

About The Branches of the Great Silk Road Passing Through the Cities of Central Asia and International Trade Relations

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Abstract: This article talks about one of the most famous and huge roads of human civilization - the Great Silk Road and the problem of the peoples of Central Asia, who began a great stage of development on it. Opinions about the networks of this road, its connections with the West and the East, and the factors that contributed to the growing trade dynamics of Central Asian cities are based on historical sources and literature.

Keywords: The Great Silk Road, Sogd, Fergana, China, Silk, Ordos, Maniakh, Dunhuang, Byzantium, Kashkar, Choch, Mug.



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INTRODUCTION. The "Great Silk Road" did not arise spontaneously, but from time immemorial there were many trade and caravan routes connecting various regions of Central Asia and neighboring regions, and in the 1st millennium BC, trade routes were formed in several directions, such as Lapis Lazuli, Jade, etc. The connection of traditional trade routes into a single, but extensive intercontinental trade network led to the emergence of such a historical phenomenon as the Great Silk Road. This intercontinental trade route, the largest in human history, connected Europe and Asia, stretching from the ancient Roman state to the ancient capital of Japan, Nara. Historians believe that the real beginning of the great road, which connected the caravan routes from Central Asia to the West and South, and the routes leading from China to East Turkestan, dates back to the middle of the second century BC. At that time, the Western countries - the countries of Central Asia - were discovered for the first time by the Chinese.

Literature analysis and methods. Within the framework of the selected topic, the works of a number of historical scientists who conducted research on the Great Silk Road, in particular, Rtveladze. E.V., Radkevich, Masson. V.M., Shirinov. T.Sh., Mavlonov O'M. and Ergashev J.Y., as well as the works of medieval scholars, were thoroughly studied and analyzed. Methods such as discourse analysis, period-chronological consistency, and comparative approach were used to illuminate the topic.

Discussion. When historians write about the Great Silk Road, they speculate about when trade caravans first set out from East to West, the routes and routes of the road, and the distance. Archaeologist A.R.Muhammadjonov argues that the Great Silk Road stretched from the Far East through Central Asia and Iran to the Mediterranean Sea, that this road is the same distance as the

