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Finnair's "New Silk Road" in the New Millennium:
An Analysis of the Construction of Asia and of the Company

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During the past century, an increasingly diverse world provided us with opportunities for intercultural communication; especially the growth of commerce at all levels from domestic to international has made the combination of the theories of intercultural communication and international business necessary.

As one of the main beneficiaries in international business in recent years, companies in airline industries have developed their international market. For instance, Finnair has developed its Asian strategy which responds to the increasing market demand for flights from Europe to Asia in the new millennium. Therefore, the company manages marketing communication in a global environment and becomes a suitable case for studying the theories of intercultural communication in the context of international marketing.

Finnair implemented a large number of international advertisements to promote its Asian routes, where Asia has been constructed as a number of exotic destinations. Meanwhile, the company itself as a provider of these destinations has also been constructed contrastively. Thus, this thesis aims at research how Finnair constructs Asia and the company itself in the new millennium, and how these constructions compare with the theories of intercultural communication.

This research applied the theories of international marketing, intercultural communication and culture. In order to analyze the collected corpora as Finnair's international advertisements and its annual reports in the new millennium, the methods of content analysis and discourse analysis have been used in this research.

As a result, Finnair has purposefully applied the essentialist approach to intercultural communication and constructed Asia as an exotic "Other" due to the company's market orientation. Meanwhile, Finnair has also constructed the company itself two identities based on the same approach: as an international airline provider between Europe and Asia, as well as a part of Finnish society.

The combination of intercultural communication and international marketing theories, together with the combination of the methods of content analysis and discourse analysis ensure the originality of this paper.

Keywords:

Intercultural communication, international marketing, advertising, Finnair, Asia, Otherness, selfness.

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1. Introduction

The world became a more diverse place for its inhabitants during the past century due to the technological innovations and sociopolitical changes.¹ More access to global information through the mass media, more links via telecommunication systems, more transportation connections as well as more openness between national borders reduce the geographical distance between people, and meanwhile bring those more opportunities to confront the variety of different cultures and societies.²

This increasingly diverse world provides both benefits and challenges: on the one hand, communicating with people from different cultures can establish relationships and increase commerce at all levels from domestic to international; on the other hand, since every person is encultured into a particular culture with different characteristics, from which they learn the behavioral patterns, values, and attitudes that govern human interaction remain relatively unchanged, the misunderstandings between different cultural groups can create confusion, distrust, even lead to hostility and conflicts, and thus it brings the necessity of studying intercultural communication.³

Intercultural communication is a multidisciplinary field that combines those of interculturality which contains the complex phenomenon of intercultural contact, and communication which is the foundation of all human relationships.⁴ Different understandings of intercultural communication are applied in practice in different fields of

¹ Neuliep. (2009). 2.

² Ibid..

³ Ibid.; Czinkota, Rivoli & Ronkainen. (1989). 230-231; Neuliep. (2009). 4-6; Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 158.

⁴ Ernest & Hess-Lüttich. (2003). 41-58.

studies, such as sociology, psychology, linguistics and communication.⁵ According to Dervin, these different understandings are formulated into three approaches: solid, liquid and Janusian, which represent the perspectives of essentialist, non-essentialist and the one in-between.⁶ The essentialist approach reduces the complexity of “culture” and categorizes people based on patterns such as geographical origins. The non-essentialist understanding oppositely focuses on the diversity of “culture” and people, while “Janusian” approach admits but reduces this complexity and diversity at the same time.⁷

Since the past four decades, the growth of the importance of international business has shaped and presented us with a global marketplace. It provides a global network that links countries and individuals much closer than ever before, and brings a global orientation to investment and production strategies, too.⁸ While individuals at all levels – both customers and personnel of international companies – are involved in intercultural communication, culture became one of the most challenging elements of the international marketplace, because cultural difference is one of the major problems that cause the failure of business assignments.⁹ Therefore, the application of the theories of intercultural communication into international business becomes necessary.

As one of the main beneficiaries in international business in recent years, the airline industry plays an important role in the service sector which it influences

⁵ Bennett. (ed.). (1998).

⁶ Dervin. (2010).

⁷ Dervin. (2009); Sen. (2006). xvi; Dervin. (2010); Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 3; Abdallah-Preteille. (2001).

⁸ Czinkota, Rivoli & Ronkainen. (1989). 21 & 7.

⁹ Ibid.. 230 & 251; Hynes. (2005)

interdependently with both transportation, as well as hospitality and tourism industries.¹⁰ The saturation of the domestic market and the (possible) declining interest it causes, as well as the competition and foreign demand become the main forces that urge airline companies to develop their international market..¹¹

During the 1980s and 1990s, Finnair focused on the European market, and now it switches to a global approach.¹² The competition in international airline industry becomes more intense as a result of more efficient marketing, international cooperation and new information technology; and this triggered the strategic decision of Finnair to join the global Oneworld alliance in the autumn of 1998, which aims to offer passengers a global flight network.¹³

As the location of various states and cultural entities, Asia has been constantly constructed by the “West”; now “the huge continent’s diverse cultures and differing stages of development create contrasting markets in terms of economy and travel”, and furthermore, “the interaction between Europe and Asia continues to grow”.¹⁴ Therefore, Finnair expands its business globally: the company gradually started its Asian marketing strategy since the 1980s, and now it regularly flies to nine Asian destinations.¹⁵

Back to November 1976, Finnair started its flights to Bangkok. The company introduced its first non-stop flights from Helsinki to Tokyo on 22 April 1983. Five years

¹⁰ Curry. (1999). 17-18.

¹¹ Ibid.. 55.

¹² Haapavaara. (1999). 89.

¹³ Ibid.. 99 & 111.

¹⁴ Korhonen. (2006); Lewis & Wigen. (1997);
<http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_Annual_Review_2007.pdf>,
retrieved November 2009. 9.

¹⁵ <<http://feel.finnair.com/full.html>>, accessed May 10, 2010.

later, Finnair operated direct flights from Helsinki to Beijing on 2 June 1988. The flights represented the first direct connection between Europe and China by a Western European airline. Then Finnair expanded its flight program to Osaka in 1995.¹⁶

In the new millennium, new destinations were added to the Asian network. Finnair opened its first flight to Hong Kong on 7 February 2002. Then on 2 September next year, it began flying to Shanghai. In the summer of 2006, Nagoya became Finnair's third Japanese destination; and on 30 October the same year, flights to Delhi which is Finnair's first Indian destination began. After that, the opening of a direct service to Seoul in South Korean in the summer of 2008 has strengthened the company's Asian network further.¹⁷

Since Finnair rapidly increased the emphasis and competence on Asian marketing in the new millennium, the company engages more in intercultural communication, which makes Finnair a proper case to study the theories and practices of the field. The strategic change of the company on Asian marketing can be seen evidently through the launch of a large amount of the advertising campaigns of Finnair's flights between Europe and Asia, as well as statements in the company's recent-year annual reports.

Due to its wide-range and efficient coverage via mass media, advertising is an important marketing communication tool that communicates multiple and mass receivers than with a specific person or small group; in international advertising, this communication is from one country to another.¹⁸ By constructing and presenting Asia, Finnair has introduced Asian cultures to its audience – mainly Europeans – through the promotion of

¹⁶ Ibid..

¹⁷ Ibid..

¹⁸ Shimp. (1993). 8;

< http://www.marketingpower.com/_layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=I>, accessed February 3, 2010.

its Europe-Asia routes. These advertisements are considered appropriate corpora for the construction of the “Other” in intercultural communication studies.

According to the theories of cultural identity, when defining the Self, one needs to compare with the “contrastive” “Other”, and vice versa.¹⁹ For this reason, when Finnair is constructing Asia, it is also constructing the company itself. Since an annual report is an evaluation of a company’s financial performance during the previous year, which is relied on by investors, shareholders, employees and other readers when making important strategic and financial decisions, it is a relatively credible source compared with other accessible information to analyze a company’s performance; especially due to the new functions of annual reports in recent years, they became a communication tool a company uses to promote its principles, strategies and success, and accordingly the attitudes and identification of the company can be traced in these reports.²⁰

Therefore, the central questions of this research are “how does Finnair construct Asia in its international advertising campaigns and construct the company itself in its annual reports in the new Millennium, and how do these constructions compare with the theories of intercultural communication?” Based on the collected corpora, the methodologies were chosen accordingly: content analysis is used to analyze advertisements and discourse analysis is used to process annual reports.

Since this paper uses an international company Finnair as the case and aims to study the theories of intercultural communication in the context of international marketing, it starts with marketing theories in section 2.1 that introduces the meaning and purpose of

¹⁹ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001).

²⁰ Hynes. (2004).

international business and international marketing, the principles of marketing and its communication tools which link to part of the collected corpora – advertisements. Then in section 2.2 the theories of intercultural communication explain the meaning of it and introduce its different approaches in which distinguishing perspectives towards culture and cultural identity are presented that lead to the theories of culture and representation in section 2.3; meanwhile, the notion of Asia is also introduced together with theories of culture, because it formed the origin of the construction of Asia. Following the theories that are going to be applied in this research, some previous studies about national stereotyping and cultural impacts on international branding are presented in section 2.4, and they also provide a theoretical base for this research.

After the theoretical framework, methodologies in section 3 present the research questions, the limitation of this study, the description of data, and the analyzing methods of this research, which are content analysis and discourse analysis. Then followed by the application of these methods into the analysis of advertisements and annual reports in section 4, the results of this study will be explained in the conclusion in section 5.

2. Theoretical Framework

Since this paper aims to study the theories of intercultural communication in the context of international marketing by analyzing the case of the international company Finnair, it is necessary to clarify the meanings of international business and international marketing, the ways of their operation and their relations between each other.

2.1. International Marketing

2.1.1. International business and international marketing

International business aims to satisfy the objectives of individuals and organizations through transactions across national borders, and this can be achieved through marketing which is “the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”.²¹ This process of marketing in international business that Doole and Lowe interpreted as international marketing simply means that one or more marketing mix decisions of a company are made across national boundaries; i.e., the company establishes manufacturing facilities and coordinates marketing strategies overseas.²²

In international marketing, managers focus on product markets and furthermore, the differences due to the physical location of customer groups, who are seeking shared benefits and emphasizing their similarities despite their geographic locations, that is, no matter where the consumers and producers come from, the creation of consumers’ needs and supporting of their demands is still the core of business.²³ Therefore, the meaning of international marketing is to apply marketing principles to business in a multinational sphere, which brings the necessity to study the fundamental theories of marketing; accordingly an understanding about the nature of (international) marketing that provides communication tools for (international) business stretches across and supports the study of international communication in the same context.

²¹ Czinkota, Rivoli & Ronkainen. (1989). 18;
<<http://www.marketingpower.com/AboutAMA/Pages/DefinitionofMarketing.aspx>>,
accessed February 3, 2010.

²² Doole & Lowe.. (2001).

²³ Muhlbacher, Helmuth & Dahringer. (2006).

2.1.2. Marketing, marketing mix and promotion

Marketing is the initial movement of ideas that results in a saleable product, much of it involves communications activities, and these activities - that is marketing communications - represents the collection of all elements in an organization's marketing mix that facilitate exchanges by bringing about shared meaning with the organization's customers.²⁴ The technical universals of marketing, despite geographical influence, which ensure a long-term competitive advantage to the company, are target markets planning, and marketing management executing which includes implementing marketing mix elements to satisfy the needs of target markets.²⁵

A marketing mix consists of four sets of decisions which are product, pricing, distribution and promotion decisions. The last one generally refers to various techniques – usually four types: advertising, personal selling, public relations, and supplemental efforts / sales promotion - used to create a positive image of a product / service in the minds of potential customers and to support marketing efforts.²⁶

The coordination of advertising, public relations and other marketing mix of a brand with each other is one of the most important marketing developments toward the integrated marketing communications of the last decade in the 20th century.²⁷ In Finnair's Asian strategy, the promotional method of advertising is widely applied due to its particular function of wide-range and efficient audience coverage.

²⁴ Curry. (1999). 3; Shimp. (1993). 8.

²⁵ Bartels. (1968). 56-61.

²⁶ Curry. (1999). 3 & 124.

