



The discovery of Silk Route: Cultural and technology communication between China, Korea and Japan

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Abstract

One of the earliest civilizations took place in Asia, particularly the East Asian region. As a main result of war, historical travel, such as trading and pilgrimage, influenced the daily life of most people in the region. The Han Dynasty was traced back as the most significant period that triggered travelling activities during the discovery of the Silk Road. Since then, travelling facilities were developed, which consequently led to the increased inter-region movement of people and merchants. This study explores the historical development of travels in Eastern Asia, with a particular focus on the expansion of the Silk Road throughout several dynastic periods of China, as well as its influence on peninsular Korea and Japan. This study concludes that the Silk Road is an important channel for the exchange of tangible and intangible elements between China, Japan, and peninsular Korea as a sinicization process, particularly in the exchange of food, papermaking, and printing technology. An increased understanding of Asia's travel history helps to assess the travelling patterns in the region by revisiting the influence of tourists' socio-demographic factors to include the cultural background with historical elements.

Keywords: travel history, Silk Road, movement of people, East Asia travelling, cultural and technology communication

Introduction

In the discipline of travel and tourism research, historical studies and their chronological development have been extensively explored, particularly in the European region (Young, 1973; Towner, 1985; Towner & Wall, 1991; Hunt & Layne, 1991; John, 1995; Lickorish & Jenkins, 1997; Leiper, 2003; Shackley, 2006; Yeoman, 2008). As such, the outcome has contributed to a better understanding of travel and tourism development in the modern era, especially across Europe. Furthermore, the Asian region possesses an interesting history of travel development, especially in the discoveries related to China's Silk Route. The development of the route happened thousands of years earlier under the complex dynastic rules of China. In the past decades, many scholars have studied the Silk Route and the cultural exchanges among countries from consequent movements along the route (Lu, 2001; Wang, 1997; Wang & Yi, 2005; Zhao, 2006). However, these studies seldom linked the development of travel and its sinicization process between China, Japan, and Peninsular Korea (henceforth, Korea). Therefore, this study attempts to outline aspects of travelling facilities development in China and its cultural influenced on Japan and Korea resulting from the travelling activities along the Silk Route. With respect to the commodities, materials, and various products distributed and exchanged along the Silk Route, not only tangible items were disseminated, but knowledge transmission of production also occurred, including a cultural attachment that consequently influenced other regions and recipients. The expansion of the exchange of these goods and ideas resulted in the distributions and exchanges of

material, intellectual, and cultural wealth.

In this paper, focus is first given to the discovery of the Silk Route, then with emphasis on travelling facilities development in China. The effects of the route on the transmission of tangible and intangible components through trading and pilgrimages were then discussed, including food and paper and printing technology. For data collection, this study is approached through documented records of Western and Chinese scholars.

Discovery of the Silk Route during the Han Dynasty

The history of the Silk Route is speculated to have started with an expedition under the reign of Emperor Wu Han (141 BC–87 BC) in the Han Dynasty (Shackley, 2006). The initial objective of this expedition was not for mercantile or territorial purposes, but an attempt by Emperor Wu to form an alliance with *Da Yue Zhi* (大月支, ancient alliance of Central Asia) against the invasion of the *Xiongnu* (匈奴)ⁱ (Fitzgerald, 1954; Ebrey, 1993). Despite the eventual failure of the alliance mission, *Zhang Qian* (张骞), who was the ambassador for the mission, became the first Chinese to discover the great route to the West.

