

THE HISTORY OF TRADE DEVELOPMENT IN TASHKENT CITY

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Abstract

This article provides information about the historical development of trade, science, and urbanization in the territory of Tashkent city. It also highlights the current share of Tashkent in foreign trade turnover, along with insights into bordering countries and other developed nations with a high share in Tashkent's foreign trade relations.

Keywords: Choshtepa, Great Silk Road, FTT (Foreign Trade Turnover), Chorsu, Registan, Chigatoy, Kukcha.

Introduction

TOSHKENT SHAHRIDA SAVDO SOTIQNI RIVOJLANISH TARIXI

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ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada Toshkent shahri hududida savdo-sotiqni, ilm-fanning rivojlanishi tarixi hamda urbanizatsiyalashishi to'g'risida ma'lumotlar keltirilgan shuningdek, Xozirgi kunda Toshkent shaharni tashqi savdo aylanmasidagi ulushi,

chegaradosh davlatlar va boshqa rivojlangan davlatlarning TSA ulushi yuqori boʻlgan davlatlar toʻgʻrisida yoritilgan.

Kalit soʻzlar: Choshtepa, Buyuk ipak yoʻli, TSA, Chorsu, Registon, Chigʻatoy, koʻkcha

INTRODUCTION

The Chirchik and Ohangaron valleys, geographically advantageous and climatically moderate, have been inhabited since ancient times by people engaged in livestock breeding and agriculture. According to archaeological evidence, by the end of the second millennium BCE and the beginning of the first millennium BCE, nomadic pastoral communities had begun to settle, and agriculture started to expand.

In the early stages, when irrigation and the construction of water management facilities were not yet feasible, the first farmers of Tashkent could not divert water from the main river flow. Nevertheless, they practiced agriculture along streams formed by river floods and runoff from hills, using naturally damp lands. Primitive agricultural culture developed in the southern part of modern Tashkent, irrigated by the Qorasuv, Salor, and Jon canals.

Traces of this early agricultural culture were first discovered and studied 30 km south of the city, on the banks of the Burganlisoy stream. In historical science, this culture became known as the *Burganli culture*. By the 6th–4th centuries BCE, the first villages appeared along the banks of the Qorasuv, Salor, and Jon canals. One of them was located along the Jon canal — the ruins of a fortress were unearthed in the lower layers of Shoshtepa. Excavations carried out from 1980 to 1982 revealed developmental stages of this site dating back to the 6th–4th and 2nd–1st centuries BCE.

This ancient settlement, adjacent to the Jon canal, was initially surrounded by earth and ramparts, giving it the form of a fortified castle. The early inhabitants of Shoshtepa were involved in livestock breeding (cattle, horses, sheep, and camels). They were also skilled in producing weapons and tools from bronze and iron, pottery, and weaving. Undoubtedly, the emergence of these villages laid the foundation for the development of urban culture in the Tashkent oasis and the gradual formation of ancient Tashkent.

By the 2nd–1st centuries BCE, urban features had begun to appear in Shoshtepa. A circular fortress surrounded by thick walls rose over the ruins of the old village. In the 1st–2nd centuries CE, a writing stick (stylus) made of bone was created and used in ancient Shosh. This 15 cm bone pen had a pointed end for writing and a wedge-shaped eraser-like end. This find indicates that literacy and script already existed in the Tashkent oasis at the beginning of the Common Era.

Archaeological remains at Shoshtepa — including fortified walls, majestic architectural complexes, artisan tools, inscriptions, and trade-related artifacts — show that by the start of the Common Era, urban culture had developed in the Tashkent oasis, and the ancient village of Shoshtepa was beginning to take on the characteristics of a city. The study of Shoshtepa has led to the conclusion that the urban history of Tashkent began around this period and is no less than 2,300 years old.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY:

By the 1st century CE, more than half of the oasis along the Chirchik, Salor, and Qorasuv rivers had been developed and cultivated. The city of Choch, located near Salor, held a leading position during this period, and historians rightly consider it the foundation of what would become modern Tashkent at the beginning of the Common Era.

Situated along the Great Silk Road, Tashkent played a crucial role in the interactions between European countries and India and China. The city especially flourished between the 6th and 8th centuries. Its incorporation into the Turkic Khaganate, its proximity to ore mines in the Qoramozor mountains, and its location near the nomadic steppe dwellers who had a constant demand for handicraft goods — as well as its position along the main caravan routes, especially the Silk Road through the northern oasis — all contributed to Tashkent rapidly becoming the capital of the Choch state.

The city was surrounded by strong defensive walls, and a special palace-fortress was built. Archaeological excavations have uncovered tools and household items indicating a high level of cultural development. According to historical sources, the city included an ark (citadel) with a palace and temple, a shahristan with administrative buildings, and inner and outer rabads (suburbs) where craftsmen lived and worked.

