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## UNDERSTANDING THE K-MAGIC: KOREAN POPULAR CULTURE IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

“When you put ‘K’ in front of something, it suddenly works magic.”, said a Swarovski senior vice-president at the International Luxury Conference in Seoul earlier this year, joking that he wished for ‘K-crystal’ to be developed because it would surely become very trendy soon.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, not only K-pop and K-drama, but also K-food, K-fashion and even K-books have been identified as new areas of cultural production, developed for and served to a foreign audience, riding on the wave of ‘everything Korean’. Well into its second decade, the Korean wave (hallyu, 한류, 韓流) has been an omnipresent scholarly topic when debating modern Korea for years. Perhaps because the term itself is wide enough or because the consequences of cultural consumption are so diverse, the phenomenon of hallyu has invoked numerous analyses, not only in the field of cultural and Korean studies, but also in economics, international relations, media studies, tourism studies, anthropology and other areas. As such, these debates, conducted in foreign academia, media or elsewhere, and those debating have themselves turned into vehicles of this ‘hallyu hype’. The Korean wave therefore has somewhat the feel of a self-fulfilling prophecy to it. However, concert tours of the K-pop boy-band TVXQ in East and South Asia gross tens of millions USD and attract an audience of hundreds of thousands,<sup>2</sup> the number of college students in the US taking a Korean language course has almost doubled in recent years,<sup>3</sup> and 1 out of 10 incoming tourists in Korea visit the country inspired by hallyu.<sup>4</sup> Though the line between the real and the perceived may be blurry sometimes, hallyu has established itself as a phenomenon worth a serious academic reflection.

In the Czech Republic too, Korea is no unknown, though our attention shifted dramatically in the course of the eventful 20th century, from the socialist fraternity with the North to a prosperous business partnership with the South. And culture followed. While in the 50’s and 70’s, for instance, books of the North Korean poet Cho Ki-cheon were being translated into Czech and the North Korean movie *Flower Girl* awarded a special prize at the Karlovy Vary International Film, respectively, these days we read Kim Young-ha in Czech and watch Kim Ki-duk on our main TV channels. Meanwhile, South Korea has become our fourth biggest non-European

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<sup>1</sup> *The Korea Herald*, on-line, 27.5.2015. Accessed 29.4.2015. Available at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150527000856>.

<sup>2</sup> Hankuk kyōngchae [Korean Economy], on-line, 2.5.2013. Accessed 30.4.2015. Available at <http://www.hankyung.com/news/app/newsview.php?aid=2013050261471>.

<sup>3</sup> *Voice of America*, on-line, 24.4.2014. Accessed 30.4.2015. Available at <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/content/more-us-students-learning-korean/2732095.html>.

<sup>4</sup> *Korea Tourism Organization*, on-line, Korean Wave: Treasure of Korea Tourism. Accessed 30.4.2015. Available at <http://dtxqt4w60xqp.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/docpdf/koreanwave.pdf>.

trading partner, employing over 12.000 people locally and priding itself on having made the largest ever single investment in the country (a Hyundai car manufacturing plant).<sup>5</sup> And finally, perhaps most importantly for our debate, the Czech cover dance girl-band *O.M.G.* won the Grand Prize in the final round of the K-pop Contest in Korea in 2012. Not only that, Czech K-pop performers have scored top positions at this world championship ever since. K-pop has found its fans among young people and hallyu-focused events, such as flash-mobs, contests and gatherings, have been organized in various cities. The number of Korean restaurants in Prague has reached ten and Missha shops, offering cosmetic products of this popular Korean brand, have been opened both in Brno and Prague. On top of that, applicants for the Korean studies major at Charles University have been steadily growing in number, as are the learners of Korean language in language schools. Has hallyu hit us then? Depending on the criteria one sets, the answer may be both yes and no. Korean popular culture products, mostly (or perhaps even exclusively) K-pop and K-drama, have been enjoyed by a certain socio-demographic group, whose number we now count in hundreds and who, through the increase of their interest in anything Korean, communicate among themselves as well as towards others a new image and perception of Korea. However, for the general population this has arguably an impact close to zero. The patterns of spread and acceptance of hallyu in the Czech Republic as compared to other European and Asian countries are interesting research material, however.

In an attempt to elaborate on the many aspects of hallyu discussed above and to reflect on the influence of Korean popular culture in the Czech Republic and the rest of Europe, an international academic conference was organized in November 2014 jointly by the Czech-Korean Society and the Korean Studies Department of Charles University in Prague. Entitled '*Winning Central Europe: The Spread and Reception of the Korean Wave in the Czech Republic and the Adjacent Countries*', the multidisciplinary conference gathered 18 speakers from 9 European countries, who focus their research on hallyu in their particular fields of academic study, ranging from Asian studies through diplomacy to musicology. Thanks to the generous support of the Academy of Korean Studies that enabled the organization of this event, and to the speakers who shared their academic expertise, an important addition to the scholarship on hallyu in Europe was produced<sup>6</sup> and the discussions shared among the top European hallyu studies scholars shed light on how to assess the current state of hallyu in the Czech Republic.

This special issue introduces a series of eight papers presented at the conference by senior scholars, PhD candidates or graduate students. The issue starts with the reflection of hallyu in the Czech Republic by **Vladislava Mazaná** (Charles Univer-

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<sup>5</sup> Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on-line, Republic of Korea: Business and Economic Cooperation. Accessed 30.4.2015. Available at [http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/encyklopedie\\_statu/asi/korejska\\_republika/ekonomika/obchodni\\_a\\_ekonomicka\\_spoluprace\\_s\\_cr.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/encyklopedie_statu/asi/korejska_republika/ekonomika/obchodni_a_ekonomicka_spoluprace_s_cr.html).

<sup>6</sup> Hallyu in Europe has been discussed in the recent years most importantly at a conference called '*Years of Radical Change: Conference on Korean Screen Culture*' at SOAS (London, 2013) and in the book *Global Impact of South Korean Culture : Hallyu Unbound* edited by Valentina Marinescu (Lexington Books, 2014).

sity in Prague). Rich in factual data, her sociological study provides a great overall picture of the popularity of Korean pop culture and explains the specifics of Czech K-pop fandom, such as the influence of the Vietnamese community, the largest non-European minority in the Czech Republic. Next are two pieces focused on the various differences in the acceptance patterns of Korean popular culture in the West and in the East. **Valentina Marinescu** (University of Bucharest), one of the most prominent European hallyu scholars, explores the unique characteristics that differentiate the reception of Korean cultural products among an Eastern European audience as compared to the reception of other Asian cultures. In most cases, K-pop is the main trigger of interest in Korea and 'respect' is the most positively viewed value, she suggests, after conducting a vast interview-based research among hallyu fans in Europe. The third article, by Japanologist **Anna Jarchovská** (Charles University in Prague), elaborates on the role of cultural proximity in the acceptance of K-drama, comparing the popularity of one of the most successful Korean dramas, *Winter Sonata*, in Japan and in western countries. She argues that while some values are shared across cultures (e.g. 'pure love'), other might be difficult to grasp by a culturally diverse audience; in reaction to cultural products, consumers tend to draw from their own cultural reservoir.

The next part concerns cultural content of hallyu products and its ability to shape perceptions of certain issues among wider public. **Alexandra Lichá**, an anthropologist (Charles University in Prague), reflects a phenomenon somewhat reverse to hallyu – the immense popularity of Prague as a romantic tourist destination among Koreans ever since the city was featured in the K-drama *Lovers in Prague*. She explains the portrayal of Prague as 'lived' by Korean tourists, mostly newly-weds and young backpackers. In the next article, **Alexandra Urman** (Higher School of Economics, Moscow) analyses Korean films for their depiction of politically important historical events against the backdrop of developments in the film industry itself. The take in films of e.g. the Korean War, the inter-Korean relationship or on the Gwangju uprising, tends to change over time and related correlation can be found in public opinion, the article suggests.

In the final part of this issue, hallyu is viewed as an industry and institution whose power and potential have diverse consequences. First, **Lucie Šarmanová** (University of Economics, Prague) positions hallyu in a broader perspective as a tool for Korea's image-making efforts. In her descriptive article, she touches upon the many buzzwords we have been hearing in relation to the modern 'dynamic Korea', be it nation branding, soft power or public diplomacy. One of the hotly debated impacts of hallyu recently has been the incoming medical tourism to Korea; **Paweł Kida** (Seoul National University) explains in his article, how the Korean wave, together with the competitive advantages of medical companies involved, brings the Japanese, Chinese and Russians to Korea for various medical treatments, from general health checks to plastic surgeries. Lastly, **Renáta Hanó** (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) discusses the PR industry related to hallyu and the role of big entertainment houses in the popularity of K-idols. The competition among emerging performers is severe

and the success of the debut song is key in creating new idols; the last manuscript is a case study analyzing the storytelling strategies used to generate popularity of the K-pop band EXO who debuted claiming they had superpowers and came from a planet called Exo.

Some doubt the artistic quality of Korean popular culture products and many, myself included, are rather skeptical about the claims that the Korean wave is sweeping across the world. Rather than the numbers, however, what does qualify hallyu as a fascinating research topic is the variety of social interactions that it invokes, both on-line and in the analogue world, and the interplay of diverse intermediaries in the process of exporting Korean culture abroad. The present issue will, the editors hope, add to the understanding of some of these key ramifications of the often debated, but rarely challenged, hallyu phenomenon.

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/  
The Czech-Korean Society

Prague, May 31, 2015



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# ON THE SPREAD AND PERCEPTION OF KOREAN POPULAR CULTURE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Vladislava Mazaná

**Abstract:** *The spread of hallyu is considered one of the goals of Korean foreign policy. “The Korean government took the position that the Korean wave must be the product of sheer competition in the global market and an export-oriented policy should be established to maximize economic profit.”<sup>1</sup> Korean popular music, films, dramas and other cultural products promoted and labeled as the Korean wave are continuously gaining popularity among young Europeans. When compared to the impact of hallyu in Japan, China or Southeast Asian countries, the awareness of this phenomenon in the Czech Republic is rather low. However, communities of hallyu supporters are constantly growing and the number of hallyu-related events is rising each year. The success of Czech K-pop performers at the international K-pop contest proves the devotedness and enthusiasm of the Czech K-pop community. This article is focused on the promotion, spread, reception and perception of K-pop, which is the most successful product of hallyu in the Czech Republic.*

**Keywords:** *K-pop, Hallyu, Czech Republic, Korean popular culture, fandom*

## Introduction

Not only Korean popular music, films and dramas, but also Korean comics, fashion, cosmetics, food, language and games are promoted as parts of the Korean wave. As such, these cultural products are aimed to sweep the global markets and present Korea as a destination worth visiting. In the case of the Czech Republic, a Central European country, K-pop is gaining the most popularity among all aspects of hallyu. The “K-poppers” (as Czech K-pop consumers call themselves)<sup>2</sup> are gathered around a citizens’ association named “Czech hallyu Wave” (CZHW) which is represented by enthusiastic K-pop fans who are engaged in organizing fan meetings, hallyu events, the national round of the international K-pop contest (“K-pop World Festival” in Changwon) and overall promotion of Korean popular culture. Due to geographical reasons (the Czech Republic is rather a small sized country),<sup>3</sup> the K-pop fandom is centralized to the capital Prague, where most hallyu-related events take place.

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<sup>1</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang: “Reading the ‘Korean Wave’ as a Sign of Global Shift” *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 147–182.

<sup>2</sup> The Czech term used to call a fan of Korean popular music is “K-poper” (male form) and “K-poperka” (female form), the plural form of the term is “K-popeři”.

<sup>3</sup> The area of the Czech Republic is 78,866 km<sup>2</sup> pub, the number of inhabitants is 10,436,560 people (as to the 2011 census).

Besides there are a few small-scale events in other cities.<sup>4</sup> However, the greatest part of the K-pop community's life takes place online. Although some of the fans are scattered in small groups, the majority of them follow the activities of either Czech Hallyu Wave or AsianStyle,<sup>5</sup> the two leading communities in the field of hallyu in the Czech Republic. Therefore, the online life of hallyu consumers is centralized to the two above-mentioned virtual communities.

Supported by the Korean government and companies, Korean culture is promoted in a unique and highly centralized way. "The current Korea boom is further consolidated by deliberate marketing efforts of some Korea companies operating in these countries."<sup>6</sup> In the Czech Republic, all of the interested subjects, such as the Korean embassy, fan communities, importers of Korean goods, etc., cooperate in order to support and spread Korean popular culture. There are several Korean restaurants in Prague, Korean films are usually on the programme of international film festivals, but the popularity of any Korean cultural product cannot be compared to the great success of K-pop. More than a half of hallyu supporters state that besides K-pop they are also interested in Korean language (54%), Korean films (48%) and Korean dramas (46%). The success of K-pop has direct impact on the rising popularity of Korean language and Korean studies as a major at university level. With the exception of PSY's Gangnam Style, generally, the Czech public is not familiar with Korean cultural products. Rather than that, Korea is known as a producer of cars and electronic devices. "The comparison of a film to Hyundai cars – which at that time were considered the 'pride of Korea' – was apt enough to awaken the Korean public to the idea of culture as an industry."<sup>7</sup> Although the Korean pop culture industry has made its way to Central Europe, South Korea still wins more recognition as a producer of cars and smart phones, the success of K-pop is only marginal. The number of K-pop fans may not exceed 3000 people, but despite this low number, there may be around 200–300 active members who are engaged in spreading Korean popular culture. On the homepage of CZHW it is stated that there are thousands of active fans in the Czech Republic, however, this exaggerated statement seems to form a part of the hallyu promotion strategy.

This article is divided into two parts, the first section is focused on the spread and promotion of K-pop, whereas the second part analyses the ways of its perception by the Czech audience and the various forms of fandom.

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<sup>4</sup> The Czech-Korean Society organizes a Korean cultural festival ("Korean Days") in Ostrava each year, Hallyu presentations are usually on the schedule. Ostrava is the third largest city in the Czech Republic, situated close to the Polish border, this city is the administrative centre of the Moravian-Silesian region. In this region there are factories of Korean companies.

<sup>5</sup> AsianStyle is a platform not only for Hallyu supporters but for fans of other Asian popular cultures too.

<sup>6</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang: "Reading the 'Korean Wave' as a Sign of Global Shift" *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 147–182.

<sup>7</sup> Shim, Doobo: "Hybridity and rise of Korean popular culture in Asia" *Media Culture Society* 2006, 28, 25. available online: <http://mcs.sagepub.com/content/28/1/25>

## Methodology

The outcomes presented in this article are based on interviews and surveys conducted in 2013 as part of a research project focused on cultural perception and social impacts of the Korean wave worldwide. The previous study examined the perception, reception and the overall awareness of hallyu among the Czech society and was published as a chapter in “The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: hallyu Unbound” by Lexington Press in 2014. In that volume, not only the impacts of K-pop but also other aspects of hallyu were discussed. For the purpose of this article, there were additional questionnaires and interviews conducted among 78 members of the Czech K-pop fan community in 2014.

## K-pop audience in the Czech Republic

Most of the K-pop fans as well as K-pop contest participants<sup>8</sup> are female aged 13–22 years. In the Czech Republic, there is a numerous Vietnamese minority.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, along with Czechs and Slovaks,<sup>10</sup> young Vietnamese form a great part of the Czech K-pop audience. From the view of Vietnamese fans, K-pop represents Asian culture and as such, it bolsters up their status as Asians and strengthens their Asian identity. Hence, K-pop consumers believe that the success of hallyu plays an important role in fighting xenophobia and discrimination. “The main motive of racial intolerance (especially against black people) in our country is an almost irrational xenophobia, ignorance of the environment that those people come from, and also the lack of interest to understand and accept someone’s otherness.”<sup>11</sup> The success of K-pop is believed to raise awareness about Asia in general and to draw attention to Asian popular culture. Also, in the eyes of K-pop fans, the attribute “Asian” carries such connotations as cool, trendy and attractive.

Although most K-pop supporters express their interest in Korean language, only 10% state that they master Korean at some level of proficiency, while 35% are at a stage of learning and 55% do not have any knowledge of the language at all. When compared to the number of Japanese speaking fans of Japanese popular culture,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> At the final round of the 2013 K-pop contest there were 18 acts, among these there were 64 female performers and only 3 male performers, the number of Vietnamese participants was 12, the average age was 17.3 years, the youngest performer was 13 years old and the oldest performer was 22 years old. Information about the performers is accessible at [czechhallyuwave.cz](http://czechhallyuwave.cz).

<sup>9</sup> The official number of Vietnamese people living in the Czech Republic is 55,585 (as to the 2011 census), however the 2012 estimates by the Czech television were about 100,000 people. The Vietnamese minority ranks as the third largest ethnic minority in the Czech Republic.

<sup>10</sup> With a number of 78,977 people (as to the 2011 census), the Slovaks form the second, largest ethnic minority in the Czech Republic.

<sup>11</sup> Hulec, Otakar: „Černá tvář a česká xenofobie” *Nový Orient* 1997, 9: pp. 325–327.

<sup>12</sup> Hereby the term Japanese popular culture embraces all of the comparable aspects as Hallyu does, such as anime, manga, food, film, dorama, fashion, cosmetics etc.

fans of Korean popular culture have only a little knowledge of Korean language.<sup>13</sup> Japanese popular culture commonly forms a direct link to Korean popular culture. Therefore 30% of Czech hallyu fans get acquainted with Korean popular culture products through Japanese anime, manga or J-pop. As Shim notes,<sup>14</sup> “the popularity of Japanese popular culture in Southeast Asia in the 1990s facilitated an easier Introduction of Korean popular culture there because of similar aesthetics and cultural styles.” In the eyes of many Czech hallyu fans, the understanding of Korean pop culture was facilitated by the previous acquaintance with Japanese popular culture. Other fans have discovered K-pop randomly while browsing the internet, through friends or social networks.

Despite the fact that the beginnings of hallyu date back to the 1990's, Central Europe got to ride on the Korean wave much later. The second half of the 1990's marks the spread of the phenomenon across East Asia, with the initial boom in 2001 in China and great success in Japan in 2003. But it was not until the turning point in 2007 when Hallyu started to expand to the whole world thanks to spread via social media (such as Youtube) and social networks (e.g. Facebook) and gained new supporters around the world.<sup>15</sup> The Czech Republic fits within this scope with no exception, in the academic year 2007/2008 the number of applicants for Korean studies at the Charles University in Prague<sup>16</sup> doubled (when compared to the previous year) for the first time. The second influx of new hallyu fans occurred in 2012 when PSY's “Gangnam Style” happened to be the most watched video on Youtube and topped the charts worldwide. Though K-pop fans do not consider PSY a representative artist of K-pop, it is indisputable that this artist managed to make the whole world aware of the existence of K-pop. In this case, too, the number of applicants for Korean studies in 2012/2013 corresponds with the sudden rise of the popularity of K-pop.

## **The spread and promotion of K-pop**

The leading force of the Korean wave is generally considered to have been TV dramas. This statement is true for the spread of hallyu in East and Southeast Asia, but in Central Europe the situation is somewhat different. Czech TV has successfully aired some of the South American TV series commonly known as “telenovelas”

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<sup>13</sup> According to the results of a survey by H. Zawiszova, up to 87% of fans of Japanese popular culture state to have a knowledge of the Japanese language (the outcomes of the survey were presented at the Hallyu conference “Winning Central Europe: Spread of the Korean popular culture in the Czech Republic and the Adjacent Countries” in Prague, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Shim, Doobo: “Globalization and Cinema Regionalization in East Asia” *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 233–260.

<sup>15</sup> Jin, Dal Yong: “Hallyu 2.0” *II Journal* 2012, 1: pp. 3–7.

<sup>16</sup> Palacky University in Olomouc is the second university to open a Korean Studies major, as of 2015 there is a curriculum of “Korean studies for Business Praxis” providing lectures on Korean language, economics and society. The Department of Korean studies at the Charles University in Prague has a tradition since 1950. During 2006–2008 there was an optional course of Korean language at the University of Ostrava, later, in 2009–2011 there was one at the Metropolitan University in Prague.

at the beginning of the new millennium, but despite the attempt of the Korean representatives, Korean drama has not been broadcasted on Czech TV. There is a common belief that Europeans find it difficult to distinguish Asian faces which would make it difficult to follow the plot of an Asian drama. However, as stated in an article published on AsianStyle, Vietnamese people born in the Czech Republic do not have problems with distinguishing European faces.<sup>17</sup> Although K-dramas are not shown on Czech TV, hallyu fans can easily access these online. Almost a half of hallyu fans admit to be doing so.

The emergence of youth fan power and the efforts of aggressive marketers in the culture industry are some of the factors behind the success of K-pop. Cho Hae-Joang cited a special report on the economic effects of the Korean wave which was drawn up by the Samsung Economic Research Institute in 2005, entitled “The Korean Wave Sweeps the Globe.”<sup>18</sup> According to this report, there are four stages to classify the import of hallyu in various countries, 1) simple enjoyment of Korean popular culture, 2) buying related products such as posters, character items, tours, 3) buying “Made in Korea” products, 4) development of a general preference for Korean culture itself. According to the report there are no countries that belong to the fourth category, however, at present times it could be claimed that many countries have reached the final stage. In case of the Czech Republic, definitely, due to the small extend of the present hallyu community, we cannot speak of the whole country, but if we stay focused on the K-pop fans only, we find a tendency towards stage four. K-pop fans are entangled by “feeling Korea”, “loving all that is Korean”, and the export of Korean food, drinks and lifestyle, which contains the essence of Korean aesthetics, emotions, traditions, and culture.

“Where Korean products exist in high concentrations, this is accompanied by the desire to travel to Korea, to learn the Korean language, to dress like Korean entertainers, and to learn the latest in Korean entertainment news.”<sup>19</sup> K-pop fans start their fan activities in a modest way by following activities of the hallyu fan community online. As active members, they themselves promote and spread the Korean wave by sharing music videos and pictures on their profiles, they engage in organizing hallyu events and fan meetings. As shown in the pictures below, the official partners of the main hallyu event, the K-pop contest, are not only the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also Korean companies that operate in the Czech Republic. The promotion and spread of hallyu is highly centralized, events are organized in close cooperation of all of the interested subjects; these are the fans, Korean government and Korean companies.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.asianstyle.cz/kultura/14905-vietnamska-krasa-je-stejna-jako-ta-nase> accessed on May 27th, 2015

<sup>18</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang: “Reading the ‘Korean Wave’ as a Sign of Global Shift” *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 147–182.

<sup>19</sup> Yin, Kelly Fu Su and Liew Kai Khiun: “Hallyu in Singapore: Korean Cosmopolitanism or the Consumption of Chineseness?” *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4.



1



2



3

**Picture 1 and 2.** Official posters for the first K-pop contest in the Czech Republic in 2011.

**Picture 3.** Official poster for the second K-pop contest in the Czech Republic in 2012

In 2011, five enthusiastic fans of the Korean wave got together and formed a non-profit citizens' association named "Czech Hallyu Wave" (CZHW) which plays a crucial role in spreading the Korean wave inside the country. This movement is responsible for the organization of fan meetings, the national round of the international K-pop contest and other hallyu-related events. The above-mentioned annual K-pop contest has been extended to a weekend-long hallyu event at which fans can hold and attend presentations on hallyu or Korea related topics, join a K-pop dance workshop, take part at the K-pop flashmob, taste Korean food and purchase Korean products. The event offers a great opportunity for the fans to meet each other and to discuss about their (sometimes hidden) passion. Also, it is a win-win solution for both sides, on one side the Korean government and the private sector (Korean and domestic companies who want to sell Made-in-Korea products), and on the other side, the fans who are eager to buy these. Czech and Korean media have been reporting on the event.

Nowadays hallyu has become a common part of Korea-related events, may it be an event focused on Korean cuisine or traditional art. However, number one in promoting Korean pop culture is the internet, namely social networking sites, on-line communities and profiles of K-pop fans who successfully spread the message of "Dynamic Korea".

## The reception and perception of K-pop

The common argument that Korean popular culture is popular in Asia because of anti-Japanese and anti-American sentiments is partly applicable to Central Europe which is overflowed by products of American popular culture. Cho argues<sup>20</sup> that the Korean ballads were imitations of Western music while most of the Korean dramas

<sup>20</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang: "Reading the 'Korean Wave' as a Sign of Global Shift" *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 147–182.

were clearly copied in many aspects from those of the American and Japanese. He claims that the South Korean cultural industry succeeded in creating their version of the products through quickly copying Western blockbuster films and Japan's comedies and dramas. Products of Korean pop culture are perceived as Korean, as Pan-Asian, and as international. "The Korean wave offers an alternative to the domination of Hollywood and Western entertainment. For transnational migrants, the Korean wave drives a wedge into Pan-Asian solidarity."<sup>21</sup>

Czech K-pop supporters evaluate K-pop as original and completely different from other genres. Another reason for their primal interest in Korean pop music is the overall interest in Asia, Japan in particular. Elaborated choreographies, sophisticated style, fashion and perfect appearance of K-pop artists is another important factor. Actually, the image of K-pop artists is valued higher than the music itself.<sup>22</sup> The public evaluations on K-pop range from perfect, original, creative, colourful, innovative, fresh to commercial, material, sexist and artificial. Lyrics of the songs do not matter much since most of the Czech K-pop fans do not speak Korean. Ma Sheng-mei writes<sup>23</sup> that although she is an outsider to the Korean language, she finds in the Korean wave an uncanny familiarity through the Chinese-inflected Korean tradition, from the grand ideology of Confucian patriarchy to minor, decorative calligraphy. And, of course, Asian faces and bodies are the basis of fan identification. These arguments are valid from the view of Czech Vietnamese people who consider K-pop a means to bolster up their status as Asians in a Central European society. When speaking of the factors that cause the immense popularity of Korean pop culture in Asia, the cultural proximity is often stressed. "The recovery of Korean people's sense of pride and self-confidence is linked to notions of cultural essentialism. The prevalent assertion that the popularity of Korean popular culture stems from family values and a Confucian sensibility assumes a common Asian culture."<sup>24</sup> For Vietnamese fans of hallyu, the traditional conservatism in social etiquette and gender relationships as presented in K-dramas are perceived as close to the native culture. "It is often noted that the popularity of Korean TV dramas in Asia owes much to the familiarity of Confucian-based values, such as family-orientatedness, respect for the elderly, preference for sons, and the unique relationship between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ma, Sheng-mei: "Tradition and/of Bastards in the Korean Wave" *Korea Journal* 2006, 46, 3: pp. 132–153.

<sup>22</sup> Mazana, Vladislava: "Cultural perception and social impacts of the Korean wave in the Czech Republic." In Marinescu, Valentina (eds.): *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: Hallyu Unbound*. Lexington Press 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Ma, Sheng-mei: "Tradition and/of Bastards in the Korean Wave" *Korea Journal* 2006, 46, 3: pp. 132–153.

<sup>24</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang: "Reading the 'Korean Wave' as a Sign of Global Shift" *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 147–182.

<sup>25</sup> Kim, Hyun Mee: "Korean TV Dramas in Taiwan: With an Emphasis on the Localization Process" *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 183–205.

Czech hallyu fans who watch Korean drama admit that these aspects are very interesting because they can learn about a totally different culture and get to know about the life in Korea. "Dramas are not the trivial pursuits of people without power, but rather, represent a popular genre that plays a key role in the construction of public opinion."<sup>26</sup> So does popular culture. The emerging awareness of K-pop among Czech public is believed to have impact on changing negative attitudes towards Asians that are rooted in the Czech society which to a large extent remains racist. Some K-pop fans admit that they have been bullied because of their passion for K-pop, others report to have been a K-pop fans secretly because they were afraid of the reactions from their environment. The racist and conservative part of the public disapproves of the support of the Korean wave, but knowing about these public attitudes, many of K-pop fans state that they are proud to be part of a different and exclusive community. The K-pop community members feel a strong sense of belonging. They report friendly relations with other members and an overall friendly environment. On the one hand, K-pop community members are happy about the rising popularity of Korean pop culture among the Czech society, but on the other hand, they fear that the community will lose its exclusiveness once there are too many members.

The audience is female dominated which is a direct consequence of the new woman-centrism in Korea proposed by Kim Hyun Meewho depicts the trendy dramas, which "invariably place romance and love at their center" as reflecting the desires of women. But at the same time "this new woman-centrism found in Korea is based on the archetypal gender model of patriarchal fantasy."<sup>27</sup> Female K-pop fans outnumber male fans which is the reason for boy bands being much more popular than girl bands. Male artists are perceived as physically attractive and as talented dancers and singers. Along with these characteristics, they are presented as romantic and caring, diligent and hardworking. Czech female fans admit that they appreciate the perfect look of male K-pop more than the music itself. According to the outcomes of the interviews that were conducted among Czech hallyu fans, Czech men do not care about their appearance and they are not romantic. The images of Korean men that are transmitted via music videos and dramas create the visions of perfect men that female fans desire. However, the great majority of K-pop contest participants are young girls who imitate female K-pop groups. Therefore, although they are primarily interested in male artists, they know female K-pop artists very well.

### **K-pop fandom in the Czech Republic and the K-pop contest**

The above-mentioned annual "K-pop contest" attracts a rising number of participants each year. Participation at the final round, the "K-pop World Festival" in Changwon, which is broadcasted by the Korean national television station KBS is

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<sup>26</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang: "Reading the 'Korean Wave' as a Sign of Global Shift" *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 147–182.

<sup>27</sup> Kim, Hyun Mee: "Korean TV Dramas in Taiwan: With an Emphasis on the Localization Process" *Korea Journal* 2005, 45, 4: pp. 183–205.



the goal of many K-pop fans. Not only are the final round participants sponsored their trip to Korea to take part at the contest in Changwon, but they are also given the opportunity to meet some of the K-pop stars in person, to attend workshops and trainings at Korean entertainment labels. Therefore, hallyu fans have a strong motivation to perform at the contest. Moreover, about a half of K-pop fans (45,45%) would like to become K-pop artists themselves.

The fashion, hairstyles, gestures and mimics of the Czech K-pop artists resemble those of Korean idols. Moreover, Czech K-pop bands employ similar naming principles as real K-pop bands. In particular, they prefer to use abbreviations with double meanings, e.g. "O.M.G." standing for "Oh My Girls", modify the names of existing Korean groups, e.g. Effe(x)tion which reminds of the Korean band name "F(x)". Czech solo K-pop artists also tend to use a Korean name, e.g. "Minji", "Sujin", "SunHye". They use these names within the K-pop community, however, the trend towards using Korean names is not as strong as in the case of fans of Japanese culture. Those are very keen on using Japanese nicknames and sometimes even change their official name into a Japanese one.

Many Czech K-pop groups consist of Czech and Vietnamese members. This way they manage to look more international which is a concept that perfectly fits within the philosophy of Korean popular culture. K-pop artists tend to colour their hair in order to look more international (or Western), Czech K-pop formations like to recruit Vietnamese members in order to appear more Asian. In addition to this, K-pop artists use a lot of English words and phrases in their songs which is a method used in order to appear globalized. Czech K-pop performers stick to this concept, they adopt Korean-English lyrics. "Czech K-pop contest participants put a lot of effort in imitating all aspects of K-pop culture. Besides make-up, hairstyle, clothes, singing and dancing, also the official pictures that are available on the contest website resemble K-pop band poses, gestures and mimics or typical Korean diary entries. Often attention is being paid even to negligible details."<sup>28</sup>

The winners of the first national K-pop contest in 2011, sister duo Jana and Lenka Vataščinová did not make it to the finals. However, they became frequent guests at Korea-related events where they successfully promoted K-pop and the K-pop contest. The following years of the K-pop contest are marked by great international success. The CZHW proudly announces the continuance of the Czech success at the K-pop World Festival and comments "Paradoxically the Czech Republic conquers the world of Korean pop."<sup>29</sup> The winner group from the 2012 K-pop contest "O.M.G" (see picture 4 below) scored a great success as they won the international K-pop contest in Korea. Also, the 2013 and 2014 winners of the Czech K-pop contest ranked at top position, which had direct impact on the rising popularity of the K-pop contest. After O.M.G. reached the top at the K-pop World Festival, the girl group

<sup>28</sup> Mazana, Vladislava: "Cultural perception and social impacts of the Korean wave in the Czech Republic" In Marinescu, Valentina (eds.): *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: Hallyu Unbound*. Lexington Press 2014.

<sup>29</sup> [www.czechhallyuwave.com](http://www.czechhallyuwave.com), accessed on February 5th, 2015.

“Six of a Kind” ranked third in 2013. Another year later, in 2014, Effe(x)tion ranked second. Due to the increased popularity of the K-pop contest in the Czech Republic, since 2013, participants have to take part in preliminary rounds.



## O.M.G

**Picture 4.** The 2012 Czech K-pop contest and international K-pop contest winner group O.M.G. (Oh My Girls) resembling the K-pop girl band Girls Generation

As a result of the rising popularity of hallyu, language schools and private tutors of Korean language report an influx of teenagers who want to learn the language. At university level, Korean studies at the Charles University in Prague which enhance all aspects of Korea (such as the Korean language, history, literature, geography, politics etc.) attract a higher number of applicants each year. Among other popular forms of fan activities there are engagement in fan meetings, discussions, posting and sharing K-pop videos, translating K-drama subtitles and K-pop lyrics, learning K-pop choreographies (the result of these efforts is to be presented at the K-pop flashmob which takes place every year in August), following the activities of favourite K-pop artists online. Due to the geographical distance and financial limitations, Czech hallyu fans usually do not travel to Korea in order to attend K-pop concerts (unlike Chinese or Japanese hallyu fans), but they are willing to attend K-pop concerts in Europe (e.g. in Paris or London). However, visiting Korea or living in Korea is the dream of many K-pop fans. Whenever a K-pop artist visits the Czech Republic, e.g. for music video shooting in the centre of Prague, devoted K-pop fans follow his

Facebook postings in order to localize his position and meet him in person. Luckily, the Czech hallyu fandom does not have extreme mania-like forms. In contrast to Japanese or Chinese hallyu fans, there are no reports of costly trips to Korea in order to join K-pop concerts, stalking of K-pop artists or cosmetic surgeries done.



**Picture 5.** First meeting of Czech K-pop fans at the Wenceslas Square in the centre of Prague



**Picture 6.** Czech K-pop fans in the subway



**Picture 7.** K-pop fan birthday cake with a Korean boy band (Bigbang) picture on top

## Conclusion

The K-pop contest, hallyu Weekend, K-movie day, K-Food is Good, Korean Culture Night – the scope of events (co-)organized by the Czech hallyu Wave is expanding each year since the four years of existence of the association. Among their partners, there are the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Korean companies, the Korea Tourism Organization and others. The cooperation runs between all the interested subjects, supply and demand are represented by the Korean subjects and the fans are on the other side. AsianStyle is not considered a rival of CZHW, on the contrary, its role is that of a medial partner. The relations among K-pop fans are reported to be very friendly so that the members have a strong sense of belonging to this exclusive community.

Even though male K-pop bands enjoy a much greater popularity, girls' bands still play an important role. Female K-pop artists stand as rolemodels, their fashion, choreographies, singing, dancing and mimics are imitated by the Czech K-pop performers. Among these there are many young Vietnamese girls who feel that their social status as Asians is being bolstered up by the success of Korean popular cultural products which they consider as "Asian" or "Pan-Asian". The ethnically mixed bands (Czech – Vietnamese) appear more international which fits well within the global concept of K-pop. The Czech K-pop contest winners marked great success at the K-pop festival in Korea, they ranked 1st in 2012 ("O.M.G."), 3rd in 2013 ("Six of a Kind") and 2nd in 2014 ("Effe(x)tion"). The number of Korean speaking fans is not overwhelming, only 10% state to have a knowledge of Korean, but many more are at some stage of learning

the language. As a result, the number of Korean language courses at private institutions has increased, as well as the number of applicants for Korean Studies at university level.

Hallyu is relatively new to Central Europe. Therefore, the question of whether the phenomenon can be sustained and further developed remains unanswered. However, judging by the growing number of hallyu-related events and their scope, and also the international success of Czech K-pop performers, it seems highly plausible that the community will gain new members and the broader public will get acquainted with products of Korean popular culture.

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# GEOGRAPHIES OF EAST ASIA IN EUROPE: WAYS OF PERCEIVING AND ASSESSING THE UNIQUENESS OF HALLYU

Valentina Marinescu

**Abstract:** *In non-Asian spaces, the impact of East Asia popular culture's products on consumers is related to the way in which those popular cultures were perceived especially inside large Asian communities residing in the USA and less in Western Europe. I assessed that an exploring study on this topic could offer a series of answers related to consumption reasons and the impact of this type of cultural products on a different type of public – the audience of South Korea popular culture in European countries. The present paper will approach the comparison of the impact of China, Japan and South Korea's popular products at the level of European publics. The main research question on which I tried to offer an answer is: "What are the unique characteristics that differentiate Korean cultural products at the level of opinions and assessments of European public?" The main research methodology is a sociological one: I used three questionnaires applied online on various Facebook pages and groups and websites devoted to Japanese, Chinese and South Korean fan communities.*

**Keywords:** *popular culture, South Korea, Japan, Hallyu, Europe*

## Introduction

Over the last three decades, East Asian popular culture products were exported, sold and consumed worldwide everywhere, from Asia through America and Europe. A wide variety of such products became available in shopping malls around the world, especially in big cities as well as in remote rural areas. Subsequently, this consumption trend was observed in the case of Romania, where one can notice the increasing interest of Romanian public towards East Asia popular culture, under the shape of (Korean and Japanese) Romanian fan clubs or public events devoted to South-Korean, Chinese or Japanese culture.

The objective of the present article is to compare the impact of popular culture's product from China, Japan and South Korea at the level of East European publics. Therefore, the impact of East Asian popular cultures on the East European publics was analyzed from a double perspective: first of all, one must take into account the particular characteristics of the products and second of all, the particular traits of the region and the receiving local culture. Economy, society, language, mentality – all



these have a direct role in the reception and an obvious impact over the messages transmitted by East Asian cultural products.<sup>1</sup>

The main research question on which I tried to offer an answer is: "What are the unique characteristics that differentiate Korean cultural products at the level of opinions and assessments of the East European public?"

## Theoretical framework

Focusing the research on East Asia's popular culture is motivated primarily by the interest manifested on a global or national level and secondly, by the scarcity of similar research studies that could have served as a model for an analysis in that region of Europe.

The globalization and the development of mass media and the technological boom gave free access to these products, which until two decades ago were restricted to the commercialization solely in the Asian continent.<sup>2</sup> The only ones who had access to these types of products were the East Asian natives and the East Asian language connoisseurs who were very few at that time.<sup>3</sup> Once with a technological progress, the speed of distribution, the circulation, the consumption and the production have increased significantly.<sup>4</sup> The ubiquity of East Asian popular culture products in everyday life demonstrates that this phenomenon is a topical and major issue.<sup>5</sup>

The attraction of Western public to Japanese popular culture products can be explained taking into consideration the positive image that Japan has all over the world. Positive stereotypes associated with Japan and with Japanese culture (professionalism, diligence, ambition, devotion, female beauty, tenderness, masculinity, honor, etc.) have contributed to and boosted the spread of Japanese popular culture worldwide.<sup>6</sup> These are just some of the most important characteristics of the Japanese popular culture products that had a considerable impact at a global level.

