

LATE MODERN TASHKENT AND DYNAMIC OF SILK ROAD TRADE

Shamsiev Mukhtar Bahodirovich

Institute of History,

Uzbek Academy of Sciences

Senior researcher fellow

e-mail: shamsiev.m@mail.ru

ABSTRACT

The author talks about the changes in Tashkent's urban development, its buildings and historical monuments and roads. Furthermore, it describes the Great Silk Road and its impact on Tashkent

Key words. *Tashkent, Great Silk Road, buildings, roads, East, West, reconstruction.*

1. Introduction

The Great Geographical Discoveries of the late 15th and the early 16th had significantly affected the logic and dynamic of international trade and had important socioeconomic consequences for the societies both in Europe and Asia. One of the important features has been some shifts of the patterns and dynamic of the international trade on the Silk Road. The latter originated from China and through Central Asia reached the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Routes across both land and sea, along which silk and many other goods were exchanged between people from across the world. The Silk Road linked 'east' Asia and 'western' Europe at a time when each has, in its own region, a more sophisticated commercial network than ever before. The opening of new maritime routes which linked has become a relatively quick and inexpensive way to travel and exchange commodities and knowledge held across Asia to Europe Western Europe to China and India. Hence, the great geographical discoveries provided new impetus for the shaping new directions of communication routes and path of trade.

2. Main part

The city-state of Tashkent traditionally located on the one of logistically important crossroads of the Silk Road and was conventionally known as a "Silk Road gate" to Central Asian markets. By the end of the 18th century it was a city-state which for the several decades prior to it had been maintained more or less independent policy both in internal administration as well as in external relationships. Yunus Khodja, the ruler of Tashkent succeeded in elimination of so-called '*Chor-khakims*' system of government and concentrated sovereignty over the city and surrounded areas in his own hands. In his external policy Yunus Khodja sought to galvanize and maintain close diplomatic relations with the influential neighboring countries. In doing so, he extensively considered merchants as key agents in strengthening contacts with the elites of the neighboring powers. One of the first of his envoys dispatched to Russia emperor in 1793. Russian authorities, in turn, dispatched in 1800 the mission lead by Timofei Burnashev and Mikhail Pospelov. The envoys were prescribed *inter alia* to gather the data regarding the recourses and capability of Tashkent to facilitate commercial and diplomatic relations with countries and markets further to the east, e.g. China and India [1].

Over the course of Yunus Khodja's reign commercial activity of the city substantially galvanized which has been manifested in increasing the number of bazaars, offering a wider range of goods and commodities as well as in tangible diversification of handicraft industry. Let us to consider some basic reasons for these changes. The first and foremost is that Yunus Khodja succeeded in spreading political stability far beyond the city of Tashkent and thus had been maintaining security over the caravan routes which run through Tashkent and surrounded areas. This, in turn, motivates the merchants to give preference the trade routes running through Tashkent and increased the city's importance as one of the key trading hubs in the region.

One of the main offshoots of the Silk Road passed through Tashkent and it affected the dynamic of the city life. For the decades Tashkent had been acting as a key gate to the largest cities and markets of Central Asia, e.g. to Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. Yunus Khodja, the ruler of Tashkent, successfully undertook a set of measures in order to provide the safety of trading caravans and for instance, terminated the raids of nomadic tribes who were constantly threatening the caravan routes in the provinces north from Tashkent.

Due to its favorable position on the crossroad of the Silk Road, Tashkent was recognized as an important strategic center of the trade and cultural relations with other regions. In the period under northern and southern branches of the Silk Road which passed through the Central Asia were extensively used by merchants. This direction was considered by the Russian authorities as a way to intensify economic activities by linking "eastern markets" with Russia through city of Astrakhan and along the banks of the Volga until inland roads to Moscow [2]. However, from the perspective of Russian authorities the trade relation along Tashkent – Irtysh route had even more advantages and was more convenient.

