

**TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL TRAFFIC IN NORTHEAST ASIA:
THE “PRESENCE” OF JAPAN IN KOREA’S POPULAR MUSIC CULTURE**

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Korea’s nationalistic antagonism towards Japan and “things Japanese” has mostly been a response to the colonial annexation by Japan (1910-1945). Despite their close economic relationship since 1965, their conflicting historic and political relationships and deep-seated prejudice against each other have continued. The Korean government’s official ban on the direct import of Japanese cultural products existed until 1997, but various kinds of Japanese cultural products, including popular music, found their way into Korea through various legal and illegal routes and influenced contemporary Korean popular culture. Since 1998, under Korea’s Open-Door Policy, legally available Japanese popular cultural products became widely consumed, especially among young Koreans fascinated by Japan’s quintessentially postmodern popular culture, despite lingering resentments towards Japan. Because of the sensitive relationship between the two countries, however, the extensive transnational cultural interaction between Korea and Japan—including popular musical interaction, one of the most important aspects--has been intentionally downplayed by Korean scholars and by the popular Korean press.

My dissertation theorizes what I call the “presence” of Japan, through its popular music, in contemporary Korea. I identify three major shifts in the presence of Japan in Korea from the 1980s to 2006: the “illegal” presence (1980s-1997), the “transitional” presence (1998-2004), and the “newly sanctioned” presence (since 2004). It is my contention that popular music plays a crucial role in shaping Korean perceptions about Japan, and those perceptions define a central

focus of my dissertation. The research I present in the dissertation is organized around four areas of investigation: the kinds of "presence" Japan has had in the contemporary popular music scene in Korea since the 1980s, the kinds of forces that have been instrumental in shaping Korean's consumption of Japanese popular music, the adjustments in Korea's cultural politics in response to transnational cultural flow from Japan before and since 1998, and Korean reception and responses to the Japanese "presence" in Korea—its meanings and implications. I address these issues within the political and economic context of Japan-Korea relations, whose impact on musical practice and musical taste is complex and dynamic, demanding a multi-disciplinary analysis.

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PREFACE

Although I could scarcely have imagined it then, the initial seed for this dissertation was planted when I was in junior-high school in Korea in the late 1980s. I was heading to my piano teacher's house for my weekly lessons, and her house happened to be near one of the many popular shopping districts in Seoul. After finishing my hour-long lesson, I often spent a little time looking at small shops and street carts selling all kinds of goods such as clothes, shoes, bags, hair accessories, Hello Kitty stationery goods, and little snacks before I took the bus or subway back home. One day, I saw a man selling cassettes on the street for only about a dollar a piece. I did not think about whether they were legal or illegal, but simply that I had found a bargain. There were several hundred cassettes, mostly Korean and American popular music, but mixed with a few other varieties. Since I could listen to Korean and American popular songs on TV or radio anytime, I grabbed instead a few compilation cassettes of Japanese popular songs, knowing nothing about them other than they might be something "different."

At home I listened to those cassettes in my sound-proofed piano practice room, which my parents prepared for me to practice piano and to listen to the Western classical piano pieces that I had to practice. The Japanese songs on these cassettes did not strike me as strange or foreign, but instead easy to hum along with, though I could not understand the language. Even then I remember feeling that the musical sound was more polished and sophisticated than in the Korean pop songs of the day. Perhaps because these were new, and information about them were rather

vague, I found I did not easily tire of listening to them in the way I did when listening to Korean or American popular songs. Most of my friends at the all-girls' school I attended were listening to the latest Korean hit songs and some American popular songs; I enjoyed these as well, but kept listening to the cassettes by myself well into my high-school years. A few times on school picnics or school trips to other cities, we would hear someone playing Japanese cassettes for dancing, including the song "Gingiragini." Many students were dancing to the song's repetitive rhythm and sang along with the song's refrain phrase, "*gingiragini*," which was easy to catch by ear. Later I learned that some of the Japanese songs on my cassettes were played at disco clubs and roller-skating rinks and that some students were quite familiar with these Japanese songs. This was how I began to listen to Japanese popular songs and to begin to recognize a "presence" of Japan in Korea.

I began to update my Japanese cassette collection every 3-4 months. Not only did I want to listen to other Japanese songs, but the physical quality of the cassettes was so poor that they did not last long. In high school I found other classmates who were listening to illegal Japanese cassettes like me. Most of my close friends, however, were either not interested in listening to Japanese popular music or considered my interest in these songs as inappropriate, if not incomprehensible. Because we all learned in Korea to follow the anti-Japanese sentiment toward anything Japanese, especially in public, my conservative friends were repulsed by the fact that I was listening to Japanese songs. Since I was studying classical piano, most of them did not even expect me to listen any kind of popular music, least of all Japanese. One of my classmates, however, was studying to be a fashion designer and had become quite familiar with Japanese fashion magazines. She was not so interested in Japanese music, but we could share our curiosity about Japan. We visited shops selling various imported items from Japan and most of these shops played Japanese songs to attract customers. It was just a kind of secret pleasure we

shared, knowing something that most of our friends did not know and did not expect us to know, but I thought little more about it until one day I discovered something shocking.

I was listening to the radio in 1989 and heard the newly released song, “Saranghalkkôya” (“I Will Love”) by Lee Sang-Eun, a top female singer at that time. As soon as I heard the introduction, I realized that it was exactly the same as one of the songs from my Japanese cassettes. I was so excited and surprised that I brought a couple of my friends to my house and played the two versions for them. Then I asked them if I should call the broadcasting company or news media. We did not know what to do, and I did not have the courage as a high school student to call and to accuse this famous singer of piracy. Yet as I watched her reach the top of music charts with that song, I felt so disappointed at her and at Korean popular music itself.

In the years since, I have sometimes wondered what might have happened if I had taken some action then. Would it have reduced further piracy in Korean popular music? Because she was very popular, it might have been big news and perhaps ended her music career, more like what happened to the group Roo’Ra in 1996, who copied a Japanese song when they were at the top of the charts and became embroiled in enormous controversy and embarrassment when a fan uncovered and publicized their piracy.

During my masters’ study at Arizona State University (1998-2001), I came to know a large number of Japanese students and through them expanded my knowledge of Japanese popular music and other aspects of Japanese popular culture (TV dramas, *anime*, *manga*). As I came to learn through them, the hidden presence of Japan in Korea was not limited to music, but was evident in nearly all realms of popular culture.

My curiosity to learn more about the Japanese presence in Korea stemmed from my little discovery of the Korean singer’s piracy of the Japanese song, which was never publicized. Such partially hidden presence of Japan in Korean popular music has been criticized since then, and

especially since the Roo'Ra incident in 1996, but copying of Japanese songs (both legally and illegally) and the use of ideas from Japanese songs still occurs in Korean popular music today, more than three years after the official government ban on Japanese popular music was lifted. And along with this continued copying from Japan, the Japanese presence in Korea is now greatly augmented and transformed by legal concerts, CD sales, and internet downloads of Japanese pop music there. As the presence of Japanese popular music in the Korean popular music scene becomes stronger than ever and much more apparent to the Korean public, I cannot help but think back to my discovery of the illegal and little known presence of Japan in the late 1980s, all of which started from my picking up a few pirated cassettes sold on the streets of Seoul.

In the present study, I explore the changing presence of Japan in Korea's popular music world since the mid-1980s, inquiring into the nature of this transnational cultural flow or "traffic"--what aspects have been brought in, by what means, and with what resultant meanings. I offer both a detailed chronology of the flow and an interpretation of its cultural significance in contemporary Korean society. The theoretical underpinnings for this study are introduced in my introduction (chapter 1) and I need not go into those here. My prefatory remarks are simply intended to situate my initial involvement in a phenomenon that has mushroomed in various forms around the globe—namely, the transnational traffic in popular music and culture.

Note on Orthography

In this study I use McCune-Reischauer system of romanization for Korean words and the Kunrei-shiki system for Japanese words. For individual Korean and Japanese names, I follow the Korean and Japanese convention that family name precedes given names. The titles of songs, movies, and TV dramas are routinely given in romanized form with English translations,

unless the original titles are in English. All translations and transliteration are by the author unless noted otherwise.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this dissertation is to analyze what I call the “presence” of Japan in Korea’s popular music world over a dynamic twenty-year period--from the mid 1980s, when most Japanese popular cultural products could not be imported legally into Korea, until 2006, two years after the final stage of the Korean government’s four-stage lifting of its ban on Japanese cultural products.

Scholars have pointed to the emphasis in Japan during the post-war period on developing and marketing various products internationally, such as automobiles and electronics, that were more or less culturally neutral. In Iwabuchi’s insightful interpretation, these products bear no cultural “odor,” *i.e.*, do not in and of themselves suggest the culture of the people that produced them.¹ Automobiles and most electronics were invented in the West, but skillfully built and modified by Japanese for international commerce. Also, some Japanese popular cultural products often bear strong influences from elsewhere, especially the West, but have gained strong followings elsewhere in Asia as “Japanese” products. Prominent among these is Japanese popular music, which, while not “smelling” as uniquely Japanese as *shakuhachi* and *koto* music,

¹ Iwabuchi Koichi, *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p. 24.

kabuki drama, or *kimonos*, does bear Japanese cultural “odor”—most fundamentally through the use of Japanese language, but also through musical style, performer image, and personality.²

Along with other forms of popular cultural expression, Japanese popular music has been steadily gaining a foothold in Korea over the last decade. Why and how this is so, and what it means to Koreans form the core questions addressed in this dissertation. Drawing on the descriptions of particular genres, performers, media practices, and audience reactions, I theorize what I call the “presence” of Japan, through its popular music, in contemporary Korea. It is my contention that this music plays a crucial role in shaping Korean perceptions about Japan, and those perceptions define a central focus of my dissertation.

For Korea, as for most of Asia, Japan has stood apart—from the rest of Asia and from the West—and it continues to do so now as it has through recent history. An imperial power that sought political and cultural dominion over most of Asia in the first half of the twentieth century, and an unprecedented success economically in the second half, Japan has seemed and been “different” from its neighbors, however much they may share with Japan culturally through common historical roots and centuries of interaction. In this dissertation, I am concerned with ascertaining the nature of this “difference” in Japanese pop and how Koreans construct this perceived “difference.”

Among a small but growing number of studies on contemporary cultural interaction and transnational cultural traffic, this dissertation focuses on a unique transnational case of musical interaction—one whose general pattern bears resemblance to instances in other parts of the world and in previous historical periods, but whose particular configuration is constituted around socio-historical and aesthetic contexts unique to contemporary Korea and Japan. Musical interaction across cultural and national borders, of course, has figured prominently in a number of

² *Ibid.* pp. 24-28.

ethnomusicological studies.³ But nearly all have dealt with the influence of Western musical genres and global technology. This dissertation considers music that bears clear Western influences, but whose locus of production is Japan and whose acknowledged national and cultural identity is “Japanese.”

My focus on Japanese popular music and its reception and influence in contemporary Korea is also intended to challenge some views prevailing currently in East Asian area studies that focus on the very recent export of Korean popular culture to other Asian countries and discuss greater China and Southeast Asia but not Korea in their analysis of transnational flows of Japanese popular culture. Although the Korean Wave—the recent spread of Korean popular culture (especially TV dramas and music) to other Asian countries (also called *Hallyu*)—has recently caught the attention of the popular press, and of a few scholars, the accelerated flow in the other direction (from Japan to Korea) has been largely ignored. Japanese popular cultural transnationalism elsewhere in Asia has recently been documented and interpreted by scholars,⁴ but the Korean component of the internationalization of Japanese popular music industry and the Japanese component of Korea’s popular music scene have simply gone missing from scholarly scrutiny. This is not because it is unimportant culturally or small-scale commercially, but likely because it is recent, difficult to document, and a source of potential embarrassment for Koreans eager to celebrate the recent internationalization of Korean popular culture and to downplay the ongoing cultural presence of Japan in Korea. In addition, this is due to the official ban on

³ A comprehensive list would be excessively long. Prominent studies, many dealing primarily with popular music, include the following: Arnold 1991, Becker 1980, Bender 1991, Charry 2000, Erlmann 1991, Erlmann 1999, Gay and Lysloff 2005, Manuel 1988, Mitchell 2000, Matsue 2003, Nettl’s seminal collection of essays on Western impact (1985), and contributions on popular music and Western influence in many countries and regions by various scholars in the volumes of the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*.

⁴ See especially Iwabuchi Koichi, “Return to Asia? Japan in Asian Audiovisual Markets” in *Consuming Ethnicity and Nationalism: Asian Experiences*, edited by Kosaku Yoshino. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999) pp. 177-196 and *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002); Benjamin Wai-ming Ng, “Japanese Popular Music in Singapore and the Hybridization of Asian Music.” *Asian Music* 34 (1), 2002: 1-18.

Japanese popular cultural imports to Korea (which has been lifted only recently, in stages from 1998 to 2004) and the reluctance of Korean observers to acknowledge the renewed interest on the part of Korean youth in Japanese popular culture.

Research on Japanese popular music in Japanese and English increases in volume each year, but the coverage is still limited mostly to general discussion of Japanese *enka* and *karaoke*—their prominence in Japan and their influences in other parts of the world.⁵ Research on any aspect of popular music in Korea is limited mostly to sociological studies, and treatment of the topic in English has barely begun.⁶ This dissertation is both about cultural “traffic”⁷ and about notions of cultural identity (both cultural self and cultural other). Both the nature of the traffic and the notions of identity are dynamic, changing more rapidly now than perhaps ever before. As popular culture is so evanescent and fleeting, it is my hope here to make available material that might otherwise evade documentation and thereby to serve the work of future scholars wishing to look back on the tumultuous turn of the twenty-first century.

1.2 RESEARCH ISSUES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research I have been conducting and will present in the dissertation is organized around four areas of investigation: 1) the kinds of “presence” Japan has had in the contemporary popular music scene in Korea since the 1980s, 2) the kinds of forces that have been instrumental in shaping Korean’s consumption of Japanese popular music, 3) the adjustments in Korea’s cultural politics in response to transnational cultural flow from Japan before and since 1998, 4)

⁵ See especially Yano 2002, Mitsui and Hosokawa 1999.

⁶ See Howard 2006.

⁷ Marcus and Myers 1995, Iwabuchi, Muecke, and Thomas 2004.

Korean reception and responses to the Japanese “presence” in Korea—its meanings and implications.

1.2.1 Kinds of Japanese “Presence” in Korea’s Popular Music since the 1980s

In order to assess the status and impact of Japanese popular music in Korea, it is important to have an accurate understanding of precisely which genres and performers from Japan have been popular in Korea over the period in question. This entails technical descriptions of musical genres, as well as accounts relating to representative singers and groups. Given that in the 1980s the Korean government still forbade appearances by Japanese pop singers in live concerts or on radio and television, and forbade the sale of Japanese popular music CDs and related media (DVDs, cassettes, videos), but by 2004 had abolished these strictures, we should expect a marked change in Korea’s taste for Japanese popular music in the last decade. In my quest to trace this change, I draw not only on evidence relating to the sale of Japanese popular music (even while it was still illegal at the beginning of this period) but also on audience behavior and reactions as directly observed and as documented on Korean websites devoted to Japanese popular music. From the very wide spectrum of what constitutes Japanese popular music, Korea appears to have devoted most of its attention to what can best be described as “mainstream” pop. This genre has been popular throughout the period, but other genres (visual rock, beat rock, jazz pop, idol-pop or *idoru*-pop, techno) have recently begun to show growing popularity among Koreans, with corresponding changes in Korean’s perception and desire for things Japanese.

Beyond identifying and describing the genres and representative performers, I seek to identify distinctive musical and extra-musical features of the Japanese pop that is consumed in Korea. There are two dimensions to this line of inquiry. The first is simply the issue of difference: how Japanese pop is different (or not) from Korean. The second is the issue of

Japaneseness: what aspects identify an example of Japanese pop as “Japanese” (as opposed to “Asian” or even just “contemporary”). On music television and at CD stores, Japanese pop is clearly separated—with specific shows devoted to Japanese pop on television, and separate displays and sales rack sections in the store. Television shows intersperse music videos with banter about Japanese pop singers, largely focused on personality and professional accomplishment. These shows, like CD liner notes, say very little about musical style; but the extent to which the musical sound itself differs from the rather narrow range of commercially available Korean popular music will be addressed in the chapters that follow.

Following up on stylistic description and the identification of distinctive features, another important issue to be addressed is the extent to which Japanese popular music-- and whatever elements within it that identify it as Japanese--are explicitly enjoyed as “Japanese”--i.e., enjoyed not merely because they are pleasant, or distinctive, but because they are known, felt, understood to be Japanese. This question sets into motion several important related issues. First, what characteristics beyond musico-technical ones are thought to be Japanese (e.g., cuteness, humor, wildness, humility, overt sexuality, etc.)? Second, in contemporary Korea what accounts for the popularity of these characteristics? In other words, what is the lure of Japanese popular music? If it is something specifically “Japanese,” then why do Koreans find it attractive? Is it *in spite of* or partly *because of* Japan’s former military and more recent economic might? Is it *in spite of* or partly *because of* Japan’s self-acclaimed ability to assimilate and Asianize Western modernity?

1.2.2 Forces Shaping Korean’s Consumption of Japanese Popular Music

Transnational traffic in popular cultural forms such as music involves a complex set of forces. Beyond the individual musicians—whose sound and public image is almost always heavily shaped by music industry concerns—a range of contemporary media as well as audiences’

response to the media also play crucial roles. During its recent illegal phase (prior to 1998) pirated cassettes of Japanese originals and cover versions by Korean musicians were two major avenues for the influx of Japanese popular music. Since then, a range of recording media, most importantly CDs, and broadcast media, most importantly music television, have been providing Koreans with ready access to some kinds of Japanese popular music. This dissertation documents the dominance of mainstream Japanese popular music but also traces the gradual broadening of offerings through these media up to 2006. Particular attention is paid to the ways the music industries of Japan and of Korea have facilitated and defined what is presented, especially since January 2004. Going beyond audio recordings and broadcasts, I will also be concerned with the presence of Japanese popular music on Korean websites and on Japanese or international websites accessible to Korean fans. I will also be examining the content and demonstrable role of print media—especially fan magazines—in promoting Japanese popular music and in establishing particular ways of understanding, or “appreciating” this music. And I will devote some of my inquiry to the spread of Japanese music through file-sharing (MP3, video files, TV clips).

Going beyond mere documentation of Japanese music in Korea’s various media, my guiding interest is to uncover, or at least to suggest, other subtle cultural forces that continue to shape Koreans’ perceptions and aesthetic responses to Japanese popular music. The music industry may foster certain images and promote certain sounds, but for Koreans one must also take into consideration the long history of animosity, resistance, suspicion, envy, admiration—one is tempted to say “love-hate” feelings—on the part of Koreans toward Japan. What evidence emerges from audience statements and behavior concerning the Japaneseness of Japanese popular music? In the act of meaning construction, to what extent do Korean audiences appear to be passively following or actively influencing music industry designs?

Clearly it would be desirable in addressing issues of meaning construction in the transnational flow of Japanese popular music into Korea to have as accurate a read as possible on who is doing the consuming. Without access to specific demographical data, it is still clear from press coverage, internet postings, and personal observations, that audiences for live concerts, internet downloads, and CD purchases are predominantly young Koreans, from mid-teens to late-twenties, from upper and upper-middle classes. Some Japanese singers and groups (such as the “idol” singers) appeal primarily to a very young demographic. Few, if any, current Japanese pop stars appeal to Koreans over forty. Because of the longstanding official ban and the remaining restrictions even after the fourth-stage of the Open-Door Policy (January 2004), more precise sociological profiles of audiences up to 2003 is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, I will briefly document the typical audience configuration from the end of the Open-Door Policy period as the Korean audiences of Japanese popular music became more visible.

1.2.3 Korea’s Cultural Politics in Response to Transnational Cultural Flow from Japan before and since 1998

I have alluded earlier to the seemingly willful choice on the part of Korean popular press and broadcast media to ignore or downplay the recent Japanese presence in Korea, including Japanese pop, which is closely related to Korea’s current nationalistic stance as well as an underlying postcolonial desire. Throughout the individual chapters, I address this issue by examining Korea’s cultural politics, which have been frequently redirected under the Korean government’s close monitoring of the Japanese popular culture industry’s influx and of Korean consumer behavior, as well as the Korean popular culture industry’s outflux and Japanese consumer behavior. It is my contention that the national pride in the recent exporting of Korean popular music (and other forms of cultural expression—the Korean Wave) and the national

embarrassment over a newly vigorous interest in Japanese popular music (and other forms of cultural expression from Japan)⁸ constitute a fundamental component in the overall cultural context in which Japanese popular music is consumed and understood in Korea. It would seem not only to be evidence of a deeply ingrained Korean sentiment, but also to be actively contributing to the contemporary conceptual world of Korea itself.

1.2.4 Korean Reception and Responses to the Japanese “Presence” in Korea – Its Meanings and Implications

I strive in this dissertation to demonstrate that, due to the residual collective memory of prior inequities, the meaning or emotional “space” given to Japanese music by Koreans is not merely a duplicate of that given to other foreign music. For Korea, Japan has been considered as a “close but distant” country and remembered as an assailant/invader. But, at the same time, Koreans have been envious and jealous of Japan’s economic success and international political power. Although Koreans in general (especially the older generation) dislike Japan and criticize pro-Japanese Koreans as betrayers, they prefer Japanese products (especially electronics) and enjoy Japanese food and animation. Koreans’ contradictory attitudes toward Japan, Japanese people, Japanese products, and Japanese culture are deeply rooted in their painful and embarrassing memories from being colonized by the neighbor country that had been a recipient of Korean cultural influences over a period of many centuries. Over all, though, the previously existing, still remaining, and currently growing Japanese “presence” in Korea is something that many Koreans would like to deny or ignore.

⁸ A number of new music TV and radio programs air Japanese pop-only programs. Also, a few newly released Japanese pop recordings rose to the top of the sale-ranking charts.

In sum, my exploration of these issues takes shape from a number of perspectives-- on style and repertory (identifying the particular Japanese genres and artists most popular in Korea), mediascapes (tracing the kinds of media flows through which Japanese pop reaches Korean audiences, and the patterns of interaction between the Korean and Japanese music industries), gender ideology (how Japanese sound and image are perceived and influence Koreans in relation to notions of femininity, masculinity, cuteness, machismo), generational and social class differences (what segments of society seem especially drawn to the Japanese presence in popular music and with what values), and wider political ramifications (changes in the Korea-Japan political landscape relating to music and popular culture more broadly).

1.2.5 Scope and Delimitations

This dissertation is concerned with cultural issues relating to the transnational traffic in popular music and culture. It is not a traditional musicological study of musical style as such, though it references stylistic features and genre names widely known to the vast majority of popular music consumers and scholars (such as “hip-hop,” “heavy metal,” “ballads,” “rock ‘n’ roll”). It does not rely on musical transcriptions or musical analysis, as the issues at stake in the dissertation, from international marketing strategies to artists’ personality and visual images simply are not illuminated by focus on musico-technical details. Even consumers’ remarks on the aural dimension of Japanese popular music’s appeal and meaning to them rarely reference the kinds of musical specifics revealed in musical transcription and analysis. One could certainly design a companion study whose aim was to identify particular stylistic markers of Japanese popular music and explore the extent to which these aspects are evident in Korean or other popular musics, but such a stylistic comparison is not the intention of the present study. The approach I take in this dissertation falls well within the purview of the field of ethnomusicology as

evidenced by current published scholarship, and it also invites a wider readership of those interested in cultural studies and East Asian area studies but who might find musical analysis to be somewhat daunting.

A second limitation of this study is its focus throughout on Japanese popular music and culture in Korea, rather than on the full range of foreign popular cultural influences there. It will be clear, from the introductory coverage of Japanese and Korean popular music histories in Chapter Two and the section on American popular presence in Korea given in Chapter Six, that Western, and particularly American, influences have been very strong in both Japan and Korea. Brief mention is even made of Hong Kong popular music and film in Korea, but more comprehensive coverage of this and other foreign influences in Korea (or in Japan), however interesting and important, would lead away from the core issues at stake in this dissertation. The coverage of other foreign influences is, then, intended to provide comparative perspective on the Japanese presence in Korea.

A third delimitation of this study is its focus on the presence of Japanese popular music in Korea and the Korean public's overall perceptions of this presence, rather than an analysis of the sociological make-up of audiences, based on age, social class, and gender, in relation to particular genres and individual performers. As I mentioned earlier, accurate data on the sociological make-up of audiences up to the end of Open-Door Policy is unavailable due to the Korean government's official ban and restrictions. In Chapters Four and Five, however, I will provide brief coverage of typical audience configurations, as Korean audiences' consuming behavior and their opinions on the newly rising presence of Japan in Korea become more openly documented and discussed since the end of Open-Door Policy.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation draws on scholarly writings relevant to four broad subject areas: 1) transnational cultural traffic (& globalization/localization) and popular culture; 2) modern political history of Korea and Japan (colonial and postcolonial); 3) Korean popular music and culture; 4) Japanese popular music and culture.

1.3.1 Transnational Cultural Traffic: Globalization/Localization

The notion of cultural traffic or ‘traffic in culture’ began to figure prominently in anthropological works, such as those by James Clifford (in particular his *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 1996) and George Marcus and Fred Myers (especially the edited volume *Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, 1995). The traffic metaphor also figures in the more recent volume edited by Iwabuchi, Muecke, and Thomas (2004), *Rogue Flows: Trans-Asian Cultural Traffic*, which focuses primarily on East and Southeast Asia. The emphasis on the mobility of cultural forms goes against the grain of earlier anthropological and ethnomusicological studies, in which forms of cultural expression were studied only within their originating cultural context. In fact, the distinguished anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s statement that “art and the equipment to grasp it are made in the same shop”⁹ was a view widely shared by ethnomusicologists working in the 1970s and 1980s. While Geertz’s view is eloquently stated and true in some senses, it ignores what was soon to become perhaps the main focus of the next generation of anthropologists, and ethnomusicologists: globalization. In the following Chapters, I am expressly concerned with art made in “a different shop,” one intending its product partially,

⁹ Clifford Geertz, “Art as a Cultural System” in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. (New York: Basic Books, 1983) p. 118.

but not exclusively, for consumption in its country of origin. Moreover, I am concerned with the meaning surrounding its travel (being “trafficked”) to Korea.

The literature on globalization is now truly enormous. The word ‘globalization’ and its frequent companion (and apparent opposite), ‘localization,’ have appeared in the titles of hundreds of articles and books and in the pages of countless more. The spread of cultural forms, political systems, ways of thinking, ways of interacting, all fall under the rubric of ‘globalization.’ The process of such spread rarely occurs as a kind of homogenizing obliteration of local particularities, but instead through different processes of ‘localization,’ whereby what is spreading from one part of the world—most often the West, but increasingly from other places as well—does so as the receiving group develops new patterns of usage and meaning formation. Very often the mass media are involved in these processes, particularly with regard to the globalization (and localization) of expressive cultural forms, such as films, televised dramas, and music.

Among the major studies theorizing these processes, Appadurai’s work stands out, particularly his landmark *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996). The chapter “Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy” (originally published in *Public Culture*, 1990) outlines a theoretical framework for understanding globalization and localization (or what he calls ‘indigenization’). He suggests understanding the global situation (the ‘global now’) in terms of five categories of culture, which he calls “-scapes”: ethnoscapas, technoscapas, mediascapas, financescapas, and ideoscapas. Of these the mediascapas and technoscapas are particularly relevant to the current study. These two “-scapes” involve not only the media content (TV shows, pop songs) and technological devices (televisions, CDs, computers) themselves, but the ways people construct meanings around them, the ways they

enable people to imagine their own lives and the lives of others.¹⁰ This dissertation addresses the techno- and media-scapes through which Japanese pop reaches Koreans and questions whether the process can be seen as “indigenization.”

These processes of experience increasingly occur outside the contexts in which the cultural forms are produced and intended for consumption. Thus, Appadurai talks of ‘deterritorialization’—the delinking of cultural forms from the places and the peoples responsible for creating them. This concept would seem to apply to the phenomenon of Japanese pop spreading to Korea and other countries, but one needs to look carefully at the extent to which the ‘deterritorialization’ of Japanese pop is planned and orchestrated by industry forces in Japan and elsewhere. Ella Shohat’s and Robert Stam also emphasize deterritorialization in their discussion of postcoloniality, along with the related trend in formerly colonized countries away from discourses of anticolonialism.¹¹ While anti-Japanese discourse in Korea has by no means disappeared, it is markedly less prominent among young Koreans now than even a decade or two ago.

The term globalization overtly conveys the notion of worldwide spread, but in many cases, including the case under analysis in this dissertation, the spread is transnational, but still restricted mostly to one or several world regions rather than the entire globe.¹² In this context, two important books appeared in 2002. One is an edited volume clearly problematizing this notion in its title: *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (Berger and Huntington 2002). This work consists of an introduction laying out basic theoretical concerns for the understanding of the globalization/localization process, followed by a collection

¹⁰ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) p. 35.

¹¹ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. (London: Routledge, 1994) p. 38.

¹² Appadurai (1996:32) is careful to point out that the indigenizing process may involve Westernization (or Americanization) but also “Japanization” (in Korea), “Indianization” (in Sri Lanka), etc.

of essays addressing cases around the world. Of particular interest is the distinction made by Berger in his introduction, differentiating “sacramental” and “nonsacramental” consumption. He points out the reverence with which consumers may approach a newly imported form, treating something that was “nonsacramental” in the originating culture, but “sacramental” in the new one. Moreover, he notes that the status may change, usually from sacramental to nonsacramental, over time. Related to this concept is the idea of “culturedness” discussed by Tamotsu Aoki in his article in this collection, pointing out how Japan had adopted fast-food hamburger eating by promoting this “‘new Western culture’ as a fashion.” Simply put, to be fashionable (and, by implication, modern), one had to learn not only to consume what Westerners consumed, but also to do so “fashionably”—in the manner of Westerners. The issue of culturedness, or fashionability, in Korea’s consumption of Japanese pop, forms one dimension of my inquiry into what related aspects of Japanese behavior and belief are being adopted by Koreans.

The other book is Japanese scholar Iwabuchi’s landmark study of Japanese cultural forms in Asia: *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*, a work that focuses on the influx of Japanese popular culture to Taiwan, China, and Southeast Asia, but is ultimately a book about Japan’s changing sense of its own cultural self. Iwabuchi’s omission of Korea is acknowledged, but not accurately justified, as he fails to note the extensive illegal flow of Japanese popular forms into Korea. Nevertheless, his insights on globalization within Asia—or, more accurately, as he puts it in his subtitle “Japanese transnationalism”—are invaluable in shaping some of the basic questions I ask about Japanese popular music in Korea. Already cited previously, and related to the notion of culturedness just mentioned in my discussion above of Aoki’s article in Berger and Huntington (2002), is Iwabuchi’s notion of cultural “odor.” Following the success of culturally odorless Japanese export products,

electronics and automobiles, Japan has expanded to forms that have clear cultural “odor”—especially TV dramas and Japanese popular music. Iwabuchi’s cultural “odor” is comparable to my notion of cultural “presence,” and helps make clear the varying degrees of perceivable “Japaneseness” in different products. Even within the category of Japanese pop, can some songs, or some performers, represent greater Japanese cultural “odor” (or presence) than others?

Also important in Iwabuchi’s work is the historically-informed discussion of Japan’s unique positioning of itself with respect to the rest of Asia and to the West. Iwabuchi suggests that Japan saw itself as “similar but superior” and “in but above” Asia.¹³ Japan saw itself as best equipped and most successful in modernizing “according to the Western standard”¹⁴ — successfully offering the “indigenization and domestication of foreign (Western) culture.”¹⁵ This established what Iwabuchi sees as the Japan-Asia-West “triad.” Though originating in the 1930s, this posturing of Japan still seems relevant today, as Japan exports its modern and postmodern forms to the rest of Asia, under the project known as Japan’s “return to Asia.” An important question unasked by Iwabuchi is the extent to which Korea is part of that “rest of Asia” and how it might differ from other Asian countries.

Iwabuchi and other scholars writing specifically about Japanese popular cultural flow in Asia are, naturally, concerned with identifying and theorizing about which particular qualities and characteristics contribute to its success abroad. Iwabuchi mentions the “visible [or audible?] ‘Japaneseness’” of popular music, TV dramas, as well as magazines¹⁶ and later invokes Baudrillard in talking about a postmodern image of Japan as a “‘weightless artificial satellite,’

¹³ Iwabuchi Koichi, *Recentring Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p. 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹⁶ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 34.

which is concerned neither with origin nor authenticity.”¹⁷ However weightless or unconcerned Japanese pop may be, the question of audience perception remains: to what extent Koreans pay attention to these issues. Craig, in the introduction to his collection of essays on Japanese popular culture (in Japan and overseas) enumerates a number of reasons for the popularity of Japanese dramas, popular music, and other forms, including Japan’s reputation for quality (deriving from its reputation for electronics and automobiles), Japanese cuteness, the seeming approachability of its star performers, the kinds of themes (human relations) and optimistic, innocent, and unapologetic attitude pervasive in its dramas (and music). Some of these are also presented in Ogawa’s essay on Japanese popular music in Hong Kong.¹⁸ My efforts in this dissertation to identify particular traits of Japanese pop that appeal to Koreans include, but go beyond those mentioned by Ogawa and Craig.

When looking at processes of globalization/localization/indigenization, in addition to the questions about the accessibility or attractiveness of a cultural form “as is,” or as initially received, the question of adaptability and modification also arises, frequently under the general rubric of “hybridization.” Appadurai invokes this term in relation to his preferred “indigenization.” Iwabuchi also deals with the issue of hybridization, particularly in relation to the Japanese notion of *mukokuseki*, a term “widely used in Japan in two different, though not mutually exclusive ways” to suggest the mixing of elements of multiple cultural origins, and to imply the erasure of visible ethnic and cultural characteristics.”¹⁹ In the scrutiny of Japanese pop in this dissertation, I will consider the issue of hybridity and *mukokuseki* both with respect to

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 62.

¹⁸ Ogawa Masahi, “Japanese Popular Music in Hong Kong: What Does TK Present?” in *Refashioning Pop Music in Asia: Cosmopolitan Flows, Political Tempos and Aesthetic Industries*, edited by Allen Chun, Ned Rossiter, and Brian Shoemith. (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004) pp. 144-156.

¹⁹ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 71.

Japanese pop's own mix of elements, as well as whatever kinds of accommodations have occurred as Japanese popular music moves from Japan to Korea.

Japan's longstanding claims to being modern, and now post-modern, are addressed in a number of works, including Clammer 2001, Iwabuchi 2002, Morton 2001, Richie 2003, Thomas 2004, and are the primary focus of the 1989 volume edited by Miyoshi and Harootunian. This challenging work analyzes and "deconstructs" the conception of Japan as "uniquely postmodern and therefore superior to the West."²⁰ It warns against the widespread notion of Japaneseness as an "irreducible essence...unchanging and unaffected by history"²¹ as a potentially dangerous new form of "cultural exceptionalism (*Nihonjinron*) which Japanese have always appealed to as a form of defensive reaction to distinguish Japan from the West" (and, I would add, from its Asian neighbors). The questions raised by Miyoshi and Harootunian concerning "Japaneseness" relate directly to my own inquiry into Korean conceptions of Japaneseness (particularly the postmodern or, at least, non-traditional variety) as evident in Japanese popular music.

Dealing specifically with popular music throughout much of Asia, including Japan, the 2004 volume, *Refashioning Pop Music in Asia: Cosmopolitan Flows, Political Tempos and Aesthetic Industries*, edited by Chun, Rossiter and Shoemith is an important contribution to transnational flows in Asia. Ogawa's article considers the case of Japanese pop performer/promoter Komuro Tetsuya's appearance in Hong Kong, while Yano's article discusses the problematic position of Korean pop music and musicians in Japan in the 1990s. Chun and Rossiter's introduction points to the "reterritorialization" of certain popular musics within Asia (*cf.* Appadurai's "deterritorialization" and "indigenization" mentioned earlier). And like

²⁰ Miyoshi Masao and H. D. Harootunian, eds. *Postmodernism and Japan*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989) p. xvi.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. xvi.

Appadurai 1996, Berger and Huntington 2002, and Iwabuchi 2002, they argue against the idea of a single globalization, or Wallerstein's idea of the "modern world-system."²²

Finally, another important concept I draw upon in this dissertation is the notion of "aesthetic communities"—discussed with respect to popular music by Veit Erlmann,²³ but originating from the 19th century philosopher Immanuel Kant. This concept is quite similar to what Appadurai calls "communities of sentiment"²⁴—involving a shared imagination of reality, very often built on their shared media experiences (pop music, TV, etc.). I am concerned with audience identity and sentiment in Korea as such communities form around the consumption of Japanese pop. Can one talk of a single international Japanese popular music community, consisting of all who consume this music, or are there multiple communities even within a single country, such as Korea, in which Japanese popular music is just one of a number of determinants for "membership"?

1.3.2 Modern Political History of Korea and Japan: Colonial and Postcolonial

The modern political history of these two countries, Korea and Japan, has received the most scholarly attention both from the two countries and from the West because of the Japanese colonial invasion of Korea and other Asian countries during the first half of the twentieth century. Since some important issues remain unresolved in relation to the colonial period, including sex slavery (comfort women) and Japanese history textbook issues, some Korean and Japanese publications (including the history textbooks) on their political history can be overly

²² Allen Chun and Ned Rossiter, "Cultural Imaginaries, Musical Communities, Reflexive Practices: An Introduction" in *Refashioning Pop Music in Asia: Cosmopolitan Flows, Political Tempos and Aesthetic Industries*, edited by Allen Chun, Ned Rossiter, and Brian Shoemith. (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004) pp. 5-7.

²³ Veit Erlmann, "How Beautiful is Small? Music, Globalization and the Aesthetics of the Local." *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 30: 12-21, 1998.

²⁴ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) p. 8.

nationalistic and require careful and critical examination to see beyond certain biases. Still, there is plentiful material about modern political history of Korea and Japan (in Korean, Japanese, and English) to draw upon to be able to offer in this dissertation a sense of the issues and their background.

Among the English publications, Adrian Buzo's *The Making of Modern Korea* (2002), Pai Hyung Il and Timothy R. Tangherlini's *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity* (1998), Lee Chong-Sik's *Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension* (1985), Donald Stone MacDonald's *The Koreans: Contemporary Politics and Society* (1990), Eguchi Bokuro's *Gendai no Nihon* (1976), and Ann Waswo's *Modern Japanese Society 1868-1994* provide detailed coverage of the two countries' modern political history. The most useful work for this study is Shin Gi-Wook and Michael Robinson's *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (1999), which offers a critical analysis of colonial and modern Korea. The focus of the work is primarily on modern Korea's social and political environment, but it also analyzes the chaotic residual effects remaining from the Japanese colonial invasion, as they point out in the introduction "Rethinking Colonial Korea."

The problematic political relationship between Korea and Japan drew the attention of many Korean scholars, as we can find a number of works on Japan and its relation to Korea. Hong Jin-Hee's *Ilbonûn Han'guk Yôksarûl Wae Bitturo Karûchilkka?* (Why Does Japan Distort Korean History? 1992) attempts to analyze the issue of Japanese history textbooks and their erasure of many aspects of Japanese subjugation of Korea and Korea's resistance. This erasure, as much as the brutal experiences themselves, has long been one of the most sensitive colonial issues for many Koreans. Drawing on Hong's and other sources to construct a background on Korea-Japan relations, I document and interpret the import of Japanese pop as one new development in the evolving relationship between these two countries, suggesting (somewhat

controversially, from a Korean perspective) that Korea has not been totally innocent of erasure or distortion in the realm of acknowledging its own fascination and embrace of Japanese popular culture.

Indeed, scholarly writings on Japan-Korea relations, important and insightful though they may be, have barely begun to scrutinize the shifts in Korea's stance vis-à-vis Japanese popular culture, or even to delve into cultural implications of transnational popular culture tastes. Yi Yon, *et al. Ilbon Taejung Munhaw Pekkigi* (Copying Japanese Popular Culture, 1998) offers useful description of Korea's borrowings from Japan in the realm of popular culture, but does so matter-of-factly without offering critical interpretation or suggesting the implications for Korean notions of Japanese-ness or of their own identity. It is my intention in this dissertation not only to provide wide coverage of specific instances of Korean copying and imitating of Japanese popular music and Korea's changing patterns of consumption of Japanese popular music "as is" but also to explore the deeper cultural implication of these behaviors.

1.3.3 Korean Popular Music and Culture

Until the debut in 1992 of Seo Taiji, one of the most important musicians in Korean popular music history, Korean scholars and popular culture critics showed very little interest in popular music and its important socio-cultural implications. As Seo Taiji's influence on Korean youth and general popular culture in Korea grew enormously within a month and continued even after his initial retirement as a band member in 1996, Korean scholars and critics began to analyze the meanings and impact of popular music through Seo Taiji's music and audience behaviors. More than a dozen books and major articles exclusively on Seo Taiji have been published in Korea, and most publications on Korean popular music in general regularly include Seo Taiji's impact on Korean popular culture and music since the early 1990s. Kang Hun's *Seo Taiji:*

Overthrowing Mainstream (1994), Kang Myong-Suk's *Seo Taiji rûl ilgûmyôn Munhwaga poinda* (Understanding Culture through Seo Taiji, 1995), Yi Yông-Mi's *Seo Taijiwa Kkottaji* (Seo Taiji and Flower Bouquet, 1995), and Yi Tong-Yun's *Seo Taiji nûn Uriege Muôsi yônna* (What was Seo Taiji for Us?, 1999) each provided a detailed study of the impact of Seo Taiji and popular music more generally on the contemporary Korean society.²⁵

Among others, Pak Ae-Gyông's *Kayo, Ottôk'e Ilgûl Kôsin'ga* (How to understand Korean Popular Music, 2000), Sôn Sông-Wôn's *Taejung Umak ûi Ppuri* (The Roots of Popular Music, 1996), and Lee Young-Mi's *Han'guk Taejung Kayosa* (History of Korean Popular Music, 1998) provide a history of Korean popular music, with particular attention to socio-political conditions that are essential to understand as a basis for this study. Also, another book by Lee Young-Mi's other *Hûngnam Pudu ûi Kûmsuninûn Odiro Kassûlkka* (Where is Kûmsuni from Hûngnam Wharf, 2002) attempts to evaluate popular musicians and musical styles in relation to the social, political, and economic contexts of the periods. As she briefly points out, many TV animations and their title songs since the late 1960s were directly translated to Korean from Japanese without declaration of their origin. Unfortunately she did not go further on this issue. The impact of such hidden presence of Japan in Korea is not a simple issue, because those animation title songs are still widely sung by Koreans who grew up watching those animations, and have become an important factor in their capacity to enjoy Japanese popular music as adults (a kind of "built-in" familiarity with Japanese sound).

Since the study of Korean popular music in the field of ethnomusicology has barely started, there are only few sources in English available. Among them, Keith Howard's article "Exploding Ballads: The Transformation of Korean Pop Music" in *Global Goes Local: Popular*

²⁵ Also, see Eun-Young Jung, "Articulating Korean Youth Culture through Global Popular Music Styles: Seo Taiji's Use of Rap and Metal," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 109-122.

Culture in Asia (2002)²⁶ provides a brief summary of Korean popular music scenes in the 1980s and the early 90s. The recently published book *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave* (June 2006), which is the first English-language book on Korean popular music, covers various Korean popular music genres and important socio-political issues from as far back as the early 1920s, and it also covers the recent popularity of Korean popular music outside Korea, including China and Taiwan.

1.3.4 Japanese Popular Music and Culture

Since the mid 70s, the Japanese record industry has been the second biggest in the world.²⁷ As a result, compared to other Asian popular musics, Japanese popular music has received the most scholarly attention in the field of ethnomusicology, and scholarly interest on Japanese popular music seems to be growing each year in the West. However, as a preliminary investigation of the literature in English, Japanese, and Korean shows, most writing in Japanese has remained rather non-scholarly in style and coverage, and this condition has not improved much yet in Japan.

Nevertheless, there are a few important scholarly works in Japanese that inform the present study. Important preliminary sources include the following works: ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio's *Kayokyoku no Kozo* (The Structure of Pop Songs, 1984), which analyzes melodic style in mainstream songs and *enka* of the 1960s to early 1980s, ethnomusicologist Kitagawa Junko's *Nari-hibiku 'sei' – Nihon no Popyura Ongaku to Jenda* (Resounding 'sex' –

²⁶ Keith Howard, "Exploding Ballads: The Transformation of Korean Pop Music" in *Global Goes Local: Popular Culture in Asia*, edited by Timothy J. Craig and Richard King. (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawaii Press, 2002) pp. 80-95.

²⁷ Mitsui Toru, "Japan in Japan: Notes on an Aspect of the Popular Music Record Industry in Japan." *Popular Music* 3: 107-120, 1983, p. 107.

gender and Japanese popular music, 1999), which is an anthology on gender issues in Japanese popular music, and Sato Yoshiaki's *J-POP Shinka-ron: "Yosahoi-bushi" kara "Automatic" e* (Evolutionary Theory of J-POP from "Yosahoi-bushi" to "Automatic," 1999), which is an anthology of over 500 post-WWII Japanese popular songs discussing historical development of Japanese popular songs from nostalgic rhymes to contemporary Japanese pop. Also, sociologist Ogawa Hiroshi's edited book, *Ongaku Suru Shakai* (A Music-making Society, 1988) and *Media Jidai no Ongaku to Shakai* (Music and Society in the Media Age, 1993) offer critical analyses of Japanese popular music from various insiders' points of view. In *Ongaku Suru Shakai*, each author examines different genres and aspects of Japanese popular music in relation to different social environments of the particular time periods.

Perhaps the most important work among the general and introductory writings on Japanese popular music is *A Guide to Popular Music in Japan* published by IASPM-Japan in 1991, which is the first English-language book on modern Japanese music. It is organized by the different genres of Japanese popular music from as early as the Meiji Era (1868-1912), offering definitions and brief histories, but little cultural interpretation.²⁸ In addition to this guidebook, there are substantial publications offering introduction to Japanese popular music both in English and Japanese including McClure's *Nippon Pop* (1998) and Hideki Take's *J-Pop Jihyo 1989-2001* (Comments on J-Pop, 2001).

Among the studies on Japanese popular music, those on musical genre and music industry have been the most frequent, both in English and Japanese. Although there are many different popular music genres in Japan, the majority of the studies on musical genre are about either *enka* or *Idol-pop*. Besides these two genres, in contemporary Japan, various different

²⁸ The editors, Hosokawa Shuhei, Matsumura Hiroshi, and Shiba Shunichi, noted in the preface that the booklet is intended "to be a brief outline of the most fundamental aspects of the music's history, present state, and industry" and to let overseas people know more about the popular music scene in Japan.

genres and hybrid forms of those genres exist, including the mainstream modern Japanese pop (also J-pop²⁹ in a narrow meaning), rock, visual rock, hard rock, metal, electronic, techno, dance, rap and hip-hop, R&B, computer game songs, and ethnic pop. Although *Idol-pop* and mainstream J-pop genres seemed rather popular in Korea during the early stage of the Open-Door Policy, more and more diverse Japanese popular music genres, particularly visual rock (which is quite a significant Japanese genre), have become popular most recently.

Among the studies on the Japanese music industry, Mitsui Toru's 1997 article, which is organized by different musical genres, covers important factual data about the music business. Other works on the Japanese popular music business include Kawabata Shigeru's "The Japanese Record Industry" in *Popular Music* (1991), which analyzes various data on record sales and productions in the Japanese music industry during 1989-1990 (produced by JPRA, the Japan Phonograph Record Association), and Kimura Atsuko's article "Japanese Corporations and Popular Music" in the same issue of *Popular Music*, which investigates big companies' advertising strategies through their sponsorships for popular music concerts in Japan. Kurata Yoshihiro's *Nihon Rekodo Bunka-shi* (A History of Japanese Record Culture, 1992) and Mitsushige Takemura's *Utada Hikaru no Tsukurikata* (How to Make Utada Hikaru. 2001) are the most useful writings on the music business in Japanese. These sources are valuable for this study as the two countries' music industries engage in various kinds of collaboration/negotiation as they grow closer together. Thus, what happens in the music business world in Japan may have direct repercussions in Korea.

²⁹ The term "J-pop" is often used outside Japan to refer Japanese popular music in general. However, the term also refers the mainstream Japanese popular music as well.

Karaoke (literally, “empty orchestra”) originated in Japan in the 1970s and has become the number one leisure pastime in Japan and some other Asian countries since the early 1990s.³⁰ The best resource on karaoke is the famous book, *Karaoke around the World: Global Technology, Local Singing*, edited by the two most prominent scholars in the field of Japanese popular music, Hosokawa Shuhei and Mitsui Toru (1999). As the editors claimed, “it is a medium which simultaneously evokes musical technologies, personal experiences and collective memories which go far beyond microphones and pre-recorded accompaniment.”³¹ Indeed, *karaoke* experience can be understood in various social and cultural contexts as a specific musical experience and its influence in Korea has been profound. In Korea, the Japanese word “karaoke” has been replaced by the Korean word “noraebang” (lit., “song room”) in general while the Japanese word “karaoke” has been used to indicate nighttime adult-only *karaoke* places (serving alcohol), which reflect the ironic response of Korean’s uneasy feeling toward using Japanese language in Korea.

Among the few studies on gender issues relating to Japanese popular music, Fabienne Darling-Wolf’s article “SMAP, Sex, and Masculinity: Constructing the Perfect Female Fantasy in Japanese Popular Music” in *Popular Music* (2004) and James Stanlaw’s article, “Open Your File, Open Your Mind: Women, English, and Changing Roles and Voices in Japanese Pop Music” in the book *Japan Pop!* (Craig 2000) analyze the meanings of pop stars’ gender roles. Darling-Wolf’s article suggests that the band SMAP gained extensive popularity by projecting their images as sex objects to both male and female fans through performing all kinds of recurring skits on TV variety shows. Since the band SMAP is one of the most popular Japanese popular music groups in Korea, Darling-Wolf’s study is a useful one for the purposes of this

³⁰ See Donald Richie, “Leisure Options” in *The Image Factory: Fads & Fashions in Japan*. (London: Reaktion, 2003) pp. 86-89.

³¹ Mitsui Toru and Hosokawa Shuhei, eds. *Karaoke around the World: Global Technology, Local Singing*. (London: Routledge, 1999) p. i.

study. Unfortunately, Darling-Wolf's attempt to analyze the band's male sexuality and androgyny in relation to *Kabuki* tradition seems overly simplified, writing from her Western view on a very complicated gender issue in Japan.

Scholarly awareness of the important influences of Japanese popular music on local popular music culture in other Asian countries, influenced by the popularity of globalization issues in the field of ethnomusicology in general, is rapidly growing, as cultural exchanges among those countries have been rapidly growing in recent years. Yet writings on this issue are still relatively rare, with Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea being covered so far. Meaningful research on this issue has likely been limited because of the fact that it requires equal understanding of both Japanese pop and of local pop scenes at the same time. Published studies include Benjamin Wai-ming Ng's "Japanese Popular Music in Singapore and the Hybridization of Asian Music" in *Asian Music* (2002/2003) and Ogawa Masashi's "Japanese Popular Music in Hong Kong: What Does TK Present?" in Chun *et al.* 2004. Ng compares Japanese pop concerts' less successful environment in Singapore to Taiwan and Hong Kong, where various Japanese pop concerts are regularly offered to fans. And Ogawa's article analyzes the failure of Komuro's Hong Kong performance to live up to Hong Kong producers' expectations.

Since the early 1990s, studies on Japanese culture and society began to increase, and as Korea lifted the ban in the late 1990s a number of studies on Japanese popular culture, including popular music, began to appear in Korea. Most of them give introduction to Japanese popular music in general and some of them are even translated versions of Japanese publications. There are a few books and articles that exclusively deal with the influence of Japanese popular culture and music in Korea. However, they often only focus on one particular genre, Japanese *enka*, and its connection to Korean *t'ûrot'û* or *ppongtchak* and fail to mention other important and more recent influences on Korean popular music. Among the very few publications on the issue,

Korean popular music critic Im Jin-Mo's chapter "Taejung Kayo, Kkût ômnûn Pyojôl ûi Segye (Popular Music, World of Endless Piracy)" in *Ilbon Taejungmunhwa Bekkigi* (Copying Japanese Popular Culture, 1998), which includes a list of pirated Japanese songs in Korea, provides valuable information for this dissertation. Also, the other chapters in the book offer important background information on the hidden presence of Japan in Korea before the Open-Door Policy begun. Even though the scholarly situation seems to be improving, as some efforts have resulted in establishing a journal for popular music studies (*Popyura Ongaku Kenkyu*)³² since 1997 in Japan and a society for Korea Association of Study Popular Music (KASPM) since 2005 in Korea, still most important books and articles have been written in English and published outside Japan--as pointed out recently by Japanese music scholar Hugh de Ferranti³³—and outside Korea.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Much of the material on which this dissertation is based was collected throughout my graduate studies in the United States and during my visits to Korea and Japan as well as Korean and Japanese communities in the United States since 1998. In addition to my personal accounts of the hidden, illegal presence of Japan in Korea while I was growing up in Korea, I have actively followed developments in Korea's popular music world and the growing presence of Japan through various media since I came to the United States in 1998. Aside from the relevant literature discussed above, I draw from three types of sources to support this study: 1) primary sources; 2) audio and video recordings; and 3) internet sources.

³² *Popyura Ongaku Kenkyu* (Popular Music Studies) is organized by Nihon Popyura Ongaku Gakkai in Japan.

³³ Hugh de Ferranti, "Japanese Music Can Be Popular." *Popular Music* 21(2), 2002: 198.

1.4.1 Primary Sources

Besides the scholarly writings on Japanese and Korean popular musics and cultures in English, Japanese, and Korean which are available through library research, recent newspaper and magazine articles have been essential for my research. Unlike traditional music, for popular music studies, it is critical to note that researchers need to be self-sufficient and innovative in acquiring various kinds of secondary resources, which can often offer more important information than the available scholarly writings do. In the fields of Japanese popular music culture in Japan and Korea, as well as Korean popular music culture in Korea and Japan, there are numerous *pyongnon* (called *hyoron* in Japanese), that is, writings by music and culture critics for a general readership. Along with other kinds of information about popular music, forms of *pyongnon* (including reviews of recording and concert performance, interviews with musicians, producers, and managers, and critical essays) for a general readership are commonly available in Japan and Korea from daily newspapers, popular music and culture magazines, TV and radio programs, and internet websites). I have been examining the major Korean newspapers including *DongA Ilbo*, *Hanguk Ilbo*, *Jungang Ilbo*, and *Korean Herald* regularly, as well as the Japanese *Asahi Sinbun* and *Mainichi Sinbun* from 1998 onward, mainly focusing on those *pyongnon* on popular music.

Music magazines and fashion magazines are also important sources for this research because pop music stars' appearances (photos, interviews) in those magazines are directly related to their promotion and reflect their popularity. Since many pop music stars' commercial appeal is more closely related to their image than to their musical talent, their appearance in fashion magazines as fashion icon/leaders becomes critical to their success. I draw on around 100 issues of Korean and Japanese music and fashion magazines (Korean: *Junior*, *EnFant*, *Ceci*, and *52*

Street, Japanese: *Myojo*, *Cancam*, *NonNo*, *Japan Entertainment*, *Potato*, *Arena37C*, *Fool's Mate*, *Girl Pop*, *K-Boom*, and *CD Data*) from 1998 onward.

1.4.2 Audio and Video Recordings

My research materials also include audio recordings of both Korean and Japanese popular musics from the early 1980s to the latest CDs, purchased in Korea, Japan, and the United States. Since I came to the United States in 1998, I have been watching Japanese music TVs and other Japanese variety TV shows as well as Korean TV programs obtained from friends and local Korean and Japanese markets that rent videos and DVDs. The Japanese music programs include weekly programs, such as *HeyHeyHey*, *Utaban*, *Music Station*, and *Count Down TV*, which contain pop stars' live performances, the latest concerts and album promotions, interviews, and game shows, as well as weekly music ranking charts. Since 2004, a few Korean cable TV stations began to air some music programs, exclusively or partially, showing Japanese pop music videos and introducing Japanese pop stars to Korean viewers. Those programs include M-net's *J-Pop Wave* and *Pop-Japan*, KMTV's *J-Pop Non-Stop* and *World Pops*,³⁴ MTV Korea's *J-Beat*, and Channel [V] Korea's *J-Pop Zone* and *J-Pop Street*.³⁵ Except for *J-Pop Zone* (which airs Monday through Friday twice per day), these programs are usually aired twice per week: the original broadcast and one rebroadcast. *J-pop Wave*, as an example, was hosted by Japanese model Menjo Tatsuya from 2005 to 2006 offering exclusively Japanese pop--including several music videos, general entertainment news, *Oricon* charts, new musicians and new albums, and interviews with popular musicians. Most of these stations broadcast over the internet.

³⁴ *World-Pops* has devoted exclusively to Japanese pop music more or less every other week from 2005.

³⁵ *J-Pop Street* was aired until September 2004.

