

## A Memory on the Entrance of a Campus by the Sea

My story as a foreign student in Taiwan began 3 years ago. Exactly on my birthday, I arrived at Kaohsiung International Airport. Still full of nervousness as I will pursue my doctoral degree here, I have never guessed that it will be such an exciting and remarkable experience, that I will study at a beautiful campus, National Sun Yat-sen University (NSYSU).

At first, I chose NSYSU because of the reputation and also because of an offer by one of the most prominent Professor here, Professor Da-Chi Liao, as she was one of the keynote speakers at an International Conference held in Indonesia, my home country, back in 2018. She said to me at that time: "Come study in Taiwan!", "In fact, come study at NSYSU, the university where I teach! You will get a lot of knowledge, and also beautiful views every day! Our campus is located by the sea!". At first, I was not interested in the 'beautiful' part, as I am from Indonesia, and it means that we have a lot of beaches (we even have Bali Island), therefore a view of the sea is something that is not my priority when I decided to apply as a student in NSYSU one year after that.

However, everything changed when I visit the campus for the first time, on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, one day after I arrived here in Taiwan. When I saw the campus environment at that time, I was blown away by the setting, the buildings, and most importantly, the place in the photo that is my favorite place among other spots in the university. This is the front and main entrance to NSYSU, marked by the tower. There is another entrance to the university, through the back and also the tunnel. All of the entrance is unique in their way, but this entrance is the most beautiful of all. It is because it is located on the shore, with no buildings or structures to block the view of the sunset, the ships



on the horizon, and also the sea

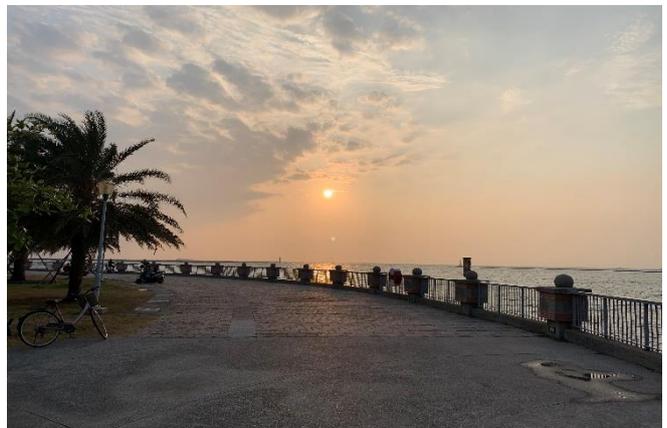
itself. Even it made me rethink my argument that I will not be amazed by the location of the campus that is by the sea. Sure we have a lot of beaches in Indonesia, but a campus where even the main building is located near the sea? I am sure I will have a hard time finding that in my home country. There are indeed several universities that are located near or even on the shoreline in Indonesia, however, most are fisheries of the marine biology faculty or department of the university, not the main building or even the whole main complex of the campus.



The relation between me and the particular spot that I feature here is quite funny. I have to admit that at first time I just think that this place is beautiful, and has a scenic view, just like some other places in the university. However, that changed when some weeks after, when there was an announcement of the result of the first midterm of the Chinese language course in the nearby International building. At that time, I did not get a satisfying grade. Sure, I passed the threshold, but I felt that I can do better. Because of the restlessness in my mind, I decided to take a long walk through the front entrance to the place where I live. As I live outside of the campus, I rarely pass the front entrance, and usually went home through the tunnel. On that day, I ask one of my friends to accompany me, turns out he also experienced the same thing with the Chinese class. His name is Satrio, and he already graduated from NSYSU. He graduated in 2021, with a Master's Degree in Electronics Engineering. Turns out, the walk that day changed my perspective and my opinion of this place entirely. As it was on winter, the sunset came early and we were greeted by the view in the photo. Even Satrio and I spent some time here, and we even took some photos to commemorate that day, not commemorating our so-so performance in the Chinese class, but the very view of a winter sunset in the Southern part of Taiwan.



After that, whenever I feel uneasy, stressed, or even brokenhearted (well, that is another whole story), I will come to this place just to stand against the fence, looking at the sea. This place is truly a place that can ease my mind and cure any anxiety that sometimes appears as a foreign student in a faraway country. Even I have started to think that the setting of this university entrance has a deeper meaning to it. Perhaps, this place not only serves as a gateway to enter and exit the campus, but also as a place to represent the vast horizon that will greet me, and all of the other students in the university, once we finish our time here. Endless possibility, an infinite endeavor in life, with all of the knowledge we got on campus, regardless of the degree we obtained.



I think I have to thank Professor Liao for her words that convince me to pursue my Ph.D. here at NSYSU, Taiwan, the heart of Asia. I also have to thank Satrio for his willingness that day to accompany me even though it means we walked 2 kilometers more than the usual route. Even I think I should thank my Chinese language teacher for giving me a below-average grade. Because if not for all of them, I will not value this particular spot, and more importantly, NSYSU as a whole, more in my heart.

I am thankful that I can get the opportunity to study here at NSYSU.