

Chapter 13

Japanese and Korean Popular Culture and Identity Politics in Taiwan



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Abstract Japanese and Korean popular culture has brought the consumer culture of the two countries to neighboring nations and greatly boosted inbound tourism. Nevertheless, the degree to which popular culture is effective as a soft power strategy remains a point of debate. This chapter empirically explores whether the Japanmania and the Korean Wave that swept Taiwan in the 1990s and 2000s respectively have changed Taiwanese perceptions of Japan and South Korea. Focusing on the media as the dominant representation of culture, I examine Taiwanese media discourses on Japan and South Korea from 1951 to 2015 in order to look at discursive continuities and changes. The findings show that, first, Japan and South Korea have been represented with very different themes. Japan has been portrayed either as the main political adversary or as a frontrunner of modernization. These two narratives are greatly influenced by Taiwan's domestic politics, which has been polarized by two opposing nationalisms. In contrast, South Korea has been framed as Taiwan's major economic competitor on the road to modernization. Therefore, media discourses on Japan and South Korea actually reflect Taiwan's struggle over identity. Second, with the onset of inflows of Japanese and Korean popular culture, extreme discourses in Taiwan regarding the two countries have also increased. In addition to positive portrayals of their popular culture and consumer culture, politically polarized discourses on Japan and discussion of economic competition against South Korea have also become dramatized. This indicates that transnational cultural flows enhance mutual understanding in some ways, but can also spur resistance. The forms of resistance may vary, depending on the local context.

Keywords Popular culture · Transnational flow · Identity politics · Japan · Korea · Taiwan

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1 Introduction

The prevalence of Japanese and Korean popular culture in East and Southeast Asian countries since the 1990s has spurred academic interest in reconstructing the concept of Asianness. The inquiries center on the process of cultural regionalization, manifested by such regular media practices as content trade, format imitation, crossover of talents, technology transfer and co-production (Jin and Lee 2007; Keane 2006). An abundant literature on such transborder cultural flows and regional cooperation finds that a common media sphere is in formation in East Asia, with distinct and identifiable patterns of cultural production, narrative, circulation, consumption and reproduction (Choi 2010; Iwabuchi 2002; Jin and Lee 2007; Keane et al. 2007). Some scholars further speculate that an East Asian identity is emerging from this new mediascape, as people in this region increasingly share a convergent media culture (Chua 2004, 2012; Katsumata 2012; Otmazgin 2011). Contrary to the rosy picture of regional integration, there has been evidence that transnational expansion of popular culture has sometimes aroused nationalistic reactions and therefore become a source of intraregional division. Well-known examples included *Kenkanryu* (anti-Korean Wave) movements in Japan and boycotts of Japanese products in China (Chua 2012). The simultaneous yet contradictory trends towards regional integration and divergence reveal the complexity of the relationships between popular cultural flows and cultural identity. A valuable and convincing analysis should take into account the context that produces, facilitates and receives those flows.

On the supply side, it should be noted that the state in East Asia, invigorated by nationalism, has played a key role in promoting inter-Asian media culture (Iwabuchi 2014). Certain countries—Japan, South Korea and China in particular—actively use popular culture as soft power to renew their national images and advance their economic, political and cultural competitiveness in the region and beyond (Daliot-bul 2009; Jin 2014; Nye and Kim 2013; Otmazgin 2008; Sun 2010). Therefore, the transborder expansion of popular culture in East Asia has never been a neutral process. Rather, this phenomenon has been promoted not only by neoliberal globalization but also by cultural or so-called “pop” nationalism (Ching 2000b; Cho 2011; Joo 2011).

On the receiving side, it has been well documented that Japanese and Korean cultural products, such as TV dramas, pop music and anime, have attracted a growing number of fans abroad and thus greatly increased the two countries’ cultural exports. Moreover, the sale of a variety of commodities associated with Japan and Korea, ranging from cosmetics, electronics, and food to fashion and tourism has also grown dramatically in several East Asian markets (Ching 1994; Chua 2012; Hu 2005; Huang 2011; Ko 2004). The commercial success of Japanese and Korean products owes a lot to popular culture shaping the images of Japan and Korea as countries that are modern, urban and in vogue (Kim 2005). Beyond fan culture (see Chua 2012) and consumer culture, how popular culture influences the general public of the receiving country is under-investigated. In particular, whether the inflow

of popular culture enhances or diminishes people's perceptions of the export country is less empirically studied.

Therefore, this chapter aims to bridge the gap and explore the relationships between media flow and cultural identity. I will examine the cultural politics associated with Japanese and Korean popular culture in Taiwan—a country that has been deeply involved in Japan-mania (*hari*) since the 1990s and the Korean Wave (*hallyu*) since the 2000s. Despite the relative popularity of Japanese and Korean popular culture in Taiwan, the Taiwanese have very different perceptions about Japan and South Korea. According to a survey conducted in 2012, of the Taiwanese interviewed, 61% said that they dislike South Korea, but almost 60% of them remained interested in buying Korean products (ETToday November 17 2012). A longitudinal survey targeting high school and university students—the key consumers of the Korean Wave—showed a similar tendency. In 2005, 18.8% of the interviewed young people said that they had a strong aversion to South Korea; that number rose to 47.4% in 2011 (Hsu 22 November 2011). In contrast, the Taiwanese in general have held a more positive view of Japan, as evidenced by their generous donations to relief efforts following the March 11 earthquake there in 2011.¹ A survey conducted in 2008 by the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, the official diplomatic agency of Japan in Taiwan, showed that Japan was the country most liked by Taiwanese. In addition, 69% of interviewed Taiwanese felt a close affinity with Japan (The Southnews 23 April 2009). Why are there such differences? How have these perceptions been formed?

