

# The importance of Silk Road in the Economy of Badakhshan People

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## Abstract

The present paper evaluates the process of this question: What role has the failure and falling from the prosperity of the Silk Road played in the political and economic situation of Badakhshan? To this end, the importance of the Silk Road process has been addressed. This is a question that plays a big role in the anomalies of the people of Badakhshan and the conduction of its political, economic, and social developments. The primary trade statistics in Badakhshan are analyzed by P. B. Lord, in the first half of the 19th century, the most important of which was the strategic plan on the importance of Silk Road. Silk Road has been used by merchants since ancient times and was a good source of income for the people of Badakhshan. Along with describing the importance of silk trade; national and civic affairs, historical position, economic conditions, cultural features, and issues like the first road of Mica Stone Root and Graphite Stone, Wick Stone, construction of buildings, and transportation are also included. Trading and transportations taking place on both sides of the Silk Road, both sides of the Amu and Kokcha rivers, all through the Pamir and Khan mountain ranges, along with a valuable collection of gold and silver vessels in Badakhshan, could be evidence of trade with the region and the world.

**Keywords:** Badakhshan, Silk Road, Economic Trade, Gemstones, and Wakhan

## INTRODUCTION

The Silk Trade Road was a winding economic, communicational, and cultural road in Badakhshan, which was a long route from China through Badakhshan and to the Mediterranean Sea, a well-known commercial and transportation route. It has mediated the exchange of cultures between East and West and paved the way for better economic conditions in Badakhshan.

Today, considering the raised issue of Silk Road and its expansion, the issue has been presented in the form of an initiative in the rise of the civilizations of the time, thus the importance of its route from China to Badakhshan has been identified. In the past, Badakhshan grew up on the Silk Road in the context of the ever-increasing merchants, and became a constant route for merchants and bankers, as it was a well-known route between East and West.

This road was considered the source of wealth and the place of transport of goods, among the towns and villages. Badakhshan has been a vital area of monetary economic participation and trade in goods and precious stones. This land was the reference point for the silk, the passageway for trade caravans, and its importance and role in the civilization and culture of the region has been prominent.

The silk trade, as the most famous, lightest, and most expensive commodity, used to travel east and west along through this road. The first cities, villages, and caravanserais

were located on the side of this road, which passed through the heart of amazing cliffs and deserts, in the foothills such as Broghil, Yuli, Pamir, and Wakhan mountains. It also has made Badakhshan more colorful and has given it special features.

Therefore, on the way to this road, all kinds of goods and precious stones such as Lal, ruby, azure, silver, gold, diamond, quartz, and emerald were available and exposed for trade.

## The term Silk Road

According to the German explorer Frank and Braxton in the 19th century, the name of the Silk Road was first coined by

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the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen, who called the Asian Highway the Silk Road. According to his writings, in addition to the silk trade, along this road, the most important commodity exchange is paper and so it is known as the paper road as well. (This naming as the Silk Road is for the silk being produced in China). Jonathan Bloom also calls the Silk Road as the paper road in his work. It is worth mentioning that the first person who called this road "Silk Road", in his researches was Richthofen, followed by Jean-Pierre Derge and Emil M. "Silk had a common connection with East and West along this road. Through the road, goods such as spices, tea, paper, gemstones, and porcelain were exchanged". According to the two, "Silk has given its name to the whole road, for its luxurious feature, and also played the role of common currency among the nations. The Chinese also paid this silk to their neighbors living in tents as ransom and tribute to provide security and comfort." Pierre Derge also adds "The Silk Road is a new concept, and it was at the end of the 19th century that Ferdinand von and Richthofen used the term silk road without any explanation to describe the trade routes between China and Central Asia and the West. Since then, the Silk Road has been used to visualize a series of trade routes between China and the West." According to Lynn, the term Silk Road was used in the 19th century to refer to the East and West trade networks that passed through Asia and the Indian Ocean. Before that, both desert routes and sea routes were included. Tourists from Islamic countries believe:" The term Silk Road does not imply that silk was the only commodity on the road, but that commodities such as precious stones, spices, and others were traded, and that silk was more important and because of its purely luxurious properties this road is known as the Silk Road." [1].

