

# The Shaping and Communication of National Image by Korean Film and Television

Ning Wang\* · Jinling Wang\*\*

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## [요약]

Korean movies and TV shows have been widely distributed in the international market and have played an important role in shaping the national image of Korea. In this paper, we found that the factors of “actor’s image” and “background music and images” among the popular factors of Korean dramas have a positive influence on shaping the national image of Korea through questionnaires and spss tools. At the same time, the study also hopes to analyze the reasons for the success of Korean film and television productions to explore their useful value for the international communication of Chinese film and television productions.

**주제어:** Korea, Korean film and television, national image, international communication

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\* Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Master, 제1저자

\*\* the Department of Advertising at the School of Arts, Anhui University of Finance and Economics. a associate professor, 교신저자, jinlingwangty@sina.com.

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## I . Introduction

### 1. Background of the study

International relations scientist Liu Jinnan believes that national image refers to the comprehensive evaluation and overall impression of other countries, including individuals, organizations and governments, about the country. As an important carrier of international communication, film and television works have an unparalleled and important role in shaping the image of the country and enhancing the international influence of the country. According to the data released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Korea, the scale of Korea's cultural industry has reached 7.258 billion won as early as 2018, accounting for about 6.2% of the GDP in that year, which indicates that Korea has become a veritable cultural powerhouse. While Korean films and TV have gained a large number of fans overseas, they have also become an important window for overseas audiences to understand and recognize Korea's national image. At the same time, Korea is also using Korean films and TV productions to shape its national image in political, economic and cultural aspects and to enrich its cultural communication abroad.

### 2. Current status of research

A search on China Knowledge Network using the keyword "Korean film and television" reveals that academic studies on Korean dramas mainly focus on the dissemination of Korean dramas, the causes of their popularity, characterization, narrative, audience, artistic appeal, aesthetics, and comparison between Chinese and Korean dramas. Among the academic papers on Korean dramas, the master's thesis "Research on the Internet Communication of Korean Idol Dramas in China" (Mao Huiyin) introduces the current situation of Korean idol dramas in China, the characteristics and value performance of online communication; "Research on the Causes of Korean Youth Idol Dramas Popular in China for Twenty Years" (Zhu Hongyan) sorts out the programs and innovations of Korean dramas and audience

consumption; “Interactive Research on Korean Film and Television Industry and National Cultural Communication Strategy (Hao Tong Xu) presents the development of Korean film and television with policy support.

These research results either directly explain the basic artistic qualities of Korean dramas or analyze the specific causes of the success of Korean dramas in foreign communication, but do not directly explore how Korean dramas shape Korea’s own national image, which is the starting point for this paper to discuss the shaping of Korean dramas’ national image.

### **3. Research Methods**

#### **1) Literature analysis method**

We collected theoretical literature on culture, psychology, communication and other related disciplines for research, and found the popular elements and audience psychology of Korean movies and TV by compiling literature on the reasons for the popularity of Korean dramas.

#### **2) Case study method**

We selected representative Korean TV dramas and analyzed the reasons for their success after broadcast by combining them with theories related to communication science.

#### **3) Questionnaire survey method**

We obtained data about the popularity factors of Korean movies and TV shows through questionnaire surveys, and used Windows SPSS 17.0 as an analysis tool to conduct factor analysis of the influencing factors and explore the influence of the popularity factors of Korean dramas on shaping and spreading the image of Korean nation through multiple linear regression analysis.

## II. Studies related to the image of the country

### 1. The concept of national image

Regarding the concept of image, it has been defined by many scholars before. Lewis and Briger (2000) stated that image (image) is the content stored in people's memory, which is the content that synthesizes the information experienced by the object and visualizes the information. The impact of perceptual information, such as images, is greater when it is formed through personal experience or contact between people. [Kotler (1991) states that images are formed by the emotions and opinions of the object, as well as by the internal characteristics of the individual, including visual and personal awareness.

In previous studies, several researchers have defined "national image". Nagashima (1970) defines "country image" as the impression that the public or companies give to the products of a particular country. This is formed by a combination of the product representing the country, a specific economic and political environment, history, and traditional culture. The results of the definition of "national image" are organized in the following table.

