

A Study on the Growth and Exchange of Cotton during the Classic Mesoamerica

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Abstract

This paper introduces the probable regional and long distance trade of cotton goods among the pre-Hispanic Mesoamericans during the Classic (A.D. 200-900) period through the comparison of the available documentary sources. Based on the ethnohistoric data and the archaeological evidences it was found that cotton was used throughout the Mesoamerica by the elite ruling class. However, because cotton could not be grown at elevations above 6,000 feet it was obvious that nations such as Teotihuacan which flourished in the highland of present day Mexico City had to import cotton from the tropical coastal hotlands either through trade or tribute. Several ethnohistorical and archaeological data suggest that urban center in highland Mexico had people employed in weaving the textiles rather than cultivating or spinning cotton. Archaeological evidences such as the workshops used by the craft specialists seemed to be associated with weaving of cotton. Because of the similarity in climatic conditions for marine shells and cotton cultivation, Kolb's model seems to be applicable to the cotton trade of the classic Teotihuacan. Based on Kolb's model, it could be hypothesized that Teotihuacan-Kaminaljuyu-Maya was the indirect trade route connecting the Basin of Mexico and the Mayan regions.

Key words : cotton, Classic Mesoamerica, pre-Hispanic, growth, exchange, Teotihuacan.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to introduce the probable regional and long distance trade of cotton goods among the pre-Hispanic Mesoamericans during the Classic (A.D. 200-900) period by comparing the available documentary sources. The Classic period is the most notable period within the history of Mesoamerica which is represented as the greatest civilizations of Teotihuacan and Maya (Table 1, Fig. 1 & 2). The diversity in climate throughout the Mesoamerica led each

region to have its unique natural and agricultural resources, which were in many cases not sufficient for the local population. Among the goods that were exchanged textiles conveyed an important aspect of the elite society of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica.

Only vegetable fibers were used by the pre-Hispanic Mesoamericans. Although there are some evidence of the use of animal skin for clothing, wool and silk fibers were not introduced to Mexicans until the Spanish conquest. Sayer¹⁾ described of the three types of vegetable fibers used by the pre-Colonial Mexicans. One is the leaf

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1) Chloe Sayer, *Costumes of Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), p.19.

fibers, and they are often called *agave*, *maguay*, *ixtle*, *pita* or *henequen*. These are commonly grown in the semi-desert regions. The second type explained by Sayer is the bast fiber, which the Aztecs called *tzitzicatzli* (*chichicastle*). Their growth is limited to only certain areas. The third type is the seed fiber, and the best of this type is cotton which grow only in the tropical climate or coastal areas. As the growth of some fibers were confined to certain regions, the Mexicans had to rely on their trade. Cotton, especially, was one of the most popular items selected for the regional exchange.

While Sharer²⁾ categorized textiles as one of the utilitarian goods exchanged in the prehistoric Maya area, archaeological and ethnohistorical data revealed that certain textile items were used by the elites as a function of the class distinction. Anawalt³⁾ described that one of the way the Aztecs distinguished their social classes was by using different fibers for the clothes of different ranks.

Based on the ethnohistorical evidences Anawalt explained that the maguay fiber which grew abundantly in the region was assigned to the lower classes, whereas cotton, which could not be grown at elevations above 6,000 feet and thus had to be imported from the tropical coastal hotlands either through trade or tribute, was used as the status fiber for the elite class.⁴⁾ Such assertion is further supported by many Spanish records which describe of the first encounter of the Spanish with the natives of Mesoamerica. Hernando Cortes who is infamous for conquering and destroying the Aztec Empire in 1521, for example, described of the costumes of the natives of Cozumel that

the common women wear highly coloured robes reaching from the waist to the feet and others which cover only the breast, all the rest of the body being uncovered; but the women of high rank wear bodices of fine cotton, very loose fitting, cut and embroidered after the fashion of the vestment worn by our bishops and abbots.⁵⁾

