

The Liao Dynasty's Management of Grassland Silk Road and the Spread of Chinese and Western Culture

Xu Xue¹

¹ School of Communication, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 999077, China

ABSTRACT

The Grassland Silk Road usually refers to the trade corridor extending from China through the Mobei and Mongolian Grassland, crossing westward the Central Asian grasslands, and then extending to South Asia, West Asia, Europe and North Africa; the Road is an important channel for cultural exchanges between China and the West. The cultural exchange between northern China and the Eurasian Grassland Silk Road initiated as early as the Shang Dynasty, of which the northern Xinjiang region was an important channel. The early Hongshan culture of the Liao Dynasty laid a long history of the Grassland Silk Road. Liao enjoyed a history of more than 200 years. Yelü Dashi founded the Western Liao Empire after his westward expedition to Central Asia; the empire expanded and operated the grassland silk road, and accelerated the spread of eastern and western cultures, including paper industry and the use of advanced ironware etc.. While maintaining its Nomad culture, the Western Liao regime also brought the Confucianism, language, rules and regulations, and production methods to Central Asia, promoting the integration of ethnic diversity. The development experience of nearly 90 years became an important period for the economic and cultural development of the Grassland Silk Road, which had a profound impact on the culture of Central Asia.

Keywords: *Liao Dynasty, Western Liao, Grassland, Silk Road, Eastern and Western cultural transmission and integration.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Grassland Silk Road usually refers to the trade corridor extending through the mainland of China, through the Mobei and Mongolian grassland and the Central Asian grassland, and then to South Asia, West Asia, Europe and North Africa. Originated earlier than the Oasis Silk Road, the Grassland Silk Road is an important part of the Silk Road, and has countless ties with the Oasis Silk Road. Both archaeological excavations and the remains of early human rock paintings along the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, and Xinjiang reveal unique cultural information of the grassland Silk Road. The Grassland Silk Road has played an important role in history, whose formation, development and prosperity exhibit the glory of the Silk Road in a specific period. The cultural exchange between northern China and the Eurasian grasslands existed as early as the Shang

Dynasty, and the northern Xinjiang region, north of the Tianshan Mountains in the province was a major channel for cultural exchange between China and the West." [1] About 7000 years before the coming of the name of 'the Silk Road', commodity trade has been carried out between oasis cities surrounding the Central Asian desert and China." [2] The Khitan nationality is an ancient and powerful nationality active in the grasslands of northern China. After the establishment in the 10th century, the Khitan (Liao) State expanded and operated the grassland silk road by virtue of the grassland region, including the establishment of the Western Liao Dynasty for the sake of the management of the Grassland Silk Road.

2. GRASSLAND SILK ROAD

The trend of the Grassland Silk Road is from Chang'an and Luoyang to the north, through

Datong in Shanxi, or northern Shaanxi, or Ningxia to Inner Mongolia, and then through the desert to the Mongolian Plateau. The early Cypriots had been nomadized in Dunhuang. Later Yueshi forced them to move westward along Tianshan Mountain and scattered on the grasslands from Altai to the southeast of Lake Balkhash. Gypsies had achievements by tracing back to the early Silk Road trade. They migrated from the northwest of Central Asia to the coast of the Black Sea. They served as ancient silk traders between China and Polis before BC. By their nomadic way, the grassland is a long and narrow area from the west foot of the Greater Khingan Mountains to Eastern Europe which often serves as a channel for Nomad to migrate westward.

The Grassland Silk Road starts from the sea in the east and crosses the Eurasian grasslands. Its criss crossing roads reach the Central Plains in the south and Mongolia and Northwest Asia in the north. From the Mongolian Plateau to the west, you can cross three major channels. One is to go northwest to reach the Belga Lake (known as Hanhai in ancient times), the other is to go west to enter Eastern Europe from Siberia, another is to cross Kangai Mountains westward from the Mongolian grassland Tuul River and Orkhon River, travel westward along the Altar Mountain, turn southward to enter the grassland north of Tianshan Mountain in Xinjiang, and then go along the northern foot of Tianshan Mountain to the Ili River Valley. Afterwards, it travels westward into Central Asia and directly reaches the northern shore of the Black Sea. The northern grassland area is dominated by animal husbandry. Grain, textiles, handicrafts, etc. need to be exchanged with the Central Plains. The mutual economic needs and trade relations between the Central Plains and grasslands are the basis for the formation and existence of the Grassland Silk Road. In this sense, the Grassland Silk Road is also called "Fur Road" and "Tea Road". During the Sui and Tang dynasties, it was also called the Uighur Road because it passed through the territory of the Uighurs. It was composed of two branch lines, which are the Great Khan Road and Juyan Road, and connected with the Oasis Silk Road.

