

CHAPTER IV

THE REASON SOUTH KOREA ESTABLISHED GASTRODIPLOMACY THROUGH GLOBAL HANSIK CAMPAIGN

In this chapter, the writer wants to explain why South Korea conducted gastrodiploMACY through Global Hansik campaign. Here the writer will give the proof regarding the hypothesis that the writer made. The first is Korean food or *hansik* more represents their symbol of national identity and the second is the Global Hansik campaign is a tool to enhance South Korea's poor nation brand.

A. Korean Food or *Hansik* More Represents Their Symbol of National Identity

The writer found out that the primary reason for the decision is Korean food or *hansik* more represents their symbol of national identity. In order to make such strong impression and sturdy nation branding, South Korea must take their most powerful symbol of national identity. Nation branding needs national identity since nation branding itself is a tool to change the image of a nation image positively.

A human being cannot live without food. We depend on food. It only takes 8 to 21 days for people to survive without food and water. Here we can see that our body was deliberately designed to get enough nutrients from eating food itself. Wherever we are, whenever we are, we always need food as our basic elements to survive. Through food too, we accustomed to sensing not only by means of sight but also smell,

taste, touch, and hearing. It might need some words to describe the food, but it will be properly described if it has sensed by sight, smell, taste, and touch. Words are just nothing without proof by sensing it. From that case we can conclude that food is the best medium for communicating values and identity non-verbally. Thus food is the best medium in connecting people all over the world. Food can bring people together in creating conversation also the interactions. That is the thing that South Korea's government is looking.

As Chung Woon-chin, former Minister of Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MIFAFF) had ever said, “*Hansik* is not just food. It is the root of the country's philosophy and traditional culture that bears our culture, spirit, and a 5000-year history” (Lee J.-Y. , 2012). We can see clearly from that statement that *hansik* is the perfect representation for South Korea, since how rich the contents of *hansik* itself. It is not merely about food but also the culture, spirit, country's philosophy, and others. Then in food too there are many values that we can take while we eat it. How the food is made, how the story behind the food is, what the ingredient is, how the table manner is, and many more. That is why South Korea decided to take the specialization in their food.

A.D. Smith, in *Hongsik* (2006, p. 209) says, in national identity, it contains several fundamental features. “They are historic territory or homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common, mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members; and common economy with territorial mobility for members.”

Korean food contains all of those fundamental features which are stated by A.D Smith. First is about the historic territory or homeland. Talking about the ingredient in Korean food, most of it comes from their homeland. For example is soybean. Soybean becomes

one of the essential ingredients in Korea food. That is because, in Korean food, they offer a lot of fermented products which need many soybeans too. Some of them are *kanjang* (fermented soy sauce), *doenjang* (fermented soybean paste), and *gochujang* (fermented red pepper paste). Those products then become seasoning in the food and used in many side dishes.

Historically too the use of soybean was calculated since 4,000 years ago (Donghwa & Doyoun, 2015, p. 2). It shows that the usage of soybean becomes part of South Korea's life. Based on GAIN report number KS1706m, soybean production in Korea in 2017/2018 is predicted 0.8 million metric tons (MMT) while the consumption is predicted 1.39 (MMT) (Sunchul & Hinkle, 2017). Even though it does not cover all of the consumption of soybean, but at least it amounts more than 50% percent in fulfilling their needs. Besides that, the government also affirmed that the core of Korean food identity is "Delicious food ingredients that are produced in Korea and obtained only from Korea" (Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), 2018).

Second is about common myths and historical memories. Most of the Korean foods are having their myths, memories, or stories. *Miyeokguk*, or seaweed soup for instance. This food is an obligatory food for a new mother and people who have a birthday. For them, *miyeokgug* is a symbol of birth (Gastro Tour Seoul, 2017). Even for the new mother, they have to eat it two until three times a day for a month right after they give birth. They believe it can replenish the energy and nutrient which lost during giving birth since seaweed contains a lot of iodine and iron. It can help in producing milk too. While for people who have a birthday, *miyeokgug* is a symbol of appreciations. The birthday in South Korea is a day when a mother gives life to the baby. So by eating

miyeokgug, those people are appreciating and thanking for that memorable event (Gastro Tour Seoul, 2017).

