Persistent, Aspiring, Noble, Diligent, Achieving

SHSID TIMES

Autumn 2025

OVER THE DRAGON'S GATE

Cover and Feature Photos
by Ryan He

The *TIMES* Team

Editor-in-Chief
Aaron Xue

Vice Editors-in-Chief
James Su
Sophia Fang
Liris Zheng

Features Editors
Ariel Zhang
Pete Chen

Managing Editors
Chelsea Nam
Chingmo Zhou

Director of Digital Media
Cheer Yu

Creative Directors
Andrea Yang
Ryan He

Director of Photography
Tom Ding

News
Aeryn Tan
Liris Zheng
Alfie Flower
Cathy Jin
Henrik Lam
Max Pan
Ryan He
Will Chen

English Literature
Maegan Huang
Alison Yu
Andrea Lei
Cathy Jin
Eason Liu
Elaine Chen
Gabrielle Dai
Jennifer Wang
Jenny Lin
Joyce Chow
Julie Zhu
Letitia Lai
Linda Shu
Maggie Tang
Necla Asveren
Pete Chen
Ran Shi
Ryan He
Xiaoxiao Xue

Chinese Literature
Bella Treelertkul
Joanna Jiang
Alison Yu
Amanda Ye
Arianna Tang
Cathy Jin
Esther Lu
Emma Li
Iris Lan
Max Pan
Stephanie Suurland
Teresa Zhao

Lifestyle
Chingmo Zhou
Alfie Flower
Andrea Lei
Anthony Zheng
Ariel Zhang
Aryana Xu
Chloe Yu
Daniel Tan
Felix Zheng
Guoshwan Nian
Joyce Chow
Maggie Tang
Michelle Jiang
Michelle Pan
Ryan He
Sammi Cheung
Will Chen

Student Journal
Ariel Zhang
Chelsea Nam
Alfie Flower
Daniel Tan
Liris Zheng
Maggie Tang
Pete Chen
Ryan He
Sammi Cheung

Science and Technology
Chanyeon Hwang
Cathy Jin
Daniel Tan
Edward Chen
Henry Wang
Owen Kustandi
Rainn Ji
Ronnie Zhou
Sam Kim
Sunny Jin

Photography
Tom Ding
Annie Zhu
Daniel Tan
Julie Zhu
Minnie Chen
Nicole Ni
Tiger Li
Rachel Gu
Ryan He
Sunny Chen
Will Chen

Design, Illustration, and Digital Media
Andrea Yang
Cheer Yu
Ryan He
Aeson Tan
Alison Yu
Annie Zhu
Daniel Park
Dawnica Yang
Lilly You
Michelle Lin
Ruoxuan Zhao
Sunny Jin
Will Chen
Yenny Jin
Yunzheng Yang

Our Publicity Coordinator is **Ms. Shen, Chen Li,** and our Supervisor is **Mr. Ma, Feng.**

Letter From the Editor

To many of us, high school life can be seen as a journey upstream. We swim against currents of deadlines and expectations, build strength through challenges we overcome, and grow alongside fellow travelers—all of which prepares us for a final leap. This leap carries us toward our next chapter: into a dream university, into a better version of ourselves. This process—of the koi transforming into a dragon—is not just an ancient Chinese folklore. Every leap requires courage, every transformation demands faith, and behind every dragon is once a fish that simply kept swimming.

In this issue, "Leaping Over the Dragon's Gate," you will explore what that leap means for your fellow SHSIDers. Through interviews with classmates and alumnae, we see that the gate takes many forms—a daunting exam, a first audition, a dream against all odds. Yet what unites these stories is not the height of the gate, but the profound meaning it holds in every swimmer's heart.

To our seniors amid applications: this is our wish for you. We hope you leap over the gate that matters most to you, whatever shape it takes. And to our school, and to the culture that gives this metaphor its depth: thank you for being the river that carries us forward.

As you turn these pages, perhaps you recognize the dragon already within you. So take a breath, gather your strength—and leap.

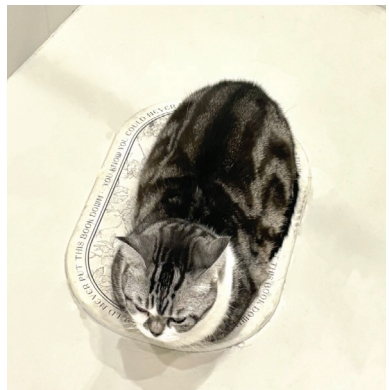
Sincerely,

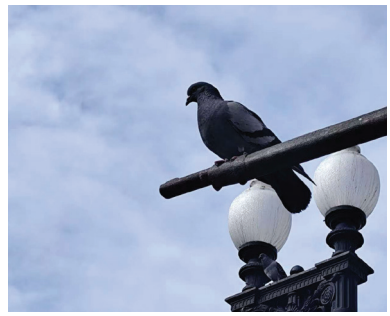
Liris

Liris Zheng, Vice Editor-in-Chief

FORUM

READERS' PET & ANIMAL PICS!





GUIDE FOR CROSSWORD

How to Solve (Next Page):

1. Locate the Word: Match the clue number (e.g., 1-Across, or 1A) to the same number in the grid. That's the first letter of the answer. Across (→): Read left to right; down (↓): Read top to bottom.

2. Mind the Grammar: The answer must match the clue's tense and form. If the clue is "adored," the answer is "loved" (past tense), not "love." If the clue is "cat and dog," the answer is "pets" (plural). If it's "cat or dog," the answer is "pet" (singular).

3. Use Crossings: Every letter is shared by an Across and a Down word. Use letters you know to solve the words that cross them.

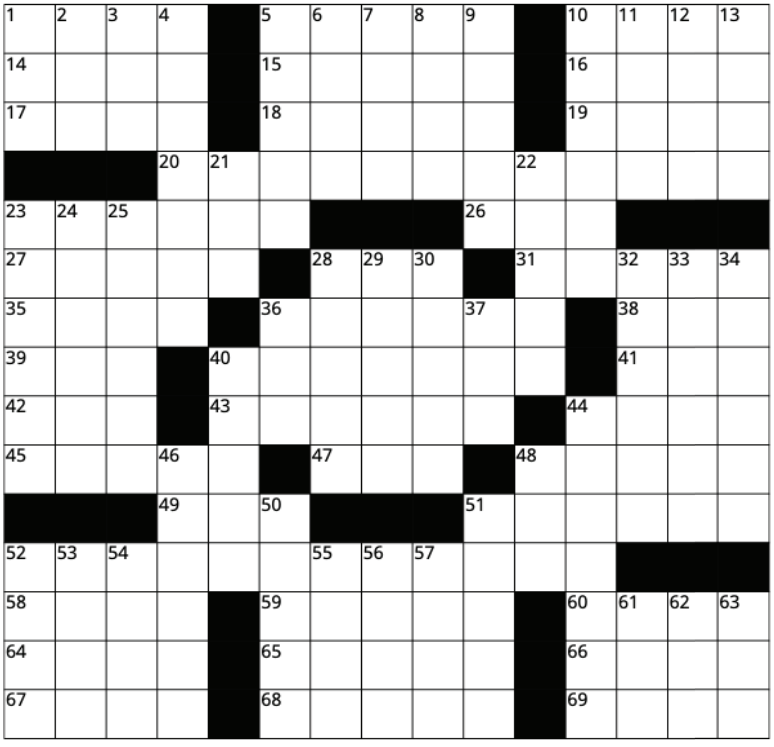
4. Answer Formats: Answers can be single words, abbreviations, proper names, or phrases without spaces.

5. Watch for References: Some clues refer to other answers (e.g., "Genre for 19-Across").

*Tip: Start with clues you know—pop culture, short words, or common phrases. Fill in those letters first to get hints for harder ones. Skip and return to tough clues later.

Hint: 33D, 34D, 20A, 51A, and 52A are two-word phrases. 40A is Chinese pinyin.

Carp-e Diem



ACROSS

1 The proverbial fish that leaps over 40-Across
5 ____ Course, last-minute study lifesaver
10 The Met ___
14 "Milk's favorite cookie"
15 Subject of "Love Story"
16 Trump's African ex
17 Trace of smoke
18 Extraterrestrial
19 24kGoldn's claim to fame
20 High-class circles
23 Holy books
26 Managed, as a business
27 Atlantic or Pacific
28 Light touch
31 Jesus' was on Christmas
35 "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the ___"
36 Pressed Italian sandwich
38 Historical period
39 "___ a Wonderful Life"
40 An SHS building named for a metaphorical gateway to 20-Across and 52-Across
41 Winter coat material
42 Prepare, as a table
43 Egg dish you might order for brunch
44 Took to court
45 Quick
47 "___ Misérables"
48 Green Italian sauce
49 Genre for 19-Across
51 "Her legacy will ___"
52 Public administration
58 Oil cartel
59 From Seoul or Singapore, e.g.
60 Frost's "The ___ Not Taken"
64 Monastery resident
65 Momentary failure
66 Palindromic girl's name
67 Small whirlpool
68 Inspiring Greek group of nine sisters
69 What someone really means when they say "Can you borrow me that?"

DOWN

1 Dairy animal
2 Nickname for pop singer Grande
3 Hi-___ graphics
4 Hit song from Wicked, by 2-Down
5 Dice game
6 Part in a play
7 Middle Eastern prince
8 Observes
9 "Objection, Your ___!"
10 Twins of the Zodiac
11 Soothing succulent
12 Plunder
13 Soup can painter Warhol
21 It's "mightier than the sword"
22 Winter getaway in the woods
23 Like a young lad
24 Cold drink often paired with lemon
25 "Fantastic" J.K. Rowling creatures
28 Group of experts
29 A matter of degrees?
30 The SHSID publication you're reading
32 Decline
33 Faithfully following
34 Strict stance toward
36 When doubled, a cheerleader's accessory
37 ___ worth, which is half a trillion dollars for 16-Across
40 Faithfully following
44 More than a couple
46 Deceptive
48 Insta post
50 A sacred song that might appear in 23-Across
51 Disneyland usually has long ones
52 Arrive
53 Discontinued Apple player
54 Sell
55 Jacob's twin
56 What a kid does to wrapping paper
57 Hibiscus holder
61 Number of partridges in the pear tree
62 Raggedy doll
63 Parent who puts the toys under the tree at midnight

TO READERS: After completing the wordpuzzle, you can post the answer to the official account and have a chance to get TIMES merchandise!

The FORUM section is a space of discussion, reflection, and interaction for the readers and writers of TIMES. To join FORUM, readers are welcome to submit either written or visual pieces or participate in the online polls on the Times official account. Follow SHSID | Times on WeChat to participate in polls and for other ways to be a part of the magazine!

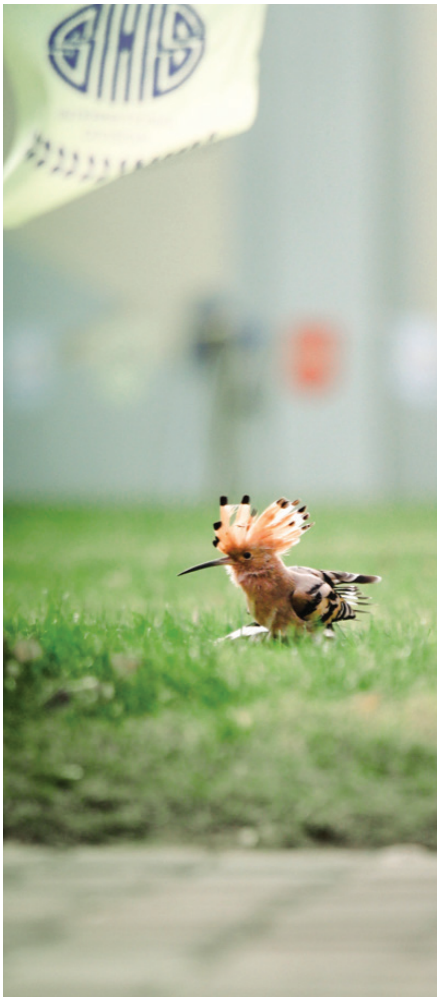
“ I got locked out of my house after returning home from Circuscape*... don‘t worry, I only waited outside for half an hour!

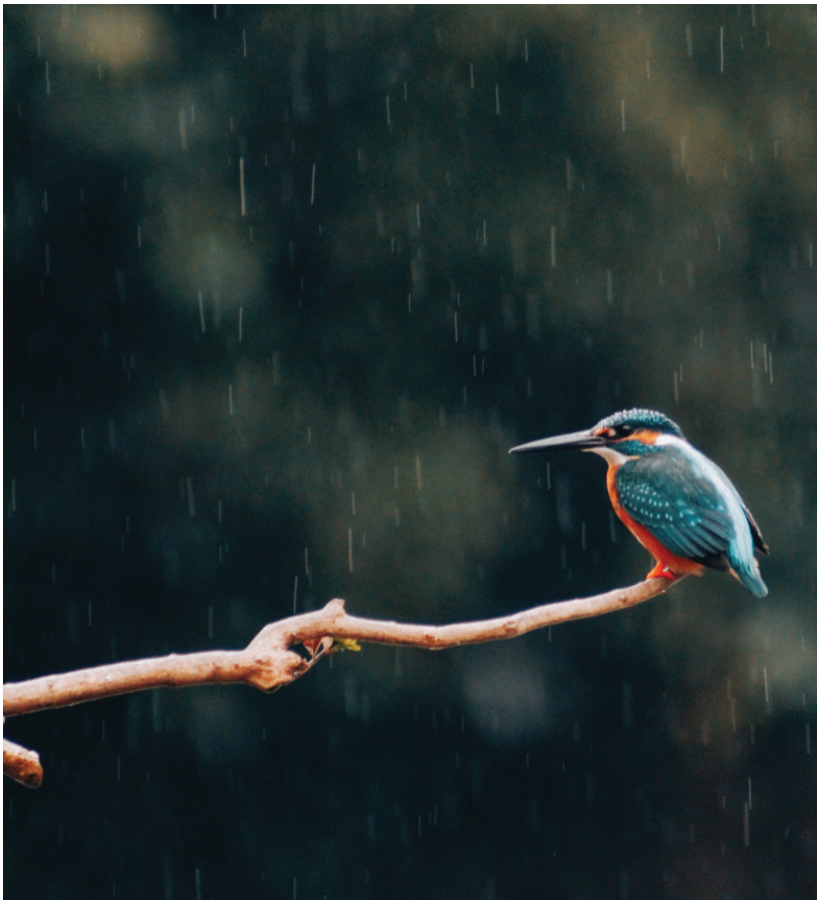
Anonymous ”

School Life

Anonymous

*Circuscape was an event held by the ASB on December 12, 2025.





