

RETHINKING THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE REGIONAL FLOW OF POP CULTURE:
THE CASE OF THE KOREAN WAVE IN JAPAN

by

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Abstract

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Rethinking the Expediency of the Regional Flow of Pop Culture:

The Case of the Korean Wave in Japan

Dissertation directed by Associate Professor Shu-Ling Chen Berggreen

This dissertation study aims to identify the role of national markets in the regional flow of pop culture, focusing on how national markets react to foreign pop cultures and take advantage of them. Taking the international popularity of South Korean pop culture, called “Korean Wave,” or “Hallyu” in Japan as the case, this study analyzes the discourse of Japan’s mainstream media from 2009 to 2016 in order to find out the national market’s role and desire behind the regional and transnational flow of pop culture.

The findings show that the Japanese media attended to the benefits coming from the boom. In political dimension, the Korean Wave was regarded as significant as a symbol of cultural exchange and mutual understandings. The two-way flow of culture was considered as necessary, and Japanese politicians, celebrities, and fans reproduced the traditional image of bridges between Japan and Korea. Paying attention to the economic effects, the Japanese media took advantage of the Korean Wave contents’ advertising effect as product placement. While the Japanese domestic economy and local governments benefited from the Korean Wave contents for town revitalization and new business opportunities, the product placement effect in the international market was viewed as a

threat to the international presence of Japan and its economy. In terms of the pop culture market, although the Japanese media and pop culture industry continuously introduced and promoted Korean Wave contents, with the desire to have the superiority of the Japanese market confirmed hidden in the background.

After all, the Korean Wave in Japan was presented and promoted within the Japanese system operating its pop culture industry and based on the contributions that the Korean pop culture made to the Japanese society. When such values do not exist any more, there is little need for the Japanese media to report and promote the Korean Wave. The desire of the larger markets such as Japan suggests that the Korean Wave phenomenon, which has been regarded to have complicated existing power structures, may represent a new form in which the status quo is reproduced in a different way.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This is not Korea. It's Shin-Okubo in Tokyo. Taking a closer look at this street, that used to be flourish with the Korean Wave boom, we found a dark shadow of the relationship between Japan and Korea.
- *Hōdō Station Sunday, January 8, 2017*

On January 8, 2017, *Hōdō Station Sunday* [*Journalism Station Sunday*], the weekend news show of the Japanese commercial broadcaster TV-Asahi, sketched Tokyo's Shin-Okubo, known as the Koreatown in Tokyo, packed with Korean restaurants and shops selling products originating from goods related to Korea and Korean pop culture. The sequence is a part of the day's top news that reports on and analyzes the processes and the background of the Japan-Korea conflicts, reignited by the "comfort women" issue, victims of Japanese wartime sex slavery during World War II. In December 2016, a civic organization planned to install a statue symbolizing the victims near the Consulate-General of Japan in Busan, the second largest city in South Korea. The district office in charge of the area attempted to remove the statue which was in vain due to criticisms and protests by Korean citizens. The Japanese government expressed its displeasure by recalling its ambassador to Tokyo.

The story that ran on *Hōdō Station Sunday* related the political issue with the Korean pop culture consumed in Japan, which is called the Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*. The story started with the scenes of a Korean boy band trying to debut in Japan and its Japanese fans. In the story, Japanese fans appear to have ambivalent emotions about the situation. A girl said "we hope the two countries can get along" while another said, "it's between the

governments, but when I hear the news, I get concerned.” The interview of the band members conveyed similar messages. One member said that he hoped the governments of the two countries could find a solution as soon as possible and get along with each other. Following the example of the Korean boy band, the story did not forget to highlight the relationship between politics and pop culture. It commented that the Korean Wave boom has suffered whenever the Japan-Korea relationship deteriorates. The story also interviews a woman running a restaurant in Shin-Okubo, saying she hopes the conflict would be settled as soon as possible. Since the early stage of the boom, the Korean Wave, the popularity of Korean pop culture in Japan and the increased contacts between peoples have been a symbol showing the improved bilateral relationship between Japan and South Korea (hereafter Korea). It is frequently said the international flow of media and pop culture has facilitated regional conversation and broadened people’s understanding of other countries and regions.

However, at the same time, the link between politics and culture can sometimes show the political pressure’s effect on taking advantage of pop culture. With the regards to the controversial statue, the Consul General of Japan sent an official letter to the district office and expressed his concerns about the statue. In the letter, he claimed that the presence of the statue shows a lack of consideration of Japan, and therefore he could not accept it. In addressing the Japanese government’s position, he invokes cultural issues, such as tourism and people’s exchange. He voiced the concern that the statue will deeply hurt Japanese people’s hearts and may affect the number of Japanese tourists visiting Busan, which had just recovered after the agreement on the comfort women issues. This phrasing implies that the conflict between Japanese and Korean government surrounding the

comfort women issue resulted in a decrease of Japanese tourists visiting Korea, and the number of tourists increased after Japanese and Korean governments made agreement on the issue on December 28, 2015. Considering that the number of tourists is generally used an indicator of cultural exchange, the Consul General attempted to pressure the district office raising the cultural exchange that accompanies economic profit.

The controversy surrounding a girl band member's nationality is another case showing how the regional politics can exert pressure on the pop culture industry. In January 16, 2016, a promotional video of a Korean TV program starring the girl band TWICE, ignited a political issue related to China and Taiwan. TWICE is a multi-national girl band, composed of five girls from Korea, three from Japan, and one from Taiwan or the Republic of China. A controversy arose surrounding the Taiwanese flag in the hand of Chou Tsu-yu, a 16-year-old from Taiwan. In the promotional video, national flags were used to indicate each member's hometown, as Japanese members held the Japanese national flag and Korean members held the Korean national flag. After the video was released on the Internet, celebrities and audiences in mainland China severely criticized her, saying her behavior – holding the Republic of Chinese flag – means that she denies the “One China” principle, the principle which means there is only a single Chinese state including both the mainland and Taiwan. As a result, several events in China were cancelled and her management, JYP Entertainment issued formal apologies explaining that the company understood and respected the One China principle. However such apologies did not diminish the criticism, and finally the company stood the 16-year-old before a camera to issue an apology. In the video uploaded on Youtube, she apologized for her “careless” behavior and added that she is Chinese and supports the One China principle.

These apologies may have soothed the anger of the mainland Chinese audiences but instead, they also embarrassed some Taiwanese audiences who felt their national identity was denied. It was even said that Chou's apology even influenced the Taiwanese presidential election, held a few days later, and led to the victory of the Democratic Progressive Party, which is regarded advocating the separation from the mainland. In analyzing this incident, a Korean Internet news commented that it showed the China's influence in the Korean pop culture market:

Exerting pressure not different from violence, China made a 16-year-old girl apologize for what she never thought of. Taiwan in the middle of the presidential election, politically used her. ... It is true that JYP got damaged. However, the ways in which JYP handled the case developed the political issue between China and Taiwan into a social issue of Korea. ... Through the efforts, the company, and, going further, K-pop can continue to make money in China. (Kang 2016)

Some journalists point out that this controversy shows that local sensitivity needs to be considered when pop culture products are exported to a foreign country (for example, Lee J. 2016; Seon 2016). However, it also showcases that the buying power of the China functioned as a political leverage.

Regional and international flows of pop culture have been one of the popular themes in discussing Asian pop culture since the 1990s. Particularly the political and economic developments along with the rapidly changing national media landscape are regarded as having brought such changes. At the same time, with the complicated colonial and postcolonial history in the region, transnational flows of media and popular culture have political significance too. On the one hand the history becomes a reason to ban foreign cultures, as Korea and Taiwan once banned Japanese pop culture. On the other hand, the regional flow of pop culture is regarded to have the potential to ameliorate political

tensions as the consumption of pop cultures could enhance mutual understanding among peoples.

The Korean pop culture boom in Japan in particular has been strong supporting evidence of the positive political potential of pop culture. In addition, the Korean Wave was welcomed as a case that media and pop culture can flow from the periphery to the area considered to be core. Numerous studies were conducted about the reason of the popularity in terms of the text of TV programs and audience reception, economic benefits coming from the boom such as an increase of tourists, and governments' role to expand the boom further.

However, the two cases detailed above suggest that pop culture may also play a different role. The consumption of foreign pop culture can be a means to wield power and influence for the importing countries. In the two cases, Japanese and Chinese buying power, either in tourism or pop music, influenced Korea in making decisions related to politics. In other words, these cases show that pop culture can be a sphere where economic pressure is exerted in order to achieve political aims, and each nation-state competes to expand its influence and secure regional hegemony. Pop culture may have the potential to influence and change regional politics, but may work in the opposite direction in that politicians can take advantage of pop culture. Actually, in 2017, the Chinese government banned Korean pop culture products and banned its citizens from traveling to Korea, in order to pressure the Korean government regarding of the deployment of an United States missile defense system in Korea. According to Yudice (2003), "the role of culture has expanded ... into the political and economic," and the same can be applied to the reception and use of foreign pop culture. Considering this, the role of countries importing pop culture products should

be discussed not only in the terms of audiences, but also in terms of mainstream politics and economy. Otmagzin and Ben-Ari (2012) acknowledge the political and economic goals related to pop culture, arguing that the governments of Japan and Korea “shifted their attention to the political and economic benefits emanating from the communication of culture” (9). However, their discussion also focuses on the role of nation states as exporting countries and the reaction and motivation of importing countries is still lacking.

Paying attention to the role of national markets in the regional flow of popular culture, this study aims to clarify the role of importing countries in creating and expanding the boom, taking the Korean Wave boom in Japan as the focus. The Korean Wave in Japan is a unique phenomenon which has complicated the discussions of the regional flow of pop culture. By analyzing how the mainstream Japanese media covered and reinforced the boom, this study aims to frame the phenomenon in a larger context of pop culture policies, international politics, and international trade.

The Case and the Research Questions

It is not an exaggeration that the success of the Korean Wave depends on the Japanese market. It is because the Japanese market takes up more than half of the Korean Wave market. In the structure where the stagnancy in the Japanese market affects the whole Korean Wave market, a success in the Japanese market makes it more likely to succeed in other Asian countries. The Japanese market plays the role of a “landmark.” (KOFICE 2009, 117)

Now we all know that Korean dramas cannot be produced without “Japan money.”¹

What matters the most in the cultural exchange between Korea and Japan is, politics.²

¹ At the symposium “Contents Business in Korea and Japan and the Global” on September 18, 2012. Korea Culture Center in Tokyo, Japan.

² At the joint symposium by the Korean Society for Journalism & Communication

The Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*, refers to the international popularity of Korean popular culture boom. The phenomenon began in the 1990s in China, where the term itself was coined, then expanded into Southeast Asia. Then the boom made inroad into Japan in the mid-2000s with the success of the drama *Winter Sonata*, and Japan has been the biggest market for the Korean Wave. The Korean Wave boom in Japan attracted the attention of both academia and industry, mainly for the following two reasons.

The Korean Wave in Japan possesses a unique position in the discussions of the international flow of media and pop culture. First, the influx from Korea to Japan was seen as a contraflow from the periphery to the center. In the literature on the international trade of media contents, Japan is frequently mentioned as one of the centers (for example, Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham 1996; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996). Even in the early 21st century, according to Chua (2004), Japan was “the leader that sets the industry quality standard and is[w]as the prime production and export location, with relatively little importation from the rest of the constituent regional locations” (210). In fact, in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, many in Korea became anxious as the Korean government decided to open its market to the Japanese pop culture products in the 1990s. However, the Korean pop culture boom in Japan demonstrated that Korea’s popular culture industry was competitive enough and therefore could survive in an era of globalization. Lee H. (2016) points out that the Korean Wave could be known as a global phenomenon because of the huge consumption in Japan.

Studies and the Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication, “The Potential of Joint Research in Japan and Korea,” August 23, 2014, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan.

Second, the Korean Wave in Japan was expected to enhance mutual understanding between the two countries and therefore ease political tensions between South Korea and Japan. Korea was under Japanese colonial rule for 36 years before the end of World War II. Even after the end of the war, political tensions have remained unsettled and still exist between Japan and South Korea, as the two countries often describe each other as “a close but distant country” (Korean Culture and Economy Service 2011; Aoki 2014). The Korean Wave is said to have contributed to mitigating these tensions. Many survey results show that more Japanese people had favorable impressions about Korea than before and the same for Korean people toward Japan. The celebrities who gained popularity beyond borders and the audiences who consumed the other country’s contents were often portrayed as civil diplomats. Furthermore, politicians, including Japanese prime ministers, have taken advantage of the Korean popular culture to improve their image.

In addition to the widely known aspects as introduced above, this study in particular focuses on the fact that Japan’s domestic media has played a crucial role in the boom. Taking a look at the case of *Winter Sonata*, it was the Japanese public broadcaster NHK that first introduced the program to the Japanese audience. In comparing the Korean Wave with the presence of Hong Kong pop culture in Japan in the 1990s which were popular in the 1990s in Japan, Iwabuchi (2008) observes that one of the crucial differences was that “terrestrial national channels, which are the most influential media in Japan, are main promoters of the boom” (245). Although it might have been an unexpected consequence that Japanese audiences reacted to the dramas and created the boom, it is true the mainstream media and the entertainment market actively participated in boosting the boom after having witnessed fans’ buying power. Besides, when it comes to the “new”

Korean Wave, which started in 2010, the phenomenon was clearly a media-driven phenomenon. The Japanese mainstream media and related industries helped revive the popularity of the Korean pop culture had been considered withered by then. The mainstream, terrestrial news shows and music programs frequently introduced Korean actors and singers. Prime-time entertainment shows explained various aspects of Korean cultures, including not only pop culture contents but also tourist attractions, Korean foods, and fashion. The Shinjuku area, a Koreatown in Tokyo and the crowd filling the street attracted the media's attention, and the area became one of the most popular streets in Tokyo.

The Japanese media's promoting Korean pop culture is quite exceptional because the general domestic markets in many Asian countries tend to regulate imports of pop culture products (Chua 2012). For example, in China, people working in the media and entertainment industry started to explicitly address their discomfort about the presence of Korean pop culture on Chinese television, and the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT) used program quotas to reduce the airtime of Korean programs and tightened regulation on importing foreign audiovisual products (Kim & Lim 2014). Here, a question arises: why then was the Japanese media active in promoting Korean (pop) culture?

Recently, opinions on the role of the national market of importing countries began to be voiced. In a podcast audio, Yang (2016) claims that politics have been a crucial factor that brought the Korean Wave boom in Japan and China, and points out the Korean pop culture industry's vulnerability, which is that it can easily be controlled by foreign big markets:

In terms of the Korea-Japan relationships, the political relation resulted in a boom of the Korean Wave contents. Concerts as well as contents used to have enormous power. But, as the Korea-Japan relationship was chilled due to the “comfort women” issue and others, cultural exchange and the export of the Korean Wave contents almost stopped. Many companies closed down and went bankrupt. This is what happened in these couple of years.³ (Yang 2016)

Lee H. (2016) points out that from the viewpoint of the importing country, Japan, the Korean Wave look different. She differentiates the Korean Wave, as a newly rising soft power, from the hegemonic soft power such as that of the U.S. (as in Nye 2004). She observes that the Korean Wave developed under circumstances in which the power relations between the exporting and importing companies could be determined by the latter. She does not ignore the effort of the Korean government and producers, but at the same time argues that the boom would not have been possible had it not been for the supporting factors in the Japanese society. According to her, the explosive popularity of the Korean Wave dramas is a win-win phenomenon for the Japanese government, broadcasters, the cultural industry, and consumers. The observations of Yang (2016) and Lee H. (2016) suggest the role of actors, such as governments, industries, and media in the countries importing television programs and pop culture contents; however, their arguments lack empirical evidences to show the role of the national market of importing countries.

Considering these, this study aims to discover the national market’s desire behind the transnational flow of pop culture by analyzing how the media represented the phenomenon in the course of the rise and fall of the boom. In particular, this study analyzes

³ These remarks were made in the context the panelists discussed about the possible effect of THAAD on China-Korea relationship, particularly Korean pop culture products’ export to China. The guest panelist, an expert in Chinese economy, started the discussion by saying Korean pop culture could gain enormous popularity thanks to political purposes.

the period called “new” Korean Wave that started in 2010. The “old” Korean Wave, which began with the *Winter Sonata* boom, emerged with the popularity among audiences, which was an unexpected turn of events. However the advent of the “new” Korean Wave is closely associated with a certain national market’s desire to take advantage of the phenomenon. Indeed, the Korean Wave is a complex phenomenon involving various issues in international communication, the pop culture industry, and going further, international politics. The landscapes surrounding the flows of pop culture have fluctuated with the ebbs and flows of the Korea-Japan relations. However, few studies focused on the media industry itself in discussing the significance of the phenomenon although it is a case that places media in the center. On the other hand, Jung and Hwang (2015) emphasize the importance of media coverage in relation to the public opinion of the receiving country. According to them, media coverage reflects and shapes the public opinion of the target country and therefore it is necessary to analyze and examine media coverage in order to comprehensively understand the perception and attitude surrounding the Korean Wave in each country. Considering this, in assessing the legacy of the Korean Wave in Japan, I intend to address the following research questions.

1. How does the mainstream Japanese media cover the Korean Wave? What are the general attitudes of the Japanese media and market toward the phenomenon?
2. How can such attitude be understood in relation to Japan-South Korea relations, in terms of politics, economy, and the media and pop culture industry?

Through examining these research questions, this study aims to investigate what Japan could obtain through the Korean Wave boom in Japan, and the desires of the Japanese society in consuming and promoting foreign pop culture.

Definition and Clarification of the Terms Used

In Japan and Korea, some English words are used with meanings different from its original meaning. What follows are definitions and clarification of the words that frequently appears in this study.

i) Contents/ cultural contents / contents industry

The term “contents” and “cultural contents” refer to pop culture products such as television shows, movies, and pop music. The related industry is called *cultural contents industry*. The Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, METI defines the contents industry as a general term for industries involved in the production and distribution of movies, animation, games, books, music, etc. (METI Official Website). The English booklet published by Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, KOTRA (2015) gives definitions of cultural contents and contents industry as following:

“Contents” is data or information, such as symbols, letters, figures, colors, voice, sound or motion pictures (or a combination of these items). As such the cultural contents industry can also be defined as an industry involving symbols, letters, figures, colors, voice, sound or motion pictures combined with artistic value, creativity, amusement, leisure and popular appeal. ... Basically, CCI [Cultural Contents Industry] means an industry that can create economic values by planning, producing and distributing on- and off-line media contents. (5)

According to the report by METI (2017), the contents industry includes movies,

animation, television programs, music and video games. According to the Korea Culture & Contents Agency's Contents Industry Statistics (2016), the contents industry includes publication, comics, music, video games, movies, animations, broadcasting, advertising, characters, knowledge information, and contents solution.

ii) Korean Wave contents/ Korean Wave drama/ Korean Wave actor/ Korean Wave singer/
Korean Wave star

Korean Wave contents refer to pop culture contents, such as dramas, movies, and popular songs, particularly categorized as a part of the phenomenon. As to be analyzed in chapter 7, the term Korean Wave tends to imply a certain connotation, differentiated from Korean pop culture in general. In this regard, Korean Wave dramas are dramas categorized as a part of the Korean Wave. Korean Wave stars, actors and singers mean the entertainers appearing in the contents regarded as a part of the Korean Wave.

iii) Korean Wave fan

The fans of the Korean pop culture contents who are categorized as the Korean Wave, such as fans of Korean Wave dramas.

iv) idol/ idol singers / idol groups

A certain type of entertainers uniquely found in East Asia. The term comes from *aidoru*, the Japanese rendering of the English word "idol" and was first used in the Japanese pop culture industry to refer to young television personalities. According to Aoyagi (2005):

Idols are designed to contribute to the industry's establishment in the market by virtue of their abilities to attract people and perform as lifestyle role models. ...

Idols perform as all-around popular talents (*tarento*) who appear mainly on television. They sing melodramatic love songs, dance to peppy electronic tunes, act in dramas, and strike poses in commercials that advertise certain products. (3-4).

According to Galbraith and Karlin (2012), “idols” are “highly produced and promoted singers, models and media personalities.” According to them:

Idols can be male or female, and tend to be young, or present themselves as such; they appeal to various demographics, and often broad cross sections of society. Idols perform across genres and interconnected media platforms at the same time. They are not expected to be greatly talented at any one thing, for example, singing, dancing, or acting. (2)

The Korean usage of the term is not exactly the same as the usage in Japan. Cha and Choi (2011) argue that idols are commodities planned through the star system that major entertainment companies prepared through systematic trainings and design. Teenagers lead both stardom and fandom, and idols’ songs are mainly dance music though a small number of slow numbers are included. In most cases, idols exist as groups rather than solo artists.

Although singing and acting abilities are not important to Japanese idols, Korean idols are differentiated from their counterparts in terms of their well developed vocal and dancing abilities. However both in Korea and Japan, it is common that idols are a product planned by the entertainment industry. Idols performing in the form of bands are called idol groups.

v) Girl group / Boy group

A subcategory of idol groups divided by gender. These terms may be replaced with girl band or boy band, but their characteristics are slightly different from those of girl band or

boy band in the Western pop music industry. Japanese media uses the terms girls group and boys group instead.

Notes on Asian Names

This dissertation follows the style used in major English-language newspapers. The Korean names follow the Korean convention that family names precede given names (e.g. Kim Dae-jung) and the Japanese names follow the English convention with given names preceding family names (e.g. Keizo Obuchi).

Chapter 2

Theoretical and Historical Backgrounds:

Transnational Flow of Pop Culture in East Asian Context

1. Cultural Imperialism and the Matter of Capital

Cultural or media imperialism has been one of the most frequently cited approaches in discussing media and pop culture products distributed and consumed across national borders.⁴ According to Tomlinson (1997), the central proposition of the cultural imperialism thesis is “the idea that certain dominant cultures threaten to overwhelm other more vulnerable ones”(122). Paying attention to the domination of the United States media products in the postwar era (Schiller 1992; Tunstall 1977), this approach raises concerns about the international penetration and dominance of the Western, particularly American, media and possible effects of such domination in other countries where media products are mainly imported from the US and other Western countries.

In his critical assessment of cultural imperialism, Tomlinson (1991) argues that there is no original form of the cultural imperialism thesis and only various ‘versions’ exist. He suggests that “a better way of thinking about cultural imperialism is to think of it as a variety of different articulations which may have certain features in common, but may also be in tension with each other, or even mutually contradictory” (9) and discusses four discourses of cultural imperialism: cultural imperialism as media imperialism; cultural imperialism as a discourse of nationality; cultural imperialism as the critique of global capitalism; and cultural imperialism as the critique of modernity. Although Tomlinson

⁴ McQuail (2010) sees media imperialism as “the more limited notion” of cultural imperialism.

criticizes each of these discourses, these connected concepts show what the major points discussed are in regard to cultural imperialism. The role of media is significant in the cultural imperialism thesis.

Boyd-Barrett (1977) pays attention to the features of the international media flow, which are “uni-directional nature of international flow” and “a small number of source countries accounting for a very substantial share of all international media influences around the world” (117). From these observations, he defines media imperialism as “the process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media in any one country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected” (117).

This thesis faced criticisms, as the international media flow became multi-directional and non-Western countries began to produce and circulate their own programs internationally. Successes of the non-Western media products such as Telenovela, regional circulations of pop culture products from Japan and Hong Kong, and the audiences’ reception of media texts are some of the examples undermining the cultural imperialism thesis. Curran and Park (2000) point out that the media imperialism thesis confronts criticism because “the notion of one-way flow of communication and influence from the West was challenged by the counter-argument that global flows are multidirectional” and that the thesis underestimates “local resistance to American domination” (6). Similarly, Chadha and Kavoori (2000) observe that there are increasing criticism from diverse perspectives, including: “the current global media environment which is characterized by a plurality of actors and media flows” such as “the emergence of many developing nations

such as Brazil, Mexico, India and Egypt” (416); the media imperialism thesis’ “reliance on the so-called hypodermic model of media effects” (416); and its tendency to “romanticize and fetishize ‘national culture’ as ‘essentially necessary, progressive and desirable,’ and to discount the fact that culture that is sought to be protected as ‘national’ is not only often unrepresentative of the entirety of the diverse and heterogeneous elements ... but may actually ... homogenize grass-roots cultures in the name of national unity” (417). Particularly in terms of the Asian context, Chadha and Kavoori (2000) argue that “a complex combination of counter-forces ranging from national gate-keeping policies and the dynamics of audience preference to competition from local media, effectively inhibit the domination of the Asian mediascape by Western audiovisual production” (417-8), and “the onset of media imperialism ... appear to be vastly overstated in the Asian context (418). Even Tunstall (2008) revised his former stances that emphasized American domination and paid attention to the non-Western media powers such as India and China. Jin (2011) summarizes three major critiques on cultural imperialism as: core-periphery theory, active audience theory, and cultural globalization or cultural hybridity thesis. Seeing from these criticisms of the cultural/media imperialism thesis, the Korean Wave can be seen as an effective counterevidence because the boom formed the regional cultural bloc, Korean pop culture products entail hybridity, and the audiences are autonomous and passionate when they read drama texts and participating in fan activities.

However, some scholars suggest that the changes on which such critiques are based are not sufficient to invalidate the cultural imperialism thesis itself. Rather, the mechanism of cultural imperialism functions more adroitly in the seemingly deterritorialized world with multi-directional flows of information and cultural imagery.

These scholars claim what matters in this thesis is the economic structure: the way how transnational capitals function. While acknowledging the changes between the 1960s and the 1990s and the fact that the global position of the United States corporate economy has weakened, Schiller (1992) emphasizes that the cultural/media imperialism thesis is still effective, paying attention to the role of transnational corporations:

American cultural imperialism is not dead, but it no longer adequately describes the global cultural condition. Today it is more useful to view transnational corporate culture as the central force, with a continuing heavy flavor of U.S. media know-how, derived from long experience with marketing and entertainment skills and practices. (14-15)

Similarly, in his study of the cultural imperialism in Korea, Jin (2007) pays attention to the strategies of the transnational capital. He argues that the critics regarding “cultural imperialism as a narrowly focused cultural process to do with the flow of cultural product ... did not consider recent trends in the transnationalization of cultural industries, as well as growing US dominance in the global cultural market” (765). He also points out that the Western cultural industry, including the US, has changed its strategy and maintains its dominance by investing in the cultural markets in developing countries, instead of exporting its cultural goods. In this regard, he argues “the transnationalization of domestic cultural industries is nothing but another form of intensified cultural imperialism” (767). According to Yim (2012), cultural imperialism changes and evolves into different forms including the export of television program formats, the use of English in programs, transnational corporations’ cooperation with local companies, and transnational corporations’ localization strategies (50-51).

In this context, according to critiques based on the political economy of media, the Korean Wave is not a phenomenon undermining the cultural imperialism thesis.

Boyd-Barrett (2013) clearly states that the Korean Wave can not be “primary evidence against media imperialism theory” (58). According to him, the celebration of the Korean Wave is based on “a narrow conception of media imperialism” which “tends to focus, ... on international trade in media products rather than focusing on aspects of corporate concentration within and control over media markets and their interrelationships with the agendas of political, corporate and other elites, local, and global” (58). Yim (2012) also criticizes the stance celebrating the Korean Wave’s potential to create the Asian cultural community because it is impossible to discuss the phenomenon without considering the logic of capital and the state intervention. To him, the international distribution of pop culture cannot help but follow the logic of capital and involve trades between nation-states (250).

Even the scholars who advocate the resisting potential of the Korean Wave do not overlook the fact that even the hybridity itself reveals the uneven power relations. Kim (2013) acknowledges that the Korean Wave is “co-existing with the Western media domination and unequal power relations that mediate the regulations and representations of media flows. The inequality and imbalance in the media flows between Western countries and Korea has not decreased significantly” (16). Iwabuchi (2009) points out “cross-border partnerships and co-operation among media and cultural industries and capital involving Japan and other non-Western developed countries are being driven forward, with the US as a pivotal presence” (27) and such phenomena “illustrate that the pattern of global dominance by multinational media conglomerates centered on the US is becoming more firmly entrenched” (28). Acknowledging this, he suggests that it is necessary to “more seriously attend to the operation of political and economic structural

restraints on the process of meaning construction and trans-border dialogue” (26).

2. International Flow of Pop Culture and the Role of Nation-States

Another theoretical framework for this dissertation is the role of nation states in the international flow of media and pop culture. Curran and Park (2000) emphasize the role of nations in media and communication systems, stating “[d]espite the internationalization of film, music and news ‘wholesaling,’ and despite the rise of transnational communications corporations and the growth of media export markets, communications systems are still in significant respects national” (11). According to them, the television and the press are primarily national media, national states, framing law and regulations, are influential in shaping media systems, and “the media systems are shaped ... by a complex ensemble of social relations that have taken shape in national contexts” (12).

In particular, the role of nation-states has changed and expanded in regard to the use of culture for political and economic purposes. In their discussions of the role of states in East and Southeast Asia, Otmazgin and Ben-Ari (2012) point out that cultural policy in the past meant “the ways to governments to emphasize and reinforce nation building or prevent the infiltration of foreign cultures” (4), but “the success of the cultural industries generated a major shift ... that centered both on the potential for enhancing countries’ so-called ‘soft power’ and the possibility of cultivating lucrative export enterprises” (4). Political and economic potentials began to draw attention, and the use of soft power and brand nationalism are the two most frequently quoted theses in discussing inter-Asian pop culture flow such as the Japanese pop culture boom in the 1990s and the Korean Wave in the 2000s.

Soft power, which is distinguished from hard power such as military and economic dominance, is a theoretical framework to explain the potential role of popular culture that can influence politics and international relations. Nye (2004) defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments” which “arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies” (x). According to Nye, a country’s soft power rests on three resources: the country’s culture, political values, and foreign policies (11).

Although Nye points out that soft power does not always mean popular cultural power, pop culture has earned a significant position in discussing the potential of soft power. Japan, in particular, has been active to reap benefits from its soft power policies through the strategy of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. While Nye (2004) introduces Japan as one of the countries with huge soft power potential, he also points out the limits of the country’s soft power due to the colonial history of Asia, saying that “Japan has never fully come to terms with its record of foreign aggression in the 1930s” (86), and “Japan does not have the full admiration of its Asian neighbors” (87).

Although soft power as an academic concept was introduced in the 1980s, there have been attempts to take advantage of culture in order to enhance national images and achieve political aims even before the term appeared. Such activities appeared in the form of cultural diplomacy policy, whose history traces back to the post-WWI era (Otmazgin 2012).⁵ Cultural diplomacy refers to “governmental strategies for the attainment of ‘soft power’ through cultural means” (Iwabuchi 2015, 419) and its primary purpose is “to

⁵ According to Ang, Isar, and Mar (2015), “countries such as France have used the term since the late nineteenth century” (366).

appeal to the widest range of foreign audiences – especially important figures and opinion leaders – and convince them to change their mind or improve their view of a certain country” (Otmazgin 2012, 41). Despite the limitations that Nye points out, the Japanese government has diligently attempted to improve its international image, taking advantage of cultural diplomacy.

While the soft power strategy originally paid attention to the potential of pop culture in international politics, such potential has recently extended its range so that the influence of pop culture exports is frequently discussed in terms of nation-states’ economic profits such as international trade. While Japan’s use of cultural diplomacy tends to focus on the political purpose, Korea’s soft power, easily linked to the Korean Wave phenomenon, is discussed in terms of its economic benefits. The growing exports of the Korean pop culture products not only strengthened the country’s presence in the international society, but also “led to heightened awareness of general Korean products” (Kim 2013, 12). As a result, a drastic increase was found in the export of Korean consumer goods, including electronics, food, fashion, and cosmetics, and in the number of foreign tourists visiting Korea. Lee (2013) claims, with the surge of the Korean Wave, “popular culture has become ‘content,’ a brand new engine of wealth generation and then an export material,” which serves neoliberal, transnational consumerism (196). In this regard, the Korean Wave is a representative example of “brand nationalism”⁶ that Iwabuchi (2009, 32) suggests. He observes, “states have become eager to see the creation and promotion of ‘cool’ national brands”(32) and “the alliance of national governments and private (transnational)

⁶ Japan also turned to the economic benefits coming from pop culture contents and began to promote “Cool Japan” strategy, but it is motivated by the Korean governments’ strategy, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

corporations ... most powerfully uses 'culture' in the promotion of national brand cultures in media texts, tourism, fashion, food and so forth" (32).

What becomes problematic in terms of the cultural policy is the collaboration of national governments and private corporations. From the cases of Korea and Japan, Otmazgin and Ben-Ari (2012) observe, "while older economic and cultural policies were pursued separately, today there is an interface of cultural and economic policies" (17). Lee (2013) argues that under the current policy of the Korean Wave, "transnational consumerism with overseas markets and consumer demands" has become "key criteria for valuing Korean popular culture" (196). She also criticizes, "a new version of cultural consumerism where overseas demands are equated with public interest and market orientation overcomes public policy concerns" and "this transnational consumerism can be seen as Korean cultural policy and the media's response to neoliberal globalization" (195). Similarly, Nye and Kim (2013) describe the Korean Wave as "a pronounced example of the crossover of culture and economy, and the commercialization of culture through nation branding, taking a neoliberal capitalist approach in the era of globalization" (39) and point out the limitation of the Korean Wave: "Korea's soft power is likely to be an extension of its economic influence, which is a core component of hard power" (39).

3. History and Pop Culture in Japan and Korea

Historical backgrounds and political tensions coming from the history issues are also important in discussing the pop culture consumption in East Asia. In the first half the 20th century, Japan colonized Taiwan and Korea and invaded China and Southeast Asian

countries during the Pacific War. As Nye (2004) points out, the colonial history has limited Japan's soft power potentials in Asia. It is even said that the issues related to history can explain the popularity of Korean pop culture in China. According to Park (2006), "the historical legacy leaves room for Korean pop cultural products to find a niche in the Chinese market because Korea is free of past bad memories and Korea's traditional relationship with China has been 'nonthreatening'" (253) while Japanese pop culture products were not very successful in China. The colonial history influences each country's pop culture policy and the way of consuming foreign pop culture.

