



## *Introduction*

Conversion of the world science to the study of the Great Silk Road is indeed the countdown back deep into centuries, the attempt to trace the landmarks of history and «generation change»...

On the 24th UNESCO General Conference session in 1987, the International Project for Integrated Study of the Great Silk Road “The Silk Road – the way of dialogue” was approved.

Silk Road is a system of caravan routes, which in ancient and medieval times crossed Eurasia from the Mediterranean to China and served as the source of the origin and development of trade and cultural connections between peoples, states and regions that were in the area of this route. That is why the implementation of this project means, above all, searches for an answer on the question: how the first in the history of mankind peaceful contact between peoples of East and West was realized. In addition, studies are designed to support cooperation, scientific and cultural, between scientists of countries once belonged to the regions of influence of the ancient route.

The most comprehensive assessment of the issues facing by the researchers was given by UNESCO General Director, Federico Mayor: “The Silk Road passed through the steppes, seas and deserts, provided an excellent opportunity for establishing contacts and dialogues, promoted «opportunities for mutual enrichment of outstanding civilizations. The aim of the comprehensive study of the Silk Road project is to help to ensure that people today have realized the need of resuming the dialogue, take advantage of the historical significance of the possibility of mutual understanding, communication and mutual enrichment of civilizations along the way”.

In 1988 UNESCO initiated the project “Comprehensive study of Silk Road: Ways of Dialog as part of World decade of cultural development”, more known as “Great Silk Road – way of dialog”. The main goal of this project was spotlight of complex cultural relations that underlie strong link of East and West. Such



*Caravan from the West. Medieval miniature*



7. Prepare an application for sponsorship.
8. Determine the coordination between the countries of Central Asia and China.

This concept was approved in April 2007 on the sub-regional UNESCO seminar on the Serial Nomination of the Silk Road by five participating countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan and China in Dushanbe (Tadjikistan).

Central Asia remains one of regions that insufficiently presented in the world Heritage List despite on eminent history and numerous historic and cultural objects in re-

gion. To this time five countries compiled subregion have only 12 cultural objects included in the List, while 911 objects (704 cultural objects, 180 natural objects and 27 mixed objects in 187 countries) are included in the List. Currently objects of cultural or natural heritage of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are not presented in the World Heritage List.

It was recognized that the serial transnational nomination of the Silk Road is one of the most promising concepts for proper assessment of significance of the rich cultural heritage of the Central Asia. With the support of countries in the sub-region, this concept has been developed to properly represent the rich cultural heritage of the sub-region in the World Heritage List.

Although this document refers to the objects of the Silk Road in specific countries, all recognize that the road network the name of the Great Silk Road is applied to which, crossed the borders of, at least fifteen modern countries between China and the Mediterranean. It is assumed that this document will provide a paradigm for later identification and nomination of cultural objects around the Great Silk Road.

Once the concept is approved by the World Heritage Committee, it is offered to nominate sites primarily located in Central Asia and China, to examine serial sites that are located further west in the Mediterranean, as well as sites of the Indian subcontinent, including Afghanistan, India and Pakistan.

All participants of the first seminar on the nomination of the Silk Road believe that transnational serial nomination is a possibility of further modern international cooperation in the spirit of friendship and respect to the common history.

In nominating sites to the list of nominees, acceptance and respect for cultural diversity, interaction and integration among diverse cultures will be considered. Objects will demonstrate the interchange and mutual assistance in the areas of trade, science and technology, as well as arts and cultural heritage.

Nomination of the Silk Road was initiated in the hope that countries and people recognize their common history, the interrelatedness of cultural development, will be promoted the overall development of human civilizations based on diversity.



*Experts meeting. People's Republic of China*



Discussion of the concept was held at international seminars: in 2007 in Xi'an (November); in 2008 in Xi'an (May); in 2009 in Almaty (May).

In 2009, in Xi'an (November 2009), the first meeting of the Coordinating Committee on the inclusion of the Serial Nomination of the Silk Road to the UNESCO's World Heritage List was held.

Landmarks of conducted work were meeting of countries-participants in Dushanbe and international workshop in Sian' (PRC) in 2007; meeting of countries-participants in Sian' (PRC) in 2008; meeting of countries-participants in Almaty in 2009. First meeting of coordinating committee was in Sian' (PRC) in November of 2009, second meeting of coordinating committee on inclusion of Serial nomination Silk road in the UNESCO World Heritage List was in Ashgabat in May of 201 [Feng J., Oers R., 2006; Концепция, 2007. С. 3-5, 12].

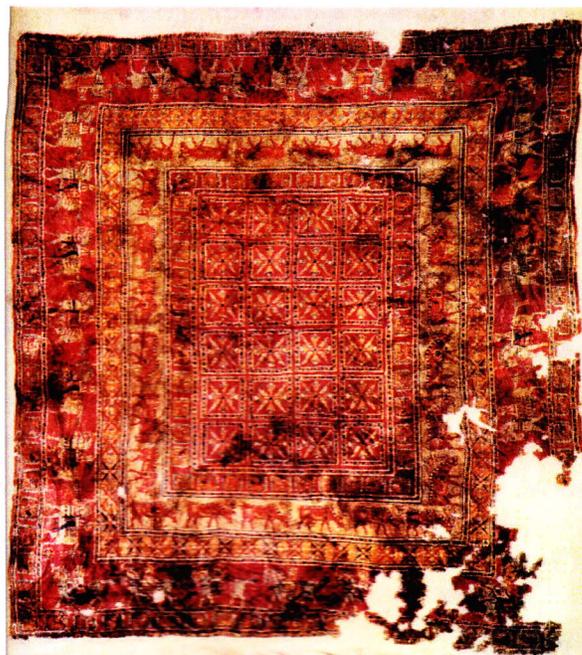
### ***The Great Silk Road, history and global value***

The Great Silk Road is a system of caravan routes, connecting the East and West Eurasia, extended regions of which have passed through China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. In the east, it took to Korea and Japan, in the west, to Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, in south to India, in south-west to the Middle and Near East. It was a road with the two-way movement of goods, the achievement of scientific idea, cultural values and religion. It was an important and fast, for its time, line to dissemination of information through the merchants, travelers and diplomats.(1)

On the question, when this road «started to function», there is still no clear answer. You can talk about its individual regions, about the beginning of the exchange and trade relations, which date back to III-II millennium BC. These connections have been regulated due to the development of deposits of lapis lazuli in the mountains of Badakhshan. Lapis lazuli, mined in Badakhshan, lead out Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Egypt and Syria to Iran. In the middle of I millennium BC, Badakhshan lapis lazuli appeared in China.(2)

Along with «Lapis lazuli route», there was another «Nephritis route», which connected the East Turkestan with China.(3) In the middle of I millennium BC, «Steppe route» has started functioning.

However, it is believed, that only in the middle of II century BC the Great Silk Road has started functioning as a unified diplomatic and trade artery. Tzhang Jian put the start of this event. In 138 year, from the capital of the Han has left the embassy caravan that accompanied the prince, Tzhang Jian, sent by Emperor Wu Di to the unknown West Countries. After thirteen years, Tzhang Jian returned. He



*Iranian carpet. Pazyryk. Altai. III c. BC*



was able to get to the areas of the modern Afghanistan and was the first who went straight through from the interior of China to the Central Asia. Caravans with silk went to the West and caravans with goods from the Mediterranean and the Middle East and Central Asia to China following the route he passed. (4)

However, archaeological researches, widely spread in the Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Altai, Siberia, China, gave irrefutable material of distribution of Chinese silk, Iranian carpets on the Eurasian territory, long before the mission of Tzhang Jian. Silk horsecloth embroidered with phoenix on it, the Iranian carpet were found during excavations of «royal» mounds of Pazaryk in the Altai, dated by V century BC. Silk cloth found in the Issyk burial mound in Zhetysu, Kazakhstan, in Arzhan, Siberia.



*Dzhenkinson's map. XVI c. AD*

Silk cloth and fringe sewed on products made of wool in the tombs of VI-V centuries BC, on the south and south-west Europe.

In distributing precious silk, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of Sakas and Scythians have participated. Through them, silk got to the Central Asia and the Mediterranean, Europe and India.

