



Reader's Reflection: Ritu Hemnani's Goal as an Author

Breanna Bautista, Sophomore

On November 6, HKAA students gathered in the gym to listen to their peers recite their poems and to meet this year's guest author: Ritu Hemnani, an Indian award-winning children's author and educator. She is best known for her works *Gope & Meera* and *Lion of the Sky*. The books she writes are a direct reflection of what she desires readers to feel when they read any book: she wants them to feel like they are seen.

Throughout the Authors Fair, students had the opportunity to learn how to write compelling stories and poems. Ms Hemnani led two workshops that day: a lesson on Novel Verse with high school students, where she demonstrated how poetic devices can convey a powerful message, followed by an interactive storytelling workshop with the fifth and sixth graders, where the students enacted scenes from her book *Gope & Meera*. Additionally, she served as the judge of the Poetry Slam and provided helpful feedback to the students who presented.

Ritu Hemnani's main goal as an author is to tell the story of the young readers who may

face similar experiences to her own childhood and life. Growing up, she didn't see much representation of immigrant children in books and therefore wasn't very keen

on reading. In the stories she writes, she says:

"I want children who grew up like I did to feel seen and believe that their life also belongs on pages."

She intends to give a voice to those who have endured hardships, such as those who went through the largest mass deportation in the world—the Partition of India—which is depicted in her Novel-Verse book, *Lion of the Sky*.

Ritu Hemnani's inspiring stories and her relatable upbringing made her an enjoyable visitor for our students. They were welcomed to share their insights and literary works, and Hemnani met them with advice and encouragement. Ritu Hemnani's visit was a delightful addition to this year's Authors Fair.



Ritu Hemnani with Poetry Slam winner, Sekela Mwamakamba, and Mr Smith

HKAA Hosts Annual Authors Fair

Renae Yung, Junior

During the Authors Fair, high school students had the chance to watch "A Midsummer Night's Dream" performed by Dovetales Theater! It was an interactive play and exciting to watch. They even had Mr. Miguel as their volunteer teacher to play a part in the play!

Other than the play, we also had many events and activities taking place. Some of which included the Chinese program, where Kelly Ho and Amy Peng helped the teachers conduct a fun

game for the elementary students, "Catch the Mosquitoes"! All the students seemed very happy and participated together!

Middle school students had the opportunity to present their favorite authors to elementary students. There were many authors, including Gareth Hinds and Mary Pope. They also included fun interactive games to help them learn more about the writer, like drawing, reading, and even crafting!

In the Poetry reading, grade 5 students recited poems that were given out to them. With the help of Ms. Nicole, they learned many techniques to improve their presentation skills.

At the church, elementary students were practicing for their upcoming speech festival competition. Many of the students were very nervous, yet they still tried their best to ace their performance. We had both student judges and teachers to give them feedback for their performance!

After the performance, students participated in a Poetry Slam, a competition in which they had to recite their very own poems. We had an author, Ritu Hemnani, to help them judge their performance and give them feedback. Afterwards, we had two different workshops: creative writing and poetry. We had a poetry workshop led by Ritu



Teachers participating in the interactive play

Hemnani, and students were able to learn about her new book, *Lion of the Sky*. We got to have a sneak peek at her poems. She taught the students how to analyze the poems and also try to write our own!

Our annual Authors Fair was quite successful, all the students had their own opportunity to enhance their writing skills or speech performance.



