

Study on the Historical Influence of Foreign Exchanges in the Tang Dynasty

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Abstract. As one of the dynasties with the most powerful national strength and wealthy social development in Chinese history, the Tang Dynasty's great and advanced culture drew numerous countries and nations to exchange and exchange. This essay will investigate the goal of international exchanges and their historical impact on the Tang Dynasty. This essay analyses the impact of the tributary system, political reconciliation, and sea trade on foreign exchange in the Tang Dynasty by consulting literature. The development of diplomats from other countries and the Confucian cultural circle in East Asia demonstrated that the Tang Dynasty wielded significant cultural influence in East Asia, bolstering the Tang Dynasty's international standing. The research findings demonstrate that the Tang Dynasty actively engaged in external exchanges, which helped to stabilise the border area and ensure internal stability, promote Tang culture exports outside, and increase the Tang Dynasty's international impact. Tang Dynasty overseas exchanges continue to have a significant impact on the globe today, inspiring the export and transmission of culture, international relations, and commercial and trade exchanges, as well as driving the acceleration and development of the globalisation process.

Keywords: The Tang Dynasty, cultural blending, cultural export, external communication.

1. Introduction

Because of its strong national strength and thriving economy, the Tang Dynasty was a period of great openness to the outside world in Chinese history. Frequent and developed international exchanges had a significant impact on the Tang Dynasty's politics, economy, and culture. This essay will focus on the Tang Dynasty's approach to international communication, which is critical to understanding how the Tang Dynasty conducted foreign communication and the impact it had. This research focuses on the method, purpose, and impact of opening up to the outside world during the Tang Dynasty period. By examining the tributary system, diplomatic marriage, and the Silk Road, this study illustrates that the Tang Dynasty valued foreign exchange and international influence. This article employs literature analysis to read and assess relevant literature and publications. The benefit of this method is that it can effectively assess the various perspectives held by domestic and international researchers on the goal and impact of the Tang Dynasty's active foreign exchanges. Foreign interactions during this period not only enhanced the Tang Dynasty's prosperity and progress, as well as its worldwide standing but also encouraged the exchange and merging of foreign and Chinese cultures. Many countries impacted by Chinese culture gradually promoted and established their own cultures. The Tang Dynasty's foreign policy was deeply open and inclusive, which not only had a profound influence at the time but also had significant implications for how a country should deal with foreign ties in future generations. The final purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the Tang Dynasty's foreign exchanges continue to have significant reference value in today's globe and will provide historical context for modern international interactions.

2. Background

In the foreign communication system of the Tang Dynasty and even the whole of ancient China, the tribute system occupies an important core position. The tributary system is an old diplomatic system in which China communicated and handled affairs with its neighbors and other Asian countries, while other countries paid tribute to the Chinese emperor, expressing their readiness to

coexist peacefully with China [1]. The tributary system embodies the ancient Chinese foreign policy, the conciliatory policies aimed at restraining other ethnic groups abroad, maintaining stability in the domestic frontier, and cooperating with them for mutual benefit. The tributary system in China dates back to the Xia Dynasty, as recounted in *The Commentary of Zuo*. The tributary system's selective nature dictated which countries would have cultural and economic ties with the Tang and gain its patronage [2].

The tributary system is not the Tang Dynasty's unilateral rule over other countries, but the result of mutual choice and balance between the Tang Dynasty and other countries. Although the vassal kingdoms were forced to pay tribute to the Tang Dynasty and subject to its rule, the Tang Dynasty did not interfere in their internal affairs, ensuring stability along the Tang Dynasty's borders [3]. In 674, when Silla, one of the vassal states of the Tang Dynasty, attacked the Tang Dynasty to unify the Korean Peninsula, the Tang Dynasty responded by removing King Munmu of Silla from his post. As a result, King Wenmu of Silla dispatched an ambassador to the Tang Dynasty to apologize and his official position was restored; he then stopped attacking the Tang Dynasty and opted to submit. Silla's unification of the Korean peninsula was its internal affair, and the Tang did not interfere; however, attacks against Tang forces constituted rebellion and endangered the stability and dignity of Tang borders, prompting sanctions.

