**<My Life as a TESOL Certified English Communication Facilitator>**

**134WDKN Final Essay Lee (Hwibok Lee)**

**<The Last Lesson>:**

Beginning with a humorous greeting that only intelligent professors like to do; with friendly jokes only my dear professor who has taught his students for many years can make; it was in the ceremony hall on the graduation day when Prof Song began his speech.

Starting with, as if introducing every student he had taught to the audience, mentioning everyone’s name. A bit funny that the picture of him faltering on our names, when we had first met, was still so fresh in my mind; he obviously could now enumerate the names as if he was showing off that he could.

But soon after that, after his old-fashioned banters, and after the sound of kind laughter from the audience, he seemed to get a little serious.

“I might be supposed to speak for my dear students today, but, as a father myself, I feel called upon to speak for their dear parents as well. For I have seen so many who wish their children not to meet any problems in their lives; so many trying to prevent problems from happening to their children; and so many who believe that being without problem is equal to a good life. If and when you share the same, I am afraid, you are utterly wrong that I must say. For the life itself is a problem which is full of problems.

Whether your child is a genius or not, whether your child is popular or not, whether your child is with parents who have money or not… Problems will always be following them. They will have problems with their friends. They will have problems with what they do. They will certainly have many problems with their lives. And times will follow, when you cannot protect your children, when you cannot help them and when you cannot do anything for them. But that does not necessarily mean you are being bad parents or doing something wrong; this is just what we call living.

If one does wish for her beloved child to be without problems, the one should have not had the child in the first place. You have already given them lives that inevitably entail a lot of problems. And as their teacher, I have taught my students in hopes of that the knowledge I impart would enable them to solve the problems they shall meet when they join the bigger world. Was I successful? It is too early to tell.

Today, your children, and my students are leaving the school to join the chaos called society. Despite certain good things, they will have to go through many ordeals there. There, your children may tumble, may be hurt, and may wail. Not because they are wrong, not because they are inferior, but just because that is what living is. So dear parents, let them go to tumble more, let them go to get hurt more, and let them go to wail more; do not let them separate the bitterness from their life; there is nothing more piffling than a life full of joys only. Through the tears they shed and with the bruises they get, let them embrace their life as it is.”

A storm of applause followed. Like that, with words of caution rather than honey-sweet compliment, we became graduates.

**<My Life as a TESOL Certificated English Communication Facilitator>:**

A Chinese, Lao-tzu, once famously said that “The heaven is mindless of people on earth; as much as the beautiful world in sight is not for us, those, such as terrible natural disasters, frequently happen and claim people’s lives, are not for us. The world only is at it is.” Rather heartless it might appear, but the view had widely been accepted in China and Korea quite until recent days. Unlike his many contemporaries who denied the incomplete world before their eyes and established a hypothetical one, a perfect, errorless, namely, the real one, to justify the unfair, sorrowful and at many times, riddling world on the other side of the earth, he had no excuse for the cruel world nor attempts to justify it. From his perspective, the only concern is not the eternal truth nor salvation but living itself, to be specific, to fulfil the life in the given situation, just like, perhaps, Dr Hawking whose academic motivation was rather occidental. Not to my surprise, I heard the same in Prof Song’s speech and many times in Frank’s, my dear TESOL teacher, too.

What have I learned from the TESOL course? What changed through the course? Most definitely, they are too early to be told for now; I am still in the course of changing, learning and becoming a better teacher, even at this very moment, as I will always be. As the life is uncertain, so will be my students; and as my students learn, so will I. TESOL has never taught me the mechanism, how I can be the perfect teacher, rather, it cast a question “how” and “what” is being a good teacher”.

Many different, and provisional, answers are possible to the question. Is a teacher who is the most generous good one? Or is a teacher who is the most intelligent better one? If so, what it means being generous or intelligent? Should that be judged by the number of how many the teacher has whipped his students? Or should that be judged by how much talkative the teacher is? Alas, the TESOL has never given me the answer - in other words it has given me a question instead; how could be more heartless!

A tender voice once told me, “Some questions are to answer and some to hold; sometimes for life.” TESOL has just burdened me with one. But I will carry this one. I shall try to fail, try to fail again, and try again to inch forward. Let the stupid tumble, get hurt and wail; to be a good teacher and to live my life.