Cotton was not only used for the cloaks of the upperclass but also for the warriors' armours. The extensive written description of the New World by one of Cortes' soldiers, Bernal Diaz, provides ample documentary evidences that the armour of quilted cotton was used throughout the Mesoamerica.⁶⁾

Because cotton growth was limited only to the tropical or coastal areas, the rest of Mesoamerica had to rely on either long-distance trade or tribute. Westheim described of the tribute list in Codex Mendoza (1502-1519) which describe the history, tribute, and daily life of the Aztec that the economy of individual state was maintained by large amount of tributes collected from inner and outer state, and that cotton was among the first ones on the list.⁷⁾ The following, which is directly quoted from Westheim, clearly shows its evidence.

every eighty days, i.e. every four mexican months, the subject peoples (according to the calculations of M. O. de Mendizabal) had to hand over 1,328,000 cloaks, 72,000 maxthal (skirts) and 96,000 huipiles (shirts or tunics),... together with 4,000 bales of cotton and a considerable amount of henequen "as raw material for the weavers of the Aztec capital"⁸⁾

2) Robert J. Sharer, *The Ancient Maya* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), p.248.

3) Patricia Anawalt, "Costume and Control: Aztec Sumptuary Laws," *Archaeology* Vol.33 No.1 (1980), p.38.

4) *Ibid.*, p.38.

5) Hernando Cortes, *Hernando Cortes: Fiver Letters 1519-1526*. trans. F. Bayard Morris (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1929), p.22.

6) Bernal Diaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p.75.

7) P. Westheim, "Textile art in Ancient Mexico," *Ciba Review* (1948), p.2568.

8) *Ibid.*, p.2568.

II. Research Method

Knowledge of the textiles of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica comes from the available textile artifacts, the Spanish records of the Colonial periods, and the comparison of the above with the textile materials used by the present day Mexicans.

However, not many textile artifacts are available to us first due to their highly degradable nature. According to Jakes and Sibley⁹⁾ warm and humid climatic conditions combined with the salinity and the pH of the soil will accelerate the degradation reactions of cellulosic fibers such as cotton, flax, and other bast fibers. Therefore, most of the textile artifacts of Mesoamerica come from dry caves or some elite tombs of highland regions where the arid environment aided their survival. The second reason why the textile artifacts are so scarce compared to the other artifacts is attributed to the burial practices of most of the pre-Hispanic tribes. According to Westheim¹⁰⁾ most of the tribes of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica, including the Aztecs, cremated their dead. This makes it difficult to identify the fiber content or weave or even to find the trace of any surviving textile fragments.

Nevertheless, there are cases when textile specimens were able to survive as they had been in close contact with copper artifacts such as copper earspools or bells in the archaeological context. Jakes and Sibley¹¹⁾ explained that heavy metals such as copper would inhibit the microbiological growth and thus preserve the textile in a mineralized form called 'pseudomorph.' Thus textiles or their evidences are apt to survive more in the

tombs of the elites where copper ornaments were buried together with the dead.

Acknowledging the importance of cotton in the pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica, but with the inevitable limitations on the archaeological facts based on the actual artifacts, this study relies on the documentary evidences of the usage and the regional exchange of cotton. The sources utilized in this study are documents written both by the direct Spanish witnesses of the Classic Mesoamerica and also by the available archaeological and ethnohistorical records on the selected period.

III. Results and Discussion

I. Analysis of Archaeological Evidences

The earliest evidence of cotton comes from the excavations at the Coxcatlan Cave in the Tehuacan Valley (Fig. 1). According to Stephens¹²⁾ the radiocarbon dating of the two cotton bolls excavated were 5500 B.C. which belong to the El Riego phase of the Archaic Mesoamerica (8,000-2,000 B.C.) (Table 1). The El Riego phase (7,000-5,000 B.C.) was the period when the sedentary village life and agriculture were not yet quite established. Thus Stephens maintained that the two cotton bolls must represent the wild form rather than the cultivated ones.