1.4.3 Internet Sources

Most Korean TV stations, cable or regular (“terrestrial”), offer internet service at little or no cost, and this has allowed me to access the latest popular music news in Korea and Japan instantly. In addition to the internet TV services, for contemporary Korean and Japanese popular music research, some internet research is indispensable. Countless numbers of websites about Japanese popular musical genres can be found, both in Korean and in Japanese (which can be translated to Korean with a few clicks). These can roughly be divided into four categories: musicians’ official sites, individual fan and fan club sites, entertainment news sites, and shopping sites. From these websites, I have been able to obtain a wide range of information about Japanese popular music and much more, including introductory information about Japanese pop in general, profiles of singers, the most up-to-date discographies, concert and broadcasting schedules, audio and video clips of newly released songs, lyrics, photos, cellular phone ringer service, ranking charts, fan club meeting, forum, gossip, and shopping information. Indeed, the quantity of data available on the internet is truly staggering, and it requires vigilance on the part of the researcher, as content changes constantly and “archiving” of these materials is random at best. Also, I fully recognize that the reliability of internet sources varies widely, and I have therefore exercised diligence in evaluating the sites I have accessed for this study, giving emphasis to official websites of major corporations, music labels, international organizations, as well as national governments. For fan websites, I have drawn mostly on the opinions expressed and the images presented. Yet because so much more information concerning recent popular music is available on the internet than in printed sources, it is incumbent on any researcher with serious interest in popular music to search far and wide on the internet. (We can see this trend already set in

motion a decade ago in the work of Timothy Taylor on global pop music,³⁶ and in numerous more recent studies.)

1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The dissertation encompasses six chapters beyond this introduction. I trace the “presence” of Japan in Korea chronologically in the three core Chapters Three, Four, and Five. The four research issues identified earlier in this chapter will emerge and be treated in each chronological period, with further elaboration and interpretation in Chapter Six. In short, the chapter organization is based not upon research issues, but on historical chronology, thereby providing an important dimension to the study. Here, in Chapter One, it has been my intent to lay out the basic rationale for the dissertation. It has presented some of the key concepts from recent scholarship on globalization, transnational “traffic”, as well as Korean and Japanese popular music sources, both scholarly and popular/commercial.

Chapter Two serves as the primary background chapter for the main body of the dissertation. Here I discuss the historical relationship between Japan and Korea, going back to the sixteenth century, but concentrating on the twentieth century, and particularly the post-colonial period. A second section considers the present political environment and the contradictory forces contributing to contemporary Korea-Japan relations, including the co-hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan, the objections raised by Korea over Japan’s distortion of its colonial past in school textbooks, and Japan’s continued claims for Dokdo/Takeshima Island. This chapter also provides basic introductions to Korean popular

³⁶ See Timothy Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets*. (New York: Routledge, 1997).

music and Japanese popular music, with mention of early roots and interactions, but mostly focused on current popular music (1990s to present) and its most recent antecedents (1970s-1980s). The sections on music incorporate some historical background on the music industries of Korea and Japan (particularly the recording industries), providing some background to my presentation of more detailed data in subsequent chronological coverage in following three chapters.

Chapter Three, “Japan’s Illegal Presence” begins with an historical overview of transnational traffic from Japan into Korea of a range of popular culture forms: *manga/manhwa* (comic books), *anime* (animation), computer games, character goods, television, movies, magazines, fashion, and cuisine. This serves as essential context for the subsequent coverage of the illegal cassettes of Japanese popular music available in Korea in the 1980s and 1990s. The chapter then looks in detail at a landmark incident in the history of Japanese musical presence in Korea—the illegal cover version in 1996 by the Korean group Roo’Ra of a rather obscure Japanese hit. The Korean public’s response to the controversial incident is discussed in detail. This leads to a focus on the highly contentious issue of Korea’s ban on Japanese popular cultural imports and the opinions for and against an Open-Door Policy that led to the lifting of the ban.

Chapter Four, “Japan’s Transitional Presence,” focuses on the period from 1998 to 2003, the period during which the Korean government’s Open-Door Policy on Japanese imports was implemented. Following an introductory section on the political and economic circumstances of the late 1990s in Korea, I discuss the Four-Stage Plan of the Open-Door Policy, with emphasis on the place of popular music. The discussion also addresses the contradictory responses to this policy in the context of Koreans’ nationalistic attitudes, reinvigorated by the controversy over Japan’s misrepresentations of its colonial history in government textbooks, but mitigated by Japan’s and Korea’s successful collaboration in hosting the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan.

The second main section of this chapter considers the rather narrow range of Japanese popular music actually imported into Korea during this period. The kinds of media used were also constrained, with imports of Japanese-produced CDs of Japanese popular music with lyrics sung in Japanese still banned until January 2004. This section also addresses issues of audience reception during this critical transitional phase, presenting evidence of great initial curiosity on the part of the many listeners who were already actively consuming Korean popular music.

Chapter Five, “Japan’s Newly Sanctioned Presence and Two-Way Traffic” looks closely at the era after the phasing in of the Open-Door Policy, after the lifting of nearly all restrictions on the importing and dissemination of Japanese popular music and related forms in January 2004. I am concerned here with identifying the genres and performers that have been finding a following in Korea, in the wake of the initial curiosity and enthusiasm over the new accessibility of Japanese imports. I explore the full range of media exposure through which Koreans can experience Japanese popular music. Here, I go beyond the initial discussion of the music industries (in Chapter Two) to provide a closer view of industry policies and marketing strategies in the post 2004 era, with focus on ways in which the Korean and Japanese music industries collaborate and compete as the markets have become open. I also provide examples of the kinds of information and opinions shared by members of the growing internet-based Japanese popular music communities created by Korean fans and draw on these as well as direct interviews to reach an understanding of which aspects of Japanese pop are attractive to Koreans (as well as which ones are not). And because it is an integral aspect of the current popular cultural environment in Korea recently, I consider Japanese popular music’s further success in Korea in relation to the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) in Japan, providing comparative data and questioning the imbalance in Korean awareness and perceptions about these forms of transnational cultural traffic.

Following these three chronologically-based chapters, Chapter Six, “Transnational Dynamics,” offers a more interpretive look at the descriptions and patterns that have emerged over the last decade. Here I expand the inquiry to look beyond the singular instance of Korea’s importation of Japanese popular music to consider other intra-Asian popular cultural traffic—focusing on music, but touching on TV dramas and other forms. I compare the Korean case to other areas in Asia that have developed strong markets for Japanese popular music, such as Taiwan and Hong Kong, Singapore, and other Southeast Asian countries. In the second section of this chapter, I venture into more interpretive territory, addressing issues of postcolonial desire. Here I offer an overall evaluation of important themes relating to postcolonial and neo-national dynamics in Korea itself, moving toward the core questions about the unique and historically-contingent “presence” of Japan and Japaneseness in contemporary Korea. I do so by first considering patterns of similarity and contrast between Japanese popular music and other imported popular music in Korea, including items from the West, especially the U.S.A., and from Hong Kong. I then draw together evidence from the previous chapters to create a sharply focused picture of Koreans’ current perception of what is “Japanese” and what “Japanese” qualities are especially appealing to Koreans, or, more complexly, might evoke resistance and allure simultaneously. The Korean government’s frequent changes of cultural policies in response to the “presence” of Japan in Korea in recent years are the evidence of Korea’s newly re-invigorated nationalistic attitude, which I intend to document and analyze in this chapter.

In a final concluding chapter, I offer a brief summary of the key points of the previous chapters and then draw back my lenses once again to consider the wider terrain of popular music and contemporary Korean society, looking at the persistence of certain genres and styles over time and the introduction of new ones (from Japan and elsewhere) and offering some likely scenarios for the future of Japanese popular music in Korea and of Korea’s changing attitudes

towards Japan. I conclude with some reflection on the nature of “aesthetics” in transnational cultural flows.

2.0 KOREA AND JAPAN: CULTURAL RELATIONS AND POPULAR MUSIC TRADITIONS

Before focusing directly on the presence of Japanese popular music in Korea, I present in this chapter historical background, providing a context essential for understanding the recent cultural traffic discussed subsequently. The first section covers the troubled historical relationship between Korea and Japan from the colonial period, the second section introduces Japanese and Korean popular music from the early twentieth century, and the third section offers brief introductions to Japanese and Korean popular music industries. Though the focus of the dissertation is on the contemporary situation and very recent past, the issues at stake have their origin in developments taking shape through the politically and culturally tumultuous twentieth century.

2.1 RELATIONS BETWEEN KOREA AND JAPAN

2.1.1 Pre-Colonial Era to 1997

Relations between Korea and Japan have historically been strained ever since the Japanese general Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) invaded Korea with his army in 1592,³⁷ wreaking havoc on Korea before finally being repelled in 1598. As Japan's imperial designs began to develop again towards the end of the nineteenth century, Japan positioned itself as the beacon of a Western-modeled modernity within the Asian region and proclaimed its interpretation of that modernity (by force) to the rest of Asia. Colonial occupation and annexation of Korea by Japan (1910-1945) kindled extreme resentment and hatred, while at the same time instilling a ponderous sense of Japanese superiority. In order to understand postmodern Korea and its continuously conflicting relationships with Japan, it is crucial to understand the unique nature of the Japanese colonization of Korea and what it has meant to most Koreans even today. The colonization ended more than a half century ago and the two countries have been attempting to rework their relationship for the new century, at least on the surface, but underneath the friendly political gestures, strong prejudices against each other have persisted.

Compared with Japanese colonialism in other East Asian countries, Japanese colonial rule in Korea aimed to be an especially powerful program for demolishing its national identity even in everyday life, beyond political and economic domination and brutal torture—a systematic de-Koreanization and Japanization.³⁸ For example, all public officials, including

³⁷ Exactly 200 years after the founding of the Yi dynasty, Korea's longest continuous dynasty, lasting from 1392 until Japanese annexation in 1910.

³⁸ Between 1895 and 1945, Japanese colonies included Taiwan, Korea, Sakhalin Island, the Kwantung territory in Manchuria, and the South Sea Islands. See Edward I-Te Chen, "Japanese Colonialism: An Overview" in *Japan Examined: Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, edited by Harry Wray and Hilary Conroy. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983) p. 201.

school teachers, had to wear Japanese military uniforms and sabers to promote fear and respect.³⁹ Also, the colonial regime abolished the rights of speaking and assembly and prohibited political associations and mutual aid societies, including any kind of meetings outdoors. In compliance with the rule, Korea (the Yi dynasty) was renamed “Chosen” based on the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese characters for Korea. Thus, Koreans had to use the term, which they pronounced as “Chosôn,” instead of Yi dynasty--after more than five centuries of history.

As part of the de-Koreanization strategy, Japan forced Koreans to change their Korean names to Japanese names. The renaming policy was considered to be one of the most successful ones as many Koreans commonly used Japanized Korean names for many decades in Korea even after the liberation. However, the most crucial attempt of Japan’s assimilation policy was the prohibition of the Korean language, perhaps the most critical element of the national identity. The process of de-Koreanization for a complete and permanent annexation was executed through the educational system, which was controlled by thousands of Japanese teachers from Japan. All textbooks were in Japanese, and all the books and other printed materials on Korean history and biographies of illustrious Koreans were destroyed. Korean students were prohibited from studying Korean history; instead, they were directed to study Japanese culture and history. In addition to those prohibition orders, Japanese educational policy prevented most Koreans from receiving a high level of education, so that Koreans would not use advanced academic knowledge against Japan.⁴⁰ The racial discrimination through this policy of academic suppression was strictly carried out during the colonial period.

³⁹ Kim Han-Kyo, “Japanese Colonialism in Korea,” in *Japan Examined: Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, edited by Harry Wray and Hilary Conroy. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983) p. 223.

⁴⁰ See Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change* (New Jersey, London, Singapore, Hong Kong: World Scientific, 2001) p. 35.

It should be noted that while most Koreans claim themselves to be anti-Japanese and show strong patriotic attitude against anything Japanese until today, a number of Koreans, especially those of who were educated under the Japanese educational system during the colonial period, became deeply Japanized, or at least accustomed to the Japanese system of education and politics. This can be easily found throughout the post-liberation Korean society. Furthermore, a number of the leading powers in various fields, including politics, economy, education, arts, and religions after the liberation were actually pro-Japanese.⁴¹ As international relations expert, Juergen Kleiner, also points out, the Japanese educational system left affects that had reached to the following Korean generations:

Quite a number of politicians of South Korea have received their training in Mukden (in the Manchurian military academy in the allegedly independent state of Manchukuo in Mukden), among others, President Park Chung Hee and Chung Il Kwon, a Prime Minister and Speaker. To have received one's training in the military academy in Mukden was something to be proud of in the Republic of Korea....What Koreans tend to overlook is how much the ideology of their post-liberation leadership on running a state was shaped during the Japanese period. The Japanese model of strict administration in the absence of politics was revived later by Park Chung Hee.⁴²

Another important point in relation to the Japanese colonial period is that the racial discrimination and academic suppression policies of Japan stimulated the Korean nationalism that Koreans had retained from earlier centuries. Many scholars noted this as the least successful aspect of the Japanese colonialism.

⁴¹ In February. 28. 2002, the list of 708 pro-Japanese Koreans during the colonial period was announced by the Korea Liberation Association and the members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, *Hankyoreh News*, March 1. 2002.

⁴² Kleiner, *op. cit.* pp. 42-43.

Colonial rule helped arouse Korean nationalism, albeit inadvertently. Koreans had long had a sense of national identity even before the advent of modern changes, perhaps because of the frequent incursions into their territory by northern tribes and occasional invasions by Chinese and Japanese. Japanese colonial rule in the twentieth century was more systematic and effective than any previous experience; by the same token, however, it helped bring forth a more virulent and more widely shared sense of nationality among Koreans. Racial discrimination fed the fire of nationalism among the discriminated. Throughout the colonial period Koreans doggedly carried on, in Korea and abroad, political agitation and activities of armed resistance against Japanese rule.⁴³

Following its surrender at the end of World War II, the Japanese nation abandoned the military project and turned its efforts towards economic development. Japan's successful operation following the advanced Western economic model soon outshone its Asian neighbors, who lagged far behind in terms of standard of living and international economic stature. As Japan became the second biggest economic power in the world in the 1980s, Japan's notion of being superior to other Asian nations came to be reinstated. As Iwabuchi aptly puts it, Japan saw itself once again as "similar but superior" or "in but above" Asia.⁴⁴

In Korea, since the end of Japanese colonial rule, Koreans have maintained a strong nationalistic antagonism toward Japan and anything related to Japan, but at the same time have unwittingly been envious of its international economic and political accomplishments and fascinated as well as repulsed by its expanding cultural power. Koreans' undeniable "superiority/inferiority complex" (which became rather pride/shame and attraction/repulsion kinds after the independence) towards Japan since the end of the colonization period has always been one of the major driving forces for restoring Korean nationalism. Korea's envy of Japan's international success became a positive motivation for Koreans to put their every effort toward

⁴³ Kim Han-Kyo, *op. cit.* p. 227.

⁴⁴ Iwabuchi Koichi, *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p. 8.

economic development from the early 1970s (shortly after Japanese-Korean relations were normalized in 1965) under the Park Chung-Hee military regime (1963-1979), which took Japan as a role model for political stability and economic development. The Korean elites that emerged after the liberation of 1945 and assumed Korea's leadership roles, especially under the Park Chung-Hee regime, had an intimate knowledge of Japan. Like most of them, Park Chung-Hee, who himself was educated in a Japanese military school and worked for the Japanese as a military officer during the colonial period, took the Japanese model of industrialization when Japan's economy boomed in the 1960s and 70s.

Despite the Korean public's deep hatred towards Japan, Park Chung-Hee normalized relations with Japan in 1965 and turned to Japan for technology, equipment, and a model for development. Since then, Japan has been a major investor in Korea, and the economic relationship between the two countries has become exceedingly close despite their conflicting political relationships and deep-seated prejudice against each other. Beginning in 1965, Japan and Korea held annual foreign ministerial meetings in order to discuss trade.⁴⁵ Because Japan's economy was much more advanced than Korea's, the Korea-Japan trading relationship has always been unbalanced. For example, Japan's exports to Korea have been around twice as large as Korea's exports to Japan even during the 1980s and 1990s when Korea's annual GDP growth was 5.5%-9.0%.⁴⁶ However, Japan and Korea kept their close economic relationships as primary trading partners with each other.

⁴⁵ Along with other controversial matters including the Korean minority in Japan, the content of Japan's history textbooks, and Japan's relations with North Korea.

⁴⁶ See *The Bank of Korea*, [www. bok. or. kr.](http://www.bok.or.kr) (accessed July. 3. 2006).

2.1.2 Since the Beginning of the Open-Door Policy (in 1998)

Korea's rapid economic growth in the 1980s and 90s was drastically reversed by Asia's economic crisis in 1997. In order to restore the nation's economy, Korea had to change its foreign trading policies, which had involved regulating foreign imports in order to protect the domestic economic markets and to open its doors ever more widely to foreign economic forces, including Japan.⁴⁷ In 1998, the newly launched Kim Dae-Jung government (1998-2003) began to open the market for imports, and this also included the abolition of the limit, established in 1978, on Japanese goods being imported into the Korean market. In October 1998, President Kim Dae-Jung visited Japan and agreed to the joint declaration on the "New Korea—Japan Partnership for the Twenty-first Century" with Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi.⁴⁸ The main agreement was that "in order to maintain and develop a free and open international economic system and to achieve a recovery from the structural problems of the Asian economic system, both countries have to overcome the current economic difficulties and consolidate their balanced cooperative economic relations." After the joint declaration, Japan's investment in Korea jumped from US\$265 million, in 1997, to US\$1.75 billion in 1999 and US\$2.448 billion in 2000.⁴⁹ Some of the planned actions included the following:

- Joint efforts to help Asia tide over its economic crisis.
- Japan will provide 3 billion dollars in united loans to Korea through the Japan Export-Import Bank
- A revision of the double taxation avoidance treaty
- Mutual cooperation, including easing regulations on visa issuance and customs clearance, on the occasion of the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan Tournament

⁴⁷ Lee Hong-Bae and Okuda Satoru, "Possibility of Realizing a Japan-Korea FTA." *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 18: 131-156, 2004, p. 134.

⁴⁸ "Joint Declaration on New ROK-Japan Partnership for 21st Century." *The Korea Times*, October. 8. 1998.

⁴⁹ See *Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy*, [www. Mocie.go.kr/index.jsp](http://www.Mocie.go.kr/index.jsp) (accessed July. 3. 2006).

- Korea to end its 53-year ban on imports of Japanese popular culture.⁵⁰

As a result, Korea finally planned to open its doors to Japan, and economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries started to burgeon as Korean society rapidly recovered from the economic crisis. However, the two countries' conflicts over a range of sensitive historical-cultural issues, including the Japanese history textbook content, conflicting claims to the tiny island of Dokdo/Takeshima, the sexual slavery of Korean women under Japanese colonial rule, and shrine worship issues, have not been settled yet. Furthermore, their longstanding antagonism is still strongly present in general, and in some cases those issues could cause more than mere public concern and peaceful protests. In July 2001, the re-emergence of the controversy over Japan's refusal to reconsider the interpretation of the colonial history in government textbooks led to the delay of the opening process, and a number of Koreans (not only the older generation but also the young generation, who enjoy all kinds of Japanese cultural products and high-technology) protested against Japan. However, the scheduled co-hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan pushed Korea to resume the opening process soon again. During the 2002 FIFA World Cup, Korea and Japan not only worked together but also competed against each other to produce a successful international event, seen around the world. As more and more varieties of cultural products were freely introduced from Japan to Korea and from Korea to Japan, with still more scheduled for the future, the Korean public's concern over potential detrimental intrusion into the Korean cultural market also rapidly increased.⁵¹ This intrusion, of course, included popular music. Japanese popular music, in various forms, had

⁵⁰ "Highlights of Action Plan for ROK-Japan Partnership." *The Korea Times*, October. 2. 1998.

⁵¹ I will discuss more details in Chapter Four.

been known in Korea for many decades, often serving as a model influencing developments in Korea's popular music genres.

2.2 INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE AND KOREAN POPULAR MUSIC

The origins of popular music in Japan can be traced back to the latter half of the nineteenth century, and in Korea to the early part of the twentieth. In both countries a new foreign presence (Japan's opening to the West and Korea's colonial subjugation by Japan) presaged the rise of popular music. Following prevailing discourse in both the popular and scholarly realms, in this dissertation, the terms "Japanese popular music" and "Korean popular music" are loosely defined as mediated musics intended for commercial consumption, disseminated through recording technology and broadcast technology, as they developed from the early twentieth century. Each has been intended primarily for consumption in the country of origin (Japanese popular music in Japan, Korean in Korea) and consisted mostly of songs whose lyrics employ the national language. Though early instances of popular music (early *enka* in Japan, for instance) may bear little if any influences from Western popular music, the music subsumed under the category of popular music in both Japan and Korea has, at least since the 1920s, been limited to music employing Western harmony and, almost always, at least some Western musical instruments. Thus, as in Western countries, the term "popular music" conveys a notion of both musical style and emphasis on commercialism. Other genres that have also come to be disseminated through the recording and broadcast media, such as indigenous "traditional" musical genres of Japan and Korea, as well as music introduced from outside (Western art music) are excluded from the category "popular music" even though recordings of these genres

may gain some commercial success. And foreign popular music remains identified as such (e.g., American pop, Hong Kong pop).

2.2.1 Introduction to Japanese Popular Music

The Japanese music industry has been the second largest in the world, holding around 15% of world sales, since the mid 1970s.⁵² Despite Japan's advanced audio and audiovisual technologies, as well as its world-class music industry, however, Japanese popular music and its scene have generally been unknown outside Asia (except, perhaps, through recent video games). While it is true that Japanese arts and culture in general have not had much exposure in the West, and that Japanese cultural identity and aesthetics are quite different from Western standards, as pointed out by Mitsui Toru,⁵³ one of the most prominent scholars in the field of Japanese popular music, Japan has actively adopted foreign music since as early as the 1850s.

The beginning of Japanese popular music can be traced to the Meiji period (1868 - 1912). One of the earliest popular music genres in Japan is *gunka* (lit., "military songs"), which were generally composed from the Meiji period to the end of WWII (1945).⁵⁴ *Gunka*'s musical format was derived from Western concepts of military music, introduced in the mid-nineteenth century in Japan, but also containing elements from traditional Japanese folk songs.⁵⁵ Although not "mass-mediated" in the era of their origin, these military songs maintained their popularity

⁵² Mitsui Toru, "Japan in Japan: Notes on an Aspect of the Popular Music Record Industry in Japan." *Popular Music* 3: 107-120, 1983, p. 107 and "Interactions of Imported and Indigenous Musics in Japan: A Historical Overview of the Music Industry" in *Whose Master's Voice?: The Development of Popular Music in Thirteen Cultures*, edited by Alison J. Ewbank and Fouli T. Papageorgiou. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997) p. 152.

⁵³ Mitsui Toru, "Introduction." *Popular Music* 10(3); 259-262, 1991, p. 262.

⁵⁴ For a brief account of military songs, see IASPM-Japan's *A Guide to Popular Music in Japan* (Kanazawa: IASPM-Japan, 1991) P. 5.

⁵⁵ For more account on the musical styles of *gunka* from its beginning, see Junko Oba's article "To Fight the Losing War, to Remember the Lost War: The Changing Role of Gunka, Japanese War Songs" in *Global Goes Local*, edited by Timothy J. Craig and Richard King (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2001) pp. 227-230.

into the age of musical commodification, thus becoming “popular music” in the usual sense. In the first part of the twentieth century these military songs continued among the generations who were associated with the militaristic period culminating in World War II. As Junko Oba argues in her article “To Fight the Losing War, to Remember the Lost War: The Changing Role of Gunka, Japanese War Songs,” *gunka* were used for political purposes during war times and even afterwards survived as a form of nostalgic entertainment among the older generations who had experienced the war.⁵⁶ Like other more recent forms of popular music renditions of these songs were recorded and disseminated commercially. Even among older Koreans, who learned these songs during the colonial rule, it is not unusual to find people who sing these songs in nostalgic remembrance of their youth. However, recordings of these songs are certainly not produced in Korea and are, to my knowledge, have not even been sold illegally on the black market there.

Ryukoka, a form of sentimental narrative song accompanied by *shamisen*, was known to have originated in the Kansai area in the mid nineteenth century. These songs are also called *naniwa-bushi*, based on the genre’s origin in *naniwa* (Osaka’s old name).⁵⁷ *Ryukoka* (lit., “popular songs”) were particularly popular in the Taisho period (1912-1926) and known to be closely related to *enka*.

In the 1880s, *soshi*, who were involved with the people’s freedom (rights) movement, popularized a type of song known as *enka* (lit. “performance/act songs”). By the late Meiji period, *enka* subject matter changed, as did the performers, and the street entertainers who took over the genre came to be known as *enkashi*. As explained in the 1991 IASPM-Japan guide to genres of popular music in Japan,

⁵⁶ Oba, *op. cit.* pp. 225-245.

⁵⁷ For a brief account of *ryukoka*, see IASPM-Japan’s *A Guide to Popular Music in Japan* (Kanazawa: IASPM-Japan, 1991) P. 5.

Gradually, the political flavour diminished, singers became more professional, and began to accompany themselves with the violin when they performed on streets. The performance then consisted simply of news of contemporary events set to any of a multitude of existing melodies.⁵⁸

As described by Linda Fujie in her textbook chapter on Japanese music, and evidenced by the recording of “Nonki-Bushi” (1918) she includes on the accompanying CD, early commercial *enka* songs could also be humorous as well.⁵⁹ The *enkashi*, though a kind of “popular musician,” used only a single instrument to accompany their songs—usually a Western violin, as indicated in the citation above, or a *shamisen*—neither capable of providing chordal accompaniment but providing, instead, a heterophonic variation of the vocal melody. As time progressed, the topics of the songs changed again to emphasize matters of romantic love.⁶⁰ Only later did the genre add typical Western harmonic accompaniment, played on a small combo of Western instruments, with songtexts emphasizing the sentimental aspects of love, characteristics which have dominated the genre for many decades. At least since the 1970s, this sentimental variety of *enka* has come to be known as a kind of national popular music of Japan, promoted by the Japanese media as even “the heart of the Japanese.”⁶¹

Enka is now a “slow to medium ballad song,” whose lyrics usually depict “dark stories such as the separation of lovers, loss of hope and despair, and cherished memories.”⁶² Misora Hibari (1937-1989), who was called “the queen of *enka*” or “the queen of the Showa era”⁶³ for her last thirty years, sang many *enka* songs over her long career. Although each year around 10-

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 12.

⁵⁹ Linda Fujie, “East Asia/Japan,” *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World’s Peoples*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Schirmer/Thomson Learning, 2002), p. 371-374.

⁶⁰ Sôn Sung-Won, *Ilbon Umaki Poinda: Japan Pops into Korea* (Japanese Music Becomes Visible: Japan Pops into Korea). (Seoul: Arûm Ch’ulpansa, 1998) pp. 36-37.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 39.

⁶² IASPM-Japan, *op. cit.* p. 12.

⁶³ Showa period (1926-1989).

15% of newly released songs in Japan have been *enka*,⁶⁴ the popularity of this genre has been mostly associated with the older generation and mainly enjoyed through radio and *karaoke* (lit., “empty orchestra”).⁶⁵

In the 1960s, influenced by internationally popular groups, including the Ventures (who visited Japan in 1965), the Animals (who also visited in 1965), and the Beatles (who visited in 1966), *Group Sounds* (or “GS”) music was developed in Japan. In addition to imitating those foreign music bands’ musical sounds and images, the Japanese *Group Sound* bands adapted English names, including the Tokyo Beatles, the Spiders (one of the most popular GS bands), the Golden Cups, the Tigers, the Dynamite, the Blue Comets, the Idols, the Mops, the Out Cast, the Carnabeats, and many more.⁶⁶ In addition, in 1963, Sakamoto Kyu’s (1941-1985, known as Kyuchan) “Ue wo Muite Aruko” (“I Look Up When I Walk,” but known as “Sukiyaki” in the West) reached the top of the Billboard chart for three weeks, making it the most successful international hit song by a Japanese popular singer to the present time.⁶⁷

In the 1970s, the rapidly expanded media and music industry in Japan began to produce a number of superstars or pop idols (*idoru/idoru kashu*),⁶⁸ including male singers, such as Saijo Hideki (1955-), Go Hiromi (1955-), and Noguchi Goro (1956-), and female singers, such as

⁶⁴ <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/market/trend/industrial/pdf/jem0406-2e.pdf>. Japanese Economy Division, *Japan’s Music Industry*, (accessed February. 20. 2006).

⁶⁵ For a more detailed and insightful account on *enka*, see Christine Yano’s book *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002); Maki Okada’s article “Musical Characteristics of Enka.” *Popular Music* 10/3 (1991): 283-303; Tetsuo Yamaori, *Misora Hibari to Nihonjin (Misora Hibari and Japanese)*, (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2001); Debra Jane Occhi, *Namida, Sake, and Love: Emotional Expressions and Japanese Enka Music* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Davis, Dept. of Anthropology, 2000).

⁶⁶ See IASPM-Japan, *op. cit.* p. 15.

See also, <http://www.pp.ij4u.or.jp/~marukazu/homepage/groupsounds.htm>. (accessed February. 20. 2006).

⁶⁷ <http://www.sakamoto-kyu.com> (accessed February. 20. 2006).

⁶⁸ Japanese idol or *idoru* music is a kind of genre which is focused on showcasing singers’ unthreatening life-sized looks, youthful cuteness, formulaic image, and approachable personae instead of singing ability. Idol singers’ are expected to appear on various TV programs as a multi-tasking entertainer rather than a musician. Their musical style is usually light (often danceable), happy, simple love songs. See also Hiroshi Aoyagi’s “Pop Idols and the Asian Identity,” in *Japan Pop!: Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture* edited by Timothy J. Craig (Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000) pp. 309-325.

Sakurada Junko (1958-), Mori Masako (1958-), Yamaguchi Momoe (1959-), and the duo Pink Lady.⁶⁹ Pink Lady (Nemoto Mitsuyo and Masuda Keiko) debuted in 1976 and broke up in 1981.



Figure 2.1 Saijo Hideki's 1974 single cover, *Namida to Yujo* ("Tears and Friendship" left) and Pink Lady's 1977 single cover, *Challenge Concert* (right)

During those years, Pink Lady appeared in numerous TV commercials, dramas, variety shows, and music programs. The duo always wore skimpy mini-dresses or bikini-like clothes and tried to fabricate girlish-sexy images through their bubblegum disco music. In 1979, Pink Lady even debuted in America, and their debut song, "Kiss in the Dark" reached number thirty-seven of the Billboard chart.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ For more account on those singers, see their official websites at <http://www.earth-corp.co.jp/HIDEKI/>; <http://www.goro-net.com/>; <http://www.hiromi-go.net/>; <http://www.sonymusic.co.jp/Music/Info/momoe/> (accessed February. 20. 2006).

⁷⁰ Sôn Sung-Won, *Ilbon Ūmaki Poinda: Japan Pops into Korea (Japanese music becomes visible: Japan Pops into Korea)* (Seoul: Arûm Ch'ulpansa, 1998) pp. 136-137. Also, for more details on Pink Lady's history, see <http://www.bunbun.ne.jp/~tetsu/pinklady.htm> (accessed February. 20. 2006).

In Hiroshi Aoyagi's article on Japanese pop idols, he argues that a fundamental characteristic of Japanese pop idols is their image as "life-sized, cute, and above average."⁷¹

Aoyagi states:

Playing on young people's social needs, Japan's life-sized pop idols are produced and marketed as personifiers of a typical "girl or boy next door," chosen to become "lucky stars" and to represent their generation...To express cuteness, pop idols generally smile with bared (though often crooked) teeth and clear, sparkling eyes. Female idols strike "coy" poses, while male idols adopt a more "stylish" or "cool" appearance. Female fans generally agree that trying to appear stylish is what makes male idols cute...The autographs and handwritten letters of female idols often include drawings of cute animation characters such as kittens and bunnies. It was once common for female idols to dress up in "fake-child costumes" (*buriburi isho*) resembling European dolls.⁷²

Among the numerous pop idols, the most famous idol singer in the Japanese popular music history (and especially in the 1980s), is known to be Matsuda Seiko (1962-), a female idol who debuted in 1980 with the song "Hadashi no Kisetsumi" (lit., "Barefoot Season"). Since her debut, she has been the center of the Japanese media coverage. In the 1980s in particular, she was the fashion leader of the young Japanese girls, who imitated not only her hair and fashion styles, but also her liberal love life, which was a relatively controversial one at that time in Japan.⁷³ Matsuda Seiko's popularity has continued even after her first marriage (in 1985) and becoming a mother (in 1986) as she kept showing her timeless, youthful cute look and making her love life very interesting (creating a number of scandals). Unlike the other earlier idol stars, Matsuda Seiko has continued her singing career until the present time without having much

⁷¹ Aoyagi Hiroshi, "Pop Idols and the Asian Identity." In *Japan Pop!: Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*, edited by Timothy J. Craig (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 2000) p. 310.

⁷² *Ibid.* pp. 311-313.

⁷³ For a more detailed account of Matsuda Seiko and the other pop idols of the 1980s in Japan, see Inamatsu Tatsuo's chapter in *Ongakusuru Shakai (Music Making Society)*, edited by Ogawa Hiroshi (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1993) pp. 155-178.

interlude, having released a total of 41 regular albums, 59 singles, 28 “best” albums, 5 sound tracks, and 33 music videos/DVDs from 1980 to 2004.⁷⁴ The male version of Matsuda Seiko in the 1980s was Kondo Masahiko (1964-), one of the many male idol superstars produced by Jonny’s Jimusho (“Jonny’s Entertainment/Office”).



Figure 2.2 Matsuda Seiko single covers, *Squall* (1980, left) and *Supreme* (1987, right)

The rock (and rock-pop) band Southern All Stars (who debuted in 1978 and are often called *Sazan*) became the dominant Japanese group after releasing their first hit song, “Itoshi no Eri-” (“Lovely Ellie”), in 1979.⁷⁵ For more than twenty-five years Southern All Stars have been at the top of the Japanese popular music world and have created the unique Japanese band music sound (called the *Sazan sound*), which has been beloved and followed by many Japanese.

⁷⁴ See <http://www.seikomatsuda.net/contents/discography/single/index.html> (accessed February. 20. 2006).

⁷⁵ In 1990, the famous American singer, Ray Charles, included the remake version of this song, titled as “Ellie, My Love.”



Figure 2.3 Southern All Star's single covers, *10 numbers* (1979, left) and *Tsunami* (2000, right)

In the 1990s, the Japanese popular music scene became more dynamic than in the previous periods by the ever-expanding popular music industry. Also, production companies and artists/producers became more powerful. Various new and revived genres were developed and produced a number of new artists. In the early 1990s, the new marketing strategy “tie-up” was introduced and has become the typical marketing strategy of the Japanese popular music industry since then. This strategy involved the packaging (“tying up”) of a particular popular song or album with a popular television drama, commercial film, television commercial, or computer game. The popularity of the related product is intended to provide ample promotion to launch the song or album, reaching far beyond what mere advertising or concert tours could achieve. The most successful company in the 1990s adapting the tie-up strategy was the Being Record, whose affiliated artists, including TUBE, ZARD, WANDS, and B’z, have been million-seller makers without appearing frequently on television.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ For extensive details on the Japanese music industry, see Umeda Koji, *Nihon Ongaku Shiritai Kotoga Suguwakaru* (Tokyo: Kou-Business, 1997), translated into Korean by Kim Hyung-Chan (Seoul: People of Fresh Mind Publishing, 1998) pp. 27-30. Also, see Steve McClure’s *Nippon Pop* (Tokyo, Singapore, and Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1998) p. 149.

The early and the mid 1990s was known as the *Band Boom* period. Among the bands, X-Japan (1992-1997), known as the pioneer of Japanese visual rock, became extremely popular not only in Japan but also among the overseas Japanese popular music fans, including those in Korea.⁷⁷ The year 1991 also saw the debut of the most successful super idol star band managed and produced by the Jonny's Jimusho, SMAP (derived from the first letters of the somewhat enigmatic English phrase “**S**ports and **M**usic **A**ssemble **P**eople”). Its five members began to dominate the popular media in Japan from that time, remaining popular today (2007). The most popular member of SMAP, Kimura Takuya (1972-), was selected as the “sexist man in Japan” or the “most desirable man in Japan” for many years,⁷⁸ attesting both to the prominence of popular musicians in the public imagination and to the importance of image and personality in the success of popular musicians in Japan.

The period from 1995 to 2000 was the era of Amuro Namie (1977-), who was the biggest female star of Japan in the 1990s. Amuro Namie's popularity led to her to be recognized widely as the single most influential cultural phenomenon of Japan in the late 1990s. Her many young female fans, who copied almost everything about Amuro Namie, were called *amura*, and those *amura* copied Amuro Namie's styles instantly. One of the most famous aspects of her “style” was her long, colored straight hair and super mini-skirt with white long boots, with surprisingly high platform soles and heels). Also, her thin body figure led young Japanese girls' to lose weight, and the average weight for girls actually decreased at that time. As her popularity arose in the other Asian countries, she became the top icon of contemporary Japanese pop.

⁷⁷ I will discuss more details on X-Japan in Chapter Three.

⁷⁸ For more account on SMAP, see Fabienne Darling-Wolf's article in 2004, “SMAP, Sex, and Masculinity: Constructing the Perfect Female Fantasy in Japanese Popular Music.” *Popular Music and Society*. 27 (3): 357-370. Darling-Wolf devoted the entire article to SMAP's sex appeal.



Figure 2.4 Amuro Namie's album covers, *Sweet 19 Blues* (1996, left) and *181920* (1998, right)

Following Amuro Namie, Hamasaki Ayumi (1978-) debuted in 1998. Her instant popularity made her the “Queen of J-pop.” Hamasaki Ayumi has been named the Artist of the Year three times in the Japan Gold Disc Awards (2001, 2002, and 2004), an unmatched accomplishment to date. The most recent superstar is, Koda Kumi (1982-), who struggled for a few years since her debut in 2000, became the Artist of the Year in the Japan Gold Disc Awards in 2006. Her overwhelmingly sexy outfits and dance movements, with easy-going, friendly character has brought her massive popularity since 2005. Her fans have been calling her *Ero-Kawa* and *Ero-Kakko* (“Sexy-Cute” and “Sexy-Cool”).

Among the foreigners who became very successful in the Japanese popular music world, Vivian Hsu (known as Vivian Su in Japan, 1975-) from Taiwan was popular as a female member of the comic band, Black Biscuits, from 1997 to 1999. Korean singer, BoA (1986-) initially debuted in Korea at the age of thirteen, debuted in Japan in 2001. Under the dual management of very powerful labels, SM Entertainment in Korea and Avex Entertainment Cooperation (or Avex

Trax) in Japan, BoA became the most successful foreign female singer of the mainstream Japanese popular music.⁷⁹

Summary. With origins in the nineteenth century, Japanese popular music has developed and proliferated along lines whose basic contours resemble those of many other countries outside the West, but whose particulars are unique to Japan (though perhaps not “essentially” Japanese). Primarily, we can point to the adoption of Western musical stylistic traits, especially functional harmony and intervallic structure, and Western instruments associated with popular music in the West—jazz combo instruments in the early twentieth century and electric guitar, bass, and keyboards in the latter half. Direct imitation of jazz and rock ‘n’ roll (later “rock”) bands has been evident from the end of World War II, when Japanese had ample exposure to a whole range of American popular culture from the enormous American military presence there. As the number of American troops grew less, through the 1960s and 1970s, Japan continued to imitate American popular music, especially the mainstream “Group Sound” bands, but began also to develop its own mix of pop music instruments and harmonies with the cute, amateurish public image that came to define the idol culture, a popular cultural phenomenon with no real counterpart in Western popular music (bubblegum music notwithstanding). Still reflecting transnational flows between Japan and West, however, some of these female idol stars, such as Amuro Namie, have outgrown their teenage cuteness and taken on some of the brazen sexuality that has also become prominent among American female pop stars, such as Madonna and Janet Jackson. Indeed, the continuing similarities between American popular music culture and popular musical culture in Japan supports the notion of Japan’s ongoing emphasis on cultural absorption, now seen by some scholars (Iwabuchi 2002, Miyoshi and Hartoonian 1989) to be

⁷⁹ I will discuss more details on BoA in Chapter Four and Five.

occurring within a growing sense of irrelevance of origins and a postmodern embrace of pastiche/bricolage (though these are more evident on the margins than in mainstream Japanese popular music). As part of this postmodern mosaic, foreign singers such as Vivian Hsu and BoA have become major figures in what is seen both in Japan and overseas as “J-Pop.”

2.2.2 Introduction to Korean Popular Music

Korea’s popular music has followed some of the same basic contours followed by Japanese, though differing in some important details. Western influence has been evident from the early days, complicated, as we might expect, from the direct colonial presence there of Japan in the formative decades. For most of the twentieth century, domestic popular music in Korea, known locally as *kayo* (or *taejung kayo*), has been distinguished from other forms of music: Western popular music, known simply as *p’ap song* (Korean pronunciation of the English “pop song”); Korean traditional music, known as *kugak* (lit. “national music”) *uri ûmak* (lit. “our music”) or *chônt’ong ûmak* (lit. “traditional music”), and Western classical music (known as “*k’ûllaesik*”, Korean pronunciation of the English “classic”). Yet the term “kayo” is directly derived from the Japanese term for popular music, *kayokyoku*. As the term *poppyura ongaku* (lit., “popular music” or *popusu* lit., “pops”) replaced the term *kayokyoku* for popular music in Japan from around the early 1990s, Korean popular music is often called K-pop particularly since the late 1990s outside Korea, but in everyday speech, most Koreans continue to speak of their popular music as *kayo*.⁸⁰

The beginnings of Korean popular music date from the first decade of the twentieth century, when foreign melodies were introduced and the texts translated into Korean. These

⁸⁰ It should be noted that those terms, *kayo* and *kayokyoku* as well as K-pop and J-pop are extremely vague terms. In this dissertation, I refer them as Japanese popular music or Japanese pop and Korean popular music or Korean pop as opposed to the terms for traditional, western classic, or directly imported foreign musics.

songs, known in Korea as *ch'angga* (lit. “creative song”) were the first recordings released and marketed in Korea. As Korean popular music scholar Lee Young Mee summarizes,

These songs were initially imported from Japan (where they were known as *shōka*) and Europe, but they gained Korean lyrics for the first time in 1905. No Korean appears to have been able to compose adequately in the new idiom, hence Korean lyrics were added to foreign melodies. Early examples featured edifying lyrics for the common people, but the themes changed as the second decade of the century dawned, as sentiments of love, emptiness and the beauty of nature became central. Many of the early songs were designed for school use, but as they broadened their appeal they became known as ‘popular *ch'angga*’ (*yuhaeng ch'angga*). These, recorded and released on disc, marked the birth of Korean *taejung kayo* [popular music].⁸¹

Though Japan was not the only source for *ch'angga* melodies, it is significant in our investigation into the Japanese presence in Korea that some, indeed many, of these songs were from Japan, and entered Korea even before formal annexation in 1910. This was the first stage in what would become an ongoing pattern of Japanese musical influences in Korea.

In the early 1930s, with Japanese colonial rule firmly established and Korea’s initial resistance movement tightly suppressed, a new Korean music genre developed in close parallel to the Japanese popular genre *enka*. Koreans refer to this genre either as *t'ūrotū* (from the English duple-meter dance form “foxtrot”) or *ppongtchak* (an onomatopoeic reference to the duple oom-pah bass pattern so dominant in much of this music). During the colonial period it was also simply called *yuhaengga* (lit., “popular song,” “song in fashion”). The musical style featured ornamented and openly emotional singing, pentatonic scales, with simple two- or three-chord Western harmonic accompaniment on Western band instruments, usually with a strong bass pattern. The only other significant category of Korean popular music during the colonial era

⁸¹ Lee Young Mee, “The Beginnings of Korean Pop,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) p.3.

was a genre of songs, also dating from the early 1930s, that combined Western and Korean instrumental accompaniment with traditional Korean folksong style and whose name, *shin minyo*, consists of the Sino-Korean (and Japanese) word for “new” (*shin*) and the Japanese loanword for folksong (*minyo*, from Japanese *minyō*). While *shin minyo* declined in popularity after the colonial era, *tūrotū* remained as literally the only Korean popular musical genre until the late 1960s.⁸² *Tūrotū* is generally thought to be the Korean counterpart of Japanese *enka* and, like *enka* in Japan, still exists as an important popular music genre in Korea and has been extensively discussed (particularly in the 1980s) by a number of music critics and scholars in its close connection to Japanese *enka*. With the rise of an economically powerful younger generation and new genres of popular music in the 1980s and 1990s, the popularity of *tūrotū* has diminished markedly since the early 1990s).⁸³

From the late 1960s, Korea’s economy began to grow, and Korean society became more and more industrialized. By the 1970s, Korea began to establish a consumer-based market structure, and as the general standard of living was steadily improving, the people’s demands for various kinds of consumer products, cultural items in particular, began to increase rapidly. As a result, Korea began to see forms of Korean popular culture’s formulation, especially among the younger people who often tend to be at the forefront in seeking something new and different), with which they (and not their parents) can be associated, such as new forms of popular culture. What the young Koreans saw in the early decades after colonial rule as new/different/better was American popular culture, which was directly brought to Korea by the American army forces, beginning in the 1950s after the Korean War.

⁸² *Yuhaengga* (lit., ‘songs in fashion’ or ‘popular song’) was influenced by Japanese *ryūkōka*, which is known as *enka*’s predecessor in Japan. See Lee Young Mee, “The Beginnings of Korean Pop,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) p.2.

⁸³ See Gloria Lee Pak’s article “On the Mimetic Faculty: A Critical Study of the 1984 Ppongchak Debate and Post-Colonial Mimesis” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 62-71.

Though more insulated from the American military than the Japanese had been during the 1950s, Koreans nevertheless could not help but be exposed to the new popular music whose influence was spreading around the globe. As in Japan and other countries worldwide, some Korean musicians began to learn rock ‘n’ roll, adopting the vocal styles, instrumentation, even styles of dress--such groups as ADD4, Key Boys, Five Fingers, He6, and Sarang kwa P’yônghwa (“Love and Peace”).



Figure 2.5 Key Boys' 1964 album cover, *Kûnyô Ibsurûn Talkome* (“Her Lips are Sweet” left) and ADD4’s 1964 album cover, *Pisôgui Yôin* (“Woman in the Rain” right)

But beyond the direct imitation of Western groups and songs in performances for the American military (see further Chapter Six), Korean rock ‘n’ roll groups only began to create their own rock ‘n’ roll-style songs in the latter 1960s, somewhat later than the Group Sounds bands in Japan.

It was through the American presence that the genre known as *t’ong kit’a* (“acoustic guitar”) music started in Korea. *T’ong kit’a* music was developed by young Koreans, most of

them college students, who were deeply influenced by the American folk song movement from the late 1950s and 1960s. Most *t'ong kit'a* singers began their careers as underground amateur singers in the small music salons/cafés (also called *ûmak kamsangsil* in Korean) in downtown Seoul. The most famous music salon was called the *Ssessibong* (“C’est si bon”) which was the Mecca of the young artists during the 1970s. A number of *t'ong kit'a* singers, including Song Ch’ang-Sik, Cho Yông-Nam, Yun Hyông-Ju, Kim To-Hyang, Sô Yu-Sôk, and Kim Se-Hwan, all performed at the *Ssessibong* and later became professional singers, radio DJs, or TV program hosts. Most *t'ong kit'a* singers directly adopted American folk songs or simply add new Korean lyrics to the same melodies.⁸⁴

In her article, “The Ascent and Politicization of Pop Music in Korea,” Hwang Okon discusses one of the most important singers of the *t'ong kit'a* period, Kim Min-Gi (1951-), and his music in relation to the political protest movement against the *Yu-Shin* (“Revitalizing Reform”) by the Park Chung-Hee regime. As she argues:

While most *t'ong kit'a* singers avoided controversial issues, Kim’s open display of protest stood out. Young intellectuals, agonizing over the political situation resonated to the sentiments of Kim’s music. As a result, and despite the government ban on his music, Kim’s songs were widely circulated among students. Pirated reprints of his album became highly valuable, and Kim emerged as an anti-government activist and cultural and political icon.⁸⁵

Kim Min-Gi’s songs were interpreted as anti-government protest messages to the Korean public. However, ironically, Kim Min-Gi made himself clear on the issue that he never intended to make protest songs and did not agree with his nickname “Chôhang kasu” (means “protest singer”) in his interview in 1998. Instead, Kim states:

⁸⁴ Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *Korean Popular Music History* (Seoul: Ries & Book, 2003) pp. 19-22.

⁸⁵ Hwang Okon, “The Ascent and Politicization of Pop Music in Korea,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) p.40.

“None of the songs were intentionally made for protest. I expressed my sad feelings or youth’s universal sorrow as I was looking around. I wrote the song “Ch’in’gu” (“Friend”) as I missed my friend who was drowned in the East Sea when we were high-school seniors. I made the song “Nûlgûn Kunin ûi Norae” (“Old Solder’s Song”) when I was serving in the army. Also, I only described the reflection of a hill’s image in the morning in the song “Ach’im Isûl” (“Morning Dew”). But, those were interpreted as the spirit of the times. Perhaps the recipients gave meaning in relation to the times because the “story” of our images was incorporated in my songs. It is a great honor if my songs could comfort them.⁸⁶

In any case, as Hwang Okon argues, his songs were interpreted as anti-governmental protest songs by the Korean public during the darkest political hardships in the 1970s and early 1980s. His most famous song, “Ach’im Isûl” (“Morning Dew,” 1971), was banned for unspecified reasons by the revised Public Performing Law (*Kongyôn bôp*) in 1975, when the Park Chung-Hee regime tightened the censorship on music for the purposes of political stabilization.⁸⁷ But in 1987, with the lift of the ban, the song was released and became a kind of anthem especially among the college students and factory workers, who were at the forefront of protest movements, until the early 1990s. As Korea became more politically stable from 1993, with the establishment of Korea’s very first civil government, the song “Ach’im Isûl” became less symbolic politically, but began to be used as a popular cheering song for various kinds of public events and gatherings throughout the 1990s in Korea.

⁸⁶ “Kasu, Jakk’oga, Kim Min-Gi” (Singer, Writer Kim Min-Gi), *JoongAng Daily*, September. 28. 1998. Translated by the author.

⁸⁷ “Noraehaji Annûn Kasu, Kim Min-Gi” (Kim Min-Gi, the Singer Who Does Not Sing). *Segye Daily*, February. 18. 1998.

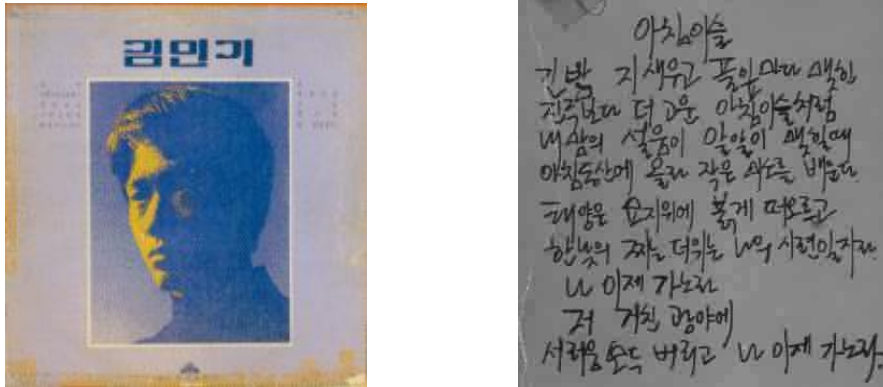


Figure 2.6 Kim Min Gi's 1971 album cover, *Kim Min Gi* (left) and handwriting of the lyric, “Ach'im Isûl” (“Morning Dew” right)

During the 1970s, the genre known as *palladû* or *palladû kayo* was also developed, consisting of songs usually in slow tempo, with simple structure, and sentimental love themes. The vocal style uses much less vibrato than is typical of *tûrotû*, and the Western harmonies are far more varied, making *palladû* sound much closer to mainstream Western popular music than earlier Korean genres. *Palladû kayo* was usually sung by stars who were promoted and marketed by the state- operated television stations during the 1970s and the 1980s.⁸⁸ *Palladû kayo* place considerable emphasis on the text, with stock melodies and harmonies used again and again in different songs. The love depicted in the text is romantic, but not erotic or overtly sexual; it contains nothing that would go against Korea’s moralistic censorship laws. In general, the musical structure of *palladû kayo* is simple. It contains a regular four-line stanza set to a single melody in a basic, steady rhythm, usually in duple meter. In the 1970s, *palladû kayo* were

⁸⁸ For a further account of a “star system,” see Keith Howard’s “Exploding Ballads: The Transformation of Korean Pop Music,” in *Global Goes Local: Popular Culture in Asia*, edited by Timothy J. Craig and Richard King (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001) pp. 81-83.

usually accompanied by the television stations' own pop orchestras, but in the 1980s, piano and synthesizer became the main accompaniment.⁸⁹

The popularity of *palladû kayo* kept increasing throughout the 1980s and has clearly become one of the most prominent Korean popular music genres, if not the dominant genre, since then. Among the *palladû kayo* singers, the most popular singer of the 1980s was Cho Yong-Pil (1950-), who dominated the Korean popular music scene for nearly a decade and was very popular in Japan in the mid 1980s. The other popular singer was Lee Sun-Hee (1964-), who debuted in 1984 by winning the grand prize at the Fifth *MBC Kangbyôn Kayoje* ("MBC Riverside Song Festival") in Korea.⁹⁰ Keith Howard compares Cho and Lee:

Cho was a teeny-bop idol, mobbed by screaming fans wherever he went...He was slightly plump, and there was nothing provocative in his performance style; he sang into his microphone with his face and hands adding expression, but with little body movement...If Cho Yong Pil's conservative "safe" romanticism kept him popular, Lee Sun-hee might be a female version of the same cautious star image, though her music goes further politically. Lee Sun-hee won the grand prize at the First Riverside Song Festival with her song "Dear J" in 1984...Lee dressed casually, like a university student, and wore delicate, thin-rimmed spectacles. This created an image, not just of Confucian studiousness, but of someone people wanted to be like. There was nothing provocative in her performances; rather, she was, as Kawakami and Fisher rightly characterize her, "the chaste girl-next-door." Her audience was older than Cho's; whereas he catered to high-school girls, Lee's fans were university students and recent graduates...Koreans could and did associate with Lee, not as a teeny-bop idol like Cho Yong Pil, but as a peer, someone who shared the same feelings and experiences as her audience.⁹¹

However, while it could be true that both of them did not show particularly provocative performance styles, Cho Yong-Pil was not simply a teeny-bop idol who could only cater to high-

⁸⁹ See Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *op. cit.* pp. 174-176.

⁹⁰ *MBC Kangbyon Kayoje* ("MBC Riverside Song Festival") was launched in 1979 and Lee Sun-Hee participated as a member of Samak O'jang (the music circle at Incheon City College) in 1984, which was the fifth festival (1980 was skipped). http://tour.hsc.ac.kr/sdc_festival.asp?id=1 (accessed February. 23. 2006).

⁹¹ Howard, *op. cit.* pp. 83-85.

school girls. Unlike Lee Sun-Hee, Cho Yong-Pil was a singer songwriter and a leader of his own band *Widaehan Tanaseng* (“Great Birth”). He has incorporated various music styles besides *palladû kayo*, including *t’ûrotû*, *minyo* (folk songs), pop, rock, and fusion jazz, which actually enabled him to appeal to all ages of fans among the Korean audience.⁹² Although Cho Yong-Pil’s lyrics approved the standard romantic themes, Keith Howard’s view of him as a simple teeny-bop idol is inaccurate. Because of the governmental censorship, most popular song texts were based on standard romantic themes in the 1980s (including Lee Sun-Hee’s songs).⁹³



Figure 2.7 Cho Yong-Pil's seventh album cover, *Nunmullo Poinûn Kûdae* (“Looking at You through Tears” 1985, left) and Lee Sun-Hee's first album cover, *J ege/A! Yennariyô* (“Dear J/Ah! The Old Days” 1985, right)

Cho Yon-Pil has sold the most albums in the Korean popular music history (over 20,000,000 copies, including the sales in Japan). In 2005, he was distinguished by the Korean Government Press Releases as one of the “revolutionaries of Korean popular music” along with

⁹² For more details on Cho Yong-Pil’s various musical styles in his seventeen albums from 1980 to 1998, see the chapter three in Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *op. cit.* pp. 92-119.

⁹³ Howard, *op. cit.* p. 83; Lee Young Mee, *Han’guk Taejung Kayosa*. (Seoul: Sigongsa, 1998) pp. 255-263.

the 1990s superstar Seo Taiji.⁹⁴ Among the large number of hits by Cho Yong-Pil, one of the most famous songs (both in Korea and Japan) has been his debut song “Torawayo Pusanhange” (“Come Back to the Pusan Harbor”), which was first released in 1975 and then included in his first album in 1980.⁹⁵



Figure 2.8 Cho Yong-Pil's first album cover, *Ch'angbakkui Yôja* (“Woman outside of the Window” 1980, left) and second album cover, *Ch'oppul* (“Candlelight” 1980, right)

Alongside *palladû kayo*, *t'ûrotû* temporarily regained its popularity in the 1980s. *T'ûrotû* had been denigrated and officially discouraged due to its Japanese style, which was one of the elements that the Korean government attempted to control and even eliminate from Korean culture through its strict censorship policy.⁹⁶ Songs could be, and were, banned based solely on perceived Japanese influence, a quality referred to in Korean by the term *waesaek*—consisting of a colonial-era derogatory term for Japanese, *wae* (lit. “little”) and the Korean word for color

⁹⁴ “Taejung Kayo” (Popular Music), Government Press Releases – *Korea Plus News*, July. 6. 2005.

⁹⁵ Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *op. cit.* pp.97-98.

