



Far left: “The Story of Ming Lan” provides insight into everyday life and domestic politics in 11th-century China. — Ti Gong

Left: Many viewers are impressed by the educational aspect of “Being a Hero” as it shines a light on new, hi-tech types of drugs that look harmless but remain dangerous.

Chinese-made TV productions gaining popularity abroad

Xu Wei

The anti-drug television series “Being A Hero” has received rave reviews since its debut on Youku and Thailand’s streaming platform TrueID last month.

Directed by Fu Dongyu and starring heartthrobs Wang Yibo and Chen Xiao, the series provides insight into the work and lives of Chinese police on the frontlines of combatting the drug trade. It will also be distributed to Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Europe and North America in the near future.

On Twitter, many Thai viewers have

given high praise to the series’ artistry and Wang’s impressive portrayal of an anti-drug cop. Japanese television fans are looking forward to the series as Wang’s previous performance in the action adventure “The Untamed” won him a large fan base in Japan.

The series pays tribute to generations of Chinese anti-drug cops’ sacrifices and devotion to fighting drug-related crimes on the borders. Before shooting for the series began, the show’s crew interviewed employees from the narcotics control bureau and drug rehabilitation center to give “Being A Hero” a realistic

flavor. Scripts are mostly based on real-life stories.

On China’s film and TV review website Douban, netizen “Under the Cloud” says he likes the series due to its rhythm, acting and very condensed storyline. In his eyes, the series’ artistry is as good as in movies.

Many viewers are also impressed by the series’ educational aspect as it shines a light on many new, high-tech types of drugs that look harmless but are actually very dangerous. The series teaches people how to identify such “hidden drugs” and protect themselves.

Chinese TV dramas have become increasingly popular abroad over the past few years. International viewers’ enthusiasm for Chinese TV and online dramas has grown as the charm of Chinese culture and art inspires original, imaginative stories.

Chinese productions that have won international acclaim in recent years include the historical suspense “The Longest Day in Chang’an,” costume drama “The Story of Ming Lan,” historical drama “The Advisors Alliance” and period drama “Story of Yanxi Palace.”

In addition to productions set to the backdrop of ancient China, more and

more contemporary stories have been introduced to foreign viewers.

Netflix acquired the global streaming rights to multiple Chinese suspense-crime series, including “Day and Night” and “Burning Ice.” Wowow, a Japanese subscription-based satellite television channel, purchased the rights to iQiyi’s award-winning suspense series “The Bad Kids” last year.

All of these series have less than 20 episodes in a season and focus on ordinary people’s destinies and struggles.

“With the growing influence of China’s economy, science and technology, a growing number of foreign viewers are curious about Chinese culture, history and society,” said Professor Liu Haibo, a film and TV expert at Shanghai University.

He also attributes the international popularity of Chinese TV productions to the series’ vast improvements in storytelling, cinematography and artistry.

“Producers can explore more cross-cultural topics and prepare for multi-language versions of a series,” Liu said. “Series that is short in length seem to be better suited for foreign markets.”



Netflix bought the global streaming rights to “Burning Ice,” a crime suspense series produced by iQiyi. — Ti Gong