

**Soft Power in International
Relations:
Japan's State, Sub-state and
Non-state Relations with China
(Volume 1)**

Utpal Vyas

**A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

School of East Asian Studies, University of Sheffield

September 2006

Abstract

The term 'soft power', coined by Joseph Nye in his 1990 *Foreign Policy* article of the same title, has been cited by academics, politicians and the mass media with varying degrees of confusion and hype. To some the term has meant the influence of Hollywood film culture around the world; to others, it refers to the economic power exerted by Western countries. In most cases, soft power has been associated with nation states and their national interests. However, for many people, the term is a vague concept with no real meaning.

In order to develop a more precise view of soft power, this thesis begins with an examination of how power has been conceived of in international relations, by reviewing the main historical schools of thought in the field, i.e. the Realist, Liberalist, Critical and Constructivist schools. It then goes on to propose a theory of soft power based upon Constructivist ideas.

To test the application of this conceptualisation of soft power, this study addresses the case of Japan's post-war relations with China, utilising analyses of three agents of Japan's soft power. Firstly, at the state level, the activities of the Japan Foundation in China are investigated. Secondly, at the sub-state level, Kobe City's sister city relationship with Tianjin City, and its relations with other cities in China, are considered. Finally, at the non-governmental level, the activities of the Japan-China Friendship Association are examined. Through an analysis of soft power at the state, sub-state and non-state levels, this thesis aims to provide a deeper understanding of soft power, and Japan's international relations as an example of its application.

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| List of diagrams | vii |
| Acronyms and abbreviations..... | viii |
| Acknowledgements..... | x |
| Note on text | xi |

Volume 1

Chapter 1

| | |
|--|----------|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| The changing face of power in international relations | 2 |
| Soft power as a new concept in the global system..... | 5 |
| Japan and its relations with China..... | 6 |
| The relevance of non-state actors in international relations | 14 |
| Research questions and hypotheses | 14 |
| Three-level agent comparison structure and methodology | 16 |
| a) State agents in Japan | 17 |
| Methodology for Chapter 4..... | 19 |
| b) Sub-state agents in Japan | 20 |
| Methodology for Chapter 5..... | 21 |
| c) Non-state agents in Japan..... | 22 |
| Methodology for Chapter 6..... | 25 |
| Contributions of this thesis | 25 |
| Structure of the thesis | 27 |

Chapter 2

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Power in international relations..... | 30 |
| Introduction | 30 |
| General definitions of power..... | 31 |
| Theories of power and state interaction | 34 |
| Realism and Neo-realism..... | 35 |
| a) Sources of power in realism | 36 |
| b) Types of power use..... | 40 |
| c) Effects of Realist power theory | 41 |
| Liberalism and Neo-liberalism | 44 |
| a) Sources of power in Liberalism..... | 45 |
| b) Types of power use in Liberalism | 48 |
| c) Effects of Liberalist ideas of power | 50 |
| i) Individualism, Cooperation and Institutionalisation..... | 50 |
| ii) International Political Economy and interdependence..... | 53 |
| Critical theories | 59 |
| a) Sources of power in critical theories | 61 |
| b) Types of power use..... | 62 |
| c) Effects of power on the international system | 63 |
| Constructivism..... | 67 |
| a) Sources of power..... | 68 |
| b) Types of power use..... | 69 |
| c) Effects of power use | 71 |
| Conclusions..... | 74 |

Chapter 3

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Soft power: what is it and how does it function? | 79 |
| What is soft power?..... | 81 |
| How is soft power created and utilised?..... | 88 |
| a) Sources of soft power | 89 |
| i) Cultural attractiveness..... | 89 |
| ii) The attractiveness of ideas and ideology | 91 |
| iii) Economic attractiveness | 93 |
| b) Agents of soft power | 93 |
| i) Central government and its agencies..... | 94 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| ii) Regional and Local governments..... | 97 |
| iii) Non-state organisations: NGOs and businesses | 98 |
| c) Means of instrumentalising soft power..... | 101 |
| i) Mass media and communications..... | 101 |
| ii) Movement of people..... | 106 |
| Effects | 108 |
| The limits of soft power in foreign policy..... | 114 |
| a) Illiberal regimes | 116 |
| b) Poverty and remoteness..... | 117 |
| Constructivism as a theoretical basis for the understanding of soft power..... | 118 |
| Japan as an example of soft power use | 124 |
| Conclusions..... | 131 |

Chapter 4

The activities of the Japan Foundation in China133

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction: state-level use of soft power | 133 |
| The Establishment of the Japan Foundation..... | 135 |
| The Purpose of the Japan Foundation | 142 |
| The Japan Foundation and China | 149 |
| a) Japanese Language and Japan Studies..... | 155 |
| i) Preparatory School, Changchun | 155 |
| ii) Beijing Centre for Japan Studies..... | 158 |
| iii) Books translated, and original research at the Beijing Centre for Japanese Studies..... | 161 |
| iv) Secondary and Primary School Teachers | 163 |
| v) Japanese Language Test of Proficiency..... | 164 |
| vi) Japanese language textbooks and other materials | 165 |
| b) Cultural Activities | 167 |
| i) Television and Film..... | 167 |
| ii) Live Performances and Exhibitions..... | 170 |
| iii) Seminars and Conferences..... | 174 |
| The Japan Foundation: an agent of Japan's ideas, information and soft power? | 177 |

Chapter 5

| | |
|--|------------|
| The Kobe Tianjin sister city relationship | 185 |
| Introduction | 185 |
| The concept of 'Sister Cities' | 187 |
| a) History of sister cities..... | 187 |
| b) Definition of 'sister city' | 188 |
| c) Characteristics of a sister city relationship..... | 189 |
| Japan's local governments and their internationalisation | 193 |
| Development of Japan's local governments' links with Chinese local governments | 200 |
| History of Kobe's relationship with Tianjin and other Chinese cities..... | 204 |
| a) Official ceremonies and exchange of city officials..... | 207 |
| b) Animal exchanges | 209 |
| c) Sports, educational and other young people's exchanges..... | 212 |
| d) Other cultural exchanges..... | 214 |
| e) Port-related exchange | 216 |
| f) Economic exchanges and technical exchanges | 220 |
| g) Kobe City's expansion of city contacts in the Yangzi Valley area | 224 |
| h) The role of Kobe City's agencies and NGOs in sister city exchanges | 227 |
| Local government as an agent of Japan's soft power | 228 |

Volume 2

Chapter 6

The activities of the Japan-China Friendship Association in

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| China | 236 |
| Introduction | 236 |
| NGOs: Definitions and origins..... | 238 |
| a) What is an NGO? | 238 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| b) Development of International NGOs..... | 240 |
| International NGOs in Japan..... | 243 |
| a) The development of NGOs in Japan..... | 243 |
| b) NGOs in Japan-China relations | 249 |
| The Japan-China Friendship Association..... | 256 |
| a) History and development..... | 256 |
| b) Recent activities | 270 |
| c) How the national and local structure of the JCFA increases its efficiency as an agent of soft power..... | 273 |
| Japan's NGOs as agents of soft power | 277 |

Chapter 7

Conclusions282

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | 282 |
| Summary of empirical findings: soft power in Japan's relations with China..... | 283 |
| a) The Japan Foundation: an effective state agent limited by nationalism | 284 |
| b) Kobe City: a small but effective sub-state agent..... | 289 |
| c) NGOs and the Japan-China Friendship Association: the flexibility of non-state agents | 292 |
| Research questions and hypotheses revisited..... | 296 |
| a) What is soft power? | 296 |
| i) Traditional and contemporary popular culture..... | 297 |
| ii) Language and, technical knowledge..... | 298 |
| iii) Ideas and ideals..... | 299 |
| b) How is soft power instrumentalised? How does it benefit the acting country? | 300 |
| c) Which agents best enable soft power to be transmitted? | 302 |
| Contributions of this thesis | 303 |
| Limitations of this study and possible areas for further research..... | 306 |

Bibliography.....310

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| English language sources | 310 |
| Japanese language sources | 340 |
| Chinese language sources..... | 352 |

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Appendix I | 354 |
| Appendix II | 355 |
| Appendix III | 356 |
| Appendix IV | 358 |
| Appendix V | 360 |
| Appendix VI..... | 362 |

List of diagrams

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1 – A continuous scale between hard and soft power | 85 |
| Figure 2 – A comparison of hard and soft power characteristics | 86 |
| Figure 3 – A schematic showing the operation of soft power | 89 |
| Figure 4 – Ideas exchange | 107 |
| Figure 5 – Japan Foundation actual expenditure | 141 |
| Figure 6 – Number of staff at the Japan Foundation | 141 |
| Figure 7 – Japan Foundation expenditure by activity and region | 147 |
| Figure 8 – Japan Foundation expenditure (leading countries) | 147 |
| Figure 9 – Number of Japanese sister city relationships by country | 202 |
| Figure 10 – Chinese businesses set up in Port Island, Kobe | 222 |
| Figure 11 – NPO growth in Japan | 248 |

Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---------|--|
| AAPA | American Association of Port Authorities |
| ARF | ASEAN Regional Forum |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| AUICK | Asian Urban Information Centre of Kobe |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CCTV | China Central Television |
| CIA | United States' Central Intelligence Agency |
| CJFA | China-Japan Friendship Association |
| CLAIR | Council of Local Authorities for International Relations |
| COMECON | Council for Mutual Economic Assistance |
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| CPC | Communist Party of China |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| DPRK | Democratic People's Republic of Korea |
| ECOSOC | UN Economic and Social Council |
| EEZ | Exclusive Economic Zone |
| EU | European Union |
| FTA | Free Trade Agreement |
| G7 | Group of Seven |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GHQ | General Headquarters (of Allied occupiers of Japan after the Second World War) |
| HIA | Hyogo International Association |
| ICANN | Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Number |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IPE | International Political Economy |
| JANIC | Japan NGO Centre for International Cooperation |
| JCFA | Japan-China Friendship Association |
| JERI | Japan Economic Research Institute |
| JET | Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme |
| JETRO | Japan External Trade Organisation |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| JIRCAS | Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural |

| | |
|----------|---|
| | Sciences |
| JLTP | Japanese Language Test of Proficiency |
| KBS | Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai (International Culture Promotion Association) |
| KEI | Kyushu Economy International |
| KICC | Kobe International Centre for Co-operation and Communication |
| LDP | Liberal Democratic Party |
| Mercosur | Mercado Comun del Sur (Southern Common Market) |
| METI | Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry |
| MEXT | Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology |
| MIC | Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications |
| MOF | Ministry of Finance |
| MOFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan |
| MTV | Music Television |
| NAFTA | North American Free Trade Agreement |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| NHK | Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) |
| NPO | Non Profit Organisation |
| ODA | Overseas Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OIF | Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie |
| OJCFA | Osaka Japan-China Friendship Association |
| PLA | People's Liberation Army |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| RIETI | Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry |
| SARS | Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome |
| SJCFF | Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund |
| SPF | Sasakawa Peace Foundation |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Economic and Social Council |
| US/USA | United States of America |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank firstly my supervisor, Professor Glenn Hook, at the School of East Asian Studies, University of Sheffield, for help and guidance at crucial points, and always timely and incisive comments. Thanks also go to Professor Tsukimura Tarō of the Department of Law, Kobe University for providing me with the opportunity to conduct field research in Japan for 18 months, and for helpful comments on chapter drafts.

I would not have been able to carry out the PhD without financial help from the University of Sheffield, and from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology which enabled me to conduct research in Japan.

My fellow PhD contemporaries at Sheffield also helped me greatly with their support and encouragement, and in particular I would like to thank Ishiguro Kuniko and Bhubhendar Singh for our numerous lively discussions.

Last but definitely not least, my wife Reiko, and my family, provided me with unending support, and encouragement throughout.

Note on text

All Japanese and Chinese names are written with the family name first. Long vowels in Japanese words are represented with a macron, except in place names well known in English, such as Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe.

All translations from Japanese or Chinese are the author's unless otherwise stated.

British English spellings are used throughout, except for direct quotations, names and titles, where the spelling is kept as in the original text.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

International relations and the shape of the global system have changed dramatically since the end of the Second World War. In the decades after the war, ideological, economic and technological innovations have variously caused changes to the dynamics which exist between different countries, cultures and societies.

After the dust had settled from the war, it was clear that the USA was by far the pre-eminent nation in the international system. With its military, industrial and natural resources, it emerged from the war as a hegemon. However, the subsequent economic growth of other countries in Europe and East Asia led to its economic dominance gradually being eroded. Technological innovation in other countries, not least in the USSR with its nuclear weapons and space/missile programmes, also reduced the dominance of the USA in the military sphere. Since the collapse of the communist/socialist alternatives, which culminated in the break up of the USSR in 1991, in particular the success of democracy and liberal free markets has led to these ideas and practices spreading around the world, and ultimately the loss of US dominance over them.

This cascade of events has caused scholars studying the international system to repeatedly try to produce overall theories of international relations to better enable them to predict and explain change in the global system, and how countries influence it. These theories have inevitably been products of the prevailing international

environment (see Cox 1981, 1986), and so have changed according to circumstances. Academics' ideas about the nature of power in international relations have, therefore, also changed according to these events; notably, scholars have again been rethinking their ideas on power since the end of the Cold War, particularly with the increasing pace of the phenomenon of globalisation.

This chapter will firstly summarise the background of this thesis, by discussing the context of the global system and international structure in which this thesis' conception of power is based. Subsequently, the gaps in various fields of literature relevant to the thesis will be explored, namely in those of soft power, Japan-China relations, and in the coverage of non-state actors in international relations research. Next, the research questions and hypotheses on which this research is based will be detailed, and an explanation of the three-level agent structure used as a basis for the empirical work will be given. Finally, the contribution this study is expected to make to the literature will be stated, and the structure of the thesis will be outlined.

The changing face of power in international relations

The term 'power' in international relations has, for the most part, been a realist concept; the word suggests a rather negative image of an anarchic, zero sum world where might is right, and only the strong win.¹ The intricacies of state interactions have usually been analysed in Machiavellian terms of which country will be able to control the other's actions in the end, whether through direct force or through more

¹ See Morgenthau (1952), Waltz (1979), Mearsheimer (1990, 1994), Grieco (1995) for a selection of realist views.

indirect coercion. In fact, many politicians and leaders still seem to think in these terms, as can be seen through the direct military action taken by countries such as the USA and UK in Afghanistan and then Iraq in recent years, or by the rapid build-up of arms and military technology which is taking place in others, such as China and India (GlobalSecurity.org 2006).

However, globalisation has accelerated in the past few decades and in particular since the ending of the Cold War. This process of increasing trade, exchange of information and movement of people across national borders has been driven by technological changes and the advance of the idea of economic liberalism, and trailing behind it democracy, into many parts of the world.² The liberalisation of markets and the need for stable global institutions to oversee these processes has led to the liberalist alternative to realism gaining credence in international relations theory.

To many scholars, however, realism deals with one simplistic extreme, of a cold, cynical competition for survival, while liberalism is rooted in the opposite extreme ideal of altruistic cooperation. The post-Cold War world seems to present a complex situation which cannot be described by choosing just one school of thought, if this was ever possible. Theories which try to account for current circumstances, and which build upon some of the ideas of the liberalists and realists (as well as bringing in concepts from other social sciences such as sociology and psychology) have appeared, using terms such as 'constructivism' and 'critical thinking' to describe their models of the global system.³ These theories try to take into account various competing identities, interests, ideas and norms which interact to result in

² See e.g. Doyle (1986), Doyle and Ikenberry (1997) on liberalism, and Keohane and Nye (2001) on globalisation and interdependence.

³ See e.g. Hopf (1998), Wendt (1999), Linklater (1998), Cox (1996).

changes in the international system. Not only do they deconstruct over-simplistic theories of the past, but they also break down the units which were thought to represent the most important building blocks of the global system, namely states.

Constructivist scholars emphasise the fact that states consist of numerous actors and agents⁴ - all interacting with each other intersubjectively according to their various interests and identities. Not only do central governments play a role in the global system, but other actors such as sub-state local governments, small and medium sized companies as well as large multinational corporations and various forms of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have increasingly been active on the international scene. Sub-state local governments have used the newly developing ideas of globalisation to form links with similar local governments, as well as with other organisations, in different countries.

Other, non-governmental bodies have become 'transnational,'⁵ that is to say, not only do they have operations in many countries, but borders between countries have become to a large extent irrelevant to them. A transnational company such as Microsoft can have its headquarters in Washington State, a research centre in Beijing, back office processing in Bangalore and offices in over one hundred countries around the world, all working together without regard for national borders. Equally, transnational NGOs (such as Amnesty International or Greenpeace) are spread out around the globe in order to collect funds and carry out activities in a way so as not to depend on any one country, and in a way that pays little heed to national boundaries, as long as the boundaries are kept reasonably open by states.

In addition to these large transnational organisations, smaller groups and

⁴ Liberal scholars have also noted this in the past, although constructivists take the idea further.

⁵ See Keohane and Nye (1972) for one of the earliest descriptions of this concept.

even individuals have begun to play a greater role in the global system. Technological advances in communications and travel have reduced the cost of communicating and even travelling between countries to such an extent that individuals can now play their own roles in international relations. Groups and individuals can exchange vast amounts of information across the Internet instantaneously, using computers, mobile phones, and an array of other devices which are becoming connectable to the global information network. Meanwhile, millions of people are also moving physically between countries for tourism and work. While many of these processes have been occurring throughout human history, a crucial point which has only become apparent in the last few decades is the dramatic increase in the speed and scale of these processes in contemporary times.

Soft power as a new concept in the global system

It is within this context that the concept of 'soft power' was developed by Joseph Nye in an article in *Foreign Policy* in 1990 (Nye 1990). In this article Nye postulated the idea of soft power, where countries' attractive resources enabled them to set the political agenda, and so 'co-opt' other countries. In his exposition of the concept, Nye (2004) gives as examples of the US' soft power the effects of Hollywood films, US ideals of freedom and democracy and other aspects of the country's culture.

Nye gives many examples of soft power resources (mainly from the US' perspective), and talks at length about the role of the USA in the global system in terms of its soft power. However, he does not give a clear explanation of how he thinks soft power actually functions in international relations. It seems to be assumed that if a country has soft power resources, this alone will be sufficient to help its

relations with other countries.

The idea of soft power has been slow to catch on among other academics, although a few other scholars have tried to use soft power as a basis for their research. Many other scholars (and journalists) have mentioned the idea over the last decade. Chong (2004) utilises soft power ideas in his analysis of the 'Asian values debate' with regard to Singapore's foreign policy, but he too does not provide a mechanism by which soft power is transmitted to other countries. Mattern (2005), in her argument disputing the 'softness' of soft power comes closer to a key ingredient in the mechanism, that is *communication*, but does not take this any further. Other writers (e.g. Shiraishi 1997, McGray 2002) who have touched upon soft power also fail to detail a mechanism for its action. Aspects of soft power could also be covered by the term 'public diplomacy' (overlapping with 'cultural diplomacy') which has recently come back in vogue (e.g. Melissen 2005a, 2005b, Katzenstein 2002, Vickers 2004, Leonard and Small 2005, Vaughan 2005); however, these expositions are in general limited to action by state agencies and appear to be more concerned with traditional hard power notions of the pushing of values through propaganda and persuasion (see Mattern 2005) than with the attraction of soft power as defined in this study. This thesis will therefore endeavour to fill these gaps in the literature.

Japan and its relations with China

An additional reason that this thesis will make a contribution to the literature on soft power is that most academic and journalistic literature on this topic has been focussed upon the sources and effects of US soft power. Nye himself, though mentioning other countries in his work, largely focuses on the USA, which is

unsurprising considering his main expertise is in US foreign affairs. Only a few authors from other regions of the world have considered other countries' soft power, such as Chong (2004) on Singapore, and Pocha (2003) on India and China.

A country whose soft power is well worth investigating, but which relatively little has been written about in English language academic journals, is Japan. The country is still the second largest economy in the world in dollar terms. Its output of ideas, technology, patents and cultural products is undeniably substantial and significant (Iwabuchi 2002, Shiraishi 1997), a point which is being realised by journalists who follow these themes (e.g. *Time* 1999), and is a hot topic within Japan itself, with even government politicians trying to use these ideas to promote their own agendas (Asō 2006, *Asahi Shimbun* 22 December 2005).

A significant amount of English language literature on Japan's relations with China exists, in particular that which considers bilateral relations (mostly from politicians' or a diplomatic perspective) since the Second World War.⁶ Some mention of non-government relations is made in this literature although mostly relating to how non-government actors were used for informal diplomacy. However, in the last two decades, non-government relations between Japan and China have increased greatly in number and importance in their own right – a point difficult to deduce from the small amount of English language literature written on the subject.

The relationship between Japan and China is a particularly pertinent one in terms of an investigation into soft power, due to the particular circumstances surrounding the relationship in the post-war era. For long periods of time, there has

⁶ Several comprehensive studies of post-War Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations exist in English, including Coox and Conroy (1978), Mendl (1978), Jain (1977), Barnett (1977), and (Leng 1958). Many studies are available in Japanese and Chinese, of which a few examples are Ishii et al (2003), Soeya (1995), Tian (1996) and Wu (1995). Works which analyse contemporary Sino-Japanese relations from various angles include Wan (2006), Wang (2005), Rose (2005, 1998), Austin and Harris (2001), Taylor (1996), Howe (1996) and Whiting (1989).

been a lack of official government relations between these two countries. In the period after the Second World War this was caused by the ideological rift between socialist/communist and capitalist countries (which developed into the 'Cold War'), and Japan's dependence upon the USA, which emphatically opposed any engagement with the communist People's Republic of China (PRC) by its allies. In more recent years, a lack of good relations between Japan and China has caused them to suspend official contacts over extended periods of time, for various reasons discussed later (see p. 11).

During the post-war period, many Japanese people displayed ambivalence to the ideologies of both sides; although most mainstream politicians and voters were opposed to communism, there were also many who either had sympathy with communist ideals, or were pragmatists who would have preferred to deal with the PRC regardless of ideology for the purposes of trade and Japan's own national interests and independence (Mendl 1978: 14). Nevertheless, due to the fact that Japan's foreign policy was almost totally controlled by the US (Barnett 1977, Tsukasa 2006), in practice the Japanese government had no choice but to join the US and its allies in their refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Communist regime in China.

In 1952, the US ensured that the Japanese government under Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru signed a peace treaty with the Nationalist regime based in Taiwan (known as the Republic of China) rather than recognising the newly established PRC in Beijing, despite the reluctance of many Japanese politicians to do this (Tsukasa 2006, Mendl 1978). According to which leader was in power, Japanese governments' stance towards the PRC varied between ambivalence or neglect (Prime Ministers Kishi Nobusuke, Satō Eisaku) and that of active encouragement of non-official

contacts and professions that normalisation of relations was necessary (Prime Ministers Hatoyama Ichirō, Ishibashi Tanzen, Ikeda Hayato) (Jain 1977, Mendl 1978, Tsukusa 2006). Therefore, as is discussed further in Chapter 6, the task of constructing and maintaining links between the two countries was left to non-governmental organisations and interested individuals, although their ability to do this was dependent on the current government's attitudes, due to the need to obtain special permits to travel between the two countries. This was shown by the sudden drop in exchanges (Soeya 1995: 89) between the two countries for several years after 1958, ostensibly due to the 'Nagasaki flag incident' (see p.252), but in fact caused by the Chinese government's anger at the rejection of its demand during negotiations on the Fourth Japan-China Private Trade Agreement that the flag of the PRC should be allowed to be flown by Chinese ships entering Japanese ports (Soeya 1995: 83) in addition to Kishi's generally pro-Taiwan, pro-America stance (Jain 1977, Mendl 1978).

This situation was to continue until the normalisation of diplomatic ties between Japan and China in 1972. Until that time, both governments used individuals, political party organisations and NGOs to maintain unofficial contacts with each other, although the Chinese government was particularly enthusiastic about encouraging these activities (Wu 2003); early examples of this being the use of the Chinese Red Cross Society to negotiate with Japanese NGOs regarding repatriation of Japanese nationals (Jain 1977: 19), and the conference between the China Medical Association and the Japan Medical Association in November 1955 (Tian 1996: 240). In particular on the Chinese side, the organisations involved in the exchanges were either directly controlled by or connected to the government or ruling party, (such as the China Committee for the Promotion of International Trade, set up in 1952, and

the China-Japan Friendship Association, set up in 1963 (Park 1977)). Individuals such as Premier Zhou Enlai, and Liao Chengzhi (of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and also head of the Chinese Red Cross Society) were also directly involved in organising exchanges from the Chinese side. The Chinese government additionally had an explicit policy of supporting certain groups (including political parties such as the Japan Socialist Party and Japan Communist Party) and individuals in Japan in order to encourage links with, or influence events in, Japan (Wu 1995). On the Japanese side, the groups involved were often left-wing and so had sympathies with the Chinese regime, or were against the domination of Japan by the US, and so were not controlled or influenced by the central government (Soeya 1995: 90, Barnett 1977).

These connections which were formed have often been referred to as 'half government, half private' (Wu 2003: 282) diplomatic links, and it was in this way that trade was restarted between Japan and China through semi-official (according to the Chinese) or unofficial (according to the Japanese) trade agreements signed by ostensibly non-government actors in 1952, 1953 and 1955 (Leng 1958, Soeya 1995) and continued later through the use of 'L-T' or 'memorandum' trade (see p. 262), based upon non-government agreements in 1962 and 1968 respectively (Jain 1977, Park 1978).

These methods of constructing information links between the two countries have led to connections which have acted as a base for the later blooming of exchanges between Japan and China which occurred as official relations were formed and strengthened, and which continued despite the occasional lapse in government diplomacy. Due to these early links, the action of soft power through various agents was already occurring long before the 1972 diplomatic normalisation,

and the 1978 Peace and Friendship Treaty, as demonstrated through the activities of the Japan China Friendship Association discussed in Chapter 6.

Since 1978, soft power links between Japan and China have been constructed by a wide range of state, sub-state and non-state actors, as is described further in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. The early links formed before diplomatic normalisation provided a solid base for the further growth of exchanges and therefore for the increased transmission of information and ideas.

This historical context has led to the present-day circumstances which surround the bilateral relationship. In security terms, the two countries are among the world's biggest spenders on defence. Although estimations of defence spending are difficult to make, especially in the case of China, the CIA estimates China to be the world's second largest spender, at US\$81.5 billion, while Japan is the fourth largest at US\$44.3 billion (CIA 2006). Territorial disputes between the two countries regularly cause tensions in the region. The Senkaku (Diaoyu in Chinese) Islands (east of Taiwan and north of Okinawa) are claimed by both countries, and currently controlled by Japan.⁷ Another dispute is that over the two countries' respective Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), and their maritime border between Okinawa and China. China contends that it should be able to claim an EEZ based upon its continental shelf, which extends far into the area which Japan claims, based upon a line equidistant from the Okinawa islands and the Chinese mainland. Linked to this is an argument over how to develop potentially lucrative gas fields which lie inside the disputed area (Curtin 2005). Recent events have demonstrated these problems in combination, for example when, in 2004, a Chinese submarine was found to have

⁷ For a recent update on this from an international law perspective, see Su (2005), and also Deans (2000) for a political perspective.

violated Japanese maritime borders, sailing between Miyako and Ishigaki islands (southwest of Okinawa) leading to it being pursued by Japan's Maritime Self Defence Forces. This was followed by unusually tough demands for an apology from the Japanese government to its Chinese counterpart, which was apparently eventually given (*Economist* 2005).

In addition to these problems must be added historical issues which feed a mutual suspicion among many ordinary Japanese and Chinese people. The legacy of Japan's invasion and occupation of large parts of China in the 1930s still affects relations between the countries. Unexploded Japanese bombs are occasionally found in China and Chinese survivors of Japanese wartime atrocities still try to obtain compensation from the Japanese government, and are still on the whole denied this.⁸ Meanwhile, the educational systems of the two countries emphasise different aspects of history, with that in China concentrating on the Second World War while paying little attention to changes in Japan in the post-war period. In Japan, young people have been taught mostly about pre-modern history (when China was seen as the regional bully), and know little about Japan's early twentieth century aggression (Wang 2005). To add to this, nationalist populist politicians in both countries have often played upon people's historically based prejudices for political gain (Austin and Harris 2001). All of these points have together created an environment where young people in China and Japan are thought to be more and more diametrically opposed on questions of history, leading to such problems as the student anti-Japan demonstrations in the Spring of 2005 (Mori 2006).

Economically, and despite all of these issues, the two countries' relationship is undoubtedly huge and still growing quickly. The sum of Japan's trade with China

⁸ See Rose (2005), Austin and Harris (2001), Ijiri (1996) on these historical points of contention.

(including Hong Kong and Macao) was US\$227.3 billion (JETRO 2006a), not far behind the US' trade with China which amounted to US\$285.3 billion in 2005 (US-China Business Council 2006).⁹ In addition, China (including Hong Kong) has risen to become Japan's top trading partner, overtaking the US in 2004 (MOF 2005). A particular feature of the economic relationship between the two countries is its complementary character. Japan's major exports to China are hi-tech electrical components (especially digital cameras), machinery, and car parts, while among China's major exports to Japan were low-tech electronics (especially office equipment), textiles, and food products (JETRO 2006b). Thus, Japan provides China with high value, high-tech equipment while China provides Japan with large amounts of cheaply produced lower value equipment, food and raw materials.¹⁰ In terms of value, the trade is almost in balance, with Japan experiencing a trade deficit in 2005 of US\$8.5 billion (although the figures are disputed – see Kwan (2006)). Links between the two countries created through direct investment are also numerous. In 2005, China received US\$60.3 billion of investment, and of this investment US\$6.5 billion was Japanese, ahead of South Korea and the USA (JETRO 2006c).

In addition to the economic ties which demonstrate the bilateral relationship's importance, historical and cultural ties also bind the two countries together. The Japanese language has been heavily influenced by Chinese in past centuries, and although not often acknowledged, a significant number of words in the Chinese language have been influenced by Japanese in the modern era (Chung 1999, Wang 2005). There have been many long periods of good relations between the two

⁹ These trade statistics are particularly variable depending on their sources and methodology, but are nevertheless indicative of the scale of Japan-China trade.

¹⁰ Much of this trade is initiated and conducted by Japanese companies which have set up subsidiaries or joint ventures in China (see Austin and Harris 2001, Taylor 1996, Shambaugh 1996).

countries through the ages, a point which is often used by officials and politicians on both sides when they are trying to be conciliatory and friendly to each other. Educational and cultural links have always been strong, and some of the current thriving links are detailed further in Chapters 4-6.

The relevance of non-state actors in international relations

A further point which can be made is the relatively small amount of academic literature focussing on non-governmental aspects of international relations, although this has been changing in recent years. Particularly regarding Japan-China relations, but also with regard to many other international relationships, the majority of writings seem to focus upon relationships as seen through the actions of prominent politicians and government officials. To take the Sino-Japanese relationship as an example, the focus is often upon Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, or on some other headline-grabbing statement made by a politician. While politicians and their daily actions and statements are clearly relevant to international relations, they are not necessarily more important than the many other actors who influence international relations. Hence, this thesis places prominence on other, no less important, but less well known actors on the international stage, as is detailed further below.

Research questions and hypotheses

The above background points to various questions which need to be asked by this thesis. Firstly, what is soft power, and how does it work? It is clear that many

countries have soft power resources, but exactly how are these resources instrumentalised in practice? What is the mechanism whereby a country's soft power resources affect another country?¹¹

In order to answer these questions, and having considered the meaning of power, a definition of what soft power is, and a new theory of how soft power resources are utilised and transferred to another country, need to be constructed. It is hypothesised that this process requires internationally active agents which somehow cause the soft power to be carried as information across links between countries. This thesis will develop, consider and test this hypothesis in detail.

Questions which follow from this argument are, what kind of agents enable soft power to travel between countries? How do they do this? Are some agents better at this process than others? The thesis hypothesises that a variety of agents can perform these functions. In order to compare their functioning, a three-level comparative structure is utilised, analysing a *state* agent, a *sub-state* agent and a *non-state* agent in turn.

Modern states have developed into collections of several varieties of components, comprising ministries, departments, agencies and more loosely linked semi-privatised entities. In this thesis, a state agent will be considered to be an actor which is part of, controlled by, or accountable to the government of a country.

Sub-state agents also come in a variety of guises. Actors most commonly termed as being at the sub-state level include municipalities, city governments and regional governments such as those controlling states (in federal countries), provinces and prefectures. Common characteristics of these bodies are that they

¹¹ A study of the impact of soft power on a country would be useful to test this thesis' theories. However, it is considered that such a project would require data collection (opinion polls etc.) on a scale which is beyond the resources of this study, and therefore this question will not be covered here.

control at least some of their own funds, or collect revenue directly from people in their areas. They are also often directly accountable to people in their regions, for example through the local election of mayors, regional governors or members of local councils.¹²

Non-state agents are independent, in terms of management and decision-making, from any state or sub-state body. In general non-state actors are (1) NGO-type organisations which are accountable to their members, and receive funding from their members in addition to other sources (2) legally incorporated companies or other commercial organisations which are accountable to their shareholders or owners, and usually are run to maximise returns. There are many organisations which are a mixture of the two types, with some NGOs having commercial arms to raise funds, and some companies operating NGOs or charities. However, even within one group it is generally possible to separate the two types of organisation. It should also be noted that both NGOs and companies may be influenced by states, for example by receiving funding from the state, or by having directors with extensive state connections. Additionally, states often have provisions for tax breaks to NGOs for certain defined purposes, which may influence an NGO's activities. However, non-state agents are at least nominally, administratively and legally independent of the state.

Three-level agent comparison structure and methodology

As detailed previously, the case of Japan's relations with China has been chosen to

¹² In this thesis, the terms 'sub-state,' 'sub-state local government' will be used interchangeably to indicate this definition.

provide empirical data to test the hypotheses, using a three-level agent comparison structure to analyse it. Hence, it is necessary to now consider the relevant agents which function in the Japanese system, and the methodology which will be used in each case study to analyse the chosen agents.

a) *State agents in Japan*

In Japan as in other advanced industrialised countries, the state consists of a wide variety of actors. The state is governed by politicians or other experts chosen by the Prime Minister (usually from among the parties in the ruling coalition) who is normally the leader of the party which prevails in popular elections. In past times, the Prime Minister was obliged to choose his ministers from the strongest factions in the Liberal Democratic Party (which has almost invariably been the party with most members of the Diet since its creation in 1955), and if there were other parties in the government coalition, from those parties. Under Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō however, this factional representation system has been undermined, with Koizumi often relying on his own personal popularity to choose his own ministers.

Each minister is nominally the head of a department of government (*shō or chō*). The various departments have their own cultures, and often long histories. They also act to some extent as bureaucratic factions of government, often working in competition against each other to attract funds and influence policies.¹³ Attached to each department are a variety of divisions and agencies, which are ultimately answerable to the Minister (*daijin*). Additionally there are a large number of ‘independent administrative agencies’ (*dokuritsu gyōsei hōjin*) which were created in

¹³ See van Wolferen (1990) on this culture of bureaucracy in Japan.

2003 as part of a financial efficiency-oriented reorganisation of government. These are theoretically more independent of the government than other agencies, but in fact are still directly answerable to it, and can still be seen as integral parts of the state. Of these, two agencies which act internationally in a significant manner, (the concern of this thesis) are to be found in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) namely the Japan Foundation and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). There are some internationally significant agencies in other departments, of which a few examples are the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and the Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

For the purpose of this thesis, in order to test the soft power ideas proposed, the Japan Foundation was chosen as a case study (Chapter 4). The Foundation was created in 1972, soon after the normalisation of Japan-China relations, and is particularly oriented towards international cultural exchanges, including exchanges in the arts, education and academia. Although its initial role was to help improve relations with the USA, it has since then increasingly focussed on Southeast Asia, and China. Thus it is hypothesised that this state agent has a prominent role in the transfer or communication of soft power from Japan to other countries, including China.

Methodology for Chapter 4

In order to collect empirical data and obtain enough information to test these hypotheses, various primary sources have been used. These include archived and current documentary data as well as statistical data published by the Japan Foundation itself, data from the Japanese government and other data from the archives of the Japanese Diet (parliament), which in particular give a deep insight into the international situation, and the aims and concerns of politicians debating current topics at the time of the Foundation's establishment. Data from external and internal evaluations was also invaluable in gaining a critical perspective on the Foundation.

Furthermore, interviews with officials in Japanese at the Japan Foundation headquarters in Tokyo, asking questions relevant to the research questions and hypotheses, were undertaken to supplement and verify other sources. These interviews were conducted in an informal, semi-structured style, with prepared questions leading into new topics which served to provide information about how people inside the organisation work and think in a way which is not often recorded in official histories or annual reports.¹⁴

Both English and vernacular secondary sources have also been extensively utilised to obtain relevant information, for example relating to state cultural agencies and their operation in general, and others written by academics and professionals who have been involved in, or have researched in detail, the activities of the Japan Foundation over many years.

¹⁴ The details of interviewees are recorded in Appendix I.

b) Sub-state agents in Japan

A sub-state organisation in Japan refers to a prefectural government, or a municipal government (such as city governments, wards and villages).¹⁵ Both of these types of body have elected leaders, a governor in the case of prefectures, and a mayor in municipalities. These local leaders are supported by elected assemblies. Larger cities are divided into sub-units called wards, which replicate the structure of other sub-state units (City Mayors 2006, CLAIR 2004).

Japan is clearly a centralised state, with the central government having control of most tax collection and distribution of funds. The trend through the 1990s was for local tax revenues as a percentage of total local expenditure to decrease, from 37.8 per cent in 1992, to 34.4 per cent in 2003 (MIC 2005). Most important functions of the state are centralised in Tokyo, and have been for centuries, since the Tokugawa Shogun moved the administrative centre from Kyoto to Edo (the old name for Tokyo) in 1603. The Emperor and his family were the last significant parts of the state to be moved to Tokyo at the start of the Meiji period in 1868 (Hall 1971).

Nevertheless, regional governments and administrations do have significant power in the country, including the administration of many aspects of social welfare, environment and with regard to people's everyday lives. Local governments account for just over half of all state expenditure (MIC 2005), and recent government policies seem to indicate a trend towards reducing the responsibilities of the central government in favour of regional and local governments. This is partly due to the precarious financial position of the central government and many local governments, and partly following trends in other industrialised countries. Local governments are

¹⁵ All of these types of sub-state agent will be referred to as 'local governments' in this thesis.

being encouraged to merge with each other, to impose financial discipline and to find new ways of funding activities.

The local government of Kobe City was chosen as the subject of the second case study in this thesis (Chapter 5). A medium-sized city in Japanese terms,¹⁶ in many ways it is a representative example of how local governments in Japan are trying to form international connections. Local governments are also now in competition to transform their sister city relationships and other international links to help their local economies, as opposed to merely using them for cultural exchange, and Kobe City is again representative of this trend. The city is historically well known for having an international outlook (the port has long been an entry point for Chinese and Western traders) and was the first Japanese city to set up a sister city relationship with a city in China. The city now has well established sister city and sister-port relationships with Tianjin City in China, as well as other activities in the Yangzi Valley region of China, and so is a good candidate to investigate the links through which soft power is hypothesised to flow between Japan's and China's regions. The case study will be used to investigate the way in which soft power functions, and is also expected to throw light on the question of how soft power has concretely benefited Japan.

Methodology for Chapter 5

To collect relevant empirical data for this case study, a number of primary sources have been used. These include various current and archived data published by Kobe City about its sister city and other international relationships, external and internal

¹⁶ The population of Kobe City was 1.53 million as of June 2006 (Kobe City 2006c).

evaluations and information provided by Tianjin City. Moreover, primary data from other cities involved in sister city relationships was utilised to provide extra information and perspective.

Interviews were also conducted at the Kobe City Hall which are later analysed to help answer the research questions. The interviewees were experienced managers in their respective departments, and were able to provide in-depth answers to the questions posed in semi-structured interviews. They were also able to provide information about human relationships between officials in the sister cities which is not available from official documentary sources, giving valuable insights into the relationships and processes involved in the sister city relations.

Finally, a wide variety of vernacular and English secondary sources have been used to provide background information on sister city relationships and insights relevant to the above hypotheses. There is a small body of research which has been conducted by academics who have realised the importance of cities in international relations, and who have considered the wider theoretical implications of these. This was utilised to help provide a perspective on the primary source data. Additionally, many Japanese journalists have considered the sister city relationships in their own cities and throughout Japan, and these secondary sources were also used to provide empirical information.

c) Non-state agents in Japan

A non-state agent in the Japanese context refers to an organisation which controls its own finances and actions, in a manner which is independent from the state. In Japan, there are several types of legally incorporated persons which can come under this

category, which are basically divided into for-profit (companies) and not-for-profit organisations (US International Grantmaking 2005, JETRO 2006d); in addition non-incorporated informal citizens' groups could also be categorised as non-state agents. There are two main forms of company, the *kabushiki gaisha* (joint stock company) or the *yūgen gaisha* (limited company), in addition to partnerships, and sole-trader companies. There are many types of not-for-profit organisation, of which just a few examples are the *shadan hōjin* (for the public benefit), *zaidan hōjin* (set up by an endowment given by a private individual or company), *gakkō hōjin* (private educational institution) *shakai fukushi hōjin* (for social welfare) and so on. A recent addition to these is the *tokutei hieiri katsudō hōjin* (NPO) which has simplified the process for citizens to set up small NGO-type groups. Each type of organisation is subject to different governance and tax rules, making the system rather complicated.

The term 'non-state agent' entails a variety of possible actors within the context of the Japanese socio-political system. In addition, the private/public distinction has not been clear in Japanese history. As is detailed further in Chapter 6, organisations which do not have links to the state, or could not be in some way controlled by it, have traditionally not been tolerated by the government. Although the distinction between state and non-state organisations has become clearer since Western influence began to be felt in the late nineteenth century, there are still some vestiges of traditional thought, such that the distinction between state and non-state actors is sometimes unclear. Nevertheless, this can also be said of some non-state organisations in Western societies which co-operate closely with the state such as Oxfam, which helps the UK government disburse food aid in developing countries (DFID 2006).

In this thesis, an NGO-type organisation has been chosen for the subject of

the study on non-state agents. While companies can be significant agents of soft power, their pursuit of a brand image and profit is not always directly relevant to the soft power of a country. Often multinational companies purposely disassociate themselves from their home country's image in order to operate with a greater degree of freedom. This is especially possible in China, where Japanese companies have to be very careful in their use of potentially offensive national imagery,¹⁷ and are even known to use Chinese joint venture partners' names rather than their own brands to downplay their Japanese image. NGOs tend to reflect the ideals of their members more, and in the case of Japanese NGOs operating in China, this is hypothesised as likely to be a positive image of mutual benefit or even selfless aid from Japan to China, in contrast to the companies' aim to extract profits from the market.

For this reason, a representative NGO with long-standing links to China was chosen for the third case study. This *shadan hōjin* is the Japan-China Friendship Association (JCFA), which was created soon after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and has gradually built up a reservoir of goodwill in China due to its cultural exchange activities. It is hypothesised that the study of this NGO will demonstrate the role of the non-state agent in enabling soft power to function. The study will be used to help answer the research questions referred to previously, to test the idea that agents form links between countries through which soft power flow, and to investigate how these links are formed and function.

¹⁷ For example, an uproar occurred due to Toyota's cars being bowed to by Chinese tiger statues in advertisements shown in China (*Straits Times* 5 December, 2003).