⁹⁶ See Gloria Lee Pak’s article “On the Mimetic Faculty: A Critical Study of the 1984 Ppongchak Debate and Post-Colonial Mimesis” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 62-71; Fumitaka Yamauchi, “Ch’angga and Yuhaengga: A Historical Study on Korean Response to Japanese Popular Culture.” M.A. Thesis (Seoul: Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 2000).

(*saek*), here meaning tone or feel. In 1984, Ju Hyun-Mi (1961-), as an unknown singer, released a *t'ûrotû* medley album “Ssang Ssang Party” (“Couple’s Party”), which became a big hit and enabled her to make her major debut in the following year.



Figure 2.9 Ju Hyun-Mi's first album (1984) and second to fifth albums (1985) covers, *Ssang Ssang Party* ("Couple's Party")

Different from the earlier melancholy *t'ûrotû* style, her songs incorporated happy, cheerful rhythms and whimsical texts that appealed to many working class people who listened to her songs while they were at work. Taxi drivers, apparently, were especially avid fans⁹⁷ At the time she gained her fame as a singer, she was also running a pharmacy as a pharmacist and was, thus, often called *yaksa kasu* or *yaksa ch'ulsin kasu* (lit., “pharmacist singer”). This professional status also helped her to be more appealing than previous *t'ûrotû* singers, who

⁹⁷ Lee Young Mee, *Han'guk Taejung Kayosa* (Seoul: Sigongsa, 1998) pp. 277-278.

usually began their career from the bars or clubs. Ju Hyun-Mi was popular until 1990, when the genre itself began to lose popularity again.

By the end of the 1980s, dance music (*taensû*) became very popular among young Koreans, who grew up watching the clips of Michel Jackson's "Thriller (1982)," "Beat It (1982)," and "Billie Jean (1982)" music videos and performances and Madonna's "Lucky Star (1983)" and "Like a Virgin (1984)."⁹⁸ Influenced by the international boom in disco music, dance music became a common musical mode for the young Korean audience. Also with the rapid economic development during the 1980s, most Korean households owned a TV set which provided a better medium for local dance musicians to offer a more visually entertaining and interesting form of performances for the viewers. Hence, dance music began to broaden its market, targeting specifically teenagers. During the late 1980s Kim Wan-Sun (1969-), who started her career as a backup dancer, successfully imitated Madonna's style of dancing and fashion, with her debut song "Onûl Pam" ("Tonight", 1986, a techno pop style dance song). Her sexy presentation of female sexuality by dynamic dancing on the stage was something new to Korean audiences. Despite some controversies over her "overly" sexual performance and poor singing technique, her popularity continued to spread until 1992, and she has been called *Han'gugûi Madonna* (lit., "Madonna of Korea") and "dancing queen."⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *Korean Popular Music History* (Seoul: Ries & Book, 2003) pp. 194-196.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*



Figure 2.10 Kim Wan-Sun's second album cover, *Nahollo Ttûrapesô* (“Alone at a Grden” 1987, left) and her photo in 1992 (right)

During the 1980s most popular musicians were exclusively created and promoted by the two state operated TV and radio broadcasters, KBS and MBC. Many popular singers came from various competitions and festivals organized by those broadcasters. Under the Chun Doo-Hwan administration (1980-1987), all production was subject to censorship and tightly controlled by the state. The commercial stations were closed down leaving only the state-operated networks and stations to broadcast what the government wanted the people to see and hear. Mainstream music production was based on the state broadcasters’ management system, which employed resident studio bands, music arrangers, conductors, dance groups, choruses, and selected singers to perform with them.¹⁰⁰ As media expert Chung Jae-Chol pointed out, mass culture in the 1980s was formulated in a specific political and economic context such that the media system was rearranged to enhance the military government’s political and economic power. As a result of this, the mass culture of Korea became a “full-scale, industrialized pleasure-seeking culture.”¹⁰¹ This “pleasure-seeking culture” was reflected in the scenes of Korean popular music

¹⁰⁰ Howard, *op. cit.* pp. 81-83.

¹⁰¹ Chung Jae-Chol’s article provides a through chronicle of Korean media system. He defines the mass culture in the 1980s as “characterized as the industrialization of pleasure-seeking culture, the deepening of cultural

that had fixed standard themes, like the “love” theme for Korean *palladû kayo* under the government control media system.

The early 1990s in Korea was very different from the previous decades. As Korea was finally released from decades of authoritarian military regimes by the launching of the first civil government by Kim Young-Sam (1993-1998), Koreans had less incentive for political protest and began to enjoy the booming economy that were available to most classes. As a result, Koreans’ consumerism on popular cultural products rapidly increased not only with desire for domestic popular culture but also for the global popular culture (mostly American and Japanese), received through various routes (advanced communication technology, direct/indirect imports of cultural goods, oversea tourism, study abroad).¹⁰²

The 1990s in the Korean popular music history can be largely summed up with the two words, “Seo Taiji” and “piracy,” as popular music critic Im Jin-Mo states:

When we talk about Korean popular music of the 1990s, the Seo Taiji phenomenon and the piracy problem must be discussed. The Seo Taiji phenomenon, which created an explosion of popular culture in Korea, should be understood within the contexts of the expansion of the popular music industry, the full-scale consuming power of the *shinsedae* (lit., “the new generation”), and the rise of American black culture, all of which were new to the Korean popular music world. However, some people, who consider the problem of piracy to be more important than the Seo Taiji phenomenon, assert that the nature of the popular music industry has been extremely unhealthy because of the deepening “copying culture” in spite of the growing market volume. In any case, while the Seo Taiji phenomenon is the positive side of the Korean popular music world, the piracy problem is its negative side.¹⁰³

colonization and commercialized culture” and criticizes the “low-quality Western culture” imported through illegal videos and movies. See Chung Jae-Chol’s article “Mass Culture, Media and the Popular Cultural Movement in Modern Korean Society” in *Elite Media amidst Mass Culture*. ed. Kim Chie-Woon and Lee Jae-Won (Seoul: Nanam Publishing House, 1993) pp. 309-312.

¹⁰² Jung Eun-Young, “Transnational Popular Music Culture and Local Cultural Politics: Korea’s Open-Door Policy on Japanese Popular Culture (1998-2004) and its Antecedents.” *Asian Musicology* (9): 63-99, 2006, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰³ Im Jin-Mo’s “Deajung Kayo, Kkûdômmûn P’yôjôrûi Segye” (“Popular Music, Endless Piracy World”) in *Ilbon Munhwa Pekkigi (Copying Japanese Popular Culture)*, (Seoul: Namu-wa Sup, 1998) pp. 161-162, translated by the author.

In 1992, the *shinsedae* (the new generation), whose values, customs, life-styles and mind-set were particularly different from the *kisûngsedae* (the older generation), found its representative voice in Seo Taiji (1972-), who in 1992 adapted rap music via hip hop culture through his debut song “Nan Arayo” (“I Know”) with two members who were mainly backup dancers. Despite the older generation’s criticism on Seo Taiji’s unconventional styles of music, dance, and fashion--as well as his educational background (he was a high school dropout)--Seo Taiji’s success was the most revolutionary one in the history of Korean popular music. That is, the exclusively *palladu kayo*-centered Korean popular music world was overturned by the rap and dance music styles of youth-oriented popular music he introduced, and this has been the major trend even up to now (2007). What is unfortunate is that, unlike Seo Taiji, who not only composed and sang all of the songs but also played the main role in recording, rearranging, designing, and even marketing, the countless numbers of other singers and groups only tried to copy Seo Taiji’s style under the control of the instant-profit-seeking entertainment companies. Although some of the boy bands, such as H.O.T. (**H**igh **F**ive **O**f **T**eenagers) under the smart management of Lee Soo-Man, were quick to grab the very opportunity provided by Seo Taiji’s initial retirement in 1996, the band’s bubble popularity was soon diminished after a series of suspected piracy issues arose in relation to their songs and to their visual images.

Seo Taiji’s effort to speak up for the young Koreans, who were suffering from an authoritarian educational system, was what the young Koreans wanted—and needed-- the most. Through his music, Seo Taiji not only criticized the older generation and the “older” social systems, but also encouraged the younger generation to find a way to face their reality and to try harder to survive within the social system. After his release of the songs, “Kyoshil Idea” (“Classroom Ideology”) in 1994 and “Come Back Home” in 1995, Seo Taiji became known as

sibdaedûrûi taebyônin (lit., “spokesperson of the teenagers”), *sibdaedûrûi taet’ongryông* (lit., “president of the teenagers”), and *sibdaedûrûi usang* (lit., “hero of the teenagers.”).¹⁰⁴ Seo Taiji’s initial retirement in 1996 as a band member again surprised the Korean audiences since it was the time when he was at the top of the Korean popular music world. As mentioned in the literature review (Chapter One), Seo Taiji became the first popular cultural icon to grab the Korean scholars’ and cultural critics’ attention, as the number of books and major articles on him proved.



Figure 2.11 Seo Taiji wa Aidûl photos in 1993 (Seo Taiji in the middle, left) and in 1994 (Seo Taiji in the front, right)

Since Seo Taiji’s arrival in the Korean popular music world, rap and dance-based music became the center of the mainstream popular music in Korea, although the *palladu kayo* style

¹⁰⁴ For more on the musical details of Seo Taiji’s two songs, “Kyoshil Idea” (“Classroom Ideology”) in 1994 and “Come Back Home” in 1995, see Jung Eun-Young’s article “Articulating Korean Youth Culture through Global Popular Music: Seo Taiji’s Use of Rap and Metal,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 109-122.

retains a strong presence in the mainstream as well. Beside those two main genres, there have been some new attempts to incorporate different genres, including rock, jazz, reggae, soul, and traditional Korean music, since the late 1990s, but most of them were still within the formats of the two main genres, *palladu kayo* and dance with rap/rap with dance.

Beside the dramatic economic downfall of the music industry caused by digital file sharing through the internet since the late 1990s, the boom of Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) a craze for Korean popular culture around the East and Southeast Asian countries, started also in the late 1990s and brought some new aspects to the Korean popular music world. Although there were some singers, Cho Yong-Pil in the mid 1980s and Seo Taiji (to a lesser less degree) in the mid 1990s, who gained popularity outside Korea—primarily in Japan--most Korean popular music had been a domestic affair until the boom of *hallyu* first occurred in China (called *hanliu*) in 1997.¹⁰⁵ However, as the international media showed great interest in the boom of *hallyu*, and more and more Korean entertainers became big stars in countries including not only China, but also Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, and even Japan, the Korean popular music industry began to seek its means to survive and thrive in the global market rather than the domestic market.

¹⁰⁵ For more explanation on the early period of *hallyu* in China, see Rowan Pease's article "Internet, Fandom, and K-Wave in China," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 176-189.



Figure 2.12 Rain's 2004 album cover, *It's Raining* (left) and BoA's 2003 album cover, *Atlantis Princess* (right)

Among the singers at the forefront of the *hallyu* boom are Pi (a male singer, born in 1982 and known also as “Rain,” the English translation of his Korean stage name; hereafter Rain) and BoA (a female singer, born in 1986 and especially active in Japan). Rain has a strong following in many Asian countries, and has even performed at Madison Square Garden in New York City—in a calculated attempt to spread the Korean Wave beyond Asia to the shores of the United States. BoA’s CDs and videos sell throughout East and Southeast Asia, but especially in Japan, where she has lived, gained native-speaker fluency in Japanese, and performs so many songs in Japanese that her music is often shelved along with other Japanese popular music rather than Korean popular music.¹⁰⁶

Summary. From its beginnings in *ch’angga* in the early twentieth century, Korean popular music has drawn much of its stylistic inspiration and often even its repertory from foreign sources. The form that maintained the strongest traditional stylistic elements, *shin minyo*, proved less durable than the still-popular *t’ûrot’û*, whose style has, from its beginnings,

¹⁰⁶ I will discuss these singers in more detail in Chapter Four and Five.

been very close to Japanese *enka*. While scholars may argue over the directions of cultural flow (whether primarily Japanese *enka* to Korean *t'ûrot'û* or from *t'ûrot'û* to *enka*), both genres owe clear stylistic debt to the harmonic language and instrumentation of Western popular music. While direct American influence was preceded by European and Japanese, it became increasingly strong in the years following the Korean War, with Korean musicians learning American jazz and, especially, rock 'n' roll, though Koreans relied mostly on cover versions until the late 1960s. From that time on, Koreans have adopted a number of American popular musical styles, from commercial folk music (*t'ong k'ita*) in the 1970s to mainstream, “middle-of-the-road” (MOR) ballads, rhythm and blues (R&B), hip-hop/rap, and even heavy metal. These genres have become indigenized, however, or at least “de-Americanized” in the sense that most songs in these genres that appear as *kayo* are not cover versions of American, or other foreign, originals. They are sung in Korean, with harmonies and instrumental accompaniment that listeners are far more likely to identify as “modern” or “international” than simply as American or Western. And thus the music that is undeniably the most “popular” in Korea—i.e., that the largest number of people enjoy and pay to enjoy, and which Koreans are now very culturally proud to see finding popularity in other Asian countries through the Korean Wave—is *kayo*.

2.3 INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR MUSIC INDUSTRY IN JAPAN AND KOREA

Above I have offered brief histories of the popular music in Japan and Korea, focusing on the styles, genres, and individual artists and groups. Before turning our attention to the changing presence of Japanese popular music and culture in Korea in the following chapters, it remains for us to consider briefly the history of the music industry itself in both countries—i.e., the changing role of technology and business in the popular music of Japan and in Korea, beginning from the

first commercial recordings dating from the early twentieth century. Because the recording industry itself was introduced by Japan into Korea during the colonial period, it is necessary to take a look at the interactions between the two countries' music industries from the colonial period.

2.3.1 Brief Outline of Popular Music Industry in Japan

The first hit Japanese song was released by the Orient Recording Company, a small-scale company established in 1913 in Kyoto. This company was having financial difficulty until their hit song, "Kachusha no Uta" ("Kachusha's Song"), was released in the following year.¹⁰⁷ It was sung by Matsui Sumako (1886-1919), who was a leading actress in the theater company led by Shimamura Hogetsu (1871-1918).¹⁰⁸ The original title of the record was "Fukkatsuno Uta" ("Resurrection Song") and derived from the play, *Resurrection* (based on the novel by Leo Tolstoy), which was performed by one of the troupes influenced by the New Theatre Movement in Japan, during the latter part of the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁹ According to the descriptions by both Toru Mitsui and Nakamura Toyo, the song's popularity resulted from the its new hybrid sound, created by mixing together Western "lied" style with Japanese folk song. The mixture was requested for the troupe's tour in early 1914 by the troupe's leader Shimamura Hogetsu when he commissioned the song from the composer Nakayama Shimpei, who studied Western classical music at the Tokyo College of Music.¹¹⁰ According to Mitsui's findings, about 20,000 copies of the record were sold, despite its expensive price at that time (about 10%

¹⁰⁷ Toyo Nakamura, "Early Pop Song Writers and Their Backgrounds." *Popular Music* 10(3): 263-282, 1991, p. 263.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 264.

¹⁰⁹ Mitsui Toru's "Interactions of Imported and Indigenous Musics in Japan: A Historical Overview of the Music Industry," in *Whose Master's Voice?: The Development of Popular Music in Thirteen Cultures*, edited by Alison J. Ewbank and Fouli T. Papageorgiou. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997) p. 155.

¹¹⁰ Toyo, *op. cit.* p. 264, Mitsui, *op. cit.* p. 155.

of an elementary school teacher's initial salary). The song lyrics, about a painful farewell, were written by Soma Kyofu and were also used for a cosmetic manufacturer's advertisement in a newspaper. Thus, it also became one of the earliest advertisement songs in Japan.¹¹¹

Another early hit song by Nakayama Shimpei, "Sendo Kouta" ("A Boatman's Song," initially released in sheet music in 1921) was recorded in 1923; based on this song's popularity, the film, "Kare Susuki" ("Withered Eulalia"), was made.¹¹² Hosokawa notes that the huge success of the film "Kare Susuki" led the film industry to take popular songs seriously and to follow the trends in popular songs. Growing popularity of Western-influenced Japanese songs, along with the film industry's expansion, became an important force in the development of the Japanese music industry.

The Japanese recording companies, which were suffering from high taxation on direct imports of foreign records after the great Kansai earthquake in 1923 (which worsened the economic condition of Japan), began to join with foreign firms for local pressing, an arrangement that lowered the cost dramatically.¹¹³ As a result, the major recording companies were reestablished between 1927 and 1928, including Nippon Columbia (Japan Columbia), Nippon Victor (Japan Victor), and Nippon Polydor (Japan Polydor), and the Japanese music industry began to develop.¹¹⁴ Besides pressing foreign records, those companies began to make domestic "cover" versions of original records including "My Blue Heaven" (recorded by many musicians, including Gene Austin, Paul Whiteman, and Dick Lucas).¹¹⁵ Soon after, those recording companies began to produce their original hits: one of the first hit songs was "Kimi Koishi"

¹¹¹ For more about the song "Kachusha no Uta," see So Nishizawa. *Nihon Ryukoka Kayoshi: Ryakushi (A History of Modern Japanese Songs)*, (Tokyo: Ufusha, 1990) p. 3007.

¹¹² Shuhei Hosokawa, "Cultural History of Kouta Ega (Song Films) in 1920s: Popular Songs and Movies at the End of the Silent Film Era" *Nichibunken Newsletter* 59: 5, 2005. p. 5.

¹¹³ Mitsui, *op. cit.* pp. 158-159.

¹¹⁴ Toyo, *op. cit.* pp. 266-267.

¹¹⁵ Mitsui, *op. cit.* 159.

(“Yearning for You”) by Nippon Victor in 1929.¹¹⁶ Since then, more and more original productions of new songs were produced and the music industry continued to expand.

After World War II, more cheerful sounding songs were popular, including the first postwar hit song, “Ringo no Uta” (lit., “Apple Song”), by Nippon Columbia in 1946; however, the total production of postwar Japan was only one-third of prewar Japan.¹¹⁷ Beginning in 1951, as the Japanese economy began to thrive through the Korean War, the music industry began to flourish and many popular singers began to appear, including the exceptionally talented singer, Misora Hibari, who achieved life-long popularity since her debut at the age of twelve in Japan.¹¹⁸

Besides NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation, established in 1926), which had mainly broadcast Western classical music, commercial broadcasting stations began to launch in the early 1950s, and many music TV shows were created. Among them, NHK radio’s *Nodojiman Shiroto Ongajukai* (Amateur Singing Contest) was a very popular one, on which people sang their favorite popular songs. As many Japanese scholars have noted, including Toru Mitsui, Toshihiro Tsuganesawa, and Hideo Watanabe, *karaoke*’s instant and extensive popularity from its inception in the 1970s in Japan is due in large measure to the fact that singing in public (at social gatherings and festivals) is a favorite leisure activity of Japanese people.¹¹⁹ However, the Japanese public’s enjoyment of public singing not only boosted the popularity of the TV contest programs and *karaoke*, but also led the recording companies to work closely with the popular broadcast media, including television, as a way of promoting records. As a result, popular music became the center of those forces, the production, the media, and the consumer (who not only

¹¹⁶ Mitsui, *op. cit.* 160.

¹¹⁷ Kurata Hoshihiro. *Nihon Record Bunkashi (A History of Phonograph Culture)*, (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1979). P. 481.

¹¹⁸ Mitsui, *op. cit.* 160.

¹¹⁹ Mitsui, *op. cit.* 165); Tsuganesawa Toshihiro, *Karaoke as Popular Culture* (Tokyo: Shibundo, 1993) pp. 99-101; Watanabe Hideo, “Karaoke Learning in Japan.” *Japan Studies Review* 9: 59-80, 2005, p. 65.

enjoy listening but also singing them in public for many years even before the creation of *karaoke* in Japan).

As TV sets began to spread in Japan from the 1950s, a number of music TV shows were produced, some lasting for decades. For example, the famous music show by NHK, *Kohaku Utagassen* (lit., “Red and White Song Battle,” annual New Year Eve’s show) started in 1951 and has been the most highly regarded music show in Japan.

From the late 1960s, as the Japanese economy grew rapidly, foreign capital investment also increased, and the major foreign record companies merged with the Japanese companies. The newly merged companies included CBS Sony (1968), Toshiba EMI (1969), Nippon Phonogram (1970), Warner Pioneer (1970), and RVC (1975).¹²⁰ By joining with the foreign companies, the Japanese music industry became even more stable and began to extend their market internationally.

The two major musical instrument manufactures in the 1970s, Yamaha and Kawai, drove Japan to become an amateur music-making country by giving demonstrations, sponsoring classes and contests, and selling cheap keyboard instruments. More than a million students joined the two companies’ music classes during this decade.¹²¹ These extremely popular classes, provided a foundation for many young Japanese becoming musicians. Their music-making experiences since they were young also became an important factor in broadening their appreciation for various kinds of musical genres. Since the mid 1970s, Japan’s has been the second biggest

¹²⁰ Mitsui Toru, “Japan in Japan: Notes on an Aspect of the Popular Music Record Industry in Japan.” *Popular Music* 3: 107-120, 1983, p. 108.

¹²¹ Mitsui Toru’s “Interactions of Imported and Indigenous Musics in Japan: A Historical Overview of the Music Industry,” in *Whose Master’s Voice?: The Development of Popular Music in Thirteen Cultures*, edited by Alison J. Ewbank and Fouli T. Papageorgiou. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997) pp. 170-171.

music industry in the world (based on sales, holding around 15%), and its success has been based primarily on the domestic consumption of Japanese popular music.¹²²

During the 1980s, as VCR players were found in more than 50% of Japanese households, producing music video became very important in the popular music industry, and many music TV programs became less popular than the previous decades.¹²³ However, in the mid 1990s, the TV show *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ* was produced and which has been one of the most popular TV program in Japan until present day. As I mentioned in the previous section, during the 1990s, an important market strategy, “tie-up,” was introduced by the Being Record company. This company was focused on producing TV commercial songs with affiliated producers and singers. As the company’s “tie-up” strategy became extremely popular for the TV commercial songs, the company’s singers became popular too. Since then, the “tie-up” strategy has become a standard, and the competition among these songs has become critical to the financial success of this and other companies.

In the mid 1990s, the Japanese music industry began to identify computer games and animations as important new vehicles for music promotion and has been expanding into these fields. Music for the popular games and animations’ original sound track albums often became big hits through this kind of “tie-up.” From 1997, the top selling record company in Japan was AVEX, which achieved its success by selling dance music, created by Komuro Tetsuya, the most powerful producer and singer at that time, producing most of the top singers in the late 1990s in Japan, including Amuro Namie.¹²⁴ Although the internet’s initial impact constituted a major challenge to the music industry in Japan, particularly the rampant file-sharing of the late 1990s,

¹²² Kawabata Shigeru, “The Japanese Record Industry.” *Popular Music* 10: 327-345, 1991, p. 327.

¹²³ Umeda Koji, *Nihon Ongaku Shirutai Kotoga Suguwakaru* (Tokyo: Kou-Business, 1997), translated into Korean by Kim Hyung-Chan (Seoul: People of Fresh Mind Publishing, 1998) pp. 25-26.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 107.

companies like AVEX and Being's (B-Gram Record) have managed to remain successful in the market.

In summarizing briefly the main contours of the music industry in Japan, several notable features emerge. First, we find a precursor to the “tie-up” strategies used by today’s Japanese music industry companies in the rise to popularity of Japan’s first recording hit being based on a drama, and subsequent hits coming from early films. The “tie-up” with other popular forms reached new intensity in the last two decades as popular music has gained enormous exposure through *anime* films and television shows, and through computer game soundtracks. From early on we see business links between Japanese recording companies and those of the Western world, particularly the United States, such as Nippon Victor, resulting in the local pressing of Western popular music as well as Japanese. Only from the 1980s, though, do we find Japanese popular music establishing much of a presence overseas, as the Japanese market has been substantial enough to sustain a diversified and creative popular music output. The visual dimension of music personalities has long played an important role in popular music in Japan. Beginning in the very early years of television in Japan, we find, much more so than in the West, a strong popular support for music shows, setting the stage for the emphasis on visual appearance that typifies much of the popular music Japan would develop in the 1970s and after.

2.3.2 Brief Outline of Popular Music Industry in Korea

The first hit Korean song, Yûn Sim-Dôk’s “Saûi Ch’anmi” (“Glorification on Death”), was recorded by the Japanese record company (Nitto) in Japan and released in Korea in 1926.¹²⁵ Although there were earlier recordings of *ch’angga* from 1925, the song “Saûi Ch’anmi” has

¹²⁵ Lee Young Mee, “The Beginnings of Korean Pop,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) p. 3.

often been considered the beginning of the record industry's history in Korea because of its popularity. The melody of the song was taken from the famous waltz "The Waves of the Danube" (1889), by Rumanian composer Ion Ivanovici (1845-1902), but the writer of the Korean lyrics was unknown.¹²⁶ After she recorded the song in Osaka, Japan in 1926, Yûn Sim-Dôk, a famous actress as well as singer, joined in a double suicide with her lover Kim U-Jin, a famous playwright, on the way back to Korea. The publicity from this tragedy contributed to making the song very popular.¹²⁷

After this big hit by Yûn Sim-Dôk, the Japanese record companies began to open branches in Korea. Following those initial openings, Nippon Victor (1927), Nippon Columbia (1928), and Nippon Polydor (1930) began to sell records from Japan in Korea. The first record company based in Korea was Okeh Record, established in 1933 through a technical cooperation with Japan. It began to produce its own SP (78 rpm) albums from 1945, including Chang Sejông's "Urôra Ũnbangul" ("Cry, Silverbell") and "Paekp'albonnôï" ("108 Anxiety").¹²⁸

In the 1950s, a few new Korean record companies, including King Star, Sinsegi, Oasis, Universal, Taedo, Midopa, Seoul, Asea, and Omega, started to sell SPs and LPs; however, it was the 1960s when the Korean record industry really began to develop substantially.¹²⁹ Also, after the Korean War as the American army established its bases in Korea, AFKN (American Forces Korea Network) was established and broadcast its own TV station (from 1957) and FM station

¹²⁶ Lee Young Mee, *Han'guk Taejung Kayosa* (Seoul: Sigongsa, 1998) pp. 50-52 and *Hûngnam Pudu ûi Kumsuninûn Ôdiro Kassûlkka* (Seoul: Goldenbough, 2002) pp. 15-23); http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ion_Ivanovici (accessed September. 15. 2006).

¹²⁷ Based on their famous love story, the movie "Saul Ch'anmi" was produced in 1991. See http://kr.movies.yahoo.com/movie/detail.html?movie_id=4394 (accessed September. 15. 2006).

¹²⁸ "Hanguk Ũmak Sanôp Hyôpôi" ("Music Industry Association of Korea"), <http://www.miak.or.kr> (accessed May. 3. 2006).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

(from 1964). AFKN introduced various kinds of American popular culture, including music, TV dramas, movies, and animations, profoundly influencing Korean popular culture.¹³⁰

In 1964, the very first organization of the Korean record industry, *Taehan Rekodû Chejakjahyôpoe* (lit., “Korea Record Manufacturers”) was launched, and earned the sanction of the Ministry of Culture and Information in 1972.¹³¹ The biggest hit in the 1960s was “Tongbaek Agassi” sung by Lee Mi-Ja (1941-) and released by *Jigu Rekodû* (lit., “Earth Records”), a company that produced a number of huge hit songs with top singers until the early 1990s in Korea.¹³²

In the 1970s, as the Korean economy began to improve, many new record companies were established and began to expand their market volume through the licensing agreements with the foreign companies. For example,

In 1973, *Sông Ũm Rekodû* made licensing agreements with Philips, Deutch Gramophon, Polydor, A&M, Argo, and Mercury and began to concentrate on the music business. *Jigu Rekodû* made licensing agreements with RCA in 1972 and CBS Sony in 1974.....Also, *Oasisû Rekodû* made licensing agreements with EMI, WEA, and Pony Canyon Records. Besides those major companies, many other Korean companies began to join the music business in Korea, including Taedo, Asea, Taegwang Ũmban, Yeûmsa, Sôrabôl, Hyundae Ũmhyang, Hanguk Ũmban, Taesông Ũmban, Taeyang Ũmhyang, Ũnsông Ũmban, and Saehan Ũmban. The Korean music industry was also influenced by the introduction of cassettes (also called MC/Music Cassette in Korea).¹³³

¹³⁰ For more account on AFKN, see Roald Maliangkay’s “Pop for Progress: Censorship and South Korea’s Propaganda Songs,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 21-33.

¹³¹ “Hanguk Ũmak Sanôp Hyôpôi” (“Music Industry Association of Korea”), <http://www.miak.or.kr> (accessed May. 3, 2006).

¹³² I discuss more details on Lee Mi-Ja’s “Tongbaek Agassi” and the record company in Chapter Three.

¹³³ “Hanguk Ũmak Sanôp Hyôpôi” (“Music Industry Association of Korea”), <http://www.miak.or.kr> (accessed May. 3, 2006), translated by the author.

From the late 1980s, besides those record companies, many major corporations in Korea began to join the music business and expanded the market. The corporations' music industry sectors including SKC (1987) by Sôngyông, Cheil Kihoeok (1992) and Samsung Chunja (1993) by Samsung, Orikom (93) by Tusan, Hyundai Chunja (1993) by Hyundai, Seûm Midiô (1993) by Daewoo, LG media (1993) by LG (Lucky Gûmsông), and Taehûng Kihoeok (1994) by Lotte.

During the 1980s, a large number of music TV programs were produced and were very popular. One of the programs, KBS' *Chôn'guk Noraejarang* (lit., "Nation Singing-variety"), started in 1988 and was broadcast every Sunday. This amateur singing contest TV show travels around to cities in Korea and invites the local residents to join the show and compete in their singing skills. These shows are very similar to the Japanese TV program, *Nodojiman* (lit., "Voice Variety"), by NHK (which started as a radio program).¹³⁴ Also, another popular music TV program, *Kayo Top 10* (lit., "Popular Song Top 10," from 1980 to 1998, broadcast by KBS) was a Korean version of the popular Japanese music TV Program in the 1980s, *Za Besuto 10* ("The Best 10") broadcast by TBS (Tokyo Broadcasting System).¹³⁵

CD Album sales continued to grow until the mid 1990s, around the time of Seo Taiji's initial retirement. However, from the late 1990s, with Korea's economic downturn in 1997 and illegal downloading, copying, and sharing of music files through the internet, the Korean music industry was rapidly reduced and a lot of companies were bankrupted. According to the Han'guk Ũmak Sanôp Hyôp'ôe's statistics, in 1999 a total of 12 albums sold more than 500,000 copies, but in 2003, only one album sold more than 500,000 copies in Korea. This downturn led to the abandonment of 500,000 as a benchmark of an album's success. In 2004, the top category

¹³⁴ See the official websites of the Korean program "*Chônguk Noraejarang*" (www.kbs.co.kr/1tv/enter/jarang) and the Japanese program "*Nodojiman*" (www.nhk.or.jp/nodojiman).

¹³⁵ <http://www.tbs.co.jp/program/bestten.html> (accessed November. 11. 2006).

was adjusted to albums selling 200,000 (nine in 2004, but only four in 2006). The sharply downward trend in domestic sales pushed some companies to internationalize, as the Korean Wave has been booming in many Asian countries for the past a few years. The frontrunners in this new direction include SM Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and YG Entertainment, all of which were launched by former popular singers. Among them, JYP and YG have focused on China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines; and SM was focused on Japan until 2005. By concluding a licensing agreement with AVEX, the giant entertainment corporation of Japan, Korea's SM Entertainment has been especially successful in the internationalization of their production.

The popular music industry in Korea, then, could be said to have grown and shifted markedly from its origins 100 years ago. In actuality, of course, the companies producing and selling Korea's first popular music were Japanese. Only after independence was Korea able to establish its own record companies, and these were of little economic consequence because the nation, following the devastating Korean War, was largely impoverished, and very few Koreans could afford to buy records or the equipment on which to play them. The Korean recording industry became a substantial one only from the 1970s onward, and became enormously successful as increasing numbers of younger Koreans came to have money to spend on entertainment. With the rise of the internet in Korea, music consumption of recordings has dwindled and shifted to internet downloads (at first free or illegally acquired for free, now mostly requiring payment). Though piracy is not officially part of the Korean music "industry" and impossible to measure reliably with statistics, I would be remiss not to mention here the substantial instance of music (and video) piracy that has pervaded Korea at least since the 1970s, and through which, as we will see in the following chapter, many Koreans first came to know and appreciate Japanese popular music.

2.4 SUMMARY REMARKS

As we have seen, Korea and Japan have had a troubled history of international relations going back many centuries. In particular, the forceful annexation of Korea by Japan during the twentieth century, and the systematic attempts to undermine Korean cultural identity and pride, not only stimulated the rise of an intensified sense of nationalism among Koreans, but also a pernicious and deep sense of cultural inferiority. But the twentieth century not only brought colonialism to Korea, it also brought Western-style “modernism” and capitalist culture to Korea and other countries in Asia. Among the many cultural developments in Korea and Japan was the birth of popular music and the music industries that shaped and supported it. Though interrelated both during and after the colonial period, Korea’s and Japan’s popular musics grew from rather similar origins (*enka* and *tûrotû*) into distinctive styles and genres. The heavy influences of Western, primarily American, popular forms, from jazz and rock to rap and metal, have been fundamental stylistic influences in both Korea and Japan, but both countries differentiate their own popular musical traditions from those of the West. And the popularity of American pop music in both countries diminished as more and more local artists rose to the top of the local charts.

One of the key differences between Korea’s and Japan’s popular music histories, however, is the hard line Korea took with respect to censorship of particular songs and the comprehensive banning of Japanese popular music and other cultural products. What was illegal, however, was not unknown. Yet what was Japanese was almost automatically controversial, openly reviled by some, but often enhancing its appeal to some Koreans by the very nature of its belonging to a forbidden realm. It is to this condition in Korea, the illegal

presence of Japanese music and related cultural products, that we now turn in the following chapter.

3.0 JAPAN'S ILLEGAL PRESENCE

Popular music from Japan has clearly occupied a prominent position in Japan's presence in Korea. Long before Korea initiated its Open Door Policy, Korean youth were purchasing and listening to pirated Japanese pop cassettes and CDs. It is the main task of this chapter to trace the transnational cultural traffic in the music that created this illegal presence and to inquire into its implications for Korean conceptions of Japan. But before I address that traffic specifically, something needs to be said about other popular cultural products from Japan, as music is not the only product involved in this traffic by any means, and the notions Koreans have of things Japanese derives not from any single form, but their composite presence. Further aspects of the traffic in these other forms will emerge in my discussion of popular music itself, but here I would like to introduce these other forms and comment on their importance as an essential context in which we can understand the presence of Japan through its popular music.

3.1 ILLEGAL PRESENCE OF JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE IN KOREA AND CULTURAL "ODOR"

Modern Japanese popular culture began to penetrate into Korea through the economic partnerships established in 1965 under the Park Chung-Hee regime. Although the Korean government's official banning policy on the import of Japanese cultural products lasted from the

liberation of Korea in 1945 until 1997, various kinds of Japanese cultural products found their way into Korea even during this period and influenced contemporary Korean popular culture through various legal and illegal routes. Among the Japanese cultural products, what Iwabuchi defines as “the odorless products” including “comics/cartoons (animations), consumer technology, and computer games”¹³⁶ were spreading rapidly in Korea, some as early as the late 1960s.

Because the boundaries of the Korean government’s ban on imports of Japanese cultural products were never clearly defined in detail, the banning policy was a rather cursory guideline in most cases. Also, the intensity of the Korean government’s execution of the banning policy was different case by case and often changed along with the political and economic circumstances of the time. Thus, the banning policy was not infrequently ignored and manipulated by the participating import industries. Because the Korea’s banning policy did not consider the Japanese consumer technologies (radios, stereos, VCRs, the Walkman, video cameras) as “cultural” products, most of them were legally imported from Japan to Korea with the original maker and place of manufacture declared and labeled as they really were. Although the Japanese consumer technologies were usually more expensive than those produced in Korea, Japanese products’ internationally recognized high quality and famous brands were preferred by Koreans over domestic products until the early 1990s.

Ironically, the Korean consumers who were most able to afford the expensive Japanese consumer technologies during the period as well as those who could only desire but not actually buy these products shared a typical *and* paradoxical Korean attitude toward Japan: i.e., Koreans dislike Japan and the Japanese people, but love the Japanese products. However, this kind of

¹³⁶ Iwabuchi discusses Japan’s marketing strategy on popular cultural products in relation to Japan’s “return to Asia” project. See Iwabuchi’s article, “Return to Asia?: Japan in Asian Audiovisual Markets,” in *Consuming Ethnicity and Nationalism: Asian Experiences*, edited by Kosaku Yoshino (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999) pp. 182-184.

Korean contradictory attitude toward Japan and Japanese products has also been repeatedly criticized by the Koreans themselves, especially when their nationalistic support has become necessary against Japan. Koreans' contradictory attitude toward Japan has been like a "love and hate relationship." It also reflects Koreans' "inferiority complex" toward "Japanese superiority" that developed during the colonial period and has been reinforced in the post-colonial era due to Japan's economic success. And such complex and contradictory responses by Koreans to Japan, Japanese, and Japanese products are still evident to a certain extent. Most Koreans would certainly deny their "inferiority complex" toward Japan in public even though it has obviously been shown through Koreans' strong sense of rivalry with Japan in almost every sphere (economy, technology, sports, etc.). Moreover, whenever the relationship between the two countries has deteriorated because of political and/or economic troubles, particularly during the 1980s, the Korean public routinely has conducted anti-Japanese products campaigns: *ilje anss'ûgi undong* (lit. "Movement not to use Japanese-made products") or *ilje pulmae undong* (lit. "Movement not to buy Japanese-made products"). These movements have usually been short-term, but their recurrence is a clear sign Korea's sense of competition with and animosity towards Japan.

3.1.1 Manga/Manhwa

Comics/cartoons (*manga* in Japanese, *manhwa* in Korean) have been one of the most successful modern popular cultural products of Japan in Asia, and its popularity even in the United States has been rapidly growing in recent years (as we can now easily find a separate section devoted exclusively to the Japanese *manga* in the large bookstore chains, such as Barnes & Noble and Border's). In Korea, since as early as the 1950s, Japanese *manga* and its contents and styles

have been illegally reproduced.¹³⁷ Though officially banned in Korea, many of the *manga* were simply copied, but with the texts translated into Korean. At first very few Koreans were even aware of the Japanese origin of these *manhwa* (Korean term for comic books), enjoying them as indigenous popular culture. While animated shows and movies from Japan (*anime*, see below) were so costly to reproduce that most Korean production companies could not even afford to undertake all the necessary repackaging, *manga* could be easily copied by individual cartoonists and delivered to the publishing companies.

By the 1970s, there were more than 20,000 *manhwa* rental stores (formerly called *manhwa kage*, and since the early 1990s called *manhwabang* in Korean) and Koreans' reproduction of Japanese *manga* became a major industry.¹³⁸ Beginning in the 1970s, reading *manhwa* became one of the most popular pastimes among Korean youth.¹³⁹ In 1977, as some adult content and violent scenes became more and more evident and problematic in the Korean *manhwa*, the Korean government took action on the contents of *manhwa*. The government's tough rules on this matter left the Korean cartoonists with limited subject matter, mostly material that was suitable only for children. The government rules remained in force until 1997. As a result, many Korean comic fans turned their back on the Korean *manhwa* and enjoyed illegally-copied Japanese *manga*, which had been spreading throughout Korea through direct and indirect copying since the late 1970s.¹⁴⁰ In 1990, as the Korean government finally allowed *Ilbon manhwa tanhaengbon* (translated version of independent volumes of Japanese *manga*), the

¹³⁷ Kwak Tae-Won, "Ilbonmanhwaga Ch'arminanûn Iyu Myôkkaji" (A Few Reasons of Japanese Manga's Popularity) in *Ilbon Munhwa Bekkigi (Copying Japanese Popular Culture)*, (Seoul: Namu-wa Sup, 1998) pp.191-192.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 195.

¹³⁹ Kim Kyong-Hwa, "Hanbandoe Ch'arijabûn Ilbon Ch'ôngsomyôn Munhwa" ("Japanese Adolescents Culture Rooted in Korea") in *Ilbon Munhwa Bekkigi (Copying Japanese Popular Culture)*, (Seoul: Namu-wa Sup, 1998) p. 41.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 202-208.

bestseller *Doragon Boru* (known as the “Dragon Ball,” 1984-1995) written by Toriyama Akira was imported right away by the major publisher, Seoul Munhwasa in Korea and was a major hit.

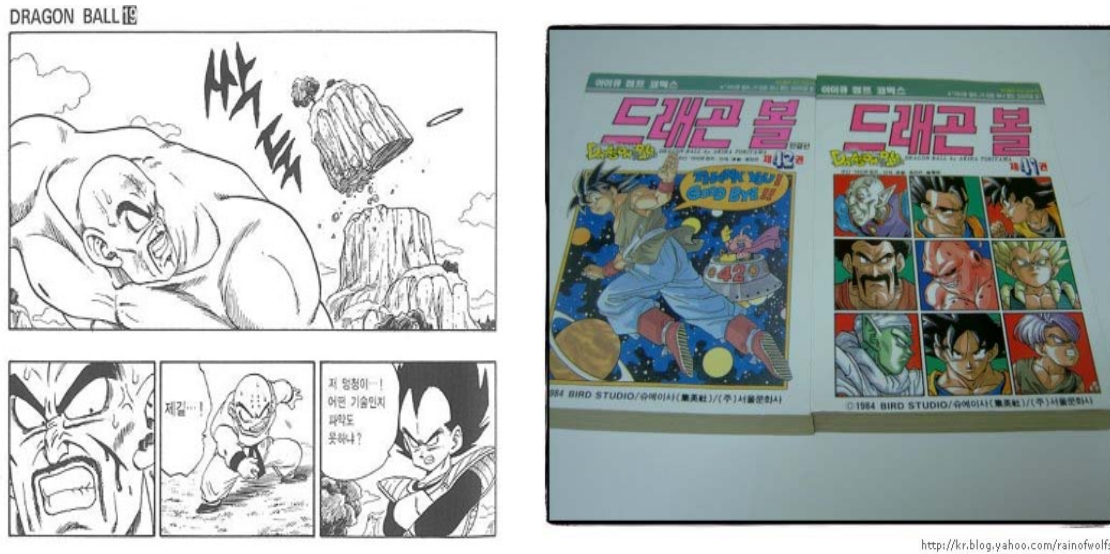


Figure 3.1 Korean Version, *Dragon Ball* (1990), vol. 19, p. 73 (left) and covers of vol. 41 and vol. 42 (right)

The Japanese *manga* has helped many young Koreans to be familiar with other kinds of Japanese popular culture, particularly anime and its associated characters, artistic style, and music, and led Koreans as they became adults to adopt a view on Japan in general that was more favorable than that of their parents and grand-parents.

3.1.2 Anime

Soon after the arrival of *manga*, Japanese animated cartoons and movies (*anime*) found popularity in Korea, beginning as early as the 1960s. *Anime* could not be so easily copied, but

became available in Korea as television broadcasters simply cut the Japanese voice-tracks, replaced them with Korean ones, and broadcast them, in spite of the Korean government policy forbidding Japanese imports. All imports of Japanese animation, which were supposed to be illegal but somehow “officially” entered into Korea due to inconsistent application of the banning policy, went through a makeover process first. They were all translated into Korean, and the characters’ names were changed to Korean names (or some other foreign names) in order to conceal their Japanese origin.¹⁴¹ Certain elements implying Japan and/or Japanese culture were modified to appear more Korean or eliminated from the content. However, much of the Japanese animations’ content has tended to be rather universal (especially the very popular fantasy stories) instead of being particularly Japanese.¹⁴² Also, the names of the writers, producers, voice actor/actress (dubbing artists), musicians, and production studios were simply cut from these products from the late 1960s until the late 1990s. As a result, many of the Koreans who grew up watching these animations on TV misunderstood their origins, taking them to be Korean even today.

In the case of music for the animations, all the lyrics were translated into Korean (or sometimes rewritten in Korean), but the original melodies were usually used. More than ninety percent of the animations broadcast on TV (*Terebi anime* in Japanese, *TV Manhwa yŏnghwa* in Korean) since the late 1960s have been Japanese animation, and they have been extremely popular among young Koreans.¹⁴³ The impact of those animations’ extreme popularity has not been limited to the animations themselves but has also included the theme songs of those

¹⁴¹ See Hô In-Uk, *Hanguk Animation Yŏnghwasa (Korean Animation Film History)*, Seoul: Sinhan Media, 2002) p. 61.

¹⁴² According to Iwabuchi Koichi, Japanese animation films have intentionally erased or subdued particular racial or ethnic differences in order to be exportable. See Iwabuchi Koichi, “Return to Asia? Japan in Asian Audiovisual Markets,” in *Consuming Ethnicity and Nationalism: Asian Experiences*, edited by Kosaku Yoshino (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999) p. 183.

¹⁴³ See Hô In-Uk, *op. cit.* pp. 67-71, and Kwak Tae-Won, “Ilbonmanhwaga Ch’arminanûn Iyu Myôkkaji” (A Few Reasons of Japanese Manga’s Popularity) in *Ilbon Munhwa Bekkigi (Copying Japanese Popular Culture)*, (Seoul: Namu-wa Sup, 1998) p. 153.

animations since the late 1960s. The theme songs were extremely popular among Korean children during the 1970s and beyond, and they were often used as cheering songs for school's field days because almost all Korean child knew them. As they became adults, they still favored those animations' theme songs as cheering songs for various meetings and festivals and as popular repertoires at karaoke (or *noraebang* in Korean). To this day, customers at Korean *noraebang* can choose these songs, which are listed under the genre entry *manhwa nora*, (lit., "animation songs"). One of the earliest Japanese animations broadcast in Korea was "Hwanggûm Pakjui" (lit., "Golden Bat", called "O-gon Batto" in the Japanese broadcast April 1967 to March 1968 by the Yomiuri TV). It was the first animated program broadcast weekly in Korea, shown from September 1968 to August 1969 by the Tongyang Pangsong (TBC-TV), and its extreme popularity led the TV station to rebroadcast it a few times in the 1970s and the 1980s.¹⁴⁴ In addition, its theme song became one of the most famous animation theme songs in Korea.

¹⁴⁴ Kang In-Chun, "Kû Yennal TV Manhaw Yônghwa, "Hwanggûm Pakjui ui Ch'uôk" (The Old Day's Animation, Memory of the "Golden Bat"), *OhMyNews*, October. 12. 2005.



Figure 3.2 Animation “Hwanggûm Pakjui” (“Golden Bat” first aired in 1968 in Korea)

Among the many popular Japanese animations, one of the most famous was the “Ujusonyôn Atom” (original title “Tetsuwan Atomu” in Japan, also known as “Astro Boy” or “Mighty Atom” in English). It was first broadcast in 1970 and, showing remarkable comeback power, most recently rebroadcast by the SBS-TV from November 2003 to July 2004.¹⁴⁵ As can be seen in the illustration provided here, the hero, Astro Boy, has features that suggest a Caucasian rather than an Asian racial identity. His hair is jet black, but his eyes are round and his skin the pinkish “flesh” color of a European or an American. This is a typical strategy used by the creators of Japanese popular cultural products—the erasure of Japanese (or even East Asian) odor, which thereby widens the potential market. That the choice is Caucasian rather than Asian or African, for example, has clear implications of the West’s dominance in the global

¹⁴⁵ “Ujusonyôn Atom, Anbange Tasi Sogae” (Ujusonyôn Atom Introduced to Home Again), *Yonhap News*, November. 2. 2003.

popular culture market and ongoing vestiges of a Euro-American presence in Asia's post-colonial mentality.

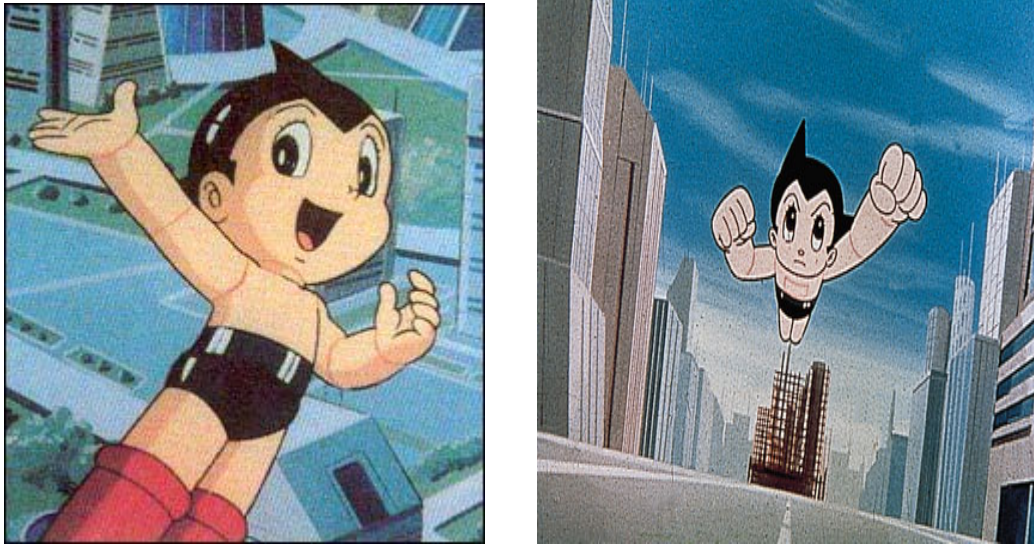


Figure 3.3 Animation “Ujusonyôn Atom” (“Astro Boy” first aired in 1970 in Korea)

Large numbers of Japanese animations have been broadcast and rebroadcast in Korea since the late 1960s, and the theme songs of those animations have been favorite popular songs of viewers not only during their childhood, but also during their 20s and 30s, as nostalgic triggers of their childhood memories. What is more important here is that this kind of intimate familiarity that many young Koreans had with the Japanese animation songs (just like many old Koreans' familiarity with Japanese *enka*-related Korean *t'ûrotû*) naturally led them to be open to other kinds of Japanese popular music and Japanese popular musical sounds in general, as they shared familiar stylistic traits with the animation songs. Moreover, the younger generation's emotional and physical distance from the older generation's bitter experience from the colonial history with Japan has led them to be more active in consuming Japanese popular culture. Thus,

what Iwabuchi defined as one of the “non-smelly” (odorless) products of Japan, animations, in Korea has become a rather “smelly” cultural product in the close relationship of the theme songs to Japanese popular music.

3.1.3 Character Goods

In addition, such “character goods” as the Hello Kitty¹⁴⁶ line and a range of items bearing the images of various *anime* and *manga* characters have been popular in Korea since the 1970s, unlike the forms that inspired many of them, were not officially banned by the Korean government. Most of the character goods marketed in Korea, in fact, are manufactured there. By conscious design, these character goods have born very little Japanese cultural odor, likely contributing to their wide appeal in many countries outside of Japan, including the United States, where the average consumer has no idea of their Japanese origin.

3.1.4 Computer Games

Since their first appearance in the early 1980s, Koreans have become avid devotees of computer games, and many of these also have been created in Japan. The arcade machines of the 1980s were directly imported, mostly from Japan, but because most of the lettering was in English and the graphics avoided clear indications of racial or cultural identity, most Korean consumers were not aware of their Japanese origins. Computer games came to be as popular as comics (*manhwa*) in Korea. Throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, *manhwa kage* (or *manhwabang*, “cartoon rental stores”) and *oraksil* (or *keimbang*, “game arcades”) were the two popular inexpensive

¹⁴⁶ Hello Kitty is a white cat with a big red ribbon on her left ear, created by Sanrio Company Ltd. in 1974 in Japan.

entertainment spots for many Korean in their teens and 20s. These were taken over in the late 1990s by *PC pang* (lit., “computer [PC] rooms”), the ubiquitous public internet-access facilities found on almost every city block in Korea’s cities and towns, as more and more of the games are played on-line.

Most of the computer games played by Koreans have been Japanese, including the most popular games in the 1980s, “Galaga” and “Pac-Man” (both by Namco Ltd., one of the major computer and video game companies in Japan). These early ones were graphically simple and gave no indication of racial, cultural, or national origin. The highly sophisticated graphics of more recent computer games, however, bear clear resemblance to *anime*, which, as I have suggested above, does not represent characters whose physical features are clearly Japanese, or even Asian, but whose Japanese origins is increasingly known to Korean consumers. The Japanese origin of these games is certainly more obvious now than for the games of the 1980s. Some games accessed on line even employ Japanese language, or offer Japanese language as one of several options. This, coupled with the frequent use of Japanese theme songs (in Japanese, not translated), makes the Japanese identity of these recent and current computer games quite obvious. In historical perspective, then, we can find a strong shift from the culturally “odorless” games of the early 1980s to games that now bear strong Japanese cultural odor.

3.1.5 Television and Film

The “smelly” products of Japanese popular culture, including TV dramas, movies, and popular music, were all over Asia during the 1990s. However, Korea was still under the banning policy prohibiting the TV dramas, movies, and popular music along with some of the “non-smelly” products. As a result, like the consequences from banning the Japanese animations and *manga*, a

number of Korean TV dramas and movies have copied various aspects from the popular Japanese TV dramas and movies, and, I should add, also from *manga* and animations.

3.1.5.1 Television.

As Korean media expert Lee Dong-Hoo discusses, the Japanese “generic discourses, production practices, and drama texts” have been adopted by the Korean media industry.¹⁴⁷ Most of the popular Japanese dramas in the 1990s (known as “trendy dramas,” dealing with youth-oriented love stories, usually 24 to 28 episodes), including *Tokyo Love Story* (1992), *Women of Tuesday* (1994), *Long Vacation* (1996), *Love Generation* (1997), and *Hitotsu Yane no Shita* (“Under One Roof” 1999), were partially or entirely copied by many Korean dramas in the 1990s, including *Chiltu* (“Jealousy” 1992), *Kûmyoirui Yôja* (“Women of Friday” 1994), *Pyôrûn Nae Kasûme* (“Wish upon a Star” 1997), *Yegam* (“Hunch/Presentiment” 1997), *Misûtô Kyu* (“Mr. Q” 1998), *Ch’ôngch’un* (“Springtime” 1999), and *Haep’i Tugedô* (“Happy Together” 1999).¹⁴⁸ From specific scenes, title, characters, settings, music, to main plot, a number of Korean dramas in the 1990s took the popular Japanese dramas as a model.

The Korean television industry has actually taken advantage of the government’s banning policy, which blocked the Korean public from knowing Japanese TV dramas directly. As a result, the Korean television industry has copied not only the dramas but also the other genres of TV programs, including news programs, comedies, quiz shows, variety shows, and music programs. Instead of trying to create original works, many Korean producers and writers were busy copying popular Japanese programs for quick results. Although some Korean viewers

¹⁴⁷ For more account on Japanese TV dramas’ impact on Korean TV dramas, see Lee Dong-Hoo’s “Cultural Contact with Japanese TV Dramas: Modes of Reception and Narrative Transparency,” in *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Dramas*, edited by Iwabuchi Koichi (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004) pp. 252-274,

¹⁴⁸ “MBC Tûrama, Yegam” (“MBC Drama, Hunch”), *Cine 21*, November 4, 1997; Lee Dong-Hoo, *op. cit.* p. 264.

began to realize some obvious cases of piracy through the internet and some illegal video copies from the black market, there has been only one Korean drama cancelled because of piracy. The drama, *Ch'ôngch'un* (March 1999), was cancelled only after eight episodes shown. Although the producer admitted that he borrowed a few ideas from the Japanese drama, *Love Generation*, its main plot and four characters' love relationships were basically the same. The Japanese drama, *Love Generation* (also *Long Vacation*), featured Kimura Takuya (member of the popular male group, SMAP, in Japan), who has been the most famous Japanese male actor/singer in East Asia since the mid 1990s. Since he was also well-known in Korea among the Japanese popular culture fans, who could easily watch the original dramas through the internet), the Korean drama *Ch'ôngch'un*'s obvious piracy was not tolerable by the Korean public, unlike the other Korean dramas.

In both countries, the TV dramas are generally categorized as “historical” or “contemporary” and this similarity in categories has led to similar sets of characteristics in what viewers expect in TV dramas. However strong the popular cultural influences have been from the West, particularly the United States, the focus on family and dealing with personal challenges found in many Japanese and Korean dramas does not have a corresponding niche in American TV dramas. Moreover, most American TV dramas are single episode, rather than the serial approach of Japanese and Korean dramas (with sometimes more than 50 episodes in a single drama). Much has been made of Japan's recent infatuation with Korean TV dramas, particularly *Winter Sonata* (*Kyôul Yôngga*), but the influence in the other direction has been considerable, and more than Koreans would generally acknowledge. Because even the instances of direct copying involve translation of the dialog and relocalization of the plot to Korea, viewers may not be aware of the Japanese origins of the Korean copies. Thus, it would be hard to argue for a strong Japanese “odor” in this case—the obvious cultural markers (language and location) having been

removed and replaced. But this kind of surreptitious use of Japanese popular cultural materials is more and more widely known. Many instances are painstakingly researched and exposed by Korean scholars and journalists, who see as their nationalist duty the revelation of Japan's insidious presence in contemporary Korea. And more directly, more and more of the Korean public gained the capability of accessing Japanese television shows through the circulation of pirated video tapes and DVDs, as well as on-line viewing.

