

## SOURCE STUDIES OF CENTRAL ASIA – CHINA RELATIONS (16TH – 21ST CENTURIES)

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A B S T R A C T	K E Y W O R D S
<p>The uniqueness of the historical past of the Central Asian region, the history of relations between the peoples of Central Asia and China, as well as the significance of the processes taking place here for world history, increase the interest of researchers in them. This article analyzes sources related to relations between China and Central Asia.</p>	<p>Central Asia and China, historical analysis, economic and social relations, topography of the territories, the level of research of sources.</p>

### Introduction

For thousands of years, the region has been a zone of contact between the settled peoples of the south and the nomads of the north. Many state formations have emerged on its vast territory. Central Asia can be called the cradle of many modern peoples who later settled in the vast expanses of Eurasia. Busy diplomatic, trade and migration routes connecting different countries and peoples passed through the lands of Central Asia. The First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, emphasizes that “the Great Silk Road passed through the territory of today's Uzbekistan - the lifeblood of international relations: economic exchange, the movement of crafts, science and art” and “it is necessary to restore the historical artery of the life of the Turanian peoples - the Great Silk Road, along which caravans always traveled towards each other.” China's relations with the peoples of Central Asia date back to ancient times. Indeed, our land has always been a bridge connecting East and West, South and North.

### MAIN PART

Currently, the importance of Central Asia as a connecting link in relations between China, East Asian countries and European countries is growing. China's rapid integration into the world community is increasing its influence on the geopolitical situation in the world, in particular in the Central Asian region. The study of relations between the peoples of China and Central Asia in the late Middle Ages makes it possible to observe and better understand many aspects of modern China's domestic and foreign policy. The success of economic reforms in China, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of fifteen independent states require a new understanding of the history of these relations. Most modern studies study the relations between the PRC and Central Asia in the last ten to fifteen

years, while many aspects related to their centuries-old history of development remain beyond the reach of researchers. A comprehensive study of these relations in historical retrospect shows that the most stable period of Central Asian-Chinese relations coincided with the Ming Empire (1368-1644) in China, and the Timurid Empire in Central Asia.

Consequently, when analyzing modern Uzbek-Chinese relations, and even more so at the present stage, when defining and developing foreign policy strategy vectors, it is necessary to know the history of the development of relations between China and Central Asia. The practice of international relations shows that certain fundamental moments of Central Asian-Chinese relations have been repeated and, perhaps, will be repeated in the future. China has always been distinguished by its traditionalism, and when talking about modern China, we must remember this. In this regard, we can talk about the relevance of this study not only from an academic, but also from a practical and political point of view.

China has a long tradition of studying the history of relations with the countries of Central Asia. In general, everything related to the borders with its close neighbors in China (and the borders with Central Asia, in particular, East Turkestan, have always been one of the most important) was carefully recorded and included in dynastic chronicles, thereby acquiring the status of a historical document. Chinese historical works, official and unofficial chronicles and encyclopedias, as well as geographical descriptions, have always contained information about neighboring peoples and countries.

In this regard, the systematization of the accumulated experience allows us to form our attitude to the issues raised in the work, to highlight unused opportunities and to confirm the significance of information from Chinese written sources for the history of Uzbekistan, the study of which allows us to complete the general picture of historical events in Central Asia during the period under study. Materials from Chinese written sources are also of great importance in the study of the ethnic history of the peoples of the Central Asian region. In Chinese written sources, special attention is paid to the settlement of peoples and individual tribes at a certain time, the direction of their movement not only within a certain territory, but also beyond its borders, and toponyms and ethnonyms, often preserved only in Chinese transcription, are carefully analyzed.

Geographical information found in the historical works of ancient Chinese authors is undoubtedly valuable, since they allow not only to draw a map of the studied territory, but also to obtain initial data for clarifying the relations of peoples and tribes and determining their ethnicity. Among other things, they provide statistical data, economic data, information about the customs and traditions of peoples. The above determines the scientific, theoretical and practical relevance of the topic under study.

