

馴化異國：外來文化改造在台灣

王淑美

國立政治大學新聞系助理教授

論文摘要

本文以焦點團體訪談為實證基礎，討論韓劇、日本流行音樂、美國咖啡等外來文化如何在台灣被馴化並且改造。當收看韓劇時，觀眾的感想與討論內容反映了他們自己的經驗、生活形態與價值觀。台灣的流行偶像團體過去亦步亦趨地抄襲日本，現在當青少年討論他們的偶像，音樂的元素混雜了日本、美國與中國文化的元素。第三個例子是咖啡館在台灣形象從色情場所變成都市休閒聚會的空間，咖啡館服務方式也被本地餐廳接納，衍生出廣受歡迎的個人簡餐，融合西式服務與中式食物。

當今世界經常被描繪成一個全球化的場域，且許多批評全球化完全消滅了在地差異。本文反對這個觀點。擁抱外來文化不代表接收者成了文化侵略的犧牲品，全球文化流動不能單以文化帝國主義的觀點來解釋，對於外來文化的消費與參與也可以是令人興奮且正面的經驗。

Domesticating the foreign: How cultural imports are remade in Taiwan

Sumei Wang¹

Abstract

Based on an empirical study conducted in Taiwan, I investigate how Japanese cultural imports, particularly popular music, drama and food, are domesticated and remade in Taiwan. While Taiwan's teenagers embraced their idols' hit records, the creativity that they admired originated from a mixture of Chinese, and Japanese and American influences. The world today has been characterized as a globalized arena and many have objected that globalization is actually eliminating local differences. In this paper, I oppose this viewpoint. I shall argue that embracing foreign cultures does not necessarily turn recipients into victims of cultural invasion. Global flows do not all fit into the category of oppressive imperialist imposition. Rather, consumption and participation can be an exciting and positive experience.

¹ Sumei Wang is now Assistant Professor at the Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University. Email: sw@nccu.edu.tw

This paper explores how foreign imports may participate in the continual reinvention and innovation of local cultures and identities. Cultural imports often attract criticism because they are seen as a cultural invasion by many. However, with illustrations from my empirical study on the variations of popular Japanese culture in Taiwan, I shall demonstrate that consumers do not merely appropriate these cultural imports but also actively remake and re-export them.

My purpose is to address the connections between practice, identity and social change. Foreign imports do not always fit into the category of repression; they can bring enjoyable experiences and be welcomed by local people. The creative ways of using, adopting and remaking foreign imports indicate that people always manage to 'domesticate the foreign'. While domesticating the foreign, societies show their capacity to incorporate novelties into traditions. The seemingly trivial practices in everyday life are not just reflections of social structures, mainly political and economic powers, these practices can drive social change as well. In the following discussions, empirical cases will be further discussed and elaborated in order to investigate the implications and connections between global influences, local practices and the innovations of culture.

Japan's Controversial Image in Taiwan

Unlike the US, which enjoys a generally positive image in Taiwan, Japan's image in Taiwan has been controversial. In its attempt to eliminate Japanese influences after World War Two, the Kuo-Ming-Tung (the Nationalist Party, hereafter the KMT) reproduced the class structure in colonial Taiwan by replacing the Japanese colonizer with the *waishengren*, the mainlanders who followed the KMT to Taiwan after the War. The government also halted imports of Japanese films and encouraged boycotting Japanese products from 1945 to the 1960s (Lee, 2005: 64-5). Japanese video and audio imports were restricted until 1993. Prior to the lifting of martial law, history books never mentioned how people lived under Japanese colonial rule. However, despite the anti-Japanese atmosphere under the KMT regime, many of the *benshengren*, the native Taiwanese, possess fond memories of Japanese rule. Many (e.g. Wu Zhou-Liu 1988, Peng Ming-Min 2004) have attributed this nostalgia to the KMT's subsequent repression of the *benshengren*.

Because the state-controlled educational system seldom mentions Taiwan's history under Japanese colonial rule, many grandchildren could not understand why their grandparents felt nostalgic about the brutal colonizer. For example, Tsai Hui-Kuang (2000: 1) wrote in the preface of her Master's dissertation on Taiwan's educational system under Japanese colonial rule:

History schoolbooks said very little about Taiwan under Japanese rule. They said that the Japanese colonial government was very cruel and violent to the Taiwanese. ... Once I had a chance to join my grandparent's gathering, I heard them talking in Japanese, singing Japanese songs, recalling memories under Japanese rule. I got a very different impression of Japan from the textbooks. This prompted my curiosity about life under Japanese rule.