On September 22nd, 1797 the Head of Russian troops in Siberia, Lieutenant General G. von Shradtmann reported to the Emperor Pavel I that '... the route along the line Irtysh – Tashkent is more closer comparing with Orenburg line. The

further development of trade relations with Tashkent [along this line] will help us to establish [stable] relationship with neighboring khanates of Kokand, Khojand, Bukharan and other countries further till Tibet” [3]. One of the political factors of this trend was that Tashkent was located on the way to China and India which would help Russia to establish trade relations with these countries. Tashkent was very convenient from political and economic sides in the region. The development of trade and economic relations at that time was very favorable to Russia. The location of Tashkent at the crossroads of the Silk Road was an important factor. It was assumed that Tashkent would serve as a convenient strategic center for the development of trade relations between Russia, China and India. It is widely recognized that Russia authorities had three possible geographic directions for the development of trade relations with China and India. The first route ran through Khiva, Bukhara and Afghanistan; the second - through the river of Irtysh and Kashgar, and the third way passed through the Syr Darya and Yarkend. Implementation of the first route was impossible due to the conflicts between Ottoman Empire and Persia. In order to scrutinize the possibility of using the second route Grigori Glazenap, a commander in-chief of the Siberian line, in 1808 dispatched his agent, Mehdi Rafailov, with trade caravan to Gulja (Xiangjiang). This merchant was prescribed to collect information about routes to China and India. In August 22nd, 1811 Glazenap was reporting to Count Nikolai Rumyantsev, the Russian ministry of External Affairs: “...relying upon obtained the data, the city of Aksu in China has been actively visited by numerous traders and merchants from Guldja, Kashgar, Tibet and Kashmir, as well as from the Central Asian Bukhara, Kokand and Tashkent” [4]. It was emphasized, alongside, that caravans sent from [Russian] Semipalatinsk to Aksu will be able to purchase Chinese and Indian, notably, Kashmiri goods ‘from the first hands’. However, according to Glazenap, at the initial stage such caravans might be sent only informally accompanied by ‘Asian’ traders since, according to the agreements between two countries, the Russian merchants were forbidden to trade on the territory of China. Such situation had been widely used by Tashkendi merchants who were delivering Russian goods commodities on markets in China. The Tashkent merchant, Mirqurban Niyazov, was one who had been extensively acting in such capacity [5].

By the end of 18th century Tashkent was also renowned as a large production center. The numerous caravans of two or three thousands of camels laden with fruits, gold, and various goods had been regularly dispatched from Tashkent to Dzhungaria and Guldja. Slightly smaller caravans laden predominantly with white calico had been dispatched to Kirghizs and Kazakhs, to the bazaars of the city of Chuguchak [6].

In 1810 Tashkent was conquered by Umar-khan, the ruler of Kokand. However, this event did not significantly affect economic activity of the city. Trade relations with China, for instance, maintained its previous dynamics. Merchants of Tashkent passing through the territory of Kokand easily reached Kashgaria and Yarkend delivering their goods like iron, cheesecloth, silk, gold, carpets and cast iron to local markets [7] From Chuguchak and Guldja Tashkent merchants brought tea, sal ammoniac, porcelain and other goods. Caravans of thousands camels with goods went through to Kashgaria, China and Russia every year. These caravans laden with the Russian and European goods came back to Eastern Turkistan through Tashkent and the regions further east.

In 1851 Russia and China signed an agreement, according to which the Russian merchants were allowed to trade in cities of Guldja and Chuguchak [8]. In the second half of the 19th centuries the most part of Central Asian principalities, including Tashkent, were annexed by Russian Empire. Respectively, the Russian merchants enjoyed more privileges in their trade relations with China. Tashkent became a mainstay between the two great powers, i.e. China and Russia. It should be noted, however, that Russian merchants do not use a large route of the Silk Road through the Pamirs, and followed the southern and the northern foothills of the Tien Shyanya then through northern Kazakhstan, they traveled to Russia [9]. Due to the time a value of these roads has increased. The historical evidences clearly shows that trade relations on the Silk Road had been maintained under any circumstances. Old roads were expanded and created new trends, they erected new settlements and shopping centers.

