

Seminar on South Korea's Soft Power and its Foreign Policies in the ASEAN Region

Organised by
Korea Centre, East Asian Institute (EAI), National University of Singapore (NUS)

Sponsored by
The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Singapore

Wednesday, 5 October 2022

**Lecture Theatre, Level 3, Block B,
NUS Bukit Timah Campus, 469 Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259756**

Joseph Nye, who coined the term “soft power”, notes: “A country’s soft power rests on three resources: its culture, its political values, and its foreign policies. I believe Korea is well-endowed with soft power on culture.” Indeed, South Korea’s soft power is rising in the world due to the popularity of the “Korean wave” (*hallyu* in Korean) such as K-pop and K-drama.

Since the late 1990s, Korean popular culture and their idols have become immensely popular in various ASEAN countries. Korea’s cultural popularity has positively influenced its bilateral relations with Southeast Asian countries and burnished its image in the region. For instance, in April 2022, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha called for closer bilateral cooperation to promote soft power for mutual benefits.

Indeed, Republic of Korea–ASEAN relations have strengthened over the years. The Yoon Suk-yeol administration intends to raise this relationship to new heights by pursuing the policy of “global pivotal state that advances freedom, peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond” with an emphasis on ASEAN. Seoul will bolster its partnership with ASEAN, particularly in areas of human resources, public health, culture and digital infrastructure, among others.

This seminar aims to assess Korea’s soft power and its impact on bilateral relations with specific Southeast Asian countries. Panellists will also analyse how the major powers of the United States, China and Japan have pursued their soft power strategies towards ASEAN. This seminar, upon examining Korea’s soft power strategy and policies, envisages to generate policy advice, suggestions and comments with a view to answering the following questions: How to enhance Korea’s soft power? How to forge a synergy between its soft power and foreign policies towards ASEAN? How to strengthen its diplomatic and economic ties with ASEAN by harnessing of its soft power?

~ Programme ~

9.00 – 9.05 am <i>Singapore Time</i>	Welcome Remarks Prof Bert Hofman Director, East Asian Institute, NUS
9.05 – 9.10 am	Congratulatory Remarks H E Ambassador Choi Hoon Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Singapore
9.10 – 9.25 am	Keynote Speech Striking a Balance of Soft Power amid Great-Power Competition Prof Kim Taehwan Professor of Public Diplomacy, Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea
9.25 – 9.30 am	Group Photo

9.30 – 10.45 am

Session 1 - Assessing Korea's Soft Power in ASEAN countries

Moderated by Prof Bert Hofman, Director, East Asian Institute, NUS

Case studies of Korea's soft power (K-pop, Korean language and K-food, etc.) and impact on bilateral relations with ASEAN countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam

- Trajectory of Korea's soft power in each country: past, present and future
- Background of the allure of Korea's soft power and its implications, as well as its strengths, limitations and challenges

1. **Korea's Soft Power and Viet Nam-Korea Relations**

Mr Tran Xuan Thuy | Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam

2. **Attractive and (can be more) Persuasive: A Thai Perspective on Korea's Soft Power**

Mr Seksan Anantasirikiat | Researcher, International Studies Center, Thailand

3. **South Korea's Soft Power in Malaysia: Time to Move Beyond Cultural Dimension?**

Dr Nur Shahadah Jamil | Senior Lecturer, Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, Malaysia

4. **South Korea's Soft Power in Indonesia**

Ms Aisha Kusumasomantri | International Relations Department, Universitas Indonesia

5. **Assessing South Korean Soft Power in Singapore**

Mr Gordon Kang | Research Assistant, Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, NUS

10.45 am – 11.30 am

Session 2 - Major Powers' Soft Power Strategies towards ASEAN

Moderated by Dr Chen Gang, Assistant Director and Senior Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, NUS

To examine the soft power strategies of major players such as the United States, China and Japan and their efficacy in ASEAN.

