

May 26, 2010

Dear Members of Aspen Christ Church,

I have already lived about 8-9 months in Taipei, Taiwan and it has been quite a journey for me so far. I arrived here last year in August and ever since I have not stopped enjoying it. I will still marvel at how big this city is and I will still find foods that I have not eaten. In fact I have recently tried two fruits that I have never knew existed. Taiwan is full of surprises and great adventures.

I am attending senior high school here at a school of around 3,000 students. My class alone is 41 students and every student has a number, that is written on their uniform, mine is 71139. My school is called a vocational high school which means that students must choose their majors. The class that I was put into took an English Major so it was easier for me to communicate with them and I am also able to take more classes because they have many classes in English.

I am learning a lot of Chinese. I am now reading and writing, not fluently but simple characters. Chinese is not so difficult once I learned to recognize the characters it got much simpler.



I have been hosted by three host families. They are all members of my hosting Rotary club Peitou Rotary Club. I have been taken care of and treated well. It has been difficult at times when I miss my real family. Because a host family can only be a host family. But they are very kind and generous. My host rotary club also treats me very well. They have

taken me on countless trips around Taiwan and have taken me to dinners and weddings and I have had good fun with many Peitou Rotary members.

Taipei may be a large city but it's public transportation system is very good. They have trains and buses and so it has made Taipei, a large city with many interesting places to go to, much smaller and at my grasp. I have gone to night markets, which are special to Taiwan in which one can find famous Taiwanese food. I have also gone to some museums like the national Palace museum, which contains ancient artifacts from ancient China that

were stolen and brought over and stored in massive storing rooms carved into a mountain. The museum is said to have so many treasures that they can continue changing out the displays for years and years. I have gone to famous places like Taipei 101 the, was the tallest building in the world, and Chang Kai Shek memorial hall, a memorial hall built to one of Taiwan's founding fathers (truly a sight to see). I have been all over Taiwan for that matter. I have seen beautiful black rock beaches with mountains just jutting out of the sea. I have been to small villages where the fog makes it seem like a prehistoric rain forest when you look up at the faint silhouettes





of the hills. I have seen very old Chinese Temples that are filled with the smell of incense and have very finely decorated statues of gods watching the people as they bow, incense in hand. I have walked through crowded markets, not walking more like shuffling along, with powerful smell of ripe dead fish and various pig body parts and then at the next stall you can buy all kinds of flowers and the next one delicious treats and the next one a live chicken. I have

had some most memorable experiences with other foreigners and exchange students as with Taiwanese people.

Now that I am close to leaving I am realizing the great place this little country is, but also I am remembering what is waiting for me back in the USA. I am excited to see my family and friends again but at the same time I am not ready to leave. One thing many Taiwanese people would ask me is "Why did you choose Taiwan?" My answer could have been inspired by the fact that I really didn't know what to say or it could have been because it was what my Chinese ability allowed me to say, whatever the reason was, my answer was always "because I want to learn Chinese. But now that I have lived here for a year and have made this one of the places close to my heart I will say that I came to Taiwan to have adventures and so I will have memories and stories to tell and experience that will stay with me all my life through. When an adolescence my age is put into a foreign country with no one he knows to study in foreign school and to learn a foreign language that is very life changing. I have to thank the members of Christ Church for all your support and help and enthusiasm for this venture of mine.

Thank you for everything,

Egbert Ospina

p.s. my Chinese name is 艾伯特(Ai BoTe)

