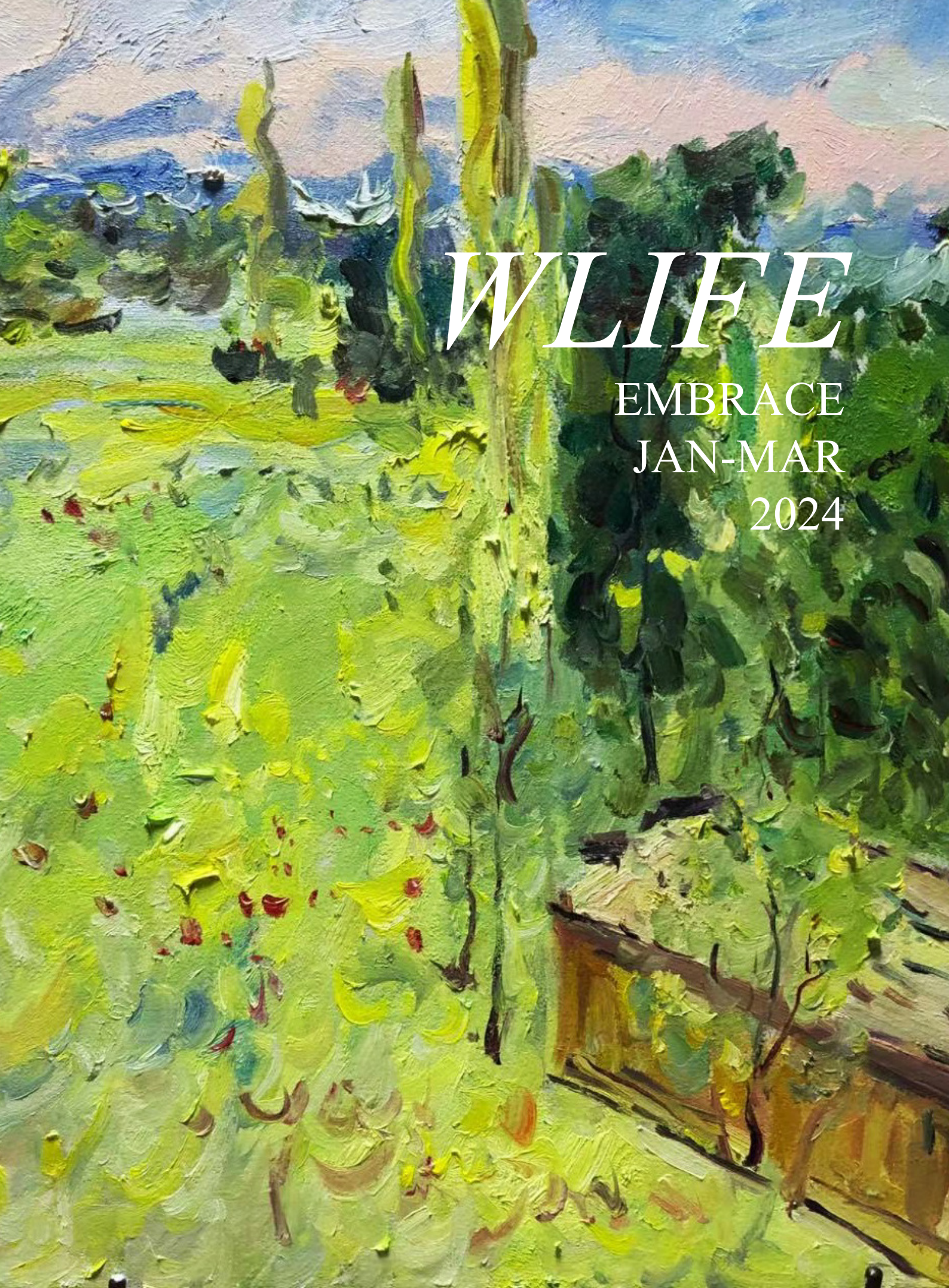


# WLIFE

EMBRACE
JAN-MAR
2024



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# *Dear Readers,*

"Gentlemen seek harmony but not uniformity." This famous saying from The Analects of Confucius demonstrated humanity's long respect of diversity. Indeed, every individual in this world is born unique. Each of us crafts our own narrative, painting our own lives with different colors, sounds, and emotions.

Yet, despite these differences , there still exists a drive among people to connect, to find a piece of common ground amidst various individua experiences. With that, I invite you to delve into the theme of this issue: "Embrace." Embrace is not merely an act; it's a profound force, a bridge across the chasms of time and space.

We've all faced challenges, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges prompt us to reconsider what true connection and resonance mean. In times like these, embracing each other becomes more essential than ever.

In this issue, we won't quantify the importance of embracing diversity with cold statistics. Instead, we'll explore stories and experiences that foster understanding, empathy, and unity. I hope you feel the warmth behind each story, the emotion in every photograph. Let us appreciate the world's diversity, for it is this variety that enriches our lives.

May this spring inspire you to embrace every moment.

Warmest regards,
WLIFE Editors

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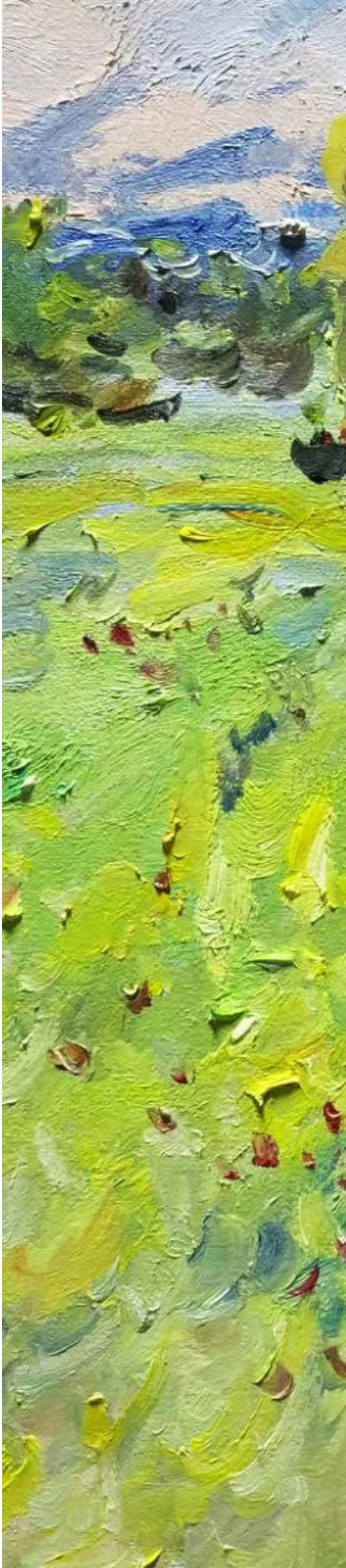
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*EMBRACE*

*JAN-MAR 2024*

WLSA SHANGHAI ACADEMY
JOURNAL



# *01 Literature*



# 无名

Jingle Liang G10 Eta

相传杜康酿酒，有人曾言道:“欲得美酿，须于酉时前，寻得三人血。”杜康得一书生血，得一将士血，得一疯人血。有血三滴，启封于酉时，是谓“酒”。

昔有越王投醪,适越国强盛,勾践只道伐吴之时已到,将美酒倾至河中,以箪饮河之水,振将士之气。客官可知这河水流往何方？嗐！却是流至了会稽山阴，，成了琅琊王氏宴饮之流。东晋王羲之邀其旧友谢安一行，同饮于兰亭。众人曲水流觞，作行酒令，故而羲之即兴作序赋诗云:“虽无丝竹管弦之盛，一觞一咏，亦足以畅叙幽情。”自此，此流便分作两股，殊不知这一分，便流了近千年。

这第一股，流作疏狂酒，自古文人侠客最爱喝。这盛唐有一谪仙，唤作李太白，太白有一挚友与之齐名，名为杜子美。

酒中仙道:“北斗酌美酒，劝龙各一觞。”

酒中客曰:“白日放歌须纵酒，青春作伴好还乡。”

“笑尽一杯酒，杀人都市中。”

“艰难苦恨繁霜鬓，潦倒新停浊酒杯。”

“鹅鹳换美酒，舞衣罢雕龙。”

“且看欲尽花经眼，莫厌伤多酒入唇。”

这一个喝清酒，一个喝浊酒。一个酒中作乐，一个酒中作苦。这酒中仙醉后捞月，失足溺亡。这酒中客，则谱成《饮中八仙》，记那盛唐的文与酒。这唐酒顺着时间流成了宋酒，流成务观豪饮三千秋，流成了幼安醉挑灯看剑，亦流成六一太守游琅琊，最后啊，流进了令狐小子的剑，流进了七公老儿的壶。

休问这第二股水的去处，吓！怎地流成功名酒，说这魏晋年间，羲之前曾有阮籍其人，长自陈留，属竹林七贤之一。缘其才，将军司马昭意欲征辟，阮籍素以恣意潇洒闻名，这征辟自然应不得。他便大醉六十日，日日癫狂示人。继而朝前寻，才道这功名酒早有迹可循。魏晋前乃三国，魏国曹丞相曾与汉高祖之后刘邦煮酒论英雄，说来这汉高祖与酒亦有不解之缘，先是饮于鸿门，再是醉斩白蛇，噫！净是功名酒。功名酒自高祖便开始流，流到杯酒释兵权还往后。

人只道杯酒入喉可消愁，斗酒下肚忘今宵，醉的不省事便成了痴汉，殊不知这酒，流穿了胸中壑，又岂知这酒，酿的是中华五千载。



# 《无题》

Steven Chen G12 Delta



我梦中去过一个地方

那里的风绵密柔软

能吹来甜蜜的花香

却吹不起海上的风浪

我梦中去过一个地方

那里的溪水缓缓流淌

流过青草地

流向看不见的远方

漂着 漂着

就撞到了夕阳

我梦中去过一个地方

那里时间太漫长

足够我把一切欣赏

足够我漫无目的地流浪

我梦中去过一个地方

漫天的森林

遍地的海洋

坐在小船上

2020.12.20 长途汽车中写

2023.8.18 家中修正

# Embrace Diversity

*G10 Gamma Joshua*

During my last holiday, I travelled to Melbourne. After an 11 hour flight, I stepped onto the Collins Street, and I was immediately embraced by a diversified world. There were Indians, Malaysians, Japanese, Middle Easterners, and of course a lot of Australians from their accents. People wore miscellaneous clothes and spoke different languages, but they all looked joyful and relaxed. I saw temples for Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists. People lived in diversified communities, and maintained their different cultures and traditions, but they seemed to appreciate and respect that their neighbors might be different. In Melbourne, I felt that every single voice could be heard, every person could be him or herself.

According to a report from Economist Intelligence – a leading business consulting firm in 2019, Melbourne is continuously ranked as the most livable cities around the world, and diversity is one of the key factors for this. Sportspeople, artists, and scientists from every corner of the world move here with their unique talents and aspirations and their contributions make the city full of dynamic energy.

While experiencing the diversity of Melbourne, I can't stop thinking of the sad ending of 2023 in coldness. 2023 was a year full of sadness and woe from conflicts and blood shedding. I think the root cause is narrowness. Narrowness is exclusion. Exclusion happens in every sector of our social lives, including gender, ethics, culture, religion, community and it brings about bias, discrimination, bullying or even war. Take the war between Israel and Palestine as an example, one of the long term factors is the continuous exclusion between Judaism and Islam brings about the continuous clash of these two civilizations.

According to historian Huntington, before the Age of Exploration and Industrial Revolution, most people spent their entire lives in relatively small communities. They would speak the same language, eat the same food and practice the same religion. There might have been few, isolated events of cultural exchange, like when Marco Polo came to China, but these were very rare. Clashes of civilizations were still small scale.

But things were totally changed after the Age of Exploration. New forms of ships called caravels allowed explorers to travel from west to east. Besides treasure hunting, they conflicted with the local people because of cultural and religion difference. From then on, conflicts among civilizations become a common theme in our modern world. Wherever these explorers arrived, while shipping away gold and spices and even aboriginals for slavery, they forced local people to change their languages, traditions, and even converted their religions. Because they believe their civilization is superior and exclusive.

