

Go for Dazzling Distinctiveness



It was one spring day of my second year in junior high school. I had a shaved head, like everyone else in my class. A longlegged, blue-eyed, beautiful lady came into our class. She was our new English teacher, a member of the US Peace Corps who had been assigned to our class just a few days ago. The young teacher was so beautiful, her beauty was almost blinding.

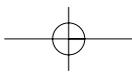
With our curiously sparkling eyes, we were appreciating this American beauty. Our class leader, who seemed to have lost his mind, jumped up.

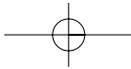
“Attention! Bow !”

This was the same salutation the class gave to our teacher at the start of each English class.

“Good morning, Sir !”

We growled energetically, as we always did. We thought our lady teacher was going to greet us with a dazzling smile. However, her face turned red as a carrot. Sometime thereafter, we came to realize our mistake. Her response, I guess, was understandable given that a bunch of country boys all called her sir at the first meeting.





The name of our beautiful American teacher was Jane Jones. Not only was her smile beautiful, her name was also pretty. Jane Jones I soon began to spend my days rolling her sweet name on the tip of my tongue. From a certain point in time, she began to look at me differently. Our eyes met more often during class, and she smiled at me or quizzed me indiscriminately.

I was thrilled. Already well-known as a good student of English, I became more confident. I received immense enjoyment out of memorizing the English textbook word for word and proudly displaying my talent before Ms. Jones.

For an upcoming English speech contest, Ms. Jones had recommended me as the school's representative. From that date on, she began to train me vigorously, including my pronunciation as well as body movements. Her Spartanlike training was quite strenuous, but I worked equally hard as I did not want to lose this golden opportunity.

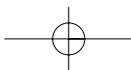
Soon, however, my unrequited love for Ms. Jones began to unravel. The passion I had for Ms. Jones remained as high as ever. However, my passion was not reciprocated. When asked why she showed special interest in me and was particularly nice to me, she replied, with disinterest, it's not because you're smart or cute. Unlike the other kids, you wore glasses, which made you stand out, and I was able to spot you more readily.

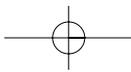
Upon hearing this statement, I was overcome with embarrassment. I realized then that I was the only one among about 900 students at my school wearing glasses.

“I simply could not distinguish one student from another even after some time had passed since every one has a shaved head and all wear black school uniforms. But I was able to find you without any difficulty since you wore glasses.”

So went crumbling was my mistaken belief that Ms. Jones for some reason liked me. In any event, I benefited in some way

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from wearing glasses, as I was able to receive personal lessons in phonics from a beautiful English teacher from early on in my English studies. I also gained the confidence to speak English to a foreigner without the usual fear. All in all, I think I was lucky.

Even when I was in the army, my nickname was glasses. In terms of trademark jargon, my glasses possessed distinctiveness as it related to me. In order for a mark developed by a person to be registered at the Korea Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), it must have a feature which distinguishes it from other marks. This is called distinctiveness. Perhaps the reason I was able to travel around the world and work in the international legal arena as an IPR expert was because of the distinctiveness I acquired from my glasses.

Yes. The modern world brings opportunities to those who are distinctive. Being distinctive brings about changes to this world. If one can be more distinctive than others, half of the elements necessary to succeed has already been attained. Distinguishing or discriminating oneself from others can directly develop into competitiveness.

What is the essence of a trademark? It is the energy that distinguishes one from another, i.e. distinctiveness, a discriminating energy. This distinctiveness can start from such trivial things as a boy wearing glasses. Even with the same technical content, one endowed with a characteristic design and distinctive brand will move faster than its competitors.

Look around, even just a little bit. You will be able to see another Ms. Jane Jones. Remember, a world is changed by creative steps, one by one.

