

THE SILK ROAD AS A WAY OF CONNECTING CENTRAL ASIAN AND EUROPEAN CULTURE, HISTORY, AND ART

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BUYUK IPAK YO'LI MARKAZIY OSIYO VA YEVROPA MADANIYATI, TARIXI VA SAN'ATINI BOG'LOVCHI YO'L SIFATIDA

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ШЕЛКОВЫЙ ПУТЬ КАК СПОСОБ СОЕДИНЕНИЯ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОАЗИАТСКОЙ И ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ, ИСТОРИИ И ИСКУССТВА

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Abstract: The article, devoted to the diplomacy of the ancient Silk Road and its influence on intercultural development, emphasizes the historical significance of the Silk Road, particularly its role in the fostering diplomatic and cultural relations. It analyzes the formation of the cross-cultural environment in Central Asia and examines the key factors that influenced this process. It is also emphasized that, based on Silk Road diplomacy, not only cultural but also economic cooperation was established among Asian countries, and this process was actively extended to European nations as well.

Key words: cultural evolutionary theories, cultural diffusion, silk supply, raw silk, cross-cultural interaction, diplomatic relations, silk weavers, ancient Silk road diplomacy.

Annotatsiya: Qadimgi Ipak yo'li diplomatiyasi va uning kross-madaniy rivojlanishga ta'siri mavzusidagi maqolada Ipak yo'lining tarixiy ahamiyati, ayniqsa, uning diplomatik va madaniy aloqalarni rivojlantirishdagi o'rni yoritilgan. Unda Markaziy Osiyoda kross-madaniy muhitning shakllanishi va bu jarayonga ta'sir ko'rsatgan omillar tahlil qilingan. Shuningdek, maqolada Ipak yo'li diplomatiyasi asosida Osiyo davlatlari o'rtasida nafaqat madaniy, balki iqtisodiy hamkorlik yo'lga qo'yilgani, bu jarayon Yevropa mamlakatlari bilan ham faol olib borilgani ta'kidlangan.

Kalit so'zlar: madaniy evolyutsiya nazariyalari, madaniy diffuziya, ipak yetkazib berish, ipak xomashyosi, kross-madaniyat o'zaro ta'siri, diplomatik aloqalar, ipakchilar, qadimgi Ipak yo'li diplomatiyasi.

Аннотация: В статье, посвящённой дипломатии древнего Шёлкового пути и её влиянию на кросс-культурное развитие, рассматривается историческое значение Шёлкового пути, особенно его роль в развитии дипломатических и культурных отношений. Анализируется формирование кросс-культурной среды в Центральной Азии и выявляются ключевые факторы, повлиявшие на этот процесс. А также подчёркивается, что на основе дипломатии Шёлкового пути

формировалось не только культурное, но и экономическое сотрудничество между странами Азии, причём данный процесс активно распространялся и на европейские государства.

Ключевые слова: *теории культурной эволюции, культурная диффузия, поставки шелка, шелк-сырец, кросс-культурное взаимодействие, дипломатические отношения, ткачи шелка, дипломатия древнего Шелкового пути.*

INTRODUCTION. The history of the culture of the peoples of Central Asia goes back to the distant past. Culture embodies the way of life and traditions of the people. It is known from history that the territory of Central Asia is located at the crossroads of intercultural contacts. This provided the opportunity for cultural interaction of the country with the cultures of other countries. From ancient times to the present day, several famous trade routes passed through the territory of Central Asia. For example, the “Lapis lazuli Road”, the “Royal Road” and the “Great Silk Road”. Among them, the longest and most extended was the Great Silk Road, the length of which was 12 thousand kilometers.

