

Seoul 3000: A Taxi Ride in Seoul

Grouppodcast ASBE I

Actors

Christine	Christine van Rossum
Johanna	Johanna Köhler
Rilana	Rilana Karlguth
Taxi driver	Christian Tewes
Narrator	Friedrich Scheel (as a guest)

Introduction

Narrator: Someone who is in an unfamiliar city and wants to arrive at a destination quickly normally goes by taxi. But in a metropolitan area like Seoul you should not do so without preparation. Just a few taxi drivers speak English fluently and in Seoul neither street names nor house numbers do exist. Therefore, it is important to know public places, famous buildings, large hotels or underground stations close to your desired destination to give some instructions. During the 2002 Soccer World Cup even a special translation service was introduced that made it possible to call an interpreter free of charge if communication is impossible. How the Germans and Germany as the host country of many famous writers is perceived in Korea is presented in the following spectacle in five acts and is well-grounded in fact and the knowledge about Korea the group has gained so far. To get detailed information Koreans who lived or still live in Germany for a while were interviewed. Moreover, the situations described by the taxi driver are based on real life stories.

Storyline

Narrator: After a wonderful week in Doha Christine, Johanna and Rilana arrive suntanned at Seoul International Airport. Christian, however, is not with them as he found the love of his life in Doha and decided to stay with her. To get to their accommodation at EWha Womans University they hail a taxi and greet the friendly driver. The most important point is to choose the right color of the car.

Dialogue

The just left the arrival hall and are waiting in front of Incheon Airport. They are curious about their arrival. They decide to call a taxi using their knowledge about the Korean language and the way of calling a taxi. Translation may be found in box brackets.

The girls: Ajeossi! *[Mister!]*

Taxi driver: Annyeong haseyo! Oso ossipchio! *[Hello! Come in!]*

The girls: Ne, ne! *[Yes, yes!]*

Taxi driver: Odieso gago sipeo? *[Where do you want to go to?]*

Christine: Idä (*Abbreviation for the Ewha University*) Ewha university.

Taxi driver: Ahhh, sungkynkwan? *[Ahhh, Sungkynkwan? {another university in Seoul}]*

Rilana: Öhhmm Ne! (*As the girls do not understand the driver they just nod in agreement.*) *[ÖhhmmYes!]*

Taxi driver: So sumnida. Jo eneun Kim Hyon-Ho inmida *[OK, very good. My name is Kim Hyon-Ho.]*

Christine: Jo eneun van Rossum Christine inmida. *[I am Christine van Rossum.]*

Johanna: Je ireumeun Köhler Johanna inmida. *[My name is Johanna Köhler.]*

Rilana: Je ireumeun Karlguth Rilana inmida. *[My name is Rilana Karlguth.]*

Taxi driver: Hangugmareul jal haschineundaeyo. *[Your Korean is very good.]*

Rilana: Anieyo. Chal mothaeyo! *[Oh no. It is nothing to speak of.]*

Taxi driver: Odieseo baeusyoesseoyo? *[Where did you learn it?]*

Johanna: Dogil Bohum Rureudaehakkyo LSI eohagwoneseo baewosseoyo. *[We learned it in Germany at LSI at the Ruhr University.]*

Taxi driver: Dogil isseosseo. *[I have been to Germany as well.]*

Narrator: But now the dialogue becomes too difficult and the language barrier too high.

Christine: Yeongeo haseyo? *[Do you speak English?]*

But the taxi driver does not understand them. The girls try to use the installed interpreter. But the taxi driver recognizes it and starts speaking in English.

Taxi driver: I have already been to Germany, for example Brandenburger Tor, Schloss Neuschwanstein or Kölner Dom.

Christine: Really? Why? What have you done there?

Taxi driver: My uncle has emigrated to Germany. I have worked in his enterprise for half a year.

Rilana: Aahh... interesting, why did your uncle go to Germany?

Taxi driver: Germany is one of the leading economies in the European Union and is a good example how unification can work well. Furthermore, they have a well developed democracy and are very successful in playing football.

Narrator: Especially during the 1960s Germany recruited Korean nurses and miners to cover the need of qualified workers and to demonstrate the loyalty to a country that was also divided due to different ideologies.