Another example is *tteokguk* or rice cake soup. *Tteokguk* is a symbol of gaining a new life or one year older. Since in the late of 1970, it has been eaten on the lunar new year. Every bowl of *tteokguk* commonly is loaded with oval-shaped rice cake and meaty broth. Before the rice cake is being cut the form is a long tube which symbolized prosperity just like the noodle. Meanwhile the oval-shaped represent the coin-shaped which means it will bring wealth in the new-year (Gastro Tour Seoul, 2017).

The third fundamental features are a common, mass public culture. As we know that eating is a part of the public culture, in South Korea there is a table manner and traditional table setting which has become their common and public culture too.

For the table manner, it is the etiquette when people are eating together. Every state has its etiquettes when it comes to eating together and so do with South Korea. However, in South Korea, the table manner is quite detail and distinctive. Politeness is a must, and they respect older people. Here are several etiquettes in having a meal, includes the ordering seat based on ages. Usually, the oldest people take the seat the farthest from the door. Another thing is the regulation about the way use of chopstick, spoon, and bowl. They do not hold bowl just like in other Asian countries, they left it on the table while eating. Besides, that they do not stick the chopstick and spoon straight up into the bowl because it is considered disrespectful and the sign of bad luck. After use it, put it back on the table after use it. Then they should keep in pace while having the meal since it can be called rude if the young one has done the meal faster than the old one. (Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), 2018).

Meanwhile, the traditional table setting explains how to set the foods properly in a table. In South Korea when they are having a meal, they usually do not only serve the main course. They will serve all of the food includes the side dishes in one time which make the table looks so full. The arrangement cannot be made randomly. In general, the main course will be the center then the *banchan* (side dishes) will be arranged according to the texture, taste, color, recipes, ingredients, and temperature (Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), 2018). All of them are emphasizing balance.

In South Korea there are six classified traditional table setting. They are *bap-sang* (regular dining table) with cooked rice as the main dish; *juk-sang* (porridge table) with porridge as the main dishes, here the non-salty and mild side dish will be good companies; *myeon-sang* (noodle table) uses noodles, *tteokguk*, or dumplings as the main dish, this setting is useful for quick and simple meal; *juan-sang* (liquor table) uses alcohol or liquor as focus; *dagwa-sang* (refreshment table) this setting is for enjoying non-alcoholic beverages; and the last is *gyoja-sang* (large dining table), this setting usually use when there is a holiday or ceremonies in serving for many people in one time (Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), 2018).

The fourth fundamental feature is common legal rights and duties for all members. Similar to what Hongsik (2006, p. 209) says, “*Food for survival forms an implicit element of modern citizenship.*” When talking about food in survival form, it will make us talk about common legal rights and duties. Logically as living creatures, we cannot always wait for food to come by itself. We have to do something to afford it. That is the thing we called it as a duty. After we have done our duty, then we have that right to get the food.

The last feature is common economy with territorial mobility for members. Korean food is a commodity economy, where it can be commodity trade, to be exported and imported. In 2007, the South Korean government decided to focus on food and beverage as a key industry. Relying on its strategic geographic location and local agricultural resources, then the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs created the Korea National Food Cluster, a food-optimized industrial park namely Foodpolis. This is the first time the South Korean government has supported the construction of the food industry complex. The government provides 2.3 million square meters (568 acres) of land in Iksan City, North Jeolla Province, about 100 miles south of Seoul, as well as preparing universities with food research experience plus sufficient financial incentives. The government has allocated \$ 474 million for the project (Fusaro, 2016).

In addition, the government already has established temporary R&D support centers at Wonkwang University (for functional food evaluation) and Chonbuk University Iksan Campus (for food quality & safety and packaging). Later those will be moved into Foodpolis. During the visitation for monitoring the building of Foodpolis in October 2015, Lee Jun-won, the deputy minister for food industry policy at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, admitted that the food industry is a promising growth engine for Korea since a lot of traditional manufacturing industries' vitality is getting losing (Fusaro, 2016).