The Grassland Silk Road is an ancient passage. The cultural relics related to the Grassland Silk Road were unearthed in the Bazerek Tomb in Wulagan District, Gorno Altai State of the Russian Federation, from the late Spring and Autumn Period to the early Warring States Period, which confirmed the long history of the Grassland Silk Road. 30 years ago, Japanese scholar Xiguzheng

published an article entitled "Archaeology of the Silk Road", which traces back the impact of the ancient culture of the Western Regions located on the Silk Road on Culture of Korean and Japan from an archaeological perspective, and has unearthed Chinese and Western cultural objects such as saddle shaped stone grinding plates, bronze mirrors, coins, seals, murals, gold products, and glass containers in different regions of the Western Regions, Korea, and Japan [3]. Through the comparison of unearthed cultural relics, the glorious mission of cultural exchanges between China and the West undertaken by the Grassland Silk Road in its early period was revealed. The Bazerek cemetery excavated by former Soviet scholars on the banks of the Wulagan River in Altai region of southern Siberia of Russia, unearthed Chinese cultural relics during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, such as phoenix embroidery and bronze mirrors with mountain shaped patterns. At the same time, leather, felt, and wood carvings with Hellenistic artistic styles were also unearthed; TKoreahere are also artifacts from the ancient Achaemenid dynasty of Persia, such as wild animal patterns, winged lion images, etc. [4]. In the 1970s, in the Alagou Cemetery in Tianshan of Xinjiang, phoenix pattern embroidery, chain silk pattern Luo, lacquerware, and other artifacts from the Central China were also unearthed, which have similarities with the cultural relics unearthed from the Bazelek Tomb [5]. The cultural relics excavated by Bazerek have already revealed the commercial information of silk fabrics in the Western Asian and Central China styles during this period. These unearthed cultural relics witnessed the connection between China, western Asia and Europe in the early days of the Grassland Silk Road, and proved that the East West international trade of the Grassland Silk Road through the Mongolian Plateau had begun long before Zhang Qian connected to the Western Regions.

Mr. Su Bingqi believed that the origin of the country can be summarized as the trilogy of the development stage (ancient country, square country and empire) and the three types of development model (primary, secondary and continuous). The formation of civilization in the Central Plains belongs to the "secondary type", and Hongshan culture belongs to the "primary type". In terms of time, the Central Plains civilization is later than the "Northern Primitive Type" in the western Liaoning region. At the same time, this' native type 'has incorporated multiple factors [6]. The Hongshan culture (4000-2500 BC) Yuzhulong in the early

Liao Dynasty laid a long history of the Grassland Silk Road and became the basis for cultural exchanges between China and the West on the Grassland Silk Road in the Han, Tang, Liao, Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties. During the Liao, Jin and Yuan Dynasties, Nomad such as Khitan, Jurchen and Mongolia served as intermediaries, and a large number of commodities such as silk, fur, livestock, lacquerware, tea and rhubarb circulated on the grassland silk road; Western religions such as Manichaeism, Nestorianism, Islam and other religious cultures and scientific and technological cultures have also been introduced into the mainland of China. At the same time, exchanges and integration among nomads are also carried out along the Grassland Silk Road, with abundant trade materials and diversified cultural integration.

3. THE TERRITORY OF LIAO STATE AND THE GRASSLAND SILK ROAD

3.1 The Origins and Disappearances of the Liao Dynasty

In 840 A.D., the Uighur Empire was destroyed by the Jieqasi. After the fall of the Uighur Empire on the grasslands, the Khitan nomads in the upper reaches of the Liao River broke free from the control of their original lords and were able to develop rapidly and become increasingly powerful. The Liao Dynasty was established by the Qidan nationality in History of China. It is said that nine emperors enjoyed the country for 209 years. In 907, the Liao Taizu Abaoji became the leader of the Khitan tribal alliance. In 916, the country was founded and the country was named "Khitan". After the Chanyuan Treaty of the Liao and Song Dynasty, the territory of the Liao Dynasty in its heyday reached Sakhalin in the northeast, Orkhon River and Kherlen River in Mongolia in the north, the Yellow River in the east, Bazhou, Zhuozhou, Hebei, Yanmen Pass in the south, the border with the Northern Song Dynasty, and the Altai Mountains in the west. According to the "History of Liao", the territory of the Liao Dynasty "extends to the sea in the east, to Jinshan in the west, and to Liusha in the west, to the Luqu River in the north, and to Baigou in the south, covering a territory of ten thousand li." [7] It covers ten thousand li from east to west and five thousand li from north to south, occupying a large space on the grassland Silk Road. The establishment of the Liao Dynasty regime not only reflected the development of its social productive

forces, but also demonstrated the growth of its military power. During the period of Empress Dowager Xiao and Emperor Shengzong of Liao, the Liao Dynasty was relatively stable in social politics and prosperous in economy and society. During this period, Han people were highly valued and reform was emphasized, accelerating the process of feudalization.

Liao has a history of over 200 years of founding the country. In December 916, Abaoji became the Emperor of Liao. In 924, Taizu Abaoji made a large-scale westward expedition, and Gaochang Uighur State attached itself to Khitan. In July 926, the Bohai State was destroyed and the Dongdan State was established during 10 years. The eldest son, Tuyu, guarded the Dongdan. In May 936, Shi Jingtang asked for help from Qidan and became an official, cutting Yanyun 16 prefectures (You, Ji, Ying, Mo, Zhuo, Tan, Shun, Xin, Gui, Confucianism, Wu, Yun, Ying, Huan, Shuo, Wei) and Qidan, and tributed 300,000 pieces of silk. The jurisdiction of the Liao State had been continuously expanded and enfeoffed with a separatist regime. While managing its own territory, it also pays attention to political, economic, and cultural development.

