

address

桃園市八德區廣福路1023號

the letter

To Mandy:

This is being written at 4:30AM. You probably shouldn't read this. Hahahah!

Holy moly batman-dy. I've been meaning to write, message, or send some form of communication since forever!!! Better late than never? Probably not.

Thanks so much for inviting me to the wedding! Taiwan weddings are strange: people just eat a bunch of expensive food quickly over lunch in assigned tables? No party? No dancing? No mingling? Haha, well, I guess most modernized cultures' weddings are like that now. I'll absolutely fight that norm (if I ever wed)!

Sorry if I looked strange. I really only had my backpack, and those Indian clothes are super useful for travel as they're light[-weight], light-colored, long-sleeved (anti-mosquito), and even looks cool. Haha, I really have no manners or as my friend often reminds me “嘿，你沒有禮貌！”.

Unfortunately, I didn't find many thoughts written about you. I appended what I found to the end of this letter. If I didn't write the last two thoughts / dreams, I'd never remember them. They're a bit strange, perhaps aspirational day-dreams [of the time]. The second dream has an awesome ambiguous, film-like ending though! So much must have been going through my mind! The most relevant thought, however, is this one, which I thoroughly remember:

[unknown date, written on iPhone]

The best day in Taiwan: Run to train with Tomo, meet with Mandy, practice momotarou, meet with Stacey and Rita, eat at Chunghua, see and eat at historic district near Chunghua, see a temple, see a shell temple, see the beach in which you can catch oysters, celebrated the Moon Festival with Stacey's family, cooked meat, shoot fireworks under a highway, scooter to a shopping mall / grocery store, take a hot shower, repair Tomo's shoes, sleep. No mosquito bites.

That indeed may still be the best day I had in Taiwan. Just look at how much experience was packed into one day! And best of all, we had a hot shower AND slept without mosquitos biting us! Hahahaha, Jon and Qing's apartment must have been rough.

I actually began writing a letter to you so many times [in the past], but I think the reason to write was always

the same: to answer the question, why I like you, or more precisely, what I like about you.

The answer was clear: **I like you because you reminded me of everything I love about Taiwan:** the simple ways to satisfaction / simple pleasures — a trip to nature (the beach, a mountain), the crafts (including foodstuffs) of towns, the cultures of peoples, talking. Being playful, yet intelligent in a peculiar manner. Being aware of everyday life. Being outgoing, adventurous, willing to do anything, without complaint. Being patient (especially to me and Tomo [during that time]). Being positive. And in general, just going with the flow of life. You are the epitome of Taiwanese culture [to me].

Everyday was an adventure in Taiwan. Every moment was an experience. Maximizing experience was the categorical imperative of life in Taiwan.

Gladly, nearly all of my Taiwanese roommates, most of whom work at hostels, had similar characteristics.

Well, of course, you had leverage beyond the average Taiwanese hostel owner / worker (many of which are my closest friends!) because you also had some kind of interest in art, which I also had at the time. Your photos eyed the strangeness of the material world, although it was usually just cats or food, haha. I never quite understood your mind, and was never able to communicate about aesthetic, cultural theory, social philosophy, or anything too deep. Surely there was some deep mental structures and gems in there to be excavated. There was a quiet, calm, solemn, aura in you. You were by far the most mature among us; which in turn made me, at the time, a wild part-backpacker, part-programmer, pro-social-techno-development, pro-game-art, insular American, halt to.

I'm guessing at that period of time (particularly the days you came to dada school, and the slow day at the accommodation in 阿里山, sitting by the campfire) I was attracted to you. In retrospect I think two things stopped me: 1. I had a huge Asia-wide trip ahead of me, so I kept moving on, and around Taiwan, as scheduled for the visa. 'Tis the cons of the life of a nomad. 2. The language barrier, and even perhaps difference in culture, made it difficult to communicate. I poked questions but could never figure you out. What was behind that solemn face? I remember trying to talk during the car trip, using an iPhone dictionary application hastily, but just gave up for the moment, to simply enjoy the trip. Either that or because sitting in the car makes me feel lazy, hahah.

Actually, of the entire Asia trip, I can only think of maybe two other girls I liked; and I must have met hundreds throughout my travels. Crazy! Conversely, I have no idea how many [girls] liked me because I'm terrible at detecting feelings and usually focused on my own world; Normally, a friend must inform me.

Hmmm, in retrospect, I kind of feel bad for bombarding you with so many questions [during that time], like, where are events to meet people, or certain social organizations, or other gatherings of interest. I was surely one-track-minded at the time. Those were *my* interests, *my* directions, *my* actions, and yet, I rely on being social to take those further act. **Thanks** sooooo much for all the help of searching those things through the vast Chinese world of Internet. I totally remember going to an awesome concert in an abandoned building around Taipei one weekend that you researched for me. I also remember sending a huge Facebook message through the separate Facebook Messenger application, asking for a lot, and you answered at length. I'm pretty bad at reciprocating time. Thanks thanks thanks, again and again.