While on his way to *Da Yue Zhi* in 138 BC, *Zhang Qian* was captured by the *Xiongnu*. He was imprisoned for a decade before he was able to escape. During his imprisonment, he was first taken to *Xiongnu*'s territory in the Gobi Desert, northwards to *Kashgar*, *Da Wan* (大宛, modern Fergana in Uzbekistan), also a part of the Northern Silk Route, and on to the West of Pamirs to Bactria. Eventually, he was able to escape and return to China by passing through another route (the Southern Silk Route) (Wood, 2003). He did not head directly back to China, but decided instead to continue his expedition by travelling to *Da Yue Zhi* by passing through *Da Wan*. During his yearlong stay in *Da Yue Zhi*, *Zhang Qian* attempted an alliance with the residents to resume the war against the *Xiongnu*. However, he was forced to return to China after his attempt was turned down by the residents (Fitzgerald, 1954). After the 12-year expedition ended in 126 BC, *Zhang Qian* finally returned to China.

Delighted by the expedition, the Han Emperor decided to open up the route according to the details indicated in *Zhang Qian*'s report upon his return. Hence, the expedition encouraged the movement of people between *Chang'an* (modern *Xi'an*), the capital of China, and *Da Xia* (modern Bactria) in Central Asia, which subsequently encouraged the transfer of merchandise and culture along the Silk Route. While the Han Dynasty established the route, the later dynasties continued to expand the route.

Silk Route

The Silk Route started at *Chang'an*, the capital city (see Figure 1). It then continued westwards to *Dun Huang* (敦煌) via *Lan Zhou* (兰州) and the *Gansu Corridor* (甘肃走廊). At *Dun Huang*, the Silk Route split into two: the Northern route and the Southern route. The two routes met again at *Kashgar* in the Western part of *Xinjiang*, China. The Northern Silk Route crossed the Taklamakan Desert (in *Xinjiang*, China) and passed through a few oasis towns before reaching *Kashgar*. This route was longer but easier to travel compared with the Southern Silk Route. Meanwhile, the Southern Silk Route was along the oases of *Charkhlik*, *Cherchen*, *Niya*, *Keriya*, *Khotan*, and *Yarkand* before arriving at *Kashgar* (Wood, 2003). From *Kashgar*, the Silk Route continued westwards to Central Asia.

The constraints caused by the distance between destinations and the relatively undeveloped travelling facilities during this era forced the transportation of merchandise to make stops before arriving at the designated places. The multi-point transportation process thus provided employment opportunities to the tribes living along the Silk Route to become involved in the movement of merchandise back and forth between destinations. From *Chang'an*, travellers heading toward the *Gansu Corridor* (甘肃走廊) had to pass through locations such as *Liang Zhou* (凉州), *Gan Zhou* (甘州), *Gua Zhou* (瓜州), and *Sha Zhou* (沙州). In these early days, the entire *Gansu Corridor* was

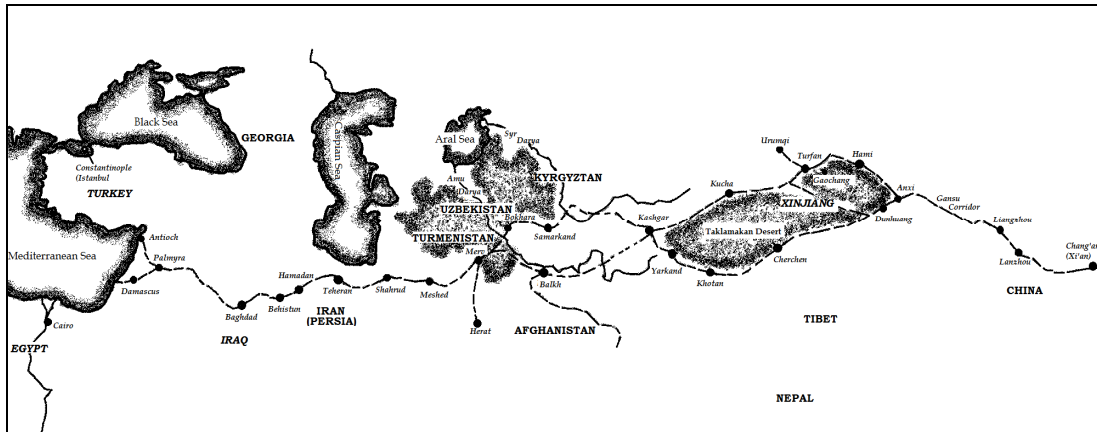


Figure 1: The Silk Routes—Hand drawn map with visual guidance adapted from Wood (2003) and DeFalco, D. L. (2007, Thesis of The Silk Road in China)

