

A new trial about the 'Korean-Wave' over the glocalisation :The approaches of case study that SM Enterment made 'Korean-Wave Star'

Soo-Jung Kim / University of Incheon, Korea

Extended Abstract

This study is on 'Korean-Wave' which is appeared by culture phenomenon of globalization flow and investigated the limit and a possibility from production process of the cultural product which limits in the Korean pop music advances to Asia. 'Korean-Wave' retains aspect that is Asia culture exchange of Asian as an example of 'globalization of culture' that pass over boundary of the country.

But globalization can't give a full detail of 'Korean-Wave'. The 'Korean-wave' signifies a new pattern of cultural flow, cultural hybridity in the glocalizing late capitalism. It is obvious that the 'Korean-Wave' is becoming an impressive aspect of cultural production, cultural flow and cultural consumption in Asia. Much more specifically, it tries to see of cultural contents launched by Korea into its neighboring Asian countries. As beginning to look for Asian cultural identity on Asian's eye, not viewpoint which see in Western cultural standard. 'Korean-wave' is becoming opportunity that know Asia neighborhood as being connected by Korea sightseeing. Dozens of research have been done regarding the 'Korean-Wave' such as 'Cultural Imperialism' that have been done criticising global cultural assimilated phenomenon by Western cultural rule. But there still remain many significant questions as unanswered. Because of audiences enjoying other Asian country's popular culture find various differences including cultural values and have opportunities to experience self-reflection about their culture and other's cultures as well as becoming interested in other societies and cultures.

The theoretical background of this study is to understand the nature of popular culture texts and reception in East Asia. In 1990, Appadurai wrote that the world has been a congeries of large scale interactions for many centuries, yet "today's world involved interactions of a new order and intensity." Cultural transactions between social groups in the past have generally been restricted, but now, an Asians are experiencing in everyday life, fundamental changes are taking place in the cultural topography due to the globalization of the market, high technology, and various cultural flows.

Iwabuchi(2000) took the issue of the increasing intra-regional flows of popular culture in East

Asia Culture Forum 2006 / 1

Asian context and argued that "the experience of the forced appropriation of Western modernities in the non-West has produced various kinds of vernacular modernities in the world which, through clearly marked by Western influence, are never replica of Western modernity through an ongoing act of cultural mixing and hybridization." Recent global cultural economy have definitely encouraged an intra-regional cultural flow and apparently weakened the direct dominance of Western culture. So then we have to account for 'Korean-Wave' finally achieved their own brand of modernities through accumulated modern experience.

Also, 'Korean-wave' has meaning inside that recognized culture is possible to become goods and accomplish export of cultural product in cultural industry. Like this the 'Korean-wave' achieved main stream at cultural flow of East Asia. Naturally this viewpoint has a many problem. Nevertheless 'Korean-Wave' is under three discussion that traditional 'culture imperialism', value naturally 'to maintain friendly relations with Asia nation', 'cultural industry by economic paradigm'. But these viewpoints cannot account for 'Korean-Wave' understand each other through cultural exchange among inter-Asian audience. This study investigated which is accommodated culture and cultural product of 'Korean-Wave Star' in two viewpoints as 'circuit of culture'. The popular cultural flow and increased cultural interactions provided an opportunity for residents of non-Western societies of entered a phase in which they measure their modernities based on their shared and similar experienced.

The 'Korean-Wave' phenomenon begun slowly 1998 appears in Korean pop field. The "Korean-Wave" is being commonly used to indicate a boom of Korean pop culture in East Asia area. The term was first used by Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Korea when it planned and produced a CD with neighboring countries in 1999. Its title in English was Korean pop music, while its Chinese version was 'Hanryu(韓流)-Song from Korea.' The term has gained wide popularity since the Chinese newspapers represented the success by Clone in November 1999 and H.O.T. in February, 2000. It is therefore not a simplification to say that the Korean-Wave did not mean anything more than the popularity of Korean pop music at its beginning stage. Actually an early stage of 'Korean-Wave', Korean pop music compared to Korean television drama, Korean television drama spreaded out widely. The Korean television dramas gaining national attention in China for the first time might be <What is the love>, which it ended, by the Chinese channel of CCTV in 1997. The success of Korean television dramas has contained since, also in other Asian countries. The 'Korean-Wave' is widening its scale broadly into Southeastern Asian countries including Vietnam, Philippine, Thailand and Malaysia.

Since then Young dance music groups such as Clone and H.O.T. ignited the 'Korean-Wave' in China in 1999, followed by BabyVox and NRG. Various radio stations in China began to make a program specializing K-pop. At least 50 different CD's by Korean singers were produced in China, and more than Three million CD's in total were believed to be sold by 2002. Also BoA

Asia Culture Forum 2006 / 2

gained popular favor in Japan in 2001.

The aim of this study is to understand the phenomenon of transnational capitalists' appropriation make use of 'Korean-Wave'. In the concretely the approaches of case that SM Entertainment made 'Korean-Wave Star'. Also, this study tries to answer 'Korean-Wave' get rid of nationalism. SM Entertainment have a star-system native to SM Entertainment. The SM Entertainment's system is composed of capitalism and culture technology. Culture technology is based on transnational cultural exchange. Nevertheless, Culture technology make it a rule to look after SM Entertainment's own interest with no thought of nation ideology. Therefore this study searched the role of the 'Korean-Wave' communicated inter Asian audiences or appeared the globalization phenomenon through interpreting SM Entertainment's 'Korean-Wave Star' making process.

SM Entertainment is a major producer of Korean pop music that was founded by Lee Soo Man, and is also the management agency of several Korean pop stars. Initially "SM" was an abbreviation of the label founder's name, Soo Man, but now it stands for Star Museum Entert, alluding to the popularity of SM Entertainment's singers in South Korea. The company's current CEO is Kim Youngmin. SM Entertainment also co-publishes avex trax releases for Japanese artists such as Ayumi Hamasaki, Namie Amuro and Kumi Koda.

