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BEIJING'S ESSENTIAL INTERNATIONAL FAMILY RESOURCE

# 菁 jingkids

ENGLISH EDITION

July-August 2021

**I Scream  
For Ice Cream:**  
Our Favorite  
Local Popsicles  
in Beijing

**Plus:**  
How one teen  
published a  
sister poetry  
book over  
quarantine



## Teen Takeover

Lessons on Growing Up

ISBN 978-7-5587-3212-6




July-August 2021





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**jīngkids**

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# True Run Media

Helping the international community get the most out of life in Beijing

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## The *jingkids* Board



### Alessandra Azambuja

Alessandra's Beijing adventure began in 2010 when she arrived here with her local Beijinger husband and two children. She is originally from Brazil and has also lived and worked in Argentina and New Zealand. With a passion for working in multicultural environments with international students, Alessandra worked for nearly nine years at The University of Auckland English Language Academy, and is currently at AISB-Hope International in Beijing. You can contact her at [azambuja.alessandra@hopeintschool.org](mailto:azambuja.alessandra@hopeintschool.org)

### Tim Coghlan

Tim first came to China in 2001 and has made Beijing his home for the last 10 years. He specializes in new market development for the world's most iconic consumer brands, previously helping luxury brands enter and expand in China, and now helps a Chinese technology company build their global business. He enjoys outdoor adventures with his two young children, and time permitting, vlogs in Chinese under the moniker of "Kangaroo Daddy".



### Tara Gillan

Tara is from England, UK, and has been in China over 14 years where she is raising third culture, bilingual kids. She has a passion for education in China, and is a lifelong learner still trying to master Mandarin. In between, work, study and being a mum, you will find her looking for her next adventure!



### Juliet London

After seven years in Beijing, market researcher, branding consultant and writer, mother to two teenagers, Juliet 'Lady' London continues to be fascinated by this ever changing city. British by birth, she has also lived in Australia and other parts of Asia. Her work primarily focuses on education research, leaving less time than she would like to take exercise, walk her dog, and snap up bargains at local markets.



### Caroline Nath

Caroline Nath moved to Beijing as a teenager after growing up in the US, Canada, France, and India. She is a filmmaker, radio host, Parent Effectiveness Training teacher, founder of Bonne Nani Jams, and an organic food promoter. She has two multi-ethnic and multi-lingual children. Contact her at [kulfidoll@gmail.com](mailto:kulfidoll@gmail.com).



### Mike Signorelli

Mike Signorelli arrived in Beijing in 1994 as a student and has called China home ever since. He has held several senior management roles over the past 20+ years, including his last corporate job with NBA China. Mike is the founder of Signature Wine, an independent subscription wine club. Contact him at [mike@sigwine.com](mailto:mike@sigwine.com).



### Grace Sun

Hailing from Sydney, Grace is a true blue Aussie who was always curious about her Chinese heritage. After working in Taipei, Seoul, and Hong Kong for many years, she moved to Beijing in 2016 and hasn't looked back since. In between being a mother of two and working in luxury hotel design and management, she is also founder of the bespoke DCA studio for interior design and art. Contact her at [gs@designcollabassociates.com](mailto:gs@designcollabassociates.com).



## A NOTE TO OUR READERS

This time last summer, an editor from *Jingkids* asked me to write a food review on a Turkish restaurant for the annual Teen Takeover issue.

The idea both excited and terrified me. I hadn't eaten out at a restaurant in months. I'd never interviewed anyone, never published anything I'd written, and certainly never tried Turkish food.

But sometimes you just have to take a leap of faith.

That article I never would have imagined myself writing ended up changing my life. Thanks to editors like Mina Yan at *Jingkids*, that first step led to an internship, nearly a dozen bylines, and the skills that helped me bring my school magazine back to life.

This summer, I'm back as the first ever student Managing Editor of the annual Teen Takeover—the same issue that started me on this journey.

For the first time, this special issue of our magazine is produced almost entirely by students under 18, some as young as 13, working in almost every department, from editors to photographers to designers to writers.

I've learned so much from everyone here. From our lunch time hangouts to in-office jokes to the drafts after drafts I received every day, all of it pushed me to become a better editor, writer, and person.

Growing up is hard. Even now by writing this editor's note, I'm rereading every word, terrified of the idea of others reading what I've written and what they might think. It's just as scary as taking the first step outside to write my first article. But without that first step, I wouldn't be where I am today, sharing with you all the wonderful stories we came up with under the theme "Lessons on Growing Up".

Even though we can't travel outside of China, there are plenty of places sunny and sandy near Beijing to explore (p20). Don't forget to grab your book bag, cause we're packing three must-reads that'll make you at least appear like a literature genius to mom and dad (p10).

Frustrated by the heat? Keep cool with these traditional Beijing ice creams (p28) while discovering the hidden stories behind your favorite Beijing destinations (p26).

Find out what teens today think about curfews (p32), tiger moms (p37), and the ever-present struggles of navigating long-distance friendships (p14). Read about overcoming the fears of starting high school (p44), what the heck "yeet" and other teen lingo means (p36), and one teen's experience publishing a poetry book with her sister (p46).

I could not be prouder of what we've accomplished together. Thank you once again to all the "grown-up" editors at *Jingkids* for taking a chance on us teens and for giving us this opportunity to grow and to shine.



**TianTian Xu**  
Managing Editor



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## ON THE COVER

14-year-old FeiFei Xu is just one of many teen writers working on this month's issue. Take a sneak peek at the photos on the desk, featuring our young team at work, interviewing, designing, writing, and editing.

Photographed by Dave's Studio



# SAY HELLO TO BEIJING'S SMALLEST

Share your new arrival and  
scan this QR code!



Note that we will only publish  
photos of babies born  
in the last 12 months



**Maksim Yunitskiy**

Russian

Born Feb 1

to Olga Yunitskaya and Andrey Yunitskiy  
at Amcare Women's and Children's Hospital



**Stella Victoria Schaefer**

German/American

Born Mar 13

to Christiane Schaefer and Daniel Lee Arsenault  
at Oasis International Hospital



**Mila Huot**

French/American

Born Mar 3

to Rapahel Huot and Mariana Jaramillo  
at Hospital San Francisco de Asia, Univeritario



**Nathan Eguiluz Lin**

Chinese/Peruvian

Born Jul 4

to Lin Shang Yun and Gonzalo Francisco David Eguiluz Salas  
at Shenzhen Maternity and Child Health Care Hospital



**Zachariah Dilip Simandan**

Romanian

Born Mar 22

to Upashna Rai Simandan and Voicu Mihnea Simandan  
at Harmoni Mother and Child Hospital



# What's New

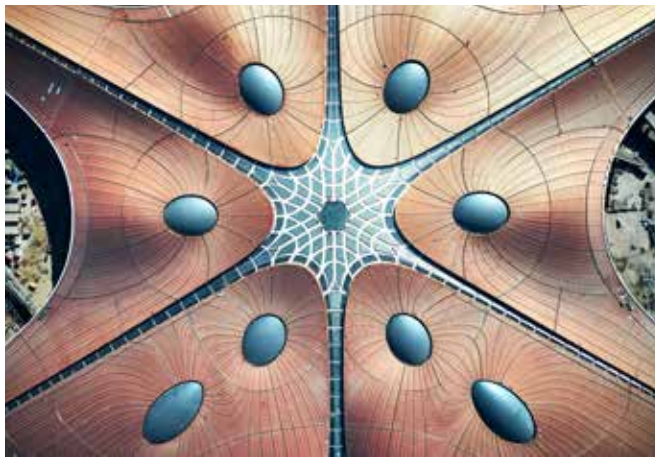


## Universal Studios Opening

Since its construction began back in 2016, we've all been eagerly awaiting opening day of Universal Beijing. Well, we've officially heard the news that the park has finally completed construction and has undergone two stages of testing. Now, they're doing the final round of employee testing before the park's grand unveiling soon. At the moment, two metro lines – Line 7 and BaTong Line – have dedicated Universal Resort Stations located near the park's entrance. So, keep an eye out for tickets, as they may become available very soon!

## Daxing Airport

When Beijing Daxing International Airport (PKX) officially opened on Sep 25, 2019, it stood as the largest airport in the world. With flights departing to 112 destinations around the globe, it quickly surpassed Beijing Capital International Airport in popularity. The gigantic Daxing airport – with its impressive shape and adorable nickname, "Starfish" – has enormous dimensions and holds four runways. Its location in Daxing District is ideal to serve the Chinese capital and the neighboring areas of Hebei and Tianjin. With a 46km-distance from Tiananmen Square, a 67km-distance from Beijing International Airport, and a 26km-distance from Langfang City Center, Daxing airport aims to become the main airport hub of the region.



## Beijing's HSR (High-Speed Railways)

Beijing's HSR has certainly become popular over the years. Whereas once people preferred airplanes to high-speed railways, there's been something of a shift as of late. But it's not hard to see why HSR is widely used nowadays. With travel time between Beijing and Shanghai cut to a mere four hours, upgrades to Beijing's HSRs have made them much faster and more efficient. Likewise, since summer is a rainy season for much of the country – especially if traveling to Zhejiang or Jiangsu Provinces – Beijing's HSR does a great job of reaching every region, even when airplanes fail us.



## Beijing's Sharing Economy

As mobile phones continue to dominate just about every aspect of our lives, more and more companies in Beijing are embracing the "Sharing Economy." Popular transport apps such as Shenzhou Car Service, Didi, and Mobike make life much easier, enabling folks to bike to work without owning a bike or call a taxi from the comfort of their couch. By installing a simple app on your phone, you're able to scan and unlock those share-bikes and get to work without the hassle of being trampled on the subway. Talk about efficiency.

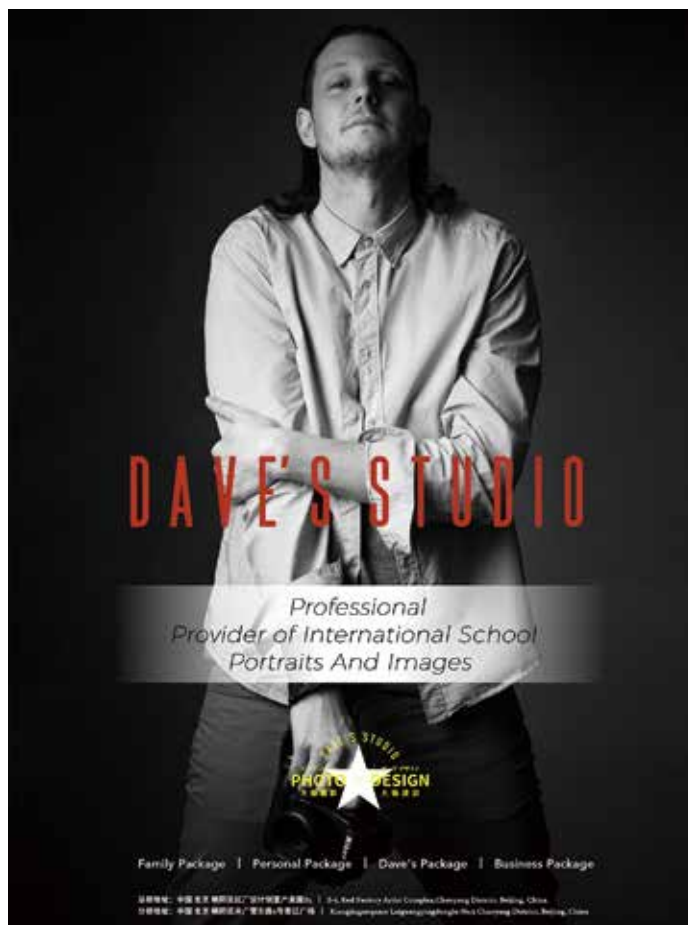
## Facial-Recognition Payments in Beijing

China has long led the pack in digital payments. Recently, however, facial-recognition payments (刷脸支付) have gained popularity as an even newer digital-payment method at physical stores. This payment service is operated by Alipay, which belongs to the e-commerce giant Alibaba Group. With contactless payments being preferred due to the coronavirus pandemic, facial recognition payments are taking off. There's no need to carry a bank card, any form of identification, or even enter a pin number. Currently, more than 1,000 convenience stores are using facial payment methods and more than 100 million Chinese have registered to use the technology.



## Internalization & Globalization

If you came to Beijing a decade ago, the streets would've been full of *jianbing* and *baozi* restaurants. Even finding a non-Chinese fast food restaurant like McDonald's or KFC was a challenge. But nowadays, Beijing has become a global metropolis, serving dishes from all over the world. You can easily find an international panoply of cuisines such as French, Mexican, and German throughout the capital. And yet, despite the heavy internalization, Beijing has managed to keep its traditional roots while embracing foreign practices.





# BIG SCHOOLS VS. SMALL SCHOOLS

Tackling parents' concerns when it comes to school size

By Isabella Cao and Angeli Zhao

*ANGELI ZHAO attended the British School of Abu Dhabi (BISAD), comprised of approximately 1,400 students.*

*ISABELLA CAO goes to AISB Hope International, an international school in Beijing with a total student body of around 100.*



*Do you think it was easy gaining leadership roles in your school?*

**Isabella:** Small schools teach us how to become more independent and responsible. Small schools give everyone a chance to be a leader, and no child is left behind. With fewer students in each class, the students can get comfortable with everyone, making it much easier for shy students to try out for leadership positions. With more focus on learning in the classroom, students will participate and engage in the subjects more, and increase overall productivity in and out of school. Summing it all up, it's very easy gaining leadership in small schools.

**Angeli:** No, I'd say it was comparatively much more difficult. Of course, I was a different character then, and that could've also been a factor that made me less enticing to be voted for "House Captain" or "Head Girl," but, the hurdles to attain "elitist" leadership roles were especially apparent. Our school followed an overtly democratic system of voting for most leadership roles, and this engendered the conceptualization that only the "popular" students could gain these roles. Truth be told, this is not dissimilar to what the real world is like, but to an 11-year-old who saw everyone centralizing themselves around the notion of being "popular," it did lead to some self-doubt and lower self-esteem at times.

