Silk Road Trade, Religious Exchange, and Chinese Economic Growth

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Thesis Statement: The Silk Road connects China with the rest of the world. It also helped increase trade, spread religion, and improve the economic stability of China.

1. The Silk Road is the busiest and most important trade route for China.
2. The route helped in promoting religion.
3. The Silk Route created job opportunities for the people of China.
4. Many tourists get access to various parts of the world by using this route.

Introduction

The Silk Road is the most important and busy trade route between China and the Mediterranean. It was named “Silk Road” in 1877 by a German geographer, Ferdinand von Richthofen, because it was initially used for the trade of silk from China to other countries. This road is now a part of the World Heritage List of UNESCO. This route is the busiest trade route for the trade of technology and goods. The route that was initially made for the trade of “silk” soon became a cultural and technological pathway between China and the rest of the world. It helped in spreading many religions in China and was used by followers of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity to spread their religions in the world. Buddhist monks from China traveled to India and Europe to bring back sacred texts. Other religions, like Islam and Christianity, spread the same way when trade started between Arabia, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In the past, this route created many job opportunities for both Chinese people and people of other countries when the use of silk was introduced to the world. It even improved relations with countries like Pakistan when the famous CPEC project started in 2016. The Silk Road connects China with the rest of the world. It also helped increase trade, spread religion, and improve the economic stability of China.

Discussion

The Silk Road was the busiest and most important trade route for China. Trade with European countries and South Asian countries opened new and reliable markets for silk and other goods from China. As the world was introduced to silk, the trade expanded to Rome and Sri Lanka (Whitfield, pp. 204-205). With the passage of time, other goods were also traded on this route. Both sea and land

routes were used for the trade of medicines, clothing, minerals, and ivory. The current trade plans that have started on this route for increasing trade, like the One Belt One Road, will involve 68 countries worth more than $900 billion (Tsui et al., p. 44). The most commonly used sea routes were Persia and Arabia, which mainly traded musk, ivory, and jute from Africa. The reason why this route was used so commonly was its safety because most countries benefited from the trade made on this route (Whitfield, p. 2). The people who traveled to various countries also brought their religion with them, which we will discuss in the next paragraph.

The Silk Road helped in spreading religion. Buddhist preachers in the 7th century BC started their pilgrimage to South Asian countries on this route to preach religion in other countries. References to the use of this route in different texts can be found in the diary of Xuan Zang's "Pilgrimage to the West." Various examples of the dissemination of the Buddhist religion through Eurasia can be found in Afghanistan and Indonesia (Whitfield, p. 106). The route was also used by Muslim preachers in the early Islamic era when they traveled from Arabia to other parts of the world to spread Islam. Islam was introduced to Indonesia and Malaysia by Arab merchants who went to these countries for trade purposes and introduced Islam to the native population (David, n.p). Next, we will discuss how the route created job opportunities.

The popularity of the Silk Road created job opportunities and good relations with neighboring countries. As the concept of silk production became famous and people started to learn the harvesting process of silk, many people in various countries gained a livelihood. The Silk Road, in addition to trade options, also traded concepts. Many people who were jobless before trade on this route had jobs in the production, harvesting, and transportation of goods. Nowadays, this route is providing job opportunities to people from neighboring countries, too (Raza et al., p. 4). The famous CPEC project started by the China-Pakistan collaboration provides jobs to Pakistani people. In addition, to trade, this program is also bringing energy production to Pakistan. The Gwadar energy power plant started by China is also a part of this project. This route has also been used by tourists since early ages, which we will discuss next.

The Silk Road also helped improve tourism. Tourists in the past came from Europe and Russia to the subcontinent and got inspired by the culture and traditions of this location. As this route was safe and secure and countries provided safe passage to travelers, most people used this route to travel to European and South Asian countries (Whitfield, p. 107). The Chinese government has made agreements with 16 countries to send Chinese tourists to them. This initiative increased the tourist population in African countries by 100 percent. For countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, in which tourism is a large part of GDP, the Silk Route provides opportunities to attract tourists. The Buddhist remains in various countries that were made by preachers of the religion are places of attraction for most tourists in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Conclusion

In short, the Silk Route connected many civilizations. It made trade between China and other parts of the world possible and introduced people to new ideas and concepts. It also provided a safe passage to merchants who traded goods from various countries through land and sea. The route helped in promoting the religions of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, and people used this passage to introduce their culture and traditions to the outside world. The Silk Route also created job opportunities for the people of China, and it is still opening new options for various countries as projects work to develop this route. The route also enabled tourism, and many people gained access to various parts of the world by using this route. There are still programs in progress to improve the condition of the Silk Road and create more opportunities and benefits.

Works Cited

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