1) Japan's Use and Consumption of (pop) Culture

Japan's postwar strategy in terms of pop culture can be largely summarized in two different types: one is to actively accept and domesticate foreign culture and the other is to take advantage of its pop culture contents for political reasons. First, Japan has been an active receiver of foreign culture and its ability to assimilate, domesticate, and indigenize foreign culture is frequently discussed as a part of Japanese national identity. Iwabuchi (2002) outlines such characteristics of Japan as follows:

Japan is said to be a vociferously assimilating cultural entity: The Japanese modern experience is described in terms of appropriation, domestication, and indigenization of the foreign (predominantly associated with the West) in a way that reinforces an exclusivist notion of Japanese national/cultural identity. ... This mode of self-representation, which I am calling "strategic hybridism," is a principal form of Japan's trans/nationalism discourse. (53)

Such traits of Japan in accepting foreign culture made *mukokuseki* (cultural odorless) as one of the most representative characteristics of Japanese commodities and pop culture

contents, particularly comics and animation. However, Iwabuchi (2002) argues the term used in Japan in two different, but not mutually exclusive ways: “to suggest the mixing of elements of multiple cultural origins, and to imply the erasure of visible ethnic and cultural characteristics” (71). This explanation may mean that when Japan receives foreign cultures and indigenizes them, the origin is not important any more.⁷ He also points out, “the assumption about Japan’s leading role in Asia in terms of hybridizing West and East was overtly or covertly incorporated into the strategies adopted by Japanese media industries for entering market in 1990.

While Japan is good at appropriating foreign (especially Western) cultures to make them a part of Japan’s national identity, it should be noted that there has been a certain pattern in Japan’s reception of Asia. In discussing the popularity of Asian pop culture in the 1990s, Iwabuchi (2002) uses the term “capitalistic nostalgia for Asia” (173) and explains “Orientalist tropes of nostalgia have played a significant part in Japanese representations of an idealized ‘backward’ Asia, in which the Japanese can find their lost purity, energy, and dreams.” According to him, “Japanese capitalist nostalgia does not just mourn what is destined to be lost in Asia” but “what is grieved, through the predicted destiny of premodern Asia, is actually what Japan itself has lost or is about to lose” (175). In his analysis of the popularity of Hong Kong stars in the 1990s, he observes that the Japanese media’s promotional strategy was “disseminating ‘modern’ and ‘fashionable’ images of Hong Kong” (182). In his analysis of the fans of Hong Kong stars, he reads the fans’ distrust in Japanese media industries that would commercially promote their idols

⁷ Considering this, it seems exceptional that the origin, Korea, is emphasized in the Japanese media’s coverage of the Korean Wave or Korean pop culture.

and their desire to “show off their good taste to the mainstream” (187). However, at the same time, he points out, “the appreciation of Hong Kong is intertwined with the perception of the overlap between Hong Kong’s present and Japan’s past” and “the female following of Hong Kong male stars still shares a nostalgic orientation toward them” (189). After all, Asia and Asian stars are consumed in the context of nostalgia. In addition, such tendency bears similarities of Japan’s consumption of Koreans during the colonial period, as Atkins (2010) observes: “a nostalgic longing for a purer self that has been lost, yet can be retrieved through the consumption of Koreana” (148).

The other aspect of Japan’s postwar strategy in terms of pop culture is that Japan has diligently attempted to improve its international image, taking advantage of cultural diplomacy. In Japan, using “culture and media communication to enhance Japan’s image in the international arena” began to be discussed “as early as in the 1920s and 1930s, when Japan aspired to become an imperial and colonial power equivalent to Euro-American counterparts” (Iwabuchi 2015, 420, citing Sato 2012). At the same time, in the colonies of Taiwan and Korea, cultural policies were designed “to achieve better control” and “to facilitate their assimilation with Japan” (Otmagzin 2012, 43).

Japan’s cultural diplomacy, which was interrupted after the country’s defeat in the WWII but brought back with the country’s economic development in the 1960s, was renewed in the 1970s (Iwabuchi 2015). In this period, Japan began to “publicly suggest ‘cultural understanding’ and ‘cultural exchange’ in the framework of relations with Asian countries” (Otmagzin 2012, 49). In 1972, Japan Foundation was established as an extra-departmental organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and “the improvement of the international image of Japan was pursued through the presentation of Japanese

culture overseas” (Iwabuchi 2015, 420)

It was in the 1980s that the Japanese government began to pay attention to the potential of media and pop culture. Now the cultural diplomacy meant the Japanese government’s use of “the potential for popular culture to improve Japan’s reputation and soothe – even suppress – the bitter memory of the Japanese invasion of Asia” (Iwabuchi 2002, 75), and therefore “make smooth Japan’s historical reconciliation with other East and Southeast Asian countries” (Iwabuchi 2008, 250). Japanese TV programs were provided to Asian countries with the government’s financial support and therefore, the success of *Oshin*, the drama which depicted Japan’s postwar experience from a “pacifist” women’s perspective, shows how media texts and pop culture can be used as soft power.

2) Korea’s Ban on Japanese Pop Culture and the Open-Door Policy

While Japan actively received foreign culture and domesticated, Korea had taken a protectionist position from foreign cultures. Korea was a colony of Japan for 36 years (1910-1945) and after the end of the colonial regime, the South Korean government struggled to erase the influence of Japanese culture from the Korean society. There was no official political or economic relationship between the two countries before the diplomatic relationship was normalized in 1965. Although economic and cultural exchange increased after the normalization, Japanese pop culture still remained banned in Korea until 1998. Under the authoritarian regime, containing “Japanese color” was often quoted as a reason for censorship. However, Korean audiences were still exposed to the influence of Japanese pop culture. They could “unofficially” consume Japanese pop culture products through spillover of airwaves and pirate records and videos. Korean televisions broadcast Japanese

television animations after erasing every sign showing that they were produced in Japan (Kim 2014). Korean broadcasters “were happy to appropriate ideas and formats from Japanese programs for their own productions” (Chua 2012, 15).

The discussions about lifting the ban were incited by the social changes that had been taking place in Korea since the late 1980s, including: democratization; the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul; an increase in Korean citizens’ traveling to Japan; and the opening of trade barriers (Yamamoto 2003). Moreover, the Asian economic crisis in 1997 added pressure on Korea to lift the ban. To restore its economy, Korea had to open its market to foreign economic forces, including Japan, and build cooperative relationships with them (Yamamoto 2003; Jung 2007). In October 1998, the Korean president Kim Dae-jung and the Japanese prime minister Keizo Obuchi announced the “New Korea-Japan Partnership for the Twenty-first Century,” in which Korea agreed to lift the ban on Japanese popular culture. After this joint declaration, Japan’s investment in Korea drastically increased from 265 million US dollars in 1997 to 1.75 billion US dollars in 1999 and 2.448 billion US dollars in 2000 (Jung 2007). The lift of the ban “provoked a grim warning of another Japanese cultural assimilation in Korea” (Joo 2011, 493). Joo (2011) explains the background as follows:

... the memory and legacy of forceful assimilation during the Japanese colonization have made many Koreans fearful of Japanization as much as Americanization, especially as Japan’s already significant economic power was coupled with the rise of its popular culture in Asia during the 1990s, Japan was often viewed as the “America of Asia” in Korea. (493)

The Korean government enacted the ban lifting, dubbed the Open-Door Policy, in four stages. The first stage was implemented in 1998, the second in 1999. After the third

stage was enacted in 2000 many expected the fourth stage to be in effect before Korea and Japan co-hosted the FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament in 2002 but this was not the case.

Table 1 summarizes each stage.

Table 1. Four Stages of the Open-Door Policy

Category	1st stage (Oct 20, 1998)	2nd stage (Sept 10, 1999)	3rd stage (June 27, 2000)	4th stage (Jan 1, 2004)
Movies	Award winners of four international film festivals	G-rated films among award winners in renowned international film festivals	All but ones rated 18 or above	Films rated 18 or above
Videos	Films screened in Korea	Films screened in Korea	Films screened in Korea	Films screened in Korea
Animation	No lift	No lift	Award winners of international film festivals	Postponed
Live Performances	No lift	Indoor performances with 2,000 seats or less	No restrictions	
Music	No lift	No lift	All but songs with Japanese lyrics	Songs with Japanese lyrics
Games	No lift	No lift	All but console games	Console games
Broadcasting	No lift	No lift	Sports, news, documentaries (all media) Films screened in Korea (new media only)	Postponed

(Source: Choi 2004, 14)

3) FIFA World Cup and Increasing Exchanges

Along with the increasing cooperation, the FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament

co-hosted by Korea and Japan, was an important turning point in facilitating the cultural exchange between the two countries. What was notable in this period was the Japanese discourse on such exchange, which was a reproduction of cultural diplomacy as Japan's typical soft power strategy stated above. In August 2000, about two months after Japanese entertainers were permitted to perform in Korea with no restrictions, a popular Japanese pop duo Chage & Aska held a concert in Seoul. Having given previous concerts in Asian markets such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, the duo was "quite conscious about their role in overcoming Japanese history" (Iwabuchi 2008, 250), and the Japanese media covered the concert in Seoul in similar ways. The Japanese media were "enthusiastic" about covering "a historic concert being the first performance by Japanese pop musicians in the Japanese language, which clearly marked the cultural thaw between Japan and South Korea. Chage & Aska themselves expressed the sense of accomplishment at the concert: 'Let us younger generations make a future together!'" (Iwabuchi 2008, 250-1). A similar sense of reconciliation is found in the co-hosts' official song for the 2002 World Cup,⁸ "Let's get together now," which says "Don't you think it's time we all let go of fear inside / open up our mind, understand each other / If we just decide to be as one, we'll set our spirits free." Japanese entertainers who were active in Korea were often characterized as "civil diplomats" by the Japanese media,⁹ and Japanese politicians did not forget to mention the

⁸ *Voices of Korea/Japan*, a collaboration of popular Korean and Japanese musicians performed this song. The participants were: Korean male duo Brown Eyes, Korean female singer Lena Park, Japanese male duo Chemistry and Japanese female singer Sowelu.

⁹ For example, after the Japanese boy band Arashi attended a concert in Korea, an anchor who was covering the story in a morning news show said "you guys are civil diplomats" to Sho Sakurai, who is a member of Arashi and featured in the show as a panelist.

Korean Wave whenever they meet Korean politicians or make a visit to Korea.¹⁰ Iwabuchi (2008) points out, “the recent development of popular cultural exchange between Japan and South Korea is a great advancement of the application of cultural diplomacy to East Asia” (250).

One of the most successful uses of the theme may be the variety talk show, *Chonan Gang*, which was aired on Japanese Fuji TV. This program began in March 2001 and was hosted by Tsuyoshi Kusanagi, a well-known entertainer and a member of the top Japanese boy band SMAP. Being aired for 15 minutes every Friday after midnight, this program, entitled after Kusanagi’s name read in Korean, introduced Korea and Korean cultures to Japanese viewers through various projects, such as interviews with ordinary Korean citizens and celebrities. The program was entirely conveyed in the Korean language, with Japanese subtitles. *Chonan Gang* was favorably received in both Japan and Korea as a program promoting the mutual understanding between the two countries. In June 2001, the Korean Tourism Organization presented Kusanagi with a plaque of thanks to show its appreciation for the program’s contribution to the increase in Japanese young people traveling to Korea (Lee 2001; Hwang 2001). Even though the program seems to have promoted positive images of Korea in Japan, it can be still considered as part of Japan’s cultural diplomacy, to use the mass media to improve its relationship with Korea.¹¹ At the

¹⁰ When Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Korea in 2006, the Japanese First Lady Akie Abe introduced herself as a huge fan of the Korean Wave. When she visited an elementary school in Seoul, she spoke in Korean and sang a Korean song.

¹¹ However, there were also the reactions that were cautious about this program. For example, in her column for a Korean daily newspaper, Yoo (2001) expressed her concern about the program because she saw it as a test by the Japanese popular culture industry to lay inroads into the Korean market.

press conference for the release of his Korean single in Korea, Kusanagi said that he wanted to contribute to cultural exchange between Japan and Korea (Kim-Ko 2002; Heo 2002; Kim 2002), which complies with the basic idea of cultural diplomacy.

Similar discourses are found in the studies on Korean entertainers and athletes. BoA, a Korean pop singer who made success in Japan, appeared in Japanese media as a Korean girl who liked Japan and her songs included lyrics calling for mutual understanding, such as “I believe that minor troubles can be cleared” and “open this door and head for the future.” She was presented as a symbol of reconciliation between Korea and Japan and also as a source of information about Korea, Korean culture, and Korean citizens’ perceptions toward Japan. Similarly, during the 2002 FIFA World Cup Soccer, Japanese newspapers covered the success of the South Korean national soccer team¹² with an emphasis on the theme of mutual understanding between Japan and Korea. Emphasizing that the troubled relationship between the two countries became ameliorated and the friendship was being forged beyond borders, many newspaper articles reported the stories that Japanese fans rooted for the Korean team, and Japanese and Korean fans getting together to watch the Korean teams’ quarterfinal and semifinal matches, stressing conflicts ameliorated and friendship beyond borders.

4) History Issues and Pop Culture

Although the bilateral exchange in Korea and Japan has expanded since the turn of the millennium, the historical issues still remained as something sensitive with a

¹² The Korean team advanced to the semifinals, becoming the first Asian team to achieve it. The Japanese team did not make it to the quarterfinals.

potential to affect the bilateral relationship dramatically. The conflict surrounding Japan's right-wing history textbook and territorial disputes are some of them.

These issues even affected the implementation of the Korean government's ban lifting, dubbed the Open-Door Policy. As introduced above, the ban was lifted in three stages by the year of 2000, and many expected the fourth stage to be in effect before Korea and Japan co-hosted the FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament in 2002. This, however, was not realized. In July 2001, the Japanese government refused the Korean government's demand to revise a right-wing history textbook published in Japan, and on July 12, the Korean government declared that it would not lift the remaining bans unless the history textbook issue was resolved. Moreover, on August 15, 2001, on the anniversary of the end of WWII, the then Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi paid an official visit to Yasukuni Shrine, where class-A World War II criminals are honored. Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni enraged many Korean people and caused further deterioration to the Korea-Japan relationship. In June 2002, during the World Cup, some of the remaining bans were temporarily lifted, but the official announcement about the next stage of the Open Door Policy was not made until September 2003.¹³

There are observations that the historical backgrounds influenced a particular representation of Japanese entertainers in the related dramas and programs. In her analysis about the program *Chonan Gang*, Hirata (2005) points out that the host Kusanagi's character has drastically changed in the program. Even though his character in Japan rested on his sincere and serious attitudes and strong acting ability, in the Korean market

¹³ The fourth stage became effective in January 2004, opening the Korean market to songs with Japanese lyrics. The ban was completely lifted in January 2006.

he was characterized comical silly. Hirata (2005) explains this transformation in terms of gender stereotypes and the political relationship between Korea and Japan. She also observes that TV dramas co-produced by Korea and Japan tend to portray romantic relationships between Korean men and Japanese women whereas in these dramas Japanese men are almost invisible. According to her, the mass media's presentation of relationships between Japanese men and Korean women is risky because it can remind Korean audiences of the colonial history and its aftereffects, including the "comfort women" issue. She also points out that Kusanagi's identity as a Japanese man could be an obstacle to his activities in Korea, and the anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea made it difficult to present Kusanagi in the usual character of Japanese actors and entertainers. As *Oshin* weakened the colonial image of Japan by feminizing Japan's modern history, the comical transformation of Kusanagi's personality also worked to minimize the negative effect from the Japanese men's image as colonizers. As discussed above, cultural exchange between Korea and Japan cannot be irrelevant to Japan's cultural diplomacy, and historical backgrounds and accompanying political issues significantly influence the regional flow of pop culture.

Chapter 3

The Korean Wave in Japan

1. *Winter Sonata* and the Korean Wave in Japan

The Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*¹⁴, has become one of the key concepts defining the media and pop culture industry in East Asia since the late 1990s. The term was first coined in China when the drama series *What Is Love* was aired on the China Central Television (CCTV) in 1999 and became popular among Chinese audiences. In the middle of 1999, *the Beijing Youth Daily* first used the term Korean Wave to mean that the trend of Korea's popularity was surging (KOFICE 2011) and the term was solidified into the expression to refer to the boom of the Korean pop culture. As the boom began to expand to Southeast Asia and then to Japan, the definition of the term also expanded to describe the international popularity of the Korean pop culture. According to Cho (2005), for Korean people "living in the semi-periphery of the world systems" (149) and suffering from the shock of the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, the Korean Wave provided "one of the most unexpected dramas to emerge from these large movements of capital, media, culture, and people" (148).

KOFICE (2011) divides the boom of Korean Wave into three stages. The first stage is from 1997 to early 2000s when Korean dramas and pop music gained popularity in China and Taiwan. The second stage is early and mid-2000s when Korean dramas attracted attention with the success of the drama *Winter Sonata* in Japan. The third stage is the boom

¹⁴ In the beginning, the Korean Wave was read Kanryu in Japanese, following the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese characters 韓流. However, since 2004 Hanryu, following the Korean pronunciation have been more frequently used (Hirata 2005).

of Korean pop music, which started in the middle of the 2000s. In this stage, idol singers became popular in Southeast Asia, and some even succeeded in the Japanese market. In this stage, the Korean pop culture was received in regions other than Asia, such as Europe and North America.

Table 2. Three Stages of the Korean Wave

	First Stage	Second Stage	Third Stage
Keyword	Birth	Development	Diversification
Period	1997-early 2000s	Early and mid-2000s	After 2007
Industry	Dramas, music	Dramas, music, movies, video games	Dramas, music, video games, movies, comics, characters, food, Korean alphabet
Countries	China, Taiwan, Vietnam	China, Japan, Taiwan, Southeast Asia	China, Japan, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Africa, the US
Contents	<i>What Is Love</i> (drama) H.O.T. (idol group)	<i>Winter Sonata</i> (drama) <i>Jewel in the Palace</i> (drama)	K-pop
Promotion method	Broadcasting media	Broadcasting media, the Internet	SNS, mobile, the Internet

Source: KOFICE (2011)

In the beginning, the popularity of the Korean pop culture was understood as a result of the modernization and changing environments in Asian countries. According to Park (2006), “media globalization, economic development, and the growth of a consumer culture led to the mushrooming of cable and satellite TV stations in Asia” which “brought about urgent demands for more programs to air” and “increased importation of foreign programs” (247). Korean TV dramas became cheap alternatives to Japanese dramas, which

became popular in the 1990s but “the cost of importing had become too high” (247). She also points out that the emergence of the Korean Wave is “closely related to the economic development of Asian countries and their similar degrees of modernity” (250) and “Korean popular culture’s success is also often explained in terms of cultural proximities among Asian countries” (254).

At the same time, the phenomenon was a repetition of the existing model of international media circulation, whereby pop culture products flow from the more developed and modernized countries to less developed countries in the region, delivering a model of modernization and development. The Korean dramas’ failure in gaining popularity in Japan in the early 2000s supported this thesis. In the spring of 2002, TV-Asahi aired the drama *All about Eve*, which marked the first Korean TV drama to be aired on a Japanese terrestrial channel, but the drama was not very successful. A director from TV-Asahi later recalled that the failure of the drama made the broadcaster reluctant to purchase broadcasting rights of Korean dramas.¹⁵ Although the ratings of dramas that were co-produced by Japan and Korea were not bad, dramas solely produced by Korean production companies were not received favorably.

What changed the entire media landscape was *Winter Sonata*, a drama series originally produced by the Korean public broadcaster KBS in 2002.¹⁶ The Japanese public broadcaster, NHK first aired the drama on its satellite channel in March 2003 and repeated

¹⁵ Yasuo Kawashima, at the symposium “Contents Business in Korea and Japan and the Global” on September 18, 2012, Korea Culture Center in Tokyo, Japan.

¹⁶ Although the drama created an enthusiastic boom, it is often considered that the Korean Wave began with the commercial success of Korean movies, including *Shiri* (1999, released in Japan in 2000) and *JSA* (2000, released in Japan in 2001).

the series at the end of the year. Then, upon popular demand, NHK re-aired the drama on its terrestrial channel in 2004, and the rating of the final episode was 20.5% although it was aired during the period when the 2004 Summer Olympic Games were being held¹⁷. At the end of the year in 2004, again upon viewers' requests, NHK aired the uncut version of the drama. At the year-end of 2003, NHK has earned more than 100 million yen (approx. a million dollars) thanks to the drama. Korea's Gangwon Province, which was the setting of the drama, enjoyed a drastic increase in the number of tourists (Hayashi 2005a). When the lead actor of the drama, Bae Yong-joon first visited Japan, thousands of fans were waiting at the Narita International Airport to welcome him. The lead actress, Choi Ji-woo made an appearance on a prime-time talk show in Japan and met the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at his office. Following the success of *Winter Sonata*, Japanese broadcasters, both public service and commercial, purchased the rights and aired Korean dramas. Korean movies were widely screened at movie theaters in Japan, and several Korean singers and bands held concerts and released CDs in Japan. Even popular actors, who were not professional singers in Korea, began to release CDs and had fan meetings and concerts in Japan. After the success of *Winter Sonata*, Japan became the center of the academic and industry discourses on the Korean Wave.

¹⁷ In Japan during the Olympic period, live broadcasts of the games become the priority for most terrestrial channels

Table 3 Timeline of the Korean Wave boom in Japan

1998	○ Korean President Kim Dae-jung announced Korea will lift the ban on Japanese pop culture incrementally. Bans on records and CDs with Japanese lyrics, movies, comics and so on were lifted by four stages
1999	○ Korea enacted the Basic Act on Promotion of Cultural Industry ○ The movie <i>Shiri</i> becomes a big hit in Korea; was released in Japan in the following year.
2002	○ South Korea and Japan co-hosted FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament
2003	○ NHK BS2 broadcasted <i>Winter Sonata</i>
2004	○ NHK General broadcasted <i>Winter Sonata</i> ○ NHK BS2 broadcasted <i>Jewel in the Palace</i>
2005	○ The Korean vocal group TVXQ debuted in Japan ¹⁸
2010	○ K-pop groups including Girls' Generation and KARA debuted in Japan one after another. ○ K-pop boom began in full scale
2012	○ The number of Korea-related shops and restaurants in Shin-Okubo exceeded 500
August 2012	○ South Korean President Lee Myung-bak visited the controversial island Dokdo/Takeshima
2013	○ The strong yen brought about the peak of Japanese companies' purchase of Korean dramas. 240 titles in 26 BS and CS channels were broadcast in October. ○ Hate speeches arose in Okubo, Tokyo and Tsuruhashi, Osaka
August 2016	○ The number of Korea-related shops in Shin-Okubo fell to 320 approx.

(Source: Asahi Shimbun Digital, November 15, 2016; The Asahi Shimbun, March 14, 2015)

2. The Reason and the Significance of the Boom

The popularity of Korean dramas in Japan was considered distinct from the boom in other Asian countries. Ko (2010) summarizes the characteristics of the Korean Wave in Japan as follows:

¹⁸ TVXQ is regarded as an idol group in Korea, but the Japanese newspaper used the term “vocal group” to describe the boy group.

The Korean Wave was driven by broadcasting.... Killer dramas such as *Winter Sonata* and *Jewel in the Palace*. Secondly, the market structure favors merchandising. Unlike China and Taiwan, Japan has proved a successful market for merchandising. Thirdly, consumption focuses on middle-aged people. ... Fourthly, the Korean Wave has contributed to an improved relationship between Korea and Japan. (141)

As stated above, the Korean Wave in Japan is distinguished from other countries such as China and Taiwan, particularly in terms of the audiences and the Japanese market's know-how in merchandising and developing business with pop culture contents. Previous studies on the audiences of *Winter Sonata* and Korean pop culture suggest that the popularity of the Korean Wave is closely related to the social contexts in which Japanese female audiences are situated.

1) Pure Love as the Main Theme

Many studies locate the reason of *Winter Sonata's* popularity in the content of the drama itself. Kim et al. (2009) observe that "*Winter Sonata's* influence in Japan can be explained by the audience's engagement with the series' narrative: that is, it was perceived as being coherent, realistic and emotionally involving" (605). In particular, the theme of pure love and the overall aesthetic beauty are frequently given as the strength of the drama series. Shin and Lee (2006) argue that the quality of Korean drama, good scenario, actors' acting, and beautiful camera work brought catharsis to the viewers. They also point out that the theme of pure love, which was a theme forgotten in Japanese television by that time, was also a reason for the popularity of the drama. Similarly, Hanaki et al. (2007) find the portrayal of 'pure love' was "the major narrative appeal of *Winter Sonata*" and describe

the drama “included no overt sense of sex or passionate lovemaking. Instead, the television series depicted nuanced exchanges of ‘pure’ feeling” (286). They also point out that “the esthetic and poetic beauty strengthened the ‘pure’ quality of *Winter Sonata*.” (286)

These points that appealed the fans of *Winter Sonata* actually resonate with the preferences of middle-aged women, who consisted the majority of early Korean Wave fans. Above all, the pure love story fits the value system of the middle-aged Japanese women. Hayashi (2005b) connected the reason of the drama’s popularity to the social contexts in which Japanese women are situated. The theme of the drama, “first love” represents the type of love not requiring social obligations and is the natural expression of emotions. The description of natural emotions, which society has taken away, is the most luxurious and noble behavior in the contemporary society, which moved the women who had become obliged to the social norms and the roles imposed on them. Similarly, Hanaki et al. (2007) point out that the characters in the drama embodied the traditional gender values that “Japanese middle-aged women have cherished since their youth” and “evoked a strong sense of compassion and identification among Japanese middle-aged women”(287).

Hanaki et al. (2007) also discover the preference of the middle-aged women for the music and the pace of the drama. According to them, “the music was especially loved by middle-aged Japanese women, who do not care much for the fast-paced, upbeat music of contemporary Japanese television dramas and Hollywood movies.” They also point out that these features suit the older audiences, mentioning that “[w]hile some of our younger respondents in their twenties were occasionally bored with the slow development of the

story the relatively older respondents appreciated the moderate, non-hurried pace, allowing them to appreciate and savor the esthetic and poetic beauty” (287). Shin and Lee (2006) also find that the slow and simple development of the drama enabled middle-aged viewers to easily follow and understand the story.

The theme of pure love can be also connected to the nostalgia of the viewers, which is another popular reason for the drama’s success. Park (2006) states, “Japanese audience members seem to feel ‘nostalgia’ when they watch Korean dramas because they depict things such as close, caring human relations and pure, long-lasting love, all elements Japan once had but lost” (251-2) and “this explanation ... implies a time lag between Korea and Japan and Korea’s backwardness in terms of development” (252). Hanaki et al. (2007) observe that *Winter Sonata* is similar to the old Japanese dramas that many fans of the Korean drama once enjoyed in the 1960s and 1970s and they argue that “[t]he subtle depiction of pure love, overall esthetic and poetic beauty and endearing characters with traditional values evoked a sense of nostalgia among Japanese middle-aged women” (288). They state that the content of *Winter Sonata* “corresponded with Japanese traditional values that ... middle-aged Japanese respondents admired” (289). They also point out that “*Winter Sonata* led many of the respondents to recognize the cultural commonalities between Japan and South Korea,” but such commonalities are traditional values “such as respect for family, kinship networks and the elderly,” suggesting that the Japanese fans of *Winter Sonata* were looking for what they have lost in the contemporary Japanese society. Lee and Ju (2011) also find the sense of nostalgia from their interviews with the fans.

According to them, “[t]he views of the older Japanese audience suggest that Korean dramas resemble earlier Japanese television dramas from the 1970s to the 1980s in terms of narrative, emotional appeal and central message” (288) and “the enjoyment of Korean dramas has led Japanese women to feelings of nostalgia, a familiar remembrance of past experiences and collective memories” (289). They also find the sense of nostalgia from the different sense of “Asianness” between Japanese and Korean audiences. According to them, “[w]hile Japanese interviewees found ‘Asianness’ in accordance with nostalgic sentiments of the past, Korean interviewees perceived ‘Asianness’ to be found in synchronous modes of modern Asian lives.” (295). This observation resonates with what Iwabuchi (2002) finds in Japanese audiences’ consumption of pop culture from other Asian countries.

2) Dissatisfaction with the Japanese Mainstream Society

In addition to the point that the *Winter Sonata* boom satisfied the values of Japanese middle-aged women, it also reflects their dissatisfaction with Japanese mainstream media and pop culture. Hayashi (2005b) observes that many fans of *Winter Sonata* did not like the Japanese mass media. To fans such as these, the Japanese mass media had accelerated modernization and caused social unrest and chaos. Also, they were aware that mainstream media had neglected them, and therefore they had been disappointed with the Japanese mainstream media. Instead, they found an antithesis to the Japanese mass media in *Winter Sonata* and believed that Korean dramas provided them with an alternative entertainment. Similarly, as Park (2006) points out, “Japanese middle-aged women have long been neglected by Japanese TV” and *Winter Sonata* “tapped

an unserved market and touched the hearts of female viewers” (252). The Korean pop culture has become an antithesis to the Japanese mainstream media and pop culture contents that have ignored the middle-aged women as audiences.

However, following the Korean Wave boom, the media began to pay attention to their needs again. Mōri (2008) finds the importance of *Winter Sonata* from the fact that “it made middle-aged women, roughly between 30 and 70 years old, visible as its audience” although “they have often been marginalized and invisible as cultural practitioners in both journalism and academia” (131). Lee H. (2008) also observes that the buying power of the Korean Wave fans made the media industry accommodate to what they want. Park (2006) also pays attention to the audiences’ buying power, stating, “with their strong purchasing power and unsatisfied emotional needs, these middle-aged women eagerly consumed anything related to the drama and, to some extent, Korea” (252).

The audiences were dissatisfied not only with the programs Japanese televisions were offering but also with the ways in which the Japanese mainstream media covers the Korean Wave and its fans. According to the survey of the fans of Bae Yong-joon (Lee H., 2008), 58% of the audience perceived that the Japanese media covered them in a negative way, and 26% showed strong antipathy toward the title *obasan*, the Japanese word for middle-aged women. Based on these results, Lee H. (2008) criticizes that it is the Japanese television that makes the fans feel alienated, because the Japanese television derides the fever of the Korean Wave fans in entertainment programs for young audiences¹⁹ but at the

¹⁹ For the details of the Japanese media’s representation of *Winter Sonata* and its fans, see Lee (2004) and Ishida (2005).

same time attempts to garner ratings by airing the Korean Wave dramas in the prime time. Hirata (2005) also reports that the Japanese media either poked fun at the Korean Wave fans in their forties or portrayed the fans in their twenties and thirties as a group who want to marry Korean men, and the fans had a sense of antipathy and distance.

In addition to providing an antithesis against the Japanese mainstream media, the Korean Wave boom also offered an alternative masculinity, which explains the fans fever for Korean actors and singers. Hayashi (2005b) describes that the male lead of *Winter Sonata* as a patient character that shares women's sufferings, and this ideal character as such evoked Japanese women's sympathy living in the contemporary society. According to her, he bears a gentle quality that erases the threat of masculinity and at the same time shows a noble masculinity that is fresh and cannot be hated. He also evidences an Asian virtue which has been lost in Japan. According to Kim (2011), "[t]he hero's unconditional love for a woman – faithfully devoted to one lover, sensitive and understanding of woman's emotional needs – captivated many women in Japan" and "[t]his can be read as a hidden criticism of Japanese men and society" (39).

Korean entertainers' masculinity, considered different from that of Japanese men, is also sought after in K-pop idol singers. In her analysis of the Korean boy group TVXQ, Kim (2014) describes TVXQ as having "hybrid masculinity," which is a "reason why the Korea group appeals to Japanese fans. The Japanese media represented the Korean boy group differently from Japanese idol groups, by constructing their masculinity "in connection with their national specificity" (76). According to her, "by incorporating

elements of these two [Japanese and Korean] societies TVXQ presents a different type of ideal man and successfully appeals to female fans in Japan” (76). Comparing the Japanese idol group EXILE and TVXQ, Kitahara (2013) observes that these two groups display different types of masculinity. While EXILE embodies male pride and the power threatening others, she only sees beauty and Eros from TVXQ. According to her, the beauty and the sexual attractions of TVXQ and other Korean entertainers reflect Japanese women’s desire.

3) Changed Images of Korea and Improved Bilateral Relationship

It is frequently said that the booms of *Winter Sonata* and the Korean Wave have changed the image of Korea and going further, improved the relationship between Japan and Korea, as supported by many opinion polls and empirical studies. Lee S. (2008) observes that Japanese fans of the Korean Wave tend to show a strong curiosity about Korean culture. According to Kim and Kim (2011), “the Korean Wave, particularly after *Winter Sonata* was broadcast, has greatly reshaped the Japanese perception toward Korean people and their culture and, as a consequence, improved international relations between the two countries.” Mōri (2008) observes that *Winter Sonata* “played a crucial role in reconsidering the cultural relationship between Korea and Japan” (130) and reports that most common comment from his interviewees was that “Korea had become closer to them” (137). Hanaki et al. (2007) also point out, “*Winter Sonata* and the hanryu phenomenon in general seem to have led the Japanese viewers to open their minds and develop empathic interest in Koreans (at least for the Zainichi Koreans and South Koreans) (291). Situating

the popularity of *Winter Sonata* in “the historically hostile relationship” between Japan and Korea, Kim et al. (2009) see the phenomenon as intriguing because “when the audience group [middle-aged and older women] was growing up (postwar) the animosity and hostility toward Koreans was at its peak” (597)²⁰ and point out that the popularity of *Winter Sonata* “suggest[s] a possible perceptual change in Japan toward Korean-Japanese history and diplomatic relations between the two countries, and offers a new perspective on everything South Korean” (597).

However, it is also necessary to look at the background of such shifts. Hayashi (2005b) points out that the symbol of “Korea” was something totally new for Japanese fans and therefore it ignited their curiosity and made *Winter Sonata* something more than just a TV drama. According to her, the drama lacks many social issues in contemporary Korean society and therefore Japanese fans for the first time knew about the modernized aspects of the neighboring country and were surprised. She also observes that *Winter Sonata* fans from their forties to seventies reported that they hardly had known about Korea before they became fans, which suggests postwar Japanese society’s ignorance about Korea.

Also, it is dubious whether such potential of soft power, suggested by the Korean Wave boom, was actually effective in improving the relationship between Japan and Korea. In their analysis of Japanese and Korean media coverage of the *Winter Sonata* boom in

²⁰ Although Kim et al. (2011) mention older Japanese women’s hostility against Korea, other studies find that Japanese female fans of the Korean Wave had been almost ignorant about Korea. According to Hayashi (2005b), in regard to Korea, ignorance, Japan’s superiority, and a sense of discrimination were coexisting in Japanese society. Ham and Heo (2005) also report that most of their interviewees did not have much knowledge about Korea. This suggests the gap between Korean and Japanese people in terms of the impression of the other

Japan, Hayashi and Lee (2007) observed that both Japanese and Korean discourses were “concerned with promoting national narratives that served their commercial interests” (199) and “interpreted and politicized ... in ways that responded to the anxieties and aspirations specific to each nation” (213). Therefore, according to them, “the idea of ‘soft power’ turned out to have a limited or at least ambiguous effect in ameliorating the troubled relationship between Japan and South Korea” (198).

