The Keystone

Magazine 鼎石志

PLACE.
PEOPLE.
PURPOSE.

2017 Spring Issue

Editorial Oversight
Malcolm McKenzie

Editor-in-Chief
Sabrina Liu

Editors (English)
Benita Sumita and Franne Van der Keilen

Editors (Chinese)
Wang Zhao and Amelie Wan

Translator
Christine Shi

Staff Writers
Gary Bradshaw, Maureen McCoy

Student Writers
Phoebe Sun, Vincent Liu, Sofia Islas, Steven Shi

Photography
Liu Zheng, Dave's Studio (cover photo, and pages 10-18)

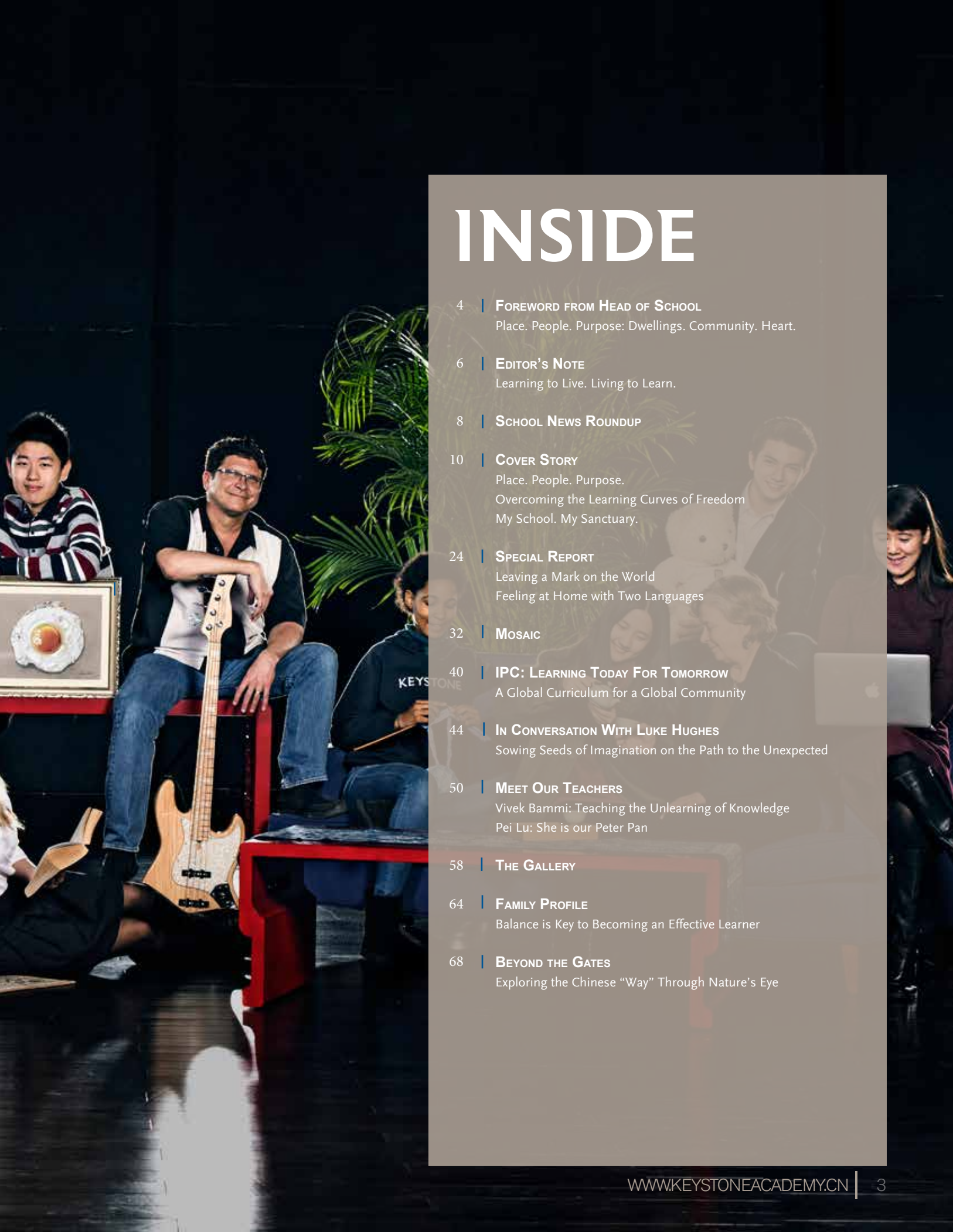
Special Thanks
Vivek Bammi, Pei Lu, Luke Hughes, Kelli Sanchez, Prof. Dong Mei, Cherry Tian and Parents

Cover Photo
(from left to right) Juli James, Cindy Liang, Vincent Liu, Amanda Shen, Heather Hines, Leo Sheng, Gregory Barnes, Goleba Lefatshe, Phoebe Sun, Matthew Beaman, Catherine Powell, and Kacy Song

Submissions/Subscription/Comments:
communications@keystoneacademy.cn
Admission Inquiries:
admission@keystoneacademy.cn
Employment Inquiries:
hr@keystoneacademy.cn

Drop by and visit us in person at:
No.11 Anfu Street, Houshayu, Shunyi,
Beijing – 101318

For more information, visit:



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PLACE. PEOPLE. PURPOSE.

DWELLINGS. COMMUNITY. HEART.

Dwellings. Physical places. Homes are at least these. Homes are where we eat, sleep, and live. Our dwellings here at Keystone are more than comfortable. Boarders share two to a room, and do not have barracks bathrooms. Teachers live in spacious and beautifully appointed apartments. The dining hall is large and airy and there are many and fine communal areas for work and play.

Community. Individual people. As we grow up, for most people (but let's always remember, with sadness, by no means all) homes are where we are loved by our parents, and become social beings. At Keystone, we learn to live together in residence. Character and community come together, and reflect each other. Many of our students come from single child families, and do not know what it is like to live with other teenagers. Some of our teachers have their parents living with them. We are a three-generation residential community. We learn from each other in wholesome ways, and we care for each other graciously.

Heart. Centered purpose. The core that beats blood into the body. Cindy says: "My confidence has grown. I have also learned to manage my own daily life." Here's Matthew: "Having the freedom to choose made me make better decisions because if I make the wrong or a bad decision, it will be my responsibility." And this is Heather: "I've grown to be a lot stronger and independent. Living on campus really pushes you to fix your own problems and figure out who you are as a person." Self-confidence. Responsibility. Independence. That's characterful purpose with a strong and resilient heart. What solid preparation for college.

Hear these other voices:
Prisana: 'I have made soup, toasts, hot water bottles to help ease their illness';
Vincent: 'the bonds one builds as a boarder are truly special';
Kacy: 'I get a deeper understanding into this generation's way of life';
Sofia: 'living away from my family has increased my gratitude towards them';

Phoebe writes of 'the acts of kindness and love we encounter every day'. She says also that 'home is more than oneself'. Living in this residential community expands our understanding of home. Home is where the heart is. That's a well-known saying. Let's reverse it. Heart is where the home is. Changing it like this revitalizes the meanings of both. You will see ample evidence of home and heart, heart and home, in the home pages that are at the heart of this magazine.

Malcolm McKenzie

Learning to Live. Living to Learn.

Let me take you to a mysterious castle, overlooking a large loch, a place no ordinary muggle would be able to find. This boarding school, hidden in the Scottish Highlands, is called Hogwarts. If you are talented and lucky enough to receive the acceptance letter by owl, you can board the train on Platform 9¾ and be whisked away to a new life at Hogwarts. When you arrive, the Sorting Hat will be placed on your head to look into your personality so that you can be put in one of the four houses (Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw or Slytherin) that make up this magical institution. Then, you will meet your housemates: the friends you will board with as well as the classmates with whom you will be studying subjects including flying, magic, charms, divination and defense against the dark arts. Remember though, no matter where you are on campus, you have to wear the school uniform. But if it's Quidditch season and you are on the squad, then you will have to wear your house kit, as you get ready for the famed 'Inter-House Quidditch Cup'.

This fantastical description is perhaps familiar to anyone who has ever read any book from the Harry Potter series. Keystone is similar in many ways, especially as a boarding school, which is one of our key guiding philosophies. In past editions of *The Keystone Magazine*, we focused on life in the classroom. In this issue, we take a look at what happens after class – not just by simply observing the students through a microscope, but also by relating their lives to our own salad days.

Over the last few months producing this issue, I feel that I have (re)discovered a whole new side to the people with whom I share the campus after hours. I only have my own school days to draw comparisons with, and the differences far outnumber the similarities. Nowadays, students have to race against multiple deadlines for all kinds of projects and assignments. They come into their own even as they grow to express themselves, while being considerate of others – roommates, floormates, classmates and others. Balancing work, life and friends have steeper learning curves for some. They choose to engage in leadership training and community work. School life is so much more than just what happens in classrooms, and every part of this school life is of great importance.

It is a privilege to see our boarding students grow, take control of their time, take pride in managing their dorm, cope with stress and learn how to work together. And it is not just the students; the dorm faculty adds to this colorful community. You see a family coming together when a dorm parent bakes birthday cookies for the students on her floor; a counselor who is always there for a heart-to-heart; an Associate Dean of Residential Life who opens her home up for after-school activities; a hands-on Head of School who works hard in the belief that "everyone has something to offer in a community of keen learners." All this and more makes boarding life at Keystone unforgettable with many little memories that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

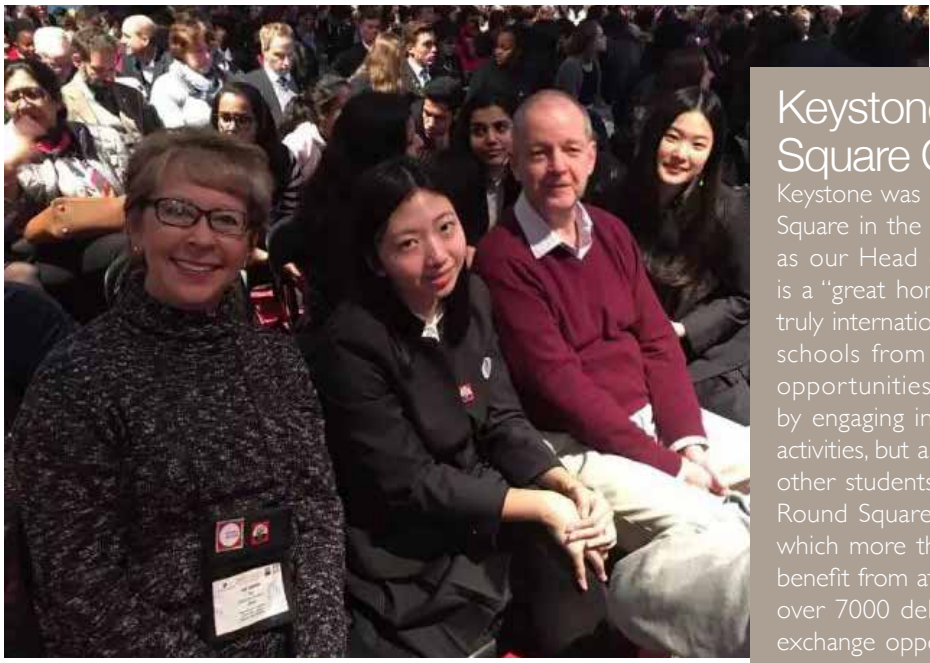
If the walls of the Keystone residences could talk, they would share these precious memories and stories of learning and living together, encouraging each other, taking comfort in one another, debating the nuances of philosophy or literature, pulling hair over a particularly difficult math problem, organizing a charity event or a basketball match, or putting together a performance. These stories form the rich and varied backdrop to life at a boarding school, full of hopes, ambitions and the freedom that every teenager craves.

This is the beauty of a boarding school where every residential student is presented with opportunities to grow from the inside out, to explore the wider world, to form their own perspectives and opinions, and to realize that they are one small part of a much greater whole. In turn the world embraces them with open arms, as they reach out beyond the school gates. It is the beginning of a life-long journey to discover the world and oneself. This is their home, shared by teachers, students and everyone – a sanctuary in its real sense. It is the heart of their universe and the center of their world. Each person is connected where nothing ends and everything is just a beginning.

Their Keystone days will mark their youth, and become part of who they are. All those late-night walks back to the dorm, the sense of achievement they felt with each project, the last-minute rush to finish assignments, all the fun and friendship, all the ups and downs, the confusion, disappointments along with the drive and the sense of adventure that push them forward will flood back to them as the most precious memories of their life.

And there is no better way to remember a school.

Sabrina Liu
Director of Marketing and Communications



Keystone Joins the Round Square Community

Keystone was inducted as a full, global member of Round Square in the fall of 2016 at Louisenlund, Germany. This, as our Head of School, Malcolm McKenzie, remarked is a "great honor, and responsibility." Round Square is a truly international forum that brings together like-minded schools from around the world. They offer students opportunities not only to learn through experience by engaging in various service initiatives and adventure activities, but also to share in the experiences and lives of other students, teachers, scholars and experts. Annually, Round Square organizes over 1700 service projects, in which more than 25000 students engage. Students also benefit from attending international conferences in which over 7000 delegates attend. Members are also offered exchange opportunities; in a year at least 1500 students apply for Round Square exchange programs.

Artistic Synergies: A Global Vision

On 24 October, Yale Center Beijing hosted 'Artistic Synergies at Keystone Academy: A Global Vision for Future Leaders.' This event featured a music performance and a dialogue between Robert Blocker, Dean of Music and Professor of Piano at the Yale School of Music, and Malcolm McKenzie, Keystone's Head of School. These leading global educators exchanged views about creativity, its place in education, and its importance at Keystone. The Arts has the potential to bring out leading skills in students, which are the capacity to collaborate and the ability to introspect. "I think it is the kind of combination that you get across the range of the Arts, the collaboration on the one hand and the focus on individual introspection on the other, which really makes for significant leading skills," said Mr. McKenzie.

