

## Spread of Chinese Food Culture along the Southern Silk Road in the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties

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## **Spread of Chinese Food Culture along the Southern Silk Road in the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties**

先秦汉晋时期南方丝绸之路上的中国饮食文化传播研究

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties (2100 BC-420 AD), the Southern Silk Road of China included the Sichuan-Yunnan-Myanmar-India line and the Sichuan-Yunnan-Vietnam line. During this period, Chinese food culture spread constantly along the Southern Silk Road, promoting people's diet and living standards and social and economic development in different regions. With respect to food utensils, use of bronzeware, ironware, and pottery was disseminated. Spread of dietary ingredients mainly involved spread of rice and its production technology. Food types spread included betel pepper sauce, Zongzi, and other glutinous rice foods. Merchants from different countries and regions played an important role in spreading Chinese food culture during this period.

### **摘要**

先秦汉晋时期(公元前2100年-公元420年),中国的南方丝绸之路包括蜀滇缅印线、蜀滇越线等。在这一时期,沿着南方丝绸之路,中国饮食文化不断对外传播,促进了不同地区人民的饮食生活水平和社会经济发展。在饮食器具方面,有青铜器、铁器、陶器的对外传播;在饮食原料方面,主要有稻米及其种植技术的对外传播;在饮食成品方面,主要有蒟酱、粽子及其他糯米食品的传播等等。不同国家或地区的商人在这一时期中国饮食文化的对外传播中发挥了重要作用。

### **INTRODUCTION**

Study of the history of human civilization and culture reveals that human cultural progress was realized in part through communication between different cultures. China's Silk Road, which included the Northwest Silk Road, Southern Silk Road, Maritime Silk Road, Grasslands, and others, was an important channel of

communication and transmission between Chinese culture and the rest of the world. An important aspect of Chinese culture is the food culture, which refers to the sum of material and spiritual wealth created and accumulated during the long-term production and consumption of food and drinks by the Chinese nation (Du et al. 2007: 13).

In the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties (2100 BC–420 AD), Chinese food culture spread to different countries and regions along the Southern Silk Road, beginning in southwest China. Of course, the communication and dissemination of civilization and food culture is a two-way process; however, the present chapter summarizes the outward communication of Chinese food culture during this period. The influence of other countries or regions on Chinese food culture is left for future discussion.

## **SOUTHERN SILK ROAD CONCEPT AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **1. Concept of the Southern Silk Road**

Research on the routes and various exchanges between southwest China and southeast and south Asia began in the academic community as early as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, pioneered by Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), the famous French sinologist and scholar. He wrote and published the *Investigation of Roads and Seaways between Jiaoguang and India* (Zhonghua Book Company, 1955), conducting particularly deep research on the road between southwest China and southeast and south Asia. In the 1940s, Chinese scholar XIA Guangnan wrote *The History of Sino-Indian Burmese Traffic* (Zhonghua Book Company, 1940), and later the Chinese scholars ZHANG Xinglang, FENG Chengjun, JI Xianlin, and FANG Guoyu also discussed this road. Since the 1980s, Chinese scholars have further studied the road. CHEN Yan, a Chinese scholar, was the first to use the name ‘Southwest Silk Road’ in his paper ‘The Position of Myanmar in the Southwest Silk Road in the Han and Tang Dynasties’ (*Oriental Studies* 1, 1980). Later, most scholars used the name ‘Southern Silk Road’.

The traditional view holds that the Southern Silk Road begins in Chengdu and splits in Yunnan: one fork travels west of Yunnan to north Myanmar and northeast India; the other travels south of Yunnan to Vietnam and Indochina. During the Tang and Song Dynasties (618–1279 AD), the renowned Ancient Tea Horse Road was established, spanning from Sichuan and Yunnan to Tibet, Nepal, and India (Qu 2011: 172–179). SHEN Xu, a scholar from Yunnan, proposed that all roads to foreign countries in southwest China between the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and 1949 should be embraced in the spatial range of the Southwest Silk Road (Shen 1994: 9–28). In comprehensive consideration, this chapter adopts the concept of the Southern Silk Road as a general term for all ancient roads of business from southwest China to foreign countries, mainly covering roads beginning in Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guangxi.

