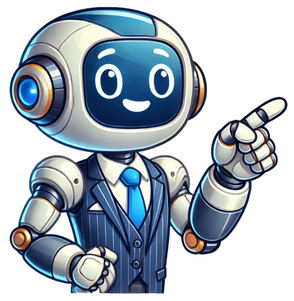
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The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Television programs from South Korea Korean drama (Korean: ; RR: Hanguk deurama), also known as K-drama or Koreanovela, refers to Korean-language television shows made in South Korea. These shows began to be produced around the early 1960s, but were mostly consumed domestically until the rise of the Korean Wave in the 1990s. They have since achieved significant international popularity, with millions of viewers across the world. Beginning around the 1970s, more and more households in South Korea owned televisions. Programs were often produced on low budgets and were mostly consumed domestically. The industry significantly developed in the 1980s, after the spread of color television. Beginning in the early 1990s, several Korean dramas began achieving significant international popularity, primarily in China and Japan. In addition, South Korean popular music ("K-pop") and films began seeing similar successes, which gave rise to rapid international adoption of South Korean media in a phenomenon commonly called the Korean Wave. In the following decades, viewership spread throughout the globe. Rapid growth continued into the 2010s, with the rise in online streaming. Around this period, the American video streaming company Netflix took interest in the phenomenon, and began releasing Korean dramas on its platform, as well as creating and funding ones. This culminated in the release of the 2021 Squid Game, which was watched by more than 142 million households in its first four weeks.[1] In 2022, Netflix reported that six in ten of its 221 million subscribers had watched a Korean program in the last year,[2][3] and in April 2023, it announced that it would invest US$2.5 billion in the industry.[4] The success of Korean dramas has had a significant economic impact on South Korea. In 2022, US$561.3 million of Korean television content was sold abroad, which was a 29.6% increase from the previous year,[5] surpassing those of South Korea's major export items such as secondary batteries and electric vehicles.[6] The industry also employs tens of thousands of people.[7] Korean dramas have also been cited as a motivation for tourists to visit the country. Yongin Daejanggeum Park, a filming site where historical dramas for Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation are produced A single director usually leads Korean dramas, which are often written by a single screenwriter. This often leads to each drama having distinct directing and dialogue styles. This differs from American television series, which can rely on multiple directors and writers working together.[8] The 19:00 to 21:00 evening time slots have usually been reserved for daily dramas, which run every night from Monday through Friday. Dramas in these slots are in the telenovela format, rarely running over 150 episodes. Unlike American soap operas, these daily dramas are not broadcast during the daytime. Instead, the daytime schedule often includes reruns of the flagship dramas. The nighttime dailies can achieve very high ratings. During the late 2000s, for example, the weekend series First Wives' Club recorded 41.3%, according to TNS Korea,[9] and the evening series Temptation of Wife peaked at 40.6%, according to TNS Korea.[10] K-dramas have a multitude of different genre such as action dramas, historical dramas, school dramas, medical dramas, legal dramas, or even horror comedies. While most dramas contain romantic elements and deep emotional themes, some may also contain a tragedy or slice of life theme. There are various styles and tones.[11] The main themes of Korean television dramas are friendship, family values, and love, blending traditional Confucian with Western materialism and individualism.[12] However, it is an emerging trend amongst Korean dramas to showcase ongoing societal issues of Korean society, such as stigma of mental illness,[13] gender inequality, suicide, classism, bullying, spy cameras, corruption, homophobia, or racism.[14] Main article: Sageuk The term sageuk refers to any Korean television or film drama that is either based on historical figures, incorporates historical events, or uses a historical backdrop. While sageuk directly translates to "historical drama", the term is typically reserved for dramas taking place throughout the course of Korean history.[15] Since the mid-2000s, some sageuk dramas have achieved major success outside of Korea, in places such as the Asia-Pacific, Central Asia, Greater Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America.[16] Sageuks including Dae Jang Geum (Jewel in the Palace), Yi San (Lee San, Wind of the palace) and Jumong enjoyed strong ratings in countries such as Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Fiji and Iran. Jumong, which aired on IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) in 2008, had 85% viewership.[17] Often centered on a love story, series set in contemporary times often focus on family ties and romantic relationships. Characters are mostly idealized with Korean male protagonists described as handsome, intelligent, rich, and in search of "one true love". This has also been a contributing factor to the popularity of Korean dramas among women.[8][18][19][20] Main article: History of Korean television drama Radio broadcasting, including the broadcasting of radio dramas in Korea, began in 1927 under Japanese rule, with most programming in Japanese and around 30% in Korean.[21] After the Korean War, radio dramas such as Cheongsilhongsil (1954) reflected the country's mood.[22] Television broadcasting began in 1956 with the launch of an experimental station, HLKZ-TV, which was shut down a few years later due to a fire. The first national television channel was Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), which started up in 1961.[23] The first Korean television film was a 15-minute piece titled The Gate of Heaven (, Cheongugui mun), on HLKZ-TV.