Certainly, social and historical contexts matter. The survey data reveal a kind of public opinion, but they miss many nuances behind the numbers. This chapter provides a historical review of Taiwanese media representation of Japan and Korea. By looking at continuities and changes in media discourse regarding these two countries, we may better understand how people respond differently to the inflows of various foreign popular cultures and form different perceptions of the exporting countries. Media representation does not always reflect the thoughts of a society, but, as Tomlinson (1991) argues, the media is the dominant representational aspect of modern culture. This study investigates Taiwanese media portrayal of Japan and Korea in the post-war era, paying particular attention to Japan-mania in the 1990s and the Korean Wave in the 2000s. The materials for this chapter draw mainly from Taiwanese mainstream newspaper databases from 1951 to 2015, including UDNDData (from 1951) of the United Daily News Group, publisher of the *United Daily News*, KMW (from 1994) of the China Times Group, publisher of the *China Times*, as well as websites for the *Apply Daily* (from 2003) and the *Liberty Times* (from 2004).² In

¹ According to a report by Japan's *Shukan Shincho*, Taiwan donated more money to Japan than any other country in the world right after the March 11 earthquake of 2011 (The Taipei Times 17 April 2011).

² UDNDData is the electronic database of the *United Daily News* Group, and KMW is the electronic database of the China Times Group. Both databases contain the contents of several newspapers affiliated with the two groups. Until the 1990s, the *United Daily News* and the *China Times*, under the protection of the press ban, had been the most popular newspapers in terms of readership in Taiwan. The content of the *United Daily News* was in concert with government ideologies and

addition, prominent magazines in Taiwan such as *CommonWealth* and *Wealth Magazine*³ are also included.⁴

The next section briefly summarizes Taiwan's relations with Japan and South Korea, and the popular cultural inflows from the two countries to Taiwan. Then I review media discourses regarding Japan and South Korea, individually. The final section compares the discursive differences of the two countries and provides a theoretical reflection.

2 The March of Japanese and Korean Popular Culture to Taiwan

Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895 under the Treaty of Shimonoseki and was a colony of the Japanese Empire for 50 years. After World War II, the Nationalists (*Kuomintang*, or KMT) took over Taiwan in 1945 and then retreated to the island in 1949 upon their defeat in the civil war against the Communists in mainland China. Under the banner of the Republic of China (ROC), the KMT regime claimed itself to be the sole representative of China, as opposed to the People's Republic of China (PRC) across the Taiwan Strait. Due to divergent histories, Japan symbolized very different things to the newly-arrived Mainlanders and the local Taiwanese present before 1945. To the former, Japan had been a cruel invader that committed many appalling atrocities during the second Sino-Japan War between 1937 and 1945 in China. To the latter, Japan was not only a former colonizer but also a country that initiated Taiwan's modernization (Ching 2000a). Both historical contexts made the KMT government cautious of Japanese influence. The regime needed to suppress the Mainlanders' anger towards Japan in order to maintain bilateral relations. More importantly, it had to eradicate the Japanese legacy in order to legitimize its Sinicization project on the island. Therefore, the import of Japanese audiovisual products was restricted in the 1950s, and in 1974, they were completely banned in retaliation for Japan's breaking of diplomatic relations with the ROC in 1972 (Lee 2004).

Since the early 1980s, however, Japanese popular culture began to make inroads into Taiwan through various illegal avenues. For example, Japanese TV variety shows, dramas, cartoons and wrestling matches became popular through the circulation of videotapes and cable TV (Lee 2004). The consumption of Japanese

public opinions. Currently the *Liberty Times* and the *Apply Daily* lead those two newspapers in circulation. While the *United Daily News* and the *China Times* are considered friendly to China after Taiwan's democratization in the late 1980s, the *Liberty Times* and the *Apply Daily* have held an anti-China stand since they were launched.

³*CommonWealth* has been the most sustainable and prominent financial magazine in Taiwan, with a complete digital database from 1981. In addition to *CommonWealth*, other magazine articles analyzed in this chapter were downloaded from the Hyread ebook database, which includes more than 100 magazines in Taiwan.