According to Johnson¹³⁾ the earliest cotton cloth was found in the Valley of Mexico. The specimen was found in the burial of Zacatenco phase (800-400 B.C.), the early middle Preclassic period (2,000 B.C.-A.D. 200). Johnson¹⁴⁾ described that the cloth was woven from cotton yarn in one direction and from yucca yarn in the opposite

9) Kathryn Jakes and Lucy R. Sibley, "Survival of Cellulosic Fibres in the Archaeological Context," *Science and Archaeology* Vol.25 (1983), p.36.

10) P. Westheim, op. cit., p.2564.

11) Kathryn Jakes and Lucy R. Sibley, op. cit., p.37.

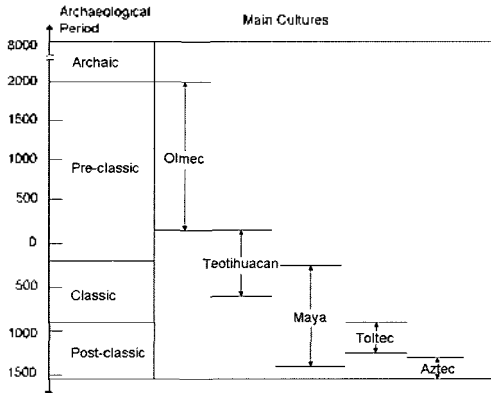
12) Stanley G. Stephens, "A Cotton Boll Segment from Coxcatlan Cave," in *The Prehistory of the Tehuacan Valley: Environment and Subsistence*, ed. Douglas S. Byers, vol. 1 (London: University of Texas Press, 1967), p.256.

13) Irmgard Weitlaner Johnson, "Basketry and Textiles," *Handbook of Middle American Indians* Vol.10 (1971), p. 301.

14) *Ibid.*, p. 301.

〈Table 1〉 Key Features of Each Periods of Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica

Periods	Key Features	Main Cultures	Major Sites
Paleo-Indian (-8,000 B.C.)	Normadic hunter & gatherer		
Archaic (8,000-2,000 B.C.)	Formed permanent villages develop agriculture grow corn		
Pre-Classic (2,000 B.C.-A.D. 200)	Formed complex society develop intense farming class distinction (commoner & elite)	Olmec (1,500-200 B.C.)	San Lorenzo La Venta
		Teotihuacan (200 B.C.-A.D. 600)	Teotihuacan
Classic (A.D. 200-900)	Emergence of king growth of armies & markets social classes sharply defined great civilization	Maya (A.D. 250-1,400)	Tikal Chichen Itza
Post-Classic (A.D. 900-1519)	Long-distance trade emphasized growth of military power Spanish conquest	Toltec (A.D. 900-1,300)	Tula
		Aztec (A.D. 1325-1579)	Tinochtitlan



〈Fig. 1〉 Archaeological Periods and the Main Cultures of Mesoamerica.

direction.

Good example of cotton fragments found with the association of copper artifacts come from the Pacific Coast. Johnson¹⁵⁾ described that cotton

plain weaves were excavated from Guasave, Sinaloa, and Apatzingan, Michoacan, all associated with copper ornaments. Johnson¹⁶⁾ also suggested that the textiles found from Chametla, Sinaloa exhibit complicated weaving technique and are presumed to be the burial offerings of a high rank personage.

In the Lowland Mayan region (Fig. 1), even fewer textiles had been preserved due to warm and humid tropical climate. Mahler¹⁷⁾ said that textile fragments found in Mayan lowlands count up to about 600 specimens from the Sacred Cenote at Chichen Itza. She described that with a few exceptions of a bast fiber, all the specimens are made with cotton yarns.

It is unlikely that the Valley of Mexico could have provided the suitable climate and environment for the cotton cultivation. If cotton clothes were brought from other regions, they could have been brought from either eastern or western coasts.

15) Irmgard Weitlaner Johnson, op. cit., p.525.

16) Ibid., p.525.

17) Joy Mahler, "Garments and Textiles of the Maya Lowlands," in *Handbook of Middle American Indians* Vol. 3 (1965), pp.581-593.