The Silk Road has been the highway to the economy throughout history, and the way the caravans have passed through has been a major source of revenue for countries and has led to the development of those areas. A study of the general route of the ancient Silk Road shows that Afghanistan, and especially Badakhshan, was one of the main and important pillars of this route.

### Badakhshan location on the Silk Road

Far past, Central Asia was the site of world civilization and culture. Most religions and civilizations were built along the Silk Road. Along the Silk Road, which began on the shores of China along the Pacific Ocean and passed through the soaring mountains of the Himalayas, Tian Shan, Hindu Kush, and Pamir Badakhshan, commodities like silk, spices, and other goods were transported to Europe, so the Europeans could experience the sweet taste of silk. Accordingly, the silk trade was considered to be the most famous, lightest, and most valuable commodity that was transported to the west through this road. The first cities at the beginning of this road in the east were the city of Xi'an and in the city of Anshi, there were two branches, the first of which extended to the north of the Tarim district. The other part was to the southwest and passed through the Taklamakan desert. It extends after the

eastern Pamir, to the last mountainous part of the Pamir of Badakhshan, from which the two rivers Seyhoun and Jeyhun flow. This road passes through the cities of Shan, Khatanga, Yarghand, and Bukhara, and through Kashgar to the mountainous Pamir of Badakhshan. [2].

And even Sogdian merchants contributed to the Silk Road trade. Sogdia covered a large part of the plain between the rivers Jeyhun and Amu Darya and Seyhoun and is one of the provinces whose most important export was the azure stone of Badakhshan which after being traded in the Silk Road was transported from China to the western lands of the Badakhshan Pamir, and instead, the warhorses needed by the Chinese cavalry were transported to China from Fergana, northeast of the Badakhshan Pamir. [3]. This great highway has long been a source of special commercial value through which Asian, Egyptian, and Eastern European countries always traded silk goods from China to India and Europe in transferring Indian building materials to other parts of the world. The Silk Road passed through the city of Chi Chia and west of Yang Shu, and with two major tradelines, it extended through the west, then branched off towards Yarkand, Khatan, and Aksu. Later, in Central Asia, it reached to Badakhshan via Sangyang, and from there it extended to Balkh [4].

The eastern road, Wakhan and Khatan roads (Marco Polo route) passed through Khatl, Badakhshan, Jaryab River, Meng, Sangi Bridge, Vakhshab, Liukand, Hellarud, Arhan, and Halabak crossings. That is why silk pieces are so common in Badakhshan. It is still known for cocooning and silk production. The silk trade went from Badakhshan to the old Balkh, until it entered Herat into Mashhad and spread to Tehran and Turkey. Then the silk was traded, on the Mediterranean coast with their other partners [5].

It is a cultural and ancient province and is famous for the rapid growth of the Amu civilization and the azure stone of Badakhshan in the world. These valuable objects were linked in business exchanges and were even influential in the culture of the people of Badakhshan. [6]. Badakhshan Silk Road has gained fame and glory in the ancient world and has been addressed as the Great Silk Highway, which has formed a transit channel to the world's continents through the Hindu Kush and Great Pamir dynasties. On the other hand, the existence of large mines such as ruby, lapis lazuli (azure stone), mica stone, and Graphite, among other valuable treasures, has given this province its glory. Faizabad is the center of Badakhshan. It is well-known for its famous Silk Road [7].