3. Political

The Tang Dynasty's foreign connections comprised both military conquests and diplomatic marriages. The Tang Dynasty conducted military actions or strategic cooperation with a variety of ethnic minorities in the region, including the Eastern Turkic, Western Turkic, Tubo, and Uighur peoples. In 659, the Tang Dynasty conquered the Western Turkic empire on the northern frontier, occupied its territory, and established the Beiting protectorate to govern it. To bolster border administration, the Tang Dynasty implemented the policy of Jimi, which stated that border districts were officially under the control of the central government but were administered by local minority leaders. These policies broadened the reach of the Tang Dynasty's jurisdiction in border areas, allowing the central government to harness the strength of nomadic ethnic groups to safeguard border stability, lessen ethnic tensions, and fulfill the goals of stability and assimilation [4].

Maintaining positive ties between the Tang Dynasty and ethnic minorities through diplomatic marriage was an essential aspect of Tang foreign policy. Taking the Tang Dynasty and Tubo exchange as an example, two Tang Dynasty princesses, Princess Wencheng and Princess Jincheng, made peace with Tubo. The Tibetan monarchy was powerful at the period and posed a threat to the Tang Dynasty, so the two princesses married Tubo in 641 and 710 to keep peace between the two communities [5]. After making peace with Tubo, the two princesses not only established and strengthened cordial connections and cultural exchanges between Han and Tibet but also became a symbol of Chinese-Tibetan friendship, which was recognized and commemorated.

4. Geographical Environment

The geographical environment was also one of the major influences in Tang Dynasty international exchanges, influencing cultural dispersion and diffusion. The Tang Dynasty's area was extensive, thus it had a well-developed transportation network, which provided good transportation conditions for trade and commerce, promoting foreign exchange between the Tang Dynasty and other countries. The Tang Dynasty's transportation network was primarily focused on the land Silk Road, which subsequently evolved into the combined growth of the land and sea Silk Roads, eventually becoming dominated by maritime shipping [6]. The Tang Dynasty's overseas trade was extremely developed, with seven international sea routes, and Guangzhou was the first port at the time, with the world's longest international route, and overseas trade was very prosperous [6]. At the same time, the Tang Dynasty established the Bureau for Foreign Shipping and other government institutions to oversee

maritime trade, significantly improving the international trade system and attracting numerous countries to trade with China. Strong official support for global trade aided the high-level dissemination of Tang culture and advanced technologies abroad.

5. Culture and Religion

Communication through culture and religion was also an important way to promote foreign exchanges. The Tang Dynasty possessed a strong national strength and a well-developed cultural and educational system, which drew many foreigners to study in China, including the diplomats and students sent by other countries. The diplomats visited China frequently, carefully learning the culture of the Tang Dynasty in numerous fields, drawing on Tang Dynasty calendars and regulations to learn and use when they returned home. Overseas students who came to the Tang Dynasty were classified into two groups: academic students who specialized in acquiring technology and knowledge, and degree monks who specialized in learning Buddhism in China [6]. Although their learning focuses differed, they all dedicated themselves to learning about Tang culture and then continued and promoted what they had learned in their respective nations upon coming home. Around 663, Sino-Japanese relations underwent a major change due to the war on the Korean Peninsula, when Tang and Silla defeated the allied forces of Japan and Baekje on the Korean Peninsula and triggered internal unrest in the Japanese imperial family. To mend Sino-Japanese relations, the Tang Dynasty sent a mission to Japan to declare its cordial intention to maintain exchanges. Since 630, Japan had dispatched thirteen times of diplomats to the Tang Dynasty. Some students returned home after finishing their studies, but others died overseas due to the lengthy journey [7]. Students who came to China to study were not afraid of the long voyage and witnessed cordial relations between China and Japan, as well as foreign exchanges throughout the Tang Dynasty.

