



# Blossoming Bonds

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Merry  
Christmas





# COVER STORY

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/Pic by OIC

# Blossoming Bonds:

## A Floral Extravaganza Unveiled at NCCU's International Christmas Wreath Workshop

Article by Iris Asmita Banerjee

On the winter afternoon of December 11, the Office of International Cooperation at National Chengchi University hosted a Christmas wreath workshop, bringing together a diverse group of 15 international students eager to engage in the festive art of crafting holiday wreaths. Steering this creative venture was Peng Chengyi, an esteemed Floral Designer associated with FulownA, a company renowned not only for its visually stunning floral arrangements but also for its dedication to imparting the intricate skill of floral design through educational courses.

The workshop unfolded in a space adorned with an array of vibrant flowers, fragrant evergreens, and an atmosphere charged with anticipation. As Peng Chengyi assumed the center stage, the room hummed with excite-



▲ Asmita (first from the left) and Lisa (first from the right) along

ment. Initiating the session with an insightful introduction to the materials, Peng provided valuable perspectives on the significance of each chosen element in the wreath-making process.

arrangements, FulownA distinguishes itself by extending its expertise to those eager to delve into the art form through educational courses. This commitment to education makes FulownA an ideal collaborator for an event designed to bring joy and skill to the international student community.



*with other international students making Christmas wreath*

FulownA, the driving force behind this collaboration, stands as a paragon of excellence in the field of floral design. Renowned for seamlessly blending creativity with the beauty of nature in its breathtaking

For the participants, many of whom find themselves distanced from the familiar sights and sounds of their home countries during the holiday season, this workshop served as a poignant bridge to cherished traditions. The wreath-making exercise, a ubiquitous practice in various cultures during Christmas, evoked a sense of connection and nostalgia. Lisa, an exchange student from Austria, expressed her sentiments with a smile, “I am delighted to partake in creating a Christmas wreath, a tradition I hold dear from my home country.”

Adding an unexpected layer of delight to the workshop was the presence of Peng Chengyi, the adept Floral Designer guiding the session. Lisa continued, expressing her surprise, “I did not expect a professional florist to be here. This workshop has exceeded

my expectations.” Peng Chengyi’s expertise injected an additional dimension into the event, transforming it beyond a mere crafting session into a masterclass in the art of floral design. The ambiance transcended mere crafting; it evolved into a full-fledged immersion into the realm of floral artistry.

Ben, another enthusiastic exchange student from Germany, eagerly signed up for the event upon learning about it. Sharing his experience, he remarked, “I like the event a lot. It makes me feel at home a bit. It’s also a creative endeavor, and I enjoy doing creative things. So, I like it a lot.”

As the workshop unfolded, participants immersed themselves in the creative process, with each wreath becoming a unique reflection of its creator’s personality. The experience transcended mere crafting; it evolved into a shared journey of cultural exchange and artistic expression.



◀ Christmas wreath made by Lisa



International ►  
students  
making  
Christmas  
wreath



FulownA's commitment to education became evident as Peng Chengyi patiently guided the international students through the intricate steps of wreath-making. Questions were met with encouragement, and uncertainties became opportunities for learning. What initially seemed like a festive diversion transformed into an educational adventure.

The joyous hum of activity reached its crescendo as participants proudly displayed their finished wreaths. Each creation told a story, not just of holiday traditions, but also of the diverse backgrounds and experiences converging in that creative space. The wreaths, adorned with a tapestry of colors and textures, became symbols of unity in diversity.

The Christmas wreath workshop organized by the Office of International Cooperation at NCCU, enriched by the expertise of Floral Designer Peng Chengyi from FulownA, transcended the boundaries of a typical seasonal activity. It became a cultural tapestry, weaving together the threads of tradition, creativity, and education. For the 15 international students who gathered that day, it was more than a workshop; it was a celebration of shared experiences and the magic that unfolds when diverse minds come together to create something beautiful.





# GLOBAL CONVERSATION

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/Pic by NASA  
on Unsplash

# Working for the Government of Israel During Conflict

## Perspective One of a Two-Part Series

Article by Maria Wilkinson

### Highlight of the Article:

*The following is one perspective on the 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict from a Palestinian-Taiwanese student. This article is part two of a two-part series. In part one, an Israeli perspective is represented. In part two, a Muslim perspective is represented.*



▲ Map of the Gaza Strip. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

The 2023 Israel-Hamas war stirs up many feelings for all across the world. Each side presents a strong claim, reckoning ideological and geopolitical beliefs.

To briefly provide context, the conflict that began on October 7th, 2023 was a result of a Hamas attack on Southern Israel. The Hamas group is known as the Islamic Resistance Movement, a political and military organization located in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas claims that Israel illegitimately occupies Palestinian territories and has rejected the two-state solution that was developed in 1974 by the United Nations General Assembly as an attempt to create peace in the region.

