



*“The pen is mightier than the sword.”*

**Ben Emata Jr.**

[ben\\_emata@yahoo.com](mailto:ben_emata@yahoo.com)

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## **CAGAYAN DE ORO'S NIGHT CAFÉ**

**By: Ben Emata**

**CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY - - I was roaming around the city on the 8th day of my visit and I got a big surprise of my life when I was approaching the Golden Friendship Park or Plaza Divisoria as it used to be called..**

**I saw what I thought a complete disorder of business in the city and that restaurant owners, in utter disregard of rules and order, have rushed to the nearby park to demonstrate their rancor against the government by throwing their chairs, tables and even hundreds of sizzling barbecue chickens along Tirso Neri and R.N. Abejuela Streets. I waited for people running and battling the police or at least violence would follow but there was none and instead peace and tranquility had ruled the place. I saw some people occupying tables and partaking the fried and barbecue chickens, fish, grilled meat and many more. I saw giant San Miguel beer dancing on the table with red face people finishing bottles after bottles.**

**I had to approach friendly-looking people and asked them what was happening at the Plaza Divisoria. It was a Night Cafe, they said, a kind of open business or open commercial for everyone to display their ware. It is like a flea market in Hongkong where hundreds of businessmen open up small stalls, blow their giant umbrellas and colorful lights to give way to an open city of business ventures. I surmised the city earns a good fortune for the three-night a week Night Cafe.**

**The Plaza is divided into several zones where people can display their business. A portion near the Magsaysay monument near the Xavier U grounds is occupied by snack centers or fast food carinderias that serve all kinds of merienda items like hamburger, shakes, mangoes, fruits and everything.**

**You go down towards Burgos Street and see that portion near the Balintawak monument where people display dry goods, RTW items,**



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jewelries, blanket, t-shirts, pearl stuffs and many things that attract the wal-kin buyers.

Go down further to the area near the bandstand are the Umbrellas those shown in famous beach resort, picnic grounds or anything that actually sell hanging rice (puso nga kan-on) barbecue chicken, pork, beef and so many to mention. Business is brisk and each businessman I supposed count with contentment the money they earn for the night. There are coffee shops, video tapes, CD tapes by the thousands and a lot of items in electronics. Cagayan de Oro is not behind, I think, when it comes to pirated music CD from China or Hongkong or even from Taiwan.

I see Cagayan de Oro as a baby of the Chinese cities where they Chinese can dump anything and the Filipinos buy them even without money. Cellular Phones have fascinated me so well. Almost everyone even minor kids walk around undertaking the risk of being bumped by reckless drivers and doing text adventures. They receive and send text messages. Text sending, it seems, is part of their lives now. They text even inside churches, restaurants and anywhere. So annoying to look for people who have not been used to it. Of course, in the USA we also use cellphones but we don't resort to text sending. We use cellphones as a telephone and we talk.

Anyway, I tried the Night Cafe and have hanging rice and barbecue chickens. So nice, I ordered for more. I asked for beers but they have nothing but giant San Miguel beer.

While partaking the hanging rice, I enjoyed listening to live stage shows. There was a band playing and some singers that put silence in the city a thing in the past. Drums and trumpets break the sound barriers and wild music enters well and easily to the ears of people around.

I watched people walking around with shopping bags, kids trailing all along eating ice cream and fruits. Everyone seems to enjoy what I thought at first as a creation of a man who had shortsightedness.

I see the Night Cafe as a good business venture for the city government and an opportunity for people earn especially those who did not make it well during the day.