

Interviewer: We just mentioned the negative impact of the media on the China-South Korea relationship. Why do you think the media wants to deliberately create a negative impression of China for South Korean citizens?

Interviewee: First, I think that most of the media can now be seen online. If you watch it online, the title needs to be attention-grabbing. Sometimes, in order to grab people's attention, the headlines need to be negative. The more people come in, the more advertising and benefits the media can get. So, I think about this at the beginning. As you know, there are two types of South Korean media. Some media are friendly to the government and other media oppose the government's policies. Each media pursues different interests. That's the case.

Interviewer: How are these two different interests you just mentioned related to shaping the image of Chinese people?

Interviewee: Well, I still need to consider it carefully. I am not very familiar with these things.

Interviewer: I think this political and news communication issue is really difficult for ordinary people like us to understand. Unless you spend a lot of time and energy studying the logic behind them, as well as the relationship between government policies and information dissemination, you cannot explore the relationship on your own. Besides the influence of the media, what other factors do you think affects the attitude of South Korean citizens toward China?

Interviewee: Apart from the media, there are areas like Chinatown in Seoul, where ethnic Chinese Koreans live together. Now it's good, but I have previously heard that the crime rate among these Chinese Koreans living there was relatively high, and that these crimes were very cruel. When people see these crimes committed by those ethnic Koreans who came from China, they have a feeling that China is also like this—terrifying. The second thing is that there were some Chinese tourists who came to South Korea before the pandemic and insisted on their own culture. For example, can they bring their own alcohol to drink in restaurants in Korea? When eating at a restaurant [in China] it is okay to bring your own purchased alcohol to drink, but this behavior is not acceptable in South Korea because South Korean restaurants make a lot of money by selling alcohol and beverages. Some Chinese tourists buy their own alcohol and go into the restaurant, but the restaurant owners do not allow it. Some Chinese tourists will insist this should be allowed in South Korean restaurants because they always do that in China. This kind of attitude of disrespecting the culture is not acceptable. Perhaps some people may have this feeling after seeing some media reports that Chinese people do not respect South Korean culture. This may affect the impression of China on this issue. Personally, I think this is the case.

Interviewer: Although sometimes the media intentionally distorts some of the true content, there are other times when they truthfully report on the behavior of Chinese people not respecting other cultures in South Korea, which does indeed have a negative impact on the image of their country. I think respecting other cultures is very important. As we always say, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." If you go to a country but do not respect its history and culture, it does not reflect well as a Chinese person. Thus, this does indeed create a very negative impression of China in South

Korea.

Interviewee: Because there were many Chinese tourists at that time, there may have been more of those incidents and the media reported on them more frequently.

Interviewer: Being respectful of other's cultures is also a point that many people may overlook. I think we should strengthen education in this area and at least emphasize many cultural facts. We just talked about the attitude of South Koreans towards China, and I also want to know about the attitude of the Chinese people you have encountered towards South Korea.

Interviewee (07:52): It's not that good or that bad either. When I introduce myself as a South Korean, they will say: "Oh, so you are South Korean." They won't be, either, "Oh, so you are South Korean! [in an excited tone]" or "Oh... So you are South Korean... [in a contemptuous tone]" They'll just be "Oh, so you are South Korean [as a matter of fact statement]." I am currently living in Shanghai, where there are many foreigners, so people may just accept the fact that I am a foreigner easily.

Interviewer: Yes, Shanghai is a city with a high level of cultural inclusivity, so their acceptance of foreign cultures and people is also relatively high.

Interviewee: That's right.

Interviewer: However, I feel that if I didn't know you were South Korean, I would think that your Chinese is very good.

Interviewee: Thank you. My Chinese is disorganized and I ramble a lot.

Interviewer: I think your Chinese is quite fluent. I know that learning a language is a very difficult thing because I myself am study [in English] in the United States.

Interviewee: It's extremely difficult.

Interviewer: You are already very impressive.

Interviewee: Thank you.

Interviewer: We just talked about language and learning, and I would like to ask you further, why did you choose to stay in China? Although you may have already mentioned it at the beginning, you were interested in Chinese dramas, what are the real reasons that made you stay?

Interviewee: The reason is not particularly special, it's just a very personal reason. I learned Chinese from a young age, and my friends who also studied Chinese with me came to China to study abroad. I also wanted to come to China to study Chinese, so I came to study abroad here, and then I met my husband and we got married and I stayed.

