

## **Soft Power and Shantou Economic Special Zone Construction: A New Breakthrough Point for Development**

**Tian Guang  
Shantou University**

*Soft power has become a major issue in urban economic development in China in recent years. Chinese scholars have creatively applied soft power theory in their studies of different city development strategies. Shantou is located in one of five Special Economic Zones in China and its rate of economic growth has sped up in recent years. However, compared with other Special Economic Zones Shantou has lost its opportunities for fast development in both hard power and soft power. The article suggests that Shantou can mobilize its resources and choose to enhance soft power development as a breakthrough point to gain socioeconomic full-scale development. The article further suggests that to build up the city's spirit and to increase the city's brand value would be a breakthrough point for the development of the city soft power.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Today, urban development mainly determines the world development and in the future, every country's economic growth will rely more heavily on the contribution from cities. All scholars agree that a city's development must take synthesized strength as its foundation. We categorize the infrastructure construction and other resources that can be transformed into material products as hard strength or hard power of a city; categorize the intangible assets, such as spiritual and the cultural traditions and characteristics as soft strength or soft power of a city. Repeatedly encountering the bottleneck constrains urban development, such as limiting land resource, degrading environmental protection, and exhausting the production capacity. To enhance and develop soft strength and power should become a rational and feasible choice facing most decision makers for urban development (Wang, 2009).

It is not difficult to find out that in today's world those most developed, charming and attractive cities, except for their strong hard strength and power, they all have their unique soft strength and power formatted from their social capital, such as energetic cultural dynamics, their spiritual assets, and their traditional values. The mechanism that integrates those intangible assets into strength and power enhances the overall development of the cities and thus becomes a competitive advantage of those cities. Therefore, social capital is the soft resources of regional economic development. The meaning of soft power and its formation mechanism based on social capital becomes one of the most discussed topics recently among economists, especially among Chinese economists in China. Scholars put forward a new perspective of a comprehensive observation of the regional and urban economic resource endowments in order to make a reasonable strategic choice for regional and urban development (Li, 2011).

Shantou is a coastline city located in the eastern part of Guangdong province, South East China. It is suggested that the globalization of the world economy has assigned an important role to coastal cities to

play in national development. In China, coastal cities have functioned as “engines” in economic growth since earlier 1980s (Han and Yan, 1999). As a coastal city, the territory of Shantou is about 2043 square kilometers with a population of 5.2 million. It is one the five Special Economic Zones (SEZ) in China. The Chinese government gives special economic policies and flexible governmental measures to SEZs, which allows SEZs to utilize an economic management system that is especially conducive to doing business not already existing in the rest of mainland China. Authorized by the State Council from May 1, 2011 the Special Economic Zone scope expands to whole Shantou city, which combines the special zone construction and the Shantou urban development into one package. Compared with other SEZs, such as Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Xiamen, and Hainan Island, apparently Shantou missed its prime opportunity for rapid development. Presently, not only Shantou falls behind in hard strength and hard power but also behind other SEZs in soft power development. The growth of soft power in Shantou in recent years, compared with its own hard power growth, is not balanced and as a result, it slows down the overall social economic development of the city. Accordingly, the underdeveloped soft strength becomes a barrier that obstructs the SEZ construction and needs to be removed (Zhu, 2007).

Shantou definitely needs to redefine its development strategies to meet the new challenges it is facing in today’s world. The strategies for urban development concern the comprehensive and long-term planning in the light of how the city positions itself and what goal it is to attain. They serve as guidelines and roadmaps for the development of city. We argue that the full-scope development of a city relies on both its hard strength and soft strength; as such, any city must keep a balance of its both hard power and soft power. We also argue that the growth and accumulation of hard power in a city usually involves a large capital investment and may take a longer time, while the soft power development, in certain areas does not request a large capital input and could break through in a short period of time. Considering the fact that Shantou has an unbalanced structure of hard power and soft power, the realistic social economic conditions and the stern challenges Shantou is facing, we suggest that to mobilize its resources to quickly enhance and build up its soft strength and power is a rational and feasible strategic choice for Shantou SEZ construction in the near future.

## THE THEORY OF SOFT POWER IN URBAN SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The concept of soft power initially introduced by Harvard University political science professor Joseph Nye to explain and predict the persistence of the US hegemony during the days of American national decline in the 1980s. In Nye’s theory, a nation’s power includes two kinds from the development perspective, one is hard power, and the other is soft power. In his original conception, Nye defines soft power as co-optive behavioral power that attracts “others to want what you want” (Nye, 1990 b: 188). He argues that, soft power was through attraction rather than coercion to achieve the wish. It originated from a country’s culture, political ideas and foreign policies.