²⁷ Shimp. (1993). 10.

2.1.3. Advertising

As an important marketing communication tool, advertising is “the placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms...who seek to inform and/or persuade members of a particular target market or audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas”.²⁸ Due to its multiple functions in communication, advertising becomes a very often used promoting method of companies, because it can stimulate consumption by generating people’s needs in which they seek their identities.²⁹

With the wide-range and efficient coverage via mass media, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the Internet, and other media (e.g., billboards), or direct mails, advertising involves mass and direct-to-customer communication, along with the method of public relations that earns public understanding and acceptance through the use of corporate symbols, corporate advertising, customer relations programs, and the generation of publicity.³⁰

Advertising makes consumers aware of the product /service, and educates them about the features and benefits of those; it reminds consumers about the brands and persuades them to buy; it adds values to companies’ offerings mutually by innovating, by improving quality or by altering consumer perceptions; it enhances the company’s

²⁸ <[http://www.marketingpower.com/ layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=A](http://www.marketingpower.com/layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=A)> accessed February 3, 2010.

²⁹ Ibid.. 263; Storey. (1996). 114.

³⁰ Shimp. (1993). 8; Czinkota, Rivoli & Ronkainen. (1989). 487.

marketing communication process and assists sales representatives.³¹

Advertising is considered non-personal because the paying company is rather communicating with multiple and mass receivers than with a specific person or small group; especially in international advertising, the transfer of advertising appeals, messages, art, copy, photographs, stores, as well as video and film segments (or spots) is from one country to another.³² Hence, the key elements to be considered in advertising are media strategy and the promotional message.

Media strategy refers to the selection of media vehicles, the development of a schedule that clarifies the implementing time and process of these media vehicles, and creative strategy which is the promotional message. Effective advertising should be developed based on well-planned marketing strategy; it must be related more with consumer's needs and wants than the marketer's; it should be persuasive – but not promise more than what it can deliver, and competitive; and its ideas should be highly related with the selling message.³³

All promotion, especially advertising, is confronting problems of overstatement and misrepresentation, so it is important to international companies to choose a proper combination of promotional tools for creating images among the intended target audience.

³⁴ The choice usually depends on the target audience, company objectives, the product / service, the resources available for the endeavor, and the availability of the tool in a

³¹ Czinkota, Rivoli & Ronkainen. (1989). 263-264.

³² Ibid.. 8; < <http://www.marketingpower.com/layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=I>> accessed February 3, 2010.

³³ Shimp. (1993). 293.

³⁴ Curry. (1999). 4.

particular market.³⁵

In the case of Finnair, the company aims to promote its flights to Asia to potential global consumers, which requires the creation of persuasive messages in the advertisements and the maximum number of audience that are aware of the product. Therefore, Finnair chose multiple media – mostly used are the Internet, television and magazines (e.g., the onboard ones “Blue wings”) to maximize the large coverage of audience; and due to the orientation of sales and profits, there is no need to present Asia from all perspectives but instead, a constructed Asia that draws the attention and needs of audience who come from different origins with different cultural backgrounds.

To sum up, when doing international business, the nature of marketing drives Finnair to promote its flights to Asia through international advertisements; this leads to one of the purposes of this research that is to see how Finnair constructs Asia in these advertisements.

Since companies expanding internationally arrange their daily operations, especially in international marketing communications that necessitate communicating with their foreign markets, customers and personnel, methods of intercultural communication are required.³⁶ Otherwise, the ignorance or misunderstandings of elements such as languages, customs and religions from different cultural groups/backgrounds may cause problems in the companies’ daily operation. After all, “the business of international business is culture”.³⁷

³⁵ Czinkota, Rivoli & Ronkainen. (1989). 481.

³⁶ Ibid.. 230.

³⁷ Hofstede. (1999). 381.

2.2. Intercultural Communication

When Finnair creates its international advertisements to attract audience from different cultures, these advertisements are involved in intercultural communication through the construction of Asia, which requires the company to adopt and interpret theories of intercultural communication in the context of international marketing. In order to compare this construction with these theories, it is necessary to define intercultural communication and briefly explore the contents of different understandings / approaches towards this wide field of studies.

2.2.1. Definition of intercultural communication

People are different from each other and they belong to cultural groups with different characteristics; as a matter of fact, this creates culture and brings the necessity of studying intercultural communication.³⁸ The concept of intercultural communication combines those of interculturality which contains the complex phenomenon of intercultural contact, and communication.³⁹

As a social phenomenon, intercultural communication is often confused with other concepts such as cross-cultural or multi-cultural communication from which it bears different goals.⁴⁰ Take cross-cultural communication as an example, it involves comparisons of communication across cultures, while the intercultural aspects generally

³⁸ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 158.

³⁹ Ernest & Hess-Lüttich. (2003). 41-58.

⁴⁰ Dervin. (2010).

involve communication between people from different national cultures; the former compares behavior in different cultures, and the latter examines behavior when members of different cultures interact.⁴¹

Intercultural communication includes a comprehensive range of social phenomena, which are

- The interpretive constitution of cultural distinctions, typifications and identifications, as well as the cognitive and social preconditions of such social constructs;
- Various forms of constructive and destructive practices of intercultural interaction;
- Social power-structures and psycho-emotional constraints which may foster intercultural interactions and cultural hegemony; and
- Symbolic sedimentations and material manifestations of intercultural communication.⁴²

Therefore to understand and study intercultural communication, various perspectives are necessary and thus this makes it an interdisciplinary field of studies which primarily involves psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics and communication. The main contributions of the various disciplines are “perception”, “interpretation”, “attribution” in the fields of psychology, linguistics and communication; “verbal communication” in the fields of linguistics and communication; “nonverbal communication” in communication; “communication styles” in linguistics and

⁴¹ Gudykunst & Mody. (eds.) (2002). 19 &179; Gudykunst. (2000). 293-315.

⁴² Otten, et al.
<<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/viewArticle/1248/2698>>
accessed February 4, 2010.

communication; and “values” in psychology, anthropology and sociology.⁴³

Researchers in these various fields study from their own perspectives as well as with their own focuses and methods, thus different approaches to intercultural communication were developed. The purpose of analyzing the construct of Asia in this research necessitates the application of intercultural communication theories, to which different approaches in the practice of international marketing were established and are distinguishing from those in other fields of studies due to the market orientation.

2.2.2. Different approaches to intercultural communication

Intercultural communication has been studied by many scholars and their understandings were generally divided into essentialist and non-essentialist approaches.⁴⁴ Later towards otherness and interculturality within the field of intercultural communication, Dervin adopted concepts from sociology, applied them to the research in intercultural communication by reformulating the three approaches as “solid”, “liquid” and “Janusian”, which the first two terms were primarily introduced by Bauman Z. into his studies on modernity, post-modernity and consumerism, while the third approach was named after the two-faced God Janus proposed by Dervin.⁴⁵

Bauman sees modernity as a time that fears of the unfamiliar, a time that chases certainty and security, and as a time that organizes life into known and controllable categories. In such a society, the unfamiliar and strangeness is new and tempting but also

⁴³ Bennett. (ed.). (1998).

⁴⁴ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 2.

⁴⁵ Dervin. (2009).

fearful.⁴⁶ He also argues that since the 1950s/60s, the modern society has shifted from a society of producers to one of consumers; instead of chasing security, people started to consume and enjoy; freedom became what people were after. This was seen as a shift from “solidified” modernity to changeable, flexible and “fluid” post-modernity, that is from “solid” modernity to “liquid” time.⁴⁷

Dervin’s adoption of the term of “solid” into intercultural communication implies that the essentialist understanding reduces and solidifies “culture” to national and geographical boundaries, ethnicity, sex and professions that categorize people and ignore the complexity of them.⁴⁸ Contrary to essentialists, non-essentialists see people as diverse individuals instead of concluding patterns due to their origins, ethnicity, sex and professions. A non-essentialist view sees as “liquid”, focuses on the complexity of culture, that is, cultures are not fixed facts within certain national boundaries, “societies constantly live through open-ended, ongoing mixing”, unstable hybrids that are continuously being constructed by individuals.⁴⁹ Thus, all communication as cultural acts is flexible and changeable as “liquid”, so is intercultural communication.⁵⁰

The non-essentialist approach provides a method of how people see each other as diverse diversity; in other words, the origins of people do not determine who they are. Meanwhile, a third approach “Janusian” between the previous two also exists, and is usually used in political discourses and research.⁵¹ It, on the one hand, agrees that

⁴⁶ Bauman. (1991).

⁴⁷ Ibid.; Bauman. (2000).

⁴⁸ Dervin. (2009); Sen. (2006). xvi; Dervin. (2010).

⁴⁹ Bauman. (2004); Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 3; Dervin. (2010).

⁵⁰ Abdallah-Preteille. (2001).

⁵¹ Dervin. (2009).

people/cultures are diverse, yet still categorizes people on the other.

Due to the nature of marketing and its principles, the essentialist and Janusian approaches of intercultural communication have also and always been used in tourism and international marketing that provide people with the possibilities to experience the different and unfamiliar styles of food, fashions and customs, where stereotyping is used very often as a functional tool.⁵²

The first approach of intercultural communication simplifies the complexity of human culture; yet it makes culture easy and quick to deal within the field of management studies where people look for a usable and marketable model or formula to communicate with people from different backgrounds.⁵³ For instance, cultural trainings in marketing management always remain categorization and attribution particularly on the basis of factual and descriptive knowledge. From this perspective, culture or cultures become social constructions that are established according to factual, limited and partial cultural knowledge instead of being objective, like Hofstede's five-dimension model.⁵⁴

Hofstede's theory was criticized by a professor of management Brendan McSweeney.⁵⁵ He questions the validity of Hofstede's findings, because neither a company nor its employees can represent a nation, and furthermore, he doubts whether nations have cultures, or whether national culture determines uniform national actions and institutions.

⁵² Dahlén. (1997).

⁵³ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 3.

⁵⁴ Abdallah-Preteille. (2006);

McSweeney. (2002): By collecting data from IBM employees through questionnaires, Geert Hofstede developed a model that identified five Dimensions: "Power vs. Distance", "Individualism vs. collectivism", "Masculinity vs. femininity", "Uncertainty vs. Avoidance", and "Long- vs. Short- Term Orientation" to differentiate cultures.

⁵⁵ McSweeney. (2002).

Besides, nations can change due to political reasons, so a question arise that if national cultures changes with nations they belong to as well. In a word, McSweeney finds Hofstede's analysis "reductive, closed, single-cause, one-sided proof and implausible".⁵⁶

Different from Hofstede's essentialist notion of national culture, McSweeney suggests that to understand national cultures, people need to be open to know more about the richness and diversity of national practices and institutions in order to understand the properties and prospects of nations, but not the assumption of their "uniformity". He also explains from the perspective of management that rich considerations of the characteristics of individuals, organizations, societies, nations and regions are both outside and within the management disciplines, and people need to cope with change, power and variety.⁵⁷

For this reason, this research agrees with the "liquid"/non-essentialist perspective of study intercultural communication, and accordingly aims to compare the constructions of Asia and Finnair itself with this fundamental understanding.

When comparing these approaches, perhaps all of them views culture from their own perspectives and provide culture different contents that increase its complexity; in other words, it is the different understandings of the concept of culture, its artifacts and people from different cultural backgrounds with the different attitudes towards them distinguish these approaches from each other. For this reason, theories of culture, otherness and their connections with intercultural communication are presented in the next section.

2.3. Culture and Otherness

⁵⁶ Ibid..

⁵⁷ Ibid.. 112.

2.3.1. Culture and the construction of the “Other”

The word “culture” in English has two normal uses as high culture and anthropological culture. High culture, according to Raymond Williams, refers to the intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development of an individual, group or society, or a range of intellectual and artistic activities and their products, such as art, music, literature, and theater, while anthropological culture to him is the entire way of life, activities, beliefs and customs – material production - of a people, group or society.⁵⁸ In studies of intercultural communication, the concern is with anthropological culture which refers to social practices, as any aspect of the ideas, communications, or behaviors of a group of people that distinguish them from other groups.⁵⁹ Or in Stuart Hall’s words, culture characterizes a particular society, class or group at a particular historical moment as lived practices.⁶⁰

Within communities of life and fate that are “welded solely by various ideas or principles”, identity becomes a process of identification and differentiation that distinguishes members of and out of the communities.⁶¹ In the modern time of industrial capitalism, people’s identities were founded on and attached to their working career, and they expected a steady life.⁶² Meanwhile, working people spent their incomes on purchasing living necessities, and that made them “consumers”.⁶³

The nature of consumption changed completely in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when working people consumed based on “desire” rather than “need”. “Mass

⁵⁸ Williams. (1976). 90-91.