<Table 1> Definition of "national image"

Scholars	Country Image
Nagashima (1970)	Assigning a picture, a reputation, a stereotype to a specific national product
Narayana (1981)	Comprehensive and implicit consumer awareness of specific countries or country-specific products
Han (1989)	For consumers' perception of foreign brands, the "national image" of the country of origin plays a halo role
Martin & Eroglu (1993)	Synthesis of technology, inferences, and information possessed by a given country
Knight & Sprang (1995)	Beliefs and attitudes of the average consumer towards the products of a particular country
Ian & Gerard (2000)	Buying determinants formed by multifaceted elements of the product and its country's economy, politics, history, etc.

In general, “national image” refers to the public’s inherent impression and perception of the country’s characteristics, economic and political background, history, and traditional culture. Korean films and TV works are able to convey to viewers in vivid detail the richness of Korea’s history and culture, its social landscape, and its economic situation, thus implicitly shaping the public’s cognitive construction of Korea’s national image.

## 2. Country Image Dimension

“Country image” can be defined as the subjective stereotypical influence and perception of viewers through the combination of multiple messages and experiences with a specific country as an object. Many scholars have proved that “country image” is a subjective image of viewers and has a very important impact on the construction of a country’s image. The factors of “national image” determination are divided into three dimensions: political and economic image, national image, and product image. Based on the questionnaire items proposed by Parameswaran and Yapark (1987) and with reference to Han (1993), Nagashima (1970), Hall (1986), Klein et al. (1998), Hulland (1999), Clark. F (2000), Knight and Calantone (2000) and other scholars’ “national image” research scales, we designed the following dimensional scales.

<Table 2> Dimensional scale of “national image“ of Korea

Korea National Image Dimension	Title item	Reference Sources
Political and Economic Image	Korea is a rich country	Parameswaran and Yapar (1987) `
	Korea is a developed country in terms of economy	
	Korean companies are competitive in the world market	
	Korea is a friendly country to China	
National image	Korea and China are not in competition, but in cooperation	Han (1993) `Nagashima (1970) `Hall (1986) `Klein (1998) `Hulland (1999) , Clark.F (2000) `Knight and Calantone (2000)
	Korea is an excellent country	
	Koreans are highly educated	
	High level of education of Koreans	
	Koreans are decent	
	Korean people are very kind	
Product Image	Koreans are friendly to China	Knight and Calantone (2000)
	Excellent technology for Korean products	
	Excellent product design in Korea	
	Korean products of high quality	
	Excellent after-sales service for Korean products	
	Cost-effective Korean products	

### 3. Research on the current state of Korea's national image

There has been an increasing number of studies on the image of Korea within China in recent years. Liu Fei (2008) analyzed Korean content in People's Daily, China Youth Daily and Xinmin Evening News. His study found that Korea has more exposure in Chinese mainstream media than some older Western countries. In her master's thesis, Miao Hongguo (2013) concluded that the presentation of Korean national image has been evolving and changing with the development of the relationship between China and Korea, and that Chinese people's evaluation of Korean national image has been gradually improving as the influence of Korean film and television works has further increased in recent years. In addition, Chen Hongyu (2016) points out that with the prevalence of Korean film and television works, "cultural Korea", "Korean Wave", and the beautiful and romantic country have gradually become labels for the public's perception of Korea. Shin, Lizhu (2012) mentioned in "An Analysis of Cross-cultural Communication of Korean Film and Television Works" that film and television dramas can be used as a tool to promote the country's image, and they can not only promote the country, but also eliminate the prejudiced ideas of some countries about the country.

In Korea, many scholars have also studied the content related to the national image of Korea. In his research paper, Li Xiufeng (1999) summarized the relationship between national image and consumers' purchase intention. When consumers have no prior knowledge about the product they are buying, the image of the producing country becomes an important indicator that influences consumers' evaluation of the product. An Zhongshuo (2005) did a study on Korean national image and Korean brand attitudes with Chinese consumers, and he concluded that there is a certain causal relationship between the elements that constitute national image, and in addition there is a positive influence of national image on public awareness of certain specific products, i.e. the better the awareness of national image, the better the attitude toward product brand awareness.

