

南锣鼓巷里的“洋老板”

A Store Owner on South
Luogu Lane

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On the bustling South Luogu Lane (also known as Nanluoguxiang), a shop's name is particularly eye-catching and inviting: "Plastered 8" is shining brightly. When you get into the store, you will see a tall bald foreigner wearing a creative T-shirt that can be seen everywhere in the store. He is Dominic Johnson-Hill, the owner of "Plastered 8".

At the age of 17, Dominic left his hometown in England to pursue a free life and travel around the world. He lived in Africa for a while, then went to South America, then to India, and finally arrived in China at the age of 20. "I am not a big planner. It all happened in a beautiful accident." Dominic says, "When I arrived in China, the economy has just opened up. Everything was just starting to develop; there were so many opportunities. It was a good place to do business. So I chose to stay."

When he first arrived in Beijing, Dominic did not have much money, and he had to hunt around to make money. "At that time, there was almost no





‘foreigner’ in Beijing, and so foreigners were very popular, and there were many job opportunities,” recalls Dominic. “I taught English at companies at one time, then ran a company that did market

research. Later, I learned Chinese and some Beijing dialect and began to know some good friends and understand Beijing’s history and culture.”

In 2003, Dominic met a Canadian girl, his wife, Laura. They moved to South Luogu Lane, rented a store to start a business with their own fashion brand “Plastered 8”. The brand name has three meanings: First, plaster; Second, paste things, which indicates Dominic’s business is to “paste” creative patterns on T-shirts. He often says, “I am not a painter. I sell creativity. T-shirts are the carrier of my creativity.” It also means “drunk as a skunk”, which, he says, fits his love for beer. He also likes the number 8 because 8 represents good luck in Chinese culture. He hopes good luck in business, so he named it “Plastered 8”.

The T-shirts sold in Dominic’s store are all designed by himself. “I like the old objects in Beijing very much,” Dominic says. “I go to the second-hand markets in Beijing every week. You can pick out something which is decades or even a hundred years old. These old objects are like windows, showing me the long history of Beijing and letting me know more about the interesting past. They all inspire me.”

On the T-shirts sold in Dominic’s shop, you can see many exciting and familiar objects: food tickets, subway tickets, white enamel mugs,



washbasins, and so on. These patterns with Chinese historical imprints, even some modern bill stickers, slogans, such as “certificates help” and “medicine collection”, have become creative patterns on the T-shirts.

“My neighbor, Auntie Kang, once threw an old thermos. I took a picture of it, and we made it into a design.” Dominic said with a smile, “My neighbor once said something like 哪凉快哪待着 (stay where you feel cool). I thought it was interesting, and I put it on a shirt.” These objects are familiar for Chinese people, but from a foreigner’s eye, they are very new. “For me, these objects are quite fresh, interesting, and I put them on my shirts.”

Plastered 8 T-shirts drew inspiration from Chinese culture and set off a nostalgic fashion trend. With his unique creativity, Dominic created the Plastered 8 brand, which had developed into a Chinese streetwear brand. By 2009, the Plastered 8 had expanded to three stores in Beijing and six in China. Their T-shirts have been exported to the United States, Britain, France, Singapore, and other international markets. Local or foreign stars wearing Plastered 8 T-shirts can be seen all over the world. Accordingly, Dominic won the “Entrepreneur of the Year” Award in the “2008 British Business Awards”.

Besides the brand Plastered 8 he founded, the most important reason for



him to stay in Beijing and live in hutong for these years is his special love for hutong culture. “When I arrived in Beijing, there were only about 10 million people. And now it grew to 20 million people. It puts a massive pressure on the infrastructure of an old city. And the city has to develop. Part of the city had to be destroyed to make way for a new economy to make a better life for people. So part of the old city has to be destroyed. It is very sad. What I want to see is that the remains of this old city, like this area, especially places like Nanluoguxiang (South Luogu Lane), can be protected.”

Speaking of this, Dominic sighs with emotion, “Although I don’t read many books and don’t know the history of the Beijing hutong, in particular, the hutongs are the soul of the city, and it has old history. Many things may not be seen in museums, but still exist in Beijing’s hutongs. If you want your children to know more about the history of Beijing, take them to the hutongs more often.” What Dominic does not want to see is that South Luogu Lane becomes a bar street like Houhai. He worked with people from the street office to organize a “creative market” in the lane, which attracted many tourists. Today, South Luogu Lane has become a creative street, as Dominic most wants to see.

“I have lived here for 22 years. I am part of the city. I own a house here. I own a business here. My children were born here. I met my wife here. I absolutely love my life here.” Dominic says with a smile, “I couldn’t be happier. We share a courtyard with other families. My children grow up with neighbors’ children. There are so many good neighbors around. I have my own shops. There is hutong culture. I like the feeling that people are familiar with each other, care about each other, and are very cordial. I love Beijing!”

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走进熙来攘往的南锣鼓巷，有一家商铺的店名特别吸人眼球，让人想一探究竟：“创可贴8”几个字闪烁着醒目的光芒。走进店里，你会看到一位身材高大的光头老外，穿着店里随处可见的创意文化T恤。他就是“创可贴8”的洋老板——江森海（Dominic Johnson-Hill）。

17岁那年，从小在英格兰长大的江森海为追求自由自在的生活离开家乡，开始漫游世界。他在非洲生活了一段时间，后来去了南美洲，之后又辗转到印度，终于在20岁那一年来到了中国。“我不是一个有明确

