

## Chinese Documentaries and the Korean War\*

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### Introduction

“A faithful documentary is a living evidence of our lives and the portrait of our history. It influences, sometimes motivates, or enlightens the public with persuasive truths and artistic charms particular to our lives. Documentaries allow us to experience our lives, look back on the history, and appreciate them as art—fulfilling all of their social functions.”<sup>1</sup> Ever since films became pervasive, people of every time period attempted to

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\* When the Korean War broke out in 1950, the Chinese government decided to enter the war and called it the “War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea.” The Chinese government and people used this name for the war until after the Chinese economic reform. After the reform period, which began in 1978, Chinese people in various sectors began to reflect on historical incidents that occurred since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, and the name of the “War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea” was also changed. Although government documents still use the term “War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea,” academic circles and civilian society uses the term “Korean War” more widely. In this paper, “War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea” will be used when discussing documentaries filmed in China during the Korean War, and “Korean War” will be used when analyzing the contents of documentaries produced after the Chinese economic reform period.

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define documentary films, “yet no definition that the majority can accept has surfaced.”<sup>2</sup> People agree on the characteristics of documentary films, such as the fact that they use real events as motifs and that they are based on real events, real people, and facts. However, at certain times in the past, the production of documentaries was limited, and it was inevitable that subjective elements filtered in later due to environmental limitations and other impacts. Consequently, a certain degree of critical thinking is necessary in analyzing video documents such as documentaries. Despite such pitfalls, video resources (mainly documentaries) are a new kind of document that make up for many of the shortcomings of existing written documents and depict the original aspects of historical scenes, taking full advantage of its intuitive and emotional features. As a result, these video resources hold significant research value, just like existing historical resources.

Cultural exchanges between the Korean Peninsula and mainland China have continued to thrive over the years; and North Korea, which was called “Little China” among East Asian countries under the Sinosphere, has received a lot of attention from the Chinese people. Visual records about the Korean Peninsula in Chinese historical studies have become important historical materials in understanding the circumstances surrounding the Korean Peninsula in ancient times. With the development of science and technology in modern times, new types of historical sources, such as photographs and video images, began to proliferate. Among such records are documentary films, a type of nonfiction film that directly presents the reality—not fabricated stories—about real events or people; and documentaries about the Korean Peninsula filmed by the Chinese are gaining more and more importance as historical documents. Therefore, organizing and analyzing documentaries on Korea have significant value.

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1 *Dictionary of modern Chinese literature and arts*, Zhongzhou (中州) Ancient Books Publishing: 375.

2 Dan Wanli, *History of Chinese documentary films*, Beijing: China Film Publishing, 2005: 2.

These Chinese documentaries about Korea not only reconstruct true historical images of the Korean Peninsula, but also allow the viewers to understand the intentions and the ideas of the producers. Furthermore, they provide an opportunity to explore the Chinese perspective on the Korean Peninsula.

### History of Chinese Documentaries

The very first moving picture was released in 1895,<sup>3</sup> and it spread to China from the West at the end of the nineteenth century. In August 1896, the first “Western film” was screened at You Yi Cun (又一村) in Shanghai, China. Afterward, the number of Chinese films grew gradually.<sup>4</sup> As film screenings became widespread in a few major cities, film productions began in China. However, they were all produced by foreigners, and the subjects these films explored were mainly significant historical events, such as the Boxer Rebellion, or landscapes and sceneries of various places in China.

Films produced by foreigners in China did focus on Chinese society, but most only captured negative images of China from absurd perspectives. Some even went as far as to disparage or oppose China,<sup>5</sup> clearly devoid of the objectivity and truthfulness that early films had.

Only after the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese began to produce their own films. In 1905, Feng Tai (丰泰) photo studio in Beijing filmed and produced a documentary of a few scenes from *The Battle of Dingjunshan* (定軍山), a Beijing opera, and the film was also titled *The Battle of Dingjunshan* (定軍山). This was the very first film directed and produced by the

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3 The Lumiere Brothers used Edison’s “kinetoscope” to invent the “cinematograph.” They produced the first film in human history and screened it successfully. Gao Weijin, *A history of Chinese news and documentary films*, Beijing: Central Historical Documents Publishing, 2003: 1

4 Gao Weijin, *A history of Chinese news and documentary films*: 3.

5 Gao Weijin, *Ibid*: 8.

Chinese,<sup>6</sup> and since then Chinese filmmakers began to produce films more actively.

Early Chinese films mainly recorded actual events, and common subjects were Beijing operas and street performances. Therefore almost all of the early films produced in China can be classified as documentaries, and these maintain a relatively objective perspective since they did not undergo a lot in the editing process.

As film technologies began to develop, film subjects and genres began to diversify, and at the same time commercial films became mainstream. Such a transformation pushed forward the development of the Chinese film industry, and film production companies were founded by Chinese people in various parts of China, including Shanghai.

Modern news documentaries filmed by Chinese filmmakers were produced in 1911, when the Xinhai Revolution that overthrew the Qing Dynasty began. When the Wuchang Uprising erupted, Zhu Liankui, a prominent Chinese artist at the time, collaborated with foreign merchants at Meili (美利) Company and filmed many important battles waged by the New Army (新軍), which culminated in the film *War of Wuhan* (武汉战争). Later in the second phase of the uprising, when Hwang Xing and the revolutionary army fought to subjugate Yuan Shikai, a Chinese director and cameraman from the Asia Film Company in Shanghai filmed *War of Shanghai* (上海战争).<sup>7</sup> Although we no longer have access to these films, they are important as the first Chinese news documentaries in film history.

The Chinese film industry grew rapidly in the 1920s. About 200 film companies were established all across China, and many of these companies produced feature films. Sometimes they produced newsreels and scenic films, and some companies produced films that introduced the private lives and biographies of important figures in the military government in each region.

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6 Fang Fang, *A history of the development of the Chinese documentary*, China Drama Press, 2003: 7.