Historians kept on studying the reason why Pirogues explorer Fernando De Magallanes was killed by Philippine aboriginals in 1521. More and more evidence shows that at first, Magallanes and his crew was received by the aboriginals and they traded much food and goods

from their hands. However, the aboriginal people wanted to take Magallanes's ship as a friendship gift, because it was their perspective of friendship that a friend can take away anything from their friends without approval. This was totally against Magallanes's concept as he didn't take the interactions with the aboriginals as making friends, but fair trade. Finally, Magallanes was shot in the following conflict.

What if, when Magellan and his crew traded food and goods with indigenous people, they spent more time to understand local culture, traditions and respect these differences with equity and open mindedness? Maybe they would therefore realize the aboriginals were fascinated by the new shipping techniques, and they followed the local customs, sent the ship to the aboriginals as a gift of friendship? Maybe, world history after 1520 would be totally different with more peace and harmony.

Fortunately, every cold winter has a warm spring ahead. In 2024, let's embrace diversity. Cherish uniqueness and accept each other's differences for the sake of ourselves and others.

# 大美于齐物

马悦言 *G10 Gamma*

星夜拥抱着地球，海洋拥抱着陆地；大地拥抱着江河，江河孕育着生灵。
大海里游过，陆地上爬行过，空中飞过，溪流中跳过。
每一片阳光下的草丛，都有昆虫们鸣叫，
它们时时刻刻交换着密码，生生不息地演奏者关于生与爱地交响诗。
天空中有飞鸟，可能是一群，也可能是一只，
御风而行，鸣声穿云破雾，
地上的人仰天怅惘，无人能懂他们的语言，却懂他们追逐自由的方向。
溪流里，鲑鱼逆流而上，千条，万条，奋力地游。
命和运就是逆着方向，游往最冷最远最高的地方。
第一条鲑鱼，是把什么秘密藏在那片月光下那个古老的池塘里了么？
日月交替，天玄地黄。星云之外开着花，岩层底下飞着雪，
宇宙中飞旋着、升腾着，弥漫着、萦绕着、交织着、
流淌着、变幻着、凝固着、混沌着不同。
万物同此冷暖，却异于来去。
大相相于形，大美美而异，万物物于齐。幸甚志哉！

# Island of Inclusion

*Joshua Ma G10 Gamma*

No wave embraces the shore in the same caress,
Each grain of sand, a universe, vast, boundless.
On this island of acceptance, no tree stands alone,
Roots intertwined, in the soil of diversity sown.

Here, every breeze whispers the language of inclusion,
Carrying stories of distant lands, without illusion.
Birds of varied feathers, together, they fly,
Under the same sun, in the shared sky.

We ponder the island's lore,
A haven of embrace, where the heart opens its door.
Inclusivity, not just a word, but the island's pulse,
In every beating heart, it finds a way to convulse.

Foreword, to readers: Hey there! We're experimenting on a new horror story series. It's a collection of stories without reason. Most of our sources came from details in our winter exchange program in Boston. Just in memory of them, and part because of our desire to do something fun, we wrote this thing without reason. Enjoy.

**PS:** Our series title comes from the song Freaky Undulations ~Noble Knights of The Tune~ by Jehezukiel + KURORAK. all elements of the stories are fictional, and if anything is similar to real life it's pure coincidence.

-Luca Mo, feat. Elma Liu

# FREAKY UNDULATIONS

Elma Liu G11 Sigma

## 1/ The Flashing Lights

### 1.1- Winter Exchange Program



"A winter exchange program?" Ming Mo asked.

"Yes, let's try it. Come on, there's nothing to afraid." said Charlie.

With a simple beginning, Ming Mo stepped into the supernatural world without reason.

Boston, Massachusetts.

The white snow covered the earth. Stepping out the van, freezing air heavily blew on Ming's face. He was in Groton school as an exchange student. Beside him were Charlie and other exchange students. After brief self-introductions, the students were led to the dorm.

Except Ming's group. They stared at a girl in white miko attire.

"Alright, friends, I am Zetsumetsu Miyano, a senior exchange student here who came a couple of weeks ago. Maybe you guys will be confused about everything here but, no worries. If you have any questions just ask. Nothing can bother me."

Ming looked at her embarrassingly. What a person without reason.

"You might hear of me from other students. No one doesn't know..."

A girl with a purple high ponytail stopped her. She was tall, wearing jeans, and carrying a bag like an adventurer. Yvonne Yale, a lover of the supernatural. That was how she introduced herself. Another person without reason, Ming thought.

"Uh...Who are you? Who allowed you to... Wait! Listen!"

Yale did not listen and walked into the dorm.

"Err..."

“A winter exchange program?” Ming Mo asked.

“Yes, let’s try it. Come on, there’s nothing to afraid.” said Charlie.

With a simple beginning, Ming Mo stepped into the supernatural world without reason.

Boston, Massachusetts.

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## 1.2- The Way

So, why do things happen without reason?

Ming stared at Miyano and Yale, thinking.

Half an hour earlier.

Ming walked out of the dining hall alone. On the way back to dorm, everything was quiet. Nothing without reason happened, expect a few sudden blackouts of the street light.

“Looks like a horror story,” Ming complained. “No one tried to repair it? Such a thing without reason.”

“Aaaaaaaa!”

Suddenly, a shouting broke the peace, with white lights flashing. Ming quickly ran and kept a distance from the pulsing lights. Several minutes passed, and nothing happened. The street light stopped its sudden blackout, and the forest was dark and quiet again.

No jumpscare? Ming thought and left with eyes peeking back at the darkness.

Crack!

Another sound. Someone stepped on the branch. It sounds...really close, maybe a few more steps to discover me. Thinking about this, Ming ran without any hesitate. During a hasty peek back, he saw a dark figure carrying a huge white fox or something.

Anyway, just escape. Let those things that are without reason be there. Curiosity kills the cat. Or fox.

Dorm.

“It seems safe here. I’ll take a rest.” Ming breathed heavily. “What was that thing that was without reason? An illegal hunter? Anyway, it has nothing to do with me and I will go to sleep now.”




As the sentence was finished, the lights suddenly began to blackout, again.

“Uh...haha...it seems the buildings were really old here. It will not bother my sleep. Seriously, I’m going to b...AAAAAAAHHHHH!”

A woman in a bloody white dress stood under the flashing light. Her long straight black hair covered her face. Her skin was as pale as the wall, and dirt or dried blood filled the uncut nails. She reached out her claws towards him.

Even though how unwilling Ming wanted to face these things that were without reason, he had to accept the truth that he was already trapped into. And the only thing with reason he thought about was...

RUN!!!

He headed for the exit but the woman suddenly appeared on in front of the door. He turned backwards, but almost




ran into her bloody dress. Like cats playing with their prey, Ming was toyed around.

Open this door, she was behind it. Open that one, still there she was.

Upstairs, downstairs, she is everywhere.

There was no escape.

Eventually, his strength gave up. Ming sat on the floor, breathing heavily.

“OK, the end.” He closed his eyes.

But the sound of an arrow passing through the air woke Ming. The ghost let out a bloodcurdling scream and vanished into a puff of smoke. Several arrows were still travelling towards this direction, which broke a few lights and almost hit Ming.

“See, that silly and weak ghost ran away because of me, and the powerful arrows I shot. You know how great I am?”

“Shut up.”

Yale gazed at Miyano, who appear to have a pair of fox ears and a fox tail, for a while. Then she put her hand on her forehead and sighed.

Back to the beginning.

“So, what’s all these things that were without reason?”

Ming said as the light-off time for this dorm started.

“Well, that’s a long story. From millions of years ago...”

“You do not need to care. Just be an ordinary human.”

“Wait, why did you always interrupt me...”

“Shut up.” Yale patted Miyano’s head.

So Miyano did as Yale said, looking quite afraid.

“Just forget the stuff. Good night.”

“Wait! Did the ghost die?”

“Of course, who will be able to survive the attack of...”

“I guess not. It seemed to be afraid of something and disappeared.”

“That’s for sure. It was certainly afraid of my, the great...”

“Take this potion. It can help you hide from it.”

“It’s nothing compared to my...”

“Be careful next time. We would not always be available.”

After this, she left, dragging Miyano like the figure Ming saw on the way back to the dorm. There were still plenty of questions bothering Ming, but Yale did not give him the chance to ask. She disappeared in the corner.

Such two without reason, Ming thought.

FREAKY

## 1.3- The Forest

6p.m., the next day, on the way to Mrs. Jin's home.

The exchange students from China, like Ming, were invited to dinner there.

"Come on, Shadow. Come here." said Charlie, a cat lover. He was trying to play with the family's cat, Shadow.

"It's weird. Shadow is not afraid of strangers."

"Yes, she used to be really calm. What happened?"

Ming watched at them behind Charlie. It is said that animals could see dirty things. Shadow seemed afraid, he thought. Maybe because she knew that I am the target of the ghost?

To test this, Ming took a step forward and tried to touch Shadow. As expected, Shadow ran away as fast as possible.

"Oh, man. She's afraid of you." said Charlie. "I could succeed if you were not beside me."

In a moment, Ming felt extraordinary angry and wanted to give Charlie a punch. Then everything in his eyes became muddled, only a sarcastic voice surrounded him.

"Do not stand behind me, you fool."

"I could succeed without you."

"You were doing nothing good but making trouble."

"Time for dinner!" Just when Ming was about to reach out the fist, this pulled his mind back.

"Oh, man. That's close. It's also something the ghost did?"

Ming shook his head to stay calm.

"Anyway, I'll take that potion. Then I'll try to find a solution with Yale and Miyano's help."

Back to the dorm.

In the car, Ming carefully stared at the street lights. Nothing happened so far.

"Why are you staring at the lights? Afraid of being in a horror story?"

Ming just smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"But the facilities really needed to be repaired. See that flashing light over there?"

Ming's heart almost stopped.

One second, two seconds, three seconds, nothing happened. But Ming did not dare to stay put again.

Another light was flashing. Still nothing happened.

One by one, the lights began flashing. But there was no ghost.

Ming's nerves were so tight that they might break down anytime.

"I'm done with this!"

Suddenly, he seemed to lose control. He grabbed the steering wheel and the car was forced to turn left, towards the forest.

"Errr...What's wrong with you? You seem to be nervous the whole night."

"She wanted me to do so. That's her trick. Yes, the trick."

"What she? What trick?"

"She wanted us to be here. I made a huge mistake."

"Wait for a second. Can you explain what happened?"

"Her trick was done, and she got the ancestral land she wanted."

"Could you please say something that was understandable."

"Then...she will come."

"Oh my."

"Yes, she's coming, she's coming, SHE'S COMING!!!"

Ming left without any other words.

It was almost completely dark around in the forest. The thick leaves covered the top, not allowing the moon to spread the gentle shine to the ground. No sound was made when stepping on the soil. Ming hurried through the dense woods. The voices of other students were no longer heard. But crows were crying high above the empty trees, watching him struggling.

"Not yet. She might, no, must be chasing behind me."

The infinite darkness swallowed everything beyond.

"But she didn't appear tonight. Why? To avoid accidents like last night? But why just chasing instead of killing or anything else?"

"Such a thing without reason!"

He continued running.

“It’s near the road. I can see lights there. I need to get there and wait for help.”

Unfortunately, the lights began flashing.

“Oh my, she’s there! Waiting for me!”

Ming looked back at the deep dark forest, considering whether to turn back or not.

“She’s fast enough in the lights. I cannot imagine how fast she can be without lights.”

The lights began flashing quicker and quicker.

“But going straight into the lights will certainly lead to death.”

Ming can’t stand the brightness anymore.

“Oh, man! I will go...”

Crack!

A sound of stepping on a branch appeared in the forest.

“Give up now. There’s enemies on both sides of you.”

## 1.4- The Lights

“So, it time for me, the greatest miko in the Miyano family of all time, Zetsumetsu Miyano, to enter the stage and bring this little lamb hope.”

Arrows passing through the air and hit the ghost with the street light. The ghost screamed and disappeared.

“Hahahaha! Just like yesterday, the powerless and stupid ghost was beaten by me, the great...Aaaaa!”

As Miyano went under another street light to let Ming fully admire her, the ghost appeared behind her, sneered, raised her bloody claws, and barreled into the unsuspecting girl.

Still a person without reason. Ming put his hand on his forehead, and sighed.

So did Yale.

