

Whenever my parents would talk about Korean history during a Korean holiday, like Chuseok, I would always stare with a blank look on my face. I didn't get it. I still don't. But as I watched videos about the LA riots at the workshop, I realized that my ancestors have suffered so much that should have been prevented. Then I realized that the "should haves" would linger long in those hearts after the division of the peninsula and after the wars. From Japan colonizing Korea, then the Korean War separating the Korean peninsula, Koreans had to endure it all. As a result, there are so many Koreans who have migrated with their lives on the line.

The LA riots were also something Koreans had to endure, Korean merchants had to suffer the loss of their stores and source of income. When I think about this, I think about elementary school, where I had no idea what Korea was. My friend asked me one day if I knew my race. I didn't, and I asked my mom what I was. She replied, "You're Korean". Another classmate sneered, "Are you Kim Jong Un's daughter?" I remember being extremely bothered, but I replied no, he was not my dad. Even in middle school, I kept hearing similar remarks. It sort of saddens me that Koreans have to go through this even today.

After I watched *Jeronimo* with my mom, she had a long conversation with me. I didn't get the movie, but she did. She explained how her mom reprimanded her because my mom taught me Korean. My grandma said that I didn't need to know how to speak Korean because I'm American and I didn't need to learn the language. Then she told me that the reason why I was taught Korean was because I am; nothing will change that. I was born Korean, and I need to know how to speak the language because it was the basics of knowing your culture, she said. Just like how nature determines your height, your ethnicity is inevitable and cannot be changed.

Despite their geographical distance from every other, the Korean diaspora is unambiguously a part of Korean history. However, their bond can not be explained without providing the history of exploitation, conflict over colonization, and also the current politics of a divided nation. In South Korea, the citizens value hard work in their daily lives and are very proud people in their traditional culture and their financial success. South Korea is also extremely well developed, with one of the largest economies in the world, and are caught up on the latest technologies, if not ahead. However, I never thought much about their achievements, I just thought, "It is how it is." But when I was listening to the workshop, I realized that Korea didn't achieve all of this without any hardships and pain. The pain of separating, the pain of wars, and the pain of identity.