Such limitations of soft power or the potential of the Korean Wave became visible when anti-Korea or anti-Korean Wave movement arose in Japan. In July 2005, the comic book titled *Manga Kenkanryu (Comic the Anti-Korean Wave)* was published and “became an instant bestseller and topped the Amazon Japan ranking for several years” (Liscutin 2009, 173), followed by the second volume in February 2006 and the third in August 2007. As of 2007, a total of around 800,000 copies were sold. According to Liscutin (2009), the book aims to counteract the Korean Wave boom “by providing ‘the truth’ about Korea, its history, culture, and Korean claims against Japan for restitution” and “to educate its readers on a wide range of misdemeanours allegedly committed by Korea” (Liscutin 2009, 172). At the same time the book became a bestseller, the extensive pro-*Kenkanryu* movement rapidly spread on various Japanese and global Internet sites” (Liscutin 2009, 173). Haag (2017) sees the publication of the book as “epoch-making turning points for the breakthrough of” *kenkan* [anti-Korean sentiments]” (119). He also points out that, what played an important role in this period were new media platforms such as the Internet and “the surge in mediated contact with Korean culture and viewpoints” (119). Increased contacts with

Korea and the Korean culture rather led to extremely nationalistic and xenophobic backlash in Japan, suggesting the limitation of the improved relationship through pop culture.

4) Fan Activities as Self-Development

What is also notable about the Korean Wave fans is that their love for the drama expands to many different activities leading to self-development. Lee S. (2008) observes it is typical that the Korean Wave fans in Japan start from watching television dramas then move to various activities that include traveling to Korea, attending concerts, and learning Korean culture and the Korean language. According to her, watching drama, which used to be for pleasure, develops into a channel that expands the fans' worldview and interests in foreign culture. Similarly, Mōri (2008) points out that the *Winter Sonata* phenomenon "created more social and cultural practices in its fans' everyday lives," reporting "many fans have started to show a general interest in Korean culture, to organize fan meetings, to participate in *Winter Sonata* tours in Korea, and even start studying Korean language and culture" (131).

Lee H. (2008) describes the Korean Wave encourages the fans to make new friends and travel around, providing them with the routes to escape from their daily lives. They purchase merchandise related to the dramas and the actors they like and travel around Japan to watch the movies starring their favorite actors. They also caught up with the new technologies through the Korean Wave. According to her survey, 56% of the fans

responded that they started to use the Internet after they became fans of the Korean Wave. Terming the fans “cyber nomad,” she points out that the PC, the mobile phone, and the digital camera have become the three must-have items for the fans. According to her, while Japanese women in the 1970s purchased three electric appliances – the color TV, the refrigerator, and the washing machine – pursuing the dream of sweet home, the Korean Wave fans purchase the three devices in order to enjoy themselves.

Fans’ activities and drama viewing behavior are connected to typical ways in which Japanese audiences have consumed television and pop culture contents. Mōri (2008) and Lee and Ju (2011) point out that the Korean Wave fans’ viewing behavior is similar to that of *otaku*, the Japanese term referring to “a nerdy maniac who is crazy about comics, animation, video games and computer media entertainment” (Mōri 2008, 133). Mōri (2008) compares *Winter Sonata* fans’ “repetitive and even addictive” (133) way of watching the drama to “an *otaku* style of watching” (134) and argues “the practice of watching *Winter Sonata* is not a passive exercise but a very active one” (134). Lee and Ju (2011) outline the fans’ passionate activities and active responses, including voluntarily participating in the interview to share their experience and holding a drama screening at a movie theater, and describe their activities as “voluntary Otaku” (282). According to them, this “[o]taku culture differentiates Japanese fans of Korean dramas from other foreign fan groups in terms of placing them as the most informative messengers of newly-arriving Korean pop culture in Japan” (286). From their analysis of Japanese fans’ activities on the Internet, Ham and Heo (2005) find similarities with Japanese traditional festival, *Matsuri*. Lee H. (2008)

links the Korean Wave fans' activities to Japanese women's consumption pattern in general. She quotes a fan identifying Bae Yong-joon with imported luxury goods saying that the imported luxurious goods are nothing special for Japanese women and what is selected by Japanese women equates to imported luxury goods. Despite the differences in lifestyles, what is commonly found among the Korean Wave fans is that the Korean Wave is accepted as newly imported luxury goods. Giving an example that many Korean Wave fans bring name cards with their favorite actors' photos printed on them, she points out that what they consume is a symbol that informing their social identity and consumption is a gesture to find their colleagues in the anonymous society. (48-51).

5) The Media Environment in Japan

There are also attempts to explain the phenomenon in terms of media environment of Japan. Kwon (2010) points out the effect of the changes in the Japanese broadcasting industry, such as the launch of satellite channels and the shift from analog to digital. According to him, with Japan's affluent domestic programs and its preference for Western programs, it was difficult for Korean dramas to be broadcast via terrestrial channels. Hardly anyone would take the risk to show Korean programs in order to emphasize "Korea-Japan friendship." However, it was possible to take a risk in programming for the BS (broadcasting satellite) channels, as *Winter Sonata* first broadcast on NHK-BS. The Korean drama boom started at NHK-BS influenced other BS channels run by commercial broadcasters. Korean dramas provided an easy solution for the problems stemming from the shortage of programs because they were already gaining popularity in

Japan. Moreover, the boom in Korean Wave dramas sounded good to sponsors who were eager to attract attentions of middle-aged women with high buying power. The same applies to paid channels such as SkyPerfect TV (Kwon 2010, 26-29).

Lee H. (2016) pays attention to the fact that the Korean Wave landed in Japan several years later than other Asian countries. She argues that Japan offered its niche market only after the commercial value of the Korean Wave was proved in China and Southeast Asia (90). In the early stage of the Korean Wave in Japan, the fans were regular viewers of NHK's morning dramas, and they used to be faithful supporters of Japanese pop culture including trendy dramas in the past. In the context of a changing media environment they also wanted new contents, but for producers, contents tailored for them were not easy to produce in terms of cost effectiveness. Therefore the Korean dramas were the best option because female audiences of other Asian countries verified the commercial potential of Korean dramas (92).

3. K-Pop Boom and the "New" Korean Wave

While the Korean Wave in Japan, which started with Korean TV drama boom, seemed to decrease in the latter half of the 2000's, a new trend appeared in 2010. From this year, the symbol of the Korean pop culture boom moved from male actors to idol groups, particularly girl groups. Several Korean girl groups – later joined by boy groups – made debuts in Japan, released CDs recorded in the Japanese language, and made chart successes. Japanese media competitively introduced Korean girl groups to the Japanese audience,

regardless of whether they made an official debut in Japan or not. Korean media welcomed this trend, emphasizing that not only dramas but also popular music started to “conquer” the Japanese market. Although it was once frequently said that the Korean Wave was almost over, the Japanese media’s attention and the Korean industry’s active response to such attention revived the boom, so-called “new” Korean Wave (*Shin-Hallyu*).

In fact, Korean singers’ presence in the Japanese music industry was not new. Since the turn of the new millennium, many Korean pop stars debuted in the Japanese pop music (J-pop) market, and some of them, for example, BoA and TVXQ, achieved notable successes.²¹ However, girl groups’ debuts since the year 2010 were different from their predecessors’. When BoA and TVXQ debuted in Japan, they were treated in the same way that any other new artists were. They received relatively less media attention and went through the process of localization. In contrast, girl groups in this period²² made their Japan debut under the media spotlight and their activities were based on their Korean hit songs, translated into the Japanese language, with relatively less intensive localization processes. Rather, their exotic presence, including awkward Japanese language usage, costumes and dance moves, which were sexier than those of Japanese idol groups, have become selling points in the Japanese market.

This K-pop boom or the new Korean Wave expanded the territory of the Korean Wave in Japan. In terms of the genre, the boom was not limited to dramas and films but expanded to pop music. In terms of audience, while middle-aged women constituted the

²¹ Going back to the 1970s, several Korean singers debuted in Japan to sing *enka*, a genre of Japanese pop music considered to resemble its traditional music

²² This tendency lasted from 2010 to 2012 roughly. After the territorial disputes reignited in the summer of 2012, Korean idol groups hardly debuted under the media spotlight.

majority of fans in the inception of the boom, the Korean idol groups appealed to teenage girls and young women in their twenties (Okajima and Okada 2011). The boom expanded to other aspects of Korean culture and products, including foods, fashion, and tourist attractions. In the years from 2010 to 2012, Korean (pop) culture was prevalent in Japanese society, and the Koreatown in Tokyo's Shin-Okubo area was studied as an epitome of urban regeneration. In 2011, the Japanese public broadcaster, NHK invited three Korean idol groups – Girls' Generation, KARA, and TVXQ – to perform at its annual *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*, dubbed as “Year End Song Festival,” whose average ratings are higher than 40%. Although it was not rare that the program invites foreign artists (Nagasaki 2012), it was received quite exceptional that the program chose three artists from a single foreign country.

However, this new Korean Wave revealed negative aspects of the phenomenon in Japan and the Korean pop culture industry. According to a report published by the Maeil Business Newspaper (2012), during this period there was a prevalent atmosphere in the Japanese pop music industry to secure the rights of Korean pop stars in advance. Japanese record companies signed contracts even with Korean pop singers who were not so popular in Korea and arranged for them to debut in Japan. It was also pointed out that the many Korean singers were not getting a proper share in the profit. For instance, the Korean management company of KARA, which was one of the most successful Korean girl groups, received only 8% of the whole profit, while the Japanese distributor and the management company took 92% (Maeil Business Newspaper, 2012). Postings on the Internet reported that some Korean idol groups were working in Japan under harsh and inhumane conditions.

Kang (2014) points out the K-pop system is “the McDonaldisation of the music business and the globalisation of radical neoliberalism” (62). Unlike the idol groups in the past, the recent idol groups – frequently called the second-generation idol groups – are “formed through intensive auditions and training sessions” and the members are “made rather than found, through a highly rationalized and systematic business practice” (57). Moreover, under the “de-individualization” (57) strategy, “each member functions as a standardized part that can be readily replaced, which seems to reflect the increasing flexibility of labour approach that has been applied in all of Korea’s industries” (58). After all, “Korea’s new production system has turned the entertainment labourer’s private life ... into part of the commodity” (60).

Lee (2015) criticizes the situation where idol groups have dominated the Korean television industry and points out that such domination results from the global contents industry’s interests. According to him, the global awareness of Korean idol groups makes Korean television programs cast them although their appearances in the program do not contribute to audience ratings in Korea. Assisted by the media hype of the international popularity of K-pop, the K-pop industry could establish a monopoly status in the cultural capital market in Korea. He also raises questions about the situation in which K-pop earns most of its profit in the Japanese market, particularly through concerts and fan events.

However, the K-pop boom did not last long. From the year 2012, in the year the Japan-Korea relationship began to deteriorate again, the presence of the Korean Wave on Japanese television gradually decreased. Fuji Television discontinued *Hanryu α [Korean Wave α]*, the afternoon programming block for Korean dramas on August 22, 2012, and *Hanryu Serekuto [Korean Wave Select]* the morning programming block of TBS also closed

in March 2014. The public broadcaster NHK had maintained a program block for Korean dramas on Sunday night, but from 2014 Korean dramas were replaced by British and Spanish dramas.²³

Similarly, K-pop artists disappeared from the prime-time music shows. Figure 1 and Table 3 show the number and the details of Korean musicians who performed on TV-Asahi's *Music Station*, which is the only prime-time music show featuring recent hit songs in Japan. No Korean artists made an appearance from October 2012 to March 2015. The last performance in 2012 was on August 26, by the boy group BIGBANG. Even the two performances in 2015 were made by TVXQ and BoA²⁴, who gained popularity through the localization process by the Japanese music industry and were already popular in Japan before the K-pop boom. That is, from September 2012 to the end of 2015, no Korean musician categorized as K-pop artists made an appearance in the program.

²³ The last Korean drama aired in this block was *Moon Embracing the Sun*, which was broadcast from July to November 2014. It was mainly British series – *Downton Abbey*, *The Musketeers*, *Partners in Crime*, and *War and Peace* – that replaced Korean dramas. The Spanish series *El Tiempo Entre Costuras* and the Japanese series *Hibana [A Spark]*, originally produced for Netflix, were broadcast in this block, too.

²⁴ It should be noted that these two appearances were also made under special circumstances. As for TVXQ, it was their last performance on Japanese TV before taking a hiatus for their mandatory military service. BoA's performance in the year-end special was to celebrate the 15th anniversary of her debut in Japan.

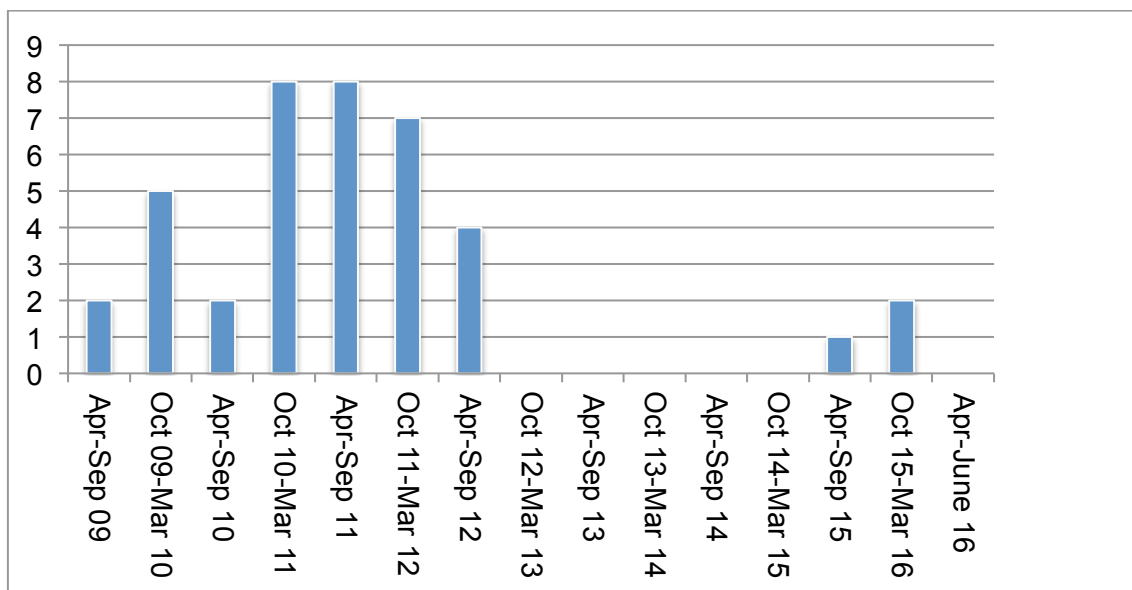


Figure 1. The Number of the Korean Artists that Performed in *Music Station 2009-2016*

Table 4. Korean Artists that Performed in Music Station 2009-2016

Year	Date	Artist	Notes
2009	February 13	BoA	
	July 3	TVXQ	
	July 17	BIG BANG	
	October 16	BoA	
	October 30	BoA	
	December 25	TVXQ BIG BANG	Year-end special
2010	February 9	BoA	
	May 28	Xia Junsu (from TVXQ)	
	August 27	BIG BANG	
	October 15	KARA	
	October 22	Girls' Generation	
	November 19	KARA	

2010	November 26	Girls' Generation	
	December 24	KARA Girls' Generation	Year-end special
2011	January 28	Girls' Generation TVXQ	
	May 13	Girls' Generation	
	June 3	Girls' Generation	
	June 17	KARA	
	June 24	KARA	
	July 22	TVXQ	
	August 26	2PM	
	September 2	2NE1	
	September 9	SHINee	
	December 9	BoA	
	December 23	KARA, Girls' Generation, TVXQ	Year-end special
2012	January 20	BIG BANG	
	January 27	Kim Hyun-joong	
	March 12	TVXQ	
	April 16	KARA	
	June 22	Girls' Generation	
	July 13	TVXQ	
	August 24	BIG BANG	
2015	April 13	TVXQ	
	December 25	BoA	
2016	February 5	BIG BANG	

(Source: Music Station Official Homepage, <http://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/music>)

It was not only the commercial channels that were reluctant to show Korean artists on television. In November 2012, the public broadcaster, NHK announced that no Korean artist was selected for its year-end music program, *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*. As stated above, the program had invited three idol groups in the previous year. Because the K-pop boom continued in this year too, many suspected that the growing tensions between Japan and Korea might have affected NHK's decision. Since 2012, no Korean artist has made an appearance in *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*.

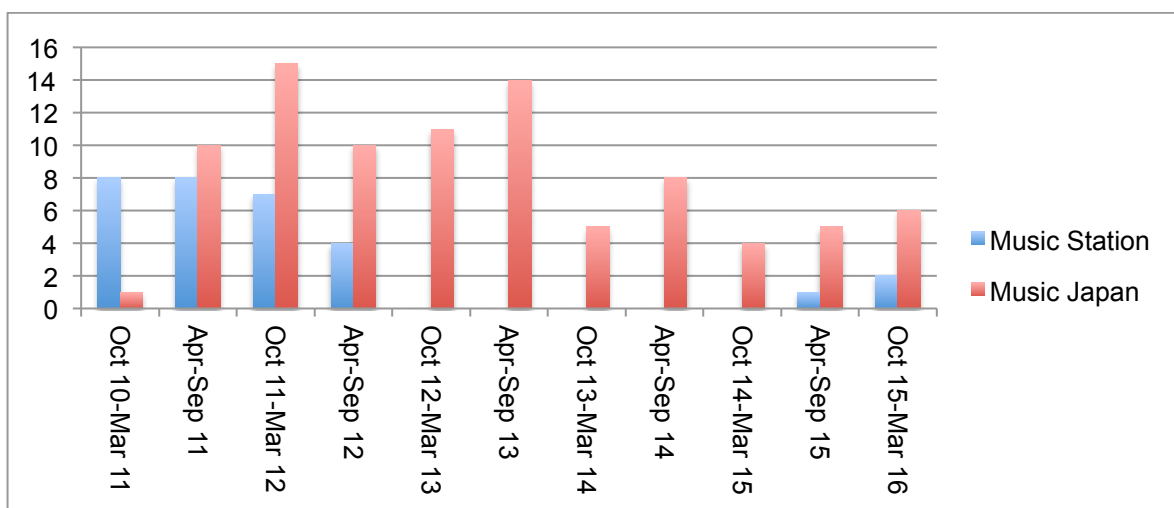


Figure 2. The number of Korean Artists in *Music Station* and *Music Japan*

However, Korean artists' absence in prime-time music programs does not mean that they were not active in Japan at all. Figure 2 compares the number of Korean artists in *Music Station* and NHK's *Music Japan*, a music program aired after midnight. This graph shows that NHK's late night music programs still presented Korean artists after the summer of 2012 when *Music Station* did not invite Korean artists at all. Even after the summer of 2012, many Korean singers and idol groups made debuts, performed at late

night programs, and participated in promotional events touring the country. When they become popular enough, they could hold concerts in large stadiums in front of thousands of audiences members

Korean singers and idol groups still garner a decent profit. Table 4 and 5 show the lists of Korean artists whose singles and albums were included in the 100 most sold singles and albums in the year. Although K-pop artists were active in the Japanese market and had a large number of fans, their presence was invisible in the mainstream media.

Table 5. Korean artists in Yearly Top 100 Singles by the Oricon Chart 2009-2016

Year	Rank	Artist	Single Title	Label
2009	21	TVXQ	Stand by U	rhythm zone
	30	TVXQ	Share The World/We Are!	rhythm zone
	32	JEJUNG & YUCHUN (from TVXQ)	COLORS ~Melody and Harmony~/Shelter	rhythm zone
	49	TVXQ	Bolero/Kiss The Baby Sky/Wasurenaide	rhythm zone
	65	TVXQ	Survivor	rhythm zone
2010	16	TVXQ	BREAK OUT!	rhythm zone
	26	TVXQ	Toki wo Tomete	rhythm zone
	28	XIAH Junsu	XIAH	rhythm zone
	49	Girls' Generation	Gee	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	58	Girls' Generation	GENIE	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	67	KARA	Mister	Universal Sigma
	77	KARA	Jumping	Universal Sigma
2011	16	TVXQ	Why?(Keep Your Head Down)	Avex Trax
	25	KARA	GO GO Summer !	Universal Sigma
	26	KARA	Jet Coaster Love	Universal Sigma
	29	Jang Keun-suk	Let me cry	Pony Canyon
	41	TVXQ	Superstar	Avex Trax
	46	Girls' Generation	MR.TAXI/Run Devil Run	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	54	TVXQ	Winter ~Winter Rose/Duet -winter ver.-~	Avex Trax
	64	KARA	Winter Magic	Universal Sigma
	66	SHINee	Replay - Kimi wa boku no everything-	EMI Music Japan
	84	2PM	Ultra Lover	Ariola Japan
	85	SUPER JUNIOR	Mr.Simple	Avex Trax
	91	2PM	I'm your man	Ariola Japan
	96	CNBLUE	In My Head	Warner Music Japan
	97	T-ARA	Bo Peep Bo Peep	EMI Music Japan
2012	31	Kim Hyun-joong	HEAT	Universal International
	35	SUPER JUNIOR	Opera	Avex Trax
	40	TVXQ	ANDROID	Avex Trax
	47	2PM	Beautiful	Ariola Japan
	48	TVXQ	STILL	Avex Trax
	49	KARA	Speed up/ Girls' Power	Universal Sigma
	52	2PM	Masukaredo~Masquerade~	Ariola Japan
	58	Girls' Generation	PAPARAZZI	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	59	SUPER JUNIOR	Sexy, Free & Single	Avex Trax
	61	Kim Hyun-joong	KISS KISS/Lucky Guy	Universal International
	71	SHINee	Dazzling Girl	EMI Music Japan

2012	92	Girls' Generation	Oh!	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
2013	40	TVXQ	OCEAN	Avex Trax
	42	TVXQ	Catch Me -If you wanna-	Avex Trax
	44	2PM	GIVE ME LOVE	Ariola Japan
	47	TVXQ	SCREAM	Avex Trax
	54	2PM	Winter Games	Epic Record Japan
	55	SHINee	Boys Meet U	EMI Records Japan
	57	TVXQ	Very Merry Xmas	Avex Trax
	58	Kim Hyun-joong	TONIGHT	Universal International
	67	Supernova	WINNER	Universal J
	90	KARA	Bye Bye/ Happy Days	Universal Sigma
	95	SUPER JUNIOR-K.R.Y.	Proimise You	Avex Trax
	97	KARA	Thank you/ Summer Love	Universal Sigma
2014	48	TVXQ	Sweat/Answer	Avex Trax
	56	TVXQ	Hide & See/ Something	Avex Trax
	59	TVXQ	Time Works Wonders	Avex Trax
	61	2PM	Midaretemina	Epic Record Japan
	73	Kim Hyun-Joong	HOT SUN	Universal Music
	78	SUPER JUNIOR	Blue World	Avex Trax
2015	34	EXO	Love Me Right ~romantic universe~	Avex Trax
	42	TVXQ	Sakuramichi	Avex Trax
	46	JYJ	WAKE ME TONIGHT	C-JeS Entertainment
	50	2PM	HIGHER	Epic Record Japan
	53	SHINee	Your Number	Universal Music Japan
	61	2PM	Guilty Love	Epic Record Japan
	67	BTS	I NEED YOU (Japanese Ver.)	Pony Canyon
	70	BTOB	Natsuiro/ MY GIRL	Kids Entertainment
	74	CROSS GENE	Love & Peace/sHi-tai!	Universal Music
	80	BTOB	Ashita	Kids Entertainment
	83	BTS	FOR YOU	Pony Canyon
	90	B1A4	Shiroi Kiseki	Pony Canyon
92	SUPER JUNIOR	MAMACITA - AYAYA -	Avex Trax	
100	INFINITE	24jikan	Universal Music	
2016	41	EXO	Coming Over	Avex Trax
	45	BTS	RUN - Japanese Ver.-	Pony Canyon
	55	BTOB	Dear Bride	Kids Entertainment
	61	2PM	Promise(I'll be) - Japanese ver.-	Epic Record Japan
	67	BTOB	L.U.V.	Kids Entertainment
	77	SHINee	Kimi no sei de	Universal Music
	85	SUPER JUNIOR	Devil/Magic	Avex Trax
	93	iKON	DUMB & DUMBER	YGEX

Table 6. Korean artists in Yearly Top 100 Albums by the Oricon Chart 2009-2016

Year	Rank	Artist	Album Title	Lable
2009	22	TVXQ	The Secret Code	rhythm zone
	58	BoA	BEST&USA	Avex Trax
2010	7	TVXQ	BEST SELECTION 2010	rhythm zone
	42	JUNSU/JEJUNG/YUCHUN	The...	rhythm zone
	45	KARA	Girls' Talk	Universal Sigma
	70	KARA	KARA BEST 2007-2010	Universal Sigma
	77	TVXQ	COMPLETE SET Limited Box	rhythm zone
	80	TVXQ	COMPLETE SET Limited Box	rhythm zone
2011	5	Girl's Generation	GIRLS' GENERATION	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	7	KARA	Super Girl	Universal Sigma
	20	TVXQ	TONE	Avex Trax
	22	KARA	Girls' Talk	Universal Sigma
	42	Girl's Generation	HOOT +6	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	63	BIGBANG	BIGBANG2	Universal J
	71	KARA	KARA BEST 2007-2010	Universal Sigma
	87	BEAST	SO BEAST	Far Eastern Drive Records
	92	SHINee	THE FIRST	EMI Music Japan
	95	Girl's Generation	The Boys	S.M.Entertainment
2012	18	KARA	Super Girl	Universal Sigma
	25	Girl's Generation	GIRLS' GENERATION	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	31	BIGBANG	ALIVE	YGEX
	41	Girl's Generation	GIRLS' GENERATION 2 ~Girls & Peace~	NAYUTAWAVE RECORDS
	59	Jang Keun-suk	Just Crazy	Pony Canyon
	65	T-ARA	Jewelry Box	EMI Music Japan
	66	KARA	Girls Forever	Universal Sigma
	99	KARA	KARA Collection	Universal Sigma
2013	10	TVXQ	TIME	Avex Trax
	49	SUPER JUNIOR	Hero	Avex Trax
	56	G-DRAGON(from BIGBANG)	COUP D'ETAT[+ONE OF A KIND & HEARTBREAKER]	YGEX
	79	Kim Hyun-joong	UNLIMITED	Universal International

2013	80	INFINITE	Koi ni Ochita toki	Ulim Contents
	92	SHINee	Boys Meet U	EMI Records Japan
	94	JUNHO(From 2PM)	Kimi no Koe	Ariola Japan
	100	2PM	LEGEND OF 2PM	Ariola Japan
2014	13	TVXQ	TREE	Avex Trax
	22	Girl's Generation	THE BEST	Universal Music
	25	Girl's Generation	LOVE&PEACE	Universal Music
	32	BIGBANG	THE BEST OF BIGBANG 2006-2014	YGEX
	63	2PM	GENESIS OF 2PM	Epic Record Japan
	64	D-LITE(from BIGBANG)	Deiraito	YGEX
	68	SOL(from BIGBANG)	RISE[+SOLAR & HOT]	YGEX
	87	SHINee	I'm Your Boy	Universal Music
	94	JUNHO(From 2PM)	FEEL	Epic Record Japan
2015	15	TVXQ	WITH	Avex Trax
	58	SUPER JUNIOR DONGHAE & EUNHYUK	Present	Avex Trax
	59	2PM	2PM OF 2PM	Epic Record Japan
	75	EXO	Exodus (Korean version)	
	79	MYNAME	I.M.G.~without you~	YM3D
	85	BIGBANG	THE BEST OF BIGBANG 2006-2014	YGEX
	88	JUNHO(From 2PM)	SO GOOD	Epic Record Japan
2016	20	BIGBANG	MADE SERIES	YGEX
	36	2PM	GALAXY OF 2PM	Epic Record Japan
	44	iKON	WELCOME BACK	YGEX
	48	BTS	YOUTH	Pony Canyon
	70	SEVENTEEN	FIRST 'LOVE & LETTER'	Imported
	72	SHINee	DxDxD	Universal Music
	88	Taemin	Sayonara Hitori	Universal Music
	90	JUNHO(From 2PM)	DSMN	Epic Record Japan
	91	EXO	EX'ACT (Korean version)	Imported

Chapter 4

Research Method

As discussed in the introduction, the Korean Wave in Japan, especially in the period called the “new” Korean Wave, was promoted by the Japanese media industry. Unlike what is observed in other countries’ cases, in this case the domestic industry did not block the inflow of foreign cultures, but instead, rather took advantage of it. For the purpose of revealing the backgrounds and logic behind such tendency, qualitative analysis of mainstream media texts was conducted. As Foucault (1992) notes, every society has a series of processes to control, select, organize, and redistribute the production of discourse, and it is through this process that the power relations are reproduced and reinforced. Therefore, analyzing media texts is expected to reveal the mechanisms through which a society functions and defines an event.

1. Media Text as the Data for Analysis

The major concern for this analysis is how the Japanese mainstream media – national newspapers, television programs, and magazines – covered the Korean Wave phenomenon and framed the relevant issues. As numerous previous studies have shown, the media coverage is not the objective reflection of reality and the reality depicted by media is socially constructed through various factors. Tuchman (1978) defines news contents as “a constructed reality” (182) and notes “the news frame organizes everyday reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality” (193). Similarly, Shoemaker and Reese (2014) argue that “news realities can be manipulated by both

sources and practitioners, resulting in news reports that differ in important ways from other information about the world” (62). Van Dijk (1988) points out that “news reports, whether in the press or on TV,” constitute a particular type of discourse”(1). In regards to the social construction of news, McQuail (2010) also states:

In respect of news, there is now more or less a consensus among media scholars that the picture of ‘reality’ that news claims to provide cannot help but a selective construct made up of fragments of factual information and observation that are bound together and given meaning by a particular frame, angle of vision or perspective. (101)

Based on the understandings that news contents are constructed in a certain society, the comparison of international news contents has shown that media coverage of a certain event differs from one country to another. Such factors as political and economic relationships, cultural backgrounds, media policies and other factors affect these differences. According to Lee, Chan, Pan, & So (2000), each country’s national interest and cultural assumptions influence how media “domesticate” foreign news (306).

Previous studies of newspaper coverage of the Korean Wave show that the Korean Wave phenomenon is covered in different ways by various countries (Hayashi and Lee 2007; Jung and Yu 2013; Jung and Hwang 2015). However, studies that analyze the media coverage of Japan are few. There are recent studies comparing Chinese and Japanese coverage (Jung and Yu 2013) and comparing Japanese and Korean coverage (Jung and Hwang 2015), but both of them are comparisons based on quantitative analysis and the data are drawn from only two national newspapers from each country. The quantitative content analysis and semantic network analysis that they conducted are useful to find general tendencies in the media coverage but are inefficient to discern the underlying background and desires hidden in media contents. In particular, Jung and Hwang (2015)

offer an analysis of headlines of newspapers and therefore, as the authors admit, may not properly reflect the content of each articles. Therefore in order to supplement previous studies' findings and to analyze the context in which the phenomenon is consumed in Japan, this study utilizes critical discourse analysis as the main analytical method.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is “discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk 2015, 466). When it comes to analyzing media texts, critical discourse analysis goes further than the visible differences in news contents, in terms that it pays attention to the structure in which a certain discourse is produced and reproduced. Fairclough (1995) claims that the social impact of media is more than selective representation of the world. According to him:

[t]he wide social impact of media ... is also to do with what sorts of social identities, what visions of ‘self,’ they project and what cultural values ... they entail. And it is to do with how social relationships are defined, especially social relationships between the mass of the population who constitute audiences for the most popular media output and people like politicians, scientists, church leaders, and broadcasters themselves (17-18).

This is where the usefulness of textual analysis enters the picture. As Fairclough points out, “texts are socioculturally shaped but they also constitute society and culture” (34) and in this context, analyzing texts “can give access to the detailed mechanisms through which social contradictions evolve and are lived out, and the sometimes subtle shifts they undergo” (15).

Fairclough (1995) summarizes, “critical discourse of a communicative event is the analysis of relationships between three dimensions or facets of that event.” (57) According to him, the three dimensions are: texts; discourse practice, which means “the processes of text production and text consumption; and sociocultural practice, referring to “the social and cultural goings-on which the communicative event is a part of,” and including aspects as “the economics of the media, the politics of the media, and the wider cultural context of communication in the mass media” (57). Therefore, the analysis in this study will not be limited to the texts themselves but extended to various aspects of media environments, including the style of reporting, media systems, policies related to media and popular culture, and also political and economic relationships between Japan and Korea. Media discourse should be understood through facets affecting or related to the media texts, and the way in which the Japanese media portrays the Korean Wave phenomenon and how Korean pop culture has been shaped under the influence of various factors in the Japanese media industry.

3. The Media System in Japan and Cross-Ownership

One of the most distinct characteristics of the Japanese media system is the national newspapers with huge subscriptions and the cross-ownership of different media outlets with the national newspapers in the political center. Westney (1996) observes that the national newspapers “engage in activities that span the entire range of publishing and which have dense linkages with broadcasting” (59). She also points out the relative weakness of commercial television in producing news programs, stating “affiliation (of

local stations) came to be defined in terms of the key station that supplied national news programs” and “each of the major Tokyo stations relied heavily on the national newspaper that had invested in it” (61). Tadokoro (1994) points out that, although it is said that there are legal restrictions of cross-ownership, even the regulations exists in a form to accepting the cross-ownership of press and broadcasting. Table 6 shows the cross-ownership structure of national newspapers, flagship and sub-flagship stations, and news networks affiliating local stations.