Methodology for Chapter 6

The data used to perform these analyses were obtained from primary sources published by the JCFA or its subsidiary branches, and data published by other Japanese NGOs.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted at the JCFA as well as at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, providing further insight into the world of international NGOs in Japan which is used to enrich the empirical data collected.

Secondary sources in Japanese, Chinese and English were used to provide further insights into the role of Japanese NGOs in international relations and the role of the JCFA; academics writing on Sino-Japanese relations provide some information on the activities of the JCFA and the NGOs in both English and Japanese, while newspapers in Japanese and China have also covered events involving the JCFA in the past.

Contributions of this thesis

By providing a novel theoretical framework to study the case of Japan, and by empirical analysis utilising the three case studies as outlined above, this thesis makes several contributions to the literature in the fields of power, international relations, and area studies.

The thesis does not intend to produce an overall theory of power, yet it is hoped that the theory of soft power has been developed in novel ways which contribute to the study of power in general, and to the ideas of constructivism - itself a complex collection of theoretical ideas which seek to describe international

relations. Soft power theory, and the agency theory used together with it, are hypothesised to fit well within these constructivist ideas, and one contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate this. It is hoped that the field of area studies, and in particular studies of the East Asia region, also benefits from these ideas.

Additionally, each case study contributes theoretically and empirically to particular fields. The research on the Japan Foundation contributes to the understanding of how state actors not part of the government, and in particular state promoters of cultural exchange, utilise soft power and operate in actual international relations and cultural exchange, using English, Japanese and Chinese source material.

The study on Kobe City contributes to the understanding of the growing importance of sub-state actors in international relations, and how they utilise soft power in their international activities. The chapter refers to English, Japanese and Chinese language sources to do this. This case study also points to ways in which Japan-China sub-state relations have been operating actively, and additionally cooperating with businesses, despite problems between the two governments, in a manner which is rarely highlighted in the current academic literature.

Finally, the investigation of the Japan-China Friendship Association and NGOs in general will contribute to the understanding of NGOs in international relations, and how they utilise soft power. The chapter will provide information garnered from vernacular and English language sources which help illuminate the way in which Japanese NGOs in particular contribute to Japan-China relations, even when there are no official state to state relations.

Structure of the thesis

This chapter has introduced the general background of this thesis in terms of relevant theories of international relations and the international structure in which the ideas of this research will be grounded. It has identified gaps in the international relations, power, and more specifically soft power literature which need to be investigated, in particular the need to examine the mechanism through which soft power is instrumentalised in international relations. It has also identified the relative paucity of literature on soft power in relation to countries other than the USA, and hence the value of studying Japan's soft power. Furthermore, the chapter has introduced the background to Japan-China relations and discussed the lack of literature in English which considers the importance of links between the two countries from a non-governmental perspective. Subsequently, the research questions and hypotheses which need to be investigated were outlined, including the methodology which has been used to investigate them. Finally the contributions this thesis will make to the field of international relations, power and area studies were outlined.

Chapter 2 surveys the major schools of thought on power in international relations. It first considers various definitions of power which have been proposed. It then discusses the development of realist theories, including neorealist theories in international relations, by analysing their treatment of the concept of power, and how these theories' precepts are now less relevant in many cases due to the unfolding of events in recent times. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the evolution of the liberalist school of thought in international relations, including neoliberalism. The analysis includes such liberalist concepts as economic power, institutionalism, interdependence and international political economy among others. Finally, the

chapter then introduces more recent theoretical developments in international relations, chiefly so-called 'critical' theories, and constructivist theories.

Chapter 3 firstly offers a definition of soft power. Next a discussion of the nature of soft power is presented. This covers (a) sources of soft power, namely cultural attractiveness, the attractiveness of ideas and ideology and economic attractiveness; (b) agents of soft power, namely central government and its agencies, sub-state regional and local governments, and non-state organisations; (c) means of instrumentalising soft power, for example through the mass-media, communications and the movement of people; (d) finally the effects of soft power are considered. The limits of soft power are then briefly discussed. Next, with reference to Chapter 2, the reasons why soft power can be considered to be constructivist are analysed. Finally the case of Japan's soft power is introduced.

Chapter 4 analyses the subject of state agents of soft power, using the Japan Foundation as its case study. Firstly the background to the establishment and purpose of the Foundation are discussed. Secondly, the range of its activities in China, and how they relate to soft power are considered, in terms of two categories; (a) the encouragement of Japanese language and Japan studies, and (b) the use of cultural exchange and promotion activities. Finally, the extent to which the Foundation can be seen as an agent of Japan's soft power in China, and how it demonstrates the mechanism by which soft power is transferred, is analysed.

Chapter 5 goes on to describe the role of sub-state agents in the transmission of soft power. It does this by first considering the role of sub-state actors in international relations through a discussion of the history of sister city relationships throughout the world. The chapter then reviews the growth of local government international relations in Japan. Next, the chapter analyses in detail the case of Kobe

and its sister city relationship with Tianjin in China, in terms of the development of the relationship, and the kinds of cultural, economic and port-related exchanges which have taken place. Subsequently Kobe's relations with other cities in China through the Yangzi Valley Project are detailed. Finally these observations are considered in the light of the research questions and hypotheses which have been outlined in this chapter.

In Chapter 6, the case of non-state agents is analysed using international NGOs. Firstly the definition and development of international NGOs is summarised. The place of international NGOs in Japan and in Japan-China relations is then considered. The specific case of the Japan-China Friendship Association's history, activities in China and structure is then analysed in terms of the research questions and hypotheses previously outlined. Finally, the manner in which Japan's NGOs act as agents of Japan's soft power is detailed.

The concluding Chapter 7 provides a summary of the results of the empirical research, and analyses them in terms of the research questions and hypotheses, using the theoretical points outlined in Chapter 3, and in the light of the academic context provided by Chapter 2. Finally, the limitations of this thesis, and possible areas of further research based on the its findings, are discussed.

Chapter 2

Power in international relations

Introduction

Issues of power in relations between actors and states have been debated since ancient times, when philosophers such as Aristotle and Thucydides deliberated on the nature of the world around them. The term ‘international’ may not have made much sense in those times due to the lack of a concept of the nation state as it is known today, but does this mean that the fundamental manner in which groups of people interact has changed? Have societies moved away from their ancient instincts of fighting for survival and to gain or protect territory? The debate among theorists often seems to boil down to the question of whether this is the case or not.

In order to consider how large groups of people in the contemporary world (in most cases states) can interact with each other, and to create a foundation for an exposition of soft power, this discussion must start from the most basic factors related to the issues of power in international relations. Questions such as ‘what is power,’ ‘how do states interact,’ and so on, need to be addressed before more specific issues of policy and practical consequences can be examined.

With regard to these questions, this chapter will first briefly consider general concepts of power, and then focus on a review of prevailing theories of power in the field of international relations. The chapter will concentrate upon reviewing ideas of power in each school of international relations in turn, discussing their main points and their relevance or otherwise in today’s world, and why constructivist theory is

the most promising foundation for further development of the ideas in this thesis. This discussion will then be used in Chapter 2 to argue further that constructivism is the most suitable school of thought on which to base an explanation of soft power.

Thus, firstly the realists' views of power will be discussed, then the liberalists' views, and finally the perceptions of more recent ideas embodied in critical and constructivist theories. For each school of thought the analysis will consist of a brief description of the theory, how the theory views sources of power, types of power use and finally the effects of power in terms of the international system. Finally it will discuss why these theories are useful, inadequate or incomplete, and therefore why there is a need to explore new concepts such as soft power.

General definitions of power

The general notion of power has been defined in a variety of ways. The most common approach among scholars and other thinkers has been to equate power with some kind of authority, control, or imposition of will. In ancient times, Aristotle took it for granted that these qualities were inherent in power, and there was no need to elaborate upon the meaning of the concept. Machiavelli also used the terms 'strength', 'potency' and 'authority' in his work without defining these terms further. Max Weber believed that 'power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance...' (Weber 1968 [1925]: 53). C Wright Mills declared that '[a]ll politics is a struggle for power; the ultimate kind of power is violence' (Mills 1959: 171). For the most part,

these theorists were considering power within the boundaries of a strongly defined community or state, rather than between states.

In more recent times, definitions of power have been phrased in more subtle ways, and power has been recognised as not only the result of control or force. Talcott Parsons, for instance, saw power less as the result of actions and more as 'a circulating medium, analogous to money, within what is called the political system...' (Parsons 1986: 101). Hence, power could be accumulated in a manner akin to money, by actors forming relationships with other actors in the system. Hannah Arendt put the case for seeing power in other ways by noting that '[p]ower corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together' (Arendt 1986: 44). This was an argument in favour of a consensual form of power, rather than an imposed form. Lukes (1974) argues for a three dimensional view of power which provides a framework for all of these views and more.

Among international relations scholars, the nature of power has also been discussed in many ways. A general theme behind these different definitions is the ability of the wielder of power to influence the outcome of a situation; more specific definitions are often dependent on the author's view of international relations. For example, the assertion that '[p]ower can be thought of as the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do...' (Keohane and Nye 2001: 10) is open to the question of whether an actor making another act in a manner in which he may have done in any case is exerting power; according to the above definition this would not be the case.

Power can also be defined in terms of how it is created rather than how it is used. Thus, according to Robert Cox, power is the corollary of production; power controls production, which in turn generates more power. All other social phenomena are the result of this relationship (Cox 1987). A definition of power can also point to the prejudices or inclinations of the definer - in this case, Cox manifests Marxist leanings while Keohane and Nye, and Arendt, show tendencies towards a liberalist view.

A more general, or less prescriptive, definition is that offered by Susan Strange, according to whom '[p]ower is simply the ability of a person or group of persons so to affect outcomes that their preferences take precedence over the preferences of others' (Strange 1996: 17). Although this definition is least prescriptive, it is by the same token all-encompassing, and therefore must be refined according to the situation.

It is necessary to recognise that there are different kinds of power, and different ways in which it can be used. Additionally, power is not always a one-way process; its use will always have consequences or side effects upon the user. If an idea of consensus power is adhered to, logically it is not possible for an actor to use power without this power also affecting the user. Thus, the way in which power is defined in international relations also depends on the view taken of what kinds of power exist, and how states interact using those kinds of power. In general, it can be said that international relations scholars' often conservative views of power have been influenced by the prevailing general theories within the field. Therefore, in order to evaluate ways of thinking about power in international relations, these prevailing theories' points of reference regarding forms of power will be considered in turn.

Theories of power and state interaction

The way in which we think about power in international relations depends on the way in which states are thought to interact. The practical consequences of the previously mentioned ideas of power depend greatly upon prevailing views of international relations among power wielders and people who influence them. The mainstream views can be separated in a very rough manner into those which are described as 'realist' and those which are 'liberalist'. In addition to these are the newer, less widely adhered to theories of the critical theorists and the constructivists. These latter scholars reject the narrow views which have come to be a feature of recent realist and liberal writers, and attempt to return to earlier ideas of what the purpose of a theory should be. Although it has been noted that 'agreement on the core premises that underlie either of these traditions, or international relations theory generally, does not exist' (Kegley 1995: 3), a summary and critique of the main ideas of power within these traditions will now be attempted.

This consists of an overview of realists' ideas of power, including those ideas in contemporary attempts to update the theory as neorealism by Kenneth Waltz and Robert Gilpin; following this, the broad spectrum of liberalist theories of power is considered, focussing upon recent revivals of Kantian liberalist ideals espoused by Doyle, and concepts of power implied by Keohane and Nye's theory of interdependence. Linked to this are ideas of power in the international political economy, in particular those which have been considered by Susan Strange. Subsequently, theories which are not necessarily part of mainstream American academic debate are considered. These include Marxist-inspired 'critical theories'

such as Robert Cox's class-based analysis and Andrew Linklater's post-Westphalian vision of the international system and its implications for power relations. Finally, ideas of power in the relatively recent theories of constructivism are explored, in the form of Alexander Wendt's theory of social constructivism and Ted Hopf's explication of 'the promise of constructivism' (Hopf 1998) in international relations.

Realism and Neo-realism

Traditional realism centres on the idea that the basic condition of the world is anarchy, therefore units of people must help themselves to survive. The most important units in the contemporary world are states, or nations. States look after their own interests and conduct their policy according to a narrow definition of national interest. Therefore, 'international relations is not a constant state of war, but it is a state of relentless security competition, with the possibility of war always in the background' (Mearsheimer 1994: 9). Such comments as these show that realists see the main source of power as being military power (Dunne and Schmidt 2001), with any other forms flowing from this. Stability in the international system can only be maintained by a 'balance of power' between states. These ideas have left little room for consideration of other softer forms of power, and the idea that only coercive forms of power are of any use within the international system has become ingrained in Western politicians' and academics' minds over centuries. As an adjunct to this, the concept of power itself has come to be seen as realist, without consideration of other ways of viewing it (Barnett and Duvall 2005).

Realists claim that their idea of the international system of states being anarchic can be seen in scholarly works since classical times, in the writings of the Greek 5th century BC scholar Thucydides (Waltz 1979, Keohane 1986, Gilpin 1988), through to medieval times in the work of Niccolo Machiavelli in the 15th century and Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century.

a) *Sources of power in realism*

Realists concentrate upon sources of power which relate directly to their view of the international system. Thus according to realists, as the system is defined by a state of anarchy, the most important force for maintaining order is military power. In the current world order, the *nation state* is said to have monopoly control over military power, and so is the most important institution, and power wielder, in the realm of international relations. Realists do not deny that other organs inside and outside states can wield other forms of power, but profess that these other organs have negligible influence on the international order. These ideas are not applicable in present times if they ever were; it is now clear that many non-state actors wield military power, such as terrorist groups and private military groups available for hire to any government (Avant 2005).

For realists, military power has been dependent upon the strength of the state which controls it, and therefore the state's ability to fund the maintenance of a strong military, and strong weapons and scientific development programs. Clearly, in order for this to be possible, the state must be strong enough to collect sufficient tax revenues from individuals and companies. Therefore the ultimate sources of power for a realist would be a) the amount of material and economic resources a state can

call upon specifically to fund its military strength, and b) the resulting military strength which is produced. Having secured these sources, the state needs to have an effective weapons development programme, relevant scientific knowledge, and a solid military-industrial base to produce weapons and support systems. These assumptions which are often made by realists preclude the possibility of cooperation between nation states which would reduce the need for such military-industrial complexes, and generally fail to take into account the reduction in the need for such hard forms of power when cooperative relations between countries are strong.

Realist accounts of the need for these hard power resources often seem to refer to the ancient and long-standing acceptance of them. Thus ancient Greek philosophers are often invoked to back up their ideas. Thucydides' view of power generally is said to have been concentrated upon the idea of military power (Gilpin 1988), and the material resources of the state which could be directed to producing this. In his account of an event during the Peloponnesian war (431-404 BC) between the Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta, he is cited by realists as demonstrating the basic need for a state to be able to overcome its enemies with coercive military power. As the ancient Greek world of that time was a collection of independent city-states, realist scholars have identified it as analogous to an international system such as that which exists in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, it seems irrelevant for realists to use Thucydides' observations as a basis for their arguments about the contemporary world; the city-states constantly warred between themselves, and economic or other forms of power were not comparable in influence to military power in such a situation. Communications between the city-states were likely to have been sparse and slow, and any links between them would have likely been between elite power-holders rather than the masses. Therefore these situations are in

fact incomparable with the globalised world of today. Moreover, it is little noted that Athens was eventually defeated by Sparta in the Peloponnesian war. This would seem to indicate the Athenians' lack of consideration of the limitations of their military power, and hence their lack of consideration of other potential sources of power.

Even more recent attempts to update and develop realist theory focus upon military power as the primary source of power. While Waltz (1979) attempts to produce a theory which accounts for other types of power source, in particular the structural power embodied within the configuration of the international system, his ideas are still based upon the assumption that states are the most important power wielders, and that their power stems from military power. The idea of the international structure as an actual source of power does not emerge, and the importance of non-state actors (which had some importance even in the period when Waltz wrote his seminal work) was not acknowledged.

Waltz believed that relations between states had to be seen as relations between 'units' (this term is used rather than 'states' in order to show that the theory is universal regardless of historical period), which could not be subdivided without detracting from a serious theory. The system was seen as, contrary to domestic political systems, non-hierarchical; each unit was able to choose its own policy with regard to the other units, and in this respect the units were all similar, regardless of size. Thus, the international system was said to be 'decentralised and anarchic' (Waltz 1979: 88). Therefore, the distribution of capabilities (meaning military power based upon other material resources) across the units remained the crucial element in the international system, deciding the course of international relations (Waltz 1979: 97). The primary importance of military sources of power to realists in contemporary

times was further demonstrated by Waltz (1993), where he concentrated almost exclusively on the importance of military power, dismissing economic and political sources. He additionally found it difficult to believe that countries which had achieved economic power, such as Japan and Germany, would not eventually strive to produce a strong military presence, and a nuclear deterrent. In his narrowly defined view of the international system, Waltz had put no emphasis on softer forms of power, such as the influence of ideas and the importance of communications, despite clear indications of the growing importance of these concepts at that time.

Another realist account of the international system was given by Gilpin (1988) who acknowledged changes in sources of military power over the centuries, from being purely based upon territory and agricultural prowess to being based upon technology and organisation. Nevertheless, he refused to acknowledge that the international system has also changed, and asserted that military power was still the most important power source for states in the international system:

It does not necessarily follow that this change in the nature of warfare, as important as it surely is, has also changed the nature of international relations. The fundamental characteristics of international affairs unfortunately have not been altered and, if anything, have been intensified by the nuclear revolution...In the contemporary anarchy of international relations, distrust, uncertainty, and insecurity have caused states to arm themselves and prepare for war as never before (Gilpin 1988: 611).

These statements showed that Gilpin, as with other realists, had been unable or unwilling to grasp the changes in the global system and in technology which were making other sources of power in international relations, such as ideas, information and communications, more important.

b) Types of power use

Realists have universally assumed that the state is the only significant user of power. The state is seen as a unitary, rational actor, whose relationships with other states are the fundamental basis of the international system. Little attention has been given to relationships between states and sub-state actors (such as regional authorities and local governments) or to relationships between states and non-state actors such as NGOs and companies. Equally little attention is given to international institutions or putative supra-national institutions. Each state is seen to form alliances, agreements or adversarial relationships with other states purely in their own interests, and depending on their own military and material resources.

Furthermore, realists' views of power use generally refer to the direct use of the relevant power resource, or what Strange (1996) referred to as 'relational' power use. This means that the only relevant use of power has been assumed to be when states actively do something towards or against other states. Indirect usage of power, for example directed towards non-state actors such as international institutions with the intended side-effect of acting upon other states, or the ways in which sub-state actors affect relations with other states, appears not to be contemplated. Strange's 'structural power' usage is therefore not easily combinable with realist theories.

Continuing the theme of emphasis on relational power use, realists have contemplated the use of military power as a legitimate method for a state to maintain its place within the international system. This can mean that a state will build up military power firstly for its own defence; it will then build up military power in order to deploy it within striking distance of another state, and so deter any attacks

upon it, or otherwise implicitly threaten to use this power if another state should not act in accordance with its wishes.

Thus, realists believe a state may use the implicit threat of its military resources to bring coercive pressure to bear upon another state, for example using measures such as diplomatic pressure through ambassadors and other official channels, and general statements of condemnation of another state's actions. While the state may also utilise political and economic sanctions against another state, this is ultimately backed up and reinforced by military power, according to realists. Little reference is made in realist accounts to non-coercive uses of power which have become increasingly important, such as information exchange, attraction through ideas and the mutually beneficial construction of links for these purposes.

UNIVERSITY
OF SHEFFIELD
LIBRARY

c) Effects of Realist power theory

Realists' views of the international system and of sources and types of power affect greatly their views of how power is wielded and used in that system. Given that realists believe in anarchy as the fundamental characteristic of the international system, they further believe that states can and will use their coercive power resources to maintain their status in the international system.

Some realists believe that states will build up power defensively; when they have enough military power to defend themselves, they will not try to acquire more of this power if it would jeopardise their security (Waltz 1979, Grieco 1997). Therefore, Grieco states that the realist assumption of anarchy means that 'most states... will seek the minimum level of power that is needed to attain and to maintain their security and survival.' So-called 'offensive' realists believe that states will

continue to build up military power until they gain a hegemonic position in the world (Mearsheimer 1994). This could be seen simply as a difference between states regarding the meaning of defence; recent American doctrine has regarded pre-emptive action as a part of defence, such as the action which led to the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. This demonstrates the possibility that some countries feel the need to defend themselves by controlling the international system – hence the drive for hegemony. Nevertheless, the belief in an anarchical international system leads to the assumption among realists that states will build up certain minimum amounts of power as a priority.

Other realists believe that the effect of military power being the primary source of power in the international system is that states will strive to maintain a *balance of power*. This entails that states will always try to ensure that they can in some way balance another state's power, either by developing more powerful weapons, or by allying with other states to balance a particularly powerful state. Morgenthau was noted for his 'pessimistic' (Holsti 1995: 38) vision of international anarchy with the balance of power being the most defining aspect of the international system. He further asserted that

...one could go on and pick out at random any foreign policy pursued by the United States from the beginning to 1919 and one would hardly find a policy ...which could not be made intelligible by reference to the national interest defined in terms of power – political, military and economic... (Morgenthau 1952: 964).

Neither of these concepts allows for a situation such as that which has been constructed by the states of the European Union, where such notions of military hegemony or balance of military power are not relevant when considering dealings

between member states. It is today inconceivable that even Germany and France would fight a war to settle a disagreement, although this has been a normal way of doing so for hundreds of years for these two countries. Therefore there is no need to maintain a balance of military power between themselves, or to strive for military hegemony within the EU. This lack of applicability of realist notions highlights their irrelevance in today's world, and the need to find other ways of describing international relations.

The neorealist, or structural realist theory espoused by Waltz (1979) took the basic assumptions of power used by realists, and added to them an international system composed of self-interested interacting units. A resulting effect of this view was that the balance of power was at its most stable in a bipolar system (Waltz 1979: 135), conveniently representing the military power balance of the international system at the time of writing. Although this point of view seemed to accurately *describe* the state of affairs which had existed previously, it is an example of a criticism often directed at the classical realists – that their theories were poor at *prescribing* policy.

Additionally, this form of realism could only be applied to the problems of the world in a short-term manner within a set historical framework. Although some realists such as E H Carr have acknowledged this, applying the theory only to a set period, writers such as Morgenthau and Waltz used realism as a 'problem-solving theory' which was applicable regardless of the historical conditions, and 'tacitly assum[ed] the permanency of existing structures' (Cox 1986: 244). In other words, within their theories they did not allow for the manners in which sources of power, types of power, and the use of power has changed over time, since the ancient

Greeks' internecine wars to the modern day period of international regimes, globalisation and the gradual spread of liberal democracy.

Vasquez has noted that realists did not contemplate that there would

[emerge] from the ranks of the Communist Party of the USSR a leader who through a series of unilateral actions opted his country out of the struggle for power in the belief that peace was possible and that zero sum games could be converted into positive sum games (Vasquez 1998: 376).

That the rise and decline in the pervasiveness of realist perceptions of power seems to have reflected the current world-view of US administrations additionally points to questions about its universal applicability, and US bias.

Liberalism and Neo-liberalism

Liberalism as a collection of concepts derives from the ideas of philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, John Locke, and Jeremy Bentham in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 20th century it was developed by the so-called 'idealists' (such as Woodrow Wilson) who, after the First World War, were determined to change the international system in order to prevent such devastation happening again in the future. Despite being much maligned during the Cold War years, liberalism has in recent times received a boost from the end of the Cold War, and has been supplemented by 'neoliberalism' (Kegley 1995, Doyle 1995, Zacher and Matthew 1995, Doyle and Ikenberry 1997).

A central theme of liberalism is that individuals are free to make their own choices. Therefore, people and states' actions are not necessarily dictated by an

anarchical system, but they can co-operate by looking after each other's interests in order to bring about security for all.

a) Sources of power in Liberalism

Liberalists have tended to concentrate upon the individual and actors other than the nation state in their analysis of sources of power in the international system. A corollary of this is that they do not consider military power to necessarily be the most important source of power.

In the contemporary world, liberalists focus upon economic power, consensual power (leading to cooperation) and institutional power (Kegley 1995, Weber 2001). Economic power is wielded by actors which possess or control financial resources, such as cash, credit, debt, investment capital and assets. If this view of power is focussed upon, it can be seen that the power of the state is immediately reduced in comparison to the realist view. Although the nation state may nominally control more economic power than any other institution, in fact most of its resources are tied up in long-term commitments to its citizens, in the form of security, debt payments, welfare and the other societal functions a legitimate, modern state must perform. Therefore the amount of economic resources it has available to mobilise and use to influence the international system in various ways becomes more comparable to large transnational companies, international institutions and other international non-state actors. This view of international relations is, however, highly skewed towards industrialised and economically developed democracies, between which some freedom of trade and movement has been achieved. It is therefore difficult to consider liberal theories as being applicable to all areas around the world

– the problem of historical contingency (see p.60) is still apparent here. Liberal theorists have constructed their ideas of power based upon the circumstances in their own times and countries.

Consensus power is based upon the free choice of individuals to cooperate with one another. It need not be incompatible with the idea of competition, and is a necessary component of liberalist thinking. All power derives from the consensus of a group; even in a totalitarian state, the power-wielding dictator can only control that power with the cooperation of his administration and military (Arendt 1986).

The idea of actors' positions in international institutions as a source of power is based upon the view that these institutions have significant influence in the international system. International institutions may include such bodies as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, and other bodies which are basically formed due to collaboration between national governments. However, they also include international bodies which may have been formed by global companies, or even groups of interested individuals. Examples of this would include technical standards bodies, such as ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), which administers systems which determine how domain names are indexed on the Internet, or ad hoc consortia of companies which decide upon mobile telephony protocols. The ability of actors to control or influence the actions of these bodies can be seen as institutional power. Again, however, this source of power may not be available where there are few stable international institutions operating, such as in sub-Saharan Africa and other poor regions of the world – areas which liberalists do not often consider.

A final source of power in the liberalist view is interdependence. The interactions between individuals, sub-state actors, states and international

organisations in the international system can be a source of power. Actors other than states have grown in importance, leading to a web of interactions between actors above and below the state level (Keohane and Nye 2001). These include non-governmental organisations, transnational companies, other international or supra-national organisations such as the EU or ASEAN, and also sub-national or regional authorities which have in many cases started to act internationally (see e.g. Breslin and Hook 2002, Jain 2004). This view of international actors draws from the idea that the individual and other sub-state actors have political power in the international system.

The idea of interdependence as a source of power envisages that states, institutions and other actors are linked by their transactions. These transactions include flows of money, people, information and other goods and services. The value of these transactions has grown to a point where actors and states are mutually dependent; this means that this interdependence has become a potential source of power, in particular for actors which are less dependent on a transaction than others. This source of power, while being a valid explanation of processes in developed and politically free countries, fails to take into account the situation in totalitarian states, with repressive regimes, further showing how liberalist theories are not universally applicable. This points to the need to embrace some of these liberalist theories but from a constructivist perspective which envisages them as a set of tools among others in order to understand the complexity of contemporary international power relations.

b) Types of power use in Liberalism

A consequence of liberalists' belief in individualism is that power is seen to reside not just in monolithic states, but also in individuals, companies and other actors formed by the individuals or companies. Power also lies in the relationships between these actors.

Actors' accumulation and use of economic power thus affect the international system as much as actions by states. If an individual decides to buy a certain financial product, for example a share in a company, this is an act of power which leads that individual to have a certain amount of control in that company. On the international scale, this will have a negligible effect; however, if many individuals exercise this kind of economic power, the effect will be larger, and may even affect the actions of the company. The actions of the company in turn will affect other companies and organisations, and eventually the effects will be felt by states. The same is true of other organisations such as domestic or international NGOs, community action groups and organisations which straddle the boundary between the public and private sectors.

The emphasis on economic power in liberal theories tends to occlude other forms of power which are relevant between actors in the international system. The importance of power represented by ideas and information is often overlooked in liberalist accounts which are based on purely economic theories. This is also a criticism which can be levelled at another mainstay source of power in liberalist theories – institutional power.

As explained previously, an actor such as a state will gain institutional power by virtue of its position within an international institution. It gains this position by

negotiation with the other states in the system, so as to gradually manoeuvre itself into a stronger position. This can be done through making economic contributions to the institution and by devoting attention to being politically proactive and thus raising its profile within the institution. It is likely that a country will have a stronger position through being a founder member of the institution, than if it joins later on. This can be seen in the case of the European Union, where founder members retained disproportionate political power within the EU bureaucracy long after other members had joined, partly due to inertia caused by the slow-changing nature of large bureaucracies, but also no doubt due to the original member states' representatives in the bureaucracy leaning towards the selection of their own preferred candidates for jobs.

An actor can then use this position to affect the outcome of international negotiations. If a nation state engages in negotiations which will lead to an international treaty or other set of rules being established, it can exert its institutional power to ensure the rules are favourable to it. Similarly, a company can use its position within an international consortium to ensure that its needs are met when the consortium decides on an international standard.

Liberals believe that states can, through institutions, engage in cooperation for their mutual benefit. The essence of international organs such as the United Nations, is that international security is best safeguarded by some form of international cooperation and consensus rather than by unilateral actions.

While these liberalist assertions are valid within certain contexts, for example when explaining how or why states form international institutions, the simple proposal that an actor gains power by manoeuvring in international institutions does

not explain why and how this occurs, as is possible by using constructivist theories (see p.67).

c) Effects of Liberalist ideas of power

i) Individualism, Cooperation and Institutionalisation

Liberalists' ideas about power relations lead to a belief that states can cooperate in the international system, and that anarchy is not the basic situation. Liberal theories based on the individualist view of power relations outlined above, but also based on the idea of cooperation, lead logically to the formation of international institutions.

Immanuel Kant's ideas are often evoked in depictions of liberalism (Doyle 1986, Zacher and Matthew 1995, Onuf and Johnson 1995). Kant believed that, despite difficulties leading to wars, revolutions and so on, in the end nature forces people to cooperate to ensure their survival, as they learn the lessons of war and conflict. Doyle's research has shown that no liberal regimes (according to the Kantian definition) have fought a war between each other since the late 18th century (Doyle 1995: 90). As they acquired broadly representative governments, these states have eschewed war as a means of settling disputes with each other in favour of negotiation. These observations provide powerful evidence in support of Kantian liberalism and therefore the idea that coercive power is not necessarily the most important source of power as realists suggest.

Kant's theories and ideas embody the liberalist view of power relations explained earlier. There is strong emphasis on the individual's political power being the basis of a republican state. The idea that individuals should be able to trade with

others freely, even with foreigners, comes from the emphasis on the importance of the economic power of the individual (and other non-state actors). Finally, the ideas of the liberal zone of peace reflect liberalists' views on cooperation, and the power of international institutions such as treaties and organisations.

The liberal zone of peace is an idea which has been picked up by many liberalists trying to counter realist arguments of universal anarchy. This zone of peace can be said to have come into existence due to the realisation of Kantian liberalism. In liberal democracies, individuals are free to express their political and economic power, and at least in relation to other democracies, they have done this by opting for peace. Economic competition still thrives, but the element of consensual power can be seen in that true economic competition can only occur in a system with certain ground rules, i.e. international laws or practices.

The liberalist view of international power relations reached a high point of influence after the First World War, when leaders and other politicians began to see that a comprehensive and strong international system of cooperation was the only way to avert further disaster.

Prominent among advocates of such a system was Woodrow Wilson, the US President from 1913-1921. His idea was for an organisation called the League of Nations, a system based on institutional power and consensus power which would promote liberalist ideas of international relations. The organisation was unfortunately doomed from the beginning, with the refusal by Congress to ratify the agreement and the rise of the realist believers in military power, such as Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. Liberals of that time have been labelled as 'idealists,' who were not able to see the realities of how power was being used in the international system at the time; many countries had been building up their military power under illiberal regimes.

However, Wilson's ideals survived with the development of the United Nations, especially after the end of the Cold War, and the development of theories of 'liberal institutionalism'. This was a strand of thought pursued by people who believed that the only way to ensure peace and spread liberal democracy was through the use of strong international institutions. In the period after the Second World War, theorists such as David Mitrany (1948) and Ernst Haas (1968) argued that institutions could be developed initially by encouraging governments to cooperate in certain spheres of policy such as trade. This was to be influential in the development of the European Union, and the development of this group of countries, as well as other regional groupings such as NAFTA and ASEAN based on institutional power and economic power, seems to have led to a revitalisation of liberal theories. This new liberalism, or 'neoliberalism', takes ideas from Kant, Wilson, and their contemporaries, but also responds to realists' arguments, by emphasising how international institutional power as a means of controlling an anarchic international system. In order to refute realists' pessimistic assumptions about states' behaviour, however, neoliberal institutionalists have concentrated on staying close to the realists' arguments. The result is that neoliberalism seems to differ little in many ways from neorealism.

Both assume that some kind of international institution is needed to control the anarchic system (unlike classical liberalists who did not recognise anarchy in the international system); neorealists believe that it will not be possible to construct an effective institution, while neoliberalists believe it will be possible. Grieco (1995) emphasises the argument that states will always be concerned about their competitors' relative gains in the international system, and so will not wish to

cooperate with each other. Additionally, states will 'cheat' to increase their relative institutional power, and other states will therefore decline to act multilaterally.

Realism's identification of the relative gains problem for cooperation is based on its insight that states in anarchy fear for their survival as independent actors. According to realists, states worry that today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy in war, and fear that achievements of joint gains that advantage a friend in the present might produce a more dangerous *potential* foe in the future (Grieco 1988: 487).

Grieco's statement of the disagreement between neoliberals and neorealists shows the main difference between them, that is their conception of the nature of people and states. This fundamental distinction draws from their more traditional predecessors of classical realism and liberalism.

ii) International Political Economy and interdependence

The liberal notion of the importance of economic power, consensus power and institutional power, leading to trade and economic links between states and countries has gradually come to the forefront again, with the advent of increasing globalisation. The study of this network of links between states and non-state organisations has come to be known as International Political Economy (IPE). IPE has traditionally consisted of theories which are dependent on a liberal view of the world (Katzenstein et al 1998), although in more recent times some realists have attempted to develop theories which combine states' lust for power with their economic policies (Gilpin 1971). It is difficult for an international political economy to exist without, to some extent, having stable military relations between the

countries partaking in it. Therefore, arguably a state of international anarchy would not be conducive to the formation of such an IPE. Conversely the growth in importance of the IPE, most notable between economically (and usually politically) liberal states, should lead to a more liberal world.

The process of globalisation, the development of international structures and increasing interdependence have increased the importance of the idea of IPE. Although such a concept would have been very relevant in the 18th and 19th centuries, with the large volumes of global trade in those times, it was rendered almost irrelevant by the bipolar global system which emerged after the Second World War. During the Cold War, trading relationships were governed by security needs to a great extent, with the world divided into spheres of influence dominated by the USA and Soviet Union. The thawing and eventual end of the Cold War enabled a multitude of trading links and patterns to re-emerge. This development has been much amplified by the explosion of new communications technologies which have enabled information and capital to cross the globe in seconds.

IPE theory emphasises the relationship between politics and economics when considering state interaction. As the volume of trade and capital flows between economically liberal states increases, the importance of trade in international politics has also increased. The idea that relations between states are driven by trade (economic power) rather than military power is a challenge to classical realism. An equally important challenge to realist views of power relations is the fact that the increase in importance of international trade has also increased the importance of non-state actors (Strange 1996).

An important point raised by the theories behind IPE and the liberalist view of power relations is that states are not necessarily the most important actors in the

international system. In particular, transnational companies are considered important wielders of economic and institutional power within the international system (e.g. Strange 1996).

A further concept deriving from liberalist views of power is shown in the idea of interdependence in the global system, between states and non-state actors. Keohane and Nye, the original proponents of these ideas, distinguish interdependence from 'interconnectedness':

Where there are reciprocal (although not necessarily symmetrical) costly effects of transactions, there is interdependence. Where interactions do not have significant costly effects, there is simply interconnectedness (Keohane and Nye 2001: 8).

According to Keohane and Nye, dependency is measurable by considering a country's 'sensitivity' and 'vulnerability' to other countries' policy changes. They use the example of power relations between the USA and Canada (Keohane and Nye 2001:144). This case is a useful showcase for the theory, as there is a virtually zero chance of these two countries going to war, due to their secure military ties, which therefore cancels out the USA's vast military superiority over Canada. The volume of trade and amount of other transactions between the two countries is also very high. Therefore issues of interdependence become very important when considering how these countries make decisions on the use of power between them.

However, in the wider world, the process of globalisation has not yet proceeded to the point where trade between other countries is as high as that between the USA and Canada. In fact, in many large economies, the amount of trade as a proportion of GDP is quite low, although it has increased dramatically in recent

years. Even in this period of accelerating globalisation, just 9.3 per cent of the USA's GDP is from trade, while the figure is 8.4 per cent for Japan (*Economist* 2003), despite the widely believed vulnerability of that country to export and import fluctuations. Hence the idea of interdependence, while being valid in certain situations cannot explain international relations in a general manner, and so would perhaps best be utilised as one component of a theory using the constructivist principles explained later; the degree of interdependence between countries would depend on changes in their various interests and identities. The effects of interdependence would also depend on interest and identities; an example of this is the fact that the UK and France went to war with Germany in 1914 despite their previously high degree of economic interdependence.

Although difficult to classify as realist or liberalist, a well-known proponent of ideas of IPE is Strange (1996) who has also commented on several aspects of liberal views of power; one point of relevance here is her reference to a division between 'relational' power and 'structural' power, touched upon earlier (see p.40). Relational power is power used by one state upon another, by such means as military action, economic or diplomatic pressure. In other words, relational power is used between states or groups of states directly. For example, when American governments have negotiated with, threatened, or otherwise dealt with the North Korean regime, it has usually been on a direct basis, using as many forms of relational power that each can bring to bear; the USA with economic sanctions, and military presences in the region, and North Korea with its putative nuclear defence and other military threats.

Structural power is more indirect. This kind of power is used by a country to manipulate and control international structures which have arisen from

interdependence. These include financial and trading regimes and international political arrangements. Strange cites the example of the US Oil Pollution Act, passed after the 1992 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill (Strange 1996: 26). The Act stipulated that all tankers entering American ports had to supply financial guarantees that they could accept unlimited liability for the cost of oil spills. This therefore raised the price of importing oil into the USA, and barred smaller operators which could not afford the expense. Thus the oil trading system structure was affected by a unilateral US move, showing American structural power.

This kind of power, once established, can be longer lasting than one-off relational power use. A kind of structural power is that which is embodied by international institutions. International institutions originally created after the Second World War are a case in point, reflecting the relational power of states in that period. The United Kingdom retains structural power which is arguably much greater than its current reduced relational power would suggest. Its permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council and strong position in the Bretton Woods financial institutions, which resulted from being on the victorious side in the Second World War, still enable it to influence world events in a manner disproportionate to its economic size and population. For the same reasons France retains a similarly disproportionate structural power in the international system.

In contrast, the defeated countries of the Second World War have had a much harder time trying to influence the international regimes embodied in those institutions. Japan and Germany had to spend many decades trying to increase their influence within the IMF and World Bank, until it was on a par with their economic size. These countries still do not have proportionate influence in the security structures of the United Nations when their political and economic importance is

considered. The same is true of more recently emerging economic powers such as Brazil and India.

Another clear effect of liberalist views of power has been the development of free trade areas (FTAs). The European Common Market (now known as the European Union) was a pioneer in the implementation of liberalists' views of international power relations. The EU's success in rendering the idea of military power between its members obsolete has been a strong endorsement of liberalism. The continuing, gradual reduction in state power within the EU has emphasised the importance of non-state organs within its borders. State power has been increasingly surrendered to the supra-national institutions of the Union, and delegated to the regional institutions. Trade and communication across the borders of member states has increased greatly, meaning that more economic and political power has accrued to companies, financial institutions and, through shareholdings, to individuals.

The example provided by the EU has been watched closely in other regions of the world, leading to the spread of liberalist ideas of the importance of cooperation (consensus power) and trade (economic power). Concrete examples of the results of this spread include the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Mercosur (Mercado Comun del Sur, or Common Market of the South) in South America. ASEAN members agreed to implement an FTA amongst themselves in 1992, with the agreement finally coming into effect in 2002 (ASEAN 2002), and other regional organisations are at various stages of tariff reduction. A corresponding reduction in the emphasis on military power directed between co-operating states has occurred in these cases.

Thus, the development in international structures, and the consequent increase in the availability and use of structural power resources for many countries,

has increased interdependence in the international system. However, the lack of further development of groups such as ASEAN, NAFTA and Mercosur along the lines of the EU shows how it is necessary to consider the interests and identities of the actors involved to explain how they progress. The development of these institutions is not explicable through liberalist theories of interdependence, economic and consensual power, and requires the tools of constructivism to help investigate this.

The debates which were started by these views of the international political economy and interdependence began to show how a simplistic separation of international relations theories in realist and liberalist categories was becoming increasingly difficult and irrelevant. The ideas in these theories are very relevant to today's globalising world, and yet they can not provide a framework to help explain international relations in all areas of the world. IPE and interdependence theories ultimately seem mostly relevant to relations between liberal democracies, and while hinting at the roles of non-state political and economic actors in the international system, they do not provide a framework to explain the influence of NGOs and other international actors. Hence, the new critical and constructivist theories have dispensed with artificial realist and liberalist distinctions of international relations, and it is contended that they are more suitable to provide a base for an investigation of soft power.

Critical theories

Depending upon which theory of international relations we subscribe to, our ideas about the nature of power can be very different. However, as Cox (1981: 87) has

said, '[t]heory is always *for* some one, and *for* some purpose.' That is to say, a theory is often developed with the intention of supporting the theorist's view of how policy should be implemented; it is impossible for a theorist to create a theory which does not embody their own values. This needs to be borne in mind when considering how a writer defines power.

So-called 'critical theorists' see the idea of international relations theory in fundamentally different ways from mainstream writers. They reject the positivist views of contemporary realist, neorealist and neoliberal writers. Critical theorists believe not only that theories reflect the circumstances in which they were developed, but also that facts are products of their historical framework (Smith 2001). Therefore a critical theorist might say that realist theories such as Waltz's were products of the bipolar cold war system; the fact that they did not predict or allow for the changes after the collapse of the Soviet Union tends to confirm this.

They therefore reject the assertion of realists that the state of anarchy between nations is a situation that has always been true of the past and will also be true in the future. Critical theorists seek to not only describe the situation facing states now, but also to search for indications of change in the international system. As Linklater notes, '[c]ritical perspectives seek to identify the prospects for change in global politics – latent though they may be at present' (Linklater 1998: 22). In this way, critical theory follows on from Marx's philosophy of looking for seeds of change in the current system, and encouragement of its reform.

a) *Sources of power in critical theories*

Robert Cox's own way of looking at power relations (e.g. Cox 1977, 1987, 1996) is derived from a class-based view of societies, influenced by Marxism and the early 20th century Italian writer, Antonio Gramsci's work. Cox's theories embody the idea that the structure of a society and its economic systems profoundly affects its relations with other societies – also a theme of the study of International Political Economy.