⁵⁹ Scollon & Scollon.(2001). 139-140.

⁶⁰ Hall. (2005). 7-10.

⁶¹ Bauman. (2004). 11; Hall. (1992).

⁶² Bauman. (2005). 27.

⁶³ Storey. (1996). 114 & 117.

consumption” occurred and the society becomes “a consumer’s society” at the moment now called “postmodernism”.⁶⁴ People’s identities are built by what they consume rather than what they do, because people can always purchase newer things to make them distinguished from others after the fast changing fashion which makes identities consumed as well. Hence, Bauman called this time that the “liquid modernity” with no certainties.⁶⁵ Cultural identity is constantly changing belongings and identification that based on ethnicity, language, religion and nationality.⁶⁶

During the process that identities are built up, people always take a particular perspective to describe the “world” in their mind, which indicates their views and values that might be different from others, and thus set boundaries between the “Self” and the “Other”.⁶⁷ In intercultural communication, the distinction between “Self” and “Other” is always being discussed. Adrian Holliday et al. refer to that to define the “Self”, one needs to compare with the “contrastive others” which are different from that “Self”; in other words, one can be a ”Self” because one is not somebody else.⁶⁸

As essential to meaning, difference distinguishes “Us/ the Self” from the “Other” can be both positive and negative.⁶⁹ It is a means of learning the Self in a subjective sense, and meanwhile of splitting and hostility towards the “Other”.⁷⁰ Usually, this leads to cultural differentialism, which differs people /their identities from each other based on their “cultural belongs”, and reduces them into one single identity within a certain national and

⁶⁴ Ibid.; Bauman. (2007).

⁶⁵ Storey. (1996). 114 & 117; Connolly & Prothero. (2008).

⁶⁶ Hall. (1992).

⁶⁷ Gee. (1999). 2.

⁶⁸ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001).

⁶⁹ Hall. (1997). 234-5.

⁷⁰ Ibid.. 238.

geographical boundary as foreign Others.⁷¹

In modern society, the images of the foreign “Other” are constantly provided by the mass media, and this influences the way people see themselves and others; it is easy to judge and categorize foreign cultures based on the prior images, since people do not always search for deeper understanding (emergent evidence) of those cultures because of simple interests, but intend to formulate an ideal characterization of the foreign “Other” instead, which create and develop stereotypes.⁷² As Finnair intended to promote the constructed Asia in its international advertisements, the company as the Self is also constructed, for instance, in annual reports, hence studying representation and stereotypes shall provide the theoretical basis for the analysis of these constructions.

2.3.2. Representation and stereotypes

As members of a same culture, people “share” a same conceptual map which gives the ideas of meanings as a common sense. From the semiotic/constructionist approach, people construct meanings by using concepts and signs as representational systems that meaning and language to culture which needs to be interpreted between one another.⁷³

The meaning of the word “represent”, which is to call up the thing to be presented in the mind by description or imagination, as well as to symbolize or stand for something, makes “representation” the process by which members of a culture use language to produce meaning; and the language here means a broader system which

⁷¹ Dervin. (2010).

⁷² Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 23.

⁷³ Ibid.. 25-26.

deploys signs by which meaning is provided.⁷⁴

The codes people use to interpret meaning and representation do not exist in nature but are the result of social conventions which create broad categories of things with common characteristics, that is, types.⁷⁵ By the common use of types, people can categorize things in a meaningful way and make conclusions of those with similar features from previous experience; this provides a routine for people to learn, for instance, different social roles they need to play in daily life.⁷⁶

Though as another set of representational practices as types, stereotypes mean differently. The word “stereotype” came from Greek, which originally meant a solid printing mould or plate that was difficult to change once cast.⁷⁷ It was given its present meaning and adapted to the cognitive studies since Walter Lippmann’s book “Public Opinion” in 1922.⁷⁸ Stereotypes reduce people to a few, simple, essential characteristics which are represented as fixed by Nature.⁷⁹ However, stereotype content is deployed in flexible ways that it is not a fixed category but being selectively applied and constructed.⁸⁰

There are two different types of stereotypes, autostereotypes and heterostereotypes; the former means the judgments about one’s own group, that is, “extremely simplified images about oneself”.⁸¹ People themselves are conditioned by their previous education, media, their parents and friends, visual and physical trips, as well as

⁷⁴ Hall. (1997). 16 & 61.

⁷⁵ Ibid.. 29 & 257.

⁷⁶ Ibid..

⁷⁷ Jones & Colman. (1996). 843.

⁷⁸ Ibid..

⁷⁹ Hall. (1997). 257.

⁸⁰ Oakes, Haslam & Turner. (1994). 122.

⁸¹ Brunsch. (2007). 3.

social cliché, while these images about others refer to the latter type: heterostereotypes.⁸²

Stereotypes symbolically fixed boundaries and exclude every “Other” which does not belong to “Us”.⁸³ People easily pre-define the foreign “Other” based on the stereotypes the “Other” are given, because they are simple, vivid and easily recognized; and the stereotypes, however, are the imagined realities according to the adoption of people’s own/familiar cultural experiences into analyzing the unknown ones they meet.

People do not learn much about the “lived realities” but the construction of the “Other” in Western discourses.⁸⁴ They intend to choose the established essentialism to see the foreign “Other”, and this demand influences the action of mass media; on the contrary, the media can also create and enrich the dominant discourses about those cultural stereotypes, in order to cater the postmodern needs. Hence, stereotyping occurs in and shows the inequalities of power that is the possession of controlling the representation of someone or something in a certain way in a broader cultural or symbolic range⁸⁵.

Some studies divide stereotypes into another two kinds, positive ones that provide the general characteristics of a certain group that may be respected by the observer, while negative ones are disrespected.⁸⁶ However, both these two kinds of stereotypes are selective ways of seeing others that always cause misunderstandings, and may become a source of prejudice; that is why stereotyping is problematic in intercultural communication and cannot be positive.⁸⁷

⁸² Ibid..

⁸³ Hall. (1997). 258.

⁸⁴ Pennycook. (1998). 180.

⁸⁵ Hall. (1997). 258-259.

⁸⁶ Bennett. (1998). 4.

⁸⁷ Ibid..

By implementing public representations in the media/advertisements, where the use of words also contributes on building social images, ideas can be indicated and easily accepted. In the case of Finnair, artifacts of culture are sold through international advertising campaigns which promote categorized concepts of Asia, for instance, a strong description of exoticness via texts and graphics. The market-oriented consideration has “repackaged” the cultural differences in the mass media and therefore intentionally made the foreign “Other” “distinct and separate types of humankind”.⁸⁸ While Finnair constructs Asia as the foreign “Other” in advertisements, the company itself is also constructed vis-à-vis in its annual reports; therefore, representation (of types) and stereotypes are applied in both constructions.

As an area which is not well known by the “West”, Asia is easily reduced to something less than what it is, and this reflects in the mass media that the images of Asia have always been selected according to the expectation of the “West” about Asia, which for tourist purpose is “exotic”, and the word appears in various advertisements. However, instead of being nature-defined geographical area, “Asia” is rather a created notion. Due to the purpose of analyzing Finnair’s construction of Asia, the next section will focus on the creation of Asia from the Western perspective.

2.3.3. The notion of Asia and the “Silk Road”

As a centuries-old and important division, the world is usually framed as the so-called “East and West” when cultural and political matters are discussed. The Western mental

⁸⁸ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 103.

attributes and opposite to which the Eastern traits are consistently identified and characterized with the European approach to life.⁸⁹ Western theorists have studied on the “East” since Herodotus and Hippocrates, and the essence of it is “seen as manifest in communitarian, aesthetic, and other-worldly values, extolling the submission of the individual to a timeless, mystical whole”.⁹⁰ In his book “Orientalism”, Edward Said argued that the “Orient” (though it is neither identical with the “East” nor Asia, it is still closely related to them) was essentially an elaborate construct of the European imagination.⁹¹

The “West” is conventionally defined as Europe and its colonial offshoots that is the power behind a collection of norms and models of behavior for the rest of the world, while the “East” is very often seen equally with Asia which geographically includes countries from Pakistan eastwards and Mongolia southwards within the region that has the Pacific and Indian Oceans as eastern and southern boundaries. Though they are relative concepts when seen from Europe, Asia is definitely smaller, somewhat more coherent than the “East” and thus possible to be understood as an acting power comparable to that of the “West”.⁹²

As time passed by, the use of the term “Silk Road” nowadays does not only refer to the geographical area that covers the present East, South, and Western Asia with the Mediterranean world, as well as North and Northeast Africa and Europe, but also a long cultural history of trans-continental trade which began with the silk trade of China back to

⁸⁹ Lewis & Wigen. (1997). 73.

⁹⁰ Ibid..

⁹¹ Ibid.. 74.

⁹² Korhonen. (2006); Lewis & Wigen. (1997). 6.

its Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE).⁹³ The term was coined in 1877 as "Seidenstraße" by the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen; as one of the world's earliest highways, "Silk Road" is still being used currently to suggest a continuous journey whereas transportation of goods and passengers are involved that conveys a sense of distance and exotic of the continent of Asia.⁹⁴

As a consequence of massive industrial growth and the increasing capital flows of Asia in wide range, this huge continent's "diverse culture and differing stages of development create contrasting markets in terms of economy and travel", which make Asia the fastest growing market area for air traffic, and thus bring Finnair large amount of market demands and long-term growth potential; as a result, Finnair has created a "new Silk Road" to "invest in Asia's future".⁹⁵

Asia and the so-called "West" are rather two metaphorical concepts than entities; the composition of the meanings within them tends to change over time, and their continuing salience as foundational concepts in people's understanding of the world is manifest daily in the popular press.⁹⁶ Accordingly, Finnair's construction of Asia can be traced in its international advertising campaigns that have been published via mass media; and it provides the research opportunity for this paper. Furthermore, based on similar themes there are also a number of previous studies that have been done.

⁹³ Whitfield. (1999); Wood. (2002).

⁹⁴ Wood. (2002).

⁹⁵ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_Annual_Report_2003.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 3;
<http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_vsk05_englanti.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 1&5;
<http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_Annual_Review_2007.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 9.

⁹⁶ Korhonen. (2006); Lewis & Wigen. (1997). 73.

2.4. Previous Studies

Due to the originality of this research which aims to explore the construction of the self and foreign “Other” in the field of international marketing by using content analysis and discourse analysis as methods, previous studies on exactly the same topic are absent so far; however, in the business world, intercultural communication was usually elaborated to an essentialist approach that otherizes culture and cultural identity. Many studies have been made which adopted or analyzed theories to such an approach, and may provide theoretical support and comparative for this research. These previous studies are mainly related to the themes of symbols and images of places/nations and people in advertising, as well as stereotypes of them.

In contemporary advertising, as well as in Finnair’s advertisements, a place is a vital component that images of the place are widely used to market products, locations and services to consumers. Fleming and Roth’s research found that these images are laden with symbolism: the symbols of places are usually widely recognized, and a place itself can be used as a metaphor for a lifestyle or an emotion. The places in advertisements may be devices to enlighten and persuade viewers – potential consumers - to be more involved in the plausible fictions that an advertisement provides.⁹⁷ The study presents a number of different uses of places in advertising that included examples from tourism and airline industries, which correlate it with the research of Finnair’s advertisements in this paper.