Nature
Anonymous

FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHY DEPT

"Long Live Having Some Fun" by Tom Ding, November 24, 2025, at the L2D "Ways to be Wicked" performance for the 2025 Theater Festival, performed in the Black Box.

"Christmas Time" by Tiger Li, December 14, 2025, The Bund, Shanghai, CN.

"Stallions" by Tiger Li, December 18, 2025, Pudong New Bund, Shanghai, CN.

"Love You, Partner" by Rachel Gu, November 30, 2025, Hangzhou, CN.

Raymond Kim and David Han by Ryan He, c. November 2025, Fengxian, Shanghai, CN.

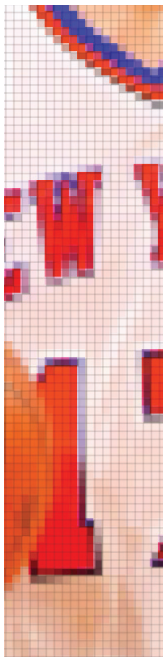


TABLE OF

Cover Story

12 As a Pillar Amidst the Sea:
"A Chronology of Shanghai High School in its Buildings"

The Longmen and Xianmian Buildings weren't always where it is now, south of Xujiahui and next to the Botanical Garden. We're going back 160 years to see what happened.

18 Fellow Leapers and Dragons

Staff writer Maggie Tang interviews pairs of siblings in SHSID to uncover the various different ways they leap over their own dragon gate.

News

24 Gen-Z Revolutions

2025 was a year of protest - this is how young people drove it.

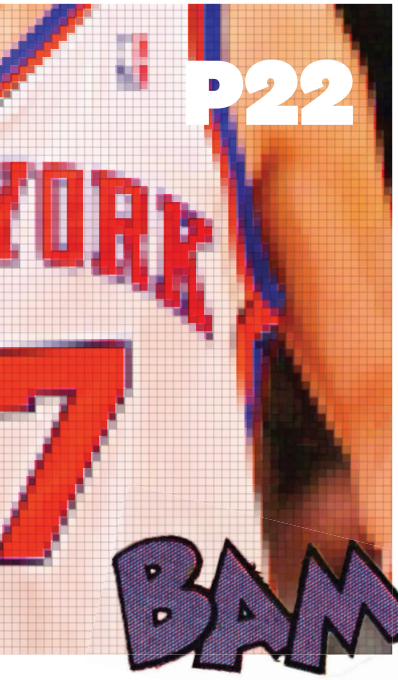
28 Leap of Dependency

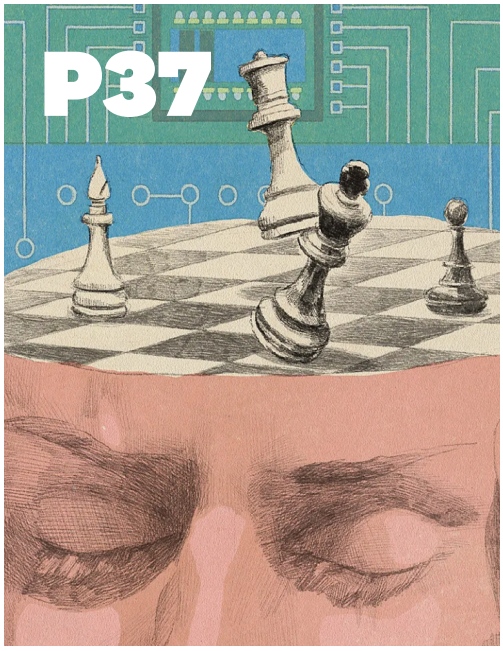
Regions of Rwanda has long been torn by violence, but they are turning in a new direction.

Lifestyle

30 Linsanity
"One Man, One Month, One Miracle"

Jeremy Lin's Valentine's Day was a little different that everyone else. It was also the day his life changed.





CONTENTS

34 The Courage to Hope
"A Practical Guide for Hard Times"
Life is notoriously difficult. Here is how you can cut yourselves some slack.

Literature

36 The Fish That Grew Wings
The fisher told me that, for the longest time...

38 The Eighth Rank
All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.

41 鲤越龙门
人们通常认为通往成功的道路只有一条，而鲤鱼跃过龙门的方式也只有一种。

43 小锦鲤越龙门
每逢暮春，骤雨忽至，夏雷滚滚而起时……

Student Journal

45 Different Eyes on the Same Court
Staff writer Alfie Flower dives deep into Coach Jayme Lawman's razor-sharp psyche and vision.

Science and Tech

47 Beyond the Neural Gate
"Redefining What It Means to Be Human"
Staff writer Rainn Ji tells of a different kind of leaping in the human neural system.

COVER STORY

A Chronology of Shanghai High School in its ——— Buildings

As A Pillar Amidst The Sea

Written by Max Pan and Ryan He
Max is a sophomore staff writer with an interest in history. Ryan is a junior co-Creative Director at the Times.

Ariel Zhang contributed to editing.
Designed by Ryan He

Footsteps sweep in the morning as we juniors make our commute between Zhongxing and Xianmian Building. Here on the Shanghai High School campus in Shanghai's center city, sunlight smells brisk, especially as it filters down the patches of foliage, dashes past the falling ginkgo leaves, and falls into the climbing stairs of Longmen Building.

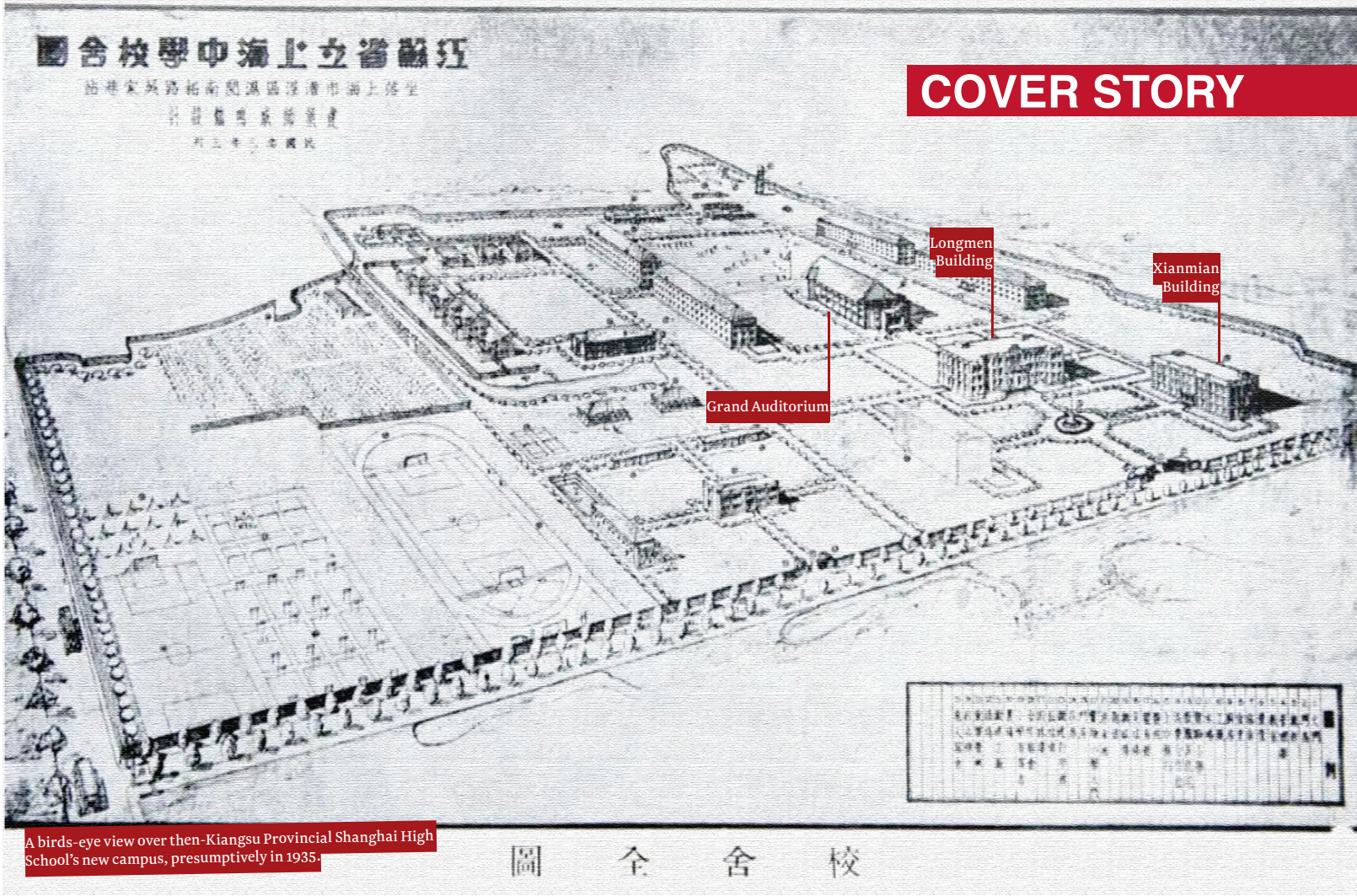
Shanghai High School turns 160 this year; our "Dragon Gate" - Longmen Building, turns 89. It, along with other architecture around campus, are witnesses to the progress and heritage embedded in Shanghai's history; they are surveyors of the memories of thousands of students, teachers, and staff who walked upon this campus. For this Times issue's cover story, staff writer Max Pan and I dive into the history of the Longmen Building and the campus it reigns over.

Beginnings Elsewhere

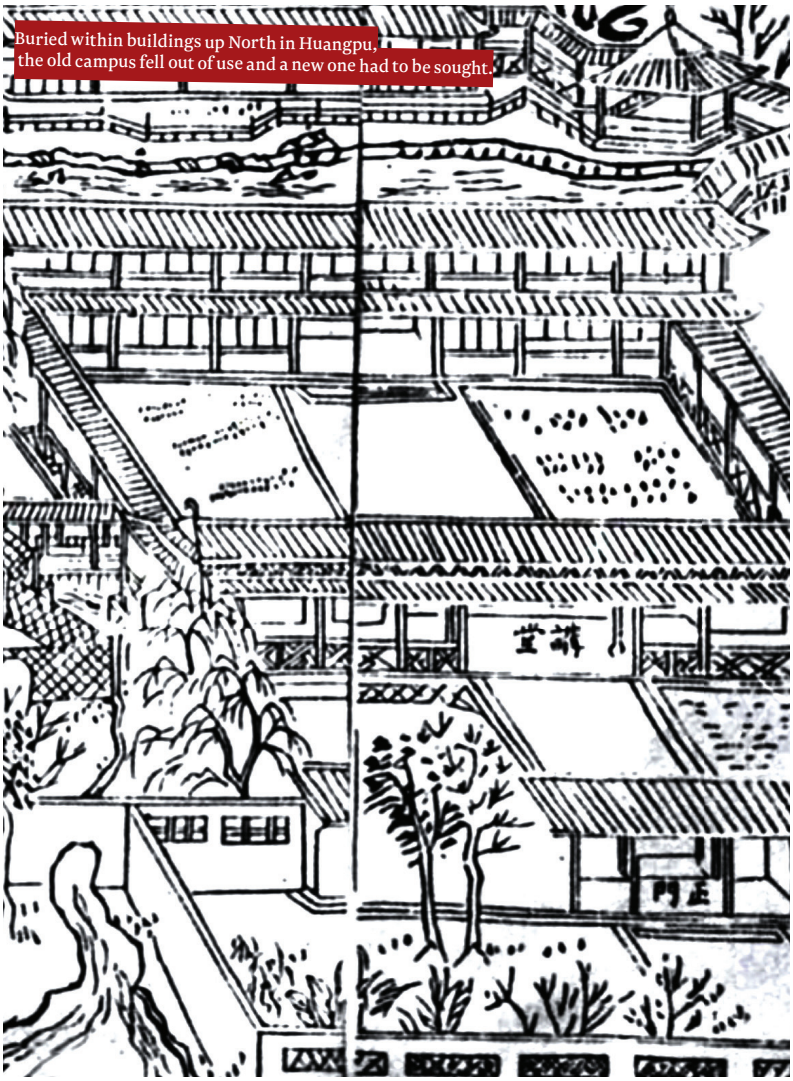
1865-1934

Shanghai High School wasn't always where we now stand, next to the Botanical Garden and south of Xujiahui. Ding Richang founded Longmen Academy in 1865, initially borrowing its classrooms from Zhenhuatang of Ningzhu Academy in nowadays Huangpu District. In 1867, with the help of a donated lump sum of silver, the school owned its first independent campus a few blocks west, on the site of the old Xianmian Ancestral Shrine (where Xianmian Building gets its name) off Shangwen by Lujiabang Road. It's now home to Longmencun, a residential block of preserved Western architecture named after the Academy's Dragon Gate metaphor, one of striving against all odds towards success and achievement.

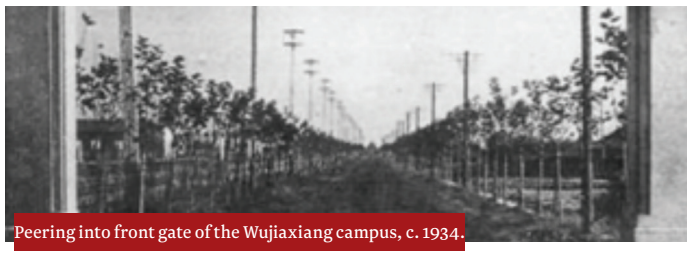
Longmencun, off Shangwen Road in Huangpu District, remains a residential block to this day. (*Yuan Jing/Wenhui Bao*)



A birds-eye view over then-Kiangsu Provincial Shanghai High School's new campus, presumptively in 1935.