She walked out of the dark side of the forest, carrying Miyano, whose miko attire and hair became messy.

“Aaaaa! You little ghost, I will definitely...”

“Shut up. And you, turn off your phone.”

Yale looked down at Miyano’s head then gazed at Ming. Miyano seemed like she was crying.

Also, still a person without reason, Ming thought, turning off his phone. After this, Yale turned back to face the ghost.

Here was a situation without reason. A ghost stood under the street light, and two wannabe ghost hunters stood in the dark forest. And between them, there was Ming, a weak ordinary human.

Seriously, why don’t you guys change position? Ming thought. Shouldn’t the ghost hide in the dark and try to attack people, while the two stand under the light and pay attention to the dark dangerous surroundings?

Yes, why not?

And why did the ghost escape last night? What’s nearby? The two? No, it can’t be. Otherwise, the ghost will try to escape now.

But what else can scare the ghost?

What’s another similarity between the two times the ghost screamed?

Miyano could not stand the quiet situation. She rolled over, held her ground, loaded her bow and began shooting the arrows. That surly annoyed the ghost, who shrieked sharply and...just hid? The ghost began teleporting herself between street lights, like moths chasing the flickering candlelight, but did not fight back. Yale also took out a flare gun and aimed. After a few rounds, there was nothing notable except shattered glass raining down like snowflakes, landing and breaking apart endlessly.

What’s the street lights’ fault, and why are they breaking because of your fight?

Wait...

There seems to be another similarity.

The upcoming blackout of the dorm, and the destruction of lights both in the dorm and the street.

“That’s truly unexpected. A ghost, who should be a hunter in the dark, is scared of the dark?”

## 1.5- Welcome to the Real World

“Smart.”

When Ming woke from the thinking, he was standing in complete darkness. Obviously, the ghost was trapped. Trapped without reason, Ming thought.

Yale was quite satisfied about Ming. “It’s not an easy job for a normal man to guess the characteristics of a ghost.”

“Thank you.”

“But still you have a lot to improve upon! Because you

are just an ordinary human, me, the greatest miko in the Miyano family of all time, generously forgive your ignorance and...”

“First, the ghost is not afraid of the dark. We call it “the Flashing Lights”. It can freely travel between sources of lights. When it does that, the lights will flash. Fortunately, you encountered a weak one. Those stronger ones can turn anything into light sources and build their bases there.”

“Yes! I once met a really strong one. It made all sorts of things glow, and I had a hard time...”

“Second, ghosts are not just hunters in the dark. They can be anything that cause fear to people in order to take over their places in the world. As a result, they may do anything. Never be influenced by your stereotypes.”

“That’s for sure. Once my sister went out for ghost hunting, she…”

“You explained a lot today. What do you want?”

“Nothing. Just wanted to welcome you to the real world.”

“Hey, Ming! Where are you?” The other ordinary exchange students’ voice came.

“Em...can you deal with this?”

“No.”

“Of course I can! As you know, I am the greatest miko in the Miyano family of all the time. It’s just a piece of cake for me to...”

“Make it short, do it now.”

“O...OK...I’ll deal with it.”

“The foxes are really good at charming magic. Such an easy way to change people’s mind.”

“Don’t lead the topic away. Do you really just wanted me to know the true world?”

“Then what do you think I want to do?”

“I don’t know, but I will help you with it. After all, I owe you my life.”

“I’m back! See how great and mighty I am, normal? Why don’t you kneel down and praise how...”

A slap.

“The Miyano family is a family that rely on people’s admiration. Most of them will be mikoes when they grow up. They help people who in turn praise them. In this way, they can steal people’s luck. They are also ‘ghosts’, but they are much more peaceful. That’s why this silly fox asked you to admire her.”

“Wait, who’s the silly fox? You’d better take it back, half- ghost hunter!”

Third slap tonight.

On the way back to the dorm.

“Oh, I almost forget. Is that you two making those white lights near here last night?”

“Oh, exactly! Once we met each other, we know we encountered a good enemy. So we met here and fight for



thousands of rounds. The sky changed its color, and the earth...”

“The actual story was, a silly fox asked me to be here to revenge for what happened when we check in. But she didn’t discover that I am a ghost hunter, and she has been slapped.”

“A half- ghost hunter! I just did not feel your weak supernatural power and underestimated you. If there would a second chance, I can definitely beat you!”

“So why don’t we try it now, just right here.”

“Em...It’s late at night. As students, shouldn’t you go to bed? Me, the senior in your dorm, asks you to...”

The forth slap, maybe.

Before lights-off.

“I seem to forget something, what is it?” Ming thought.

The street near forest.

“Who broke these street lights?! They must have to pay for it!”

Anyway, there were too many things that were without reason happening so far. I’ll just take a break from it.

Ming thought and went asleep.



# Love Through the Eye of Embraces

Written by: Emmie G10 Eta

## To my luck, I've had my fair share of embraces.

For the most part, they're spread throughout irrelevant and daily events. I was embraced by dozens of people during Christmas time, simply out of holiday spirit; I was embraced by my friends when I received my test score at an unexpectedly high mark, only for that brief moment of celebration; I embraced my duet partner when we finished our performance, strictly influenced by the high of the stage; I embraced an old friend of mine landing at the airport when we haven't seen each other for months, mostly for old time's sake. Embraces have always found a way to weave itself into the probabilities of my life, no matter big or small, declaring or silent.

However, I've found that my personal best of embraces have been ones that were long lasting, ones that were much more unnoticeable unless you purposefully looked, and ones that hardly ever involved actual arms or bodies. The best of which definitely goes to the 15-year long embrace I've been sharing with my sister. Outside of the occasional bickering and playful taunts thrown at each other, I truly am grateful for all the love I've been able to gain from this lifelong investment of a relationship. I know for a fact that the person I am today and the confidence I bubble wrap myself within couldn't have gotten half as near as they are right now without her unconditional support. Growing up with reassurance, I knew I was always safe no matter what. Only with that notion in my head was I able to fearlessly delve into myself and come to natural conclusions about my identity which I luckily have the strength to accept and admit.

I've encountered an unfortunately frequent pattern of homophobia and transphobia in my life, but with my continuous source of embraces, I've never been scared to build a castle out of the bricks thrown and stand up for myself as well as the community that I constantly carry in my heart.

Of course, I've been on both the receiving end and giving end of an embrace, subconsciously always aware of the fact that it's just as much of my duty to protect as it is my right to be protected. I don't find myself to be a particularly articulating person, especially when it comes to intense emotions I'm not familiar with. It's that precise reason that I have a long list of apology letters to people I may have hurt that I unfortunately likely won't ever have the courage to send. But I genuinely do believe that emotions, true and positive ones at least, can work as an embrace to those on the receiving end better than any other physical manifestation of a gift. I am still working on it, but I'm trying to say things like "I'm here for you" and "I care about you" more frequently and more shamelessly to the people around me that I love. If there's one thing I've noticed from any experience I've had with socialization, it's that emotions, often the rawest ones, get washed away in the gaps of overthinking and nervousness. Hence, I've made it my one true goal and responsibility to try and simply embrace the people around me with a candid heart and make then feel worthy of that embrace, to spread love and positivity among all those that deserve.

I do believe that emotions can easily get out of hand if handled rashly, speaking from my own unfortunate experience. However, with my unrealistically optimistic mindset, I trust that life is nothing more than a few hues of love combined. Coloring in the world, it's hard not to embrace a few people around you along the way. And if love really is nothing more than a tangible chemical reaction in the brain, then what better way to deem it poetic than through a midnight's song, a wind's chime, and an embrace?



# Ancient Town in Yunnan Province

*Kristy Liu G10 Kappa*



Born up in Shanghai, I have always been interested in canal towns in Jiangnan. As the famous Chinese writer Qiuyu Yu descripted in A Bittersweet Journey Through Culture, “A narrow waterway weaves through the town, adorned by delicately carved stone bridges. Along the riverbanks stand quaint dwellings, their lower floors immersed in water. Stone steps from beneath the buildings extend, tier by tier, creating a waterfront platform. Women stand at these platforms, diligently washing clothes, mere feet away from black-topped boats where wisps of white smoke rise. The smoke wafts through the bridge arches, drifting across the river. On the opposite bank, low and wide stone railings provide comfortable seating or reclining spots. Several elderly individuals peacefully sit there, observing passing boats with serene expressions.”(self-translated). It is clear that ancient cities in Jiangnan Districts leaves a gentle image in the author’s mind, creating a delicate atmosphere.

Towns in Yunnan, however, gives me a rather different idea of what ancient town can be. These differences can be classified into three categories, including choice of merchandise, city planning strategies and natural resources.

I used to think that all the ancient cities are repetitive, roast sausage with merely any meat, plastic hair accessories and roughly made toys, all selling at a dramatic high price. It is no longer a joy to visit these ancient towns that have nothing ancient. However, my mind was totally changed after my visit to several Yunnan ancient towns. First, they all have their own handicrafts instead of universal industrial products. For Lijiang old town, I came into “Traditional Hand-Dyed Craft of Intangible Heritage”( 扎染 ), while in Dukezong, a Zang-style town, I saw a particular handicraft called “ 藏 绣 ”. Second, they have a variety of local food individually. You cannot find a snack belonging to the specific town in another place, not at least authentic. This diversity enables each of the Yunnan towns have their own souls.





As is the same with Jiangnan ancient towns, those in Yunnan also have rivers flowing throughout the town. However, these rivers are all built by the local government called “tu3si1” in order to provide the indigenous people with water to drink, to do their laundry as well as to protect their house from fire. This reflects the determination of human being to fight against the infertile nature to live their own life and is the representation of human wisdom. The Yunnan people make full use of the water to design their own hydraulic device instead of solely building bridges across the river. These devices add more flavor to our trips.

In addition, compared to Jiangnan, Yunnan is surrounded by continuous mountains, and is at a higher altitude. As a result, towns in Yunnan have a lot of up and downs, creating tucks between lines of houses, making it even more interesting to stroll around the town. The weather there is also warmer than that in Shanghai. Although it is winter in Shanghai, Lijiang ancient town is still immersed in flowers of various colors, and tourists wearing the traditional clothes of Zang & Yi minority are everywhere to be seen.

In conclusion, only when they are aware of their own culture and character can the towns stand out from the others and gain a long-tern development.

# *02 Journal*

# Expression of Gene CG13427 in Drosophila Embryo and Its Regulation by the Transcription Factor Zelda

Audrey Wang G11 Omega

*Abstract*—**This study focuses on the moiety influencing gene expression in Drosophila embryonic development, including RNA polymerase II, transcription factor (TF) Zelda, and interactive neighboring genes. The CG13427 gene in Drosophila was used as an experimental model. Chromatin Immunoprecipitation (ChIP) was conducted to examine the DNA sequence targeted by Polymerase II and Zelda at different time points. Since previous evidence indicates that Zelda may play a key role in activating the zygotic genome, a well-controlled experiment here was designed to investigate whether the expression of adjacent genes would be interrupted if Zld-binding sites in one gene are abolished hence determining the correlation.**

**Based on the research works done by Y. Ma and Rushlow (unpublished data), the exact binding site of Zelda in the CG13427 was found at the CAGGTAG motif. Therefore, a series of experiments were designed to investigate how Zelda affects the expression of CG13427 in Drosophila embryos. Validation experiments were subsequently designed using gene editing tools to abolish CAGGTAG when the mutation was introduced to further verify the previous findings.**

*Keyword*—**GeneCG13427, transcription factor (TF) Zelda, CAGGTAG motif, Drosophila embryos**

## I. INTRODUCTION

During the early development of the organism, the expression level of genes in the embryo varies in different stages and locations. As a key factor of gene transcription, and this could be concluded from the basic description of transcription. RNA polymerases can be used in research to determine the expression level of a gene in the transcription region through its binding site. Such works normally could be carried out using chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) techniques, which ChIP is an invaluable method for studying interactions between specific proteins or modified forms of proteins and a genomic DNA region [1]. With antibodies specifically targeting RNA Polymerase II (anti-Pol II). Pol II is responsible for transcribing genes into RNA, and a Pol II ChIP experiment can identify the genomic regions where Pol II is actively transcribing genes. Previously, a study done by Nien et. al has shown one single transcription factor Zelda may suffice to activate the zygotic genome. Zelda binds to CAGGTAG and related motifs which were referred to as TAGteam sites from in vitro experiments. By a ChIP experiment using a monoclonal antibody targeting Zelda, the DNA sequence that Zelda stuck to was identified deciphering the gene expression in this region.