When one assesses independently the impact of each East Asian popular culture on foreign and national audiences, both similarities and differences among them could be noticed.

Thus, the major cultural differences between East Asian and Western culture have also incited the Western public's interest. This new model of popular culture products offered totally new products, different in form and content from those previously known to the public.<sup>7</sup> For example, Japanese subcultures behave in an extravagant way that could not be linked to or resembled any Western subcultures.

<sup>1</sup> Allen, Matthew and Sakamoto, Rumi: *Popular Culture and Globalisation*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Gid Powers, Richard and Kato, Hidetoshi: *Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture*, 307.

<sup>3</sup> Schodt, Frederik, L.: *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*, 351–352.

<sup>4</sup> Schodt, Frederik, L.: *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*, 360–361.

<sup>5</sup> McGray, Douglas: "Japan's gross national cool", 44–54; Martinez, Dolores: *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture. Gender Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures*, 21; MacWilliams, Mark, W.: *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, 29.

<sup>6</sup> McGray, Douglas: "Japan's gross national cool", 44–54.

<sup>7</sup> Kelts, Roland: *Japanamerica: How Japanese Popular Culture has invaded the US*, 27.

Otaku, Cosplay, Gyarū, Visual Kei – all belong to a cultural universe unseen and unknown until now by the western consumer.<sup>8</sup> Despite all these categorical differences that played the role of magnets in attracting the public, products like “anime” or “manga” seem to be targeted to not only children, like the American comics are, but also to adult public due to the fact that Japanese products contain messages, themes, symbols and universal values that can be recognized only by a mature public.<sup>9</sup> In this way, the consumers of the Japanese popular products were able to easily identify themselves with the fictional characters and with their dilemmas and conflicts.<sup>10</sup>

In the case of South-Korean popular culture's products, referring to hallyu and globalization, Shin<sup>11</sup> stressed the fact that the paradox of globalization in South Korea is the existence of two (seemingly) contradictory trends: the co-existence between a “nationalist appropriation of globalization” and an “intensification of ethnic/national identity in reaction to globalization”. But what are the Korean products' success ingredients? On the first sight, one can say that despite the obvious disadvantage of Korea in terms of language but also cultural “visibility” (as compared in particular to North-American products), the advantages of its cultural products result from its polyvalent culture and their content. “Cultural value” is multidimensional. It is not strictly a matter of what language the audience or a public has knowledge of. This explains why – despite its initial disadvantage caused by the inability to understand the language spoken and by the lack of “diasporic markets” – the so-called “Korean wave” could be so successful, using the polyvalent Korean culture to its advantage.<sup>12</sup> As to content, the appeal to common values enables cultural assimilation by Asian audiences, thus reducing the danger of cultural unacceptability or rejection. Moreover, standardization and specialization are necessary for these products in order to reach global audiences. Of course, concerning Asian markets, economic considerations can be added to these aspects. Thus, in Japan, the cost of the distribution of American films is rather high, although there is a high request for successful films (“blockbusters”) similar to those produced in Hollywood. Summarizing, I can say that according to the research studies of the phenomenon<sup>13</sup> the key ingredients of the Korean cultural products' success are cultural assimilation and economic opportunism. As to industrial infrastructure, the marketing strategies based on the communication industry and an increasing request for new products

<sup>8</sup> Azuma, Hiroki: *Otaku: Japan's database animals*, 3–25; Okabe, Daisuke: “Cosplay, learning, and cultural practice”, 225–248; Tamagawa, Hiroaki: “Comic market as space for self-expression in Otaku culture”, 107–132.

<sup>9</sup> McLelland, Mark: “Local meanings in global space: a case study of women's ‘Boy love’ web sites in Japanese and English”; Napier, Susan: *From Impressionism to anime : Japan as fantasy and fan cult in the mind of the West*, 152–155.

<sup>10</sup> Okabe, Daisuke: “Cosplay, learning, and cultural practice”, 225–248; McGray, Douglas: “Japan's gross national cool”, 44–54.

<sup>11</sup> Shin, Gi-Wook: *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy*, 232–236.

<sup>12</sup> Cunningham, Stuart and Jacka Elisabeth: “The role of television in Australia's ‘paradigm shift’ to Asia Media”, 619–637.

<sup>13</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang: “Reading the ‘Korean Wave’ as a Sign of Global Shift”, 173–179.



connected to communication technologies favored the Korean cultural industry's economic advance.

From the existing academic literature devoted to the impact of East Asian popular cultures worldwide, I based my analysis on three main theses. One is the so-called "cultural proximity thesis", according to which culture flows more easily between culturally similar countries than between culturally different ones.<sup>14</sup> The second theory starts from the assumption that due to the hybrid nature of the East Asian cultural products, the impact these types of products had on external markets and audiences is based on their distinctive nature as compared with the local cultural products. The so-called "cultural discount thesis" stated, as such, the fact that the distinctiveness of a country's cultural products in terms of values, beliefs, and style may hinder their acceptance by consumers in other countries.<sup>15</sup> The last theory considers East Asian popular cultures and their products as "cultural hybrids". From here, the "thesis of cultural hybridity" assumes that those (e.g. Japanese, Chinese, South Korean) cultural products are unique due to their mixed – or "hybrid" – nature: they are mainly Western in form but mostly traditional (or national) in contents.<sup>16</sup>

### Methodological elements

The paper presents the preliminary results of the Research Grant granted by Academy of Korean Studies in 2013–2014 (AKS-2013-R 71). The project started in February 2014 and ended in November 2014. The set of data which is analyzed was collected in two waves: between February and April 2014 – for the data related to South Korean fans from Eastern Europe – and between July and September 2014 for China's and Japan's Central and East European fans.

The main research methodology used is of a sociological type. More precisely, the method used in the research project is an online interview – the interview guide was applied online, using Internet contact with respondents. The option to use an online interview was based on the one hand on the experience of the Romanian field-research. Giving the fact that many Romanian fans live a double life – on-line and off-line – they agreed to offer information on the Internet and not in face-to-face meetings. On the other hand, I had also considered that it would be impossible to reach in such a short period of time a higher number of respondents who are geographically spread in the countries from Central and Eastern Europe in any other way than by using the Internet.

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<sup>14</sup> Chua, Beng-Huat: "East Asian pop culture: consumer communities and politics of the national", 115–140.

<sup>15</sup> Lee, Keehyeung: "Mapping Out the Cultural Politics of the 'Korean Wave' in Contemporary South Korea", 175–191; Shim, Doobo: "Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia", 25–44.

<sup>16</sup> Shim, Doobo: "Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia", 25–44; Lee Keehyeung: "Mapping Out the Cultural Politics of the 'Korean Wave' in Contemporary South Korea", 175–191.

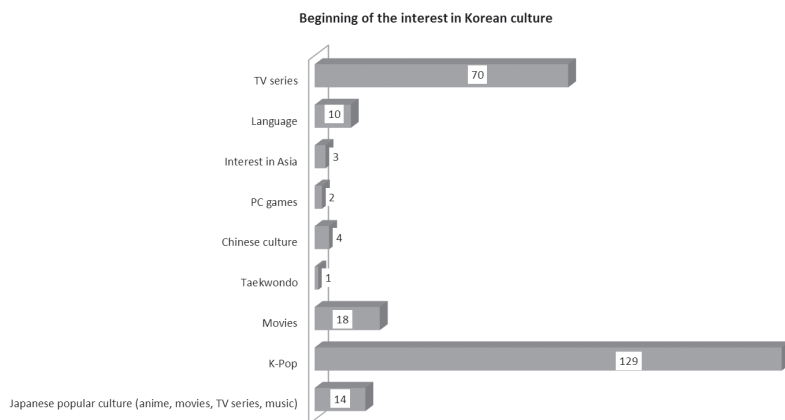
Due to different periods of time in which the guides of interview were applied, the samples analyzed are not similar, one of them (the sample of South Korean fans from the Central and Eastern Europe) is bigger. In September, the final samples are as follows: the sample of China's Central and Eastern European fans: 9 respondents; the sample of Japan's Central and East European fans: 140 respondents; the sample of South Korea's Central and East European fans: 327 respondents.<sup>17</sup>

The results were recoded and made into SPSS files. The analysis uses only descriptive statistics – simple frequencies – available in SPSS program.

## Analysis of the results

The ways in which Central and Eastern European fans first got into contact with East Asian popular cultures were completely different. Thus, in the case of the fans of hallyu, TV series and K-pop were the main “gates” through which they encountered the South-Korean culture. As the data showed, there was a smaller number of fans who were first attracted by South Korean movies and language. At the same time, the number of fans who declared that they discovered South Korean culture by playing PC games is extremely small and there was no fan who discovered hallyu through literature (books, novels).

**Figure 1** – Beginning of the interest in South Korean culture

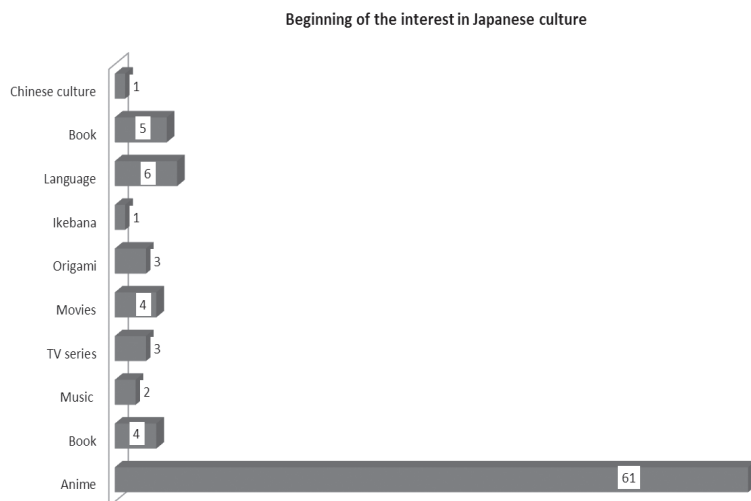


<sup>17</sup> Giving this imbalance among the empirical data collected in the field, the analysis was made using two sets of data: the sample of answers given by the Korean fans of Central and Eastern Europe and the sample of responses from the Japanese fans from the same geographical region. The opinions expressed by the fans of Chinese popular culture were not used in the present analysis.

The same set of data showed also that some (e.g. fifteen) respondents had declared that at the beginning, they were attracted by the Japanese popular culture (anime, manga, music, movies) and after some time they discovered hallyu products (TV series and K-pop), while four fans of hallyu were first interested in Chinese popular culture's products.

The reverse “flow” (from the initial consumption of South-Korean popular products to that of Japanese ones in a later time) was not recorded in the set of interviews with the Japanese fans from Eastern and Central Europe. On the other hand, one fan of Japanese popular culture had declared that he/she was first attracted by the Chinese culture and he/she abandoned this interest later in favor of Japanese popular culture's products.

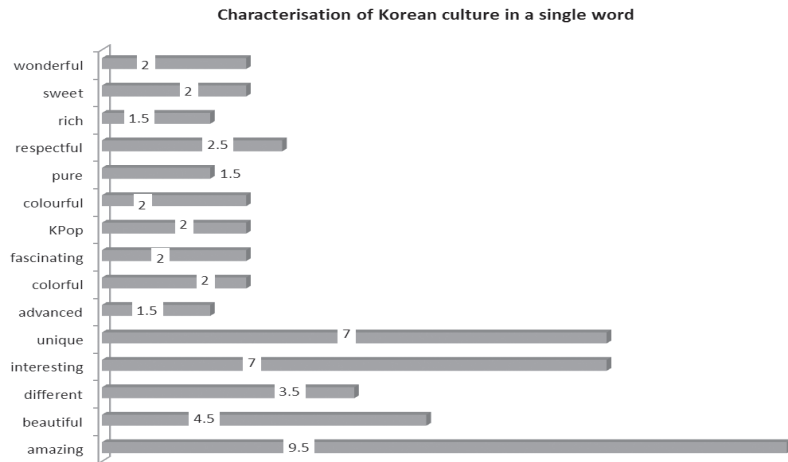
**Figure 2** – Beginning of interest in Japanese culture



Anime and manga were the main Japanese popular culture's products which attracted from the beginning the interest of the fans of Japanese popular culture from Central and Eastern Europe. The huge number of respondents who stated that they first paid attention to anime and manga, placed their first meeting with Japanese popular culture earlier in their life – in their childhood.

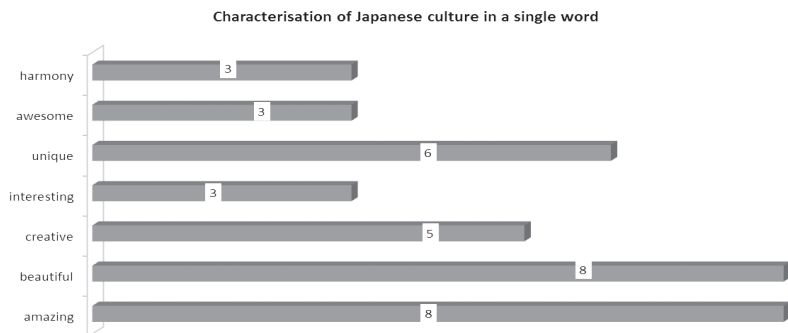
When asked how they can describe Korean culture using a single word, in all countries enclosed in the analysis, Central and Eastern European fans of hallyu mentioned “respect”, “beauty”, “amazing” and “unique” character. Many fans also mentioned “hard-work”, “politeness” and “education” as main traits characteristics of Korean culture as a unique entity.

**Figure 3** – Characterization of South Korean culture through a single word



“Amazing”, “beauty”, “interesting” and “unique” were the attributes used both by the fans of hallyu and by the fans of Japanese cultural products.

**Figure 4** – Characterization of Japanese culture through a single word



Apart from the common “vocabulary”, one can notice the fact that the fans of Japanese popular culture described Japanese culture through two special words, as “awesome” and “creative”, while the fans of hallyu assessed the Korean popular culture as “wonderful”, “fascinating” and “colorful”.

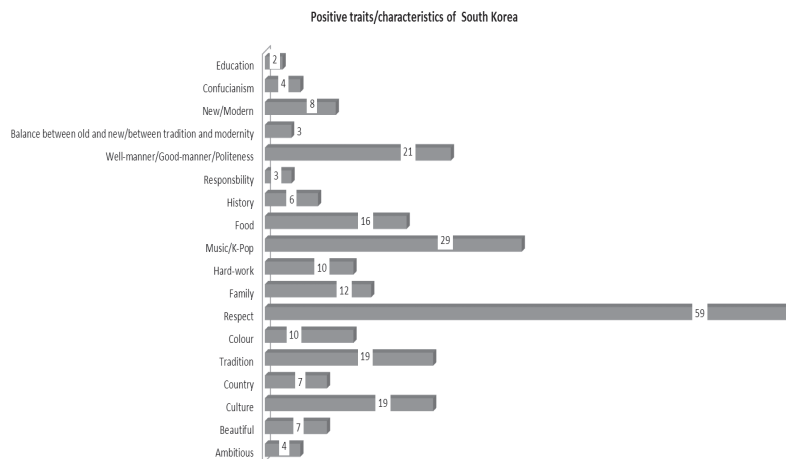
Greek fan: I like how people are so hardworking and respectful. They are also really polite and well-mannered. However I believe that the worst thing about Korean people is just how prejudiced they are.

Bulgarian fan: Positive – Countries with ancient cultures are always mysterious and interesting. I'm studying Korean Studies at university and learn new things about Korea every day, falling in love with this country all over again.

Czech fan: Positive – manners matter a lot; negative – I can't think of any right now...

The similarities between the two groups of fans (e.g. those of hallyu and those of Japanese popular culture) were recorded also in the case of positive traits of each country. According to the fans' descriptions, "respect", "tradition" and "culture" were the main characteristics both for Japan and for South Korea.

**Figure 5 – Positive traits of South Korea**



On the other hand, the differences between the two groups of fans are also noticeable. According to Central and Eastern European fans of hallyu, the positive traits of South Korea had a more modern and materialistic character – they describe South Korea using words like “K-Pop”, “K-Dramas” and “Balance between tradition and modernity”.

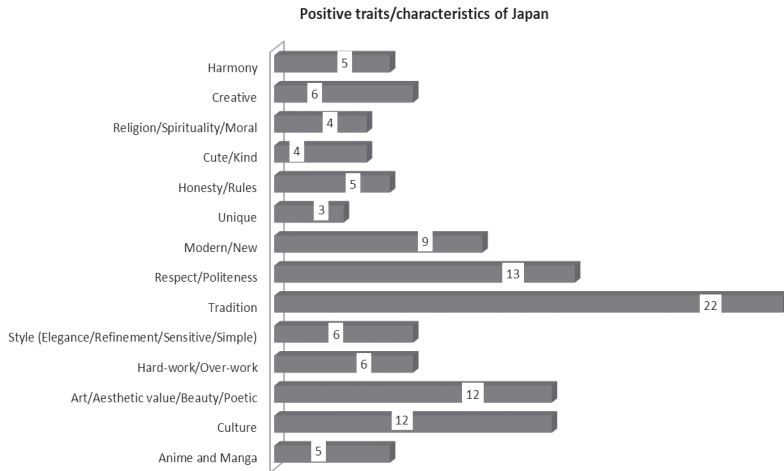
Hungarian fan: Respect, language, musical culture and singing technical.

Czech fan: Well, the positive traits about Korean culture are: respect to elders, “jeong”, being used to extreme hard working.

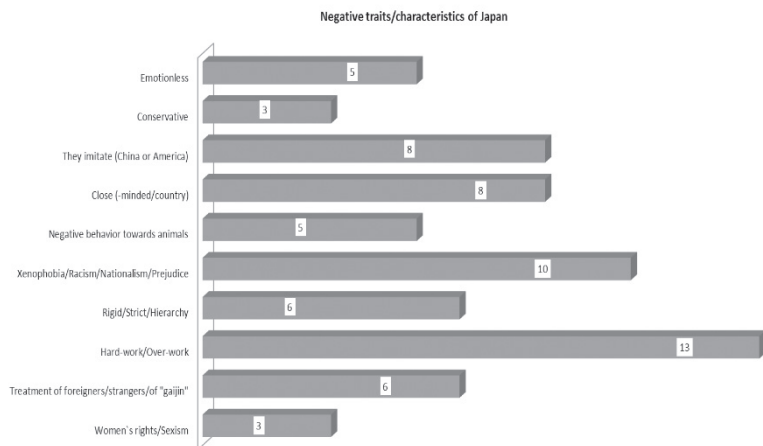
Bulgarian fan: Positive traits are music (and traditional music), history, TV series.

When asked about the positive traits of Japan, the fans of this popular culture stressed mainly the aesthetic characteristics, such as “elegance”, “poetry”, “art” or “spirituality”.

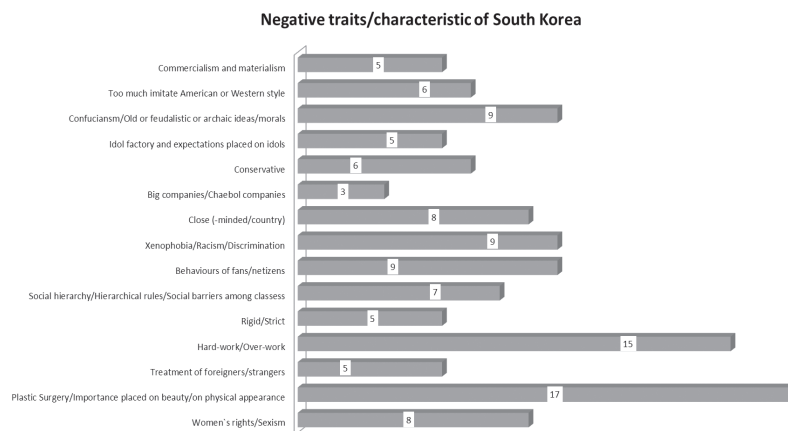
**Figure 6** – Positive traits of Japan



“Hard-work” was not only used when describing a positive trait in cases of Japan and South Korea. For the Central and Eastern European fans of both popular cultures the word had also a negative connotation. Many respondents were using it in their assessments of negative traits of those two countries.

**Figure 7 – Negative traits of Japan**

Apart from that commonality in assessments, one can notice the great impact hallyu has on its fans in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, seventeen fans mentioned “plastic surgery” as a negative aspect of South Korean society while nine fans pointed to hallyu fans’ behavior in relation with their South-Korean idols also as a negative trait of South Korean society and culture.

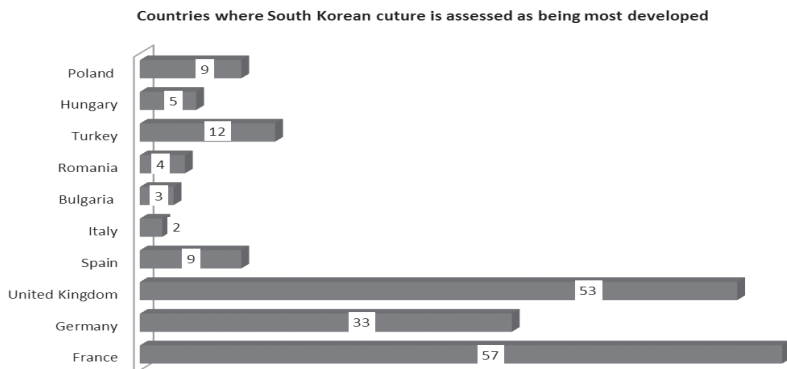
**Figure 8 – Negative traits of South Korea**

The following example illustrates this negative association of the foreign hallyu fans with the negative image of South Korean popular culture:

Czech fan: I was in London at BigBang's concert. There were many fans from Europe. They were crazy. They were aggressive... horrible. Some fans too exaggerate their cheering and affection for Korean celebrities. They do many projects, cover dance and singing.

As regards the spread of hallyu and Japanese popular culture, Eastern and Central European fans mentioned Germany, France and United Kingdom as the main countries where East Asian popular cultures' influences are visible and are greater than in their own countries.

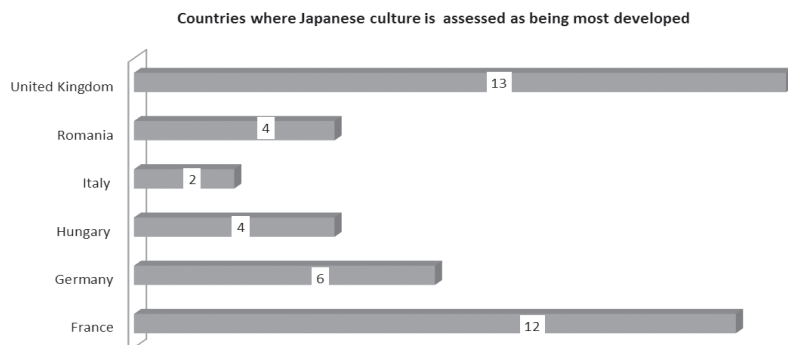
**Figure 9** – Countries from Europe where fans assessed that the Korean popular culture has the greatest impact



When we compare the “geographical maps” of East Asian imagined influences as those, they can be drawn from fans’ depiction and one could notice that South Korea’s one is more vast and differentiated than that of Japan. Thus, hallyu fans mentioned other countries from Eastern Europe (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary) as regions where hallyu is much more developed. On the contrary, the fans of Japanese popular culture had indicated mainly Western Europe as a “locus” for Japan’s influence.



**Figure 10** – Countries from Europe where fans assessed that the Japanese popular culture has the greatest impact



“Respect”, “hard-work” and “love for the country and history” are the main things that fans from Eastern and Central Europe assessed that people from their countries should learn both from South Korea and Japan.

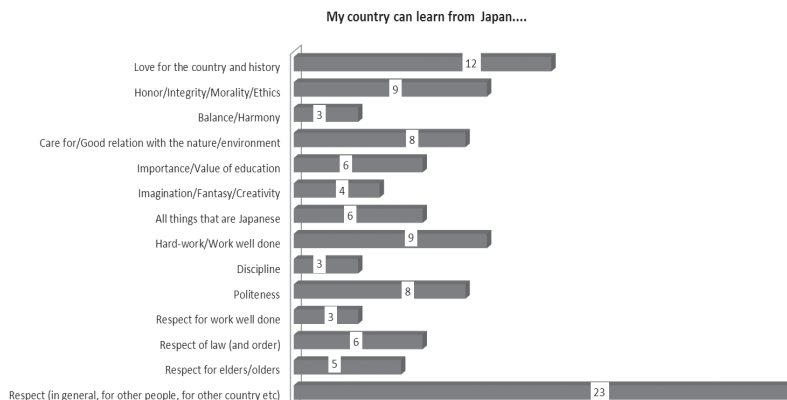
But here one can notice also a difference in this case: In the case of Japan “respect” was a generic term, covering respect towards other people, other cultures and habits. In the specific case of South Korea the fans made references to practical situations where this attitude can be recorded: respect to elders, respect for “the work well done” and for the laws existing in a society.

**Figure 11** – The people from my country can learn from South Korea...



This tendency to use concrete manifestations of general East Asian customs and habits by the hallyu fans was not recorded in the case of Japan's fans from Central and Eastern Europe. In the last case, the most frequent references were made, again, to the elements with an aesthetic or artistic value, such as “care for the nature”, “harmony” or “honor”.

**Figure 12** – The people from my country can learn from Japan...



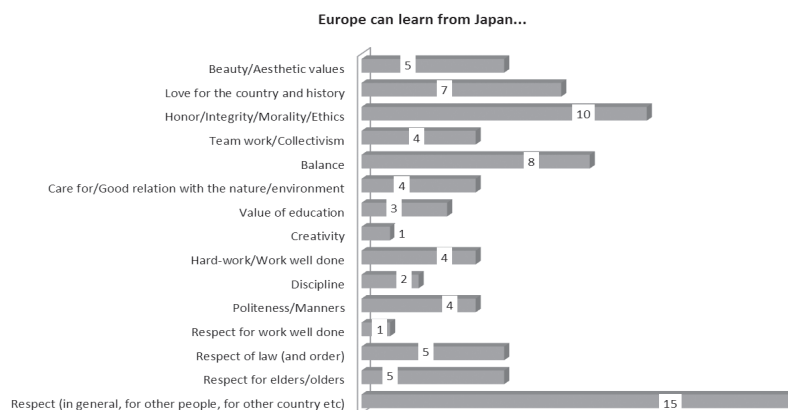
It was not surprising that at the European level both (i.e. of Japan and of South Korea) groups of fans made references to the same set of behavior and customs that Europeans should learn from East Asian countries.

**Figure 13** – Europeans can learn from South Korea...



Both hallyu fans and the fans of Japanese popular culture mentioned again “respect” and “love for the country and history” when assessed what can be learnt from East Asian countries.

**Figure 14** – Europeans can learn from Japan...



Apart from those similarities, one can notice the differences. The most interesting one is the stress put by the fans of South Korean popular culture on the practical aspects that can be learnt from this society, such as “search for the progress”, “respect for the work well done” and “respect for the community”.

Czech fan: I think Europeans can learn from South Korea the respect for everybody, to keep their own culture, not to copy the American, because in Europe it starts to be really everywhere.

Greek fan: The European culture needs to pay more attention to society than the individual, as is the case with South Korea. It is also necessary to learn proper respect towards seniority.

Bulgarian fan: Europeans can learn a lot of stuff from Korea. Like I said, we can learn how to show more respect towards the elders, value the education we get, how important family is, how we can be more polite and humble and many more things.

## Conclusions

The ability of South Korean culture and media industry to transform Western or American culture to fit Asian tastes is considered a key-factor that explained the success of Korean products at the regional level and is considered as a possible

“effective bridge or buffer [functioning] between the West and Asia.<sup>18</sup> This assumption is especially true when related to hallyu, as seen by Chua Beng Huat,<sup>19</sup> as an East Asian reply to Hollywood-type cultural products:

“The emergence of an East Asian pop culture stands significantly in the way of complete hegemony of the US media culture, which undoubtedly continues to dominate entertainment media globally.”

If Asian “family-friendly” values were considered as the main reason for the success of Korean television series exported abroad, the interest for Korean popular music seems to be due to its increasingly transnational and hybrid aspects<sup>20</sup>. At the same time, the strategic cultural hybridization on which K-Pop is based, is first and foremost due to the need to meet the complex desires of various consumer groups, which maximizes capitalist profit.<sup>21</sup> Shin’s conceptualization of globalization<sup>22</sup> and the South Korean response to it can be extended to the globalization of culture, as in what concerns South Korea, there is an interplay of both homogenization and heterogenization.

In the present article, I tried to understand what the main peculiarities of hallyu fans are compared with the fans of Japanese popular culture. Although the preliminary analysis is a descriptive one (and should be continued at a deeper level of data refinement), the interviews showed both the strengths and the weaknesses of hallyu as compared with “Cool Japan”.

As the existing literature stressed,<sup>23</sup> hallyu is a rather new social and cultural phenomenon, which had attracted mainly teenagers and youth as fans and potential audiences. Its influence in Central and Eastern Europe started few years ago and the spread of South Korean popular products in that part of Europe is only at the beginning. On the contrary, Japanese cultural products were some of the few non-communist products with whom the former children from those countries first meet on mass media. I can say that we are witnessing here the difference between a mature phenomenon – such is the case of Japanese fan groups from Central and Eastern Europe – and the novelty of a cultural development – this being the case of hallyu fans in that region of Europe. One important characteristic of hallyu is, as such, its ability “to convert” (in a strict religious way) the expectations and desires of Japan fans into attitudes and behaviors of “faithful” South Korean fans.

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<sup>18</sup> Ryoo, Woongjae: “Globalization, or the logic of cultural hybridization: the case of the Korean wave”, 145.

<sup>19</sup> Chua Beng-Huat: *Structure, Audience and Soft Power in East Asian Pop Culture*, 145.

<sup>20</sup> Jung, Eun-Young: “Transnational Korea: A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States”, 75.

<sup>21</sup> Jung, Eun-Young: “Transnational Korea: A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States”, 77.

<sup>22</sup> Shin, Gi-Wook: *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy*, 204–223.

<sup>23</sup> Chan, Joseph Man and Ma, Eric K. W.: “Asian television: Global trends and local processes”, 45–60; Cunningham, Stuart and Jacka, Elisabeth: “The role of television in Australia’s ‘paradigm shift’ to Asia Media”, 619–637.

Even though there are undeniable resemblances between the fans of the two East Asian cultures, the main differences can be found at two levels.

First, as the sets of interviews showed, the “mental maps” for the influence exercised by Japan, on one hand, and by South Korea, on the other, are different. Although both groups of fans located Western Europe as the “main core” for the diffusion of East Asian popular cultures, hallyu fans drew borders that cover also parts of their region as being placed under the influence of South Korea’s products.

Second, and perhaps more relevant, the references made at the customs and things related to each of both popular cultures oppose, on one hand, the more contemplative and aesthetic character of Japan fans to the more dynamic, modern and progress-oriented nature of hallyu ones. One can notice, as such, the fact that hallyu does not only address the young generation (youth or/and teenagers) but also that it enlarges their cultural horizon and adds pragmatic elements to their assessments about the existing world.

However, the present paper has several limits: the absence of previous academic research regarding the influence of East Asian popular culture on the Eastern and Central Europe publics has been a serious obstacle. I had to turn to foreign studies, usually American or Eastern Asiatic and not Central and Eastern-European. The usage of qualitative research methods has brought me in the situation where it is impossible to generalize the findings and the results of the research.

In addition, the second limit refers to the descriptive character of the present text. As stressed above, it is obvious that in the near future the analysis should be refined and deepened with the help of the existing data sets.

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## CONDITIONS OF POSITIVE ACCEPTANCE OF KOREAN TV DRAMA ABROAD: CULTURAL PROXIMITY AND DIVERSITY

Anna Jarchovská

**Abstract:** *This article explores the question of the roles that cultural proximity and diversity play in the positive acceptance of Korean popular culture products, specifically Korean TV drama, by foreign audiences. In the first part, I focus on defining what is cultural proximity and diversity, what a TV drama is, and what I mean by the term “cultural aspect”. These cultural aspects as seen in the chosen TV drama “Winter Sonata” are then specifically defined in the case of culturally close audience (Japanese viewers) and viewers in culturally distant regions (international audience). Regarding Japan and Korea, I focus on what makes these two countries culturally close, what is the connection between “Winter Sonata” and Japanese TV drama, in what sense is Japanese audience specific, and how was “Winter Sonata” accepted in East Asian regions. Next, I compare these findings with the acceptance of this drama by Western audience. Drawing on several cultural theories (e.g. Wallerstein’s and Straubhaar’s theory on cultural flows, Walker’s ideas on cultural proximity of the individual), this research uses commentaries on on-line fans’ forums as the main primary source, together with secondary literature review on this subject.*

**Keywords:** Korean TV drama, cultural aspects, cultural proximity, cultural diversity, Winter Sonata

### Introduction

In the late 1990’s a new pop culture phenomenon, nowadays commonly known as the Korean wave, appeared in the East Asian region. The term Korean wave incorporates number of South Korean (from now on abbreviated to Korean) pop cultural products, mostly Korean TV drama, followed by a line of music groups and Korean idols. Korean wave presents Korea as a modern “trendy” country and turns its fans to the consumers of Korean products. A number of TV dramas, films and music groups became widely known through Korean wave, as well as fashion brands and Korean electronic products. Fans are studying Korean language diligently; they are interested in Korean history, culture and discover Korean cuisine.

Korean wave started to spread during late 90’s initially to countries which are close to Korea in terms of culture.<sup>1</sup> A shift in cultural flows can be seen during this time in the East Asian region. Korean wave overshadowed dominating Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> For more see Shim, Doobo: “Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia,” 25–44.

cultural products and went against such theories on cultural flows as for example *cultural imperialism*, suggested by Wallerstein in the 1970's.<sup>2</sup> In other words, we can say that theories, which say that cultural flow is a stream of cultural products that moves from center to periphery, are challenged by the Korean wave phenomenon, in a sense that such culturally developed countries as 90's Japan, that exports its pop culture worldwide, can be immensely influenced by a relatively young pop culture of a country whose economic and cultural power is still on the rise. Korean wave corresponds more to ideas of such scholars as Straubhaar,<sup>3</sup> who say that culture-media flows between nations and cultures are much more complex and bound together than the theory of cultural imperialism concludes.<sup>4</sup>

As East Asian countries were being hit by the Korean wave, the question of how these countries share information and what role does the cultural similarity play in this sharing, appeared. At the first glance, it may look like its role is tremendous, as culturally close countries may identify with the same values, which are contained in the products of culturally close countries. However, since Korean wave in recent years became popular even in countries which are culturally distant from Korea (for example the Czech Republic), there is the question of whether the positive acceptance of it is not influenced by something different than mere assumption of easily transferable values. Even though Korean wave has the most impact on neighboring countries, where the distribution is less complicated, it gains its audience in the West, which leads us to the assumption, that these product are universally acceptable. The question remains, what causes this universality?

Since the Korean wave incorporates a large number of pop cultural products, the main focus of this article will be mostly on the Korean TV drama. The basis for this choice lies in Iwabuchi's theory of cultural attractiveness,<sup>5</sup> which says that cultural attractiveness depends on how much the product, while consumed, raises the positive image of the country of its origin. In other words, culturally attractive products, according to Iwabuchi, are those, which are tightly connected with the image of lifestyle in the country of its origin. If we think of Korean TV drama as a cultural product, which has (besides other functions) a propagation of Korea abroad as its goal, we may come to the conclusion that the means through which it transforms its viewer into a fan of anything Korean, are tightly connected to the image of Korea itself, as well as how much that image is suggestive. Korean TV drama is a television miniseries, consisting of 10–20 one-hour parts which has a wide range of genres and therefore has all the means to create an appealing image of Korea – it presents the country of its origin through image (which is of course stylized), sound (it mediates

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<sup>2</sup> See Wallerstein, Immanuel: "The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: Concepts for comparative analysis," 387–415.

<sup>3</sup> For more see Straubhaar, Joseph: "Beyond media imperialism: Asymmetrical interdependence and cultural proximity," 39–59.

<sup>4</sup> Shibata, Ria: "The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan," 116–126.

<sup>5</sup> Iwabuchi, Koichi: "Marketing Japan: Japanese cultural presence under the global gaze," 165–180.



language and musical accompaniment), story (which is based in different ways on history, customs, imagination etc.) and interesting characters.

It is clear from what was mentioned above, that Korean TV drama does not appeal to its viewer just through interesting story, but also through depicting various concrete *cultural aspects*. These aspects are what mediate the various values between the product and the viewer and create an image of the country of origin of a particular TV drama. They are, of course, modified (idealized) and one cannot say that they mediate the culture in its true form – although they still create or support actual stereotypes that are connected with the country of its origin. We must emphasize, that these aspects are influenced by such factors as e.g. the way of narration, story, types of characters, goal of the director or screenwriter, musical accompaniment etc. However, they still provide an image of the country itself. For example, one cannot say that Korea presented in the TV drama *Winter Sonata* corresponds exactly with the real-life in Korea, or that Korean women behave exactly the same as the drama's heroine Yoo-Jin. But what we can say is that all this is based upon certain values (social order and customs shared in Korea etc.) that are modified to fit the needs of a pop cultural product to create a pleasing image of it.

*Cultural aspects* can be understood as aspect which make a concrete country more accessible, its customs, types of people, traditional products of that country (cuisine, clothing in various historical periods), segments of its history, its social system or the way of communication between its people and environment in which they live. To put it shortly, they create an *image of reality* in the viewer. These images lead to (on top of other things) the fact that the audience (Japanese woman's audience in case of Iwabuchi's research), stops to view the East Asian region as a vaguely defined "Asia" and starts to appreciate cultural diversity of this region.<sup>6</sup>

This article follows the direction in which the Korean wave made its way through Asia to the West. Because of the fact that Korean wave was most intensely accepted in culturally close countries, I pay the most attention to the aspects in that the TV drama strongly affected the viewer in culturally similar country. I confront these aspects with an audience from culturally diverse countries and analyze to what extent they may be appealing or repulsive to the viewer from these countries. I bear in mind that the question of cultural closeness (or proximity) is in itself complex and not easily definable. Cultural closeness of two or three countries may be affected by such factors as similar/same influence of religion or philosophical teachings (that take part in creating the social system), but it also depends on a wide range of conditions – for example similar historical experience or being influenced by the same third party, culture-wise. Two countries may be similar in some ways and different in others. Defining to what extent two countries are culturally close is hard and cannot be one hundred percent precise. The basis for this article is Danielle and Thomas Walker's

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<sup>6</sup> Iwabuchi, Koichi: "Symptomatic transformations: Japan in the media and cultural globalization," 125–140.

theory,<sup>7</sup> which says that cultural frame of an individual is defined by such values as language, style, ethics, ways of socialization, non-verbal communication etc. That being said, we can presume that cultural similarity of two individuals is in proportion to the extent to which these factors overlay. If we apply this theory on two different countries, we can see in what ways and how much are those two countries close. If I say two culturally close countries, I mean countries, which understand each other in the areas of ethics, customs, human relations, personal values, but also in the way of accepting stereotypes, such as ideal relationship between men and women.