Buried within buildings up North in Huangpu, the old campus fell out of use and a new one had to be sought.



Peering into front gate of the Wujiaxiang campus, c. 1934.

Settling in Wujiaxiang

吴家巷

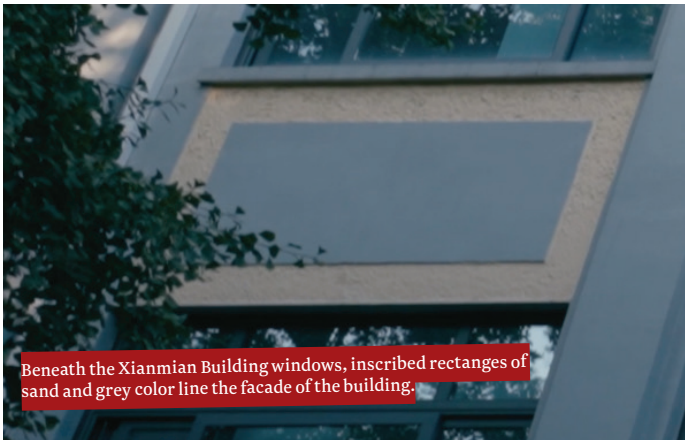
1930-1934

In the 1930s, the school, then the namesake high school of Shanghai as a county under Jiangsu Province, had an issue – the city campus was cramped, and facilities were increasingly in a poor state. This motivated then-Principal Zheng Tonghe to search for a new site for the school starting from 1930. Following the withdrawal of Japanese troops via the Shanghai Ceasefire Agreement of 1932, the provincial high school finally settled on a 460-acre plot off Humin Road in Wujiaxiang, covering Xuhui and Minhang Districts nowadays. This is where our campus stands now – sandwiched between Laohumin Road and Shangzhong Road. ▶

Enter the Buildings

1934-1936

Speaking of which, the Longmen Building, Xianmian Building, and Grand Auditorium all initially finished construction in 1936. Both Longmen Building and Xianmian Building were constructed in a typical Art Deco style, a geometric design school that emphasizes modernity and technological progress, and flourished during that time; that shows with the low-relief geometric plaques underneath both buildings' rectangular windows. They are both three stories tall, fronted with metal inscriptions of their names in serif Chinese calligraphy. Longmen Building's entrance is projected out with four pillars, emphasizing its sense of symmetrical authority; it culminates in the rising roof containing its flagpole, cementing its position as the nexus of the campus. Xianmian Building, by contrast, seems more modest but also has geometrical decorations upon its front that make it share the same authority and beauty.



Beneath the Xianmian Building windows, inscribed rectanges of sand and grey color line the facade of the building.

On the top of Longmen Building's climbing arch, the relief patterns and outer metal lining adds complexity and elegance to the building.

In a post card collection from the school: Longmen Building behind the roundabout flagpole, taken from outside school bounds.

Longmen Building in Autumn 2025, which roundabout centered by a terrance with the 160-year commemoratory carp statue. (*Tom Ding for SHSID|Times*)

Into World War II

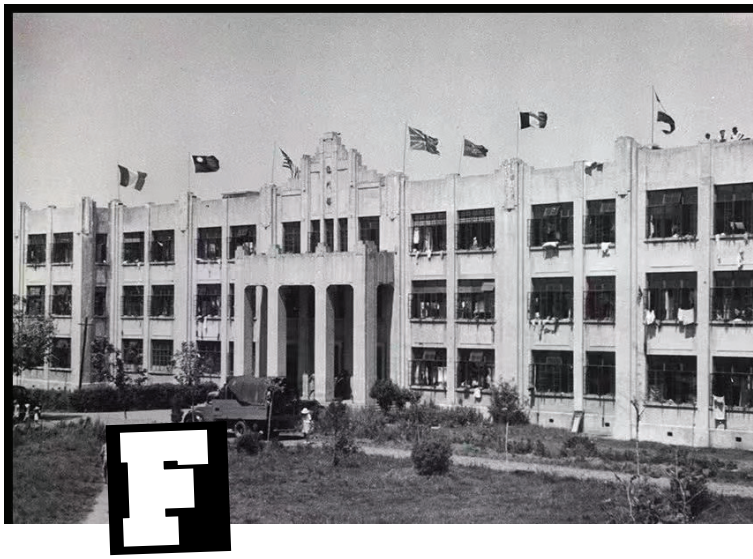
1930-1934

After the 1937 Battle of Shanghai, all parts of Shanghai apart from the foreign concessions were occupied by the Japanese army. From August to November, bombing raids on Shanghai demolished two dormitories; the auditorium, cafeteria, and Xianmian Building suffered various degrees of damage. According to the Shanghai Local Gazette, over a third of the school was laid to waste. The school evacuated to the French Concession, where education continued on Shaoxing and Shunchang Roads.

Hours after Japan struck Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941, the imperial army occupied the previously independent foreign concessions in Shanghai. As the Pacific Theater started to develop, so did the Japanese control of allied residents in Shanghai: starting in 1942, American, British, and other Allied residents were forced to wear "A", "B", and "X" armbands as a means of identification. And in 1943, all Allied civilians were transported in trucks and buses to internment camps around Shanghai. Some of them, like the late British science fiction writer J. G. Ballard, would have seen the Japanese flag flown high in front of the Longmen Building as they arrived at the Lunghwa Civilian Assembly Centre. The school, once populated with students, now housed 1,988 people through blocks named alphabetically –

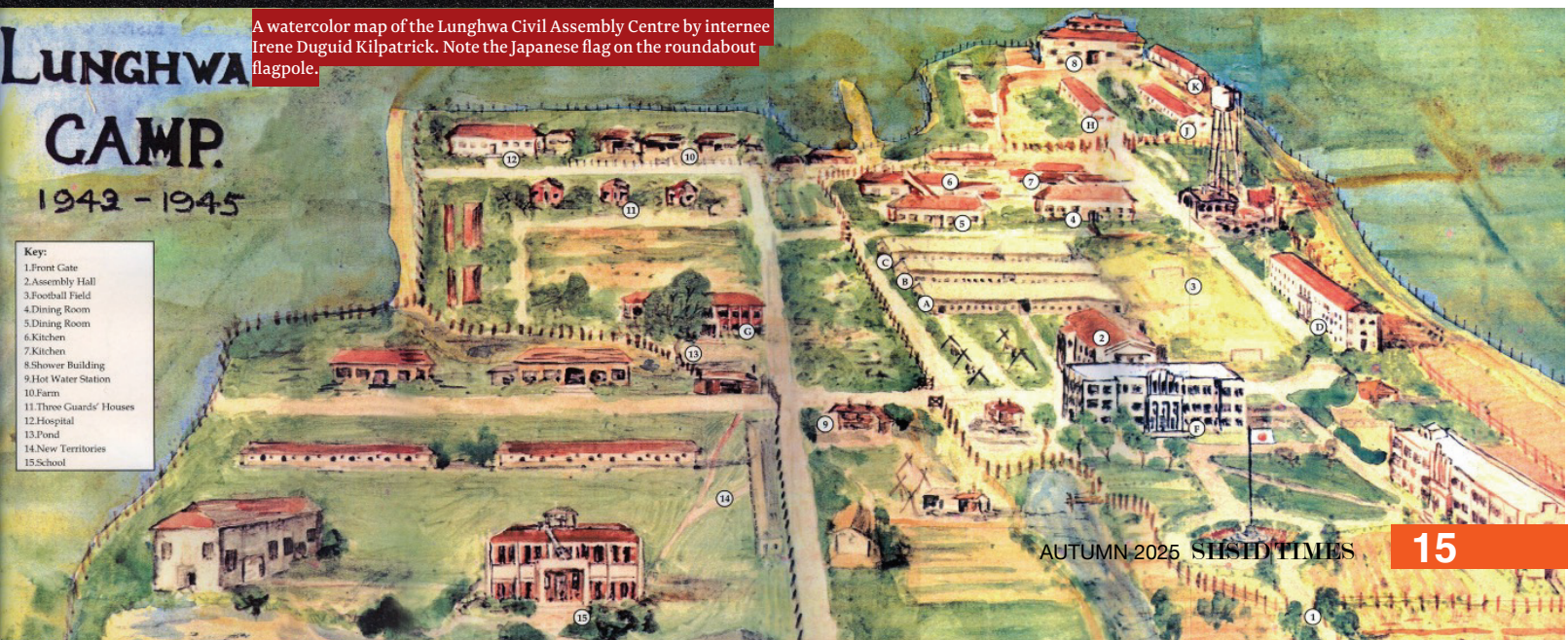
Xianmian Building

Xianmian Building became E block. In addition to accommodating internees with families, it was also one of the three places where secret radios were kept.



Longmen Building

Longmen Building became F block, the administrative block housing the camp commandant ▶



A watercolor map of the Lunghwa Civil Assembly Centre by internee Irene Duguid Kilpatrick. Note the Japanese flag on the roundabout flagpole.

Tomohiko Hayashi's office on the third floor, which overlooked the roundabout. West of the roundabout, what would be known as Zhongxing Lake was one of two ponds whose water would be boiled and used for washing clothes. Though the pond water was often filled with weeds, it was better than nothing.

As WWII drew to an end, Shanghai was returned to the Chinese authorities. In the two-week vacuum of power in which the Japanese Army had to wait for the American troops to arrive, the food supply was cut off. The internees had to rely on emergency deliveries by the Swiss Consul General Fontanel and air drops of food by the US Air Force. Many of them fell sick: they had been eating the camp food for years, and they were not used to the food being dropped. Nonetheless, the Lunghwa CAC drew to a close, and Shangzhong returned to its campus in 1946.

At the 120th anniversary of Shanghai High School in 1987, Teachers and faculty line up in front of the roundabout before Longmen Building, which was turned into a fountain.

A panel from Eric Cumine's comic "Lunghwa CAC-kles" in 1946.

Finding Home Here

1949-2025

Coming up long and short, Shanghai High School and SHSID have been educating students in the center of Shanghai for the past 80 years, with not many surprises. The roundabout that once flew the Japanese flag became a fountain, then a ring of flowers that blooms year-round.

The library was first built in 1949, the same year the PRC was established. In the 1980s, Shangzhong was rejuvenated and extended west to the Hsi Building bounds, expanding athletic and scientific facilities. All in the meanwhile, the buildings of this school towered above, witnessing the dynasties of Shanghai's development.

And now, upon the 160th anniversary of Shanghai High School, thousands of students, teachers, and faculty continue to walk underneath the Longmen Building's peak, home to a fluttering Chinese flag.

Nowadays, Longmen Building has been relieved of much of its burden, as the lower forms of Shanghai High School students have been relocated to Zhentao Building; it's the same with Xianmian Building now only the permanent residence of senior Stallions.

But as time stretches on, the weight of these buildings won't falter. They're a reminder that our progress has been built brick by brick, time and time again.

THE DRAGON'S GATE:
FELLOW LEAPERS AND DRAGONS

As we grow older, we're expected to take on more responsibilities: assembling a striking portfolio, managing school activities with your own hobbies and interests, living like the mature well-taught student you've pictured yourself as…

Many of us ask ourselves these questions every day, often as an indicator of progress. There will always come times when our growths are put to the test, an evaluation of our discipline and achievements that is also a pathway to the future. Chinese folklore imagines this journey of spiritual growth as a koi fish leaping over the dragon's gate–if the koi succeeds, it will transcend its previous limits, rebirthed with shining scales and a fiery soul as a dragon anew.

In essence, many of us are koi, swimming and diving around in anticipation for our turn at the gate. We can feel doubt, anxiousness, or joy when that opportunity comes, but it's important to remember that everybody lives through it at least once. That is why, for this issue "Leaping Over the Dragon's Gate", the Times has hosted interviews from two sibling pairs and an alumna to share their experience leaping over their own gates and what difference it has made.

Written by Maggie Tang
Maggie is a sophomore staff writer with an interest in literature.

Pete Chen contributed to editing.
Designed by Ryan He

Sophia Zhang '28
Eric Zhang '31
Irune Eceiza Shen '28
Ibai Eceiza Shen '29

What does "leaping over the dragon's gate" mean to you?

Sophia: I think it means overcoming challenges and working hard, even when it's difficult.

Eric: To me, leaping over the dragon's gate means you're defying odds.

Irune & Ibai: Well, it's an idiom about a huge, transformative challenge. To us, it's not just about the success at the end. It's about the difficult but rewarding process of pushing past your limits—going out of your comfort zone to reach a greater height. We really enjoy the moment that you look back and realize the obstacle you thought would break you actually made you stronger.

As siblings, do you have similar or different ways of overcoming obstacles?

S: My main approach is to let my emotions out and after that work as hard as I can (and pray that everything goes okay).

E: I don't really overcome obstacles. I just go with the flow.

I&I: We actually have very different approaches. I (the sister) tend to be more careful, considering every possibility and angle before I act. This makes me thorough, but sometimes slower. My brother, on the other hand, is a strategic minimalist (a more flowery term for his laziness... Hahahah, just kidding!). He doesn't overthink; he identifies the most efficient, direct path and goes for it. I think we balance each other out. I help him avoid potential mistakes, and he helps me cut through the noise.

What was the last "gate" that you leaped over and how did you do it?

S: It was probably navigating all the different tasks I'm doing and telling myself that I can manage all of it! High school gets really stressful at times, so it's important to stay optimistic.

E: For me it was moving to a new home. It took a lot to get used to all of it but I'm very glad I've adapted to my new environment.

I&I: The last major gate was the Art Festival host auditions. It was our first time collaborating on an official school activity, and we quickly realized we had very different visions for how to present the show. Our ideas and the "effect" we each pictured initially differed greatly. However, we stopped insisting on our own way and started genuinely incorporating each other's most insightful ideas. We blended our perspectives into a final script that was better than what either of us could have written alone. The result was a huge success with the audience, and we earned our spots as hosts!