This, so-called «Steppe» route, begins in the big bend of the Yellow River, crossed the eastern and northern foothills of the Altai, steppes of Kazakhstan and the Black Sea region, reaching land of the Greeks and Etruscans.(5)

Therefore, the Great Silk Road began in Chang'an – the capital of China, and went to the crossing through the Yellow River to the Lanzhou area, then along the northern spurs of Nan Shan' to the western edge of the Great Wall of China and to the "Toll-bar of the Jasper gate". Here, a single road branches out, fringing the north and south of the Taklamakan desert. Northern route went through the oasis of Hami, Turfan, Beshbalyk and Shiho to the Ili river valley; middle one from Gaochan to Karashar, Aksu and through the Bedell crossing to the shores of lake Issyk-Kul; south one through Dunhuang, Khotan, Yarkand and Kashgar to the Central Asia, Bactria, India and the Mediterranean. it is so-called «Southern route». «Northern Route» headed from Hami, Turfan to Zhetysu, south of Kazakhstan, the Aral Sea region and Eastern Europe.(6)

In VI-VII centuries, the northern route was the busiest, which can be explained by the following reasons. Firstly, there were Turkic Kagans' headquarters in Zhetysu, which controlled the trade routes, and secondly, rich Turkic Kagans and their environment have become major consumers of overseas goods.(7)

Thus, this route became a major and main number of embassy and trade caravans in the VII-XIV centuries passed through here.

In Zhetysu, Dzhungarian region from China, exactly from the western territories (the modern Xinjiang) came through the Dzhungarian gate to the coast of Alakol and through



the foothills of Dzhungarian Alatau to the valleys of Lepsy and Karatal, crossing over Ili around Kapchagai. Then the road led to the Trans-Ili Alatau and along it through Kastek or Kurday heights to Chu and Talas valleys, to the cities Suyab Navaket, Taraz, and led to the largest city in Southern Kazakhstan – Ispidzhab, also known as Sayram.

Hence, it was the way to Tashkent and then to Samarkand, Bukhara, Merv, to Iran and Afghanistan to India.

Let us return to one of the starting points in the Kazakhstan section of the Silk Road, to the city Ispidzhab, to proceed to Europe through the Byzantine ambassador, Zemarha's way to Turkic kagan Dizabul.

Caravan road led from Ispidzhab to Arsubaniket on Arys', to Otrar-Farab and further down by Syrdarya to the Aral Sea region.

Otrar was a center of many caravan routes. From here, one way led to Shavgar, and another to the crossing through Syrdarya and to the city Vasidzh. The latter is known as the birthplace of the outstanding scientist of East Abu Nasr al-Farabi. From here, route led to Khorezm, to Urgench through the Kyzyl-Kum, and from there to the Caspian Sea area, to the Volga area and to Europe.

Another segment of this route rounded the Aral Sea from the north and led to the southern Ural area, to the cities on the river Ural (Dzhaik) to places of crossing and then through the trans-Volga steppes on the Volga to the Don, Black Sea steppes, to the Balkans and Constantinople. It was possible to get to Zhetysu through Almalyk, crossing over the Ili and Khorgos. From here, you could walk to the Chu and Talas valleys, to Ispidzhab. To the coast of Lake Issyk, it was possible to get from Kashgar through the mountain passes the Tien-Shan.

This segment of the Silk Road has been particularly busy in XIII century – the beginning of XIV century, when in the lower reaches of the Volga River formed the Golden cities of horde.

Road passed through the Saraychik, Saray-Batu to Cafu, and then by sea to Constantinople.

From the main route of the Silk Road, passed through the Southern Kazakhstan and Zhetysu, walked off the roads to the north and east, which led to areas of Central and Eastern Kazakhstan, to the Dasht-i-Kipchak steppe, later known as Sary-Arka, to the riversides of the Irtysh River, to Altai, to Siberia and Mongolia.(8)

Thus, in determining the time of the functioning of the Silk Road, at present time two phases must be indicated.

The first phase, which can be called as «Protosilk Road», is chronologically linked with the formation of the first countries (Bactria, Khorezm, Sakas Countries of Zhetysu and Aral Sea region) in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Chinese silk and Iranian carpets are well represented in materials from the excavations of the widely known «royal» burial mounds



*Detail of Iranian carpet. Pazyryk. Altai. III c. BC*



of Altai – Pazyryk, Bashadar, Tuekty, Shibe, Katanda, Ulandryk, Uzuktal, Ak-Alakh and Berel; Xinjiang – Subashi, Kyzyluk, Zathunluk; Zhety-su – Issyk; Tuva – Arzhan.

Thus, the first or initial phase of the Great Silk Road – «Protosilk way» is dated by VI – the first half of II century BC.

Cities-headquarters and the «royal» grave mounds of Sakas and Usuns, Hunns, Sauro-mats and Sarmatians, ancient cities of Central Asia are belong to it.

The second phase of the Silk Road starts with the trip of Tzhang Jian in 138, and ends with the Ming Dynasty's advent to power in 1405, when the overland segment of the Great Silk Road is in decline due to the isolation of China and the rapid development of the sea route.

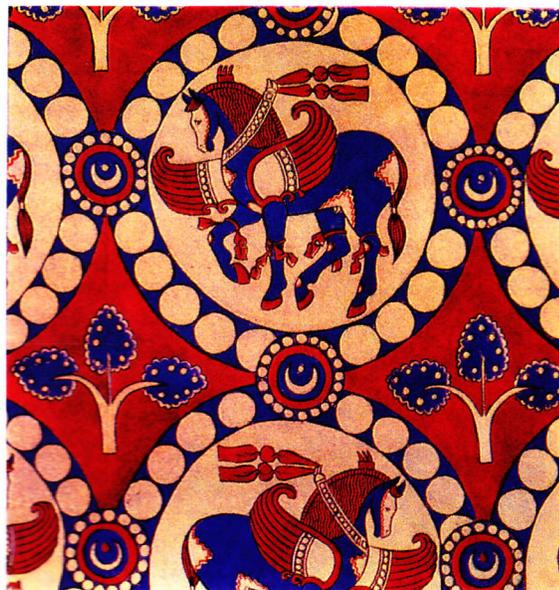
When Ulugbek, grandson of Timur in 1449, was killed, and when the strong power ended, a turmoil started in Central Asia. Trade caravans passed along the Silk Road, were attacked and looted.(9)

Disputed is the date of termination of the Silk Road's functioning. However, the unreliability of overland routes and the success of the Chinese merchant fleet since XVI century, meant the end of the Silk Road as a commercial and cultural bridge between East and West, and it stopped to exist.

### *Silk and golden peaches of Samarkand*

The Great Silk Road, as already noted, first served for the export of Chinese silk to the West. However, we know also that from Rome, Byzantium, India, Iran, the Arab Caliphate, and later from Rus' and European countries, goods manufactured in these countries were imported to China. List of strange, exotic goods were extended: myrrh and frankincense, jasmine water and ambergris, cardamom and nutmeg, ginseng, and python's bile, carpets and fabrics, dyes and minerals, diamonds and jade, amber and corals, elephant's ivory and tusks of the fish, ingots of gold and silver, furs and coins, bows and arrows, swords and spears... Along the Silk Road: «pure-blooded» Fergana horses, Arab and Nisus horses, camels and elephants, rhinos and lions, cheetahs and gazelles, hawks and falcons, peacocks, parrots and ostriches were led on sale. In addition, cultivated plants, like grapes, peaches, melons, vegetables and herbs, and spices and sugar were distributed through dealers.

In the introduction to his book «The Golden Peaches of Samarkand» Schaefer E. wrote: «The title of this book «The Golden Peaches of Samarkand» was chosen because it resembles both the golden apples of the Hesperides, and the peaches of immortality, which the Chinese legend puts far West, and of the «Golden Journey to Samarkand»



*Patterns on the silk. Paintings on the walls of Afrasiab palace VII-VIII cc.*



by James Elroy Flicker, and the melodies of Frederic Delyu “Golden road to Samarkand» to the play of Flicker «Hassan». But if you leave these vague associations with myth and music, golden peaches existed in reality. Kingdom of Samarkand has sent yellow peaches as a gift twice in the VII century to the Chinese court. «They were as big as goose eggs, and because their color was like gold, they are called: the golden peaches. A few tree seedlings, which grew these regal fruits, were brought by the embassy caravan through Serindia desert and reared in the palace gardens Chang’an. Now we can only guess what sort and taste were that



*Venice – trade city. Medieval drawing*

peaches. “Attractive, because of its inaccessibility, golden peaches of Samarkand symbolized in the Celestial Empire Tang all exotic and desirable, all unknown and effecting.”(10)

Yet the main and constant subject of trade remained Chinese silk, which, along with gold, in fact, became an international currency. Silk, highly valued as a gift, so it was gifted to Kings and ambassadors, it was «issued» to the soldiers-mercenaries as a salary, it was an item by which national debts was «paid».(11) There are numerous examples of it in the sources. Shahinshah of Iran Khosrow I Anushirvan received from the Chinese Emperor (in conjunction with other gifts) Chinese silk dress “usheri”, on an azure field of which was depicted the King wearing a crown and jewelry.(12) Tribute to silk is clearly seen in the frescoes of the lords of the palaces of China, Central Asia, East Turkestan: clothing made of silk of noble people made out of all inherent with this precious goods, decorations, details and even seams.

