

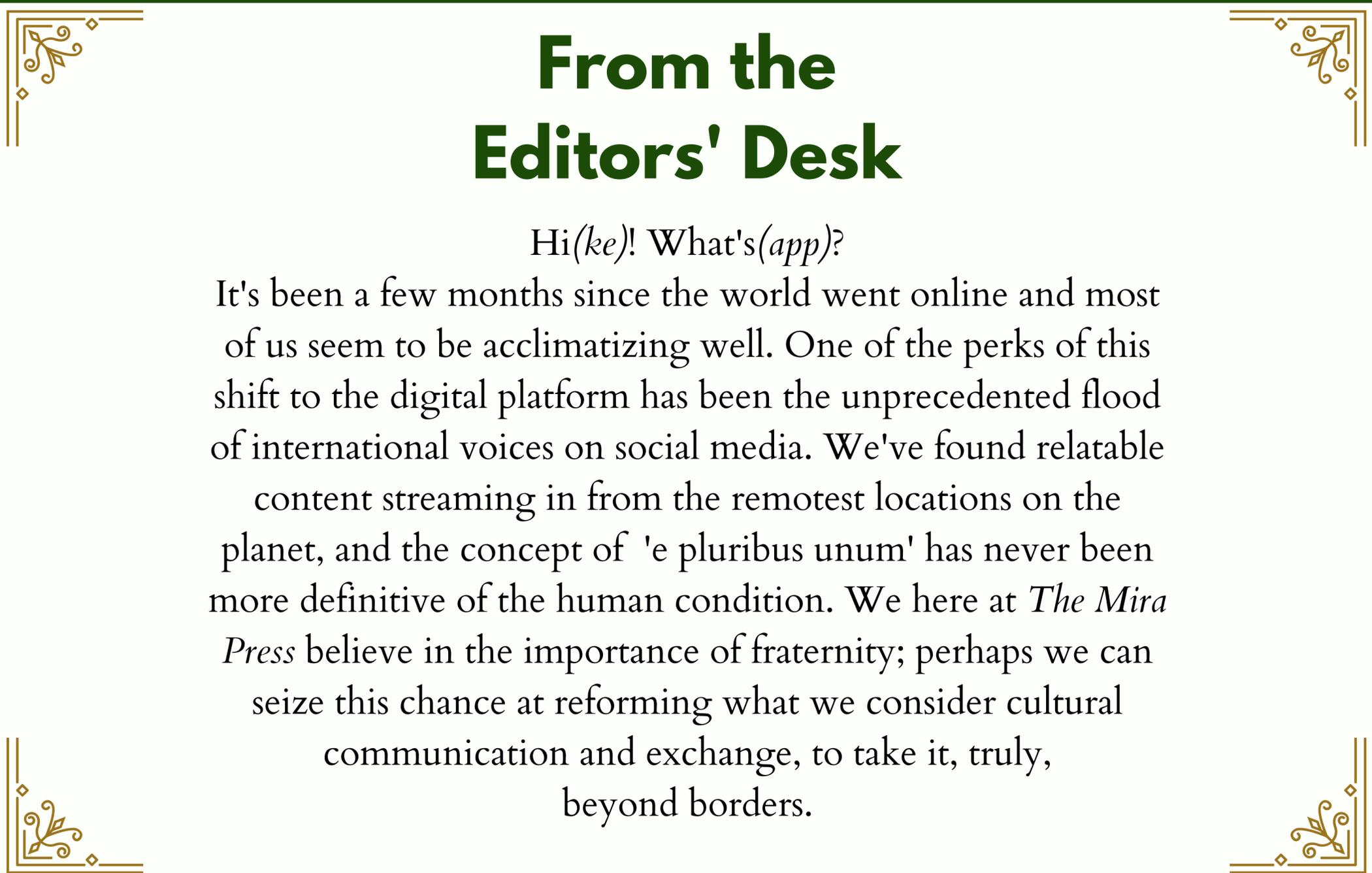
The Mira Press

The Multicultural Mosaic

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FOR STUDENTS,
BY STUDENTS

VOLUME 3
18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020



From the Editors' Desk

Hi(*ke*)! What's(*app*)?

It's been a few months since the world went online and most of us seem to be acclimatizing well. One of the perks of this shift to the digital platform has been the unprecedented flood of international voices on social media. We've found relatable content streaming in from the remotest locations on the planet, and the concept of 'e pluribus unum' has never been more definitive of the human condition. We here at *The Mira Press* believe in the importance of fraternity; perhaps we can seize this chance at reforming what we consider cultural communication and exchange, to take it, truly, beyond borders.