### **III. Korean Film and Television and National Image**

#### **1. Film and Television Products and National Image**

In today's world of mass media and international exchange of mass cultural goods, this "mass communication effect" is receiving more and more attention at the level of "national image" formation and change. In particular, film and television products such as TV dramas can lead viewers to construct social reality and thus influence their perceptions and judgments of specific objects (Jin Zaihui, Li Xicheng, 2017). Therefore, many scholars have paid attention to the relationship between film and television products and "national image". In a study conducted by Liu Guangzong, Jin Xuanqi (2005) on foreign images in Japanese TV commercials, it was shown that by watching commercials with foreign images, viewers have friendly impressions of the countries in the commercials. evaluation has a close relationship.

In a study on the current state of Taiwanese acceptance of Korean dramas, it was shown that viewers are influenced by mass transmissions when forming impressions of specific objects. In fact, many scholars have emphasized the importance of mass media in shaping the image of a foreign country, and Rilley and Doren (1992) suggest that film and television products such as dramas and movies have a strong impact on potential consumers and can change their perceptions and images of a destination. They argue that this has the advantage of longer exposure and presentation to the general public than traditional methods of tourism promotion, and that the effect of film and television products in cultural products is particularly significant. Films and television series, in particular, can have a significant impact on potential consumers' perception of the image of a particular location.

#### **2. Status of Korean film and television products exported to foreign countries**

After the 1990s, thanks to the support of the Korean policy system, Korean film and television culture developed rapidly. According to Liu Hong (2017), Korean film and television products are exported not only in Asia, but also in Africa and North

America. And the export volume is large, from only \$8 million export in 2001 to \$270 million in 2014. Due to the limited domestic market in Korea, the Korean government decided to focus on China and Japan as the key cultural exporting countries when promoting the development of film and television cultural industry, after which in continuously radiating to the rest of the world, Korea has now become the fastest growing country in the world in terms of export value of film and television cultural trade. [13] China started its reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, and the market for Chinese cultural products expanded rapidly. At the same time, the demand for overseas popular culture is also increasing, and after 1990, Korean films, TV dramas, music and other cultural products are slowly coming within the Chinese market, and more and more Chinese consumers are beginning to enjoy Korean cultural products. Korean popular culture and cultural goods have expanded in China to include Korean dramas, movies, popular music, cartoons, sports, food, fashion, beauty, computer games, and many other fields, of which this study focuses on the impact of film and television products.

The following table shows the 2018 Cultural Industry Statistical Survey Report sponsored by the Korea Culture, Sports and Tourism Agency. The report shows the status of domestic imports of Korean cultural and film goods in China from 2015 to 2017. Because of political ties, the report shows an overall shrinking domestic market for Korean cultural goods in China.

<Table 3> Import statistics of Korean cultural products within China

Imports (unit:thousand dollars)		2015	2016	2017	Year-on-year increase/decrease rate (%)	Average annual rate of increase or decrease (%)
TV Programs	Taiwan	21.820	22.742	33.532	47.4	24.0
	Hong Kong	11.119	15.776	21.328	35.3	38.6
	Continental	52.583	78.179	13.555	82.7	49.2
Movies	Taiwan	1.726	3.932	3.327	15.4	38.8
	Hong Kong	1.968	4.406	1.234	72.0	20.8
	Continental	9.253	7.038	3.172	54.9	41.5
Animation	China	2.162	1.825	2.188	19.9	0.6



### 3. Chinese People's Evaluation of Korean Film and TV Products

With regard to the Chinese people's evaluation of Korean film and television products, a number of scholars have also studied them. The results of the Chinese people's evaluation of Korean film and television products are generally manifested in the following aspects. China's Beijing Times has explained the reasons why Korean film and TV products are popular among the Chinese as follows. First, it gives viewers a freshness never seen in Japanese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese TV dramas; second, the Asian way of thinking, emotional expressions and similar characters gain the viewers' recognition; third, the commercial elements of the U.S. and Japan are more ably expressed; and fourth, the attractive characters' appearance, costumes and filming techniques. Not only that, although the Korean way of life is influenced by the West, Korean dramas transform Western culture into Eastern culture, so they are more easily accepted by Chinese viewers. Plus, the reason for attracting Chinese viewers is because Korean actors fully show the oriental values and urban life in their movies or dramas (Korea Cultural and Political Development Association, 2001). The following is a compilation of positive reviews about Korean dramas in China.

