

Dare To Give!

A Call from Philosopher, Educationist and Entrepreneur

Jimmy Teo

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Some 41 years ago, I was having dinner alone at Potong Pasir (Pek Suan Phu) at Tanjung Pinang, Bintang Island, Riau Archipelago, Indonesia.

My eyes got a little cloudy when recollecting that moment.

I need to share for posterity sake:

- 1 I love seafood. Rarely, I eat alone. For whatever reason, that evening, I was there alone. It was also my 1st time eating at this large alfresco food place where the locals frequent – brightly lighted by kerosene lamps & fronted by lots of ‘push carts’ hawkers.
- 2 I ordered steamed shell fish. And when I was waiting for my dish to arrive, I was enthralled by an interesting incident. A thin man, followed by his wife & 3 children were marching, all in a single file to a table about 50 meters away from me. It was quite spectacular in that, they were marching, not walking leisurely. From their clothes, one can see that they were very poor & very thin. Why they were there to eat was a wonder to me. I guess then that the man of the house decided to give the whole family a treat despite their poverty or that they freshly arrived from the jungles (Pulau Bintang was then not developed, with lots of jungle hinterland).
- 3 I saw them got seated & ordered something from the enquiring hawkers.
- 4 I then asked the hawker serving me to do me a favour. I told him to please tell the other hawker serving that family not to accept any payment. I will pay for all that they consume that evening. And he quickly went over to tell his hawker friend that I will pick up the bill for that family.
- 5 As I was eating my dish, to my surprise, the whole same family came to me (again in single file) to thank me. I was caught by surprise. They ate so fast & probably so simply, as I guess they could not afford more. I think I must have paid only a few Singapore dollars for their whole family. And they came to thank me! They could not believe that there are people in this world willing to do that!

My little action touched the life of the hawker who sold me my food as he was also very touched; and also his hawker friend who provided the food & was paid by me. Then, the family who ate the food who could not help but be thankful & grateful.

And now, all of you who read this article may be touched as well.

Only a few dollars, and it helped make the world a better place.

May we dare to be generous;
To give to the needy
Showing the way for others
To do likewise.

May we infuse this world
With kindness & goodness
By our thoughts, actions, smiles
And our words.

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