

What I Think About Taiwan and Taiwanese People

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Darima 與 Anna, Alisha 同為俄羅斯姊妹校 Irkutsk State Technical University 的學生，三人在 2013 年 2 月透過姊妹校交換計劃來到建國科大就讀一學期。對台灣非常陌生的她，本以為這是一個和她已去過數次的中國很像的地方，不過，經過四個月的在地生活與觀察，她對台灣的風土民情有了完全超乎想像的新認識。

I appeared in Taiwan by accident. I had always thought about going to China to study, but I could not even imagine that there was an opportunity to study in Taiwan.

I have been to mainland China several times, but once I came to Taiwan, for the first few days and maybe even a week, I asked myself the question: "Is it like China?" I constantly noted the differences: from the colorful signs with the names of shops, restaurants and streets in traditional characters, to the fact that the Taiwanese, unlike the Chinese, honestly line up for transportation, tickets to the movies, and for their coffee at Starbucks.

By nature, Taiwanese are very calm, good-hearted, slow, smiling, people who don't love the hustle and bustle. When you live here, life takes on the slow pace of Taiwanese and one realizes that for success you do not necessarily have to constantly rush to do things. Everything could be solved peacefully and without nerves.



I was struck by Taiwanese who selflessly help and rescue others in difficult situations. My roommate Gou Mei helped me during my first days living on the island by explaining some basic household items.

For foreigners the pleasant side of Taiwan is that it is one of the safest countries in the world. So you can safely travel on public transport with an open bag without fear of someone hankering for its contents. For Taiwanese, to take someone else's things or to do something bad



to another person causes permanent loss of face, and in Chinese culture that is considered to be the worst thing that can happen to a person.

I think Taiwanese are more similar to the Japanese than Chinese. First, the girls use much more expensive cosmetics and due to the habit of face whitening their skin is pale. Most people also maintain a well-groomed appearance. Second, Taiwan is strongly influenced by Japanese culture: fashion, music, language and so on. Taiwanese love K-pop as well, and love to sing karaoke (KTV). They usually book a room, invite a bunch of people there, order food and drinks, and sing Taiwanese songs. For a foreigner it is an interesting and fun experience.

Taiwanese love to go to the night markets that are open almost every night. There they buy local delicacies, cheap Korean clothes and just stare at people. First of all, when you come to the island, many Taiwanese will make it their primary duty to drive you to the night market, as it is almost the most important local and tourist attraction. Items at the night market often cannot be traded and prices cannot be bargained down, so it's best not to give into the temptation to bargain for cheap things (as you do in China), because the Taiwanese immediately refer to a set price and will look at you strangely if you raise your voice to achieve lower prices.

In Taiwan, people prefer to dress casually. Taiwan is very comfortable in terms of style, and there is no European panache. Taiwanese girls like Japanese and Korean brands of clothes, and the clothes can be very cheap to buy at the night market. Women's clothes are "baby doll" style, and since most Taiwanese girls are thin and small-breasted, they do not spoil the frill. As for the "femme fatale" style, most girls who follow this fashion dress like girls in nightclubs. However,



Taiwanese style in general is rather interesting: when chilly, rainy and cold, they wear jackets and flip flops, and when hot, for fear of a tan, they wear tight leggings and sometimes even Ugg boots! Older people like colorful things, and the old women on motorcycles wear helmets with pink "hello kitty" designs, which look quite harmonious.



When I first came to Taiwan, I thought that this island would not be much different from China. If you think this way, you have already set yourself up to think that you will have to communicate among uneducated people who constantly strive to outwit you and expect that your heart is not respected. At first I thought, "How am I going to live there, or even make friends? I probably will not." However, it was not what I had anticipated. I met a

lot of good, open, intelligent people who are very ambitious, and interested in the culture of my country and me as a person. In Taiwan the people are very sociable, they say what they think, and do not idle in secrets.



In Taiwan, the world is arranged so that the person is in line with the reality that surrounds him or her, and not in opposition to it. Taiwanese will seldom raise their voices, do not look askance, and will not leave one in an emergency. That's why I think everyone who's ever been here loves this island and dreams to come here again and again.