*Do you think your school had a strong sense of unity and community?*

**Isabella:** Small schools have a really strong sense of unity. Everyone knows everyone, it's normal for middle schoolers to be good friends with high schoolers, and everyone will be friendly to you. You won't get lost in the crowd, and most importantly, you won't get bullied. As we have few students, it's easy for teachers to spot a problem going on between students. Fewer people in classes means more unity and teamwork. In all grades, everyone is close and comfortable with each other, and almost no one is shy during a presentation, answering questions, and participating in the class. Everyone is like one big family.

**Angeli:** Due to our school being so big, it would be senseless to think that all 1,400 students, 3,000 parents, and 500 staff could be unified ideologically and physically through our school's moral values and curriculum. Nevertheless, there were distinct, subcategorized branches of groups allocated, almost entirely by your ethnicity. If you were a Korean parent of a Korean student, for example, you would find yourself in a Whatsapp group with all other Korean parents of the school within the first few days of your arrival, where you could voice opinions and conduct discussions on almost anything regarding the school. If you had a complaint to make in a big school, it's almost guaranteed you would need the support of your circle to gain bargaining power. These subcategories also made it difficult for interracial interactions. I remember the first few days I arrived, I was asked multiple times whether I was Korean from parents and older students whom I never interacted with after I voiced that I am in fact, fully Chinese.

*What were some difficulties you faced going to your school?*

**Isabella:** One of the difficulties a lot of small schools have is that there are not as many opportunities for after-school activities. There are still plenty of choices, but some children might not find the exact activities they want. As a result, a lot of parents don't really give small schools a chance. They pay more attention to big schools because of their opportunities, bigger facilities with impressive swimming pools, big gyms, and big libraries without paying attention to what's more suitable for their children.

**Angeli:** Fitting in was hard, in fact, I don't think I ever did. It had to do with everyone else being cliqued together by either ethnicity or regionalism and most importantly, my own introverted personality. I had two really nice Korean friends with whom I stayed closed to, but there always seemed to be a divide linguistically and ideologically. There were only three other Chinese people in my entire school in different years, so I couldn't bond with them either. I felt displaced at times and never made wholehearted friendships. My grades were neither stellar nor deficient, but this didn't help with the fact that feeling I was simply part of the majority, the undistinguished, average student, which made me unmotivated to pursue my interests. I think this was largely due to the teachers having to tailor their classes to larger groups of students, and so not many regarded individualism as a priority.

*Do you think your school was able to provide diversified opportunities outside of school that was equivalent to other schools of different sizes?*

**Isabella:** Obviously small schools don't have as many opportunities outside of school as big schools have. However, we still have a lot of them and still participate in most of the sports tournaments, art exhibitions, and musicals. Small schools usually have all the sports the big schools have such as soccer, volleyball, and basketball, and are still pretty active with the art and music departments. In my experience, I feel like I had a good amount of opportunities outside of school, and participated in all sports and ISAC tournaments, plus quite a few art exhibitions, and musicals. I'd say we have quite a lot of opportunities in small schools, but just not equal to bigger schools.

**Angeli:** Our extracurriculars were very diverse, and looking back, I realized I missed a lot of opportunities due to laziness and nescience. Looking over the wide range of Co-Curricular Activities (CCA's), there were collaborations with Julliard for performing arts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for STEAM, and sports competitions hosted both at home and at other schools. I think one of the main advantages of bigger schools is that they offer opportunities for a wider and more sophisticated range of subjects. I was never deprived of opportunities, I just felt unmotivated to go for them.

*Did your school make you more open-minded through multiethnic and interracial dialogue?*

**Isabella:** Since my school is an international school, it definitely makes us more open-minded through multiethnic dialogue. We might not have a lot of students, but there sure are a lot of different cultural backgrounds. Since everybody knows everyone, you will get used to all the people from different countries, which will make you more open-minded about different races. You won't be judged for where you came from, or where your parents are from, because, as I said before, we are like one big family.

**Angeli:** Yes, but I think I credit the entirety of my environment and not just my school for making me more open-minded. Living in a Middle Eastern country, the weather, the heritage, the people, and the international expat community allowed me to gain insight and challenge my existing beliefs on many short-sighted ideas that I carried. I witnessed the increasingly cosmopolitan city, the rapidly increasing population, and the diversification of the economy and workforce in the city which all added to my values and outlook on Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, and the Middle East.

*Do you think the amount and variety of facilities and equipment in your school coincided with your interests?*

**Isabella:** Small schools, or at least my school, definitely do their best to provide us with equipment and facilities for our hobbies and interests. My school has all the sports equipment we need for soccer, volleyball, basketball, and more. When we need equipment – whether for art, science, or physical education – they most likely have it. They sure meet our interests and do their best to provide for our needs. So, we don't really have to worry about small schools not having enough equipment for a student's needs.

**Angeli:** In terms of facilities and equipment, I believe large schools definitely have the benefit. Our school was complete with a library, drama studios, three music suites, science labs, playing courts, playing fields, on-site coffee shop, and a sports center which consisted of an indoor semi-Olympic sized swimming pool, a large gym, and a huge covered and air-conditioned multi-purpose hall that can be used for basketball, volleyball, tennis, and other sports. It was certainly the most well-equipped school I had ever attended and in hindsight, is incredibly beneficial to any student. As for coinciding with interest, I believe the sheer degree of extensive equipment makes it near impossible to not be able to find something that tickles your fancy.



# *IMPRESSED YET, MOM?*

Books to help you engage with older generations

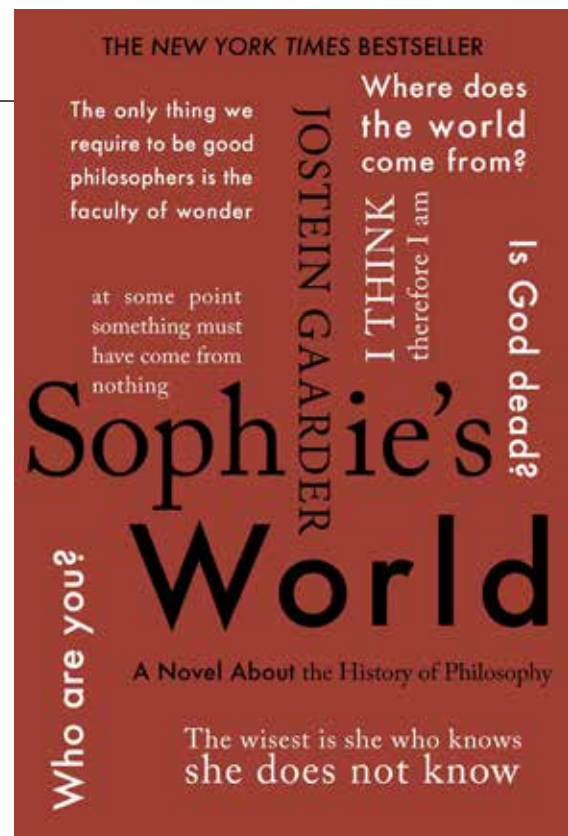
By Tadej Trpkoski

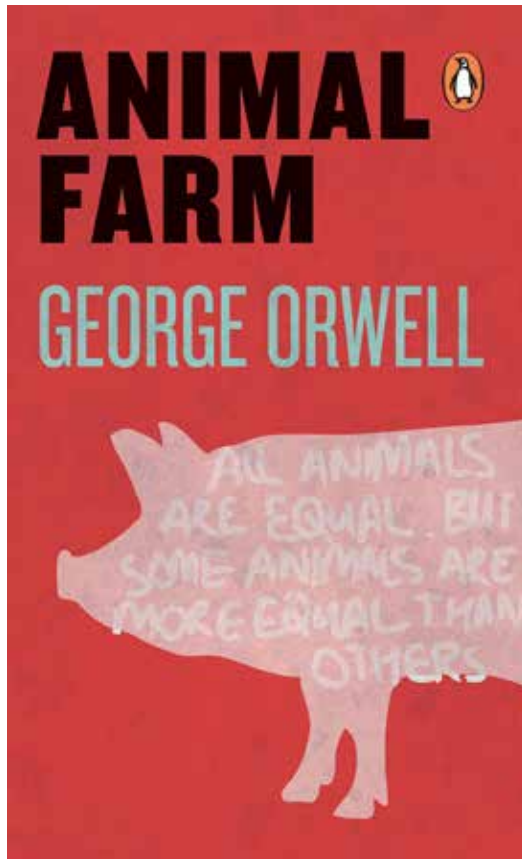
Young teens often look for various ways to impress their parents. The problem is, most of the things that parents are interested in have no appeal to younger people and are flat-out boring. Worry not, however, as the following novels are both interesting and contain deeper messages that you can bother your parents with for hours. Not to mention the new things you'll learn from them will surely impress older family members.

## SOPHIE'S WORLD

by Jostein Gaarder

Want to impress your parents with your newfound critical thinking skills and historical knowledge? Then be sure to check out this 1991 Norwegian novel. *Sophie's World* revolves around the life of its eponymous character, a teenage girl who is introduced to philosophy by middle-aged loner Alberto Knox. The plot's simplicity, combined with its easily digestible yet highly informative content, makes *Sophie's World* perfect for younger audiences who simply want to learn something new. Both accurate and richly detailed, *Sophie's World* is the perfect book for children and young teens alike, especially if they want to impress their parents. Containing a very exciting twist near its end, this book is sure to take any child who picks it up on the adventure of a lifetime.





## ANIMAL FARM

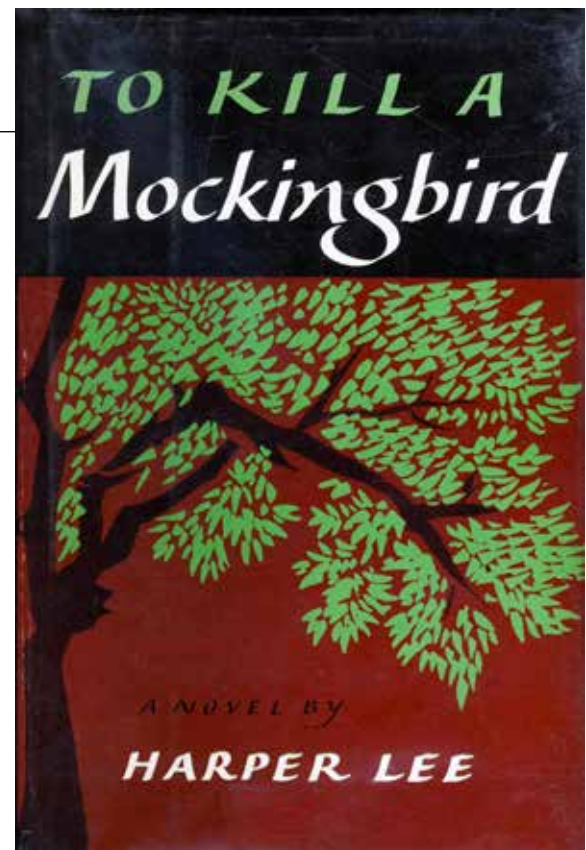
by George Orwell

Politics seem to be a hot topic nowadays, between parents, other family members, and their friends. Sometimes, they can be impressed by other peoples' opinions and ways of thinking, so why not try impressing your parents by reading George Orwell's 1945 classic, *Animal Farm*? Already a well-known book among students, this novel tells the story of a group of farm animals that successfully overthrow their human owners, and subsequently establish their own state. Struggles for power ensue, revealing the best and worst of each animal in the process. Equal parts simple yet thought-provoking, *Animal Farm*'s plot makes politics and political ideologies a bit more interesting, and would make for a great dinner table discussion. Older people, not just parents, will definitely be impressed by a young teen that is just as knowledgeable about politics as they are, if not more. So make sure to check out this great piece of writing the next time you visit the library!

## TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

by Harper Lee

Already a popular book among younger audiences due to its prevalence in schools, you may want to give *To Kill a Mockingbird* a second chance if you found it boring the first time around. Themes of racism, segregation, poverty, crime, and other social issues are told through the perspective of a 6-year-old living in 1930s Alabama. What more could you possibly want from a novel if you're trying to prove to your parents that you're a well-rounded, informed young adult? The greatest part about *To Kill a Mockingbird* is that it was published in 1960, so many of our parents and grandparents would've read it when it first came out, making it easier for your family members to understand what you are talking about, and resulting in some great bonding spent discussing the book and its themes.





# OFF TO SCHOOL

What boarding school taught me about growing up

*By Cynthia Zhang*



Scrambling out of my bed at 6:57am, forcing my eyes open with eye drops, dashing to the student center to scrub the windows for 50 minutes while memorizing a 20-line poem, charging to the dining hall to gobble down leftovers after 600 students had eaten, sprinting down a steep hill covered with a thin sheet of ice – until I land on my butt. I get up, limp to my classroom that looks more like a dilapidated factory than an academic building, and awkwardly shuffle to my seat as my teacher gives me a tardy point.

No, I don't go to a public school in Beijing, nor am I hired as a building cleaner: Welcome to my boarding school life, atop a mountain in Gill, Massachusetts.

Growing up in Beijing's CBD and riding a private car to Beijing City International School (BCIS) every day from nursery to 8th grade (yes, I repeated nursery), I can safely say that I had lived a life of opulence and blitheness, complete with a deep and abiding dependency on my *ayi*. BCIS was merely a venue for learning, nothing more. So even with my terminal procrastination, I still submitted every assignment without having to put in a whole lot of effort, feeling moderately challenged but mostly coasting by with the occasional cramming, all the while sparing some time for personal interests and recreation. Did I

grow? Education-wise, yes. Height-wise, yeah (albeit slowly). Life skills, self-awareness, and worldview? Not so much.