divided, and towns along the corridor were independently administered. The Tangut people (党项族) only centralized and unified this region from 1028 to 1036. Compared with previous eras, the development of the Gansu Corridor was especially glorious under the reign of the Western Xia Dynasty (西夏) in the 11th to 12th century (Lu, 2001). Unfortunately, this empire was destroyed and conquered by the Mongols in 1227.

Further westward, the Tarim Basin (majority of the basin occupying the Taklamakan Desert, Xinjiang Region) was dominated by the Uyghur people (维吾尔族). The Uyghur served as important transporters through the deserts along the Silk Route, especially during the Tang Dynasty. Owing to the extreme weather in the deserts, two-humped Bactrian camels were the primary modes of transport to carry goods back and forth between China and other countries (Duiker & Speilvogel, 2010). Further to Central Asia, areas between Syr Darya and Amu Darya (Oxus) were conquered by the Sogdiana people (粟特族). Given that Sogdiana was geographically located at the centre between the East and West, its people became the dominant traders. They spoke a language related to Arabic, which later became the common language along the trade road (Wood, 2003).

Since the discovery of the Silk Route, merchandise trading became the major activity between the West and East. This time marked the beginning of the transport and transmission of tangible goods and of intangible cultures and skills from one place to another. These goods included everything from daily commodities to precious products traded along the route. Imported merchandise from the West to China included grapes from *Gaochang* (高昌), precious stones and horses from Ferghana, silverware from Persia, amber from the Baltic, woven textiles from Egypt, wool from the Middle East and Greece, ivory and spices from India, wine and slaves from Arabia, and glass and beads from Syria (Wood, 2003). Apart from these commodities, religions such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Islam were also brought to China (Fitzgerald, 1954). In return, China exported merchandise, such as jade, spice, and paper, to India and the West. In particular, the Chinese exported a precious material called silk, which explains the naming of the route as ‘*The Silk Road*.’

The Silk Road was a corridor with complicated physical and social environments. Physically, travellers had to pass through diverse climates, such as oasis towns, mountains, and deserts, under extremely harsh conditions without any support facilities. Cultural obstacles and language barriers exacerbated travel activities as well. Nevertheless, these barriers failed to deter the relationship between China and Central Asia. Instead, trade and cultural exchanges continued to expand from one dynasty to the next, especially during the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–AD 907) when alternative routes

were extended out to neighbouring countries, and during the Yuan Dynasty (1280–1368, also known as the Mongols) when they controlled the entire region of Central Asia.

Development of systematic travel routes and travelling facilities

The expansion of the Silk Route was considered most significant during the Tang Dynasty. This period witnessed the development of systematic routes known as the Seven Great Routes, which subsequently led to the expansion of the dynasty's Department of Foreign Affairs owing to the increased interactions with neighbouring countries.

The Silk Route comprised not only a single route linking the East and West, but a network of different routes as well. The multi-route network is explained by revisiting the existence of numerous kingdoms before the unification of China. During this period, each kingdom sought to find the best routes to connect to the West for commerce and diplomacy. For the same reason, the Tang Dynasty expanded its exploration and opened up a total of seven systematic routes connecting to the surrounding countries, including Central Asia, East Asia, the northern part of Asia, India, and Europe (Zhu & Huang, 1992; Wang & Yi, 2005).