This brief synopsis is an oversimplification of the conflict and I implore you to do additional research to gather a deeper insight. The following is one perspective on the conflict from a past National Chengchi University student, who has recently returned to Israel. This article is part one of a two-part series. In part one, an Israeli perspective is represented. In part two, a Muslim perspective is represented.



▲ Views of Israel. Photo Credit: David Shatz



▲ A selfie of David. Photo Credit: David Shatz

David Shatz is a recent student from the International Master's in Asia Pacific Studies (IMAS) program. In his last semester, he felt more pressure to return home. David says this pressure was mainly due to seeking career opportunities. However, the reelection of Benjamin Netanyahu in December of 2022 created a shifting climate in Israel's politics around this time.

Almost immediately after returning home, David started a position in the Ministry of Finance in Israel as an economist. David describes his job as a financial regulator at the Israel Capital Market Insurance and Saving Authority under the Ministry of Finance. His duty is to regulate, evaluate, and rewrite car and housing insurance policy papers. His work requires that he must monitor and control all private insurance companies and assess their business plans regarding the insurance policies they sell so as to not harm the individual, while also mitigating and keeping the competition in the insurance market.

Since the current conflict, David has faced an insurmountable number of cases affecting the lives of innocent civilians. Private property has been lost, housing and vehicles have been destroyed, and personal and private property have been stolen. David and his office must work to provide proper compensation for the unfortunate cases.

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David has considerable stress during this time, along with his counterparts. He describes, with sadness, the chaos outside while he sits inside his office. Sirens wail after missiles rain over cities. A tense anticipation of being called to join the reserve military forces lingers. These pressures weigh on him, though he recognizes the importance of his job is even more important now. David says the government needs to work properly to cope with the ongoing challenges and as long as he feels he has a routine his mind is at ease and he can focus better.



*Views of Israel.*  
*Photo Credit: David Shatz*





Views of Israel. Photo Credit: David Shatz





As an Israeli, David has painted an image of the current conflict as a battle between good and evil. This narrative is a common reflection by Israel when speaking on the conflict. Israel UN ambassador, Gilad Erdan said to members of the [UN Security Council on October 30<sup>th</sup>](#), “From this day on, each time you look at me, you will remember what staying silent in the face of evil means.” [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) also made a similar statement referring to the Hamas attacks on October 7<sup>th</sup>, stating Israel is “going to abolish this evil in order to further all humanity.” David had made his own comment that “the time will come when good will prevail against evil once again.”

David feels the answer is to fight for a free and democratic spirit in the modern world. Although he is faced with current events that trouble him, he believes in a world that can still find a common language and grounds for peace, mutual future, and progress.

As this article is part one of a two-part series, the narratives from a Muslim perspective will be provided in the second part. It is important to note that NCCU and OIC wishes to provide all perspectives. If you would like to share your own perspective, please contact OIC Connect for an interview.

