

ANCIENT SILK ROAD DIPLOMACY AND ITS IMPACT ON CROSS-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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QADIMGI IPAK YO'LI DIPLOMATIYASI VA UNING KROSS-MADANIYAT RIVOJIGA TA'SIRI

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ДИПЛОМАТИЯ ДРЕВНЕГО ШЕЛКОВОГО ПУТИ И ЕЕ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА КРОСС-КУЛЬТУРНОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ

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Abstract: The article examines the Great Silk Road as a link between the culture, history and art of Central Asia and Europe. The Great Silk Road is revealed as a primary reality that determined the exchange of culture, scientific achievements and art between Central Asia and Europe.

Key words: Great silk road, spread and mixing of religions, a great civilization, Lazurite road, a vehicle of cultural creativity, deeper cooperation, long-distance overland caravan.

Annotatsiya: Maqolada Buyuk ipak yo'li Markaziy Osiyo va Yevropa madaniyati, tarixi va san'atini bog'lovchi yo'l sifatida ko'rib chiqilgan. Buyuk ipak yo'li Markaziy Osiyo va Yevropa madaniyati, ilm-fan yutuqlari, san'ati almashinuviga sabab bo'lgan birlamchi voqelik sifatida ochib berilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Buyuk Ipak yo'li, dinlarning tarqalishi va qorishishi, buyuk sivilizatsiya, lojuvard yo'li, madaniy ijod vositasi, yaqin hamkorlik, uzoq masofali quruqlik karvoni.

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается Великий Шёлковый путь как связующее звено между культурой, историей и искусством Центральной Азии и Европы. Великий Шёлковый путь раскрывается как реальность, обусловившая обмен культурой, научными достижениями и искусством между Центральной Азией и Европой.

Ключевые слова: Великий шелковый путь, распространение и смешение религий, великая цивилизация, Лазуритовый путь, средство культурного творчества, более глубокое сотрудничество, дальний сухопутный караван.

INTRODUCTION. Since the concept of "Seidenstrassen" or "Silk Roads" was first invented by the German geologist and explorer Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877, the "Silk Road" has been used as a metaphor of European and Asian cultural interchange. While largely commercial, the

Silk Road provided the vehicle for all sorts of creative exchange between tremendously diverse peoples and cultures. Given the Silk Road's symbolic meaning of sharing and exchange, it is somewhat paradoxical that the desire to control its namesake commodity, silk, was so strong. The

ancient Chinese guarded the secret of silk production for centuries. The Ottoman Turks and the Persians fought a war over it. The English and French competed to restrict its markets. But despite such attempts, silk moved across the planet with remarkable ease and was a vehicle of cultural creativity wherever it went. The degree of borrowings and choosing of techniques and patterns, the invention and discovery of uses and styles is incredible. Every culture that touched silk added to its adornment of humanity[5].

MATERIALS AND METHODS. Today, in an effort to study our history and the roots of our culture, many scientists are studying the emergence of the Great silk road and its role in the region. After all, finds from sources and excavations provide valuable information about the ancient culture, art and history of the peoples of Central Asia. This helps to reveal the true essence of cultural diversity.

Most today would agree that Richthofen's original concept was too limited in that he was concerned first of all about the movement of silk overland from east to west between the "great civilizations" of Han China and Rome. The routes of exchange and products were many, and the mix changed substantially over time. The history of the Silk Roads is a narrative about movement, resettlement, and interactions across ill-defined borders but not necessarily over long distances. It is also the story of artistic exchange and the spread and mixing of religions, all set against the background of the rise and fall of polities which encompassed a wide range of cultures and peoples, about whose identities we still know too little. Many of the exchanges documented by archaeological research were surely the result of contact between various ethnic or linguistic groups over time[1].

The Great silk road was used not only for the distribution of trade goods, but also for the religions and cultures of different peoples, and it also served as a route connecting the cultures of the East and West. Evidence of trade in ancient Chinese silk has been found in archaeological excavations in Central Asian Bactria (currently the region around Balkh and Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan) dating to about 500 B.C.E. Strands of silk have been found in

ancient Egypt from about 1000 B.C.E., but these may be of Indian rather than Chinese origin. Alexander the Great, who ruled much of the known world from the Mediterranean to India in the late 4th century B.C.E., wore robes of deep purple-dyed silk. The silk was probably from China, which the Greeks knew as Seres – the place where serikos or silk was made – and made optimum use of the rare and expensive purple dye that was produced by the Phoenicians of Tyre from the secretions of sea snails. Yet, in the West, knowledge of silk and its trade were relatively limited. So, too, in the Far East. Sericulture was carried to Korea by Chinese immigrants in about 200 B.C.E. Though silk was extant in Japan at the turn of the millennium, sericulture was not widely known there until about the 3rd century C.E. Conventionally, historians refer to three periods of intense Silk road trade:

1) from 206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E., between the Rome;

2) from about 618 to 907 C.E., between Tang dynasty China and Central Asia, Byzantium, the Arab Umayyad and Abbasid empires, the Sasanian Persian Empire, and India, and coinciding with the expansion of Islam, Buddhism, Assyrian Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Judaism into Central Asia;

3) during the 13th and 14th centuries, between China, Central Asia, Persia, India, and early modern Europe, made possible by Mongol control of most of the Silk Road. Some would add a modern Silk Road period, beginning in the 19th century with the "Great Game" - the competition between Russian and British colonial powers for influence over Central Asia - and extending through today[5].

