

Completion Report

Seoul Theological University

Oh Hyun Suk

Subject of Research Project :

After the 1990s, “Japan” as the other in Korean Popular Culture

This paper examines how the discourse regarding the country “Japan” was constructed in Korean popular culture in the 1990s. In South Korea, due to the historical trauma caused by Japan's colonial rule, a national discourse has been constantly created that targets the Other, “Japan”.

This social background also had an impact on popular culture, and imports of Japanese popular culture were prohibited, making it difficult for people to come into contact with Japanese popular culture. However, since the beginning of the 1990s, this situation has been changing. In other words, in the 1990s, with the arrival of the end of the Cold War era, a geopolitical change called globalization occurred. As a result, South Korean society changed, and the discourse on Japan also changed.

Based on this awareness of issues, this study analyzed the media related to Korean popular culture and clarified the following.

First, since the 1990s, there has been a tendency for anti-Japanese nationalism and hostility towards the other country, “Japan”, to gradually diminish in South Korea. In other words, it has broken away from its existing ideological device function and constructed a new national discourse. This phenomenon is especially seen among young people.

Second, since 2003, a new national discourse has been constructed through the Korean Wave phenomenon in Japan. It is a celebrity phenomenon for stars of their own country through so-called popular culture. In other words, rather than consuming Japan's Korean wave as a country called “Japan”, they construct an identity for their own country while consuming Korean stars.

Through such considerations, this study can be said to have clarified how the national discourse is constructed in South Korea.