

Evolution of the Land-Sea Silk Road Watershed: Causes and Impacts

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Abstract: *From a macro point of view, the evolution of the land Silk Road presents the characteristics of "pendulum movement", while that of the sea Silk Road presents the status of "right-sided normal distribution". Based on some historical facts, it can be determined that the watershed of the land and sea Silk Road was in the Northern Song Dynasty. The main reasons for the watershed of the evolution of the land-Sea Silk Road are as follows: the Northern Song Dynasty failed to control the Northwest Silk Road (East Asia section) effectively, but paid more attention to maritime trade; The development of shipbuilding technology and navigation technology in Northern Song Dynasty and other countries; The economic scale of the Northern Song was much larger than that of the regimes along the Northwest Silk Road. The natural environment in northwest China deteriorated. The watershed of land-sea Silk Road evolution mainly includes: helping shift China's economic center of gravity from the northwest and Central Plains to the southeast, strengthening its control over the southeast and many islands; Strengthen the development of the southeast which has not been fully developed before, and increase the proportion of the population of the southeast in the total population of our country; Strengthen the contact with many overseas countries, trade volume and communication frequency are significantly increased; We will accelerate scientific and cultural exchanges between China and other countries. Many enlightenments can be found by analyzing the emergence of this watershed.*

Keywords: *Silk Road; A watershed; The Liao Empire; Northern song dynasty*

1. Introduction

At present, China is comprehensively promoting the construction of "One Belt and One Road", which is highly likely to make the land Silk Road occupy a certain advantage in the land and sea Silk Road, so as to realize the change of the dominant position of the land and sea Silk Road, which is the watershed in the evolution process of the land and sea Silk Road. In fact, there was once a watershed in the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road in history, that is, a watershed in the evolution of the land-Sea Silk Road caused by the prosperity of the maritime Silk Road and the decline of the land-sea Silk Road due to the comprehensive effects of various factors in the early Northern Song Dynasty.

From the research situation at home and abroad, no scholars have studied the watershed in the evolution process of the land and sea Silk Road, but there are some relevant studies. For example, Li Jinming elaborated the development and changes of the ancient maritime Silk Road in China:[1]Shu Shangji and Xu Guiling explained the historical evolution of the Maritime Silk Road based on a lot of historical facts.[2]Cao Dongying analyzed the "pendulum" shaped evolution of the Silk Road based on the rise and fall of the Silk Road.[3]All these studies have certain value, but it must be noted that these studies do not analyze the watershed of the land and sea Silk Road based on the evolution process, and the research in this field needs to be further developed.

Based on practical and theoretical considerations, it is necessary to analyze the following questions on the basis of elaborating the evolution process of the land-sea Silk Roads: What were the causes of the watershed in the evolution process of the land-sea Silk Roads? What is the main impact? What can be gleaned from this?

2. The evolution of the Land and Sea Silk Roads

2.1. The evolution of the overland Silk Road

From a macro point of view, the evolution of the overland Silk Road showed the characteristics of

"pendulum movement": (1) In the Western Han Dynasty, Zhang Qian's "empty exploration" made the overland Silk Road open. Subsequently, with the continuous operation of the Western Han government in the Western regions, the overland Silk Road developed greatly; (2) New, Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties. Compared with the Western Han Dynasty, the Central Plains Dynasty had lower control over the overland Silk Road, and the degree of sustained control was also lower. This period was the relative decline of the overland Silk Road. (3) In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Central Plains had strong national power and developed economy, and could effectively control the Northwest for a long time, and the overland Silk Road was significantly revived. (4) During the Five Dynasties, Liao, Song, Xia and Jin Dynasties, the Central Plains failed to control the Northwest, and there were many political powers and checkpoints in the territory of China. In addition, the Maritime Silk Road entered a prosperous period, while the land Silk Road declined again. (5) During the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongolian regime controlled most of the Eurasian continent, which created favorable conditions for the Yuan government to carry out foreign trade and significantly revived the overland Silk Road. (6) During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the overland Silk Road declined significantly: the Ming government failed to control Xinjiang and the western regions, and the Qing government began to control Xinjiang and part of the western regions from the middle period. However, the natural, political and economic environment of the land transportation was much worse than before, which jointly led to the decline of the overland Silk Road.