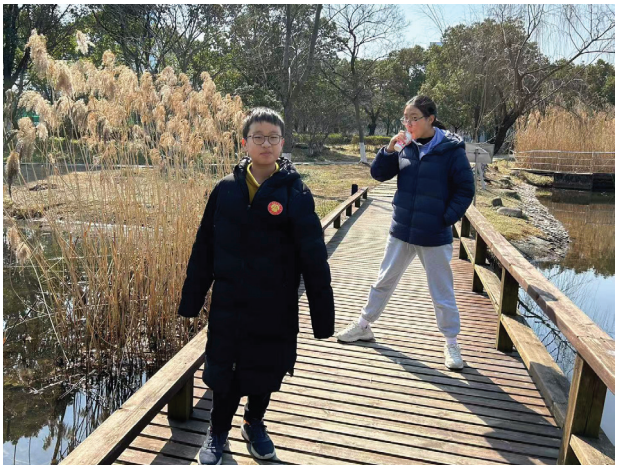
What's the next biggest obstacle for you? What can you gath-

er from your previous experiences to help you?

S: Right now, it's trying to survive high school. I feel like everybody wants to be something and sometimes I feel lost because I don't know what or who I wanna be. Hopefully I can just work hard like I have in the past and it'll pass over eventually.

E: I'm currently getting used to sixth grade. Middle school has been really different from elementary school and I think I need to get used to it. If I keep being myself and doing the things that make me happy, I trust that things will be okay.

I&I: Surviving next week without collapsing! I'm currently staring down a mountain of work: 2 exams, 4 projects, 1 presentation, my research work, Art Festival host prep, staying after school every day for ASB to prep for our huge event next Friday, plus club activities. From past experiences, I'd say I need to focus on the main, most important tasks first. I



don't have to be perfect on every single assignment, but I do need to understand my priorities and tackle them efficiently.

As siblings, how have you helped each other through these challenges?

S: What my brother does is that he listens to me vent about all the things I hate. I totally don't force him to do that!

E: My sister helps me with homework I don't understand and we often discuss the material I'm working on.

I&I: My brother is usually willing to help with small tasks or just motivate me to persevere. Lately, we've both been incredibly busy. Seeing him work so conscientiously, completing one task after another, actually fires me up. I think, "If even he can do it, what's my excuse?" That friendly sense of competition becomes a powerful motivation that pushes us both to accomplish more.

Does attending to the same school have any impact on your interactions with each other?

S: Yes, it means that we have to interact because we see each other at school. But it also means that we can support each other.

E: Yes, she can help me because we both go to SHSID.

I&I: Absolutely! It's fun because we share the same context and can gossip about school life with total understanding. More importantly, it provides built-in support. I've already navigated things he's going through, and I am also experiencing challenges he's facing. It strengthens our bond. Getting to participate in activities together, like hosting the Art Festival, is the best part. It has brought us so much closer, and I honestly can't imagine what it would be like to be in different schools.

Zoe Tang
SHSID '23 / Swarthmore '27
Maggie Tang '28

Let's start with how you got to SHSID. Why did you decide to take this challenge and how did you adjust to this new environment?

In seventh grade, a girl who transferred from SHSID to the school I was in told me about her experiences there and how it was academically challenging. I instinctively knew that I was doing good in my school at the time but I wasn't pushed to my limits. That's why a little voice told me to give myself a shot and see if SHSID was the school for me. The transition ended up being pretty successful, I arrived in eighth grade and instantly felt that it was more challenging.

What was your next challenge as a highschooler in SHSID?

I think it was when I decided to take our school's IB courses in junior and senior year. Before, I always imagined myself as an AP student. What got me instead into IB was English. When I was in 10th grade, I realized I began to develop a strong passion for English. A big reason was that I was lucky enough to take our school's pilot IB course. I enjoyed listening to podcasts, analyzing literature, and keeping up with world related news. I remember in 10th grade was when I developed my first deep and thorough analysis. I realized that since I already took AP Lang in 10th grade, I couldn't take an AP English course in 11th grade and would have to take for a standard course instead. I thought, since I already conquered rigorous challenges through AP Lang, I wanted to keep taking a hard English course like IB literature HL. That's what ultimately got me on my path!

Let's talk about college then. What made you decide on the college you wanted to go to, and why?

I went to Swarthmore for college. I was already interested in liberal arts colleges because my English teachers all had liberal arts-related backgrounds. What drew me to Swarthmore was their core values. They talked a lot about integrity and a sense of purpose. Because they were a quaker institution, there was a lot of emphasis on being a good person and fostering a sense of connection with other people. When I saw those key concepts on their websites, I felt really drawn to Swarthmore compared to others. After I got into Swarthmore, we had this tradition of getting freshman to all gather in the Swarthmore amphitheater with candles and we just start sharing about our excitements and emotions for the upcoming future. Some people talked about how they wanted Swarthmore to be a place to be vulnerable and a girl even recited a poem out of sheer memory. I remember hearing everybody talk about their thoughts and thinking, "I belong here". I saw those values of integrity, intellectual curiosity, and purpose reflected through people's comments. I truly resonated with this remarkable and tightly-knit community.

What's an obstacle you surpassed that you're proud of, and what elements of that experience do you think you can carry with you?

I think the biggest change at least, was my pursuit towards math. I was so convinced that I would be an English major, but during my freshman year fall it all changed because I took Calculus just out of curiosity. I really enjoyed it and now I'm a math major! I kept taking advanced courses like Real Analysis and Modern Algebra 2. I think it's because I'm in this community that's so caring with professors that support me, I have a clear vision of what I want to become. I want

to be a math professor, and I want to go to math grad school, and I'm so grateful for all the experiences I've gained to lead me to this point. I now know that I want to do this with my full heart, and it's been a hard 180-degree pivot from a humanities student to a STEM major student.

I'm currently experiencing my hardest semester in college yet because I've signed up for math courses that are graduate level. I have genuinely suffered because there were moments when I truly had no idea what was happening in class. How could I ever solve these problems? How could I ever understand this? This is the first semester in college I've been getting grades that I'm not adjusted to. Sometimes you know how to do a proof question and sometimes you don't. But grades are still not the most important. The most important that I'm trying hard and it's that I can always do better. My mantra right now is to do not feel despair, do not feel defeated, and dare to problem solve. In the future, I see myself trying to uplift and inspire others who are like me because of my unconventional journey to math. I've found this passion and I've found out that I like the invigorating feeling of doing a problem. I want to help students who are afraid of math to find the joy in it in college. Math has changed my life so this is my gate. My gate is to become a better mathematician, despite my lack of understanding and frustrating, and to keep on going and go to grad school. I can't wait for me to leap over that gate and discover something new.

Cover Photo: **"The Dragon's Stronghold"** by Ryan He, c. November 2024. Shanghai High School, Shanghai, CN.

Written by Alfie Flower
Alfie is a sophomore staff writer from Bristol, UK.

Designed by Andrea Yang

GEN Z REVOLU

PART I
INTRODUCTION

Generation Z has always been a juxtaposing dilemma: anxious but ambitious, tech-addicted yet socially aware, a digital generation who still loses themselves on the internet. When we truly observe Gen Z, however, it will not be difficult to see what simmers below the surface: a desire to leap beyond a future plagued by political stagnation.

Most generations grew up listening to the same story: work hard, play hard. Be patient, and eventually you'll succeed. But the world Gen Z stepped into made finding work harder than ever, barriers higher than ever, and opportunities distributed with a kind of selective generosity that made the story feel like an inside joke. So, they did what this generation is known for. They questioned the premise.

Why should there be only one repetitive path upward?

Why should the gate to success remain where previous generations placed it?

The chain of recent protests wasn't rebellion for rebellion's sake. It was a collective realisation that the old systems no longer worked. It was a reawakening from previous years that they needed to revert back to inspiring to change because the system was not for them, not for their elders, and not for the countries trying desperately to move forward.

When the spark for change was ignited, it didn't come from a parliament or a boardroom. It began online.

PART I
NEPAL'S REVOLUTION 2025

Nepal's 2025 revolution didn't begin with a manifesto, a party, or even a leader who spearheaded all of this. It began with a singular post: a lavish Christmas-tree-shaped display made from luxury goods, from Cartier to Louis Vuitton, it glittered with brand names and fairy lights. It was a Christmas tree meant to impress.

It didn't.

The reaction was instant and undeviating. Young Nepalis, where more than 20% of whom struggle with both poverty and unemployment, questioned the validity of the Thapa family's source of wealth, raising alarms of corruption. Reposting the photo under #NepoBaby, many demanded to know how political elites had amassed astronomical wealth. For days and months, the image spread like wildfire.

Then, on 4 September 2025, the government announced a ban on 26 major social media platforms. Kathmandu's justification was to curb misinformation, but to Gen Z, it felt like a digital bottleneck, a way to silence previous voices and unethically consolidate power only when they spoke loud enough to be heard.

The government thought that they would follow the orders. Instead, they protested and revolted.

TIONS

By 8 September, thousands of young people, many in their school uniforms, gathered at Maitighar Mandala and the federal parliament in central Kathmandu. The protests began with chants, banners, and hopeful slogans for change and marched in solidarity. They quickly descended into chaos as police launched tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets, and ultimately live ammunition.

But something astonishing happened: the crowd didn't disperse. They reorganised.

Whilst the government tried to silence the young generation with a nationwide curfew, the youth leveraged it against the government and fought back. What older generations learned to do with walkie-talkies and pamphlets, Gen Z managed with Discord threads and shared Google Docs.

The government disbanded in less than 48 hours, and the military remained as the final force to mediate between the protestors and the old government. Then came the moment no one predicted. 5 days after the original protests, Nepal held a national vote on Discord. In a makeshift but efficient voting system, Sushila Karki was sworn in under Article 61 of the Constitution of Nepal, becoming an interim prime minister, both the first female prime minister and Nepal's first prime minister, unanimously approved by its citizens.

It wasn't a textbook revolution.
It wasn't polished nor fully legal.
But for once, it was theirs. It made them proud.

Nepal became proof that when the gates to success refuse to open, Gen Z will simply build a new gate in the fence.

Nepal at the precipice. (Sunil Chandra Sharma/Unsplash)

SOUTHEAST ASIA PART III

Revolutions rarely stay at home anymore. With the rise of globalisation, helped by the internet, Youth in the Philippines and Indonesia, both grappling with high youth unemployment and painfully familiar cycles of corruption in their respective countries, watched Nepal's revolution with a mixture of shock and inspiration.

The internet not only planted the seeds of protest within the minds of the young adults, but the internet helped them taste true unity for a just cause they sought to change. Bonding under #SEAblings, a play on "Southeast Asian siblings", they rode on the wordplay as a method to pull frustrated and struggling youths together, telling them that they are not alone in their frustration.

Ultimately, their movements weren't identical to Nepal's. Each country had slight variations in their own historical background and their issues of concern (when Nepal focused on clashing back against the elites, Indonesia worried about environmental erosion and the Philippines worried about human rights violations). Though the tone remained united, young people are tired of empty promises and are ready to craft their own future. Staying true to crafting their own future, Gen Z chose an unconventional symbol that blended rebellion with pop culture: the signature pirate flag from the Anime One Piece.

The skull-and-bones wearing a straw hat wasn't merely an aesthetic choice. Instead, its meaning resided in the plot of the show, where the flag resembled freedom and resistance against corrupt authorities.

In the Philippines and Indonesia, truck drivers who barely made enough to scrape by rallied behind the flag. Students and gig workers raised it at street marches and campus sit-ins. Digital activism was at an all-time high with different sectors: nurses, teachers, drivers, factory workers, and farmers, all rallying as a figurative pirate under oppressive regimes, discovering their voice and echoing it across the seas.

Filipinos wave a One Piece flag as they take part in protest against corruption at Rizal Park. (Ezra Acayan/Getty Images)

Protesters outside of Antananarivo City Hall in Antananarivo, Madagascar on October 11. (Luis Tato/AFP)

PART IV
MADAGASCAR

Far across the Indian Ocean, Madagascar's Gen Z watched these movements unfold with growing recognition. Their president, Andry Rajoelina, had promised progress for over 15 years. He promised more jobs, cleaner water, and economic growth for the world's fifth-poorest nation. But more than a decade later, poverty still loomed large as GDP per capita barely grew, youth unemployment increased by 35%, and more than half of the population still lack basic sanitation.

For young Malagasies, this is a lie that can no longer continue. Inspired by Nepal and #SEAblings, they formed Gen Z Madagascar, another leaderless yet remarkably coordinated movement. Their tools were another familiar set: Discord channels, shared documents, anonymised communication, and mass livestreams.

And like their counterparts in Southeast Asia, they chose the pirate flag to represent their cause. However, they reimagined the anime flag with a Malagasy twist. The skull wore a pink and green satroka bucket hat, a symbol of the Betsileo ethnic group native to Madagascar. It felt local, proud, and for once, theirs.

They marched across Antananarivo, not commanded by a singular leader but inspired by a shared consciousness. Something had to change, and they were tired of being ignored. When the presidency finally fell, it wasn't because another party usurped power. Instead, it was the cries of a generation that refused to let Malagasy decadence linger on.

PART V
CONCLUSION

It would be easy to dismiss these movements as impulsive or chaotic. And yes, they were unconventional to say the least. Yes, perhaps they were improvised; they were built on Reddit tags, fandom symbols, and group chats rather than on formal political structures or discourse. But maybe that's the point.

Gen Z refused to follow the framework they were told to abide by. They're building a new gate for prosperity. A gate founded online, of leaderless coordination, of cultural symbols repurposed into political tools, fostering solidarity. Where older generations saw decay or danger, Gen Z saw opportunity, cracks through which light might finally enter. It's too early to know what these movements will look like a decade from now. Revolutions, after all, are easier to ignite than to sustain. But this much is clear: Gen Z is not waiting. Not for permission, not for tradition, and not for a world that refuses to change.

LEAP OF DEPENDENCY

(directed towards violence-affected regions in Rwanda)

Written by Aeryn Tan
Aeryn is co-Section Editor for News at the Times, from Kuala Lumpur, MY.