The KMT's attempt overwhelmingly to 'de-Japanise' Taiwan did not really succeed because Japan formed a security alliance with the US after the Second World War. Taiwan, Japan and the US were supposed to stand on the same side during the Cold War. Besides international politics, both the US and Japan ranked among Taiwan's top trading partners until being surpassed, only recently, by China. Japan continually shifted its manufacturing production to Taiwan. The KMT wanted to block Japanese culture but could not resist its investment. The boycotting of Japanese culture was not successful either. After the restrictions on Japan's cultural imports were softened, Japanese music, fashion, and dramas soon became very popular among the youngsters.

Since the deregulation of the media industries in 1993, all restrictions on Japanese cultural imports were lifted. Being attracted by Japanese popular culture, including comics, animations, music, films, dramas and fashion, many youngsters worshipped Japan and formed a distinctive subculture: 'they learn and dream of becoming Japanese through everyday practices' (Lee, 2005). These young Japanese fans were labelled as the '*Harizu*' (Japanophilia). This subculture attracted criticism from 'the adults' – saying that the *Harizu* were irrational and losing their own cultural identity. It seems to me that there is some Japanophobia behind all this name-calling and labelling.

In order to investigate how Taiwanese consumers of different ethnic, generational and gender backgrounds appreciate a variety of imports that were originally introduced from abroad. I held six focus groups in Taipei and members were divided according to their ethnic origins, namely the *waishengren* and the *benshengren*, and age – the middle-aged generation and those who were born after the lifting of martial law.

Chen K. H. (2002) argues that 'the divided attitudes towards Japan – the modern advanced Japan vs. the evil invader Japan – were the source of contention between Taiwan's '*benshengren*' and '*waishengren*', and made 'the Taiwanese' irreconcilable with 'the Chinese' in mainland China. Data from my fieldwork showed that orientations towards Japan still figure as a form of ethnic distinction within Taiwan. The historic wounds of wartime massacres have been reproduced by the nation-state through the educational system. The *waihsengren* transmitted these collective memories from generation to generation, whereas, the *benshengren*, though also

educated under the KMT regime, had no strong feelings of nationalistic hatred.

Family practices and collective memories

The contrasting stance towards Japan is revealed in many family practices. For example, my informant Liang (42, female, *waishengren*) recalled how she was surprised when visiting her college mate's family in southern Taiwan, “My friend's parents, they watched Japan's NHK, listened to Japanese music, and ate Japanese food everyday. I thought their brains were damaged. Didn't the history books tell us that the Japanese were all brutal colonisers?” Questions about families dining out also reveal ethnic differences, even among the younger generations. Informant Tsai-Rong (19, female, *benshengren*) said, “whenever my family eat out, we go to Japanese restaurants,” while Jia-De (19, male, *waishengren*) said “my family rarely go to Japanese restaurants.” During the discussion, Jia-De described the Japanese as '*xio tou rui mian*', meaning that the Japanese look as crafty as mice, and he would not want to be associated with them.

The *waishengren* may inherit certain impressions of the Japanese from elderly members of their families but perceptions can change. The *waishengren* who intended to boycott Japanese products often found themselves in contradictory positions: they couldn't get away from the influence of nationalism but had to admit that many Japanese products were popular and of good quality. Huei (44, female, *waishengren*), in the discussion on countries of origin, first said that. “I bought an Olympus digital camera in Japan a year ago. I only wanted ‘made in Japan’.” Later in the conversation she claimed that she never bought any Japanese products, “because of nationalism, because of Nan-Jing Massacre.” Her words contradicted what she had said earlier. Despite their family backgrounds, many of my *waishengren* informants acknowledge that Japanese products, especially electronics, are trustworthy and therefore count as their first choice.

The Taiwanized Japanese Culture

Apart from Japanophilia and Japanophobia, Japanese culture has been internalized, localized and re-invented in Taiwanese society. Cheng (2004) discusses the concept of 'menu localization' by investigating ethnic restaurants in Taipei city. He argues that Japanese restaurants actually provided 'Taiwanised Japanese cuisine'. During the 50-year colonial period, Japanese culture had been 'indigenized' into local culture. Many words in Taiwanese come from Japanese and so do many terms for food, such as

'Tehbura', 'miso', 'wasabi' and 'sushi'. When Taiwanese customers ordered these dishes, they did not think of them as exotic, rather, they had been modified and adopted into local tastes.

Members of my focus group discussions regarded 'made-in-Taiwan' products as 'good quality', sometimes as good as Japanese ones. From the younger informants' conversations, the *waishengren* revealed that they are proud of Taiwan too. They called themselves 'the Taiwanese' – a name their parents would only use to refer to the *benshengren*. The fading sense of 'Japanophobia' indicated a signal of indigenization as they moved on and began to identify themselves with the natives. In a focus group with three middle-aged *waisheng* mothers, they recalled how they loved American-style music, such as Andy Williams and the Bee Gees², in the 1970s, and couldn't understand why their children like Jay Chou, a Taiwanese pop idol, so much.

