

The effect of coins on the silk road

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A Major Route of Trade

An ancient network of trade routes, the Silk Road promoted an exchange of goods and ideas between China and the West. The Silk Road was opened during the Han dynasty and remained a major route of trade for more than one thousand years. The eastern and western parts of the Silk Road presented many dangers and hardships for those who traveled along it. To make a profit from trade, goods had to be valuable and easy to carry. Silk and ornaments traveled from China to Rome, India, and central Asia. Gold, horses, cotton, and spices traveled back to China.

Unified Currency

Coins were a large part of the silk road in many ways, one of the more inventive and innovative ways that coins had affected the silk road is it allowed people to trade their goods to far away regions without having to leave their town. They would sell the product they had for a unified currency that had a set exchange rate for each of the different currency's and allowed for fair trading across many different civilizations without a clash of numbers and extra hassle. The exchange of the coins allowed for people to realize the value of new items and to see how their items were valued in other areas and were able to make decisions on what to make more of and what to make less of because of the basics of supply and demand.

Even though coins were a very large part of the Silk Road it was not always used, when there was a lot of controversy over coins value or they just didn't want to use coins they would just use goods that had a universal value and

were in demand in their country, they would just be exchanged instead of the use of coins.

Two Coins

The two major coins found on the Silk Road were the silver Drachm from the Sasanian Empire (Neo-Persia) and the Gold Solidus of the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Rome). Because they were both made of precious metals, they were ideal for international trade and even held their value when brought outside of the country of origin. Both of these coins have been found as far east as China in the northern part of the country. It's unclear whether these coins were used as an official currency in China but they do know that they were used by peasants and used to adorn clothes.

The Goods Exchanged

One obvious effect of trade along the Silk Road was more goods were available in more places. Silk, owing to its soft texture and appealing shimmer, became so hotly desired that it was used as currency in central Asia. However, the process of raising silkworms and creating fabric from their cocoons remained a Chinese secret through the 6th century C. E. The fact that China remained the only source of silk meant that trade goods continued to travel across Asia. Other popular goods that were used in the Silk Road trade were spices from the East Indies, Glass Beads from Rome, Silk, Ginger and Porcelain from China.

One of the "side routes" on the Silk Road was called the Spice Routes and it was a part of the silk road that was famous for carrying large amounts of spices from Asia and India to the Americas and Europe. The Spice Routes are

the vast web of trading networks that connect the Far East with the Mediterranean, covering more than 15, 000 kilometers of land and sea travel. Traders bought and sold goods from port to port, and some of the most valuable and desirable on the market were spices, emanating originally from Indonesia, southern China, India, Sri Lanka, and in particular, the Spice Islands in the Pacific Ocean, and on demand throughout Asia and Europe.

Many goods were exchanged along the Silk Road, including both silk from China and glassware from Rome. In addition to new products, ideas and knowledge were exchanged. In this way, trade brought cultural changes to both East and West. One of the most important examples of cultural diffusion was the introduction of Buddhism to China.

The Dangers

The Eastern Silk Road connected the capital of China to Kashgar. Travelers formed camel caravans for protection from bandits and the harsh conditions of desert travel. From Kashgar, the Western Silk Road crossed mountains and a desert on its way to Mediterranean ports like Antioch. Travelers faced high, slippery mountain trails and dangerous desert wildlife, such as tigers and lions.

Conclusion

The Silk Road was a massive trade route that had an enormous impact on the western world, it allowed silk to be enjoyed by millions of different people, for many people to try new spices and create new foods, it even helped created new technologies through the trade of ideas and information through the Silk Road also. While it isn't used the same way today that it was

in 1700 B. C., but I still feel that it is a very large part of history and that the Silk Road could not have happened without a stable currency of gold and silver coins.

Citations

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