

資 料 來 源 : Taipei times(1)

日 期 : 114 年 04 月 05 日

Recognizing Taiwan' s true identity

As a child, I loved watching volleyball matches. The match that got me into the sport was between Chinese Taipei and Japan. At the time, I did not think much about the name “Chinese Taipei.” I thought Taipei was a city in China and that it was a designation reflecting that status.

It was not until years later that I realized “Chinese Taipei” was Taiwan — a place with its own flag, government and all the fundamental attributes of a sovereign nation. That sparked my interest in studying there and I discovered that Taiwan offers high-quality education and generous scholarships. However, I realized that educational opportunities remain overshadowed by more widely known destinations and that many were unaware of its quality. What convinced me to study in Taiwan was its academic excellence and reputation for safety and convenience.

Many people still do not realize how significant Taiwan is. Some of the most products we enjoy and use daily originate from Taiwan: bubble tea, semiconductor chips (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co), laptops (Asus, Acer and MSI), bicycles (Giant) and snacks (I-Mei Foods). Even Taiwan' s national baseball team, which clinched gold at the World Baseball Softball Confederation Premier12 Championship last year, has made a name for itself internationally. Yet, despite all those contributions, Taiwan remains largely unrecognized for its achievements.

If I had not come to Taiwan, I, too, would have continued believing that many of these well-known brands came from Japan or the US. That lack of recognition is a missed opportunity for Taiwan to leverage its soft power. It has the potential to boost its international presence by promoting its cultural and economic contributions. However, many people — including some Taiwanese — are unaware of just how much their country has accomplished.

That issue becomes even more frustrating when I talk to friends and family. Whenever I tell them I am in Taiwan, they often respond with, “Oh, Thailand! I love pad Thai,” and “shopping is so cheap there.” Having to correct them every time is exhausting, yet I do not want them to remain misinformed. Taiwan is a remarkable place and it deserves to be known for what it truly is.

Taiwan' s visibility is also affected by geopolitical tensions. Due to China' s statements and military posturing, some people are increasingly worried about the future. I have heard international students in Taiwan say that they carry their passports and US dollars at all times — just in case they need to leave the country in an emergency. When I first arrived in Taiwan, I did the same thing.

文藻外語大學公共關係室剪報表格

資 料 來 源：Taipei times(2)

日 期：114 年 04 月 05 日

While we have grown accustomed to military drills in the Taiwan Strait, tension remains. Some believe that a crisis could unfold in 2027, prompting them to make contingency plans to leave. While those fears might not represent everyone's views, they highlight a growing uncertainty about Taiwan's long-term stability and security.

Despite those challenges, I believe Taiwan has an incredible opportunity to shape its global image. Its universities offer competitive programs in technology, business and international relations, yet they remain underpublicized globally. More government initiatives should be dedicated to promoting Taiwan as a top destination for international students.

The nation is home to breathtaking natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage, but many foreign travelers still opt for destinations such as Japan, South Korea or Thailand. Better marketing campaigns could position Taiwan as a must-visit destination.

Taiwan's vibrant entertainment industry could also be a powerful vehicle for cultural diplomacy.

By embracing cultural diplomacy, investing in branding and telling its own story, Taiwan could ensure that its name is recognized not as a geographical or political ambiguity, but as a thriving, innovative and independent force on the world stage.

Brianne Winfried is a student in the Department of International Affairs at Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages.