

Topic 014 Studying Chinese

杨晨:各位听众好, 欢迎大家到美语咖啡屋。我是杨晨。

JODY: Hello and welcome to American Cafe. My name is Jody! Hey, Yang Chen, who's going to join us today on American Cafe?

杨晨: 明克胜先生。你知道吗, 现在中国有学英语热, 但是他们不知道其实在美国也有很多人在学中文。所以我们今天请明克胜先生来给我们谈谈他为什么要学中文, 还有他在学中文的过程中遇到什么困难。我们今天还有一位神秘的嘉宾。你知道是谁吗?

JODY: I have no idea.

杨晨: 就是你。

JODY: Oh, my gosh!

杨晨: 好, 我们就请明克胜先生谈谈他为什么要学中文, 他是怎么开始的。

Carl: Well, I started a long time ago. First learned a little bit when I was in college. But I probably picked up most of it when I was overseas in Taiwan and also Mainland China for about three years total. Started learning, really learning, when I was in Taiwan.

杨晨: 那么, Jody 你呢, 你是怎么开始学中文的呢?

JODY: Actually I started studying Chinese when I arrived in China. I don't have Chinese under my belt before that time, Yang Chen. So I arrived in Shanghai when I was 21 years old, not speaking any Chinese. And I arrived at the train station at 3 o'clock in the morning surrounded by people who did not speak my language. And I can tell you it was a little frightening. So, I did the only thing I knew what to do ... I sang a song, "Rain drops keep falling on my head." And everyone started laughing and it made the situation better. Actually, Carl said that he began studying in college while he was in the United States. I did not do that. I got a scholarship to leave the country and go to China and study and I took advantage of it. I really wanted to go abroad to study and China seemed like the most foreign place on the planet.

杨晨: 我们可以想象美国人学中文一定有很多困难, 因为这两个语言实在是相差的太远了。那么下面请你们谈谈你们在学习中遇到过什么困难, 首先我们让明克胜先生谈一谈。

Carl: Two of the most challenging things when you study Chinese, in particular, are the tones and the characters. I think that's just extremely difficult. And it was frustrating to be teaching ... teaching kindergarten students and realizing that their reading was much better than mine.

杨晨: Jody, 你觉得明克胜谈的这些困难是不是每个学中文的学生都会遇到的困难呢?

JODY: Oh, most definitely. The tones and the characters, Yang Chen, they're so difficult. We're just not used to it. We're not used to the strict tonal aspect of Chinese. 妈、麻、马、骂。

杨晨: 没错, 我听到过很多外国人说中文的时候因为四声没有掌握对, 所以闹出很多笑话。比如把一个东西讲成另一个东西。我想学中文也和学其他语言一样, 每个人都有一些小的诀窍。那么你们两谈一谈你们在学习的过程中有些什么样的诀窍, 或者是技巧啊, 或者有什么好的经验介绍给大家。

Carl: The best thing to do when you're learning Chinese is to be around a lot of four-year olds. And the reason I say that is because their level of Chinese and yours are at the very beginning quite similar. You can have these great conversations like "I'm hungry!" "I like blue." "I want the ball!" And so, I thought it was great to be able do that ... very simple Chinese expressions with four and five-year olds.

JODY: Yeah. I didn't teach small children. I taught university students and we mostly used English. But I did have the opportunity to make friends with students in the music department and I learned several Chinese pop songs and I was able to perform with them and sing Chinese songs at concerts. And when you're a foreigner living in China you get asked to do television commercials and acting shows.

杨晨: 所以这个语言环境是很重要的, 你和不同行业的人交谈也可以学到很多东西。

JODY: Not only the language but most importantly, the culture and how people live their lives and make a living and have fun.

杨晨: 好, 我们今天的时间快到了, 我想最后请你们二位一人用中文讲一句中国的成语啊, 俗语啊, 或者是俏皮话, 讲什么都可以。

Carl: 天下无难事, 只怕有心人。

JODY: I like this idiom. I heard it and it stuck with me and here it is 好马不吃回头草。

杨晨: 哇，你们两都说得非常好。好，我们今天的时间到了。谢谢大家收听。我们下次节目再见。

JODY: See you later!