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Socio-Economic and Cultural Life in China in the Xvi-Xvii Centuries

Sunnatov Asadbek
Termiz State Pedagogical Institute Pedagogy and social sciences Department of History Education 3rd year student

A B S T R A C T
In this article, China's contribution to world civilization, inventions applied to life, social, economic and cultural life at the end of the Middle Ages, land ownership relations, work carried out in the tax system, traditional architecture, the emergence of many sages and philosophers, the establishment and development of trade relations, the construction of cultural buildings, the activities of the Ming Dynasty and the uprisings against the system are discussed.

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Introduction.

China is one of the countries that has been the center of civilization since ancient times. China has a rich history of innovation with many inventions that have had a significant impact on world civilization. Among these inventions, four stand out as being particularly transformative: paper, gunpowder, compasses and printing techniques. These inventions not only revolutionized various aspects of Chinese society, but also greatly influenced the development of the entire human civilization. The Compass alone revolutionized navigation by providing a reliable way to determine direction at sea. This breakthrough allowed sailors to travel great distances with greater accuracy and confidence, opened up new trade routes, and fostered cultural exchange between East and West. The compass remains a symbol of human ingenuity and the spirit of inquiry. Traditional Chinese architecture has a number of unique characteristics, and its architectural decorations contribute to the recognition of Chinese buildings around the world. During the five thousand-year history of Chinese civilization, many architectural structures have been preserved, most of them are rightfully considered world-class masterpieces. Their diversity and originality combine the traditions of antiquity and the best achievements of Chinese architecture.

Materials.

Today, most of the Chinese people believe in Buddhism, which is one of the world religions. During the prosperous Middle Ages, China fell under the influence of external forces and internal conflicts. In the land of Chin, the emperor is considered the head of state and has a special position, so many harems were brought to the palace. Harems were common in the imperial court, and only ethnic Chinese were accepted. They were bought from the children of the poor for the imperial court. Only the members of the imperial family could use the services of harem masters. In some years, the emperor himself had up to three thousand harem employees, the princes - up to thirty, and the emperor's children - up to twenty harem employees. During the reign of the Ming dynasty, no less than ten thousand harem employees

lived in the palace (their total number, according to some sources, reached 100 thousand), and one of them, during the reign of the last Ming emperor, actually ruled the state on his behalf. Some harem employees held high positions in the regions, where they were governors, military chiefs, heads of city administrations, and so on. The main rivals of the harem officials in influencing the emperor were the members of the Palace Secretariat, who enjoyed the support of major Chinese scientists who were united in the Hongmin Organization (an organization similar to the Academy of Sciences). In their letters to the emperor, they often exposed the tyranny of the ruling officials in the capital and regions, advocated economic restructuring, military reform, and the like. They were often persecuted for such opinions, although some of the townspeople supported them. The agrarian sector, which reached a much higher level of development by the beginning of the 16th century, occupies an important place in the Chinese economy. Although the implements were much cheaper, the farmers had a high yield of rice, the staple food of the Chinese. Some farmers learned to build special machines that pumped water up, used fertilizers to increase yields, and introduced new rice cultivation techniques such as nesting. method, preparation of quality seeds and so on. In addition to rice, Chinese farmers have also achieved great success in the field of cotton cultivation, which allows them to meet the needs of the population for various products. There were two main types of land ownership in China - state and private land ownership (private land ownership could also be called conditional private, because officially these lands were also considered the property of the emperor). Private land decreased throughout the 16th century: the peasants' land gradually passed into the hands of large landowners, usurers, and officials. A large part of the lands directly became the property of the imperial court. In Ming China, a unique system of taxes and obligations was created, based on both in-kind payments and monetary collections. Taxes on state lands would be higher than taxes on conditional-private lands. Attempts by the state to raise taxes often created sharp conflicts between tax payers and tax collectors. Taxes were mainly calculated in rice, and the collection of taxes in silver was established only at the end of the 16th century. Along with the silver ingots measured in lyans, copper coins of various values were introduced into circulation from the beginning of the 16th century.

Research and methods.

Even after the "Great Geographical Discovery" was made, trade volume in China did not decrease, but trade will develop further through the sea route, because China is located in a geographically very favorable area. At the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century, a new organization appeared in the city of Wuxi, one of the important trade and cultural centers of southern China, on the basis of the Dunlin Academy. Its members demanded reforms in all spheres of social life. Their programs were largely reminiscent of the demands of 16th-century reformers, since the organization was formed by officials expelled from Beijing for their opposition to the government. Gu Xianchen, who relied on the support of wealthy people and some shenshi, headed four organizations.