Colour of Class

I am a tag; a colour I used to be,
I am a class defined by the disparity.
If I am a part of you then you are prone to attack,
Yes, you guessed it right, I am the colour black.
God made colours; man gave them a hierarchy,
Thus, I am now considered as a symbol of impurity.
Earlier the world was divided into the good and the bad,
the wrong and the right,
But today there is mainly one differentiation of the black and the white.
I am not an entire person; I'm just a part of their skin,
But is being black, is being myself really a sin?
No, they are not black, it's who I am, it's my identity,
Manners maketh man, I just enhance their beauty.
Black and white go together they say,
But why have this comparison when united we form grey.
I am a class colour and the colour of class,
Man's cruelty on me has begun to surpass.
If I can be a mood and a trend,
Then why can't I be associated with mankind as a friend?
I have seen their struggles; I have felt their pain and cries,
Every second day the person I constitute has to die.
I don't regret being made,
Instead, I feel sorry for a world so poorly disarrayed.
I have walked alongside the brightest of minds,
Empowering personalities who are one of a kind.
Maya Angelou, Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama, Malcolm X to name a few,
Who never let the world stop them though I was a part of their crew.
I am worn in the courts on cloth as a symbol of power and authority,
But when it comes to skin,
people treat me unjustly;
I am undressed of my dignity.
Oh, you man, to compare and judge has become your nature,
But don't treat me as a person when I'm only just a colour.



Harshita Masand
XII Arts



The Hallyu Wave: By the Shore

The Mira Press catches up with students to see how they've been influenced by the 'Hallyu Wave' and their experiences with being fans of Korean popstars!



A.C.E. one of the underrated groups, has constantly right from their debut in 2017 has challenged the underlying structure and power dynamics in the kpop industry. They have broken gender roles and are very unique in their unorthodox styling. in their most recent comeback, they have meshed old traditional Korean garments and modern western clothing to tell a story about re-birth. A.C.E. are going against the currents and in doing so are redefining themselves and that confidence is one of the many things I like about them.

Ritwika Kanungoe

I became a k-pop fan last year. The 1st song I ever listened to was 'Gangnam Style' though I didn't realize that it was a k-pop song. My friend told me to join JNK Club. After joining the club, I got to know more about other bands like EXO, SEVENTEEN, BLACKPINK, ASTRO and BIGBANG. I also met many other fans from our college who always kept talking about K-pop, but then I thought these girls are crazy. When I started listening to other bands, I thought it was mesmerising and different from western music.

Geetika Pardeshi

BTS will always have that special place for me. The reason it's so close to me is that they motivated me when I was feeling low.

Kasinam Dabi

"If you can't fly, then run/ Today we will survive/ If you can't run, then walk/ Today we will survive/ If you can't walk, then crawl"- my daily dose of motivation as I wake up.

Namrata Dutta



Who knew clicking on a random suggestion on YouTube about some crackhead Korean boys will change my life so much! Not that I am complaining. But here I am, deep into the fandom, proudly calling myself an ARMY and head over in love with Bangtan Soneyondan. And yes, not only because of their looks but because they were the ones that introduced me to the concept of self-love and told me its importance when I needed it the most. I am thankful to my YouTube for introducing me to a band that told me to embrace myself despite my faults and fears, and to start loving myself, little by little, something the society failed to teach. I will be forever grateful to this rainbow- the seven brightest colours that helped me light up my dark life.

Music has no boundaries because it does not require language to be understood.

Aqlima Virani

I have been a k-pop fan for the past 5 years and never has it failed me. K-pop has gained immense popularity through the years, one reason being its highly influential and addictive nature that comes from the distinctive melodies, slick choreography and an abounding list of remarkable idols. Additionally, k-pop has such a unique mood-altering effect that keeps attracting people towards it and provides us with the best escapism from reality, working as an effective stress buster. Every song is unique in itself because of its concepts, costumes, performances and storytelling that leaves every fan awestruck!



We're All In This Together!

As The Beatles once said,

"Come together right now, over me."

If nothing else, COVID-19 has allowed people from all over the world to see eye-to-eye.

This digital artwork by Hope McConnell only showcases that sense of cultural diversity that this age bears witness to.

Hope is a design student and illustrator from Auckland, New Zealand.

