



# The Joy of Being an Old Freshman

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It never occurred to me that at the threshold of 30, I could get the opportunity to become a freshman at MPI (Macao Polytechnic Institute). Due to the agreement between MPI and the Foreign Affairs Office of Jiangsu Province, a mechanism of Portuguese-talent cultivation was initiated this year. I was very lucky to be one of the eight persons to be sent here for the one-year Portuguese learning.

With bewilderments, I landed on Macau on August 15 and was accommodated on the Taipa campus with the international students. My worries proved groundless as I experienced the hospitality of MPI. Both

the staff and the volunteers tried their best to make us feel at home and we were really treated like freshmen who had left their home for the first time. Unlike universities on the mainland, MPI is not so large in terms of campus size. However, just as Professor Lei Heong Lok, President of MPI, pointed out during the opening ceremony, "MPI has established a culture of cultivating talents with high standards of ethical behaviour, with adherence to the educational philosophy of 'small yet beautiful and exquisite'."

Speaking of the opening ceremony, we had been reluctant to attend it in the beginning since our age could easily betray

us and the funny thing was that we had been mistaken for their peers by the other parents at the previous information session for mainland students. Our attendance turned out to be worthwhile. Besides a further understanding of MPI, the speeches from the president, representatives of teachers and new students, were really encouraging. We, the old freshmen, should follow the eternal guidance that “it is never too old to learn” to make full preparations for the upcoming studies. Otherwise, we would be inclined to find excuses for our laziness, idling away our precious time.

Over the first weekend in Macau, I wandered in the streets — the hustle and bustle there reminded me of Nanjing, and the Portuguese street signs refreshed my memory of Brazil. As a melting pot of western and eastern cultures, Macau is serving as

an important exchange platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. After the stroll, I went to the library of MPI and chose a seat next to the window so that I could witness both the tranquility and the hullabaloo. In retrospect, I had spent most of my spare time in the library during my high school and college days. How lucky I am to have the opportunity again to sit in a library for the whole afternoon and to have a whole year’s time to understand Macau through MPI. Macau is more than a city for shopping and legal gambling for many short-stay tourists from the mainland.

Maybe learning Portuguese is really challenging for me, but I am willing to restart my youth here as a freshman despite my age. Yes, I will treasure this precious opportunity and fight like a warrior without regret.