It is quite natural that the silk and some of the goods, transported by the Silk Road, settled in that cities through which it passed. Archaeological findings, found here is a vivid evidence of it.

During excavations Mardan grave mound in Otrar oasis in one of the burials seven Chinese coins «Wu-Shu», relating to I-IV centuries were discovered (13) and of course, pointing to China’s connections with Kanguy. Exactly on Syrdarya was the center of this country.(14) Just about this time is referred in Chinese sources: «...the Chinese court, more recently, expecting connections with foreign owners and overall, more than fame to be known, in distant suburbs, didn’t interrupted connections with Kanguy.»(15)

From the precious furniture associated with the West, silver jugs of Zhetysu with a stamp in the form of christcrosses distinguished: the master, made this product, obviously tried to «grant» its work for Byzantium.(16) Byzantium gold solidus were widely circulated and used as an international currency. In addition, Indikoplav Kuzma’s story is known, referring to the middle of VI century, about the controversy of the Byzantium and Persian merchants



about. whose lord was powerful. Byzantium defeated by showing a gold coin, which was circulated around the world, while a merchant from Persia was able to present only silver.(17)

A rare finding, the silver hoard of Otrar, is important for the study of international trade on the Silk Road. According to its composition, it is monetary-clothing. Collection of coins treasure is unique: there are mints of Eastern Turkestan cities – Almalyk, Pulad and Emil (Omyl), Ordu al-Azam; the European – Crimea; Minor Asian – Sivas, Konya, Tabriz; Kazakhstan – Otrar, Dzhend. Time of accumulation of coins considered to be the second half of the 60-th of XIII century, and coinage – 40-60-th of XIII century. No less unique are silverwares of treasure: the plaque of inlaid belt with Uighur inscriptions, twisted bracelets of Central Asian production and wattled, made in the Volga region; belt buckle, emerged from the craft workshops of one of the cities of Minor Asia. The hoard contains «business cards» of cities that were on the Silk Road of the Mongol Empire era.(18)



*Wandering artists. Figurine of Tang Epoch. China. VII-X cc. AD*

In the treasure of Otrar were also silver bullions in the form of lenses and oval bars. They could serve as money, to which directly indicate written sources. Thus, the Florentine merchant Francesco Balduchchi Pegolotti wrote that merchants traveling from Europe to the East, should take the linen cloth, to sell them in Urgench and there stocking somas (silver bullion) used in that countries.(19)

A bronze inkwell was found in Otrar, decorated with wealthy engravings. On the walls of this item and on its removable cap, on the background of floral ornament in medallions are pictures of duck, and at the bottom of the inkwell depicts a winged sphinx. On the lid is also are auspicious inscriptions.(20)

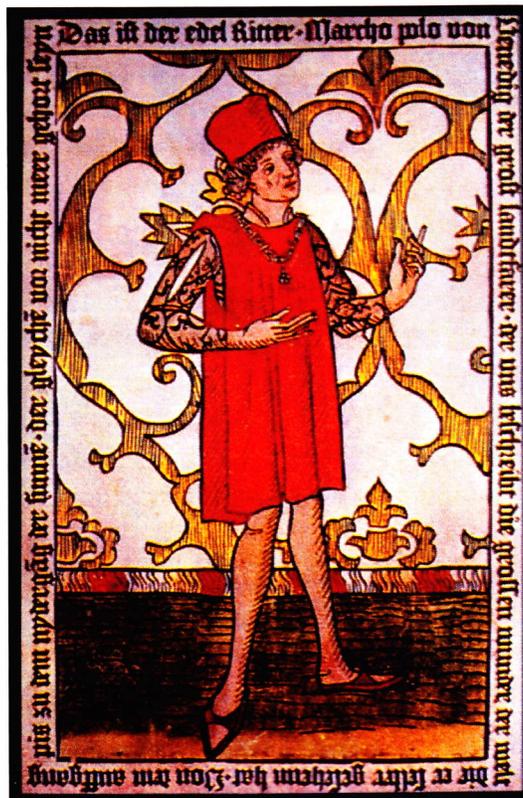
It is known that the inkwells, such as those described, were made at the end of XII-XIII centuries in Central Asia and Khorasan. These findings are numerous and decorate art collection of set metals of many museums.

Not only products were spread along the Silk Road, but also the fashion for art styles, which could have a social order and, when applied to the prepared soil, in particular ethno-cultural environment, were widely disseminated. There is a perception that Timurid style in ceramics was spread on the Silk Road, wherein the blue range of paintings on white background. Originated in the imperial workshops of China during the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), it was widely spread in Iran, Turkey and Central Asia.(21) Excellent examples of ceramic bowls, vases, painted with cobalt, adorn the exposure of many museums around the world.



## Dialogue of Cultures

In the early Middle Ages in Asia was extended the concept of four «Kingdoms of the World», which symbolized the vast regions and countries. Each of them in the eyes of contemporaries possessed its specific advantages. Creation of powerful states such as China that united under the power of Sui (in 589-618 years), as Tang (618-907), as the kingdom of the Indian rulers with the center in the city Kanauzha on the Ganges, as well as the union of Turks from the Pacific to Black Sea. Persia and Byzantium are all formed the basis for the emergence of the idea of «Four World Monarchies». They are, according to the concept, were located on the four corners of the Earth: on South – the empire of «The King of elephants» (India), on West – «The King of treasures» (Iran and Byzantium), on North – «The King of horses» (Turkic Khaganates), on East – «The King of people» (China). Fans of this idea among the Muslim authors, called «The King of elephants» as «The king of wisdom», giving a tribute to the importance to humanity of Indian philosophy and science; «The King of people» as «The King of government and industry» (mindful of famous Chinese inventions); «The King of horses» as «The King of beasts of prey»... In the West were differed two kings: one of them («The King of Kings») was king of Persia, and then of Arabs, the other is («The King of Men», because of beauty of the population) – Byzantium.(22) Expressions of this concept are the descriptions of paintings in Kushania village near Samarkand, that covered the walls of the building, where one depicting the Chinese emperors, on the other was Turkic khans and the Indian Brahmins, and on the third are the Persian kings and Roman emperors.(23)



Marco Polo. Medieval drawings

The fact that every nation is well-known and famous for something, is described by poets such as Nosir Hisrou:

*Know that, in poetry there  
are no best riders,  
Than the Arabs, and the children  
of ancient Greece,  
Have chosen Medicine, as their arena.  
Hindu people are strong in Necromancy,  
Mathematics, music are  
Roman inheritance,  
Power of the China is the picture,  
Nevertheless, the light has never  
seen skillful painters,  
Than masters of Baghdad (24)*

Baghdad painting... Is a kind of benchmark. We believe, that by respect to it can be explained the fact, that the walls of the sanctuary of VIII-IX centuries, discovered on the Kostobe site in the Talass valley, which is identified by Dzhamukat,



was carved by a thick layer of plaster (carved piece). Panels were depicting the vines with bunches of ripe berries, tulips, rosettes, palmettos, belt of diamonds, borders of meanders, bunch of flowers. Motives for carving, some elements of ornamentation, style – all of this you can find in carving, on the walls of palaces Afrasiab and Varahsh, as well as Samarra and Fustat.(25) In other words, tastes of Baghdad's masters, and fashion on capital style of the caliphate center is spread along the Silk Road, grabbing the edge of the city Muslim Ecumene.