The focus of this article is on the gene expression of CG13427. According to the database from FlyBase, this gene, also known as Dmel\CG134270034514) in Fly Base, is a protein-coding gene in Drosophila melanogaster. It has one annotated transcript and one polypeptide. The gene sequence is located at 2R: 20538877..20539316. Its temporal expression profile shows a range from extremely high to nearly zero expression detected, with peak expression observed within the 00–06-hour embryonic stages.

One peculiar aspect of this gene apart from traditional understanding is that it does not contain a necessary TATA box and is closely adjacent to a down-regulated gene, CG13428. The article hereby further elucidated on the full aspects of this gene, including its genetic features, regulation by Zelda plus its binding sites, and the interactive impact to its neighboring gene.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 In Situ Hybridization (ISH)

To observe and analyze the expression patterns of the specific gene CG13427 in embryos from Y. Ma's experiment and Rushlow's unpublished result, researchers employed the experimental methods of in situ hybridization and immunofluorescent staining. According to the study of

Nien et al, In the experiment, embryos were fixed and subjected to in situ hybridization using digoxigenin-UTP labeled RNA probes synthesized from subcloned cDNA sequences or genomic intron DNA sequences. Additionally, immunofluorescent staining was performed using a primary mouse monoclonal anti-Zelda antibody and a secondary Alexa Fluor 488-labeled donkey polyclonal anti-mouse IgG. The embryos were then observed using fluorescence microscopy and Nomarski differential interference contrast microscopy. Furthermore, fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) was conducted using intron probes for sog and rho, a sheep anti-DIG antibody, and an Alexa Fluor 555-labeled donkey anti-sheep IgG secondary antibody. Finally, images were acquired using the Leica TCS SP5 confocal microscope [2].

**2.2 CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing**

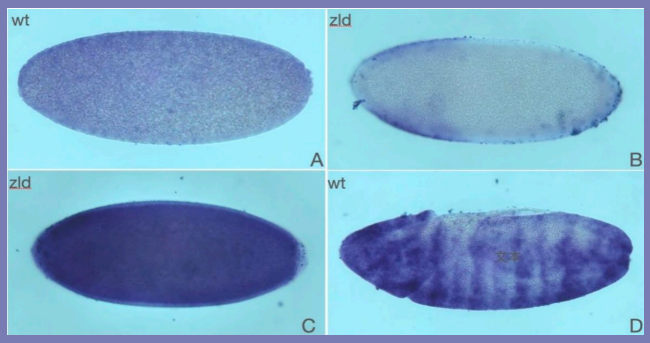
The hypothetical experiment to mutate the CAGGTAG site to CTCATAG is performed using CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing technology with the assistance of designing tools such as SnapGene and Chop-chop. CRISPR/Cas9 (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeat)-Cas9 is a multipurpose technology for genetic engineering that relies on the complementarity of the guideRNA (gRNA) to a specific sequence and the Cas9 endonuclease activity [3].

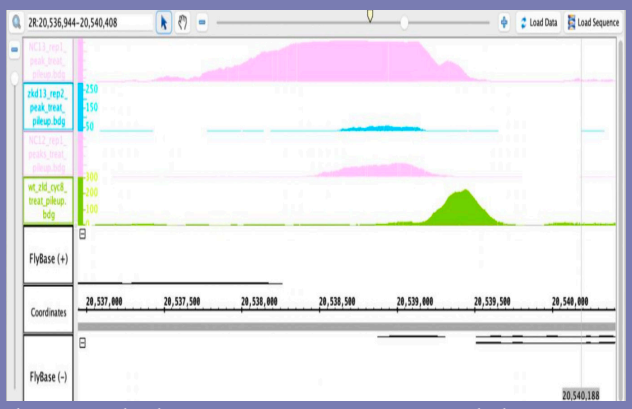
The first step is to design a guide RNA. Start by extracting 60 base pairs containing the CAGGTAG site from the gene sequence using SnapGene. This sequence is then copied and pasted into the "target" field in the Chop-chop. In Chop-chop, the species is set as Drosophila melanogaster (dm6), the tool as CRISPR/Cas9, and the purpose as knock out. After submitting the sequence, Chop-chop provides results that include the position, sequence, and score of potential guide RNAs. To select a suitable guide RNA, it should be considered that CRISPR/Cas9 requires a PAM sequence, which is NGG, to be adjacent to the target site for cleavage. And the chosen guide RNA should not contain the PAM sequence. By analyzing the results from Chop-chop, a guide RNA can be selected that meets this requirement and has a high score.

The next step is to design the donor plasmid. To accomplish this, the initial step is to design two primers specifically for in vitro mutagenesis. Firstly, it is crucial to determine the location of the target mutation site within the donor plasmid. Once the mutation site has been determined, the next step is to design two primer sequences. For illustration purposes, the following primer sequences have been designed based on the guide RNA:

5’ ATCCTGTGACAGGTAGAGAAGAAAA 3’
changed into
5’ ATCCTGTGACTCATAGAGAAGAAAA 3’
(primer1)
5’ TTTTCTTCTCTATGAGTCACAGGAT 3’
(primer2)

In the HDR (Homology Directed Repair) step, after Cas9 has completed the cleavage guided by the sgRNA designed in the first step, CAGGTAG can undergo precise mutation through naturally occurring crossover. To be more specific, HDR is a DNA repair mechanism, a journal about CRISPR gene editing described this process in detail. v“Homology-directed repair (HDR) — enzymes patch the break using donor template DNA. Researchers design the donor template DNA, which may include a desired sequence flanked on both sides by “homology arms”




that match the sequence upstream and downstream of the cut. A complementary DNA strand is created during repair” [4]. To ensure that the mutation is homologous and as much as possible that crossover happens on both sides of the CAGGTAG, 2000kb long homology arms are selected in SnapGene.

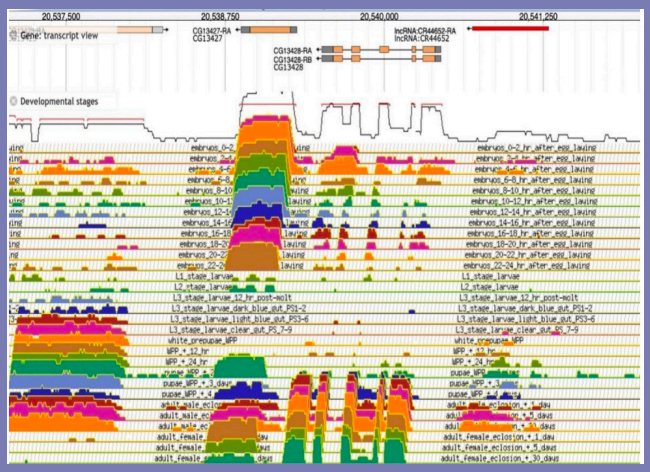
**2.3 Applications for gene visualization**

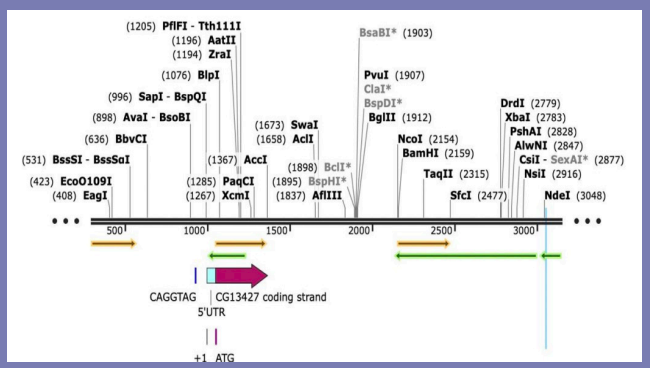
Integrated Genome Browser (IGB) is used in the study as a powerful tool for visualizing and analyzing genomic data, including ChIP-seq data for proteins such as Zelda and Polymerase binding. By aligning the peaks of Zelda binding with the gene sequence of CG13427, the Zelda-binding site can be localized. Furthermore, the expression pattern of genes in Drosophila embryos can be determined

by examining the binding of Polymerase II on the corresponding image. The start and end of the coding strand, as well as +1 of CG13427, could also be identified on IGB.

FlyBase is used as a comprehensive database that provides information on the genomics of the gene CG13427, including the whole genomic sequence of CG13427. It also offers a wide range of functions and features of CG13427.

SnapGene as a molecular biology software is







used in designing the Guide RNA and donor plasmid in the study. In addition, based on the information provided on IGB, a more visual gene map of CG13427 was constructed by annotating the Zld-binding site, +1 position, 5' UTR, coding strand, and Guide RNA from the gene sequence in SnapGene.

Chop-chop is used for designing guide RNA for CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing in the study. In the designed experiment, after inputting 60 base pairs containing CAGGTAG in CG13427, Chop-chop identifies potential Guide RNA sequences in a given DNA sequence and scores each sequence for reference.

## III. RESULTS

### 3.1 Illustration of CG13427 expression in Drosophila embryo

Developmental geneticists turned to 'network biology' decades ago, q good example is the early patterning of the Drosophila embryo, a relatively well understood process involving the concerted action of about ten or so transcription factors (TFs)[5].

In the experiment conducted by Y. Ma, the Zld ChIP and Polymerase ChIP reflect the binding of Zelda and polymerase II to gene CG13427, indirectly indicating the gene expression levels. As shown in Figure (E), the Integrated Genome Browser (IGB) visualizes the experimental data, showing that in NC13, the binding level of polymerase II to CG13427 is comparatively the highest and the peak duration is the longest of all binding patterns. In NC12, the peak length is significantly shorter, and the binding level is lower (shown in pink). In zkd13, Polymerase II binding barely appears (shown in blue). The binding pattern of Zelda appears as a peak-like structure, indicating that the Zld-binding site is likely located at the peak position (shown in green).

According to the pattern of embryo developmental stages on FlyBase (Figure 2), it can be observed that CG13427 is actively expressed in 0-24h after egg laying, but hardly expressed in L1, L2, and L3 larva stages. At the same time, the expression is restored in adult eclosion, but the expression is not as active as 0-24. From this, it can be inferred that CG13427 mainly functions during the early growth of Drosophila, specifically during the embryonic stage. Additionally, it is observed that CG13428, located next to CG13427, shows a similar expression pattern to CG13427, except that CG13428 appears to be more active during the adult eclosion stage.

**Feature of CG13427 gene region**

By observing the SnapGene map created based on the features of gene CG13427, it can be observed that the CAGGTAG motif, which is the Zelda binding site, is located at the +1 upstream of the gene's transcription start site (highlighted in dark blue). The 50kb long 5' UTR is located between the +1 site and the ATG start codon (highlighted in light blue), followed by a coding strand that is 318kb long. See Figure(G).

## IV. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Correlation of Gene Expression: from a Controlled Variable Experiment Targeting Zelda Binding Sites

Based on the observations from Figure 1, gene CG13427 exhibits a peak in expression levels during the embryo 0-24 hours after the egg-laying stage, while CG13428 shows minimal expression

levels throughout all stages. However, it is interesting to note that the expression peak of CG13428 corresponds almost perfectly with CG13427. This raises the discussion topic of whether neighboring genes can influence each other's expression levels. To investigate this, several controlled experiments are designed using Zld binding sites as variables.

In the hypothetical experiments, the experimental targets are gene1 and gene2, and the control group consists of gene1 and gene2 with their Zld-binding sites knocked out. In the first group, the Zld-binding site of gene1 is knocked out while gene2's is preserved, and the expression of gene1 is observed. In the second group, the Zld-binding site of gene2 is knocked out while gene1's is preserved, and the expression of gene2 is observed. The real results should be analyzed after the experiment, but only the hypothetical results are analyzed here.

If in the first group, the expression of gene1 is not significantly down-regulated and there is a significant down-regulation in Zld-binding, it is likely that the expression of genes can mutually influence each other, meaning that an actively expressing gene may drive the expression of a neighboring gene with weaker expression. On the other hand, if the expression of gene1 is significantly down-regulated and there is a significant down-regulation in the Zld-binding site, it suggests that the expression of genes does not mutually influence each other. Another possibility is that the expression of gene1 is not significantly down-regulated and there is no significant down-regulation in the Zld-binding site, which may indicate that the Zld-binding site of gene2 affects the Zld-binding of gene1, but the expression of genes does not mutually influence each other. These three scenarios roughly cover all possible results and analyses that may arise in a real experiment, and the results of the second group would be similar to the first group, and so on.

