

Monoracial Interview #4 (Chris)

Male Korean American Adoptee - *Chris*

For my monoracial adoptee interview, I interviewed a Korean American adoptee, who I will refer to as “B”. Like me, B is racially Asian with a Korean ethnic ancestry. I started the interview by asking how he responds to the question, “What are you?” Like my multiracial interviewee, B responded with a racial answer: “Asian. Secondary, Korean.” The issue of Tashiro’s ascribed racial identity plays a major role in how B sees himself. When I asked him why he responded to the above question in racial terms, he stated that it was because that’s what other people are looking for; “No one has ever told me that that wasn’t a racial question.” His chosen identity is Asian because that’s how people perceive him. Also, B believes that to identify as anything else would be a denunciation of what he is and where he came from.

Although B chooses to identify as Asian because that’s how others see him, it is difficult for him to be around other Asians. Like my multiracial Japanese-European American adoptee interviewee, B has been in situations where his “Asian-ness” was called into question. Last year when he attended a southern Florida university, he was at a party and started to talk with some Korean students. He told them that he was from South Korea. When they found out that he was adopted and had no knowledge of Korean culture or language, they told him, “Yah, but you’re not really *from* Korea, right?” B admits that he has had relatively little contact with other Asians. He feels abnormal, awkward, and nervous around a group of Asians. Part of the problem is that he feels that they have a certain set of expectations of him, and that he really does not like when people have predisposed expectations of who he is and what he should be. Basically, he doesn’t feel like he fits in with Asians and he feels much more comfortable hanging out with whites. This is a bit different from my other interviewee, who felt very Asian and was very adamant about identifying and socializing with Asians because that’s who she felt she was, even if some Asians excluded her.

B’s views of how this all affects the issues of adoption and of multiracial adoptees are quite similar to my multiracial interviewee. He feels that multiracial individuals are very welcome in the adoptee community and that he doesn’t see a person’s multiracial heritage as being that significant. What is much more significant, or the *most* significant, is the experience of being an adoptee, especially a transracial adoptee. “I feel that we connect on an adoptee level, not a racial level. It is much more important that you are adopted, especially if you are transracially adopted, than what race you are.” He remarked that a person could be green, purple, have three heads, etc., but if they were

adopted, he feels that he could connect with that person. The experience of being adopted is so unique that race plays a very minor role within the community.

This view that the experience of being a transracial adoptee is what draws the boundary between the in-group and out-group, and not race, or culture, or ethnicity, is a common theme in both of my interviews. My multiracial interviewee remarked that her being a transracial adoptee was a much more significant aspect of her life than being multiracial. B echoed this view. Although race and ethnicity is certainly an issue, what it means to be "multiracial" within the adoptee community seems to be of little significance. Being a transracial adoptee has much more significance, indeed, it could be said that it is *the* significant factor.