This is where the author of Hudood al-Alam says: Badakhshan is a city with blessings and a place for merchants. In the words of Istakhri, Badakhshan is the area where there exist towns, villages, and boroughs. This means that in the past, Badakhshan was a small and urban area and was also referred to as a large area. Mr. Siahi Sanion travels to Badakhshan after Bakha (Wakhan) and writes about it:"

Badakhshan is a land of prosperity. It passes in front of every house a water streamlet, which refreshes the whole land. <sup>[8]</sup>

And according to the text (Goda), to beautify the city (Lagosh), they used the import of red agate, copper, silver, gold, azure, and precious woods in Badakhshan. Accordingly, a complete collection of not-so-large residential neighborhoods with palace-like buildings appeared in the estuary of Morghab on both sides of the Amu River. Like the rest of the gold and silver artifacts unearthed from the treasure of Folul, this bowl is torn to pieces. However, this work has been found near the ancient azure stone mine in Badakhshan. <sup>[6]</sup> Undoubtedly, the trade in the Silk Road in Badakhshan was close to the confluence of the Amu and Kokcha rivers and it has played a major role in azure's trade with West Asia. The Amu River formed an important part of ancient Khorasan which joined the inn of the Dayeh Khatoon on the Silk Road in Khwarazm <sup>[9]</sup>.

In recent centuries, the former importance of the old Silk Road has been diminished and, remained intact as in the first case. The communication route of the two Badakhshan provinces was also done through the Panj River which was closed after the division of the Russian-British border in 1895 while many residents on both sides of the Panj River were relatives. After the Russian occupation, the Russian metal attacking bridge built over the Amu Darya River connected two Badakhshans in Afghanistan, and the commuting was done. According to this, Badakhshan was on the way to the Silk Road, through which the warehouses of the eastern and western goods of the world were transported. The value of azure mines and precious stones was very high in transportation, but in recent centuries, for various reasons, its prosperity has been lost. This land is located in a region bordering China and Pakistan from one side and bordering India and Kyrgyzstan from the other side, accessing other newly independent republics. In recent centuries, it has become a limited and semi-enclosed area. Exports and significant revenues have been gathered through azure and gold mines, and opium farming. Due to the difficulty and sometimes the closure of the roads, most of the products are sold on the spot. <sup>[10]</sup>

### Wakhan Road, the first crossroads of merchants

Passengers reached the dry land of the Pamirs after walking a long way through the dry and unproductive area of Tarim. Then they reached the last part of the mountain, which was a land full of rivers and gardens, which some called East Babylon. People did not just stay on the banks of the river. They had built a masterful system of water and roads to bring water to all parts of their cities\_ in several cities in the area, all homes had access to water. Travelers traveled long distances to the Pamir Plateau to reach this pleasant land. Choosing one of these valleys depends on the destination of the caravans and the political situation of the time. The Jeyhun River (now known as the Amu Darya) and the Seyhoun (Sea Route) originate in the Pamirs, winding north and flowing into the Aral River. (In some centuries, it flowed

into the Caspian River) Along the way, thousands of streams joined this river. The land, commonly called West Turkestan or Soviet Turkestan, has been conquered by the Turkish language and culture during the modern era. This land includes parts of the republics of Uzbekistan, Soviet Turkmenistan, and the northern strip of Afghanistan (Badakhshan). (Unlike this region, Tarim, it is called also East Turkestan or Chinese and sometimes Kashgaristan or Sangyang, where is now part of China.) The land is currently in political isolation, with fewer passengers.

This region was one of the largest crossroads in Asia, wherein the Silk Road connected the European -Asian plain in the north to the deserts of India in the south by the main north-south road. A large crossroads was created by the large cities in the valley of the river. The reason for the popularity of these cities was that merchants from all over Asia came here to exchange their goods and thoughts. Silk Road travelers who wanted to take advantage of the lucrative trade with India generally traveled from the Pamir Mountains and from Yarghand or Kashgar to Balkh. In the latter days, other mountain roads were opened, allowing travelers from Qara Qaram or the soaring Hindu Kush to Kashmir and India. Balkh was at the end of India's main highway, which was both a trade and travel route and also a road for attacking (military road). This road stretched from the northwestern borders of India to the plains of Punjab <sup>[11]</sup>.