▼ Views of Israel. Photo Credit: David Shatz



# GLOBAL CONVERSATION

# Weighing in on Taiwanese Narratives of October 7th from a Palestinian-Taiwanese Perspective

## Perspective Two of a Two-Part Series

Article by Maria Wilkinson



▲ Source: 可以自由巴 For Peace Taiwan Facebook page

## Highlight of the Article:

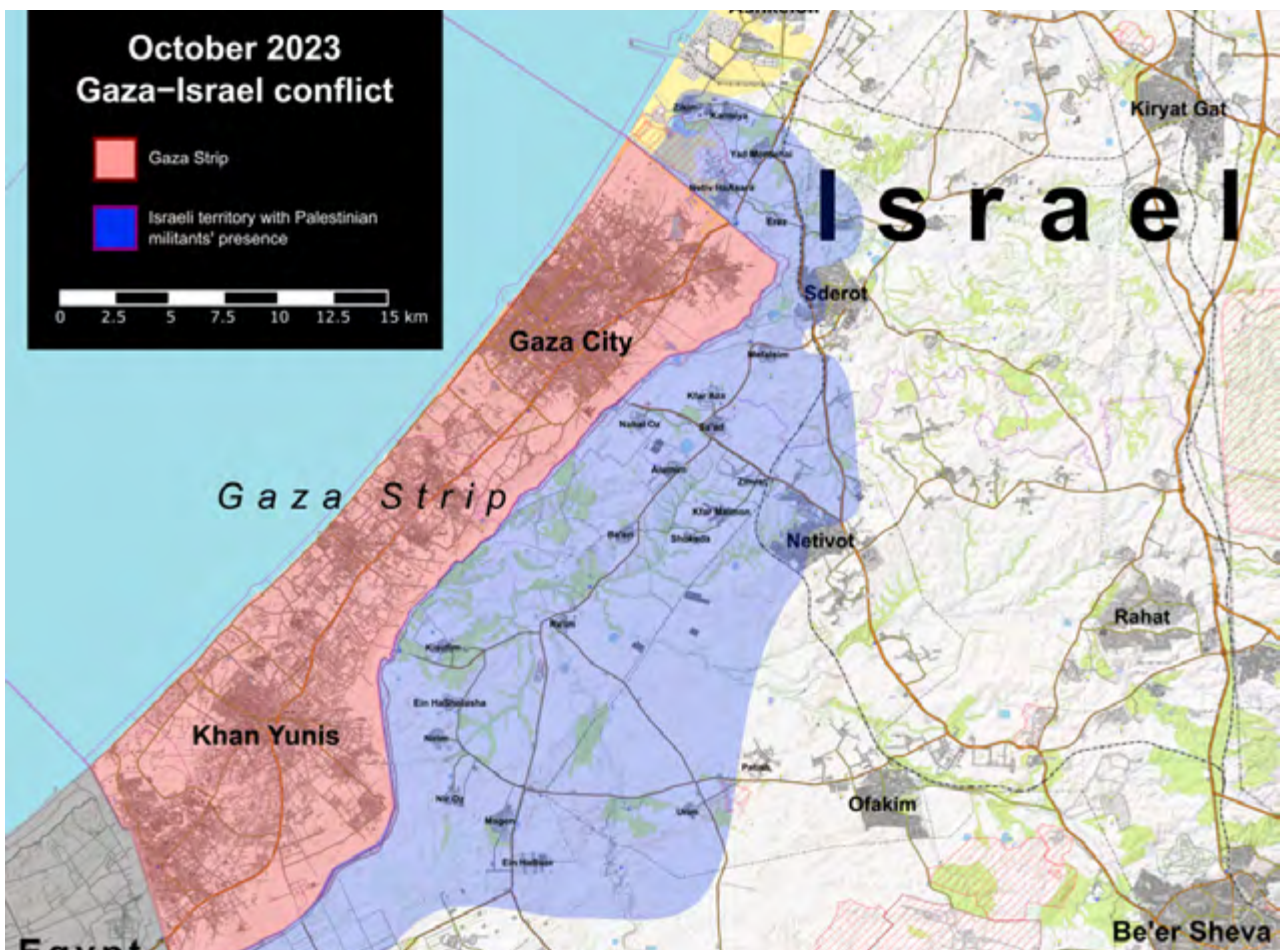
The following is one perspective on the 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict from a Palestinian-Taiwanese student. This article is part two of a two-part series. In part one, an Israeli perspective is represented. In part two, a Muslim perspective is represented.



The 2023 Israel-Hamas war stirs up many feelings for all across the world. Each side presents a strong claim, reckoning ideological and geopolitical beliefs.

To briefly provide context, the conflict that began on October 7th, 2023 was a result of a Hamas attack on Southern Israel. The Hamas group is known as the Islamic Resistance Movement, a political and military organization located in the Gaza Strip. As of November 29th, there has been an extended ceasefire between the two parties.

▼ Map of the Gaza Strip. Photo Credit: Wikipedia



Hamas claims that Israel illegitimately occupies Palestinian territories and has rejected the two-state solution that was developed in 1974 by the United Nations General Assembly as an attempt to create peace in the region.

This brief synopsis is an oversimplification of the conflict and I implore you to do additional research to gather a deeper insight. The following is one perspective on the conflict from a current Palestinian-Taiwanese student. This article is part two of a two-part series. In part one, an Israeli perspective is represented. In part two, a Palestinian perspective is represented.

Half Palestinian - half Taiwanese, Yasmine (name has been changed for privacy reasons) was born and raised in Jordan, bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south and east, Iraq to the northeast, Syria to the north, and the Palestinian West Bank and Israel to the west. Yasmine's grandparents, originally from Nablus, Palestine, were forced out of Palestine during the Nakba in 1948, a violent displacement and dispossession of Palestinians. Their family was forced to Kuwait and then immigrated to Jordan a couple of years later. Her father's parents were a few of the approximately 750,000 Palestinians displaced between 1947-49 and were prevented from returning by the Israeli government.



▲ Location of Nablus, Palestine  
Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nablus\\_in\\_Palestine.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nablus_in_Palestine.svg)

Yasmine came to Taiwan four years ago and has since begun her Bachelor's at a university in Taiwan. As someone with ethnic heritage from two countries that fight claims over their sovereignty, Yasmine has grown to feel disappointed in the neglect she has felt by Taiwanese citizens and

the government over the current Israeli-Hamas conflict. This conflict is not only a fight for those in the Gaza Strip, for those in Palestinian territory, or for those who are Muslim and Arabic. This conflict is a worldwide issue, Yasmine says.



▲ Source: 可以自由巴 For Peace Taiwan Facebook page

After October 7th, there were protests on [November 18](#), [November 21](#), and [November 25](#) in front of AIT and the Israel Representative Office in Taipei.

「以巴停火，反對封鎖！」台北和平集會 or “CEASEFIRE NOW, END APARTHEID” Taipei Peace Rally has

been organized by [@forpeacetw](#) (可以自由巴) on social media. Hundreds have gathered to show their solidarity with Palestine and to support a permanent cease-fire. Although this support is hopeful, the protests have received little reception from the Taiwanese government.