Although boarding schools – typically private secondary schools in the US and UK where students live on campus – might be a distant concept to some, the number of Chinese families sending their kids abroad before college has soared over the past ten years. When I first learned about this opportunity, it sounded fascinating, if not a little bit sketchy. Yet, after hearing positive reviews from my friends who were already boarding, I decided to transfer out of BCIS. I hoped to immerse myself in a more intellectually stimulating milieu, hopefully not as mundane as the one I'd been part of. Undoubtedly, Northfield Mount Hermon did offer me that, but more importantly, it made me realize that having lived in such a privileged bubble, I lacked the most rudimentary skills like reaching out for help, doing laundry, and advocating for myself. What's more, I had to grasp all this in a foreign cultural sphere, 10,786km from home.

I encountered my first "growth spurt" during an agonizing ten-month test prep process that revealed an environment similar to the exam-oriented education system at Chinese public schools. From March of 7th grade to November of 8th grade, I prepared for two

standardized tests that all boarding school applications required: a proficiency test for students who speak English as a second language known as the TOEFL test, and the Secondary School Admission Test called the SSAT (the secondary school version of the SAT). As long as you're satisfied with your SSAT and TOEFL test scores – depending on where you wanted to fit in a hierarchy of boarding school applicants competing for a spot in a top 10, 20, 30, 50, or 100 tier institution ranked by Chinese boarding school advising counselors – you were good to go. Of course, it was already a test in and of itself, but I abhorred the bland, repetitive routine at my test prep center where the only thing that excited me was ordering waimai from a different place every day. But precisely because of the arduousness, I figured out how to juggle school and extracurricular activities while memorizing seemingly endless lists of words like "effluvium" and "neophyte" that frankly didn't even sound like English to me, analyzing 18th-century authors' intentions from book excerpts entirely devoid of context, summarizing college lectures and conversations between students and professors, and writing persuasive essays about whether competition among friends harmed friendship.

But even outperforming in the two standardized tests didn't guarantee anyone a spot at their dream school. The actual application process was steadily creeping towards me. Later, I would realize that test prepping was nothing compared to the inexhaustible essays, recommendation letters, parent statements, activity lists, and interviews that I had to somehow get done in three months. Searching for a way out of this labyrinth became





my second growth spurt. This time, however, the challenge wasn't monotony – it was the opposite.

The essays wanted to know about a moment of adversity, a turning point in my life, my most meaningful educational experience, and how I would contribute to the community. I only knew how to gape blankly at the prompts. Virtually nothing came to mind, in part because I had never looked back at what I did over my 12 years at BCIS and how I came to be the person I was. I was unconscious about how I grew, who helped me, and my purpose in life. That's when I began to panic. I had nothing to show to the schools. So the task at hand – to at least write something under the essay prompts – forced me to digest my weaknesses and flesh out certain aspects of me that stood out. There were epiphanies that enabled me to slowly begin piecing together the first 14 years of my life, but regrettably, the most impactful moments were still unexcavated. Filling out my activity list also proved to be perplexing. Some were pursuits that had already become a daily ritual like community service and practicing the piano, so giving up would be irreverent. Others were activities that I was plainly passionate about like photography and creative writing. Then there was the because-my-friend-did-it stuff such as basketball and drama. My unorganized activities also proved to be problematic when it was time for the interviews. I struggled to introduce my myriad interests to admissions officers through anecdotes when I couldn't even make sense of why I set out to do those things in the first place. Although I understood that my extracurriculars would be more meaningful if I started to unearth the underlying purposes, increase them in magnitude, and connect them to form a more holistic picture, it was all too late. Admissions officers could

tell at a glance any effort to beautify my story.

My third growth spurt happened after a phase of self-doubt and existential crisis that began in March of 8th grade and lasted until November of my freshman year at my new school. Receiving two offers, three rejections, and numerous waitlists left me with two choices: begrudgingly going to one of the two schools I was accepted to or continuing my high school years at BCIS.

During the few months before I stepped onto campus, I was unmotivated to do anything because I felt my previous endeavors weren't recognized. I was also overly optimistic about my adjustment to boarding school life. But as soon as I was thrown into the alien habitat, reality contrasted starkly with my previous unrealistic expectations and romanticizing of boarding school. It wasn't merely a simplistic, triangular relationship between my dorm, the dining hall, and academic buildings. In fact, it wasn't a school in the literal sense at all. It was like living in a reclusive little town, and I had to swiftly adapt and conform to the conventions of the place to survive. The dorm staff was my second family. I picked up my Amazon packages from the school mail center. I hauled down the overloaded laundry basket each week to the laundry room in the basement. We took a shuttle bus every Friday night to a supermarket to stock up food for weekend unwinding. There was a hidden social hierarchy among the student body. And academics – the only thing I was confident I could skillfully manage – was the thorniest to cope with. The AP curriculum was nothing like BCIS's IB program. STEM classes were test-intensive and exceedingly challenging for a humanities-oriented student. And pressuring myself to live up to the stereotypical math geek Asian also demolished me. I refused to drop an honors math course that I was suffocating in. Asking teachers for help outside of class was a norm for which I never before bothered. A 4.0 GPA that was excruciating to preserve suddenly mattered so much. But the most formidable obstacle to overcome, without a doubt, was becoming friends with domestic students and chatting with my teachers because deep inside, I was ashamed of my broken conversational English that I never had the chance to use and improve, thanks only to writing in academic jargon in the classroom and habitually speaking Chinese with my friends outside.

Nevertheless, despite it all, each stage of growth in my boarding school career equipped me with a new set of skills: Preparing for standardized tests instilled a work ethic to plow ahead despite the tedium, which is often a prerequisite for more engaging and promising opportunities in the future (I like to refer to the Chinese idiomatic phrase, 不吃苦头怎么尝得了甜头 *bù chī kǔ tóu zěn me cháng de*

*liǎo tián tóu*—you have to eat bitter before you can taste sweetness); working on my application taught me to think critically about every decision I make and undergo constant introspection; contemplating a transient failure and figuring out the rules of boarding school, not to mention living away from home, prepared me for major life transitions. Yes, boarding school is a real hustle, but I can't imagine another disoriented four years had I stayed at BCIS.

Furiously typing out unrelated sentence fragments for my English essay at 10:15pm, scuffling down the stairs to sign-in for the night, resuming my not nearly finished business, alerted by my 10:27pm alarm to dart down the corridor to wash up in the shared bathroom, rushing back to my room to leap under my blanket just in time for lights-out at 10:30pm My day is far from over. As soon as the resident leader says good night and closes our door, I use all my strength to lunge myself out of my magnetizing bed, hoping that someday lights-out for me will manifest its literal meaning. I switch on my desk lamp and continue my grind. It's 1:04am when I finish the last sentence in my essay. I dive into bed and my mind dozes off a second after. All I know is that my nightly two-hour TikTok binge routine is lost – extinct, actually – here. Thankfully, it will not be missed.

Author's note: Both NMH and BCIS and the like may suit some and not others. This article only represents my views of my circumstances and should not be used to assess others or generalize the pros and cons of boarding and international schools.





# GOODBYES ARE NOT FOREVER

Keeping friendships alive after moving

By Angeli Zhao



As an internationalized student who's moved to five different major cities across the world (Beijing, Paris, Rio, Shenzhen, Abu Dhabi, then back to Beijing), I know firsthand the tumultuous journey – both physical and emotional – that comes with jumping from place to place. I've experienced what it's like to form cherished and adoring connections with teachers, classmates, and the local community, only to be told that I would have to leave them all behind. I have been frustrated, confused, and dejected. However, as the Chinese adage goes, “海内存知己，天涯若比邻 *hǎi nèi cún zhī jǐ, tiān yá ruò bǐ lín* Long distance separates no bosom friends,” and I believe there are plenty of ways to maintain long-distance friendships after packing up and saying goodbye. Here is a trusty list I follow to nurture these friendships, even from across the world:

## SECURE A COMMUNICATION TOOL

With changes in sim cards, local app restrictions, and communication platforms, you'd be surprised how often friends of mine have had their WeChat and other social media apps terminated or crashed after their fateful move. Luckily, there are a couple of universal apps that you can consider setting up. Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and Facebook are all great platforms that support global communication. Make sure to maintain a presence on these platforms, because I learned the hard way that lack of communication due to the absence of a common platform can be devastating to any long-distance relationship.

## COMMUNICATE AS MUCH (OR AS LITTLE) AS YOU NEED TO FEEL CONNECTED

The preferred amount of communication differs from person to person, but it can be especially discouraging when all that's left of your friendship are one-sided conversations. For some people, the right amount of communication can be texting or calling once a week, whilst others prefer calling every day, or even once a month. If both sides know beforehand that their preferred amount of communication is fairly contradictory, then they should work towards finding an equilibrium through trial and error or prioritization. I would say the most important thing is to not give up and be patient with your friends. Remind yourself that both your lives are changing and that you can work through it together.

## SET PRIORITIZED TIMES FOR EACH OTHER

Maintaining a friendship is like nurturing a seed, you have to set aside time for them and nourish your friendship through habitual care and attention. When working to keep your friendships, regardless of whether you are separated by several seas or just a few blocks, remember to agree to a common time reserved just for the two of you. My friend Laura and I have found this method particularly helpful in our relationship (she moved to Germany last year). It also acts as an assurance that no matter how busy we get, there will always be a piece of the day that we preserve for each other. For example, I try calling her around 10pm, twice a week on Mondays and Fridays.

## BE CREATIVE WITH BONDING METHODS

Texting gets boring, and with the now seemingly endless possibilities of the internet, it's important not to underestimate the power of these new alternatives. Snapchat Games, Clubhouse, Virtual UNO, Discord... even good old-fashioned video calling! Or hang on the phone while watching the same Netflix show, playing the same video game, baking the same recipe, or giving a shot at watercolor painting together...the possibilities are boundless! Let's just say I know a thing or two about staying up till 2am, binge-playing random Bitmoji games on Snapchat.

## DO ACTIVITIES IN SYNC

One of the sadder truths we all come to realize is that what once were satisfying, absorbing, and regular discussions between you and your long-distance friend have thawed into awkward, repetitious, and monotonous conversations on the weather or their breakfast. To combat this, I've realized that you have to maintain common interests that don't alter based on your location or school life. This could be watching the same show (just pick and choose from Netflix, really), keeping up with similar events (Euro Cup, Wimbledon, nuclear deals, the supply of shampanskoye to France halting after Putin's claim that Champagne is in fact, Russian. You know, the usual), or maintaining extensive discourses about philosophical ideas. Whatever it is, I know this definitely helped me find interesting topics to discuss with my favored friends abroad (although at the cost of surrendering myself to anime).

### Why should we choose plant-based meat?

**Greener:** In terms of sustainability, producing 1kg of beef protein will create 74 times more greenhouse gases than 1kg of plant-based protein.

**Healthier:** When compared to traditional meat, plant-based meat contains lower saturated fat and lower cholesterol.

# PLANT-BASED MEAT

A lighter and brighter future for food?

By Kathy Shi

**P**lant-based meat, artificial meat, vegan meat, meat substitutes...whatever fancy name people want to call it, there's little doubt that it's sweeping much of the world. The name plant-based meat is probably most suitable, as it reflects the source of protein and explains some of its characteristics. At any rate, since plant-based meat is becoming increasingly popular around the globe, as an avowed foodie I figured it was high time I try it for myself!

My first experience with plant-based meat came while traveling in Hong Kong. After a full day of activities, I was exhausted and my stomach yearned for some food, so I opted for a burger restaurant right next to the hotel. Initially, I intended to play it safe and order a classic beef cheeseburger. But then I saw the huge poster placed beside the cashier bearing a photo of a delicious-looking burger and a phrase I've heard countless times, "Impossible Meat." "Woah!" I thought, "I've never tried this before. Should I go for it?"

And so began my first encounter with plant-based meat. I don't remember exactly how the burger tasted, probably because I was too hungry and devoured it within sec-

onds. But what I can remember is that there was no "wow" moment nor disappointment in having it.

Since then, I've tried more and more plant-based meat dishes including dumplings around town and Beyond Meat wraps from Starbucks, as well as cooking my own meals using plant-based meat stuffing and sausage. And though the concept of plant-based meat is worthy of applause, there's definitely still room for improvement in terms of its likeness to real meat. For instance, many of the plant-based proteins that are used lack some of the amino acids found in meat. This, in turn, means that some of the essential chemical reactions – such as the Maillard reaction – are missing during the cooking process. These are integral to capturing the texture, taste, and aroma of meat.

In fact, my numerous experiences with plant-based meat have all left me with similar impressions. Namely, when biting into it, the meaty, juicy mouthfeel is distinctly less, instead consisting of a rather beany and dry texture. These features – or flaws, depending on who you're talking to – become even more noticeable when cooking. I vividly remember

the first time I worked with it, excited to make some Chinese dumplings using plant-based meat stuffing from Zrou. And yet, when I popped a dumpling into my mouth I froze: The flavor was so plain! While I was making those dumplings, I seasoned the stuffing the same way I would normal meat, however, it didn't turn out the same. Thus, I discovered that although plant-based meat is regarded as a more sustainable and healthy option, if it's a richness of flavor you're after, you'll have to add some extra condiments to your recipe and meal.

What's interesting though is that all this raises another question: Should plant-based meat aim to mimic authentic meat? Admittedly, the answer is largely subjective. For vegetarians and vegans, the answer might be no. After all, the creation of plant-based meat simply provides more options and is tastier than many of the previously available protein sources. However, put that question to a meat-eater like me, and though the concept of a more sustainable source of protein is appealing, it's an uphill battle persuading them to give up the kebab in their hand and go for the plainer plant-based variety.



# PERFECT NIGHT OUT

Bestie date night at Dongye

By Linda Huang

When I was introduced to the perfect romantic dining night at 東也寿司 (*dōng yě shòu sī*) Dongye, a lavish, authentic Japanese restaurant off Liangmaqiao, I was more thrilled and fascinated than ever. Located inside a drive-in movie theatre park, the restaurant is discrete and distant from the bustling commercial city of Beijing, an idyllic venue for a fancy date night. However, being single, and thus not have a significant other with whom to share this romance-filled night, I brought my friend Wenlan to make the most out of this perfect meal.