Find Hope McConnell at:

 [@hopemcconnellcreative](https://www.instagram.com/hopemcconnellcreative)

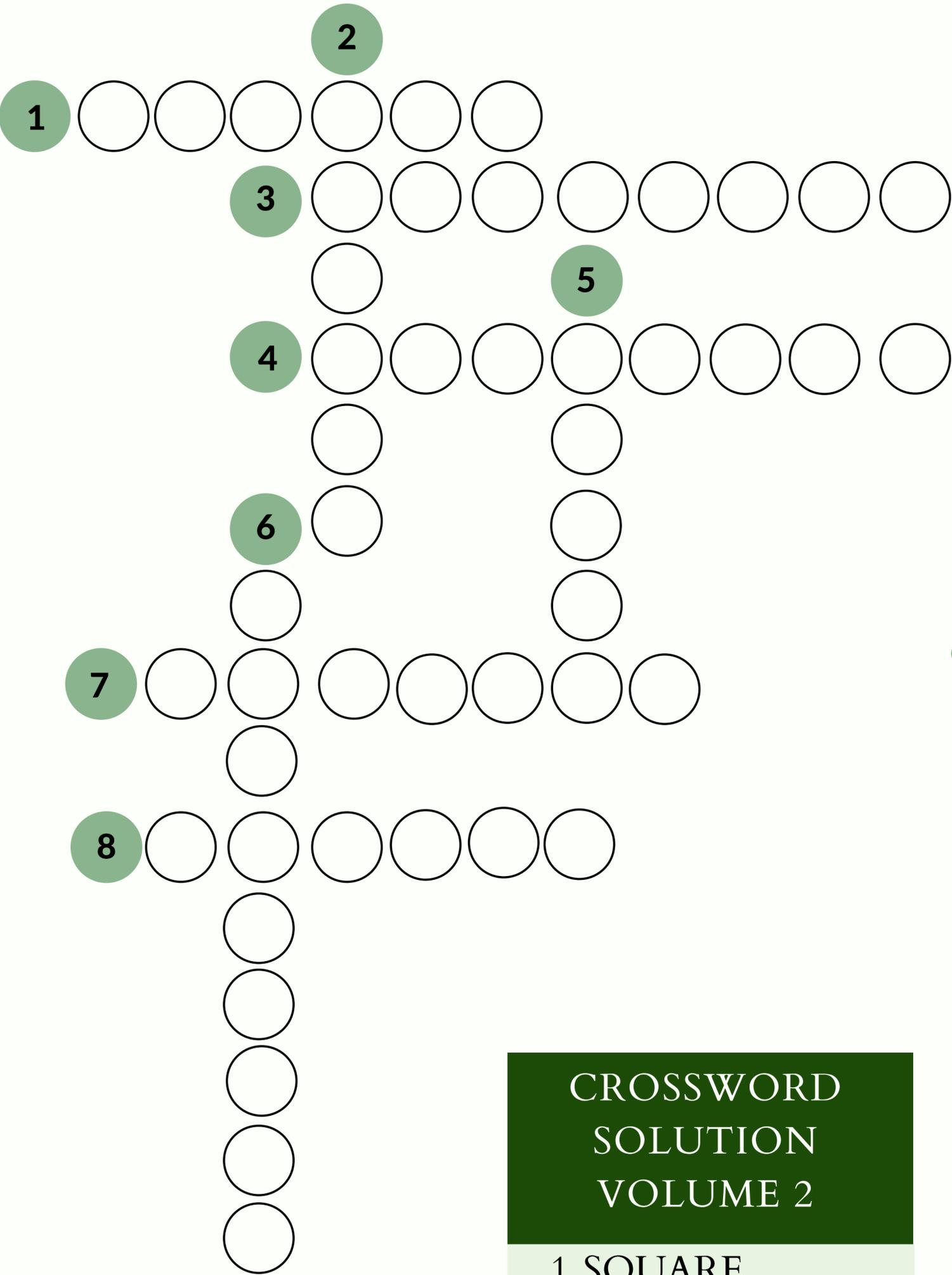
Source: Behance



A Student Speaks

Anime is simply defined as Japanese style animation for kids as well as adults. People open to different art styles and cultures should definitely check out anime too. When I first started watching anime I realized that it had various dimensions, and a multitude of genres to be explored. There are thousands of attractive characters, and the content captures one's heart instantly, anime is not only appealing to the eye but also to the heart. The emotions conveyed take you on a new journey every time you start a new anime. Fans truly enjoy watching anime and express their heartfelt gratitude to the hard work and efforts that go into the making of every episode. Anime and its fans have received a negative image at times due to their crazy obsession or judged for watching something that most people believe are Cartoons. Regardless of these opinions, there are other positive aspects to liking anime, it brings people together, there are communities online and offline which welcome anyone with open arms, the anime series or movies often showcase meaningful messages and spark amazing discussions between fans. There is so much to learn about life through anime and yet it is the best alternative when you want to unwind. I have watched quite a few anime and have a rather long way to go ahead of me. I have enjoyed anime along with the themes of science, high school drama, magic, detective, and I discover new ones every single day. Anime is an interesting media that caters to the needs of a variety of people, there's always something for everyone in anime. My love for Anime has not only brought me to meet wonderful people in life but it also encourages my passion for learning new things. I will continue to explore this media and I firmly believe it will lead to many more wonderful things to come.

CROSSWORD



- 1 A popularly used Indian word which means a flexible approach to problem solving, that uses limited resources in an innovative way
- 2 This TVS bike shares its name with a Native American tribe
- 3 Puchka, Gup-Chup, Pakodi and Fulki are names of which popular Indian street food
- 4 _____ is Russia's national flower
- 5 The Iroquis called _____, beans and squash the "three sister"
- 6 The birthplace of Christ, Bethlehem is in which country?
- 7 Chickpeas are the main ingredient of this Middle Easter dish, often accompanied with Pita bread
- 8 Uber is actually a _____ word which means above/beyond

CROSSWORD SOLUTION VOLUME 2

1. SQUARE
2. KOROSUKE