Taxi driver: And, what about you, why are you here?

Johanna: We are in Korea for the first time to study for one semester. We are curious and looking forward to learning more about this foreign culture and history.

A song of the Korean band „no brain“, or better known as “no peurrain” among Koreans, is played on the radio, the taxi driver turns it louder and introduces the band to the three girls. The girls go a bit crazy, as they are familiar with the band due to the language class at the LSI in Bochum.

Taxi driver: Oh you guys from Germany, you do not like karaoke, do you? Here in Korea, we love it. When you stayed here for a longer time, you will recognize that a karaoke bar may be found at any corner of the street. But I have got an idea: what about singing a German folksong right now. Please do it for me.

The Girls start singing a German folksong (Hoch auf dem gelben Wage). In the background the song is played.

Taxi driver: Ohhh that’s soooo cool. Normally, international passengers do not like to sing. Especially Germans are not willing to do so.

Johanna: Really? Why? What do you think, where can you find differences between the German and the Korean culture or behavior in everyday life?

Taxi driver: Seriously? Hm, that is a pretty difficult question. Well, yes, a real difference is eye contact between dialogue partners. The ambiguity of the Korean smile is another good example. I often experienced that the way we smile, which is often based on embarrassment or pacification, is misinterpreted as dump grin. German people often think, we are stupid or do not take them seriously. But, that is not how it is meant. Personally, I got into trouble due to my mentality of restraint and politeness. Once, I celebrated Christmas with my host family. I drank the whole glass of wine, as in Korea it is polite to empty your glass. But

any time it was empty the host refilled it. So I had to empty it again and again. In the end of the evening, I drank two bottles of wine all alone and I was really drunk. But let us come to a totally different topic. Do you know, that the EXPO is currently in Yeosu?

Narrator: The Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea or naming its full title: International Exposition Yeosu Korea 2012 is an international exposition in the New Port area in Yeosu, Korea taking place May – August 2012. The Bureau International des Expositions accepted Yeosu’s bid to host the Expo 2012 on November 26th, 2007 in Paris. Thus Yeosu successfully prevailed against the competing candidate cities of Tanger and Breslau.

Be careful and differentiate between World Expo and International Expo:

The World Expo – one of the world’s oldest and largest international events – takes place every five years and lasts for six months. Participants include states, international organizations, civil society groups, corporations, and citizens. The size of the site is unlimited and participants may build their own pavilions. A World Expo is further characterized by the broad scope of the chosen theme, which must be of universal concern to all of humanity.

The International Expo is held between two World Expos and its duration is three months. Participants include states, international organizations, civil society groups, corporations, and citizens. The size of the site is limited to 25 hectares and the Expo organizers provide the pavilions, which are then customized by the participants. The theme of the International Expo must represent, as with the World Expo, a global concern but it must be more specialized in its scope.

The theme of the Expo is “The Living Ocean and Coast” with subthemes of a) “Preservation and Sustainable Development of the Ocean and Coast,” b) “New Resources Technology,” and c) “Creative Marine Activities.” The organizers anticipate participation of more than 100 countries and international organizations, and 8 million visitors. These visitors may experience extraordinary entertainment on an exhibition area of 250,000 m² and auxiliary facilities (including Expo Town, Transit Parking Lots, parks, green areas, etc.)

The site, which is surrounded by 317 jewel-like islets, has the geographical edge that comes from being adjacent to the ocean, and thus, is ideal for

realizing the Expo theme. It overlooks Hallyeosudo Marine National Park and Odong Island. Hence, it has the perfect natural conditions to make the Expo's theme come alive.

The Yeosu Expo's goal is to provide an opportunity to enhance the international community's perception of the function and value of the ocean and coast, share knowledge on the proper use of the ocean and coast and recognize the need for cooperation in the marine sector. It also desires to serve as a venue to learn about the achievements of and future models for the marine sector and offer a valuable chance to promote state-of-the-art marine science and technology and marine industries.

Taxi driver: German beer is also poured out on the EXPO. I always liked beer in Germany. There is so much beer – anywhere beer. I have also been to the Oktoberfest. There you may find all these enormous mugs of beer and there were terrific sausages. Many Koreans get Bavarian people in their mind when thinking about Germans.