And since the Zacatenco phase coincides with the time when the Olmecs (1,500-200 B.C.) had their cultural economical florescence, it could even be said that cotton goods indicate the evidence of long distance trade between the Olmec and the Valley of Mexico.

Another indication of the possible exchange between the people of Valley of Mexico and the Olmecs comes from the excavation of a small piece of cotton cloth in the tomb at Tiapacoya. According to Coe¹⁸⁾, Tiapacoya is 'among the sites in Central Mexico which have produced Early Formative Olmec objects, principally figurines and ceramics.' If cotton was not cultivated in the Valley of Mexico, it could be possible that cotton was one of the items exchanged between the two regions.

There are more abundant ethnohistorical records relating to the usage and cultivation of cotton during the Classic period (A.D. 200-900). Although cotton was cultivated throughout the lowland area during the Maya civilization (A.D. 250-1,400), the Mayan rulers also reserved cotton cloths for the upper class. As cited earlier, the natives whom Cortes encountered in the Island of Cozumel showed clear distinction of classes by the use of the different material for their clothes, namely, cotton for the higher ranks and bark cloth for the lower ranks. According to ethnohistorical sources, large portion of cotton fibers of textiles produced in Maya were exported to highlands or adjacent Maya lowlands.

2. Analysis of Documentary Sources on the Growth and Weaving of Cotton

According to Coe, the states in Yucatan maintained their economy through the export of "honey, cotton, mantles, and slaves"¹⁹⁾ rather than through the maize agriculture. Having the climate and other natural environments favorable to cotton cultivation, Yucatan seems to have had the

greatest supply of cotton fibers, if not cotton cloths, throughout the Mesoamerica.

Anawalt²⁰⁾ provided a good secondary evidence of the mechanism for the regional exchange of cotton by citing the sixteenth century Spanish judge Alfonso de Zorita who described that the people of highlands

did not grow cotton but worked it into a very good cloth. This excellent cloth was made by people of the tierra fria [the colder land of the high Central Mexican plateau] who are better workers than those of the tierra caliente [the coastal hotland]. Thus some towns gave cotton and others turned it into cloth.²¹⁾

It seems likely that Yucatan or the regions of Pacific or Gulf coast exported large number of cotton fibers to highland Mexico or Guatemala, where they were woven into elaborate cloths of various kinds. Although the natives of Yucatan must have been employed in weaving as well as cultivating and spinning of the fiber, most of the highland zone seems to have been involved only with the weaving procedure. The following described by Bartolomew Columbus (1461-1515, younger brother of Christopher Columbus) on the scene in the Bay Islands of the Gulf of Honduras, provides a picturesque view into the past (Columbus, 1866).

The canoe was eight feet wide. They had in it much clothing of the kind which they weave of cotton in this land, such as cloth woven with many designs and colors, shirts which reached the knees, and some square pieces of cloth which they use for cloaks calling them *zuyen*. 1866²²⁾

Blom²³⁾ explained that these were Mayans 'as indicated by the name of their provenance as

18) Michael D. Coe, *Mexico* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), p.78.

19) Michael D. Coe, op. cit., pp.141-142.

20) Patricia Anawalt, op. cit., p.38.

21) Ibid, p.38.

well as by the word which they used for their cloaks, i.e. *ziyan*.' He further described that 'cotton was grown in most parts of the Mayan country, and pieces of woven cotton of a stipulated size were monetary units of trade.'

Besides the Yucatan, the coastal regions of Veracruz seem to have provided large supply of cotton goods to the highland regions of Central Mexico. Wolf²⁴⁾ described of the merchandise in Teotihuacan by saying that

Thus at Teotihuacan, we find shells imported from the two coasts, precious stones from Guerrero, rubber balls from the southern Gulf, mica from Oaxaca, feathers from the southern lands of quetzal bird, and cotton from Morelos or from Veracruz.

Several ethnohistorical and archaeological data suggest that urban center in highland Mexico had people employed in weaving the textiles rather than cultivating or spinning cotton.