It can be seen that the two states of development (or revival) and decline alternately appeared in the evolution process of the overland Silk Road, making the overall evolution of the overland Silk Road show the characteristics of "pendulum movement". It is worth noting that it is a period when the overland Silk Road has achieved great development or revival, and it will decline in some stages. Periods of decline are dominated by periods of short-term recovery.

2.2. The evolution of the Maritime Silk Road

From the macroscopic point of view, the evolution of the Maritime Silk Road shows a "right normal distribution" state: (1) Rising period: In the Qin and Han Dynasties, our country's shipbuilding and navigation technologies gained a certain development, political unity, economic development and strong national strength, the Maritime Silk Road rose in this period. (2) Development period: In the period of The Three Kingdoms, the Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, despite the long-term turbulence, the overall development of the economy and the further development of shipbuilding and navigation technology boosted the further development of the Maritime Silk Road. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Maritime Silk Road enjoyed political stability, economic prosperity and strong national power for a long period of time. (3) Boom times: During the Five Dynasties, with the rise of the Khitan and Dangxiang nationalities, it was difficult for the Central Plains to carry out foreign trade through the land Silk Road. During the same period, shipbuilding and navigation technology developed significantly. Influenced by various factors, the Northern Song Dynasty began to vigorously develop maritime trade after the establishment of the Northern Song Dynasty, thus the Maritime Silk Road entered a prosperous period, while the Southern Song Dynasty was suppressed in the southeast. The greater reliance on maritime trade has driven the further prosperity of the Maritime Silk Road. During the Yuan Dynasty, the rulers attached great importance to overseas trade for most of the time, which further prospered the Maritime Silk Road. (4) Declining period: In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, except for some short periods, the policy of "maritime prohibition" existed for a long time. The implementation of this policy restricted the development of maritime trade and led to the declining period of the Maritime Silk Road.

It can be seen that the 1126 years from 221 BC to 906 AD saw the rise and development of the Maritime Silk Road for a long time. During the 460 years from 907 to 1367, the Maritime Silk Road flourished. During the 543 years from 1368 to 1911, the Maritime Silk Road was in a period of decline. The existence of these stages of evolution makes the evolution of the Maritime Silk Road present a "right-leaning normal distribution" state. It is worth noting that the prosperity stage is not necessarily absolute prosperity. For example, at the turn of the Song Dynasty and at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty, the Maritime Silk Road experienced a brief period of decline. The decline stage is not necessarily absolute decline. For example, the Maritime Silk Road experienced a brief period of prosperity after Zheng He's voyages to the West and the "Longqing Sea Opening".

3. Evolution watershed and judgment basis of the Land and Sea Silk Road

3.1. Watershed in the evolution of the Land and Maritime Silk Roads

After the territory of the Liao Empire was basically fixed, it strengthened its control over the Mobei and Western Xia dynasties. Based on this, it re-opened the overland Silk Road, guaranteed the smooth flow of the overland Silk Road with the help of the forces in the northwest (Mobei) and southwest (Western Xia), and conducted trade and tribute with many regimes and tribes to keep the overland Silk Road smooth for a long time. However, it was difficult for the Northern Song Dynasty to benefit from the overland Silk Road: the Northern Song Dynasty failed to control the northwest region, and the cost of foreign trade through the overland Silk Road was high. In this case, in order to develop foreign trade, the government of the Northern Song Dynasty had to rely mainly on the Maritime Silk Road (the Han and Tang empires mainly relied on the overland Silk Road to develop foreign trade). During this period, the status of the Maritime Silk Road gradually surpassed that of the overland Silk Road, and the watershed in the evolution of the overland Silk Road emerged.