As Finnair’s advertisements aim to promote its flights Asia, the review of previous

⁹⁷ Fleming & Roth. (1991).

studies moves on to the analysis of images and symbols of Asia. In her study, Mari Suvanto examines “images of Japan and the Japanese in the Western world” on the basis of the literature targeted at Western audiences during the big boom in the late 20th century. The analysis shows the two Japanese worlds: the old/traditional society with icons such as the geisha, temples, cherry blossom and Mt Fuji and a new/high tech society with icons like the sarariiman, neon lights and electronics. The timeless image of the Japanese is that they are a people with great contradictions; they are different, unique and they have ability to combine the new and the old in great harmony.⁹⁸

Suvanto’s research has analyzed an Asian country’s images by using method of content analysis, which gave ideas of methodologies for the analysis of this thesis. Furthermore, the perspective she analyzed images of Japan as a Finn might also provide something in common with Finnair’s selection of images of Asia in advertising.

The categorized images of Japan in the Western world lead to questions of national stereotyping. As it analyzes advertising as this research about Finnair, Gronhaug and Heide’s “Stereotyping in Country Advertising: an experimental study” examined whether advertising creates stereotyping effects in the target group by analyzing Norway as the target object in their case study. They found that advertising may create changes in the target group's evaluations of the target object (Norway), and result in more coherent and stereotyped knowledge structures.⁹⁹ Therefore, by comparing this result with the analysis of Finnair’s case, one may see whether Finnair’s advertising created stereotypes, and whether they changed the audience’s knowledge of Asia.

⁹⁸ Suvanto. (2002).

⁹⁹ Gronhaug & Heide. (1992).

As an international company, Finnair confronts intercultural encounters when running its service in the global market. In recent years, in order to increase its customers and profits thus to be competitive in the airline industry, Finnair creates a new marketing strategy emphasizes its Asia destinations where there are huge and increasing business opportunity; meanwhile, the company invests in and implements numbers of international advertising campaigns of those destinations.

This paper is going to analyze this construction according to the foregoing review of theories on international marketing, intercultural communication as well as culture, along with the previous studies on symbolizing places and stereotyping national cultures.

3. Methodologies

3.1. Research Questions and the Limitation of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to see how Finnair constructs Asia in its international advertising campaigns and construct the company itself in the company's annual reports (in the new Millennium), and how these constructions compare with theories of intercultural communication. The hypotheses of this research are based on the theories of international marketing, intercultural communication and culture, as well as previous studies and the analysis of data mainly collected from Finnair's official websites. The adoption of intercultural communication theories into the context of international marketing, as well as the combination of content analysis and discourse analysis at the same time provides originality for this research.

An interview request to its global marketing communication personnel was

denied, hence a primary source of the company's internal information cannot be achieved, and this research cannot promise of the full coverage of the company's international advertising campaigns towards Asia during the period being studied; additionally, the analysis of the company's annual reports only concentrates on parts that argue about Asia, and thus may cause limitations of this study.¹⁰⁰

3.2. Data Description

Since the new millennium Finnair started to be more market-involved by implementing its new Asian strategies, images and information of Asia and the increasing demand towards this market are provided more than ever before. Hence, the study of this paper which began in 2009 chooses the period of data that are advertisements from 2001 to 2009, and annual reports from 2001 to 2008.

The entire data to be analyzed in this paper was already published by Finnair, and was collected from Finnair's official websites (include the international site and those for each country in which Finnair runs business), its in-flight magazine "Blue wings" (30 of them published during 2007-2009 were studied through), and Finnair weekly newsletters via e-mails.

To answer the research questions, it is necessary to find out what messages in the advertisements and annual reports have been sent, and how/why they were created/ chosen; therefore 49 international advertisements (46 flat advertisements and 3 video clips) that Finnair made for promoting Asia are collected as the graphic visual corpora, which are

¹⁰⁰ Both advertisements and annual reports that are collected for this research focus on Finnair's passenger traffic; the cargo traffic is not taken into account.

posters, pictures, photographs and video clips. Meanwhile, textual corpus, which refers to Finnair published annual reports from the year 2001 to 2008 and other related sources (for instance, articles in “Blue wings”), have also been studied because marketing strategies and attitudes towards Asia of Finnair are stated in the textual corpus.

A combination of analysis of both types of corpora is necessary, because visual advertisements and annual reports have different emphases due to their nature: advertising as a marketing communication tool means to promote the company’s product / service to the potential customers and assists sales, while annual reports are evaluation of the company’s performance that are provided for investors, shareholders, employees and other readers when making important strategic and financial decisions.¹⁰¹ The two types of corpora are supposed to be mutually supportive to provide a clear explanation of the research questions. The methodology to be used for visual ads is content analysis and discourse analysis for annual reports and articles.

3.3. Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context; and a way of understanding the symbolic qualities of texts (written documents, images and artifacts) which are a part of the wider cultural context.¹⁰² It describes the content, which develops in the interaction between the text and readers, by revealing characteristics or features that readers may not see immediately.¹⁰³ Content

¹⁰¹ Storey. (1996). 114; Hynes & Bexley. (2003).

¹⁰² Krippendorff. (1980). 21.

¹⁰³ Rosengren. (Ed.) (1981). 111 &114.

analysis is usually used to analyze large numbers of images in relation to mass media, for instance images in newspapers and magazines or on television.¹⁰⁴ The method is based on counting the frequency of certain visual elements in a clearly defined sample of images, and then analyzing those frequencies.¹⁰⁵

There are three stages in the process of content analysis. First, research questions should be defined in order to choose the relevant images to be analyzed; second, developing coding categories, which is reducing the chosen images to a number of component parts with certain characteristics which can be labeled in a way that has some analytical significance. This determines the validity of the analysis, while the completely unambiguous coding categories are clearly defined that different researchers at different times using the same categories would code the images in exactly the same way, which makes the coding process replicable. Finally, the results will be analyzed by interpreting through an understanding of the relationship between the codes and images.¹⁰⁶

The quantitative approach and qualitative approach to content analysis are applicable for different purposes and problems.¹⁰⁷ The traditional quantitative approach of content analysis that uses statistics has advantages on managing large numbers of images consistently and systematically; however, since it focuses most on the image itself in its compositional modality, it has problems to explain how the meanings of images are made.¹⁰⁸ The qualitative approach, which analyzes the content through detailed descriptions, provides understanding of “the comprehension of social relations and the

¹⁰⁴ Rose. (2007). 73.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.. 62.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.. 62-71.

¹⁰⁷ Rosengren. (Ed.) (1981). 139.

¹⁰⁸ Rose. (2007). 73.

social role of mass media”.¹⁰⁹

In the case study of this paper, samples of content to be analyzed are Finnair’s international advertising campaigns which promote Asia. Both images (symbols appearing in the advertisements) and texts in the campaigns are categorized based on elements that are most frequently applied in the campaigns (geographical location, food, nature / weather, well-being and activities, as well as cultural elements which refer to architecture, art, people and religion for the purpose of this text).

The study which means to analyze the construction of Asia in those advertisements, concerns also social modality of images than only the images itself by considering their cultural constitution and the social identities of the audience.¹¹⁰ The number of advertising samples is limited, since they are selected among those launched in the first decade of the new century; it is therefore possible to describe details of each image that belong to different categories. Hence, qualitative content analysis seems more appropriate here than a quantitative one.

While analyzing the visual advertisements, Finnair’s strategies in the annual reports are also necessary to process at the same time, in order to provide a supportive reference to the content of the campaigns. Hence, discourse analysis which aims to study the linguistic evidence in written text is used for analyzing the annual reports.

3.4. Discourse Analysis

Discourses provide people with different ways to integrate linguistic with non-language

¹⁰⁹ Rosengren. (Ed.) (1981). 139 & 155.

¹¹⁰ Rose. (2007). 111 & 24.

elements, for instance different ways of thinking, valuing and using symbols in the right places and at the right time so as to enact and recognize different identities and activities, give the material world certain meanings, and distribute social goods in a certain way.¹¹¹

Michel Foucault defines discourse as a form of discipline that is powerful in a particular way due to its productive nature in human thinking and acting; through discourses human subjects are produced.¹¹² Especially nowadays, media discourse becomes the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, due to the freedom of media as well as its discursive and symbolic power.¹¹³

The use of discourse analysis (DA) tends to analyze written, spoken or signed language, that is, interpret the intertextuality among various kinds of verbal texts and visual images, as well as explore how languages and images construct specific views of the social world.¹¹⁴ Being important to understand discourses, intertextuality refers to the way the meanings of any one discursive text or image depend on both meanings of the text or the image itself and the ones carried by other texts or images, that is, the potential meaning of texts. In other words, the method analyzes language (linguistic elements) as it is fully integrated with social practices, such as ways of thinking or using non-linguistic symbol systems that construct social languages and difference.¹¹⁵

A discourse analysis is not simply a reflection of human realities, because those realities are being constructed all the time, and language itself has a reflexive relation to situations in which it has different meanings. Therefore, though discourse analyses are not

¹¹¹ Gee. (1999). 12-13.

¹¹² Rose. (2007). 143.

¹¹³ Van Dijk. (2000).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.. 146.

¹¹⁵ Rose. (2007). 142; Gee. (1999). 9-10 & 25; Rose. (2007). 171.

subjective, the validity is not fixed and may slightly vary due to the analysts.¹¹⁶

Discourse analysis has been adopted in a variety of social science disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, anthropology, psychology and political science; each of disciplines uses its own methodologies, for instance, as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced by text and talk.¹¹⁷

DA focuses on context, text surface and rhetorical means, and the types of linguistic elements of DA are argumentation, figurativeness and vocabulary, such as certain argumentation forms and strategies; symbolism and metaphors; vocabulary, style, idioms and clichés; actors like persons and pronominal structure; and so on.¹¹⁸

Primarily on the basis of linguistic evidence, most of the human ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature; conventional metaphors are pervasive and partially structure the human everyday concepts; this structure is reflected in literal language which is an important source of evidence for what human conceptual system is like; because communication is based on the same system that people use in thinking and acting.¹¹⁹ This system contains non-metaphorical and metaphorical concepts.

The non-metaphorical concepts emerge directly from living experience and are defined in their own terms, which include at least spatial orientations, ontological concepts arising in physical experience, such as an entity, a substance, a container and a person, as well as structured experiences and activities; while the metaphorical concepts, that are

¹¹⁶ Gee. (1999). 34.

¹¹⁷ Robin. (2001).; Fairclough. (1995).

¹¹⁸ Wodak & Meyer. (ed.) (2009). 28.

¹¹⁹ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980b). 104; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 453 & 469; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980b). 103.

understood and structured not only on their own terms but rather in terms of other concepts, “involve conceptualizing one kind of objects or experience in terms of a different kind of object or experience”, and thus the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.¹²⁰ Take “argument is war” as an example, this metaphor is reflected in people’s daily expression that when arguing, things people do are partially structured by the concept of “war”, such as “your claims are indefensible”, “shot down arguments”, and “win an argument”.¹²¹

Since metaphorical concepts are defined in terms of non-metaphorical ones, “they show entailment relations parallel to those for the corresponding non-metaphorical concepts” which mainly include spatial orientations as “up-down” and “in-out”; ontological concepts that came from physical experience, for example, entities and containers; as well as structured experiences and activities, such as moving, seeing, playing, and so on..¹²²

Therefore, metaphorical concepts are briefly divided into three types which are orientational, ontological/physical and structural metaphors.¹²³ Furthermore, by identifying and analyzing the systematic connections among and within three basic domains of conceptual structure: physical, cultural, and intellectual, one can see more details in the metaphorical structuring of a concept or system of concepts.¹²⁴

Discourse materials in this paper to be studied are mainly Finnair’s annual reports from the year 2001 to 2008. A transcript that contains categorized linguistic elements collected from those reports was made according to perspectives of people, economy,

¹²⁰ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980c). 195; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980b). 104.

¹²¹ Examples are taken directly from Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 454.

¹²² Lakoff & Johnson. (1980c). 195-198.

¹²³ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 461; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980c). 195-197.

¹²⁴ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 460-461.

geography, efficiency, market demand and operations in time order. Since annual reports are meant to conclude the operational decisions of the company, where both strategies and attitudes are shown, by analyzing the linguistic elements as metaphors used in them, a pattern of the construction of Finnair itself shall be seen. Therefore, the discourse analysis of metaphors used in annual reports is simultaneously and mutually supportive to the content analysis of the company's advertising campaigns though due to the differences of purpose, the orientations of advertisements and annual reports differ from each other.