Millon's Teotihuacan Mapping Project revealed the workshops used by the craft specialists, and among the workshops were those that seemed to be associated with weaving of cotton and maguay textiles.²⁵⁾ Bernal Diaz also described

the women, the weavers and sempstresses... who made such a huge quantity of fine robes with very elaborate feather designs. These things were generally brought from some towns in the province of Cotaxtla, which is on the north coast, quite near San Juan de Ulua.²⁶⁾

Based on the archaeological and ethnohistorical data, and since cotton can grow in warm and humid climate and below the elevation of 6,000 meters, one could hypothesize that states of Central Mexico acquired cotton fibers or cloths from the regions along the Pacific and Gulf coasts. The fact that cotton fragments were found more along the coastal regions supports the above hypothesis.

3. Analysis of Documents on the Trade routes of Classic Mesoamerica

According to Sharer²⁷⁾, the Olmecs, during the Preclassic period, seem to have created the first integrated Mesoamerican long-distance trade network. The vast network of Olmec's long-distance trade is supported by numerous Olmec related artifacts found in the highland Mexico along the Pacific coast, Valley of Oaxaca, and in Guatemalan highlands. Sharer²⁸⁾ also maintained that one of the reasons for the decline of the Olmecs was the loss of control over trade and the resulting loss of access to exotic trade goods.

During the Early and the Middle Classic, with the rise of Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico and the Maya in the Peten, the dominance of trade shifted to these two regions. Sharer²⁹⁾ described that the land-based trade of the Olmec route gave its dominance to combination of the land and the 'river-canoe transport' through the rivers such as Usumacinta.

The Olmecs, being the creators of the north-south long-distance trade, seems to have played

22) Frans Blom, Commerce, Trade and Monetary Units of the Maya, *Middle American Research Series Publication No.4 'Middle American Papers,'* New Orleans: The Tulane University of Louisiana, Department of Middle American Research (1932), p.533.

23) Frans Blom, Commerce, Trade and Monetary Units of the Maya, *Middle American Research Series Publication No. 4 'Middle American Papers,'* New Orleans: The Tulane University of Louisiana, Department of Middle American Research (1932), p. 534.

24) Eric R. Wolf, *Sons of the Shaking Earth* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), p.81.