Among their demands:

1. reforming the state apparatus,
2. increasing the role of the emperor directly in managing the country,
3. the effectiveness of economic changes,
4. privatization of state factories and workshops to increase the quality of manufactured products,
5. the seizure of peasant lands by large owners stopping,
6. Regulation of the taxation system, etc., played an important role.

Many sages and philosophers came from the territory of Chin. Confucianism, which was the ideological basis of many Chinese sages' philosophical researches, also occupied a special place during the Ming Dynasty. Wang Yanmin (1472-1529), one of the most brilliant scholars of the Ming Dynasty, did not abandon Confucianism, which is the basis of the Chinese worldview, and began to interpret this doctrine in a new way in accordance with the changed historical situation. The central place in Wang Yanming's worldview is the doctrine of liangzhi (innate knowledge). According to him, every person, regardless of his social background, has such knowledge and can reach the state of wisdom. Thus, wisdom is not only

the property of selected people, but the common destiny of all. Lin Zhaoen (1517–1598) was another prominent representative of the social thought of this period. He was a consistent propagator of the ideas of syncretism. He gave new meaning to the concepts of "dao" (way), "xuan" (mysticism) and "kun" (space), proving that they all reflect the whole of existence and should form the single ideological foundation of the Chinese state. tried to do. Chinese culture flourished during the Ming Dynasty. Having absorbed the best achievements of previous periods, the society was able to rise to a new stage of development. Literature has also made great progress. The writer U Chenen (1500-1582) created the novel "Journey to the West" based on ancient legends. It describes the priest Xuan-san's pilgrimage to India, accompanied by fantastic animals, in search of a miracle to find sacred books of the Buddha. This novel made a great impression on many generations of readers. At the beginning of the 17th century, a collection of short stories entitled "Amazing events that happened in our time and in ancient times" was compiled. The content of these stories is enriched with folk epics and many wise words and proverbs, which have spread widely. China in cultural traditions, art was divided into "high" and "low" types. The "high" type included ceremonial music and dances as part of state celebrations. Music was considered a means of educating a person in the spirit of traditions. Traditional Chinese theater originated from ceremonial music and dances. Later, the theater, which became an independent form of art, acquired its unique sound. The formation of public theater art led to its adaptation to both the upper and lower layers of the society of that time. Therefore, the theater occupied the place between "high" and "low" types of art. The source of theatrical plots was literary prose and poetry. In the XVI-XVII centuries, the most popular type of theater art was the kunsui, which later became a national theater. Peking opera, which is famous all over the world, was formed on the basis of Kunsui at the end of the 18th century. At the beginning of the new era in China, types of literature for the "ordinary people", primarily dramatic poems, developed. The most famous dramatist of that time was Tang Xiangzu (1550-1616), who was a supporter of Wang Yanmin and formed the "Taizhou school". He Xining, Luo Jufon, Huang Chunxi and others were the bright representatives of this school. The architectural appearance of the Chinese cities settled during the Ming Dynasty was preserved until the 19th century. After the capital returned to Beijing in 1421, reconstruction work was carried out there. Its old, northern part (the Inner City) was separated from the southern city by a wall. This wall was completed in 1564, and the southern part of the city was named "Outer City". The "Imperial City" was built in the center of the "Inner City", and inside it was the "Forbidden City", the main building of which was the "Taikhedyan" ("Pavilion of Supreme Proportion"), where important state ceremonies were held. In 1530, the "Samo temple" complex dedicated to the main goddess of the Chinese, Samo, was built in the inner city. In the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, the imperial cemetery memorial was built around Beijing, which, in addition to the tombs, also housed temples, towers, underground treasure, and so on. Chinese masters have also achieved great success in creating porcelain, gas, lacquered miniatures, which are highly appreciated and highly valued all over the world.

Results.

