

TAIMUN

TIMES

TAIMUN XXII
First Issue



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OPENING CEREMONY

Written by Declan Chang

TAIMUN XXII

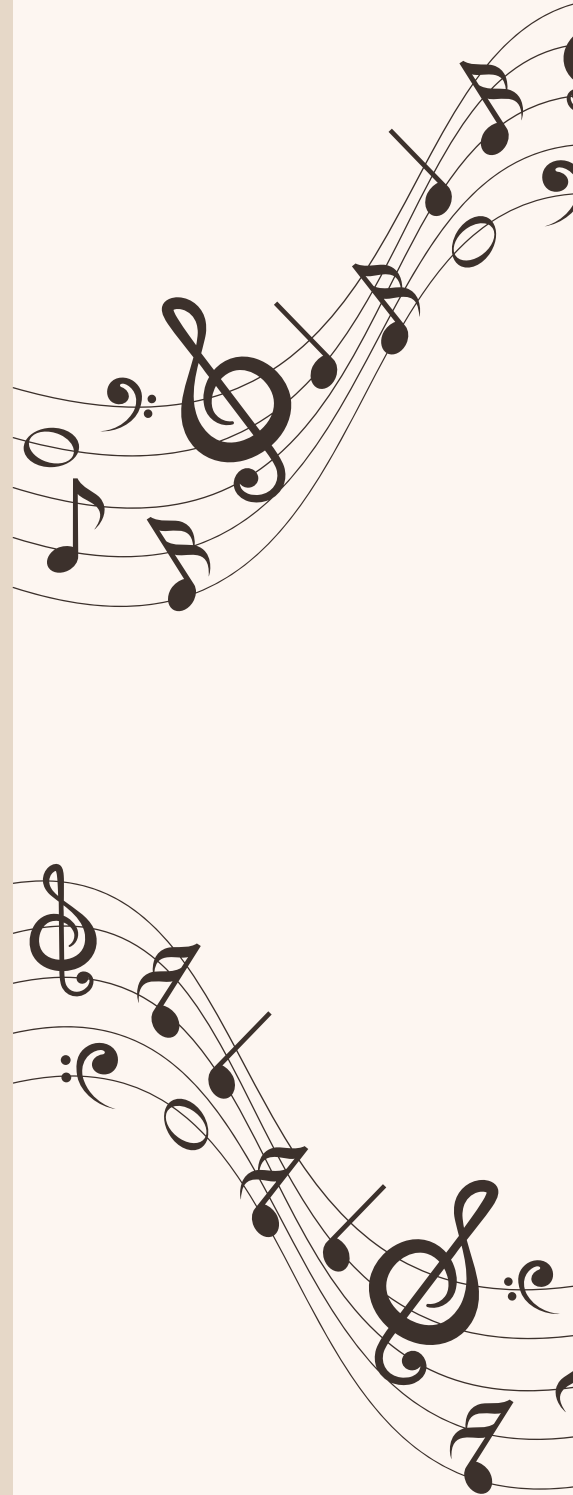
The hall was filled with the bustling noise of representatives from all over the island. The cameras and microphones were ready. The dimly lit room, filled with cold air, excitement, and anxiety. The opening ceremony of TAIMUN XXII was beginning.

The room was silent and focused as the harmonious sounds of the cello and piano flowed across the room. A delightful prologue to the event. The first chapter was the address of the deputy secretary generals. John and Chloe narrated to the audience their interpretation of our theme. A call for unity to stand for what we believe in.

Following the interlude of Theresia's performance of "Gigue" by Bach was the warm welcome from the director of school. Simultaneously reminding us of our theme: "Painting a New Horizon", to be bold and courageous as we envision and strive towards the horizon we dream of.

Keynote speaker Ms. Leah Lin stepped on stage and began her speech. Her speech was inspirational and admirable; as someone who takes actions to fix an issue she sees in the world, Ms. Lin is a role model of what each delegate should aim to be. An honorary gift was presented to Ms. Lin as the insightful presentation ended.

Energy grew in the hall as the officers were presented with the gavels, cheers and applause echoed throughout the room. With the gavels given and pictures taken, the long awaited moment arrived as the Secretary General and the MUN director stood before the house and struck the gavel to announce the official beginning of TAIMUN XXII.





Chair: Kyra Dea
y Chair: Yebin Ki



ty Chair: Zue wan



Press Director's Message

OUR SHARED CANVAS AWAITS YOUR BRUSHES



◆ Mr. Joel Sparks ◆

Delegates, you will arrive at the 22nd annual TAIMUN armed with the skills and knowledge to discuss and confront our world's greatest challenges. However, the true power to "Paint a New Horizon" lies not just in what you have learned, but in the hope, creativity and idealism you can mix into your palettes.

No generation is handed a fresh canvas. For better and worse, the paint is already quite thick as this canvas is passed on once more. This well-worn canvas before you bears the faded brushstrokes of generations past grappling with issues like inequality, social justice, and technological disruption. The fabric is torn in places, blemished by the shortcomings of previous attempts to reshape the landscape. However, there are also some strong lines representing a history of effort, development, and growth. There are contributions to celebrate, those to avoid, and those demanding repair and a new perspective.

Regardless of the paint and scars it already bears, this canvas is yours to reimagine. You inherit not just its flaws, but the boundless potential to craft a vision of cooperation, human dignity and environmental stewardship. As this conference's theme declares, you are the "Next Generation" empowered to offer "Bold Solutions."

The articles in this magazine explore innovative pathways - from sustainable energy and food security to ethical AI governance. But bold ideas alone are not enough. You must make your mark with resilience, open-mindedness and a moral conviction to redraw our shared horizon - to separate figure from ground in a manner appropriate for your own generation and to draw each others' attention to the values and events most critical to you.

Though the challenges loom large, your connectivity and creativity are unmatched. Along with the canvas, you inherit a workshop full of tools - philosophies, histories, theories, and technologies - from those who came before. Where others have faltered, your strokes can redefine a landscape that welcomes and shelters us all.

This TAIMUN is your canvas to craft a masterpiece of global progress. Grasp your brushes tightly, for the horizon you paint will be the legacy of your generation. Stay bold, delegates - the time has come to draw some lines and sketch the outline of your own era.

Mr. Sparks
TAIMUN XXII Press Director

FAZHI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Article by Carilyn Chang

As the only primary school of the Taiwanese indigenous Bunun tribe in Ren'ai Township, Nantou County, Fa Zhi Elementary School embodies a unique community that celebrates their education of Bunun traditional music.

2024 marks the eleventh anniversary of the friendship between AST and Fazhi Elementary School, with this cross-school friendship dating all the way back to 2013. Throughout these years, both schools have never failed to engage in interactive programs and events, enlivening the AST community as well as theirs with joy, warmth, and love.

We are fortunate to have the young, talented musicians of the Bunun tribe join us yet again at the closing ceremony of TAIMUN XXII, where they will be presenting two songs. The first ballad is a compilation of Bunun nursery rhymes and children's folk songs: "Let's Go!" or in Bunun language "Mudanin Ata" (我們出發了) and "Pre-hunting Sacrificial Song to Shotguns" or "Pislahi" (祭槍歌). "Let's Go!" is a game song sung by Bunun children where the seven-verse lyrics tell the story of their journey through mountains, rivers, and waterfalls; the eighth to eighteenth verses describe the Bunun people's prayers for a successful hunt. The last verse concludes the ballad with lyrics "no one is stronger than me."



Closing Ceremony

The second ballad is titled "Beautiful Moonlight" or "Maciala Buan" (月光組曲). This song paints a vivid picture of a peaceful night under the soft, tender light of the moon. The first half of the ballad calls for friends, family, and relatives to gather together for moon gazing. The second half of the song then shifts to a more emotional tone, illustrating how the moon is always there to caress our woes in times of loneliness and sadness. The lyrics narrates how we gaze upon the moon, the rest of the world fades away as we are greeted by serenity and tranquility.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation for Ms. Lee Shu-Huei (李淑慧主任), the director of teaching and learning from Fa Zhi Elementary School. Her continuous support has given this year's TAIMUN a memorable conclusion.

Finally, as we all bid farewell to the twenty-second conference of TAIMUN XXII, let us immerse ourselves in the joyous melody of Fa Zhi Elementary School's performance.