### Qaraqram an important part of the Silk Road

In ancient times, Afghanistan had a long border with China. Thus, what became known as the Silk Road in the 19th century, was an important part of the ancient routes of land connection between Afghanistan and China that connected each other. This road is a branch of the old Silk Road, the northern branch of which is from Qaraqram between Marv, Bukhara, and Samarkand, and the southern branch passed from Balkh, Taleghan, and Badakhshan to Pamir, reached Kashgar and the road was divided into two branches. One road to the north and another road to the south and at Twain Huang have connected again. Kashgar played an important role in this, <sup>[12]</sup> which in some historical texts, was known as the first city on the border of Dar al-Salam and was considered a trading station between governments <sup>[1]</sup>.

In the past, Mount Boroghil and Mount Yuli (a mountain in northeastern Afghanistan), the Pamir and Wakhan districts of Badakhshan, paved the way for Sangyang China. Merchants and travelers passed through Qaraqram. The Chinese and Central Asian merchant goods came to Andiman Mountain in the north of Chaqmaqin, and from there to Yuli Badakhshan Mountain to Vakhjir Mountain (4850 meters above sea level, on the Pamir border, Vakhn Badakhshan was located in the south of Jahil, the Chaqmaqin Badakhshan which is a snow-covered and difficult-to-pass place), then to the Mount Broglil and Golgotha and from there to Lahore. Lahore was rich in Central Asian trade goods, through the Qaraqram road. Different types of silk fabrics with special qualities and different designs for women's and men's clothing; and

handkerchiefs in the name of these cities were woven and still have their reputation.

In the past, this road was considered a branch of the Silk Road. Also, guesthouses and caravanserais were built on this winding road, which was used for night rest, such as, Dry caravansary, Terminal caravanserais which was located at 70-480 degrees east longitude and 23-36 degrees north latitude which was considered to be one of the most important guesthouses on the way to the Silk Road trade caravans. <sup>[4]</sup> This road, which connected Feyzabad to Qatghan, was separated from the center of Feyzabad and reached the city of Mashhad. Mashhad was the center of Kashm's rule, and it has many villages, gardens, and lush lands that irrigated the Kashm River. Kashm, which is an influential point in the government's territory, is located 10 kilometers from the government. And from there to the area of about 17 km of road between the settlements and farms then after a 17-kilometer journey through the hills, in the vast expanse of the valley, it reaches flatlands called Ruba plain. From there, it reaches Taleghan and extends to Qatghan, reaching Balkh. <sup>[13]</sup>

### Trade and transportation

Badakhshan is a land where musk was traded via this route, through Dalan and Khan to Tibet, China, and northern India. The city of Badakhshan was considered the most important trade route in the southeast and also is reported a place for the merchant exchange on the northeastern route. Animal skins were the most important commercial commodity traded along this road. <sup>[5]</sup> Although the center of all the world's exchanges such as raw silk and Chinese thorn silk, iron and iron ore, the type of red and high-quality silk, cinnamon, multinational drugs, yellow turmeric, paper, musk, thighs, utensils, medicinal plants, sword, otters, livestock, kohlrabi, wooden goods, and fabrics, on the Umm al-Balagheh Silk Road (Balkh), were imported from China <sup>[12]</sup>, Badakhshan's trade was limited to the merchants of Bukhara, who transported azure, gold, Lal, and other jewels and more importantly silk goods from Badakhshan. <sup>[14]</sup> Some Badakhshan merchants were from the Turkish Atranji tribe and others were from Yarkand, who on this side, transported Lal (ruby) and opium (khashkhash), and from the other side, they got and sold white canvas, carpet, felt from Khotan, Yarkand, and Kashghar; and also porcelain. Only Bajuri clan from Peshawar and Chatrar brought English clothes, tea, and other clothes. On this side, it was forbidden to take cash. Cumin and animal skins such as fox skin, fleece, and leopard skin were transferred. After the collapse of Tsarist Russia on the side of the Pardarya, trade, and commerce were banned. <sup>[15]</sup>

Trade and production of precious stones and metals, according to human needs and the demand of commercial markets, were common in several Badakhshan cities such as Kashm, Argo, Baharak, Feyzabad, Jerm, Khash, Raghistan, and Yaftal. Also, the production of azure, Lal (ruby), and other precious stones and fruits was very common. Observing the national games in parts of Badakhshan was very

interesting and spectacular for tourists, business people, and pilgrims, which is considered to be the cultural richness of the heart of Asia.