4. Analysis of Corpora

4.1. Content Analysis of the Construction of Asia in Advertisements

According to the three stages in the process of content analysis stated above, the first step is to define the research question that is “what symbols, icons, and images in the description of Asia are used in these international advertising campaigns?”¹²⁵ The second step is to develop coding categories, such as stereotypes in this case, which can describe certain characteristics of these symbols, icons, and images as labels based on the frequencies they appear. Then by interpreting the relationship between the codes and symbols, icons, as well as images – for example, relationship between stereotypes and images of Asia - an analysis will be done.

The primary study of the contents of 49 advertisements found that they manifest 40 themes which introduce Asia, individual Asian countries or cities from different perspectives (see category based on countries and themes in Appendix 1). These

¹²⁵ Rose. (2007). 62-71.

advertisements can also be categorized into two main groups based on the methods whereby their messages were created: Otherness, as well as representation and stereotype; meanwhile, the frequencies of the use of certain words was studied. Two tables as below briefly show the findings from the analysis of these advertisements: Table 1 categorizes the graphical contents, and Table 2 lists the frequencies of words.

Table 1: Graphical contents of advertisements		
Themes		Contents
Otherness	Generic otherness	Chochin and calligraphy of Japan
		Beijing opera of China
		Taekwondo of South Korea
	Asia as a whole	Food
		Daily necessities (chopsticks, paper parasol and fan, porcelain bowls and plate)
		Images of dragon
		Buddhism
	Zen	
Representation	Architectures	Chinese, Indian & Japanese
	Fauna	Panda
Stereotype	Weather	Nature in Thailand

Table 2: Frequencies of words in advertisements			
Themes	Frequencies		Words
Exotic Asia	14	3	adventure(s)
		3	experience
		2	sunny
		1	exotic
		1	faraway lands
		1	opportunities
		1	taste
		1	fascinating
		1	break

Finnair's efficiency	11	4	fast
		1	shortcut
		1	closer
		1	best connection
		1	fast connection
		1	move smoothly
		1	direct route
		1	opens all of Asia
Seasons	4	2	winter
		2	autumn

4.1.1. Asia's otherness

Cultural differences in the mass media are intentionally shaped as distinct foreign "Other" due to the market-oriented consideration.¹²⁶ A number of Finnair's advertisements use both material and spiritual concepts of Asia as "otherness" to create audience's curiosity towards its destinations in order to enhance the effect of promotion. Based on the origins of these concepts, the otherness Finnair has shown to its audience could be divided into two different types that presented the generic otherness and Asia as a whole.

4.1.1.1. Generic otherness

Japan, China and South Korea are neighboring Asian countries that each of them has its typical cultural artifacts which distinguish from each other. In Finnair's advertising campaigns, different artifacts are used to show the otherness of the countries of origin.

Constructed of a bamboo frame wrapped in washi paper and lighted by a candle, the delicate and gorgeous paper lanterns known as *chochin* are one of Japan's oldest crafts styles; they are originally used to light city streets at night, and can still be found at

¹²⁶ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 103.

festivals or hanging from the eaves of traditional restaurants today.¹²⁷ In a Finnair's campaign for Tokyo (see Appendix 5-20), a photograph of chochin is shown to the readers. Beside its look, the language written on chochin also increases the "foreignness", therefore, Japanese calligraphy arts "shodo" (Appendix 5-19) was applied in advertising.

Besides language, national arts are also used to distinguish the destination country from others. In the campaign Finnair launched before Christmas in 2009 (Appendix 5-21), by using the figure of Beijing opera actress which may not be a well-known thing to the Western audience, Finnair aims to draw their attention to "faraway lands" in Asia. This develops an interest in the strangeness and novelty of these destinations for the audience; however, perhaps too strange that people maybe lack of enough degrees of familiarity which enable them to feel secure enough to enjoy the strangeness of what they experience.¹²⁸

Compares with Beijing opera, Taekwondo might be much more familiar to the audience. As a type of martial arts originally from Korea, Taekwondo was designed into the poster as a symbol of (South) Korea when Finnair promoted its new route to Seoul in 2008.¹²⁹

4.1.1.2. Asia as a whole

As a huge continent, Asia contains many countries presents the world various cultures, and due to the historical reasons, many concepts are commonly shared on the continent. These

¹²⁷ <http://www.tourism.metro.tokyo.jp/english/tourists/info/basic_info/basic/basic3.html> accessed March 7, 2010.

¹²⁸ Cohen. (2004).

¹²⁹ <<http://www.digipaper.fi/bluewings/>>, accessed November 2009. May 2008. 42.

concepts are adopted into Finnair's advertisements to present Asia as a whole.

Food plays an important role in the overall tourism experience as a supporting act in the tourism product; in certain situations, an exciting food and drink culture, or experience can motivate people to visit certain holiday destinations.¹³⁰ Finnair used food from different Asian countries (Appendix 2-1, 2-2, 2-3 and 2-4) as symbols that are typical enough to visualize and represent Asia, a continent different from Europe to present the difference, and call people come and "experience Asia".

Similar to food, the images of daily necessities which are widely used in Asia, such as chopsticks (Appendix 2-5), paper parasol and fan (Appendix 5-10, 5-18), as well as porcelain bowls (see Appendix 5-17, 5-24¹³¹) and plate (see Appendix 5-22) are also viewed as symbols of Asia.

While material concepts of food and daily necessities are seen as symbols of Asia, spiritual concepts also play the same role. When traveling, tourists are also attracted by the participation and experience of activities beside the landscape; especially for leisure journeys, people tend to seek the senses of relaxation, freedom and stress-free.¹³² "Winter break in Asia" (see Appendix 4-1) is a campaign that draws people's attention to a well-being journey. The advertisement gives people a hint that they can get away from the European winter and have a break in Asia, where there is spring-like weather and Zen.

"Zen has been one of the most attractive Buddhist traditions among Westerners in the twentieth century".¹³³ People consider it an exotic fashion and are willing to make a

¹³⁰ Sharple. (2003). 206.

¹³¹ <<http://www.digipaper.fi/bluewings/>>, accessed November 2009. December 2007. 82.

¹³² Lew. (1987). 554; Anable & Gatersleben. (2005).

¹³³ Koné. (2001). 139.

cultural consumption of it without the necessity of knowing its history but superficial concept, that “Zen has been touted as an iconoclastic and antinomian tradition which rejects scholastic learning and ritualism in favor of naturalness, spontaneity, and freedom”.¹³⁴

Like Zen from the Buddhist concepts, a religion itself in Finnair’s advertisements is used to identify the “foreignness”. Usually in Southeast, South and East Asia where Buddhism is a widespread and active religion, statues of Buddha are seen. In Appendix 5-28 & 29, a female Buddha statue in nature was neatly presented. There is no human figure appears in the environment but only elements of nature and foreign religion; Finnair is sending a message to people who might be exhausted of the fast-changing post-modern world, that one can relax and “experience” the spiritual peace in such an “exotic” place without being bothered.

Another spiritual concept of Asia that is famous in the world is the figure of a dragon. As a creature of the imagination, there have always been huge differences in literature, arts and design of dragon between the “East” and the “West”.¹³⁵ The Eastern dragon which is generally represented by the Chinese dragon fully contains the character of divinity while the dragon has been seen as an evil figure since the Medieval Europe in the Western world.¹³⁶ The image of the Chinese dragon has been widely used in Asia, and in some of Finnair’s advertisements (see Appendix 5-11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16, as well as video clip “Hong Kong lohikäärme”) to represent the continent or certain regions in it.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Sharf. (1993).

¹³⁵ Sievers. (1990). 208;

¹³⁶ 杨媛. (2009). (my translation)

¹³⁷ “Hong Kong Lohikäärme” as “Hong Kong Dragon” in English. (my translation).

The analysis above indicates that by purposefully selecting the images, Finnair has presented a constructed Asia in its advertisements which emphasizes Asia's differences as a foreign "Other"; these images are meant to suggest Asia's exoticness that may draw the audience's attention and curiosity. Finnair also shows the same intention by using well-known local architectures and fauna as well as weather to represent certain destinations; some of these elements are commonly known as representatives, while some other fixes the category of local features that makes them stereotypes.

4.1.2. Representation and stereotypes of Asia/Asian countries

4.1.2.1. Architectures as local symbols

The role of built heritage is at the hearts of postmodern cultural tourism, these cultural landscapes represent the "combined works of nature and of man" that have the "outstanding and universal" values.¹³⁸ Hence, the world-famous architecture always becomes symbols of their locations; they are photographed and published on postcards, travel brochures as well as in advertising campaigns.

The certain decorative elements in traditional Chinese architecture, such as brilliant colors and motifs of dragons, phoenixes, lions and lanterns were used in advertisements "Get a taste of Beijing" (Appendix 5-2), "China in winter" (Appendix 5-3), and video clip "Peking temppeleli" to promote China.¹³⁹ Meanwhile, Indian architecture is also used to promote this country; as in Appendix 5-4, 5-5-1, and 5-5-2, Safdarjung Tomb

¹³⁸ Nuryanti. (1996);

<<http://www.culture.gov.uk/ukwhportal/criteria.htm>>, accessed March 7, 2010.

¹³⁹ Lai. (1990).; "Peking Temppeleli" as "Beijing Temple" in English. (my translation).

and Taj Mahal are presented. Moreover, “Japaneseness” is produced to the audience by showing them Osaka Castle with a Geisha in “Japan calls for a unique adventure” (Appendix 5-26).

When talked about the business trip between Finland and Japan (Appendix 5-7), icons of the Lutheran Cathedral Tuomiokirkko and the Tokyo Tower are used to represent and contrast these two destinations as opposites. Modeled by the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Tokyo Tower is a popular tourist spot in Japan.¹⁴⁰ The most obvious use of specific-place description, such as Tokyo Tower, for promotional purposes is often made by destination-conscious airlines.¹⁴¹ Therefore similarly in Appendix 5-9, eight Finnair’s destinations are presented as 8 icons abstracted from the local symbolic architecture, and that makes the explanation of Finnair’s global network as a picture more vividly.

4.1.2.2. Fauna as a local representative

As weather, unique fauna can also represent certain areas, such as kangaroos in Australia, and giant pandas in China. In 2006, Finnair launched a one-minute commercial on television. In the commercial, an animated panda bear was selected as the main character whose dreamed journey from Europe to Asia becomes the narrative structure. After launching the TV commercial, the same figure of the panda is adopted in Finnair’s other promotions, for instance, the poster in Appendix 3-8.¹⁴²

“Exotic habitat, rarity, striking coloration, and an appealing countenance have

¹⁴⁰ <<http://www.tokyotower.co.jp/china/>>, accessed June 2010.

¹⁴¹ Fleming & Roth. (1991). 282.

¹⁴² <<http://www.digipaper.fi/bluewings/>>, accessed November 2009. January 2007. 19.

combined to surround the giant panda with an aura of mystery unmatched by most other mammals”, and hence Finnair takes advantage of the unique image of the panda in its promotion.¹⁴³ On the one hand, the character of the panda in the commercial is cute and friendly that can reduce the strangeness yet keep its mysterious figure, while on the other hand, to Asian / Chinese audience the use of Chinese national treasure might provide them with an intimate and familiar feeling.

4.1.2.3. Stereotype of weather

Tourism is highly dependent on climate, and in some parts of the world, the climate itself is the main feature promoting tourism. The factor weather is of particular importance concerning the attractiveness of a destination.¹⁴⁴ By reducing the destination to a few, simple, essential characteristics, such as its weather, Finnair’s advertisements applied a stereotype for the purpose of promoting.¹⁴⁵

An advertisement of flight to Bangkok has been released on Finnair’s website of Finland in the autumn of 2009 (see Appendix 3-1 and 3-2). It is a picture of the coastal landscape of Thailand, which indicates the peaceful clean nature and sunny weather of the country by showing the coastal mountain, the green plants, the clean and transparent seawater, the clear sky and clouds in bright colors. No human figure has appeared in the picture.

Actually, the landscape appears in the picture is not more than an ordinary

¹⁴³ Sarich. (1973).

¹⁴⁴ Lohmann & Kaim. (1999).