<Table 4> Positive evaluation of Korean dramas

Provenance	Evaluation
Zhang Hongjie, Asia Weekly (2001.06.24)	Korean Wave may seem like a new trend on the surface, but there is a conservative simplicity, morality that comes from Eastern culture, and a humanistic tradition that is beneficial to society. At the same time, it is both healthy and natural, and there is no exaggeration.
People's Daily (2001.11.04)	The success of Hallyu is due to its deep concern for society and life, as well as its true satire of the world and its taste for life.
Qin Mingxin, International Department, Central Broadcasting Station (2005.10.17)	Korean dramas were chosen because of their attractive plots, simple and beautiful images, content that appealed to Chinese audiences, and low prices.
Liu Yeyuan, Professor, Communication University of China (2011.02.07)	Korean dramas feature the emotions, love and happiness of a family, showing the warmth and humanity of a family. These atmospheres will touch the hearts of Chinese viewers.

Guangming Daily (2017.07.07)

The biggest reason for Chinese viewers to enjoy Korean dramas is a sense of empathy and nostalgia for traditional rituals. This familiar and unfamiliar drama has a much wider audience than the completely unfamiliar European and American dramas.

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## IV. Research on the popularity factors of Korean dramas and their influence

### 1. Research Description

#### 1) Variables and Scale Settings

First, in analyzing the variables of Korean drama popularity factors, this study drew on the scale used by Kong & An (2012) and adapted it to finalize 12 question items after content screening. Also, the Likert 7-point scale was used for rating, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 7 indicates strong agreement, and as the number goes up, it indicates a higher level of agreement.

Secondly, in measuring the variables of national image, this paper draws on the study of Liu, Park & Hwang (2014) and also adjusts it to determine 20 items, which are also measured using the Likert 7-point scale. In the reliability analysis of the country image scale, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient value was 0.853. It can be seen that the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values were all greater than 0.80, indicating that the reliability was feasible.

#### 2) Data Collection

With a population of more than 50 million people, Korea's local market is limited, so Korea has been committed to expanding its overseas market, and China, with its vast territory and large population, as well as the cultural commonality between China and Korea, has made China one of the largest markets for the overseas expansion of

Korean film and television products. In terms of sample identity definition, considering that college students are active, receptive to new things, sensitive to fashion trends, and have a high frequency of receiving Korean movies and TV, this data is based on college students in the author's province as the research object.

The study was conducted in Anhui province colleges and universities in the form of online distribution, a total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, 287 questionnaires were collected, 20 questionnaires with incomplete answers and incorrect data were excluded, and 265 questionnaires were finally valid, with a valid recovery rate of 88.3%. By collating the valid questionnaires, it was found that 112 (42.3%) male students and 153 (57.7%) female students were surveyed in the sample.

## 2. Research results

### 1) Analysis of the factors of popularity of Korean dramas

The factors of Korean drama popularity factors were analyzed by removing the 12 variables with a common variance of less than 0.5 or a factor loading of less than 0.5 from the identified Kong & An (2012) scale. By removing 4 variables such as "unique expression of Korean dramas" and "content of Korean dramas is close to daily life", and conducting Bartlett's spherical test on the remaining 8 variables, the results showed that the  $X^2$  value was 409.830 ( $df=28$ ), with a significance level of 0.000 and a KMO value of 0.825, indicating that the variables were suitable for factor analysis. Then, using the principal component analysis method, the initial matrix was orthogonally rotated with great variance (Varimax), and the three factors extracted according to the author's setting of the previous study, the cumulative variance contribution was 74.162%, and the factor loadings were all above 0.60 (as shown in Table 4-1), so each question item of the independent variable had high construct validity.

In this paper, factor 1 is named "actor image", factor 2 is named "background music and picture", and factor 3 is named "plot content". As shown in Table 4-1, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the three factors are 0.796, 0.748, and 0.765, respectively, which are higher than the critical value of 0.7 proposed by Nunally (1978), showing that the factors have good internal consistency. Thus, the factors of

popularity of Korean dramas include “actor image”, “background music and images”, and “plot content”, among which “actor image” is the most influential.