TAIWAN MODEL UNITED NATIONS

COMMITTEE



Security Council



The Security Council (SC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It aims to maintain international peace and security. Its power to make decisions, which member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter, sets it apart from other organs of the UN. Under hostile disputes, the Security Council can also dispatch military observers or a peacemaking force to help reduce tension.

This year, the Security Council will focus on the issues of The Situation in Myanmar (101) and The Situation of Civilians in Occupied Territories (102). Amy Lin (DIS) is the President of this year's Security Council Committee, and Gordon Hung (HCAS) is the Deputy President.

(101) In February 2021, the Burmese military seized control of the government of Myanmar and arrested key political figures, including Aung San Suu Kyi; the action ignited widespread protests in Myanmar, caused civilian casualties and arrests, and drew international condemnations. The Security Council president, Amy Lin, believes that the situation in Myanmar is pertinent to our times and thinks the problem often gets overshadowed by many other pressing issues currently discussed, such as the war in Ukraine and the occupation of Palestine.



(102) There have been international conflicts occurring such as the Syrian civil war, resulting in over 400,000 deaths. The civilians living in occupied territories often have to endure human rights violations and resource scarcity. In addition, children frequently lose access to education and are exposed to constant danger. Deputy President of the Security Council, Gordon Hung, finds this topic interesting because he is passionate about resolving global issues and believes international conflicts are very significant in the contemporary world.

All participants in this year's TAIMUN XXII Security Council anticipate a deep and fruitful discussion of the issues at hand.

GA1-1: DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Article by Savoy Liao



The General Assembly 1-1 (GA1-1) is one of the main committees of the General Assembly, and it works around disarmament, global challenges, threats to peace impacting the international community, and finding solutions within the international security framework. It is structured into three distinctive stages: general debate, thematic discussion, and action on drafts.

This year the committee will focus on issues (201) Addressing and preventing coups occurring in West and Central Africa and (202) Measures to ensure adequate security from cyber terrorism and cyber crimes. This year's Head Chair of GA1-1 is Kyra Dean from Hsinchu International School, and the Deputy Chair is Yebin Kim from Hsinchu International School.

(201) Since its establishment in 2000, the African Union has made considerable progress in promoting democracy through legal frameworks such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. However, coups in Africa stem from complex factors such as governance issues, ethnic tensions, and economic problems, leading to instability. To prevent a coup, it is crucial to address underlying political and social issues while strengthening institutions and addressing economic challenges such as inequality. Delegates must consider fundamental solutions to build a resilient society and maintain stability in the region.

(202) With the rise of AI (Artificial Intelligence) the general issue continually debated is the challenges of preserving individual freedoms amidst advancements in artificial intelligence. Some main contentions are whether it is reasonable to sacrifice privacy rights for counterterrorism efforts, whether privacy can coexist with the surveillance capabilities of intelligence agencies, and whether individuals should control the use of their personal data. Cooperation between various sectors is critical to address these concerns through discussion, legislation, and technological development, emphasizing the need for ongoing dialogue and deliberation.



GAI-2: DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Article by Keira Brown



(201) The prevention of coups occurring in West and Central Africa is to be addressed for the sake of the overwhelming dissatisfaction with western and central African nations and governments. This issue helps draw attention to the need for delegates to target sanctions and policy interventions.

(202) In addressing Issue 202, concerning measures to ensure effective security from digital crimes and attacks, it is crucial to acknowledge the increasing threat posed by dangers within cyberspace. As nations continue to rely on digital infrastructure, the risk of cyber attacks targeting information grows alongside it. It is important that delegates prioritize cooperative efforts among each other to establish frameworks for cyber security, including information sharing, capacity building, and the development of international norms and regulations.

The chairs and delegates of GAI-2: DISEC are all anticipating an eventful and memorable conference at TAIMUN XXII.

Head Chair Anderson Chung and Deputy Chair Edmund Tsai are beyond honored to be your chairs for General Assembly 1 in this TAIMUN conference. Also known as GAI or the Legal committee, this committee aims to promote the improvement of public international law. This year, for TAIMUN 2024, the topics of the committee are (201) Addressing and Preventing Coups Occuring in West and Central Africa and (202) Measures to Ensure Adequate Security from Cyber Terrorism and Cyber Crimes.



GA3

Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural

Article by Savoy Liao



The General Assembly 3 (GA3) is one of the main committees of the General Assembly. It works around examining human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. The overall themes that the GA3 discusses are human rights and social issues relating to the “advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination” (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee)).

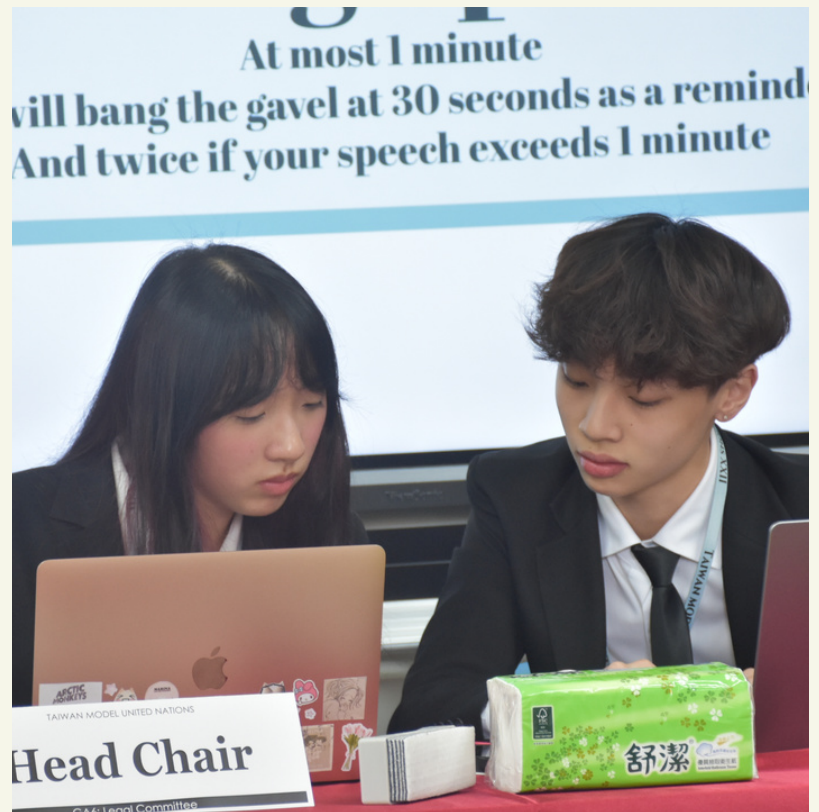
This year, the committee will focus on issues (301) The protection and integration of migrants into a foreign nation and (302) Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. This year’s Head Chair of the GA3 Committee is Morris Chang from KCIS, and the Deputy Chair is Priscilla Chui from TAS.

(301) Immigration has a strong influence on a country’s economy and on its people. However, another important issue is that immigrants often encounter difficulties in their new environments. Some critical issues are poverty, violence, and assault from native citizens, preventing them from thriving. Research has also shown that a large number of immigrants report facing prejudice and discrimination.

(302) Last year, with the departure of the United States from Afghanistan, the Islamic nationalist military and governance group, the Taliban, took over control of Afghanistan, creating many problems for the citizens living in the country. The Taliban’s inexperienced governing resulted in a devastating humanitarian crisis, economic collapse, and food insecurity. Many Afghan citizens are struggling to meet their basic needs.



At the heart of the United Nations' commitment to justice and the rule of law lies the General Assembly 6: Legal (GA6), a crucial organ tasked with addressing legal dimensions critical to global progress. GA6 serves as the primary forum for deliberation and action on a wide array of legal issues, including international law, human rights, humanitarian law, and legal cooperation among nations. Structuring its work around annual themes, GA6 fosters focused discussions and encourages coordinated action across the UN system to address systemic legal challenges and promote legal reforms. Through its deliberative processes, thematic focus, and collaborative efforts, GA6 plays a pivotal role in promoting justice, upholding the rule of law, and advancing human rights on a global scale.



In this year's TAIMUN XXII, the GA6: Legal committee will be debating on Developing Legal Measures to Combat Discrimination Against Indigenous Groups (401) and The Question of Piracy and Maritime Security in International Waters (402). This year's GA6: Legal committee Head Chair is Celine Shih (AST), and the Deputy Chair is Rhys Cheng (TYAS).