## 2. The Southern Silk Road during the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties

The Southern Silk Road formed and developed during the Pre-Qin Period and the Han and Jin dynasties of ancient China (2100 BC–420 AD). At that time, the main lines of the Southern Silk Road were divided into the Sichuan-Yunnan-Myanmar-India line, Sichuan-Yunnan-Vietnam line, and others. The road started in the Chengdu Plain and extended south to connect to present-day Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar in southeast Asia and the Indian countries of south Asia.

### Sichuan-Yunnan-Myanmar-India line

The Sichuan-Yunnan-Myanmar-India line came into being as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and was officially discovered 200 years later. The road gradually attracted more and more attention and began to play a role in trade communication.

According to *Records of the Grand Historian* (also called *Shi Ji*, written around 94 BC), ‘[In 122 BC of the Han Dynasty], Bowang Duke ZHANG Qian came from the Empire of Daxia. He said that in the Empire of Daxia, he saw piece goods made in Sichuan and bamboo cane made in Qiong, so he asked where the two things came from. Someone told him that they came from southeast Sindhu, which is thousands of miles away, and that these goods are popular among Sichuan traders. It is known that the Sichuan-Indo Road is about two thousand miles away from the west of Qiong. ZHANG Qian said that because of the danger of the Huns near the Empire of Daxia, which was located in the southwest region of the Han empire, it was beneficial to connect with Sichuan, which then offered easy access to the Sichuan-Indo Road. So the Han Emperor appointed WANG Ranyu, BO Shichang, and LV Yueren to go to the west to reach Sindhu’ (Sima 1999: 2284).

This is the start of China’s discovery of the route from the southwest to India. The Empire of Daxia was located in modern-day Afghanistan; Sindhu translates to India. China was the first silk-producing country in the world. Shu, the birthplace of silkworm rearing, is located in the southwest region of Sichuan, and Qiong bamboo cane is produced in Sichuan as well. Chinese documents report trade relations between southwest China, southeast Asia, and the western countries as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The road was extensive, stretching from Sichuan in China to modern-day India, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and other countries.

The Sichuan-Yunnan-Myanmar-India line began in Chengdu, providing access to the present Yunnan, Guizhou, and other regions by way of the Lingguan Road, Wuchi Road, and Nanyi Zangke Road. The Lingguan Road was an important traffic route between Sichuan and Yunnan. Research by experts has identified the path of the main route through Linqiong County (Qionglai), Ruodong (present Changping in Mingshan County), Maoni County (present Hanyuan County), and Lingguan (Shengou) to Qiongdu (Xichang), and from Huiwu County (Huili) to Jingling (Dayao in Yongren) and Yeyu County (Dali). The Wuchi Road

accommodated traffic, mostly on foot, from northeast Sichuan to Yunnan. This road travelled from Bodao (Yibin City) to Shushi (Zhaotong), then to Qujing and the Dianchi area. The Nanyi Zangke Road passed from the northeast Shu State to modern-day Yunnan and Guizhou, allowing access to the Maritime Silk Road. Its main route was from Nanguang City (Mutan in Gongxian) to present Weixin, then north to Zhengxiong and Hanyang County (present Hezhang County). From there, it travelled to Yizhou County in the southwest, Zangke River in the south (upstream of the Beipan River), Yelang National Centre (Anshun area), and Panyu (Guangzhou), then to the South China Sea along the Zangke River. The Wuchi Road merged with the Lingguan Road in Yeyu (Dali), allowing for further travel along the Yunnan-Myanmar-India Road to Myanmar, India, and other places. The Yunnan-Myanmar-India Road began in Yeyu (Dali) and travelled to Lanjin (present ferry of Lancang River), through Bolan (Yongping), to Tengyue through Buwei and Xitang, and from the present Kachin State of Myanmar to Assam in India. This route is also known as the, Bolan Road, as it passed over Bolan Mountain (Lan 1992: 12–30).

### **Sichuan-Yunnan-Vietnam line**

The Sichuan-Yunnan-Vietnam line passed from Sichuan to Vietnam through Yunnan. Contact with Vietnam marked southwest China's earliest external relation. Ancient Chinese books such as *Big Shang*, *Mo-tse*, and *Huainan Zi* contained many legends of Shennong, Zhu anxu, Yao, Shun, and Yu, who all once moved south to Jiaozhou.

