

The Trash in Taiwan

What surprise me in Taiwan? I already answer to this question as soon as I arrived to Taoyuan airport eight month ago. It happened when I was looking for a trash can and it was kind of hard to find one.

Nevertheless, there was no trash anywhere, so I was thinking if it was because there are a lot of people cleaning.

Now, after some months here, I know that there are a few trash cans not only in the airport, but everywhere; however, the cities always look clean.

I also comment on this to my friends back home since the first few days after my arrival to Formosa, but there's also more about this, like the recycling system.

It is amazing to see how clean the streets look without "enough" trashcans and how locals are really used to this.

Me and other foreigners I know still complain sometimes when we are eating something from a bag and we cannot find a place to litter, because it is uncomfortable to carry with something you are not using anymore like the bags from the fried chicken in night markets, the plastic cups from the milk tea shops, or the little sticks from the sausages.

I think that all of this is a matter of culture and education and another good example that we as international students should bring to our countries.

When I was talking about the recycling system, which is also good from my point of view, I am referring to this separation of materials. As I mentioned some lines above, it is hard to find a trash can in Taiwan, but when you find one, it is complete, and here comes out another issue, separation of materials.

We have different options: plastic, cans, bottles, paper, tetra pack and other waste, it was something hard somehow, sometimes, because there are some places that have these specifications in English, but there are other places where they don't have it, only in Chinese, so we have to open the trashcan to see what it has inside so we can know where and how we have to do the recycling.

The garbage truck, is another interesting thing here in Taiwan, it is kind of funny but educative and admirable at the same time, how people go out with the trash at a certain time every day, after listening one of the Beethoven's symphony coming from the truck.



I said it is also educative and admirable because I think it is hard to educate a whole society with that obedience, and that good habit to control their own garbage, to be on time at home to do it.

I have also understood that people have to buy this bag for the garbage which is provided by the government. It is provided by the government in the size and the type of bag but even with that, it can be acquired from most of the big convenience store or in any supermarket. With the force from the government, even with high price for the bag, from what I heard is about 5 to 10 NT dollars per bag, but still the citizens of Taiwan and anyone who live here are willing to pay in order to act in the rule and regulations of the society.

This kind of recycling is also contributing to the environment. According to the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) the Taiwanese government has been encouraging the citizens to realize the damage to the nature, so they have been adopting a plan to pay a certain amount to recycle also the cars and motorcycles.¹



I believe that Taiwan is now in the top of residual of management and it could be now an example worldwide contributing to the protection of the environment and it's also building a productive society conscious our planet protection.

ⁱ <http://taiwanhoy.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=41068&CtNode=1547>