The 1160s was the most prosperous period of Liao and the beginning of its decline. In September 1114, Aguda launched a rebellion against Liao. In 1115, Aguda declared himself emperor under the name of Jin. In January 1118, Emperor Jin sent envoys to Liao to seek canonization, and Liao sent envoys to negotiate peace. In 1120, the peace agreement between the Liao and Jin dynasties failed, and the Jin Emperor captured the capital Shangjing of Liao. In 1122, the Jin Dynasty conquered the central capital of Liao. In March, the Jin army advanced westward, while the Liao Emperor went westward. Yelü Dashi, the minister of Liao who stayed in Yanjing, and other officials appointed Yelu Chun as the Emperor of Tianxi. Their seeking peace was refused, and they befriended Song but failed. In April, Jin conquered Xijing of Liao and many Counties surrendered. At the end of the Liao Dynasty, social contradictions intensified and socio-economic disintegration occurred. In January 1124, Emperor Liao fled to Jiashan for the force of the Jin dynasty. In July, Yelü Dashi went west. Emperor Liao launched a counterattack in Jiashan and suffered a great defeat. In 1125, Emperor Tianzuo of Liao of Dynasty went to Dangxiang. In February, he was captured by the Jin Dynasty and granted the title of King Haibin. Liao Dynasty ended.

In the first year of the Liao Dynasty's Shence era (916), Emperor Taizu led his army to personally conquer the western region, including the Turkic, Tuhun, Dangxiang, Xiaofan, and Shatuo tribes. "From Daibei to Hequ and passed Yin Mountain, there were all their own territories. Wu Prefecture was renamed as Guihua Prefecture, Gui Prefecture was renamed as Khan Prefecture, and the Zhaotaoci was established in the Southwest of Liao." [8] In June of the third year of Tianzan (924), Emperor Taizu of Liao once again marched westward, the large-scale conquest of Tuhun, Dangxiang, Zhubu and other tribes... in September, Bingshen Shuo, then the ancient Uighur city, and the achievements were recorded in the tablet. The imperial edict was issued to build a monument to suppress the Khan's past, and the achievements were recorded in Khitan, Turkic, and Chinese characters... All the Western tribes were taken. [9] The Western Expedition of Emperor Taizu of the Liao Dynasty started from Shangjing, entered the Kherlen River and Orkhon River basins through the grassland road of Mobei Uighur Road in the Tang Dynasty, went down south along the Altai Mountains and reached the Beiting area to the north of Tianshan Mountain, crossed the grassland silk road and oasis silk road, incorporated the regional space of the vast grassland silk road into the map of the Liao Dynasty, which promoted the ethnic integration in the northern border areas. From the perspective of archaeology, Su Bingqi divided the culture of densely populated areas into six regions, one of which is the north, which focuses on the northern and southern Great Wall of Yanshan. This area is located in Chaoyang of Liaoning Province, Chifeng of Inner Mongolia, Beijing Tianjin and Zhangjiakou of Hebei Province. It has been an area of agriculture and animal husbandry since ancient times. Archaeological culture here refers to the two Neolithic cultures centered on Chifeng and Chaoyang and Hongshan culture and Fuhe Culture [10]. For more than 200 years in the Liao Dynasty, the foundation of political, economic and cultural development was in such a regional space with cultural heritage. With the Grassland Silk Road, it continued to expand outward, and its strength and influence continued to increase. Trade and cultural development extended to surrounding countries, including road expansion, which had great influence in that specific historical period.

Firstly, focus on cultural education and strive to enhance cultural influence. In 988, Khitan began to select scholars through the imperial examination until the end of the Liao Dynasty, which was

Initially regular, then irregular. Secondly, with the expansion of space, the construction of official roads began. In the early stages of the Shengzong Dynasty (984-989), the demand for carriage roads and the establishment of the postal system objectively required the Liao Dynasty to build transportation roads and bridges for easy transmission [11]. In 1027, the official road had a new requirement to carve out a 30 step wide space on both sides of the road to enhance its safety. In fact, the transportation capacity of the grassland silk road has been further strengthened. In February 1005, a market was set up in Zhenwujun (Shuo County, Shanxi Province) to develop foreign trade and economy. Thirdly, the diplomatic space is constantly increasing. One is the relationship with the Song Dynasty. The second is to pay attention to establishing a good relationship with the emerging Western Xia. In December 986, a princess in the royal family married Li Jiqian. In November 1000, Li Deming, the son of Li Jiqian, was appointed as Shuofang's Jiedushi. In July 1004, Li Deming was crowned King of Xiping. In September 1010, Li Deming was crowned King of Xia. In 1012, Li Deming paid tribute to Khitan. In 1031, the Khitan made Li Yuanhao marry to Princess Xingping, and Li Deming was granted the title of Duke of Xia. In 1032, Yuan Hao was conferred the title of King of Xia. It is important to have contacts with the Samanid Empire in Central Asia and the Ghaser during the Mahmoud rule, and to have economic ties and political marriage with Dashi. Fourthly, expand the relationship with Korea and use military forces. Khitan retreated from Korea, and Korea sent envoys to pay tribute. In 1012, Khitan ordered King of Korea to pay tribute. In May 1020, Korea claimed to pay tribute to Khitan. In 1023, Khitan sent envoys to Korea and conferred the title of Crown Prince. Fifth, pay attention to the relationship with various political regimes in the Western Regions. In January 1019, Khitan granted Cao Xianshun the title of Duke of Dunhuang in Shazhou. In March 1049, Gaochang (Turpan, Xinjiang) paid tribute to Khitan. In May 1026, Khitan attacked Ganzhou Uighur Kingdom. In November 1052, the Uighur tributed horses and ruled by Khitan. Da Shi invited marriage to Khitan, with a royal daughter as a princess. Sixth, a larger geographical scope has maintained frequent commercial and trade relations with the Dashi Empire for a long time, including the import and exchange of materials and culture. Archaeological excavations confirm literature records. In February 1021, Dashi married Khitan as a royal daughter and a princess wife. Mongolian Plateau Shubo is a