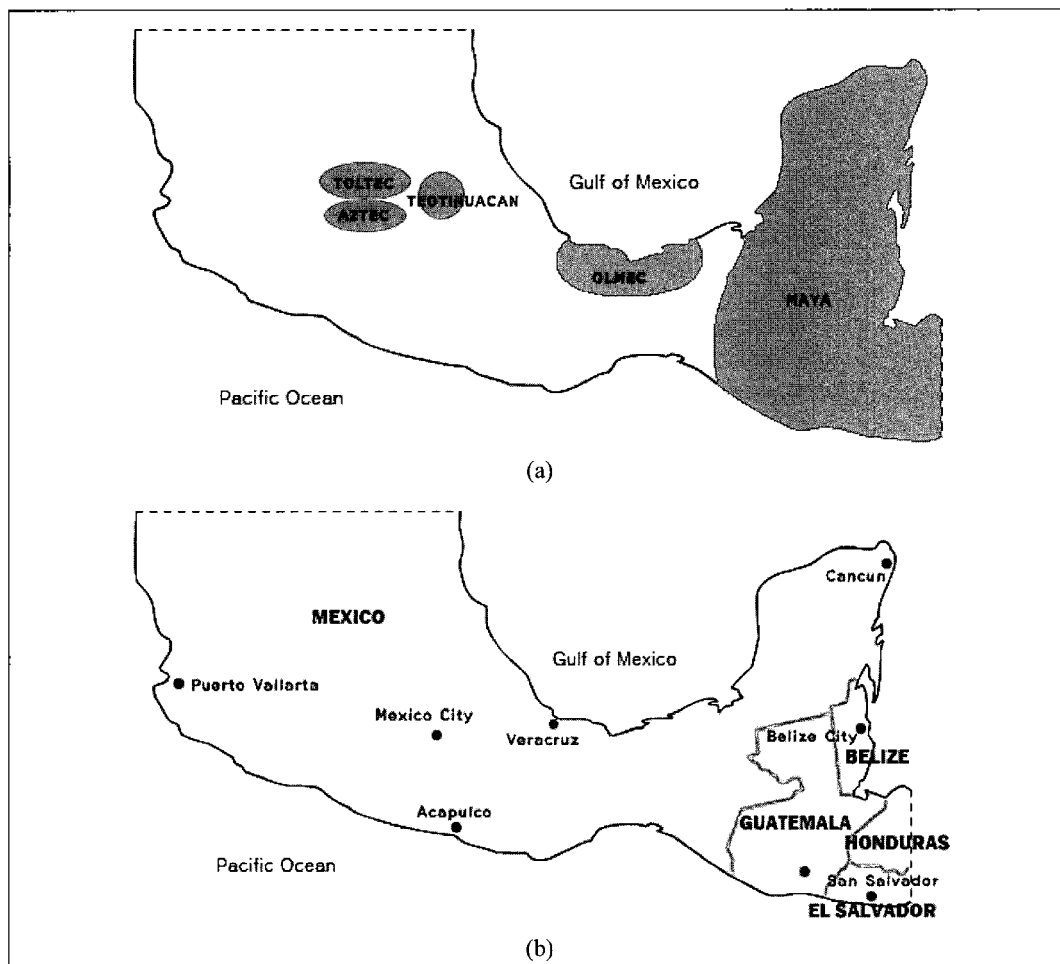
25) Rene Millon, "Teotihuacan: City, State, and Civilization." *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol.1: Archaeology, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp.198-243.

26) Bernal Diaz, op. cit., p.230.

27) Robert J. Sharer, op. cit., p.251.

28) Ibid., p.252.

29) Ibid., p.251.



〈Fig. 2〉 Map of Mesoamerica: (a) Ancient Map Showing the Major Cultures, (b) Present Day Mesoamerica.

significant role in the establishment of a firm long-distance trade between the highland Mexico and the Lowland Maya. It is said that Kaminaljuyu of the Guatemala highland was colonized first by the Olmecs in the Preclassic period, and then with the fall of the Olmecs, was colonized again by the dominant power of the Central Mexico, Teotihuacan.³⁰⁾

Sharel³¹⁾ suggested that as Tikal emerged as a powerful state in the lowland Maya and the Teotihuacan-Kaminaljuyu alliance chose Tikal as

its partner. The contact between these three regions seem to have been based on political as well as economical alliance. Even after Kaminaljuyu and its adjacent regions lost their power and became depopulated, the economic tie between the highland Mexico and the lowland Maya continued to exist.

The significance of Teotihuacan as the classic trade center has been uncovered by Millon's work. As part of the Teotihuacan Mapping Project, Millon³²⁾ found out that there were "mer-

30) *Ibid.*, pp.246-258.

31) *Ibid.*, p.107.

chants' barrios" with ceramics of Veracruz and the lowland Maya. According to Kolb³³⁾ the 'merchants' barrio' served as a combination of storehouse and custom's house.

The merchants' barrio or the ports of trade were explained by Kolb³⁴⁾ and Chapman³⁵⁾ as the locations easily reached by merchants, caravans, or canoe transport and that they were also meeting places for the non-local foreign merchants who were engaged in the transaction of luxury goods. The region and town of Anahuac-Xicalango and associated communities on the Veracruz Gulf Coast^{36,37)} and the province of Anahuac-Ayotlan/Xoconusco on the Chiapan-Guatemalan Pacific Coast³⁸⁾ were free trade loci for the exchange of luxury goods, ceramics, exotic foodstuffs, and unique raw materials during the Aztec Postclassic period.

