

Thesis for the Degree of Master of Philosophy

# **Comparative Study on the Aesthetics of Korean and Chinese national Cinema:**

**Focusing on the Films**

**<Seopyeonje> and <Farewell My Concubine>**



by

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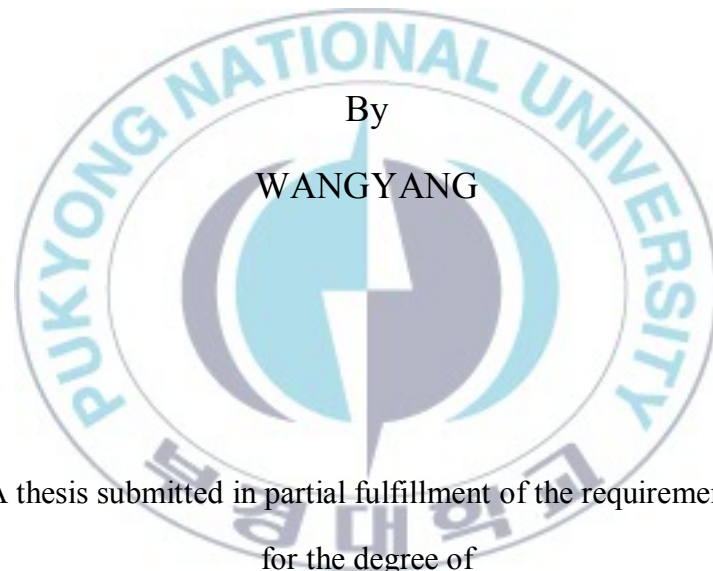
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한국과 중국 민족영화의 미학에  
대한 비교 고찰:  
〈패왕별희〉와 〈서편제〉를 중심으로

Adviser: Prof. Mookyu Kim



By  
WANGYANG

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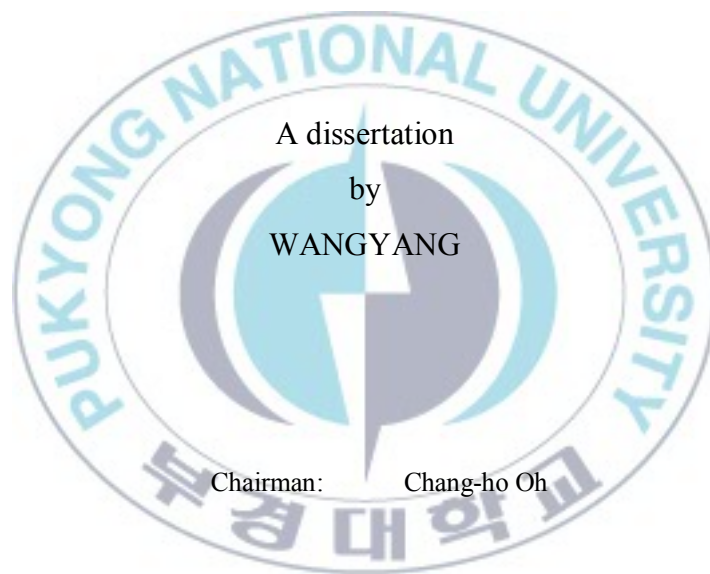
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### Abstract

Based on present film studies, there are many theories about cinemas from various angles, but there is still no precise and scientific definition for national cinema. The purpose of this paper is to simply define national cinema from the perspective of film theory. National cinema has extreme complex concepts, which also contains many factors. We will analyze the concept with perspectives of national culture and film aesthetic in this paper. We will define this concept by summarizing and analyzing other scholars' viewpoint. Then we will define Korean and Chinese national cinema by the same method and collectively analyze some films. At last, two national cinemas will be examples: <Seopyeonje> (Korea) and <Farewell My Concubine> (China).

Key word: National cinema, <Seopyeonje>, <Farewell My Concubine>, Film Comparison, Film Aesthetics

## 요지

현재 영화학 분야에서 민족영화에 대한 연구가 다양한 관점으로 이루어지고 있지만 여전히 민족영화를 구체적이며 체계적으로 정의하기는 어렵다. 본 논문은 선행연구의 결과들을 검토하며 민족영화에 대해서 명확히 정의하고 그러한 정의를 바탕으로 사례를 분석하는 것이 목적이다. 특히 본 논문에서는 민족영화가 그 생성배경에 있어서 특정한 문화와 연관되어 있어야 한다는 점을 강조하고자 한다. 그리고 민족영화란 문화적인 정체성과 차별적 특성이 반영되어 있어야 한다. 나아가서 그러한 문화는 형식적인 특수성으로 형상화되어 있는 경우를 민족영화로 간주할 수 있다. 본 논문에서는 한국의 대표적 민족영화인 <서편제>와 중국의 <패왕별희>를 다각도로 분석하며 이러한 정의를 검토하고자 한다.

**핵심 단어:** 민족영화, <서편제>, <패왕별희>, 영화의 비교, 영화 미학



## I. Introduction

At present academia, there are many theories about cinemas from various angles, but there is still no precise and scientific definition for national cinema. The purpose of this paper is to simply define national cinema from other scholars' discussion and further use classical films from Korea and China as examples to analyze. National cinema has a complex definition, and it contains many aspects, so this paper will only analyze from cultural and aesthetic perspectives.

Since the birth of films, national differences existed nearly everywhere. Due to certain factors such as economic, industrial, and social conditions that shape critical and theoretical understandings of national cinema began after World War I. Before we study this thesis, we should understand the background of it. The earliest emergence of national cinema is to resist dominance of Hollywood. After World War, Europe gradually devastated but America rise up, including film industry. Hollywood has broad market and a lot of audience, both home and abroad.

Film is a kind of art, at the same time it is also a kind of culture, even is a kind of cultural industries. Along with the development of economic, political, and other fields, films carrying more and more important significance. So people expect the birth of national cinemas which are different. These films are fundamentally different from Hollywood, but not only the form.

“Early on, these aberrations were assimilates to the cinematic canon primarily as aesthetic or high art alternatives to Hollywood’s mass culture norms. Later the distinctions became politicized.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1920s, films were critically and historically categorized as *French* surrealism and impressionism, *German* Expressionism, and *Soviet* Montage. After World War II, international film festivals were found gradually and facilitated the development of national cinemas and national film movements whose identity as such

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Mchugh. “South Korean Film Melodrama: State, Nation, Woman, and the Transnational Familiar.” South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, and National Cinema. (2005) p.20.



that came to prominence.

The study of national cinema experienced such a process: From 1960s Film studies has generally accepted that to identify the nation in various national cinema. Under this situation, there are a lot of excellent, distinctive directors appeared. In Asia, they are Asujiro Ozu, Kenji Mizoguchi come from Japan; Kwon-taek Im, Ki-duk Kim come from Korea; Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige come from China; and Satyajit Ray comes from India. The national culture and aesthetics expressed in their films were recognized in the world widely and their films win prize at international film festival.

Although there are a lot of problems in these film festivals. They provide very limited international access to a very small number of films from nations other than the United States, while also insuring that the products of other national cinemas would be selected and would circulate as “art” cinema rather than as narratives in direct competition with Hollywood products.<sup>2</sup>

But the existence of these awards greatly promotes the development of the various countries' national cinema. In the 1980s and 1990s, the festival scene came to include pan-African, Latin American, and Asian events.

Film studies have, until recently, tended to ignore the state's role in the formation of national film culture via economic, political, and technological opportunities and constraints.

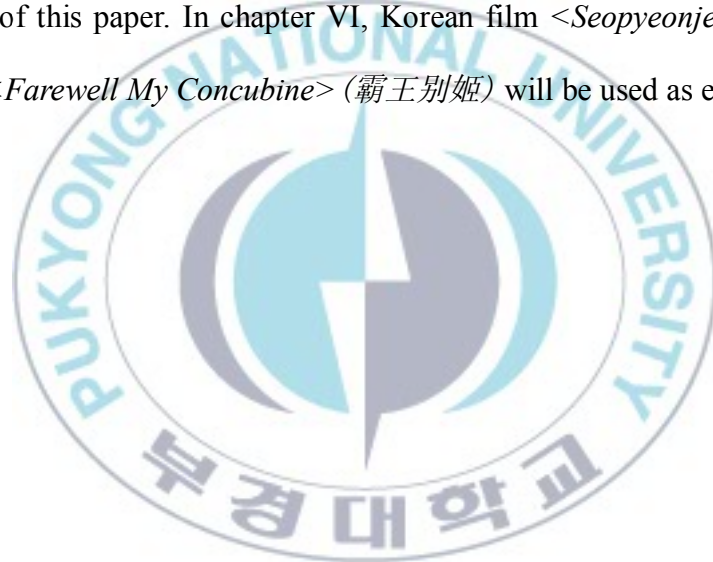
This article will be divided into six chapters. Chapter I: introduction. In this chapter, we will introduce the background of study of national cinema and the meaning of this study. Chapter II , Historical overview of Korean and Chinese national cinema. In this chapter, we will briefly introduce the development of two countries films and the main achievement or aesthetic characteristics in different periods. Chapter III: Definition of national cinema. In this chapter, we will define

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<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Mchugh. “South Korean Film Melodrama: State, Nation, Woman, and the Transnational Familiar.” p.21.



national cinema from scholar Andrew Higson and Ni Xiangbao's discussion. They almost hold the same view of this definition that we should definite it both from the body and patterns of film. Chapter IV: Definition of Korean national cinema. In this chapter, we will analyze Korean cinema from psychological, cultural, and aesthetic perspectives. And focus on analyzing scholars In-sik Kim, Zhang Zhenhua and Jin Yan's point of views. Chapter V: Definition of Chinese national cinema. In this chapter, definition of Chinese national cinema will be analyzed according to chapter III. Then I will discuss under two different perspectives----contents and form. And in the end of this chapter, we will also discuss the similarities and differences between Korean and Chinese national cinema through the aesthetic comparing which is the main purpose of this paper. In chapter VI, Korean film <Seopyeonje> (서편제) and Chinese film <Farewell My Concubine> (霸王别姬) will be used as examples.



## II. Historical overview of Korean and Chinese cinemas

In this part, we will focus on historical overview of Chinese cinema, because we will introduce Chinese cinema.

### 1. Historical overview of Korean cinema

Korean films about appeared in the early 20th century, <Arirang> (아리랑) in 1926 can be classified as the earliest South Korean film with the national characteristics. Its influence is very deeply and widely. From Gu-yeong Lee's <Chunhyang> (춘향전) in 1935, Korean films went into sound film era. But at that time, Korean was under the colonial rule of Japan, the film industry development was suppressed. Till 1955, the main theme of Korean film is recovery of motherland and national liberation. Representative films are: Gu-yeong Lee's <The Chronicle of Ann Jung-keun> (안중근 사기, 1946), Bong-chun Yun's <The Samil Revolution> (삼일혁명기, 1947) and <Uisa Kwan Soon> (유관순, 1948), Chang-geun Jeon's <My Liberated Hometown> (해방된 내 고향, 1947), Kyu-hwan Lee's <Dawn of Nation> (민족의 새벽, 1947) and Yeong-sun Kim's <The Immortal Secret Envoy> (불멸의 밀사) in 1947. From 1948, Korea became a country with two conceptions of North Korea and South Korea. So in this period, the theme of film is national problem and the practical problem after war. Representative films are: Kang-Cheon Lee's <Piagol> (피아골, 1955), Hyun-mok Yu's <The Crossroad> (교차로, 1955), <An Early Frost> (잃어버린 청춘, 1957), and Man-hee Lee's <Seven Female Pows> (7인의 여포로, 1965). In 1970s, it appeared some films which are encouraging can inspire people's heart to love motherland and nation. And also appeared some films reflect the development of local culture and modern life. The representative films are Kwon-teak Im's <Jeungeon Anaedeului> (아내들의 행진) and <Jeungeon> (증언)

in 1974. Si-Hyun Kim's <My Liberated Hometown>(잔류첩자) and Yeong-sun Gwon's <Taebak Mountains> (태백산맥) in 1975. 1980s is the transition of Korean film. Along with the loosening of film censorship, a lot of socialist country's film began to enter into South Korea. A lot of religious, local film debuted in that times, and began to appear films about the division of South and North Korea. The representative films are Kwon-Teak Im's <Gilsodom>(길소뜸, 1986) and <Come, Come, Come Upward>(아제아제 바라아제, 1989), Won-se Lee's <Queen Bee> (여왕벌, 1986) and Yong-Kyun Bae's <Why Has Bodhi Dharma Left for the East>(달마가 동쪽으로 가는 까닭은, 1989).