The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On improving the activities of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan" considered numerous Chinese written sources covering the historical situation in the regions of Central Asia and China in the 16th-21st centuries. In addition, materials on the history of the Great Silk Road and trade-ambassadorial relations between the peoples of Central Asia and China were attracted and studied from Chinese sources, and testimonies of Chinese diplomats and travelers on the historical geography of the Central Asian states, the ethnic history of the peoples of Central Asia, and other issues were presented. The introduction into scientific circulation of little-known materials, often inaccessible to local researchers, and a critical analysis of existing publications on this topic allow us to take a fresh look at many issues of relations between the peoples of China and Central Asia in the late Middle Ages. Based on new modern realities, the task of analyzing the research of our and foreign scholars devoted to the history of the people, from ancient times to the present day, is gaining particular importance. The

importance of conducting source and historical research is associated with the need to search for new information on the history of the peoples of Central Asia and clarify a number of data. The relevance and necessity of the problem are also determined by the requirements of the modern era, where "The main task is scientific objectivity and impartiality of historical analysis." The radical change in world reality at the end of the twentieth century, the formation of a new system of international relations, necessitates a comprehensive study of the history of our Central Asian region in order to determine the prospects for the development of relations with various countries, which also determines the relevance, scientific and practical significance of this study.

In Chinese historiography, relations with neighboring peoples occupy an important place in the late Middle Ages. The author of the study studied all the available materials of Chinese researchers on the history of relations between China and Central Asia. First of all, these are the collected works of Chinese historians studying various aspects of the political and cultural life of the peoples of East Turkestan. The scientific conclusions presented in the monographic study of the famous Chinese historian Su Beihai, whose object was the historical geography of the Central Asian region, were of great help in understanding the topography of the studied territories. Among other Chinese authors, it is worth noting Ma Shoujiang, He Yan, Wen Yin, etc., whose works consider certain aspects of relations between China and the peoples of Central Asia.

It should be noted that the above-mentioned studies of Chinese authors are characterized by a generally recognized bias in Chinese historiography, especially manifested in the issues of the conquest of East Turkestan (as Chinese historians write - the unification of lands). Nevertheless, all works without exception are of certain interest, because they contain excerpts from many Chinese sources that are not available to us, and they introduce us to the research of the Chinese school of historiography.

As A.D. Voskresensky noted, the study of the history of the development of relations with China in Russia was carried out in the 70s of the 20th century, when an active and stable scientific research school emerged. However, it is worth noting that the research of the Soviet period was to some extent tendentious, which was associated with the political and ideological situation. Among the fundamental studies of Russian authors, we note the work of O.V. Zotov, devoted to the study of interstate relations between China and the oases of East Turkestan. The conclusions and generalizations presented in the works of A.A. Bokshchanina are of great interest. The first geographical description of East Turkestan was given by Russian researchers and travelers of the 20th century G.G. Przhevalsky, G.E. Grum-Grzhimailo, V.A. Obruchev, and others. The Russian orientalist N.Ya. Bichurin was the first to cite information from Chinese sources on the history of Central Asia in his works.

In the work of K.Sh.Khafizova "Chinese Diplomacy in Central Asia (XIV-XIX centuries)" - shows the formation and development of diplomatic institutions and the influence of various factors of Chinese culture on them. The author examines the interstate relations between China and the Central Asian states in detail, focusing on the Xin period. The issues of relations between China and the Central Asian states have attracted the attention of a number of local oriental historians. The early periods of the history of East Turkestan were the subject of research by M.Kutlugov, who considered the issues of Mongol rule in East Turkestan (XII-XIV centuries). A number of works by O.B. Buriev are devoted to the study of China's relations with Amir Temur and the Timurid empire. His object was trade and embassy relations between China and the Central Asian states.

Many studies by the famous orientalist A.Khojayev are devoted to the later period of the history of East Turkestan (XVII-XX centuries). Despite the fact that the above-mentioned works are

chronologically outside the scope of the period considered in this study, familiarization with them was extremely useful for a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the historical processes taking place in this region, especially since recently A.Khojayevev has significantly expanded the topics and chronological scope of his research, which has aroused due interest among researchers.