7 Dan Wanli, *Ibid.*: 10.

During this time, about 20 companies produced around 100 news documentaries,<sup>8</sup> including the *Completion of the Northern Expedition* (北伐完成记) (Great China-Lily Film Company, 大中華百合影片公司) which captured the revolutionary movement in China, *History of the Great War of the Northern Expedition* (北伐大战史) (Minsheng Motion Picture Company), *Northern Expedition of the Revolutionary Army* (革命军北伐记) (Novelty Company), *Shanghai Wusa Citizen's Rally* (上海五卅市民大会) (Great Wall Film Company), and *Wusa Wave* (五卅沪潮) (Youlian Film Corporation).<sup>9</sup> There were also films about the lives and activities of contemporary personalities, such as *Presidential Inauguration of Sun Wen* (孙中山就任大总统) and *Sun Wen Heads to the North* (孙中山先生北上),<sup>10</sup> as well as films that recorded social activities of ordinary people including *Patriotism, a Sports Day for Two Schools in East Asia* (爱国、东亚两学校运动会) and *National Diplomatic Parade* (国民外交游行大会).<sup>11</sup>

In the 1930s, Imperialist Japan sped up their plan to invade China and staged the Manchurian Incident and the January 28 Incident. After the two incidents, eminent personalities from various circles requested that Chinese film companies produce more anti-Japanese films that reflect anti-Japanese sentiment to encourage the Chinese people to protest against Japan. Faced with a national challenge, Chinese filmmakers and workers in the film industry answered the demands of the times and captured the Chinese people's struggle against Japan on camera. Film producers filmed newsreels, such as the *19<sup>th</sup> Route Army's Bloody Struggle against Japan, Battle of Shanghai Part 1* (十九路军血战抗日-上海战地写真第一集) (Star Motion Picture Co. Ltd.), *Disaster from Japanese Violence in Shanghai* (暴日祸沪记) and the *19<sup>th</sup> Route Army's Glorious Battle against the Japanese Enemy* (十九路军抗日战史) (Lianhua Film Company), *Shanghai Holocaust* (上海浩劫记) (Tianyi Film Company), *Glorious*

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8 Dan Wanli, *Ibid*: 16.

9 Gao Weijin, *Ibid*: 16-17.

10 Dan Wanli, *Ibid*: 17-18.

11 Gao Weijin, *Ibid*: 12.

*History of the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army* (十九路军光荣史) (Huimin Corporation), *History of Bloody Struggle Against Japan in Shanghai* (上海抗日血战史) (Huichong Company), and *History of War in China* (中国铁血军战史) (Xifan Company).<sup>12</sup> These films heightened the Chinese people's anti-Japanese sentiment.

Some film companies sent camera crews to the northeastern regions to capture the anti-Japanese struggle of the people there and produced documentaries including the *History of the Northeast Army of Volunteers' Struggle Against Japan* (东北义勇军抗日战史) (Nine Stars Motion Picture Company), *History of the Northeast Army of Volunteers' Bloody Struggle Against Japan* (东北义勇军抗日血战史) (Jinan Film Company), and *Struggle of the Northeast Army of Volunteers* (东北义勇军抗日记) (Supporters' Association of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang).<sup>13</sup>

A large number of Korean patriots fighting against Japan fought in the Northeast Army of Volunteers, and Korean independence fighters in the northeast fought against Japan in cooperation with Chinese anti-Japanese organizations. Therefore it is possible for these documentaries on the Northeast Army of Volunteers to contain information about Korean anti-Japanese fighters.

Because films are quite influential, the Kuomintang Central Propaganda Commission reorganized the Entertainment Unit into the Film Unit in 1932, and established the Central Film Studio near Lake Xuanwu in Nanjing in 1934. The studio was called "Zhongtien (中电)" for short.

Zhongtien mainly produced *China News* (中国新闻) and introduced activities of important figures in the KMT as well as the KMT army.<sup>14</sup> After a full-scale war against Japan began, Zhongtien recorded the anti-Japanese struggles of the Chinese army and people and produced documentaries such as *War in the East* (东战场), *Nine Months of Anti-*

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12 Gao Weijin, *Ibid.*: 23.

13 Gao Weijin, *Ibid.*: 24.

14 Gao Weijin, *Ibid.*: 40.

*Japanese War* (抗战第九月), and *Overcome Tai'erzhuang*<sup>15</sup> (克服台儿庄), *Vibrant Western Front* (活跃的西线), and *Prelude to Victory* (胜利的前奏). When the anti-Japanese War escalated into confrontation, Zhongtien produced documentaries, including *Ten Thousand Li of a New Road* (新路一万里), *The Second Generation* (第二代), *A Pilgrimage to Tibet* (西藏巡礼), *Scenery of Zhongyuan* (中原风光), *Scenery and Customs in the Northwest* (西北风物志), and *The Korean Volunteers Army* (朝鲜义勇队).<sup>16</sup> The Political Training Camp (政训处) at Nanchang Headquarters (南昌行营) also created a film production team in 1935 which was changed to China Movie Studio (中国电影制片厂), or “Zhongzhi (中制).”<sup>17</sup> Films produced by Zhongzhi during the anti-Japanese War include *Film News* (电影新闻) and *A Special Report on the Anti-Japanese War* (抗战特辑) parts 1 through 6. These documentaries were screened not only in China but also in Singapore, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, USSR, UK, and the US.<sup>18</sup> At first, a number of foreigners intruded upon the bases of the anti-Japanese struggles led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) without permission and filmed documentaries which show the anti-Japanese fight of the Chinese people at those bases. *China Fights On* (中国在战斗) and *In China* (在中国) filmed by an American cameraman, Harry Dunham, are such films.<sup>19</sup> In April 1938, “Shanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Anti-Japanese Film Studio” was established in the region near Shanxi (陕西), Gansu (甘肃), and Ningxia (宁夏), yet this company virtually did not produce any films. In August 1938, Yuan Mu-zhi, a famous actor and a playwright, established the Film Group in the General Political Department of the Eight Route Army, which later began to be called the Yanan (延安) Film Group. The Yanan Film Group produced documentaries, titled *Yanan and the Eighth Route Army* (延安与八路军), *Integrate Production and War* (生产

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15 Tai'erzhuang is a district under the administration of the prefecture-level city of Zaozhuang. It is located in the south of Shandong Province.