Rilana: Hö, but we have no traffic with Bavaria.

Taxi driver: Well, ok. But when I was in Germany, I experienced that it was nearly the same regarding the difference between people from Asian countries. I was severely insulted as people called me Japse or Ching Cheng Chong. So, do you already know anything about the Korean history?

Christine: mhhh, ahh, mhhh... (*hesitates*)

Taxi driver: What's wrong?

Christine: We do, but we are not sure whether we should mention it.

Taxi driver: Oh, do you refer to the Korean War and the separation of Korea? This is indeed a sensitive topic, but I asked you directly... excuse me.

Christine: Well, especially in the recent time North Korea and the death of Kim Jong Il was very present in the German media. The rocket launch was also a heavily discussed topic.

Taxi driver: After the death of Kim Jong Il we hoped for a change in the relationship between the two countries, but the signs are not looking good for the near future.

Christine: Why?

Taxi driver: The situation was very complicated after the incident of the Cheonan battleship in 2010 and the artillery attack afterwards. Many considered the change in the regime as a new start, but Kim Jong Un clearly stated that he will continue the Songun politic, where the main focus is military strength. What do you think about the current situation?

Johanna: Well, that is a difficult question. I think that this situation differs a lot from the unification in Germany. People in North Korea suffer a lot under the regime and the more time passes the more difficult the situation becomes. With China and Russia in the picture it becomes even more difficult.

Taxi driver: Yes it is indeed a difficult issue, but the Korean history is way richer than this conflict and you will learn a lot about Korean history during your stay.

Have a look. This is the Gyeongbokgung Palace or Gyeongbok Palace. It is a royal palace located in northern Seoul. Originally built by King Taejo, the founder of the Joseon dynasty, the grandest of Seoul's palace served as the principal palace until 1592, when it was burnt down during the Japanese invasions. It lay in ruins for nearly 300 years until Heungseon Daewongun, regent and father of King Gojong, started to rebuild it in 1868. King Gojong moved in, but the expensive rebuilding project virtually bankrupted the government. Nearly destroyed by the Japanese in the early 20th century, the walled palace complex is slowly being restored to its original form prior to destruction. As of 2009, roughly 40 percent of the original number of palace buildings still stand or are reconstructed.

Do you know that the name of the palace, Gyeongbokgung, is translated as "Palace Greatly Blessed by Heaven"?

Christine: No, we do not know.

Taxi driver: One time you should visit this unique sight.

Rilana: We will do but Öhh Ajeossi, I think we drove too far. We wanted to go to the Ewha University.

Taxi driver: Ohh (*Rummages in the footwell of his car and seeks his face/mask. Finally he finds it and puts it back on his face.*) Oh I'm really sorry. I lost my face because I thought you wanted to go to the Sungkyunkwan University.

Johanna: No, no. We are staying at the Ewha University. I think we didn't make ourselves clear. So, sillye hamnida. [*Excuse us please, we are sorry.*]

Taxi driver: No, that was my fault. I will immediately get you to the EWHA.

The girls arrive safely and without any further devious routes at the EWHA University.

Taxi driver: So, here we are. I wish you all the best for your stay in South Korea.

Rilana: Thank you. We really enjoyed this entertaining and informative taxi ride.

Taxi driver: You are most welcome and please excuse my inconvenience caused.

Johanna: We will go back to Germany on the 21st of December. Do you have a card so we might give you a call to drive us to the airport?

The Taxi driver gives his card to the girls.

Christine: Nee, gamsa hamnida. Annyeonghi gyeseyo! (*Vielen Dank. Auf Wiedersehen!*)

Taxi driver: Annyeonghi gaseyo! (*Auf Wiedersehen!*)

...to be continued...

Outro

It's December 21st. The winter term is over and Christmas is just around the corner. The three girls call the nice taxi driver to bring them to the Incheon Airport...

Conclusion

We are looking forward to the intercultural encounter and are curious how we will assess retrospectively our podcast and our foreknowledge.

Outtakes

We thank Stephain Baik, Soyeon Moon and Friedrich Scheel for the friendly support.