These seven routes were known as follows:

- (1) *An Dong Route* (安东道), a path that functioned as a transit to Goryeo (modern Korea);
- (2) *Bo Hai Route* (渤海道), a path that departed from Bo Hai Gulf to Korea and Japan;
- (3) *Yun Zhong Route* (云中道), a corridor that passed through the Shaan Xi Province to Mongolia;
- (4) *Uyghur Route* (回鹘道), a passageway to the West that passed through Uyghur and Mongolia;
- (5) *Tian Zhu Route* (天竺道), a way that led to the countries of South Asia;
- (6) *Xi Yu Route* (西域道), another passageway that led toward the West; and
- (7) *Hai Yi Route* (海夷道), a path that connected to Europe, Africa, and the West Asian countries.

The *An Dong Path*, *Yun Zhong Path*, *Uyghur Path*, and *Xi Yu Path* were part of the terrestrial Silk Routes, while the three other routes were known as the maritime Silk Routes (Chao, 2008). The development of the Seven Great Routes provided convenience for travellers who commuted between these countries. Consequently, trade expanded and the frequency of travelling activities increased, which then led to the rapid growth of accommodation facilities and diplomatic housing during the Tang Dynasty.

Early documentation recorded that the earliest existence of diplomatic guest houses (蛮夷邸) was during the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 22) to serve envoys, merchants, and minority tribes in China (Wang, 2000). During the Tang Dynasty, a total of 300 diplomatic houses were recorded. Apart from these houses, 1,639 taverns (逆旅) were established to accommodate other travellers. These taverns had existed 3,000 years earlier during the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC–1046 BC) and were called 'stations of exchange' (驿传). These stations were initially built to provide shelters and horse-changing services. They were reserved for government messengers and administrators for the delivery of important messages (Wang & Yi, 2005). These stations then evolved into taverns, which not only provided rooms for shelters, but also other services, such as food and storage.

To manage the matters related to guests from neighbouring countries, the Department of Foreign Affairs during the Tang Dynasty set up four functional divisions as follows (Chao, 2008):

- Division of Foreign Affairs Authority (外事主管机构), which was responsible for all internal and external administrative documents. Three departments and six councils were assigned different duties under this division.

- Division of Foreign Affairs Reception (外事接待机构), which was responsible for the reception, protocol, translation, and guest house services.
- Division of Foreign Trade Management (外贸管理机构), which was given the duties to manage all foreign trading, including land and sea trades.
- Division of Expatriate Management Division (侨民管理机构), which was responsible for immigration matters.

Apart from the Tang Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) also exerted efforts to develop their Foreign Affairs Department. Under the reign of the Ming Dynasty, language translation and training centres (會同四译馆) were established as part of the diplomatic systems, which included languages such as Korean, Indian, Tibetan, and Mongolian (Zhuo, 2003). Later, the Qing government further expanded these centres as a medium for delegates to learn Chinese arts and culture.

Starting with the expansion of different routes until the establishment of foreign policies and travel facilities (e.g., the development of taverns, translation centres, and accessibility of routes), the progress observed from the Silk Route's existence reflected the development of travels in China. Previous travels were slightly different from those in modern days. These early travels focused mainly on diplomatic matters, with travellers generally coming from a high social status and seldom included leisure purposes in their trips. For example, foreign delegates frequently travelled to China in large numbers, especially those from Japan and Korea (Murphy, 2000; Yan, 2011). Those delegates included monks, scholars, ambassadors, artists, doctors, and craftsmen, who were attracted to visit China for its developed and civilized society. Delegates were tasked to acquire knowledge in the aspects of scholarship, craftsmanship, arts and music, religion, architecture, and basic daily practices (Yan, 2011). These exchanges significantly influenced the tangible and intangible cultural practices in Japan and Korea, particular on food, papermaking, and printing skills were discussed in the following context.

Cultural and technology exchange between Japan, Korea, and China

The discovery of the Silk Route stimulated the development of international travel in the Eastern Asia region. The people travelled along the Silk Route for specific purposes, such as pilgrimages, trades, migrations, studies, and diplomatic pursuits. Through these activities, direct and indirect interactions and communications occurred along the trips and between the interconnected regions. These communications transmitted knowledge and technology among the various trading countries along the route. The famous transmissions during this era included food, papermaking, and printing technology.