Designed by Cheer Yu

A crowd of Rwandan refugees angered by the closing of the border run to the border bridge to force their way into Zaire, Aug. 21, 1994. (Photograph by Jean-Marc Bouju/AP Photo)

While fragments of developing economies across the world are channeling their resources on the advancements of AI innovations, utilizing both socio-technological and economic standings to a greater level, the Global South has been involved in their own headways— leaping over the entrenched barriers of dependency. The metaphor "Over the Dragon's Gate" captures this phenomenon, which can be elaborated on emerging economies taking a step into steadiness. A prime example is Rwanda, an African nation that demonstrates their transformation, leaping from dependence and profound violence to emerge as an independent hub of technological and economic evolvement.

Rwanda's subsequent economic recovery from the genocide of 1994, was an event that precipitated a national crisis requiring decades of stabilization. This act of violence led to the nation facing threats of social stagnation and disintegration that led to both impactful and devastating results, such as the deaths of millions, the evacuation of large populations, and the overall destruction of the country. This conflict was not just a typical civil war but a state-sponsored campaign of mass murder committed by extremists of the Hutu majority against the Tutsi minority. Fueled by long-existing social and ethnic detachments, this idea that the Hutus had further sought the elimination of the Tutsi population. Conflicts all began on the night of April 6th, 1994, where a plane that the Rwandan president sat on was shot by Hutu extremists and later on crashed into the capital of Kigali, where everyone was killed on board. Hours later, the Hutus started a mass massacre of the Tutsis around the city, systematically murdering an estimated amount of 800,000 people from the population, and around 2 million of the Rwandan population evacuated their homelands to seek safety and shelter as

refugees both during and after the genocides, where this occurrence of violence lasted from April to June.

▶ Destruction of the nation never burned the flame of success for Rwanda.

Years later, from a fragmented nation transforming to one of Africa's fastest, developing economies— the nation of Rwanda stands as a perfect example for the world to visualize. It took months, years, decades for the country to resolve and recover from their economic recessions, launching a strategic framework in 2020, a transition from recovery to sustainable development. Subsequently, suspected extremists that were accused of participating in the genocides were gathered and tested in trials around and outside the country (for fled escapers). In these trials, death sentences, imprisonment torture, deportation, and enslavements were crucial results of prosecution. Central to this effort, "Vision 2020" was a plan structured on the foundation of the damage caused by the war, where they focused on short-term achievements; macroeconomic stabilization and the reduce of dependency on external aid, and long-term achievements such as improved infrastructure and advancements in education, technology, and healthcare. These examples led to outstanding outcomes, a growth in life expectancy, a 40% decrease in population poverty, and the nation was leaping towards a new realm of technical and economic reliance for the entire world to perceive.

A bus using a dedicated lane is benefiting for traffic green light which releases the bus before other vehicles on the KN 3 Road in Kigali City on December 2nd, 2025. The Government of Rwanda has recently made changes in the traffic rules whereby buses operating in the public transport are priotized and given a dedicated lane at road junctions. With the BUS ONLY lane, a bus waiting for a green light is now able to move ahead before every other private cards and is not allowed to spend more that 3 mins at the bus stage.Photo:Cyril NDEGEYA

Simon Maina

Works Cited

Chen, Pamela. "Revisiting the Rwandan Genocide: Origin Stories from the Associated Press." Photography, 31 Mar. 2014, www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/article/revisiting-rwandan-genocide.

Sabiiti, Daniel. "Rwanda's Economy Surges with 11.8% Growth in Third Quarter." KT PRESS, 16 Dec. 2025, www.ktpress.rw/2025/12/rwandas-economy-surges-with-11-8-growth-in-third-quarter/. Accessed 19 Dec. 2025.

Gacuruzwa, Eric. "Gulf Investors Deepen Interest in Rwanda's Growth Strategy." FurtherAfrica, 18 Dec. 2025, furtherafrica.com/2025/12/18/gulf-investors-rwanda-growth-strategy/. Accessed 19 Dec. 2025.

Nussbaum, Martha C. Upheavals of Thought. Cambridge

LIN SANITY

ONE MAN
ONE MONTH
ONE MIRACLE

Written by Anthony Zheng
Anthony is a sophomore staff writer from Chicago, IL, US.

Designed by Ryan He

1

"Lin with the ball in his hands. Fans on their feet. 5...4..."

The countdown echoed through the Air Canada Centre on Valentines Day as Jeremy Lin dribbled at center court, creeping his way to the three-point line. Twenty thousand people on their feet holding their breath,. Lin took four step forwards, crossed over three times, took a hesitation move, then he shot it.

For a heartbeat, silence… ▶

"For the wiiiiiin... GOT IT!"

The call rippled across the broadcast as the ball arced through the arena, before swishing through the net, winning the game for the injured New York Knicks team. The arena erupted into chaos, fans screaming, cameras flashing, as Lin turned around, skipping with the presence of a cold-blooded killer, nodding his head with sharp, unshakable confidence, as if this moment had never been in doubt for him, even though he had never been here before.

On that night, the basketball world changed forever. A movement would be started, and a generation forever altered.

"Linsanity had officially arrived."

2 A Generational Rise

For two weeks in February 2012, Jeremy Lin had the entire world on notice. The Taiwanese-American basketball player became an iconic sensation overnight, his speed and finesse producing signature moment after signature moment. Over those two weeks, Lin averaged 24.6 points and 9.2 assists in 10 games, dragging the injury-riddled Knicks team to a 7-0 start and an 8-2 record, reviving New York's season.

Before that, the struggling Knicks were gearing up for a third back-to-back game, the guaranteed contract deadline less than a week away. As the New Jersey Nets visited Madison Square Garden in a New York face-off, Lin was precariously holding on to his NBA dreams. In an interview with The Ringer, Lin says, "That was going to be it for me. My agent had actually called me before the game and said, 'If you don't play well, tonight will probably be your last game in the NBA." Jeremy Lin knew how close he was to becoming a nameless face, one of many whose career had flamed out without much to prove. He was the farthest thing from a star; he wasn't even a contributor on his own team, because Jeremy Lin was the player who got stopped by team security because they didn't believe he was a player. Jeremy Lin was a nobody.

After Knicks guard Iman Shumpert got into early foul trouble, Coach Mike D'Antoni subbed in Lin with 3:35 left to go in the first quarter. Lin got into the game, handled the ball and played solid basketball, but that wasn't it. When everyone thought this would just be a normal game, Lin started to heat up, a nice assist on one end, a stop on the other, and as the game continued one thing became clear: Jeremey Lin was **cooking.**

LAY LOB HESI JUMPER.

He was doing everything.

With 2 minutes left in the 4th quarter, Lin crossed over, snatched it back, crossed again, shaking Deron Williams. With the pressure mounting, he didn't rush, didn't fluster, he called for a screen at the top of the key, and with one dribble, Lin split the defense and dropped it in with grace for the And-One. The broadcasters could not believe what they were seeing; he was "penetrating, manipulating, devastating the Nets." Lin ended the game with a stat sheet he had never seen before, collecting 25 points, 5 rebounds, and 7 assists, all career highs for him at the time. Just like that, he was back in the game. ▶

A few games later, Jeremy Lin faced his toughest opponent yet, Kobe Bryant and the Los Angeles Lakers at the Garden. Before the game, the media asked Bryant about his thoughts about playing the Knick's new hero, however, he brushed it off, saying. "I don't even know who that guy is." Soon enough, Kobe would find out just who Jeremy Lin was. That night, Lin erupted for 38 points and 7 assists, shredding the Lakers' defense and igniting a Garden crowd that roared with every bucket. The entire game, Lin spun past defenses, executed textbook pick and rolls, and slashed to the rim, stealing the win away from Kobe's Lakers.

Linsanity brought Lin to international fame, appearing on the covers of Sports Illustrated and being named to the Time 100 as one of the most influential people in the world, winning ESPY Award for Breakthrough Athlete of the Year.

During Linsanity, Lin was still sleeping on his teammate, Landry Field's couch, worried about being cut any day on a non-guaranteed contract. Before his ascension, Lin was constantly worried about being waived any day, not sure that New York was his home. However, during that month, New York found a hero and Jeremy Lin found a home.

3

The Life Behind the Miracle

Jeremey Lin's pathway to excellence was anything but smooth, facing adversity after adversity. He grew up in Palo Alto, the son of Taiwanese immigrants, excelling academically and athletically. After no schools came knocking at his door, Lin attended Harvard University and began his path to dominance. Lin became a three-time all-conference player in the Ivy League; despite this success, Lin was still dismissed by NBA scouts, going undrafted in the 2010 draft. He signed with his hometown team the Golden State Warriors in 2010, receiving sparing minutes in his rookie season and frequent call assignments to the NBA Development League (now called G League). In 2011, Lin was waived by both the Warriors and the Houston Rockets before joining the Knicks in early 2011-2012. During this period, Lin had to live with his older brother, crashing on his couch and calling taxis to practice. In New York, the rest became history…

4

Beyond the Hardwood

Jeremy Lin's month wasn't just an exceptional basketball streak, it was a cultural movement that reached out to millions of Asian Americans across the country, showing them that someone who looked like them could be up there with the pros. At a time when Asian faces were scarce in global sports, when stereotypes quietly shaped expectations and ceilings, Lin shattered the barrier in the most unexpected way possible, by playing ball. Across the US, kids wore his jersey to school, families gathered to watch him, and communities cheered for him all around the country. For many, it was the first time they felt fully seen.

Lin utilized his platform to become a leading voice for Asian American advocacy, confronting discrimination in interviews, speeches, and social media posts. He spoke honestly about the racism he faced, about the times where he was called 'c---k' in college by hecklers, about the times when the media had played into racist jokes, and all the adversity being Asian brought him. Lin founded the Jeremy Lin Foundation to empower underprivileged athletes and championed mental health awareness, inspiring a movement of change beyond the court.

5

What's Next?

The legend of Linsanity isn't just about basketball; it's about overcoming all the odds and reaching new heights. Linsanity isn't just a title, it's a movement; a movement that inspired, inspires, and will inspire forever.

The Courage To Hope:

A Practical Guide For Troubled Times

Written by Michelle Jiang
Michelle is a freshman staff writer from Guangzhou, CN.

Designed by Cheer Yu

Life is notoriously difficult. It's awful. It's stressful. It makes you anxious. It is especially horrible when disaster strikes, when you feel the crushing weight of expectations on your shoulders, when you try to suppress the fears lurking in the back of your mind, only for them to catch you off guard when you try to get a moment of rest.

Through all of this, there is a dilemma. If you show people you're freaked out, you'll get overwhelmed. If you don't show it, it'll eat you up from the inside. So, how do you deal with it?

The answer, as simple as it is, is hope. While hope may seem unrealistic and naïve or even useless at times, it holds more importance than most people realize. Hope is the flame that preserves us through hardships. No matter how challenging things are, no matter how hard it is to find it, hope if always there. Yet, the biggest challenge isn't finding hope, but rather keeping it despite everything that happens. So, how do we preserve hope in the midst of challenges?

HOPE

***

First of all, what is hope? Hope is not simply naïve optimism or blind confidence. It's the courage to believe that things will be fine despite all the setbacks you encounter. It's also not just an emotion—it's a skill cultivated more through strategic techniques than pure belief and sheer willpower.

DOUBT

***

Doubt is the voice inside you that tells you that you can't do it. It's the voice that identifies and magnifies all of your fears and insecurities, and it's the voice lurking in the back of your mind, telling you what a failure you are right now and how much more of a failure you will be.

The important thing of facing it down isn't saying that you're not afraid but rather acknowledging it. Acknowledge to yourself how terrified or doubtful you feel about yourself. Admit that you are stressed and anxious, because hope isn't the absence of doubt or fear; it's the courage to fight despite their presence. Instead of telling yourself, "I can't do this", think, "This is difficult but I will try my best" or, "I'm not a perfect person, but that doesn't make me a failure." The key is to acknowledge your insecurities and fears without letting them define you or cloud your judgement. Although this seems silly, it's actually very useful, and as long as you make an effort to believe in yourself, it's really not that hard.

PROSPECT

***

We often have a rigid idea of the future, so when life doesn't go as planned, it's easy to freak out, and we might even lose hope if things are persistently bad. One way to keep hope is to remember that there are many forces beyond your control that shape your life and that it's not your fault things don't turn out the way you want them to. While this may seem ineffective, it isn't, because by making peace with this fact, you are saving yourself on wasting hours on self-blame when you could've used that time more productively. It's also helpful to remember that if you are hopeful, you tend to see the better side of things, and when you do, you are usually able to make the best of your situation so that things aren't really as bad as you think they are most times.

EXPECTATIONS

***

Maybe the most crushing thing of all (at least in high school) is expectations. We are constantly aware of the invisible weights placed on our shoulders, most of which take the form of our grades, extracurriculars, and college applications. In reality, the worry we feel about our expectations is less of what's expected but more of the fear that we won't be able to fulfill them. A large part of this is that some part of us expects a smooth and easy journey but get a rocky and difficult path instead. The dissonance between imagination and reality can be jarring at times and is a breeding ground for doubt and insecurity.

***Illustration from* Pinterest**

Something that is helpful is practicing holding the mindset of two truths at the same time. For an example, when you are faced with a daunting task, think, "This is very difficult, but I am capable of learning it" instead of saying "I'm cooked!" When the actual outcome fails your expectations, think, "This outcome is not the one I was hoping for, but it has also opened up a door for me that hadn't been there before." Even if things seem bad, if you don't lose hope, you actually wind up better than you are without hope. It's also easier to meet your expectations if you do have hope because hope often acts as a motivator for you to try your best, and with enough effort, you can end up succeeding even when you thought you didn't have a chance.

Even though keeping hope through prospects and expectations sounds similar, it's different. Prospects are more of the probabilities that you see, while expectations are internal beliefs that you hold. In other words, you face prospects, while you hold expectations. The difference between them is crucial because it helps us understand the different types of hope that you muster when something goes wrong. When your prospects don't go as you planned, you feel frustrated, and the hope that you usually need is the type that says, "It's all right, it's not your fault that things happen." However, when something doesn't meet your expectations, it hits harder in the way that it causes you to subconsciously question your self-worth. Here, the hope you try to keep is the type that says, "I am not a failure" or "It's fine, it's not really so bad". While prospects are external, expectations are more internal.