6. **American Hard and Soft Power Divergence: Simultaneous Acceleration and Degradation and Implications for Southeast Asia**

Dr Ryan Clarke | Senior Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, NUS

7. **Chinese Soft Power in Southeast Asia**

Assoc Prof Li Mingjiang | Associate Professor and Provost Chair in International Relations, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

8. **Cool Japan in Sunny Singapore**

Dr Lam Peng Er | Head of Korea Centre & Principal Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, NUS

11.30 am – 12.20 pm

Session 3 - Soft Power Strategy towards ASEAN and its Enhancement

Moderated by Dr Lam Peng Er, Head of Korea Centre & Principal Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, NUS

To explain Korea's soft power efforts and the lessons learnt, to seek policy advice and comments on improving Korea's soft power and attaining a synergy between Korea's soft power and foreign policies towards ASEAN, as well as on strengthening Korea's diplomatic and economic ties with ASEAN.

9. **Korea's Soft Power Strategy towards ASEAN**

Dr SunHa Yeo | Senior Researcher, Debiasing and Lay Informatics (DaLI) Lab, Center for Applied Social Research, University of Oklahoma, USA

10. **ROK's Soft Power and Future Cooperation to Enhance ASEAN-ROK Relations**

Mr Shawn Ho | Associate Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

End of Seminar

Bio profiles of speakers and moderators (in the order of the seminar programme)



Prof Bert Hofman, a Dutch national, is Director of the East Asian Institute at NUS and Professor of Practice at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Before joining NUS, he was with the World Bank for 27 years, 22 of which in Asia, and 12 of which on China. Prof Hofman was the World Bank Country Director for China 2014-2019, the Country Economist 2004-2008, and the Chief Economist for the World Bank in the East Asia and Pacific region 2011-2014. He also worked on Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea and Mongolia. Before joining the World Bank, Prof Hofman worked at the Kiel Institute of World Economics, The OECD and NMB Bank (Now ING). He has extensive experience in advising governments around the region on a wide range of development issues, and published on fiscal policy, debt issues, and China's and Indonesia's recent economic history.



Amb Choi Hoon was the Standing Commissioner and Deputy Chairman for International Cooperation at the Financial Services Commission (FSC) from 2019 to 2021. He held various positions at the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) in 1991, including Director for Financial Hub Cooperation, for 16 years. He was posted to FSC in 2008, and worked as Director-General for Banking and Insurance Bureau, Director-General for Financial Industry Bureau and Director-General for Financial Policy Bureau from 2016 to 2019. He also served as Director-General for Greater Tumen Initiative Secretariat of the United Nations Development Programme China from 2011 to 2015, and Senior Assistant Secretary for Economic and Financial Affairs at the Office of the President from 2015 to 2016. Ambassador Choi holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from the Sungkyunkwan University, ROK, and a Master degree in International Banking and Finance from the University of Birmingham, UK. In 2017, he completed his PhD in Economics from the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, China.



Prof Kim Taehwan is Professor of Public Diplomacy at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA), the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Before joining the KNDA in 2013, he had served as Director of Public Diplomacy at the Korea Foundation since 2008. He also taught as Research Professor at the Division of International Education of Yonsei University during 2002 and 2008. He is a book review editor for the English quarterly *Global Asia* published by the East Asia Foundation. Dr Kim graduated from Yonsei University (BA and MA in Political Science) and received his PhD in Political Science from Columbia University. His research focus is on Korea's public diplomacy and comparative political economy of post-socialist transformation. His recent works in English include "Seeking Recognition in Anarchy: An Identity Approach to Public Diplomacy"; "A Status Identity Approach to Middle Power Public Diplomacy"; "China's Sharp Power and South Korea's Peace Initiative"; and "Authoritarian Post-Communist Transition and Its Future in China, Vietnam, and North Korea".



Mr Tran Xuan Thuy is a doctoral student of International Relations at the Diplomatic Academy of VietNam (DAV). Mr Tran's thesis is on the foreign policy of the Republic of Korea during the period from 1993 to 2022, when this country finding a global policy matching to its new position. He is also the Head of Research and Training Division at State Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam. Prior to that, he was the secretary to ambassador at the Embassy of Viet Nam in Seoul, in charge of Viet Nam – Korea culture exchanges and member of Culture and Tourism Working Group at ASEAN-Korea Centre in Seoul (2015-2018). He can be contacted at tranxuanthuy-ncs11-qhqt@dav.edu.vn.