An Eclectic Education Salon Season

Through the first semester of 2016-2017, Keystone hosted a diverse array of experts from the field of education in our Salon Series. From our own Head of Middle School, Dr. Maureen McCoy, presenting her views on bilingualism, Prof. Dong Mei exploring Chinese culture through nature, and Prof. Gong Pengcheng advocating for an interdisciplinary reading of Chinese literature, to Ms. Nancy Chen laying out the vast arena of US college admissions, and Ms. Carol Rafferty of the Yale Center in Beijing giving parents insights into this and other Ivy League colleges, it was an interesting and informative Keystone Education Salon season.

Poetry and Poesy with Peter Fallon

On 20 October, Keystone's middle and high school students were fortunate to have an opportunity to share the day with Irish poet Peter Fallon in classrooms, followed by a splendid evening of poetry recitation. Students were moved by his reflections on the meaning of poetry in his life, and how he combines the ordinary and the mysterious in his verse. At his evening recital, Mr. Fallon read verses from some his poems, such as 'A Rose' that delves into the enigma that surrounds a blossoming friendship, and many others from his collections: ***The Speaking Stones***, ***Winter Work***, ***News of the World***, and ***Eye to Eye*** to name a few. His recital let the audience see his "way of understanding the world," which was also what the poet himself hoped he could achieve by writing poetry – "a credible version of life – convincing, true and authentic."

Annual Book Fair Returns to Keystone

Project Roundabout's Book Fair was back at Keystone on 23 and 24 September. It was a success that was made possible not only by student volunteers, but also several parent helpers. Book lovers browsing through the fair were also treated to lovely music played by Keystone students. The over RMB59000 raised at the fair was donated to 20-month old Li Junqian who was undergoing treatment for leukemia.

Authors Visit Primary School

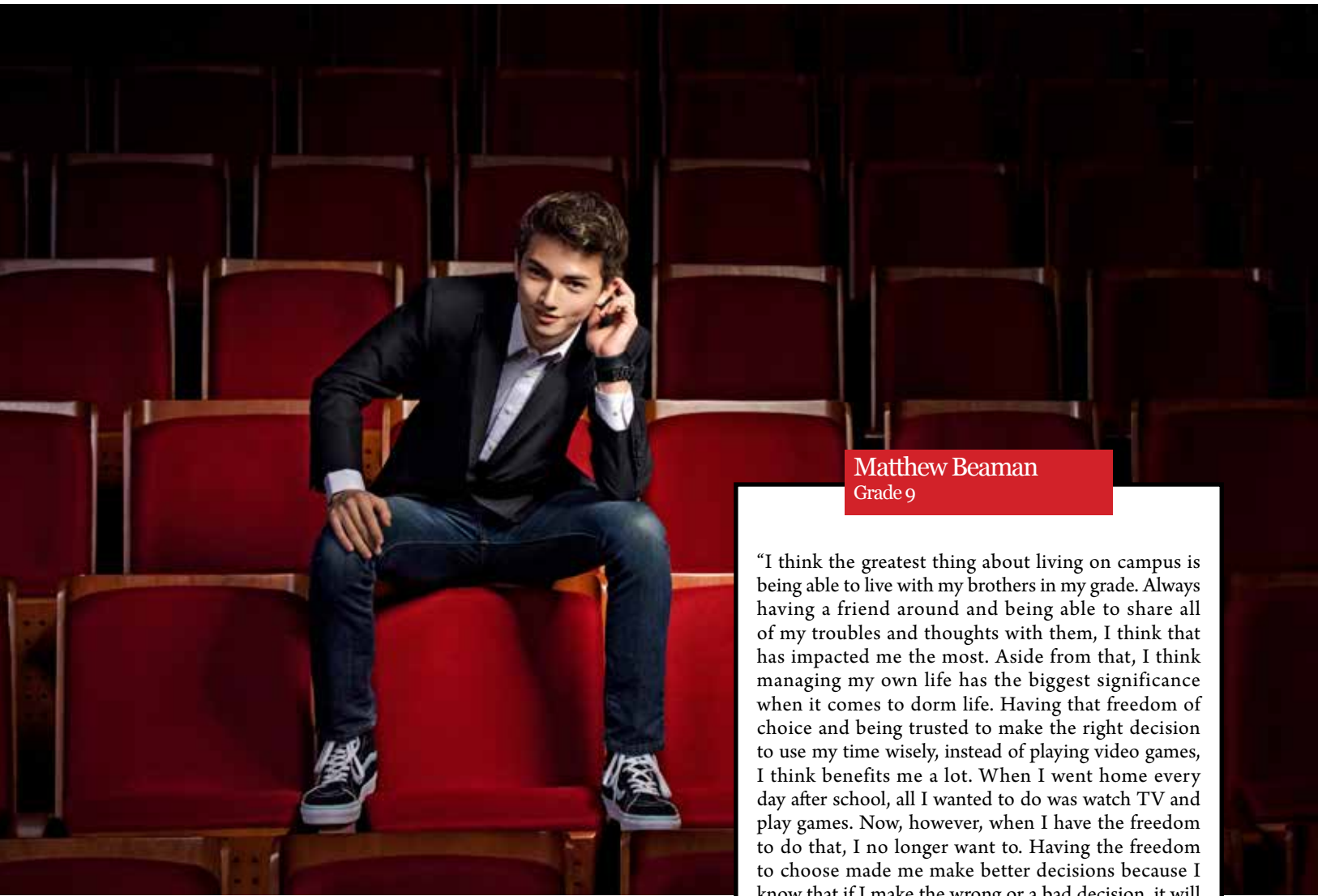
Over the first semester of 2016-2017, the primary school library hosted a couple of prominent children's authors. On 26 and 27 September, students engaged in writing and creative sessions with British author Julia Jarman and her illustrator Lynn Chapman. About two months later, students were presented with an opportunity to interact and learn from award-winning Chinese author, Bao Dongni, and her interesting take on Chinese characters.

PLACE. PEOPLE. PURPOSE.

More than a Home-Away-from-Home

By Benita Sumita

Keystone's residential program is one of the defining elements of the school. Enshrined as one of three keystones, the school aims to build character and community throughout our residential setting. A US-style boarding initiative, it intentionally weaves together norms of coexistence rooted in the five Confucian values of compassion, honesty, respect, justice and wisdom. It has not only become a second home, or home-away-from-home, for our residential students and faculty, but has also evolved into a family and community. Though staying on campus is mandatory from grade 9, several students from grades 7 and 8 have also chosen to be part of the residential community. Boarding students and faculty on campus rely on and support each other just like with one's own family. A supervisory and care system that starts with one's own roommate, and goes all the way to a dorm head on each floor ensures and enables individual development and collective growth. This is not just a program; it is a place that Keystone's residential community has come to recognize as home, with people – both adults and peers – they have come to consider as family, brought together for the purpose of living and learning as a community. This is a two-part cover story. This article is followed by two more – one by Phoebe Sun and another by Vincent Liu. These high school residential students share their own personal experiences of living on campus.



Matthew Beaman
Grade 9

"I think the greatest thing about living on campus is being able to live with my brothers in my grade. Always having a friend around and being able to share all of my troubles and thoughts with them, I think that has impacted me the most. Aside from that, I think managing my own life has the biggest significance when it comes to dorm life. Having that freedom of choice and being trusted to make the right decision to use my time wisely, instead of playing video games, I think benefits me a lot. When I went home every day after school, all I wanted to do was watch TV and play games. Now, however, when I have the freedom to do that, I no longer want to. Having the freedom to choose made me make better decisions because I know that if I make the wrong or a bad decision, it will be my responsibility and no one but me will pay the consequences."

Prisana Heaton

Middle and high school Math teacher and dorm parent to grade 9 boys

"I make baked goods on my duty night, as some of them don't eat due to the many commitments after school. I also bake for birthdays and organize birthday gifts. This year, I have ordered for the boys and teachers, a personalized blue mug with their name and zodiac sign. I fill it with lollies and give it to them on their birthdays. Several other dorm-parent teams have borrowed my idea. I do a lot more than what is asked of me. We are reminders of their parents so by doing what their parents would normally do, they don't get homesick as often. We give them support, they know we are there and it's up to them to ask for help when they need it. I have had boys knock in the middle of the night when they felt sick and needed nursing. Knocking last Sunday at 6:30am because they locked themselves out of their room. We were having a sleep-in but we got up and helped them. I have fed hungry boys what I made for dinner as they missed dinner and were hungry. I have made soups, toasts, hot water bottles to help ease their illness. I have also done what mums do and "yell" at the boys for being immature, dangerous, rude, inconsiderate, dirty, smelly…"

Amanda Shen
Middle and high school Math teacher
and dorm head to grade 9 and 10 girls

"As a dorm parent, I get to know the girls better – their likes, dislikes, and more. They know they can come to me with the many confusions of teenage life because now they know that I am not just their Math teacher. The boarders also get to understand me better. They know I love taking long drives, and also know where to go for the best Tiramisu at Keystone."

Heather Hines
Grade 10

"Being a residential student is a new and challenging experience that has made me the person I am today. I've grown to be a lot stronger and independent. Living on campus really pushes you to fix your own problems and figure out who you are as a person. You no longer have your mom and dad watching over you. I had to learn how to better manage my time on my own, and do a lot of things on my own. I love the aspect of being independent with the help of dorm parents and friends who can help you learn from your mistakes and be a better person because of them."

Kacy Song

Director of Libraries and
dorm parent to grade 7 & 8 girls

"The best part of residing on campus is that while I get to know the students better, the students also get to know me better. Interacting with students outside school hours tells me more about their likes and dislikes, why they like one pop star and not the other; I get a deeper insight into this generation's way of life. Meanwhile, the students also get to know that I am not just a bookworm, but also have other passions, such as hiking, a cultural and personal appreciation for tea, and that I can also teach them some winning moves at table tennis. This sort of relationship is deeper, more meaningful and more satisfying."

Cindy Liang
Grade 10 student and dorm proctor

"I have been a dorm proctor for two years now. It is both challenging and fulfilling. Sometimes, I help the dorm parents with duties such as room inspection. It is difficult to be as strict as a parent or teacher in carrying out these responsibilities. It's part of my role. But I love my role as a dorm proctor when it comes to organizing activities and events for my dormmates. The proctors pour their hearts into planning events in the dorm, and they are always successful. I have grown a lot since I have been living on campus. My confidence has grown. I have also learned to manage my own daily life. Boarding has become a very important part of my life, and I am learning more and more everyday."

Amanda Narkiewicz

Middle school Science teacher and dorm head to grade 7 and 8 girls

"I'm where the buck stops because I am the Dorm Head. I am the bad cop so to speak. You must have done something really bad to have a conversation with Ms. Amanda."

Residential life offers plenty of opportunities for students and teachers to interact

It is Matthew Beaman's first year at Keystone Academy. As a grade 9 student, he automatically became part of the residential program. If living away from his family for the first time was not hard enough, his birthday falling in the second month of being at a new school, a new city, and surrounded by new people made him long for home. But Matthew soon realized that he was home. "My classmates, and dorm mates kept wishing me through the day. Happy birthday Matthew! Have a great day Matthew! I was so happy because I hadn't really told anyone," he said his face glowing with happy hesitation. He goes on with a smile to say that it was a senior student and dorm resident that informed all of Matthew's classmates and peers that it was his birthday. That day he realized that everything was going to be okay, and he would have a home right here at Keystone.

IT'S NOT JUST A PLACE

Home is a weighty concept. Think of "home," and perhaps the first thought that pops to mind is a place, a space, a location, or a house. However, it is a word that means much, much more. Yes, surely it is a place often territorially bound in our present, or habitually resonated in memory of a dwelling from our past. But what really makes a place a home are the people in it. Just as Matthew's classmates, peers and dormmates enabled him to rediscover home, it is the people in our lives that define and redefine our home many times over, if we are fortunate, in the span of our lives.

Keystone's residential program creates the opportunity to make and remake, experience and re-experience home. It allows for the creation of a place with conceptual extensions beyond a habitual residence, involving people who are not your family members but who perhaps become as close as your kith and kin. Most of all, the residential program is a direct manifestation of one of the three keystones of the school – building character and community throughout our residential setting. In this sense, Keystone's residential life, often referred to as a home-away-from-home, is an extension of each individual student and his or her growth and their collective coexistence.

Keystone's boarders agree that living on campus has helped them grow and realize a deeper potential, a deeper insight into themselves. Leo Sheng, one of our first boarders now in grade 11, says he has changed a lot in the last three years: "I was amongst the first 48 boarders to join Keystone. I can confidently say that I have changed a lot in the three years of boarding. As an introvert I found talking to others very hard. But I have learned that communication is key. I also learned the importance of apologizing when you have made a mistake. No matter how good your intentions are, people feel hurt. A sincere apology can make

Friends-for-life in the making.

Dorm meetings is one way to keep life in the residential halls in check.

things better. It is important to be willing to accept one's mistakes even if they are unintentional and apologize to maintain a good relationship and eliminate gaps between people." It is admirably mature of Leo to understand what it means, and what it takes to make a place a home. Goleba Lefatshe, a residential student from Botswana and Leo's cohort, agrees that it is important to know how one's actions affect others. She asserts that "one should not expect teachers to always 'command' them to do what is needed. Rules, such as check-in and appropriate use of technology, demonstrate that with rights come the responsibility to act in ways that are conscious of, and considerate to the people in the community."

Goleba is right, as are her peers, in understanding and imbibing the social norms and culture that not only make Keystone a home, but also a community. But before we get into what this community means and stands for, let's take a look at the people who guide, guard and nurture the adolescent residents of this community.

THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE KEYSTONE HOME

A well-known spiritual leader once said, "Whoever gives you love, that's your parent." Keystone's boarders are fortunate to be surrounded by the love, guidance, and care of not only their own parents when they go home, but also their dorm parents while their home is on campus. "I feel the role of the dorm parent is critically important to monitoring the students, acting in place of the parents, and providing pastoral care," remarks high school Math teacher and dorm parent Gregory Barnes. As a dorm parent for boys in grades 10 and 11, Mr. Barnes feels that "having a team of dorm parents on every floor is an important part of supervising and supporting the boarding students."