Closing

In short, hope isn't just about feeling—it's about practice, strategy, and, ultimately, belief. By maintaining hope throughout life, you are choosing to move forward with resilience, clarity, and the quiet confidence that even on the hardest days, you are stronger than you think.

Works Cited

Bachtell, Justin J. "Finding Hope amid Despair." The Odyssey Online, 18 July 2016, www.theodysseyonline.com/finding-hope-amid-despair?ref=pn. Accessed 19 Dec. 2025.

The Fish that Grew Wings

Written by Guoshwan Nian
Guoshwan is a junior staff writer from San Francisco, CA, US.

Designed by Andrea Yang

The fisher told me that, for the longest time,
No fish
made it up the Dragon's Maw.
That gushing waterfall
spewing fiery water,
crashing down any fish trying to swim upstream.

Legend did speak, though,
Of the flying fish.
They once soared through the skies
With the most beautiful of wings.
They fly through the Dragon's Maw,
And glide
with such
delicate
grace.
(At this, the fisherman's eyes grew misty)

Legend has perished,
Myths were forgotten.
Thousands of years have passed,
the flying fish disappeared,
and their beautiful wings with them.
Now the schools are plain.
Their scales dull.
Their eyes dead.
Their gills flapping uselessly.
And the fishermen's catches were all the same.

That is until last night.
The fisherman told me this with a glimmer in his eye
and a smile of a gold tooth.
Last night, he and his friend were by the Dragon's Maw
fishing. (For what, I wondered?)
Until
Amongst the school
Amongst the swarm,
Something marvelous befell their eyes.

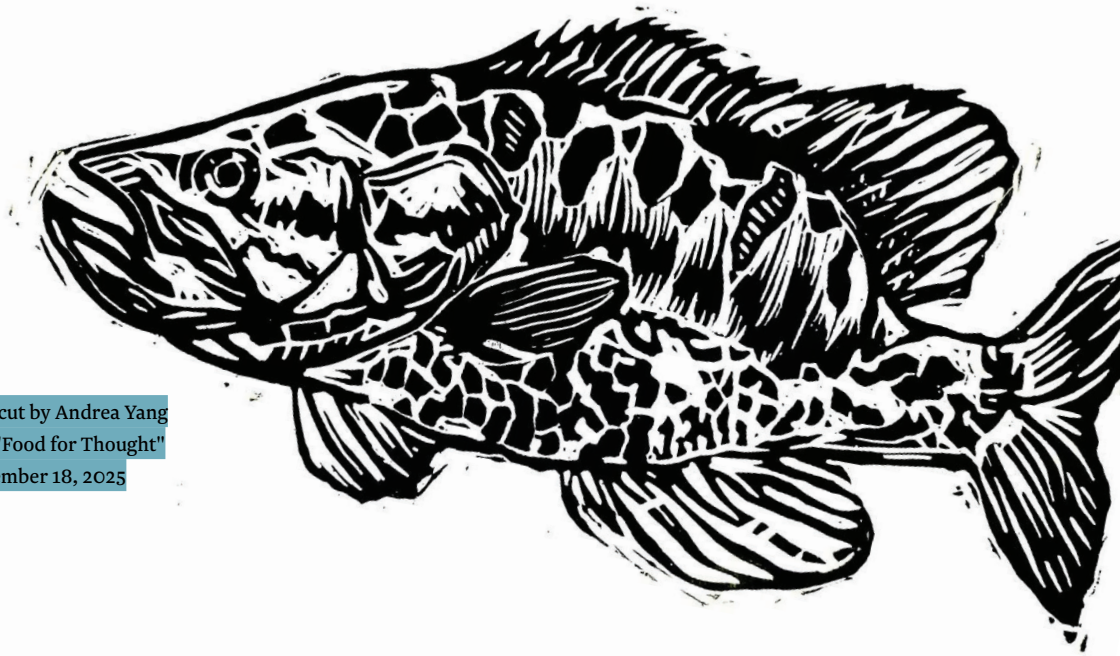
Iridescence.
Shimmering through the air.
Rainbows slicing through the water droplets.
Glossy wings, raised to the sky.
Underneath the burning sun,
the first flying fish in a thousand years.

What unearthly Daedalus has crafted those wings?
What leviathan from the depths has resurfaced?
What godly touch, what monstrous gift,
What an incredible fish just leapt past the maw!

The fishermen did not think that.
They and their harpoons were simple-minded creatures.
The fish flew in midair, making it an easier target.
It was practically asking for it, said the fisherman, and his golden tooth flashed.
Swish went their harpoons.
Splat went flesh.
And down went the fish.

While the fish flailed helplessly on the ground,
The fisherman dug in.
Peeling its scales,
Searing its flesh,
Ripping its meat,
Licking its bones.
The fisherman said it was delicious meat,
The most delicious meat that he and his mates have ever tasted.
Though, of course, they could not eat the wings.

I let the fisherman be, and the glimmer in his eyes behind me,
And I wondered how
How is it that the fishermen did not realize
Why the flying fish of thousands of years past had all disappeared.



Linocut by Andrea Yang
1/5 "Food for Thought"
December 18, 2025

THE EIGHTH RANK

Written by Xiaoxiao Xue
Xiaoxiao is a sophomore staff writer from Hong Kong SAR.

Designed by Andrea Yang

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players"

-- *As You Like It*, Act 2 Scene 7

Oftentimes, life resembles more a game of chess than a stage, where every piece is driven forward by that unseen yet incessant force.

I was only seventeen years of age, armed with a wooden pike and winter in my lungs, when I first stepped onto the frozen earth of Towton. The snow was like a cold altar cloth laid over the ground and the breath of thousands rose in pale banners, and if you ask me now what I believed then I would say I believed in squares, square on square of duty, because a pawn is taught to move forward and not to look left or right or back when the arrows lift like a black incense against the sky. We stood in ranks, the white rose stitched in thread that burned against the blue, and far off I watched the dark host gather around the vacancy that was Henry of Lancaster, poor king of inward storms, while the true tempest of his house wore the red rose and the iron will of that lioness, Margaret of Anjou. And then we went down the board, step by step, the snow sticking to our greaves, the snow falling gently.

As the minstrels would later sing, Towton lifted Edward of York onto the throne, but I only remember how soldiers froze to death standing. After the battle, we gathered the fallen by ranks: they were stiff, faceless, anonymous, and unidentifiable save for their livery. Edward IV was crowned and the kingdom sent us to walls and marches — to Ludlow, where people's eyes were as cold as its stones, where my hands forgot their tremor and learned the winter work of barracks: oil, whetstone, drill, prayer, day after day after day. Rumor traveled through the corridors like a sly rogue, whispering that Warwick — our iron lord, the one they called Kingmaker — had set himself against his own king. In the chapels I heard the old men of God weigh justice as butchers would a muscle of lamb, and all the while, out across the Narrow Sea, Margaret gathered ships and shadows and her exiled son, and I knew, as a pawn is taught to know, that the opening is a promise the midgame will betray.

Fog at Barnet rolled in close to the ground as if the heavens leaned in out of interest; we killed by misprision, friend to friend and oath to oath, banners hidden from the eyes that served them, and when Warwick fell the earth seemed to miss a step. I saw his horse thrash once, saw him fall to the dust beneath, and had the childish thought that the board would not know how to be a board without such an important piece, and then we were running, and Barnet was done, and Tewkesbury not long after, and Margaret's cause drained from England like color from a banner left too long in rain, and still I was stepping forward in the only way a pawn is taught to do, promoted not by dreams of glory but by survival and the inherent intimacy a man takes on with his own breath.

There were evenings when I thought we had won and peace had a taste — the decent, homely taste of bread and mead and mutton and sleep — and there were mornings when I knew peace is only the infinitesimal distance between bells ringing for Mass and bells ringing for muster. We believed the King's second reign would hold, yet Fate sent men with hammers underneath: Edward died early, and Gloucester — Richard, all nerve and iron — moved as if the board had tilted toward him. The boy-king's shadow lengthened and then was gone, and Richard wore the crown, and many who had fought for York since Towton felt a draft across their necks and, shivering, turned to the last sliver of hope — Henry Tudor, the dormant dragon in his Welsh den.

Bosworth dawned with a red-gold light that was neither homely nor bloody, and the fields steamed feverishly. Richard's lines held the ridge firmly, and Tudor's men moved with the lucidity of players who have learned the board by candlelight and now see it under the rays of the sun. I carried a pike smoother than my own palm from polishing it with rags and old talisman-sayings, and I stood mid-file with men whose names I had borrowed for a day — John of Nottingham, Will the tinker's son — knowing we might forget them or exchange them back to the silence by noon. When Richard spurred forward in that hard straight thrust toward Henry's standard, I felt the whole field jump a line --, and I went with him because the rank pushed me and because courage is often momentum by another name, and we cut and cut again until the air turned viscous --, and then the ring closed, and I heard him cry after a fresh horse, and it was then that I understood that kings are only common men permitted to want aloud…

I cannot tell you precisely when the crown left his head and entered history, but only that the Red Dragon climbed a little higher in the sky and every piece on the board took a half-step back, for we had come to the moment the game pretends is its end; yet even as Henry Tudor stood very straight and very mortal, even as the lords recalculateding their family trees, I felt a small, particular thing: that I had reached the far side without knowing that the squares behind me had added up to a life.

The Eighth Rank.

They told me — cheering, clapping me on the back — that I might choose, as if life was a box with jewels laid out in equal worth: the cross, the tower, the helm, or the crown; the church persuaded me with honeyed rhetoric, the castles spoke through their stewards, the horsemen sang their old song of chivalry, and the court murmured of the wide moving power of the monarch.; I hesitated, which is unseemly in a pawn, for hesitation is how men die in battle. And yet, I could not help but see in each emblem a history of grief, as if every office held only a different kind of sorrow.

At last I chose the queen, not for glory but for memory, because I had seen a woman hold a kingdom together with her teeth and then lose it and still have teeth enough to speak, and because I wanted to move in all directions and lay a hand, however lightly, on all the edges of our suffering. I tell you the cheer that rose then was a sweet, wild thing, like the first harvest when a plague has passed, and I moved through the crowd with the strange lightness of a piece that has been lifted from its old rules and set down among the major powers, and though I was no royal, men looked at me as if I could change their weights on the scale

… and for a little while, I could.

Checkmate.

What followed was not what the legends had promised. Parchment was sent in from all over the kingdom, wax was heated then allowed to cool, accounts corrected themselves with a scratch of the quill; I learned how the kingdom is always slightly broken and the repair is ceaseless, like a chapel roof in a rainy country; I learned that the commonwealth is a board the rain warps every spring, and that to move like a queen is to move with care across a country of infinitesimal cracks, and all the while the new king grew into his shoes and the two roses entwined into a single emblem and the song about it made children brave in their sleep…

We said we had ended the hostility and begun a peace that would last, and in a way we had, but the heart remembers what the brain insists it has forgotten. There were nights I woke remembering the exact width of a rank by the measure of my two feet set heel to toe, and there were days when the look in a widow's eyes was a lance's stroke across my chest; I could, with a word, lift a tax or lower a sword; I could, with a silence, let a man live with his small theft so his children might have bread. Such is the power the board bestows upon the one that reaches the far side and does not choose to run.

Yet I must tell you the truth.

On a certain autumn evening, passing the chapel where Richard's name is prayed for, I felt time go glassy around me, as if the world had been holding its breath since Bosworth and only just now exhaled, and I saw that we had won and yet nothing stays; kings and queens are replaced by better or by worse, bishops by bishops more political or more pious, knights by the sons of knights who ride with prettier horses, rooks by rooks that weather more and more in the wind, and the pawns by other pawns just tall enough to carry the first piles of firewood; I saw the lid of the great wooden box lifted by invisible hands and felt in my bones that we would all go back into it, and the pieces would lie together without argument, and then on some rainy morning some child would cry out for a game and history would set its pieces on parchment again and we would begin, courteous as ever, to slaughter one another.

I do not despise this. If I could tell the boys at Towton anything (and God knows I have assembled them often enough in my sleep and counted them off by files), it would be that the Eighth Rank is not a ladder out of the bound of the world, only a bell you must carry around your neck better; that checkmate is not the last word, it is only the burden that one must bear and the silence in between eras strong enough to suffocate…

Now I am older than the legends and I carry in me the old game's weather: Towton's snow on my lashes, Barnet's fog in my lungs, Bosworth's amber in my eyes; when I think of Margaret now, I do not see a fury but a mother with her back to the sea; when I think of Richard, I do not see a monster but a man who refused to abdicate his own will until the last hoofprint filled with water; when I think of Henry, I see a patient artist fitting two roses onto one canvas and knowing it will hold at least for a time being; and when I think of myself, I try not to think at all, only to stand where I am placed.

There was a day, not long after the marriage that made a new emblem for children to stitch, when a messenger came with news I can no longer remember, and I thanked him and turned to the window and saw the city move. Vaguely I heard the sound the board makes when a game is concluded and the pieces are guided into the mildew-filled darkness; I knew then that I would go back into the box like the rest, and that someday a hand would lift me again and set me among strangers who would become my brethren, and that we would begin.

And because of this, I was not sad; I carried the lightness with me down the corridor and into the long evening, and if my step had music in it no one remarked it, for we are all music briefly, and then silence, and beyond the city the river shone, and a heron touched its surface while skimming past, leaving only circles that widened until they touched both banks and were gone.

鲤跃龙门

Written by Stephanie Suurland
邓芬妮 著

Stephanie is a freshman staff writer from Rotterdam, NL.