Interviewer: You studied abroad and achieved a beautiful marriage. A very beautiful marriage.

Interviewee: Yes, I think so.

Interviewer: Besides being interested in the local culture, was there any other reason that motivated you to study Chinese and come to China for further studies?

Interviewee: Please repeat the question again.

Interviewer: Besides being interested in the local culture, was there any other reason that motivated you to study Chinese and come to China for further studies?

Interviewee: No, just my interest in the culture, so I came.

Interviewer: I'm also curious: are there many South Korean students who choose to study Chinese or come to China for further studies, or just a small group?

Interviewee: I'd say that there were many before, because the relationship between China and South Korea used to be better and there was a more cultural and economic exchange. But now it's getting less and less, because South Koreans have limited job opportunities in China, and compared to the ethnic Chinese Koreans, we have lower economic power. These ethnic Koreans can also speak both Chinese and Korean, so there are fewer and fewer South Korean students studying in China.

Interviewer: You mentioned there were more South Korean students studying in China before. How long ago was that?

Interviewee: About ten years ago.

Interviewer: I understand that the relationship between China and South Korea was better back then.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: We just talked about education. Do you think there are any similarities or differences between being educated in China and being educated in South Korea?

Interviewee: I only studied in China for three years for my master's degree, so I don't know if I can make a comparison. But from my three years of studying, I found that Chinese universities have more courses on patriotism and learning about Chinese politics.

Interviewer: Are there any differences in academic pressure?

Interviewee: The academic pressure is harder for me because my Chinese is not as good as Chinese students.

Interviewer: This would indeed make the process of studying more challenging.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: You also mentioned earlier that Chinese education puts more emphasis on ideology and patriotism. Why do you think there is such a difference in this regard?

Interviewee: Maybe it's because of the different political systems between South Korea and China.

Interviewer: Yes, that's possible. China's political system emphasizes unity and collective interests.

Interviewee: Yes, that's right.

Interviewer: I also feel that there is a big difference between American university education and Chinese education in this regard.

Interviewee: Yes, that's true.

Interviewer: Are students supposed to study the *Summary of Mao Zedong's Theories*?

Interviewee: Marxism... Yes, in China, there are courses such as "The Thoughts of Mao Zedong," and "Xi Jinping's Thoughts," which are taught starting from middle school.

Interviewer: I remember when I was in high school, we had to do the "Youth University Study" course, which was a patriotic education program that required us to listen to a lot of content about the history of the Party, Chinese history, and Chinese culture.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Can I assume that China's emphasis on patriotic education has caused some tension in its relations with some other countries, including South Korea?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: I think there are advantages and disadvantages to this approach. Since the theme of my course is Korean history from 1945 to the present, I am curious if there is education in South Korea that focuses on this specific historical period or if there is something that stands out to you in this type of education.

Interviewee: What stands out to me is that there have been many tragic events in modern South Korea since 1945, and from the perspective of victims of these events, many things have happened that have caused them great pain even to this day.

Interviewer: Do I understand correctly that South Korean history education places more emphasis

on humanitarian education?

Interviewee: You could say that.

Interviewer: I think humanitarianism is indeed an important aspect, because sometimes if we focus too much on nationalism and international relations, we may overlook some of the more important aspects of our humanity.

Interviewee: Yes, that's right.

Interviewer: Then I am curious about how the relationship between South Korea and the United States is depicted in South Korean education.

Interviewee: After August 8, 1945, the Soviet Union was in the northern part of South Korea and the United States began to send military and political forces to the south. When China came to the South during the South Korean War, the United States blocked the Communist forces from the sea. Then later, the United States and the United Nations on one side and North Korea and China on the other side signed a ceasefire agreement. Later, South Korea and the United States signed a mutual defense treaty, and their relationship has been maintained since then.

Interviewer: In your opinion, in this type of historical education, is the image of Americans more positive or negative?

Interviewee: I'm not quite sure what you mean.

Interviewer: Would they depict Americans as having a more positive image, such as helping South Korea, whether economically or politically, or...

Interviewee: That's right. They didn't say it directly, but it does sound like they helped us.

Interviewer: Then, is the image of China relatively negative?

Interviewee: Because China was with North Korea at the time and their political system was different from that of South Korea, they may have had different opinions. So, yes, it's more negative.

Interviewer: Can I say that, in this respect, the differences in history, culture, and ideology have led to some South Koreans having a negative impression of China?