The number of Korean TV dramas produced every year is huge. Therefore, in this article I focus on TV drama called *Winter Sonata*,<sup>8</sup> which is now a bit dated but still has a tremendous significance. I study the acceptance of this drama by culturally close viewers (Japanese female fans), mostly middle-aged women. I pay attention to the cultural closeness of the two countries on the background of cultural exchange, I mention important *cultural aspects* that can be found in Japanese TV drama of the 90's (which seems to be a significant factor in accepting *Winter Sonata* for Japanese fans) and then I define concrete *cultural aspects*, which Japanese viewers state as a reasons for TV drama *Winter Sonata*'s appeal. Chosen *cultural aspects* of the *Winter Sonata* are presented in quoted statements made by Japanese viewers and are compared to their Western counterparts.

### Japan, Korea and TV drama

Before we define what the *cultural aspects* are, as observed by culturally close Japanese viewer regards *Winter Sonata* and before we look into the reason of the series' popularity, we should turn our attention to the environment which defined these aspects. As we already mentioned, *Winter Sonata*'s audience was specific, because it consisted mainly of middle-aged females, who identified the content of the series with TV dramas of their youth. That means that Japanese female viewers connected *cultural aspects* recognized in the *Winter Sonata* series with the culture of Japanese TV drama of the 90's, and that provoked the nostalgia of the old days. For example, viewer named Sawaki Haruka mentions in her blog in 2004:

*I guess that it (Winter Sonata) walks in footsteps of trendy drama of the 80's.*<sup>9</sup>

The TV drama *Winter Sonata* caught attention of females who, according to Atsushi's categorization of Japanese women, belong to the group called *Oyome-kei* (お嫁系). *Oyome-kei* are women who in the early 1990's before the bursting of the

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<sup>7</sup> Walker, Danielle and Walker, Thomas: *Doing business internationally: The guide to cross-cultural success*, 207.

<sup>8</sup> *Winter Sonata* is a South Korean TV drama series first aired in 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Comment on page <http://plaza.rakuten.co.jp/kithunenomado/diary/200405170000> (Jan 31, 2015). Translated by the author.

economic bubble married a man with annual salary being more than 7 million yen.<sup>10</sup> These women were used to high standard of living and we can assume that they suffered shortcomings during the economic crisis (for example the “kitchen drinker” キッチンドリンカー phenomenon<sup>11</sup>). One of the ways of relieving oneself of the present time hardships was watching television. Various TV dramas (see below) let those women escape to the fantasy world and live someone else’s life. Of those dramas particularly they are reminded by *Winter Sonata*.

Japanese TV drama of the 90’s became a typical example in which the *cultural aspects* presented in a pop cultural product caught attention of the viewers in neighboring countries. The reason why *Winter Sonata* reminds these viewers of those dramas is simply the fact, that it is their successor and it emphasizes the values that were stressed in those dramas. Japanese TV drama of the 90’s was an export article to the countries of East and South-East Asia. In Singapore, between 1995 and 2000, more than ten Japanese TV dramas were broadcasted annually.<sup>12</sup> It is of course debatable, to what extent *Winter Sonata* was influenced by those dramas but there are number of similarities, as seen by the viewers themselves:

*A scene where Yoo-Jin waits for her lover (who never comes) in the first snowy day reminds me of one scene from famous TV drama Tokyo love story, where Rika waits for Kanji. (...) All important characters (from TV drama Winter Sonata) are high school classmates. So are Kanji, Satomi, Sekiguchi and Mikami (characters from Tokyo love story). When Akana Rika comes to them, this outer element disrupts their relationships. In Winter Sonata Rika is represented by Min-Hyung. Kanji, who is strongly manipulated under the influence of a new interrupter, is similar to Yoo-Jin. Roles of men and women are reversed, but I can’t say I don’t like that. Rika and Min-Hyung have much in common – both of them grew up in America. In Winter Sonata there was a dialog: “Mr. Min-Hyung grew up in America, which is why he is so straightforward and often causes misunderstandings and confuses women.” In Tokyo love story there is famous Rika’s speech: “Let’s have sex!” which was understood as a result of her education in America. It is truly interesting how stereotypes about America are similar in Japan and Korea. (Sawaki Haruka)<sup>13</sup>*

One of the main themes of the Japanese 90’s TV drama were the personal lives and troubles of young people, usually employed, living in big Japanese cities. These

<sup>10</sup> For more see, for example, Schad-Seifert, Annette: “Gender and class in Miura Atshushi’s karyū shakai [low-stream society]: Literature Review,” 137–152.

<sup>11</sup> This term refers to Japanese housewives who got used to drinking alcohol drinks alone in their kitchen to forget the troubles of everyday life.

<sup>12</sup> Ng Wai-ming, Benjamin: “From Oshin to Beautiful Life: A Study of Japanese Television Dramas in Singapore,” 71–82.

<sup>13</sup> Comment on page <http://plaza.rakuten.co.jp/kithunenomado/diary/200405170000/>, (Jan 31, 2015). Translated by the author.

TV dramas were later named urban dramas (sometimes trendy drama) and these are series such as Tokyo Love Story (東京ラブストーリー) or Long Vacation (ロングヴァケーション). Series such as these were widely popular, not just with Japanese audience, because they depicted the harsh 90's through stories which were easy to identify with. It presented Japan to neighboring countries as a country on par with Western countries. There were strong connections between characters and friendship was emphasized as much as true love and family. Young people lived in their own apartments in Tokyo: an image of a young independent person. Here probably lies the reason, why these particular series had such a big influence on East Asian youth. Iwabuchi states, that young Asians could sympathize with Japanese characters, because Japan was similar and different at the same time. It was a kind of sympathy born out of viewership of the *cultural aspects* in those dramas and probably its source could not lie in American culture.<sup>14</sup>

If we take a look at the most popular Japanese dramas of the 90's we notice that almost half of them are melodramatic romances with a theme of getting used to life in a big city.<sup>15</sup> Second noticeable category are dramas with a theme of family relations, sibling love and respect to the wishes of parents. These are mostly themes that viewers state as a reason for *Winter Sonata's* appeal. Although there are *cultural aspects* in *Winter Sonata*, that are naturally close to Japanese viewers (see below), one of the reasons why this series appealed to Japanese middle-aged audience, is without a doubt the fact that it touches on themes commonly touched on in Japanese TV dramas of the 90's.

There are many articles on the mania that was started in Japan by the Korean wave and how enthusiastically the TV drama *Winter Sonata* was accepted.<sup>16</sup> We should mention briefly a few facts on this mania, most commonly connected with the character of actor Bae Yong-Joon. Thanks to the TV drama *Winter Sonata*, Japanese audience of this drama became – what Mori calls by term *active audience*.<sup>17</sup> In other words, viewers were no mere passive consumers of the pop-culture (by buying various products, watching the show etc.) but started to take active role in the development of such a cultural wave (by organizing gatherings, communicating in real life, not just websites, and they knew each other personally). For example, Bae Yong-Joon's massive birthday parties organized by fans in Korean restaurants all around Japan in 2004 received even a media coverage.<sup>18</sup> Watching the TV drama

<sup>14</sup> Iwabuchi, Koichi: "Symptomatic transformations: Japan in the media and cultural globalization," 125–140.

<sup>15</sup> See a list at [http://ranking.go.ne.jp/ranking/category/022id/video\\_LhDjCXZs39a9\\_all/](http://ranking.go.ne.jp/ranking/category/022id/video_LhDjCXZs39a9_all/), (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> For more see, for example, Hirata, Yukie: "Touring dramatic Korea: Japanese Viewers of Hanryu Dramas and tourists on Hanryu Tours," 143; Yoshitaka, Mōri: "*Winter Sonata* and Cultural Practices of Active Fans in Japan: Considering Middle-Aged Women as Cultural Agents," 127–143.

<sup>17</sup> Yoshitaka, Mōri: "*Winter Sonata* and Cultural Practices of Active Fans in Japan: Considering Middle-Aged Women as Cultural Agents," 127–142.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

transcended from being just a free time activity to being a lifestyle of its audience. Many of the dramas viewers started to learn Korean, Korean side started to sell tourist trips to see sites where the drama was shot. On the Japanese website of the actor Bae Yong-Joon comments and messages by fans came in waves of thousands because they used to communicate there. The discussion threads varied from what passage of the drama is the best to poems speaking of the actor's unspeakable beauty. From March 17th to 22nd December 2004, 77,623 comments appeared on the website, out of which 1,204 demanded help relating to the TV drama or actor himself and 4,000 were information sharing between users.<sup>19</sup>

According to research by Chōsen Nippō (朝鮮日報) from March 9th 2005, which Ahn cites in his study, as much as 38% of Japanese (even though repeated airings) actually saw the drama. From these, 26% stated (10% of the Japanese population), that this drama changed their opinion about Korea, 22% of people asked (8% of the population) took deeper interest in Korea and 13% (5% of the population) changed their opinion about the Korean culture. It is said that as much as 90% of Japan's population knows what *Winter Sonata* is and the biggest part of its audience are females between 40–60 years. Because of that, Ahn says, watching and existence of the TV drama is not a mere fleeting point of interest but rather it became a social phenomenon.<sup>20</sup>

The cultural exchange between Japan and Korea was not an easy process until just recently and even today we cannot say that the exchange of cultural products is a non-problematic cooperation of both countries. There was a ban on import of Japanese culture in Korea from the end of the Japanese occupation, which was revoked only in 1998 (although some parts of it are still active). There are several aspects complicating the relationship of the two countries which have their origin in the historical experience and besides a few light moments of improvement (such as the co-organization of the 2002 World Cup in football), the relationship remains still complicated. When a Japanese fan of Korean culture wanted to gain access to any cultural products prior to Korean wave, he had to make a considerable effort in the early 90's.<sup>21</sup> The delay in cultural exchange was conditioned by the already mentioned ban of Japanese culture import and memories of Koreans related to the Japanese occupation, which were still vivid. Also, a number of diplomatic faux pas on the Japanese side revived these old scars. Due to enduring problems between the two nations and in hope of warming the cold relationship, both countries coproduced a few TV dramas, which tried to present one country to the viewers of the other one in a more appealing fashion. One of the most successful of these dramas was the drama *Friends* (フレンズ), which deals with romantic relationship between a Japanese girl and a Korean boy who met each other in Hong Kong. This TV drama showed to the viewers the problems with which mixed couples (Korean-Japanese)

<sup>19</sup> Ahn, Jeongmee: "Nihon ni okeru kanryū taishū bunka jūyō: Fuju no sonata wo chūshin ni," 196–210.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

had to deal with. This drama was the first one, which brought attention of Japanese female viewers to the Korean actors. The TV drama *Friends* caught attention of viewers with the clever use of *cultural aspects* backed up by the intimate relationship of two different characters. Two images of reality were created and through these images both Korea and Japan were presented. The TV drama presented two different worlds, two different cultures and two different characters who came from two different backgrounds and let them connect. It served as an evidence that Japan and Korea can get along and understand each other.

The TV drama *Winter Sonata* was in a sense of changing the opinion of Japanese on Koreans a breakthrough and a number of experts, such as Yoshitaka Mori, think that interest in this TV drama changed into the general interest in Korea itself. A lot of them agree that as a hit that the series *Winter Sonata* became, it changed the stereotypical image that Japanese made of Korea.<sup>22</sup> In Japan, the interest in studying Korean language has also risen and Japanese started to show interest in understanding Korean culture. NHK incomes from this miniseries franchise rose to 3 and a half million dollars. As many as 330,000 DVD copies and 1,220,000 book version copies were sold.<sup>23</sup> Popularity of the *Winter Sonata* series is shown, besides other things, by the fact, that in the year 2003 all the DVDs were sold out in four hours after reaching the stores. A lot of Japanese female viewers gained interest in Korean language, which is apparent from Bae Yong-Joon's website:

*I apologize for the issue of a private nature. I'd like to study Korean. How do you study Korean? I want to understand his every word! (Bae Yong Joon's). I want to go to Korea and enjoy it! But even though I bought a textbook and I listen to practical exercises videos, I realized that without education I can't remember anything...*<sup>24</sup>

### **Winter Sonata – brief storyline**

For better understanding of the *cultural aspects* contained in *Winter Sonata*, let us shortly sum up the most important parts of the story. For a better orientation, I divided the storyline into four following parts:

#### 1) Part one:

At the very beginning of the story a boy called Kang Jun-Sang comes to a small town in the south of Korea in order to find his father, about whom his mother says he had died long time ago. Because of an old photography Kang Jun-Sang starts to think that his lost father is the father of Kim Sang-Hyuk, a boy who goes to the same school. Soon after that the two boys start to fight because both of them have

<sup>22</sup> Yoshitaka, Mōri: “*Winter Sonata* and Cultural Practices of Active Fans in Japan: Considering Middle-Aged Women as Cultural Agents,” 127–142.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Comment on page [http://www.yongjoon.jp/bae\\_bbs\\_old/start/board.asp?pagemode=view&m\\_part=baeyongjoon&m\\_code=start&gotopage=9&strsearch=machyanri&searchpart1=&searchpart2=&searchpart3=&searchpart4=&searchpart5=&m\\_idx=77457&totalcnt=3531](http://www.yongjoon.jp/bae_bbs_old/start/board.asp?pagemode=view&m_part=baeyongjoon&m_code=start&gotopage=9&strsearch=machyanri&searchpart1=&searchpart2=&searchpart3=&searchpart4=&searchpart5=&m_idx=77457&totalcnt=3531), (Jan 31, 2015). Translation of the author.

feelings for Jung Yoo-Jin, one of their classmates. Finally, Jun-Sang and Yoo-Jin fall in love with each other. Together, they experience unforgettable moments of first love. After some time, Jun-Sang finds out that Yoo-Jin's father was also a close friend of his mother and he starts to think that they could be brother and sister. In spite of mystery left unsolved, Jun-Sang follows his mother's wish and decides to leave Yoo-Jin and goes studying abroad. On the way to the airport Jun-Sang changes his mind and tries to get to Yoo-Jin so that he could keep his promise and meet her for a date. Unfortunately he is hit by a car and loses his memory. Classmates are told that Jun-Sang died during a traffic accident.

2) Part two:

The second part of the story takes place ten years later. Yoo-Jin and her childhood friend Sang-Hyuk are about to get married when Yoo-Jin suddenly meets a man who looks exactly the same as her first love Jun-Sang who died a long time ago. She spends a whole evening trying to catch a glimpse of him in the streets. She is shocked even more, when he appears at her engagement party, introducing himself as Lee Min-Hyung. Soon after that, Yoo-Jin, who works as an architect, meets Min-Hyung at the business meeting. She starts to cry and cannot act normally. Min-Hyung does not understand Yoo-Jin's reaction but after a short time he discovers he has a special feeling for her. They fall in love with each other and Sang-Hyuk falls into depression. Next, Yoo-Jin leaves Jun-Sang but once he tries to attempt suicide, she comes back. Meanwhile Min-Hyung finds out about his past, discovering his real name is actually Kang Jun-Sang. He also discovers that his mother had him brainwashed by a physician while he was unconscious after the crash and made him think he was Min-Hyung.

3) Part three:

In the third part Yoo-Jin is hit by a car but survives and finally confirms her belief that Min-Hyung is no one else but her first love Jun-Sang. Sang-Hyuk gives up so that Yoo-Jin could be happy. However, after some time the old question of Jun-Sang's real father arises and separates both lovers for they think they might be siblings. Then Jun-Sang finds out about his real father (who happens to be also Sang-Hyuk's father), but before he can contact Yoo-Jin with the good news, he is told that he is sick having a dangerous blood clot in his brain. Sang-Hyuk asks Jun-Sang to give up on Yoo-Jin. He grants the request and leaves for important surgery. Yoo-Jin cannot marry Sang-Hyuk and goes to France.

4) Part four:

Last part of the story takes place after another three years. Yoo-Jin comes back to Korea and meets all her friends. Soon after that she finds out that somewhere in Korea someone has built a house that resembles very much to the house project she had designed for her and Jun-Sang when they were together four years ago. She decides to visit this place and when she gets there, she meets Jun-Sang who has who

became blind after the surgery. Finally they can kiss knowing they can be together for the rest of their lives.

It is not just the story of *Winter Sonata* what is interesting for Japanese fans. Some of them do even admit that in comparison with others Korean TV dramas, the story of *Winter Sonata* is nothing special or we could say that it is rather weak. It is more the atmosphere of the series, actors and particular *cultural aspects* what attracts Japanese audience:

*The story for sure is silly (trivial). Yet when you watch Winter Sonata, you feel so easy and you soon forget all the inconveniences.* (Iwanaga Naoko quoting her mother)<sup>25</sup>

*First of all, Korean dramas are unrealistic, but the story line is simple for even a person at my age to follow.* (Ms. B, age 58)<sup>26</sup>

According to the fans, the often mentioned atmosphere clearly compensates almost all weaknesses of the story. This atmosphere can be felt especially in the first part of *Winter Sonata*, when TV drama presents us the main characters during teenage carefree years. The happiness of being in love is shown in scenes when Jun-Sang and Yoo-Jin ride bikes or build a snowman together. These scenes seem to be the favorite ones of almost all Japanese fans. *Winter Sonata's* dreamlike atmosphere is also supported by romantic piano music.

### **Cultural aspects in *Winter Sonata* as seen by culturally close audience**

Shibata in her study says,<sup>27</sup> that in contrast to Japanese television miniseries, which depict modern life, Korean TV dramas are full of traditional Asian values. In this part, I will focus on the following three *cultural aspects* seen in this TV drama: 1) cultural aspect of the Korean family, 2) cultural aspect of the relationship with older people, 3) cultural aspect of the friendship between peers and an image of the ideal “true” love in Korean understanding, connected with main character of this TV drama.

1) Even though *Winter Sonata* is a melodrama, that has just a few characters, the family background of most of these characters plays a big role in the story. The families do not disappear even after the story moves from the first part (main characters are in high school) to the second (problems with wedding). Korean family, as presented in this miniseries to the Japanese audience, has its roots in the concept of filial piety, loyalty to the parents, and presents a family in which the roles of mother and father are very strictly defined. If there is a non-complete family in

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<sup>25</sup> Comment on page <http://www.yomidr.yomiuri.co.jp/page.jsp?id=37324>, (Jan 31, 2015). Translation of the author.

<sup>26</sup> Comment taken from Shibata, Ria: “The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan,” 116–126.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



*Winter Sonata*, it is either because one of the parents died or the absence of that parent has a bad influence on the kid.<sup>28</sup>

*Winter Sonata* shows to its viewer a story, in which the main characters are under a strong influence of their parents – actively and passively. The first group (passive influence) is formed by the things that happened before they were born and is rooted in their parents' past wrongdoings. These events gave life to questions like who is actually Jun-Sang's father or whether Yoo-Jin is actually Jun-Sang's sister. The second group (active influence) is made of characters who are influenced by their parents' wishes and opinions that affect directly the lives of their children during the years in which this drama takes place. While the first group creates a background for the story, the second helps in creating circumstances mostly because wishes of their parents, no matter how much they are against their own wishes, are always granted. In other words, the TV drama *Winter Sonata* presents to the viewer an image of Korea, where nothing is more important than family and wishes of family members have to be obeyed, even though it means personal suffering. It is evident that for a culturally close viewer, moments when characters of children grant wishes of their parents even though they disagree, are the most crucial. These moments are aptly described by Mrs. G in Shibata's study:

*In Winter Sonata, one of the big obstacles Jun-sang and Yoo-Jin face is the strong objection from their parents. If this was in Japan, they would ignore the parents and go off and get married. Jun-sang is established in society as the CEO of a successful architectural firm and Yoo-Jin is old enough to make her own future decisions, and yet they suffer because of the notion of filial piety that they must absolutely respect...*  
(Ms. G, age 58)<sup>29</sup>

Korean family presented in *Winter Sonata* reminds us of a more traditional form of Japanese family, where distinctive roles are given to father and mother and respect towards parents and grandparents is very highly stressed. This traditional hierarchy went through several changes in Japan over the past few decades. Those changes led to the determination of some of the viewers that modernization of Japan caused the dissolution of the family system and the rise of the number of incomplete families where traditional Confucian values no longer matter.<sup>30</sup> For example, female viewer of the drama *Winter Sonata* Mrs. F expresses her feelings towards the decline of traditional Japanese values in as follows:

*Traditional values to respect family ties seem to be extremely important in the Korean society. Japan used to attach importance to these*

<sup>28</sup> For example, Kang Jun-Sang has a problematic relationship with his mother because of his father absence. Because of this complicated relationship, when Jun-Sang loses his memory, his mother creates a new life for him while trying to be his favorite parent.

<sup>29</sup> Comment taken from Shibata, Ria: "The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan," 116–126.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

*values in the past, but not anymore. With the industrialization after the war, we have lost these familial values; the kind you find in the world of Sazae-san.*<sup>31</sup> (Ms. F, age 63)<sup>32</sup>

The manner in which Korean family is presented by the TV drama *Winter Sonata*, gradually created in the Japanese audience an image, that while in Japan those traditional family values are no longer relevant, their importance lives on in Korea. If we realize, how much the aspect of family is stressed in the TV drama *Winter Sonata* and if we take in account that typical viewer of this drama are middle-aged to older women, then it is clear that this aspect had a tremendous influence on these viewers.

2) The second aspect in this TV drama comes out of similar values, such as the aforementioned aspect of family. It is the aspect of general respect towards older people, which is also mentioned by some viewers as a reason, why they watched *Winter Sonata*. Viewer Mrs. G in Shibata's study comments on this in following manner:

*Japanese people no longer respect their elders. You can tell that when you are inside a train. We see less young people giving up their seats to older people like myself. But in Korean dramas, young people constantly show care and respect to those who are older than them.* (Ms. G, age 58)<sup>33</sup>

Korean dramas treat topic of respect towards old people in several different ways. The most common way is to show young people freeing their seat for older ones in the public transport, but for example characters in Korean dramas do not even smoke in presence of older people. This way of presenting respect towards older people is very strongly felt by Japanese audience:

*Korean men in the television dramas show respect for their elders and always obey their parents. They don't even smoke in front of their seniors. When they drink alcohol with a senior, they look sideways and sip the glass, as an expression of showing respect.* (Ms. G, age 58)<sup>34</sup>

3) Another cultural aspect, which is often mentioned as a reason for watching this drama, is the aspect of kindness towards friends and ability of Korean women and men to feel 'true' or 'pure' love. While the emphasis on togetherness between peers comes from vertical hierarchy of Korean society, which is familiar to the Japanese viewer, the ability to show pure love, different from for example family, is not something that comes from the traditional values or social system. It is essentially a way to present the quality or emotional world of a few characters. What happened

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<sup>31</sup> Sazae-san was a popular Japanese manga comic strip written by Hasegawa Machiko, first published in Fukunichi Shinbun (フクニチ新聞) on April 22, 1946.

<sup>32</sup> Comment taken from Shibata, Ria: "The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan," 116–126.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

is that in the eyes of Japanese viewers the characteristics of a TV drama characters had mixed into a general image of young Korean people.

*Characters often express feelings of love and affection. All characters are kind towards the older people. In Korean TV drama, we also often hear the question: "Have you already eaten?" when people care about others.<sup>35</sup>*

With this generalization comes the opinion, that Korean men are, compared to the Japanese men, kind to their women, dedicated and able to sincerely express their feelings.

*There is something special about Korean men that you cannot find in Japanese men. They depict pure love. (Ms. D, age 37)<sup>36</sup>*

*Japanese men are so weak and hesitant to express their emotions. They hardly tell their lovers, 'I love you.' Every woman, I think, wants to be strongly desired and to be loved. On the other hand, Korean men are so passionate in expressing their love. Yon-sama is gentle and warm but passionate to show his true love to Yoo-Jin. He is strong when it is necessary to be strong. Sometimes their lines sound a bit corny and unrealistic but that is what I like about Winter Sonata.<sup>37</sup>*

Matsumura says,<sup>38</sup> that Japanese female fans of *Winter Sonata* think it impossible, that Japanese men would express their feelings in such an honest and serious way as their Korean TV drama counterparts do.

Thanks to the manner, in which close friends treat each other in the TV drama *Winter Sonata* and the way in which a young man is presented (connected to Bae Yong-Joon), an image of attractive and kind Korea is created. This image is even strengthened by the way, in which characters of the *Winter Sonata* approach people, who they cannot love back, or by the determination with which they try not to break promises given to their loved ones and friends. Due to the fact, that the common audience of the TV drama *Winter Sonata* were middle-aged women, places where these women usually appeared were flooded with posters of young Korean actors and pictures with scenes from the series. A young woman, whose 70 year-old mother became a fan of the show, remembers in an internet article, how women's doctors' offices were full of products connected with Korean wave. She cites her doctor's words, which she used to describe the mania that possessed older patients. This doctor mentions on the subject of the kindness aspect as follows:

<sup>35</sup> Comment on page <http://www.yomidr.yomiuri.co.jp/page.jsp>, (31. 1. 2015). Translation of the author.

<sup>36</sup> Comment taken from Shibata, Ria: "The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan", 116–126.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> In Ahn, Jeongmee: "Nihon ni okeru kanryū taishū bunka jūyō: Fujū no sonata wo chūshin ni", 196–210.

*In Korean TV dramas men are extremely kind to women. Affectionate relationship between men and women that are portrayed in Korean TV dramas have therapeutic effect on many patients who suffer from problems related to menopause and long for their husbands' understanding and care.<sup>39</sup>*

Mrs. I from Shibata's study adds:

*When I watch Winter Sonata, I feel energy welling forth. I feel younger and my heart feels healed. I feel so happy. I think this drama does magic. (Ms. I, age 60)<sup>40</sup>*

For a Japanese female viewer of the *Winter Sonata*, the series is probably attractive due to the nostalgic quality of it, which reminds her of times when she herself lived the first and pure love. Older Japanese female viewers even said that this TV drama reminds them of a Japanese radio play from 1952 called *Kimi no na wa?* (君の名は?). The play *Kimi no na wa?* left strong memories of pure love that was lived by characters in that play in the minds of its listeners and they mostly remember the scene in which the lovers kissed through glass.<sup>41</sup> Nostalgia, be it evoked by older TV dramas or youth loves of viewers, is presumably one of the keys to the question why this TV drama is so immensely popular among its viewers.

*Thank you very much! Today (21. 12. 2004) Jon-Sama's photo book arrived. (...) When my mum was 29, my father died. Although mother had many opportunities to marry again, she could not forget my father and raised me alone. When my mother saw Winter Sonata, she connected my father with Yon-sama. She could not stop staring at the TV screen and her smile from the time when my father was alive has returned. (...) For this mum, I have chosen Yon-sama's photo book as a birthday present. Thank you very much Yon-sama, for my mother's smile.<sup>42</sup>*

Let us look at the term "pure love" itself (*jun'ai* 純愛) and we realize that it essentially means romantic love which endured various hardships. Pure love is, according to Japanese female viewers, love which lived through long-term separation of the characters, neglecting on side of parents, complications due to different social status of characters, or, in an extreme case, amnesia or even death of one of the characters.

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<sup>39</sup> Comment on page <http://www.yomidr.yomiuri.co.jp/page.jsp>, (Jan 31, 2015). Translation of the author.

<sup>40</sup> Comment taken from Shibata, Ria: "The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan", 116–126.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Comment on page [http://www.yongjoon.jp/bae\\_bbs\\_old/start/board.asp?pagemode=view&m\\_part=baeyongjoon&m\\_code=start&gotopage=&strsearch=heymom&searchpart1=m\\_name&searchpart2=&searchpart3=&searchpart4=&searchpart5=&m\\_idx=77226&totalcnt=2](http://www.yongjoon.jp/bae_bbs_old/start/board.asp?pagemode=view&m_part=baeyongjoon&m_code=start&gotopage=&strsearch=heymom&searchpart1=m_name&searchpart2=&searchpart3=&searchpart4=&searchpart5=&m_idx=77226&totalcnt=2), (Jan 31, 2015). Translation of the author.

*Yoo-Jin, even after she thinks she lost Jun-sang in the car accident, never forgets her first love. Her pure and untainted love makes me cry. (Ms. C, age 60)<sup>43</sup>*

With the *Winter Sonata*'s manner of presenting to its viewers the ideal "Korean" love is also connected the image of an ideal loving man. Japanese viewers tend to think that the loving tenderness of a TV drama character is a common attribute of Korean men.<sup>44</sup> The Jun-Sang character from *Winter Sonata*, played by Bae Yong-Joon, made such an appeal to Japanese audience that most of the characteristics of this fictional character were mixed up with the actor himself in the eyes of the viewers. Therefore, Bae Yong-Joon became for Japanese audience an embodiment of an ideal loving man. Some of the fans writing comments on his website even say that Bae Yong-Joon became something of a symbol of Korea for them. Mixing an actor and fictional character into one is evident from these comments:

*Jun-sang's deep love for Yoo-Jin is the reason why I like Bae Yong-Joon so much. (Ms. C, age 60)<sup>45</sup>*

*I think he is a real man (Bae Yong-Joon). Intelligent, humble, polite, takes care of others, elegant and has a strong will. We used to have that kind of man in Japan. But now it's hard to find that kind of character [virtue] from young Japanese men. (Ms. Tang)<sup>46</sup>*

If we realize that since 1980's the tendencies in Japanese TV drama were to depict, instead of strong men, strong and independent women next to whom men characters may seem a bit dependent, then it is no wonder that Japanese female audience were being attracted to Bae Yong-Joon. Tendencies to depict weak, maybe lovely men, otaku or stylized teenagers that seem feminine in Japanese TV drama who cannot give to its females any guarantees, reached its peak in 2003 by airing the TV drama *Kimi wa petto* (君はペット). This miniseries, firstly aired simultaneously with the first broadcast of *Winter Sonata*, tells a story of a relationship between independent woman and a young man she finds one day cold in a box in front of her apartment, and starts to keep him as a pet. It is evident that in contrast with *Winter Sonata*, which was aimed at a specific audience of middle and older aged persons and comes with 'real' characters, pure love and family bonds, Japanese TV dramas of *Kimi wa petto* kind were of no interest to the older viewer. In any case, probably under influence of TV shows, which show stylized 'cute' men, Japanese viewers had

<sup>43</sup> Comment taken from Shibata, Ria: "The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan", 116–126.

<sup>44</sup> This is closely related to the "Yon-sama phenomenon".

<sup>45</sup> Comment taken from Shibata, Ria: "The Globalization of Popular Culture: The Korean Wave in Japan," 116–126.

<sup>46</sup> Comment taken from Jung, Sun: "Bae Yong-Joon, Hybrid Masculinity and the Counter-coeval Desire of Japanese Female Fans", [http://www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%202%20-%20special/3\\_02\\_jung.htm](http://www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%202%20-%20special/3_02_jung.htm).

experienced a shift of what is seen as masculine, because ideal man, as presented by Bae Yong-Joon, does not seem manly at all on the first sight.

In the matter of Bae Yong-Joon, sometimes we speak about hybridized masculinity,<sup>47</sup> which is a new form of masculinity this actor presents. In his sociological study on this form of masculinity, Jun sun says, that a lot of Japanese female fans speak of Bae Yong-Joon in a manner that he is an ideal perfect man, who has a 'manly charisma' and a 'woman's tenderness'. In other words, Japanese female fans think of masculinity in a manner of this new form. Mrs. Ga in this study says:

*He is different from any other actor or any other guy. He is tender but not weak. His dialogues are so sweet, poetic and intelligent but at the same time he has such a charismatic manner. (Ms. Ga)<sup>48</sup>*

*Jung adds that one of the keys to the appeal of Bae Yong-Joon to Japanese female viewers is a fact that he is essentially neutral. He is not extremely sexually attractive, nor is he very manly but also he is not feminine. Jung concludes that he is seen as an ideal man precisely because he is sensitive, charming, polite but he can also express himself if needed. He is a man a woman wants to be with. In other words, he fulfills the needs of Japanese middle-aged women.<sup>49</sup>*

### **Cultural aspects in *Winter Sonata* in a culturally diverse environment**

If we sum up the most important *cultural aspects* of *Winter Sonata* as listed above we can summarize them as follows: The Korean TV drama *Winter Sonata* emphasizes *family ties, respect for elders, friendship* among friends and true love. It also comes with the idea of an ideal (Korean) man. Through these aspects, *Winter Sonata* allowed culturally close fans (due to its similarity to the Japanese trendy drama that was produced in eighties and nineties) to return to the days of youth and provoked nostalgic feelings in them. It also presented them an ideal world (ideal Korea) based on similar social values that culturally close countries share with Korea. These values are still valid in this ideal world, although in real world their validity is disappearing.

In all these points, *cultural aspects* played a crucial role. On this basis, culturally close fans created roughly the following image of Korea: Jun-Sang's character became an epitome of the ideal man. Later, this character became one with actor Bae Yong-Joon and so he became the ideal. In other words, what became the ideal was a Korean man, insuperable by other men. "Yon-sama phenomenon" then helped fans to believe that all Korean men are honest, elegant, caring, and stylish and they are responsible towards their families and friends. Also, some Japanese fans started to believe that Korean stars care more for their fans than Japanese stars do. The Korean TV drama made its fans think that traditional values that are no longer valid in Japan are still relevant in Korea. Especially in the case of Korean family aspect, in

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

culturally close countries it is believed that children in Korea almost always respect their parents' wishes.

Before we compare these images of Korea with images that were created in culturally distant countries, it is important to mention a few facts. First of all, as already mentioned in the Introduction, Korean TV drama is not so widespread in the West as it is in East Asia and it is only occasionally broadcasted on televisions of culturally distant countries. Because its popularity is limited mostly to watching them on the internet, average fans of Korean TV drama (including *Winter Sonata*) are usually younger than their Asian counterparts (we could say that they are about 17–30 years old). It is also important to mention that there are almost none or only a very few studies dealing with the problem of the acceptance of Korean TV drama in the culturally distant countries. Nevertheless, following comparison can serve as certain guidance in understanding the universality of *Winter Sonata* and the Korean TV drama, as the *cultural aspects* shown here can be found in other Korean TV dramas as well and these TV dramas took effect on much more younger audience in both culturally close and distant countries.

Since the TV drama *Winter Sonata* affects most of the culturally different audiences via the internet, it is necessary to briefly mention its popularity on the Western internet sites. On the internet server Imdb.com *Winter Sonata* rates 8,2 out of 10 (rated by 536 users),<sup>50</sup> on the server Asianwiki.com (Wikipedia pages dealing with Asian TV drama) *Winter Sonata* reaches the popularity of 95% (rated by 420 users),<sup>51</sup> on D-addict pages (pages dealing with Asian pop cultural products) 52 users (37% of respondents) recommend *Winter Sonata* for watching and 47 users (34% of respondents) consider this drama as a life-altering one<sup>52</sup>. In general, among culturally diverse audience and fans, *Winter Sonata* is perceived and accepted rather positively. Fans like mostly the romantic story and among positive comments we can find also enthusiasm for good acting and great music:

*I fell in love with Korean dramas after watching this (...)! The emotions it could evoke now that's beautiful. Only a good drama can make me cry & this well is the best. Much love for Bae Yong Joon, such a beautiful man (like many other Korean men eye candy). Superb. Huge fan from Zimbabwe, Africa. Korean dramas are amazing! (Samantha Proud African)*<sup>53</sup>

Most of the comments mention the same *cultural aspects* that were mentioned by culturally close audience. English and French viewers for example most often mention the aspect of Korean family and friendship. However, at the stage of creating the image of Korea, we can find substantial differences. For culturally distant audience, some of the *cultural aspects* are not so easily readable and this unreadability, poor

<sup>50</sup> See <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0395057/>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> See [http://asianwiki.com/Winter\\_Sonata/](http://asianwiki.com/Winter_Sonata/), (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>52</sup> See <https://www.d-addicts.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=13291>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>53</sup> Comment on page [http://asianwiki.com/Winter\\_Sonata](http://asianwiki.com/Winter_Sonata), (Jan 31, 2015).

intelligibility, leads in their case to misunderstandings and wrong interpretation. These aspects then do not create positive image of the country of the origin and the viewer is confused. If this kind of unreadable aspect is not compensated by other easily readable aspects, good plot or a good musical accompaniment, it can (in extreme cases) lead to the condemnation of this particular drama.

The most problematic and unreadable cultural aspect in the case of culturally diverse audience is probably the aspect of the Korean family. Specifically the filial piety is not always understood correctly. While culturally close audience tend to like the Confucian concept of traditional family where the roles of family members are fixed, culturally distant audience understand this concept in a sense that parents push their children into such decisions and life situations, that loving parents would never want their children to go through. Here, the cultural aspect of the Korean traditional family and the traditional value of filial piety are being misunderstood:

*I must say I had to laugh in disgust when the mother kept asking her daughter if she was okay. Meanwhile she is forcing her into a loveless marriage and to do the 'honorable' thing, even though she herself married a man who was engaged to another woman. Then Jun Sang's mother must have had a serious case of arrested development. (...) Apart from the unbelievable 'parents' and a little too melodramatic a script this drama was really very beautiful and the acting very enjoyable. (Davia)<sup>54</sup>*

*I despised that Jun Sang's mother. How selfish letting her son suffers mental anguish! (Natasha)<sup>55</sup>*

Firm social hierarchy may also seem problematic, required respect for elders and superiors and the duty to fulfill the tasks and obligations, even when those obligations do not correspond to our moral sentiments and wishes.

*I'm beginning to wonder if Koreans are extreme people (sorry, this is not meant to demean the Koreans). From the serials that I've watched so far, they're either very good or really really bad. Very sadistic and cruel. (Dianat)<sup>56</sup>*

*The writer must hate women – all the pivotal women in this show are bi\*ches. Watch and you will know what I mean. I watch for Bae Yong Joon (love him) and for the beautiful setting and scenery. (Little Tiger)<sup>57</sup>*

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<sup>54</sup> Comment on page [http://asianwiki.com/Winter\\_Sonata](http://asianwiki.com/Winter_Sonata), (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>55</sup> Comment on page [http://asianwiki.com/Winter\\_Sonata](http://asianwiki.com/Winter_Sonata), (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Comment on page <https://www.spcnet.tv/Korean-Dramas/Winter-Sonata-p651.html#VL2AzEeG8X0>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>57</sup> Comment on page <https://www.d-addicts.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=13291>, (Jan 31, 2015).



The already mentioned friendship is, on the other hand, accepted quite positively.

*I have watched WS about 5 times (favorite chapters a bit more) but not for the plot. (...) I watch (Winter Sonata) for Bae Yong Joon (love him) and for the beautiful setting and scenery. I also love the way friends interact. (Little Tiger)<sup>58</sup>*

Very readable for culturally distance audience is also the aspect of true love. Love itself is after all accessible to everyone because every viewer wants to experience it.

*Beautiful love story about first love, beautiful memories shared and a reflection of life with love. Beautiful scenes that add the sheer ambience of the whole drama. Beautiful songs adding up it's wonderful lyrics. (...) Winter Sonata will change your perspectives about Love. (Maea\_maie)<sup>59</sup>*

In a culturally distant country, it is not easy to provoke the same feeling of nostalgia that is felt in culturally close environment through watching Korean TV drama. Nevertheless sometimes kitschy aesthetics of *Winter Sonata* cause the audience to yearn for an experience of similar love, which experienced two main characters.

*The theme of the different types of love really touched me. The cast was great and so was the story. I loved the scenery and music as well. (LightningEmperor)<sup>60</sup>*

The main characters are mostly accepted positively, although actors and characters are not always viewed as one person. Bae Yong-Joon obviously captivated culturally distant audiences but unlike the Japanese fans who emphasize its uniqueness, Western fans often compare him with American and Japanese actors trying to assimilate it to someone.

