

# A Starter Pack to the Lunar New Year



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A photograph of several red, spherical lanterns hanging from black strings against a clear blue sky. The lanterns have gold-colored patterns and tassels hanging from their bottoms. The image is partially obscured by a white rectangular area containing the title.

# COVER STORY

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# A Starter Pack to the Lunar New Year

Article by Maria Wilkinson

**L**unar New Year (known as Chinese New Year or Spring Festival in Taiwan) is right around the corner, starting February 10th this year. The New Year is ten days of celebration, though Taiwan's recognition of the national holiday changes in length from year to year.

In mythology, Lunar New Year began from the story of Nian (年; year), a mythical beast that lived under the sea (or others may say in the mountains). During the Spring Festival, Nian would trek through villages in the middle of the night eating people, with a particular appetite for children.

One year, the villagers thought to hide from the beast, all except for one man. The man said he would seek revenge, so he hung red chunlians (春聯) and set off firecrackers. Apparently, the man had found that Nian was frightened of the color red and of the noise of the firecrackers. The next day, the villagers discovered that their village had not been destroyed.

Afterward, people in villages began to hang red chunlians (春聯) and set off firecrackers to ward off Nian. Nian is believed to have been slain by an ancient Taoist monk, but the tradition of keeping Nian away has continued on.

The customs around Lunar New Year are numerous and differ from country to country. The following are just a few traditions in Taiwan that you can participate in this year.



Firstly, clean your house or room (or dorm) from top to bottom. Windows, floors, bathrooms- you name it, you clean it. It's best to clean out all dust and grime out of your house to ensure no unlucky drifting dirt can impede your chances for a lucky year ahead. Usually, the house is cleaned before the first day of New Year. Not only should you clean, but you should make sure to remove all trash from your house before the first day. Additionally, any trash that you accumulate during the New Year should be left to the side, as cleaning during the New Year is seen as an inauspicious act.

After you have completed the cleaning of your lovely abode, to ward off Nian and to bring good luck, you can hang chunlians (春聯) around your house. Chunlians are Chinese decorations that come in a number of different forms.

Doufang (斗方) is a style of decoration that is square and points to four cardinal points. Often around Lunar New Year common Mandarin characters seen on doufang's are fu (福; Good fortune) and chun (春; Spring). Both characters tend to be placed upside down since "down" or "inverted" (倒) shares the same sound as "arrival" (到). Meaning, it will come to you. (Side note: it is best not to put "chun" on your door, as many people are coming and going and your fortune will spill out.)





- ▲ Doufang (斗方) is a style of decoration that is square and points to four cardinal points.  
Source: <https://donnavuong.wordpress.com/2013/01/28/diy-chun-lian-and-a-quick-lesson-on-chinese-culture/>

The red, long rectangular chunlian or duilian (對聯) that goes on the sides of your doors. ▶  
Source: <https://www.terrageria.com/pictures-subjects/doors/picture.doors.taiw5545L.html>

Another form of decoration is the red, long rectangular chunlian or duilian (對聯) that goes on the sides of your doors. Each rectangular chunlian usually has seven characters. Together, the two dualians pair as successive lines that rhyme and have the same meter, known as a couplet. Usually, the duilian expresses good wishes for prosperity.

One aspect of Lunar New Year that many children (and let's be honest, we students also enjoy), is the giving and receiving of red envelopes (紅包; hong bao). These red envelopes tend to hold cash inside but the amount depends on the relationship between the giver and receiver and also their economic status. The giving of money signifies "lucky money" that gives good wishes to the receiver for a prosperous and wealthy year. Typically, if you are the





giver, you should avoid giving money that has odd numbers. 300, 500, 700, etc. are not auspicious numbers. It is best if you can make the number even (examples are: 600, 1,200, 3,600). When receiving money, you may say gōng xǐ fā cái (恭喜發財). Translated literally, it means; hope you get rich. Though the meaning is more to say “wishing you prosperity in the coming year”.

These three traditions are only a few of the basics, but take these as your starter kit for participating in the New Year traditions. From the Office of International Cooperation, we wish you a happy Lunar New Year! May your belly be filled with delicious food and your pockets full of money.

Gong Xi Fa Cai!



▲ The giving of money signifies “lucky money” that gives good wishes to the receiver for a prosperous and wealthy year.  
Source: <https://today.line.me/tw/v2/article/6W73mN>











# GLOBAL CONVERSATION

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/Pic by Marcin Jozwiak  
on Unsplash

# Jasmine Wu:

## A Student's Voice at COP28

Article by Maria Wilkinson

### Highlight of the Article:

*Jasmine Wu, a student at NCCU and a dedicated climate activist, shares her experiences and insights from participating in the COP28 conference. Her journey reflects the growing importance of youth involvement in global environmental discussions. Here, we present a series of questions and Jasmine's responses, offering a glimpse into her motivations, experiences, and the lessons she learned.*

▼ Youth organizes protest on the last day of COP28 to call for “phasing out fossil fuel” to be included in final negotiation text





## **1. What inspired you to become involved in climate activism and how did you secure the opportunity to volunteer at COP28?**

**Jasmine Wu:** Discovering the impacts of my everyday choices, especially regarding animal agriculture, on the environment and animal welfare sparked my awareness of climate change. This realization, coupled with my concern for social inequalities and human rights issues, propelled me to take action. I became the Plant-Based Project leader and club president of

the NCCU Green24 Sustainability Club in 2022, and later joined the Taiwan Youth Climate Coalition (TWYCC). TWYCC's role in training volunteers for COPs for over a decade enabled me to represent them at COP28, aiming to bring global insights back to Taiwan for further advocacy.