According to Nye, in international politics, a country can affect other country’s conduct to achieve its objectives in various ways. It can let other countries yield by means of violence; it can use economic benefits to entice other countries and let them acknowledge its goal; moreover, it can also use ideology, culture and political values and other factors to attract other countries to achieve the voluntary target, which is the soft power of that country. Compared to hard power, soft power is an alternate way of expressing the will of a country and therefore is a non-material power. In essence, the soft power manifests itself in cultural and political values and policies. The greatest feature is the use of attraction rather than coercion. The political actors achieve its goals in a subtle way rather than the frenetic method (Nye, 1990 a).

The concept of soft power has poured into the new strategic thought for the various countries in the international competition, and it becomes the new focal point for countries’ to build competitive advantages. However, Kroenig et. al (2010) argue that the term *soft power* is entrenched in the theory and practice of American foreign policy, scholars have not yet developed, or empirically tested, a theory about the conditions under which governments can use soft power to their advantage—and that makes good policy hard to design. Drawing on research from the different fields, they have developed a theory about

the conditions under which state efforts to employ soft power will be most likely to succeed. They argue that to apply soft power effectively states must communicate to an intended target in a functioning marketplace of ideas, persuade the target to change its attitude on a relevant political issue, and ensure that the target's newly held attitude influences international political outcomes.

Nevertheless, Joseph Nye's theory of soft power was very quickly introduced to the academic and political fields in China, Wang Huning, one of the major think-tank members for both President Jiang Zemeng and President Hu Jintao, published his article on soft power in the Fudan University Academic Journal, among the most prestigious academic journals in China. In the pilot paper on soft power in China Wang claims that China should build its international strategy based on a stronger soft power (Wang, 1993). Later, Chinese scholars and politicians publish a series articles and speeches on national soft power and competitive advantages, and suggest the Communist Party of China to rule its people by soft power. The intuition leads us to believe that using thirty years of reform and opening-up has laid strong and solid material foundations for the future development of China, and scored considerable influences for China in terms of hard power. However, the construction of soft power lags behind in many fields such as culture, education, public management etc. That is incongruous with the increasing influence of China (cf. Ni, 2001; Li, 2008).

The CPC General Secretary Hu Jintao stressed the importance of building the nation's soft power several times in 2006 and made a special note on the national cultural soft power in his political report to the 17<sup>th</sup> CPC National Congress in 2007. Hu clearly indicates that the enhancement and promotion of "China's soft power," is a strategic measure related to the future prospects of China (Li, 2008; Tao 2010). As the result, China government has increased its investment on diffusing Chinese cultural values in the world. For example, China has launched a globally spearheading by a network of Confucius Institutes, educational outposts designed to promote Chinese language and culture. In just under six years, China has established 320 institutes around the world. In year of 2010 alone, the Chinese government made a further \$8.9 billion investment in external publicity work. Combined with the rapid expansion of Confucius Institutes around the world, a growing number of foreign-language Xinhua news outlets, and a swelling public diplomacy budget, China's soft power capability appears to be on a steep upward curve (McClory, 2010).

The discussion on soft power thus conflagrated in the domestic society in various academic fields, such as political science, management, administrative science, economics, cultural studies and many others. More recently, as Zhang and Li (2010) observe, in China the soft power theory has extended to the areas of expertise, combined with the relevant content of the professional research. Some scholars argue that soft power has different levels, such as human level, domestic political level, and international political level (Gong, 2008); other scholars indicate that the theory of soft power can also applies to a country's internal social governance (Li, 2008). Zhang and Li (2010) propose the ruling party of Chinese society needs to strengthen its soft power in the process of governance in order to construct the harmonious society.

Creatively, the Chinese scholars started to apply the theory of soft strength and power in their discussion of various issues pertaining to regional economic growth. More specifically, they started to use the soft power theory to probe strategies for urban socioeconomic development strategies. Chinese scholars sharply note that previously Chinese city government tend to focus on the establishment of hard power and ignores the soft power, which leads to a serious waste of cultural resources, being inadequate protection of cultural heritage, and lack of wholeness and planning on the establishment of cultural soft power. At present, facing the new challenge of industrialization, informationalization, urbanization, marketization and internationalization in China, city, as a symbol of civilization and accumulation of wealth, plays an important role in China's peaceful rising (Wu and Wang, 2009).