16 Gao Weijin, *Ibid*: 41.

17 Fang Fang, *Ibid*: 86.

18 Dan Wanli, *Ibid*: 55-56.

19 Gao Weijin, *Ibid*: 56-57.

与战斗结合起来), etc.<sup>20</sup>

Among the documentaries filmed in China during the anti-Japanese War, only *The Korean Volunteers Army* (朝鲜义勇队) contains information about the activities of Korean independence fighters in China. However, considering the situation at the time, it seems possible that other anti-Japanese war documentaries filmed during this period included the struggle of Korean independence fighters against Japan to gain control of Korea since Korean independence fighters of the time believed that China's victory against Japan would mean Korean independence<sup>21</sup> and actively took part in China's anti-Japanese War. Most of the soldiers in the Anti-Japanese Allied Forces who continued their fight against Japan in the northeastern region of China were Koreans, and their traces can be found in the *History of the Northeast Army of Volunteers' Struggle Against Japan* (东北义勇军抗日战史), *History of the Northeast Army of Volunteers' Bloody Struggle Against Japan* (东北义勇军抗日血战史), and *Struggle of the Northeast Army of Volunteers* (东北义勇军抗日记).

Whether it was a full-scale war waged by the KMT or an anti-Japanese struggle led by the CCP, the Korean Liberation Army, Korean Volunteers Army, soldiers of the Korean Volunteer Army and Chinese military fought together against Japan. Therefore in anti-Japanese war documentaries filmed by the Zhongtien, Zhongzhi, and Yanan Film Group all include activities of Korean independence fighters in China.

After China's victory in the anti-Japanese war, the Chinese film industry finally entered the golden age of film production. Although it only lasted for about four years, the development of commercial films around this time marked a new chapter in Chinese film history. Documentaries also were able to enjoy a certain level of development, yet in terms of speed, it fell behind the development of commercial films.

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20 Dan Wanli, *Ibid*: 81-82.

21 Wen Zhi, *Joy and hope, Korean Volunteers Army correspondence week 3*, Feb 5, 1939.



## Korean War Documentaries in the New China

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was established. However, within a year of the birth of new China, the Korean War began. In accordance with their national security strategy, the Chinese government decided to dispatch troops of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army and enter the Korean War. On October 19, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army marched into North Korea. The Beijing Film Studio "War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea" Film Team followed the Chinese People's Volunteer Army into North Korea as well. The Korean War was the first war that was directly linked to the issue of life or death for the country since the establishment of the new China, and consequently, the whole country showed an enormous interest in the war. For a swift and comprehensive understanding of the Korean War for the Chinese people, the Beijing Film Studio's camera crew produced short documentaries such as *Intelligence from the Korean Western Frontier* (朝鲜西线捷报) (Dec 1951) and *Over the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, Seoul was Freed* (突破三八线解放汉城) (1951) based on the progress of the war to notify the people of China. In November 1951, Xu Xiaobing, who led the camera crew, reedited these short documentaries to create the first feature-length documentary about the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, titled *War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, Part 1* (抗美援朝 (第一部)) (Nov 1951, Filmed by: Yang Xuzhong, Liu Deyuan, Mou Lin, Shi Yimin, Liu Yunbo, Wang Yongzhen, Chen Yifan, Han Bingxin, Su Zhongyi, Liu Hua, Zhao Hua, Jin Wei etc., Editors: Xu Xiaobing and Wang Shen). From then, a number of documentaries were produced reflecting the changing state of affairs in the war. In 1952, when the war went through many phases of truce and hostility, a series of documentaries were produced and screened in China: *War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, Part 2* (抗美援朝 (第二部)), *We Oppose Germ Warfare* (反对细菌战) (1952, Producers: Ji Chusheng, Shi Dongshan, Editor: Wang Yonghong), *Chinese People Dispatch a Delegation to Comfort North Korea* (中国人民赴朝慰问团) (1952, Filmed by: Li Hua, etc., Editor: Jiang yuchuan), and *Exchange of Injured*

*Prisoners of War* (交换病伤战俘) (1953, Filmed by: Li Hua, Li Wenhua, Li Zhenyu, Editor: Lei Zhenlin). After the end of the Korean War, many series of documentaries about the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea were made in China. Most of them were produced by Bayi Film Studio, including *Comforting the Cutest Person* (慰问最可爱的人) (1953), *An Unbreakable Transportation Line* (钢铁运输线) (1954, Adapted and directed by: Peng Yifu, Hua Chun, Shi Wenzhi, Edited by: Li Erkang, Xue Boqing, etc.), *Leniency to the Prisoners of War* (宽待俘虏) (1954), *Hurrah for the Friendship* (友谊万岁) (1954), and *At the Datong River* (大同江上) (1954). The Beijing Film Studio also produced documentaries on the Korean War, such as the *Song of the Hero* (英雄赞) (1958) and *Welcome Home, Our Troops* (欢迎志愿军回国) (1958).

The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 further solidified the Cold War. In the sharp conflict of the two ideological camps, a “hot war” like the Korean War did not break out again. However, China and Korea, which belonged to different camps, lost the opportunity to improve their relations and practically broke off all exchanges as well. In such circumstances, it was impossible for China to produce documentaries on Korea or screen Korean documentaries. Even the news recordings on Korea were mostly short footages from North Korea. During this ideological conflict, the films that were “selected” were unable to depict the actual condition of Korea to the Chinese people.

