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HISTORICAL VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GREAT SILK ROAD

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ANNOTATION

This article describes historical intercivilizational dialogue and these issues in the process of formation and development of the Great Silk Road. The role of the Great Silk Road in the development of cultural and economic ties in the modern world was also shifted.

Key words: Great Silk Road, Central Asia, China, Sogdiana, Turkic countries, cultural traditions, TRACECA, cultural and economic relations

Roads that unite destinies, cultures, civilizations. Whose foot first left its mark on those nameless caravan trails, which later merged into the stormy bed of the Great Silk Road?

The Great Silk Road gives birth in the imagination of each of us to caravans filled with exotic goods, which, bypassing sultry deserts and mountain steeps, being exposed to dangers for several months, persistently moved from the mysterious countries of Southeast Asia to the flourishing and rich cities of the Near and Middle East, the Mediterranean and further to Europe. Caravans also went in the opposite direction.

Entire nations left the historical arena, cities perished, and old caravan routes were covered with sand. But new trade routes appeared in the endless desert and steppe expanses of the southern part of the Eurasian continent. The southern sea route along the coastal seas of the Indian and Pacific oceans functioned smoothly.

Written sources from the period of antiquity (5-6 centuries BC) testify to the trade trips of the ancient Greeks and Romans to Central Asia. Internaries have been preserved - road workers, in which descriptions of paths, road stations (stafma) were entered, and distances between settlements were indicated. These "guides" mention prestigious "royal roads" and equally significant local routes leading from the cities of the Greco-Roman world to distant eastern peoples.

Since the 15th century, the intensity of transit trade on the Great Silk Road gradually shifted to the southern sea routes.

Medieval civilization owes to the Great Silk Road not only the knowledge of silk production, but also the spread of fundamental technologies for the production of paper, porcelain, glass, and printing. Even more important was the influence of Eastern philosophy on the development of European natural science.

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Why is this ancient trade route interesting for us? First of all, by the fact that through the exchange of material and spiritual values, for twenty centuries it connected the original and unique civilizations of the East and West.

Global trends of modern civilization are characterized by a powerful movement of countries and peoples towards integration. And even the collapse of some artificial supranational formations, which are based on the struggle for equality and sovereignty, leads in the future to rapprochement and mutual cooperation.

The preservation and enrichment of the cultural identity of peoples is both the basis and the result of global progress.

There is a growing understanding in the world that the foundations of this progress were not laid in Europe, not in the Mediterranean and not on the Asian continent - they were created by the efforts of all mankind.

The experience of the past allows us to better understand each other, to feel the continuity of the development of civilization, the enduring connection of times and the destinies of peoples. The Great Silk Road, thus, acts as one of the oldest integration models for the development of the human community.

The XXIV session of the UNESCO General Assembly, at the initiative of ten countries, including the Soviet Union, adopted a resolution on the organization and implementation of a large-scale humanitarian project "THE GREAT SILK ROAD - THE ROAD OF DIALOGUE".

This gave new impetus to the development of cultural dialogue between countries and peoples belonging to different cultures and socio-economic systems professing different religions. Simultaneously with the organization of scientific historical, archaeological and environmental research, the UNESCO project paid great attention to the development of trade, cultural and tourist development of modern routes of ancient caravan routes: construction of hotels, creation of folklore and ethnographic centers, museums, revival of folk arts and crafts, cooperation of youth organizations, publishing and educational activities.

Within the framework of the project, several large comfortable expeditions were carried out with an international composition of participants (scientists and representatives of the public) along the key cities of the Great Silk Road routes: "SEA" - from Venice (Italy) to OSAKA (Japan) along the Mediterranean and South Asian seas; "DESERT" across the territory of China; "STEPPE": Odessa-Baku and Ashgabat-Alma-Ata.

The Great "Silk Road" in all its ancient manifestations has been revived today to a new life and has reappeared on the world map. The young energetic generation of the beginning of the 3rd millennium, developing the traditions of their distant ancestors, is actively exploring the enormous potential of international communication.