Table 7. Cross-ownership of Press and Broadcasting in Japan

Holdings Company	Daily Newspaper	Broadcasting		
		Flagship Station (Tokyo)	Sub-Flagship Station (Osaka)	News Network
The Yomiuri Shimbun Holdings	The Yomiuri Shimbun Sports Hochi	Nippon Television Network Corporation	Yomiuri Telecasting Corporation	Nippon News Network (NNN)
The Mainichi Newspapers Co., Ltd.	The Mainichi Shimbun	Tokyo Broadcasting System Television, Inc.	Mainichi Broadcasting System, Inc.	Japan News Network (JNN)
The Asahi Shimbun Company	The Asahi Shimbun The Nikkan Sports News	TV Asahi Corporation	Asahi Broadcasting Corporation	All-nippon News Network (ANN)
Fujisankei Communications Group	The Sankei Shimbun Sankei Sports Yūkan Fuji	Fuji Television Network, Inc.	Kansai Telecasting Corporation	Fuji News Network (FNN)
Nikkei, Inc.	The Nihon Keizai Shimbun	TV Tokyo Corporation	Television Osaka, Inc.	TX Network (TXN)

As shown above, all five commercial channels, NTV, TV-Asahi, TBS, TV-Tokyo, and Fuji-TV, and major news networks are owned by or closely related to major newspaper

companies. And the cross-ownership or affiliation is not limited to broadcasting but extends to live-action and animated films, DVD distribution, and record companies. Recently, the Internet-based media services are also associated with this network. For example, the VOD service Hulu struggled after opened its service in Japan in 2011, and finally was taken over by the Nippon Television Network Corporation, affiliated with *the Yomiuri Shimbun*, in 2014. In 2015 Netflix entered Japanese market in cooperation with Fuji TV, a member of Fuji-Sankei Group. TV-Asahi, affiliated with *the Asahi Shimbun* also run the Internet TV Abema TV, in cooperation with the Internet company CyberAgent, Inc. The cross-ownership prevalent in the Japanese media industry should also be put into concentration in analyzing Japanese media texts.

4. Data Collection

In order to grasp the whole picture of the ways in which the Japanese media accepted the Korean Wave phenomenon, this study analyzed all the major newspapers and affiliated magazines and television programs. As for television, due to the accessibility of data, two specific cases were chosen for analysis.

1) Print Media

All five national newspapers – three general and two financial papers – were analyzed. Weekly and monthly magazines published by the companies affiliated with major newspapers are also selected for analysis. Magazines were selected based on the affiliation and the accessibility in the database. Magazines archived in the newspaper database *the*

Economist, affiliated with *the Mainichi Shimbun* and *AERA*, affiliated with *the Asahi Shimbun*, were included in the data. Among the magazines archived in databases, *Shūkan Asahi* [*Weekly Asahi*], affiliated with *the Asahi Shimbun* is the only magazine excluded in the data because the magazine is categorized as popular weekly magazines. Many magazines in the category are not affiliated with major newspaper companies²⁵ are frequently criticized because these magazines are frequently criticized for its sensationalism and lack of evidence.

Articles published from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2016 and including keywords meaning “Korean Wave” or “K-POP”²⁶ are included in the data analyzed. A keyword search was conducted in each newspaper’s database except *the Sankei Shimbun*, which does not provide past data for researchers and which limits keyword search-ability to the past six months. Instead, the Factiva database was used for the keyword search for *the Sankei Shimbun*.

All the articles found from keyword searches were read, but a large number of the articles were only tangentially related to the phenomenon of the Korean Wave itself. Many are promotions or introductions of Korea related events, talks and symposiums, and Korean restaurants. Also, the term “Korean Wave” is frequently used to refer to anything from Korea or with Korean style. Even Korean athletes active in Korea are called “Korean Wave athletes.” For these reasons, only articles closely related to the media and pop culture industry were examined in depth.

²⁵ In the popular weekly magazine category, *Shūkan Bunshun* and *Shūkan Shinchō*, the two most sold magazines are not affiliated with major newspapers.

²⁶ Actually used keywords used were Hanryū (韓流), K-POP, and Kpoppu (Kポップ) .

Table 8 Titles of Publications and the Number of Articles Analyzed

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Daily Newspapers									
Asahi	137	173	204	205	129	90	88	64	1,084
Yomiuri	73	135	166	130	68	40	58	60	730
Mainichi	88	122	162	144	101	76	58	53	816
Daily Financial/Economic Papers									
Nikkei	28	32	49	55	42	27	25	24	272
Sankei	74	63	101	94	54	50	21	28	485
Weekly Magazines									
AERA ²⁷	11	28	28	18	17	2	4	0	108
Weekly Economist ²⁸	4	13	7	8	6	6	2	0	46
Nikkei Business ²⁹	1	7	8	9	1	2	1	0	29
Monthly Magazine									
Nikkei Entertainment ³⁰	N/A	N/A	N/A	53	29	24	17	27	150

2) Television Programs

While newspaper articles are easy to collect by combing databases, television and pop culture are usually topics that national newspapers do not report in detail. Therefore, in order to obtain more detailed discourses about the phenomenon, TV programs were also analyzed. However, it is difficult to legitimately obtain data of the past Japanese programs because VOD services provided by Japanese TV channels are very limited. Besides, the

²⁷ Published by Asahi Publishing Co., *AERA* had regularly introduced Korean entertainers under the title *Ima Aitai [Want to Meet Now]* from October 2010 to March 2011. The articles were later published as a book.

²⁸ Published by Mainichi Shimbun Publishing, Inc.

²⁹ Published by Nikkei Business Publications, Inc.

³⁰ Published by Nikkei Business Publications, Inc. Articles published in and before 2011 were not available at the Nikkei BP database.

same applies to archives and databases open to public. Therefore, it was impossible to collect all the TV data from 2009. Instead, I accessed databases that store TV programs for a short period of time. TV news and programs related to two specific cases were collected for analysis: the girl group KARA's disbanding scandal in 2011 and the boy group BIGBANG's Japan tour in 2016. The data for the year 2011 came from the database *Spider* and the data of 2016 from the database *Max Channel*.

KARA, the girl group who debuted in Japan in 2010, was the most symbolic figure in the "new" Korean Wave. To analyze the Japanese media's coverage of their disbanding scandal in 2011, news and information programs from January 11, to the end of February were analyzed. January 11 was the first day the scandal was reported, and the coverage of the scandal drastically decreased by the end of February.

As for the case of the boy group BIGBANG, all the media exposure in January February 2016 were examined, including news, information programs, music shows, and talk shows. As the Korea-Japan relationship began to deteriorate after Summer 2012, it became difficult to see Korean entertainers performing in Japanese prime-time shows. However, in January and February 2016³¹, the band made frequent appearances on TV, and even performed on the music show *Music Station*, which is known to be reluctant in introduce Korean entertainers. The programs whose information includes the keywords "BIGBANG," "Korean Wave," or "K-POP" were collected for analysis.

³¹ It may be a mere coincidence, but on December 28, 2015, an agreement was made between the governments of Japan and Korea on the "comfort women" issue.

Chapter 5

The International Flow of Pop Culture as Cultural Exchange: The Political Dimension

The success of *Winter Sonata* and the following Korean Wave boom is considered to have changed Japanese people's image of Korea and narrowed the emotional distance between Japan and Korea. Even though the Korean Wave boom was said to have faded in 2009, still the potential of cultural exchange to ameliorate political tensions was one of the dominant themes found in the coverage of the Japanese media from 2009 to 2016. However, the enthusiasm about the positive function of the international flow of pop culture might have been Japan's "one-sided love" as Hayashi (2005b) argues. With unsettled historical issues between the two countries, the discourse stressing the importance of cultural exchange has changed over time. This chapter explores the ways in which Japanese mainstream media interpreted the political potential of the Korean Wave phenomenon and the implications of such interpretation. Despite the changes over time, the Korean Wave is still presented as an example of cultural exchange and its potential to ameliorate political tensions was continuously examined in media coverage.

1. The Korean Wave as an Example of Cultural Exchange

One of the prevalent approaches found in the articles including the keyword the Korean Wave is the viewpoint that interprets the phenomenon as an example of cultural exchange, with the enhancement of mutual understanding following as a result. Japanese newspapers elaborate ways in which the Korean Wave facilitated the exchange between

people and mutual understanding, and the media flow between Japan and Korea is shown as an aspect of exchange and understanding between the two countries' citizens. The term Korean Wave frequently appears in articles not directly related to the media and pop culture phenomenon. Many articles reporting and discussing the bilateral relationship between Japan and Korea made reference to the term. These articles observed that the Korean Wave and the following cultural exchange have improved the political relationship between the two countries and emphasized the potential of cultural exchange and peoples' communication in international politics.

In particular, commentaries following the results of opinion polls conducted jointly by Japanese and Korean newspapers³² drew upon the role of the Korean Wave in explaining the data. These opinion polls include various questions in many different fields, including politics and economic issues, and the questions that are usually connected to the Korean Wave is whether each country's citizens feel favorable or familiar to the other country's citizens. When the positive answers increased, the Korean Wave is cited as a reason of the increase. Even when the negative rise, articles analyzing the results reference the Korean Wave to describe the change over time. Newspapers offered similar analyses that people's perceptions improved following the co-hosting of the FIFA World Cup and the Korean Wave boom, but began to deteriorate with the Korean president's visit to the

³² These survey results are usually conducted and published near the events commemorating events related to the post-colonial relationship between the two countries. For example, in the year in 2015, Japanese and Korean Newspapers published the results of the opinion surveys commemorating the 50th anniversary of the normalization between Japan and Korea. *The Yomiuri Shimbun* and *the Hankook Ilbo*, *the Asahi Shimbun* and *the Dong-A Ilbo*, and *the Mainichi Shimbun* and *the Chosun Ilbo* jointly conducted the survey respectively. The surveys conducted by NPO groups are also quoted. Japanese public broadcaster NHK also publishes its own survey results about Korean and Japanese citizens' perception on each other.

disputed island, Dokdo/Takeshima. Even though the political situation continued to worsen, with the Japanese Prime Minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and the controversy surrounding the comfort women issue, people's efforts to communicate with and understand each other are still considered crucial to improve the bilateral relation between Japan and Korea.

Emphasizing the Korean Wave's characteristics as an example of cultural exchange, many articles even attempted to locate the origin and significance of cultural exchange in history. Many articles introducing events related to Korean history or the history of exchange between Japan and Korea employ the term "Korean Wave" to draw a connection between historical events and current cultural exchanged brought about by pop culture. Joseon Tongsinisa, a goodwill missionary sent intermittently by Korea's Joseon Dynasty to Japan, from 1607 to 1811 (Joseon Tongsinisa History Museum), is one of the popular themes that Japanese newspapers introduced to show the history of cultural exchange. For example, an article in *the Asahi Shimbun* about an event related to Joseon Tongsinisa (Sept 13, 2011) detailed the event to showcase historical materials on "the intercultural exchange" in the Edo period (1603-1868) and wrote the enthusiasm for Joseon Tongshinsa at that time was "had something similar to today's Korean Wave boom." The article was titled "the Korean Wave boom of the Edo Period," following the exhibition's title itself. Even the historical events related to Japanese colonialism in Korea were cited to show the long history of cultural exchange. In the year 2010, which was the centennial of Japan's annexation of Korea, the theme of cultural exchange and mutual understanding repeatedly appeared in terms of, for example, discussing the desirable relationship for the next 100 years.

2. Japanese Citizens as Actors for Change

In emphasizing people's exchange, Japanese citizens' roles and activities are highlighted as a positive aspect of the Korean Wave boom. One of the most frequent themes in the Japanese media was the role of Japanese citizens who brought the change. Many interviews and op-ed articles deliver how the Korean Wave has changed their perception of Korea and their everyday lives. For example, in an op-ed contribution, a reader described how she was enjoying Korean dramas and her trip to Korea. Then, regretting that she had been indifferent to the neighboring country, Korea, she added that the Korean Wave boom would contribute to exchange between peoples.

In Japan, the Korean Wave boom had people yearn for Korea, but on the other hand, there are people who feel uncomfortable due to history issues etc. If more people are interested in Korea thanks to the Korean Wave boom, such change will help remove misunderstanding and prejudice about the neighboring country and facilitate exchange. (*Yomiuri*, Op-Ed, Aug 15, 2010)

As many contributions by readers suggest, fans of Korean pop culture started to learn the Korean language hopes of watching the Korean dramas they like in the original language and making (repetitive) trips to Korea to visit the filming locations. The fans of Korean history dramas became interested in the historical backgrounds and began to study Korean history. Many readers regret that they were ignorant about the neighboring country, Korea, and credit the Korean Wave boom for giving them a chance that they got to know about Korea and therefore, the distance between the two countries has decreased. The term *kakehashi*, which means "bridge," frequently appears to describe such efforts by Japanese

people.

Particularly, the activities related to the Korean Wave boom appear to have revitalized fans' everyday lives. Although the K-POP boom after 2010 has widened the fan base, typical Korean Wave fans are considered to be middle-aged women or older. For the fans as such, learning foreign languages and overseas travels are challenges that can make their everyday lives fruitful. Local editions' articles that introduce nearby Korean Wave shops selling Korean pop culture merchandise describe that these shops formed a community hub where fans can communicate and share information with each other. For example, the owner of a shop in Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture, comments: "this small shop connects people. Customers are excited to share their stories about Korean stars and make friends with one another" (*Asahi*, May 31, 2011).

This theme of the Korean Wave revitalizing elderly fans' lives even developed into a political issue during the Lower House election in 2009. In his speech about the welfare policy, Prime Minister Taro Aso from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) mentioned "(we have to think) how to use these healthy senior citizens. Working hard is the only talents of the senior citizens." His comment was met with criticism for being inconsiderate and having belittled senior citizens. To attack the government party, Yukio Hatoyama, the head of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) raised this issue during his speech. Hatoyama said: "my mother, after she turned 85, started to study the Korean language enthusiastically because she wanted to meet Korean Wave stars. There are many different ways of life. It's weird to say that working hard is the only talent of senior citizens." (*Asahi*, July 26, 2009)

The Japanese citizens' role in easing political tensions and enhancing mutual understanding was further reinforced even after the political relations deteriorated in

August 2012, as a result of the Korean president's visit to the island Dokdo/Takeshima. When NHK announced that no Korean singers were invited to its year-end music program, *Kōhaku Uta Gassen [Red and White Song Battle]*, the *Asahi Shimbun* published readers' letters criticizing NHK's decision.

Recently, I was glad that the distance from Korea is getting closer through K-pop and Korean drama. So I cannot understand that Korean artists cannot perform for a political reason and some negative public opinion. Are the majority of people thinking the same? I think that political and cultural exchanges must be considered separately.

Everyone, I want you to think what the essential problem is. What will remain if we eliminate young singers coming from the neighboring country and doing their best from Japanese TV due to the international situation? (Dec 2, 2012)

What first came up to my mind about the reason "why they were not invited" is that the relationship between Korea and Japan went bad over the sovereignty of Takeshima this year. If they were not invited for such political circumstances, I am afraid that Japan cannot be said to be a free and democratic country. ...No matter where they are from, I hope singers who became news in Japan and played an active part in Japan this year should have an equal opportunity to perform at the program. (Dec. 7, 2012)

When anti-Korea protests were repeatedly held in Shin-Okubo in Tokyo, the area known as Koreatown and "the sacred place of the Korean Wave," fans of Korean pop culture raised their voices to confront them. In addition to the columns criticizing the protests and hate speeches, newspapers introduced readers' letters joining criticism.

I like K-pop singers and often watch videos of the singers on the Internet. However, when I look at the comment field of the videos, I find defamatory comments on the singers' nationality such as "Koreans return home!" "Koreans work in Korea! Liars" instead of comments on the music.

It makes me very unpleasant when I see them. Certainly the current relationship between Japan and Korea is very strained with the territorial issue of Takeshima³³ and so on. But are Koreans all evil? Do you think Koreans do not have to come to Japan because the relationship between Japan and Korea chilled? I guess that is not

³³ The Japanese name of the disputed island.

the case.

I think that you should stop thinking, "I am denying you because you are Korean" and think something cleverer.

Otherwise, I am worried that the relationship between Japan and Korea may be far more strained than now. (*Mainichi*, May 1, 2013)

Through the op-ed sections and interviews, readers share their experience with Korea and Korean people and display their unchanging hope that exchange through culture and with people can ameliorate political tensions.

The twisted relationship between Japan and Korea is shadowing the music as well. I have liked K-pop since I was a junior high school student. I joined a boy band's fan club and am following their activities. Since the Abe administration launched, I feel that K-pop is less seen on media. The Korean Wave used to show its presence in NHK's *Kohaku Uta Gassen*, but none appeared in the program in the past two years. I want to see Korean artists more on Japanese TV as before. I hope that music will become a breakthrough restoring the friendship between Japan and Korea. (*Asahi*, Aug 4, 2014)

Some Korean Wave fans were even reported to have participated in activities to oppose protests and hate speeches in Shin-Okubo. On August 26, 2013, *The Mainichi Shimbun* published a story of Korean pop culture fans who joined online and offline activities. According to the article, "secondary school students who are K-pop fans first raised voices saying 'it [hate speech] is weird'" about the hate speeches. The article also introduces a high school student who made a video and uploaded it on Youtube to refute the claims of anti-Korean protesters. In the video, he showed the Korean girl group, KARA's letter cheering up the Japanese fans after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and asked what they thought after watching the video. Indeed, the fans activities developed into active movements that may lead to political change. These cases can be examples confirming the political potential of the international flow of pop culture.

However, it is also notable that the term bridges (*kakehashi*) is used to describe the role of ordinary citizens to improve the bilateral relationship between Japan and Korea. According to Ogawa (2014), the term is “often used in the formulaic expression, ‘building a bridge between Korea and Japan’” and the popular usage of the term “implied that cultural differences and colonial history should be erased to make way for a closer diplomatic relationship” (153). The term can be related to the Japan’s self-identity in the international society. Black (2013) observes that the term *kakehashi* is “frequently referred to in the literature on Japan’s foreign policy” and points out that originally comes from the notion that “Japan could act as a bridge between East and West owing to its historical experience as the first developed Asian state” (344). In this context, using the term bridges to emphasize the potential of cultural exchange is apt to be used for political purposes, which will be discussed in the next section.

3. Celebrities and Politicians as the Korean Wave Fans

It is not just ordinary citizens who play the role of bridges between the two countries. Actors and TV personalities played the role as well. For example, when the Korean Tourism Organization named the transgender entertainer IKKO as an honorary ambassador of the Korean Wave tourism, she was introduced as “known as ‘the Korean Wave messenger’ in Korea” (*Asahi*, March 3, 2009), and *the Sankei Shimbun* reported that the head of the Korean Tourism Organization requested her to be “the bridge for the friendship of Japan and Korea.” (Feb 28, 2009). Fukumi Kuroda, an actress who had actively introduced stories related to Korea from the 1980s, frequently appears in

newspaper articles to tell her personal history related to Korea and how passionately she have tried to be the bridge between the two countries. Several Japanese and Korean celebrities, including K-pop bands JYJ and KARA, Korean actors Ryu Si-won, Ji Jin-hee, and Japanese actresses Yuko Fueki and Mina Fujii³⁴, appeared in newspaper articles as “PR ambassadors” for the Korea Tourism Organization and other Korean authorities. Even after the bilateral relationships deteriorated, the theme of “bridges” was one of the strong symbols of the cultural exchange.

Politicians were no exception. Rather, they were quick to take advantage of the Korean Wave boom. Junichiro Koizumi, former prime minister of Japan whose visit to Yasukuni Shrine became a controversy, created a famous scene (Figure 3) in regarding the Korean Wave boom: when Choi Ji-woo, the lead actress of *Winter Sonata* visited Japan as a PR ambassador for Visit Korea Year 2005, he invited her to his office and they talked for more than 30 minutes. In the meeting, he reportedly told her that he was a Korean Wave fan and had enjoyed watching *Winter Sonata* (Yang 2004).³⁵ Since then, it was not difficult to notice that Japanese politicians mention the Korean Wave boom when then visit Korea or meet Korean politicians. The term “Korean Wave” is easily found even in coverage related to elections. In the articles introducing candidates for elections, “watching Korean Wave dramas” or “watching Korean historical dramas” were frequently mentioned as the

³⁴ Fueki and Fujii have been working as an actress both in Japan and Korea.

³⁵ While Koizumi was active in taking advantage of pop culture, he was criticized for his attitude related to history issues. Iwabuchi (2015) describes such ambivalence as the contradictory practices of the Koizumi government. According to him, “while on the one hand emphasizing the importance of widely disseminating Japanese media cultures for the purpose of establishing harmonious relations with other countries, Prime Minister Koizumi’s relentless official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine added fuel to the flames of anti-Japanese sentiment in China and South Korean over issues such as history textbooks and long-standing territorial disputes.” (425)

candidates' hobbies or the way to spend their free time.



Figure 3. Prime Minister Koizumi meeting with the *Winter Sonata* Actress
(Captured from SBS news)

The activities of the First Ladies of Japan are notable as well. The well-known cases that the media covered are Miyuki Hatoyama, the wife of Yukio Hatoyama who served from September 2009 to June 2010, and Akie Abe, the wife of the current prime minister, Shinzo Abe. When the DPJ led by Hatoyama won the lower house election in 2009, Japanese newspapers reported the reactions of foreign media, and Miyuki's being a Korean Wave fan was mentioned in articles delivering Korea's reaction.

Each newspaper introduced Mr. Hatoyama's career in detail and wrote "a member of the Kennedys of Japan," "his wife is a Korean Wave fan." ... The (Korean) media expect that the relationship between Japan and Korea will further improve with the launch of the DPJ government. (*Asahi*, Aug 29, 2009)

The Joong-Ang Ilbo also mentioned that the Prime Minister and his wife met an actor who starred in a Korean Wave drama on the 14th just before his inauguration and made a positive comment, "The prime minister's diplomacy focusing on Korea was foretold before his inauguration." (*Yomiuri*, Sept 18, 2009)

The Wife of the Prime Minister Hatoyama: "I love the Korean Wave" Miyuki's

“Kimchi Diplomacy” Was Favorably Received (*Mainichi*, Oct 10, 2009, Headline)

Japanese media paid attention to Korean media’s interest in Mrs. Hatoyama, and reported that Korea was expecting a better relationship between Japan and Korea, probably thanks to the Korean Wave factor. During Mr. Hatoyama’s term, Mrs. Hatoyama’s activities as a Korean Wave fan was picked up several times. For example, in September 2009, it was reported that Mr. and Mrs. Hatoyama met the Korean actor, Lee Seo-iin who played a leading role in a popular Korean historical drama *Isan*, in Hatoyama’s office in Tokyo (*Nikkei*, Sept 14, 2009; *Yomiuri*, Sept 15, 2009), and reportedly they met several times during Hatoyama’s term. Her moves as such confronted criticism, which extended to the criticism against the prime minister himself and the policies of the DPJ administration.

On 19th, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said, his wife Miyuki invited the popular Korean actor, Lee Seo-jin to the dinner at the Prime Minister’s residence and he joined them. Mrs. Hatoyama is a enthusiastic fan of Lee, and Prime Minister too met him four times after he took the office. Among the people around him there are concerns that “it can cause misunderstanding if he meets with a certain foreigner only.” (*Sankei*, March 20, 2010)

The lightness of the DPJ is condensed in the prime minister’s behavior. Expressions for speeches, the color pattern of the tie, the writing on Twitter and the luncheon of the Korean Wave star with his wife are decided, but the Futenma relocation³⁶ is not decided. (*Mainichi*, March 29, 2010).

Her activities were even discussed at the Japanese Diet. On May 24, 2010, in its article comparing American and Japanese First ladies, *the Asahi Shimbun* introduced an episode in which a member of the House of Representatives asked the prime minister whether his

³⁶ This refers to the issue related to the relocation the U.S. military base in Futenma, Okinawa Prefecture. The plan to move the base out of the Okinawa Prefecture was included in the DPJ’s manifesto for the election, and the delay in realizing the plan became a major criticism against the DPJ administration, dropping the approval rate of the Cabinet.

wife's activities related to the Korean Wave was "a part of diplomatic policies keeping in mind the friendship between Japan and Korea or just for her personal hobby." This question suggests that her activities related to the Korean Wave are expected to be a part of diplomatic policies and may confront criticism otherwise.

As for the current First Lady, Akie Abe has been well-known for being a Korean Wave fan since her husband's first term from September 2006 to September 2007. When she and her husband made an official trip to Korea in October 2006, she stated that she was a Korean Wave fan. During the visit, she went to an elementary school to participate in the Korean language class as an observer. During the class, she introduced herself in Korean and read a Korean poem from the textbook (Hong 2006). However, after Shinzo Abe returned as a prime minister in December 2012, her activities related to Korean pop culture were also called into questions, because the Japan-Korea relationship had deteriorated, and the Abe Administrations and the government party LDP opted for conservative and right-wing policies. Even her attendance at a theatrical performance was criticized. On May 9, 2013, she posted on her Facebook page that she had gone to see a Korean musical in Tokyo and was attacked by other Facebook users. *The Asahi Shimbun* describe this incident as follows:

"There are Japanese people who feel uncomfortable with your Korean Wave activities," "Careless." – After Akie, the wife of the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe posted on Facebook that she saw a Korean musical, negative comments poured in. ... Probably because South Korea has taken a firm stand against Japan due to the Takeshima issue and Prime Minister's historical awareness, criticisms of her were posted one after another. On May 10, Akie re-posted, "no matter how I am criticized as being naïve, I think I want to make friends with all the people and all the countries." By 7pm on the same day, she received more than 1,900 "likes," which means they agree with her. (*Asahi*, May 11, 2013)

In general, her attitude was favorably accepted as facilitating friendship with Korea in spite of her husband's rightwing policies. She made appearances at several events related to the Korean Wave or Korean culture and made speeches emphasizing the power of cultural exchange, saying for example, "I want to build friendships in my own way" (*Nikkei*, Nov 14, 2014). Japanese newspapers covered the story with quotes from favorable comments by Korean government officials and foreign media.

About Akie's participation in the "Japan-Korea Exchange Festival" held in Tokyo on 21th, Cho Tae-young, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea, favorably commented that "(her behavior) is a good effort to improve the bilateral relationships." ... She is well-known in Korea too. KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) reported ... that "instead of her husband, Akie's enthusiastic move is becoming a force to improve the Korea-Japan relations in conflicts." (*Asahi*, Sept 25, 2013)

Akie, who is a Korean Wave fan, actively participates in the events ... in order to ease the tensions between Japan and Korea. ... Her activities were even described as "a secret weapon that will ease the conservative image of Prime Minister Abe" (the American newspaper, the *Washington Post*). (*Nikkei*, Nov 14, 2014)

What is notable here is the different assessment of each First Lady's activities as Korean Wave fans. During the DJP regime, during which the Japan-Korea relationship was considered to be relatively better, Mrs. Hatoyama's activities were not very favorably accepted. At the beginning of the Hatoyama Administration, the fact Mrs. Hatoyama was a Korean Wave fan was given as a reason to have led Korea to expect some benefits from the Korean Wave. The fact that she was a Korean Wave fan appeared in quotations of Korean newspapers, conveying that Korea expected her to play a role in improving the bilateral relationship. Moreover, her activities such as meeting Korean actors at the prime minister's office were regarded as a failure in drawing a line between public and private matters.

On the other hand, in the LDP administration when the tensions increased between Japan and Korea, Akie's activities were positively regarded as an effort to promote international friendship. Most of her activities that media covered were about her speech at events related to cultural exchange. Quotes from her emphasizing cultural exchange were regarded as diluting the rightwing color of her husband's politics and facilitating cultural exchange and mutual understanding in order to decrease political tensions.

4. Call for the Two-Way Flow of Pop Culture

In the discourse that posits the flow of pop culture contents as "cultural exchange" enhancing "mutual" understanding, the two-way flow of pop culture products is one of the foci of the newspapers considered as a desirable structure. As a result, Korea's lifting of the ban on Japanese pop culture, called the Open-Door Policy, is frequently given as a factor that has brought about the Korean Wave boom. For example, when the former President Kim Dae-jung, who started the Open-Door Policy during his term, passed away, Japanese newspapers evaluated that the Korean Wave would have been impossible without the preceding Open-Door Policy:

Although cautious opinions were persisting in Korea, he [Kim] lifted the ban on Japanese popular culture. With cultural exchanges being facilitated, more people became interested in the neighboring countries, which led to the Korean Wave boom in Japan (*Asahi*, Aug 19, 2009)

Kim Dae-jung, the former President of South Korea, "opened the door" for Japanese songs, movies, and TV programs, which were banned by then. This promoted grassroots exchanges between Japan and Korea and led to the Korean Wave boom in Japan. (*Mainichi*, Aug 29, 2009)

Paek (2007) observes that from the political viewpoint, the Korean Wave in Japan was an

outcome of the increased international presence of Korea and Korea's Open-Door policy. In particular, from the Japanese point of view, Korea's lifting of the ban on Japanese popular culture became grounds for mutual exchange of culture, which reduced Japanese audiences' resistance against Korean pop culture and led them to watch Korean TV programs and movies. He also claims that the Korean government's policy and exchange with Japan both governmental and civil levels indirectly contributed to the Korean Wave (237).

In this context emphasizing the two-way flow of pop culture and considering the Korean Wave as a reward for opening the market, the trade imbalance in the media industries was seen as problematic. As of 2009, Japan was witnessing a huge trade deficit with Korea in the field of media and pop culture products. As shown in Figure 4, the import of Korean pop culture products, particularly broadcasting and music, was dwarfing the export of Japanese pop culture products in Korea. As discussed in chapter 3, Japanese terrestrial TVs, including the public broadcaster NHK, were active in introducing Korean dramas and celebrities, which developed into the Korean Wave boom. However, it has not been easy to see Japanese dramas and pop music on the terrestrial channels in Korea. Although the ban on Japanese pop culture was officially lifted, Korean broadcasters are still reluctant to show Japanese TV programs or Japanese pop music on their terrestrial channels, due to "national sentiments" (Lee 2014)³⁷. In Korea, Japanese dramas and pop

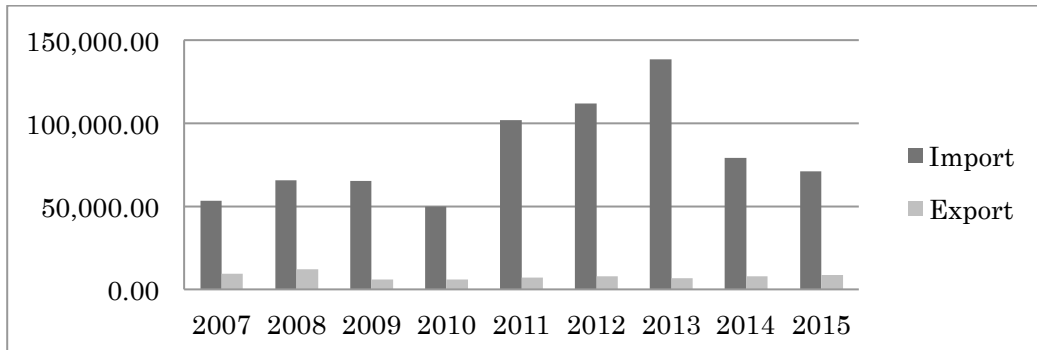
³⁷ According to an article of Korea's daily newspaper, *the MunHwa Ilbo* (Lee 2014), there is no legal problem in broadcasting Japanese dramas and pop music on terrestrial channels. The restrictions on Japanese dramas and pop songs are due to the negotiations of lifting the ban were incomplete. When the remaining ban was lifted in 2004, the governments of Korea and Japan did not reach a detailed conclusion in regard of Japanese dramas and feature animations. They were to decide the details later with the consideration of social atmospheres and public opinions, but no further discussion was

artists could be seen only on cable and satellite channels. Japanese newspapers call out this imbalance and claim that Korean people should have more access to Japanese pop culture, in order to enhance mutual understanding between Japanese and Korean citizens. Paek (2007) points out that such imbalance may bring the anti-Korean Wave sentiments among Japanese public. According to him, phenomena such as the anti-Korean wave reflect cultural defeatism and frustration when the two-way flow of culture was not achieved.

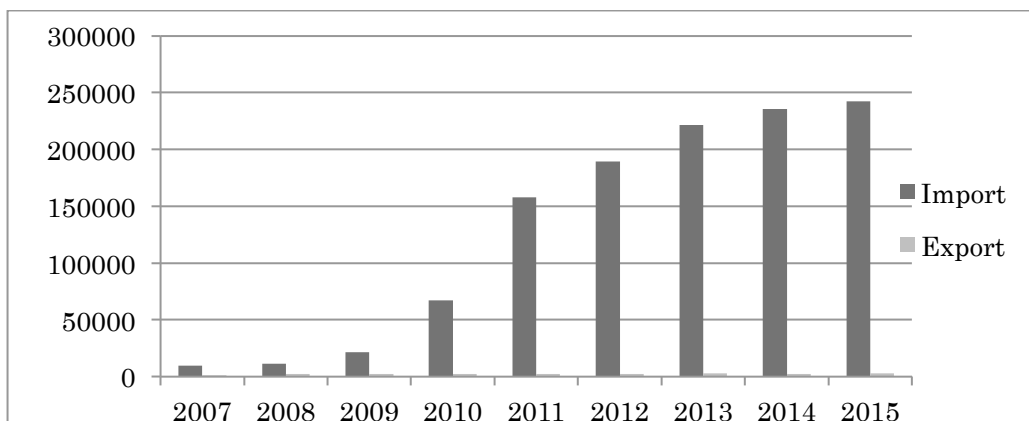
This “balanced exchange” thesis developed to frame the co-production between Japan and Korea as a part of cultural exchange too. The case of “Telecinema 7,” a movie co-production project between Korea and Japan, is an example showing this trend. In this project, described as a “new collaboration system between Korea and Japan” (*Yomiuri*, May 21, 2010), seven Japanese writers participated in this project and each created an original scripts. Based on the scripts, Korean directors produced movies with popular Korean actors – so-called *Hanryu Sutā*, Korean Wave stars. The seven films produced for this project were released at movie theaters in Korea from the summer in 2009 and were aired on TV-Asahi’s network in Japan in 2010. In reporting about this project, newspapers point out that Japanese dramas are still banned on Korean terrestrial channels and expect that this project could be a turning point allowing Japanese dramas to penetrate into the Korean audiences. *The Sankei Shimbun* characterized this project as one launched in order to “expand the drama market to the partner country” (January 28, 2009), implying hopes that the Japanese drama market could expand to Korea.

made since then. An official at the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) said, the Korean government did not provide a detailed guideline, and therefore, the broadcasters have made conservative rules in order to avoid criticisms. Members of deliberating offices of terrestrial channels commented that they do not broadcast Japanese songs on consideration of public sentiments.