[24] The first television series was aired by KBS in 1962. Their commercial competitor, Tongyang Broadcasting (TBC), had a more aggressive program policy and aired controversial dramas as well.[25] The first historical TV series aired was Gukto manri (), directed by Kim Jae-hyeong (), depicting the Goryeo era.[26][27] In the 1960s, television sets were of limited availability, thus dramas could not reach a larger audience.[28] In the 1970s, television sets started to spread among the general population, and dramas switched from portraying dramatic historical figures to introducing national heroes like Yi Sun-shin or Sejong the Great.[28] Contemporary series dealt with personal sufferings, such as Kim Soo-hyun's influential Stepmother (, Saeeomma), aired by MBC in 1972 and 1973.[29] As technology and funding was limited, Korean channels could not make series in resource-heavy genres like action and science fiction; American and other foreign series were imported instead.[30] Actress Chae Shi-ra, the lead of Eyes of Dawn (1991)Actress Lee Young-ae, the lead of Jewel in the Palace (2003) The 1980s saw a change in Korean television, as color TV became available. Modern dramas tried to evoke nostalgia from urban dwellers by depicting rural life. Kim Soo-hyun's first real commercial success, Love and Ambition (, Saranggwa yamang), aired on MBC[31] in 1987 and is regarded as a milestone of Korean television,[32] having recorded a 78% viewership. "Streets became quiet at around the airing time of the drama as 'practically everyone in the country' was at home in front of the TV", according to The Korea Times.[22] The most outstanding classical historical series of the era is considered to be 500 Years of Joseon (500, Joseonwangjo 500 nyeon), a serial that ran for eight years, consisting of 11 separate series. The serial was produced by Lee Byung-hoon, who later directed one of the biggest international successes of Korean drama, Dae Jang Geum (2003–04), which was sold in 150 countries.[33][26][28][32] The 1990s brought another important milestone for Korean television. As technology developed, new opportunities arose, and the beginning of the decade marked the launch of a new commercial channel; Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), which facilitated and re-initiated a race for catching viewers' attention.[34] The first real commercial success among Korean television series was Eyes of Dawn (, Yeomyeongui nundongja), aired in 1991 by MBC, starring Chae Shi-ra and Choi Jae-sung. The series led the viewers through turbulent times from the Japanese rule to the Korean War.[34] The 1992 MBC miniseries Jealousy starring Choi Jin-sil and Choi Soo-jong is considered the first "trendy drama", marking a breakthrough in filming techniques and the beginning of the romantic comedy genre in Korean dramas.[35][unreliable source?][36] The series depicted the lifestyles of young people of the era and is one of the first dramas to air in China, along with Eyes of Dawn.[36][37] New channel SBS also produced successful series, one of them being Sandglass in 1995. Sandglass was another trendy drama, which the Korean Culture and Information Service considers an important milestone, having changed the way Korean dramas are made by introducing a new format.[34] In this decade, the new miniseries format became widespread, with 12 to 24 episodes.[38] The term Hallyu (Korean:) which comes from Mandarin 韓流, (Pinyin: hán liú) was coined in the late 1990s after the success of Star in My Heart in China, and its popularity elevated the main cast to Hallyu stardom.[39][40] This era marked the start of export for Korean dramas, setting off the Korean Wave.[41] The beginning years of the 2000s gave birth to famous Korean dramas and also marked the period of overseas distribution. Some popular ones are Full House, Autumn in My Heart and Winter Sonata. It marks the birth of a new genre, called "fusion sageuk", essentially changing the ways to produce historical series, with successful pieces such as Hur Jun, Damo and Dae Jang Geum.[26] It started to take over the popularity of conventional dramas among 10s and 20s because the shorter runtime, and often feature trendy content which teenagers find it easy to sympathize with.[42] The late 2010s and 2020s saw newfound attention of K-dramas from international markets.[43] Netflix had begun seeking productions from South Korea and other countries since around 2018 to expand offerings for their service with a growing international audience. These efforts came to fruition when Hwang Dong-hyuk's Squid Game drew in more than 111 million viewers within 17 days of its release in September 2021, becoming the service's most-watched program.[43] In the 2020s, several production companies began to produce dramas even before the first season was aired, keeping in mind the season system. The most representative series is The Penthouse: War in Life series, which gained sensational popularity as it aired over three seasons. The biggest reason why Korean dramas introduced the season system is interpreted as changes in the industry due to the 52-hour workweek, viewers' rejection of feature-length dramas, and excessive supply of dramas.[44] At the same time, MBC and tvN's anomalous organization began to be criticized a lot. tvN extended one episode of the drama to 2 hours and 20 minutes. delaying it to the late night of another drama. In particular, the running time of the last episode of Hospital Playlist was close to three hours, but even though it was reduced after editing, it delayed the formation of the next The Road: The Tragedy of One to late night as it passed two hours.[45] And MBC canceled telenovela The Second Husband and reran the thriller The Veil at that time.[46][47][48][49] See also: Category:Television production companies of South Korea Korean series were originally produced in-house by the television channels themselves, but have been outsourced to independent companies since the 2000s. In 2012, as much as 75% of all K-dramas were produced this way. Competition is fierce among these companies; out of 156 registered firms, only 34 of them produced dramas that were actually aired in 2012.