There is a proper system of adults and peers to supervise and support the students. Each floor of the residence buildings has students from specific grades and gender who are cared for, supervised and supported by a team of four dorm parents. Of the four teachers, one is the dorm head for a specific floor. Each floor also has dorm proctors that are leadership positions filled by boarders for a period of one year. There are also middle and high school teachers living on campus who are not dorm parents. However, irrespective of whether a residential teacher is a dorm parent or not, boarders can always rely on any teacher living on campus for support. So starting with one's roommate, dorm proctors, and dormmates, to dorm parents, dorm heads, and teachers, Keystone boarders have an entire social system and network of support, supervision and security that is their campus home.

In addition to guiding boarders through the daily practicalities of coexisting – from cleanliness to camaraderie – the residential faculty are an influential part of these students' growth as individuals. Student counselor and dorm parent, Catherine Powell feels that her role is personal: "I find that my role as a dorm parent is very crucial. My connection with the girls on a personal level gives them a feeling that there is someone they can go to if they have problems or concerns. We celebrate birthdays and talk about some of the issues that come up. Living away from home, sharing personal space, studying for tests, etc. can cause anxiety. My role is to help them cope with all these things and more."

Dorm parents are a pivotal part of residential life. However they not only take on the role of campus parents with upmost sincerity and deep responsibility, but they also ensure that they create spaces and opportunities for students to grow into their own, become their own person – strong, independent and self-discovered.

"I think boarding is beneficial because it allows students to become more social. They have to interact with different people from different backgrounds and cultures. They learn self-control, and self care. While

they learn to solve social conflicts, they also develop emotionally as an individual. Dorm parents provide positive encouragement and an environment in which students can develop and thrive," comments Pei Lu, Chinese Language and Literature teacher.

It is not only the people who surround you, but also how they influence you to become you that is crucial in one's growing years, as the Dean of Student Life and dorm parent to grades 7 and 8 boys, Kelli Sanchez, points out: "I love the time between room inspections and study hall. We call it "tech-free time," and it's a time every evening when students hang out without the distraction of technology. Some of them play cards, some play pool, while some like to read quietly. They often huddle in the little side-rooms of the lounge. There's always tons of conversation and laughter and smiles. Sometimes they get a little rambunctious, and that's okay too. They are all learning to interact with each other, and to coexist with other boys who are like them in a lot of ways, but also unlike them in other ways, which will help them to learn from each other."

THE UNDERLYING PURPOSE

Since the fall of 2014, Keystone's inaugural year, the school has become a home for the residential students and faculty. The buildings are no longer residential towers; they are home. The residents are no longer just students and faculty; they are family; they are a community. This is both an intentional drive towards achieving the school's mission and the willful subconscious coming together of a collective consciousness of a community of learners, as Head of School Malcolm McKenzie explains about the philosophy that underpins the residential program: "The thinking that underlies the Keystone residential program is that it is both possible and productive to create a community of learners by living together on campus. Adults and teenagers learn from each other, and students also learn from each other. These shared experiences give authentic meaning to the philosophy of building character and community simultaneously."

This purpose has been growing and evolving over the last three years through deepening meaning associated with the place, intensifying connections between and amongst its people, and developing the residential curriculum. From the academic year 2016-2017, Dean of Residential Life Juli James segmented the residential curriculum into Space-Face-Place. The first phase – Space – helps students transition to boarding life, master procedures, complete dorm chores, and become self-sufficient. Time management and study skills are a major focus of the first quarter, along with developing skills of conflict resolution and compromise. The second phase of the residential curriculum – Face – is defined here as relationship building. A wide variety of activities are planned in the second trimester to enable relationship building among and between boarders, such as team building at weekly "dorm wars" competitions, parties, late night socials, weekend fun, and dorm proctor-led meetings and activities. The final trimester of the year focuses on Place. This is a time for introspection, where students reflect on questions such as: Where do I fit into the Keystone community? How can I give back, or make an impact on my school, my community and my own character?

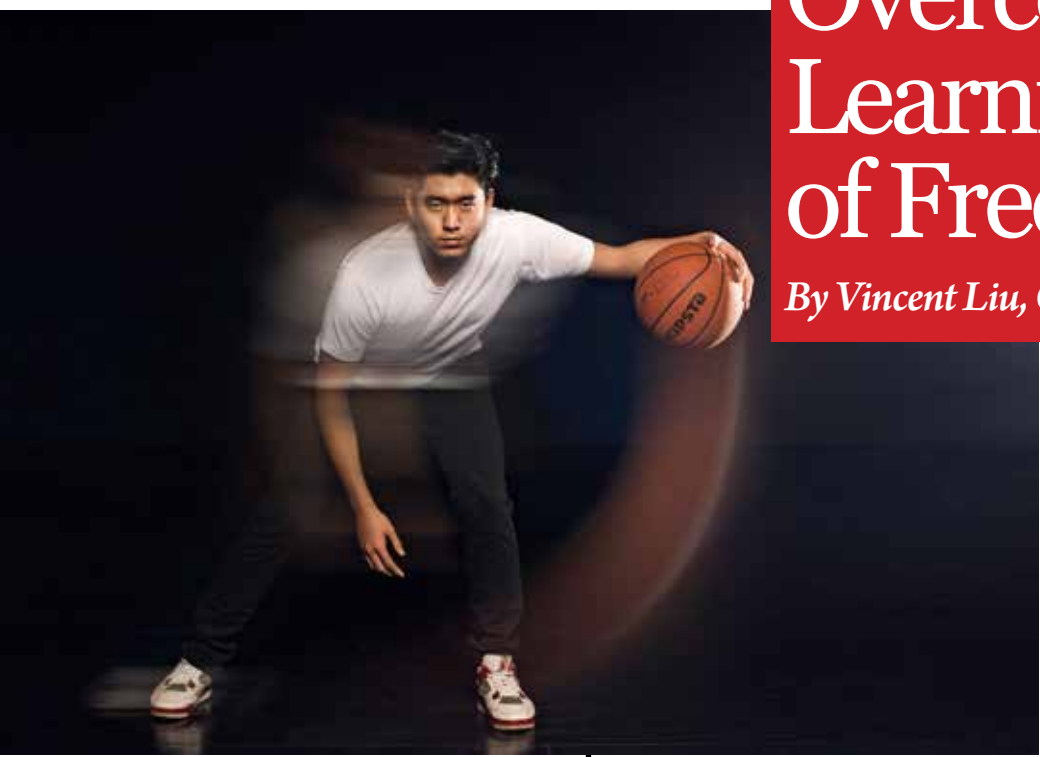
In addition to a purposefully developed residential curriculum, Dr. James feels that the other programmatic aspects of residential life are taking root, such as a fully-rounded weekend program that offers everything from cultural experiences, lectures, outdoor exploration, to service opportunities and typical teenage fun. She also feels that there is an all-round deeper understanding of boarding that helps pave the way forward for the residential program: "As we move into our third year, more and more of our teachers have a deeper understanding of boarding and have grown to appreciate the connectedness of a boarding setting. There is a nice, purposeful energy in the dorms in the evenings. Meanwhile, our boarders are grasping the ins and outs of boarding more quickly and have established effective routines. Many dorm parents open their homes for movies, baking and other homely togetherness. The dorm proctors are concrete examples of effective leadership development and tangible leadership outcomes. As grade 11 students, they exhibit a confidence and skill set not often seen by students of this age. In the future I see a need to move them toward a peer counselor role, as part of their training to help with conflict mediation. Some other goals for the future may include establishing a direct connection between the advising and residential curriculums in order to provide a dual reinforcement of skills and attitudes."

With a robust mission and vision that are already gradually being realized, improved upon, and evolving as an extension of every single resident's individual dreams, goals, and collective ambitions, the Keystone residential program will continue to flourish as a home, a community and a commitment to learning for a dynamic and ever-changing world.

Moments of music and merriment fill many evenings.

Overcoming the Learning Curves of Freedom

By Vincent Liu, Grade 11



I never thought I would leave home before I became a college freshman. "Why would I ever leave home before that?" I used to say, but I did and I don't regret it. Apart from the luxury of being 3 minutes away from your classroom, living on campus has its perks. To me, the freedom that comes with being a residential student and the bonds one builds as a boarder are truly special.

Our freedom starts at 3:20pm on school days. From this time until 7pm, our time is ours. These few hours give us the freedom to do pretty much anything. We are in charge of our own time, and responsible for the decisions we make. This realization dawns on you like a double-sided blade. I hit quite the learning curve with my newfound freedom. In addition to occupying most of my free time with basketball, I also squeezed multiple extracurricular activities and leadership responsibilities into my schedule. The excitement was blinding. At the end of this semester, I was faced with the stark reality that though I may have used my free time to pursue my passions and acquire leadership skills, I may have done so at the cost of not leaving enough time for academics. But I have no one to blame but my own lack of foresight.

I asked myself: "Can I continue like this? Or should I get myself more organized?" The answer was obvious, but not easy. Though I had to take time away from some of the activities I loved and enjoyed, it was something I had to do in order to catch up with my peers because I also enjoy learning. Though a challenge, I was able to overcome thanks to my dorm family. My parents' support was significant, but I also received a crucial amount of help from my dormmates and dorm parents.

One of these people was my roommate. Before I tell you how he, a close friend, is a pillar of support for me, let me start with how different we are. For one of the kindest students I know at Keystone, he can be really messy after having eaten at my desk. Two people living in one room can be like microscopes that enlarges each other's smallest traits, most often the ones we find hard to accept. So of course our road to friendship began with a few disagreements. But, we soon realized that we are different and learned to accept and tolerate our differences. Now, no one knows me better than my roommate. He is a great listener, and I am glad that he is. Whenever I approached him with something that bothered me, he always helped me analyze my situation and gave me constructive feedback. He is also someone I can talk to about anything – games, relationships, and even philosophy. I am grateful for close friends like him who can support you through challenges and share in happy encounters too.

Residential life at Keystone has deepened my relationships with teachers and friends. Living under the same roof has brought us closer together. Dorm faculty are also like older friends instead of just a Math, Chemistry, or Chinese teacher. Their open-mindedness has created the comfortable atmosphere for us to talk about anything, from academics to personal problems. Our dorm family is like the bottle of water a runner gets in a marathon. It can be very demanding, especially for us senior students. For instance, around Christmas time there is a downpour of assessments. To relieve some of the stress, the teachers organized 'secret angel.' Receiving and preparing gifts when I have 5 assessments a week is a huge relief. These simple things pull us out of stress long enough to remind us of who we are and our capabilities, encouraging us to carry on. Boarding at Keystone at this age is like beginning a pre-college life. I get to face all the pros and cons of living independently. I know that my experience here is preparing me for a future where I can take well thought out decisions and deeply considered choices.

My School. My Sanctuary.

By Phoebe Sun, Grade 11

"A living space should be a sanctuary," said the Japanese architect, Tadao Ando. "It has to be a place where you can reflect on your life. When one arrives home, there's a tranquil feeling." I think what Ando means is that a home is a place for peace and quiet so that you can reflect on yourself and prepare yourself for all that life has to offer. For the Keystone students who are required to stay in school dorms, we are at school for 230 or more out of 365 days in a year. In this sense Keystone is not just a school but also a home, where our families are our friends, classmates as well as our teachers and their families. Keystone is Tadao Ando's ideal living space by not only giving us a warm and cozy home, but also providing us with an oasis of calm.

Like Ando, I used to think that home is the only place where you can be alone, away from the cares of the world, where you can truly feel any sense of calm and relaxation. I realize now, however, that home is more than oneself. You can feel that ideal sense of calm even in a stressful environment, faced with all kinds of difficult issues, as long as you have friends by your side. One such instance comes to mind. It was at the beginning of an academic year when one does not have the luxury of transitioning from the leisure of holiday to the rigors of a school day. In fact, in less than two months into the first semester we already had countless assessments ahead of us in addition to plenty of extracurricular commitments. Most students I knew were doing one of two things or both – trying to stay one step ahead of all the looming deadlines, and counting down the days until the annual October Chinese National Day holidays.

It was one morning during this intense period that my friends and I agreed to get up early to finish off a presentation to be delivered that afternoon. It was already late fall and there was an early morning chill in the air. I was standing at the window and I could barely see the campus through the morning mist. To shake off the drowsiness, my friends and I decided to go for a run along the length of the corridor in the center of the campus. Then we sat together to type up our work with immense concentration. At this very moment, despite all the pressure, I felt a sense of tranquility. Sitting in familiar space, surrounded by friends and peers, my sense of calm was a confidence that let me know that there were not many challenges I (we) couldn't overcome. This sense of belonging to a tightknit group with trust for each other is an important part of residential life.

As boarders we enjoy the calm and peace of residential life not only because of our friends and dormmates, but also of the residential faculty. Students receive so much warmth, whether it's from the snacks at weekly Monday meetings, or the gifts and cards on our birthdays, or the care we receive in the face of inevitable teenage challenges. I remember how one of my classmates was so touched by the concern for his well-being shown by one of the duty teachers. It was way past dorm bedtime, but my classmate had to run out for water because of a nagging cold. He ran into a teacher still at work. He was worried that he would be reprimanded for staying up late. But instead, the teacher told him to take care of himself and get well soon. It was a small act of kindness that provided great comfort for my classmate.

In my years living at Keystone, teachers also feel a similar sense of belonging and kinship with students. A teacher once told me how happy she felt after helping a student with a difficult situation by just being a good listener. The teacher said that she felt she hadn't really given any useful advice, but the big smile the student wore the next day proved the teacher wrong. I never thought that teachers too could be affected by how students feel. This is the one of the best aspects of Keystone's residential life – the acts of kindness and love we encounter everyday. We give and receive in equal measure. I think now is the time to say to all of those special members of our school family – especially the teachers – a great big thank you.