This commercial trade and the transfer of commercial property from one place to another has led to the development of primitive roads. Sometimes on foot, on horseback or donkey, they moved from one place to another, such as, to the mountains of Vakhjir, Yuli, Khavak, and Anjoman, through the center of Badakhshan. <sup>[4]</sup> Badakhshan relocated their surplus items in the region and later in surroundings and around the region and then to more distant areas. Due to the geographical location of Badakhshan, which was located at the crossroads of civilization at that time, they traded their goods with the land where was located next to the civilizations of China, Bukhara, and India. They were connected to Badakhshan through the trade of commercial property, especially azure, by trade caravans to the east and west. At the same time, Badakhshan was important as a valuable transit point in the trade. Before the sea routes were discovered, the merchandise was transported by caravans by land, which was traded from China to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. This commercial road was later named the Silk Road. Silk fabrics, building materials, and spices were very popular in the ancient Roman and Greek empires. In this regard, large caravans with Western camels were moving between the borders of Kashgar, China, Bukhara, and its connected areas, the cities of Syria, and the ports of the Roman Sea.

Badakhshan was in a position where merchant caravans passed through the land and reached the city of Balkh via Badakhshan, where the southern branch of the Indian caravans and the eastern branch of the Chinese caravans intersected. Indian merchant caravans and the eastern Chinese branch were approaching in the city of Balkh. There, they exchanged their property and belongings. This route continued in Badakhshan through Wakhan towards Yarkand and the other part continued through Ferghana to Kashgar and then to India, and this situation lasted for a long time but changed due to several factors. Foreign trade was controlled by Indian, Iranian, and Central Asian merchants, but it regained its independence and again flourished.

From the mid-19th century to the 20th century, Badakhshan was the largest exporter of raw materials. One of the major export segments was Qaraqol (a kind of sheep) leather, one major item that was distributed to the world markets through the Afghan market. Qaraqol (a kind of sheep) skin production, which has been done since ancient times in the north, especially in Badakhshan, has been famous in the world in terms of its type and quality and has had many customers.

Dried fruits were another item of Badakhshan exports. Other materials such as wool, goat and cow skin, medicinal and oily plants, dried and fresh vegetables, as well as fur were exported to the Indian market.



**Imports:** Industries in Badakhshan have not made much progress, and most of the artifacts needed, such as tent, iron, Sikh Gool (reinforcement used in building constructions), glass for repair, vehicles, sugar, tea, oil, cotton and nylon textiles, electrical appliances, gasoline, petroleum, and spices are imported from foreign countries. Also, imports and transportation of machinery and spare parts have increased by millions of dollars, and with the expansion of transportation, the cost of petroleum products has been overestimated. <sup>[16]</sup>.

### The importance of the azure stone trade in the Silk Road

Badakhshan is a city called Balkhsh, wherein, the Lazar (Lajevar) mine, Yajarq, and pure crystal exist, which is one of the wonders of that province. Fitile stone (Wick stone) is a stone that resembles a plant. Its characteristic is that when the oil is rubbed on it and set on fire after the lamp oil runs out, the characteristic of that stone does not change at all. Chandelier stone is made by this stone, and if it gets dirty, its dirt will be cleaned after setting it on fire. Mr. Bashari states: If the stone is placed in a dark house at night, it will light the house. <sup>[17]</sup>. There are shreds of evidence that show that 5,500 years before the Silk Road, the azure of Badakhshan was traded through the old roads to the west and east. The discovery of lapis lazuli (azure) from the tomb of Salaleh Ur in between Mesopotamia, Kashan, and Tutankhamun dates back to the time of the pharaohs, i.e. the periods of 3500 and 1400 BC. The historical routes of the Oxus and Andes seas were older than the Silk Road. <sup>[12]</sup>.