3. NODDY
4. OSWALD
5. DEEDEE
6. PHOOL
7. COURAGE
8. DORA

By: **Ummesalama Karu TYBA**

Studio Ghibli's Japan

Japanese art has always been one of the defining aspects of their culture; one of their most renowned forms is anime. Anime has become mainstream in today's culture not only because it is easily accessible, but people today are delving into the world of anime, influenced by celebrity fans, like Michael B. Jordan, Keanu Reeves, and Megan Fox. Anime comes from the word 'animate', which means 'to bring back to life', and if there is any person that does justice to the meaning, it is Hayao Miyazaki.

Hayao Miyazaki, co founder of the famous production company Studio Ghibli - which was founded in 1985- is known for consistently putting out quality films. His films are a reflection of the relationship between traditions and progress, it echoes how the changes in the world are affecting people in their everyday lives. His films can also be a great introduction to Japan's unique and complex culture.

Hayao Miyazaki's work, although not considered spiritual or religious, despite the abundance of magical elements portrayed, are in actuality representation of the Shinto and Buddhist iconography, both Japan's leading religions; like the *Jizo* statues, or the sacred *Shimenawa* ropes shown tied around Totoro's tree, and the marking off the river god's bath in *Spirited Away*. Miyazaki's perception of gods and spiritual elements is not explicitly based on the concept of *kami* (a word that designates a range of supernatural beings), although a lot of them abide in, or at least visit, Yubaba's bathhouse in *Spirited Away*. Many of the *kami* that appear in *Spirited Away* are wonderfully strange, like a giant radish spirit. But a few resemble traditional Japanese gods, like Haku and the "stink spirit," who are both river dragons, both of whom have been gravely injured by humans.

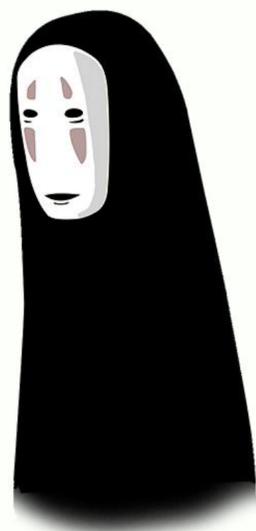
The tension between humans and spirits intensifies into full-out war in *Princess Mononoke*, in which Lady Eboshi fights against the gods of the forest. *Mononoke's kami* are woodland creatures: wolves, wild boars, and deer. They're just as fuzzy as Totoro, but a lot less cuddly. Like the wilderness itself, they are elemental, powerful, dangerous, and sources of life and death.

Studio Ghibli is the home of some of the most revered and beloved animated works to have ever graced the screen as Miyazaki has created a pre-modern voice that has long been lost in urban culture and prearranged religions, an ancient point of view, that given Japan's geography has been able to survive there more than anywhere else.