ancient capital of China, Chan'an, to Venice, Italy, and that trade caravans first set out from China to the West in the second half of the 2nd century BC. Economist N.Tokhliyev specifies the time when the caravan first set out and notes that trade began in 126 BC. O. Mavlonov argues that the Great Silk Road was the first to reach the Mediterranean Sea in the second half of the 2nd century BC. It is noted that communication routes connecting relatively large areas of Central Asia were formed as early as the 6th-5th millennium BC[1.44]. According to historical sources, the Great Silk Road emerged around the 2nd century BC, and the concept of the "Silk Road" itself appeared in the second half of the 19th century. In 1877, the German traveler and geographer F.F. Richthofen published his book "China", in which he first described this trade route through the eastern countries, called the "Silk Road"[12.12]. Since then, this name has firmly taken a place in scientific research, used in relation to one of the caravan routes from East to West. This phenomenon is truly worthy of such attention, because it played a major role in world culture. As Academician N.N. Negmatov noted, the Silk Road is a product of the globalization process of ancient and medieval times, a carrier of the realities of the world order, values, goods, and achievements that existed in other countries[1:14-18]. The Great Silk Road, covering almost the entire Eurasian continent, not only provided the peoples of the entire world continent with necessary goods, but also spread world religions, writing and culture, thereby playing an important role for one and a half thousand years. The establishment of diplomatic relations in the last decade of the 2nd millennium BC greatly contributed to the emergence of the Great Silk Road. It was from this time that it became a road connecting all the major civilizations of the Old World - China, India, the Middle East and Europe. The basis of the Great Silk Road was two great roads. The first was explored during the campaigns of the Hellenes and Macedonians, during the reign of Alexander the Great and the Seleucid commander Demodamus, and went from the Mediterranean Sea to Central Asia - the Syr Darya. The second road was explored by Zhang Jiang and began from the two main centers of the Han Empire - Luoyang and Chang'an. Caravans traveled from Lanzhou to Dunhuang through the Great Wall of China. From here, the road divided into two main branches - the southern and northern routes. The first went from the south, bypassing the waterless Taklamakan Desert, through Khotan, Yorkent, and Balkh to Merv. The northern route passed through Turfan to Kashgar, and then to Samarkand and Merv. After Kashgar, the caravans entered Central Asia through the Tien Shan. One branch of the caravan route headed towards India, passing through the dangerous path called the Hanging Passes. The central route of the Great Silk Road passed through Merv, where the southern and northern routes met. Its main branch headed towards Baghdad and reached the ports of Syria. There, goods were loaded onto ships and transported by sea to Egypt, Byzantium, Italy, and other Mediterranean countries.[18.73] Another branch ran through what is now Afghanistan to India. Another branch ran through the Volga to Eastern Europe. Along this route, caravans from China, India, and Central Asia reached Ancient Russia[18:96]. Thus, trade along the Silk Road served to strengthen and expand economic and cultural ties between Asian and European countries. Medieval Arab geographers and travelers wrote in their manuscripts about some trade routes of the Great Silk Road of Central Asia. For example, Ibn Khurdadbeq, describing the continental route through Fergana, mentions the following cities: Khujand, Bab (Pop), Fergana (Akhsikent), Kuba (Quva), Ush (Osh), Uzkan (Uzgan), Atbash[4.182]. According to the descriptions of Arab geographers and travelers, in the Middle Ages, trade caravans coming from India, Iran and other countries through Samarkand went directly to Khujand. The route was divided into two directions: 1) Khujand - Kanibodam - Sokh - Rishton - Margilan - Kuva - Osh - Uzgan - Atbash - Terekdovan Pass - China; 2) Khujand - Akhsikent. Here the road went in two directions: one reached Uzgan through Myan-Rud, the other reached Kuva and connected with the southern route. It should be noted that it was also possible to get to the capital of Fergana - the city of Akhsikent through Kokand. As is known, the eastern point of the Great Silk Road began in China, and trade caravans began their journey from the city of Chang'an and reached the city of Dunhuang on the border of the Great Wall, and here their route divided into two branches: northern and southern. The