The concept of soft power is rapidly becoming the catch phrase in the Chinese urban development domain; almost every city is seeking its soft power development opportunities although not every city really understands how to mobilize its resources to build its soft power. Everybody, whether city politicians, scholars, or regular citizens believe that culture is not only the important fountainhead for national cohesion and the creativity, but also is the important synthesis competitive power among cities

(Zhuang and Yang, 2010). The Chinese scholars indicate that “soft power of cities” refers to an aggregate of a myriad of powers including social cohesiveness, culture appeal and the supportive force to science and education, which are constructed on non-material factors such as city culture, government service, the civilization of citizens and image communication. Such a soft power can attract various production and consumption factors from the outside, coordinate the socioeconomic operation in the city, improve the city taste in the fields of society, politics, economy and culture, help promote the competitive force and grant vigorous support to the healthy, harmonious, and leap-frog development of the city (Zhuang and Chen, 2009).

On the national level, to enhance the cultural soft power construction is the country’s strategy, on the local level, to enhance the soft power construction will serve as a very important factor to increase the city’s competitive advantage. A city’s well-established cultural soft strength can help to increase the asset of the city own brand, it can also help to increase the city comprehensive attractive power. This type of strength finally will generate positive influence on the city brand through the internal public (the residents) identity to the city and through the appeal to exterior public (other local inhabitants). As such, the city will have stronger attractions to the outsiders, stronger inspirational forces, and stronger persuasive power to influence (Li, 2011; Ma, 2007).

It is true that in today’s world, cultural activities and amenities are increasingly seen as a central part of the competitive city. Here the competitiveness of cities refers to the ability of the local economy and society to provide an increasing standard of living for its inhabitants (Malecki, 2000). Then, we need to probe why some cities are competitive, while others are not? Apparently, the ability to attract both investment and talented migrants is essential. In addition, the ability to create and sustain jobs with adequate pay levels is a typical output criterion of competitiveness. This ability includes not only inward investment in the conventional forms of commercial buildings and manufacturing plants but also tourism and local entrepreneurship (Kresl and Gappert, 1995).

In brief, cultural soft strength is not only a somewhat cohesive and affinity force, but a kind of productive and creative force as well. Presently, stressing the cultural soft power construction in China becomes a common sense and national will. While in the worldwide scale, the tendency of culture and the economy mutual integration makes culture a significant force that push the fast growth of economy, and the cultural factors become even more important in terms of economic competition. The cultural soft power plays an important role in national, regional, and the urban development strategy. Therefore, strengthens the city cultural soft strength or soft power is necessary for the construction of harmonious society, necessary for satisfying the people's spiritual life the need, and thus is the necessary support and safeguard for carrying out the science development strategies (Gong and Lou, 2008).

As to Shantou Special Economic Zone, it is a good proposition that the city diligently develops and enhances the cultural soft power, which most likely will lead the Special Economic Zone socioeconomic full development breaks through to a new level, and therefore is worth us discussing earnestly concerns the Shantou scientific developmental strategy. Local scholars from Shantou have done some fundamental scientifically strict research. They propose that the full-scale development of Shantou Special Economic Zone, must company with the innovation spirit; the innovations include the science and technology innovation, as well as the innovation of system, management, ideology and cultural thought (Shi, 2010). According to Shantou’s actual situation, the local scholars suggest that the city must sharpen the independent innovation ability, and to construct the innovative society, the key point is to strengthen the soft power construction, including education, culture and system three aspects (Zhu, 2007). The current author fully agrees with local scholars.

## **SHANTOU SOFT POWER DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS AND RESOURCES**

The soft power of culture, marked by cultural appeal and influence and the strength in culturally creative industry, is the core element in the soft power of a nation, and an important element in the comprehensive competitiveness of a city. Supported by its traditional civilization and a long history as a city, Shantou enjoys a rich cultural heritage that can turn into a great advantage in its overall

development. At the same time, the new era requires the task of enhancing cultural soft power to include not only cultural heritage, but also the advanced culture, building the culture of harmony and developing the industry of culture and creativity. Shantou is one of five Special Economic Zones in China; the rate of economic growth has sped up in recent years. In 2010, the city's GDP achieved more than ¥120 billion RMB (about \$18.9 billion USD), ¥23,000 RMB per capita (about \$3,600 USD per capita), an increase of 13.7% compared to 2009. Based on this growth rate, we predict that the GDP in Shantou city (or Shantou Special Economic Zone) will arrive to more than ¥240 billion RMB (\$37.8 billion USD), ¥45,000RMB per capita (about \$7,500 USD per capita) in 2016, which means that in a very short of period Shantou's GDP per capita will be above the middle level developed countries.