¹⁴⁵ Hall. (1997). 257.

tropical coastal, and there is no hard evidence to prove that it is a geographical spot of Thailand, which suggests the generic place with such nature matters more than Thailand as a country in this advertisement. As a typical but not specific place, a generic place is a compromise in the concept and scale between universal and specific place. The use of a generic place is an important device in advertising which means to reach a wide range of audience.¹⁴⁶

In order to cater the audience's demand for the image of Thailand, the picture has been used in fact indicates shrinkage of physical space and a compression of time. Perhaps in people's minds, Thailand as an exotic holiday destination is supposed to be a coastal place in eternal sunny summer, and the real location of Thailand is not important to be shown but a place with the standardized sun, beach and sea.

This generic approach to a place usually defines representative landscapes in geographical description as generic landscapes symbolic of certain countries, for instance, luxuriant French vineyards and sunny Mexican beaches. Furthermore, in these scenes, the images of native residents are rarely included, which has been seen as "ironic racism" by Fleming and Roth.¹⁴⁷

In the advertisement of Thailand, only pure environmental elements but no human figure was shown. This is believed a selective presence and absence according to the audience's taste. Since people may be eager to experience the exotic holiday in Thailand, but they are not looking forward to the strange, dangerous and crowded foreign "Other"; on the contrary, a sense of safety within this foreign land is expected, and this

¹⁴⁶ Fleming & Roth. (1991). 285.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.. 286.

might explain the absence of people.

4.1.3. Summary

Due to the nature of marketing that its communication activities, especially advertising which aims to persuade consumers, that are supposed to result in the sales of products / services, Finnair's international advertisements of its Europe-Asian routes follow the same principle that they are made to promote these routes to as many potential consumers as possible.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, the company intends to provide a constructed Asia for its audience.

The content analysis of Finnair's international advertisement indicates that the images of Asia that Finnair has adopted are selective and symbolic; the company seems intentionally create simple and vivid images which aim to cater audience's taste easily. Through otherization, representation and stereotype of Asia's culture and nature, Asia has been categorized by different characteristics as a foreign "Other" that contrary to the audience. Most of the symbols and images used in advertisements were about the traditional culture(s) of Asia instead of its urban areas. Furthermore, images of people were not shown except the rare use of human figures as symbols (such as a Geisha and a Beijing Opera actress).

Meanwhile, the frequencies of words on the advertisements could also be evidence of Finnair's intention of constructing Asia. In table 2 at the beginning of this section of content analysis, the frequencies of words on advertisements are listed and ranked from high to low. It is evident that there is the biggest number of descriptions of

¹⁴⁸ Shimp. (1993). 263-264; Curry. (1999). 3.

Asia as an “exotic” place in the advertisements, among which the words “experience”, “adventure” and “sunny” are used the most often; then the descriptive words of Finnair’s efficiency ranks the second high among all the slogans of these advertisements; following behind is the mentioning of seasons.

The selection of images and words suggests that Finnair adopts the essentialist approach of intercultural communication when advertising, as the company consciously uses fixed categories to construct Asia an exotic “Other” for the purpose of audience attraction. In these advertisements, Finnair also used various words to establish and emphasize its efficient identity.

When the “Other” is constructed, the Self as the contrastive one is also constructed for comparison; therefore, the identity of Finnair itself should be clarified. Besides the corpora of advertisements that have just been analyzed, there are also the company’s annual reports as relevant discourse sources to analyze the construction of Finnair itself.¹⁴⁹

4.2. Discourse Analysis of the Construction of Finnair in Annual Reports

The central elements in the analytical process of Discourse Analysis are linguistic categories such as certain argumentation forms and strategies; symbolism and metaphors; vocabulary, style, idioms and clichés; actors like people and pronominal structure.

The metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture will be coherent with the most fundamental values in a culture, since the metaphorical concepts

¹⁴⁹ Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001).

of all types arise naturally from physical and cultural experience; though some metaphors with the common physical basis are universal, most metaphorical concepts are clearly dependent on culturally relative activities and experiences.¹⁵⁰ Due to this reason, metaphors in discourse can be a useful source to trace the meaning potential for context in intercultural communication.

By summarizing Asia-related statement in Finnair's annual reports in terms of people, economy, geography, efficiency, market demand and operations, metaphors among them will be categorized based on the three types of metaphorical concepts: orientational, ontological/physical, and structural.

The orientational metaphors do not “structure one concept in terms of another”, but “orient concepts with respect to non-metaphorical linear orientations”, that are spatial orientation such as up-down, front-back, in-out, on-off and central-peripheral.¹⁵¹ Orientational metaphors are based on physical and cultural experience.¹⁵²

Take the metaphor “more is up” as an example, the physical basis of this metaphor is when adding more substances into a container, the level goes up.¹⁵³ In the annual reports, this metaphor is reflected in the expressions of popularity, travel, demand, flights, flight frequency, numbers, market share, traffic, passengers, load, price, significance, time, capacity, extent, investments, economies, interaction, services, brand awareness, awareness, and recognition, such as:

China is also instantly **increasing in popularity** as a tourist destination for

¹⁵⁰ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 465; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980c). 201.

¹⁵¹ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 461-462; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980c). 195; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 461-462.

¹⁵² Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 464.

¹⁵³ Example directly taken from Ibid.. 463.

Finns and other Europeans.¹⁵⁴

The company also has plans to benefit from the **growing demand** for traffic between Asia and Europe in the future.¹⁵⁵

By using this metaphor, the adding of abstract contents is visualized, becoming more vivid and understandable to the readers of the annual reports.

Ontological/physical metaphors “involve the projection of entity or substance status on something that does not have that status inherently”.¹⁵⁶ They “use a concept from the physical domain to structure a concept from the cultural or intellectual domain” that generally view events, activities and ideas as entities.¹⁵⁷

Ontological metaphors are widely used in Finnair’s annual reports, for instance, there are numbers of concepts that are described as people, such as demands, growth, investment, destinations/countries, Finnair and airlines, services, products, travel, strategies, flight connections, routes, network, geography, factors, campaigns and point. Since most of them are abstract concepts from the business field, the use of metaphors make the language simple and vivid, in order to help readers to understand them better. On the other hand, when making statements about airlines and destinations, the personification can shorten the distance between these concepts and people, as well as make the use of language more diversified. For instance:

A rainy summer in Finland **stimulated demand** for holidays in the sun in the summer and early autumn.¹⁵⁸

In addition to business travel, the **destination** (South Korea) **has lots of**

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Annual_Report_2001_1.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.. 24.

¹⁵⁶ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980c). 196.

¹⁵⁷ Lakoff & Johnson. (1980a). 461.

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/annual_report2004.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 32.

potential in tourist travel from Asia to Europe, and the area is also becoming increasingly popular among European tourists.¹⁵⁹

As physical metaphors, structural metaphors also involve using a concept from one domain to structure a concept from another domain; usually they are applied when structuring experiences and activities from one kind to another.¹⁶⁰ For example, in Finnair's annual reports, business is described as a performance in which the different stages of plots and the surprises it offers to audience are very much like the ever-changing business; so the business elements can "show", members have "roles", can "act", and business can also be "dramatic" as in:

Finnair has a growing **role** in passenger and cargo traffic between Europe and Asia.¹⁶¹

Based on the trace of all these types of metaphors in Finnair's annual reports, two functions of them were found as descriptions of Finnair itself as a company, and stereotypes of Finns and people in other countries; furthermore, different types of metaphors are used at the same time in many of these descriptions and stereotypes. Therefore, these statements of metaphors in the reports are categorized into two groups: the selfness of Finnair and the stereotypes of Finns and the "Others".

4.2.1. The selfness of Finnair

Annual reports, which are evaluations of the company's financial performance in the previous year, are relied on by investor, shareholders, employees, and other readers when

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_Annual_Review_2008.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.. 461; Lakoff & Johnson. (1980c). 197.

¹⁶¹ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2006.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 3.

making important strategic and financial decisions. Now the function of financial statements of this kind is extended as a marketing communication tool that can promote the company's principles, strategies and successes. Annual reports became the "self-statements" of a company.¹⁶²

Therefore, Finnair's annual reports in the new Millennium might be the most suitable corpus for studying the construction of the company itself. In its annual reports, Finnair has used a number of metaphorical concepts to describe and construct itself. Three metaphors have been used the most in the descriptions of the company, which are "Finnair is a person", and "Finnair is a choice".¹⁶³ The use of metaphors makes the language simple and vivid in order to help readers to understand them better.

For instance, as a person, "Finnair has **brought Europe and Asia closer together** by offering the fastest connections between the continents."¹⁶⁴ When making statements about airlines, the personification can shorten the distance between these concepts and people, as well as make the use of language more diversified.

"Helsinki is an efficient gateway between Europe and Asia. **Finnair is naturally the best choice** for an increasing number of customers."¹⁶⁵ Due to their invisible nature, concepts as Finnair and its flight connections can not be seen. By structuring Finnair into an object, readers can understand these concepts according to their own living experiences

¹⁶² Hynes. (2004).

¹⁶³ Only metaphors that are the most relevant to the construction of Finnair are abstracted from the statements and listed in brackets right after the quotations; central descriptions about Finnair, Finns and others are marked in **bold** letters.

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2002.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 7.

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_vsk05_englanti.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 12.

on real objects; hence the existence of these concepts could be traced then. Moreover, by describing itself as a choice of customers, Finnair indicated its competitiveness in the market.

Based on the descriptions in the metaphors, Finnair has been presented itself from three perspectives: as an efficient and strong airline brand, as a provider of the new “Silk Road”, and as a part of the Finnish society.

In terms of the company’s geographical advantages, connecting efficiency and financial increase, Finnair as an efficient and strong airline brand could be traced from statements at below:

Finnair has **brought Europe and Asia closer together** by offering the fastest connections between the continents.¹⁶⁶ (Finnair is a person)

Helsinki is an efficient gateway between Europe and Asia. **Finnair is naturally the best choice** for an increasing number of customers.¹⁶⁷ (Finnair is a choice.)

Finnair has **a growing role in** passenger and cargo **traffic between Europe and Asia.**¹⁶⁸ (Finnair is a person.)

Finnair’s Asia strategy is based on the Helsinki gateway concept, which **delivers the fastest connections between Asia and Europe.**¹⁶⁹ (Finnair is a person.)

In the Baltic area **Finnair is a popular brand**, but in the large markets in Europe and Asia we still have a lot of work to do to **increase brand awareness**. A competitive product, the fastest connections and efficient service mean that we can, however, rise to become the airline of choice in these markets, too.¹⁷⁰ (Finnair is a person.)

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2002.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 7.

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_vsk05_englanti.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 12.

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2006.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 3.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.. 20.

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2007.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 5.

Finnair is the **market leader in air transport** to and from Finland as well as in gateway traffic that passes through Finland. Finnair has **an increasing role in passenger and cargo traffic between Europe and Asia.**¹⁷¹ (Finnair is a person.)

Through the Asia strategy, **the focus of the marketing communications has shifted from Finland to the international market,**” says Jarkko Konttinen, who is responsible for Finnair’s marketing communications. “The message of Finnair’s marketing communications is clear: **Finnair’s biggest advantage** in traffic between Asia and Europe is the speed and shortness of the journey. Helsinki is a fast transit airport and Finnair offers a modern fleet and good service.¹⁷² (Finnair is a person.)

Finnair stated in its annual reports that the company has created a new “Silk Road” which connects Europe and Asia. The term “Silk Road” was adopted from its original meaning of the ancient trade road between Europe and Asia. The new use of it on naming Finnair’s Europe-Asia flight connections seems to be a suggestion of Finnair’s ability of connecting, as well as a sense of distance and exotic of the continent of Asia.¹⁷³

The meeting of two cultures always creates energy. Energy produces movements. Movement is important, but so too is the goal. Finnair’s goal is sustainable, profitable growth with Asia and Europe as special focus areas. **A force for unity between two continents and two cultures.**¹⁷⁴ (Finnair is a person.)

As a market area, Asia presents huge opportunities both for Finnair and its customers. Traffic between Asia and Europe is growing at seven percent per year. Finnair offers the fastest and shortest links between the continents. Eastern traffic has been a success for Finnair, so Asia has been chosen as the theme of this annual report. Through pictures, words and figures we will explain how **the company has created a new Silk Road.**¹⁷⁵ (Finnair is a person.)