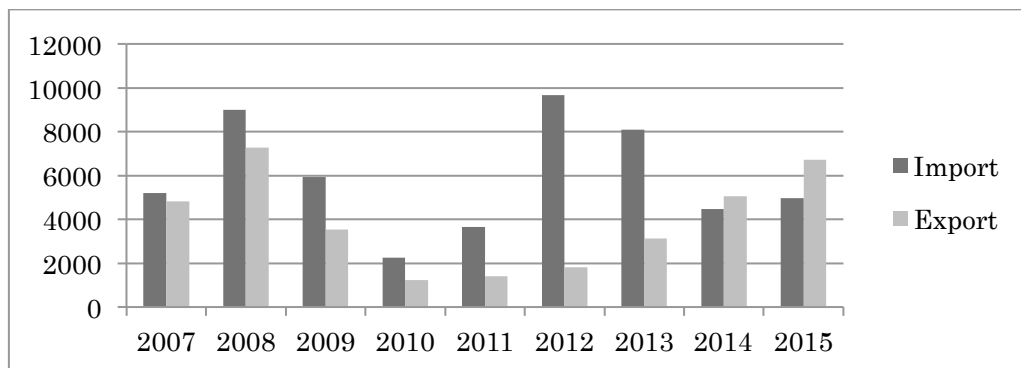
Broadcasting



Music



Movies



Source: KOCCA, Contents Industry Statistics (2010, 2013, 2016)

Figure 4. Japan's Import and Export of Pop Culture from/to Korea 2007-2015

Japanese dramas are still banned in Korean terrestrial TV. Mr. Shin said, "I hope this project can be a breakthrough to open (the Korean market) to Japanese dramas" ... In order to advance to Asia, I hope that the [Japan's] cooperation with Korea and China can be further strengthened. (*Yomiuri*, June 12, 2009)

The project started in 2007. In order to create common contents for Asia that can compete with Hollywood, broadcast writers in Asia, including China and Taiwan, gathered and the Korean Cultural Industry Exchange Foundation made a specific proposal to the Japan side. (*Asahi*, May 31, 2010)

This project is a case showing not only that Japanese media attempts to increase its influence in the Korean market in the form of co-production but also that Korea and Japan – and sometimes China – should cooperate together to achieve success in the Asian market. Japan and Korea are presented as the partners to advance together to the Asian market. An attempt as such can be seen as an earlier form of the new structure of co-production, which will be discussed in chapter 7.

The popularity of Japanese pop culture in Korea is used to highlight the two-way exchange of pop culture, or lack thereof. The phenomenon that Korean youth enjoying Japanese comics, animation, and pop music are often framed as the Japanese Wave³⁸. The context in which the Japanese Wave is mentioned changes over time, in according to the ups and downs of the political atmosphere and the fads in the Korean pop culture. When Korean pop culture was strong in the Japanese market, the Japanese media reported the Japanese pop culture contents that are popular in Korea in order to show that Japanese pop culture was favorably received in Korea and the mutual exchange was being realized. The articles observed that, although Japanese dramas and pop music were not shown on

³⁸ This term reads *nichiryu* in Japanese and *illyu* in Korean.

Korean terrestrial channels, other genres of Japanese pop culture, such as comics, animations, and theatrical performances were well received in the Korean market and have many fans, which in a sense stresses the competitiveness and high quality of Japanese pop culture.

Some Japanese dramas are broadcast on cable television. Japanese dramas are called "*ildeu*"³⁹ and have many fanatic fans. (*Sankei*, Jan 28, 2009)

Recently, Japanese comics and rock bands are popular in Korea too. Looking at theaters, Japanese plays are on stage almost everyday in Daehakro in Seoul. Because Japan and Korea are culturally close to each other, it is easier to accept each other's culture. (Interview with Oriza Hirata, *Yomiuri*, June 24, 2010)

When the political relations deteriorated and it was said the Korean Wave boom had waned, the popularity of Japanese pop culture in Korea is used to show the power of (popular) culture in ameliorating tension in the relationships. The term "Japanese Wave" as a counterpart of the Korean Wave frequently appeared to refer to the popularity of Japanese literature and comic books. In particular, the commercial success of the Japanese novelists in the Korean market was frequently introduced as the representative figure of the Japanese Wave.

Of course, cultural exchanges should be mutual, not a one-sided flow. Currently, many people have impressions that the Korean Wave is unilaterally entering from Korea like a flood, but a counter flow also occurs.

The boom of Japanese literature started a little after the Korean boom exploded in Japan. There is increasing interest in comics, food, fashion etc., and Japanese magazines are lined up in bookstores.

Among novelists, Haruki Murakami is particularly popular, and in November 2009, his novel "1Q84" became the No. 1 best seller at Kyobo Bookstore, one of the biggest bookstores in Korea. In the following year, more than one million

³⁹ An abbreviated form of *ilbon deorama*, meaning Japanese dramas.

copies were sold.

... He [an expert] sees that the Korean Wave boom in Japan was favorably received in Korea and the mutual exchange between Japan and Korea has progressed. (*AERA*, May 11, 2015)

Japan and Korea celebrates 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations this year. Affected by conflicts such as the comfort women and Takeshima, the Korean Wave boom in Japan does not have the momentum it used to have. However, the Japanese Wave in Korea is alive. Anime, ramen, sake... Despite the resistance coming from history issues, Japan is something familiar. (*Asahi*, July 30, 2015)

What is notable in this period is that the word “Japanese Wave” and the comments about Japanese pop culture’s popularity frequently appeared in interviews and speeches given by Korean experts, politicians, and diplomats. As the Japanese politicians and citizens had stressed the significance of cultural exchange, now the newspapers use Koreans’ voice to emphasize the theme.

Consulate General Park pointed out that against the Korean Wave boom in Japan, a strong “Japanese Wave” boom is continuing in Korea, mentioning that 1000 works of novels are translated annually, including works by Haruki Murakami and Keigo Higashino. He said “an exchange does not complete if it is one-sided. It is important to share the Korean Wave and the Japanese Wave. (*Yomiuri*, Sept 14, 2014).

I think, regardless of the political situation, more and more people are enjoying culture as a part of their lives. It’s the same to Koreans. “The Japanese Wave” is also popular in Korea, and many people watch Japanese animations on cable televisions and on the Internet. “Hello Kitty” is the character that Korean people like the most, and Japanese comics are also popular. (*Asahi*, March 14, Comment by the director of the Korean Cultural Center in Japan)

The quotes including the term “Japanese Wave” from the Korean side stresses that it is not only Japan that believed that culture can contribute to the settlement of difficult issues such as the politics. By suggesting that the Korean side thinks the same way, the thesis stresses

the two-way flow of cultural exchange and the following mutual understanding are far more reinforced.

5. Historical Issues and the Potential of Cultural Exchange

Since the popularity of the Korean Wave was frequently connected with the theme of cultural exchange and mutual understanding, the tensions that grew after the Korean President's visit to the disputed island, Dokdo/Takeshima, affected the coverage by Japanese media. Many articles reported that several events related to the Korean Wave and new Korean drama series were canceled or postponed: the satellite channels BS-Japan, run by TV-Tokyo, and BS-Nitere, run by Nippon Television announced that they would cancel the two TV series that star the actor Song Il-guk, who participated in an event in which people swam to the disputed island; Sumitomo Mitsui Card, Co., Ltd. cancelled the launch of its new card service for Japanese tourists visiting Korea; a press conference of the actor Jang Keun-suk, who was enjoying huge popularity in Japan, was postponed. In November, the public broadcaster NHK announced the list of artists to perform at its year-end song festival, *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*, which included no K-pop artists. As discussed above, several letters to the editor questioned about this decision and criticized NHK.

Despite the industry's reactions, the Japanese media in general still seemed to expect that the political situation would not affect the popularity of Korean pop culture and stressed that cultural exchange was more than ever important under the unfavorable political climate. Quotes from citizens and letters to the editor were presented to support the importance of cultural exchange. In particular, the continuing cultural exchange

between Japan and Korea are compared with the Sino-Japanese relationship which had deteriorated due to the Senkaku/Dyaoyutao islands disputes:

In recent years, the exchange between Japan and Korea has become active in a wide range of fields such as culture, economy, and sports. Kazuo Korenaga, managing director of the Japan-Korea Economic Association, who took charge of this "Festival" said, "we have to continue to exchange with each other when the relationship between Japan and the South Korea is unfavorable." Participants from both countries agreed.

In contrast, in China, as the relations with Japan deteriorated, the exchange events were stopped one after another. About the difference in response, Korenaga said, "Japan and Korea share the value of market economy and democracy." (*Asahi*, Oct 16, 2012)

The idea that politics and culture should be separated seems to remain strong. On April 16, 2013, *the Mainichi Shimbun* published a feature article looking back over the ten years of the Korean Wave boom, quoting Korean Wave fans and experts criticizing politicians, and calling for further exchange and understanding. The newspaper asked the fans of the Korean boy band JYJ about the strained relationship between Japan and Korea. An office worker in her fifties answered "there is nothing to do with territorial disputes or troubles with Korea. I don't think they [JYJ] are Korean. I don't care where they are from, because I like them." Another fan clearly references the importance of cultural exchange: "politicians should resolve the political issues. What we do is interacting with culture." The article also introduces stories of fans who became reluctant to make a trip to Korea or openly talk about their hobbies related to the Korean wave due to the political troubles. However, such thoughts are rebutted by an expert saying "that's weird" and other fans' experiences positive to Korea and Korean people. The expert, who is also a fan of the Korean Wave, recounted:

In the seat next to me, an old woman, with her daughter, was staring at the stage with her eyes shining. I asked how old she was and she was 83 years old. I could have not imagined a phenomenon as such 10 years ago. The Korean Wave has changed women in Japan and spread throughout Asia. No matter how much they are criticized, the passion of the Korean Wave fans will not fade.

As seen in the example above, although the Japan-Korea relations became strained, the Japanese media did not lose the confidence in the potential of the Korean Wave: its influence on the lives of Japanese women and the significance of the cultural exchange. In the year 2013, which marked the tenth anniversary of the start of the Korean Wave in Japan, it was not difficult to locate this theme in the coverage of Japanese newspapers. Most newspapers were concerned about and at the same time denied any possible negative impact on the Korean Wave boom. They kept paying attention to the potential of exchange on the grassroots level.

However, *the Sankei Shimbun* took a different approach. The newspaper, which is considered as the most conservative and rightwing among the mainstream Japanese newspapers, explicitly expressed its anger against the Korean side. On August 16, 2012, the anniversary of the end of WWII, a column criticized the Korean president's speech saying, "no matter how much we [Japan] have asked for friendship, they [Korea] have kept betraying us." In December 2012, after NHK announced the list of artists to perform in the *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*, *the Sankei* published a column welcoming the results and calling for the readers to think differently:

In Korea, there are voices that complain about the fact that no Korean artist was selected for this year's NHK *Kōhaku Uta Gassen*. They say it's a pity because in recent years, Korean artist were always invited to *Kōhaku* thanks to the Korean Wave boom. What is lying on the background is, probably, (Korean) President Lee Myung-bak's visit to Takeshima and criticism of the Emperor, which worsened

Japan's public opinion against Korea. The Korean Wave fans in Japan would also be dissatisfied, but it is a good opportunity to think about diplomacy and the international situation. At the same time, pay attention to the surprisingly unfriendly reality that Japanese songs, dramas, and movies are still banned in Korean television (terrestrial channels). I want you to complain strongly against Korea. (December 1, 2012)

In fact, *the Sankei Shimbun* had stressed the correlation between the historical issues and the Korean Wave even before the territorial disputes were reignited in August 2012. It pointed out that there was a risk that political issues can affect the boom and therefore historical, political conflicts should be resolved for the sake of the Korean Wave boom. On February 2012, its *Gaishin Koramu [Foreign Column]*, reported that a promotion event starring the Korean actress Kim Tae-hee was canceled because it became known that she had commented "Dokdo⁴⁰ belongs to Korea." The writer of the column, Katsuhiro Kuroda, criticized her comments as a "patriotic performance" and claimed "it is common sense that entertainers should refrain from making political comments." On June 2, 2012, a column in the front page dealt with the so-called "comfort women" issue and added, "it is Korea that has to collect its people's thoughts lest the Korean Wave boom should end as a temporary one," suggesting that the issue could be a factor to dampen the boom. A column *the Sankei Shimbun* published in 2015 claimed that the historical issues have brought an end to the Korean Wave boom, using the expression that Japanese middle-aged women, who were into the Korean Wave, "returned to sanity" after the former Korean president visited the disputed island and demanded the Japanese emperor for an apology (May 9, 2015).

The Sankei Shimbun's viewpoints related to cultural exchange and mutual

⁴⁰ The Korean name of the island that Japan calls Takeshima.

understanding are different, too. As with the other newspapers, it emphasizes the significance of narrowing the distance between the two countries, but with its op-ed articles, it warns readers to be aware of the history issues. For example, a column on March 16, 2010, cautions against “Japan’s one-way understanding,” saying, “it’s good to know, out of goodwill, what Korea claims, but at the same time, I want to know what Japan claims, too.” For *the Sankei Shimbun*, the Korean Wave Boom was supposed to be a chance to make Korea open its media market to Japan and, at the same time, make agreements with Japan on many historical and political issues. However, the things did not turn out as it had hoped. The Korean Wave boom did not develop to be the two-way flow as expected, and the Korean government did not surrender its firm stance in relation to the history issues.

However, these seemingly different approaches may not be completely dissimilar. In his chapter about Japanese media’s focus on Korea-Japan discourse, Hwang (2007) suggests that liberal and conservative discourses related to the political potential of the Korean Wave may share some ideas in common. He points out the discourse of “Korea-Japan friendship” is one of the dominant discourses in Japan about the Korean Wave and summarizes a typical example as follows:

The long-time effort for Japan-Korea friendship came to fruition; the frame became clear around the time the FIFA World Cup was co-hosted in 2002; there was *Winter Sonata* breakthrough in 2004; Japanese people deserted long-lasting prejudice and accepted Korean stars; through this process, Koreans’ perception on Japan and Japanese people will change too; and Japan and Korea, sharing the common values of market economy, democracy, and human rights, will be cooperating. (Hwang 2007, 81)

According to him, there are common ideas in “Japan-Korea friendship” thesis and “anti-Korea” thesis. The former looks for the Korean Wave to erase Korean people’s

anti-Japanese sentiments and the latter deems this impossible. While the discourses in *the Sankei Shimbun* are not the same as the anti-Korean thesis, the slightly different approaches between *the Sankei Shimbun* and the other newspapers are basically stem from the same expectations that Korean people will desert their long held anti-Japanese sentiments. The territorial disputes and other conflicts related to the history issues showed that the anti-Japanese sentiment in Korean were remained strong and betrayed Japan's expectations as such, as *the Yomiuri Shimbun* puts it:

The deteriorated evaluation in Japan of the Japan-Korea relations reflects the fact that Japanese people felt "betrayed" at President Lee Myung-bak's visit to Takeshima. (March 16, 2013)

6. Blurring the Origin: The Presence of Korean Entertainers after 2012

Korean singers, who were seen on television almost everyday a few years ago, have disappeared from mass media. It is because "along with the worsening relations between Japan and Korea, information distributors do not want to touch the theme that may praise Korea, because it may create antipathy in consumers" (PR staff of K-pop bands). (*Nikkei Entertainment*, July 2014)

As argued in chapter 3, after the territorial dispute was reignited in the Summer of 2012, Korean dramas and pop artists hardly appeared on the Japanese terrestrial TV channels. Although many newspaper articles first denied any possible negative effect on the popularity of Korean pop culture, the effect was quite visible. It was an open secret that the political pressures erased the presence of Korean pop culture from the terrestrial television, as evidenced in *the Nikkei Entertainment's* quote above.

However, from the end of 2015, Korean entertainers began to make appearances in Japanese major TV programs, thanks to the seemingly improved relationship between

the two countries. In November 2, 2015, Korean President Park Geun-hye and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had a Japan-Korea summit meeting for the first time following the inauguration of Park. On December 26, the two governments made a “final and irreversible” agreement in regard to the “comfort women” issue. In its feature story about the new trend of K-pop published in June 2016, *the Nikkei Entertainment* links the change to politics as follows:

In 2015, the Japan-Korea Summit was held for the first time in three years. Strangely, Korean singers returned to terrestrial channels. In the end of 2015, BoA made appearance at *FNS Music Festival*⁴¹ for the first time in four years, and in 2016 BIGBANG made appearance at *Music Station*. With the big names’ appearance on terrestrial channels, “information programs that has been cautious started to report about new releases and offers of tie-ups with programs are also coming” (staff in charge of a singer).

While Korean artists have returned to prime time programs, the context and labeling of their appearances have changed dramatically. They are presented not as a part of the Korean Wave and or the K-Pop boom, but as a foreign entertainer active or popular in Japan. For example, the way the boy group BIGBANG was presented on Japanese television shows their national origin was being blurred, in order not to stress they are from Korea. In order to promote their new Japanese album and concert tour in Japan, the band made appearance not only in music programs including TV-Asahi’s *Music Station* but also in morning news shows and late night talk shows. However, when they were on television, the context of “Korea” was not much emphasized. Instead, their popularity in Asia was highlighted. NHK’s music show, *Music Japan*, aired on February 29, 2016, introduced the idol group in the following way:

⁴¹ An special music program broadcast a few times a year, such as summer and year-end, on Fuji Television.

A monster group representing Asia, BIGBANG. The world tour that has been held since last year is the largest in scale among the tours given by any Korean artists. Active on the world stage, they make appearance at MJ for the first time in about four years.

The introductory remark includes “Korea,” but in general, the emphasis is put on the fact that they are internationally popular, with the expressions such as “representing Asia,” “world tour,” and “active on the world stage.” Similarly, TV-Asahi’s *Music Station* included a caption to introduce them, reading “popular five representing Asia.” They mentioned they would sing the song that was the top hit on the Korean yearly music charts, but did not make clear where they were from. The audience could guess that the boy group was from Korea, but it is not clearly mentioned in the program although most of the Japanese singers appearing in the show are introduced by their hometown. The descriptions as such suggest that the band was invited to the program not as a part of the Korean Wave or K-pop boom, but as a foreign artist popular in Japan, like many Western artists visit Japan and make TV appearances.

In the conversations with other personalities in programs, most of the topics covered are related to Japan or the members’ everyday lives. Topics related to Korea were hardly broached. For instance, the member of the group asked for advice before they had a concert in a local city of Japan (*Music Station*, Feb 5), talked about what they think about each other (*Music Japan*, Feb 29), tried Japanese style jokes (*Momm!*, TBS, Feb 8), and performed a part of a famous Japanese comedy (*Mezamashi Terebi*⁴², Fuji TV, Feb 4). While topics about Korea were mentioned in TBS’s talk show *Momm!* (Feb. 8), the difference is that this program is a late night show airing at midnight. Considering late night programs

⁴² A morning news show airing 5:30 to 8:00 am from Monday to Friday.

are usually for the fans of the main guests, the program may have posed less risk in discussing the topics related to Korea.

While the members were presented as international popular artists, their conversations in Japanese about Japanese topics cast them in the light of foreign entertainers active in Japan. In Japanese television, it is not difficult to see entertainers with foreign origins, who display exoticness with their foreign accent when speaking Japanese but at the same time demonstrate that they were localized in the Japanese entertainment industry.

The media portrayal of BIGBANG is not the only case in which Korean entertainers are introduced in the broader term of “Asia” instead of the national origin of “Korea”. Jiyoung, the former member of the girl band KARA is presented in a similar way. After her seven-year contract with her Korean agency ended, she signed a contract with a Japanese agency to work as a singer and actress in Japan. *The Asahi Shimbun* chronicled her debut as an actress in Japan on October 22, 2014 and reported that she was aiming to become an “Asian actress” who can be active internationally. In the article, her own words are quoted: “I am a person of Asia, which includes Japan too. I want to be active in many other countries as an Asian.” Although she was one of the frontrunners of the K-pop boom in Japan and became popular as a K-pop girl group, in this interview her background related to Korea and the Korean Wave are almost completely erased. She is treated as one of the many foreign or Asian entertainers, frequently found on television.

Doerr and Kumagai (2012) points out the Japanese media tend focus to less on the racial and ethnic differences in some areas as seen from the examples of non-Japanese

wrestlers in the Japanese traditional sport, *Sumō* and many TV personalities from foreign origins. On the other hand, there were singers such as Teresa Teng from Taiwan, who “acknowledged and embraced their cultural Otherness as ambassadors” (Higgins 2012, 113) in the Japanese market. Kwon (2010) also pointed out that the existence of idol singers from Hong Kong and Taiwan seemed to show Japan’s interest in Asia. When BoA first debuted in Japan in the spring of 2001, she was shown as an international artist, but, before the FIFA World Cup co-hosted by Korea and Japan, from the end of the year 2001, her Korean origin was highlighted and she functioned as the source of information about Korea and Korean culture (Kwak 2010). Now, making clear the national identities of entertainers from Korea does not have any benefit and instead may invite resistance from viewers.

7. Summary and Conclusion

Pop culture’s potential to reduce the political tensions between the countries is the theme most often emphasized throughout Japanese media’s coverage of the Korean Wave boom. The Korean Wave in Japan is situated as an – at least indirect – outcome of political negotiations and the political aspect of the boom is, therefore, indispensable to discuss the significance of the boom. It has been typical of Japan’s cultural diplomacy agenda to take advantage of popular culture to ameliorate the country’s negative national image stemming from the colonial regime and the Second World War. As a former colony, Korea was one of the most significant targets of the cultural diplomacy policy. However, Korea’s ban on Japanese pop culture prevented Japan from achieving such a goal.

The situation changed in the late 1990s. The Korean government elected following the Asian financial crisis in 1997 decided to gradually lift the ban on Japanese pop culture, which Japanese regard as having prepared ground for the Korean Wave boom. Japan and Korea competed at the bid of the FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament 2002, but once co-hosting was decided upon, Japanese politicians expected it to become a chance to improve the Japan-Korea relations (Butler 2002). In this context, Japan's mainstream media favorably received the Korean Wave boom, which was regarded to have contributed to the mutual understanding between the two countries and therefore ameliorate political tension. The popularity of "Korean" culture and Japanese fans' changing perceptions about Korea were good examples satisfying the political purposes as such. They regarded the imbalanced trade structure and seemingly one-way flow of Korean culture into the Japanese market as problematic, but dissatisfaction with such situations was also discussed in terms of the necessity of mutual exchange of culture. Japanese media's attention to Korean pop culture reflects the typical political desire of Japan.

The reignited conflicts related to history issues signaled that the belief in the potential of "cultural exchange" had collapsed. When the premise that we can narrow the distance through cultural exchange appears invalid, the utility value of consuming "Korean" pop culture also decreases. Although Japanese media keep calling for the need for cultural exchange, stressing both the Korean Wave and the Japanese Wave, the question remains whether the positive influence of the cultural exchange really existed.

The fact that Japanese media stopped to attaching "Korean Wave" brand to Korean entertainers active in Japan shows the conflict between the political and economic values of Korean pop culture. Although Korean pop culture disappeared from the

mainstream media's interest, Korean dramas still take up a significant amount of airtime in satellite and cable channels and K-pop idols CDs and concerts are popular among the Japanese youth. Going further, the Korean market is an important source to supplying the Japanese market with new talents. Blurring Korean pop culture as Asian or international may result from a strange combination of Korean pop culture's decreased political value coupled with its commercial value remaining strong in the Japanese market.

Chapter 6

Product Placement Going Global: The Economic Benefits

In addition to the political potential, the Japanese media's discourse on the Korean Wave is frequently reported in terms of the phenomenon's economic effects on the domestic economy of Japan. Having observed the economic benefits that the success of *Winter Sonata* had brought to Japan and Korea, and following the tradition of using television programs as an advertising medium, Japanese companies and local governments paid attention to the economic potential of Korean pop culture. On the other hand, despite the economic benefits the Japanese domestic economy enjoyed with the Korean Wave boom, Korean pop culture's popularity in other Asian countries was seen as a threat to the international presence of Japanese pop culture and other industries. The anxiety related to such situation is expressed in the articles analyzing each government's policy to support popular culture. The international flow of pop culture has become a sphere where the pop culture contents have become transnational advertising media, with its increasing product placement role.

1. Revitalizing Local Economies with Korean Pop Culture

In June 2, 2009, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* and *the Mainichi Shimbun* reported an occurrence at an event promoting the Korean drama *IRIS*, whose organizer included the Japanese commercial broadcaster TBS. According to the reports, the organizers mistakenly sold the seats that were in space actually allocated as a part of stage, and approximately 1,500 audience members per event were affected. In order to resolve this issue and

reassign seats, the event started one hour later than had been expected. It was said that the fans whose seats were affected by this mistake even cried. A ticket for the event was 9,800 yen (98 USD approximately) and attracted 30,000 audience members for the two separate events (*Yomiuri*, June 2, 2010) held on the same day, one in the afternoon and the other in the evening. Despite this trouble, this event pleased the Korean Wave fans with speeches of the actors and actresses who performed in the drama and performances of the theme songs in Korean and Japanese versions.⁴³ What also occupied a significant part of the event was, the promotion of Akita Prefecture, which supported the production and having provided the filming location. Even before the drama was broadcast in Japan, the prefecture already had welcomed a rapid increase of tourists coming from Korea, where the drama garnered the audience ratings of over 30%. Japanese local governments' effort to support Korean drama productions by offering filming locations is one of the themes frequently found in the coverage by the Japanese media. They reported that local governments were expecting increases in the number of tourists and the seat occupancy rates arriving at international airports in the region.

Although there had been several dramas in which parts of which were filmed in Japan, it was the success of *IRIS* and Akita Prefecture that ignited local governments' competition in supporting filming locations for Korean television dramas. The drama was originally produced and aired by the Korean public broadcaster KBS, and Akita Prefecture in Northern Japan supported the filming of the drama⁴⁴. In February 2009, Akita Prefecture announced that several locations in the prefecture were selected for the background of this

⁴³ The author participated in the afternoon event held on June 1, 2010.

⁴⁴ "Support" repeatedly appearing in this chapter refers to *Rokeshien* (location support), meaning local government's financial and material support.

new Korean drama and Japanese newspapers detailed the process of the production, and the role of the local residents and community in the filming. According to the *Asahi Shimbun* (Feb 20, 2009), the prefecture offered to provide accommodations for a staff as up to 80 people. In order to secure the funds to cover the cost, the prefecture launched a committee supporting the filming and recruited members to pay dues and participate in the committee. As seen from the governor's comment that he hoped to "make Akita more known to Korea" (*Asahi*, Feb 20, 2009), the prefecture expected that, by supporting the filming locations, it could attract tourists from both Korea as well as other areas in Japan. Even before the location began to be used in filming, travel agencies in Korea planned guided tours that visit the places that would appear in the drama.

Akita Prefecture's investment turned out to be a huge success. Aired from October to December 2009 in Korea, the average ratings of the drama was 39.9%, and as expected, Akita succeeded in attracting tourists from Korea and other Asian countries like Taiwan, where the drama was broadcast. According to the Japan Tourism Agency's Statistics of Accommodations (2010), the number of the foreign tourists who stayed in the facilities in Akita from January to March 2010 increased by 156.6% compared to the previous year, which showed the highest increase rate in the whole country. The occupancy rate of Seoul-Akita flights also increased. The number of passengers from October 2010 to March 2010 was 2.8 times larger compared to the previous year (*Yomiuri*, Feb 20, 2011). The drama also contributed to an increase in the number of the passengers using local railways. *The Asahi Shimbun* reported that "an increasing number of travelers from Korea and Taiwan use the Akita Nairiku [Inland] Line. It seems that it is part of the effect of tourist flooding in the prefecture to visit the places where the Korean drama *IRIS* was filmed"

(April 28, 2010). After the series *IRIS* aired on the Japanese terrestrial channel TBS during prime time in 2010, tours of the filming locations attracted Japanese tourists too.

Motivated by the success of Akita, other local governments also volunteered and competed to offer filming locations. *Bad Guy*, co-produced by Japan's NHK and Korea's SBS, was shot in the three prefectures of Gifu, Aichi, and Mie. Aomori, Fukuoka, Ibaraki, Kagawa, Hiroshima, Nara, and Osaka also joined in the trend. National and local editions of national newspapers reported in detail how local governments fought to be chosen as the filming location and how the negotiations were proceeding. In particular, the efforts of Tottori Prefecture in the Western part of Japan were frequently reported. The prefecture was eager to obtain a spin-off drama of *IRIS*, and the activities of the prefecture were reported in detail. On the press conference held in May 12, 2010, the governor of Tottori announced that the prefecture aimed to attract the filming of the drama which will be a sequel to *IRIS*. In the press conference, the governor said "I will clearly deliver the merit and passion and desire to win the competition" (*Yomiuri*, May 13, 2010). He also referred to the success of Akita and showed his hope that the number of passengers on the flight connecting Tottori and Seoul, Korea would increase (*Asahi*, May 13, 2010). After the press conference, newspapers reported many different procedures related to the filming, from the prefecture's winning the competition to the actual filming. In the article on the press conference on May 19, the newspaper cited the governor's speech that the expected economic effect was more than one billion yen, and he prepared plans related to the filming, such as assembling a supporting committee and a project team, relieving regulations on a certain tourist attractions, and making a location map. Considering other prefectures were also interested in the drama, the governor said he would visit Osaka to meet the president

of the production company to express his passion for inviting the filming (*Yomiuri*, May 20, 2010).

Table 9. Prefectures that Supported Korean Drama Productions in the 2000s⁴⁵

Year	Title	Prefecture	Broadcaster in Korea	no. of episodes	First Broadcast in Korea
2004	Stained Glass	Hyogo	SBS	18	Dec 1, 2004
2005	Wedding	Miyagi	KBS	18	Aug 23, 2005
2006	Someday	Aichi	OCN	16	November 11, 2006
2008	Star's Lover	Nara, Osaka	SBS	20	December 10, 2008
2008	When It's at Night	Ishikawa	MBC	17	June 23, 2008
2009	You're Beautiful	Okinawa	SBS	16	October 7, 2009
2009	IRIS	Akita	KBS	20	October 14, 2009
2010	Bad Guy	Aichi, Gifu, Mie	SBS	17	May 26, 2010
2010	Hyunhaetan Marriage War	Fukuoka	MBC	2	February 27, 2010
2010	The Fugitive: Plan B	Osaka	KBS	20	September 29, 2010
2010	Athena: Goddess of War	Tottori	SBS	20	December 13, 2010
2011	Sign	Hiroshima	SBS	20	January 5, 2011
2012	The Innocent Man	Aomori	KBS	20	September 12, 2012
2012	Love Rain	Hokkaido	KBS	20	March 26, 2012
(2012)	City Conquest	Tochigi	KBS		Cancelled
2013	IRIS II: New Generation	Akita	KBS	20	February 13, 2013

⁴⁵ This table is made based on the newspaper articles included in the data for analysis, and the article of *the Yomiuri Shimbun* (July 7, 2009), and therefore may not include all the Korean dramas supported by local governments in Japan.

After the prefecture was selected as the location venue, newspapers provided detailed information to show the filming was going smoothly. For example, on July 5, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that the president of the production company visited the prefecture to survey the tentative filming locations and had a meeting with the governor. On September 4, *the Asahi Shimbun* wrote that the prefecture was recruiting volunteers and extra actors to participate in the filming. The article also stressed the vigilant effort of the prefecture. It reported that the prefecture's increased support and the passion had led the revision of the scenario and the prefecture succeeded to include more scenes using Tottori's tourists spots in the drama. Newspapers also reported that though there had been numerous inquiries the prefecture could not reveal the exact filming schedule and venue. Subsequent articles detailed the actors' and staff's arrival in the prefecture for the filming and the drama's broadcast debut in Korea with the details of the audience ratings.

Japanese local governments' interest in inviting productions of Korean dramas is connected to their strategy of *machi-okoshi*, which can be translated as town revitalization (as in Taniguchi 2007; Traphagan 2012). According to *the Yomiuri Shimbun* (Sept. 7, 2009), it was the success of *Winter Sonata* that drew attention of local governments in Japan. After the drama was aired, numerous fans of the drama made trips to Korea to visit the location venues and travel agencies even prepared guided tours called "Winter Sonata Tour." While pointing out that the *IRIS* effect did not last long, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* describes that "local governments desperate for *machi-okoshi* have big expectations for Korean dramas" (Aug 25, 2010).

In addition to the tourist attractions, what was frequently reported was the seat occupancy rate of the flights departing and arriving in local airports. The articles reporting

Akita Prefecture's support of the filming of *IRIS* raised the issue of the seat occupancy rate of Seoul-Akita flight, and later reported the increased number of passengers, using the Seoul-Akita flights as a metric to illustrate the economic success of the location brought about by the support of the prefecture. On April 21, 2010, *the Asahi Shimbun* introduced the situation as following, describing the phenomenon working in the opposite direction compared to the *Winter Sonata* Boom:

Since it [the airport] opened in 2001, the average seat occupancy rate has been sluggish with the seat occupancy rate under 50%, and maintaining the route was in danger. However, since November last year, passengers have rapidly increased. In January this year, there were 6,075 passengers (an increase of 3,298 from the same month of the previous year) and 4,819 Korean passengers (an increase of 3,500), which recorded the highest ever. (*Asahi*, April 21, 2010)

On December 25, 2010, the newspaper stressed that the average seat occupancy rate of the airport was 79.4%, which is higher than the January 2010 rate of 74%. According to the article, the prefecture estimated that the annual average of the seat occupancy rate would be higher than 70% for the first time since its inception. The governor of Akita reportedly said he would aim for the next "*IRIS* effect" and had entered negotiations with a production company to film in Akita during the summer, showing the governor's awareness that a drama set in Akita's winter had led to an increase of tourists visiting the prefecture in winter. Such success story of Akita spurred other prefectures troubled with low seat occupancy rates for the international flights landing at their local airports. The governor of Tottori Prefecture repeatedly expressed expectations for an increase in passengers using the flight connecting Yonago, Tottori and Seoul. After the drama was broadcast in Korea, newspapers began reporting the changes in the seat occupancy rates for the flight. Similarly, the Korean movie *You're My Pet* was filmed in Ibaraki Prefecture

just north of the capital Tokyo. In February 2011, the press conference announcing the production of the movie was held at the international airport in the prefecture, which had just opened in 2010, and the event became a tool to promote the airport and the prefecture to the press and fans.

Japanese local governments' attempt to attract filming location and boost their local economies is a typical case of screen-tourism. Kim and Wang (2012) define screen-tourism as "tourist visits to a destination or place as a result of the destination being featured or portrayed as background or foreground of media productions on the big or small screen" (424). Kim, Agrusa, Lee, and Chon (2007) identify four themes in the economic impact of this kind of tourism: intangible benefits to the host community, such as image enhancement or an increase of awareness; negative impacts; and the perspective of post modernism such as deconstructing and reconstructing the image of places. In discussing the economic benefits, they point out that "numerous local government and tourism officials are trying to entice Hollywood to film a TV series and make movies in their areas since the economic impact to a community is immense" (1344).