It is clear that the Taiwanese government has presented the issue as not a fight between two states, but a fight against terrorism.

On October 7th, the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs [officially condemned the attacks by Hamas](#). On October 11th, [Taipei 101 lit up](#) in blue and white lights to symbolize the Israeli flag. On October 23, Taiwan’s representative to Israel Abby Lee (李雅萍) [pledged a donation of US \\$70,000 to Israeli NGO Pitchon-Lev](#). President Tsai Ing-wen took to X on October 8th to bolster the rhetoric of a fight for democracy against terrorism.

Yasmine feels a strong sense of irony in Taiwan's stance. The war, if framed only as beginning on October 7th, seems full of violence and unjust acts filled with misinformation. Yasmine asks others to recognize this conflict is only a tipping point from decades of violations of International Law and colonization. Yasmine knows, as a Palestinian-Taiwanese, that she will continue to support the sovereignty of those who have been oppressed by unjust governments. Despite disappointment by Taiwan's current stance, she hopes others will choose to seek unbiased information and support those fighting for their freedom.

As this article is part two of a two-part series, the narratives from an Israeli perspective have been shared in part one. It is important to note that NCCU and OIC wish to provide all perspectives. If you would like to share your own perspective, please contact OIC Connect for an interview: [uhjiog5@g.nccu.edu.tw](mailto:uhjiog5@g.nccu.edu.tw)

OIC CONNECT





A photograph of a food stall or market stall. The stall is filled with various food items, including what appears to be fried chicken, bread, and other prepared dishes. The lighting is warm and focused on the food, creating a cozy atmosphere. The stall is set up under a canopy or awning, and there are some signs or menus visible in the background.

# CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT

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/Pic by Adriaan Terblanche  
on Unsplash

# Exploring Dadaocheng, Where a River Once Was: Bridging the Gap Between Past and Present

Article by Léa Charette

## Highlight of the Article:

*The following is a recounting of the Dadaocheng cultural tour activity, during which international degree students and local high school participants got to know each other while getting (re)acquainted with the area's rich cultural history.*

On a sunny December day, as the weather unexpectedly got warmer, more than a dozen NCCU students of various nationalities gathered in front of Affiliated High School of National Chengchi University's (AHSNCCU) main gate. They would soon be joined by local students from the Ambassador club. Together, they would embark on a bus journey to Dadaocheng, a famously important 19th century trading port. Now, all naval activities have ceased, but the place nevertheless remains a historical and gastronomical landmark.

The aim of this Dadaocheng cultural tour was dual: (1) for enthusiastic NCCU international students to discover or rediscover the old streets of Dadoacheng and immerse themselves in its cultural heritage and (2) to offer AHSNCCU students the opportunity to meet foreign students and interact with them to get a better sense of their culture. This article will describe how both objectives were met.



▲ It is customary for female tourists and visitors to rent a qipao - a Chinese traditional dress - to wear while wandering the streets and taking pictures.



A NCCU USR staff member, Chao Yu, pointed out that Dadaocheng's architecture and atmosphere were perfectly suited to be captured using film photography.



Key actors played a role in the realization of this event. AHSNCCU staff partnered with both NCCU USR (University Social Responsibility) and the NCCU OIC (Office of International Cooperation). The latter helped promote the event to the foreign student body, while the former made sure communication between local communities such as affiliated high schools and particular groups like NCCU international students went smoothly.

To get to Dadaocheng, the university students boarded one bus, while the high school students boarded another. This was surprising to some international students. They were expecting to be paired with local students right away, so that they could spend the journey getting to know each other. Instead, NCCU students were given the opportunity to mingle and meet new faces. Among them, a few Taiwanese students who had also decided to join the activity got to engage in conversation with students from abroad. The whole bus ride was thus still an occasion for cultural exchange.



▲ According to a Walk In Taiwan staff member, this stall is the best amongst those of the indoor market.

▼ Fred Chiang would occasionally be calling out on someone at random to answer his enquiries. Behind him, a Walk in Taiwan employee was taking pictures of the group.



Upon reaching the destination, everyone was quickly organized into two main groups, A and B, with separate itineraries and tour guides. Each group was composed of multiple sub-groups, each sub-group a team made of both high-schooler and university students. The importance of this subdivision will be highlighted below.

It should first be mentioned, however, that group B's tour guide from the A Walk in Taiwan company, Fred Chiang, did a splendid job. He was passionate, energetic and knowledgeable. He introduced various aspects of Dadaocheng's geographical and cultural history in a lively manner. Furthermore, Fred emphasized Dadaocheng's importance as one of the region's two richest townships - the other being Wanhua District -, where foreign dignitaries, businessmen as well as wealthy Chinese merchants lived.

As an interesting historical fact, when in 1875 the Taipei Prefecture was established, its capital was chosen to be around the area of present-day Taipei Main Station, more or less between Wanhua and Dadaocheng, so as not to favor either town. In more recent history, Dadaocheng is where most of the events related to the February 28 Incident took place. The Incident started with the murder of a widow who was suspected of selling contraband cigarettes. The subsequent violent repression of manifestors who wanted retribution ignited a revolt sentiment that swept the whole country.