If we talk about the Western tradition of sinology, here, first of all, we should dwell on some aspects of the relations between the peoples of China and Central Asia by such researchers as M.Rossabi, J.K.Fairbank, H.Serruys, as well as the developments of a number of other modern Western researchers. Despite the large number of publications studying certain aspects of Central Asian-Chinese relations, there are practically no studies in Russian historiography devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the data of Chinese written sources in the context of studying the history of relations between the peoples of China and Central Asia in the 16th-21st centuries.

The study is based on Chinese sources, the most important of which are the Dynastic Chronicles: “Min shi” (History of the Ming Dynasty), “Min shilu” (Authentic records of the reign of the Ming emperors); Collections of Chinese historical materials: “Xinjiang difang lishi ziliao xuanji” (Selected materials on the history of Xinjiang), “Weiuerzu shilao jianbian” (Excerpts from historical materials on the history of the Uyghurs), “Lidai gezu zhuangji huibian” (Collection of materials on the history of ancient peoples); Personal works, primarily the works of the famous Chinese diplomat and traveler Chen Cheng: “Siyu Xingchenji” (Notes on a trip to the Western countries), “Siyu Fanguozhi” (Description of the countries of the Western region), etc. The following main tasks should be carried out in the implementation of this research work:

1. Describe the main Chinese written sources and historical literature on the history of relations between the peoples of Central Asia and China in the 16th-21st centuries;
2. Identify the main foreign policy and economic aspects of relations between the peoples of China and Central Asia;
3. Study of materials from Chinese sources about the missions of Chinese travelers in Central Asia;
4. Study of the relationship between the oases of East Turkestan - Kumul and Turfan, which were considered the gateway to Central Asia;
5. Identification and study of information from primary Chinese sources about the development of trade routes in Central Asia;
6. Introduction into scientific circulation of information from Chinese written sources on the historical geography of Central Asia from the history of the 16th-21st centuries.

Based on factual materials from Chinese written sources and their critical analysis, the study is an attempt not only to recreate an objective historical picture of the past of the Central Asian region, but also to introduce into scientific circulation many previously unknown and little-studied materials from Chinese written sources. The study is the first special study on the relations between the peoples of Central Asia and China in the 16th-21st centuries. The scientific novelty of the scientific research work is as follows:

1. The internal and external political aspects of the relations between the peoples of China and Central Asia in the 16th-21st centuries were comprehensively studied;
2. The most important problems of the economic aspects of relations between China and its neighbors were studied;

3. Along with modern research conducted by Chinese historical scholars, the oases of East Turkestan in the late Middle Ages were identified by Chinese historians on the example of the Kumul and Turfan oases;
4. Information on the historical geography of the Central Asian khanate period from the works of Chen Cheng and other Chinese written sources was introduced into scientific circulation;
5. Little-known information from Chinese sources on trade and embassy relations between the Central Asian states and China during the period under study was studied and scientific explanations were given;
6. Materials from Chinese sources on trade routes in Central Asia during the period under study were identified and studied;
7. New information from Chinese historical sources on the topic of the study was comprehensively studied and introduced into scientific circulation.

## CONCLUSION

The study expands the source base of Sinology in Uzbekistan. The results of the research work can serve as material for further studies on the history of China's foreign policy in Central Asia, as well as source studies and historiographical studies on the history of relations between Central Asia and China. The principles and conclusions set out in the master's thesis can be useful for historians, political scientists, teachers and students of higher education institutions, everyone involved in and interested in the history of international relations in Central Asia and the history of the Great Silk Road. In pedagogical practice, research materials can be used in teaching basic and specialized courses on the history of China and Central Asia in the 16th-21st centuries. In the process of working on the dissertation, a wide range of historical materials and documents related to the source study of the history of Central Asian-Chinese relations in the 16th-21st centuries were used in the research work. The main source of the research is the works and diaries of Chinese historians and travelers. The scientific literature is also based on foreign sources, as well as the fact that the main results on the topic of the dissertation have been published in national and foreign scientific journals and conferences.

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