Sofia Islas
Keystone Academy
20 November 2016
Beijing, China

Leaving a Mark on the World

In August 2016, Steven Shi and Sofia Islas left the familiar behind and chose to plunge into the unknown, to open their minds and learn about other people, schools and cultures. Through an academic and cultural exchange program, they each gained a deeper understanding of themselves and their host culture. They built new friendships, experienced taking responsibility for themselves and developed a deeper respect for the complexities of the world around them. Through a Keystone partnership with La Jolla Country Day School (LJCDS) in San Diego, California, grade 10 student Steven Shi got to taste life as a high school student in the US. Living with a host family there, he became more aware of the hopes, dreams and concerns of his new family, his San Diego neighborhood, the US, and the global community. In turn he realized what it means to belong to the Keystone community, China and its culture within a world context. Keystone, in return, welcomed LJCDS grade 10 student Sofia Islas, who joined the boarding community here and learned from her roommate, peers, dorm parents and teachers about life in China and at a Chinese boarding school that offers a program with a world flavor. In a letter to each other, both students chronicled their exchange journey, which ended in December 2016.

Dear Steven,

Near the end of last year, my school (La Jolla Country Day School) emailed my parents asking if I would like to spend my first semester of grade 10 on a student exchange in China. My mother texted me asking if I was interested, even though she already knew what my answer would be. I had been studying Chinese for three years, and now I was finally going to be able to live in Beijing! I was already planning to study in Beijing and stay with a host family that summer. So I was super excited that instead, I could study there for four months.

My student exchange experience at Keystone Academy has allowed me to make lifelong friends, travel throughout China to learn about the Chinese people, culture and traditions, go on a service trip to Laos PDR, and develop as a leader by taking on new responsibilities.

For the first few months leading up to my exchange not an inch of me was nervous. I was just filled with pure excitement. However, during the final weeks before boarding my flight, I started to get more and more anxious. I honestly did not know much about Keystone, or what boarding life was like. My school didn't really have many details either, everyone was so focused on, and excited about the fact that I was going to China that the little things were slightly overlooked. So, I started to get worried about being alone and away from my family and friends for so long, and living in this new place I knew little about. However, I quickly had to get over that anxiety and continue with packing.

Once I arrived at Keystone I was shaking, because I knew I had to say goodbye to my mother and sister for four months. I felt better once I saw the campus, because Keystone has one of the most beautiful campuses I had ever seen. My family and I were in awe just looking at the might of the academic buildings and the Performing Arts Center, and the beauty of the central quad surrounded by trees. I tried to get all caught up in my excitement, but when the moment came for goodbye, I couldn't hold back my tears. I'm very close with my family, and the idea of not seeing anyone I know for that long was deeply saddening. Then again, the start of a new life at Keystone was equally exciting.

I was both nervous and happy to live in a dorm. The idea of living with your schoolmates was exciting, but also new territory for me. I had no clue what boarding life is like. Being a boarding student means complying with all the rules and regulations of Keystone, which are very different and stricter than the ones in my own home. The thought of sharing a room with someone I didn't know was also nerve racking. I have spent most of my life having my own room, but I have now come to really enjoy having a roommate.

It has been a gift to share a dorm with Selena, my Chinese roommate. During the first few weeks at Keystone, I came to realize that fitting in for me, as a foreigner, was going to be a lot tougher than I had thought. I quickly took note of the large language and cultural barrier between the Chinese students and myself. Having a roommate implied that I always had a friend to talk to and sit with, and our cultural differences have sparked many great late night questions and conversations. Selena and I have a great fascination for learning more about each other's culture, and have been able to break past the initial shyness and awkwardness that still stands between a lot of the international and Chinese students here.

So, having a roommate during the week is great, but when the weekend comes around most boarding students go home. I usually keep busy by going on one of the many amazing weekend trips Keystone has on offer. Some weekends, I go on cultural explorations, and others I may do something fun like shopping and going out for dinner with friends. Now, while the weekends are fun, I find myself missing my family the most during these times. I believe living away from my family has increased my gratitude towards them. Never in my life have I been so grateful for the love and support my family has given me, and I know that upon my return home our relationship will be much stronger, and more trustworthy.

While boarding life has its advantages and disadvantages, what really impressed me upon arriving at Keystone was the style of education. I feel as if all my classes are really challenging, and asking thought-provoking questions. In some ways, they are harder than home because the approach to education is different at Keystone, and focuses more on developing analytical skills than simply acquiring knowledge. And in some ways, my classes here are easier because the grading is based on progress, tests and development rather than homework and assessments. I really prefer some of the elements of the Keystone education system than the one I have back at my school at home. However, the school day here can be quite stressful with many tests and summatives. Plus, after school this semester I am the stage manager of the school's English theatrical production, a member of the high school girl's volleyball team, and the leader and founder of Keystone's Spectrum club. Spectrum is a diversity club that advocates against bullying. So, I have been keeping very busy!

All in all, transitioning into Keystone has not been easy. I have faced social, academic, and personal challenges. But looking back on my few months here, I can see that the rewards and achievements outweigh the challenges. I have been able to immerse myself in a completely new culture that has different customs, religions, and ideas than my own. This has been a gift that not many people get to enjoy. I can now use this experience to reflect on my own life and values. This exchange has changed and broadened my views, increased my gratitude, and improved my understanding of the world.

I look forward to reading about your exchange experience at LJCDS, and how you have been enjoying life in San Diego.

Steven Shi
La Jolla Country Day School
26 November 2016
San Diego, USA

Dear Sofia,

Time really has flown by since the first time I heard about the exchange program, over half a year ago. The only thing I could think of, as I was rushing to hand in the application, was that I couldn't miss out on this opportunity. But I didn't think that I would receive an offer, so I only casually mentioned the program to my parents as I was about to hand in the application. When the Dean of Admission, Rachael Beare, who manages the program, sent me an email telling me that I had been selected, I was somewhat bewildered by the thought of going to school in America, halfway across the world.

Honestly, since I had never been to the US before and going to school for a semester in America was not part of some grand plan, I just felt a tinge of excitement, mixed with uncertainty, and a feeling that I didn't want to leave Keystone.

My life in America is much more "plain" than I had expected. There aren't any of those three-course hamburger or steak dinners that you see in the movies or any of those big gleaming cities. I also did not expect that I would feel so lonely so quickly. I always thought of myself as being quite independent. I didn't really see my parents that much since joining Keystone, but I suddenly found myself feeling homesick, missing all kinds of things that are important to me. I keep dreaming that I am back wandering around the Keystone campus.

I now attend your school in La Jolla, San Diego and I stay with a host family. They are a middle-aged American couple; the father runs a home decorating business, while the mother is a dentist. They have three children, two of whom have already gone to college, so there is enough space for me and another Chinese student. My host parents prepare meals for me, take me to the supermarket and show me a lot about what life in America is like. When I am wracking my brains about my schoolwork, they are always there for me, looking after me and making me feel secure.

The first week at school was the toughest. I didn't know a single person there and could barely say a word in English. I just kept asking myself how I could get through months of this. But this feeling of uneasiness also reminded me of all the help that my friends and teachers on the other side of the world back at Keystone gave me. When you didn't know anyone or didn't even dare to lift your head up when walking down the school hallway, as was the case with me, a word of encouragement from home would give me more strength and more of that "warm and fuzzy" feeling than I could imagine. In October, Keystone's Dean of Residential Life, Dr. Juli James, also surprised me by coming to see me in San Diego and telling me that my friends and teachers at Keystone were thinking of me. I can't even begin to describe how I felt when I saw that familiar smiling face, and heard her one-in-a-million laugh.

Once I braved through the first week I started to feel a lot better. My classmates were actually really friendly; and I made some friends and even began to see some familiar faces when walking around the school. But I also realized that making friends was only the first challenge. Thankfully, Keystone had prepared me well, especially when it came to Western teaching methods. Take science classes for instance, where the approach to laboratory work and the writing up of experiment results is quite similar to that at Keystone. And in History, we analyze our source materials in the exact way as at Keystone. All these seemingly little things helped me to quickly adapt to studying in the US.

As time passed and I started to adapt, I began to relax a little, and even started to enjoy how things were taught here. I liked how LJCDS, very much like Keystone, helps its students find opportunities. As long as one makes a conscious effort, he or she can always find resources and opportunities to develop further.

LJCDS is a private school that offers a continuous academic track, from preschool to grade 12, even AP classes. This school is really similar to Keystone in its philosophies on teaching and learning, with a focus on not only the academic, but also on all-round development in areas such as art, physical education and character-building. Each school day consists of six lessons of 50 minutes each, including a self-study session, and when the bell rings at the end of the day, almost everyone takes part in a sport. The sports on offer change with the seasons but generally contain all types of ball games, such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, American football, baseball as well as athletics like cross-country, track and field, and cheerleading. For those who don't want to do sport, there are also many student-run clubs.

I chose cross-country. For those going to a new school, I would strongly recommend they pick up at least one sport in the first semester. This is because you make "friends" in classrooms, but become "buddies" only on a sports team. At an average of six kilometers a day, cross-country was as exciting as it was tough. In fact, after the initial burst of excitement had worn off, I realized that all long-distance programs were really all about endurance. During the conference and invitational races we have each Saturday, I feel the runner's high. Whenever I cross the finish line under the midday sun that heats the air to 30 degrees Celsius, every part of me is screaming out "never again." But when I look back at the course, at the five kilometers that I just completed and all the people I left

behind, I would suddenly feel such a great sense of accomplishment.

The university where we normally train for cross-country has also made a long-lasting impression on me. University of California San Diego (UCSD) has one of the best biology and computer science programs in the world, and I learn something new about the school every time I go to its campus for training. I was pleasantly surprised that LJCDS not only takes us around the campus, but also arranges for us to meet face-to-face with the geeks from the computer science department during a project for our design class. As our school is only a 5-minute walk away, our design teacher gives us the opportunity to speak to, and to work with the researchers at the university, who are attempting to bring online resources to people not yet connected to the web. I gather from this experience that before achieving success or transforming the world in some way, I would first need to learn more – much more in fact. I also took part in one Model UN session organized by UCSD, where, donning the role of Mark Zuckerberg, I discussed the effects of Brexit on trade between Europe and the United States. In addition to enjoying that feeling of being in supreme command in this and subsequent debates, I gained exposure to the intricacies of international affairs as well as improved my communication and persuasive skills.

Another thing I like about LJCDS is the freedom in its course selection system, a plus made all the more salient by the difference between the AP program here and the IB program at Keystone. When the semester began, I quickly realized that much of what's being taught in class was already covered by my previous courses. Actually, I was getting a bit worried that this half year in the US would be wasted. But my teachers were exceedingly helpful and patient in adjusting my courses (this happened multiple times in fact), bringing me up to speed with the class, and finding courses that suited my level and interest.

The relationship between the faculty and the students is also something I admire. For example, my cross-country coach is also my algebra teacher; so as the meme goes, my math is really taught by my PE teacher. He might look really stern in class, but as soon as the bell rings, he becomes almost like one of "us" – listening to the same music, chatting and laughing with the group, and making jokes about changing our grades. I feel somewhat apologetic whenever my test results aren't that good.

During my time as an exchange student, I am learning a lot, making new friends, and taking part in many extra-curricular activities. But for me, the personal growth far outweighs these gains. The experience has changed my perspective, helped me develop a new understanding about other cultures, and sharpened my outlook toward the future. LJCDS has been teaching students for over a hundred years and we can learn much from it, both inside and outside the classroom.

Probably owing to my experience on the Student Council, I came to understand that, due to cultural differences, what I admire here in the US may not be right for Keystone in Beijing. It takes the efforts of everyone at Keystone to find the "Keystone Way." Just as Franklin Roosevelt said, "Take a method and try it. And if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something." It is after I arrived at LJCDS that I realized what it truly meant when people say "you don't know what you have until it's gone." The positives of Keystone, and the "home away from home" feeling it provides, cannot be summed up in this brief letter. But as with anything, there is always room for improvement and, as Roosevelt says, we always need to try new things and make the most out of every day.

I am grateful to all those who support me in the US and at Keystone. There are not enough words to express how much it means to me.

Keystone Academy promotes grade 10 student exchanges as part of the Keystone learning experience and has sent as well as welcomed a number of exchange students through various channels, such as LJDS, Round Square, and independent and network exchanges.

Feeling at Home with Two Languages

By Dr. Maureen McCoy, Head of Middle School

Bilingual immersion is one of the three keystones of the school, and is fundamental to who we are. Head of Middle School, Dr. Maureen McCoy examined the meaning and merits of bilingualism in the first Keystone Education Salon of the academic year on 25 August 2016. With over three decades of experience in teaching and education administration, Dr. McCoy is a language acquisition specialist who earned her doctoral degree with a dissertation on Teachers' Experiences with English Language Learners' Difficulty with Mastering Academic Literacy. This special report is extracted from Dr. McCoy's address at the salon titled, 'Patterns and Practices in English Language Acquisition.'

The concept of the "keystone," in architecture, in biology, and at our school too, is that without the one stone or species or concept, that the structure or organization will not hold up. It will fall apart. Thus the keystone at the top of an arch holds the arch together, and a keystone species is vital for keeping an ecosystem functioning. Here at Keystone Academy, each of our three keystones is essential for the school's carrying out its mission of educating well.

Many families are specifically drawn to our school because of its keystone about Chinese culture. We are dedicated to promoting Chinese culture and identity in a world context. There are few if any schools that will provide an international-style education while allowing students to continue to develop a deep connection with Chinese history and literature and culture. This is a keystone concept; without it, we are not Keystone Academy.

In the secondary school, with our second keystone, we take advantage of our boarding school tradition to create an environment where we build character and community throughout our residential setting. The ability to connect with students morning, noon and night during the vital years of high school lets us work to this goal. Without it, we are not Keystone Academy.

The third keystone of bilingualism is the one that I want to focus on in this piece. We are a school that doesn't just teach two languages; we are a school that values the use and practice of both English and Chinese. Keystone is not an international school where English is the default language. English is not the fallback for students from different cultures to find a medium for communication. However, we are not a school that conducts the business of education in a traditionally Chinese way either. We are a school that is linguistically inclusive. English and Chinese are valued and are necessary for our functioning. In order to meld our western, international, and Chinese traditions, bilingualism is a defining keystone of our school. Without it, we are not Keystone.