Food

Food has played an important role within the Chinese society since antiquity; the transport of Chinese food outside the country via the Silk Route was recorded as early as the Han Dynasty (Chang, 1977; Anderson, 2009). This travel history has wielded a huge influence on the food culture in China's neighbouring countries, namely, Japan and Korea. The majority of their daily essential foods are similar to China. For example, tea and soybeans are daily consumed items among the people in these countries.

The history of tea in Korea developed earlier than it did in Japan. Tea was transported from China to Korea during the period of AD 632–AD 646 (Wang, 2001). In the beginning, tea was used widely by Buddhist Zen masters and monks as an offering for both worship and prayers at Buddhist temples. During the 14th and 15th centuries, tea became a common food item consumed by all levels of the Korean society. However, the practice of the use of tea between Japanese and Koreans was slightly different.

The art of tea was introduced in Japan by Japanese monks who visited China. In AD 804, monks brought back tea seeds to Japan when they returned from China. During that time, tea drinking was precious in Japan because of the insufficient supply of tea leaves. Hence, only the royal families

and a few monks had the privilege of drinking tea. After the reign of *Hirayasu*, Japan decreased diplomatic contact with China for nearly 200 years, and tea drinking was discontinued. Tea drinking culture was revived only in 1192 when tea art was popularized by *Eisei*, a monk who spent 24 years in China and was named the founder of Japanese Tea Art (Wang, 2001). In the 16th century, *Sen no Rikyu* (1522–1591) developed his own tea ceremony, borrowing from the concept of *wabi* (desolation) (Nikoru, 1997). During the *Wabi* tea ceremony, the focus is on the concept of ‘no wasted movement and no superfluous object’. Hundreds of years after the initial transport of tea seeds to Japan, tea drinking has penetrated the Japanese daily life and has become a prominent part of the culture. At the general level, tea is currently a daily beverage among the Japanese.

Apart from tea, soybean is another dietary staple of the Chinese society. According to early documentation, fermented soybean paste was previously used during the Han Dynasty (circa 40 BC) (Huang, 2008). Soybean became an important cultivated crop during the Zhou Dynasty (circa 1000 BC). Until today, soybean is used to produce various food products through fermented and non-fermented processes. Fermented products are commonly used as seasoning supplements in cookery, such as *jiang* (豆酱, fermented soybean paste), *chi* (豆豉, fermented soybean), and *jiangqing* (酱清, soy sauce); whereas non-fermented products include *doufu* (豆腐, tofu), *doujiang* (豆浆, soybean drink), and *doufupi* (豆腐皮, soybean skin). As in the past, China, Japan, and Korea currently rely heavily on soybean products as daily cooking ingredients.

