On September 24, 2013, over 250 students of National Chengchi University (NCCU) attended the welcome party, hosted by Office of International Cooperation and Student Ambassadors in Wanxing library. The event, titled “Color Taiwan,” aimed to introduce three of the biggest festivals in Taiwan, namely the Moon Festival, Chinese New Year, and the Dragon Boat Festival, to the newly arrived international students, as they got the first taste of Taiwanese cultural experience and cuisine.

The party kicked off with a welcome speech, followed by a performance of the flag drum dance team. During the cuisine time, Taiwanese students and organizers took time to introduce stories and the backgrounds of important traditional festivals such as the Moon Festival, Chinese New Year, and the Dragon Boat Festival, to the newly arrived international students, as they got the first taste of Taiwanese cultural experience and cuisine.

The festival’s associated cuisines, such as mooncake, dumpling, zong zi (粽子), and more, were available for students to enjoy.

International students then got to walk around and visit a number of “cultural” stands, which gave them the first hand experience of what it is like to be Taiwanese. Outside the main auditorium, a calligraphy stand allowed students to learn how to carve out their own names and other Chinese characters. There were also traditional Taiwanese clothes available for anyone to try on and take pictures wearing them. Last but not least, some stands enabled attendees to experience traditional games, such as a ring toss – a game in which international students could win some awards.

International and Taiwanese students then gathered together during the introduction of an Aboriginal dance and chants. Some of the Taiwanese students showed, taught, and danced together with international students in the circle. The lottery time and group photos concluded the remarkable evening. “Some of the things that they had today were something that I otherwise would not have experienced elsewhere. I really have never played the games before! Also, I didn’t know there was such a sad story behind the Dragon Boat Festival,” said Ms. Veronika Tomanova, an international student from Czech Republic.

The Taiwanese students and organizers themselves get a unique experience as they had a chance to see students from other sides of the world to relive their childhood experiences. “This is what we do. This is what we grew up playing as a young boy and girl. Everything here today, from decorations to the foods is very local,” said Andy Huang, the coordinator of the party.

The welcome party has become an annual event seven years ago, but it was Andy’s first time organizing it. After a lot of hard work that the organizers have put in to make this event happen, Andy was pleased with the result: “In terms of the cultural standpoint, we managed to introduce many special cultural aspects at the same time, and I think that fits with the theme of the party, which is three big festivals in Taiwan, and this way, international students get to really know us.”
2013 SA Olympics:  
Don’t Be Couch Potatoes!

Story by Daniel Guzman Briman  
Photo by NCCU Student Ambassadors

NCCU Student Ambassadors (SA) held their annual “SA Olympics” on Saturday, October 19th. This year’s Olympics counted with the participation of four Taiwanese universities: National Taiwan University (國立台灣大學), National Taiwan Normal University (國立臺師範大學), National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (國立台灣科技大學), and National Chengchi University (國立政治大學), which participated in basketball, soccer, and volleyball tournaments. All competitions took place at the NCCU campus’ sport facilities, such as the main gymnasium and other sport fields.

SA Olympics aims to promote sports and physical activities as a healthy habit we all should incorporate to our daily lives. It also provides a great opportunity for foreign students to team up with locals and compete against teams from other schools. SA believes that these kinds of events are the key for internationalization within the campus. On the one hand, both foreign and local students can interact and know each other better. On the other, they are also able to learn and appreciate the value of team work in a fun, yet healthy way.

This year’s interesting motto and logo “Don’t be Couch Potatoes!” was indeed very eye-appealing at the time of recruiting participants and audience, since most of them were excitedly taking photos with the posters located around the NCCU campus. It was also a year of big improvements: NCCU welcomed National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST) who joined SA Olympics for the very first time, and the volleyball competition was added (during the previous years, the Olympics only offered basketball and soccer competitions).

Mr. Bereket Haile, 23-year-old international student from Ethiopia who is currently studying Industrial Management at National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST), said, “This is my very first time visiting NCCU. I really enjoy the environment here and I think that the campus and the sport facilities are really nice and have a lot to offer. I enjoy playing soccer a lot, that’s why I decided to join with my team. I definitely didn’t expect to meet so many foreigners and locals here. The best thing is that we all have a common interest we share and enjoy, which is playing sports.”