After the end of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, Chinese documentaries on Korea were mostly about North Korea or North Korea-China relations. Documentaries filmed during this time can be found below:

No.	Title of Documentary	Production Company	Year
1.	<i>Chinese Government Delegation Visits North Korea</i> (中国政府代表团访问朝鲜)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1958
2.	<i>Eternal Friendship Between China and North Korea</i> (中朝友谊万古青)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1958

3.	<i>Welcome to the Distinguished Guests from North Korea</i> (欢迎朝鲜贵宾)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1958
4.	<i>A Delegation from the North Korean Supreme People's Assembly Visits China</i> (朝鲜最高人民议会代表团访问中国)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1962
5.	<i>Chairman Liu Shaoqi Visits North Korea</i> (刘少奇主席访问朝鲜)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1963
6.	<i>Premier Zhou Enlai Visits North Korea</i> (周总理访朝鲜)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1970
7.	<i>Deep Affections Between the People of China and North Korea</i> (中朝人民情谊深)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1971
8.	<i>Blossoming Friendship Through Battle Songs—North Korean Pyongyang Opera Troupe Visits China and Performs</i> (战斗歌声传友情—欢迎朝平壤民族歌剧团访华, 演出)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1972
9.	<i>Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei Visits North Korea</i> (姬鹏飞外长访问朝鲜)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1972
10.	<i>Forever Will Bloom the Flower of Friendship—Heartfelt Welcome to the North Korean Pyongyang Mansudae Art Troupe</i> (友谊花开万年长—热烈欢迎朝鲜、壤万寿台艺术团)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1973
11.	<i>Friendship Through Circus Art—North Korean Pyongyang Circus Troupe Performs in Beijing</i> (杂技艺术传友情—朝鲜平壤杂技团北京演出)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1975
12.	<i>Chinese Communist Party Delegation Visits North Korea</i> (中国共产党代表团访问朝鲜)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1976
13.	<i>Performing Art Troupe of China Visits North Korea</i> (中国艺术团访问朝鲜)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1976

14.	<i>Premier Hua Guofeng Visits North Korea</i> (华国锋主席访问朝鲜)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1978
15.	<i>Vice Chairman Deng Yingchao Visits North Korea</i> (邓颖超副委员长访问朝)	中央新闻纪录电影制片厂 Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio	1979

Documentaries of this time mainly celebrated and praised the deep friendship between the people of China and North Korea, and recorded visits of art troupes or government officials from the Chinese government and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to their respective countries.

From 1966, China entered a special phase in its history called the Cultural Revolution. During this time, most sectors in China suffered heavily, with academia possibly suffering the most. Certain scholarship was considered taboo, and a number of prominent scholars were dismissed as "reactionary intellectuals," and the all scholastic research in the humanities and social sciences was brought to a standstill. Research on Korea and the Korean Peninsula was not an exception. Considering these circumstances, the fact that very few video images and records of Korea or the Korean Peninsula can be found during this time period is not surprising.

After the Chinese economic reform, most sectors returned to normal, and China began to reflect back on historical issues since the establishment of the country. Accordingly, Chinese people from all levels and classes of society began to look back on the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea. The most noteworthy achievements in research began to appear in the 1990s after documents and materials on the Korean War were declassified. With the emergence of numerous studies related to the Korean War, the academic name for the war was changed, and more and more scholars began to call the war that began a little after the establishment of new China as the "Korean War." Moreover, documentaries on the Korean War began to be produced once again, based on new research results and other documents and materials. A list of new documentaries on the Korean

War that have been produced since the 1990s can be found below:

No.	Title of Documentary	Main topics	Production Company	Publisher/ Year
1	Korean War (Original Title: 朝鲜战争)	War, battles	Unknown	Shenzhen, 1990
2	Korean War (Original Title: 朝鲜战争)	Military, North Korea	Unknown	China National Theater for Children Music Technique Publishing, 1997
3	War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Oct 25, 1950-July 27, 1953) (Original Title: 抗美援朝战争)	Korean War	Zhujiang (珠江) Film Studio Ltd.	Bai Tian E (珠影白天鹅) Media Publishing, 1997
4	The Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea—Special report on the Bainian zhongda incident and massacres (Original Title: 抗美援朝战争-百年重大事件与事变特辑)	Korean War	Zhujiang (珠江) Film Studio Ltd.	Bai Tian E (珠影白天鹅) Media Publishing, 1997
5	War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, Part 1 and 2 (Original Title: 抗美援朝战争 1-2 集)	Korean War	Contec Sound Media Ltd.	Contec Sound Media Ltd., 1997
6	War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 抗美援朝战争)	Korean War	Zhujiang (珠江) Film Studio Ltd.	Bai Tian E (珠影白天鹅) Media Publishing, 1997
7	Korean War (Original Title: 朝鲜战争)	War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea	Shanghai Film Company	Shanghai Film Company, 1998
8	Records of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 抗美援朝纪实)	Documentary, War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea	Bayi (八一) Film Studio, Beijing Academy of Military Science, Department of Military Research	China Sanhuan Media Publishing, 1998

9	The Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 抗美援朝实录)	Korean War	People's Liberation Army TV Propaganda Center	Changzheng (长征) Media Publishing, 1998
10	War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 抗美援朝战争)	Korean War	People's Liberation Army TV Propaganda Center	People's Liberation Army Media Publishing, 1998
11	Records of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 抗美援朝战争纪实)	Korean War	Bayi (八一) Film Studio	Bayi (八一) Film Studio, China Academy of Military Science, China Sanhuan Media Publishing, 1999
12	Confrontation: the Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 较量: 抗美援朝战争实录)	Korean War	Bayi (八一) Film Studio	China Sanhuan Media Publishing, 1999 (Bayi (八一) Film Studio, China Academy of Military Science)
13	Echoes of Half a Century (Part 5) (Original Title: 半个世纪的回响 (五集))	Reinforcements, War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea	China Central Television (CCTV)	The Audio & Video Publishing House of the Central Newsreel & Documentary Film Studio, 2000
14	Records of the War 1 (Vol 2) (Original Title: Original Title: 战争纪实 1 (下))	Regional war—North Korea	Unknown	Daheng (大恒) Digital Publishing, 2000