*About Bae Yong-Jun's performance, DAMN ohh my god, he is just 100 times awesome. 101% perfect for such role. Choi Ji-Woo is good as well so as her chemistry with Bae Yong-Jun in the drama. (Clarkdale44)<sup>61</sup>*

*Hihhihi, I thought I was the only one who thought he reminds me of older version of Kim Hyun Joong. (soso12)<sup>62</sup>*

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<sup>58</sup> Comment on page <https://www.d-addicts.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=13291>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>59</sup> Comment on page <https://www.d-addicts.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=13291>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>60</sup> Comment on page <https://www.d-addicts.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=13291>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>61</sup> Comment on page [http://asianwiki.com/Winter\\_Sonata](http://asianwiki.com/Winter_Sonata), (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>62</sup> Comment on page <http://www.nautiljon.com/people/bae+yong+jun.html#comments>, (Jan 31, 2015).

Besides the right understanding of particular cultural aspect, culturally diverse audience has also problems with the slow pace of the story, particularly with frequent repetition of explanatory scenes. Predictability of the plot is not a problem for culturally close fans – and it sometimes even helps him to follow the story, is seen as redundant in culturally diverse environment:

*I voted stay away because I have watch many dramas and no drama has been more boring (...) in every way than Winter Sonata. Right now I'm stuck on episode 12 and it is so damn boring that I don't really want to watch it anymore. (Nikeg)<sup>63</sup>*

*Thankfully, the only K-drama that I have regretted spending time on. I slept thru six episodes and didn't miss a thing: They were still walking s l o w l y and recalling the past, except of course, the amnesiac. (Gasenadi)<sup>64</sup>*

*Yoo-Jin & Jun-Sang are really destined to each other after all the conflicts they had to surpassed, but the series took long (20 episodes) just to collaborate a simple plot that it can only take in lesser episodes and the finale are too simple after all they've gone thru... (Biege)<sup>65</sup>*

Nevertheless, it should be noted that in terms of Winter Sonata storyline, there are also positive comments:

*I went crazy halfway through the show and couldn't move, it was totally unpredictable what will happen next... (Clarkdale44)<sup>66</sup>*

## Conclusion

It is obvious that *cultural aspects* contained in Korean pop cultural products (TV drama in our case) are perceived by both culturally near and distant audiences and that both of these audiences mention the same *cultural aspects* when asked why they like the particular pop cultural product. *Cultural aspects* allow the audience to idealize the country of the origin of the product (they create usually positive *image of reality*). All this corresponds with Iwabuchi's theory of cultural attractiveness of the product that was mentioned above.

When we compare culturally close and distant audiences, we have to say that culturally close fans can easily identify themselves with the *cultural aspects* of the particular culturally close product and that these aspects usually bring back old memories or evoke feelings of nostalgia in this audience. In case of culturally close audience, *cultural aspects* contained in some special products (for example romantic

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<sup>63</sup> Comment on page <https://www.d-addicts.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=13291>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>64</sup> Comment on page [http://asianwiki.com/Winter\\_Sonata](http://asianwiki.com/Winter_Sonata), (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>65</sup> Comment on page <https://www.spcnet.tv/Korean-Dramas/Winter-Sonata-p651.html#VL6c4UeG8X1>, (Jan 31, 2015).

<sup>66</sup> Comment on page [http://asianwiki.com/Winter\\_Sonata](http://asianwiki.com/Winter_Sonata), (Jan 31, 2015).

TV drama) also lead to a desire for pure love. Environment, in which the TV drama takes place, seems to be truly close in the meaning of being *near* or not far away, because both the viewer and the characters share the same values.

On the other hand, culturally distant audience, although it is also sensitive to the same *cultural aspects*, sometimes cannot identify itself with the *cultural aspects* so easily. This inability leads to incomprehension and misunderstandings. But we should not understand this inability as a purely negative thing. *Cultural aspects* that show a culturally distant country can bring up such questions as *what is this country really like* and they can lead to searching for other cultural products from the same cultural background. They stimulate curiosity. It is also obvious that one or two incomprehensible *cultural aspects* can be balanced out by other *cultural aspects*, which are readable and transparent even for the culturally distant audience (idea of pure love), so the product remains culturally attractive. In case of TV drama, fans are also influenced by musical accompaniment, romantic story, beauty of characters etc. that can overshadow the *cultural aspects* which are difficult to understand.

While the culturally close audience can feel nostalgia while watching TV drama from culturally close country and it might feel “familiar”, it is not so easy to achieve these feelings in a culturally diverse audience. When it is achieved, it is rather on the level of general interpersonal relations (compassion for the sick character, sharing happiness with character in love etc.) than in the social level (longing for the good old days). However, what is typical for culturally diverse audience in the case of Korean cultural products and what is not so strongly felt in the case of culturally close audience, is a desire for exoticism.

Although both of these audiences perceive *cultural aspects* in different ways, we can assume that the essential thing both of these groups actually want, is basically the same. That is the opportunity to experience “real feelings” different from the everyday life (here it is almost comical because the real feelings are experienced through TV drama). That means that the audience desires for attractive world full of attractive people (handsome men, beautiful women) who are able to feel true feelings (love, friendship, hate based on serious reasons etc.). This ideal world, ideal Korea, is then merged into one with real Korea just as it sometimes happens with actors and characters. This ideal Korea created by Korean TV dramas such as Winter sonata functions as an imaginary space available for everyone.

To conclude, in culturally close audience the Korean TV drama provokes desire for something familiar that *used to be* familiar before and in culturally distant audience it is something that *might be* and it is not so familiar. Anyway, in both cases this something is desired and wanted.

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# PRAGUE: IMAGINING THE METROPOLIS OF ROMANCE<sup>1</sup>

Alexandra Lichá

**Abstract:** *This paper views Korean tourists in Prague through the lenses of urban anthropology and anthropology of tourism in order to map their image of the city of Prague. It aims to see whether and to what extent this image could be related to the portrayal of the city as a site of romance in the TV series “Lovers in Prague” and/or if particular locations or body techniques among Korean tourists would perpetuate to create a Korean-specific image of Prague; the two main groups of Koreans coming to Prague being young backpackers and newly-weds. In order to do this, a preliminary research through Naver keyword search has been carried out. The paper then discusses the elements of the city image created by the supply-side and the demand-side before moving to discussion on a possible future research on this topic.*

**Keywords:** *Prague, tourism, city image, hallyu, Lovers in Prague, urban anthropology, anthropology of tourism, South Korea*

## Introduction

The hallyu phenomenon can work in both ways; not only as a pull factor towards South Korea but also as a push factor for Koreans<sup>2</sup> towards other places. In this article, I tried to do a preliminary research on the dynamics of hallyu between Korea and Prague in the less studied direction – to complement the research on the spread of hallyu in Central Europe among locals. The South Korean drama trilogy “Lovers” (2004–2006) features Prague in its second series; and “Lovers in Prague” (프라하의 연인, 2005) increased considerably Prague’s popularity as a holiday destination among South Korean tourists. It creates an image of the Czech capital, alongside to Paris featured in the first series (“Lovers in Paris”, 2004), as a site of romance.

In this paper, I tried to view Korean tourists in Prague through the lenses of urban anthropology and anthropology of tourism to map their image of Prague. I was particularly interested in knowing whether and to what extent this image could be related to the portrayal of the city as a site of romance in the series and/or particular locations or body techniques among Korean tourists that would perpetuate to create a Korean-specific image of Prague.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my supervisor, PhDr. Marek Halbich, PhD, for his comments on this paper. Same, thanks to the 2014 Hallyu conference (Nov. 2014, Prague) discussants for their remarks on this work. All mistakes remain solely my own.

<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I am discussing South Korean context only. Therefore, Korea and Koreans stand invariably for South Korea and South Koreans.

Such a study could serve not only as an addition to hallyu research but also in urban anthropology as well with possible comparative work on different “romantic metropolises” or juxtaposed images of Prague. Of course, studies in urban anthropology and anthropology of tourism offer possibilities (or even dilemmas<sup>3</sup>) of being used in (commercially) applied research on tourist attraction, city branding etc.; though my aim in this article was purely academic. Hence, keeping original names of companies serves to substantiate my arguments, not to create any sort of advertisement.

After the literature and other source review, I confront my hypothesis that the series “Lovers in Prague” would influence the creation of mental map of Prague among Koreans, and thus create a Korean-specific image of the city, with preliminary field results. I would like to note that two main groups of Koreans coming to Prague are young backpackers and newly-weds. I also discuss the elements of the city image created by the supply-side and the demand-side before moving to discussion on possible future research on this topic.

## Methodology

This study is an interdisciplinary analysis in anthropology and anthropology of tourism, serving as a preparation for possible future research on the image of Prague among Korean tourists. It tries to explore a possible link between the romantic image of Prague and the South Korean television soap-opera “Lovers in Prague” and to explore other possible Korean-specific images of the city.

The “image of the city” in urban anthropology is always dynamic and subjective. Lynch<sup>4</sup> defines it as a mental map of the city of an individual. Raulin<sup>5</sup> notes that such an image is always constructed in contrast to another; i.e. in between two neighbourhoods, in between two cities etc. Pauknerová<sup>6</sup> talks about the “landscape”, which can be an “urban landscape” rather than the image of the city, and she notes that it is always “such as the individual or a group comprehend it and experience it”. In my research, I was thus interested in the “mental map” of Prague among Korean tourists, more specifically the one they tried to share with others on their Naver blogs – further research would necessitate direct qualitative data through semi-structural interviews and possibly direct mental map drawing by the respondents to add more complexity and detail. Because, the shared data are mainly images and commentaries that might have been selected and auto-censored by the bloggers as they are sharing the content of their blogs publicly. Also, such content is in its disposition mainly vi-

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<sup>3</sup> Tribe (1997) in Waldmannová, Eliška: *Změna obrazu Prahy po roce 1989 očima turistů*, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Pauknerová, Karolína: “Cesty antropologa ve městě: o lidských smyslech, městské krajině a antropologii,” 95.

<sup>5</sup> Raulin, Anne: *Anthropologie urbaine*, 85.

<sup>6</sup> Pauknerová, Karolína: “Cesty antropologa ve městě: o lidských smyslech, městské krajině a antropologii,” 89.

sual. Within these limitations, I tried to focus on locations and experiences searched as well as body techniques<sup>7</sup> performed by Korean tourists in Prague.

Tourism is a rather new anthropological subject researched extensively only since the 1980s. Graburn<sup>8</sup> conceptualises the tourism in the Durkheimian opposition of sacred versus profane – the tourism as a manifestation of the sacred, a “process of leaving the ordinary, i.e. sacralisation that elevates participants to the non-ordinary state wherein marvellous things happen, and the converse process of de-sacralisation or return to ordinary life.”<sup>9</sup> In short, Graburn labels tourism as a “sacred journey”. Within this logic, tourism is meant to serve as a “get away from it all”, a way of “re-creating oneself”. In this respect, tourism can be viewed as a “self-imposed rite of passage” or at least as a “self-daring experience.”<sup>10</sup> I found this perspective very fitting given the fact that the two main groups of Korean tourists coming to Prague are young backpackers on a Euro-trip or honeymooners. As such, the tourists match more the upper class travellers seeking personal enrichment rather than the case of travelling working class who travelled sometimes as a whole village and reconstructed in the group, while travelling, their home setting.<sup>11</sup> While studying Korean travellers to Prague, I am inclined to align with Helms<sup>12</sup> who puts quest for knowledge and not wealth as a motivation for people to travel – in my case it would be knowledge in more general terms of extraordinary experience.

MacCannell<sup>13</sup> offers a structuralist perspective on tourism and creation of attractions: he explains that tourist sights can embody the representations of moral order, a “modern alternative to systems of in-group morality built out of binary oppositions: insider vs. outsider, us vs. them.”<sup>14</sup> He defines a tourist attraction as composed of “an empirical relationship between a *tourist*, a *sight*, and a *marker* (a piece of information about a sight).”<sup>15</sup>

Within the categorisation of the types of tourism according to Cohen,<sup>16</sup> Koreans coming to Prague for seeking romance, or even better – if the trip is motivated by having seen the “Lovers in Prague” series, can be defined as “pilgrimage” tourism – or at least a “ceremonial agenda” to use Goffman’s terms.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Mauss, Marcel: “Les techniques du corps”.

<sup>8</sup> Graburn, Nelson H.H.: “Tourism: The Sacred Journey,” 24–25.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Chambers, Erve: *Native Tours: The Anthropology of Travel and Tourism*, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>13</sup> MacCannell, Dean: “Sightseeing and Social Structure: The Moral Integration of Modernity,” 55–70.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>16</sup> In Waldmannová, Eliška: *Změna obrazu Prahy po roce 1989 očima turistů*, 28.

<sup>17</sup> In MacCannell, Dean: “Sightseeing and Social Structure: The Moral Integration of Modernity,” 58.

## Sources

The primary sources for this preliminary research could be divided into three groups. First is the drama “Lovers in Prague”. It is a possible source of the “model image” of Prague, an image that I expect the Korean tourists would like to (partly) re-create, experience, or re-enact.

In the series, Prague is portrayed as a romantic city, a city where romance and the magic of love takes place. Both of the main couples of the series have a past nostalgic, romance-forming experience in Prague and come back to the city to find love again. The love magic of Prague is not just a vague genius loci, but it takes shape in two distinctive features. First, the T-shirt all main protagonists get from a tourist souvenir shop during their past Prague romance, stating “Prague for Lovers” in pink letters on a grey background. Second, and more importantly, it is the Jan Hus statue on the Old Town Square. In the series, it is transformed into a sort of a “wish tower”. As one Naver blogger says: “People would write their wishes on small pieces of paper or post-its and stick them on the statue’s base, hoping they would come true.”<sup>18</sup> Of course, in reality, there is no such use of the Jan Hus statue in Prague – the “wish tower” role is taken up by the so-called “Lennon wall” in the Lesser Town. This reality alteration is likely to be attributed to budget reasons. Even though cheaper than Paris, filming time in Prague is far from free; many other scenes of the series take place in the Old Town Square (which is very iconic of Prague) so the choice of Hus statue seems likely to be just utilitarian.

In this overall romantic imagery, Prague is, in a sense, put on equal footing with Paris in terms of romantic hype. Indeed, the series’ first season, the “Lovers in Paris” (파리의 연인) takes place in this iconic “metropolis of romance”. The third season called simply “Lovers” (연인) takes place in Seoul, not in another European or North American city, as we could have expected. The simple explanation for this is likely to be the budget again: even for the second season, only a handful of episodes takes place in Prague before moving the storyline completely to Korea. We should thus be careful not to over-interpret the original intent in Prague’s choice as a city of romance, in opposition to Venice, for example (to cite another traditionally popular honeymoon destination). However, the effect this production choice has had on consumer choices among Korean tourists is noteworthy.

A second type of source we have, though far from complete, is the offers of the tourist mediators and the narratives they use when offering experiences related to Prague. We could cite the Czech tourism brochures targeting South Korean tourists (“I love Prague”), online brochures such as “Top 6 things to see in Prague,”<sup>19</sup> etc. Online Trip Advisor cannot be used significantly, as the top destinations are aggregated for all nationalities, even on the Korean version of the website.

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<sup>18</sup> During the conference, one colleague remarked that it was even paradoxical, given the fact that Jan Hus died for his wish, being one of early Church reformers burned as a heretic in 1415.

<sup>19</sup> Hanintel Naver blog, source: <http://blog.hanintel.com/220177201694> (Acquired November 27, 2014).



Third, I did a keyword search on Naver blogs.<sup>20</sup> This particular site has been selected on the one hand for its accessibility (simple search for all blogs, fully public content – in contrast with other social networks) and for being quite representative when it comes to surveying Korean social media. Indeed, it is rather widely used by South Koreans, according to my personal experience. The keywords used were as follows:

*Prague* (프라하): 228,147 entries

*Prague voyage/travel* (프라하 여행): 92,984 entries

*Prague voyage/travel love* (프라하 여행 사랑): 72 entries (this one included, due to Korean language, also “love for voyage – 여행의 사랑” and as a consequence was after all not that significant)

*Prague honeymoon* (프라하 신혼여행): 6,994 entries

However, we have to note that due to the imperfections of the Naver blog search tool (if a blogger divided his/her post about the Prague experience into several posts, they would show up as individual entries), we would need to divide the number of individuals blogging about Prague roughly by two to three (the average number of multiple posts about Prague by a single blogger) to get a more exact result.

## Initial hypothesis

If we try to recreate a specific image of a city, we need to bear several points in mind. Of course, in the anthropology of the city, the basic social variables that influence the individual city experience are social status, age, gender, educational attainment etc.<sup>21</sup> For our study, it is equally important to note that city dwellers (those who live in the city) and the city users (those who commute to the city) have both different perceptions of the city and different needs (in terms of services, public transport etc.). In this respect, tourists form a distinctive group of city users. As such, their image of the city and their city landscape is likely to be specific as well.

Based on my personal experience from living in Paris, I expected that a specific nationality-based city image or city landscape could develop and perpetuate. Let me demonstrate on a small example: in Paris, several para-pharmacies are known to sell French brand beauty products at a very low price. However, Chinese tourists (and expats) visit the one in Saint-Germain area (6th district) whereas Korean tourists (whole buses of them) the one in Place Monge in the 5th district. The reasons are multiple: on the one hand, there is likely to be an arrangement with the tourist agency to channel the customers to a particular pharmacy. On the other, these specific places are recommended on Chinese or Korean websites. Based on this second reason, I have encountered many Chinese in a particular Korean restaurant (because a guidebook recommended it) or Korean visitors wanted to visit a specific shop at Champs-Élysées because it received a lot of good reviews on Naver, similarly to the

<sup>20</sup> I have strictly used public content only for my interpretations.

<sup>21</sup> Pauknerová, Karolína: “Cesty antropologie ve městě: o lidských smyslech, městské krajině a antropologii,” 87–99.

pharmacy at Place Monge.<sup>22</sup> We see thus two channels – one supply-oriented, one demand-oriented – or establishing and perpetuating specific elements constituting the city landscape and the mental map among different groups of tourists. In my research, I was therefore interested to see whether similar albeit small particularities of city image could be found among Koreans visiting Prague. In MacCannell's words,<sup>23</sup> I was interested if a "collective sense that certain sights must be seen",<sup>24</sup> a sort of Korean-specific, Prague-related agenda developed.

In the case of Prague, I expected the eventual specific city image among Koreans to be influenced by the TV drama "Lovers in Prague" aired in 2005. Indeed, if we look at the data from the Czech statistical office (Fig. 1), we see a sharp increase in South Koreans coming to Prague in 2006, a year after releasing the series, suggesting that many Korean tourists have indeed learned about Prague through the drama. As such, it would create a benchmark for real-life experience with the city.

**Fig. 1** Comparison of the number of Japanese and South Korean tourists staying for at least one night in Prague. Sources: Czech Statistical Office, "Guests at collective accommodation establishments in Prague: by country".<sup>25</sup> Emphasised and cropped by author.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Japan</b>	126,428	122,42	112,658	98,179	91,710	104,688	94,072	107,556
<b>South Korea</b>	28,304	<b>44,363</b>	47,487	39,469	35,835	52,468	64,445	81,992

## Research results

This research aimed to be a preliminary pilot study and as such, it yielded more axes of further possible in-depth research than a full conclusive study. In general, we can say that Korean tourists stay in Prague on average for less than two nights (which is shorter than the average Japanese tourist), they tend to sightsee on foot and almost systematically combine Prague with a one day visit to Český Krumlov (which follows after the "Top 6" things to do in Prague brochure by Hanintel.). Contrarily to the almost caricatural portrayal of a Korean tourist in the series "Lovers in Prague", they do not shy from tasting Czech food, beer and street food (especially trdelník<sup>26</sup>). From the itineraries documented on Naver blogs, it appears that the "conventional" sightseeing walk around Prague goes from the Powder Tower to St.

<sup>22</sup> See "Ma pharmacie est une attraction touristique", *Le Monde*, 20th March 2015, [http://www.lemonde.fr/m-planb/article/2015/03/20/ma-pharmacie-est-une-attraction-touristique\\_4597728\\_4498071.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/m-planb/article/2015/03/20/ma-pharmacie-est-une-attraction-touristique_4597728_4498071.html) (Acquired May 31, 2015)

<sup>23</sup> MacCannell, Dean: "Sightseeing and Social Structure: The Moral Integration of Modernity", 55–70.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

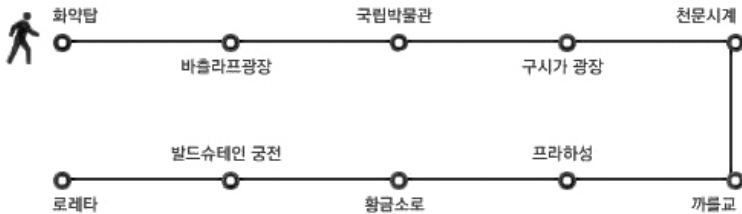
<sup>25</sup> The small decrease in 2008–9 for both nationalities is likely to correspond to the global financial crisis. Unfortunately, the data for Korean nationals before 2005 are missing. However, the sharp increase in 2006 and the steady increase ever since strikingly corresponded with my assumptions.

<sup>26</sup> It is a sweet pastry sold often on Christmas markets. Interestingly, despite its marketing, it is a very recent supply created tradition that appeared in Prague only in the past several years.

Wenceslas Square, then back down to the Old Town Square (to see the astronomical clock), across the Charles Bridge up to the Prague Castle, and through the Valdstein Palace to Loreta (and eventually the Petřín Hill). I found this exact itinerary suggested on one of the blogs:

**Fig. 2** Prague walk suggested by a Naver blog that seems rather typical for Korean sightseers.<sup>27</sup>

오늘의 동유럽 자유여행/프라하 여행 코스는 이렇게 추천드립니다!



We could roughly divide the Korean tourists coming to Prague into two large categories. One, the young backpackers who come to Prague as part of their Euro-trip which is popular among fresh high school graduates or undergraduate university students. In terms of the anthropology of tourism, we could label this as a self-imposed rite of passage, a self-challenging experience of one's re-creation<sup>28</sup> that can be paralleled to the Grand Tour, as a sort of "quest for knowledge" (Helms, 1988)<sup>29</sup> or for an exotic experience which is one of the "values we now hold up for worship."<sup>30</sup>

The second significant group of Korean tourists are travelling couples, with large proportion of honeymooners. This second group was, not surprisingly, of a special interest in terms of the search for Prague romantic image. I believe it is important to distinguish between these two groups – the backpackers and the honeymooners – while mapping their personal Prague landscape, as they are bound to come with different expectations, needs and consumer patterns. Bluntly put, the backpackers are likely to stay in youth hostels whereas the honeymooners would prefer individual hotel rooms and fancier restaurants etc. However, both of the groups seemed to prefer individual or small group travels, mostly brokered by a mediating actor.

This two-group division may stem from the bias of the preliminary search on Naver blogs, where participants in large group package tours might have self-omitted themselves. Yet, from living in Prague, it seems that large organised groups of Korean

<sup>27</sup> Source: <http://blog.naver.com/choiluna/220063963850> (Acquired November 27, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Chambers, Erve: *Native Tours: The Anthropology of Travel and Tourism*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Graburn, Nelson H. H: *Tourism: The Sacred Journey*, 28.

tourists are of much smaller occurrence than for instance large groups of Japanese middle-aged to elderly visitors. Of course, a further research would need to take into account this, albeit possibly smaller, category.

An important part of the research on Korean image of Prague is the supply-side offer of the mediators, who, according to Chambers,<sup>31</sup> are “not, strictly speaking, either hosts or guests”. In this category, he classes travel agencies, agencies offering a special type of experience and hotels. These actors and institutions create opportunities for tourism experience, in order to develop demand where it was previously small or even none. In other words, these actors are the crucial institutional support “required for sight sacralization in the modern world.”<sup>32</sup>

If we look at the “I love Prague” brochures of the Czech Tourism office that target Korean tourists, we can see how various actors exploit romantic imagery of Prague. In the edition from June 2008, for example, we find an ad from Gullivers Travel Associates in association with Czech Airlines directly labelled “Prague 4 lovers”. Or, the South Korean Honeymoon Resort agency advertising “Love story Prague” as a perfect place for honeymoon, presented already in the Spring 2006 edition. However, the Czech Tourism brochures try to advocate for the cultural side of Prague, especially in terms of classical music (and the Don Giovanni puppet opera) and out-of-the-city destinations, Karlovy Vary or Pilsen are often advertised in contrast to Český Krumlov, propelled on the Naver bolgs as the “must do”. In this area, a more systematic research would be interesting in order to show if and to which extent the offered landscape for Prague (or Czech Republic) experience differs from the one “lived” by the Korean visitors.

In terms of supply, there is also a non-negligible offer of opportunities to “re-create one’s physical self”<sup>33</sup> or to self-dare.<sup>34</sup> In Prague, these out-of-ordinary experiences include shooting ranges<sup>35</sup> and, more importantly for my research, sky-diving. Indeed, the Naver keyword search for “Prague skydiving” (프라하 스카이다이빙) yielded a staggering number of 1,972 results. Apparently, this particular experience is popular among young travellers, who often come to Prague on a Euro-trip thanks to its relatively cheap price in comparison to Korea or other European countries. Of course, there is a specialised Czech agency “Sky Service”, brokering this experience in Prague – interestingly, they have a special dedicated Korean website on a Korean domain.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Chambers, Erve: *Native Tours: The Anthropology of Travel and Tourism*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> MacCannell, Dean: “Sightseeing and Social Structure: The Moral Integration of Modernity”, 59.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Graburn, Nelson H. H: “Tourism: The Sacred Journey,” 34.

<sup>35</sup> There are agencies offering special foreign-targeted packages to experience shooting from kalachnikov and various assault rifles which, at the time of my research, ranked high on TripAdvisor – however, as I said, this is aggregated data for all nationalities of tourists.

<sup>36</sup> Sky Service official Korean website <http://skydivings.co.kr/default/> (Acquired November 27, 2014).

Another important dimension of the Korean tourism in Prague is the “Koreanization” of the Prague landscape. Not only there is an increasing number of Korean restaurants in Prague (which, of course, likely target expats and locals who, often through the hallyu phenomenon, acquire taste for Korean cuisine), but we can also find Korean “homely” hostels (*minbak*) in Prague (such as “OH! Praha minbak”<sup>37</sup> near St. Wenceslas Square) used mostly by young backpackers.

Not very surprisingly, the honeymooners seek a more romantic side of their Prague experience. Their Naver blog albums from Prague include labels such as “Flower of Western Europe”<sup>38</sup> (동유럽의 꽃) or “City of love” (사랑의 도시) and they take couple pictures with the iconic Prague skyline. Following a general international trend, we see the so-called “love locks”<sup>39</sup> appear in Prague and Korean tourists also participating in this “love magic ritual”.

However, the benchmark for experience from the “Lovers in Prague” series seems to show among both major tourist groups. Indeed, some of the bloggers openly admit that they have seen the series and it inspired them to come to Prague. Also, some even try to look for the “wish tower” of Jan Hus statue – and, of course, they do not find it (but would eventually make it to the Lennon wall), after all, a rather Korean-specific part of Prague city landscape, albeit as yet imaginary. If we were to follow MacCannell’s model,<sup>40</sup> here, an intriguing problem arises: the sight marker (= the series “Lovers in Prague”) creates not only stylised, but false expectations about “the real thing”.

## Discussion

First of all, I need to acknowledge again that this study is a preliminary working paper and as such, there are considerable limits to its results. I tried to offer a starting snapshot for possible future social science studies on this subject. I would like to lay out three axes of questions.

Firstly, when mapping the Prague landscape image among Korean tourists, we need to ask ourselves to which extent can we say that the images are Korean-specific or Prague-specific? If we look for example at the “love lock” trend, it is neither specific to Korean tourist, nor is it typical for Prague only. It reinforces the romantic imagery of the city nevertheless. Even the clear link between the series “Lovers in

<sup>37</sup> OH! Praha minbak Naver blog: <http://blog.naver.com/ohpraha09> (Acquired November 27, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> Which, in itself, is interesting in terms of social geography. The Czechs place Czech Republic into Central Europe and Western Europeans, such as the French, see Prague in Eastern Europe due to Czech Republic’s former affiliation with the Soviet bloc.

<sup>39</sup> “Love lock” is a relatively recent ritual that started in Paris on the Pont de l’art. Couples would buy a metal lock (usually conveniently sold on-the-spot by entrepreneurial locals), write their initials and a heart or other message of mutual love, lock it on the bridge and throw the keys to the Seine, thus sealing their love and hoping for it to last. Ever since, the “love locks” started to appear in other European cities, such as Venice or Prague.

<sup>40</sup> MacCannell, Dean: “Sightseeing and Social Structure: The Moral Integration of Modernity”, 57.

Prague”, the motivation to visit the city and look for the “wish tower” of Jan Hus statue might not remain specific to Korean tourists. With the spread of hallyu in other, especially Asian countries, it could be possible to find tourists of other nationalities benchmarking their Prague experience on this series. And if yes, would we find other elements of determining a Korean-specific image of Prague, especially the demand-oriented ones? (If it is even possible.)

Secondly, an applied research could be interesting to determine whether and how is the romantic imagery of Prague constructed among tourists in contrast to other “conventionally romantic” European cities, such as Paris or Venice, for example. For this, it would be first of all important to know how much these cities are complementary or concurrent choices for the travellers – they might be complementary for those going on the Euro-trip and concurrent for the honeymooners, for example. One possible option is to use the mental map creation of city landscapes during the qualitative fieldwork, proposed by Pauknerová<sup>41</sup> as particularly useful for researching individual perception of the city.

Thirdly, in MacCannell’s structural analysis of tourism,<sup>42</sup> institutions, as we have noted, play an important role in “sacralization” of certain sights – even their establishment as such. It would be fruitful, I believe, to expand his analysis towards a creation of secondary, multi-layered, “sacralization” of a sight by an “outsider” actor not involved in the original sight creation. In our example, the Jan Hus statue is a “well established” Prague monument. However, the “Lovers in Prague” add a specific marker to this sight, which seems to be internalised by a certain group – in our case the Korean (or other hallyu-consuming) tourists. It seems that such actors play a central role in propulsion of a group-specific city image.

## **Concluding remarks**

In this article, I presented preliminary research results on the city image of Prague among South Korean tourists through the lenses of urban anthropology and anthropology of tourism. I discussed the differences between the elements of the city image created by the supply-side and the demand-side, mental map creation as well as the differences between the two main groups of Korean tourists – the young backpackers and the honeymooners.

In the discussion, I challenged the identified “Korean-specific” element of the image of Prague: looking for the “wish tower” of Jan Hus statue, an imaginary ritual created for the purpose of the “Lovers in Prague” series. Indeed, it is rather a hallyu-specific element and hallyu fans from other countries could re-create it as well. Moreover, with Korean celebrities coming to Prague (for photoshoots, etc.<sup>43</sup>), other hallyu-specific pull factors towards Prague could surge.

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<sup>41</sup> Pauknerová, Karolína: “Cesty antropologa ve městě: o lidských smyslech, městské krajině a antropologii,” 87–99.

<sup>42</sup> MacCannell, Dean: “Sightseeing and Social Structure: The Moral Integration of Modernity,” 55–70.

<sup>43</sup> Like Jessica from SNSD, or Girl’s Generation, a famous K-pop girl band, did recently.

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# PERCEPTION OF KOREAN POLITICAL HISTORY THROUGH MODERN SOUTH KOREAN CINEMA

Alexandra Urman

**Abstract:** *This research focuses on the analysis of current political issues as represented in modern South Korean film industry (1999-now). Public perceptions of inter-Korean relations, the Korean War, Park Chung-hee's authoritarian regime and the Gwangju uprising are thoroughly examined in the present research through the most popular South Korean movies. I analyze these pop culture products in an attempt to reveal what points of view on certain political and historical matters are dominating in modern South Korean film industry and for what reasons. I compare the ways of representation of important historical facts in different movies and try to understand which films better reflect the opinion of South Korean society on the depicted events. The research is based on content analysis of Korean dramas produced in the last 15 years. I argue that the majority of modern South Korean films correlate with public opinion on major issues of Korean political history. As the popularity of South Korean films grows outside the country, Korean film industry starts to play a more important role in building South Korea's image in the consciousness of foreigners. Thus, by analyzing Korean movies one can understand both how Koreans see their history and how they want the world to see it.*

**Keywords:** Korean cinema, political history, Korean War, Gwangju uprising, inter-Korean relations, National Security Act, film studies.

## Introduction

In the last 15 years, the popularity of South Korean films has increased dramatically both inside and outside the country. Along with that, the number of South Korean films on historical and political subjects has also risen and, what is probably even more important, movies on those topics usually gain the biggest box office, meaning that they are extremely popular with South Korean audience. Thus one can make a conclusion that those films mostly reflect public opinion of the citizens of the Republic of Korea as otherwise those movies would not have been as successful as they are. That is why one can use films produced in South Korea in the recent years as a tool to analyze how Koreans see their political history and, probably, how they want foreigners to see it as the Korean film industry has gained many fans all over the world during the last decade and the South Korean government does much in order to promote film industry outside the country as a part of hallyu.

It should be noted that Koreans do not produce films on contemporary political issues. The exception is the problem of inter-Korean relations and films on this topic



are usually a huge success. Still, the majority of movies on political subjects deal with the most famous historical events among which are the Korean War and the period of military dictatorships when the country was ruled first by Park Chung-hee and then by Chun Doo-hwan.

In this article, I am going to define which points of view on certain political issues are fostered by South Korean film industry and try to figure out how it correlates with public opinion. In order to do so, I will compare different variants of a reflection on certain political subjects in South Korean films, figure out how the depiction of the events has transformed on the South Korean screen in the last 15 years and analyze the reaction of the audience to the movies discussed.

## Historical background

In order to understand how popularity of Korean movies correlates with the political situation in the country and social changes it is useful to look into the events which preceded the rise of South Korean film industry.

In the 1990s South Korea experienced an overall liberalization which had a great impact on all aspects of social life including culture. Before the liberalization, censorship in film industry was very strict. Films praising North Korean regime or criticizing South Korean government were not allowed. The Motion Picture Law was enacted in 1962,<sup>1</sup> it was revised 9 times until becoming the Film Promotion Law in 1995.<sup>2</sup> However, both of these laws implied rather strict censorship in the industry. For example, according to the revision of the law enacted in 1966, one should have gained the permission of the authorities before the start of the filming otherwise the film would be banned. It is worth noting that in the 1960s there were such categories as “the best anti-communist film” or “the security section award” in the program of Grand Bell Awards – the most important South Korean film festival at the time.<sup>3</sup> So the conditions in which cinematographers were working implied the production of propagandistic anti-communist films. Therefore, the movies produced at the time were reflecting only the governmental point of view and people were not interested in them. Later on, in 1999, the second revision of the Film Promotion Law was adopted, it made the censorship less strict and authorized the establishment of the Korean Film Council (KoFiC) was established in order to promote Korean movies and maintain freedom in the industry.<sup>4</sup>

The end of the 1990s was marked by an uprise of nationalistic moods in the country. The economic crisis of 1998 influenced Korean society greatly and as it was a critical moment in the history, political leaders frequently made patriotic speeches in public. Nationalistic sentiments were reinforced among Koreans. Among different campaigns aimed at fostering national unity there were “Boycott Hollywood Films”

<sup>1</sup> Lee, Young-il: *The history of Korean cinema*, 145.

<sup>2</sup> Im, Sang-hyeok: “Freedom of Speech and Cinema: The History of Korean Film Censorship,” 100.

<sup>3</sup> Kim, Hyae-joon: “A History of Korean Film Policies,” 354.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 355.

and “Watch Korean Films” campaigns.<sup>5</sup> Those two campaigns and the spread of nationalistic ideas in the society were among the factors which boosted the popularity of such films as “Swiri” and “Joint Security Area” (see below). Those were the most successful films in South Korean film history at the time. It should also be noted that those are the first films where North Koreans were portrayed as humans and not as some kind of machines designed to kill. Such portrayal was obviously impossible in the times of strong censorship in the industry but, as we can see, it was favored by South Korean audience meaning it has something to do with the true public opinion.

It must be noted that the period of the late 1990s and early 2000s was marked by the Sunshine Policy introduced by Kim Dae-jung. The policy resulted in closer cooperation between North and South Korea and the willingness to establish stable relationships with the DPRK on the governmental level has obviously affected the public opinion on North Korea making citizens of the ROK less hostile towards the DPRK.

### **Images of North Koreans**

South Korean cinematographers have always paid much attention to inter-Korean relations. Though in the times of strict censorship in the industry the image of North Koreans was very negative. After the democratization in film industry that took place in the 1990s, the image of North Korea and its citizens has changed dramatically. The first film to reflect this change was “Swiri” (“쉬리”, dir. Kang Jae-gyu, 1999). The main heroine of the movie is a North Korean spy who fell in love with a South Korean special agent. Her image is not that of a ruthless killer but of a woman capable of deep and sincere feelings. In the movie, the love of North and South Korean agents meets many obstacles as they belong to the confronting states.

After “Swiri” there were relatively many movies according to the plots of which South and North Koreans became friends, fell in love with each other and so on. It is worth noting that usually in the movies such relationships are endangered because of the inter-Korean confrontation. For example, heroes of “Joint Security Area” (“공동경비구역”, dir. Park Chan-wook, 2000) are 4 frontier guards (2 from South, 2 from North) serving in the demilitarized zone between South and North Korea who accidentally become friends, but their friendship ceases to exist as soon as a North Korean officer gets to know about it. The story ends in a firefight in which one South Korean and one North Korean soldier die. “The Secret Reunion” (“의형제”, dir. Hun Jang, 2010) tells the story of two intelligence officers (one from the ROK and one from the DPRK) who incidentally become friends after retirement. However, the fact that they used to work for confronting special agencies interferes with their friendship. Linguistically speaking, the original name of the film “의형제” is literally translated as “Sworn brothers” and, to my mind, reflects the plot better than the English translation “The Secret Reunion”.

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<sup>5</sup> Kim, Sung Kyung: “‘Renaissance of Korean National Cinema’ as a Terrain of Negotiation and Contention between the Global and the Local: Analysing two Korean Blockbusters, Shiri (1999) and JSA (2000),” 86.

All the films listed above can be categorized as thrillers. The plot of the movies is based on a situation in which warm-hearted relationships of common people from South and North Korea meet various obstacles because of the inter-Korean confrontation which in the end makes personal happiness of the common citizens impossible. "Swiri" and "Joint Security Area" were box office leaders in South Korea in 1999 and 2000, respectively, "The Secret Reunion" was second according to the box-office takings in 2010. It means that the movies discussed above were extremely popular with South Korean audience. Probably one reason for that is that South Koreans sympathize with the heroes of the movies who have to cope with personal conflicts not being able to achieve happiness because of the division of the Korean peninsula. "Swiri", "Joint Security Area" and "The Secret Reunion" convey the message that common South and North Koreans could coexist peacefully if there were no inter-governmental problems between the ROK and the DPRK. The examples justify the idea that after the liberalization in the industry, North Koreans began to be portrayed as people very similar to South Koreans and not as some extraordinarily violent creatures.