Ozeki provides two major explanations for the spread of fermented soybeans to Japan (Ozeki, 2008). Soybeans were deduced to have been transmitted from China to Japan via Korea, a process that took place approximately between the 6th and 8th centuries concurrent with the spread of Buddhism (Shurfleff & Aoyagi, 2001). First, fermented soybeans were introduced by the Koreans who settled in Western and Central Japan (Owari, Mino, and Ohmi) around AD 710 or during the 6th century (during the Asuka era). During that period, fermented soybean was called *Koma-bishio* (Korean paste). Second, fermented soybean was indicated to have been introduced in AD 735 by Ganji, a Chinese Buddhist monk. Despite the varying explanations, Ozeki suggests that credit goes to the statement with the older timeline (Ozeki, 2008). From AD 794 until the 16th century, Japanese craftsmen adapted, invented, and continued to develop the processes of making *miso* (味噌, fermented soybean paste) and *shoyu* (酱油, all-purpose soy sauce) in light of the local climatic factor and available ingredient choices. Miso and shoyu are distinct from the original *jiang* in China. In time, these two ingredients gained widespread use in both traditional and modern Japanese cooking. In particular, miso is gaining popularity worldwide. Alternately, soybean paste is termed *chang* in Korea. *Chang*'s original form was found in the Three Kingdoms period (57 BC–AD 668) (Cwierka & Moriya, 2008). *Kanjang* (soy sauce) and *toenjang* (soybean paste) were gradually invented by Korean craftsmen. From the late 16th to early 17th century, red pepper was introduced to Korea by Portuguese traders; this event led to the newly introduced paste called *koch'ujang* (hot red pepper paste) (A guide to Korean cultural heritage, 2001). There is a debate about the country of origin of paste making. Korean scholars claim that their ancestors from the Koguryo Kingdomⁱⁱ were the founders (Cwierka & Moriya, 2008). However, Huang (2008) states that the recipe for soy paste making was recorded as early as circa 40 BC in China. According to documented history, soy paste was first created by the Koreans in 57 BC and by the Chinese in 40 BC. Given the geographical proximity between the two countries and the invasion by the Han Dynasty into the northern part of Korea around 109 BC–108 BC, the Korean culture was unsurprisingly heavily influenced by the Chinese culture (Murhy, 2000).

Apart from the fermented paste, another soybean product is *doufu* (豆腐) or *tofu*, a well-known nutritionally beneficial food. Early research found evidence of the tofu-making process on a mural in a Han tomb; tofu was suspected to have been invented by *Liu An* (刘安), a grandson of the founder of the Han Dynasty (Zhao, 2006). However, a critical stage for heating raw milk was incomplete on the mural at that time (Huang, 2008). A complete tofu-making process was established later during the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–AD 907). Since then, tofu has become a common food in the Chinese society. Tofu was brought into Japan and Korea during the Song Dynasty (AD 960–1279) (Zhao, 2006). In Japan itself, although no formal documentation record exists regarding tofu export,

tofu was carried by the Chinese Buddhist monk *Jianzhen* (鉴真, AD 688–AD 763) into Japan during the late Tang Dynasty or the early Song Dynasty (Zhao, 2006; Huang, 2008).

Apart from tea and soybeans, other Chinese food products, such as dumplings and noodlesⁱⁱⁱ (Kim, 2009), also had a huge influence on the Japanese and Korean daily diet. Similar to miso and shoyu, dumplings and noodles originated from China and was incorporated into the local customs and rituals in Korea and Japan.

Paper and printing technology

Paper and printing technology are the two greatest inventions of China. Dating back to AD 105 during the Han Dynasty, paper was invented in the palace by a eunuch named *Cai Lun* (蔡伦) (Twitchett, 1983). Thereafter, paper quality was improved gradually from one dynasty to the next. Most of the paper was produced using mulberry bark, although hemp, fish net, and rag were also used for paper making. Although no official record exists for Korean paper making, Korean paper making skills were believed to have been imported from China at least around the 4th century. In AD 610, a Korean monk named Damjing introduced the same techniques to Japan (Yum, 2009). The Koreans were proud of *Hanji* (Korean paper), which was regarded to be of best quality by ancient Chinese scholars (Lee & Yang, 2012). Unfortunately, the paper-making industry in Korea declined after 1529 during the Joseon period^{iv} (Choe & Malarcher, 2011) because of insufficient material supply following the Japanese invasion, and papers were paid as tributes owing to the high demand from China (Yum, 2009).