As recorded in *Shui Jing Zhu*, written around 527 AD by LI Daoyuan, 'when there are no counties in Jiao State, there is land reclaimed by the tide of the sea, the tide goes up and down from the field, the people till the land, that is why the people are called Luo people. The Luo King and Luo Duke were set to rule the main counties. There are mainly Luo generals in the county, and they were given the sealed green ribbon. Later, the Shu Prince sent thirty thousand soldiers to crusade against the Luo King, Luo Duke, and other generals. The Shu Prince was then called the King of Anyang' (Li 1995: 537).

This and other historical texts indicate the presence of a road from Sichuan to Vietnam in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the so-called 'Shu-Yue' (Sichuan-Vietnam) traffic line, as it is known by historians. Reference to various documents shows that the road began in Kunming, Yunnan and travelled south to Mengzi Manhao (Xisui) and Gejiu to Hemen (Jinsang Guan) along the Red River (Yeyu River), then to Fushou district in Yongfu Province, Vietnam, travelling by land and river. The road corresponds in general with the Annan-Tianzhu Road in in Tang Dynasty, which records describe in greater detail.

Prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, independent countries had not yet appeared in the area of modern-day Vietnam, with Vietnam itself under Chinese feudal dynasty rule. Because of its important position in external exchange, China's feudal government attached great importance to the area's development. The mainland's

