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## **The role of the Great Silk Road in transmission of different religions in Central Asia and Kazakhstan**

In this paper we consider the influence of the Silk Road on the distribution of different religious beliefs and the pursuit of cultural exchange of ideas on the territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Research covered the ancient history of the spreading of different religious cults, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam etc. along the Silk Road. The article presents the historical role of the Silk Road in establishing religious dialogue between East and West, the main centers of religious and distribution routes for Kazakhstan's segment of international trade routes. In the work have been used archaeological, historical and anthropological researches of domestic and abroad scientists.

*Key words:* The Great Silk Road, religion, cult, Islam, Sufi, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Nestorianism, Shamanism, Totemic, Tengrism, Central Asia, Kazakhstan.

There are several thousands of historical and cultural memorials and landmarks in Kazakhstan. The President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev spoke of reconstructing the most significant of them when he initiated the Cultural Heritage State Program (issued on January 13th, 2004). There are magnificent architectural masterpieces and cities of the Middle-Ages on the paths of the Great Silk Way. And more still, there are petro glyphs — the rock art, and ancient kurgans — the burial mounds of the rich.... More to the point, the Khoja Ahmed Yasavi Mausoleum of Turkestan City and Tamgaly petro glyphs of Almaty Province have been added to the World Cultural Heritage List of UNESCO. This is a bright proof of the world-wide acclaimed, rich inheritance our ancestors have left us. It is our responsibility to pass it on to next generations.

Not always was the Great Silk Way silky and smooth. There were times when Great Road was not very convenient for trade and cultural exchange. That is when the feuds came to replace the peace, good will, and understanding.

The Great Silk Way wasn't just a commercial flow of goods. It was a never-ending exchange of ideas, religions, philosophy, scientific and geographical discoveries, methods of agriculture, architecture and even city planning. People were bringing with them their music, poetry, song and dance, their national customs and traditions. Everyone benefited from an exchange of experience, which humanity had gained over the centuries and thousands of years.

Noisy were the bazaars with their brightly dressed people speaking different tongues, selling and buying overseas goods. No one cared where the caravans came from and which god caravan's merchants and traders worshipped. Mosques and churches, synagogues and Buddhist temples were all welcome.

And when mistrust was replacing the understanding, the caravan trails were changing its routes, by passing the aggressors. No movement — no progress. Feuding countries were left far behind in economic and cultural development. Some trails of the Silk Way were being abandoned, the others, on the other hand, were gaining greater importance.

The Way of the People had never been stagnant; it always had a steady pulse. And it is not surprising. Everyone knows that movement is life. People were setting out to travel. A great resettlement of peoples had begun. A Great Silk Way had become a major route for ethnic migrations and religious propagation. Nomadic tribes went from East to West.

By the way, this beautiful and sonorous name appeared long after the Way of People ceased to exist! Its author was a German historian Ferdinand Richthofen, who published a book named China in 1877. It was in this scientific publication that the term Great Silk Way appeared for the first time.

Great Silk Way is a special chapter to this chronicle. The longest ever-over seven thousand kilometers — and the most significant in history! Never have there been a road that meant so much for so many people on Planet Earth. Not before, not after.

The Great Silk Way was a web of caravan routes, covering the Eurasian continent from China to the Mediterranean Sea. In ancient times and the middle Ages, it served as an important connection for trade and cross-cultural relations between the East and the West. One of the longest routes lay through Central Asia,

where among other countries it crossed the territory of what is now Kazakhstan. The segment of the road, that went through Kazakhstan, was called steppe, which in Russia means the vast spaces of grass fields.

In the 6–7 centuries, the busiest segment of the Great Silk Way was the one crossing Semirechye and what is now Southern Kazakhstan. There are some reasons to that. There, the Turkic Kagans — the rules of Turks — set their camps, which controlled trade routes in Central Asia. Another reason, according to historians, is that the road to Fergana Valley became dangerous due to local feuds. And, finally, the rich Turkic Kagans and their surroundings had become major consumers of overseas goods. All of that contributed to large cities emerging and growing on the Great Silk Road. Today, many people have heard these names: Bukhara, Samarkand, Taraz, Ispidjab, Otrar, Turkistan, Talkhir, Kayalyk....

One of the most famous cities of the Silk Road is Taraz, which was not only an important trading center and was the site of many religions plexus. For example, the study of the history of this city, you can draw interesting conclusions on cultural exchange and religious dialogue on the Silk Road.

«Historical and archaeological studies of the medieval cities of the Great Silk Road of Southwest Semirechye» are devoted to the historical and archaeological study of Talas and Chui valley in the first period associated with P.Lerch [1], D.Ivanov [2], V.V.Barthold [3], N.Petrovskiy [4], V.Kallaur (1896) [5] and other prominent researchers.

The first step in the archaeological survey were recording and description of monuments found in the result of intelligence and excavations carried out by the Central Asian Committee of the Heritage Conservation under the direction of P.Ivanova, M.Masson, M.Tynyshpayev [6], who are greatly expanded the understanding of the area of Taraz and its suburbs.

More significant results for the restoration of monuments and history of Taraz and its district were obtained by expeditions of IHMC, Kazakhstan branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union in 1935–1938, under the direction of A.Bernshtamm [7].

In 1938–1941 Archaeological Expedition of Semirechinsk (AES), headed by A.N.Bernshtamm, engaged in the study of sedentary and urban culture of the Chu Valley. In 1938–1940 expedition examined the medieval town of Silk Road Kula, Merke, Aspara.

In 1940, on the site of Taraz Jambul archaeological excavations were carried out in paragraph of G.I.Patsevich [8] with the aim of collecting archaeological material for the local history museum.

T.N.Senigova [9] identified three chronological periods of the ancient city of Taraz and its surroundings (VI-IX, X-XII, XIII-XVIII), On the basis of archaeological materials showed features of the development of the city and its surroundings in each period.