INSIDE A BILINGUAL BRAIN

The simple definition of a bilingual person is someone who is proficient in two languages. There aren't very many perfectly truly bilingual people. There are some people called ambi-bilinguals who don't even have an obvious dominant language; both of their languages are of native-like proficiency. Few folks are equally split 50-50 in their language proficiency. Most bilinguals fall onto a continuum of bilingualism built on the communication skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Their placement on this continuum depends on the age they started learning the second language, how much schooling they had in each language, how often they use each language and in what types of situations they use each one.

It is a rare person who is ambi-bilingual. Not many Keystone students are or will be ambi-bilingual. For most, Chinese will be their number one language. That's fine; in fact, that linguistic connection to Chinese culture is a major element of Keystone bilingualism and Keystone's commitment to teaching and promoting Chinese culture. Our responsibility here at Keystone is to graduate students who are at home in both languages, so that they can go out into the world and make a mark in either language. Thus building up English skills, from primary through secondary school, is vital for our students. By grade twelve, students are having more than 80% of their classwork in English. While it is likely that their tertiary education will be also in English, we are confident and proud that their knowledge and understanding of Chinese language and culture will be deep.

The inter-mingling of the two languages has interesting ramifications for brain development. In a bilingual brain, there are not separate locations for the vocabulary and grammar of each language. They're together, all entwined. Brain researchers have found that vocabulary words for the same concept in different languages are "parked" in the same place in the brain. When a bilingual person grabs a word in one language, the other one is often made available, even if it isn't used.

A research study was done with Chinese-English bilingual people, asking them to judge how alike two English words were in meaning. Even though they were asked the question in English, about English words, their responses were affected by whether or not the Chinese characters for the translations of those words were written similarly. Their judgment about the two English words' similarities and relationship was impacted by those words' Chinese translations. Even though they didn't need Chinese for this English question, it was immediately available to them, and in fact useful to them.

Having all those extra connections and extra information in the brain might sound like being bilingual requires the brain to work more. Perhaps so, but consider the advantages. There are attitudinal

advantages: open-mindedness, greater understanding, better communication with different kinds of people. There are situational advantages: social mobility, job possibilities, reading literature in the original language.

There are learning advantages too. Brain researchers have recently found that the brain of a bilingual person can actually reorganize specific brain networks to create a more efficient basis for what is called executive control. Bilingual people have mental flexibility. This means that they can more easily and quickly adapt to changes happening around them, to different situations with different people. Their brains get good at figuring out what to pay attention to, and what to ignore or suppress.

For students, having two languages in their heads, both separate and intermixed, helps them with decision-making not just about language usage. It helps with decision-making about how to manage one's time. When you are constantly having to make decisions about which language should be used and which term is most appropriate, those decision-making neurons in the brain become stronger. The brain gets better at deciding how to reach a goal, because the distractors get sorted out more efficiently. When bilingual people are continually sorting out what to use and what not to use in their very daily communication, there are similar impacts on their daily decision-making. With all that regular practice with evaluating if a word or phrase is useful or appropriate in language, bilinguals get better and faster at evaluating other daily decisions, be they about scholarship or relationships.

There are even medical advantages to bilingualism. Bilingual people have been shown to sustain better cognitive performance throughout their lifespan, even to the point of having lower levels and later onset of dementia in old age.

Fifty or a hundred years ago, so-called experts argued that being bilingual was a handicap, that it slowed down and delayed processing and growth. Some parents today worry that their children are not learning the same academic content at the same pace as students who are not in a bilingual environment. This is understandable, as it would seem that students are being asked to learn everything twice, one time in each language. In fact, building understanding of academic concepts in both languages makes for deeper comprehension. While students do have to learn vocabulary twice over, their constant back-and-forth between the languages gives them strategies for efficiency as well as opportunities to forge fascinating connections that non-bilinguals miss.

BILINGUALISM AT KEYSTONE

Bilingualism is a different experience. We at Keystone think that the benefits of knowing two systems, two cultures, two languages outweigh the initial jump that might happen at another school when focusing on just one.

Let's return to the earlier discussion of the nature of a keystone - something that is essential for the support and the existence of a structure, or an ecosystem, or an organization. The keystone of bilingualism is a fundamental part of who we are at Keystone.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you explore your own bilingualism.

- What language do you count in? What language do you use in times of stress? What language do you dream in? In what language do you talk to your mother? These are different indicators of a person's primary language, but as bilingualism grows, may be done in either language.

- Do you read your second language without using a dictionary? Do you ever use a dictionary when reading your first language? Size of vocabulary is another measure of determining dominant language in bilinguals.

- Can you speak as confidently in your second language as your first? Another measure for deciding a bilingual person's dominant language is the complexity and length of spoken sentences.

- Do you have someone who helps you with checking your second language writing, or even your first language writing, for important pieces of writing? Correct grammar and syntax are a way to tell if a person is bilingual, but academic or content knowledge at (or above) the level of a native speaker is also a measure.

Keystone adults and Keystone students are all language learners. Most everyone in our community continues to learn and improve their second language (or third, or fourth). As well, most everyone in our community continues to learn and improve their first language. We live the Keystone mission in being lifelong learners; we are all working to get better at speaking, listening, reading, and writing – no matter what language. We try to live our bilingualism here at Keystone, and invite you to do so also.

Winter Celebration

It was a day of singing, dancing and wintry fun in the Performing Arts Center on the last day of school before the winter break.

Achievements and Accolades

From table tennis, basketball, and athletics to swimming, robotics and math league competitions, it has been raining medals and awards for our students. Congratulations to all!

Chalk Circle: A Theatrical Spectacular

Led and directed by Theatre teacher, Allen Babcock the winter play, Chalk Circle was a superb presentation of this Brechtian play enriched by the use of Chinese and English in the same performance.

Global March for Elephants and Rhinos

In late September, the Keystone community joined the global movement to end the poaching of elephants and rhinos. Various initiatives and activities continue throughout the school to continue our support to ameliorate this wildlife crisis.

Concerts Galore

The Keystone community enjoyed a semester of music and melody from classical performances to contemporary beats.

Weekend Cultural Exploration Series

Students and faculty explored Chinese culture through kite making, tea ceremony, and many more art forms and traditions organized through the Weekend Cultural Exploration Series.

A Global Curriculum for a Global Community

By Gary Bradshaw, Assistant Head of Primary School and IPC Coordinator

What does it take to make our children global citizens? In this column, Assistant Head of Primary School and IPC Coordinator Gary Bradshaw ponders this question within the context of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). Exposure to foods, flags and festivals is not sufficient, he says, as he elaborates how the IPC is a global curriculum that intentionally prepares students to be a valuable member of the global community.

When the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) was developed over twenty-five years ago, its founders began by asking themselves a number of important questions:

- What kind of world will our children live and work in?
- What kinds of children are likely to succeed in the world?
- What kinds of learning will our children need, and how should they learn it?

These questions put children and their learning needs at the forefront of the curriculum and ensured that the focus was on preparing children for an unknown future. They considered ongoing changes in work and employment, and noted how developments in transport, technology, media and communication had opened up the world. Ultimately they felt a global, world, or 'international' curriculum was essential. The IPC seeks to develop citizens of the world for the world, not restricted by borders or bound within the confines of isolated principles. It gives students the knowledge, skills and understanding to examine themselves, their culture and their language within the context of the globe. It is a 'global' curriculum for a global community.

LEARNING AND PREPARING FOR A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Within the IPC, this focus on the global community is explicitly defined as 'international-mindedness'. Martin Skelton, one of the original writers of the IPC, in an article called 'International-Mindedness and the Brain: the Difficulties of 'becoming'', argues that international-mindedness or the understanding of a world or global perspective is an important phase in the 'development of self'. By this he means that as children grow and develop, so too do their understandings of the world around them. This too relates to Howard Gardener's "declining ego-centrism" or how children move from the self to the other, from the inside to the outside and from national to the international. Children examine who they are within the family long before they are aware of their own role within the world community.

In the development of international-mindedness in our students, the IPC has been very clear to define the objectives and what standards students need in order to be internationally minded. In all subject

areas through the IPC these come in the form of 'learning goals,' and are explicitly taught to ensure that children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required to be globally functioning citizens. They are designed to develop in children a familiarity and appreciation that goes beyond that related to their own context. They are also designed to enable students to adapt to other education systems, develop national and international perspectives, develop an understanding of the independence and interdependence of peoples, countries and cultures, while also allowing for a clearer understanding of their own culture, country or context. Some examples of these international learning goals are:

- Be able to identify activities and cultures different from but equal to their own.
- Understand that there is value both in similarities and differences between different countries.
- Know about ways in which similarities and differences affect the lives of people.
- Be able to respect one another's individuality and independence.

These learning goals shape the focus and content of the individual IPC units themselves. In units such as, 'Who Am I' in grade 1 for example, children learn about themselves, learn to celebrate and understand differences and similarities between themselves and their classmates, in their own families, homes and general lifestyles. Within this unit, children study their local environment in Geography, read books about families around the world and in China in Language classes, share with each other their family trees and write illustrated stories about family members and things they do.

This unit usually comes at the beginning of the school year when children are becoming familiar with being part of a school community. So one of the projects we have done at Keystone within this unit is called 'Star of the Day.' Each day a different student is selected to be the 'star'. This student is then interviewed by the class about who they are, their family, their likes and dislikes, and the things they find significant. After the interview all the students have an opportunity to individually interact with the child and draw and write something about them. These are then put together in the form of a book, which becomes part of the classroom library and is also shared with the parents. This not only helps students to get to know other members of their class, but also seeks to highlight individuality and mutual understanding.

Meanwhile in the grade 3 IPC unit 'Different Places, Similar Lives,' we begin to see students examine the lives of other people from around the world more closely, while at the same time examining who they are. This unit has children doing studies on culture, history and contemporary life. Opportunities are created for students to reach out and connect to other schools and other children outside China. They begin to get a better perspective of the lives of others, and therefore begin to see each other as connected with a global community. In one grade 3 class this year, students created pen pals with schools in India and Turkey. They wrote letters, put together a pamphlet on some of sights and locations in Beijing, and sent video greetings. Both groups of students shared the contexts of their lives, their schools and local geographical environments.

The older students in primary school examine the global community in a much deeper way. In the IPC unit 'Making the News' for grade 5, students examine forms of communication that spread global issues, challenges and understandings. Through different forms of media children examine the role of news and photojournalism in informing and disseminating information across the globe. Students research the lives, interests and perspectives of others, look at global interests, issues and trends. They also learn how the media reports on world,

political or environmental events or crises. You will notice that each of these units in the three grades are envisioned for a different stage of a child's development, as they move their understandings outward into a wider understanding of the world.

BEING A MEMBER OF A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

As children grow and learn about what it means to be a member of the global community, they also become more aware of social expectations, rules and ways of being and acting. At Keystone in addition to our five shared values, we also have the IPC Personal Learning Goals as well as our IB Learner Profile. These all set out to prepare children with the personal and social skills needed to participate in the world and guide their philosophy towards understanding, service, and openness. These guide the creation of individual class rules or shared agreements that assist students in participating as valued and equal members of community.

Here is an example of a shared agreement from a foundation year class, which reflects an emphasis on developing an awareness of the 'other' in the context of understanding the community.

- We care, love and help each other
- We respect others and listen carefully
- We care for our school and environment
- We will learn to be responsible
- We get on well with others and we cooperate to solve problems
- We are happy, healthy, honest and confident.

However, learning about the world around us is not enough and ultimately we only see the product of the knowledge, skills, and understanding that children have through the form of action or engagement. One wonderful example of action occurred this year in a grade 3 class, as they were learning through the 'Different Places, Similar Lives' unit. Students were exploring Kenya (the home country of one of our teachers) when they came across a brief video of a student who adopted and cared for an orphaned baby rhino. This was also around the time the whole school had joined the 'Global March' to raise awareness about the plight elephants and rhinos faced due to the illegal trade in ivory. This primary school class connected with the young woman in Kenya who sent back a personalized video talking about her accomplishments with her adopted rhino. This inspired students take action themselves. With the support of their parents they put together a picture book and sold it in their local communities, raising money for the plight of these majestic beasts. Students have also 'adopted' elephants of their own and received an information booklet on each individual elephant along with monthly photos and updates.

For many curricula, understanding the world, its peoples, cultures and the roles children play within the world community is sometimes left to chance. Travel, media or exposure to 'Festivals, Flags and Food' or so-called 'International Days' is just not sufficient and often produces a superficial understanding about cultural and global perspectives. We want our kids at Keystone, through our philosophy and the IPC, to develop and grow to understand what it means to be part of a global community. We want to challenge and inspire our students to ask questions, seek answers and explore. We also want them to learn in a developmentally appropriate way, as they begin to look beyond themselves, their own families and their own contexts. We want them to truly understand people, cultures and communities of the world and take action where they believe they need to. Learning is at the heart of what we do here, through the IPC, as we endeavor to prepare students for the unknown challenges that lie ahead in our modern integrated world. This learning prepares them for community, our community and the community of the world.

Even before spaces are inhabited, they are given life, meaning, and purpose with the possibility to change and evolve, sown with seeds of immense potential to create dreams, find paths to the known and unknown and even to get lost. In the academic year 2016-2017, Keystone Academy was fortunate to have created one such space on campus – the High School Library. The Keystone Magazine caught up with the furniture designer extraordinaire, Luke Hughes, who brought this space to life with his intricate weaving of historical and cultural traditions of the east and west. As a much sought-after designer who has been commissioned by 54 of the 68 Oxbridge colleges, this British craftsman tells us that the Keystone High School Library project was the dream job he has been waiting for. In addition to nurturing a professional and personal penchant for all cultural things Chinese, it is the vision of the school that drew Hughes to Keystone. In this conversation, he talks about the vision, meaning and purpose for the library here and now, and in the future.

