



Japan's soft power as a global trouble-shooter: aspirations and conceptual implications

A Public Lecture presented by
Associate Professor Heng Yee Kuang
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

Well before the events now known as 3/11 injected greater urgency to the task, scholars and policy-makers alike have long considered Japan's future international role. Opinions have ranged over it becoming a more 'normal' military power, an 'international state'; a middle power, a 'soft power superpower', or more of a 'global ordinary power'. The July 2011 McKinsey report *Reimagining Japan: the quest for a future that works* was only the latest in a long line of introspective works. Indeed, one can sum up the general tone of inquiry in terms of, as Rienhard Drifte (1996) put it, 'from economic superpower to what power?' While much academic attention has focused on Tokyo's turn towards 'soft' power to help raise its declining international profile, these have tended to focus largely on Japan's cultural diplomacy. This paper suggests that in fact, Joseph Nye's concept of soft power is much broader than cultural attractiveness per se. It also stresses the ability to generate 'soft' power through attractive domestic and international policies that promote values, norms and interests that others around the world share globally. With this in mind, this paper examines the 'soft' power aspirations and conceptual implications of Japan's *New Growth Strategy* (2010) expressing a desire to become 'a country that solves global-scale problems'.

Friday 18th November 2011
2:30 pm

Freehills Lecture Theatre
All Welcome, Free Admission

Dr. HENG Yee Kuang is Associate Professor of International Relations at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), National University of Singapore. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), UK where he also taught from 2002-2003. He was previously Lecturer in International Relations at the University of St Andrews, UK (2007-2011). He was also Lecturer in Political Science at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland (2004-2007). Dr. Heng has held visiting positions as a Visiting Scholar at Waseda University, Japan (2010) as well as Visiting Senior Fellow at LKYSPP (2010). Current research interests include security risks in the age of globalization; Global risks and Global Cities; 'soft' power strategies in the Asia-Pacific, especially Japan and Singapore; Great Power Politics; strategic studies and the evolution of strategic cultures.