

American TKU Professor Speaks on his Language Development

【Wan-xun Qin, Special Report】 “I’ ve been here nearly 30 years!” said Associate Professor of the Department of Diplomacy and International Relations, David Lee Kleykamp, in fluent Chinese. Originally from America, he’ s been here long enough to discuss the beginning foundations of modern Taiwan. He expressed, “I had never been to Asia when I heard about Tamkang University back in 1987.” At the time he was only 30 years old and highly skilled in English writing.

David previously was a financial assistant for important clientele and often had to translate documents from English to Chinese. David explained, “I’ d receive papers in the morning and had to complete the translation within 12 hours. I was required to finish as much as 25 pages in a day.” He often listened to government recordings at his work as he kept records, imitating the sounds of the Chinese associates. He elaborated, “Sometimes while making a voice recording, I was told that I was speaking too quickly for the client. So I started over and did it again, but then they said I was speaking too slowly. I had to repeat it three full times before they were satisfied.”

When David arrived to Taiwan, he expressed he didn’ t have much to do in the form of entertainment. “There were only three channels.” He stated. But he spent his days enjoying the pleasures of reading. “If I hadn’ t come to Taiwan, I would have never read so many English novels.” David expressed. At the time his Chinese was only at elementary school level, so he also began to pick up reading Chinese stories to continue developing.

He stated, “I’ d only seen Chinese language related to the basics of finance and money transactions. There were so many things related to life that I hadn’ t come in contact with. After a while of continuing to read Chinese diligently, I didn’ t need the dictionary anymore.” In addition to his Chinese improving, David also met with many other interesting events in his life in Taiwan that helped shaped his unique character. He expressed, “Just like a tree, we can not choose where we grow, but we can

choose how we grow. After being here so long and making so many friends, it' s hard to imagine my life elsewhere.”

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