Unlike most guided tours where one simply follows the guide around while paying close attention to the historical content and the historical landmarks presented, this one had additional interactive components. The tour played out like a game: each sub-group of both local and foreign students described above had to act as a team and cooperate in order to obtain points.

For example, Fred would ask the question “What is the name of this place?” and point to each team to get an answer. Team members would then quickly look at each other to determine who would be the spokesperson.

A correct answer would be awarded one point. Other challenges included compiling pictures of interesting facade details and drinking a full cup of extremely bitter tea as fast as you could!

The team which had amassed the most points received traditional souvenirs to take home. However, the prize put aside, participation in the activity ignited a nostalgic feeling inside many of the university students. The way the activity was organized reminded some of the field trips from their high school days. This must have appeared funny to the AHSNCCU participants, because for them this cultural trip was an integral part of their high school experience.

All in all, the activity was a resounding success. It was clear the university students had had as much fun as the local students. Everyone was talking with one another, exchanging song recommendations or discussing what anime or K-dramas they liked best. This was a true moment of cultural communication, which, combined with the international students’ learning of Dadaocheng’s history, were the event’s alleged goals.





▲ Everyone - from Fred Chiang to the AHSNCCU and NCCU USR staff as well as the high school and university students - seemed to be having a good time.

# CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT

# OIC CONNECT



# STUDENT LIFE

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/Pic by NCCU

# Unleashing Opportunities: Why National Chengchi University Is Your Ultimate Postgraduate Destination in Taiwan

Article by Maria Wilkinson

Applications to degree-seeking postgraduate programs at National Chengchi University (NCCU) open in February. As you look for a Master's or Ph.D. program abroad, I'm sure there are several characteristics that you are looking for. Taiwan is a great option for studying abroad. Life in Taiwan is more affordable, vibrant, and built on democratic values.

But, when it comes to a university in Taiwan, out of the many to choose from, NCCU must be on your list. Through a series of anonymous street interviews, current international students at NCCU provided a grocery list of why they picked NCCU over others.

▼ *Gates to NCCU*



“When I applied to NCCU, knowing there were so many English-taught programs in contrast to the other schools I was looking at, made me feel confident there would be many English courses to choose from.” – 2nd year International Master’s Program in Applied Economics and Social Development (IMES) student

NCCU has a number of Bachelor’s and Master’s programs that are taught in English. If you are coming to Taiwan hoping to start your Mandarin learning once you’ve arrived, there are many English courses available until you are ready to take a Mandarin course.

The list of all English programs and programs that have a sufficient number of courses that can fulfill graduation requirements open in the second round of applications can be [found here](#).

In addition, the Mandarin learning courses offered at NCCU are offered through [NCCU Chinese Language Center](#). Classes are small in size and can be made to fit around your courses. Program prices are competitive and affordable.

“NCCU’s GCIT program is one of the few in Taiwan. It’s new, so the faculty is working to build a strong and vibrant student body. The admissions interview felt relaxed and I could tell the professors were excited about the program, which made me excited- I wasn’t actually sure if I even wanted to do my Master’s, but that interview made me feel it was something I wanted to do. Then, when I got accepted, I found out that NCCU has a 3D printer lab and now I go there once a month to use the printer. It’s cool that the school has this resource open to its student body.” -2nd year Master’s Program in Global Communication and Innovation Technology (GCIT)



▲ Makers Space

▼ 3D printers in makers space



NCCU has been investing in future developments, hoping to create students who are prepared for the future. Along with the 3D printers, which can be found in Makers Space on the 5th floor of the Dah Hsian Seetoo Library, various departments such as the College of International Affairs and the School of Law at NCCU are preparing for the future of AI by inviting speakers to discuss the topic and creating new courses that focus on AI and intersectional areas of study.

“Actually, I was trying to choose between NCCU and a school in Europe, I was prepared to go to Europe and even paid a deposit, but then got the acceptance to NCCU and changed my plans. I wanted to be in Taiwan after visiting and falling in love with the country and everything is much cheaper than Europe. Not only that, but the scholarship options are good in Taiwan. I had looked at other programs in Taiwan, but they didn’t have anything I was interested in, which was why I picked NCCU.” – 2nd year International Master’s Program in International Studies student



▲ Dah Hsian Seetoo Library

Affordability to study in Taiwan is one of the main draws to study in Taiwan. Since NCCU is a public school, tuition is considerably more affordable than private universities. Including tuition, the cost of living on-campus is roughly \$87,765NTD per semester and \$175,530NTD annually. Including tuition, the cost of living off-campus is roughly \$119,165NTD per semester and \$239,230NTD annually. The College of Innovation has created an estimate breakdown [on its website](#). This estimate includes the National Health Insurance, which is \$4,494NTD per semester. In comparison to many countries, the affordability of health insurance is reason enough to study in Taiwan.