(401) Discrimination against indigenous groups represents a deep-rooted issue that extends across continents and cultures, threatening the very fabric of their existence. Despite international declarations and conventions aimed at safeguarding their rights, indigenous communities face systemic discrimination that undermines their fundamental rights, dignity, and well-being. From forced displacement and land grabs to cultural appropriation and lack of access to essential services, indigenous peoples confront multifaceted forms of discrimination that impede their socio-economic development and perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization. The Deputy Chair, Rhys Cheng, chose this issue because he has previous knowledge regarding the topic and is eager to delve deeper into it.

(402) Piracy and maritime security in international waters presents a multifaceted problem that undermines global trade, jeopardizes maritime transportation, and threatens the safety of seafarers. Despite international efforts to combat piracy, maritime criminal activities persist in various regions, including the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Guinea, and the South China Sea. Armed pirate attacks, hijackings, and maritime kidnappings not only endanger the lives of crew members but also result in significant economic losses due to ransom payments, cargo theft, and increased insurance premiums. Head Chair Celine Shih decided on this issue because she was interested in understanding the involvement of different countries in the issue of international maritime piracy. Delegate Anderson Gao takes the side against piracy because, according to him, it's ethically compromised.

Overall, both the Delegates and Chairs of GA6: Legal are excited for a fruitful debate and are ready to get to work over the course of this conference.

ECOSOC 1

ARTICLE BY BRENT HUNG

The Economic and Social Council 1 (ECOSOC 1) is at the heart of the United Nations system to advance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. To ensure focused attention throughout the UN system, ECOSOC structures its work around an annual theme of global importance to sustainable development each year and encourages agreement on coherent policies and actions that make fundamental links across all three (“About Us | UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC and SOCIAL COUNCIL”).

In this year's TAIMUN XXII, the ECOSOC 1 committee will be debating on “Combating the Issue of High Unemployment Rates in Developing Nations” (501) and “Measures to Ensure the Global Transition Towards Renewable Energy” (502). The President of this year's ECOSOC committee is Joshua Roh (TES), and the Vice President is Leona Hsu (TAS).



(501) High unemployment rates present formidable challenges to economic progress and social cohesion in developing nations. The inability to secure stable employment perpetuates poverty, exacerbates inequality, and undermines the overall well-being of communities. Without meaningful interventions to address the root causes of unemployment, such as limited access to education, inadequate infrastructure, and barriers to entrepreneurship, the cycle of economic hardship will persist, hindering the prospects for sustainable development. President Joshua Roh chose this issue because it helped diversify his perspective on a global scale, and also helped him to understand the current challenges that developing nations face.

(502) The urgent need for renewable energy arises from interconnected global challenges, including climate change, energy insecurity, environmental degradation, and public health risks associated with fossil fuel use. These problems stem from the continued reliance on finite and polluting energy sources, exacerbating threats to human well-being, ecosystems, and economic stability. Deputy President Leona Hsu looks forward to delegates working together to create a meaningful resolution. Delegate Christopher Shih is taking the side of helping lower economic countries transition because he represents a lower economically developed country.

Over the course of the conference, delegates will negotiate, lobby, and debate in order to gain more insight and provide innovative resolutions to the aforementioned issues.

ECOSOC 2

ARTICLE BY KEIRA BROWN

President Joseph Lin and Deputy President Allyn Wang are beyond honored to be your chairs for this year's Economic and Social Council 2 for TAIMUN XXII. Also known as ECOSOC 2, this committee aims to promote the improvement of public international law. This year, for TAIMUN 2024, the topics of the committee are (501) Combating the issue of high unemployment rates in developing nations and (502) Measures to ensure the global transition towards renewable energy.



(501) Combating the challenge of high unemployment rates in developing nations is a crucial issue to the Economic and Social Council. Unemployment not only prevents economic growth but also creates significant social and political challenges for nations striving for sustainable development. Delegates must prioritize the implementation of targeted policies aimed at creating job opportunities, particularly for disempowered groups such as youth and women.

(502) Concerning measures to ensure the global transition towards renewable energy is a pressing matter for the Economic and Social Council. Embracing renewable energy sources is critical in taking on climate change and achieving sustainable development goals. Delegates are urged to make collaborative efforts with each other to encourage and take action regarding the adoption of renewable energy technologies and policies, including regulatory frameworks.



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL I



The Human Rights Council 1 (HRC 1), one of the indispensable committees of the United Nations, is responsible for protecting and strengthening human rights around the world and addressing human rights violations to advise on possible solutions. Its ability to manage vandalized human rights gives it a special place in the UN, helping those who are incapable of advocating for themselves. This year, the Human Rights Council 1 will be focusing on the issues of Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Children in Southeast Asia (601) and Measures to prevent Human Trafficking in developing nations (602). This year's HRC 1 President is Benjamin Wu (HCAS), and the Deputy President is Liyeh Kang (DIS).

(601) The protection and promotion of children's rights in Southeast Asia is one of the issues in HRC 1 this year. Children in Southeast Asia are being exploited for the benefit of illegal companies and inhumane organizations. Sex trafficking, child marriage, and sexual abuse are happening all around Southeast Asia to innocent children. VJ, a delegate representing Japan from KCIS, states that "children's rights should be protected" and should not be violated at all cost. Deputy President Liyeh Kang from DIS, says "when I went to rural areas in other countries, I saw little kids doing jobs that I believe are supposed to be done by adults." She believes it is unfair and explains the reason why she chose this issue is the injustice she witnessed in many countries where children are powerless to change their fate and forced into unjust labor. Liyeh hopes to use her advantage and privilege to assist those incapable of advocating for themselves.

(602) Back in the 19th century, there was slavery; now, we have human trafficking. Every year, thousands of people are victims of human trafficking, both in their home country and abroad. According to the International Labor Organization, there are currently 30 to 40 million victims controlled by human traffickers through threats, fraud, or acts of violence. Ian, a delegate representing the United States of America from PAS, explains that "the US is one of the most developed countries in the world, but it still faces the issue of human trafficking everyday." Representing the US, Ian hopes to provide useful information and perspective during the discussion in order to come up with a possible solution.

All delegates in this year's TAI MUN XXII Human Rights Council 1 wish to resolve all issues through an eventful and constructive discussion.

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL 2



The Human Rights Council 2 (HRC 2), one of the indispensable committees of the United Nations, is responsible for protecting and strengthening human rights around the world and addressing human rights violations to advise on possible solutions. Its ability to manage vandalized human rights gives it a special place in the UN, helping those who are incapable of advocating for themselves.

This year, the Human Rights Council 2 will be focusing on the issues of Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Children in Southeast Asia (601) and Measures to prevent Human Trafficking in developing nations (602). This year's HRC 2 President is Josephine Tang (HIS), and the Deputy President is Austin Yang (IBSH).

(601) Children in Southeast Asia are losing their human rights such as fundamental education and poverty. Sex trafficking, child marriage, and sexual abuse are happening all around Southeast Asia to children. Josephine Tang, a chair of HRC 2 from HIS, says that "it is more relevant to where we are right now as we see all the controversial countries talk about this issue."



She hopes to address issues on children's rights in Southeast Asia because she wants to listen to each country's stance on the issue and wishes to make change in the current situation. Sheryl, a delegate representing Singapore from HIS, states that it is "an interesting debate." She hopes to enhance protection on children's rights in Southeast Asia through a fruitful discussion.

(602) "Working in their graves" is how human trafficking survivors describe their experience. Human trafficking is often unspotted by people because it is dynamic and can happen anywhere at any time. Human trafficking happens in Asia and mostly Africa, mainly because the two regions suffer from poverty, government corruption, lack of control on migration, and a high demand of cheap labor—all factors that lead to this troubling social issue. Myron, a delegate representing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from TAS, says that "human trafficking is bad." He hopes to represent his country to cease this issue. Austin Yang, the Deputy Chair of HRC 2 from IBSH, explains how he "wants [the delegates] to cooperate and come up with a united solution." He wishes to see participants of TAIMUN work together in a collaborative discussion and formulate a solution that can be accepted by all countries. All delegates in this year's TAIMUN XXII Human Rights Council 2 wish to resolve all issues through an eventful debate.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

WHO

Welcome to the World Health Organization. President Jason Yang and Deputy President Zoe Wan are honored to be the head chair and co-chair. Also known as WHO, this committee aims to discuss the issue of artificial intelligence and healthcare. This year for TAIMUN 2024, the Security Council will be focusing on two issues: (702) Measures to address the importance of ASICO and safe use of AI in healthcare and (701) address on Improving Access to Healthcare in Conflict Zones.



