



Lesson 2: You're Welcome

천만에요 (cheonman-eyo)

LESSON NOTES

In today's lesson we'll learn how to respond to "gamsahamnida," or in English, "thank you." Today's phrase is "you're welcome."

"You're welcome" in Korean is "cheonman-eyo" (천만에요). This phrase is used as the English "you're welcome" is, but it carries a different connotation. It means something along the lines of "don't mention it," "it's nothing," "don't worry about it," "don't sweat it," "it's no big deal." These phrases in English are very casual, but this is the total opposite in Korean. It still carries the same suggestion that it's not a big deal, but in a very polite and respectful manner. This phrase is very formal.

Because this phrase is so formal, there's another phrase which is very similar in meaning and nuance, but is used much more often. This phrase is "ani-eyo." This phrase is actually the negative copula, which basically means it translates into "is not." And just like "cheonman-eyo" this carries the same notion that it's nothing to worry about. The only difference is that it's not as formal, and used much more frequently.

Both carry the notion that you are deflecting someone's praise. Instead of it being something like "Yea, I know I'm a great guy, but don't worry about it, it's nothing;" it's more like "no, really, it was nothing, really, it's nothing." Something along those lines. Koreans try to humble themselves as bragging and boasting are considered very rude in Korean culture. That's true with many cultures, but especially in Korean culture.

If a Korean person cured the common cold and someone tells that person that they're smart, it wouldn't be surprising to hear "ani-eyo," telling the other person "no, I'm not." Humbling yourself will score you some big points in Korea.

PHRASES

Hangul	Romanized	English
천만에요.	cheonman-eyo.	It's nothing.
아니에요.	ani-eyo.	It's nothing (is not).

QUICK TIP

Refraining from bragging and boasting is part of Korean culture because Korean culture is a group-oriented society. But that's a different notion than being proud. Generally speaking, Koreans are a very proud people. They love to tell others about their sons who go to Ivy League schools. They love to talk to others about their daughters that work in the most prestigious hospitals. But when it comes to themselves, most Koreans will try to deflect praise and try to humble themselves.