Mr Seksan Anantasirikiat is currently a researcher at International Studies Center (ISC), Thailand and Advertising Director, Korean Association of Thai Studies (KATS). He also served as the coordinator, ASEAN Roundtable, Seoul National University and a senior editor of the Seoul National University Journal of International Affairs (SNUJIA). During 2016-2018, he was a recipient of the Korea Foundation-ASEAN Fellowship for Korean Studies. His research interests include public diplomacy in Asia, national security strategy of middle powers, political-security issues on the Korean Peninsula, and ASEAN Community-building.



Dr Nur Shahadah Jamil is a PhD holder in Strategic and Security Studies, National University of Malaysia (UKM). Her PhD dissertation entitled *Evolution in China's South China Sea Policy Process: A Neoclassical Realism Explanation* focuses primarily on explaining how structural factors and elites' perception (after being filtered by relevant domestic considerations) contribute to the evolution of China's South China Sea Policy and the patterns of pluralization in the policy process from 1949-2017. Dr Shahadah is also one of the recipients for Taiwan Fellowship Award in 2017 and has conducted her four-month research in National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan. Her research concentrates mainly on China's foreign policy, South China Sea, Southeast Asian responses to Belt and Road Initiative and East Asian Security. Dr Shahadah is currently serving as a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of China Studies (ICS), University of Malaya (UM) and can be contacted via email at shahadah@um.edu.my.



Ms Aisha R. Kusumasomantri is a lecturer at the State Intelligence College, Indonesia. She is also teaching at the International Relations Department, Universitas Indonesia. A specialist in international security, her research is focused on the studies on asymmetric warfare (insurgency and counterinsurgency), terrorism, hybrid warfare, as well as strategic studies in Asia Pacific. Her current research includes "Reassessing the Importance of People to People Diplomacy in The Formation of ASEAN Security Community", and "Internally Displaced Persons in Papua and its Political Implication to Indonesia's Security Policy". A graduate from Universitas Indonesia and University of Glasgow (UK), Aisha is currently active in working with government institutions in formulating Indonesia security policies.



Mr Gordon Kang is a Research Assistant at the Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore. He graduated from The Australian National University's (ANU) Master of International Relations (World Affairs Specialisation) Thesis programme with Commendation, with a dissertation focusing on North Korea, Ontological Security, and Poststructuralist Discourse Theory. He also holds a Bachelor of Politics, Philosophy and Economics from the ANU. Previously, he has worked as a Research Assistant at the Korean Studies Research Hub and Gender, Environment and Migration Cluster at the Asia Institute, University of Melbourne. His research interests revolve around Politics and Society in the Korean Peninsula (particularly on North Korea), International Relations in East Asia, and Critical International Relations and Security Studies Theory. Email: gkang@nus.edu.sg.



Dr Chen Gang is Assistant Director and Senior Research Fellow of the East Asian Institute (EAI), National University of Singapore. Since he joined the EAI in 2007, he has been tracing China's politics, foreign policy, environmental and energy policies and publishing extensively on these issues. He is the single author of *Politics of Renewable Energy in China* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2019), *The Politics of Disaster Management in China: Institutions, Interest Groups, and Social Participation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), *China's Climate Policy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), *Politics of China's Environmental Protection: Problems and Progress* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2009) and *The Kyoto Protocol and International Cooperation against Climate Change* (in Chinese) (Beijing: Xinhua Press, 2008).



Dr Ryan Clarke is a Senior Research Fellow at the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore. His career has spanned leadership positions in defence and intelligence technology companies, investment banking, biodefense, strategic assessments, emergency response, and law enforcement. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge.



Dr Li Mingjiang is an Associate Professor and Provost Chair in International Relations at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is also the Coordinator of the PhD Program at RSIS. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Boston University. His main research interests include Chinese foreign policy, Chinese economic statecraft, the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese politics, China-ASEAN relations, Sino-U.S. relations, and Asia-Pacific security. He is the author (including editor and co-editor) of 15 books. His recent books are *China's Economic Statecraft* (World Scientific, 2017) and *New Dynamics in US-China Relations: Contending for the Asia Pacific* (lead editor, Routledge, 2014). He has published papers in various peer-reviewed outlets including *International Affairs*, *Asian Perspective*, *Asian Politics & Policy*, *Asian Security*, *Oxford Bibliographies*, *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Global Governance*, *Cold War History*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *the Chinese Journal of International Politics*, *the Chinese Journal of Political Science*, *China: An International Journal*, *China Security*, *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, *Security Challenges*, and *the International Spectator*.