In addition, there are several [scholarships](#) offered by the government of Taiwan and NCCU which, if awarded, will significantly decrease the cost of attendance even more.

Other notes made about why students choose to study at NCCU:

“I came to NCCU because of the program, I want to be a diplomat in the future” – 2nd year Department of Diplomacy student

▼ International building







▲ General building of colleges

“There were a few schools I was looking at, but this was the only one in Taipei, so I decided to come here.” – 2nd year International Master’s Student in Asia-Pacific Studies (IMAS)

“My experience has been positive since being here. I feel like I made the right choice coming to NCCU.” - 1st year International Master’s Program in International Studies (IMPIS)

With the experiences shared, we hope to see your application this February. If you have further questions about the application process or would like to know more about the programs at NCCU, please contact the Office of International Cooperation.

STUDENT LIFE

OIC CONNECT

# National Chengchi University: Nurturing Holistic Development through a Flourishing Sports Culture

Article by Isis Calderon

In the heart of Taiwan, National Chengchi University (NCCU) stands as a beacon of academic excellence and vibrant sports culture, where the passion for sports is deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric. At NCCU, the belief that engaging in sports is akin to making an investment in oneself is not merely rhetoric but a guiding principle. The university takes this commitment seriously, ensuring that students have access to a myriad of outstanding sports facilities that create a dynamic and vibrant environment conducive to diverse recreational pursuits.

Campus life at NCCU pulsates with the energy of popular sports such as tennis, taekwondo, table tennis, golf, badminton, and cycling. These activities take center stage in the bustling student community, fostering an atmosphere of togetherness and well-being. However, NCCU's dedication to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle goes beyond the conventional offerings of traditional sports. The university prides itself on boasting a comprehensive array of top-notch facilities that cater to a wide spectrum of interests, providing students with ample opportunities to explore and excel in various physical pursuits.



▲ NCCU's exercise yard

For those seeking high-energy activities, NCCU offers a well-equipped multi-purpose sports stadium that serves as a hub for a myriad of events and competitions. The fully-furnished gymnasium caters to fitness enthusiasts, providing a space to engage in rigorous workouts and training sessions. Specialized rooms dedicated to table tennis and billiards offer students a chance to hone their skills in these popular indoor sports, while purpose-designed spaces for martial arts enthusiasts contribute to the diverse array of physical activities available on campus. The modern fitness center and weightlifting training room are essential for those looking to enhance their physical capabilities under professional guidance.

The outdoor facilities at NCCU further contribute to the rich tapestry of sports offerings. The expansive track and field area provide space for athletic pursuits, while football and soccer fields become hubs of spirited matches and friendly competitions. The swimming pool, meticulously maintained courts for badminton and tennis, and the rock climbing tower cater to a wide range of interests. Baseball fields, well-groomed and inviting, provide an avenue for enthusiasts to revel in the joy of the sport. Meanwhile, basketball courts stand as bustling arenas for spirited matches, fostering a sense of camaraderie and healthy competition among students.



Amidst this vibrant sports culture, Billy, an international student hailing from Hong Kong, pursues his master's degree in Global Communication and Innovation Technology (GCIT) at NCCU. His experience reflects the universality of the positive impact of sports on student life. Billy is thoroughly impressed by the diversity of the sports culture at NCCU, emphasizing the wide variety of clubs and societies available. In his reflections on campus life, he shared, "It's great to see how diverse the sports culture is at NCCU. There is a wide variety of clubs and societies that students can choose from. I know some friends who have explored and started new hobbies here!"

However, in acknowledging the positive aspects of the sports culture, Billy candidly acknowledges a challenge that many students face: crowded sports facilities. Expressing his thoughts on this matter, he mentioned, "It would be nice if the university could work out a better booking system and utilize the resources more efficiently, such as the air conditioning and lockers." Billy's observation brings to light the enthusiasm among students to actively engage in sports and recreational activities and underscores the need for enhanced infrastructure management to ensure a seamless and enjoyable experience for everyone.



Billy’s personal journey at NCCU extends beyond being a participant in sports; it encapsulates the transformative power of sports in fostering connections and building a sense of community. When asked about how sports has impacted him, Billy responded with a smile, “Friendship! (cliché enough).” He went on to explain how playing badminton at NCCU has significantly expanded his social circle. “I have met so many friends on the court and enjoy catching up with them,” he shared warmly.

Not content with merely being a participant, Billy took the initiative to co-found a badminton group specifically for his program/department. His enthusiasm for fostering a sense of community through sports underscores the profound impact that physical activities can have on building connections and camaraderie among students. His active involvement in organizing sports activities as an international student demonstrates the universal language of sports, transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries to unite individuals in the pursuit of shared enjoyment and friendship.