Before the Northern Song Dynasty, the Central Plains regime mainly relied on the land Silk Road (rather than the maritime Silk Road) to carry out foreign trade. From the Northern Song Dynasty, the Central Plains regime mainly relied on the maritime Silk Road to carry out foreign trade. It can be seen that the watershed in the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road occurred in the early 11th century (after the Liao Empire controlled the Northwest Silk Road). The most important founders of the watershed in the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road were mainly the Liao Empire and the Northern Song Dynasty. The Liao Empire mainly relied on the land-Sea Silk Road for foreign trade, while the Northern Song Dynasty mainly relied on the land-sea Silk Road for foreign trade. This move in the process of foreign trade of the Northern Song Dynasty was completely different from the previous Central Plains regime. This situation was forced: it could not effectively control the northwest and could not compete with the Liao Empire for the control of the land Silk Road. Instead, it mainly relied on the maritime Silk Road for foreign trade. Of course, the Liao Empire began to gradually control the Northwest Silk Road at the early stage of its establishment, mainly for the purpose of gaining more interests and enhancing its own strength, rather than deliberately creating the watershed of land and sea Silk Road.

3.2. The basis for determining the watershed of the evolution of the land-Sea Silk Road

The most accurate basis for determining the watershed of the land-Sea Silk Road is: Take some time points in the development process of the Land and Sea Silk Roads, find the total freight volume of the land and sea Silk Roads at these time points, or the total trade volume converted into the current currency value, or the total tariff volume, and make statistics, comparison and analysis of these total freight volume, total trade volume, or total tariff volume. The year when the total freight volume, trade volume or tariff volume of the maritime Silk Road exceeded the total freight volume or trade volume of the overland Silk Road was found, which was the watershed of the evolution of the overland and maritime Silk Road. However, there are some problems with this method: many regimes do not distinguish which ones come from the overland Silk Road and which ones from the maritime Silk Road when calculating the total freight, total trade or total tariff. Different regimes have different statistical standards in these aspects, and some regimes do not even carry out statistics in these aspects. Different regimes or even the same regime have different tax rates in different periods. In the case of the same total trade volume, the total tariff volume is large in the period of heavy taxation, while the total tariff volume is small in the period of light taxation. In this case, the total tariff volume is no longer the accurate basis for determining the total trade volume. In fact, based on some historical facts, we can determine when the watershed of the land and sea Silk Road was roughly located in the historical period.

In the early period of the Northern Song Dynasty, the overland Silk Road was mainly affected by the war, but the government and merchants of the Northern Song Dynasty would not stop their demand for foreign trade. In particular, the government of the Northern Song Dynasty had to take effective measures to increase the fiscal revenue (to support redundant soldiers and redundant personnel, pay the "old coin", etc.). Therefore, the dependence on the overland Silk Road turned to the maritime Silk Road. Many policies related to the Maritime Silk Road were introduced. For example, in the fourth year of Kaibao (971 AD), the government of the Northern Song Dynasty set up the Office of Ship in Guangzhou, and then successively set up the office of Ship or the Office of Business in Hangzhou, Mingzhou, Quanzhou, Mizhou and Xiuzhou. The implementation of these measures resulted in a major change in the tax structure of the Northern Song (compared with previous dynasties): agricultural taxes

accounted for only 30% of the revenue of the Northern Song, while industrial and commercial taxes accounted for 70%, of which 15% came from customs taxes (mostly from trade taxes along the Maritime Silk Road), whereas agricultural taxes had been dominant in previous dynasties. On the other hand, compared with the Northern Song Dynasty, the economic scale of Liao Empire, Xixia, Tubo, Xizhou Uighur and Black Khan Dynasty, which mainly relied on the land Silk Road for foreign trade, was much smaller than that of the Northern Song Dynasty, which meant that the total trade volume of the land Silk Road was smaller than that of the maritime Silk Road. These circumstances indicate that in the early Northern Song Dynasty, the watershed appeared in the evolution process of the land and Sea Silk Roads -- the land Silk Road was dominant before, and the sea Silk Road was dominant in the early Northern Song Dynasty and for a long time afterwards.