Designed by Ryan He

人们通常认为通往成功的道路只有一条，而鲤鱼跃过龙门的方式也只有一种。

传说，在黄河上游，有一道名为“龙门”的险要关口。这里水流湍急，两侧是陡峭的山崖，形势非常险峻。每年春季，会有成千上万条鲤鱼从各条河流逆流而上，汇聚于此，试图跃过这道龙门。

它们必须从瀑布底部，迎着雷霆万钧之力，奋力向上跳跃。水流像重锤一样将它们砸下，岩石像利刃一样刮擦着它们的鳞片。有无数鲤鱼跳起，又有无数鲤鱼失败。它们有的撞在岩石上，头破血流；有的被水流拍晕，沉入水底；有的筋疲力尽，最终放弃。周围的其它水族常常会嘲笑它们：“别白费力气了！龙只是传说，你们鲤鱼就是鲤鱼，怎么可能变成龙呢？安分守己地过日子吧！”

然而，总有一些信念极其坚定的鲤鱼，它们不顾嘲笑，无视失败，一次又一次地向上跳跃。它们的心中燃烧着化龙的梦想，这梦想给了它们无穷的勇气和力量。奋力跃过龙门，就会有天火烧掉它的尾巴，它就会蜕变成一条翱翔九天的“龙“；从此它不再是凡间水中的一条鲤鱼，而是行云布雨、守护一方的”龙“。

而那些没有跃过的鲤鱼，则仍然是普通的鱼，继续在江河中生活。

这便是鲤鱼跃龙门的故事，一个关于奋斗、机遇和蜕变的寓言故事。

人们常说鲤鱼跃过龙门成龙才算“成功”，可“成功”的定义却从未如此局限过。在古代社会，“龙门”或“成功”是具体、单一且公认的。它几乎等同于科举及第，是寒门学子改变个人与 ▶

家族命运的唯一通道。在现代社会，“龙门”变得更加多元、平行且个性化。它可以是高考名校、创业上市、也成为网红、技术突破，更可以是追求艺术、守护家庭、等等。就如“深处种菱浅种稻，不深不浅种荷花”。人生的水域如此广阔，何处不能扎根，何处不能繁花？

而那奋力一跃却未能抵达的鲤鱼便不算成功了吗，难道那逆流而上的勇气、遍体鳞伤的坚持，就不算一种成功吗？我们更不该被那一道单一的一道“龙门”，所定义、所束缚。“成功”可以是一鸣惊人的跳跃，可以是细水长流的坚守；可以是超越他人的卓越，但更应是超越昨天的自己以及成为不一样的自己。

我们不妨思考在什么样的前提条件下鲤鱼才会成龙。化龙的前提是必须先烧掉自己的尾巴；在成长之前，必须先完成蜕变。鲤鱼是忍受着剧痛，放弃了它所习惯的鲤鱼形态，才完成了龙的蜕变。它所跨过的“龙门”也更是一个现实中的目标，似乎难以达到却永远有一线生机。重要的不是跃过，而是在激流中认清“我是谁”，我该成为什么样的“谁”。

真正的超越，不是跳得更高，而是迎接更好更崭新的自己。

你的“龙门”，是否只是一道需要征服的障碍？它能否也是一面让你认识自我的镜子？你的“一跃”，是孤军奋战，还是与你所爱的事物、你所珍视的人共同完成？你所追求的“蜕变”，终点是更强大的自己，还是更完整、更自由的自己？

鲤鱼跃龙门的传说不是在歌颂少数幸运儿的成功，而是在启示每一个在人生激流中奋力向前的人。

小鲤鱼跃龙门

Written by Emma Li
李奕澄 著

Emma is a sophomore staff writer from Shanghai, CN.

Designed by Ryan He

每逢暮春，骤雨忽至，夏雷滚滚而起时，聚集在黄河下游的鲤鱼便蠢蠢欲动地游往龙门了。鱼群中，有各式各样的、不同性格的鱼。有特别自信、心态绝佳的鱼，有我行我素、不受他鱼影响的鱼，也有较为低沉、行事低调的鱼。

鱼们整装待发，准备出行时，鱼群里突然传出则恐怖的消息。“我们之间混进了鲫鱼！”一条鱼慌张地大喊，“岸边的人指着水里，说了一句‘鲫鱼’！”

众鱼听到这则消息，都有些神色不安。有条思维敏捷的鱼，很快地反驳道：“荒唐！鲤鱼池里，怎会混进鲫鱼？”发布消息的鱼脸上随即浮现出恐怖的神色，说道：“这不重要！重要的是，谁是鲫鱼，谁即使跃过了龙门，也没法化龙！”

这下大家都慌了。都是从小认识的伙伴，谁是那条可悲的鲫鱼？谁是那条从出生起，就注定无法化龙的鲫鱼？谁是那条即便天赋再好，游得再快，跳得再高，也没法修成正果的可怜的鲫鱼？可怜它！从来都不知晓自己的命运，傻乎乎地追逐一个遥不可及的梦想！

“我就说我的鳞片从小就长得不一样！”有条胆小的鱼，“哇”地一声哭出声来。

一条勇敢的鱼游到前面，对众鱼发言道：“各位！别怕，别怕。鲫鱼毕竟是少数，大多数的我们，都是鲤鱼！而当下，也没有很好的办法能使各位分辨出品种，跃龙门的时间迫在眉睫。我们不妨先游，先跃跃看！等跃了龙门，谁是鲫鱼，谁是鲤鱼，就都见分晓了！”

众鱼思索片刻，一致同意了它的说法，便整齐地朝着龙门进发了。

游至龙门的过程十分漫长。从位于黄河下游的鲤鱼栖息地开始，游到位于黄河上游的龙门，大致需要四年的时间。中途不乏半途加入，又很快跟上脚步的；也有路过美景，驻足停留，找到鱼生目标的；还有游至一半，游进其他支流的。不过不必为它们担心，它们只是找到了自己的龙门。

过了漫漫四年，抵达龙门的鱼群仍然庞大。经过旅程的洗礼，似乎谁是鲫鱼，谁是鲤鱼，不再重要了。也许根本就没有鲫鱼，那则消息只是旅途开始前一道小小的考验罢了。也许龙门前，谁鳞片银白，谁鳞片金红，都没有差别了。

众鱼终于在众人的围观欢呼下，从下游的江水往挺拔的龙门奋身一跃。

那一刻，谁升天？谁落水？敬每一次竭尽全力的跳跃！跃龙门快乐！

鱼尾摆起的万千水珠在夏季初升的艳阳下熠熠生辉，好似一路艰辛中挥去的汗水与眼泪，最后也都高高地落下。结果的重要性被抛之脑后；每次奋不顾身的一跃，似乎都是对过去四年最好的盛大告别。

黄河奔腾不息的咆哮声仍在持续。水花的声音很大，岸边的人们却分辨不出这声音是鲤鱼落水，还是黄河层层的激流了。太阳闪烁了一下，浓密的云层似乎也有了一丝搅动过的痕迹。水中掀起的短暂涟漪，终于也是淡去了 。

DIFFERENT EYES ON THE SAME COURT

Written by Alfie Flower
Alfie is a sophomore staff writer from Bristol, UK.

Designed by Cheer Yu and Annie Zhu

Pre-Game: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Basketball is a game of perspectives. On the court, you have 10 different perspectives, where each player sees a different game unfold in front of them. On the sidelines, more players, officials and coaches observe the game with their own perspectives. In a parallel manner, school and life play differently for everyone. Whilst the students see one part of the experience, the teacher, coaches, and staff tend to see another.

Students may see the coach as the person calling plays and running drills, but behind that, Coach Jayme Lawman tells a story. One shaped by responsibility, games and history in SHSID, he opens a window into an unseen side of the game and school.

1st Quarter - Tip-off: WHEN DREAMS MEET ACTIONS

At tip-off, every player is filled with the same hope, energy, and passion. The start of a game was always shrouded in a cloud of mystery: what would happen next, what would be the tactics that led the team to victory? These were the same ideas that ran through my mind when I first arrived in China more than a decade ago. During high school, I often visited my relatives in Florida and watched high school basketball games. The atmosphere was breathtaking. Every game, no matter how big or small, had drums, cheerleaders, music, and everything made me so jealous that I couldn't grow up in such an environment back in the ▶

UK. Thus, that became my goal as a basketball coach: to grow a basketball culture from the ground up.
Fresh out of college, when I first arrived in SHSID, the sports culture was virtually non-existent. The basketball team functioned more like a club; they played no games and met up once a week for practice. Even though the team did not play games, the players were hungry for basketball. Gradually, I started implementing specific moments I admired in US basketball culture and began building a system and a platform for the players.
They were always appreciative and gave them their all in practices and games because they saw that we were building something, even if it was the minute additions.
In this process of piecing together the foundational building blocks of the SHSID Stallions, I made relationships that stuck with me throughout the years. I remain in close contact with many of my students (now turned alumni) from the Stallions team in my first year. I see many players grow steadily and exponentially, and learning skills that we've honed. A handful of the players would start to do basketball or sports-related internships and return to say talk about how they were appreciative of discipline, punctuality, and endurance that Stallions taught them and learned to master and manifest in their current jobs. Arguably, that is the most important thing: that we learn and grow to become not only better athletes, but more importantly, students who remain curious to learning and master new skills.

2nd Quarter - Full-Court Pass:
RISING THROUGH AN UNDERDOG STORY

Our school has always been the dark horse in different leagues we played in during the past. Yet, one way or another, we always find a method to prevail. Every generation, they expect a generational fall-off, where they expect some talented seniors' graduation to lead to the Stallions' decline. They asked us what we would do when so-and-so left. What will you do next year?

To that, we always had an answer: Watch and see. In the Jr. NBA, we returned to the finals again and again and again. That was never down to luck, but instead we've recognised that as our identity. It doesn't matter if you are the smartest in the room, the strongest in the room or the most skilful in the room. What truly matters is being the hardest worker in the room. I always say to my players that even if LeBron James walked into the gym right now, there is no excuse for not being the hardest-working person in the room, because the battle is always between you and yourself. Thus, this mentality has become who this team, who this school represents.
Although the scoreboard tells the facts about the final score, it doesn't tell you what happened behind the scenes. Recalling the Asia Pacific Cup in Singapore, we played against a team that was the eventual semi-finalists. We knew how good they were, but we still gave our best. We were down by around 10 with a couple of minutes to go, but we kept pushing. We worked as a team, and although the other team didn't think much of us, we kept pushing. Even though we did lose in the end, it felt like a scoreboard because we won the mentality game. Sometimes we are too fixated on the scoreboard, the numbers, to truly realise it is beyond just that.

3rd Quarter: HALFTIME ADJUSTMENTS - LEARNING TO REFLECT AND GROW

Coaching generation after generation has taught me that pressure can shape student-athletes. Some fight fire with fire, whilst others prefer calmness and stability; after all, I never know the full picture of what happens outside of the court. This brings me back to a quote by Al Davis, an American football executive and coach, who said, "Don't treat people how you want to be treated, treat them how they want to be treated." With my students, I've learned to grow and reflect alongside them. I never believed that the learning experience should be one-way, from teacher to student, but instead a mutual understanding and simultaneous development. I learn from my students all the time, whether it's their passion for playing basketball and their ongoing pursuit of improvement or their efforts to become the best versions of themselves. Looking back, there have been students faced with adversities that still amaze me today in how they overcame them.

A few years ago, we had a player who tore his ACL, but he eventually returned through rehab, only to tear his second ACL. To understand the seriousness of this injury, one ACL was already career-ending; two? Almost impossible to return to playing any sport. When all the odds were against him, it did not bother him. He had surgery, fought in rehab, and worked tirelessly to play that season, his final year. He rehabbed all year until the Jr. NBA championship final, where he was on the roster. Many doubted him; his performance was shrouded in doubt, and they questioned whether he could keep up as a player who had been sidelined the entire season. When he was the first to score in the game, sinking a 3-pointer, he made a statement. It's all just noise.

While the team was busy focusing on practices and preparing for matches, he was always rehabbing on the sideline, where re-joining the team became his motivation. He researched his own techniques, learned tricks and methods that helped him return to the court. His story is incredible, but his self-motivation, facing adversity and taking initiative to move past the heartbreaking injury and finish his basketball journey in high school with a buzzer-beater in the Jr. NBA finals? Spectacular. I think that self-motivation is something I still strive for, but that is the power of maintaining an open mind to learn and reflect from everything and everyone around me. As a lifelong learner, I've learnt from both good and not-so-good players, because as soon as you stop learning, you start to regress in whatever you do.

4th Quarter: CRUNCH TIME - HEART OVER EVERYTHING IN THE ONGOING CHAPTER

The fourth quarter is when the teams show their true identities. Everyone learns differently, but we are always learning. Whether we learn in a classroom, in a conversation, on a stage or in the classroom, we are always learning. Life will never be easy, but I've learned to use my team not only to foster our school's culture but, more importantly, to foster a learning experience where I teach them both hard and soft skills. I taught them hard skills, they learn a bit of officiating, a bit of coaching and of course, the main event, basketball. Simultaneously, I also teach them some soft skills, whether that is leadership, grit, communication, respect or learning to pick themselves up in moments when things are not going their way.

In basketball and in life: You cannot control opponents, only your response. You cannot control your obstacles, only your effort. You cannot control the whole timeline, only your mentality. If I had to choose one scene to define the Stallions, it would be a simple one: A David vs. Goliath-like battle. Facing a stronger opponent, we sprint, hustle and battle for every possession, every loose ball, and every dribble in the final minutes. We play as the shot clock slowly winds down, still believing, still pushing, still fighting. That's because effort is the one thing that no scoreboard could ever measure, and no opponent could ever take away.

TIME BEYOND THE GATE

RE-DEFINING THE MEANING OF BEING HUMAN

Written by Rainn Ji
Rainn is a junior staff writer from Dallas, TX, US.