In contrast to its exterior, the restaurant's interior is striking and conspicuous. We were welcomed by beams of warm, extravagant lights, elegant marble walls, and exquisite porcelain wares alongside Japanese antiques. Our seating was that of a cozy tatami, closely resembling traditional Japanese dining etiquette and radiating lovely historical feels.

As we made our way to the tatamis, we were introduced to Dongye's unique way of serving dishes. All customers order by set menus, with the dishes varying almost every day depending on the availability of ingredients and pricing. Wenlan was served with an RMB 1,200 set, which contained eight courses, and I was served with an RMB 900 set that consisted of six courses.

Before the main courses arrived, we indulged in a few, what those in the West would call, appetizers. Everything came in a uniquely styled wooden plate, with a handful of small, delicately shaped ceramic bowls holding different treats. Wenlan's set consisted of pufferfish (or fugu) skin, abalone, cheese, tuna tartare, and foie gras, while mine included cherry tomatoes, fugu skin, tofu, asparagus, and cheese. We were both intrigued by the exotic combination of such foods and dazzled by the mastery of such complex culinary art.

Before attempting to take our first bite, Wenlan and I exchanged looks as we eyed our alien-looking dishes. Rest assured, however, that once we dug into our plates, we were both astounded by the savory flavor of each serving, our faces spreading into uncontrollable smiles as we exclaimed, "Wait, this actually tastes so good!"

More dishes came as we finished our first course, as well as our own distinctive sashimi pieces. Mine contained tuna, snapper, mackerel, and ark shell, and Wenlan's had tiger shrimp, tuna belly, urchins, and snapper. Normally, when I eat in Japanese restaurants my go-to sashimi is salmon and tuna. But at Dongye, I was struck by the newfound realization that Japanese sashimi is wildly diverse, each type of fish boasting its own peculiar taste. Needless to say, learning about the slightest variations and distinctions between different types of raw fish truly highlighted the delicacy of Japanese cuisine.

The sashimi, some tinged with light pink and some with a unique shade of orange, was cooled to perfection and its texture left us wanting more. Unfortunately, however, within no time, our plates were fully emptied.

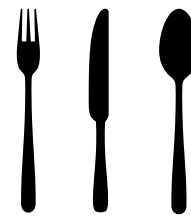






To us, a Japanese meal cannot be called a Japanese meal without sushi. As such, our favorite dish had to be the sushi set that came towards the end of our dinner. Topped by layers of salmon, sea bream, and mackerel sashimi for my sushi set and tuna, urchin, mackerel, and sea bream for Wenlan's, these sushi rolls were devoured in minutes.

Even though we had finished our food, we continued basking in the artistic glory of Dongye's dishes and praising the originality of the courses. Even the post-dinner fruit plate contained pieces that were carved into fine figures, stylized and visually stunning.



Over the next half-hour or so, egg custard, baked codfish, grilled prawn, and Japan's iconic Wagyu beef were served to our table. We dined with relish while filling the empty void of our large tatami table with endless compliments about the elegance of the porcelain bowls and conversations about our summer vacation so far.

Although the restaurant is a bit pricey, the combination of the food and the environment makes it a perfect choice for special occasions such as date nights, anniversaries, or even simply some quality bonding time with that special someone. Not matter who you're coming with though, I recommend getting different menus so each person can try a range of courses and revel in the variety of unique dishes that Dongye offers.

Like an oasis of serenity amidst the hectic city of Beijing, Dongye is truly a great place for people to take their mind off all the things that keep them busy, and simply relax with loved ones or celebrate important days. The luxurious interior is soothing, the ingredients are pure, and the dishes are truly elevated to culinary artistry. Simply put, Dongye will provide you with the perfect dining experience to appreciate the true beauty of culinary art, while satisfying your stomach with delicious food.



## Dongye 東也寿司

Liangmaqiao Luck 21 Phoenix Drive-in Cinema, Chaoyang District  
朝阳区将台地区亮马桥路21号枫花园汽车电影院內21号  
Ph: 5741 5598





# DON'T KNOCK IT 'Till You *shake it!*

Blind tasting at Shaking Crab

*By Emily Hellqvist*

**“E**mily! Shake the bag!” I was instructed after being guided to the table, blindfolded. A huge plastic bag had been placed in my hands, and I dutifully shook it. Confused, I uttered a couple of questions: “What on earth could be so heavy? What am I going to be blind tasting?” Of course, none of these questions were answered, simply dismissed with, “You’ll find out, just be patient.” So, I sat down and waited for the game to start. I had a distinct feeling that I was not going to do well, but hey, at least I’ll get to eat the food, right?

I must admit, I am a proud foodie who’s confident in my ability to eat. However, I had no idea how accurate my senses would be if my eyes couldn’t identify the food before it touched my tongue. I guess the texture of the seafood makes it a bit easier to identify, but I was kind of terrified that there might be something alive and capable of attacking

me. It probably didn’t help that when I was exiled to the corner as the crew decided on my menu, my colleague sauntered up to me, claiming that something was, in fact, alive and moving.

Thank goodness the three seafood items on the list were very much cooked, and I got almost all of them correct. The first was a huge lobster that covered the opening of the bag. The firmness of the meat is what gave away its identity. I guess whether the lobster is the size of my hand or my face, the texture doesn’t change. Muscles and shrimp were straightforward (also perfectly cooked), and then there were the quail eggs and broccoli. My initial guess for the latter had been cauliflower but I was able to redeem myself.

When I was finally told I could take the blindfold off and finish the food, I ecstatically dug in, savoring the garlicky taste of the seafood. The sauce that came with it – dubbed Shakin – is their most famous. It’s made with



## Did she guess correct?



lobster

☒ yes☐ no

shrimp

☒ yes☐ no

mussels

☒ yes☐ no

egg

☒ yes☐ no

broccoli

☐ yes☒ no

watch the video

a particular kind of butter, as well as garlic and Cajun seasoning so the hint of spicy plus the creamy undertone adds a complex layer of flavor when dipped in the seafood. While I was eating, from the corner of my eyes I saw my phone blowing up with notifications, however, there was no inclination to reach for it. I was too busy enjoying the food.

This sort of reaction is exactly the mission Shaking Crab is going for, reflected in their slogan "Bibs up, phones down." They aim to make diners forget about their phones, don an apron and pair of gloves, and get lost in conversation with friends, something we don't see often anymore. Also, for what it's worth, I hope you aren't tempted to check those notifications given how greasy your hands would be.

Temporarily curbing your phone addiction isn't the only thing that's unique to Shaking Crab. If you look at the menu, you'll notice that the lobsters are sold individually, not by pound. This is because the restaurant believes in the trust that they build with their customers and minimizes any confusion that might arise

when it comes to ambiguous pricing. Unlike most restaurants that charge fresh seafood by weight, this place removes the guesswork and tells you exactly how much each crustacean will cost.

What's more, they strive to be as family-friendly as possible. With more than 30 Shaking Crab restaurants around the US (the first was founded in Boston, MA) and a growing international presence, they have a wealth of experience in fostering a family-friendly environment. As such, Beijing's Shaking Crab noted that their most popular family orders include the lobster (RMB 298) and the Alaskan King Crab (RMB 398). Generally speaking, kids don't have the patience to pick apart smaller seafood, so, in terms of crabs, the Brown Crab (RMB 398) is also a local favorite.

This was an experience I enjoyed. Even though I was robbed of my sight, I basically guessed all the food options correctly. I suppose the moral of this blind-tasting story would be that even though you can't see the food you're eating, your brain naturally compiles years of memories that are ready to be

tapped at a moment's notice.

Shaking Crab's "bibs up, phones down" ethos makes it an ideal restaurant for some quality family bonding time. After all, when your hands are covered in a tasty sauce, it's hard to want to check your phone for updates. And aside from that, the food was amazing and definitely some of the best I've had in Beijing!

Shaking Crab has a happy hour Monday to Thursday from 6-8pm. A few of the deals include BOGOF Goose Island beer and buy five get one free on draft beers. They're perfect both for parents taking their children out for dinner, or colleagues who want to unwind after a long day of work.

### The Shaking Crab

1 Workers Stadium North Road,  
Chaoyang District  
朝阳区工体北路1号一层  
5351 5016



# Life's a Beach

China's top five beaches to while away your summer days

*By Isabella Cao and Meredith Tung*

Find summer in Beijing sweltering and dry? Unable to return to your home country due to travel restrictions? Don't fret! China is home to plenty of windswept beaches, perfect for a weekend getaway! With the fresh atmosphere, sound of waves, warm sun, and golden sand beneath your feet, you'll definitely feel rejuvenated and refreshed. Listed below are China's top five beaches to explore.

## *Yalong Bay* 亚龙湾 – Hainan Island, China

A luxurious resort located 30 minutes from Hainan Island, Yalong Bay is known for its white sandy beaches, turquoise waters, and beautiful rain forest and mountain surroundings. Be ready for activities such as parasailing, seafood fine dining, and to die for Instagram-worthy photo ops!

## *Sanya Bay* 三亚湾 – Hainan Island, China

Known as the "Heart of Sanya," this 25km public beach is on the bucket list for many! However, given that it's open to the public, Sanya Bay can get extremely crowded which is why water sports aren't advised. As such, might we suggest you take a balmy summer evening stroll! Enjoy the calm sounds of waves and salty breeze while indulging in cheap seafood and watching locals dance on the sand.





### *Silver Beach* 银色海滩 – Guangxi, China

Stretching almost 26km, this popular beach is perfect for those who love being active! Arrive geared up and ready for volleyball, horse riding, sandcastle building, and of course, suntanning! It's important to note that Silver Beach is only open between 9am and 6pm.



### *Beidaihe* 北戴河 – Hebei, China

Widely known as a birding haven, Beidaihe has a coastline stretching 22.5km. This beach is covered with fine yellow sand and shallow waters. Its secluded paths, lush vegetation, mysterious caves, and grand pavilions make the site attractive to visitors from both inside and outside China.



### *Golden Sand Beach* 金沙滩 – Dalian, China

This beach stretches 3.5km long, from the east to the west coast of the Shandong Peninsula seashore, like a crescent. It has soft reflective golden sand and crystal clear seawater, hence the name, "Golden Sand Beach." Other than enjoying the beautiful views, visitors can experience seaside leisure, dining, water activities, musical performances, volleyball, football, evening parties, and more!



# I'VE GOT A QUESTION FOR YOU

Posing the same questions across three generations

By Caroline He

"WHAT WAS THE HARDEST THING YOU'VE FACED GROWING UP AND HOW DID IT CHANGE YOU?"

**AICHENG XU (12):**

The hardest thing I've ever faced growing up is solving disagreements without fighting or hurting someone's feelings, which can be hard because we're born differently and it can be hard to understand each other. After many arguments, I learned that sometimes I need to be flexible in coping with the situation on my own while respecting everyone's ideas.

**NALO RUSH (6):**

The hardest thing for me is writing because it's hard and I don't like it. But I practiced a lot, and now I'm better at writing.

**KELLY ZHAO (10):**

The hardest thing I faced growing up was when I went to Year 1 at an international school. I did not even know the English alphabet and couldn't understand my teacher at all. I studied very hard to learn English, and through this, I learned that any problem can be overcome by hard work and determination.

**VLADIMIR DEMENTYEV (17):**

Growing up I started gaming, and got addicted to it. I struggled to work properly, and my time management had been affected negatively. However, I am no longer addicted and I learned that although gaming is a lot of fun, it will create a negative impact on my other skills that are much more vital and important.

What was the hardest thing you've faced in life? You've probably been able to answer this question since the age of 5, however, as you grow up, your answer has doubtlessly evolved, gradually morphing into something more complex. And the same goes for the lessons that come with it – from "Don't anger mom" to "Life is fleeting; we need to learn to embrace and enjoy every moment." Change is inevitable, and there will always be transformative moments that deeply affect you and become another step on the turbulent road to growing up.

**ALLISON CUSATO (45):**

I was always passionate about art, yet my parents always wanted me to study business instead. We argued for years and I sought refuge in the art classrooms. After the [events of Sept 11, 2001], combined with my own passion for art, I decided to recreate the safe haven that I had for other children and encourage them to follow their own passions.

**REVETAHW LIU (22):**

My biggest struggle so far was when I wanted to get an actual job rather than an internship, which I had no chance of getting even if I worked very hard and late. I learned that the solution for me was to not waste my time at this company, but rather use this experience and seek a stable job at another company.

**SHUKANG JIAO (78):**

My biggest regret was that I was unable to pursue my dream career of being an actor. However, over the few decades, I had many chances to follow my passion for theatre and music, such as being a music teacher, a voice actor, a conductor, and so on. Life is long and there will be a whirlwind at some point, but as long as you face it with a calm attitude, then your life will be an extraordinary one.





# Unexpectedly Beautiful

It's not what we asked for, but it's beautiful

*By Emily Hellqvist and Kathy Shi*

Our names are Emily Hellqvist and Kathy Shi, and we underwent a hair makeover in the name of journalism. While both of us have never really been to the hair salon for anything other than simple cuts, we didn't quite know what to expect on the

big day. We both went in with an idealistic view of what could come out of it but were soon faced with reality. But you know what they say about plans...



## Emily's Experience:

The only times I've ever been to the hair salon were to trim or cut my hair – never for anything else. I had always been discouraged from dyeing or curling my hair as my mom is fond of saying that, "Doing anything unnatural to your hair damages it." Call it the prime teenage rebellious era, but when the opportunity arose for me to do whatever I wanted with my hair, I hopped on board. Hey, what excuse will work better on my tiger mom than, "It's for work!"

I went in with reference pictures ready. Like the stylist noted, the style I wanted was very European-American, while what Kathy wanted was more Korean. I had been so nervous and excited in the week leading up to it, that when the day came, I was a little bit scared. I was right to be scared though because my emotions were about to endure a roller coaster ride.