4. Causes of the watershed in the evolution of the Land and Maritime Silk Roads

4.1. The Northern Song failed to effectively control the Northwest Silk Road (East Asia section) and instead focused on maritime trade

Unlike previous dynasties in the Central Plains, the Northern Song government no longer relied on the overland Silk Road for foreign trade, but mainly relied on the maritime Silk Road for foreign trade. The important reasons are as follows: During the Northern Song Dynasty, the regions of the Northwest Silk Road (East Asia section) were occupied by Liao Empire, Western Xia Dynasty, Tubo, West Zhou Uighur, Black Khan Dynasty and other regimes, which were essentially controlled by Liao Empire. No matter in war or peace, the government of the Northern Song Dynasty could use the Northwest Silk Road to carry out foreign trade, but the difficulty of this measure was obviously greater than that of Han and Tang dynasties and other unified dynasties. When Han and Tang dynasties effectively controlled the Northwest Silk Road (East Asia section), the cost of foreign trade was relatively low because there were no other regimes to block this section and there were fewer barriers. The Northern Song Dynasty failed to control the Northwest Silk Road (East Asia section), and foreign trade through the Silk Road had to pass through the Liao Empire, Western Xia, Tubo, West Zhou Uighur, Black Khan Dynasty and other regimes. There were many checkpoints and taxes had to be paid for many times, so the cost of foreign trade was relatively high.

Influenced by the above situation, the Northern Song Dynasty turned to maritime trade. For the purpose of encouraging maritime trade, in addition to the aforementioned establishment of the department of commerce or commercial vessels, the Northern Song Dynasty introduced many policies to protect foreign trade and promulgated special foreign trade laws. First of all, some local governments in the Northern Song Dynasty set up areas for expatriates in some cities. In these areas, there were chambers of commerce for foreign businessmen, whose posts were held by people from other countries. If the holders made certain contributions, they could be granted official posts by governments at all levels of the Northern Song Dynasty. Secondly, the governments at all levels of the Northern Song tried their best to protect the property and personal safety of foreign businessmen. For example, the Northern Song would provide assistance to foreign businessmen when their ships encountered accidents (shipwrecks or pirates, etc.). When a foreign merchant died, the Northern Song would send his body and belongings back to his hometown. Third, Yuanfeng three years (1080 A.D.), the Northern Song Dynasty issued the first special foreign trade regulations of our country "Yuanfeng Guangzhou City Law", this method is referred to as "market law" in some studies. The name of this method includes the year number (the promulgation time) and the place name (Guangzhou). Although the place name of Guangzhou is included, this law is generally applied to the territory of the Northern Song Dynasty. This law was formulated based on the purpose of protecting the legitimate rights and interests of merchants and established the main body of foreign trade operation and management. The existence of these measures greatly strengthened the enthusiasm of foreign businessmen in trade activities and created favorable conditions for the development of maritime trade in the Northern Song Dynasty.

4.2. The development of shipbuilding and navigation technology in Northern Song Dynasty and other countries

In the Northern Song Dynasty, shipbuilding technology and navigation technology were in the leading position in the world. At that time, there were many official or private shipyards in the southeast coastal areas. The former mainly manufactured main ships, war ships and ships, while the latter mainly manufactured merchant ships and pleasure ships. The main types of ships had deep draft,

strong resistance to wind and waves, and their volume and load capacity were significantly larger than those of previous ships. All these conditions made the large ships in the Northern Song Dynasty very suitable for ocean navigation. On the other hand, during the Northern Song Dynasty, the compass had been invented and effectively applied to navigation and sea, which created favorable conditions for the rapid development of maritime trade during this period. The improvement of shipbuilding technology made it very easy to sail by sea wind. The Northern Song Dynasty ships could sail in any direction except the direction of the current wind. In addition, the line according to the weather changes on the ship prescription position to be determined, and has been able to use a long rope weight to measure the depth of the sea.