Dr Lam Peng Er obtained his PhD from Columbia University and is a political scientist. His publications have appeared in international journals such as the *Pacific Affairs*, *Asian Survey*, *Asian Affairs*, *Japan Forum* and *Government and Opposition: An International Journal of Comparative Politics*. Lam's latest single-authored book is *Japan's Peace Building Diplomacy in Asia: Searching for an Active Political Role* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009). Other books include: *Contemporary Korea-Southeast Asian Relations: Bilateral and Multilateral* (London: Routledge, 2022) edited, *Japan's Relations with Southeast Asia: The Fukuda Doctrine and Beyond* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013) edited, *Japan's Relations with China: Facing a Rising Power* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006) edited and *Green Politics in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1999). He is an executive editor of the *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (A Journal of the Japan Association of International Relations published by Oxford University Press) and *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* (Journal of the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies, Seoul National University).



Dr Yeo SunHa is a senior researcher in the DaLI (Debiasing and Lay Informatics) Lab at the University of Oklahoma. From 2005 through 2016, she worked as a public diplomacy practitioner at the Korea Foundation (KF) and received the Foreign Minister Award from South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in recognition of her achievements in the diplomatic field. She led various projects in KF, including the "2013 Korea Festival in ASEAN". Besides her career, she completed her Ph.D. degree in communication at Ewha Womans University in 2019 and lectured on "Public Diplomacy and Communication" and "International Public Relations" as an invited professor at the same university. As a Principal

Investigator, she led MOFAs' annual research project "Evaluation of Korea's Public Diplomacy Implementation Plans" in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Currently, she is pursuing a new Ph.D. program at the University of Oklahoma. Her research focuses primarily on the conceptual and practical links between public diplomacy and public relations and is expanding to strategic communication, digital diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, and racial minority issues.



Mr Shawn Ho is an Associate Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. His research interests are: East Asian politics, security and history (in particular Korean Peninsular affairs). Prior to joining RSIS, he was a Researcher at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Singapore. He has also worked at the National Security Coordination Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office, Singapore and the Ministry of Defence, Singapore. He has been a fervent supporter of the English football club Tottenham Hotspur for over 25 years.

Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore

Peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula are vital not only for the East Asia, but the whole world. South Korea's New Southern Policy Plus has raised its partnership with ASEAN to the level of relations with its traditional four major diplomatic partners of the United States, China, Japan and Russia. For Singapore in particular, its good relations with the United States and North Korea had landed the city-state with the important role of hosting the 2018 US-DPRK summit, the first historic summit between the two.

The establishment of a Korea Centre in Singapore is thus timely and serves as the knowledge hub for sharing Korea's development experience. The East Asian Institute's (EAI) Board approved the setting up of a Korea Centre in its meeting in June 2021. The Centre has the endorsement of the embassies to Singapore of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the financial support of the Korea Foundation. It will be the first in Southeast Asia focusing on contemporary Korean politics, economy, society and international relations, as well as North-South interaction in the Korean peninsula.

The Korea Centre's mission is to analyse issues on governance, peace and development in the Korean peninsula to enhance understanding and interaction between the two Koreas and ASEAN countries. Its vision is to be the best Korea Centre in the Indo-Pacific outside of the Republic of Korea dedicated to the study of contemporary issues of public policy, peace and development in the Korean Peninsula and its international relations. Some of its activities include hosting conferences and seminars, publishing a quarterly Bulletin and interacting with its counterparts from the two Koreas.

The Korea Centre will have an advisory board and core staff from EAI. The Centre will also draw on a network of adjunct research fellows with internationally recognised expertise on the Korean Peninsula and manage an ASEAN-Korean Peninsula network among interested researchers. Administratively, the Korea Centre is an integral part of EAI. The Centre will be headed by Dr Lam Peng Er, Principal Research Fellow of EAI. The Korea Centre will operate within EAI's existing budget and through the funding of the Korea Foundation.

Please visit www.eai.nus.edu.sg for more information.