3.1.5.2 Film.

Japanese commercial films, also banned in Korea until very recently, have also been shown rather convincingly by some observers to have served as direct models for some Korean films. Korean film critic Yang Yun-Mo provides a list of twelve Korean films clearly influenced by Japanese originals, even going so far as to rate the percentage of copying, from 20% to 90%.¹⁴⁹ What does this say about Japanese "presence"? Again, if the Korean public is unaware of, or does not sense or feel, the Japanese origins of a particular Korean film, what is the effect of watching and enjoying it? Does one become, unknowingly, Japanized in some sense? Opinions differ on the answer to this type of question, but it is clear that a concern for Korean cultural subservience to a more dominant Japan runs deep in Korean consciousness. Like the other authors of the articles in the 1998 collection of essays on Korean copying of Japanese originals in various popular cultural forms, Yang is driven by an abiding concern over Korea's apparent inability to refrain from this kind of borrowing and copying from Japan.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the matter of copying and the matter of Japanese presence need to be carefully distinguished.

¹⁴⁹ Yang Yun-Mo, 1998, "P'yojôl Nonjaengûro Pon Haebang Hu Han'guk Yônghwa," (Post-Liberation Korean Movies Considered with respect to the Piracy Controversy). In Yi Yôn et, al. *Ilbon Munhwa Pekkigi (Copying Japanese Popular Culture)*. (Seoul: Namu-wa Sup, 1998). P. 58.

¹⁵⁰ Yi Yôn et al., *op cit.* Other realms of popular culture covered in the book besides movies are TV programs, animation (anime), comic books (*manga*), fashion, TV commercials and magazine advertisements, newspaper content, popular music, and food.

Koreans are not forming ideas of Japan, Japanese culture, or Japanese people through consuming and reacting to films or television shows that have been made in Korea but based on Japanese models. What worries the culture critics like Yang is that the media-fed images Koreans are developing of themselves are too often coming from Japan. Does the success of these shows and films mean that Korea and Japan share many cultural traits that make it easy for Koreans to find meaning and relevance for their own lives in viewing shows whose plots, scenarios, and characters were created by Japanese? Or does it mean that Korea's national cultural identity is dangerously weak--too easily subsumed, or even transformed, by the images that they believe are Korean but in fact derive from Japan?

3.1.6 Magazines, Fashion, and “Style”

Japanese popular culture magazines, though written in Japanese and officially banned until very recently, were sold illegally in Korea for several decades. Containing copious color photo illustrations of Japanese pop stars, the latest Japanese fashions, and advertisements for a myriad of Japanese goods, these magazines found their way into the hands of eager Korean teenagers, along with pirated Japanese popular music cassettes, through black market sellers in large market areas of Seoul, such as Namdaemun and Chongno, and in Pusan.¹⁵¹ As early as the mid-1980s, magazines such as *Non-No* and *MORE* were spreading a fascination with things Japanese among a growing fan base in Korea. These illegal items had especially strong Japanese odor, as there could be no doubt about their origin. And the appealing images contributed very substantially to

¹⁵¹ In Pusan, the nearest big Korean city to Japan, Japanese cultural products were easily found and Japanese presence was such that Japanese tourists could even use Japanese *yen* without exchanging their money for Korean *won* even in the late 1980s.

shape a mindset among younger Koreans to desire Japanese goods, Japanese fashions,¹⁵² and, more abstractly, a Japanese “style”—characterized by cuteness, a non-critical, a-political worldview, infatuation with physical appearance (body, clothing, and accessories). This style, while first and foremost Japanese, was attainable also by Koreans, whose physical and cultural resemblance to Japanese was evident.

3.1.7 Cuisine

Food is a basic human need and has evolved complex symbolic and cultural meanings. Up until fairly recently, one found very little in the way of “foreign” cuisine in Korea, other than Chinese restaurants, but even these were mostly “Korean-Chinese” restaurants, serving specialties one might not find in most Chinese restaurants in China or other countries (such as the noodles-with-black-sauce favorite, *chajang myôn*). In contemporary Korea one finds a wide range of restaurants serving various non-Korean foods, from Europe, the United States, and many other Asian countries. Again, however, the presence of Japan is strongly felt here as *ch’obap/sushi*, *udong* (Korean rendering of Japanese “udon”) and *k’asû* (Korean rendering of Japanese “katsu”) restaurants are especially numerous. Though identified not as “Japanese” restaurants as such, but rather as *k’asû* or *udong* restaurants, for example, the public is almost universally aware that the food they will encounter there is Japanese. And since the late 1990s, many restaurants serving Japanese cuisine do use an obvious Japanese place name in their name (e.g., “*Osak’a k’asû*,” “*Tok’yo udong*,” “*Sapporo*,” etc.).

¹⁵² The issue of fashion is a complicated one, as clothing is both a human need and a complex symbolic system for expressing identity and presenting oneself to the public. Korean fascination with foreign fashion in general goes back many decades and today certainly includes the fashion centers of Europe (esp. France and Italy) as well as the United States. But, not surprisingly, Japan looms very large in Korean notions of fashion as well.

As I have suggested here, and will elaborate further, the cultural odor and resulting perception of Japanese presence varies considerably from one type of popular cultural product to another. In some cases, such as TV dramas, movies, *anime* and *manga/manhwa*, the potential for strong Japanese cultural odor is almost completely erased through translation and (re)localization. In others, such as early computer games and character goods, Japanese odor is weak, if evident at all, in the originals. Now that Japanese TV dramas, movies, as well as popular music can at last be imported and consumed legally in Korea, Japanese presence in Korea has the potential to be much more strongly perceived. And among these forms, it is popular music that seems to be the most widely accessible and known to the Korean public, particularly its youth.

3.2 ILLEGAL PRESENCE OF JAPANESE POPULAR MUSIC IN KOREA AND CULTURAL “ODOR”

The transnational cultural traffic in popular music between Korea and Japan had started during the colonial period. However, as the colonial period ended, the remains of Japanese presence in the Korean society and culture became a very troublesome and sensitive matter for Koreans. Furthermore, the two countries’ ongoing political conflicts have made Koreans keenly sensitive to the presence of Japan, a presence which became deeply rooted in the Korean society and culture from the colonial period and has been revitalized again recently (although this time largely by their own will). In this section, I will discuss postcolonial Korea’s effort to eliminate the remains of Japanese presence in popular music, starting from 1960s, and the contrary process of gradually growing illegal presence of Japanese popular music from 1980s until 1997, especially among the young Koreans.

3.2.1 De-Japanizing Korea and Purifying Korean Popular Music

The presence of Japan in the popular music of postcolonial Korea was all but inevitable, because Korean popular music first appeared and developed during the colonial period, and its music industry was established by Japan during that time. Since the colonial period, the revitalization of Korean cultural identity by abolishing the legacy of Japanese colonialism has been an integral part of Korean cultural policy. The Korean government has sought to restore the national culture from deteriorating by reevaluating and funding traditional culture and to protect popular culture by monitoring its content. Besides the banning policy on the imports of Japanese popular culture to prevent further “Japanization” of Korean culture, the Korean government’s internal efforts on de-Japanizing postcolonial Korean popular culture through the censorship policies clearly proved the Koreans’ concern over the deeply ingrained presence of Japan in Korea.

After the liberation and the Korean War, Koreans could not afford to spend much of their money on leisure activities, such as the consumption of popular music. Personal financial resources were mostly spent on basic necessities, and national financial resources were devoted largely to rebuilding the nation from the ruins of the war. Nevertheless, Korean popular culture, including music, did manage to grow gradually as Korea’s economy began to improve by the 1960s. In 1965, when the Park Chung-Hee regime normalized relations with Japan for economic support, despite the Korean public’s strong opposition, he saw the need for a quick and efficient plan to suppress the public’s anger toward the government. Korea’s popular culture, which the government saw as potentially harmful and thus in need of the strict monitoring, came under very tight government control in order to suppress the anger as well as the growing anti-government force within the Korean public.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, the Park Chung-Hee regime established the various censorship policies and organizations to monitor and to “purify” (*chônghwa* in Korean) postcolonial Korean society and culture. Among them, two censorship organizations, the *Pangsong Yulli Wiwônhoe* (the Korean Broadcasting Ethics Committee) and the *Han’guk Yesul Munhwa Yulii Wiwônhoe* (the Korean Arts and Culture Ethics Committee) have specialized in censoring popular music for broadcasting and recording through *Sajôn Simuije* (Preliminary Review Policy, which was abolished in 1996), which covered not only the de-Japanization issue but also anti-communist content (for example, the use of the color red in song lyrics was restricted, called *pangong* in Korean), anti-government (*panjôngbu*), defeatism (*paebaejuûi*), decadence (*toepyejuûi*), *et al.*¹⁵³

As a result, not only were Japanese popular songs prohibited from being directly imported or reproduced in Korea but also the Korean popular songs that were deemed “too Japanese” or “*waesaek*” (a derogatory term, translating as “Japanese color/taste/style”) were banned by the government policies from 1965 until 1987.¹⁵⁴ Not surprisingly, many of the prohibited songs were *t’ûrotû*, which was the most clearly Japanese-influenced and widely exposed popular music genre in the 1960s.¹⁵⁵ One of the best known examples is Lee Mi-Ja’s song “Tongbaek Agassi” (the “Camellia Lady”). Lee Mi-Ja has been known as the “*Ereji ui Yôwang*” in Korea since the 1960s to the present day (means the “Queen of elegy,” which the word *Ereji* is a Japanese pronunciation for “elegy” used to describe *enka* in Japan and also used in Korea from the 1960s). The song, “Tongbaek Agassi,” was released in 1964 but prohibited in

¹⁵³ For more account on the censorship on popular music in 1965, see Roald Maliangkay’s “Pop for Progress: Censorship and South Korea’s Propaganda Songs,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 50-51.

¹⁵⁴ In 1987, the Chun Doo-Hwan regime declared its landmark decision (June 29, 1987) to grant some additional freedom of the press, of speech, and of public opinion as a proper gesture before hosting the Olympic Games in 1988. See Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) pp. 158-161.

¹⁵⁵ The 1960s was called the golden period of *t’ûrot’û*. See Sôn Sông-Won, *Taejung ûmak-ûi Ppuri (The Roots of Korean Pops)*, (Seoul: Kkum, 1996) pp. 295-296.

December 1965. The song was initially included in the sound track of the big hit movie, *Tongbaek Agassi* (1964), which was featured by the most popular actor (Sin Sông-II) and actress (Ôm Yông-Lan) at that time.¹⁵⁶



Figure 3.4 Movie Poster of *Tongbaek Agassi* (1964)

Along with the movie's hit, Lee Mi-Ja became the most popular singer and was known to be the very first singer to sell more than 100,000 albums, including pirated copies.¹⁵⁷ Even

¹⁵⁶ The plot of movie, "Tongbaek Agassi," is about a young girl falling in love with a college student, who came from Seoul the small town of an islet. After being pregnant, she went to Seoul to find her love, but he went to a foreign country to study. She began working at the bar called "Tongbaek Suljip" ("Tongbaek Bar"). When they met again, he was already married. Then, she gave her baby to his family and came back to her hometown.

though the song was prohibited by the government because of its “*waesaek*,” the *t’ûrotû* genre itself was still allowed and many *t’ûrotû* songs used the word “*ereji*” for their titles from the mid 1960s until the 1980s. As this case showed, the conscious/unconscious use of the Japanese words was deeply-rooted in Korean society. Although the government attempted to “purify” the Korean language (*Kugô chônghwa undong*) since 1976, the presence of Japan in the Korean language has not been completely eliminated but became even stronger after 1997.

After the enormous popularity of the song “Tongbaek Agassi,” its licensing record company, Midopa (established in the 1950s), was divided into two separate record companies, *Jigu Rekodû* (lit., “Earth Records”) and *Kûraendû Rekodû* (“Grand Records”) in 1965. The *Jigu Rekodû* started as the major record company from its beginning by taking the copyright of the song “Tongbaek Agassi” and its exclusive contract with Lee Mi-Ja (who has released thousands of songs since her debut).¹⁵⁸ Because only that the song was prohibited, Lee Mi-Ja was able to continue her musical career as a *t’ûrotû* singer for the next four decades. Although a total of about 150 songs (a lot of them *t’ûrotû* songs) were prohibited by the government because of their “*waesaek*,” the *t’ûrotû* genre itself was not eliminated from Korea and remains one of the most durable genres in Korean popular music history.¹⁵⁹

During the early 1970s, while the American influenced *t’ong kit’a* music was booming among the young Koreans, along with blue jeans, and mini-skirts, *t’ûrotû* songs became the favorite only of the older generation and were pushed aside from the main spotlight. Under the government’s emphasis de-Japanizing Korea, *t’ûrotû* became something vulgar and a low taste

¹⁵⁷ “T’ûrot’û ui Yôksa” (The History of *T’ûrot’û*), *Hanguk Ilbo*, July. 24. 2003.

¹⁵⁸ “Lee Mi-Ja ui Samgwa Norae” (The Life and Song of Lee Mi-Ja), *Seoul News*, April. 22. 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Im Jin-Mo’s “Deajung Kayo, Kkûdômmûn P’yojôrûi Segye” (“Popular Music, Endless Piracy World”), in Yi Yôn et, al. *Ilbon Munhwa Pekkigi (Copying Japanese Popular Culture)*. (Seoul: Namu-wa Sup, 1998) pp. 165-166, translated by the author.

kind of music during the 1970s. As a result, *t'ûrotû* singers came to be less respected by most Korean audiences since then.

While the other kinds of popular culture, including cartoons and animations, were deeply influenced by the Japanese counterparts and less controlled by the government censorship, the popular music and musicians were rigorously screened. In the mid 1970s, a few *t'ong kit'a* singers and rock group musicians were caught smoking marijuana in an incident known as the *Taemach'o Sagôn* (lit., the “Marijuana Incident”). Most of the popular *t'ong kit'a* singers and writers were either imprisoned or/and prohibited from making music based on presumed association with the *Taemach'o Sagôn*, although they might not actually have smoked marijuana. It was simply because they were the *t'ong kit'a* singers.



Figure 3.5 The *Taemach'o Sagôn* (The “Marijuana Incident”) in 1975

Like the *t'ûrotû* singer Lee Mi-Ja's case, the *Taemach'o Sagôn* was something that the Park Chung-Hee regime wanted to use to demonstrate the government's unconditional power over the Korean public in a frightening way, in fact very much like the Japanese colonial policy. As the *t'ong kit'a* music became popular gathering the young Koreans together, the government began to see the popular music's potential threat and considered it as more decadent than other popular cultural forms. As a result, the strong censorship on Korean popular music in the 1970s left an extremely limited space for creativity and pushed many talented musicians away from the popular music scene. Although those *t'ong kit'a* singers were not directly related to the presence of Japan, and their music did not contain Japanese “odor” the way the *t'ûrotû* songs often did,

the government's censorship on music in order to "de-Japanize" and "de-colonize" Korea through such militaristic ways showed the deeply remaining presence of Japan in Korean politics in its relation to popular music. It was a period called *Hanguk kayo ui amhûkgi* (lit., "dark period of Korean popular music") in the Korean popular music history.

Since the 1970s, the Korean record companies began to sign contracts with foreign record industries, including the Japanese company SONY, for sale of foreign popular music and Western classical music albums. The *Jigu Rekodû*, which was one of the biggest record companies dating from the 1960s, signed contracts with RCA (America) in 1972 and CBS SONY (Japan) in 1974. Also, the other Korean record company *Oasis* signed a contract with the Pony Canyon Records (Japan) in the late 1970s. With the introduction of cassettes in the mid-1970s, the Korean music industry began to grow rapidly, through the 1980s.¹⁶⁰ However, it was also a period when a number of small factories illegally reproducing music cassettes began to spread in Korea.

3.2.2 (Un) Hidden Presence of Japan and Pirated Cassettes in Korea

The 1980s were perhaps the most turbulent years of Korea's post-war history as the period began with the assassination of President Park Chung-Hee (December 1979) and the imposition of a cruel military regime under Chun Doo-Hwan. However, it was also the period of an ever-growing economy, which provided rapid improvement in the standard of living. During the Chun Doo-Hwan regime, the educational system was ever more tightened by strict rules and conditions.

¹⁶⁰ "Hanguk Ŭmak Sanôp Hyôp'ô'i" ("Music Industry Association of Korea"), <http://www.miak.or.kr/>, (accessed December. 11. 2006).

The educational system required young students to devote most of their time to preparing for entrance exams, which were required at each level. This extremely authoritarian educational system created an enormously competitive environment not only for the students but also for their parents. Parents, who believed that the high education of their children was their primary responsibility, supported their children with anything available for obtaining maximum results. Although cassette players were not produced for the purpose of study, but for music, they became a popular device for enhancing school performance results.¹⁶¹ Besides learning at school and having private teachers (which was illegal and expensive), many students used a number of secondary textbooks, which came with cassettes containing voice lectures. Not surprisingly, those young Koreans began to listen to music with the cassette players as well. Although it was not the only factor, the young Koreans' easier access to music in the 1980s influenced the overall development of the Korean music industry.

Various pirated items, including popular music, from Japan were available on the black market in the big cities from the mid 1980s. While the regular cassettes of Korean popular music and legally imported foreign music, most of which was American or European popular music or classical music) sold at around US\$4-5, the reproduced illegal copies of those cassettes and the pirated Japanese popular music cassettes were sold at a much more affordable US\$1. Those illegal music cassettes were found at every corner of the urban commercial centers and were sold by countless vendors from their street carts, called *riōka* (Korean pronunciation of the Japanese word *riaka*, which is derived from the English words “rear” plus “car”). From these street carts, in Korea as in Japan, all different kinds of cheaply (re)produced small goods like jewelry, toy, clothing, snacks, and music cassettes were sold.

¹⁶¹ See Jung Eun-Young's article “Articulating Korean Youth Culture through Global Popular Music: Seo Taiji's Use of Rap and Metal,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 110-111.

Around 1984, the popular idol star of the 1980s in Japan, Kondo Masahiko's 1981 song, "Gingiragini Sarigenaku" (lit., "Sparkling Boldly") became extremely popular at disco clubs, and it could also be heard blaring from the *riōka* carts, which also played the song on the streets of Korea. Most people in their 30s in Korea remember, this song whether they were the fans of the illegally pirated Japanese popular music or not, because the song could be heard virtually anywhere the street carts were selling them. The song was a fast-tempo dance song to which the young students often danced disco at school festivals or on group trips.¹⁶² Whether they could actually understand the lyrics or not, they could follow (and mumble) its catchy phrase "gingiragini" and the English parts "I got you baby, I need you baby, I want you baby, Right on!" However, most of them did not even know who the singer was at that time and just called the song "Gingiragini."

While pirated photos of Japanese singers were rather less popular (poorly-done reproduction was not so appealing in the case of photos), mostly it was the sound of the songs which the young Korean fans were into. Those young Koreans were the generation watching the repackaged Japanese TV animations and singing along with the theme songs almost everyday when they were little kids. Although those animation theme songs were translated into Korean, the original melodies were directly copied. The simple but catchy melodies, which were similar but different from the Korean sounds, had already become something very familiar to the generation. Thus, when the melody of the song, "Gingiragini Sarigenaku," was copied with slight revisions by a Korean singer/dancer, Ham Yun-Sang, in his song "Ppaljunochopanambo" (meaning "all of the rainbow colors") in 1984, the song was quickly caught by those young Koreans' ears. However, as the Korean singer simply denied its piracy, no further action was taken by the media or the government, who had claimed to be eliminating the presence of Japan

¹⁶² JAVE Entertainment, *Ilbon Ingi Kasu Kōlleksyōn* (Collection of Popular Japanese Singers), (Seoul: Munjisa, 1998) p. 177.

from the Korean popular music since the 1960s. Because of the government’s insufficient banning policy, which officially prohibited but also failed to punish some illegal actions at the same time, both the popular music makers and the audiences became more and more insensitive about participating in the illegal production and consumption of the illegally flowing Japanese popular music, which was not only a legal matter but also an important cultural matter for the postcolonial Korea.



Figure 3.6 Kondo Masahiko's "Gingiragini Sarigenaku" (1981, left) and the pirated versions by Ham Yun-Sang, "Ppaljunochopanambo" (1984, right)

Among the other popular Japanese groups and singers in the mid and the late 1980s, a male band Anjônjidae (Anzenchidai in Japanese, debuted in 1982) was very popular in Korea. The band’s 1983 song, “Wainredono Kokoro” (lit., “Red Wine-color’s Heart”), which was very popular all over Asia at that time, became one of the most famous Japanese popular songs in

Korea in the 1980s.¹⁶³ The style of the song was similar to the Korean *palladû kayo* style, and its moody and gloomy sounding catchy melody was easy to hum along with. Most of the young Korean audiences at that time can easily named the Japanese band, Anzenchidai, which is still one of the most favored Japanese popular music bands in Korea.¹⁶⁴ Also, their other albums, including *All I Do* (1987), were popular in the late 1980s.

The band's popularity was recently reaffirmed as many Korean singers, including the popular band Position, hurried to remake the band's popular songs, as well as the lead singer Tamaki Koji's solo songs, when the second stage of the Open-Door Policy allowed the import of Japanese song melodies to Korea in 1999. In addition, among the Korean Wave stars who became popular in Japan in the past couple of years (from 2004), including Park Yong-Ha (singer/actor) and Ryu (singer), stated on the Japanese music TV programs (*Hey!Hey!Hey!Music Champ* and *Utaban*) that they knew the band and the song very well, and both of the Korean stars actually sang the song in Japanese on those shows. Since the song was quite old (more than 20 years old) and the band has not been active for many years, the show hosts were surprised by the Korean stars' familiarity with that particular song and the band from the 1980s.

A number of the Korean popular songs from the late 1980s have been suspected by many young Korean audiences to be partial or complete copies of popular Japanese songs. For example, the popular female singer, Lee Sang-Eun, debuted by winning the grand prize at the Ninth *MBC Kangbyôn Kayoje* in 1988 with the song, "Tamdadi" (known as "Damdadi," the singer explained the word as a humming sound, dance music written by Kim Nam-Kyung). After the debut song became a big hit, she became a top star, with her unique boyish appeal. In

¹⁶³ JAVE Entertainment, *op. cit.* p. 191.

¹⁶⁴ In the Japanese music TV programs, *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ* and *Utaban*, the Korean Wave singers/actors often mentioned this song and sang the song at those shows in Japanese. (from personal collection).

the following year, based on the song and her popularity, a movie with the same title, “Tamdadi/Damdai,” was released with the singer featured as the main actress.



Figure 3.7 Lee Sang-Eun's first album cover, *Happy Birthday* (1989, left) and the movie poster of *Damdadi* (1989, right)

However, in December 1989, a few months after releasing the second album's title song, “Saranghalkkôya” (“I will love,” written by Won Kyông) which became an instant hit, she left Korea, moved to Japan and later to America, renamed herself as Lee-tzsche, and only returned three years later. The song “Saranghalkkôya” was a fast-tempo dance song, whose melody was almost identical to that of a song by one of the most famous musicians in Japan, Kuwata Keisuke. The song was “Kanashii Kimochi - Just a Man in Love” (“Sad Feeling – Just a Man in Love”), which had been released in 1987 by his other band, the Kuwata Band. The lyrics of the original Japanese version are about the sad feelings of a broken heart missing the old love: the lyrics of the Korean version are about the new beginnings of love once passed. Although the

rumor of piracy of the Japanese song was circulating at that time, the truth of the rumor was not acknowledged by the singer, by the writer, or by the record company, Jigu Rekodû, with which she was associated at that time. More importantly, the popular media did not react to the rumor; and, thus, there were no disciplinary actions on the song, and it has been considered to be one of her most important songs. Because she left Korea soon after the song's release, the rumors not only about the song "Saranghalkkôya" but also about her other songs on the first and second albums in 1989 quickly disappeared in Korea.

After studying music in Japan and America for a few years, she returned to Korea with different musical styles (from dance and *palladû kayo* to alternative, experimental, and fusion music) and has been actively performing--but mostly in underground--both in Korea and Japan. In 1997, she released her eighth album "Lee Tzsche," made with Japanese producer Takeda Hajimu, her musical partner since 1995. All the titles and lyrics of the songs are neither in Korean nor in Japanese, but in English.¹⁶⁵ Her fans both from the late 1980s and the 1990s seemed not mind much about the piracy issue from 1989. Moreover, they seemed eager to enjoy the newly developed Japanese influences in her recent works, resulting from her living and performing as a musician in Japan. Her release of the 1997 album, which had been released in Japan in 1995, was known to be the result of her fans' request to the record company, Toshiba-EMI, to release the album in Korea.¹⁶⁶ Although the banning policy had not been abolished at that time, meaning the album was not supposed to be released, the Korean government's regulation on the imports of Japanese cultural products was much loosened during this year before the opening, due both to the rapid growth of piracy and to the uncontrolled and uncontrollable burgeoning of internet music and file sharing.

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.mymusic.co.kr/portal/album/album.html> (accessed January. 21. 2007).

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.tubemusic.com/magazine/review> (accessed January. 21. 2007).



Figure 3.8 Lee Sang-Eun's second album cover, *Saranghalkkôya* (1989) and eighth album cover, *Lee-Tszche* (1997)

Although the most powerful “odor” of Japanese presence, the language, was eliminated because of the banning policy, her fusion style songs produced by the Japanese producer Takeda Hajimu in Japan earlier represented a definite presence of Japan, which was very much appreciated by her enthusiastic Korean fans in Korea. In her interview with the newspaper, she mentioned that she did not want to be associated with her earlier songs, including “Tamdadi” and “Saranghalkkôya,” even though most Koreans still connected her with those songs, more so than with her recent works in Korea and Japan¹⁶⁷ In any case, it seems that her fans have forgotten (or forgiven) the piracy issue and supported her works, which incorporated more and more Japanese elements.

¹⁶⁷ “Lee Sang-Eun kawui Intôbyu” (Interview with Lee Sang-Eun), *Seoul News*, July. 21. 2005.

Besides the cases I have discussed above, there are a number of Korean popular songs that have been suspected of piracy, either at the time of release or sometime later. Shin Yong-Hyun, a former SBS radio producer who lived in Japan for many years, told Im Jin-Mo that:

He [Shin Yong-Hyun] defined the piracy of Japanese popular music as a kind of “social crime” created by the three elements of producers, writers, and consumers. From his point of view, those consumers, who prefer Japanese popular music because they are familiar with the Japanese style and try to support their favorite singers by arguing “why just blame my favorite star since the other singers all do copy,” cannot be exempted from being criticized. After spending many years in Japan, when he had just returned to Korea, he felt confused and angry but now he was giving up. He asserted that the Korean popular music market is the mimeograph of the Japanese popular music market. He claimed that because of the ban on imports of Japanese popular music, Korean composers saw Japanese popular music as safe to copy. Thus, he argues that Korea should open its doors to Japanese popular music as soon as possible.¹⁶⁸

Shin Yong-Hyun’s list in Im Jin-Mo’s 1998 article included the hit songs of many top Korean stars from the late 1980s. He created a rough listing that included 25 Korean singers’ names and the pirated song titles with the 25 Japanese singers’ names and the titles (including cartoons and *animés* in some cases). For example, with the Korean song listed first, followed by the Japanese song:

¹⁶⁸ Im Jin-Mo, *op. cit.* pp. 170-171, translated by the author.

Table 3.1 Selected Songs from the Shin Yong-Hyun's List (1998)

Original Japanese Version	Pirated Korean Version
Saito Yuki: “Zyonetsu” (“Passion”)	Pyôn Chin-Sôp: “Lora” (“Laura”)
Zard: “I Can’t Let Go”	Su: “Ûnjangdo” (“Ornamental Silver-Knife”)
Amuro Namie: “Taiyouno Shizun” (“Sunny Season”)	Jam: “Namanûi Iyu” (“My Reason”)
Amuro Namie: “Try Me”	NRG: “Ibônen Halsuissô” (“Can Do It This Time”)
Matsuda Seiko: “You’re My World”	Lee Mu-Song: “Above the Sky”
T.M.Revolution: “Telephone Line”	The Blue: “Ch’in’gurûl Wihae” (“For Friend”)
Southern All Star: “Sonna Hiroshini Tamasarete” (“Being Cheated by such Hiroshi”)	Cheksû Kisû: “Sanai Kanûngil” (“Man’s Pathway”)
X-Japan: “Endless Rain”	Noksaek Chidae: “Chunbi ôpnûn Ibyol” (“Unprepared Farewell”)
Miyazaki Hayao’s <i>anime</i> “Tenku no Shiro Rapyuta” (“Laputa: Castle in the Sky”): the main title song	Yoon Sang: “Ibyôrûi Kûnûl” (“Shadow of Farewell”)

Besides Shin’s list, as Im Jin-Mo pointed out, many Korean popular songs were being questioned by many young Koreans from simple suspicions to detailed analyses posted on the internet.¹⁶⁹

Although Shin’s list only compared the piracy of the melodies, from the early 1990s as stars’ visual images became more and more important in the Korean popular music, many Korean singers not only copied the Japanese singers’ fashion and hair styles, but also the images from the various kinds of the Japanese popular cultural products, especially from *anime* and cartoons.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 173-176, translated by the author.

3.2.3 Roo’Ra Incident in 1996 and the Hiding Ninja in Korea

In January 1996, one of the top Korean popular music groups, Roo’Ra, was nearly disbanded after a young fan discovered that their newly released song, “Chônsangyuae” (“Love in Heaven,” produced by the band leader Lee Sang-Min), had the same melody as the Japanese popular song “Omatsuri Ninja” (“Festival Ninja”), by the Japanese idol group Ninja, in 1990.¹⁷⁰ The Roo’Ra song “Chônsangyuae” was the title song of their third album, *Reincarnation of the Legend*, which was released in December 1995 and also included the remix version of the song “Chônsangyuae.”

After their second album, *Nalgae Irûn Ch’ônsa* (lit., “Lost-Winged Angel”) was released in March 1995, the group’s fun reggae rhythm and the female member’s sexy “Öngdôngi Ch’um” (lit., “Bottom Dance”) became an instant and huge hit, selling more than 1,500,000 copies. Although there was a little wondering about the song’s overly familiar sounds among some Korean fans (known to be similar to the Jamaican reggae singer Shaggy’s “Oh, Carolina,”) the group’s popularity continued.¹⁷¹ However, after realizing that Roo’Ra had copied the Japanese song almost entirely, a fan posted a message on the internet alerting the public. Roo’Ra’s song was immediately banned from being sold and broadcast, and the incident raised public debate about the issues of Korean popular music’s piracy and influences from Japanese popular music. Roo’Ra’s song not only copied the basic melody, but also a short *enka*-style interlude and some vocable sounds from the lyrics of the Japanese song. The texts of the two songs are completely different: Ninja’s song depicts the wild, exciting mood of a *matsuri* (traditional Japanese *shinto* festival) and Roo’Ra’s song is about eternal love.

¹⁷⁰ This is their romanization; the standard McCune Reischauer romanization would be “Rulla.” The group’s name was from their first album title, “Roots of Reggae,” released in 1994. Ninja’s 1990 song “Omatsuri Ninja” is a remake of Misora Hibari’s “Omatsuri Mambo” (1952).

¹⁷¹ Im Jin-Mo, *op. cit.* p. 168.

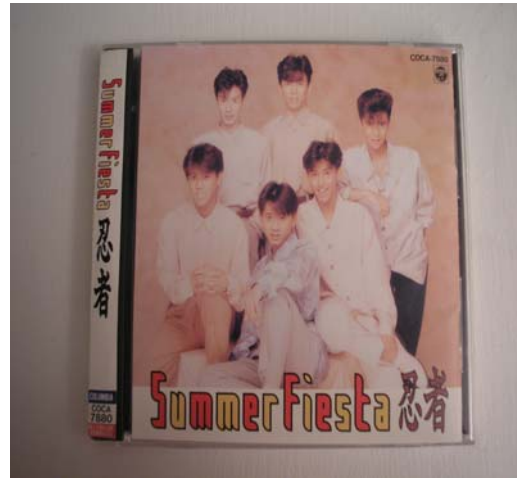


Figure 3.9 The Korean group Roo'Ra's "Chônsangyuae" ("Love in Heaven," 1996, left) and the Japanese group Ninja's "Omatsuri Ninja" ("Festival Ninja," 1990, right)

Although earlier there had been many other Korean songs that copied from Japanese songs, this 1996 incident was the very first time both the media and the Korean public expressed interests and concerns together. The group leader and composer of the song, Lee Sang-Min (calling himself "Season" as a writer), who first denied his piracy, tried to commit suicide as the band's piracy issue spread through the media, and the angry public did not tolerate the band this time. One of the reasons that the band was severely exposed to the media in relation to the piracy at that time was that many young Koreans began to learn a lot more about the Japanese popular music easily through the internet, and the information was being passed around extremely fast and on a grand scale. Unlike the earlier rumors of piracy, which briefly circulated among the fans and the music professionals, the Roo'Ra incident became national news in the beginning of 1996. Furthermore, it was the time when the illegal presence of Japan was more and more coming into the mainstream Korean popular culture and many Koreans began to

realize how, unconsciously, they had been becoming familiar with the Japaneseness and becoming comfortable living with the illegal presence of Japan.

The illegal presence of Japan in Korean popular music and culture remaining unproblematic until 1996 with the Roo'Ra incident was like the appearance of Japanese ninja. Like ninja, the illegal presence of Japan had been hiding in the dark but gradually expanding its authority then when its power became so overwhelming that the entire nation could not ignore it. Furthermore, while most older Koreans have ignored or did not realize the very existence of the illegal presence of Japan in their native country, just like the hiding ninja, many young Koreans had even been eagerly enjoying their secret discovery of the ninja, the illegal presence of Japan, and playing with it.

3.2.4 X-Japan and Korean Fans

X-Japan, known as the pioneer of Japanese visual rock, was extremely popular in Korea during the early and the mid 1990s. Besides the fact that many Korean popular songs copied their melodies and musical style (rock-ballads), most of the X-Japan's albums were available in Korea through the black market during the time. According to an unofficial research report, a total of more than 500,000 of X-Japan's pirated albums were sold in Korea before the banning policy was abolished in 1998. Until X-Japan became popular in Korea, most of the Korean audiences of Japanese popular music were not selectively listening to any particular singers' songs, but rather to something Japanese. Their options as consumers were limited because of the banning policy. However, as the Japanese popular music consumer base began to expand in Korea, a greater variety of the Japanese popular songs were illegally reproduced and marketed

X-Japan's popularity became legendary by the mid 1990s in Japan, and more and more Korean audiences began to hear about them and their music in Korea even though they might not have been particularly interested in Japanese popular music more generally.



Figure 3.10 X-Japan's 1991 album cover *Jealousy* (left) and 1993 album cover *Art Of Life* (right)

Among the many reasons for their popularity in Korea, their personal charisma through their powerful rock music, which had been a weak genre in Korea, was known to be the main one. The band achieved a major debut in America, by the invitation, due primarily to their rock sound.) The band's first-rate musical techniques, coupled with their unique fashion, hair styles, heavy makeup--the essential elements of the visual rock genre in Japan--were very influential on the young Korean audiences. Their feminine appearances made them look like the cartoon characters from the Japanese *shojo manga* (lit., "teenage-girl cartoon"). The plot and drawing for this genre of *manga* are particularly beautiful. Although many of the Korean fans of X-Japan were school girls, who liked to read Japanese *shojo manga*, the band's impressive musical

techniques and powerful sounds in different genres, including rock, hard rock, and rock ballads, were more than enough to create over 100 fan clubs in Korea even before 1998.¹⁷²

Since the X-Japan's introduction to Korea, Japanese visual rock became one of the most popular Japanese music genres in Korea. And the fact of its being unique to Japan caused many young Koreans to find them especially fascinating. During the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the popular Japanese songs in Korea, or popularly pirated Japanese songs, were similar in sound to the popular genres in Korean popular music at that time--ballad and dance styles. However, with X-Japan's arrival in Korea, visual rock, which was a popular music genre new to Korea, became very popular, especially among the younger Korean fans of Japanese popular music--roughly those of who were born after 1980. Those younger fans were even more familiar with the Japanese popular culture than the previous generation and more eager to learn about the country as well as the culture.

3.3 SUMMARY REMARKS

In this chapter, I have discussed the illegal presence of Japan in Korea through various kinds of Japanese popular cultural products, available in Korea as early as from the 1960s, and Japanese popular music, which spread by the pirated cassettes and the piracy of the songs by Korean popular singers from the mid 1980s. By tracing the examples of the illegal presence of Japan in the various aspects of the Korean popular culture, it is clear that the Koreans' attempt to de-Japanize the country and themselves since after the liberation from Japan was far from completely successful. Furthermore, the young generation's mental and physical distance from

¹⁷² Sô Ch'ang-Yong, *Chaepaen Pijuôllakui Hyosi,, X-Japan (The Pioneer of the Japanese Visual Rock, X-Japan)*, (Seoul: Munjisa, 2000) p. 306.

the older generation's strong antagonism toward Japan caused by their bitter colonial experiences led them to enjoy the Japanese popular cultural products relatively unproblematically. As Korea finally decided to open its doors legally to Japanese popular cultural products, a number of voices from the Korean public were aroused, expressing a range of reactions. In the following chapter, "Japan's Transitional Presence," I will explain the details of the Open-Door Policy and the Four-Stage Plan, with emphasis on the place of popular music.

4.0 JAPAN'S TRANSITIONAL PRESENCE

4.1 PUBLIC DEBATES ON THE OPEN-DOOR POLICY

The Open-Door Policy was set in motion in 1998, but against a backdrop of renewed cultural nationalism in Korea.¹⁷³ This nationalism has been extremely important in forming the bonds that hold Koreans together, and it has been necessary for them to identify themselves as “one,” especially during and after Japanese colonization.¹⁷⁴ Koreans nationalism is based on a conception of the Korean people (*Taehan minjok*) not as a legally bound group of people residing in a particular territory, as in the United States, or in such post-colonial countries as India, Zimbabwe, or the Philippines, but as a primordial people/race/ethno-linguistic group (*minjok*) who naturally belong together and whose one-ness as a nation is a fact of human nature, with a strong instinct for self-preservation. Since the colonial period, the bitter experience of Japanese colonization became a symbolic force to strengthen Korean nationalism, which was used as a basic motivation for Korea to compete against Japan's economic and cultural domination. For this reason, scholars like Shin Gi-Wook and Michael Robinson gave equal attention to both colonialism and nationalism in Korea.

¹⁷³ The official name for the policy in Korean is *Ilbon Taejung Munhwa Kaebang Chôngch'aek*.

¹⁷⁴ Lee Yong-Hee's “Modern Nationalism-In the Context of Historical Reality,” in *Nationalism in Korea* edited by Chung Chong-Shil and Ro Jae-Bong (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1978) p. 7.

The nationalist paradigm has dominated the historical presentation of modern Korea. It presupposes an unproblematized sense of the Korean nation, a nation that is assumed to have existed in a “natural” form in the pre-modern era and emerged in the late nineteenth century coeval with the modern stimuli of external political pressure, especially Japanese aggression. The process of rethinking Korean politics and culture in national form accelerated with the failure of the ancient regime’s reforms and inability to defend its sovereignty. With formal colonization in 1910 by the Japanese, nascent Korean nationalism flowered in different directions—as cultural, political, and social revolutionary impulses—all focused on a reshaping of Korean society and consciousness in order to create an independent nation-state.¹⁷⁵

This Korean nationalism has been maintained through several generations under the nationalist education system since liberation, in order to support Korea’s economic development as well as political stability. As a result, Korean nationalism, I would argue, has become one of the most distinctive features of Korean cultural identity. This nationalism plays out as a sense of devotion and duty to the nation, which is touted to be based on primordial ties dating back 5,000 years.

As Korea tried to rebound from the economic downfall in 1997, Korean nationalism came quickly to the fore. Thus, when President Kim Dae-Jung (1998-2003) agreed to accept the joint declaration on the “New Korea—Japan Partnership for the Twenty-first Century” in October 1998, the majority of Koreans were concerned about its potentially overpowering impact on Korea’s cultural identity.¹⁷⁶ Since the colonial period, as we have seen, the revitalization of cultural identity by abolishing the legacy of Japanese colonialism has been an integral part of cultural policy. The Korean government has sought to restore the national culture from deteriorating by reevaluating and funding traditional culture and to protect popular culture by monitoring its content. Also, the government encouraged intensive research and education on

¹⁷⁵ Shin Gi-Wook and Michael Robinson’s “Introduction: Rethinking Colonial Korea,” in *Colonial Modernity in Korea* edited by Shin Gi-Wook and Michael Robinson (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asian Center, 1999) p. 3.

¹⁷⁶ “Dawning Korea-Japan Partnership for 21st Century” *The Korea Times*, October, 9, 1998.

Japanese colonialism. However, Kim Dae-Jung, who had been close to Japan since the early 1970s, saw the opening as an important step for Korea becoming a more internationally competitive country in terms of its economy and quickly negotiated the opening agreement with Japan in 1998.¹⁷⁷

Until 1997, the banning policy towards Japanese culture and arts was mainly based on Korea's national prejudices against Japan as a whole since liberation. In other words, any appearance of Japaneseness was sufficient grounds for banning, regardless of any particular content. Yet the Japanese popular cultural products sold illegally in Korea were often considered to be overly violent and/or overly sexual; and these qualities have underscored the Korean public's uneasy feeling towards Japanese cultural imports. But at the same time, the indiscreet piracy practices of the Korean popular culture industry, which had been continuously taking advantage of the inefficiencies and inconsistencies in the banning policy, led the Korean public to a basic agreement on the need for opening the door to Japan, though not without some dissenting voices. The Korean public's debates on the issue of Japanese cultural imports were raised from the late 1980s as the Japanese satellite broadcasting began to reach Korean viewers. Japanese NHK and WOWOW (entertainment channel) were available and watched with considerable curiosity.¹⁷⁸ Also, Japan had been requesting Korea to open the economic door since after the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965. However, until 1997, the policy makers tried to avoid this extremely sensitive issue as their main agenda in order to avoid fomenting unnecessary conflict among the Korean public. Instead, the policy makers often used the issues related to Japan as their way to convince the Korean public's nationalism to support the government's focus on political stability and economic development.

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter Two.

¹⁷⁸ Kim Kyông-Hwa's "Hanbandoe Charijabûn Ilbon Ch'ôngsomyûn Munhaw" ("Japanese Youth Culture Seated in Korea"), in Yi Yôn et, al. *Ilbon Munhwa Pekkigi (Copying Japanese Popular Culture)*. (Seoul: Namu-wa Sup, 1998) pp. 16-17.

According to a 1995 public opinion survey of Koreans ranging from junior high school students to people in their 50s on the issue of Japanese cultural imports, conducted by the Ministry of Culture and Sport,¹⁷⁹

Table 4.1 1995 Public Opinion Survey¹⁸⁰

Immediate open	15.2%
Open within 2-3 years	22.3%
Delay the opening time	43.6%
Opposed to the opening itself	18.3%

The result of the survey indicated that more than 81.1% of Koreans did not oppose to the opening. Also, the survey showed that among the Japanese cultural products, popular music was the most familiar product that Koreans had been obtaining. The percentages of Koreans who had purchased illegal products were as follows:

¹⁷⁹ The Ministry of Culture and Sport became the Ministry of Culture and Tourism since February 1998.

¹⁸⁰ “Ilbon Munhwa Kaebang Nollan” (Controversy on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Hankyoreh News*, January. 24. 1998.

Table 4.2 Percentage of Illegal Japanese Products Purchase¹⁸¹

Popular music recordings	33.5%
<i>Manga</i>	31.6%
Videos	20.1%
Movies	13.6%

Furthermore, it is significant that the distribution of these patterns of consumption varied rather markedly by age bracket. A large majority (72.6%) of the junior-high school and high school students had acquired illegal Japanese cultural products, and their first two choices were popular music (first) and *manga* (second).¹⁸²

In 1998, only three years after this first major opinion poll, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism conducted another major survey of the Korean populace.

Table 4.3 1998 Public Opinion Survey

Immediate open	21.4%
Open within 2-3 years	14.6%
Delay the opening time	49.6%
Opposed to the opening itself	15.5%

¹⁸¹ “Ilbon Munhwa Kaebang Yôronjosa” (Public Opinion Survey on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Seoul News*, March. 1. 1995.

¹⁸² “Ilbon Munhwa Kaebange Taehan Uisikjosa” (Public Opinion Survey on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Segye Ilbo*, April. 20. 1995.

The results showed that the overall percentage of Koreans with a positive opinion, in favor of opening, had increased slightly, from 81.1% to 84.6%.¹⁸³ When asked to rank which particular Japanese cultural products they were in favor of Korea importing, the rankings were as follows: 60.2% for TV programs, 19.0% for movies, 17.5% for popular music, and videos for 2.4%.¹⁸⁴ While these results might at first seem mystifying when considered in the context of the clear evidence of junior and senior high school students favoring popular music, the realities of late-1990s Korea and the impact of the internet helps explain these figures. The primary reason for the lower percentage for popular music was that obtaining Japanese popular music became very easy through the internet, in addition to the continued wide availability of pirated copies at that time. In the following section, I will discuss the two conflicting standpoints of the Korean public's debate on the issue of the Open-Door Policy prior to opening. Although the Korean public's standpoints on the issue of the Open-Door Policy cannot always be reduced to a simple black-and-white binary set of opinions, it is important to understand the main reasons for basic opposition vs. basic support.

4.1.1 Anti-Open-Door Policy

Among the reasons given by Koreans who were opposed to the Open-Door Policy, roughly five main ones emerge.¹⁸⁵ The most frequently stated reason (31.0%) was historical: their

¹⁸³ See the *Hanguk Munhwa Kwangwang Yōnguwon* (Korea Culture and Tourism Institute) website at http://www.kcti.re.kr/statistics_db.htm (accessed January. 12. 2007).

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ The details of the surveys are slightly different according to the different sources. See “Ilbon Munhwa Kaebang Yōronjosa” (Public Opinion Survey on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Seoul News*, March. 1. 1995; “Ilbon Munhwa Kaebang Nollan” (Controversy on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Hankyoreh News*, January. 24. 1998; “Ilbon Munhwa Kaebange Taehan Uisikjosa” (Public Opinion Survey on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Segye Ilbo*, April. 20. 1995; “Ilbon Taejung Munhwa Kaebange Taehan Yōronjosa” (Public Opinion Survey about the Japanese Popular Cultural Imports), *DongA Ilbo*, November, 21, 1997; *Hanguk Munhwa Kwangwang Yōnguwon* (Korea Culture and Tourism Institute) website at http://www.kcti.re.kr/statistics_db.htm (accessed October. 5. 2006).

antagonism against Japan resulting from the persistent memory of the unforgettable experiences of the Japanese colonial rule. The bitterness made it difficult for Koreans even to tolerate, let alone welcome, any kind of Japaneseness within Korea's borders.

The second reason (28.0%) given was concern for the cultural flows that would result from the Open Door policy. In this instance, respondents expressed their aversion specifically against Japanese popular culture, which was generally viewed as offensive and decadent because of its frequent emphasis on excessive violence and overly lewd sexual expression. Most of these respondents opposed the import of Japanese culture because they felt that it would be a reversal in the direction of long-standing cultural flow in history, which had been mostly from Korea to Japan (including court music, musical instruments, Buddhist teachings and practices, etc.). They expressed a fear of the "bad influence on the Korean youth" of Japanese popular culture.

The third reason (20.5%) given was the continuous stream of conflicts in the political relationship between the two countries. These include the unwillingness of Japan to acknowledge and apologize for the practice during colonial times of forcing Korean (and other) women into sexual slavery (the "comfort women"), the unwillingness of Japan to report honestly about Japan's colonial aggression and wartime atrocities in Japan's secondary school history textbooks, the ongoing dispute over Korea's vs. Japan's rightful possession of the small island ("Dokdo" in Korean; "Takeshima" in Japanese) in the sea located between Korea and Japan (known as the "Japan Sea" in Japan and the "East Sea" in Korea), and the ongoing worship by Japanese, including the prime minister, of Japanese war heroes on behalf of the Japanese emperor at the *Yasukuni* war shrine.

The fourth reason (20.3%) given was economic. Respondents expressed concern over the impact on Korea's domestic markets of Japanese imports, since the Japanese cultural industry was far more powerful and highly financed than its Korean counterpart. Among the four reasons

cited, three (together 79.5%) are closely related to aspects of Korea's colonial history and subsequent political and cultural conflicts, which leads us back to the fundamental matter of Koreans' concern over being "Japanized." Many Koreans were concerned that Korean popular culture would become "Japanized"—or, for those who were aware of Japan's substantial presence in Korea's popular culture already, become "more Japanized." Only one reason given (by 20.3% of the respondents) was based on concerns over economic competition and, presumably, would be leveled against any other country, regardless of its history, that threatened any of Korea's industries. The Open-Door Policy was, in this category of response, going to be bad in particular for the Korean popular cultural industry.¹⁸⁶

4.1.2 Pro-Open-Door Policy

Among the reasons given by Koreans who supported the Open-Door Policy, roughly four main ones emerge.¹⁸⁷ A majority of the respondents believed that the door should be equally open to any foreign country, including Japan, because such a move was essential to Korea's position as a country of more than regional significance, in keeping with Korea's vision of its own internationalization in the context of globalization. Most of them criticized Korea's longstanding political tendencies toward exclusivism and seclusionism, which date back many centuries, although Korea was open to China before the founding of the Yi dynasty (i.e., before what

¹⁸⁶ *Hanguk Munhwa Kwangwang Yŏnguwon* (Korea Culture and Tourism Institute) http://www.kcti.re.kr/ssdb/ssdb_result.html?KorEng=1&A_UNFOLD=1&TableID=MT_DTITLE&TitleID=E5&FPub=3 (accessed January. 23. 2007).

¹⁸⁷ The details of the surveys are slightly different according to the different sources. See "Ilbon Munhwa Kaebang Yŏronjosa" (Public Opinion Survey on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Seoul News*, March. 1. 1995; "Ilbon Munhwa Kaebang Nollan" (Controversy on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Hankyoreh News*, January. 24. 1998; "Ilbon Munhwa Kaebange Taehan Uisikjosa" (Public Opinion Survey on the Japanese Cultural Imports), *Segye Ilbo*, April. 20. 1995; "Ilbon Taejung Munhwa Kaebange Taehan Yŏronjosa" (Public Opinion Survey about the Japanese Popular Cultural Imports), *DongA Ilbo*, November, 21, 1997; *Hanguk Munhwa Kwangwang Yŏnguwon* (Korea Culture and Tourism Institute) website at http://www.kcti.re.kr/statistics_db.htm (accessed January. 23. 2007).

historians would call the “modern” period”). They also cited the undesirability of Korea’s heretofore unequal attitudes toward American popular culture and Japanese popular culture.¹⁸⁸

The second reason given was that the Korean public has a right to enjoy various kinds of culture, and can do so without becoming “Japanized” (or “Americanized” or “Sinicized”). The third reason given was that they expect the problem of illegal piracy can be greatly reduced by importing the Japanese popular culture directly. The fourth reason given was that by competing with Japanese popular culture, the quality of Korea’s domestic popular culture and the industry that supports it can be improved. In relation to this reason, many of the younger respondents indicated that they favored the Open-Door Policy because the Japanese popular cultural products, *manga* and *anime* in particular, are “fun.”¹⁸⁹

What we can see from these surveys of the public opinions on the issue of the Open-Door Policy is that the Korean government’s banning policy was indeed flawed—both in conception and in implementation. Also, not surprisingly, the Korean youth, who grew up with various kinds of Japanese popular cultural products, seemed not so bothered by the historic and political issues, whereas the older Koreans recognize these issues but want to find some conclusion, or successful resolution. Many of the older Koreans showed a great concern for the Korean youth becoming a “little pro-Japanese.”¹⁹⁰ In reality, it would seem that the very fact of these cultural products being “Japanese” was at the root of the uneasy feeling. Nevertheless, despite clearly articulated and heartfelt opposition by some, the majority were favorably disposed, and the four-stage plan of the Open-Door Policy was put into place from 1998 to 2004.

¹⁸⁸ Although some degree of anti-America has existed in Korea, it has been a mainly political one.

¹⁸⁹ http://www.kcti.re.kr/munhwa_sangse.htm?num=174 (accessed January. 18. 2007).

¹⁹⁰ Kim Kyông-Hwa, *op. cit.* pp. 15-18.

4.2 PROCESS OF THE OPEN-DOOR POLICY

This section offers a detailed account of the four stages of the Open-Door Policy between 1998 and 2004. Since October 1998, under the Kim Dae-Jung government, which emphasized cultural exchanges with foreign countries as a way of developing and globalizing the nation, Korea's economic, foreign, and cultural policies have been extensively modified. The schedule of the Open-Door Policy toward Japan was often renegotiated by Korea in response to lingering anti-Japanese sentiment there in relation to political and economic dynamics in Japan. The opening process was delayed because of the re-emergence of the controversy over Japan's misrepresentations of its colonial history in government textbooks in July 2001. Yet it was soon resumed as Korea and Japan successfully collaborated in hosting the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan. The first round (1998) permitted a few films, videos, and cartoons. The second round (1999) permitted more films, the staging of small, indoor popular music concerts (maximum audience of 2000), and some publications. The third round (2000) allowed the importing of additional films, animation, video, computer games, and a few TV programs (sports, documentary, news programs). For popular music, both indoor and outdoor music concerts and imports of instrumental versions of Japanese popular music CDs were permitted. The fourth round (2004) finally allowed the sale of Japanese popular music CDs, complete with original Japanese-language vocals, but most of the TV programs and some animation films are still banned.

4.2.1 The First Round/Stage (from October 1998)

The first round of imports began on October 20, 1998 and was limited to a few films, videos, and cartoons. The policy on films at this point limited Japan's exports to Korea to (1) award-winning

films from the four major international film festivals (Cannes Film Festival, Berlin International Film Festival, Venice Film Festival, and Academy Awards), (2) jointly produced films (limited to Japanese films directed by a Korean director or with Korean actors/actresses playing the main characters), and (3) Korean films with Japanese actors/actresses.¹⁹¹ As a result, some older as well as recent Japanese films were shown, including Kurosawa Akira's *Kagemusha* (Shadow Warrior, 1980), Imamura Shohei's *Unagi* (The Eel, 1997), and Kitano Takeshi's *Hana-Bi* (Fireworks, 1997), all of which mainly used instrumental music played by orchestras.



Figure 4.1 Kurosawa Akira's *Kagemusha* (1980, left), Imamura Shohei's *Unagi* (1997, middle), and Kitano Takeshi's *Hana-Bi* (1997, right)

Also, Korean director Park Chul-Soo's *Kajok Sinema* (Kazoku Cinema/Family Cinema, 1998), which was jointly produced, was shown in Korea. During this first stage, video sales were limited to only those films that had already been shown at theaters in Korea.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ "Ilbon Munhwa Kaebang Pangan" (Open-Door Policy toward Japanese Culture), *DongA Ilbo*, October. 20. 1998.

¹⁹² "Ilbon Munhwa Kaebanggwa Yŏnghwa" (Open-Door Policy and Movie), *DongA Ilbo*, December. 28. 1998.

Although the release of Japanese-language songs was not yet allowed, Japanese popular songs were locally reproduced and introduced to Korean audiences. The latest Japanese popular songs were compiled and released, without the original lyrics, as instrumental version recordings (also called “the *karaoke* versions” in Japan).¹⁹³ These CDs began to appear in 1998 and were widely available in Korea at least through 2003 (during the prohibition of Japanese language songs). Compilation recordings of Japanese TV drama title songs were particularly popular during this period.

For example, instrumental versions of the title songs from popular Japanese dramas, including *Long Vacation* (1996) and its title song “La La La Love Song” (sung by Kubota Toshinobu and the famous model Naomi Campbell) and *101st Proposal* (1991) and its title song “Say Yes” (sung by Chage & Aska), were regularly included in compilation recordings until 2003 (and then, from 2004, with the original lyrics). Although Chage & Aska’s song “Say Yes” was known among some Korean fans earlier through illegal copies, with the Open-Door Policy the duo became quite popular in Korea. However, in Japan the duo has not been very active lately. The Japanese drama *101st Proposal* (Fuji TV), which recorded the highest audience rating (36.7%) in 1991, was remade twice in Korea.¹⁹⁴ Both of the movie version (1993) and the TV drama version (2006 by SBS TV) used the same title, *101st Proposal*, and the original title song, “Say Yes.” In the 2006 drama, three different versions (vocal, piano, acoustic guitar) of the original title song, “Say Yes” were used.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ The literal meaning of *karaoke* is “empty orchestra”—*i.e.*, with no vocal track.

¹⁹⁴ “SBS 101bontche Pûropojû, Sinsedae Immasûro Saedanjang” (SBS 101st Proposa;, Newly Designed for the New Generation), *Goodday Entertainment News*, May. 23. 2006. The original Japanese version was also broadcast in Korea in May 2004 by MBC Drama channel. See <http://drama.tv.co.kr> (accessed January. 3. 2007).

¹⁹⁵ “TV wa Sûkurin, Ilbon Bekkigi Nômu Simhada” (TV and Screen, Copying Japan Too Much), *OSEN News*, January. 7. 2007.



Figure 4.2 *101st Proposal*, the original Japanese version (1991, Fuji TV, left), the Korean movie version (1993, middle), and the Korean TV drama version (2006, SBS TV, right)

Also, compilation CDs of newly released popular songs by top singers or groups were released in instrumental versions. Those CDs often included brief introductory booklets about the singers/groups as well as "tie-up" dramas and movies in Korean for the newly acquiring Korean audiences.