[50] In the late 2010s, a typical Korean drama may cost as much as ₩700 million per episode. Historical dramas have a bigger budget; one episode of the historical romance The Red Sleeve cost as much as ₩950 million.[51] Recently, factors such as improving the work environment, along with whether to sign contracts with domestic and foreign OTT companies such as Netflix have served as variables. For example, Kingdom had a budget of ₩2 billion per episode, while ₩3 billion were spent on each episode of Sweet Home.[50][52][53][54][unreliable source?] Often, production companies overrun their budgets and cannot pay salaries. In 2012, actors held a demonstration in front of the headquarters of KBS, expressing their concerns. Actors are usually paid after the last episode is aired. In series made by smaller production companies, there have been cases where the companies went bankrupt and could not pay their actors and crew, while the channel denied all responsibility, claiming all liability was with the bankrupt production firm.[55] Producer Kim Jong-hak spent ₩10 billion on Faith, which was considered a commercial failure, resulting in the inability of Kim to pay crew salaries and other overheads. Kim, who had produced iconic dramas such as Eyes of Dawn and Sandglass, committed suicide after he was accused of embezzlement.[56][57] The biggest stars may earn more than ₩200 million per episode, with Kim Soo-hyun, the lead of hit dramas Moon Embracing the Sun (2012), My Love from the Star (2013) and It's Okay to Not Be Okay (2020) reportedly receiving ₩500 million per episode for One Ordinary Day in 2021.[58] As producing a series involves high expenses, production companies seek to shoot the episodes in the shortest time possible. In contrast to practices elsewhere, the first four episodes of Korean series are usually shot in advance, but the rest are shot continuously as the series is being aired. Scripts are not finished in advance, and may change according to viewer feedback and viewership ratings, where popular characters receive increased screen time and plotlines are changed to match audience expectations.[59] These changes may occur a few hours before daily shooting, and the crew might receive only a few ready pages. The production usually works with three camera crews, who work in a rotating manner to speed up filming. Because of unregulated script changes and tight shooting schedules, actors are almost continuously on standby, and have no time to leave the set or sleep properly. The Korean media have a separate word to describe irregular, short sleeps that actors resort to, in often uncomfortable positions, or within the set: jjok-jam (), or "side-sleeping". Dramas usually air on two days every week, with following episodes having to be shot within the intervening five days. Some Korean actors have admitted to receiving IV therapy during filming, due to extreme schedules and exhaustion.[55][60][61][unreliable source?] Nonetheless, the live-shoot model remains widely used since the production team can react to real time audience feedback.[59] Production teams originally sent two tapes to the channels; a primary copy and a backup copy. However, due to the tight filming schedules, a 70-minute episode might arrive at the broadcasting station on seven separate tapes in ten-minute installments. It happened that while the episode is being broadcast, the crew would be still shooting the last minutes or cutting the rest of the episode. During the airing of the nineteenth episode of Man from the Equator, screens countrywide went black for 10 minutes. Actor Kwon Sang-woo was openly complaining that he was still shooting King of Ambition 30 minutes before the last episode began airing.[55] In South Korea, some production teams still do planning and scheduling manually, instead of using dedicated software.[62] In 2016, dramas such as Descendants of the Sun, Uncontrollably Fond, Moon Lovers: Scarlet Heart Ryeo and Hwarang: The Poet Warrior Youth were all pre-produced before airing. Nonetheless, some pre-produced episodes are often re-edited or even reshot the day of airing, due to audience feedback.[59] The larger broadcasting companies have their own dedicated shooting locations for historical dramas, with extensive and elaborate sets. MBC's series are shot at the Yongin Daejanggeum Park in Gyeonggi Province,[63] while KBS dramas utilize the Mungyeongsaejae Studio (KBS) in North Gyeongsang Province[64] and their studio in Suwon.[65] In April 2023, it was announced Netflix would invest $2.5 billion in K-Dramas.[4] Further information: List of South Korean actresses and List of South Korean male actors Song Joong-ki of Descendants of the Sun (2016) and Vincenzo (2021) is considered a top starLee Min Ho of Boys Over Flowers (2009) and The Heirs (2013) is considered a top hallyu starPark Bo-gum wearing a hanbok for the sageuk Love in the Moonlight (2016). He became a prominent hallyu figure owing to successes of dramas Reply 1988 (2015–16) and When Life Gives You Tangerines (2025) among others.[66][67][68] In the 2000s, it became customary to cast popular K-pop idols in dramas. Initially, this generated mixed reactions.[69] Their appearance had provoked predominantly negative reactions outside their fandom because some idols' acting was not viewed as professional. Also, some idols were criticized for poor acting.[70] Nowadays, this has become much more common feature in Korean dramas, as the public has been getting more used to the concept of "idol actors" and some idols have become known for their excellent acting skills.[71] Their critical reception is still mixed, however, some of them, like Bae Suzy, IU, Yim Si-wan, Seo In-guk, Ok Taec-yeon, Park Jin-young, Doh Kyung-soo and Im Yoon-ah, became successful as actors and actresses.