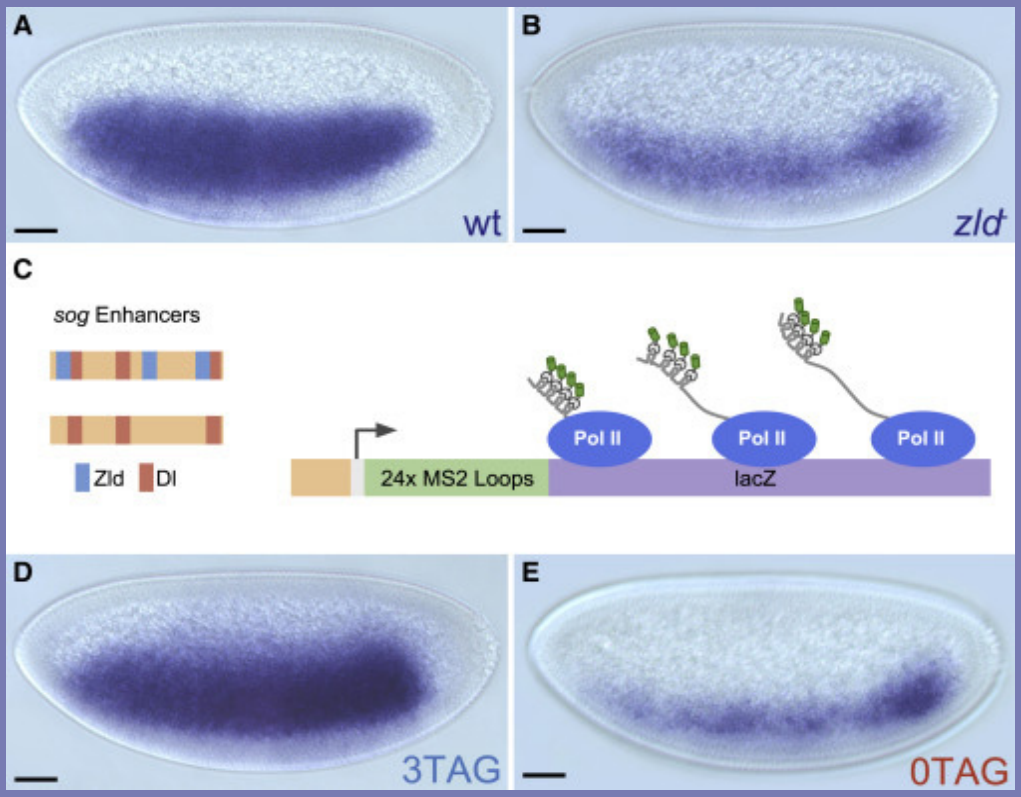
Furthermore, in the real situation, the lack of significant expression in CG13428 is due to down-regulation, but the reason for this down-regulation is unknown. By examining its gene sequence, it is found that it does not contain any Zld-binding sites. Therefore, in the hypothetical experiment, a Zld-binding site could be inserted into the CG13428 sequence to observe its expression. If the gene starts to express, it will not only confirm the importance of Zelda in regulating gene expression but also that the expression of genes does not mutually influence each other (based on the second and third scenarios in the experiment mentioned above).

**4.2 CG13427 expression is down regulated in Zld-binding site CAGGTAG mutant embryos**

To further justify the cruciality of CAGGTAG as a Zld-binding site and identify the influence of mutation on the Zld-binding process. In the designed experiment, by gene editing, CAGGTAG is mutated to CTCATAG by CRISPER-cas9, as CAGGTAG is known to be the most common Zld-binding site, according to the study of Nien et al. “Enrichment indices of all possible heptamers were calculated for Zld-bound regions using a 500 bp window centered around the middle of Zld-bound peaks. Using an enrichment score of 3.5 as the cutoff, 11 heptamers were recovered (Figure S1B). The highest-ranking heptamer was CAGGTAG”[2]. After mutating to CTCATAG, Zld-binding in CG13427 is expected to reduce since CG13427 expression is down-regulated in zld- mutant embryos (see fig1). After mutation, if a reduction of Zld-binding is observed, it could be concluded that Zelda normally binds the CAGGTAG site and activate the gene expression.

On the other hand, if there is hardly significant down-regulation in Zld-binding or CG13427 expression in the zld- mutant embryo is observed, this result could be explained by the following: 1. CRISPER-cas9 in gene editing process didn’t function well, in this case, the mutated gene sequence should be retrieved and confirm the result of the CAGGTAG mutation. 2. CTCATAG could be predicted to replace CAGGTAG as the new Zld-binding site. While this situation is relatively difficult to verify, many subsequent comparison data between genes containing CTCATAG and Zld-binding peaks are required. 3. Zelda itself has opened entrances for other binding sites, “Zelda is responsible for "opening" the enhancer regions so that other regulatory factors can gain access and bind to them”.






## VI. CONCLUSION

Through the utilization of In situ Hybridization (ISH), CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing, and gene visualization tools such as FlyBase, SnapGene, and Integrated Genome Browser (IGB), this study has centered on the investigation of gene CG13427 from three distinct perspectives. The first pertains to the examination of gene expression during drosophila embryonic development, revealing that CG13427 predominantly operates during the early stages of Drosophila growth, specifically within the embryonic phase. The second aspect involves the characterization of the gene CG13427 itself, uncovering the presence of the CAGGTAG motif located at the +1 position upstream of the gene's transcription start site, a 50kb long 5' UTR situated between the +1 site and the ATG start codon, followed by a 318kb long coding strand. The third dimension of this research entails the exploration of the impact of mutant Zelda binding site on gene expression, with the hypothesis positing that CG13427 expression is downregulated in Zld-binding site CAGGTAG mutant embryos. Furthermore, the correlation of gene expression was comprehensively investigated through a controlled experiment involving CG13427 and its neighboring gene CG13428. In this hypothetical experiment, a Zld-binding site could be incorporated into the CG13428 sequence to monitor its expression, revealing valuable insights regarding the regulatory role of Zelda in gene expression as well as the independent nature of gene expression.

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# Pluralism: Origins and Development

***Good is not a general term corresponding to a single idea***
***——Aristotle***

**Joshua Ma G10 Gamma**

As a type of political theory, pluralism promotes the co-existence of different values for individuals to achieve life goals or happiness. But why do we need to respect, protect, and embrace others' values or thoughts in a society? We are told in school that it is necessary to tolerate differences between ourselves and others, and that enforcing our own thoughts on others is impermissible. Even though in authoritarian countries, governments may try to asphyxiate plurality, they still admit the liberty of representing different values or thought literarily, and vindicate for their asphyxiation by other reasons such as certain dangerous thoughts could subvert the national safety. In other words, pluralism is a universal value accepted by international societies. Through looking at texts of different philosophers in this essay, I attempt to describe the development of pluralism and how it has become a universal value in human society.

Pluralism is the belief that the content of our backgrounds, education, and beliefs should allow us to choose our own values to help us pursue happiness. No social authority has the power to define which values will help us acquire and reach a beatific life. Although pluralism respects majorities' choices, values and thoughts, it has been frequently challenged by authority throughout history. Regimes spanning from the Crusades of the Middle Ages, to the 18th century European absolute monarchies, to the totalitarian, Fascist and stalinist governments of the 20th century have threatened pluralism. After the Second World War, pluralist values were protected and accepted widely by the international society. In the words of the former Czech Prime Minister Václav Havel, "the time when 'leaders' instructed 'ordinary people' on how



they should live was over, and the people should have the power to choose their own way of life." Looking through the history of pluralism, we realize how precious freedom of thought is and how easily it can be undermined.

The earliest supportive texts of pluralism came from the Greek philosopher Aristotle. The question of how to live a good life is central to Aristotelian thought. Aristotle believed that a good life relied on finding happiness, "living well, and doing well". The pursuit of happiness depends on virtue. He believed that there were many ways to achieve virtue, and that virtue was not a specific value liked integrity, respect or glory, but an equilibrium psychological condition. For example, Aristotle gave an example of bravery: when bravery becomes the only value of a man, it is very dangerous, but a man without bravery is timid and feeble, so a man who can control their bravery and thus maintain their bravery in an equilibrium condition has virtue.

In other words, Aristotle provided a potential principle to acquire virtue, but did not define “virtue”.

But Aristotle doctrine also extinguished early pluralism. In Aristotle's natural philosophy, there was a transcendent "unmoved mover" in the universe that was superior to human beings and caused all the motions in the world. A few decades later, Stoic philosophers in Rome argued further that the concept of God did exist and that people could live better and happier lives according to God's will. This philosophical foundation allowed for Christian concepts of god to enter the European spiritual world without difficulty, and get the support of most citizens in the later stage of the Roman Empire.

After Christianity established its cultural hegemony in continental Europe, all opposition to Christianity was suppressed and Christianity became the only way for ordinary people to pursue a happy life. After the acknowledgement of the Christianity as national religion by Constantine the great in 313 CE, the Christian authority unified the diversified Greek and Roman thoughts by implementing principled Christianity, and proposing Christianity as the only way to get redemption. Salvation is only found in the Christian Church, and those who do not believe in the doctrines will go to hell for all eternity. The second major event was the declaration of war against theological heresy. Whoever practiced heresy was declared an enemy of God, which led to their persecution. However, the voice of pluralism and liberty became the mainstream of religious dissidents in that time. In the end of 12th century, Western Christian intellectuals became familiar with Aristotelian philosophy through the Islamic freethinker Averroes, and were deeply influenced by Averroes' doctrine of "double truth".

By the thirteenth century, this religious skepticism was in vogue, giving rise to a claim that the world had been deceived by three deceivers, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, in addition to stories of skepticism about the truths of religion that had long circulated in society. This situation could be considered a harbinger of the fact that the Christian confinement of reason or slavery of the mind was almost over, and the pluralism in thought as well as the rationality was reemphasized through dignifying the religious authority.

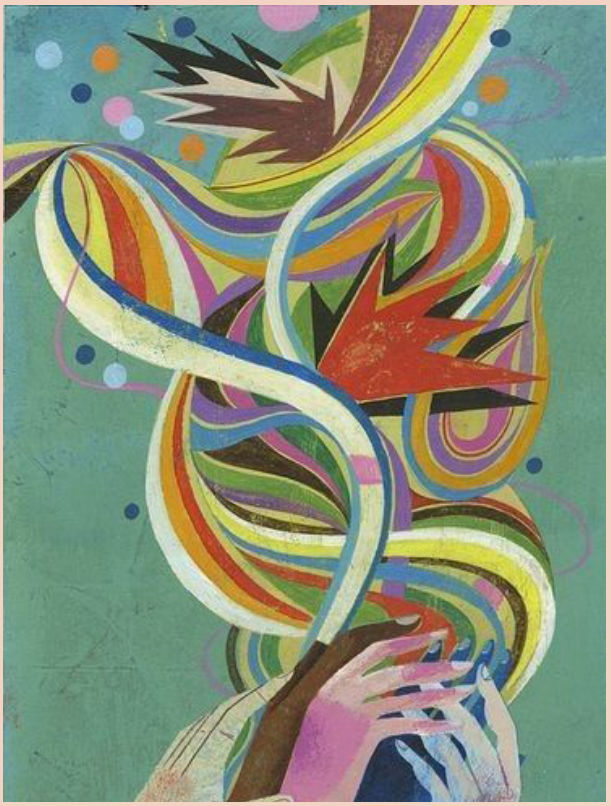


More theoretical defenses of pluralism gradually emerged after the 18th century. With the gradual emergence of people from the shadow of religion in Europe, the implementation of global navigation and the rise of capitalism, there was a growing belief in mutual respect and a more pluralistic society, rather than the retention of an ideological and political authority to guide life. During the Enlightenment in the 18th century, liberal intellectuals began to emphasize the importance of social pluralism and freedom of thought, and to criticize

oppressive absolute monarchies. For example, the French scholar Voltaire wrote in order to refute the suppression of plural thoughts by the French monarchs, "If there are a dozen caterers, each of whom has a different recipe, must we on that account cut each other's throats instead of dining? contrary every man will eat well in his fashion with the cook who pleases him best." EI Hadj Oumar, a famous Islamic scholar from Timbuktu also opined that, "Tragedy is due to divergence and because of lack of tolerance. divergence and because of lack of tolerance." Montesquieu, Voltaire's friend and earliest sociologist, on the other hand argued that if the government would allow for a plurality of ideas, and in particular a plurality of religions, the people would be more concerned about their own morality and its impact on society. Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume provided an ethical justification for pluralism, arguing that some values are thought to be considered virtues and socially acceptable only because they are "immediately approved of by others, without any regard to utility or beneficial tendency...without any public interest involved. " At this level, Hume enables individual values and rights to be decoupled from the interests of society (the collective), arguing that any value can be accepted and respected if it does not interfere with the freedom of others. On the European continent in 18th century, philosophers petitioned for freedom and pluralism of thought and culture, but politicians pursued an absolutist system of government, hoping to retain feudal hierarchies and aristocracies. Absolutism persecuted freedom of thought. In 1715, Voltaire satirized the Duke of Orléans, the Regent of France at that time, which led to his own exile to Surrey. In 1717, he was imprisoned in the Bastille by the French ruler for 11 years because of his satirical poems on the corruption of the French court.

