

# *Exploration of Chinese Film and Television Paths under the Influence of the Globalization of Japanese Film and Television Culture*

## *—Taking Hachi: A Dog's Tale as an Example*

Yuanyue He<sup>1,a,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*School of International Communication, Hainan University, Haikou, Hainan, 570216, China*

*a. 20223005465@hainanu.edu.cn*

*\*corresponding author*

**Abstract:** In the background of globalization, the development of the Internet and media has brought countries around the world closer together, and cultural communication has become more frequent. Japanese film culture is also playing a more important role around the world. This article takes the Chinese version of the film *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* adapted from the Japanese screenplay *ハチ公* as an example, combines the relationship between structure and events, globalization theory and localization theory, and takes the localized adaptation of this film as the starting point to discuss the enlightenment of Japanese film and television culture to the development direction of Chinese film and television from multiple perspectives such as casting and location. It will talk about relevant policies, cultivating talents, and maintaining innovative practices from the aspects of government, enterprises and individuals, as well as the importance of maintaining cultural uniqueness in the process of localization, and finally provide new ideas for the development of China's film industry.

**Keywords:** Japan, globalization, film culture, *Hachi: A Dog's Tale*, China

## 1. Introduction

Cultural globalization refers to the global flow of all cultures in the world in various ways, under the simultaneous effect of “integration” and “diversity”.

After World War II, the world economy entered a stage of recovery, and for the wish of post-war reconstruction and cherishing the hard-won peace, communication and connection between countries became closer, and cultural globalization came into being. Japanese cultural industry was severely affected, and it was not until 1949 that the Japanese film and television industry slowly recovered. At first, Japan established commercial TV stations, because of the huge domestic demand in Japan, and they have already formed their own TV culture, so their popular culture is market-oriented. It is worth mentioning that *Rashomon* directed by Akira Kurosawa won an award at the 1951 Venice International Film Festival, and since then, Japanese films have received international attention. *Hellgate*, *Nishitsuru Generation Girl* and *Rainy Night Story* also won awards at international film festivals, creating conditions for Japan to open up international markets. In the 60s of the 20th century, Japanese film and television culture entered the American market

and has now become an important branch of American popular culture [1]. The prototype of this article was also remade by Hollywood in the United States in 2009 as *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* in Japan, and the following year in the United Kingdom. In the 70s of the 20th century, Japan became a major exporter of TV programs with its prominent animation and drama industries, and its film works began to enter the Chinese market. In the 80s of the 20th century, Japanese film and television dramas flooded into the Chinese market and received a good response, and the social issues they reflected have sparked a widespread resonance among people, and these films are still sought after today [2]. Since then, with the globalization of media technology and markets and media industries, Japanese animation industry has spread more and more widely to Asian and Western countries, making Japanese animation industry and local culture more famous around the world [3].

This paper takes the Chinese version of *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* adapted from the original Japanese screenplay *ハチ公* as an example, and uses the relationship between structure and events, the theory of Cultural globalization and localization theory to analyze all aspects of its localization adaptation from the angles of the selection of animal protagonists, the shooting location of the film and the shaping of Chinese traditional families, and explains the rationality of some plots in the film in the Chinese context. From a small perspective seeing big, this film explores the inspiration that Chinese films can gain from the development of Japanese film and television culture, as well as how to localize and adapt foreign cultures in the future.

## 2. The Successful Adaption of Chinese *Hachi: A Dog's Tale*

### 2.1. The Story of the Film *Hachi: A Dog's Tale*

Japanese movies also have a profound impact in China. The Chinese version of the film *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* adapted from the script of Japanese screenwriter Shinto Fujimoto *ハチ公*. It is a feature film directed by Xu Ang and starring Feng Xiaogang and Chen Chong. The film tells the story of the four members of the Chen family who are full of contradictions welcomed a little dog with Ba Tong. Its existence bridges the differences and cracks among family members, bringing many touching moments and telling the audience the significance of loyalty and perseverance. Up to now, the cumulative box office of the Chinese version of *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* is 286 million, with a Douban rating of 7.6 points, achieving good results and reputation, which precisely proves that the film has gained widespread recognition from the public.

