Soft Power & Asian Identity: A Taiwanese Perspective

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Structure of Presentation

- Soft Power
- Asian Identity
- Public Diplomacy
- Taiwan
Structure of Presentation

• Conceptual Reflection of Soft Power
• Soft Power and Taiwan’s Public Diplomacy
• Soft Power and Asian Identity
• Taiwan’s Contributions
Concepts of Soft Power (1)

• Origin: Joseph Nye
  – a strategist view of sustaining US hegemon in complex interdependence
  – the pursuit of becoming a soft power as an end
  – sources of soft power: culture, political ideas and foreign policy
  – means: persuasion and attraction, seeking followers, not patrons
Concepts of Soft Power (2)

• Trends
  – sources of soft power controlled by non-state actors:
    • undirected flows
    • Soft > Power (more liberal thoughts)
    • people-centered regional community > state-led regional regime
  – soft power as a mean to pursue national interests
    • Power > Soft (realist trend))
    • cooperation btw non-state actors and state governments
Taiwan’s Perspective

• viewing soft power strategically and instrumentally
• an alternative to cope with the inferiority of Taiwan’s hard power
• gaining more friends > killing one enemy
• exercising all three dimensions of soft power in advancing national interests
• Public Diplomacy: national level, beyond official propaganda
Taiwan’s Public Diplomacy (1)

• Objective: promote national interests by gaining supports of international public

• Scope: people-to-people dialogue (engagement) to enhance mutual understanding, informing and influencing

• Approach: shaping public opinions, creating positive image, bottom-up policy formation
Taiwan’s Public Diplomacy (2)

- Cultural Dimension
  - cooperation with non-state actors, performing art groups
  - sponsoring activities to deliver official messages
- Political Ideas
  - supporting activities of promoting democracy, TFD
  - coalition of democracies, Democratic Pacific Union
- Foreign Policy
  - foreign aid, attracting followers of Taiwan’s economic experiences
Soft Power & Asian Identity

- externalities of exercising soft power
- facilitating societal integration? undirected processes of social and economic interaction?
- increasing regional awareness? connecting through ideas? multi-cultural democracy?
- state-led cooperation? converging national interests of soft power policy?
Taiwan’s Role

• soft > power approach
  – facilitating societal integration

• regional community > regional regime
  – influencing public opinions

• positive image > political message
  – making friends