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## PHILADELPHIA 2014

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## Report on "The 'Miracle' Narrative of the Korean Cultural Industries: Perspectives from the Middle East"

Jerusalem, Israel, May 7–9, 2013

Submitted by Nissim Otmazgin and Irina Lyan, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The conference, "The 'Miracle' Narrative of the Korean Cultural Industries: Perspectives from the Middle East," was held at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem from May 7–9, 2013. Organized by the Department of East Asian Studies and the World Association for Hallyu Studies (WAHS), it was the first major academic event of its kind to be held in the Middle East.

The purpose of this conference was to contribute to the study of the social and cultural influence of Korean contemporary culture in the Middle East. The discussion panels focused on Hallyu (the "Korean Wave") in the Middle East within a broader context related to the globalization of Korea's cultural industries and Korea's images and presence in the region.

The conference was also a chance to reflect on the state of Hallyu consumption and fandom in the non-Asian and non-Western context. For one, looking at the Middle East allowed us to examine the way Korean contemporary culture is being received outside the geographically and culturally-proximate markets of East Asia and outside the major economic markets of North America and Europe. Moreover, the presence of Korean contemporary culture in relatively distant locations in the Middle East may exemplify the resilience and ability of the cultural industries to go beyond national and regional boundaries, and effectively reach out to audiences of various nationalities and ethnicities.

The sixteen papers presented at the conference analyzed and showcased instances of the way Hallyu has been disseminated and accepted in Egypt, Iran, Israel, Palestine, and Turkey, and examined the way it is reshaping the image of "Korea" in this part of the world. The issues addressed in discussions included: (a) Harbingers, industries, and agents involved in introducing the "Korean Wave" in the Middle East; (b) The integration of the Korean Wave within the local, regional, and global popular culture confluences; (c) The reaction of governmental and media discourse to the Hallyu phenomenon; (d) Relations between Korean cultural presence and the increase in the learning of the Korean language and of Korean academic studies; and (d) The role of Hallyu in propagating new images of Korea.

For the list of participants and abstracts go to: <http://www.korean-studies.org.il/conference>

We would like to emphasize three methodological insights that emerged from the discussions. First, *the regional context matters*. In order to understand better the transnational dissemination of popular culture, including Hallyu, we should look at the regional context and not limit ourselves to the framework of globalization and global-local relations. Viewing the "region" as a framework of analysis may illuminate overlooked practices and attitudes which influence the way popular cultures are accepted or rejected.

Second, *earlier historical and cultural encounters matter*. This is because confluences of popular culture may build on previous images, appreciation, and presences of the producing country.

In the case of the Middle East, the acceptance of Hallyu builds on earlier layers of images of Korea in the region—as a nation divided by war and more recently as an economic success story.

Third, *an inter-disciplinarity is useful for analyzing transnational cultural phenomenon*. It is productive to utilize various disciplinary and methodological tools to analyze cultural phenomenon rather than staying only within the boundaries of cultural and media studies. In our conference, some of the papers emphasized the historical and political linkages between certain countries in the Middle East and Korea, which have an impact on the way Hallyu is regarded in official and popular discourse. Other papers used ethnographic and anthropological approaches to analyze the way Hallyu fandom is created and institutionalized; or focused on the popular culture text and the messages it delivers; while others used methods prevalent in communication studies to examine the industrial side of the production, marketing, and reproduction of Hallyu.

The conference was supported by various institutions: The Academy of Korean Studies, Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the State of Israel, The World Association for Hallyu Studies (WAHS), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Development of Peace, and The Louis Frieberg Center for East Asian Studies.

## Report on The International Conference "Various Aspects of Chinese Studies in the Global Age"

New Brunswick, New Jersey, June 21–23, 2013

Submitted by Xin Ning and Dietrich Tschanz, Rutgers University

The International Conference "Various Aspects of Chinese Studies in the Global Age" was held on June 21–23, 2013 at Rutgers University-New Brunswick Campus. The conference was organized by the Confucius Institute of Rutgers University (CIRU). The organizing committee includes Ching-I Tu, Dietrich Tschanz, and Xin Ning of Rutgers, and Pan Shouwen of Jilin University, China. About thirty scholars in the fields of history, philosophy, literature, linguistics, political science, sociology, education, and social work from North America, Europe, Mainland China, Taiwan, and Korea presented papers in the conference.

