

Conversation Friends

Class # 37

Wednesday,

November 1, 2017

7:00 - 8:30pm

Volunteers: Jon* Elizabeth

Students: Rainbow, Guosheng and Marie. Isaac joined us around 7:45

Jon's Notes:

We began by each telling what they did before class. Guosheng took his son to swimming practice to prepare for a swim meet. His son is having trouble with the Butterfly but doing well at other swimming strokes. Rainbow had taken a friend's two young daughters to an ice-skating arena. Marie had an eye exam earlier in the day and then was at her book club.

The book club reads 50 pages every two weeks and meets to discuss the book, *The Hundred-Year Old Man Who Climbed out of the Window and Disappeared*. It was written by a Swedish man and was a popular translation in Korea a few years ago. Marie said it is a "burden" for her to read the 50 pages and not easy at all but she likes the story and is enjoying it.

Our discussion topic was Memory. I asked about everyone's earliest memory. Rainbow remembers being about 4 or five and being taken to the railway station to go home with her grandfather, who lived in the country. Her parents lived in Harbin City, near the Russian border and there was danger from bombings at the airplane factory in that city, so after having to run from kindergarten to an underground shelter while the siren's blared, she and her younger sister were sent to stay with her grandfather. Rainbow remembers the crowded station, her grandfather holding her tightly against him and seeing the doors close as her mother waved good bye.

Marie recalled that she and her brother used to spend several weeks a year at her grandmother's farm, leaving the crowded city of Seoul behind. They played hide and seek in the fields and she suddenly remembered finding a nest of baby mice and not knowing what they were, just that they were tiny baby animals.

Gousheng remembered playing and running in the fields with his friends and playing dice games with them in his small village. He also remembers his 4 ½ year-old brother dying when Gousheng was 7. His brother had a brain infection, probably encephalitis, from a mosquito bite. He said healthcare was very bad. He remembers his little brother liked to go fishing with him. It was a touching story.

Isaac joined us and told of being in an orphanage and beating up someone who was beating up his brother in the middle of the night.

Next, we talked about schools and their memories of classmates. In China the elementary schools had 70 to 100 children in a classroom. Isaac said in Haiti the students stay in one room and the teachers of various subjects come to the room.

In China, boys and girls were separated and not allowed to speak. I asked how they met their spouses then. Marie met her husband at her first job after college; Rainbow's parents introduced her to a young man they worked with and Gousheng said his uncle introduced him to his wife.