## **2. What were some of the most impactful experiences or discussions you witnessed at COP28? How did these moments deepen your understanding of global climate issues?**

**Jasmine Wu:** The most inspiring aspect at COP28 was witnessing the power of people, especially young activists' determination to be included in the policy-making process. Their passion and strategies to make a difference in climate injustices were truly motivating. Another impactful experience was understanding the importance of creativity and storytelling in climate

activism. Initiatives like "ClimateLive" showed how alternative methods like music festivals can effectively spread awareness, especially in contexts where traditional forms of protest are not feasible.

**3. Volunteering at such a significant event must come with its challenges. Could you describe a particularly challenging situation you faced at COP28 and how you managed it?**

**Jasmine Wu:** The most challenging aspect was dealing with first-timer burnout. The intense schedule of events, negotiations, and networking, combined with processing everything simultaneously, was overwhelming. This led me to reassess my goals and expectations, emphasizing the importance of balance and self-care.

**4. From your perspective as a student and climate activist, what key takeaways or lessons learned from COP28 are crucial for your peers to understand?**

**Jasmine Wu:** Climate change is not just an environmental issue; it's intertwined with every aspect of our lives. It's crucial to find a role that aligns with your strengths in the fight against climate change. Whether you're a negotiator, artist, scientist, or lawyer, finding your flow is key to creating impact





▲ TWYCC cooperated with Taiwan Climate Partnership to hold an event about Intergenerational Equity and the importance of youth's voices in climate actions. Jasmine Wu served as moderator in the event.

▼ Attending side events at COP28 to gain insights about different topics, this one was about Just Transition in cities





## 5. For fellow students who are eager to contribute to climate activism but might need help knowing where to start, what advice would you give based on your experiences before, during, and after COP28?

**Jasmine Wu:** Before COP28, it's important to set clear goals and understand the UN and COP systems. During the conference, it's crucial to balance your schedule, leave time for flexibility and rest, and take notes for reflection. After COP28, take time to process your experiences and share them with others who might be interested in attending

Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged to put "Climate Action With Taiwan" in the Dubai's metro, as if telling the world that we have a presence here! ▶

### Before:

- Know the goal of what you'd like to achieve in COP.
- Join COP youth constituency (YOUNGO) to get involved in specific topic working groups for more influence.





- Get to know the systems of UN and COP so you will know what to look for (it's complicated with all those UN terms)
- Consult with experienced COP goers to know the reality compared to your expectations.
- Learn the skills of networking (super important skill!)

#### **During:**

- Intentionally leave time for flexibility and rest, it's easy to overestimate your capacity as a first-timer and it's also easier to get tired with so much information to catch up and process
- Take notes of what you've learned, your feelings, reflection
- Proactively reach out to people, unexpected chances might appear!

#### **After:**

- Take some days to stroll the city that you worked so hard to come to
- Organize the reflections and the plentiful photos you've taken, so that you could share your experience with other people who would also like to attend COP

## 6. In your opinion as a student, how can universities foster more spaces for climate activism and education?

▼ *Youth having meetings outside the meeting rooms about the negotiation situation in regards of Just Transition topic*



**Jasmine Wu:** Universities should proactively cooperate with established student groups fighting for climate change, like the NCCU Green24 Sustainability Club. They can support and collaborate on projects or include student climate activists in policy-making processes. Encouraging platforms that gather like-minded professors, students, and faculties to work on passionate projects is also crucial. For climate education, integrating climate change topics into various departments can be effective, like offering Eco-Literature for Linguistics or Indigenous Climate Justice Issues in Ethnicity Departments.



▲ Taiwan Youth Climate Coalition (TWYCC) COP28 Delegates. I'm second one from the left, Yunfang is third from the left

**7. Based on your observations at COP28, how do you perceive the gap between climate policy discussions and real-world actions? What steps do you think are necessary to bridge this gap?**

**Jasmine Wu:** Policy outcomes at COP are like setting the direction of a cruise; they are vital but vague. To effectively limit global temperature rise, every sector, civil society, and individuals must work together in a fast, just, and equitable manner.

## 8. What's the importance of youth participation in high-level political discussions such as the Conference?

**Jasmine Wu:** Youth participation is crucial for demanding inter-generational justice. It ensures that the perspectives and demands of younger generations are heard and taken seriously in important decisions.

## 9. After participating in COP28, what are your next steps or goals as a climate activist? How do you plan to continue contributing to the fight against climate change?

**Jasmine Wu:** Inspired by COP28, I plan to continue tackling industrialized animal agriculture and promoting a plant-based lifestyle. I'm excited about our "Plant-Based Project" and the upcoming GreenFest at NCCU, which will be a vegan and plastic-free themed fair. Follow @nccugreen24 for updates and opportunities to get involved!

## 10. Was Taiwan represented in any other capacity at the conference?

**Additionally, could you share your thoughts on the significance of Taiwan's inclusion in high-level international discussions like COP28?**

**Jasmine Wu:** Taiwan, not recognized as a country in the UN, participated as an observer at COP28. This status still allowed for meaningful engagement through observing negotiations, participating in side events, and networking. Taiwan's cooperation with diplomatic allies in these settings is crucial for forging future possibilities. Even without official recognition, we can still make our voices heard through various constituencies like "Children & Youth" at the UNFCCC.

