

# Comparative Study on Story-telling between Local Specialties and Historical Person in Asia and West

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**Abstract:** Local specialties are items of special quality that come from certain places. For local specialties to develop into luxury goods, storytelling based on historicity and popularity is needed. For this purpose, a long period was emphasized to increase historically. And to increase popularity, storytelling, which was used by famous people like King, was used. To discuss these cases, I analyzed local specialties in Korea, China, and France. One of the most important ingredients in Korean food, Red chilli pepper paste was famous for being made in the Sunchang area. However, it was not historically long, it was storytelling of the relationship with Lee Seong-gye, a character from more than 400 years ago. XiHu Longjing Tea, the representative tea of China, was made of high quality, which had been rated intermediate, with the storytelling with Emperor Qianlong. France's Brie Cheese, a land of cheese, has brought Louis XIV to overcome the 2,000-year history of Roquefort and the 80 percent popularity of Comté.

**Keywords:** Sunchang red chilli pepper paste; XiHu Longjing Tea(西湖龍井茶); Brie cheese

## 1. Introduction

Local specialties are items of special quality that come from certain places. They have gained their popularity among locally produced goods. Combination with historicity and popularity, some of these local specialties for example whisky from Scotland and wine from Bordeaux France became world-famous.

However, for local specialties to develop into luxury goods, reputation was essential. To this end, it was effective to do story-telling with a historical person with popularity. The most common cases were story-telling with the famous king. This is the Halo Effect by a historical person.

## 2. Materials and Methods

A historian Keith Jenkins mentioned in his book 'Rethinking History' that "People need the past to give meaning to their existence and to justify their present and future"[1]. Borrowing Jenkin's statement to apply to local specialties, I can argue that famous persons in history and some iconic figures are affiliated with local specialties. In many cases, relationships with the late Kings and emperors to the local specialties were brought in the stories to give legitimacy. Also, some parts of history or tradition were modified or even created to back it up. Eric Hobsbawm introduces 'The Invention of Tradition' in his book that "Characteristics of the invention of tradition emphasizes the relation of its continuity from the history"[2]. However local specialties show different traits that emphasize more on popularity - who the famous person used the product than history - how long or since when the product was widely used.

I would like to review three cases - SunChang red chilli pepper paste with Lee SeongGye, XiHu Longjing Tea(西湖龍井茶) with Emperor Qianlong, and Brie cheese with Louis XIV on how historic figures were used in story-telling to provide historicity and popularity to local specialties.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. SunChang red chili pepper paste and Lee Seong-gye

One of the key ingredients in Korean food is fermented paste. It is widely used to enrich the taste of Korean food. JeungBo-SanLimGyeongJe(增補山林經濟) shows how obsessed people are with the fermented paste. It says "The fermented paste is the best. Even if you have quality vegetable or meat, if you don't have a good fermented paste, the food would not be the same. Every house shall try to have a good fermented paste." Also according to DongGugSeSiGi(東國歲時記) it describes a yearly plan for every household to make a proper fermented paste in summer and kimchi in winter.

Red chilli pepper was used either its seeds to flavor or itself as a side dish. When red chilli pepper was grown all over the Korean peninsula, people tried to use in powder form and mix with other seasonings, soy sauce, and fermented bean paste to add the taste. That was how red chilli pepper paste was born. GyuHabChongSeo(閨閣叢書) written in the early 19th century mentions that SunChang red chilli pepper paste and Hamyang red chilli pepper paste are very famous in the Korean peninsula.

In addition, to have a better branding position, the invention of tradition were involved. There was a meeting between Rev. MuHak and Lee SeongGye in ManIl temple in SunChang and Lee SeongGye instantly fell in love with SunChang red chilli pepper paste. When he became the first king of the Chosun dynasty, it was sent to the King as a present.

Unfortunately, ManIl temple was burned down during the Korean war so did the documentary evidence about Lee SeongGye and SunChang red chilli pepper paste. SunChang municipality found the words "Lee SeongGye" and "Rev. MuHak" on an epigraph to make SunChang red chilli pepper paste story[8]. SunChang red chilli pepper paste became agriculture Protected Geographical Indication(PGI) in 2005.

#### 3.2. XiHu Longjing Tea(西湖龍井茶) and Emperor Qianlong

A Chinese proverb that goes "A cup of morning tea to make your day, a cup of afternoon tea to make your day more enjoyable, and a cup of evening tea will rejuvenate." Due to scarce drinking water, Chinese drink boiled tea.

According to Sima Qian(司馬遷)'s ShiJi(史記), the first growing tea was found in modern days Chongqing area. During ancient China, all ethnic groups were growing tea everywhere in China. Tea culture shaped as in the same era, Lu Yu(陸羽) wrote The Classic of Tea(茶經) to guide how to drink tea.

Chinese fine tea is determined by not only the quality of tea leaves but also cultural superiority. Names of the Chinese fine tea changed their names several times. Then the tea should be associated with a story or myth so people could talk about the tea during the tea ceremony or after the meal. As the book was judged by its cover, the tea was considered by its name. Amongst all stories and myths related to the tea, the most luxurious and elegant one goes with the great emperor ever lived.

China selected 10 best tea in 1959 and XiHu Longjing tea came in the first place. Longjing tea has been appreciated for its rich aroma, silky taste, jade-like green in color, and beautiful tea leaf. Longjing tea from XiHu is famous and also known as "the queen of green tea". It was famous tea before but gained its special place during the Qing dynasty.

Qing continuously expanded its land and the emperor visited the merged land later to show his power and authority. Emperor Kangxi(康熙帝) visited the Southern part of China six times. Grandson of Emperor Kangxi, Emperor Qianlong to expanded its border to Burma, Taiwan, Viet Nam, Nepal, and visited 6 times to the Southern part of China, 4 times to the Western part of China, and 5 times to Eastern part of China.