From 1998, Korean musicians began to purchase melodies of Japanese hit songs released earlier in Japan. They then remade the songs with new titles and lyrics. Lyrics could be similar or not to the original Japanese lyrics, although direct translation of the original lyrics was rare. This type of song has been called *bōnan kayo* (lit., "interpreted song") in Korea. In some cases, the same Japanese song was reproduced by more than one Korean singer or group. The best known example of such *bōnan kayo* was, Tetsuro Oda's "Sekaijuno Dareyorimo Kitto," ("Surely more than anyone in the world") which was sung by two different Japanese music groups, Nakayama Miho & Wands and Zard, in 1992 in Japan. This song was re-released by two different Korean music groups, Position and The Nuts, with different titles and lyrics in different

years. Position's version "Kû Hae Kyôurûn" ("That Year's Winter") came out in 2001. Position has been covering a number of big Japanese hit songs from 1999, including "Blue Day," a cover version of Shogo Hamada's "Mo Hitotsu no Doyobi" ("One More Saturday") released in 1986 in Japan. In 2003, CD 1 of their new album "On the Road" contained 11 cover versions (some with the same titles) of Japanese songs popular in the 1980s in Korea through the pirated cassettes, including a few ballad-style songs by Tamaki Koji (leader of the group Anzenchidai) and Kuwata Keisuke (leader of the group Southern All Stars).¹⁹⁶ Because imports of the original Japanese versions were still prohibited and ballad-style songs (*palladû kayo*) have always been popular in Korea, the Korean group Position's cover album of popular Japanese ballad-style songs was quite popular and they became known as a *bônân kayo* group. The other group, The Nuts, came out with their version, "Sarang ûi Pabo" ("Love's Fool"), in 2004 in Korea (remake songs have continued to be popular even after 2004). The Nuts not only released the cover version of the Japanese song "Sekaijuno Dareyorimo Kitto" but also followed Nakayama Miho & Wands' style by inviting a popular actress to join in for the song. Nakayama Miho & Wands were joined by actress Nakayama Miho for their version; the Korean group The Nuts invited Korean actress Im Sông-Ŏn as the guest singer for their cover version, "Sarang ûi Pabo."¹⁹⁷

Prior to 1998, the Korean popular music industry had already begun to prepare contracts with the Japanese music industry. Both the Korean music industry and the Japanese music industry expected that Japanese popular music would take 15% to 17% of the market in Korea—more than in Hong Kong and Taiwan—due to the fact that the Korean music industry had been copying/borrowing Japanese popular music for years.¹⁹⁸ The major Korean entertainment companies rushed to make distribution copyright deals and local production copyright deals with

¹⁹⁶ Position. *On the Road* (GM Entertainment, 2003).

¹⁹⁷ "Im Sông-Ŏn, Nado Kasu" (Im Sông-Ŏn, I Am a Singer Too), *Ilgan Sports News*, August. 27. 2004.

¹⁹⁸ "Superstar "Amuro" Taeûng Koreanyôn Ch'aebi (Ready for the Superstar "Amuro" Concert), *Chosun Ilbo*, October. 13 1998.

the Japanese entertainment companies. For example, Korea's Doremi Record dealt with Columbia Japan and Seoul Record dealt with Japan Victor Entertainment.¹⁹⁹ Also, the major record labels like Sony, BMG, and EMI organized selections of Japanese top singers and bands who were already popular in Korea, including Amuro Namie (who was the most lucrative Japanese superstar in the late 1990s) and Japan-rock bands like L'Arc en Ciel, Tube, and B'z.²⁰⁰ The Korean music industry was also expecting that Japanese musicians would make frequent concert appearances as soon as permitted in Korea as an efficient way of stimulating the Korean market for Japanese popular music.²⁰¹ In addition, some in the Korean music industry saw the Open-Door Policy as creating an environment conducive to marketing of Korean popular music to Japan.²⁰²

Since this first stage of the Open-Door Policy did not permit the importing of much Japanese popular music, the Korean audiences were still attracted to those illegally sold pirated cassettes. The famous Japanese rock band from the early 1990s, X-Japan, became the most popular Japanese rock/visual-rock band in Korea, and countless fan sites devoted to the band were formed in the internet, nurturing and expanding the base of devoted X-Japan fans among Korean youth. Despite the band's break-up in 1997, and subsequent mysterious death of band-member Hide in 1998, the popularity of X-Japan reached its peak in Korea just as the Open-Door Policy was in its first stage. As I briefly mentioned in Chapter Three, X-Japan's songs were also copied by some Korean singers. The popular Korean boy-band in the mid 1990s, H.O.T, were accused of piracy in their 1996 song "Onûldo Tchajûngnanûn Narine" ("Today too is Irritating"), basing it on the Japanese song "Doubt" (1994) by X-Japan's member Hide. From their debut in

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ "Ilbon Kayo: Japan Rock Param Yesang" (Japanese Popular Music: Expecting the Japanese Rock Wind), *Chosun Ilbo*, October. 14 1998.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² "Superstar "Amuro" Taeûng Koreanyôn Ch'aebi (Ready for the Superstar "Amuro" Concert), *Chosun Ilbo*, October. 13 1998.

1996 to their break-up in 2001, H.O.T.—the (in)famous early “product” of SM Entertainment-- was accused a number of times because of their piracy of many Japanese songs from not only popular singers but also *anime* and computer-game music.²⁰³ Furthermore, their fashion and hair styles, dancing styles, and even album cover designs have been rigorously compared and criticized by the Korean audiences because of their imitations of Japanese cartoon character-like looks (similar to Dragon Ball’s characters), Japanese idol bands’ dancing styles, and much more.

²⁰³ “Pyojôl Kayo, Ttôtdahamyôn Pyojôl Ŭihok, Ilbu Hwaldongjungdan” (Pirated Song, Piracy Suspicion as Getting Popular, Some Taking a Break), *Chosun Ilbo*, May. 13. 2001.



Figure 4.3 H.O.T's photos in 2000 (top) and the cartoon, *Dragon Ball* (bottom)

The band still survived until 2001 under the strong protection of their management company (SM Entertainment) but have become known since then as the worst case of piracy in the Korean popular music history. Since H.O.T. as well as the producers and their management company never apologized and chose instead to ignore the accusations of the Korean audiences, many Koreans became very angry and protested against H.O.T until they disbanded.

Nevertheless, H.O.T's fans tried to rally in support of them by arguing that H.O.T was not the only group guilty of pirating. There were a number of websites entirely devoted to H.O.T's disbanding, and *H.O.T Ŭntoe Ŭndong Ponbu* (meaning "Protest Headquarter for H.O.T's Withdrawal") was formed in 1999, namely "against hot."²⁰⁴ Unlike the case of Roo'Ra, H.O.T's reckless piracy in the face of the Korean fans' complaints eventually led to the band's ending, and the five members, still active as entertainers, were nonetheless left with countless "anti"-fans in Korea.

Besides H.O.T, as more and more Korean audiences became familiar with all different kinds of Japanese popular cultural products, more and more Korean popular songs (both new and old) were found to be copies from Japanese popular culture. The Korean audiences' discoveries were instantly spread through the internet, and the popular media also quickly responded making big news out of them. Although some of obvious songs were excluded from some TV programs or awards after the audiences complained, most of them were not prohibited from sales, though the singers and producers often took a short break in order to avoid further criticism, and then coming back.²⁰⁵

Since the copyright law in Korea requires the original composer or copyright holder to lodge a formal complaint to the *Hanguk Ŭmak Chôjagwon Hyopoe* ("Korea Music Copyright Association"), Korean singers' piracy of Japanese songs would not likely be banned unless the Japanese original composer or copyright holder sued them directly.²⁰⁶ Thus, the problem of pirating Japanese popular music did not quickly disappear from the Korean popular music scene

²⁰⁴ Examples of those websites include "ANTI-HOT" (<http://come.to/anti-hot>), "HOTDOG" (<http://members.tripod.co.kr/geggang/index.html>), and "Samryu Kasu Pandae Saitû (Against Third-Rate Singer)" (<http://krmusic.tripod.com>). The headquarter website is <http://againsthot.tripod.com>.

²⁰⁵ "Pyojôl Kayo, Ttôdahamyôn Pyojôl Ŭihok, Ilbu Hwaldongjungdan" (Pirated Song, Piracy Suspicion as Getting Popular, Some Taking a Break), *Chosun Ilbo*, May. 13. 2001.

²⁰⁶ See *Hanguk Ŭmak Chôjagwon Hyopoe*'s <http://www.komca.or.kr/eng2/tariffs.htm> (accessed May. 5. 2006) and "The Copyright Act" at http://www.copyright.or.kr/copye/main.asp?ht=../law/law_b_koe.htm&ca=6&se=1 (accessed September. 24. 2004 and March. 5. 2007).

with the beginning of the Open-Door Policy. However, it became more difficult for Korean singers and producers freely copying Japanese songs as the Korean audience became more and more knowledgeable about Japanese popular music and the general public's concern over the copyright issues became more and more serious.

In addition, another of SM Entertainment's "products," S.E.S (Sea. Eugene. Shoo, a female trio), introduced something new to Korean audiences. By forming the trio with Eugene (Korean-American, fluent in both Korean and English) and Shoo (Korean-Japanese, fluent in both Korean and Japanese) along with Sea (Korean, good singing technique), SM Entertainment sought out a bigger market for them, Japan in particular.²⁰⁷ During the group's period of activity in Korea, from 1997 to 2003, and in Japan, from 1998 to 2001, S.E.S was very popular indeed in Korea, and the Korean fans actively monitored the group's activities not only in Korea but also in Japan through the popular media and the internet. The boom of young girls' bands (Fin.K.L, S.E.S, Baby V.O.X, etc.) in Korea from 1998 was closely related to the Japanese female idol group SPEED's huge success in Japan from 1996 to 2000. SPEED (four teenage girls, Imai Eriko, Shimabukuro Hiroko, Uehara Takako, Arakaki Hitoe) was the most popular female idol group in Japan in the late 1990s and produced a number of million/double million-seller singles and albums.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ "SM Cheguk: Kkamtchik, Sunsu, SES, "Sonyô Kûrup" Wonjoro" (SM Empire: Cute, Pure, SES, as the Pioneer of "Girls' Band"), *Herald Media News*, June. 21. 2005.

²⁰⁸ JAVE Entertainment, *Ilbon Ingigasû Kôlleksyôn (Japanese Popular Singers Collections)*. (Seoul: Munjisa, 1998) pp. 103-105.



Figure 4.4 The Japanese group, SPEED (top-left) and the Korean group, S.E.S (top-right), FIN.K.L (bottom-left), and BABY V.O.X (bottom-right)

Like SPEED, the Korean girls' bands were formed with three to five young girls and usually focused on the visual images rather than musical sounds. After SPEED announced their disbanding in 1999 in Japan, the Korean group S.E.S gained short-lived popularity in Japan. Their modest success was relatively easy to achieve because of their familiar idol style and because the Korean-Japanese girl Shoo could communicate in Japanese. However, S.E.S could not achieve truly spectacular success in Japan because of the absence of support from any major Japanese label company, as their management company SM Entertainment had not negotiated such at that time. Nevertheless, the Korean media enthusiastically exaggerated S.E.S's

performance success in Japan, and this in turn helped the band to gain further popularity in Korea.

4.2.2 The Second Round/Stage (from September 1999)

On September 10, 1999, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced the second round of the Open-Door-Policy, which allowed more films, the staging of small, indoor popular music concerts (maximum of 2000), and some publications.²⁰⁹ The second round was scheduled to begin in spring 1999, but it was delayed until September because of the controversy over a bilateral fisheries pact with Japan. With the exception of animation, all international award-winning films (70 titles) and all G-rated films from Japan were permitted because of the modest response by Koreans to Japanese films during the first stage.²¹⁰ Among these the most popular included Iwano Iwano's *Love Letter* (1995, a contemporary love story with a macabre twist, the first showing in Korea: November 20, 1999), Nakata Hideo's *Ring* (1998, the terrifying film subsequently remade in the USA, the first showing in Korea: December 11, 1999), Nakano Hiroyuki's *Samurai Fiction* (1999, an Edo period samurai story, the first showing in Korea: February 19, 2000), and Sudo Masayuki's *Shall We Dance?* (1996, the story of a middle-aged man discovering the joys of ballroom dancing, also subsequently remade in the USA in 2004, the first showing in Korea: May 14, 2000).²¹¹

²⁰⁹ "Ilbon Munhwa Ich'a Kaebang ui Yŏnghyang" ("The Impact of the Second-Stage of the Open Door Policy"), *KBS News*, September. 19. 1999. See <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news.php?id=524244&kind=c> (accessed May. 12. 2006).

²¹⁰ "Chuga Kaebang...Yŏnghwaman hwakdae Kanungsung" (Additional Opening...Limited Possibility on Movie)" *Donga Ilbo*, February. 19. 1999.

²¹¹ "Asia Yŏnghwanŭn Chiŭm Sunsuhan Sarangjung" (Asian Movies in the Trend of Pure Love), *Hangyoreh News*, April. 14. 2006; "Ilbon Yŏnghwayo? Kŭlsseyo..." (Japanese Movie? Well...), *Chosun Ilbo*, September. 20. 1999; www.kr.movies.yahoo.com (accessed May. 12. 2006).



Figure 4.5 Iwaii Sunji's *Love Letter* (1995), Nakata Hideo's *Ring* (1998), Nakano Hiroyuki's *Samurai Fiction* (1999), and Suo Masayuki's *Shall We Dance?* (1996)

Also, more *manga* and *manga* magazines (weekly, biweekly, monthly) in Japanese languages were introduced legally, but most of the cartoon magazines in Korea were becoming less popular as internet service (webzines) of *manga/manhwa* began taking over in 1998. For example, the popular Korean website “Manhwa Kyujang’ak” (“Korea Manhwa Information Archives”) offers *Kyujang’ak Magazine*, including a global report section, which is entirely devoted to the world of Japanese *manga*.²¹²

In popular music, the staging of small, indoor, live music concerts by Japanese pop musicians was permitted for the first time. These were limited to halls with a maximum of 2000 seats and resulted in 308 performances in concert halls, 130 in arenas, and around 400 in hotel ballrooms—certainly a substantial number of appearances.²¹³ Live concerts at private restaurants, bars, or clubs were not allowed. The Korean government monitored Japanese

²¹² <http://www.kcomics.net/Magazine/List.asp?intBnum=415>, “Manhwa Kyujang’ak” (“Korea Manhwa Information Archives”), (accessed December. 2. 2006).

²¹³ “Ich’a Kaebang, Taejung Kayo Kungnae Kongyôn Hôyong” (Second Stage, Permitting Popular Music Concert), *DongA Ilbo*, September. 10. 1999.

performances and could do so much more easily at public venues than small private ones. Also, the production and sale of live concert albums or music videos were prohibited.²¹⁴

Korean singer, Kim Yon-Ja, who has built her career as a Japanese *enka* singer in Japan since 1988, had the first Japanese popular music concert in Korea in October 26, 1999.²¹⁵ Her concert, titled “Korea-Japan Culture Exchange Night—Kim Yon-Ja Big Concert,” was held at the *Gwangju Munhwa Yesul Hoegwan Konsôtû Hol* (Gwangju Culture and Art Center Concert Hall, 1732 seats) in Gwangju city (her hometown) in Korea.²¹⁶ The singer sang a few Korean *t’ûrot’û* songs, including “Mokpoûi Nunmul” (“Tears of Mokpo”) and “Nagûne Sôrum” (“Wanderer’s Sorrow”), in Korean and a few Japanese *enka* songs, including “Jinseikaikyo” (“Straits of Life”) and “Kawano Nagareno Youni” (“Like a Flowing River”), in Japanese.²¹⁷

In December 1999, a famous Japanese countertenor Yoshikazu Mera had a concert, titled as “Yoshikazu Mera Christmas Concert,” at the *Yesurûi Chôngang Konsôtû Hol* (the Seoul Arts Center Concert Hall, 2523 seats, the most prestigious music hall in Korea).²¹⁸ Yoshikazu Mera, who sang the theme song for Miyazaki Hayao’s 1997 *anime Mononoke Hime* (“Princess Mononoke,” called “Wôllyông Kongju” in Korea), was already well-known in Korea with his album “Romance,” released November 1998 under Western classical music category through Synnara Record in Korea.²¹⁹ As his voice from the classical music album “Romance” (which includes Handel’s “Ombra Mai Fu,” Satie’s “Je Te Veux,” Grieg’s “Solveig’s Song,” and more) was used for a few TV commercials in Korea, he was beginning to be recognized by classical

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ <http://cafe.daum.net/kimyonja>; Yano (2004: 159-160).

²¹⁶ See Gwangju Culture and Art Center’s official website, <http://art.gjcity.net/index.html>.

²¹⁷ “Kasu Kim Yon-Ja, Hanguksô Chut Ilbongayo Kongyôn” (Singer Kim Yon-Ja, The First Japanese Popular Music Concert in Korea), *JoongAng Daily*, October. 15. 1999.

²¹⁸ “Kasûm Chôksinûn Sinbisûrûn Moksori” (Touching, Magical Voice), *DongA Ilbo*, December. 9. 1999.

²¹⁹ “Yoshikazu Mera, Namjaga Purûnûn Yôsôngui Umyôk” (Yoshikazu Mera, Man Singing Woman’s Vocal-range), *Woman Donga*, December. 1999; <http://www.synnara.co.kr/jump/fp/music/page.do> (accessed November. 3. 2006).

music fans in Korea.²²⁰ However, he became very popular through the *anime*, *Mononoke Hime*, which spread widely throughout Korea through the pirated video tapes and video CDs, especially among the young Korean fans of the most famous Japanese *anime* director in Korea, Miyazaki Hayao. Thus, at his first concert in Korea in December 1999, where he only performed Western classical pieces, many Korean fans, who had come to hear the *anime*'s theme song, were disappointed and complained to the concert director (planner).²²¹ However, Yoshikazu Mera actually wound up singing the song for the Korean fans who waited for him outside of the hall after the concert.²²² Yoshikazu Mera could not sing the Japanese *anime* song in Japanese at the concert hall because of its over-2000 capacity, but sang the song for the several hundred people waiting outside of the hall, without violating the law. In this way, Yoshikazu Mera became even more popular among Korean audiences despite the Korean government's continued limits on Japanese popular music activity in the early stages of the Open-Door Policy. Based on his successful concert and growing popularity in Korea, Yoshikazu Mera returned to Korea in December 2003 for a joint concert with Korean pianist Iruma, sponsored by the Japanese Embassy in Korea. And on February 14, 2004 at Yoshikazu Mera's Valentine's Day Concert & Event, held at the *Yesurui Chôndang Konsôt'û Hol*, he could finally sing the original theme song of the *anime*, *Mononoke Hime*, which the Korean fans had long been waiting to hear and see him perform on stage. The EBS (Educational Broadcasting System) even broadcast his concert on TV through the program called *Yesurui Kwangjang* ("Arts' Square") on March, 17, 2004.²²³

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ "Kasûm Chôksinûn Sinbisûrôun Moksori" (Touching, Magical Voice), *DongA Ilbo*, December. 9. 1999.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ "Yoshikazu Mera ui Palentaindei Konsôtû" (Yoshikazu Mera's Valentine's Day Concert), *DongA Ilbo*, February. 15. 2004.



Figure 4.6 Yoshikazu Mera's album cover, *Romance* (1998, left) and Miyazaki Hayao's animation, *Mononoke Hime's* original sound tracks (1999, right)

From 1998 Japanese popular music (albeit without Japanese language) made gradual but steady penetration into Korea. Various genres of Japanese music, including pop, pop-classic, new age, crossover, jazz, and original sound tracks, became more and more popular in Korea. For example, new age pianist Kuramoto Yuki sold more than 500,000 copies of his five CD albums, including “Reminiscence” (March 1998), “Romance” (July 1998), “Refinement” (December 1998), “Lake Misty Blue” (May 1999), and “Sailing in Silence” (May 2000).²²⁴

²²⁴ Some of his albums were categorized as new age (semi-classical) piano music rather than Japanese music composed and performed by Japanese. Thus, his albums were available in Korea before the Open-Door Policy began to relax the censorship.



Figure 4.7 Kuramoto Yuki's album covers, *Romance* (1998), *Refinement* (1998), *Lake Misty Blue* (1999), and *Sailing in Silence* (2000)

His album, “Sailing in Silence” reached seventh place in the first half of 1999 in the *Hanguk Ŭmban Sanôp Hyôpoe* (Recording Industry Association of Korea) category called “pop-music-album” sales, which includes all types of musical recordings except Korean popular music (*kayo*). By the end of 1999, the album sold 132,605 copies and reached fifteenth place on the same chart.²²⁵ From 1999, Kuramoto Yuki became the most renowned Japanese new-age artist in Korea and appeared on the front covers of various magazines.²²⁶ After his first concert in Korea in 1999 at the *Yesurûi Chôndang Konsôt'û Hol* (the Seoul Arts Center Concert Hall), he has often visited Korea for his concerts, which have always been sold out and flocked to by young Korean fans. In addition, his three newly released albums from 1999 to 2003 sold around 50,000 copies each, namely *Sceneries in Love* (April 2001), *Time for Journey* (May 2002), and *Concertino* (April 2003).²²⁷ However, from 2004, as sales of original Japanese version of Japanese popular music albums became allowed in Korea, sales of Kuramoto Yuki’s albums,

²²⁵ "Recording Industry Association of Korea (MIAK)'s Pop-Music chart of the first half of 1999" <http://www.miak.or.kr> (accessed December. 12. 2006).

²²⁶ “Hanguge Tûrôdûnûn Sôjông, Pianisûtû Yuki Kuramoto ssi” (Delineation of Feeling Flowing into Korea, Pianist Kuramoto Yuki), *Mindan News*, December. 08. 2004.

²²⁷ <http://www.miak.or.kr> (accessed December. 12. 2006).

Pure Piano (March 2004) and *Heartstring* (May 2005), dramatically decreased to around 5,000 copies each.²²⁸

Also popular in Korea were albums by internationally-known composer, pianist, and actor Sakamoto Ryuichi: the piano album, *BTTB: Back To The Basics* (January 2000), and the compilation album of his film music, *Cinimage* (January 2000), the latter including music from *The Last Emperor* (1987) and *Little Buddha* (1993).²²⁹ Although he was internationally popular as a member of the techno-pop group YMO (Yellow Magic Orchestra, 1975-1983), he became popular in Korea through his Academy Award-winning film music for *The Last Emperor* and also through his performance as an actor in the movie, which was shown in Korea in 1988.²³⁰ In April 2000, he had his first concert in Korea at the *Yesurûi Chôndang Konsôt'û Hol*, where he performed his works from those two albums released a few months earlier.²³¹



Figure 4.8 Sakamoto Ryuichi's album covers, *BTTB* (2000, left), *Cinimage* (2000, middle), and *The Last Emperor* (1987, right)

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ “Ilbon Taejung Ŭmak Salgûmsalgûm Sangryuk” (Japanese Popular Music Gradual Touchdown). *JoongAng Daily*, May. 17. 2000.

²³⁰ “Pyujôn Ŭmakpaendûl Sinnageta” (Fusion Music Fans Must be Excited), *Hangeyreh News*, April. 18. 2000.

²³¹ “Ryuichi Sakamoto, Yônghwa Ŭmak Ch’ôtsôn” (Ryuichi Sakamoto, Introduction of Film Music), *Chosun Ilbo*, April. 27. 2000.

Also, the Japanese movie *Love Letter*'s original sound track (new-age style instrumental pieces by Remedios) became the top selling film music album in Korea during the first half of 2000, selling an impressive 187,492 copies.²³²

In 2000, under the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the *Hanguk Munhwa Kwangwang Yôn'guwon* (Korea Culture and Tourism Institute) conducted a public opinion survey of Koreans over 15 years of age on the outcome of the first and second stages of the Open-Door Policy. According to the survey result, 63.6% Koreans closely followed the process of the Open-Door Policy and 36.4% Koreans were not so interested in the process.²³³ Nearly half (48.2%) of the respondents assumed the impact of the two stages of the Open-Door Policy was harmful to Korea both because of its offensive and decadent contents and because of the resultant economic losses Korean industry was suffering. However, a slight majority (51.8%) of the respondents evaluated the outcome as positive to Korea because it offered more variety of cultural experiences to Koreans and the domestic cultural industry seemed to be becoming more active by competing with Japan.²³⁴ Also, both Japan and Korea's cultural industries indicated that *anime* and popular music would be the most successful categories as Korea opened the door wider in the next stages.²³⁵ Although limitations on Japanese popular music were still rigid, as we can from the sales of the Japanese artists' works and their sold-out concerts at the most prestigious music hall in Korea, many Koreans--not only devoted fans of Japanese popular culture but also the general Korean public--responded to the growing, and now legal, "presence" of different genres of Japanese popular music. One of the reasons for those artists' success in

²³² *Ibid.*; <http://www.miac.or.kr> (accessed February 1, 2007).

²³³ "Ilbon Taejung Munhwa Kaebang Chôngchaekui Punsök 2000" (Analysis of the Open-Door Policy toward Japan 2000), *Hanguk Munhwa Kwangwang Yôngguwon* (Korea Culture and Tourism Institute) website at http://www.kcti.re.kr/statistics_db.htm (accessed March 2, 2007).

²³⁴ http://www.kcti.re.kr/statistics_db.htm (accessed March 2, 2007).

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

Korea, besides their internally acknowledged musicianship, was that many Koreans favored the kinds of music genres they represented, including new age, semi-classic, pop-classic, and film musics, which were all easy-listening kinds of music, as we can see the everlasting popularity of ballad-style popular music (*palladû kayo*) in Korea.

4.2.3 The Third Round/Stage (from June 2000)

On June 27, 2000, the third round of the Open-Door Policy allowed the importing of additional films, animation, video, computer games, and TV programs. In popular music, a wider range of activities became legal. Both indoor and outdoor music concerts were permitted. Of considerable importance from the perspective of establishing a Japanese “presence” in the music world of Korea, Japanese popular music CDs could now be imported, albeit with the somewhat remarkable proviso that the Japanese language not be used in the vocals. As a result, the original “karaoke” versions (with no vocal part) produced in Japan, were legally imported, and the video track for Korean *noraebang* (*karaoke* halls) gave the Japanese song texts, but only in Korean transliteration.²³⁶

This round of widening the range of imports Korea would allow from Japan was cast as a friendly gesture from the Korean government, with an eye toward co-hosting the World Cup with Japan two years hence (in Summer 2002). All Japanese films were permitted except NC-18 rated movies, and international award-winning animation films were now also included.²³⁷ In addition, videos of those permitted movies and animations were allowed to be imported and sold.

²³⁶ However, Japanese popular music has been available to Korean audiences through the Internet since the late 90s. (As of 2003, over 70 percent of Korean households are using the Internet via broadband connections.)

²³⁷ “Ilbon Taejung Munhwa Kaebang Chôngchaekui Punsôk 2001” (Analysis of the Open-Door Policy toward Japan 2001), *Hanguk Munhwa Kwangwang Yônguwon* (Korea Culture and Tourism Institute) website at http://www.kcti.re.kr/munhwa_sangse.htm?num=1247 (accessed March. 7. 2006).

Computer, online, and commercial (arcade) games also became legally available. In broadcasting, sports, documentary, and news programs began to be imported and broadcast.²³⁸

According a public opinion survey on imports of Japanese movies and *anime* conducted by a member of the national assembly, Park Chong-Ung, in summer 2000, 79% respondents still supported further opening, and only 21% respondents opposed whether it would damage the local market further or not.²³⁹ Among the supporters, many of them have changed their prejudices about Japanese movies and *anime* from negative to positive after they watched some of the released movies and *anime*. Despite the bad reputation that Japanese movies and *anime* had among Koreans for frequent reliance on offensive and violent content, once Korean viewers had a chance to view a broad range of them, they found many to be highly artistic. Some supporters also indicated that not all Japanese movies and *anime* could be popular in Korea as the box-office record of Kurosawa Akira's *Kagemusha* was disappointing, so the local industry would not need to fear unmanageable competition from further importation.²⁴⁰

In July 12 and 13, 2000, the Japanese visual rock band Penicillin had their first Korean concert at the Seoul Hilton Hotel Convention Center (1998 seats). Although it was a small concert, the band's appearance presaged the coming of others groups from Japan, playing in larger venues during this third stage. Penicillin, known for some years in Korea through the black market, sang their hit songs including "The Flame" and "Mr. Freez" to an enthusiastic crowd.²⁴¹

After having a small concert for charity in April 2000 in Seoul, the famous Japanese rock-ballad duo Chage & Aska had the *Han-Il Ch'insôn Konsôtû* ("Korea-Japan Friendship

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ See "Chôngch'I Toron, 3 ch'a Kaebang" (Political Discussion on the Third Stage), <http://www.park21.org/discuss> (accessed March. 7. 2006).

²⁴⁰ "Ilbon Yônghwa Hûnghaeng Silpae" (Japanese Movies' Failing Box-office Records), *Chosun Ilbo*, April. 9. 2001.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Concert”) in August 26 and 27, 2000 at the Seoul Olympic Park Dome, which, with a capacity of 15,000, is one of the biggest indoor halls in all of Korea.²⁴² Their concert was the first big mainstream Japanese popular music concert in Korea, another major step in the establishment of Japanese pop music presence in Korea.²⁴³



Figure 4.9 Japanese duo Chage & Aska's concert poster (left) and photo (right) of "Korea-Japan Friendship Concert" in August, 2000²⁴⁴

This concert was organized by the Korea Foundation for Women and sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Korea Tourism Organization.²⁴⁵ All the profits were donated to the Korea Foundation for Women, thereby representing direct benefit to Koreans (not just the Korean music industry) and serving to counter any ill feelings from those

²⁴² Iwabuchi described the duo as musicians “who have been self-conscious of their mission as cultural diplomats in the Asian region,” and mentioned the massive Japanese media coverage about the flow of Japanese pop into Korea that began with this duo’s big concert. See Iwabuchi (2002:208).

²⁴³ A Korean website on Asian popular music, “asiamusic.net,” selected the duo’s Korean concert as the biggest news of Japanese popular music in Korea in 2000. See <http://nine4u.asiamusic.net/dj/program.asp>, (accessed July. 21. 2006).

²⁴⁴ “Chage & Asûka ui Sei Yesû” (Chage & Aska’s Say Yes), *Ohmynews*, September. 20. 2000.

²⁴⁵ “Chage & Asûka, Ilbon Taejung Ŭmagi Onda” (Chage & Aska, Japanese Popular Music is Coming), *Donga Ilbo*, August. 31. 2000.

Koreans resistant to the Open-Door Policy who might complain of Japanese pop artists draining their country of Korean financial resources.²⁴⁶ The band sang a total of 19 songs, including their most famous song “Say Yes,” at the Korean concert. Also, the Japanese *anime* maestro Miyazaki Hayao’s special 7-minute *anime* music video produced for band’s song “On Your Mark” (1995) was also viewed during the concert.²⁴⁷ Since it was the first big concert of Japanese popular musicians in Korea, both countries’ media coverage was substantial. Moreover, Japan’s Fuji TV even produced a historic documentary of Japan-Korea relations in conjunction with the Chage & Aska concert in Korea as a new beginning of the two countries’ relationship.²⁴⁸ However, the Korean media coverage was less friendly, pointing the failure of this concert to fill the whole Dome as a kind of disappointment for Japan—5,000 of the total 15,000 seats were empty.²⁴⁹

Leading up to co-hosting the 2002 Soccer World Cup, collaborations between Korean and Japanese musicians were taking place. In the realm of traditional (or neo-traditional) music, the famous Korean percussion quartet SamulNori joined forces with Japanese percussionists and Western classical musicians from both countries to play concerts together. The first popular music group collaboration that appeared was Y2K (Year Two Kilo), formed in 1999 and featuring one Korean musician (Go Jae-Geun, lead vocal) and two Japanese musicians (Matsuo Koji, bass guitar and vocal, and his brother Matsuo Yuichi, guitar and vocal). Y2K’s performances in Korea took place mainly from 1999 to 2002. They released five albums in Korea, including their second album *Try Again* in October 2000.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ “Ilbon Rokgurup Sangryuk” (Japanese Rock Bands’ Landing), *Hankook Ilbo*, July. 12. 2000.

²⁴⁷ “Chage & Asûka, Ilbon Taejung Ŭmagi Onda” (Chage & Aska, Japanese Popular Music is Coming), *Donga Ilbo*, August. 31. 2000 ; “Chage & Asûka ui Sei Yesû” (Chage & Aska’s Say Yes), *Ohmynews*, September. 20. 2000.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ “Chage & Asûka ui Kongyôni Nagingôt” (Chage & Aska Concert’s Meaning), *Chosun Ilbo*, September. 1. 2000.

²⁵⁰ The Japanese members have joined to form the duo “Doggy Bag” in Japan. The Korean member Go Jae-Geun recently re-debuted as a musical actor. See “Y2K Go Jae-Geun, Myujikeul Pae’Uro Keumbaek” (Y2K Go Jae-



Figure 4.10 Y2K's Korean member, Go Jae-Geun, and Japanese members, Matsuo Yuichi and Matsuo Koji (left) and Y2K's second album cover, *TRY AGAIN* (2000, right)

As various kinds of Japanese popular cultural imports increased in Korea, local culture industries understandably began to express their fear and concern about losing ground to their neighbor to the east. Nevertheless, the Korean government kept the opening process going until July 2001 when the issue of Japanese history textbooks was suddenly raised again. On July 12, 2001, the Korean government temporarily disapproved of the Open-Door plan because of the Japanese government's refusal to revise the coverage of Japan's colonization of Korea in its middle school history textbooks, despite pressure from Korea.²⁵¹ Although the Korean government had formerly scheduled further relaxing of the restrictions on Japanese cultural products to permit importation of original Japanese-language versions of music CDs, TV drama and show programs, and animation, the opening process was stopped and these products continued to be prohibited.²⁵²

Geun, Comeback as a Musical Actor), *Herald Media News*, June. 12. 2006. Also, for more account on the group's albums, see http://kr.music.yahoo.com/m_music/artist.asp?aid=5784 (accessed July. 12. 2006).

²⁵¹ Yu Kyun, "Tûrama Hanpyôni Yônûn Hanil Munhwagyoryu Saesidae" (The New Age of Korea-Japan Cultural Exchange Started by a Drama), *Munhwa Yesul* (April): 30-37, 2002, P. 36.

²⁵² "Kaebang Iljông Chungdan" (Suspension of the Open-Door Policy), *Chosun Ilbo*, July. 12. 2001.

However, in 2002, some of these regulations were temporary lifted because of the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan, which was held in Korea and Japan from May 31 to June 30, 2002. In February 2002, for the first time in history, Korean television (MBC) and Japanese television (TBS) co-produced a drama, *Friends*, performed by Korean top actor Won Bin and Japanese top actress Fukada Kyoko, drawing a 19% audience rating in Korea (anything above 15% audience rating in TV drama viewership is considered as high in Korea).²⁵³ The drama was a love story between a Korean man (Chi-Hun, a college student who struggles with his conservative family and his dream of being a movie director instead of an architect) and a Japanese woman (Tomoko, a department store employee who tries to find her own dream after getting tired of being nobody within the society). They met in Hong Kong and began to like each other. After they went back to their countries, the two found many differences and conflicting issues between them and their countries but tried to understand the differences and to solve the problems at the same time, an obvious metaphor for the conflicting relationships between Korea and Japan.



Figure 4.11 TV drama *Friends* (2000), co-produced by Korean television (MBC) and Japanese television (TBS) featuring Korean top actor Won Bin (left) and Japanese top actress Fukada Kyoko (right)

²⁵³ “World Cup Hunpung tago Yôngija Kyoryu Hwalbal” (Active Exchange of Actor/Actress for World Cup), *DongA Ilbo*, February. 16. 2002; Yu Kyun, “Tûrama Hanpyôni Yônûn Hanil Munhwagyoryu Saesidae” (The New Age of Korea-Japan Cultural Exchange Started by a Drama), *Munhwa Yesul* (April): 30-37, 2002, P. 35.

During the World Cup, the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism gave permission for the production and release of the World Cup official music album *2002 FIFA World Cup Official Album Songs Korea/Japan* (April 2002), which contained songs in Japanese and Korean. The title song, “Let’s Get Together Now,” was sung by both Korean and Japanese official musicians for the World Cup (“Voices of Korea/Japan,” for the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan”), including Korea’s Park Jông-Hyun (a Korean-American female singer, also known as Rena Park) and Brown Eyes (a Korean male duo) and Japan’s Chemistry (a male duo) and Sowelu (a female singer).²⁵⁴ Besides these musicians, top popular singers from Korea and Japan participated in the album, including Kuraki Mai (singing “Always”) and Park Jin-Young (singing “Ready”).



Figure 4.12 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan official album cover, *Songs of Korea/Japan* (2002, left) and single cover, "Let's Get Together Now" (2002, right)

²⁵⁴ “Music Story: 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan Official Album.” *Sport Chosun*, March. 12. 2002.

Kusanagi Tsuyoshi, a singer/actor, member of the Japanese mega-star group SMAP, has been the most active Japanese entertainer in Korea since his debut in July 2002 as a solo singer in Korea. Inspired by his interest in Korean culture (the 1999 movie *Swiri* in particular) and language, he produced a single album *Chôngmal Sarang Haeyo* (“I really love you,” which was a humorous, friendly concept) singing in Korean. Kusanagi Tsuyoshi has been hosting a program, *Ch’o Nan Gang* (Korean style pronunciation of his name in Chinese characters, Fuji TV) in Japan since 2001, on which he speaks only in Korean and introduces various aspects of Korea and invites popular Korean entertainers.²⁵⁵ He also performed in a few Korean dramas and movies, notably *Ch’ônhajangsa Madonna* (“Like a Virgin”) in 2006; and he has become very popular in Korea as the most *chihanp’a* or *ch’inhanp’a* (new Korean words for a foreigner, usually Japanese, who knows, understands, and likes Korea well) of the Japanese pop stars.²⁵⁶



Figure 4.13 Kusanagi Tsuyoshi (or Cho Nan Gang)'s Korean single cover, "*Chôngmal Sarang Haeyo*" ("I Really Love You" 2002, left) and the Korean movie, *Ch’ônhajangsa Madonna* ("Like a Virgin" 2006, right) featuring him as a Japanese language teacher

²⁵⁵ “Sanyôntchae Hanguk Sogae Pûro Chinhaeng, Ilbon Kasu Cho Nan-Gang” (4th Year of Hosting the TV Program introducing Korea, Japanese Popular Singer, Cho Nan-Gang), *Jungang Ilbo*, January. 11. 2005.

²⁵⁶ “Ch’o Nan Gang Ilbonpaen, Hanguk Wonjong Ungwonhyunjang” (Ch’o Nan Gang’s Japanese Fan, Coming to Korea for Cheering), *Sport Seoul News*, November. 1. 2003.

Prior to the fourth stage of the Open-Door Policy, the Korean music industry prepared for licensing and contributing deals with the Japanese music industry. For example, from September, 2003, SONY Korea began to select Japanese musicians from the R&B genre (which has been popular in Korea), including Chemistry and Hirai Ken, and planned to released around ten albums in January 2004.²⁵⁷ EMI Korea planned to release the best albums of those Japanese musicians who were already popular in Korea, including Utada Hikaru and GLAY (a rock/visual-rock band), in January 2004.²⁵⁸ Also, SM Entertainment completed the licensing deal with AVEEX, with which top stars like Amuro Namie, Hamasaki Ayumi, Misia, and Globe were associated.²⁵⁹

4.2.4 The Fourth Round/Stage (from January 2004)

On January 1, 2004, except for some limitations on TV programs and animation films, the fourth round allowed the import of almost all kinds of Japanese popular cultural products.²⁶⁰ As a result, most Japanese movies, games, and music CDs have been permitted since that date. Finally, then, the sale of Japanese popular music CDs, complete with original Japanese-language vocals, became legal in Korea, putting Korea on equal footing with other Asian countries, such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, where Japanese popular music CDs and related

²⁵⁷ “2004 Ilbon Taejungmunhwa Wanjôn Kaebang, Ilbon Munhwaya Nolja~~~~” (2004 Japanese Popular Culture Complete Opening, Let’s Play Japanese Popular Culture~~~~), *Gaseum* (Bugs website magazine, December. 2003), C:\Documents and Settings\Owner\Desktop\SCHOOL\AM 9\AM9 Article\ETC (accessed July. 14. 2006).

²⁵⁸ “2004 Ilbon Taejungmunhwa Wanjôn Kaebang, Ilbon Munhwaya Nolja~~~~” (2004 Japanese Popular Culture Complete Opening, Let’s Play Japanese Popular Culture~~~~), *Gaseum* (Bugs website magazine, December. 2003), C:\Documents and Settings\Owner\Desktop\SCHOOL\AM 9\AM9 Article\ETC (accessed July. 14. 2006).

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ “Sa’cha Chuga Kaebang” (Fourth Round Additional Opening), *Hankook Ilbo*, September. 16. 2003. After a two-year grace period, most of *anime* imports have been legal since January 2006. However, most of the Japanese TV programs are still banned even in cable stations except some TV dramas, variety shows, and sports broadcasting (as of March 2007).

products had been selling for some time. Within days, Japanese pop music sections appeared in CD stores in Korea.

The Japanese presence in Korea's music scene, building gradually, took a leap forward with this change. Under the various kinds of unusual rules imposed by the Korean government until 2003, Japanese popular music was either banned or required to modify its "Japaneseness" by some degree of "de-Japanizing," "Koreanizing," and/or "de-nationalizing" processes in order to be legally present in Korea, and these requirements did not motivate much interest of the Japanese music industry. Instead, the Japanese music industry had mainly been waiting until Korea gave up on their last shield (even though, as we have seen, that shield has always had some big holes). As a result, as soon as Korea's final resistance was removed by the fourth round of the Open-Door Policy, Japanese popular music began to flourish "as-is" in Korea without changing anything unless the Japanese musicians wanted to or saw that as a better way to promote their music.

Within weeks, Korean music cable channels began to air programs that featured Japanese popular music exclusively. Those programs include M-net's *J-Pop Wave* and *Pop-Japan*, KMTV's *J-Pop Non-Stop* and *World Pops*, MTV Korea's *J-Beat*, and Channel [V] Korea's *J-Pop Zone* and *J-Pop Street*.²⁶¹ Except for *J-Pop Zone* (which airs Monday through Friday twice per day), these programs were usually aired twice per week: the original broadcast and one rebroadcast. The shows feature not only Japanese popular music videos themselves, but also commentary by veejays (= VJs, i.e., "video jockeys"), often including young Korean and Japanese hosts conversing in Korean language. For example, MTV Korea's *J-Beat* was hosted by a Korean female singer, Kim Yoon-A, a member of the music band Jaurim, and a Japanese

²⁶¹ *World-Pops* has lately been devoted exclusively to Japanese pop music more or less every other week. *J-Pop Street* was aired until September 2004. KMTV later joined with M-net.

radio DJ, Huruya Masayuki, in 2004.²⁶² Most of those shows simply play music videos (called promotion video in Japan) “as-is” and introduce Japanese musicians and their recent albums or concert schedules along with short clips of Korean popular music info between breaks (Hot Clips, Fresh Break, Melonade, Melon Clips). Some of them, including M-net’s *J-Pop Wave*, also introduce latest fashion trends and popular places in Japan. Through the internet broadcast, without having a cable TV service, most of those programs--from the very first show to the latest show--can be easily viewed anytime by joining the membership either for free or with a small fee.²⁶³

Sales of Japanese pop took off. In the first half of 2004, in the category called “pop-music-album” sales announced by *Hanguk Ŭmban Sanôp Hyôpoe* (Recording Industry Association Korea), which includes all types of musical recordings except Korean pop recordings in Korea, 21 recordings out of the top 50 were Japanese pop recordings.²⁶⁴ Most of them were top stars from those major label companies, including the best seller of 2004 Nakashima Mika’s *LOVE* (SONY and SONY Korea) and Hyde (SONY and SONY Korea), BoA (AVEX Inc. and SM Entertainment), L’arc-En-Ciel (SONY and SONY Korea), Utada Hikaru (EMI and EMI Korea), Anzenchitai (SONY and SONY Korea), and Amuro Namie (AVEX Inc. and SM Entertainment). For the full year of 2004, in the same category, 10 recordings out of the top 50 were Japanese pop recordings, including X-Japan (SONY and SONY Korea) along with those from the first half sale record.²⁶⁵ On a different chart, which includes all musical recordings, the Japanese idol band V6’s album *Very Best* (AVEX Inc. and SM Entertainment)

²⁶² Huruya Masayuki became a host of Inter-FM’s program “K-Generaion” in Japan from April, 2004 to March, 2005. See Korea Tourism Organization’s news at <http://www.knto.or.kr/am/bo/ambo>, (accessed March. 8. 2006).

²⁶³ <http://www.mnet.com>; <http://www.mtv.co.kr/>

²⁶⁴ “Recording Industry Association Korea (MIAK)’s Pop-Music chart of the first half of 2004” <http://www.miak.or.kr> (accessed October 13, 2004).

²⁶⁵ “Recording Industry Association Korea (MIAK)’s Pop-Music chart of 2004” <http://www.miak.or.kr>, (accessed February 10, 2005).

reached the number one position on the chart for a two-day period in October 2004.²⁶⁶ Like the music TV programs, Japanese popular music albums were introduced “as-is” except they were all made in Korea by the Korean manufacturers associated with the Korean market licensing holders in order to adjust the price for the Korean market. Thus, while the original Japanese CDs are around US\$ 35 - US\$ 40 (regular album) and US\$ 15 – US\$ 20 (single album) in Japan, the Korean made Japanese CDs (with the same contents) are usually around US\$ 15- US\$ 17 (regular) and US\$ 6 – US\$ 9 (single).

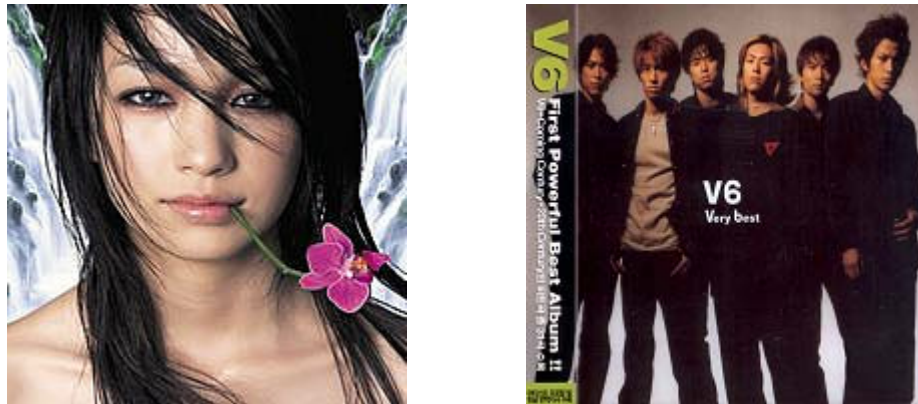


Figure 4.14 The most sold Japanese pop album in Korea in 2004, Nakashima Mika's album cover, *LOVE* (2004, left) and popular Japanese male idol group, V6's album cover, *Very Best* (2004, right)

On May 13-14, 2004, the mega star Amuro Namie (called *J-Pop ui Yôsin* (“Goddess of J-Pop”) in Korea) had her first Korean concerts “Amuro Namie - So Crazy Tour in Seoul 2004” at the Seoul Olympic Park Dome, one of the biggest entertainment news items of the year in Korea.

²⁶⁶ “V6 Pesôtû Aelbôm” (V6 Best Album), *Herald Premium News*, October 8, 2004.

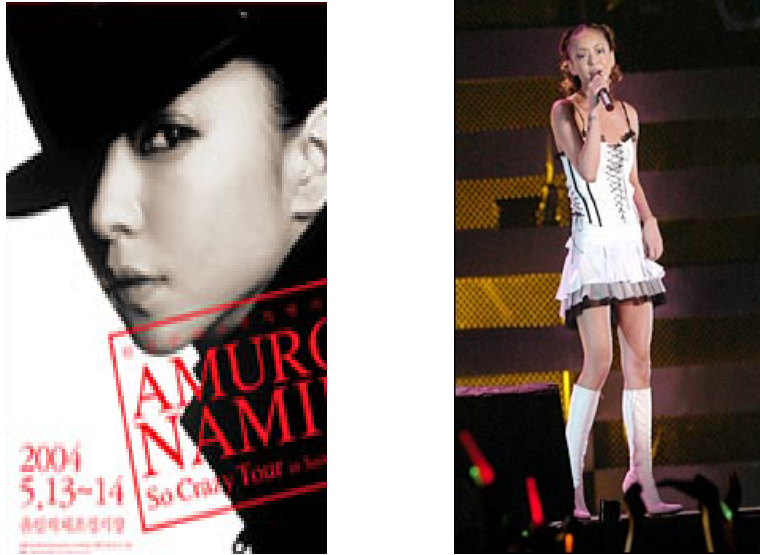


Figure 4.15 Amuro Namie's first Korean concert poster and photo of "Amuro Namie – So Crazy Tour in Seoul 2004"

Amuro Namie's Korea concert was an extension of her Japan tour in the spring of 2004. The entire tour consisted of 36 engagements, for which all tickets sold out within 30 minutes in Japan. As in Japan, she headlined her Korean performances with her current hit songs, including "Never End" and "Can you Celebrate?"²⁶⁷ Again, this Japanese mega pop star's approach to her concert appearances in Korea indicated the confident attitude of the Japanese music industry, as she simply presented her music "as is" with no special repackaging or accommodation to Korean tastes. Her uncompromising, "as is" Japanese style was enthusiastically accepted by many Korean fans. The media coverage of her concert was extensive, and the fans' anticipation and attention before and after her visit filled the Korean internet in 2004.

²⁶⁷ "Amuro Namie Ch'ôt Naehangonyôn Sônghwangrie Yôllyô" (Amuro Namie's First Korean Concert was Successfully Held), *Joins News*, May. 14. 2004.

Korean fans eagerly enjoy and consume this newly available Japanese popular music, “as is.” A fashion icon in Japan, Amuro Namie has always been creating new fashions, hair styles, and makeup styles, which are quickly imitated not only by her fans but also by other female singers and actresses in Asia. In Korea, Amuro’s latest fashion, hair and makeup styles have been quickly disseminated to young women in Korea through the internet and hundreds of Japanese magazines (*Non-No*, *Can-Cam*, *ViVi*, *AnAn*, *CD Data*, *Girl Pop*, *Arena37C*, and many more) at the local bookstores.



Figure 4.16 Korean pop star Hyori (left) copied the Japanese superstar Amuro Namie’s dress, hairstyle, and posture (right)

As you can see above, Hyori and Amuro were wearing the same dress in different colors with identical hair styles and poses. This infamous photo has been all over the Korean internet along with Hyori’s many other photos revealing her extensive imitation of Amuro Namie’s

visual images from as early as Amuro's debut in 1995.²⁶⁸ Hyori (or Lee Hyori), a former member of the girls' band FIN.K.L (1998-2002), has often been criticized by many young Korean music fans because of her frequent imitation of Amuro's sexy images by copying Amuro's fashion, hair, and makeup styles.²⁶⁹ However, despite such criticism and her further imitation of other Japanese pop stars' songs and styles, Hyori, as a sex symbol, has been the most popular female singer in Korea, and many young Korean girls have followed Hyori's version of Amuro's latest fashion, hair, and makeup styles. This indicates that both the Korean music industry and the Korean audiences have been continuously chasing the "Japaneseness" represented by these pop music stars with no problem, and as a result the presence of Japan within the world of Korean popular music has become even stronger than before.

Countless online music service sites were active in promoting the newly flourishing Japanese pop and considered it as one of their main categories. For example, websites such as *Tube Music* (www.tubemusic.co.kr), *Bugs Music* (www.bugs.co.kr), *I Music Land* (www.imusic.co.kr), *Asian Music* (www.asianmusic.net.kr), *Music Plaza* (www.musicplaza.com), and *Melon* (www.melon.com) categorize Japanese popular music as a genre parallel to Korean popular music. Furthermore, those websites usually offer subcategorized Japanese popular musical genres including the mainstream J-pop, Idol, rock, R&B, hip-hop and rap, club, jazz, easy listening, reggae, new age, Shibuya-kei, visual-rock), and *enka*, which clearly indicates the broad range of Korean fans with various tastes on Japanese popular music.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ <http://www.avexnet.or.jp/amuro> (accessed March. 07. 2006).

²⁶⁹ "Ilbon Kasurŭl Hyungnaenaenŭn Hanguk Kasudŭl" (Korean Popular Singers Copying the Japanese Popular Singers), at <http://enjoyjapan.naver.com> (accessed March. 07. 2006).

²⁷⁰ Shibuya-kei (Shibuya-style) is a kind of musical/artistic trend which was especially popular during the 1990s in Shibuya, Japan. As the musical trend became popular in Japan as well as outside Japan, the term Shibuya-kei became a kind of genre, which is more widely used outside Japan. The musical style is a combination of popular western music genres, including jazz, disco, dance, bossa nova, hip hop, electronic pop, and French pop. Among the popular bands, Pizzicato Five and Cornelliuss were very popular in America during the mid 1990s.

Continuing the trend started in 1999-2000, more and more Korean and Japanese musicians have participated in joint projects and concerts. For example, in February 2004, Sakamoto Ryuichi appeared in one of the most popular music TV programs in Japan, *Utaban* (on TBS), and introduced his new piece “Undercooled,” which featured the Korean rapper, MC Sniper, rapping in Korean, along with a sampling of *kayagŭm sanjo*.²⁷¹ This leads us to the other direction of the transnational flows from Korea to Japan, one hoped for but not fully anticipated by supporters of the Open-Door Policy in Korea. As Korea opened up legally to Japan, Japan appears to have begun opening up to Korea as some Japanese musicians collaborate with Korean musicians and Japanese fans begin to seek out and consume Korean popular music.²⁷²

4.3 JAPANESE POPULAR MUSIC AND KOREAN FANDOM

4.3.1 Popular Singers/Groups

As we have already seen in Chapter Three, Japanese popular music in Korea during the 1980s and the early 1990s has enjoyed a relatively hidden (or supposed to be hidden) popularity with distribution limited to piracy. Particularly in the 1980s, although many hit songs from the top Japanese pop stars were very popular among young Korean audiences (such as Anzenchidai, Kuwata Keisuke’s Kuwata Band and Southern All Stars, Kondo Masahiko), there were not much direct connection to make between the Japanese singers and groups and the Korean fans. Thus, it was mainly their musical sound itself that the Korean fans liked about Japanese popular music.

²⁷¹ Sakamoto Ryuichi’s latest recording, *Chasm* (Kinetic Art & Business America, Distributed by Warner Music) was released in Japan on February 25, 2004 and then released in Korea on April 22, 2004.

²⁷² Further discussion on this issue is in Chapter Five.

However, by the early 1990s, as Korea's contact with Japanese popular culture increased, not only the songs but also the visual images of the Japanese pop stars became available in Korea.

One prominent example was X-Japan, which was a sensational visual-rock band in Japan at that time, and began to be popular in Korea with their artistic musical sound as well as their *shojo manga*, i.e. visual images resembling beautifully drawn male characters of Japanese comics.



Figure 4.17 **Photos of X-Japan**

While many teenage boys were hooked on X-Japan's powerful musical sound, many teenage girls were fascinated by the band's visual images. X-Japan's combination of such unique and wild visual images with powerful rock/hard-rock sounds has been something that the Korean music fans could not find in the Korean popular music. As a result, the pioneer of the visual-rock genre, X-Japan's undying popularity became a legend and has created many devoted fans, who became what in Korean are called "X-mania." (The loan word "mania" in Korean translates not as a kind of craziness or English "mania" but the people overcome with such

craziness, in this case a fan with a crazy infatuation with X-Japan.) Although most of X-Japan's albums were available through the black market in Korea, the smuggled original copies were 3-4 times more expensive in Korea than in Japan. It is not surprising, then, that the band's albums released legally in Korea from 2004 have been all-time best sellers of Japanese popular music in Korea, even almost a decade after the band's breakup (in 1997) and the guitarist Hide's mysterious death (in 1998). Furthermore, a number of books on X-Japan have been published in Korea from 1998, which clearly indicates their supreme popularity. It is rare in Korea for a whole book to be devoted to any one popular music star, foreign or domestic, with the exception (noted earlier) of Seo Taiji. The publication of a whole book on one Japanese group, then, is a significant indicator of that group's major importance to Koreans. Indeed, since Japanese visual-rock was introduced by X-Japan to Korea, many other visual-rock bands have become popular in Korea, including GLAY, L'arc-En-Ciel, and Gackt, with similar but a little less wild music styles and visual images.

Since 1998, through the internet and the other popular cultural products, popular Japanese singers and groups and their songs have begun to gain their popularity in Korea and Japan more simultaneously, narrowing the lag of earlier years. Among the many popular stars, the mega star band SMAP and the pop cultural icon Amuro Namie have been particularly popular. SMAP, which debuted in 1991, has been the most successful male idol band produced by the Johnny's Jimusho ("Jonny's Entertainment/Office"), and by the mid-1990s the band was all over the Japanese media as well as in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Like other typical Japanese pop idols, SMAP's five members are not so good at singing, but as multi-entertainers (actors, cooks, TV program hosts, comedians, writers) they have been extremely popular in Japan. In particular, Kimura Takuya, the most popular, best-looking, best singing member of the band, has been selected as the most popular, cool, sexiest man in Japan for more than ten years, even after his

marriage in 2000. His extreme fame in Japan and outside Japan has been achieved through his drama appearances, especially *Long Vacation* (1996); and his exceptional charisma as an entertainer has been built through one of the most popular TV programs in Japan, SMAPXSMAP since 1996. In Korea, many young female Koreans became fans of the band and of Japanese popular music and drama because of Kimura Takuya's supreme "coolness." His international popularity even led a Korean entertainment company (Star J Entertainment) to find and to produce a Korean actor, Won Bin, who debuted in 1996 and was groomed to project an image very similar to Kimura Takuya. Crossing the Korea/Japan boundary has been a key to Won Bin's success, as he has become very popular in Korea as well as in Japan as an actor since 2004.²⁷³ Following SMAP's popularity and "coolness," most of the male pop idols produced by the Johnny's Jimusho have been very popular among young girls in Korea. These groups have included Kinki Kids, V6, Tackey & Tsubasa, Arashi, News, and Kat-Tun.



