

臺南市政府「每日聽・英語廣播」文字稿

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Foreigners' Experiences in Taiwan

Taiwan is a place of giant billboards and blinking neon signs. It can be overwhelming to the foreigner who doesn't read Chinese! In America there are zoning laws that prohibit this type of advertising. Up-scale neighborhoods are exclusive and have regulations that restrict billboards in an attempt to preserve property values. It has gotten so bad that you can't even put up a garbage sale sign without someone getting upset.

I remember one of my first meals in Taiwan. What an experience! Someone ordered for all 12 of us without even knowing what we wanted. All of the food came and the waiters put it on a table that spun around like a merry-go-round in front of us. I got dizzy just watching the food go round and round. I was never quite sure what was mine and what wasn't. In the end, it looked like everything was everyone's. I had never tasted such great food on a spinning table in all my life!

I was having dinner with a Taiwanese friend and we began talk about ping-pong. In America I excelled at ping-pong. Very rarely did I lose a game. I told him my nickname was "the slammer." I bragged and bragged about my table tennis expertise and he listened attentively. Afterwards, in the first game we played, I lost 11 to 5, and in the second game the score was 11 to 3, and I was the one with 3. You might say he taught me a lesson.

One day I went to see the Tainan Lions play a baseball game. I was shocked at how different the Taiwanese crowd was from a typical American crowd. In America, whenever there is a foul ball that goes into the stands, it is like a 100-dollar bill dropped from the sky and everyone goes wild trying to get it. In Tainan, a foul ball was avoided like the rain.

I pulled up to a traffic light and saw one of my favorite things in Taiwan. There was a grandma riding an '85 Vespa without a helmet. I smiled and said, "Knee-how." She gave me a big grin and said, "Welcome to Taiwan!" The light turned green and off she went, giving me a warm Taiwanese wave. I tried to keep up with her but it was clear that she was out of my league.

Over time, what I once thought was strange has become perfectly normal. What do I mean? When I first came to Taiwan, I freaked out when I saw people using umbrellas when there wasn't a cloud in the sky. The second thing I remember was that lots of people wore surgical masks, and some of the masks even had a Hello Kitty design on the front. Four years later, I am wearing a bathing ape mask and I suppose the umbrella is soon to follow.

Different countries allow you to ask different questions. The following questions are okay in Taiwan but are considered offensive in America:

- How old are you?
- How much do you weigh?
- How much money do you make?

You can always tell when you've asked the wrong question because it is followed by an awkward silence. I have found that if you become a good listener, people will end up telling you everything. You don't even have to ask them. That's because people love to talk about themselves.

I am impressed by the perseverance of the Taiwanese. They are a people who never give up, and work long hours to make a living. I am impressed with the people who push hand-made carts collecting items to be recycled. Oftentimes they are elderly people pushing heavy loads in all kinds of weather. I always give them my empty cans. My opinion is they should be applauded and not despised.

Driving in the USA is much more boring than driving in Taiwan. In America, driving is very organized and everyone follows the rules at all times. If you get too close to someone, they get mad and honk at you and sometimes make obscene gestures. Whenever I go back to my homeland I always get traffic tickets because I drive like a Taiwanese. I guess you could say Taiwan is in my blood.

老外的臺灣經驗談

臺灣到處都看得到大型看板廣告和閃爍的霓虹燈招牌，這對看不懂中文的外國人來說，可真是挫折！在美國，區域劃分法規禁止這類廣告，高級住宅區限制尤其嚴格，規定禁止廣告版的設立，以維護當地房地產的價值，情況嚴重到連立個車庫拍賣告示牌，也會有人不高興。

我記得在臺灣吃的頭幾餐，其中一餐真是難忘的經驗！有人甚至不知道我們想吃什么，就替我們十二人全點好菜了。服務生上菜時，就將菜放在我們面前的餐桌上，餐桌可以像旋轉木馬一樣轉圈。我光是看著菜餚轉啊轉就頭暈了，根本無法確定哪道菜是我的、哪道不是我的。結果看來是大家共享每一道菜。我一生從來沒在轉盤餐桌旁，吃過如此美味的佳餚！

有一次，我和一位臺灣朋友共進晚餐，我們聊到乒乓球。在美國時，我的乒乓球打得嚇嚇叫，幾乎從沒輸過任何一場比賽。我告訴他，我的封號叫「重砲手」，他專心聽我不斷吹噓自己的桌球技術有多高明。後來我們兩人比賽，第一局我以十一比五落敗，第二局的比數是十一比三，只得三分的人是我，你可以說他幫我上了一課。

有一天，我去觀賞臺南統一獅的棒球比賽，看到臺灣觀眾與典型美國觀眾的不同處，讓我大吃一驚。在美國，只要有界外球飛入觀眾席，就像是一張百元美鈔從天而降，大家瘋狂搶奪，在臺南，大家卻像躲雨似地閃避界外球。

我在紅綠燈前停下來，看到我在臺灣最喜歡的一幕：有位阿嬤沒戴安全帽，騎著 85 年代的偉士牌機車。我微笑地向她打招呼，說：「妳好。」她咧開嘴笑說：「歡迎來臺灣。」此時交通號誌轉為綠燈，她揚長而去，給我溫暖的臺灣式揮別，我試著追上她，但顯然我的飆車級數離她還有一段距離呢。

隨著時間的過去，我一度認為怪異的事，已經變得再正常不過。這是什麼意思呢？初抵臺灣時，看到人們在萬里無雲的晴天撐傘，我嚇一大跳。讓我印象深刻的第二件事，是許多人戴著口罩，有些口罩上面甚至印著凱蒂貓的圖案。四年後，我也戴著猴子洗澡圖案的口罩，可能不久後，我也會開始撐傘吧。

不同國家對問題的接受度不一，以下是一些在臺灣可接受，但在美國卻會被認為無禮的問題：

- 你幾歲？
- 你體重多少？

- 你賺多少錢？

你一定會知道自己何時問了不該問的問題，因為話一出口一定是一陣尷尬的沈默。我發現，若你成為好的聆聽者，別人最後會把什麼都告訴你，你甚至不必開口問，因為人就是喜歡談論自己。

我很佩服臺灣人的毅力，他們從不放棄，為了謀生超時工作。推著自製手推車、做資源回收的人，令我印象深刻。通常他們是上了年紀的人，無論寒暑晴雨都推著沈重的推車。我總是把空的瓶瓶罐罐給她們，我認為他們應該獲得掌聲，而不是被人鄙視。

在美國開車比在臺灣乏味多了，在美國，大家開車井然有序，總是遵守交通規則。如果你開車靠別人太近，他們會生氣地對你按喇叭，有時候還會對你比低級的手勢。我每次回到家鄉，就老收到交通罰單，因為我開車就像臺灣人一樣。我想你可以說我體內留著臺灣的血液吧。