In the 1963–1965 squad of Kula-Sumbinsky, led by K.M.Baipakov, in the study of medieval towns and villages of Chui valley in the district of Kulan made excavations of the Lugovoe castle A and Lugovoe manor B [10].

In the 1978–1980 expedition of Jambul Regional History Museum (Edokov) were examined medieval towns and villages of Kazakhstan in Chui valley [11].

In 1970, the archaeological squad of archeology and ethnography of the Kazakh State University named after S.M.Kirov (UAE) examined all known fort and settlement of Chu valley.

Both old and new materials were the basis for the study of typology and medieval fortifications forts and settlements of Chu valley along the Silk Road (Eleuov M. [12]).

«Research of V.V.Barthold» are devoted to the results of his expeditions to Central Asia and Kazakhstan. His first expedition was associated with Kazakhstan. In the 1893–1894 years he was sent here by the St. Petersburg University to study the topography of ancient monuments, mainly in the south of Kazakhstan, in the valley of the Issyk -Kul and Semirechye [13]. A careful analysis of archaeological material, meticulous extraction of data from written sources provided the basis for raising the question of the historical geography of Kazakhstan cities along the Silk Road in the Middle Ages.

Becoming political hegemony over vast expanses of Central Asia, and taking control of trade along the Great Silk Road, Turkic Kagan established strong ties with Sogdiana, which not only stimulated, but also to a certain extent determined the growth of towns and villages in the Semirechye.

Records show the resettlement of the Sogdians along the Great Silk Road, where they found a number of cities. The first information about the Sogdians in the Chu- Talas rivers are contained in the report of the Embassy of Menander Zemarh to the West- Kagan Istemi (568). To this time also relates message of Nershahi about the relocation of Bukhara group of Sogdian farmers and merchants who founded in the city of Hamukat (Dzhamukat) in the Talas valley [14]. In VII Taraz, Suyab and Naveket become widely known among all greatest cities of Silk Road.

Simultaneously with the Sogdian extends Turkic cultural complex. Turkic influence is clearly revealed in the study of material culture is not only the South- West Semirechye and South Kazakhstan but also in Fergana, Ustrushana, Tokharistan, Sogda [15]. Taraz and other major cities of Talas and Chui valley evolved similarly, having a lot of similarities in the historical topography [16].

Reinforced rate, in turn, served as the nucleus around which the town was formed. An important role in the composition of its international trade and multicultural and polyreligious significance has played on the Great Silk Road [17].

Thus, Taraz in the Middle Ages was a major center of cultural, religious, economic and political influence. This is confirmed by archaeological evidence [18, 19].

For example, in VIII-IX century there were found a kind of ceramic vessels which subsequently spread to other cities of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. By studying pottery of Chu Valley, V.I.Raspopova noted that «stucco pitchers appeared in Sughd, apparently, only with the arrival of the Turks Karakhanids» [20], the capital of whom was for a while Taraz [21]. Identical elements of material culture found in Sughd, Fergana, Semirechye that relate to the VI-VIII — X centuries. It can be concluded that the spreading of cultural and religious exchange on the territory of Central Asia and of several of cultural elements influenced by the Silk Road.

In the year 629, Buddhist pilgrim Syuan-Jiang or Xuanzang (born 600, Guoshi, China-died 664, Chang'an) Chinese Buddhist monk and pilgrim to India [22]. Syuan-Jiang described his travel from China to India. When he reached Taraz City, he turned south. The pilgrim reported on the cultural centers in the valleys of rivers Chu and Talas at the times of Turkic domination. A guest from Chian was astonished from the level of civilization in governance, trade, literature, religious beliefs and even the daily life of the local people. 1219, the Minister of the Celestial Empire Elyuy-Chu-Cai, while accompanying Genghis Khan in his western conquests, had left some information about the area between Ili River and Talas. It can be found today in The Works by the Members of Russian Spiritual Mission to Beijing [23].

In 1265 Nicolo and Mateo Polo, respectively a father and an older brother of legendary Marco Polo, have crossed Central Asia and Semirechye region when going from Venetia to Mongolia on trade business. Marco Polo himself reached Mongolia by going through Pamir and Kashgar.

The Silk Road was functioning in our region up to 15-th century. That is when the wars and feuds brought decline to the urban culture. The last revival of the caravan route segment was in the middle of 13th century, when trade and diplomatic embassies to Karakorum, the Mongolian Empire capital, were travelling across this region. The travel of Italian missionary Plano Carpini and Dutch Ambassador Louis de St.Guillaume de Rubruock occurred in that period of time as well. Not many realize that in 13–14 centuries BC the oriental trade was under the wardship of the Mediterranean merchants! [24]

The last of missionaries to walk this route was Giovanni Marinolo's caravan in 1357. In 1424, Yongle Emperor of the Ming Dynasty ordered to close the north-western border of the Celestial Empire. So just like that, after one-and-a-half thousand years, the road of all people and times had ceased to exist [25].

The ancient Silk Road contributed greatly to the cultural exchange between China and the West. From the 2nd century BC to the 15th century AD, splendid civilizations among Central Asia, China, India, Greece, Persia and Rome were exchanged along this famous trade route, making the route a great «Cultural Bridge» between Asia and Europe [26].

Together with the economic and political exchange between the East and West, religions of the West were introduced into China via the world-famous route. Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Nestorianism and Islam were cultural treasure of the ancient west, which were bestowed upon China during the old times.

Nowadays, a project to revive the Great Silk Road had been initiated. UNESCO Former Director-General Federico Mayor said in this regard: «The Silk Road, passing through steppe, seas and deserts, provided an excellent opportunity for establishing connections and communications, facilitated the outstanding civilizations to benefit from each other. The goal of the project on Great Silk Road's comprehensive study is to encourage people to realize the need to revive communication today and, also, to use a historically important opportunity for mutual understanding and enrichment of civilizations along this route» [27].

We are lucky. We are witnessing the revival of the Great Silk Road, a Road of Peace, Understanding and Friendship between the Nations.