It was my first time doing something different with my hair, so I was very new to the environment. When they pulled out the tin foil that they were going to use to bleach my hair, my internal dialogue was a mixture of confusion and horror. What were they going to do? I was like an indoor cat seeing the outside world for the first time. I didn't know what to feel. Then, after a lot of tin foiling and a lot of waiting, they washed my hair and I think that's when they dyed it? I did feel some burning sensation on my scalp so that's what I assume it was. It seemed like he had washed my hair several times but by the time he was drying my hair, I noticed something that seemed different.

The highlights that I had asked for were...not there. Instead, the bleached strands were replaced with grey locks. It wasn't the light brown that I had asked for – unless I've been color blind this whole time? When I asked, the reply was a relatively simple one: "We thought this would look better on you." At that moment, my heart did about three somersaults and wanted to jump out of my chest. Even if this altered style did look better, shouldn't they have asked first? Maybe tell me what they were planning on doing instead of letting me find out after they had finished the job. This attitude threw me off – but maybe it's a normal occurrence, and I was just a rookie in this whole new world.

As they dried and curled my hair, it began to take shape. The colored highlights were growing on me, but I just couldn't quite get over the fact that they had switched the colors up without letting me know first. But, I've been getting compliments since so it all worked out in the end.



## Kathy's Experience:

"Unexpected" would be the perfect word to describe my experience at the hair salon during this seemingly ordinary, but entirely extraordinary Tuesday. As a girl whose long hairstyle has remained unchanged for years – until very recently, that is – going into a hair salon and asking a hairdresser to "create art" was a challenge.

So then why would I describe it as unexpected? One week before I even stepped into the salon, I was already very excited about the makeover and began looking up photos and styles to capture the "ideal me." Initially, as a K-Pop fan, I wanted a Korean-styled girl kind of look. However, when I showed the photos to the stylist, he firmly rejected the idea and suggested that small curls would suit me better. He suggested that for a magazine shoot, we should go for something a bit more complex than what I would normally wear in daily life. So, this is what happened...

The final look was a far cry from my original plan, and I can't say I was 100 percent satisfied with it, but this modern disco lady look was a big breakthrough from the normal me.

This was my first time having my hair styled somewhere other than the small hair salon near my home, and it left me with a good impression. I enjoyed the whole process of putting on the makeup, getting my hair done, and doing the photoshoot. It was particularly interesting to watch the transformation taking place in real time. The four hours passed very quickly, and the salon's staff were super friendly too.

While Emily started the process of getting her hair dyed, I started with makeup. The process of putting on makeup while a photographer documented it made me feel a little like a celebrity.

The whole experience was quite enjoyable. My hairdresser was an easy-going person and very professional. I have to compliment the effort he put into turning my long and messy hair into a shorter, neater version by cutting it into several layers again and again. Unfortunately, those small curls disappeared after a single hair wash – or perhaps fortunately, since in any case, I wouldn't have gone with those exaggerated curves in real life.

### 大象造型 (三里屯店)

北京市朝阳区工体北路4号院78号楼南侧首层  
4 Gongti Beilu, South side of Bld 78,  
Chaoyang District  
Tel: 6592 2202

### 大象造型 (祥云小镇店)

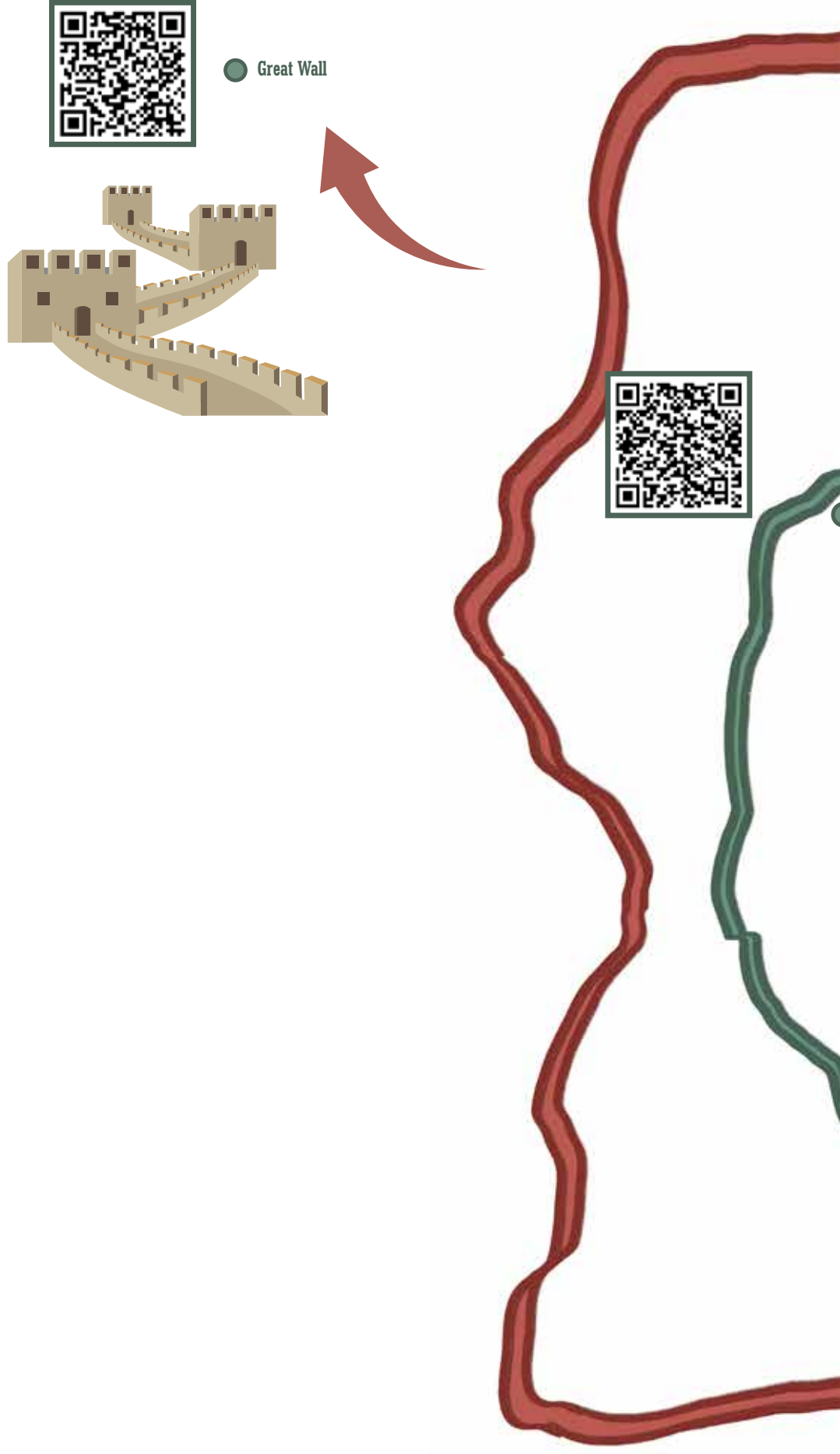
北京市顺义区安泰大街3号楼南侧底商  
3 Antai Dajie, Shunyi District  
Tel: 8047 6166

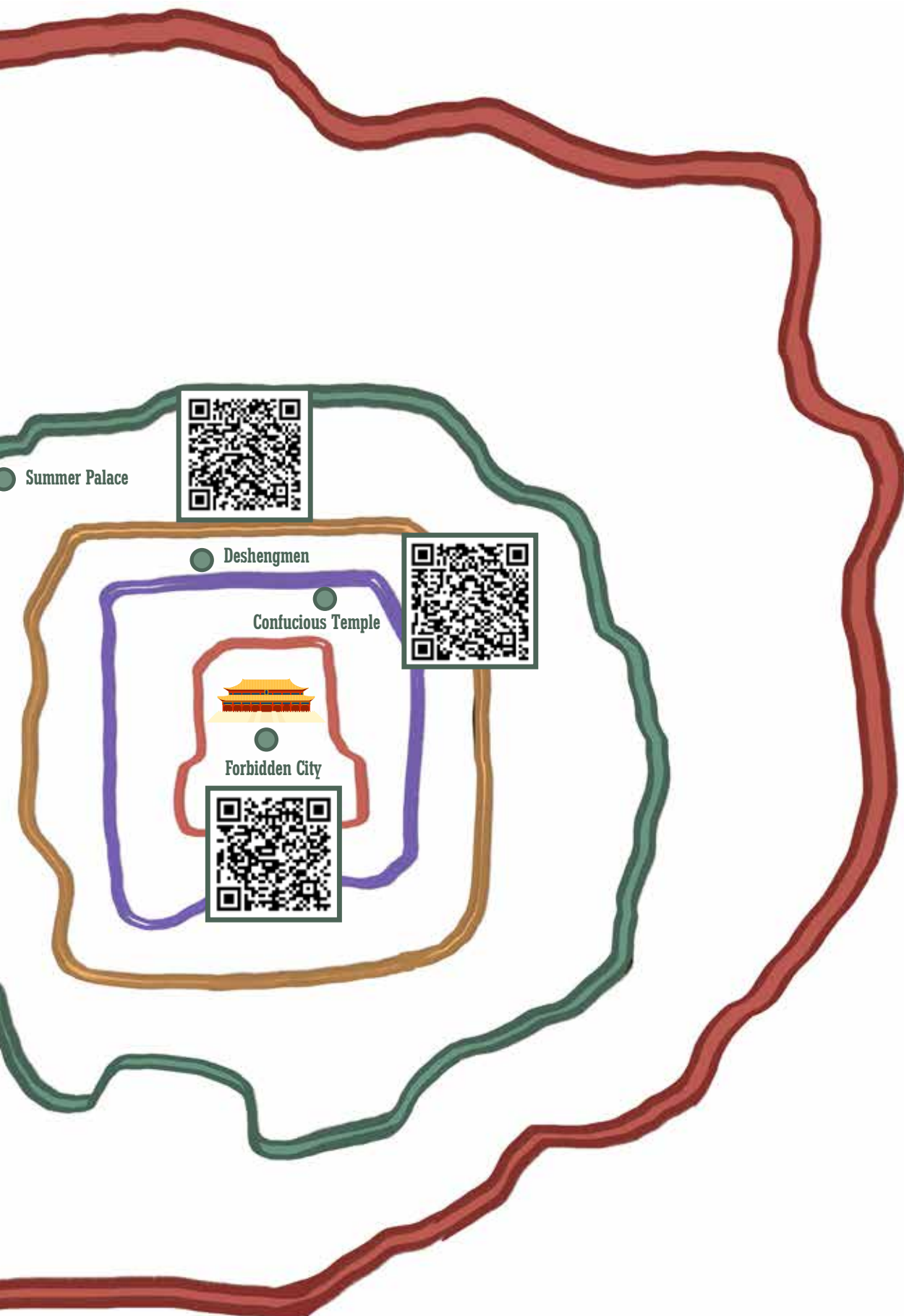


# DISCOVER BEIJING

Scan the QR code to discover the history behind Beijing's iconic landmarks

*By Rachel Bu, Amber Ker-Foz, Tadej Trpkoski*







# I Scream, You Scream, It's Time for Ice Cream!

A tour of Beijing's traditional ice creams, plus a few of the capital's most popular flavors

By Angeli Zhao

Illustrations and Layout by FeiFei Xu

Summertime is best spent with an ice cream in hand. However, aside from simply being a delicious treat, you can also turn a little ice cream indulgence into a teachable moment for the kids, as we take a stroll down memory lane with Beijing's traditional ice creams that are as rich with flavor as they are history. Then, we'll take a look at some of the capital's most popular flavors, taste 'em all, and score the whole lot!

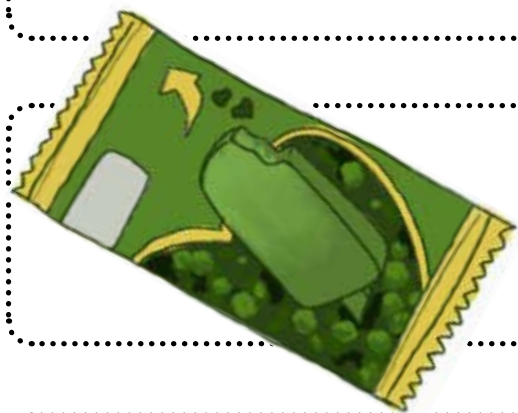
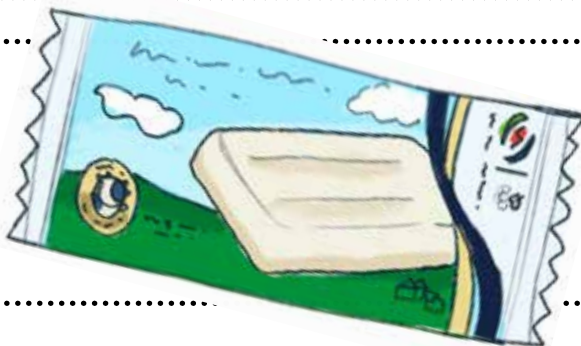


## Old Central Street Popsicle

Despite the fact that today, some regard this as a bland flavored ice-pop, its history and authenticity cannot be overstated. It is said to have originated during the summer of 1965 when an ice cream maker accidentally added 30 percent less milk to the original recipe. Nevertheless, the happy accident was met with rave reviews, and it quickly became the company's new signature, selling out on the first day. Brittle and icy in texture, it's a slightly sour but refreshing yogurt pop, making it the perfect summer treat and a vehicle for many a locals' trips down memory lane. 10/10

## Mongolian Yogurt Ice Cream

Many know Yili to be the infamous, multinational dairy-producing giant that sponsors Olympic games. However, setting aside the company for a moment, this otherwise unassuming yogurt treat is replete with flavor, to say the least, and the subtle tang that accompanies the taste is incredibly refreshing as a summer treat. 7/10



## Handmade Green Bean

Another classic, its company, Dehua Limited, has been a staple of China's frozen food industry since 1987. The authenticity is unparalleled and merely looking at the packaging is enough to trigger a wave of memories and emotion in any Chinese person. The addition of green beans into actual ice cream and a hint of milk that doesn't overpower the taste of bean proves timeless. 8/10

## Little Tinker

This was an interesting one, bound to entice those who are younger. As my friend mentions, this five-in-one, individually-flavored, popsicle pack – although likely not the healthiest or most organic – is definitely unique in its approach, and I recall that it was extremely popular around five years ago among my primary school classmates (I wasn't cool enough to get one then, or now, really). 4/10





### Corn-Flavored Ice Cream

Although many people from the 80s and 90s generations see this as a representation of their youth, this corn-flavored ice cream is definitely not for the faint of heart. The insipid wafer gives away to the astringent taste of corn. Although the question remains – should corn be an ice cream flavor in the first place? – the internet's enduring love for this ice cream and disputes over the correct way to eat it certainly don't waiver (ha! wafer) with time. 1/10

## Dongbei Popsicle

An iconic ice cream for many of the 90s generation, this nostalgia-inducing series of ice creams – concocted by the Red Diamond company in 1992 – was and still is worthy of its overnight success.