<Table 5> Factor analysis and reliability results of the reasons for the popularity of Korean dramas

Factor analysis results								
District Distinction	Item Item	Cause Sub 1	Cause Sub 2	Cause Sub 3	Special Characteristics Value	Variance ratio (%)	Cumulative variance ratio (%)	Cronbach's $\alpha$ value
Actors Profile	V31	0.782						0.796
	V21	0.770			4.133	51.758	51.745	
	V29	0.731						
Background Music and painting Face	V24		0.789					0.748
	V25		0.763		0.932	11.981	63.693	
	V23		0.623					
Storyline Content	V26			0.853				0.765
	V27			0.809	0.768	9.639	73.458	

KMO: .837, Bartlett's test: Chi-Square411.000, df:28, Sig:.000

## 2) Influence of Korean drama popularity factors on the image of the country

The study investigated the impact of Korean drama popularity factors on the image of the country by conducting multiple linear regression analysis. As shown in Table 4-2, the adjusted R2 of the regression coefficient representing the explanatory power of the regression equation was 35.4% for the image of the country and the F-value of the regression analysis model was 32.967 for the image of the country. 32.967, which is significant at the significance level of 0.001. Therefore, the regression equation is statistically significant. After t-testing the coefficients of the regression equation, the factors of “actors’ image” ( $\beta$ =.264,  $p$ =0.000) and “background music and images” ( $\beta$ =0.163,  $p$ =0.008) of the reasons for the popularity of Korean dramas passed the test into the regression equation has a positive effect on the image of the country.

Therefore, “actor’s image” and “background music and images” have a greater

impact on the country's image than "plot content", and among the three factors of Korean dramas' popularity of the three factors that contribute to the popularity of Korean dramas, "actor's image" has the greatest impact on the country's image. According to this, college students who like the appearance or dressing style of Korean stars have a better opinion of the image of Korea.

<Table 6> Relationship between the popularity factors of Korean dramas and the image of the country

independent variable \ dependent variable		Country Image						
		$\beta$	Standard Error	T-value	Sig.	VIF	Adjusting R2	F-value
1	(Constant)	2.923	0.257	11.343	0.000	1.000	0.310	58.012***
	Actor Image	0.296	0.045	7.610	0.000			
2	(Constant)	2.679	0.257	10.324	0.000	1.634	0.354	32.967***
	Actor Image	0.264	0.061	4.314	0.000			
	Background music and screen	0.163	0.056	2.731	0.008			

\*\*\*  $\rho < .001$

### 3. Conclusion

In this paper, in order to study the influence of Korean films and TV on shaping and spreading the national image of Korea, we analyzed which factors play an important role in shaping the national image of Korea by analyzing the popular factors of Korean dramas with college students in Anhui Province as the research subjects, so as to provide experience for the promotion of Chinese films and TV. The results of the study are summarized as follows.

First, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the reasons for the popularity of Korean dramas, which resulted in three factors: "actor's

image” , “background music and images” , and “plot content” . Among them, “actor’s image” is the most influential factor. The study shows that the main reason for the strong attraction of Korean dramas to college students in Anhui Province is the image of actors’ appearance and the beautiful and romantic music and picture content in Korean dramas. High-value actors’ images have become an indispensable factor in Korean movies, and the soothing music and romantic scenes bring audiovisual experience to the audience almost perfectly.

The reason why “background music and pictures” and “plot content” have become important factors may be that in Korean film and television works, melodious background music, professional and delicate emotional performances of actors, and vivid language dialogues of characters all reflect the rich and colorful national culture of Korea. Korean film and television shooting techniques are characterized by delicacy. Professional shooting techniques and delicate artistic style bring a sense of visual beauty to the audience. At the same time, Korean film and television also strives for perfection in post production. In terms of details, they focus on market reaction and interaction with the audience, thus arousing the emotional resonance of the audience. In order to achieve aesthetic effect, many pictures in film and television works will be shot dozens or even hundreds of times.

For example, the film and television work Top Tower magnifies the darkness of different classes in Korean society with exaggeration, so that the audience can fully have a sense of identity. Looking back at “Please Answer 1988” , it is actually just a simple matter between several different families, but because it describes the vicissitudes of life in real life, it brings the audience closer. Each emotion is portrayed very carefully, and everyone is ordinary and unique. At the same time, the emotional rendering of the script in the play also has a natural film and television effect, which promotes the audience to share joys and sorrows, joys and sorrows with the characters in the play, so as to achieve emotional resonance and trigger in-depth thinking.