### 2.2. Localization

Localization refers to the process of transforming something into something that meets specific local requirements. Under the influence of globalization, the formation of new localization is the result of selective localization of global culture.

There is a close relationship between structure and events. Structure refers to the components of things and their interrelationships and sort order, while events refer to situations that occur or change over time. Events occur in a specific temporal and spatial context, while structures exist in a stable state before and after the event occurs. The relationship between structure and events is interdependent. Structure provides the basis and background for events to occur, while events can alter and adjust the structure [4].

Remaking a classic will attract a lot of attention, which will save a lot of effort for the promotion and marketing of the movie. However, if the content, character settings, and techniques of the film all copied the original movie, it will lead to a negative effect [5]. Therefore, when remaking classics, adaptation is necessary. Especially when remaking classic film and television works from other countries, localization adaptation is necessary. It must conform to people's daily lives and values,

so that it is easy to be accepted and loved by local residents, and it is also necessary to convey the voice of China to the world and tell the story of China well. In order to better adapt to the needs of Chinese audiences, the localization adaptation of the Chinese version of *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* has been carried out in terms of story background, plot details, dialogue performance, scene design, and other aspects. Director Xu Ang repeatedly emphasized at the first show, "The nature of this story is very simple. It tells the story of a person encountering a dog, and the man later passed away and the dog waited for the person to return for the rest of its life. The difficulty is to fill the gaps in the story with our Chinese emotions [6]." Director Xu Ang added some plots specifically for the Chinese version in this film, while also adapting the ending plot to make the entire story more emotional.

### 2.2.1. The Chinese "local Dog" - China Countryside Dog

First of all, instead of choosing the Japanese Akita Dog from the original script and the American version, this film chose the Chinese "local Dog" - China countryside dog, changing the name of "Hachiko" to "Badong" in Mahjong, which is more Chinese. There is a plot in the film where Professor Chen knew that the puppy was adopted by an unknown person, but he walked in the direction of the meat market. When Professor Chen found it, he discovered that the man wanted to kill the puppy to eat dog meat, and finally he quietly cut the rope that tied the puppy and took it home. Through using the relationship between structure and events, people can see that the nature of events depends on structure. In the context of Chinese, that is, under the institutional structure of China, eating dog meat was a normal thing in those days. Because the Chinese pastoral dog are the product of thousands of years of agricultural society in China, it was once mainly used in rural nursing homes and early hunting, and their role is no different from the domestic animals like cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, ducks, and geese. At that time, people's concept was that the domestic animals all could be used for food, including dogs. But with the development of industry and economic society, the main function of dogs has shifted from domestic animal which guard homes and hunt to pet which accompany humans as family. Nowadays, dog meat shops have disappeared from the streets of China, replaced by more Pet store, animal hospitals and small animal rescue centers.

### 2.2.2. Location: Chongqing

Secondly, the main filming location for this film was chosen in Chongqing. Chongqing is a very distinctive city in China. In recent years, there have been more and more Chinese movies about Chongqing. By telling the story of Chongqing well, they can effectively show the Chinese story. There are many places in this film that reflect the strong regional characteristics of Chongqing. For example, the local residents' Chongqing dialects of "wo huo" and "zao nie", etc; Chongqing's special delicious food includes "Three Treasures of Cooling", cold shrimp, Houttuynia, red pepper, and more; The land form features of Chongqing include intricate staircase alleys, residential buildings, and cable cars which was used for crossing the river in the past. In the film, the waiting place of Hachi changed from the train station in the Japanese and American versions to the cable station; Residents' entertainment culture: Chongqing Mahjong, dog is named after the mahjong card "Ba Tong"; The climate characteristics of Chongqing include hot summers and wet and cold winters. In summer, the sweat broke out all over professor Chen's body and trickled down his back, and in winter, people also put on thick coats and scarves. It makes people feel the exclusive memory of Chongqing.