[72][73][74] There were also instances of children taking up careers as child actors or actresses, usually portraying either the younger versions of some characters or the children of the adult characters from dramas.[75] Subsequently, there were some child actors and actresses who continue pursuing acting careers even after reaching adulthood, and with some achieving success even after adulthood.[76] Notably, such people include actors like Yoon Chan-young, Park Solomon, Yoo Seung-ho and Yeo Jin-goo; and actresses like Kim So-hyun, Lee Se-young, Nam Ji-hyun, Kim Hyang-gi, Moon Geun-young, Park Shin-hye, Kim Sae-ron and Kim Yoo-jung.[77] Scriptwriters and directors of Korean dramas are often as well known as actors are. An overwhelming majority of scriptwriters (90% according to the Beijing Metro Reader) are women, who not only write love stories but action series as well.[78] Compared to Korean cinema, television is more appealing for scriptwriters as contract conditions are better, acknowledgment is greater, and the salary is higher.[citation needed] Famous scriptwriters tend to have a say in their field.[79] The most well-known scriptwriters include the Hong sisters, who wrote popular series such as My Girl, You're Beautiful and My Girlfriend Is a Gumiho; Kim Soon-ok, the screenwriter of The Penthouse: War in Life, The Last Empress, Band of Sisters, Jang Bo-ri is Here! and Temptation of Wife; Kim Eun-sook, the screenwriter of Lovers in Paris, Secret Garden, The Heirs, Descendants of the Sun, Guardian: The Lonely and Great God, and The Glory; Lee Kyung-hee, famous for I'm Sorry, I Love You and The Innocent Man; male writer Choi Wan-kyu of Midas and Triangle; Noh Hee-kyung, the author of That Winter, the Wind Blows; and It's Okay, That's Love; and Park Ji-eun, who wrote My Husband Got a Family, My Love from the Star, The Producers, Legend of the Blue Sea and Crash Landing on You.[80] In particular, writer Kim Soon-ok is famous for captivating male viewers who did not watch dramas well.[81] In 2021, an article called "Kim Soon-ok, Kim Eun-sook, and Kim Eun-hee" was also published, referring to star writers.[82] Acknowledged TV directors include Lee Byung-hoon, who directed Hur Jun, Dae Jang Geum and Yi San;[26] Kim Jong-hak, the director of Eyes of Dawn, Sandglass, The Legend and Faith,[83] Pyo Min-soo [ko], the director of Full House, Worlds Within and Iris II[84] and Jang Tae-yoo who directed War of Money, Painter of the Wind, Deep Rooted Tree , My Love from the Star and Hyena.[85] In recent years, director Jo Hyun-tak was also propelled to fame through his works Sky Castle, which became one of the highest rated dramas in Korean cable television history,[86] and Snowdrop, which, despite its alleged historical distortions, was ranked first among the most-watched series on Disney+ in Asian countries like Singapore and South Korea.[87] While scriptwriters are mostly women, directors are usually men.[88] Some female directors have risen to prominence, such as Lee Na-jeong (), who directed The Innocent Man,[89] and Lee Yun-jeong (), whose most famous works are Coffee Prince and Heart to Heart. The latter director is also the first female television producer employed by Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC).[90] Music plays an important role in Korean dramas. Original soundtracks, abbreviated OST's, are explicitly made for each series, and in contrast to American series, fans have a need to buy the soundtrack album of dramas. This trend started in the 1990s, when producers swapped purely instrumental soundtracks for songs performed by popular K-pop singers. Tom Larsen, director of YA Entertainment, a distributor of Korean TV series, thinks that Korean soundtracks are polished enough musically to be considered standalone hits.[91]Balladeer Baek Ji-young has been named "OST Queen" after providing the songs for several hit dramas such as Secret Garden (2010) and Love in the Moonlight (2016).During the 2000s, it became customary for lead actors to participate in original soundtracks, also partially due to the employment of K-pop stars as actors. Actor Lee Min-ho, and leader of boy band SS501, Kim Hyun-joong both recorded songs for Boys Over Flowers, while the actors of You're Beautiful formed a fictional band and held concerts, where they perform the soundtracks live.[92][unreliable source?][93][94] OST songs of popular K-dramas can also become hits on regular music charts, with good sales of both physical and digital albums. The chart performance of the OST songs usually co-relate to the popularity of the drama. Songs from the OST of Secret Garden for example, had high digital sales and high rankings on music charts.[95][unreliable source?] My Destiny, performed by Lyn for My Love from the Star, led music charts in Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and other Asian countries.[96] It also won the Best OST award at the 2014 Baeksang Arts Awards.[97][unreliable source?] The soundtrack album of You're Beautiful sold 57,000 physical copies.[98] Performers of OST songs for action series Iris held two concerts in Japan in front of an audience of 60,000 people.[99] Although the songs in Korean dramas may be a few or repetitive, their choosing process is not considered easy since they are made to convey emotions or scenes. Rocoberry, who composed the soundtrack for Guardian: The Lonely and Great God, created 12 different compositions before I Will Go to You Like the First Snow was chosen, and rewrote it seven times before it got the approval of the production team.[100] OST composers usually look for singers who have previously had success in the genre. Songs are written to reflect the mood of the series and their structure. Sometimes performers give their own songs for a series. For example, Baek Ji-young thought her song That Man, originally written for her own album, would fit Secret Garden. There are popular OST singers who are often employed, like Baek Ji-young, Lyn, and Lee Seung-cheol.