15	New Chinese Diplomacy (Part 3): Conflict on the Peninsula—Battle in Korea (Original Title: 新中国外交 (第三集)-半岛较量—朝鲜战役)	Korean War	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Xinghui (星辉) Music International Ltd., 2001
16	Once Again at Home—a Journey of an Old Chinese Soldier to North Korea (Original Title: 重踏热土—志愿军老战士朝鲜纪行)	Documentary, Film recording actual event, North Korea, reinforcements	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	China National Nuclear Corporation (核工业) Media Publishing, 2001
17	POW Camps without Barbed Wire (Original Title: 没有铁丝网的战俘营)	Korean War, POW issues	China Central Television (CCTV)	China International Television Corporation, 2004
18	A Gun Salute at the Tiananmen Gate—Here the Chinese People Rose (Original Title: 天安门的礼炮—中国人民从此站起来了)	Mao Anying, who was killed in the Korean War	Unknown	Jiangxi (江西) Cultural Media Publishing, 2004
19	The 38 <sup>th</sup> Parallel of History (Original Title: 历史上的三八线)	History of the international relations, Korean War, China, US, USSR, Document ary	Unknown	3 Commissions of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, 2005
20	A Journey for Reconciliation within the New China—The Realities of the Chinese Military Expedition to the Korean War (Original Title: 新中国破冰之旅—中国出兵朝鲜真相)	Military history, Korean War, China, footage	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Beijing China Sports Audiovisual Publishing Center, 2005
21	Records of New China's Ambitions in War (Original Title: 新中国战争风云录)	Relevant to the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea	Film rights provided by Beijing Wuyue Cultural Consulting Company	Guizhou (贵州) Culture Audio Video Publishing House, 2005

22	War of the Republic (Original Title: 共和国战争)	Somewhat related to the Korean War	Guizhou (贵州) Culture Audio Video Publishing House	Guizhou (贵州) Culture Audio Video Publishing House, 2005
23	New China's Ambitious Years (1950 War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea) (Original Title: 新中国风云岁月 (1950 抗美援朝))	Korean War	People's Liberation Army TV Propaganda Center	People's Liberation Army Media Publishing, 2005
24	Great Ambitions of the Korean Peninsula (Original Title: 朝鲜半岛风云)	North Korea, Documentary, source film	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Jiuzhou (九洲) Media Publishing, 2009
25	Passionate Warriors, Conflicts in the Sky in the Korean War (Original Title: 欲火雄鹰—朝鲜战争 空中对决)	Korean War	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Jiuzhou (九洲) Media Publishing, 2010
26	Spring in a Foreign Land: 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 异国青春: 抗美援朝 60 年祭)	A delegation of 20 elderly volunteer soldiers, their families, and descendants of patriotic martyrs visits North Korea to offer condolences to heroic patriots	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Jiuzhou (九洲) Media Publishing, 2010
27	Spirits in the Mountains and Rivers of Three Thousand Li (Original Title: 融进三千里江山的英魂)	Korean War, heroic figures	China Central Television (CCTV)	Huayi (华艺) Brothers Media Corporation, 2010
28	Broken Sword—Great Reversal in the Korean Battlefield (Original Title: 断刀-朝鲜战场大逆转)	Korean War	China Central Television (CCTV)	China Central Television (CCTV) Documentary, aired in 2010



29	First-hand Experience of the Korean War: Heroic Sons and Daughters (Original Title: 亲历朝鲜战争: 英雄儿女)	5 part series. Participants in the Korean War—Chai Yunzhen, Wang Qingzhen, Sun Mingzhi, Jiang Qingquan, etc.	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Jiuzhou (九洲) Media Publishing, 2011
30	The Battle of Chosin Reservoir (Original Title: 长津湖战役)	A battle in the Korean War	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Jiuzhou (九洲) Media Publishing, 2011
31	Conflict on the Frozen Lake—Complete Records of the Battle of Chosin Reservoir (Original Title: 冰湖雪战——长津湖战役全纪录)	A battle in the Korean War	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Jiuzhou (九洲) Media Publishing, 2011
32	Beyond the Yalu River—Peng Dehuai (Original Title: 跨过鸭绿江—彭德怀)	Korean War, heroic figures	China Central Television (CCTV)	China Central Television (CCTV) Documentary, aired in 2011
33	Shangganling (Original Title: 上甘岭)	Korean War	China Central Television (CCTV)	China Central Television (CCTV) Documentary, aired in 2012
34	Bloody Sunset—Memories of the Korean War (Original Title: 残阳如血—朝鲜战争的记忆)	Korean War	Phoenix Television (Hong Kong)	Phoenix Broad Vision Television Documentary, aired in 2013
35	War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 抗美援朝)	Korean War		Unknown
36	Records of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (Original Title: 抗美援朝纪实)	Korean War		Unknown

As we can see from the chart above, only in 1990, ten years after the start of Chinese economic reform, the first documentary on the Korean

War was able to be screened in the new China. Also, it was first produced in Shenzhen, the forefront of economic reform. Documentaries on the Korean War were intensively produced between 1997 and 2013, resulting in a total of 35 documentaries related to the Korean War. In terms of the regions where these documentaries were produced or screened, it encompassed major Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong. The contents of the documentaries varied, from those focusing on the progress of the war to specific battle scenes, groups of war heroes or a hero, general introduction to the Korean War to reflections on the war. In addition, the format of the documentaries also varied from interviews of those who had first-hand experience in the war to analyses and interpretations explained by researchers regarding certain issues based on historical documents and video images.

Regarding the production methods, many of the films were based on related television programs that had been aired by some television stations, and they were edited and published as documentary films. Most of these films were produced by China Central Television (CCTV) and Phoenix Television in Hong Kong. Bayi (八一) Film Studio of the Chinese People's Army, the Department of Military Research at the Academy of Military Science, and the People's Liberation Army TV Propaganda Center also released documentaries that have been produced from the military's perspective.

Although numerous documentaries on the Korean War were produced at this time, basic video resources on the Korean War are documentaries produced during the Korean War. However, unlike the documentaries that were produced during or immediately after the Korean War, new documentaries combined newly declassified information with existing information, allowing for detailed analysis and explanation of issues related to the war.

Certain documentaries reinterpreted issues related to the war based on existing video images by adding the analysis of a researcher on the topic, and others included reenactments and reproductions of the war based on the memories of survivors. Likewise, documentaries on the Korean War

that have been produced after the war are results of reflections on or reinterpretations of the Korean War. These documentaries reveal that Chinese perspectives on certain issues of the Korean War have changed.