Mongolian of the same kind or closely related to the Tatar people. In fact, "Zubu" is also known as "Tatar", which refers to the northern tribes centered around the Mongols [12], and its various ministries are also subordinate to Khitan. In June 1011, the Khitan set up Jiedushi to stop divination. Tubo, located in the southwestern region, also paid tribute to Khitan in 1054.

The above contents can be seen from the origin and development process of Liao, which originally operated on the Mongolian Plateau. These spaces are all carried on the grassland silk road, and extend to Central Asia and West Asia. For 200 years, Liao has been operating the Grassland Silk Road, with a large regional space. At the beginning of the establishment of Liao Dynasty, Gaochang attached themselves to the large-scale Western Expedition, and the grassland Silk Road has connected the Western Regions.

3.2 Regional Space and the Grassland Silk Road

From the perspective of the regional space of Liao, it is located on the vast Mongolian Plateau and serves as the passage of the Grassland Silk Road. From the perspective of the geographical space of the whole Grassland Silk Road, the capital of Liao Dynasty is located in the upper reaches of the Liao River, near Huangfu and Zhongjing Dading. It is at the eastern end of the Grassland Silk Road, and enters the western region, Central Asia, and West Asia when moving westward. In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Abaoji, the Emperor Taizu of the Liao Dynasty, made an expedition to the Western Regions, and once reached the ancient Uighur city on the bank of the Orhun River (Labarhasun on the west bank of the upper reaches of the Orkhon River in Hangai Province of Mongolia). At the same time, Kedun City (Hadassan East, Bulgen Province, Mongolia) was built in the Ya tent of the Uighurs. In the 22nd year of the Liao Tonghe era (1004), a Zhenzhou government was set up in Kedun City, which was connected with the Great Khan Road and brought part of the Great Khan Road into the jurisdiction of the Liao Dynasty. It was an important border town on the Mobei Road of the Grassland Silk Road and became a place of exchange with the Uighurs in Xizhou. In the middle period of Liaohé, we continued to vigorously explore the northwest border and maintain the smoothness of the Grassland Silk Road. From here, you can go west by crossing Mount Taishan in the

northwest, Irtysh, Lake Zaysan, Lake Balkhash and other places; It can also go south from the Altai Mountains to Beiting (Jimsar, Xinjiang), connect with the north road of the middle section of the oasis silk road, and then go north through the Ili River basin to Central Asia, from the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea to Europe and North Africa. In the early years of the Liao Dynasty, countries such as Persia and Dashi successively paid tribute to Liao. With the increasing international influence of the Liao Dynasty, envoys from various countries and many business travelers came one after another. The cultural exchanges between the East and the West through the Grassland Silk Road in the Liao Dynasty were multifaceted.

In the Liao Dynasty, there were several channels at the eastern end of the Grassland Silk Road, including the north and south. Northeast Road covers the entire territory of Northeast China. The initial territory of the Khitan State was in the upper reaches of today's Liao River basin. During the period of Abaoji and Deguang, it continued to expand. Abaoji conquered Xi (northern Hebei), Ugu, Shiwei (today's southeast of Hulun Lake in eastern Inner Mongolia), Tatar, Uighur and Bohai State. During the reign of Deguang, the Sixteen Prefectures of Yanyun were acquired and the Central Plains were once occupied. In the heyday of the whole dynasty, Liao stood against the Southern Song Dynasty with its territory from the northeast to the Heilongjiang estuary of the Sea of Japan, to the Lenge River and the Shileka River in the central part of Mongolia in the north, to the Altai Mountains in the west, to the Baxian County in Hebei Province and the Yanmen Pass in Shanxi Province in the south. With the expansion of regional space, five capitals had been set up respectively, namely Shangjing Linhuang Mansion (the southern suburb of Lindong, Bairin Left Banner, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia), which were the early political, economic, military and cultural center of the Liao Dynasty. Zhongjing Dading Mansion (Ningcheng County, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia), Tokyo Liaoyang Mansion (Liaoyang, Liaoning Province), Nanjing Chujin Mansion (Beijing City), Xijing Datong Mansion (Datong, Shanxi Province). With the five capitals as the center, there had formed Beida Baowei, Wugu, Huanglong Mansion (today's Nong'an County, Jilin Province) in the northeast, Bohai State (Bohai Town, Ning'an, southern Heilongjiang Province), Nuergan City (the old city of Shangjing is called Nuergan City in the northeast. It is Telin in the southwest of Nikolayevsk, Russia). The road

network extends to Turkic and Tuyuhun in the northwest, Fengzhou, Shuozhou and Xiazhou in the west, and connects the Northern Song Dynasty in the south. It did not only protect the grassland silk road, but also was the Home front where runs smoothly the grassland silk road. It is a special regional space, especially covering the whole Northeast Asia, including the relationship with Gaoli.

