

## CITIES OF CENTRAL ASIA AND THE GREAT SILK ROAD

Guldonakhon Anvarbekovna Mamasolieva

Teacher at the Department “World History” of  
Andizhan State University, Republic of Uzbekistan

### ABSTRACT

In the interaction of various regions with China and India, the cities of Central Asia played an important role. The fate of cities on the Silk Road was influenced not only by economic, but also by political factors. The whole history of their existence is associated with continuous confrontation for control over the most important caravan routes. Wars between the states of Central Asia led to the decline of the main cities on the trade routes and the robbery of caravans, and somewhere new urban settlements were formed. The Great Silk Road stimulated the development of trade cities and services: caravan - sheds (hotels), trade in markets, translators, money changers, camel drivers, caravan guards, tax collectors, etc. The rulers of the lands, receiving income from customs duties levied in cities along the caravan routes, adopted strict laws to protect merchants. In Timur's empire, the province in which the merchant was robbed had to compensate the merchant in double the amount of the loss and pay a fine to Timur himself in five times. The Silk Road became a channel through which there was a constant exchange of cultural achievements - knowledge, new goods, ideas, technologies.

**Keywords:** The Great Silk Road, West, East, role, city, trade, economy, control, continent, value, bridge, tradition, cooperation, stability, peace, progress, commodity, history, state, income, technology, knowledge, idea, innovation, control, center, transit, bazaar, karvanserai, tax, kharaj, lodge, province, fabric, caravan, smuggling.

### INTRODUCTION

The Great Silk Road, which existed in antiquity and the early Middle Ages, undoubtedly had an important economic and political significance in the life of the peoples of Asia and Europe. Throughout the vast expanse of the Great Silk Road, stretching across the entire continent, from the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of the Pacific, throughout the history of its existence, there was an active trade, exchange of accumulated knowledge and cultural values, advanced ideas, which played a huge role in the development of many countries and peoples. contributed to the progress of all mankind.

And that is why in our time, in the 21st century, the process of a comprehensive, comprehensive study and restoration of the traditions of the Great Silk Road as a “path of dialogue”, a kind of bridge that connected the peoples of the West and East in their desire for friendship and cooperation, has become relevant. Today, in the age of globalization, the dynamic development of integration processes between countries, regions and continents, the implementation of the idea of reviving the Great Silk Road undoubtedly serves the cause of strengthening peace and stability, the socio-economic development of states, social progress, and the well-being of people.

## RESEARCH METHODS

China became the starting point of the Great Silk Road. The legendary track originated in the ancient city of Chang'an (now Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province). The pioneer of the western lands for the Chinese was the diplomat Zhang Jiang. In particular, in his messages he writes: "The Davanians lead a sedentary life, are engaged in agriculture, grow rice and wheat. They have wine... On the territory of Davan there are 70 cities and towns... The population is several hundred. The army consists of 60,000 people ... "[6,29]. The active policy of conquest by Emperor Wu Di (whose temple name translated means "militant emperor") was aimed at expanding the spheres of influence of the Chinese state in all directions. Its historical consequence was the organic inclusion of China in the cultural and economic structure of Eurasia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The interaction of the Eastern European and Mediterranean-Middle Eastern regions with China and India was also carried out with the participation of the states of Central Asia. Their nodal position at the crossroads of intercivilizational ties of the first half-middle of the 1st millennium AD. is of particular interest to this area, which played an important role in the system of trade communications of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. The specificity of this region was that it found itself in the zone of intersecting influence of three civilizational systems: the ancient Christian Mediterranean through Western Asia, the Hindu-Buddhist and Chinese-Confucian. At the same time, Central Asia acted as a link in contacts not only in the meridional direction - from West to East and vice versa, but also served as the focus of transcultural contacts along the north-south line. The latter was very characteristically manifested in the significant position of the Central Asian region in relation to the nomadic world of the Eurasian steppes. A natural consequence of this situation in Central Asia was the high intensity of intercivilizational contacts, which manifested itself in the active exchange of goods and information, the richness of cultural and economic relations.