Sofia Perevezina and Kyle Kim with Puck in a Midsummer Night's Dream



The Words We Stay Alive For *Editorial*

Brogan Archer, Senior

“We don’t read and write poetry because it’s cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for.” -N.H. Kleinbaum, Dead Poets Society

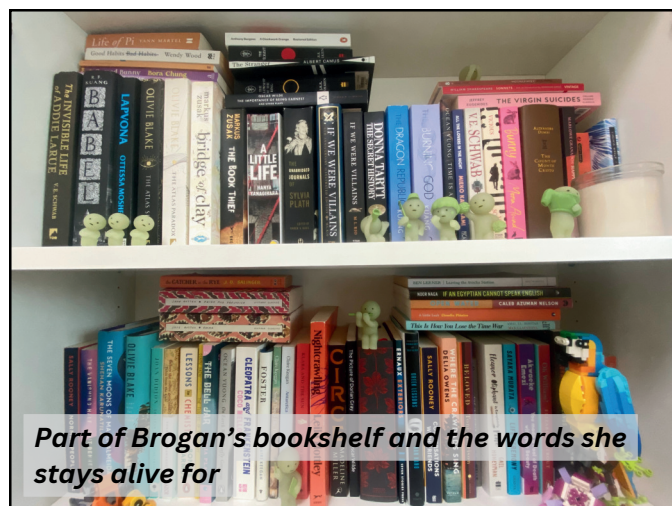
Have you ever read a book and felt deeply understood, as if the author had written a secret part of your soul onto the page? Or written a poem that finally captured a tangled feeling you couldn’t otherwise express? We spend our school days learning how to use calculators for equations and microscopes for science, but it is language that equips us with an unparalleled power.

This year’s Authors Fair reminded us of this power. Underneath the plays, Poetry Slams, and presentations, you’ll find a blueprint for how language amplifies our inner voice, validates our identity, and bridges us with the wider world.

Writing is the ultimate megaphone, giving flesh and structure to our innermost thoughts; it provides an outlet for self-expression, allowing us to curate a unique voice. For instance, the Poetry Slam wasn’t just a competition; it was a direct embodiment of how different techniques and styles can give an outlet to our private thoughts and feelings.

But, before we can speak, we must first feel we have the right to. When we see our own value reflected in the stories around us, we feel a sense of belonging – our identity validated. Ritu Hemnani’s mission perfectly encapsulates this, as her work provides much-needed

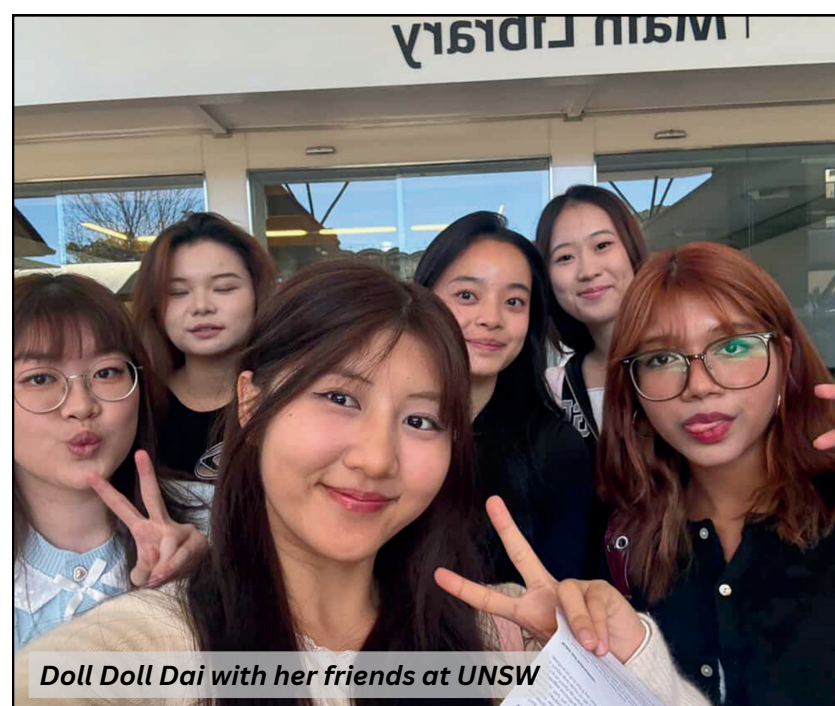
representation to immigrant children and those who may feel invisible. If you never see your life portrayed in a book, you receive the silent message that your story doesn’t matter. However, humans naturally have a fundamental need to be seen, and literature serves as one of the core ways people can find connection. With our voice found and our identity recognized, language



then evolves into its paramount form as a bridge that cultivates empathy and awareness. When you read a story, you are able to step into others’ shoes, experiencing different lives and emotions. This exposure to complexity and diverse perspectives helps develop our understanding and overall emotional intelligence.