What should not be missed in discussing the screen tourism is that, the movies or television programs function as advertising media for tourist destinations. According to Su, Huan, Brodowski and Kim (2011), the screen tourism can play a role as product placement, which refers to "how the appearance and use of products in moves or on TV influence the appeal of those products to consumers" (2011). Especially when cultural contents are distributed across national borders, the product placement effect also expands transnationally. By featuring its tourist attractions in Korean television dramas, Japanese tourist sites are promoted not only in Korea but other foreign countries where such dramas

are broadcast, including Japan and other Asian countries.

What is notable in the Japanese case is that local governments' efforts are pursued as a part of national strategy, which has been called contents tourism (Seaton and Yamamura 2015). Seaton and Yamamura (2015) points out that "contents tourism in Japan has a vibrant history since at least the 1970s" (2) and the Japanese government has been aware of "the potential of popular culture to trigger tourism to and thereby the revitalization of Japan's regions in an era of depopulation and economic stagnation" (6) Throughout the 2000s "a number of landmark government reports and initiatives pushed the agendas of nation branding and tourism promotion via popular culture" (6), including a government report published in 2005 in which "called on local authorities to use contents as part of their regional development plans" (6) and the establishment of organizations such as the Japan Tourism Agency in 2008 and the Creative Industries Promotion Office in 2010. Several local governments also launched film commissions to attract and support location filming of domestic and foreign cultural contents. The case study of Kwon (2012) on the filming of the Korean drama *Sign* (2011) illustrates the intervention of governmental strategies. According to him, local governments' effort to attract foreign drama's location filming is a part of Visit Japan Regional Collaboration Project, a policy by the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT). The total production cost in Japan to support the filming of *Sign* was 15 million yen. Chugoku Transport and Tourism Bureau of MLIT contributed a half of the cost and two cities in Hiroshima Prefecture contributed a quarter each.

It is not only through the increase of tourists that the Japanese domestic economy receives benefits. In addition to supporting the location filming, local governments, and

related companies were quick to devise a variety of events related to the drama and filming. When Akita Prefecture supported the filming of *IRIS*, the prefecture took advantage of fan events to cover costs. Upon the moment the prefecture was selected as the location venue, it recruited members of the committee to support the filming. The membership fee was 10,000 yen per account, and the members were to be invited to special events, including meet-and-greet sessions at the airport and a tour of filming scenes. There was a rush of applicants and membership was soon sold out. (*Asahi*, February 20, 2009). Although it was branded as a membership in a the committee, in fact it worked as a ticket for fan events. Similarly, the press conference of *You're My Pet* held in the Ibaraki International Airport was open to fans too, but required a ticket sold at 9,700 yen. When the last episode of *You're Beautiful* (2009) was filmed in Okinawa, a Japanese travel agency recruited fans to participate tours in which they could view the actual filming, participate in the drama as extra actors, and receive souvenirs to be handed out by the drama's casts. The three-day tour, with no other itinerary except the one day devoted to the drama, commanded prices ranging from 53,000 to 71,000 yen, approximately 530 to 710 dollars, excluding the airfare.⁴⁶

In particular, the high popularity of Korean pop culture and fan meeting events became a new business opportunity for Japanese companies. For example, the rental DVD franchise TSUTAYA launched a lineup *TSUTAYA Dake!*, meaning "only TSUTAYA," a collection of Korean dramas available exclusively at TSUTAYA's stores. Movie theaters lent their screens to fan meeting events of Korean celebrities for the fans who failed to get a ticket due to high demand (*Mainichi*, January 10, 2009). An award ceremony that had been

⁴⁶ According to the travel company's website (http://big.jp/doc_page/206). Accessed in November 22, 2009.



Figure 5. *IRIS* Exhibition held in Roppongi, Tokyo in June 2010

a free event in Korea became a paid event in Japan. In 2012, Golden Disk Awards, the award ceremony for the songs and albums that were sold and downloaded in Korea, was held in Osaka, Tokyo. As stated in newspaper articles, the event had been basically free and for live broadcast in Korea, but as it moved its venue to Japan, it became a two-day concert that cost 11,800 yen for one day or 22,000 yen for two days. The organizer from the Korean side explained that it could not help but become a paid event due to the high production cost in Japan (*Mainichi*, January 26, 2012). Although the explanation is understandable, this event

is an example that show how a free event in Korea could become a profitable event in Japan.

Other than the fan events as detailed above, Japanese companies demonstrated their know-how to create profitable business based on a drama contents. In terms of *IRIS*, there were other related events including exhibitions held in several places in Japan and fan events that drew thousands of fans. Related to tourism, a guidebook including introductions of the location venues and interviews with the cast was published too. Such sales activities are closely related to the strategy easily found in the Japanese contents industry, in which television dramas and other cultural contents are expanded to many different platforms. Rather, what is shown on television – dramas and TV animations – function as a preview or advertisement of the related merchandises, including DVDs and blue-ray disks, original soundtracks, novels, comic books, guidebooks, and toys. Such characteristics of media, which recently began to attract the attention of the Western academia and termed “media convergence” (Jenkins 2006), actually has a long history in Japan, under the term “media mix” (Steinberg 2012). While the role of the audience is important in Jenkins’ use of the concept convergence, the term media mix was coined in the midst of the marketing discourse in the postwar Japan. Drawing on the definition of media mix in a dictionary published in 1963, Steinberg (2012) observes that the television was “a key factor in the recognition of multiple avenues of advertising” and argues that “the marketing media mix ... best described as a method of advertising that used multiple media forms to deliver an advertising message to potential consumers” (139).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Hong (2013) also points out the difference between East Asian media’s expandability and Jenkins’ media convergence. She uses the term “cross-media” to refer to the phenomenon in which a single content moves around many different media platforms

After all, Japan's use of Korean dramas to promote its tourism is related to the role of television media as an advertising medium, which has been long discussed in the Western tradition of critical media studies. According to the theory of audience commodity by Smythe (1977, 1981), the audiences work for advertisers and their labor is packaged and sold to the advertisers as a 'commodity.' According to him, audience power is "the concrete product which is used to accomplish the economic and political tasks which are the reason for the existence of the commercial mass media" and "audience power ... produced, sold, purchased, and consumed ... commands a price and is a community" (Smythe, 1981, 26). In the perspective taking the television primarily as an advertising medium, the audiences "may be defined as an aggregate of actual or potential consumers of media services and products" (McQuail 2010, 401). Considering this, with the location filming in Japanese tourists sites, the audiences of Korean dramas as positioned as potential tourists which can contribute to the economic benefit of the Japanese local governments and economies. Also, Japan's long history and know-how in expanding content into many different platforms are also evidenced in utilizing foreign media contents to promote the domestic economy.

and translated and adapted to different genres. According to her, "cross-media" is more industry-oriented way of producing contents. She argues that the Korean Wave industry as a whole, including food and tourism has benefited from this cross-media phenomenon. She mentions the term "media mix" by quoting the definition by Ito (2007), but she fails to discuss the term media mix used in Japan in general. Taking Steinberg's definition of media mix, I think Hong's cross-media strategy can be replaced with Steinberg's concept of media mix.

2. Koreatowns and Urban Regenerations

Another economic impact that the Japanese media attended to in this period was the economic value of Koreatowns, which had been regarded rundowns and backwards part of the city. Above all, Shin-Okubo area in Tokyo was held up as a representative example of the urban regeneration which has resulted from the Korean Wave boom. According to an article published in *the Economist* (Oct 26, 2010), the area was originally a multi-ethnic street where international students and women working at nearby Kabuki-cho, a red-light street of bars and adult entertainments venues, lived. However, after the FIFA World Cup Tournament in 2002 and the Korean Wave boom, Korean restaurants and shops selling merchandise related to Korean pop culture increased dramatically. These shops began to attract not only Korean customers but also Japanese customers. *The Economist* article describes the atmosphere of Shin-Okubo as:

What is the image of "Shin-Okubo" in Tokyo now? "Koreatown" will be the first response to the question. With "the Korean Wave boom," you may think that the area is overflowing with middle-aged and elderly women, but it is a hasty conclusion. Recently, Shin-Okubo has become a "new spot" where young women are gathering. (Tatsunobu Kazama, *The Economist*, Oct 26, 2010).

The Japanese media paid attention to the the fact that the Korean Wave boom had transformed the former slum known only for being close to a major entertainment street into one of the most popular streets in Tokyo. On October 19, 2011, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that the operation revenue of the nearby Shin-Okubo station had increased 38% over the previous year. By citing the JR East rail company, the article found the reason for the increase in the young customers visiting Korean Wave-related shops in the area. In 2012, Shin-Okubo was reported to be one of the few districts in Tokyo where official land

value increased (*Asahi*, March 23, 2012). On June 23, 2011, only three months after the Tohoku Earthquake, *the Mainichi Shimbun* quoted a businessman working in Shin-Okubo as saying, “Economic recession? It doesn’t matter. It’s just for one week after the earthquake that the customers decreased. Currently, every month we have record-high sales.” Although Japanese society went through a long recession and the Tohoku Earthquake in March 11, 2011 further worsened the country’s economy, such factors hardly affected the area. Although some articles avoided defining the area as the Koreatown and stressed its characteristics as a multi-ethnic district⁴⁸, it had become clear that the Korean Wave boom has contributed to the regeneration of the area, frequently described as the sacred place of the Korean Wave.

It was not only Shin-Okubo in Tokyo that drew attention. The Koreatowns in other prefectures also attempted to take advantage of the boom to revitalize as shopping areas. The Ikuno area in Osaka, which is known as “the biggest Koreatown in Japan” (*Sankei*, Nov. 5, 2009), is also an example that has been revitalized thanks to the Korean Wave boom. In November 2009, newspapers reported that three shopping districts in Ikuno area would co-host a festival to promote the area. According to *the Asahi Shimbun* (Nov 14), three different shopping districts located in the area had previously held promotional festivals separately. However, once the image of the area as a Koreatown had been established and the Korean Wave boom took off, the executives of the three district had discussions to open a joint festival from the spring the year before. *The Sankei Shimbun* (Nov 5) explained that the Korean Wave boom was one of the reasons that established the area as a tourist spot

⁴⁸ For example, a twelve-episode feature story of *the Nihon Keizai Shimbun* published in 2010 introduce the lives of people in the area, who are diverse in origin, ethnicity, background, occupations, etc.

that drew many people not only from Osaka but also from other areas like Tokyo. Also, some articles on the area's effort to develop the area to a tourist spot like the famous Chinatown in Yokohama and Nankin-machi [Nanjingtown] in Kobe.

In Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture, a major departing and arriving port of ferries connecting Japan and Korea, there is an example of a that local shopping mall that attempted to take advantage of the Korean Wave boom. In 2011, the promotion association of the shopping mall opened a shop selling Korean cosmetics and merchandise of Korean actors and pop stars "in order to make the Koreatown a PR base" (*Asahi*, May 8, 2011). In the article reporting the first anniversary of the opening the shop, it became clear that revitalization of the town was one of the aims of opening the shop. *The Asahi Shimbun* on April 28, 2012 reported that "for the shopping district suffering from hollowing out, it is expected that the shop will be a trigger for revitalization" and cited a shop owner expressing his anxiety saying, "passengers are not many in the shopping district and currently it is tough." Taking cues from the successful case of Tokyo's Shin-Okubo followed by Osaka's Ikuno, local shopping districts with any connection with Korea and Korean culture attempted to use that background as a catalyst for reviving flagging local economies.

However, that atmosphere did not last long. After the political relations deteriorated, the passengers arriving at Shin-Okubo Station decreased, and instead of urban renewal, Shin-Okubo began to be connected with hate speeches and anti-Korea protests in the Japanese media. *The Asahi Shimbun* (December 17, 2013) even described the situation as one where "the sacred place of the Korean Wave has become a symbol of the hostility between Japan and Korea." The decline of the areas known as Koreatowns

often appear in newspaper articles reporting the area's transformations into multi-ethnic area.

3. Anxiety of Japan's Dwindling International Presence of Japan

While Japan reaped benefits from the Korean Wave contents when it promoted tourism as a tool for revitalizing its local economy, the Japanese media expressed anxiety about the trend in which the Korean Wave was appropriated as a way to advertise Korean consumer goods. In the year 2011, the Japanese media began to point out that the Korean Wave is a national strategy driven the Korean government, and draw attention to the economic effect of the Korean Wave that brought considerable benefits to the Korean companies.

At first, the focus was the popularity of the Korean consumer goods among Japanese customers. In February 4, 2011, *the Nihon Keizai Shimbun* reported that the Korean Wave boom was extended from the pop culture contents to Korean consumer goods in general. Cosmetics, children's clothing, and even smartphones made by Korean manufacturers became popular owing the boom. In particular, the Japanese media frequently mentioned the popularity of Korean cosmetics when they covered special marketing events for Korean cosmetics that some major Japanese department stores prepared. The Japanese media often position Korean cosmetic companies as rivals of Japanese companies in the Chinese market and reported some of them opened branches in popular shopping districts in Japan. Even *AERA*, the magazine that had focused on introducing Korean entertainers and dramas, started to draw the readers' attention to the

economic benefits of the Korean Wave boom. In March 2012, it published multiple articles analyzing Korea's national strategy to enhance its national brand, which emphasized the popularity of Korean pop culture had been one of the main reasons for the popularity of other Korean consumer goods such as cosmetics (March 5; March 26). One of the articles directly used the term "product placement" to describe the situation:

The marketing consultant Tsutomu Kanemori points out, "I think dramas and movies are working as 'product placement.'" ... In the case of Korean dramas and movies, regardless of the intention or the aims of the production companies or manufacturers, viewers may have been indirectly affected [by the product placement] when they are watching a large number of works [dramas], says Kanemori. (*AERA*, March 5, 2012).

According to the article on March 26, global corporations and the popularity of the Korean Wave are the two main engines to enhance the value of Korea's national brand. Many articles in newspapers and magazines analyzed that the Korean government, due to its small domestic market, had strategically supported the media and pop culture industry to go abroad, and as a result the Korean Wave boom contributed to the improvement of Korea's national image which in turn helped Korean companies make better business performances in foreign markets. Criticizing the product placement, an article of *the Yomiuri Shimbun* found the reason from the Korean system of drama production and warned its readers to be smart:

At the heart of the current problem lies the high production cost of Korean dramas. When the scale of dramas continues to increase due to intensified competition among production companies, and the production cost coming from broadcasters is not enough. Therefore, the production companies have to rely on indirect advertisements (*kansetsu kōkoku*⁴⁹).

⁴⁹ Japanese term for product placement. In fact, when Korean dramas were broadcast on terrestrial channels, some Korean products were blurred on the screen in order to avoid the product placement effect.

Lots of Korean dramas are broadcast in Japan, and Korean products are becoming more and more familiar. To become a smart consumer, you need watch smart. (January 21, 2013)

The anxiety of the Japanese media and the Japanese industry about the popularity of the Korean consumer goods became more apparent when it comes to the economic effect of the Korean Wave in foreign markets. In particular, the Japanese media paid close attention to the popularity of the Korean pop culture in China and Southeast Asia including Thai, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Bhutan⁵⁰. Many articles reported that the Korean Wave boom had enhanced the national image of Korea and people in those countries are interested not only in popular Korean dramas and movies but also in its consumer goods such as fashion, food, cosmetics, and electronics.

The influence extends beyond the content industry. In dramas and movies, the close-ups of the stage props like Korean household appliances, cars, cosmetics, etc. are frequent and like advertisements, they make viewers want Korean products. In addition, there is an increasing number of consumers who are interested in Korean food and fashion thanks to dramas and pop music and therefore visit Korean chain stores. (*Nikkei*, Aug 6, 2013)

Korea has become our the role model and rival. Recently, as the economy of countries such as China and India are declining, many economists pick Korea as the next "star of expectation".

Probably, it is Korea's good PR strategies that bring such high evaluation. First, they sell Korean dramas and K-pop. Thanks to the popularity, the brand image of Samsung and Hyundai rise. The government also supports with its policy. It seems that the strength of "Team Korea" as such leads to the high evaluation as a whole. (*Asahi*, Nov 10, 2013)

⁵⁰ The Japanese newspapers were particularly interested in Myanmar. As the military regime in Myanmar ended in 2011, there were high expectations about the development of the market and the infrastructure in Myanmar. The country was even described as "the last undeveloped market in Southeast Asia." (*Yomiuri*, March 13, 2012)

Emphasis on the role of the pop culture and the government policy became more prominent after the year 2013, and Korea is positioned as a role model and rival of Japan in the markets of Asia. In January 2014, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* featured a series with the theme of soft power and detailed the examples of Korean electronics, smartphones, and fashion industries' international strategies. Then, it positioned the popularity of the Korean Wave and K-pop as one of the major reasons for the growth of Korea's presence in Asian markets. Considering the feature articles in the start of a new year deals with the most important issues in the country at that time, the serialization on the topic shows the newspapers' interest in the use of pop culture in Japanese companies' international strategy.

Such rapid change in the Japanese media's interest can be considered in relation to the Japanese government's strategy for pop culture, called "Cool Japan" strategy. The term "Cool Japan" comes from McGray's article "Japan's Gross National Cool" (2002) that introduces the international influence of Japanese culture, "from pop music to consumer electronics, architecture to fashion, and animation to cuisine." (44) Today, the term is officially accepted to indicate Japan's pop culture strategy targeting international market. It can also be found in the official titles of government appointee, as in "Minister in charge of Cool Japan Strategy" and "Regional Cool Japan Promotion Council," who are in charge of promoting Japanese pop culture in the international stage. According to Matsumoto and Tanaka (2017) the Cool Japan strategy is closely in line with the Japanese government's interest in the economic impact of its pop culture in foreign countries:

Overseas contents strategy does not only mean exporting broadcast programs, but also means economic effect such as purchasing Japanese products and increasing number of foreign tourists motivated by the programs. For this reason, the government is promoting the "Cool Japan strategy" in which internationally distributes Japanese contents and so on, as an important policy. (Matsumoto and

Tanaka 2017, 67)

According to Hasegawa (2016), the years 2011-2013 were the most important turning points in the direction of the Cool Japan strategy: the Tohoku Earthquake in 2011, the general election in 2012, and the bid of the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2013. Considering the Japanese media started to report the economic effect in 2011, the Japanese newspapers' increased interest in the economic effect of pop culture exports correlates with the direction of the Japanese government's policy.

When the Japanese media raised the issue that the Korean government supported its pop culture as a national strategy, they often reported that the Korean government provided Asian countries with Korean dramas at a cheap price or free of charge.

In Korea, the government buys the copyright of Korean dramas and offers them to the television stations of Southeast Asian countries free of charge. TV stations broadcast dramas one after another, and the viewers who saw them become familiar with Korean electrical appliances and cars. As a result, Korean products are sold well in those countries as a result. (*Yomiuri*, May 9, 2013, an interview with Seiichi Kondō, Minister of Cultural Affairs)

As for Korea, the public and the private sector has collaborated closely and they sold many works [dramas] to Asian countries at a cheap price and brought about the "Korean Wave boom." (*Mainichi*, Oct 11, 2013)

Since the 1990s, Korea has propelled its strategy of exporting Korean dramas cheaply to television stations in Asia. Korea created an "ecosystem" that sells home appliances and automobiles when a drama gains popularity and succeeded in supporting its export industries. (*Asahi*, Feb 7, 2016)

By stressing that Korean dramas are distributed for a cheap price or for free in Southeast Asian countries, the Japanese media attributed the popularity of the Korean pop culture in Southeast Asia as to its government's strategy and regarded the Korean Wave

and Korean pop culture contents as the phenomenon of such powerful advertising tool. In describing the current popularity of Korean dramas, the Japanese media recollected that Japanese dramas used to be popular in those areas in the past.

In Iran, in the 1980s, NHK's serialized TV drama *Oshin* that depicted the heroine who suffers from hardships recorded close to 90% audience rating during the war with Iraq. (*Yomiuri*, May 3, 2016)

(In Myanmar) In the 1980s and 1990s, Japanese TV dramas such as "Oshin" enjoyed overwhelming popularity, but after the 2000s, Korean drama became the mainstream when speaking foreign dramas there. (*Asahi*, Feb 13, 2016)

What is notable here is that the articles stating Japanese dramas' popularity in the past hardly mention that Japan also used to distribute its dramas free of charge. *The Mainichi Shimbun's* article on October 11, 2013 wrote, "since the 1980s, Japan's dramas have been popular in Asia, including *Oshin* which were offered free of charge to more than 30 countries" but drew a line that it was "part of international exchange" not for economic purposes. It reflects a certain resistance in the Japanese society against the government's intervention in the private sector. Pointing out that the Korean government's strategy influenced the Japanese government's, Choo (2010) observes that Japanese government officials in Japan were positive about some of the Korean government's policies but showed their awareness that the Korean government's support for the media industry, including the government's direct investment deviated from the standard of developed countries. Choo analyzes such reaction implies the Japanese bureaucrats' sense of rivalry against Korean counterparts.

In a sense, the Japanese media's detailed reporting on the Korean government's strategy reflects their dissatisfaction with the Japanese government's policy and the strategies of the industry. In September 2012, *the Nikkei Entertainment* pointed out that the

Japanese music industry was lagging behind in terms of using the Internet for promotion.⁵¹ In July 2013, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* cited the Minister of Cultural Affairs saying the Japanese policy for pop culture contents was single-shot and did not last long. In January 2015, *the Economist*, citing a businessman in Vietnam, explained “the Korean media often provide contents free of charge” and “send actors to Vietnam for promotion before broadcast,” and then pointed out “if Japan keeps sticking to charge for its contents, its gap between Korea or China would get bigger” (January 27, 2015)

With the government policy’s interest in the economic effect of the pop culture, the Japanese media read economic implication even from an message from the Korean side calling for reconciliation and friendship. On October 6, 2014, *the Asahi Shimbun* published a lengthy article about the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), an annual film festival held in Korea’s second-largest city, Busan. Having started in 1995, BIFF, had been rapidly developed to become one of the major international film festivals held in Asia. Consequently, it posed a threat to the status that Japan’s Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) had enjoyed. The article introduced the keyword of the year’s festival was “Japan-Korea” and cast a question: “At this point when temporary booms about each other’s culture have withered, why does ‘Japan-Korea’ matter? We delved into the background.”

The article continues to illustrate that the world-famous Japanese actor, Ken Watanabe co-hosted the opening ceremony with the Korean Actress Moon So-ri. About the

⁵¹ “In the case of K-pop, you can listen on the Internet for free. In this way, K-pop attracted fans and expanded to the world. On the other hand, in Japan, the Diet passed the bill that punishes illegal downloads this June” (*Nikkei Entertainment*, September 2012)

reason why he was selected as the host, the Chief Programmer, Kim Ji-seok was cited to have said, “among Japanese actors, Mr. Watanabe is the most active internationally. Since the political relationships are severe, we have to strengthen the cultural exchange and do what politics cannot do.” Then the article introduces the increasing cooperation between the two countries;

While both in Korea and Japan, films from each other did not commercially success, cooperation in movie production increased and the barriers were getting lower. A new era is about to begin, where there is no need to divide “Japanese movies” and “Korean movies.”

The article did not forget to mention “*Hannichi* (anti-Japan) and *Kenkan* (hate-Korea)” atmosphere, taking the examples of the hate speech against Koreans in Japan and the commercial success of the Korean movie *The Admiral: Roaring Currents*, which depicted the Korean victory over Japan during the Japanese Invasions to Korea in the 16th century⁵². Still, it introduced the comment of the Chair of the Organizing Committee hoping “I want to unravel the political tensions with culture. The increasing cooperation between Japan-Korea will contribute to the friendship between the two countries.”

While the article followed the typical “cultural exchange” theme, it emphasized that the government policy lay in the background with the “Japan-Korea” theme, stating that the Korea’s ambition is to become “the hub of East Asian Culture.”:

Meanwhile, Teraoki Ken (62 years old), a film critic who has visited the film festival every year since 2003, when he was working for MEXT⁵³, analyzes,

⁵² The Japanese media tend to regard any Korean films dealing with historical conflicts with Japan as anti-Japanese movies.

⁵³ Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

"having Watanabe to host the opening ceremony is a message not only for Japan and Korea but also for Asia. 'The hub of East Asian culture,' which Korea aims for, is diplomatically tasty as well." Korea is maintaining balance between the great countries in Asia – China and Japan. Teraoki sees, "There are countries that feels uncomfortable with China and Japan taking the leading role, but it is a good fit if Korea is in the center. I thought the scene was made to make everyone feel good." With the Korean Wave boom, the Korean government has been working on nurturing cultural industries. Aiming for 'the hub of Asian movies' the venue of the film festival, Busan Cinema Complex was also built with about 170 billion won (about 18 billion yen) by the Korean government and Busan City. The strategy is clearly shown but at the same time there is a hidden layer. "Improvement of culture enhances the image of the country, and the product value of industrial products will increase too" (according to a government official). (emphasis mine)

While the themes of "mutual exchange" and "cooperation" are ostensible focus of the festival, this article added interpretations in terms of international power structure and government policy, showing Japan's wariness about Korea's advance to the global market.

4. Summary and Conclusion

The Korean Wave boom and the profits coming from its related events and activities led the Japanese media to pay attention to the economic potential of the phenomenon. In hopes of an increase in foreign and domestic tourists, local governments put their human and material resources toward supporting the location filming of Korean dramas and movies putting its human and material resources. The landscapes and tourist spots shown in Korean dramas attracted viewers in the countries where Korean dramas are broadcast, granting the drama the role of promotional films. Shopping districts crowded with fans of Korean pop culture, represented by Shinjuku in Tokyo, were showcased as examples of urban regeneration and motivated other shopping districts to expect similar effects from promoting services and goods related to Korea and the Korean

Wave. Although such tendencies were not enduring, at least before the year 2012, the Korean Wave has provided the Japanese domestic economy with new source for creating profits and new business opportunities. The Japanese local governments' and industries' uses of the Korean wave as a promotion tool not only confirms the position of television and pop culture as advertising media which bring forth the effect of product placement, but also reflect Japan's traditional use of pop culture for marketing purposes.

While the Japanese domestic industry benefited from the effects of product placement of Korean cultural contents, such effect in turn appears to be a threat to the Japanese industry when it appears in reports on the international circulation of popular culture. The Japanese media stresses that the Korean government provides its cultural contents for free in order to promote Korean consumer goods appearing in Korean dramas. Along with negative assessment of the Korean government's strategy, they express anxiety about the decreasing Japan's presence in China and Southeast Asia in particular as well as dissatisfaction from the Japanese government's lukewarm support. Even the events calling for Japan-Korea cooperation are read in terms of a competition for hegemony in the international pop culture market.

The Japanese media's attention on the economic effects of the Korean Wave is correlated with both national and local governments' strategies in Japan to take advantage of pop culture for economic revitalization both domestically and internationally. In the long economic recession dubbed "lost decades," and especially after the Tohoku Earthquake in 2011, town revitalization was one of the urgent problems that local and national governments faced, as the Japanese Cabinet made a new position titled Minister of State for the Promotion of Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in 2014.

Even events related to the Korean Wave and K-pop were held under the name of supporting Tohoku. With its tradition of screen, or contents, tourism and media mix, the Japanese industry has been quick to find the economic potential of foreign cultural contents in order to serve such goals. Korean pop culture, which already obtained an extensive fan base, became good sources for new business opportunities to be connected to the revitalization of local economy and urban regeneration.

Unlike the promotional use of the Korean Wave in the Japanese domestic industry, its promotional use in the international market was a source of anxiety for Japan, which lagged behind in the international strategy. With its huge domestic market, profits coming from exporting pop culture itself had never been the major concerns for Japan. As seen from the case of *Oshin*, Japan traditionally has used the pop culture contents for political reasons as a tool for cultural diplomacy. However, Korean pop culture's advance to China and Southeast Asian market, and Japanese manufacturers' struggles in competition with Korean counterparts became a momentum for the Japanese government to pay more attention to the economic value of pop culture exports. Here, Japan reveals its ambivalent position on the promotional use of pop culture contents.

Chapter 7

Reconfirming the Presence of the Japanese Industry: The Market Perspective

In addition to factors such as politics and economy, this chapter explores the aspect which is less prominent in the coverage of the Korean Wave: The needs of the Japanese media market. Although they were not as explicit as political and economic significance, changing media landscape and pressures on the media market led the television and pop culture industry to look for a cheaper way to fill broadcasting slots and make profit, and Korean dramas and K-pop idols were decent substitutes for Japanese pop culture products. This chapter explores Japanese media's reception and reaction to the Korean Wave attending to the changing media landscape in the pop culture industry in Japan and the Japanese market's desire in confronting the transnational flow of media and popular culture.

1. The Media Landscape of Japan and the Korean Wave

In September 2011, there were repeated protest rallies in front of the main Fuji Television building in Tokyo, voicing the criticism that the broadcaster was airing too many Korean dramas. Such complaints began with a twitter post. In July 2011, the actor Sōsuke Takaoka, wrote on his Twitter and criticized Fuji Television's programs related to the Korean Wave, saying "Japanese people want to see Japanese traditional programs" and "I turn off the TV when Korea-related themes are mentioned." These comments drew such criticism that he was forced to resign the programs he was working for, but at the same time, his comments spread on the web. People who agreed with him appeared. As a result,

calls for protests were raised on websites including *2channel* (<http://www.2ch.net>), one of the most popular online bulletin boards, and thousands of protesters gathered voicing their agreement with Takaoka. Interestingly, these protests were much talked about on the Internet, but mainstream newspapers did not cover them with the exception of *the Asahi Shimbun*. In multiple articles in September and October 2011, the newspaper introduced the protests and reported the words and slogans of the protesters. At the same time, the articles explained and analyzed why Japanese televisions could not help but allocate significant airtime for the so-called Korean Wave contents. Based on the sources that those articles analyzed, Japanese broadcasters could not help but rely on the Korean dramas and related contents in order to reduce the cost in order to survive in a changing market situations.

It's because they are "cheaper." Advertising expenses decreased due to the economic downturn. "It is better to buy cheap programs from foreign countries than produce programs in our own station, and the audience ratings of Korean dramas are quite good," says an official of a commercial television based in Tokyo. It is connected to a reduction of production cost, which has become a task for many channels. (*Asahi*, Sept. 20, 2011)

The rapid changes in Japanese media and pop culture industry was one of the reasons of the outsized presence of the Korean pop culture contents on Japanese television. After commercial broadcasters launched satellite channels called BS (broadcasting satellite) and CS (commercial satellite) in 2010, they needed more programs to fill the increased airtime. After the Korean Wave boom started, the broadcasted competitively purchased the rights of Korean dramas because they were cheaper, but at the same time garnered decent audience ratings. As Kwon (2010) points out, in the early 2000s, BS and CS channels' demand for programs lowered the barriers of entry to the Japanese broadcasting

industry, and the popularity of Korean dramas among middle-aged Japanese women intrigued the advertisers who targeted that audience group. Japanese newspapers acknowledge the roles Korean dramas played in the growth of the satellite channels. In its serialized feature articles in August 2010, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* quotes the opinion of a shopping channel's manager:

Kazuya Noda, the media sales manager of *Shop Channel* says, "By the year 2005 or so, I was worried whether viewers will really watch (the satellite channels). But I became interested in them as media when Korean Wave dramas were aired one after another." (*Yomiuri*, August 11, 2010)

According to this quote, the manager in charge of advertising sales was first skeptical whether the satellite channels could earn enough profit, but the Korean dramas aired on the satellite channels demonstrated the potential to attract advertisers. In a sense, Korean dramas contributed to the stabilization of Japan's satellite broadcasting industry, as "contents indispensable to BS" (*Mainichi*, April 16, 2010). Even after the Japan-Korea relations deteriorated prompting the disappearance of Korean dramas from terrestrial channels, Japanese satellite and cable channels remained as the major buyers of the television programs. According to *the Asahi Shimbun* on March 14, 2015, the number of Korean dramas that Japan purchased peaked in 2013, under the influence of the stronger yen.

Table 10. Korean Wave dramas on Japanese Television 2005-2011

	Dec 2005	Mar 2007	Mar 2008	Aug 2009	Dec 2010	Aug 2011
BS	-	12 titles on 8 channels	14 titles on 8 channels	33 titles on 9 channels	39 titles on 9 channels	31 titles on 8 channels
CS	45 titles on 10 channels	100 titles on 12 channels	112 titles on 20 channels	136 titles on 25 channels	160 titles on 17 channels	162 titles on 18 channels
Terrestrial	19 titles on 64 local stations	26 titles on 29 local stations	26 titles on 29 local stations	37 titles on 29 local stations	On the national networks of Fuji, TBS, and TV-Tokyo	On the national networks of Fuji, TBS, and TV-Tokyo

Source: KOFICE (2011)

The merit of Korean dramas – bringing high ratings at a reasonable price – seems to have enabled the Korean dramas to advance to the terrestrial channels. In *the Yomiuri Shimbun's* feature mentioned above, the newspaper introduced the success of *Hanryu α [alpha]*, meaning “the Korean Wave α,” Fuji Television’s afternoon block programming devoted to Korean dramas.

It is BS and CS late at night that Korean dramas are broadcast. Fuji Television’s “Hanryu α” (Monday to Friday, 2:08pm), which started in January, betrayed such common sense and is winning high ratings. The ratings of *Brilliant Legacy*, which was aired in March, recorded 9.7% on 24th, which is “a high figure unthinkable in this time slot” (Staff in charge of programming at other broadcaster). (*Yomiuri*, August 24, 2010).

According to the interview with the producer who started *Hanryu α*, it was usually re-runs of Japanese dramas that filled the afternoon time slots. She decided to try Korean dramas in these slots because there were cases where a series had been re-run several times and she thought the audiences might have tired of these old Japanese dramas. She originally

intended to try to for only three months but the slot continued to garner high ratings and DVD sales were increasing. *The Yomiuri Shimbun* commented that the attempt expanded the range of Korean drama fans and therefore kicked off a new phase of the Korean Wave. The *Hanryu α* slot lasted until August 2012.⁵⁴

Complicated copyright issues in Japanese productions and a relatively cooperative attitude from the Korean partners were also part of the reason that broadcasters turned to the Korean dramas instead of Japanese dramas. In contrast, Korean broadcasters and productions appear to be cooperative in accommodating the needs of the Japanese market. In February 2010, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* wrote that the Korean drama *IRIS* was to be broadcast in the golden slot (9 to 11pm) and Fuji Television would devote a new programming slot to Korean drama. This article attempted to find a reason by comparing the situations of the Japanese and Korean media industry.