Jasmine's journey at COP28 is more than just a personal achievement; it's a reference point for student activism worldwide. Just another proof that being a student does not limit one's ability to influence global issues. Instead, it offers a unique platform



for bringing fresh perspectives and innovative solutions. Students possess a blend of passion, creativity, and resilience that is essential in tackling complex challenges like climate change and it is indeed a big opportunity that we must take seriously.

Students are not just future leaders; they are change-makers here and now. In recent world events, we have noticed how young voices and actions can shape policies, influence public opinion, and drive societal change. By engaging in activism, you can develop critical thinking, leadership, and collaborative skills that are invaluable in your personal and professional life.

Jasmine's story is a call to students to recognize their potential and harness their passions for a cause they believe in. Whether it's climate change, social justice, or any other pressing issue, there is a space and a need for student activism. It's about finding what resonates with you, what stirs your spirit, and taking that first step toward making a difference.

To students at NCCU & worldwide: your voice matters, your actions count, and your involvement is crucial. Look for issues that ignite your passion, seek opportunities to learn and grow, and don't be afraid to take the lead. Remember, every big movement starts with a small step, and your journey

as an activist can start today. Be inspired by stories like Jasmine's and be the change you wish to see in the world. Your engagement today shapes the world of tomorrow.

◀ *Satirical, creative action outside the negotiation rooms. This is called the "Fossil of the Day Award" which Climate Action Network organization gives award daily to the country who's doing the worst in climate change action.*





▲ *Inside the negotiation room*

If you are interested in learning and following NCCU Green24 Sustainability Club, don't hesitate to give them a follow on Instagram @nccugreen24!

Get involved - reach out - look for a community that makes things happen and advocate for things you believe in.

**If you made it this far, thanks for reading!**



GLOBAL  
CONVERSATION  
OIC CONNECT







# PEOPLE

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/Pic by Suelee Wright  
on Unsplash

# The Old and the New Religious Ways:

## Interview With Professor Gao Chen-Hung

Article by Léa Charette

### Highlight of the Article:

*The following is a transcription of an interview with professor Gao Chen-Hung. The interview's aim was to explore traditional and modern Taiwanese folk culture in order to give foreign students and residents an in-depth understanding of the beliefs and superstitions unique to Taiwan.*

**G**ao Chen-Hung (高振宏) is an associate professor at National Chengchi University's Department of Chinese Literature. His research is centered on Taoism and folk beliefs, literature, and folklore. He kindly offered to share his expertise on Taiwanese traditional beliefs and their transformation in a globalized and interconnected world.

Foreigners living in Taiwan may not be overly familiar with the details of Taiwan's religious tradition. Hence, this interview was conducted with an educational perspective in mind. Professor Gao's discourse can be a reference for interested foreign students that are eager to research these topics, but who do not know where to start



▲ Portrait of Professor Gao Chen-Hung  
/Photo Credit: Léa Charette.

▼ Professor Gao in a discussion with Chiu Yi-kai (邱奕凱) from OIC's Cooperation & Exchange Section, who kindly assisted with the interview. Photo Credit: Léa Charette.





## 1. Please briefly introduce yourself, your work at NCCU and your educational background.

I grew up near Sanchong (三重) and was raised in a temple. My father worked as a gas deliveryman. I grew up in the mountains in a temple until junior high school and came to Taipei for school. I come from the Gao (高) family known for its intellectuals and scholars. The Gao family has five branches in the upper branch and seven branches in the lower branch, a total of twelve branches. Education is very important to our family. As I belong to the third branch of the upper branch, since I was a child, my dad used to tell me that we have a literary heritage to honour.

## 2. How has your family background and/or how you grew up influence your choice of studies?

My father is a committee member in a temple in Sanchong where I grew up. Throughout my childhood, I was constantly immersed in my surrounding religious culture and naturally became interested in it. Moreover, as a child I used to suffer from malnutrition and a rather weak

However, by the time I was growing up, our family had already been declining for successive generations. Becoming a professor was a primary goal to improve my family's situation. I also wanted to study in order to lighten my dad's burden. I attended National Chengchi University, where I studied Chinese throughout my undergraduate years and pursued both my master's and doctoral degrees, all in the Chinese department. It ultimately led to me becoming a professor in the Chinese Department here at NCCU.

▼ *A glimpse of the Jingmei Grand Procession (Jingmei Dà Rào jìng).*





constitution. I used to take medicine prescribed by the temple gods through divine mediums (乩童 jītóng).

Just like that, I grew up healthily from that point on. My sisters and I were saved by consuming the food and medicine that were blessed by the gods. We were lucky to experience healing through divine intervention. This helped foster a strong connection with temples and Taoism in me. I felt a sense of gratitude towards the deities that protected me, and felt it was my duty to do research in order to acknowledge those divine blessings.



### 3. You specialize in the study of Taoism in classical Chinese literature as well as Taiwanese folk beliefs. Could you tell us more about what exactly you found interesting in these two subjects?

What is interesting in the difference between folk beliefs and Taoism is that they serve different purposes. They come from two different energies, which are pronounced the same in Chinese: 炁 (Ch'i, primordial energy) versus 氣 (Qì, gas, vapor, breath). Taoism gods are said to come from this Ch'i, from the primordial force of creation. Conversely, in folk beliefs people worship humans which became deities, and who consequently are closer to them. Purity is emphasized in Taoism. The higher the gods, the purer/cleaner offerings people offer.

Folk beliefs are less restrictive. Offerings are more “common”, closer to us humans. They include offerings like fish, pork, and chicken (called 三牲 in Chinese, which means three kinds of meats). In this vein, folk beliefs often focus on practical requests - e.g. money, love -, while

Taoism addresses more transcendental concerns. For example, students go to worship the Wenchang Wang (文昌王/文昌帝君) before taking an exam in the hopes of getting good results.