Liang: My son has an iPod and listens to Jay Chou's songs everyday.

Ren: Ha! So does mine.

Liang: I told him that was decadent music...

Wei: My daughter admires Jay's creativity.

Ren: Yes. He is creative.

Liang: I thought our level was higher than them back then. I told my son: Mum wouldn't listen to this kind of decadent music when I was your age.

Q: What did you listen to?

Liang: Andy Williams.

Wei: I began to listen to Western music since secondary school. I liked the Bee Gees.

So-called 'Western music' was actually American pop songs. In these middle-aged mothers' minds, the songs of American style were of higher class than the pop music that their children were crazy for. However, teenagers thought their local idols creative, cool and familiar to them. According to Jay Chou's personal profile, he was born in Taipei in 1979, is a high-school graduate, and the only child of a single mother. Since 2000, he has become a superstar who attracts millions of fans across Asia (Chan P. J., 2006). His fans call his style 'Tai-style Rap'. He has sung about Indian legends, Chinese heroes, on-line games, and his everyday life—playing basketball, domestic violence ('Stop Beating my Mum'), or memories of his late grandparents ('Tea Made by my Granddad'³). Chen Ming-Kai (2004) commented on Jay Chou's music videos, "...Jay Chou catches the ingredients of both the Eastern and Western culture. You can't tell whether his style is Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese or American - perhaps everything a

² [Bee Gees] I don't think they're American though they sound it

³ [Granddad] Usually Granddad

little bit. All the cultural elements are hybrid and mingled.”

It occurred to me that the '*Harizu*' had no longer been a concern lately since the most popular stars were all native-born singers. The phenomena of Japanophobia and Japanophilia have both faded. Taiwan has now become a leader in Mandarin popular music. Artists must come to Taiwan to publish their work to become famous in worldwide Mandarin-speaking communities. Chinese, American and Japanese cultures were absorbed, appropriated, reinvented in Taiwan, and then re-exported to the world. The interactions between the global and the local are dynamic.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have written about how Japanese popular cultures are 'remade' in Taiwan. Having been through a controversial historical relationship with Japan and China, almost everything related to Japan was discouraged for decades in post-war Taiwan, but the ban imposed by the authorities could not stop people incorporating Japanese culture into their everyday life, such as food, electronics, fashion, popular music and animations. Still, the ways in which those Taiwanese consumers welcome Japanese cultures in general are related to their social backgrounds. The *waishengren* consumers interviewed perceived the Japanese as 'brutal colonizers' despite their preference for choosing 'made-in-Japan' electronical goods over other countries of origin.

Taiwan has now gone beyond the controversies over Japanophobia and Japanophilia. One example is Taiwan's popular music industry. In the past, Taiwan was often criticized for being a 'copy cat' in manufacturing singing groups identical to Japanese pop stars. Nonetheless, Taiwan has now become the leader in global Chinese-music markets. The younger generation have their native born idols who are considered 'creative' in their styles of mixing Chinese, American and Japanese influences.

How Japanese culture is recreated in Taiwan is one example of showing how local consumers domesticate the foreign. The various ways of remaking foreign imports in fact demonstrate consumers' collective identity, based on their shared memories, experiences and living conditions. On the one hand, these consumption practices are shaped by Taiwan's political economic structures; on the other, the practices reflect and drive social change. Being assimilated into foreign culture or embracing it actively do not necessarily make the recipients victims of cultural imperialism. Instead, new variations and creations of cultural hybrids often emerge from global-local encounters.

References

- Chan, P.-J. (2006). *A Study of 'Jay Chou' Phenomonon*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, National Central University, Chung –li, Taiwan.
- Chen, K.-H. (2002). Why is 'great reconciliation' impossible? De-Cold War/decolonization, or modernity and its tears (Part I). *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 3(3), 77-99.
- Chen, M.-K. (2004). *A Study of Visual Meaning in Contemporary Taiwanese Hip Hop Music videos from Years 2000-2004*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, YuanZhi University, Chung-Li, Taiwan.
- Cheng, L.-L. (2004). Routes of Cultural Globalisation: Ethnic Restaurants in the Taipei City. *TungWu Journal of Sociology*, 17, 1-14.
- Lee, M.-T. (2005). *Absorbing 'Japan': Transnational Media, Cross-cultural Consumption, and Identity Practice in Contemporary Taiwan*. King's College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge.
- Peng, M.-M. (2004). *A Taste of Freedom*. [Electronic Version]. Retrieved 16 September 2010 from <http://www.hi-on.org.tw/ad/ATASTE.htm>
- Tsai, H. -K. (2000). *Taiwan's History Education under the Japanese Colonial Rule*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, National Taiwan University, Taipei.
- Wu, Z. -L. (1988). *A Flowerless Fruit*. Taipei: Avangua