The azure stone of Badakhshan with its traces in the Folul Hill in northern Afghanistan began years before the silk trade. This trade flourished through the azure mines of Badakhshan and Qala, on riverbeds, and was exported to Western cities via Iran and Mesopotamia. With the advancement of agriculture and ruralism in Afghanistan, people eventually developed and used irrigation methods that allowed them to cultivate agricultural products in the northern deserts of Afghanistan, later known to the West as the Bakhtar. They built houses with high endurance against the enemies. The culture of the people of these areas is similar to that of their neighboring civilizations in some respects, including the presence of handicrafts, the existence of a superior social class, and public religious ceremonies. In 1972 and 1973, Murtiso Tuzi and Raouf Wardak published an article detailing the explorations of the Folul Hill treasure and recounted the story of the discovery of the treasure of Folul. The remains of jewelry workshop in Mundigag and Burnt City show the importance of the azure industry. The source is Badakhshan stone mines in northeastern Afghanistan. The blue stone of Afghanistan has been too popular in Mesopotamia during the third millennium BC. Azure's mines are located less than two hundred kilometers from Folul Hill. The existence of this valuable collection of gold and silver utensils in Folul could be evidence of trade with the West Asian region, which was in the early stages of azure's trade. <sup>[6]</sup>.

This trade was possible after leaving Little Pamir to the west, where the road connects to the upper river estuary. Arriving in the northern part of Afghanistan, one can reach Balkh via Feyzabad and Kunduz, where Chinese traveler Shawan Zang, like Marco Polo, stayed for a while. Legendary Marco Polo tells us that, in the city, people are constantly talking about Balkh, the route can be continued to Marv or Mashhad and the southern part of the Caspian Sea. In the northeastern part of the royal city, on the edge of a mountain, there is a standing stone statue of the Buddha. Its height reaches one hundred and forty to one hundred and fifty feet. Its golden and azure color dazzles the eye, and its precious ornaments shine with glory and splendor <sup>[18]</sup>. These beautiful natural landscapes of Lal, ruby, and azure have been famous since ancient times and even the oldest azure that archaeologists have identified from the Egyptian pharaonic period as a result of excavations of ancient artifacts there has been attributed to the azure mines of Badakhshan <sup>[19]</sup>. Precious stones, such as azure, were transported from the Wakhan Badakhshan Road to Sumer, the Egyptian Mesopotamia. Also, turquoise, Dope, ruby, soap, silver, and some spices indicate the periods of being exported. Some merchants were transferring the silk goods exchanged to Balkh. <sup>[20]</sup>.

### Types of precious stones and their role in the economy of the people of Badakhshan

Badakhshan has been famous since ancient times for its jewelry, especially the ruby, and the azure mine. According to Moqaddasi, in addition to ruby and azure, there is also the Puz Heran stone in that state. The Arabs call it the Hajarolfitila (Wick stone), where it is found, and it is an incombustible material used to light the lamp. This stone was a type of phosphor stone. According to Qazvini, in Badakhshan, in addition to this jewel, there are all kinds of stones and Lal, which are like rubies. These precious stones are part of the trade of the people of Badakhshan. <sup>[21]</sup>

In Badakhshan, there are mines of precious and semi-precious stones, such as rubies, diamonds, sulfur, lead, and quartz. These famous and precious stones of the country have been extracted for centuries and a part of Badakhshan's exports which have played a prominent role in the economy of the people of Badakhshan. Badakhshan has been very rich in mines. In particular, there are salt, ruby, pure crystals, coal, gold, Momiyat (Dope), Borooj, Zarj, Cinnabar, azure, sulfur, and lead, whose trade is limited to the government and determines the economy of the people of Badakhshan. <sup>[15]</sup>. The people of Badakhshan get some part of their economy from these precious stones. These stones are very beautiful and valuable which are hidden in the rocky cliffs and difficult to reach. As the silver streaks are being excavated, the rocks should be dug. To find them, large underground tunnels should be dug deep into the mountains. <sup>[5]</sup>