The first of these roads, which connected the territories of the Ancient East and Central Asia in the 3rd-2nd millennia BC, was called the “Lazurite Road”. One branch of this road connected Europe, and the other - the countries of Asia. Another important ancient road is associated with the Achaemenids, one of the Iranian dynasties. One branch of this road connected the cities of Asia Minor, as well as Ephesus and Sardis on the Mediterranean coast, with the Iranian city of Susa in the 6th-4th centuries BC, and the other passed through Iran, Central Asia, South Kazakhstan and came to Altai. In historical sources, this road is called the “Royal Road”. The third and largest of the ancient trade routes is called the “Great Silk Road” and stretched for 12 thousand km. The first branch of the Great Silk Road, which at one time had great social, economic and military significance, began in the 2nd-1st centuries BC. in the Chinese city of Xi'an and extended through East Turkestan, Central Asia, Iran, Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean Sea. Having reached the Chinese city of Anosi, the Silk Road divided into several branches. In particular, one branch went through Anosi-Hami-Kashgar to Kokand, and from there to Tashkent. From here the road to Bukhara through Jizzakh and Samarkand went to Guryev via Urgench, and from there to the Black Sea coast through Oqsaroy.

Another branch went through Dunhuang to Khotan, and from there to Lahore. In addition, having reached Bukhara, this branch divided into two. The southern route went through Bukhara-Karshi-Termez to Nishapur and went to India through Herat. One of the branches in Nishapur stretched along the route Tehran – Qazvin – Hamadan – Baghdad – Palmyra to the city of Tiro on the Mediterranean Sea. In general, the southern branch of the Silk Road passed through Uzgen to Osh, and then through Kuva-Margilan-Kokand to Khujand, Samarkand and Bukhara. The northern branch, through the Khazar Khaganate and the Bulgar State, went to Kievan Rus and the countries of Europe, and this network began to develop from the 6th century. In addition to the main caravan routes of the Silk Road, there were also internal trade routes[6].

MATERIALS AND METHODS. The Great Silk Road was famous throughout the world for its silk trade. This trade route consisted of three periods. In the early periods, silk attracted European countries and encouraged traders, builders and scientists to travel along the Silk Road. These trips contributed to the development of silk fabric production technology by other countries. In the third period, silk was supplanted by other precious stones, spices and medicinal herbs, and trade in them intensified.

The Silk Route also linked up with several other great trading routes. The Indian Grand Road brought spices up from the Punjab over the Hindu Kush to join the Silk Route at Bactra. The Incense Road, carrying oriental perfumes, led up from the southern shore of Arabia to join the Silk Route at Damascus. Here in the Syrian heartland the Silk Route was also joined by a branch of the Spice Route. This was largely a sea route, which led down the Red Sea, across the Indian Ocean to India, and beyond to the south coast of China. This was the Silk Route's main alternative in trade with the East. During the periods when the Silk Route was too dangerous for traders, silk would often

come from China by ship along this much longer (but often much safer) route[7].

Thus, in the countries located on the Great Silk Road, along with economic indicators and trade, culture, education and science began to develop rapidly. The process of mutual communication contributed to the exchange of cultures, the harmony of arts, the improvement of the knowledge and skills of masters and artisans, the growth of the state economy, the development of new languages and the improvement of diplomatic relations between countries.

During this “third” Silk Road, silk, while still a highly valued Chinese export, was no longer the primary commodity. Europeans wanted pearls and gems, spices, precious metals, medicines, ceramics, carpets, other fabrics, and lacquerware. All kingdoms needed horses, weapons, and armaments. Besides, silk production already was known in the Arab world and had spread to southern Europe. Silk weavers and traders – Arabs, “Saracens”, Jews, and Greeks from Sicily and the eastern Mediterranean – relocated to new commercial centers in northern Italy. Italian silk-making eventually became a stellar Renaissance art in Venice, Florence, Genoa, and Lucca in the 14th and 15th centuries. New stylistic techniques were added, like alto-e-basso for velvets and brocades, while old motifs, like the stylized Central Asian pomegranate, took on new life[3].