In relation, printing technology came much later. The invention was recorded hundreds of years later after the discovery of paper making in AD 105. Two printing systems were invented in ancient China, namely, woodblock and movable type. The former was established during the Tang Dynasty, with texts or illustrations carved on wooden blocks and pressed on individual sheets of paper (Pan, 1997). The latter was invented during the Song Dynasty by *Bi Sheng* (毕升) between 1041 and 1048 (Carter, 1955). The movable-type printing system initially used porcelain as the material, but this was later replaced with metal in 1234 (Sohn, 1959). To increase printing production, the Korean government established a printing division responsible for the casting of metal movable type system and printing jobs (Twitchett, 1983). The Chinese woodblock printing technology was introduced to Japan because of the tolerance of Buddhism during the reigns of Empress Shotoku (the first reign was from AD 749–758 when she was known as Empress Koken, and then she re-ascended the throne during AD 765–770). During AD 735–770, the Empress was infected with a terrible smallpox disease. To overcome the disease, she demanded the Buddhist monks to print millions of Buddhist charms and place them in millions of wooden pagodas sometime before 770 (Carter, 1955). Later, the metal movable type printing system was introduced in Japan by the Koreans during the Hideyoshi invasion (1592–1598) when many Korean technicians and craftsmen were sent to Japan (Sohn, 1959).

The technology of papermaking and printing was not only introduced to Korea and Japan, but also to other parts of Asia and beyond. During the Yuan Dynasty in particular, paper money as a remarkable printing by-product was widely used in trading along the Silk Route, even in Central Asia and Persia (Twitchett, 1983). In fact, paper money was officially launched as a medium of exchange in trading during the reign of Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty. Beyond Asia, the printing technology was introduced to Europe during the Mongol invasion of Europe when the Mongols arrived in Poland, Hungary, and German (Wood, 2003). The German Johannes Gutenberg was the first European involved in printing. His use of the metal block printing to improve the quality of reading material circa 1445–1450 led to the printing revolution in the continent (Carter, 1955). Interestingly, his printing technology was brought to Nagasaki, Japan, by a group of Tensho-Kenou Boys Mission from Collegio (a missionary training college) who went to Rome in 1582 and returned to Nagasaki eight years later in 1590. A printing factory was established there mainly to publish teaching books printed in Roman characters for Collegio (Kinoshita, 1998).

The consequence of technology transfer into Europe had a significant effect on the development during the Renaissance and Reformation eras in the 16th century. Printing technology increased reading habits among the commonage and triggered intellectual curiosity, which then contributed to revitalizing particular travel activities, such as art and cultural travels (Carter, 1955).

Later in the 17th and 18th centuries, art and cultural travels expanded into the Grand Tour, namely, the Classical Grand Tour (1661–1700) and Romantic Grand Tour (1814–1820) (Towner, 1985).

Conclusion

China played a central role in the discovery of the Silk Road, which took place during the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 22). The discovery of the Silk Route was a momentous period in enabling the East to ‘meet’ the other Eastern countries and the West. This paper reveals some travelling developments during the Chinese dynastic periods and the effects of such development on other countries, especially Japan and Korea. The paper highlights the influence of historical travels on the regional cultural communication along and through the Silk Road. Despite the rather harsh conditions in the past, travellers were keen to make journeys for pilgrimages, trade, migration, and even war. Compare to the modern tourism, the nature of travelling activities have evolved due to the factors such as technological innovation and changing of market’s demand. Although purpose of travelling may have changed, the meaning remains similar in this modern days. For example, pilgrimage tourism remain popular in Mecca and Jerusalem; while trading has transformed to become MICE sector. On the other hand, Silk Route as a trading corridor in the past and have evolved to be become a historical tourism destination, provide as a platform for modern tourists to gaze on the past history. The UNWTO, for example, has conducted a series of research projects on tourism development along the Silk Route (UNWTO, 2012).

Travelling along the Silk Route did not only involve the inter-region movement of people, but also the transportation of tangible and intangible components, such as merchandise, technology, culture, religion, and literature. During Silk Route eras, travelling was a sinicization process, which through travel, the various components were first introduced and adapted in Japan and Korea. Gradually, these components penetrated into society through daily consumption and eventually became integrated in the cultural practice. In particular, this paper discusses food, papermaking and printing technology, both of which significantly contributed to cultural and intellectual development. For example, over the times, tea-drinking and soybeans consumption have been incorporated into the daily life among the folks and become part of the lifestyle in these three countries with distinctive variations, namely Chinese Oolong tea and *jiang*; Japanese Green tea and *miso*; and Korean Ginseng tea and *Koch’ujung*.