(702) Ensuring the ethical use of artificial intelligence in healthcare is an important issue in this modern world. The increase of AI in healthcare holds great potential to change or improve diagnosis and treatment, but it also raises concerns that must be tackled. Through this debate, President Jason Yang believes the debate would center around the idea of integration of AI in healthcare systems, with ideas from data privacy to algorithmic bias.

(701) Improving access to healthcare in conflict zones urgently calls for the need to prioritize healthcare delivery in regions affected by the conflict as we work to verify the fundamental rights to health for all individuals. Zoe Wan hopes for the debate to center around strategies that could better improve healthcare access amidst difficult circumstances and reduce their devastating impact on more vulnerable populations.



The President of the World Health Organization (WHO) encourages all delegates to actively participate, share ideas, and collaborate in crafting meaningful solutions; the Deputy President hopes to make a tangible difference in advancing global health equity.

APQ

Article by Chris Yang



The Advisory Panel Question Committee is a diplomatic conference where representatives from different countries discuss a specific issue from a particular region. This year in TAIMUN, the Advisory Panel Question will be focusing on the DRC, also known as Democratic Republic of Congo. Specifically, the committee tackles the issues of Political Structures (801) and Humanitarian Crisis (802) in the DRC. The President of this year's APQ committee is Kingston Yu (PAS), and the Deputy President is Richards Pretrevics (AST).



(801) The DRC has a history of political instability, corruption, and conflict. The question revolves around establishing an effective and transparent political institution that can make a democratic government, protect human rights, and promote development to the country. Key issues include addressing various armed groups like M23, FDLR, ADF, and CODECO, contributing to human rights abuses (killing, kidnapping, and torturing civilians, sexual violence, force recruitment into rebel groups, and attack on humanitarian workers), and promoting liability for the government. Establishing a solid solution to these issues can help promote peace and stability in the DRC. Deputy President Richards Pretrevics expects everyone to have a fruitful debate where delegates can learn from each other.



(802) The humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a pressing and alarming issue, with ongoing armed group conflicts, displacement of civilians, and widespread poverty. These crises are mainly caused by political instability, ethnic tension, and armed groups. Civilians have a difficult time accessing basic daily needs such as food, water, and healthcare. President Kingston Yu hopes everyone will enjoy the conference and reach a consensus on an effective resolution.

UNDP

Article by Chris Yang



The United Nations Development Programme, also known as the UNDP, is a global organization that focuses on promoting sustainable development and improving the quality of life for people worldwide. It provides technical expertise, funding, and support to countries that face poverty, social crises, and environmental issues. The UNDP works closely with governments and communities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); it is an important committee for a better, brighter future.



This year in TAIMUN, the two issues explored are Measures to promote sustainability in the fashion and textile industry (901) and Measures to prevent exploitation of workers by MNCs in LEDCs (902). The Chair for this conference is Curtis Shih (AST), and the Secretary is Jenny Wu (HCAS). (901) Currently, the fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to rising environmental concerns, emitting a significant amount of greenhouse gasses and generating enormous amounts of waste. Moreover, it often exploits labor in sweatshops with poor working conditions and low wages.

The UNDP focuses its debates on reducing carbon emissions, minimizing water usage, transitioning to eco-friendly materials, and promoting fair labor; its goal is to encourage collaboration between governments, business owners, and consumers. By prioritizing sustainability, Chair Curtis Shih hopes to advance toward a more ethical and environmentally conscious fashion and textile industry, ensuring a greener future for all. (902) The UNDP addresses issues faced by workers in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) caused by the operations of Multinational Corporations (MNCs). These challenges include low wages, poor working conditions, and long working hours. The committee aims to develop a measurement to protect workers' rights and ensure fair wages, good working conditions, and reasonable working time. Secretary Jenny Wu knows that there are a lot of newcomers and aims to provide an engaging space for a meaningful debate.

UN WOMEN

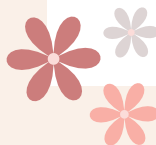
Article by Brenda Hung

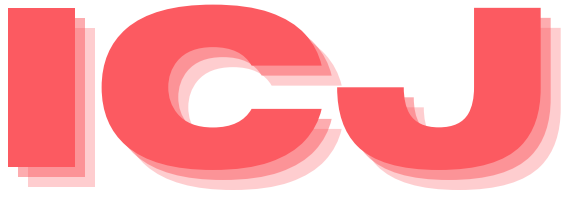
Welcome to the UN Women committee. Head Chair Ashely Wang and Co-Chair Ethan Tse are beyond honored to be your head chair and deputy chair, respectively. This committee aims to promote gender equality and empower women worldwide. This year, for TAIMUN 2024, the topics of the committee are (1001) “Measures to eradicate forced prostitution” and (1002) “The question of sanctioning honor killings”.



(1001) “Measures to eradicate forced prostitution” is a pressing concern for the UN Women committee, as it directly impacts the fundamental rights and dignity of individuals. Delegates are expected to propose comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of forced prostitution, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of education. Collaborative efforts between countries and organizations are crucial to combat this issue effectively. Delegates must also consider the importance of rehabilitation and support services for victims of forced prostitution. The committee aims to draft resolutions that promote gender equality and protect the rights of all individuals, especially vulnerable populations affected by forced prostitution.

(1002) The issue of “sanctioning honor killings” is a deeply complex and sensitive topic that requires careful consideration and discussion. It involves exploring cultural norms and traditions that may conflict with universal human rights principles. Delegates must navigate the delicate balance between respecting cultural diversity and promoting human rights. Finding effective solutions to this issue requires empathy, understanding, and a commitment to ending violence against women and girls. The UN Women committee must work together to develop strategies that protect and empower women while respecting the diverse cultural contexts in which honor killings occur.





The International Court of Justice (ICJ), also known as the World Court, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It aims to settle legal disputes between states and gives advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies. The ICJ's decisions are binding and are based on international law, which states are obligated to follow. The ICJ plays a crucial role in promoting peace and security by providing a forum for peaceful resolution of international disputes.

This year, for TAIMUN 2024, the International Court of Justice will be focusing on the issue (1101) Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda). The President of this year's ICJ committee is Yi-Chia Lee and Co-President Jessie Chiang.



(1101) There is a profound, legal and humanitarian problem surrounding the subject of armed actions on Congolese territory, that demands immediate attention. It draws attention to the devastating impact of armed conflict on women and girls, including widespread sexual violence and displacement. Judges must deal with the underlying issues causing the conflict and try to find a peaceful understanding that protects women's rights and protections. The International Court of Justice must advocate for the implementation of international law and mechanisms to hold perpetrators of violence accountable. It is crucial to prioritize the needs of women and girls in conflict zones and ensure their voices are heard in the peace process.

To conclude, the International Court of Justice seeks to bring justice to the legal and humanitarian issues brought about by armed activities within the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Whilst giving special attention to the protection and rights of women and girls, pushing for the application of international law, and guaranteeing that their opinions are taken into consideration during the peace negotiations.

Article by Brenda Hung

Interview with Keynote Speaker

ARTICLE BY CARILYN CHANG
& DECLAIN CHANG

28 March 2024



LEAH (WEN-LIANG) LIN

Q: What motivated you to establish the Asia Citizen Future Association? What is ACFA's mission?

A: Firstly, ACFA's mission is to connect Taiwan with Southeast Asian countries to defend our civic space together. We noticed the situation in Bangkok and Hong Kong is getting worse, and knowing that Taiwan is top-ranked in terms of encompassing a democratic civic space, we wonder if there is a way to enhance Taiwan's accessibility to other Southeast Asia civil society organizations. In the past eight years, I got to know a lot of young activists from other Asian countries and we discussed how we could all participate in building a safe space that raises awareness of the various social issues and initiatives. We strongly believe Taiwan should play a role as the civic space of Southeast Asia is closing.

Q: Do you believe that Taiwan should change these laws to be more progressive?