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁷² <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2008.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 27.

¹⁷³ Wood. (2002).

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_report_2001_1.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 6.

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_vsk05_englanti.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 1.

Travel between Asia and Europe is growing at an annual rate of seven percent. The number of passengers of Finnair's Asian routes is growing twice as fast. The company is responding to increasing demand by expanding its wide-bodied fleet and adding new routes. Finnair will open one to two new routes every year on its Asian network and increase the frequency of flights to its present destinations. In this way **the modern Silk Road connecting Asia and northern Europe will be reinforced** through carefully considered steps.¹⁷⁶ (Finnair is a person.)

New Silk Road led to record year. The biggest success factor was Finnair's effective Asian strategy. The growing Eastern market, moreover, will continue to increase Finnair's Asian traffic significantly in the future.¹⁷⁷ (Finnair is a person.)

Furthermore, Finnair also sees itself as a part of the Finnish society by emphasizing its "Finnishness". Though the company did not define "Finnishness" in the annual reports, this concept is believed the positive images of Finnish people and culture, for instance, the working efficiency that Finnair has highlighted in its previous statements.

Bearing social responsibility requires a company to deliver long-term profitability and competitiveness. **Finnair is part of Finnish society**, but to an increasing extent it also has **a role as a builder of connections between Europe and Asia**.¹⁷⁸ (Finnair is a person.)

It is rewarding to take Finnair's message out into the world. Excellent connections, Helsinki's unbeatable location in traffic between Europe and Asia, **Finnair's long and impressive traditions, not to mention its Finnishness**, are excellent assets in international campaigning. Good stories have enduring power.¹⁷⁹ (Finnair is a person.)

All these metaphors have shown the widely used of the personalization of Finnair, which makes the company a person with identity and personality. Finnair positioned itself a provider of efficient connections between Europe and Asia. Moreover, the company has been

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.. 11.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.. 15.

¹⁷⁸ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2006.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 22.

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2008.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 57.

intentionally constructed itself an increasingly important link between the two continents, especially by the adoption of the term “Silk Road” into its flight routes between Europe and Asia.

The statements above indicate that Finnair sees itself an international corporate that provides trans-continental flight as well as a Finnish company when mentioned “Finnair is part of the Finnish society” and the company’s “Finnishness”. Accordingly, Finnair also presents some opinions towards other countries from different perspectives. Such presentations that describe Finns and other countries as fixed categories become stereotypes of them.

4.2.2. Stereotypes of Finns and the “Others”

Among the metaphorical concepts in the annual reports, Finnair made statements about Asia and three Asian countries: Thailand, China and South Korea; most of them have been personalized, and Thailand has especially been mentioned. Meanwhile, traveling demand and destinations have been described as a person and choices. Some of the sentences have presented the stereotypes of Asia/Asian destinations, for instance:

Finns are accustomed to holidaying abroad. Now they are increasingly changing their familiar Mediterranean and Canary Islands destinations for **exotic alternatives** in Asia.¹⁸⁰ (Destinations are choices.)

Finnair’s Bangkok route differs from its other Asia routes in that demand for the flights comes **principally from Finland and Scandinavia. Thailand is above all a holiday destination**, because its climate, developed services and reasonable prices are attractive to tourists....As well as city holidays, travelers are also interested in Thailand’s beach resorts, to which there are excellent connections from Bangkok. Finnair also flies leisure

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_report_2003.pdf>, retrieved November 2009.10.

flights direct to **Thailand's holiday paradises**.¹⁸¹ (Thailand is a person.)

In the sentences above, Asia is “exotic” and the holiday places in Thailand are “paradises”. However, together with these, a larger number of statements of Finns, Europeans, Scandinavian and the Nordic countries were also presented in these metaphors at below.

Statements of Finns:

Demand for Asian destinations, particularly Thailand, is growing steadily. After the Canary Islands, Thailand is becoming the **Finns' second most popular holiday destination**. Finnair Leisure Flights flies to a total of 66 holiday destinations, in more than 30 countries. There is growing demand for various independent travel options and active holidays. **Finnish customers trust in Finnair's services**.¹⁸² (Thailand is a person.)

Finnair's Leisure Traffic had a successful year in 2004. **A rainy summer in Finland stimulated demand for holidays in the sun** in the summer and early autumn.¹⁸³ (Demand is a person.)

The spectrum of destinations stays in tune with the times. Asian holiday resorts, particularly **Thailand, have become very popular among Finns**.¹⁸⁴ (Thailand is a person.)

Statements of Europeans (and Finns):

On Finnair's Thai flights, the significance of tourism for the country's economy is evident: **Thailand lives on tourism**. There is strong demand particularly from Europe to Thailand and it currently exceeds capacity. In the winter season Finnair, with its 26 flights per week, is one of the biggest European airlines flying to Thailand. **The country's popularity as a holiday destination for Europeans is still growing**.¹⁸⁵ (Thailand is a person.)

The growth opportunities for Helsinki gateway traffic are considerable, because, among other things, Chinese travel is increasing dramatically. **China** is also constantly

¹⁸¹ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2006.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 15.

¹⁸² <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2006.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 25.

¹⁸³ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_report2004.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 32.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.. 20.

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2007.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 13.

increasing in **popularity** as a tourist destination **for Finns and other Europeans**.¹⁸⁶
(China is a person.)

In addition to business travel, the **destination** (South Korea) **has lots of potential** in tourist travel from Asia to Europe, and the area is also becoming increasingly **popular among European tourists**.¹⁸⁷ (South Korea is a person.)

Statements of the Nordic countries:

Due to business travel, the passenger stream flows mainly from Korea to Europe. On the other hand, **from the Nordic countries' perspective Korea** is a new and interesting holiday destination, whose **culture is totally different from Japan and China**, for example.¹⁸⁸ (The Nordic countries are people.)

Statements of Scandinavia:

Finnair's Bangkok route differs from its other Asia routes in that demand for the flights comes **principally from Finland and Scandinavia. Thailand is above all a holiday destination**, because its climate, developed services and reasonable prices are attractive to tourists....As well as city holidays, travelers are also interested in Thailand's beach resorts, to which there are excellent connections from Bangkok. Finnair also flies leisure flights direct to **Thailand's holiday paradises**.¹⁸⁹ (Thailand is a person.)

Based on the descriptions in the metaphors, Finnair has been proposed its opinions and attitudes towards its Asian destinations from the perspective of Finns, Europeans, the Scandinavian and the Nordic. Since Finnair sees itself as a Finnish company, the metaphors which concluded the traveling habits of Finns as stereotypes may close the relationship between the Finnish readers, investors, shareholders and the company, and may make Finnair's statements more "reliable". Meanwhile, by using the stereotypes of Asia/Asian destinations, Finnair also drew an "exotic" image of Asia to its readers.

¹⁸⁶ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_report_2001_1.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 3.

¹⁸⁷ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2008.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 3.

¹⁸⁸ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2007.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 13.

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_review_2006.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 15.

Furthermore, the stereotypes of other Europeans have provided Finnair with more perspectives to see its own identity: it is from Finland, Europe, the Nordic and Scandinavia.

4.2.3. Summary

Through the analysis of metaphorical concepts in Finnair's annual reports, a small number of them are found relevant to this research on the theories of intercultural communication, while most of these metaphors are presenting the company's financial conditions and statistics, hence an interview for the marketing communication personnel who created these annual reports may have provided more information on the company's attitudes towards its Asian market and the company itself, and be helpful to this research.

Among all the relevant statements, Finnair uses a small amount of short paragraphs to essentialize Asia, Thailand and South Korea, and construct them the foreign "Others". Contrary to this, in most of the pages Finnair constructed itself. Due to the functions of annual reports, they are made to provide the performance of the company for readers and to promote the company, which made annual reports naturally objective. Therefore, by using metaphors, especially the personalization of the company, Finnair emphasized its competitive advantage on business and the role of itself that has been intentionally constructed as a creator and provider of "a new Silk Road" that connects Europe and Asia in its annual reports.

Furthermore, Finnair's Finnish identity was also presented in the reports. Statements on the traveling habits of Finns are seen autostereotypes of this group of people of which Finnair sees itself a member, and may create such a circumstance in which the readers

may feel familiar with and close to the company. The statements of Europeans, Scandinavia and the Nordic also provided more identities besides its Finnish one. Meanwhile, the use of heterostereotypes constructed Asia an “exotic” traveling destination and provides this image for the readers. The combination of autostereotypes and heterostereotypes means to create a “neutral” position of Finnair as an airline provider.

As a result, by enhancing its brand image as an international and a Finnish rooted company, Finnair has constructed itself an important provider of airlines between Europe and Asia; and at the same time, the company has also constructed itself a member of “the Finns” by essentializing Finns and other countries.

5. Results and Conclusion

As an international airline company, Finnair concerns with international business confront communicating in a global environment. The implementation of its Asian strategy in the new Millennium due to the increasing market demand of flying from Europe to Asia has especially increased the necessity of intercultural communication.

As other businesses, marketing has also been widely used to promote Finnair’s product / service due to its communicational functions; furthermore, marketing plays an important role of communicating audience from one country to another in international business, which provides a connection between intercultural communication and international marketing, and the possibility for this thesis to study the theories of intercultural communication in the field of international marketing.

Finnair has claimed that the company “creates a new Silk Road” which connects

Europe and Asia in the promotion of Asian routes its Asian strategy. On the one hand, when showing the destination of this “Silk Road”, Asia as a continent that has always been constructed by the “West”, is also being constructed in Finnair’s international advertisements; on the other hand, the presence of Finnair could be traced from its annual reports that aim to promote the company to readers. Therefore, by using the methods of content analysis and discourse analysis, the purpose of this research was to see how Finnair constructs Asia in its international advertising campaigns and constructs the company itself in its annual reports in the new Millennium, as well as how these constructions compare with the theories of intercultural communication.

Different understandings in the field of intercultural communication are divided into different approaches. Dervin adopted terms from sociology and summarized the different understandings as three approaches: solid/essentialist, liquid/non-essentialist and Janusian that holds a view between the previous two.¹⁹⁰ As essentialist and Janusian approaches reduce different cultures and people into fixed categories of certain characteristics, the non-essentialist approach sees people all diverse as different individuals that their behaviors are not naturally set because of their origins.¹⁹¹ Therefore, this research took a critical non-essentialist perspective to see Finnair’s construction of Asia and the company itself.

The methods of content analysis and discourse analysis have been used to analyze the collected corpora in this paper. As a method that describes the characteristics of the contents of images based on their frequencies, content analysis could provide a way of

¹⁹⁰ Dervin. (2010).

¹⁹¹ Dervin. (2009); Sen. (2006). xvi; Dervin. (2010); Holliday, Hyde & Kullman. (2001). 3; Abdallah-Preteille. (2001).

understanding the cultural context of these images. Though it might function even better when managing a larger number of images, content analysis is still considered a suitable and useful method for this research. At the same time, a method of discourse analysis was used to process the annual reports and it offered a clear way of categorizing the linguistic elements in the reports.

Comparing the analysis of Finnair's international advertisements and annual reports with the theories of intercultural communication, both constructions of Asia as the "Other" and Finnair's identity are believed a conscious application of the solid/essentialist approach to intercultural communication due to the market-oriented consideration. Since this consideration focuses on achieving the sale of products or services, it emphasizes the satisfaction of customers' needs.

Therefore, in order to cater the imagination of Asia of its audience and their needs to experience the exoticness, Finnair has used different categorized concepts of Asia in its international advertising campaigns through otherization, representation and stereotyping. At the same time, by stereotyping Asia and Finns, Finnair constructs itself as an important international airline provider with multiple identities (Finnish, European, Scandinavian and Nordic) that connects Europe and Asia.

The analyses of Finnair's advertisements and annual reports show some points in common, for instance, the use of the high frequencies of words to indicate Finnair's efficiency. Besides this, advertisements and reports also have other mutually supportive similarities. The nature of Thailand has been stereotyped as "eternal sunny" in the advertisement of "Sunny Bangkok"; while in the annual reports Finnair used a number of

paragraphs to tell the popularity of Thailand as a holiday destination among Finns who see Thailand a “holiday paradise” with its attractive climate.