#### 4. What significance do parades like the Jingmei Grand Procession hold for local residents today?

I do not think the Jingmei Grand Procession in Taiwan is particularly special. It is essentially a year-end thanksgiving for peace and good harvest as part of the “Lower Yuan Festival” (下元節) on the 15th day of the 10th lunar month. This makes it a part of the “Upper Yuan (上元節/元宵, Lantern Festival), Middle Yuan (中元節, Ghost Festival), Lower Yuan” trilogy. The Lower Yuan celebrates the birthday of water official Shui Guan Da Di (水官大帝), who dispels disasters and calamities.

When Taiwan was a primarily agricultural society, connections between villages would traditionally be made and maintained through these processions. It would connect people together, thus facilitating mutual aid and emotional connections in rural communities. Now, administrative regions are more prominent than individual villages. Processions now are therefore more a process of forming a larger collective consciousness. In an individualistic society, processions give people from different neighborhoods a chance to talk to each other and exchange information.

An example of the modernization of folk traditions is the Neon Gods we can see - e.g. the Third Prince in the Jingmei Procession (see pictures) - dancing to electronic music while wearing modern accessories.





◆ The Electronic Third Prince (電音三太子) doing his dance during the Jingmei Procession.







▲ A glimpse of the Jingmei Grand Procession (Jingmei Dà Rào jìng).

## 5. How did the phenomenon of the Electric-Techno Neon Gods - e.g. the electronic music-inspired Third Prince (電音三太子) - happen?

The Third Prince was a divine general, not in the sense of a military officer, but more akin to a guardian of the gods. Traditionally, during the procession, individuals would perform dances to help purify the entire area and cleanse the place where the procession is held. The origin of the Electronic Third Prince, as far as I know, is different from how it is portrayed in temple processions and movies. It mainly came from the Taoyuan area.

The Third Prince is often portrayed by young people, who brought the music and dance moves from the nightclubs in the temple processions to replace the more traditional kind of music. That is why people these days find it very entertaining. The most famous display of Electric-Techno Neon Gods was in 2017 during the World University Games sport event. At that time, the mayor of Kaohsiung had incorporated the performance of the Third Prince into the opening ceremony.

To be honest, I do not agree with this phenomenon. First, I do not think deities should be associated with electronic music. As the Third Prince is relatively young, using more lively music is fine, but not that kind. Second, I worry that this trend of Electronic Music Third Prince will lead to a homogenization of festive cultures. Temples from the South of Taiwan already borrow trends and practices from the Northern part that aren't theirs originally. This leads to every event being more and more similar, erasing each temple or area's unique characteristics.

## **6. In fast-paced modern times dominated by social media, how can traditional folk beliefs continue to be promoted and attract more followers?**

In my own understanding, it is mainly because in modern society, we lack what a Japanese scholar called "community consciousness". There is no awareness of such a community. In fact, from the perspective of my university days at NCCU, the Cultural Cup competition was a series and

everyone had to participate. That competition became a crucial memory, and it was also an important factor in the feeling of pride and belonging that students felt towards the university. Now, the Cultural Cup allows free participation, so students' identification with NCCU is not as strong. Similarly, if cultural activities hope to form a kind of social identification, they must first have a sense of group consciousness.

If you ask me, as I am more traditional, I do not think it is necessary to integrate new media such as social media platforms and short videos into the temple practices. However, from the perspective of communication, these mediums can attract more people to pay attention to religious rites. Additionally, some online feedback can be useful to take a new modern direction and introduce some new elements to our practices. These new elements may not all be correct, but through communication, we can see what everyone's opinions are.



## 7. What is the significance of international students participating in the Jingmei Grand Procession? What do you hope they learn or understand from this activity?

Actually, there was a practical purpose behind this. When I encountered the Chief Executive Officer of Jingmei Jiying Temple, he asked me to advise him, since we share the same surname. Jingmei Jiying Temple lacks uniqueness; the processions I mentioned earlier are all outsourced, which does not give it a distinct character. So, he asked me, “What can we do?”. In cooperation with professor Tang Ching-Ping and the Office of International Cooperation, we managed to recruit many eager international students to join the procession, as I believed that carrying a palanquin would be a unique experience for them. The Officer liked my idea.



▲ Eager international students participated in the procession by carrying the palanquin.

My main goals with this project were twofold. Firstly, I hoped that the temple’s processions would not rely solely on outsourced individuals. You have to know that traditional processions are typically voluntary, involving no monetary transactions—just a dinner for everyone at night. Outsourcing creates a commercial relationship, lacking a sense of cohesion.





like a refreshing stream for the temple. They can post about the temple proceedings on Instagram, which is free publicity. When other foreign students come to Taiwan, they might consider your place because of that publicity instead of you having to find local YouTubers to attract them.

## **8. What resources are available for foreign students who want to learn more about Taiwanese religion?**

Secondly, I wanted the temple to internationalize. By that, I mean it should not be exclusively focused on the Gao family. It is too closed in on itself, too localized. I believe we need to open up and welcome different people to participate in the processions. A temple, to be lively, needs different people to join. In this way, international students are

I have provided a few websites that would be interesting. The following [folklore database](#) is the electronic resource at the Traditional Arts Center. If you are interested, you can click on the traditional acrobatics theme knowledge network. There are some interesting [videos](#).

Another database is the “Folklore and Religion” [collection](#) under the National Cultural Memory Bank of the Ministry of Culture. However, the internationalization of the two databases needs to be strengthened. The websites are not yet available in English, but you can translate web pages manually by using the translating function in your parameters.