These jewels were transported by messengers, kings, and princes and sent as gifts, ransoms, or exchange of gold and silver to preserve their true value. If allowed to be mined and exported to other parts of the world, the value and price of

these stones will be reduced in a short time. Therefore, they have imposed a penalty to ban and prevent the extraction of stones without permission. <sup>[22]</sup>

**Azure (Lapis Lazuli):** Azure, Lal, emerald, turquoise have a special reputation in Badakhshan and their main natural reservoirs are 300 km long and 47 km wide in Yamgan. Lal mine is located in Sarghilan city. <sup>[23]</sup> These gemstones have been mined in Badakhshan for about 4,000 to 5,000 years since ancient times and have the best quality in the world. During the time of Pre-Cambrian, it was located in the Sarsang area of the city of Karan and Manjan, among the towering mountains of Hindu Kush, and its extraction began simply from 1934 onwards. Marco Polo and some tourists have mentioned to the azure of Badakhshan in their works.

They named Badakhshan azure with different colors of blue, green, and indigo which is located on the eastern side of the Kokcha Sea and in the Sarsang, at an altitude of 300 to 7500 meters above sea level, which are among the largest mines of azure in the world. In 1972, the existence of more than 30 azure reserves in northeastern Afghanistan was studied. The azure stone of Badakhshan is considered to be of five types in terms of the petrology and commercial market, which are first, second, third, fourth, and fifth. <sup>[24]</sup> They are famous in the world in terms of their better kind. The most important mine is located at the Sarsang of Badakhshan. At a distance of approximately 12 km from the mine, there are five other azure reserves, estimated at 1,300 tons. Its height reaches 3500 meters. <sup>[16]</sup>

**Silver:** It is a pure metal in nature that is used in the photography, electric, electronics, mirroring, and medical industry. In the past also it was used for coinage. The most important silver mines are in Badakhshan. <sup>[25]</sup>

**Gold Mine:** Gold mines are located in the mountainous city of Raghistan in Badakhshan. There are four types of mines, including quartz and gold. Each ton of minerals contains between 1 to 85 grams of gold. The other major gold mine is located in the northeast of the Yaftal district of Badakhshan province. Among the rocks and sandstones on the bed of the Kokcheh Sea, from the Darwaz area to Zal Castle and the valleys of Ragh, Dowing, 40 mines can be found. Some people get sedimentary (marine) gold from this riverbed with basic methods and simple tools. <sup>[24]</sup> Gold mining has long been popular in Afghanistan. Gold reserves have expanded from Badakhshan to Kandahar, but in general, the number of its reserves reaches six mines, the most important one of which is located in Yaftal Badakhshan. Other gold reserves are found in sedimentary buildings in the Badakhshan River basin. <sup>[16]</sup> Binoni's waiter, Nikolai Miner, writes that he went to Balkh and Badakhshan with a commercial caravan and after a while, he went to Moscow. At the Moscow Foreign Ministry, he shared what he had seen and heard during his visit to Badakhshan. He writes: "It is a twelve-day journey from Bukhara to Balkh with a camel and eight days from Balkh to Badakhshan". Both cities are free and do not depend

on anyone. In these two cities, Russian and Bukhara goods are sold. These goods are exchanged for sand and gold. Gold is obtained from the Jeyhun River in Badakhshan. The proper time for obtaining gold is when the river is running low in summer. According to Miner, the gold sand is washed in the pot. Then, they let them dry on the skin and shake the skin. The sand then separates from the skin and falls off. The gold stays on the skin and the extra particles that are not separated from the gold, burn while melting. Regarding the types of mines in Badakhshan, Miner said: Although I have not been to Kashgar, Marguilan, or Tashkent, I have heard that gold, silver, musk, and Tanzo Rivand are also produced there. <sup>[14]</sup> The gold mine in Badakhshan had already been discovered in the past. The former Soviet Union had permission from the Afghan government to extract it. Badakhshan is a useful province for the government and the people of Badakhshan. This kind of initial extraction is beneficial and helps their economy. <sup>[26]</sup>