B. The Global Hansik Campaign is a Tool to Enhance South Korea's Poor Nation Brand

For South Korea, nation branding matters so much. That is because nation branding which affects the nation image will impact its international influence, its economic interest and its power in the international stage. Nation image is linked to the ability of a country in building and maintaining positive relations with other countries and international audience (Kinsey & Chung, 2013, p. 5). Besides that, nation branding will affect the national competitiveness. A powerful and positive country brand, of course, will bring more advantage competitiveness rather than a weak and negative country brand. Moreover in this globalization era in which every country will compete for each other in almost every single matter in order to gain attention, respect, trust, potential consumer and investor, so do the media and government of other nation

As a middle power state, South Korea always tries to seek recognition of its existence and its importance. The middle power states are considered to have quite different foreign policy considerations from the superpower or the developing states. This is because they have already in the upper of the developing states, but they are somewhere between developing and superpower state. Middle powers face difficulties in seeking acknowledgment and recognition in the global public, so they need to secure global attention (Rockower P. S., 2012, p. 3). Therefore they are always looking for more recognition of their economic interests and political influence, as well as a more significant role in international organizations (The Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars (APDS), 2014).

Since President Lee Myung-Bak (2008-2013) until President Park Geun-Hye (2013–2017), both of them were focusing on enhancing the national image in the international arena (Snyder, 2009, p. 24). They want to be distinguished from their neighbors, mainly Japan and China, as South Korea's product often being mistaken from those two countries (Rockower P. S., 2012, p. 5). One of way is through international cooperation in public diplomacy (Snyder, 2009, p. 24).

Before becoming a president, Lee Myung Bak was a businessman, a former of CEO Hyundai Group. After knowing the Brand Index of South Korea in 2008 is in the 33rd rank out of 50 states in Anholt-GfK Ropers Nation Band Index³ (The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands IndexSM 2008 Report), as a former businessman, he recognized that South Korea needs branding and PR (Jin & Kim, 2016, pp. 5524-5525). In his inauguration speech, Lee Myung-bak has talked about the problem of the image in South Korea. He talked about the fact that the national brand value of Korea accounts for only about 30 percent of the nation's economic strength. He did talk about the first image that comes to the minds of foreigners is a labor-management dispute and street demonstrations even though Korea is leading in several technologies (Kim, as cited in Schröter & Schwekendiek, 2015, p. 118).

He took nation branding seriously. Even during his era, South Korea established a special council called The Presidential Council on Nation

³ The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands IndexSM measures 50 nations' images. Each year, since spring 2008, a total of 20,000 adults ages 18 and up are interviewed in 20 core panel countries. It measures the power and appeal of each country's 'brand image' by examining six dimensions of national competence, such as Export, governance, culture, people, tourism, immigration and investment (The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands IndexSM 2008 Report).

Branding. It established the strategy and direction to coordinate, manage, and lead the activities of nation branding for every department. Meanwhile, to build a more systematic approach also the strategic approach to nation branding, the Council sought an objective management index from the Samsung Economic Research Institute (SERI) (Dong-Hun, 2010, p. 104). However, the Council was dismissed in less than four years (Jin & Kim, 2016, pp. 5524-5525).

The same thing also pointed out by the professor of international relations from the University Of Seoul, Ahn Se-Hyun. He thought that it matters so much in selling the national image and defining the national identity for Korean either inside or outside South Korea also other nation's people (Power, 2013). He added, "If you see what the Japanese or Chinese have been doing in the past few decades, Koreans and the government have clearly ignored the importance of the national brand or improving or advertising the (country's) cultural uniqueness" (Power, 2013).

The primary concern was not the number of people around the world who knew about Korea, but the perceptions of a people regarding South Korea itself. "South Korea wants to be or become an attractive, advanced, and globalized world-class country that people all over the world would want to come to, invest in, and live in" (Schröter & Schwekendiek, 2015, p. 118).

In September 2008, Lee Myung Bak declared his interest in globalizing Korean food along with the *Hallyu* phenomena, "I have a special interest in introducing Korean foods as healthy foods so that Koreans can spread all over the world. Thereby we can expand the scale of *Hallyu* not only (popular) culture and arts, but also food culture" (Jin & Kim, 2016, p. 5526). That was the forerunner of Korean

food or *hansik* used as one of tool to enhance South Korea's nation brand.