From 1990s, it is the fast develop period of Korean films. Korean films come to the fore as a glaring image, and not only in Asia but also the international film festivals. They won awards in international film festivals frequently, and became the new nobleman of international film, also the new representative of Asia films and culture. Take three international film festivals of Europe as example: in 2002, film <Drunk on Women and Poetry>(취화선) made by Kwon-taek Im won the best director of the 55<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival. Film <Oasis>(오아시스) made by Chang-dong Lee won the best director and the best new artist in the 59<sup>th</sup> Venice film festival. In 2004, film <Samaria> (사마리아) won Silver Bear award for the best director at the 56th Berlin International Film Festival. The film <3-Iron>(빈집, 2004) won Silver Lion award for the best director at 61<sup>th</sup> Venice Film Festival, and Chan-wook made <Old-boy>(올드보이, 2003) won the Jury awards at 57<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival. Korean films after 1990 are famous and contain more national characteristics. So in this paper, we will mainly take the films after 1990 as example.

## 2. Historical overview of Chinese cinema

Chinese first Independent film screening is <Ding Junshan>(定军山, 1905) directed by Ren Jingfeng in Beijing Feng Tai photo studio in 1905. It only took three days to shoot and based on the Chinese drama --- Peking Opera. Although it was a short part, it was the beginning of Chinese film. And it was very popular at that time. After this, Chinese Film is divided as the following periods by “Generation”

### 1) The First Generation: Before the 1930's

There are about 100 directors of the First Generation represented by Zhang Shichuan, Zheng Zhengqiu, Yang Xiaozhong. Among them Zhangshi Chuan and Zheng Zhengqiu made quick progress. They directed <The Odd Couple> (难夫难妻, 1913)、<Victims of Opium> (黑籍冤魂, 1916), the first sound feature film <Singer Hong Mudan> (歌女红牡丹, 1931) and "the most influential film in the early stage <Rescue Grandpa> (孤儿救祖记, 1923) which created a creative mode of Chinese film. They are the pioneer of Chinese film, especially during that time the shooting conditions are primitive, difficult and lack of experience. From the artistic skills, the First Generation" doesn't know what film is, so they often used the concept of traditional drama to direct and shoot film.

### 2) The Second Generation: Between the 1930's and the 1940's

Represented directors and films are Fei Mu's <Springtime in a Small Town><sup>3</sup>(小城之春, 1948). It has been honored on the top of top-10 Chinese popular films by overseas movie critics. Wu Yonggang's <Goddess> (神女, 1934). Sang Gu's <Fake Phoenix> (假凤虚凰, 1947)、<Miserable at Middle Age> (哀乐中年, 1949), etc, which exercises a great influence on the society. The Second Generation Directors have achieved the change from silent film to sound film. The best feature of this generation is realism artistically. It can say so only from this generation Chinese film shows it's self-value. The left-wing film movement runs through the active stage of the Second Generation period.

### 3) The Left-wing Film Movement (1931~1937)

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<sup>3</sup> Tian Zhuangzhuang re-photographed it in 2002.

Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the League of Chinese Left-Wing Writers and the League of Leftist Theatrical Figures were successively formed in Shanghai after 1930. After the September 18th Incident and January 28<sup>th</sup> Incident, the anti-Japanese war broke out in Shanghai, and the people of vision of filmdom feel greatly the needs of our times is the realistic film. Film Group was established by the Chinese Communist Party in March 1933, Xia Yan is the leader of the group with members Qian Xingcun, Situ Humin, Wang Chenwu and Shi Linghe. The establishing of Film Group promotes the creating of film. During that time a large number of quality had been directed, such as <Raging Waves> (狂流, 1933)、<Three Modern women> (三个摩登女性, 1933)、<The Gadget> (小玩意, 1933)、<Twins> (姊妹花, 1934)etc. The Left-wing Film Movement was making brilliant achievements and produced influential and outstanding films like <Song of the Fisherman>(or Yu Guang Qu)(渔光曲, 1934)、<New woman> (新女性, 1934)、<Children in Trouble Times> (风云儿女, 1935) etc.

#### **4) The Third Generation: From the founding new China in 1949 to the "Cultural Revolution" in 1965**

The excellent Chinese films at this stage included <Haired Girl>(白毛女, 1950) of Shui Hua, <Fighting North and South> (南征北战, 1952) of Chen Yin, <Song of Youth> (青春之歌, 1959)、<Little Soldier> (小兵张嘎, 1961) of Cui Wei, <February> (早春二月, 1964) of Xie Tieli etc. The most noticeable of this period is Xie Jin. In addition to his film before the Cultural Revolution <Woman Basketball Player No. 5> (女篮五号, 1957)、<Red women's detachment>(红色娘子军, 1961)、<Stage Sisters> (舞台姐妹, 1965), he launched the first film <Day Yunshan Legend> (天云山传奇, 1980)take "right" as the subject, <Herdsman>(牧马人) in 1982, and <Under Mountain Garland>(高山下的花环) in 1984 which helped he won a best feature film award of "Hundred Flowers Awards" and a best scenarist award of "Golden Rooster Award" etc. By far he is the only one who won "Hundred Flowers Awards" sit times by direct suffrage of massive audience in the history of Chinese film.



This generation of directors followed the principle of realism to reflect the essence of life. Try their best to reflect period character. They have much useful exploration in national style, local characteristics and pursuit of artistic atmosphere. But due to the times limit, the esthetics characteristic of this generation is: strong political consciousness, high-spirited and optimistic spirit temperament, political language and popular narrative style. Its core is the relation of politics and art. Generally speaking, the art unfolded around political mission. (Huang Huilin, professor of Beijing Normal University art department, Wang Xuanwen, doctor of Beijing Normal University art department, <Aesthetic study on Seventeen years films of New China>)

#### **5) The Fourth Generation: Awkward generation (Cultural Revolution -- early 1980s)**

The representative directors of this generation are Xie Fei, Zheng Dongtian, Huang Jianzhong, Zhang Nuanxin, Wu Gongyi and so on. The representative works are Zhang Nuanxin's <Sand Bird> (沙鸥, 1981), Wu Yigong's <South Side Story> (城南旧事, 1984)... Most of the Fourth Generations came from the group constituted by the graduations of Beijing Film Academy before Culture Revolution which exploded as soon as they graduated. Therefore, their creation began after 1978. However, after 1980's, the Fifth Generation appeared on the film stage as a so strong influence that the Fourth Generation disappeared without any achievements. Because of the times limitation, the Fourth Generation couldn't be in touch with the other films except soviet during the learning period, which caused them lacking of creativity and represent ability in movie-language. However, they proposed that the films should rootle philosophy and poetry in daily life in a simple nature and true way but not limited by stage. At the same time, they began to self-examinant the history and set village as the central material of their work. And this kind of technique of expression also influenced the following Fifth Generation film-makers

#### **6) The Fifth Generation: From early 1980s**

Beginning in the early 1980s, the rise of the so-called Fifth Generation of Chinese filmmakers refers to these persons who had graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982. Take Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige as a representative rise to the international film, they ignited a Chinese climax with strong color and profound impressionistic style. They brought increased popularity of Chinese cinema abroad. The main members who constitute the Fifth Generation included Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, Tian Zhuangzhuang, Zhang Junzhao and others. They are the first graduates of filmmakers who graduate since the Cultural Revolution and they soon rejected traditional methods of storytelling and opted for a more free and unorthodox approach. Zhang Junzhao's *<One and Eight>* (一个和八个, 1983) and Chen Kaige's *<Yellow Earth>* (黄土地, 1984) in particular were taken to mark the beginnings of the Fifth Generation. The most famous directors of the Fifth Generation are Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige, went on to produce celebrated works such as (in order of time) *<King of the Children>* (孩子王, 1987), *<Ju Dou>* (菊豆, 1989), *<Raise the Red Lantern>* (大红灯笼高高挂, 1991), and *<Farewell My Concubine>* (霸王别姬, 1993), which were not only acclaimed by Chinese audience but also by the Western audience. It was during this period that Chinese cinema began reaping the rewards of international attention, including the 1988 Golden Bear for *<Red Sorghum>* (Zhang Yimou, 红高粱), of the 38<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival. The 1992 Golden Lion for *<The Story of Qiu Ju>* (秋菊打官司), of the 49<sup>th</sup> Venice Film Festival, the 1993 Golden Palm for *<Farewell My Concubine>* (霸王别姬), of the Cannes International Film Festival and the Best Foreign Language Film nominations from the Academy Awards. Besides, the films *<My Father and Mother>* (我的父亲母亲), *<Ju Dou>* (菊豆) and *<Hero>* (英雄) etc also won award at international film festival. Their recent works: Zhang Yimou's *<Under the Hawthorn Tree>* (山楂树之恋, 2010), Chen Kaige's *<Sacrifice>* (赵氏孤儿, 2010). The Fifth Generation directors' common characteristic is they hope to explore the history of national culture and the structure of national psychology. Their works are with strong subjectivity and symbolic. Such as they like to use some fixed color to show some artistic conceptions, just like red in *<Red*



*Sorghum*> (红高粱) and yellow in <*Yellow Earth*> (黄土地).

## **7) The Sixth Generation**

It refers the directors birthed in late 1960s - middle and late 1970s, entered in of Beijing Film Academy in late 1980s - 1990s and received the regular film-education. The other part was composed by freelance who ardently loved films. The representative directors contained Zhang Yuan, Wang Xiaoshuai, Jia Zhangke and Ning Hao. The representative works are Zhang Yuan's <*Mother*> (妈妈, 1990), <*East Palace West Palace*> (东宫西宫, 1996) and <*Seventeen Years, Diciassette anni*> (过年回家, 1999); Ning Hao's <*Mongolian Ping Pong*> (绿草地, 2005) and <*Crazy Stone*>(疯狂的石头, 2006). They grew up in an economy recovering period, which was the start point of building market economy of China. At the same time, they received systemic education under open and diversity culture background, then could taste much films from oversea. The change of the economy system brought huge changes to the relationship of the society, people and the families, and they experienced the step of the film which changed from an art to one part of the life and culture. So their mind of the work and the contents itself changes a lot contrast to before. Their films pay more attention to social reality which can't say. On the theme selection, they concern on edge character, the thief, prostitutes, unemployed youth, etc. In narrative strategies, they often put into their experience on the characters of film, which contains autobiographical characteristic more or less.

## **8) The New Generation (or Post- Sixth Generation)**

The New Generation is a broad appellation. It both refers to the Sixth Generation including Jia Zhangke, Wang Xiaoshuai, Zhang Yuan etc, also refers to the new directors who started later including Lu Chuan and Xu Jinglei. They mostly absorb foreign investment, make a small cost production and use the underground issued market strategy. As theme and content of film, they usually involved in gray themes such as youth, growing, search and frustration. There usually is a kind of sentimental and narcissistic emotion between narrative and keynote. Represented

directors and films: Lu Chuan's <*The Missing Gun*> (寻枪, 2002) , <*Mountain Patrol*> (可可西里, 2004) and <*City of Life and Death*> (南京南京, 2009) ; Xu Jinglei's <*Letter From An Unknown Woman*> (一个陌生女人的来信, 2004) and <*Go LA LA Go!*> (杜拉拉升职记, 2010).

Among them, the Fifth Generation's achievement is the largest and they are the most representative by national characteristic. Some national symbols they created also get the international and universal recognition. Such "Red" was thought as Chinese national color. In this paper, we will mainly study the Fifth Generation's films.



### III. Definition of national cinema

What is national cinema? Like other film theory or film criticism terms (e.g. "art film"), the term "National cinema" is hard to define, and its meaning is debated by film scholars and critics. In arguably the most influential single article about the subject, Andrew Higson points out:

“The concept of national cinema has been appropriated in a variety of ways, for a variety of reasons: there is not a single universally accepted discourse. In general terms, one can summarise these various mobilizations of the concept of as follows. First, there is the possibility of defining national cinema in economic terms, establishing a conceptual correspondence between the terms ‘national cinema’ and ‘the domestic film industry’, and therefore being concerned with such questions as: where are these films made, and by whom? Who owns and controls the industrial infrastructures, the production companies, the distributors and the exhibition circuits? Second, there is the possibility of a text-based approach to national cinema. Here the key questions become: what are these films about? Do they share a common style or world view? What sort of projections of the national character do they offer? To what extent are they engaged in ‘exploring, questioning and constructing a notion of nationhood in the film themselves and in the consciousness of the viewers?’<sup>4</sup>

Higson’s highly condensed, at times elliptical, argument offers one way of conceptualizing the dominant approaches to the topic. Of crucial importance is his observation that most scholars simply equate “national cinema” with the body of films produced in or by a given country, while patterns of film *consumption* (which invariably involve an international range of product) are neglected.

