

Raymond's excursions into East Asian pop music, episode 2: China Dolls (中國娃娃)

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The wife of one of my colleagues took a trip through the Far East as part of her work. One of the things she did was buy a bunch of music CDs from the various countries she visited. But not just any CDs. To decide which ones to get, she used a very scientific method that didn't require knowing how to read or speak the local language: She would go into a music store and just observe the teenage girls as they did their shopping. Based on this sampling, she would buy the CDs that appeared to be the most popular. One of the CDs she loaned me is of a Thai pop duo called [China Dolls \(中國娃娃\)](#). (Here's a [Japanese fan site](#).) "Wait, if they are Thai, why is the group name China Dolls?" Well, because one of the members is Thai-Taiwanese and the other is Thai-Chinese, and they play up the Chinese angle. The songs on the CD are translations of their top-selling first album from Thai into Mandarin so that they would appeal to a Taiwanese audience. (My untrained ears detect what I believe to be a Cantonese accent in some of their songs.) The plan was a success: [The CD made it to #3 on the charts](#). YouTube has [the video of what may be their signature song](#), 單眼皮女生, variously translated as *Single Eyelid Girl* or *Girl with Slanty Eyes*, performed in Mandarin Chinese with some Thai mixed in. And of course English, because in my experience, all East Asian pop music contains some English. It's just a rule. What particularly impressed me about the performers was not so much their artistic ability (for their intonation is occasionally lacking, though they certainly dance with a lot of energy and the tunes are catchy enough) but that Hwa-Hwa [speaks four languages \[mpg\] \[wmv\]](#). (And check out the sneaky backwards [peace sign from Bell](#). Warning: [Do not make this hand gesture in England!](#))

[Episode 1](#).

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