Bhoomi Punjabi TYBA



Image Source: [Pinterest](#), [GameBanana](#), [Pinterest](#), [DeviantArt](#), [ReBloggy](#), [DeviantArt](#)



Is eastern culture really on the rise?

When I started researching the influence of eastern culture on the world, I thought I was going to have a list of Asian countries dominating the global cultural scenario. I mean, look at South Korea, India, Japan, China and a host of other Asian countries flaunting their unexplored cultures through American and European mainstream pop culture. Turns out, my thoughts didn't take the reality into account.

Portland, a strategic communications consultancy which works with governments, businesses, foundations, and non-governmental organisations on a global level, releases a publication titled SoftPower30 every year. It publishes a comprehensive global ranking of top 30 countries' soft power, and guess which country topped the list in 2019? A hint: think Eiffel Tower. Yes, it's France followed by UK, Germany, Sweden, US, Switzerland, Canada and on the eight position I recognised an Asian country – Japan. So, I frantically looked through the entire list to see if India made the cut. Unfortunately, we didn't. In fact, the percentage of Asian countries was only about 13% on the list, and the other whopping 87% included American, European, and some other Oceanic countries.

Those figures got me thinking again.

Why did I think that Asian countries would soon be taking over world culture? Is it because I saw the American music industry appreciating K-Pop groups? Is it because I saw an Indian dance group audition and get accepted on Britain's Got Talent? Is it because Sashi Cheliah won MasterChef Australia 2018? Is our understanding of emerging global cultures then, actually coloured by the 'developed first world countries'? Are we looking at our own culture through their lenses? These are questions that have now been troubling me since days, and I hope they trouble you too so that we finally go on a quest for truth.



Sashi Cheliah, winner of MasterChef Australia, 2018



Idol group BTS at The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon in 2018

Ummesalama Karu
TYBA



Tales from the South-East

We have heard of Disney taking inspiration from folk-tales, and we might have heard some fairytales from our grandparents in our childhood. We learnt lessons through these tales and escaped to magical lands with them. So today, we bring to you a few of our favorites from the rich fairy-tales in the South East Asian countries.

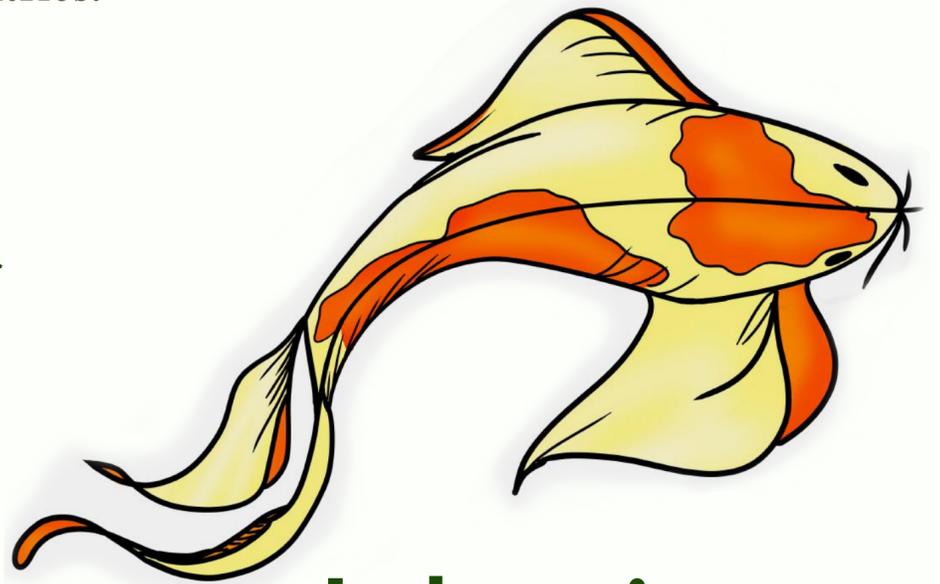
Phillipines

Once upon a time, the sky was very close to the earth. A woman used to hang her comb and jewels on the sky while working with the mortar and pestle. One day she hit the sky so forcefully that it rose up and soon was out of reach. Thus, her comb became the moon and her jewels were scattered as the stars in the night sky.