The southern route of the Grassland Silk Road, due to the improvement of the commercial status of Yanjing Xijin Prefecture, connects the westbound route to Xijin Prefecture, with Juyan Road as the main exit route, and presents a network pattern. From the south to the Hejin Mansion, the Road generally goes down from the Linghuang Mansion in Shangjing to the south, crosses the Huangshui River (Xar Moron River), passes through Guangning Pavilion (today's Ongniud Banner in Inner Mongolia), Songshan Pavilion (Longwangmiao Village in the suburb of Chifeng in Inner Mongolia) and other posts, and arrives at Dading Mansion in Zhongjing. Further south through Zezhou (Nanchahan City, Pingquan County, Hebei Province), enter the Gubeikou and arrive at Yanjing Xijin Prefecture. Later, from Juyong Pass in the northwest of Yanjing, through Ruzhou (Yanqing District of Beijing), Khan Prefecture (today's Huailai County of Hebei), Fengsheng Prefecture (Zhuolu County of Hebei), Weizhou (today's Yu County of Hebei) to Datong Mansion in Xijing, and then through the three receiving cities in the west, namely the receiving city (Baotou in Inner Mongolia) built under the leadership of Zhang Renyuan in the second year of Tang Jinglong (708), the receiving city in the east (Tuoketuo County in Inner Mongolia, north of the South Yellow River, south bank of Dahei River) The west receiving city (on the north bank of the Urga River in kangjin Rear Banner, Inner Mongolia) is connected with the Cantiankehan Road of the Tang Dynasty. One can reach Yazhangkedun City in the old Uighur Yatent in the north, or Juyan Sea Road in the west. Juyan Lake Basin is also a hub channel, going straight down to Hexi Corridor, Ganzhou, or Yizhou or Xizhou. The Liao Dynasty, established by Khitan, made more smooth the Grassland Silk Road . The Liao Dynasty established trading centers in border areas to facilitate trade and exchange needed goods. Post houses were set up in Tongwen Guan in the capital to provide convenient accommodation for messengers from various countries. At that time, the Western Xia occupied the Hexi Corridor, and

the communication between the Liao Dynasty and western countries mainly depended on the Grassland Silk Road.

The Liao River is one of the seven major rivers in China. It was called the Juli River before the Han Dynasty, the Daliao River in the Han Dynasty, and the Liao River after the Five Dynasties. It originated in Pingquan County of Hebei Province, and flows through four provinces (regions) of Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Jilin and Liaoning. It has nurtured over 200 years of history and culture of the Liao Dynasty. Qidan nationality, originated in northeast China, is an ancient Nomad in China and lived a semi agricultural and semi pastoral life. The Liaohe River Basin, located at the eastern end of the Grassland Silk Road, is also a rich place in Liao. The vast grasslands provide pastures and a large number of horses for cavalry equipment. The Grassland Silk Road runs from east to west, and horses have played an important role in the smooth flow of the Grassland Silk Road.

In the prosperous Liao Dynasty, the tributaries along the Grassland Silk Road and its surrounding countries also made a rule. Horses are the military strategic material of a country. From the perspective of the tribute paid by the subordinate countries, there were a thousand tribute horses from the Dongdan Kingdom, ten thousand Nuzhi, ten thousand from the Zhibugu and other countries, twenty thousand each from Zhubu and Wuduwan, and thirty thousand each from Xixia and Shiwei, and three hundred horses from various departments such as Vietnam, Pouxii, Olimi, Punuli and Tieli." [13] In addition, there will be horses from the pastures of the Liao State and horses looted in the war. A large number of horses were equipped with a powerful "500000" cavalry unit. Only horses collected by the country can receive 40000 to 50000 horses per year. Horses entering the territory of the Liao State shows the prosperity of the Grassland Silk Road from another aspect. Not only did the grassland Silk Road prosper, but also the agricultural foundation of the Liao Dynasty supported the country's outward expansion. The You and yun areas were originally an important agricultural area, the former land of the Northeast Bohai Sea, and also an agricultural area with a household registration of thousands of and over a thousand miles of cultivation. [14]

Tracing history, in 840 A.D., the Huihe Khanate was conquered by the Jiegasi people. Most of the Huihe people migrated westward, of which one branch moved to the west of Congling and

established the Kara Khanate dynasty in the 10th century. The establishment of the Turkic and Huihe khanates and the effective management of the Tang Dynasty over the two khanates further developed and expanded the eastern section of the Grassland Silk Road, and laid the foundation for the overall prosperity of the Liao Dynasty's Grassland Silk Road.