The historical changes of China in the 20th century have led to the rise of Chinese Studies as a modern discipline first in the West and extended to China. It gradually took its present form with the introduction of new theories, development of new perspectives, and establishment of new areas of study. The scope of Chinese Studies today is much broader than the traditional Sinology. China's recent reforms and the impact of globalization have led to a series of new social, economic, political, cultural and even linguistic changes in China. They raise new questions and require new methods for Chinese Studies accordingly. Hence, this conference aims at reflecting on Chinese Studies in the past and holding a discussion on the current issues in the field with an eye to its future development. Emphasis of the conference was placed on multi-disciplinary dialogues and comparative and interdisciplinary approaches. Specific topics covered in the conference include:

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- Disciplines represented in the field of Chinese Studies, their interrelations, and their latest developments in the contemporary era
- Interaction between historical changes and cultural transformations in pre-modern and modern China
- Social, economic, and cultural changes in China after its latest reform
- Changes in Chinese language(s) and their relations with China's social and cultural transformation
- Modern methodologies in teaching Chinese language and Chinese Studies

The conference began with opening remarks on the rise of Chinese Studies in the West since the 1950s, its extension to contemporary China, and the development of Chinese Studies at Rutgers by Ching-I Tu (Rutgers). Vincent Yang (Baylor U) made a reevaluation of Confucius's attitude toward "God" through cross-cultural comparison. Zhou Qun (Nanjing U) discussed the idea of *zhonghe* (the middle way and harmony) in Chinese philosophy and its relevance in contemporary China. Gloria Shen (Rutgers) reread the Chinese myth of "Breaking the Communication between Earth and Heaven." Kenneth Holloway (Florida Atlantic U) tried to rediscover a religious tradition in ancient China through *Guodian* bamboo files and *Xunzi*. Qianshen Bai (Boston U) introduced his research on rubbing workers in late Qing intellectual and artistic life. Chang So-an (Academia Sinica) discussed "the vitality of evidential studies and its opposition to ritual orthodoxy" in Qing Dynasty. Cheng Shu-chuan (National Chi Nan U) reviewed the role of *ren* (humanity) in New-Confucian scholar Ma Yifu's thought. Chen Shuiyun (Wuhan U) contextualized Qing poet Wang Sen's work within the family/clan in pre-modern China's cultural transmission. Dietrich Tschanz (Rutgers) examined the rise and fall of early

modern Chinese drama societies. Ping Zhu (U of Oklahoma) discussed gynocentrism in early twentieth-Century China. Xin Ning (Rutgers) read two modern Chinese poems titled "Portrait of Self" against Whitman's influence and historical background of modern China. Weijie Song (Rutgers) scrutinized space in various versions of Lao She's drama *Teahouse* and the relations between space, ideology, and patterns of feelings. Xiaojuan Wang (U of Pennsylvania) illustrated the cultural displacement of 1950s' Hong Kong through her study of Eileen Chang. Li Long (Jilin U) challenged the aesthetic-enlightenment-humanitarian discourse dominant in Chinese intellectual circles since 1980s. Jiwei Xiao (Fairfield U) used Mo Yan to redefine the relations between Chinese and world literatures. Jie Chen (Berlin) analyzed *Wolf Totem* and the revival of ethnic minority representation in contemporary China. Chien-Chung Huang (Rutgers) presented research on the NGOs in China and Taiwan. Tanja Sargent (Rutgers) reported on the study of the college entrance examination system in China's higher education. Zhou Guanghui (Jilin U) discussed the national identity crisis in developing countries in the age of globalization and strategies of reconciliation. Oh Soo Kyung (Hanyang U) examined the transmission and protection of local cultural heritage through the study of folk drama in Fujian Province. Peter Li (Rutgers) presented his biographical study of Li Fang-Kuei, the "father of non-Han Chinese dialect studies." Gu Qian (Nanjing U) focused on the relations between Nanjing dialect and everyday life of local people. I-Wen Su (National Taiwan U) analyzed the concept of time as reflected in Chinese language. Dongdong Chen (Seton Hall U) examined the new vocabulary emerging in contemporary Chinese society. Chien Ying-Ying (National Taiwan Normal U) provided a multi-media model of teaching Chinese literature and culture in language courses.

For abstracts and further details of the conference, please contact: [circu@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:circu@rci.rutgers.edu).