The fate of the Silk Road was influenced not only by economic, but also by political factors. The entire history of its existence is connected with the continuous struggle for control over the most important caravan routes. Wars between the states of Central Asia led to the decline of the main cities on trade routes and the robbery of caravans. This led to the disruption of trade flows from China to the Eastern Mediterranean and the fall of certain sections of the Great Silk Road. The history of this route has several short periods when the control of the routes was in the hands of one state: the Turkic Khaganate in the last third of the sixth century, the empire of Genghis Khan in the second quarter of the 13th century and the empire of Tamerlane in the last third of the 14th century. These were the periods of the greatest prosperity of the Great Silk Road.

From the III century AD. until the 6th century AD The Silk Road was in a state of decline, which was associated with the so-called fall of the large states of that time: Roman (Mediterranean), Parthian (Middle East), Kushan (India, Afghanistan, Central Asia) and Han (China).

Central Asia was located in the very center of the Great Silk Road, which served as a factor in the development of trade, economy and culture in the Middle Ages, in particular in the 4th-6th centuries. In the 6th century, the territories of Central Asia and all the Eurasian steppes, from

Northern China to the Black Sea region, were united under the rule of the Turkic Khaganate. The Turkuts, having defeated the Ephthalites and the northern Chinese kingdoms, achieve not only political, but also economic power, since the entire great caravan route from China to the borders of Iran and Byzantium passes into their hands. For the first time in history, it unites within one state almost the entire territory of the Eurasian steppes, as well as the areas of ancient settled civilizations - Sogd and Bukhara, which were key links on the route of the Great Silk Road. With the help of Sogdian merchants, the Turks become Byzantium's partners in creating uninterrupted trans-Eurasian trade [8,40-48].

From that moment on, Sogd and other possessions of Central Asia began to play a significant role both in the trade and economic sphere and in the foreign policy activities of the Turkic Khaganate.

Trade during this period was very lively and profitable, developing commodity-money relations, which affects the social structure of the population. New layers of society are emerging, as not only goods and technologies are spreading, but also knowledge and ideas, innovations between the civilizations of Eurasia.

According to archaeologists, Sogdian trade relations with China date back to about the 2nd century BC [1,343]. At the same time, in connection with the outflow of the population due to the invasion of Alexander the Great, the first Sogdian colonies arose in the border regions of China. It is known that in the caravan of the famous discoverer of the Silk Road Zhang Qian (張騫, d. 114 BC), sent to Central Asia, there were about 200–300 people, and that the emperor “gave each 2 horses, bulls and rams with a score of 10,000. He loaded with gold, money and silk fabrics worth several thousand, even more than 10,000” [4,2]. This journey marked the beginning of competition between the "sons of poor families" for participation in trade missions to the West. But at that time, the Chinese did not manage to oust the Sogdians from the trade routes. Since ancient times, the Sogdians also actively traded with India.

But further control by the Turks of the Great Silk Road is interrupted by serious political processes in the Middle East and Central Asia associated with the Arab conquests and changes in the political map of the world.

The Arab conquest of Central Asia, which lasted more than a hundred years, from the middle of the 7th century, and the battle of the Arabs with the Chinese in 751 in the Talas valley, which put an end to the Chinese advance into this region, radically changed the very essence of the ancient transcontinental road - the Great Silk Road. way.

A new period in the history of the Great "Silk Road" will come after the creation in the middle of the VIII century. stable Abbasid caliphate, stretching from Spain to East Turkestan, becoming a kind of "golden age" in the history of Muslim civilization.

This new period in the history of Central Asia, and, consequently, the Great Silk Road, continued from the second half of the 8th century AD. e. until the beginning of the thirteenth century. This period, which is usually called the period of the developed Middle Ages.

The next stage in the development of the Silk Road was associated with the Mongols. Genghis Khan, intending to conquer the Great Silk Road, realized that even the impressive military power of the Mongols at that time would not be enough to control all its branches for a long time. Therefore, having captured the Northern branch, Genghis Khan began to methodically

destroy the Arab and Turkic cities that lay on his southern branch. Thus, the Mongol ruler tried to stop the intensive exchange of goods bypassing his possessions.