It is remarkable that in 2013 many films with North Korean spies as main characters came out: "Secretly, Greatly" ("은밀하게 위대하게", dir. Jang Chul-soo), "Commitment" ("동창생", dir. Park Hong-soo), "The Suspect" ("용의자", dir. Won Shin-yeon), "Berlin File" ("베를린", dir. Ryoo Seung-wan) and "The Red Family" ("붉은 가족", dir. Lee Joo-hyeong). The amount of films dealing with the images of North Koreans which came out in 2013 tells us about a rapid increase in the popularity of the topic. One possible explanation for that is the change of powers in the DPRK which has definitely attracted much attention to the country as there were many discussions concerning what to await from the new young leader of North Korea Kim Jong-un. The unpredictability of the current situation allows the directors to use their imagination and social interest towards the topic of inter-Korean relationships almost guarantees the box-office success of the movies on that subject.

It must be noted that in "Secretly, Greatly" and "Commitment" main heroes' roles are played by actors popular mostly with South Korean youth and famous because of their appearance in TV series or their music. "Secretly, Greatly" starred Kim Soo-hyun (TV series "Dream High" and "My Love from the Star", movie "The Thieves"), Park Ki-wong (TV series "Bridal Mask") and Lee Hyun-woo (TV series "To the Beautiful You"); "Commitment" starred Choi Seung-hyu who is a popular singer better known by his stage name T.O.P. I think that the choice of the cast was aimed at attracting the attention of younger audiences who are probably not very interested in inter-Korean relations as they have witnessed neither Korean War nor the period of military dictatorships and anti-communist propaganda.

All movies concerning North Korea which came out in 2013 continue the tendency of humanization of the image of North Koreans in modern South Korean film industry. For example, the heroes of "Secretly, Greatly" are North Korean spies sent to a small South Korean town who easily manage to build successful relationships with locals. The director of the film claimed: "I wanted to portray them not as just

a tool or a device for political scheme but rather highlight the humane aspects of them”.<sup>6</sup> The main hero of “Commitment” becomes a spy to get his little sister out of a North Korean labor camp. Later, in the South, he fell in love with his classmate. In the “Berlin File” a North Korean special agent and his wife work in Berlin but then North Korean officials turn their back on them and the heroes try to get the support from South Korean government. In “The Suspect” the main hero is ready to do anything to avenge his wife’s death. In all the movies listed above North Koreans look like people who value their families above all and get on well with South Koreans if they happen to meet them. Such films could not have come out 20 years ago.

The movies analyzed above show that even though people on the Korean peninsula are citizens of two different states they still share the same ethnical identity, speak the same language and are capable of the same human feelings. The directors demonstrate to the audience how citizens of the DPRK can easily fit into South Korean everyday routine, and they try to accentuate things Southerners and Northerners have in common and not the differences between them. If we look at the box-office takings we can see that the audience obviously likes the movies about North Koreans and at least to some extent shares the viewpoint on the people of the DPRK conveyed in the films. New South Korean cinematography pays much attention to the search of national identity between South and North Koreans and points at the factors they have in common.

### **North Korean refugees on the screen**

Even though the topic of inter-Korean relations is relatively often addressed in South Korean movies, the problem of North Korean refugees is barely covered on the screen. In the last decade there were only two films dealing with this topic: “Over the Border” (“국경의 남쪽”, dir. Ahn Pan-suk, 2006) and “Crossing” (“크로싱”, dir. Kim Tae-gyun, 2008). It is remarkable that these two movies are of a different genre and the approaches to the depiction of everyday life in the DPRK and the adaptation of the refugees to the life in the South in those films differ greatly.

“Over the Border” is a melodrama and the main hero, a North Korean refugee, marries a South Korean woman and then accidentally meets his first love who also fled from the DPRK to the ROK. “Crossing” is a drama based on actual events. Its protagonist illegally crosses the DPRK-China border to get medicine for his terminally-ill wife in the PRC. Though in both movies at some point action takes place in North Korea, the depiction of life in the DPRK is very different.

The protagonist of “Over the Border” is a musician of a Pyongyang orchestra. He flees to the South with his family after they get to know that the protagonist’s grandfather did not die in the Korean War but moved to the South and owns a big company there. The grandfather has arranged everything to help his children run away to the ROK. It seems that the director of the movie did not really care about the depiction of North Korean routines as the only details of everyday life in the

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<sup>6</sup> Lee, Hojung: “The North Korean Spy Who Loved Me.”

DPRK demonstrated in the film are a beautifully decorated theatre in Pyongyang and a historical museum with pretty North Korean guides dressed in military style.

The main hero of "Crossing" is a mine worker in South Hamkyung province of the DPRK. He goes to the PRC to get medicine which can not be found in the DPRK. He first earns money in China but then loses it while running from the authorities. He is promised a big sum of money if he agrees to give an interview at the South Korean embassy. When he finally gets to the embassy he is told that he will receive money only upon arrival to the ROK even though he never wanted to go to South Korea. Being in the South, the hero finds a courier to bring medicine to his wife in the North. Some time later the courier tells him his wife had died and his son had been sent to a labor camp. He sends a conductor to take his son to the ROK but the son dies on the way. "Crossing" reflects such aspects of everyday life in North Korea as bad healthcare system, smuggling from China, ban of Christianity, high level of corruption and labor camps. In the time of preparation for the filming, the director and scriptwriters met more than 200 North Korean refugees. The director claims he struggled to make his movie as objective as possible. It took almost 4 years to film "Crossing" and the project was kept secret as the crew feared North Korean special agents and pro-North Korean activists from South Korea.<sup>7</sup>

Heroes of "Over the Border" finally adapted to life in the South and casted in lot with citizens of the ROK. They are depicted as people content with their lives in South Korea who do not experience many problems because of the difference in mentality with the people surrounding them. The director paid much attention to the romantic line and not to the inner conflicts of the heroes who had to flee from the DPRK to the barely known Republic of Korea. The protagonist of "Crossing" never managed to become an integral part of South Korean society and was left alone losing his family in the North. In "Crossing", unlike "Over the Border", lives of North Korean refugees in the South do not seem happy at all. This film from the very beginning was made not as a commercially successful product but as a movie aiming to show the true life of North Korean refugees as seen by the crew.

In my opinion, "Crossing" is one of those rare South Korean movies which seriously deals with the problem of inter-Korean relationships, North Korean refugees and the life in the DPRK itself. "Crossing's" lack of commercial success in comparison with movies about North Korean spies with melodramatic plots demonstrates that South Korean audience can not or does not want to look at the problem seriously. It is possible that citizens of the ROK are so tired of the discussions about North Korea that in the cinema they want to abstract from the topic. Besides, South Korean mass audience in general prefers melodramas or action movies over meaningful films.

The films discussed above have almost nothing in common. However, they are similar at least in one aspect. Both movies continue the tendency of humanization of North Koreans on the screen as the refugees and their friends from the North are very human, sincere and capable of deep feelings.

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<sup>7</sup> Song, Mun Hong: "Kim Tae-kyun: I want my film to show the truth."

## **The Korean War**

The Korean War (1950–1953) finalized the division of the Korean peninsula and since then, it became the subject of heated discussions among scholars both inside and outside Korea. Until today Koreans feel very bitter when discussing the war. Thus, it is obvious why there is much attention paid to the event both in South and North Korean culture including, of course, the film industry.

The approaches to showing the Korean War on screen, before the liberalization in the industry and after it, differ greatly. The most significant difference is that modern films on this subject are more of anti-war dramas than movies aimed at spreading official governmental anticommunist propagandistic ideas. The fact that films about the Korean War usually become box-office hits indicates that South Korean audience is undoubtedly interested in the topic. Though the reaction of the audience towards different films on the subject varies which allows us to make certain conclusions whether the viewpoint of the director and the crew of a particular film correlates with the spectators' one.

First of all, I would like to discuss the movies “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” and “The Front Line” as they share quite many common traits but were filmed with the difference of 7 years. One of the movies was far more popular than the other one, thus it is worth comparing the two movies in order to figure out what differences between them could possibly make the audience react differently, taking into consideration that the reaction of the spectators could also be affected by the changes in the society over the 7 years.

“Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” (“태극기 휘날리며”) is a film by Kang Jae-gyu which came out in 2004 starring Won Bin and Chan Dong-gun. The film is one of the most successful South Korean movies of the last decade: the box-office takings amount to 64,800,000\$<sup>8</sup> in the ROK with the initial budget of 12,800,000\$.<sup>9</sup> It must be noted that the budget is rather big for the South Korean film industry. It was possible to collect the necessary amount of money due to the success of “Swiri” – the previous film by Kang Jae-gyu.

“The Front Line” (“고지전”) is a movie dealing with the establishment of the Korean Armistice Agreement. The film came out in 2011. The director of “The Front Line” is Hun Jang, the scriptwriter is Park Sang-yeon who also wrote the script for the “Joint Security Area”. Both “The Front Line” and “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” have unexpected plot twists along with the aspiration to give unbiased images of both South and North Koreans. At the same time “The Front Line”'s box-office taking amount only to 20,618,627\$<sup>10</sup> in Korea making “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” three times more popular with the audience.

Even though Kang Jae-gyu made a film that is significantly different from the previous films on Korean War, in my opinion, he still did not manage to be unbiased.

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<sup>8</sup> Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War (2004). Box Office Mojo.

<sup>9</sup> Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War (2004). Box Office/Business. IMDb.

<sup>10</sup> Gojijeon (2011). Box Office Mojo.

While watching “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War”, the spectator sides with South Koreans. It is inevitable as the two main heroes of the movie from the start belong to the Republic of Korea and after all twists of the plot, both of them still end up on the South Korean side. So despite the scenes of brutality conducted by South Koreans, the spectator still sympathizes with the South. It makes the movie quite patriotic even though it includes criticism of strict anticommunist propaganda (for example in the scene where the mother and the girlfriend of the main hero are arrested on the charges of supporting communists for signing some pro-communist document in exchange for rice).

Things are different with “The Front Line”. Hun Jang managed to shoot a full-scale anti-war drama that the audience sides neither with the South nor with the North. It rather feels sympathy for the people who are forced to kill each other sometimes without knowing what they do it for. The director shows the brutality of the war itself. Even though the main hero is a soldier of the ROK army, the episode with the exchange of things and letters by the soldiers of confronting armies who do not see anything criminal in it, makes the spectator realize the bitterness of the division of the nation and the cruelty of the war which was, in a sense, a civil war. The absurdity of the “war for the sake of war” is revealed in the scene when the armistice is signed but there are 10 hours before it comes into operation and before that the soldiers of both armies have to fight over a small hill. In one of the final scenes South and North Korean officers drink wine after the armistice comes into effect and then we see the main hero walking down the hill across the dead bodies which highlights the brutality and senselessness of the war once again.

The hallyu films are characterized by certain melodramatism and therefore, “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” is more relevant for hallyu than “The Front Line”, as the former one is focused on the fraternal relationships and their dynamics rather than on the relationships between the confronting sides. “The Front Line” at the same time is focused on the relationships between soldiers both from South and North Korean sides. The melodramatism of “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” is one possible explanation why it was more popular with the audience than “The Front Line”.

It is interesting that the narrative structure of “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” is quite similar with that of “The Titanic” which was the box-office leader in South Korea in 1998. Both films start with a flashback when heroes start telling the story to their grandchildren. In the center of the narration in both films there are personal relationships (fraternal ones in “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” and those of two lovers in “The Titanic”) against the background of a tragic event (the Korean War and shipwreck, respectively).<sup>11</sup> “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” is frequently compared to “Saving Private Ryan” (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1998). The movies in fact are somewhat similar stylistically. For example, handheld cameras are used to make the combats look more realistic and many flashbacks are used in the narration. It seems that Kang Jae-gyu had taken into account the characteristics

<sup>11</sup> Hughes, Theodore: “Planet Hallyuwood: Imaging the Korean War,” 204.

of the most successful movies of the time and skillfully used them to make his own film a box-office success.

“Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” is better designed for the gross audience than “The Front Line” and better correlates with the standards of modern South Korean and American cinema (we must not forget that before “Swiri” American blockbusters were the most successful movies in the Republic of Korea). I also suppose that South Korean audience still has many stereotypes about North Koreans and the Korean War that is why the unbiased anti-war “The Front Line” did not receive a very warm welcome in the country and its success was probably triggered by the quality of the film and its similarities with military blockbusters.

Another film dedicated to the Korean War is “71: Into the Fire” (“포화속으로”, dir. Lee John H., 2010). The movie tells a story of 71 students who had to protect a school in P’ohang. Though the film is based on real events, the movie version of the story is quite different from the historical one. For example, actually only 48 out of 71 students died while protecting the school<sup>12</sup> but in the movie all the students die.

The film was made at the time of Lee Myung-bak’s conservative administration and received sponsorship from a governmental company KEIC. It was made in the year of the 60-years anniversary of the act of bravery in P’ohang. Those factors definitely added up to the movie’s hyper patriotic approach to the depiction of the events. Aside from the increased number of victims aimed at evoking deeper emotions in the spectators, the movie is also filled with anticommunist propaganda which is revealed in how North Korean soldiers are shown. Soldiers of the DPRK army in the film are extremely brutal and the impression is strengthened by the contrast between the very well-armed and experienced North Korean soldiers and South Korean schoolboys who had to protect the school building. The commander of the North Koreans is stereotypically cruel and his facial expression is malicious in all scenes of the movie. The director also used the contrast between the Northerners and the Southerners in their clothes and equipment: South Korean students look very poor, they barely have any weapons while North Koreans are well-equipped. In his aspiration to deepen the contrast, the director made a mistake: the DPRK soldiers’ commander is wearing a model of Rolex watches which was not designed until 1970s.

The movie is full of pathos aimed at making the audience sympathize with the heroes of the movie. The movie definitely shows the cruelty of the war but just from one side. In comparison with “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” and “The Front Line” discussed above, “71: Into the Fire” is extremely subjective and supportive of the anticommunist propaganda. Lee John H. filmed a very patriotic interpretation of a real event and the film turned out to be not as successful as “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” but almost similar with “The Front Line”, according to the box-office takings (collecting about 20,000,000\$ in Korea).

Finally, I will discuss a comedy by Park Kwang-hyun which came out in 2005 – “Welcome to Dongmakgol” (“웰컴 투 동막골”). The reason why I decided to analyze

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<sup>12</sup> “Student soldiers who were wounded fighting Korean War warn of complacency in South today.”



this film as the last in this section, is its difference from the movies discussed above. It is not a military drama but an anti-war comedy. The plot of the movie is based on a similarly-named play by Jang Jin who also was a producer of the film. The film budget was about 8,000,000\$ and its box-office takings in South Korea amounted to 31,000,000\$. Thus, the movie was a success. The soundtrack was written by a famous Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi (before “Welcome to Dongmakgol” he had never written music for Korean movies and agreed to participate in the project after reading the screenplay), his sentimental music strengthens the grotesque in some scenes of the movie.

The action of the movie takes place in autumn, 1950, after the Battle of Incheon. By accident, an American pilot, two South Korean and three North Korean soldiers end up in a mountainous village called Dongmakgol. The inhabitants of the village do not know about the war. When one of the soldiers says that the war broke out, the villagers ask him: “With who? With the Chinese or the Japanese?” – that is how the director highlights the absurdity of the inter-Korean war. When South Koreans first meet North Koreans, they confront each other. Soldiers make the villagers sit between them, then take sides and take out their rifles. The confrontation lasts all night long and in the morning, one of the soldiers accidentally throws a grenade into the warehouse and destroys all the food of the villagers. The soldiers decide they ought to help the villagers restore their stocks. While working together in the field, South and North Korean soldiers start getting on well. To work in the field, they take off the uniforms and put on traditional Korean clothes. This way, the exterior differences between the soldiers of the DPRK and the ROK armies fade and traditional unity of the Koreans is emphasized. In the end of the movie, soldiers of both armies sacrifice their lives to save the village from the airstrike.

In this Park Kwang-hyun's film, traditional Korean patterns of life contradict with the war time. The director evidently does not side with North or South Koreans, his film is purely anti-war and the brutality of the martial law which makes people behave cruelly is demonstrated throughout the movie. The DPRK soldiers look more humanistic than their counterparts from the ROK in the beginning of the film, as they are more willing to help the villagers than South Koreans and show courage when protecting villagers from another group of South Korean soldiers.

The success of “Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War” was partly predetermined by its narrative structure and the fact that it fits into the hallyu culture quite well. Still, the success of the movie along with the success of “Welcome to Dongmakgol” reveals that Korean society is ready for anti-war dramas and they prefer them over the simple patriotic military blockbusters such as “71: Into the Fire”. However, South Korean audience prefers the anti-war military blockbuster which contains some stereotypes to the anti-war military drama (“The Front Line”) or the comedies (“Welcome to Dongmakgol”) which are almost stereotypes-free. One may conclude that even though South Korean society does not really share strict anticommunist stereotypes, it is still quite stereotypic about the Korean War, communism and North Korea.

## **The Gwangju massacre and its legacy in modern South Korean cinema**

One of the most tragic events in the history of the Republic of Korea is the Gwangju Uprising. It took place in the city of Gwangju from the 18th to the 27th of May, 1980, in the very end of the so-called Seoul Spring (a period from the October, 26, 1979 – when president Park Chung-hee was murdered – to the May, 17, 1980 – when Chun Doo-hwan came to power in the country). The Seoul Spring was marked by a relatively widespread protest movement for the abolishment of the martial law and democratization in South Korea. In May 1980, the movement was suppressed by the government everywhere but in Gwangju where it broke out with a renewed vigor. The people of Gwangju were protesting against military general Chun Doo-hwan's rise to power by the means of a coup d'état.

The Gwangju uprising broke out in the morning on the May, 18, in front of the Chonnam University with its students protesting against the shut-down of their educational institution. The university building was blocked by the soldiers so the students started moving forward to the downtown. There they confronted special forces that brought down fire on the protesters. The clash resulted in a number of casualties among students. People of Gwangju were outraged by the brutality of the government and as a consequence of that, by May 20, the number of protesters rose to 10,000. At the time, the uprising was covered only by one broadcasting company – MBC – which was under governmental control. The company claimed that the protests were inspired by communists. On May 20th, the protesters burnt down the company building. By May 21th, approximately 300,000 people (almost a half of the Gwangju population at the time) had joined the protesters. They captured the warehouse with weapons and police stations. With the weapons they managed to outflank the army troops. The city was blocked by regular army. On May 27th, five army divisions entered the city center and captured it in an hour and a half. In the times when Chun Doo-hwan was the South Korean leader, the Gwangju uprising was officially presented as a revolt organized by pro-communist groups,<sup>13</sup> now it is frequently called not the Gwangju uprising but the Gwangju massacre.

The Gwangju uprising is one of the most topical events of the contemporary South Korean history which attracts much interest both from the historians and from common citizens of the Republic of Korea. In 2007, South Korean website Cine21 has conducted a survey according to the results of which 41.5 % of the respondents claimed the Gwangju uprising is the event about which they would like to watch a movie the most.<sup>14</sup> In the same year, a film by Kim Ji-hoon called “May, 18” came out. The original name of the movie “Splendid Holiday” (“화려한 휴가”) correlates with the name of the operation aimed at the capture of Gwangju in May, 1980. The movie was a huge success ending up being the 3rd film according to the box-office takings in 2007. “May, 18” is stylized to look like a documentary. Though the director states he did not aim at precise reconstruction of the events but rather

<sup>13</sup> *History of the 5.18 Democratic Uprising*, Volume 1, 236–239.

<sup>14</sup> Lee, Hoo Nam: “Director has a mission to remember.”

tried to highlight personal feelings of the people who survived through this tragedy. The plot of the film is based on the real stories of the participants of the Gwangju uprising.<sup>15</sup> The box-office success of the film clearly indicates that the events which happened in Gwangju in 1980 evoke strong emotions among modern South Koreans. Besides that, it is obvious that people in the ROK now very well understand the true reasons behind the uprising: that it was a protest against Chun Doo-hwan and his new government, not a revolt inspired by the communists.

Another film dealing with the Gwangju events came out in 2012. It was directed by Cho Geun-hyun and it is called "26 years" ("26 년"). The movie tells an imagined story about 4 people – children of the victims of the Gwangju massacre – who gather to kill the former president Chun Doo-hwan. The story takes place 26 years after the events in the city of Gwangju. The film was not as popular as "May, 18" but one may conclude that it still received certain support from the audience – part of the film budget was collected by common citizens. I believe that considering the plot of the film, the fact that it came out and the support it received demonstrates an extremely negative attitude of a relatively significant part of the South Korean society towards Chun Doo-hwan and a considerable liberalization both in the film industry and in the society itself.

The reaction of South Koreans to the films "May, 18" and "26 years" evidently shows that they sympathize with the participants of the Gwangju uprising and that there was a significant shift in their viewpoint on the event – they no longer perceive it as a communist-inspired revolt but rather as one of the most tragic events in the history of their country.

### **National Security Act in South Korean cinema**

National Security Act was adopted on December 1, 1948 – only 3 and a half months after the Republic of Korea's establishment. Not long before that, the almost 40 years of Japanese rule in Korea ended with Japan's loss in the WWII. After the liberation of the unified Korea from Japan, the confrontation between anticommunists and People's Committees' supporters strengthened. We must note that at the beginning there were more left-wing policy supporters in the South, so logically South Koreans were to build communism, not North Koreans. But as we know, history did its thing: the liberating troops of the Red Army stood in the North, and the American liberators in the South. So soon enough the Northerners started their movement towards the "bright communistic future" and the Southerners went with the "tainted West".

In the first years of the existence of the Republic of Korea the problem of stopping the spread of communist ideology was really sharp. In order to increase the effectiveness of fighting the "left-wings" or the "inside enemy", the National Assembly suggested adopting a law setting strict sanctions for national treason. It was adopted under the name of National Security Act. In a month after the adoption, more than 30,000 people were arrested; people that were suspected for helping the communists were accused in 80% of lawsuits; in the first year 188,621 people

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

were found guilty on it. The numbers speak for themselves. Thanks to this law, the authorities managed to send enormous number of regime oppositionists and their sympathizers to jail. Under the Act, the people not in favor of the government were regularly sent to prison for actions that did not really threaten South Korean national security: starting from approval of the DPRK's regime and ending with running for presidency. We should note that the main argument that the Act was necessary has always been the necessity of the protection from North Korea. In reality, this law turned into a perfect tool for repressions.

National Security Act is mentioned in all films dealing with South Korean history of 60s–80s one way or another. For example, in the “President’s Barber” (“효자동 이발사”, 2004) and “President’s Last Bang” (“그때 그사람들”, 2005) on Park Chung-hee’s rule and his murder, there are scenes of torture of people arrested based on this law. There is satire on the Act in the “President’s Barber” – some characters of the film are arrested in accordance with the Act as they have diarrhea. The director shows on what absurd charges people could be arrested in the times of military dictatorships. In “The Attorney” (“변호인”, 2013) a young man is accused of violating the Act and goes to prison. After studying the case, his lawyer understands that the charges are absurd and carries out a brilliant speech in the court. The judge admits that the fact that the charges are absurd but still finds the young man guilty. The film highlights the corruptness and bias of South Korean law system of the time. “The Attorney” was the second according to the amount of the box office in 2013 meaning it was extremely popular with Korean auditory. Thus, one can state that the majority of South Korean spectators agree with the director’s view on the events depicted in the film.

Another film dealing with the Act is “National Security” (“단영동 1985”, 2012). It is based on the memoirs of a political activist Kim Geun-tae. The movie depicts how Kim had been tortured for 22 days in 1985 before being forced to admit to collaboration with the DPRK. “National Security” was not a big success in Korea. Probably because many scenes of the film are too cruel – some people even could not watch it to the end. The director said he wanted to “really make the viewer feel how torture destroys human soul.”<sup>16</sup> Even though the film never became a box office hit, it still had a noticeable impact on the auditory. It is remarkable that some school-children after watching “National Security” asked their teachers to show the film to their classmates. The new generation feels interested in the issue and, I believe, does not fully approve of the Act. Many elder South Koreans do not either as can be concluded based on the audience reaction on the films dealing with the topic.

## Conclusion

The fact that in the last 15 years there has been a relatively big amount of films issued by South Koreans on political subjects, is tightly connected with the liberalization in the industry in 1990s. With less strict censorship, it became possible for the directors to express their own opinion on the events in the movies, and also many more South Korean citizens now have the opportunity to watch films that correlate with

<sup>16</sup> Song, Ho Jin: “New film portrays torture under dictatorship.”

their viewpoints, not with the propagandistic viewpoints of the government. The analysis of the movies on political subjects suggests that many issues such as the Gwangju uprising or inter-Korean relationships have been re-thought recently in the Korean society. Some, for example the National Security Act and its applications, are in the process of being re-framed as well, while other, such as the viewpoint on Korean War, remain almost the same – even though people understand how cruel and meaningless the war is, they still sympathize with South Koreans more than North Koreans.

It seems that South Korean film industry reflects certain changes in the consciousness of the people. Watching the changes in the choice of topics by Korean cinematographers and the approach to depicting them on the screen, a keen observer may follow the shift in the South Korean society.

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# THE ROLE OF SOFT POWER IN DEFINING THE IMAGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA<sup>1</sup>

Lucie Šarmanová

**Abstract:** *This article discusses the concept of soft power as applied to the case of the Republic of Korea. South Korea, defined as a middle power, strives to make itself visible in the international milieu by focusing on soft power and multilateral cooperation with other countries. One of the tools for such policies is the Korean wave (or hallyu) which refers to the increased export of Korean cultural products (mainly popular music, dramas and films) to the rest of Asia and to the world. Through hallyu, an image of a modern and cool Korea is built which attracts foreign tourists and students, and helps the branding of the nation as well as Korean products. The author introduces the various strategies, channels, institutions and impacts of Korean recent nation-branding policies and their soft power implications.*

**Keywords:** *soft power, middle power, Hallyu, Republic of Korea*

## Introduction

Soft power is one of the commonly used terms in international relations these days. In the case of the Republic of Korea, with the compliance with one of the country's slogans "Dynamic Korea", awareness of Korean culture is no longer a regional phenomenon, having spread to different countries. It is also gaining visibility in Europe thanks to its unique character, as well as being an area of interest among professors and academics across the world. Therefore, it is ever more important to discuss it and with the growing influence of Korean economics in the world and also understand the strategies, that are generated in the cultural field, and their goals.

The goal of this paper is to find out the role of soft power in shaping the image of the country in the international milieu. Therefore, it is necessary to first introduce the topic of soft power, discuss its characteristics and related terms, such as public diplomacy, branding, or smart power. The following part introduces specifics of the Korean way to globalize its popular culture and the position of the country in the international community. South Korea is defined as a middle power; therefore, middle powers concept is introduced and specific examples of Korea's international behavior supporting its positions are elaborated. Finally, the Korean brand as a part of the nation's branding is discussed. In this article, the role of the state and conglomerates in spreading Korean popular music globally will be pointed out because their conscious support makes the Korean soft power more interesting and its tena-

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is an extract of a master's diploma thesis written by the author at the Jan Masaryk Centre of International Studies, University of Economics, Prague (2014).

city in the attempts to distance from the historical traumas with the speed of one's own is rather fascinating.

### **Characteristics of soft power**

Power is defined as “an ability to influence the behavior of others in order to get desired results”<sup>2</sup> and it is traditionally measured by the size of population, area, military, economic power, and social stability. Power depends on context and with modern times, it became less tangible and coercion less effective. Hard power, which means economic and military power of a country, has been changing: while military power in the globalized world is less significant (albeit still crucial), dependence on economic market forces has been increasing. This fact depends however on the extent of engagement in global markets.<sup>3</sup>

According to the American political scientist Joseph Nye,<sup>4</sup> soft power politics is a way of achieving your goals by being admired by other countries for your values, culture, openness, and level of welfare. The soft power concept describes the ability to change the preferences of others and make others want to cooperate and achieve the same results. Appealing personalities, culture, political values and institutions, legitimate politics, or moral authority can build a country's soft power. As an “attractive power” it is, however, in comparison with military and economic power intangible even though its intangibility is not a necessary condition.<sup>5</sup>

Other potential sources of power consist of government strategies at home and abroad. It is highly influenced by foreign politics of the country and it has both short-term and long-term effects, which can be changed with a context. Government strategies of soft power both support and harm it, which is dependent on its values and approach. But effectiveness is unsure and cannot guarantee success of a country abroad. If a country enjoys a good reputation abroad, it supports its prestige and can facilitate acceptance of its unpopular and risky measures. Help to other nations and individuals to reach their ambitions are the best way of strengthening the reputation of America abroad, for instance.<sup>6</sup> In long-term national interests, soft power brings wider benefits.

Despite the fact that the term *soft power* was coined by Joseph Nye, the concept existed before he did so. The classical realist Edward Carr called it a power over opinion,<sup>7</sup> which is as important as military and economic power and connected with

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<sup>2</sup> Nye, Joseph: *Soft Power: The Means to success in World Politics*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Nye, Joseph: *Limits of American Power*, 551.

<sup>4</sup> Nye, Joseph: *Soft Power: The Means to success in World Politics*, 6–8.

<sup>5</sup> Parmar, Inderjeet: *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, 216.

<sup>6</sup> Armitage, Richard: *CSIS Commission on Smart Power- How American can become a smarter power*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Carr, Edward: *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 132 and 141.



them. Its loss can be negative also for hard power. According to Carr,<sup>8</sup> morals and state's opinions also influence the decisions of the state. Hans Morgenthau elaborated on the importance of prestige and pursued different ways to deal with a threat.<sup>9</sup> International morality and world public opinion is for him important to keep international status. Neorealist Kenneth Waltz also recognizes that material power "does not always have to be the most effective in achieving main goals of a nation."<sup>10</sup> The philosopher and economist Kenneth Boulding distinguished coercive, exchangeable (trade, mutual contracts and cooperation), and integrative power (through human relations on all levels). According to realists, soft power is meaningless without economic and military influence.<sup>11</sup>

Public diplomacy is a soft power's tool and "an activity aimed at creating and influencing positive projections of a given state, its values and activities, which it represents among foreign publics."<sup>12</sup> Public diplomacy is successful among countries which are mutually dependent on each other (economically or politically) and connected through transnational bonds.<sup>13</sup> Strategies of public diplomacy are talking, listening, conversation, and cooperation and it aims at publics abroad and builds on mutual trust of both parties which helps create long-term relations abroad.<sup>14</sup> The goal of public diplomacy is to maximize national interests thanks to building cooperation with civil societies in other countries and facilitating relations among non-governmental actors at home and abroad.<sup>15</sup> Through its methods, public diplomacy not only helps maximize national interests, it is also a way to be a reliable and trustworthy player in multilateral world. Soft power (attractiveness or motivation to follow one's example) is a source of public diplomacy and the soft power tools are diplomatic measures and foreign aid (humanitarian operations).

In connection with public diplomacy, we should also mention the "branding" of countries. The term branding, sometimes also nation-branding, focuses on the reputation of a country and presentation of its position abroad. The reputation of a country also becomes a part of its foreign politics and also plays a role in assessing a country's position in international relations. Countries more and more realize the importance of national identity in a globalized world and bringing its uniqueness to attention. The goal of branding is "creation of an identity and its subsequent presentation."<sup>16</sup> In the case of South Korea, the government actively strives to change the look at the country and soft power became the "national brand". In order to support

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<sup>8</sup> Melissen, Jan: *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Waltz, Kenneth: *Theory of International Politics*, 190.

<sup>12</sup> Peterková, Jana: *Public Diplomacy: A Buzzword or Real Change?*, 87.

<sup>13</sup> Melissen, Jan: *The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice*, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Peterková, Jana: *Veřejná diplomacie*, 19.

it, the government created in 2009 Presidential Council on Nation Branding,<sup>17</sup> whose chairman's goal is that the country "truly becomes one of the most important leading countries in the world"<sup>18</sup> and its fulfilling shall be an investment for the future.

Even though hard power competences are important, they cannot guarantee safety in today's context. On the contrary, by creating alliances of states, state and non-state actors get a comparative advantage in today's world. Thanks to connecting hard and soft abilities in "smart power", countries can better solve current and future problems.<sup>19</sup> Smart power is not hard nor soft and achieves goals by "skillful combination of both". Smart power is characterized by strong military power but finds alliances, partner cooperation, and institutions at all levels important. With the help of these sources, it helps spread the influence and create legitimacy for its members in order to do global good. Multilateral consultations are considered more effective ways to create soft power and legitimacy than unilateral promoting of values.<sup>20</sup> It is primarily important to be a credible partner. Ernest Wilson, describing the importance of smart power in American politics, considers soft power a less sophisticated power,<sup>21</sup> which is in comparison with smart power of less importance. In the case of the Republic of Korea, the discussion about smart power is meaningful because the country thinks of its modern culture as a business model. According to the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "culture has risen as an indispensable element of a nation's competitiveness and economic resource that produces added value."<sup>22</sup> The government strives to increase its economic power and its orientation on economic growth by supporting culture and therefore does not create soft power in original meaning of the term.<sup>23</sup> Korean modern culture is then considered as a unique mixture of economics, culture and soft power which "cannot be called hard power but is not completely soft."<sup>24</sup>

In this place, it is also important to think about the efficiency of Korean culture. Even though a culture helps increase an awareness of a country in the global scale, the question remains what kind of influence can this fact have on other goals of the country and how can a culture penetrate also among those who do not sympathize with it. Korean culture can be effective if its fans follow the Korean example or socialize through the culture. The country should also freely connect its national identity with a modern culture in order to raise the chance to be followed by others.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Kim, Andrew: *Catching up to the Korean Wave? The Pursuit of Soft Power in East Asia*, 70.

<sup>18</sup> Presidential Council on Nation Branding: *Improvements in nation branding begin today* (online).

<sup>19</sup> The term is used mainly for an American foreign strategy of following national security interests – in CSIS: Smart Power Initiative (online).

<sup>20</sup> Melissen, Jan: *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, Ernest: *Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power*, 120.

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Culture: Overview* (online).

<sup>23</sup> Kim, Andrew: *Catching up to the Korean Wave? The Pursuit of Soft Power in East Asia*, 70.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>25</sup> Sohn, Yul: *Engaging Hallyu: Theoretical and Practical Challenges*, 4.

## Globalization of Korean culture

Hallyu, or the Korean wave, provokes general debates on globalization in East Asia. In the case of Korean wave, prevailing neoliberalism is considered the change in political and economic system, responsible for spreading hallyu in East Asia, connected with opening primarily Asian cultural markets toward foreign imports in 1990s. The competitiveness in culture and the investments to it had been increasing.<sup>26</sup> Cultural production has become significant and media, economics, or technology started to be influenced by globalization and by the common community identity.

In conformity with the theory of globalization, hallyu is a part of globalization and it depends on each country if it accepts it or not. In the 1990s, Asian countries began to open towards the influences of foreign cultures. The Korean cultural industry as well followed this trend and started to export its cultural products, that is to other countries of East Asia – to China, Japan and Taiwan – and then further. Export articles<sup>27</sup> do not only consist of popular culture but also the digital games industry, books publishing, and radio broadcasting. Globalization contributes to spreading hallyu in China, Japan, and Taiwan besides other things thanks to the fact that local viewers enjoy “modern, advanced but culturally close and politically neutral television shows” but at the same time consider Western or Japanese popular culture as “ideologically threatening and emotionally unacceptable.”<sup>28</sup> Social proximity thus becomes a factor, why East Asian viewers watch Korean shows, which consequently leads to becoming even closer and raises the ratings of the programs.

Globalization leads to cultural hybridization;<sup>29</sup> that is creating new forms by mixing domestic and foreign cultures because both cultures mutually influence each other. This subsequently creates closer cooperation among members of cultural groups, greater understanding and helps revive diasporas. Thanks to hybridization, perception of foreign cultures also change because “hybrid characteristics” are created, e.g. foreign food is adapted to local needs and expectations, and then we can talk about “touristic goods”<sup>30</sup> rather than reviving foreign cultures. In this sense, Korean culture is also being criticized for its clear similarity with American popular culture which shall facilitate its acceptance in the West. It is also considered a part of export industry, and therefore the uniqueness of its culture disappears because it rather becomes an interesting and well-thought export article and a source of profit. Yul Sohn also argues<sup>31</sup> that thanks to hybridization of Korean culture with the American, it is more easily accepted, because it is easier to Asian taste rather than Western culture.

<sup>26</sup> Yang, Jonghoe: *The Korean Wave (Hallyu) in East Asia*, 108.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 131.

<sup>29</sup> Shim, Doobo: *Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia*, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Schirato, Tony: *Understanding Globalization. The Global Subject and Culture*, 158.

<sup>31</sup> Sohn, Yul: *Engaging Hallyu: Theoretical and Practical Challenges*, 3.

This trend can also be described as “glocalizing”<sup>32</sup> in order to approach global markets. It is represented by weakening of ties between a culture and its location by removal of cultural characteristics. In praxis, it means adapting films or songs to the target group: e.g. by setting movies in an international environment or using foreign words in songs. This is dependent on the final target group. In the case of South Korea, a good example is the more and more present English lyrics in Korean songs or setting foreign actors in movies which became blockbusters and also by setting their scenes abroad. As a good example serves the movie *Snowpiercer*<sup>33</sup> shot in the Barrandov Studios in the Czech Republic or, in South Korea, the very popular drama *Lovers in Prague* which made Prague famous in Korea.<sup>34</sup> Korean popular songs are more and more inspired by alternative American music styles which we can see in the song “Hangover” by Korean rapper Psy and American rapper Snoop Dogg. Korean musicians are also often compared to their American counterparts in order to raise their familiarity.

### **South Korea as a middle power**

According to Jinwoo Choi,<sup>35</sup> a country is considered a middle power, which means a country which is in the size of political, economic, and military power ranks among great powers and small powers, if “it has enough sources of hard power which are taken into account at least in regional context by neighboring countries”. It also has to behave “according to the international codes of conduct which are required by responsible members of the international community” and “be able to actively cooperate with like-minded countries”.

Middle powers are defined as “neither strong, nor big”<sup>36</sup> and earlier, sizes of countries were determined by obvious criteria such as size or the population, area of the country, or its economy. But as Eytan Gilboa puts in “The Public Diplomacy of Middle Powers”, middle sized countries which lie somewhere between small and great powers could not effectively be recognized according to these viewpoints.<sup>37</sup> On the contrary, according to Duy-Heyong Cha, middle powers bridge the differences between super powers and weaker countries and their role will be even more important. Their task might be the key in cases, in which big countries strive for their favor in resolving disputes; they might play a crucial role in resolving territorial disputes, or climate issues.<sup>38</sup> They thus become a bridge between great powers and small states which stress the meaning of cooperation by looking for multilateral solutions. Yul Sohn deals with another view when he recognizes a middle power according to the

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<sup>32</sup> Tomlinson, John: *Globalization and Culture*, 29.

<sup>33</sup> Kim, Kyung Hyun: *South Korean Cinema's “Localizing Global” Strategy*, 99–104.

<sup>34</sup> Unless otherwise stated, “Korea” or “Korean” refer to the Republic of Korea.

<sup>35</sup> Choi, Jinwoo: *Korea's Role as a Middle Power in the Global Public Policy*.