⁴The publications originally written in Chinese are indicated in the references, and the contents were translated into English by the author.

comics, cartoons, videogames, stationary, electronics and so on also became a daily practice of Taiwanese. In 1992, the satellite channel Star TV started to broadcast trendy Japanese dramas during prime time to the Taiwanese audience, making the shows a sensation. Other networks and cable channels followed suit. Under pressure from TV stations, the Taiwan government soon lifted the ban on the import of Japanese programs (Su and Chen 2000). Although Taiwan had already been deeply influenced by Japanese popular culture, trendy dramas created a space for Japanized cultural consumption that was unprecedented. This trend was dubbed “Japan-mania” in Taiwan, referring to a desire for Japanese popular culture, commodities, lifestyle and even identity (Ko 2004; Lee 2004). This Japanese fever only gradually waned in the early 2000s, when Korean popular culture swept Taiwan. However, it should be noted that the Japanized consumer space has not subsided.

Compared to their familiarity with Japanese culture, the Taiwanese were ignorant of Korean culture before the rise of the Korean Wave in the early 2000s. Taiwan and South Korea shared some similarities in modern history: Both were colonized by Japan during the first half of the twentieth century and then controlled by authoritarian regimes for decades. In the Cold War era, the two countries stood side by side against the Communists in China and North Korea, and maintained frequent political, economic and cultural exchanges. In addition, rapid economic growth and modernization from the 1970s made these two nations, along with Hong Kong and Singapore, members of the “Four Asian Tigers.” Starting from the late 1980s, both countries went through political democratization that also impressed the world. However, in 1992, South Korea severed its diplomatic ties with Taiwan and built relations with mainland China. Afterwards, a wide range of bilateral exchanges were interrupted.

Around 1998, Korean popular culture started to appeal to the Taiwanese after some Korean pop singers and groups were introduced to the island. Nevertheless, it was TV drama that initiated the first Korean Wave in Taiwan, approximately between 2000 and 2004. During this period, Taiwan was the biggest importer of Korean TV dramas (Sung 2010). The fever peaked in 2005, when the historical drama *DaeJanggeum* hit a record-high in the TV ratings. Afterwards, Korean TV dramas remained popular in Taiwan. In 2010, Korean dramas occupied 37.9% of the broadcasting time of TV dramas on Taiwanese TV (Ministry of Culture, Taiwan 2014) and on average, 27 such programs were being broadcasted daily (Kuo 2011). Still, the Korean Wave subsided in several Asian countries. As a response, the Korean government and cultural industries invested heavily in pop music to sustain cultural influence, eyeing global markets. Taiwanese passion for Korean popular culture was also reignited by this so-called second Korean Wave or *Hallyu* 2.0 starting around 2008 and 2009 (Jin 2016; Lee 2015).

Like Japanese popular culture, the Korean Wave successfully introduced Korean products to Taiwan, such as food, cosmetics, attire, cellular phones and electronics. It also had a positive effect on film tourism. Taiwanese visitors to South Korea dropped significantly from 302,184 in 1992 to 131,392 in 1993 right after the two countries severed diplomatic relations. The number has gradually rebounded since 2000 and reached 626,694 in 2014 (Tourism Bureau, Taiwan 2017). In addition to the consumption of Korean commodities, the Taiwanese also became interested in

understanding Korean culture. In the past, Korean language classes were mainly offered by two universities with related departments. In 2003, a total of 31 universities had such classes. Outside formal training at universities, Korean classes for the general public increased from 46 in 2000 to 321 in 2009 (Kuo 2011). The Taiwanese interest in learning Korean was also demonstrated by the growth in the number of people who took the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK), from 555 in 2005 to 1537 in 2009 (Kuo 2011). Such a trend also reflects the increase in academic research on the Korean Wave. *Mass Communication Research*, a leading peer-reviewed journal on communication in Taiwan, devoted a special issue to the Korean Wave in 2015. It found that between 2001 and 2014, a total of 75 journal articles and theses on the Korean Wave had been included in a major Taiwanese academic database (Piong et al. 2015).

This historical sketch shows that Japan and South Korea meant very different things to the people of Taiwan when their popular culture greatly influenced Taiwan in the 1990s and in the 2000s, respectively. Japan was either a former colonizer or a former war adversary—both framed in political terms. South Korea, instead, was a sibling nation that resembled Taiwan in many ways. Despite South Korea's similarity with Taiwan, the Taiwanese were not so familiar with its culture as compared to Japanese culture. If Japan-mania was rooted in Japan's continuous presence in Taiwan, the Korea Wave was a sudden success, which looked more invasive.

3 Japan: A Reflection of Taiwan's Opposing Nationalisms

Various scholars have explained Taiwan's Japan-mania from the perspectives of post-colonial theory and modernity theory. Iwabuchi (2002) argues that the historical legacy of Japanese colonization overdetermined the influx of Japanese cultural products in Taiwan in the 1990s. This phenomenon happened as the temporal gaps between the two countries diminished, creating a sense of coevalness and feelings of cultural proximity. Similarly, Ko (2004) argues that the formation of Japanese consumer culture in Taiwan reveals a Taiwanese desire for a modernity that is both represented by Japanese popular culture and reminiscent of colonial history. The haunting trauma from the colonial past and the desire for present mimicry trigger a colonial complex, making Japanese cultural invasion look dangerous. Focusing also on the two desires for Japan in post-colonial Taiwan—Japanese mass cultural representations and colonialism—Ching (2000a) offers a more sophisticated explanation by adding the factor of identity politics in Taiwan. In his view, the desire for Japanese colonialism is part of the fantasy needed to construct a unique Taiwanese subjectivity against Chinese nationalism instilled by the KMT regime. This consciousness that “the Taiwanese are not Chinese” emerged from the Japanese colonial practices of assimilation and imperialization. Therefore, he argues, the Taiwanese desire for Japan should not be reduced to the psychology of colonial dependency or nostalgia. Rather, it manifests a fantasy not only to participate in the globalization of consumerist culture but also to create an independent Taiwanese

nation. Ching's explanation helps us understand the complexity of media discourses on Japan in Taiwan, a country that is divided by divergent histories, collective memories and national identities. In this regard, Japan has served as the mirror of two opposing nationalisms nurtured in Taiwan under specific historical contingencies.