northern route ran along the southern slopes of the Tien Shan and the Tarim River through Turpan, reaching Kashgar, Aloy, from there to Fergana and Sogd, and then to the Volga and the lower reaches of the Northern Black Sea[16.43]. In the 2nd millennium BC, this trade route reached the local Greek colonies. One of the trade routes passing through Fergana reached the Urals and Volga through the steppes of Kazakhstan. Archaeological materials found in the Minusinsk basin of the Pazyryk mounds of Altai allow us to assume that the period of intense exchange between the tribes of South Siberia dates back to the middle of the 1st millennium BC. The Central branch of the Great Silk Road, i.e., the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, passed through In particular, 65 cities such as Tarmita (Termez), Marokand, Kesh, Yerkurgan, Budrach and other ancient cities in southern Uzbekistan, as well as Dizak (Jizzakh), Zamin, Samgar, Khadzhistan, Binkent, Kanka, Turmukan, Bob, Akhsikent, Osh, Uzgand in the Usturskaya, Shash and Fergana regions, were located along the Great Silk Road and played an important role in international trade and cultural relations [1:65]. At the beginning of the new era, a new route of the Great Silk Road was opened through Kashgar. Nevertheless, the ancient route through Fergana along the Issyk-Kul and Talas valleys continued to operate [8, 112]. Ancient Sogd played an important role in ethnocultural relations along the Silk Road, since it showed a tendency to urbanization much earlier than other regions of Central Asia, and this is clearly demonstrated by the example of the settlements of Sarazm. Indeed, Sarazm is the oldest scientifically discovered monument of the first settled culture of the northeastern region of Central Asia, known as Aryanam Vayjakh[5.8]. The Sogdian merchant Maniakh sailed around the Caspian Sea, sailed along the Black Sea, reached Constantinople, and founded a new route for silk trade - the "Caucasian Silk Road". There is information that the Sogdians traded along the sea routes of the Silk Road, from Arabia to India, and then to China[14. 196]. Coins of the Western Turkic khagans were minted, depicting Sogdian legends. The merchants of Chach and Sogd, under the patronage of the Turkic khagans, were also actively engaged in trade in other countries[7.93]. Products such as stirrups, lice, belts, blankets, and walnuts were imported from Samarkand. Sogdian merchants mainly exported silk, hemp, silver, gold, ammonia, mercury, medicinal herbs, brass, emeralds, red glass, some types of cotton fabrics, and others[11. 48]. Bukhara was a center of skilled craftsmen, and the products they made were famous all over the world. Bukhara exported carpets, cotton and woolen fabrics, leather goods, horse saddles, oil, hemp, walnuts, watermelons, and melons, which were in great demand in other countries. It was able to compete with Urgench, Samarkand, Kashgar, and other cities in terms of trade, economy, and culture. V.M. Masson notes that as early as the Bronze Age, ancient trade links along the Great Silk Road began to be established in the Bukhara oasis[10.14]. Southern and southwestern contacts with Sogd, Tokharistan, India, Iran, and the countries of the Middle East played a major role in the prosperity of the ancient Fergana civilization. Constant contacts with the countries of the north and north-west also occupy a special place. The Fergana people were in close contact with the peoples of East Turkestan. All this served to form a culture in Fergana, in which the cultures of farmers and herders seemed to have "merged". At the same time, Fergana was a kind of relay of these contacts in the nomadic world[2. 34]. The presence of ore deposits from which gold, cinnabar, copper, and iron were mined gave impetus to the development of jewelry and blacksmithing[3. 96]. In particular, horses, green glass, alfalfa seeds ("mu-su"), and nuts were exported from Fergana to China[17. 42-44]. When talking about trade on the Great Silk Road, it is natural to touch on the issue of payment. In the early times, that is, in the early Middle Ages, silk cloth served as a unit of payment. Silk cloth determined the value of gold, and in China itself it was possible to exchange medicines, books, food and other products for it. It was even possible to be exempted from various taxes and obligations through silk cloth. It was also used as compensation to escape punishment for a crime. For example, it was possible to escape the death penalty by giving 20 rolls of silk cloth. A similar situation can be observed in Sogd. Results. The Great Silk Road had its impact not only on social life, but also on place names. Even now, Russian-speaking trading posts operate in India. Arbat Street in Moscow is named after the word rabot, meaning a settlement of merchants from the east.

In Merv, called the “mother of cities” in the works of Arab historians, two branches of the Great Silk Road, the northern and southern, joined together. From here, the main highway first went to Babylon, then to Baghdad, and then to Syria, and from there, cargoes were loaded onto ships and distributed to Egypt, Byzantium, Italy, and other Mediterranean cities and states. Among these products, Chinese silk, Indian and Indonesian spices, jewelry, cotton fabrics, ivory, diamonds, etc. occupied the main place. In the 8th century, two trade routes were used. One led from East Turkestan through Dzungaria to Khakassia, and in some sources it is called the “Kyrgyz route” [10:54]. The second was the “Uyghur route” from Turfan to Northern Mongolia. During archaeological excavations, monuments and living trade signs were found along the route from Kashgar to Osh - Mingtepa - Kuva - Fergana - Khujand - Samarkand - Bukhara.

Conclusion. In Uzbekistan, great attention is paid to the restoration of the "Great Silk Road". The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to promote Uzbekistan's participation in the restoration of the "Great Silk Road" and develop international tourism in the republic was published. On this basis, the national company "Uzbektourism" has developed more than 200 routes along the historical sites of the "Silk Road". They cover the main tourist zones and pass through the cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and the Fergana Valley. Routes are being developed through the cities of Andijan, Namangan, Fergana, Termez, Nukus, which are considered branches of the "Silk Road". The route along the Fergana Valley - the "Fergana Golden Ring" includes the cities of Kokand, Andijan, Namangan. The number of people traveling along the tourist routes of the "Great Silk Road" is increasing every year.

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