Taking away this critical lesson from the Authors Fair, we should continue to use language as the powerful tool it is –magnifying voices, affirming identities, and connecting people.

From Senior Editor to College Freshman: A Look into Doll Doll’s New Chapter



Doll Doll Dai with her friends at UNSW

Paula Lau, Freshman

The Former Editor-in-Chief of HKAA’s Newsletter and current freshman at the University of New South Wales introduced us to her new life and how she manages freshman expectations and the shift from Hong Kong to Sydney, as well as more interesting aspects. As a student in

college, she currently majors in Commerce and is working towards her goals related to her major. She also maintains some previous hobbies that she has carried with her from her life in Hong Kong to her life now, in Sydney.

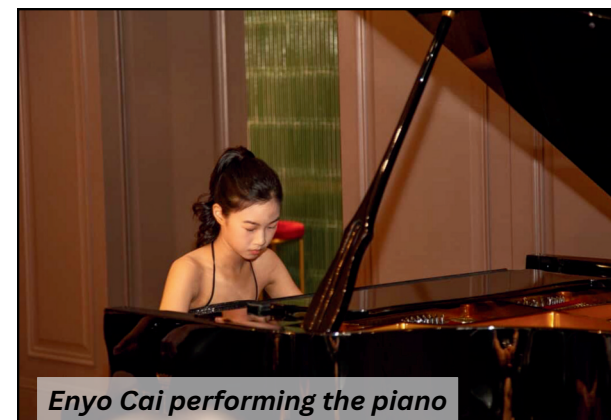
Now that she has survived all of this, she is finding her way in her freshman year and is learning all the aspects of commerce. As for her plans for her years at UNSW, she plans to run for marketing director of her society there, as she feels drawn to marketing. In recent times, she has found herself working on numerous dance projects, and for those who know her, this may not come as a surprise. In terms of her major, she and her team are currently working on building a prototype that is designed to improve the quality of education. They have recently finished presenting the final prototype. When talking about her transition from high school to college, she finds her transition to be quite smooth and is discovering a lot of things to make sense, thanks to what she has previously learned in high school.

Student Talent Feature: Enyo Cai

Vani Yim, Freshman

HKAA is home to many talented students. In the music field of our school, bright, young musicians can be found in the hallways and classrooms. Among them is Enyo Cai, a newcomer, a grade 9 student. She is an award-winning pianist recognized for her talent at a young age.

Enyo grew up in Los Angeles, California, and her remarkable journey began at the age of four. She has practiced an unbelievable number of hours, and the time she has spent practicing for her passion has shaped her into the accomplished pianist she is today. Her commitment to piano and natural talent allowed her to achieve all those impressive accomplishments.



Enyo Cai performing the piano

Enyo has won a plethora of awards. For the World Classical Music Awards, she has won platinum prizes for A4 - Age 12-13, C3 - Romantic, and a gold prize for C4 - Modern. She has also won second place in piano at the American Protege International Music Talent Competition Fall 2022. She is a first prize winner of the Grand Prize Virtuoso Competition and the “Golden Classical Music Awards” International Competition. She has won countless awards, and those mentioned were just a part of her outstanding performance in competitions against other great pianists.

Besides competitions, she also has performances on the piano. Last August, Enyo performed in Zhongshan, China, for the Special Olympics. She performed highly difficult pieces such as Beethoven, Liszt, Prokofiev, and Rachmaninoff for an hour on that day. But instead of taking the money for her performance, she and her mother have donated that money to the International Special Olympics, impacting society for the greater good of those who need special help.