[101][unreliable source?] Sometimes, foreign singers are invited to perform songs for Korean OST. For instance, Swedish artist Lasse Lindh sang several songs for series like Angel Eyes, Soul Mate, I Need Romance, and Guardian: The Lonely and Great God.[citation needed] Further information: Television content rating systems § South Korea The television rating system is regulated by the Korea Communications Commission, and was implemented in 2000. According to the system, programs, including Korean dramas, are rated according to the following principles (ratings irrelevant to dramas are omitted):[102] : programs that may be inappropriate for children under 12, such as mild violence, suggestive themes or language. : programs that may be inappropriate for children under 15. Most dramas and talk shows are rated this way. These programs may include moderate or strong adult themes, language, sexual inference, and violence. : programs intended for adults only. These programs might include adult themes, sexual situations, frequent use of strong language and disturbing scenes of violence. This article may contain excessive or irrelevant examples. Please help improve the article by adding descriptive text and removing less pertinent examples. (March 2022) This section may be too long and excessively detailed. Please consider summarizing the material. (March 2022) There is a tacit knowledge regarding the production of television series in South Korea that uniquely appeals to consumers. K-dramas have a substantial female presence that makes up their following and representation. The female fandom is specifically targeted, and tacit knowledge is applied most effectively in this area. The Korean actors show a wide range of emotions, and many ad-lib without prompting, even producing genuine tears without assistance. The acting of women in K-dramas appeals to women universally, showing the struggles that pertain only to women. Women in these television series often assume typically male-dominated professions, and they appeal to all women who want to bring down the image of traditional values and male-dominated communities. K-dramas are successful when women can break free of traditional roles and embrace freedom. The men in K-dramas have begun to present a more fluid nature of representation, which challenges the gender roles typically expected of men. Rather than focusing on being "macho" or "manly," men adopt more feminine and androgynous looks in order to cater to female fans. There is a great focus on the beauty techniques used, ranging from makeup all the way to cosmetic surgeries. The androgyny in K-drama, as well as K-pop, is a common phenomenon and draws the attention of women through global targeting.Princess Hours teddy bear exhibition at N Seoul Tower, 2012 According to a researcher at the University of Vienna, the popularity of Korean dramas has its foundation in Confucian values they transmit, which Asian viewers can easily identify with. Respect for elders, filial piety, family-orientedness, and the display of perceived "Asian moral values" play an important role in the Korean series.[103] YA Entertainment, the American distributor of Korean dramas, believes that part of the attractiveness of these series come from the quality of camera work, scenic locations, and spectacular costumes, which make the "final product very stylish and attractive, with arguably some of the highest TV production values in the world."[104] Korean series follow their own formula, are innovative and don't conform to Western television productions.[104] Stephan Lee from Entertainment Weekly called Korean dramas "fascinating and weirdly comforting". [105] Exports of Korean series yielded US$37.5 million in 2003, which was three times higher than the amount reached in 1999.[106] According to data from Korea Creative Content Agency, in 2013, K-dramas constituted 82% of the culture content export of South Korea, with an income of $167 million, which is four times more than a decade before.[62] A driving force behind the rising popularity is the intense involvement of fans. Because of the live-shooting production of K-dramas, Korean-speaking fans have the opportunity to participate in their creation[107]—a unique phenomenon in the mass media world. They can influence the content of later shows in the series through complaints and suggestions, which are frequently adopted by the production teams.[108] The global community of non-Korean-speaking fans, on the other hand, is more involved in the consumption aspects: Fans share their opinions through tweets and comments on newsgroups (for example, the Soompi discussion forum) as well as reviews and recaps on websites and blogs. However, the impact of their social media activity goes beyond the fan community. It spreads the word about the K-drama genre to social connections like acquaintances, friends and family (e.g. Facebook friends or followers on Twitter) and thereby generally raises its popularity. But it also affects the creation of new dramas. It influences the popularity of certain dramas, leading to higher demand for those videos from streaming sites and additional income for broadcasters. When a substantial profit results, it raises not only the prestige of people involved in the production[109] but also provides feedback for production teams and indirectly influences future productions. Won Bin gained wide popularity in 2000 after starring in the television drama Autumn in My Heart and has since gained critical acclaim for his performances in the films Taegukgi, Mother and The Man from Nowhere.[110][111][112][113] In China, South Korean programs on Chinese government TV networks accounted for more than all other foreign programs combined in 2006.[114] Hong Kong has its own channel for airing Korean dramas, TVB J2, but ATV also airs Korean series in prime-time slots.[115] My Love from the Star received enthusiastic feedback from China. It was viewed 40 billion times on numerous Chinese video sites.