«Jol jurse kiskarady» — «The walking will manage the road», — say Kazakhs.

«To live through life is not like crossing the field», — says the Russian proverb.

«If you are exhausted — walk another mile», — joke Americans.

«The road goes and leads others to walk. A man leaves his trace on the Earth», — wisely notice in the East.

Richard C. Foltz is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at the University of Florida. He is the author of several books and articles including *Religions of the Silk Road*, *Mughal India and Central Asia*, and *Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*. Asia Society spoke with the author in anticipation of his participation in the Asia Society and Museum's November 9–10, 2001 symposium «Nomads, Traders and Holy Men along China's Silk Road» [28].

Before the rise of the maritime empires of Europe, the ancient trade routes of Central Asia served as one of the world's most vital thoroughfares of religious traffic. From the goddesses of prehistoric Eurasia through the Iranian religions of Zoroaster and Mani, to the Buddhism transferred from India and the Judaism, Christianity and eventually Islam carried in from the Mediterranean west, almost all of the major religions of Asia were imported into the oasis towns that lined the route between Persia and China [29, 30]. Yet if the monks, books and relics who moved along the «silk road» point to a history of religious transmission both into and through Central Asia, important questions remain about what happened to these religious forms in their long periods in transit. Placing the question of transformation alongside that of transmission, the current series of talks excavates the neglected history of Central Asia's own contributions to the religions of the old world.

Foltz stresses that religions in general are far from «monolithic» [28; 9], and thus some of the religions that were involved in the history of the Silk Road, and that are still known and practiced today (such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism), cannot be imagined in history like we know them today as when facing foreign contexts, foreign cultures and other religious beliefs, all religious traditions adjust and become enriched, change their vocabulary, and incorporate foreign ideas. That Jesus has been referred to as the Mani Buddha [28, p. 84] is just one example of the enculturation of religious ideas that the author points to. In addition Foltz shows that today's phenomenon of a «patchwork-religion», often criticized by orthodox believers, is not a modern occurrence. The Mongol rulers especially were very open to any religious idea, as long as worshipping a certain god or prophet would help them reach their short-term objectives [28; 117]. Maybe one could add to the title of the book the following sub-heading: «Premodern Patterns of Religious Pluralism».

In his book, Foltz emphasizes how the Silk Road was a forum for the spreading of knowledge, ideas, culture and religion for over 3,000 years. He stresses that today's foundations of globalization is based on the developments from many centuries ago from along the Silk Road, especially with its role in many religions' birth, evolution and death. Some of these religions are still alive today, such as Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and some have disappeared. Directly or indirectly, the existence of a constant trade route helped to build relationships between religion and commerce as the Silk Road's ideas reached even marginal areas in the West and the East.

In chapter four, «A Refuge to Heretics: Nestorians and Manicheans on the Silk Road» [28; 59–84], Foltz provides valuable facts about the spread of Christianity through discussing two sects, Manicheans and Nestorians, which are often neglected in historical accounts of Christendom. Many Christian theologians only refer to Manicheans and Nestorians indirectly, when talking about St. Augustine of Hippo, who was attracted to Mani's ideas before becoming an orthodox Christian, or the many church fathers who spoke about Nestorian ideas. The big influence those two groups had in Asia until the 15th century is well presented as well as their specific theology about the nature of Christ.

Zoroastrianism (Avesta religion) — one of the oldest in Mitric religions that occurred in the VII–VI centuries BC in ancient Iran. The characteristics of its ritual worship practices are that 4 elements of the universe: water, fire, earth and air are submitted.

It should be noted that in Central Asia and Kazakhstan development received a special version of Zoroastrianism different from the canonical one. It was closely intertwined with the local pagan cults — the cult of fire, kind, ancestor, animals — sheep, horses, camels etc.

As a result of the archaeological work conducted at an archaeological site in Kazakhstan, was identified complex finds, characterized generators of Zoroastrianism. Signs of this religion can be seen in the monuments of architecture and art, interior decorations of religious premises and the attributes used in ritual practice. Thanks to the images impressed on the monuments of art, you can get acquainted with the gods, to determine their iconography, hierarchical importance, solution with respect to the areas of the universe.

In order to restore the ritual and the pantheon of gods worshiped by the faithful, should be considered vessels with anthropomorphic (human-like) symptoms, most of which are found in the Talas valley and the south of Kazakhstan, and carved wood of Kuryrktope [31].

By anthropomorphic vessels are featured images of ears, made by sculpting, rarely by carving. Mouth is missing. Marked images of the nose and eyes. On some «female» vessels can be seen stylized images of the breast, on the «male» — a beard and mustache. Ornaments on the vessels are cosmogonic, vegetable, sometimes zoomorphic character.

During the ritual vessels — gods, were placed around the altar of the fire, which corresponds to the image on the wall of the Samarkand foci.

Ritual vessels depicting bulls and ducks found in the cities of Semirechye and Southern Kazakhstan corresponded to VIII–XII centuries, can also be associated with «small avestan» calendar. Soul of a bull dedicated to the day of the calendar month. Biruni writes that «on the day of Nauriz God created the world and Gayumarsa (Gayomarta — bullman). Duck and goose were regarded as symbols of unity between heaven, earth and water. They attributed participation in the creation of the earth and the earthly world» [32].

Rites of common meal had ritual significance. Their aim was to unite the faithful, the approval of their isolation from other religions. Drinking wine from the bottle container-bull refers to the remnants of primitive totems to a ceremony where people killing an animal totem, ate its flesh and drunk its blood. It was believed that during that process people received features inherent in the animal.

In cultures that have arisen among the agricultural tribes, as a ritual food were used the bread and grape wine. As such, the rite of communion carried the body and blood of the god Mithra among the fans. This ordinance is passed in Christianity too. The implication is that the believer after eating the body (bread) and blood (wine) is connected to God and became the participant of eternal life. Ritual actions «feeding deities» (filling vessels) and «drinking deities» (from vessels) are known in the ritual practices of the peoples of the ancient East.