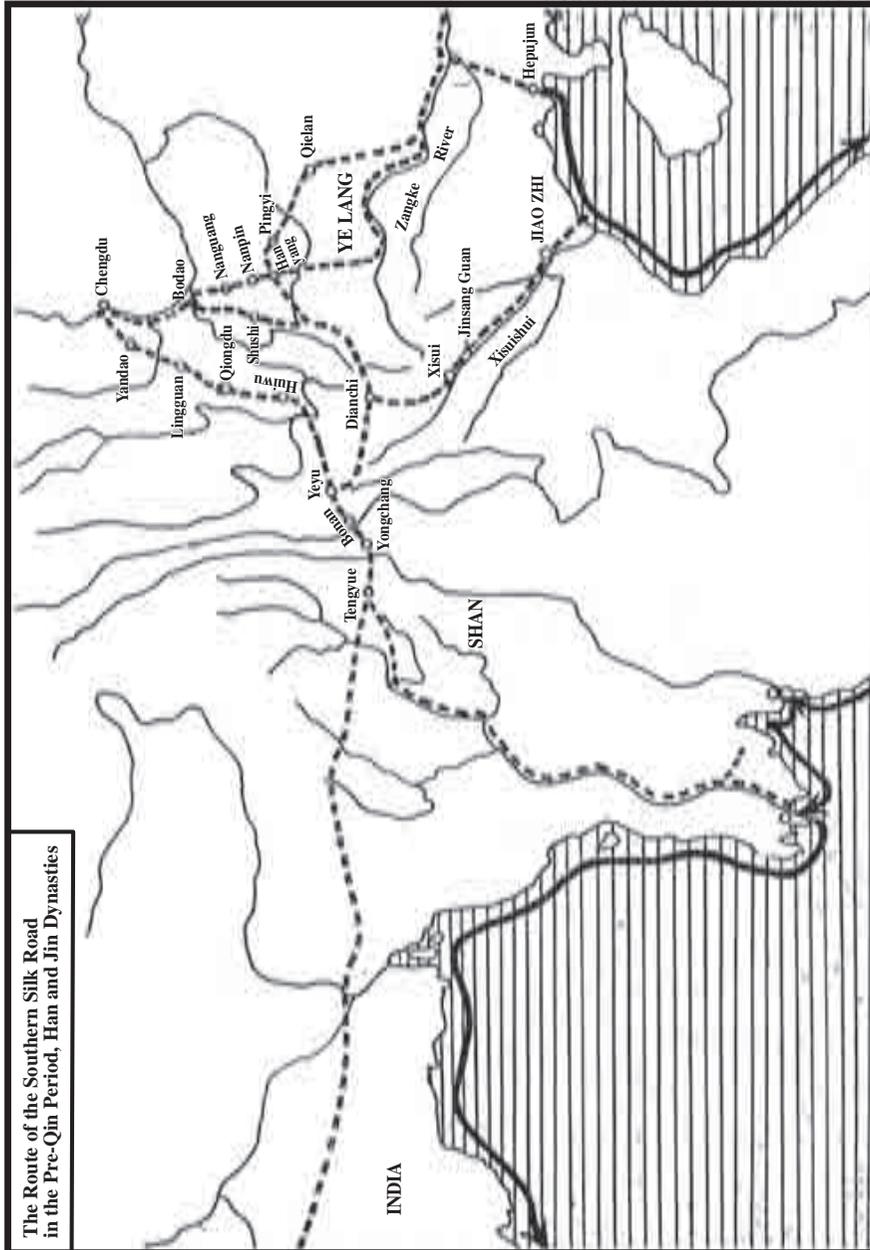


Figure 1 Route of the Southern Silk Road in the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties  
(Source: *Southern Silk Road*, LAN Yong, 1992, p. 1. Chongqing: Chongqing University Press)

production technology, advanced production tools, and food culture were thus continuously disseminated to northern Vietnam. Figure 1 shows more detail on the routes of the Southern Silk Road in the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties.

### **3. Spread of Chinese Food Culture**

During Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties (2100 BC–420 AD), three main aspects of Chinese food culture were spread: food utensils, dietary ingredients, and food types.

#### **Food utensils**

During this time period, bronze, iron, and pottery were the most typical types of food utensils spread.

#### **Bronze utensils**

Although Sichuan and Yunnan did not enter the Bronze Age at the same time, both did so earlier than other southeast Asian countries. As people in the ancient Shu State migrated to Yunnan and other countries further southeast, such as Vietnam, and as trade occurred along the Southern Silk Road, Chinese bronzeware, including food-related bronze pieces and their production techniques, were spread to the southeast.

Bronzeware from south China was introduced to north Vietnam along the Southern Silk Road through trade. Western scholars have conducted considerable research on the origins and formation of Vietnamese bronze culture; many believe it to have a very close relationship with Yunnan bronze culture, as did Vietnamese scholars, initially. Yunnan and Sichuan bronze culture directly influenced Dongshan culture in Vietnam (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC–1<sup>st</sup> century AD). As a result, a large number of Chinese food-related bronze pieces were imported into north Vietnam, which belonged to China at the time, by Chinese immigrants or skilled craftsmen. Their purpose was to develop the area through commercial trade and sharing of technology, so as to achieve greater commercial profit. Food-related bronzewares have been unearthed in original Dongshan cultural relics in Vietnam, such as flat pots and jars. French scholars concluded that ‘these items must have been imported from China, the great neighbour in the north and northeast, and they obviously are Chinese products’ (Karlgrén 1979: 24). Some scholars believed the bronze jars were used for thrashing rice (Geluobo 1985: 242).

In addition to trade, immigration was an important method for transmission of bronzewares, including food-related bronzewares and their production techniques, to Vietnam. The ancient king of the Shu State fled to north Vietnam, created the Luo State, and settled there long-term, spreading the Shu civilization and bringing with it the advanced bronze culture. Shu weapons, pottery, and jade articles unearthed at the Dongshan Cultural Site excavated in the Red River Delta, Vietnam, also show the influence of Shu civilization. In summary, the combined effects of immigration and trade gradually introduced Chinese bronzewares,

including bronze utensils for eating and their production techniques, to Vietnam.

In addition to Vietnam, Myanmar's production of copper and bronze food utensils was also affected by techniques from south China. In 1938, bronzewares found in the Zen State of Myanmar were identified as belonging to the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. Morris, the famous archaeologist, believed that the casting technology had been introduced from China (Wang 1993: 33–38).

### **Iron utensils**

In the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC) of China, iron was already in use; steel was in use during the Warring States Period (476–221 BC), and the iron smelting technology of the Han and Chu States was particularly good. The emergence of ironwares was an important milestone in development of productivity, and the Southern Silk Road played an important role in the history of metallurgical production and marketing.