[116] The drama also spurred interest about Korea, shown by China's increased consumption of Korean products such as Chi Maek (chicken and beer) and Korean cosmetics.[117] Due to the success of Korean dramas in China, some dramas have been compiled to create feature-length films by combining all episodes into one film. The prodigious popularity of Korean dramas in the country has, on some occasions, been caught in the crossfire over diplomatic issues between China and South Korea. Most notable was the THAAD deployment in South Korea, which resulted in the blocking of Korean dramas on streaming services across the country in late February 2017.[118] Following the block, Chinese TV shows showcasing Chinese culture and other similar content replaced Korean content on TV networks' prime time schedules in the country.[119] In November 2017, the ban was lifted unannounced following the appearance of K-pop groups on national TV and the move to resume importation of Korean dramas by Chinese streaming services.[120] In China, apps like IQiyi, which is currently also available in Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and some other countries in multiple different subtitles, are available to stream and download Korean dramas for viewing. The first Korean drama to gain widespread popularity in Japan was Winter Sonata, which was broadcast on the NHK satellite channel NHK BS2 in 2003. The program was aired twice in the same year due to high demand from viewers.[20] NHK also hosted a classical concert featuring Winter Sonata's tunes performed by Korean musicians.[20] Korean dramas boost tourism between Korea and Japan,[20] and are considered a possible way of improving strained relationships between the two countries, as series have become increasingly popular with Japanese viewers.[121][122] Conversely, the series Iris had several pivotal scenes shot in Akita, Japan, which led to an increase of Korean tourists in that part of Japan.[123][124] In Mongolia, Korean dramas have become popular and are broadcast during prime time. Dae Jang Geum achieved success in the country and was broadcast five times due to this. Autumn in My Heart, Winter Sonata and Stairway to Heaven were other popular dramas. The popularity of Korean dramas has resulted in interest in learning the Korean language as well as Mongolians travelling to South Korea. It has also led to increased mutually cooperative relations between Mongolia and South Korea.[125] Watching films or TV dramas from South Korea is a serious offence in North Korea, punishable by execution,[126] but people still manage to acquire them on CDs, VHS Tapes, streaming services and DVDs.[127] In 2021, there was an article that young people who were watching the popular drama The Penthouse: War in Life were caught in Pyeongseong, Pyeongnam Province, and will have to serve more than 10 years. Later, the residents of Yanggang Province began to imitate the famous lines from Penthouse series, and the residents were also unable to avoid punishment.[128][129] In Taiwan, interest in Korean dramas began when Star in My Heart aired in 1999. Since then, Korean dramas have become very popular, and according to the South Korean mission, 120 K-dramas had been broadcast in Taiwan in the first half of 2011.[130][131] In recent times, Korean dramas have experienced growing popularity in Brunei. The growing impact of Korean culture in Brunei led to the hosting of the ninth Korea Forum in the country at Universiti Brunei Darussalam in 2010. Korean television dramas, movies, music, and clothing have had a great impact on the people of Brunei.[132] The first Korean drama to be broadcast in Cambodia was Winter Sonata; it was, however, Full House that launched the interest in Korean dramas and entertainment in the country. Following the success of Full House, more Korean dramas have been dubbed into the Khmer language. Korean dramas have become popular, particularly amongst youth in Cambodia.[133] In Indonesia, Korean dramas have gained popularity and the popular Korean dramas Winter Sonata and Endless Love were aired on Surya Citra Media in 2002. Some Korean dramas have also been remade into Indonesian versions such as Demi Cinta in 2005 which was a remake of the popular drama Autumn in My Heart and Cinta Sejati, a remake of Stairway to Heaven. RCTI and Indosiar are examples of Indonesian television networks that air Korean dramas in the early times, but later Trans TV airing some of popular Korean dramas until today.[134][135] The popularity of Korean dramas and pop culture in Laos has led to many Laotian tourists travelling to South Korea. Korean pop culture has gained popularity in Laos through the Thai TV channels broadcasting Korean dramas and K-pop bands in the country.[136] In Malaysia, Winter Sonata began airing on TV3 in 2003, which started an interest in Korean pop culture in the country. Dae Jang Geum and Autumn In My Heart were also aired in Malaysia. The popularity of Korean dramas have resulted in a positive reception of Korean expatriates in Malaysia.[137] In Myanmar, the K-drama Autumn in My Heart was broadcast in the country in 2001, which led to interest in Korean entertainment. When Dae Jang Geum was aired, the drama sparked an interest in Korean cuisine in the country.[138] The rising popularity of Korean dramas and music in Myanmar has led to the Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange (KOFICE) distributing Korean dramas in the country for free.[139] In the Philippines, Korean dramas have been politically popular on free-to-air television since 2003.[140] For more than two decades, GMA Network has the highest number of Korean dramas broadcast in the Philippines.[141] Filipino politician and SAGIP Partylist representative Rodante Marcoleta complimented that Korean dramas have better stories and has a lot of choices: "they may not be so good at acting, but the flow of the story, especially their society is different so it will attract your interest, you get something to learn. They can show their culture, we see it ourselves and we say, we should adopt that too."