In Badakhshan, the largest mines are in the shelly and flaky lands, which have white, gray, and yellow colors. There are also marble and coal in the province which play a prominent role in people's economics. This circulation of stones annually makes a significant share of commercial markets. Afghanistan's precious stones are worth 400 million dollars a year. The value of gemstones is much higher than in other parts of the industry and mining. This exchange of stones, in particular, can bring a large part of the young and job-seeking manpower of Badakhshan into the field of employment to move the rusted wheels of the industry. Of course, some of them are working now <sup>[24]</sup>.

### The role of tourism in the benefits of the Silk Road

Tourism was adopted in 1980 as one of the world's leading industries and is one of the largest sources of wealth in the country. Tourism plays a good role in political relations and international understanding. This is why the term "peace passport is associated with tourism". Tourism plays a positive role in the balance payments of developing countries. Most of the country's revenue comes from tourism. This phenomenon has a long history. Groups of Christians, Buddhist, and Muslim pilgrims visit religious sites. This group of pilgrims, in terms of etiquette and customs, wrote more about trade and artifacts that were effective in the development of tourism. The Great Tourism Conference was held in 1963 at the United Nations in Rome. Following this, the International Union of Tourism Officials (IUTO) recognized the official tourism department of IUTO as an internationally specialized and consultative agency. The High Conference on Tourism was held in 1969 in Sofia. Afghanistan and 130 other countries have been recognized as a state tourism organization within the framework of the United Nations. The 1371 meeting was held in Mexico City. Afghanistan was an active member, there. At the 1979 Bangalore Conference in India, Afghanistan was represented as a member of the Commission on Environmental Protection. The purpose of other conference decisions was to

appoint a commission to study the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan.

The WTO has established close ties with UNESCO to develop long-term plans between culture and tourism. Both organizations have launched important, inter-regional cultural projects under the title of the Silk Road. These projects were in favor of the development of cultural tourism. By increasing the awareness of nations about the value of historical, cultural, and artistic heritage, huge profits were made. Tourism in Afghanistan began in 1957. In 1971, some tourists visited Badakhshan. Badakhshan could earn a high interest due to tourism. This interest was gained through dried fruits, oily grains, wool, and Qaraqol (a kind of sheep) skin. The presence of various historical monuments and valuable heritage and beautiful natural buildings along with a pleasant tradition and hospitality promises a bright future to attract and develop tourism. Badakhshan has more tourist attractions which have played a role in the development of the tourism industry. Badakhshan Silk Road, along with caravanserais and watchtowers in the east and west, has played a prominent role in attracting tourists and foreign currency. <sup>[12]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Badakhshan is a land with precious stones, located on the Silk Road, in the Far East, in the neighborhood of China, Transoxiana, and Pakistan. With its extreme cold and long winters, many rivers, deep valleys, narrow passages, scary precipices, over time, it has been the refuge of many tribes and clans. This large province was an ancient road and a large Silk Highway that formed a canal between the Hindu Kush and Great Pamir dynasties to the continents of the world. Badakhshan is a cultural and ancient land that is famous for its commercial exchanges among the inhabitants of different regions. There was also great progress in the flourishing of the large Lal (ruby) and azure mines among other precious stones. Of course, the city is best known for its famous Silk Road. In the past, it was considered a commercial route with the construction of guesthouses, and caravanserais got very famous.

This road counts as the first road of mica and graffiti. The existence of these precious commodities could enable serious economic centers to take shape in the sub-branches of the East and West Silk Roads. As a result, it increased the volume of exchanges and the possibility of accumulating a huge amount of money in this region. The road was influential and the importance of the Silk Road was one of the wonders of the province. This ancient Silk Road has lost its former importance in recent centuries and according to Badakhshan immigrants, it has remained intact. The communication route between the two provinces of Badakhshan, which was carried out by the Panj River, was cut off by the great powers. Then, subsequent riots broke out, and the road has become relatively obsolete.

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