After the KMT regime retreated to Taiwan in 1949, it monopolized political power by implementing martial law and setting boundaries on what could be expressed in the media. Eventual reunification of the Chinese Mainland was its core ideology (Rawnsley 2000). Therefore, discourses of mainstream media in the early period were mostly in concert with the government's ideological doctrine. My study finds that, from the 1950s to the 1960s, the news media represented Japan with ambivalent and even contradictory attitudes. Politically, Taiwan needed to secure its international recognition and legitimate its claim of "recovering China." Japan's support and military cooperation with Taiwan against the Communists were crucial to achieving this end. Therefore, the media called on Japan to resume and maintain diplomatic relations with the ROC—especially through signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951 and the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty in 1952. Still, from early on, the media worried that Japan would abandon Taiwan and build relations with the PRC. There were frequent reminders of how the ROC repaid Japan's war atrocities with kindness. Such discourse appeared more and more frequently as Japanese businesspeople and politicians became eager to trade with the PRC. Putting the trade issue aside, the media admired Japan as a model for modernization that Taiwan should follow. Contrary to promoting political and economic attachments to Japan, the media advocated de-Japanization on the cultural aspects Japan's colonial legacy in Taiwan was seen as a hindrance to the KMT's Sinicization project to consolidate Chinese nationalism. Speaking the Japanese language, singing Japanese songs and adopting Japanese names were seriously criticized as a symptom of servility and fawning over Japan. Despite this concern, the media refrained from criticizing Japan, especially regarding its war crimes.

Such self-restraint ended around 1972, when Japan severed its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The media released heavy coverage of the anti-Japan protests and boycotts on the island and abroad, and reiterated the history of Japan's "invasion" of mainland China. Japan was accused of ingratitude in contrast with the ROC's benevolence. The nationalistic tones were replete in news coverage and editorials for years. In particular, discourse on the "Eight-Year War of Resistance"—referring to the second Sino-Japan War—repeatedly appeared on certain national holidays, especially October 25 when Taiwanese celebrated the liberation of Taiwan from Japanese rule. For example, a senior editor of *the United Daily News*, pen-named Yangtzu, frequently fomented the anti-Japan sentiment in his column. His article, titled "How can we not be hostile to Japan", emphasized:

I don't have any Japanese friends. I am adamantly hostile to Japan. I analyzed myself and found that I am actually ambivalent towards Japan. I admire Japan's democratization and economic development; at the same time, I dislike Japan because of the hatred embedded in contemporary Sino-Japan history. I think such a hatred would not disappear for generations. But history can't explain it all. The Japanese people's sense of superiority and racism also anger me. (Yang 4 April 1983)

This paragraph reveals the complex feelings that Chinese nationalists in Taiwan had about Japan: resenting Japan's invasion of China (which caused the civil war that divided China) and envying its modernity. Historical conflicts between China and Japan were recurrently represented in the media, especially after a series of diplomatic frustrations of the ROC in the 1970s. Meanwhile, trade deficits with Japan, emerging from the 1950s, became a national "humiliation" that was intolerable. In other words, the economic problem was packaged into political animosity. With the public anger, the Taiwan government banned the import of more than 1500 commodities from Japan in 1980. This move, as recognized by the Taiwanese media, was futile in balancing bilateral trade but was admirable as a symbolic triumph. Despite the boycott, Japanese commodities started to flood the Taiwanese market through various legal or illegal channels. The Taiwanese addiction to Japanese goods was likened to smoking opium. The media concern centered on youth culture, worrying that the next generation would be Japanized. As early as 1984, a magazine article described young people's "Japan fever" as "appalling" (Lee 1 August 1984).

In the early 1990s, Japanese TV dramas spurred a new Japan-mania. On the one hand, the Taiwanese media were eager to cover all things Japanese and extol Japanese culture (Huang 2011). On the other hand, concerns about young people fawning over Japan continued. Media and academic attentions concentrated on the issue of cultural imperialism. The concept of post-colonialism was introduced to the discussions (Chen 2005). Taiwan's post-colonial mentality, instead of Sino-Japan history, was emphasized. In addition, political factors played a role in polarizing discourses on Japan. After the lifting of martial law in 1987, Taiwan went through dramatic changes in many regards, including political democratization, cultural localization (or Taiwanization) and media liberation. Curiously, Japan became a focus of dispute between the competing ideologies of Taiwanese nationalism and Chinese nationalism, which found their vocal representatives in different media institutions. Such polar opposites were intensified by some political controversies from the 1990s to the 2000s, such as sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, fishery conflicts, compensation for comfort women, Japan's revision of history textbooks as well as Taiwanese and Japanese politicians' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine.