Scholars have divided the Silk Road into three periods based on chronological data. The main reason for this is that each period was accompanied by new changes. Each period, being unique, also contributed to the development of dialogue, relations and communication between people in all areas. On the evidence of these explorers' reports, Britain, France, Germany, America and Russia now all launched archaeological expeditions to explore the Tarim Basin. They realized that here possibly

might lie vital evidence on how East and West had been linked by the Silk Route. The Japanese too sent explorers, who hoped to discover how Buddhism had reached their country. What the archaeologists found was to exceed their wildest expectations. Digging through the sand, they uncovered the relics and treasures from the oasis cities which had once formed the essential links along the Silk Route between north-west China and the Pamir Mountains. A Buddhist culture, which few people knew had existed, was revealed. For instance, at Dunhuang the Hungarian-British explorer Sir Aurel Stein discovered a priceless collection of Buddhist manuscripts and paintings of the Tang Dynasty which had been bricked up in a cave since 1000 CE[6]. To understand the Silk road more deeply, we have the opportunity to support our ideas with solid evidence, mainly through archaeological finds that confirm the harmony of ideas, cultures and religions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. From Han China to Rome. In 198 B.C.E., the Han dynasty concluded a treaty with a Central Asian people, the Xiongnu. The emperor agreed to give his daughter to the Xiongnu ruler and pay an annual gift in gold and silk. By the 1st century C.E. silk reached Rome, initiating the first “Silk Road”. Pliny, writing about silk, thought it was made from the down of trees in Seres. It was very popular among the Romans. People wore rare strips of silk on their clothing and sought more; they spent increasing amounts of gold and silver, leading to a shortage in precious metals. Coinciding with the development of ruling elites and the beginnings of empire, silk was associated with wealth and power – Julius Caesar entered Rome in triumph under silk canopies. Over the next three centuries, silk imports increased, especially with the Pax Romana of the early emperors, which opened up trade routes in Asia Minor and the Middle East. As silk came westward, newly invented blown glass, asbestos, amber, and red coral moved eastward. Despite some warnings about the silk trade’s deleterious consequences, it became a medium of exchange and tribute, and when in 408 C.E. Alaric the Visigoth besieged Rome, he

demanded and received as ransom 5, 000 pounds of gold and 4, 000 tunics of silk[5].

The contacts that took place along the Great Silk Road were based on mutual agreements, and the strict requirements established in them applied to both sides. Movement is life, travel, globalization has always been the driving force of development. This intercontinental trade route, the largest in human history, connected Europe and Asia and in the past stretched from the ancient Roman state to Nara, the ancient capital of Japan. Of course, trade between the East and the West had been carried on since ancient times, sunk in the depths of the past, but these were isolated parts of the future Great Road. The formation of trade relations was greatly helped by the discovery and mining of semi-precious stones in the mountains of Central Asia – lapis lazuli, nephrite, agate, and turquoise, which are highly valued in the East. For example, there was a “lazarite road” that supplied lapis lazuli from Central Asia to Iran, Mesopotamia and even Egypt. At the same time, the “jade road” was formed, which connected Khotan and Yorkend districts with the regions of North China. In addition, agate stones were brought to the countries of East Asia from Sogdiana and Bactria, and turquoise was brought from Khorezm. All these directions eventually merged into the Great Silk Road. 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 roads leading from China to Eastern Turkestan, is in the middle of the second century BC[3].

It would not be wrong to say that the Great Silk Road was a historical trade route that connected the East and the West, transported goods, provided an opportunity to study the cultures of peoples, caused the migration of different nationalities from one region to another and contributed to the development of trade.

The Silk Road has historical significance as a well trodden trade route connecting Eastern Europe and Africa to Southern and Eastern Asia, encompassing the geographical region known as Central Asia or Eurasia. Traditionally, it carried silk produced in the Chinese city of Chan’an (now Xian,

capital of the Shaanxi province), apart from other trade goods, to far off European cities. It spanned a 7,000 mile long route over land and water, through towns and cities in Northern India, Central Asia and Parthian empire to the farthest extent of Roman Empire[2].

Today, a number of countries are interested in continuing the idea of the Great Silk Road, which is gaining momentum due to its historical roots and past, since economic cooperation serves to ensure close interaction between countries.

The Silk Road Economic Belt (the 'Belt') component of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China in 2013 is an ambitious vision that has evoked enthusiasm among many stakeholders. Among other objectives, the Belt intends to promote infrastructural development and connectivity, and stimulate economic integration across the Eurasian continent. Europe is an integral part of China's transcontinental vision, and the European Union (EU) has its own vested interests in the Belt – as the EU–China Connectivity Platform demonstrates. Beyond direct economic engagement, the Belt could also function as an entry point for deeper cooperation between the EU and China on a range of issues related to global and regional governance[4]. The development of trade and commerce led to the development of interpersonal relationships. The use of markets, religious sites, entertainment venues and hotels brought different peoples closer together and allowed them to get to know other cultures.

Absorbed by the movement of people, religions, and trade goods, we rarely pause to consider how the long-distance overland caravan trade affected the communities through which it passed. Traders must have frequented inns, religious sites, markets, and financial institutions, we suppose, but in fact we know surprisingly little about the day-to-day functioning of the oasis economies ringing the Taklamakan Desert. For those interested in understanding the Silk Road trade of the Tang dynasty, the Turfan oasis offers the best case study. The century from 640 (the Tang conquest of the independent Gaochang kingdom) to 755 (the Tang withdrawal from Central Asia

following the An Lushan rebellion) marks the apogee of the Tang dynasty's involvement in Central Asia. Nearly two thousand documents span the period before Tang rule and continue after 640, when Gaochang was renamed Xizhou[7].

CONCLUSION. In conclusion, it should be noted that the Great Silk Road contributed to the following processes:

culture developed and improved due to the high level of trade;

the existence of this trade route contributed greatly to the spread of Buddhism in other regions;

merchants from European countries, Greece and Arab countries lived for a long time along the Great Silk Road to study the culture and economy of the peoples inhabiting this region.

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