[142] President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr. acknowledged the importance of Korean dramas and culture to the Filipinos: "with Korean restaurants sprouting out around the Philippines, Filipinos have shared stories and have laughed over some kimchi, some samgyeopsal with friends and family, and of course, the countless hours we have spent binge-watching our favorite Korean dramas and listening to K-pop. This highlights how the Filipinos love Koreans."[143] In Singapore, Prime 12 (now known as Suria) originally aired the Korean drama Sandglass every week in 1996 and aired Asphalt Man in 1997. Since 2001, they have been shown on Chinese language channel MediaCorp Channel U daily.[144] The launch of KBS World, ONE TV ASIA, Oh!K, Channel M and streaming app, Viu in Singapore allows viewers to watch Korean dramas with a variety of subtitles in a matter of hours after the original South Korean telecast.[145] Currently, Singaporeans also get access to Korean dramas through China-originated online platform IQIYI, which first soft-launched its app in 2019 and planned to expand its international bases in Singapore.[146][147] When Dae Jang Geum was aired in Thailand, Korean food started gaining wide popularity.[148] Due to the lop-sided nature of entertainment exports favoring South Korea, the Thai government requested increased introduction of popular Thai films to South Korean media outlets. This led to the signing of an Agreement of Cultural Cooperation between the two countries in August 2004.[149] Korean dramas have also gained popularity in Vietnam, particularly among women and young people. The fashion and hairstyles presented in Korean dramas have become very popular among the youth of the country.[150] Korean dramas have gained popularity in Bangladesh in recent years.[151] Their rising popularity in the country has led to the Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange (KOFICE), an organisation which aims to distribute Korean dramas for free to countries, cooperating with broadcasters to distribute Korean dramas for free in the country.[152] With the growing number of K-drama fans in Bangladesh, more and more Facebook groups are popping up, giving them a platform to share their love of the shows with fellow K-drama enthusiasts and take part in events and activities hosted by the groups. One of the largest Bangladeshi K-Drama groups, BD K-Family, arranges a yearly get-together for its members. Other popular Facebook K-Drama groups include K-Drama Archive BD, Korean Lovers Bangladesh, and BD Korean Drama Fam- all of which create opportunities for both local and international fans to participate in discussions about their favourite shows.[153] In Pakistan, Korean dramas have gained popularity after the broadcast of My Love from the Star, Empress Ki and The Heirs have been broadcast in dubbed on H Now entertainment. Whereas Pakistan Television Corporation aired Dae Jang Geum and Descendants of the Sun being aired in Filmazia. However, during the pandemic, Hallyu sparked and took Pakistan by storm when the hit shows Crash Landing on You, All of Us Are Dead, and Squid Game took off. With the help of Korean Dramas and "K-pop" Pakistani youngsters are getting more familiar with them. Korean dramas are mostly watched by women and young Pakistanis. Korean dramas are unique enough to be endearing and familiar enough to be reassuring for Pakistani viewers because of the similar storylines regarding family, romance, and comedic elements. Pak-Korea Culture Collaboration (PKCC) is a group of young Pakistanis living in Karachi who want to improve ties between both cultures. The youth have worked with the Korean embassy in Karachi on multiple occasions to host festivals and activities, and they have been incredibly successful in their aim.[154] In the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, Korean dramas and entertainment have gained popularity, particularly amongst youth. Before interest in Korean entertainment, Bollywood had largely been the most popular form of entertainment in the country. When the Bhutanese film industry launched in the mid-1990s, Bollywood was the only form of influence on the industry. However, in recent years, Korean entertainment has made significant inroads in the country and influenced the entertainment industry alongside Bollywood. Korean entertainment has managed to influence fashion, and many video shops now sell Korean dramas and movies alongside Bollywood films. The interest in Korean entertainment has also led to controversy with older generations voicing their concern that Korean entertainment will deteriorate Bhutanese culture and traditions.[155][156] Hyun Bin has starred in Highest Rated K-Dramas in Korean Television history like My Lovely Samsoon, Secret Garden, Memories of the Alhambra and Crash Landing on You and is considered one of the most influential South Korean actor In India, after the late 1990s and around 2000 Korean dramas started becoming popular through piracy particularly in north-eastern states such as Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Mizoram and Nagaland as well as parts of eastern state like West Bengal and more recently in southern states like Kerala, Telangana, Tamil Nadu.[157][158] Hindi films and TV serials were banned in Manipur in 2000, as a result local television stations began broadcasting subtitled Korean dramas instead from Arirang TV and KBS World.[159][160] Many young people in north-eastern, eastern, northern and southern parts of India mimic the hairstyles, clothes of Korean actors while Korean fashion became very popular in the region.[161][162][163] As part of cultural exchange, public broadcaster Doordarshan telecast Emperor of the Sea and Dae Jang Geum.[164] Korean dramas are dubbed in Tamil on Puthuyugam TV such as Boys Over Flowers, My Love from Another Star, Playful Kiss and many more.