**Figure 1.** Emperor Qianlong's 18 tea trees[十八棵御茶]

It is not the first time that Longjing tea was grown in the Qing dynasty. The Longjing tea got its recognition and fame during the Ming dynasty. After the king's appointment of Longjing tea tree as "royal trees", its fame spread all over China like wildfire. Emperor Qianlong shared with his cabinet members[3].

Later XiHu Longjing tea became the best Chinese tea and ranked number one in 1959 among the top ten Chinese teas. This shows how a story between a historical figure and the local specialty plays an important role in gaining fame and brand positioning.

### 3.3. Brie Cheese and King Louis XIV

Cheese is an important menu in the Western diet and is one of the world's most ancient fermented dairy products, even recorded in the Old Testament. There are currently more than 1,000 different types of cheese, each different in taste and appearance according to its origin and production method.

While it is difficult to know exactly when cheese originated, cheese making may probably have begun as early as when humankind began consuming milk as curd, a solid substance formed by coagulating milk is needed for cheese production. Therefore, it can be inferred that the first cheese was made as a natural result of the fermentation of bacteria found in animal milk.

Cheese, first made naturally with bacteria began taking a similar form by coagulation and condensation using the rennet. The rennet made available a wide range of cheese in Europe. The exact origin of rennet is also unknown. There is a legend that 4,000 years ago, an Arab trade called Kanana who was crossing the desert stored goat milk in a pocket made from a lamb stomach and the next day found the goat milk turned into a white curd substance.

The cheese was an important and standard ration for Roman soldiers due to its convenience in storage and travel. For that reason, the places where Roman soldiers set base naturally adopted cheese and winemaking wherein they quickly spread through all Europe. The cheese was also an important source of protein for monasteries and priests whose meat-eating diet was prohibited. From the 19th century, cheese began to take characteristics particular to specific regions. In mountainous and deep valley regions such as Switzerland and England, firm hard cheese was produced while flat plain regions such as France and Italy began developing soft cheese. This is evidenced by the AOC list of certified French cheese until 2010 and the larger part of them being soft and creamy in texture.

The Institut National des Appellations d'Origine(INAO) in France regulates the quality of cheese through AOC certification. On May 6, 1919, a law was issued protecting the production of cheese, regulating geographical origins by département, canton, and commune. Additionally, the law mandated on November 28, 1955, began regulating labels of the origin of milk, such as farms(fermier), processing(artisanal), milk processing(laitier) or manufacturers(industriel) as well as shipping details. Moreover, to be granted AOC certification, the milk needs to be labeled as either raw or sterilized and categorized by its animal source, as well as whole or skim milk according to its level of milk fat. The specifications and conditions of cheese making process such as the making of milk

curdle, curd cut, draining, salting as well as shape, size, and maturation period are also taken into account. At times, the temperature of the maturation cave is labeled, especially for the maturation basement for washed rind and cave for Roquefort cheese.

Brie cheese is particular to the outer skirt regions of Paris, Marne, and Seine, and sales regulations are applied. Despite the wide variety of Brie cheese, the French government allowed only two types of Brie cheese, Brie de Meaux and Brie de Melun to be sold.

As such, while Brie is the best known of all in France, it lacks historicity compared to the oldest known cheese, the Roquefort cheese made from goat cheese. Brie also lacks in popularity to the Comte cheese, known for its tagline, 'the most popular cheese in France, the most consumed cheese among French AOC cheese, and cheese consumed by more than 80% of the French'.

For this reason, an encounter with a historical figure is emphasized. Charles, the Duke of Orleans, also known as the father of Louis XIV, ordered 24 types of cheese from the region of Brie, and Louis XIV had cheese at every meal table. It is said that more than 50 carriages per week were seen leaving a town and heading to the Palace of Versailles or towns in Paris[4].

Lastly, at the Congress of Vienna, 1814~1815, attended by representatives of European countries after the 19th century Napoleonic War, French diplomat Talleyrand suggested an amity competition of cheese. England was represented with Stilton, Italy with Gorgonzola, Netherlands with Edam, but the French Brie de Meaux won and was declared "Le Roi du Fromage"(King of Cheese.)

#### 4. Discussion

I reviewed how the local specialties - SunChang red chilli pepper paste, XiHu Longjing tea, and Brie cheese made their ways from local to further international recognition. Historicity and popularity are needed for local specialties to develop into luxury goods. To ensure historicity, the three cases use the peak of the era or dynasty and to gain popularity, the three cases emphasize that they were luxury items used by the king.

From the 18th century, one of the most important ingredient - red chilli pepper paste made in SunChang area was famous. To overcome its short historicity, a story between Lee SeongGye who was the founding king of the Chosun dynasty 400 years ago were created.

The Longjing tea was known as a good tea before but after the appointment of being "royal trees" by Emperor Qianlong the king at the peak of the Qing dynasty in terms of size of the land, it became the best tea. Also ranked first place among Chinese teas in 1959. The popularity of a historical figure - Emperor Qianlong has more influence than the history that Longjing tea grew in China for more than 900 years.

Brie cheese lacked historicity against 2000 years old Roquefort and also lacked popularity against Comte. It used the Sun King Louis XIV to add both historicity and popularity.

In three cases, it shows how historicity and popularity influenced the local specialties to brand and gain international recognition. With these elaborations, local specialty could overcome its locality to brand into luxury goods.

The luxury of local specialties requires a halo effect through storytelling based on history and culture. In the case of modern brands, they can develop into luxury goods through storytelling by the founder. However, it is difficult to confirm the origin of the local specialties. Therefore, if you are storytelling the long history or the popularity of celebrities, you can go to luxury goods. The value depends on how unique the local history and culture are.

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