4.3. The economy of the Northern Song was much larger than that of the regimes along the Northwest Silk Road

During the Northern Song Dynasty, the major regimes along the Northwest Silk Road in China were the Liao Empire, the Western Xia, the Tubo, the Western Uighur and the Black Khan dynasties. The economic scale of the Northern Song was much larger than that of these regimes: At the beginning of the Northern Song Dynasty, the total population in the territory exceeded 50 million, and the total population exceeded 100 million at the end of the Northern Song Dynasty. The huge population combined with the extremely prosperous trade made the economy of the Northern Song Dynasty very large and its fiscal revenue exceeded 100 million taels of silver. Compared with the Northern Song Dynasty, the Liao Empire, the Western Xia, the Tubo, the Uighur Kingdom of Xizhou, the Black Khan Dynasty and other regimes had a small population, not prosperous trade and small economic scale. Thus, two “trade groups” emerged in the early Northern Song Dynasty. One was led by the Northern Song with a large economic scale and supplemented by some Northeast and Southeast Asian countries. The other was mainly based on the Maritime Silk Road. Led by the relatively small economic scale of the Liao Empire, supplemented by the Western Xia Dynasty and the Black Khan Dynasty, it mainly carried out foreign trade activities based on the land Silk Road. The existence of these two trading groups brought about significant changes in the evolution of the land and Sea Silk Roads. Before that, the most economically powerful regimes in East Asia (mostly the regimes of the Central Plains) carried out their foreign trade activities mainly based on the land and sea Silk Roads, which dominated the land and sea Silk Roads; In the early period of the Northern Song Dynasty, the most economically powerful regime in East Asia (namely the Northern Song Dynasty) mainly carried out foreign trade activities based on the Maritime Silk Road, which gradually replaced the dominant position of the land Silk Road in the land and sea Silk Road. This situation always existed in a long historical period, and the leading roles of the land and sea Silk Roads in the land and Sea Silk Roads changed completely. It can be seen that in the early Northern Song Dynasty, the watershed in the evolution of the land and Sea Silk Roads occurred because the most economically powerful regimes in East Asia chose to carry out foreign trade activities based on the Sea Silk Road.

4.4. The natural environment in northwest China deteriorated

In ancient times, China's northwest regions (mainly Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia) had a good natural environment, which helped the region become one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization. In the land of the silk road opened early (marked by Zhang Qiantong the western regions), northwest (especially in hexi corridor) natural environment is still good, the land of the silk road between the caravan can more easily find the camp of China and other countries and water, etc. But early development has not been harmless: frequent wars, population pressures and climate change have combined to degrade the Northwest's natural environment. This situation became more and more obvious after the mid-Tang Dynasty. By the early Northern Song Dynasty, the natural environment in Northwest China was already very poor, and the caravans traveling along the overland Silk Road often found it difficult to find camping and drinking water. As a result, the cost of foreign trade through the overland Silk Road increased significantly, which not only affected the folk merchants but also the official policies of the Northern Song Dynasty. The dominant position in the evolution of the Land and Sea Silk Roads began to change: the Northern Song government abandoned the previous practice of relying on the land Silk Road for foreign trade, and began to rely on the Sea Silk Road for foreign trade.

5. The influence and enlightenment of the watershed in the evolution of the Land and Sea Silk Road

5.1. The impact of the watershed in the evolution of the Land and Sea Silk Roads

Boost China's economic center of gravity from the northwest and Central Plains to the southeast, strengthening the southeast and many island control. In the longer historical period before the mid-Tang Dynasty, China's economic center of gravity was in the northwest (mainly Guanzhong) and the Central Plains. In the mid-Tang Dynasty, China's economic center of gravity began to shift to the southeast, which was significantly strengthened after the watershed appeared in the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road: The southeast coast was an important base region of the Maritime Silk Road. After the Maritime Silk Road dominated the land and sea Silk Road, the strongest economies in East Asia (Northern Song, Southern Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties) mainly relied on the Maritime Silk Road to carry out foreign trade, which accelerated the shift of China's economic center of gravity from the northwest and Central Plains to the southeast. Also causes the northern Song, Southern Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties to control the southeast and many islands significantly strengthen. This situation even to our country's current economic center of gravity and territory control based on the important influence.