Second, among the three factors that contribute to the popularity of Korean dramas, “actor’s image” and “background music and images” have a positive effect on the image of the country. Thus, “actor’s image” and “background music and images” have a greater impact on the country’s image than “plot content” , and among the three factors “Actor’s image” has the greatest impact on the country’s image.

Therefore, college students who like the appearance or dressing style of Korean stars have a better opinion of the national image of Korea. This explains why Korean celebrities, Korean clothes and Korean fashion trends have become more influential in China and the world in recent years as the Korean Wave culture has spread widely, and Korea is using cultural symbols in movies and TV works to shape and spread its positive national image.

The reason why “actor image” has become the most influential factor is that every successful film and television works in South Korea will focus on creating some highly personalized and distinctive characters. The successful portrayal of the characters can not only show the character characteristics of the heroes in the film and television works, but also show the cultural heritage and the flavor of the times that the film and television works have. In order to gain recognition in overseas markets, Korean film and television companies pay special attention to shaping the high-quality image of film and television works and their actors. In Korean film and television works, there are many handsome men and beautiful women, tall, rich, handsome and white, handsome and beautiful faces of actors, and exquisite costumes. On the one hand, they can give full play to the characters created, on the other hand, the refined images of actors can also create a visual enjoyment and unlimited imagination for the audience.

The discussion on love between men and women in ancient Chinese can also be used to explain why the “actor image” in Korean films and TV plays has the greatest impact on the audience. The Chinese ancient saying emphasizes that the best love experience between men and women often begins with their appearance, loyalty to character and talent. The reason why men and women can meet and love each other is that they recognize their own image first, and then they can have a deeper understanding. In the film and television works, that is to say, the audience should first like the actor image in the play, and then more likely to pay attention to the film. Only in this way can the background music, picture, plot content and other factors of the film play their due role. It is not difficult to understand why Korean films and TV dramas choose actors with high appearance value to attract the attention of the audience.

For example, during the hot broadcast of “Descendants of the Sun”, a large

number of Chinese film and television audiences cheered and fell in love with the main characters and heroines. In the play, Liu Shizhen (played by Song Zhongji), the captain of the peacekeeping special operations force, and Jiang Muyan (played by Song Huiqiao), the surgeon, create a different military love myth for the audience with their high appearance and excellent acting skills. The strong and resolute spirit of the soldiers in the play complements the gentle lyricism and elegant poetic style of the intellectual women, and forms a strong and distinct contrast. The characteristic language and the enthusiastic performance of the actors have sublimated the characters and the story.

## **V. Reasons for the success of Korean film and television communication and the significance of the lessons learned**

### **1. Multidimensional shaping of national image by Korean films and TV**

#### **1) Political influence under positive guidance**

One of the characteristics of Korean dramas is that they accurately and powerfully expose the dark side of society and try to reveal the best side of human nature in their narrative logic, thus reflecting the goodness of all human beings. At the same time, Korean dramas also portray small characters with a simple sense of justice despite their difficult fate, and lead viewers to establish a positive self-stance through their spirit of resistance in the face of injustice and their persistence in the pursuit of fairness and justice, thus creating an image of a country full of democracy, justice and cohesion.

This year's new Korean drama "The Hunt", which is themed on the struggle between the North and South Korean regimes, tells the story of Piao Pinghao and Jin Zhengdao, two important officials of the South Korean Ministry of National Security Planning, who uncover the shocking secrets behind their respective crimes while hunting down North Korean spy Dong-rim who is lurking in South Korea. While the



film exposes the dirty deeds of politicians in their struggle for power, status and profit, it also highlights the two male protagonists' deep appreciation of the tragic damage caused by war and turmoil to innocent people. Although the film gives the protagonists an aura of superhuman bodies, it also breaks them down in their hearts, thus raising the film from regional power struggles to a high level of thinking about peace and stability around the world, reflecting the idea of good world in the narrative structure of Korean dramas, and also giving the audience a deeper and more three-dimensional impression of Korean history and politics through the film.

## **2) Economic Development through Political and Economic Interaction**

The Korean government's policy of "culture as a nation" has led to the rapid development of Korea's cultural industry, and the progress and improvement of Korean dramas have also played an important role in the development of the Korean economy. The appearance and use of handsome men and beautiful women, beautiful shooting scenes, and the latest cell phones and clothing in Korean films and TV shows have attracted a large number of viewers and led the fashion trend. As a result, Korean dramas have also established Korea as a developed, fashionable, and open country, inspiring many viewers to long for and aspire to Korean life.

