

Interweaving- Consciously and Unconsciously.

Allen Huang



the group's photo with the friendly foreigner, Nick

“Hey, Allen. There is one there,” my group member, Kelly, cried excitedly when we searched randomly in the night market for a foreigner.

“Can the guy be a foreigner?” I thought for a while to myself.

Ten minutes ago, when we started to “look around” in the night market, we thought that since Lohua night market had become one of the famous night markets in Taiwan, we could find some foreigners easily and had a chat on their impressions about night markets in Taiwan. Unfortunately, either the foreigners we encountered walked very fast past us as if they headed for somewhere in a hurry, or they simply went away and denied the request indirectly. Compared to local people’s slow tempo and warmth, these foreigners seemed self-defensive. But Kelly’s yelling gave us a hope. Actually, for me, the guy looked like a Taiwanese, or least an Asian, when seen from his back and judged from his clothing. He has the short hair in special Beckham’s style, which was popular several years ago. When we saw his front, all three of us felt relieved. “Thanks God. He is really a foreigner!” But when we looked closer on his dressing, we found him no different from a local person - in T-shirt, jeans, and slippers. After we explained our intention, the foreigner, Nick agreed to

have an interview with us without any hesitation. The brief interview went as follows:

Q: What's your impression of the night markets in Taiwan? And how is Lohua different from the others?

“The night markets, are all warm, with many friendly people, and convenient. Compared to the other night markets such as Shelin, Lohua possesses more characteristics like non-separated food and shopping area, mixed cultural foods, a sense of familiarity because I live in it.”

Q: How often do you come to Lohua night market and what do you usually do?

“Most of the time, I come here (Little Italy Coffee Shop). Because I live in-around the night market, I probably come here three or four times a week. I usually have a chat with the coffee shop owner. But when he is busy, I may sit here, have a cup of coffee and see shoppers walking by.”

Q: Why you do not choose chain- store coffee shops such as Starbucks or Eighty-five points C?

“Besides good coffee, comfortable, warm and relaxing environment attracts me.”

In little Italy coffee shop, Nick not only had a cup of coffee but also made good friends either with shop owner or with customers like us. Believe it or not, we had the same feelings as Nick did. Indeed, through the observation, the male owner and his wife had zeal to entertain customers. I remembered when we saw Nick in the coffee shop, we hesitated in front of the coffee shop. Seeing us, the owner Arnold said, “Now, it was very cold outside. Why not just come inside, and I would like to make different good cups of coffee for you.” What he said warmed up our hearts immediately and broke the ice in between. At that moment, I felt Arnold were as one of my friends instead of a store owner trying to promote his products.

At the end of the interview, Nick was asked if he'd miss the night market in Taiwan when he goes back to South Africa. Nick said, "Definitely, I would." Owing to different life styles, South Africans usually shops at shopping mall and in the evening, all the stores are closed.

In and around Lohua night market, besides traditional Taiwanese snacks, there are still quite a few venders selling Japanese, Thai, Korean, Turkish foods and so on. Most of the time, the food from other countries are popular among local people and such mixture of cultures has become a unique feature of Lohua night market. Sometimes, we may wonder if, in addition to our eating habits, other aspects such as our dressing, life style, experience, attitudes and knowledge towards life have also been changed in such a culturally mixed environment.

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