

The adventure of buying a camera in Asia

We arrived in Hong Kong late at night flying in from Shanghai (Chinese Mainland), falling into bed very tired after we had finally gotten through immigration, sorted out our luggage and checked into our hotel for the night.

The next morning we woke up and left our hotel at Kowloon very early, heading straight to the harbor to take a Star Ferry to Hong Kong Island and on to Aberdeen.

After an exciting day there a must do visit of "The Peak" we came back to Kowloon, to start right into our next adventure, otherwise commonly known as window shopping.

Hong Kong Panorama

While my wife spent ages looking for clothes, jewelry and travelers'™ souvenirs and gifts, I was taking time to check out all the electronic stuff, eventually deciding that photographic equipment would be the most interesting thing to go for.

Hong Kong

At this time I owned a Nikon F 301 with a standard Nikkor 50mm and a Tocina 28-200. Maybe some of you will turn up your noses a little when you read this, but I have to say that I really liked this combination. And at last I bought it as it had also fit my budget. Just then I thought how it might be time I switched to auto focus system and I was falling in love with a Nikon F 801s.

Right after I had made this decision, I started to ask for local rates for each one. As you may have guessed, I ended up with a very stressed Kerstin and me having more than a few more than curious experiences about business practices in Asia. You won't believe this, but in one shop the owner had the nerve to ask me to lend him my credit card so he could use it while picking up the camera for me!

It didn't take long for me to figure out that buying a camera here has to be done very carefully. It's just that prices were really great and quite a few were less than half of what I'd have to pay at home.

Very late after an incredible visit to Kowloon's night market "if you only could see what Asians are able to sell! ;-)" - and what was on offer there - we ended our day exhausted, and headed back to the hotel. (My last thought was to give it a new try the next day).

So the following day we left our hotel very early to catch up with friends staying at a different hotel on Kimberley Road. While waiting in front of the entrance, I spotted another photo shop, right there!

Chinese Food

Right after I passed the entrance I recognized that this shop was somehow different than the others. It didn't have the normal neon light advertising and was very quiet, filled with lots of used and new cameras and equipment. It was a wild mess of a place, and I'd really need awhile to find the model of my choice. Just going to the panel and looking for the price was an ordeal. It was then that I started to feel that it was curious that no one was coming around to assist me

After having to ask for assistance, a very friendly man explained the camera to me and then offered me several used and new bodies, all at different rates. Because I was only interested in a new one, I told him that I was worried about not having a guarantee in case a problem arose in the future. As an answer he offered me an international warranty certificate for free, which is normally sold for \$HK 100. As you certainly can imagine, we couldn't come to an agreement on this, and at that, I left the shop again.

The rest of the day was spent asking about this international warranty certificate at other shops ... only to see a lot of astonished looking faces ... which made me finally trust this specific shop.

New day, new game!!! First thing I did on this third day was to go again to this shop and ask for "his" actual price. I should mention that this was to be our last day and we were scheduled to leave Hong Kong later during the evening. Unfortunately he was not willing to sell the body for the price I had mentioned to speed things up, and again, I left the shop very disappointed. You cannot imagine how disappointing this was for me. After this experience I was sure that I would not buy in any other shop. And now the time was running out for me to make my deal. Was it really important to fight for this \$HK 200 difference as both our prices were away from each other? But in Asia, you have to learn the rule that every final deal made higher than 50% on the first offered price is a waste of money. I was not willing to break with this rule.

Hong Kong at night

Just!!! We had already picked up our luggage and left the room. In another 45 minutes we had to head off to the airport when I decided to give it one last try. After a short run to the shop which was just two streets away, I went directly to the guy and offered him his last chance to make a deal with me. There I was, fighting for my breath, while he seemed to believe that I was offering about another \$HK 100 off. Shaking my head, I replied that I would not pay one cent more than the mentioned sum. I believe it took nearly a half minute when

he said that he now had to ask his boss: a woman sitting in a corner of the shop feeding a baby, from which he returned with a smile: Yes Sir, you own a new Camera

For anyone interested, I made this deal at:

David Chan Co. "It"™s at the junction of Kimberley Road and Carnarvon Road in the Tsim Sha Tsui district.

I had a lot of fun and highly recommend this shop to anyone looking for a fair and serious camera dealer in Hong Kong. As far as I know, this shop still exists until today. At the end I had saved something like 45% compared to our local offers where I live in Germany. Not to forget: And I never did need that international warranty!!