This year's hit Korean drama "Anna", in which Zheng Nencai plays the second female, has gained a large number of fans with her three-dimensional facial features, high-class dressing, and casual and natural personality, showing her bright and heroic personality. With the popularity of the movie, the clothing, shoes, hats, and lifestyle products of the same model in Zheng Nencai's drama have attracted great attention and hot discussion among domestic and foreign netizens online, and the related products have become best-selling items in both offline physical stores and online flagship stores. The story structure of Korean dramas reflects reality and the characters' unconventional struggle for progress, which resonates strongly with people and gives them confidence in life and the future. People aspire to the lifestyles and pursuits of the movies and use them as a standard to enrich their lives and improve their standard of living, which in turn leads to changes and improvements in the consumption mindset and spending power of society as a whole, thus driving the

economic development of society as a whole.

3) Ethnic culture in a detailed portrayal

Korea has a strong national culture and a rich historical background, and Korean dramas take this as the background to show the elements of Korean culture such as food, folklore, costumes, and art, so that the audience can always be refreshingly familiar with Korean culture and receive cultural inculcation in a subtle way. In Korean dramas, we often see Koreans greeting each other, bowing when they meet their elders, and speaking in plain language.

The Korean drama “Please Answer 1988” is an influential Korean movie with high scores, in which Korean etiquette is shown to the fullest. Before Cheng Shanyu and Cheng Baola got back together after years of breakup, Cheng Shanyu emphasized that they should use plain language instead of honorific language in their future life. Through the delicate portrayal of these manners, the Korean drama shows the good quality of Korean people and portrays an image of a country with mutual respect, harmony and a strong moral atmosphere.

## **2. Reasons for the Success of Korean Film and TV Foreign Communications**

### **1) Strong policy support**

After Korea proposed the policy of “culture as a nation”, successive governments have paid sufficient attention to the cultural industry, from the “New Cultural Policy of the National Government” in 1998, the “Content Korea 21st Century Blueprint” in 2001, to Lee Myung-bak’s “Cultural Blueprint 2012” in 2008, to President Park Geun-hye’s governing platform of “cultural prosperity” in 2013 and President Moon Jae-in’s invitation to lunch with the creators of the Korean film “Parasite” at the presidential palace in 2019 after it won four international awards at the 92nd Academy Awards. These policies and government actions reflect the importance that the Korean government places on the cultural industry and its support for Korean film and television to enter the international market.

For example, in terms of financial taxation system, the Korean government gives

great incentives to domestic films, thus providing financial support to film and television enterprises in financing, mergers and acquisitions, and investment. At the same time, Korean drama exports are not only tax-free, but the Korean government also covers all the expenses for Korean films to participate in 9 major film festivals around the world. The Korean government has also established a special Film Promotion Fund and Cultural Industry Promotion Fund, which fully subsidize the language translation and editing costs incurred in the cross-cultural dissemination of Korean dramas.

## **2) Professional operation system**

The modernized and specialized operation system of the film industry is also an important reason for the success of international distribution of Korean dramas. In Korea, whether it is filming a Korean drama, producing a variety show, or launching an idol group, there is a mature and strict operation system behind the planning, filming, production, and finally promotion and marketing, which has been formed after years of experience. Sufficient capital investment, professional creative team, and international management system ensure the high quality creation and continuous output of Korean movies and TV.

For example, in terms of film production, the Korean film and television industry is highly competitive, which has forced all the people involved, from writers, directors, and actors, to do their best to polish the details and treat each film with care, thus effectively reducing the existence of a large number of shoddy films. The professional and rigorous industry standard makes Korean films and TV works, not only compact and well-cast, but also with beautiful music and exquisite pictures, which can bring the audience a strong sense of immersion and emotional resonance, which is also an important reason for the popularity of Korean dramas.

## **3) Cultural Packaging Charm**

Language, writing, and customs are the most basic cultural symbolic carriers of a country or region, and they are also the most crucial communication tools in film and

television works, which are the bridges to communicate with audiences in cross-cultural communication. In order to develop overseas markets and win the recognition and support of overseas audiences, Korean film and television companies pay special attention to the cultural packaging of their films and TV works.