He distinguishes between three sources of power. Firstly 'state-centric' power, approximately meaning the power accrued to and exercised by the government or administration of a state, generally in the form of military or other direct enforceable power. Secondly he refers to the 'economic-welfare' sphere of power relations. He characterises this power in the way a state directs and develops a society or responds to its pressures, and in modern terms defines it as financial policy, which in turn affects other states. His third category of power source is 'social power' which refers to relationships between social classes or groups, within and across state boundaries (Cox 1977).

Now, as a consequence of international production, it becomes increasingly pertinent to think in terms of a global class structure alongside or superimposed upon national class structures. At the apex of an emerging global class structure is the transnational managerial class...class action penetrates countries through the process of internationalization of the state (Cox 1981: 111).

Another prominent critical theorist in recent years has been Andrew Linklater. Linklater's ideas of power relations in the international system share the

characteristic of Cox's ideas of being forward-looking. They also share the characteristic of looking at historical frameworks, and the long-term progression of international power relations. However, whereas Cox's ideas stem from a class-based analysis, Linklater's ideas appear to stem from a conviction that while realist viewpoints were more relevant in the past, liberalist viewpoints will be more relevant in the future.

In an extension of the liberal democratic zone of peace theory extolled by Doyle and others, Linklater (1998) proposes that the seeds of a post-Westphalian international order are visible. He rejects the notion that nation states are the only way to visualise communities and hence their relations. Consequently for Linklater, non-state actors are major power sources within this new order.

b) Types of power use

In an international context, Cox's 'social power' refers to the power of rich producer states over poorer countries. Therefore in this view, a transnational elite consisting of rich developed country governments and their strategists, uses its power over global production to maintain the status quo of industrially developed countries' structural, political and economic power, and developing countries' international impotence. Rich countries use their control over economic power carried by their companies to ensure that industrial production which is dangerous to human health and to the environment is situated in poor countries which have less international clout. They use their structural and political power to ensure that developing countries do not have an international voice.

Linklater views use of power in the international system from a different perspective. He envisages a fluid system, where nation states do not have great control. Instead, non-state actors such as financial institutions, transnational companies, international NGOs and international institutions determine where and how power is used. The Westphalian system gave nation states 'monopoly power' over crucial elements of society, such as over military power, taxation, adjudication between people, representation of people in international society and therefore the authority to bind people into international laws. In the era of the nation states' peak, the increased power of the state monopolies led to the exclusion from society of ethnic minorities who found themselves within the nation state's boundaries, and a reduction in the diversity of political communities; states had a 'homogenising' effect. The enforcement of notions of 'sovereignty, territoriality and citizenship' made the idea of alternative forms of political organisation seem impossible. However, Linklater sees evidence that power being used by non-state actors is changing the international situation.

c) Effects of power on the international system

Cox's definition of power is based on the assumption of a division between classes in national and international societies. This serves the purposes of a class-based analysis, and seems relevant when many notable historical events are analysed. For example, if one considers the ongoing division of the world's wealth, roughly between the advanced industrial nations and the poorer 'third world' or developing countries, the idea of a transnational elite controlling the means of production and stifling the labouring classes seems to make sense.

It is nevertheless not clear that these ideas can fully explain the development of countries which have changed or are changing from being exploited sources of cheap labour, into countries which direct the means of production in other countries using foreign direct investment and financial policy. Examples include South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries in East Asia. These countries have changed from being extremely poor third world countries into having living standards on a par with many industrially advanced nations (UN 2006) and international financial investment programs to match. Cox assumes that these countries have only been able to gain power as a result of the actions of the transnational elite, led by the US hegemon, and that they are still in essence controlled financially by that elite through bodies such as the IMF. However, the contention that US largesse has been the only reason for, or even the major factor in, their development clearly belittles the skill and effort which has been applied by the people of those countries and, in some cases their leaders. The fact that the USA believed that Japan's economic future was to be a small power with little economic potential provides some evidence that its development into the world's second largest economy was not inevitable just because it had been given access to US markets. In fact American policy of not allowing Japan to deal with the Soviet Union or China after the Second World War hampered its trading relations to some extent.

Cox believes that the hegemonic power of the United States has caused the current situation of international division between rich and poor, and calls for a multipolar international system as the only way to alleviate these problems. However he does not take note of the fact that, by its own actions, the US has created the conditions for a multipolar international system. Its liberal investment and relatively liberal trade policies since the Second World War have helped countries which were

never seen to be part of 'the West' to grow in economic and political strength, thus diluting the 'transnational elite' and enabling poor countries to escape poverty. Those countries, especially in East Asia, have in turn sought to help other poorer countries to escape the poverty trap. Most notably in the past two decades, hundreds of millions of people in China have been lifted from poverty, and the same kind of effect is gradually being seen in India. If these two giant nations can eventually join the 'transnational elite' it will be difficult to defend the idea that such an elite controls the international system through hegemonic power.

Linklater suggests that in the current era of globalisation the weakening of the Westphalian system of nation states has become possible through changes in power relations. The signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 is generally considered to be the beginning point of the current international system, with nation states becoming the main political actors and sources of power. In previous periods, other units such as city-states and loose-knit confederations or empires had been predominant in Europe. With the advent of greater populations and more intensive conflicts between them, constant warring between states in Europe led to the conditions which favoured accumulation of military power to be controlled by a central authority, the nation state. As Linklater notes,

Modern states outflanked their competitors – city-states and sprawling imperial structures – by striking the appropriate balance between the accumulation of coercive power and the encouragement of capitalist development (Linklater 1998: 28).

Linklater proposes that a key element in the change in power relations between nations has been shown by 'arguments which suggest the obsolescence of war

between the major industrial states' (Linklater 1998: 30). Evidence of the weakening of national monopolies' power consists of people's recourse to non-state and transnational groups to secure social and environmental protection. The growth of international human rights law has begun to infringe the state's monopoly control of justice. The nation state's ability to control the national economy has been undercut by globalised production and financial relations. The reduction in the state monopoly has also exposed the natural boundaries within states along ethnic lines and 'in several states the myth of national unity and coherence has been shattered' (Linklater 1998: 31). Linklater therefore advocates the urgent expansion of democratic accountability beyond the domain of the nation state to support and control these processes. He identifies the European Union as a prime example of the tendencies mentioned.

Although Linklater's vision of the reduction of the power of the nation state may be somewhat premature, he nevertheless identifies definite trends which point in the direction of his theory. One key trend which he notices is that of minority peoples insisting on their recognition:

Across the world – and largely because globalisation disseminates similar political projects and creates a common stock of political resources and ideas – minority nations, indigenous peoples and migrant organisations fuel “the politics of recognition”... these new movements seek global support ... to create universal norms which establish the principle of respect for cultural differences (Linklater 1998: 32).

Linklater notes these trends with enthusiasm, but also cautions against underestimating the staying power of entrenched institutions and ideologies such as

nationalist socialism, hierarchical views of ethnic groups and the lack of cohesion of transnational political communities.

In fact, Linklater's vision seems to be some distance in the future; even in a place such as the European Union, where freedom of movement across borders has been a long-standing principle, the reduction in states' monopoly power has not discernibly led to an increase in cross-border political communities. His arguments nevertheless have some merit, and contain strong indications that neorealist assumptions of international anarchy and the nation state are not universally applicable.

A problem common to critical theorists, therefore, is the lack of any theoretical framework to explain current international power relations and their effects. The emphasis on looking at the global system from a broad historical viewpoint has disadvantages, in that it does not help to understand or describe events and processes which are happening at the present time in the world. With the increasing lack of relevance of many classical realist and liberalist concepts of power relations, it has been necessary for a set of theoretical tools which take a more detailed view of power from a human perspective, and also a broader view in that they embody both realist and liberalist concepts. These are collectively known as constructivist theories.

Constructivism

'Constructivism' is a relatively recently developed concept, or approach, which tries to introduce some more esoteric ideas from philosophy, sociology and psychology about how people's ideas, interests and identities affect international relations

(Wendt 1999, Hopf 1998, Kratochwil 2000, Guzzini 2000, Checkel 2004, Lukes 2005). It suggests that the system of international relations is not inherently anarchic, as is assumed by realists, neorealists and neoliberals. In fact the international system, as well as domestic systems, are defined by the ideas and ways of thinking of the actors involved in them. Hence, if key actors within a system strongly believe it is anarchic, then it will be. States are constituted by people, and therefore the states themselves are constructed from ideas and ways of thinking. Wendt's social constructivism theory is state-centric; states are still the most important actors in international politics. However it does not deny the importance of non-state actors (Wendt 1999: 9). Other writers such as Hopf (1998) have also considered constructivism in international relations and how it might be used as a practical tool to understand international power relations.

a) Sources of power

The most important source of power, according to constructivists, derives from people's identities, ideas, and interests (Wendt 1999, Luke 2005). Therefore, if a state is inclined towards territorial expansionism, military power will be important to it, whereas if a state is inclined towards building wealth, economic power will take precedence. The inclinations of a state are built up by prevailing ideas, that is to say norms, and the distribution of interests (Wendt 1999: 103). The actors within the state also have beliefs and identities which have been created according to the prevailing structures and norms within that state.

Therefore sources of power could also be said to be forces which shape those ideas and norms. These forces control dissemination of information and knowledge;

specifically they would include such structures and agents as the education system, mass media and to some extent agencies in state governments which regulate it, among many other actors.

However, in addition to this emphasis on identities, interests and so on, most constructivists would admit the importance of sources of power which have been identified by realists and liberalists, such as coercive power, institutional power and structural power (e.g. Barnett and Duvall 2005, Hopf 1998). These forms of power are often considered in constructivist accounts, but explained by and defined in terms of constructivist language. This all-encompassing character of constructivism makes it a more practical set of tools than either realism or liberalism, which even in their later incarnations concentrated too much upon certain kinds of power relations to the detriment of the study of other varieties. These properties also make it the most suitable set of tools to consider soft power, a concept which does not fit well into previous realist or liberalist theories.

b) Types of power use

It follows from Wendt's assertions that to utilise, affect or change people's ideas and interests represents the use of power. Clearly, people's ideas can be changed by a multitude of factors, whether coercive or consensual. The use of force or sanctions by one state against another would change both states' ideas about each other. Changes in the educational curriculum of a country in order to influence its citizen's knowledge of another country would constitute the use of power; this kind of power use is seen around the world where nations wish to promote nationalism among their people, or certain preconceived views of other countries. Equally, the use of

propaganda against another country would affect that country's citizens' knowledge, and possibly affect anyone else who was to be subject to such propaganda. A lack of action can also change people's ideas and interests – Lukes (2005) cites the example of the US' decision not to sign the Kyoto Treaty on climate change as changing many people's and states' ideas about the USA.

Central to Wendt's theory, however, is the notion that nation states are the primary wielders of power in the international system. Power may be used by non-state actors; however, Wendt believes that ultimately all power is still channelled through states due to their still overwhelming presence in the international system. This is a highly debatable point considering how transnational media groups and other organisations which are outside state control can have a great influence on people's ideas in societies with any freedom of expression. Indeed, there have been many criticisms of Wendt's state-centred approach, and other aspects of his approach to power in international relations (e.g. Kratochwil 2000), and in fact most constructivist scholars do not seem to take the idea of the state as the only important actor in the global system. Non-state agents are recognised as important users of power within the literature (e.g. Barnett and Duvall 2005, Lipschutz 2005, Lukes 2005) and all actors and structures are seen as important in a way which can not be attributed to realist and liberalist accounts. Therefore, again constructivist tools seem appropriate to explain soft power, which is clearly not the exclusive preserve of states; points which are considered further in Chapter 3.

c) Effects of power use

The fact that states have different policies towards each other depending upon their beliefs about other states shows that realism does not apply in all situations. For example, countries such as Britain and Germany within the EU patently do not expect to go to war with each other in the foreseeable future; there has been no build-up of military power directed at each other since the Second World War. A similar statement could be made about relations between many other liberal democratic countries. Therefore these countries' beliefs about each other have directed policy-making.

The 'critical theorists' also take the view that a theory such as realism cannot apply in all situations. Proponents such as Cox (1981) argue that realism is a theory which reacts to problems which have occurred, and does not propose possible alternatives to the current power distribution in the world. This would tend to agree with Wendt's proposition that beliefs structure theories. As outlined previously, Linklater (1998) takes the argument further to propose that the structures of international relations have changed beyond the traditional Westphalian view of states and that those state boundaries are no longer as relevant to global structures as they once were.

If Wendt's theory, that social structures are constructed by ideas and are therefore changeable, and Linklater's theory that state boundaries are no longer so important are applicable, they could provide a new theoretical basis to describe how power is used by actors, through the dissemination of ideas, culture, ways of thinking and ways of living. The Soviet Union's strong influence in Europe after the Second World War was based upon the perceived attractiveness of the ideology of

communism and the promise of a new way of life for people. The USA's influence around the world has been driven by its ideals, transmitted through Hollywood films, and other cultural exports. People in oppressed states have been drawn to the idea of democracy, free speech and wealthy lifestyles.

However, the fact remains that Wendt's theory is state-centred. In the end, his theory subscribes to the ultimate power being that of violence, the use of which is monopolised by states. He anticipates criticism of this assertion:

“State-centrism” does not mean that the causal chain in explaining war and peace stops with states, or even that states are the “most important” links in that chain, whatever that might mean... The point is merely that states are still the primary medium through which the effects of other actors on the regulation of violence are channelled into the world system. It may be that non-state actors are becoming more important than states as initiators of change, but system changes ultimately happen *through* states (Wendt 1999: 9)

Despite toying with the use of ideas and culture as the bedrock of international relations, Wendt clings to the essentially realist notion that even within the liberal democratic zone of peace, the state's power over organised violence (i.e. military and police power) is in general the most important foundation of international relations (Wendt 2005).

Ted Hopf (1998) carries the idea of constructivism further, by suggesting ways in which it could be used to explain commonly used examples which have been explained unsatisfactorily by mainstream theories. He observes that the classic balance of power argument used by realists is not empirically correct; states do not balance their power against other friendly states. Britain does not consider the need to defend itself against the US and vice versa. Therefore a ‘balance of threat’

argument has been used in recent realism – states balance their power according to size of the threat they see emanating from other states. This would appear to be susceptible to a constructivist argument which can see that the perception of a threat is dependent upon the norms, ideas and preconceptions of other states' identities which are prevalent. Hopf uses the example of the US's stance against communist third world states during the Cold War. The US identified those states primarily in terms of their communist characteristics, and its actions reflected its own self-identity as being anti-Communist. However, European states identified those third world countries as former colonies, or 'economic actors' and therefore their actions towards them were different. An example could be Vietnam, where France was initially involved primarily as an outgoing colonial power, whereas the USA later became involved primarily to halt the Communist advances in Vietnam.

Hopf goes on to cite the problem of the security dilemma in international relations, whereby states are said to act realistically by increasing their defences to deter attacks, but thereby increase the likelihood of attack by causing other states to build up their own military power. Hopf contends that realists see this uncertainty as a constant, about which nothing can be done, but that a constructivist would see the uncertainty as a variable, which can be investigated by means of consideration of the involved parties' identities, norms and practices.

He further suggests applications of constructivist theory to liberalists' concerns. The first case is that of neoliberals' concern over how international institutions function, and how to maintain them. Hopf says that

...one of the more enduring puzzles for neoliberals is why these institutions persist past the point that great powers have an apparent interest in sustaining them. Their answers include lags caused by domestic political resistance to

adjustment, the stickiness of institutional arrangements, and the transaction costs entailed in the renegotiations of agreements and the establishment of a new order. An alternative constructivist hypothesis would be that if the identities being reproduced by the social practices constituting that institution have gone beyond the strategic game-playing self-regarding units posited by neoliberals, and have developed an understanding of each other as partners in some common enterprise, then the institution will persist, even if apparent underlying power and interests have shifted (Hopf 1998: 184).

Hopf's underlying premise is therefore that states and other actors build up ideas about each other in order to predict others' behaviour and tailor ways in which they should use power appropriately.

Other constructivist scholars concentrate on a wide variety of the effects of their interpretations of power. Such effects as globalisation and regionalisation are explained through power created by identity and interests (Lincicome 2005, Eaton and Stubbs 2006), the rise of a global civil society (Lipschutz 2005) and so on. The somewhat limited perspective of realist and liberalist theories becomes apparent when the constructivist approach is utilised, and it is this embracing of the complexities of the global system, rather than the reductionist tendencies of the previous theories, which makes it most relevant to present day power processes, including the idea of soft power.

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to review and evaluate the relevance of traditional and newer schools of thought on power in international relations to the global system today, and thereby to choose a suitable foundation upon which to develop a theory of soft power in the next chapter. The conclusion which must be drawn from this

analysis is that the development of constructivism (and other related schools of thought) in recent years reflects the growing irrelevance to today's global system of purely realist or liberalist theories.

It has been shown that the general trend in academic writing increasingly criticises realism for its pessimism, lack of vision and even inaccuracy. The backlash has been against realism's turn towards positivism, and a narrower, more simplistic view of international relations exemplified in particular by Waltz (1979, 1993) but also by Gilpin (1988) and Mearsheimer (1994). There is no doubt that many realist insights into the international system have chimed with events in the past, in particular during the Cold War, and as many power wielders around the world still hold to its precepts, it will continue to influence policy-making.

Nevertheless, realist arguments have failed to deal with the profound changes which have been happening all around the world as a consequence of the increasing pace of globalisation and the spread of new information technologies. The power of twenty-four hour, instantaneous news coverage is underestimated; in democracies where this is commonly available, voters will no longer contemplate their own countrymen dying in their tens of thousands in wars far away, especially after the traumas of the Vietnam War, one of the first wars to be covered in detail by colour television news programmes. Even though democracies will still continue to intervene in the manner of the USA's invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, wars which involve large numbers of casualties even on the opposing side will be quickly met with substantial anti-war demonstrations in the democratic country, with subsequent damage to leaders' electoral chances.

Because of these technological changes, the liberal democratic zone of countries is likely to continue to be peaceful, or at least free of international wars.

Even in non-democratic countries, regimes may risk revolution if they do not consider public opinion, which can be mobilised through the Internet or wireless communication links. The relatively peaceful popular revolution in the Philippines, which ousted President Estrada from power and installed President Arroyo, came about in large part through normal, dissatisfied people sending each other text messages on mobile phones (Rafael 2003, Time 2001), and is a stark example to corrupt or illiberal leaders of the power of new communications technology. Hundreds of thousands of anti-Estrada demonstrators were able to converge through text messaging and Internet communication to protest against his corruption and remove him from power on 18 January 2001.

Equally, the efforts of the Communist Party of China to block information on the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003 were stymied by the ability of Internet-savvy Chinese to access information about the disease and pass the information on to the much larger number of Chinese people owning text message enabled mobile phones (BBC 2003).

In relations between liberal democracies and non-liberal states, realism may still have useful things to say, and it would be naïve to dismiss realists' concerns regarding the threats and dangers to democratic regimes by illiberal dictatorships (or vice versa), and of other potential military conflicts around the world. Nevertheless, it would be equally naïve to dismiss the gradual spread of democracy and liberalism throughout the world, the liberal zone of peace, and the spread of access to the new communications technologies. These factors call for new ways of looking at international relations.

Neoliberal institutionalism (classical forms of liberalism are not currently espoused by mainstream international relations scholars) may have some useful

contributions to make in the new era; regional groupings such as the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Mercosur and the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) show that there is a definite contribution to be made by top-down regionalism. International institutions such as the World Trade Organisation have potential to contribute to international order. The United Nations also has some potential to become a real actor on the international stage, if there is the will among its most influential members to achieve this. Neoliberalism's general focus upon economic power, transactions and international institutions also has relevance in a world where liberal economic policies are widespread, global trade continues to increase and international institutions are still functioning actively. However, neoliberalist theories tell us little about international relations which are not defined by trade, economics and institutionalism; cultural exchange, exchange of ideas and the importance of values and interests are not catered for by these theories.

Real integration and change in the current global system are occurring through the actions of normal people, their organisations, and their networks. In this sense, concepts in international political economy and interdependence theory are more useful guides to the future of international relations. Linklater's post-Westphalian vision is also a relevant though perhaps somewhat extreme view of the future international environment. Equally, Wendt's and Hopf's conception of norms, ideas and practice as drivers of change in societies can help us understand the contemporary international situation. The fact is that the Internet, multi-channel television and other new technologies as mentioned above are contributing to the establishment of new norms across the globe, among which norms against international warfare may even be developing (Mueller 1991).

Having developed from theories of interdependence and critical theories, constructivism takes further a recognition of the increased complexity of the global system in modern times, when so many factors not controlled by states or ruling elites can lead to changes in international relations. Not only actors themselves, but the interests, values and norms of every actor which affects a country's international relations must be considered and taken into account, rather than simplified into a model which, while being easier to contemplate, does not apply to any real-world situation (as was attempted by Waltz and other neorealists).

Considering the reality of these issues, new ways of thinking about power in international relations must be developed using constructivist themes. These new ways of thinking must take into account the sometimes bewildering pace of technological change in human societies, despite the difficulty in confronting it. The current era of rapid social change throughout the world, and therefore international relations, is without precedent in previous eras. This thesis uses constructivist tools to investigate one novel way of thinking about power, postulated by Joseph Nye (1990), that is 'soft power.' In the next chapter this method of looking at international relations will be reviewed and expanded upon.

Chapter 3

Soft power: what is it and how does it function?

The idea of 'soft power' comes from a relatively new method of categorising international power relations; the distinction between coercive policies and cooperative policies. Although soft power itself is not new, its increasing significance and importance has only come to be recognised in the last decade or so. The term was first coined by the American academic and former Assistant Secretary of State for Defence in the Bill Clinton administration, Joseph Nye, in his 1990 *Foreign Policy* article (Nye 1990a). Since that time he has expanded upon his ideas in further articles and books (Nye 1990b, 1991, 2002, 2004).

Academics, politicians and writers around the world have come to realise the potential of soft power theory (Drifte 1996, Chong 2004, Takenaka 2000, McGray 2002, Lukes 2005), and have used it to back up their own policies and theories, although in some cases without a complete grasp of the concept. In particular, ideas of soft power have been seen recently as potent tools to counter the hard-line neorealist doctrine of many recent American policies (Cox 2004). Others have criticised Nye's ideas as being little more than another realist excuse to push values and cultures on to other countries (Mattern 2005).

In order to help answer the questions initially posed in Chapter 1, and as the soft power theory developed in this study does not aspire to be an all-encompassing theory of international relations, it is necessary to ground the study in terms of a world view, or a basic theory of international relations. Having reviewed the prevailing theories in the previous chapter, the ideas espoused by social

constructivism have been found to most closely represent a world view which can accommodate a theory of soft power. Nye's (1990, 2004) own exposition of soft power comes from the view of a policy maker, with US foreign policy problems clearly in mind. Additionally, soft power is not explained by Nye in detailed theoretical terms, as Lukes (2005) also argues. From Nye's previous work, it can be seen that his perspectives come from a liberalist point of view; however, as suggested by Hopf, 'Nye's conceptualisation of "soft" power could be usefully read through a constructivist interpretation' (Hopf 1998: n17). As soft power relies upon the transfer of ideas, information and norms from one country to another, and upon the identity of both countries involved in the transfer, constructivist theories embody useful tools which will help to understand it. Therefore in this chapter, the relevance and applicability of soft power theory will be explained, with reference to constructivist theory.

Firstly, the meaning of the term 'soft power' itself will be considered, leading to a working definition of soft power. Secondly, soft power will be considered in terms of its sources, agents, the ways in which it is used, its effects and limitations. Subsequently, with reference to Chapter 2, the use of constructivist ideas to explain soft power will be justified. Following this, the reasons for the use of Japan as a test of soft power theory in this study will be explained. Finally, the chapter will be summarised briefly.

What is soft power?

Soft power is often thought to be an elusive concept. The use of the word 'soft' to describe a form of power at first appears to be a contradiction in terms – many commentators would question whether the use of power is ever 'soft'. Nevertheless, the idea encompasses a wide range of activities which are influential in the realm of international politics and economy.

Nye (1990, 2004) describes soft power as 'co-optive', as opposed to coercive 'command power':

Command power can rest on inducements ("carrots") or threats ("sticks"). But there is also an indirect way to exercise power... This aspect of power, that is, getting others to want what you want – might be called indirect or co-optive power behaviour. It is in contrast to the active command behaviour of getting others to do what you want. Co-optive power can rest on the attraction of one's ideas or on the ability to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences that others express... This dimension can be thought of as soft power... (Nye 1990: 181).

Thus, soft power is power which has the consent of both or all parties effecting it or being affected by it. Therefore, it is founded upon the idea of cooperation in relations between parties.

An alternative way to define soft power would be to contrast it against its natural corollary: hard power. Hard power consists of coercive activities, the most obvious of which are military activities. The use of force or coercion to obtain an outcome is the traditional basis of the idea of power; as was shown in the previous chapter, the idea of power has been assumed to be coercive by realists through the ages and so a distinction has not been made between soft and hard power.

Coercive hard power can be characterised by the use or threat of use of soldiers, weapons, and other military hardware to force an opponent to behave in a certain way through subjugation. Even if military force is not utilised directly, the positioning of military assets near a country, or the targeting of weapons systems upon it inevitably forces the target country to behave differently. The behaviour of nuclear capable countries (in particular the US and the Soviet Union) during the years of the Cold War was a prime example of this; the fear of being exposed to potential military coercion was an important factor leading to the build up of vast reserves of nuclear weapons on both sides in order to deter its use.¹⁸

However, hard power is not monopolised by military forces. Other coercive methods used by governments to force a change in behaviour include economic and political pressure. Economic sanctions are applied to pressure countries into changing their trade policies, but also to make them change unrelated policies such as those regarding the rights of their own citizens¹⁹ or to make them acknowledge past wrongs.²⁰ Political pressure can be applied by refusing diplomatic contacts, or by refusing to acknowledge a country's existence, as was the case with many Western countries in regard to the People's Republic of China before the US rapprochement in 1972. Although these methods may sometimes be necessary or useful for countries wishing to influence other countries, for example when they are under direct attack or feel they are likely to become so, they are certainly not 'co-optive'.

¹⁸ See Sagan (1996) for a review of these and other factors in nuclear build-up.

¹⁹ For example in South Africa during the apartheid regime, in Cuba to pressurise Fidel Castro to give up his Communist system, and in China for a brief time after the Tiananmen Square massacre of protesting students.

²⁰ The Libyan government was accused of sponsoring terrorists who had blown up an American aeroplane full of passengers over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988, and pressurised by UN sanctions into handing over the suspected terrorist, and compensating the victims, which it finally did in 1999 and 2003 respectively (see Economist Global Agenda 2003).

Therefore, it can be said that soft power represents other co-operative activities which occur between nations, and in turn affect the practices and norms of those nations. These can include such things as cultural exchanges, educational exchanges, and economic and political cooperation.

Soft power does not only result from these active policies, but it also results from policies which create an environment for the exchange of ideas, services and goods. In particular cultural trade, trade in techniques, technology and educational goods promote this kind of exchange; however, ultimately all goods which have been manufactured or services which have been created carry people's ideas with them. These are ideas which have gone into the creation of those products, and are therefore inherent within them.

Soft power also emanates from the attractiveness of a country's identity. Identity in this case consists of countries' perceptions and knowledge of ideas and culture, their habits and practices (Hopf 2002, Wendt 1994) which have been transmitted through communication and discourse to other countries. In this respect, people in one country may be attracted to the lifestyles, practices and ideas of people in another country, and thereby try to obtain or emulate them. The attractive country's identity therefore can be said to influence the attracted country. The most often cited example of this has been the attraction of American lifestyles to many people around the world; these are seen as embodying individual freedom and choice, concepts which may be especially attractive to people living in circumstances where they are oppressed politically or economically. This kind of American soft power, however, is mitigated by other aspects of US policy; in areas of the world where the US applies unwelcome hard power, its soft power is diminished. Nye notes that,

Serbs eating at McDonalds supported Milosevic, and Rwandans committed atrocities while wearing T-shirts with American logos. American films that make the United States attractive in China or Latin America may have the opposite effect and actually reduce American soft power in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan. But in general, polls show that our popular culture has made the United States seem to others “exciting, exotic, rich, powerful, trend-setting – the cutting edge of modernity and innovation” (*Economist* 2003) (Nye 2004: 12).

Nye goes on to recount the case of a young Chinese activist who had the idea that going to court to complain was normal after watching those kinds of American films (Nye 2004: 12).

However, in order for this attraction to be possible, a transfer of ideas still needs to take place; people in a country or area which is closed off from the outside world will not be attracted by ideas which are available in other countries, as they can not know of their existence. Historically, there have been many regimes which have felt threatened by new ideas emanating from other countries; even in today’s globalising world of high-tech communications, some regimes still try to control the flow of information to their citizens.²¹

Considering that there are a variety of definitions and types of soft power, it is also necessary to consider degrees of ‘softness’ (see Fig. 1, p.85). Is one kind of power softer than another? How does this affect the ways in which we consider its usefulness, or effectiveness?

If hard power is coercive power, that is to say actions which would not be accepted by the people being acted upon were they not backed by force, then soft power consists of the transmission of ideas and information which are either

²¹ See Rodan (2003) on Singapore, and Kalathil (2003) on China’s attempts to constrain the effects of new media on their authoritarian regimes; also see 16 for further discussion on this.

passively accepted by the people being acted upon, or in fact positively encouraged by those people.

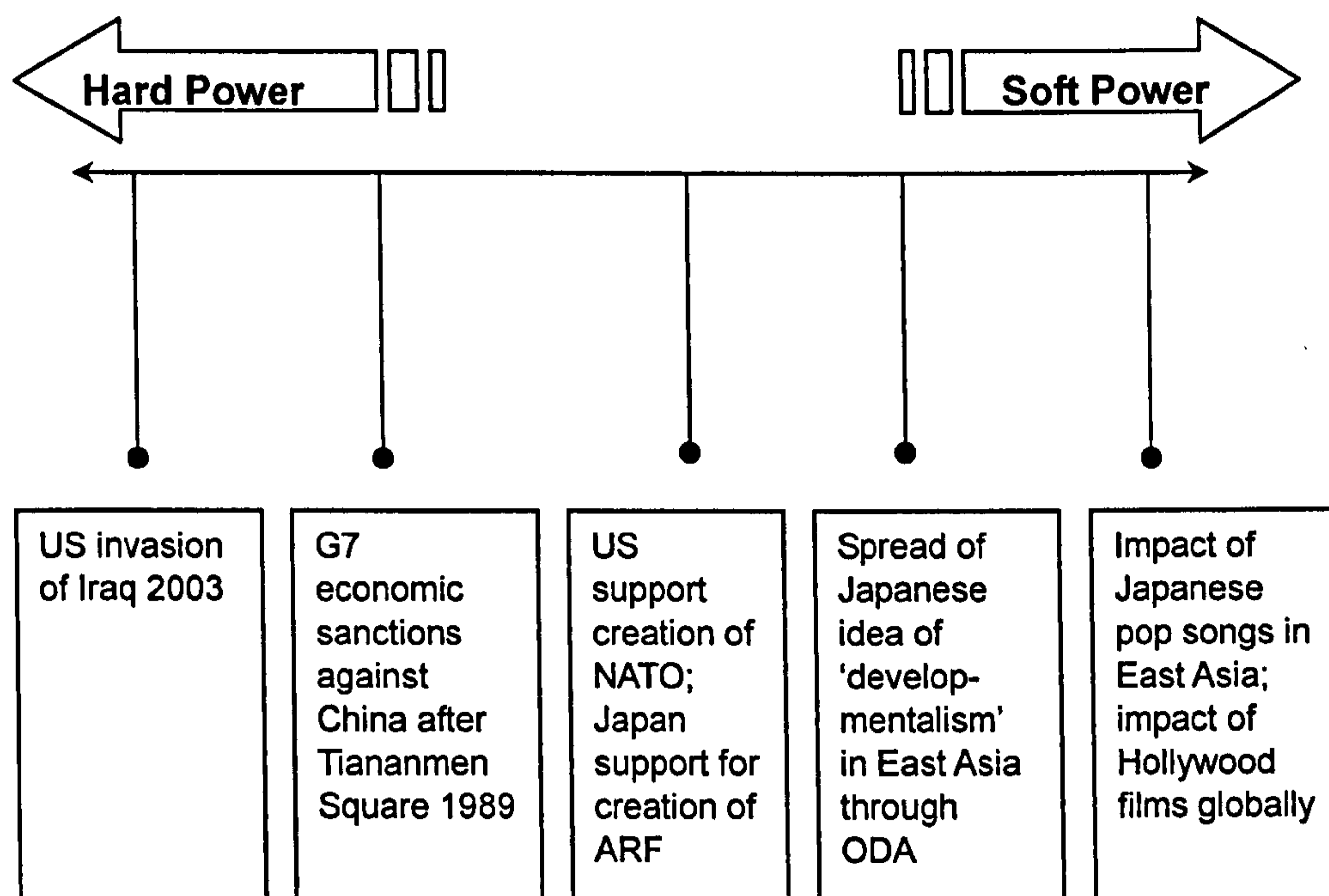


Fig. 1 – A continuous scale between hard and soft power

Source: Author

The degree of acceptance or encouragement by the people affected by the use of this power could be regarded as an indicator of softness (Nye 2004: 8). For example, the use of ODA by a country such as Japan in another country such as China could be considered a less soft form of power than the active consumption of Japanese cultural products by Chinese people. In the former case, the ODA-receiving country wants the aid Japan can supply; on the other hand, it also realises that taking the aid will enable Japan to influence its development and economy, a process which it is unlikely to be happy about considering their past enmity (see e.g. Austin and Harris 2001). In the latter case, people want to buy Japanese products or emulate

Japanese lifestyles purely because they are attractive; the degree of influence Japan may or may not accrue due to Chinese people’s consumption patterns is of little concern to them. They encourage Japanese companies to sell more Japanese-style goods by buying more of them.²² Therefore, it could be said that in this case the influence of Japan on Chinese people’s lives is less obviously intentional, and so softer. In the first case, Japan’s intention to influence the affairs of another country is more pointed, and so less soft.

| | Soft power | Hard Power |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Time taken to implement and see effects | Long | Short |
| Difficulty in controlling processes and outcomes | Difficult to control | Possible to control |
| Cost | Relatively cheap | Relatively expensive |

Fig. 2 – A comparison of hard and soft power characteristics

Source: Author

Soft power is therefore by definition, power which acts best in a gradual and subtle fashion. The use of this power is accepted in a natural manner; it can not be pushed upon the receiver. A propaganda campaign pushed by an occupying power on to a non-accepting population is likely to be unsubtle, direct and received extremely sceptically by the target population. Unsolicited propaganda is unlikely to influence a jaded people to a great extent, and cannot be considered as soft power unless the

²² Opinion polls conducted in China often show that Chinese people regard Japanese products and company brands highly, while at the same time strongly disliking Japanese policies and attitudes (Searchina 2003, China Survey 2003).

receivers are actually receptive (in post-war Japan and Germany, common people saw the Western occupiers to some extent as liberators, and were open to messages of democracy and freedom). However, a sustained image-building exercise carried out over many years and backed by concrete examples of genuinely cooperative intent is more likely to have a positive impact on the target, and ultimately to be accepted; this is an example of soft power (Chong 2004: 97). Both Germany and Japan have had to conduct such a sustained image-building campaign over many decades in order to rehabilitate themselves in the world's eyes after the Second World War. Of these two, Germany (Buruma 1994) would appear to have been more successful in building a good image and relationship with its neighbours; however, this may be connected with the more supportive environment which it found within the European Economic Community. Japan, by contrast, has had to rebuild its image with only American support (and pressure), although this is not to say it could not have improved its relations by formally apologising for its wartime actions more quickly. An image building exercise is also likely to be more sustainable in terms of costs; the sustained application of hard power is extremely costly, both in financial terms, in the effects on a country's soft power resources, and in political terms, and so is unlikely to be sustainable for the long term. Relatively small investments by Japan into the building up of relations with neighbouring countries through ODA programs have led to uncountable economic returns in terms of trade; compare the hundreds of billions of dollars which are required for a modern war or the economic and military containment of a country, for little or negative return.

Taking all of these aspects of soft power into consideration, it can be said that the essential elements of soft power are the active or passive transfer between people of different communities of ideas and ideals, the willing acceptance of those ideas,

leading to changes in the habits, practices and norms of the receiving communities, and the benefit which therefore accrues to the originator of the ideas.

How is soft power created and utilised?

The creators of soft power are wide and varied, consisting of individuals, companies, organisations and other parts of human society. This is in notable contrast to hard power, the monopoly on which, in established states, is generally held by the central government of a country in the form of military and paramilitary forces, and control over the ability to sanction other countries economically or politically. The use of soft power, however, in general does not have the potential to endanger its wielders, and is controlled much less by the state. This is not without exceptions; technology transfer is a kind of soft power which is usually monitored and controlled by states and companies which fear their own technology being used against them (Riciutti and Yamamoto 2004).

Together, these people and organisations create an atmosphere or pool of culture, ideas and norms which act as the source of soft power. This pool is the structural context in which agents operate to utilise soft power, the agents being government bodies, companies and other NGOs. In particular, internationally active agents create links between countries, across which ideas and information are transmitted. The action of the agents undoubtedly affects the structural context; a body which uses the soft power pool can also add to the pool by its actions, thus changing the structure. This duality of agent and structure has been well documented (Wendt 1987, Giddens 1979, Meyer and Jepperson 2000, Hays 1994, Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Finally, the ideas and information which have passed into the

receiving country enter into its society, subtly changing the ideas, values and norms which already exist there, as depicted in Fig. 3 below. Clearly, therefore, the number and strength of the information links created by agents between countries will affect the quality and quantity of soft power transmitted through those links.

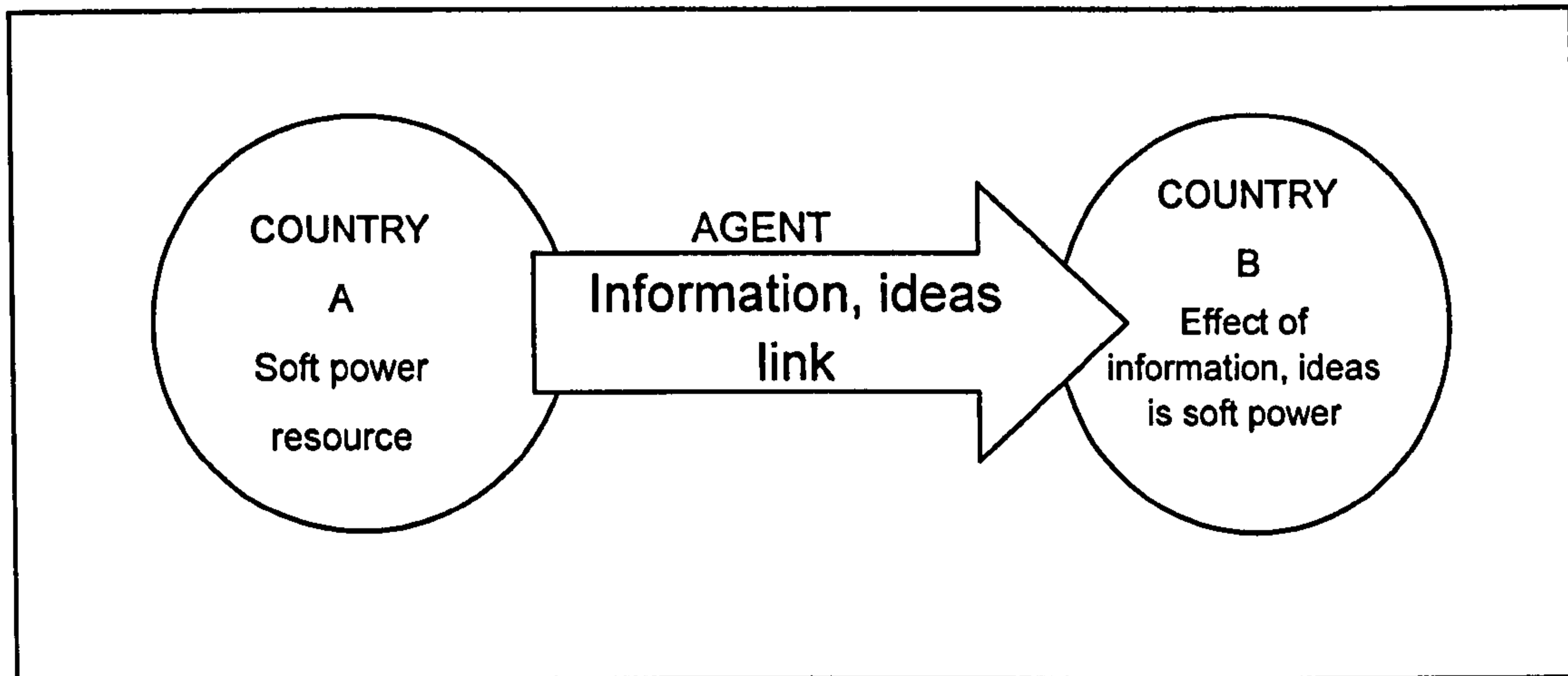


Fig. 3 – A schematic showing the operation of soft power

Source: Author

a) Sources of soft power

Some of the sources of soft power will now be considered in detail.

i) Cultural attractiveness

The attractiveness of the culture or lifestyle of a country affects its soft power resources intrinsically. People’s ideas of a country’s image are based on a myriad of factors, many of which are beyond control. People have romantic images of countries based on ancient historical events and civilisations; the fact that present-day Greece has few vestiges of ancient Greek civilisations does not prevent people from

associating them with each other. Nevertheless, governments and tourist companies can and do play upon these legacies of the past in order to attract visitors.

Stereotypes held throughout the world about countries are often maintained and emphasised by tourism campaigns. Despite Britain's attempts in the 1990s to reinvent its image as 'cool' and modern, old and young Japanese tourists still go there to see Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and Harrods department store. Equally, the few British tourists who go to Japan expect to see temples, Japanese gardens and the *geisha* of Kyoto. All of these domestic and international viewpoints of a country affect its identity. The social expectations which these images create affect how a country is perceived within the international environment; this affects the country's soft power. As Katzenstein has said,

The domestic and social environments of states have effects; they are the arenas in which actors contest norms and through political and social processes construct and reconstruct identities (Katzenstein 1996: 25).

According to polls conducted in China, 41 per cent of respondents felt few or no feelings of closeness or friendship (*shitashimi*) at all towards Japan. However, among the remainder, about 20 per cent said they felt close to Japan because they liked its fashion, *manga* comics, and video games (Searchina 2003). Although this poll was conducted over the Internet, and so reflects the views of a certain middle class segment of the population, these people are likely to be among the opinion formers and literati.

People around the world are attracted to dynamic cultures, and their products and innovations. This has been the basis of the success of such places as Silicon Valley in the USA, which is based upon the image of a thriving, highly dynamic and

high-tech environment where anyone who can contribute is welcome; hence the large number of foreign software pioneers who went there, especially during the 1990s.²³

ii) The attractiveness of ideas and ideology

A thriving, dynamic cultural environment, which attracts foreign artists and other creative people and encourages domestic artists, creates an attractive atmosphere which also impacts on the health of the economy.²⁴ In addition, people who come to see these new ideas then take them back to their own countries and try to use them. They may even go so far as to learn a new language in order to gain new ideas (see Chapter 4 regarding Chinese learners of Japanese). Goldstein and Keohane (1993) point out that ideas are one of the main drivers of change in the construction of foreign policy, and therefore international relations. In particular within institutions such as those which comprise the central government and its agencies, ideas which gain a foothold within the organisation, becoming established practices, can cause substantial changes in policy and in the identity of the institution. These ideas can come from within the country of the institution, but they can and do also come from outside countries. In Japan's case, during the Meiji era, a plethora of ideas were imported by the government specifically in order to change policies and practices in the country (e.g. Beasley 1972, 1990).