You can find additional information on Professor Gao on his [page](#) on the NCCU Chinese Department website. If you have any questions, feel free to send him an email. We hope this interview has been both interesting and instructive. Thank you for reading!



▲ Candid portrait of Professor Gao, with a well-timed camera light streak  
/Photo Credit: Léa Charette.

# PEOPLE OIC CONNECT









# STUDENT LIFE

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/Pic by 復堯  
on Unsplash

# NCCU at the Jessup Moot Court Taiwan Regional Competition 2024

Article by Maria Wilkinson

The Jessup Moot Court Competition stands as a pinnacle in the realm of legal education and advocacy. It offers law students a unique opportunity to delve into the intricacies of international law through a simulated courtroom experience. Each year, law schools from around the world participate in this prestigious event, vying for the chance to showcase their legal prowess on an international stage.

At the heart of the Jessup competition lies the simulation of a fictional dispute between imaginary countries, brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. This simulation tasks participating teams with crafting detailed legal memorials, akin to real-world court briefs, outlining arguments for both

the applicant and respondent sides of the case. These memorials serve as the foundation upon which teams construct their oral arguments, which they present before a panel of judges during the competition rounds.

The topics chosen for the simulation are carefully curated to reflect timely issues in public international law. Known as the *Compromis*, this document forms the basis of the case, posing complex legal questions and dilemmas for participants to dissect and argue. Despite the fictional nature of the parties involved, the issues raised in the case often mirror real-world challenges faced by nations and individuals in the international arena, thus providing students with a platform to engage with pressing

*The Official Poster of Jessup 2024 Competition* ►



# THE CASE CONCERNING THE STERREN FORTY

# 2024 Jessup

## TAIWAN ROUNDS

"The Queen's Friend Is  
Threatening Our Future"

CANCELLED  
without prejudice

#FreeTheSterrenForty

Concerning  
Sterren Forty  
Heats Up

BY FRED SCHALYDEPARI

### THE CASE CONCERNING THE STERREN FORTY

THE JESSUP 2024 PROBLEM CONCERNS TRAITORS AND CROOKS, AND RAISES ISSUES RELATED TO THE RIGHT TO POLITICAL EXPRESSION, STATELESSNESS, THE RIGHT TO A NATIONALITY, AND THE SCOPE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL'S AUTHORITY IN THE PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES.

### 國立臺北大學三峽校區

2024/2/2~2/4



In the 2024 edition of the competition, the Case Concerning the Sterren Forty has been shaped to explore the concept of state responsibility in preventing the deprivation of nationality and addressing statelessness. This topic highlights the critical intersection between human rights and state sovereignty, shedding light on the obligations of states to protect the rights of individuals within their jurisdiction.

▼ *The Room Poster for NCCU Team*



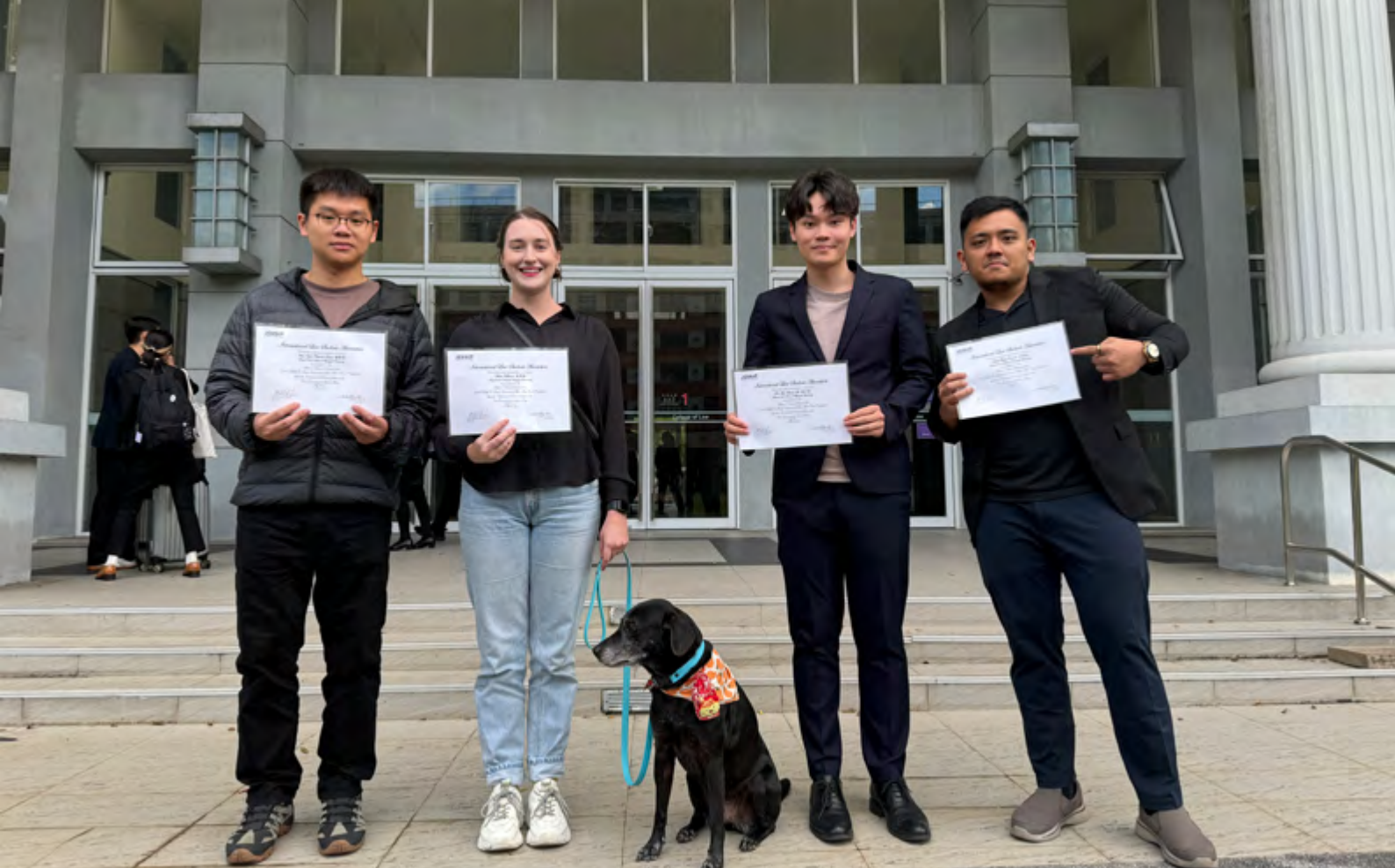
In Taiwan, participation in the Jessup competition begins with regional rounds to determine the school that will represent the country on the international stage. National Chengchi University (NCCU) was among the contenders in the regional round, facing off against five other esteemed universities.