For example, in terms of plot structure, Korean studios are well aware of how cultural discounts and barriers can reduce the impact of a film, so they actively seek common ground and convergence of interests between different cultures to embellish and package the content of the film. For example, the traditional rituals and cultural traditions in Korean dramas are all informed by the Chinese Confucian concepts of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and filial piety. At the same time, as the pace of internationalization of Korean dramas continues to accelerate, the ideology of freedom, democracy, and fairness, which are revered by Westerners, is also increasing in the proportion of Korean dramas.

### **3. Implications of Korean films and TV for Chinese foreign communication**

#### **1) Structured communication and enhanced two-way interaction**

An important reason for the wide gap between the development levels of the film and television industries in China and South Korea is the lack of effective communication between China's cultural policies and the film and television industries. When measuring interaction indicators, scholar Xu Haotong found that the frequency, scale, level, and quality of interaction between the Korean government and the cultural industry are higher, while Chinese interaction is not only less, but often missing the link of industry-to-strategy feedback.

For this reason, China should learn from the Korean film and television censorship system, clarify and refine the laws, regulations and implementation standards for film and television censorship, change the single-agency film and television censorship system, and enhance the objectivity, transparency and interaction of film and television censorship. This will not only help improve the efficiency of film and television censorship, but also give film and television creators more reference space, stimulate their creative inspiration, and avoid some invalid, erroneous and poor film and

television content, thus promoting the standardized, institutionalized and systematic development of China's film and television industry.

## **2) Affiliate marketing, improve the industrial chain**

Affiliate marketing emphasizes the need to find the correlation between different products, brands, companies and other marketing objects on the basis of mutual benefit and win-win, so as to achieve deep, multi-disciplinary and all-round interactive cooperation between businesses. Compared with Chinese film and television, where a large number of product patches and rigid brand recurrence are advertised, the key to the great success of Korean affiliate marketing is the soft implantation model of brands.

For this reason, China should learn from the Korean experience and grasp all aspects of the development of the film and television industry from a macro perspective, from the creation, financing and brand implantation planning in the early stage of the film, to the promotion of derivative products during the broadcast of the film, to the selection of copyright, broadcasting platform, overseas expansion and other terminals in the later stage of the film production. Thus, the development chain of the upstream and downstream of the film industry is connected, and the driving effect of film and TV works on economic development is maximized.

## **3) Inclusion and cultural adaptation**

“Cultural adaptation“ emphasizes the tendency of cultural products to maintain their traditional culture and identity while communicating with other ethnic cultural groups in the process of dissemination. An important reason for the success of Korean film and television in foreign communication lies in the nature of cultural compatibility in its film and television works, which can combine localized and internationalized factors and form film symbols with Korean identity based on Korean film and television's own narrative logic and expression.

To this end, China's film and television works should fully recognize and understand the differences between different countries and regions in terms of religious beliefs,

values and ways of thinking, actively study and learn from the culturally compatible qualities of Korean film and television, and use the excellent Chinese traditional culture as the foundation for the cultural packaging of film and television works. In this way, we can establish a common space of meaning between Chinese films and foreign audiences in subjects such as affection, love, family, faith and other subjects that are in line with the values of all human beings. In this way, we can create Chinese film and television works that have the characteristics of the main Chinese culture, but can also maintain good communication with foreign cultures.

To date, Korean TV dramas have never stopped their pace of innovation and change, from melodrama to light-hearted to fantasy, and from pure love to crossover, suspense, workplace, nostalgia, family, and so on. Whether it is the type, style or subject matter is always seeking new and change. By sticking to the local, open and innovative, there are various variants as well as their unchanging roots, which makes the new style of Korean TV dramas inseparable from the inclusiveness and innovative spirit of its national culture. Korean films and dramas are not only a cultural and artistic style that provides spiritual entertainment, but also a popular cultural product with a commercial nature. Therefore, Chinese film and television should learn from the beneficial aspects of Korean film and television development on the basis of their own national conditions, and transform and innovate locally, in order to create new and innovative film and television works with Chinese characteristics in line with the spirit of the times, thus promoting the development of China's cultural industry and establishing a good image of China in China's foreign communication, and adding color to China's cultural soft power.

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