Hmm, I thought there was much more to say / write. Perhaps I'll think of it during another late night...

Though the marriage was all too quick, no time to talk, just snap a few pictures, and it was over in a flash, quite like my time at dada school; **I was so happy to see you get married. I was so happy to see you being happy!** Really! What else matters anyway? A quiet life in 潭水 sounds ideal and fitting for you.

I have no idea why I was invited. To allow a traveler a Taiwanese marriage experience? I was glad though. Thanks.

I write this after recently accidentally breaking a heart because I focused on other things for too long (philosophy and generally being homeless) and failed to communicate, as usual, then in turn breaking my own.

It is from that experience that **I sincerely wish the best of your relationship [with him]**. By nothing else really matters, *I mean it*: economic, environment, cultural, social problems of the world can be put aside. Though, I'm sure you're way way better than me at social relations, communication, and so on; More in tune with the world, like Taiwanese people often are; More feeling, less over-thinking; Naturally avoiding communication errors, moving in unison, together; Better able to adapt to each other, and the world around.

Maybe the reason I'm writing to you now is because of that experience. I'm still oh so selfish of time, hehehe, and this is definitely me just writing to myself. Maybe it is a problem of Western culture / mind. Implementing an idealized order versus allowing order to naturally arise. There's still so many things I need to learn from Taiwan's culture. Being apolitical, Daoism, not affecting others, inaction, not desiring (especially of social development [critical theory, equality, social problems, etc.]), not not not. Ohhhhh how it contradicts all that I am.

I don't have your Facebook. Maybe you don't have one. That's cool, because I haven't used mine for nearly two years — that's part of my communication problem. But as I don't have a physical address to reach me, perhaps it's better to Facebook message (I don't post things, but I sometimes read messages) or e-mail me if you ever decide to reply (I never expect anything, so no worries!). If your Chinese is more precise than your English, I prefer your Chinese, hahahah :) . I hope this makes it to you, wherever you are, Mandy.

9-10/7/2016

Rahil

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facebook.com/rahil627 (I think?)

thoughts from my thoughts files:

sometime before 9/12

Mandy said "You feel it was long because you experienced so much". It's true. You have to constantly create new experiences.

9/29 and 9/30

Leave DADA school, celebrate Lunar Moon Festival with Mandy, [Rita]?, Ricco, Stacy, and their family.

1/13

Nearly a month since my last thought? Wild. I haven't written much blog posts either. Brain dead, surely. I had a short day dream. I was in Taiwan, and I just created several projects, asking money from other governments and international organizations. I'd just use Facebook to ask friends to join projects. I'd ask Pan for architecture and building, Mandy for everything including overseas emergencies. Projects included: helping preserve a language of aboriginal Taiwanese people using Hangul, building a hiking stop to make it easier to get to them, learning from Kim's organization about how to handle prostitution and going to nearby countries to try to help, going to Japan for another major disaster and giving hundreds of shots to children with a fear of shots, only to pass out beside Mandy wondering why no one else did the things we do.

1/18? after watching Sans Soleil?

I had a long dream of arriving in Taiwan. On that same street I arrived on my first day in Taipei.

I stood at one end, crying. At the amount of life, and the things people shaped by it. I didn't quite consume it, or become a part of it. I didn't enter society, I just stood, like a past dweller whose come home.

Mandy came, in a nice dress. We talked. I told / explained her everything. I said that I was just happy to be there. That I had an experience similar to a prison at my parent's house. I first wrote, then I struggled because I had to stay for Dad's business, then I just struggled from the sense deprivation over the long period of time. The suburbs are inhuman. Societies developed into failed ones. People aren't machines. They weren't supposed to be separated so far, from other people or nature. I didn't feel right in New York, so I went home. At home, I didn't want to be a part of that society, so I didn't react to it. It was a realization that Taiwan was my home.

We walked down the street. I gave examples of history of materials and people. I asked a farmer if it was she from a certain village with three dogs. She said that's her younger friend, and was happy at the compliment. I was affectionate with the use of my arms. She replied with body language and a nice smile. [missing examples]. We also saw the girl at the tea shop, the woman at the restaurant, and the dumpling guys.

Near the end of the street there was a cart of jewelry. I said that the designs from it matched an aboriginal's tribe. I said that I thought it was silly that Taiwanese people feel that they lack identity. Their identity is all over the street materially and in the minds of the people. The street evoked my memories of places and people in Taiwan. I had more memories on that street than my own home. I created more memories while in cities and abroad over the span of four years than the previous twenty. Passing the street everyday made me think of Taiwan more. The more memories one creates in a place, the more it becomes home.

We sat facing the end of the street. I said most of all, I missed talking, and am likely talking too much. She said keep talking. I thanked her. I said talking is a creative act. Taiwanese people are very creative, but the output is spoken language, as opposed to material [and media]. [missing more?]. Some guy came for Mandy. She hesitates, I said it's fine. She left. She looked back once.