*Noble Chinese ladies in the silk garbs*

Authors from different countries, the contemporaries of those distant events, praised not only the prosperity of any country, but also assimilation of the values of foreign cultures by their own people. In the idea of cultural interaction is naturally incorporated main content of one of the real forms of development of world culture.(26) An example is the position of the famous Persian poet – Sufi Rumi Dzhalaleddyn (1207-1273), who left the words, filled with the pathos of human inter-tolerance(27): «As often happens that a Turk and an Indian found a common language. As often happens that two Turks like strangers. Hence, the language of consensus is quite different: the consensus is more valuable than common language».(28)

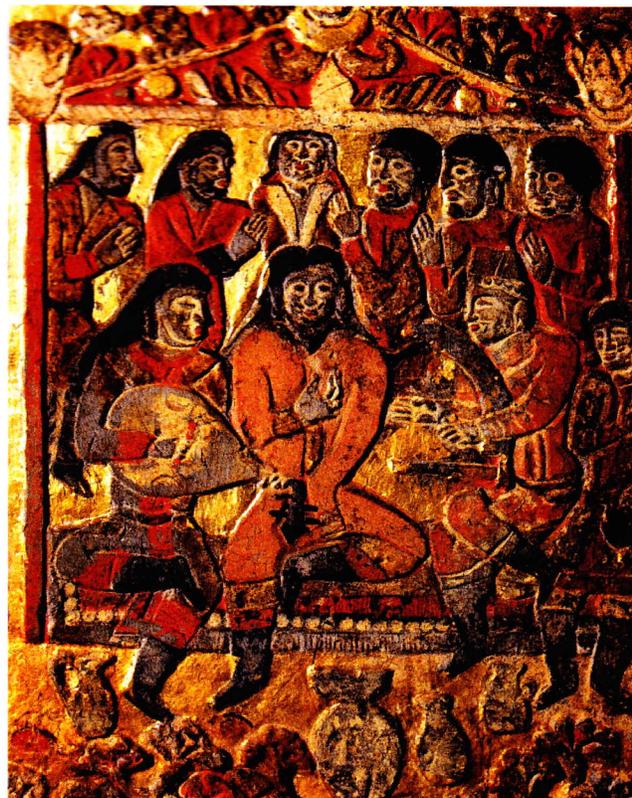
On the Silk Road, along with the goods, cultural patterns and standards of applied art, architecture, wall paintings, among countries of East and West has spread art of music and dance, spectacular entertainments, a kind of «bandshell» of the Middle Ages. Performances by musicians and dancers, tamers of wild beasts, acrobats and mimes, magicians are all of these forms; possess qualities such as entertainment and mobility. They did not require a translation, as for the wandering troupe there was no language barriers. «Those who speak on gestures, everyone will understand the same» wrote Erasmus of Rotterdam.(29) Similar acts were also shown to Greek Basileus and Kiev prince, and Turkic khagan, and Chinese emperor.(30)

Foreign orchestras were part of court personnel. They played as the «official palace ceremonies», and during «informal court celebrations». Reported, for example, that one of the famous royal music lovers contained 30.000 musicians.(31) Also the descriptions of ambassadors receptions by Turkic Khagan in its headquarter near Suyab were preserved. «Khagan – writes one of the witnesses of the ceremony, a Buddhist pilgrim Xuan Tzang, – has ordered to put wine and start the music... All the time the foreign music was playing, followed by a metal chime. Although it was the music of barbarians, it too mellifluous, gladdened the heart and mind.»(32) It is known that the most popular in Tang China was the music of the West – of the cities of Eastern Turkestan and Central Asia. Musical traditions of Kuch and Kashgar, Bukhara and Samarkand, merged with the Chinese musical tradition.

Iranian, Sogdian and Turkic actors have made a significant contribution to the



choreography and culture of China. Of all the artists most popular were the dancers – boys and girls. «Western hopping dance» is usually performed by boys from Tashkent, dressed in an Iranian blouse and a high-peaked hat trimmed with beads. They were girt with long sashes, whose ends fluttered in the time of execution of dance movements. «Chach Dance» was performed by two young girls in transparent robes decorated with colorful embroidery with silver belts. Dress shirts supplemented with narrow sleeves, pointed hats with gold bells and red brocade slippers. Also «West Virgins, spinning in a whirlwind» dance was performed by Sogdian girls, dressed in scarlet dress and green trousers, wrapped in a red suede boots, galloping, moving by jumps, and spinning, standing on the balls.(33)



*Sarcophagus of Antsya.  
Reception of noble Turk by Sogdian. China. VI c. AD*

It is well known, for example, that artists of the East often toured to Constantinople. Thus, at a noble dinner at the Byzantium Empress Russian Princess Olga was entertained by jesters and tightrope walkers, and on the festivities arranged by Manuel I in honor of the Seldzhuk Sultan Arslan II, Turkic acrobat executed an dangerous flip.(34)

Of great success among different peoples were masked shows. This tradition is guarded in Muslim countries and in later times. Even Caliph was notified about masked shows held during the Nevruz celebrations in Baghdad.(35)

Monuments of spiritual culture, excavated in different places that were on the Silk Road, say about the development of mutual enrichment of cultures. For example, in music and theater, collection of terracotta of the Tang time, indicating dancers, actors wearing masks, musical ensembles, fit on camel humps. Faces of many of these artists are identified with those of representatives of the peoples of Central Asia.(36) On the wall paintings preserved in the staterooms of Pendzhikent, Varahsh, Afrasiab, Toprak-kala, and in the cities of Eastern Turkestan, depicted musicians, actors in masks. Beautiful wooden sculpture of dancer found in Pendzhikent.(37) Clay Mask of artist of X-XI century was discovered during the excavations of Syrdaryan city Keder.(38)



### *Dissemination of religions*

The role of the Great Silk Road in the spreading of religious ideas is great. Just on its tracks, various missionaries «carried» their faith to overseas countries. Buddhism came from India through Central Asia and East Turkistan, Christianity, and then Islam from Syria, Iran and Arabia.

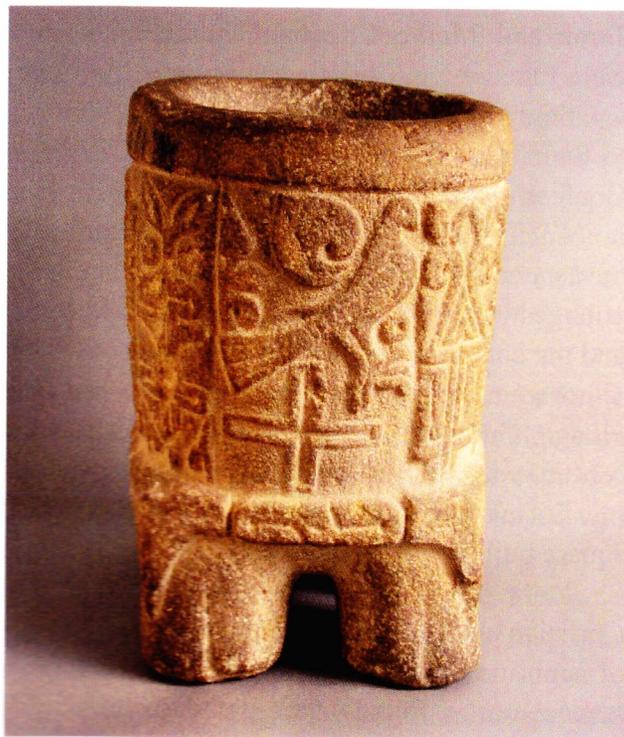
According to researchers, the penetration of Buddhism from India to China passed through Central Asia. The process began in the middle of I century BC. In the spreading of this religion in East Turkestan and China, important role belonged to the Central Asian theologians and missionaries, in particular, Sogdians, Parthians, Kangyuyan.(39) There were found the Buddhist monuments in a number of cities on the Great Silk Road, passing through Central Asia: Buddhist monastery I-III centuries, the excavations of which are conducted for many years in Termez on Karatobe; religious construction in the Sanzar valley (Sogd); Buddhist monuments that are discovered on the site Gjaur-kala in Merv; Buddhist monastery of the VII-VIII centuries in Adzhina Tepe, in which remarkable examples of painting and sculpture were depicted, studied in the Vakhsha valley in southern Tadzhikistan.(40)