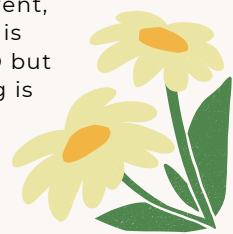
A: Yes, definitely. In the past four years since 2020, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights and the Ministry of the Interior have drafted two versions of the bill to change our Civil Association Act into Social Organization Act. There were no disputes among the different parties, yet they lacked the political will and strive to really push for its acceptance. Although the Democratic Progressive Party has for eight years made up the majority of the Parliament, they still do not pass any law that is related to right to association or right to assembly. It is quite ironic that we do not see the Democratic Party actually making an effort to change the legal environment, protect people's right to protest, and ensure people's right to form an NGO.


Q: Do you think there is a reason why Taiwan is not already internationally recognized as a civil liberties hub? Or is it simply because Taiwan has just never stepped up before?

A: Taiwan's current state is quite unique considering the fact that it is an independent country but is often not recognized by other countries and has no access to the UN. However, in my experience, I think that Taiwan's civil society is somehow not as motivated to connect with other international or foreign organizations. In the work we do, ACFA provides security training for non-profit organizations in Taiwan. Every time we reach out to an NGO in Taiwan, we need to spend a long time explaining why it is important to learn about the social issues in Southeast Asia or what is the significance of connecting with Southeast Asia NGOs. It is rather clear that they do not take much interest in connecting with these foreign groups. This is a phenomenon ACFA has observed and shows the consequences of long-term isolation from the international community.

Q: You mentioned you did comparative studies from Taiwanese laws to other Southeast Asian countries. Is there any country you find that has a lot of resemblance with Taiwan's laws or Taiwan's political situation?


A: In the Southeast Asia region, it's quite interesting because some of their laws are more progressive than Taiwan. However, the problem would be how they really interact in the implementation process—it might be different. In the Philippines and Malaysia, only five to seven people are needed to start a non-profit organization. In contrast, according to our Civil Association Act which was written in 1941, Taiwan requires thirty people to start an NGO. That is a lot of people, and that was what I had to do when I first established ACFA. From these thirty people, they can vote and come up with a board of twelve people; the size of the board is like a national company. In Southeast Asia, there are some countries that have better laws, but the problem is that their government is trying to use other administrative policies to restrict them or even break up some of these NGOs. The situation in Taiwan is different, though—in terms of law, it is difficult to start up an NGO but once registered, everything is relatively free and open.





Q: What are some of the projects or topics you are currently engaged in on behalf of ACFA?

A: ACFA is an organization working to build a platform for civil society groups from Taiwan and Southeast Asia. An ongoing project we have is the annual Summit Conference; during the Summit, we will launch a report on our research results, bringing different stakeholders together in the conference room such as Southeast Asian NGOs, Taiwanese NGOs, INGOs, schools, MOFA (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and governmental bodies every year. One Summit Conference we have revolves around research on rights to association in Southeast Asia. Basically, because during the first year we scrutinized Taiwan's legal system as an attempt to understand why Taiwan is unable to host Southeast Asia and foreign NGOs, we had various key findings and identified problems that should be tackled in Taiwan's system. This year, we are trying to do a comparative study of the law among the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia in terms of rights to association. We will then compare these four cases and release the report in our annual meeting conference. Another project we have is the Youth Project: we aim to establish a platform for young Taiwanese people in Southeast Asia and students in Taiwan to learn how they could start a collaborative campaign. We provide training on specific skills such as how to approach the media press and politicians, analyze the current political situation, and determine when to best take action.



Q: Why is it important to collaborate and work with the younger generation in terms of building civil society?

A: I think the younger generation will definitely have different ideas because they grow up in a different generation than we adults do. You can feel how different generations look at things from different angles, and which generation you belong to can play a very important role in how you approach the issue of today's world because of the closing, shrinking civic space. In this modern world, we've transitioned a lot of our advocacy and campaigns to online platforms, and the younger generations are fully equipped with the ability to initiate digital activism. Something that demands attention, though, is how we could all work as a collective group and form a collective movement. I think this is a problem because the younger generation have a more individualistic way of life, so it is difficult to really work as a collective action. Their skill to form a campaign on a digital space, however, is obviously very amazing so we definitely need to engage more young people to work together.

This year, we are focusing on the Myanmar coup that occurred three years ago on February 1, 2021. There is a self-formed group in Taipei working to support the Myanmar democracy and the revolution there, which I think it's quite amazing and organic. However, this community of activists is relatively old, so our goal is to use our youth workshop to recruit more young people, bringing them as well as the younger generation in Myanmar together in hopes of discovering innovative ways to combat these problems. A third project is security training for NGOs. When these organizations need an international trip, they can come to ACFA and obtain the necessary training. The training sessions enhance the organizational skills on security, risk mitigation, and security planning. Since many Taiwanese NGOs need to go to Southeast Asia for business purposes, they face challenges such as transnational repression where governments target human rights defenders. We want to enhance not only the ability of individual employees but also that of the organization as a whole. We help organizations in Taiwan, specifically human rights and law organizations, to come up with their own international trip protocols.



Q: What are your hopes for the future of Taiwan, and what goals does ACFA have?

A: Taiwan is in fact a country with diverse ethnicities. However, in our educational and law systems, we are still very Han-centered. We have immigrants, migrant workers, and indigenous communities—society is getting more diverse. I hope Taiwan can work toward embracing this diversity so that everyone can collaborate, live, and make decisions together. ACFA plays the role of creating an opportunity for this goal: we provide the link and connection between Taiwan and Southeast Asia. We are trying to bring more Southeast Asian activists and organizations to Taiwan to diversify the island's civil society. Although we already have an anti-death penalty alliance, various LGBT groups, and human rights organizations, they tend to only focus on local issues as they are not really connected with other organizations working on similar topics. We hope that civil society can change mainstream society politics one day.



TAIWAN MODEL UNITED NATIONS

ARTICLES



HANDMADE FOR HELP

ARTICLE BY SAVOY LIAO



Handmade for Help is a middle/high school club of students in the American School in Taichung who are dedicated to making a change by crafting handmade products and selling them to raise funds for several charitable organizations. Our goals are to support local and global charities, to offer a platform for students to gain craftsmanship experiences, and to increase empathy and support for individuals facing difficulties.

In the past year, we have managed to donate a total of 44,600 NTD to charities near and far through bake sales, workshops, and product sales. We split the money up between several charities: we sent 7,000 NTD to help people in Ukraine, 10,000 NTD to Doctors Without Borders, 10,000 NTD to a local dog shelter, 6,600 NTD to an orphanage in Taichung, and 11,000 NTD to support people in Turkey and Syria.

Some of our future projects include bake sales, candle workshops, and beaded accessory sales; we aim to host at least one of these events each month. Our members stay after school and spend hours constructing our projects with heart. When we see people buying our products, we feel grateful about how our commitment is appreciated—this sense of acknowledgement fills us with gratitude and happiness, knowing that our efforts are in fact making a difference in the lives of others.

As a dedicated Handmade for Help member, though not the most experienced or the longest-serving, I am proud to be part of a group that values collaboration and community service. Entering high school has shortened my free time immensely, but being part of this club allows me to unwind while engaging in something meaningful. The Handmade for Help club has shown me a rare opportunity to give back to our community by doing something I genuinely enjoy.



Through Handmade for Help, I am constantly inspired by the passion and generosity of my peers as we continue to learn and grow alongside each other. As a student, I am grateful to have this opportunity at school—to enjoy my hobbies while also contributing to the community. Whether your hobbies are sports, music, art, baking, and more, consider incorporating these passions into making a difference in your community.

There are various ways to do this, such as volunteering, exploring local community centers, and collaborating with non-profit organizations. By taking these initiatives, you will not only enrich your own life but also help those in need along the process. I am excited to see how our efforts will shape the world around us for the better.



History of Sparkling Beverages

ARTICLE BY NORBERT HOU & GILBERT CHANG



From the burning hot summer in May to the day you got rejected by your crush, sparkling beverages have always been there like our best friends to comfort, refresh, and uplift us through life's highs and lows. But beyond mere refreshment, the journey behind a bottle of soda from ancient volcanic springs to modern obsession reveals a story of innovation, cultural significance, and an insatiable craving for that fizzling sparkle. Let's dive into the glamorous history of sparkling beverages.