Cities such as Samarkand, Bactria and Merv were considered centers of advanced science and culture. The mixture of Arab, Persian, Greek and Indian cultures, as well as local ones, created cross-cultural interaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

Important oasis cities like Khotan, Turfan, and Dunhuang were reached by the northern and southern routes that circumnavigated the Taklamakan Desert. These urban centres were crucial in assisting traders and serving as cultural melting pots. Other important cities along the Silk Road were Antioch, Palmyra, and Constantinople in the West, and Merv, Bactria, and Samarkand in Central Asia[4].

The introduction of sea routes into the trade of European and Asian countries not only reduced the countries’ costs, but also ensured security.

Commercial trade and competition was of great importance by the 15th century with the

growth of European cities, guilds, and royal states. With the decline of Mongol power, control over trade routes was vital. The motivation behind Portuguese explorations of a sea route to India was to secure safer and cheaper passage of trade goods than by land caravans, which were subject to either exorbitant protection fees or raiding by enemies. Indeed, it was the search for this sea route to the East that led Columbus westward to the “New World”[3].

As trade intensified, countries sought to trade both by land and by sea. This, in turn, required geographical knowledge in addition to language learning.

The audacity of the Portuguese attempt to establish an Estado da India through enforcement of a cartaz (safe-conduct) system underestimated the resilience and vibrancy of Asian shipping dominated largely by Arab shipping. Persian and Arab shippers and traders had developed the earlier Graeco-Roman trade routes across the Arabian Sea from the Gulf ports of Basra and Saifra to Sri Lanka and crossing the Bay of Bengal to Śrīvijaya before heading north to Guangzhou[2].

The silk trade influenced European culture, customs and lifestyle. Silk clothing became a tradition among nobles and merchants. This led to the widespread use of silk products by individuals.

The modern Era. Trade in silks helped fuel the mercantile transformation of Western Europe. French King Charles VII, the dukes of Burgundy, and their successors participated vigorously through markets in Bruges, Amsterdam, Lyon, and other towns. The practice of emulating Asian silk styles was institutionalized in Lyon, France, with the development of imitative Chinese and Turkish motifs, chinoiserie and turqueries respectively. A steady stream of European travelers and adventurous merchants moved luxury goods between Europe, the Middle East, Iran, India, and China. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605- 98), who traversed parts of the Silk Road on six journeys and witnessed the building of Versailles, Isfahan, and the Taj Mahal, traded in diamonds and pearls, was awarded “Oriental” silk robes of honor by the Shah of Iran and a barony by Louis XIV (for the sale of what later became the Hope Diamond). The English developed their own silk industry and tried silk cultivation in Ireland, and even in the New

World. Mulberry trees and silkworms went with settlers to Jamestown in the early 1600s. Silk cultivation was successful but only for a time; other attempts followed later in Georgia, among the 19th-century Harmonists in Pennsylvania, and even among the Shakers in Kentucky. Still, imported silks showed the long reach of an international trade[3].

The culture of the peoples of Central Asia has always interested all nations with its achievements in science. Peoples speaking several languages have long inhabited this region. This contributed to the emergence of scientists and thinkers. For example, during the Hellenistic period, along with Greek culture, the Greek language also penetrated here, and Central Asian scientists studied the works of Greek philosophers in Greek and wrote commentaries on them. Chinese, Iranian, Indian and other cultures also penetrated along the Silk Road. Together with these cultures, they also adopted the unique features of Central Asian religion and culture.

The end of the Mongol age in the East coincided with the brewing Commercial Revolution in late Medieval Europe, which marked the beginning of another epochal event in the history of the silk trade: the beginning of the Western European silk weaving industry. Important silk manufacturing towns, such as Lucca in Northern Italy, began to establish themselves in the mid-thirteenth century. The industry and technology quickly diffused across the Continent[1].

The spread of silk products and raw materials along the Great Silk Road to European countries marked the beginning of the production of this product. They not only used silk products in everyday life, but also established their own silk production.