Preparing for and participating in the regional round is a rigorous endeavor that demands meticulous research, strategic planning, and

effective advocacy skills. Teams must delve deep into international legal principles, crafting persuasive arguments grounded in precedent and scholarly analysis. During oral presentations, speakers must navigate the intricacies of courtroom procedure, anticipating and addressing questions from the judges with clarity and confidence.



◀ *The 2024 Jessup Competition NCCU Team*



▲ Team With Certificates of Participation on the last day of the Competition

Although NCCU did not emerge victorious in the regional round, the experience proved invaluable for the participating students. Engaging with complex legal issues and honing their advocacy skills provided them with a deeper understanding of the role of international law in shaping global affairs. Moreover, the competition underscored the importance of providing a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and represented within the international legal framework.

In essence, the Jessup Moot Court Competition serves as a testament to the power of legal education in fostering critical thinking, advocacy skills, and global awareness among aspiring legal professionals. By grappling with complex legal dilemmas and engaging in spirited debate, participants emerge not only as better advocates but also as informed global citizens committed to upholding the principles of justice and equality on the world stage.





▲ One of the Moot Court Rooms for the Competition at National Taipei University

Judges at the End of One Round ▼



Beyond its educational value, the competition also serves as a forum for networking and collaboration among legal scholars, practitioners, and students from diverse backgrounds. Participants have the opportunity to interact with esteemed judges and legal experts, gaining insights and perspectives that enrich their understanding of international law and its implications for global governance.

The Jessup competition contributes to the development of international law as a dynamic and evolving field. The arguments and insights generated during the competition often inform ongoing debates and shape the trajectory of legal scholarship and practice. In this way, the competition serves as a catalyst for innovation and progress within the realm of international law. Through rigorous preparation, spirited debate, and

meaningful engagement with the principles of international law, participants emerge not only as better advocates but also as informed global citizens committed to promoting justice and equality in an increasingly interconnected world. Students who are interested in International Law with some background in Law are encouraged to join next year's NCCU team as a team member or coach.

# New Student Guide:

## Addressing concerns adjusting to life in Taiwan

Article by Angela Glowacki

The Spring 2024 semester is well underway and hopefully new international students have begun to adjust to life in Taiwan. It can definitely take some time to find your footing as an international student due to the new environment. Here is some useful information that can help with the transition process.

### Important dates

While the [academic calendar](#) contains many important dates that students should be aware of this semester, it is important to note that midterm exams are held from April 15-19 and final exams are held from June 14-20. Students can check their course syllabi for more specific dates of their exams.

NCCU operates on a 16 +2 week semester. This means that while the semester is officially 18 weeks, professors have the option to utilize the last two weeks up to their discretion. In some cases, professors will choose to assign remote work and not hold classes the final two weeks of

the semester. Be sure to pay attention to how each professor arranges their semesters, as you might find that some of your classes will stop meeting before others.

### Getting Involved

There are many different ways to get involved and meet other students. @oic.nccu, @nccuia, and @ic\_cafe are all organizations that regularly host activities for international students. You can follow these accounts on Instagram to stay updated about upcoming events. Additionally, the OIC office sends emails promoting certain events tailored to both international and local students. These events are great opportunities to meet



new friends and get more involved in the community. Lastly, clubs are another effective way to get more involved with the campus. There will be a club fair from March 5-7 where many student organizations will be promoting themselves. There is a wide variety of clubs at NCCU and the club fair is an excellent place to check out all your options. All of the clubs are open to international students and it is a fun and consistent way to meet local students as well as practice your Mandarin.

▼ *The health center is located directly opposite the main entrance.  
photo credit: Angela Glowacki*

## Health Services

Having any sort of health issue can be challenging to address in a foreign country. Luckily, the [health center near campus](#) is both convenient and affordable. The clinic offers both physical and mental health services. The doctors and most staff speak English and will be able to communicate with you and take care of you. The check-in process is very straightforward and often times the wait is not very long. The hours are somewhat limited, so it is important to check when the clinic is open beforehand.