A film may be considered to be part of the "national cinema" of a country based on a number of factors, such as the country that provided the financing for the film, the language spoken in the film, the nationalities or dress of the characters, and the

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Higson. “The Concept of National Cinema”. Screen 30.4 (1989): 36-46. p.36.

setting, music, or cultural elements present in the film<sup>5</sup>. To define a National cinema, some scholars emphasized the structure of the film industry and the roles played by "...market forces, government support, and cultural transfers ..."<sup>6</sup>

Among many scholars, Chinese scholar Ni Xiangbao's view is systematic and comprehensive. Ni Xiangbao points out that we should understand national cinema from these three aspects:

Firstly, as we usually understand, the so-called national cinema, it should at least refer to the films that use national human, national material and national language. Secondly, from the strict perspective, national cinemas not only refer to use national human, material and language, but also reflect the national real life or use the national story. Usually it should be shot in the nation, and the films premiere should in country screening. Thirdly, from the aesthetic, there should be a key for defining national cinema, it is that the films should show the national cultural traits and history characteristics as possible from content and form, namely holds the attributes of "this one" as Hegel said.<sup>7</sup>

Based on it, we can understand, in this conception, the nation should refer to national state. The national cinema should contain two aspects contents: one is it should utilize national people, national material, and national language. The other one is the nation's cultural characteristics should be shown in the film. Simply to say, to distinguish if it's a national cinema, one is to look at the nationality, another is to look at the culture shown in the film.

With above basic principles, let us look at these two Chinese film: <The Story of QiuJu> (秋菊打官司) and <Hero> (英雄). <The Story of QiuJu> (秋菊打官司) directed by Chinese director Zhang Yimou, with Gong Li(巩俐), naturalized to

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<sup>5</sup>Jimmy Choi. "Is National Cinema Mr. MacGuffin?" The Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds, UK. (October 2002)

<sup>6</sup>Tom O'Regan. "Australian National Cinema", cited in Jimmy Choi". Cited in Jimmy Choi. Is National Cinema Mr. MacGuffin?

<sup>7</sup>倪祥保.《跨国电影与民族电影内涵厘定及其他》.“全球化语境中电影美学与理论新趋势”国际学术研讨会论文集. (2004)

Singapore citizenship in 2008) as the main actress. This film reflects the west rural life condition thought transformation of China soon after the 改革开放(reform and opening up). This film reflects the thought transformation in western rural life in China soon after the reform and opening up. Studios are Sil-Metropole Organization and Youth Film Studio of Beijing Film Academy. It was debuted in August 31, 1992 Beijing. The language is Chinese mandarin. And the film <Hero> (英雄), directed by Zhang Yimou too. The actors: Jet Li(李连杰 , born in Beijing 1963, and naturalized to Singapore citizenship in 2009). Tony leung chiu wai(梁朝伟, Hong Kong), Maggie Cheung(张曼玉 , Hong Kong), Zhang Ziyi(章子怡, Beijing) etc. It was made and issued by Beijing New Picture Film Company. The language is Chinese mandarin. The story comes from Chinese accent story called Emperor and the Assassin, and this film reflects Chinese traditional landscape painting and Chinese martial arts. We can understand the national spirit too. So these films can be defined as 'national cinema'.

Along with the development of film globalization, it seems more and more difficult to define national cinema. We can follow above rules to judge the films. If a film does not follow one of those two rules, it cannot be considered as national cinema, for example: film <Memoirs of a Geisha> tells a bumpy life of a geisha working in Kyoto, Japan before and after World War II. It shows a lot of Japanese etiquettes, customs and culture including geisha custom. The film was directed by Rob Marshall. He is an American, and the main actors Zhang Ziyi, Gong Li, and Michelle Yeoh are all come from China. This film was made by Columbia Pictures Corporation and issued by Sony Pictures Entertainment that both of them are American companies. And they speak English in that film. The environment is also not only belongs to Japan. Sometimes is American, sometimes is Japan. Although this movie meets one of the national cinema rules: reflects Japanese folklore and culture, but it didn't meet the other rule, and almost all the film makers and actors are not Japanese. It doesn't show more Japanese national cultural element except the

geisha's life. Of course, geisha belongs to Japan, but it is not the whole thing of Japan. It is just a special group of Japan. Even can't represent the common group of Japan. This film cannot be defined as Japanese national cinema.

According to analysis, we can know, the definition of national cinema is not very complex. It just emphasizes nationality of the film, the background of film makers, and the cultural spirit shown in the film. Simple to say, there are two standards to definite a film if it is national film: the first one is producing nation, the second one is the culture shown in the film, and both are necessary.





#### IV. Definition of Korean national cinema

According to the above analysis, each nation's national film should be distinctive. Because each nation's cultural tradition and psychological characteristics are different. Korean national cinema refers to the films which are made by the filmmakers come from Korean peninsula and could reflect Korean national psychological characteristics, national emotions, national culture and national characteristics.

Here the culture we talk about is not necessarily the most important culture of a nation. It refers to the culture reflected in films and it can stand for this nation or it is recognized in the world. The main purpose of this work is not the definition of Korean national culture, but how these cultures described by films.

About Korean culture reflected in films, many scholars point out one of the important emotion in Korean cinema is Han. Korean scholar In-sik Kim said: "Han is an inherent emotion of Korean nation. The form of expression of Han is a kind of defeatism."<sup>8</sup> It is a kind of emotion formed in a long-term depressive environment. This emotion related to Korean history and geography. Chinese scholar Zhang Zhenhua has analyzed "Han"<sup>9</sup> in these three levels: sadness, isolation, and rebellion. In this paper we will analyze this "Han" in details according to his viewpoint. Because he analyzed Han from theories to examples, make it more persuasive. Help us understanding Korean culture and Korean national cinema in further.

At the same time, Confucianism plays an important part in Korean films. One of the most important theories of Confucianism is 'Love' which it is also expressed in Korean films well. It is not my own viewpoint. Hyun-soo Lee<sup>10</sup> In her paper "Seopyeonje and Korean traditional aesthetic consciousness" holds the same attitudes with me. She points out: Korean form its own loving ideas with the Confucian's Love.

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<sup>8</sup> 김인식. 「〈서편제〉의 한과 한민족의 정서」. 『우리문학연구』 22. (2007.8): 213-240 쪽. 217 쪽.

<sup>9</sup> 张振华, 秦玉兰. 《悲情, 疏离, 反叛——韩国电影的民族性及其美学呈现》. 广东教育学院学报 3. (2003): 86-90 p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> Hyun soo Lee, Korean. A master of 1994 grade in Beijing Film Academy dramaturgical theory major, his professor is Huang Shixian.



We should understand this love in a broader sense. It is a kind of love not means the love between lovers, but also means a love broadly exist between all people. Even though we've not sure the Korean national cultures are Han and Philanthropy, but we can say so as some examples.

In addition, on the technique of expression, Korea aesthetics belong to the eastern aesthetics. "The characteristic of eastern aesthetics is implicative and meaningful and calm."<sup>11</sup> The aesthetics of Asian countries are influenced by Confucianism and Taoism to a certain extent. One of this aesthetics is polite and silent. So there are not many blatant scenes in Asian films. And Korean films are more famous as this emotional and silent image. Now we will analyze Korean films from these tree aspects.

### 1) Korean ethnic emotions -----“Han”(한).

Kim In-sik points out:

Han is an inherent emotion of Korean nation. For us, Han is the inherent emotion that we have no choice. This Han is a kind of inherent emotion that Western Europeans can never translate. The realistic feeling that we emphasized is quite different from China and Japan which borders Han peninsula in Eastern Asia. First it is the willpower and courage to live. Then it is a kind of emptiness after suffering. And it is also the idea of despair and sadness in a long hopelessness

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The form of expression of Han is a kind of defeatism. Namely, the failure consciousness and sense of emptiness which formed from the realistic setbacks, it is the hopelessly living appearance after all the hopes destroyed.”<sup>12</sup>

South Korea is surrounded by big nations like China, Japan, and Russia. In ancient time, Korea had to pay tribute to China; in modern history, once it was

<sup>11</sup>宋红岩. 《从<八月照相馆>看韩国电影的东方美学意蕴》. 电影评介 11.(2009): 51-52. p.51.

<sup>12</sup>김인식. 「<서편제>의 한과 한민족의 정서」. 217 쪽.

colonized by Japan. So this Han is a kind of hart mood which formed by chronically oppressing.

Zhang Zhenhua divided this Han into three levels in his paper. “The Han of Korean nation can be divided into three levels, which are sadness, isolation, and rebellion.”<sup>13</sup> Now we will analyze these three levels.

The first level is Sadness. Zhang Zhenhua said sadness is the highest level of Han. But I think it is the basic level. It comes from leaving, disease, natural disasters and human disasters. When we face them, the natural and instinctive feeling is sadness. The next two levels base on sadness. Oriental aesthetics characteristic is implicative, so when face sad things such as failure, pain, the mood showed as patience but not outbreak. But when we can't bear, we choose to leave, this is the second level. Isolation means alienation and separation, which comes from the word island. Island is separated from the continent, which then represents loneliness. Isolation is also regarded as loneliness. After a long sad and lonely period, if we are still unable to ease the pain, then it reached the third level, rebellion. It means release the emotion. It is the peak to keep wills and overcome difficulties, which surpasses sadness, abandons isolation and then reaches an anti-regular extent.

Now we will analyze these three levels from some films. In 1970s, a series of films just like he typical example <Yeong-ja in Her Prime> (영자의 전성시대) pay attention to recall the suffering experience and analyze the poor real life. Sad emotion became exactest concentrate and summarized in that period. In 1980s, films like <Aema Buin> (Mrs Emma) (애마부인) related to age development. Truly record and show capital and market influence people's life from clothes to heart.

In film <The Isle> (섬) the beautiful color, solitude mood, misty island, small house, self closing man, silent woman--- the woman bloodily peels the fresh fish, maim private parts--- the persons in the beauty nature, do the non- normal bloody things, it makes the isolation emotion strongly.

<Taegukgi> (태극기 휘날리며) describes the harsh reality of the suffering of

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<sup>13</sup>张振华, 秦玉兰. 《悲情, 疏离, 反叛——韩国电影的民族性及其美学呈现》. p. 87.

history and work of realism, breaking into long-standing thinking of the Cold War and restore long-lost view of human nature to look at North-South Korean situation, reflect Korean confrontation, send out the voice of peace; <Sympathy For Mr Vengeance> (복수는 나의 것)etc, these works possess post-modern characteristics. These works take violence as the expression of inner emotional thinking. Through then on-logic and non-normal behavior of vandalism, kidnapping, crime, to express the will and desire of breakthrough the traditional restrict, and the good mind of overcome the reality shackles.

From the emotion strength, these three levels are in gradual advance. Sadness is the basic emotion, all the person holds. When people face misfortunes, feature, and the ill or death, this is the normal response and representations; Isolation can be seemed as its sublimation. When either dislikes it or unable to face the pain, some people choose to avoid or evade, this level can be thought as an escape. At last, the sad continuously accumulate and reach a level that people can't fear, the persons can only make a clean break or see through everything, and the latter one is the highest level of "Han".

Cinema is a result of cultural development, and also is a media for culture. National cinema contains more national characteristics than other films. So a film can be called Korean national cinema, it will show the characteristic of Han from the cultural perspective.

## **2) Philanthropy**

Birth, death, love are three themes of cinema. Love as one of the three major themes reflected in films naturally, so is Korean films. But the love reflected in Korean films is different from the love between lovers as we think. It is a wide love we call it Philanthropy. Korean scholar Hyun-soo Lee said:

“The ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism has already taken root in Korean daily life deeply. Under the Confucian "love" concept, Korean formed the unique thought that “with a lovely heart”---- it refers to the spirit of loving others, and become the fundamental order between human ethical relations. 孝悌也者，其爱仁之欤？”

(Filial piety should become the fundamental order to love peoples.)<sup>14</sup>

Now we will analyze his view and the unique Korean love. Korea is influenced by Confucianism deeply. The core idea of Confucianism is 仁 (love). Love is a very broad concept. There are a lot of kinds of loves, such as the love between parents and children or siblings, between lovers, the friendship between friends, and the love to patients or older people, and the help to strangers, etc. Throughout the Korean film, it shows a kind of wide love. We call it philanthropy. This is not the love between lovers, but also not means love one's own, it is a spirit to save other even lose oneself. It is the mutual care between the persons no matter if they are blood relationship. Simply said: to love others.