Many places in southwest China were important sites of iron production starting in ancient times. In the Han and Jin Dynasties (206 BC–420 AD), such places included Buwei in the county of Yongchang, Dingzuo, Taideng, Beishui, Nan'an, Linqiong, Huiwu, the Dianchi, Dangqu, Guangdu, and Wuyang. In the period of the Han and Jin Dynasties, The Sichuan district developed early, with well-developed productivity and a relatively well developed iron smelting industry. At that time, Linqiong was one of the most famous iron smelting centres in southwest China. The famous merchant ZHUO Wangsun exploited iron near Linqiong Mountain, eventually acquiring fabulous wealth and thousands of servants. Another famous merchant, CHENG Zheng, conducted smelting and casting work and acquired hundreds of servants. These examples illustrate the large scale of trade in ironwares on the Southern Silk Road.

Southwest China was important area in general for iron production in the Han and Jin Dynasties. In the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD), the metallurgical industry in Yunnan developed greatly, resulting in a gradual boom in iron utensils, including iron pieces for food and tools for agriculture.

Many iron pieces have been excavated from the tombs and relics of the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) in southwest China, including weapons, tools for production, and instruments of daily life. Along the Southern Silk Road, such iron pieces, especially those for food, production, and daily life, such as knives, ploughs, and so on, were spread widely, with great beneficial effect on local living standards. DAI Yixuan concluded, based on reference to domestic and overseas historical documents and archaeological excavations, that the iron pieces produced in southwest China were sold in India, central Asia, and as far away as Rome by way of the Yunnan-India commercial road (Dai 1979: 44–50).

Famous Chinese scholar JI Xianlin, who was proficient in Sanskrit, believed that China's steelmaking technology was greatly improved in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC–23 AD), when many grew rich from iron smelting. Further, Chinese steel smelting technology may have spread abroad, not just within China.

The ancient western text *Natural History* (*Naturalis Historia*) by C. Plinius Secundus (23–79 AD), also known as Pliny the Elder, spoke of ‘China’s iron’ (*Serico ferro*). Some suspect that this may refer to steel. Either way, Chinese steel was introduced to Rome in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. This is consistent with *Records of the Grand Historian*. China’s iron and steel could be transferred through the city of Farghana (in modern-day Uzbekistan) to Rome, which is also in the interests of India. Ji Xianlin also solved the problem in language studies. There are many words in Sanskrit for ‘iron’. One of these, *cīnaja*, means ‘made in China’; the word has multiple meanings, one of which is ‘steel’. This shows that although ancient India had a steel production industry that exported steel abroad and enjoyed fame in ancient times, the ‘made in China’ steel entered India one area at a time (Ji 2008: 16).

The steel and technology imported into India from China not only met the needs of construction and agricultural production; it could also be used for household utensils, including eating and living utensils. According to the literature and archaeological findings, transfer and trade of iron along the Southern Silk Road occupied an important position during this historical period.

### Pottery

Archaeological information shows that various exchanges between Sichuan and Vietnam began in the Shang Dynasty (about 1600–1066 BC) and Zhou Dynasty (about 1066–221 BC) at the latest, and that the ancient Shu culture spread to north Vietnam. Pottery dou with high stems and pottery pot unearthed from Vietnamese Phung Nguyen culture archaeological sites, and pottery covers and pottery dou unearthed from the Dongshan Culture Site, are similar to or very similar to pottery dou with high stems and pottery covers unearthed from the Sichuan Sanxingdui Site, pottery pots unearthed from the Shifang Warring States site, and pottery dou with high stems unearthed from the YingJing Nanluoba Warring States site. Moreover, most of the items that reflect such similarity or consistency are not the items with particularly simple shapes, indicating the occurrence of cultural exchange between these two places during the Bronze and Iron Age (Lei 2006: 17–23).

Spread and exchange of culture are characterized by repetition and multiple contacts, and the exchange of pottery skills was more obvious during the Pre-Qin Period and Han and Jin Dynasties. Some scholars suggest that many ceramic crafts in Vietnam were directly transplanted from China, and that Vietnamese kiln workers learned the rotate ceramics with Chinese technicians in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the Chinese pottery glazing process was introduced to the south (Tang 1993: 95–99). In 200 BC, Chinese HUANG Guangxing immigrated to Touxi Township, Haiyang Province. From him, villagers learned the techniques and methods of making pottery moulds, cylinders, and skeletons with him. Since then, Touxi Township in Haiyang gradually became centre of Vietnamese ceramics, and Huang has been honoured by the Vietnamese as the

‘founder of pottery’ (Pan 1960: 43). More Chinese pottery was introduced to Vietnam during the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), and Chinese pottery antiques are collected by the Saigon Museum. LI Zhengfu said in his work *Annan of the County Era*, ‘The structures and unearthed antiquities of the ancient tomb in Annan, such as pots, tripods, plates, cases, bowls, earthen bowls, cups, and steamers and so on, are works in pure Chinese style’ (Li 1945: 171).