4. YELÜ DASHI AND GRASSLAND SILK ROAD

4.1 Yelü Dashi Establishes the Western Liao Dynasty

Yelü Dashi (1087-1143), with the word Chongde, was Dezong of the Western Liao Dynasty, the eighth grandson of Abaoji, the founder of the Western Liao Empire. He is proficient in Khitan and Chinese characters, and in Chinese culture. At the beginning of the 12th century, Jurchen became increasingly powerful and established the "Great Jin". In 1116, the Jin army went south and captured Dongjijing (now Liaoyang City, Liaoning Province). In 1122, the Jin army marched westward to capture Zhongjing (today's Ningcheng County, Inner Mongolia) of Liao, Emperor Tianzuo of Liao fled westward to Jiashan (today's Wuchuan County, Inner Mongolia), and Yelü Dashi, the minister of Liao staying in Yanjing, and other officials appointed Yelü Chun as the Emperor of Tianxi and stuck to Nanjing (today's Beijing). In June, Emperor Tianxi died, and his wife, Xiao, was called Empress dowager. The Jin soldiers went south to Juyong Pass. Yelü Dashi and Concubine Xiao withdrew from Nanjing and went to Emperor Tianzuo. Emperor Tianzuo killed Concubine Xiao De and questioned Yelü Dashi. They disagreed on the leading ideology of anti Jin. In July 1124, Yelü Dashi led his followers into Mobei and set up a base camp in Zhenzhou (Kedun City during the Uighur Khaganate period) in the west. It was originally the military and political center of Khitan and was supported by the garrison here. After the westward expedition to Central Asia, Yelü Dashi's established a new regime - the Western Liao Empire, which lasted for 88 years.

In 1132, Yelü Dashi led his troops to move westward to Central Asia, opening up new territory westward. His West Expedition was from Juyong Pass to Datong, Hohhot, and Helin (Kedun City). During the expedition, he led over 200 elite cavalry troops and set sail north for three days. After crossing the Heishui River (now the Aibiha River

in Mongolia), he met Chuanguer general of Bai Dada, who presented four hundred horses, twenty camels and lots of sheep, and then reached the west of Kedun City.[15] He set foot on the North Avenue of the Grassland Silk Road. Kedun City was an important supporting point and played an important role in the process of Yelü Dashi's westward expedition. Kedun City is the garrison of the highest military and political organization of the Liao Dynasty in the north desert. There are thousands of horses here, which were obtained by Yelü Dashi. In addition, 7 states and 18 local forces were also gathered in the Kedun city, calling on everyone to destroy Jin and restoring Liao. This was supported from various departments, including the supplementation of manpower and material resources, and possessed a certain level of military strength. In order to accumulate strength, Yelü Dashi operated in Kedun City for more than 5 years. It was not until the eighth year of the Tianhui era (1130) when more than ten thousand Jin soldiers attacked the north that Yelü Dashi left Kedun City and traveled westward along the Grassland Silk Road, following the path of Yelü Chuc'ai's expedition to Central Asia with Genghis Khan. After Yelü Dashi became the emperor, he set his capital at Balasagun, known as the "Western Liao Dynasty" in history. His jurisdiction extends to the Syr Darya basin in Central Asia, and the subordinate countries include the Eastern Kelahan Dynasty and Western Gaochang Khan etc..

The Beiting Capital Protectorate (Jimsar, Xinjiang) is the intersection of the Grassland Silk Road and the Oasis Silk Road, as well as an important channel. Before he stationed in Beiting, Yelü Dashi sent an envoy to the Uighur King Bilge in Xizhou, hoping to get through, because the Uighur King Xia happened to be in Beiting, a place that must be experienced. The Uighur king invited Yelü Dashi into the summer palace, not only for dinner, but also for horses, camels, sheep, etc. More importantly, he expressed his willingness to become its vassal. The Uighur King Gaochang has his summer capital in Jimusar and his winter capital in Turpan. So the Uighur King invited Yelü Dashi to the Summer Palace to entertain.

Yelü Dashi is heading west, and the destination is Dashi. The Dashi here is not the Arab Islamic State, but the Kelahan Dynasty in the Western Regions [16]. According to "the Liao History-Emperor Tianzuo IV", Yelü Dashi covered the Gaochang State. Yelü Dashi traveled from Kedun City on the Mongolian Plateau to the Gaochang State. The route was from the ancient

road at the northern foot of Tianshan Mountain to the Xiadubieshibali (Tingzhou City, the capital of Beiting in the Tang Dynasty). To Yemili (now Emin County, Xinjiang), and to build a city for temporary residence. With the increase of military strength, in February 1132 (1131), Yelü Dashi established himself as the emperor in Yemili. According to the custom of Turks, it was called "Juer Khan", which means "Great Khan". At the same time, there is also the honorific name "Tianyou Emperor" in the Han region, the year name "Yanqing", and the Turkic people refer to it as "Hala Khitan", meaning "Great Khitan Kingdom". The Chinese historical records are called "Western Liao". Afterwards, he left Ye Mili and arrived at Husibali in Bacisahun.

The Kara Khan Dynasty, also known as the Black Khan Dynasty, is the Khan Dynasty established by Turkic languages in Xinjiang and Central Asia today; it is different from the eastern and western khanates. The East Kara-Khanid Khanate was once in civil strife. It was difficult for the rulers to make calm the situation for a while, and they invited Yelü Dashi to enter the country to suppress the rebellion. After the unrest between the Kangli people and the Hararu people was quickly settled, Yelü Dashi took the opportunity to occupy its capital, Peiluo General City (Husiwoerduo). In 1137, the Yelü Dashi soldiers were divided and marched in two directions, one was to westward to Khwarazm, crossed the Yemili River, Yili River and Chu River westward, and straight to Balasagun, the capital of the Karahan Dynasty. The other way was the Eastern Expedition to Kashgar, Hetian and Gaochang, and they took Shule and other areas in the east of the Karahan Dynasty and made them vassals. Finally, they defeated the 100000 allied forces of the Seljuk dynasty Sudan and the western Karahan in Xunsigan (Uzbekstan Samarkand), and gained the rule of Transoxiana in Central Asia. In this way, the northern and southern Tianshan Mountains and the vast Central Asian region were included in the territory of the Western Liao Empire. Yelü Dashi established the Western Liao Empire for 90 years by taking advantage of the foundation of the Karahan Dynasty. In 1134, Yelü Dashi was founded as the capital in Husiwoerduo (Balasagun, Brana city of in Tuokemake on the south bank of the Chu River in the Kyrgyz Republic), and changed its name to "Kanguo", which is the transportation hub of Central Asia in the western section of the Silk Road. In the first year of the Kanguo era (1135), he led a large army to march eastward towards the Jin Dynasty. "He

traveled more than ten thousand miles without any gains, but many oxen and horses died. He withdrew his troops and returned. The goal of the Eastern Expedition was not achieved.