It should be noted that while young people's Japan-mania could be overlooked, as they were considered ignorant of history, the fawning by the older generation was perceived as an act of betrayal by some pro-unification media. For example, in 1995, 100 years after the signing of the Shimonoseki Treaty, a parade called "Saying Goodbye to China" was held in Taipei. This event was denounced by the *United Daily News* as shameful Japanization and de-Sinicization. Its editorial harshly criticized the event, writing:

It is like the father of a family [i.e. the ROC] who was too timid and too feeble to protect his children from the bullying of an intrusive bandit [i.e. Japan]. Of course these children have the right to complain about their father. But it goes too far to treat the thief as their own father. This is a betrayal of one's own roots. (The United Daily News 18 April 1995)

Contrary to the discourse of accusing Japan as an “intrusive bandit,” some media representations praised Japan’s contribution to Taiwan, especially its economic engineering during the colonial period. Japan’s positive image was compared to the KMT’s control of Taiwan and the Communist “tyrannies” in China. An editorial in the *Apply Daily* argued that the voice of hostility toward Japan was marginal because:

Taiwan became modernized during Japanese governance. The Governors assigned by the Japanese empire in Taiwan put Taiwanese people in their heart and kept peaceful relations with the Taiwanese. Besides, Taiwan was shielded from the bitter history of China because of Japanese rule ... All these reasons explain why Taiwanese people do not hate Japanese. (The Apple Daily 26 September 2012)

These sentences over-glorify Japan’s colonialism as a way to legitimize Taiwanese nationalism in its opposition to Chinese nationalism. Therefore, Japan, a country that has been most deeply involved in Taiwan’s modern history, serves as an ambivalent signifier of domestic contentions about identity politics. The theme of modernity has been chiefly adopted by those espousing Taiwanese nationalism, but also utilized by those promoting Chinese nationalism to amplify Japan’s “arrogance” towards its Asian neighbors. Japanese popular culture as a representative of Japan’s modernity (Iwabuchi 2002) may strengthen polarized impressions of Japan and radicalize extreme discourses.

4 South Korea: Continuous Race for Economic Competition

Compared to Japan’s symbolic role in Taiwan’s identity politics, South Korea’s involvement in the construction of Taiwan’s national identity is less evident, yet equally influential. According to Kim (2005), the Korean Wave has transformed the image of South Korea, from an “impoverished country” to a country of “material brilliance” that matches the progress of Taiwan. Analyzed from the political perspective, Sung (2010) argues that the Korean Wave has improved the two countries’ relations and helped construct a new image of South Korea in Taiwan that is confident, admirable and worth emulating. The assumption is that in the past, South Korea was considered less developed in the process of modernization than Taiwan. Both scholars affirm that the Korean Wave has had positive effects on reversing this perception of South Korea and enhancing mutual understanding. Nevertheless, some scholars emphasize nationalistic reactions to the Korean Wave. For example, Yang (2008) argues that, in addition to fan discourse that focuses on fan culture, public discourse on the Korean Wave in Taiwan centers on economic nationalism and cultural nationalism against South Korea. Similarly, Liu (2015) finds an increase in anti-Korea discourses about sports events in Taiwanese newspapers in the 2000s. He further argues that such a nationalistic discourse has resulted from the competition between the two countries in terms of the national economies in general and the entertainment industry in particular.

Does the Korean Wave enhance or diminish the Taiwanese perception of South Korea? Currently, two polarized discourses on South Korea coexist in Taiwan: fan culture and hate speech. These two kinds of discourses frequently ignite vicious debates between Koreaphiles and Korea detractors. Aside from the two extreme discourses, the tone of media discourse on South Korea has been attuned to themes relating to economic competition over a long time span. Stories concerning Taiwan's economic rivalry with South Korea started to appear in Taiwanese mainstream newspapers in the 1970s and became more notable after the 2000s, the heyday of the Korean Wave.

Nevertheless, in the 1950s and 1960s, news reportage concerning South Korea focused on political issues. During that period, South Korea was in alliance with Taiwan against the Communists. The country was presented in the Taiwanese media as a "faithful friend" and a "sibling nation" who shared the same destiny as Taiwan. The comradeship of the two was said to be as strong as "iron and steel" for their commitments in fighting the common enemy. Frequent visits by top Korean officials to Taiwan were covered heavily and characterized as a sign of close bonds. Among these, South Korean President Park Chung Hee's visit in 1966 was a huge media event. An article titled "When 'Brother Nations' meet together" by the *Free China Review* emphasizes:

China [the ROC, i.e. Taiwan] and Korea are called "brother countries" by their own people. The Chinese and the Koreans are considered "brothers" because they are ethnologically akin to each other and have much in common (Liu 1 March 1966).

This article then went on to point out "many similarities" between Taiwan and South Korea, including ideographic writing, names, respect for the Confucian doctrine of filial piety, use of seals, traditional holidays and medicine. It should be noted that these similarities, according to the author, resulted from Chinese cultural influences on South Korea. In other words, South Korea was implied to be inferior to the ROC in the sibling relations.