▼ *Billy (in the middle) with his friends at the court.*



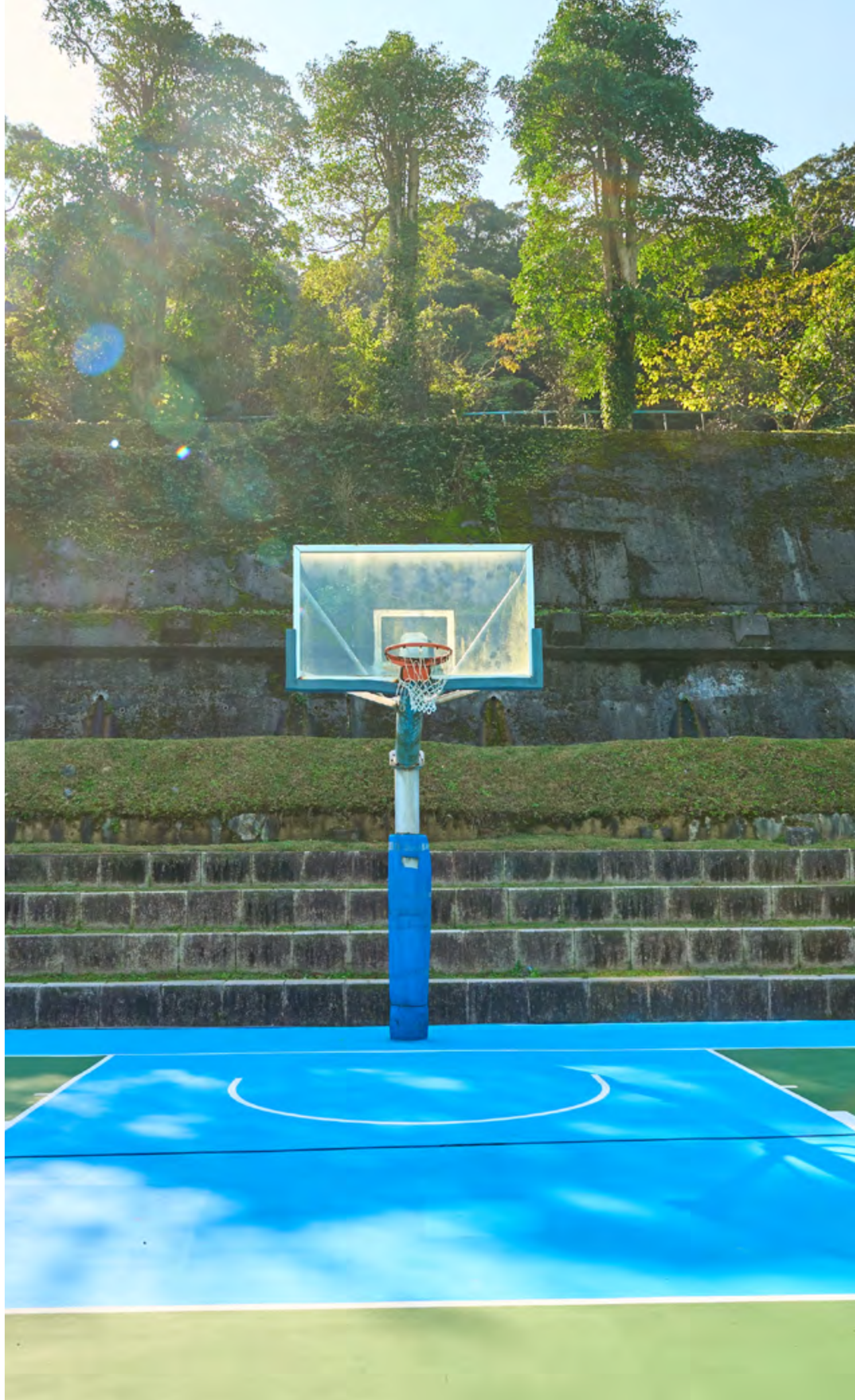


▲ Billy playing badminton

Billy's experience echoes the sentiment that sports go beyond physical fitness; they serve as a powerful catalyst for forging meaningful connections and creating a sense of belonging within the university community. As an international student, his journey at NCCU becomes a testament to the university's commitment to providing a holistic and enriching experience for students from diverse backgrounds.

In essence, National Chengchi University's commitment to sports extends far beyond the playing field;

it's about fostering an environment where students can thrive physically, mentally, and socially. The university aims to cultivate a generation of individuals who are not only academically adept but also possess the strength and confidence to navigate the challenges of life with resilience and vigor. This commitment is reflected not only in the state-of-the-art sports facilities but in the stories of students like Billy, who find friendship, personal growth, and a sense of community through their engagement with the vibrant sports culture at NCCU.





▼ Billy with other GCIT students.



STUDENT LIFE  
OIC CONNECT

# 2023 NCCU-SNU-UT Annual International Symposium: A Convergence of Minds in Tokyo

Article by Isis Calderon

After revising and refining his paper, Lee submitted it to the Taiwan Journal of Democracy, where he believed his work would receive a more positive response. This experience taught Lee that social studies journals base their acceptance decisions on two main factors: the author’s status (Master’s Student, PhD Student, etc.) and the novelty of the subject matter presented in the paper.

