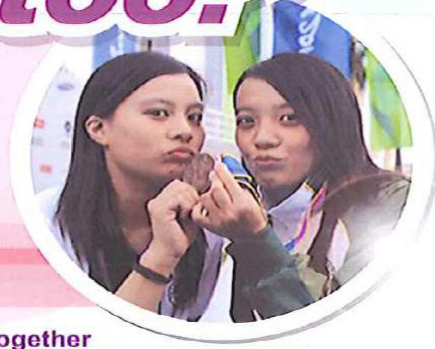


Choi Sut lan: “If I can, you can too!”

21-year-old Choi Sut lan is one of the first diving athletes from Macau and she has witnessed the development of diving in the city. At the Asian Games in 2010, she won third place in the women's 3-meter springboard competition, and has since been regarded as the leader of the Macau diving team. She said, “I am only the beginning. Macau diving athletes will be able to win many more international medals in the future. If I can do it, I believe the younger athletes can do it too!”



Nine years of diving experience has widened horizons

Sut lan, who regards “diving diva” Guo Jingjing as her idol, began her diving career when she joined the then newly-formed Macau diving team. In the short span of nine years, she has participated in various competitions overseas, such as those in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Mainland China, the U.S., Australia, Italy etc. Last year at the Guangzhou Asian Games, she turns a new page on her diving career. Sut lan said, “The Asian Games is the biggest competitive event that Macau athletes can participate in. Winning a medal in the Games attracts the general public's attention and allows the people in Macau to learn more about diving, which helps to promote the sport.”

Winning bronze at the Asian Games increases public's expectations

The Asian Games medal boosted her confidence but it also brought more pressure at the same time, which probably caused Sut lan to score her first zero mark in her career in the semi-final of 2011 Universiade. Sut lan recalled, “I took a misstep on the springboard and I totally missed the springboard when I tried to bounce on it, so I could only do a half turn before going in the water. It was very disappointing. Fortunately my coach encouraged me not to give up. People had faith in me because of the Asian Games but every competition depends on the conditions of the body, as well as the psyche in facing the competition. Pressure always makes one worry about not being able to live up to other people's expectations.” Luckily, Sut lan had her eyes set upon the goal of surpassing herself and was not concerned with winning a medal, and therefore she was able to regroup herself within a short period of time.

The goal is to surpass herself

Diving in Macau sports a less than 10-year history, and Sut lan said, “Right now a lot of foreign teams know about the Macau diving team. I remember one time Malaysian divers complimented our team, saying that there are many new bloods with good potential in the Macau Diving Team. I hope that we will continue to work hard and persevere together in the sport of diving, with the aims to win more medals in international competitions.” Sut lan is already in third year of university and she is determined to continue her education and her sports career. She also wants to become a coach and contribute to the development of the diving sport after she retired as an athlete.

Diving Twins Competing Together

Macau diving twins Choi Sut lan and Choi Sut Kuan are popular in the sports world. The two sisters always have great rapport and have competed together as a team in different competitions, such as the Asian Games and the World Championships in Canada. In 2009, Sut Kuan went to Taiwan to start her tertiary education and Sut lan admitted that she missed her sister a lot: “We have actually become closer after she has gone to Taiwan”.

Tertiary Education Separating the Twins

The diving twins joined the Macau diving team when they were twelve. They started from zero and worked together for over six years. Sut lan jokingly said, “Both our looks and our personalities are different. Because we are twins, we do have some kind of telepathic connection. Our similar body build also makes diving synchronization easier.” But Sut lan did not think that twin pairs are really that special because there are many twins competing together in foreign teams.

Unforgettable Experience in World Championship

Sut lan and Sut Kuan had participated together in many different world championships and competitions. The most unforgettable experience for Sut lan was their first-time participation in the World Championships held in Canada in 2005. She recalled, “At the time divers needed to performed required dives in synchronized diving competitions, and the dives on the A and B springboards had to be clearly stated beforehand, but we did a mix-up and scored zero points. Only after making an appeal were we able to get back the marks we had been given originally. We had thought we were going to be the last in the competition, but it turned out better than we thought and we were very surprised.”

Separation Making them Stronger

The two sisters had always worked and played together since their childhood until their university years. Sut lan said, “Since we were very little, we faced everything together. The sudden separation did somewhat make us feel lonely. But there is some good out of her going to Taiwan – we both become more independent. In the past we always had each other to lean on. Now our circles are bigger, we have learned different things and we have more interesting things to share with each other.” In recent years, Sut lan worked with teammates Lei Sio I and Lo I Teng in synchronized diving, and she believed that training hard and learning to accommodate others help to overcome different obstacles.