Zoroastrianism is the palace temple in the ancient city Kuyryktobe, which is identified with Keder city — capital of the district in Farab IX — XI centuries. The palace was damaged by fire and later rebuilt Designs lower. The original, the horizon related to the construction of the palace date back to the second half of VII century — the first half of the IX century. The largest area of it (165 m<sup>2</sup>) has a central reception hall. Two doorways connecting room with a bypass gallery and living quarters of the palace. Along the walls were located sufa. During cleaning the floor a large quantity of burnt wooden floors and carved boards, decorated with ornaments and plot scenes were found.

The palace of the early medieval churches Sogda were primarily associated with the cult of dynastic rulers, performing similar functions and temple complex of the palace Kuyryktobe. So in Sughd, in the ceremonial hall of the palace Kuyryktobe performing the functions of the cult hall «daremehr», conducted ritual ceremonies marked the solemn events, which are usually timed to the days of celebrating Nauriz.

In the prospective niches on the walls of the central hall of the palace on the site Kuyryktobe been posted story boards depicting scenes made of highly artistic carvings. The nearest analogy Kuyryktobe carved wood materials are available in Sughd and Ustrushana.

The basis of the compositional structure of boards composed of three arches, decorated with four petal flowers designated center. Three semicircular arches carved on the tree of Kuyryktobe comparable with the three spheres of the universe: heaven, earth, and water.

When you consider that the board had originally been painted, you can imagine how colorful looked hall.

In Zoroastrianism, the execution procedure rites could meet during the excavation of the palace complex of VIII–X centuries. Kostobe of the Talas valley, identified with the city Dzhamakatom. Worship the fire occurred in the temple, in a special hall of the palace complex, where on the dais (the altar) the sacred fire was found.

During excavation of Kuyryktobe and Altyntobe figurines of the Zoroastrian goddess Anahita was found.

Discovery of ossuaries (clay coffins), and vessels for burial of bones of dead people belong to Zoroastrian cult too. They were placed in a specially constructed building — Naoussa. Ossuaries come in different forms. They are rectangular or oval boxes, the walls of which are decorated with relief images of fravashi — gods who guard the soul, and floral ornaments. The heads of deities are available and on the covers of ossuaries.

Numerous cults and rituals are collated with Zoroastrianism.

So many aspects of life in ancient and medieval Otrar oasis are becoming clearer by archaeological discoveries.

Common beliefs associated with supernatural properties of fire, animals, birds spread quite widely in Otrar oasis.

During archaeological excavations have accumulated a diverse collection of artifacts and, above all, ceramics. Some of ceramic products in addition to its utilitarian functions have a certain meaning. Disclosure of the semantics of the articles themselves, as well as ornaments on them allows you to better understand and appreciate the spiritual world of bygone generations. These products include the so-called foci. Now there are several types.

The custom of decorating hearth remained in southern Kazakhstan, and at a later time. Tandyrs of XII–XIII centuries investigated in a residential area on the site of Baba-Ata, decorated by firing ceramic plates with a carved and stamped ornaments in a variety of outlets, circles, cross- pieces and plant shoots. Tiles with embossed floral and geometric patterns found on tandoors in some homes Otrar XVI–XVII centuries.

Researchers who have studied the hearths, detected different interpretations of their purpose. The prevailing opinion of the hearths due to the cult of fire. Archaeologist V. Grigoriev suggested that hearths are original Zoroastrian icons, before which kindles the sacrificial fire, and in the ornamentation of hearths he saw symbols of the four elements of zoroastrizma [32; 428]. The most comprehensive cult semantics hearth was justified by G.A. Pugachenkova and L. Rempel, so to write about the great glow of the lights Mazdaism who «continued to smolder in specific hearths in the homes of the Sogdians, even those that are already established Islam and the Arabic writing was accepted» [33].

A number of researchers, in contrast to this view insist on the utilitarian function of hearths, seeing them artistically processed household hearths. However, I think, without denying their household use, we can not see in their rich decoration of the cult of fire in the reminiscences of religious and mythological concepts of the ancient population of the Syrdarya region, dating back to the era of Saks and Uisuns. The search for the prototypes of medieval altarpieces — hearths lead to the bronze fixtures of sak tribes [34].

In particular, in a roasting pan –hearth of Kuryktobe with rosettes on the bottom, probably reflected an ancient structure organized by the Cosmos in mythology.

As already mentioned, one of the most popular incarnations of the universal sign of the complex cosmos is the World Tree. It symbolizes the spatial structure of the world. Threefold division of vertically organized reflects the universal picture of the cosmos, so-called ternary model, or trigram.

In the first three areas kuryrk brazier of the world — these are three of the circle, lined up vertically: the underworld, the earth, the sky. The lower sphere — is the bottom fryer with medallions filled with floral ornaments, coupled with plant shoots may have roots. Middle sphere — is the wall fryer, ornamented with plant stems, branches of trees. And finally, the third ring, the third sphere — it notched frieze, a symbol of mountains or mountain ranges, which are trees, placed on a plane stamped inside the rim of the thyroid fields.

Way which reflects the idea of the World Tree, column, movement of fire, flying upward, and other characters, as well as opposing the idea of communication spheres of the universe and the unity of the world, are the four towers on the vertical walls of the fryer. Horizontal composition scheme of the World Tree is also formed round-bottomed roasting pan with a three point and spot flickering coals, each character is opposite towers, pointing out the direction of the light. Similarly, you can decipher the structure of almost all hearths and their ornaments ornamentation.

Scientists have noted the similarity of ornamental motifs and architectural details from the real hearths of early medieval castle architecture. L. Rempel tied one of the hearth with a «house of fire» [32; 429]. This seems to be true and, in turn, allows you to search for similarities of hearth and Vary (abode of immortality), which were performed ritual function inherent fire and attached to eternity. Square Vara — a sacred fence against the forces of death, the abode of fire of immortality. Its earthly likenesses were religious, ritual sacred fire altars and funerary structures and were burned. In the Middle Ages these distant origins of religious purpose — hearth roasters seem to have been forgotten and hardly comprehended contemporaries in daily life, but the connection with the cult of fire outbreaks was alive. This is evidenced by solar signs — sockets, oblique crosses and swastikas.