“I’m glad I came with my team. It’s always nice to change environment from time to time. By competing with other schools, we can improve our techniques and strategies as a team. We can also enjoy and share a good game,” said Mr. Wang Shuo Huang (王碩煌), 24-year-old Taiwanese student from National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), who joined this year’s basketball competition.

International students of National Taiwan University (國立台灣大學) are awarded the champions of the 2013 SA Olympics Basketball Competition. After showing a constant solid team work at the basketball preliminaries and at the final basketball championship game, international students from National Taiwan University (國立台灣大學) receive the trophy of the first place and are awarded as champions of the 2013 SA Olympics Basketball Competition.

http://oic.nccu.edu.tw
Three days to explore traditional Taiwanese culture

Story by Joy Li
Photo by CIEE

American students at National Chengchi University (NCCU), together with the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), took a three-day trip to Miaoli (苗栗) and Nantou (南投), Taiwan, to experience local Taiwanese culture, as well as to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival.

From August 19 to 21, around thirty students of NCCU, including the international students from America and CIEE student ambassadors from Taiwan, traveled to the central part of the island. In Miaoli, they learned about Taiwan local customs by wandering around the Hakka Cultural Park (苗栗客家文化園區), painting Chinese opera facial patterns on wooden masks, and staying overnight in the traditional building called San-Ho-Yuan (三合院). In Nantou, they cycled around the beautiful tourist spot, Sun Moon Lake (日月潭), to appreciate the natural scenery of Taiwan. They also attended the ceremony of a native tribe, Thao People (邵族), joined their dancing, and explored the paper-making history by creating their own paper fans.

The three-day trip exposed the international students to yet another aspect of Taiwanese culture. Though some of the activities were not easy, like staying in the traditional San-Ho-Yuan building, rather than in a more comfortable hotel, those were the parts of the culture experiences. “That is exactly why CIEE arranged this cultural trip for the foreigners from different cultural backgrounds,” Ms. April Wang (王如敏), the Resident Coordinator of CIEE, said.

“I am really glad that I came to Taiwan through this program. I don’t think I would get that experience if I came alone because I would not know where to go. It is my first time here by myself, I would not have known Sun Moon Lake or the traditional Taiwanese house. The program is arranging all these things that we should see because they know what you have to see around Taiwan,” said one of the participants, Ms. Rachel Lu (盧立萱), expressing her gratitude to CIEE for planning the well-organized trip for them.
On the third day of the Study Abroad Fair (海外留學週), Office of International Cooperation (OIC) gave prizes to the thirteen winners of the competition titled “My Study Abroad Experience” (我的海外進修經驗). Three of the students, Ms. Yu-ting Huang (黃于庭), Ms. Veronika Tomanovam, and Ms. Retno Widyastuti (孫莉瑋), were invited to share their own study abroad experiences.

13 students from National Chengchi University (NCCU), including ten registered students and three international students, who travelled to foreign countries such as the USA, France, Russia, Singapore and Japan, to gain different academic and cultural nourishment, talked about the journeys they have experienced there. By taking the advantage of the opportunities and resources given by the university, they fulfilled their dreams of stepping into a brand new world and broadening their horizons.

The winner of the second prize, Ms. Yu-ting Huang (黃于庭), an outbound exchange student to Bordeaux Management School in France for five sequences, challenged herself to live and learn in an unfamiliar environment. By studying abroad, traveling to foreign countries, and dealing with everyday life, she discovered her potentials and got to know more about herself and the world in a deeper and broader aspect.

Attending the 2013 pioneer summer program titled “A Primer on American Studies” at James Madison University, Ms. Po Ju Hsieh (解傅茹), winner of the second prize, noticed the massive differences between the two cultures. She later reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of the United States and Taiwan from different points of view. Now, being back in Taiwan, she started to appreciate her mother country even more.

The winner of the first prize, Ms. Veronika Tomanovam, a degree-seeking international student from the Czech Republic and the previous winner of the 2012 NCCU English Short Film Competition, suggested students, who aims to study abroad, to exert on conquering the obstacles and polish their language skills in order to fit into the local culture.

Winner of the second prize, Ms. Retno Widyastuti (孫莉瑋), a degree-seeking international student from Indonesia, encouraged students, who were not acquainted with the foreign language, to smile and confidently leave the comfort zone to enrich their life experiences.