Figure 4.18 Similar photos of Korean actor Won Bin (the two photos on the left) and Japanese actor/singer Kimura Takuya (the two photos on the right)

²⁷³ "Wonbinûn Kimuratakuya ui Bench'imaking" (Won Bin was Kimura Takuya's Benchmarking), *Star News*, October, 14. 2006.

Among the female singers, besides Amuro Namie, Hamasaki Ayumi (AVEX, recently called “Queen of J-Pop” in Korea), Nakashima Mika (SONY), and Utada Hikaru (EMI), who are generally considered as “J-pop” singers, within the narrow stylistic meaning of the term, have been particularly popular in Korea. They are all good looking, musically talented singers, and their main focus has been musical performance. After Amuro Namie’s popularity passed its peak, Hamasaki Ayumi (often called Ayu) became the most popular female singer in Japan during the early 2000s and her albums were widely available in Korea from the very beginning of the final stage of the Open-Door Policy, in January 2004. Besides her singing technique, her sassy character and exceptionally big eyes with trendy fashion styles created the “Ayu Boom” in Japan and many Japanese girls also imitated her. In Korea, her fans favored her particularly “Japanese” vocal technique on a big scale--the *enka*-like vibration with nasal sound--and expressive lyrics, all written by her. Like Amuro Namie, Hamasaki Ayumi has been very good at both dance and ballad style genres and offered both musical and visual pleasure to the fans.

After the four young girls’ band SPEED broke up in the late 1990s, the place was quickly filled in by the teen-pop idol band, Morning Musume (lit., “Morning Daughter”), produced by former singer Tsunku in 1997. The membership has changed a little over the years, but the ages of the members have been very young, usually been between twelve and early twenties. The band’s central element was based on the typical Japanese pop idols main image: “cuteness.” Their childish acts and sexy lyrics were all embraced within the realm of “cuteness,” which was very rare in the Korean popular music scene. As in Japan, Morning Musume became very popular among young boys in Korea, who were quite fascinated by the exaggerated “cuteness”

of the young Japanese girls, similar to the cute characters in Japanese computer games, *anime*, and *manga*.

4.3.2 Popular Genres

What popular musical genres within the broad spectrum of Japanese popular music have been most prominent in Korea? Most Korean fans would not identify their own tastes in Japanese popular music along the lines of genres, but rather by naming specific groups or individual singers. We must remember that musical style alone is not the only, and sometimes not even the primary, element that makes a particular group or individual attractive to audiences, whether in Korea or in Japan. Nevertheless, we can identify the several genres of Japanese popular music that have gained the greatest popularity in Korea simply by referencing the categories of music that the most popular singers and group have been presenting, which include the mainstream J-pop, visual-rock, and idol music. Rock (also called J-rock) and folk-rock genres are somewhat popular as well. While the main stream J-pop music is similar to the main stream Korean popular music in Korea, these other genres are either rare or absent among Korean performers.

Although there were some underground rock musicians active in Korea, rock and rock style genres could not reach the mainstream because they were mostly available at the small clubs in Seoul. Thus, various Japanese rock music genres, including rock (or J-rock), visual-rock, folk-rock, hard-rock, and ballad-rock, which have been very important genres in Japan, became very appealing to the Korean fans, who were eager to enjoy more variety in music. Among those rock genres, visual-rock caught the Korean fans' attention the most from the early period and has been continuously popular.

The other unique and very "Japanese" popular music genre, idol music, has also been a popular genre in Korea. Although young female idol singers' exaggerated verbal, facial, and

body expressions in order to create “(super)cuteness” might not be appreciated by musically concerned fans, many young Koreans, who have literally been growing up with various kinds of Japanese popular cultural products (computer games, *anime*, *manga*, fashion, food, TV dramas, movies), could easily be connected to this genre.

4.3.3 Internet Communities: Age, Class, Gender, Activities

Since the late 1990s, the internet has become an essential place—arguably the single most important one—for young Korean audiences to form fan communities and to consume popular music. In the 1980s and the early 1990s, being a fan of Japanese popular music (or just listening Japanese popular music) in Korea was something that one could not openly talk about or be proud of because of Korea’s strong (or at least publicly necessary) sense of nationalism against Japan. Thus, being a fan of Japanese popular music was a kind of risky act that could be severely criticized by the older generation as well as friends and family members. However, by the mid 1990s, the environment became very different from the past in that being a knowledgeable fan of Japanese popular music and culture was considered to be hip and fashionable. After Seo Taiji’s initial retirement in 1996 there was simply no big Korean pop star that could attract the Korean fans the way Seo Taiji had. Many young Korean pop singers and bands appearing after Seo Taiji cleverly imitated Seo Taiji’s styles, but most of them could make only one or two hit songs before quickly disappearing, as the Korean fans became tired of their similar styles, lacking in originality and freshness. Furthermore, many Korean music makers/singers’ constant piracy of Japanese songs and styles even after the Open-Door Policy began to be implemented, drove many Korean music fans away from Korean popular music. As a result, more and more young Korean audiences became fans of Japanese popular music and began to form small fan communities through the internet. During the mid 1990s, those small

fan communities often met at cafes with TV sets in the popular spots like Myongdong or Apgujôngdong in Seoul and enjoyed popular songs, music videos, and TV clips that they were able to obtain through various means.

By the late 1990s, as the ban on Japanese popular culture was gradually lifted and the internet resources became extensively available to Korea (which has enjoyed a reputation as the most wired/broad-banded country in the world), not only the number of Japanese music fan communities increased but also their size grew exponentially. Countless internet communities and clubs devoted to Japanese popular music have been formed within the popular portal sites in Korea, including yahoo, empas, daum, naver, netian, nate, paran, and dreamwiz. All kinds of subcategories of those Japanese popular music fan communities and clubs became more and more specific. From the different musical genres, particular singers and groups, TV programs, and music labels, to the members' ages, genders, jobs, educational backgrounds, hometowns, and other interests and hobbies--all of these serve as criteria for distinguishing one website or club from another. The main activities of these fan communities and clubs are similar, including the sharing of music files, of stars' photos and visual clips, of the latest Japanese entertainment news and fashion information, and of personal opinions. Through these communities and clubs, the fans support their stars or favorite music genres, buying/selling albums and other related goods, going to concerts together, even learning Japanese language, and other aspects of Japanese culture. Although the majority of the members of these fan communities and clubs for Japanese popular music have been young Korean students, those older fans from the 1980s (who are in their 30s and early 40s now) also seem to be active, just as the older musicians like Anzenchidai and Chage & Aska are still popular.

In the early 1990s, when X-Japan was popular in Korea, most of the fans were boys, who liked the heavy metal and hard rock sound more than most girls. But the mega star group

SMAP, with its lighter sound and unthreatening, handsome looks, began to dominate the Japanese popular media coverage from the mid 1990s; and as more and more similar male groups became popular in Japan, more and more young Korean girls and women became their big fans. Additionally, the female Japanese pop stars like Amuro Namie and Hamasaki Ayumi became popular not only among Korean boys but also among many young girls and women, who adored these stars' fashion styles and cuteness (which was, it should be noted, more mature than the female teenage idol stars' childish cuteness).

Among the various activities of the fan communities and clubs, buying the CDs and DVDs and downloading music and video files can be relatively easy for most Korean youth in Korea, even though some of devoted fans prefer to buy the original albums made in Japan, which are usually three times more expensive than the Korea-made licensed albums. Japanese pop stars' Korean concerts require serious commitments since the concert tickets can be quite expensive (around US\$ 50 to US\$ 150) and yet, despite the exorbitant cost, are often sold out quickly.

4.4 SUMMARY REMARKS

In this chapter, I have discussed the transitional presence of Japan in Korea by tracing the increasingly direct influence of Japanese popular culture with a particular focus on popular music, during the Open-Door Policy period between 1998 and 2004. During the Open-Door Policy period, cultural interactions between Japan and Korea began to flourish as never before. But in this process of cultural importation, we find contradictory responses in the context of nationalistic attitudes in Korea. Korea's longstanding antagonism toward Japan and fear of being dominated by the powerful Japanese cultural industries became important forces for

negotiating the policy. Since October 1998, under the Kim Dae-Jung government, which emphasized cultural exchanges with foreign countries as a way of developing and globalizing the nation, Korea's economic, foreign, and cultural policies have been extensively modified. The schedule of the Open-Door Policy toward Japan was twice delayed and renegotiated by Korea in response to lingering anti-Japanese sentiment there in relation to political and economic dynamics in Japan, as we saw in the discussion above of the second and third round. First the bilateral fisheries controversy delayed the initiation of the second round, and the re-emergence of the textbook controversy put the process on hold in July 2001, only to resume months later as Korea and Japan successfully collaborated in hosting the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan. And by January 2004 most Japanese popular cultural products, including popular music--which many young Koreans had been anticipating the most--became legal and available in Korea.

During the Open-Door Policy period--the period during which Japan's presence in Korea underwent an especially rapid and marked transition--Japan's image and its meaning to Koreans has indeed gradually changed to a more positive one through the flourishing cultural exchanges, including those in popular music. Furthermore, the main consumers among those young Koreans have taken these newly available cultural products as their hip and cool trends and become devoted fans of Japanese "cuteness," "wildness," and/or "coolness." In the following chapter, "Japan's Newly Sanctioned Presence and Two-Way Traffic," I will discuss Korea's further consumption of Japanese popular music, which has become customary for most Korean youth. Also, I will examine the phenomenon of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) in Japan since 2004, which has not only opened the door for Korean popular cultural flow into Japan, but also contributed toward a reciprocal widening of the doorway for the Japanese popular cultural flow into Korea.

5.0 JAPAN'S NEWLY SANCTIONED PRESENCE AND TWO-WAY TRAFFIC

The primary focus of this chapter is on the new presence of Japan and its popular music in Korea since January 2004, when the implementation of the four stages of the Open-Door Policy was completed. Several important developments that were beginning in the years prior to 2004 bear directly on the situation since and are, therefore, incorporated into this chapter. I begin with a discussion of the Korean music industry overall, from the early 2000s, when it began to fall dramatically, down to the present (2007) as it has developed the digital music market. Korea's rapid growth in this market has attracted Japanese attention, after an initial few years of Japanese neglect. Indeed, over the last few years, the Japanese music industry has become serious about investing in the Korean market and collaborating with the Korean music industry, forming an important and unprecedented context for the presence of Japan in Korea's popular music world. In the second section, I describe the arrival of the Korean Wave²⁷⁴ in Japan in 2004 and the musical activities and marketing strategies evident among some of the popular Korean singers in Japan. Scrutiny of these activities and strategies could, of course, become the focus for a parallel study of the Korean Wave, but here serves the dual purposes of revealing the new importance of popular culture in Korea's nationalist sentiments and setting forth some obvious contrasts with Japanese popular cultural traffic to Korea. The traffic has, in fact, become two-way, but the flow is asymmetrical both with respect to content and consumption. Moreover, the Korean Wave in

²⁷⁴ The Korean Wave (*Hallyu*), as noted previously, refers to the spread of Korean popular culture, especially TV dramas and music, to other Asian countries since the late 1990s.

Japan is an important factor that has influenced the inflow/marketing strategy of Japanese popular cultural industry, including music, on the Korean market. In the third section, I probe into a more complicated strand in the fabric of transnational cultural traffic in popular music--the special qualities of Korean singers popular in Japan (and elsewhere in Asia), who either gained or increased their popularity in Korea only after they successfully launched their music career in Japan, a phenomenon I call “re-importing” Korean Wave from Japan.

5.1 POPULARIZING JAPANESE POP MUSIC

In Korea, Japanese popular music was once an exclusive cultural possession of a limited number of young music lovers during the 1980s and the early 1990s. In the mid 1990s, as other kinds of Japanese popular cultural products, including *anime*, *manga*, computer games, and fashion, became popular among a wider segment of Korean youth than before, Japanese popular music also became more widely consumed. With the monumental change in Korean popular cultural history through the Open-Door Policy toward Japan between 1998 and 2004, Koreans began to explore Japanese popular culture much more freely. Popular music is the last category of Japanese popular cultural product to be permitted by this policy and some of the limitations (including the most critical one, broadcasting) still remain in Korea as of March 2007. However, both the Korean music industry and the Korean audiences seem skilled at finding ways to overcome such limitations, and Japanese popular music is available as never before in Korea. Cable music television shows and CD sales have certainly played an important role, but the CD market in Korea, as in other parts of the contemporary world, as declined, perhaps never to recover. As will be evident below, Korea’s rapid digitalization not only redefined its own music industry, but also is contributing to a strong presence of Japanese popular music there.

5.1.1 Music Industry in the Age of Digitalization: Marketing Strategy, Collaboration, and Competition

The Japanese recording industry had been ten times bigger than the Korean recording industry until 2001 and the gap became even larger as the Korean recording industry began to fall dramatically since then. By 2004, the Korean recording industry was reduced to almost one fourth of what it had once achieved, and continued to fall such that the top selling albums barely reached 200,000 copies in 2006.²⁷⁵ However, the Japanese recording industry has managed to keep its second place in the world behind U.S. with only a slight decrease. Despite the opening process, which finally allowed the Japanese recording industry to legally export CDs to Korea, the Japanese recording industry showed only a moderate interest in expanding their market in Korea. As a relatively small country (some 44 million *vs.*, for example, China's 1.3 billion), sales in Korea would bring relatively little profits to Japan. Besides Korea's small market size for music, the issue of the high percentage of illegal piracy, especially on the internet and p2p (peer to peer file sharing) in Korea caused the Japanese recording industry to limit its investment there. Thus, for the Korean market, the major Japanese recording companies only released CDs of the top singers who had already become popular in Korea, with no specific promotion or marketing strategy being necessary. Without expending much effort, then, these Japanese popular music CDs could still achieve high rankings on the sales charts, but the number of Japanese titles doing so was quite limited. The Korean media's nationalistic and anti-Japan attitude made a quick judgment on the sales results, interpreting them as a Japanese failure, without considering the different music market situations. Also, at the same time, the sudden boom of the Korean Wave

²⁷⁵ <http://www.miak.or.kr/navigator.php?contents=html&usemode=list&DB=117> (accessed January. 12. 2007).

in Japan was more than enough to lead the Korean media and the general public to celebrate it as an unexpected cultural and economic victory.

However, the Japanese music industry's attitude toward Korean music market began to change in 2005 due to the rapid spread of digital usage among consumers in both Korea and Japan. Since the late 1990s Koreans have been at the forefront of internet usage, especially through *PC Bang* ("Computer Rooms"), which have been ubiquitous in Korea. Korean *PC Bang* is similar to a Western internet café but other than soft drinks and light snacks, the atmosphere is more like a computer lab than a café. They are usually open for 24 hours and charge a very small fee (ca. ₩1,000/hour, equivalent to about US\$1/hour). Recently many *PC Bang* offer memberships and reservation services and frequently update their interiors with high-end decoration and the best quality chairs available. In addition to PC Bang, from 2002, Korean household broadband penetration has been the highest per capita in the world and by 2003, 78% of Korean households had broadband internet service.²⁷⁶ Since then, Koreans' consuming behavior has become rapidly digitalized, and it is essential for most kinds of business in Korea to offer both off- and on-line sale service. The music business is certainly no exception, and it has been one of the fastest growing markets as it has joined with many other multi media digitalization, including TV, films, computer/on-line games, mp3 files and players, commercials, and especially mobile services. Since 2003, the mobile music market in Korea has been the most developed of any in the world--a market that includes ringtones, ringtunes, ringbacktunes, and full-track downloads, and that was worth US\$158 million in 2004. This market was more than 50% higher than Japan's ringtone market, which was worth US\$100 million in the same year.²⁷⁷ As the law on internet piracy and illegal file-sharing (which had caused the Korean recording

²⁷⁶ *NIDA Hanguk Intônnet Ch'inhûngwon* (National Internet Development Agency of Korea), see <http://www.nic.or.kr> and <http://isis.nic.or.kr> (accessed January. 10. 2007).

²⁷⁷ "International Federation of the Phonographic Industry" <http://www.ifpi.org/content/library/digital-music-report-2005.pdf> (accessed January. 10. 2007).

industry's collapse since 2002) began to tighten in 2005, the Korean digital music industry, which had began to flourish from 2002, continued to expand.²⁷⁸ At the same time, the Japanese music industry, which was also rapidly digitalizing, began to expand its market in Korea. Although Korea's piracy rate was still higher than Japan's, Korea's piracy rate was actually decreasing and it has recently been much less than most other Asian countries (with the exception of Singapore). As a result, the Japanese music industry has very recently become much more interested in the Korean music market over the long term than in other Asian countries' music markets, such as China, where the piracy rate has been extremely high and continuously increasing.²⁷⁹

Since the middle of 2006, Korean media have speculated that the increasing investment of the Japanese music industry in Korea has not been for the purpose of making profits in Korea itself, but rather to expand its market to the other Asian countries and to amplify their musicians' popularity in Japan as well by using the Korean Wave boom.²⁸⁰ That is, since the Korean Wave has been extremely popular all over the Asia since the late 1990s and in Japan from 2004, Japanese musicians' getting recognition in Korea would help them also to be popular in the rest of the Asia and in Japan itself. While it could be true to some degree, it cannot be the only reason that the Japanese music industry began to make a move. Because most of those Japanese musicians who have visited Korea for promotions and concerts were all top stars in Japan associated with giant entertainment companies, it would seem that they do not need extra help from the booming Korean Wave in order to gain popularity in Japan. Also, although the popularity of Japanese popular culture in the other countries in Asia (starting as early as the late 1970s) was indeed affected by the Korean Wave (especially Korean TV dramas), Japanese

²⁷⁸ "Muryo P2P Pûrogûraem Sunanshidae" (Free P2P Program Suffering Age), *Money Today*, December. 2. 2005.

²⁷⁹ <http://www.ifpi.org/content/library/digital-music-report-2005.pdf> (accessed January. 10. 2007).

²⁸⁰ "Japanese Pop Star Gives Her First Live Show in Korea," *JoongAng Daily*, November. 28. 2006.

popular music is still popular there. Thus, it is difficult to conclude that the Japanese popular cultural industry, including popular music, has been trying to use the Korean Wave as a way to survive.

As I mentioned above, the Japanese popular music industry did not show much interest until 2005. However, as the digital music industry in Korea began to flourish and the market value has been steadily growing since 2002, the Japanese music industry began to collaborate in the digital music market in Korea. Also, more importantly, many Koreans' undying fondness of "Japaneseness" or "Japanese color" (even though up to recently they have been "trying" hard to eliminate it from their land and their souls for almost a century) openly welcomed the influx of Japanese popular culture. This accepting attitude helped the Japanese music industry to feel free and secure to invest and to collaborate more with the Korean music market. As a result, more and more Japanese music industries, including minor labels, began to join the digital music service websites in Korea. The major digital music service websites are joined with or managed by the biggest companies in Korea, including Bugs.co.kr with LG, Soribada.com with Samsung, Melon.com with SK Telecom, and Dosirak.com with KTF. The music service websites offer music from online downloads and online subscriptions to mobile music, and Japanese popular music (listed as *Ilûm/ Ilbonûmak* (lit., "Japanese Music") or J-pop) is usually listed next to Korean popular music (listed as *Kayo*). These digital music service websites offer a single download for around US\$0.50, unlimited streaming/listening for around US\$5, and unlimited downloading for around US\$5 for a month, which usually requires an automatic charge through a mobile phone account. One of the most popular music portal service websites, Bugs.co.kr has licensing deals with Sony-BMG, EMI, Universal, and Warner Music, in addition to various

Korean music labels.²⁸¹ Another popular website, Melon.com's father company SK Telecom has had business partnerships with Japan's KDDI corporation since 1998 ("Kokosai Denshin Denwa Idou," which is the Japanese telecommunication operator and third biggest in the world)²⁸² and with Japan's Toshiba since 2004.²⁸³

Among the major entertainment companies in Korea, SM Entertainment has been the forerunner in collaboration with the Japanese music industry. As I discussed in Chapter Four, SM Entertainment knocked on the door of the Japanese popular music market in 1998 with the female idol trio S.E.S, who could not really achieve major success. However, after S.E.S' failure in Japan, SM Entertainment quickly learned that they needed to collaborate with the Japanese entertainment companies in order to succeed in Japan. The SM Entertainment company itself was established by adopting the Japanese idol star system. In fact, SM Entertainment's management style is almost the same as Johnny's Jimusho's style in Japan except SM Entertainment also produces female idols. For more than a decade, SM Entertainment has been exclusively producing teenage idol stars for teenage audiences and has been very successful in Korea and in China (e.g., with H.O.T). As the Korean domestic market all but collapsed, SM Entertainment began to expand its marketing elsewhere in Asia.²⁸⁴ Drawing on the case of S.E.S as a good lesson, SM Entertainment began to put full force on the Japanese music market with a careful plan and established SM Japan in January 2001.²⁸⁵ Thus, it was no accident when SM Entertainment could successfully bring about the teenage girl BoA's major debut in Japan in 2001 (after her Korean debut, which had been a rather insignificant one). Before her debut in

²⁸¹ http://info.bugs.co.kr/company/music_copyright.asp (accessed January. 10. 2007).

²⁸² <http://www.kddi.com/> (accessed February. 12. 2007).

²⁸³ <http://www.sktelecom.com/> (accessed February. 10. 2007).

²⁸⁴ For more account on H.O.T's popularity in China, see Rowan Pease's "Internet, Fandom, and K-Wave in China," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 176-189.

²⁸⁵ http://www.smtown.com/ir/aboutsm_04.aspx (accessed February. 9. 2007).

Japan, SM Entertainment made deals with not only the most powerful music label company in Japan AVEX but also the most powerful show/comedy entertainment company Yoshimoto Group and the most popular entertainment site Fandango Japan (a joint venture by KDDI and Yoshimoto Group).²⁸⁶ As a result, BoA was able not only to make a major debut in Japan, but also to keep appearing on various music and variety TV shows and garner many TV commercial deals in Japan.

The other major entertainment company in Korea, YG Entertainment (also known as Yang Gun Family/YG Family, which means Mr. Yang's family) has been rather more active in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia than Japan until recently. YG Entertainment was established in 1996 by Yang Hyun-Sôk, who was a member of the group Seo Taiji and Boys. (He was one of the Boys mainly dancing.) Based on his own musical interest, YG Entertainment has been focused on the musical genres hip-hop and R&B. It created a good image as a music-focused entertainment company through a family-like management of the musicians. The most successful singer produced by YG Entertainment has been a young male singer Se7en, who debuted in 2003 in Korea. After having a showcase concert in Japan in 2003, Se7en was scouted by one of the major music label companies in Japan, Unlimited, which has mainly managed rock genre musicians, including X-Japan, GLAY, and Sophia.²⁸⁷ For Se7en, who is an R&B dance genre singer, Unlimited has created a sub-label, Nexter Corporation, and supported his career in Japan since February 2005.²⁸⁸ In May 2005, Se7en's Korean management company YG

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ See Unlimited's official website at <http://www.m-up.com/index.html> (accessed February. 11. 2007).

²⁸⁸ "Sebûn Il Sosoksa, Chônpojôgin Sebûn Milgi" (Se7en's Japanese Management Company, Supporting Se7ven with Full Force), *Chosun Ilbo*, May. 23. 2005.

Entertainment opened an official Japanese website, YG Family-Japan, and planned to establish a branch, YG-Japan, in Tokyo in order to collaborate further with Unlimited.²⁸⁹

It is important to emphasize that, in the midst of these many Korea-Japanese music industry collaborations, performances by Japanese singers and groups on Korean TV and the broadcasting of Japanese music TV programs are still banned from the regular terrestrial TV stations; only cable channels can broadcast Japanese popular music. Despite the limited resources, the cable music channels' Japanese popular music programs (on Mnet, MTV Korea, Channel [V] Korea), which play the Japanese singers' and groups' promotion videos, have continued to be popular. Moreover, a special cable channel, DCN media's *Channel J*, was established in 2004 in Korea and has been exclusively broadcasting Japanese dramas, sports, variety shows, and music programs (mainly playing music videos) for Korean viewers. According to *Channel J*'s viewer's opinion survey conducted on February 2006, 62.71% viewers wanted to see more dramas and 25.54% viewers wanted more music programs.²⁹⁰ DCN media has been affiliated with Japanese TV stations, including NHK, Fuji TV, TV Asahi, and TBS. Moreover, it joined with Dreambuild Entertainment and Prossmedia in Japan for technical cooperation.²⁹¹

Thus, it is clear that as the Korean digital music market began to thrive because of the rapid changes in Koreans' consuming behavior--from watching conventional TV programs and buying CDs to watching, listening, buying, and using popular music more freely and extensively--Korean and Japanese music industries' collaborations and competition began to increase as well.

²⁸⁹“YG Entertainment Yang Hyun-Sôk Taepyu, YG pyo Hipap Segyemudaesô Sungbu” (YG Entertainment's CEO Yang Hyun-Sôk, YG Brand's Hip Hop Kicking Off at the World Stage), *Herald Economy*, December. 21. 2006.

²⁹⁰ <http://www.channelj.co.kr/poll/view.asp?idx=4&gotopage=&block=> (accessed January. 10. 2007).

²⁹¹ “Channel J, Ilbon Chônmun HD Pangsong 12ilbutô Sijak” (Channel J, Special Japanese Channel Starts HD Broadcasting from 12th), *Joynews*, February. 05. 2007.

5.1.2 Normalizing the Consumption of Japanese Popular Music

How is Japanese popular culture becoming part of Korean life? A list of activities could include the following: watching Japanese TV dramas, listening to Japanese popular music, eating Japanese *yakiniku* (Japanese style Korean BBQ) and *kamameshi* (Japanese style Korean hot-stone-pot rice), reading Japanese *manga* and novels, wearing Japanese brand cloths and cosmetics, imitating Japanese stars' fashion, hair styles, and makeup styles, singing Japanese popular songs at Japanese popular music-only *karaoke* halls, watching old and new Japanese TV clips through the internet, collecting Japanese character goods, becoming adoring fans of *anime*, playing Japanese computer games and catching some Japanese words, subscribing to Japanese magazines, going to Japanese popular music concerts and fan meetings (also welcoming them at the airport), chatting and gossiping about Japanese stars with friends, using Japanese words in casual conversation, visiting Japan over the weekend, and much more. This is not a comprehensive list, but merely a sampling; the list could go on and on. All of these activities have become especially common among young Koreans, and many of them feel that consuming Japanese popular culture is nothing to be afraid of or ashamed of. More and more Koreans seem to think that they should not discriminate against Japanese culture only because it is Japanese. Furthermore, the unconditionally antagonistic attitude toward things Japanese so prominent in Korean discourse about Japan has recently begun to be criticized by many Koreans, who believe that the political and historical conflicts between the two countries should be separated from their cultural consumption and/or individual contacts. As Korea has become culturally more developed and confident, fair competition with Japan has become more welcomed than before, and this has naturally led to a gradual increase in the number and frequency of Japanese artists' visits to Korea.

After Amuro Namie's first Korean concert in May 2004, Japanese top singers' and groups' showcase performances, fan meetings, and concerts in Korea have followed one after another. In August 2004, the popular Japanese rock-band Bump of Chicken had their first Korean concert at the live club Soundholic and also participated in the Busan International Rock Festival, held at the Pusan Dadaepo Beach.²⁹² In December of the same year, the band returned to Seoul for their second concert at the popular standing concert hall in Seoul, Rolling Hall, and for their third Korean concert at the Fashion Center Event Hall in Seoul in March 2006.²⁹³ In November 2004, the female ballad duo Kiroro had their first Korean concert and returned in January 2005 to participate in "Super Live in Seoul" sponsored by the Embassy of Japan in Korea, where the male R&B duo Chemistry (one of the official Japanese singers for 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan) and the male dance group Da Pump also performed.²⁹⁴



Figure 5.1 Japanese rock band Bump of Chicken (left) and female ballad duo Kiroro (right)

²⁹² "Yôrûm Ch'ukje Chôngbo" (Summer Festival Information), *Ohmynews*, August. 2. 2004.

²⁹³ "Il Lokbaendû Bômput Obû Ch'ikin Sebônche Naehan Kongyôn" (Japanese Rock Band, Bump of Chicken's Third Korean Concert), *Chosun Ilbo*, January. 19. 2006.

²⁹⁴ http://www.kr.emb-japan.go.jp/rel/r_friendship/r_friend_050204_1.htm; [www. Superliveinseoul.com](http://www.Superliveinseoul.com) (accessed January. 10. 2007).

In December 2004, the popular hip hop duo m-flo had their first Korean concert. Because of their increasing popularity in Korea, the band returned in December 2005 for their second concert (programmed by SM Entertainment) at the Seoul Sheraton Walkerhill Vista Hall, where their former member Lisa and other Japanese musicians also joined in.²⁹⁵ Their second concert, titled “m-flo Tour 2005: m-flo loves KOREA,” was divided into a two-hour concert from 10 pm to midnight and the dance party from midnight to 5 am.²⁹⁶



Figure 5.2 Japanese hip-hop duo m-flo's press conference in Korea (December. 17. 2005)

In January 2005, the Japanese *a cappella* group The Gospellers had their first Korean concert, “The Gospellers Asia Tour G10 in Seoul,” to promote their tenth anniversary album *G10*.²⁹⁷ In April, the college-rock/folk-rock/rock band Spitz, which has been a regular visitor since 2001 for small concerts, had bigger concerts in both Seoul and Busan.²⁹⁸ The band has

²⁹⁵ “Empûllo, Kungnae Ingi Pokbal, Naehangongyôn Tiket Dongna” (m-flo, Korean Concert Blowing up Popularity, the Tickets Were Sold Out), *Mydaily News*, December. 13. 2005.

²⁹⁶ “Il Ingi Hipagûrup Empûllo” (Popular Japanese Hip Hop Group m-flo), *Chosun Ilbo*, December. 16. 2005.

²⁹⁷ “Hwaje ui Kongyông, Ilbon Bokôl Kûrup Kosûperajû Naehangongyôn” (Topic on the Special Concert, Japanese Vocal Group, The Gospellers’ Korean Concert), *Donga*, January. 1. 2005; “Il Bokôl Kûrup Kosûperajû, 10junyônginyôm Kongyon Sôulsô (“Japanese Vocal Group, The Gospellers’ 10th Anniversary Concert in Seoul), *Herald Economy*, January. 19. 2005.

²⁹⁸ “J-Pop Atistû, Lokbaendû Sûpich’û” (J-Pop Artist, Rock Band Spitz), *Herald Economy*, May. 11. 2006.

been known as one of the most important rock bands in Japan since the late 1980s, and all of their albums were released in January 2004 in Korea.²⁹⁹



Figure 5.3 Japanese *a cappella* group, The Gospellers's 2004 album cover, *G10* (left) and the college-rock/rock band Spitz's photo (right)

In September 2005, one of the most popular rock bands since the late 1990s, L'Arc-en-Ciel had their first Korean concert at the Seoul Olympic Park Dome, as a part of their Asian tour "Awake Tour 2005."³⁰⁰ The band has been one of the three most popular rock bands (with X-Japan and GLAY) in Korea, and their concert has been one of the most anticipated concerts for many Korean music fans. In their interview with one Korean newspaper, the band said that they

²⁹⁹ http://www.changgo.com/past/jj_plus/20010531/plus02.htm (accessed January. 10. 2007).

³⁰⁰ "L'Arc-en-Ciel Kongyôn Tamûn DVD Ch'ulsi" (L'Arc-en-Ciel's Concert DVD on Sale), *Sport Chosun*, April. 13. 2006.

were so surprised to see so many fans at the airport because they thought it would be less crowded than Japan.³⁰¹



Figure 5.4 Japanese rock/visual rock band L'Arc-en-Ciel's photo (left) and their concert photo, "Awake Tour 2005" in Korea (right)

In January 2006, the top Japanese visual rock singer Gackt had his first Korean concert at the Seoul Olympic Park Dome (the tickets cost around US\$100), which he had planned for a year as he learned the Korean language.³⁰² Unlike most Japanese singers and groups, he has provided a more “localized” service for the Korean fans. Besides learning Korean for use in his the concert, Gackt produced a special Korean version of his album, “Love Letter for Korean

³⁰¹ “Il Lokbaendû Larûkû-ang-Siel” (Japanese Rock Band L’Arc-el-Ciel), *Chosun Ilbo*, September. 2. 2005.

³⁰² *Music Station*, aired in January 2006.

Dears,” in June 2005.³⁰³ Although his effort on the Korean-version album was well received by the Korean fans and by the Korean popular media in general, the sales of the Korean version were actually *less* successful in Korea than the original Japanese versions of his other albums. Nevertheless, Gackt became known as one of the few “chihanpa” (Korea-loving) Japanese pop stars, and his popularity has increased even more in Korea as he shows special treatment for the Korean fans. In January 2007, more fluent in Korean language than previously, Gackt returned to Korea for his second Korean concert at the MelOn-AX, the first popular music concert hall in Korean, which was built in June 2006 in collaboration with the Shibuya-AX in Japan.³⁰⁴ The 3600 concert tickets (around US\$ 70) were sold out within 30 minutes.³⁰⁵



Figure 5.5 Japanese visual rock singer, Gackt's first Korean concert photos (January, 2006)

³⁰³ “Il Lokgasu Kaktû, Naehangongyônjung Silsin” (Japanese Rock Singer Gackt, Passed Out during the Concert), *Sport Chosun*, January. 14. 2006.

³⁰⁴ “Kaktû, Hangukgwa Ilbon Kajokch’ôrôm Chinassûmyôn” (Gackt, Hoping Korea and Japan Being Closer), *Mydaily*, January. 20. 1007.

³⁰⁵ “Ilbon Lokgasu Kaktû Tubônchae Naehangongyôn” (Japanese Rock Singer Gackt the Second Korean Concert), *Segye Ilbo*, January. 26. 2007.

On November 11-12, 2006, the top Japanese male idol band Arashi had their first Korean concert. Without having any promotion, the 12,000 concert tickets (around US\$ 90) sold out within one hour, and the internet ticket sale server (*Interpark*) went down as more than 200,000 people tried to connect at the same time.³⁰⁶ Their new album cover created a controversy on their use of the world map, which indicated the sea between the two countries as the Sea of Japan, which Koreans have been arguing against and indicate instead as the East Sea (i.e., to the east of Korea). However, this politically problematic issue that their album had revived did not have impact on the Korean fan support for the Japanese pop stars. Their concert was evaluated as one of the most successful concerts of 2006 in Korea and the group has continued to release their songs in Korea.³⁰⁷



Figure 5.6 Popular Japanese male idol band, Arashi (2006, left) and female idol singer, Koto Maki's Korean concert photo (2006, right)

³⁰⁶ “Arashi, Hanguk Kongyôn” (Arashi, the First Korean Concert), *My Daily*, October. 19. 2006.

³⁰⁷ “Il Kûrup Arasi, 3wôl 7il 18bôntchae Singûl Kungnaebalmae” (Japanese Group Arashi, March 7th Released the 18th Singles in Korea), *Money Today*, February. 20. 2007.

Only a few days later, on November 19, the top female idol star Koto Maki had her first Korean concert at the newly opened MelOn-AX.³⁰⁸ She had released a couple of Korean-language versions of her Japanese hit songs, including “Thank You Memories,” on her recent album for Korean fans, and she also studied Korean for a few months for her concert in Korea.³⁰⁹ She has become one of the most popular Japanese female singers in Korea since then. Koto Maki’s outstanding presentation of Japanese “cuteness” with subtle sexiness has been well received by many young Korean boys.

In addition to all these Japanese top singers and groups, more and more Japanese popular musicians have begun to show serious interest in the Korean music market. While the Korean popular music concerts have been struggling with low ticket sales, most of the Japanese popular musicians’ concerts have been quite successful in Korea since 2004, and more concerts have been scheduled, including the hardcore rapper Zeebra’s all night hip-hop party concert on March 17, 2007.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ “Koto Maki Chôt Naehangongyôn, Kûnyômamui Kkamtchikan Insabôp” (Koto Maki The First Korean Concert, Her Way of Greeting Super Cute), *Newsen*, November. 20. 2006.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ “Il Hipap Taebu Chibûra Ch’ôt Naehangongyôn” (Japanese Hip-Hop Legend, Zeebra’s First Korean Concert), *Newsis*, March. 10. 2007.



Figure 5.7 Japanese hardcore rapper, Zebra's photos (2006)

As we can see from the case of Gackt, Korean fans' preference for the original "Japanese language" version over the "Koreanized" version clearly indicates that the Korean audiences indeed have become familiar not only with the musical sounds but also with the Japanese language of the song lyrics. To put this another way, many Korean consumers of Japanese popular music have become more and more comfortable with the "Japaneseness," "Japanese sound," and "Japanese color." In addition to the long list of Japanese popular music concerts, many Japanese popular songs, movies, and TV dramas have been remade in Korea since 2004. Since it has recently become quite difficult to pirate, the Korean entertainment industry has begun to buy (but quietly) the original resources from Japan and simply use them. Although some Koreans have quickly discovered the fact that the original resources are Japanese, most Koreans have not recognized the Korean industry's copying or borrowing, as the industry itself does not usually acknowledge such activities explicitly (e.g., through labeling). More importantly, more and more Korean audiences have begun to care little about Korean copying since so many popular cultural products have been influenced, remade, copied, adapted from Japanese cultural products, or resulted from collaborations with Japanese artists. In other words, the postmodern conditions of deterritorialization and lack of concern with authenticity and

origins is evident in Korea in this era following the lifting of the ban on Japanese popular cultural products.

5.2 SURPRISING TURN, KOREAN WAVE IN JAPAN

5.2.1 Winter Sonata Syndrome

In the last few years, much has been written in the popular press about the so-called Korean Wave (*Hallyu*), which refers to the exporting of Korean cultural forms, particularly popular TV dramas and popular music, to other countries in Asia. CDs and VCDs by many of Korea's mainstream pop singers have been widely available in East Asia, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, and in Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.³¹¹ Indeed, it would seem that, after more than a century of intensive cultural influences—including the introduction of Western music in the late nineteenth century, the imposition of Japanese music and language during the first half of the twentieth century, and the flood of American popular cultural influences following the Korean War—the flow of cultural traffic is finally moving in the other direction.

In April 2003, the popular Korean TV drama, *Kyôul Yôn'ga* (lit., “Winter Song,” usually rendered in English as “Winter Sonata,” first broadcast in January 2002 in Korea), was first

³¹¹ In Indonesia, for example, Korean serial dramas and MTV Korea's “Kayozine” (featuring Korean pop exclusively) are broadcast regularly. As of 2006, *Bintang*, the Indonesian weekly TV and pop culture tabloid, devotes two pages per issue to Korean celebrities (pop music singers and TV drama stars). See “Hanguk ui Biboie Yôlgwanhan Indonesia” (Indonesia's Wild Enthusiasm on Korean B-Boys), *Chejusarang News*, December. 3. 2006.

broadcast by NHK's BS2 channel in early 2003 in Japan and rebroadcast by NHK four times: in December 2003, April through August 2004, and December 2004.³¹²



Figure 5.8 Korean TV drama *Kyôul Yôn'ga's* main actor Bae Yong-Joon and main actress Choi Ji-woo's photo in the Japanese version title photo, *Fuyu no Sonata* ("Winter Sonata") by NHK (2003)

The drama (Japanese title: *Fuyu no Sonata*) had become tremendously popular in Japan by spring 2004. The main actor, Bae Yong-Joon, has become a superstar in Japan, where he is known as *Yon-sama* ("Sir Yon") and has created the *Yon-sama Phenomenon* (and the *Yon-Fluenza*), especially among middle-age women.³¹³ A large number of them were touched by the love story. As of August 2004, 330,000 sets of the DVDs (or videos) of the drama were sold (over US\$ 100 millions), and the drama's original sound track sold more than 690,000 copies, making it the second most successful drama in Japanese TV history.³¹⁴ Countless products related to the drama and *Yon-sama* were also created, including photo albums, jewelry, costume sets (wigs, eyeglasses, and scarves for man, all of which supposedly transform them to the *Yon-*

³¹² The drama recorded a spectacular 20.6% program rating. See Ham Han-Hee and Hu In-Soon. *Kyôul Yôn'gawa Nabi Hwantaji (Winter Sonata and Butterfly Fantasy)*. (Seoul: Sowha, 2005) p. 13.

³¹³ He was selected as one of the top hit products of the first half of the year in Japan and became a model for SONY electronics.

³¹⁴ "Fuyu no Sonata to Hallyu Bumu" (Winter Sonata and The Korean Wave), NHK, September. 2004.

sama look), dreaming machines (which help them to see *Yon-sama* in their dreams), *Joon-Bear*, and many more.



Figure 5.9 Bae Yong-Joon's first official product, *Joon-Bear* (2005, left) and his photo on the cover of Japanese magazine, *Stars Korea* (2005, right)

The *Joon-Bear*, produced by *Yon-sama*'s Japan management company IMX as the first official product of Bae Yong-Joon, was sold only through the internet, on February 1, 2005.³¹⁵ The 5000 *Joon-Bear*, handmade teddy bears wearing the *Yon-sama*-style eyeglasses and scarves and autographed (in English) by *Yon-sama* on the left foot, were around US\$300 a piece, and they were sold out within 6 minutes.³¹⁶ The fever of *Fuyu no Sonata* and *Yon-sama* was all over the Japanese popular media, and many special TV programs about the drama and the actor were made. The plot, the main characters' relationships in the drama, the main actors and actresses,

³¹⁵ “Yonsama Kominyông 1gae 30 Manwôn” (Yon-sama Teddy Bear US\$ 300 per One), *Chosun Ilbo*, January. 24. 2005.

³¹⁶ “30 Manwônchari Yonsama Kominyông” (US\$ 300 Worth Yon-sama Teddy Bear), *Maeil Business News*, February. 7. 2005.

featured places and items, and fashion styles were analyzed in detail on TV and radio programs, in books, magazines, and newspapers. All this coverage clearly stimulated the popular media market in Japan.

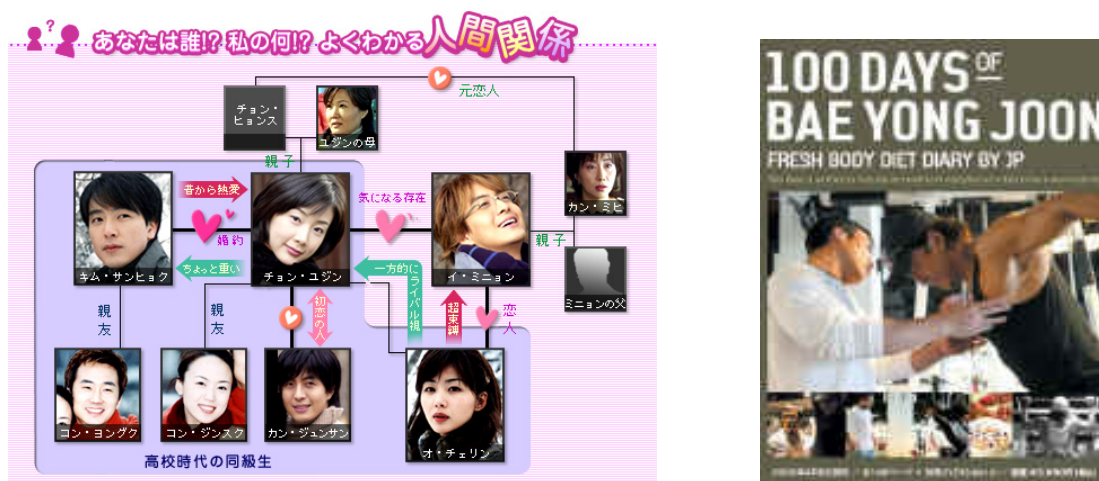


Figure 5.10 Diagram of the characters' love relationships in the TV drama "Winter Sonata" shown in the music TV program *Utaban* (TBS) in Japan (2004, left) and the Japanese book cover of Bae Yong-Joon's diet diary, *100 Days of Bae Yong Joon* (August, 2005, right)

The most devoted fans not only followed him around in Japan and Korea but also booked rooms at the same hotel and seats on the same flights. Numerous websites were created about the drama, the actors, and the fans, where many middle-age Japanese women could share their stories of memories and the love that they felt missing from their lives, which were realized by the love story. Many Japanese women's increasing interests in Korea led the boom of learning about Korea and Korean culture. The impact of the *Yon-sama Phenomenon* on the Japanese fans and their changing views on Korea were taken seriously by the Japanese media. The title of an article from December 4, 2004 in *Yomiuri* newspaper was taken from the fans' message posted

on an internet fanzine, “The one person, *Yon-sama*, has achieved what more than 100 Korean ambassadors in Japan could not.”³¹⁷

5.2.2 Korean Wave in Japan

The Korean Wave in Japan (or also known as *Hallyu Boom* or *Kankoku Boom* in Japan) was seen as a sudden explosion spearheaded by the drama *Winter Sonata*'s popularity especially among middle-aged Japanese women. The fan base in Japan is quite different from most other Asian countries, where the Korean Wave first arrived a few years earlier and usually won popularity primarily among the young people. However, as the Korean Wave has spread over the last ten years, the boundaries of consumer age groups have become difficult to identify. Thus, it should be noted that the term “Korean Wave” (or *Haliu*, *Hallyu*, and *Hanryu*) has become extremely vague, and its implication can be very different case by case and depending on one's position.

Although there had been some popular Korean movies shown in Japan from 2000 (including the sensationally popular *Shwiri*), and the two countries' co-hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan led to some cultural exchanges between the two countries, the TV drama *Winter Sonata* was the phenomenon that had the greatest impact on the Japanese public, going beyond its economic impact on both countries' cultural industry. Indeed, many Japanese middle-age female fans expressed how the drama and the actor *Yon-sama*'s caring and gentle manner along with his physical charm had changed their prejudices about Korea and Koreans.³¹⁸ Their feelings of superiority over the Korean race, with roots in the colonial period and persisting

³¹⁷ Ham Han-Hee and Hu In-Soon. *Kyôul Yôn'gawa Nabi Hwantaji (Winter Sonata and Butterfly Fantasy)* (Seoul: Sowha, 2005) p. 169.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 24-41.

down to the present, have now eased as people have begun to change their attitudes.³¹⁹ Their deep-seated prejudices against Korea and the Korean people have given way to a widespread appreciation of things Korean. This change has also benefited Japanese who are related to things Korean (through jobs, relationship, education), as being “Korean” has become a kind of good thing and even enviable. For example, the top Japanese group SMAP’s member Kusanagi Tsuyoshi, who had been less popular than the other four members, had a big break in Japan in 2004. When Kusanagi Tsuyoshi started to learn Korean after he was inspired by the Korean movie *Shwiri* (shown in 2000 in Japan) and started the TV program *Cho Nan Gang* in 2001 (Fuji TV, currently titled as *Cho Nan Gang 2*), not many Japanese even knew that such a program existed. However, as the Korean Wave hit Japan in 2004, anything related to Korea, including the language, became very popular among the Japanese fans. Thus, his popularity has rapidly risen in Japan because he has been the forerunner in learning and introducing Korea and its popular culture to Japanese through the show.

³¹⁹ “Fuyu no Sonata to Hallyu Bumu” (Winter Sonata and The Korean Wave), NHK, aired September. 2004.

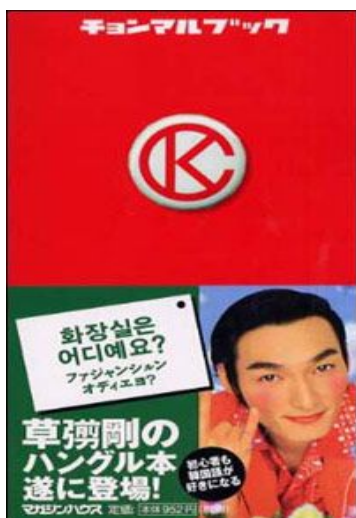


Figure 5.11 Kusanagi Tsuyoshi's Korean learning book, *Chomaru-Buku* (lit., "Real/True-Book," 2002, left) and his photo at the First Seoul Drama Awards (August, 2006, right)

His publication of the Korean learning book, *Chomaru-buku* (lit., "Real/True-Book," *Chôngmal Buk* in Korean) became a best seller, and he was even invited as a guest speaker to an academic conference on the Korean Wave held in Japan.³²⁰ His growing popularity in Korea since his debut there in 2002 helped him to gain more popularity in Japan as the Korean Wave started in 2004. Since then he has become the most popular Japanese star in relation to the Korean Wave in Japan, and his continuous efforts to introduce Korea and its popular culture have been very well received as well by Korean fans and the Korean media. In August 2006, Kusanagi Tsuyoshi was invited to the First Seoul Drama Awards in Korea as an award recipient, and he stressed his promise to keep working on arrangements for cultural exchanges between the two countries.³²¹

³²⁰ *SMAPxSMAP*, Fuji TV, 2004.

³²¹ "Cho Nan-Gang, Momgwa Maûmûl Tabach'yo Han-Il Kyoryue Himssô" (Cho Nan-Gang/Kusanagi Tsuyoshi, Will Try the Best for the Korea-Japan Exchange), *Joynews*, Sugust. 29. 2006.

Before the *Yon-sama Phenomenon/Fuyu no Sonata Syndrome*, the teenage pop singer BoA's major success in Japan was considered to be a single victory within the realm of popular music. And, for some time, her success was not viewed as an extension of the Korean Wave happening in other Asian countries. In countries like Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China, where various Korean pop stars were popular along with TV dramas and other popular cultural products, the Korean Wave has not been limited to a single cultural genre but included diverse cultural products (although some genres might be more popular than the others).³²² However, in 2004 as the Korean Wave or *Yon-sama Phenomenon/Fuyu no Sonata Syndrome* took place in Japan, the Korean popular media began to emphasize BoA as a pioneer of the Korean Wave in Japan since she was very successful in Japan at that time. But as the Korea Wave arrived in Japan, the Japanese popular media began to focus on her nationality and to hold her up as a forerunner of the Korean Wave in Japan. The change of Japan's attitude towards Korea can also be seen in awareness of BoA's national identity. Until then BoA's Korean nationality was not the center of attention in Japan, as her management companies (AVEX and SM Entertainment) tended to avoid the fact and tried to promote her image as a Japanese pop singer (or as an "Asian" singer). SM Entertainment provided her with intensive training in Japan before her debut in Japan, so that she could be fluent in Japanese by the time of her Japanese debut. Thus, even a few years after her debut, some Japanese thought that she was Japanese not only because of her fluent Japanese but also her songs and styles which were just like those of other Japanese singers. On the other hand, BoA's "de-Koreanized" or "Japanized" musical career, beginning from her debut in Japan, has often been criticized by many Koreans in Korea, even though most

³²² For more account on the Korean Wave in China and Taiwan, see Rowan Pease's "Internet, Fandom, and K-Wave in China" and Sung Sang-Yeon's "The Hanliu Phenomenon in Taiwan: TV Dramas and Teenage Pop" in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 176-189 and pp. 168-175.

Korean media showed strong support for her success, since she was *the* product of *the* entertainment company in Korea, SM Entertainment.



Figure 5.12 Korean singer BoA's photos from Japanese music TV (left: 2004, right: 2006)

In Korea, BoA's popularity has been a direct result of her success in Japan (as she has mainly been in Japan), and many Koreans know about the SM Entertainment's highly calculated strategy. However, among the young teenagers BoA has been very popular and her success in Japan has always been the center of the Korean popular media's attention, which became more intense as the Korean Wave in Japan started. In any case, BoA (or more correctly both AVEX and SM Entertainment) did not seem to mind the direction of the media coverage of her as a pioneer of the Korean Wave in Japan, since such media attention on her would only increase her fame in Japan and in Korea as well. During 2004, BoA was often asked to speak some Korean

words with other Korean music guests, including Ryu and Park Yong-Ha, when they were invited to appear on music TV shows.³²³ The hosts of the TV shows often asked BoA about differences between Korea and Japan, since she was active in both countries.³²⁴ Also, since then she often talked about her friendships with other Korean top stars, including *Yon-sama* (she told at the TV program *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ* that she often met him at the hair salon where he often goes). As her nationality became a part of her popularity in Japan to a certain extent BoA has been widely publicized as the most successful Korean Wave singer in Japan by the both countries' popular media, even though she has always been a Japanese pop singer, singing Japanese songs in Japanese, being managed by a Japanese management company in every detail, and spending most of her time in Japan.

The impact of the *Yon-sama Phenomenon* on the Japanese popular music scene is not limited to the case of BoA's. As of October 12, 2004, the original soundtrack album of the "Winter Sonata" had sold over 1 million copies in Japan, breaking records.³²⁵ The drama's unparalleled success indeed brought new opportunities for Korean singers and actors. For example, the singer Ryu, who was barely known in Korea at that time, was frequently televised in Japan singing "Ch'ôûmbut'ô Chigûmkkaji" ("From the First Time until Now"), the main theme song of the drama.³²⁶ The other main male actor in the drama, Park Yong-Ha, a singer/actor who was not so popular in Korea at that time, became very popular in Japan. He became known in Japan as *Yongha-chan* (adding the term of endearment "chan" to his given name), based on his cute and soft image and manner. Although both Ryu and Park Yong-Ha obtained career opportunities in Japan because of the drama's success, their careers in Japan became quite different. While Park Yong-Ha was able to launch a successful musical career in

³²³ *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ*, Fuji TV, August. 2004.

³²⁴ *Utaban*, TBS, February. 2006.

³²⁵ <http://www.oricon.co.jp/index.html> (accessed February. 21. 2006)

³²⁶ *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ*, Fuji TV, August. 2004.

Japan as he was supported by a significant number of devoted middle-age female fans in Japan, Ryu could not reach out further after the extreme popularity of the drama itself had faded. Beside the singing skill (which was quite good), Ryu had not much to offer for either countries' entertainment markets.



Figure 5.13 Korean singer Ryu's photo (2004, left) and Park Yong-Ha's Japan concert photo (August, 2005, right)

On the other hand, Park Yong-Ha began to focus on his musical career in Japan rather than the acting career, as he became managed by a Japanese management company (affiliated with Pony Canon). His album, *Kibyôl* (lit., "Expected Farewell," June 2004) rose to the fourth place on the *Oricon* chart and the top of the HMV weekly sales chart.³²⁷ In August 2005, he

³²⁷ "Park Yong-Ha, Oricon 4wui" (Park Yong-Ha, The Fourth Place of the *Oricon* Chart), *Sport Today*, Junn. 28. 2004.

became the first Korean Wave star in Japan to have a concert at the Butokan (the most famous and respected Japanese concert hall). The 18,000 concert tickets were sold out within 30 minutes. In December 2005, he released his new song “Truth,” composed by the famous Japanese singer Tamaki Koji (the leader of the group, Anzenchitai, one of the most popular Japanese groups in Korea since the 1980s) after he announced on a music TV program that he has been respecting Tamaki Koji and his music. In June 2006 his concert DVD went to number one on the daily sales chart; and in September 2006 his single “Kimiga Saiko” (lit., “You’re the Best”) reached number two on the *Oricon* daily chart. He has won the New Artist of the Year (2005, in the international category), the Song of the Year (2006), and Japan-Korea Friendship Year Special Award (2006) at the Japan Gold Disc Awards in Japan.³²⁸

His success in Japan as a ballad singer has been rather different from BoA’s. While it is questionable as to whether even to include BoA as a part of the Korean Wave in Japan only because of her nationality, Park Yong-Ha’s success has been directly related to the Korean Wave in Japan from the very beginning. As he successfully created his image as cute, sexy, kind, and approachable at the same time through popular music variety TV programs like *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ* and *Utaban*, his fans seemed to extend to younger Japanese women.

5.3 KOREAN WAVE VS. JAPANESE WAVE IN KOREA

While the Korean media and even the Korean government were busy blowing their horns and making new plans to support the Korean Wave outside Korea, the rapidly growing presence of Japan in the domestic popular cultural life of Korea in the mean time was mostly ignored or

³²⁸ <http://www.riaj.or.jp/e/data/gdisc/2006.html> (accessed January. 15. 2007).

unrecognized until very recently. In 2004, as the economic results of the Korean Wave in Japan became undeniably significant, the Korean government began to support many projects on expanding the Korean Wave boom in Asia. However, as the Korean Wave seems to have lost steam as of late 2006, the Korean media have begun again to pay attention to the domestic market and to warn the Korean public and the domestic cultural industry about the threat of renewed cultural invasion by Japan. In the following section, I briefly discuss some characteristics and forms of the Korean Wave within the context of the popular music in Japan and the newly raised conflicts in Korea as the waves of Japanese popular culture resurge into Korea.

5.3.1 Repackaged Korean Wave in Japan

It is important to note that the nature of Korean popular musical presence in Japan is categorically different from the Japanese popular musical presence in Korea. In most cases, Korean pop music undergoes a process of what I call “repackaging” by both Japanese and Korean music industries, rendering it, while not completely “de-Koreanized,” substantially “Japanized.” Most of the Korean singers who have built successful musical careers in Japan, including BoA and Park Yong-Ha, have done so by singing Japanese songs, in Japanese, for the Japanese audiences. They are produced by Japanese writers and their careers in Japan are managed by Japanese management companies. Besides the fact of their national identity, nothing in their music or public image indicates their Korean identity. In contrast, Japanese pop music is imported and consumed in Korea mostly “as is,” suggesting that Korean audiences relish new Japanese sounds and images in ways that are not reciprocated as Japanese encounter pop from Korea. These interactions have created (and continued to create) multi-layered popular music cultural flows between Korea and Japan.