Geographical factors heavily influence the character and development of the religion, myths, rituals and epics of Central Asia. While in other parts of the world, religious rituals are primarily used to promote agricultural prosperity, here they were used to ensure success in hunting and breeding livestock. Animals are one of the most important elements of indigenous religion in Central Asia because of the role they play in the survival of the nomadic civilizations of the steppes as well as sedentary populations living on land not conducive to agriculture. Shamans wore animal skins and feathers and underwent transformations into animals

during spiritual journeys. In addition, animals served as humans' guides, rescuers, ancestors, totems and sacrificial victims [35]. As a religion of nature, shamanism throughout Central Asia held particular reverence for the relations between sky, earth and water and believed in the mystical importance of trees and mountains. Shamanism in Central Asia also places a strong emphasis on the opposition between summer and winter, corresponding to the huge differences in temperature common in the region. The harsh conditions and poverty caused by the extreme temperatures drove Central Asian nomads throughout history to pursue militaristic goals against their sedentary neighbors. This military background can be seen in the reverence for horses and warriors within many indigenous religions [36].

Common shamanic practices and beliefs shared among Central Asians along Silk Road. Central Asian shamans served as sacred intermediaries between the human and spirit world. In this role they took on tasks such as healing, divination, appealing to ancestors, manipulating the elements, leading lost souls and officiating public religious rituals. The shamanic séance served as a public display of the shaman's journey to the spirit world and usually involved intense trances, drumming, dancing, chanting, elaborate costumes, miraculous displays of physical strength, and audience involvement. The goal of these séances ranged from recovering the lost soul of a sick patient and divining the future to controlling the weather and finding a lost person or thing. The use of sleight-of-hand tricks, ventriloquism, and hypnosis were common in these rituals but did not explain the more impressive feats and actual cures accomplished by shamans [37].

Shamans perform in a «state of ecstasy» deliberately induced by an effort of will. Reaching this altered state of consciousness required great mental exertion, concentration and strict self-discipline. Mental and physical preparation included long periods of silent meditation, fasting, and smoking. In this state, skilled shamans employ capabilities that the human organism cannot accomplish in the ordinary state. Shamans in ecstasy displayed unusual physical strength, the ability to withstand extreme temperatures, the bearing of stabbing and cutting without pain, and the heightened receptivity of the sense organs. Shamans made use of intoxicating substances and hallucinogens, especially mukhomor mushrooms and alcohol, as a means of hastening the attainment of ecstasy [38].

The use of purification by fire is an important element of the shamanic tradition dating back as early as the 6th century. People and things connected with the dead had to be purified by passing between fires. These purifications were complex exorcisms while others simply involved the act of literally walking between two fires while being blessed by the Shaman. Shamans in literature and practice were also responsible for using special stones to manipulate weather. Rituals are performed with these stones to attract rain or repel snow, cold or wind. This «rain-stone» was used for many occasions including bringing an end to drought as well as producing hailstorms as a means of warfare [39]. Despite distinctions between various types of shamans and specific traditions, there is a uniformity throughout the region manifested in the personal beliefs, objectives, rituals, symbols and the appearance of shamans.

Tengrism is often called as Nestorianism by Christian devices [40]. Turkish Nestorian manuscripts, that have the same rune-like duct as the Old Turkic script, have been found especially in the oasis of Turfan and in the fortress of Miran [41–46]. When and by whom the Bible or any part thereof have been translated into Turkish for the first time, is completely in the dark [47]. Most of these written records in the pre-Islamic era of Central Asia are written in the Old Turkic language [48]. Nestorian Christianity also had followers among the Uighurs. In the Nestorian sites of Turfan, a fresco depicting the rites of Palm Sunday has been discovered [49].

In Tengriism, the meaning of life is seen as living in harmony with the surrounding world. Tengriist believers view their existence as sustained by the eternal blue Sky, Tengri, the fertile Mother-Earth, spirit Eje, and a ruler who is regarded as the holy spirit of the Sky. Heaven, Earth, the spirits of nature and the ancestors provide every need and protect all humans. By living an upright and respectful life, a human being will keep his world in balance and maximize his personal power Wind Horse.

Historical Tengrism surrounded the cult of the sky god and chief deity Tengri and incorporated elements of shamanism, animism, totemism and ancestor worship. It lost its importance when the Uighuric kagans proclaimed Manichaeism the state religion in the 8th century [50].

It is difficult for most Central Asians today to distinguish today between that which is Islamic and that which is shamanic or non-Islamic. What we might erroneously imagine should be separate spheres share, among other things, aspects of ancestor worship. In some of the tombs and shrines below we can see this syncretism.

Buddhism in Central Asia refers to the forms of Buddhism that existed in Central Asia, which were historically especially prevalent along the Silk Road. The history of Buddhism in Central Asia is closely related to the Silk Road transmission of Buddhism during the first millennium of the common era.

In the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia, East Turkestan and China, an important role was played by the Central Asian theologians and missionaries, in particular, the Parthians, Yueh-chih, kangyuytsam, sogdians, which is particularly active began to preach the teachings of the Buddha in II–III centuries BC, which was due, apparently, to certain political objectives of the Kushan state to East [32; 447].

In the early Middle Ages, the main ascetics in the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia have Sughdians.

Buddhist relics found in a number of historical and cultural districts and cities along the Great Silk Road. As an example Buddhist monastery of Karatobe of II–III centuries in Termez, religious building in the valley Sanzar in Sughd, Buddhist monuments in Merv, a Buddhist monastery of VII–VIII centuries, AdzhinaTepe in Tokharistan, a Buddhist temple in the Cuvée (Ferghana), the temples of the Ak-Beshim and the Red River in the Semirechye (Zhetysu) [32; 447].