Sowing Seeds Of Imagination On The Path To The Unexpected

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?' asked Alice
'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.
'I don't much care where -' said Alice.
'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.
'so long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.
'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'
Alice in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll

Alice is ready and willing to explore and embrace the unexpected, to embrace her imagination in Wonderland. Every library must be a Wonderland; they are "places of imagination," as James Campbell portrays in his book on the world history of libraries. It is such a wonderland that Luke Hughes, renowned designer of bespoke furniture, hopes the recently opened Keystone High School Library will be:

"I don't think you can teach imagination. But what you can do is to encourage people to go down the root of the unexpected. This is really important," said the British furniture tsar with a knowing

CURZON

smile, "A lot of people don't go down this path because of the fear of failure. I think failure should be celebrated sometimes because it is through failure that you find different ways of thinking. And having a tramline way of thinking is a tremendous counterpoint to imagination. Sometimes you stumble across a book when you were looking for something else and when you get used to that and feel comfortable stumbling across the unexpected. This sows the seeds of imagination and the art of the possible. One of the most gratifying things about all the school libraries we have designed or redesigned is that each has had a jump in its rate of usage, and it stayed up because they have become good places to work.

FOURTH FLOOR ARCHWAY TO THE FUTURE

Thanks to Luke Hughes and his team, Keystone Academy has a special good place to work, a unique wonderland among the many good workspaces on campus. The High School Library welcomes its students and every other visitor through a Chinese-style arched doorway on the fourth floor of the middle school building. The red portal transports you to a wonderland of books, worlds, and unexpected possibilities in a setting the blends the traditions, cultures, habits and habitus of the east and west, which is in line with the school's mission and ethos. Hughes explains the meticulous care that has gone into the design details, and the passionate commitment that has enveloped the building of the library to ensure that it not only enables the framing of meaning and identity for students in the present but also continues into their future paths, wherever that might be. He starts with all the practical aspects that went into the deliberations, and then moves on to what he

calls "the big themes."

"What do the students absorb by osmosis, and not just because it is a lesson or a lecture… this is about values and messages within the furniture itself. What we have tried not to do is to imitate the past, but we have tried to reflect some of the virtues of the past and prove them relevant to the future. Now one can do this in a lot of different ways. But for 16-18 year olds, they absorb their interiors; they are like sponges. They will absorb values from the quality of the materials, color – it carries a lot of meaning, especially in Chinese culture through its ceramics, paintings and architecture – and these things carry meaning…"

Constructing and imbibing meaning is both individual and collective. While, it is designed as a space for dreaming and discovery of the self, it is also a "social space with a sense of ritual in a shared sphere." So though the High School Library is unique in many ways, it is part of a whole – spatially and programmatically. Its layout enables quiet study, and encourages mutually supported group work and teamwork, which is essential to the International Baccalaureate curriculum used in Keystone's middle and high school years.

He leans forward and continues, "The big prize will be when they move on from Keystone, will they feel comfortable about using a university-style library of the kind you might expect in America, or in the UK or anywhere else and feel immediately at home. Because if they don't feel at home, then they will always be slightly behind in their first year of study. The crucial thing is when they leave this place, they have absorbed a lot of this meaning, and the messages and they also feel comfortable about going on to the next stage."

INDIVIDUAL TO INSTITUTIONAL FUTURE

Hughes' craftsmanship not only acts as a launching pad for students as they venture into college or university in another part of the world, but it also sets the tone for the evolution of the place itself. Drawing from his experience in the European tradition of a thousand years, there are three principal rooms that form the central core of any major building or establishment of learning: they are the library, the dining hall and the prayer hall. Hughes hopes the library will be the soul of Keystone's academic fulcrum and also pivotal to its community. "In two to three decades, the library will speak of something much bigger than just a collection of books. It is not just for the current high school students, but it will also be setting a standard for the students growing up to that age and stage as well."

Institutional identity is an important

element of the birth and development of a space. Structural and spatial life-givers, such as Luke Hughes, are aware of this need and purpose, and strive to provide this or create an enabling environment for it. In Hughes's experience of designing and building school and university, or even Supreme Court, libraries, each projects a different identity. He says, "Cambridge has a different culture, or Yale has a different culture. But what they are all doing is telling the world something about their values through the architecture they have chosen to build. Sometimes, the wisdom of institutions is rather greater than the wisdom of the individuals that comprise them. I have picked up some of these echoes, a few seeds to plant here at Keystone."

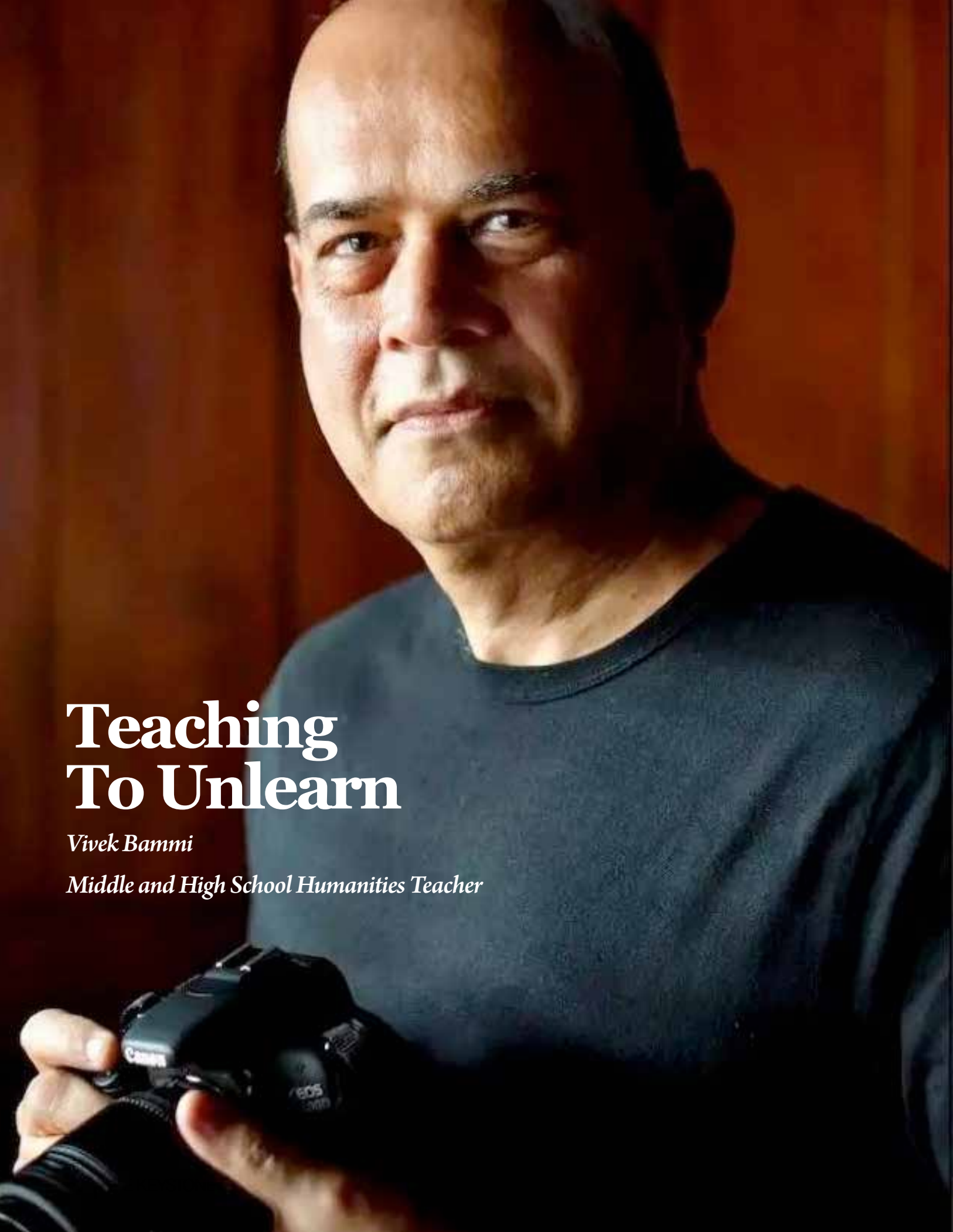
Decades from now the becoming and re-becoming of the Keystone individual and institution will mesh together along a continuum of identity and structure, and the nexus between them. Visitors to the Keystone High School Library will come with pathless dreams and be led along many paths, and if they are lucky enough some may find these seeds of imagination to the unexpected.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER

With over three decades experience, Luke Hughes is one of the most accomplished furniture designers in the UK. This Cambridge graduate has designed and produced furniture for over 900 boardrooms, 80 churches, over a dozen cathedrals, over 50 Oxbridge colleges, 20 major academic libraries, 19 major public schools, seven national museums, five royal palaces, two supreme courts, just to name a few from his long list of projects. Hughes began in the early 1980s as a one-man workshop designing for private clients, which expanded into a more commercial venture by, and has grown since 1985. In 2010, he was shortlisted for a Walpole Award for British Luxury Design Talent for 'outstanding achievement in design, craftsmanship, business and culture.'

He has also contributed to his field of expertise, as the former Chairman of the Grants Committee of the Crafts Council, and of the Art Workers Guild – both British entities. Amongst his other passions are teaching and writing about his craft with a focus on sustainability and environmental responsibility, and mountaineering. He has climbed the North Face of the Eiger and, over 25 years, explored much of the unmapped central climbs of Tibet. Hughes was also the Chairman of the Mount Everest Foundation until 2015.

While in conversation with The Keystone Magazine, he said, "I dreamt of a mountain and was lucky enough to make that dream come true." It is this passion and purpose that he brings to all his works. For him the deepest fulfillment comes from being an inspiration for others, as he recollects: "I remember a library I designed a couple of years ago for a school and I met the student 6 months after it had officially opened. They said, "It is such a cool place to be seen!" And then followed it with, "can I come and do work experience for you?" If that was the reaction from a pretty cynical 16 year old… it is worthwhile."



Teaching To Unlearn

Vivek Bammi

Middle and High School Humanities Teacher

A gap year in India between his undergraduate and postgraduate years presented Vivek Bammi with an opportunity to teach for a semester at his alumni school – The Doon School. This first stint led to the making of a great teacher because, as Dr. Bammi says about choosing a profession, "It was almost as if my experiences chose my path for me." With a first degree in History from St. Stephen's College in New Delhi, he went on to do two Masters degrees – the first in Mass Communications from the University of Pennsylvania and the second on Social Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. It was his passion for Asian history and culture and a 25-year teaching spell in Indonesia that inspired him to complete a second Masters that focused on people, their lives and why they live it the way they do. Dr. Bammi also holds a doctorate in History and Curriculum Development from Carnegie-Mellon, University of Pennsylvania. Fortunately for us, though he has taught undergraduate students he wanted to focus his career on international school education, which he started at the Kodaikanal International School – the first IB school in India and third in Asia – as a History teacher. Over the years he also began teaching and, later, examining the IB's signature high school mandatory course called Theory of Knowledge. It is his zeal for international education, and love for Chinese history and culture that drew him to Keystone Academy. Over 30 years now, and he has not looked back except with fond and happy memories.

Nirvana has both spiritual and intellectual dimensions. It comes from the Sanskrit word nirvā, in which nis means out and vā means to blow, together meaning 'be extinguished,' ergo the pursuit of achieving transcendental freedom from oneself. It carries infinitude of import and value that it almost seems to cease to exist merely as a word, and enters a perpetual state of living beyond just living; it is a state of happiness that may seem elusive to many. But perhaps it is not elusive for some. It takes a particular kind of person, and definitely a very particular kind of teacher, to achieve this state of being. Well, at least middle and high school Humanities teacher, Vivek Bammi is close.

photos: Vivek Bammi

"Vivek once told me, "I am just a happy person. I was happy since I was born!" remembers middle and high school English teacher Chelsea Prehn, adding, "After knowing Vivek for a couple of years now, I can say that his relentless optimism and humor certainly are his hallmarks. No matter the situation, Vivek is always there ready with a happy or affirming perspective." A happy demeanor with a smile to brighten any day is one that stands out for anyone who has met Dr. Bammi. This International Baccalaureate (IB) teacher with over three decades of experience in a few Asian countries says that his inspiration comes from the eastern philosophies rooted in the concept of the "non-self." In his understanding, it is when

one dissolves and unlearns one's identities to a point of emptiness that one discovers one's true non-self – "a completely creative and liberated being."

A PARTNERSHIP IN UNLEARNING

It is this freedom of thought with a creative and critical approach enveloped in a happy disposition that Dr. Bammi wants his students to strive for too, and not shy away from. A Bammi student would never have to sacrifice his or her mind: "Sacrifice meaning giving way to too many influences and conformity. I don't want conformity; that would be the worst thing. On the other hand I am not advocating for revolutionaries, but I want my students to develop their own minds and find their own balance." Balance is also a key ingredient in Dr. Bammi's brand of teaching. On the one hand, he inculcates structure in his lessons, and on the other he encourages and enables creativity. Facilitating students to create their own viewpoints and perspectives in a structured way helps students create, what he calls, a "mental map, which is so important in how one deals with the world."

Giving students the big picture through a critically and creatively formed mental map is especially pivotal in the IB Diploma Programme's (IBDP) mandatory course called Theory of Knowledge (ToK). It sets apart the IB's high school curriculum, used at Keystone, from any other international syllabus. ToK is not only a mandatory course, but also an overarching subject in the IBDP. Every subject in the curriculum has a linking element to the ToK, "which guides students to think and reflect upon how knowledge is constructed," explains Dr. Bammi. The course itself has evolved over the decades with a shift from the individual knower to the shared and personal knowledge. This "course on thinking," as Dr. Bammi calls it, helps students learn about themselves, but within the bigger circle of shared knowledge. To enable this, he says that he has to take the backseat in a class because "the teacher is like a partner giving ownership of the learning to the students." As a partner in their learning, he probes their claims pushing them to think and question themselves further.

"It is a lot about unlearning because you learn so much from society by the time you are in high school, and you haven't had time to think for yourself. As teachers, we get them to think about cultural practices children believe unquestioningly. They need to step back and ask themselves what parts of their own culture they can accept, and what parts they can question." This ability to develop a student's mind is also why he teaches History because together with honing a student's skills in critical thinking, writing, and debating, it is a subject that "attacks the complexity of situations, societies and humans." One of his students and advisees, Phoebe Sun, recollects the Bammi teaching style with fondness: "Even in our grade 10 History lessons, Dr. Bammi utilized this kind of teaching method. He would ask us to think of opposing standpoints, reflect on commonalities, and abstract conflicting themes from these. He was training us to be more critical. Now in grade 11, this training has helped us and we are able to combine knowledge from different subjects and connect them into a knowledge network of our own."