Besides BoA (who is essentially a Japanese pop singer/dancer) and Park Yong-Ha (who sings ballad-style Japanese pop, but whose Korean identity is very clear because of his direct connection to the Korean drama and whose career in Japan has been a rather natural one, supported by his Japanese fans first), Korean singer-actors attempt to build their music careers in Japan by using the Korean Wave in Japan as an access card. At the early stage of the Korean Wave in Japan, almost every one of the Korean singer-actors was related to the Korean TV dramas as actors or actresses in the dramas or as singers of the title song. The most successful example has been male singer-actor Ryu Si-Won. He was able to achieve fame in Japan through the drama *Arûmdaun Naldûl* (lit., “Beautiful Days”) which aired in Japan in 2005, with him playing one of the main characters. The drama’s success provided him with an opportunity to extend his career in Japan as a ballad singer. Based on the drama’s popularity and the booming Korean Wave in Japan, his song “Sakura” (“Cherry blossom”) was especially well received. In 2005, Ryu Si-Won, affiliated with the Sony Music Association in Japan, won the New Artist of the Year (domestic category) at the Japan Gold Disc Awards.³²⁹ Although he had already established his career in Korea as an actor-singer, his new success in Japan as a singer helped him to revive his popularity in Korea. As his career demonstrates, the assumption of many Koreans, which has been based on their inferiority complex from the colonial experience and Japan’s powerful modern economy, led them to believe that “Japanese” products must be good or better than “Korean” products. As a result, gaining fame and success in Japan has often been more respected by many Koreans than achieving fame and success in the domestic market or in other foreign countries (with the exception of America, though Korean successes there have been rare).

³²⁹ <http://www.riaj.or.jp/e/data/gdisc/2006.html> (accessed January. 16. 2007).

5.3.2 Re-Importing the Korean Wave from Japan

There are a few new Korean singers, including Younha and K, who have made their major debuts in Japan as Japanese pop singers, and then become known in Korea. Unlike the other Korean singers active in Japan, such as BoA, Park Yong-Ha, and Ryu Si-Won, these Koreans are not related to the popular Korean TV dramas in Japan. The 23-year-old male singer, K, was unknown in Korea until March 2005 when his Japanese debut single “Over...” reached the eighth place right away and rose further to number four on the charts. He was scouted by a Japanese recording company representative, who accidentally happened to hear K’s singing and piano playing at a small café in Seoul during his business trip. With Sony Music and the Japanese management company Stardust’s support, K’s debut song “Over...” was tied up with Japanese TV drama *H2* (TBS), which was very unconventional. The song became very popular in Japan, and the Japanese audiences began to wonder about the singer, who had not received any media coverage yet.³³⁰ His first album, “Beyond the Sea,” released in January 2006, reached second place on the *Oricon* weekly chart, the best result among all Korean male singers.³³¹ In 2006, K won the New Artist of the Year and the Japan-Korea Friendship Year Special Awards (along with Park Yong-Ha and Se7en).³³² As the total sales of his four singles and one album rose over the one million mark in Japan, K became *the* most successful Korean male Japanese pop singer. As his music career began to flourish in Japan with almost perfect Japanese language skill after spending a year in Japan, he began to appear on music TV programs as a main guest next to Amuro Namie, BoA, or Hamasaki Ayumi.³³³ Soon the Korean popular media began to cover his musical career in Japan and touted his success as another victory of the

³³⁰ *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ*, Fuji TV, November. 2005.

³³¹ <http://www.oricon.co.jp/index.html> (accessed February. 21. 2006).

³³² <http://www.riaj.or.jp/e/data/gdisc/2006.html> (accessed January. 23. 2007).

³³³ *Hey!Hey!Hey! Music Champ*, Fuji TV, February. 2006.

Korean Wave in Japan, which led to his growing popularity in Korea. His CDs have been released in Korea just like the other Japanese popular singers' CDs, which the licensed local company reproduces and distributes in Korea. Instead of growing popularity in Korea, K has mainly been focused on building his career in Japan as a Japanese pop singer, instead of trying to work both in Japan and Korea. As a result, his fans in Korea can only enjoy his music that has been imported to Korea—an ironic Japanized Korean Japanese presence in Korea.



Figure 5.14 Korean male singer K's photo (2005, left) and teenage girl Younha's photo (2006, right)

Another example has been the Korean teenage girl, Younha, who debuted at the age of sixteen in Japan, in 2004. She has, not surprisingly, been compared by Koreans in Korea, to BoA in Korea, at least from the end of 2006. Like K, Younha had her major debut in Japan first and began to build her music career in Japan. Despite her fairly good start in Japan, until July 2006 Younha did not get much attention from the Korean media, which had been more focused on BoA. However, after a mini documentary on her debut story was produced by Korea's

national TV station KBS and aired in Korea, she began to be popular. Her outstanding piano playing as she sings her songs has been well received in Korea since the end of 2006, which led to her first Korean release in the spring 2007.³³⁴ Besides her self-taught Japanese language skills and powerful vocal technique, her frequent experience of failing in auditions in Korea before she could debut in Japan has become an important factor for her growing popularity, especially among young teenagers, who found it easier to relate themselves to her than BoA, who has been a big star for a while and recently has begun to shift her public persona to present herself as a sexy adult singer rather than a teenage idol star. This has been a typical career image change for Japanese idol stars. Although Younha has not yet demonstrated the Japanese idol stars' extreme kind of "cuteness," her nervousness and shyness have been clearly viewed as cute. As Younha's launching of a successful career in Japan became widely publicized by the Korean media, her career in Korea also took off.

Most of those Korean singers who became popular in Japan have become the center of Korean media attention as an extension or part of the Korean Wave in Japan. However, what these Korean singers have performed in Japan has all been Japanese pop and Japanese product. None of them, except Ryu, ever sang Korean songs, or even Japanese songs in Korean language in Japan. They all sang Japanese pop, produced in Japan by Japanese producers, and managed by the Japanese music labels and management companies for Japanese audiences. This process of "repackaging" by the Japanese music industry seems the rule for becoming successful in Japan. Some Korean singers, like Younha and K, are being "re-imported" via the Japanese music industry into Korea. Both "repackaged" and "re-imported" Japanese popular music by Korean singers have been adding another layer of presence of Japan in Korea's popular music scene. Furthermore, many Korean consumers assumed that these Korean singers' Japan-made

³³⁴ "Younha nûn Taesônghal Su Innûn Kasu" (Younha Would Become a Big Star), *Newsen*, March. 12. 2007.

Japanese popular music must be good or better and even more comfortable to enjoy because the singers are Korean (at least by nationality).

5.3.3 Korean Wave vs. Japanese Wave in Korea: *Hallyu* vs. *Illyu*

Besides these popular Korean Japanese pop singers in Japan, there are some Korean singers who have entered the Japanese popular music world with a different nature and purpose: the two R&B and hip hop singers/dancers Se7en and Rain, who do not go through the “repackaging” process and do not need to depend on building their careers in Japan in order to gain popularity in Korea because they have already been popular in Korea and in other Asian countries. When Se7en debuted in Japan in 2005, he had already been extremely popular in Korea and other Asian countries, and he has been considered as one of the two most famous Korean Wave pop stars. Se7en’s image could be described as soft, gentle, friendly, cheerful, and warm. After achieving tremendous success in Asia, except Japan, he started releasing singles and albums in Japan in February 2005.³³⁵

³³⁵ <http://www.hello7.co.kr/4th/disco.php> (accessed Febuary. 11. 2007).



Figure 5.15 Korean pop star Se7en's Osaka concert photo (2006, left) and his stamp-booklet produced in Japan, “Se7en Stamp” (2006, right)

However Se7en has never totally focused on building his career in Japan. Japan has not been his main target, although still an attractive and necessary one because of its market size and reputation. Unlike BoA or the other Korean singers in Japan, the basic direction of Se7en’s music career in Japan has not only been managed by the Japanese music label company Unlimited, but also by a Korean management team, YG Entertainment. This Korean management team has been deciding the basic directions of Se7en’s general career and main target, which, it turns out, has been America from 2006.³³⁶ He sang both Korean hit songs in Korean and Japanese hit songs in Japanese in his concerts in Japan.³³⁷ Even though Se7en has fluency in Japanese and has sung Japanese songs in Japanese in Japan, the nature of his career in Japan has been different from that of other singers in Japan, including BoA, Park Yong-Ha, K,

³³⁶ “YG Entertainment Yang Hyun-Sôk Taepyu, YG pyo Hipap Segyemudaesô Sungbu” (YG Entertainment’s CEO Yang Hyun-Sôk, YG Brand’s Hip Hop Kicking Off at the World Stage), *Herald Economy*, December. 21. 2006.

³³⁷ “Sebûn, 6ch’ônyô Paen Yôlgwang, Osaka Kongyôn Sônghwang” (Se7en, 6000 Wild Fans, Successful Osaka Concert), *Mydaily*, May. 4. 2006.

and Younha, whose careers have been entirely managed by the Japanese management companies and repackaging and/or “Japanizing” is an essential element for them to be successful in the Japanese popular music market.

The other singer, Rain, has been also extremely popular in Korea and many other Asian countries. Different from the Se7en’s image, Rain’s image could be described as sexy, energetic, athletic, masculine, and cute. Despite the mainly body images and powerful stage performance, his childlike smile has been melting countless female fans. Under JYP Entertainment’s management (the CEO, Park Jin-Young, was a former singer and spent his childhood in America), Rain, who used to be a backup dancer in 1999, became a “World Star” or “The No.1 Superstar in Asia” from 2004.³³⁸ His official website “Rain.Jype.com” offers 12-national-language options.³³⁹ Rain did not put much effort toward expanding his career in Japan because his target has been America from 2005, but his international reputation brought the Japanese music market to him. As he became the first Korean singer to perform at New York’s Madison Square Garden in February 2006 and also as he was (somewhat surprisingly) chosen as one of the world’s most powerful 100 people by *Time Magazine* in May 2006, his popularity has been continuously growing in Japan.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ http://www.jype.com/main/artist/common/artist.jsp?p_artist_id=rain (accessed February. 12. 2007).

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ “Miguk Konyôn Machin Pi” (Rain, Finishing the New York Concert), *Chosun Ilbo*, February. 4. 2006; “Kasu Pi, 2006nyôn Taimji Sônjông 100 Myông” (The Singer Rain Selected by 2006 TIME within the 100 people), *YTN News*, May. 1. 2006.

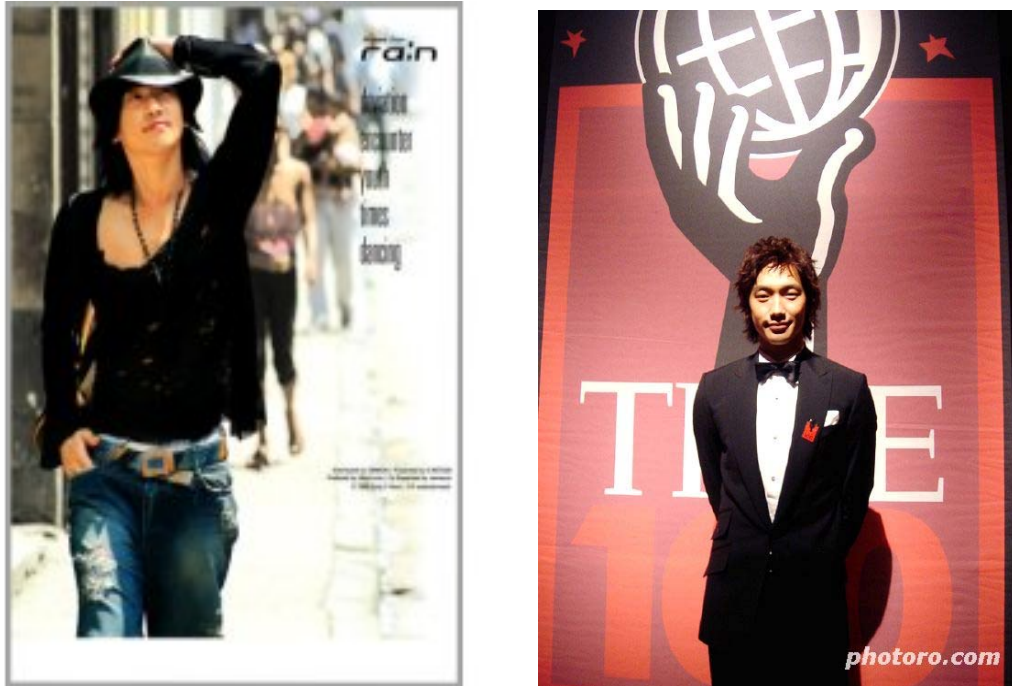


Figure 5.16 Korean pop star Rain's Japanese DVD cover, *Rain Official Premium Box Road for Rain* (2006, left) and his photo at the *Time Magazine* party in the U. S. (2006, right)

While these two, Se7en and Rain, have grown as the two main popular singers of the Korean Wave in Asia and began to reach out to the American popular music market, which has been quite resistant to popular music from anywhere in Asia, the rest of the Korean singers and groups in Korea have been struggling with the overpowering Japanese popular music that started pouring into the Korean popular cultural market. Because many Japanese idol stars have been multi-tasking entertainers, acting in movies and TV dramas, singing the theme songs for movies, TV dramas, *anime*, and games, voice-acting for *anime* and games, publishing books and photo albums, designing cloths, jewelry, shoes, and character goods, serving as TV program hosts and regular guests, participating in magic shows, and even joining and performing on sport teams, their growing popularity means an invasion of the entire popular cultural industry. In addition to

the mainstream popular genres, more and more Korean fans are beginning to enjoy underground genres or outdated genres of Japan, including Shibuya-kei.

In November 2006, there were four major concerts by the top Japanese singers and groups in Korea, including Arashi (dance/idol pop), Koto Maki (dance/idol pop), w-inds (dance/idol pop), and Paris Match (Shibuya-kei). All of these concerts sold out quickly, and thousands of young Korean fans showed passionate responses, from the stars' arrivals at the airport to their departure at the airport, which not only surprised the Japanese stars but also shocked the Korean media. Increasing observations on the Korean Wave's downturn (except a few cases, such as Rain and Se7en) began to intimidate the Korean popular cultural industry. Since then, the term "Illyu" (lit., "Japanese Wave") has begun to appear and be highlighted in the news media in Korea.

Unlike the other Japanese popular cultural products that can usually be consumed individually at home or at those thousands of *PC bang*, the Japanese popular music concerts at the biggest dome (the Seoul Olympic Park Dome) and the newly built popular music concert hall (MelOn-AX) have finally revealed how popular Japanese popular culture has become among the younger Koreans. The fan base range in age from young teens to a cadre of fans in their 30s, who not only used to buy those commonly available pirated cassettes but who also have been searching every nook and cranny in the market places to find even better and even more copies of Japanese popular music releases from as far back as the 1980s. Despite the government's banning policy, nationalistic education, and never-ending political issues related to the colonial period, many Koreans do not relate those issues to their cultural consumption of Japanese popular culture anymore. Moreover, the issue of Korean singers' and groups' lack of creativity as they continue to copy the Japanese songs (if not simply buying the melody) even after 2004 has turned away the Korean audience even further.

5.4 SUMMARY REMARKS

In this chapter, I have discussed the newly sanctioned presence of Japan in Korea by mapping out the Korean music/digital music industry's changing strategy and its competition within the domestic market and the Japanese music/digital music industry's changed attitude as Korea has become a profitable market. More importantly, as the two countries' cultural collaboration was encouraged by both countries for economic reasons, many Korean consumers also have more freely consumed the Japanese popular culture instead of spending their time and energy fretting over the endless and unresolved political conflicts. In 2004 when the Korean Wave hit Japan with the TV drama *Winter Sonata*, Korea was in a "festival mood" (or *Ch'ukje Punwigi* in Korean) and many Koreans began to believe that Korean popular culture had finally become powerful enough to beat Japan, as if Japan had finally surrendered. Such a celebratory mood led Koreans to include anything that could possibly be related to the Korean Wave as a part of the Korean Wave in Japan. Because it was a positive thing from the Korean point of view, the Korean public had no problem with the Korean news media's exaggerations. However, soon after Koreans began to realize what they had recently been consuming and enjoying in Korea was mostly from Japan, many Koreans began to wonder about what was happening to their beloved Korean Wave in Japan that they thought was the winner. During the short two years after the fourth stage of the Open-Door Policy, many Korean consumers became so comfortable consuming the Japanese popular culture as if the ban had never even existed. Various aspects of the imported Japanese popular music have been attractive to Koreans, as I have pointed out, and much of it relates to image and personality of the performers, as much as to the sound of the music—the image of Japan, Japanese things, Japanese entertainers, as cute, sophisticated, self-assured, a bit unpredictable, aesthetically daring. Yet while part of the appeal during the years

that Japanese popular culture was banned from Korea was the very fact of its illegality (a kind of “forbidden pleasure”), that dimension has now mostly disappeared, though its continued restriction from full broadcast rights still gives it a status as something less than (or other than) completely domesticated.

Having looked closely here at the influx of Japanese popular music and other forms of cultural expression into Korea, and of Korean influx into Japan, it is appropriate to look now with a comparative lens at other streams of cultural traffic— Japanese popular cultural flows elsewhere in Asia, and other international influences in Korea. By thus adding depth and perspective to the detailed close-up provided in this and the previous two chapters, we proceed, in the next chapter, to a contextualized view of transnational dynamics, allowing us to evaluate the global commonalities and unique aspects of the Korea-Japan case.

6.0 TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS

Our close look thus far at Korea's engagement with Japanese popular music and other popular cultural products has uncovered a number of historical—and historically-contingent—stages and particularities relating to popular taste, political and economic rivalry, marketing, and technology. In this chapter, we shift to a comparative and more interpretive view, first zooming out, as it were, to look beyond the singular instance of Korea's importation of Japanese popular music to consider other transnational popular cultural traffic in Asia—with emphasis on music, but touching on TV dramas and other forms. The recent patterns of this traffic, indeed, have been complex and polymorphous, too much so to attempt comprehensive coverage in this dissertation. The traffic most relevant to the present study is the flow of Japanese popular culture to countries other than Korea and this will constitute the focus of the first section of this chapter. Indeed, Japanese popular culture has established, again through various legal and illegal means, a strong presence in other areas in Asia, notably Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other Southeast Asian countries, and I will discuss these instances in reference to the Korean case.

In the second section of this chapter, I bring the focus back to Korea, addressing first the other major foreign presence in Korea's popular music world—namely, the USA, whose strong military presence in Korea, beginning during the Korean war and continuing to the present, has had profound effects (not surprisingly), but whose particular trajectory has been unique, due in no small measure to the controversial attitudes towards American foreign policy and its military

foothold in Korea. Looking comparatively at the presence of America and of Japan, I explore issues of postcolonial desire and neo-national cultural politics, addressing core questions surrounding the uniqueness of Japan's presence in Korea—what qualities are perceived by Koreans as Japanese and how these qualities may both appeal and evoke resistance and debate, leading to an embrace of Japanese culture for some and a re-invigorated nationalism for others.

My intentions in the first section are to identify aspects of the Japanese presence elsewhere in Asia and draw on these in considering the uniqueness of Japanese presence in Korea. Though anti-Japanese sentiment is not unique to Korea, in late-twentieth century and early-twenty-first century Asia it has clearly been strongest there. These other Asian countries have had either no ban or briefer and less stringent bans on the importing of Japanese cultural products. The second section reveals the different nature of the presence of America in Korea, a cultural “other” quite different from Japan, and a country towards which Koreans have not held the kind of antagonism they have towards Japan. These two sections contribute towards an understanding Koreans' contradictory desire toward Japan. In the third section, I discuss Koreans' changing attitude and desire toward the new presence of Japan and its cultural products in Korea. By examining Koreans' perceptions of Japanese popular culture and music, important elements of Japanese popular music and “Japaneseness” are revealed. Many young Koreans are drawn by cuteness, overt sexiness, hybridity, instrumental performance skills, polished recording production, approachability, and amateurish personae of Japanese popular music. Among these Korean fans, some try to argue their consumption of Japanese popular culture to be fundamentally the same as their cultural consumption of American or other foreign cultural products, not necessarily related to any transformation of their cultural identity. As “things Japanese” have become legal in Korea and anti-Japanese attitudes have begun to weaken especially among young Koreans, Koreans' notion of Japan is inevitably changing. Yet a high

regard for Japanese quality and lingering nationalist resentment towards Japan still lends to Japanese pop at least a residual aura of “difference”—as superior, trend-setting, internationally seasoned and successful, but potentially culturally “dangerous,” pitting the safeness and approachability of the sounds and images projected against a background of Japanese national aggressiveness and stubbornness on certain issues with Korea.

6.1 JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE IN ASIA

Japanese popular culture, including *anime*, *manga*, computer games, TV dramas, music, character goods, food, fashion, *tamagotchi* (digital pet), *purikura* (small sticker photo), and karaoke, was taking off in many Asian countries in the 1990s. Iwabuchi states that “Japan could not neglect Asia as a vital market for its products, and a new Asianism emerged in Japan in the early 1990s.”³⁴¹ He notes that Japan’s successful modernization according to the Western standard positioned Japan as “similar but superior,” or “in but above” Asia, placing Japan as Asia’s leader and the rest as followers.³⁴² That is, as some of Japan’s neighbors, including Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, became modernized based on the Japanese model, they began to desire the modernity of Japanese popular culture as well.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Iwabuchi Koichi, *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p. 12.

³⁴² Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 8.

³⁴³ Although his study of Japanese transnationalism is mainly based on Japanese TV dramas becoming popular in Taiwan since the mid 1990s, Iwabuchi also briefly discusses the Japanese popular music industry’s localizing attempt in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the late 1990s, where Japanese popular music was particularly popular. Other scholars have looked more closely at factors relating to the transnational flow of Japanese popular music and will figure in the subsequent discussion.

The intellectual underpinnings of this cultural and economic positioning on the part of Japan were well in place before the 1990s, growing from Japan's longstanding view of itself as not only as unique, but as (quint)essentially unique:

Japan's obsession with the uniqueness of its own culture has been widely observed in the popularity of the *Nihonjinron* discourses, which explain distinctive features of Japanese people and Japanese culture in essentialist terms.³⁴⁴

Also recognizing Japan's essentialistic self-image, Miyoshi and Harootunian offered the following appraisal, couched in semiotic terms, of Japan's sense of itself as of the late 1980s:

What this reflex produced was a conception of Japan as a signified, whose uniqueness was fixed in an irreducible essence that was unchanging and unaffected by history, rather than as a signifier capable of attaching itself to a plurality of possible meanings. It is this sense of a Japan as signified, unique and different from all other countries, that is promoted by the most strident and, we should say, shrill spokesmen for Japan's postmodernity.³⁴⁵

What these authors suggest, and I will return to later in this chapter, is the notion that Japan sees itself as postmodern in essence, but presents its postmodernity to the world as a kind of Japaneseness. Evidence suggests that, while people in other Asian countries may not have readily labeled Japanese popular culture as the postmodern object of desire they had been longing for, they nevertheless embraced Japanese popular culture as modern, up-to-date, sophisticated, and trend-setting, coming as it was from the most economically and technologically advanced country in Asia.

³⁴⁴ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 6.

³⁴⁵ Miyoshi Masao and H. D. Harootunian, eds. *Postmodernism and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989) p. xvi.

In earlier chapters I have drawn on Iwabuchi's notion of cultural odor—apparent in some kinds of popular cultural products, especially movies and TV dramas and also popular music, but totally absent from such products as electronics and appliances. One of the key characteristics that scholars point to in tracing the successful transnational marketing of Japanese popular cultural products is “erasure” of clear indicators of race, ethnicity, and nationality.³⁴⁶ This practice is identified in Japanese language, along with hybrid mixing, as *mukokuseki*, a term “widely used in Japan in two different, though not mutually exclusive, ways: to suggest the mixing of elements of multiple cultural origins, and to imply the erasure of visible ethnic and cultural characteristics.”³⁴⁷ The erasure and obscuring of such characteristics, resulting in minimizing or eradication of cultural odor, is indeed highly evident in Japan's popular culture, and may be more pervasive in Japan than elsewhere. But certainly other countries engage in similar practices, for example, featuring movie stars who look more European than local (and may even be mixed-race) (e.g., Indian movie stars), or employing Western pop idioms, vocal styles, and/or English lyrics to be more accessible and acceptable as “international” (e.g., Anggun in Indonesia, Raihan in Malaysia, Thongchai McIntyre in Thailand).³⁴⁸

The practice of erasure in Japan is most evident in computer games, *manga*, and *anime*, but we can see it also in character goods. It is important to note, however, that the issue of erasure is not as simple or as absolute as it might first appear. While a variety of Japanese cultural products when they first were marketed overseas were not widely known to have originated in Japan and were not thought of as “Japanese,” some of these have more recently gained, as it were, a Japanese identity, even despite the erasure of physical signs of Japaneseness.

³⁴⁶ Murai Yoshinori. “Oshin, Doraemon wa kakehashi to nareruka.” *Views* (March 10):26-27, 1993; Otsuka Eiji. “Komikku Sekai Seiha.” *Sapio* (8):10-11, 1994.

³⁴⁷ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 71.

³⁴⁸ See Anggun, <http://www.anggun.com/>; Raihan, <http://raihan.com.my/homepage/>; Thongchai McIntyre, <http://welcome.to/thongchaimcintyre>. (accessed February. 24. 2007).

Before narrowing the focus to Japanese popular music, which underwent its own kind of erasure through the widespread practice of producing cover versions of Japanese originals in other Asian languages (primarily Chinese), I would like to consider the case of Japan's most famous character good: Hello Kitty.

6.1.1 Japanese Character Goods in Asia: The Case of Hello Kitty

Among the numerous character goods, Hello Kitty (created by Sanrio Company Ltd. in 1974) has been extremely popular since the late 1990s in Asia after Hello Kitty became popular in Japan itself once again. Hello Kitty is a white cat with a big red ribbon on her left ear. This image and name can be found on everything from pencils, candy, purses, nail clippers, soap, lamps, slippers, cosmetics, jewelry, water bottles, coffee makers, toaster ovens TVs, rice cookers, hair dryers, bathroom scales, telephones, cellular phones, tooth brushes & tooth paste, bicycles, to a real car (called "Princess Kitty I" produced by Mitsubishi in 2006).³⁴⁹ Hello Kitty has been popular not only among little girls but also among women in their 20s and 30s, who grew up with Hello Kitty lunch boxes and handkerchiefs when they were children in Japan and its neighbors, including Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

In January 2000, McDonald's in Singapore offered 40-day promotion for Hello Kitty dolls, which caused "fist fights, traffic jams, broken glass and people fainting from sheer fatigue in queues that start forming by early evening on Wednesdays for the Thursday morning release of a new set of dolls."³⁵⁰

In 2005, EVA Air, the Taiwanese airline, introduced the first EVA AIR Hello Kitty Jet ,flying from Taipei to Fukuoka, Japan everyday, and its overwhelming success led the second

³⁴⁹ <http://www.mitsubishi-motors.co.jp/> (accessed January. 15. 2007).

³⁵⁰ "Kitty Kitsch Turns Singaporeans into Pavlov's Dogs" *Asia Times*, February. 12. 2000.

Hello Kitty Jet in 2006 offering service to Nagoya, Osaka, and Sendai in Japan.³⁵¹ The EVA Air Hello Kitty Jet offers everything Hello Kitty from check-in to luggage, including Hello Kitty boarding passes, luggage tags, in-flight food service (cookies, ice-cream, cups, plates, napkin, chopsticks) served by flight attendants wearing Hello Kitty aprons, and EVA Hello Kitty duty-free shopping.³⁵²



Figure 6.1 Taiwan's EVA Airline *EVA Air Hello Kitty Jet's* photos including female flight attendants' wearing Hello Kitty apron and Hello Kitty marked in-flight foods (2006, left) and the popular Japanese pop singer Hamasaki Ayumi's doll figure holding Hello Kitty, *Ayumi Hamasaki X Hello Kitty* (20087, right)

Even with this icon we find a kind of tie-up with popular music. Hello Kitty will join the “Japanese Pop Princess” Hamasaki Ayumi’s first Asian tour “Tour of Secret” starting in March,

³⁵¹ <http://www.evaair.com/html/b2c/english/> (accessed January. 15. 2007).

³⁵² *Ibid.*

2007 in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, China.³⁵³ The “Ayumi Hamasaki X Hello Kitty (Hamasaki Ayumi figurine holding Hello Kitty wearing matching cloths and the red ribbons)” is her 10th Anniversary *Ayupan* (“Ayumi Panda” dolls) which will be sold during her tour.³⁵⁴

While Hello Kitty’s popularity in America and Europe seems to remain culturally odorless, detached from any association with Japan, particularly among the children who are its main consumers, Hello Kitty does constitute a Japanese presence in Asia, recognized by consumers as—if not “essentially Japanese” then at least “coming from Japan.” As noted by many scholars and journalist, since the 1990s, Japanese popular culture has been adored by many young Asians who were fond of its “cuteness,” as well as its being “cutting-edge” “stylish” and “sophisticated.” *Time Asia*’s journalist Terry McCarthy wrote in the 1999 article “Export Machine: while Asia’s older generation is still haunted by Japan’s wartime brutality, Hello Kitty culture is hot with the region’s youth, who are happy to snap up all”:

Japan may not top the popularity polls in banks and boardrooms around Asia, but among the younger generation the homeland of Hello Kitty is hot. Japanese pop music, videos, comic books, clothes, accessories and cosmetics all are being snapped up across the region by a new generation of YPMs--Young People with Money. Slickly packaged and having already run the gauntlet of one of the world's most demanding fashion markets at home, Japanese youth culture is proving irresistible to teens from Taipei to Singapore, despite what local parents and grandparents remember of Japan's brutality in the last war. Four in five comic books sold in South Korea are Japanese. In Hong Kong, people buy pirated VCDs of their favorite Japanese TV soaps within days of their being shown in Japan. Taiwanese and Singaporeans cannot get enough of Japanese pop music. When diva Noriko Sakai abruptly announced last year that she was both married and pregnant, the news was on Hong Kong radio stations just minutes after Sakai's press conference in Tokyo.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ “Japanese Pop Princess Ties Up with Hello Kitty,” *China Daily*. March. 10. 2007.

³⁵⁴ “Ayumi Hamasaki X Hello Kitty Special Edition “Ayupan”,” *Sankei Sports*, March. 8. 2007.

³⁵⁵ Terry McCarthy, “Export Machines,” *Time Asia*, 1999.

New York Times journalist Calvin Sims also noted in a 1999 article “Japan Beckons, and East Asia’s Youth Fall in Love”:

“We like Japanese things because Japan is a very advanced country with a very sophisticated lifestyle,” said Vick Chen, 18, a high school student. “I dreaming of visiting there one day.” Her classmate Kelly Chou concurred: “Taiwan is too conservative, but Japanese fashion and music are so daring, so cutting edge. I love them.” The people of Taiwan are not alone...In South Korea, for example, Japanese-culture cafes and teahouses are quickly replacing American fast-food restaurants and European-style coffee houses as the preferred meeting places for college students. Japanese rock and jazz bands are more popular than their Korean counterparts, and many soap operas, game shows and television dramas are direct copies of Japanese programs. In Hong Kong, newsstands cannot stock enough copies of Japanese comic books and fashion magazines. Japanese TV dramas have huge followings. In China, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, bootleg copies of Japanese music recordings and movies, and merchandise like Hello Kitty dolls are popular.³⁵⁶

The word that overwhelmingly describes the appeal of Hello Kitty (not only the dolls themselves, but the hundreds of Hello-Kitty gadgets and objects) is, of course, cuteness, a quality that Japan has been exporting to Asia in other of its popular cultural products, including *anime* and *manga*, but also very notably in popular music, to which I would now like to direct our attention.

6.1.2 Japanese Popular Music in Asia

The 1990s saw an enormous flow of Japanese popular music into other countries in Asia, often along with TV dramas, and sometimes directly tied to TV dramas (theme songs and original sound track albums). In some areas, Japanese popular music had a presence before the 1990s,

³⁵⁶ Calvin Sims, “Japan Beckons, and East Asia’s Youth Fall in Love.” *New York Times*, 1999.

particularly in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In this section I offer not a comprehensive survey, but representative glimpses of Japanese popular musical penetration in Asian countries, primarily those areas we can describe as culturally and ethnically Chinese (i.e. Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, and Singapore), with some mention of other countries.

6.1.2.1 Japanese Popular Music and Culture in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China

As early as the 1970s, some Japanese popular music was finding its way into Hong Kong in the sound tracks to Japanese TV dramas, which were dubbed in Cantonese. Hong Kong audiences tended to prefer these to Westerns dramas, as they “were relatively cheap and their settings were more familiar to viewers in Hong Kong. Some of the theme songs for these Japanese dramas were packaged as Cantonese cover versions and became hits.”³⁵⁷ Though music lovers who only heard the Cantonese cover versions might not know of the Japanese origins of the music, listeners were likely to be drawn to the music via the dramas and thus would know that they were hearing Cantonese covers of Japanese pop tunes. This initial popularity set the stage for what was generally recognized as a “boom” in Japanese pop music there in the 1980s.

During the 1980s, Cantonese cover versions continued to be produced and sold in Hong Kong, more widely than they had been during the 1970s.³⁵⁸ This approach was replicated in other Chinese areas and in Southeast Asia. Indeed, the Japanese music industry devoted very little effort to marketing Japanese originals and promoting Japanese singers, but instead would, in Iwabuchi’s words:

³⁵⁷ Ogawa Masashi, “Japanese Popular Music in Hong Kong: What Does TK Present?” in *Refashioning Pop Music in Asia: Cosmopolitan Flows, Political Tempos and Aesthetic Industries*, ed. by Allen Chun, Ned Rossiter, and Brian Shoesmith. (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004) p. 146.

³⁵⁸ In some instances, multiple cover versions of a single Japanese original were produced and sold in Hong Kong. Four different cover versions of Masashiko Kondo’s ‘Yuyake no Uta,’ were circulating at the same time in 1989. Ogawa, *op. cit.* p. 147.

seek out ‘indigenous’ pop stars who could be sold to pan-Asian markets with Japanese pop production know-how (see *Ongaku sangyo wa Ajia meja o mezasu* 1992). The Japanese project of finding pan-Asian pop singers is thus motivated by a chimera of producing trans-Asian popular music through cross-fertilization of a Japanese initiative.³⁵⁹

This was a very conscious effort at localization and was enthusiastically embraced and encouraged by music industry companies in Hong Kong and elsewhere eager for fresh material. It is notable that before the mid-1990s most of this transnational traffic in Japanese pop music was initiated and promoted not so much by the Japanese music industry, as by companies elsewhere, especially in greater China. This meant that the Japanese music industry was able to earn profits on the rights to the cover versions, with very little outlay of cash for promotion. It also meant that audiences outside of Japan usually had no idea that a cover version they enjoyed was in fact originally a Japanese song.³⁶⁰

Neither did the Japanese music industry make efforts before the 1990s to market original Japanese versions internationally, but by the mid-1980s, one could hear the original versions of Japanese pop songs on several radio stations in Hong Kong, with several shows devoted exclusively to Japanese pop. This was partially a response to a small but growing interest among some young Hong Kong residents in Japanese pop as a refreshing alternative to the formulaic sounds of Canto-pop. It also led to Hong Kong music fans gaining familiarity with particular Japanese popular singers. For example Japanese popular singers and groups such as the female idol singer Sakai Noriko and the duo Chage & Aska enjoyed enormous popularity in the mid 1980s in Hong Kong, and also in Taiwan, despite a lingering distaste for Japanese culture there, evidenced by the official ban in Taiwan on Japanese television shows (lifted in 1993, see below).

³⁵⁹ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 98.

³⁶⁰ Hara Tomoko. *Honkon Chudoku (Hong Kong Addiction)*. (Tokyo: Japan Times, 1996) pp. 144-157.

After a short lull in transnational traffic of Japanese popular culture in the first few years of the 1990s, both Japanese popular music and Japanese TV dramas took off in the mid-1990s, with greater success than ever before outside of Japan.³⁶¹ After the introduction of original versions of Japanese songs and perhaps an overabundance of cover versions, Japanese originals became the dominant trend during the first half of the 1990s. Part of the new boom in Japanese pop music and popular culture in general was due to Taiwan lifting its ban on Japanese TV programs in 1993, as noted by Hsaio.

Japanese pop culture has increasingly dominated Taiwan's cultural scene in the last decade. One of the main reasons for this is that in 1993 the government finally lifted its 1972 ban on showing Japanese TV programs, which was originally enacted when the Japanese government officially recognized the People's Republic of China. By the mid-1990s, however, the term *ha-ri-zu* ('tribe of Japanese infatuation') had come to be associated with the idea of a mindless besottedness with anything Japanese.³⁶²

Indeed, by the mid 1990s, as Japanese TV dramas, including *Tokyo Love Story* and *Long Vacation*, became popular in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, other popular cultural products followed suit. Because of the Japanese TV dramas' popularity, CD collections of original sound tracks also sold well. Since then, Taiwan and Hong Kong have become centers of Japanese popular cultural consumption and reproduction outside Japan. And their cheaply-produced illegal copies have enjoyed extensive distribution throughout the greater China region, including mainland China.

Most of the mainstream popular singers and groups in Japan have recently been able to gain popularity in Taiwan and Hong Kong simultaneously with their popularity in Japan, thanks

³⁶¹ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 98.

³⁶² Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, "Coexistence and Synthesis: Cultural Globalization and Localization in Contemporary Taiwan," in *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World*, edited by Peter B. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 56.

to MTV Asia and STAR TV's Channel [V], as well as the Japanese satellite TV (J Sky B) and local FM radio stations. This ability to keep up with the musical and related popular cultural trends in Japan has been enhanced by the Japanese coverage in media magazines such as *City Magazine* (Hong Kong), which promoted not only Japanese pop, but Japanese middle-class lifestyle. Hong Kong newspapers also cover Japanese popular culture extensively, focusing, not surprisingly, on gossip. While coverage is extensive, it is also mostly “second-hand, or a direct translation from articles in Japanese paparazzi magazines, such as *Focus* and *Flash*, or gossip magazines of the entertainment word, such as *Myojo* and *Heibon*.”³⁶³ Even so, this new ability to stay current with Japan, Asia's “most modern” country, both through TV and print media, feeds the Japanese music industry as well.

The strong presence of Japanese popular music in Hong Kong and Taiwan since the mid-1990s has been due to a number of factors, but certainly the most important single force in this transnational traffic has been the phenomenally successful Japanese producer-musician Komuro Tetsuya. Among the various Japanese singers and groups, many top stars produced by Komuro were particularly successful in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China, just as they were in Japan at that time. According to Ogawa Masashi, Komuro was one of the “few Japanese music-makers trying to promote their music to the pan-Asian market” and gave his first overseas concert in Hong Kong in 1997.³⁶⁴

Komuro's approach has been typical of recent Japanese approaches in the music industry, managing everything, from choosing the singer, choosing or composing or arranging the song, training the singer both with respect to singing style and to stage personality, and deciding on types of presentation, including “tie-ups” with TV dramas or movie—in short, doing “total

³⁶³ Ogawa Masashi, “Japanese Popular Music in Hong Kong: What Does TK Present?” in *Refashioning Pop Music in Asia: Cosmopolitan Flows, Political Tempos and Aesthetic Industries*, ed. by Allen Chun, Ned Rossiter, and Brian Shoemith. (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004) p. 152.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 144.

management.”³⁶⁵ During the mid and the late 1990s, Komuro produced a number of top stars, including Amuro Namie, Kahara Tomomi, Suzuki Ami, TRF, Hitomi, and Globe (with Komuro himself as a keyboard player), and these singers and groups began to be called TK Family (or Komuro Family). The musical styles of Komuro Tetsuya were mainly euro/electric/techno dance styles.

As he dominated the domestic market, becoming the fourth richest man in Japan in 1996, he began to invest in the Asian market. In 1996 as he teamed up with News Corp., he created TK News and produced a talent-search program in Greater China region, *TK Magic*.³⁶⁶ In 1997, Komuro produced big concerts in Beijing and Shanghai.³⁶⁷ During the same year, Amuro Namie became the first Japanese singer to be named Channel [V]’s artist of the month, as her single climbed to number one on Channel [V]’s Asian Top-20.³⁶⁸

In 1998, a thirteen-year-old Taiwanese female singer Ring, discovered by *TK Magic*, debuted and reached the top of the chart in Taiwan.³⁶⁹ Also, Komuro produced a nineteen-year-old Hong Kong girl Grace into a popular singer in Hong Kong as he tried to expand his music empire into Asia.³⁷⁰ However, TK Family’s fame faded after 2000 in Japan, and his singers and groups went separate ways. Japanese popular music in Taiwan and Hong Kong began to share the market with Korean popular music since 1999 as the Korean Wave hit the region.

Komuro made some musical innovations that contributed to his international success, but very likely his most significant step was the joint business venture with Rupert Murdoch:

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 154.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 116-117.

³⁶⁷ “Will Japan’s Top Hit Maker Become Asia’s Too?” *Time Asia*, May. 1999.

³⁶⁸ Iwabuch, *op. cit.* p. 116.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 116-117.

³⁷⁰ “Will Japan’s Top Hit Maker Become Asia’s Too?” *Time Asia*, May. 1999.

It is said that one of the reasons for his success lies on the fact that he introduced the musical elements of dance music and club music—Euro-beat in particular—to pop songs. In 1996 he established the joint corporation ‘TK News’ in Hong Kong with News Corporation’s ‘media king,’ Rupert Murdoch. The corporation is aiming to produce musical talent in Asia. He is supposed to be in charge of finding talent and producing singer’s entire music activities. He is notable as one of the few musicians who have started to market their own music in Asia.³⁷¹

Though there had been a few Japanese idol (*aidoru*) stars who gained some visibility in greater China, such as Matsuda Seiko in the 1980s, it was during the 1990s that Japanese idols and the total management style exemplified by Komuro had a significant impact throughout Asia, and most strongly in greater China. Iwabuchi points out that, while Japan has been successful in introducing and promoting “idol culture” in other Asian countries, the time lag has been significant; the situation of “idol culture” elsewhere in Asia in the late 1990s was, in his opinion, like Japan 16 or 17 years earlier.³⁷² The core characteristics persist: most crucially the emphasis not on singing ability but on cuteness and intimacy between the idol stars and audiences. The contrast between the inapproachability of American (and other Western) superstars and the seeming approachability and amateurish personae of the idol stars has been noted by a number of scholars.³⁷³ The appeal has led to international popularity for many Japanese idol stars, and also, to some extent, to the adoption of the idol package approach to creating and launching non-Japanese stars in greater China.

Marketing for idol stars, of course, relies heavily on visual media, such as television and this has been the case outside of Japan. However, the primary medium for profit-making and consumption in the music—whether idol or not—remains recordings and live concerts. The

³⁷¹ Ogawa, *op. cit.* p. 154.

³⁷² Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 99.

³⁷³ Leo Ching, “Imaginations in the Empire of the Sun: Japanese Mass Culture in Asia” in *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture*, edited by John W. Treat. (London: Curzon Press, 1996); Inamasu Tatsuo. *Aidoru Kogaku (Idol Linguistic)*. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1993); Ogawa, *op. cit.*; Iwabuchi, *op. cit.*

marketing of Japanese popular music in greater China has been somewhat complicated, involving CDs produced in Japan, CDs produced legally in Hong Kong and Taiwan, pirated CDs produced illegally in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China, and live concerts of musicians. With the exception of an unsuccessful 1997 concert in Hong Kong, in which Komuro himself attempted to educate his audience about Japanese pop, rather than merely entertain them, most Japanese singers and groups, including many produced by Komuro himself, have been quite successful, both on stage and on recordings in greater China.

The CDs imported from Japan have been, of course, significantly more expensive than those made in Hong Kong or Taiwan, whether legally or illegally. But by the early 2000s, many of the CDs that show initially good sales in Japan are legally manufactured in Hong Kong within a month or less and marketed directly to Chinese consumers. HMV stores in Hong Kong, for example, have an enormous section for Japanese pop, mostly at prices that indicate manufacture in Hong Kong rather than in Japan. Ogawa noted that a few Hong Kong music fans continue to buy the CDs imported from Japan, believing them to be of higher quality and also not wanting to wait even a few weeks for a locally manufactured copy.³⁷⁴ Not all Japanese pop CDs are released in Hong Kong, as the market is relatively small—an estimated 200,000-300,000 “active pop music consumers.”³⁷⁵ The choices tend to be conservative, i.e., mainstream stars, in hopes of reaching the maximum number of consumers and maximizing sales, and this approach prevents Hong Kong audiences from exposure to the full variety of Japanese popular music.

Little reliable information can be found about the pirating of Japanese pop in greater China, but it is clear that, through various channels, pirated CDs are ubiquitously hawked by street vendors and find their way onto the shelves of many CD/VCD stores in mainland China,

³⁷⁴ Ogawa, *op. cit.* p. 148 and p. 154

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 150.

from large cities to modest villages. Alongside the pirated Japanese recordings one finds, since the late 1990s, Korean ones as well.³⁷⁶ Recently in Hong Kong, Ogawa reports, “pirated VCDs of Japanese TV dramas appear only a few days after broadcast in Japan. Many have pop song ‘tie-ups’ that helped spread familiarity with Japanese pop songs along with the TV dramas.”³⁷⁷

Although Japanese popular music was introduced to mainland China later than it was to Hong Kong and Taiwan, through broadcasting and wide-spread piracy, Japanese popular music started to become popular in mainland China in the early 1990s. For example, the top Japanese band, Southern All Stars, had their concert in Beijing in the early 1990s, which was the first rock music concert by a foreign group or artist in China.³⁷⁸ Also, as in Taiwan and Hong Kong, many Japanese pop songs were covered by local mainland Chinese singers. However, from 1999, as Korean popular music became very popular in the greater China region through the Korean Wave boom, Korean popular music exceeded Japanese popular music in airtime on MTV Asia (by a full 50% in 2001).³⁷⁹ After the break-up of the popular Korean boy band H.O.T, which had been particularly popular in China, Korean popular music and Japanese popular music began to share the Chinese popular music market more or less evenly. According to Rowan Pease’s research in China, the coexistence of Korean popular music and Japanese popular music in China has actually resulted in many quarrels between zealous fans of one or the other.³⁸⁰

6.1.2.2 Japanese Popular Music in Singapore

Though somewhat later than in East Asia, Japanese popular music has made significant inroads into Southeast Asian countries, particularly Singapore. Singapore musicologist Benjamin Ng

³⁷⁶ Rowan Pease, “Internet, Fandom, and K-Wave in China,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006).

³⁷⁷ Ogawa, *op. cit.* p. 149.

³⁷⁸ Asuna Mizuho, *Tokyo ui Pap Munhwa* (Pop Culture of Tokyo) (Seoul: Wooseok, 1999). p. 41.

³⁷⁹ Pease, *op. cit.* pp. 176-177.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 178-179.

notes that sales of Japanese recordings in Singapore increased by more than ten times in the short three-year period 1999-2002: “It is now [as of 2002] common to find several Japanese recordings in the top ten of the Singapore music chart listed by the Recording Industry Association of Singapore (RIAS).”³⁸¹ In the 1980s, Japanese singers already had a presence in Singapore, though not large. Ng mentions a number of idol stars, including Matsuda Seiko, Itsuwa Mayumi and other girls, as well as men’s groups such as Shôentai, Anzen Chitai, and Hikaru Genji, among others, but selling no more than a few thousand albums each.³⁸² True to the design of idol producers in Japan, however, some of these young stars (Yamaguchi Momoe, Makamori Akira, Kontô Masahiko, and Saijô Hideki) succeeded in becoming fashion icons, primarily among young Singaporean Chinese.

As in other Chinese areas discussed above, Japanese pop music encountered a lull in the early 1990s in Singapore, apparently because Japanese TV dramas were not popular enough to compete with local dramas and American dramas in the early 1990s and transnational flows in popular music in Asia have usually correlated closely with the flows of TV dramas. But with the resurgence in Japanese TV dramas in Asia, Japanese pop music also was strong again by the mid-1990s and had a secure place in the Singapore music market by the end of the decade, ranking highly on the Singapore music charts, with special sections devoted to Japanese pop in CD stores, radio shows featuring or devoted exclusively to Japanese pop, and locally-available cable MTV including Japanese pop videos.³⁸³ The female idol group SPEED was particularly popular in Singapore in 1999, becoming the first Japanese singer to make the top ten in the Singapore music charts SPVA.³⁸⁴ Also, between 1995 and 2001, as many recent Japanese TV

³⁸¹ Benjamin Wai-ming Ng, “Japanese Popular Music in Singapore and the Hybridization of Asian Music” *Asian Music* 34/1: 1-18, 2002, p.1.

³⁸² *Ibid.* pp. 2-3.

³⁸³ *Ibid.* pp. 3-5.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 3.

dramas were shown in Singapore television, newly released Japanese popular songs quickly spread in popularity, once again illustrating the marketing wisdom of “tie-ups.”³⁸⁵

6.1.2.3 Japanese Popular Music in Thailand

Japanese popular music has been relatively less popular in Thailand than in the greater China region and it has been consumed by only a small number of urban youth, who listened to FM radio stations and build fan communities through music magazines, including *Nippon Idol*, *Idol J-Rock*, and *Japan Rock Mania Magazine*, starting in 1997.³⁸⁶ According to Ubonrat Siriyuvasak’s research, the visual rock band X-Japan was particularly popular in Thailand between 1997 and 1998 and created devoted young Thai fans, who shared a sort of freedom represented through the band’s heavy metal music and its extreme visual image.³⁸⁷ As the Korean Wave first arose in the late 1990s, Thailand was less influenced than Singapore or greater China. But after the Korean female group Baby V.O.X’s success in Thailand in 2001, Thai youth’s consumption of Korean popular cultural products began to increase. Spearheaded by the Korean male singers Se7en and Rain, famous as much for their cuteness and masculine good looks and public personae as their smooth voices, Korean popular music has begun to dominate urban Thai youth’s popular cultural consumption,³⁸⁸ creating a situation comparable to that noted by Pease in mainland China, where Japanese pop and Korean pop enjoy roughly the same level of popularity.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 6.

³⁸⁶ Siriyuvasak, Ubonrat. “Popular Culture and Youth Consumption: Modernity, Identity and Social Transformation.” in *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Dramas*, edited by Iwabuchi Koichi, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004) p. 186.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 186-187.

³⁸⁸ Siriyuvasak, Ubonrat, unpublished paper.

³⁸⁹ Pease, *op. cit.*

6.1.2.4 Japanese Popular Music in Asia—Contributing Factors and Implications

As of now (2007) the presence of Japanese pop music in Asia is significant and largely recognized. Cover versions, whose Japanese origins were unknown to almost all listeners just over a decade ago and before, have given way to a clear market niche devoted to Japanese popular music by Japanese musicians—their sound, their visual images, their personalities. It seems plausible that the widespread practice of covering Japanese hit songs served as a very effective mechanism for preparing other Asian ears for the sounds of Japanese pop, with the cover versions serving as intermediate steps towards developing a taste for Japanese pop itself. It is thus not surprising, even from the standpoint of musical taste, that Japanese pop would gain popularity in greater China and Southeast Asia. However, other forces have come into play as well, such as the “tie-up” with popular Japanese TV dramas and, to a lesser extent, movies. And even something as remote from music and as culturally odorless as Hello Kitty has helped build a desire among Asians for things Japanese, a desire that has led to avid consumption of Japanese popular music, not in cover versions, but as packaged and produced in Japan.

I have alluded to several factors that other Asian (non-Japanese) audiences find appealing in Japanese popular music and popular culture more generally. These have been qualities of the performers and their image—cuteness, approachability, and amateurness (in singing skill and overall public persona) -- more than the particular sound of the music. Another aspect, mentioned by several scholars, is the greater proximity—culturally, aesthetically, geographically, of Japan than of the West (America and Europe) with the rest of Asia. Of course, Western cultural hegemony through the last half of the twentieth century has resulted in world-wide familiarity with Western popular culture, but Japan’s quest to “domesticate” and “Asianize”

American and other Western cultural expression has made it successful internationally in Asia recently. As Iwabuchi puts it,

What Asian pop idols embody is neither ‘American’ nor ‘traditional Asian,’ but something new and hybridized. People no longer consume ‘the West’ or a ‘Westernized Asia’ but an ‘indigenized (Asianized) West’; they are fascinated neither with ‘originality’ nor with ‘tradition,’ but are actively constructing their own images and meanings at the receiving end.”³⁹⁰

Korean scholar Kang Hun also points out that strong Western influences on Japanese popular culture appealed to Asian youth, who were already familiar with Western popular culture but felt apprehensive about embracing it directly.³⁹¹ That is, many Asians can relate to Japanese popular culture more easily than to its original source, Western (or American) popular culture, because of their greater physical and cultural proximity to Japan than to America. Not only do Japanese singers physically resemble Chinese and other Asian audiences, due to racial similarities, but their vocal production, public manner, and sense of fashion are much closer to those of other Asians than to American or European ones. They share not only physical similarities, but a long history of cultural and political interaction, including, for greater China, Buddhism, Confucianism, and use of Chinese writing system. In short, the Chinese and other Asian audiences would seem to comply with the Japanese attitude identified by Iwabuchi, of Japanese being “in but above” Asia.

Based on his interview work with audiences and music industry personnel in Hong Kong, Ogawa concluded that

³⁹⁰ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 105.

³⁹¹ “Will Japan’s Top Hit Maker Become Asia’s Too?” *Time Asia*, May. 1999.

consumer taste for popular culture in particular demands the right balance of familiarity and novelty. Yet the industry [in Hong Kong] cannot risk investing in nurturing creative new and young talents which ensure new trends and market development. Therefore, the industry is characterized by a dependence on music trends developed elsewhere. Japanese pop music, either as cover versions or originals, has proven to be particularly suitable for adaptation into Chinese musical structures and cultural tastes.

Non-Asian observers of the music business in Asia have also noticed both the high production quality of Japanese pop and the greater resemblance between Japanese pop and other Asian pop than between Western pop and other Asian pop. For example, Jeff Murray, director of Channel [V] told Iwabuchi that

Japanese music production is definitely more sophisticated than its counterpart elsewhere in Asia, and Japanese music, though a new taste for the Taiwanese audience, is more similar to Taiwanese pop and easier to relate to than Western pop.”³⁹²

Closely paralleling this view is the opinion expressed by Hong Kong listeners to Ogawa that the original versions of Japanese pop songs were “representative of a Japanese ‘neatness’ and ‘perfectionism’ in producing pop songs.”³⁹³ Also relating to the musical sound are the observations of Ng about Japanese pop in Singapore, where the variety of Japanese pop genres contributes to its success. Ng argued that Japanese pop offers diverse genres, including Euro-beat, R&B, rap, soft rock, hip-hop, which can be alternated with American pop or Chinese pop.³⁹⁴ Nevertheless, lest we come away from this section with the impression that Japanese pop has been dominant in the rest of Asia, it is important to remember that Japanese pop competes more or less evenly with Korean pop in parts of mainland China and has never equaled the level

³⁹² Murray personal conversation, as cited in Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 117.

³⁹³ See Ogawa, *op. cit.* p. 151.

³⁹⁴ Ng, *op. cit.* p. 8.

of popularity of American or Mandarin pop in Singapore. This leads us, then, to turn our attention back to Korea and inquire into the presence of other popular music there beside Japanese.

6.2 AMERICAN INFLUENCES ON KOREAN POPULAR MUSIC

Besides the strong presence of Japanese popular culture from the colonial period to the present, American popular culture has certainly influenced the development of Korean popular culture. Indeed, modern Korean popular culture and music have been heavily and directly influenced by American popular culture and music from the Korean War period (1950-1953) as the American military established its ongoing presence in Korea down to the present. While the presence of Japan in Korean society and culture has long been problematic for Koreans because they could not emotionally let go of the colonial past, the influence of American popular culture on Korean society and culture has been accepted relatively unproblematically, especially among the younger generation, who have embraced its association with civilization, freedom, and peace. Although aspects of American culture were introduced by the missionaries in the late nineteenth century and also through Japan during the colonial period, the American military became the main source for the spread of American popular culture and music into Korea since the 1950s.

In 1951, as the American military established AFKN (the American Forces Korea Network), with radio broadcasts of American popular music, Koreans began to gain familiarity with a variety of American genres. From 1957 the AFKN TV broadcasting started to air

American movies like *Mambo*, *Rock Around the Clock*, and *The Americano*.³⁹⁵ Koreans were already absorbing the sounds of American pop, and while they rarely performed the music for Korean audiences, a number of Korean singers and groups found they could have steady and relatively lucrative engagements at the American military base in Seoul-- called *Mipalgun* (American Eighth Army) in Korean—performing at the *Mipalgun-shyo* (American Eighth Army Show) for the American soldiers. During the 1950s and the 1960s, because it was expensive to invite the pop stars from America to Korea, *Mipalgun* mostly hired local singers/groups who could play the popular music genres of America at that time, including jazz, mambo, cha-cha-cha, tango, swing, rock and roll, boogie-woogie, and twist. Because of its good pay, many Korean musicians and dancers who were performing at the clubs around the base after the Korean War, competed to be selected for the *Mipalgun-shyo* and the competitive conditions improved their performance skills. Many of the Korean singers and groups used English words or American sounding names in their stage names, such as the Kim Sisters, the Lee Sisters, the Chông Sisters, the Pearl Sisters, the Kim Trio, Johnny Brothers, the Kim Brothers, the Arirang Brothers, Patty Kim, Frankie Son, Monica Yu, and Hiky Shin.³⁹⁶ Among them, the Kim Sisters (a female trio) was especially popular in the 1950s and the early 1960s, leading to their concert in America in 1960 and introduced in some American magazines including *Life*.³⁹⁷ The trio learned to play some traditional Korean instruments to add more variety to their show in America, and they often wore Chinese-style dresses besides wearing western-style dresses and traditional Korean dresses.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ Roald Maliangkay, “Supporting Our Boys: American Military Entertainment and Korean Pop Music in the 1950s and early 1960s,” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 22-23.

