

the central government should build a big mosque to accommodate Muslims who celebrate Eid.<sup>51</sup> Regarding the central government, President Tsai Ing-wen posted a video on the date of the Eid al-Fitr in 2017. She said “thanks Muslim immigrants for their contribution to Taiwan’s economy and said Muslim culture had enriched Taiwanese society.” She added that the government has also been working to establish a halal certification system and advocates the establishment of Muslim prayer rooms in public places.<sup>52</sup> This is the first time that a President of the ROC has expressed gratitude to Muslim migrant workers.

In addition to support from the government, increased numbers of social welfare organisations, human right groups and journalists were becoming more aware of Indonesian migrant workers’ powerlessness. They started cooperating with Indonesian migrant workers; for example, they implemented the ‘Taiwan Literature Award for Migrants’ which has been held since 2014. The literature competition is for both Indonesians and other foreign migrant workers from Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. Through writing, Indonesian Muslims can enjoy a moment of freedom and express their feelings of how they struggle with life in a non-Muslim environment and how Islam sustains their spiritual life during hard times.<sup>53</sup>

Compared to Indonesian migrant workers, Indonesian students exhibit a more vibrant image of Islam because Indonesian students have greater mobility to express their thoughts and they are willing to introduce Islam to the public. It is estimated that around five thousand Indonesian Muslim students currently study in Taiwan, which is the third largest foreign population of students. Most of them study sciences and technology subjects at universities.

The image of Islam that Indonesian students evoke is as follows. First, they create Muslim student associations with other foreign students at several universities in Taiwan<sup>54</sup>. When they have difficulties on campus such as how to get halal foods or find proper spaces for prayers, school administrators are willing to help to create Muslim-friendly environments. Cooperation between Muslim student associations’ and school administrators, has led to a halal canteen and several prayer rooms being set up on campus.<sup>55</sup> Second, Indonesian Muslims affiliated with Muslim student associations have actively engaged in introducing the messages of Islam to the public. For example, the Muslim association in the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Ko Wen-je: Taiwan should build a big mosque if Taiwan wants to be a friendly country to Islam,’ 2 October 2016, <<https://www.thenewslens.com/article/50450>> (accessed on 3 December 2017).

<sup>52</sup> ‘Tsai thanks Muslims in post to mark Eid al-Fitr,’ *Taipei Times*, 26 June 2017, <<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2017/06/26/2003673325>> (accessed on 3 December 2017).

<sup>53</sup> See Nanik Riyati, ‘Honesty and Obedience,’ *The News Lens*, <<https://www.thenewslens.com/article/10084>> (accessed on 4 December 2017); Abdul Mubarak, ‘LIR ILIR,’ *Independent Opinion@ Common Wealth*, 30 August 2016 <<http://opinion.cw.com.tw/blog/profile/52/article/4717>> (accessed on 4 December 2017)

<sup>54</sup> See NTUST-IMSA, <[https://www.facebook.com/ntustimsa/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/ntustimsa/about/?ref=page_internal)>; Muslim Students Association in NCKU, <<http://msancku15.wixsite.com/msancku>>; Muslim Students Club in NCTU, <[https://www.facebook.com/pg/MSCTaiwan/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/MSCTaiwan/about/?ref=page_internal)>

<sup>55</sup> Halal Canteen at NTUST, <[http://www.oia.ntust.edu.tw/ezfiles/17/1017/img/1596/Halal\\_Canteen\\_at\\_NTUST.pdf](http://www.oia.ntust.edu.tw/ezfiles/17/1017/img/1596/Halal_Canteen_at_NTUST.pdf)> (accessed on 4 December 2017)