6. Discussion

The Tang Dynasty placed a high value on foreign exchange and aggressively improved and developed it, which is inextricably linked to its several foreign exchange objectives. First and foremost, it was to ensure and solidify national security and border stability, as numerous minority regimes around the Tang Dynasty may constitute a threat to the Tang Dynasty border area. In the early Tang Dynasty, when the nation was not totally stable, the Tang government frequently preferred gentler methods like defense and connections through marriages over violence in the face of the entrance of surrounding nomadic governments [8]. In these approaches, the Tang Dynasty would relieve strain on frontier defenses and avoid most large-scale wars when its armed resources were insufficient. In the process of the gradual rise of the Tang Dynasty, When it had acquired enough military might and resources, it would start an active attack on the surrounding minority regimes, eventually conquering and annexing them. Although the country's economic foundation was relatively weak in the early Tang Dynasty, and the number of domestic residents was small, the Tang Dynasty insisted on military construction to prepare for the subsequent conquest of neighboring regimes and to maintain the Tang Dynasty's dominant position in East Asia [9]. As the Tang Dynasty's national might grew, so did its attacks on neighbouring governments, and attacks on Turkic, Tuyuhun, Koguryo, and other regimes secured the country's stability and border security.

Second, regular foreign exchanges had the potential to increase the Tang Dynasty's international influence. By establishing the tribute system, and advancing science, technology, and culture, the Tang Dynasty was able to raise its profile abroad, which in turn raised its political standing inside Asia and even beyond, and preserved order in East Asia. The Tang Dynasty carried on the values of territorial expansion and global integration which began from the Han Dynasty, and actively engaged in interactions with foreign countries to connect Chinese civilization with the rest of the globe [10]. The Sui Dynasty, which preceded the Tang Dynasty, had brief prosperity, which served as a stark warning to Tang monarchs. As a result, Emperor Taizong valued the concept of people-centred

governance, was adept at listening to ministers' suggestions, and fostered an open political environment. The air of openness was reflected not only in politics and economy but also in ethnic policy; the Tang Dynasty adhered to the ruling idea of multi-ethnic integration and opposed the exclusion of foreign nationalities, promoting trade and cultural integration between the Tang Dynasty and various nationalities and countries [6]. The open and inclusive foreign policy of the Tang Dynasty enabled China to have an environment and attitude that was in line with the world, which had greatly enhanced China's influence in the world.

Numerous political and cultural influences were brought forth by the Tang Dynasty's growing global reach. Due to Taizong's military conquest of the surrounding minority regimes, Taizong and even the Tang Dynasty established a strong deterrent in minority areas. During the period, ethnic minorities such as Turks and Uighurs in the north, Tubo in the southwest, and vassal kingdoms like as Japan and Korea in the east referred to Emperor Taizong and other subsequent Tang emperors as 'Heavenly Khagan' to demonstrate their respect and submission to him and the Tang Dynasty [10]. Due to the open and tolerant atmosphere of the Tang Dynasty, which was different from the traditional barbarian and Han ideas held in the previous dynasties, the Tang Dynasty adopted the attitude of inclusivity in handling ethnic relations affairs, and became the common monarch of several ethnic minority regimes in the Western regions and northern Xinjiang. The manner and mindset of Taizong in resolving interethnic conflicts became the model for government. The Hu and Yi people, who were previously marginalized by the Han Chinese, were granted their own standing inside the Chinese political structure as a result of this tolerant approach [11]. Outsiders are allowed to trade in China and even have prominent roles in the financial industry. The Tang Dynasty's expanding influence was evident in a variety of spheres, including politics, the economy, and culture, all of which emphasized the dynasty's boundless power and open atmosphere.