Now we will analyze two representative films ---- <Taegukgi> (태극기 휘날리며) and <Samaria> (사마리아). <Taegukgi> (태극기 휘날리며) tells a story about two brothers in a ordinary family, the elder brother was the head of the family, and the younger one is frail, obedient to his brother. In the war years, the two brothers were forced to banishment. In the battlefield, they missed their family, they went to go back, but hopeless. They experienced battles one after another. Many people died during the war, and in order to protect the young one and send him home, the elder became a killing machine. Younger brother was unable to understand elder brother. From then on, the younger saw his brother as an enemy. At the last battle in the war, they had a big fight, but the younger one awoke his brother with their family love. At that moment, all misunderstandings and hate disappeared. Elder brother asked his brother to leave first, and he died in order to protect his brother. Because of the war, the younger one was unable to find his brother. At the end of this film, the younger brother found his brother's remain after 50 years. He also found a pen with his name on it, at that moment, shocking with his brother's love.

In film < Samaria > (사마리아), there are two kinds of love. One is friendship between two girls. Yeo-jin gave up her best thing in order to complete

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<sup>14</sup>李泫淑. 《〈悲伤一曲〉与韩国人传统的审美意识》. 当代电影 4. (1996) : 76-79. p. 77

Jae-young's last wish, which she frowned upon and with the man she hated. After Jae-young's death, In order to make their friends behavior became beautiful redeemed behavior instead of dirty money transactions, she found all the pimps, and slept with them, then gave the money back. The other one is the father's love. After knowing his daughter being in prostitution, he agonized, but did not confront her for protecting her pride. The father found those pimps trying to stop them. One man jumped off building and one man was miss-killed by the father. From beginning to end, father didn't complain about her daughter. Finally, father surrendered to sin, which was his atonement to his daughter. This love transcend from normal, is a great love.

Korean films are popular, one reason is it can bring strong shake of deep national emotion, another one is the strong feeling between people, which is the most direct, simplest, and the purest feeling. This love is Korean love.

### **3) Image: Emotional and silent Image**

Song Hongyan said: "The main style of Eastern aesthetics is implicative meaningful, calm aestheticism... Korean films are famous as implicative aestheticism."<sup>15</sup> The different social, political, economic and cultural conditions formed different eastern and western aesthetics. Eastern aesthetics is "文贵含蓄(the excellent characteristic of article is implicative)."<sup>16</sup> This is a kind of aesthetics formed by the influence of Taoism. Lao Zi's "大音希声" (the biggest sound is no sound) and Zhuang Zi's "至乐无乐"(the highest and the most beautiful music is no music) are this aesthetic.

Japanese esthetician Soetsu Yanagi (야나기 무네요시) said:

The beauty in Korean movies is not the shape or color, but the streaks which reveal the unspeakable emotion and contains sadness and hope in this emotion". "Through this dignified beauty, what audiences will realize is the dignity of the tragedy and the tough national spirit. It is just the inside spirit of Korean people."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>宋红岩.《从<八月照相馆>看韩国电影的东方美学意蕴》. p.51.

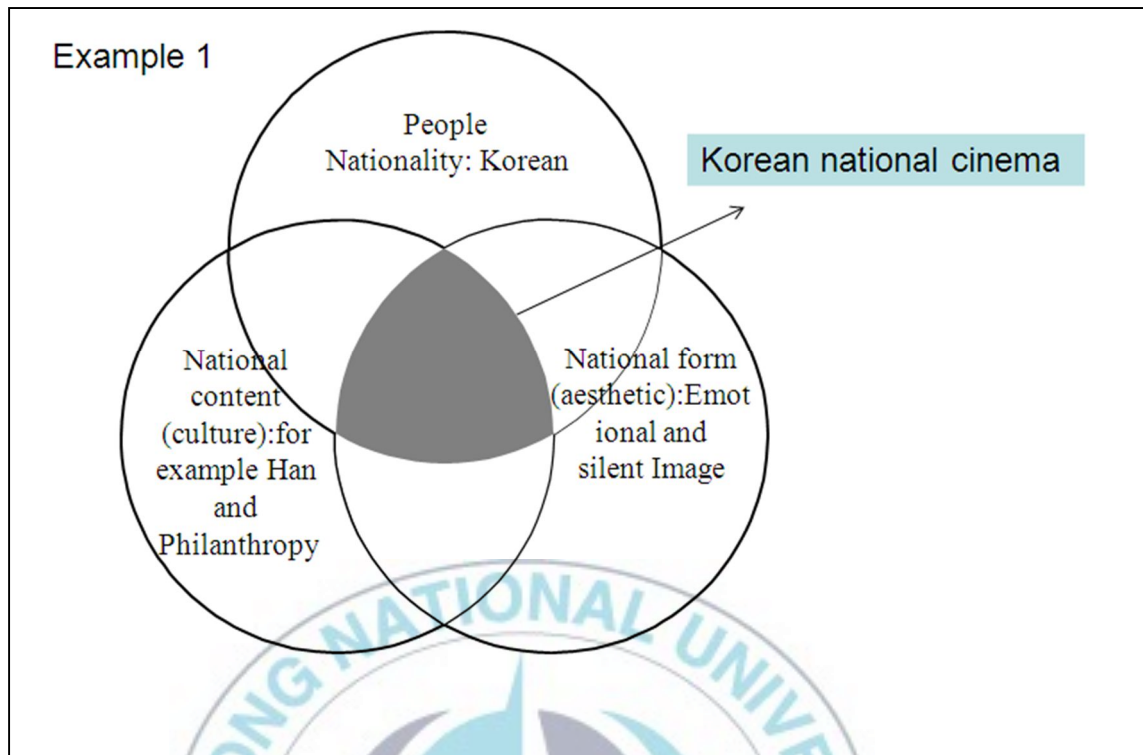
<sup>16</sup>彭钰涵.《<八月照相馆>：唯美含蓄的东方意蕴》. 知识经济 5. (2010) : 169. p.169.

<sup>17</sup>金燕.《林权泽的电影世界》. 硕士毕业论文. (2000.6) p.12.



Akira Kurosawa said: a film, if it is not a thing called Beauty, it can't touch heart. Korean films just because of the beauty that moved the audience both at home and abroad, and conquered the world. This kind of beauty is a kind of aesthetic: emotional and silent. It is a kind unique Korean aesthetic makes Korean film like a picture.

This kind of aestheticism means there are not a lot of crazy frames. It focuses on expressing and portraying emotion through details. Korean films inherited and showed this Eastern aesthetic style well. For example: <Christmas in August> (8월의 크리스마스, 1998). When the hero knows he will die soon, he should be extremely sad and his emotions should vary greatly. But in this film, he was very calm. He secretly hid in the coffee shop, and touched his girl friend's body through window with no words. Before dying, he adjusted the camera, took a photo of himself with his smile. There was no cry, no tears. Gradually, the photo became to a portrait with his timeless smile, beautiful, silent and heartbreaking. The whole film is always in a state of peace and connotation. It is a romance, but there are no words about love, and also no lust plots. It is also a film about death, but there is no intense mood swing, no fearless, no shouting. The hero was always silent, kept him sling smile when facing death. The film used many long-lens view to make the beauty frame freeze-frame in the line of people's sight, leaving the audience endless space to aftertaste, to rethink love and death. So now we can understand Korean national cinema is as example1



Here the cultures we talk about are not the most important culture of Korea, but it was expressed in films and recognized in the world. The main purpose of this work is not the definition of Korean national culture, but how these cultures described by films.



## V. Definition of Chinese national cinema

Chinese films reflect one kinds of Chinese traditional culture---Filial Piety, which is also one of the representative Chinese national cultures. Liang Shuming<sup>18</sup> points out:

“In a sense, Chinese culture is Filial Piety Culture. Filial Piety Culture plays an important role and hold high status. If we talk about Chinese culture but neglect filial piety, that means we don’t understand Chinese culture deeply.”<sup>19</sup>

Many other cultures are derived from it. But Filial Piety is an abstract concept. Many Scholars have been objectified nepotism. Hao Yimin also said: “Family relation and family conception take a core position and play a decisive role in the development of Chinese culture.”<sup>20</sup> Scholar Cao Shuwen and Zhang Tai support the same view too.<sup>21</sup> Chinese films usually base on a family background or try to show family rules and family relationship etc.

China is a country with a long history. In these long histories, science is not developed, but culture is very advanced. Especially in East Asia, it always stays in a position of culture export. Different from other world civilization, it has a strong continuity, never interrupted. It made Chinese people have a feeling of cultural superiority, we call it Culture exhibitionism. This consciousness reflected in Chinese films well.

From narrative perspective, in mid 1980s, Chinese scholar Chen Xihe, a doctor graduated from Ohio state university, and a professor of Shanghai University film and television department. In 1985, he graduated from Beijing China art research institute in film department. He is the first generation of film master’s studies. Former is Beijing Chinese film art research center of theoretic aesthetics laboratory researchers,

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<sup>18</sup> Liang Shuming(1893-1988), Chinese famous scholar, maestro in Chinese traditional culture.

<sup>19</sup> Liang Shuming cited Xie Youwei’s opinion in “Chinese cultural essence”; Xie Youwei (1905-1976), a master of Harvard University, and is a professor of Zhejinag University.

<sup>20</sup>郝一民. 《电视剧的家庭化观赏特征与其文化艺术选择》. 中国传媒论坛. (2002): 81-86. p. 82.

<sup>21</sup>曹书文. 《论中国现代作家的家庭文化情节》. 文学评论 1. (2005): 144-148. 张泰. 《简说汉语与民族文化心理》. 文学艺术 3. (2006): 36-37.

deputy director of this center. He attended the writing of encyclopedia "Film Volume" and "Film Art Dictionary". Early in 1988 he went to the United States to study. Early 1994 at Ohio state university received movie and television doctoral degree. He point out: Story Film is the core concept of Chinese film aesthetic<sup>22</sup>, preliminary established Chinese film aesthetic theory----影戏 (Story Film). Its main characteristic is: emphasize on telling a story. Namely, the story should be told clearly from beginning to end, and the plot should be winding. Zhong Dafeng perfects this theory future in mid 1990s. Chen Pingyuan said: traditions of biography and poetry. The tradition of biography is similar with Story Film from narrative characteristic, and the tradition of poetry is another form of Chinese films which different from Story Film, which some scholar such as Li Hui and ZhaoYan call it Writer Film.<sup>23</sup> It pays attention to express one's emotion. Lv Yidu analyzed further, gives a new conception: 戏人电影 and Writer Film. 戏人电影 is similar with Story Film, and the Writer Film is similar with Poetry Film(or tradition of Poetry).

## **1. Perspective of content: Filial Piety, Loyalty and Culture Exhibitionism**

### **1) Filial Piety and Loyalty**

The same with studying Korean national cinema, firstly we will analyze Chinese films from cultural perspective. There are many kinds of cultures in China. One of them is Filial Piety which expressed in Chinese films usually. Except the scholar Liang Shuming we mentioned above, another scholar Pan Jianfeng holds the same viewpoint. Pan Jianfeng points out:

“The original idea of Filial piety means care for parents, but after generations of carrying forward and development, it has rich cultural connotation. firstly, 孝丧, 孝祭和孝守(mourning, sacrifices), respect for ancestors. Secondly, honor parents.

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<sup>22</sup>转引自吕益都.《闪烁在诗意的长河----中国文人电影的叙事特征》.解放军艺术学院学报 1. (2005): 45-51. p.45.

<sup>23</sup>赵艳.《论中国文人电影的美学意蕴》.硕士学位论文.(2004).李辉.《论中国的文人电影》.硕士学位论文.(2007).

Thirdly, learn hardly to glory on parents. Lastly, piety, the path of managing state affairs”<sup>24</sup>

Now we will analyze this viewpoint. Filial Piety contains these several means: Respect the dead ancestors, mourning for them and take good care of parents. This is the basic meaning as we known. The third one means in order to complete Filial Piety, we should try hard to be an outstanding person, because that will have our parents honored by others. So here studying and working hard is not only individual behavior, it is also a kind of Filial Piety behavior. The last one, it is the fundamental for manage state affairs. In China, country is called “国家”(Country-family). It means a country is a big family. We love our family, so we love our country too. We study and work hard for our family, so we should do the same thing for our country. So another requirement of Filial Piety is loyal to country and participating in state affairs actively. Generally, Loyalty becomes to be a rule for person. Being loyal to husband, to our work or cause is a kinds of virtue.