### Original

The original milk flavor was unexpectedly citrusy in taste and consists of strands of ice. Basically, if you bite into this one, your teeth will be digging into ice threads. On top of that, it carries a distinctly sharp flavor. 6/10



### Chocolate

The chocolate flavor is more akin to coffee, with a bitter and grittier taste. Although not the best option to accompany your hot summer day, it could potentially be salvaged with a sweeter side dessert. 5/10



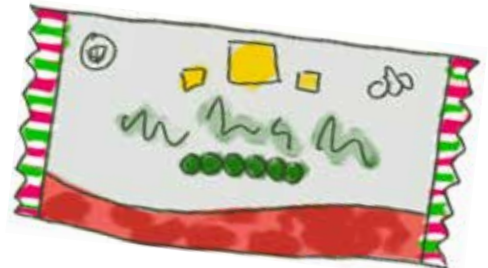
### Strawberry

The strawberry is precisely the type of treat I was looking for. The impression was that of a sorbet, but make no mistake, the aftertaste suggested nothing of additives or artificial flavoring. Rather, it possessed a slightly tangy but altogether decadent strawberry taste. 8/10



### Durian

For the durian, I had to enlist the help of a pro-durian friend (Full disclosure: I was immediately struck dead by the pungent aroma). Simply put, our perspectives were diametrically opposed. Whilst she happily munched away at the ice cream bar, savoring every last morsel, I was trying desperately to wash the aftertaste out of my mouth. If you like durian, this diversely textured, scrumptious, durian-to-the-max ice cream is the way to go. As for those who don't, run! 0/10, 10/10



### Matcha

Although relatively new product-wise, it has received its share of positive feedback. The matcha is, in my opinion, entirely underrated and should be as revered as Magnum and similar A-list ice-creams. The texture is an absolute delight – complex and multi-faceted due to its crunchy outer crust surrounding the soft but fortified cream inside. Likewise, the matcha is strong but doesn't assault your taste buds. It's also not overly sweet, so those who love a good afternoon tea will be pleasantly surprised by this otherwise unsuspecting treat. 10/10



### Green Bean

Last but not least, green bean. Its bean fragments result in a chunkier texture that's pleasant to nibble on, but it does taste rather artificial, and after looking at the ingredients list, it's definitely not the most natural approach we've seen to creating a bean flavored ice cream. 6/10







# BUT WHERE ARE YOU

Do Asians from abroad face prejudice in China?

By Hélène Wang and Helena Zhao

As an international student, how do you answer questions regarding your nationality? Addressing such inquiries, two international students in Beijing offered unique insights into their identity. An additional spin is that their names are quite similar: Helena石榴 from Dulwich College Beijing (DCB) and Hélène Wang from Beijing City International School (BCIS).

## **Q** Have you experienced any forms of racism in China?

**Helena:** During lunch with an intern last week, a Chinese couple moved away from us after muttering the word “English.” My lunch suddenly tasted like sand. After all these years, I thought these judgmental experiences would end. Experiences like this make it seem like speaking English is blasphemous, arousing apprehension, especially as there are numerous videos of violence against Asian Americans online – though, that mainly happens in the US. In China, it’s eye-daggers and avoidance that hurts.

**Hélène:** Saying I experience racism is stretching, except when I speak English in malls, strangers jerk their heads, roll their eyes, and scrutinize me like a ladybug in a glass jar. It’s understandable since I look Chinese but don’t speak Chinese with my Chinese presenting friends. I am accustomed to strangers’ surprise and sometimes even forget their shock at my English-speaking, Chinese-looking disposition, but my own urge to recoil or flee and the feeling of, “I don’t even know if I am accepted in my hometown” lingers forever.

## **Q** Were you ever asked to choose one nationality?

**Helena:** Growing up, I was frequently asked “Where are you really from?” I have a Canadian passport, but I might as well have the word “Chinese” imprinted on my face. Westerners tell me that I am not fully Canadian as I grew up in China, but Chinese people tell me that I’m not fully Chinese because I have a Canadian passport. So, am I a “fake Canadian” or a “fake Chinese?” Must I be bounded by our nationalities? Do I have to choose?

Society tells me that I must, as supposedly only one identity can reside deep down inside. But what is identity? Although leaving me in a quagmire, I, like most international students, am still on the journey of self-exploration. Like the enigmas of color, there lies gray between black and white. I don’t have to only be one thing. I can encompass both. Therefore, to those who ask me to choose a nationality, I will proudly say that I am a Canadian Chinese.

**Hélène:** My nationality is written on a passport page’s dotted line. I am legally and singularly Chinese. But people still ponder my identity, which grows beyond black ink on a blank page, that I flesh out with non-singularly Chinese things.

My grandparents worked in foreign lands, my parents worked with foreigners, and I attend an international school, speaking English and French. My future university resides an ocean away. My friends are scattered around the globe like unshuffled houses of cards. I fill my memory bottle with miscellaneous mistakes made in New York, Toronto, and Tokyo. My identity better fits the label “internationalized Chinese,” because I feel like a world trapped within a person.



## Q How do you feel about having to choose?

**Helena:** My two nationalities are like the forces of yin and yang, pushing against each other, but balancing harmoniously at the same time. I try my best not to conform to societal expectations and abandon either one of my nationalities.

I want everyone to know that it's okay not to choose. We can be melting pots of cultures, an amalgam of rich histories and cultural traditions. I was once asked if we celebrated Father's and Mother's Day in China: I always thought that these festivals are worldwide, not belonging to any specific culture (which they are). Thus, we need to show the world our unique perspectives and identities, that we don't have to stick any labels on our skins, that we all celebrate international holidays. Reading Gloria Anzaldua's work on Mestiza consciousness and *Borderlands/La Frontera*, I realized that like her, I can have multiple identities. According to Anzaldua, there are people who live at the borderlands, meaning the outskirts or in the middle of two different things.

**Hélène:** I feel the question urging me towards, "Where do I belong?" Not in the East Coast, not at Chinese diners, not in the tongue-tied silence, the languages that won't belong to me. I am one of those cross-cultured human beings, legitimately educated and internationally fashioned but unable to classify themselves, I don't know where I belong. I don't know how to belong.

I used to try fitting in, blending in, like water rolling in rich wine. I could shatter every mirror on my lake, distort every version of myself to match my environment, and I seemed to belong, but it never meant I belonged to anywhere. We all know a friend to all is a friend to

none. Similarly, one who belongs to everywhere belongs to nowhere, because to mold is not to belong. It is an illusion to twist between twisted fingers, lacing a little prison to dance around the question, and wait for it... wait for it... because life will answer for me: Where in this fragmentary, passionate world, do I belong?

## Q In the end, who are we really? What are your concluding thoughts?

**Helena:** Our life is like a narrative, but we are our own writers. We can determine who we are and who we want to be. If you're unsure of your identity, know that it is okay to feel bewildered. Life is full of enigmas and maybes for us to discover, and this journey won't be over in the blink of an eye. This is just the beginning.

**Hélène:** Our story has no ending yet. I have no escape to my own imagination and logic: Where will I go, who I am, and who will I be? If "home is where the heart lives," then I have two homes. One is Beijing, the city I was raised in. The other is my city of choice, where I will work, conjecture, and contemplate life. I am like the peanut butter and jam stuck to the bread, for who I am is burning between two layers, intertwined from the neck to spine. The next time you ask, I am the salt and stale sugar, the cynical fur and carmine feather, the forest evergreen and frosted leaves in winter, the blessing and the curse. I am all or nothing. Still, I am me.



# “Because *I* Said So!”

How strict should parents be when it comes to curfews?

By Linda Huang

**F**or teenagers, the sheer power of the line, “Because I fed you and raised you, so I get to...” is indisputable. It often seems like no matter how much we’ve grown and learned, our maturity gained through years of experience can be all but destroyed by our parents with that one simple line.

As a teenager turning 18 in a few months, a major reason I have always been so keen to grow up is to gain a degree of freedom, and specifically, the freedom to come home whenever I please at night. Simply put, I look forward to making my own choices, and not having to adhere to my parents’ decisions about what time I should return.

Curfew, of all the existing conflicts between parents and teens, is arguably one of the most mainstream and non-negotiable, and certainly one that we have no right or wrong answers to. As long as there are people, there are problems. The lack of freedom concerning returning home seems like a common struggle shared by many of similar backgrounds in Beijing, too.

“My mom has strict curfews regarding hanging out,” says Rachelle H, an incoming junior. “Usually I come home between 9 and 10pm because [my mother] makes it very clear that if I don’t get home by these times, I will not be able to hang out with my friends again for a while.”

Sometimes, parents tend to seek a quick and convenient curfew based on their child’s age, however, this may not be suited to every child’s development as maturity does not necessarily correlate with age.

“I don’t think my curfew is reasonable because I’m 16 so I should have the freedom to go out with my friends... I feel like [my mother] giving me a curfew like this means that she doesn’t exactly trust me, and that makes me kind of sad,” adds Rachelle.

Trust – undoubtedly one of the most essential qualities formed in all parent-child relationships – also happens to be one of the biggest struggles. Establishing trust is like crafting an intricate vase out of fine crystal: Considerable time is required to nurture it, but the thing can shatter into a million pieces with one slip of the hand.

However, the so-called “overprotectiveness” and “possessiveness” that many parents tend to exhibit may not come from direct mistrust towards the child.

“I don’t trust the kids that I don’t know, [my children] may be in contact with people who can make them do things that they would not do otherwise,” says Solange Avom, an expat mother of two 16-year-olds in Beijing.

From this perspective, the argument seems equally sensible, as parents actually tend to place more trust in their children to teach them the concept of trust and accountability.

Student Qinglan Du, who does not have a curfew, expresses that



her father trusts that she is responsible for getting home safely at night. “I think it’s important to give [teenagers] this degree of freedom because when they are off to college, no parent will be there to implement a curfew,” says Qinglan, adding, “for kids who feel restricted or unhappy with their curfews, the sudden freedom of college could cause them to defy all their old restrictions and go all out, which could be risky. So I think it’s good to practice during high school.”

Lee Cassidy, a mother of two daughters currently living in Beijing with her younger daughter, shares a similar parenting philosophy. “Neither of my daughters have or had a specific curfew. They have open discussions with us regardless of if their decision has positive or negative consequences.”

In fact, Cassidy’s family began building this parent-child trust when the children were quite young. “Since my daughters were young, their father and I gave choices about what to wear, how to play, and who were their friends. We gave them choices because we knew there would come a time when they

would have to make their own choices. Everything we have done was to prepare them to make safe and healthy decisions.”

Likewise, safety, another common concern that parents face, is a crucial aspect to consider in responsible parenting. For those living in Beijing, a general consensus seems to be that Beijing is a relatively safe city. People have expressed that “there’s always security, bright lights, and crowds of people” and that “Didi drivers are conscientious and public transport is reliable and secure.” So what might be the other reasons why parents still believe their teens need to come home by a specific time?

“I consider Beijing a safe city because you cannot get robbed or harassed,” says Avom. “However, my children must be home by 8pm latest as I believe it teaches them discipline.”

Although different families establish different rules, most parents tend to share one commonality: They all want their child to learn valuable lessons and essential life skills – choosing the right friends, establishing independence, making safe and responsible decisions, and understanding the concept of discipline – from life’s simple daily undertakings such as coming home at night after hanging out.

There is no rule as to what responsible and safe parenting is, but through active communication and mutual understanding, parents can establish ways to help their teens minimize risks when being out, while still providing a suitable extent of freedom that is in accordance with their teen’s emotional maturity.

Freedom can be earned through trust, but trust can also be built through letting go of fears and allowing a greater sense of freedom. There is no fixed formula.

# Tell Me About Your Day

The pros and cons of the “Therapist Friend”

By Meredith Tung

Ah...we all have that one friend; trustworthy, wise, empathetic, great at listening and dispensing advice. You know, the therapist friend. We all have one, and for some of us, we may even be one. And yet, to put it bluntly, in a friend-therapist relationship, the benefits are entirely one-sided. It has to be said that being the “therapist friend” is extremely problematic, exhausting, and can be all-around damaging.

Many might agree that it is more convenient to confide in a close friend than a therapist. Friends are supposed to have your back, they desire the best for you, and will most likely give the kind of advice you yearn to hear. Not to mention, conversing with a friend is completely free! However, this creates a unique level of pressure, responsibility, and burden for that friend. At times – depending on the severity of the situation – these “duties” move beyond the normal expectations we place on a friendship. Sure, talking to a friend may be free, but only through working with a professional are we able to develop the cognitive and emotional skills necessary to navigate life. Still, this doesn’t mean we should belittle the struggles and urgent need for emotional support, suffered by those battling mental health issues.

Many of us view therapy as simply having vulnerable conversations, and receiving a bit of advice here and there. These, of course, are aspects of attending therapy. However, there are also some defining differences, that once identified, make clear why therapy is worth the investment.