The history of soda began around two thousand and four hundred years ago in ancient Greece; a man named Hippocrates, a physician, was one of the first to suggest that carbonated water had medicinal properties. Unfortunately, humans had not yet developed the technology to artificially produce soda water at that time, they could only find natural springs near volcanoes to get carbonated water. After nearly two millennia, a Presbyterian minister and scientist called Joseph Priestley led humans into mastering the art of carbonation in 1767 AD. Although Joseph Priestley was not the first scientist to artificially synthesize soda water, with his touch he perfected the carbonation process by significantly increasing the efficiency of soda production. He submitted his work to the Royal Society of London and was then awarded the Copley Medal, the highest honor the society gives, for his work. However, the Royal Society and Priestley were significantly off-base on the actual effects soda water has on people; they believed that carbonated water contains various healing properties and can cure cancer and scurvy (a disease that occurs when you have a severe lack of vitamin C). In fact, consuming carbonated water in the long term could lead to symptoms such as gas bloating, acid refluxes, and dental erosion, all caused by the carbonic acid (H_2CO_3).

A few years later, another man named John Knuth improved Joseph Priestley's invention in several ways. Priestley's approach used a pig bladder to carbonate the water by injecting carbon dioxide into it. The urine residue within the bladder would be mixed with the product carbonated water, making it taste slightly revolting—just like how the remaining enzyme present in an animal stomach accidentally turned milk into curd when people around 8000 BC first stored milk in them.



John Knuth, however, managed to make a design that was even more efficient without using a pig bladder to carbonate water. Knuth got in touch with Priestley and shared his invention. In his letters, Knuth wrote that he managed to remove the taste of urine from the carbonation process, but apparently, Priestley took this modification to his design as an insult and claimed if Knuth had tasted urine, it was likely to be contributed by his servants. John Knuth's design soon became popular in Europe, and even the author of Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle, said the device could be found in Baker Street.

The history of soda presents the drink as something that could benefit health and personal well-being. At first, it was only European scientists who experimented with soda, but over the years entrepreneurs started developing new and interesting soda flavors with fruit extracts and syrups. Throughout history, society slowly became more and more advanced; entering the 20th century, the manufacturing process of soda has become more efficient, leading to greater availability and higher quality of sparkling beverages; the story of how soda came to be is truly extraordinary.

Moreover, in a modern world with increasing attention to health and wellness, the soda industry responded by creating diet- and sugar-free alternatives to combat the drawbacks of artificial sweeteners and processed sugar often included in conventional formulas.

Over years of refinement, soda has continually created more new flavors for consumers to choose from. In recent years, companies have shifted focus to improving the health benefits of soda such as creating low-calorie and natural alternatives to suit the demands of modern consumers. Overall, the history of soda shows a journey of refinement and development. The beverage has also grown more widespread and more accessible to acquire, highlighting the technological advancements, changes in consumer demands, and health awareness.



IS THE ADAPTABILITY OF THIRD CULTURE KIDS AN ASSET OR HINDRANCE?

ARTICLE BY KEIRA BROWN

Although Third Culture Kids (TCKs) all around the world undergo an identity crisis in some form, the adaptability of Third Culture Kids is an asset because it builds a high level of cultural intelligence and an open-minded global perspective.

The lifestyles of TCKs often result in a realization that they have an absence of roots in a specific country or culture, a realization which in turn can have a significant impact on their mental health, and understanding of who they are, where they are from, and where “home” is. According to ISC Research, in a TCK Training’s research, “44% of TCKs experienced emotional abuse.”



On the other hand, it is also important to note that not everyone is suited for that one permanent place that doesn’t face much change. In fact, many people thrive in a diverse and international setting. Places that are more international tend to host more migration and to be more accepting, allowing for and creating a new sense of home for TCKs–this ‘feeling’ being the “Third Culture.”



Furthermore, being a TCK allows one to develop an accepting and understanding global perspective that not many other youth who stay in the same place get to have. This is because the exposure to cultures different from your own allows for you to develop more empathy for others with different beliefs. In a regression analysis taken by Science Direct, “TCKs had higher positive diversity beliefs than non-TCKs, and that this relationship was mediated by the degree to which they had developed specific intercultural competencies.”

However, for those who are not TCKs it is unfair to stereotype or classify them as not empathetic. All people are different and each one has a different level of acceptance of other cultures, so to say that non-TCKs are not as empathetic or don’t have as wide of a global perspective as TCKs is a biased statement.

My argument is simply to stress that TCKs are put in a scenario daily which exposes them to other cultures, allowing them to gain a wide global perspective, it is important to know that this argument is not meant for comparison between non-TCKs and TCKs. To conclude, while TCKs face a struggle of understanding their roots, being a TCK is a privilege when it comes to having an accepting and compassionate outlook on our world’s diversity. TCKs are put into a situation where they should be empathetic to a culture they are living in, to further adapt to their new society.

Article by Emillie Lee

Traditional Chinese New Year Cuisine

長壽麵 Changshou Noodles (Longevity Noodles)

The longevity noodle is a type of noodle that is very long. Even though it is extremely long, you are not allowed to bite or break the noodles. You have to finish the whole serving in one bite because that symbolizes a healthy, happy, and long life. This type of noodle also appears during birthdays and maybe stir-fried using oyster sauce with shiitake mushroom and veggies or in a clear broth with bok choy.



水果 Shuǐguǒ (Fruits)

After eating so much Chinese New Year cuisine, you might need some fruits to freshen up. Some popular Chinese New Year Festival fruits are oranges, apples, pineapples, and persimmon. Oranges in Chinese are called 橘子 (Juzhi), and their pronunciation is similar to 大吉大利 (da zhi da li), which means good luck and fortune in Chinese. As a result, Chinese people think eating oranges during CNY can bring good luck. Apple 蘋果 (Ping Guo) has a similar pronunciation to 平平安安 (ping ping an an), which means safety. By eating apples during CNY, Chinese people believe that you will be able to have a safe and stable year.



餃子 Jiǎozi (Dumplings)

Jiaozi is dumplings with meat fillings wrapped inside wheat flour, rice, or starch dough. It is then cooked in boiling water and dipped in soy sauce or spicy chilly sauce to eat. They sound delicious, but, how is Jiaozi a traditional Chinese New Year Cuisine? Well, there are lots of connections. Jiaozi is often made by lots of family members together before the first day of Chinese New Year, which brings the family together, called 團圓 (reunion). Jiaozi has to be shaped like a gold ingot, which symbolizes wealth and fortune, so if you eat it you will have money in the coming year. Another reason people eat jiaozi during Chinese New Year is that people often add sugar or sweet ingredients to the dumplings, and whoever gets the sweet-flavored dumplings will have a sweet year. Moreover, dumplings are mostly made in large portions at a time, so leftovers will be stored in the freezer and cooked for your relatives who visit you during the festival.



Pineapples 鳳梨 (Fung Li) in Taiwanese is called Ong Lai, and its pronunciation is similar to 旺來 (good luck comes to you)—eating pineapple is believed to bring good luck throughout the rest of the year. Lastly, persimmon 柿子 (shi zhi) has a pronunciation similar to 事事如意 (shi shi ru yi), which means “things will go your way.” Chinese people value these traditional practices like eating Chinese New Year fruit during CNY very much, so you can easily find these fruits at the supermarket or people’s houses during Chinese New Year.

八寶飯 Ba Bao Fan (Eight Treasure Sticky Rice)

The Eight Treasure Sticky Rice is a traditional dessert served during Chinese New Year. It looks very beautiful, decorated with fruits and nuts and glazed with syrup. The eight treasures include lotus seeds, longan, oranges, dates, dried plums, red bean paste, and sometimes cherry and melon. It takes quite a while to

make this dish because the chef starts by layering fruits and nuts at the bottom of a bowl, adding a layer of sweetened glutinous rice, and then repeating this process until the bowl is filled. Then, the chef puts the bowl into the steamer until fully cooked and places it upside down on a plate, which will look like splashes of colorful delights. The lotus seeds imply a happy marriage, the longan reunion, the oranges good luck, the dates pregnancy, the sweet cherry and melon a good relationship with the ones you love, and the barley rice a long life and elegance.



湯圓 Tāngyuán (Dessert)



Tang Yuan is a kind of traditional Chinese dessert. It is made from glutinous rice pastries wrapped into a ball or around red beans, sesame, and peanut fillings. They are to be eaten with sweet, warm soup. Tang Yuan symbolizes good luck and attracts good people towards you. Hence, during Chinese New Year and Dong Zhi (the official day winter starts), Chinese people will eat Tang Yuan for good luck. Also, Tang Yuan has a similar pronunciation to Tuan Yuan, which means reunion in Chinese. To this end, Tang Yuan is a popular dessert during Chinese New Year.