Filial Piety is an abstract concept. In films, it usually based on family background, and developed in family environment. If there is no family, there is no Filial Piety. So in Filial Piety, family is very important. Family is an important carrier of Filial Piety culture. The Chinese great master of sinology Qian Mu (Beijing University and Tsinghua University former professor, his main works are: *“Biography of Confucius”*, *“Chinese academic and ideological history Series”* etc; his main papers are *“Chinese cultural spirit”*, *“Nation and Culture”* etc) points out:

“Family is one of the most important mainstays of Chinese culture. We can say that, all Chinese culture based on family. The idea of family comes first, and then the idea of humanity, the idea of humanity comes first, and then the others.”<sup>25</sup>

In China, whether literary works or artistic works both show a strong familiness. Qian Mu said: “Family is one of the most important mainstays of Chinese culture. We

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<sup>24</sup>潘剑锋. 《论中国传统孝文化及其历史作用》. 船山学刊 3. (2005): 25-28. p. 25.

<sup>25</sup>钱穆. 《中国文化史导论》. 商务印书馆. (1994) p. 51.

can say that, all Chinese culture based on family. The idea of family comes first, and then the idea of humanity, the idea of humanity comes first, and then the others.”<sup>26</sup> Hao Yimin also said: “Family relation and family conception take a core position and play a decisive role in the development of Chinese culture.”<sup>27</sup> Tang Xia said: “family, as a kind of special image, a narrative theme, extensive and long-term exists in modern literature”.<sup>28</sup> (Many Chinese films are adapted from literature, such as <To Live>)

Thus, familiness also occupies an unshakable important position in Chinese films. It “becomes an important role which China is different from other countries.”<sup>29</sup> Chinese film profoundly shows this feature. Family rules, family ethics, the traditional family conception, and relation of family members are all showed in Chinese films strongly. Such as a series of films of Zhang Yimou, <Raise the Red Lantern>(大红灯笼高高挂), <Ju Dou>(菊豆), <To Live>(活着), etc.

Now we will analyze this familiness from film <Ju Dou>(菊豆). The film tells a story happened in a closed southern town. People live under family rules in generations. They spent every day quietly, and don't know what is love and romantic. There is an important family rule: there are three things show the persons lack Filial Piety, the worst is who has no children. In order to have a son, the boss of dye house who almost 60 years old married with a young girl called Ju Dou. Because his old and ill, he had no ability to make children. But he still rudely forced his wife slept with him and wished he can have a son. Another man Tian Qing in the film was Yang Jinshan's nephew who was small and weak. He had the instinctive primitive impulse for Ju Dou. But because the bondage of feudal rule, it was only a dream. One day, they slept together accidentally and made Ju Dou pregnancy and gave birth to the child Tian Bai. Tian Qing and Ju Dou still slept together clandestinely, and Yang Jinshan was still Ju Dou's nominally husband. Four people lived under the same roof

<sup>26</sup>钱穆. 《中国文化史导论》. p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>郝一民. 《电视剧的家庭化观赏特征与其文化艺术选择》. p.82

<sup>28</sup>唐霞. 《论中国现代作家作品中的集体无意识》. 现代文学 1. (2010): 70-71. p. 70.

<sup>29</sup>曹书文. 《论中国现代作家的家庭文化情节》. p.144

with deformed relations, which caused Tian Bai was not psychological health from childhood. He was deeply influence by feudalism. He only recognized nominal "father" Yang Jinshan but disown birth-father. One day Tian Bai pushed Yang Jinshan into dyed pool accidentally when he was 4 years old and had him drowned, which made him more shadowiness. After he grew up, he hated his parents' behavior, even revolted to his biological father and thrown him into the dye pool to drown. Ju Dou utterly disheartened. She fired the dye house. The whole film was cold, only rule moral code without human mood. In the last part, Tian Bai killed his father tells us that rules will be passed on to following generations without an end.

## 2) Culture Exhibitionism

In Chinese film works, there is one kind of aware cultural pride, we call it: Culture Exhibitionism. "One prominent feature of Chinese culture is continuity"<sup>30</sup> China as one of four origins of civilization in the world, is the only one didn't get disrupted. In such long history, despite it had been invaded and the regime was occupied by other nations for so many times. Every time when it assimilated alien cultures, it made Chinese people have a feeling of cultural superiority, we call it Culture Exhibitionism. Such as Tong Liechun<sup>31</sup> says that five thousand years civilizations constituted the national psychology, which make them hold nation-based superiority. Because China is the center of Confucianism civilization, in the long history of several thousand years, the Chinese civilization is the culture output state, which also established the cultural display psychology. On this view, at present there are much and clear argument in China. But through the analysis of the movie, we will find the previous statement is a clear consciousness after analyzing Chinese films.

There are two concrete repressions of Culture Exhibitionism in Chinese films.

Firstly, many films directly come from the story of ancient literature works and stories. Such as <Hero> (英雄) and <Emperor and the Assassin> (荆轲刺秦王)

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<sup>30</sup>陈连开. 《中国民族文化的特点》. 云南社会科学 2. (1994): 57-59. p. 58.

<sup>31</sup> Tong Liechun, a professor of Letter and Law department, Wuhan University of Technology.



come from the story “Emperor and the Assassin”. And *<Sacrifice>* (赵氏孤儿) comes from the famous story of the drama of Yuan dynasty.

Secondly, in films, show Chinese elements as much as possible. The ancient traditional manual techniques, tea art, fencing, opera poetry, bamboo, calligraphy, etc, all are the typical elements of Chinese culture. Representative film is *<Forever Enthralled>* (梅兰芳) etc.

Let us analyze *<Hero>* (英雄) and *<Forever Enthralled>* (梅兰芳) concretely. *<Hero>*, its theme is concerned, is a kind of spirit of self-sacrifice, which accords with Chinese traditional family culture, Filial Piety culture. At last it reveals the theme of this film: the real hero is a person who contains a country in his heart. Therefore, Wu Ming gave up the assassination, because at that time, only the King of Qin had the abilities to unify the country. He could make civilians far from war, so Wu Ming sacrificed his life. From the frame, it was a visual feast. All the visual symbols about China, *<Hero>* try best to reproduce: calligraphy, swords, Chinese Zither (Guzheng), landscape, bamboo, bows and arrows, etc, all of them are Chinese symbols. Fully show the deep and connotation of ancient Chinese culture. From color, it is the opposition and collisions of red and black. Black is representative of Qin dynasty, representing a grand narrative pressure, and the majesty mainstream ideology. At the beginning of film, it shows the powerful army, the gaudy palace, and the composed black. The King of Qin heads black crown, wear black boots and black armor, sitting at the center of the palace of Qin, solemn and dignified. Red is the representative color since Zhang Yimou's film.

*<Forever Enthralled>* (梅兰芳) tells a story about Chinese Opera master called Mei Lanfang in real life. Opera is Chinese representative national opera. Mei Lanfang is the representative figure of Chinese drama, is the symbol of Chinese performing arts. His life makes outstanding contributions in promoting international cultural exchange between China and the world. He is the pioneer of Beijing Opera spread to overseas. He once visited Japan, the United States and the Soviet Union. These

activities not only enhance the world to know Beijing Opera, but also make it became part of the world art. Mei Lanfang, Stanislav Belkovsky and Bertolt Brecht were called the world three performance systems together. Film *<Forever Enthralled>* on one hand for remembering deceased Mei Lanfang, on the other hand, promoting Beijing Opera art.

## 2. Perspective of form: Biography and Poetry

Chen Pingyuan summarizes that there are two characteristics of Chinese cultural tradition and aesthetic characteristic. They are traditions of Biography and Poetry. The tradition of Biography comes from *<Records of the Historian>* (史记)” and the tradition of Poetry comes from “*<The Book of Songs>* (诗经) and *<Li Sao>* (Poetry) (离骚).<sup>32</sup> The tradition of Biography is good at story and the tradition of Poetry is good at express emotion.<sup>33</sup>

*<Record of the Historian>* is the first biographical book in China. The biographical style established in the *<Record of the Historian>* (史记) has had a profound influence on narrative literature of later centuries. *<The Book of Songs>* (诗经) is the first poetry book. It collected the nobles and folk songs of fifteen places.<sup>34</sup> and *<Li Sao>* (离骚) is the longest romantic political poetry. These three books form Chinese literary two systems: biographical and romantic. Almost all the after literary and art works continue this tradition.

Under this influence, “Chinese films can be divided into tradition of Biography Film (or Story Film) and tradition of Poetry Film (or Poetry Film). Story Film’s characteristics: Pay attention to plot, the story should be full of twists and turns; the story should have been told from beginning to end, and clearly; A film usually through more than ten years even decades, and has certain social function. From such characteristics, it is like Chen Xihe's theory of Story Film (影戏). This kind of film has complete plot, easy to understand, belongs to the mass ancient culture. The

<sup>32</sup>陈平原. 《陈平原选集》. 广西大学出版. (1997) p. 76.

<sup>33</sup>吕益都. 《闪烁在诗意的长河——中国文人电影的叙事特征》 p. 46.

<sup>34</sup> Originally, all the poems of it are musical songs to be sung and, later to be read as written poems for the loss of ancient musical settings.



earliest Biography film in China is <Rescue Grandpa> (孤儿救祖记). This film received a high phrase as soon as it was released. In subsequent decades, the narrative method was popular, and it became a story-telling model film:

- 1) It has the intense social responsibilities or conscience (function of film)
- 2) It has a tragic fate legendary story (usually in family background)
- 3) A sacrifice image of women image showed in film
- 4) It lasts from a few years to decades

Typical film of Story Film is <To Live>(活着). The film takes the humor and a sarcastic tone, tells the story of Fu Gui's miserable life. The film timeline is 40 years, experienced War of Liberation, Great Leap Forward, Culture Revolution and other several important transition periods in Chinese modern history. The film put a small person into a great historical environment. It Reflects Chinese social change though the perspective of individual destiny change, humorously and sarcastically. Fu Gui had a luxury childhood that he lived in a big and beautiful house which was left from ancestors. He loved to gamble and do nothing. He lost all his money and the house in a short time. His wife left him and took away his children. Fu Gui was evicted from his big and beautiful house with his ill mother. His father died because of his impoverishments and got evicted. Fu Gui became a poor person and fed his mother and himself by his labor works. At that time, his wife and children came back. The reuniting of family made Fu Gui very happy. He lived very seriously from then he was caught by Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) to battle field. After experiencing life and death, he returned alive. But his mother died and daughter became an unintelligent person. Although it was sad, after all, family members reunited together, which was a very happy thing. They understood what life is and loved each other more than before.

In new China, their life became better and better, but an accident killed his son, which made this family withered again. As time passed, they went well generally. The daughter grew up and married to a good man. One year later, she had a baby-boy,

which made this family very happy. But all doctors were arrested during the Culture Revolution, their daughter died of postpartum hemorrhage. The bumpy life and tragic fate of this family connected with historical environment. The director tells this story with a satirizing tone. Such as they worried about their daughter's conceiving process and brought a doctor from “牛棚”(a place where doctors are kept in). But because of hungry, the doctor who is the only one can save their daughter eat too much steamed bread to move. Then their grandson was named Steamed Bread. All these make it more dramatic.

Poetry Film is different from Story Film. It doesn't pay attention to narrative, but emphasizes on representing people's emotion. The plot and persons' relationship of these films are simple. This kind of film uses long take and long shot. It is good at setting atmosphere and making unforgettable emotional appeal. Different from Story Film, it also makes narrative blank, but make a same shot appear again and again, in order to creating a mood and make audiences to imagine.

The three main sources of poetry: “first, <The Book of Songs> (诗经) and <Li Sao>(离骚). Second, classical Literati paintings. Third, Taoism.”<sup>35</sup> These three sources have a common aesthetic characteristic: It is ancient literati's idea which is decorous, delicate and lyrical, so it is also called Writer Film.