4.2 The Spread of Eastern and Western Cultures in the Western Liao Empire

The Later Liao Dynasty saw the rise of Dashi and the unification of Kucha in the Western Regions. The power of Liao was strong, and the name of the religion lasted for a hundred years. The Western Liao Empire spanned the Western Regions and Central Asia, with a territory of "tens of thousands of li" [17]. Its ruling strategy was loose, with low taxes and levies, and the vassal state only represented a relationship of submission. With the cultural dissemination of the Silk Road to the west, the Western Liao people spread the excellent traditional culture learned from traditional Chinese civilization to the Silk Road and Central Asia regions. Archaeological discoveries in the Western Regions and Central Asia confirm the influence of Han culture along the route. Yelü Dashi, the founder of the Western Liao Empire, was born as a Jinshi, proficient in Han culture, and has a high level of cultural accomplishment. In terms of imperial rule and management, the implementation of Centralisation system is conducive to social stability and production development, and the tax collection is lower than the previous provisions of the Islamic Code in Central Asia. "Culture and education are popular, and the Western Regions have been thinking about it since" [17]. When he marched westward with Genghis Khan to Central Asia, Yelü Chucai still felt that the local people remembered the merits of Yelü Dashi in governing Central Asia.

The impact of cultural dissemination is crucial. Under Yelü Dashi's command, there are many Han cultural people and various craftsmen, who are qualified to spread the Han culture in the Central Plains. In the city of Samarkand, the capital of Central Asia in the middle of the river, "the majority of people come from Huihe, and the countryside cannot be planted by themselves. It must be accompanied by Han people, Khitan, and Hexi (Xixia people). The officials also take all kinds of people, and Han craftsmen are everywhere in the city." [18] Not only is agricultural cultivation advanced, but handicrafts also have a special influence. The natives of the Ili River basin used to take water from bottles. Later, they saw the introduction of bucket tools (windlass, waterwheel,

etc.) from the Central Plains. "Xi said:" Peach Blossom Stones are all skillful. Peach Blossom Stones are called Han people. "[19] Including Pulp and paper industry, advanced iron ware use, etc. The new wave of highly developed Chinese culture in Kyrgyzstan is attributed to Halachitan. They had an important impact on the culture of Central Asia. Before the Yuan people conquered the Western Regions, Dashi had already showcased Han civilization on the Central Asian continent. [20]

In 1208, Naimanqichu went to the Western Liao Dynasty. Zhigulu took him in and married to a princess. In 1211, Quchulu abolished Zhilugu, the leader of the Western Liao Dynasty, and seized the power of the Western Liao Dynasty. The west Kelahan Dynasty died in the Hualazimoshan Dynasty in Central Asia in 1212. In 1218, the Western Liao regime was destroyed by Genghis Khan of Mongolia.

4.3 Unearthed Cultural Relics Showcase Grassland Silk Road Culture

The Liao Dynasty regime existed for a long time and accumulated rich culture. There are abundant cultural relics related to the grassland Silk Road unearthed through archaeology. In July 1992, although the tomb of Ye Luyu, the left minister of Liaodong Dan State, was stolen in Sumuchaoke Mountain of Ar Horqin Banner of Chifeng of Inner Mongolia, a large number of gold and silver wares were still unearthed. The gold and silver artifacts among them have similarities with the artifacts unearthed from the Tang tombs in Dachangling of Hexi of southern Gansu, and one of the artifacts is similar in shape to the gold jar unearthed from Tomb 1 at the Kurai 4th site of the Turkic tombs along the Altai and Ursul rivers excavated by former Soviet archaeologists. It was an item brought by the Uighur tribes from Mobei during the middle of the 8th century under the rule of the original Turks who migrated to Hexi. Meanwhile, the burial customs of the Liao Dynasty were influenced by ancient funerals in the Altai region [21]. The cultural relics unearthed underground confirm the integration and influence of Chinese and Western cultures on the grassland silk road. The influence of the Liao Dynasty on the Grassland Silk Road was far-reaching. Qitai County, located in the northeast of Xinjiang, is at the northern foot of Tianshan Mountains and the southeast edge of the Junggar Basin. It is an important channel for Altai to enter the grassland silk road at the northern foot of Tianshan Mountains. The name "Qitai" is

derived from the homophonic sound of "Qidan" [22]. It was considered an important town in the Western Liao Dynasty, indicating the influence of the Grassland Silk Road during the Western Liao period.