<sup>36</sup> Gilboa, Eytan: *The Public Diplomacy of Middle Powers* (online).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Gilley, Bruce: *Middle powers rising*. The Global Edition of the New York Times, 9.

topics to which the country is dedicated,<sup>39</sup> usually the environment, technologies, and developing aid. Further areas of interest are world safety, ecological development, foreign aid, and global health.<sup>40</sup> They commonly focus on soft power and try to resolve problems multilaterally and base their approach on norms.

Middle power countries promote stability and legitimacy of the international environment, build networks and mechanisms open to them. In the long-term outlook, their activities lead to peace and safety in the world. In order for a country to become a middle power, it has to be a leader in its area of interest and they need considerable advantages. The necessity to build coalitions is significant mainly among such big countries because they can reach success only with partners and by cooperating with others. Yul Sohn emphasizes networking even more and considers networks together with soft power as the basis of Korean public diplomacy,<sup>41</sup> because networking gives, thanks to the access to sources of information, the actors not only bigger strength and competences but also the mediator can improve through information flows and socializing. They influence preferences of other governments or international players and are as well respected for their attractiveness, not by coercion or for material incentives.

In the international measure, the Republic of Korea ranks a middle power, because it fulfills the above-mentioned criteria. As the 14th biggest economy<sup>42</sup> and 10th in military size,<sup>43</sup> the Republic of Korea has capabilities of being a hard power but is also respected because it keeps global norms and is taken seriously by like-minded countries. In the praxis, the diplomatic activism can be seen in the support of creating the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in the 1980s or the strong support of the role of the Group of Twenty (G20) in resolving the global financial crisis. In the G20 summit, Seoul also advanced the poverty solution in developing countries and found a decrease in differences in the levels of development in their efforts to reach a "fair economic order."<sup>44</sup> South Korea also specializes in nuclear energy, building nuclear power plants (the country won in 2009 a contract to build four nuclear reactors in the United Arab Emirates)<sup>45</sup> and non-proliferating of nuclear weapons and therefore supports the Nuclear Security Summit, which the country itself organized in March 2012. Thanks to building coalitions, it also has abilities to influence like-minded countries, which the country actively exploits in

<sup>39</sup> Sohn, Yul: *Searching for a New Identity: Public Diplomacy Challenges of South Korea as a Middle Power*, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Gilboa, Eytan: *The Role of Middle Powers in Public Diplomacy*, 52–53.

<sup>41</sup> Sohn, Yul: 'Middle Powers' Like South Korea Can't Do Without Soft Power And Network Power, 32.

<sup>42</sup> The World Bank: Data. GDP (current US\$) 2013 (online).

<sup>43</sup> Choi, Jinwoo: *Korea's Role as a Middle Power in the Global Public Policy*, 52–53.

<sup>44</sup> Song, Sang-ho: *Lee's 'Global Korea' initiative gives boost to Korea's diplomatic profile*, 1 and 7.

<sup>45</sup> World Nuclear Association: *Nuclear Power in South Korea* (online).

economic agendas. Recently, it also stresses the importance of development, human rights, and investment in resources and extraction.

South Korea is aware of the necessity to solve global problems in cooperation with others which it proves through its engagement in the human rights agenda and humanitarian aid and development assistances. Since 2010, the country is a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (the club of sponsors) and the year after hosted the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness,<sup>46</sup> which is a symbol of a transition of the country from the receiver of development assistance to the donor.<sup>47</sup> The country supports common interests, values, and rules of behavior, and is a member of wider international community. It takes part in international forums, hosts key diplomatic events and its citizen's work in international organizations on all levels up to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and thus fulfills conditions of a definition of a middle power.

In 2013, Incheon became the seat of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), a fund within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Korean government expects that this step will globalize Incheon which shall become an international city on the level as Geneva or New York and also the organization GCF global as the World Bank Group (whose president in 2012 became the South Korea-born Jim Jong Kim) of the International Monetary Fund. The country itself is also 2013–2014 non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The 2018 Winter Olympics are scheduled to take place in the South Korea's Pyeongchang.

South Korea has attracted an increasing amount of attention, partly thanks to its rapid economic rise, but also by organizing international events (such as the 1998 Olympic Games and the 2002 World Cup). The change of an international setting created pressures in East Asia. With the "Global Korea" strategy, it also becomes the venue of international meetings of top state leaders, namely at the already mentioned G20 Summit or two years later at the Nuclear Security Summit. Public diplomacy is also supported by hosting conferences or seminars with Korean topics directly in Korea or abroad. Since 2006, Korea hosted six conferences of International Monetary Fund, the last one in 2013<sup>48</sup> with the topic of stability and growth in Asia. An important institution engaged in public diplomacy is the Korea Foundation, granting support to cultural centers, libraries, or think tanks all over the world.

In this development, Korean political representatives play a crucial role. Former president Chun Doo-hwan built in 1988 the Seoul Arts Center, the first and most important art and cultural complex of the country.<sup>49</sup> Kim Dae-jung (1998–2003 in office), called the President of Culture, decided to support cultural industry and also legally set this project, inspired by American movies and British musicals. The

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<sup>46</sup> Robertson, Jeffrey: *Time to start debate on Korea's role as middle-power*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Song, Sang-ho: *Lee's 'Global Korea' initiative gives boost to Korea's diplomatic profile*, 1 and 7.

<sup>48</sup> International Monetary Fund: *IMF Seminars, Conferences, Workshops and Economic Forums* (online).

<sup>49</sup> Seoul Arts Center: *About SAC* (online).

former president Lee Myung-bak's merit is the increase of international influence and a profile of the country in diplomacy and creating the policy of Global Korea. During his office in 2008–2013, the global importance of the country then increased. His strategies united the position of Korea as a middle power, searching for answers on global challenges. Apart from organizing important events, the president did not leave out environmental themes, where he promoted sustainable economic development based on lower use of carbon. Except for long-term and short-term strategy of ecologic growth, a plan was set to decrease the emission of greenhouse gas by 30%<sup>50</sup> until 2020. A project to build an ecologic city near Saemangeum is evidence of compatibility of economic growth with the protection of the environment; it should serve as “business and logistic center of East Asia” and be “another miracle of the Korean economy”<sup>51</sup> based on ecologic development in the purpose to improve the quality of water and national parks. The incumbent president Park Geun-hye strives to continue in the success of her predecessor, even though she did not dedicate attention to culture in her presidential campaign. The increasing economic value and cultural exports and the role of culture in supporting the Korean image abroad, however, got her attention and she is occupying herself with innovation, creativity, and richness in the cultural sector.<sup>52</sup> In addition, public diplomacy became a pillar of Korean foreign politics.<sup>53</sup>

The increasing diplomatic influence of the country is caused not only by public diplomacy, supported by the state, which influences the public opinion abroad, but also by the popularity of Korean popular culture, which should serve as means of understanding and increasing awareness of local culture and make the country more attractive abroad. Middle powers such as South Korea are motivated to increase its soft power by spreading its economic influence<sup>54</sup> as well as compensating for the lack of hard power, and thus the goal of strategic building of soft power in East Asia is generally reaching bigger influence and getting importance.<sup>55</sup> The third reason is then the change in perception of national identities of countries. Yul Sohn connects directly South Korean soft power with the security on Korean peninsula.<sup>56</sup> Long-term effort could, according to him, indirectly contribute to increasing safety for South Korea.

Public diplomacy is an opportunity, thanks to which middle powers can exert certain influences<sup>57</sup> in global politics owing to engaging in coalition building, gaining international support and reaching wider recognition. They also widely

<sup>50</sup> Young, Soogil: *Harnessing green growth and climate change*, A7.

<sup>51</sup> Na, Jeong-ju: *Lee Pledges Eco-Friendly Development of Seawall*, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Do, Je-hae: *Park to put policy priority on Culture: President-elect to increase cultural budget, diversity 'hallyu'*. The Korea Times, Dec 21, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Ma, Young Sam: *Korea's Role in Global Public Diplomacy*, 65–66.

<sup>54</sup> Melissen, Jan: *Soft Power in East Asia*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>56</sup> Sohn, Yul: *Engaging Hallyu: Theoretical and Practical Challenges*, 3.

<sup>57</sup> Sukma, Rizal: *Middle Powers and Public Diplomacy*, 54–55.

cooperate with more and more important non-state actors in order to reach their goals, and use their power. In this changing international milieu, Korea can find space to play an important role in the coordination with great powers and newly emerging actors.

Korea also has normative advantages which help the country in international success. The country was also acknowledged as valuable partner in peace-keeping cooperation (e.g. in Lebanon or in the Republic of South Sudan)<sup>58</sup> and in international development aid. They are motivated to contribute to world peace and safety and improve their status in the international community and at the same time to create a safer world.

## **Creation of hallyu**

Korean cultural sources comprise of Korean modern culture including Korean popular music (K-dop), drama (K-drama) and films and also food, fashion, classical music, arts, literature, dance, and technology (K-tech). They are called hallyu (or sometimes also allryu or hanryu; a term coming from Chinese) or Korean wave which is related to the increased exports of Korean cultural products in Asia and the world<sup>59</sup>. All these areas became the main source of business.<sup>60</sup> The democratic government allowed the consecutive “waves” of Korean popular culture, which thanks to the production of fresh and diverse genres and their different aesthetics, create persisting impressions on viewers all over the world. These cultural waves are not always defined equally but generally three are identified. Distinction among them rests not only in their beginning but also in the form of culture which is leading them.

The first wave was the result of the government’s endeavors and events were organized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.<sup>61</sup> Its spread was facilitated by television channels and mass media.<sup>62</sup> At the beginning, Korean dramas were the propulsion power because they represented a cheap alternative to Japanese shows. According to the general belief, hallyu started in 1999 in China with a successful drama but outside of the country, it was still rather unknown. “*Winter Sonata*” is considered the pioneer drama which reached success in China and Japan (where products connected to the series earned 2,3 billion dollars)<sup>63</sup>, and so contributed to the propagation of the country. The romantic series made the main character

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<sup>58</sup> Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations: *Peacekeeping Operations* (online).

<sup>59</sup> Kim, Andrew: *Catching up to the Korean Wave? The Pursuit of Soft Power in East Asia*, 63.

<sup>60</sup> Shim, Jae-yun: *Hallyu seeks to bridge different worlds*. The Korea Times, 5.

<sup>61</sup> The Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism was created following the reorganisation in 1998, and replaces the former Ministry of Culture and Sport.

<sup>62</sup> Ahn, Shin-Hyun: *Girls’ Generation and the New Korean Wave*, 85.

<sup>63</sup> Joo, Jeongsook: *Transnationalization of Korean Popular Culture and the Rise of “Pop Nationalism” in Korea*, 494.



a women's idol ("which was more popular in Japan than the then prime minister")<sup>64</sup> and the island Nami, where the show was shot, became an after-sought touristic location, which was within 10 years of the screening visited by more than a million of tourists.<sup>65</sup> In 1999 the series "Star in my Heart" became a hit in Taiwan and China and since then, it was shot in primetime in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, and Vietnam. The critic Lee Jung-mi ascribes the success also to the situation after the financial crisis, after which people found relief in romantic stories. In Hong Kong, the most watched drama in 2003 was the historical drama "Jewel in the Palace."<sup>66</sup> Thanks to advanced conditions for production, film stars, rich supply of genres, spread of domestic film companies and the support by the film promoting and developing agency Korean Film Council (KOFIC), the country succeeded to gain dominance on the domestic market and international reputation. The series finally spread all over Asia. Korea is the 7th biggest film market in the world which yearly attracts 119 million viewers. Joo in this context defines the Korean wave as something, "what various people in eastern Asia watch, listen to, and play."<sup>67</sup> Korea is a country of blockbusters beating Hollywood on its domestic market, recognized by critics abroad, and commercially. One certain drawback is the fact that the series and films are much more successful on the Asian market, where they spread much easier. Although movies reach foreign markets, they are still rather a part of specific film festivals. The first wave of Korean culture thus rather remains a regional affair.

The global success happens only with the second wave (sometimes also called as "New Korean wave"), led by Korean popular music. The main difference is<sup>68</sup> that fans itself searched for it, who in addition drives it by their activities and enthusiasm. They organize auditions and cultural events all over the world. According to Keith Howard, in the musical industry, this wave arrived already in 1999 with a member of the group CLON Jun Yup's duet "I can't wait" with a Taiwanese singer Yuki Hsu,<sup>69</sup> even though generally it is connected with the H.O.T.'s performance later the same year. Because Korean popular culture was earlier not too internationally recognized, Koreans view the global success of hallyu as national pride.<sup>70</sup> Before creating big entertaining agencies, singers became famous thanks to live performances or through broadcasting and only then signed with a manager, agency, or record company.<sup>71</sup> Lee Soo-man, founder, chairman and the biggest shareholder of the biggest entertainment agency SM Entertainment, however, changed this trend.

<sup>64</sup> Lee, Claire: *Remembering 'Winter Sonata,' the start of hallyu*, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>66</sup> Salmon, Andrew: *New wave of pop culture redefines Korea*, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Joo, Jeongsok: *Transnationalization of Korean Popular Culture and the Rise of "Pop Nationalism" in Korea*, 490.

<sup>68</sup> Ahn, Shin-Hyun: *Girls' Generation and the New Korean Wave*, 85.

<sup>69</sup> Howard, Keith: *The Foundations of Hallyu – K-Pop's Coming of Age*, 67.

<sup>70</sup> Joo, Jeongsok: *Transnationalization of Korean Popular Culture and the Rise of "Pop Nationalism" in Korea*, 489.

<sup>71</sup> Kim, Hyung-eun: *SM Entertainment and the birth of the Hallyu*, 12.

His goal was to find talents and grow with them; the company organized castings, propagation, marketing, and sales. With the new system of managing talents from their beginning and spreading on global markets, the Korean music industry was changed. As a consequence of globalization, every artist at SM Entertainment has to produce their work in English and Korean. Today, the talent scouts search all over the world, mainly in the USA and China, in order to ensure continuous growth at home and abroad.

Approximately since 2010, hallyu has been led by Korean pop that became a recognized category of music genres and promising business even though it was considered only a temporary thing at the beginning. K-pop became an identifiable brand like Samsung and it is getting such attention which traditional Korean culture never got. Popularity of music reached outside of Asia to Latin America, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. K-pop is particularly popular on the Internet. In 2011, even before Psy's hit, K-pop hits have been seen by 2.3 billion viewers from 235 countries in one year.<sup>72</sup> Popularity of Korean popular culture has an economic effect: in 2012 was the first time it surpassed exports of cultural products of their imports. According to the Korean bank, the country exported products worth 1.25 billion dollars<sup>73</sup> and most of these cultural products are related to hallyu. Export sharply rose since 2011 and its success is ascribed to boom of music groups.

Historically, probably because of Confucianism, the entertainment industry did not enjoy high social recognition.<sup>74</sup> But artists gradually gained respect even though they have low education and financial success. Fame becomes a new possibility for success, which leads to shift in Confucian traditions. In recognition of their increased status, the group Girls' Generation and Super Junior became honorary ambassadors of the quarter Gangnam.<sup>75</sup> President Lee Myung-bak considers the international success of K-pop as "one of the biggest successes of his country"<sup>76</sup> and the government administrates Korean wave Index for measuring the craze for cultural exports. The creativity of Korean youth becomes an impetus of Korean economics – local entertainment industry is significant and growing export article and Korean stars in neighboring countries are sometimes getting more attention than local stars.<sup>77</sup>

The concerns are currently about the sustainability of hallyu and its future. Korean culture could, according to negative predictions, lose its strength within several years. Therefore the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism tries to find ways to prevent this. In this regard, we are talking about the third wave of hallyu which focuses on globalization of traditional culture. High level of products should be reached by unique and universal Korean cultural values: traditional culture should be the base of cultural products which, thanks to propagation with the help of

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<sup>72</sup> Seo, Min-Soo: *Lessons from K-pop's Global Success*, 60.

<sup>73</sup> Kim, Rahn: *Korea posts 1st surplus in culture account*, 11.

<sup>74</sup> Jones, Jeffrey: *Time to support entertainment in Korea*, A7.

<sup>75</sup> Oh, Kyu-wook: *Fest to show hallyu Gangnam style*, 16.

<sup>76</sup> The Korea Times: *K-pop's slick productions win fans across Asia*, 22.

<sup>77</sup> Jones, Jeffrey: *Time to support entertainment in Korea*, A7.

modern culture will be globally successful, yet unique.<sup>78</sup> Less popular genres shall get more support from the government: writers who create on the basis of traditional Korean legends or alternative music groups which want to breakthrough abroad. Setting a supporting center is also planned<sup>79</sup> which should help companies in law and financial issues and in case they are interested in exporting abroad also suggests a marketing strategy and provides information. The role of the government and companies is very evident in the support of Korean culture.

## Korean brand

Pictures that a country projects on a political scene as well as by wider public play “a very important role in assessing the position of a state on the international scene.”<sup>80</sup> The concept of branding appears in Korea with the initiatives of Lee Myung-bak,<sup>81</sup> which shall support economic and social success of the country abroad and attract not only foreign tourists but also investments. A brand differentiates its products from their rivals on the market by creating certain emotions and behavior and means a certain quality for them.<sup>82</sup> The Korean brand has a significant name in the competitiveness in the field of technology, science, or economics but the country is still rather remembered with North Korea and the Korean War, which are the most commonly mentioned negative connotations.<sup>83</sup> According to the survey, people even confuse both Koreas.<sup>84</sup> According to the professor Yoo Jae-woong,<sup>85</sup> the global image of the country lacks behind its transnational companies such as Samsung or Hyundai.

The country strives to improve its image abroad by two ways: in 2009, it introduced an official government campaign for supporting branding and even the modern Korean culture lead to the change. By improving the international image of the country, they want to prevent companies from being disadvantaged “only because they are from South Korea.”<sup>86</sup> The key projects of branding of the country are increasing of development aid according to the Korean model of success, development of programs for multilateral families in the country, promoting education according to the global norms and supporting student exchanges, and thus providing education in the country to foreign students. The country also sets the goal to

<sup>78</sup> Shin, Hae-in: *Korea to promote 3rd Hallyu: Minister Choe* (online).

<sup>79</sup> Cho, Chong-un: *Korea to turn hallyu into industry* (online).

<sup>80</sup> Peterková, Jana: *Public Diplomacy: A Buzzword or Real Change?*, 91.

<sup>81</sup> Na, Jeong-ju: *Korea urged to revamp overseas PR system*, 5.

<sup>82</sup> An, Ji Yoon.: *An Exploration of Korea Brand and its strategy*, 21.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>84</sup> Pike, Andy: *Brands and branding geographies*, 294.

<sup>85</sup> Na, Jeong-ju: *Korea urged to revamp overseas PR system*, 5.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 5.

provide 3,000 volunteers per year<sup>87</sup> under the program World Friends Korea, while direct personal contact of the volunteers with the local inhabitants is important. This “grassroots diplomacy” shall promote Korean soft power all over the world.<sup>88</sup> Organizing of the Vietnam-Korean Week, where Koreans connected cultural and economic diplomacy, could serve as an example: they introduced popular culture and food to local inhabitants as well as organized business forums and seminars for strengthening business relations. With the help of creating a worldwide network of Koreans living abroad, this connection shall serve to promote the country abroad. Another goal is also to advertise Korean food, taekwondo, tourism and language. The government also wants to support the connection of successful companies with the country of origin, which allegedly distances from the country because Korean products are considered less prestigious. While economic development helps to improve the reputation of the country, thanks to culture and education, foreigners can better understand the country and, therefore, the government shall strive – with the help of politics and diplomacy – to inform about its country in compliance with the needs of the foreigners.<sup>89</sup>

The country also uses logos and slogans for its ministries which represent Korean potential. So, in 2002 with the motto “Dynamic Korea” and five years later “Korea Sparkling”, the government wanted to attract foreign investors and tourists. These slogans were abandoned because they did not bring desired results.<sup>90</sup> In 2010, the slogan “Korea, Be Inspired” was launched but according to the critics, it was too arrogant.<sup>91</sup> With the new motto “Imagine your Korea”, the country wants to focus more on foreign tourists – by 2020, the government plans to attract 20 million,<sup>92</sup> which means almost twice as much as the current number. The country should be according to the slogan “exciting and modern“, inexpressible with one word. Apart from the traditional richness, the enticement is of course modern music and series. Nevertheless, with these often changing slogans in accordance with the changing governments, it might give the impression of unpredictability especially to the investors.

Media became a strategic industry which shall again reinvigorate the sector of economics and tourism, where they with the state and travel agencies are all involved. Too much of American culture in 1980s created a wave of nationalism<sup>93</sup> in the country and craving for restoration of their own identity and together with globalization led to the idea of selling of Korean cultural products on the global market. In the

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<sup>87</sup> Kim, Regina: *Searchers and Planners: South Korea's Two Approaches to Nation Branding*, 150.

<sup>88</sup> Na Jeong-ju: *Korea Seeking Grassroots Diplomacy to Enhance Global Image*, 2.

<sup>89</sup> Na, Jeong-ju: *Korea urged to revamp overseas PR system*, 5.

<sup>90</sup> Na, Jeong-ju: *New Government Logo Planned*, 1.

<sup>91</sup> Lee, Chang-sup: *Tourism agency changes slogan again* (online).

<sup>92</sup> Lee Woo-young: *'Imagine your Korea' new tourism slogan* (online).

<sup>93</sup> Huang, Shuling: *Nation-branding and transnational consumption: Japan-mania and the Korean wave in Taiwan*, 5.

purpose of support of media industry on the global level, the Division of cultural industry was created. Cultural industry gradually and successfully becomes national pride with which the inhabitants identify and which creates “cool, popular, and a modern country,”<sup>94</sup> upgrades its status and helps their citizens to get confidence.

Koreans have big ambitions in advertising activities – the government subsidizes their works abroad or provides them for free with the aim of spreading a positive image of the country all over the world.<sup>95</sup> Thanks to the support, it expects future profits. Thanks to the popular culture, it creates bonds to international audience, which perceives it as an ideal image,<sup>96</sup> helping them to better understand Korean culture. With the help of marketing strategies, Korean brands shall become brands on the world level. Korean conglomerates take advantage of product placement<sup>97</sup> in television programs and Korean stars represent brands. Thanks to this strategy, Korean cosmetics in Taiwan became successful since 2005, where it was considered lower quality<sup>98</sup> products in comparison with the Japanese cosmetics.

According to the president of the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), hallyu contributed to increasing the national brand of the country,<sup>99</sup> it is thanks to the advertising for Korean national image and the increased interest in it, that the understanding of Korea is growing. Furthermore, it has positive economic effects. Positive images are projected by indirect experience with cultural content of the country (via TV shows, films, advertising) as well as direct (travelling to the country, meeting with local people and enjoying their products). In this way, the Chinese also learn about the country, who like Korean series and entertainment shows and therefore positively think about Korea.<sup>100</sup> Also thanks to hallyu, the Chinese prefer and consume more Korean products – foods and sweets but also mainly cosmetic products that are mostly bought by Chinese tourists during their visit to South Korea. Hallyu projects positive images as a marketing strategy and uses stars in advertising. Positive perceptions towards the nation then leads to positive images of the product.<sup>101</sup> This marketing strategy relies on spoken words – on the fact that positive attitudes toward a nation will be transmitted on its products. Hallyu stars are used as models in marketing. Prevailing favorable feelings towards Korea improves the images of its products and the society will positively feel this trend if the products are clearly identified as Korean, based on Korean values. The biggest consumer show with electronics in Europe, the Internationale Funkausstellung (IFA) in Berlin, serves as an example, where the company LG attracts attention to its televisions with the

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>96</sup> An, Ji Yoon: *An Exploration of Korea Brand and its strategy*, 30.

<sup>97</sup> Huang, Shuling: *Nation-branding and transnational consumption: Japan-mania and the Korean wave in Taiwan*, 9.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>99</sup> KOCCA: *Greetings from the President* (online).

<sup>100</sup> C. Min Han: *The Korean New Wave in China*, 17.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 17.

help of Korean popular stars that enable the company to get more attention all over the world. Companies exploit the growing popularity of the stars for expanding to global markets and therefore, the culture is not only a motor of economic growth but also improves the image of the country. Thanks to the positive promotion, export profits rose.

The goal of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism is to create job opportunities with the help of culture, constant increasing of added value of cultural industry should be assured, strengthening of tourism, and further cultivating of new markets. With the aim of diffusing the value of culture, the cooperation and cultural influence shall be further spread and dynamically adapted.<sup>102</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs includes cultural diplomacy as one of its pillars in order to increase the brand of its country<sup>103</sup> and its prestige in the international milieu. Cultural exchanges in the field of arts, sports, and media are based on a Cultural Agreement.<sup>104</sup> Through its embassies, the ministry supports Korean culture abroad and helps facilitate mutual understanding. Business people, journalists, government assistants, or artists are invited to the events and the audience also gets the chance to express its opinion in the survey of satisfaction. The Ministry also supports the screening of Korean dramas in places, where they are hard to penetrate (mainly in Africa and Latin America). The Ministry also supports spreading Korean films at festivals in Cannes, Venice, or Berlin and attracts foreign creators to Busan International Film Festivals, and in addition it organizes film festivals abroad. Since 2008, global cultural events<sup>105</sup> are also a part of cultural diplomacy of the country, connected with raising awareness of global issues – poverty, climate change, and ecological growth. One of the projects was organized by the fans of the singer Seo Taiji themselves on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his debut; they called a forest after him “Seotaji Forest” in Brazilian rainforest Guapi Assu. British environmental organization World Land Trust was engaged in the realization.<sup>106</sup>

## Conclusion

Before the “creation of hallyu”, there existed a Korean culture which was penetrated to the world. But the difference lies in the look at the country: while earlier, it was connected with oppression, war atrocities, and post-war poverty, nowadays it is attractive for its rapid economic development and tries to be connected through culture with modernity, fun, beauty, or high living standards. This picture is projected with significant help of Korean stars, associated with perfect appearance and style, and thanks to them, the government also tries to make their products visi-

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<sup>102</sup> Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism: *Vision* (online).

<sup>103</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic Korea. Culture: *Overview* (online).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Cho, Chong-un: K-pop still feels impact of Seo Taiji & Boys.

ble abroad and thus contribute to their sales abroad. Exactly this role of government and companies in the spread of hallyu is crucial.

Korean culture plays an important role mainly because it increases interest in cultural products of the country. Companies are aware of the stars popularity and they take advantage of it in marketing of its products. This leads subsequently to the increase of consumption of their products. In addition, the number of tourists has been steadily increasing and the increasing number of foreign students is an evidence of successful branding in education, embodied in the Korean plan from 2009.

South Korea is in diplomacy defined as a middle power and on the grounds of this position, it exerts diplomatic activities which successfully promote the country on the international level. Thanks to organizing international conferences, sports events or fairs, the country strives to become visible and asserts itself as a reliable partner in the matters of development aid or ecology. Apart from the well-thought governmental strategies, Korean modern culture also becomes a part of “Korean brand” and based on the newest slogan “Imagine your Korea” one of the lure for tourists, whose number should reach 20 million within next 6 years. The Republic of Korea, in their efforts to develop not only economically but also to become a popular tourist destination and globalize more, promotes ambitious plans. In order to reach them, not only entertainment companies but also the government and Korean conglomerates connect and finally not only stimulate but also control Korean modern culture.

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## THE EFFECT OF THE KOREAN WAVE IN MEDICAL TOURISM : JAPAN, CHINA, RUSSIA AND POLAND

Pawel Kida

**Abstract:** *The 21st century has seen an increase in the amount of effort people are putting into their appearance. More and more people aspire to look as good as the images they see on TV and in commercials — definitely due in part to increased consumerism. The fierce competition in the medical tourism market forces companies to introduce new items and packages to potential customers through well-known celebrities. Korean soap operas, music, and movies positively affect the sales of skin care and beauty products. Moreover, Korean actors and actresses personally feature in the cosmetics advertisements on the market or run businesses to help attract potential tourists. This study introduces the effects of the Korean wave in medical tourism in the cases of Japan, China, Russia and Poland.*

**Keywords:** *Hallyu, medical tourism, Korea, Japan, China, Russia, Poland*

### Introduction

Located on the Korean Peninsula between China and Japan, the small country of South Korea has a turbulent past: repeated colonization between its two historically stronger neighbours, a war which left it in shambles for awhile, and a government dictatorship that endured for years. The modern Korea, however, has launched itself forward as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It has the fourth largest economy in Asia behind China, India, and Japan, and the twelfth largest in the world—and is still showing consistent growth. Korea is a technologically and scientifically advanced country with 100Mbit broadband Internet access and full HDTV broadcasting. Virtually all Koreans use the Internet and smart phones daily. Hard work and the resulting wealth in the IT and electronics sectors made Korean society think not only about making money but also about the health and welfare of its citizens. Koreans live longer than they used to and take much better care of themselves. According to KOSTAT (Statistics Korea), with the development of medical skills and the enhancement of health consciousness, the life expectancy of Koreans has increased by 9.6 years from 71.7 years in 1991 to 81.3 in 2013, with that of females being about 7 years higher than that of their male counterparts.<sup>1</sup>

Korea boasts more than twenty-five modern international hospitals, including Asan Medical Center, established by the founder of Hyundai and one of the world's largest clinical campuses with more than three thousand beds. Almost all big hos-

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<sup>1</sup> Website [www.kostat.com](http://www.kostat.com), accessed on November 19, 2014.

pitals are JCI accredited.<sup>2</sup> Korean medical tourism began with service to Japanese patients who took advantage of the huge cost savings and excellent care. The Korean government is pushing to simplify visa procedures for patients, making nearby China, Japan, and Russia Korea's the largest source of inbound patient flow. In addition, on the streets in Seoul it is easy to see customers queuing in long lines to well-being restaurants or shops selling organic food. But even more striking are the shops stocked with enormous varieties of cosmetics and the plastic surgery hospitals. It is believed that in the area of Apgujeong in Seoul there are around one hundred plastic surgery hospitals, ranging from small clinics to tall buildings.

### **The notion and types of medical tourism**

Medical tourism simply refers to people leaving their home countries to find treatments or cures for problems of their mind and body. But this definition can narrow or broaden according to the situation; it can be limited to those whose aim is to treat a disease only or extended to include those who want to focus on beauty or diet. Taking into consideration 'mind and body', spas and other means of relaxation can also be included. Joo states<sup>3</sup> that medical travel is a fusion of medical service, relaxation, cultural experience, and leisure; a way to keep foreign customers who want and need any kind of treatment related to medical activity. Hall<sup>4</sup> even included yoga as a medical activity to promote health. From another perspective, Yu<sup>5</sup> states that the US recognizes a difference between medical travel and medical tourism. Medical travel involves leaving the US to find cheaper medical treatment abroad, while medical tourism means leaving the US to have minor treatment combined with the pleasure of sightseeing. As can be seen above, the notion of medical tourism is very broad in its content and can include many aspects of life. So it can be said that medical tourism is an activity when a person decides to leave a country to receive medical treatment to protect his or her life, including other activities that help to reach this goal.

As the scope of medical tourism is broad, types of medical tourism can vary. Medical tourists will visit a country to receive only medical treatment for a disease or to take treatment and enjoy some shopping and sightseeing. Henderson<sup>6</sup> proposes types of health tourism<sup>7</sup> according to service, presented in the table below:

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<sup>2</sup> JCI- Joint Commission International founded in 1994 is a non-profit organization that identifies, measures and shares the best practices in quality and patient safety with the world.

<sup>3</sup> Joo, Kyung Kun: "A Study on a Global Marketing Strategy for Medical Tourism," 83.

<sup>4</sup> Hall, C.P: *National Images: A Conceptual Assessment*, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Yu, Ji Yun: *Medical Tourism Introduction for Tourism Special Zone*, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Henderson, J. C.: "Health Care Tourism in Southeast Asia," 112–113.

<sup>7</sup> Henderson's notion of health tourism seems to be wider and includes the notion of medical tourism. In Korea, the general English term *medical tourism* is widely used.

**Table 1:** Henderson's Types of Medical Service

Health Tourism			
Medical Tourism	Cosmetic Tourism	Spas and Alternative Therapies	
Cancer treatment	Breast augmentation	Acupuncture	Hypnosis
Health screening	Facelifts	Aromatherapy	Massage
Health surgery	Liposuction	Beauty care	Yoga
Joint replacement		Facial and body scrubs	Meditation
Medical check-ups		Exercise and diet	Mud therapy
Neurosurgery		Flower remedies	Retreats
Transplants		Herbal healing	Stress management
		Homeopathy	Thalasso therapy <sup>8</sup>
		Holistic lifestyle	Thermal springs
		Hydrotherapy	

According to Henderson,<sup>9</sup> health tourism according to service can be divided into medical tourism, cosmetic tourism, and spas & alternative therapies. The Korea Tourism Organization proposes types of medical tourism according to purpose, as shown in the following table:

**Table 2:** Korea Tourism Organization's Types of Medical Tourism<sup>10</sup>

Purpose of visit	Main Medical Treatment
Treatment	Visit hospital for particular medical reason only
Treatment + Sightseeing	Medical treatment and sightseeing
Care Type	Patient accompanied by family member plus possible sightseeing
Potential Treatment	Visit hospital for medical reason in case of emergency or experience medical treatment during business trip/delegation

The first type, 'treatment', means that those patients who suffer obstinate diseases visit a particular doctor or hospital for service or a level of treatment that they cannot receive in their home country, so they decide to travel abroad to get better service. The second type, 'treatment and sightseeing', is designed for those who need minor medical care and decide to travel around to see and enjoy the foreign destination, often including travel packages to visit spas and beauty institutes. 'Care type' targets people who come to take care of the patient (generally family members) but at the same time decide to travel, shop, and sightsee. The last type, 'potential treatment', includes patients who visit a country to get emergency treatment as well as those

<sup>8</sup> Thalassotherapy (from the Greek word thalassa, meaning "sea") is the medical use of seawater as a form of therapy. It is based on the systematic use of seawater, marine products, and coastal climate. The properties of seawater are believed to have beneficial effects on the pores of the skin.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Website [www.mcst.go.kr](http://www.mcst.go.kr), accessed on November 19, 2014.

who are on a business trip or in a delegation who receive some information about medical tourism and decide to try it.

### Hallyu and medical tourism

The culture industry is the area through which a country's image can help to attract and keep foreign customers while increasing the export of different products. Culture industry is widely developed in Korea due to the lack of natural resources. The main components of hallyu (soap operas, music, and movies), as well as new Korean stars and the country's image help to promote products. According to the newspaper *Hankuk Ilbo* (2010), among the four countries of Japan, China, Vietnam and Taiwan, hallyu's index is highest in Japan, and China has the most positive impression of hallyu.<sup>11</sup> People watching soap operas and listening to K-pop have a positive image of the country in their mind. Thanks to this image, they want to visit Korea and associate with people who live there. The Korean government invests a lot of money into the culture industry and its image to encourage foreign customers to come and visit. The problem is that there is no indicator which helps us to measure a country's image. Surveys and questionnaires about products can ask customers why they chose a specific product. Many answers include statements like: 'I chose it because of a certain actor or actress', 'I watch Korean soap operas', 'I love the beauty of Korean stars' et cetera. Hallyu has without a doubt had a huge impact on medical tourism in Korea. According to the KHIDI (Korea Health Industry Development Institute), the top five countries from which people travel to Korea for medical purpose are accordingly China, USA, Japan, Russia and Mongolia.<sup>12</sup> In the table 3, we can see the number of international patients by department.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 3:** Number of International Patients by Department (only the first four most popular departments are shown)

Departments	2010		2011		2012	
	Patients	Ratio	Patients	Ratio	Patients	Ratio
<b>Internal Medicine</b>	23,632	23.3	34,330	22.2	45,994	22.2
<b>Medical examination</b>	13,272	13.1	19,894	12.9	23,898	11.5
<b>Dermatology</b>	9,579	9.4	12,978	8.4	17,224	8.3
<b>Plastic Surgery</b>	4,708	4.6	10,387	6.7	15,898	7.7

<sup>11</sup> Website [www.hankooki.com](http://www.hankooki.com), accessed on November 19, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> *Health Industry Statistics Annual*. Seoul: Korea Health Industry Development Institute 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Having a look at the table above, it is easy to conclude that the number of international patients has been increasing every year since 2010. While the ratios of internal medicine, medical examination and dermatology are almost unchanged, it is worth noting that the interest in plastic surgery is increasing rapidly with every year. Medical tourism is also based on cosmetics. Such domestic companies as Amorepacific Corp., LG Household & Health Care Co. Ltd, Able C&C Co. Ltd, The Faceshop Inc, Aekyung Industrial Co. Ltd, CJ Oliveyong Co. Ltd, Etude Co. Ltd, Innisfree Co. Ltd, Cosmax Co. Inc, and Nu Skin Korea Co. Ltd saw high sales in 2013. *Statistics Korea* says sales have grown to more than 3.6 billion dollars in the third quarter of 2014, an increase of more than 10 percent.<sup>14</sup> The sales surge can largely be attributed to Chinese buyers, with the popularity of Korean dramas leading to the great interest in Korean make-up products. According to Arirang News,<sup>15</sup> the Korean cosmetic market is expected to reach 14.6 billion dollars this year.

### Japanese customers and preference in sightseeing

The high standard of living in Japan enables well-to-do family members to buy inexpensive tickets for the short flight to Seoul. Thousands of Japanese people can be spotted in hotspots around Seoul, tending to prefer the Myeondong and Apgujeong shopping areas, as well as historical tourist destinations. Jang<sup>16</sup> states that Japanese women of 30–40 years prefer a short three-day trip to Seoul to experience shopping, sightseeing and food together with medical treatment or skin care. The main factors that draw them to Korea are safety and price. The Korea Tourism Organization enumerates that among items that Japanese customers prefer to buy are accordingly perfumes or cosmetics, food, clothing, ginseng, kimchi and accessories.<sup>17</sup> Choi<sup>18</sup> shows in his study that country image, self image, and hallyu have a huge impact on Japanese customers. He proposes economic development, mature society, affirmative attitude and security as primary factors regarding country image. Self image includes youth and sensitivity to fashion as well as attractiveness and spirit. Through soap operas and music, hallyu influences Japanese tourists to choose Korea over other countries such as Thailand or Singapore. A practical survey conducted among Japanese customers reveals that the doctor's skill, treatment price and interpreting are the most important factors for satisfaction with the visit.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Korea: *Explore Korea through Statistics 2014*.

<sup>15</sup> Website [www.arirang.co.kr](http://www.arirang.co.kr), accessed on November 19, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Jang, Yang Lae: "An Analysis on the Factors of Influence of Preference of Japanese Medical Tourists," 363–380.

<sup>17</sup> Website [www.mcst.go.kr](http://www.mcst.go.kr), accessed on November 19, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Chu Sang: "A study of impact on Japanese tourists' attitude and future behavioural intentions related to the Korea country image, self image and Korean wave involvement – focusing on beauty tourism in Korea," 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Website [www.koreanmedicaltour.com](http://www.koreanmedicaltour.com), accessed on November 19, 2014.