## Transportation

Public transportation is very convenient in Taipei. Both buses and MRT run regularly until around midnight. Bus Taiwan is an incredibly useful app to track buses and look at routes when traveling. I recommend this app because Google Maps will sometimes have incorrect information regarding when the next bus arrives. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the bus stops around NCCU, as well as the MRT stations. The closest MRT station to NCCU is the [Taipei Zoo Station](#), which is easily accessible via bus or a 20-minute walk. The Brown line connects to other MRT lines, making it very convenient to get around Taipei. Both the bus and MRT use EasyCards as the main way to pay for fare. You can purchase and add money to EasyCards at convenience stores and MRT stations.

## Banking

If you plan to stay in Taiwan for an extended period of time, you may consider opening a bank account. The most popular options for banking are through the [post office](#) or at First Bank. In order to open a bank account, you will need to have a valid ARC. In addition, if you choose to open an account with the post office, you will need a stamp with your Chinese name engraved. There is a [shop](#) by campus that prepares the stamps very quickly. If you do not plan on opening a bank account in Taiwan, luckily there are ATMs in almost all convenience stores that accept foreign cards. It is better to carry cash on you at all times because many stores and restaurants only accept cash.

▼ *MRT Taipei Zoo Station*





It is completely natural to feel nervous and displaced adjusting to studying abroad. It can be difficult not knowing how to take care of things that you would normally be able to figure out in your home country. Hopefully some of this information can help alleviate some of the stresses of getting used to Taiwan. Studying abroad is an experience filled with highs and lows, learning how to navigate your way here will lead to personal growth. Remember that you are not alone! Don't hesitate to seek support and help from your fellow students, faculty and other resources. With an open mind and willingness to adapt, you will soon find yourself feeling more at ease and at home in this wonderful country.



- ▲ The key shop by campus that prepares the stamps very quickly.  
photo credit: Angela Glowacki
- ▼ The post office is also located directly opposite the main entrance.  
photo credit: Angela Glowacki





# “You’re Not From Here, But Not A Tourist”:

## Living As A Foreign Exchange Student In Taiwan

Article by Léa Charette

### Highlight of the Article:

*This article’s content will reflect on the position of a foreign exchange student in Taiwan. Its aim is not to present my student exchange experience as unique or universal. I simply wished to give an account of my experience in the hopes that it will resonate with others.*

Shortly before the beginning of Chinese New Year - while the train tickets were still available and relatively inexpensive -. my Taiwanese friend and I had decided to take a short weekend trip to Tainan to experience the good food and local culture. It was during this trip that I reflected on the past five months I had already spent as an exchange student and what it really meant to be a foreign student in Taiwan.

As we were among the many other passengers that were boarding at Songshan Station, I kept apologizing while I bumped into people. “不好意思，不好意思”，I repeated. My friend noticed it and smiled. She said to me: “you say *bù hǎoyìsi*, you are a real Taiwanese now”. I did not know what she meant. She explained: “I think Taiwanese say 不好意思 a lot more than other Mandarin speakers. In my opinion, Mainland Chinese people



only say 抱歉 (bàoqiàn) or 對不起 (duìbùqǐ); they seldom say 不好意思.” That interesting language lesson made me feel proud to have unconsciously adopted a language characteristic of Tāiwān. It made me feel closer to, as my friend had said, a “real Taiwanese”.

As we continued talking, I made the joke that “Taiwanese people were the Canadians of Asia”, as both countries seemingly value being apologetic and respectful in all situations. When in a foreign country, it is often a reflex to make comparisons with the one you left. The comparisons are not meant to be overly critical of either place, but are simply a natural consequence of living somewhere else.

However, when you live elsewhere for an extended period of time, the contrast slowly fades away. You start to see things for themselves instead of in opposition to what happens in your home country. This is one of the obvious characteristics of acclimation.





*Tainan illuminated: we were in the city during the month of the Taiwan Lantern Festival.*

A few days before going to Tainan, I had come back from a trip to Japan. My Japanese is not very good; I spoke in English to people I encountered if I really needed to make myself understood. The sole purpose of my trip was to see my friends and do some sightseeing. I had no doubts about my status as a foreign tourist. People would see me carrying my luggage around and would automatically deduct that I was only there in passing.







To be back in Taiwan was a different sensation. Here, I feel like neither a proper tourist nor a true resident, more like somebody in between. Anyone who has gone/is currently going on an exchange can agree that it is an interesting experience. You become intimately familiar with the country you are residing in, all the while with the knowledge that you will not stay there indefinitely (or perhaps you will; it happens). There is this push-and-pull between your status as an outsider and your extended knowledge of your surroundings that cannot make you just a tourist. I will expand on both extremes in the following paragraphs.

▲ *Lacing up my shoes before a day spent exploring the city/Photo Credit: 朱珮妤.*

In terms of knowledge, some of the people who have just arrived in Taiwan might wonder as to the usefulness of understanding or speaking Chinese. If you plan on living in Taiwan long-term, then I definitely think you should put some effort in learning the language. I am far from fluent, but I manage to communicate with people daily, and this has helped smooth things tremendously since I landed in August.



Being fluent in Chinese is not necessarily to have a pleasant experience, but does come in handy when, for example, you have to make an appointment over the phone. There are various ways through which you can acquire some Chinese other than enrolling classes at university. A good tip is to make friends with Chinese-speaking students. The friend I am traveling with first asked me to be her language exchange partner. Every week, we would meet for a Chinese and English lesson. This is how we became friends, and how my Chinese vocabulary gradually improved.