Strengthen the development of the southeast region which has not been fully developed before, and raise the proportion of the population of the southeast region in the total population of our country. During a long period before the Northern Song Dynasty, the southeast region of our country was not fully developed, and the population of this region was small in the total population of our country. After the Maritime Silk Road played a dominant role in the land and Sea Silk Road, the importance of the southeast region in the economic map of China has been rising, and the development of this region has been significantly strengthened. Accompanied by this process, the population of this region has been rising and its proportion in the total population of China has been significantly expanded. These conditions still have an important impact on our current economic and demographic landscape.

Strengthen the contact with many overseas countries, and the volume of commerce and communication frequency are significantly increased. Before the Northern Song Dynasty, the Maritime Silk Road did not play a dominant role in the land and sea Silk Roads, and many regimes within the territory of China had relatively few contacts with overseas countries, which was mainly reflected in the relatively small trade volume and low communication frequency between many countries. In the early period of the Northern Song Dynasty, overseas trade began to occupy an important position in the foreign trade of the Northern Song Dynasty. The economic and trade exchanges between the Northern Song Dynasty and many countries in East Asia, Southeast Asia and even South Asia and West Asia were increasingly strengthened. The trade volume and communication frequency between these countries increased significantly, and the mutual understanding between the Northern Song Dynasty and these countries was also strengthened. This has been going on for hundreds of years, and it has had a profound effect.

Accelerate scientific and cultural exchanges between China and other countries. After the Maritime Silk Road took the dominant position in the land and Sea Silk Road, the exchanges of science and technology and culture between China and other countries were significantly strengthened. Such exchanges were not only reflected in the spread of science and technology and culture of the Northern Song Dynasty to other countries, but also in the influence of science and culture of other countries on the Northern Song Dynasty, such as: The Arab Empire had a strong overall strength around the 11th century, and its shipbuilding and navigation technologies were ahead of many other countries. These technologies had a non-negligible impact on the development of shipbuilding and navigation technologies in the Northern Song Dynasty, which promoted the rapid development of these technologies in the Northern Song Dynasty, and in turn contributed to the further development of the Maritime Silk Road. Such in-depth exchanges in science, technology and culture between China and the rest of the world lasted for hundreds of years. Although they were weakened during the "sea ban" period of the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, they were quickly revived after the end of the "sea ban". It was not until the Qing Dynasty implemented the policy of isolation for a long time that they became significantly weaker.

5.2. Inspiration from the watershed of the evolution of the land-Sea Silk Roads

Change is the only constant: the land Silk Road or the Sea Silk Road cannot always dominate the land and sea Silk Road. From the Qin Dynasty period to the Five Dynasties period, the land Silk Road

has been dominant in the land and sea Silk Road for 1,100 years, but the continuation of more than 1,000 years does not mean that this state will exist forever. In the early Northern Song Dynasty, the land Silk Road was replaced by the Sea Silk Road, which lasted for hundreds of years. In recent years, China's high-speed rail industry has been developing rapidly. Compared with Marine transportation, high-speed rail transportation has some advantages. When these advantages are fully played, "One Belt" of "One Belt One Road" will be more prosperous than "One Road", which means that the land Silk Road will regain its dominant position in the land and sea Silk Road. The appearance of these situations is the direct manifestation of the view that "change is the only constant" in Marxist philosophy.

Changes are often the result of both necessity and chance. To be specific, the emergence of the watershed in the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road was the result of both necessity and contingency: The deterioration of the natural environment along the land Silk Road and the continuous development of shipbuilding technology and navigation technology made it inevitable that the Maritime Silk Road would dominate the land and Sea Silk Road. However, this situation appeared accidentally in the early Northern Song Dynasty. In the early Northern Song Dynasty, the government had the opportunity to control the Dangxiang people's inhabited areas. However, as a result of many policy mistakes, Dangxiang people controlled a large area in the northwest and were hostile to the Northern Song Dynasty for a long time. Meanwhile, Liao Empire gradually gained the control of the overland Silk Road. As a result, it was difficult for the Northern Song Dynasty to carry out foreign trade through the overland Silk Road, so it had to rely mainly on the maritime Silk Road to promote the change of the dominant position in the evolution of the overland and maritime Silk Road. Something similar is happening today: With the establishment of good diplomatic relations with many countries in Central Asia, West Asia and North Asia and the gradual optimization of the natural environment in northwest China, it has become inevitable that the overland Silk Road will regain its dominant position in the evolution process of the overland and maritime Silk Road. However, this situation appears to a certain extent by chance (mainly due to the rapid development of high-speed rail industry).