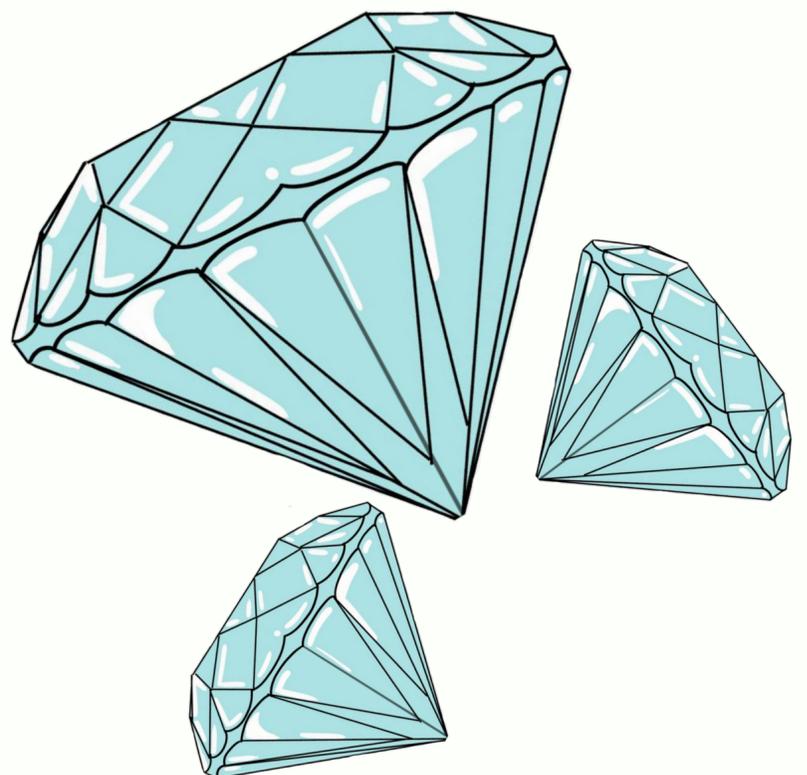
Khmer

A man worked at the house of a millionaire, earning his favour over time. His luck was turned around when his habit of gossiping caused him to tell his wife and friends of a secret deal between him and the millionaire. When he had become poor, the millionaire reappointed him as a cleaner at his home. This man happens to listen in to a conversation about a stolen diamond that the millionaire bought and spills this secret to his friend at a place where the business partners were present. They consider the two friends a threat and kill both of them mercilessly.



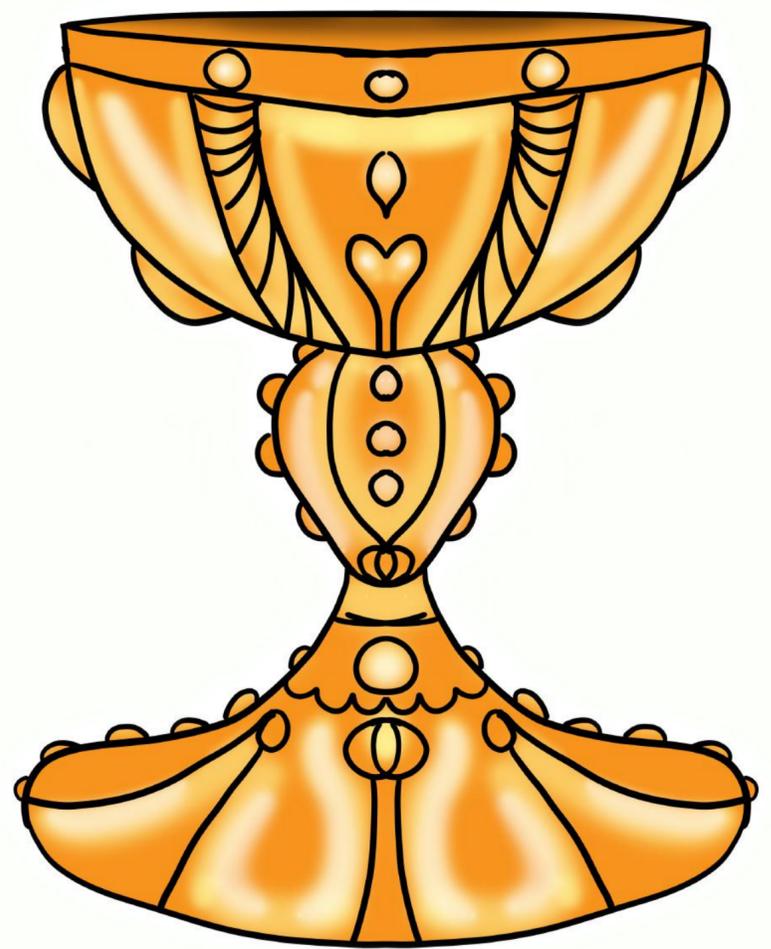
Indonesia

A fisherman catches a golden fish and discovers that it can turn into a beautiful lady; he pleads her to be his wife. The woman agrees but on the condition that it will be a secret forever; then giving birth to a daughter called 'Samosir'. On one occasion the fisherman gets angry with Samosir and spills her mother's secret. When the mother gets to know this, she sends Samosir to the mountains and drowns the whole village, making Samosir's hiding place an island. The place is known as Toba Lake and the "Samosir Island" is a part of the Sumatra Islands of Indonesia.