Lee Soo Man, the founder of SM Entertainment, started out by surveying teenage girls what they wanted to see in music groups. With this information, he started the boy band H.O.T. and girl group S.E.S. Strongly successful from the beginning, both groups managed to become two of the top Korean pop groups of the 1990s.

During Summer 2006 to Fall 2006, SM Entertainment had gone around North America for auditions, in search of more asian talents. Some talents they are looking for included Singers,Directers/screenwriters, Dancers, actors, Modelling and DJ's.

Boa Kwon(Kwon Boa, born November 5, 1986 in Kyunggi-Do, South Korea) is an iconic Korean singer who is better known by her artistic name BoA (Beat of Angel). She has released albums in both South Korea and Japan. SM Entertainment, has positioned her to become a cross-cultural idol for all of Asia. She has released nine full-length albums, three mini-albums, two compilation albums, two remix albums, and over thirty singles in Japan and South Korea. Her albums have also been released as "overseas versions" throughout Asia and her total record sales are quickly approaching the ten million mark. BoA broke records in both Korea and Japan with her top songs, No. 1, Valenti, and Listen to My Heart. She has also made strides in music and acting with chart-breaking albums released in both Japanese and Korean. BoA's first language is Korean, but she also speaks fluent Japanese and conversational English, and is also learning Mandarin Chinese. BoA has re-recorded her more popular songs in Mandarin and has composed and written lyrics for several of her songs. Today, BoA is considered one of the most

Asia Culture Forum 2006 / 3

popular pop artists in both Korea and Japan, and is one of the leading stars of the Korean-Wave. She has been credited as helping establish and improve relations between Japan and Korea, where tensions have traditionally existed. She is recognized as the "Queen of Asia" by fans across the globe. BoA has re-signed an extended contract with SM Entertainment until 2012 for which she will receive 100,000 shares of SM Entertainment.

TVXQ(Tong Vfang Xien Qi) is a Korean boy band. This group is composed of five male members specializing in the areas of dance, A cappella, various drama acting, and pop with an R&B vibe. The group has gained popularity in Japan, Taiwan, China, and other East-Asian countries. Today, it has become one of Asia's most influential pop groups, and is one of the top groups of the Korean Wave. TVXQ, their international and official name, is written in Chinese as '(東方神起)' and is also referred to by various other names. Its Korean title is Dong Bang Shin Gi '(동방신기)', which is abbreviated to DBSK(or DBSG). The Japanese equivalent is Tōhōshinki, which is abbreviated to THSK. The group debuted in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and China throughout 2004. The Korean phrase “Dong Bang Shin Ki” translates almost literally into “Rising Gods of the East.” This five-man dance team came into being after an audition in 2004. The contestants of the audition were divided into groups of their peers and received training to find potential talents. All the members of TVXQ were originally the lead vocals of other singing groups.

Super Junior is a 13 member K-pop boy band. The group first debuted with 12 members on November 5, 2005 with their first single, Twins. The original 12 members, in age order (from oldest to youngest), were LeeTeuk(the leader), Heechul, Hankyung, YehSung, KangIn, ShinDong, SungMin, EunHyuk, DongHae, Choi Si Won, RyeoWook, and KiBum. At their debut, eleven of these members were Korean and one was Chinese. The Chinese member, Hankyung, was picked through auditions held in China by SM Entertainment in 2001. Many of the members had already made a name for themselves prior to Super Junior's debut through acting, VJ-ing, and modeling. On May 23, 2006 SM Entertainment announced the addition of a new member, Cho KyuHyun, making them the 13 member group they are today. Even before their official debut, Super Junior was a hot topic over the internet through pre-debut. News broke about SM Entertainment's unprecedented plans of forming a large 12 member group. Rumors about the identity of the members as well as the group's name circulated for months. For awhile, many speculated that they were going to be known as "Common Ground." Another speculation claimed that the band was going to be called "O.V.E.R"(Obey the Voice for Each Rhythm). Before officially debuting as a group, they had already made appearances on television via acting, VJing on music programs, or modeling. Some of the members still continue to do so today, such as Choi Si Won and Hee Chul, who are active in dramas and movies.

Zhang Li-Yin(Korean pronounced Jang Li Yin, and Jang Ri-In) is the first Chinese solo singer

Asia Culture Forum 2006 / 4

to break into the Korean music industry, and currently the only. Discovered after Beijing partners informed the head of SM Entertainment, Zhang Li-Yin started training in 2003 at the age of 13. Zhang's debut single was released three years later on September 8, entitled Timeless. The single was a duet with Kim Jun-Su(also known as Xiah), from a popular boy band TVXQ. Subject to much publicity, Zhang Li-Yin has been nicknamed the "Chinese BoA" much prior to her stage debut. She is fluent in Korean, and has no problems with pronunciation and communicating with fans.

SM Entertainment made 'Korean-Wave Star(in cultural pop field)' have a specific character which is account for a stage of 'Korean-Wave'. The first stage is BoA. This stage is localization strategy which localized Korean pop star in production phase. The second stage are TVXQ and Super Junior. These groups contain Chinese member are healed 'The anti-Korean-Wave'. The Third stage is Zhang Li-Yin. This stage indigenization strategy which is local singer to break into the Korean music industry, and currently the only.

To conclude, the Korean-Wave is to be understood within the Asian contexts of cultural production, distribution, consumption as well as fandom. But cultural industry and capitalism being affected the field of audience.

Key words: Korean-Wave, Korean-Wave Star, globalization, SM Entertainment, inter-Asian culture, making process