Enyo Cai has great accomplishments at a young age through diligence, practice, and talent. HKAA is proud to have such a gifted young musician in our community.



How To Maximize Your Study Halls

Jessie Lo, Sophomore

What do you usually do in your study halls? Do you use this time to catch up with some homework? Or catch up on some sleep? In some teachers' classrooms, the lights are dim and the air conditioner is just at the right temperature, and with a jacket, it is just the right place and time to take a nice, little nap.

A study hall is a time when students can take a break from learning and catch up on their work. It is free time for students. Ms Shashi says that if students have a free period or study hall, they can go to the library or a teacher's classroom, but only if the teacher agrees.

With this mention, here are some of the best study areas on campus: the Library, teachers' classrooms (but only with their permission), and the school lounge. Other areas on campus are perfect for study halls; simply choose the one that suits you best. A quiet place would be in the library. It depends on your preferred way of studying.



If students don't want to do homework, they can use the time for a hands-on activity. Students can assist a teacher, such as helping them clean up their classroom or grade assignments, etc. This not only gives the teacher a better impression of you but also allows you to earn community service hours. For example, for the Speech Festival, students are able to use their study halls to help the little elementary students with reciting their poems while also earning community service hours. A student needs at least 20 hours of community service, so you can always use study halls to help teachers or tutor some elementary students.

Many students can catch up with their homework or studies with a study hall, so you should do it too! Put your "catch-up" halls to good use!

SA Holds Volleyball Tournament Event

Samson Chan, Senior

On 16th November, the Student Association hosted our school's first friendly volleyball tournament on the school campus. Students were asked to form teams of six to compete in a tournament bracket. The three teams that played were Enoch, Sugarcane, and Supergirls. The final game for the victory was Team Enoch versus Sugarcane.

The tournament ended with Team Sugarcane being victorious and Team Enoch placing second. Curious about some first-hand challenges faced and memorable experiences gained, we interviewed Kyle Kim, a player from Team Enoch that came second, about how he felt and what it was like to play. He recalled the challenges he faced, overcome with exhaustion



and an injured leg, but persisted and kept playing, not wanting to disappoint his team. Although their team didn't win, he looks back on the memorable experience of the whole team cheering loudly to boost their spirit and morale in the final moments of the game: an unforgettable experience, spending time with his friends.

In the end, the volleyball tournament was both a blast for the players and the spectators, who enjoyed their time, gave it their best effort, and cheered each other on.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

Samson Chan, Senior

Seasonal influenza is a predicted time of the year when the flu is more prevalent and easily transmitted from person to person. Typically, from January to April and from July to August, the seasonal influenza comes and goes, carrying a range of symptoms, including high temperature, chills, cough, sore throat, headaches, and runny or stuffy nose in Hong Kong.

To avoid falling victim to these symptoms, the public is advised to maintain proper hygiene practices. Thoroughly washing your hands, covering your mouth and nose, and avoiding crowded places are good ways to start. However, getting the seasonal influenza vaccination is by far the most effective method to combat the flu. A process where a dose of a weakened version of the virus is injected into



the body to promote the production of antibodies to fend off the influenza virus.

This vaccination has played a major role in significantly reducing illnesses and hospitalizations, keeping society safe for everyone. Without it, it can lead to a higher rate of transmission in areas with high concentrations of people. However, some may refuse to take the vaccination due to skepticism about what's being injected into their body. If so, they are strongly encouraged to maintain a hygienic lifestyle to reduce the risk of symptoms for both themselves and others.

Parent-Teacher Conference: A Day for Parents and Teachers to Interact

Renae Yung, Junior

November 9 was our school's first parent-teacher conference of this school year, a time when parents and teachers could communicate and learn about students' progress in the class.

Teachers saw this as an opportunity to discuss their child's strengths and areas for improvement with parents. At the same time, parents could ask teachers questions about various topics, such as upcoming exams and AP courses. Teachers also gave parents feedback on additional classes or activities that the student could participate in to achieve their future career goals.