DARK MATTER AND DARK ENERGY:

THE ENIGMA OF PHYSICS

DISCOVERY OF DARK MATTER

The story of dark matter begins with the observation of galaxies. Astrophysicists noticed that visible matter, consisting of the atoms that make up stars, planets, and every single visible object in the universe, could not account for the gravitational forces holding our galaxies together. Swiss astronomer Fritz Zwicky was the first person to propose the existence of dark matter in 1933 when he calculated that the mass required to explain the observed gravitational effects was much larger than the visible mass. Further evidence was discovered fifty years later in the 1970s and 1980s as astronomers and physicists studied the rotational curves of galaxies. The speed at which galaxies rotate suggests the presence of invisible mass; this reinforces the idea that dark matter exists and makes up a significant portion of the entire universe. For example, in the Bullet Cluster, one of the hottest clusters of galaxies that we know of, the celestials collide with each other very frequently. The separation of dark matter and visible matter caused by the collision provides compelling evidence for the former's existence.

Understanding Dark Matter

Dark matter makes up around 27% of the entire universe. As the name implies, it does not emit, absorb, or reflect light, which makes it nearly impossible to detect directly. However, its gravitational influence on visible matter allows astronomers and physicists to indirectly study it. One theory called the Weakly Interacting Massive Particles theory (WIMPs), suggests that dark matter consists of particles we have not yet discovered, and to detect these particles is still a challenge with today's technology. Still, scientists around the world are actively in search of them.

Significance of Dark Matter

Although dark matter can neither be seen nor directly detected, its influence is essential to our understanding of the universe, affecting the overall structure and even the fate of the entire universe. This is because the presence of dark matter refutes many of the laws of physics. One big issue is our understanding of gravity. Our current understanding is primarily based on Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity; it describes gravity as the curvature of spacetime caused by mass and energy. However, the presence of dark matter implies that there is more mass in the universe than what we originally observed with the telescopes. This challenges our understanding of gravity because the observed gravitational effects are much stronger than what we would expect based on only visible matter. Dark matter's significance is in its gravitational pull, shaping the large-scale structure of the universe, such as galaxies, clusters, and black holes. In other words, it provides the gravitational framework for everything in the universe. Without dark matter, the universe would lack the structure we can observe today. In the modern world, understanding dark matter is a crucial component of comprehending the universe at a fundamental level.



Discovery of Dark Energy

In 1998, astronomers and physicists made another astonishing discovery: the accelerated expansion of the universe. Their observation led to the proposal of dark energy, an unknown force driving the universe's acceleration to expand. In 2011, physicists Saul Perlmutter, Brian P. Schmidt, and Adam G. Riess confirmed the existence of dark energy through observation of distant supernovae and were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics.

Understanding Dark Energy

To this day, dark energy is still one of the most challenging topics in astrophysics as it makes up 68% of the entire universe while being invisible. Unlike dark matter, which attracts matter through gravity, dark energy acts as a repulsive force, causing the acceleration of the universe. Although the nature behind dark energy remains unknown today, its discovery has opened many new research topics to understand the fundamental forces that rule our universe.

Significance of Dark Energy

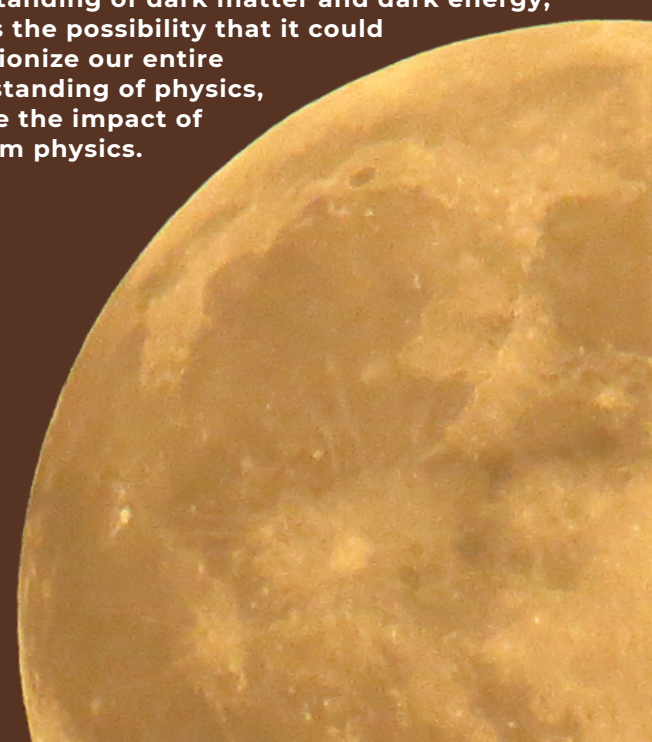
Dark energy's influences are essential to the universe: it is responsible for the accelerated expansion of the universe, counteracting the gravitational pull that pulls everything together by pushing it further and further away. As the universe continues to expand, the total density decreases. Together, it is estimated that dark energy and dark matter make up about 95% of the mass energy content of the universe. Compared to dark matter, however, dark energy is still not very well understood.

Dark Matter and Dark Energy Today

Compared to quantum physics, dark matter and dark energy are quite an enigma. Today, we have various experiments and observations to continue understanding the science behind it. Particle accelerators, underground detectors, and advanced telescopes are all modern tools to assist physicists in the study of these mysterious matters. The Large Hadron Collider at CERN and the Hubble Space Telescope both contribute valuable data to let us understand the mystery behind dark matter and dark energy.

Conclusion

While dark matter and dark energy continue to baffle astronomers and physicists, decades of research and observation have enhanced our understanding of the universe. As we deepen our understanding of dark matter and dark energy, there is the possibility that it could revolutionize our entire understanding of physics, just like the impact of quantum physics.