With a history of more than 200 years, the Liao Dynasty focused on operating the Grassland Silk Road. Yelü Dashi crossed the Grassland Silk Road in the process of establishing the Western Liao Dynasty. From the Mongolian Plateau to the south and across the Tianshan Mountains, and from the northern foot of the Tianshan Mountains to Central Asia, the Grassland Silk Road will move forward, and the Western Regions and Central Asia will be connected, linking the Grassland Silk Road at the northern foot of the Tianshan Mountains with the oasis Silk Road. Yelü Dashi and his troops moved westward along the grassland Silk Road to Central Asia, conquered the Huihe and Karahan dynasties in Gaochang, and established the Western Liao regime. While maintaining the orthodox culture of Nomad, the Western Liao regime also brought Eastern Confucianism, language, rules, systems and production methods to Central Asia. The nearly 90 years' development experience of Western Liaoning has become an important period for the economic and cultural development of the Grassland Silk Road. In this sense, Yelü Dashi has made contributions.

5. CONCLUSION

The Grassland Silk Road has a long history of cultural exchange, which is an important channel for cultural exchange between China and the West. The Khitan people are a powerful ethnic group active on the grassland Silk Road, deliberately managing it. The large number of cultural relics unearthed from the Grassland Silk Road continuously confirms the close relationship between China and the Western Regions, Central Asia, and Europe in the early stages of the Grassland Silk Road, with abundant trade materials and diverse cultural exchanges. The more than 200 year history of the founding of the Liao Dynasty emphasizes the development of cultural education, strives to enhance cultural influence, expands regional and diplomatic space, and manages the relationship between Song and Xia, including with Goryeo, especially the trade on the grassland Silk Road. Afterwards, Yelü Dashi founded the Western Liao Empire, which lasted for 90 years and dominated the transportation hub of Central Asia in the western section of the Silk Road. During this

process, the Western Liao Dynasty continuously spread traditional Chinese culture, including agriculture, handicrafts, and the use of iron tools, which had a positive impact. It was a special historical period in the development history of China and the Western Regions and Central Asia, which had a profound impact. In the new era, the "the Belt and Road" advocated and promoted by China is an extension of the ancient Silk Road in the contemporary era and has epochal significance.

REFERENCES

- [1] Lin Yun. Traffic Routes in Xinjiang Before the Opening of the Silk Road [J]. Grassland Cultural Relics, 2011(1).
- [2] Wu Fangsi. Silk Road 2000[M]. Shandong Pictorial Press, 2008:17.
- [3] Xiguzheng. Archaeology of the Silk Road[J]. Journal of Xinjiang Normal University, 1992(2).
- [4] C.N. Lu Jinke. Translated by Pan Mengtao. On the Ancient Relationship between China and
- [5] Wang Binghua. Research on the Xinjiang Section of the Silk Road//The Silk Road [M]. Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 2012:223.
- [6] Su Bingqi. New Exploration of the Origin of Chinese Civilization[M]. Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2009:130-167.
- [7] History of Liao: Geographical Records [M]. Zhonghua Book Company, Vol.37,1987:438
- [8] Emperor Taizu of History of Liao [M]. Zhonghua Book Company, Vol.1,1987:11.
- [9] Emperor Taizu of History of Liao [M]. Zhonghua Book Company, Vo2.1,1987:19-20.
- [10] Su Bingqi. On New Exploration of the Origin of Chinese Culture[M]. Life, Reading and New Knowledge Joint Bookstore, 1999:35-40.
- [11] Fu Haibo, edited by Cui Ruide. Cambridge History of Chinese Western Liaoning, , Xia and Jin Dynasties[M].China Social Sciences Press, 2007:94.
- [12] Nashunuliji. The Evolution of the Name of Zubu in the History of the Liao Dynasty//Western Mongolia Forum[J]. 2011(4).
- [13] History of Liao: Records of Food and Goods[M]. Zhonghua Book Company, Vol.60, 2013:932.
- [14] Xu Zizhi Tongjian Changbian [M]. Zhonghua Book Company, Vol.27, 2012:604.
- [15] Emperor Tianzuo with the History of Emperor Yelü Dashi of Liao History[M]. Zhonghua Book Company, Volume 30, 1987:355.
- [16] Qian Boquan. The Interaction between Dashi and the Liao Dynasty and the Yelü Dashi Expedition to the West: A Probe into the History of the Relationship between the Liao Dynasty and the Karahan Dynasty, Social Science Front, 1995(2).
- [17] Yelü Chucai. Proofread by Xie Fangdian. Collected Works of Zhanran Jushi [M]. //A Hundred Rhymes of Nostalgia to Zhang Minzhi, Zhonghua Book Company, 1982:260.
- [18] Li Zhichang. Journey to the West of Changchun Actual Person//Yang Jianxin. Journey to the West [M]. Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1987:205-206.
- [19] Li Zhichang. Journey to the West of Changchun Actual Person//Yang Jianxin. Journey to the West [M]. Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1987:203.
- [20] Chen Yuan. A Textual Study of the Humanization of the Western Regions of the Yuan Dynasty [M]. Beijing Normal University Press, Vol.1,1982:2.
- [21] Li Yongping. The Gilded Silver Crown of the Liao Dynasty in the Gansu Provincial Museum//Zheng Binglin, Fan Jinshi, Yang Fuxue. The Silk Road Ethnic Ancient Characters and Cultural Academics (Part 2) [M]. Sanqin Publishing House, 2007:597-598.
- [22] Wang Binghua. Research on the Xinjiang Section of the Silk Road//The Silk Road [M]. Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 2012:242.