Malaysia

Sultan Mansur of Melaka demanded to marry the fairy princess Gunung Ledang, who lived on a mountain. After the sultan's warriors had faced the difficult trial of climbing, one of them meets an old woman who tells him that the princess wishes for a bridge of gold and silver from Melaka to Ledang and other seemingly impossible wishes including a cup of blood from him and his son. The sultan humbles himself upon hearing her demands and says, "Everything can be provided to you, except the blood of our son which is an unbearable pain."



Laos

Once upon a time, the crow and peacock were both white. The crow suggested that they paint each other and took great efforts to draw intricate designs on the peacock; he painted the peacock beautifully. The peacock walked around proudly and when the crow asked to be painted, the peacock poured black paint on it then walked away. This is the reason why the peacocks have vividly colored feathers and crows are plainly black.

Vietnam

This story is very similar to that of Cinderella. Tam is hated by her stepmother and stepsister, Cam. Through a 'spirit of mercy', Tam obtains gold slippers, one of which flows down the river to the prince's attendant. They search for the owner and find Tam with the other slipper. This is followed by the prince taking her to his palace in a procession and marrying her after.

By: Geetanjali Lachke
TYBcom



Behind the Scenes: K-pop and Literature

K-pop music videos have been known for their colourful sets and alluring nature. Many groups and artists also use literary allusions in their music video to express a concept or a topic. The weaving of stories into these high budget and intricate videos adds another layer of excitement to the work. K-pop music videos are a fine example of how art inspires art. These are some of the artists who use literary allusions in their works.



The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas

BTS's "Spring Day" is influenced by the short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K Le.Guin. The story describes a supposedly utopian city of Omelas and the sacrifice that the utopia depends upon. Even though the music video is never explicitly explained, fans have various theories based on the references in the video.

The Red Shoes

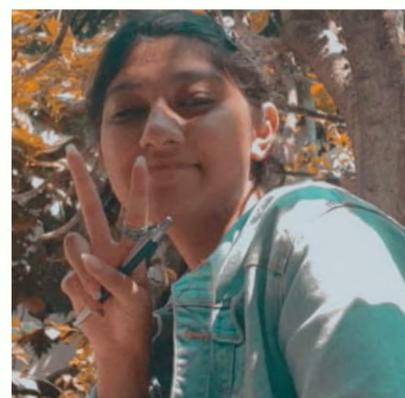
IU's "Red Shoes" draw inspiration from a fairy tale named "The Red Shoes" by Hans Christian Andersen.

'The Red Shoes' explores the theme of temptation and redemption where a girl is obsessed with her red shoes that get cursed to dance forever and her following actions lead to terrible consequences. In the music video even though initially, the red shoes help IU achieve what she wanted, they continue to haunt her when she abandons them. By the end, she surrenders to the shoes and accepts her fate.



The Little Prince

Various artists have referred to "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry differently in their music videos. SHINee's "Good Evening" and "I Want You" use the symbolic reference of the fox in their music videos; the fox who becomes the little prince's friend and helps him realize the truth about his rose. The girl group Favourite take a direct approach and showcase the entire journey of the little prince in "Where Do You Come From?"



While the incorporation of these stories adds another dimension to storytelling, it also clears a path for literature to a wider and newer audience through a different medium.

Writer: Anshula Dhulekar
SYBA

Cultural Appropriation for Clout: India's Stolen Stylizations

It's the era of globalization – barriers between countries and cultures are diminishing.

Cross-cultural exchanges have become frequent. However, the borrowing and exchanging of certain cultural elements go beyond simple cultural exchanges. Could the act of a white celebrity wearing an Indian *sari* be called a simple cultural exchange?

Or does it point to a more intricate term like cultural appropriation?

