

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Asian Culture – Inspiring The West

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For many years, there has been a fascination with Asian culture in the West, however over the past few years this interest in all things Asian has grown beyond all recognition. No longer is the thirst for Asia restricted to food and martial arts – it has expanded to the entertainment industry. Manga, anime, K-Pop, and K-Dramas are now attracting their own huge followings in Europe and the USA, especially among the younger generation who are excited by the possibilities that an ever-shrinking globe can offer them.

Today, you can visit any mainstream bookstore and find Manga literature on sale. Ask any Western teenager about the latest K-Pop bands and they'll probably be able to name at least one. Even Asian movies like *Parasite* – a recently released Korean film – are now on general release in Western cinemas, something which would have been unheard of just a few years ago. So, how far has the drive to embrace Asian culture gone in the West?

The Hypebeast Trend

The rise of Asian culture has stretched as far as streetwear, with [European teenagers adopting the “hypebeast” trend](#) after influencers and fashion bloggers extolled the virtues of brands such as Paradise Youth Club and Yeti Out that originate from Asian countries. Taking its inspiration from Asian society and club culture, these designers create unisex pieces in an aim to break down the boundaries in society through the use of fashion. While Western teens may not understand the context of the designers' creations, they appreciate the unique aesthetic and are buying these hoodies, sneakers, and t-shirts in huge numbers.

K-Pop – A Teen Sensation

As recently as 2012, K-Pop had barely touched the West when [Psy's “Gangnam Style”](#) was released and became an overnight hit. Yet, the very first Kcon event, held the same year in the US only attracted a couple of hundred attendees. Today, over 125,000 people attend this annual convention dedicated to all things relating to the Korean entertainment industry. K-Pop is no longer a niche genre – it's a global industry worth over \$5 billion. [Soompi](#), an online K-Pop community, has over 22 million users, and most of them aren't Korean. Groups like Red Velvet, Exo and, of course, BTS are household names, and American and European teenagers are singing lyrics in a language that they can't understand let alone speak. It's a fascinating example of how Generation Z are ready and willing to embrace other cultures.

Asian Culture In The Gaming Industry

The gaming industry has also taken Asian culture to its heart. Visit any online casino these days and you'll find a host of [Asian-themed slots](#) that take their inspiration from all things Eastern. Featuring imagery from Chinese, Japanese and Korean myths and legends, Far Eastern architecture and martial arts, these slots are incredibly popular with Western players who regularly choose them for their online gambling fix.

East Meets West

It's clear that, as we move further into the 21st century, East and West are increasingly margining. Teenagers today are less likely to see a difference between Eastern and Western cultures – it's all pop culture to them. Who knows, within a few years, there may be seamless cultural transitions all over the globe!

Photo:  **Chan Hyuk Moon**

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