Shantou owns unique supportive resources and conditions to enhance city soft power development. Its geographical coordinates are 116.46°E and 23.21°N, located in the eastern Guangdong Province, China and is the crossing of the Tropic of Cancer and coastline of China. It is the hub of communications, an import/export and the distributing center of east Guangdong, south Jiangxi and southeast Fujian. It is 195 sea miles away from Hong Kong and close to the Taiwan Strait in South China Sea and near the important international seaway in the western Pacific Ocean. The advantageous natural environment makes Shantou an oasis and one of most suitable places in the earth for human beings to live. On the cultural resources, Shantou surpasses other places: it is the Chinese model for synthesizing sea culture as well as Chinese traditional culture. Historically, Shantou is the only city in China established entirely based on market economy needs. From 1860 when the port initially opened, Shantou has been under modernized scientific management administration, the first such kind city in China (Shantou Daily, July 21, 2009 Entertainment page).

As one of the five SEZs, Shantou has the most preferential benefit policy that the other cities in China dream of having. SEZ is a geographical region with a distinct set of Economic laws, which are evidently more liberal than the rest of places in the country. Of the earliest SEZs that were established, the most famous one is Shenzhen, which Deng Xiaoping himself directly established in the early 1980s. We can well understand the development of the Southern Chinese Economic Block with a thorough and in-depth examination of these SEZs. Established by the state to encourage foreign investment, the SEZ in China, like the SEZ in any other part of the world, assures the advent of much needed jobs, technical knowledge, and significant tax concessions. The Central Government of the Peoples Republic of China allows the SEZ to undertake special Economic systems and policies. SEZ thus creates her own distinct and special Economic management system, include: 1) Special tax incentive for foreign investment in the SEZ; 2) Greater independence is provided for International trade activities; 3) Products are primarily export oriented; 4) It is primarily a market driven economic activity; 5) Attracting and utilizing foreign capital. According to a local study, since Shantou obtained the Special Economic Zone legislative power it has revised or abolished 77 pieces of legal and regulation documents, which generated a series positive impacts on socioeconomic development in the SEZ (Shantou Daily, February 28, 2011 front page).

The wonderful natural landscape together with its unique cultural landscape reflects well-established cultural tradition and rich cultural heritage of Shantou, known as Chaoshan culture. Shantou enjoys a reputation as the "Coastal Zou Lu" (Zou Lu refers to the Kingdom of Zou and the Kingdom of Lu, the hometowns of Mencius and Confucius respectively) as early as in the Song Dynasty. Chaoshan culture has its own features such as Chaoshan dialect, Chaozhou opera, Chaozhou music, Chaozhou cuisine, Gongfu tea, Chaoshan arts and crafts, and Chaoshan folk custom. Chaoshan culture features rich content and unique style. It has profoundly nurtured the people on the land of Chaoshan in the past and present. Recently, through a variety of exchange and cooperation channels, Shantou will integrate into the cultural exchange and cooperation among cities on the west bank of the Taiwan Straits. Meanwhile, Shantou will also grasp the opportunities to actively build Shantou-Taiwan cultural exchange brand, expand Shantou-Taiwan cultural exchange field, and promote Shantou-Taiwan communication and cooperation on cultural industry (Shantou Daily, July 18, 2011 front page).

Shantou is a famous hometown of overseas Chinese, with very close relationships with foreign countries. Presently, there are 3.35 million overseas Chinese originating from Shantou, covering more

than 40 countries and regions in the world. The returned overseas Chinese and family members of the overseas Chinese or Chinese living in Hong Kong-Macao-Taiwan are more than 2 million. The characteristic advantages in overseas intercourse have offered Shantou superior conditions and great development potentials (China's Foreign Trade, 2008). For instance, the worldwide famous businessperson Li Ka-shing is from Shantou, who has made a huge donation to establish Shantou University and supports its ongoing operations.