The influence of Buddhism on Turks in VI century shows XuanJian: he writes about the benevolent attitude towards the religion of the Western Turks Hagan. At the first half of VII century some rulers of the Western Turks became Buddhists or patrons of Buddhism, the turkologist A.Gaben connected it with the transition of Turks to settled and urban life [32; 448].

In the Semirechye — the domain of the Western Turks, Turgeshes and Karluk, the process was quite intense, as convincing evidence discovered in different years at the settlements of the Chui Valley (Ak-Beshim, Red River, Novopokrovskiy) temples, monasteries, chapels and statues and stelae with images of Buddhist characters and scenes.

Fully excavated the remains of two Buddhist temples in the city Suyabe which is identified with the city of Ak-Beshim.

According to some researchers, the spread of Buddhism followed the Silk Road from west to east through Fergana and Semirechye. The main Buddhist missionaries were Sogdians, who founded their colonies in the Semirechye. B.A.Litvinsky believes that the architectural character of Semirechye's Buddhist temples testifies to their Indian and Central Asian traditions, as well as the temple sculpture [32; 450].

A.N.Bernstamm at one time believed that Buddhism came to Semirechye through East Turkestan A.N.Bernstamm [51]. About the influence of the Buddhist traditions of East Turkestan (Shikshin, Karashahr) on one side and the north of Afghanistan (Bamiyan, Hadda) writes L.P.Zyablin. He believes that the style of Gandhara was a common source for the development of Buddhist art in other regions of its distribution, including the North- West China, East Turkestan, which formed their art schools [52].

B.Stavisky also thought that the Buddhist monuments in the Semirechye and Ferghana were more often associated with the religious activities of the East Turkestan or Chinese missionaries [32; 451].

New materials, in particular, the analysis of written sources suggest that, most likely, East Turkestan and Chinese influence on the spread and development of Buddhism in the Semirechye was predominant. For information on the construction of a Buddhist monastery in Suyabe show its construction in 692 on the orders of Wang Zheng Jian, the military governor of Besbalyk, after they had been captured Suyab.

For example, a Chinese encyclopedia, written in 778, according to the monastery Da Yuney («big cloud»), which in 750 traveler visited Du Huan on the way from Persia. There is information about the construction of a large number of Buddhist temples in the 692–705 years in China and the western states, where the Chinese garrison located. They were built by the Empress Vu Hou (Vy Jiang), which reformed Buddhism on the basis of sutras of «big cloud». Therefore, we can conclude that the Buddhist monasteries and temples were built in Semirechye from 692 until 705.

The nature of architecture as well as a clay sculpture of temples of Semirechye, and paintings testify to their close similarity with the Buddhist buildings and art of the East Turkestan (Shorchuk, Gaochang, Bezeklik, Tumchuk).

Bronze statues and plaques of Semirechye have similarities with the products of the two Buddhist centers in China — Chang'an and Luoyang Tang period, as well as Kashmir.

Analogies of Buddhist stone steles of Semirechye materials are also available in North China in the period of Tang Dynasty.

Thus, we should adhere to the opinion of the overwhelming influence of the direction India — China — East Turkestan on the development of Buddhism in Semireche [53].

Buddhism was persecuted after Bogra Khan made Islam the state religion of the Turks karahans in 940, and he was widely circulated among city dwellers and nomads of Semirechye and East Turkestan. The au-

thor of the XI century Mahmud of Kashgar is a bright line that reflected the confessional struggle of Muslims and Buddhists.

But Buddhism, like other religions existed here, has not disappeared.

New research shows that Buddhism had spread in the Semirechye and after X–XI centuries, when Islam had already established.

In the middle of XIII century Guillaume Rubruck — Ambassador of Louis IX, who was sent to Mongol Khan Mongke told us in his diaries about Buddhist temples on the north-eastern of Semirechye.

In 1253 Guillaume Rubruck out of Lyon and crossed the southern Russia and steppes of Kazakhstan, reached the South Kazakhstan and then Semirechye. In Semirechye he stayed for two weeks in Kaylak (Kayalyk), which is identified with the city Antonivka in the valley of river called Lepsy. Guillaume Rubruck seen here and described the «joss-house».

«The idolaters put their temples in the direction from east to west and north side of the suit room, projecting like a choir, and sometimes, if the house is rectangular, this room is in the middle of the house. On the northern side they make pit on the place of the choir, where they put the chest, long and wide as a table, and a chest behind it to the south, they put the main idol that I have seen in the Karakoram, the same size as the draw of St. Christopher.

One Nestorian priest, who arrived from China, told me that in this land is an idol is so big that it can be seen from a distance of two days' journey. All around they are putting other idols: they are all very beautiful gilded.

In this chest, which resembles a table, the lamps and the victim. All doors shall be opened temples to the south, opposite to the custom of the Saracens. Similarly, among the idolaters, as we have, there is a large bell... Similarly, all the priests shave their whole head and beard, their yellow robes, since they shave their heads, they keep chastity, and have to live on one or two at a time in one community...

Wherever they go, they are constantly in the hands of some kind of rope with a hundred or two hundred nucleoli, as we wear rosary, and constantly repeat the following words: «From manibavvam», that is, «My God, knowest thou», as one of the they turned to me is...» [54].

The above characterization of «shrine», a clear indication of its Buddhist character.

One of the other theories says that, in the 10th century, a Buddhist mission was on its way to the heart of Semirechye when suddenly an earthquake catastrophic power shook the earth. A huge boulder fell off the rock near the halt place at the riverbank. Deeply religious people thought the event a bad omen and decided to return to India. But, they have left a wonderful artwork on the rock as thanks for the warning from above.

There are more traces from Buddhists presence in this area — different drawings and scriptures. One of them reads: «Om mani padme hum», «Blessed be jewel in a lotus».