The change of things is often the result of qualitative change caused by quantitative change. The emergence of the watershed in the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road was not a sudden situation, but a process of qualitative change caused by quantitative change: The emergence of this watershed was caused by the failure of the Northern Song Dynasty to control the Northwest, the development of shipbuilding technology and navigation technology, and the deterioration of the natural environment in the northwest. These situations did not occur in a short period of time, but were the result of a slow evolution in a long or even a very long time. Take the deterioration of the natural environment in the Northwest as an example: In ancient times, the natural environment of Northwest China was relatively good. After a long period of war and overdevelopment, the natural environment of Northwest China was already relatively bad in the early Northern Song Dynasty. This situation was caused by the continuous influence of many factors over thousands of years, and was not caused by any particular event or policy in a short period of time. After a long period of "evolution", this factor and some other factors broke the "threshold" (the breakthrough from quantitative change to qualitative change) in the early Northern Song Dynasty, which together led to the watershed in the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road.

Things are universal: changes in the reality will lead to changes in a country's foreign trade policy. The universal connection of things is an important idea in Marxist philosophy, which advocates to view things realistically and comprehensively, rather than seeing things as isolated individuals. The watershed in the evolution of the land-Sea Silk Road may not necessarily have occurred in the early Northern Song Dynasty: The Northern Song missed the opportunity to control the settlements of Dangxiang people, which resulted in the failure in the process of competing with the Liao Empire for the dominance of the overland Silk Road. This reality led to the fact that the Northern Song had to change the reliance on land foreign trade, which had long been practiced by many previous dynasties, to the reliance on sea foreign trade when formulating foreign trade policies. The change of the foreign trade policy of the Northern Song Dynasty had an important impact on the evolution of the land-sea Silk Road, which helped the Maritime Silk Road to achieve a dominant position in the land-sea Silk Road.

6. Conclusion

In the early Northern Song Dynasty, there was a watershed in the evolution of the land and Sea Silk Roads: the land and Sea Silk Roads dominated the land and sea Silk Roads for thousands of years

before that, and this dominant position was replaced by the Sea Silk Road in the early Northern Song Dynasty. There were many reasons for this watershed: the Northern Song Dynasty failed to effectively control the Northwest Silk Road (East Asia section), and instead focused on maritime trade; The development of shipbuilding technology and navigation technology in Northern Song Dynasty and other countries; The economic scale of the Northern Song was much larger than that of the regimes along the Northwest Silk Road. The natural environment in northwest China deteriorated. The watershed of land-sea Silk Road evolution mainly includes: helping shift China's economic center of gravity from the northwest and Central Plains to the southeast, strengthening its control over the southeast and many islands; Strengthen the development of the southeast which has not been fully developed before, and increase the proportion of the population of the southeast in the total population of our country; Strengthen the contact with many overseas countries, trade volume and communication frequency are significantly increased; We will accelerate scientific and cultural exchanges between China and other countries.

In recent years, China is making all-out efforts to promote the "Belt and Road" construction, which is likely to usher in a watershed in the evolution of the land and maritime Silk Road: The Maritime Silk Road has played a dominant role in the land and sea Silk Road for thousands of years. In recent years, the strengthening of China's land transportation, the optimization of the natural environment in northwest China and the optimization of relations with neighboring countries in northwest China have effectively boosted the development of the land and Sea Silk Road, making it highly likely to replace the dominant role of the Sea and Sea Silk Road in the land and Sea Silk Road. Different from the watershed in the evolution of the Land and Sea Silk Roads in the early Northern Song Dynasty, this watershed is very likely to occur in the rapid development of the land and sea Silk Roads, rather than the obvious decline of one of the land and sea Silk Roads. The emergence of this watershed depends on the joint efforts of the academic and practical circles.

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