Shantou's economy is medium by Guangdong standards. Manufacturing accounts for a large and increasing share of employment. Canning, garments, lithography, plastic, and toys are some of the principal products. Toy manufacturing is the city's leading export industry, with 400 million U.S. dollars worth of exports each year. Since the reform and opening, Shantou City has called full play to the regional advantages and the advantages of a hometown of overseas Chinese, making its comprehensive economic strength step onto a new level, and upgrading its social civilization greatly. It has entered the ranks of "Top 50 Cities of China in Comprehensive Strength," "China's Excellent Tourism City," "National Model City in Environmental Protection," "National Model City in Hygiene," "China's Brand Economy Cities," "China's 100 Best Cities in Investment Environment," "Top 50 Cities of China in Information-oriented Construction in 2008." (Shantou Government Website). Since it has established the Special Economic Zone, Shantou's economical culture and the education have gained a vigorous development, which created a solid foundation for Shantou to take enhancing the soft strength and soft power as a breach to realize the socioeconomic full-scale development (Fang, 2011).

In reviewing of the past 30-year socioeconomic development history, Shantou people learned lessons from the past and have reached a common consensus by all citizens of Shantou. In order to speed up the ESZ development, in order to play the elder brother's role in the development of East Guangdong area, and in order to become a regional even an international influential strong city, Shantou must take the strategy to vigorously develop Shantou culture and make it the core content of the city soft power. The Chinese Communist Party of Shantou Municipal Committee leadership pointed out that, to promote culture soft power is very important for speeding up the development of the ESZ. Shantou must build good environment and atmosphere for doing business, must inherit the outstanding historical culture traditions and put the new generation characteristics into it, and let it become the formidable energetic power to push socioeconomic develops. Shantou aims at becoming a regional key city, to construct Shantou culture and to strengthen the cultural industry is an important content of the goal. The cultural industry is a sunrise industry with great potentials, has bright prospects, and may make into a pillar industry in Shantou (Shantou Daily, May 30, 2010 front page).

In July 2010, Shantou Municipal Committee held its ninth plenary session, and designed Shantou cultural soft power construction ten-year blueprint. Each main cultural index should enter the front row in Guangdong province; to make the cultural establishment to prosper, to have a well-developed cultural industry; to enjoy the rich cultural life; to have a strong cultural radiating power, and to have a good cultural image. In so doing, Shantou will have its modern opening special characteristic and the bright culture develops new pattern (Shantou Special Economic Zone Newspaper, July 27, 2010 front page). Without a doubt that the foresightedness leadership decision-making mechanism and ability of Shantou Municipal Government, that 5.4 million Shantou people who longed for and determined to constructs their own homeland, as well as that the legislative power ESZ enjoyed, formed Shantou soft strength development powerful supports. On other side, that the well-established cultural traditions and characteristics, that the good economical strength and fast development trend, and that proliferates of global Chaoshan industrial and commercial enterprises, as well as the international economy relation, enlarged Shantou soft power development resources. Relies on these advantageous foundations and the backups in addition to the Shantou special zone brand and the spirit, certainly Shantou can take enhance the soft strength as the breach point to accelerate Shantou SEZ full-scale development.

## SHANTOU SOFT POWER DEVELOPMENT BREACH POINT AND SUGGESTIONS

In recent years, Chinese scholars, in their study of soft power development in cities, have proposed various city soft power and quality synthetic evaluation systems. They established soft power indices by quantifying strength and weakness in different fields. They further analyzed the connotation and the elements of the cultural soft power of city, explained the connection of the cultural soft power and government behavior, explored issues and rationales that exist in the establishment of the cultural soft power by city government and provided some corresponding measures. Soft power of cities refers to an aggregate of a myriad of powers including social cohesiveness, culture appeal and the supportive force to science and education, built on non-material factors such as city spirit, cultural traditions, government service, city brand image and brand name distributions. This type of soft power can attract various production and consumption factors from outside. It can also coordinate the socioeconomic operation in the city, improve the city welfares in fields of society, politics, economy and culture, help promote the competitive force and grant vigorous support to the healthy, harmonious, and leap-frog development of the city (Gong and Luo, 2008; Tao, 2010; Wu and Wang, 2009; Zhuang and Chen, 2009).

Based on Joseph Nye's original soft power theory principles, we argue that attractiveness of a city should be the core content of its soft power, while the spirit and the brand of a city are its strongest points of attraction. We also argue that city spirit, as the soul of city is a concentrated expression of the soft power plays a role of cohesion and radiation in the historical process of urban development. If promoting soft power development is determined a breach point of Shantou ESZ socioeconomic full-scale development strategy, then to construct the spirit of Shantou special zone and to increase the city brand value should be the breach point for promoting Shantou Special Economic Zone soft power.