More specific written records about the neighborhoods (mahallas) of Tashkent can be found in court registers (qozilik daftar) and in Russian publications from the second half of the 19th century. According to one such record from 1865, there were 140 neighborhoods in Tashkent with a population of 76,000. The "Turkestan Region Statistical Yearbook" (1876) stated that there were 149 neighborhoods: 48 in Shaykhontohur, 38 in Sebzor, 31 in Kukcha, and 32 in Beshyoghoch. N.G. Malitsky's 1927 register mentioned 280 neighborhoods and 171 rural settlements (mavze) associated with the urban population (see plan diagram). These settlements were typically farmland and orchards located outside the city; during the Soviet era, they were confiscated and converted into collective farms.

The most vibrant areas of Tashkent were its markets. Between Eski Juva, Chorsu, and the Kukeldash madrasa, there were three main markets: Registan, Chorsu, and Kappon (grain market). Registan market offered not only locally produced goods but also merchandise from India, Afghanistan, Iran, Kashgar, China, and Russia. Caravans from Tashkent traveled through the steppe to cities in Siberia, Kashgar, China, India, Afghanistan, and Iran.

In order to strengthen both internal and external trade, the Tashkent state minted its own coins, bearing the inscription "Muhammad Yunuskhoja Umariy" and images of falcons or tigers. These coins were used as part of an independent economic and foreign policy. Yunuskhoja particularly sought to establish and expand trade relations with Russia. In 1792, he sent a letter to the Russian tsar announcing an alliance with the leaders of the Great Horde and reported that banditry on the caravan routes from Tashkent to Russia had been eradicated.

In the autumn of 1802, Yunuskhoja dispatched an embassy to Saint Petersburg, led by his vizier Mullajon Okhund Mahzum and military commander Ashurali Bahodir. The purpose of this mission was not only to expand trade but also to acquire weapons, cast iron, and copper ore, to strengthen military power, and to invite Russian gunsmiths and miners to Tashkent in order to develop local artillery craftsmanship and mine exploitation.

In March 1803, Tashkent's ambassadors were received by Emperor Alexander I, as well as by the state chancellor and foreign minister Count A. Vorontsov. In the early 19th century, Tashkent's fortress walls were repaired under a decree from Yunus Khan, with all men from the neighborhoods (dahas) mobilized for public labor (hashar).

During the rule of Lashkar Kushbegi, the city was encircled by 12 gates: Qo'ymas, Qo'qon, Qashqar, Labzak, Taxtapul, Qorasaroy, Sag'bon, Chigatoy, Ko'kcha, Samarqand, Kamolon, and Beshyoghoch. According to Muhammad Solih, small towers (called *bord* or *mola*) were constructed every thousand steps along the wall, and larger towers (*burj*) every four thousand steps. The distance from the eastern to the western gate of the city was 8,500 steps, and from the northern to the southern gate — 8,100 steps. Each gate connected to the central market, Registan, via a main street, from which many narrow alleys branched out.

RESULTS:

Today, Tashkent remains one of the largest and oldest cities in Central Asia in terms of both population size and ethnic diversity. According to records from the "Kaaba of Zoroaster" dating back to 262 BCE, Tashkent was listed as one of the key cities in the trade of precious metals, horses, and livestock breeds. This confirms that our capital had an ancient and centralized trade network.

Even today, Tashkent is considered one of the most industrialized cities, hosting the majority of Uzbekistan's largest manufacturing enterprises. The city's foreign trade turnover constitutes a significant portion of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). According to statistical data from January to March 2023, the total foreign trade volume of Tashkent reached USD 5,830.2 million, of which exports accounted for USD 1,064.8 million and imports for USD 4,765.4 million. Tashkent's international economic relations are expanding year by year. The increase in the number of manufacturing enterprises is creating thousands of new jobs, raising employment levels, and contributing to the population's economic and spiritual well-being. The growth in export volume supports the country's sustainable development and helps improve living standards.

In the period from January to March 2023, trade with CIS countries accounted for 37.2% of Tashkent's total foreign trade, while trade with other countries made up 62.8%. The export and import turnover for the same period amounted to 35.2%, representing a 2.6% decrease, while trade turnover with other countries increased by 2.6%.