Mongol domination stimulated caravan trade between China and the Mediterranean countries. But all the benefits from this trade went to the Golden Horde. Khorezm in this period was the southern segment on this northern route, standing at the advantageous intersections of routes from the steppe nomads to the oases and from distant countries to Maverannahr, it played a large role as a transit center of trade. It was, as it were, the northern gate of Maverannakhr, from where the paths to the nomads of the Great Steppe to the Russian lands opened. Urgench (Gurganj) was a major trading center.

Rice, dried fruits, cotton, woolen and silk fabrics, carpets and other goods were supplied from Gurganj to the Russian principalities. From there, in turn, they brought very popular goods - slaves, sable furs and other fur-bearing animals [14,75]. Russian merchants played a significant role in the trade turnover of Gurganj.

There were many bazaars in the city, and strict order reigned in each. A special position was introduced - mukhtasib, who oversaw the state of the bazaars. He checked the quality of goods, the cleanliness of dishes, the freshness of food, monitored the accuracy of measures and weights, and prevented deceit and fraud[2,102].

Here is what the Arab traveler Ibn Batuta writes about him: "Khorezm is the largest and most beautiful of the Turkic cities. The streets in it are wide, the buildings are numerous and there are many sights. The city is so populated and lively that on market day it is impossible to ride a horse[3,79-80].

Soon, the empire of Temur (1370–1405) was formed on the territories of the state of the Mongols, which led to the complete disintegration of the Turkic-Mongolian state. The revival of the Great Silk Road begins, which stimulated economic and cultural ties between the East and the West. Caravans from China to the Middle East again took a course through Otrar, Tashkent, Samarkand, Balkh, Herat. Now the entire flow of goods has poured along the roads passing through Maverannahr. Complete order was established on the roads, and merchants could travel on it without fear. In large cities, separate caravanserais were built for foreign merchants. For example, in Bukhara for Urgench merchants, the Urganzhiy carvan-shed was built, and separate carvan-sheds were also built for Iranian and Merv merchants. In Baku, there were separate caravanserais for Bukharians[10,158].

Amir Temur did his best to support people involved in the revival of "dead lands" - fallow and abandoned lands. They were given special benefits. This is stated in the "Code"; "... in the first year nothing was charged from them, in the second year they were content with what they handed over at their own discretion, and only in the third year they charged them kharaj at the established rate." At the same time, the right to own abandoned land was strictly regulated by law. The Code says: "If the land was abandoned or did not belong to anyone, then cultivate it at the expense of the Khalis, if there is an owner, but he is not able to cultivate it, then you should provide him with the things and tools necessary for cultivating the land, so that he I was able to put my land in order." And further: "He ordered that kyarizes be built in abandoned lands, repaired destroyed bridges, built new bridges over rivers and canals; on the roads, at a distance of one day's march, build a discount ... "[13,122].

The tax system under Timur was debugged. The size of taxes and duties from the land, from livestock and from crafts was precisely established, and the activities of tax collectors were tightly controlled.

The main tax was kharaj, the amount of which was set depending on the quality of the land, water supply, proximity to the city, etc., and amounted to one tenth, one fourth or one third of the crop.

Mal-u jihat (from Arabic "mal" - land, property and "jihah" - reasons) - a tax paid in money and in kind.

Kunalga (from the old Uzbek "kyunmok") - the provision of lodging for the night by the population to ambassadors, royal messengers and officials, as well as their servants when passing through certain settlements.

Budge (Persian - tax, duty) - a duty levied on trade caravans (merchants) when crossing borders and stopping in caravanserais.

Pishkesh (Persian - offering, gift) - obligatory collection for gifts to feudal lords.

Savari (Persian - voluntary offering) - a mandatory collection from the population for offerings (gifts) to high-ranking persons.

Shilan puli (Pers. "royal feast, royal treat") - a fee for the cost of royal treats.