### 2.2.3. China's Local Culture and Family Ethics

In addition, the film is rooted in China's local culture and family ethics, and created a typical Chinese family: a silent and unsmiling father, a mother who loves to play mahjong and has a spicy personality, a rebellious daughter and a silent son who loves to surf the Internet, showing subtle and delicate Chinese emotions. Such typical features make Chinese audiences more resonant and shall count it as a personal favour [7].

### 2.2.4. Changes in China's Times

In the process of localization, this film also tells the story of the changes in China's times over the past fifteen years. In terms of transportation, many bridges have been built in Chongqing, and people do not need to take cable cars when crossing the river as before. The cable car has also transformed from a necessary path for crossing the river to a tourist attraction for tourists to enjoy today; In residential areas, the previously intricate staircase alleys have been transformed into well-arranged high-rise buildings, and the former houses have been continuously pulled down; In terms of career change, due to the increasingly convenient transportation, the younger brother who picked up the stick lost his job and had to return to his hometown to make a new living, etc. Fifteen years have passed, and the only thing that remains unchanged is the figure of the Hachi waiting for their owner to return. This kind of comparison touches the soul deeper.

The ending settings in this film are different from the Japanese and American versions. In the Japanese and American versions, Hachiko dead alone at the snowy station entrance, while in the Chinese version, the director representationalize the ten year wait of Hachi into piles of newspapers like a hill. After waiting for the professor's wife to return home, he dead by the side of his family. This change made the film more affectionate and also made the audience shock by the dog's loyalty.

## 3. Inspiration for China

Japanese films occupy an important position in Asia and are the earliest country in Asia to enter the world's film vision [8]. Through the understanding of the globalization of Japanese film and television culture and the analysis of the Chinese version of *Hachi: A Dog's Tale*, there is some enlightenment that is gained from the similarities and differences between Chinese and Japanese cultures. There are many cultures in Japan that were handed down from ancient China, so there are many similarities. For example, this film, the "loyalty" embodied by dogs is derived from Japanese traditional culture, and Japanese understanding of "loyalty" is transformed from the traditional Chinese thought with "benevolence" as the core. At the same time, the Chinese and Japanese people's cognition of the concepts of "family" is also very similar, which is one of our early universal ethics. Besides, a subtle and delicate expression is a common emotional characteristic among Asian countries, which can be reflected in many aspects. In the case study of the Chinese version of *Hachi: A Dog's Tale*, the relationship between father and children is delicate and magnificent. Of course, there are also many differences between Chinese and Japanese cultures. Early Confucianism in Japan stressed the idea of "unity of loyalty and filial piety". If the two cannot be preserved, it will give up "filial piety" and choose "loyalty". This shows the importance of "loyalty" in Japanese culture. Hachi, the prototype of this case, is the most typical and legendary loyal dog in Japanese history. For the Japanese, the Akita dog is of great spiritual significance. When many families have children, they will be given the statue of Akita dog, which symbolizes health, happiness and longevity. When visiting sick people, giving a statue of Akita dog means wishing them a speedy recovery. As a symbol of "loyalty", dogs are regarded as the most loyal partner of human beings. Therefore, in the context of Japanese culture, eating dog meat is not

allowed and normal. This is different from early Chinese thought [9]. With the development of society, some concept what is wrong should change. China should take the essence of traditional culture, discard its dross, and continue to inherit it in the process of improvement; Seeking common ground while reserving differences in foreign cultures, learning from each other's strengths and making up for deficiencies, and gaining progress together through communication.