#### 4. Dietary Ingredients

Due to war, the ancient Shu people and their descendants migrated south along the Southern Silk Road to southeast Asia, bringing with them food materials such as rice and rice production technology. Their immigration had a profound impact on the local food culture, especially the cultivation and consumption of certain dietary ingredients.

In the autumn of 316 BC, the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of the Huiwen King of the Qin State, Qin Officers ZHANG Yi and SIMA Cuo crusaded against the Shu State, ending the Kaiming Dynasty. The Shu people, including some royal families, migrated to north Jiaozhi (present-day Vietnam). Experts believe that Pan, prince of the Shu State by marriage, led the people south along the Zangke River, conquering the Xiong State (King of Luo) to found the Anyang State (Xu 1982: 150–165). The southern migration of the Anyang King is recorded in the historical text *Classic of Water – Yeyu Water Went East into Sangguan*. Records of Anyang’s emperors migrating south are found in *The Records of Jiaozhou Outland* and other historical records, cited in ‘The Annotation on Yeyushui’ from *Shui Jing Zhu*. Today, the Vietnamese have built temples for the Anyang King, and regard Ouluo State as the first state in Vietnam’s history. In the ancient history of Vietnam, Pan of Shu State was known as the ‘Shu Dynasty’, and enjoyed high prestige among the Vietnamese people (Tao 1976: 218–222).

The southward movement of the Shu people, represented by the King of Anyang, demonstrates a typical spread of Chinese food culture to the south, which had a direct and profound impact on Vietnamese food culture. QU Xiaoling believed that because Pan led the Shu migration to Vietnam, crusaded against the Xiong State, and founded the Anyang State, it is possible that rice cultivation techniques were introduced to Vietnam by the the Kaiming Dynasty of ancient Shu State in Chengdu Plain (Qu 2016: 99). Since the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC–23 AD), the ancient Luoyue State has been influenced by Chinese Han culture, promoting the cultivation of rice. Because the Emperor of the Han Dynasty established the three counties of Jiaozhi, Jiuzhen, and Rinan in the territory, Han culture was officially spread in the Luoyue State, with particular influence on the cultivation of food crops; Han officials who served as county guards played an important role in this process. Chapter 36 of *Shui Jing Zhu* recorded that Vietnamese rice had begun to mature early and late, both white rice and red rice, since the popularization of rice cultivation by the prefecture chief of Jiuzhen:

REN Yan began to teach people ploughing, which became a custom in Jiaozhou and spread to Xianglin. For more than 600 years, the method of slash-and-burn cultivation has been the same as that of China, since the people knew how to cultivate the land. Known as the white field, they all plant white rice, sowing in July and maturing in October. Known as red field, all kinds of red rice are cultivated in December and mature in April the next year, which is called double cropping rice (Li 1995: 532).

REN Yan (?–68 AD), the prefecture chief of Jiuzhen County in the Han Dynasty, promoted the cultivation of rice in Jiuzhen, Vietnam, thus promoting the planting of rice as a custom. Subsequently, most Vietnamese dynasties in history imitated the Chinese tradition of prioritizing agriculture, paying greater attention to the crops, building altars of land and grain, and holding annual farming ceremonies. In addition, the waterwheel (also known as the ‘rollover’), invented in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, was an important agricultural tool farmers commonly used to divert water into the fields in southern China. This was introduced to Vietnam to benefit Vietnam’s agricultural production, further promoting economic, population, and cultural growth in the region (Wang 1998: 213).

## 5. Food Types

### Betel pepper sauce

According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, Nanyue locals treated TANG Meng (an official of the Western Han Dynasty) to their unique betel pepper sauce, and he was impressed. When he returned to Chang’an, he found a merchant from Sichuan asking about the betel pepper sauce, and confirmed it was a unique product sold secretly by merchants to foreign countries (Sima 1999: 2283). Panyu in Guangdong could have acquired betel pepper sauce through trade; the Vietnamese could have acquired it in the same way along the Southern Silk Road.