Typical films of Poetry Film are Feiwu's <Spring in a Small Town> (小城之春), Xie Tieli's <February> (早春二月), Zhang Yimou's <Red Sorghum> (红高粱) and Chen Kaige's <Yellow Earth> (黄土地), etc. Such as in <My Father and My Mother> (我的父亲母亲), only recalling father and mother's love story with a smooth tone. The story is quite simple. The film tries its best to show mother's beauty, true love between father and mother and the romance in ordinary life. Director didn't show the following plots: father and mother date at the edge of well, father and mother chat outside the classroom, etc. but repeating the mother goes to the edge of the well to draw water, and listening outside the classroom again and again. The film

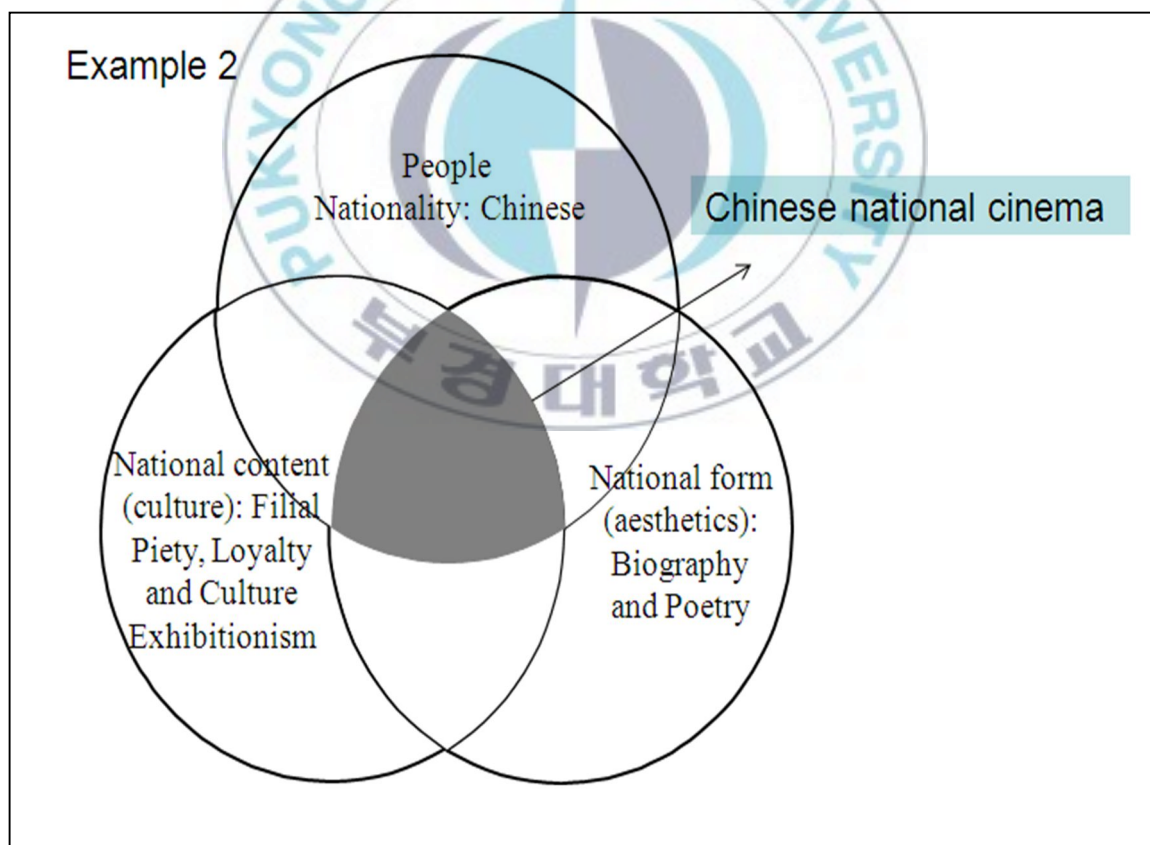
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<sup>35</sup>赵艳. 《论中国文人电影的美学意蕴》, p. 8.

adopted space-time alternate methods between reality and the memory. The largest color characteristic of this film is that the director used opposite coloring from other general films. The memory part is colored, but the reality part is white and black. This contrary color makes it more poetic. Zhang Yimou said: “this is the first time I show a love story by poetic, romantic and pure”.<sup>36</sup>

Now we can understand, there are two branches in Chinese films from narrative Angle. Compare these two kinds of films, Story Film pays attention to narrative, but not emotion. Its plot and person’s relationship are intricate and holds heavier social responsibility. Poetry Film pays attention to emotion and individual features, light social responsibility. Its plot and person’s relationship are simple.

So now we can understand Chinese national cinema is as example 2

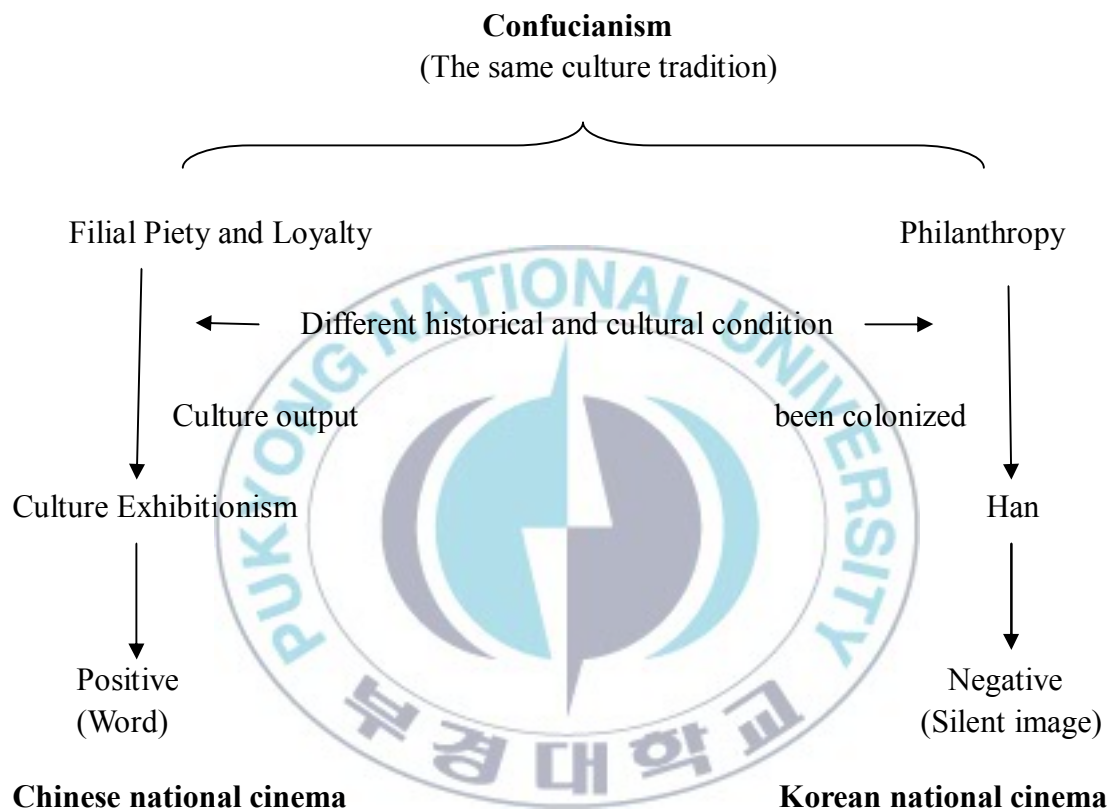


<sup>36</sup> <http://baike.baidu.com/view/173750.htm>

According to example 1, here the cultures we talk about maybe are not the most important culture of China, but it was expressed in films and recognized in world. The main purpose of this work is not the definition of Chinese national culture, but how these cultures described by films.

### 3. Discussion

So comparing Korean and Chinese national cinema <2>



Korean and Chinese culture are both influenced by Confucianism. Confucianism has a complete system and Korean or Chinese cinema only expresses parts of them. Korean national cinema pays attention to express the culture of love of Confucianism. But this kind of love of does not mean the love between lovers as we understand as usual. It is a kind of love among all the people even has no blood relationship which we call it Philanthropy. Due to certain historical and geographical reasons, Korea is rounded by big countries and was colonized in history. This experience makes Korean people a unique emotion---Han. This Han expressed as defeatism. In films it expressed as accumulating sadness. The sadness become too

more to bear, but Korean people do not tell out. All the films do not say I am Han, but only express through silent image which is the form characteristic of Korean national cinema.

Chinese national cinema pays more attention to express Filial Piety and Loyalty which is an abstract conception, so in films it also takes a family background. Chinese films express more family rules, hierarchy consciousness etc. different from Korea, ancient China is a strong country although it lost in modern wars, but it is always in culture output position, which makes Chinese people a culture confidence, we call it Cultural Exhibitionism. So Chinese people are relatively positive and love telling. So it is aesthetic characteristic of Chinese national cinema.





## VI : Case study—comparison of <Seopyeonje> and <Farewell My Concubine>

Among many movies, South Korean film <Seopyeonje> directed by Kwon-taek Im and Chinese film <Farewell My Concubine> directed by Chen Kaige can be said the representative of national cinema. <Seopyeonje> takes Korean traditional music *Pansori* as theme. Director calls the emotion in people heart long time ago through the strong music effect. Han is expressed clearly. <Farewell My concubine> takes Beijing Opera as theme. Chinese opera art blends traditional literature, music, dance, painting and acrobatics, and also contains Chinese unique aesthetics system. Its own is the symbol of Chinese traditional culture. This film tells the famous history story too, no need to say that it contains strong national culture and spirit.

We will compare these two films from four aspects. First, character, we will choose two the characters of these two films to analyze. Second, background, social and culture condition, we should understand the background what the films made, then we can understand the films well. The film contains these characters and made in a certain background should reflect such certain subject, so the third one is subject. The last is form analysis. We will analyze these two films from the angle of their national aesthetics.

### 1. Character analysis

#### 1) <Seopyeonje>

The three levels of Han Zhang Zhenhua said (we had analyzed in chapter III) also showed clearly in this film. How did it do? It was concentrated on the heroine Song-Hwa. Song-Hwa had no parents when she was a little girl, then she drifted with her foster father. Afterwards, her step mother died as well. She then was deserted by her younger brother Dong-ho. During the drift, she suffered from hunger and reproach. Last even, she was blinded by her father. Sadness was accumulated constantly during the process. However, Song-Hwa had never released out. This is the second level of



Han---isolation. When facing sad things, she tried her best to bear them but not revolt. For example, when deserted by her younger brother, she only stood under the big banyan tree and waiting for his back silently. When she was told of the reason why she was blind, she accepted quietly even did not come to howl. Instead, she practiced more hard. In the process of practicing, she felt more loneliness. Her voice became miserable. It is the reflection of this loneliness. In the end, she came to comprehend the greatness of *Pansori*, which might contribute to her understanding of the Han and beyond. At that time, it came to the third level of Han. Many years later, when she met her younger brother, they had no words to each other. Instead, they expressed their feelings by songs, as their childhood: younger brother Dong-ho played the drum and the elder sister Song-Hwa sang the sorrow of many years with her beautiful voice. At last, Song-Hwa's face was filled with tears, and Dong-ho regretted a lot. They sang *Shimchung* together for the whole night, in which way the director showed the sadness of human destiny and made the audience was touched from the bottom of the heart. The resentment was released by their songs eventually. Dong-ho left and Song-Hwa made herself free, but didn't tell out the truth of their identity. It is difficult for audience to understand, in the end, the film told the truth through the conversation between a man and Song Hwa.

Man: "Is this the man your brother whom you are waiting for?"

Song Hwa: "yes."

Man: "Why you don't recognize each other? You are waiting for him for such a long time?"

Song Hwa: "We know and understand each other through the song."

Reunion with her brother, Song Hwa finished her hope. Trough talking, the Han in Song Hwa's deep heart for many years was released, she was not sad; Years went away, father was dead, and she also didn't hate her father anymore. Song Hwa's Han was sublimed here. When a person can forgive others' faults with the understanding attitude, his spirit becomes sublime-----this is the realm of Han.

In<*Seopyeonje*>, the three main characters had no blood relationship at all. Song-Hwa was an adopted daughter of Yu-bong, Dong-ho was an orphan of

Yu-bong's second wife, and the three lived together in a family. Yu-bong was displaced for life. However, he never gave up his two children, which came from love to them. And the two children also called him "father". Yu-bong taught them traditional art *pansori*, the purpose of it one was he was a traditional artist, he loved this art. He hoped this art could continue forever. On the other hand, he wanted to teach the children something as a father. When Dong-ho left, Song-Hwa waited for him year after year, due to she saw him as her own brother although they have no blood relationship, meanwhile, Dong-ho made all his efforts to look for his elder sister, which was also from his love to Song-Hwa who had no blood relationship with him. The philanthropy means love between persons who don't have blood relationship.