## Chinese customers and simplified visa requirements

Increased economical development has China emerging as one of the world's largest spenders on overseas tourism. According to the data provided by KHIDI,<sup>20</sup> among medical tourists coming to Korea, China comes first place and comprises 20.4 per cent of all medical tourists. Generally, female patients visit plastic surgery hospitals (36.5%) or dermatologists (15.2%). Seven out of ten females are in their twenties or thirties. Chinese patients choose good Korean technology and high-class equipment. Yang<sup>21</sup> proves in her research that behavioural intentions of the Chinese cosmetic tourists are based on medical service, narcissism and celebrity endorsements. While Japanese patients come for medical checkups, skin care and minor treatment along with sightseeing, Chinese patients are mainly interested in plastic surgeries and skin care beauty programs, especially surgery done on the eyelids and nose. Hallyu is widespread in China, thus the slim, V-line face of the Korean celebrity is the goal for female visitors. To keep Chinese visitors coming, the Korean government decided to simplify the visa process. Those who received one entry medical visa (15-day medical visa) can visit two more times or extend the time of sojourn. Server Onbao notes<sup>22</sup> that not only family members, but also a patient's personal assistant can easily receive a medical visa. Also, those who visit the Jeju Island have the visa requirements waived.

## Russian customers and FTA

Russia and Korea have signed a mutual agreement on free trade and the waiver of visa requirements. This caused an enormous surge of customers to Seoul and Busan in comparison with the last few years, as seen in the table below:

**Table 4:** Russian Medical Visitors to Korea by Year<sup>23</sup>

Year	Medical Visitors
2009	1,758
2010	5,098
2011	9,651
2012	16,438
2013	24,026

In comparison with China and Japan, the reasons for which customers come to Korea to get treatment are based more on price, technology and country image

<sup>20</sup> *Health Industry Statistics Annual*, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Yang, Eun Ju: "A Study on the Influence Factors of Behaviour Intension for Chinese cosmetic surgery tourism: Focusing on extended model of goal-directed behaviour," 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Website [www.onbao.com](http://www.onbao.com), accessed on November 19, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Website [www.kostat.com](http://www.kostat.com), accessed on November 19, 2014.



than on hallyu or self image. The main reasons why Russian visitors come to Korea are the highest level of service – Korean specialists study for many years and only one out of ten receive licence – and prices of treatment are 20–30% cheaper than in the US, 15% cheaper than in Japan and 10% cheaper than in Singapore.<sup>24</sup> Almost seventy percent of hospitals in Seoul and Busan have international departments where there is a Russian speaking coordinator.<sup>25</sup> Russian visitors are mainly interested in internal medicine and health checkups, but these days many of them opt for the plastic surgery alternative. Korean beauty medicine provides non-invasive methods of face-lifting through threads made of protein, which are very comfortable and patients recover immediately after the procedure. This encourages short trips to Seoul and Busan with amazing effects upon a visit to hospital. That is why female visitors generally use the technology of Aptos, Omega and Mindas threads. Apart from that, according to the server Medvoyage,<sup>26</sup> young girls opt for Thermage, Refirme, and Matrix IR technologies to improve the skin complex. The desire for these procedures comes from advances in technology and the youthful beauty of celebrities who undergo such procedures. Plastic surgery hospitals lure foreign clients with pictures of Korean celebrities who have undergone plastic surgeries. Moreover, a few visitors opt for stem cell transplants and nanotechnology cosmetics which are expensive in comparison with foreign brands.

### Poland and PDO threads

There are 25 years of bilateral diplomatic relations between Poland and Korea since 1989. Even though hallyu is gaining interest, it has been argued<sup>27</sup> that one cannot state that there is full hallyu in Poland. Among Poles, the image of Korea is mainly based on the country's rapid economic development and advanced technology. Polish people are aware of the strong Korean economy and its growth. The distance between the two countries is huge and therefore Polish people choose European hospitals. Nevertheless, we can talk about some interest in medical tourism, but in a reverse situation where Korean doctors come to Poland to treat people. Since 2010, there has been an increased interest in beauty and natural ways of obtaining facial procedures in Poland. Since Korea started to produce and use PDO<sup>28</sup> threads in face and body lifting, some companies tried to implement this kind of business on Polish ground, which resulted in inviting Korean doctors to Poland to conduct procedures. The first attempt took place in 2010 in Royal Vital Spa. Korean oriental medicine doctors visited Poland a few times to conduct PDO face lift and body procedures. After two years since 2012 Polish doctors (Ambroziak Hospital) using PDO threads

<sup>24</sup> Website [www.kosis.go.kr](http://www.kosis.go.kr), accessed on November 19, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Website [www.kosis.go.kr](http://www.kosis.go.kr), accessed on November 19, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Website [www.medvoyage.info](http://www.medvoyage.info), accessed on December 10, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Kida, Pawel: "Wind of Change: Poland is One Step Away from the Korean Wave," 65–74.

<sup>28</sup> Polydioxanone (PDO, PDS) or poly-p-dioxanone is a colorless, crystalline, biodegradable synthetic polymer.

conducted some procedures. Since 2014, the HanBang oriental medicine method is again performed in Poland by Korean doctors. Polish customers are aware of good technology and prefer a non-invasive, natural way to lift the face and body. In addition to threads, there are few online shops which provide such Korean cosmetic brands as: It's Skin, Innisfree, Missha, Tony Moly, The Face Shop, and Skin79. In the case of Poland, we can talk about a case of reverse medical tourism where Korean doctors come to perform some procedures. It is very convenient from a customer's point of view, due to distance and time saving as well as the good quality and interpreting service provided.

## Conclusions

Korea aims to quadruple the number of foreigners visiting for medical purposes to 1 million by 2020. Thanks to excellent medical skills, advanced technology and advertising through hallyu celebrities, this goal can be reached easily. The Korean government is targeting customers in the Middle East. But will they succeed? It is necessary to do research on how the Korean wave is perceived by people in that region. Nevertheless, Japanese and Chinese customers are coming to Korea in great numbers for medical tourism and the culture industry plays a big role. Country image, self-image and the Korean wave help to develop a better strategy to market products. Russian citizens come to Korea for good service and price which is their main factor for medical tourism rather than hallyu. In Poland, we can talk about a reverse type of medical tourism where Korean doctors come to treat people. The interest in beauty medicine among Poles arises from great technology of Korea rather than from the interest in Korean pop culture.

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## LEGENDS WITH SUPERPOWERS: RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE DEBUT STRATEGY OF THE K-POP BAND “EXO”

Renáta Hanó

**Abstract:** *In this article, I explore religious elements in the Korean-Chinese boy band EXO's debut in an attempt to uncover the influence of Korean religions on this cultural product. Firstly, I discuss the structure of South Korean music industry and the importance of a band's debut for the band's future. Comparing the EXO's strategy with that of other Korean music groups who debuted in 2012, I will show the specific features that made this debut exceptional. Next, I analyze the various myth-creating symbols found in the EXO's debut. For instance, stemming from Korean shamanism, Buddhism and Christianity, religious elements of the tree of life, the twelve deva guardians or the red-eye demon are introduced and explained. Lastly, I will proceed to the topic of social response to the band's debut. Having analyzed the data from interviews and on-line comments, I argue that the debut strategy did not succeed the way the entertainment company expected. I search for the reason behind it and conclude by suggesting the lack of interest in traditional religions as a possible cause of this failure.*

**Keywords:** *K-pop idols, religious symbols, debut release strategy, shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity.*

### K-Pop bands and debut strategy

Nowadays, the most efficient cultural charm of South Korea is hallyu (한류), in other words, the Korean wave. Hallyu is a widespread term that includes Korean traditions, Korean dramas and Korean music. In this article paper, I focus on the topic of Korean pop music, also known as K-pop, which evolved in the 90's when the first K-pop group, SeoTaiji & Boys, was formed. In 1995, the most successful company, S.M. Entertainment, was established. The entertainment agency trains and markets their idols with competitive concepts. The number of groups that emerge every year has been growing significantly. Consequently, every management and entertainment agency has to face great competition. An exception to this are the S.M. Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and YG Entertainment that are together known as the 'Big Three'.

The marketability of one group is mostly dependent on the outfits, personalities and the various talents of the group members, and the entertainment agency has the biggest influence on the concept of the group. If one group has its own style and a fitting concept, selling and keeping their image in the future will be easier. First of

all, entertainment agencies have to determine the target audience, estimate its size, do social research; these are important steps to create a suitable concept. If the debut concept turns out to be not as successful as statistics predicted, even if they are risky, there are opportunities to change it afterwards, but then there is the chance that the group might fail. This kind of industry is mostly dependent on its market; in other words, the fans are the buyers so they have a big influence on a group's success. While showing their charm and good manners in front of the public, the groups are selling themselves at the same time. However, the difference between K-pop and the Western pop industry is that while in the latter, calculated effects and showing off are considered as good business catches, in K-pop, most emphasis is put on setting a good example. For this reason, we can call the performers "idols".

The main focus of this paper will be on the debut strategy of the boy band 'EXO' that can be considered to be different from all the other usual strategies. The main reason for this is that their debut concept is based on the use of religious symbols. Yet the debut concept was created not only for the Korean market, but also for the international audience, so it is interesting to see how each audience reacts to this.

### EXO's debut strategy

The South Korean-Chinese boy band 'EXO' debuted with twelve members on the 8th of April, 2012, with a big showcase concert. The K-pop industry especially favors groups with a larger number of members, reasons being that they are spectacular and everybody may find their favorite. Before their debut, however, EXO had altogether twenty-three teasers in which they introduced each member separately. There were speculations about the concept, caused by the fact that in the teasers, some members had superpowers and an eclipse was emphasized. After the showcase, EXO released their debut single "MAMA", the music video of which clearly conveyed the band's concept: that all of the twelve members had a superpower and were divided into two groups, one Korean and one Chinese. EXO-K is promoted in South Korea while EXO-M is performing the same songs in China. Both groups however come from the same planet called "EXO" and there is a creation myth that precedes the "MAMA" song itself and that tells about the birth of this planet. I would like to analyze the whole concept of EXO through this creation myth and compare it with the similarities I have found in Korean shamanism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and Christianity.

In the opening scene of the 'MAMA' music video, the following tale is told:

*When The skies and the grounds were one legends through there twelve forces nurtured the tree of life. An eye of red forces created the evil which covered the heart of tree of life and the heart slowly grew dry. To intent an embrace for heart of tree of life, the legends hereby divide the tree in half and hide each side hence time is overturned and space turns askew. The twelve forces divide into two and create two suns that look alike, into two worlds that seem alike. The legends travel apart. The legends shall now see the same sky but shall stand on different*

*grounds, shall stand on the same ground but shall see different skies.  
The day the grounds beget a single fault before one sky in two worlds  
that seem alike, the legends will greet each other. The day the red forces  
purify and twelve forces reunite into one perfect root – “A New World  
Shall Open Up”.*

The first motif is the one of the “Tree of Life”. The symbol of the Tree of Life appears in many world religions and yet it has the same function of being the world’s axis mundi (middle of the world). Every living creature receives energy from the Tree of Life, which creates a connection between heaven, the world under heaven, and the underworld, establishing a world cosmos.<sup>1</sup> In Korean shamanism, the Tree of Life has a role as axis mundi; it is called *shingan* (싱안),<sup>2</sup> which serves as a bridge for the gods and the spirits.<sup>3</sup> These trees may not only act as bridges but also concrete houses of a spirit. Generally speaking, the shamans perform their ceremonies (*kuts* – 굿) near to these trees because they connect the underworld (*chiha* – 지하), the world under heaven (*chisang* – 지상), and heaven (*chonsang* – 존상).<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, there is another tree in Korean mythology called *Shindansu* (신단수) that stands on the T’aebaek mountain and the place is called by the Koreans “Saint City” or “Home of Spirits”.<sup>5</sup> Like in the Tan Kun myth, Tan Kun, the establisher of the first ancient Korean state, arrived to Earth with an army of three thousand near that Tree.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, the place is sacred to Korean people. In the present-day creation myth, the Tree of Life is a Spirit or God, who is living in that Tree and is dying, so the Legends are coming to save him.

In Buddhism, there is the *Bodhi Tree*, near which Buddha reached complete enlightenment. In this kind of interpretation, the tree is a center, a beginning and ending at the same time.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, in Confucianism, the image of the Tree of Life does not exist; the axis mundi is related to a person, called *T’ien-tzu*, who is the Son of Heaven<sup>8</sup> and functions as a connection between the Gods and the people. This point of view shows the Tree of Life as a person. In the myth presented in the debut video, the tree has a heart which is slowly drying out and hence one may interpret this heart to be part of a person and therefore the tree can be understood as a person, too. In Christianity, the Tree of Life has a well-established meaning. In the Bible, Adam and Eve were prohibited to eat from the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/648638/world-tree>, (December 12, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Or also *hondae* (혼대) / *chonsanggye* (존상계) / *chonangdae* (존앙대) / *kunmungi* (군몽이) / *myongdu* (명두) / *surittae* (술인대).

<sup>3</sup> Chang, Soo-kyung and Kim, Tae-gon: *Korean Shamanism – Muism*, 188.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Tokarev, Sz. A. and Braginskij, I. Sz.: *Encyclopedia of Mythology II.*, 473.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 475.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.treeoflifeteachings.com/tree-of-life/>, (December 14, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, Rodney Leon and Choy, Howard Yuen Fung: *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 9.

and due to the violation of this rule, they were banished out of the Paradise.<sup>9</sup> From this last example, one can make the conclusion that if something happens to the Tree of Life, the world will fall out of its order, like in the debut video where “time is overturned and space turns askew”.<sup>10</sup>

The second motif is the “Legends” and their “twelve forces”. In EXO’s debut story, as previously mentioned, every member has a superpower:<sup>11</sup> fire, wind, earth, water, light, teleportation, telekinesis, time control, flight, ice, thunder and healing. The EXO members are the Legends, who protect the heart of the Tree of Life. These elements can be found in the basics of Asian culture as Wu Xing, the answer to cosmos questions, which includes the aforementioned five elements. Also, they have symbols as ☰ (iron/heaven), ☷ (earth), ☴ (wood/wind), ☵ (water) and ☲ (fire),<sup>12</sup> all of which can be seen (with the exception of the symbol of wood/wind)<sup>13</sup> on the flag of South Korea. The terms and the use of elements are one of the oldest traditions in Korean culture and it directly relates to the analyzed cultural product. However, there are only five of these elements, so one has to attempt to find the possible source of the other ones.

Firstly, one may find two more elements in Buddhism that are connected to the seven main energy points, the chakras, which are believed, in Buddhism, to play an important role in one’s life. The chakras are *Sahasrara* – time, *Ajña* – darkness, *Vishuddhi* – light, lightning, *Anahata* – wind, *Manipura* – fire, *Svadhithana* – water/ice and *Muladhara* – earth.<sup>14</sup> The remaining three elements (flight, telekinesis and teleportation) are most probably only fictional elements with no religious background, but the usage of the other elements may have religious explanations.

One may also find religious similarities between the elements and the twelve Legends in Buddhism or Korean shamanism. In Korean shamanism, there are the *Yŏltudaeshin* (열두대신), who were highly ranked officials in the king’s court. After they died, they became members of the Korean shamanism pantheon. Unfortunately, we do not know much about them.<sup>15</sup> In Buddhism, there are the twelve Deva Gods, who are the guardians of Buddhism. Devas are superhuman and invisible to humans, but they can be heard and felt if one reaches the divyacaksus status.<sup>16</sup> The Deva Gods are as follows:

<sup>9</sup> Gen. ii. 8, iii. 22; Ps. cxi. I8, xi. 30; Enoch xviii. 8-9, xxiv; Rev. xxii. 2.

<sup>10</sup> James, E. O.: *The Tree of Life*, 248.

<sup>11</sup> Now the group has only ten members; Kris is inactive since May 2014, Luhan since October 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Feng, Youlan: *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 13.

<sup>13</sup> We can find all the elements in the ancient type of the flag.

<sup>14</sup> Mercier, Patricia: *The Chakra Bible*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Chang, Soo-kyung and Kim, Tae-gon: *Korean Shamanism – Muism*, 192.

<sup>16</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deva\\_%28Buddhism%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deva_%28Buddhism%29), (December 14, 2014).

1. *Bonten* (Japanese: 梵天, Sanskrit: *Brahma*) – Up / Heaven
2. *Taishakuten* (jp: 帝釈天, skr: *Indra*) – East/ The God of Devas
3. *Suiten* (jp: 水天, skr: *Varuna*) – West / Water
4. *Bishamonten* (jp.: 毘沙門天, skr.: *Vaiśravaṇa*) – North / Health
5. *Enmaten* (jp.: 炎魔天, skr.: *Yama*) – South / Underworld
6. *Katen* (jp.: 火天, skr: *Agni*) – South-East / Fire
7. *Rasetsuten* (jp.: 羅刹天, skr.: *Raksasa*) – South-West / Demons
8. *Ishanaten* (jp.: 伊舍那天, szr.: *Isana*) – North-East / Dharma
9. *Futen* (jp.: 風天, skr.: *Vayu*) – North-West / Wind
10. *Nitten* (jp.: 日天, skr.: *Aditya*) – Sun
11. *Gatten* (jp.: 月天, skr.: *Candra*) – Moon
12. *Jiten* (jp.: 地天, skr.: *Prthivi*) – Down / Earth<sup>17</sup>

Here one may find most of the Legends' elements and therefore we can make the conclusion that Korean shamanism and especially Buddhism may have helped in the creation of the debut concept for EXO.

The third motif is “An eye of red forces [that] created the evil”. In Korean shamanism, there is a spirit that is called *Mama Sonnim* (마마 손님). Firstly, it is connected to the title of the debut song, “MAMA”. Also, the lyrics contain very deep social criticism. One may believe that the prayer in the lyrics is directed at the God of *Mama Sonnim*, or *Mama* (마마) / *Hosŏn Mama* (호선 마마) / *Hogu Pyŏlsŏn* (호구 별선) / *Tushin* (두신). In Korean tradition, this God is called the “Variola Guest”, which was the name for the most frightened contamination. They believed that when somebody got variola, *Mama Sonnim* appeared.<sup>18</sup> Variola causes red pimples, which may be connected to the part of the myth that says that the “eye of red forces created evil”. If we see the Red Eye Evil as *Mama Sonnim* (Variola) and the Tree of Life as a human (as discussed above), one can say that the myth refers to a human who caught variola, which was a lethal disease in the old times. The last sentence of the discussed video intro, “*The day the red forces purify and twelve forces reunite into one perfect root*” may be therefore interpreted as “*someone who overcome that illness*”.

The forth and last motif is the *solar eclipse* that was seen in the teasers. The term “exo”, the alignment of the planets, and the motif of the eclipse shows the sacred nature of Korean astrology. There is a myth about the birth of the eclipse in Korean shamanism: there was a King of Darkness, who wanted to steal the Sun and the

<sup>17</sup> Chaudhuri, Saroj Kumar: *Hindu Gods and Goddesses in Japan*, 184.

<sup>18</sup> Tokarev, Sz. A. and Braginskij, I. Sz.: *Encyclopedia of Mythology II*, 468.



Moon, who sent his fire dogs out for them but they failed. One of the fire dogs bit the Moon but it was too cold, the other bit the Sun but it was too hot, and hence the solar and the lunar eclipse were born.<sup>19</sup> The eclipse can be the motif of the Ends of the World, but it may refer to the alignment of the planets too, which is what one sees in the myth created as a part of the EXO's debut.

With the creation myth fully discussed, let us focus on the name of the boy band. The term EXO comes from astronomy, where there are extrasolar planets or *exo planets* for short. These planets are outside of our galaxy.<sup>20</sup> From that source came the idea that the Legends, the EXO members, came from another galaxy, hence are aliens. For these reasons, several fan-made pictures are galaxy-themed and the group first concert was also named "Lost Planet".

To summarize, we may argue that the creating process for EXO's debut was not a simple task, for it contains a large variety of known as well as less known religious elements. Thanks to the astrological and mysterious parts of the concept, many people became fans of EXO. However, there is a turning point that we shall discuss below.

### Social response to the debut

One may think that EXO gained a lot of popularity immediately after their debut, considering the above-discussed strong and well-developed concept. Yet for the company it was more a disappointment than a success. The selling rate of EXO's first album "MAMA" was not so great, it only reached the 7th place on the Gaon Chart in 2012.<sup>21</sup> Comparing the "MAMA"'s selling rate to their other albums, the charts show that this new promising concept was not their way to success.<sup>22</sup>

As previously stated, EXO consists of two groups, EXO-M and EXO-K. Perhaps this strategy was just a marketing move to break into the Chinese music market. This kind of group concept was considered new despite its resemblance to Super Junior-M, the Chinese subunit of the famous K-pop band *Super Junior*. But in this case, EXO-M and EXO-K are doing the same things, singing the same songs, but in different languages and with different members. Though it may seem illogical at first to buy two albums only because the members are different while the songs and everything else is the same, but regardless, people are still buying these and that is the point.

During the time of their debut, EXO received a lot of on-line criticism from their fans for the concept of superpowers as well as for the lyrics of "MAMA" that contain harsh social criticism of the modern generation (the lyrics describe this generation as not being able to talk to each other and being in a constant hurry). Especially this following part of the lyrics caused uproar:

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 460.

<sup>20</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exoplanet>, (December 14, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> See <http://gaonchart.co.kr/chart/album.php>, (December 14, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> See <http://www.allkpop.com/article/2013/12/exo-becomes-the-first-million-seller-in-twelve-years> | [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EXO\\_discography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EXO_discography) (December 14, 2014).

*“MAMA! Answer me, why did the people change Did they notice the existence of that time I have forgotten how to just hear, love and care, no longer but lost Turning their backs while working while living Full of envy behind that anonymous mask Even after seeing the end, you’re still full with hunger Are you satisfied now?”*

*“Wouldn’t we face our eyes anymore? Wouldn’t we communicate? Wouldn’t we love? Tearing up to the reality that hurts Say MAMA if you can change it, say MAMA.”<sup>23</sup>*

One of the members defended the song against the accusation that the lyrics criticize Internet culture too much as follows:

*“It criticizes the bad posts. We accept advices at a reasonable level but all the harsh posts using an ‘anonymous mask’ must disappear. We still couldn’t see the ‘Internet bullying’. We go to see from time to time when we have spare time but I think that fans are still treating us cutely.” (Kai)<sup>24</sup>*

Korean media were making fun of EXO because of the superpower concept, comparing them to the heroes of the comics Marvel Comics.

*“Kai (18) has teleportation, D.O (19) has a beast’s strength, Baekhyun (20) has the light, Chanyeol (20) has the fire, Sehun (18) has the wind, leader Suho (21) has the ability to control water.”<sup>25</sup>*

People believed that this concept was created by the secret community called “Freemasons” because of its supernatural elements. The members’ confidence in saying they have superpowers has made reporters feel slightly awkward. When asked “Who decided to give you these powers”, the boys were a bit taken aback but still carefully replied “Lee Soo Man CEO”. However, they do insist on saying “We really have superpowers”. Besides, there were rumors on Internet saying S.M. Entertainment’s CEO Lee Soo Man was a part of the Freemasons (a secret organization).<sup>26</sup>

One may argue that they could not take the debut story seriously even if it had a very strong message. Korean people could only focus on how American-styled it was and did not connect the story with their own traditional religions. This shows that the modern generation is not very much aware of traditional religions nor is it easily convinced by mythological stories as the company expected it to be. Therefore, even though we may conclude that the EXO’s debut was cautiously prepared and the story carefully narrated in an attempt to deliver desirable marketing results as

<sup>23</sup> Taken from: <http://www.kpoplyrics.net/exo-k-mama-lyrics-english-romanized.html#ixzz3KFoCGaTi>, (December 13, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Taken from [http://news.jtbc.joins.com/article/ArticlePrint.aspx?news\\_id=NB10101937](http://news.jtbc.joins.com/article/ArticlePrint.aspx?news_id=NB10101937), (December 13, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Taken from <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20120518/46313521/2>, (December 12, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> Taken from <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20120517/46323686/1>, (December 12, 2014).

well as to come up with a unique story, different from other debuts in the industry, the album did not fulfill the expectations and the strategy turned out to rather unsuccessful.

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## RECENZE

**Uher, David: *Hanská grammatologie*.**

Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého 2013, 264 s.

ISBN 978-80-244-3866-5

**Zuzana Pospěchová**

Recenzovaná monografie sinologa a pedagoga působícího na Univerzitě Palackého Davida Uhra, se zaměřuje na čínskou grammatologii, a to především, jak už sám název publikace napovídá, na grammatologii období dynastie Han, tedy na samotné počátky grammatologického bádání. Právě hanská grammatologie je autorovým dlouhodobým předmětem zájmu, toto téma rozvíjel již ve své disertační práci z roku 2002 s názvem *Výklad významu obrysových a rozbor struktury odvozených znaků: teorie, etymologie a kultura* 《说文解字》学说, 字源, 文化 (knižně vyšlo roku 2012 taktéž ve vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého).

Jádrem monografie je „Doslov“ k *Výkladu obrysových a rozboru struktury odvozených znaků* (说文解字 Shuō Wén Jiě Zì, dále jen *Výklad*) napsaný čínským lingvistou Xu Shenem (許慎), „Doslov“ je považován za základní manifest hanské grammatologie. To, jaký mu autor připisuje význam, je vidno již i z toho, že celý text tohoto „Doslovu“ uvádí v originále, ke kterému připojuje překlad do češtiny. Autor sám si vytyčuje pro jednu publikaci poměrně náročný úkol popsat hanskou grammatologii v celé její šíři včetně vzhledu do historického kontextu doby jejího vzniku, který usnadní pochopení okolností doby a motivaci ke vzniku díla. Cíle, který je zde takto ambiciózně vytyčen, se autorovi daří dosáhnout a ve své práci tak přináší komplexní obraz vzniku a vývoje vědy o písmu v období dynastie Han i po něm – v podstatě až do dnešní doby. To, jakou má Xu Shenova práce hodnotu i v dnešní době dosvědčuje tato citace: „*Pokud by Xu Shenova práce neexistovala, nacházela by se čínská filologie po objevení nápisů na kostech v podobné situaci jako egyptologové před rozluštěním hieroglyfů: texty nápisů na kostech, na bronzích a ostatně ani texty z období Válčících států by nebylo možné číst.*“ (s. 194)

Autor celou monografii přehledně uspořádal do pěti hlavních částí: Grammatologie, Xu Shen a jeho doba, „Doslov“ *Výkladu znaků*, *Výklad znaků* a O hanské grammatologii. Po pečlivém prostudování těchto kapitol získá čtenář celkový obraz o hanské grammatologii i o kontextu doby jejího vzniku a následného vývoje, nicméně je třeba podotknout, že čtení a porozumění textu této monografie je poměrně náročné a nedá se v žádném případě doporučit laikům s nulovou znalostí tématu. Naopak čtenářům–odborníkům se zkušeností v tomto oboru poskytuje velmi za-

jímavý komplexní vhled do problematiky vědy o písmu a okolností jejího vzniku a vývoje. Jako přínos k celkovému lingvistickému náhledu lze kladně hodnotit i to, že autor u většiny lingvistů, zmíněných v textu, uvádí ve formě poznámky pod čarou jejich biografická data, jejich konkrétní spojení s lingvistikou a jejich přínos či díla. K samotnému textu jsou připojeny resumé v ruštině a angličtině.

První kapitola čtenáři podává teoretický úvod ke kapitolám následujícím, jedná se o jakýsi úvod do grammatologie, a to jak do vědy o písmu obecně, tak do čínského znakového písma konkrétně. O této kapitole se dá říci, že je jednou z těch, které mohou posloužit i čtenářům laikům. Jsou zde také v rámci pojednání o paleografii funkčně zařazeny demonstrace vývoje piktogramů s významem zvíře, které ukazují hlavní tendence ve vývoji grafiky znaků. Druhá část je už věnována samotnému autoru *Výkladu* Xu Shenovi a období, ve kterém jeho dílo vznikalo. Autor se zde zabývá vyložením historického kontextu hanské jazykovědy od jejích počátků, přičemž se zaměřuje i na její návaznost na dynastii předchozí a především na intelektuální ovzduší doby, do kterého spadají počátky grammatologie. Snaží se také o shrnutí základních důležitých momentů Xu Shenovy kariéry a života, v neposlední řadě také poutavě rozvádí pohnutou historii Xu Shenovy hrobky v minulosti i současnosti, což zcela doplňuje komplexní výklad osudů tohoto znamenitého lingvisty.

Třetí kapitola je tvořena již v úvodu zmiňovaným textem „Doslovu“ k *Výkladu* v originále s překladem do češtiny. Obsahuje nejen tento samotný text, ale také v podstatě jeho cestu k císařskému dvoru. Na tuto kapitolu navazuje kapitola čtvrtá s názvem *Výklad znaků* – která je vlastně praktickou nadstavbou kapitoly předchozí. Autor se zde podnětně zamýšlí například i nad tím, zda je možné Xu Shenův text považovat za slovník či spíše za „grammatologickou studii korpusového charakteru“, k čemuž se přiklání, a co se opravdu, vzhledem k charakteru Xu Shenovy práce, zdá jako příhodnější chápání celého textu. Autor také rozebírá jednotlivé z šesti kategorií písma a grafické styly. Obecné poučení o jednotlivých kategoriích není ničím novým a lze ho najít i v jiných publikacích o čínském písmu, nicméně zde je funkčně ilustrováno přímo na znacích vybraných obsažených v Xu Shenově díle.

Poslední pátá část nazvaná O hanské grammatologii se zabývá grammatologií po roce 220 n. l., a to dalšími osudy *Výkladu* a zejména lingvisty až do období dynastie Qing, kteří text komentovali, rozebírali jej ve svých pracích a dále s ním pracovali, čímž zabezpečili jeho zachování a srozumitelnost do dnešní doby. Lingvistu může velmi zaujmout myšlenka, že pronikání evropské jazykovědy do Číny podnítilo nový směr zkoumání *Výkladu* a v podstatě díky evropské lingvistice a jejímu náhledu se z grammatologie stala samostatná vědní disciplína. Autor se zabývá i pozdějšími rekonstrukcemi a edicemi *Výkladu*. Zvraty a úpravy, kterými dílo v průběhu historie procházelo, jsou velmi zásadní a navozují otázku, co je v něm původní a co je přidáno zásluhou pozdějších redakcí.

Text publikace *Hanská grammatologie* je textem vysoce odborným, s velmi podrobným poznámkovým aparátem, jenž na svého čtenáře klade nemalé nároky, ale vynaložené úsilí pozorného čtenáře odměňuje vyčerpávajícím pohledem do počátků tradiční čínské lingvistiky a její doby. Odborníkům z řad sinologů nabízí všestranné

rozšíření povědomí o grammatologii celkově, ale také o jejím dalším vývoji po období dynastie Han až do současnosti. Monografie může ale zaujmout i ty z řad čtenářů, kteří se zajímají nikoliv o hanskou grammatologii jako o celek, nýbrž pouze o jednotlivá témata v této monografii rozpracovaná, tedy například o dobu dynastie Han či historickou lexikografii, která je zde také částečně rozvedena. Nezanedbatelným přínosem laikům, kteří se pustí do prostudování tohoto díla (nutno podotknout, že toto jejich počínání musí provázet jistá odvaha prokousat se náročným textem motivovaná opravdovým zájmem o téma), může být například přístupnou formou napsaný základní vhled do psaní čínských znaků, či odborníkovi dobře známých šesti kategorií znaků i s příklady.

Publikaci lze doporučit všem čtenářům se zájmem o čínské znakové písmo a zejména o vědu o něm, nicméně, jak je již uvedeno výše, pro její odbornost a velké nároky, které na svého čtenáře klade, se z ní stává spíše publikace určená především odborné veřejnosti s předchozí znalostí problematiky vědy o písmu a s komplexnějším povědomím o lingvistice.

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**Benedictová, Ruth:**  
***Chryzantéma a meč. Vzorce japonské kultury.***  
Praha: Malvern 2013, 303 s. ISBN 978-80-86702-45-5

**Pavel Šindlář**

Dílo *Chryzantéma a meč* bylo první, a jak se později ukázalo, velmi vlivnou analýzou Japonska za druhé světové války od americké antropoložky Ruth Fulton Benedictové (1887–1948). Původní dokument nazvaný „japonské vzorce chování“, byl rozšířen po skončení války do současného textu *Chryzantéma a meč. Vzorce japonské kultury*. Tato kniha vyšla poprvé již v roce 1946. Autorka dostala zadání výzkumu od tehdejšího amerického Úřadu pro válečné informace s cílem zejména pochopit a předvídat chování Japonců, a tím dát americké administrativě návod na to, jak by měla vypadat poválečná správa země. I když její analýza vznikala bez možnosti fyzické návštěvy Japonska, je dodnes označována za klasické dílo americké kulturní antropologie a měla důležitý vliv na utváření americké představy o japonské kultuře během okupace. Kniha *Chryzantéma a meč* vyvolala zájem nejen mezi odborníky, ale přitáhla pozornost i široké veřejnosti. Vysoce si díla cení také v samotném Japonsku, kde bylo přeloženo v roce 1948, a kde následně významně přispělo k sebepojetí japonské národní a kulturní identity.

Kniha byla přeložena do řady dalších jazyků, a ačkoliv od prvního vydání již uběhlo téměř sedmdesát let, k českému čtenáři se tento překlad dostává až nyní. Přestože je možné pochybovat o vhodnosti překladu s takovým zpožděním, kniha je zajímavá především „vnějším“ pohledem na Japonsko jakožto jinou kulturu v daném historicko-společenském kontextu. Alespoň tehdy převládal dojem, že Japonsko je zcela jiná a odlišná kultura, což ostatně píše i Benedictová na začátku textu: „*Žádný z protivníků, s nimiž Spojené státy vedly v průběhu své historie rozsáhlejší boje, nám nebyl tak cizí jako Japonci. V žádné válce s nebezpečným nepřítelem nebylo třeba počítat s tak naprosto odlišnými způsoby jednání a myšlení (...) Vážným problémem této války byla povaha nepřítele. Abychom ji vyhráli, museli jsme porozumět jeho chování*“ (str. 31). Tento pohled byl pochopitelně ovlivněn dobou svého vzniku – za druhé světové války (a zejména po japonském útoku na Pearl Harbour), přesto i dnes je velmi cenný. České vydání knihy doprovázejí další tři texty: předmluva japanologa Iana Burumy, poukazující na to, v čem je kniha dosud aktuální. Dále je to text, který se zabývá portrétem autorky od kulturního antropologa Martina Soukupa, a v neposlední řadě ještě doslov českého japanologa Jana Sýkory.

Kritika textu a předkládaných argumentů spočívá zejména v tom, že výzkum byl realizován „na dálku“, bez možnosti proniknout do zkoumaného japonského prostředí (do kterého neměla Benedictová v době války přístup), a bez znalosti

japonštiny. To znamenalo studium japonské kultury prostřednictvím překladů z literatury, výstřižků z novin, filmů a nahrávek, či rozsáhlými rozhovory s Japonci, kteří žili ve Spojených státech za druhé světové války. Získané informace pak měly do značné míry vojenský význam, který měl přispět k úspěchu tehdejší americké armády. Ačkoliv sama Benedictová nepovažovala svou práci za čistě akademické dílo, její kniha měla zásadní význam pro šíření informací o Japonsku, chování Japonců a pro pochopení jejich kultury. Zajímavým momentem je rovněž fakt, že kniha dodnes vytváří prostor pro její neustálou interpretaci a reinterpretaci. Některé koncepty, které Benedictová představila, a které byly samotnými Japonci zprvu přijaty sebekriticky, byly následně revidovány a časem začaly být chápány dokonce jako pozitivní znaky odlišnosti japonské kultury.

K jakým hlavním zjištěním Benedictová dospěla? Při srovnávání japonské a americké kultury došla ke zjištění zásadní odlišnosti v kulturních vzorcích. Podle Benedictové je americký liberalismus a důraz na demokracii Japoncům cizí a naopak uvádí, že nerovnost byla zásadním rysem organizovaného života Japonců po staletí. Jako klíčový prvek v japonské kultuře Benedictová spatřuje zakořeněnost a vědomí hierarchie a řádu. *„Každý pokus o porozumění Japoncům musí začínat tím, jak chápou význam slovního spojení „zaujmout správnou pozici“. Japonská víra v řád a hierarchii a naše důvěra ve svobodu a rovnost jsou záležitosti naprosto odlišné a pro nás je obtížné docenit význam hierarchie jako jednoho z možných sociálních mechanismů. Víra v hierarchii tvoří základ japonského pojetí veškerých vztahů člověka k jiným lidem a ke státu“* (str. 64). Dle Benedictové jsou Japonci ve společnosti hierarchicky seřazeni dle svého postavení a vědomí hierarchie je u Japonců pěstováno již od raného věku. Striktní hierarchizace japonské společnosti se pak projevuje zejména ve způsobu komunikace.

Jako klíč k odhalení této hierarchizace slouží oslovování (případně klanění), které odráží postavení ve společnosti. Japonská společnost je založena na nesčetných dvoustranných vztazích nadřazenosti a podřízenosti či vztahy mezi staršími a mladšími. V japonštině existuje celá řada způsobů, jak tento hierarchický vztah vyjádřit.<sup>1</sup> Hierarchické vztahy v Japonsku jasně určují normy chování a použití nižší formy, než by bylo formálně vhodné, nemusí být tolerováno. *„Každé uvítání, každý kontakt musí naznačovat druh a stupeň sociální vzdálenosti mezi lidmi. Pokaždé, když člověk řekne jinému člověku „jez“ nebo „sedni si“, použije různá slova podle toho, zda někoho oslovuje familiárně, nebo zda hovoří k podřízenému či nadřízenému. (...) Každé takové chování se řídí přesnými pravidly a zvyky; nejenže musíme naprosto přesně vědět, kdo se ukloní komu, ale musím také vědět, jak hluboce se má člověk uklonit. Správná a vhodná poklona jednomu hostiteli bude jiným hostitelem, který je k tomu, kdo se uklání, v poněkud odlišném postavení, považována za urážku“* (str. 67–68). Obecně se dá říct, že je předem dané, jaký způsob chování je možné v té či oné situaci zvolit

<sup>1</sup> Neexistuje například pouhé oslovení „bratře“ – vždy jen „starší bratře“ či „mladší bratře.“



a v běžném styku je rovnostářství spíše něčím nežádoucím. Hierarchické vztahy určují práva a povinnosti a svět se pro Japonce jeví jasně organizovaný.<sup>2</sup>

Modelovými příklady, na kterých Benedictová demonstruje japonskou sociální hierarchii, jsou skupiny, jako je rodina nebo armáda. Co vytváří a udržuje pevnou hierarchii v rámci těchto skupin? Je to vztah jednotlivců (a skupin) mezi sebou, zejména pak vědomí o „vlastní pozici“ či zařazení. *„Na nezbytné rozhodování, jaké chování vůči druhé osobě zvolit, má vliv pohlaví, věk, rodinná pouta a předchozí vztahy s touto osobou. Dokonce i od osob na stejné hierarchické úrovni budou při různých příležitostech vyžadovány různé stupně úcty: civilista se může k dalšímu civilistovi chovat familiárně a poklony úplně vynechat, když si ale oblékne vojenskou uniformu, přítel v civilu se mu uklání. Dodržování hierarchie je umění vyžadující neustálé zvažování mnoha aspektů, z nichž některé se mohou v určité konkrétní situaci navzájem rušit a některé naopak mohou získat na váze“* (str. 68). Tato hierarchie však nemusí být vždy opresivní a například v rodině jsou děti svými rodiči milovány, avšak zároveň musí poslouchat a podřídit se. Hierarchie v interní japonské skupině zahrnuje zároveň jak ochranu, tak i podřízení se. Tento vztahový systém je pak podporovaný symbolickou představou závazku (*on*), kdy jednotlivci domněle dluží svým rodičům, předkům, komunitě, císaři a společnosti vůbec (kapitola 5). „*On*“ je dluh a musí být splacen. Tento dluh je však otázkou cti. Jak píše Benedictová (str. 120), v západní společnosti nám tento základní japonský princip, podle kterého se každý člověk už od narození automaticky stává velkým dlužníkem, chybí.<sup>3</sup>

V předchozím odstavci byl zmíněn závazek (*on*), který se dále dělí na další dva typy závazků: splácení dluhu rodičům (*kó*) a splácení závazku císaři (*čú*). Oba tyto závazky jsou povinné a „patří ke správnému způsobu života každého Japonce“. Benedictová chápala hluboký pocit závazku (*čú*) k císaři jako jeden z hlavních rysů japonského národa.

