

## **THE ACTIVITY OF THE GREAT SILK ROAD DURING THE KUSHAN PERIOD**

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**Annotation:** In this article discusses the activities and significance of the Great Silk Road during the Kushan period.

**Keywords:** The Kushan state, The Great Silk Road, socio-economic and cultural ties, diplomatic and trade relations, Parthian kingdom, caravan routes.

The Kushan state is considered one of the most powerful and large states of the ancient east. During the Kushan period, a large part of Central Asia was united under a single state, and the development of agriculture and handicrafts in the centralized state, in turn, contributed to the development of trade along the Great Silk Road, which operated during this period.

Founded in the first half of the 1st century AD, the Kushan state controlled for three centuries the present-day part of the Great Silk Road in northern India, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Southeast Turkestan [Khodjaev, 169]. As a result of the development of international relations during this period, as well as in accordance with the current political situation in our region, new directions of the Great Silk Road were formed, socio-economic and cultural ties developed in all directions.

During the Kushan period, the Great Silk Road, which became the main link between East and West, developed not only as a trade route, but also as a transit route used in the development of growing international diplomatic relations. In the ancient East, the kingdom of Kushan developed as the most powerful and largest state. During the period up to the 4th century AD, the Kushans took many measures to develop domestic and foreign international trade relations, as well as to regulate the circulation of money by establishing the production of coins [Khojaev, 169-170]. This has greatly contributed to overcoming some of the problems associated with international trade and exchange. The development of trade relations played an important role in the economic growth of the Kushan state. First of all, let us consider the factors that contributed to the development of economic and cultural ties along the Great Silk Road during the Kushan period.

During this period, the emergence of new cities in many parts of the region, and later the formation of caravan routes connecting them, laid the foundation for the growth of trade relations. Because during this period, cities became the commercial, handicraft and religious-ideological center of the country. During this period, the cultural, social and agricultural development of the peoples of Central Asia reached a high level. We can see that these innovations and developments had a positive impact on the activities of the Kushan kingdom and the Great Silk Road passing through the territory of this state, whose economy was based on irrigated agriculture, trade and handicrafts [Sagdullaev , 54].

During the Kushan period, the part of the Great Silk Road passing through Central Asia was completely under the control of this state. The Kushan kingdom established economic and political relations with Parthia, the Roman Empire, India and China [Mavlonov, 125]. In particular, trade and diplomatic relations were established along the Great Silk Road from China to Rome during the reign of the Kushan king Kanishka and subsequent rulers. We can know this through the exchange of embassies between these powerful states. In 99 AD, the ambassador of the Kushans arrived in Rome [A. Ziya, 72]. This indicates that a network of the Great Silk Road operated regularly during this period from Central Asia to Rome. Silk, lacquer and other products were exported from China to Turkestan and through it to the western countries, and pedigree ropes and various glassware were exported to China [A.Ziya, 72]. Among them, the silk trade was especially important and was the main trade product. Silk products were also widely used for exchange with other products.

Trade and cultural ties between Kushan and China are highly developed. Although relations between the two countries have at times deteriorated and led to wars, this has not had a very negative impact on the development of trade relations. Only in the case of areas that have become a battleground between China and the Kushans can such an opinion be expressed. For example, it is known that the Sino-Kushan conflict over East Turkestan arose. The Kushan king Kanishka conquered the lands of Hotan, Yorkent, and Kashgar through military campaigns. This, in turn, created favorable conditions for economic and cultural relations [Tikhonov, 158]. Because important trade routes to China passed through these regions. Information about the embassy mission sent to the palace of the Wei dynasty of China in 230 by the Kushan ruler Vasudeva is preserved in Chinese chronicles [Mavlonov, 125]. Of

course, such diplomatic relations between the two countries, in turn, contributed to the development of trade along the Great Silk Road.

The Kushan state established trade and cultural ties with the Middle East, Egypt, Rome, and Asia Minor during this period, and almost all the caravan routes connecting these regions passed through the territory of the Parthian kingdom. Therefore, the development of the Kushan kingdom's relations with these regions was inextricably linked with its relations with Parthia. As the Parthian state sought to monopolize the silk trade with the western states and prevented the passage of Roman and Chinese merchants through its territory, several new trade routes bypassing the Parthian territory leading to Rome were formed. The first: through the Kushan North India to the trading ports of India, from there by sea to the Mediterranean countries, the second, from China through East Turkestan to the Waxon corridor and the Pamir mountain passes through Qorategin to Bactria, from there along the lower reaches of the Frot River to the Roman Empire way [Mavlonov, 126]. The conquest of the lands of North India by Kanishka created great opportunities for access to convenient commercial ports in India and for participation in sea trade through it.

During the Kushan period, Bactria was considered an important crossroads of trade routes. Through Bactria, trade routes passed from India to the interior of Central Asia and to China. Also, the Chinese scholar A. Khodjaev noted that during the Kushan period, ie in the first three centuries AD, the road through Kashgar to Pakistan was rich. The reason for this is that during this period, the Kushans made a significant contribution to the spread of Buddhism in China, and the visit of Chinese monks to Gandhara, the center of this religion, became more active [Khodjaev, 82]. Indeed, written sources indicate that this path was very active not only during this period but also in recent times, and that many Chinese monks visited the center of Buddhism through this path.

During the Kushan period, not only the activities of external international communication routes developed, but also new important communication and trade routes connecting the cities and villages in the territory of the Kushan state. Caravan routes were formed between the remote villages and towns of the country, and intensive trade relations were established. As an example, the discovery of more than 150 copper coins in Akkurgan, one of the villages of Kushan, during archeological excavations [Pidaev, 32] is evidence of active trade

relations in the village. What is important is the emergence and development of villages as separate trade settlements during the Kushan period.

In short, the Kushan period is a very important and crucial stage in the activities of the Great Silk Road. In general, the international diplomatic and trade relations of this period laid the foundation for the continuous development of these relations in subsequent periods. There was also a system of seasonal use of important branches of the Great Silk Road. Eastern and Western cultures were connected and developed through a bridge between them. The system of servicing caravans on the Great Silk Road was further developed, many caravanserais and rabats were built. Cultural and trade ties have further expanded. Trade has served the economic development of many countries. The Great Silk Road developed as a caravan route that provided trade and cultural ties between East and West.

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