Although the term 'ideology' is often given negative connotations, denoting a system of thought which is dogmatic and closed, politicians and intellectuals often

²³ Nye (2004: 58) notes that 'by 1998, Chinese and Indian engineers were running one-quarter of Silicon Valley's high-technology businesses.'

²⁴ Florida and Gates (2001) find in their research that a high overall diversity of people in a city, including many foreigners, "bohemians" and gays, is a good indicator of a city's high-technology success. Also see Quigley (1998) on diversity and growth.

derive their beliefs from ideological perspectives. Hence 'liberalism', 'conservatism' and 'socialism' have been major drivers of political and social action, and have attracted followers as a result. The ideology of communism and its economic policies was (and in a few places still is) very attractive to many people who sought to establish its precepts within their societies. Even more attractive has been the ideology of capitalism; in the present day, the idea that increased trade leads to increased wealth has gradually persuaded countries and institutions around the world to lower trade barriers, thus leading to globalisation. In East Asia, the Japanese ideology of economic development led by state industrial policy, known as 'developmentalism' (Johnson 1982), has been very influential in the shaping of society and economy in many countries in that region. Chong (2004) details the influence which Singapore had in regional discourse through the "Asian values" ideology espoused in particular by Lee Kuan Yew, seized as a tool for countering Western economic neoliberalism by several other countries.

Thompson describes ideology as 'meaning in the service of power' (Thompson 1989: 7), referring to the purpose and function of ideology, which is to influence others in order to spread a particular way of thinking. Gerring reviews the many ways in which ideology has been defined over the past centuries, and arrives at the conclusion that a 'core' definition of ideology must reflect 'coherence' of 'idea-elements' (Gerring 1997: 980) at least in respect of other ideologies. However the term is defined, ideology represents soft power through its attractiveness to large and/or influential groups of people, often regardless of cultural, linguistic or national borders.

iii) Economic attractiveness

The success and dynamism of a country's economy is also an attraction to people in other countries. It is an attraction which makes people want to see for themselves why that country is successful, and to strive to gain ideas to emulate it. Government policies, business practices and the organisation of society all become of interest to outsiders who wish to use new ideas to improve their own situations.

A 2005 poll conducted by the South Korean newspaper Dong-a Ilbo in China revealed that, among ten categories the economy was rated the most interesting point about Japan by 29.5 per cent of respondents (Mike and Maureen Mansfield Foundation 2005), showing its importance in terms of Japan's soft power resources.

Investors and entrepreneurs also become attracted to successful countries, bringing their capital, expertise and contacts with them. This leads to a virtuous circle; the dynamism and new ideas created by the newcomers in turn attracts more people, who in turn take their experiences back to their countries and improve the reputation of the dynamic country they visited.

b) Agents of soft power

Soft power is created within a country through people's individual ideas and endeavours. It could be said that a pool of soft power becomes available through these efforts. However, in order for soft power to have consequences for a country's international relations, it needs to be channelled through links and focussed by internationally active agents within that country. Agents also must encourage the opening of channels for information to flow between countries, in order for soft

power to work. Agents are actors within the country which have purpose based upon their structural context; in this case, the agents use the soft power resources around them to inform their actions with regard to actors in other countries.²⁵ The agents' actions in turn affect their structural context, that is, the soft power resources available. As Wendt notes,

Just as social structures are ontologically dependent upon and therefore constituted by the practices and self-understandings of agents, the causal powers and interests of those agents, in their own turn, are constituted and therefore explained by structures (Wendt 1987: 359).

The main agents which can utilise a country's soft power include the central government and its myriad arms, local authorities and internationally active non-state organisations such as companies and NGOs.

i) Central government and its agencies

National governments can exert soft power in a direct manner, or in an indirect manner. By promoting their country's image in other countries, or by instituting cultural and educational exchanges in them (see p.155), and by pursuing a positive co-operational foreign policy, governments can directly utilise soft power to achieve their goals, and many of the methods discussed below have been found to be used by the Japan Foundation, an agent of the Japanese state discussed in Chapter 4.

²⁵ It has also been argued that an 'agent' is the 'legitimated representation of some legitimated principal, which may be an individual, an actual or potential organisation, a nation state or abstract principles...' (Meyer and Jepperson 2000: 101 n2), which provides another method of understanding how various actors act as agents of soft power.

Equally, by creating a good environment for the exchange of ideas, information and goods with other countries governments are indirectly promoting the ability of their own citizens and companies to influence other countries positively, and thereby increasing the country's soft power.

Governments can and do advertise in the media, promoting their countries as good tourist destinations²⁶ or as good locations for foreign direct investment.²⁷ They can use their contacts with other countries' governments to establish educational and cultural exchanges, or simply provide funding and sponsorship for citizens of other countries to visit their country to learn about its culture and language, and to exchange ideas.²⁸ Governments can also establish foundations in foreign countries which fund promotions and exhibitions relating to their country.²⁹ They can provide publicly funded jobs, which are especially for foreign citizens in order that they may become cultural ambassadors.³⁰ Governments are the source of much of the world's development aid. Governments can also provide their services to other countries in helping to mediate disputes or provide peacekeeping security forces as a neutral third party; this can improve their reputation as friendly or cooperative countries³¹ and hence their soft power.

Indirect actions which will improve a country's soft power include initiatives to improve links and cooperation between countries. Firstly, governments which help to maintain a welcoming environment in their own country to outside ideas and

²⁶ The official Spanish tourist website is a good example (<http://www.spain.info>, Accessed 27/7/06).

²⁷ Examples include MOFA's Invest Japan! Campaign (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/japan/invest/index.html>, Accessed 27/7/06) and UK Trade and Investment (<https://www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk>, Accessed 27/7/06).

²⁸ E.g. the American Fulbright Program, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's MEXT Scholarship.

²⁹ For Japan, the Japan Foundation (see Chapter 4), for Germany, the Goethe Institute.

³⁰ For example, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (McConnell 2000).

³¹ Norway is a good example of a small country highly active in international peace negotiations (*Economist* 2003, Henrikson 2005).

influences are likely to be seen as attractive places for intellectuals, scientists and other thinkers to visit or work in, taking their valuable expertise and ideas with them (Florida and Gates 2001). A welcoming investment environment will also attract companies, which among their other attributes are vast stores of ideas and information.

Finally, governments can help to promote this kind of open environment outside their own countries by encouraging the development of groups of countries with common interests or goals. This includes the idea of regionalisation,³² in which case the common interests are defined by geography - the fact that the countries are neighbours in a region and must deal with issues in the region together. Other common interests might be a shared history,³³ or shared belief systems³⁴ and ideology.³⁵ Strong groupings which promote links enabling dialogue, free trade and general cooperation between members can increase the soft power of the states involved in them. The European Union is the prime example of this, while other prominent examples include ASEAN and NAFTA. In consequence of the fact that ideas and goods are often most easily exchanged between neighbouring countries purely due to their proximity and shared history, regional groupings tend to be stronger than other types of groupings. Nevertheless, stable and functional non-geographical groupings can also thrive.

³² Regionalisation refers to the gradual economic and/or political integration of countries within a geographical region.

³³ E.g. the Commonwealth, L'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

³⁴ E.g. the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

³⁵ The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) could easily be described as an organisation promoting capitalist ideology. The now defunct COMECON was an international organisation for communist countries.

ii) Regional and Local governments

If a sufficiently trusting relationship exists between two countries, then it is likely that regional governments will be able to reach beyond their national borders to establish relationships with regions of other countries; a process which was commonplace before the rise of unitary, centralised nation states (Linklater 1998).

In the age of globalisation, regions are again becoming more relevant as national borders to some extent are becoming more porous, and in some ways weaker. A long-standing form of cooperation between local governments of different countries has been the 'sister city' relationship. Cities are proud to display, alongside their names, that they are linked to cities in other countries. Through these links, other initiatives often thrive, such as cultural exchanges and the forming of business relationships³⁶ as is discussed with regard to Kobe City in Chapter 5 (for example see p.204).

A good example of this 'microregionalism' (Breslin and Hook 2002) in East Asia is the burgeoning linkage between regions with complementary economies in Japan, South Korea and China (KEI 2002, Kyushu METI 2003). Other examples of cross-border relationships include Malmo-Lund-Copenhagen in Sweden and Denmark (Oresund 2004) and San Diego-Tijuana straddling the USA and Mexico (Kado and Kiy 2004). These regional link-ups naturally increase the flow of ideas and culture, and hence enable the action of soft power, between the participating regions, and therefore those regions' countries. Additionally, increased understanding and knowledge about each other's country is likely to increase attractiveness, and decrease prejudices caused by the fear of the unknown.

³⁶ See Guichard-Anguis (2001) on Japanese and French sister city relations.

Cities, as the centres of their regions, have an important role to play in these linkages. Alger (1990, 1999) argues that cities are neglected in international relations scholarship, which generally focuses on the state system, despite their importance in cross-border relations. Examples of cities which have tried to change international policy in important ways are Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Alger 1990: 511). The mayors of these cities have continuously lobbied in the United Nations for nuclear disarmament, and additionally write to protest strongly to every country which tests a nuclear bomb.³⁷ Friedmann postulates a network of 'world cities' (Friedmann 1986) which, linked together, form a 'core' of activity in the world. However, it is reasonable to assume that with the increasing pace of globalisation, not only capital cities but also smaller cities will play a role in international relations through their exchanges and links.

iii) Non-state organisations: NGOs and businesses

Non-governmental organisations, or NGOs, cover a vast range of institutions, associations and interest groups. Some NGOs may be associated with the country in which they are based (see p.278), but some are truly global or transnational endeavours.

Local NGOs, run by just a few people for local communities, are small in scope but collectively can have some impact on international issues. Alger notes that

As the global context of cities has been transformed, changes have been taking place in the ways in which local people attempt to cope with the foreign policy issues of states...Those involved tend to be a small minority of

³⁷ Many of these letters are on display at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Hiroshima.

middle class people who had some international education and sometimes some kind of international experience that sustains their concern for international issues. The traditional activities of these local “internationals” in the United States has been three main types: relief and aid, exchange programs, and international education (Alger 1990: 505).

Their activities can contribute to a positive image of their base countries or cultures. Global NGOs have less of an association with their base countries, being highly decentralised. However, many global NGOs are associated with Western countries; charities such as Oxfam or environmental groups such as Greenpeace have headquarters in the West, and do most of their fundraising in rich (usually Western) countries.³⁸ Many Western governments use established NGOs to manage substantial proportions of their official ODA funds; they contract out their ODA programs.³⁹

Therefore, NGOs are also relevant in terms of soft power, as is detailed in Chapter 6. They not only can improve the reputation and attractiveness of the countries or cultures with which they are associated, but they can gain an independent capacity which they often use to achieve certain political ends in the international arena. Reports by groups such as Amnesty International are taken seriously by governments around the world. Reports made during the occupation of Iraq in 2004 by the International Red Cross about abuse of prisoners by American and British military forces caused shock waves in those countries. NGOs themselves therefore gain soft power by their actions, in terms of recognition and respect for

³⁸ The Oxfam Annual Report (2002) notes that Oxfam International has offices in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Spain, Ireland, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Japan. Its head office is in the UK.

³⁹ According to the UK's Department for International Development, £223 million of UK overseas aid was channelled through “civil society” organisations in 2002/3, an increase of 32 per cent on the previous year (DFID 2006).

their work, and they can additionally damage countries' or other organisations' soft power.

Although leading companies profess to be 'global' and often try to distance themselves from their home countries in order to gain business in overseas markets, they inevitably take their business culture, practices and ideas wherever they go. These ideas usually reflect the culture of their home country. This effect is increased by these companies' drive to save money, by producing goods and services which can be sold anywhere in the world, and therefore must to some extent embody a global culture. It is difficult for global companies to adapt their products completely to specific markets if they want to undercut local suppliers. This is one reason why Western companies have initially found it difficult to operate in newly emerging markets with clearly (to them) unfamiliar cultures, such as China (*Economist* 2004).

An advertisement produced by an American company in Japan is noticeably different in style and content from that of a local company. These advertisements often bring an American brand of humour, which is unfamiliar on Japanese television screens. If a Gap clothing store in Japan is stepped into, posters of people from many different cultural backgrounds, with blonde hair and blue eyes, or of African American background among others can be observed. These kinds of images are seldom seen in Japanese stores, even in the present day. However this American idea is to some extent seeping into Japanese companies' culture – some companies do include non-traditional Japanese models in their promotional imagery; a process which demonstrates US soft power.

The whole exercise of branding and marketing is an exercise in persuading people of the attractiveness of a product or service. If this attractiveness rubs off on the culture or country associated with the company, it may contribute to that

country's soft power resources. However, as the Toyota incident showed (see p.24, n14), negative publicity can damage a positive image quickly, for companies as well as countries.

c) Means of instrumentalising soft power

The speed and efficiency of transmission of soft power has been profoundly affected by new communications technologies which have become ubiquitous around the world in the last few decades. In previous eras, the ability to communicate and exchange ideas between countries was limited to the rich and powerful; in this new era of globalisation, the ability to communicate ideas to people around the world is becoming available to the general public.

More traditional means of communicating ideas have also become cheaper to produce through technology. Newspapers, magazines and books have proliferated as the literacy rates of many areas of the world have improved along with economic development. Information and the means of its transmission have been commodified, leading in turn to the commodification of culture and cultural products.⁴⁰

i) Mass media and communications

The mass media became the primary means of communication between people from different societies and countries in the twentieth century.⁴¹ Perhaps the most widely

⁴⁰ See Adorno and Horkheimer (1997) on the culture industry and the commodification of culture.

⁴¹ See Taylor (1997), Thompson (1990) on the role of the mass media in propagating ideas throughout the world.

owned and effective means of communicating new ideas is the television.⁴² Television programs have the ability to emphasise and magnify attractive and unattractive points about different countries and cultures. With the growth in the number of channels available for consumers to watch, the amount of programming available from other countries has also grown. In particular, satellite and cable television have given people a taste of other countries' cultures in their own homes.

An example of this medium as a conduit for soft power lies in the sudden popularity of the South Korean soap opera, *Kyoul Yonga* in Japan where it is called *Fuyu no Sonata* (Winter Sonata). This kind of programme, with its simple themes of love and friendship, has proved so popular in Japan that it has led directly to an increased interest in Korean culture generally (*Japan Times*, 7 April 2004) and Korean language study materials (*Kyodo News*, 17 May 2004).

In recent years, the popularity of Japanese *anime* cartoons around the world has led to millions of children growing up with ideas dreamt up largely by Japanese artists. While it is difficult to predict how this may affect these children in the future, it will undoubtedly infuse them with a Japanese point of view (whether they are aware of this or not) on some aspects of life.⁴³ Cartoons or animations are much easier to export than drama serials or films, as they can be dubbed into other languages simply; however the underlying concepts within them remain Japanese.

News programmes and channels greatly affect the public's view of the surrounding world.⁴⁴ There are two ways in which they can do this – firstly by their portrayal of other countries, and secondly by the culture in which the news

⁴² See Langdale (1997) on the importance of international broadcasting in East Asia.

⁴³ See Han (2001) on the debate within South Korea about the deregulation of Japanese cultural imports.

⁴⁴ See Eldridge et al (1997), Couldry (2000) on the power of media; Kabashima and Broadbent (1986) on the power of the media in Japan.

programme itself is based. In the first case, news programmes often choose to concentrate on tragedies or disastrous events. This could result in the worsening of a country's image – the opposite effect a country which is seeking to use soft power would wish for. Therefore, it could be argued that a country seeking to maximise its positive image would prefer to stay out of the limelight on these programs. Such a strategy could backlash if the image of a country which is non-transparent and secretive is projected.

Good economic, business and sports news also tends to be reported on these programmes, and countries which understand the importance of projecting a good image encourage foreign reporters to cover these items.

An international news channel such as CNN clearly broadcasts news in a manner which is based on American views of how it should be broadcast. This is equally true of the UK-based channel, BBC World⁴⁵, or of the Qatar based Arabic channel, Al Jazeera.

Television has also been an important channel for projecting music and musicians, other artists and their ideas. America's MTV (Music Television) is often credited, or blamed, for playing a leading part in spreading American culture around the world, especially among young people. Images of rich and glamorous pop stars and their lifestyles have encouraged young people to question their own situations or to try to aspire to similarly rich lifestyles. Since the 1980s and 1990s Japanese J-Pop⁴⁶ singers (such as Utada Hikaru, Hamasaki Ayumi among many others) have become popular throughout East Asia, inevitably spreading Japanese ideas through

⁴⁵ See Chalaby (2002) on how European public broadcasters set up global channels in response to CNN's dominance of broadcasting of the Gulf War in 1991.

⁴⁶ The term 'J-Pop' is commonly used to refer to Japanese popular music; likewise 'K-pop' refers to Korean music.

their music and videos, and in more recent years, the quickly developing South Korean pop industry is following their example (BoA is a recent K-pop creation popular in Japan and elsewhere in East Asia). In order to be able to sing these songs in *karaoke*⁴⁷ bars (another Japanese idea) many young people try hard to learn the lyrics, even if they are in an unfamiliar language. An interesting contribution by a teenager to a website aimed at young people around the world reports that J-Pop is more popular in Taiwan than American music because parents approve of its conservative tastes, and disapprove of American stars such as Britney Spears due to her 'dress habits' (Wang 2004).

The commercial efficiency with which the J-pop industry has been producing singers and bands is perhaps unique in the world, and its methods appear to have spread into local markets in South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong; this is a clear example of soft power (Iwabuchi 2003, McGray 2002, Ogawa 2001).

Print media, including newspapers, magazines and books, have been the main way to transmit ideas and attract interest among people until relatively recently, and the print media is still arguably more influential than new electronic media carried over the Internet, due to the number of people who can access it and the guaranteed quality of edited articles; although it is uncertain whether this state of affairs will continue as the number of Internet users around the world grows rapidly.

Creative people also find expression through printed media. A case in point is Japan's *manga* (comic book) industry, which has been successful in promoting its style throughout the world. It is probably most pervasive in East Asia, popular

⁴⁷ See Mitsui and Hosokawa (1998) for detailed investigation of the spread of *karaoke* around the world.

formats having been translated and copied throughout the region, but is also becoming more popular in Europe and the USA.⁴⁸

The exploding popularity of the Internet as a means of communication throughout the world has created a powerful new medium for the transmission of soft power without regard for national borders. The number of people owning mobile phones now outnumbers the number owning computers in developed and developing countries (*Economist* 2003), and in some countries more people use the Internet through appropriately specified phones than through computers.

As significant resources are required to broadcast programmes, or print media, these channels have often been subject to the control of governments or large companies. However, the Internet enables even individuals to publish information in broadcast or textual forms which is then accessible all over the world, through computers and increasingly also through mobile phones.⁴⁹

This means that soft power, represented by the transfer of ideas, has the potential to be effective even in countries with authoritarian regimes which try to control the flow of information to their citizens. With faster connections and improved technology, broadcasters can also use the Internet to send live video and other programmes, further empowering Internet users to access outside information and ideas.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ One such format is called *Weekly Shonen Jump*, a weekly compilation of popular comic strips in Japan, which has now been exported successfully throughout Asia, Europe and the USA (*Washington Post*, 28 December 2003). Also see Shiraishi (1997), Lai and Wong (2001).

⁴⁹ See Li, Xuan and Kluver (2003) on the influence of Western news reports in online chat rooms in China, despite attempts by the Government to censor them.

⁵⁰ An example of this is how information about the SARS epidemic of 2003 in China was largely covered up by authorities, until they realised that people were communicating directly with each other about it over the internet (Kalathil 2003: 491, BBC 2003). The popular revolution against Joseph Estrada in the Philippines is also reported to have been mainly organised over the internet and by mobile texting (*Time* 2001).

ii) Movement of people

Soft power, in the form of ideas and ways of thinking, is also transferred through the movement and actions of people.⁵¹ As people move between countries, and interact with people in those countries, they take, transfer and exchange ideas, concepts and ways of thinking.

This is most direct and meaningful in gatherings intended to promote this purpose, such as trade or business conferences, academic conferences or institutions where governmental officials can exchange opinions and come to understand partner countries' positions on relations. Countries which promote these exchanges of ideas are likely to promote the production of ideas in their own countries, which are likely to in turn eventually be influential in other countries.

Cultural and educational exchanges similarly lead to the promotion of ideas in countries which take part.⁵² Countries which operate cultural exchanges with each other are likely to benefit in terms of the fresh production of ideas in comparison to countries which do not partake. Not only does the person who is enabled to participate carry ideas from his own culture, but he will also take ideas from the new culture back to his own country. If the exchange operates in both directions, each country will benefit doubly (see Fig.4, p.107).

Migrant workers, in a similar fashion, carry their ideas and experience with them. However, in this case the most obvious beneficiary is the country which attracts the workers, unless the workers then return to their homes. The host country

⁵¹ See Befu (2001) on the movement of Japanese people to and from other countries around the world, and the effects of this cultural transfer.

⁵² See Guichard-Anguis (2001) on cultural exchanges and sister city relationships between Japan and France.

is benefiting from the years of experience and expertise which are carried by the worker; this is a very cost effective way to improve a country's knowledge base, considering that the host country has had to contribute nothing to the building up of the migrant worker's expertise.

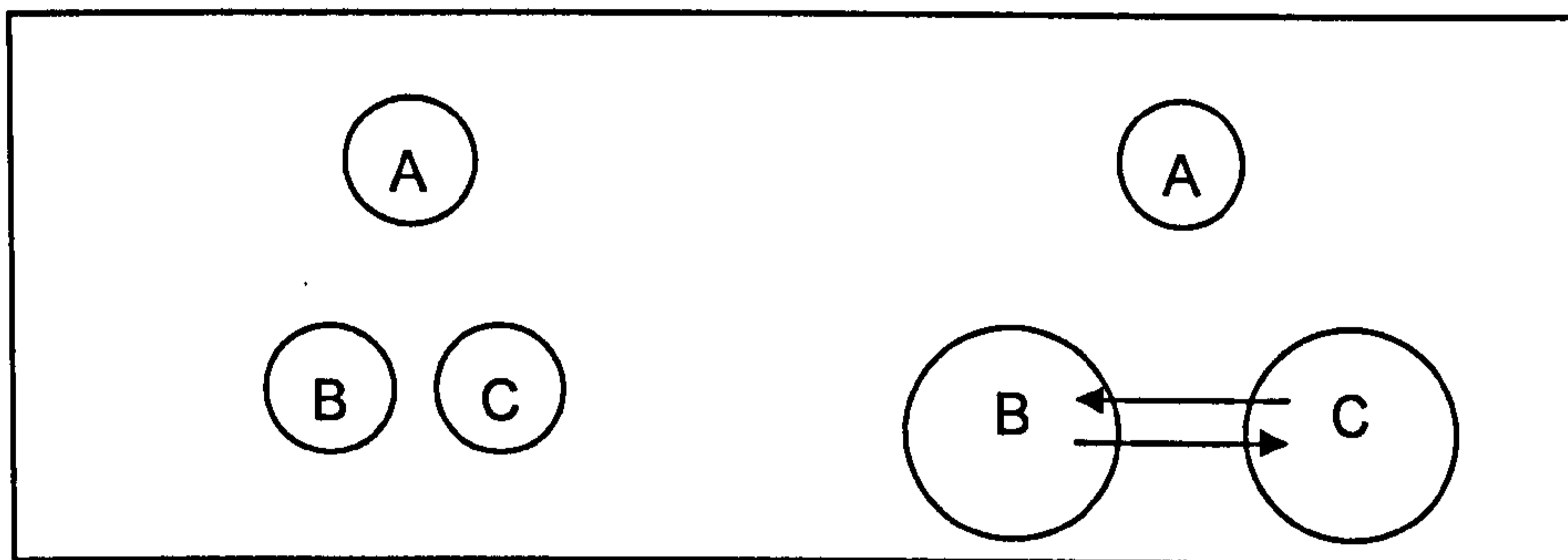


Fig. 4 – Ideas exchange

Source: Author

The circles represent countries, with the size of the circle representing each country's stock of ideas. Countries B and C exchange ideas, doubling their stock, while Country A does not partake in the exchange, and its knowledge base remains the same size.

Finally, tourists can also carry ideas. As short-term tourists do not often interact greatly with people in the country they are visiting, they are unlikely to benefit their home countries by imparting their own ideas and culture to the countries they are visiting. However, they can benefit the countries they visit, if they have had a good experience, by spreading information about the virtues of those countries when they return home.

If a person can be a repository and carrier of ideas and culture, then a company can perform the same function to a far greater degree, through its employees, investments and products. If a company builds a new facility in another

country, or invests in a company which is established in that country, it will certainly bring new ideas and ways of thinking to that country. The ideas may be from the base country of the investing company, or from links it has in other countries. However, it will form a base for at least a two-way exchange of ideas, and the ideas which are most attractive will be most pervasive. Employees travel between company bases in various countries, or to deal with other companies, taking their ideas and soft power with them. Manufacturers' and service companies' products equally carry soft power wherever they are successfully sold.

Understandably, many companies seek to project a global image, and try to play down any association with the home country which may be unwelcome. This has been especially true of Japanese companies working in East Asia (Iwabuchi 2002) which are sensitive to consumers who are wary of any kind of Japanese incursion. Nevertheless, in their methods of marketing, production and management, it is difficult for these companies to fundamentally change the ideas and culture which they bring from their home countries, and these are inevitably transferred to local employees and subsidiaries.

Effects

Goldstein and Keohane discuss the effects of ideas on norms (legal and social) through their institutionalisation, in particular when the institutions in question are powerful:

Regardless of how a particular set of beliefs comes to influence politics, use of those ideas over time implies changes in existing rules and norms. Ideas have a lasting influence on politics through their incorporation into the terms

of political debate; but the impact of some set of ideas may be mediated by the operation of institutions in which the ideas are embedded...In general, when institutions intervene, the impact of ideas may be prolonged for decades or even generations (Goldstein and Keohane 1994: 20).

Hence, when soft power acts upon an institution, that is an organisation which is well established in a society, its effectiveness is amplified. This is likely to speed up the process by which ideas become established practices and norms within that society. The action of a country's soft power works in a similar fashion.

In contrast to hard power, whose effects will be seen almost instantaneously, the effects of soft power take time to become apparent. However, if soft power can be built up continuously the result can be very pervasive and long lasting (Chong 2004). A country's identity, once embedded within the minds of people, can take a long time to change.

The effects of an application of hard power, such as military force or economic sanctions, can be seen quickly. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by US forces was a devastating example of this. However, it is debateable as to whether hard power can actually directly change the underlying culture of a country or people in a way envisaged by the country applying it in a short time. Even when the USA bombed, invaded and occupied Japan during the Second World War, the underlying culture of the people did not change drastically. US forces tried to induce directly a multitude of changes in the organisation of society and industry, but many of these changes were ultimately short-lived as people and businesses for the most part returned to their traditional practices. Companies continued to work together in groups as they had done previously despite US attempts to break up the *zaibatsu*; old religious customs and practices continued.

However it is possible to say that while hard power is not as effective as soft power in the long term, the use of hard power conceivably may open up a country to the influence of soft power. US soft power arguably changed Japan, Japanese people, and Japanese culture much more dramatically and fundamentally in the post-war era than its hard power. American culture was consumed in Japan voraciously as people sought new ideas and directions (Beasley 1990). The impact of American consumerism and individualism is immediately visible in Japanese cities, and is particularly embodied in people who grew up after the use of televisions and video cassette recorders made American culture, ideas and norms accessible to all.

In turn, these American ideas were appropriated, mixed with indigenous ideas until they were almost unrecognisable as American, and then re-exported around the world, in particular influencing people in East Asia, but in many respects also reaching the USA and Europe.

The sustained pursuit over decades of ideas such as high quality control in manufacturing, the maintenance of tight links between suppliers and manufacturers which is one of the characteristics of the Japanese *keiretsu* system (see e.g. Gerlach 1989), and continuous innovation (*kaizen*) in manufacturing are some examples of Japanese soft power which are likely to serve the country well for many more decades to come. The term 'Made in Japan' is a guarantee of high quality (ChinaSurvey 2003). The same is true for Germany, which is still well known throughout the world for the quality of its manufacturing.

Other countries in East Asia such as South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore are well advanced in gaining similar reputations for quality in production and innovation in high-technology, while parts of India are pursuing a reputation for excellence in

information services; the effects of these investments in reputation will be long-lasting.

Small countries which do not have the resources to utilise hard power to achieve influence in global affairs, have realised quickly that the use of soft power is the best way they can improve their situations. Norway has gained a reputation as a country which is helpful in negotiating settlements between warring parties, such as in the Philippines, the Balkans, Colombia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka and the Middle East (Henrikson 2005, Nye 2004, *Economist* 2004). Switzerland, with a reputation for neutrality in world affairs, plays host to the headquarters of a number of international organisations such as 28 United Nations bodies (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs 2004) and the headquarters of the International Red Cross. Singapore has also managed to use its reputation for business acumen and orderliness to gain influence in East Asian discourse. China's former leader, Deng Xiaoping, authorised Singapore as a model for political and economic development, and China 'has specifically invited Singaporean public and private corporations to set up city-scale experiments in several industrial parks in the coastal provinces...' (Chong 2004: 103).

The promotion of exchanges and dialogue between countries has profoundly long-lasting effects. A lack of knowledge about another country and its people is likely to breed mistrust and prejudice; if, through exchange and other contact, people of different cultures can learn more about each other there is less chance of conflict based upon irrational fear of the unknown.

At the elite level, people who have deep knowledge and experience of neighbouring countries, and go on to become leaders in their own countries are likely to have a head start in maintaining good relations with neighbours. Soon after Tony

Blair was elected Prime Minister in Britain, he was able to garner much local praise and admiration by addressing the French National Assembly in French (BBC 1998), which he had learned while working in France as a barman in his younger days. Nye cites the example of the former US under-secretary of state for public diplomacy finding that half of the world leaders who joined Bush's 'coalition against terror' had passed through American exchange programs (Nye 2004: 110). Japan's JET exchange programme, which started during the late 1980s⁵³, is now one of the largest employers of UK university graduates, many of whom are now beginning to enter influential positions; a tactic which is very likely to be beneficial to Japan's interests in the future.

The ultimate example of the effects of this type of soft power can be seen in the success of the European Union. The multitude of cultural and political exchanges and cooperative programs between its members has led to it gaining a reputation as a model of cooperation around the world, and has led to an increasing number of countries in Europe and on the periphery of Europe wanting to join it (Nye 2004: 77). This model of soft power techniques arose from the realisation that the use of hard power can only damage all sides involved, whereas the use of soft power creates a win-win situation for all involved.

As soft power takes a long time to build up, it also takes a long time to be rendered ineffective. To some extent, the attractiveness of a culture such as that of the USA is separated from the activities of its current administration. Even though recently anti-American feeling is high in many countries due to its military actions, American companies' products are still popular in those countries, reflecting the long-term trend. This is not to say that sustained use of military actions and other

⁵³ See McConnell (2000) for an in-depth study of this programme.

coercive methods is not damaging American soft power in the long term as well as the short term – global American companies are now becoming worried that their brands are being damaged by US military actions (*Financial Times*, 24 May 2004).

The building up of soft power does not incur any particular extra costs on a country; in fact, the benefits it brings in terms of increases in trade and exchange of ideas mean that it is a highly profitable exercise for all involved. The use of hard power is in stark contrast to this - the US Congress as of April 2004 had allocated \$162 billion for the invasion and occupation of Iraq (BBC 2004).

Another difference between hard power and soft power is in how they can be directed. The effect of hard power can be predicted fairly accurately; it sets out to achieve specific aims, which can be controlled relatively directly by the user, who is usually a government. Sanctions will be felt by the affected country immediately, and it will know who has applied them and why. The ability to control the application of hard power is a reason why it is favoured by politicians who are elected for short terms, and need to see results quickly in order to maintain their domestic popularity.

On the other hand, a soft power strategy will only work in the long term, requiring a succession of administrations to effect it, as the ideas which constitute soft power take time to become established as habits, practices and norms in the receiving country. The effects of the strategy will be to some extent unclear; it can not be known whether a targeted country will reciprocate, or be at all susceptible to the charms of another country's culture. A case demonstrating this is that of North Korea. The closed nature of its society, and the manner in which all exchange of information and goods is closely controlled by the dictatorship has meant that even the determined application of the 'sunshine policy' (instigated by President Kim Dae

Jung of South Korea) has had only a small effect⁵⁴ over a number of years. The effects of soft power are much more likely to be seen in a relatively open, liberal country where a large number of people are free to trade with outsiders, and to exchange ideas.

The limits of soft power in foreign policy

In certain respects, the soft power of a country is analogous to the reputation of a company and its brand name.⁵⁵ As companies do not usually have recourse to any kind of hard power, they have perfected the techniques of marketing their qualities and protecting their brand reputations. Companies know that any adverse publicity is liable to harm their image, and therefore their sales.

This analogy can not be taken to extremes, however. Countries tend to last much longer than companies; their actions are therefore likely to affect their reputation for much longer periods of time. Britain's actions throughout the world two hundred years ago still strongly affect global perceptions of it today.

The essential points of soft power capture the factors which contribute to economic and political success of countries. Countries which have built up well respected identities using soft power and which have not negated them through coercive actions are generally respected in the international environment, and can reap the increased opportunities in trade in knowledge and goods which result. Countries which rely upon hard power are not respected so much as feared. The

⁵⁴ See Lee (2004) for a negative assessment of the policy, but Kim (2002) for a more positive assessment. Also see Son (2006) regarding the effect of the policy on South Korean attitudes to North Korea.

⁵⁵ See Olins (2005) on national branding.

expense of enforcing exchanges based upon coercion or implied threats is liable to reduce the benefits of the exchange and cause potential for instability in international relations.

The military policies which the USA has used to threaten and control the oil producing countries of the Middle East may well backfire when people finally are able to overthrow the dictatorships in the region which it has supported and still supports. A soft power strategy would arguably trade current short-term stability in oil production for a future free of confrontations between suicide-bombers and US interests, through promotion of liberal democracy and basic human rights by its own example (rather than trying to force the concepts on Middle Easterners).

In some cases, it must be admitted that the reliance on only soft power as a means of conducting international relations will not be adequate. If a country or its close ally is attacked with military force, then it clearly must try to defend itself with force. In such a short-term situation, soft power is inadequate. In fact, the basis of soft power is to stop such an event happening in the first place. Additionally, if there is the possibility that a terrible tragedy, such as a genocide or other mass persecution is occurring or about to occur, then it may be justifiable on humanitarian grounds to use military force or sanctions to prevent catastrophe; in fact the norm of humanitarianism has been spread around the world gradually through the action of soft power, as it is an attractive concept (Finnemore 1996).

However, it must be remembered that there are certain conditions in which it will be difficult for soft power to act even without these tragedies.

a) Illiberal regimes

The use of soft power is wholly dependent on the possibility of the transfer of ideas by agents across links between countries. If a state is completely isolated or closed off from this kind of transfer, soft power will not be able to act. If it is not completely closed off, then soft power will be able to act a little. This is less of a problem than in previous ages; the advent of satellite communications technology and the Internet means that ideas are transferable between virtually any place on the earth. However, if the equipment to do this is not available because it has been strictly forbidden by the regime controlling the state, as appears to be the case in North Korea, then there are few ways for ideas to be transferred. It is also difficult for ideas to be transferred through people in such a state; the movement of people into and out of the country is strictly controlled, and reportedly any foreigners entering the country are escorted by government 'minders' at all times. This makes contact with local people difficult (Lankov 2003).

Nevertheless, even in possibly the most illiberal regime in the world, some ideas are transferred. The small leakage of ideas into and out of the country is a consequence of the tight control imposed by the regime. This control encourages desperate people to use any means possible to escape the country, thus taking impressions of the culture and situation to other countries. In addition, the rulers of such states tend to reserve privileges for themselves, such as access to foreign culture and news. Kim Jong Il has been reported to enjoy watching satellite television and foreign videos. He has also travelled to China to observe changes in that country. This may have led to some changes being introduced in the DPRK, such as some

elements of a market economy (*Economist* 2002a). Therefore, the actions of soft power (in this case China's soft power) are visible.

In the case of China, a subject of the case studies in this thesis, there was little chance for outside countries, including Japan, to have a soft power effect on its people before the liberalisation policies were started by the Communist Party in the late 1970s (although the Japan China Friendship Association, as detailed in Chapter 6, was able to open some information channels into and out from China). Until relatively recently, perhaps the most important route for ideas and values to be transmitted – the mass media – was strictly controlled by the state. Even in the present day, the Chinese government strives to block unpalatable ideas from entering China and affecting its people, although the Internet and the growth of mass tourism in China has negated this strategy in recent years.⁵⁶

b) Poverty and remoteness

In the case of widespread poverty, the limiting factor may not be the lack of a transfer medium, but the ability of people to own receiving and transmitting equipment, or the means to go to a place where outside ideas are freely available for all to see, such as a large town or city. Poor rural subsistence farmers living in remote areas are unlikely to be able to access outside ideas easily. Although they may meet travellers who carry news, the transfer of ideas happens at a glacial pace. Additionally, if a person is struggling just to survive and feed his family, he is unlikely to be able to search actively for outside knowledge. Therefore, the action of

⁵⁶ Although the Internet is becoming widely used throughout China, the state is struggling to control the ideas which are expressed on it (*Economist* 2006)

soft power would be almost negligible in these places. This situation is still commonplace in developing countries around the world such as China, India and many African countries. As is shown in Chapters 4 to 6 of this thesis, most information links created by Japanese agents in China have been in the more prosperous, eastern areas; it is difficult for them to reach into the more remote western side of China, thus reducing any soft power effect there.

As has been outlined, soft power encompasses a wide range of ideas. However a common theme of mutual benefit through a certain convergence of ideas, norms and values is apparent, although the extent to which countries involved in this transfer of ideas benefit from the process is not necessarily the same. Nevertheless, soft power cannot be effective without the unforced consent, implied or otherwise, of the country on the receiving end of it.

Constructivism as a theoretical basis for the understanding of soft power

Having provided an explanation of soft power, it is now possible to consider where this soft power theory fits into the various schools of power thought as described in Chapter 2, and to explain why constructivism is thought to be the most relevant school of thought for the study of soft power. For this purpose, the inapplicability of realist, neorealist and neoliberalist schools of thought to the understanding of soft power will now be explained, with reference to more subtle constructivist theories.

As was detailed in Chapter 2, realists and neorealists assume that nation states act as unitary agents which only look after their own national interests (Morgenthau 1952, Waltz 1979, Mearsheimer 1994), within the context of an anarchical

international environment.⁵⁷ Neoliberalists also take the condition of anarchy as a given (Grieco 1988), although they consider this condition to be controllable through the cooperation of states, or through complex linkages between them (Keohane and Nye 1997).

A constructivist approach would, firstly, agree with the soft power approach taken here in questioning the notion of the state as a singular entity (Ashley 1984, 1988). For the purposes of simplification purely in order to achieve a clearly understandable theory of international relations this simplification may be acceptable to some people, but it is clearly not the case in reality. States consist of many individual actors and agents. Each department of government may act as an agent, and at a further level, officials, politicians and other members of the bureaucracy act as individual agents, each with their own interests and ideas. The manner in which soft power works also demonstrates that the state consists of many actors, which utilise soft power in different ways and according to their own needs, without necessarily referring to the needs of the state as a collective. Agents within the state have varying degrees of interest in, and reasons for, using soft power in other countries.

In a typical administration such as that in Japan, governmental departments often have different interests and goals.⁵⁸ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) acts in a different manner to the Japan Defence Agency; the former with its eyes on global and regional diplomatic strategy, the latter with an eye to fortifying Japan's security alliances and dealing with its own security worries. An agency, such as the

⁵⁷ See Barkin (2003) for argument that this often cited statement of realists' position is an oversimplified characterisation.

⁵⁸ See van Wolferen (1993) for a detailed proposition that the Japanese state is not represented by a single, accountable power source.

Japan Foundation, within MOFA may wish to use soft power in order to further international relations as related in Chapter 4, whereas another agency within the government such as JETRO may wish to use soft power to further trade and investment. Not only do departments within the government have different interests, but different levels of government also have disparate aims. A provincial local government in the Kansai or Kyushu regions (in the western part of Japan) may value its links (cultural, economic and industrial) with other cities in nearby East Asian countries much more highly than the central government in Tokyo, which has a more global or possibly Pacific outlook,⁵⁹ would value them. Hence soft power theory in this sense agrees more with constructivist thought than realist thought. It also agrees with neoliberalist thought in this respect (although, as discussed below, it disagrees in other respects).

Secondly, the constructivist would question the assumption that anarchy is the original condition of the international system. Not only is anarchy that which states make of it (Wendt 1992), but a state which itself consists of many different individual agents cannot necessarily act with one voice in the international system. While a national government may consider its international relations predominantly with regard to national interests, a regional city government may be less constrained. Despite the ebbs and flows of Japan's international relations with China and South Korea, recent national issues have not greatly affected western Japan's regional governments' enthusiasm for pursuing links with those countries, and their ability to do so. This is shown in Chapters 4 and 5 by the way in which the state agent (Japan Foundation) and the sub-state agent (Kobe City) are affected in different ways by the

⁵⁹ Evidence for this is the active promotion of microregions across international borders by these local governments (Breslin and Hook 2002) while Tokyo concentrates on state to state relations.

recent freeze in relations between Prime Minister Koizumi's administration and the Chinese government.

A country's soft power cannot be seen as emanating solely from the central government of a country. By its nature, soft power is exerted by any agent which is active on the international stage, although the degree of soft power exerted naturally depends upon the type of activity the agent produces. Hence, a strong central government and its various departments will necessarily enable more soft power to flow from a country than any other single agent, as it controls by far the largest budget and other resources among a country's agents.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, soft power transmitted by regional governments and other non-state organisations can be significant, especially when many of these agents are considered together, and so must be taken into account. Hence, the idea of an international system defined by anarchy is not relevant – soft power can function whether states are strong or weak within the global system, as the state is not the only relevant actor which can create information links between people and societies.

Additionally, realist and neorealist descriptions of international relations stress the importance of material capabilities (Morgenthau 1952, Waltz 1979, Mearsheimer 1994), including military resources, natural resources and manpower. Realist theories tend to ignore intangible resources; ideas, culture, the attractiveness of identities and the influence of prevailing habits and norms must be considered if an overall picture of international relations can be built. A constructivist approach takes into account these other diverse factors in international relations, and can easily accommodate the idea of soft power which necessarily relies on a view of the

⁶⁰ This, of course, may not be the case in a highly decentralised country or a country where the central government is not fully in control of its affairs.

international system as an entity affected by intangible properties such as ideas and information.