About the strong influence of Buddhism, which the Turks suffered from VI century, shows all the same Xuan Tzang: he writes of a favorable attitude toward the religion of Khagan of the Western Turks. Other researchers indicate that in the first half of VII century, some of the rulers of the Western Turks are Buddhist or patrons of Buddhism, and A.Gaben associates this with the transition of Turks to the settled and urban life.(41)

The remains of two Buddhist temples are completely excavated – Ak-Beshim and Suyab, dated by the end VII – beginning of VIII century.(42)

Along the Silk Road in the direction from West to East Christianity was spreading. The impetus for this was given in the first half of V century in the Eastern Roman Empire (Syria), where there was «heretical» sect of followers of the priest Nestorius. The teaching of Nestorius was condemned at the Cathedral of Ephesus in 431, after which began brutal persecution of the Nestorians. Because of the persecution, they were forced to flee to Iran. Followers of Nestorius organized a school in Persia, in the border Nisibin, which brought together political opposition of the Byzantium Empire. Wealthy Syrian merchants and craftsmen, after losing the market of Constantinople, moved to the East.(43)

Amazing, some remote areas of Asia have been connected with the



*Stone small mortar. Tortkul – Buduhket site.  
VII-XI cc. AD*



Syrians. Their colonies and trading posts stretched from the shores of the Mediterranean to the «Celestial Empire». In the oasis of this road, which passes through the mountains and lowlands, were found remarkable monuments of culture. According to researcher, Pigulevskaya N.V., «...the Syrians have made an enormous contribution to world science and culture. They familiarized the East to the development of trends of the world culture, which comes from the achievements of antiquity».(44)

In VII-VIII centuries, Nestorianism is widespread in the cities of Central Asia and Southern Kazakhstan, and Zhetysu: Christian churches appeared, which carried out the rite of baptism. The king of the Turks, Karluk dzhabgu adopted Christianity in the time of patriarch Timothy (780-819). Apparently, at the turn of the IX-X centuries was formed a special Karluk metropolis.(45) In Taraz and Merke Christian churches were functioning. Christians also have lived in cities of Syrdarya.(46)

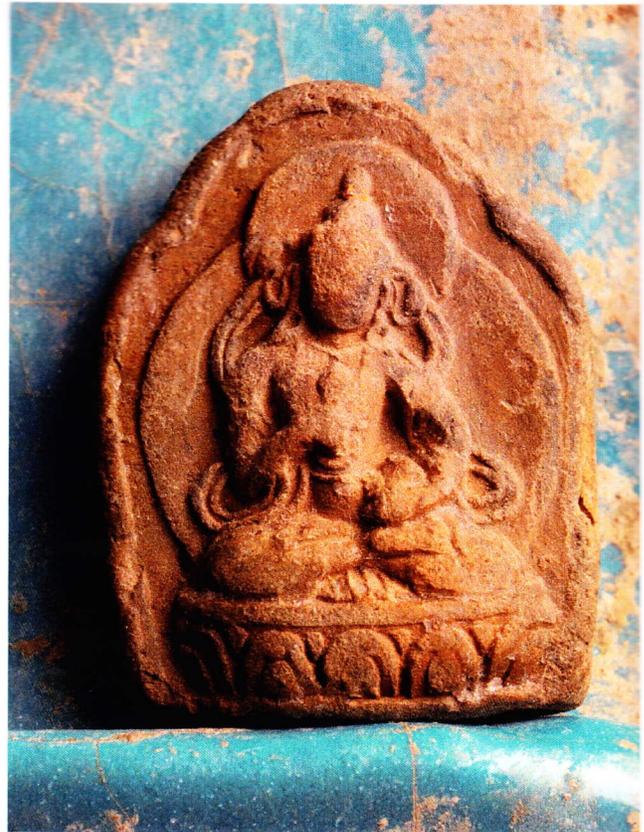
Some of the information, that in XI century, Christians turned Mongolian tribe Kereits to their faith, is preserved. Rashid al-Din in the «History of the Mongols» wrote:» The Confession of Jesus – peace be upon him! – penetrated to them (kereits), and they accepted it.»(47) The Nestorians played a significant role in the empire of Genghis Khan. Niece of devastated by Kerey Emperor Wang Khan, Nestorian Sorgahtani-beki was the wife of the youngest son of Genghis Khan Tulu, mother of two great khans Munch and Kublai Khan and the conqueror of Iran Hulagu Khan.(48)

About Christians of Ili Valley, who had their own church in Kayalyk, as well as their village, Guillaume de Rubrouck said. It is known that on the coast of Issyk-Kul in XIV century was a Christian monastery, where the relics of St. Matthew were preserved.(49)

Excavated on the Ak-Beshim siteremains of buildings, were of Christian church: a square building with a dome placed in a rectangular courtyard.(50)

During excavations of necropolises of Dzhamukat and Navaket cities remains of Christian church, with silver and bronze crosses, were discovered. Also, accidental finding of nephritis Cross on the siteRed River is known.(51) South Kazakhstan area museum has a stone mortar, found on the siteTortkoltobe, which is identified to the Sharab city. It shows the symbols of Christianity – the cross and dove.(52)

In VI-VIII centuries' layer during the excavation of Taraz, ceramic mug with a Syrian



*Kazakhstan. Semirechie.  
Occasional find*



inscription «Peter and Gabriel» was found.(53) To products of Nestorian artisans we should include two silver dishes, became known as Anikovskoe and Grigorovskoe, with the subjects of early Christian iconography.(54) On a silver diskos-platter of Grigorovskoe, IX-X centuries, images are made in the technique of flat terrain with an additional engraving. Background and some parts of dishes are gold plated. In the three interlocking medallions are scenes of «Ascension», «Wife by the coffin» and «The Crucifixion», and in between «Daniel in the lion's den», «Denial of Peter» and «Guards of the Lord's tomb».(55)

To the outstanding works of religious art and religious symbolism of the Central Asian Christians, Turks by nationality (the period from the emergence of Christianity in these lands before the end of the XIV century), we can apply “kairaks” – tombstones with Nestorian inscriptions and symbols.(56) Most of them are found in Zhetysu and the East Turkestan in the late XIX – early XX century(57), but this kind of findings occur even in our days. Thus, during the excavations of the citadel of the Krasnorechensk site in the foundation built in XI-XII centuries, two “kairaks” with Syrian writings were found. They were used for the second time. One of the “kairaks”, dated by 789, and another by 909. On the first is written «virgin Yal-Anch».(58) This is the earliest Syrian epitaphs on the stones that make up an intermediate link in a chain of similar discoveries, of which “kairaks” of V-VI centuries were found in Syria, and “kairaks” of XII-XIV centuries in Zhetysu and East Turkestan.(59)

The existence of the Christian community in Navaket, is evidenced not only by gravestones with Syrian inscriptions, but Sogdian inscriptions on ceramics, on the “humas” corolla for wine. On one of them is written: «This humas (intended) for teacher Yaruq-Tegin. Master Pastun let it be (hum) filled, amen, amen!»

The word «teacher» on this inscription is similar to the terms of the Turkic-Sogdian epitaph – «teacher, mentor». The closing «Amen» leaves no doubt that Yaruq-Tegin was the leader of the Christian community. On another hum traced shorter inscription: «Master of this Hum – Pastun». On another vessel, found on the Pokrovka ancient settlement, located to the west from Navaket, there was a large two-line Sogdian inscription which is translated as: «This vessel is the gift of the Pakapa community. Your majesty, drink this wine in joyous time... Your Majesty Ali Bilge, who received the happiness of the Gods, let you be happy and prosperous!» On the wall of hum from Taraz carved inscription «Governor Iltag», and on the corolla of Hum, found on the Kysmychi site was written: «Bishop Shirfan».(60) By the nature of paleography inscription is dated by IX-X centuries or even the beginning of XI century.

Judging by the fact that the inscriptions engraved on wine bottles, we can assume: the production of wine in Zhetysu was in the hands of Christians, in rites of which wine has played an important role. In favor of this opinion indicates winery of X-XI centuries, discovered by archaeologists on site Aktobe Stepninskoe. The bottom of it was paved with brick with incised images of crosses.(61)

Archaeological and epigraphic discoveries, coupled with the data of the medieval sources show that Christianity was spread in the medieval cities of Kazakhstan because of migration flows, which went along the Silk Road.