In the background are circumstances of the broadcasters that "it is cheaper to purchase a drama than to produce a program, and the copyright issues are easier to solve compared to old Japanese dramas" (BS digital official). Also, the production companies in Korea are also strongly conscious of Japan, which has a large market for related products such as DVDs and photo books. (Feb 23, 2010).

These complicated copyright issues, are said to be one of the factors that cause the Japanese media and pop culture industry to fall behind the recent shifts in the media market, such as international sales and broadcasting on new media outlets. While the Japanese government promotes and supports the export of Japanese television programs and pop culture contents, the copyright issues involved in dramas and variety programs

⁵⁴ Interestingly, the last episode of this time slot was aired on August 22, about two weeks after Korean President Lee landed on the disputed island.

are frequently given as one of the obstacles. In discussing about the a channel in Taiwan specialized in Japanese programs being terminated, *the Asahi Shimbun* quotes the CEO's comments that "Japanese programs are difficult to purchase because the rights are divided in detail. With the influence of the Korean Wave, Japan fever is getting weaker in Taiwan" (Feb 20, 2015). In an article reporting that Fuji Television was producing a Chinese remake of a Japanese drama series, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* explains the situation in which Japanese dramas cannot be made available on the Internet in China, because the Internet service was not put into consideration in the beginning and it is impossible to edit each episode to accommodate the Chinese side. (July 30, 2014). The copyright issues become even more of an obstacle when terrestrial television's simultaneous broadcasting online. When the public broadcaster, NHK conducted a test of simultaneous broadcasting on the Internet, 15.4% of the entire airtime was not shown on the Internet because the copyright issues remained (NHK Kohokyoku, 2017).

The continuous debuts of K-pop girl groups and boy groups at least partly result from the strategy of Japanese music industry. In 2010, *the Economist* interviewed Kazuhiko Koike, the CEO of Universal Records Japan (Sept 28, 2010), which was the most active company to have Korean idol groups in the Japanese market. In 2010 and 2011, many Korean idol groups debuted under the labels affiliated with the company⁵⁵. In the interview, Koike explained that his company made contracts with Korean bands because "there are no female idol groups who are good at both singing and dancing and therefore you can appeal

⁵⁵ Three out of four girl groups that made their Japan debut in 2010 released CDs under the affiliated labels. These labels include Far Eastern Tribe Recodes of 4 Minute (debuted May 5, 2010), Universal Sigma of KARA (debuted on August 11, 2010), and Nayutawave Records of Girls' Generation (September 8, 2010).

the difference” and added, “gaining idols who have already completed in Korea is more likely to succeed rather than training idols from nothing.” That is, the record company wanted to avoid the risk of launching new idol groups and therefore paid attention to Korean groups. In 2009 and 2010, the Japanese pop music market was dominated by a small number of management companies with popular idol singers, and it was increasingly difficult for any newly launched girl group or boy group to achieve success in the market. The K-pop scene provided a pool of candidates for from which Japanese companies could choose in order to gain decent profit while reducing risks. In evaluating the current trend of the K-pop idol groups in 2016, *the Nihon Keizai Shimbun* analyzes that K-pop fans cannot be tired because K-pop keeps providing new idol groups one after another, which is a boon to Japanese records companies.

The more active the artist's music activities are, the higher the fans' enthusiasm remains. This is very grateful for record companies that takes in charge of sales in Japan. “The fans show high loyalty, and therefore it is easy to read the numbers [estimate revenues] and easy to make budge plans” (a manager of a foreign-affiliated company). This is the reason why K-pop groups are keep releasing records in Japan. (May 14, 2016)

Considering the benefits that the Japanese media industry has earned with Korean dramas and K-Pop idol groups, the reason why the anti-Korean Wave protests were hardly covered by the mainstream media can be understood as related to this inconvenient truth of the Japanese industry. It is notable that *the Asahi Shimbun* was the only newspaper that covered the anti-Korean wave protests, and TV-Asahi, an affiliation of the newspaper was relatively less active in broadcasting Korean dramas and K-pop⁵⁶. If newspapers cover

⁵⁶ NHK, TBS, Fuji Television, and TV-Tokyo regularly broadcast Korean dramas in

the protests and analyze the backgrounds, it could be easily connected with inside stories, which may negatively portray their affiliated broadcasters. In a sense, the anti-Korean Wave protests being invisible in the newspapers reflect the interests of the Japanese television industry. When affiliated TV channels owe their audience ratings and cost reduction to the Korean wave contents, the newspapers may have been reluctant to raise the issue and spread negative impressions regarding the Korean Wave. *The Sankei Shimbun's* ambiguous stances come from this trepidation. As discussed in chapter 5, the newspaper has been quite cynical about the popularity of the Korean dramas and their fans. However, its affiliated broadcaster, Fuji Television was winning high ratings, and therefore decent profits, from Korean dramas. Moreover, the record company Pony Canyon, one of the subsidiaries of the Fuji Media Holdings, had been releasing records by Korean actors and singers, including the *Winter Sonata* actor Park Yong-ha, the idol group SS501, and the actor Jang Keun-suk⁵⁷. As long as an affiliated company was the beneficiary of the Korean

their terrestrial channels. Nihon Television actively introduced and promoted K-pop singers in its information program and entertainment programs.

⁵⁷ In particular, Jang Keun-suk's popularity in Japan is at least partly an outcome of detailed media strategy of the Japanese media market. He gained popularity in Japan after the drama *You're Beautiful* (2009) found success and is frequently mentioned as the most popular/famous Korean actor after Bae Yong-jun, the male lead of *Winter Sonata*. In a symposium held in 2012, Takeshi Yoshimura, a director of the DVD rental franchise TSUTAYA, proudly stated that the company developed extensive media promotions in order to make Jang a star. According to him, TSUTAYA purchased the broadcasting right of the drama *You're Beautiful* even before the production began in Korea and developed media promotions of Jang because they wanted to maximize the profit from the drama ("What Brought the Popularity of You're Beautiful?: Thinking about the Drama's Success and its Significance," May 22, 2012, Korea Cultural Center in Tokyo). The drama *You're Beautiful* was aired as a part of Fuji Television's *Hanryu α Matsuri [Festival]* in July and August 2010 and was re-run as a part of *Hanryu α's Jang Keun-Suk Matsuri [Festival]* in

Wave boom, it would have been difficult for the newspaper to spotlight the protesters' voices criticizing broadcasters and explain the logic of the broadcaster.

2. KARA's Disbanding Scandal and the Desire of the Japanese Market

Although the Japanese industry had a good reason to push Korean pop culture in their media outlets, what the Japanese industry sought from the Korean Wave boom was not usually emphasized in the coverage carried in Japanese newspapers and magazines. It was when any troubles or scandals related to the Korean wave became known that the stances of the Japanese media industry were shown indirectly.

The intense coverage on Japanese television on the disbanding scandal of the girl group KARA is an example showing the Japanese industry's basic stance viewing the entertainment industry of Korea. Among the many Korean girl groups who debuted in Japan in 2010 and 2011, KARA was the most successful case. KARA debuted in Korea in 2007 as a quartet and was not very successful at first. In 2008, one member left the team, and two new members joined, forming a quintet. They started to gain popularity with their second mini-album, released in December 2008 and became one of the top girl groups in Korea with their second full-length album, released in July 2009. They were soon introduced to Japan via the Internet and magazines related to Korean pop culture, but it was through words of mouth by Japanese celebrities that they were introduced on

January 2011. On April 27, he released his first single "Let Me Cry" and became the first foreign male artist who topped the Oricon singles chart in the first week of his debut album. *Hanryu* broadcasted the drama again from April 28, 2011, right after his single was released. The artist section of Pony Canyon Inc., still include several Korean actors and idol groups, such as BTOB and B1A4.

Japanese media. In particular, the famous comedian and TV personality, Hitori Gekidan, asserted that he was a fan of KARA and repeatedly mentioned the group in the programs that he was hosting or appeared on as a guest.

After their Japan debut in 2010, the idol group achieved a greater success than they had in Korea. Their Japan debut single, *Mister* and their second single, *Jumping* ranked at #5 on the Oricon Weekly Chart, which is the most respected music chart in Japan, and their album came in ranked at #2 on the same chart. At the end of the year, the Oricon Annual Chart selected KARA as the best new artist. The band also extended their range of activity, and in November 2010, the commercial broadcaster TV Tokyo, announced that a new drama series starring KARA as main characters would be aired from January 14, 2011 (Oricon Inc.).

Table 11. Discography of KARA

Category	Title	Release Date	Chart Peak
Single	Mister	Aug 11, 2010	5
Album	KARA Best 2007-2010 (Korean)	Sept 29, 2010	2
Single	Jumping	Nov 10, 2010	5
Album	Girls Talk	Nov 11, 2010	2
Disbanding Scandal (from Jan 19, 2011)			
DVD	Karadise 2011~Season's Greeting From Thai	Jan 26, 2011	9
DVD	KARA BEST CLIPS	Feb 23, 2011	1
Single	Jet Coaster Love	Apr 6, 2011	1
Single	Go Go Summer-!	Jun 29, 2011	2
Album	STEP (Korean)	Oct 5, 2011	5
DVD	KARA's All about Beauty	Oct 12, 2011	3
Single	Winter Magic	Oct 19, 2011	3

(Source: Oricon)

While they were crafting a successful career in Japan, on January 19, 2011, it was reported that four members of the band demanded that their Korean management agency,

DSP Media, terminate their contract. According to their legal representative, the four members were “deeply distressed and disappointed by the agency’s misuse of its power which forced them to engage in unwanted activities and sometimes face personal insults” (Kwon 2011). On the same day, one of the four announced that she would not leave the agency. However, the disband crisis lasted for more than a month. On February 3, the all five members together entered Japan to film the TV-Tokyo drama and the media assumed that the crisis was over, but on February 11, the three who hoped to leave filed a lawsuit against the agency to terminate their contracts, showing that no reconciliation had been made. Although national newspapers did not cover the story in depth, television news shows and information programs busily followed the story and the scandal was treated as the top news for these programs for many days⁵⁸. With intense coverage, Japanese media criticized the Korean entertainment industry, portrayed the band members as victims, and emphasize the role and superiority of the Japanese entertainment industry.

1) Criticizing the Korean Entertainment Industry

When the scandal was first reported, the Japanese media did not hesitate to blame the Korean agency for the scandal and the structural problems of the Korean industry. From the first day, all the news programs pointed out the problems in Korean entertainment media system, stating “behind the boom were ceaseless conflicts”(News 23 Cross, Jan 19) or asking “What has been hidden behind the spotlight?” (*Super J Channel*, Jan

⁵⁸ This disbanding scandal was not the only big scandal going on at that time. There was suspicions of fixed matches in Sumo, Japanese traditional wrestling, but this scandal was dealt with less importantly than KARA’ scandal. In a way, KARA’s scandal made the scandal in Sumo the secondary interest.

20). They attributed the cause of the scandal to Korea's entertainment system and stressed that the members did not receive the income they deserved. Japanese news presented the claims of both parties and explained the Korean system in detail but most comments following the reports were concentrated on the issue of profit share, and many news stories concluded with newscasters' and panelists' comments saying they felt pity for the members and voicing support.

By attributing the cause of the scandal to Korea's entertainment management system, Japanese news coverage set up a comparison between the Korean and Japanese systems and emphasized Japanese system's superiority. Some news items reminded audiences that other Korean pop stars and actors had similar problems, and some even tried to connect Korean actors' suicides to this scandal. Labeling the Korean system, "pre-modern," Japanese news compared Korea's present to Japan's past and stressed that such systems did not exist in Japan any more, a negative version of "nostalgia" that Japanese fans felt about Korean and Asian dramas (Iwabuchi 2002; Hayashi 2005b; Hirata 2005). Japanese coverage also pointed out that due to the small scale of the Korean market, many Korean artists were eager to break out in Japan, but once they have debuted in Japan, they realized to know that they had been treated unfairly in Korea.

Japanese agencies used to be like that [Korean agencies], but recently all of them are limited companies. So they are all clean. ... Korean companies don't have management ability, do they? (*Asazubat*, Jan. 20)

When they [the members of KARA] are in Japan, DSP's Japan branch, their record company, and a big agency take care of their activity. However, in Korea, they have to do what TV programs force them to do. Entertainment agencies are subordinated to broadcasting. (*Super Morning*, Jan. 20)

Criticizing Korean agencies and Korean entertainment system, Japanese news

emphasized the role that Japan can play in order to improve the environment. In TV Asahi's *Super J Channel* on January 23, newscasters commented that thanks to the K-POP boom in Japan, unfair treatments in the Korean entertainment industry became known to public. Similarly, on February 16, a panelist of NTV's *Sukkiri!!* mentioned Korean agencies' so-called "slave contracts" and commented that Japan and Japanese fans can play an important role. Newscasters and panelists even asked whether there was any possible way that KARA could leave the Korean agency and work with a Japanese agency.

While Japan's role and potential to solve the problems prevalent in Korea, the role that the Japanese industry played in bringing about the scandal itself was almost out of question. However, in terms of the band members' income, Japan should not be seen as free of charge. A report by Korea's public broadcaster, KBS, pointed out that the problems related to profit sharing is due to what is decided upon in the contract between Japanese distributors and Korean agencies. According to this report, 84% of the profit that KARA made in Japan went to the Japanese distributor, 8% to the local partner in Japan, and 8% to the Korean agency who would pay 1.6 to 1.8% to the band members. To clarify the Japanese market's influence, this program quoted two experts, a columnist and a journalist, saying "it moves within the Japanese broadcasting industry and capital. Quite a big share of the profit goes to Japan," and "it is customary in Japan" (The Entertainment Weekly, Feb. 12, 2011). It was even said that there was someone directly behind the scandal, and a report mentioned that "Japanese capital" was one of them behind the scenes (MBC, Section TV, January 23).

Although Japanese television, particularly information programs enjoy talking about gossips in the world, plausible explanations as such were hardly found in the

Japanese coverage. Rather, the Japanese coverage sometimes failed to give correct information. Especially, Japanese news hardly mentioned the actual breakdown of the profit share, and if they did, they misled the audience by insinuating that a large amount of money was going to DSP's Japan branch, not the Japanese distributor. NTV's *Sukkiri!!* on January 21 explained that 80% goes to DSP Japan branch, 10% to DSP in Korea and 10% to the band members, differed from the figures reported by KBS as mentioned above. Furthermore, sometimes they made mistakes in converting Korean currency into Japanese currency, making the amount of money look smaller. On top of that, the negative opinions of ordinary citizens regarding the members were invisible. For example, Fuji TV's *Mezamashi Terebi* (January 20) showed an interview with a Korean woman who said, "the agency had problems, but the members knew about the conditions and agreed to accept them." However, the news did not translate the latter part of the interview, erasing negative opinion regarding the judgement of the group members.

2) Band Members as Victims

As Japanese news programs were attributing the cause of the crisis to the excessively low income and the structural problems of Korean entertainment industry, the members of KARA were portrayed as victims of Korea's management system. The members still wanted to perform as a team although they had been suffering from unfair treatment. The news items repeatedly aired the departing three members' claims that they were forced to do unwanted activities and their dignity was insulted, and panels in the program reacted that they feel pity for the members. At the early stage when the profit sharing issue was assumed to be the main reason for the breakup, the news emphasized that it was the

members' parents who had raised questions about money. For example, a newscaster of Fuji TV's *Super News* commented, "It is the parents. The members don't know well" (Jan 20). When the scandal seemed to set to last, television news started to claim that monetary conflict was not the crux of the issue. On January 25, NTV interviewed via telephone a friend of one of the parents, who rendered his opinion that money was not an important problem (*Sukkiri!*; *News Every*). Fuji TV's *Tokudane* also adopted this approach, with the host remarking, "anyway, it is not the money problem. Parents understand their children's sufferings" (Jan 26).



Figure 6. TBC's Advertisement Saying "Hang in There, KARA"

Portraying KARA as the victims of the Korean entertainment industry, the Japanese media and Japanese fans were situated as the supporters of the members. One example clearly showing this stance was a TV commercial by the aesthetic company, TBC, that KARA filmed before the scandal. When launching the print advertisement and TV commercial, TBC made a catchphrase "*Ganbare, KARA,*" meaning "Hang in There, KARA"

and the outdoor advertisement bearing this message was installed in the Shibuya area of Tokyo, which is considered as the street of the youth. The evening news programs even picked up on this campaign, commenting that this catchphrase had been created to say, “TBC as a company is always behind them to support” (*Super News*, Jan 26), and “it is important to send messages of support when the whole Japan is thinking about KARA’s future” (*N Sta*, Jan 26).

By positioning KARA as victims and Japan as their supporters, Japanese news coverage did not hurt KARA’s positive image and maintained, or even enhanced, the commercial value of the band. At the same time, they justified the industry’s forthcoming business with KARA, including releases of dramas and CD/DVDs. In fact, Japanese television’s heated attention to the disband crisis lasted until around February 20th, but after that date the coverage of the ebbed and was replaced with KARA’s DVD release information.

3) Reflecting the Needs of Japanese Entertainment Industry

While criticizing the Korean system and portraying the members as victims, Japanese coverage paid close attention to the possible problems KARA could cause to the Japanese media industry. News items reminded the audience what the remaining schedule was like, and whether KARA would enter Japan so that they could film the drama as planned to prevent the episode from being cancelled. A panelist of Fuji TV’s *Tokudane* remarked, “what is important is not causing troubles to the industry personnel” (Feb 3). Maintaining the planned schedule was one of their main concerns, and what they aimed for an early settlement of the conflict. This may be the reason why the Japanese news did not

criticize the Korea Entertainment Producers' Association's statement that the band members would be expelled from the industry if they left their current agency. As for Japan, KARA's expulsion from of the Korean entertainment industry might sign an earlier resolution of the trouble. In criticizing the Korean industry, many panels expressed that Japanese companies would be willing to hire them.

One notable aspect of the Japanese news coverage is, that the it may have functioned as an effective promotion channel. For about a month, almost everyday, four commercial channels – NTV, TBS, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi – covered the twist and turns of the KARA scandal, and when they were covering KARA's story, the group's songs were used as background music. In the early stage of the scandal, some programs (for example, NTV's *Sukkiri!!* on Jan 20; TBS's *N Sta* on Jan 21) introduced about the members, their history, activities in Japan, with detailed figures of their CD sales. TV was still a powerful promotion medium in Japan, and media exposure as such may have increased the sales of the girl group during the period of crisis. In the Oricon chart released on February 24, 2011, which is based on the sales from January 31 to February 6, all of the two singles and two albums that KARA released by that time moved up relative to the previous week. Although KARA's disbanding scandal attracted the media's attention whether it would cause any problems in Japanese pop music and TV industry, at the same time, such media's concerned attention was edging towards to the favorable direction of increasing the profit of Japanese record company, and being channeled further the Japanese market.

Considering Japanese media was worrying about possible problems, it is easy to assume that was why TV-Tokyo neglected to cover the scandal. As the channel was broadcasting a weekly drama series starring the members of KARA, the channel may have

wanted to reduce the news that could negatively influence the drama. Instead, it took advantage of any news that could serve as a chance for promotion of the group and the drama. On February 3, when the members entered Japan to film the drama, TV-Tokyo's *News Fine* devoted significant amount of coverage to their arrival at the Haneda Airport in Tokyo, and the anchorman did not forget to remind the audience when KARA's drama was to scheduled to broadcast.

In sum, in covering KARA's disbanding scandal, Japanese TV stressed what Japan did and could do for the K-pop market. Japanese TV apparently attributed the problem to the agency and the Korean entertainment system and tried to emphasize the superiority of Japan's management system. Therefore, the members were presented as victims and Japanese industry and Japanese fans were positioned as supporters and important actors to improve the inferior working environment in the Korean entertainment industry. Japan's role as such clearly illustrated in a Japanese news segment, where a newscaster introduces a Korean newspaper article describing this scandal as the "nation's shame" but a panelist rebuts, saying "but raise their salary!" (TBS, *Hiruobi*, Jan 27)

3. The Presence of Japanese Capital in the Pop Culture Industry of Korea

As shown in the cases discussed above, the Japanese market took advantage of Korean pop culture and the so-called Korean Wave boom for the sake its dominant market, but in the meantime the Japanese media attempted to shore up the superiority of the Japanese market. Such an attitude comes from the confidence of the Japanese system and

the influence of Japanese capital. In the period called the era of New Korean Wave, Japanese capital began either directly or indirectly influence in the Korean market and the production of Korean pop culture contents.

One of the examples showing the Japanese market's expanding influence is Japan's participation in the production of Korean dramas. In this period, Japanese broadcasters and distributors started to invest in the Korean dramas instead of purchasing the dramas which had been broadcast in Korea and gained popularity. An early example of this trend was *IRIS*, which was aired on TBS and is known as the first Korean drama aired in the golden time slot (9-11pm) in Japan. In addition to providing filming locations as introduced in Chapter 6, Japan participated in the production and raised voiced a say in the casting and evolution of the story line of the drama. The articles heralding *IRIS* being broadcast in the golden time emphasized the participation of TBS in the pre-production.

According to the broadcaster [TBS], it had planned for more than five years and invested in the production committee. From the beginning, it has planned to broadcast the drama in the golden time. The Korean Wave is not particularly emphasized, and the target audience goes beyond the middle-aged women who are major audience of Korean dramas. (*Yomiuri*, Feb 23, 2010).

Yoshiko Yoshino of TBS business department handling this work has been planning this drama with the producers of the Korean production company for about 5 years.

The production cost is about 1.5 billion yen, and TBS has become a major investment company. TBS exchanged opinions from the casting, and ordered the stories "to include romantic elements that Japanese people prefer." They say, "we do not have to stick to in-house productions. We have to admit that good works are good and challenge."

As the CEO Shunji Ishihara says that "the drama is positioned as developing a new business," TBS acquired various rights in Japan. The subtitled version is already on air on CS's TBS Channel, and is to be on air on BS-TBS this fall. The business will be developed in various directions including DVD, photo books, novelizations, events, etc. (*Mainichi*, April 16, 2010).

Considering the Japanese broadcaster participated in the planning the drama from an early stage, it can be said the broadcast of IRIS is not a case in which the Japanese broadcaster has found a drama and decided to air it at the golden time. Instead, it invested in a Korean drama project in order to craft a Korean drama that could fit Japan's prime time shows.

Japanese capital's increasing influence on the Korean market changed the form of Japan-Korea co-productions. In this period, the presence of Japan was almost invisible in the text of the dramas. Japanese companies listed their names as co-producers only as investors of capital. An example of this trend is *Bad Guy* (2010), which is regarded as a co-production between Korea's commercial broadcaster SBS and Japan's public broadcaster NHK⁵⁹. While the typical Korea-Japan coproduction dramas hired actors and staff from the both countries to show the theme "cooperation," Japan's presence is almost hidden in this case except some filming locations in Japan. The director and all major cast members were Korean, and it was not easy for audiences to recognize that it was a co-produced work. However, the drama was promoted in Japan as a "Japan-Korea co-produced drama" and NHK's official website introduced this drama under the category of "NHK dramas." According to its official website:

Red and Black (the Japanese title of the drama) was co-produced between Japan and Korea. Actually, it was in Japan that filming started in February 2010. Gero Onsen, Sakae and Yokkaiichi Shopping Street in Nagoya, Yacht Harbor in Mie Prefecture etc. were selected as filming locations.

In their study on Pan-Asian co-production, Jin and Lee (2007) point out that "the

⁵⁹ In addition to these two broadcasters, production companies such as Good Story Inc. (Korean) and Asia Content Center Inc. (Japan) also participated in the production.

co-produced dramas have tried to create ‘image spaces’ that transcend traditional cultural and national boundaries” (41) and “increase their appeal to Pan-Asian markets” (42) by multi-national casting. Taking *Friends*, co-produced by Japan’s Fuji Television and Korea’s MBC which was aired in 2002, Jin and Lee observe that the narrative framework set up by this drama – transnational romance between a Japanese woman and a Korean man – had been reproduced in other dramas produced in 2002 and 2004. In her analysis of the same drama, Hirata (2005) states that the romance in the drama appraises and justifies the process through which a Japanese woman accepts Korean culture and such framework suggests a certain “role” that is given to Japanese women. Remarking on the episode where Kyoko Fukada, the lead actress of *Friends*, appeared in Korean traditional costume in a promotional event, she points out her costume symbolizes Japanese women as a mediator between Korean and Japanese culture. Co-produced dramas in early 2000s highlighted the theme of cooperation and exchange with multi-national casting and locations.

The Telecinema 7 project, introduced in Chapter 5, showed a slightly different structure of co-production. Unlike its predecessors, the dramas produced as a part of this project hired Korean directors and actors, and Japanese screenwriters, in which the role of Japan was limited to pre-production and funding. However, Telecinema 7 was still in agreement with the theme of cooperation between Japanese and Korean creators in the broadcasting industries, as the project was discussed in terms of the cultural exchange between Japan and Korea. In this regard, the news trend of coproduction in the form of Japanese capital invested into the Korean drama production has added a new definition and structure to the world of Japan-Korea co-production.

This new form of co-production and the Japanese market’s influence in the

Korean pop culture industry becomes visible through the fund supporting the co-production and production companies specialized in coordinating co-production projects. In August 2011, Japanese newspapers reported that Japanese television companies and production companies would join “Ilshin New Korean Wave Fund,” a fund established to support drama co-productions between Korean and Japan. Among the total amount of the fund, which was 30.5 billion won (30.5 million dollars approximately), the Korean government contributed 15 billion won, about half of the investment. Japanese companies contributed 8 billion won and Korean companies 7.5 billion won (*Yomiuri*, Aug 10, 2011). According to *the Asahi Shimbun*, the aim of Japanese companies participating in this fund was to be involved in the pre-production state (Aug 20, 2011). Officials from the commercial channel, TBS are quoted to explain the merit of participating in the fund:

“Titles that fit the Japanese market are limited. However, recently in the Korean Wave drama market, we have to purchase dramas without knowing the story and the price is soaring. It is good for us that we can secure dramas with good stories and control the price so that the price should be appropriate.” (*Yomiuri*, Aug 10, 2011)

Japan's aim is being involved from the planning stage. The price of hit dramas soars but there is no guarantee that the works popular in Korea will always be successful in Japan too. By investing a certain amount, we can be involved from the planning stage and “we can produce dramas that suit the needs of Japan.” (*Asahi*, Aug 20, 2011)

In this new form of co-production, Japanese companies participate in the production as investors affecting decisions related to the story line and price. By investing in the pre-production stage, Japanese companies craft Korean dramas that better suit the needs of their own market and the tastes the domestic Japanese audience, while at the same securing the broadcasting rights at a more reasonable price.

The Japanese company Asian Content Center Inc. (ACC), which specializes in coordinating co-productions and locations⁶⁰ had reportedly played a central role in establishing the fund (*Yomiuri*, Aug 10, 2011). In its feature article introducing the new trend of the Korean Wave, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* describes the company as the following.

ACC is a company that participates from the planning stage of the program on an equal footing with foreign production companies, owns the copyright of the program, and handles the distribution in Japan. "Because there are differences in language and customs, it will be more secure to work with Japanese companies than directly contacting Korean production companies," says the CEO Takaomi Deguchi. (August 25, 2010)

According to ACC's website, the company participated in the production of several Korean dramas, which are categorized as Japan-Korea co-production dramas. Like *Bad Guy*, these dramas were produced with Japanese funding hiring Korean actors, writers, and directors. Many of them were not broadcast on terrestrial channels in Korea but rather aired on cable channels. However, they were broadcast on Japanese satellite and terrestrial channels with relatively less time lags after broadcast in Korea. In a sense, this tendency shows that these dramas were produced for the Japanese market, rather than the Korean market and did not really have the staying power to secure a slot on the terrestrial channels in Korea. It is also interesting that these dramas starred actors and idol singers popular in Japan for major roles.

⁶⁰ *The Yomiuri Shimbun* introduces ACC as "a company that participates from the planning stage of the program on an equal footing with foreign production companies, owns the copyright of the program, and handles the distribution in Japan" (August 10, 2010). The official website of the company listed several Korean dramas as the Japan-Korea co-production dramas, such as *Mary Stayed out at Night* (2010), *Bad Guy* (2010), *Full House TAKE2* (2012), *Nail Shop Paris* (2013).

Table 12. Japan-Korea Co-production Dramas with Participation of ACC

Title	First Broadcast in Korea		First Broadcast in Japan	
	Terrestrial	Cable	Terrestrial	Cable/Satellite
Mary Stayed Out All Night	Nov-Dec 2010 KBS		May-June 2011 TBS	Feb-Jul 2011 DATV
Bad Guy	May-Aug 2010 SBS		Sept-Dec 2012 NHK General	Sept 2011 NHK BS Premium
Full House TAKE 2		Oct-Dec 2012 SBS Plus	Oct-Nov 2012 TBS	Oct-Dec 2012 CS-TBS
Nail Shop Paris		May-June 2013 MBC Queen MBC Dramanet		Jul 2013- DATV
Bride of the Century		Feb-April 2014 TV Chosun	Aug-Sept 2014 TBS	Jul-Sept CS Eisei Gekijo
My Unfortunate Boyfriend		April 2015- MBC Dramanet		May 2015- DATV

Source: ACC official website (<http://www.asia-cc.jp>)

Investments were made even in Korean broadcasters. In Korea, with the revision of the Broadcasting Act in 2009, four new cable channels called “general cable television” were set to launch in December 2011, and Japanese companies reportedly invested in one of these new channels. On December 31, 2010, the commercial broadcaster TV-Asahi, announced that it would invest in JTBC, one of the general cable television channels and would cooperate in areas including drama productions (*Nikkei*, January 1, 2011). *The Asahi Shimbun’s* article profiling the new CEO of the major publishing company Kodansha Ltd. also revealed the company’s plan to invest in JTBC. Kodansha’s new CEO made it clear that the company’s plan included producing Korean versions of TV dramas and movies based on Kodansha’s novels and comic books, saying “Korean dramas are expanding all over Asia and we want to take advantage of them to increase the sales of original publications and e-books” (March 6, 2011).

While Japanese broadcasters and distributors were interested in investing in the Korean market to secure dramas befitting the Japanese market's taste, Japanese media emphasized the international standing of the Japanese market, the second largest in the world. For example, in January 2011, *the Nihon Keizai Shimbun* interviewed the CEO of CJ Entertainment Japan, the Japanese branch of the Korean entertainment company. In the interview, the importance of the Japanese market is stressed:

Last year, CJ Entertainment Japan was founded as a joint investment company with T-Joy, the cinema complex affiliated with Toei⁶¹. ... "Japan is an important base to advance to the world" says Bae Hyung-Chan, the CEO of CJ Entertainment Japan. Japanese and foreign films fiercely compete in the world's second largest market next to the United States. "If you succeed in Japan you will succeed in all over the world" (*Nikkei*, January 25, 2011)

The small size of the Korean market is often contrasted with the international presence of Japan. In its article about the anti-Korean Wave protest in front of Fuji Television, *the Asahi Shimbun* raises the market size of Korea as one of the rationales of the Korean strategy going abroad.

Korea's "strategy" also exists as a background for the spread of Korean programs. With the economic crisis in 1997, major companies strengthened their global strategy. Since the population of Korea is one third of that of Japan and the size of the market is small, Korea started to produce works targeting overseas markets with the support of its government. (*Asahi*, Sept 20, 2011, emphasis original)

As we see in this quote, the Japanese media mention that the small market size, make Korean pop culture focus on international sales, and situate Japan as the most important market. With a combination of the Korean government's strategy discussed in

⁶¹ Toei Company Ltd. is one of the major movie production and distribution companies in Japan. Korean entertainment companies' Japan branch was established in cooperation with Japanese companies.

Chapter 6, the problems in the Korean domestic market itself are given as the impetus of the Korean market's attention to the Japanese market. Moreover, in this context, the Korean market's dependency on the Japanese market is discussed. For example, in the following feature article of *the Economist*, multiple references are made to K-pop's dependency on the Japanese market.

Meanwhile, the overseas expansion of Korean music industry mostly depends on Japan. The importance of the Japanese market is unchanged even now. ... In the background of K-Pop's aggressive overseas strategy, is the small market size of the music industry, which is smaller than a tenth of the Japanese market. The music industry of Korea cannot survive unless the export of K-Pop to Japan and the rest of the world. ... However, the exports of the Korean music industry heavily depend on the Japanese market. Out of Korea's exports in music in 2012 ... Japan occupies 80.6%. ... The sales revenue in the Japanese music market is ... the second largest in the world following the United States. In other words, although Southeast Asia and China have a large population, their music markets are not mature, and therefore they will not bring an increase in exports. ... The political relations between Japan and Korea got chilled, and the media exposure of K-pop also reduced. However, for the moment, no big change is seen in the trend of K-Pop fans in Japan. In order to expand overseas export in the future, K-Pop will continue to depend on the Japanese market. (*The Economist*, September 9, 2014, emphasis mine)

While expressing anxiety with Korean pop culture's presence in international markets, the Japanese media repeatedly emphasize how crucial the Japanese market is for the Korean pop culture industry to flourish. Even an article comparing Chinese and Korean dramas mentions the vulnerability of the Korean domestic market and Korean pop culture's dependency on the Japanese. On May 2014, *the Mainichi Shimbun* mentions that the price Chinese dramas are about a half of that of Korean dramas but observes that China does not produce works that will suit the Japanese market. The article argues that the Korean market was accommodating the needs of the Japanese market. "In the case of Korea, Japan is a major market. Korea hired actors popular in Japan and has exported a large

number of Korean Wave dramas” (*Mainichi*, May 9, 2014). Although it is generally said that the Korean Wave boom decreased after the territorial disputes in 2012, conflicting discourses are found surrounding the presence of the Korean Wave. Articles focusing on the political aspects and cultural exchange tend to conclude that the Korean Wave boom is over and lacks the impact it once had. On the other hand, articles reporting fans’ activities and the new business approaches in the K-pop market tend to write that the boom has not faded but rather expanded its fan base to younger audiences. Despite disparities as such, Japanese media are in unison emphasize the market size of Korea and the Korean pop culture industry’s awareness of the importance of the Japanese market.