³⁹⁶ “Hanguk Pokû ui “Sagam”in Ibaekch’ôn” (Korean Folk’s Supervisor, Ibaekch’ôn), *Chosun Ilbo*, August. 10. 2005.

³⁹⁷ “Kungnae Ch’ôt Pokôlgûrubun Kim Sisters” (The First Korean Vocal Group was the Kim Sisters), *TV Rreport*, July. 28. 2005.

³⁹⁸ “Kim Sisters rûl Asimnikka?” (Do You Know the Kim Sisters?), *Herald Business*, September. 8. 2006.



Figure 6.2 Korean female trio Kim Sisters' first album cover, *The Kim Sisters: Their First Album* (1958, left) and their American concert photo in the cover of American magazine, *Life* (1960, right)

As the Korean broadcasting system began to develop in the 1960s, some of these singers and groups began to appear on Korean radio and later television. Until the 1960s, besides the remake versions of American pop songs, many Korean songs also took English words, often related to the American popular culture of the period, for song titles, such as “Ulrûngdo Tûwisûtû” (“Ulrûng-Island Twist”), “Hawaiian Hula Agassi” (“Hawaiian Hula Lady”), “Noraegarak Ch’ach’ach’a” (“Singing-Melody Cha-Cha-Cha”), “Ch’eri Pingkû Mambo” (“Cherry Pink Mambo”), “Kutpai Chon” (“Good-Bye John”), “Kuiyôun Peibi” (“Cute Baby”),

“Appanûn Madorosû” (“Sailor Dad”), and Pûrabo Haebyûngdae” (“Bravo Marine Force”), “Amerikan Madorosû” (“American Sailor”).³⁹⁹

Among the singers and groups from the *Mipalgun-shyo*, the singer Shin Chung-Hyun, who debuted as Hiky Shin in 1955 at the *Mipalgun*, came to be considered as the master of rock music in Korea.⁴⁰⁰ Since the 1950s, from the *Mipalgun-shyo* period, Shin Jung-Hyun has focused on rock music as he formed various rock bands playing at the clubs, including Add 4 (1963), Donkeys (1966), Shin Jung-Hyun Big Band (1968), Question (1970), The Men (1972), Shin Jung-Hyun kwa Yôpjôndûl (Shin Jung-Hyun and Coins, 1973), Shin Jung-Hyun kwa Myujikpawô (Shin Jung-Hyun and Music-power, 1980), and Shin Jung-Hyun kwa Se Nagûne (Shin Jung-Hyun and Three Wanderers, 1983).⁴⁰¹ Besides his long career as a rock musician, his constant conflicts with the authoritarian Korean government of Park Chung-Hee over his involvement with the *Taemach’o Sagôn* (lit., the “Marijuana Incident”) in the 1974 won him respect among some young Koreans (mostly college students from that period) as the most resistant rock musician.⁴⁰² Among the many musicians involved with the *Taemach’o Sagôn*, he was the most severely punished by the government, serving four years in prison. Furthermore, most of his songs were banned until 1987.⁴⁰³

Another famous singer from the *Mipalgun sho*, Patty Kim, became very popular as a mainstream singer in the early 1970s as she joined with the composer Kil Ok-Yun, who had played saxophone at the *Mipalgun sho*.⁴⁰⁴ Kil Ok-Yun, who produced a number of hit songs in

³⁹⁹ “Kayo Pangmulgwan” (Korean Popular Music Museum), Asea, 10 CDs, January. 2006.

⁴⁰⁰ His mother was a Japanese.

⁴⁰¹ “Shin Jung-Hyun, Rogûn Ch’am Yeppûn Umak” (Shin Jung-Hyun, Rock is Very Beautiful Music), *My Daily*, July. 6. 2006.

⁴⁰² The *Taemach’o Sagôn* (lit., the “Marijuana Incident”) in the 1974 was not only related to the folk song or rock music musicians but also many popular singers who might have been just friends with those involved musicians. It was also a strong gesture by the government to control the Korean public in general.

⁴⁰³ Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *Korean Popular Music History* (Seoul: Ries & Book, 2003) pp. 68-69.

⁴⁰⁴ Lee Young-Mee. *Hanguk Taejung Kayosa* (The History of Korean Popular Music) (Seoul: Sigongsa, 1998) p. 152.

the 1960s and the 1970s, took elements from swing jazz and used them in the folk-song and *t'ûrot'û* style songs.⁴⁰⁵

After the infamous “Marijuana Incident” in the mid 1970s, many older Koreans began to consider the contemporary American popular music being introduced through the *Mipalgun* as culturally harmful, and Koreans were worried about its bad influence on the youth. Also, the neighborhoods around American army bases filled with night clubs (where those musicians performed), bars, and prostitutes (serving the American soldiers), and earned a bad reputation as dangerous areas to be around, especially after dark.

In 1978, America’s disco fever was brought by the movie *Saturday Night Fever* to Korea, and dance clubs, called *Tisûko T’ek/Tit’ek* (“Disco Club”), became popular among young Koreans. Also, in 1978 and 1979, the top band from the *Mipalgun sho*, *Sarang kwa P’yônghwa* (Love and Peace), became very popular in the mainstream as they introduced funky disco style music by using synthesizer and talk box, which were new to most of the Korean audiences at that time.⁴⁰⁶ Since 1976 the band was the most highly paid band at the *Mipalgun sho* and the only Korean band earned “Special AA” from the *Mipalgun* at the audition.⁴⁰⁷ However, the band *Sarang kwa Pyônghwa* was banned in 1980 as the band members were caught by smoking marijuana.⁴⁰⁸

In the 1970s and the 1980s, American and European popular music, distinguished from Korean and other Asian pop as “*pap song*” in Korean (pronounced almost like the English “pop song”), was very popular in Korea. In the 1970s, hit songs by the famous duo the Carpenters, including “For All We Know,” “Superstar,” “Rainy Days and Mondays,” and “Yesterday Once

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 60-70.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 71-72.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 71.

⁴⁰⁸ “Sarang kwa Pyônghwa” (Love and Peace), *Weekly Hankook*, November. 1. 2002.

More,” were very popular in Korea through FM radio.⁴⁰⁹ The other popular singers/groups and songs were Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven,” Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody,” Deep Purple’s “Soldier of Fortune,” the Eagles’ “Hotel California,” Simon & Garfunkel’s “Bridge over Troubled Water,” the Bee Gees’ “Without You,” Olivia Newton-John’s “Let Me Be There,” Pink Floyd’s “The Wall,” and ABBA’s “Dancing Queen.”⁴¹⁰

In the 1980s, American and European pop musicians, including Michael Jackson (America), Madonna (America), Duran Duran (England), Culture Club (England), and A-Ha (Sweden) were enormously successful in Korea. After Michael Jackson’s music video “Thriller” was broadcast on TV in 1983, many young Korean boys practiced his dance steps, and break-dance--Michael Jackson’s robotic dance and moonwalk movements--became a regular item for school picnics and festivals throughout the 1980s. The Korean singer Park Nam-Jung gained national popularity as a dancer-singer due to his skill at imitating Michael Jackson’s dance steps, and often sang Michael Jackson’s “Billie Jean” in tuxedo on TV. Madonna’s dancing and fashion styles were imitated by Kim Wan-Sun, as mentioned discussed in Chapter Two. Besides the music and style of these American super stars, there were countless English-language popular songs, mostly by Americans, that Koreans enjoyed and imitated. The following list provides a sense of the range of international hits in Korea:

Lionel Richie & Diana Ross’s “Endless Love”
Olivia Newton-John’s “Physical”
Richard Sanderson’s “Reality”
Joe Cocker & Jennifer Warnes’
“Up Where We Belong”

⁴⁰⁹ The Carpenters’ best album “The Ultimate Collection” was newly released in March, 2007 in Korea. “Pop Atisûtû, Capentôjû” (Pop Artist, the Carpenters), *Herald Business*, March. 2. 2007.

⁴¹⁰ “ABBA Noraenûn Chigûm Tûrôdo Sinsônhada” (ABBA’s Music Is Fresh Even Today), *Newsweek Korea*, January. 16. 2007; Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *Korean Popular Music History* (Seoul: Ries & Book, 2003) pp. 192-194; <http://pops.pe.kr/> (accessed February. 16. 2007); <http://www.oldpop.net/> (accessed February. 16. 2007); <http://www.yetpop.com/> (accessed February. 16. 2007).

Chicago's "Hard to Say I'm Sorry"
 Alan Parsons Project's "Eye in the Sky"
 ToTo's "Africa,"
 The Police's "Every Breath You Take"
 The Scorpions' "Still Loving Young"
 Falco's "Rock Me Amadeus"
 Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors"
 Stevie Wonder's "I Just Called to Say I Love You"
 Bon Jovi's "Living on a Prayer"
 Boston's "Amanda"
 Suzanne Vega's "Luka"
 Debbie Gibson's "Lost in Your Eyes"
 New Kids On The Block's "Step by Step"⁴¹¹

From the mid 1980s, as American and European pop stars' music videos became popular, some Korean TV programs broadcast those music videos with commentary by Korean VJs.⁴¹² More importantly, FM radio offered many programs exclusively devoted to the popular songs from America and Europe, and many young Koreans listened to the programs on a regular basis. For example, KBS Radio's "Hwang In-Yong ui Yôngpapsû (Hwang In-Yong's Young Pops)" and "Kim Kwang-Han ûi Papsû Taial (Kim Kwang-Han's Pops Dial)" and MBC Radio's "Park Won-Ung kwa Hamkke (With Park Won-Ung)" and "Kim Ki-Dôk ûi 2 si ûi Teit'û (Kim Ki-Dôk's Date at 2 o'clock)" were very popular, broadcasting songs by listener request and also the latest hit songs from the American Billboard charts.⁴¹³ Pirated cassettes of these popular stars' albums, as well as compilation cassettes, were sold everywhere; and illegally imported or copied LPs were sold on the black market. Their photos were sold everywhere, and magazines often offered big bromides of those pop stars' latest pictures. There were some music magazines that only covered popular songs from America and Europe, including *Wolgan Papsong* (Monthly Pop

⁴¹¹"80nyôndae Papsong kwa Atiutûdûl" (80s' Popular Songs and Artists) at <http://kr.blog.yahoo.com/dol5153/943394>; <http://www.mufree.com/bbs/board.php>; "Ultimate 80s Songs" at <http://www.afn.org/~afn30091/80songs.html>. (all accessed February. 16. 2007).

⁴¹² Lee Hye-Sook and Son Woo-Suk (ed), *op. cit.* pp. 195-197.

⁴¹³ "80 nyôndae Radio Pap Pûrogûraemdûl Kûrigo 80nyôndae Chôngsô" (80s' Radio Pop Programs and 80s' Sentiment) at <http://www.emh.co.kr/xhtml/eighties.html> (accessed February. 16. 2007).

Songs) and *Ŭmak Segye* (Music World), which disappeared in the late 1980s as American and European popular songs receded in popularity in Korea.⁴¹⁴ It was around this time that the quality of Korean popular music production, especially *palladû kayo*, became quite sophisticated both in terms of studio recording quality and in the level of sophistication in the packaging of albums, and Korea's booming economy stimulated young Koreans' consumerism in Korea. Young Koreans began to spend their allowances on local pop stars' albums, and the broadcasting and sales of Korean popular music increased significantly.

From the late 190s, with the downturn in the popularity of Western pop in Korea, Hong Kong pop took its place. Although since the late 1970s, Hong Kong action movies (most of them starring Jackie Chan) and ghost/fantasy movies were popular in Korea in the late 1970s, as in the rest of Asia, Hong Kong's popular musicians did not begin to gain popularity in Korea until a decade later. Super-star actor-singers from Hong Kong and Taiwan, including Leslie Cheung, Jacky Cheung, Andy Lau, and Jin Cheng Woo (Kaneshiro Takeshi in Japanese) were the rage in Korea from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. Among them, Leslie Cheung and Andy Lau, were particularly popular in Korea among many Korean girls. Their songs as well as original sound tracks were available cheaply through pirated cassettes and LPs on the black market, and fashion and movie magazines constantly introduced news about these stars. Leslie Cheung even appeared in Korean TV commercials, including a chocolate commercial, in which he also sang the commercial's song. In 1989 Leslie Cheung gave a big concert in Seoul joined by Korean star singer Lee Sun-Hee, with thousands of young Korean girls lining up from the early morning and waiting long hours for tickets on a rainy day. Besides his good looks, his soft voice and sexy dance were beloved by many Korean fans through the early 1990s.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Since the early 1990s, as American hip-hop and rap music was being introduced by Seo Taiji, mainstream Korean popular music became two-fold: *taensû* (dance) and *palladû* (ballad) styles, both often containing sections of rap interposed between the main melodic parts. At first, Seo Taiji's adaptation of hip-hop and rap music was criticized by older singers and popular music critics because it was obviously an imitation of American black music culture. Soon thereafter the media and the older generation began to complain about his lyrics, which became critical and cynical about Korean society and educational system. Nevertheless, hip-hop culture and rap music began to dominate not only mainstream popular music in Korea, but also the underground music scene there throughout the 1990s. Besides rap music, Seo Taiji's adaptation of rock, heavy metal, gangster rap, house, and rave genres into his music from 1992 to 1995 were highly influential, and were imitated by many Korean singers and groups after his initial retirement in 1996.

In the mid 1990s American popular music still had a strong presence in Korea. As music television made its first inroads into Korea in the late 1990s, foreign pop was dominant, but receding, and by the early 2000s, popular music performed by Koreans, with Korean lyrics took over—albeit heavily and obviously influenced by a range of foreign popular musical styles, whether coming directly from America or from Japan. Even the international music television stations in Korea, MTV Korea and Channel [V] Korea, devoted most of their airtime to Korean pop, though with continued coverage of Western pop⁴¹⁵ and, after 2004, adding new shows devoted to Japanese pop. Though some Koreans all too easily judged this turn of events to be both an economic and a cultural triumph for Korea, augmented by the Korean Wave boom in China and then in Japan, the issue of foreign presence in the popular cultural world of

⁴¹⁵ On Korean music television, see R. Anderson Sutton's "Bounded Variation? Music Television in South Korea" in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 208-220.

contemporary Korea remains a contested issue, as it bears on Korean's individual cultural identity, national pride, and economic well-being. In the final section of this chapter, we take an interpretive look at the meanings of Japan's presence in Korea, seen primarily through Japanese popular music.

6.3 THE NEW "PRESENCE" OF JAPAN IN KOREA AND KOREAN PERCEPTIONS: POSTCOLONIAL DESIRE

In this section I discuss Koreans' current perceptions about Japan, about its popular music and culture, and about Korean fans themselves and their consumption of Japanese popular culture in order to trace which factors appeal to Koreans. Based on fans' remarks, we can readily identify cuteness, overt sexiness, hybridity, instrumental playing ability, polished recording production, approachability, and amateurish personae as main reasons. The new presence of Japan in Korea is accepted by many young Koreans who desire access to Japanese cultural products but not to Japanese cultural identity. That is, anticolonialist or anti-Japanese discourse is considered as an obsolescent idea for many Koreans as they have begun to change their cultural attitudes toward Japanese popular culture and music, although this change is not shared unanimously.

Popular music consumption has always depended on desire. Most directly, we can point to the desire of the listener to hear the music (live on stage, broadcast on radio, TV, or internet), and the desire of the listener to "own" the music on recording and thereby to "control" his or her access to it. As popular musicians and music industry producers and marketers have come to know very well over the last century, the stimuli that induce listeners to become paying consumers, the very basis of the music industry, incorporate numerous factors beyond the musical sound. Most obvious is the physical appeal of the musicians, as they appear in action on

stage and as they appear in various media: promotional photographs, album covers, television appearances, and internet websites. And with elaborate video projection equipment now routine at many live concerts in Korea and Japan, as well as many other countries around the globe, the distinction between “live” and “mediated” is growing ever more fuzzy.

Considering Japanese popular music over the last several decades, it is certainly clear that Japanese music producers paid very close attention to a popular musician’s total image, with singing and musical abilities often less important than physical appearance and public personality. Japanese idol culture is a quintessential culmination of this approach. Successfully established, an idol star can project a friendly amateurish personality, that is—perhaps ironically—enormously effective in its power to lure the zealous adoration of fans, who think little of spending recklessly on everything from concert tickets to CDs and related products.

In Japan itself, the music industry has effectively marketed idol stars for decades, but at the same time remained open to a wide variety of musical genres (from bubblegum music to noise music) and popular musician images (from cute to threatening).⁴¹⁶ It is our task in this final section to inquire into current attitudes held by Koreans about Japan and its popular culture (as such and in Korea?) and to scrutinize and question critically the factors accounting for Japanese popular music’s appeal in Korea, weighing it against the appeal of other popular music, foreign and domestic.

⁴¹⁶ Bubblegum music is a genre of popular music that is characterized by its simple harmony, danceable beat, childish lyrics, and catchy melody. Noise music uses unconventional, “non-musical” sounds in combinations that sound cacophonous and grating, representing a kind of “anti-music” that is enjoyed for its oppositionality, among a small but devoted fan base.

6.3.1 Pro-Japanese Popular Culture vs. Anti-Japan/Japanese in Korea

The popular Korean portal website *Daum* (serving 37 million members) offers “debate rooms” (called *T’oronbang* in Korean) where various topics are discussed and argued. Debate rooms are correlated to different nationality rooms, including “Japan room” (*Ilbonbang* in Korean). Almost any topic can be debated, but those related to any aspect of relations between Korea and Japan often lead to heated and extreme exchanges. In many of those cases, the “debate room” becomes a kind of “war zone” between those who are pro-Japanese popular culture and those who are anti-Japanese popular culture and anti-Japanese in general. Most of those who are pro-Japanese popular culture claim that they are not necessary pro-Japanese and what they like is not the Japanese nation or the Japanese people, but simply Japanese popular culture, which they consider to be more advanced, diverse, and of higher quality than Korean popular culture. Furthermore, many of them express a belief that anti-Japan/anti-Japanese Koreans would like Japanese popular culture if they knew more about it. In contrast, those who are anti-Japan/Japanese criticize the pro-Japanese popular culture Koreans as people without national self-respect.

Japanese words and Japanized English words have been widely used in Korea. As more Japanese popular cultural products have become available in Korea since the late 1990s, many Japanese words related to popular culture have become common on the internet and in daily conversation among many young Koreans. Among these, the word “otaku,” which refers to people who are overly obsessive with anything (from *anime* and *manga* to idol stars) to an extreme level, has become a common term in Korea. While in Japan the word *otaku* has a negative connotation, both fans and anti-fans of Japanese popular culture in Korea seem to use the word *otaku* to refer to those fans of Japanese popular culture who believe that they are

experts, in a rather positive sense. There are a few other words used to refer to them, including *Chepaen Maenia* (“Japan Mania,” i.e., fans who are zealous “maniacs,” in a positive sense) and *Ilppa* (from *Ilbone Ppajin*, lit., “being addicted to Japan/fallen for Japan,” which is usually used by the anti-Japanese Korean fans in a negative sense).

On January 22, 2006, web ID “Arasô Saenggakagil” (lit., “Think Whatever You Want to”) posted a long message entitled “Otaku ûi Siljewa Ilbon ûi Hyônsil” (“Facts on Otaku and the Reality of Japan”).⁴¹⁷ It was viewed 109,219 times, and 593 postings (*kkoritmal* or *taetgûl* in Korean) had appeared as of March 18, 2007. In the message, “Arasô Saenggakagil” criticized Korea’s *Ilppa* people categorically as hopeless. Based on his/her experience living in Japan, “Arasô Saenggakagil” explained how even Japanese look down on *otaku* people in Japan and stressed how the *otaku* Korean do not really understand Japan and Japanese society, which can be as conservative as Korea. Also, he/she pointed out that Korean people’s indirect contact with Japan through Japanese popular culture should not be considered as if they were looking at the real Japan or Japanese people. He/she stressed that the real Japan is not a fantasy world as represented by *anime* and *manga*. People who agreed with the message posted:

“I also think they are really hopeless. They should be able to distinguish good and bad instead of being obsessed with Japanese pop stars and *manga* and even proud of themselves.”

“I saw a *kosûpure* (Cosplay/Costume Play) event here in Korea. I couldn’t believe those elementary kids were wearing all kinds of weird costume and kept saying Japanese words *kawaii* (cute) to each other.”⁴¹⁸

“What you said is true and it’s sad and embarrassing.”

“Ilppa don’t know how cheesy they look.”

⁴¹⁷ “Otaku ui Silchewa Ilbon ui Hyônsil” (“Facts on Otaku and Reality of Japan”) at C:\Documents and Settings\Owner\Desktop\ch6 source 2\otaku 593.htm (accessed February. 17. 2007).

⁴¹⁸ *Kosupure* is showing off characters by dressing like the characters from *manga*, *anime*, games, movies, pop stars, and so on.

“I live in Japan too and I feel really embarrassed when those Koreans come to Japan and talk about how much they love Japanese *anime* and *manga* all the time. I think in fact most Japanese must look down on them.”

“I like Japanese *anime* and *manga* too, but when I look at those *Ilppa* or *otaku* I can’t say anything.”

As noted by Berger and Huntington, “language is a crucial factor in this cultural diffusion,”⁴¹⁹ and Koreans’ easy access to Japanese sources in the internet has been very important force of disseminating Japanese popular culture and related words in Korea. Besides the fact that Japanese has been the second most popular foreign language to learn in Korea and the two languages share many linguistic similarities, an automatic translating internet program has been available for free in Korea since the late 1990s, by which any Japanese website can be instantly converted to Korean and also the other way around. For example, any Japanese song lyrics can be translated into Korean with one click, which has led users to be able to access the textual meaning and messages in the song.

“Arasô Saenggakagil”’s message was criticized by many Koreans--not only by the devoted fans but also by people who do not consider themselves to be *Ilppa* or *otaku* and who also understand the bad implication of the Japanese word *otaku* but just simply enjoy Japanese *manga* and *anime*. These people were disturbed by its specific point on *anime* and *manga*, which have been the most popular and oldest products of Japanese popular culture in Korea. Some examples from the interchanges are given below:

“I like *anime* and *manga* but I’m not crazy. They are popular all over the world.”

⁴¹⁹ Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington, eds. *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 3.

“Didn’t you watch any *anime* and *manga*? Everybody likes them so what’s the problem?”

“If Japan is really not good, then why do so many Koreans try to learn Japanese? Speaking English is a good thing so why not Japanese?”

“Japanese *anime* is internationally famous. It’s a high art.”

“I like Japanese *anime* and *manga* and dramas and music also. Most Korean stuff has copied its Japanese counterparts, which we should be more ashamed of.”

“Arasô Saenggakgil”’s message and its responses prove how serious and emotional Koreans can be in relation to Japanese popular culture. Iwabuchi argued that “a sense of yearning for Japan is still not aroused in Asia, because what is appreciated, unlike American popular culture, is still not an image or idea of Japan but simply a materialistic consumer commodity.”⁴²⁰ However, as we can see from those replies, some Koreans clearly reveal a sense of respect and yearning toward Japanese popular culture, whereas at the same time it is troublesome and disturbing for many anti-Japan/Japanese Koreans. It seems that there is a growing sense of desire and respect for Japan and Japan’s image is gradually improving in Korea despite strong opposition, and that is why it matters to many Koreans who do not want to acknowledge this change. Korea’s newly raised nationalistic attitude can be interpreted as a resistant response to this newest manifestation of yearning for “things Japanese.” At the same time, Korean’s cultural contacts with Japanese have increased, and many Koreans have begun to discover the strong sense of superiority over Korea that a significant number of Japanese still harbor as former colonizers and as citizens of the richest country in Asia, an attitude which invigorates Koreans’ antagonism. It is still early to say whether the sense of yearning or respect for Japan is a different from that for America or not, since Japanese popular culture has only

⁴²⁰ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 34.

recently been legally imported to Korea, giving Koreans comparable access and potential for familiarity as that enjoyed for decades by American popular culture.

Until the early 1990s, being pro-Japan/pro-Japanese anything in public was to risk confrontation and trouble in Korea, regardless of whether the particular person, issue, or thing might be ethically or politically positive or not. Korea's strong nationalistic antagonism against Japan did not allow anything but anti-Japan/Japanese opinion in public. However, as the official opening process was declared and Koreans increasingly accessed Japanese popular music and cultural products they fully knew to be Japanese, through the internet and through television and radio broadcast and CD sales, people have freely experienced Japanese popular culture as never before. Korean youth especially, growing up in an economically developed Korea, with parents who themselves were born after the colonial era, have become separated from the nation's political and emotional conflicts with Japan and attached instead to Japan as cultural consumers. These Korean consumers of Japanese popular culture often rationalize their consuming behavior as the same as consumption of American or any other foreign popular cultural products. However, anti-Japan/Japanese Koreans do not agree with the rationalization, instead feeling disturbed by what they see, vehemently, as a loss of national pride and identity by Koreans with positive attitudes towards Japanese popular culture.

The photos below were posted on March, 16, 2007 by a *Daum* user "hirata" (a Korean student living in Japan).⁴²¹ Within two days, the photos were viewed by 414,807 people and 349 replies were posted, and the numbers kept increasing. The title of the post is "Ilbon 'Akihabara'esô Mannan T'ûgihan!! "Ajôssi"..." (Unique Man I Met in Akihabara, Japan...). Hirata described how surprised he was to see the middle-age Japanese man in the Sailor Moon-

⁴²¹ "Ilbon "Akihabara"esô Mannan T'ûgihan!! "Ajôssi"..." (Unique Man I Met in Akihabara, Japan...). <http://bbs5.worldn.media.daum.net/griffin/do/photo/read?bbsId=201&articleId=80893&pageIndex=1&searchKey=&searchValue> (accessed March. 16. 2007).

like school uniform-costume on a weekday morning playing Play Station 3 at Akihabara, a famous shopping district in Tokyo that sells electronic, computer, anime, and character goods.⁴²²



Figure 6.3 Japanese man playing Play Station 3 at Akihabara (left) and his another photo showing him wearing the famous anime character Sailor Moon-like girl's school uniform (2007, right)

The hundreds of responses showed two contrasting opinions: “crazy” and “unique.” While most of the negative responses used the words like crazy, scary, sick, abnormal, incomprehensible, disgusting, and perverted, most of the positive responses used the words like unique, cool, cute, courageous, freedom-loving, creative, funny, progressive, and enviable. I would suggest that those words not only represent what they think about the man in the photos but also explain what Koreans think about Japan, Japanese, and Japanese popular culture in general. Some of the positive responses were:

⁴²² Sailor Moon is a popular *manga* character, which is a magical girl.

“It’s so unique and cool. This is why Japan is an advanced country.”

“He looks so cute.”

“It’s up to his taste. People should not discriminate against different culture.”

“I think Japan is really open-minded. Sometimes, I really envy their freedom.”

“He must be so brave!”

“I envy his courage. I hope to visit there sometime.”

“I wish I could do that kind of thing in Korea, but I don’t have that kind of courage.”

“Their creative and unique elements became the driving force for achieving such an advanced country. People should overcome their fixed ideas.”

Based on these replies, we can see that the images of Japan as unique, cool, advanced, and confident in attitude were delivered through the Japanese popular cultural products to many young Koreans, who could not find enough uniqueness or coolness from within their own country and its popular culture. Thus, for those Koreans, the anti-Japan/Japanese Koreans’ nationalistic view is considered as old-fashioned and nonproductive.

6.3.2 Korea’s Japanese Popular Music Fans Converse on the Internet

Since most of the consumption by young Koreans of popular cultural products, and of Japanese popular music in particular, has become online-based, it is difficult to evaluate the patterns of their consumer behavior based on rankings or downloading numbers, as the statistics can be very different site by site. However, by tracing what the devoted Korean fans of Japanese popular music have to say to other fellow Japanese pop lovers or to the people who criticize their pro-

Japanese popular cultural behavior, we can find very current evidence of some aspects of the “new presence” of Japan in Korea and Korean perception thereof.

One of the popular portal websites, *Naver*'s subdivision *Naver Japan* has been offering *Enjoy Japan* service, which both Korean and Japanese have been interactively using since 2000, even though it is a Korean website. With the automatic language conversion tool mentioned previously, both Korean and Japanese can post and read their messages and replies in both languages. In some cases, both Korean and Japanese users verbal attacks and defenses get quite ugly and the message board becomes vitriolic war zone between the two countries. The “Japanese Music” community of *Enjoy Japan* has been a place for Korean fans and some Japanese users to share their messages and replies about certain Japanese artists and songs. Although this community's board also often foments “verbal war” between the two nationals, as the restriction on usage of words has become relatively tightened now, Korean users try to keep the community clean and to focus on musical issues only.

Among the innumerable kinds of questions and answers by both Korean and Japanese users, I will describe some of the most interesting and relevant ones, which show Korean's perceptions about certain genres of Japanese popular music and musicians. On March 3, 2007, for example, Japanese user “ub777” posted a question “Wae Hagugindûri Choahajyô?” (“Why Do Koreans Like [Japanese pop]?”) with a video file of Japanese rock band Ellegarden's “Fire Cracker,” which was in English.⁴²³ The Japanese rock band Ellegarden has been popular in Korea and had a concert in Korea September 29, 2006. The musical sound was almost identical to American rock music. Korean fans answered:

⁴²³ <http://enjoyjapan.naver.com/tbbs/read.php>. “Wae Hagugindûri Choahajyô?” (“Why Do Koreans Like [Japanese pop]?”) (accessed March. 18. 2007).

“I think Japanese rock bands’ vocal techniques are really horrible. I can’t stand the vocal part but the instrumentalists’ performance is really excellent. That’s why I like the band.”

“I think the band is not musically better than Korean rock bands. I think Korean singers sing better than Japanese. But, Japanese know how to make their concert so fun, and the singer’s face’s so cute too.”

“I like the band’s performance techniques and looks but not the vocal part. Japanese can’t sing.”

In this case, the Korean fans seem to like Japanese versions of localized American rock music more than Korean versions of localized American rock music. Japanese band’s skillful performance and sophisticated stage manner seem appealing to those fans.

On February 18, 2007, Korean user “sellys09” post a message “Ilbonûn Aidoriranûn Changrûga Ttaro itta?” (“Idol Music Is a Separate Genre?”). “sellys09” said:

“I often see that people compare Korean and Japanese idols, which I don’t think necessary. Since Japan’s aesthetic values are different from Korea’s, Japanese idol’s lack of singing techniques should not be criticized. Also, in Korea, as we do not even use the word to refer a certain genre, we really do not compare the Japanese idol singers to young Korean singers in Korea.”

Korean users replied:

“I don’t care about idols’ singing at all. Only ‘looks’ are important.”

“I think Korean idols seem commercially less elaborated. I feel they just work hard but lack of variety. Japanese idols are well-packaged normal people. They are short and not pretty, just act cute.”

“They just need to be cute and sexy. If you want vocal technique, you need to listen to classical music.”

“In my opinion, Korean idols are music-centered although they began to expand their careers to other entertainment genres. But, they are still considered as singers. Japanese idols also sing and dance, but they participate

in many different entertainment genres. In any case, for them, I think their expression of cuteness and happiness is more important. If they can sing well like Kinki Kids, then even better though...”

In this case, the Japanese female idols’ cuteness and youthful looks and behavior, which have been pointed by many scholars, seem also to constitute the main, or at least the most obvious, reasons for their popularity in Korea.⁴²⁴ However, the idea of “life-sized” persona, so often attributed to Japanese idol stars, might not be a factor in Korea, since most Korean fans do not have direct contact with the idols. It seems to me that what they like about Japanese pop female idols is really no different from what they like about *anime* and *manga* characters. Traditionally, Koreans have appreciated “beauty” and “prettiness” more than “cuteness” in general. However, as Japan’s well-packaged “cute” culture began to penetrate into Korea via *anime*, *manga*, and character goods like Hello Kitty in the 1970s, the positive value placed on “cuteness” in general seemed to increase as well. Buying cute products used to be only for children, but not anymore. People in their 20s and 30s, especially young mothers, also buy cute products for themselves, and they do not consider such consuming behavior as a kind of “Peter Pan syndrome” since it is so common.

Among the popular female singers, discussions on Amuro Namie are focused on somewhat more on musical matters than her image and personality. Besides her pretty and sexy looks, her singing ability while she dances, especially at live concerts, has been frequently discussed among the fans. As many Koreans point out, most Korean singers (if they also dance) have been doing lip-sync on TV and even at concerts, until recently. Thus Amuro Namie’s live singing ability, which is almost the same live as on her CDs, has been highly praised by Korean audiences. Her fans state:

⁴²⁴ Aoyagi, Craig 2000, Iwabuchi 2002, Ng 2002.

“I love her. She’s so pretty and she’s a good singer too. When I listened to her live concert CDs, I got goose-bumps.”

“I’ve been listening to her 1996 album for more than 10 years. I’m still not sick of it.”

“I like her songs a lot. She’s pretty and can sing so well.”

“She’s really outstanding among the Japanese female singers. She really can sing!”

“Her voice is so in control even when she dances hard.”

“I think she is a really artist. She always works so hard. I can’t believe that she is a mother...”⁴²⁵

Among the many posts investigated for this study, relatively few addressed the “Japaneseness” of the singers or their sound, tending instead to focus directly on a particular singer or song. Yet we have seen above that some have addressed issues of cuteness and packaging, attributing these qualities to Japanese stars, or as originally Japanese before being imitated by Koreans. One even mentioned different “aesthetic values” between Korea and Japan.

These responses, in fact, are in accord with the factors identified by scholars investigating Japanese pop and its appeal elsewhere in Asia, as well as in Japan itself. I would like to review and comment on these factors now in order to probe a bit further into the cultural significance of Japanese popular music’s presence in Korea.

⁴²⁵ http://enjoyjapan.naver.com/tbbs/list.php?board_id=tj (accessed March. 17. 2007).

6.3.3 Korean Desire for Japanese Popular Music and “Things Japanese”

As I have suggested earlier, even an infatuation with Japanese popular music does not necessarily carry with it an embrace of all things Japanese. Yet as more and more Korean listeners not only become exposed to the sounds of Japanese music with full awareness of its Japanese origins—both through its cultural “odor” and through explicit labeling in the post Open-Door Policy era—they inevitably form opinions about its qualities and characteristics as constituting aspects of “Japaneseness.” Earlier in this chapter I outlined the important stages in the American popular musical presence in Korea, and this presence certainly remains strong. Most Koreans are savvy enough to realize that much of the music now performed by Korean stars—*taensû* and *palladû*—has its stylistic roots in American popular music, even if *palladû* bears intermediary influences from China and Japan. Despite America’s accelerating loss of stature and respect worldwide based on its militaristic foreign policy and its particular political differences with the South Korean government, Koreans mostly retain a sense of admiration for American popular culture, including most of its musical styles. The evidence is overwhelming, not only in the airtime on radio and television devoted to American and other Western singers and groups, and large sections for their music albums in CD stores, but also in the ongoing and pervasive stylistic imitation of American popular music genres by Korean musicians. The basic instrumentation, harmonic vocabulary, song structures, and ethos are all quite clearly American-derived. Nevertheless, the image projected by many American stars is not particularly attractive to all, or even most, Koreans. The rough, rude, in-your-face attitude of many groups, particularly in the metal-rock, gangster-rap, and punk music categories, would seem the ultimate

anathema to Korea's Confucian values, but these genres of music have small but devoted, even zealous, followings among some Koreans.⁴²⁶

6.3.3.1 Physical and Racial Resemblance

If we ask about Korean desire in relation to American popular culture, we inevitably must confront the issue of identity. Just as white teenagers in Great Britain and America found it much more appealing to hear and see blues songs performed by young white British and American pop stars, from the Beatles and Rolling Stones to Joe Cocker and Janis Joplin, in large measure because of physical (i.e., racial) similarity, Koreans have found appeal in popular music performed by Koreans and by other Asians who resemble them most closely (Chinese and Japanese). In fact, in part due to physical and cultural contrasts, and in part due to strong stereotypes projected in the American media, Koreans tend to feel more comfortable with and “similar to” white Americans than black Americans. In other words, Korean desire in the realm of American popular music and its star personalities, leans much more strongly towards white than towards black Americans, even if the white Americans are taking much of their musical style and dance movement vocabulary from black Americans.

In fact, in a more general sense, authenticity is not the issue for most Koreans, any more than it is in most other Asian countries or in the West. Remarking on the case of Japan's place in Asian transnationalism, Iwabuchi draws attention to the

apparent ambivalence in such nationalistic claims concerning Japanese cultural export, as they occur within the context of accelerated transnational cultural flows, which have gradually made it difficult, and possibly

⁴²⁶ On the punk scene in Seoul, see Stephen Epstein's “Anarchy in the UK, Solidarity in the ROK: Punk Rock Comes to Korea.” *Acta Koreana*, 3: 1-34, 2000 and “We Are The Punx in Korea” in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2006) pp. 190-207, as well as the documentary video by Epstein and Timothy R. Tangherlini, *Our Nation: A Korean Punk Rock Community* (New York: Filmmakers Library, 2001).

insignificant, to specify the original source of transnationally circulated cultural products in the first place.⁴²⁷

Not only are the American stylistic origins of much Japanese popular music not readily acknowledged, but even its performance by Japanese stars may not necessarily be known by the consumers, particularly in the case of “cover” versions and pirated music. Yet when Korean consumers can see pop musicians, performing on stage, on television, or on the internet, posing on album covers and in magazines, the physical appearance of these musicians inevitably plays an important, often critical, role in their popularity. For, like the white teenagers in the USA and Great Britain, Koreans also fantasize about the pop music stars they encounter—as potential role models, to be emulated, as imaginary girl friend or boy friend. Where a popular song performed by an American singer or group might be appealing “musically,” a Korean or Japanese performing the same or similar song is likely to be more appealing overall to most Korean audiences.

6.3.3.2 Polished Production, Instrumental Performance Skills, and Hybridity

If physical resemblance is an important factor, as I believe it is, and as a number of cultural theorists have argued, then the appeal of Japanese popular music stars in Korea requires additional interpretation. If Koreans can cover American pop songs and imitate American pop styles quite well, what need is there for Japanese popular musicians? As we have seen in the case of Hong Kong, so some Korean consumers would, in fact, question the ability their local popular musicians to rank as “world-class” or “top-notch.” While opinions inevitably vary from individual to individual and will be different depending on the particular singer or group in

⁴²⁷ Iwabuchi, *op. cit.* p. 15.

question, one does find a pervasive sense among Koreans that American pop is the global benchmark and that Japan has developed an excellence in popular music and culture that represents a regional benchmark in Asia. While Japanese singers may at times be rather mediocre, the quality of their instrumental performance and the quality of their recordings is second to none.

If Japan were merely copying and, as Iwabuchi has put it, “domesticating” the West for itself and for the rest of Asia, we might wonder at the degree of its success transnationally. However, we have seen how Japan has developed its own approach to pop star production—primarily idols, but carrying over to other stars as well—and how it has developed its own self image as quintessentially postmodern, nurturing and disseminating its hybrid musical mixes, its carefree, unpretentious sounds and frivolous fashions, amateurish and approachable rather than pompous and professional public personae, not merely as commercial product but as “Japaneseness” itself.⁴²⁸ And it appears that other Asians, including Koreans, are perceiving the sounds, the images, and the ethos behind them as “Japanese.”

6.3.3.3 Cuteness and Amateurish Personae

To review the qualities especially noted, we would necessarily begin with “cuteness”—evident not only in the idol stars who are scarcely old enough to be anything else, but also in the personalities of older Japanese popular musicians. Closely related to the notion of “cuteness” is the amateurish, unpretentious, approachable, “life-size” personality they exude in their appearances on television talk shows and even in conversing with audiences during their stage

⁴²⁸ Miyoshi Masao and H. D. Harootunian, eds. *Postmodernism and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989).

acts. Innocence, wholesomeness, and docility combine with this amateurish cuteness to make these stars the absolute opposite of scary or threatening.

In the introduction to his book on Japanese popular culture, Craig notes that, while “not all Japan pop is high quality—far from it” Japanese popular cultural products enjoy a reputation for high quality, based on a long tradition of meticulous attention to detail, in craftsmanship and manufacture.⁴²⁹ He goes on to suggest a number of characteristics accounting for the Japanese popular culture’s success, domestically and internationally:

One is that Japan pop wholeheartedly embraces life in all its dimensions, with relatively little in the way of efforts to shield its audience from unpleasant aspects of life or to ‘raise’ people to more noble or politically correct standards.... As the Italian scholar Fosco Maraini writes: ‘The Japanese, both in work and relaxation, enjoy the mere fact of living to the hilt...’⁴³⁰

A second notable characteristic of Japan pop content is a strong strain of idealism, innocence, and what the Japanese call *roman* (from the word ‘romance’): dreams, daring adventure, striving to achieve great things. On this point there is a rather sharp contrast with current American pop culture, with its heavy doses of cynicism, “attitude,” and putting people down.⁴³¹

A third feature of Japan’s popular culture is its closeness to the ordinary, everyday lives of its audience.⁴³²

Another mark of Japan’s pop culture is the frequency with which certain themes appear in its stories. Human relations are a pervasive topic, as one would expect from a society that places great importance on the group, harmony, and the smooth management of conflict.⁴³³

For other Asians, Japan’s pop culture has a resonance that is derived from ethnic similarity and from shared values, tastes, and traditions. The faces of Japan’s pop stars and actors resemble their own.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁹ Timothy J. Craig, eds. *Japan Pop!: Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*. (Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000) p. 6.

⁴³⁰ Citing Fosco Maraini. *Japan, Patterns of Continuity*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972); Craig (2000: 13).

⁴³¹ Timothy J. Craig, eds. *Japan Pop!: Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*. (Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000) p. 13.

⁴³² *Ibid.*

⁴³³ *Ibid.* p. 14.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 15.

And addressing Japanese popular music specifically, Craig states that

The hook lines (distinctive musical phrases) and chord structures of Japanese pop music are particularly agreeable to Oriental tastes. References to other Asian cultures and traditions also give Japan pop a familiar feel.⁴³⁵

6.3.3.4 Sex Appeal

Yet there are other dimensions to the appeal of Japanese popular music, and popular culture, in Korea. X-Japan took hold not because they were cute or their music was wholesome, but because it was daringly different and refreshingly, even shockingly, outside the mold. As a homogeneous and largely conformist culture, Korea has not nurtured the kinds of bold experimentation (whether truly “original” or boldly hybrid) that has taken place in Japan. Along with this, I should note that Japanese female pop singers, including former idols, such as Amuro Namie, project an increasingly daring sexuality, wearing skimpy and provocative clothing, gyrating sexually on stage, and singing in a breathy, sexy tone of voice. This quality is certainly not unique to Japan, as it has been evident for several decades at least in American popular music, at least from the early days of Madonna and hip-hop, and is now glaringly apparent in the styles of some Korean singers, such as Um Jeong-Hwa and Hyori (Lee Hyori).

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 16.

6.4 SUMMARY REMARKS

It is tempting to suggest that one of the appeals of Japanese pop music and culture to Koreans lies in the repressed subliminal responses by Koreans to its former colonizer's culture, consciously despised but alluring and even irresistible by nature of Japan's hegemonic dominance. Yet the evidence does not support this view. Younger Koreans are growing up in a Korea that clearly has not forgotten Japan's colonial subjugation of them in the past, and its denial of that subjugation in the present. But they are not hegemonically under Japan's spell any longer. Rather, as pointed out in a scathing appraisal of Korea's colonized mentality by Choi Chungmoo, Japan was ousted summarily from Korea in 1945, but almost immediately replaced by the United States, which remains a colonial presence in Korea.⁴³⁶ For Choi, it is not a case of "post-colonial" Korea, but of a continually colonized Korea, a "'postcolonial' colonialism"⁴³⁷-- which is primarily a "colonization of consciousness."⁴³⁸ Western modernity is, he argues, so thoroughly embraced by Koreans that they appropriate an enormous range of devices in an attempt to claim it and make it their own, but "For those who adopt such a worldview, the lack of material resources to produce it is tantamount to an admission of one's own cultural inferiority"-- hence, a clamoring by the Korean elite for "meticulously acquiring Western, that is, U.S. culture."⁴³⁹ This has included American popular music, as well as facility in English, American college or graduate school education, and a tacit (and insidious) acceptance of Western superiority.

⁴³⁶ Choi Chung Moo, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea" in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. by Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) pp. 461-484.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 465.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 463.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

The yearning for things American continues to be evident among Korea's younger generation, but not as strongly as the previous generation, and this difference is partly due to the rise of Asia—most recently China, but before that Japan, in the post-World War II era (i.e., post-Japanese colonialism). It is not my intent here to delve deeply into the lingering and transforming presence of the United States and Western culture more generally in contemporary Korea. It is, rather, the positioning of Japan that concerns me.

In this context, we might more fruitfully draw on Ella Shohat's and Robert Stam's notion of postcoloniality: "...postcolonial thought stresses deterritorialization, the constructed nature of nationalism and national borders, and the obsolescence of anticolonialist discourse."⁴⁴⁰ And what we find among devotees of Japanese popular culture is an embrace of these very notions. Japanese pop, for many, is not "Japan," not inextricably tied into a bundle requiring a love or even acceptance of "things Japanese," but rather an enjoyable, even deeply satisfying, alternative or addition to other popular music choices. If cuteness, overt sexiness, hybridity, instrumental performance skill, polished recording production, and amateurish personae are Japanese, or portions of a still incomplete and not yet knowable Japan—as many Koreans would seem to think—they are nevertheless able to enjoy and consume this popular culture as part of their own hybrid, postcolonial world. They are, one might say, desiring access to Japanese cultural products, but not to Japanese cultural identity. Even learning Japanese and eating Japanese food is not a stepping stone to abandoning Korean identity, moving to Japan, or fantasizing oneself to be Japanese. If anything, the ongoing emigration and growing Korea-towns in greater Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Washington DC, Atlanta, and other American cities is strong evidence for the ongoing lure of America. If Japan were open to such migration, it seems unlikely that many Koreans would choose to move there.

⁴⁴⁰ Ella Shohat and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. (London: Routledge, 1994) p. 38.

Along with deterritorialization, Shohat and Stam's identification of the "obsolescence of anticolonialist discourse" also applies directly to the case of Japan's presence in Korea. As the strident anti-Japanese discourse begins to recede, space is made for a newly uncontested Japanese presence in Korea—no longer illegal, banned, giving rise to shame and secrecy among those who are drawn to it. Though perhaps trite-sounding amidst ongoing political quibbles, the perception of popular cultural interchange as a tonic by which longstanding antagonistic feelings can be put aside is proving to be more than idle rhetoric, even though not all Koreans and not all Japanese are willing or able to get passed their deep-seated mutual dislike or distrust. Cultural attitudes rarely change overnight, but the new presence of Japanese popular music and culture in Korea is, I would contend, contributing to this end.

Korea's lifting of the ban on Japanese popular culture is so recent, and even now not complete (still limiting broadcast of Japanese popular music on terrestrial television, for example), it is far too early to evaluate the most significant ramifications of Japan's new presence in Korea. But it is inevitably changing Korean notions of Japan, putting Japanese pop musicians on a more equal footing with others, domestic and foreign. It is not impossible, or even unreasonable, to imagine a time in the next decade or two when Japanese pop will finally have shed its pariah status and enjoy full distribution and consumption privileges in Korea, along with other popular music. In the concluding chapter that follows, it remains to review the several historical paths we have traced through this and the previous chapters and to revisit the issues of cultural hegemony, influence, and change.

7.0 CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

In this dissertation, I have traced various aspects of the “presence” of Japan in Korea’s popular music world from the 1980s to 2006. In chapter one, I outlined four general areas of investigation in relation to transnational cultural flow of popular music from Japan to Korea that would provide us important gateways to understand contemporary Korean society and Korean perceptions on Japan and its popular culture.

The first area of investigation was the kinds of “presence” Japan has had in the contemporary popular music scene in Korea since the 1980s. I have identified three major shifts in the presence of Japan in Korea from the 1980s to 2006, the “illegal” presence (from the 1980s to 1997), the “transitional” presence (from 1998 to 2004), and the “newly sanctioned” presence (since 2004). As these shifts have altered both the nature and extent of Japan’s presence, from hidden and relatively little known to legal and widely known, they have also played a crucial role in shaping Korean perceptions about Japan and had a significant impact on contemporary Korean society.

The second area of investigation was the external forces that have been instrumental in shaping Korean’s consumption of Japanese popular music. As we have seen, various forces from the popular media, including recording, broadcasting, the internet, and print media, have

created the patterns of Korean's consumption of Japanese popular music. Unlike the other Asian countries, however, where the Japanese music industry entered with an entrenched system and marketing strategy in the 1990s, Korea has been out of Japanese music industry's direct reach until the ban on popular music was almost completely lifted in January 2004. Before the lifting of the ban, which, as we have seen, was inconsistently and insufficiently enforced, the local music industry and black market illicitly copied songs and illegally sold pirated cassettes in order to satisfy Korean consumers' desire for this "forbidden pleasure." As Korea's music industry rapidly became digitalized and more stabilized in the past a few years, the Japanese music industry has begun to show clear interests in the Korean market, even though its population of 48 million is quite small in comparison to other overseas markets for Japanese popular music, greater China and Southeast Asia.

The third area of investigation was the adjustments in Korea's cultural politics in response to transnational cultural flow from Japan before and since 1998. Korea's strong anti-Japanese sentiment from the colonial period has often been reinvigorated by both the government and the general public's efforts to carry out the nationalist dictate to de-Japanize and de-colonize the nation, a process that had considerable momentum during Korea's steady economic growth until the financial crisis of 1997. Since 1998 as the new government's vision on cultural politics emphasized globalization and Korea's economic woes encouraged a reappraisal, the door to Japan began to widen. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Korea's lingering antagonism toward Japan has required adjustments from time to time, such as the delays in the implementation of the Open-Door Policy, depending on conditions of the two countries' political relationships.

The fourth area of investigation was the Korean reception and responses to the Japanese "presence" in Korea – interpreting its meanings and implications. In short, because of Korea's

colonial experience under Japan, which has left national embarrassment and anger as well as envy and jealousy toward Japan, the meanings or implications given to the “presence” of Japan in Korea and young Koreans’ active consumption of Japanese popular music have always been, and perhaps will always be, different from that given to other foreign countries and their music. Despite growing popularity of Japanese popular music among young Koreans, who have found “things Japanese” as appealing consumer products, the “presence” of Japan in Korea and in its popular music culture is still something that some Koreans would like to deny and or to underestimate.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Transnational cultural traffic has played a defining role in East Asia from ancient times down to the present. This dissertation has taken as its focus the recent and contemporary cultural traffic between Japan and Korea, focusing on the flow of Japanese popular music and other popular cultural products into Korea. Alongside the large-scale adoption of Western popular musical style (scales, harmony, rhythms, song forms, and instruments) in both countries from the late nineteenth century and especially since the end of World War II, a process that has characterized musical developments almost everywhere in the world, Korea and Japan have experienced a number of musical interactions whose particular contours have been shaped by the asymmetry of their international relationship in the political and economic spheres. As a former colony of Japan and then as a poorer neighbor in the postcolonial period, Korea has both resented and admired Japan’s demonstrated ability to project itself internationally. That projection has shifted from a primarily military one in the first half of the twentieth century to an economic one in the

second half and, over the last quarter century or so, a cultural one as well. Korea's bitter resentment of Japanese domination led to an official banning of Japanese cultural products in Korea, lifted only recently under the somewhat controversial Open-Door Policy, implemented in four stages from 1998 to 2004.

The dissertation has taken this critical period as a pivotal one in the ongoing history of Korean-Japanese cultural relations. Following brief discussion of the Japanese colonial subjugation of Korea (1910-1945) and subsequent conflicts and rivalries, and the development of popular music traditions and industries in both countries, the core of the dissertation traced in detail the evolving presence of Japan through its popular music and other forms of popular culture in Korea. Prior to 1998, though illegal, Japanese popular music found an audience through pirated cassette sales and through inconsistent enforcement of laws banning Japanese popular music and other popular cultural products from sale and broadcast in Korea. During the implementation of the four stages of Open-Door Policy, a period of transition, the Korean nation systematically dropped almost all of its former laws banning the import of Japanese popular culture. The process went forward despite political tensions that resulted in several delays, and despite ongoing objection registered in public opinion polls. The final implementations were put into effect in January 2004, after which the Japanese popular music in Korea was no longer illegal or constrained, other than on terrestrial television. But just as Japanese CDs were at long last made legal for sale in Korea, the market for CDs itself took a drastic downturn, as Korean music fans turned increasingly to the internet for digital downloads. At the same time, following initial successes in greater China and Southeast Asia, Korean popular music rode the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*), spearheaded by TV dramas ("Winter Sonata" in particular), as it arrived in Japan. Though never illegal in Japan, Korean popular music was not a significant item in the Japanese market until the "Winter Sonata" drama took the country by storm and suddenly

“things Korean” were in fashion there. As Japanese popular musical presence moved from illegal to legal in the space of just a few years, Koreans became familiar with a range of genres and artists. Older Koreans partially cling to their categorical aversion to anything Japanese, but younger Koreans express a range of opinions about their embrace of Japanese popular culture, generally indicating their approval of being just as open to global popular culture as other countries have become and underscoring their belief that, despite ongoing political disagreements on specific issues between Japan and Korea, Japanese popular culture merits Korean appreciation.

One of the immediate ramifications of Japan’s new legal, normalized presence in Korea is that Japanese popular music is no longer a “forbidden pleasure.” Purchasing CDs or downloads of Japanese pop songs, watching cable TV shows with Japanese pop videos, and attending concerts with Japanese pop stars may be new activities, but just as permissible as exercising similar access to American or Korean pop. Another of the immediate ramifications is that, as Koreans come to know Japanese popular music and its stars, the rampant copying and imitation promulgated by the Korean music industry prior the Open-Door Policy are now much less frequent. Though it is too early to put forth convincing evidence, it is likely, in the opinion of some observers, that Japan’s popular music presence in Korea will help promote greater creativity and originality among Korean pop musicians, as copying becomes difficult to carry out surreptitiously and Korea must compete directly with Japan in the Korean marketplace.

What, then, is the place, or position, of Japanese popular music in the popular music world of Korea presently? Korean pop (*kayo*) has been the top category, overtaking Western pop (*p’ap song*) since the late 1980s. Japanese pop is less widely consumed than either *kayo* or *p’ap* song, but its strength has been growing as it became legal. Japanese pop, therefore, has the fact of its rising popularity as a factor in its image in Korea now as trendy. The musical genres

represented by Japanese popular musicians whose music circulates now in Korea is substantially more varied than the few genres that dominate the Korean music industry (still mostly ballad and dance styles). Underlying this rise is also the issue of physical appearance, as Japanese singers simply look much more like their Korean audiences than do African-American, Latino/Latina, or Caucasian singers from the West.

While it would be hazardous to generalize about the aesthetic elements in Japanese pop that appeal to Korean audiences, our inquiry has identified a range of elements, ranging from musical sound to personality and fashion preferences. These have included the following: physical and racial resemblance, polished recording production, instrumental performance techniques, hybridity, youthful cuteness, approachability, amateurish personae, and sexuality. While none of these characteristics could be demonstrated to be quintessentially or primordially “Japanese”—the particular configuration and combination of these in Japanese popular music has come to be recognized, in Korea as elsewhere in Asia, as “Japanese.” But it is a different kind of Japanese-ness altogether than the aggressive militarism that Korea and much of the rest of Pacific Asia knew in the first half of the twentieth century, or the aesthetically austerity of classical Japanese theater, music, and dance that have existed there for centuries, and which, despite origins in Chinese and Korean traditional arts, had no intention whatsoever for appeal to any audience but Japanese. This new Japaneseness is, instead, approachable, inviting, and “international” both in its heavy reliance on Western-derived musical elements, and its ease of imitation. Fans can sing along and fantasize themselves as Japanese pop stars or as their boy friends or girl friends, and Korean and other Asian musicians can, as they have for several decades at least, produce cover versions that are successful locally without audiences even knowing they are “Japanese.” One might ask how “Japanese” a song is that, if sung in another

language, is perceived (and consumed) elsewhere simply as popular music, rather than as “Japanese popular music.”

Indeed, this brings us again to the question of Japan’s “presence” in Korea through its popular music. We have seen in the remarks by some Korean fans, and echoed in the theoretical ruminations of cultural studies theorists such as Iwabuchi (2002, 2004) and Appadurai (1996), that country or culture of origin figure less now than previously in the experiencing and appreciation of expressive cultural forms. Yet this is not to say that Koreans are unaware of the Japanese identity, or do not conceive of something “essentially Japanese” in the Japanese popular music they consume. If anything, it appears that Koreans attribute to the new Japanese pop the kind of postmodern qualities that Japanese intellectuals have recently been touting as Japan’s quintessential postmodernism, which it is now actively exporting to other countries in Asia.

As popular cultural flows between the two countries are only likely to intensify in the future, we should not be surprised to find additional shifts and complications in the meanings and in the cultural balance of power. As this dissertation has shown, the power imbalance that has so long existed between Korea and Japan is still evident in the ways in which Korean and Japanese produce and consume popular music. However, as Korea’s popular culture has begun to rise and even to surpass the prestigious position of Japanese popular culture in some parts of Asia in the past several years, it is important to keep our attention on the transnational cultural flows between the two countries as well as their relation to the other parts of Asian countries, as Japanese and Korean popular music and their industries continue to shape and fulfill cultural desire.

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