Interviewee: Yes, that's also right.

Interviewer: Yes, history is indeed an inescapable factor. I have another question about South Korean presidents. I wonder which post-1945 president you like the most, and why?

Interviewer: My favorite is former President Moon Jae-in (Presidential term 2017-2022) because

when he took office relations between China and South Korea were very bad due to the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Aerial Defense) issue<sup>1</sup> and the previous Park Geun-hye administration's decision to allow the deployment of THAAD in South Korea. However, after Moon became president, the relationship between China and South Korea improved, and the relationship between South Korea and the United States also improved. So, I think that was good.

Interviewer: From a more macro perspective, which president has the best reputation in South Korea?

Interviewee: The best reputation? It's difficult to say because every president has supporters and detractors. As I mentioned earlier, I personally like Moon Jae-in, but some people do not like him. I think it's difficult to say that. There is no "best" in South Korea. There's no best.

Interviewer: That's true, sometimes there's no best or worst, and it's more a matter of personal opinion, like many of the topics we've discussed today. I also want to know about the differences between generations. We've previously talked about the relationship between China and South Korea, and how South Koreans' views of Chinese people may change depending on the era. So, I want to know where these changes come from. Starting with yourself, would your parents and grandparents support you studying in China?

Interviewee: My parents would support me in studying in any country. No matter which country it is, they would support me. As for my grandfather, he wasn't very fond of the idea. He didn't express his opinion very strongly, but I think he didn't like the idea of me studying in China because he fought in the Korean War and was captured by the Chinese. He escaped from his captors and returned to South Korea. During the Korean War, China was on the North Korean side, so I think he wasn't very fond of the idea of me studying in China. That's how it was.

Interviewer: War and history are indeed very pessimistic factors that cannot be avoided. As your grandfather experienced the South Korean War as a prisoner of war, would he tell you some of his own stories?

Interviewee: Please say that again.

Interviewer: As a war veteran, would your grandfather share his own stories from the war with you, or do you prefer not to talk about these potentially heavy topics?

Interviewee: I'm not sure I understand.

Interviewer: That's okay, what I mean is, does your grandfather talk to you about his experiences in the war?

---

<sup>1</sup> The THAAD issue: The THAAD issue refers to the controversy over the deployment of the U.S. "THAAD" anti-missile system in South Korea. In 2016, the South Korean government agreed to deploy the THAAD anti-missile system on its territory. However, this agreement sparked opposition from China. China believed that the radar of the SAD system could monitor military activities in China and thus threaten China's national security. As a result, during that period of time, the relationship between South Korea, the U.S., and China was very intensive.

Interviewee: I only heard about it from my parents, I haven't directly heard my grandfather talk about it.

Interviewer: Do you tend to avoid discussing these heavier topics?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Actually this is a common choice for many people because some things take a long time to be settled. What are some differences between your views and those of your parents or grandparents? This view does not need to be limited to one aspect, I am asking this question from a relatively broad perspective.

Interviewee: It's hard to say about my dad, because my grandfather's era and our era are different, and we haven't gone through my grandfather's era, I just heard several sentences, so it's like this.

Interviewer: I think this is understandable because sometimes the differences between generations cannot be quantified. Okay, I think I've asked enough questions, is there anything you would like to add?

Interviewee: No, there is nothing to add. I don't know if my answers have been helpful to you.

Interviewer: I think you have helped me a lot. I can learn a lot from your answers—things that I can't see from a single perspective—and being able to talk to you directly will definitely help me learn more than what I can learn in class. Because in class, we only talk about relatively “dead” content in textbooks and PPTs, but real history should be alive and made up of people. This is also an important aspect of why our professor wants us to do such a project.

Interviewee: I'm also very happy, just like you, to chat with someone who has a deep understanding of South Korean history and South Korean people, I'm really happy.

Interviewer: I think history is very important. As a Chinese person, I really hope that China-South Korea relations will develop in a good direction in the future, including cultural, economic, and other aspects. In this era, we face many new opportunities, so I really hope to see a better result, where we can coexist harmoniously without disrespecting other cultures, or even attacking citizens of other countries.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Our interview today has come to an end. I would like to thank you again for your time and cooperation. I will continue to communicate with you shortly. If there are any follow-up questions after the interview, please contact me in a timely manner.

Interviewee: Okay, no problem!

Interviewer: Thank you very much, and have a nice day!

Interviewee: Have a nice day.