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Bloggers without borders

A quiet dinner meeting with top M'sian blogger turns riotous

LAST WEEK, it seemed as if Kenny Sia (www.kennysia.com) was the most popular Malaysian in town.

The winner of the Malaysian bloggers' Blog of the Year Award (www.petalinstreet.org) arrived here on Saturday, informing only a few trusted Singaporean counterparts of his visit. But it is quite silly to trust a blogger, Singaporean or otherwise, as Kenny found out.

We were to meet for dinner and drinks at a quiet location, talk about blogging and how things were in our respective countries, when Kenny's female fans began streaming in, clamouring for attention and jostling for photographs with their idol.

And this was all based on a rumour that he would be in town, at a place where several bloggers had previously blogged about dining!

So, yes, there is such a thing as the Internet version of celebrity.

Kenny's star-struck fans went home (though not with him, the decent gentleman that he is), uploaded their photos and, yes, blogged about meeting him.

Scarlett Ting (www.joewei.blogspot.com) was so star-struck that she ran and hid in the ladies' before she composed herself enough to say hello.

Some bloggers who've never met each other in real life, such as Apple Lim (www.verypoisonouslady.blogspot.com) and Sassy Jan (www.sassyjan.blogspot.com), actually found that meeting Kenny was a good reason to do so.

Apple writes: "The 4 of us was taking photos like crazy at Baker's Inn ... I think people who dunno we are bloggers think we *siao*."

So, how does one become a popular blogger?

It seems Kenny Sia's got the right formula. He's funny, writes well and is good-looking enough that photographs of him don't make people turn off their computers.

Sometimes, he pokes fun at people, but mostly at himself, making his perceived shortcomings (such as his very, very hairy legs and his wide girth) into a joke.

And Kenny's not merely funny, he writes some thoughtful and poignant posts — sandwiched between the nonsensical ones.

Just like in meatspace (a term coined in the late-90s to describe the opposite of cyberspace), these traits seem to work well online with the opposite sex, and boy, did Kenny discover that this weekend. His readers in Singa-

pore have obviously been following his blog for a while, and it didn't matter if he only wrote about all things Malaysian, because his brand of humour is pretty much universal, as are his musings on life, love and family.

On long distance relationships, Kenny ponders: "Can a girl have another boyfriend overseas, when she has a boyfriend back home? Can she be allowed to subscribe to third party insurance, before the current insurance policy expires? Can she allow multiplayer for a game that's meant to be for single players only? Can she install a back-up hard disk, in case the current hard disk becomes corrupted?"

In another post on "Signs the wedding dinner you are attending is S****", he asserts: "There's always that over-enthusiastic 40+ year-old uncle/auntie who goes on stage and sings some stupid songs from the 70s."

This kind of humour appeals across borders, letting readers delve deeper into cross-cultural traits — such as the very subtle difference in how Singaporeans and Malaysians use "lah" in their respective brands of written English.

But mostly, bloggers tend to find more things in common than differences, and this spills over with ease into meatspace.

As you can see, if ever there's a need to initiate some form of international diplomatic effort, bloggers should be given due consideration as suitable ambassadors for their countries. We're so warm and friendly to each other. Really.

And there's the other thing about meeting a blogger in real life.

Last week, I blogged about getting a haircut, and I was stopped on the street by three different people, asking to check out my hairstyle.

So, you can see how one would feel like one knows the blogger personally, even before actually speaking with him or her.

That is, if you believe what he or she writes is true, but that's another issue for another week's column.

Mr Miyagi aka. Benjamin Lee, has been entertaining blog readers for a year, so he's not at all jealous of Kenny Sia's popularity with the ladies. (His blog can be found at <http://myveryyounglob.blogspot.com>)



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Cross-traits relations may never have been warmer: Top Malaysian blogger Kenny Sia with local blogger Xiaxue.