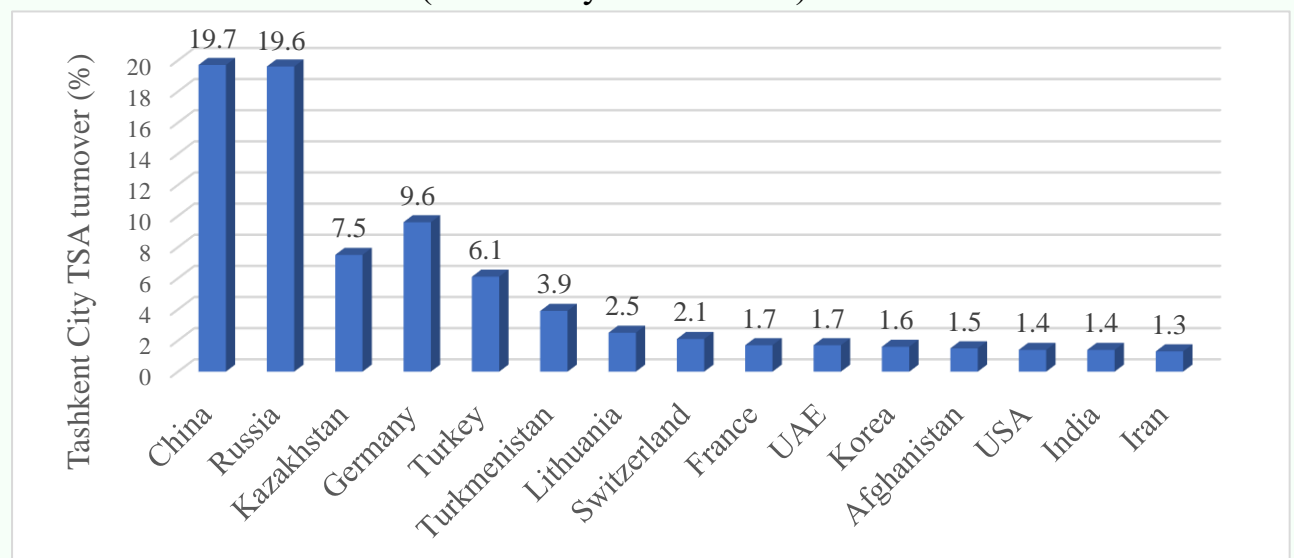
As of January–March 2023, 35.2% of Tashkent's foreign trade turnover was with CIS countries, and the remaining 64.8% with other nations. In comparison, in 2022, these shares were 37.8% and 62.2% respectively. Tashkent's foreign trade turnover with CIS countries in January–March 2023 amounted to USD 2,050.2

million, which represents a 118.9% increase compared to the same period of the previous year.

Among CIS countries, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Belarus, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan are Tashkent's main trade partners, with a combined share of 35.1% in the city's total foreign trade turnover. Among non-CIS countries, China, Germany, Turkey, Lithuania, Switzerland, France, the United Arab Emirates, and South Korea are among the major trade partners, with trade volumes continuing to grow.

Countries with a relatively large share in Tashkent's foreign trade turnover, in percent

(for January-March 2023)



According to the data from January–March 2023, Tashkent's leading foreign trade partners were: China (19.7%), the Russian Federation (19.6%), Germany (9.6%), Kazakhstan (7.5%), and Turkey (6.1%). These countries together accounted for 62.5% of the city's total foreign trade volume. Among all countries globally, the main export partners of Tashkent included the Russian Federation, China, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, accounting for 73.5% of the total export volume. The main import partners were China, the Russian Federation, Germany, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Lithuania, making up 70.5% of the total import volume.

Nearly all categories of goods and services in Tashkent's export structure showed growth. Compared to the same period of the previous year, food product exports increased by 133.3%, and industrial goods by 121.2%. In the structure of total imports, machinery and equipment accounted for 37.4%, while industrial goods made up 14.6%.

DISCUSSION:

In general, research has confirmed that Tashkent city is one of the oldest and most favorable locations for trade. Due to its advantageous position along the Great Silk Road, ancient Tashkent served as a significant hub for merchants from various countries.

Urbanization in the Tashkent oasis gradually accelerated. In addition to being a trade center, the city also became a cultural and intellectual hub, with an increasing number of educated citizens, indicating the rise of an urban culture. The transformation of Shoshtepa from a rural village into an urban settlement also supports this observation.

A study of historical sources related to Shoshtepa reveals that urban culture in the Tashkent region likely began in this very period — making its age no less than 2,300 years.

Science and trade continued to expand in Tashkent. The city's markets remained vibrant, including Registan, Chorsu, and Kappon (grain market), situated between Eski Juva, Chorsu, and the Kukeldash madrasa. While goods produced in local khanates were sold at Chorsu and Kappon, Registan market offered both locally made and imported artisan goods from India, Afghanistan, Iran, Kashgar, China, and Russia.

Trade caravans departed from Tashkent and crossed the steppes to reach cities in Siberia, Kashgar, China, India, Afghanistan, and Iran. To support internal and external trade, the Tashkent state minted its own coins inscribed with "Muhammad Yunuskhoja Umariy," often bearing images of falcons or tigers — asserting its independent economic and foreign policy.

Today, Tashkent's foreign trade turnover (FTT) remains a key contributor to the country's gross domestic product. For the period of January to March 2023, Tashkent's foreign trade volume totaled USD 5,830.2 million, of which exports amounted to USD 1,064.8 million and imports to USD 4,765.4 million.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, scientific research has shown that ancient Tashkent's favorable climate and geography made it an ideal location for trade. Alongside the rise of commerce, the city's population also became increasingly educated, contributing to urban expansion.

Tashkent has a 2,000-year-old history of foreign trade, and the process of urbanization has steadily intensified over time, as supported by numerous academic sources. Today, Tashkent is not only the capital of Uzbekistan but also one of the leading industrial cities in Central Asia. A significant portion of the country's foreign trade turnover is concentrated in Tashkent.

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