Silk styles and fashions were led, in Europe, by royalty, but soon extended to a wealthy merchant class, and were broadened further as a result of new manufacturing techniques. Silk production became industrialized in 1804 with the Jacquard loom. This loom relied upon punched cards to program the complex orchestration of threads into wonderful patterns; the cards later inspired the computer punch cards of the mid-20th century. Throughout the 19th century, chemists developed synthetic dyes. Designers, who could

create one-of-a-kind items for the elite but also develop mass-produced lines of clothing, furnishings, and other silk products, set up shop in Paris. Asia was the subject of romantic allure and fascination by elites of the period. In the early 1800s, England's George IV built his Brighton palace in an IndoPersian style, decorated it with Chinese furniture, and wore silk garments, thereby setting a trend, with his friend Beau Brummel, for men's formal fashion. Declared Empress of India in 1858, Queen Victoria was feted with grand celebrations and a diamond jubilee that included "Oriental" durbars or courtly convocations, replete with marching elephants and parades of Asian troops adorned in native dress. Parisians held costumed balls, dressed up as sultans and Asian royalty. Kashmiri and Chinese silk scarves were a big hit. Jewelers Cartier and Tiffany used Asian gemstones and imitated Asian decorative styles. Tiffany and Lalique were designing silk sashes, scarves, and other items. New silk textiles like chiffons and crepes were developed in France, and silk cultivation centers sent raw silk to design houses and production factories to meet demand. This demand extended to the United States, and raw silk was imported from Japan and dyed using the soft waters of the Passaic River in Paterson, New Jersey. Paterson became the U.S. headquarters of silk supply, design, and furnishing companies[3].

Over centuries, knowledge about sericulture spread from China to other areas of Asia, and starting in the eleventh century CE to Europe, and then in the sixteenth century to European colonies in the Americas. As it spread, so too did knowledge about production techniques, which had to be adapted to local environmental conditions. For instance, in the 17th century, the Chinese treatise *Tiangong Kaiwu* was first introduced to Japan and France. This book records how to improve the yields of mulberry trees. These treatises record how to cut mulberry trees' leaves and roots to maximize the following years' production. Such discussions were usually quite detailed when it came to arranging and treating the trees according to the annual cycle[5].

It is no coincidence that the ancient roots of cross-cultural interaction in Central Asia go back centuries, and its connection with such cultures as the Hellenistic era, the Silk Road culture, Persian

culture, Indian culture, Arabic culture, Russian culture, is today considered one of the main objects of scientific research. These connections allow us to reveal the stages of development of the existing culture and identify close ties between peoples.

It was during this Orientalist period that the idea of the Silk Road as a way of connecting European and Asian culture, history, and art, was articulated by Baron von Richthofen. In 1786 William Jones had found the links between Sanskrit and Latin, devising the idea of an Indo-European family of languages. Throughout the 19th century, European philologists were working on the relationships between European and Asian languages, positing such “families” as Uralic and Altaic. European scholars found common roots in religions and symbols spanning Eurasia and relating Hinduism and Buddhism to ancient Greco-Roman mythology, and with Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Archaeologists had begun to find links between widely dispersed civilizations of Egypt, the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, Iran, India, and Central Asia. Cultural diffusion, particularly strong in German and later English social science, became an explanatory model for the similarities found in widely separated societies, and an alternative to cultural evolutionary theories. These connections across cultures, history, and geography still intrigue us today. Consider, for example, the names of a number of stringed instruments with the root *tar* (“string” in Persian), from the *tar* itself to the *dotar*, *dutar*, *lotar*, *setar*, *sitar*, *qitar*, *guitarra*, and the *guitar*[3].

CONCLUSION. From the above, European countries used Central Asian motifs as a cultural source in silk production. Silk products

were created by exchanging European and Asian motifs, which led to the emergence of new types of silk fabrics.

In formulating the idea of the Silk Road, Richthofen saw Central Asia as not only the land bridge between distant civilizations, but as a source of cultural creativity in its own right[3].

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