[165] Full House and Hwang Jini started airing on Firangi channel in 2008. Reliance Big TV offered KBS World to its subscribers from 2009 on satellite television. Local fan clubs got help from Consul-General of South Korea while Korean Cultural Centre in India (KCCI) under South Korean embassy started mapping popularity of K-dramas.[166] As per KCCI, the motivation to understand Korean drama properly without subtitles is driving the uptake of Korean language classes among the youth with females outnumbering males.[167] DD Bharati broadcast period drama Hur Jun in 2014 that received highest viewer ratings of 34 million from January to October 2014. Online streaming platform ZEE5 launched Descendants of the Sun to test the Indian market from February 8 to March 1, 2017, and found overwhelming positive response for Korean content with viewership ran close to 56 million.[160] The telecast of Korean drama on Cable TV in 2017 stopped as Korean Broadcasting System Network wanted to raise syndication charges due to accumulation of large viewer-ship base in India that included pockets of Bihar, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh due to short 16 to 20 episodes format that are easier for binge-watching.[168][169] With increasing interest in Korean content among younger generation from tier-1 cities, Samsung through its My Galaxy mobile application is partnering with Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) in 2019 to bring exclusive content for 20 million Indian users.[170] With COVID-19 pandemic, Dish TV started premium K-dramas dubbed in Hindi and Tamil.[171] Korean dramas are also driving highest viewer-ship on Netflix with second season of TV series Kingdom attained the Top 10 series row as of March 2020. It's Okay to Not Be Okay is on Netflix Top 10 list in India for several weeks in August 2020 which has jumped to number 3 position. Netflix is increasing investment on Korean content to capture the Indian market.[172] Over-the-top media service (OTT) MX Player confirmed rising popularity and demand of Korean dramas among millennial population especially the women audience and is now making deals with South Korean television and radio network company Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) to bring more content in India. Korean dramas and films became most visited category for ShortsTV in India.[173] As per media experts, the relatable themes in Korean content is fast catching the imagination of general public of almost every age group that is going mainstream and driving highest viewing especially after 92nd Academy Awards winning movie Parasite due to the shared Asian cultural heritage and societal values.[174][175][176] As per Parrot Analytics report, K-drama series Crash Landing on You, is on demand 1.2 times than an average TV series that is 89.8% more than all drama titles shown in India forcing broadcasters to make extra slots as women are at the forefront of consumer demand in Korean content category.[177][178] The COVID-19 lockdown in India proved to be an inflection point in 2020–2021 when Korean drama moved from a niche sub-culture segment to mainstream due to services like Netflix, Rakuten Viki and YouTube. It penetrated to every age group and social background. The popularity of Korean drama forced many over-the-top media service in India such as MX Player, Viu and ZEE5 to bring the dubbed versions in local language that will help cater to large non English speaking audience.[179][180][181] Interest for Korean dramas in the Nepal began when Winter Sonata aired on Kantipur Television Network in the mid-2000s. This led to the popularity of other K-dramas such as Boys Over Flowers, Autumn In My Heart, You Are Beautiful and Full House to name a few. Popularity of Korean media products has also led to interest of learning the Korean language and has resulted in the emergence of Korean language tutorials that air on ABC Television in the country. Korean dramas have become popular among Nepali youth and markets are often frequented by teenagers looking to buy the latest dramas. The hairstyles and fashion of Korean actors have influenced the fashion sense of Nepali youth. Fascinated by the lifestyle and food of Korea, restaurants serving Korean cuis

4, 2024 [415] 32 The Good Bad Mother 2.669 June 8, 2023 [416] 33 Strong Girl Nam-soon 2.652 November 26, 2023 [417] 34 Little Women tvN 2.618 October 9, 2022 [418] 35 Jirisan 2.586 December 12, 2021 [419] 36 The Art of Negotiation JTBC 2.487 April 13, 2025 [420] 37 Encounter tvN 2.473 January 24, 2019 [421] 38 Red Balloon TV Chosun 2.457 February 26, 2023 [422] 39 The Crowned Clown tvN 2.447 March 4, 2019 [423] 40 Mine 2.429 June 27, 2021 [424] 41 Alchemy of Souls 2.410 August 28, 2022 [425] 42 What's Wrong with Secretary Kim 2.383 July 26, 2018 [426] 43 Behind Your Touch JTBC 2.328 October 1, 2023 [427] 44 Military Prosecutor Doberman tvN 2.279 April 26, 2022 [428] 45 Alchemy of Souls: Light and Shadow 2.267 January 8, 2023 [429] 46 The Light in Your Eyes JTBC 2.223 March 19, 2019 [430] 47 Tale of the Nine Tailed 1938 tvN 2.216 June 11, 2023 [431] 48 Show Window: The Queen's House Channel A 2.195 January 18, 2022 [432] 49 Stranger 2 tvN 2.186 October 4, 2020 [433] 50 Resident Playbook 2.152 May 18, 2025 [434] Asia portalSouth Korea portalTelevision portal List of South Korean television series History of Korean animation Korean Wave Manhwa Mass media in South Korea International mass media of South Korea South Korean culture South Korean television dramas in the Philippines Television in South Korea Webtoon Taiwanese television drama Philippine television drama Japanese television drama Chinese television drama ^ As of 2010 it remained 38th in ranking,[citation needed] as of January 2013, it remained 41st in ranking,[citation needed] as of May 2015, it remained around 40th in ranking,[273][unreliable source?] as of June 2018, it remained 39th in ranking.[citation needed] ^ a b The number of viewers was released by Nielsen Korea starting January 2018. ^ White, Peter (October 19, 2021). 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