Making

The NBA

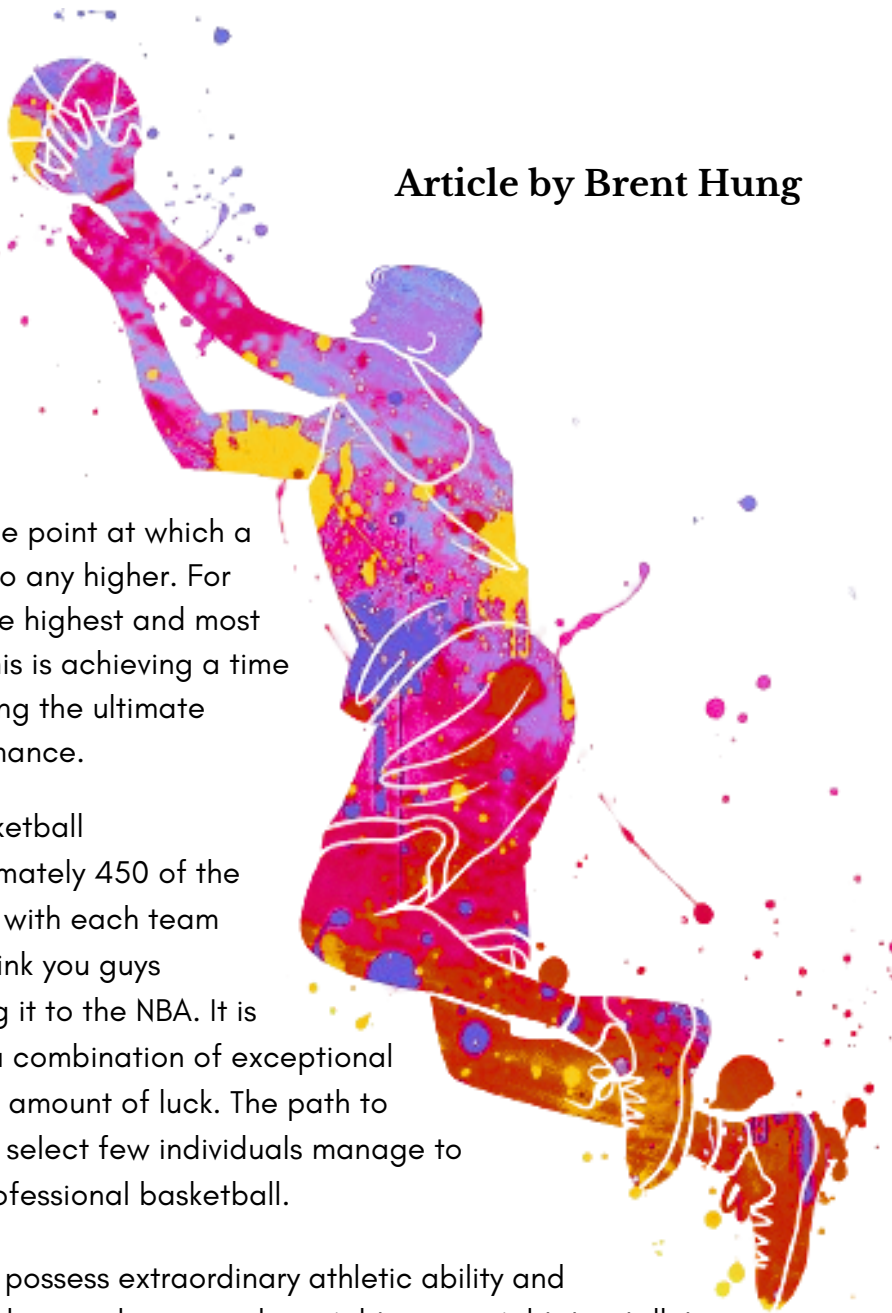
Article by Brent Hung

In every sport, there is a pinnacle—a peak. The point at which a player has risen to the very top and cannot go any higher. For Global Motorsports, this peak is Formula 1, the highest and most prestigious Motorsports league. In Running this is achieving a time of under two hours in a marathon, representing the ultimate benchmark of human endurance and performance.

But in basketball? It is the NBA (National Basketball Association), a league consisting of approximately 450 of the best players in the world. Split into 30 teams with each team consisting of around 15 players. But I don't think you guys understand the overwhelming odds of making it to the NBA. It is an incredibly challenging feat that requires a combination of exceptional talent, relentless dedication, and often a fair amount of luck. The path to the NBA is fraught with obstacles, and only a select few individuals manage to navigate their way to the highest level of professional basketball.

First and foremost, aspiring NBA players must possess extraordinary athletic ability and basketball skills; this ability excludes certain players who are underweight, overweight, too tall, too short, disabled, too weak, or too slow, adding a natural barrier to players who can even qualify to be "NBA Material". This includes elite-level athleticism such as speed, agility, strength, and vertical leap, as well. Once this criteria is met, you will have reached the hardest part. Apart from natural gifts there are refined skills such as shooting, ball handling, passing, and defensive prowess. Moreover, players need to possess a high basketball IQ, understanding the nuances of the game, strategic play, and how to excel within a team framework.

However, talent alone is not enough to guarantee a spot in the NBA. Players must also navigate a highly competitive landscape, beginning with youth and high school basketball, progressing through college or international leagues; there are around 500,000 players in the US alone that play competitive basketball for their respective high school teams. Around 18,000 of them end up playing at the college level, and of these players, only around 1% of them make it to the NBA, leaving roughly a 0.03% chance of making it to the NBA starting in High School (excluding any country other than the US).





Unfortunately, if you are not playing in the US, your chances of playing fall even lower. Most countries don't even produce NBA level talent and those that make up a fraction of the NBA. To simplify this article, let's assume we are in the US. The road to the NBA typically begins at the grassroots level, where young athletes showcase their skills in local leagues, AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) tournaments, and high school competitions. From there, standout players may receive scholarship offers to play college basketball at NCAA Division I programs or choose to pursue alternative routes such as playing professionally overseas or in minor leagues like the NBA G League. Even for those who excel at the collegiate level or in international competition, the transition to the NBA is far from guaranteed.

The NBA Draft serves as the primary entry point for new talent, but only a fraction of draft-eligible players are selected each year, with many talented individuals going undrafted. For undrafted players, the path to the NBA often involves proving themselves in other professional leagues, participating in NBA Summer League or training camps, and securing a spot on an NBA roster through hard work and perseverance. And even once you make it, you will be competing against 450 of the best players in the world to become the greatest in the world. Which in all honesty, is the hardest part of all.

So next time you see an NBA player, no matter their status, just know they have already beaten every odd in the book by making it to the NBA.

WHISPERS OF PLAYTIME

THE LOST CHILDREN

ARTICLE BY BRENDA HUNG

Welcome to the haunting world of Poppy Playtime, a horror based survival game created by American independent developer Mob Entertainment. In this game, you step into the shoes of a former worker for Playtime Co., a once-thriving toy company now shrouded in darkness and mystery. The former employee returns to the factory ten years later, to learn the truth behind the great disappearance of the playtime employees. In the dark, abandoned halls of the Playtime Company, where toys once brought joy to children's faces, a sinister tale unfolds. The factory, once bustling with life, now lies in decay, its corridors haunted by the echoes of past horrors. The player's objective is simple yet terrifying: solve puzzles to navigate the twisted remains of Playtime Co. and uncover the truth behind its dark past. As they explore, the player discovers VHS tapes left behind, each revealing a piece of the macabre puzzle, as they step one step closer to the truth. If you're looking for an immersive yet spine-chilling experience, join me on an adventure that will keep you on the edge of your seat as I delve into my favorite game, "Poppy Playtime."

In the 1930s, genius inventor Elliot Ludwig founded the Playtime Company with a dream to entertain children across the globe with their toys. After years of toy making, the toy company became a global phenomenon with famous toys such as Huggy Wuggy and Mommy Long Legs. But behind this facade were secrets hidden in plain sight. As the Playtime Company grew, they created their own "Playcare," an on-site orphanage hidden deep below the factory. To the world's later dismay, this Playcare was just a front for the many horrific experiments conducted by head scientist Doctor Sawyer along with the Playtime Company.



As the player progresses deeper into the factory, they come across the former entrance into the Playcare, an enormous Sky Dome situated under the factory. Upon entering, an eerie voice echoes over the aged speaker; a welcome message from Playtime Co-founder and master inventor Elliot Ludwig himself, as he recalls his grand ambitions for this place: "These children deserve to smile, they deserve to love, and they deserve a safe home. That is why it is with enormous pleasure that, as the founder of Playtime Co., I announce Playcare, our very own onsite orphanage."

The Playcare was the heart of the nefarious plan, the heart of the “Bigger Bodies Initiative,” live experiments on children conducted by the company. Once the pride and joy of Elliott Ludwig, the Playcare became a selection process for the unfortunate. Playtime began using children from the “Playcare” as test subjects for their toys under the guise of developing a cure to a supposed sickness. This so-called treatment created giant versions of the company's most infamous toys like Huggy Wuggy, Kissy Missy, and the smiling critters. These giant toys acted as a cheap workforce for the company, slaving away. But all of that came to an end on a fateful day called “the hour of joy.”

On August 8th, 1995, during the “Hour of Joy,” living toys at Playtime Co. simultaneously rebelled, slaughtering all the on-site staff. This went on for months as bodies piled on bodies, and workers littered the floors. From VHS tapes, we are told that “guilty or innocent, it didn’t matter because no one was spared.” Which explains why the factory had been abandoned for all this time. But one of the biggest questions which remains is “What after”?

Years after the collapse of the once glorious Playcare, the giant toys roam the abandoned corridors, transforming them into the home of Catnap, one of the smiling Critters, a line of toys turned giant. In the beginning, the Smiling Critters were global sensations. However, news reports spoke of how one toy in particular, Catnap, left children with horrific nightmares and was swiftly pulled from production. The Catnap plush had accidentally gone into mass production with a red smoke-scented spray. Little did many know, the red smoke was a sleeping gas used on the orphans within the play care facility and expelled by the living version of Catnap who resided there.



As former workers of the corporation, it is our job to seek out exactly what happened to the kids living below and the now-smiling critters. As we learn bit-by-bit the real reason behind our callback to this factory years later...

In conclusion, Poppy Playtime is a chilling exploration of the horrors lurking within the walls of Playtime Co. The game's intricate lore, spanning chapters 1-3, reveals a dark and twisted history of the once-thriving toy company. From the founding dreams of Elliot Ludwig to the nightmarish experiments of the Bigger Bodies Initiative, the story delves into themes of innocence lost, betrayal, and the consequences of unchecked ambition. Through its gameplay and storytelling, Poppy Playtime leaves players with a sense of unease, reminding them that some secrets are best left behind.





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