As the nineteenth century progressed, pluralism matured and gained intellectual respect. Liberal intellectuals recognized necessarily be brought about by social revolutions; rather, excessive social revolutions could bring about an infringement of personal liberty. German theorist G.W.F.Hegel once argued that leaders of the French Revolution, such as Robespierre, forced the ideals of republican virtue upon the common people of France, which ultimately led to tyranny and executions in the name of republicanism. According to Hegel, there is no single political doctrine can solve all social problems, and it is very dangerous for people to hope that a political doctrine can save them from true happiness. According to the British scholar John Stuart Mill, human beings should admit that they cannot recognize the fullness of events by themselves, and they should also respect the diversity of others and their ways of action. He wrote, "Human beings were not infallible until they were better equipped than they are now to recognize truth in all its dimensions; most of their truths were only half-truths; and the unity of opinion, unless it arose from the fullest and freest comparisons of opposing opinions, was not a matter of course for them, but of their own. fullest and freest comparison, is not desirable, and that diversity is not an evil, but a good, and that these principles apply to the manner in which men act, no less than to their opinions. "

At the beginning of the 20th century, various contradictions and social divisions emerged in capitalism, leading to the First World War and the Great Depression, which challenged and questioned pluralism and liberalism. During this period, the defense of pluralism by the intellectual community was not as extensive as it had been during the past two centuries. Many were more enthusiastic about left-wing socialism (Stalinism) and right-wing nationalism and fascism. The surge of extreme ideological trends in the 1930s evolved into the emergence of totalitarianism. Totalitarian regimes deny all forms of pluralism and emphasize the consistency of social thought. Fascists believe that individual freedom of speech (cultural diversity) is



contradictory to the freedom of the state. For the freedom of the country and nation, individuals should unconditionally contribute to the country, including by sacrificing their own freedom. Stalinists believe that individual freedom of speech and thought are tools for the bourgeoisie to oppress the proletariat, and that only the cultural and intellectual freedom of the proletariat represents true freedom and diversity. However, an authority determined whether any kind of speech belongs to the bourgeoise. So, the government has the power to directly manage social culture. However, after Stalin launched the Great Purge and Hitler launched the Second World War, the utopia of fascism and Stalinism was shattered, and pluralism was once again valued and widely appreciated by the intellectual community. In 1944, economist Friedrich Hayek published The Road to Serfdom, which completely refuted and criticized the view that political leaders attempted to bring happiness to the people through national plans. For example, in economics, Hayek believed that the essence of division of labor is the division of knowledge. For thousands of years, everyone has been spontaneously utilizing scattered, unique, and unspeakable knowledge, using price as the sole signal for division of labor and trade, and promoting human progress and prosperity. No individual or group can master all the knowledge required for market operation, so a planned system will inevitably cause huge waste, eliminate knowledge division of labor, and ultimately lead to economic collapse, moral decay, and the extinction of truth. In 1945, political scientist Carl Popper published The Open Society and Its Enemy, in which he argued that any politician using the idea of "utopia" to coerce ordinary people into pursuing a happy life would lead to the emergence of totalitarianism, and the consequence would be that no one could achieve a happy life, only suffering. Since 1945, pluralism has once again moved into the mainstream of the intellectual community. Representative discussions on pluralism include Four Essays on Liberty published by Saya Berlin in 1969, A Theory of Justice published by Rawls in 1971, and Liberal Pluralism published by William Galston in 2002. At that time, pluralism was systemized and became an important political theory.

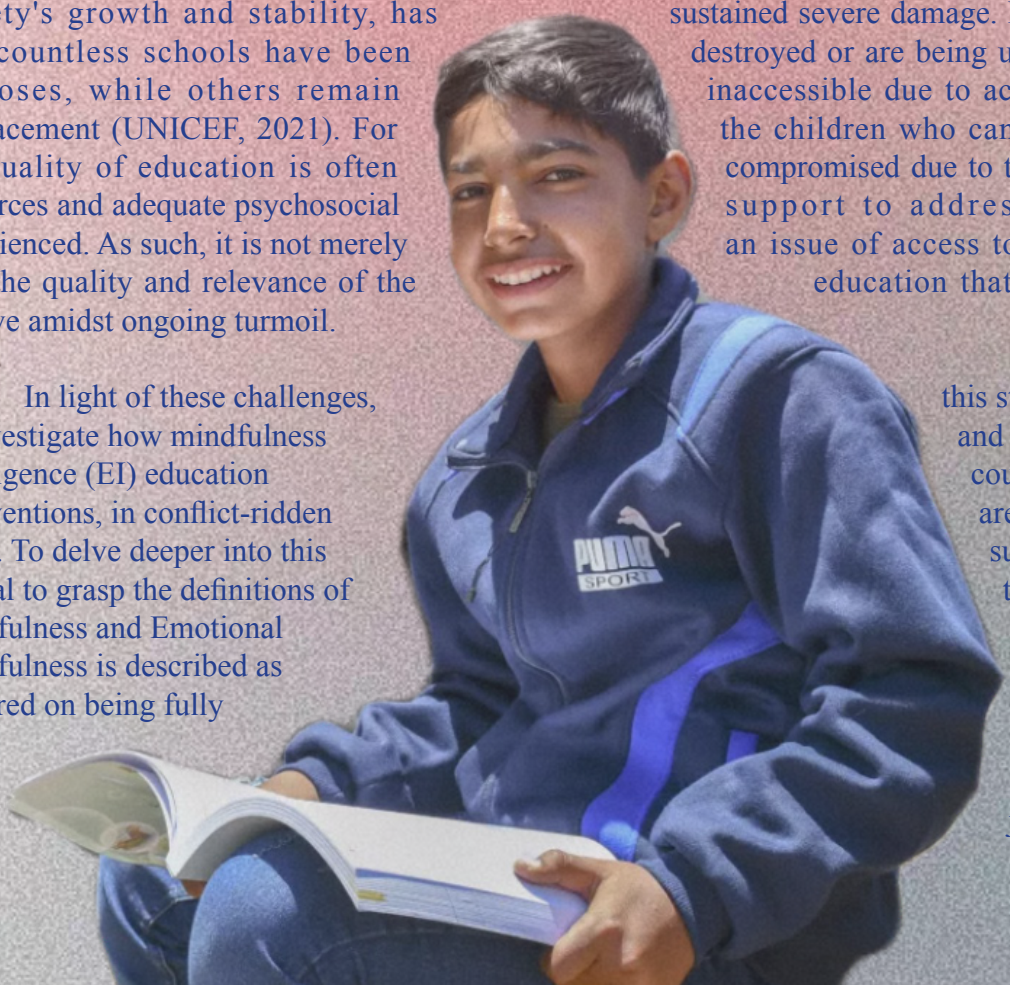
Pluralism has become a universal value and has historical inevitability. However, pluralism is also often challenged and threatened, although it successfully overcomes these challenges. The latest challenge comes from the successful rise of the Four Asian Tigers led by Confucian ideology since 1990, which has once again posed a threat to Western pluralism. According to them, pluralism is not necessary for national success and development. However, regardless of whether pluralism is threatened, embracement of plural values, tolerance of dissidence, and absorption of the outstanding characteristics of various cultures are all characteristics shared by mainstream civilizations. These values are all key to nation’s abilities to develop in the long term.

# Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence Education in Conflict Zones: THE CASE OF SYRIA

Thomas Xiang G10 Phi

The continuous conflict in Syria that erupted in 2011 has precipitated one of the most significant humanitarian emergencies of the 21st century. The ongoing chaos has made millions of families uprooted, decimated infrastructure, and wrought incalculable trauma upon its population. Children, whose lives and educations have been altogether halted, have been the biggest victims of the conflict. This demographic is inherently the most vulnerable to the psychological ravages of war. Children confront a daily reality where violence and displacement have become the norm, resulting in a generation of Syrian youth being at risk of enduring long-term cognitive and emotional scars that could impede their development and prospects.

The educational sector, playing the role of a fundamental pillar for any society's growth and stability, has sustained severe damage. Reports indicate that countless schools have been destroyed or are being used for military purposes, while others remain inaccessible due to active conflict or displacement (UNICEF, 2021). For the children who can attend school, the quality of education is often compromised due to the lack of basic resources and adequate psychosocial support to address the trauma experienced. As such, it is not merely an issue of access to education but also the quality and relevance of the education that these children receive amidst ongoing turmoil.

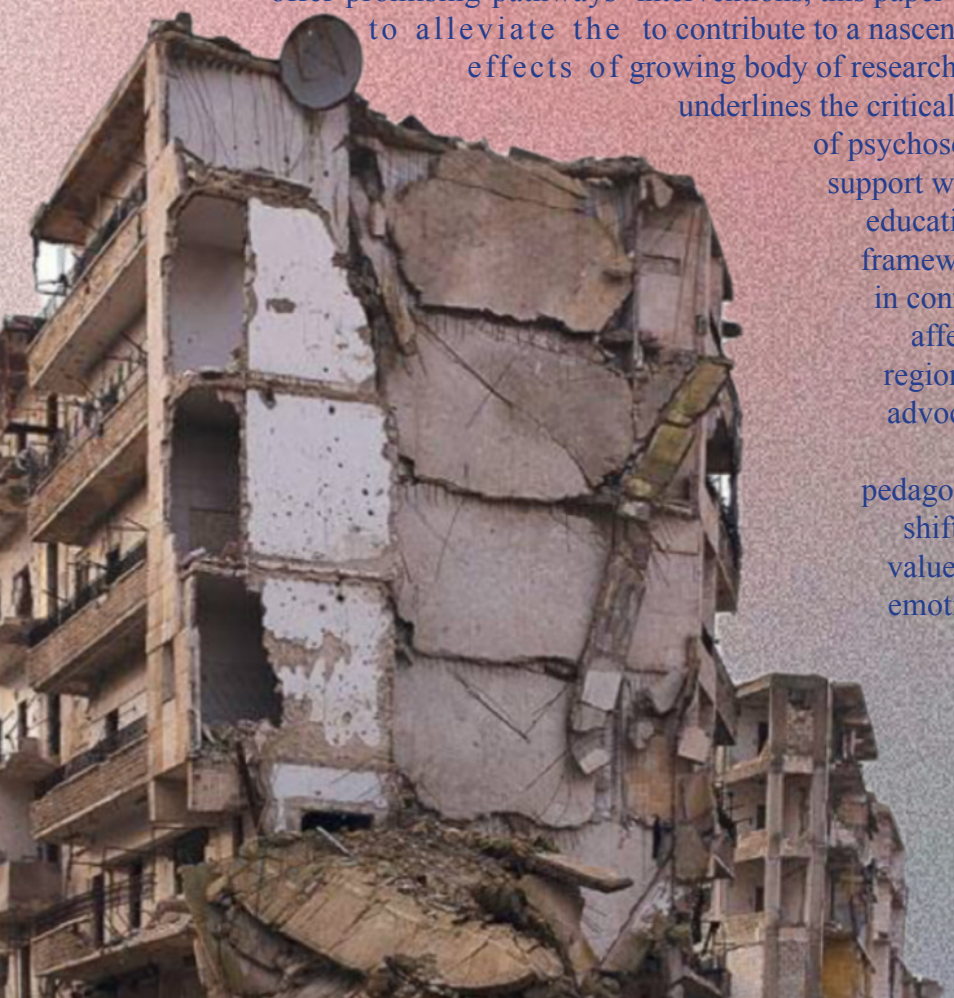



In light of these challenges, this study aims to investigate how mindfulness and emotional intelligence (EI) education could serve as interventions, in conflict-ridden areas such as Syria. To delve deeper into this subject it is crucial to grasp the definitions of two concepts. Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence. Mindfulness is described as a practice centered on being fully present and engaged without passing judgment.

mindfulness principles can cultivate feelings of tranquility, clarity, and focus (Kabat Zinn, 1994). Similarly emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify, comprehend, and manage one's emotions as well as those of others. It is increasingly recognized as a component for emotional well-being (Goleman, 1995). By incorporating these teachings into the education provided to children there is potential, for enhancing resilience strengthening emotional control and boosting academic performance even in challenging circumstances.