Mainstream accounts of neoliberal institutionalism emphasise the importance of international institutions as the main way to improve relations between countries in the anarchical environment (Keohane 1984, 1989). By looking beyond national governments as the only legitimate international actors, a constructivist approach can show the importance of other forms of international exchange. The movement of people between countries, and their communications across borders can only seriously be considered as to their influence on international relations through a constructivist approach, using the language of ideas, identity, habits, norms and interests.⁶¹

In reality, the interactions between states, and other organisations, are controlled by people and societies in a manner analogous to the processes which occur within countries; hence the need for theories which draw on these sociological perspectives. Soft power also is used and affects relations according to the ideas, values and information which flow between actors and countries; it can be accommodated by international institutions, states or sub-state and non-state actors. One of the most important factors which affect international relations is in the quantity and quality of information links between actors, whether they are international institutions or otherwise.

Having stated that a constructivist viewpoint is the most useful way to view the international sphere, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that there are several variations upon the constructivist theme (Hopf 1998, Checkel 2004); distinctions

⁶¹ The literature exploring these topics is now very wide; in particular see Hopf (2002, 1998), Katzenstein (1996), Wendt (1999), Goldstein and Keohane (1993), Ashley (1998), Lukes (2005).

which are relevant to the question of how soft power can work. Hopf (1998) broadly categorises these into 'conventional' and 'critical' constructivism. Conventional constructivism attempts to maintain a positivist attitude by emphasising that interests, identities and other precepts of constructivism, once deciphered, can become predictable and therefore be used as the basis of a more general theory. Wendt (1997), for example, takes the state as a given identity, whereas Ashley (1988) denies that this is possible. Critical constructivists therefore deny the possibility of generalisation or stability of identities and interests. Hopf (2002) himself tends towards a more conventional form of constructivism, concentrating his attention on the state. Other variations use the language of culture, ideas and practice, but aspire to keep to a positivist agenda (Katzenstein 1996b, Goldstein and Keohane 1993).

There is, however, a valid case for taking a centre line between these arguments. If one considers the state to have a singular identity with clear interests, it is undoubtedly the dominant actor on the international stage, and is likely to remain so for the near future. However, if one considers the state to be constituted of many disparate parts, each with their own interests and identities, its dominance is reduced. The resources, both financial and cultural, available to a single government department may be comparable to a large regional government in some states, or even a large non-state organisation such as a company. If a ruling administration maintains strong control over the state's various components, it may produce an entity with a more coherent, singular identity with clear interests. However, in most modern, industrialised democracies, it is arguably impossible for such a monolithic state identity to form, and to some extent at least, various parts of the state have different interests and identities. The state as a singular identity is most clearly

visible when it has to respond to some attack upon its legitimacy by an ‘Other’⁶² such as in wartime, or other crisis seen to affect all people within the country. The theory of soft power as used in this thesis tends to veer more towards conventional rather than critical constructivism; actors exchange information, and this is clearly affected by the actors’ identities and values. Therefore, it must be possible to determine those actors’ identities and values to some extent, while recognising that they change constantly in a gradual way.

These constructivist points of view provide a basis for using the principles of soft power to analyse international relations. As Katzenstein has pointed out,

Nye has difficulty articulating the relational implications of his concept of “soft power” and demonstrating empirically how it, and America’s stipulated cultural, ideological, and institutional pre-eminence, is affecting different features of international politics... (Katzenstein 1996b: 504).

However, using the tools of constructivism, the soft power aspects of international relations can be empirically analysed, as has been described.

Japan as an example of soft power use

When academics have talked about soft power until now, they have mostly focussed upon the USA as the primary source of soft power around the world, with its globally successful film industry, its globally dominant companies and financial clout, and the increasing prevalence of English in international communication. Although these factors are unchanged, it is arguable that successive US administrations’ policies on

⁶² On the self and other, see Hopf (2002), Berger and Luckman (1966).

military intervention and the use of hard power tactics against other countries are increasingly eroding this soft power in many areas around the world (e.g. Nye 2004, *Financial Times*, 24 May 2004).

While the soft power of burgeoning economies such as China and India is now being considered (Pocha 2003), perhaps the most useful example in recent times of a large country which has had a foreign policy based primarily upon the use of soft power is that of Japan. This state of affairs has come about partly through the decapitation of its military capability after its catastrophic military defeat and subjection to US occupation after the Second World War. This condition has persisted due to the popularity of its 'peace constitution' which theoretically bans the maintenance of military forces (although in practice this absolute ban has been reinterpreted so as to allow a 'self defence force' which is an army in all but name). Despite the almost complete inability to apply military power in any international negotiation, Japan managed to become the second largest economy in the world. As it has also only rarely used sanctions in foreign policy, this success has come about largely due to foreign policies based on cooperation with other countries – one of the bases of soft power.

Due to East Asian countries' suspicion of Japan's motives since its attempts before the Second World War to carve out an empire from its neighbours, Japan has had to be especially sensitive and patient in order to rebuild its image as a trustworthy partner in the region; this situation has made the use of soft power a necessity and the use of hard power very difficult. In the post war era, it managed to sign reparations agreements, or agreements to give economic aid in lieu of reparations to most of the countries it had caused damage to during and before the war.

These were to lead to the implementation of more considered aid programs; as Japan itself developed and grew at a phenomenal rate in economic terms, it was able to pass expertise and technical help to other developing countries in the region (Arase 1995).

Not only was it able to give cooperative help directly to other countries in the region, but it came to be admired for its economic prowess and ability to compete with Western economies. Its record in producing innovative new technologies and manufacturing processes (such as Sony's transistor and the Toyota Production System) added to its reputation and image, not only within the region but also around the world. Success bred success, and financial power and influence soon followed along with influence in international institutions such as the G7, the IMF and World Bank, the WTO and the UN (e.g. Drifte 1996, Wade 1996).

However, during the last decade or so since the explosive bursting of its economic bubble in 1990 and the subsequent regional financial crisis in 1997, Japan has realised that it faces an uncertain future in economic terms, relative to its post war growth. Policy makers, Japanese and foreign academics and journalists have started to focus more on the longer term aspects of soft power as a means of strengthening the country's image and attraction in the East Asian region and beyond.

The current minister in charge of internal affairs and privatisation of the post office, Takenaka Heizō, has notably written about Japan's future use of soft power (e.g. Takenaka 2000). Takenaka emphasises the lifestyle and cultural aspects of soft power, and how they must emanate from within the society's structure. He therefore uses the argument that Japan must renew itself from inside, and build up its 'human capital' in order to be able to project soft power more effectively. This agrees with

the argument that a country must build its image and attractiveness to achieve long term success. Japan's use of ODA and other economic cooperation with East Asian countries in particular has been laudable and positive, but there has always been a niggling suspicion that it is carrying out these policies mainly to create new markets for its own companies to exploit. While this may not be a wholly bad thing for the receiving countries, they fear Japan's economic dominance in their markets, and loss of control over their own economies. The consequences of this kind of loss of control were in fact confirmed during the Asian financial crisis of 1997, when panicked selling of stocks and short-term assets was led by the large Japanese investors, deepening the crisis substantially in most countries in the region (King 2001).

A report was published in 2002 by Dentsū Sōken, a research institute owned by the influential Japanese advertising company Dentsū Corporation, about the use of soft power (Sodekawa 2002). The report attempts to measure Japan's soft power against fourteen other countries by specifying three categories of soft power – 'choice power' (control of markets and systems), 'leadership' (competitiveness in knowledge and science), and 'culture, society and lifestyle' (attractiveness and popularity). It then identifies a wide range of data (39 data sets) which demonstrate these characteristics for all of the countries and makes a comparison. Examples include income from tourism, importance of trade to GDP, number of transnational companies based in each country, CO₂ emissions, and diverse others. It is difficult to ascertain whether this study truly can claim to measure soft power, as the reasons for the choice of each data set are not given and each data set is arbitrarily given equal weighting. However, it is nevertheless a useful indication of the importance that is now being attached to soft power by companies as well as academics.

In the last few years academics and journalists interested in Japan have reflected upon the influence of Japan's lifestyle and modern culture throughout East Asia (Iwabuchi 2003, Tadokoro 2003, Ishizuka 2003, McGray 2002, *Time* 1999, Shiraishi 1997). They cite the popularity in East Asia of Japan's *anime* (cartoons), *manga* (comics), pop singers, television dramas and merchandise based on popular Japanese characters, and consider how it affects Japan's relationship with East Asian countries. The fact that this popularity has spread to young people even in South Korea (Hanson 2004) and China (*Straits Times*, 2 April 2004), the countries which remember most strongly Japanese wartime aggression and cultural imperialism, gives an indication of its attractiveness.

Tadokoro (2003) considers how to look again at cultural soft power as a possible foreign policy resource. He acknowledges the difficulties of harnessing soft power as a direct resource, but comments on a certain 'cultural affinity' (*shinkinkan*) that East Asian countries have with Japan more than the USA, and how Japan may be able to use this to spread its cultural values such as artistic freedom and other aspects of its civil society (*shibiru karucha*). Japan may not be able to 'spread' its culture actively in order to influence other countries as envisaged by Tadokoro and others (e.g. Asō 2006). However, by maintaining an atmosphere of artistic freedom and dynamism (more in tune with ideas expressed by Takenaka 2000) such a culture will be attractive to other countries in the region. Japanese culture will then continue to naturally spread through the region, as it has been doing. The ideas embodied in such work, such as freedom of expression or the questioning of authority and tradition, may be absorbed in other countries.

Soft power by its nature is not a one-way process, and it is clear to see some other East Asian countries' cultural and ideological soft power working in Japan. By

becoming an attractive source of ideas, a country also necessarily opens itself up to outside ideas. Before the period of Western domination, Japan is known to have absorbed ideas and culture gleaned from China, Korea and other neighbours. Now that these countries are again coming to the fore, and producing culturally exciting ideas, Japan is naturally starting to import such ideas again. Such a process can be seen, as mentioned previously, in the recent popularity of South Korean culture, catalysed by pop bands (BoA), films (*Shiri*) and television dramas such as *Friends* (Iwabuchi 2002) and *Fuyu no Sonata* (Winter Sonata). The popularity of the latter has apparently led to greatly increased sales of Korean language textbooks and increased Japanese tourism to South Korea by young and old alike (*Kyodo News*, 14 May 2004).

Naturally, due to its still overwhelming economic size compared to other countries in East Asia, the influence of cultural soft power is likely to flow more from Japan to East Asia than the other direction. Japanese language and other culture such as pop groups, films and TV dramas (Iwabuchi 2002) has been increasing in popularity in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea in the past decade. South Korea has been legalising the import of Japanese culture in the last few years, after decades of suspicion. The import of popular music from Japan only became legal in 2004 (*Korea Times*, 8 January 2004), while the import of non-animated, and non-age restricted Japanese films became legal in 2000 (*Japan Times*, 7 April 2004). While Japanese pop culture was a novelty in East Asia, and it was fashionable to consume it, it may have generated more interest. However, while it now appears to be becoming a normal option in places such as Hong Kong and Singapore (Iwabuchi 2002), and no longer fashionable, this is an indication that Japanese culture is now rooted as a permanent influence in these countries, along with American or European culture –

accepted by many people rather than just people who specifically attracted to Japanese culture.

However, Iwabuchi (2002) suggests that Japan's recognition in recent years of its growing cultural influence has led to a kind of 'soft nationalism,' whereby it is taken as a given that Japan should try use its soft power to further its national interest, an observation supported in recent times by conservative politicians (Asō 2006) and academics. While this option may seem attractive to Japanese nationalists, who hanker for the days of imperial glory, the fact remains that this kind of soft power is not available to be pushed as a policy tool which has specific results. Culture which is pushed upon people will not be accepted, and so can not be called soft power. Culture which is inherently attractive and interesting will have influence.

Iwabuchi also disputes the premise that the spread of Japanese popular culture has any meaning in terms of East Asians being attracted to Japan itself:

...it matters not that Japanese animations and TV programs are eagerly consumed. It is argued that a sense of yearning for Japan is still not aroused in Asia, because what is appreciated, unlike American popular culture, is still not an image or idea of Japan but simply a materialistic consumer commodity (Iwabuchi 2002: 34).

Nevertheless, it seems clear that it is not necessary to induce 'a sense of yearning for Japan' in order for Japanese ideas to have an impact and influence on countries where they are accepted. An idea produced in Japan and accepted elsewhere is inherently Japanese until it is modified or adapted by the receiving country. Hence it is not necessary for the receiving country to like or dislike the fact that the idea is Japanese; as long as the idea is accepted in itself it will have some influence,

however small.⁶³ The gradual accumulation of influence engendered by these ideas is soft power.

Conclusions

This chapter has looked at the concept of soft power, and considered the questions of ‘what is soft power?’ and ‘how does soft power work?’ using the language, ideas and tools of constructivism. It has theorised that soft power is constituted from the attractiveness of ideas and culture within a country which have been produced by individuals and utilised by agents, both governmental and non-governmental, which channel it towards other countries across information links. The mass media, including new forms of electronic media, and the increasing movement of people between countries, have been described as the primary methods of transfer, or instrumentalisation, of this soft power. The fundamentally constructivist nature of soft power theory has also been analysed, and finally reasons to use Japan-China relations in order to study soft power in this thesis have been explored.

In order to empirically investigate the questions posed and theories suggested in this chapter, this thesis will concentrate upon the use of soft power in three case studies in Japan’s relations with China. The case studies will utilise the theory posited in this chapter to explain the action of soft power from the perspective of some of the agencies which channel it, namely a state level government agent (the Japan Foundation), a sub-state level city authority agent (Kobe City), and a non-governmental organisation (the Japan-China Friendship Association).

⁶³ See Hirano (2000) for more on how ideas become embedded in cultures.

As noted in Chapter 1, Japan's relationship with China has been troubled at the state level, in particular since the visits by Prime Minister Koizumi to Yasukuni shrine (where several war criminals' spirits are enshrined, along with those of many other soldiers killed in Japan's wars since the latter half of the 19th century). Koizumi has not been able to make a state trip to China due to disagreements over these visits. Nevertheless, trade and exchange of culture and ideas between the two countries has continued to flourish despite these problems, and soft power has continued to act through agents such as those mentioned above. The following chapters will investigate these exchanges in more detail.

The activities of the Japan Foundation in China

Introduction: state-level use of soft power

It is debatable as to whether a government or other state body can contribute in great measure to a country's soft power. It seems that more often governments can damage their country's image through interventions designed purely for short-term political purposes. Nevertheless, governments can improve the soft power of their country by focussing on domestic policies, which can make the country's image more attractive to outsiders and contribute to a national identity in the international arena.⁶⁴

However, state-level organs are often likely to try to use their country's existing soft power in order to facilitate their transactions and relationships with other countries. Governments trade on their countries' reputations and images in order to implement agreements with other countries, and to help them persuade other countries to follow certain paths. A prominent example is that of the EU member states persuading Eastern European countries to implement the EU's recommended economic policies based upon its member states' identities as fiscally prudent and prosperous states.⁶⁵ Another example would be the US government using its country's reputation as a rich democracy to pressurise other countries to also become democracies.

How and by whom is soft power utilised at the state level in Japan's case?

⁶⁴ See Hirano (2000), who argues that state cultural exchange organs find it difficult to promote genuine exchanges due to them being state institutions.

⁶⁵ See Michalski (2005) on how the EU uses soft power in its external relations.

Can a government body act as a useful conduit for soft power, even though it will clearly be associated with the state and its sometimes controversial foreign policies? A large number of governmental departments and agencies use Japan's soft power in their dealings with other countries. These include departments and agencies dealing with foreign affairs, education, tourism, and industry. All of these agents attempt to use Japan's soft power to facilitate dealings with other countries, such as in attracting foreign students or tourists, in promoting Japanese diplomacy, or in helping Japanese companies prosper abroad.

The Japan Foundation is a pertinent example of a state-level agent of Japan's soft power. The Foundation was a special agency (*tokushuhōjin*⁶⁶) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan until October 2003,⁶⁷ thereafter being reformed as a nominally more financially independent quasi-governmental agency (*dokuritsu gyōsei hōjin*) (Japan Foundation 2003a) (although it is yet to assert any independence from MOFA in terms of its policies). It not only tries to utilise Japan's soft power, but also tries to act as a 'catalyst' (Ishii 2002: 3) to develop Japan's image and relations with other countries through exchanges of people, and their ideas and information.

In this chapter, the Japan Foundation's activities in China will be focussed upon as an example of the Japanese government's use of soft power. In the face of often frosty relations between Japan's and China's leaders, particularly under the recent leadership of Prime Minister Junichirō Koizumi, the Foundation has continued to enjoy political support in its endeavours to carry out long-term programmes of exchange with China and to promote Japan's image, while at the same time seeking

⁶⁶ The definition of a *tokushuhōjin* (special corporation) is 'a corporation which has been established by a special law. It is established according to state policy or for the public benefit.' (Kōjien 1998).

⁶⁷ The Japan Foundation's legal basis and operational structure changed in October 2003; however, its activities and goals remain largely unchanged, and so these recent reforms do not affect the current analysis of the Foundation as a soft power agent unless otherwise indicated.

to act in a non-coercive manner.

In order to understand how the organisation tries to maintain this difficult balance, this chapter will firstly analyse the purpose and role of the Japan Foundation, including the conditions under which it was established, and the changes it has experienced since that time. Secondly, it will investigate the content and purposes of the Foundation's activities in China. Finally, the chapter will reflect upon whether and how the Foundation, through its activities, acts as an agent of Japan's soft power.

The Establishment of the Japan Foundation

The Japan Foundation's roots are in the Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai (KBS), a Japanese government agency which had been set up in 1934 to help promote Japanese culture, and spread Japanese influence through East Asia. The KBS was an active part of Japan's military government's strategy of promoting the 'Greater East Asia Prosperity Sphere' (Takahashi 1998), including the production of language materials for the areas under Japanese occupation at the time. After the Second World War, its activities were drastically curtailed due to Japan's ruined financial position.

The KBS was relaunched after the war as a private foundation sponsored by the government, and it continued to promote Japanese culture to some extent, but it was clear that its budget was not sufficient; in 1953 it received 2.6 million yen in government money. Considering the fact that the value of the yen had dropped precipitously from pre-war levels, this budget was about one-thirtieth of that of the pre-war body.

In the years prior to the Japan Foundation's set-up in 1972, there had been many discussions regarding the need for an agency which promoted Japan's culture

and exchanges with other countries more vigorously, with an appropriate budget. By the 1960s, and particularly after the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, although Japan was seen as having become an economic power, it was still not recognised as having any great influence around the world in terms of its diplomacy or culture. Voices inside and outside Japan were calling upon the Japanese government to exert a greater effort to promote and channel Japan's ideas and culture abroad, to complement its purely economic output. In 1958 (and again in 1963), the KBS added its own proposal to set up an international cultural exchange foundation, with a substantial budget provided by the Government, with a view to 'expanding foreign cultural exchange activities' (Japan Foundation 1990: 15).

In 1971, the then Foreign Minister, Fukuda Takeo, had toured seven European countries, only to continually hear comments from other foreign ministers and leaders such as, 'Japan has become such an economically powerful country – what is it going to do with that power? Surely it will use its economic power to become a military power' (Okamoto 2000: 12). In the same year, two actions by the US government combined to focus Japanese leaders on the need to increase international cultural exchange activities. The first was Henry Kissinger's visit to Beijing to start talks to normalise US-China relations, and the second was the US' decision to unlink the value of the dollar from the price of gold. The Japanese government did not have prior warning of either of these events, both of which would clearly have important consequences for Japan. It realised that the two 'Nixon shocks' showed there was a serious communications problem between the Japan and the USA, despite having believed that the USA was Japan's close ally. There was a real 'feeling of crisis that Japan would become isolated in international society' (Okamoto 2000: 12), due to the country having few close allies at that time.

In September 1971, the Satō cabinet's Foreign Minister, Fukuda Takeo, went to Washington to make a speech about Japan-US relations. During a meeting of the Japan-USA Trade and Economy Association, he said,

There is a strong need for broad human and cultural exchange between Japan and the USA; a strengthening of exchanges between scholars, students, and cultural people, and an expansion of Japanese studies in the USA, and American studies in Japan (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 10 September 1971).

On returning to Japan, Fukuda instructed the Foreign Ministry to put in place steps to set up the Japan Foundation. In January 1972, at a meeting between the US President Richard Nixon and the Japanese Prime Minister Satō Eisaku aimed at finalising the US' return of Okinawa to Japan, he announced the creation of the Foundation. He added that the creation of the Japan Foundation was welcomed by the US President (Japan Foundation 1990); this gave an extra legitimacy to Japan's moves to deepen links between itself and the US.

The original stimulus for the creation of the Foundation from the government's point of view, therefore, seems to have been the need to deepen Japan-US relations, to avoid 'communications gaps' and cultural misunderstandings in the future.⁶⁸ The more precise details of the Foundation's goals were to be formulated later, as the practicalities of setting up such an organisation were considered (see p.142 for further consideration of the Foundation's purposes).⁶⁹

In MOFA, there was resistance to the idea of the Japan Foundation at first,

⁶⁸ Zemans (1999) also argues that promotion of US-Japan relations was the initial goal of the Japan Foundation.

⁶⁹ See Katzenstein (2002) for a view that the Foundation was initially set up mainly to enable Japanese companies to expand smoothly in target Southeast Asian and US markets.

as it was thought the Foundation would become a competitor in the creation of foreign policy (Umesao et al 2002). However, this fear was allayed after it was argued that cultural exchange could be an extra tool of foreign policy, by increasing understanding between cultures and thereby helping to avoid tensions. In the National Diet, the opposition parties agreed to support the setting up of the Foundation, with some reservations about where and how the Foundation's resources would be used; the only party which did not agree to the Foundation's establishment was the Japan Communist Party, which argued that it would just be a mouthpiece of MOFA, and that substantial actions were required to improve Japan's image, rather than just public relations exercises (Matsumoto 1972, National Diet of Japan 1972a, 1972b).

The Foundation's initial endowment was 10 billion yen, established by the government over two fiscal years, a figure which has grown through government top-ups and capital growth to 106.2 billion yen in 2003 (Japan Foundation 2003). The Foundation's budget grew from 183 million yen in 1972 to a record of 19.8 billion yen in 1992, thereafter falling to 11.8 billion yen in 2003 (See Fig. 5, p.141).

The KBS, in contrast, had received 236 million yen in 1970, and in 1971 it received 265 million yen; a level of funding which clearly had not been sufficient to sustain enough cultural activity. The Japan Foundation's budget quickly grew beyond this level. As the KBS was to be dissolved at the same time as the Foundation was to be established, it was decided that the Foundation would take control of the KBS' branch offices in Rome, Cologne, New York and London. Regarding the KBS staff, MOFA was at first reluctant to consider moving them all to the new Foundation, as it wanted the Foundation to represent a fresh start, but strong representations by the KBS' union ensured that all staff were moved to the Japan Foundation, barring a few

older staff who took early retirement (Japan Foundation 1990: 18n3). Thus, there was inevitably some continuation between the two organisations, although in the government there seems to have been a genuine intention to establish the Japan Foundation as a completely new agency.

In the years after its creation, the Japan Foundation was built up by its staff, and with the political and financial support of successive governments, as a credible organisation with substantial human and financial resources. Its activities have grown to cover a wide range of areas, such as human exchanges, Japanese studies, arts exchanges and media production as will be detailed later. In addition, far from becoming a competitor to MOFA, the Foundation has reliably acted in accordance with MOFA's policies and goals.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, in comparison with similar state organs of other countries, its budget and staff numbers are low. Although its budget and staff numbers grew strongly after its establishment (Fig. 5, p141, Fig. 6, p141), by 1987, the budget was still just two-fifths that of the Goethe Institute, and about one-eighth of the British Council. It had just 166 staff members compared to the Institute's 2764 staff, and the Council's 4402. In terms of its international presence, it had just 11 offices in foreign countries, compared to the Institute's 148 offices, and the Council's 136 offices (Japan Foundation 1988).

Its budget continued to increase along with the growth of Japan's economy and general internationalisation, hitting a peak in 1991, but stabilising until the mid-1990s when the Japanese Government's finances started coming under strain

⁷⁰ Although a statement given to the National Diet by the head of the Foundation's Board of Governors (Fujii Hiroaki) in 2002 stated that 'strengthening the link between foreign policy' and the Foundation's activities was one of the most important objectives in the future (National Diet of Japan 2002), suggesting that there was some dissatisfaction in MOFA regarding the Japan Foundation's activities.

from the prolonged recession. Due to public spending cuts, and poor returns on investments, the Foundation's budgets started to decline in the late 1990s.

By 1997, the Foundation's general budget was 20.6 billion yen, comparing more favourably with the Goethe Institute's 25.6 billion yen, but still far behind the British Council's 49.0 billion yen. The number of staff members had increased to 237 people, against the Institute's 2602 people, and the Council's 5188 people. The Foundation had 18 offices abroad, the Institute 140 offices, and the Council 221 offices (Japan Foundation 1997).

In recent years the Foundation has gone through some administrative changes (in common with some other government agencies), which have culminated in its formal status changing in 2003 from a 'special corporation (*tokushuhōjin*)' to an 'independent administrative corporation (*dokuritsu gyōsei hōjin*). Although these reforms are in some ways intended to enhance the independence of the organisation, the major reasons the reforms were carried out were to increase administrative efficiency, to align the Foundation's activities more with MOFA policies, and to enable the Foundation to attract more funds from outside the government (National Diet of Japan 2002). The reforms were not carried out to distance the organisation from the government, and the Foundation still works closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to coordinate its programmes with government policy (Kawano, interview, 2005, Japan Foundation 2003b). Therefore the status of the Japan Foundation as a state-level government agency has not changed.

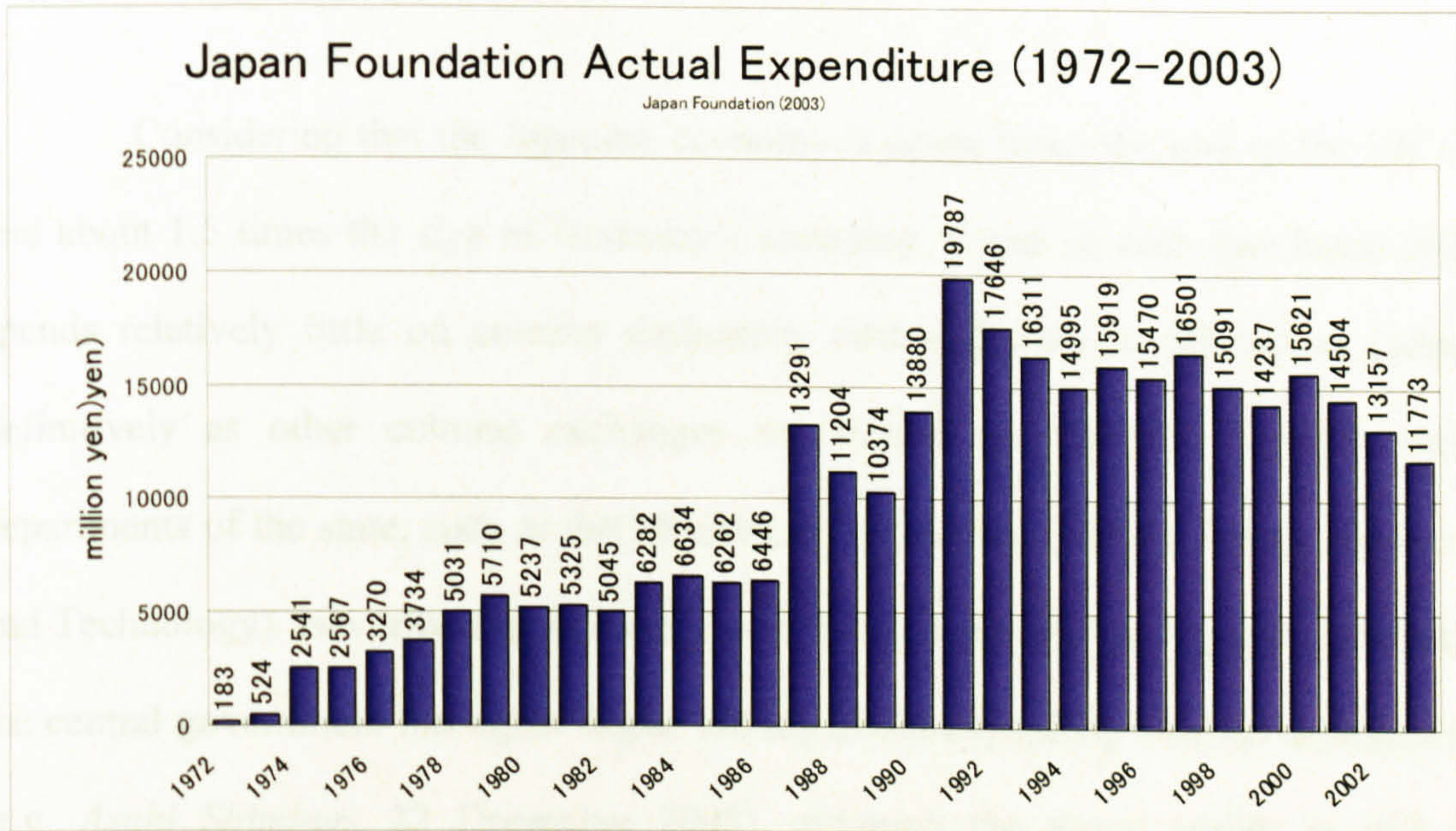


Fig. 5 – Japan Foundation Actual Expenditure

Source: Japan Foundation (2003)

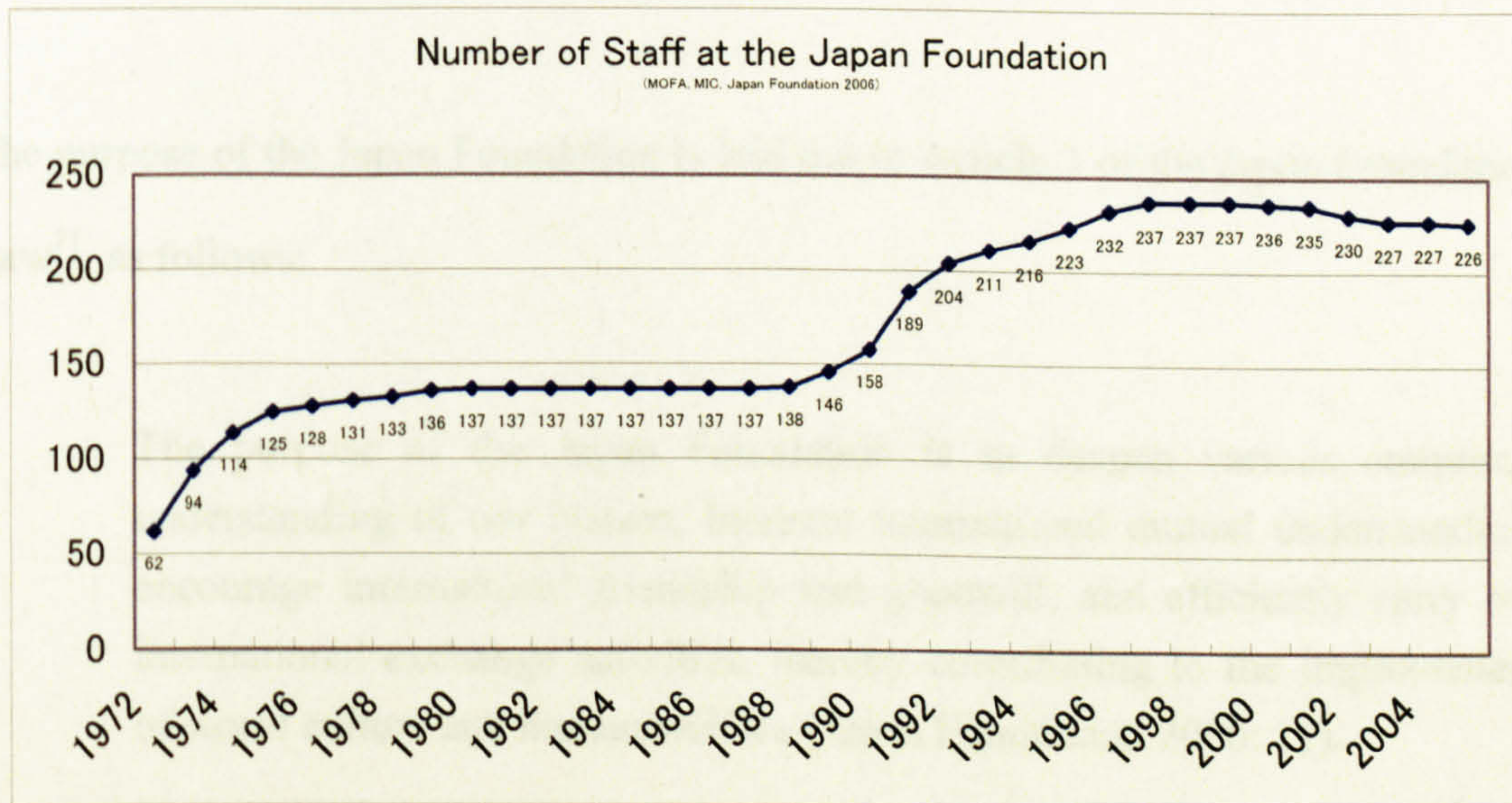


Fig. 6 – Number of Staff at the Japan Foundation

Source: MOFA, MIC, Japan Foundation (2006)

Considering that the Japanese economy is about twice the size of the UK's, and about 1.5 times the size of Germany's economy, it can be seen that Japan still spends relatively little on cultural diplomacy (although this is difficult to judge definitively as other cultural exchanges are funded by different agencies and departments of the state, such as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). Nevertheless, in recent years as the economy has begun to recover, the central government has again begun talking about expanding cultural diplomacy (e.g. *Asahi Shimbun*, 22 December 2005), although the actual reality is still a situation of rationalisation and re-entrenchment at the Foundation.

The Purpose of the Japan Foundation

The purpose of the Japan Foundation is laid out in Article 1 of the Japan Foundation Law⁷¹ as follows:

The purpose of the Japan Foundation is to deepen various countries' understanding of our Nation, increase international mutual understanding, encourage international friendship and goodwill, and efficiently carry out international exchange activities, thereby contributing to the improvement of world culture and human welfare (Japan Foundation 2000: 11).

The structure and purpose of the Foundation were decided after officials had studied similar organs of other countries, such as the Goethe Institute of Germany,⁷² the

⁷¹ Law No.48, 1st June 1972.

⁷² See Katzenstein (2002) for a comparison of the methods of the Goethe Institute and the Japan Foundation.

British Council,⁷³ and the Alliance Francaise (Hirano 2002). The purposes of these institutions are generally to promote their countries' language and culture around the world, but the emphasis and structure of their work differ. For example, the Goethe Institute seems to concentrate on promoting German culture, regardless of the language it is promoted in, whereas the Alliance Francaise treats French language promotion as its primary task (Umesao et al 2002). Additionally, the Alliance is structured as a network of highly independent branches around the world, whereas other state cultural institutions operate a more strongly linked operation, with the policies of the whole network set by the head office in the home country, influenced strongly or even controlled by their respective governments. Arguably these institutes are all state agents of their respective countries' soft power; they help channel ideas and information into other countries. Nevertheless, their methods and areas of focus differ substantially.

According to Yamazaki Masakazu, an academic who was closely involved with the setting up of the Foundation, it was emphasised at the start that 'we should put human exchange at the centre' of the Japan Foundation. However, the people involved should be 'not politicians or foreign ministry officials, but people who can move opinion in their countries at an intellectual level' (Umesao et al. 2002: 7).

This kind of comment suggests a slightly different purpose than that outlined in the original Japan Foundation law, which has a somewhat more lofty aim of 'increasing mutual understanding... and contributing to the improvement of world culture'. The aim of a state-sponsored organ such as the Foundation is inevitably likely to be linked, at least to some extent, with the national interest and benefit.

⁷³ See Phillipson (1992), Taylor (1999), Leonard et al (2005), Vickers (2004) and Vaughan (2005) for analyses of British cultural diplomacy past and present.

Yamazaki's comment shows that the Foundation aimed to change opinions about Japan in other countries through exchanges.

In its own comments on the setting up of the Japan Foundation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted,

In order to achieve a basic trust between countries, each country's people must touch each other's hearts. When we think of the international environment facing our country, there has never been a more urgent need to increase mutual understanding in this way. In order to do this, cultural exchange with other countries, most importantly human exchange, is the most effective way to deepen people's mutual understanding. Additionally, in order to ensure that there is no opposition to these exchanges in other countries, our country should produce a fundamental base for the development of a long-term view of foreign relations.... As our country's cultural exchange organisations, and their scales of investment, are extremely weak and must be drastically strengthened, the Government will establish a special legal entity, the "Japan Foundation" with an endowment of ten billion yen (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1972).

This statement shows how the Japanese government was trying to steer the Foundation along a middle path, between being merely a tool of government policy, and being a completely independent organisation with no connection to the national interest. Debates in the Japanese Diet in the months before the establishment of the Foundation, however, record that opposition members of the Diet were concerned about the lack of a clear direction, and the fact that the Foundation's activities were to be biased towards the US and certain South-east Asian countries, while ignoring the Communist-bloc countries (National Diet of Japan 1972a, 1972b).

Hirano (1990) notes that cultural exchange in the past has not necessarily been associated with peaceful or egalitarian intentions; governments used state

organs to promote their culture as being superior to other countries' cultures, for the purpose of their own aggrandisement as in the case of the pre-war Japanese government. However, he proposes that the meaning of cultural exchange has changed since then; the concept is becoming less of a top-down state-driven enterprise, and more of a bottom-up people-driven process, and that the Foundation must acknowledge this in its activities.

Even with cultural exchange that is ultimately being promoted by a state, the methods of exchange show which kind of process is happening; even a state organ can enable the bottom-up type of exchange. If the cultural exchange is pushed too much by the state in a top-down approach, there is more of a danger that the policy will be coercive, not co-optive, that is to say an example of hard power rather than soft power. However, as will be detailed later, the Japan Foundation has managed to some extent to mitigate the problems of being a state-controlled organisation, and to increase the involvement of private groups and organisations in its activities. As Sugiyama (1990) points out, in order for cultural exchange to be effective, it is best carried out with a view to the long-term benefits; if programmes are carried out independently of short-term government policies and with consistent aims they will have a better chance of showing results. Cultural programmes carried out on a short-term basis are unlikely to produce a sufficient exchange of ideas and information in the desired manner, as the routes over which these ideas travel take time to build and maintain. Additionally, a breakdown in hard-won personal links through lack of funds will also reduce the effectiveness of programmes.

In the three decades since the Japan Foundation was established, it has developed a core of activities in which it specialises, and expanded its programmes around the world, although as noted previously, the number of branch offices in

different countries it possesses is relatively small, and concentrated in North America, Europe and East Asia.

In East Asian countries, the Foundation's resources are mostly spent on Japanese language teaching activities (see Fig.7, p.147), in particular training teachers and producing teaching materials. In the USA and Europe, more of its resources are used in holding exhibitions, and organising other cultural exchange activities. This is likely due to the lack of demand in Western countries for Japanese language teaching in comparison to East Asian countries, although the numbers of people learning Japanese has been increasing gradually in the last twenty years, in particular in Australia and New Zealand (Japan Foundation 2003d). In East Asia, the Foundation was mainly responding to high demand when it expanded its language teaching activities, which was created by the growth of interest in Japan's ideas and information, and due to the growing number of Japanese companies entering the region. In order to facilitate the teaching of Japanese, the Foundation concentrated on training local Japanese teachers to be able to train their colleagues, rather than sending many native Japanese teachers (Umesao et al 2002). This undoubtedly was seen as an effective use of resources as it would not have been possible financially to send large numbers of native Japanese teachers to every country which asked for them. This can also be seen as an efficient way of enabling the flow of soft power through the processes described in Chapter 3; the people teaching Japanese are effectively agents for Japan's soft power who create links and connections between Japan and its people, and their Chinese students. Therefore, sending a limited number of Japanese teachers would only enable a limited number of links, and therefore a limited transfer of soft power. Training many hundreds or thousands of Chinese teachers of Japanese increases the number of links between Japan and

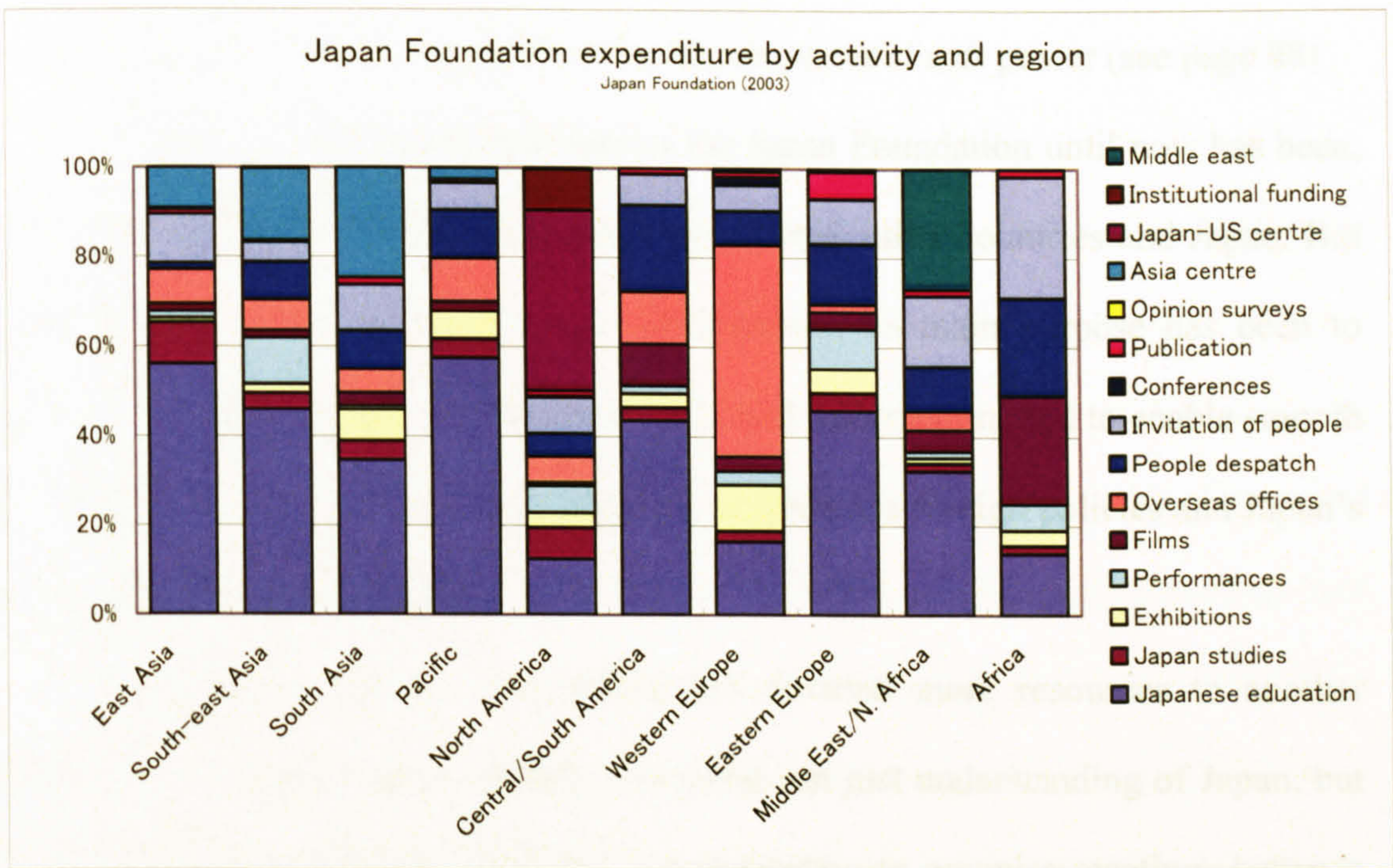


Fig. 7 – Japan Foundation expenditure by activity and region

Source: Japan Foundation (2003)

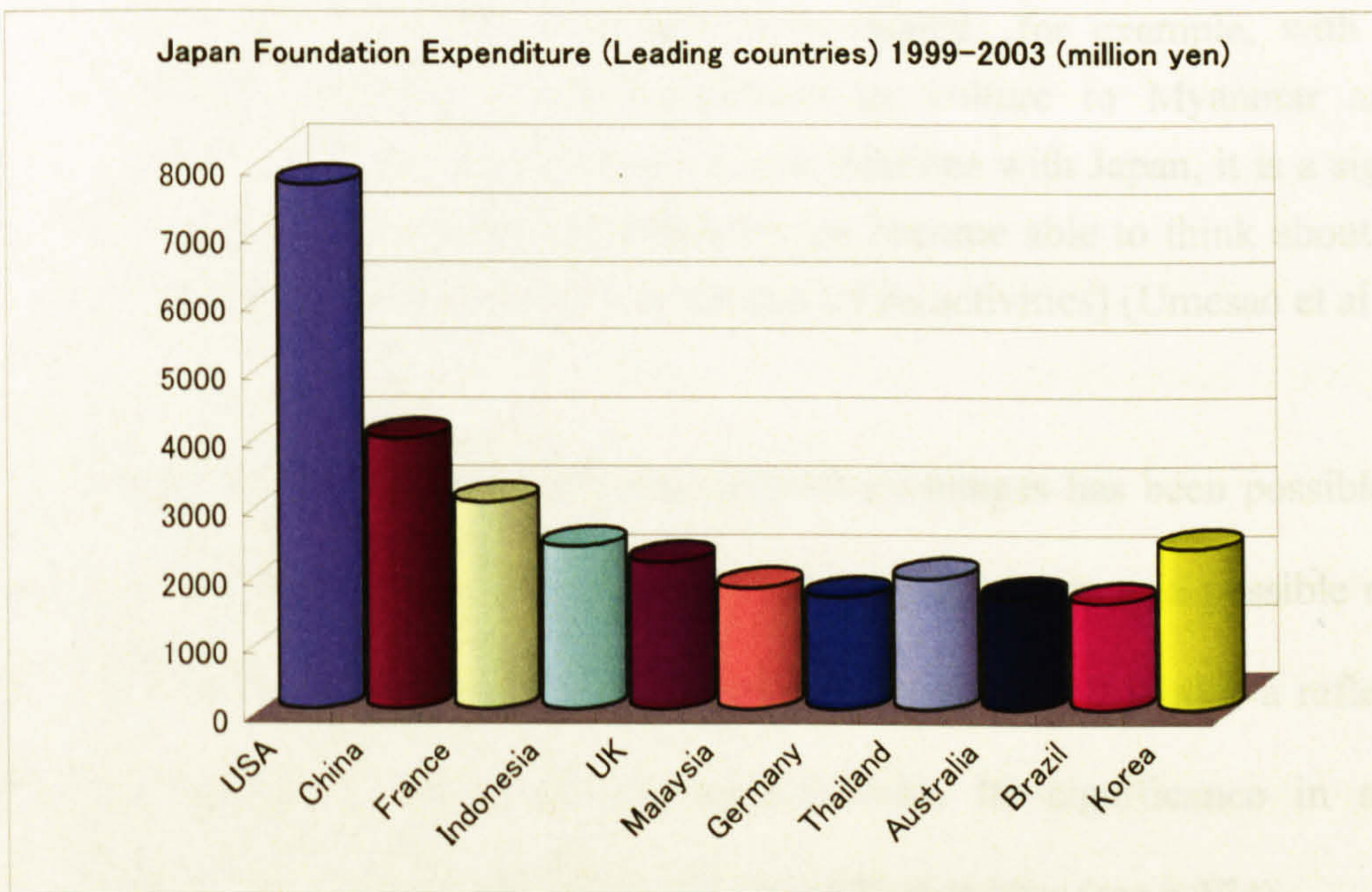


Fig. 8 – Japan Foundation expenditure (leading countries)

Source: Japan Foundation (2003)

China, which is the key to increasing the transmission of soft power (see page 88).

