ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SILK ROAD
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASIAN AND EUROPEAN NATIONS

Abstract: The paper discusses economic and political significance of the Silk Road in the development of Asian and European nations. The author presents the history of emergence and development of the Silk Road as broad cultural, political, economic interaction and exchange between East and West. The author comes to the conclusion that some principles of the Silk Road should be learnt nowadays and used for building strong trading and cultural relations under the conditions of industrialization and globalization.

Key words: Silk Road, development, economic interaction, achievements, the route.

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается экономическое и политическое значение Шелкового пути в развитии азиатских и европейских народов. Автор представляет историю возникновения и развития Шелкового пути как широкое культурное, политическое, экономическое взаимодействие и обмен между Востоком и Западом. Автор приходит к выводу, что некоторые принципы Шелкового пути должны быть изучены в наши дни и использованы для построения
устойчивых торговых и культурных связей в условиях индустриализации и глобализации.

Ключевые слова: Шелковый путь, развитие, экономическое взаимодействие, достижения, путь.

The 21st century can be named as a century of globalization, economic and information integration, when the whole world is becoming a single system. However, as we know, one of the main factors for the development of societies is a cultural exchange between nations and civilizations. Everything we have now was inherited from the past. Then Cultural achievements spread through connections of trade, conquests and migrations. At new places, they acquired a new life: they changed, they accustomed and they got local features, supplemented with new content and essence.

Special parts of these processes mainly were possible because of the emergence and development of the Great Silk Road. It is known as the first, longest and the most important trade route, which in ancient times and early Middle Ages connected China, India, Central and the Middle Asia and Mediterranean. So, traditions and legacy of Great Silk Road is important not only for China and Asia, but for the whole world too [2].

Great Silk Road, undoubtedly, had significant economic and political meaning in development of Asian and European nations. It was a bridge between East and West, which enhanced interaction and partnership of nations in trading and cultural spheres.

Developing trade relations, countries and empires, through which Great Silk Road ran, not only satisfied their demand for imported goods but also engaged them in political communications with other nations. Not infrequently, merchants and traders performed diplomatic functions: entered into a contact with the leaders of the different states about friendly alliances, war unions and trade collusions. Moreover, it resulted in cultural exchange between
civilizations. The existence of Great Silk Road on the territory of Middle Asia spread main world religions: Christianity, Buddhism and Islam [1].

One of the most significant achievements of Silk Road, which can be easily found, is the emergence of cities and settlements, roads, hostels and warehouses through the development of trade routes. Many cities were created especially for merchants and travelers. During their stops, they could take other horses, hire guard. Also, thanks to the medieval merchants’ checks emerged: it was convenient for them to give the money on receipt, and in another city get it from the trustee.

Travelling across Eurasia, traders shared cultural knowledge and technologies, talked about religious teachings. Not only merchants and traders, but also writers, soldiers and scientists embarked the journeys [4].

As a result of the Silk Road operation for the first time in history it was a trend towards convergence of cultures in the process of intensive and regular world economic relations. Along the route of the Silk Road there was a gradual unification of cultural elements. The researchers note that in the Asian commercial cities common traits of churches started to appear, even though they belonged to different religions [3].

This convergence, however, was only a trend. Borrowing of cultural achievements was limited. For example, the Chinese inventions such as printing and paper money were not an object of borrowing for even close Asian countries of Great Silk Road, There was almost no adoption of innovations in socio-economic sphere. Europeans showed much more interest in the study of the East. The collapse of the Great Silk Road led to the virtual elimination of the experience of peaceful trade and cultural contacts, which were replaced by colonial aggression of European countries.

Great Silk Road played an important role in the development of geographical knowledge. Only after the establishment of the trade route the
Europeans and the Chinese first learned about each other and received at least vague ideas of all the civilizations of Eurasia.

The era of the Silk Road gave birth to many institutions, similar to the international trading ones of modern and contemporary time (international division of labor, extra-territorial protection of property rights). During centuries, Great Silk Road connected different nations and empires, used as mean for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, mutual enrichment of languages and cultures. Of course, past times even more than present ones were full of war and politic conflicts, during which Great Silk Road faded, but it invariably revived. Ineradicable desire for dialogue, for reasonable benefits and higher welfare is constantly prevailed over political and religious confrontations. The exchange of spiritual values - is the highest achievement of the activities of the Silk Road. Buddhism, for example, has caused China's rise and flourishing of philosophy.

Islam, though unlike Buddhism, initially expanded its influence through non-peaceful way, too, in the vast spaces of the area of the Silk Road created its unique inner world, its unique culture, absorbed achievements of dozens of countries and people. Therefore, while creating a model for future relations between the people, nations and their cooperation, we should use convincing example. The history of the Silk Road - is the story of a broad cultural interaction and exchange between East and West. It is argued that only close cooperation and mutual enrichment of cultures are the basis of peace and progress for the whole humanity.

References