Let's start by answering a simple question – what does cultural appropriation mean? Cultural appropriation is “appropriating” or borrowing elements of one cultural group by a different cultural group. When it comes to the appropriation of Indian culture, we find that foreigners adopt symbols of Indian culture without knowing its significance, often for clout.

An example of this can be the commercialization of yoga by Americans. Yoga is essentially a spiritual practice involving the use of *asanas* and various breathing techniques, but when the Indian diaspora introduced Yoga to the Americans, they focused on the physical aspects of the practice. Today you will find countless yoga studios in the US, where Americans turn Yoga into business for selling classes and yoga pants. Pop-star Selena Gomez wore a *bindi* for one of her music videos and described her new look as 'glam tribal'. Many other American celebrities have used *bindis* and *saris* as mere fashion accessories, with complete disregard for their cultural significance. Recently, popular K-pop girl group BLACKPINK was under fire for using the idol of Lord Ganesha as a prop in their music video.

When it comes to Indian culture, we should help society understand it. Indians living in the United States are in a unique position to discuss cultural elements that are being appropriated. The influence of one culture on another is universal and cross-cultural exchanges are inevitable. However, it is always a good idea to understand a culture before borrowing from it.

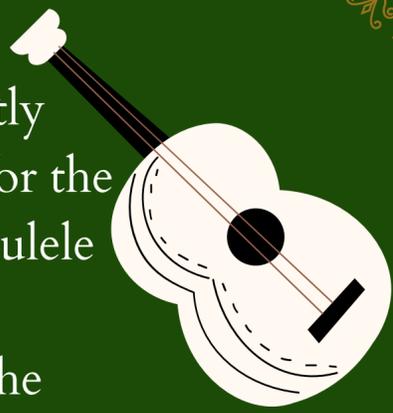


**Harshita Rao
SYBA**



Aloha, Alaska!

My best friend 'AK' as I call her, earned and saved money for months and recently got Alaska home. Well, Alaska is the name of her Ukulele. When I saw Alaska for the first time, I felt so thrilled. So I started to read up on it. Did you know that a Ukulele is a Hawaiian adaptation of a small guitar-like Portuguese machete? The more I explore Polynesian music and culture, the more it fascinates me. Well, most of the traditional Polynesian songs are a portrayal of their culture and folklore. They say "Dance, melody, rhythm and harmony serve as decorations to the to the lyrics, but it is the words of a song that form the core of music," and indeed one gets attracted to these songs because of their words. Performers in vibrantly coloured costumes, clapping their hands, stamping their feet and occasionally doing knee-slapping to create the musical beats is fascinating. It is not passed on to the next generation in the written form, but verbally through music and it is remarkable that to this day it has stood the test of time. Immigration, renaissance, globalisation, colonisation; all of it did influence the Polynesian culture, but it also gave the world cheerful rhythms and soothing island music. There's a playlist titled "The Sound of Polynesian Pop" on Spotify; it's worth a try. Almost everything I explore regarding Polynesian Music, dance and culture, is very enticing. Why do I find it very enticing? In the era where all rocking things sound 'happening', this soulful music is truly ahappening one!



Sriradha Gupta
TYBA

New on the Block:

Renuka Dattatray Bhil, a student of St. Mira's College for Girls, Pune, is pursuing BA in economics but dabbles in hand embroidery. In Renuka's words, 'doing hand-embroidery gives her solace, peace, happiness: everything'.

She is addicted to the craft after having discovered it only last year and has been experimenting and honing her craft daily. She hopes to start an online commissioning business of her craft soon!

Follow Renuka on Instagram to stay updated on her new projects and commissions!

@embroiderylove



A Hope for a Changed World

I wish to stand at the massive gates,
And be welcomed into a changed world;
A world seen as a solitary state
Where all boundaries are blurred.

Where similarity is acknowledged,
Yet differences make you unique
Where all are us - not prejudiced
And togetherness is the new chic.

This world may not be a reality,
But no one can crush my dreams
To aim for the ideal is a necessity
And only hope can save us from future screams.

Ummesalama Karu
TYBA



Extending the Olive Branch

This art is inspired by the Russian folk art style called Khokhloma. It is such a style which will instantly catch your eyes with its vibrant and absolute coloring style as it did mine. One of the most attractive things for me is the way these colors do not take away the grace that the traditional patterns of berries, flowers and leaves are supposed to bring. The Russian folk art, for me, defines the phrase 'less is more' as there are a limited number of colors and patterns that are used throughout this form and yet they bring out the most beautiful artworks.



By: **Kumud Poptani**
TYBA



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