## **The Changing Chinese Perspective of the Korean War through Documentaries**

### **The Cause of the Korean War**

The first Chinese documentary about the Korean War, titled *War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝), Part 1, shows that the US started the Korean War. It further informs the audience that after the Second World War:

“Southern Chosôn (South Korea) had just broken off the yoke of Japanese imperialism but was immediately bound by American imperialism. The people are still living like prisoners in dark prison cells. The war criminals of the US want to set an enormous fire of war in Asia by lighting the fuse in South Korea. The American imperialists are armed and ready for combat every day. On June 25, 1950, the notorious schemer Dulles arrived in Southern Chosôn, made an inspection of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, and planned to attack the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The US’ plan to attack North Korea was closely related to their plan to attack the People’s Republic of China.”

The documentary also explains that the reason behind China’s belief that the US provoked the Korean War was “on June 25, 1950, three days after the notorious schemer Dulles left the Southern Chosôn, Syngman Rhee and his group of thieving South Koreans declared an all-out-war against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and launched a sudden attack on Pyôngyang like a lightning to topple the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.” The cause of the Korean War as asserted in

the *War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝) Part 1 remained the dominant explanation from the Chinese perspective on the Korean War for a long time. The documentaries produced in the 1960s and 1970s reflect the same perspective and only add an explanation regarding the background of the Korean War from the two opposing camps.

On October 28, 1960, an article written by a person with the alias Gao Han was published in the *People's Daily*, introducing a new documentary *The Witness of History*, which was playing in the theaters. Part of the article reads: "While some of the new socialist nations were busy with economic growth of their own, the US imperialists were busy producing tanks and cannons. And the two wings of socialist nations were supporting the two militarist nations, West Germany and Japan, who indulge in starting wars."<sup>22</sup> The documentary avoided mentioning that the conflict between the two ideological camps directly caused the Korean War, but continued to explore the cause of the Korean War from the opposing two camps.

Documentaries related to the Korean War that were produced after the end of the Cold War concluded that the cause of the Korean War was the Cold War. For instance, *A Journey for Reconciliation within the New China—The Realities of Chinese Military Expedition to the Korean War* (新中国破冰之旅—出兵朝鲜真相) pointed out that "at this point in time, the Korean War, which began in 1950, seems like a direct conflict of two major ideologies after the end of the Second World War—a performance on the international political stage." *Bloody Sunset* (残阳如血) also asserted that "after the establishment of the new China, China was allied with the USSR, and Kim Il-sung believed that it was time to unify Korea with military force. Therefore the Korean People's Army started the fight, and the US refused to immediately come to South Korea's aid under the UN, considering it a civil war." The film explained that the outbreak of the Korean War resulted from the conflict of the two ideologically

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22 Gao Han 高汉, "The witness of history" *People's Daily*, 28th Oct. 1960.

opposing camps in the Cold War. The *War of the Republic* (共和国的战争) likewise found the cause of the Korean War in the Cold War. This documentary explained that in the early 1950s, the US found signs of unusual activities north of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and declared to remove Chosôn (North Korea), China, and Taiwan from the US defensive line in the Pacific. Through this action, the US attempted to relieve its pressure in Asia and focus on Europe instead. At the same time, Stalin also had two secret meetings with Kim Il-sung (Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev) to relieve its pressure in Western Europe. At the end of 1949, North Korea decided to resolve the issue of national unification by force and received Stalin's consent. *Bloody Sunset* (残阳如血) analyzed that after the establishment of the new China, China was allied with the USSR, and Kim Il-sung believed that it was time to unify Korea with military force. Accordingly, North Korea crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and invaded South Korea, and the Korean War broke out. However, the US, the major force of the Capitalist camp, refused to respond quickly to the war under the UN Forces, considering it a civil war on the Korean Peninsula. As such, the scale of the war grew rapidly. Through the analyses of these documentaries, we can see that the perspectives of the Chinese scholars regarding the cause of the Korean War became more objective and closer to the historical truth.

Regarding the cause of the war and which party first launched an attack, documentaries produced during the war and later in the war differed greatly. The *War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝) Part 1 noted that "On June 25, 1950, Syngman Rhee and his group of thieving South Koreans declared an all-out-war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and launched a sudden attack on Pyongyang like a lightning to topple the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

The *38<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (三八线), a documentary filmed in the 1960s and 1970s, also asserts that the US imperialists invaded and started the war by crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. However, with the progress of research on the Korean War, Chinese people in different sectors of society also came to understand that North Korea first launched the attack, and as a result, later

documentaries no longer mention this issue directly. Instead, they objectively state that the Korean War began on June 25, 1950. *A Journey for Reconciliation within the New China—The Realities of Chinese Military Expedition to the Korean War* (新中国破冰之旅—出兵朝鲜真相) asserted that “On June 25, 1950, a military confrontation erupted on the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel of the Korean Peninsula and turned into a war.” Regarding the same issue, *Confrontation—the Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (较量-抗美援朝战争实录) articulated that “On June 25, North Korea and South Korea started a large scale civil war surrounding the issue of national unification.” *Military Data—Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* simply stated that, “On June 25, 1950, the Korean civil war finally broke out.” Examination of these documentaries shows that the Chinese awareness of who first began the Korean War changed in the documentaries produced in the later period.

Another interesting fact is that Korea, one of the important agents in the Korean War, was rarely mentioned in the documentaries made by the Chinese. The main actor of the war was usually the United States, and even when Korea was mentioned, it was usually referred to as a “puppet” of the US, or as “thieves.” The Korean people were mentioned even less in the documentaries. This was possibly due to the objectivity of the situation at the time, and Chinese documentaries produced in the later years are not much different in terms of mentioning Korea or Koreans.

Overall, the perception regarding the cause of the Korean War in Chinese documentaries has been influenced by the conflict between the two opposing ideological camps. These documentaries made during the Cold War concluded that the war began with US imperialists deciding to start the invasive war and the group of thieves led by Syngman Rhee attacked first. This perception somewhat changed in the documentaries produced after the end of the Cold War.