What was betel pepper sauce? Various descriptions exist, but it was something like a dressing for food, such as jam, konjac, fruit wine, and others. Most scholars identify the betel pepper (*Piper betle* Linn.) as a member of the *Piperaceae* family. Originating in Indonesia, the plant is an evergreen vine, blooming in late spring or early summer. It produces a column-shaped berry 5–15 cm in length and ripening to greenish yellow or dark red in colour by late summer or early autumn. The leaves of the vine are large, thick, and oval in shape with a unique scent and a slightly salty, spicy taste (Guo 2007: 8–17). However, the recipe for betel pepper sauce was lost long ago in mainland China, and today is likely unavailable even in Vietnam or other places.

Interestingly, in southeast Asia, people chew betel nuts with a slice of lime wrapped in betel leaves. This is known as the ‘betel pepper’, named after the betel pepper box, which is black in colour and with red, lacquer paint-filled lines. Painters in southeast Asia call this technique ‘betel pepper’. The spread of this

kind of ‘pepper sauce’ is also a question worth discussing. The pepper sauce box is both a food type and a food utensil, and as such its production and transmission deserve further study.

### **Zongzi and other glutinous rice foods**

During the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC) and Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), some Baiyue people migrated southwest to regions such as present-day Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos via the Southern Silk Road. In the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD), Han soldiers moved south to Jiaozhi (present-day Vietnam). Through the influence of these new immigrants, glutinous rice foods were introduced to Vietnam and other areas.

‘Yue’ was originally a country name, and the people of this country belonged to the family of ‘Min’ (their totem is snake, one of the dragon’s predecessors), though it later gained popularity as a family name. The name ‘Baiyue’ reappeared after the Warring States period (475–221 BC), mainly referring to the ancient Yue tribe in the ancient south coastal and Lingnan areas. Because there were so many ancient Yue tribes, and the Central Plains people did not understand them well, they were collectively called ‘Baiyue’. The Baiyue had many branches, including the Wuyue, Yangyue, Dong’ou, Minyue, Nanyue, Xi’ou, and Luoyue, an ethnic origin of the Han nationality. Following the Qin (221–206 BC) and Han Dynasties (206 BC–220 AD), Baiyue people migrated to Guizhou, Guangxi, and Yunnan in the southwest, and even to southeast Asia, via the Southern Silk Road. Mr. Xiuling You proposed a circle of a glutinous rice food culture in the world. The lower reaches of the Yangtze River is the origin of the rice cultivation in Asia. Four or five thousand years ago, rice was gradually introduced to the Yellow River basin in the north; though glutinous rice was cultivated less than indica or japonica rice at the time, the Wuyue people always consumed it as a staple food. When Baiyue people migrated to Guizhou, Guangxi, and Yunnan in the southwest, and to Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and other places in the south after the Qin and Han dynasties, they retained their habit of eating glutinous rice as a staple food (You and Zeng 2010: 417). Additionally, some expert analysis has shown that Han soldiers marching south to Jiaozhi (present-day Vietnam) during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 AD) brought ‘Zongzi’ (glutinous rice dumplings) that were eaten on the Dragon Boat Festival (5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the Chinese lunar calendar) and thus introduced them to Indochina. For these reasons, people of Myanmar and other parts of southeast Asia developed the custom of eating rice dumplings, and the ‘glutinous rice balls’ common in Myanmar are nearly identical to Chinese rice dumplings in shape and production methods (Xu 2012: 58–60).

Chinese rice dumplings were thus introduced to the Myanmar region during the Han Dynasty, and the people actively learned the method and innovated to produce the special Burmese glutinous rice balls. Therefore, production and consumption of glutinous rice foods such as rice dumplings in southeast Asia, including Myanmar, are a result of migration along the Southern Silk Road during

the Qin and Han dynasties.

## DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

It is not difficult to identify the important role of communicators in the study of international communication of Chinese food culture during the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties (2100 BC–420 AD). During this period, both immigrants and merchants were important communicators of China's food culture. This chapter has primarily discussed the important role of merchants in international communication of Chinese food culture.