What is city spirit? We can find the answers from a review and analysis of the history and process of Wenzhou city's reform and development. Before the implications of reform and open policy in China, the central government made a total accumulated investment to Wenzhou for only 950 billion Yuan in 30 years, the average per capita land is only 0.4 Chinese acres. In terms of hard power, Wenzhou used to be in a very weak position. In the initial period of implementing reform and open up policy, the natives of Wenzhou liberated their minds, dared to be the first in the country to do something new, to run out from enslaving of the planned economy system, dared to renovate and to push forward in economic system reform. They bravely developed the individual private economies, strived for successfully enterprising and diligently worked hard to build their economic well-being. Under this kind of energetic inspiration, Wenzhou people have created innumerable firsts, for example: the first individual private industry and commerce license in China; the first batch of countryside specialized market in China; the first individual private sector representative assemblies in China (Wenzhou Metropolis Newspaper, June 15, 2005 front page). As the result, Wenzhou economy development model holding high esteems by over all Chinese people in 1980s. In a sense, the miracle speed of Wenzhou socioeconomic development is the outcome of primarily soft power, or Wenzhou spirit, which then transformed into huge hard productive forces for Wenzhou's development. Apparently, if here were no Wenzhou spirit breeding the new and strong soft power, there would not have great changes in Wenzhou's economy.

Dare to be the first to do something new in the world and to be people oriented is Wenzhou city spirit cultivated in the new era, which represents the scientific development of taking people foremost and the objective of constructing a harmonious society. It stresses the braveness and humanistic. Accordingly, we can briefly describe the spirit of a city from the practice of Wenzhou natives. A city spirit is a flag that waves in the heart of the people of that city, is the spiritual characteristics of the people in that city, is the youthful manners of the people in that city, and is the justice values of the people in that city. The spirit of a city, displays a positive upward vigorous vitality of the city, the overwhelming healthy tendency of the city. The spirit of a city reflects all the life aspects of that city and leads the people in that city step forward. Thus, the city spirit has widespread and profound influence to the city's socioeconomic development. Accordingly, Shantou must develop and raise a positive upward city spirit.

The administration leadership of Shantou government has been very actively in promoting, nurturing, and expending the Shantou Spirit, which has generated a very positive impact in terms of socioeconomic

development in Shantou. We need to further summarize and refine a statement of Shantou City Spirit based on the existing values preferred by Shantou people. We propose to adopt a statement like this: “courageously develop, unceasingly enterprise” as the statement of Shantou City Spirit. First, this statement is open; it has manifested ancestor's red ship spirit for probing new opportunities, as well as the special zone spirit and the overseas Chinese culture spirit. Second, this statement contains the meaning of struggle and vigorous energy, indicating no matter in their native place or in other places all Shantou people can endure hardship, can have brave industrious spirit, it also means that Shantou people dare to go on the road that others dare not to go. Third, this statement implies to search for opportunities become stronger. Unceasingly enterprising indicates that no matter where they are and what they are doing they would always be outstanding. These three factors constitute the core values of Shantou spirit, which penetrates ancient and modern, passes through the Chinese to foreign. Therefore, Shantou spirit statement we proposed is opening but not sealed, is diligent but not indolent, is to be stronger but not to be backward (Shantou Special Economic Zone Newspaper, March 28, 2005, front page).

From the angle of enhancing the city spirit to embark, we would like to suggest continuously enriching and rising up Shantou spirit in the practice of socioeconomic development; continuously integrating Shantou people lofty thought ideas, the noble moral mood, and the good behavior standards in the process of developing Shantou spirit. The administrators must take the leadership to practice the city spirit. The municipal government must educate its residents through entertainment to guide the residents to practice and to value up the city spirit diligently together. Simultaneously it is necessary to have meaningful and plentiful platform to practice Shantou spirit diligently. Let Shantou spirit integrate the city life comprehensively, and let it become the advancement power to promote economic development and social development in the special zone.

At the same time, it is very important continuously to enhance Shantou city brand. The internationally famous brand study master, the triumphant scholar Kevin L. Keller argues that: a city brand power let people understand and know a region, connect some kind of imaginations with that city natural existence together, let its spirit integrate the city with every construction, and let the competition and the life coexist in that city (Keller, 2004). The city brand is an important resource for local development, is the intangible asset belongs to all residents and enterprises of that city. The city brand model is advantageous in enhancing the city connotations of culture, it forms the inside cohesive force, is advantageous in promoting the city culture diffusion and exchange, enhances the city's well-known name, and thus maintains good external environment for economical development. We agree to such a viewpoint that the special zone policies designed by the central government made Shantou become more attractive and draw attentions worldwide, let Shantou turn into the window and experimental plot for the modernization as well as reform and open policy in China. The true significance of special zone lies in facts that the central government granted the special zone the experimental and legislative power, which allows Shantou administrators to do something new and unique without political risks. In addition, the special zone gold-lettered signboard also has the extremely significant political effect. The central and provincial government, for the need of general situation and tendency to maintain reform and open up policy, can give Shantou a special care and guidance in terms of policy, mechanism, plan, project, and fund (Shi, 2010).