The thesis presented in this paper suggests that integrating mindfulness and emotional intelligence (EI) practices, into the setting can serve as a tool for Syrian students. These approaches offer promising pathways to alleviate the effects of caused by conflict, which in turn may lead to improved performance. Various research studies have shown that mindfulness techniques can help reduce the toll of stress and enhance concentration (Siegel & Bryson 2017). Additionally teaching EI skills has been linked to control lower levels of aggression and increased empathy among students (Brackett et al. 2011). By customizing these strategies to fit the culture and context there is potential not only for academic recovery but also, for nurturing a resilient and emotionally intelligent next generation capable of thriving despite challenging circumstances.

In proposing these interventions, this paper aims to contribute to a nascent but growing body of research that underlines the critical role of psychosocial support within educational frameworks in conflict-affected regions. It advocates for a pedagogical shift that values the emotional and psychological facets of learning as much as the acquisition of knowledge. Through an examination of the extant literature and the analysis of field reports and case studies, this research will offer a nuanced view of the potential for mindfulness and EI to act as catalysts for healing and growth in Syrian schools, serving as a foundation for a more peaceful and prosperous post-conflict society.



# Background

Before the civil conflict erupted in 2011 Syria had an education system with a high number of students attending school and around 90% of people being literate (UNDP, 2010). Education was highly valued as an aspect of society and a means for young individuals to progress in life showcasing the country's dedication to nurturing its youth. However since the conflict began there have been setbacks, in achievements. Schools have turned into battlegrounds or temporary shelters leading to disruptions or complete halts in activities. Presently than 2.1 million children within Syria and 700,000 Syrian children in neighboring nations are facing the reality of delayed or denied education (UNICEF, 2021) sparking concerns about a potential 'lost generation' that might never regain the educational and developmental opportunities lost due, to war.

This section delves into the differences, between the conditions in Syria before conflicts arose and the current situation plagued by disruptions illustrating a contrast from a once thriving education system to one now plagued by devastation and hopelessness. The deterioration of facilities in Syria goes beyond physical damage; it signifies a deeper breakdown of the societal framework that fostered learning and growth. Teachers, many of whom have been displaced or affected by conflict themselves are scarce. Those who remain often work under unstable circumstances. As a result there has been a decline in the quality of education with classrooms, insufficient teaching resources and a curriculum suited to the traumatic environment in which these children find themselves.

The psychological effects of prolonged exposure to conflict on children are profound. The ongoing stress and trauma experienced by these children can lead to behavioral challenges such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) depression, anxiety and aggression. These difficulties are exacerbated by access, to health support services leaving many children to navigate their traumas without professional assistance.

In this challenging situation, Emotional Intelligence (EI) stands out as a beacon of hope. Both mindfulness originating from practices centered on enhancing awareness and acceptance of the moment (Kabat Zinn, 1994) and emotional intelligence (EI) which encompasses skills related to identifying, comprehending, controlling and utilizing emotions efficiently (Salovey & Mayer 1990) have been acknowledged for their effects, on mental well being and educational outcomes. Research indicates that mindfulness can alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression while enhancing focus, self regulation and academic performance among individuals (Zoogman et al., 2015). Likewise education on intelligence has been associated with social abilities, emotional management and academic success (Durlak et al. 2011).

In light of this information, this segment will delve into the benefits of implementing mindfulness and EI in conflict-affected regions particularly focusing on Syria. Considering the difficulties faced by children in settings integrating these practices into educational initiatives could offer vital support, for their psychological and emotional health. It could equip them with strategies to navigate through the challenges they encounter during conflict situations. Potentially lessen the impact of trauma. The possibility of these efforts aiding in boosting the resilience of children is promising. It can help them handle challenges and develop the cognitive skills essential, for their future achievements.



## Evaluation of the Case

The assessment of incorporating Emotional Intelligence (EI) into the setting of conflict affected areas, in Syria has highlighted both the advantages and obstacles of such initiatives. Recent studies like the one conducted by Brown, Goodman and Inzlicht (2019) suggest that mindfulness techniques can help reduce stress reactions and build resilience in children exposed to prolonged

heightened alertness and may grapple with memories and fears related to their encounters with violence and loss. Embracing an approach may aid in breaking the cycle of stress and trauma responses offering a potential pathway for relief.

# Proposed Solutions and Changes

To tackle the education related challenges alongside issues confronting Syrian students we suggest an inclusive strategy that melds culturally sensitive mindfulness programs, with Emotional Intelligence education.

This comprehensive approach aims to address the impact of trauma while also creating an atmosphere that promotes learning and emotional development. By combining these two methods the goal is not to enhance well being but also to boost academic involvement and accomplishments laying a groundwork, for enduring resilience among young Syrians.




At the heart of this plan is the creation and implementation of a curriculum that respects and reflects the experiences and values of children. Learning from Emotional Intelligence (EI) programs in Eastern educational settings as highlighted by Abu Hilal et al. (2013) this initiative will be tailored to fit within Syrias cultural and societal norms.This adaptation will involve integrating traditions, language and stories to ensure that the interventions are meaningful and embraced by the children and their communities thereby increasing their effectiveness.

To support the implementation of these initiatives it is crucial to provide training for teachers. This would include workshops and ongoing assistance to help educators effectively deliver mindfulness practices and Emotional Intelligence education. By empowering teachers who're part of the community, as the students these interventions gain credibility and are more likely to be maintained over time.

Furthermore teachers who have an understanding of these methods can act as examples, for their students reinforcing the lessons taught in these programs. It is crucial to have community based support systems that help reinforce these teachings and ensure they become part of students daily routines. This could include sessions for parents, community workshops and the formation of peer support groups that promote the practice and enhancement of mindfulness and emotional intelligence skills beyond the classroom setting. These community connections play a role in providing support nurturing resilience not just in individual children but also within their broader social circles.

To accomplish these objectives forming partnerships with organizations specializing in health and education is imperative. Collaborative initiatives with entities like UNICEF, UNESCO and various non governmental organizations (NGOs) can offer access to resources, expertise and funding. Such partnerships could assist in creating teaching materials training educators and establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions.

Additionally implementing an evaluation system to track the progress and results of these interventions is crucial. This system should incorporate both quantitative measures to evaluate the impact, on students mental well being, health and academic achievements.

By evaluating and receiving feedback the system can be improved over time to better cater to the changing requirements of children and their educational setting. Our goal is to establish an encouraging learning atmosphere by fostering the psychological well being of students, through mindfulness practices aligned with their culture and emotional intelligence education. Ultimately this effort can play a role, in reconstructing the prospects and future of Syrias youth by empowering them with the resilience and abilities needed to succeed despite the challenges they have encountered.

# Conclusion

The mindfulness and EI education into the war-torn fabric of Syrian society offers a promising avenue for addressing the complex psychological and educational needs of children affected by conflict. The pervasive impact of war on the mental health and cognitive development of young learners cannot be overstated; thus, the introduction of such programs represents a critical and hopeful intervention. By promoting resilience and emotional awareness, these initiatives could play an instrumental role in supporting the next generation's ability to navigate and overcome the profound adversities they face.

While logistical and cultural challenges to the implementation of these interventions are significant, the transformative potential of mindfulness and EI education in conflict zones like Syria is compelling. Existing literature and case studies point toward the efficacy of these approaches in enhancing students' capacities to manage stress, understand and regulate their emotions, and develop empathy for others. Such skills are invaluable in any context but are particularly crucial in environments where trauma and uncertainty are everyday



realities. The ability to remain present, navigate complex emotional landscapes, and forge connections with others can serve as powerful tools for personal and community healing.

The anticipated benefits of mindfulness and EI education extend beyond the individual level, with the potential to promote social cohesion and peacebuilding. By fostering empathy and understanding, students can learn to appreciate diverse perspectives and collaborate effectively with others. These competencies are essential in laying the groundwork for a more peaceful and inclusive society. As such, these educational programs are not merely an investment in the mental health of children; they are an investment in the future stability and prosperity of the nation.

Undoubtedly, the introduction of these programs requires careful planning, resource allocation, and a commitment to long-term support. It necessitates collaboration between educators, mental health professionals, community leaders, and international partners. However, the pursuit of such an ambitious educational overhaul is justified by the substantial returns it promises: a generation of Syrian youth equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with the emotional and social tools to rebuild their lives and communities.

Innovation in education, particularly in post-conflict reconstruction, must prioritize the holistic develelopment of learners. By nurturing the emotional and intellectual capabilities of Syrian youth, these educational interventions can catalyze their potential to thrive amidst adversity. Children who are emotionally intelligent and mindful can become agents of positive change, contributing to a culture of resilience and peace within their communities. In the long term, the integration of mindfulness and EI into Syrian schools has the potential to contribute to the nation's recovery and growth, reflecting the indomitable spirit of its people and the unwavering belief in the transformative power of education.

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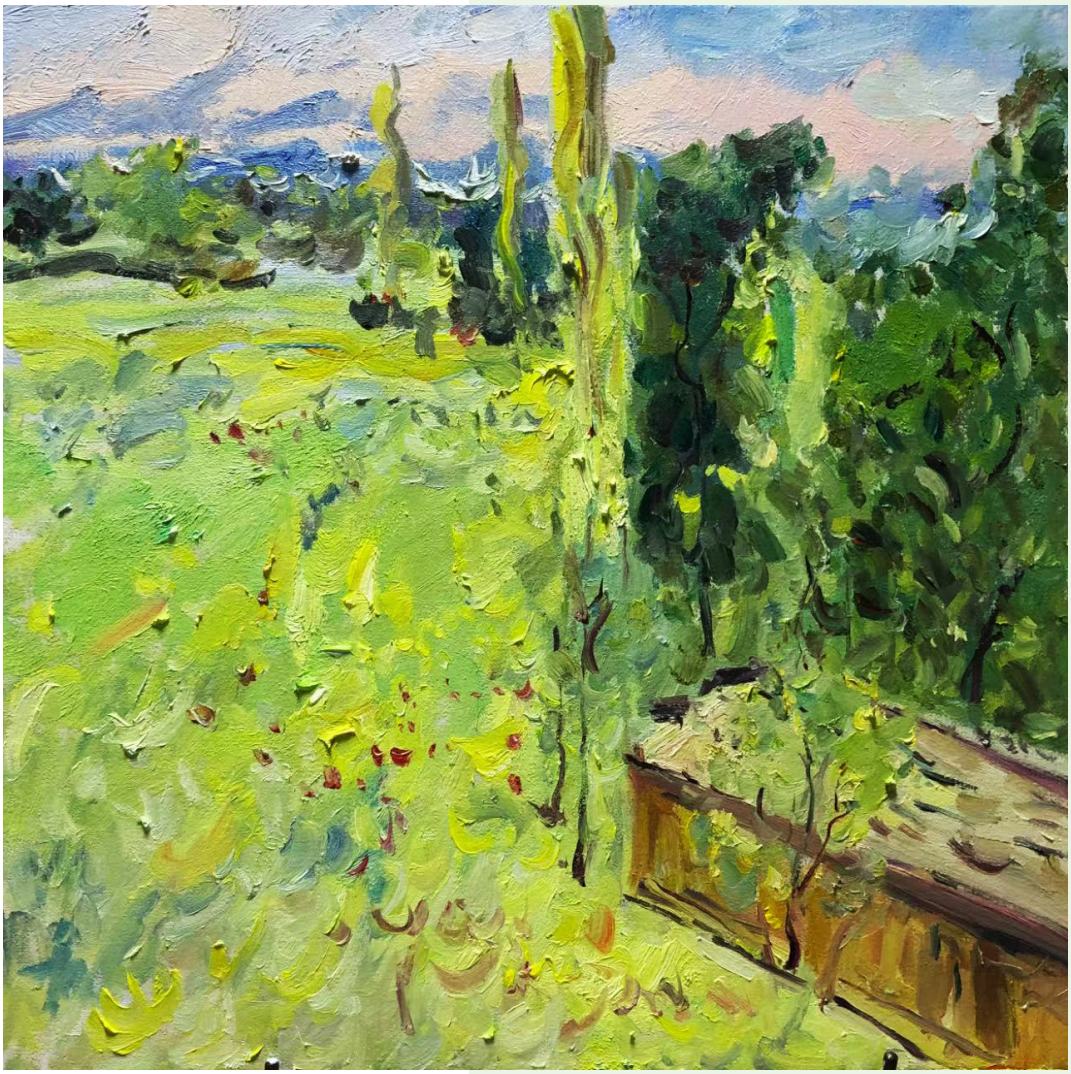
# *03 Art Gallery*