Buddhism entered Kazakhstan in 9th -10th centuries together with believers, who fled from persecution in their native Tibet. At the end of 19th century, Chokan Valihanov was already writing the first drafts of messages left by Buddhist monks several centuries ago [55].

Another researcher Nikolai Pantusov wrote in 1897 that «Kyrgyz nomads of this area say that the drown images and writings on the rocks left from Kalmyks». Even the name of the place — «rock with signs» — came from the people who once lived here.

The decline of Buddhism along the Silk Road was due to the collapse of the Tang Dynasty in the East and the invasion of Arabs in the West. The conversion to Islam started in the 8th century in Central Asia. Since Islam condemned the iconography, most of the Buddhist statues and wall-paintings were damaged or destroyed. Buddhist temples and stupas were abandoned and buried beneath the sand. By the 15th century, the entire Central Asia basin had been converted to Islam.

From the 7th century onward, the nomadic Turks of Central Asia started to convert to Nestorian Christianity. Mass conversions are recorded in 781–782 and later in 1007, when 200,000 Turks and Mongols reportedly became Christians [30, p. 70]. The Turkish Kipchaks are also known to have converted to Christianity at the suggestion of the Georgians as they allied in their conflicts against the Muslims. A great number were baptized at the request of the Georgian king David II. From 1120, there was a Kipchak national Christian church and an influential clergy [56].

The Kereit were converted to Nestorianism, a sect of Christianity, early in the 11th century [57–59]. Other tribes evangelized entirely or to a great extent during the 10th and 11th centuries were the Naiman and the Ongud.

An account of the conversion of the Kerait is given by the 13th century Jacobite historian Gregory Bar Hebraeus and also in Mari ibn Suleiman's «Book of the Tower» (Kitab al-Majdal) written in 1145–1150.

Among Silk Road spread another religion called Manichaeism. It originated in III century in Iran and has quickly gained a large number of devotees from Italy to China. It represented the overall synthesis of Zoroastrianism and Christianity. Of Christianity, Manichaeism borrowed the idea of messianism, and of Zoroastrianism — the idea of the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness.

Leading role in the spread of Manichaeism in Kazakhstan played Sughdians. At the beginning of the century VIII supreme head Manichaean had residence in Samarkand. Manichaeism coexisted in Central Asia with Buddhism for a long time. The latter has had a severe impact on the pantheon, terminology and even the concept of Manichaeism.

Manichaeism had its adherents in the Semirechye, and in the south of Kazakhstan. In the first place among the sedentary and nomadic populations. As found in the Turfan oasis ancient Uighur manuscript Manichaean writings, «The Sacred Book of the two principles» refers to the fact that this book was written in «The argument Talas (Altyn The argument Talasiulushe, Talasulushe)», «to awaken (faith) in the country of ten arrows». We are talking about the famous city of Taraz [60]. It is also known that the Manichaean monastery were still a number of Semirechye's cities — Balasagun, Chigilbalyke.

Among the relics should be attributed Manichean found at the site of Taraz bronze medallion with the image of women and the moon (crescent), which is a symbol of the Manichean astral deity [32; 468].

Manichaeism remained in the cities of Kazakhstan up to the end of the thirteenth century. Manichean communities had their own churches, where religious rites and ceremonies were committed.

On one of these temples, which were in the city Kajlak at Dzhungare mount was described by Guillaume Rubruck. Following the descriptions of Rubruck the church that he visited, was Manichaean.

The temple of Kajalyk had a room, serving like a choir from the north. Rubruck mentions that all «idolaters» (Buddhist and Manichaean) pray to the north. The fact that the altar of the church is not in the east, as the Christians, but to the north, consistent with the concept contained in the Eastern Manichaean texts.

According to the descriptions of Rubruck, territory, where the city Kayalyk mentioned contact with the ground of «Yugur» (Uighur), which could also have an impact on the spread of the Manichaean religion.

There is significant evidence about the historic importance of Sufi orders in the spread of Islam along the Silk Road all the way into Xinjiang and also into Northern India. Richard C. Foltz is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at the University of Florida in addition to his expertise on religious traditions along the Silk Road, Professor Foltz's research interests include the intersection of Islam and ecology, as well as environmental ethics and the relationship between Iran and South Asia. To the questions «how did Islam spread on the Silk Road? What factors led to Islam becoming the dominant religion of the western half of the Silk Road?» he answered: «This can mainly be attributed to the activities of Muslim merchants operating under the protection and favoritism of local Muslim rulers. An additional factor, especially in rural areas, was the missionary activity of Sufi preachers, who often competed successfully for the authority held by traditional shamans» [61].

Foltz emphasizes three major reasons for the spread of Islam in Central Asia. The first reason is concerned with politics as «anyone contingent upon the government and have to accept its rules and customs rather than against it». The second factor was economics as the region saw the «Muslim dominance of commercial activity». After Islam spread on the Silk Road, it was easier to get in contact with other traders if you were a Muslim rather than a Buddhist. The third factor for the Islamization of the Silk Road was assimilation. The children who were born in mixed marriage family were raised as a Muslim according to Islamic law. In addition, Sufi shaykhs played an important role in the Islamization process as charismatic leaders, especially on the pastoral peoples. The spread of Islam continued with the Islamization of Turkic dynasties, such as the Qarakhanids, Ghaznavids and Seljuks, and Islam reached China through Muslim armies (when their soldiers settled in China and had their own families there) and were hired by the Tang emperor.

Foltz provides practical insights into how religion and trade have always been connected through many examples from sources; for example, when a Bulgar king was healed by a Muslim merchants and he then converted after that [62]. Another strength of Foltz's work is his pointing out that the sociological and ideological process of self-definition and the formulation of identity markers in religions starts when they are «challenged by something they could conceivably be, but, for fear of losing their identity, must demonstrate they are not. (That is why belief systems in traditional societies often appear so frustratingly flexible and inclusive to modern, description-minded observers)» [62; 59]. The Jewish identity formation process started under the Babylonian Exile but was concluded after Christianity started as a Jewish sect, and was defined in the Rabbinic tradition as a normative tool to define who and what is Jewish and who and what is not. It

should be mentioned that the author has used a large variety of sources from different times, languages and cultures to prove his arguments on the religions of the Silk Road.