For Phoebe, this is not only Dr. Bammi's style, but also what sets him apart as a teacher. Teachers in the Humanities department think so too. "The most

effective teachers are the ones who challenge their students to question the things around them, to think deeply about their own beliefs and place in the world, and who push their students so they can get the best out of themselves. The other vital part of being a great teacher is the constant drive to be a learner and educate yourself," says middle school Humanities teacher, George Scorgie.

NOT KNOWING IS MOST POWERFUL

Dr. Bammi's teaching approach, the partner teacher, also lends him the opportunity to continue his own learning. Though what makes him proud as a teacher is when students write back about the lessons and his teaching style that changed their lives, his more favorite moments do not come from what he taught students, but from what he could not. "We were in the middle of an Ethics Unit in ToK one time," Dr. Bammi started with a knowing smile, "I raised the whole idea of karma. The kids got interested and I began explaining a bit about what it was. We got discussing leading to many different ideas. At the end of the discussion, I said, as did the kids, this is a great discussion because none of us knows anything about it. It was a great ending because we all realized we needed to learn a lot more."

Not knowing may have fazed Dr. Bammi when he started his teaching career because he remembers how insecure a new teacher can be in those initial years, but "you grow into the profession and realize you don't have to be. It is a profession that keeps you alert because the world around you is always evolving and changing, particularly with a course like ToK. You have to not only be aware of your own subject, but also be aware of what's happening in Science, Math, Art, etc. Your worldview becomes much broader; your vision becomes wider." So now Dr. Bammi is not afraid of not knowing because he keeps learning. He reiterates that not knowing is often the "most powerful learning." It spurs "humility, which is an underrated value."

His humble nature is also what endears Dr. Bammi to his colleagues, according to Mr. Scorgie: "Vivek is a person and teacher who personifies what it means to be not only a good teacher, but a great teacher. Most people wouldn't know he has a doctoral degree. Being lucky enough to work with Vivek, and know him as a friend, you realize it isn't about titles that make you look good, or trying to impress others, it's about working hard and sharing your knowledge so everyone can benefit. It's about being humble and listening as much as speaking. It's about questioning and being thoughtful when you encounter new ideas or ideas that are different form your own." So, if you seek the fearless freedom of thought (with evidence to back your claims, of course) that is guaranteed to help you grow into a liberated being basking in a glow of happiness for the collective good, then Dr. Bammi is the teacher, or should we say partner, you need.

She Is Our Peter Pan

Pei Lu, Middle and High School Chinese Language and Literature Teacher and Associate Dean of Residential Life

Passionate, positive and perky are some of words that come to mind to describe Keystone's secondary school Chinese Language and Literature teacher, Pei Lu. Whether it is teaching Chinese classics or a contemporary literary work, Ms. Pei is not only able to connect with her students through her pedagogical tact honed over 10 years, but also helps them relate to their lessons academically and personally. Students are drawn to her because of her ability to understand today's teenager and her youthfulness. She is one of them – their very own Peter Pan. Fortunately for the students, Ms. Pei is also part of their life after school because she is the Associate Dean of the Residential Life program. In this administrative role and also as a dorm parent, students living on campus get to continue their interactions with Ms. Pei in the residence halls. She has also taught Chinese in Beijing's No.125 Middle School and Yew Chung International School before joining Keystone. She holds a graduate degree in Chinese Language from the Beijing International Studies University, and a postgraduate degree in Linguistics from Beijing Foreign Studies University.

An intense, involved and invigorating session of Chinese Language and Literature can feel exactly like an engrossing video game of Final Fantasy or Call of Duty or Grand Theft Auto where you lose track of time and the tension rises, as your blue energy counter drops by the second. So at the end of one of her classes when a grade 10 student said, "I am low on blue from your Chinese class," she was not taken aback. She not only knew what this student was referring to, but also was content that students could feel the depth and dynamism of Chinese literature. As a gamer herself, her favorites being Master Yin Yang and Marks of Heaven, her student's remark was a compliment.

MAKING THE CLASSICAL POP

But if you really want to compliment and impress Ms. Pei, you have to be familiar with the latest tunes in the world of pop culture. According to this trendy teacher from Southern China, pop songs have not changed much from the Yuefu poetry genre of the Han Dynasty. "Let's take the song 'When,' sung by the popular Taiwanese music duo Power Station. The lyrics for this song, "When mountains have no cliffs, when riverbeds run dry," are drawn from the folk-style Yuefu poem titled, 'Oh God.' Making linkages between pop culture and classical literature not only allows Ms. Pei to connect with her students, but also makes it easier for the students to learn classical Chinese literature. "Our Chinese class is so interesting and lively. When she teaches us, it feels like there are new ideas constantly sprouting in our heads. She is great, just like a kid at heart!" says Cindy Liang from grade 10.

This "kid" is clearly quite pop-ular; add to it the determination and commitment to go above and beyond to make students' wishes come true. "We want a Chinese drama club," they wished. Ms. Pei's response: "Just start it, and leave the rest to me." Her students identify with the bubbly personality streaked with an endearing mischievousness and the inner child waiting to burst out, as if she were Pei Lu on the outside and Peter Pan on the inside. So when she leaves this note for her drama students…

My fellow drama fanatics!
Let's get the show on the road this afternoon!
Same time: 3:20 – 4:30pm
Same place: 1280

…the students follow. Room 1280 is packed with over 30 students, almost twice the number of students than in a regular Keystone classroom. She may be playful and light-hearted, but her students take her seriously because if Ms. Pei takes on something, she means business.

OUT OF THE BOX AND BEYOND

During an internal test for grade 9, students sat in pairs, and wrote scripts that would depict the critical exploration of the Chinese imperial examination system from the perspective of two crucial characters in Chinese classical literature, Fan Jin from the novel Fan Jin Zhong Ju and Kong Yiji from the novel Kong Yiji. The scenario is set in a graveyard where the two souls meet to talk, reflect, and critically examine the imperial examination system. This is Ms. Pei's business-as-usual out-of-the-box style. So having given them this unique test, she watched each mini skit performed by a pair of students, and gave them their scores.

"Teaching Chinese is made up of two important parts – firstly to develop and train, and secondly to develop an aesthetic appreciation of the language and hone a critical bent of mind," explains Pei Lu. This interesting test was given as part of the unit on novels in Chinese Language and Literature. Being confident about her students' grasp about these novels, the test was her way of challenging her students a bit more. "Writing scripts is a great way to develop language skills and critical thinking," she says.

Her students know that Ms. Pei isn't one of those teachers who follow a textbook to the T. "She has her own unique insights on a novel, which she shares with us. She also indulges in our opinions, as far as they are not too outlandish. She supports and guides us to delve even deeper," says Sybil Zhao from grade 10. However, it is not just the outlandish that captivates Ms. Pei, but also the original. She appreciates students who have enjoyed Chinese texts enough to recite it out of true aesthetic admiration. "I really enjoy teaching at Keystone, and I realized this in my very first year here," she remembers, "Once when I mentioned a form of Chinese poetry called 'ge xing ti' in passing, some of my younger students recited verses from A Flowery Moonlit Night by the Spring River, without a moment's hesitation." It is this passion and desire for literary exploration and reexamination that Ms. Pei has been looking for since she began teaching, first as a graduate student, then in Hong Kong and then at various other public and international schools in Beijing. Keystone's emphasis on Chinese teaching together with pedagogical approaches of the IB makes Pei Lu feel right at home. For her students, they have found one of their own.

ONE OF US

Young and older adolescents are a demanding group of humans to be, interact, and live with, let alone teach. But perhaps being one of them is the key to not only nurturing them, but also yourself, thinks Ms. Pei: "Students look at me as quite knowledgeable, but as a matter of fact, sometimes it is I who learns from them. No one can be an expert in everything and there is so much I want to learn. In many ways, I am just one of them." However, this may also mean indulging students a bit more: "Once, I had a 90-minute phone conversation with one of my grade 10 students, Alex Li, because we disagreed about some of the core aspects of The Legend of the Monkey King. These sorts of arguments are never personal, they are just business. I will not force my views on them. What's the point of that? Are teachers' ideas always right, or is it just because I am their teacher?"

She is also one of them because students can rely on her to know when they need help, and how to lend that helping hand. Ms. Pei once had a student whose strong character sometimes unintentionally upset others. To broach the issue, she gave him a book and said, "While you are just like the main character in this book, it might be worth a try to be a bit more sensitive to other people's feelings." Meanwhile, she has helped several students with their teenage conundrums by guiding them to focus on their strengths. "My students and I have experienced a lot together; some of these memories were so trivial that I can't even remember the exact details. Meanwhile others were quite memorable. I cherish them all," Ms. Pei emotionally recollects.

Students reciprocate her kindness in many ways; they have her back too, as she remembers from one instance: "One time when they heard that I needed a few movies for a class, they began sorting out movies for me – Chinese in one pile, foreign in another, movies from books in another, and still one more pile of movies which had good reviews. I was so touched when the students handed me their compilation." The qualities of a "good teacher" often surpass the common markers, such as experience, pedagogical uniqueness, personality, and so on. The most important quality is much more fundamental – the ability for two souls to reach out to each other. Ms. Pei has this most innate of qualities. It is rooted in this inner virtue that she has reached out to her students with her own teaching methods, and provided a whole new way for the students to approach and understand their world. As Peter Pan has said: "I have taught you to fight and to fly. What more could there be?" Keystone's very own Peter Pan may think of some more.

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Balance Is Key To Becoming An Effective Learner

There are no shortcuts in education, especially if it is your own child's. From providing basic necessities to developing social skills or everyday skills, every step in a child's development needs the support, both emotional and practical, of both parents. And as parents take on and overcome the challenges of a highly competitive world in their own lives, there is often a feeling of helplessness in trying to live up to the expectation of raising a child that we have often set for ourselves. Grade 9 studen Cherry Tian and her parents may have found ways to meet the expectations for their daughter's education, while also balancing their own individual growth – professionally and personally. Her father, Tian Fei, is the deputy general manager of a state-owned enterprise, while her mother Feng Ruiyan is a partner and financial director of a joint venture. Though Cherry has only been with Keystone for less than 18 months, she has already made an impression on her teachers. "She excels academically, and it is a pleasure to teach her," say her teachers. Her warm, friendly and pro-active demeanor also appeals to peers and adults alike. Speaking to The Keystone Magazine (TKM), Cherry and her parents tell us about their education philosophy, and how they balance their individual and family lives.

TKM: Before coming to Keystone, Cherry attended a good public school. When you decided to switch schools, what factors did you take into consideration?

Father: Cherry's previous school was very good with cutting-edge teaching methods and excellent resources. These helped its students to develop a positive outlook, accompanied by excellent study techniques and a good grounding in Chinese. However as our daughter grew older, she wanted more. It was at this time that I contacted Keystone, and saw that the teaching here could give our daughter what she needed and wanted. We hope that Keystone will help our child to develop into an adult with a global outlook while remaining true to her Chinese heritage.

Mother: It was actually Cherry's decision to change schools. We have always given our daughter the liberty to make her own decisions and share her opinions with us. She thought it through, and gave us clear and rational arguments as to why she wanted to move to another school. After that, my husband and I discussed it before coming together as a family and choosing Keystone. The biggest factor is that Cherry enjoys learning

TKM: It has now been a year and a half since Cherry joined Keystone. How would you say the shift has been? What have been the changes?

Cherry: I love the environment and vibe at Keystone, especially when it comes to my love for music and sport. The teachers are really experienced and patient. Any time I have a problem with my schoolwork, they are always ready to help me, sometimes even with detailed answers, in person or via email. I also like that many of my teachers have initiated after-school activities through the

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Keystone Activities Program (KAP). It lets me try out new things or gain more exposure to things I am already interested in. For example, I have signed up to the North East Asian Math Competition KAP, which has given me a completely fresh perspective.

Mother: In this year and a half at Keystone, Cherry has not ceased to surprise us. I can see that she is more confident now, works well with others, values academic integrity, and excels in critical thinking. Her enthusiasm for learning, life and making new friends has been revived. The biggest change we have noticed is that she has become more intellectually curious, and enjoys learning. Before Keystone, Cherry was not particularly interested in Math; she would study what was needed and leave it at that. Now thanks to guidance from her teachers, she has become fascinated by Math and takes the initiative to study beyond what is required. She goes over very difficult Math problems with her classmates, and takes part in competitions. We can see from her grades that being interested in a subject is the key to effective learning.

Father: We are really happy to see Cherry's academic progress. Her grade 8 Chinese writing portfolio, complete with an author's introduction, not only demonstrates her skill in using a variety of tools to research the literature, but it also shows her unique perspective on the subject and efficiency in task completion. As the old Chinese saying goes "a workman needs to have the best tools to do a good job." It is obvious that the teachers at Keystone are equipping her with the right tools, which lays a solid foundation for her future studies.

TKM: The Keystone ethos is not only about personal achievement, but also incorporates the philosophy of giving back to the community. You seem to be quite involved in many activities, including some of the service initiatives.

Cherry: Keystone's Global and Service Initiatives are my favorite activities. During the October National Day break, I accompanied my teachers and classmates on a trip to Laos where we helped repair homes in a rural community. I learned from the local people there about their way of life, and it also helped me understand how we can better support their community. I also take part in many events organized by the Student Council. As a grade-level student representative, I am always determined to do my part in promoting and preparing for the activities we organize.

TKM: How do you manage the challenges of being involved in various activities?

Cherry: These activities do take up a lot of my time after class, but I really enjoy being involved; spending time on them is really worth it. If I focus on challenges, then I would have to say that it is time management. Organizing my time is really important when it comes to finishing my schoolwork. My strategy is to separate my time for study and for participating in activities. Anytime I feel I am losing my time balance, I ask my advisor for guidance.

TKM: Study time vs. co-curricular activities – is there a hierarchy in your opinion? What is your take on this? How would you support your child?