## The Nature of the Korean War

Regarding the nature of the Korean War, *Joseon Frontline News* (朝鲜前线新闻) described that it was a groundless invasion against North Korea by the “US imperialists and their henchmen countries.” The *War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝) Part 1 also stated that it was “an invasive war against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea by US imperialists using their henchmen. *On the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (三八线上), which was made in the 1960s, also treated the Korean War as an invasive war that the US started, and asserted that “China, North Korea, and all the pacifists around the world issued warnings to the invaders.” The *War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝) Part 1 also stated that China’s War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea is “another heroic work in the history of China besides the War of Liberation.”

A different perspective was formed regarding the nature of the Korean War in later visual records. For instance, *Confrontation: the Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (较量—抗美援朝实录) narrated that “North and South Korea started a large scale civil war surrounding the issue of national unification.” The film perceived the war before the intervention of outside powers as a civil war. In other words, it was seen as a civil war that the North and South Korean governments began in order to unify the Korean Peninsula. However, the perception presented in documentaries regarding the nature of the war after the Chinese intervention do not differ much from that of the documentaries produced during the war.

*Confrontation: the Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (较量—抗美援朝实录) states:

“In the early 1950s, the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army and the Korean People’s Army stood shoulder to shoulder and engaged in a war; and the UN army, headed by the US, and the Korean Army fought desperately for two years and nine months to gain a victory recognized

by the world. This was a confrontation between blood and fire, a fight between justice and injustice. *Annals of the World's 100 Years War: War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (世界百年战争实录—抗美援朝) also asserted that the “Chinese people’s War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea was a huge international affair that came after the Second World War. It contributed significantly to the peace of the Far East and the world.” Analyses of these documentaries reveal that although the Chinese perception of the nature of the Korean War changed a bit, their perception of the nature of China’s intervention in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea did not change. In other words, the Chinese justification of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea left no room for doubt and was directly related to the cause of Chinese participation in the Korean War.

### **Reasons for China’s Participation in the Korean War**

After the outbreak of the Korean War, the scale of the war grew rapidly with the intervention of the UN army headed by the US, and the battle positions changed as well. The UN army and the Korean army crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and drove into the north, pushing the front to the Yalu River. Under these circumstances, China dispatched the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army to the Korean War.

*The War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (抗美援朝) Part 1 gave several reasons for China’s participation in the war. First, “US imperialists invaded the People’s Republic of China according to plan, and the US dispatched the seventh fleet from the Pacific Ocean to Taiwan, obstructing the liberation of Taiwan by the Chinese people and taking part of China’s territory.” Second, the US and other countries advanced over the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and “into the Yalu River valley, directly threatening the eastern part of our territory.” Third, “the invaders fired at our farmlands on the southern coast of the Yalu River, mobilized the air force attacking the northeastern region, and bombed the areas around Andong (安东, former name of Dandong).” Under such circumstances, “since our enemy



aimed the point of their sword at our head, we could not but retaliate.” “If you want peace, actively stand up to the assault and invasion.” *On the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (三八线上), a documentary made in the 1960s, also considered the Korean War as a war that the US planned in order to invade China ultimately and asserted that “US imperialists will not admit to their failure in China. They do not want to learn from the actions of Hitler or Tojo Hideki. On the contrary, they are perpetuating Japanese militarism to conquer North Korea first, and then invade China.”

Regarding justifications for the war, Chinese documentaries produced in later years show no differences. For instance, *Confrontation—the Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (较量-抗美援朝战争实录) illustrated that after the outbreak of the Korean War, “the US Navy’s seventh fleet left for the Taiwan Strait to prevent the Chinese people from liberating Taiwan.” In addition, “US planes brutally bombarded the farmlands in eastern China, posing a serious threat to the national safety” of China. As a result, “the US forced the Chinese people to partake in the war.” In fact, after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the most important task was to build the economy. To accomplish this, the People’s Revolutionary Military Council passed the project to restore the People’s Liberation Army in the afternoon of June 24. About ten hours after the decision, the Korean War broke out. (*Confrontation—the Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (较量-抗美援朝战争实录) “On the first day of the war, the US Navy’s seventh fleet invaded the Taiwan Strait and prevented the Chinese People’s Liberation Army from liberating Taiwan.” After the UN army, beginning with the US military, came to participate in the war, the UN army advanced to the north and descended over the Yalu River between China and North Korea. “US planes continued to invade Chinese airspace and destroyed cities and farmlands in the eastern part of China, costing tremendous number of lives and fortune. China’s security was seriously threatened.” “The US forced the war on the people of China.” Therefore “since saving our neighbor is tantamount to saving ourselves, we have to support the North Koreans to protect our country.” (*Military Data—*

*Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (军事资料—抗美援朝)). Through the perspective of a scholar, *Echoes of Half a Century* (半个世纪的回响) pointed out that the Korean War was an “unexpected war that China was forced to take part in.” China was forced to take part in the war because the “US fleet invaded the Taiwan Strait, US planes destroyed the Yalu River bridge, and the US army marched across the Yalu River, directly threatening China’s security. As a result, China had no choice but to send troops to the war.”

Although debates were held in academia to discuss the justification for China’s participation in the Korean War, many scholars believed that China’s participation was justified, which is a view that coincides with the perspective in the documentaries.

### **The Significance of the Korean War**

At the time of the production of *Confrontation—the Annals of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (较量—抗美援朝战争实录), the Korean War was not over, so it was difficult to evaluate the overall significance of the Korean War, but the documentary asserted that the “War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea was a great heroic project besides the War of Liberation.” *Song of the Hero* (英雄赞), a feature-length documentary produced in the late 1950s, expressed that the participation of the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army was to “resist the US, save North Korea, protect our families and our country, and for the peace of the Far East.” *War of the Republic—War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea* (共和国的战争—抗美援朝) also stated that in the Korean War, “China became the real hero of a war after its 100 long years of history of humiliation” and “stopped the war that saw no end by oppressing the other.” “This allowed China to escape from a history of humiliation to dignity, to the path of national restoration.” It also revealed that for China which was humiliated in early modern times, this was the first time that China “abhorred a common enemy with one accord as a nation and protested against the shame imposed on China by the foreign

powers.” *Annals of the World’s 100 Years War—Korean War* (世界百年战争实录—朝鲜战争) discussed the significance of the Korean War from a broad perspective, and the documentary described that “the Chinese people’s War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea was a huge international affair since the Second World War; and through victory, China foiled the attempt of the UN army, headed by the US, to invade the northern part of the Korean Peninsula and protected the independence of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the security of the socialist new China. It also contributed greatly to the peace of the Far East and the world. The victory of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea showed that the legacy of America’s totally victory had finally ended.