Physiocracy and restriction of business was a long-standing policy of feudal China. Therefore, if the social status of ancient Chinese business was relatively low, the business would encounter difficulties and limitations in the central part of the country, and that spurred some merchants to immigrate and settle in remoter regions of the southwest.

According to 'Biographies of Southwest Yi' in *Records of the Grand Historian*, the road during the Qin Empire was about five feet wide. Officials were appointed to rule the counties, and when the Han Dynasty started, Sichuan people snuck out to trade, regarding zuo horses, Botong (slaves of the Bo nationality) chants went into business in Yunnan to promote economic and cultural exchanges between Sichuan and Yunnan. Records of the Grand Historian also indicated that the Sichuan area had fertile land and rich products:

In the south, Sichuan people rule Yunnan servants and servants from Bo county, and they own horses and yaks in the west. However, thousands of miles of roads reach everywhere... The ancestors of the Zhuo family in Shu came from Zhao State and were rich from iron smelting. After the Qin Empire came to rule Zhao State, judging the situation, the Zhuo family moved to another place. Only the wife and husband of the Zhuo family pushed their carts to another place. At the same time, displaced people with a little extra money scrambled to send to the officials and beg for migration to the neighbouring area, Jiameng County. Only Zhuo said: "Jiameng is narrow and the land is barren. I heard that there are fertile fields down the Wen Mountain, there are big taro in the field, so people will not starve to death. People there are good at trading." So Zhuo moved to the distant place and ended up in Linqiong. He was very happy, and busy with molten iron and iron casting machinery. Due to his careful planning and calculation, he became rich enough to own more than one thousand slaves. He enjoys the pleasure of shooting and playing in the idyllic pool, comparable to the monarch. Cheng Zheng was a migrant from east of Taihang Mountain, who also ran the metallurgical industry, and he often sold iron wares to the minorities in the southwest region. His wealth was equal to that of Zhuo, and he also lived in Linqiong (Sima 1999: 2478).

Sichuan merchants' footprints are all over Yunnan, and many Han Dynasty

ironwares have been unearthed there. The promotion and use of ironware greatly supported development of Yunnan social economy at that time.

Additionally, during this period, the Sichuan-Yunnan-Myanmar-India line of the Southwest Silk Road gradually opened, allowing Sichuan merchants to sell Chinese iron and other products along the route to south Asia, southeast Asia, and other places. Yongchang (now Baoshan) in western Yunnan grew to become the centre and hub of trade and cultural communication.

According to *The Records of Huayang Kingdom* (348–354 AD), many Minpu, Jiuliao, Piao, Yue, and Sindhu people were present in the county of Yongchang. Examination of the products and goods within the territory of Yongchang reveals gold, light beads, amber, jade, peacock, rhinoceros, elephant, crystal, glass, beads, Ke worm, and other products (Chang 1984: 430). ‘Piao’ is in Myanmar, and Sindhu refers to India, meaning that Yongchang communicated frequently with Myanmar, India, and other places at that time. Further evidence is that some of these items were not produced in Yongchang County. Light beads (jade), amber, clam beads (pearl), and jade were produced in Myanmar, whereas Ke worm (seashells) and glass were produced in India. Burmese and Sindhu merchants lived in Yongchang and traded a large volumes of these foreign goods, sending a message to the people.

Prior to the Han Dynasty, a commercial road ran from Yongchang in Yunnan to Myanmar, India, and other places. Commercial exchange occurred between these regions. The merchants of various countries and regions conducted reciprocal bilateral or multilateral trade. Indian and Burmese merchants brought rare foreign products that could withstand the long-distance transport and be sold for high value in China for sale. Chinese goods traded included iron, gold, silverware, and various types of food belonging to the food culture.

The Southern Silk Road was one of the most important roads for foreign trade and spread of Chinese food culture. It was established in the Pre-Qin period and developed during the Han and Jin dynasties into a key route for immigration, trade, and business, by way of which food utensils, dietary ingredients, and types of food spread to regions in southeast Asia such as modern-day Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. The spread of Chinese food culture accelerated the economic development and enhanced the living standard of local people in these areas. This paper attempts research only of Chinese food culture’s spread along the Southern Silk Road in the Pre-Qin Period, Han, and Jin Dynasties; future study will focus on the communicators, communication channels, communication content, communication network, and so on.

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