Father: I have read in a classical Chinese masterpiece "a child should learn to nurture love for the family and for others, and develop honesty and compassion before embarking on academic learning." I think this is the understanding that underlies engagement in any co-curriculum activities. We hope the same for Cherry. Studying or study time should come after making sure a child has

a well-rounded education. There are many types of co-curricular activities that are useful in developing personality and fostering a philanthropic spirit. Every time she takes part in activities, it validates her beliefs and builds character, as she contributes to society, which gives her joy no matter how small a contribution it may be. It is our family tradition to sit together and listen to Cherry talk about her co-curricular engagements. I think this helps her to reflect on her gains and shortcomings, and encourages her to do better the next time.

TKM: How was the transition for Cherry from being a day student till grade 8 to becoming a boarder in grade 9, as it is mandatory in Keystone?

Mother: I think Cherry's transition was smooth, as she enjoyed being a day student and staying on as a boarder was easy. Of course, we are still part of her everyday life, always on hand to calm any worries she may have or to ensure she adjusts at school. For example, we have emphasized the importance of following dorm rules; viewing every situation from multiple perspectives; respecting people's habits; helping others and being part of the community. We also remind her that she should approach a teacher for guidance, if she had any questions. With the help and support that she has got from her teachers and dorm mates, Cherry has settled in well as a boarder.

Cherry: I was nervous initially, and worried that I would not be able to manage my time or get used to the daily routine. So before moving onto campus, I gave myself a trial by organizing my daily schedule, going to bed at a reasonable hour, and setting an alarm. I think this really helped me transition into dorm life. But even if I wasn't prepared, I am confident that fitting into dorm life would not have been a problem, as all the teachers and dorm mates are so kind and considerate.

TKM: What does it take to become a successful boarder?

Cherry: For me one of the most important factors that can influence your success as a boarder is time management. Optimum efficiency during study time is an essential part of allocating your time. This is the only way to finish your work promptly and avoid procrastination.

Father: First and foremost, confidence. Have faith in the school's ability to carefully and thoughtfully look after the boarders as well as your children's ability to adapt to life in the dorms. Second, prioritize. With limited time to speak with boarders, it is important to make the most of the allowed time they have to communicate with them effectively. Third, don't go to your children with every little thing. The proper channels are already in place for parents to talk with their children's teachers. Parents are given plenty of opportunities through events and activities to see what their children and the school are doing. And last, don't put all your worries on your children; they might already be nervous as they move into the dorms. Parents should be a source of comfort and encouragement, and avoid dragging out their adjustment period.

Mother: Cherry is academically independent. We catch up with her over tea every week. She tells us how she is getting on at school in a relaxed setting, and we take advantage of this time to share with her as well. We would even talk to her about issues we are facing at work and ask for her opinion, or discuss current affairs. In this way, we communicate a lot more and understand each other more. When it comes to communicating with her, we try to understand each other, encourage each other and help each other, almost like friends would. More importantly, I think her father's patience and constant involvement in the whole process has nurtured the happy and positive daughter that we can see today.

Exploring the Chinese "Way" Through Nature's Eye

Astronomy • Nature • Lifestyle

Lecture by Prof. Dong Mei, China Central Academy of Fine Arts

About two and half millennia ago, Laozi professed that Tao (the Way) characterized the epitome of greatness with deep roots in the laws of nature. The laws of nature bind human beings, and all other living things alike. This intrinsic value is deeply rooted in the culture and philosophy of the East. The ancient Chinese lived in sync with the changing seasons and formed the system of 24 solar terms and 72 pentads (five-day intervals), and arranged their lives on the basis of these shifts in nature, and farming on celestial movements and events. Moreover, the literati throughout Chinese history not only have sought inspiration from nature, but have also given nature extremely rich cultural connotations, aiming to distill an ideal value system from the essence of nature. As Tao Yuanming, a renowned Chinese poet in the fourth century, wrote in his verses, "with the changing of seasons, warm and beautiful mornings are upon us again," and "all the living things thrive by observing the laws of nature," the harmony and coexistence between human beings and nature and all its rules and changes can easily be found in Chinese literature and paintings. Traditional Chinese culture believes that "there are emotions and values in every living thing." "Have contemporary China forgotten this way of life?" wonders Professor Dong Mei from China Central Academy of Fine Arts. On 23 September 2016, she led an audience through an exploration of the rich ancient Chinese tradition, as part of the first Education Salon Series season of the academic year 2016-2017. In this column we share a translated version of her salon presentation.

A quote from the Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion by the master calligrapher Wang Xizhi reads "Hanging high is the immense universe. Around us is a myriad variety." These compelling words help readers to visualize themselves in the context of the universe. It brings to mind the Chinese phrase "yang guan fu cha (looking up and down to observe)," which aptly captures the essence of the cultural connotation of Wang's words. While his Preface was written in 353 CE, the origin of the quote can be traced to one of the most ancient Chinese philosophy masterpieces, I Ching. The original text, which believes that people should "look up to observe the changes in the sky, and look down to learn the workings of the Earth" was also where the Chinese words for astronomy (tianwen) and geography (dili) were derived from. More importantly, the quote stresses the links between humanity and nature. By putting ourselves in the context of heavens above and Earth below, we were able to observe the world around us and find our place, thus grasping our own cultural heritage. Chinese philosophy is rooted in this fundamental notion that humanity lives in harmony with, and as a part of nature. The Tao of humanity lies in the Tao of the seasons and in all things and creatures that exist between heaven and Earth.

24 SOLAR TERMS IN CALENDARS, CHARTS, AND CULTURE

Much of this way of life is guided by a unique combination of the solar and the lunar calendars. To complement the lunar calendar formulated based on the changes of the moon, the ancient Chinese observed the changes in the sun that drove the rhythms followed in agriculture and farming. This set the 24 solar terms. Though the traditional lunar calendar and solar terms were abandoned from the official state calendar with the adoption of the Gregorian one following the 1911 Xinhai Revolution, the use of the solar terms along with 72 pentads constitute a Chinese solar calendar that has been in use since the ancient times.

There is evidence in Chinese literature too that alludes to the traditional uniqueness that combines the lunar and solar calendars, such as this popular quote from a Tang-period poem, "flowers remain the same year after year while people change year by year." The phrase "year after year," translates to sui sui nian nian in Chinese. This is relevant because sui is in reference to the sun, and nian in reference to the moon. In Chinese literature, such phrases are a significant reminder of the marriage of the solar and lunar traditions. However, the lunar and solar systems are different. According the waxing and waning of the moon, the first day of the month in the lunar calendar is termed shuo (new moon), the fifteenth day is referred to as wang (full moon), and the sixteenth day is ji wang (close to full moon). Meanwhile in the solar terms, dong zhi (winter solstice) marks the starting point of the year. In the later Chinese periods such as the Qing dynasty, dong zhi was referred to as sui shi (turn of the year). In contemporary China, the character for sui is still used to mark a person's age or the turn of a person's year.

The winter solstice also has deep roots in Chinese philosophy. "A full container of water will spill, and a full moon will start to wane," states I Ching. This is in reference to the beauty and import of dong zhi. As a day that is marked by the longest night and shortest day, it is also one that marks the beginning of a new period because then the days get longer and nights shorter. So, on the darkest day of the year, we look forward to the bright sunlight because following winter solstice, the day starts to get longer. It is believed that the winter solstice is as important as the Chinese New Year because it is the beginning of the wait for spring – a time cherished by most.

But the wait can be long. To make the long dark winter nights more interesting, a chart of pastime was created – jiu jiu xiao han tu, or the Chart to Pass the Cold. The chart covered a period of 81 days that ended in the blossoming of spring. Tradition prescribed many activities to pass the long winter nights, the most common being painting and calligraphy. In the Ming dynasty, painting was preferred, and calligraphy in the Qing dynasty. Painting may have involved drawing a branch with nine spring blossoms, each blossom with nine hollow petals. This would

allow a person to paint one petal a day till the end of 81 days. Meanwhile, the calligraphy is a line of poetry containing nine characters, each with nine strokes. By tracing a single stroke each day, one would complete the calligraphy in 81 days. The one line poem translates to 'the courtyard's droopy weeping willows await the breeze of spring.'

The beauty of the seasons is not just tradition and ancient customs; it is guided by astronomy. The axis of rotation and the orbital plane of the Earth form an angle, i.e., the angle at which sunlight reaches the Earth. The position at which the Sun can be directly overhead is framed between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer, which is the scientific mark of the winter and summer solstices respectively. These also guide the eight farming terms depending on the area where the sunlight touches the Earth. There are also terms named after weather conditions (e.g. xiao shu, or a bit sweltering; da shu, or most sweltering), which are linked with how we feel physically. The last category of solar terms with poetic names involves depictions of climatic and natural phenomena, including yu shui (more rain than snow), jing zhe (hibernating insects awaken), bai lu (dews) and da xue (heavy snow). These categories together make up the 24 solar terms. For a major agrarian civilization like China, the rhythms of farming and agricultural cycles were determined by astronomy.

TRADITIONS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The River Zhen and Wei
Overflow on their way.
The lovely lad and lass
Hold in hand fragrant grass.
"Let's look around," says she.
"I've already," says he.
"Let us go there again!
Beyond the River Wei
The ground is large and people gay."
Playing together then, they have a happy hour,
Each gives the other peony flower.
The Book of Songs

Though it seems that some of the traditions were born of a need to "pass time," to the ancient Chinese, time was a medium to enjoy the subtleties of life, nuances of nature, and live in harmony with nature and all living things. The verse above, from one of the oldest existing collections of Chinese poetry, is symbolic of that which draws and links humans to the joys and pleasures of nature. To take another instance, the process of painting the nine spring blossoms over nine nine-day cycles is the reinforcement of the acknowledgement of the subtle link between man and nature over time. Even today we can relive the ways of ancient China through the solar terms and traditional festivals.

One such ancient festival, related to farming, called Shangsi was celebrated in the third month of the lunar calendar. This was at the end of spring, which was characterized with all living creatures coming back to life and flowers in full bloom. For me, this festival symbolizes Chinese Valentine's Day more than Qixi, which is the seventh month of the lunar calendar. I encourage my students to give their loved ones peony flowers on that day. Even in my own private workshops, I advocate for the adoption of these ancient festivals in our contemporary lives. Traditional Chinese festivals tend to fall into two categories: the ones focusing on embracing nature such as Shangsi and Double Ninth Festival; and the ones focusing on ethics and family reunions. However, it seems that only the festivals in the latter category including the Spring Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Dragon Boat Festival have prevailed till this day and age. Instead of focusing solely on family-centered festivals, which have been simplified to feasts

and festivities, we need to restore traditions that help us embrace nature, and restore our agrarian heritage.

The 24 solar terms can be further divided into 72 pentads. In simpler terms, each pentad is a three five-day unit called hou or zhenghou. Even the smallest change in a season or temperature is reflected and can be observed in nature as a clear sign or zhenghou. Let me explain from my own experience. I remember standing on the frozen Kunming Lake in the Summer Palace in the first pentad, which is when spring begins. As I stood there I could hear the cracking of the icy surface. It is the nature's way of signaling the first signs of spring with the melting of ice that releases the fish holed in through a whole to rise above the thinning ice to greet the increasingly warm sun. This is the kind of wisdom that we can learn from the traditional way of life; we can gain the ability to observe the laws of nature, as they have already been codified into a practical system of calculating time. There are other ways to calculate time too, such as measuring it with the blossoming of certain flowers. The ancient Chinese sought to promote a harmonious relationship with nature in many ways.

OPEN YOUR HEARTS. SENSE THE WORLD.

Some of the oldest Chinese literary classics make reference to this harmonious existence, such as this: "man is one with Heaven and Earth, as well as all living creatures," or "Heaven and Earth exert their influences on all things allowing humans to feel the true character and emotions of Heaven and Earth," from I Ching. There is much depth in two Chinese characters from this classical text; these two characters are for the word feeling or to feel or ganqing.

If we unpack the character gan (感), the top half (咸) means "all" or "harmonious", while the bottom half (心) means "heart." But where does this character come from? It is derived from our five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The idea of the five senses led to the idea of 'feeling.' In essence it is the idea that people are moved emotionally when they feel, such as when they appreciate the beauty of nature. This ancient school of Chinese thought led to the understanding that since the five senses are used to interact with the wonderful and beautiful world around us, thereby creating a relationship between us and everything else in this world. The second character, qing (情), has a history that stretches back thousands of years to its first mention in the Book of Rites. In this work, qing was used to describe the seven humours – the ancient Chinese medicinal system of body functions that influences an individual's natural personality. According to ancient Chinese culture, qing naturally comes from within while gan is a product of the interaction between man and the wider world, therefore these two concepts come together within, and through man to produce feeling.

'Open your senses to the world and open your heart' is the fundamental understanding of this important Chinese character, and also what I encourage everyone to do in their lives. However, when I do so, I am often asked especially by friends with children who are looking into what they should study at university: "We really like classical Chinese literature, but wouldn't our kids be a bit too sensitive and emotional if they get into the classics?" Being culturally sensitive and aware of your roots does not mean a natural tendency for oversensitivity or an emotional demeanor. Gan is the fundamental relationship between man and the world, and if this relationship is based on being open and positive then our own attitude to life will be positive. I would suggest that the basis of the Chinese character is this idea of opening one's senses to open our hearts, creating a sense of joy and happiness as an extension of being part of nature. I have always striven to cultivate the ideal character as prescribed by Chinese culture, which requires one to open one's senses and hearts, to be understanding of others, and to observe ways of the universe.

A renowned poet of ancient China, Xie Lingyun once said that happiness comes from four things: nice weather, beautiful scenery, inner happiness and pleasant events. Nice weather and beautiful weather are given to us by Heaven, however, inner happiness and pleasant events are what come about when we experience the first two. The inner happiness and joy of every single person comes from within, just as much as from without. This renewed way of thinking will connect us once again to nature, as our ancestors once were. By seeing ourselves as part of the stars, the lofty mountains, the babbling brooks, the lush forests, every one of us will be able to open our hearts to the joys of existence. Every nation contributes to the making and history of humanity, whether it is the Industrial Revolution of Britain or the Financial Revolution of the United States. China's is our attitude to nature and our relationship with the natural world that can be its legacy, a legacy that humanity is beginning to see in a whole new era.