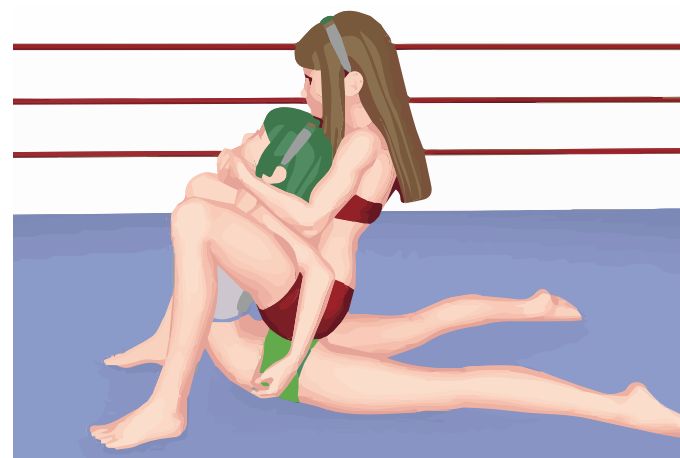


J-Porn as Soft Power



99.9% of the pornography in Taiwan comes from overseas. These videos are oftentimes imported or pirated from Japan, Russia, Europe, or the United States. Pirates and collectors store them in the Made in Taiwan 10TB hard drives which then get passed around among curious teenagers and bored adults. Among the different pornographies coming from overseas, J-porn remains as the most popular genre.

Taiwan was colonized by Japan from 1895 to 1945. During the fifty years of colonization, Taiwanese people were seen as the inferior Asian race. Taiwanese children were segregated from Japanese children at schools. Some were persuaded to take on Japanese names and speak Japanese in order to “grow out” of their barbarian tendencies. Taiwanese folks celebrated when Japan withdrew from the island, and yet Japanese culture had penetrated Taiwan so deeply that it was no longer easy to pave a new way. Taiwan needed to confront what it means to move forward as a former colony.

J-porn penetrates Taiwanese pop culture in all different aspects - the extreme obsession with uniforms; the admiration towards innocence and the fetishization of high-pitched, child-like moans. The gender performance and sexual representation

in Japanese pornography becomes the mirror of desire. The desire to be able to see the world through the eyes of the colonizer, and the desire to be able to dominate like the colonizer.

Pornography is inherently political. Sexual desires weaved together reflect government policies and political tales. Due to the lack of recognition as a country by the international community and the losing battle of maintaining economic independence from China, Taiwanese culture retrieves to nostalgia for the lack of a better future.

But the interest in J-porn isn't all innocuous. The unpopularity of Taiwanese local pornography is rooted in a deep place of shame. On one hand, it is awkward to perceive Taiwanese male as dominant figures because their identity is often intertwined with a defeated country, excused from greater opportunities. Hence the doom-to-fail masculinity of Taiwanese cis-men finds the escape by objectifying Japanese female porn stars.

When Taiwanese couples enact the gender and cultural performance of their previous colonizer, they extend the lineage of a violent history and gives up the possibility of Taiwanese independence once and for all.

“Her sexual organ represents the horror of nothing to see. A defect in this systematics of representation and desire. A ‘hole’ in its scopophilic lens. It is already evident in Greek Statuary that this nothing-to-see has to be excluded, rejected, from such a scene of representation. Woman’s genitals are simply absent, masked, sewn back up inside their “crack.” ... Whence the mystery that woman represents in a culture claiming to count everything, to number everything by units, to inventory everything as individualities. She is neither one nor two. Rigorously speaking, she cannot be identified either as one person, or as two. She resists all adequate definition.”