This road was «used» by the adherents of another religion – Manichaeism, which originated in III century in Iran and has quickly gained a large number of devotees from Italy to China. Manichaeism is a synthesis of Zoroastrianism, and Christianity, and from the latter



borrowed the idea of messianism, but of Zoroastrism – the idea of the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness. Leading role in the spreading of that religion played Sogdians. At the beginning of VIII century supreme head of the Manichaeism had a residence in Samarkand. Manichaeism in Central Asia coexisted with other religions for a long time, and a strong influence on the pantheon, terminology and even the concept of Manichaeism was rendered from Buddhism.(62)

Manichaeism had its supporters in Zhetysu and South of the Kazakhstan, primarily in sedentary population. As discovered in the Turfan oasis ancient Uighur manuscript of Manichaeism writing «The Sacred Book of the two basis» is said that this book was written in the city of Argu-Talas (Altyn-Argu, Talasi-Ulush, Talas-Ulush), «to awaken (faith) in the country of ten arrows». We are talking about the famous city Taraz.(63) The sources also reports that the Manichaeism residents also existed in other Zhetysu cities, particularly in Balasagun and Chigilbalyk. Apparently, among the Manichean relics should also include the excavated bronze medal from Taraz, with a female image and the moon (crescent), which is a symbol of Manichean astral deities.(64)

Among the inhabitants of medieval cities were representatives of yet another world religion – Zoroastrism, appeared in VII-VI centuries BC in ancient Iran. For its ritual practices, four elements of the universe – water, fire, earth and air were typical. Sites of Zoroastrism can be traced in Central Asia, Sogd, Syrdaryan cities and in Zhetysu, by the remains of constructions that can be associated with the towers of fire. Findings associated with this religion, are represented by burials in “ossuaries” – linen boxes for bones, graves. About belonging of the buried to the admirers of Zoroastrism, says inhumation in ground crypt – “naus”, burial of bone heaps.(65)

Zoroastrian faith was brought to the Kazakhstan cities in VI-VII centuries by Sogdians, although the formation of its elements started long before that in the Saka – Massaget tribes environment, inhabiting the Southern Kazakhstan.

Recently opened bright sites in the Syrdaryan cities are turned out to be associated with Sogd.

Among the Turks, in particular Kangars (Kengeres), in the Middle Ages were spread religious ideas of Sogdiana, which are more likely, were rethought and readapted to their own religion.(66) Many cults associated with Zoroastrism, continued to prevail in the cities of Kazakhstan, and even after Islam appeared there. Therefore, in the houses of Otrar, in XII century, archaeologists have discovered chimney-altars, cemented on the floor. Richly



*Glaze tile. Arabic ligatured script. Myntobe site. XIV c. AD*



decorated by carving, they served for firing. (67) These were reflections of the great lights of Mazdaism, which continued to glimmer in the houses of citizens, even those in which Islam was established and the Arabic script was adopted.

However, Islam extended not only by «fire and sword» but also with «sweet language» of Muslim merchants, gradually forced out Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrism, and local cults from the East. The new religion established in many cities on the Silk Road and in the steppe.(68)

Archaeological excavations of monuments of VIII – the beginning of XIII century, indicate the formation of urban Muslim culture in Southern Kazakhstan. In Taraz and Mirki Christian churches were transformed into mosques.(69) As the population has raised, professions of Islam, cathedral mosques were built in the cities.

Public baths are the type of structures that appeared in the cities of Central Asia and Kazakhstan during the propagation of Islam. (70)

Excavations of burials show the spread of Islam. Funeral rites have changed in the second half of IX-X century and began holding in typical Muslim canons – in ground holes, tombs of clay brick. Deceased's head was oriented to the north-west, facing south. There were no inventories in the graves.(71)

A large group of glazed pottery is an evidence of the propagation of Islam. Ceramics is made with the use of decorative possibilities of Arabic font. Part of the inscriptions are purely decorative in nature (they cannot be read), but some contain different kinds of auspicious, edification, have religious significance.

In the production of items made of metal – copper and bronze – are distributed fashions on items, also decorated with inscriptions auspicious and religious content. First, a large group of lamps and couplings for the connection of supporting pillars of yurts, in the form of high idiosyncratic cylinders on legs.

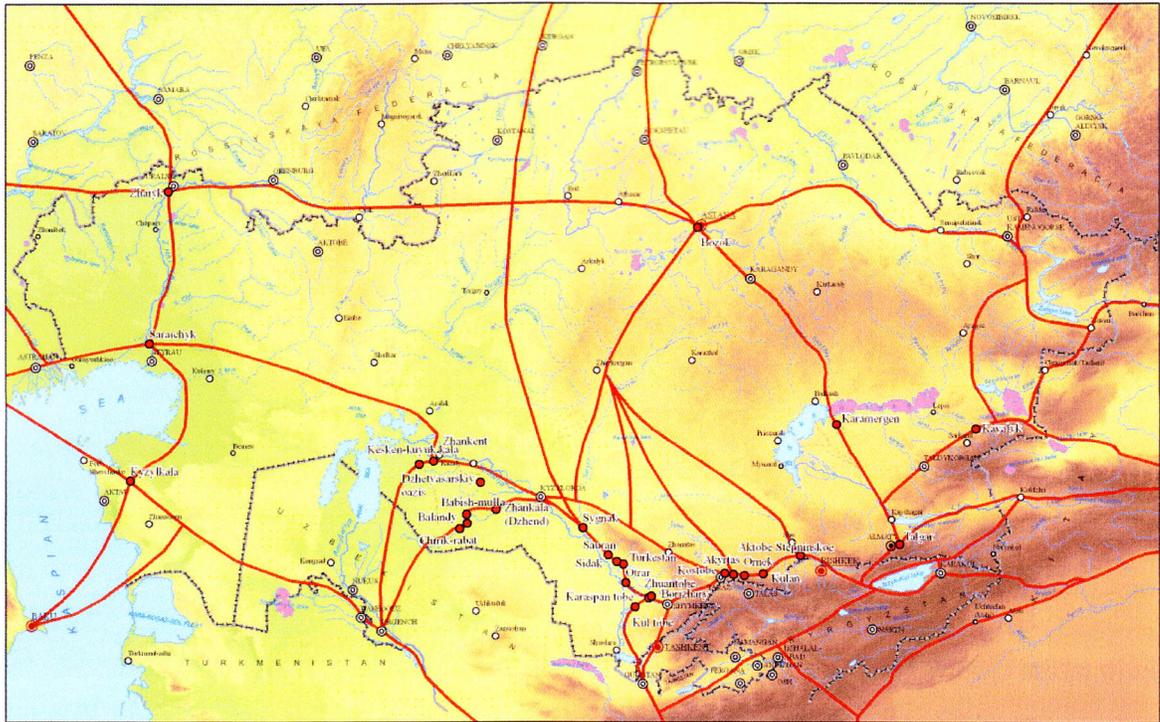
As shown by archaeological researches, trade roads that led from Europe to Asia and in the opposite direction crossed the medieval Central Asia and Kazakhstan in different places: they passed through the steppes, shifted through the mountains, descending to the fertile valley. The Silk Road, being the main trading thoroughfare, was for many countries and peoples, both the road of cooperation, interdependence and mutual enrichment of different cultures. It is logical to conclude that the Great Silk Road is a phenomenon of human civilization.



