

Waseda University Global COE Program,  
'Global Institute for Asian Regional Integration'  
Investigative Research Assistance Achievement Report

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**Itinerary**            09/   06 /   2009/   ~   09/   21/   2009/   (Month/Date/Year)

**Destination (Name of city and country)**

Beijing, China

**Research objectives**

To do interviews with Chinese professors, officers, journalists, ordinary people, and foreigners who resident in China at present, and some university students.

The main questions to Professors: What is China's soft power? How to define it in Chinese context? If China using it soft power diplomacy in its grand national strategy? Why China currently uses soft power and discusses soft power issue? What is China's soft power strategy? Etc.

The main questions to the rest of targeted people: Why soft power discussion enjoyed a large of populace in China? What is China's soft power in their views? Do you think China has a good national image in world community, and why you have this image? Do you think China's development at present posed any threat to the rest of the world? Etc.

**Research project**

- I. Participation in the international conference held by the Centre Chinese Tsinghua University International Center for Communication Studies
- II. Interview and academic exchange with some professors, officers, and journalists who had attended in that congress
- III. Personal interviews and scholarship exchange with some professors and officers in some other universities in Beijing
- IV. Each-other talks with some foreigners and students I met in this conference in Beijing around Tsinghua University
- V. Talks with some ordinary people who looked like had some educational background in the neighborhood of my accommodation hotel

**Achievement**

This research trip helped me answer some basic questions about soft power discussion in China scholarship. In abroad sense, through the international symposium, I am allowed to meet and talk to some elite professors I have never done in China or from some foreign

country, for example, I met some officers who served for the Chinese governments such as in the department of publicity of the regional CPC president, in the friendship association of foreign affairs, in some news institutions like the Xinhua News Agency, China daily, some regional journalists organizations and so on. Through the congress I learned a lot of information about China's soft power diplomacy in the perspective of all walks of life in China and came to know the diverging understanding towards the concept of soft power and its practical use. Here affords the general knowledge. But for some personal reasons and political cause I can not public all of the interviewee's names and addresses, academically, I am able to public all of the information I gained in this trip on this topic.

The information I learned from the academic circle through lectures made by some professors. In China, scholarship basically accepts the forefather, Joseph Nye's, theoretical framework on soft power. Many of them furthered and extended his work. Also, there is opposing voice on the definition of the concept. Such like the professor Zhang Wenmu who is quit into the field of international relations in Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics said that soft power is the capacity to bargain with the other state entity and is national strategic capacity. His view is a kind of realism view in that he thought the world in which is filled with conflicts for the limited resources in the world. He emphasized the national strength but can be used in a softer way. Korean professor Chung Kiyul doubted Nye's concept a lot and pointed out the hided policy intention and the deceptiveness of Nye's concept of soft power, which is to serve for the US's hegemony claim and its global strategy. He suggested China should rethink the concept of soft power and base it in the Chinese context. Professor Wu Xu who is a professor in Arizona State university now advised me to define the concept in a narrower way in that he thought that the term of soft power include everything. I'd better to position it from my perspective.

The information I learned from the practitioners. Some officers told me that the reasons why Chinese people especially those in academics or think-tanks hotly discussed the soft power is that China's military power is increasing at a fantastic speed, which may create the tension between China and its neighbors as well as reinforce the China threat theory in the other part of the world. In order to hide this soaring growth in its "hard power", Chinese waged the war on soft power narratives. Some others told me that soft power should be a good story at home. Then it ought to be communicated by good media to the outside world. This is the soft power in nature. He exemplified the poverty-alleviating effort in China should be a good story to publicize. This view can be called a new angle in understanding the soft power. His words inspired me another sort of thinking in China's soft power.

The information I learned from some foreigners, this can be said as the perspective of the westerners over Chinese soft power. Most of the foreigners I met said they like China and they enjoyed dwelling in China. Such as the ambassador of Pakistan to Beijing said that

present China is a shining star in the world, also he pointed out that the reinforcing bilateral relations between China and Pakistan will benefit the two sides and the whole world. The CEO of the Ogilvy China said China's soft power refers to the culture covering traditional culture and contemporary culture.

The information I learned from professors and practitioner in communication. This time's symposium is held by the centre of communication. Their understanding is mainly based on the standpoint of communication. Some of them point out that China's soft power is not strong in that China had a weak system of communication. Chinese discourse or China's right of saying in international community still lags far behind the west. As a result, the way to improve China's soft power is to strengthen China's communication and China's saying rights in the world affairs. The head of CFAFA think that the way to better of China's soft power is to do the public diplomacy which is ignored traditionally. Also, he emphasized the communication system should be attached importance to when considering the all wrong reporting of foreign media on Chinese affairs. The head of China Daily Zhu Yinghuang told me that Chinese official saying on soft power from the initially "culture soft power" to the "soft power" imply some political implications on the soft power issue. Meanwhile, he transmit some information about the questions I presented at first, like the definition of soft power, the status quo of soft power in China, the improvement means and if China need the soft power strategy.

The information I learned from students or ordinary people I met in Beijing. Almost all of them think that China's soft power is reinforced in recent years. The reason consists in that the frequent presence of China in international arena and the ever-growing economy. Many of them think that China's soft power is Chinese culture. This view may origin from the CPC's Report in 17<sup>th</sup> Congress in that President Hu Jintao mentioned in that congress and in some other situations. When come to the question of the Chinese image in abroad, some of them expressed positive image while a few of them said that China may not have had a good image in some foreign country. The later said that China's domestic problems are also obvious, such as the Tibet issue, the Xinjiang issue, and the environment affairs and so on. The person who said this were mainly some campus students who concern international relations a lot or some people worked in the some government departments. I think this is attributable to their daily attention on some website news or news papers.

**Confirmed by person in charge of project promotion (signature and seal)**

Academic Adviser

Sub Adviser

(Note: please write within a length of two A4 pages. Space for each item can be changed to suit.)