Zde je namístě přiblížit, že v Japonsku je skupina vždy považována za důležitější než jednotlivce. Každý Japonec náleží k nějaké skupině. Tato skupina je pro jednotlivce zásadní a loajalita ke skupině se dá považovat za „ctnost nade vše ostatní“. To, k jaké skupině jedinec patří, určuje i vztah k ostatním skupinám. Mezi skupinami pochopitelně panuje rivalita, přesto však mají všechny tyto soupeřící skupiny a instituce jedno společné. „Jsou japonské a patří tak do jedné velké rodiny, v jejímž čele stojí císař“ (Hendry 2004: 31).

Pomocí konceptu *čú* – tedy hlubokému závazku k císaři, který stojí v čele Japonska – Benedictová vysvětluje, proč na jednu stranu byli Japonci v průběhu války připraveni okamžitě zemřít; na druhou stranu pomocí téhož vysvětluje jak je možné, že jakmile císař promluvil, válka obratem skončila. Jak se můžeme o Japonsku dočíst

<sup>2</sup> Soukup v předmluvě této knihy zmiňuje, že v této souvislosti může být stresujícím faktorem naopak situace, v níž se musí improvizovat, jelikož Japonci v daný okamžik neumí uplatnit žádné pravidlo (str. 22).

<sup>3</sup> Vlastenectví, lásku, soucit či pomoc v západní společnosti nechápeme jako finanční, vyčíslitelný dluh ani jako něco, co si zaslouží nějakou odměnu. Benedictová v této souvislosti hovoří naopak o Japoncích tak, že svůj dluh vnímají skoro tak jako Američané platební neschopnost a sankce s nimi spojené.

v textu, „nepoužilo poslední silový prostředek západních národů: revoluci. Nepoužilo ani zarpuntlé sabotážní akce proti nepřátelské okupační armádě. Použilo svou vlastní sílu: schopnost požadovat od sebe ču mimořádného závazku absolutní kapitulace ještě předtím, než byly jejich bojové síly rozdrčené. Z pohledu Japonska si touto obrovskou splátkou koupilo něco nanejvýš cenného: právo říci, že to byl císař, kdo vydal rozkaz, i když to byl rozkaz ke kapitulaci. Dokonce i v porážce bylo ču pořád tím nejvyšším zákonem“ (str. 133).

Další vzor japonské kultury, který Benedictová v knize představuje a který se rovněž vztahuje k výše uvedenému, je koncept *giri*. Angličtina nebo čeština nemá ekvivalent pro tento výraz. V rámci kategorie morálních závazků by se dal přeložit ve smyslu sociálních povinností, avšak „pro lidi ze Západu zahrnuje seznam velmi různorodých závazků od vděčnosti za laskavost prokázanou v minulosti až po povinnost vykonat pomstu“ (str. 137). *Giri* se dá rozlišit dvěma způsoby. Za prvé, „*giri* jako úcta k sobě samému“ znamenající povinnost dbát na to, aby jméno a čest člověka nebyly pošpiněny. Za druhé, „neustále splácení *giri*“ jakožto závazek společnosti, který musí každý splatit (str. 138).<sup>1</sup> První tkví především k pochopení svého místa ve společnosti, která je již předem hierarchizovaná (to vše při zachování si cti a dobrého jména). Druhý význam *giri* je jakousi veřejnou povinností, kterou člověk musí zaplatit. Například loajalita k feudálnímu pánovi může mít za následek opuštění rodičů či obrácení se proti vlastní rodině. Avšak *giri* jakožto splátka společnosti může v konečném důsledku takový skutek odůvodnit. Ten, kdo přijme povinnost *giri* a nepodlehne svým citům je pak považován za silného. V rámci těchto oblastí je tak možné od člověka vyžadovat až protikladné druhy chování. Jak již bylo zmíněno výše, do srpna 1945 se po Japoncích vyžadovalo bojovat s nepřáteli do posledního muže. Když ale císař vyhlásil kapitulaci, změnily se požadavky a Japonci se naopak „překonávali v ochotě spolupracovat“ s Američany. V rámci tradičních západních modelů jednají lidé převážně ustáleným způsobem a tento způsob jednání pro nás může být matoucí, avšak v japonském životě jsou tyto „protiklady“ pevnou součástí pohledu na svět.

Zdaleka nejdůležitější koncepce formulovaná Benedictovou o Japonsku, která výrazně ovlivnila jak akademické, tak i populární představy o Japonsku, bylo představení a rozlišení „kultury viny“ a „kultury hanby“. Hanba a vina jsou morální emoce nebo pocity, které lidé prožívají v důsledku negativního hodnocení své osoby za chování, jež nebylo v souladu s externími sociálními požadavky či očekáváními. V kulturách viny se jedincům v průběhu socializace vštěpují vzorce chování, které podporují rozvoj svědomí. V případě porušení sociokulturních norem pak mohou prožívat špatné svědomí v důsledku prožívané viny. Ke svým selháním se mohou přiznat, odčinit je, případně si odčinit uložený trest nebo sankci. V kultuře hanby se naopak pocit viny nedostavuje. Tam, kde je hlavním trestem pocit hanby, pocítují lidé znepokojení, ze kterého se člověku úlevy nedostane. Kultury hanby se totiž opírají o vnější uznání patřičného chování a tudíž, jak píše Benedictová, „*hanba* je reakce

<sup>1</sup> V protikladu ke *giri* je termín *gimu*, které je vnímáno spíše jako naplňování soukromých závazků.

na kritiku jiných“ (str. 210). Jinými slovy, dokud selhání nevyjde najevo, neexistuje. K prožívání hanby musí mít jedinec nebo společnost publikum, které vynáší soud o prohřešku. Benedictová v tomto kontextu ztotožnila Američany s kulturou viny a Japonce s kulturou hanby.

Benedictová se zabývala i pozitivními aspekty kultury hanby s ohledem na výsledek války. Vzhledem k popsanému mechanismu hanby bylo podle ní možné, aby se poválečné Japonsko vzdalo svých představ o vlivu a jednoduše přešlo na jiný typ zahraniční politiky, založený na mírovém soužití. Tento typ „snadné“ změny Benedictová nazvala „situační etikou“ a jak píše v poslední kapitole své knihy, americká správa Japonska pod vedením generála MacArthura tuto schopnost Japonců vydat se novým směrem akceptovala a nekladla jí do cesty překážky tím, že by trvala na používání pokořujících postupů, které by jinak byly pro západní morálku kulturně přijatelné (str. 276).

Knihou *Chryzantéma a meč* se Benedictová snažila přispět k pochopení chování příslušníků poraženého národa a kulturních hodnot a vzorců, na nichž se jejich chování zakládá. Pokud něco výše zmíněné koncepty Benedictové propojuje, pak je to jakási japonská ctnost, která se váže k úsilí o zachování rovnováhy mezi závazky a povinnostmi a ke zvažování, jak bude konkrétní jednání posuzovat okolí. Chování Japonců se tak řídí, nebo lépe je ovlivněno kontextem (situační etikou), v němž musí člověk (nebo společnost) neustále balancovat a zvažovat důsledky svých činů v očích veřejnosti. Benedictová, dle mého, viděla sílu japonského národa v ochotě změnit směr, který se ukázal jako neúspěšný. Po válce japonský národ hledal novou cestu ke cti a vytouženému respektu, kterou našel ve formě mírového soužití.

Jakkoliv se Benedictová jako antropoložka snažila být nezaújatá a zachovat si kritický odstup, zejména z dnešního hlediska sociálních věd se publikace jeví značně problematičtější. Jako zdroj bližšího poznání Japonska a vzorců kultury by kniha byla nedostatečná a jen těžko bychom ji dnes mohli považovat za odpovídající nástroj k analýze současné japonské společnosti. Mezi nejčastější kritiku patří upozornění na skutečnost, že „*knihy pracuje od samého počátku s nereálnými předpoklady – vychází z existence homogenního národa a zavádí prototyp průměrného Japonce, u kterého předpokládá neměnné modelové chování v jakékoliv době a za jakýchkoliv okolností*“ (str. 292). Benedictová se na jednu stranu snaží o porozumění japonského chování, na druhé straně však vytváří pokřivený obraz japonské společnosti. Nicméně, jak v doslovu ke knize píše Jan Sýkora (str. 293), „*odhlédneme-li od kontextu doby, ve které kniha vznikala, od profesních limitů autorky a od zjevných nedostatků a nesrovnalostí, kterými je zatížena každá studie takového typu, musíme přiznat, že Ruth Benedictová sepsala knihu, jejíž argumenty lze přijmout, či odmítnout, ale v žádném případě ji nelze přehlédnout*“.

Její studie hrála klíčovou roli zejména v poválečné sociálně-vědní diskuzi o Japonsku. Celá řada prací, které se zabývaly japonskou společností (např. Chie

Nakane,<sup>2</sup> Takeo Doi,<sup>3</sup> Joy Hendry<sup>4</sup>), byly více či méně ovlivněny prací Benedictové a významně přispěly k rozvíjení diskurzu, který se zaměřuje na problematiku japonské národní a kulturní identity „*nihonjinron*“ (doslova „teorie japonskosti“). Pojetí tohoto diskurzu, který je stále aktuální, má význam pro pochopení perspektivy, jak Japonci sami sebe vnímají. Pro Japonce je sklon k sebeanalýze a zkoumání vlastní japonské povahy typický a existuje celá řada odborné i populární literatury na toto téma. I přes ostrou kritiku se kniha nakonec stala jednou z nejvlivnějších v západní antropologii a většina akademiků, kteří se dnes zabývají sociálně-vědním výzkumem o Japonsku, je s prací Benedictové konfrontována. Benedictová svou prací ovlivnila poválečný diskurz o japonské společnosti a jejím sebepojetí nato-lik, že *Chryzantéma a meč* se dá považovat za dobové paradigma při poznávání Japonska a jeho kultury.

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<sup>2</sup> NAKANE, Chie: *Japanese Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press 1970.

<sup>3</sup> DOI, Takeo: *The Anatomy of Dependence*. Tokyo: Kodansha International 1971.

<sup>4</sup> HENDRY, Joy: *Understanding Japanese society*. New York, London: Routledge 2004.

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**Slaměňíková, Tereza:**  
***Ideogramy v moderní čínštině***

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**David Uher**

Práci Terezy Slaměňíkové *Ideogramy v moderní čínštině* se bohužel zatím jen češtině znalému čtenáři do rukou dostává rozsahem snad nevelká svým obsahem však bezpochyby významná grammatologická studie. Téma práce se může zdát triviální pouze na první pohled: autorka totiž nejen že ověřuje obecně přijímané skutečnosti, kterým v odborné literatuře chybí dostatečná exemplifikace a často i argumentace, ale analyzuje současně i velké množství materiálu, který lépe ilustruje plasticitu studovaného tématu. Její význam je o to větší, že v euroamerickém badatelském prostoru není problematice písma jakožto významnému odvětví jazykovědy věnována dostatečná pozornost a obdobně nedostatečný je podle mého soudu i akademický zájem o čínské znakové písmo. Chápu jej jako neblahý následek nepochopení de Saussureho poučky, že hovorový jazyk je jednoznačně nadřazen jazyku psanému. Tento omyl ve své práci *Writing Systems* (Cambridge University Press 2003) však již nicméně dostatečně objasnil Florian Coulmas.

Organizaci práce považuji za zdařilou mimo jiné i proto, že v ní autorka zbytečně nehistorizuje: navíc, tam kde k problematice odkazuje relevantní literatura, uvádí ji, aniž by z ní sáhodlouze citovala. Jistě více než za zmínku stojí skutečnost, že teoretické části představují necelou třetinu celého textu. Jejich podstatná část je obsažena v oddíle nazvaném „Čínské znakové písmo“, kde autorka zmiňuje nejprve jeho genezi a grafiku. Za polemické se jeví zahájit výklad vývoje čínského znakového písma mytologickými představami o jeho vzniku. Na druhou stranu se jedná o pouhý jeden odstavec textu, který navíc autorka glosuje: „Existence těchto legend vypovídá bezesporu nemálo o způsobu chápání světa starých Číňanů, jakož i o významu písma při utváření tehdejší čínské společnosti“ (s. 14). Pasáž věnovaná vývoji grafiky čínského znakového písma od nápisů na kostech po reformy písma po založení ČLR sice nepřináší zásadní nové informace, na druhou stranu je v ní výklad podán přesně a zejména účelně ve vztahu k následujícímu textu, když zde autorka definuje základní grammatologické pojmy, o něž se bude ve svém dalším výkladu opírat, tj. tah, prvek a znak. Je nutno připomenout, že pramennou literaturou byly autorce primárně práce čínské proveniencie a musela tak – s úspěchem – čelit značným terminologickým obtížím. Na druhé straně autorka trpně nepřebírá z odborné literatury: mezi její studií a odbornými grammatologickými pracemi probíhá v jistém smyslu dialog. Tato část je uzavřena

definici frekvenčních kategorií čínského znakového písma. Úvodní teoretická část práce vrcholí pasáží, která již zkoumá „vztah mezi grafickými jednotkami na jedné straně a významem nebo výslovností znaků na straně druhé“ (s. 21), zabývající se kategorizací čínského znakového písma. Tato část je uvedena velice inovativním zamyšlením nad terminologií, když autorka vyděluje pojem prvek jako jednotku strukturní a termín složka jako jednotku konstrukční (s. 21). Následuje část pojednávající o nejstarší dochované kategorizaci Xu Shenově (?54–?125), která znaky čínského písma rozděluje na piktogramy, symboly, ideogramy, fonogramy, výpůjčky a variety. Velice dobře rozumím tomu, že autorka uvádí tyto kategorie nikoliv v Xu Shenově, nýbrž Ban Guově (32–92) pořadí, protože ta odráží lépe samotnou genezi čínského znakového písma. Autorka svůj výklad na rozdíl od svých předchůdců verifikuje celou řadou příkladů. Přínosem je bezpochyby i definiční ukotvení pojmu determinativ, které je v existující odborné literatuře přece jen rozkolísané užitím relevantních nikoliv však synonymních pojmů radikál, klasifikátor či klíč. Velice kladně hodnotím, že při tomto svém popisu autorka neopomněla zdůraznit především přínos qingského filologa Wang Yuna (1784–1854), jehož výrazně grammatologický výzkum bývá neprávem zastiňován lexikologickým výzkumem Duan Yucaiovým (1735–1815). Po úvodu do stěžejních klasifikačních pojmů tradiční čínské grammatologie autorka navazuje moderními klasifikačními systémy Tang Lanovými (1901–1979) a Chen Mengjiaovými (1911–1966), které jsou oba vesměs kladně hodnoceny a tedy i přijímány současnými historickými grammatology, např. Qiu Xiguiem (1935). Tato teoretická pasáž je uzavřena Su Peichengovou (1935) kategorizací (s. 35–37) inspirovanou pracemi reformátora čínského znakového písma a „otce“ čínské transkripce pinyin Zhou Youguanga (1906). Tuto první část je také možno chápat i jako úvod do relevantní literatury pro ty ze zájemců, kteří se kategorizací nejen současné podoby čínského znakového písma hodlají sami zabývat.

Následující pasáž označená jako „Východiska analýzy“ je vlastně úvodem ke korpusu (část 4) a analýze (část 5). V samotném jejím úvodu autorka správně identifikuje absenci relevantní literatury jako jeden ze stěžejních důvodů pro vznik své monografie. Odborná literatura v evropských jazycích se navíc problematikou znakového písma zabývá buď okrajově, nedostatečně nebo vysloveně diletantsky, když se spokojuje s několika vesměs triviálními příklady. Strukturované exemplifikace v práci Terezy Slaměňkové jsou mnohem komplexnější a hlavně konkrétnější. Současně autorka upozorňuje na skutečnost, že existující práce čínské provenience na toto téma s oblibou přehlíží změny, k nimž došlo v průběhu vývoje grafiky čínského znakového písma od nápisů na kostech až po reformní snahy po vzniku ČLR a s nimiž souvisejícími zásahy i do proporrčního složení jednotlivých kategorií čínského písma. Součástí této části je mj. i kritický rozbor Xu Shenovy definice ideogramů, zatímco v úvodní části autorka čtenáři předložila deskripci fenoménu ve vztahu k výzkumu ať již tradičnímu či modernímu. Neméně přínosné je představení mimo odbornou literaturu v němčině málo známého didaktického výzkumu klasifikace čínského znakového písma, jehož autorem je Andreas Guder.

Autorka následně otevírá diskusi o užití sémantických složek jako konstrukčního materiálu ideogramů, jejich motivovanosti a kombinovatelnosti složek, která je využívána jen minimálně. Úctyhodný je korpus sestavený na základě sedmi tisíc znaků *Analytického slovníku*. Protože však tento slovník hodnotí grafiku čínského znakového písma příliš diachronně, komparovala autorka informace v něm obsažené se synchronním slovníkem *Čínské znaky: snadno a rychle*, jenž je na druhou stranu příliš didaktický. Takto získala 1241 ideogramů, představujících přibližně 18% vstupů *Analytického slovníku*, z nichž vyřadila 430 znaků, které jsou ideogramy pouze diachronně: synchronně však náležejí k jiným kategoriím znaků nebo byla jejich etymologie zásahy do jejich grafiky setřena, případně je jejich etymologii komplikované zjistit, když se jedná o propria, dvojslabičné morfémy či dialektismy. Vyřazení z analýzy pro autorku nicméně neznamená nezáměr o tyto kategorie, což dokládá následující pasáž (s. 47–53), kde problematiku dále rozebírá a demonstruje ji na celé řadě příkladů.

Precizní analýza rozsáhlého materiálu tvoří úhelnou a organickou součást práce, a to včetně úspěšného pokusu o vnitřní stratifikaci fenoménu. Analýza se týká 811 znaků, které lze ze synchronního hlediska stále považovat za ideogramy. Součástí této analýzy je i výklad etymologie těchto ideogramů: takový přehled je v češtině k dispozici jen v základním tvaru v podobě *Učebnice čínských znaků* (Univerzita Palackého 2005). Zhruba 95% z nich, tj. 722 znaků, přitom tvoří ideogramy, které jsou tvořeny pouze dvěma složkami, tzv. dvousložkové ideogramy. Ostatní autorka označuje jako ideogramy vícenosložkové. Jejich úplný přehled nalezneme v příloze č. 1 (s. 114–139). Významným problémem, který se podle mého soudu podařilo autorce uspokojivě vyřešit, jsou názvy determinativů, když tato otázka zatím není uspokojivě řešena v relevantní literatuře v češtině, protože doposud nebyla provedena detailní sémantická analýza 9.353 znaků Xu Shenova *Výkladu znaků*. Mezi neméně významná autorčina zjištění patří fakt, že mezi frekvenčně méně významnými znaky ideogramů ubývá a významnou deskripci je i detailní popis frekvence složek, z nichž se ideogramy skládají i popis strategií, jak se složky v ideogramu obvykle skládají. Takových složek autorka nachází 526, což je číslo velmi blízké 540 determinativům Xu Shenova *Výkladu znaků*. Neméně zajímavé je autorčino rozdělení těchto složek na složky čistě sémantické a sémanticko-fonetické, přičemž čistě sémantických složek autorka ve svém materiálu nachází 244, což je číslo blízké počtu radikálů ve znakových slovnících čínského jazyka. Z uvedeného počtu 526 respektive 244 složek je patrné, že jejich produkční schopnosti při tvorbě nových ideogramů jsou velmi nízké. Nevyváženost celého systému navíc podporuje existence složek, které jsou využívány velmi často. Inspirativní je rovněž pasáž o prolínání ideogramů s kategorií fonogramů. Nepopíratelným přínosem je pak „Příloha 2: Vzájemné kombinace nejfrekventovanějších prvků v ideogramech“. Tato příloha má tvar tabulky realizované na přiloženém volném listu, který přehledně demonstruje kombinační možnosti šedesáti šesti nejužívanějších složek ideogramů.

Autorka předkládá čtenáři vyčerpávající synchronní analýzu druhé nejfrekventovanější kategorie čínských znaků – ideogramů. Jedná se o vysoce odbornou

práci postavenou na rozsáhlém bibliografickém materiálu, která se snaží definovat jednu ze zásadních kategorií čínských znaků nejen na základě teorie ale i celé řady příkladů. Velmi uspokojivé je zamyšlení nad motivovaností ideogramů a kombinačními možnostmi skládání složek, jenž demonstruje postavení ideogramů v rámci zbývajících tří konstrukčních typů. Celkový obraz doplňuje analýza kvalitativního složení ideogramu a míra využití kombinačního potenciálu jejich sémantických složek.



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**Švarný, Oldřich a David Uher:  
*Prozodická gramatika čínštiny.***

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**Zuzana Pospěchová**

Autory nově vyšlé publikace *Prozodická gramatika čínštiny* jsou emeritní profesor Univerzity Palackého prof. PhDr. Oldřich Švarný, CSc. a Mgr. David Uher, PhD., pedagog působící rovněž na Univerzitě Palackého. Publikace byla vydána v Olomouci Univerzitou Palackého v roce 2014. Oba autoři své odborné bádání zaměřili zejména na pole prozodie moderní hovorové čínštiny. Jak je zmíněno v úvodu knihy, prof. Švarný byl zejména duchovním otcem myšlenky na její sepsání a oba autoři na díle společně pracovali, přičemž práci bohužel přerušila smrt prof. Švarného v roce 2011.

Text *Prozodické gramatiky čínštiny* se skládá z pěti hlavních částí, které se zabývají slovními druhy, větnými členy a jejich fungováním ve větě v souvislosti s prozodií. Jednotlivé kapitoly jsou přepracovanými a upravenými verzemi kapitol obsažených v publikaci *Hovorová čínština v příkladech III* (1998) od stejných autorů. V podstatě by se dalo říci, že text *Prozodické gramatiky čínštiny* je částečně jakousi modernější a čtivější verzí textu předchozího, protože je jazykově i typograficky přizpůsoben a aktualizován.

Úvodní kapitolou je kapitola Rytmické členění věty, která shrnuje základní fakta týkající se rytmu moderní hovorové čínštiny. Jak je již zmíněno výše, jedná se o přepracovanou, upravenou a řadou poznámek doplněnou verzi stejnojmenné kapitoly z publikace *Hovorová čínština v příkladech III*, která ale navíc pracuje s příkladovými větami, na kterých ukazuje jednotlivé rytmické charakteristiky moderní hovorové čínštiny. Tyto příklady v publikaci *Prozodická gramatika čínštiny* zahrnutý nejsou, a pokud tedy bude mít čtenář zájem i o příkladové věty, může nahlédnout do *Hovorové čínštiny v příkladech III*.

V druhé kapitole Slabika – báze – slovo se autoři věnují problematice stanovení vztahu nejmenší významové jednotky jazyka (tyto jednotky jsou v evropských indoevropských flektivních jazycích označovány jako morfémy) k jednotce na vyšší úrovni, ke slovu. Autoři se zde opět snaží o aktualizaci a přiblížení textu současnému čtenáři, což se jim úspěšně daří. Text je oproti *Hovorové čínštině v příkladech III* o něco zestručněn a informace spíše rozšiřujícího charakteru jsou naopak umístěny do poznámek pod čarou, což napomáhá snazší orientaci v textu a jeho celkovému uchopení.

Ve třetí kapitole s názvem Gramatická funkční charakteristika slov jsou rozebrány jednotlivé slovní druhy, které se vyskytují ve standardní čínštině. Je zde zařazeno také pojednání o slovních druzích a jejich třídění v jiných jazycích, což je ale v takovémto rozsahu v publikaci o čínštině poněkud nadbytečné. Tato kapitola může být užitečná především pro studenty čínštiny, kteří hledají teoretické informace o slovních druzích a jejich fungování v čínštině. Velice kladně lze hodnotit zařazení několika příkladových vět u každého slovního druhu. Díky tomu je umožněna lepší představa např. o pozici slovního druhu ve větě. Rovněž je u jednotlivých slovních druhů funkčně zařazeno velké množství příkladů, které pomáhají čtenáři v ujasnění si jednotlivých slovních druhů či zejména jejich poddruhů a také někdy jemných rozdílů mezi nimi.

Čtvrtou kapitolou je Charakteristika větných členů v čínštině. Zde je obsáhle rozpracována problematika větných členů, která byla v *Hovorové čínštině v příkladech III* pouze nastíněna. Opět je hojně využíváno příkladových vět, které napomáhají pochopení fungování jednotlivých větných členů. Kladně lze také hodnotit srovnání větných členů v čínštině s větnými členy v češtině, případně popis rozdílů mezi nimi, což usnadňuje pochopení jejich funkce (zejména u takových větných členů, které v češtině nenajdeme, jako jsou například komplementy).

Poslední pátou kapitolou je kapitola s názvem Využití prozodických charakteristik. Tato se zabývá průnikem prozodie a syntaxe, tedy rytmem řeči, lineárním členěním vět, spojováním slov do více či méně složitých sledů a také přízvukovými prominencemi typickými pro jednotlivé slovní druhy charakterizované v předchozích kapitolách.

Je také nezbytné zmínit jisté specifikum této publikace: Nevyskytují se v ní čínské znaky (pouze u termínů v glosáři). V příkladech či příkladových větách je jednotně používáno vět přepsaných do latinky pomocí prozodické transkripce prof. Švarného na základě poslechové analýzy velkého množství vět hovorové čínštiny. Tato transkripce zachycuje jednak lineární segmentaci textu a jednak přízvukovou prominenci slabik. Díky tomuto je umožněno zpřístupnění textu čtenáři s nulovou nebo minimální znalostí čínštiny a jejího znakového písma. Zejména je ale také dosaženo maximálního důrazu na prozodické rysy jazyka, což je v publikaci, která se zabývá prozodií, velkým kladem. Čtenář s pokročilejší než minimální znalostí čínštiny tak může zdokonalovat svou realizaci řeči v prozodické rovině, a to právě díky prozodicky transkribovaným příkladovým větám. Zjednodušeně řečeno, příkladové věty čtenáři poskytují návod jak je správně realizovat, tedy které slabiky je nutno zdůraznit či které slabiky je možno oslabit. Publikace rovněž zahrnuje také popis zákonitostí a fungování této transkripce. Dovoluje tak opravdu všem čtenářům, včetně těch s minimální nebo žádnou jazykovou znalostí, nahlédnout do tajů prozodie moderní hovorové čínštiny.

Po pečlivém prostudování všech příkladových vět zde ale bohužel vyvstává otázka týkající se přízvukových prominencí slabik. V příkladových větách zcela chybí slabiky se zdůrazněnou prominencí. Toto neodpovídá reálnému hovorovému projevu, jehož jsou zdůrazněné prominentní slabiky nedílnou součástí. Jak sami autoři

publikace uvádějí, jednotlivé příkladové věty byly nahrány rodilým mluvčím čínštiny a podle těchto nahrávek byl pořízen přepis pomocí prozodické transkripce. Právě nahrání jednotlivých izolovaných vět a nikoliv souvislejších pasáží zřejmě způsobilo absenci slabik se zdůrazněnou prominencí, což je nedostatkem a může to způsobit zkreslené vnímání slabičných prominencí.

Sami autoři uvádějí, že *Prozodická gramatika čínštiny* je teoretickým úvodem k *Učebnímu slovníku jazyka čínského* (4 díly, Olomouc, 1998–2000), a za cíl si kladou osvětlit základní otázky morfologické, slovně druhové, funkční i syntaktické. Toho se jim úspěšně podařilo dosáhnout. Publikace tohoto zaměření na poli čínské prozodie, gramatiky a jejich syntézy dosud chyběla, a proto je její sepsání a vydání velmi vydařeným činem. Čtenář po přečtení této publikace získá základní znalosti týkající se výše uvedené problematiky a bude schopen se v ní samostatně orientovat. *Prozodická gramatika čínštiny* je zdařilým dílem, které je vhodné zejména pro začínající studenty čínštiny, kteří se snaží najít ucelený popis prozodické gramatiky, ale nejen pro ně, může se stát ceněnou pomůckou například i pro čtenáře, které zajímá prozodie čínštiny a její zákonitosti obecně. Recenzi této knihy nezbyvá než ukončit citátem prof. Švarného: „Čínština bez tónů je jako lízat čokoládu přes staniol.“

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## Slaměňíková, Tereza a Guo Yiying: *Čínská obchodní konverzace.*

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David Uher

V brněnském vydavatelství Edika vloni vyšla *Čínská obchodní konverzace* dvojice autorek Mgr. Terezy Slaměňíkové, asistentky oboru Čínská filologie Katedry asijských studií Filozofické fakulty Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci a Guo Yiying, Ph.D., čerstvé absolventky postgraduálního studia oboru Economics and Management na Univerzitě Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Publikace navazuje na pedagogickou a publikační praxi doc. PhDr. Jaromíra Vochaly, DSc., PhDr. Žu-čen Vochalové, CSc. a především prof. PhDr. Oldřicha Švarného, CSc., jemuž je kniha dedikována. Učebnice je reakcí na absenci obdobně koncipovaného učebního materiálu na českém knižním trhu. Pokrytecké přehlížení potřeb výuky čínského jazyka v posledních minimálně patnácti letech ze strany tradičních sinologických pracovišť do určité míry vysvětluje četná nedorozumění na poli česko-čínských obchodních vztahů: „Obchodní sektor přitom představuje jednu z hlavních oblastí uplatnění studentů se znalostí čínského jazyka...“ (s. 6). Projekt učebnice je současně výslednicí několikaletého pedagogického snažení obou autorek na půdě Univerzity Palackého i Univerzity T. Bati. Protože se jedná o učebnici konverzace, je určena především pokročilejším studentům moderního hovorového jazyka – „kteří si osvojili základy čínštiny za použití jakéhokoliv učebního materiálu“ (s. 6) – se zájmem o obchodní čínštinu. Jejím hlavním záměrem je rozvíjet především jejich schopnost percepcie a produkce hovorového čínského jazyka. Čínská obchodní konverzace je solidním základem těchto dovedností. Autorky učebnice našly při její kompilaci inspiraci v textu *Učebnice čínské konverzace* (Leda 2007), především v metodě výuky založené „na fixování ucelených frází za využití nahrávky a následného rozšiřování slovní zásoby za pomoci substitučních cvičení“ (s. 6). Obdobně autorky přihlížely k myšlence pevné struktury lekcí, jak je rovněž prezentována *Učebnicí čínské konverzace*.

Text učebnice tvoří osmnáct tematických celků a sedmačtyřicet lekcí, jejichž řazení odráží pořadí, v jakém se obchodní jednání obvykle odvíjí. Po základních obrazech společenského styku při osobním setkání obchodních partnerů (celky: setkání, banket a rozloučení) následuje zahájení vlastního obchodního jednání a finanční náležitosti celé transakce (poptávka, cenová nabídka, cena, objednávka, sleva, provize, platba); na realizaci výměny zboží (dodávka, přeprava, balení, pojištění, reklamace) navazuje rozvoj obchodních styků (smlouva, exkurse v továrně, obchodní zastoupení). Každá z lekcí je členěna do dvou dvojstránek: první z nich je věnována hlavnímu textu příslušné lekce a druhá cvičením. Na každé dvojstránce

přítom proti sobě stojí vždy verze v čínské transkripci pinyin a v čínských znacích. Překlady učebních textů jsou rovněž realizovány dvěma způsoby: podřádkovým, tj. doslovným překladem, který uvádí české ekvivalenty jednotlivých čínských slovíček pod transkripcí pinyin; a volný překlad pod textem v čínských znacích. Cvičení, organizovaná stejným způsobem jako hlavní text, tentokrát ovšem již bez překladu, jsou členěna do tří částí: obměňte, doplňte a odpovězte. Práci s učebnicí usnadňuje přítomnost barevné fólie. Ta umožňuje studentům podle potřeby zakrývat české ekvivalenty čínských slov v hlavních textech a správná řešení ve cvičeních. „Protože však jednotlivé lekce přímo nevyžadují osvojení předchozí látky“ (s. 6) lze k učebnici přistupovat i selektivně. Užítí transkripce i znaků ponechává studentovi možnost volby, když ke studiu hovorové čínštiny není znalost čínského znakového písma nezbytná. V závěru učebnice je zařazen slovníček, který – jak autorky správně zdůrazňují – není určen k položkovému studiu slovíček. Nejen tímto slovníčkem ale i celým textem je učebnice bezpochyby významným příspěvkem k česko-čínskému jazykovému diskursu významněji prezentovanému bohužel zatím pouze čínskými projekty, jmenovitě snad nejvýrazněji *Novým česko-čínským slovníkem* (Commercial Press 1998), který je ovšem určen spíše čínským uživatelům češtiny než českým studentům čínštiny.

I když text není určen samoukům, kladně hodnotím především přítomnost návodu „Jak používat učebnici.“ Nemenší význam má pro tento kurs přítomnost nahrávky textů a cvičení provedená v přirozené rychlosti rodilými mluvčími čínštiny. Práce s nahrávkou je v úvodu učebnice akcentována tak, aby si její uživatel uvědomil její nezbytnost při vlastním studiu. Text je ve vztahu k nahrávce „mapou“, bez níž by se její uživatel v nahrávce orientoval jen se značnými obtížemi. Nahrávka je tak vlastně úhelným kamenem, osou celého kursu, text učebnice jeho nezbytnou přílohou. Práci s nahrávkou usnadňuje skutečnost, že dialogy jsou realizovány vždy mužským a ženským hlasem, což studentu umožňuje od sebe jednotlivé repliky odlišit snáze, než kdyby byly realizovány stejným pohlavím. Je jistě škoda, že se vydavatelství nepodařilo zajistit nahrávku realizovanou mluvčími fonologického standardu moderní čínštiny, tj. pekingštiny. Na druhou stranu z vlastní zkušenosti vím, jak je v České republice obtížné takové mluvčí ke spolupráci získat. Nejen že je jich vzhledem k celkovému počtu obyvatel Číny relativně málo, ale počet vhodných informantů je dále snižován nároky na jejich věk, pohlaví, vzdělání a jazykovém prostředí, ve kterém vyrůstali. Na druhé straně by přítomnost takové nahrávky umožnila text učebnice transkribovat do prosodické transkripce čínštiny prof. Švarného, což by dále pozvedlo její již dosti vysokou úroveň a učebnice by se tak navíc stala zdrojem našeho poznání prosodických vlastností tematicky jasně zaměřeného dialogu, o nichž toho bohužel zatím víme jen velmi málo. Chvályhodná je provázanost učebnice s již existujícími českými pedagogickými projekty, především s *Úvodem do studia hovorové čínštiny* (Univerzita Palackého 2001) a čtyřsvazkovou *Hovorovou čínštinou v příkladech* (Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého 1998) prof. O. Švarného i s jeho čtyřsvazkovým *Učebním slovníkem jazyka čínského* (Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého 1998–2000), *Čínsko-českým a česko-čínským slovníkem*

(Leda 2003) doc. J. Vochaly a *Učebnici čínské konverzace*. Za největší didaktický přínos učebnice ovšem považují její dvoubarevnost a aplikovatelnost červené fólie zmíněné výše, které dále zvyšují již tak značnou praktičnost celého textu. Na druhou stranu bych velice uvítal, kdyby autorky do své učebnice zařadily pasáž „Jak dál?“. Prostřednictvím takové pasáže by bylo možno studentům poskytnout podněty k dalšímu studiu soupisem doporučené literatury a poznámkou o možnosti rozšíření slovní zásoby učebnice slovníkem doc. J. Vochaly. Zde by rovněž bylo možno čtenáře upozornit na existenci publikace *Soubor čínských termínů z ekonomiky a politiky*, která pod vedením přední české sinoložky PhDr. Zdenky Heřmanové, CSc. vznikla na Orientálním ústavu ČSAV v Praze v roce 1988. Tyto mé výhrady směřují spíše k možnostem jak vylepšit již tak dosti kvalitní učebnici v jejích dalších vydáních: jsem totiž přesvědčen o tom, že tato nová a v mnoha ohledech novátorská učební pomůcka vzbudí zasloužený zájem studentů hovorové čínštiny. Doposud měl totiž student k dispozici především učební texty postavené na primárním zvládnutí čínských znaků. Důraz na percepci a produkci mluveného jazyka však umožňuje studentovi mimo jiné podstatně zrychlit studium čínštiny, když zdůrazňuje současné trendy výuky jazyků jakožto praktického komunikačního nástroje nikoliv abstraktního teoretického modelu hloubání o jazyce.

V každém případě považuji *Čínskou obchodní konverzaci* za zásadní příspěvek k problematice výuky čínštiny v České republice pro její skutečný nikoliv pouze proklamovaný akcent na hovorový jazyk. V tomto smyslu je podle mého soudu průlomová i v širším evropském kontextu. Za podstatnou považují také přítomnost českých nikoliv japonských, německých či anglo-amerických reálií: čeští studenti se s Číňany setkávají především v našem jazykovém a kulturním prostředí a ostatně i v Číně zůstávají většinou tímto kontextem významně ovlivněni. Nepochybuji o tom, že tato učebnice nalezne své četné příznivce mezi studenty čínštiny. Současně doufám, že inspiruje kolegy sinology ke kompilaci dalších učebních pomůcek k výuce čínštiny. S rostoucím významem čínštiny jako světového jazyka a s tím souvisejícím zájmem o studium čínštiny roste i počet odborníků ovládajících tento jazyk. Množství učebních pomůcek, které vznikají, však trendu rostoucího zájmu o čínštinu kvalitativně neodpovídá. Nezřídka na pultech českých knihkupectví vidíme překlady učebnic a učebních pomůcek z velkých evropských jazyků. Ty pak našemu prostředí nevyhovují ani jazykově ani kulturně. Česká republika má přitom v didaktice čínštiny dlouhou a plodnou tradici, na níž je možné navázat. Velice inspirativní by mohla v tomto smyslu být *Učebnice čínské obchodní korespondence* případně *Obchodní čínštiny* obecně. Není ale vždy nutné vytvářet nové jazykové projekty, je přece možné diskutovat s již existujícími učebními texty například tím, že ke zpracovávané problematice bude přístupováno jinak: novou vysokoškolskou učebnici v rozměrech *Úvodu do hovorové čínštiny* (SPN 1967) by si tento stále významnější světový jazyk jistě zasloužil.