On this day, the Hong Kong Adventist College (HKAC) also had a special booth for parents to know more about their programs. They handed out flyers to interested parents. The college had many courses that they introduced to the parents, including aviation, biology, and many more.

Our school's parent-teacher conference was significant for both parents and our teachers, as they were able to know more about our school's program and their children's progress in the school term.

Take a Break!

Breanna Bautista, Sophomore

For most people, the day begins at 7 am and ends at 10 pm. Not Henry, you see, he lives in a different time zone. He has the power to change it, too. Most days, the time zone is five hours behind; other days, it might be six or seven. There’s just one small problem: he lives in the same time zone every day. (In other words, he sleeps really late). Generally, this schedule works for him. However, there are times when things can be highly unpredictable, especially when you go to sleep at 3 AM every day.

Unlike most boys who end the day playing Clash Royale, Henry usually ends it off with studying. For Henry, this usually results in baggy eyes and occasionally being late to school. Additionally, his immune system also gets three-crowned by bacteria. Today, Henry has a giant AP Environmental Science test that he spent the wee hours studying for.

His alarm clock rang, and he heard the same grating sound he was so used to hearing every morning. When he tried sitting up, however, he suddenly felt his head begin to throb. He reached to touch his forehead and realized it was scorching hot!

“This cannot be happening,” he thought as the room started to spin. He worked so hard and even sacrificed his sleep for the test. Most people would be logical and arrange to take the test another time, but Henry believed that if he did that, he might forget everything he studied for and risk earning anything less than an A. Clearly, Henry is not the brightest person, but he is one of the most ambitious ones.

He pushed himself to sit up despite the firing heat his body was experiencing. Fighting the pain, he dragged himself to his closet and put his uniform on. Any other day, he would be eating his breakfast at this time.

When Henry arrived at the breakfast table, he greeted his father and mother, who both raised a brow at his gravelly voice. He tried his hardest to seem like he had the energy to pick up a plate and eat. ”s there anything wrong, Henry?” his mother asked, concerned. “No, nothing’s wrong!” Henry said, slowly chewing on his food.

Breakfast conversations were exchanged across the room, but Henry was not part of any of them. He just zoned out, his half-lidded eyes plastered on his unfinished plate. His mother quickly noticed something was wrong. The moment he approached the front door with a stagger, his mother decided to act.

“Henry, where do you think you’re going?”

Henry paused and looked back at his mother with snot falling out of his nose. With that, he was forced out of his uniform and into comfortable clothes. She cooked him a warm bowl of chicken noodle soup, the perfect cure for the sick soul. After the nice meal, Henry was snuggled up into his thick blankets when his mother approached him.

“How are you holding up, kid?” she said, sitting on his bed.

“I’m okay, thanks, Mom.” Henry smiled at her. “I still think you should’ve let me go to school. I had a very important test today.”

His mother frowned, “You’re sick. If you go to school right now, you could spread your flu to the other students!”

“But-”

“No buts! You need to rest for once. You work too hard when it comes to school.”