Jan saligi is a poll tax collected from the population once a year.

"He ordered in every possible way to avoid the ruin of subjects during the collection of kharaj and not to plunge the country into the abyss of poverty, because the deprivation of subjects of shelter and family entails the drying up of the state treasury, and the drying up of the treasury is the reason for the dissolution of the rati, which ultimately leads to a weakening of state power" [13,121].

In the event that the goods were plundered on the territory of his empire, the entire province where the merchant was robbed had to compensate him for the loss in double size, and Timur himself was to pay five times the amount of the lost amount.

All caravan trade routes converged in Samarkand, the capital of the empire. The city became the crossroads of Asia, the center of the continent. According to Timur's plan, Samarkand was to adequately represent his powerful empire and become the most beautiful city in the world. In size and luxury, he had to surpass everything that the human imagination could come up with and convey to the descendants the strength and power of his empire.

A great urban development took place. The best architects of Central Asia and other countries were involved in the construction. Amir Timur paid special attention to Samarkand and Shakhrisabz. Magnificent palaces, mausoleums, mosques were built here - the palaces of Kuk Saroy, Buston, the mausoleums of Shokhi-Zinda, Gur-Emir, the Bibikhanum mosque in Samarkand, Ok-Saray in Shakhrisabz, the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmad Yasawi in Turkestan. To emphasize the greatness of Samarkand, the villages in the vicinity of the city were given the names of the capitals of other states: Damascus, Misr, Baghdad, Farish, Sheroz. The purpose of creating majestic buildings was to show the power and grandeur of the state itself, to intimidate potential opponents, in particular, the nomads of Dashti Kipchak.

Amir Timur was able to unite vast territories with different levels of development into a single centralized state, thanks to which conditions were created for the development of the economy

and culture. It is no coincidence that the period of the reign of the Timurids was called by Western scientists the "Temurid Renaissance" (XIV-XV centuries) [11,93].

However, with the arrival of pepper and spices from the Portuguese colonies to the North of Europe (1501), in connection with the discovery of the sea route from Europe to India by Vasco de Gama and the beginning of the Age of Discovery, the gradual decline of the Great Silk Road begins. Military conflicts between Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey, China's ban on the export of its goods, especially porcelain, uninterrupted wars and rivalry between nomadic peoples adversely affected the functioning of this great transcontinental road, losing its functions, although trading activities in its individual sections continued in subsequent centuries.

Well-known Uzbek cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, Termez, Urgench, the cities of the Ferghana Valley served as ground beacons on the Great Silk Road. The flourishing oasis cities that grew along the Silk Road became international transit points for goods, were vital centers of trade, crafts, and the spread of various cultures.

For example, the cities of the Fergana Valley, due to their geographical location, were considered an important transit point along the route of the northern road of the Great Silk Road[5,93]. However, the caravan roads connecting Kashgar and Fergana have been little studied. The road through Terek-Davan to Ferghana, although short, was difficult for caravans, it was considered seasonal - it functioned only in winter. Another branch of the continental road through the Tau-Murun and Shart passes functioned only in summer. In general, the Kashgar-Fergana caravan road was operated for a very long time, up to the 20-30s of the XX century[7,29]. Documents kept in the Central State Administration of the Republic of Uzbekistan indicate a brisk trade with Kashgar. All Chinese goods, except for tea, silver, bread wine and vodka, passed through customs duty-free[15]. The goods of Kashgaria were delivered through Osh and Andijan to Kokand and other cities of the Ferghana Valley, and from there caravans went to Tashkent, South Kazakhstan, Orenburg, etc. The main role in it was played, of course, by bazaars - markets [5,96].

From Kashgaria (Eastern Turkestan), merchant caravans brought cotton fabrics, raw cotton, clothes, felt hats, ropes, leather, shoes, furs, coats, raw silk, cocoons, silk fabrics, dried fruits, fresh fruits, walnuts, clover seeds, medicinal plants, rice, oil, etc. (According to the lists of 1904-1908)[15].