Regardless of when the documentaries were produced, their perspectives on the reasons for China’s participation in the war and the significance of the Korean War to China generally remain the same. In fact, the academic view of these two issues also coincides with the perspectives asserted in the documentaries. Although some scholars did discuss what might have happened “if China did not participate in the war,” history cannot be based on hypotheses, and historical affairs need to take into consideration historical circumstances of the time. For these reasons, perspectives based on hypotheses cannot bring about an agreement from the majority.

## Conclusion

China is one of the countries that adopted film technologies relatively quickly in Asia. Films produced in the earlier years are mainly footage or recording, and film genres gradually diversified with wider distribution of films and the development of technology. In addition, due to the external and internal situation that China was faced with, films became a tool that fostered patriotism in the Chinese people. As a result, many documentaries on the Chinese people who resisted the Japanese invasion

were produced during the anti-Japanese war. There were also document-documentaries on anti-Japanese Korean liberation fighters, but as these were undiscoverable, it is difficult to confirm the contents of these films.

Soon after the establishment of the new China, China intervened in the Korean War. During the war, and for a considerable time after the war, documentaries on the Korean War were filmed and produced. These documentaries depicted the Korean War from various perspectives. Since the world was divided into two camps under the USSR and the US during the Cold War creating serious ideological conflict, documentaries that were created in the beginning of the period were marked with distinct ideological characteristics in terms of the cause or nature of the war.

The opposing structure of the two camps became more permanent during the Korean War, taking away the opportunity to improve relations between Korea and China. Consequently, it is difficult to find documentaries on Korea before the establishment of diplomatic relations. Of course, there were TV and newspaper coverage as well as video images that hinted at the political scene in Korea, yet due to various reasons, it is difficult to find and see them. From the Korean War until before the establishment of Korea-China diplomatic relations, most documentaries on the Korean Peninsula were centered on North Korea or the North Korea-China relations and displayed strong political views.

The Korean War composed an important part of the history of the new China after its establishment. After the Chinese economic reform period, a number of documentaries on the Korean War were produced in China, based on footage and video images filmed earlier. Documentaries produced during this time linked newly discovered information based on the video images with existing information, and therefore they analyzed and explained issues related to the war in detail. Certain documentaries reinterpreted issues related to the war based on the existing video images by adding the analysis of a researcher on the topic, and others included reenactments and reproductions of the war based on the memories of survivors. Likewise, documentaries about the Korean War that were produced after the war can be seen as the result of reflection on or

reinterpretation of the Korean War. Compared to the documentaries made in the initial phase, these documentaries contained noticeably less political and ideological colors, and focused more on factors for logical and critical thinking. As a result, the documentaries made people reconsider the characteristics of the war, including the cause of the war and which side actually started the war, and distinctly transformed the perspectives on these issues.

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<Abstract>

## Chinese Documentaries and the Korean War

*Sun Kezhi, Xu Dan*

The Korean War composed an important part of the history of the new China after its establishment. After the opening and the reform phase, a number of documentaries on the Korean War were produced in China, based on footages and video images filmed earlier. Documentaries produced during this time linked newly discovered information based on the video images with the existing information, and therefore they analyzed and explained issues related to the war in detail. Certain documentaries reinterpreted issues related to the war based on the existing video images by adding the analysis of a researcher on the topic, and others included reenactments and reproductions of the war based on the memories of survivors. Likewise, documentaries about the Korean War that have been produced after the war can be seen as results of the reflection on or reinterpretation of the Korean War. Compared to the documentaries made in the initial phase, these documentaries contained noticeably less political and ideological colors, and focused more on factors for logical and critical thinking. As a result, the documentaries made people reconsider the nature of the war, including the cause of the war and which side actually started the war, and distinctly transformed the perspectives on these issues.

**Keywords:** China, Film Documentary, Resistance to US Aggression and Aid Korea, Korean Peninsula, Korean War

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신 중국 수립 이후 중국역사에서 한국전쟁이 매우 중요한 부분을 차지하고 있기 때문에 개혁개방 이후, 중국에서는 초창기의 영상자료를 토대로 상당히 많은 편수의 한국전쟁 관련 다큐멘터리가 제작되었다. 이 시기에 제작된 다큐멘터리는 초창기 영상 자료를 바탕으로 새롭게 밝혀진 기록과 자연스럽게 연결되어 보다 더 상세하게 전쟁 관련문제를 분석하고 설명하였다. 어떤 다큐멘터리의 경우, 기존의 영상자료를 토대로 관련 연구자의 분석을 덧붙여 연관된 문제를 새롭게 재해석하였으며 또, 전쟁을 직접 겪은 사람의 기억을 바탕으로 당시 전쟁모습을 재현한 다큐멘터리도 있다. 이와 같이 훗날 다시 제작된 한국전쟁 관련 다큐멘터리는 사실상 한국전쟁에 대한 반성 또는 재해석의 결과라고 할 수 있다. 초기 다큐멘터리와 비교해 볼 때 정치와 이데올로기의 색채가 현저히 줄어들었으며 대신 이성적 사고요소가 확연히 많아져 전쟁 발발의 원인이나 어느 쪽이 선제 공격을 하였는지, 전쟁성격 등의 문제에 대해 다시금 생각하게 했으며 더 나아가 이들 문제를 바라보는 시각에도 뚜렷한 변화가 생겼다.

주제어: 중국, 영상기록물, 항미원조, 한반도 한국전쟁