The kind of positive reportage came to an abrupt end in 1970, when the Korean government issued a white paper that stated its ambition to become the most advanced economy among developing countries by the end of the decade. At that time, South Korea had experienced rapid economic growth, but still lagged behind Taiwan in most economic indices. An editorial in the *Economic Daily News* thus ridiculed South Korea's "unrealistic goal", while at the same time cautioning that Taiwan should speed up economic reform to secure its advantage over South Korea (The Economic Daily News 30 March 1970). Afterwards, the theme of economic competition between Taiwan and South Korea began to appear in the Taiwanese media, covering such broad issues as GDP, export, trade, industrial productivity and innovation.

As the race for the export market between the two countries intensified in the 1980s, South Korea had already been conceived of as the main economic contender to Taiwan. The media discourse followed the logic of state-led developmentalism, regarding economic development as the key policy imperative. Even the chaos caused by student movements and workers' strikes in South Korea were described

as a threat to economic prosperity and a lesson that Taiwan should learn from. Economically, South Korea was not only constructed as an imaginary enemy, but also a key point of reference. For example, in 1988, a short editorial in the *United Daily News* called on the government to “take South Korea as a model” and adopt the protectionist stand against the import of American poultry. The articles went on to ask: “If South Korea can, why can’t Taiwan?” (The United Daily News 21 March 1988). Afterwards, this interrogative sentence was frequently used in the media to such an extent that it became an idiomatic expression in common usage among Taiwanese. It should be noted that, despite the economic contest, the Taiwanese media was constrained from bashing South Korea directly, mainly for the sake of maintaining bilateral relations. In 1992, South Korea formally severed its diplomatic ties with Taiwan in order to build relations with the PRC. Having been abandoned by other allies earlier, the behavior of South Korea was seen as predictable but intolerable. The feelings of political betrayal and continuing economic competition occupied newspaper pages. In particular, South Korea’s economic progress in the 1990s was portrayed as a great threat to Taiwan. Even when South Korea was heavily struck by the financial crisis in 1997, how the country sustained these difficulties was framed as an example to learn from.

Fouger (2006) argues that in the international arena, the concept of competitiveness “only makes sense in the context of rivalry among two or more actors in supplying a product or service.” In that sense, competitiveness is always relational. Being labeled as newly industrializing countries (NICs), both South Korea and Taiwan adopted an export-orientated policy for economic growth and national development as early as the 1960s. Since then, the two countries have competed fiercely with each other for the export market, from light industrial products in the early stages to electronic products in the present. The model of NICs, characterized by developmental state, is the original prototype of what Cerny (1997) called “competition state.” With the advent of globalization, the ethos of competition state prevails, forcing different states to identify and strengthen their comparative advantages in the search for international competitiveness. Theories of competition state can inform our understanding of Taiwanese media reactions to the inflow of Korean popular culture.

At the turn of the last century, Korean popular culture began to make inroads in Taiwan. Meanwhile, economic competition between Taiwan and South Korea also entered a new stage as South Korea became a growing economic power internationally. Several “milestone” events that evidenced South Korea’s moving ahead of Taiwan hit the Taiwanese newspaper headlines. In 2000, Taiwan started to suffer a trade deficit with South Korea. In 2003, Korea’s GDP per capita exceeded that of Taiwan (see Table 13.1). In 2012, Korea advanced to being designated as a developed country, leaving Taiwan behind. In the arena of sports, South Korea has also shown great ambition. In addition to hosting the Olympic Games in 1988, Korea also hosted the Asian Games and the football World Cup Games in 2002. Therefore, the term “Korean Wave” in Taiwan refers not only to popular culture; rather, it signifies the all-inclusive power of South Korea on the global stage. In contrast, Taiwan has seemed to be losing its edge in every regard.

Table 13.1 Nominal GDP per capita of Taiwan, Japan and South Korea (selective years from 1953 to 2014)

Year	Taiwan (US\$)	Japan (US\$)	S. Korea (US\$)
1953	178	226	133
1960	163	481	158
1965	229	938	110
1970	397	1965	286
1975	985	4510	625
1980	2389	9240	1735
1985	3315	11,369	2476
1990	8216	25,015	6501
1995	13,129	42,849	12,454
2000	14,941	37,635	12,215
2003	14,120	34,009	14,606
2005	16,532	36,005	19,096
2010	19,278	43,151	22,589
2014	22,648	36,390	28,505

Source: Searching results from *AREMOS Taiwan Economic Statistics Database*. Taiwan Economic Data Center. <http://net.aremos.org.tw/>

Table 13.2 Comparisons between Taiwan and South Korea in the Taiwanese media after 2000

Issue	Index of comparison
Economic	Economic growth rate, GNP or GDP, trade performance, economic plans, economic rankings, number of FTAs signed, average wage, competitiveness of high-tech industries
Political	Government efficiency, corruption, foreign policy
Cultural	Media industries (film, TV, games, creative industries), educational expenditure, academic publication, literacy rate
Others	Sports (baseball, taekwondo), life expectancy, birthrates