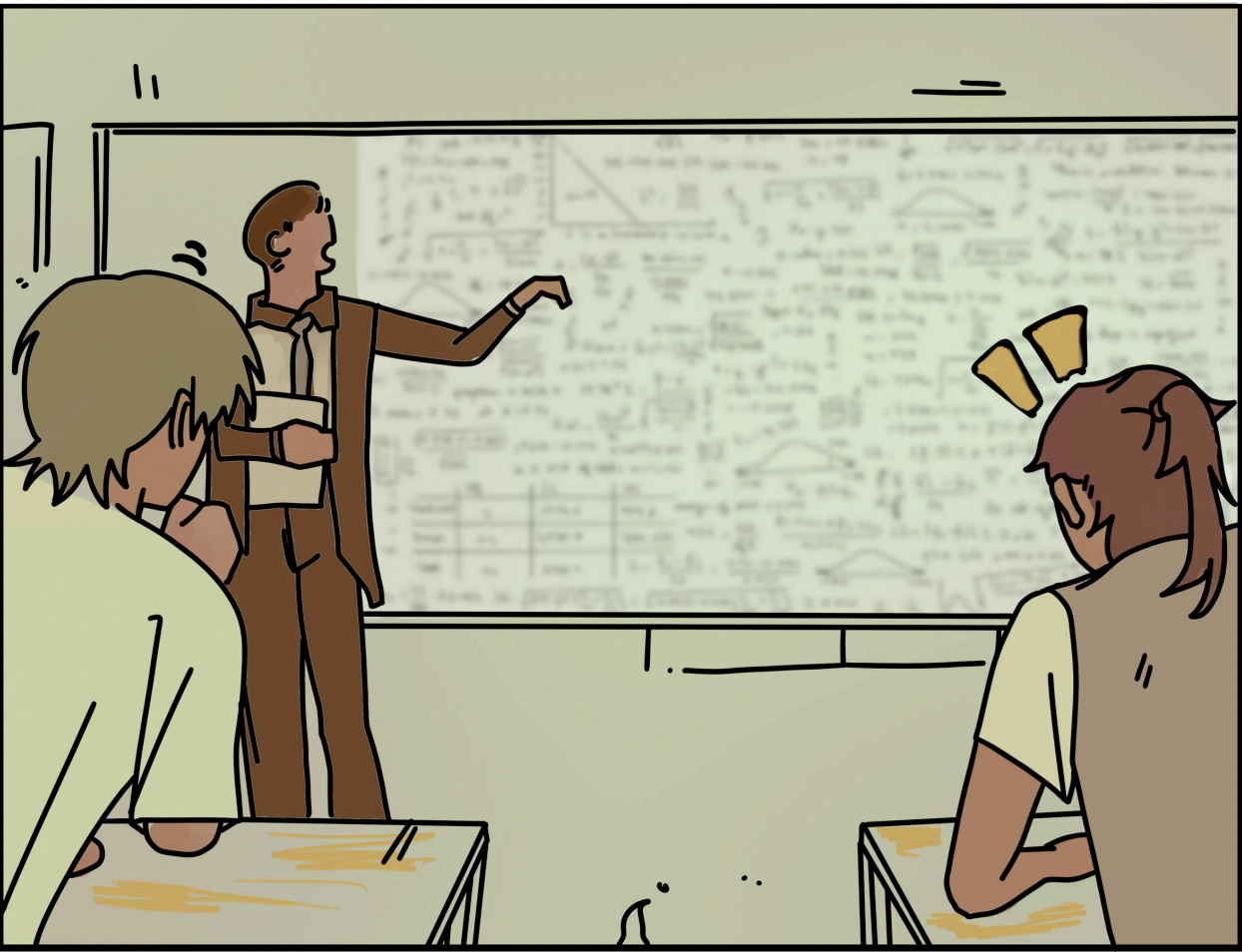
Henry looked at her with confusion. “Isn’t that the point? Working hard to make your parents proud?”

Henry’s mother sighed and held his hand. “Son, you do make me proud, and I appreciate your hard work, but I need you to put effort into being healthy, too. You matter more to me than your grades do.”

Henry was touched by his mother’s words and promised to rest that day. He decided to send a quick email to his teacher about rescheduling his APES test. Then, he decided to catch up on some sleep, and it was the best sleep he had ever had. It felt good to take a break, and he didn’t feel guilty for doing so because he knew that no matter what, his mother would always love him and be proud of him.

Value of the Month: Respectfulness

Berlynn Bautista, G8



Sudoku Puzzle

5	3			7				
6			1	9	5			
	9	8					6	
8				6				3
4			8		3			1
7				2				6
	6					2	8	
			4	1	9			5
				8			7	9

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