



A temple bell in Korea

BECOMING AMERICAN

March 16, 2015

José Cruz: What was the household language, Korean?

Danny Minn : No. Uh, heh heh. That's another complicated thing. My parents would speak Korean to each other (Uh-huh) but my dad would speak English with us, and my mom would kind of mix it up with English and Korean.

José: Did either of them ever speak to you in Japanese?

Danny: Mmm, uh not really, no. (OK) Maybe just a few words.

José: That's (yeah) really interesting, So neither you nor your brother had a lot of exposure to Korean growing up in America.

Danny: Well we obviously- we could listen to our parents speaking Korean, and when they're talking with their friends it was usually Korean so (OK OK) we could speak a little bit, (well...) but no formal education in Korean and we never lived in Korea. We visited several times.

José: Would you would you say that you had any degree of fluency in Korean then? Or it was just a little bit here and there: you knew how to say "water", you knew how to say "bread" kind of thing?

Danny: Yeah very low level, yeah.

José: OK, ok ok. Oh that's really interesting. Um, I uh, I **kind of had** a similar experience growing up (Mmm) a little bit, But um where I differ from you is that, um in my case, uh I grew up as uh, in the Philippines as a boy speaking only Tagalog.

Danny: Yeah? And when did you move?

José: When I was a nine. Um so I didn't really speak any English until I arrived uh in Canada. Uh but where we do have a similar point is that... My parents, I get the recollection that they were making an effort to have me integrate into the community so they spoke to me a lot in English (Right) and of course they would speak to each other in Tagalog. (Mm-hmm) Um, do you think your parents were doing the same thing with you? They wanted you to be American so they spoke to you quite um **conscientiously** in English? That was the purpose?

Danny: Um, certainly my dad was uh pushing that. My dad was kind of an English **freak**. (Hmm) **I mean** he was the type of guy who liked to read dictionaries for fun. You know.

José: Not phone books? No, I'm just kidding.

Danny: Yeah. Dictionaries. Oh and the newspaper of course. But yeah.

José: Well of course, yeah.

Danny: But my mom was- she wanted, I think she was pulled in both directions. She wanted us to learn Korean, but you know as kids, we said, "No. No thanks, we don't want to learn Korean. We don't want to play with other Koreans".

José: Didn't- You said that your mother and father spoke to their friends in Korean, so you had other Koreans uh, nearby as you were growing up. Didn't...

Danny: Nearby, they were not in the same neighbourhood. (Oh) They would drive you know, an hour away.

José: Just for the record, (Yeah) what part of America were you growing up in? (So in Oregon.) Not a lot of Koreans in Oregon? I don't know.

Danny: Not at that time. (Oh OK) This was the late 70s early 80s (Uh-huh) uh and we were out in the sticks. In the countryside.

José: Then you didn't have a lot of Kore- other Koreans near you as an influence growing up. When you say they were talking to their friends I guess that was mostly on the phone then?

Danny: Yeah or they would come visit.

José: No cousins no no (No) no little kids to play with. (No) So how did you sort of see your Korean heritage when you were growing up? **You were going**, "No. No thanks. Don't want to be reminded of that kind of thing."

Danny: That's right. We rebelled against Korean culture.

José: And can you can you like, help me understand why? What (The why?) you you didn't like it?

Danny: Uh, I was just copying my brother. (Heh heh) So it's pretty natural to (Yeah it's-) copy your older brother (Yeah) and just follow his actions. You kind of- you can idolise an older brother in that way. (Sure sure sure) And he did not like Korean food or Korean culture. (Really) Right, right? Crazy.

José: Yeah yeah. How do you- how do you think about this now in retrospect?

Danny: Ah I think we... Um, it's a bit of shame that we did that. I kind of regret it. I wish I had learned Korean more.

Word count	Time	Words/Min.
742	4:29	153.52

Pointers:

kind of had: note the pronunciation of "kind of". It is said quickly as "KAENDA" (1:11)

Conscientiously: José made a mistake. He should have said, "consciously". (1:57)

freak: In this meaning the word has a slang meaning like "fan" or "maniac"; someone is extremely enthusiastic about something. (2:07)

I mean: saying "I mean" before a statement can bring extra emphasis to the meaning. (2:08)

You were going: José says this so quickly you can barely hear it. (3:31)

Discussion:

Did you grow up in a multilingual household?

Are you or your parents immigrants to your country? Do you know anyone else who is?

If you could choose another native language, what would it be?

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