To speak from the angle of forging Shantou city brand, we would like to suggest the local government taking the following specific actions: (1) To invite former US President Mr. Clinton, Microsoft founder and former CEO Bill Gates and other international economic celebrities as consultants for Shantou city development. (2) To support and develop canned seafood industry with registered “Shantou Seafood” brand as trademark. Let “Shantou seafood” be the unmatched product, similar to “Qingdao Beer” trademark, marketing “Shantou Seafood” products in both domestic and foreign markets. (3) To appoint athlete and entertainment superstars represent Shantou as the ambassadors by offering competitive compensations. (4) To work with Shantou University, recruits 50 new students whose college entrance score ranked top five in each province with a total scholarship of 100,000 Yuan for each and promise them the government sponsored employment after their graduation. (5) To establish and develop a super-large-scale website, which should combine commercial and entertainment functions into one body

to propagandize Shantou special zone, sell Shantou product. (6) To work with state-level media, such as the China Central Television, jointly sponsors various activities, just as singing “red songs” activities in Chongqing, to propagandizes and introduce Shantou special zone. (7) To increase Shantou workers’ wage level and to manifest worker’s value in full, making worker’s wage in Shantou to be among the national highest level to attract more talented workers to Shantou and to increase the ratio of worker’s compensation in the city GDP structure. (8) To promote seashore scenery tourism industry with the theme of “Shantou is full of stories, Shantou is full of happiness” attracting more tourists to visit Shantou, which will in turn increase the value of the city’s brand name.

All the actions suggested above aim at increasing Shantou brand assets and the cost for doing all these are very small but the effectiveness could be unlimited. Moreover, to increase its soft power of culture and make Shantou a well-known cultural city, it is necessary to tap into the core value system of the city spirit. Shantou needs to improve its public cultural service system and to speed up the development of culturally creative industry. Meanwhile, Shantou must cultivate new contents, forms and operation types of culture, to discover excellent young artists in Shantou, or to attract them to Shantou from outside, so that there is no lacking of human and material sources in the cultural development of the city. With advanced culture, Shantou will have better cohesiveness to exercise the societal creativities, and the residents of Shantou will be able to live a more satisfied spiritual life. By doing so, Shantou will enjoy higher level of civilization with more culturally refined citizens, and in the end, a stronger culturally creative industry will enhance the city’s core economic competitiveness.

## CONCLUSION

Joseph Nye's theory of soft power was quickly introduced to China in early 1990s, soft power becomes a major issue in China's national development strategies, and more recently, it turns to be a very hot topic in urban economic development in China. The Chinese scholars argue that soft power of cities refers to an aggregate of a myriad of powers including social cohesiveness, culture appeal and the supportive force to science and education, which are built on non-material factors such as city culture, government service and image communication. Cultural soft power provides a soft environment for urban development, which helps to improve a city's competitiveness and enhance urban cohesion. Cultural soft power reflects value orientation and spiritual civilization of a city. Shantou city is one of five Special Economic Zones in China and its rate of economic growth has sped up in recent years. However, compared with other Special Economic Zones Shantou has lost its opportunities for fast development in both hard power and soft power.

Shantou aimed to build a major regional city in order to enhance the SEZ comprehensive strength as its main target. It suggests that Shantou can mobilize its resources and choose to enhance soft power development as a break through point to gain socioeconomic full-scale development. It further suggests that to build up the city spirit and increase the city brand value as the breach of soft power development, and at same time it is suggested that Shantou needs to improve its public cultural service system and to speed up the development of culturally creative industry. Shantou should further emancipate and develop cultural productivity as part of the soft power to establish wisdom city and innovative city. With the increase of its soft power by tapping into the core value system of the city spirit, Shantou will become a well-known cultural city and its social economic development will definitely come into a very new stage.

Acknowledgement: The author thanks Dr. Dan Trotter, a business professor at Shantou University, for his reviewing and comments.

## REFERENCE

China's Foreign Trade Featured Article (2008). Shantou, the Hometown of Overseas Chinese, China 's Foreign Trade, 2008 (23) : 5-7.