*Figurine of Anahita goddess. Keder.  
VII-VIII cc. AD*



## *Characteristic of the sites of Republic Kazakhstan proposed for the Tentative List for Great Silk Road Serial Nomination*



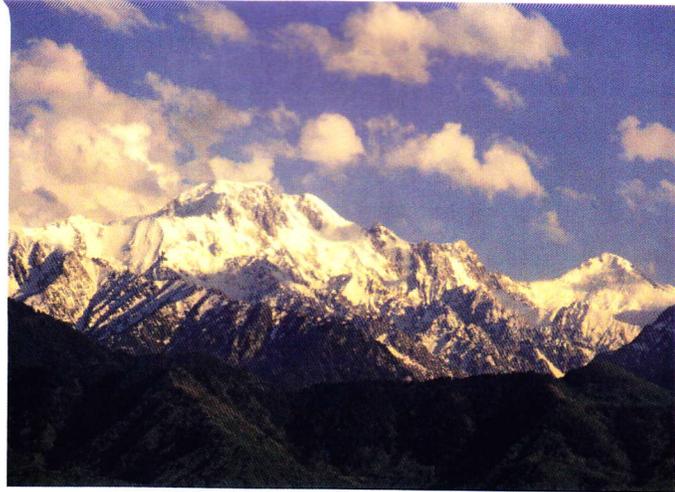
*Great Silk Road on the territory of Kazakhstan. Main directions*

On the territory of Kazakhstan four **main segments** are offered for consideration: Zhetysay (Semirechie-Seven Rivers), Syr Darya, Saryarka and Mangyshlak (Ural-Caspian). One separate additional category which gives idea of formation of Great Silk Road is presented as well. As until recently was generally accepted that 2-nd century BC was a starting point of the Great Silk Road appearance. In 138 year BC Chan Tzyan was sent by U-Di emperor to the West with the aim to establish alliance with Yuetzhy. That is sufficient time point, but at the same time ignoring fact confirming by numerous archaeological investigations that trade relations between Central Asian States, China and Middle East existed long time ago before Chan Tzyan mission. In this regard as it was mentioned above additional category – “Early Period of Great Silk Road formation” is presented. Sites which were included in the present category are follow: Boraldai, Issyk and Besshatyr necropolis.

Each of these sites are characterized by originality of the natural geographical conditions and historical development of culture, including the city, with a distinct influence on the formation, development and stagnation of the historical and cultural monuments, that were located in these regions on the routes of the Silk Road. These complex processes of inseparable connection between culture, nature and historical process, through the influence of communication demonstrate not only how to adapt a person to different climatic conditions, but the ways of mutual enrichment though the mutual interchange of human values and cultural traditions, which were reflected in the preserved monuments of culture, marking important communication links of mankind of nowadays.

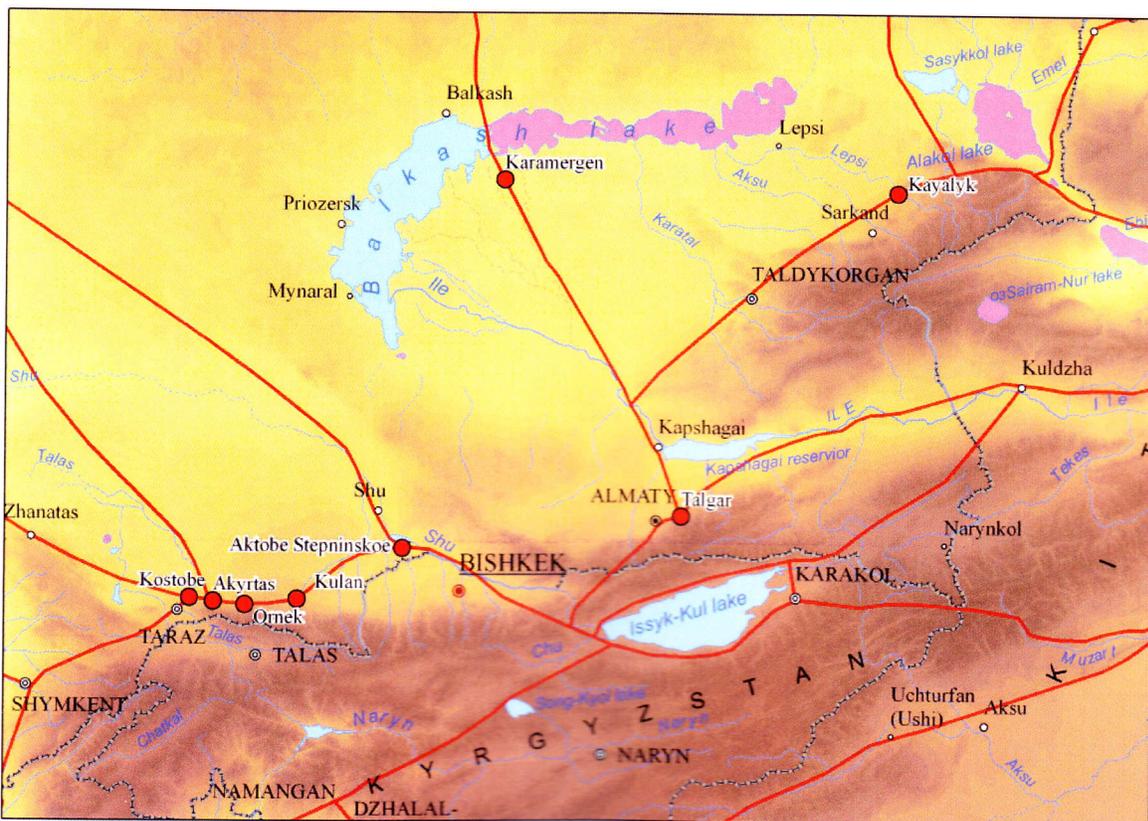


Zhetysu (Semirechiye) branch of the Great Silk Road is marked, above all, with the boundaries of the historical and geographical region known as Zhetysu. Variety of climatic zones in the region has become a determinant, as of the geographical landscape, so of the farming conditions. Variety of areas, including: sagebrush-steppe, grass-steppe, steppe-forb forest or grassland and mountainous, determines location of the local Great Silk Road areas located on these sections of monuments, their morphological features.



Talgar peak

The general route of this artery was as follows: from Shash (Tashkent), the road headed for the pass Turbat, then Ispidzhab (Sairam, Saryam, «White City» or «al-Madinat al-Baida»), then the road went in an easterly direction – in Taraz, then Dzhamukat, then followed the road to Kulanu (in Chinese Tsyuylen), then east to the cities of Mirko and Aspara after which road leads to the towns of Issyk-Kul basin. From Issyk-Kul basin through pass Santash and river valley Karkara path lay through the valley of the Ili and the right bank of the river Ili, through the Usek valleys and Khorgos, cited in Almalik. There is another way to the the Ili valley – it stretched from Kulana, Aspara to the cities of the middle and



Semirechiye branch of the Great Silk Road



lower streams of the river Chu, from which the road was to the northern slopes of the Chu-Ili mountains and down to northern Balkhash region, or passing along Chu, down and brought to the cities on the northern slopes of the Kara-Tau.

The Silk Road in the territory of Ili Valley passed through the small towns that were located on today's Kastek, Kaskelen and Almaty, and reached the city Talhiza (Talgar). In Talhize Silk Road route divided into north and south. Southern route led through the Issyk, Turgen, Chilik to cross through

the river Ili – via Khorgos on Almalik. The North road from Talhiza passed along the river Talgar before crossing the river Ili, that located on the region near Kapchagai reservoir. Following path led to Chingeldy, then passed through the Altyn-Emel road down into the valley of Koksuu and reached the city of Iki-Ogus (Ekvius), that was on site of nowadays village Kirovskoye. From Iki-Ogus route was to Kayalyku (Koylaku) – the capital of Karluk dzhahgu. Further, the path followed to the valley Tentek and skirted the lake Alakol, following the Dzungarian gate, led into the valley of Shiho.

Ili Valley linked to the central Kazakhstan by the road marching along the northern slopes of the mountains Chu-Ili, followed by Chu in its lower reaches, and then – to the shores of Sarisu. Another important way departed from the north Ili route in the Chingildy