## 2) <*Farewell My Concubine*>

In film <*Farewell My concubine*>, the representative person is Cheng Dieyi. He was influenced by feudal thought deeply. He thought teachers as father. What teacher taught him are all right. The things his teacher told him to do he must do. So his teacher told him to loyal. As a woman, you should be loyal to your husband, as an artist, you should be loyal to your art. He did both of them. As an artist, he was loyal to his art and become a famous artist, which itself was a kind of Filial Piety (the third content of Filial Piety Pan Jianfeng said in Chapter IV). His teacher taught him the story of <*Farewell My Concubine*> which made him know the truth of loyalty. From then on he believed only the loyalty was right. So when Juxian appeared, he asked Duan Xiaolou:

"Do not you forget our teacher's words? He taught us loyalty. What is loyalty? You and I act together for the whole life, no way if it is less than one year, one month, one day, one minute or one second".

From his childhood, he was forced to play female, then he changed his sex identification generally. He kept the family rules for woman well, and also the story of *Farewell My Concubine*. So he insisted on acting with Duan Xiaolou till die. At the end of the film, he died in the acting with Duan Xiaolou, died in his sword. He

died for his art, also devoted himself to feudal thought. His brother Duan Xiaolou evaluated him:

“He is mad for operas...He just plays what he should, no matter who sits down in front of him...I am a fake faggadnn (Xiang Yu, the Conqueror (232-202 B.C.)), but you are a real Concubine Yu”

The film chose Peking Opera as main content. It was a kind of self-confident of culture. Peking Opera was Chinese traditional drama, also was the typical Chinese drama in international. Peking Opera itself was symbols of China. Teacher taught drama chose the historical famous story---Farewell My Concubine. It was the true story of historical hero. And the act frames appear again and again. Both were the exhibition of culture. Yuan Siye(Peking Opera master) talked about Opera more accurately:

“*Farewell My Concubine*, it is a traditional story of drama, comes from Kunqu Opera. There is a action of this play: the King tune back to meet his concubine, he should walk seven steps in rule, but today, Mr Duan, you only walk five steps. To tell the truth, there is a lot of knowledge in this play.”

Duan Xiaolou said to Ju Xian: “the eyebrow should be vertical that looks more powerful.”

Such meticulous extent was really amazing. And there were other words shown for this cultural confidence.

The teacher said: “if he is a person, he will listen to Peking Opera. Something such as cat and dog, they don’t listen to Peking Opera, because they are not person, they are beast”, which shows his self-confident of this kind of art.

When Cheng Dieyi faces the trial, he doesn’t think act for Japanese means traitor. He said: “if Qing Mu alive, Opera will spread to Japan early.”

In New China, some people wanted to reform Peking Opera, but Cheng Dieyi

resisted, he said:

“Modern Opera is interesting, but its setting is too real. Even the clothes, is too simple, it is not as beautiful as traditional clothes of Opera, if reform, maybe we can not call it Peking Opera”

He meant the Opera now was the best. All these show the exhibition psychology of culture.

## **2. Background analysis**

### **1) <Seopyeonje>**

Throughout the history, South Korea is a single nation-state, and it doesn't have a history of national fusion like China and America; they think their generation is the cleanest and purest. In Korea, one of the most familiar slogan is “身土不二”(shouldn't damage state and national interests). This concept was deeply rooted in the Korean national bones and blood, permeating every corner of the society; while, in philosophy, South Korea was deeply influenced by Confucianism. Confucianism encourages “participating in state politics”, the so-called ideas of “修身，齐家，治国，平天下(cultivate one's morality, keep family name, govern the country and make the world peace)”.

<Seopyeonje> directed by Korean master of cinema Kwon-taek Im against the background that western culture gradually enters into the country during the progress of globalization. Western pop music and other popular elements enter into Korea (Picture1). Young people learn and love them, gradually forget the Korean traditional art and culture. It contains a large amount of national elements. In this situation, Kwon-taek Im shot the film <Seopyeonje>. It takes Korean traditional song *pansori* as theme, expresses Korean traditional emotion –Han, not only shows the traditional music, but also shows the beautiful Korean landscape (Picture2, 3, 4). Before the young people gradually forget the old culture, it arouses people's love of traditional



culture as a shot in the arm and stimulates national sentiment.



Picture1



Picture2



Picture3



Picture4

## 2) <*Farewell My Concubine*>

In ancient times, there was only the concept of family in China, but no nation. The so-called nation referred to the national minorities around the ancient China that had not been untied with Han, which were totally different from the modern one. In old times, China was a multi-nation country and people only cared about the national integration. Therefore, there was no single nation concept. However, the family concept is rooted deeply. For Chinese, family concept is quite deep which pays attention to the continuation from generation to generation, which can be seen from



the film <*The Red Lantern*> directed by Zhang Yimou. It also pays attention to family relations, hometowns, family rules, which can be seen from <*Yellow Earth*> directed by Chen Kaige.

Chinese reform and opening up began from the end of 1978. Since then, we started to introduce the advanced industrial and commercial products from east and west countries. At the same time, different lifestyles and thought also entered China together. Some of them are good, and some of them are not good. Some young people were affected by the bad things, gradually deviated from traditional culture. Even some people appeared these comments: we should completely negative Chinese culture. All the western culture is best and all the Chinese culture should be given up. Chen Kaige is regarded as the scholar-type director. There is a kind of involuntary culture protection consciousness in his mind. In this situation, he shot the film <*Farewell My Concubine*>, in order to recall the love to traditional culture, in order to show how good Chinese culture art is, and in order to recall the cultural exhibition consciousness of China.

Although the history and situation of these two countries are different, these two films almost shot with the same background: with the entering of foreign culture, national culture was disappearing gradually.

### **3. Subject analysis**

#### **1) <*Seopyeonje*>**

<*Farewell My Concubine*> and <*Seopyeonje*> were created in the same period, facing the same international environment---Foreign cultures entered into mother country, and impacted national culture which becomes weaker. Two directors who hold same sense of hardship in traditional culture Kwon-teak Im and Chen Kaige directed the film with the same theme ----Cultural Exploration. They act a similar role in protecting their respective national culture, and shocked the international film, blew an eastern wind, and achieved the purpose of reviving the love on traditional arts and

culture of compatriots.

*Seopyeonje*(서편제) tells a story of a family of traditional Korean *pansori* singers trying to make a living in the modern world. The story unfolds through flashbacks. A man named Dong-ho is roaming the rural hinterlands, ostensibly to find rare herbal medicines for his sick son back in Seoul, but actually in search of Song-Hwa, the woman he grew up with. Orphans, they were both apprenticed to the *pansori* master Yu-bong who pressured them to sacrifice everything for the art. Dong-ho rebelled and ran away, to become the man he is now. Song-Hwa stayed. Yu-bong, in order to make his adopted daughter reach the highest level of *pansori* he blinded her. Because Yu-bong thought that a truly great *pansori* artist must suffer. Song-Hwa lost her eyesight, and outlived Yu-bong. Rumor has it that she is still traveling and still singing *pansori*. This film tells the heroine's miserable life ostensibly. Actually it showed deep cultural care. It shows the worries about the vanishing traditional culture, and it displayed the wish of protect, inherit and carry forward traditional culture. Three actors in the film played different roles respectively. Dong-ho is a materialized person. He thinks: Life means there is a stable home. They should not worry about rice and clothes. If we don't have food, we will die, so art doesn't mean anything. Yu-bong is a utopian person. He pursues only art. He thinks art is pure and noble. Art can't compare with vulgar things, which is defiled art. These two kinds of thoughts was the conflict in this film. The most intense part is in the 60'.

Dong-ho: "the sound you emphasize can bring us rice?" Yo-bong: "what do you know?

Art is much better than gold". They fought, and Dong-ho left.

Song-Hwa is the incarnation of Korean traditional art. She experienced time change and her destiny changed silently, which means traditional art is experiencing historical test. She had no fierce resistance. But she held strong vitality and willpower. Facing the severe difficult situations continuously, she didn't give up. She tried her best to breakthrough each difficult moment in her life. At last Song-Hwa reaches the highest level of *pansori*, which means although the times had changed, the national

traditional art will not disappear, instead it will become better and better. But the film repeatedly appeared the frame of walking, which means if the national culture does not want to fade, it should explore and improve itself constantly.

<Seopyeonje> was the right film at the right time for just such a South Korean audience searching for something to reclaim about its culture.

## 2) <Farewell My Concubine>

<Farewell My Concubine> (霸王别姬), it is a story about two men in 20th-century Chinese history. We first observe their lives as children at the Peking Opera training school, a brutal and demanding arena for future actors. While still in training, the effeminate Douzi is chosen to play the transvestite role and the masculine Shitou is chosen to play the royal role in a ritualized play about a king and a concubine. The actors were so good at this performance that they become identified with these roles for their entire careers later on (Cheng Dieyi become a homosexual); they became famous and keep profound friendship (or love), the appearance of Ju Xian made their relationship become complicated, until the takeover by the Communists, through the insanity of the Cultural Revolution, they “expose” each other and then became enemies, and Ju Xian hung herself. In 1977, the year after the end of the Cultural Revolution, they in Beijing Opera costumes, enter the performance hall and played *Farewell My Concubine* which they had done many times before, at the end, Cheng Dieyi committed suicides by sword in the same manner as in the play.

In showing the theme of Cultural Exploration, it is the same with <Seopyeonje>. Cheng Dieyi is an artistic person. He pursue his art, and loyal to art. He also failed to distinguish between ideal and reality. But Duan Xiaolou is a materialized person. He is rational and sober, drama is drama, and reality is reality. In Chen Kaige' word says: <Farewell My Concubine> expounded the human theme - infatuation and betrayal

In film <Farewell My Concubine>, Cheng Dieyi acted the infatuation role. He

infatuated opera, infatuated his art dream. He took opera as life. He lived according to the opera principle. He was the real artist we can call “madman”. He didn’t know the world is constantly changing. So on one hand, he created his own drama a brilliant future, on the other hand also suffered from the reality torture and wrecked. In this film, there was a frame like this, when Cheng Dieyi was playing Peking opera for Japanese army, suddenly leaflets distributed from the above of theatre and the light went out once. For an instant, theater became very chaotic, but Cheng Dieyi was still playing as if nothing happened. He just immersed in his art (picture 5).



Picture 5

Yuan Siye evaluated him: “a lot of famous actors fail in playing *Farewell My Concubine*, only you are very excellent. Sometimes, I am confused, if the real Yuji came back?”

Duan Xiaolou evaluated him: “He is a drama madman. He just acts his opera, no matter who are sitting below. ”

During the Culture Revolution, he still dressed in drama costumes when was criticized.

He said: “the king also kneel, how can Peking opera do not die?”

He also infatuates his brother----Duan Xiaolou. He was attracted to his elder

brother from boyhood after the elder brother took care of him. From that time, his elder brother became a hero in his heart. When they grew up, they act *Farewell My Concubine* together, his elder brother is king and he is concubine as husband and wife. Due to his infatuation of drama, he couldn't distinguish drama and reality clearly. Gradually, Cheng Dieyi loved his brother in real life. He believed that his brother is the hero of Opera, and also the hero of real life. He fell in this love deeply. Till the appearance of Ju Xian, this relationship was destroyed. His dream was broken. He didn't know what to do, what is his life? He gave up playing opera, began to smoke opium, and began self-destruction etc.

Duan Xiaolou acts the betrayal role. He is a person who can distinguish reality and dream clearly. In order to live, he plays Peking opera, and become a famous actor. In real life, when he was a child, he loved to help others. With the passage of time, under the influence of the social environment, he lost the warm heart gradually to be a tactful person. Just as he said:

“To playing drama, of course, we need crazy, but if in the real life, we also crazy.  
How can we live?”

He betrayed Cheng Dieyi, betrayed his opera ideal, and also betrayed his wife Ju Xian successively. He knew Dieyi's love to him, but he didn't accept nor refuse. In order to marry with Ju Xian, he betrayed Dieyi, gave up playing Peking opera. In period of culture revolution, in order to save himself, he betrayed the most important people in his life who both love him. He said:

“At the beginning of Anti-Japanese War, he (Cheng Dieyi) played for Japanese. He became a traitor. He played for Nationalist Party, for reactionary, for capitalist and landowner etc.”

“I don't love her (Ju Xian), never. I will be sharply demarcated from her from now on  
(It made Ju Xian hung herself).”

Cheng Dieyi and Duan Xiaolou represent two kinds of attitude for traditional



culture. Some people think that we should insist to traditional culture, and some people will change with the changing of times and environment. But the film has no intention of the appraisalment. Infatuation and betrayal is an integral part of humanity (Chen Kaige).

#### 4. Form analysis

##### 1) <Seopyeonje>

The form of Koran films are emotion and silent image. Namely it does not tell. For example, <Seopyeonje> expresses the emotion of Han, but in this film, Song-Hwa does not say I am Han. It expresses it by some actions and silent image. Now we will analyze how this film shows them.