As stated in the annual reports that “a rainy summer in Finland stimulated demand for holidays in the sun in the summer and early autumn”, advertisements also responded to this statement as in “Autumn adventures”. Moreover, both advertisements and annual reports have constructed Asia an “exotic” place.

The comparison of advertisements and annual reports also showed their different emphases. The advertisements emphasized the construction of Asia as the “Other” and Finnair as an efficient airline company. They used a large number of images of Asian traditional culture(s), but rarely the images of people. The annual reports - in addition to its statements of being an international brand - constructed Finnair’s multiple identity by presenting the essentialized images of Finns, Europeans, Scandinavian and the Nordic countries, along with a few descriptions of the constructed Asia and Asian countries. Metaphors that personalized countries have been widely used, which is contrary to the advertisements.

Viewing the entire research at a macro level, a pair of “Self” and “Other” was presented separately in advertisements and annual reports. Asia was constructed as an exotic “Other” to attract audience and achieve the sales of flights, while Finnair objectively constructed the company itself as an international airline provider in the annual reports to show its ability, prove its performance and in order to build its brand image.

To sum up, Finnair intends to present itself as “a force of unity between Europe and Asia”, an international airline company from Finland which creates and provides a “new Silk

Road” that leads Europeans to the exotic continent – Asia. This intention might be learned from one of Finnair’s advertisements “Move smoothly between East and West” (Appendix 5-22), which may suggest the term of “Silk Road”.¹⁹²

This study of the construction of selfness and otherness comparing with the theories of intercultural communication in the context of international marketing may provide theoretical support for other research in the same field. The analysis of corpora explained Finnair’s construction of Asia; hence a question concerning the construction of Europe or the so-called “West” was raised; for example in the same context of Finnair’s international advertising, this question may be interpreted into how Finnair promotes its flight routes from Asia to Europe.

¹⁹² <http://www.finnairgroup.com/linked/en/konserni/Finnair_annual_report_2001_1.pdf>, retrieved November 2009. 6.

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Appendix 1: Category of international advertising campaigns

Apricot: food; Pink: nature/weather; Yellow: well-being & activities;

Blue: culture---architecture, arts, people & religion;

	Symbols	Words	Date (accessed)
Asia (websites)	Female Buddhist statue	Experience the exotic Asia/ Experience Asia: Delhi and Bangkok	Oct.18,2009
	Indian food	Experience Asia: Delhi and Bangkok / Go East	Oct.18,2009
	Japanese food	Go East	Oct.18,2009
	Zen elements: bamboo, a daffodil & spa hot stones	Winter break in Asia	Nov.5,2009
	Paper parasol, pattern: bamboo & Finnair logo	Fast to the Far East	Oct.18,2009
	Downy flower head of a dandelion	Autumn adventures / Take a shortcut to Asia or New York	Nov.5,2009
	Rosewood dragon head	Asia---closer than you think	Nov. 18, 2009
	The Temple of Dawn (Wat Arun)	Adventures in Asia	Nov. 18, 2009
	Bowl (red background)	Asia in business class from Hamburg	Dec. 8, 2009
	A plane, snowflakes	Asia	winter, 2009
	Autumn yellow leaves	Autumn adventures	autumn, 2009
	A plane, yellow leaves and berries	Top deal: Delhi, Beijing and Shanghai	autumn, 2009
	A Beijing opera actress in costume (weekly newsletter)	Christmas fares to faraway lands! (NYC, Delhi, Beijing, Shanghai, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Seoul)	Dec. 8, 2009
(posters)	Fan, pattern: Finnair logo	The best connections to Asia. / Finnair opens all of Asia for you.	Nov, 2009

Appendix 1

	Chopstick-highway	The fast connection to the real Asian cuisine.	Nov, 2009
	Fine china plate, pattern: Western street view + Asian garden	Move smoothly between East and West.	Nov, 2009
	Smiling Asian face	Funny, how fast you can fly to Asia.	Nov, 2009
	Taekwondo	Reach Asia fast.	Nov, 2009
	Bowl	Don't waste time flying around. Take the direct route to Asia.	Nov, 2009
	Panda & Asian nature	Your airline to Asia.	Nov, 2009
	Icons of Helsinki and other destinations	Helsinki to other destinations	Nov. 2009
	PR activity photograph, panda	---	Nov. 2009
(Videos)	Panda, map of Asia, view of Chinese nature	--- --- ---	May, 2009
	Beijing temple & Asian music	Peking ja takaisin	Oct, 2009
	Hong Kong dragon Asian music	Hongkong ja takaisin	Oct, 2009
China	Bronze lion statue & ancient Chinese architecture	Get a taste of Beijing / Beijing	Nov.5,2009
	Dragon	Don't miss out! / China / Beijing & Shanghai(Dec)	Nov.5,2009 / Dec. 8, 2009
	Chinese lanterns & eaves	China in winter	Nov. 18, 2009
	Rosewood dragon head	Experience China	Nov. 18, 2009
India	Indian/Thai food	Delhi and Bangkok / Delhi	Nov.5,2009
	A Taj Mahal-shaped cloud	Introducing Delhi-The new route to India opens October 30, 2006	July, 2009
	Safdarjung Tomb	Delhi	Nov. 18, 2009
Japan	Geisha, Osaka Castle & bridge	Japan calls for a unique adventure	Oct.18,2009

Appendix 1

	Japanese calligraphy art/ ancient literature	Japan	Nov. 5,2009
	Lanterns (weekly newsletter)	Tokyo – the city of thousand opportunities	Nov. 24, 2009
	A crane, icons of the Lutheran Cathedral (Tuomiokirkko) in Helsinki and Tokyo tower	---	Nov. 2009
Korea	A high heel	Shopping in Seoul	July, 2009
	Skyscrapers	Seoul	Oct.18,2009
	Dragon statue	Seoul	Dec. 8, 2009
	Colorful fountain (weekly newsletter)	Fascinating Seoul and sunny Bangkok	Nov. 10, 2009
Thailand	Indian/Thai food	Delhi and Bangkok	Nov.5,2009
	View of Thai nature: beach	Bangkok/ Sunny Bangkok	Nov.5,2009
	Colorful fountain (weekly newsletter)	Fascinating Seoul and sunny Bangkok	Nov. 10, 2009

Appendix 2: Category: food

2-1 Go East (Sushi)



2-2 Go East



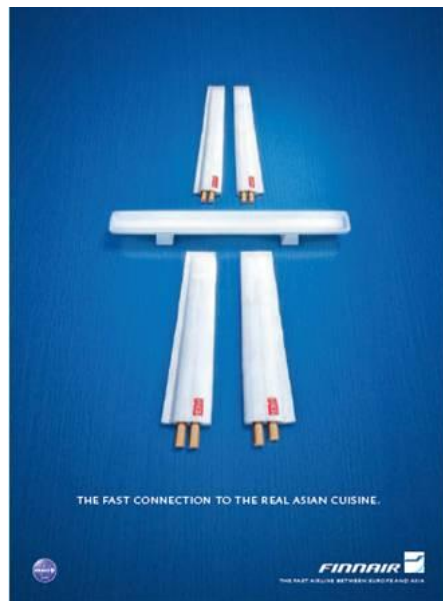
2-3 Delhi



2-4 "Experience Asia: Delhi and Bangkok"



2-5 "The fast connection to the real Asian cuisine." (chopsticks)



Appendix 3: Category: nature and weather

3-1 “Sunny Bangkok”



3-2 Bangkok



3-3 “Autumn adventures”



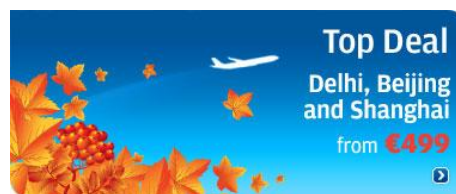
3-4 “Take a shortcut to Asia or New York”



3-5 “Autumn adventures” (leaves)



3-6 “Top deal: Delhi, Beijing and Shanghai”



3-7 Asia



3-8 Panda and Asian nature



3-9 Panda video

Appendix 4: Category: well-being and activities

4-1 “Winter break in Asia”



4-2 “Shopping in Seoul”



4-3 Public activity of panda



Appendix 5: Category: architecture, arts, people and religion

5-1 “Adventures in Asia”



5-2 “Get a taste of Beijing”



5-3 “China in winter”



5-4 Delhi



5-5-1 “Introducing Delhi”



5-5-2 Delhi - cloud



5-6 “Fascinating Seoul and sunny Bangkok”



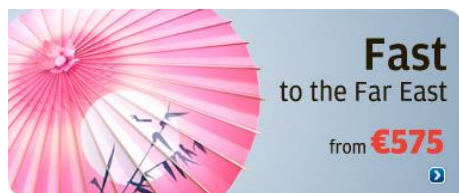
5-7 Beijing temple video

5-8 From Helsinki to Tokyo

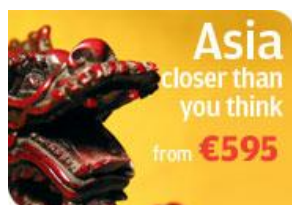
5-9 Helsinki to other destinations



5-10 “Fast to the Far East”



5-11 “Asia: closer than you think”



5-12 “Experience China”



5-13 China



5-14 Beijing & Shanghai



5-15 “Don’t miss out!”



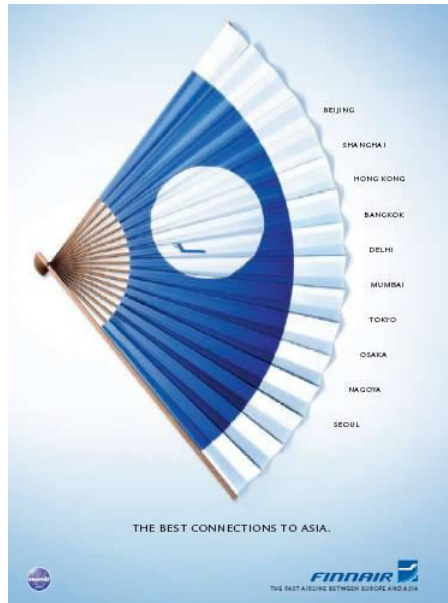
5-16 Seoul



5-17 "Asia in business class from Hamburg"



5-18 "The best connections to Asia." (fan)



5-19 Japan



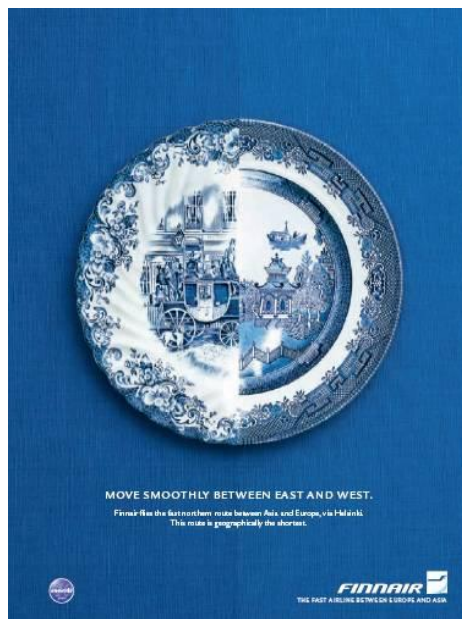
5-20 "Tokyo – the city of thousand opportunities"



5-21 "Christmas fares to faraway lands!"



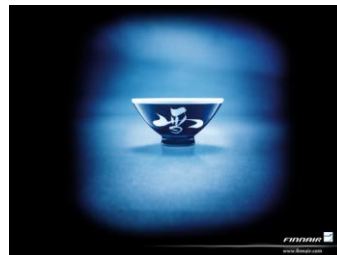
5-22 "Move smoothly from East and West." (plate)



5-23 Taekwondo



5-24 Bowl



5-25 Hong Kong dragon video



5-26 "Japan calls for a unique adventure"



5-27 Smiling face



5-28 "Experience Asia: Delhi and Bangkok"



5-29 "Experience the exotic Asia"