*Ili River*



*Steppe zone of Semirechiye*



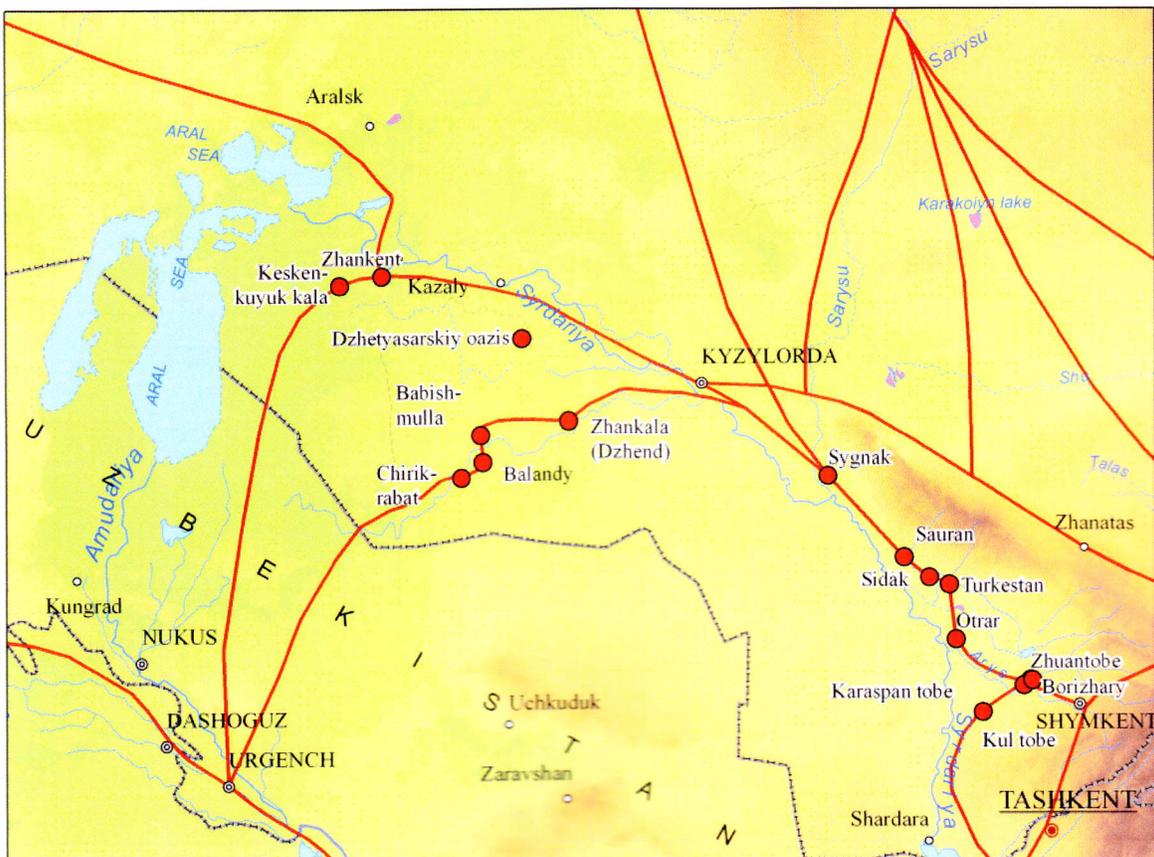
region and through the passes Koktal and Boyauly – in the Balkhash region, and then – along the Ortasu canal (river Ili) where the ruins of cities Karamergen, Actam and Agashayak are located, to the shore of Balkhash, and further by the peninsula Uzun-Aral, which almost connects the southern and northern shores of the lake, leaving the strait with the width slightly greater than 8 km. Here, on the cape, remains of the settlement, most of which flooded with water are found. We can assume that the caravans crossed the strait into the estuary of the river Tokrau and then along its banks walked to the foothills of Ulutau.



*Syrdarya River*

*Syrdaryan branch* is marked by well preserved in conditions of contemporary steppe, desert and semi-desert areal archeological remains of culture landscapes of oases and cities tied to large water arteries (Chu, Syrdarya, Arys', Bugun').

In the western direction from Ispidzhab caravan road lead on Arsubaniket on Arys' river, in Otrar (Farab) and downstream Syrdarya in Aral region. On Syrdaryan branch the large cities were Otrar (Farab) and cities of Otrar oases, Yassy (Turkestan), Shavgar, Sauran,



*Syrdaryan branch of the Great Silk Road*



Sygnak, cities of Dzhetyasar oases, Dzhend, Dzhankent, Huvara. From Dzhankent road lead on the north-east, go out on the Beleuty riverside and lead to Kounrad area, Karasakpai.

*Saryarka branch* led on the territory of “Great steppe” of Central Kazakhstan – Desht-i-Kypchak. Monuments of this region gravitate to numerous small rivers, foothills of Ulytau, riversides of Ishim, Nura, Sarysu, and Irtysh.

So-called Sarysu way lead to the Central Kazakhstan: from Otrar through Shavgar and Turgai pass on Aksumbe it went on Sarysu downstream and up river to Ulytau, then to Ishim on Irtysh. Shorter way goes through Suzak to Chu downstream and then through Betpak-dala desert to Dzhezkazgan region. One more way “Khanzhol” was used until new age: it went from Taraz downstream Talass through Muyunkum sands and Betpak-dala to the Atasu riversides. According to data of Tamim ibn Bahra and al-Idrisi trade way to Kimaks on Irtysh, lead from Taraz through Adahkes and Deh Nudzhikes cities. Ili valley connects with Central Kazakhstan by the way going along Chu-Ili Mountain, then on Chu River to it downstream and Sarysu riversides, as soon as north-Ili route described above. The direction that went around Alakul from western side and through Tarbagatai lead to Irtysh – in lands of Kimak state with Bandzhar, Hanaush, Astur, Sisan cities and capital of “khakan” branches out north-Ili way, which go to Dzhungarian gate. On Ishim River, these ways lead to Bozok ancient settlement, then on the north and west.

*Mangyshlak (Ural-Caspian) branch* of the Great Silk Road, which was situated along eastern coast of Caspian Sea, is in particular nature landscape of desert and semi-desert



*Mangyshlak (Ural-Caspian) branch of the Great Silk Road*



that differ by large diversity of nature complexes and extremity of climate and nature conditions. The population of these regions represent conglomerate of nomad and sedentary tribes, which control trade ways tied to system of wells, springs, and small rivers that imposed special stamp on material monuments of region culture.



*Caspian Sea*

In downstream of Ural and Volga, you can get from Urgench following the road of Ustyurt caravan-serais. Kyzylkala sitewas situated on this site of way. Trade arteries lead to the cities on Ural River (Zhayik): Saraychik and Zhayik ancient settlements, passing South and North Aral region. Then it lead caravans in western direction – in Europe, Crimea and the Caucasus and on “Zhayik way” in South Ural region, Ural, Volga region.

The directions (sections) of Silk Road were not frozen: during centuries, alternately, one and another sites and branches get most significance; some of them have been perished, cities and trade stations get into decay.

It can be possible to determine *the time of intensive functioning* of listed above branches of the Great Silk Road. In VI-VIII, the main route was Siria – Iran – Central Asia – Southern Kazakhstan – Talass valley – Chu valley – Issykkul basin – Eastern Turkestan. Branch



*Chinks of Ustyurt*



of this way went out on above-mentioned route from Byzantium through Derbent to Caspian region steppe, Mangyshlak, Aral region, Southern Kazakhstan (around Sasanidian Iran after trade-diplomatic alliance between West Turkic Kaganate and Byzantium). In IX-XII, this route was used less intensively, but in XIII-XIV again revived (because of establishment of Mongol Empire).

**I. Zhetysu (Semirechye) section of the Silk Road**

**included the following objects on this nomination:**

1. Antonovka ancient settlement – medieval Kayalyk (Kaylak);
2. Talgar ancient settlement;
3. Karamergen ancient settlement;
4. Aktobe Stepninskoye ancient settlement;
5. Akyrtas archeological complex;
6. Ornek ancient settlement;
7. Kulan ancient settlement;
8. Kos tobe ancient settlement.

**II. Syrdarya sector of the Silk Road**

**included the following objects on this nomination:**

9. Zhuan tobe ancient settlement;
10. Karaspan tobe ancient settlement;
11. Borizhar burial ground;
12. Kul tobe ancient settlement;
13. Monuments of Otrar oasis;
14. Turkestan ancient settlement;
15. Sidak ancient settlement;
16. Sauran ancient settlement (Sauran archeological complex);
17. Sygnak ancient settlement;
18. Monuments of Dzhetyasar oasis;
19. Zhankala (Dzhend) ancient settlement;
20. Zhankent ancient settlement;
21. Kuyuk-kesken kala ancient settlement;
22. Chirik-Rabat ancient settlement;
23. Babish-mulla ancient settlement;
24. Balandy settlement.

**III. Saryarka sector of the Silk Road**

**included the following objects on this nomination:**

25. Bozok ancient settlement.

**IV. Mangyshlak or Uralo-prikaspiyskiy sector of the Silk Road**

**included the following objects on this nomination:**

26. Kyzylkala ancient settlement.
27. Zhayik ancient settlement;
28. Saraychik ancient settlement.

**V. “Early Period of Silk Road formation (prehistory)” category on this nomination included the following objects:**

29. Boralday necropolis;
30. Issyk necropolis;
31. Besshatyr necropolis.