- Gong Na and Luo Fangzhou (2008). “City Soft Power” Comprehensive Evaluation System and Assessment Method. Shenyang Education Institute Journal, 2008(6):25-27.
- Gong, Tieying. (2008). The systematic analysis of soft power. Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing House.
- Han, Sun Sheng and Zhongxiong Yan (1999). China's Coastal Cities: Development, Planning and Challenges, Habitat International, Vol. 23 (2): 217-229.
- Kevin L. Keller (2004). Strategic Brand Management (2nd edition). Beijing: Renmin University Press.
- Kresl, Peter.K. and Gary Gappert (1995 eds.) North American Cities and the Global Economy, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kroenig, Matthew, Melissa McAdam and Steven Weber (2010). Taking Soft Power Seriously. Comparative Strategy, Vol. 29 (5): 412-431.
- Li, Liaoning. (2008). Social Harmony and Building the Ruling Party's Soft Power. Qiushi Journal. 2008 (4):18-20.
- Li, Shu-li. (2011) Formation Mechanism of Regional Soft Power Based on Resource Endowment. Chinese Journal of Systems Science Vol. 19 (1) 77-79.
- Ma, Qingguo. (2007). Regional Soft Power Theory and Implementations. Beijing: China Social Science Press.
- Malecki, Ed J. (2000). Knowledge and Regional Competitiveness, Erdkunde, 2000 (54): 334-351.
- McClory, Jonathan (2010). The New Persuaders: An International Ranking of Soft Power. London, UK: Institute for Government.
- Ni, Shixiong. (2001). Contemporary International Relation Theory. Shanghai: Fudan University Press.
- Nye, Joseph (1990 a), The Changing Nature of World Power. Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 105 (2): 177-192.
- Nye, Joseph (1990 b). Bound To Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power. Basic Books.
- Shantou Daily (2011). Shantou Has been Integrated into the Culture Strategic Cooperation on the West Bank of the Taiwan Straits. Shantou Daily, July 18, 2011, Front Page.
- Shantou Daily (2011). Transform the Special Zone Legislative Power into Development Superiority. Shantou Daily, February 28, 2011 front page.
- Shantou Daily (2010). “Sea Culture” in New Homeland. Shantou Daily, July 21, 2010, Entertainment page.
- Shantou Daily (2010). Shantou Speeds up the Development to Pay Great Attention to Culture Soft Power. Shantou Daily, May 30, 2010 front page.
- Shantou Government Website, <http://english.shantou.gov.cn/News.aspx?tid=16>, retrieved in Sep. 2011.

Shantou Special Economic Zone Newspaper (2010). Build a Happy Shantou with the Guidance of Contemporary Cultural Sprit. Shantou Special Economic Zone Newspaper, July 27, 2010 front page.

Shantou Special Economic Zone Newspaper (2005). Refine Shantou Sprit Statement: The Municipal Party Committee Solicit Opinion. Shantou Special Economic Zone Newspaper, March 28, 2005 front page.

Shi Xiaomei. (2010). Special Economic Zone 30 Years: The Achievement and Reconsidering. Great Tide Academic Journal, 2010 (7): 3-5.

Tao Jianjie, (2010). City Soft Power and Its Comprehensive Evaluation Index System Shanghai Urban Management, 2010(3):56-60.

Wang Huning (1993), National Culture Power: The Soft authority. Fudan University Journal (social sciences version), 1993(3):91-96.

Wang, Qiu-cheng. (2009) Overall Evaluation and Research on Urban Competitiveness of Provincial Area. Journal of Anhui Agricultural Sciences 2009 (8) 25-28.

Wenzhou Metropolis Newspaper (2005). Dare to Be the First, Take Care of People! Wenzhou Metropolis Newspaper, June 15, 2005 front page.

Wu, Ling and Wang Zhizhang (2009). The Research on the Government Behavior in the Establishment of the City Cultural Soft Power, Scientific Decisions, 2009, (11):27~34.

Zhang , Yuzhi and Li Ying (2010). On the Necessity of the CPC's Construction in Soft Power. International Journal of Business and Management, Vol. 5 (4): 204-207.

Zhu Ling (2007). Strengthen Soft Power Construction and Societal Innovation. Shantou Daily, December 31, 2007, theory and practice page.

Zhuang, Delin and Chen Xinkang (2009). International Metropolitan Soft Power Assessment. Urban Development Studies, 2009 (10): 35-39.

Zhuang, Deling and Yang Yin (2010). A Cold Thinking about Hot Discussion of City Soft Power Development. Social Science in Yunnan. 2010 (2): 96-101.