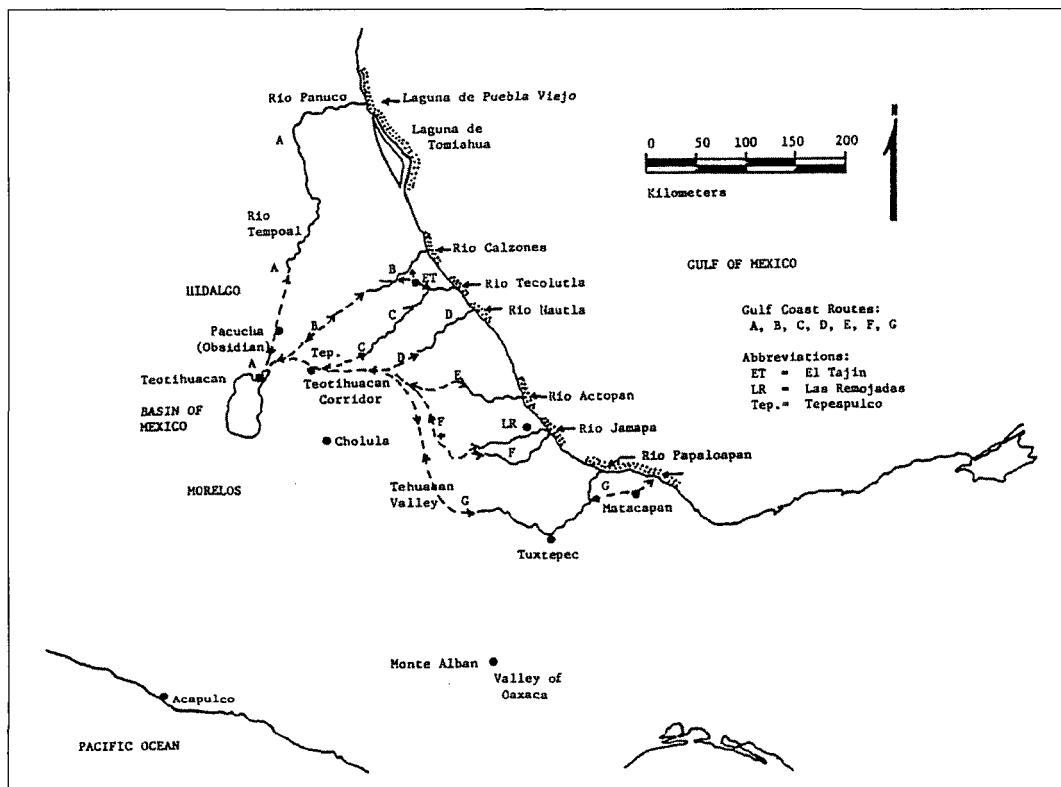
Kolb³⁹⁾ proposed the potential trade route of the Teotihuacanos to the Gulf coast and the Pacific coast for exchanging marine shells and other coastal products based on the analyses of archaeological evidences (Fig. 3). Since cotton was also cultivated in the coastal regions, it is highly probable that during the Classic period the trade routes of raw cotton fibers were similar or identical the Kolb's model of shell trade. (Fig. 1) shows Kolb's seven routs to the Gulf Coast; Rout A leading to Pachuca then into the Rio Tempoal and Rio Panuco region to La Huasteca and Pueblo, Rout B passing 'to-

ward present-day Tulacingo to the coast north of Classic El Tajin, Route C going eastward from the Teotihuacan Valley to Tepeapulco, Route D continuing overland to the northeast into the drainage basin of the Rio Nautla hence to the coast, Rout E initially following Rout D and passing modern Perote, Jalapa, and Coatepec into the Rio Actopan drainage, Rout F initially following rout D finally leading to Veracruz coast, Rout G following the Teotihuacan Corridor as routes D, E, and F, and going into the Rio Papalopan region and possibly to Matacapan.⁴⁰⁾

It seems relevant to apply Kolb's model to the cotton trade of the Classic period considering the similar climatic condition necessary for the marine shells or exotic feathers and the cotton cultivation. Although Kolb's model did not suggest the possibility of long-distance trade between Teotihuacan-Mayan lowland, it seems probable that indirect long-distance exchange system must have been established through 'Teotihuacan-Kaminaljuyu-Lowland Maya' during the early classic period and 'Teotihuacan-Matacapan lowland Maya. During the Middle to the late classic period [the possible Teotihuacan barrio at Matacapan is said to have been built during Middle classic and heavily occupied during the Late classic.