The Chinese documents of that time tell us stories about Tashkent merchants who were traveling along the Silk Road to Eastern Turkestan, Dzhungaria, China and Tibet delivering the various commodities to the main trading centers [10]. Chokan Valikhanov, the Kazakh literati, who traveled to the Khanate of Kokand and Eastern Turkistan in the mid 19th century, reported that Tashkent merchants under guidance of Mansur Mamasaidov were actively trading in Semipalatinsk and moreover accompanied their own caravans till Kashgaria and Tibet [11].

3. Conclusion

Due to the trade activity provided by Tashkendi merchants significantly increased their status in Eastern Turkistan and China. Tashkent merchant Nemat Bay, for instance, was appointed as an *aksakal* (elder) in Kashgaria by the Kokand ruler Irdona Biy. Nemat Bay had an authority to levy taxes and *zakat* from all merchants who arrived from the Kokand Khanate as well as from Uighur and Muslim population [12]. Another Tashkendi merchant Alim Posho was powerful enough to negotiate with the Chinese authorities on behalf of the Kokand ruler Muhammad Ali-Khan. In January 13th, 1813, for instance, acting on behalf of Kokandi ruler he signed special agreement with Chinese authorities.

To draw the conclusion one may note that over the course of the late 18th and the first half of 19th centuries Tashkent had been playing an important role as strategic center located on the one of the Silk Road crossroads that linked Central Asia markets with Russia, China, Dzungaria, Eastern Turkestan, Tibet and Kashmir.

References:

1. Lunin, Boris, *Istoriia Uzbekistana v istochnikakh (izvestia puteshestvennikov, geografov i uchenykh XVI-pervoi poloviny XIX v.)* (Tashkent, 1988), 145-156.
2. Agzamova Gulchekhra, *Volzsko-Kaspiiskii put' v XVI – pervoi polovine XIX veka*, in: *Tiurkologicheskii sbornik*, 2002. *Rossia i tiurkskii mir* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2003), 139-154.
3. Khalfin, N., *Rossia i khanstva Srednei Azii* (Moscow, 1974), 49.
4. “Petrovskiy voenno-razvedochnaya ekspeditsiya v Sredney Azii” // *Voенno-istoricheskii sbornik*, 1915. №1-2. - p. 118, 133.
5. *Vneshnaya politika Rossii XIX nach. – XX v.* –M. 1960, ser. T-1,6. - p. 160-161.
6. Ozadaev F. *Toshkent tarixidan ocherklar – T.: “Fan”, 1965. –p.38.*
7. Ozadaev F. *Toshkent tarixidan ocherklar – T.: “Fan”, 1965. –p.38.*
8. Serebrennikov A.G. *Turkestanskiy kray. Materialli po istorii zavoevaniy Turkestanskogo kraya. Tom 7. – T., 1914. -p. 136.*
9. Xujaev A. *Buyuk ipak yuli: munosabatlar va taqdirlar. “Ozbekiston milliy enciklopediyasi” Davlat ilmiy nashriyoti., T. 2007. p. 206-207.*
10. Saguchi Toro. *The Eastern trade of the Khokand khanate. –Tokya, 1963. –P.80.*
11. Akhmedov B. *Chuqon Valixonov Urta Osiyo tarixi haqida. // Tarixdan saboqlar. –T.: 1994. –p. 181.*
12. Semenov A.A. *Otnoshenie Kokandskogo xanstva k Kashgaru v pervoy polovine XIX veka. // UzR FA Asosiy kutubxonasi. Dissertatsiya va avtoreferatlar bulimi. RD 7125 shifr bilan saqlanadi. – p. 12.*
13. Kutlukov M. *Vzaimootnosheniya Cinskogo Kitaya s Kokandskim xanstvom. // Kitay i sosedi. M.: Nauka, 1982. –p. 210.*