

International Students Explore Sanxia, Experiencing Indigo Dyeing and Local Culture

Campus focus

As indigo-dyed fabrics gradually absorbed color in the dye vats, international students wandered through Sanxia Old Street, immersing themselves in the local cultural atmosphere. On May 24, the Office of International and Cross-Strait Affairs at Tamkang University organized the “International Student Cultural Tour: A Journey of Craftsmanship, Heritage, and Sustainability,” providing international students with an in-depth introduction to Taiwan’s traditional crafts and local cultural characteristics.

Centered on the theme of creative cultural experiences, the event featured indigo dyeing DIY workshops, old street exploration, and cultural challenge activities. Students were divided into groups and visited Sanxia Qingshui Zushi Temple to offer prayers and experience the solemn atmosphere of a traditional Taiwanese temple. They then participated in an indigo dyeing workshop at the CAN’s Sanxia Dyeing Workshop, where they used natural indigo pigment extracted from the stems and leaves of *Strobilanthes cusia* (Nees) Kuntze, widely known as Malan, a plant closely associated with Sanxia. Through repeated dyeing and rinsing processes using indigo pigment, water, and fabric, students created their own unique indigo-dyed handkerchiefs. In the afternoon, they took part in a cultural scavenger hunt called “Crossroads of Flavors and Characters” along Sanxia Old Street, completing sightseeing and food check-in challenges while learning about local cuisine and cultural heritage.

Ammar Muyuhun Abdulrahman, a first-year student in the English-taught Computer Science program from Saudi Arabia, said he joined the event to gain a deeper understanding of Taiwan’s history and culture while interacting with fellow students. He noted that the indigo dyeing workshop was the most memorable part of the trip, as he was fascinated by how different folding techniques produced unique patterns and colors on the

fabric. He also recalled encountering the Taiwanese practice of casting divination blocks for the first time while visiting the temple, an experience that left a lasting impression. He remarked that the tour allowed him to appreciate how Taiwan harmoniously blends tradition and modernity, strengthening his connection to and affection for the island. Exchange student Wenjing Li from mainland China shared that she participated in the cultural tour to interact more with other international students and to practice speaking foreign languages. She found the indigo dyeing activity particularly impressive, noting how participants created distinctive works through different folding techniques. She also enjoyed the communal dining arrangement, where everyone gathered around a large round table. In addition to the delicious food, the opportunity to chat and interact with fellow students enabled her to make many new friends.