The IMICS program at NCCU carefully selected six outstanding students from Korea, the Czech Republic, and Taiwan to present their groundbreaking research. These students were chosen through a thorough review process and had the opportunity to suggest topics that aligned with the central theme. Highlighted paper proposals include:

Overview of the symposium’s main room. ▼  
Photo: Yulgong Lee



- “Reimagining Masculinity in the Digital Age: Korean Culture’s Subversive Potential toward Soft Masculinity among Young Taiwanese Males” by Yulgong Lee, a Korean international student at IMICS.
- “The Battle of the Live Streaming Gaming Platforms - The Role of Internal Regulation for Content Creators” by Ondrej Zeman, an international student from the Czech Republic at IMICS.
- “How Conspiracy Theories and Misinformation Overlapped in the Debate of Covid-19 Alternative Drug: A Case Study of ‘Ivermectin’ on Facebook” by Sheng-Hui Yang, a Taiwanese student in the Master’s Program in Communications.

These are just a few examples of the compelling paper proposals put forth by NCCU students.

## The Digital Age Under the Microscope

As artificial intelligence technologies like ChatGPT become more entrenched in our daily lives, the symposium’s discussions took on an urgent tone. Panels and presentations delved into

the controversial and often divisive implications of such advancements, with a keen eye on their political, social, and cultural ramifications.

## The Outcome of Intellectual Endeavors

The symposium concluded on a high note, with the presenters’ 10-minute expositions followed by engaging Q&A sessions that not only challeng-

ed the presenters but also engaged all attendees in a wide range of topics related to technological advances.

## Deeper Dive into the Symposium’s Intellectual Exchange

The 2023 NCCU-SNU-UT Annual International Symposium in Tokyo was not only a showcase of cutting-edge research but also a vibrant forum for the exchange of ideas among budding scholars. Two of these scholars, Ondrej Zeman from the Czech Republic and Yulgong Lee from Korea, brought unique perspectives to the event, enriching the discourse on digital age dynamics.

Ondrej Zeman’s insightful paper on the challenges faced by Twitch in the rapidly evolving landscape of live streaming gaming platforms stood out for its focus on content creators. His research method, which involved qualitative analysis and in-depth interviews, opened new avenues

in understanding the motivations behind content creation and the impact of platform regulations. At the symposium, Ondrej’s presentation sparked lively debates, with feedback from fellow researchers providing him with new angles to consider, especially on the relationship between platform dynamics and content creator choices.



▲ Ondrej Zeman, IMICS student from Czech Republic, presenting his research “The Battle of the Live Streaming Gaming Platforms - The Role of Internal Regulation for Content Creators”. Photo: Ondrej Zeman



▲ Yulgong Lee, IMICS student from Korea, presenting his research “Reimagining Masculinity in the Digital Age: Korean Culture’s Subversive Potential toward Soft Masculinity among Young Taiwanese Males”. Photo: Yulgong Lee

Yulgong Lee’s presentation delved into the cultural aspects of digital media, exploring the influence of Korean culture on the perceptions of masculinity among young Taiwanese males. His approach to examining soft masculinity through the lens of digital media resonated with many attendees, especially those from East Asian academic circles. The interest shown by master’s students from the University of Tokyo was particularly encouraging for Yulgong, leading to fruitful discussions that extended beyond the confines of the symposium.

Both scholars noted the symposium’s focus on the implications of technological advancements, such as AI, and its integration into everyday life. Yulgong emphasized the need for ethical considerations in AI’s application in research, drawing an interesting parallel between the advent of the internet and current attitudes towards AI in academia. He advocated for the establishment of clear guidelines and ethical standards to govern the use of AI in research, foreseeing a future where AI integration in academic work becomes as commonplace as internet use today.

Ondrej and Yulgong also highlighted the symposium’s role in fostering a collaborative and intellectually stimulating environment. The event was not just a platform for them to present their research, but also a valuable opportunity for networking, sharing diverse perspectives, and learning from the experiences of their peers and established scholars. They both agreed that such interactions were crucial in broadening their academic horizons and enhancing their research methodologies.



▲ Group photo capturing the conclusion of the symposium, featuring international students from various universities around the world. Photo: Yulgong Lee



The recent 2023 NCCU-SNU-UT Annual International Symposium at the University of Tokyo offered a remarkable illustration of the benefits of academic exchanges between universities. As students, your participation in such events can be immensely rewarding. Engaging with peers and scholars from different regions, as exemplified by the contributions of Ondrej Zeman and Yulgong Lee, can significantly broaden academic horizons. This symposium highlighted the diverse perspectives and innovative ideas that emerge when students from varied backgrounds collaborate – It's a call to action for you to actively seek out and participate in similar academic forums. These platforms are not just about sharing research; they are about building a vibrant community of learners and thinkers. The opportunities for growth, learning, and networking presented by these exchanges are invaluable, and they pave the way for a richer, more interconnected academic experiences.

# STUDENT LIFE

# CONNECT



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