

My Beijing Trip II: IP and Roast Duck

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A popular belief in the UK IP field is that China is converting from a manufacture-based country to a knowledge-based one and IP plays a crucial role in this conversion. Having been away from China for several years, I am not sure whether this conversion is really happening. Luckily, I had the chance of meeting the Chief Justice of IPR Tribunal, PRC Supreme People's Court. In his office the experienced judge confirmed that more and more Chinese companies have started realising the importance of having their own branding and technology innovation but China is not yet a knowledge-based country.

A market gap that the judge pointed out is the IP service for Chinese Business in the west. The investment from business from the west has existed in China for around 30 years now and the IP service for the western businessman in China has been quite comprehensive. Chinese businesses have started entering the western market but for them the IP service provided in west is far from satisfactory. A typical case is when Chinese businessmen showcase their products at exhibitions in the west, they often lack proper consultation on how to protect their IP rights. I can't help wondering why IP firms in the west haven't filled this market gap. Perhaps the western IP firms are not ready for the emergence of Chinese business with IP awareness in the west. More possibly, western IP firms need to know more about what a Chinese business would need and expect.

On my last day in Beijing, friends took me to a restaurant which is famous for Beijing Roast Duck. I was admiring the chef's art in chopping the duck. Each piece of duck was a good shape, containing skin and meat. When Beijing Roast Duck appears in a UK restaurant, it is just crudely shredded and totally shapeless. One friend, however, started complaining that the duck in the restaurant was less tasty than before. He explained that the restaurant used to use the ducks from Chinese farms but now it started to import European ducks to save the cost. Chinese business has entered the western market and European ducks have been used to cook the most traditional Chinese dish. Like it or not, it seems globalization has become an inevitable trend now. However, how will the west countries accommodate the emerging China and how will China adapt to the world? I certainly thought too much when I was supposed to be enjoying my Beijing Roast European Duck.