In summary, the global development of Japanese film and television culture has significant reference meaning for the development of China's film industry. From a domestic perspective, people should focus on innovation and strive to create new voices and colors in terms of themes, techniques, casting, and music [10]. In addition, to understand the needs and preferences of the people, films should be fitted to their daily lives and values, creating works that are popular among the people, but they should not be overly catered to, resulting in a large number of films becoming homogeneous [11]. At the same time, relevant government departments should also attach importance to talent cultivation, establish a standardized education system, and provide a platform for talent development. From an international perspective, Chinese film production in the future should pay more attention to content quality, absorb the excellence of foreign cultures, and take a global perspective and open up the landscape; To uphold and innovate traditional Chinese culture, conform to the trend of the times, spread excellent traditional Chinese culture to the world stage, and enhance people's cultural confidence. Eventually, promote the development of the Chinese film and television industry [12].

#### 4. Conclusion

Through understanding the development experience of Cultural globalization of Japanese film and television and the analysis of the Chinese version of *Hachi: A Dog's Tale* adapted from the Japanese version of *ハチ公*, people can draw the following conclusions. Nowadays, there are many urgent problems in Chinese film and television industry that need to be solved. A large number of film and television dramas have similar content, with thick filters, fake special effects, similar film content, single character selection, and fame becomes king. But in recent years, many excellent domestic film and television works have stood out and received widespread praise, indicating that China's film and television industry has a long way to go. Therefore, if China wants to enhance its cultural soft power and improve the influence of Chinese culture in the world, it should comprehensively develop the film and television industry from the perspectives of the government, companies and individuals. The government is supposed to introduce relevant policies to encourage and support enterprises and individuals to create works that reflect Chinese cultural heritage, conform to local people's values, and focus on the global landscape. For the development status of Japan's film and television cultural industry in the same geographical context, the Chinese film and television industry should learn from its reference points and absorb the experience of other countries, based on practice, pay attention to innovation and learn multiply from others' strong points, eventually explore a path to success.

#### References

- [1] Mao Junlin. (2017) *On the Acceptance and Development of Anime Film and Television Works in the United States*. *Film Review*, 561(07):85-87.
- [2] Wang Ying. (2012) *The spread and influence of Japanese film and television works in China*. *people's forum*, 384(32):162-163.
- [3] Koichi Iwabuchi. (2002) "Soft" nationalism and narcissism: Japanese popular culture goes global, *Asian Studies Review*, 26:4, 447-469.
- [4] Li Wengang. (2014) *Anthropological research on the relationship between event, structure and history*. *Guangxi ethnic studies*, (4):74-82.

- [5] Chen Wei. (2020) *Localized narration from cross-cultural communication to film and television remake. audio visual*, 163(11):61-62.
- [6] Liu Luoqi. (2023) *Xu ang, director of "Loyal Dog Hachiko", said, "you have to wait for a gift" to shoot animal scenes*, *China film news*,2023-04-05(007).
- [7] Ge Yiting. (2023) *The box office of 'Eight Dogs of Loyalty' has exceeded 100 million yuan: Why is the old story of man and dog still moving*, *China business news*, 2023-04-06(A12).
- [8] Feng Jie. (2012) *The elimination of cultural hegemony center by the "secondary flow" of film and television media -- Taking the cultural soft power of film and television trade as an example. contemporary film*, 195(06):118-123.
- [9] Wu Shan. (2010) *"Hachi: A Dog's Story": cultural convergence or national personality. film literature*, 519(18):43-44.
- [10] Yu Zhiyuan. (2019) *Glory and decline: the background, influence and Enlightenment of East Asian pop culture -- Taking Japanese animation, Chinese Hong Kong films and Korean fashion as examples. Journal of Hefei University (Comprehensive Edition)*, 36(01):75-80.
- [11] Gu Jiawei. (2018) *The development experience of Japanese cultural soft power and Its Enlightenment to China. Jiangxi University of technology*.
- [12] Yang Guang. (2011) *A study of the spread of Japanese film, television and animation in the Chinese context. Central University for nationalities*, 47.