We find interesting examples in the *Tarikh-I Rashidi*, a 16th century history by Mirza Muhammad Haidar, who was born in Tashkent and whose family came from the Mongol Dughlat tribe that ruled in the northwestern part of the Tarim Basin (at one point from the famous city of Kashgar). Mirza Muhammad's purpose was to provide a history of his ancestors and related contemporaries, the Chagatayid descendants of Chingis Khan. Conversion to Islam and interaction with Sufi religious orders was an important part of that story. The legacy of the Chagatayids was assumed by Tamerlane and his successors, and then, in the sixteenth century, by the Mughals, whose empire was founded by Mirza Muhammad's contemporary Babur.

There are several important Sufi «orders» each of which traces its lineage back to a particular founding teacher. In the 14th century, the Yasawiyya (founded by Ahmad Yasawi in the 12th century) was the most important Sufi order in much of the Timurid realm; thus Tamerlane ordered built in the 1380s the imposing mausoleum complex at Ahmad Yasawi's grave in Yas (now Turkestan city, in Southern Kazakhstan). Yasawi's shrine attracts many worshippers today and is a kind of Central Asian «Mecca».

By the 15th century, the Naqshbandis (founded by Baha ad-Din Naqshbandi (d. 1389 and buried near Bukhara) became the dominant one in much of Central Asia and became actively involved in Central Asian politics, especially in Bukhara. Connections between Babur's successors in India and the Naqshbandi Sufi order continued to be important, since the order spread to India. Although Islam was already well established in some regions of what is now western Xinjiang, where there were important Sufi shrines, in the 17th century the Naqshbandis became the dominant force in the region and for a time actually ruled in Kashgar.

The Silk road was only a means that let different civilizations meet, Islamic morals of the Muslim merchants was the principal factor in the spread of Islam along the countries which that road passed by.

The spreading of Islam in Central Asia in the 8th century has made a tremendous change in the religious and cultural order of the peoples of the region.

In conclusion, it can be said that religions, ideas, knowledge, as well as material goods were transported along the Silk Road for centuries. This transportation was done through language, the translation of holy texts, mixed marriages, war, the occupation of territories, and so on. As sovereignties changed hands, religion and trade inevitable changed hands too. However, Foltz's conclusion about the financial market being today's most wide-spread religion does not seem very convincing. There are various other things that are dominant phenomena in the world today which show liturgical aspects and order (for example, sports, music idols and so on). But all these phenomena do not completely substitute traditional religions in their purpose-creating, hope-providing and human-connecting powers.

The studies examined a range of historical sources, archaeological data, scientific articles, books, ethnographic materials, cultural and folklore monuments. Thus, it was concluded that allow to reveal a picture of intercultural exchange and inter-religious dialogue on the Silk Road. It was found that in the territory of Central Asia since ancient times along the Silk Road spread the many religions that have left their mark. Among them you can find temples, minarets, mausoleums, cemeteries, statues of Buddha and ancient gods, Idols, stone sculptures and drawings, etc. Today, these cultural sites have become an integral part of the culture of the Central Asian region. As shown by the data of ancient Central Asia was the center of the peaceful coexistence of different cultures, religions and civilizations. That is, the emergence and establishment of a harmonious coexistence of different religions in the region played a significant role the Silk Road. Even with the spread of Islam in Central Asia, Islam does not precede it supplanted religion, and entered with them into a kind of inter-cultural dialogue, and developed a unique system of religious beliefs of the peoples of the region, called syncretism.

The medieval towns of central Asia have evolved under the influence of various religious beliefs, as evidenced by archaeological finds. For example, one of the largest cities in the region can be found Taraz monumental memorials and religious attributes of Buddhism, shamanism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam. According to information receive, all these religions have come here on the Great Silk Road. However, the most persistent was that Islam, who was able to take root in the region. This was due to the fact that the peoples of Central Asia, due to its homogeneous confessional and cultural features in the same time, one can not practice many religions. In addition, Islam was most suitable to the lifestyle of people, and also bore a resemblance to the traditional religion of the region — tengrism.

Thus, the Silk Road has laid the historical and cultural foundations for harmonious co-existence of multiple religions in Central Asia.

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### **Ұлы Жібек жолының Орта Азия мен Қазақстанда түрлі діни ағымдардың таралуындағы рөлі**

Мақалада Ұлы Жібек жолының Орта Азия мен Қазақстандағы түрлі діни ағымдардың таралу мен идеялардың мәдени айналымға түсу үрдісіне ықпалы қарастырылған. Зерттеуде ежелгі діни нанымдар, зороастризм, манихей, буддизм, христиан, ислам, Ұлы Жібек жолының Батыс пен Шығыстың арасындағы мәдени байланыс, діндердің негізгі ошақтары мен таралу бағыттары көрсетілген. Талдау кезінде алыс және жақын шетелдік, отандық ғалымдардың археологиялық, тарихи және антропологиялық зерттеу жұмыстары қолданылды.

А.Б.Сатанов

### **Роль Великого Шелкового пути в распространении различных религиозных течений в Средней Азии и Казахстане**

В статье рассмотрено влияние Великого Шелкового пути на распространение различных религиозных верований и осуществление культурного обмена на территории Средней Азии и Казахстана. Была изучена история распространения древних религиозных культов, зороастризма, манихейства, буддизма, христианства, ислама, а также других религиозных течений. Представлена историческая роль Великого Шелкового пути в установлении религиозного диалога между Востоком и Западом, указаны основные религиозные очаги и маршруты их распространения на Казахстанском отрезке международных торговых путей. Автором были использованы археологические, исторические и антропологические научные исследования как казахстанских ученых, так и ученых ближнего и дальнего зарубежья.