32 Eurasian states, including Russia, Japan, South Korea, China, and India, have already signed an agreement on the construction of the Trans-Asian road with a length of more than 14 thousand km. It will connect the countries of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

According to the World Trade Organization and UNESCO, by 2020 the Great Silk Road will become the most attractive route for tourists, capable of welcoming a third of all travelers in the world.

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The formation of the routes of the Great Silk Road was a complex process that took place over many centuries. It can be argued that in ancient times and the Middle Ages there were three main routes of the Great Silk Road: Northern, Middle, Southern, the frequency of use of which depended on many factors, primarily geographical and political (confrontations between different states and nomadic peoples for control of caravan routes and etc.). This is precisely what explains the fact that its routes shifted either to the south or to the north. For its successful functioning, political stability was necessary along the entire route, from the Eastern Mediterranean to China. This could be achieved in two ways: either by creating a huge empire that controlled all the most important Eurasian caravan routes, or by "dividing the world" between major regional powers capable of ensuring the security of trade. Internecine wars and the decline of central government led to the destruction of cities, junctions on trade routes, and the plunder of caravans. This led to the destruction of individual sections or even the entire Great Silk Road.

In the history of this route there were three short periods when it was almost completely controlled by one state: the Turkic Khaganate in the last third of the 6th century, the empire of Genghis Khan in the second quarter of the 13th century, and the state of Amir Temur in the last third of the 14th century. However, due to the high length of the routes, it was extremely difficult to unite them under single control. More often there was a "division of the world" between several large states.

It should be noted that the routes of the Great Silk Road are multifunctional. These were roads for transit and postal communications, trade, migration, diplomatic contacts, cultural and spiritual relations.

The Silk Road contributed to the development of trade and many institutions ("rules") of the market economy. The regular conclusion of large trade transactions between merchants from different countries required the use of generally recognized banknotes. The era of the Great Silk Road gave rise to many institutions similar to international trade of modern and modern times (international division of labor, check system, extraterritorial protection of property rights).

The Great Silk Road played an important role in the development of geographical knowledge. Only after the formation of this through trade route did Europeans and Chinese first learn about each other's existence and gain at least an approximate idea of all the civilizations of Eurasia. One can also note the enormous influence of this path on migration processes on the Eurasian continent and urbanization processes.

As a result of the functioning of the Great Silk Road, for the first time in history, a tendency towards the rapprochement of cultures in the process of intensive and regular world economic ties emerged. Along the entire route of the Great Silk Road there was a gradual unification of cultural components.

As a result of a number of geopolitical and geo-economic factors (the opening of a sea route from Europe to India; military conflicts between Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey; China's ban on the export of a number of its goods; wars and rivalry between nomadic peoples) in the 16th century. The Great Silk Road finally ceased to exist.

However, local segments of this route continued to function for a long time (for example, caravan trade between Central Asia, Russia, Iran, India, and China continued almost until the beginning of the 20th century). The functioning of the Great Silk Road 🔼 required the creation of a developed system of international division of labor in the production of goods for export and in providing the infrastructure of transport communications.

The Great Silk Road stimulated the development of trading cities in the medieval East. There is a trade specialization of cities, trade differentiation, and the emergence of villages that specialize in the production of export goods. If in Western Europe cities served mainly local markets, then in Asia they served international trade, playing the role of transit points on caravan routes. These cities (Tabriz, Hormuz, Bukhara, Samarkand, Khorezm, Otrar, Kashgar, Turpan, Khotan, Dunhuang, etc.) necessarily had caravanserais that combined the functions of hotels and warehouses. Special markets for the most popular goods were organized for foreign merchants. People of many professions worked to service trade caravans - translators, money changers, camel drivers, caravan guards, tax collectors, etc. The "attachment" of the trading cities of continental Asia to servicing long-distance caravan trade led to the fact that the destruction of the Silk Road led to the decline of these cities. Some of them completely disappeared (for example, many cities of Eastern Turkestan). Close intercultural contacts along the Great Silk Road contributed to the creation of original works of art, which revealed the syncretism of Iranian, Chinese, Sogdian and Turkic cultural traditions. These elements are intertwined so closely that researchers (the same phenomena with equal justification attribute them to Western or, on the contrary, Eastern influences).

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