As a result, worries about South Korea's increasing competitiveness have become a dominant theme in the Taiwanese media in the new century, as seen by these headlines: "Will South Korea lead Taiwan soon?", "The Koreans are here", "Taiwan is defeated by South Korea", "Taiwan should not lose to South Korea." Among various arenas of competition, economic issues are the most visible, such as the comparisons of GNP and growth rate, as well as the performance of individual industries, exports and intellectual properties. When South Korea signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with another country, the prediction that Taiwan would be marginalized took up a lot of newspaper coverage. Nevertheless, aside from economic indices, coverage of all kinds of competition between the two countries has also emerged in the media, ranging from government efficiency, expenditure on education, English test scores, numbers of research papers published in international journals and even life expectancy (see Table 13.2). With the success of Korean popular culture, Korean media industries and government policy are also seriously investigated. By using the metaphor of

the sweet potato (referring to Taiwan) and *kimchi* (referring to South Korea), the tortoise and the hare, spiked shoes and slippers, and so on, the media has aroused anxiety that Taiwan could become the loser among the four Asian Tigers, not only in the economic race, but also on various fronts. In other words, competition against South Korea has become a total war that includes a variety of battlegrounds.

For example, in 2012, one cover story in *CommonWealth*, a financial magazine, cautioned its readers with the title that South Korea's economy is: "Leaving Taiwan in the Dust, at a Price." This article begins by asking readers: "Once a poor junior cousin to Taiwan, South Korea now exports twice as much as Taiwan. Why has Taiwan fallen behind?" Then the reporters compare Taiwan's ten economic indices with those of Korea, showing that Taiwan has become an underdog (Wu and Huang 18 October 2012). Such comparisons indicate that South Korea is Taiwan's economic foe. This was frankly expressed by another magazine cover story titled, "South's Korea's global soft power: Learning from your enemy." In the beginning of this story, the reporter emphasizes that "maybe you think that Korea is the most disliked player in the global competition, but no matter whether you adore her or hate her, you can feel the omnipresence of the Korean Wave. This is a war without bloodshed ... Taiwan needs to learn from Korea" (Chen 6 January 2011). As such, the media framed South Korea as an enemy and "losing to Korea" as a national crisis (see also Yang 2008).

All of these comparisons show that Korea is the main object of emulation for Taiwan, especially after the "invasion" of the Korean Wave. The logic behind "If Korea can, why can't Taiwan?", frequently asked by the media, politicians and others, is as follows: "Taiwan's future depends on the race against Korea. It is a total war in which nothing should be left behind. It is a national humiliation to lose to Korea. The way to win is to learn from the enemy." In this way, discourse on Korea interpellates the Taiwanese to fight for their future by exceeding Korea in every aspect. The following sentences excerpted from a newspaper article, titled "Five things to learn from South Korea," are representative. It states:

Most Taiwanese have complicated emotions toward Korea. They dislike the behavior of Korean athletes and referees, but they have to admit the progress Korea has achieved. Korea's advance only shows Taiwan's backwardness. Now Korea begins to rival Japan rather than the other East Asian Tigers. Taiwan can only catch up by learning from Korea. (Chen 29 March 2010)

These sentences epitomize the collective anxiety of Taiwanese that South Korea, once an underdog, will sooner or later leave Taiwan behind. Such anxiety is not only shown in media representation but also affects reality. In 2007, then-president of Taiwan, Chen Shui-bian, had to contend in his National Day Address that Taiwan still led Korea in many economic indices. He argued, "Taiwan is no less impressive, economically speaking, than South Korea, both nations qualifying as an 'Asian tiger' in terms of overall economic performance, government finance, domestic real purchasing power, and various competitiveness rankings" (Chen 10 October 2007).

Therefore, competition, especially in the economic arena, has been the dominant discourse of Taiwanese media regarding South Korea for the past few decades. In

the beginning, it positioned South Korea as a sibling nation that was inferior to Taiwan but was comparable in many aspects. Later on, as Taiwan gradually lost its competitive edge over South Korea, the media tended to frame South Korea as both an object of imitation and an enemy to be defeated simultaneously. This kind of discourse was amplified upon the rise of the Korean Wave in the 2000s, when the Taiwanese sense of superiority over South Korea was replaced by a collective anxiety about losing the game. It seems that, at least in terms of media representation, Taiwan can only recover from such a trauma by leading South Korea again.

Why is South Korea's competitiveness over Taiwan so traumatic to the Taiwanese? And why is it so important for Taiwan to lead South Korea again? What is the symbolic meaning of South Korea to the Taiwanese? The reasonable argument is that Taiwan's political and economic similarities with South Korea make the two countries comparable in many regards. South Korea's rising power in the global stage is a sharp contrast to Taiwan's political isolation, as the country has been excluded from participating in many international affairs. The myth of the economic miracle, once the major source of national pride, is also losing its charm because of economic downturn. South Korea's outperformance has been presented as a threat to Taiwan's survival and therefore, a target of nationalism. The prevalence of Korean popular culture in Taiwan, from TV dramas to pop music, is such a reminder that Taiwan will be further marginalized in the world community.