Therapy is much more than a safe haven to vent your frustrations with a person paid to help you unpack your feelings. Therapists go through years of training to attain the skills needed to help their clients work through personal struggles. They are able to remain unbiased, objective, and non-judgemental. Speaking with a therapist eliminates the feeling of guilt (no need to worry about reciprocating!). With a therapist, you can feel free to share your deepest troubles and be assured of their confidentiality. Not to mention, you can freely express disagreements and conflicts, unlike with friends, where you may stress about hurting or straining your relationship.

Sometimes, we’re lucky enough to have friends who are adept at reading us. They anticipate our needs and always turn up with



precisely what we need to hear at any given moment. They are intuitive and have a tendency to point out patterns we fail to notice ourselves. They effortlessly make us feel comfortable, seen, empowered, and encouraged. It’s completely normal to vent frustrations to friends, talk about one another’s feelings, struggles, and thoughts. However, this doesn’t

mean that they should assume the role of “therapist.” It can become problematic and draining when only one friend does all the listening. In fact, qualified therapists are required to speak with therapists themselves, giving them an outlet to release any lingering stress from having such a heavy and emotionally taxing job.

## A note to the “Therapist Friends”

Be there for your friends, but don’t forget about yourself! Being able to see through problems so easily and come up with brilliant advice can be incredibly stressful right? It’s tough having to bear this unique ability bestowed by the relationship gods.

Being that friend can get overwhelming. A wheel of emotions thrown at you, complaints from multiple sides, it can get quite draining absorbing them all. The worst is when they don’t seem to take your suggestions, and the mistake repeats itself. Your gift to empathize and empower your friends is one of the many reasons they confide in you, and of course, there’s nothing wrong with that! It’s an amazing feeling to have people trust you with their dilemmas and seek your opinion. However, it is important for you not to internalize this duty too much. Always pulling yourself together just enough to continue helping others. You are somehow able to give great advice to your friends, but when it comes to you, you are left lost. You adopt a mindset of self-reliance and feel there is no one you can confide in other than yourself. But really, all you need is someone to listen and advise you! It’s natural and okay to feel down, even if you are the one everyone counts on for positivity. I encourage you to try communicating your own problems with your friends, so they can know your needs and be there for you the same way you are there for them.



# MY NAME IS MY IDENTITY

Three students share their views  
on simplifying their names

By *XueFei Liu, Tadej Trpkoski, TianTian Xu*

What's your name? For third-culture kids living in Beijing, a seemingly straightforward question such as this is wrought with complexity. Names are often the first things you learn about a person, not to mention the first thing you're taught about yourself. They play a critical role in shaping our identity and the ways we move about the world. As a result, it makes sense that so many of us spend years grappling with that question.

From nicknames to English names through to Chinese names, we asked three Beijing teens to tell us about their names and what they mean to them.



## Meet XueFei Liu

I'm often faced with the question: "Do you prefer XueFei or Rosalind?"

To be honest, I used to prefer XueFei, which prompts the obvious question, "Then why did you have Rosalind?"

My reason for choosing an English name was very disheartening. I was so sick of being bullied in primary school for my Chinese name by teachers and students that I decided to come up with an English name. For once, I ignored my parents' advice. When I was reading Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the name Rosalind called out to me, and I settled on it. Going back to school with an English name made me feel different. People no longer pronounced my name wrong, no longer gave me silly nicknames, nor laughed at my name. So, for four years, I was proud of being Rosalind.

But when I hit freshmen year and transferred schools, COVID-19 forced us into quarantine and gave me time to think. And I started to realize that Rosalind wasn't that perfect anymore. Walking down the halls with an English name was what I wanted, but it was hiding my Chinese identity. So, when I returned to campus during sophomore year, XueFei started appearing on my tests, reports, and signatures. That's when it dawned on me. I realized that Rosalind and XueFei are equally important to my identity, and I didn't need to ditch one part of me for the other. While my papers are all signed with XueFei, my friends and teachers call me Rosalind. Going back to the original question, here's my answer: I prefer both, and it's amazing being in the best of both worlds.

## Meet TianTian Xu

My name is TianTian and no, I don't have an English name. TianTian is my English name and my Chinese name.

"TianTian" means "sky sky," or "day day," or simply, "every day." My parents gave me this name because they thought it would be easy to pronounce in both English and Chinese. But it turns out nothing is ever easy when it comes to names, especially for those of us living between two cultures.

In the US, people hesitate before reading out my name or don't bother trying. I joined a Zoom webinar based in the states this year and was the only person whose name was not read aloud with their question. In China, the statement, "My name is TianTian" is always followed by, "But what's your full name?" because it's so hard for people to believe my real name would be so simple, a nickname typically given to children.

In international schools, it's almost expected that you have a Westernized English name. My fifth grade English class in Beijing briefly knew me as Skye, a name that never felt mine. Never underestimate the subtle peer pressure of being the only one in a class of 20 without an English name during rollcall.

But I don't want to change my name for the convenience of others and to avoid standing out anymore. Just like our identities as third-culture kids, my name falls between two cultures. Blending in was never an option.

It is my choice and my honor to be Tian-Tian, every day.

## Meet Tadej Trpkoski

I see my name as a representation of two things: my cultural and personal identity. Both of these things make my name what it is, and a change in either would alter my perception of my own name. The simplicity of my nickname, T, allows me to merge both of these concepts and create a solid self-identity which I am happy with, by keeping a part of my old name inside, and to fit in better with the new people that I meet thanks to the brief structure and simple pronunciation. When moving to a new

place, I believe it is important to be able to merge with the new culture that you encounter. While this can't always be accomplished with a name change, someone who is in my position – having to (sort of) start over in life and get to know an entirely new world, – should switch some aspect of their name in order to fit their foreign status better.





# DO YOU SPEAK GEN-Z?

Gen-Z slang evolves at an absurd pace.  
Can you keep up?

*By Mohammad Rao*

Every generation has been privy to its own secret code, its own slang. However, with the advent of the internet, platforms and sites like Urban Dictionary and TikTok facilitate the spread of slang in an entirely new way, as words and phrases spread like wildfire – or, honestly, a whole lot faster.

Here are 20 of the most commonly used phrases by Gen Z.

**Cap:** A synonym for “lie.”

Example: He ate five burgers in one sitting, no cap.

**Sheesh:** Used to hype someone or something up. Synonymous with damn.

Example: Person A: He ate five burgers in one sitting, no cap.

Person B: Sheesh!

**Ice:** Formerly bling, used to discuss fancy jewelry, and specifically, diamonds. Originated from a trend on TikTok.

Example: I tested this ring with a diamond tester. It's ice.

**Bussin:** Something that's extremely great.

Example: The pie was bussin.

**Clap:** To slap someone.

Example: Do you want to get clapped?

**Basic:** Someone whose tastes go as deep as the mainstream, regarded as unoriginal.

Example: Your sense of style is so basic.

**Drip:** A good sense of style.

Example: He has an iconic drip.

**Hits different:** Something that's unique or extraordinary.

Example: This pizza just hits different.

**Slap:** Denotes that something is particularly good, generally used for music.

Example: This song slaps.

**Stan:** A die-hard fan of someone or something. Generally regarded as derogatory, it was popularized by the Eminem song of the same name.

Example: You're such an Eminem stan.

**Tea:** Gossip.

Example: Person A: Do you know what happened at school today?

Person B: Spill the tea.

**Sus:** Short for suspicious. Popularized by the video game, Among Us.

Example: He is very sus.

**Vibe:** The “aura” emitted by someone which changes the mood of the room.

Example: You give me positive vibes.

**Yeet:** Used to express excitement when doing something, usually something physical.

Example: I yeeted the basketball across the court right before halftime.

**Pressed:** Being mad or upset about something.

Example: Don't be pressed about what they said.

**I'm dead:** Used to describe something being extremely funny; suggesting that the speaker died of laughter.

Example: Your stand-up comedy is so funny, I'm dead.

**Fam:** Short for family, used for one's tight inner circle of friends.

Example: Don't worry fam, I got you.

**Bet:** Denotes agreement or approval.

Example: Person A: Let's go to Taikoo Li.

Person B: Aight bet.

**Canceled:** To disassociate from someone famous on a massive scale.

Example: I can't believe Nestlé did so many horrible things, they are canceled.

**Simp:** Used for a person who publicly pours their heart out for someone else online, especially if the feeling is not mutual or reciprocated.

Example: Why is he donating so much money to that streamer? He's such a simp.

**Cheugy:** A millennial who tries too hard to capitalize on trends.

Example: Did you see that older girl trying to do that TikTok dance? She's so cheugy.

# TO ALL THE TIGER MOMS, THANK YOU

I'm a better person because of overprotective Tiger Parenting

By XueFei Liu



Growing up in China, I've been very lucky to have two doting but overprotective parents. My mother is the typical tiger mom, and my father the overly overprotective dad. As their only child, you can imagine that I've grown up with them "helicoptering" my entire life. Sure, I was annoyed at first, but looking back I'm grateful that they did what they did. And yes, I say that with zero sarcasm intended.

## #1: Keeping tabs on all my social media

I wasn't allowed my own cellphone until I turned 14. My dad – aka the IT genius in the house – keeps tabs on all my social media accounts. On top of that, I'm only allowed to use WeChat. To limit my screen time, my parents set up a limit on my phone that connects to my computer and only allows for one hour of use across both devices.

All these rules in an age of unfettered technology drastically set me apart from my friends. Being the only person in the entire grade who can't freely use their phone is depressing, but I was able to improve my self-control and also improve my schoolwork. Staying away from distractions gave me more time to develop my hobbies instead of being on TikTok 24/7. That's when I realized I loved writing and English literature, and that's when I knew I wanted to major in English.

## #2: Tracking my location. Every. Single. Second.

My phone is linked to my parents' phones, meaning they can both see my location through Apple's built-in Find My app at any given time. So, you can imagine that if I'm not where I'm supposed to be, my parents will scour the streets looking for me. And from firsthand experience, it's not fun being lectured in front of your friends.

However, any time I see a news clip about a child being kidnapped, I'm glad my parents follow my every move. It's stressful for teenagers when we're exposed to such shocking stories, but by letting my parents know where I am, I'm allowing them to trust me more while also gradually exploring the outside world. And it's reassuring to know that if something happens to me, my mom and dad will send a search party across the entire world to ensure I'm safe and sound.

## #3: Grades and VERY high academic expectations

Going into the international baccalaureate (IB) program when I started school, my parents were very strict with grades. In elementary school, I had 30 minutes of math, one hour of English, 30 minutes of piano, and 30 minutes of Chinese every day after school, with both my parents supervising me. Now

that I'm in secondary school, I'm expected to get a six out of seven or above on every assessment.

My parents know and experienced firsthand that knowledge is power, and they want to make sure their only daughter can have a slightly easier time in the real world. I'm grateful for how hard they push me because it's awesome knowing that they believe I'm capable of anything and everything, so long as I challenge myself hard enough.

## #4: Micromanaging my extracurriculars

Aside from grades, my parents tell me what I can and can't do for my extracurricular activities. I can recall the basketball fever I got in sixth grade and how I begged them to play. Instead of letting me join the team, my mom freaked out and banned all my sports. It's a miracle I can still play badminton. My parents go over the extracurriculars I've signed up for and pull me out of activities they disapprove of.

But actually, I'm grateful they take the time to check my commitments. Without that, it would be impossible to do everything while focusing on my studies and continuing to develop my passion for writing. Also, let's face it, the class study sessions were never useful, and getting a broken bone from playing basketball wouldn't be ideal during exam time.

## #5: No social life, it's straight from school to home

Anyone who has overprotective parents can relate to this. I'm nearly 16 years old but my parents still treat me like I'm 6. From the pick-up and drop-offs every day to the proposals I write to gain permission for a hang-out, I often feel left out and embarrassed when they baby me around my peers. Especially when I'm always using the, "I can't go because my parents won't let me" line with my friends.

But by restricting my social life, my parents let me focus on things that are more important. (Standardized tests anyone?) They also make sure I'm not being influenced by toxic friends because truth be told, there are a few toxic friends I've made that I regret. By making sure they know the 5W's of each hangout, they know I'm around people that make me feel good and won't get me into trouble with things such as clubbing, smoking, or drinking.











# HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN...

My childhood as told by milestones

By Jenny Andrea

## Age 8

Traveling without a parent or guardian for the first time was nerve-racking, to say the least. Although the flight was only three hours, my twin sister and I did not dare leave each other's side for a split second. We were traveling to visit our grandma – who lives in a distant city – for about a month. Our mom couldn't accompany us and our dad was in Beijing at the time. Two 8-year-olds sitting alone on a plane with terrified facial expressions was the last thing you'd expect. In the end, we made it through the flight by each other's side and found ways to kill time by playing word games and storytelling.



## Age 9

Attending a school here in Beijing for the first time was equal parts terrifying and exciting. I remember it like it was yesterday. 9-year-old me saw the experience of stepping into a new school as the beginning of a new adventure. The adrenaline rush of encountering new students and teachers, the excitement of wearing a suit for the first time, and the feeling of perhaps having to deal with a strict principal were all daunting but thrilling prospects. 4th grade was packed with the most diverse group of 9 and 10-year-olds I had ever seen in my life. The teachers were strict but extremely delightful and continuously went the extra mile to make my sister and I feel like we belonged. Overall, everyone turned out to be really friendly and inviting.

## Age 12

Hanging out with my friends, outside of school, without having my dad drive me around or boss me about curfew was a lot more challenging than it sounded, initially. But at the time, I was 12 and thought I could do anything. Boy, was I wrong.

The pressure of finding a way home to make it in time for dinner weighed heavily on my mind. Thankfully, I was not alone. Although my sister and I struggled to stop a taxi, the real battle was communicating our address to the taxi driver in Chinese - any expat's worst nightmare. It took us a few minutes of arguing and disagreement to finally be able to pronounce it right. And in no time, we were on our way home in fresh, comfortable seats and a well-functioning air conditioner. "Take that, Dad!" I remember thinking the entire way home.