In general, the Fergana Valley throughout the history of the transcontinental trade route was considered the main point in the implementation of international trade. All this was facilitated by a favorable geopolitical position, the richness of the environment, etc.

Bukhara was another center of transit trade with other countries, including India, China, Iran, the Kazakh steppes and Russia. The ambassadors of Bukhara visited the Muscovite state, bringing with them a wide variety of goods. It is known, for example, that in 1613 300 merchants from Bukhara arrived in Kazan. And ambassadors and merchants of Russia often came to Bukhara, more often than others, representatives of the Stroganovs' house did this. Cotton fabrics were supplied to Russia more than others from Bukhara.

Fish tooth, black foxes, gyrfalcons, somewhat smaller quantities of iron and products from it, the export of which was often prohibited in the 16th century, were exported from Russia to Bukhara. But this was done by smuggling. At the end of the 17th century, the Bukhara Gostiny

Dvor was built in Astrakhan, where the people of Bukhara folded and sold their goods. This also testified to the prospects for trade relations [12,59-60].

In this regard, I would like to highlight two types of goods that invariably figured in trade operations not only on the Bukhara-Fergana segment of the Great Silk Road, but throughout this unique trade route. This is a wonderful "zandanachi" fabric from Bukhara and beautiful horses from Fergana.

In various museum collections of the world one can find a sample of paper fabric ("karbas") - "zandanachi", which was produced in the village of Zandani, 30 kilometers from Bukhara, and enjoyed great success among the population of eastern and western countries due to its remarkable qualities [12,49]. Outerwear was made from this striped fabric. Zandanachi was exported to India, Iran, Egypt, Byzantium. In Bukhara in ancient times, near the Ark gates, there were large weaving workshops of Bukharkhudats, where silk bedspreads were made. Zandanachi were also produced here. Merchants from remote areas of Ferghana came to the crowded bazaars.

Located on a transit trade route, Tashkent (Chach, Shash, Binkat) was not just a transit point. He exported goods from his own urban craft. The Arab geographer al-Maqdisi noted that in addition to fabrics, carpets, felt products, leather goods, clothing, beautiful bows, quivers and chain mail were also exported. It was in the 9th-10th centuries that the main caravan routes took shape, passing through Shash to the countries of Southeast Asia. The southern one led from Sogd to the Syr Darya River, then to the Chirchik valley to Chach.

The markets of Binkat were also filled with goods brought from the steppe. Cattle breeders supplied the city with meat, milk, wool, and leather. The city was also famous for its slave market. Turkic prisoners, who were especially valued as warriors, were bought here for the guards of the gulams of the Samanid emirs and the rulers of the caliphate.

All data indicate that the increased growth of cities occurred in this era mainly due to trade and handicraft production. As a general feature of the development of handicrafts, one should highlight the tendency towards a narrow specialization of professions in the most important types of crafts, such as, for example, in construction, metalworking, weaving, leather and other branches of handicraft production. This specialization, which increased labor productivity, was the result of an increase in demand for handicrafts, both in domestic and foreign trade.

Thus, from the time of Zhang Jian's travels for several centuries, a system of roads was created that connected East and West, which received the name of the Great Silk Road in science.

Having originated as a road of trade, very soon it turned into a relay of spiritual ideas and cultural trends, a road of diplomacy. Thus, under the influence of objective and subjective factors, a unique - in essence, the first - structure of transcontinental and interethnic integration left the economic, political, historical and cultural scene of Eurasia.

However, having disappeared, she left an indelible mark on the history and culture of many peoples. Cities of amazing beauty and wealth grew up along the routes of the Great Silk Road, outliving their "ancestor" for many centuries.

## CONCLUSION

The history of the Silk Road is considered today as a relevant experience of mutually beneficial trade and peaceful cultural communication between countries and peoples. The revival and

restoration of the Silk Road road system is of particular importance for Uzbekistan and other countries of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. This is a unique and perhaps even the only opportunity for global integration for closed inland regions. The revival of the Silk Road will certainly bring major changes to the economies of all countries located along it.

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