Furthermore, the Korean government reaffirms that one of its goals in conducting Global Hansik campaign is to enhance South Korea's poor nation brand. Through the interview in the third anniversary of Korean Food Promotion Institute (KFPI), Mr. Kim Hong Wu, the newly appointed director of KFPI at that time stated,

*"Korean food globalization is not an isolated initiative. A wide variety of added value can be created in the course of pursuing that goal, including job creation in the food industry, fostering Korean culinary experts, increasing exports of Korean food and agricultural products, and **enhancing Korea's national brand**. That is why we should take a long-term approach in promoting Korean food."* (Korean Food Promotion Institute (KFPI), 2012)

Here, through Global Hansik campaign, Korean food is believed to enhance nation brand effectively. Based on Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006), in order to make nation branding work effectively, it must comprise the political, cultural, business, and sports activities. In addition, the Korean food comprises all of those things.

On the political side, by emphasizing Korean food, South Korea decided to do Global Hansik campaign. Thus the Korean Government was enacting and inaugurated the government-funded Hansik Foundation and the Hansik Globalization Development. (A. Pham, 2013, p. 7) The Global Hansik campaign is making many people in South Korea to take part. From the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries (MIFAFF), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of

Culture and Tourism, and the Ministry of Knowledge and Economy, local governments nationwide, all of them have been involved with the Global Hansik campaign (Jeon, 2012, p. 36). A special foundation was made for this campaign namely Korean Food Foundation which right now has changed into Korean Food Promotion Institute. This campaign was getting fund as much as \$77 Million which is set to run until 2017 (A. Pham, 2013, p. 7).

On the cultural side, it is clear that Korean food provides such rich cultural content. There are myth and history behind the taste of Korean food. So do with the way they make Korean food or the ingredients. There is custom too in table manner and table setting. Every Korean food contains the value that can be learned. Those are part of the culture.

People can learn many things just from one Korean food. For example is *tteok* or rice cake. It is made with grain flour, such as glutinous rice flour. There are many varieties of *tteok* food depends on the method of cooking, ingredients, shape, and region. A *tteok* museum, which located in Jongno-gu shows there are 50 different kinds of *tteok*. A bite of *tteok* will deliver Korean history and legend. That is because the main ingredient is rice. South Korea has passed the ups and downs in cultivating rice, from one dynasty to another dynasty and it always brings another stories or memories, so no wonder if *tteok* has such a long history too. Ms. Ko Juran, a principal researcher at the Institute for Asian Women even stated that in every *tteok* recipe there are the qualities of order, of stability, of harmony (Jeffreys, 2007).

While in the business matter, Korean food has brought benefit and opportunities. Korean food can be a commodity economy. One of the strategies in the Global Hansik campaign is by building up and supporting the Korean eatery around the world. In this

matter, South Korea provides several funds, loans, and grant. They encourage overseas restaurant owners to renovate by providing low-interest loans to restaurant owners and paying consultant fees (Shim, 2011, p. 29). Meanwhile, on the domestic side, the effect of *Hallyu* wave is helping Global Hansik campaign in increasing Korean food export and number of tourism. The average amount of visitor in 2009 is 651,461 people per month. While in 2017 it reached 1,111,313 people per month (Korea Tourism Organization, 2017).

With the increasing of the visitor in South Korea, it will increase the visitor of the Korean restaurant in South Korea. In addition, the export of several Korean foods is getting increased too. Based on Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation (aT) Korea's food exports amounted to US\$ 6.7 billion by September 2017, while ten years ago it was only US\$ 3.7 billion (Herh, 2017). Processed food is the most exported Korean food product. Korean ramen such as Shin ramen and Nongshin ramen shows the increasing graphics export. So do with several famous products such as the CJ Cheil Jedang 'Bibido Dumpling', Orion 'Choco Pie', Binggrae 'Banana Flavored Milk', and 'Melona' (Herh, 2017). All of them are successfully showing the taste of Korea through the competitiveness of the global.

The presence of Korean food in sports activities has been done since years ago. Since the Olympic Games 1988, Korean food has entered into the sports activities (Hongsik, 2006, p. 213). At that time *kimchi* became the official menu for athletes. It also happened in PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games. The PyeongChang Organizing Committee for the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (POCOG), along with the Korean Institute Food Promotion, served the 'The Top Ten Most Favoured Korean Foods Menu Around the

World' (PyeongChang 2018, 2018). It showed that the internationalization of Korean food was doing since years ago and yet it still happens until now. The difference is after 2009 there was a specific foundation or institution who handles it.