Therefore, one of the purposes of the Japan Foundation until now has been, as it states, to further mutual understanding between other countries and Japan. But inevitably, as a state agent of Japan's soft power, its main purpose has been to promote Japanese language and culture, ideas and information, and to enable smooth relations between countries for the purposes of MOFA's foreign policies and Japan's general international relations.

In recent years the Foundation has devoted more resources to another purpose - multilateral understanding; promoting not just understanding of Japan, but also using Japan's soft power and its own reputation to organise meetings between other countries, especially in the East Asia region. As Yamazaki notes,

...recently, at long last, at the Asia Centre [of the Japan Foundation] and elsewhere, trilateral exchanges have started...for example, with Japan's money, Thailand can communicate its culture to Myanmar and vice versa....[R]ather than just one to one relations with Japan, it is a significant development that [the Foundation] has become able to think about regions covering many countries as a subject [of its activities] (Umesao et al 2002).

This more regional way of conducting cultural exchanges has been possible due to the Japan Foundation using Japan's soft power; its reputation as a possible mediator or initiator of meetings between groups of other countries. It is also a reflection of the recent trend towards creating regional links. Its significance in terms of Japan-China cultural relations will be discussed further later (see p.174).

The Japan Foundation and China

In 1972, after the first 'Nixon shock' to Japan of the USA establishing diplomatic contact with China, Japan itself quickly moved to establish its own relations, with the Prime Minister at the time, Tanaka Kakuei, going to Beijing to establish diplomatic relations soon after the USA. This move was further encouraged by the second 'Nixon shock' - the drastic reduction in the value of the dollar against the yen (and other currencies) at the same time, without prior US consultation with Japan. Japan knew that it would have to reduce its dependence on the US market, and establish an economic relationship with China in order to help its own economy in the future.

In particular, the death of Chairman Mao Zedong in 1976, and the rise to power of Deng Xiaoping, helped Japan to negotiate the Japan-China Friendship Treaty, which was finalised in 1978, under the leadership of Fukuda Takeo, who had become Prime Minister and established his 'Fukuda Doctrine' (Japan Foundation 1990: 37) of nurturing closer ties with East Asian countries. The Japan Foundation was also quick to establish links in China, and the first exchanges involved music and dance performance groups. Japan sent a Kabuki dance group to Beijing, and China sent a Beijing Opera group to Japan (Japan Foundation 1990: 36), under the Chinese condition of 'reciprocity' (*huxiangzhuyi*) whereby any cultural trip from Japan to China must be reciprocated by a trip from China to Japan. This condition was most likely due to a certain wariness on the Chinese side regarding cultural infiltration by Japan; during the Japanese occupation of China, Japanese culture was forcibly introduced into China. The reciprocity condition therefore guaranteed that the cultural exchange would not be a one-way process. This condition in some ways was therefore an obstacle to Japan's soft power being channelled into China as the

number of exchanges (and therefore links) was limited by the Chinese side's desire to promote cultural exchange rather than Japan's.

The Japan Foundation has, since then, tracked the development of China's society and economy with a view to conducting cultural exchanges, and finding opportunities to cultivate interest in Japanese culture in China. During the 1980s, there was a 'boom' in Chinese interest in Japan due to it being seen as a model of development for China. Therefore, the number of people wishing to learn Japanese and read Japanese materials increased rapidly until the 1990s, when Japan's economy was seen as stagnant and in trouble after the bursting of the economic 'bubble'. This period was arguably the most fruitful in recent years for Japan in terms of the willingness of Chinese people to accept and digest its ideas, information and culture. The Chinese government was not hostile to Japanese interests, and in fact was encouraging the import of Japanese ideas and information (Taylor 1996, Yokoi 1996, Jackson 1996). Additionally, the Chinese respect for Japan's economic development and industry was at its peak. Japan was also seen as having some historical cultural links with China (it may be more accurate to say that historically Japanese culture was seen by the Chinese as a subset of Chinese culture⁷⁴), and so this commonality was a useful foundation upon which to base the communication of Japan's modern ideas and information. The bursting of the bubble in the Japanese economy undoubtedly tempered respect for Japan's ideas in some ways, and not just in China.

However, by this time, China's own economy had started to mature, and the country was becoming much more open to a wide range of outside interests. With the restructuring of the Japanese economy, including the outsourcing of production to

⁷⁴ See Wang (2005), and Rose (1998)

China, this provided opportunities for the Japan Foundation and other agents to build links to China, and for Japan's ideas and information to again flourish in China (along with other countries'). In its 1997 Annual Report, the Japan Foundation noted that,

In recent years, as China's reforms and opening have advanced, remarkable economic development has been seen, and its interest in regional and international affairs has increased (Japan Foundation 1997: 37).

By 1999, the Foundation was noting that,

Among city people who have gained economic latitude, the amount of resources used for education, entertainment and leisure has increased greatly as a share of the family budget, among which travel and school fees are notable as driving internal demand (Japan Foundation 1999: 12)

This kind of development was and still is relevant to the Foundation, as the number of people who have the time and money to think about things other than daily chores and work has been increasing. It therefore follows that the number of people who may be interested in the courses it runs, its international cultural events, or taking up hobbies such as Japanese language learning, are increasing. This in turn opens up opportunities for the Foundation to find ways to channel Japan's soft power, i.e. its ideas and information, towards these newly affluent people. Clearly, the Foundation, as with other agents of Japan's soft power, is in competition with agents from other countries; nevertheless, due to Japan's cultural and geographical proximity and its head start during the 1980s, the Foundation has had a number of successes despite Japan's so-called 'lost decade' of economic stagnation and

restructuring.

A more apparent problem for the Foundation has been the recurring diplomatic spats between China and Japan regarding historical viewpoints; in particular the ever-present history textbook disagreements, visits to Yasukuni Shrine by prominent Japanese politicians and territorial disputes.⁷⁵

In its reports on the conditions of Japan-China relations, the Foundation has not ignored the competitive international environment and difficult political context in which it is working. In 1999 it reflected that

...in the past few years, with revived confidence due to economic development and as a result of a tendency to look to Europe and American for ideas, intellectual interest in Japanese society and culture has declined...
(Japan Foundation 1999: 13)

and in 2002 it reported

In [China's] relations with Japan, there are several problematic examples of historical issues which have become obvious, leading to a temporary cessation of exchanges between a part of the two governments; it is difficult to say that stable exchanges are being maintained (Japan Foundation 2001).

The fact that these problems have in some ways begun to affect the Foundation's own activities in Chinese universities in particular shows the difficulty it faces as a state agent of soft power; some universities are reluctant to advertise the fact that the Japan Foundation funds research widely. This is in contrast to funding made available by NGOs such as the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. There are also

⁷⁵ See Rose (2005, 1998), Ijiri (1996) on historical issues, Austin and Harris (2001), Howe (1996) on historical and territorial issues.

indications that research funding was withdrawn from Beijing University in recent years, possibly due to Japanese government's poor image among students in China (Kobayashi, personal interview, 2006).

Nevertheless, the Foundation is firm on the need to increase cultural exchange to alleviate the problems caused by 'a hardening [of attitudes] due to the influence of... the mass media...' (Japan Foundation 2001:14). Comments such as these show that although the Foundation believes in the usefulness of cultural exchange and soft power, it realises that it has limited influence in such a large country as China. Therefore it knows that the best way to maximise its resources and create the largest number of links between the two countries is to try to utilise and encourage positive trends which have resulted from Japan's soft power, such as the increasing number of people learning the Japanese language, and young people's interest in popular Japanese culture, such as music, animation, computer games and fashion.

When trying to target a population of 1.3 billion people as exists in China regarding information about Japan and Japanese culture, it is extremely important to actively utilise mass media. In particular it is important to use the television media...(Japan Foundation 2001: 14)

The Japan Foundation has also tried to maximise its resources by targeting 'intellectuals' and 'young leaders'. The 'activity plans' reports from the Foundation's Beijing Culture Centre in recent years have often mentioned the need to make connections (*paipuzukuri*) with China's intellectual community, and in particular young leaders, in order to increase the flow of Japanese ideas and information to China. One report notes that,

As the public inclination to look to Europe and America strengthens, we need to target in particular members of the Beijing and Shanghai governments and related organs who have studied in Europe and America, and build networks to establish intellectual exchanges (Japan Foundation 1999: 13).

The report goes on to emphasise the need to reach people who are members of influential think tanks and other intellectual agencies with these networks.

As the Japanese economy has picked up strength again in recent years, and the Koizumi government has become more assertive in its dealings with China, the Foundation's funding prospects may improve. In any case, officials at the Foundation are considering seriously their future strategies to improve their ability to channel ideas and information from Japan to China. This includes such methods as using the media, in particular the Internet,⁷⁶ to a fuller degree to reach younger Chinese, and trying to contact Chinese students who have studied in Japan to form alumni networks in China (Togashi, interview 2005). If these methods are successful in channelling Japan's soft power into new areas of Chinese society, the Foundation will have carried out its role as an agent of Japan's soft power; however, it is questionable whether they will be successful if the Foundation is simply seen as acting as a propaganda agent of the Japanese state.

Over the last thirty years or so in China, the Japan Foundation has concentrated in particular on the encouragement of existing demand for Japanese language study and research on Japan. Related to this has been the exchange of people, in particular students and scholars, and support for the publishing of textbooks. In addition to these main activities, the Foundation has also provided

⁷⁶ In 2006, a new internet based initiative, the 'Japan Foundation China Centre' was launched in order to carry out this strategy: <http://www.chinacenter.jp/> (Accessed 24/8/06).

support for exhibitions, artistic performances and media activities and arranged conferences in China and Japan. These activities correspond closely to the major ways of instrumentalising soft power postulated in Chapter 3 – the use of communication links, and people to move ideas and information. The following sections will consider these activities and their significance in more detail.

a) Japanese Language and Japan Studies

i) Preparatory School, Changchun

In August 1978, the Japan Foundation held a meeting in Beijing with Chinese education specialists to gauge how much enthusiasm there was for Japanese language learning amongst them, and their level of Japanese, with positive results. In December of the same year, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, the Foundation sent a team of researchers to find out if there would be many Chinese students wishing to study in Japan.

As a result of these surveys and consultations, and with the agreement of the Japanese and Chinese governments, in March 1979 a preparatory school (*yobigakkō*) was established in the Jilin Normal University in Changchun city, in the northeast of China. This school was to be a centre for students who wished to study in Japan. The students would study Japanese language under the supervision of the Japan Foundation, including support from the University of Tokyo (Okamoto and Zhang 2000), and other basic subjects under the supervision of the Japanese Ministry of Education, for one year before going to Japan. In order to carry out its responsibilities, the Foundation sent seven Japanese education specialists to the

school. The Ministry of Education also took steps to ensure that the qualifications earned by students at the preparatory school would be recognised in the Japanese education system. Out of 100 students who started the course, 97 gained qualifications to study in national universities in Japan. They were invariably top students of scientific and engineering subjects (Japan Foundation 1990: 60).

In the first five years after the set up of the school, courses were primarily aimed at undergraduate students who wished to study in Japan for a short period. However, after 1982, following changes in the higher education system in China, and in keeping with China's modernisation, the school started aiming its courses at students who wanted to take master's courses in Japan. From 1984, the school focussed all its efforts upon these students. Continuing its evolution, from 1989 the school began to target students aiming for doctorate qualifications. Since then, the school has annually taken 80 students, of whom 40 are students wishing to complete their doctorates in Japan, and 40 are students who are 'Japan-China Co-operative Trainee doctorate students' (*nicchū kyōdō yōsei hakashisei*). Additionally, since 1985, the school has been accepting about 35 specially sponsored students from Xinjiang province, in order to send them to Japan to learn skills which will help them in furthering development there. In 1995, in accordance with agreements between the Japanese and Chinese authorities, the school decided to increase the number of students who would obtain their doctorates in Japan, and also to accept post-doctoral researchers. From 1996, the school also decided to increase the number of post-doctoral students' places by four posts annually. By 2000, the school had trained over 3300 students, many of whom have gone on to become top researchers in their fields, in particular education and the sciences (Okamoto and Zhang 2000).

Using this method of targeting students with an interest in Japan, the

Foundation has sought to use this interest in Japan's ideas and opportunities (representing Japan's soft power), to create a group of young leaders, professionals and academics with cultural knowledge of Japan, or '*chinichiha*' (Umesao 2002: 6), in the hope that when they become older and leaders in their fields, they will be able to relate to Japan on a more comfortable level than those presently in middle ranking positions. These Japan specialists were, therefore, to act as agents of Japan's soft power; first absorbing language, culture and ideas from Japan via the Japan Foundation (itself acting as an agent for Japan's soft power), in order to be able to then transmit these ideas to other Chinese people in the future, in accordance with the theory proposed in Chapter 3.

In the same year as the preparatory school was established in Jilin, there was an explosive boom in enthusiasm for learning Japanese in China. In Beijing, Shanghai and other large cities, the broadcasting authorities started showing Japanese language courses, and 2.4 million textbooks were sold out as soon as they were put on sale; NHK Radio Japan was asked for an additional 40,000 texts.

In the second year of the Japan Foundation's activities in China, it started up an additional course in Japanese studies in the Shanghai Graduate School of Foreign Languages, in order to further implement the strategy of creating a new group of Japan specialists, or *chinichiha*. This time, two teams of six Japanese education specialists were sent, one to each university.

ii) Beijing Centre for Japan Studies⁷⁷

At around this time, the Japanese Ministry of Education and the Japan Foundation were planning to conduct another survey regarding the amount of Japanese teaching taking place in Chinese universities. However, the Chinese government supplied information that 600 teachers were teaching Japanese in 37 universities around the country. The Chinese then requested that three Japanese teachers be sent for each university, in order to help the universities and education departments recover from the effects of the Cultural Revolution. In 1979, it was decided that Prime Minister Ōhira would visit Beijing to cement good relations between Japan and China, and at that time a new programme would be announced for Japanese teaching in China.

A 'Japanese Language Studies Centre' was therefore established in the Beijing Graduate Institute of Languages in 1980. The purpose of this centre was to improve the teaching of Japanese in China, in terms of quality and the techniques used. Each year, 120 Chinese teachers of Japanese language were given intensive training in Japanese language, including one month of training in Japan. Over the five year duration of the scheme, 600 teachers were trained in this way, covering all the teachers of Japanese in China's universities at that time.

Before the end of the scheme in 1985, the Chinese Government requested that the courses be continued. In China at that time, although the teaching of Japan Studies in universities was widespread, there were no examples of post-graduate courses in the subject (Xu 2002). Therefore, the Chinese Government suggested that the courses be extended into masters level courses, which would last for two years.

⁷⁷ 'Japan Studies' here is used for the term *nihongaku* (the study of Japan), while 'Japanese Studies' is used for the term *nihongogaku* (the study of Japanese language).

In response to this, the Japanese government, through the Japan Foundation, established the 'Japan Studies Centre' in the same Beijing Graduate Institute of Languages. This centre ran two year masters level courses, including a six month stay in Japan. The courses consisted of two subjects, 'Language and Literature,' and 'Society and Culture.' In addition to this, provision was made to set up a 'Resources Centre' containing information and data which could be used by all Japan scholars in China (Japan Foundation 1990: 62). This library contained over 70,000 books by 2002, making it the largest collection of Japanese texts, and therefore Japanese ideas, in China.

At that time in China, it was still usual for professors and teachers to give one-way lectures to large classes. In the Centre, already widely used Japanese techniques of teaching in small seminar groups were introduced to the teachers studying there. Although the purpose of the Centre was mainly to train teachers and scholars, and provide them with information on Japan, more than 300 of its students completed their doctorates, and over 300 students completed their qualifications to become Japanese language teachers since the Japan Studies Centre was created in 1985; many of these students now work in China's universities and research institutes, acting as agents of Japan's soft power, transmitting Japanese language, ideas and information to new generations. In order to enable this scale of activity, the Japan Foundation had to send out almost 600 professors from universities all over Japan to the Beijing Centre from 1985 to 2002 (Xu 2002).

Since 1991, the Centre has sent four graduates from its course every year to embark upon a doctorate course in Japan, with co-operation from the Japanese Ministry of Education. Additionally, since 2002, the Centre has started to offer its own doctorate course. The Beijing Centre also carries out its own research,

publishing research on classical Japanese texts, Japanese studies in China, Japanese society, and translations of Japanese works. A Japanese Studies China-Japan Symposium has been held every year by the Centre since 1992.

At the present time, the Centre holds several kinds of courses, implemented within the Beijing University of Foreign Languages and the Social Sciences department of Beijing University. In the Beijing University of Foreign Languages, it targets Japanese teachers with the literature, language, culture, and social science courses which make up its masters and doctorate courses. In the Beijing University Social Sciences department, it holds classes on understanding Japanese politics, economy, industry, and society in its 'Modern Japan' research course. This course has been directed at China's central and local government officials, and private enterprise middle managers. Since 2000, the Centre has been aiming its lectures at masters and doctorate students in the Social Sciences department of the university. It also organises research trips to Japan for these students. From 2001, the Centre additionally started a masters course in co-operation with the Chinese Ministry of Education, for Japanese teachers in universities and other higher education institutions (Japan Foundation 2003a). The course is aimed at 'middle-ranking' teachers, and requires them to take an intensive course of lectures for one year. After taking the lectures, the teachers can go back to work and write their thesis at the same time. Most of the lecturers are educational specialists and teachers from Japan. In this way, the Foundation targets a broad range of influential people in Chinese society, who will be able in the future to further transmit the information they learn about Japan to others. They will also be able to use the ideas and information in their work to affect the norms and values of people around them.

These activities in one of China's elite universities demonstrate further how

the Japan Foundation hoped to use Japan's soft power to cultivate Chinese people with a good knowledge of Japan, in the hope that they would create bridges between the two countries in the future. While it is true that the number of Chinese students going to study in Japan has increased steadily, in particular over the last fifteen years or so, it is also widely acknowledged that they often have a difficult time in Japan making local friends or leading a comfortable life. Chinese students arriving in Japan with a deeper knowledge of Japanese language and culture are more likely to be able to get along in Japanese society than those who arrive with no prior knowledge, who may become frustrated by the unexpected differences between the two countries' cultures.

The Chinese students who have learned about Japan and Japanese language to some degree also have some advantages in finding work when they return to the highly competitive graduate market at home (Wang 2005). Japanese culture and language courses first initiated by the Japan Foundation have undoubtedly had some success in channelling Japan's soft power; however the results will not become clear until these students become more influential in Chinese society, perhaps in the next twenty to thirty years.

iii) Books translated, and original research at the Beijing Centre for Japanese Studies

In order to introduce Japanese academic books into China, the Beijing Centre funds the publishing of a series of books called the 'Japan Studies Basic Academic Literature Translations Series'. In particular, this series contains important books from the range of economics and social sciences. Notable books which have been translated into Chinese in the series include 'Environmental Economics', 'The

Japanese Agricultural System', 'Internal Organisation Economic Theory', 'Revolution and Development in Japanese Enterprise Management', 'The Formation and Death of the Modern Family', 'Cultural Nationalism – Methods in Contemporary Japan's Identity' and 'Secrets and Shame – The Organisation of Japanese Society Communication' (Japan Foundation 2005).

The titles in the series show the interest which Chinese academics show in a wide variety of issues in Japan's society and economy; possibly because many of the problems are now affecting or are soon likely to affect Chinese society. Current translations are continuing of books on how new information technologies are affecting Japanese companies and society, and why Japan's economy imploded after the 1990 investment bubble – a concern of many Chinese academics regarding their own economy's problems.

Original research is also undertaken by professors and lecturers at the Beijing Centre (Beijing Centre for Japanese Studies 2005). In the Social Sciences section, the themes are 'Historical industrial change in agricultural villages in Japan', 'Support for old parents in agricultural villages', and 'Japan's old peoples' welfare problems'. These themes again reflect topics which are of particular relevance to China's own problems.

These activities complement the Japan Foundation's cultivation of a new generation of academics and leaders familiar with Japanese culture. By encouraging academics to publish books about Japan and Japanese culture, the Foundation not only provides opportunities for the students who it has funded through the 1980s and 1990s to further their academic studies, but it also helps to promote a cornucopia of knowledge and research in China concerning modern Japan, and its ideas. These ideas and information will further be passed on to the next generation of Chinese

students and so on, creating more channels for Japan's soft power to have an effect. Therefore, through these activities, enabling Japanese ideas and information to be transmitted into China, the Foundation is acting as an agent of Japan's soft power in China.

iv) Secondary and Primary School Teachers

The Japan Foundation, in collaboration with the International Cultural Forum and local governments in the northeast of China, trains secondary school teachers to improve their Japanese language skills for two weeks in the summer holidays every year, starting from 1996 (Japan Foundation 2003b). The courses also included classes on new teaching methods and theory, discussion on current events and developments in Japan and involved the participation of teachers from Japan.

The Japan Foundation sends young Japanese teachers from Japan to regional seminars, to hold discussions with local secondary school teachers about the central governments plans for Japanese education, and new teaching methods. In some regions longer term courses are also held.

The Beijing office of the Japan Foundation has held seminars every year for secondary and primary school Japanese teachers, which involved them attending for up to three days, and obtaining advice from a Japanese education advisor, sent from Japan. Finally, the Japan Foundation has been operating a programme to send about 20 secondary level teachers to Japan for training every year.

Again, these programmes provide opportunities for people who have learned about Japan and its culture to continue their association with Japan, and to further pass on their knowledge to younger generations, and again, it can be seen that

through these programmes the Foundation acts as a state agent of Japan's soft power, transmitting Japanese information and ideas to the Chinese populace.

v) Japanese Language Test of Proficiency

During the 1990s, the numbers of Chinese people applying to take the Japanese Language Test of Proficiency (JLTP) have increased dramatically. The JLTP was first introduced in China by the Japan Foundation in 1986, although only students studying at an educational institution were allowed to apply for it. From 1993, it was opened to anyone, and since then the number of applicants have risen steeply, from 4297 in 1993, to 87,132 people in 2003, in 22 cities (Okamoto and Zhang 2000, Japan Foundation Beijing Office 2004). This continuous increase occurred despite the stagnation in numbers of people studying Japanese in China during the mid-1990s. The increase in people taking the test suggests an increase in recognition of its value in proving proficiency in Japanese in China. The majority of students took the test at levels one and two, from which it could be deduced that most students take the test for professional or educational qualifications, as these higher levels are more likely to be required for jobs or university courses. Since 1993, the Chinese Ministry of Education has stipulated that even university students who were not in specialist language universities would have to choose at least one language from English, Japanese or Russian. Those choosing Japanese would have to pass at least level 4 of the JLTP. In 2004, the number of Chinese applying to take the Japanese test was much higher than the Japan Foundation's expectations, leading to a lack of capacity at test centres and many applicants being unable to take the test (*Daily Yomiuri*, 29 October 2004). Students who take these tests are in effect agents of

Japan's soft power, creating high-quality links (demonstrated by their enthusiasm for learning the Japanese language) between themselves and their acquaintances, and Japanese culture. Therefore, it is important for Sino-Japanese cultural relations that the Foundation deals with these administrative problems which tend to reflect its, at times, slow-moving, bureaucratic culture.

vi) Japanese language textbooks and other materials

The Japan Foundation has been involved in activities to produce textbooks and academic books related to Japanese language and society study, especially in the earlier years of its establishment, when there was a special need for them.

In 1978, with the co-operation of the Tokyo University of Foreign Languages, and the international office of the national television and radio broadcaster, NHK (Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai), the Foundation published three textbooks. Their titles were 'Japanese Pronunciation', 'Beginner's Japanese Kana' and 'Beginner's Japanese Kanji'. The 'Japanese Pronunciation' text was published together with slides and tapes, in a ground-breaking move at the time (Japan Foundation 1990: 66). These books became best-sellers, and were often copied illegally and distributed. In 1986 they secured a deal with a local Chinese publisher to produce a 'Basic Japanese learner's dictionary' in Chinese.

Thus, the Japan Foundation's promotion of Japanese language and Japan studies in China has been according to the principles of soft power as defined previously, that is to say, not through its own pressure or coercion, but in response to requests made from the Chinese government and officials. In the Foundation's own words, the principle of 'co-operating in Japanese language education according to

local leadership (*genchishidō*)' (Japan Foundation 1989: 93) has been at the centre of its activities in this area. The Japan Foundation has been able to use Japan's soft power effectively to build up Japanese teaching in China, resulting in a significant number of academics and students increasing their understanding of Japan and its culture. The Foundation hopes that these students will in turn become experts on Japan in the future, and spread their knowledge more widely. It also undoubtedly hopes that the students with an intimate knowledge of Japan will eventually ascend into positions of leadership and power within Chinese society, enabling smoother communication between Japan and China in the future.

Therefore, the Foundation has been shown to be acting in accord with the model proposed in Chapter 3. Here, the soft power being channelled with most energy by the Foundation has been that of the Japanese language (along with all of the ideas, information and values that it contains). The Foundation has used its resources and staff to act as conduits for this information to be carried to China, and transmitted to Chinese people. Those people targeted are likely to become influential and part of the elite in China, having graduated from universities, and in many cases gained masters or doctorate degrees. Hence, it is assumed by the Japan Foundation that they will be well placed to further spread their knowledge of Japan, its ideas and culture to other Chinese people, in time deepening general knowledge of Japan, increasing the range of common values and norms in the two countries, and thereby from the Foundation's point of view, hopefully improving bilateral relations between Japan and China.

b) *Cultural Activities*

i) Television and Film

A second part of the Japan Foundation's strategy has been to channel Japan's ideas and information directly towards Chinese people in general, rather than just at the highly educated elite.

The Japan Foundation has tried to use exhibitions and mass media to bring Japanese culture to as wide an audience in China as possible given the constraints of its resources. In 1983, the Foundation worked with the Japan China Video Network Company (which had co-operated with the Chinese authorities to put a colour television and video tape recorder in 500 places in 52 cities in China, including a cassette about Japanese technology) to make and distribute a film about 'Japan's Salaryman (*Nihon no Sararīman*)' in Chinese. The film was distributed to 200 broadcasting sites, by making copies of the film to videotape, over 2 years. It was broadcast in the six months from April of that year 1919 times, and about 95,000 people were able to watch the film (Japan Foundation 1990: 157).

In 1984, another film was made about 'Japanese young people today (*Nihon no Wakamono wa ima*)', and in 1985 a film about 'New Farm Management (*Shinnōgyōkeiei*)' to help China's farming modernisation was produced by NHK (another state agent of Japan's soft power in this respect) and distributed by the Japan Foundation. Other NHK films about basic agriculture which were distributed in China included 'The Secrets of Healthy Nurseries (*Kenbyō no hiketsu*)', 'The Secrets of Water Management (*Mizukanri no hiketsu*)', 'The Secrets of Soil Management (*Tochizukuri no hiketsu*)', 'Protecting against Pest Damage (*Byōchūgai kara mamoru*),

and 'Protecting basic techniques after rice-planting (*Taue ato no kihongijutsu o mamoru*). In collaboration with the Sakura Film Company, a film called 'Living Soil (*Ikiteiru tsuchi*)' was also distributed. In 1986, the Japan Foundation produced two films, one called 'Comic Books and Modern Japanese People (*Manga to gendai Nihonjin*)', and the other titled 'Japanese Elderly People (*Nihon no rōjin*)'.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, the Japanese language boom in China was at full pace. In connection with this, China's Central Television Office (CCTV) asked the Japan Foundation for help in providing texts to accompany its language programmes. The Foundation therefore used existing programmes created by NHK and other television companies, and provided these programmes with accompanying textbooks and video materials to the CCTV Office. The programmes included 'Our Beautiful Friend (*Waga uruwashi no tomo*)', 'The Day Women Leave the Workplace (*Onna ga shokuba o saru hi*)', and 'Three Years' Love (*Sannen tatte koi*)'. Finally, the CCTV used a series of programs called 'Yan-san and Japan's people (*Yan-san to Nihon no hitobito*)' for its series of Japanese language programmes (Japan Foundation 1990).

The fact that these programmes and films were in demand in China, and that the Japan Foundation was able to supply them, shows that the Foundation was able to utilise Japan's soft power, and build upon certain aspects of Japan's image and reputation at a crucial stage in China's development. China was at the time in desperate need of help with regard to improving its crop yields and farming know-how in order to feed its fast-growing population. Through the Japan Foundation's soft power-channelling efforts, Japan's identity as a high technology country with many skills resources was reinforced, and the Foundation was able to humanise the image with the videos of Japanese society and everyday life, in

addition to promoting Japanese language learning. The dramas were used as examples of modern Japanese culture, which were have been relevant to new issues being faced by the modernising Chinese society.

Film exhibitions are often held by the Japan Foundation in China to promote Japan's culture and ideas. An example of this was the Japan Film Retrospective, held in the Beijing Film Resource Centre in November 1999. Four representatives from Japan (including the president of the University of Tokyo and art critic Hasumi Shigehiko, and the acclaimed Korean-Japanese film director Sai Yōichi) went to Beijing and discussed in a symposium with their Chinese audiences issues such as how to protect domestic films against the influx of Hollywood films (Japan Foundation 1999: 13). By organising this film festival, the Japan Foundation was acting as an agent for Japanese values and ideas, carried by Japanese experts; for example the idea that domestic film makers need to be protected against US imports.

Another film festival was held in co-operation with the Beijing Institute of Film in June 2001. This time the films were examples of Japanese independent films made by young directors since 1995, which had earned international acclaim. Two films which were included in the festival were 'Charisma' by Kurosawa Kiyoshi, and Nakae Yūji's '*Nabii no Koi* [Nabii's love]'. The first is a subtle horror film about a man and a police-officer trying to defend a decaying forest against park rangers, while the second is set in Okinawa, about a sixty-year old married woman finding a long-lost love. It is clear that both these films show modern social problems, in the first case environmental, and in the second a traditional family culture coming to terms with a previously taboo relationship. The films may have been selected to appeal to Chinese now facing similar problems, and to enable a Chinese audience to connect with modern Japanese culture, in the same way as the dramas previously

mentioned.

According to the Japan Foundation, over 800 people filled the hall for the film festival, which was packed with film students and industry people from Beijing. It said 'as the Chinese film industry rebuilds its system to deal with marketisation of the economy and WTO membership, Japan's independent films have shown new examples and choices...' (Japan Foundation 2001: 15). These comments reinforce the idea that the Foundation was trying to appeal to the young Chinese elite by referring to common social and environmental problems which both China and Japan face. In this case the Foundation, as an agent of Japan's soft power, was channelling Japanese ideas by reflecting on these common problems, and in the form of Japan's appeal as a modern society and culture. The effect of these ideas on the people receiving them would be to emphasise the common issues which Japanese and Chinese societies face, and so encourage a feeling that cooperation on resolving these issues is possible, thereby promoting relations between people in the two countries. Although the actual numbers of people attending the film festivals would be insignificant compared to the population of China, the people receiving these ideas are likely to be elite intellectuals, who also act as conduits for Japan's soft power by transmitting the ideas to other Chinese people, thus deepening understanding and improving relations between the two peoples.

ii) Live Performances and Exhibitions

Sending stage performers and traditional Japanese arts performers to other countries is another way in which the Japan Foundation tries to promote Japanese culture and ideas abroad, and China is no exception. As with the film festivals, these

performances and exhibitions are likely to appeal to a section of Chinese society who are influential opinion formers; although most Chinese people may not be interested in or able to attend performances or exhibitions, those who attend may write or broadcast about them in mass circulation media, sending the information and ideas to the general public, and thereby acting as conduits for Japan's soft power.

An example of a traditional Japanese music performance sent to China was in November 2002, as part of the Japan-China Year programme marking the 30th anniversary of restored relations between the two countries. The Foundation, in co-operation with local government exchange groups, supported a Japanese traditional music tour (*hōgaku junkai kōen*) which travelled to five major cities around China (Tianjin, Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing and Guangzhou). The performance consisted of two parts; the first part included the playing of Japanese instruments such as the *shakuhachi* (a bamboo flute), *koto* (thirteen stringed instrument), and *biwa* (a four-stringed lute). The second part consisted of an introduction to modern experimental music, with modern instruments collaborating with traditional ones. According to the Foundation's report,

the performance was an effective cultural exchange event, which was able to contribute practically to the understanding of Japanese music's multifaceted nature, and relationship with Asia (Japan Foundation 2002: 14).

Included in the programme were a conference on Beijing Opera, and a lecture for university students. According to the Japan Foundation, the programmes were well attended in each city, with over 4000 people watching the performances. The majority of people had never experienced Japanese traditional music before, but they 'sat silently and on edge in their seats during the performance' (Japan Foundation

2002: 15), and then started clapping their hands to the background music at the end. The events were apparently reported in all major newspapers in each city, and television stations, eliciting a strong response.

A further example of an artistic performance supported by the Japan Foundation is the Contemporary Dance Performance staged in Beijing and Guangzhou in March 2003. In this case the Foundation co-operated with the China Foreign Performance Company to bring the contemporary Japanese dance group 'Leni Basso' and their act 'Finks' to China. The event in Beijing was geared towards students and people from the arts world, and about 800 people filled the performance hall. After the show, the founder of the dance group, Kitamura Akiko, held a lively discussion session with the audience, most of whom stayed on to participate. The Foundation's report noted,

In Japanese contemporary dance, there are many groups of young people actively searching for new ways of expression; the leading representatives of this group, Leni Basso, were introduced during this performance and it can be said that they had a great impact upon the Chinese dance artists and the young generation who attended... (Japan Foundation 2002: 15).

After the event, it was reported that there was great interest from journalists and artists who requested more information on Japanese dance. On the one hand, events like these are used to reinforce areas of the supposed common historical culture of the two countries, and on the other hand the Foundation seeks to show Japan as modern, by showcasing the experimental art which Japan produces. The 'common history' theme has been used by Japanese and Chinese governments for centuries (Austin and Harris 2001, Rose 1998) to promote friendly ties, and the Foundation's use of these themes represents a continuation of these efforts. The soft power which

the Foundation is channelling here is the idea of a common culture which, mistakenly or not, is widely acknowledged among the people of both countries.

Other events such as these have been supported or organised by the Japan Foundation; in the Foundation's 2002 Japan-China Year programme celebrating 30 years of normalised relations between Japan and China, a multitude of performances and exhibitions were held in both countries, a highlight of which was a concert played by the then popular Japanese pop music group 'Glaxo'. The concert was attended by 35,000 people, from China, Japan and other nearby countries. Again these kinds of events show the soft power of Japan's modern ideas, and try to appeal to the new, rich young people who have emerged in China's cities. The commonality of culture between Japan and China, in the form of popular music is also demonstrated by the Foundation at these kinds of events.

In 2002 the Foundation made a particular effort to mark the fact that Japan and China had had normalised relations for 30 years. It organised 14 events and contributed financially to 36 others (Japan Foundation Beijing Office 2002) which helped to promote its themes of modernity, traditional culture, and cultural commonality. Events included various exhibitions, traditional and modern performances, and seminars. The Foundation understandably utilises every chance to celebrate an anniversary to raise its profile; in 1998 and in 2003 the 20th and 25th anniversaries of the Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty were used in a similar way to attract attention.

During this time when the governments of the two countries were barely meeting, let alone negotiating, due to each side's somewhat nationalistic positions, the Foundation has been able to act as an agent of Japan's cultural soft power in China to try and improve relations between the two countries. It has done this by

using the above-mentioned exhibitions, performances and other cultural activities to transmit cultural values and ideas to elite Chinese people directly, and to others who are unable to attend the exhibitions by using the Chinese media who report on these events. This chain of activities is broadly in line with the model proposed in Chapter 3; the soft power resource is that of the attractiveness of Japan's culture, the agent is the Japan Foundation, and the soft power is transmitted by the Foundation across information links (using its own staff, influential Chinese people who are interested in cultural activities, and the Chinese media) to the receiving country's people. These soft power-channelling activities have been seen by Japanese bureaucrats, academics and politicians as a useful way to play down problems in relations between the Japanese and Chinese governments, by showing that, on the whole, relations between the two countries are strong as cultural exchange activities as well as trade continue to flourish.

iii) Seminars and Conferences

The Japan Foundation has in recent years come to realise that, rather than pursuing purely bilateral information exchanges, it is also essential to promote cultural ties on a regional basis. This regional emphasis also reflects recent thinking among some bureaucrats and academics about the possibilities of an East Asian regional association or trading-bloc along the lines of the European Union, or more conceivably, ASEAN. The Japan Foundation's activities also represent this thinking, and the promotion of these ideas. An example of this trend as reflected in the Foundation's activities is the Japan-China-Korea Future Leaders Forum, a conference designed to bring young leaders and intellectuals from these three

countries to discuss common issues. The first meeting was held in co-operation with South Korea's International Exchange group, and China's Contemporary International Relations Research Centre, in 2002. The discussions first took place in Tsukuba (Ibaraki-ken), then Seoul and finally Beijing over a period of about two weeks.

The main purpose of the Forum is to enable intellectuals from the three countries to form personal links, and for participants to deepen their understanding of each other's cultures. The participants were from 'the world of politics, management, finance, academia and media', numbering five people from each country. The topics discussed were about the North Korea problem, the United States' role in Northeast Asia, factors hindering regional co-operation, problems which cross borders such as environmental problems, cross-border terror, asylum seekers, and finally economic co-operation. In the evenings the participants chatted in a 'more relaxed manner'. Participants included middle to higher managers from companies, members of respective parliaments, professors, middle ranking bureaucrats, and middle ranking staff from national media organisations. According to the activity report, the participants were still in touch during the next year, and hope to continue the network of contacts (MOFA 2003).

Another example of this kind of regional conference was the Japan-China-Korea NPO (Non-Profit Organisation) Seminar, held in March 2003, in co-operation with the China NPO Network and other groups. For this seminar two panellists were invited from each country to discuss the current situation of NPOs and their problems in the three countries. Each panellist gave a presentation and comments on the possibility of development and co-operation between the three countries on these issues. In particular there was interest in the recent booming of

NPOs in China, which have yet to develop co-operative ties with Japanese and Korean NPOs (Japan Foundation 2002). The Japan Foundation has to some extent realised in recent years that it needs to work as much as possible with NGOs in China (and Korea). It has held seminars in the last three years, organised to enable it to contact these groups and help them contact each other. These activities are as yet just beginning, but they show that the Foundation is trying to deepen its access to people in China to enable it to transfer Japan's ideas and information beyond government controlled agencies.

Another reason the Foundation has been trying to work with local NGOs in China is that it is then more likely to be able to gain cooperation or funding from groups from other countries, which are not keen to work on projects which involve governments, in particular the Chinese government. Nevertheless, the Foundation has come up against initial problems in dealing with Chinese NGOs, in that they were unable to agree to cooperate beyond making presentations about their activities (Kawano, interview, 2005). This may show a certain understandable wariness on the part of Chinese NGOs to work with the Japanese government agency, and demonstrate the limits of such an agency's ability to act as an agent of Japan's soft power. It is only relatively recently that these kinds of conferences have been possible, as the flow of information between Japan, China and South Korea has become freer and less controlled by governments.