The heroine Song-Hwa is a representative of Korean traditional woman. She has all the virtue of Korean traditional women and all the advantages of the Korean race. In Song Hwa's body, we can understand the emotional and silent image. As a woman, her manners were gentle and decent, which was fully displayed the Korean traditional etiquette and then made audiences feel the long history and the rich culture sources of Korea and also made them enjoy it.; When the sad things came again and again, Song-Hwa didn't burst into tears, not even unleashed her anger and sadness. When a person faces sad thing, the natural emotion is sad. When he or she shows an inverse emotion such as quiet or smile, it makes more sadly. For example, in this film

Song Hwa experienced many sad things, but she never tell out. Only sit silently and looked down (picture 6, 7, 8) which made more sadly and ruefully.



Picture 6

When she sang, the audiences did not respect her. She was insulted. She did not resisted, only looked down and dodged silently.



When Song-Hwa knew that she could not see from then on, she did not cry, did not ask her father the reason, also sit silently and looked down.



Picture8

When her father told her that he made her eyes like that, Song Hwa did not angry with her father, did not blame him also. Listened and answered “yeah” quietly.

About philanthropy, except the content we analyzed above, there are some other expressions in this film. After Dong-ho left, Song-Hwa missed younger brother. She waited for him day by day (picture9) and became ill (picture10).



Picture9



Picture10

After Song Hwa lost her sight, Yu-bong took care of sick Song Hwa. He had no money to buy delicious food for her, so he stole a chicken (picture11). Because of it,

he was beat by the chicken's owner. Song Hwa went out to save her father when she heard the fight. Because she couldn't see, she climbed toward to her father with crying for forgiveness to the master (picture12).



Picture11



Picture12

Another incidence was Yu-bong beat Song Hwa because she helped to fill the guest's glasses. Dong-ho couldn't bear to see that, he quarreled with Yu-bong. He would rather Yu-bong beat himself than beating Song Hwa etc.

Song Hwa: "Dong-ho, don't be like that, he is our father. He feeds us since we are children. How hard! He beat me because I was wrong. I sing the song not because he forces me, because I like, I like singing."

Dong-ho: "When we lived together, I hated him, but when I left, I missed, missed all the things we had lived together."

Besides, there is an important symbol in this film----Banyan. When Dong-ho left, Song Hwa stood under a big banyan, looking the departure of her brother, (picture 13) lonely and helplessly. She looked into the distance waiting for his brother's return silently. This picture displays the break-heart incisively and vividly, and it also becomes the freeze-frame picture of this film.





Picture 13

Banyan is the holy tree of Buddhism. The doctrine of Buddhism is leniency. Banyan comes from Sanskrit word: Bodhi. Its meaning is awareness and wisdom. English for Banyan tree is peepul, Bo-tree or Large Tree, all of them mean leniency, kind, and forgive. Only Banyan tree was used in this film, it means the philanthropy, but also hinted the understanding in the end.

In the whole film, there are no bustling scenes, no intense conflict, to tell the story in a recalling way. The emotional and silent image runs through the whole film---this is the typical Korean aesthetics.

## 2) <Farewell My Concubine>

Basing on the analyzing of *Seopyeonje*, we will analyze form characteristic from how this film expresses Filial Piety, Cultural exhibitionism and tradition of Biography. First is Filial Piety. About Filial Piety, except the content we analyzed above, this film shows it by these ways:

Students kneel to teacher. In China, common people kneel only to two kinds of people, parents and teacher. Namely, teacher is the same with parents to a certain extent. Generally, when a student begins learning and to follow a teacher, at that time, he should kneel to his teacher. From then on, teacher is father. In this film, there are a lot of plots that the students who study in Peking Opera school kneel to their teacher

(picture14, 15, 16, 17), which are the embodiment of this Filial Piety. It is a kind of respect like son to father.



Picture14



picture15



Picture16



picture17

Persons' words. In Cheng Dieyi's heart, he loved his elder brother --- Duan Xiaolou. When Duan Xiaolou went to brothel, he was very sad, but he knew the love between he and his elder brother was wrong. So he asked his brother in the name of teacher:

“Don't you remember teacher's words? He told us to be loyal, you and me act together for whole life. What is whole life? No way if it less than one year, one month, one day or one hour, which can't be whole life.”



It shows the status of a teacher in student's heart. Whatever the teacher said were all right. If you go against teacher, you are wrong. Other words said by Duan Xiaolou also reflect it. His wife told him that the teacher asked him to go back to school after he didn't act with Cheng Dieyi. The first words he said was:

"I won't go. I am faceless to see teacher."

From it, we can understand the teacher's status again. In his mind, he gave up singing as a Peking Opera actor it is a failure. But when facing failure, the first thing he thinks is not his own, but is faceless to his teacher. Because in China, if you want to finish this Filial Piety, you should do well to be an excellent person, which can make your parents honored by others. If you do not succeed that make your family feels embarrassed, you are not Filial Piety. Here Duan Xiaolou's words reflected this Filial Piety directly. When the teacher died, all the students went back home, there was also a student kneeled to his teacher (picture8), he said:

"Teacher punished me to kneel seven days, not yet expired. Teacher told us if we want to be a excellent person, we should study and work hard"

It means even the teacher died, the rules, the respect still exist.

"Jiechi" and High Wall. In this film, the teacher always holds a ruler for beating student. That ruler we call it "Jiechi". It is a teacher's power symbol. When students do some things wrong, teacher will beat them with Jiechi. But students can't resist. Because it is the symbol of family rules. If you are wrong, you have to be punished by family rules. From here we can understand how strict the family rules are. Students can't rid themselves of this punishment means they are controlled by family rules. What is High Wall? In this film, school was in a big yard, and is fortified with a high wall around. All students live and studied in this closed yard. There was a plot that Xiao Shitou opened the door and asked Xiao Douzi and Xiaolaizi to run away. But when they came back, Xiao Shitou and Xiao Douzi were beat up by teacher and Xiao Laizi hung himself. Why students can't go out? That is only a school. Here, school means family, school rules mean family rules. You can't go against family rules.

School rules tell that you can't go out, so you can't go out. If you go out, you have to be punished. And the punishment is too strict to bear. Xiao Laizi would rather hang himself than bear this kind of punishment. From an abstract sense, High Wall refers to the control of feudal family rules. Students can't go out from the High Wall means people can't get rid of this kind of control of feudal rules.

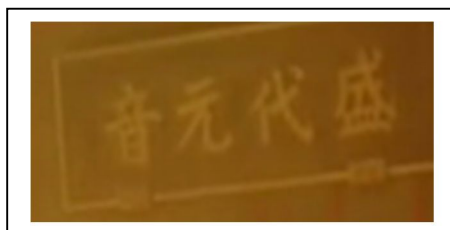
About Cultural Exhibitionism, besides the expression we mentioned before, it expresses mainly through teacher and Cheng Dieyi's telling.

"If he is person, he must listen to drama, if there is drama, there should be our operatic circle ... Since the bearing of Peking Opera, ancient dynasties, it is never as popular as today. You meet the good times."

...

"Peking Opera is particular about circumstance. Singing, dialogue, acting and acrobatics all are in this circumstance. What is Peking Opera? Eight words: 无声不歌, 无动不舞 ( no sound, no song; no action, no dance ) . It is very beautiful."

The first Opera action in this film is *Farewell My Concubine*, and the first frame of this acting is a plaque (with the words meaning the country is strong) (picture 18) and a Peking Opera Mask, which is a kind of symbol of China (picture 19).



Picture 18



Picture 19

From aesthetic angles, Film <*Farewell My Concubine*> is the typical film of traditions of biography (Story Film). It shows the four characteristics of Story Film completely.

Firstly, it has the intense social responsibility and lasts decades. This film story lasts almost half a century, from the end of Qing dynasty, to the Anti-Japanese War, the War of Liberation, and the Culture Revolution, etc. The whole film lasts for more than 170 minutes, and it makes personal destiny connected with the changing of historical periods closely. It reflected the features of time by personal destiny. Secondly, pay attention to tell story. The whole story is clear, complete and coherent. From their childhood studying Peking Opera in the same school to middle-aged acting together and become famous to old age Cheng Dieyi died. In the process, they experienced Chinese social revolution period, personal destiny changes with social changing. But every event, each plot in this long period is very clear, continuously development, without interruption. Thirdly, it should have tragic figures. In this film, there are two tragic figures. One is Cheng Dieyi, and the other is Ju Xian. Cheng Dieyi was born in brothels. His mother was unable to bring him up and sent him to Peking Opera School. Because of natural blemish he was not suitable for acting, and Mother cut off his redundant little finger. He was bullied in the school because his family background. His look was delicate so he was forced to study female role, then gradually changed his own sexual orientation. He was reflected by feudal thought and feudal rules deeply: you have to be loyal to your couple and job or the things what you are doing. He was loyal to his art and his brother. He held the rules and didn't know how to change. In acting, he and his elder brother were couples, so he regards his brother as this relationship. But his brother was a common man. When Ju Xian appeared, they married. He was abandoned by his elder brother. He began to smoke opium. When New China came, he opposed Opera revolution. So he was replaced by New Yu Ji, which means he was abandoned by Opera what he loves. Then he had to give up Opera. At last, after Culture Revolution, he found the true self again ----“I am a man” and he died in his own sword to achieve his loyal. In films, he struggled with

his fate for several times, but can't win:

When his mother sent him to Peking Opera school, he struggled the first time, but he was caught by the students in this school. Under his elder brother's help, he escaped from his school, but was moved by Opera acting----<Farewell My Concubine> and came back to school.

When he was forced to act female role, he struggle against: "I am a boy but not a girl". His struggle made him threatened that he can't act with his elder brother who helped him much. He bent before this threat. He changed his words: "I am a girl, but not a boy."

Ju Xian, a prostitute of feudal society. Prostitute's social position is very low in old China. She was eager to have ordinary people's life and tries her best to get it. She gave all her assets to the owner of brothel to buy her freedom. She married with the hero she thinks, hoping to be able to become an ordinary woman ever. She wanted to save her husband from Japanese army, which made her abort. She wanted to save her husband from his teacher, but she was beaten by her husband. She took care of Cheng Dieyi when he smoked opium, but she was exposed by him in Culture Revolution. Besides, she looked down upon in ever period. When the teacher whipped Duan Xiaolou, Ju Xian wanted to him. The teach said:

"It is the girl of Huamanlou(Brothel), isn't it? You are the important guest today, please sit down, and look carefully ... Who told you to go to brothel?"

In culture revolution, the most important man in her life---her husband betrayed her.

He said: "she is a prostitute, I don't love her. I will separate myself from her from now on."

She couldn't bear and hung herself. It is the typical narrative method of Story film.

## Conclusion

Global economic integration put forward a serious problems to culture: goes to integration or pluralism? Film as a result of cultural development, at the same time is a kind of way and method to cultural development. The French New Wave, New German Cinema, and Brazilian Cinema Novo discovered a truth: Economic integration and cultural pluralism interdependence with development. The more national, the more international. Chinese famous scholars Tang Yijie said: harmony but different, that can make the things develop. People from different regions and different nations through hard working, explore their nation's culture, filming the national film, and form the distinctive national cinema, which is the development direction of future films but also the development direction of culture. So the development and research of national cinema carries the important cultural significance. Through the analysis of this paper, we can understand national cinema means the films made by national people, contains national culture with the national aesthetic. So Korean national cinema means the films made by Korean filmmakers, contain the Korean national emotion Han and philanthropy between people, and with an emotional and silent image of Korea. And Chinese national cinema means the films made by Chinese filmmakers, contain Filial Piety and the psychology of Cultural Exhibition, and reflect the tradition of Biography or Poetry. Korean and Chinese base on the same cultural background which influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. But because the different historical and social conditions, Korea shows negative aesthetics and China shows positive aesthetics.

<Seopyeonje> chose the traditional music *Pansori* as representatives when the traditional music gradually flagging, through the protagonist practice times by times, gradually perfect performing, reflects the director's national emotion and humanistic care. Meticulous showing the Korean race deep depressive inherent national emotion and selfless love, and the silent aesthetics.



<*Farewell My Concubine*> chose Opera which contains the most profound Chinese culture accumulation and artists living, exquisite showed the thinking and understanding on traditional culture, people's living condition and human. Film passionately told a story which lasts half century with two men and a woman. Also used lots of acts and dialogues to introduce Chinese traditional art ----Peking Opera, the film not only shows traditional national culture and also reflects national psychology---- Culture Exhibitionism.



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