## Age 13

Living away from my parents for the first time had its good and bad sides. You'd expect me to return home way past my usual curfew and hang outside more. Well, that part is true. That's what I did for some time while my parents were both in Cameroon for an entire month, attending my grandmother's funeral. However, I quickly found that the more time I spent outside, the more money I spent on unnecessary and expensive things. After realizing this, I decided to dedicate more time to watching TV shows and movies indoors. One TV show in particular that kept 13-year old me busy for an entire month was *The Vampire Diaries*, which was eight seasons long. My sister and I were not entirely on our own. We had babysitters that were staying with us the whole time and they decided to have a movie marathon every night. Obviously, both my sister and I loved the idea. We watched all types of movies from the *Wrong Turn* series to *White Chicks*, a classic. In this case, I definitely think the good times spent without our parents at home outweighed the bad.



## Age 14

At 14, I was given the biggest responsibility of my life: cooking dinner for a family of four. My parents took my sister to the dentist for an entire afternoon and expected to return home to a dinner table fully set with a three-course meal. Well, maybe not a three-course meal but certainly something to eat at the end of the day. I was 14 at the time and had spent almost an entire month helping my mom out in the kitchen because she's hands-down the best cook I know. I remember scanning our kitchen pantry and choosing the easiest option: pasta and tomato sauce. Initially, I thought it would be a piece of cake. Unfortunately, it did not turn out to be as easy as I had imagined. Cutting the vegetables for the sauce was perhaps the hardest part. Although I had done it before, this time was different, because my mom wasn't there to correct me nor scold me for any little mistake I made. Eventually, I was able to make a pretty decent sauce, and with no injuries to boot!



# Love, Hélène

Dear Future Self  
*By Hélène Wang*



Dear Older Hélène,

I am now halfway to 30, and I never, rarely, sometimes, often, always wonder if you will forget me before you forgive me – for being me. I now hate every crisp laugh, couth chatter, and aching fragment of your lonely, mature mind. Later, my hate will be haggard, and your regret will be fresh.

To live is to regret. To write is to bleed (on paper). To remember is to torture (a scared child). My hellish days and ways are your poetry; My dying naivety is your legacy. My stolen lullabies become your elegy; Your worldliness is my indignity. You remember me like a glass mural. When I grow up, this mural falls from your softest walls, your youngest years shattered. And despite your best efforts, you won't glue me together again.

Secretly, you will wish I can stay a little longer, to keep the cottage of the adult world warm, to heal the winter weathers of hurt. Preciously, you will wish to bury me in the poetry of your childhood burning in fears, tears, and candles. Then, you will be numb. You will be defined by what I couldn't change. You will erase every corner of my haunted home and its doors so hard to close I left open. Finally, you will tear down chapters, calendars of my life falling apart and me staring blankly at it, alone, at the helplessness of it all.

This persists and resists me to ask you, will you be innocent enough to read this, stupid enough to miss me? If yes, then don't ever, ever teach me: Nothing is forever; being cruel is being clever. Don't ever change me, because my childish dreaminess is a lie. Don't ever touch my candy cherries, which you no longer eat. They rot in fake niceties, and to rot is to accept reality.

Please do feel young, air-headed, tantrum-ridden. We a final chance to be wild, a child, before writing tragedies older than our age. Before we hate fine china and fresh porcelain but use it anyways. Before you see me in backlogged dreams, deserted dorms, and painfully, reluctantly, miss me when you lose the best you gained, and don't know what to lose after it. Please don't say goodbye to me because I say that to you. Please count the days because I count them for you.

Love,  
Hélène



# FROM GROWING UP TO GLOWING UP

Facing the fears of a frightful year

By FeiFei Xu

High school had always seemed so distant to me. I watched my sister go through the stresses of 9th and 10th grade and figured I had plenty of time until my own demise in the high school hierarchy as a freshman. But before I knew it, 8th grade breezed by and high school was rapidly approaching.

Transition years have always been hard for me. From elementary school to middle school and then middle school to high school, I don't think I'll ever be able to shake the butterflies in my stomach or the tingles in my hands on the first day of class. But this year was different. I was no longer going to be a puny 8th grader, but an experienced high schooler who all the middle schoolers could look up to. I kept thinking to myself, how was I supposed to be a good role model for the middle schoolers if I myself didn't know what was going on half the time? Because of the pandemic, the class of 2024 never got a proper transition into high school, supported by the then-9th graders. We were thrust into a world of assessments and deadlines without prior warning. Not only was this year a big one for me as a freshman but one faced with many irrational fears that had been exacerbated by staying cooped up in my home for so long.

At the start of the year, I had pushed myself to run for student council, something I hadn't done in years because of my fear of pub-

lic speaking, losing, and ultimately, embarrassing myself. This year, however, I told myself that simply trying would be enough, especially because election speeches took the form of video recordings. I thought taking risks and letting myself be known would be a good way to transition into high school life.

The next thing I knew, I had become the 9th-grade representative and was in a position I never actually thought imaginable. After a year of getting to know my fellow council members, it had come time for the elections again. Election day speeches were quickly approaching, and they were in-person this time. I had decided once again to break out of my comfort zone and run for vice president. I realized how big a jump it was, but go big or go home, right? I had finished composing my speech and spent countless hours reciting it in front of the mirror and my family. The only thing left to do was wait and stress.

Election day came and coincidentally, it happened to be on the same day as an important math exam, adding a whole new layer of stress that consumed me for weeks. This was my chance to pull up my math grades, yet the world seemed to be against me. The night before the speech, my older sister fell from the middle school playground and almost broke her leg. Now the stress had been tripled and the expectations as well. I would need to ace my test, wow with



lic speaking, losing, and ultimately, embarrassing myself. This year, however, I told myself that simply trying would be enough, especially because election speeches took the form of video recordings. I thought taking risks and letting myself be known would be a good way to transition into high school life.

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Election day came and coincidentally, it happened

my speech, and somehow fix my sister.

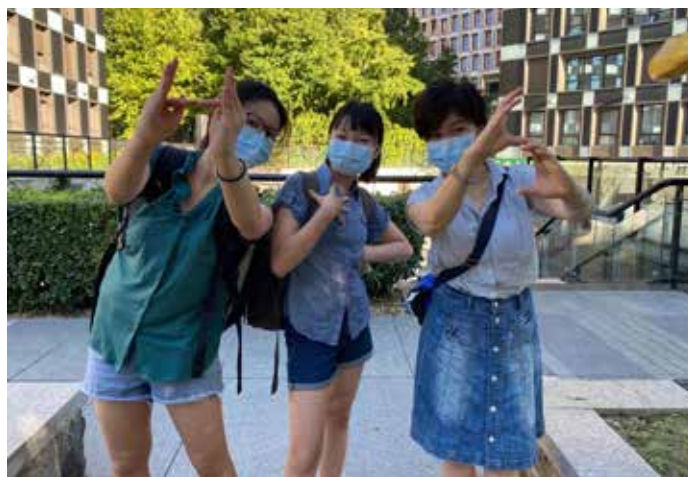
Needless to say, it was impossible for me to focus on the assessment. As soon as it finished, I burst out of the exam room and hurried to the gym where the speeches were being held. As I sat and watched the rest of the candidates go up to present their speech my worries about the test quickly melted away, replaced by a feeling of dread. I felt the sudden urge to bolt, forgetting all my ambitions of running for vice president. Suddenly, my name was called, and as I made my way to the stage with shaking hands, reality finally set in. I was going to run for VP. It was too late to back out now.

I got up in front of the podium and began to give my speech. My wobbling hands began to sweat, and my mind froze. An earthquake that only I seemed to feel rumbled through the gym, and I felt the familiar words get stuck in my throat as I clumsily corrected myself. And as soon as it began, it was over.

Afterward, I was so proud of myself for just standing up there and delivering my speech, I didn't even mind if I didn't get the position. Friends and teachers approached me throughout the day to compliment me, promising that my shaking and mishaps were unnoticeable.

In the end, I didn't get vice president, but the experience itself was rewarding enough. I had overcome my fear, and though I know next year when I try again, I will feel the same sense of dread wash over me, I will be able to recognize that I've done it before, and I can do it again.

Many people have bigger fears than me, but I believe any action like mine – be it getting in front of a crowd and performing a speech or just trying something for the first time – is a big step in overcoming your fears. After all, our fears may never disappear, but we can always be proud that we've faced them. Like my favorite line in the Newsies musical: "Courage does not erase our fears, courage is when we face our fears."





# POETRY & GROWTH

## The tale of sister poets

By Helena Zhao



From a budding seed to a blooming flower, from a caterpillar to a butterfly, from chorion to chrysalis, these are examples of physical growth. But what about transcendental and mental growth?

Throughout our childhood, my older sister Vania and I were inseparable. During the day, we explored the compound, hiding in our headquarters made from rocks, brewing balloon bombs with gooey mud, worms, and M&Ms. At night, we cocooned ourselves in our warm blankets, teleported to a world of fairies and thrilling adventures. In our imaginations, we were brave superheroes, fighting villains with laser eyes and telekinesis. We grew up with our characters. They gave us the strength to step out of our comfort zones and go on new adventures.

However, our storytime ended when Vania reached high school. It was not that she felt our stories were childish, but because she went to boarding school in the US. Although we were separated, magical stories tugged on both our cold blankets, begging to be cuddled with love and recognition. Therefore, despite being miles apart, we worked on story outlines and ideas virtually. Through video calls, we were able to talk, “face to face.” But something felt off – something we couldn’t quite explain. Surprisingly, we found out what was missing during COVID-19 – authentic connections of the soul.

Beginning in the spring of 2020, my sister was stuck outside of Beijing for over half a year. Everything was online – school for me and high school graduation for her. All forms of communication were virtual, which strained our eyes. As mentioned, FaceTime is different



PHOTOS: HELENA ZHAO

from physical connection. We realized that we needed to find a new way to connect, one that didn't require electronics. Since we both enjoy writing poetry, and in honor of National Poetry Month that April, we decided to connect through words, through poetry.

We came up with an overarching theme – the growth of a butterfly – and divided it into three sections. Within each section, there were ten prompts that we'd both react to. However, the twist was that we couldn't read what the other wrote until both were finished with the same prompt. It served as a wonderful catalyst and source of inspiration, as we desired to read what the other wrote, to feel what the other felt from miles away, to foster our sister bond, and to connect our souls through enigmatic and magical words. Another interesting aspect was that many people thought that we were twins throughout our adolescence. Therefore, we wanted to see our similarities and differences through this project. This is something that you, our dear reader, could decide and decipher for yourself. In less than two months, we both finished reacting to the 30 prompts, writing 60 poems in total.

Not only did we write poetry, but we also drew accompanying illustrations. Unlike my older and younger sisters, I am not much of a drawer – I am more of a music person. I always thought that part and parcel of being a good artist was the ability to draw flawless human beings and living things, but I was mistaken. There is a myriad of art styles – poetry itself is one! Through this project, I realized that drawing inanimate objects, flowers, and simple things soothed me. Like music, it's therapeutic. Thanks to both my sisters' encouraging words and helpful tips, I've found my art style – one that does not frustrate me.

I am also proud to say that our youngest sister also drew a few illustrations! We are hoping that she will write a few poems in our next sister poetry book, so we can deepen our bond with her. (Yes, there will be more coming! And no, there will be no spoilers regarding the next theme.)

This sister poetry book is meaningful to us, and we will cherish it forever. We wrote it with love, with yearnings to be close to each other during devastating times like

the pandemic. Poetry was also a way for us to express our emotions. It was as if time had stopped while I wrote. It was as if my sister was next to me when I read her poems. We realized that our sister bond flourished through this experience. Like the butterflies from our poems, we, too, metamorphosized.

Poetry provided me with a medium to delve into my subconscious soul, finding my quirks and voice. My exploration of diverse poetry styles complements my journey of growth, which is learning from experiences.

Seeing the growth of one another, we realized that we want to share our experiences and poems with the world, hoping that our story will impact readers, showing them alternative mediums to connect with their loved ones and to express themselves creatively. As a symbolic gesture, we published our poetry book on Jun 1, Children's Day, marking the end of our childhood and the start of adulthood.

On Jun 27, our poetry sharing and signing event successfully influenced parents and children who attended to try to communicate creatively. One mother told us that she aims to write letters with her daughter, while another hopes to go on walks with her family, just as my family does. Through this event, I grew and still am growing. I learned more



about myself and my sister, as well as those around me. We all inspired one another, as I became more motivated when I saw the loving smiles on parents' and children's faces.

That's the power of sharing experiences – we all grow together. To be frank, it felt like a dream until they called us their fans, asking us for signatures and photos.


After the event, the communication and growth continued. One buyer sends us daily images of her analysis of our poems in our poetry group chat, telling us that she improves her English and understanding of love by reading our poems. Many also told us that they felt our love through our exquisite packaging – the sweet and jubilant smell of lavender, the antique paper, and the flamboyant wax seal.

We hope to impact more families through our poetry about growth. We hope that more connections can bloom like the budding flowers, growing into blossoming love.

If you would like to discover more about how two butterflies metamorphosized, you can purchase the book via our official WeChat account: 水果来袭 Fruitelicious.







**Mom says being the parents of two children is different and unpredictable.**

**Norah's greatest achievement was** winning an award for math.

**According to Mom, the most annoying child in the family is** Shadow (the cat).

**Mom's greatest achievement was** passing the LAMDA exam Level 8 Gold with merit.

**Olivia says the most annoying thing her parents have ever done was** giving their dog away.

**Mom said they named their daughter Norah because** when she first started speaking she would always say "no."

**After dropping Norah and Olivia off at school,** mom grabs a snack with some friends and then goes to the gym.

**Mom says the reason she's always so loud when Olivia's friends are visiting is** that they're having a party and parties are loud!

## Family Favorites!

By: Olivia Li Photo: Uni You

**T**here are four main members of my family: my mum, dad, younger sister, and of course, me. Then there are three other furry members of my family: Pumpkin, Niu Niu, and Shadow. My mother is from Beijing and my dad is from Harbin. My sister and I were both born in Beijing, however, I went to England at a young age and actually found that adapting to life in England is quite a bit easier than adapting to life in China. Our family does a lot of things together such as playing poker and traveling.





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