Throughout the Tang Dynasty, overseas exchanges were also crucial to the export of culture. The tribute system gained prominence in culture when the Tang Dynasty started using the Maritime Silk Road as the primary route for international trade [11]. As international trade grew, China's cultural influence spread to neighbouring countries including Korea and Japan, which eventually adopted Confucianism and Chinese customs, as well as adopted writing, calendars, rules, and regulations from the Tang Dynasty. Japan dispatched Tang envoys to China primarily to study Chinese laws, norms, and regulations so that the students might apply what they had learned back home and advance Japanese politics and culture. Numerous East Asian nations conducted thorough analyses of the Tang Dynasty's political structure, establishing and enhancing a centralised system, reinforcing the central government's authority over the regions it governed, and consolidating the rulers' supreme authority [6]. The formation of the East Asian Confucian cultural circle, with the Tang Dynasty as its centre, can be attributed to these students' research trips to China. Based on Chinese Confucianism, these nations were greatly impacted by Confucian culture, which permeated everything from governmental and educational structures to moral values. They also contributed significantly to the outward spread of Tang culture and the development of the perception of these nations as powerful nations.

Foreign exchanges during the Tang Dynasty can be seen as an example of early globalisation because the Tang Dynasty was interacting with many countries at multiple levels of economy, culture, and religion. As a result, the Tang Dynasty's overseas exchanges continue to be essential references for modern international exchanges. The Tang Dynasty's international contacts were notable for their inclusivity, as they absorbed and accepted cultures from a wide range of places, including religions such as Buddhism and Nestorianism. In dealing with new foreign cultures, the Tang Dynasty absorbed and infused them with Chinese features, radiating the new vitality of Chinese culture [12]. This demonstrates that China should approach foreign cultures with an open mind and an inclusive mentality, bringing forth the new from the old and continuing to carry forth the fine traditional culture in the context of globalisation. Second, the Tang Dynasty established a trans-international business network via the land and sea Silk Road, as well as trade interactions with Central Asia, West Asia, and other countries, which aided the Tang Dynasty's development and international trade. China has started the Belt and Road plan, which aims to eliminate trade barriers by connecting Europe, Central

Asia, and East Asia following the paths of the historic sea and land Silk Roads. The Belt and Road Initiative increases the possibility for international cooperation, win-win outcomes, and global economic development in the framework of globalization [13]. As a result, the Tang Dynasty's international contacts were not only significant at the time, but can now serve as a source of inspiration for cultural exchanges, economic and commercial cooperation, and other aspects in today's globalized world.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research finds that foreign exchange strengthened domestic border security advanced the Tang Dynasty's international position, and played a critical role in the Tang Dynasty's social development. The Tang Dynasty assimilated the lessons of the previous short-lived dynasty which the Sui Dynasty, prioritised people's livelihoods, and fostered an open and inclusive political environment that was reflected throughout society. Under the influence of this open atmosphere, the Tang Dynasty adopted a more inclusive approach to foreign affairs, assimilating various cultures and facilitating communication with other nations and countries. The Tang Dynasty took offerings from foreign countries under the tributary system, and the Tang emperor was referred to as the "Heavenly Khan" by them, emphasizing the Tang Dynasty's superb worldwide position. The development of the land and sea Silk Roads, as well as the ensuing success of sea trade, provided physical circumstances for commercial and cultural connection between the East and West, while also promoting the Tang Dynasty's economic growth. Many countries sent envoys and students to the Tang Dynasty to study laws, regulations, and Buddhism. Returning to their motherland, they used what they had learned to promote domestic social development. They gradually formed an East Asian Confucian cultural circle with the Tang Dynasty at its core, which aided the external dissemination of Tang culture and soft power. Tang Dynasty overseas exchanges continue to have a significant impact on the globe today, inspiring the export and transmission of culture, international relations, and commercial and trade exchanges, as well as driving the acceleration and development of the globalisation process. The study of the history of foreign exchanges in the Tang Dynasty contributes to a better understanding of the Tang Dynasty's political economy and cultural communication, as well as having vital reference relevance in today's globalisation.

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