# Art Pieces

Sophia Xu G12 Eta

*The lush greenery of spring blends seamlessly together, adorned with splashes of red flowers and kissed by the sun.*



*The reflection on the water, shimmering in hues of purple, gently guides the way homeward, creating a path of tranquility and beauty.*

# *04 School Events*

# Career Day

On December 5th, the Career Day Talk was held on WLSA Bao Shan campus in the afternoon. Students had a variety of careers to choose from. Starting from bio-med, economics, and finance, to art, law, and media & psychology, students could choose two careers out of the numerous options.

From interviews with a few students, it is evident that the Career Day was beneficial towards their future major. Seven Xu and Minnie Ni came to the same conclusion "I am sure of the direction of my future major and career decision. By listening to the lectures and their experiences, I imagined what it would be like if I went on that path. Consequently, Most importantly, I learned a lot more than what I used to know realizing the career that I'm interested in."

Furthermore, "After listening to the media & psychology speech, it gave me a better understanding of the operation system behind social media. I realized that it is difficult for video operators to make certain progress in a short period of time. Although success might not be a piece of cake to obtain, the cost of trying is little, so might as well just go for it. Moreover, video content could be better when combined with psychological skills. You could analyze the comment area to determine the video content and theme." Annie Hua learned the skill of utilizing psychological skills to operate social media platforms by listening to the two lecturers' experiences.

Near the end of the activity, the students thanked all the elites who spent their time sharing their experiences. This remarkable event helped students substantially.








# WINTER GALA

As the wintry breeze sweeps across the land, carrying the chill in its breath, we WLSA students celebrate the annual celebration of Winter Gala, embracing hope and dreams. The open ceremony witnessed engaging and colorful performances. The beautiful voices of Disney princesses and vigorous dancing of What is Love led us to the world of love and bravery. The school orchestra as well as drama club let us immerse in the glamour of classic music.



The ending of the ceremony opened up the day full of happiness and surprises. Various CCA workshops and final presentation of art classes not only provided platforms for students to show their talents but also inspire their creativity and innovation. For instance, the Botany Club and Language club blend Chinese and Western cultures together by making natural garlands and carried on Chinese traditional bookmarks. At the same time, dance and music competition were in full swing. “From rock and roll to pop music, solo to music band, there always exist a song that resonate with your heart!” said Louise Zhu who watched the whole show.



If you are a fan of hands-on projects, the carnival will be your best choices. Through the games of Draw Something, Music Guessing and Balloon Making, you can make great fun with friends and gather stamps for the lottery!

Winter is a time for introspection.In this icy season, our dreams and vitality dance like snowflakes, light and beautiful. We yearned for the coming future and nurture new beginnings!


2023 WLSA
Winter




TDD SPACE





# ART WEEK



Art week was a celebration of creativity by showcasing the diverse talents of students at our school. This year's art week was packed with activities ranging from music competitions, documentary conference, to hands-on workshops.

The music competition was a highlight of Art Week. The competition drew a large audience, with students and teachers alike coming together to support the participants. The vocal category showcased a range of genres. Instrumentalists impressed with their mastery over their instruments and delivered performances that were both technically proficient and emotionally resonant. In addition, the band category was a lively conclusion to the competition due to groups of students coming together to create music that was both innovative and entertaining.In the end, the judges had a difficult task in selecting the winners, as the level of talent was exceptionally high.

The documentary conference provided a thought-provoking break from the musical festivities. Students and faculty presented documentaries they had made, covering a wide range of topics from social issues to personal stories.This event not only showcased the filmmaking talents within our school but also sparked important conversations about the subjects depicted in the films.




Art Week also offered a series of workshops, with one of the most popular being the bracelet-making workshop. Students had the opportunity to learn various techniques for creating their own bracelets, from beading to weaving. These workshops were not only a fun, hands-on activity but also a way to encourage mindfulness and the therapeutic aspects of crafting.

Art Week at our school was successful by bringing together students of all ages in a celebration of the arts. The music competition, documentary conference, and workshops provided a platform for students to express themselves, learn new skills, and appreciate the talents of their peers. As we reflect on the events of the week, we are reminded of the importance of the arts in developing a creative and inclusive school community.We look forward to next year's Art Week, confident that it will continue to be a highlight of our school calendar.



# South Africa Journal Excerpt

Liam Ding G11 Gamma

Day 4 January 24th (Sunny to Cloudy)

It was a special day for the Durban tour. We got up early and went to school. After we got to the school, we went to the city center on the school bus. The city center is not like the city center that we usually thought of. As a student from Shanghai, the city center is like gigantic shopping malls, skyscrapers, and busy business stuff. However, in South Africa, it has more homeless people, poor security, and awful sanitation. On the road, I kept seeing these. When we got out of the car, a man came directly to us and shouted, "I am a parla, parla, parla." I knew it means homeless later. Luckily, it was a joke, but it did warn us about the safety. We first went to the Victoria Market, a market selling local religious things. From my perspective as a foreigner, it was like a cult. The first market sells more ordinary things. The picture below is like a limestone. They use it to paint the wall. I know it sounds ridiculous.

Then we passed through a lane which sells clothes and things. I saw a traditional shield and weapon. It is hard to believe their ancestors used those to fight against colonists with guns centuries ago. I also saw a mural about the local rain god that they worship.

Then came the most dangerous zone. I don't have any pictures since I was warned not to take my phone out. The first purpose is to respect others, second is to keep away from danger. They sell some kinds of herbs and dry plants. They light the plants during some religious ceremonies for god. The most shocking thing they sell is the skulls and skeletons of the animals. I can even see some rotten meat on the skulls. Flies are everywhere. The stinky and irritant smell made me feel sick. I got to know Zulu use these skulls in their homes and places for their ancestors to rest their souls. The market helps me to view South Africa holistically.

Finally, we got out of the market and went to the Ushaka beach. It was like heaven after hell. It was indeed a gorgeous place though the weather turned cloudy. Along the coastline, there were mostly hotels. On the right of the picture was the stadium where they used to hold the Olympics.

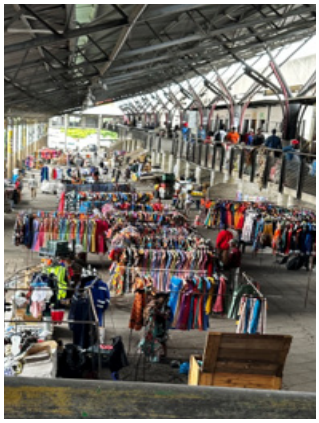
Day 6 January 26th (Sunny)

It was the day for the beach. We went to Ballito which is a little Northward from Durban. There is quite a lot of white people living there. On the beaches, beside the roads, and in the restaurants, the people I saw were basically all white. It made me think: Nelson Mandela broke segregation decades ago in a nonviolent way. The teacher, Mr Tucker, told me that when Mandela was arrested and sentenced to jail for years, he actually had a pistol in the car to fight back and escape. However, he didn't. It reminds me of MLK Jr. and Malcolm X. One kept protesting nonviolently, while one stood for Black Muslims and violent protest. The same question also came to the CCP during the establishing phase. Mao made his choice and said famously, "The regime came from the gun barrel." They chose to found their own army. Through the anti-Japanese War and the Korean War, CCP succeeded in being a giant party in a huge sovereign country. Back in South Africa, though Nelson broke the segregation, the revolution wasn't complete. The controlling class, the top-class people of South Africa remain white hegemony. The places with great scenes and comforts (usually by the sea and away from the industries in the city like Johannesburg) such as Ballito are still prodominently white.. Did Mandella really succeed? I would say definitely. The living quality of black ethnicity and colored people (a racist word in most countries, but it is the official word for ethnicity in South Africa and means no offense) improved gigantically. They had legal rights just as the white people did, but the society was still controlled by the top whites, and this could not be quite changed in a polite and gentle way. The same situations can be seen in history: The French Revolution and the violence in the Bastille terminated the French royal class completely through blood; America, the land of the free, fought against the British twice to keep the colonists' control away from the original 13 states. These two examples perfectly show that complete and thorough revolutions come from violence and wars. However, would MLK and Nelson Mandela be considered that great if they chose the violent way? I don't know, probably not.





*The limestone-like materials the locals use to paint the wall*






*The mural about the local rain god that the local people in South Africa worship*



Another thing is the reversed racism. Ever since Nelson Mandela, all South African presidents have been black. It is like a revenge. Because of the history of oppression by the white, the black people, by a large population, will support the black president no matter what political position and ideas that president has and even when they disagree with him. This foolish retaliation made the way for a corrupted president such as Zuma. Also, the law forced the companies to hire black workers. It seemed right at first for it eliminates racism in the job marjet. However, at the same time, it led many uneducated black people into occupations that they are incapable of doing. It's not their fault for being uneducated, but many companies are bankrupt because of this, and this situation is worsened after COVID. I could see a lot of empty company buildings on the road. Also, I found out that the cities of South Africa are quite small. After my research, I found most lands that were previously owned by whites are taken by the governments and given to the blacks. However, the financial status of the blacks is still not as good as the status of the whites. This made a lot of land undeveloped. The beach was wonderful as the sun shone on the dazzling beach. It really looks like California. We even saw a hotel named Beverly Hills. I just chilled and that was my best day. That is the end of my first-week journey.









# Fun Facts

1 Students are required to wear suits and trousers every day, or polo shirts if it's too hot, and they emphasize their outfits several times in the morning assembly, including the color of their socks. Clothes also represent a lot of things. The stripes, colors, and trim of the suit represent your rank in school. In addition, if you win any award that makes your school proud, you will receive a medal to hang on your suit to show your achievement. This has also led to students willingly wearing suits and uniforms because they have earned them. Strict discipline suits everyone. Junior students are obliged to greet senior students when they meet them. And high and low grades are also seen by their clothes. My roommate, Jordan, got a new embroidery and badge because he had won a debate contest the day before. The next day, when the sun was more than 30 degrees, he chose to wear a full suit to show his badge.

2 When talking to host families about South Africa's racial history and problems, they used the word "colored" all the time. It had an overbearing connotation. It sounded like it's tainted. I always thought they could say this word because they were a mulatto family, so I avoided it when I talked to them. They probably felt it too, and told me it was their official word. I was kind of shocked to imagine a white person saying to a mixed-race person, "You are colored." They probably guessed it, saying that they had friends who went to study in the United States and said they were colored. They were criticized by the professor for it and solved it using the South African Demographics website.

3 There are so many monkeys in South Africa that I can see them at school and in the trees in the residential areas. The mother in the host family told me that monkeys can come in and steal from you, so lock all the doors and windows before you go out. One day I saw a "snake" in their backyard, which scared me. The "snake" crawled onto a small coffee table in the courtyard. I immediately told them, and they laughed very happily, saying that it a rubber one to frighten monkeys that had been stealing the things they put there, and asked me to send it to teacher Gong, who was afraid of snakes.