Previously, I mentioned a common “status as outsiders”. This status can be felt more-or-less acutely during your stay in Taiwan, depending on the places you go to, the people you talk to, etc. On our first day in Tainan, my friend and I went to eat dinner at a small donburi place near our hotel. There were two other groups of foreigners, one Dutch mother-and-son duo and an American couple (the woman could speak Chinese). The chef and owner spent a lot of time entertaining them, asking questions in English and offering local liquor for



▲ The aforementioned Japanese donburi restaurant  
/Photo Credit: 朱珮好.

them to try.

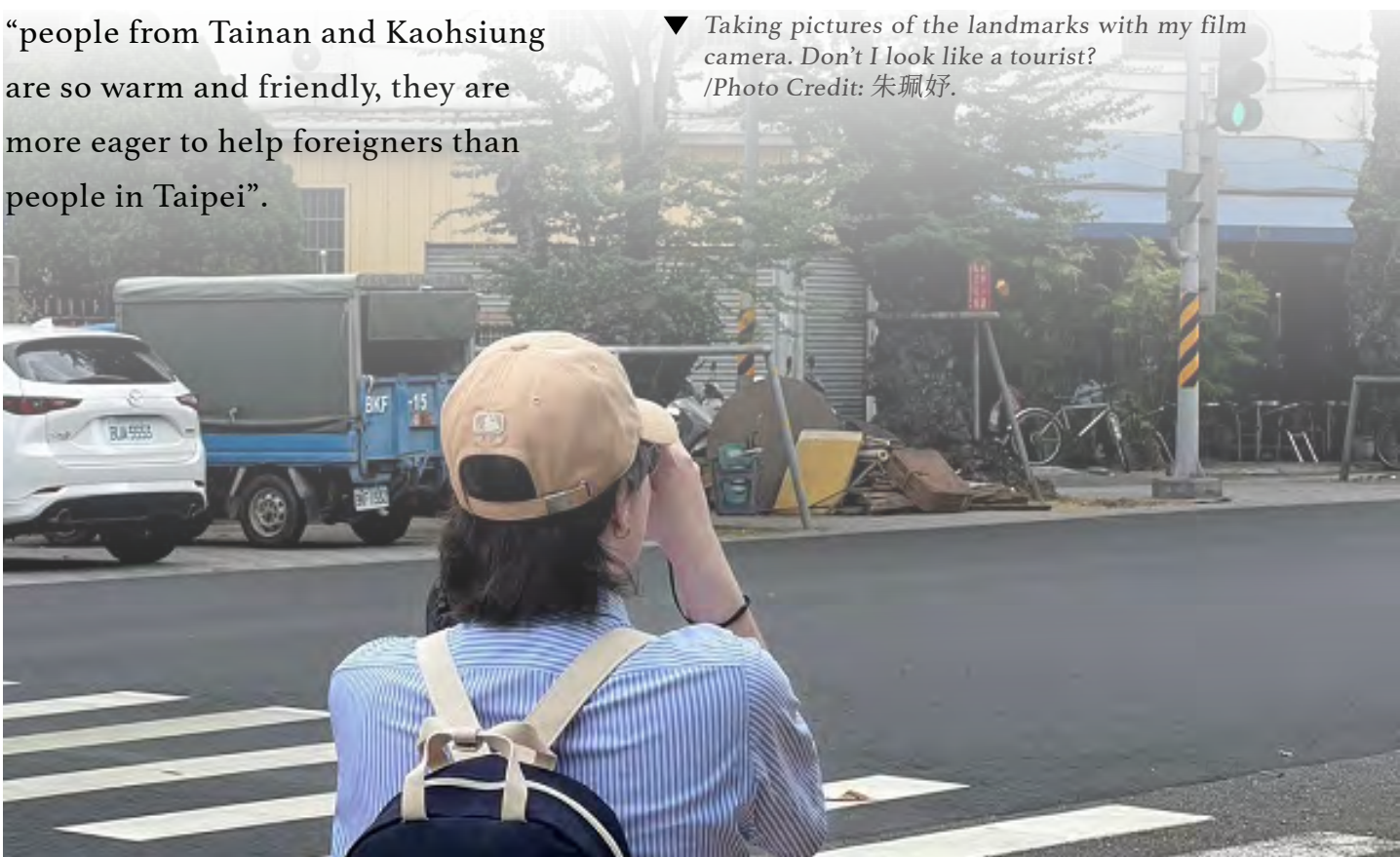
He didn't pay much attention to my friend and I. I do not think this was done with any rude intent. I believe that because my friend had ordered in Chinese and because I had understood that there was a sold-out ingredient in my order and talked with them in Chinese about the replacement, they had realized we weren't tourists. The chef asked each of the other foreign clients where they were from, but never did ask me.

We had a great time, but the whole experience made me think. It was interesting to not be treated any differently than a local and not being singled out because I am a foreigner in Taiwan. It was somewhat surprising. The Taiwanese friends I talked to before going on the trip had told me: “people from Tainan and Kaohsiung are so warm and friendly, they are more eager to help foreigners than people in Taipei”.

However, as the trip came to an end, I came to the conclusion that I had not experienced the type of interactions my friends had predicted. Everyone I had met had behaved towards me just as the chef had done. I had felt like a local, invisible. It was not a feeling I was used to. I found myself on one end of the local-foreigner spectrum, one I had not expected to experience during my exchange.

I hope that this article managed to clearly articulate my reflections pertaining to my exchange so far. I tried to express any conclusions I have in a way that can be understood by many and not be taken as offense by anybody. If I failed to express myself neutrally, the fault is all mine.

▼ *Taking pictures of the landmarks with my film camera. Don't I look like a tourist?*  
/Photo Credit: 朱珮好.







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