The Japanese market’s confidence is not only shown in terms of the market size but also in terms of the quality of Japanese pop culture contents which leads to the Japanese market’s seemingly openness to the inroads of foreign pop culture. In its report about the anti-Korean Wave protests (Sept 20, 2011) *the Asahi Shimbun* introduces Taiwan’s reaction in which the government put further limited quotas of Korean television programs. At the same time, the article claims that such regulations are not desirable in the Japanese market, quoting a university professor saying, “Japanese programs’ quality is still high. We should consider supporting overseas business rather than making regulations” (*Asahi*, Sept 20, 2011). The confidence in the quality of Japanese programs is also found in the articles about the Southeast Asian market. They tend to attribute the popularity of Korean dramas in the region to the Korean government’s strategy to provide the programs for free, complicated copyright issues of Japanese programs, and the lack of support by the Japanese government. At the same time, they stress that Japanese programs are competitive enough in terms of quality. These articles mention that Japanese dramas such

as *Oshin* and trendy dramas were once be popular in these countries.

This stance is read as the Japanese industry's position that supports the idea of the free flow of pop culture contents. Unlike other Asian countries such as China, Korea, and Taiwan, Japan has never put restrictions on importing foreign pop culture, such as television programs and pop music.

4. The Korean Wave as a Genre

While the Japanese pop culture industry attempts to exercise its influence on the Korean market, the Korean Wave in Japan is received as a genre bearing specific characteristics. Korean pop culture without such characteristics is often introduced under the title of "Korean" movies or music, instead of the "Korean Wave." In general, the term Korean Wave is associated with the concepts such as pure love, secrets related to a characters's birth, excessive emotional expressions, and unrealistic settings. If Korean dramas and movies do not include such elements, they are easily described as "not like Korean Wave dramas/movies." *The Mainichi Shimbun* on August 25, 2016 reported about suspense dramas and dramas dealing with social issues, and did not label them as "Korean Wave" dramas. Instead, they were framed as "Korean" dramas. On the contrary, Japanese dramas and movies which do bear such characteristics are introduced as works resembling the "Korean Wave." An article introducing a Japanese romance movie described the movie as, "just like Korean Wave dramas," with complicated romantic relationship between characters (*Yomiuri*, March 16). Similarly, the movie depicting a story of a women suffering from amnesia and her husband was introduced as "a story like a Korean Wave drama"

(*Yomiuri*, April 20, 2012).

A similar tendency is found in categorizing K-pop. Particularly, female idol groups are characterized as having “perfect” vocal and dance abilities and their body parts such as legs that accompany sex appeal. Such characteristics of K-pop artists are contrasted with Japanese idol groups such as AKB 48, who are not good at dancing and singing at all but try hard to improve, which is part of their appeal. A magazine article about the Korean female singer, Hyun-a, concludes that “indeed, a Korean Wave idol must be like this,” describing her to have “brown long hair and beautiful legs shown under the hot pants” (*AERA*, Dec 24, 2012), as if such sex appeal is a typical characteristic intrinsic to K-pop artists.

Japanese media’s coverage of the international popularity of *Gangnam Style* is an example illustrating such tendency. *Gangnam Style*, a song by the Korean male singer PSY, gained popularity on the Internet, and became an international hit song that reached to number 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart. Despite the song’s popularity in Korea, the United States, and worldwide, Japan was an exception. According to the website of Oricon Chart, the song was not even officially released in Japan. In addition, Japanese media regards PSY and *Gangnam style* not as a part of the “typical” K-pop. *The Mainichi Shimbun* published an article titled “the Mystery of Psy (*PSY no Fushigi*)” on October 24, 2012, and analyzed the reason why *Gangnam Style* was not released in Japan, the country “that likes K-pop.”

PSY is a signer of YG Entertainment whose artists include the popular group “BIGBANG,” and there is no problem with his debut in Japan. He already stood on a stage in Japan in January this year. A problem comes from the world contract with Island Records. AVEX has the rights for the artists of YG, but Island is a label under Universal.

However, it seems that this is not the only reason why the release is being

delayed in Japan.

Firstly, there are lots of harsh criticisms that the song "Gangnam style" itself is a disco song which has nothing new, and the dance moves that are much talked about are no more than mocking horse-riding. Next, there are not a small number of people that say they feel a sense of incompatibility about the number of access of the video in spite of such problems. Moreover, looking cool is an important point presented K-pop to date as attractive. And there is the Takeshima issue... etc. (*Mainichi*, Oct 24, 2012, emphasis mine)

In this article, the complicated contract issues and the political issue surrounding the disputed island are also mentioned as reasons that PSY's debut in Japan is delayed. However, what is interesting is the ways in which the song itself is assessed. Disparaging the quality of the song, this article says that it is not "cool" unlike other K-pop music which had been popular in Japan. With the expression "a sense of incompatibility," or the feeling they cannot understand the reason of the song's popularity, the article points out that the success of the song does not resonate with the taste of the Japanese audiences and critics.

On November 21, 2012, the op-ed section of *the Asahi Shimbun* published a series of contributions about the international success of *Gangnam Style*. The piece starts with mentioning the song is differently received in Japan: "Do you know PSY? He is a Korean singer. The world is much fussing with his song, *Gangnam Style*. However, he is hardly known in Japan. What is this gap?" In this op-ed piece, Fumio Miura, a professor specializing in the media industry describes about the Japanese pop music industry, K-pop, and *Gangnam Style* as the following:

A hit in the US music market means a worldwide hit as it is. However, Japan is an exception. ... Because domestic market is large, you can earn secure profit by paying attention to domestic fans rather than going overseas. Japanese music takes up 80% of the market. Besides, it has a rich lineup, from AKB 48 to J-POP, Rock, Visual, Animation songs. Listeners have lots of choices and

foreign hit songs cannot join so easily.

Under such circumstances, KARA and Girls' Generation from Korea, with their full-blown dance and vocals, captured the group of listeners who were not satisfied with Japanese pops. However, the point is they sang in Japanese. In Japan, one condition of hit songs is that people can sing the songs at Karaoke.

It seems there was a plan to put Japanese lyrics to "Gangnam style" and to make it as "Roppongi style". But, I think, if I were a PR person, I must have gotten lost. It cannot be classified as typical coolness of K-pop, and it cannot be categorized as something different. (*Asahi*, Nov 21, 2012, emphasis mine)

In the quote above, Miura posits the Japanese market as different from that of other countries, showing a certain pride of the domestic market of Japan. Then, he states that K-pop could be popular in Japan because the songs were sang in Japanese language. He continues to claim that *Gangnam Style* is different from the typical K-pop popular in Japan, and therefore it would have been difficult to promote the song in Japan. For him, K-pop popular in Japan is a certain type of music that fits a specific category that the Japanese music industry wants. *Gangnam Style* does not fit in the category, and therefore is not regarded as a part of K-pop in Japan. *The Sankei Shimbun* even directly questions the tastes of the Korean Wave fans, describing the situation as showing the "severe world surrounding the Korean Wave" criticizing the tastes of the female fans of the Korean Wave, adding that it has nothing to do with the political tensions surrounding territorial dispute. The article quotes a man working in a shop in Shin-Okubo saying "the customers look for good appearances" and housewives saying "I'm not interested in PSY because he is not good looking" and "he is just a fat middle-aged man."⁶²

⁶² According to Kitahara (2013), it seems true that a man like PSY does not match with what the Japanese female fans look for in Korean entertainers. She explains that what Korean Wave fans desire for is beautiful and sexy adult men, and not funny people like PSY. However, in addition to clarify women's desire looking at the Koraen Wave, Kitahara (2013) also points out that Psy's invisibility in the Japanese media is totally because of

An article in *the Economist* (Nov 6, 2012) stated delivers that *Gangnam Style* is considered as “new Korean Wave” in Korea. However, it still contrasts the song with K-pop in Japan. According to the article, the K-pop that is popular in Japan and Asia are “stars that has been made” with the purpose of overseas export from the beginning. However, PSY is totally different because it is “domestic” (*The Economist*, Nov 6, 2012, emphasis original). In its feature about K-pop’s overseas strategy, *the Mainichi Shimbun* put it that PSY was a special case, and it was hard to say that the entirety of K-pop had penetrated globally. (*Mainichi*, Sept 9, 2014)

While the ways in which the Japanese media defines the Korean Wave could be viewed a case showing a form of localization of consuming foreign pop culture and media, these discourses also reflect Japanese media’s representation of the Other (Said, 1978). Though, a certain traits of the Korean Wave-related contents are held up as exemplars, in many cases the traits are treated in a negative way. If Japanese movies are described as being like Korean Wave contents, it implies a dissatisfaction. The *Sankei Shimbun* in 2009 expressed its dissatisfaction with a movie, complaining that the later half the movie was overly sentimental like Korean Wave dramas (Nov 13, 2009). An *Asahi Shimbun* article reviewing a movie pointed out that it was unnecessary to have a scene which the lead actor takes off his clothes, just like “service scenes,” scenes to please audiences’ eyes, in Korean dramas (May 8, 2014).

When the qualities related to the Korean Wave are easily associated with the

Japanese men and the mainstream ignores him. She sees the target audience of *Gangnam Style* would have been men and children, as in other countries, and criticizes the male-dominant Japanese society that it did not show the song on the media either due to the political reasons or they were jealous of the Korean pop culture’s international success.

1970s and therefore what is past and nostalgic, the media often juxtaposes Korea's present with Japan's past. As Japanese television enumerated the pre-modern traits of the Korean entertainment industry in KARA'S disbanding scandal analyzed in this chapter, the Japanese print media also reported the negative aspects that haunts to the Korean entertainment industry, such as rapidly increasing suicide rate, unfair contracts with management companies, and connections with illegal groups etc.

When stressing that the Korean music industry cannot help but focus on the Japanese market, the Japanese media at the same time describe the business related to the Korean Wave in a negative light. For example, *the Economist* criticized the K-pop related events in the following terms:

Looking at current K-pop events, following the intention of the Korean management companies, they tend to more focus on expensive, exchange events for specific fans from which easy and higher profits are anticipated (Sept 9, 2014).

The article does not clarify what exactly "exchange events" are, but they may include events in which fans can shake hands with, chat with, and take pictures together with Korean idol group members. Some events require fans to purchase CDs to participate in the events and it is not rare for fans to purchase dozens of CDs to gain multiple chances to meet and talk the entertainers they like. Increasing CD sales by using the CDs as tickets to events shares some characteristics with the adult night entertainment prevalent in Japanese society. In his commentary of a K-pop singers' concert, Kotaro Kondo stated that the only flaw of K-pop boys is that they do not get out of feeling like "hosts"⁶³ (*AERA*, August 8, 2016). By comparing the appearance and behavior of K-pop artists with hosts, the article in *AERA*

⁶³ A "host" refers to young men working at host clubs, bars unique in Japan where "young Japanese heterosexual men provide young Japanese women with various kinds of 'companionship'" (Yamagishi 2009, 10).

identifies K-pop with Japanese night entertainment.

Such a nostalgic, condescending point of view does not only apply to dramatic texts but extends to a more generalized perception of Korean society. In his op-ed contribution criticizing anti-Korean Wave protest, Kizo Ogura positions Korea as modern and Japan as postmodern:

In South Korea protests are nothing strange. ... There are also protests against a particular broadcaster's coverage.

Also in Japan, when the momentum for social reform was strong, that is, in the modern era, we had student movements and campaigns against the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. However, the modern collapsed at the end of the 70's, and the Japanese society became completely post-modern. However, in Korea ... democratization is under way. The core of society is still modern.

In the Japanese society where postmodernity has arrived, after all, nothing has changed and the society bears a feeling of blockage. Let's return to a modern era in which humans exercise their subjectivity. (Asahi, Nov. 11, 2011)⁶⁴

Here, Okura describes "being modern" as positive and as a value that the Japanese society has lost and therefore must return to. This connects to the idea of "nostalgia" that Iwabuchi (2002) argues and suggests a certain hierarchy between Japan and Korea, with Japan positioned as a more advanced society than Korea. Similar condescending stances are found in the articles chronicling the dark side of the Korean entertainment industry, such as celebrities' suicides, suspected connections with gangsters, and contract-related conflicts between entertainers and their management companies. In the stories dealing with issues as such, Japan is presented as a more advanced society that Korea should learn from.

⁶⁴ What was interesting is, the tone on of his article in general was favorable for Korea. While the author has a positive impression about the Korean society, he still puts Korea as modern and Japan as post-modern. Which can be connected to the idea that Japan is more advanced than Korea is.

Going further, even political scandals in Korea are compared to the stories of Korean dramas. The Japanese media reported the scandal involved the former Korean president Park Geun-Hye, which led to her impeachment as it was just like a Korean wave drama, and with these kinds of contexts, Korean dramas are said to reflect the reality of Korean society, corrupt and beset with problems. For example, *The Asahi Shimbun* on November connects the social problems of Korea to the story lines of Korean dramas.

The scandal involving President Park Geun-Hye and her longtime friend does not know where to stop.

Power, conglomerates, vanity, shamanness, male and female, university admission... A number of allegations like a bundle of stories of Korean Wave drama are also this country's diseases themselves. (*Asahi* Nov 11, 2016)

There are two indispensable points in Korean dramas appealing to feelings of Korean people. First, starting from the bottom of the society and make success in the strictly hierarchical society. Mrs. Choi, the accused, reached to the top in the two generations from her father, who flattered President Park Jung-Hee. (Jang Hee-Bong, Op-ed, *Asahi* Nov 30, 2016)

Here, the clichés and characteristics that appear in the Korean dramas are identified with the general characteristics of the Korean society. *The Mainichi Shimbun* even compared the scandal with the Korean history dramas: "This scandal of the Blue House [Korean president's residence] developed into turmoil surpassing the Korean Wave history dramas" (December 19, 2016). Although the term Korean Wave does not mean the Korean pop culture as a whole, the entirety of social problems in Korea are easily connected to the characteristics of Korean Wave dramas.

For the Japanese market and the Japanese media, the Korean Wave does not refer to the Korean pop culture in general. The Japanese market confers certain traits and the Korean Wave in Japan denotes only the contents bearing such traits. Those traits, which are

easily connected to the concepts of something past, something nostalgic, something pre-modern, differ from those of Japanese pop culture. In an article looking back on the past ten years of the Korean Wave boom, *the Yomiuri Shimbun* was not receptive towards the shift in Korean dramas towards having more diversity in genre and themes. In reporting the change of Korean dramas, it gives the evolution of Korean dramas is the biggest reason that Korean dramas became sluggish in the Japanese market:

Speaking of the Korean Wave, it's pure love. Such equation is a story of the past. Dissatisfied with the typical home dramas and love romance, Korean producers began to work on dramas dealing with professionals, such as criminal, medical, or courtroom dramas, and serious action dramas. The audience ratings are also good in Korea. However, it is said that there is a gap between Korean Wave fans who think such change make Korean dramas not different from Japanese dramas. "DVDs without elements of love are not sold. Sales are completely different even the same actor appears." (November 8, 2013)

This viewpoint suggests that Korean pop culture is useful in the Japanese market as far as it is different from Japanese pop culture. Without that characteristic differentiation as such, the Japanese market did not need to promote and broadcast Korean pop culture contents. However, such differentiation is made based on the hierarchical relationship between Japanese and Korean popular culture. Moreover, the constructed inferiority of Korean pop culture develops at the same time to the condescending standpoint about Korean society, particularly the political culture.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The promotion of Korean Wave dramas and K-pop through the Japanese media also reflects the changing media environment in the domestic media and entertainment

industry and the ways in which the Japanese industry coped with the changes. The launch of new media outlets, an increase of airtime, and a decrease of advertising revenue per channel forced the Japanese industry to turn to alternative contents. Korean dramas were reasonable choices because they were cheaper but guaranteed decent ratings and profits. The presence of K-pop idol groups that released CDs sung in Japanese language one after another was another promoting of the presence of the Japanese industry which wanted to reduce cost and risk. In the Japanese televisions coverage of the Korean girl group KARA's disbanding scandal, the media's sympathy towards the members and their attempts to reinforce the band's commercial value reveal how Japan posits itself in the transnational pop culture industry and their goals in extensively promoting Korean pop culture.

Also, the importance of the Japanese market in the Korean pop culture industry is also brought to the fore. Given Korea's small population and market size, the Korean pop culture industry repeatedly appears to be highly dependent on the Japanese market; in turn, Japan attempts to influence the production of Korean pop culture contents through investments. Korea-Japan co-productions that once highlighted international cooperation with international casts and staff now have taken the form of investments, hiding the presence of Japan in the contents of dramas themselves. By investing in the drama productions, the Japanese market can secure broadcasting rights with relatively lower costs, and at the same time, can craft dramas with contents fit contents fit for Japanese audiences' preferences. Also, such co-production reflects the desire of the Japanese pop culture industry which attempts to advance into the Asian market by participating in Korean pop culture productions.

Despite the merits that the Japanese market expects through by investing and

promoting Korean pop culture, the term Korean Wave refers to certain trends and clichés found in Korean pop culture contents. What is presented to as being like the Korean Wave is easily connected to the concepts that Korea itself is, backward, pre-modern, and nostalgic, which are not much different from the typical Japanese discourse on Asian pop culture. Differentiating Korean pop culture from Japanese pop culture and associating it instead with the quality of being backward and inferior, the Japanese media discourse attempts to reinforce a hierarchical structure between Japan and Korea, stressing the superiority and competitiveness of the Japanese industry. Also, if the Korean Wave has settled in the Japanese society as a genre, then, can it mean that the genre characteristics of the Korean Wave is something that cannot be separated the representation of the Other in Japanese society?

As sketched out above, Japanese media evidences ambivalent attitudes about the Korean Wave. While taking commercial advantage of it on the one hand, on the other hand, the media maintain condescending viewpoints on the Korean Wave. Jung (2012) points out that the Korean Wave “became the site of Japan’s conflicting desires, stimulating both consumption of and resistance to Korea’s pop culture products” (126). She explains of the background as the following:

From the standpoint of the Japanese music industry, the growing popularity of K-pop internationally has been bittersweet. The local media and music industries have certainly profited from the K-pop boom through their exclusive partnership deals. However, their failure to make J-pop singers internationally popular from the 1990s, especially in the US, may have hurt their national pride. (127)

Indeed, to hide that their national price has been hurt, Japanese media keep emphasizing how its domestic market has been the crucial agent that brought and support the pop

culture phenomenon, praising the advanced system in its entertainment industry.

In a sense, Japan's complicated standpoints reveal that it has not fully abandoned its desire toward the Asian market, as shown in the cases in the Asia boom in the 1990s. Analyzing Dick Lee's popularity in Japan in the 1990s, Iwabuchi (2002) observes that the Singaporean singer's music was highly appreciated in terms of its form of hybridization differentiated from that found in Japanese music, but such appreciation ebbed drew back as Lee's way of hybridization developed along in a different course. He points out, "the discursive value of Lee diminished soon after his music lost its strong 'Asian' exotic flavor" and Lee's "Westernized" music was "too familiar to Japanese audiences to be portrayed as a spectacular antithesis to Japanese hybridism" (168), which reminds of the current differentiation of the Korean Wave. Iwabuchi also suggests, "the Japanese appreciation of Lee's music could work collusively with Japan's project of reconfiguring its leading position in a China-centered dynamic space of cultural cross-fertilization in Asia" (167). Here, the Japanese industry's finding and appreciating the exotic Asian pop culture, different from Japanese is connected to its desire to lead the East Asian pop culture scene.

The way that Japanese market takes advantage of the Korean Wave shares some traits with the case of Dick Lee. The Japanese market attempt to reinforce its influence in the Asian – and going further, international – market with its investment in the Korean pop culture. However, at the same time, in its domestic market, it attempts to stress the differences between Japanese and Korean culture and forms a hierarchical structure between the two. The Japanese market expected the Korean Wave to play a role similar to what Asian pop culture in Japan played in the 1990s, creating "pan-Asian cultural fusion" (Iwabuchi 2002, 167) with Japan in the leading role. Then, how did the Korean Wave

answered to Japan's expectation as such?

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This dissertation has analyzed how the Japanese media reported the Korean Wave boom in Japan and therefore how the phenomenon was accepted in the Japanese society, in three dimensions of politics, economy, and the needs of the Japanese media and pop culture market. In political dimension, the Korean Wave was regarded as significant as a symbol of cultural exchange and mutual understandings. The two-way flow of culture was considered as necessary, and Japanese politicians, celebrities, and fans reproduced the traditional image of bridges (*kakehashi*) between Japan and Korea. Paying attention to the economic effects, the Japanese media took advantage of the Korean Wave contents' advertising effect as product placement. While the Japanese domestic economy and local governments benefited from the Korean Wave contents for town revitalization and new business opportunities, the product placement effect in the international market was viewed as a threat to the international presence of Japan and its economy. In terms of the pop culture market, although the Japanese media and pop culture industry continuously introduced and promoted Korean Wave contents, with the desire to have the superiority of the Japanese market confirmed hidden in the background. The Japanese market expanded its influence in the Korean market by investing in broadcasters and drama productions and made decisive choices regarding Korean idol groups and introduced selected ones to the Japanese audiences. Despite the spreading popularity, the characteristics of the Korean Wave contents were still considered to be differentiated from those of Japanese pop culture and easily connected to qualities related to what today's Japan has lost. What the Japanese market wanted to see from the Korean Wave contents was quite limited. While Japan

consumed Korean pop culture, or the phenomenon called the Korean Wave boom, in the way that fits the needs of Japanese politics, economy, and pop culture market.

1. Before and After 2012

Looking at the media discourse chronologically, the year 2012 was a turning point in the media discourse on the Korean Wave. Politically, a series of incidents chilled the bilateral relationship between Japan and Korea beginning in this year. In August, the Korean President Lee Myung-bak visited the disputed island Dokdo/Takeshima. In December the conservative LDP won the general election in Japan and the rightwing Abe Administration was launched. In 2014, the “comfort women” issue resurfaced, and although the conservative Park Geun-hye was inaugurated as the President of Korea in 2013, a Korea-Japan summit had not been held until November 2015. The launch of the LDP government in Japan also brought about an important change in terms of the government’s strategies related to pop culture. The Abe Administration positioned the Cool Japan strategy as one of the administration’s core policies and began to intensively support the pop culture industry.

This political and economic backdrop brought significant changes in the discourse of the Japanese media on the Korean Wave boom. Before 2012, the viewpoints connecting Korean Wave to cultural exchange were linked to specific practices in different parts in Japanese society. Japanese and Korean broadcasters cooperated in producing dramas and movies, the media called for the necessity to reduce the trade gap in cultural contents, and Japanese citizens participated in a variety of activities as Korean Wave fans. The Korean

Wave contents' economic contribution to the domestic Japanese industry and town revitalization was a major theme as well. Motivated by the success of Akita Prefecture's support for *IRIS*, other local governments showed their interest in boosting the local economy by supporting Korean drama productions. Examples of urban regeneration including Tokyo's Shin-Okubo area also drew the media's attention. In terms of the market, the K-pop boom and Korean dramas' popularity on the terrestrial channels proved that the Korean Wave provided the Japanese media and pop culture industry with profitable contents and human resources. Furthermore, Japanese companies were interested in investing in the Korean contents industry in order to secure the rights of contents and have these contents accommodate the needs of the Japanese industry and audiences.

In the media discourse after 2012, the Korean Wave remained an important symbol of cultural exchange but became a distant goal to realize. In particular, reports published in 2015, the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and Korea, the Japanese media frequently recollected how Korea's Open-door policy of pop culture, co-hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2002, and the Korean Wave have improved the relationship between Korea and Japan and called for cultural exchange and mutual understanding. While the media discourse in the political dimension goes no farther than abstract propositions, the economic discourse indicates a clear direction in terms of the government policy. The Korean Wave appeared as a counterpart of the Cool Japan strategy of Japan, and an anxiety related to Japan's international presence and pride coexisted with trust in the Japanese pop culture industry in the media coverage.

In a sense, the Korean president's visit to the disputed island heralded a failure of Japan's diplomatic policy aimed at the Korean Wave as a way to settle history issues and

build a future-oriented relationship⁶⁵ between the two countries. At the same time, Korea began to threaten the presence of Japan in the international market. In the media discourse emphasizing the positive potential of cultural exchange which was prevalent before 2012, Korea was positioned as a partner of Japan that would cooperate with Japan to advance into the Asian market. Such position weakened after 2012, and Korea began to be positioned as a rival competing with Japan in the Asian market.

The fact that the Japanese media's discourse on the Korean Wave appears different before and after political issues and change of government policies, suggests that the Japanese media's understanding and reception of the Korean Wave boom is largely influenced by the needs of domestic politics and economy. Although what the media covers may not reflect what the Korean Wave in Japan is exactly like, such understanding and reception repeated by media are reproduced and reinforced in the Japanese society in general.

2. The Cultural Imperialism of the Korean Wave

On May 8, 2017, the Korean cable channel Mnet published a press release, and denied a rumor related to the audience voting on one of its programs. The channel was broadcasting an audition style reality program in which the viewers' voting decides who advances to the next round. Notably only the residents in Korea were able to cast votes. However, viewers raised questions regarding a large number of Chinese viewers found ways to circumvent restrictions and cast votes; complaints alleged that the votes coming

⁶⁵ Future-oriented relationship (*Miraishikōteki Kankei*) is a phrase frequently appearing in Japanese politicians' speeches and comments to describe a desirable Japan-Korea relationship.

from China were distorting the voting results. Mnet repeatedly denied the rumor and explained they take every precaution to block the votes coming from overseas, but the controversy did not easily disappear. Korean fans of the Korean idol groups also began to raise their voice in regards to the influence of foreign fans. A twitter account openly discussed the issue of illegal tickets sold to fans overseas and questioned the current situation that makes it extremely difficult for Korean fans to purchase tickets to the events and concerts held in Korea.⁶⁶ The fans claimed that a large number of tickets are sold to Japanese and Chinese fans by dishonest means, at far more expensive prices.

These examples illustrate the new paradigm where national borders cannot block the flow of culture, and coupled with the technological developments such as the Internet, the Korean Wave may have become a perfect example displaying the five dimensions of global flows that Appadurai (1996) identified: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples, and ideoscaples. However, such global flow enabled by the international popularity of the Korean pop culture have led contents producers in Korea to pay more attention to bigger markets such as Japan and China. Thus, the audiences in Korea are isolated and ignored. The pressure of big markets upon the Korean media and pop culture environment is becoming apparent.

As discussed in chapter 6 and 7, the Japanese industries and capital interests have intervened in the production of Korean cultural contents in different ways. Local governments supported filming in return for showing casing their tourists spots in Korean dramas, and Japanese broadcasters and production companies made investments and became co-producers in order to craft Korean dramas that fit the needs of Japanese

⁶⁶ Recently Korean idol groups tend to hold concerts and events in foreign countries including Japan and China as often as they do in Korea.

broadcasters and audiences. Since the Korean Wave boom began, the payment for actors and the production cost of Korean dramas have soared and now the production of Korean dramas cannot help but rely on the investment of foreign capital. Particularly in order to secure a slot on terrestrial channels, production companies hire actors who are popular in Japan or China and tailor storylines and details in order to be favorably accepted by overseas audiences. According to Lee J. (2016), the increased importance of the Chinese market for Korean broadcasters and producers brought about changes to the system in which Korean television dramas are produced; some dramas are fully pre-produced before broadcast. The need to produce dramas well before broadcast had been discussed for a long time but it was regarded that such a system was not feasible, particularly in the current format, in which a drama series is composed of 16 or more episodes and two 70-minute episodes are broadcast every week. However, the Chinese government's policy demanding preliminary reviews of all the episodes pushed Korean producers to complete the production broadcast. Recently, particularly related to the retreat of Japanese capital, the production of Korean dramas has come to rely on investments from China, and Chinese investors want the dramas to be broadcast simultaneously both in Korea and China, in order to maximize the number of viewers and profit.

In examining the usefulness of the cultural imperialism in explaining the Korean pop culture's regional popularity, Jin (2007) points out that the cultural imperialism changed its form but is still useful, citing the Western cultural industries' new strategy in which they make investment instead of exporting cultural goods. Just as the US-owned or US-based transnational corporations' penetration in Korea means "another form of intensified cultural imperialism" (Jin 2007, 767), the Japanese industry's investment in the

Korean pop culture market can also be interpreted as a form of Japanese cultural imperialism in Korea. When Korean drama is broadcast in several countries, what is broadcast together is the contents and production placement influenced by the Japanese companies and local governments that supported or invested in the production.

Accommodating the needs of foreign audiences can be interpreted as an example of the hybridity of drama contents or localization of transnationally circulated cultural contents. However, the concepts of hybridity and localization are a form of resistance against hegemonic cultures, revealing local cultures' potential for negotiation. However, in this case, the Japanese intervention in Korean dramas and cultural contents is no more than a reproduction of the existing power structure under another guise. Rather, it should be understood as a powerful market's control over, or manipulation of the cultural contents of a country whose market is not big enough to be self-sustaining and therefore cannot help but relying on foreign investment and export. Moreover, the Japanese media reproduce and reinforce such structure not only economically but also discursively, by continuously confirming the Japanese pop culture industry's superiority over and difference from the Korean pop culture industry.

3. The Expediency of the Korean Wave

The Korean Wave in Japan is a unique case in which the origin of cultural contents has settled as a genre in the pop culture industry. Moreover, it was not the exporting country that pushed the phenomenon. Although the success of *Winter Sonata* may have been an unexpected windfall, but the Japanese industries were active in discovering the

potential of Korean cultural contents and promoting them via media outlets. As a result, the Korean Wave boom has brought the following benefits for the Japanese society.

First, the Korean Wave boom in Japan agreed with Japan's cultural diplomacy strategy, the ways in which the country has taken advantage of the culture to ameliorate the political tensions with neighboring countries. With lingering history issues and the remaining ban on Japanese pop culture in Korean televisions, the Korean Wave boom in Japan became an effective example illustrating the political potential of cultural exchange leading to mutual understanding between Korean and Japanese citizens.

Second, the Korean Wave also contributed to the domestic economy of Japan, through town revitalization and media mix. Counterintuitively, from the inception of the Korean Wave boom in Japan, the major beneficiaries have been the Japanese media and pop culture industry itself. As stated in chapter 3, it was Japan's NHK that made huge profit with the success of *Winter Sonata*, not Korea's KBS, the original broadcaster of the drama. KARA's disbanding scandal also revealed the fact that most of the profit went to Japanese partners.

Third, in the changing environment surrounding the media and pop culture industries, the Korean Wave contents became appropriate alternatives that led to cost and risk reduction. Korean dramas were cheaper but brought decent ratings, and K-pop idol groups were ideal choices for record companies to reduce the risk but still secure decent sales. Despite the popularity of the Korean Wave, the rumors and scandals related to the Korean pop culture industry were enough to confirm and reproduce the existing hierarchical relationship between the pop culture industries of the two countries.

After all, the Korean Wave in Japan was presented and promoted within the

Japanese system operating its pop culture industry and based on the contributions that the Korean pop culture made to the Japanese society. When such values do not exist any more, there is little need for the Japanese media to report and promote the Korean Wave. As this analysis has shown, this is exactly what happened after the year 2012 when the territorial disputes reignited between the two governments. Furthermore, the Korean pop culture could be replaced at any time with any other foreign culture. Even during the peak of the Korean Wave boom, the Japanese media created other “waves” to confront the Korean Wave, such as the Chinese Wave (*Hoaryū*) and the Thai Wave. Since 2012, Korean dramas disappeared in Japanese terrestrial channels other than TV-Tokyo, but Chinese history dramas are broadcast in terrestrial channels though the airtime is after midnight.

This argument is not to ignore or disparage the effort of those engaged in the Korean contents industry and what the Korean Wave have achieved to date. The Korean Wave functions as strong counter-evidence against the cultural imperialism thesis and showcased the soft power potential of a country with a small domestic market, which may be the reason why this phenomenon attracted researchers all over the world. However in order to make most use of the positive potential of the Korean Wave, we also need to examine possible negative aspects behind the liberating potential of it. As Kang (2015) points out, the current Korean pop culture, which has attracted international attention with the Korean Wave, displays “the productive yet exploitive system” (63) that neoliberalization and globalization brought to Korea. The desire of the larger markets, such as Japan as this study has detailed, suggest this phenomenon, which has regarded to have complicated existing power structures, may represent a new form in which the status quo is reproduced in a different way. If the discussions of the Korean Wave only focus on the

phenomenon's liberating and resistant potential, they might obscure the power structure underpinning the international cultural flow, which may be the spot where the significance of the phenomenon rests on.

In June 28, 2017, the girl group TWICE made its official debut in Japan. Before its debut, on June 6 NHK's morning news show *Ohayō Japan [Good Morning Japan]* broadcast a feature story about TWICE and the Korean fans of the Japanese members of the band. As always, the report emphasized that pop culture reduces the distance between the youths of Japan and Korea and called for the need of further cultural exchange. However, the case of TWICE shows a different approach compared to the reports related to Korean pop culture. While the reports in the past focused on the theme of cultural exchange and mutual understanding among the Japanese fans of the Korean Wave contents, this report shows Korean young people who support Japanese entertainers, although they are members of the idol group produced by a Korean company. Although TWICE is usually regarded as a K-pop idol group, the contexts as the Korean Wave and K-pop boom are blurred in this account. It is often argued that Korean pop culture has become multinational in terms of the performers, organizers, and capital, and therefore it is meaningless to identify the origin of the pop culture. If this is the case, then who does benefit from the Korean Wave, and who has the power in the regional and international flow of pop culture? These points need careful examination hereafter.

4. Limitations and Future Suggestions

This study has shown that the Korean Wave in Japan is not just a pop culture

phenomenon but is connected to many different aspects of Japanese society, including sports, minority issues, and social welfare issues. However, all these diverse aspects could not be discussed in this single study. Instead, this study focused on Japan's strategy related to media and pop culture. Further studies focusing on any of the areas listed above would contribute to the understanding of diverse aspects of the Japanese society and its use of pop culture.

This study examined the Japanese media's discourse of the Korean Wave, in order to locate the desire of the Japanese media and the Japanese society hidden behind Japan's enthusiastic reception and active media promotion of Korean pop culture. However as mentioned above, what the media reports is "a constructed reality" (Tuchman 1978) and therefore may not reflect the complicated relationship in the reality of the media and pop culture industry. Interviews of experts who were involved in the creation and development of the boom would give more insight to understand the desire of the Japanese media taking advantage of the boom.

This study only examined what happened in the importing country of Japan and explored various aspects in Japanese society related to the pop culture phenomenon. An examination of the desire of the exporting country, Korea would provide more in-depth understanding about the dynamics behind the boom. It is clear that Korea also benefited from the Korean Wave boom, and therefore the Korean Wave boom in Japan may be a sphere where different global desires interact and benefit each other. By comparing each country's approach, each country's global desires and the position it aims to attain in the transnational flow of pop culture will be more apparent.

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