The number of participants in these conferences and seminars are undoubtedly small, but a large number of these kinds of meetings are sponsored or administrated by the Japan Foundation every year. Not only does this positively affect participants' perceptions of Japan as making an effort to co-operate, but the fact that the meetings are being organised by the Foundation is undoubtedly widely

advertised in universities, research institutes and other influential organisations around China, and East Asia. The ability of the Japan Foundation to organise these multinational meetings shows that it is able to effectively channel Japan's soft power to show Japan as a country which can enable co-operation regionally.

These seminars and conferences also demonstrate the manner in which the Japan Foundation acts as an agent of soft power according to the model proposed in Chapter 3. The source of soft power in this case is the pool of ideas and information which is held in Japan by academics, experts, politicians, students and others who participate in the conferences and seminars organised by the Foundation. The Foundation either utilises its own staff, or it utilises the participants in the conferences (who are Japanese, Chinese, or other nationalities), to travel between Japan and China and transmit ideas or to communicate their ideas by publishing them. In this way, ideas and information are transferred from Japan to China, and thence spread gradually through the country over a long period of time, gradually becoming part of the receiving culture's stock of knowledge. This may create areas of common understanding between the two countries, helping to promote good relations.

The Japan Foundation: an agent of Japan's ideas, information and soft power?

The main purpose of the Japan Foundation's activities in China is stated in the organisation's literature as being to deepen and increase mutual understanding (*sōgorikai*) between Japanese and Chinese people. Whether this is through promoting Japanese language and culture, or by encouraging physical exchanges or meetings of people between the two countries, the idea is that Chinese people who have concrete

links and affinities with Japanese people and culture, and vice versa, will be less inclined to be unthinkingly hostile towards each other.

While this is a laudable goal, the necessarily limited resources of the Foundation, in particular since the mid-to-late 1990s, also limit the extent to which it can achieve this purpose acting single-handedly. In order to truly encourage cultural exchange between Japan and China and enable Japan's soft power to flow between Japan and China, the Foundation has in recent years realised that it must help private groups such as NGOs or NPOs to establish links across borders; it also needs to consider relations between different groups of people, rather than just between nation states (Hirano 2002, Kawano, interview 2005).⁷⁸

In particular, by offering sponsorship and support to groups or individuals who request it, the Japan Foundation is adhering to the principles of soft power. The people who apply for grants or sponsorship are not being coerced to do so by the Foundation; they are being attracted by Japan's soft power, which is then utilised by the Foundation, to steer them towards a range of activities it will sponsor. Rather than prescribing a narrow range of activities which could show it as an organisation coercively trying to plant an image of Japan into Chinese people's minds, especially in recent years the Foundation has tried to sponsor a wide range of activities and research, which allows people receiving the support to feel in control.

In addition to the Foundation's goal of improving Japan's image abroad, its activities also act to improve understanding of Japan and its culture in other countries, as well as improving understanding of other countries in Japan. However, this latter purpose being at the heart of the Foundation's *raison d'être* is conducive to

⁷⁸ Also see Riordan (2005) on the need for state organisations to encourage NGOs in public diplomacy.

it improving the image of Japan as a side-product. The concept of 'mutual understanding' is by its nature a cooperative one. It is not possible to force other people to understand and respect one's culture; if this is attempted it is liable to produce fear and distrust, in the same manner as pure propaganda.

The attraction of the Japanese language as a language rich with technical knowledge, and as an important gateway to Japan, its history and culture, is a major part of Japan's soft power. However, whether it can become a soft power resource or not is dependent upon the methods used to promote it, and provide access to it. If the language is forced upon people (as occurred in the early 20th century in Japan's occupied territories) it is likely to become a negative influence on relations. The Japan Foundation's methods have in general been the opposite of this; the Foundation was, on the whole, responding to local demand and requests for help in teaching and learning Japanese, when it set up institutions and networks to achieve this purpose. The terms often used in the Foundation's reports and literature to reflect these principles are *genchika* (adaptation to local needs) and *genchishidō* (following the lead of locals). Equally, the encouragement of research into Japan's society and economy in China has been pursued in a co-operative manner, with the areas of research not limited to only positive aspects of Japan but also its problems, and information resources being provided as requested. In sum, the Foundation performs well as an agent of the soft power of the Japanese language.

While the Japan Foundation itself employs many optimistic or even idealistic people whose aim is to promote mutual understanding between cultures, there are also many more conservative people (in particular politicians) who see it purely as a convenient tool for promoting Japan's image in the world, as is also the case in China. This point of view is clearly visible in the debates regarding the

Foundation's establishment in the Diet, where both the party in government (the LDP) and most of the opposition parties (such as the Japan Socialist Party and the Democratic Socialist Party) viewed the new entity as such a tool, although they differed on where the tool should be used.⁷⁹

One of the most potentially effective points about the Foundation's programmes in terms of utilising Japan's soft power is the fact that students who study on its programmes and courses are likely to be part of networks of highly educated people, who are also likely to be future business and political leaders (Betzler and Austin 1997). Even if the Foundation can not reach the greater mass of the public in China, if it can reach people who will be the most influential people in Chinese society in the future, it will have helped mutual understanding and bilateral relations between China and Japan by having cultivated Chinese with a good cultural understanding of Japan (whether the opposite will occur through the Foundation's current activities is, however, uncertain). Japan has generally had good relations with leaders in the region who have had contact with its society in their student days. Examples of leaders who have studied in Japan are Kim Dae Jung of South Korea, under whose leadership the South Korean economy was finally opened to Japanese cultural exports; Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, and Lee Teng-Hui of Taiwan also had extensive contacts with Japan. Even in China, the late Zhou Enlai had studied in Japan, which was undoubtedly an influence on his relatively positive efforts to promote mutual understanding between the two countries.

The use of television and film media has also been a mixture of demand from groups in China, in particular for educational purposes, and co-operative or

⁷⁹ The LDP was more concerned about using the Japan Foundation to improve ties with the USA, and to some extent South-east Asia, while the Socialist Party and Democratic Socialist Party were concerned about improving ties with Communist countries (National Diet of Japan 1972a, b).

mutual exchange on both sides in the case of film festivals and exhibitions. Dances and other artistic performances have also taken place as a result of co-operation between the Foundation and private groups in both Japan and China. Despite the somewhat more cynical goals professed by politicians regarding the purpose of the Foundation, on the whole its staff's sensitive approach to cultural exchanges is likely to be an addition to Japan's soft power in the areas of China's society which the exchanges touch.

Organising conferences, seminars and other meetings between Japanese and Chinese leaders and intellectuals is also a good way of utilising and also enhancing Japan's reputation as a country which is interested in co-operation and mutual understanding, although this may not be sufficient to overcome the negative influence of some government ministers on the relationship. Although the overall numbers involved in these exchanges are small in relations to the populations of each country (Austin and Harris 2001), the people targeted are likely to be opinion formers and leaders, either currently or in the future. Additionally, the name of the Japan Foundation is attached to each meeting, and information about the meetings is undoubtedly spread much more widely than among just the participants in the meetings themselves.

The manner in which the Foundation has conducted the above activities has been shown to concur with the hypothesised process of soft power use described in Chapter 3. That is to say, the Japan Foundation first identifies a soft power resource which can be transmitted to China; as outlined in this chapter, and as hypothesised in Chapter 3, these soft power resources consist of ideas and information related to culture (especially language), lifestyle, technical ideas, and the attractiveness of Japan's economic success. The Foundation then utilises people and

many forms of media to create information links between Japan and China, and to transmit these ideas from Japan to China in a multitude of ways. The ideas then percolate into Chinese society over a long period of time, and seem to have helped relations between the two countries; the amount of non-governmental, people to people exchanges has been increasing greatly over the last three decades. While it is difficult to prove how much these increases have been helped by the Foundation's efforts, it is clear that the Foundation has had a significant role.

Nevertheless, there have been problems with the Foundation's realisation of its goals, many of which are directly related to its nature as a state organ. In an outside evaluation of the Japan Foundation's performance undertaken in 2003, a committee of academics, and representative from companies and the media, stated with regard to its purpose,

The Japan Foundation proposes that its purpose is to 'increase international mutual understanding', but for this understanding to begin, first it is necessary for other people to have an interest in Japan. It is said that Japan is attractive, but it is important to keep this [attractiveness] as a fundamental base (Japan Foundation 2003: 1).

In respect of its role and accountability, it was said,

It is important that a role should be positively searched for [by the Japan Foundation] between the government, the public and other various organs of cultural exchange; and we hope the government will also take note of this... [W]e believe it is necessary for [the Foundation], as quickly as possible, to improve its dissemination of information and thereby widen public understanding about its activities (Japan Foundation 2003: 1-2)

These comments reflect the fact that the committee thought the Japan Foundation

needed to become less a tool of the government, or an extension of the government's foreign policy, and more of an independent agent.

In stark contrast to this, the Japan Foundation's own internal report reflected upon the need to work closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA):

...in accordance with the Japanese Government's chosen foreign policy, and regarding the creation of a system which puts into practice activities which improve the effectiveness of foreign policy, the Foundation is currently revising part of its program and progressing in the choosing of which activities to concentrate upon. The Foundation, from the point of view of consistently putting into practice activities which are most necessary for foreign policy, and in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has a duty to urgently debate how to increase the liveliness of its work (Japan Foundation 2003b :1).

This position is reinforced by officials at the Foundation (Kawano, interview 2005, Togashi, interview 2005), although they acknowledge the need to maintain some distance from the government's foreign policy objectives of the day. Therefore, it is debatable as to whether the purpose of the Japan Foundation in the future is likely to be more as an agent of governmental policy, or more as an agent of the Japanese public in the form of interested groups and representatives. As Hirano has noted,

In the law setting up the Japan Foundation, 'international' is a word which is often used; this implies only relations between states, and cultural exchange between 'nations' and 'states' as a basic concept. The Foundation has, until now, been a special agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs bureaucracy... it has not responded to the changes in the undercurrents [of international exchange] (Hirano 2002: 121).

Hirano goes on to argue that the Foundation needs to become more transparent about its purpose and activities, so that the Japanese public can see how their taxes are being used.

Shiraishi (2002) also argues that the weakening of dictatorships across East Asia has enabled sudden growth in the middle classes in large, which has in turn led to the growth of NGOs and other private groups. This is also happening now in China's cities, the previously cited Japan-China-Korea seminar on NPOs being proof of this, and is a factor which the Japan Foundation knows it must take into account in its work.

Becoming more transparent and open will also improve the Foundation's ability to act as an agent of the Japanese people's soft power. If it is identified only with the state, and the Japanese government, its ability to tap into the soft power of the wider Japanese culture may be limited. Recent indications that the some of the Foundation's funding activities may have suffered as a result of poor Sino-Japanese governmental relations are indicative of the problems of being too closely associated with the government of the day.

The reforms which are being undertaken by the Foundation's managers and its staff to become more transparent, more accountable, and less dependent upon public taxes for funds, are important steps towards these goals. By strengthening its legitimacy as an agent of the Japanese public, it can strengthen its role as an agent of Japan's soft power, whether in China or elsewhere. However, if it becomes no more than a tool of the government or of MOFA, then its legitimacy and Japan's soft power will suffer.

Chapter 5

The Kobe Tianjin sister city relationship

Introduction

State-level organs are inevitably closely affected by the central government's official foreign policies. Hence, policies which reflect a growing unease about China's economic development and its growing military 'hard' power are likely to impinge upon state-level organs which deal in cultural exchanges or other exchanges with China. The rapidly dwindling provision of ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) to Chinese projects is likely to affect negatively the activities of such state-level agents of Japan's soft power as JICA and the Japan Foundation.

However, sub-state level organs such as local governments and regional governments, are less bound by national considerations in dealings with similar level organs in other countries. Once the general principle of sub-state exchanges between countries is accepted by the central government, it is generally the responsibility of those regional or local governments to develop the exchanges and relationships; hence the relationships are less likely to be affected by national policies than by the needs and hopes of the local government.

This observation is particularly relevant in the case of Japan and China. Since the signing of the Japan-China Friendship Treaty in 1978, the number of sister city and other sub-state level exchanges has expanded rapidly. The strength of these individual exchanges and relationships wax and wane, but are not greatly affected by the different cycles of international relations, which are dependent upon other factors,

such as global interests and national identities. The identity of a city or other sub-state organ is distinct from the identity of the country as a whole (see, e.g. Alger 1990, 1999). In any country, cities and provinces have distinctive characters; distinctive dialects, economies, fashions, cultures, geography and histories. These characteristics enable us to identify these sub-state organs as having separate identities, even if put together they are represented by a state identity. Thus in Japan, the identity of Tokyo is easily distinguished from Osaka, and in China, Shanghai and Beijing have very different identities based on their roles and histories.

Thus, in forming and maintaining their role as international actors through sister city programmes and other exchanges, sub-state organs such as local governments are likely to act as agents for their own, as well as their countries', soft power in these relationships. In addition, a sub-state local government is highly unlikely to try to, or be able to use power in a coercive manner, as this would soon cause any mutual exchange relationship to be weakened or destroyed (as in the case of the Shimane-Gyeongsongbuk-do relationship⁸⁰ in 2005 (*Japan Times*, 17 March 2005)). The main role of sub-state local governments as agents of soft power then, is to open channels of communication to allow the free movement of ideas and information, whether through the movement of data, people or goods.

In this chapter, the role of sub-state level local governments as agents of soft power will be investigated. In particular, the development of Kobe City's sister city relationship with Tianjin City, China, will be analysed as a representative case of this process. Firstly, the concept of 'sister cities' will be considered, including the history of the concept, its definitions and theories on the development of sister city

⁸⁰ In this incident, the Shimane Prefectural Assembly unilaterally asserted Japanese sovereignty over the Takeshima/Dokdo islands between Japan and Korea, which are controlled by South Korea, thus leading Gyeongsongbuk-do to cancel its sister city relationship with Shimane Prefecture.

relationships. Secondly, the development of Japanese cities' international activities and relationships with other countries' cities will be explored. Thirdly, the chapter will then move on to consider the Kobe-Tianjin relationship in detail, including its development, content and future direction. Finally, using the example of Kobe-Tianjin, the role of sub-state local governments as agents of soft power in Japan will be discussed.

The concept of 'Sister Cities'

a) History of sister cities

Zelinsky (1991) argues that sister city-like relationships have occurred since well before this century, either officially or unofficially across borders, or in instances where immigrants have kept in contact with cities where they formerly lived, in particular between immigrant communities in the US and other countries, and throughout history between geographically or economically linked communities.

However, the first formal 'sister city' relationships originated in the USA and Europe, an example being that between New Bern (South Carolina, USA) and Bern (Switzerland) (Menju 2003: 49). In the aftermath of the Second World War, British cities formed relationships with other cities in Europe (Zelinsky 1991) which had been devastated, in order to pool ideas for reconstruction. Coventry formed a relationship with Stalingrad in Russia, Reading with Zaandem and Oxford with Leiden in the Netherlands. Bristol city even linked up with Britain's former enemies in Germany, to form a link with Hanover in August 1947, sending it aid in the form of food and clothes (Cremer 2001).

The greatest push for the idea of the sister city came from the United States, in the post-war period. President Dwight Eisenhower promoted his vision of a 'people-to-people programme' at a conference in the White House, in 1956. This was intended to

involve individuals and organised groups at all levels of society in citizen diplomacy, with the hope that personal relationships, fostered through sister city, county and state affiliations, would lessen the chance of future world conflicts (Sister Cities International 2005).

At the time, there had been a temporary thaw in relations between the US and the Soviet Union (Menju 2003), and Eisenhower had intended to take advantage of this by promoting sister city exchanges. The organisation which was established to organise this programme later grew into Sister Cities International, which became a separate, non-profit organisation in 1967.

b) Definition of 'sister city'

The term 'sister city' itself has been debated as an appropriate term for the kind of relationship it represents. Zelinsky (1991) tries to distinguish between the phrases 'twin city' and 'sister city', arguing that the former refers to cities which are geographically close, such as those along the Mexico-US border and the Canada-US border, although this fails to take into account the British English use of the word 'twin city' to denote precisely the same meaning as 'sister city'.

In Japan's case, the term *shimai toshi* is a direct translation of 'sister city'. However, in both Japan and in China, (the equivalent term in Chinese being *jiemei*

chengshi), the characters representing the term imply a relationship between an older sister and a younger sister. Due to objections on the Chinese side to the implications of this, the less controversial (especially in its relations with Japanese cities) *youhao chengshi* or ‘friendship city’ is used (Jain 2004, Tianjin 2005). However, as the purpose of this chapter is to analyse the role of sub-state local governments as agents of soft power, the term ‘sister city’ will be used to denote a relationship between two cities, or in many cases administrative divisions which include cities, which has been formalised by their official authorities, that is the sub-state local governments which administer them.

c) Characteristics of a sister city relationship

It is said that sister city relationships are intended to promote such goals as ‘mutual regional development’, ‘international friendship’, ‘trust between local governments’ (Menju 2003: 48), and ‘broad based... long term partnership’ (Sister Cities International 2005). Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that these relationships are occasionally created with additional purposes in mind. Zelinsky (1990) notes that some American cities used sister city relationships to express disapproval of the central government’s foreign policies, for example by twinning with cities in Nicaragua in the early 1990s. It has also been suggested that Sister Cities International used sister city relationships to train officials in democratic methods after the Cold War ended in Eastern Europe (Cremer 2001). In Japan, Sakaiminato City (Tottori Prefecture) formed a sister city relationship with Wonsan City (Kangwon Province), North Korea in 1992 despite the lack of official state-to-state relations with that country (Sakaiminato City 2006, *Chūgoku Shimbun*,

1 February 2000).⁸¹ Examples such as these show that sister city relationships can and do have a wider political meaning and effect on international relations.

Sister city relationships tend to have common characteristics in their arrangements. Formal agreements between the cities are usually made by local officials, and are intended to be long-lasting. A wide range of joint activities are usually established, including youth exchanges, sports exchanges, musical and arts exchanges, language instruction and other educational exchanges. This may develop further into trade exchanges, exchanges of technology and joint promotion of tourism between the two cities. In many cases trade links already exist between cities, and the sister city relationship is used to try and deepen the links. In the case of a link between a city from a developed country and a city from a developing country (usually the case between Japan and China), there may be a one-way flow of aid, technical assistance and other advice (Zelinsky 1991) between the cities. Often, a large proportion of the people assisting the relationship are volunteers; citizens who are prepared to use their free time to encourage and organise exchanges.

According to Menju (2003), sister cities are said to often go through several phases of activity within their relationships. Firstly, the relationship is launched, with the local government officials, mayors and active citizens holding high expectations. Ceremonies are held, and the cities' citizens are highly interested in the relationship. Nevertheless, information about concrete exchanges is limited. Officials, and involved citizens' groups from each city, visit each others' cities, and try to build the relationship.

In the second 'growth phase', over several years, concrete exchanges are formed and continue. Interest and recognition among other citizens increases and

⁸¹ Also see Jain (2005) regarding Japanese cities' relations with the Soviet Union.

deepens. Chiefs of the departments dealing with the relationship in the local governments are able to smoothly manage exchanges.

In the third 'stagnation phase' interest among the public dies down, and the exchanges take on a routine character. Exchanges are carried out without innovation, local government representatives have disagreements or problems in their relationships with their sister cities' representatives, and private citizens' groups worry about the lack of new volunteers from the public. Although there is enthusiasm for renewal of the relationship, many sister city exchanges then go to the next phase of 'decline', where the people who originally created the relationship become old, and the relationship is only acknowledged with occasional anniversary celebrations.

Menju goes on to note that this process is not always the case, and many cities are able to revitalise their relationships. The difficulties involve the small number of people willing to devote their time and energy into keeping the relationship going, and the difficulty in maintaining reliable relationships between officials in the sister cities. In the case of Japan, local government officials are often moved between posts without notice, making it difficult for them to build long-term relationships. As new staff have previously been in unrelated departments, 'rather than starting new activities, they tend to be fully occupied just by maintaining existing ones' (Menju 2003: 55).

O'Toole (2001), notes that sister cities relationships among Australian cities have gone through three stages. The first stage is the 'associative' stage, where the primary goals of the sister city relationship is to establish 'international friendship, cultural exchange, and a general international awareness' (O'Toole 2001: 405). O'Toole notes that this kind of relationship was prevalent in Australia during the 1960s and 70s.

The second stage is the 'reciprocative' relationship, whereby cities establish educational exchanges between themselves. 'Reciprocative' relationships are differentiated from the 'associative' relationships in that in the former, contact is more symbolic, whereas in the latter, exchanges are used to develop the cities and their citizens' skills. In 'associative' relationships, the sister city environment provides a safe haven for young people to participate in structured exchanges.

The third stage of the relationship is the 'commercial' phase, in which cities try to take advantage of their relationship for commercial reasons, although this does not mean abandoning the former stages. O'Toole notes that, due to economic considerations, cities in Australia are being gradually pushed to realise economic benefits from their relationships, by outside groups and government policies.

Cremer (2001), however, cautions that the cultural and commercial aspects of a sister city relationship are inter-related, and too much emphasis on either side is 'not likely to result in successful sister city relationships'. Cremer argues for an 'integrated approach', which combines cultural initiatives, trade, including activity among community members and local media, as well as leadership from the city government. This integrated approach, Cremer argues, is the most likely to lead to a strong sister city relationship. The cultural aspects inspire interest in the relationship, while the economic aspects ensure that the relationship will grow strong in the long term.

In Japan, O'Toole comments, the economic aspects of sister city relationships have not yet been widely explored; as yet, sister cities are still responding to the pressures of *kokusaika*, or internationalisation. These pressures increased particularly during the economically and socially challenging period of the 1990s. During that time, Japan's economic bubble of the late 1980s had burst, and so

the country was undergoing a long period of economic restructuring. As a part of this process, Japan's central and local governments were obliged to search for outside ideas, and foreign investment and expertise. This difference in external economic and social conditions between Japan and other countries mentioned in the literature may reflect the difference in models of sister city development espoused by Menju, and by O'Toole and Cremer. Menju's proposed model seems somewhat pessimistic, while O'Toole's, and Cremer's models appear to have a more positive view of the chances of a successful sister city relationship.

However, it must also be noted that the characteristics of a sister city relationship are dependent upon many factors, including the location and size of the cities, their economies (and thus the potential for forming long-lasting deep commercial and cultural ties), and the personalities involved in building and nurturing the links. These factors in turn affect the breadth of the information links between the cities, and therefore the degree to which soft power can be effective.

Japan's local governments and their internationalisation

During the occupation by Allied (though mainly US) forces after the Second World War, the US established libraries of American books throughout Japan. They also distributed 1300 film projectors to local governments and obliged them to screen films about US life and society. Finally, they sent soldiers to each prefectural office, starting 'foreign divisions' which arranged exchanges between the soldiers and the locals. These divisions were to evolve into the international departments in the local governments after the occupation (Menju 2002a). These actions represented a clear use by the US of its overwhelming coercive power at the time, in order to make

Japanese people in the regions receive and accept the ideas and values present in US culture at that time. This would in turn create common values which would in the future ensure good relations between the two countries. In many cases, however, these activities were welcomed as an opportunity for outside contact by the local governments involved,⁸² and they were also to have long term consequences in Japan's local governments' relations with cities in other countries by becoming model cases for other Japanese cities' international activities. The first sister city relationship in Japan started in 1955, when Saint Paul in the United States contacted the local government of Nagasaki in Japan. Nagasaki, a city which had been decimated by the atomic bomb dropped upon it by the US in the Second World War, was apparently chosen in order to promote reconciliation and understanding between the two countries (Menju 2001: 58n4). However, this initial contact led to a string of relationships between American and Japanese cities, and in the 1960s, between Japanese and European cities. By 1960 there were thirty relationships between US and Japanese cities, and nine between European and Japanese cities; by 1970, the number had increased to ninety-five and forty-two respectively (CLAIR 2000).

The first sister city relationships were said to have been initiated by a 'regional elite' (Watado 1993: 39) at the top of the local governments' hierarchy (and therefore in close co-operation with the central government) in order to improve links with the US and Europe. Accordingly, the first such relationships were to a large extent ceremonial, with symbolic exchanges of top officials, eventually leading to cultural exchanges, but no further. Nevertheless, at this time, most local governments in Japan had been concentrating their resources on providing basic

⁸² Jain (2005: 70) points out that Japanese people looked to the USA at their 'foremost security ally and... largest import market' and that it was an obvious and attractive 'opportunity to cultivate mutual knowledge, interest and goodwill' for sister cities in the USA and Japan.

services for people while the country recovered economically. In addition to this, local governments were tightly controlled by the central government (Jain 1996) and did not have the means to pursue independent policies.

With economic growth and a degree of financial security, and the central government's drive to hold the Olympics in 1964, came a growing interest among citizens in international affairs, and recognition by local governments for the need to engage internationally (Watado 1993). Additionally, outsiders' voices were calling for more international engagement from Japan and its people. The central government at this stage did not have the 'administrative resources' (*gyōseishigen*) (Jain 1996: 66) to respond to all of these demands (although it did act to set up the Japan Foundation, partly as a response to these calls, as described in Chapter 4). However, local governments possessed abundant experience and knowledge regarding affairs which affected local regions and their citizens. In addition to this was the new international awareness among local governments⁸³ which was to lead to their rapid change in the 1970s, as they actively began to pursue international activities. Leading the way was the governor of Tokyo, Minobe Ryōkichi, who made visits to both the People's Republic of China and North Korea, and thereby helped to promote the normalisation of relations between Japan and China. The Tokyo government was also to host a conference of mayors and regional government leaders in 1972; this was the first instance in Japan of local governments organising a conference regarding international affairs (Yoshida 2001: 45).

The conference was instrumental in pushing reforms addressing the

⁸³ This awareness was undoubtedly encouraged by the range of international problem which directly affected Japan in that decade, such as the 'Nixon shocks', the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, and protests against Japanese economic expansionist policies encountered by Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei on a visit to Southeast Asia in 1974 (Hook et al 2005), all widely covered by the Japanese media.

problems of Korean residents in Japan (Jain 1996: 63), and also decided upon policies banning the possession, production and transport of nuclear weapons, which were presented to the United Nations and other international organisations. Further international conferences were subsequently organised by local governments focussing on problems faced commonly by cities in different countries, such as environmental pollution, living conditions, and transport policies. Other regional leaders proposed the idea of *minshūgaikō* (people-to-people diplomacy) (Nagasu and Sakamoto 1983, Jain 1996), and the idea of each regional town promoting a famous product in order to raise their international awareness, an idea which became popular in many other Asian countries.

By the mid- and late-1970s, the pace of local government internationalisation had increased rapidly. Not only did the number of cities and regions carrying out international exchange activities increase, but also the quality and breadth of the activities. Many local governments carried out exchanges which were not necessarily guided by the national foreign policy; for example Niigata City provided the lead in forming sister city relationships and starting cultural exchanges across the divides created by the Cold War, in North Korea, and the Russian Far East of the Soviet Union (Kushiya 1994). Ōyama district in Ōita Prefecture sent young researchers to Israel to study the *kibbutz* farms (Watado 1993); 16 cities established relations with cities in the Soviet Union despite the Cold War and resistance from the central government (Jain 2005).

Another development in the 1970s was the normalisation of relations between Japan and China, with the 1972 visit of Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei to Beijing, and the Peace and Friendship Treaty negotiated between the Japanese and Chinese governments in 1978. The first event led to the establishment of a few

pioneering sister city relationships between Japanese and Chinese cities, in particular the first one between Kobe and Tianjin (discussed further later on) and others such as between Yokohama and Shanghai. The signing of the Treaty in 1978 was to lead to a great increase in sister city relationships even between smaller towns and regions in the two countries (Jain 2004).

In the 1980s, a further surge in the need for local government internationalisation occurred. This was partly due to economic developments in and affecting Japan; Japan's surging exports had caused friction between it and many other countries and the sudden rise of the yen had encouraged migrant workers to seek employment in Japan. Local governments and citizens had become aware of the need to engage people in other countries through these events, leading to increased interest in local level cultural exchanges (Watado 1993). The increases in interest among local governments was fuelled by the belated endorsement of the central government of their international activities. At first, the central government had been wary of allowing local governments to deepen their international links by opening offices abroad (Jain 2004: 23), but the general trend in the central government was towards recognising and encouraging these links.

From 1984, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its 'Diplomatic Blue Book,' finally recognising the importance of the internationalisation trend at the regional level, published under the heading 'Regional internationalisation' comments suggesting that it was 'co-operating with regional local governments and private organisations, carrying out activities with the purpose of developing a broad range of citizens' diplomacy.' In 1987, the Blue Book commented that an 'internationalisation consultation centre' had been set up to help towns and regions develop their international activities, including sister city activities. It was also helping to develop

'mini Foreign Ministries' in the regions, and sending out 'caravans' travelling around the country to offer consultation services regarding internationalisation to local government staff involved in those activities. By 1988, the section on local internationalisation had become even more detailed (Ebashi 1993: 46). In addition, the Ministry of Local Government in 1987 published advice on what kind of international activities local governments could carry out, and the following year it published advice on how to 'build an international exchange town'.

This was the first time that there was any suggestion that local governments could have any competence in the arranging of or participation in international affairs. In terms of the legal system, local governments' responsibilities did not cover arranging international activities; on the other hand, they were not specifically barred from doing so (Ebashi 1993: 47). Nevertheless, there were several other laws which alluded to their ability to be involved in international activities, such as the law establishing JICA, which stipulated that JICA should establish connections and liaison with local governments. This legal basis was used by some local governments, such as that of Nagasaki Prefecture, to send volunteers out to other countries for the purpose of international co-operation activities. Further laws were also passed in 1988 stipulating circumstances in which local government staff could be sent abroad (for example to deal with sister city relations and international co-operation activities).

However, the most important development to help local governments' international activities was the setting up, in 1986, of the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). This was established as an agency nominally outside the control of the Ministry of Local Government, by a conference of local governments, with its main office in Tokyo, and branch offices in twelve

large cities and all forty-six prefectures in Japan (Jain 1996: 69). CLAIR also began setting up branches in cities around the world, such as New York, London, Paris, Seoul, Sydney and Beijing by 1997 (CLAIR 2004). Many of the staff in the overseas offices were 'old boys' of the Ministry of Local Government, and they were able to help guide local governments' sister city relationships and other international activities. CLAIR, in co-operation with the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, was instrumental in setting up and carrying out the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme in 1987, which employed young foreign graduates to teach English in schools and help with local governments' international activities.

According to Jain (2004), this proactive behaviour on the part of local governments was due to their increasing feeling that the central government was not considering seriously the threat of globalisation to local economies. Local governments had decided to organise themselves to be able to deal with their own specific needs. Their pursuit of international (especially economic) links independent from central government control could also be seen in the context of their long term struggle for greater freedom from the central government.

Partly due to the belated encouragement by the central government, and partly due to the increasing drive to 'internationalise' many aspects of life in Japan, sister city relationships (and prefectural exchanges with other countries' regional governments) increased dramatically through the 1980s and 90s (Yoshida 2001, Jain 2005). In 1987 only 26 prefectures plus Tokyo had an international department, but by 1993 all 46 prefectures plus Tokyo had one. These international departments employ people fluent in foreign languages, and often include at least one foreigner in their staff (for example, using people employed through the JET Programme).

In 1970 there were a total of 165 sister city type relationships between Japanese local governments and foreign countries' local governments. By 1980 there were 372, but by 1990 there were 829 relationships, and by 2003, 1514 relationships (CLAIR 2003). Hence, the number of relationships has continued to grow steadily, although the rate of growth has fallen off since the early 1990s. The money available to local governments for their international activities, however, peaked in 1995 at 120 billion yen, thereafter falling to 103 billion yen in 1999 and stabilising (CLAIR 2003, Jain 2005). This reflects the economic stagnation experienced in Japan during the 1990s, and in particular the budgetary cutbacks experienced by local governments in the latter half of the 90s in response to rising public debt at both central and local levels. Due to these budgetary problems, more local governments are trying to transfer their international responsibilities to other organisations, such as NPOs or semi-governmental agencies, and prioritising their various sister city relationships to concentrate on the most important (Ichinobe, interview, 2006).

Development of Japan's local governments' links with Chinese local governments

In the 1970s and 1980s, the US was by far the most common source of sister city relationships for Japan (CLAIR 2000). Even in the late 1990s, in terms of the number of relationships, the US was ranked number one, with around 30 per cent of all relationships. This was clearly due to the overwhelming influence and target activities of the US in Japan since the post-war occupation as recounted earlier (p.193). However, after the 1978 Treaty with China, the number of sister city relationships with Chinese cities increased rapidly. By 1998, 19 per cent of all

relationships were with Chinese cities or provinces, and by 2006 21 per cent (see Fig. 9, p.202). Considered in terms of the amount of money committed to the relationships, China was number one, taking 34 per cent of the expenditure available for sister city activities, while the US took 27.5 per cent in 1998,⁸⁴ (Yoshida 2001: 32). By 2002, the Chinese share was at 35.5 per cent, with the US at an increased 34.6 per cent (CLAIR 2005, despite the much decreased overall budget.⁸⁵

These trends clearly indicate the growing importance to local governments in Japan of having relationships with Chinese cities and provinces (as well as the continued importance of the US relationships). The growth of the Chinese economy, in particular in the areas along the eastern seaboard region, has been a major source of income for Japanese companies, and in recent years has accounted for much of Japan's economic growth (Woodall 2004).

The development of Japan's local government links with China started, as mentioned previously, with Kobe-Tianjin in 1973, and Yokohama-Shanghai later in the same year. Both Kobe and Yokohama are large cities, with a history of being open to international exchange and trade, so it is not surprising that they took the initiative in this manner. Other cities and regions in Japan with historical links to China soon followed suit, often making contact with cities or regions in China according to those links. Examples include Niigata's link with Harbin in 1979, Kitakyūshū's links with Dalian in the same year and Nagasaki's link, with Fuzhou City, in Fujian Province in 1980. In Dalian, in the north-eastern Liaoning Province of China, there are still people who speak Japanese due to Japan's invasion of the area

⁸⁴ This proportion increases further when it is considered that the cost of goods and services in China is less than one quarter of that in the US on average.

⁸⁵ In 2003 (latest available figures), while the US' share went down to 30.5 per cent, China's share plummeted to 22.6 per cent – most probably due to the SARS epidemic in China curtailing exchanges.

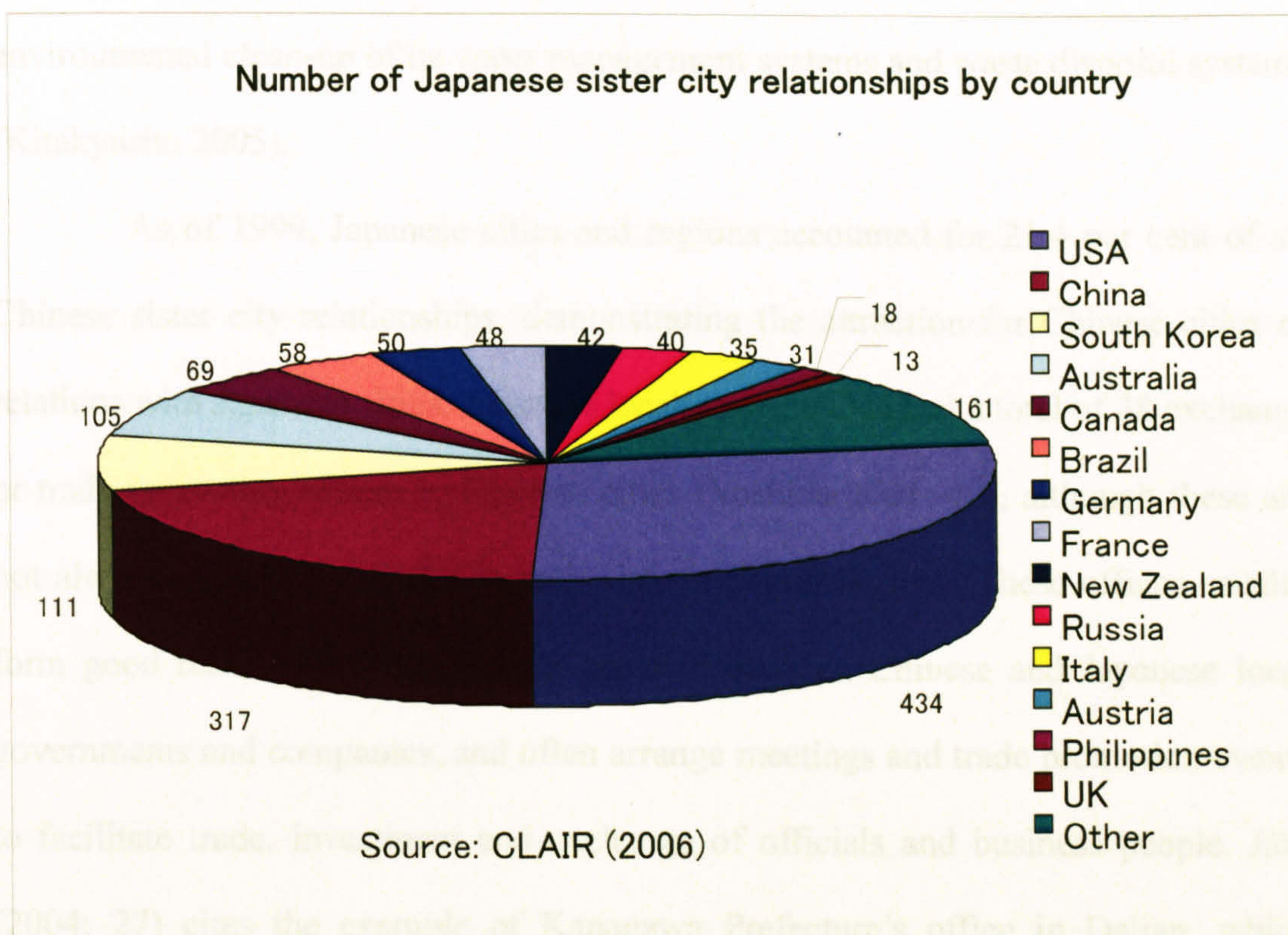


Fig. 9 – Number of Japanese sister city relationships by country

Source: CLAIR (2006)

before the Second World War, while commercial and cultural exchanges have occurred between Fujian and Nagasaki for hundreds of years (Jain 2005).

Chinese cities are keen to learn from Japanese cities about administration techniques, to attract investment capital, and to gain from technology transfers in order to assist their development. Japanese cities are particularly keen to gain markets for their companies, and to help Chinese cities to deal with environmental problems, which in many cases can affect Japan directly, such as acid rain caused by factory pollution. Kitakyūshū City is particularly experienced in environmental clean up procedures (Kowata 1994), following its problems during Japan's high growth era, and has used this experience to advise Dalian City on a UN award-winning

environmental clean-up of its water management systems and waste disposal systems (Kitakyushu 2005).

As of 1999, Japanese cities and regions accounted for 21.4 per cent of all Chinese sister city relationships, demonstrating the attraction for Chinese cities of relations with Japanese cities. Japanese local governments had a total of 38 exchange or trade promotion offices in Chinese cities (Yoshida 2001: 49), although these are not always necessarily placed in their sister cities or regions. These offices usually form good bases to develop deeper contacts between Chinese and Japanese local governments and companies, and often arrange meetings and trade promotion events to facilitate trade, investment and exchange of officials and business people. Jain (2004: 27) cites the example of Kanagawa Prefecture's office in Dalian, which provides cheap office space for Japanese companies investing in China, along with many other services including interpreting, secretarial work, transport and economic information. Kobe City's offices in Nanjing and Tianjin also provide support for officials and businesses from Japan wanting to make contact with people in those cities, by developing personal contacts and gathering local information (Ōshiro, interview, 2006)

Chinese local governments, in contrast to Japanese local governments, often minutely plan their international exchange activities in order to obtain required outcomes, which often means that they are planned according to local business' needs. Yoshida (2001: 84) cites the case of Liaoning Province, which successfully laid down a detailed strategy for surveying places in Japan which could help its industries develop, and thereafter developing trade and investment relationships with those places. Liaoning Province is now the number two destination in China for Japanese foreign direct investment; a position which may reflect its former position

as a Japanese controlled territory, and the consequently large number of Japanese speakers in the area.

Some Japanese cities have also developed ODA programs with their Chinese sister cities (Yoshida 2001: 53). This has been done in the case of Kitakyushu and Dalian. Both cities pooled resources in order to persuade the Chinese government and Japanese government to consider their environmental exchange programme as a candidate for ODA. Having done this, in 1996, JICA began working in co-operation with Kitakyushu city to investigate environmental policies, monitoring, water management systems and pollution reduction programmes. In 1997, after a meeting between Japanese and Chinese government officials, their exchanges were labelled as a 'Japan-China Environmental Model City Programme', which was allocated funds in the fourth yen loan programme, of 40.5 billion yen, turning it into a major project. While this kind of project is not yet common between sister cities, there are an increasing number of similar examples (CLAIR 2005b) which demonstrate Japanese cities' soft power in terms of attraction of their ideas and information.

History of Kobe's relationship with Tianjin and other Chinese cities

As indicated previously, Kobe City was the first Japanese city, and in fact the first local government in the world, to form a sister city relationship with a Chinese city. Around the same time that the Japanese and Chinese central governments were considering normalisation of diplomatic relations, in 1971, the Mayor of Kobe city (Miyazaki Tetsuo) announced his intention to seek a Chinese city to establish a sister city relationship with. He then conveyed this intention to Liao Chengzhi, the head of

the China Japan Friendship Association, (an influential organisation which sometimes organised contacts between Japanese and Chinese officials despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations, see Chapter 6), and other relevant people. The Mayor of Kobe, along with several other mayors of larger cities in Japan, could see the direction in which bilateral relations were heading, and was eager to gain a head start in establishing contacts with China.

In 1972 Mayor Miyazaki, as the head of the Japan-China Young Persons' Exchange Swimming Group, visited China (*Asahi Shimbun*, 13 October 1972). While there, he was able to meet Premier Zhou Enlai, and express his idea to form a sister city relationship. After this conversation, the idea of linking Tianjin with Kobe was proposed by Zhou. In May 1973, a representative group of Kobe City travelled to Tianjin to meet with the city's officials. They discussed how to start and conduct the relationship, including the important point of how to refer to the relationship, i.e. as a 'friendship city' relationship rather than as a 'sister city' relationship (Kobe City 2004g, Tianjin City 2005a) as mentioned earlier. Other issues emphasised included the need to maintain and develop friendly relations over the long term between the citizens of both cities, and to start with currently practical and feasible exchanges which could be reciprocated fairly; the Chinese were still wary in dealing with Japan, as well as other countries which in past times had forced their cultures and presences into China.

In June of the same year, Mayor Miyazaki again went to Tianjin, this time as a part of a goodwill delegation including the mayors of Kyoto and Osaka. In front of an audience of people at the Tianjin People's Assembly Hall, he signed an agreement to establish sister city relations between Kobe and Tianjin (*Asahi Shimbun*, 25 June 1973). However, a formal written agreement defining the relationship was not

exchanged, as it was said that the relationship would only acquire meaning through actual exchange activities (Tianjin City 2005a).