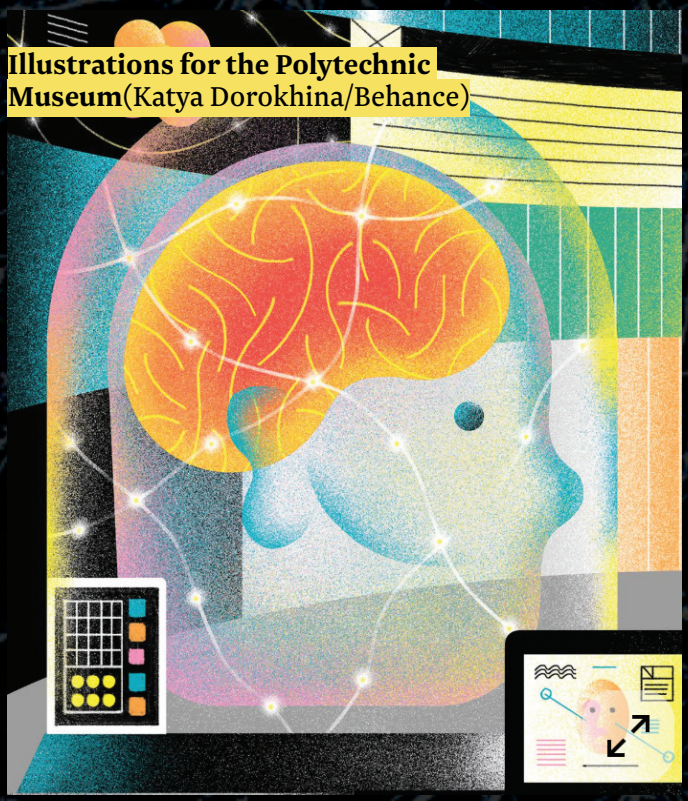
Designed by Cheer Yu

1. Introduction to a New Kind of Leap

Since humans have been telling stories, we've imagined moments where an ordinary being rises beyond its natural limits. The Chinese myth of the carp jumping over the Dragon gate is symbolic of just that: ambition, perseverance, and the will to attempt the impossible.

Today, however, these dramatic jumps aren't just being made in myths. They are coming out of labs of neuroscientists, working on devices that will allow the human brain to interface directly with machines. What seemed like something in the distant future, such as being able to operate gadgets just by thinking, recovering skills that you've long lost, and even gaining a heightened intelligence level, is now a reality and it is growing at a rapid pace.

This is known as neurotechnology, and it is one of the boldest attempts of mankind to outsmart nature. We are not attempting to leap over the physical gate, but the gate of understanding: how far can the human mind go, and at what point does technology become a part of who we are?



Illustrations for the Polytechnic Museum(Katya Dorokhina/Behance)

Illustration from Pinterest

2. The Science Behind the Leap

In essence, neurotechnology is simply a devices that connects what is going on in your brain to external devices. The large ones are brain-computer interfaces (BCI), which are devices that measure electrical impulses in the brain, process them via fancy algorithms, and convert the impulses into instructions that can operate a machine or a computer.

The ideology and functioning of the BCI may make it sound like it came out of a sci-fi movie, yet the concept is quite intuitive in actuality. Consider the movement of your hand: the neurons that control the movement of your hand send a signal to the hand in a very specific way. These signals are then picked up by the BCI sensors, where the sensors are either implanted or mounted on the scalp, and machine-learning models are trained to read the signals. The final product of this intricate mechanism is the direct connection between your brain and the outside world, without travelling through your muscles at all.

Even in the technology's early development, modern BCIs have already demonstrated some pretty cool stuff:

- Prosthetics that are operated by thoughts enable amputees to move robotic arms as accurately as real ones.
- The typing systems based on brainwaves have enabled paralyzed patients to fully type sentences at conversational speeds.
- Neural implants are capable of assisting people to move again by creating stimuli to the spinal circuits.
- It is possible to visualize neural activity in real time with research tools and this can assist scientists to observe how the brain learns, remembers, and changes.

Companies such as Neuralink, and research laboratories at institutions such as Stanford and MIT are pioneering and advancing the field, reducing the size of implants, making them more precise, and enhancing the AI to read the thoughts.

All this technology was more or less a science fiction fantasy just a decade ago. Today it is one of the most thrilling frontiers in science in something that could completely alter medical care, human capability, and even the perception of our own minds.

Illustration by Xinmei Liu (Vox)

3. Leaping Over Boundaries

The most inspiring application of neurotechnology is that this has the ability to restore what has been lost due to illness or injury. In individuals who have paralysis, injured spinal cords or neurodegenerative diseases, BCIs provide a fresh road towards claiming independence; something that the normal medicine is not always capable of providing.

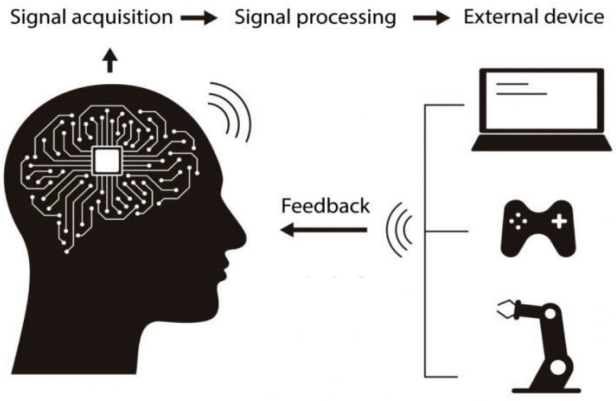
In recent clinical experiments, individuals, who previously were unable to move their limbs in a long time, could once again reach, grasp, and raise objects simply by thinking, with robotic prosthetics controlled by their brains. Patients who had implanted the spinal stimulators could stand or even walk without the use of a support after prolonged immobility. There were even cases where patients could type a message to a loved one using the brain waves for the first time in decades.

This curative capability truly alters our thinking in relation to disability. Neurotech proposes that in the future, the

intentions of the brain can be expressed once again, despite the body being unable to do so on its own, rather than losing functionality permanently.

But beyond healing, researchers are also toying with enhancement. Will neural implants in the future allow healthy individuals to learn more quickly, remember faster, or concentrate better? These concepts are controversial yet scientifically plausible as the brain does react to electrical stimulation in a manner that can increase cognitive performance.

This brings in a difficult discussion: At what point do we consider the limit between restoring abilities and improving them? In case we make things more effective or more equitable by using implants to improve memory or learning, what does effort, achievement, or even fairness mean then? These questions are pivotal in the face of neurotechnology as they challenge the very concept of the human potential. The jump that it provides is not only technical but questions the notion of what can be done, who we are, and what we are capable of accomplishing.

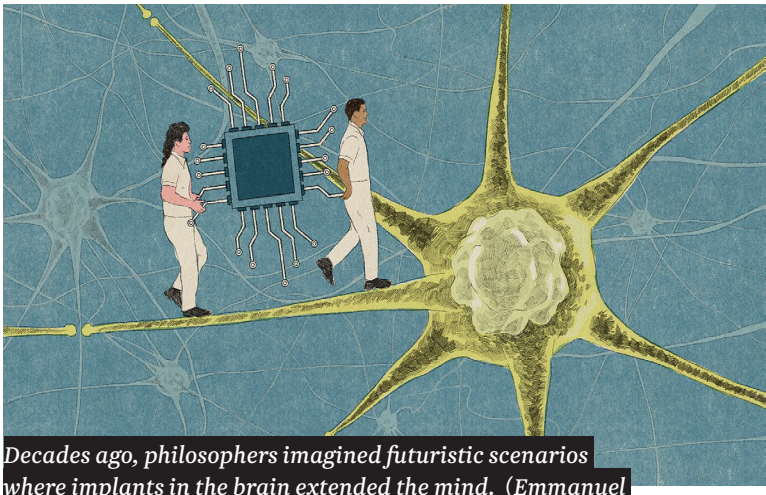


4. The Ethical Gates

Neurotechnology is a potent tool, but the range of ethical issues due to its strength is no less formidable. In contrast to other technologies being developed, BCIs communicate with the origin of our thoughts, memories, and intentions. This proximity raises questions that we must answer for the further development of such technology.

The most immediate problem is privacy. Suppose machines are capable of reading electric activity, inaccurately as it may be, what then becomes of what they read? Was it ever possible to store, analyze or transmit thoughts? And in this case, who is the owner of them—the patient, the company, or the institution that is conducting the research?

Another issue is equity. The high-tech neurotechnologies will certainly be costly, at least in the initial stages. Provided that only some groups are allowed to benefit in terms of improved thinking or renewed movement ability, the inequality between the privileged and the underprivileged can become vast. And in that sense neurotechnology can be used to empower, but also to separate.



Decades ago, philosophers imagined futuristic scenarios where implants in the brain extended the mind. (Emmanuel Lafont)

Lastly, there is the issue of identity. How are you sure what point the boundary between you and the technology is, when a device is affecting your memory or decision making? Most BCIs in the recent world are narrow and restrictive, yet, with potential upgrades, it is likely to become a gray area.

These issues are indicative of the notion that the neurotechnology gate, is not a scientific level, but an ethical one. To go across it properly, not only innovation is necessary, but empathy, transparency, and responsibility. We are not merely creating new tools but what kind of futures those tools will enable. ▶

It is the collective action on the way to the future, where the human potential is not determined by the limits of our biology, but rather the values we cherish and keep as we cross the gates in front of us.

5. The New Dragon's Gate

As we enter a period of time where the human brain is able to communicate directly with machines, we are also entering into the world of endless possibilities. Neurotechnology has become one of the most bold jumps in modern science; a jump that unites biology with engineering, curing with enhancement, and prospects with uncertainty.

Provided that we proceed with caution, take care of privacy, make accessibility equal, and basing innovation in compassion, neurotechnology can be the power that reinforces human dignity, instead of testing it. It has the potential to make individuals walk, talk, and interact once again. It will be able to broaden our knowledge about the brain to the benefit of the society as a whole. But neurotechnology is not merely a scientific breakthrough by redefining the concept of thinking, moving, and communicating. It is the collective action on the way to the future, where the human potential is not determined by the limits of our biology, but rather the values we cherish and keep as we cross the gates in front of us.

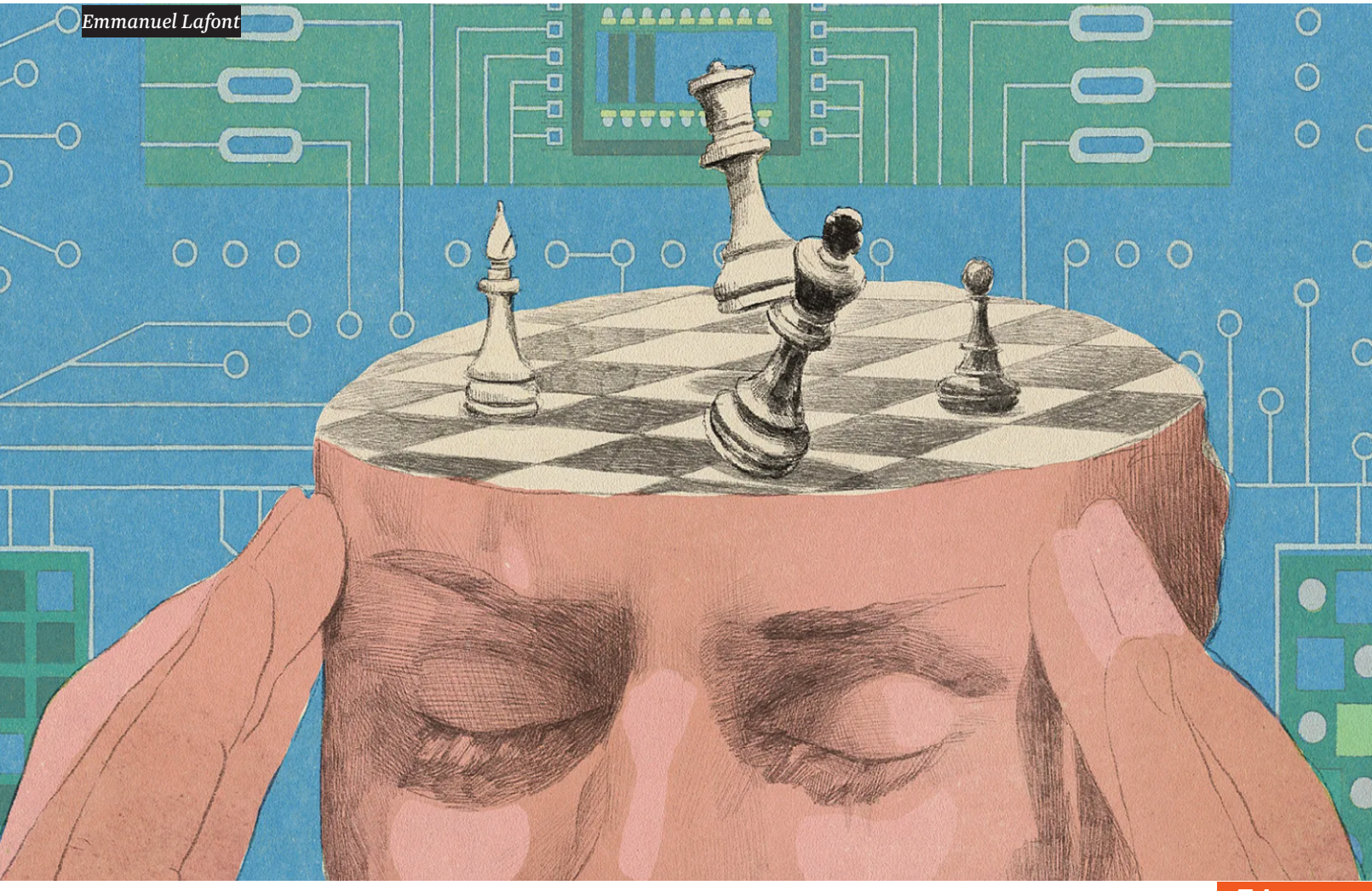
Works Cited

Mehta, Dvija. "Why Elon Musk's Neuralink Brain Implant Reframes Our Ideas of Self-Identity." Www.bbc.com, 17 Apr. 2024, www.bbc.com/future/article/20240416-why-elon-musks-neuralink-brain-implant-reframes-our-ideas-of-self-identity.

Samuel, Sigal. "Elon Musk Wants to Merge Humans with AI. How Many Brains Will Be Damaged along the Way?" Vox, 16 Oct. 2023, www.vox.com/future-perfect/23899981/elon-musk-ai-neuralink-brain-computer-interface.

Leffer, Lauren. "What It's like to Live with Elon Musk's Neuralink Brain Chip." Scientific American, 7 June 2024,

Photo Below: In March, a man called Noland Arbaugh demonstrated that he could play chess using only his mind. After living with paralysis for eight years, he had gained the ability to perform tasks previously inaccessible to him, thanks to a brain implant designed by Neuralink, a company founded by Elon Musk.



SHSID|TIMES
Autumn 2025

Shanghai High School International Division
400 Shang Zhong Road
Shanghai, China 200231
https://shsidtimes.org | https://www.shsid.org