This paper describes, for example, how religious Buddhist monks became messengers to pass on knowledge while travelling back and forth between China, Japan and Korea; and indirectly became the medium of introducing foreign food to/from their homeland upon their pilgrimage travelling. Paper and printing were also probably disseminated because of Buddhism’s heavy influence at the time. Despite the lack of emphasis in the research, paper and printing are believed to have most likely triggered the development of Buddhism in these countries (Chen & Chen, 2008). Importantly, without the Silk Route as a corridor to transfer culture and technology, these three countries would not be able to share the similar yet distinctive cultural background as in nowadays. While time pass, the integration of foreign and local culture has provided a unique identity on each country for the modern tourists to experience and gaze on.

In this paper, two research limitations are identified in terms of the temporal factor and the geographical coverage. The historical data analysed in this paper only selectively belonged to a certain period, running from the Han Dynasty, the Tang Dynasty, until a minor part during the Yuan Dynasty. The main geographical coverage of the travel activities was limited among China, Japan, and Korea. Furthermore, the focus was on selected components, including food, paper, and printing technology.

This paper has a possible limitation in comprehensively describing the historical travels in this region. Nonetheless, it provides a chapter specifically looking at the contribution of physical movement as the catalyst that predominantly promoted the communication of both intangible and tangible components in the region through the pilgrimages of the oriental religion and trade activities. As such, Buddhism, art, and culture could be topics for further investigation, especially with regard to the roles of the Silk Road in cultural exchange and trading. A particular and significant interest would

be on how tourism has eventually evolved in light of the changes in the political regime as observed in the region. The historical timeframe of study is suggested to include the development in later dynasties, especially the Ming Dynasty, which witnessed successful sea expeditions. This paper further discloses the influence of the Chinese, who invented printing technology, which contributed to the travel motivations in the West. As such, further study could be conducted on how the movement of the Yuan Dynasty to the far West influenced the tourism development of the region. Lastly, the scope for Asia's travel history is inexhaustible and requires further investigation to complete the puzzle in the historical timeline of Asia.

Acknowledgment: This work was supported by the Institute of Research Management and Monitoring from University of Malaya under Grant PS171/2009C and PS416/2010B.

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ⁱ Xiongnu were the nomadic people from the North of China who believed they were Turkish people, similar to the Huns who invaded Europe in the 4th century (Fitzgerald, 1954). However, Ebrey (1993) states that Xiongnu was descended from the ruler of the Xia Dynasty (2070 BC–1600 BC). According to both scholars, Xiongnu practiced an entirely different culture with the Chinese.

ⁱⁱ Koguryo (37 BC–AD 668) was one of the kingdoms in the northernmost part of peninsular Korea during the Three Kingdoms periods (between 57 BC and AD 935). The other two kingdoms were Silla (57 BC–AD 935) and Paekche (18 BC–AD 660) (Choe & Malarcher, 2011).

ⁱⁱⁱ The popular noodles in Japan are called *lamen* (拉面) and *jajiang mian* (炸酱面) in Korea (Kim, 2009).

^{iv} Joseon Dynasty (1392–1897) also known as Kingdom of Joseon. It was founded by King Taejo in 1392 after the fall of the Goryeo Dynasty. Joseon was the last dynasty of Korea and was declared as a Korean Empire in 1897. During the dynasty, it was invaded by Japanese and Manchus in 1592 and 1636 respectively. During the Japanese invasion, numerous scholars, experts, engineers, and potters were captured and brought to Japan; the potters in particular were tasked to teach the Japanese about ceramic skills (Choe & Malacher, 2011).