The importance of this relationship to the Chinese, and the attraction of Japan's ideas and information, was demonstrated clearly by the involvement of top level Communist Party officials, in particular Premier Zhou Enlai. The soft power model as proposed in Chapter 3 is applicable in this instance: the source of soft power was the attraction of Japan's advanced economic and technological skills, and the ideas and information which went along with those skills. One of the agents of this soft power was Kobe City, which was keen to offer itself as a link to Tianjin to help transmit some of these skills, in order to contribute to good political and economic relations between the two countries and cities in the future. At the time of the agreement, China was still suffering from the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, and there had been very little diplomatic contact with other countries. According to Tianjin City's account of the time,

The sister city relationship established by Tianjin and Kobe was the first bridge over the sea between China and Japan, personally built by Premier Zhou Enlai; it opened a new chapter of diplomacy between China and Japan, and started the construction of a new China, and the new idea of ties with foreign cities.... During the seven years after Tianjin and Kobe established their sister city relationship, no other new sister city relationships were established. In these years China still was in "the Great Cultural Revolution" period; regional leaders could not go abroad much, and there was very little foreign contact, therefore relations with a friendly city gave us a very important channel to develop foreign relations as well as enabling the leadership to make contact with another country. Japan became the main country which Tianjin leaders visited at that time (Tianjin City 2005a).

Additionally, Kobe was eager to become the first city to link up with a city

in China, as was shown by the number of times Kobe representatives flew to China to arrange the agreement. This was at a time when Japan had only just recognised the People's Republic of China diplomatically. Kobe had had a long history of international trade, and being one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Japan, it was enthusiastic about renewing its links with China.

During the course of the relationship, exchanges between Kobe and Tianjin settled down into a discernible pattern of themes. The first method of maintaining the relationship has been the visiting of officials from each city, and the performance of official ceremonies and functions. Exchanges of animals between the cities' zoos have been an important symbol of the relationship. Sports exchanges, particularly by young students and other educational exchanges have also cemented the relationship and other cultural exchanges, involving the media and arts have occurred. Further on into the sister city relationship, practical exchanges became more important, in particular dealing with the management of their ports (both cities being major ports in their respective countries). Other technical exchanges involving research visits and exchanges of knowledge in business, industry and commerce then come into view. In more recent years, trade has been a major focus in the relationship. Finally, in the years after 1995, Kobe City has tried to expand its network of relationships in China, using the experience it has gained with Tianjin. Examples and the meaning of these different types of exchange, as well as their demonstration of the validity of the soft power theory developed in Chapter 3, will now be considered in more detail.

a) Official ceremonies and exchange of city officials

In order to build a relationship between two cities, it is crucial for officials on both

sides to make contact with each other, and as far as possible to become familiar with each other. Therefore, the holding of official ceremonies, and the inviting of officials from the other city to these ceremonies is an important part of a sister city relationship, in particular during the early stages.

In this respect, Kobe and Tianjin have been no exception. The official signing ceremony in Tianjin to mark the start of the relationship was attended by 1900 officials and other leading local figures, and since that time, both cities' officials have kept up a regular schedule of visits to each other cities (Kobe City 2004g).

In the first few years of the relationship, officials visited in order to make contact with each other. In later years, the frequency of visits purely for ceremonial purposes seems to have been reduced. Every five years official events or ceremonies are held in both cities during the year to celebrate anniversaries of the relationship. Additionally, other anniversaries, such as those celebrating anniversaries of the port relationship are held. More in line with O'Toole (2001) and Cremer's (2001) model of sister city relationships rather than Menju's (2003), the activities of the two cities appear to have moved on from being purely ceremonial, to having more of a business-oriented approach.

Nevertheless, the exchange of officials remains one of the vital functions which can be organised by the city. By enabling these exchanges, Kobe City can continue to use Japan's soft power, and the city's soft power, by inviting a wide range of influential Chinese officials to see for themselves the advanced facilities, lifestyle and attractive tourist destinations available in the city; other cultural attractions, such as those regarding the food and local entertainment can also be introduced through these exchanges, and more personal relationships between officials can develop

through this (Ueda, interview, 2006). Although the number of exchanges organised by one city may be small in the context of Japan-China relations, the combined effect of all cities with relationships in China organising similar exchanges represents a significant transfer of Japan's positive ideas and information to China's local elites, who in turn can tell their relatives, friends and associates about their experiences, therefore enabling the action of soft power to occur. It is apparent that this soft power is being utilised here according to the theoretical model of this thesis. Kobe City and its officials are the agents of Japan's soft power; the source of the soft power is the information, ideas and values contained within Kobe City's facilities, attractions and culture as detailed above. The city officials utilise this soft power by transmitting it across communications links they have made, to Tianjin City, and then to the officials of that city, in particular those who come to visit Kobe. They in turn take those ideas and relate them to their colleagues, media and citizens in China, with a resulting small but significant increase in the understanding of Kobe by Tianjin citizens.

b) Animal exchanges

Another important way of affirming the relationship between the two cities has been through the exchange of animals. The first such exchange occurred when the Tianjin China Japan Goodwill Marine Exchange delegation brought eighty Mandarin fish (*gui*) as a present to Suma Aquarium in Kobe. This exchange was to continue two years later when the Tianjin Goodwill Exchange Association sent four representatives to Kobe, presenting Oji Kōen Zoo with a lynx, and a red crested white crane. This was reciprocated when the Kobe Animal Goodwill Association

presented Tianjin with a giraffe (Kobe City 2004g).

These kinds of animal exchanges provide a long-lasting link between the cities; researchers from both sides visit each others' zoos to study the animals which have been exchanged, in order to properly care for their needs. Additionally, people (in particular children) visiting the zoos are able to learn about the new animals, and learn about the fact that they were given by the other city in the relationship, thereby raising awareness of the sister city link. The animals

...act as goodwill envoys, deepening the friendship between Chinese and Japanese citizens. Both cities' news media produce articles, special programmes, and talk about their health and development, the reproduction of new generations, and these subjects become a popular topic for citizens to enjoy' (Renminwang 2001).

An important animal for the Chinese in terms of diplomacy is the Giant Panda (*BBC* 2005, Mullan and Marvin 1999). The rarity of this animal, combined with its appeal and attractiveness to people, makes it a powerful symbol of friendship and goodwill.⁸⁶ In 1981, Kobe City managed to borrow a panda from Tianjin Zoo (Enorth 2004) to show in the Pōtopia Exhibition, but since the 1980s, the use of pandas in international diplomacy has been curtailed due to protests about the rare animal's commoditisation.

Nevertheless, in 1998, the mayor of Kobe, Sasayama Kazutoshi, was able to contact a former mayor of Tianjin who had risen to a high level in the Chinese Communist Party, Li Rui Huan, and request a panda for the Ōji Kōen Zoo in Kobe. He mentioned that, 'I would like to give the children hurt by the earthquake a dream'

⁸⁶ However, Taiwan's reluctance to receive two pandas offered by China shows its appreciation of the possible effect of this attempt to use a soft power resource (*Taipei Times*, 7 January 2006).

(*Kobe Shimbun*, 11 May 2000). Mayor Sasayama was referring to the Great Awaji-Hanshin Earthquake which had devastated Kobe in 1995, taking over 4500 lives and making more than 300,000 people homeless (Kobe City 2005).

Mr. Li was reported to have replied (in an unusually positive manner for a Communist Party bureaucrat) that ‘we will make our best efforts to achieve this’ and despite the protests of the China Wildlife Protection Association and the traditional carefulness of the Communist Party bureaucracy, it was agreed that a Giant Panda would be loaned to Kobe for ten years, from June 2000. This event was to precipitate a flurry of exchanges involving researchers from Kobe travelling to Tianjin and other regions in China to study about pandas’ habits in depth.

As a result of this project, the symbol of Ōji Kōen Zoo in Kobe has become its panda, with panda imagery prevailing around the area, including the ‘panda street’ leading up to the zoo (*Kobe Shimbun*, 11 May 2000). The panda may well act as a conduit for China’s soft power in Kobe; however, the same could undoubtedly be said for the many animals which have been donated to Tianjin from Japan. The use of animals is a reliable and well-used method of engaging cities’ citizens’ interests, in particular children’s interests, and promoting awareness of sister city links through media among other routes, thereby increasing the flow of information and ideas between the two cities, and enabling the action of soft power. Hence, in accordance with the Chapter 3 model of soft power in the case of animal exchanges, ideas and information represented by the animals themselves form the soft power resources. Such attractive ideas may include care for animal welfare, interest in the environment and the intrinsic attractiveness of the animals themselves. The agents are the staff of Kobe City (or Tianjin City in the case of the pandas) who create the links between the cities enabling the exchanges. Information and ideas are also transmitted by the

media, who report on these exchanges, and the effects of the soft power are felt by children and adults who visit the zoos in each city, as well as by other people with an interest, who learn about the animals donated through the mass media. It is well known that 'panda diplomacy' is one of China's well-used strategies, and the pandas undoubtedly have a strong soft power effect in Kobe; however, the fact of the exchanges, and Kobe's own animal donations are well reported in the Tianjin media, and so Kobe exerts its own soft power in Tianjin in return – a point demonstrating the mutual quality of soft power in many cases.

c) Sports, educational and other young people's exchanges

Student exchanges, organised by schools, and youth groups in both cities are another important part of the sister city relationship. Not only do they introduce children to a new culture, and to people in that culture, but they also enable them to exchange new ideas and information which they will retain through their lives. The children will also be able to pass on the information to their families and friends upon returning. Student exchanges also act to promote the sister city relationship itself, as local media publish articles about the children's activities, and the students' families and friends become interested in the activities.

The powerful symbolism of youth exchanges is evidenced by the fact that the first contact between Kobe and Tianjin occurred when Mayor Miyazaki led a youth swimming group to Tianjin in 1972. Since then, groups of young and older people have regularly played such sports such as volleyball, football, table tennis, basketball, softball, golf and performed various martial arts in each other's cities.

Other activities between schools, such as children writing letters to each

other and sending paintings are common, and this was particularly welcomed by Kobe citizens when children from Tianjin sent goodwill messages after the 1995 earthquake (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 3 March 1995).

In higher educational institutions, student exchanges have also occurred frequently. In 1978, universities in Kobe and Tianjin agreed to form relations, in order to send each other's students and teachers on exchange trips (*Asahi Shimbun*, 30 October 1978). Naturally, exchanges for the purpose of language training are popular on both sides, with both students and teachers taking the opportunities. Japanese and Chinese speech contests are organised to encourage language learning. In the case of teachers and professors, one year exchanges for the purpose of longer term research or experience have often occurred, and in the case of students, homestays have been arranged. Students also visit each other's cities to perform research, or to learn about business conditions and so on. These educational links are now so entrenched that the city government no longer needs to interfere with the institutional arrangements in many cases, leaving them to become self-perpetuating (Ichinobe, interview, 2006).

These exchanges are ideal ways to channel Japan's soft power through the long-term flow of information and ideas, between students and teachers or researchers. The students and their ideas and values are the soft power resources here, while the agents are the city officials or school teachers who form the communications links between the two cities. Students and teachers who physically travel between the cities also act as a means to transmit soft power, and the students (along with their teachers, families and friends) also act as the main receivers of the ideas and values transmitted. They in turn transmit these ideas to their friends and media outlets who may cover the exchanges, gradually causing them to spread

further from the original receivers.

d) Other cultural exchanges

Other exchanges involving the introduction of ideas and culture from each other's cities have occurred on a regular basis since the beginning of the relationship.

In 1974, as a direct result of the Kobe-Tianjin sister city link up, Beijing Broadcasting placed a one hour programme into its New Year's television programme schedule, broadcast in Japanese, called 'A greeting from the citizens of Tianjin to the citizens of sister city Kobe'. From 1981, a programme was broadcast by Radio Kansai (in Japan) in partnership with Tianjin Radio about such subjects as the Kobe-Tianjin relationship, Japan-China exchanges, Japanese life, and development in China. Every week for two years (Wuhan Renmin Guangbo Diantai 2006), a fifteen minute programme was broadcast, with the fourth week being provided by Tianjin Radio. The programme was also said to be popular in Tianjin; Tianjin Radio covers not only Tianjin City, but also Beijing and Shandong Province, with an audience of 100 million people. The programme was said to be listened to by over 20 per cent of the audience. In China, both the Japanese version and a Chinese version were broadcast, and the programme was widely used in Japanese education as a text (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 19 June 1993). Another media tie-up was arranged between the Kobe Shimbun local newspaper, and the Tianjin Daily newspaper in 1985 (Kobe City 2005). Additionally, on the 20th anniversary of the Japan-China diplomatic normalisation, Tianjin television broadcast a special programme including an interview with the mayor of Kobe.

Other examples of cultural exchanges include exhibitions of each city's

culture, often coinciding with events celebrating anniversaries of the sister city relationship. Museum officials have made visits to the other city, and exhibitions from museums have thereby been loaned to the other city, for example the 'China's 5000 years of treasures' exhibition in July 1985 held in Kobe. Film festivals, plays, and musical performances are also regularly used to promote each other's cultures. In 1988, on the 15th anniversary of the sister city ties, the first Japanese garden in China was built in Tianjin, and called the 'Kobe Garden' (Tianjin 2005b).

Various associations, such as the Kobe Women's Association, have visited Tianjin through the sister city relationship to exchange ideas and information, such as on family matters, and education problems. Unions and other industry associations have also built ties with their counterparts in each other's city.

These cultural exchanges are particularly valuable in channelling Japan's soft power. The ability to put across new ideas and culture through mass media outlets such as television and radio is clearly a good way to reach as many people as possible. Exhibitions are also seen by a wide variety, and large number, of people, and the exchanges which special interest groups perform allow ideas and information to be transferred to groups in a specific and suitably-targeted way. The model presented in Chapter 3 shows that the number of information links which can be created between two countries can help increase the amount of information and ideas flowing between them, in turn increasing mutual understanding and enabling the improvement of bilateral relations. With cultural exchanges including citizens and the media acting as agents for the ideas and information resources of Kobe City (as well as Tianjin), large numbers of links can be created, creating the conditions for soft power to have such an effect. In particular, positive coverage of cultural exchanges by the mass media have a great effect on people's values and hence on the

effectiveness of soft power.

e) Port-related exchange

Ports are an important institution in both cities, driving their economies and acting as a symbol of the cities' prominence and culture. The port of Kobe was said to be the 'central port in Asia' during the 1980s, and Japan's leading port, but since then has been affected by Japan's relative economic decline amid global competition and the rise of other Asian ports such as Busan (South Korea), Hong Kong and Singapore. This decline was further accelerated by the damage caused by the Great Awaji-Hanshin earthquake in 1995 (Kobe Port Restoration Symposium 1995), which instantly destroyed all of the port's container berths. In contrast, Tianjin Port, said to be the 'gateway to Beijing' due to its proximity, is on course to be among the top ten ports in the world (China Daily 2004).

Since the 1970s, technical exchanges between Kobe and Tianjin have been instrumental in helping the development of Tianjin's port. In 1975, seventeen delegates from Kobe formed a Kobe Port Goodwill Exchange group to visit Tianjin and make contacts with port officials there (Kobe City 2004g). In 1976 a group of seven people, (including the vice-president of the Tianjin City Construction Council) visited Kobe in order to conduct a study of port technology. By 1980, the ports of both cities had agreed to make a formal 'sister-port' agreement, and the next year, a delegation from Kobe went to Tianjin to advise the city on managing a modern container terminal.

In 1984, a group of twelve people from Kobe were asked to go to Tianjin (*Asahi Shimbun*, 18 April 1984), in order to help solve increasing problems of

congestion, and to form an ‘urgent reorganisation medium term and long term plan’ for the development of the port. After performing analyses and studies for four years, the team proposed a comprehensive plan for the development of the port, and it was ‘precisely because of the adoption of the plan that Tianjin Port could effectively resolve the problems of congestion, and enter a new stage of development’ (Enorth 2004). The team helped Tianjin in conducting dredging operations, to increase the depth of water at the port, and trained technicians in Tianjin in dealing with water management issues (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 7 July 1993).

The upgrading of the port was also beneficial for Japanese companies which were investing in Tianjin, the most prominent example perhaps being Toyota’s car production plants and affiliated factories, which have been established there since 1997, demonstrating the value of Kobe City’s activities for Japan. In 1984, Tianjin Port’s capacity was just 10 per cent of Kobe’s (*Asahi Shimbun*, 18 April 1984). By 1993, Tianjin had one of China’s largest container ports, and in 2003 it had more than double the cargo volume of Kobe, including over 50 per cent more container traffic (AAPA 2005).

Since that time, exchanges of port technicians and officials has continued, from the Japanese side to gain information about Tianjin and China’s development, and from the Chinese side to learn about Japanese practices and skills. Ceremonies and events celebrating anniversaries of the sister-port arrangement have also been held at regular five year intervals. However, due to the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, port trade which previously was handled in Kobe moved to other ports in Japan, in particular Osaka, Nagoya and Yokohama. Even now, eleven years after the earthquake, the amount of trade handled by Kobe port has still not returned to 1995 levels, even as other ports have continued to expand. In 1995 before the earthquake,

Kobe port handled 2.80 million tonnes of freight, while in 2005 it handled just 2.18 million tonnes. Nevertheless, the friendship port agreement between Kobe and Tianjin was renewed for a further ten years in 2005, and officials in Kobe and Tianjin ports maintain close links, which may help to encourage business in the future, especially considering that officials who originally made contact in the early 1980s are now climbing to higher positions within the local government hierarchies in both cities (Ueda, interview, 2006). These links will enable ideas and information to flow between the two cities as officials who are more familiar with each other will promote this information flow, and hence enable the action of soft power.

In 1990, a regular passenger ferry service, the *Yanjinghao*, between Kobe and Tianjin was launched. The ship had been built by a joint Chinese-Japanese company based in Tianjin (Tianjin Jinshen Ferry Co.). This, the second ferry service between Japan and China, was to be run by a consortium jointly established by the two cities, and a company based in Kobe called China Express Lines, itself established by a consortium of Japanese and Chinese shipping companies. At the launching ceremony in Tianjin, Mayor Nie was reported to have said, 'The *Yanjing* will contribute towards the development of goodwill exchanges, and the economic and trade relations between Tianjin and Kobe' (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 17 March 1990), indicating the purpose of the ferry. The ferry was launched despite the events of Tiananmen Square in the previous year which had led to economic sanctions being enforced by the G7 group of countries, including Japan, and was undoubtedly a boost for China at that time. Kobe City's reaffirmation of its relationship with Tianjin, in the context of Japan's loose application of the sanctions, also helped Japan's image as a country trying to help China grow at that time. The ferry was in particular expected to help Chinese residents of Kobe (including students), researchers from

companies and tourists to travel between Kobe and Tianjin cheaply (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 28 March 1990).

In fact, it is no doubt due to this ferry service that a programme, enabling the despatch of five researchers a year from both Tianjin and Kobe to the other city, was established in August of the same year, demonstrating the usefulness of the ferry service for exchange of ideas and information (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 23 August 1990). Countless other exchanges of people, products and ideas have also taken place since then, due to the ferry service being available.

The exchange of information and ideas relating to port development through the sister port arrangement, and through the ferry service, is yet another example of the way in which Kobe City has utilised Japan's soft power, in the form of technical expertise in shipping, construction and systems management, to improve qualitatively and quantitatively the relationship between not only Kobe and Tianjin, but also Japan and China. A port link is an important example of a link through which ideas and information can be transmitted. In terms of the theory described in Chapter 3, the source of Japan's soft power here is the pool of ideas and information mentioned above, while the agent has been Kobe City, which has nurtured its port links with Tianjin, and thereby created a vital link between the two cities and countries, through which the ideas and information has been sent to enable the effects detailed above. In any event, strong port links between countries are vital indicators of good relations, and the importance of these links for the action of soft power to occur is also clear.

f) Economic exchanges and technical exchanges

Kobe City has been a pioneer in promoting trade and organising technical exchanges with Tianjin, in order to help its development, and thereby also helping Japanese companies make contacts and survey markets in the region.

One of the first visits to Tianjin for Japanese businessmen was in November 1974, when twenty-one businessmen from local small and medium businesses went on a trip organised by Kobe City and local business associations (Kobe City 2004g). As the investment environment in China was difficult at that time, the link between Tianjin and Kobe was invaluable, for smaller and medium sized businesses in particular, to start sounding out the Chinese market for their products and services. In March 1976, the first trade exhibition of Chinese goods was held in Kobe (organised in co-operation with Tianjin City). In 1976 and 1977, even before the formal Japan-China Friendship Treaty of 1978, Tianjin City sold 105 and 123 tons of seafood products in Kobe.

Tianjin food products companies also took the opportunity to visit Kobe, and in 1984 a joint Chinese-Japanese venture (Marine Kobe) opened a restaurant in Tianjin. This was the first 'Japanese-style sake bar' in China (Enorth 2004), and it was hoped that Japanese culture would be appreciated by residents of the city, as well as the restaurant being used by Japanese people living there.

In 1985, Kobe opened a trade office in Tianjin, in order to help organise surveys and to help Japanese companies set up operations and enter the Chinese market. The Chinese central authorities, however, would not allow a foreign sub-governmental organisation to open an office in China, so Kobe City set up an entity called the 'Kobe City Industrial Promotion Foundation' and registered the

office in its name in Tianjin (Kobe City 2001). The office not only acts as a base for Japanese businesses in Tianjin, but it also helps to organise and support cultural exchanges between groups in Kobe and Tianjin, official exchanges and ceremonies between the two cities, and the exchange of technical experts on research trips. Tianjin City also opened a trade office in Kobe, in March 1999, performing similar functions, although the office was opened with substantial financial support from Kobe City.

As a result of these efforts to promote trade with Tianjin, and other areas of China (see Appendix II, p.355), a number of Chinese businesses have located offices in Kobe City's Port Island (see Figure 10, p.222), including several which were started by former Chinese students who studied in Kobe. This has led Kobe City officials to start (since 2005) actively encouraging Chinese students to consider setting up their businesses in Kobe, by creating networks of former students, and by providing a 'one-stop service' specifically for these 'old boys' which helps students plan their businesses (Ōshiro, interview, 2006, Kobe City 2006a). These activities are designed to further encourage links between Kobe and China through which information and ideas flow in both directions, enabling the action of soft power.

Kobe has also been active in sending experts to Tianjin to help develop its infrastructure, and to help it with pollution management. In addition to helping Tianjin build up its port, as detailed earlier, experts from Kobe have advised on, and researchers from Tianjin have visited Kobe to research about, sewage management, city planning, medical infrastructure, transport infrastructure, industrial and scientific techniques, and other areas. In March 1985, Kobe was able to gain ODA funding from JICA to send experts to advise Tianjin on underground water management. In 1992, the Kobe Steel Production Union, with funding from Kobe City, invited 28

researchers from Tianjin to study for one year (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 14 November 1992).

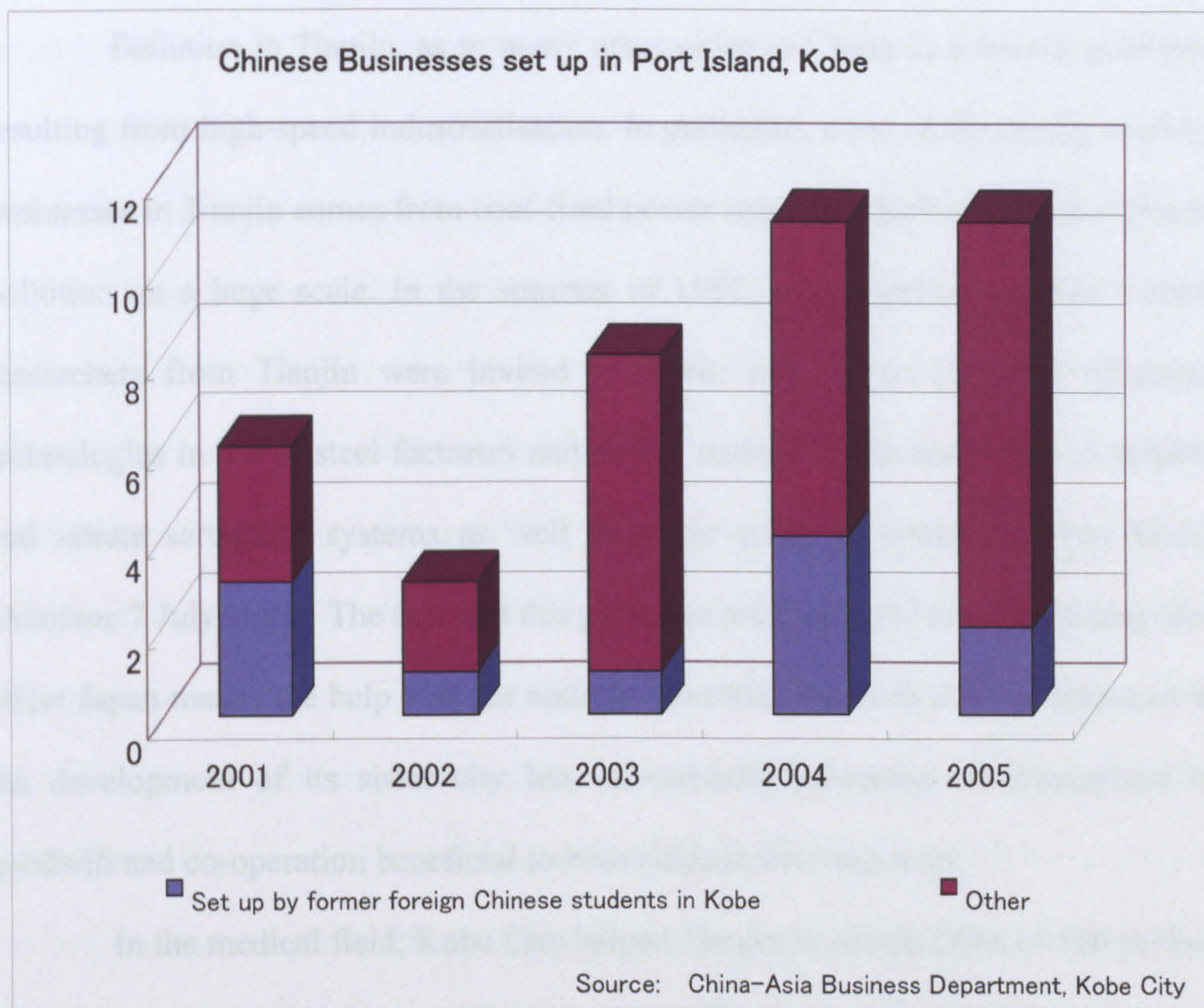


Fig. 10 – Chinese businesses set up in Port Island, Kobe

Source: China-Asia Business Department, Kobe City

In Tianjin, there exist a large number of previously ‘state-owned enterprises,’ which were used to producing goods according to quotas decided by the central government. In response to their problems, Kobe experts have been sent to factories and companies in Tianjin to advise them on how to respond to supply and demand changes in a market economy, how to restructure companies to make them

more efficient, and how to market and promote products. In October 1992, and again in 1993, a class of 50 local businessmen were given a series of seminars on marketing over a period of five days by an expert from Kobe.

Pollution in Tianjin, as in many other cities in China, is a serious problem, resulting from high-speed industrialisation. In particular, most of the energy used by businesses in Tianjin comes from coal-fired power stations, which create atmospheric pollution on a huge scale. In the summer of 1992, over a period of three weeks, researchers from Tianjin were invited to Kobe, and shown pollution reduction technologies in use at steel factories and power stations in the area, such as sulphur and nitrate scrubbing systems as well as water cleaning systems (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 7 July 1993). The fact that this pollution produces acid rain which may also affect Japan means the help was not entirely altruistic, but such a broad approach to the development of its sister city has undoubtedly promoted an atmosphere of goodwill and co-operation beneficial to both cities in the long-term.

In the medical field, Kobe City helped Tianjin to obtain ODA of 500 million yen from the Japanese government, to establish a Diabetes and Metabolism Research Centre in Tianjin University, completed in 1998, and co-operative research was then conducted in conjunction with Kobe University Diabetes Research Centre, leading to the holding of an international diabetes conference in Tianjin by the teams (Kobe City 2003). In 2003 an agreement was signed between the two cities to increase economic exchanges, medical research co-operation and co-operation in life sciences, in addition to other cultural exchanges over a period of three years. The medical research and life sciences research is planned to be implemented in Kobe, in its new medical centre on the artificial Port Island. The city is expecting this industry to grow steadily as Japan's, and China's, populations age. Chinese companies are also

expected to invest in the centre (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 25 October 2003).

These particular technical and business related investments are another good example of Kobe City being able to use Japan's soft power to open channels of communication and trade, which are of great value to both countries now and in the future. In China, the number of engineers and scientists is increasing rapidly, with the result that many cutting-edge scientific techniques are being developed there. This is an area where the use of Japan's soft power now may reap large concrete benefits for its society in the long term. The activities described above concur with the soft power theory described in Chapter 3. Kobe City has, as an agent of Japan's soft power, proactively created links between itself, the city's businesses and Tianjin to transmit ideas and information to China. Such Japanese ideas as those contained in business management techniques, environmental values, and medical knowledge have been very attractive to officials, businesses and citizens in China. By creating these links and transferring some of its ideas to China, Kobe City has contributed towards creating common values and interests between the two countries which in turn contribute to bilateral relations. Evidence of this is the high level of investment which has been made by Japanese businesses in Tianjin and elsewhere, by the former Kobe students setting up business in Kobe, and by the continuing friendly ties between Kobe and Tianjin, as well as between private groups in both cities.

g) Kobe City's expansion of city contacts in the Yangzi Valley area

Since the Great Awaji-Hanshin Earthquake of 1995, Kobe has been struggling to regain its former position as a major seaport in Asia. From a world ranking of six in terms of container traffic in 1994, it has sunk outside the top thirty as it has lost

customers to other ports in Japan, and in East Asia (*Kobe Shimbun*, 1 September 2004, AAPA 2005).

Due to the effect of the earthquake on its trade and industry, the city decided to try and attract more business from China, by utilising Japan's soft power and attractiveness as a market. In order to implement such a strategy, the city formed its 'Shanghai-Changjiang Trade Promotion Project'. This project had been under consideration before the earthquake, but was implemented afterwards with a new energy. The project was initially organised by Japan's central government in co-operation with Kobe City and the Hyogo Prefecture government, with local companies and associations providing the impetus and planning (Ōshiro, interview, 2006, Cokoya 2005). Additionally, contacts in Tianjin City helped to develop the project.

A focal part of the plan was to develop relations with cities along the Changjiang (Yangzi) River basin (see map, Appendix II), starting with Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan and further inland. A ship (the *Fortune River*) was to sail from Kobe to Shanghai, and up the river as far as Wuhan, in order to conduct trade with this rapidly developing region. The ship left Kobe and sailed up the Changjiang River twice in 1997. However, after that, the ship was only able to go as far as Nanjing, due to lack of demand. Experts said that the road network from Shanghai inland had developed rapidly, reducing the need for sea transport (*Kobe Shimbun*, 12 May 2004); in addition, the *Fortune River* was attracted by better trade prospects in Yokohama and other ports which compete with Kobe (Ōshiro, interview, 2006).

Nevertheless, as a result of the initiative, Kobe had made contact with cities deep into the Changjiang River basin, and formed relationships with them. By 2004, twenty-three Chinese cities from that region had established trade offices on Port

Island, Kobe (a man-made island located close to the centre of Kobe). In addition, Kobe City established a branch office in Nanjing to add to its previously existing office in Tianjin. These offices have been able to establish communication links and contacts which businesses and other organisations in Kobe can use to establish further links in China (Ōshiro, interview, 2006).

The 'China Business Chance Fare' initiative was also established in 1998, and held annually thereafter. This convention was to prove a success, and has become the largest exhibition of Chinese products in Japan. Not only businesses from Tianjin and the other cities targeted by the Project, but also delegates from other regions in China now attend the fare, to exhibit their products, take advantage of the networks, and take part in 'business-matching' activities which take place there. 'Mini Trade Fairs' are also held by the organisation in China, attracting many local businesses and Japanese companies (Cokoya 2005).

These initiatives have shown that Kobe has been able to utilise soft power to establish new contacts, trade and communications channels, even in the face of the economic ruin caused by the earthquake in 1995. The manner in which the city has created links with many Chinese cities in the Yangzi Valley, and enabled a transfer of ideas and information between Japan and China resulting in deepened ties between the two countries demonstrates the validity of the model described in Chapter 3. Despite some setbacks in the execution of its plans, the ability of the city to use Japan's soft power to promote the exchange of information and ideas in these cases has been notable, and in turn, the creation and expansion of these information pathways allows the further action of soft power, in accordance with the model proposed by this thesis.

h) The role of Kobe City's agencies and NGOs in sister city exchanges

A positive aspect in the sister city relationship between Kobe and Tianjin, and between Kobe and its other sister city relationships, is the extent to which it involves local groups of interested people. In Kobe, the city government works closely with local NGOs, including trade associations, sports clubs, youth exchange groups, educational institutions and groups representing ethnic minorities.

Additionally, the sister city relationship encourages Kobe NGOs to act independently in forming their own relationships with groups in Tianjin. Examples of these include the Kobe YMCA, which in 2001 formed a partnership relationship with the Tianjin YMCA, and the Kobe Youth Association which has sent students on trips to Tianjin.

Kobe City has also delegated some functions, dealing with relations with sister cities and international activities generally, to agencies which act in similar way to NGOs. These are often set up as foundations (*zaidanhōjin*), such as the Kobe International Centre for Co-operation and Communication (KICC), and Hyogo International Association (HIA). The Asian Urban Information Centre of Kobe (AUICK) is billed as an 'International NGO' but which was set up by Kobe City with some UN funding, and which has a former mayor of Kobe as its president. At the current time, the city is also making some progress in the organisation of a citizens' group separate from the local government, to further the Kobe-Tianjin relationship, as has already been achieved for the Kobe-Seattle relationship (Ichinobe, interview, 2006).

A final example of the way in which the city is using NGO-type organisations to further links between Kobe and China is the main organisation used

to promote exchange between Kobe and the Yangzi River Basin, the Japan China Kobe Hanshin Changjiang River Basin Exchange Promotion Association. This group consists of business people, academics, and some officials from the local governments of Kobe City as well as the governor of Hyogo Prefecture, and strives to promote exchange between Kobe and the Yangzi valley (Kobe City 2006b).

These agencies and partially non-governmental organisations provide an effective way of connecting with local citizens, as well as dealing with NGOs and governmental agencies in other countries, and dealing directly with citizens of other countries. Thus, the city can use these agents to channel its own, and Japan's, soft power towards other countries at the local level. NGOs (and other similar groups which may have some element of central or local government contribution) are particularly suitable as agents of a country's soft power, in terms of their ability to create links between countries, and transmit ideas in a way which is unthreatening and non-coercive. They are, therefore, good examples of the theory proposed in this thesis which describes how soft power is utilised in international relations (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of this). By encouraging NGOs to participate in the creation of links between Kobe and Tianjin, it can be seen that Kobe City has recognised this (in a similar manner to the Japan Foundation, see Chapter 4).

Local government as an agent of Japan's soft power

Undoubtedly due to the pro-active use of Japan's soft power by Kobe City to help Tianjin's development right from the beginning of Japan-China relations in 1972, the city has been able to create a plethora of links between itself and Tianjin, to the benefit of both cities' citizens, and to the wider benefit of people in both countries. In

addition, it is notable that the maintenance of these information exchange links has become a natural part of the relationship between Kobe and Tianjin; this is demonstrated by the fact that the 'international exchange department' of Kobe is no longer greatly involved with the links. Instead, the relevant sections of the city government deal with issues which affect them. For example, the education department or individual schools deal with student exchanges, or sports exchanges, while the trade department deals with business links, and the ports department deals with port-related links (Ichinobe, interview, 2006). This deepening of the sister city relationship is conducive to maintaining healthy information links between the two cities, enabling the longer term action of soft power to occur.

Although national governments may have been reluctant at first to let local governments act independently, as the concept and role of local governments' international activities has become more widely known, they have been given more freedom to act according to their own needs while working within the national framework of trade rules and law.

The primary purpose of an agent of a country's soft power is to create an atmosphere where that country's information and ideas can flow freely and non-coercively to other countries. In the case of its sister city relationship with Tianjin, Kobe can be said to have performed this task effectively. Through official exchanges, sports and educational exchanges, exchanges of researchers and technical experts, and trade and business exchanges, thousands of people from Kobe and Tianjin have been able to visit each other's cities, and in many cases to exchange ideas with local residents. The soft power being utilised by Kobe in this cases is the collection of ideas and information encompassed by the Japanese technical experts, educators, administrators, businessmen and artists among others, which have a wide

impact throughout China when they are freely transferred.

The range of exchange activities which can be undertaken by the cities together is not limited in the same way as that of a government ministry, or a government agency such as the Japan Foundation or JICA. Sister city relationships can use cultural exchanges, but can also promote trade and business exchanges in conjunction with this, often linking the different activities, or forming contacts for the purpose of one activity through another activity. When city officials meet to celebrate an anniversary, or to co-ordinate a cultural exchange, they may also talk about business or other matters which may be of interest.

Linked to this is the relative calm of sister city relations in comparison to governmental relations. The activities of a governmental agency may be affected or even curtailed by problematic relations between the governments. An example of this is the turbulence in recent years caused by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō's controversial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, or by other historical differences. While general governmental relations are affected negatively by these transient events, individual cities or regions may be able to ignore those events as being irrelevant to their own relations. Upon being asked whether recent anti-Japan demonstrations in China were having any effect on the sister city relationship, the mayor of Kobe replied,

...Kobe City, the first city in the world to form a sister city relationship with Tianjin City, this year welcomes the 32nd year of this relationship. Additionally, the city has advanced many projects after the earthquake, with Shanghai and 3 provinces and one city of the Changjiang River Basin. Those links and our mutual bonds are not going to break, I think... In concrete terms, Kobe has an office in Tianjin, and an office in Nanjing. We have not heard of any change in need of special attention from those places (Kobe City 2005)

Due to efforts of Kobe and Tianjin local governments, the investment climate in Tianjin for Japanese companies has been very good. By 2004, there were sixteen enterprises from Kobe which had invested in Tianjin, and the total investment of the 1467 Japanese companies in the city was 25.5 billion dollars (Enorth 2003). Equally, Kobe had attracted investment from Tianjin and other Chinese cities, helped by the trade offices established by Tianjin and other cities in Kobe.

Some over-ambitious schemes of the Kobe City government have been unsuccessful, such as the trading ship which was to sail up the Changjiang River. However, other schemes have been very successful, in particular the 'Business Chance' fairs, bringing local Chinese and Japanese companies together, and the joint project to upgrade Tianjin Port.

Although one local government authority can only have a very small role in channelling and utilising Japan's soft power to improve relations with China, the number of sister city relationships between Japan and China is large, and increasing. Cities, being the cultural and commercial centres in any modern country, are the places where soft power will have its most useful effects. Hence, the sister city relationship is an ideal way of enabling Japan's soft power to have a positive effect on Japan-China relations. For example, the relatively attractive and modern nature of life in Japan's cities, in particular Kobe City, is bound to make an impression upon Chinese visitors to the city, which they will take back with them to their friends and family, thus spreading ideas and information about Japan. Cases of local governments worsening relations between Japan and China, such as the Shimane Prefecture case, are rare.

According to Mayor Yada Tatsuo upon returning from a visit to Tianjin in

2003,

...the relationship between Tianjin and Kobe, although there are now 220 sister city relationships between Japan and China, has often been referred to as the first model case, and is highly evaluated by the central governments. When I met the state councillor and former foreign minister, Tang Jiaxuan, in Beijing... he told me that... he could not forget Kobe City's co-operation activities and exchanges with China and Tianjin (Kobe City 2003b).

These comments by such a highly placed leader in China show the appreciation for the kind of activities which Kobe has carried out with Tianjin.

Some criticisms of local government's handling of exchanges have been made. In particular, in common with larger governmental bureaucracies, is the charge that the local government should not be performing activities such as trade promotion and giving aid to companies, as these would best be performed by private organisations and associations. On this argument, taxpayers' money would be best spent promoting services which directly benefited them, rather than on speculation that a local government plan would produce a benefit in the long term.

An example of the difference in thinking between local government officials and external assessors on this point can be seen from the internal and external evaluations carried out by Kobe City in 2004. With regard to the office which the city runs in Tianjin, the internal assessors state, firstly concerning the 'appropriateness of the project to the times (*jidai tekigōsei*)':

The recent development of China has been eye-opening, and Japan-China economic exchange is deepening. Within this trend, the role of the office is also moving towards economic exchange projects (Kobe City 2004a:2).

With regard to its ‘appropriateness (*hokansei*)’

In order to enable this office... which has for twenty years cultivated valuable contacts, networks etc., to plan an increase in its activities, maintenance of its present form is desirable (Kobe City 2004a:2).

And its ‘validity (*yūkōsei*)’:

As China’s remarkable development continues, the role of this office as a place of economic exchange is likely to increase even more (Kobe City 2004a:2).

The internal evaluators gave the office a top grade (out of four levels: ‘competent (*tekikaku*)’, ‘somewhat competent (*yaya tekikaku*)’, ‘somewhat incompetent (*yaya futekikaku*)’ and ‘incompetent (*futekikaku*)’) in each of four categories of assessment.

In response to this, the external evaluators gave three grades of ‘somewhat competent’ and one of ‘somewhat incompetent,’ along with the comments:

It is necessary to question as to whether the City managing an overseas office for the purpose of trade promotion is in keeping with the times. In terms of international trade, this is not an activity which should be undertaken by the City (Kobe 2004a:2).

Similar comments were made with regard to the Nanjing office (Kobe City 2004c), and the ‘China Business Chance Fare,’ with the external report suggesting that ‘It is necessary to question whether taxes should be used for this activity’ (Kobe 2004b:2). With regard to the joint Kobe-Tianjin Research Association activity (Kobe City 2004e), and research seminars held in China for local businesses, the external

report was, however, more positive, although it pointed out the need to ‘concentrate on especially good results,’ (Kobe City 2004d) implying that the concrete business results until now have not been sufficient for the outlay.

There is certainly room for the argument that certain services, including those of cultural exchange, would be better performed by privately managed groups and associations, or even for-profit companies. However, it can equally be said that the undertaking of cultural exchanges and trade promotion in a country such as China is a suitable task for a local government. The local government is likely to be much more responsive to local people’s needs than the central government, and equally it is likely to be in closer contact with local businesses and their needs. It is also easier for a local government to target a small region in a country such as China in a way that the central government could not. Equally, in a country such as China, where private companies were frowned upon for many decades, a Japanese local government is likely to present a more acceptable face to Chinese officials and citizens than a large corporation, or an unknown NGO. Kobe City officials take the line that they are acting as public relations agents for the city and the country; and as they do not regard direct profit or institute specific targets for their actions, they are able to deepen international links with a view to the long term future (Ichinobe, interview, 2006, Ōshiro, interview, 2006).

However, China is no longer so hostile to private companies and groups, and it could be said that such organisations could be more successful in promoting trade and cultural exchange than a local government bureaucracy with many other priorities, and problems with public debts, in the future. The same can not necessarily be said of all countries.

There are, of course, also some exceptions to the generally positive role of

local governments in relations between countries. One example of this is the case of the Shimane Prefecture incident mentioned earlier (see Introduction to this chapter).

In any case, the majority of sub-state local governments do not provoke such reactions, or cause such trouble for their own and their country's international relations. The Kobe-Tianjin relationship is one example of many such relationships across Japan and China, which demonstrate the suitability of this kind of exchange between countries, and the suitability of local governments as agents of a country's soft power. These relationships also demonstrate well the mutual character of soft power, in that it is likely that both countries' attractions will make themselves felt over the channels of communication created between them.