Among the regions of Yucatan, it seems probable that interregional exchange routes existed based primarily on land. However, river canoe-trade must also have played an important role

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- 32) Rene Millon, "Teotihuacan: City, State and Civilization," in *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians*, Vol.1: Archaeology, ed. Jeremy A. Sabloff (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp.198-243.
- 33) Charles C. Kolb, Commercial Aspects of Classic Teotihuacan Period 'Thin Orange' Ware. In *Research in Economic Anthropology*, ed. Barry L. Isaac (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1986), pp.155-205.
- 34) Charles C. Kolb, *Marine Shell Trade and Classic Teotihuacan*, Mexico, BAR International Series 364 (Oxford: BAR, 1987), pp. 105-126.
- 35) Anne Chapman, "Port of trade enclaves in Aztec and Maya civilization," In *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, eds. Karl Polanyi, Conrad Arensberg, & Harry Pearson (New York: Free Press, 1957), p.115, p.128.
- 36) *Ibid.*, pp.135-141.
- 37) F. F. Berdan, "Ports of Trade in Mesoamerica: A Reappraisal," In *Cultural Continuity in Mesoamerica*, ed. David Browman (New York: Walter De Gruyter Inc., 1978), p. 191.
- 38) Anne Chapman, *op. cit.*, pp.141-142.
- 39) Charles C. Kolb, *op. cit.*, pp.111-116.
- 40) *Ibid.*, pp.114-115.



<Fig. 3> Gulf Coast to Highlands Commercial Routes during the Classic Teotihuacan Period⁴¹⁾.

among the regions of Rio Usumacinta or Rio Grijalva, etc. It seems unlikely that long-distance canoe-trade around the Yucatan Peninsula existed during the Classic period when the northern parts of Yucatan were not yet developed. It is with the opening of the Postclassic that large scale around-the-seacoast trade be firmly established. However, the Postclassic trade of Mesoamericans will not be discussed in this paper.

IV. Summary and Conclusion

Due to the diversity in climate, the Mesoamerican regions were symbiotically linked to each other by the regional and long-distance trade. Among the traded goods, cotton fibers and cloths were one of the important items, which not only fulfilled their utilitarian needs but also symboliz-

ed the elite dominated society of Mesoamerican states. Cotton, grown only in humid and warm tropical climate, below elevation of 6,000 meters, was a primarily cultivated in the Pacific and Gulf Coasts of Central Mexico and in most of the areas of Yucatan. It seems likely that highland regions were basically employed in weaving the cloths, whereas the coastal regions and the Mayan lowlands were employed in both spinning and weaving.

In the Preclassic period, the Olmecs are known to have created the first Mesoamerican north-south trade route from the Pacific Coast to Guatemala highland. During the Classic period, the rise of the urban state in Teotihuacan firmly established the east-west trade routes as well as the previous north-south routes. Because of the similarity in climatic conditions for marine shells

41) Charles C. Kolb, 1987. op. cit., p.112.

and cotton cultivation, Kolb's model seems to be applicable to the cotton trade of the classic Teotihuacan. Based on Kolb's model, it could be hypothesized that Teotihuacan-Kaminaljuyu-Maya was the indirect trade routes connecting the Basin of Mexico and the Mayan regions in the Classic period.

In order to build a unique model of the trade network of cotton goods, or largely textile goods, more extensive literature review of the archaeological and ethnohistorical research on the related topic seems necessary. However, with present limitations, it is hoped that this paper provided a insight for understanding the probable network of cotton trade among the prehispanic Mesoamerican, and furthermore re-emphasize the importance of textile artifacts in the field of archaeology.

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