5 Conclusion: Transnational Cultural Flow and Identity Politics

This chapter has historically reviewed Taiwanese media discourses on Japan and South Korea. It finds that (1) Japan and South Korea have been represented with very different themes—polarized political discourses regarding Japan and discourses of economic competition against South Korea, and (2) the themes have been sustained for decades, but became significant following popular cultural inflows from the two countries. Japan has always reflected Taiwan's political nationalism, albeit with different meanings. Discourses of Chinese nationalism reiterated the war atrocities of Japan in China, framing the country as the No.1 political enemy of the ROC. Discourses of Taiwanese nationalism, in contrast, cozied up to Japan in the battle against Chinese nationalists, emphasizing Japan's contributions to Taiwan's modernization. In contrast, South Korea has been evaluated via economic terms for a long time, with a focus on its economic progress and competitiveness. Japan-mania in the 1990s and the Korean Wave in the 2000s increased media curiosity about the two countries, with explosive coverage of their fan culture and consumer culture. At the same time, polarized portrayals of Japan and discourse on the economic race against South Korea also occupy press coverage. The change in media discourse cannot be attributed to popular cultural inflows alone, since other domestic and international factors also matter. However, it reminds us that the

consequences of transnational cultural flows are complicated, as far as cultural identity is concerned.

First, as Otmazgin (2007) argues, popular cultural resources are not automatically converted to diplomatic power, and “soft power can sometimes be counter-productive” (p. 75). Popular culture may rebrand a country’s image, it can also bring about some resistance. Living in the same media sphere is different from shaping a common identity. Meanwhile, we should not overstate the intensity of the resistance as a burning animosity or anti-foreign bias; rather, at least in the case of Taiwan, we can relate the resistance to domestic identity politics. Hall (1997) contends that “identity is always ... a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself.” Both Japan and South Korea, Taiwan’s closest neighbors, symbolize the Other of Taiwan. The representations of the two countries reflect Taiwan’s identity crisis: domestic identity conflicts and the anxiety for international recognition. Japan, as an ambivalent signifier, is utilized to legitimize Taiwanese or Chinese nationalism. South Korea’s growing competitiveness in the race of globalization arouses Taiwanese collective anxiety that Taiwan will be further marginalized. Therefore, the so-called anti-Japanese or anti-Korean complex in Taiwan are not always nationalistic reactions. For example, Liu (2015) considers Taiwanese anti-Korean emotions that erupted over sports events as “festival nationalism,” which is expressed as entertaining performances. Meanwhile, anti-Japanese sentiments are usually associated only with extreme Chinese nationalists rather than the general public in Taiwan.

Second, different media discourses on Japan and South Korea illustrate that local context matters in the face of foreign cultural influences. The particularity of Taiwan, as mentioned earlier, lies in its identity crisis. As a result, popular cultural flows from Japan and South Korea become sources of critical reflection within Taiwan. In addition, the historical context of East Asia also matters. Embracing the logic of competition state and linear modernization for national development, East Asian countries compete with each other for the progress of modernity. Japan has long been positioned by the Taiwanese as the frontrunner in terms of modernity in East Asia. Taiwanese nationalist discourse tends to venerate Japan’s modernity, while Chinese nationalist discourse regards Japan’s progress in modernization as a humiliation. Modernity represented in Japanese popular culture (Iwabuchi 2002; Ko 2004) is a reminder that Japan’s leading role in East Asian modernization is uncontested. In contrast, South Korea has been framed as the chief competitor to Taiwan as it marches toward modernization, owing to the similarity between the two nations. Therefore, the race against South Korea has been set as the key tone in media discourse. As South Korea caught up or even outpaced Taiwan in competition, the media has overemphasized South Korea’s threat to Taiwan, including the rise of its popular culture. Discourse of modernization focuses on national competitiveness and disregards other important aspects of people’s lives. Popular culture, utilized as a soft power strategy and facilitated by cultural nationalism (Ching 2000a; Cho 2011; Iwabuchi 2014; Joo 2011), also follows this logic of national competitiveness. This may also be a hindrance to mutual understanding in the context of East Asia.

Undoubtedly, transnational popular cultural flow is strengthening and clarifying the concept of East Asianness, as people in this region increasingly enjoy a convergent yet distinct media culture. Nevertheless, we should not exaggerate the cultural influences of this East Asian media sphere, as audience studies may rush to relate popular cultural flows to regional identity. Nor should we rush to conclude that non-audiences are immune from such regional media flows. This chapter is an endeavor to find a middle ground between the two perspectives by examining public opinions as represented in Taiwanese media. The findings show that Taiwanese respond to Japanese and Korean popular cultural inflows differently due to the identity politics of Taiwan and the country's historical relations with Japan and South Korea. This result indicates that the relationships between transnational cultural flows and cultural identity are not that straightforward. Exchanges of popular culture do not always bring about mutual understanding, neither do they necessarily lead to resistance. The heterogeneous consequences heavily depend on the historical and social context. A deeper understanding of the complexity of this issue is called for, as well as more empirical case studies on other Asian countries being conducted in the future.

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