The peasant rebellion against the ruling system in China began in 1622 in Shandong province under the leadership of the secret society "White Lily" and soon spread to a much wider area. The army sent here to quell the rebellion initially won a series of victories over the rebels, but soon the rebels resumed their activities in Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. Guerrilla groups formed there, consisting of peasants, soldiers fleeing the Min army, and the urban poor. The rebels killed landlords and usurers with particular cruelty, because they considered them to be the main cause of all their troubles. Among the rebels, Li Zichen and Zhang Xianjun proved themselves as capable leaders. The local population voluntarily helped the settlers, and their ranks were filled with new supporters. They were able to stop the rebels only on the outskirts of Beijing. The rebels retreated to the south. It was a very precarious situation for the government, because the rebellion had now taken over a large part of China. In 1636, the government announced that the participants of the uprising would be pardoned if they voluntarily returned to their permanent residences and stopped armed resistance. The leaders of the rebels were promised full amnesty and officers in the imperial army. By a special decree of the emperor, the tax levied on the population was reduced. The events soon brought positive results. Many peasants returned to their homes and began to work peacefully. The rest began to be defeated everywhere. Some of the leaders of the rebellion, including Zhang Xiangjun, defected to the Ming, while others retreated to the hard-to-reach mountains bordering

Henan and Shanxi provinces. The Peasants' War seemed to have ended with the defeat of the rebels, but it was only an illusion. In 1639, a peasant uprising again spread across many parts of China, joined by some members of the ruling class who were now dissatisfied with the Ming. Zhang Xiangjun and Li Zichen were at the head of the rebellion. In early 1644, Li Zichen decided to march on Beijing. The rebel army, supported by the broad sections of the population, left Xi'an in two groups. The rebels, who did not face serious resistance, entered the capital in April of the same year. Unable to bear such shame, Emperor Chun Zhen committed suicide. He first killed his daughter and several relatives with his own hands, and then hanged himself on the porch of the garden near his residence. Another 80,000 people committed suicide as a sign of loyalty to the emperor. Supporters of Li Zichen, who had seized power, appealed to the people to remain calm and continue their peaceful lives. Several military commanders who fought against the rebels were executed, as well as some officials who were angered by the people. Rich people were heavily taxed. Only the exiled and angry officials during the Ming period were returned to public service on the condition of "governing with justice and not oppressing the people." Li Zichen was declared the new emperor, and his closest people took high positions. The new state apparatus was built in the form of an oriental abbot, traditional for China, and relied on a reorganized army in its activities. The lands under the control of the rebels were transferred to the peasants, and many taxes and fees were abolished. All this caused great excitement among peasants and city artisans in the early days. However, the Min army under the command of U Sangui, who was on the Manchurian front when the rebels occupied Beijing, did not recognize the new government. They decided to recognize themselves as Manchurian vassals and opened the gates of the Great Wall of China to the Manchurians. The Manchus were not quick to believe that the Chinese warlord's intentions were serious. He sent his ambassadors to the camp of Sangui's rivals, asking for their help eight times, and then he himself went to the camp of the Manchus, declaring himself their vassal.

Discussion.

The Manchurians who came to power generally preserved the previous principles of the Chinese state system. The changes mainly concerned the social system. Now the category system consisted of five main groups - three dominant and two oppressed, subordinate groups. The emperor, who officially had unlimited powers, did not directly rule the country. The most important decision-making body was the Supreme Imperial Council, which included the emperor's relatives and high-ranking officials. It was followed by executive systems - the Imperial Secretariat, foreign, tax, ceremonial, military affairs, criminal, public affairs, censorship and similar courts. The influence of the harem lords, who had great power during the previous dynasty, declined until the end of the 19th century. Now they could not influence the processes of state decision-making. The Manchus became the dominant people in China, and now administrative and military officials were appointed from among them. The Manchus considered working and trading to be humiliating for them. Therefore, the main aspects of their activity were administrative and military service. Sons of Manchurians in military service received state salaries until they came of age. Manchurians and Chinese were given different punishments for the same crime. From 1644, intermarriage between Manchurians and Chinese was prohibited. China was divided into viceroyalties, each of which had its own financial system and armed forces. In order to strengthen their dominance in the eyes of the Confucian Chinese, the Manchus, who were formerly shamanists, retained Confucianism as the official state religion. Manchurian Bogdikhani began to perform the same traditional rituals performed by his Chinese followers. One of the first steps in this direction was giving Confucius the titles "Kun Zi" - "Ancient Teacher", "Great and Glorious", "Most Mature Sage". When a new emperor ascended the throne, he ordered his subjects to make sacrifices at Confucius's family mausoleum and tomb, to honor his predecessor and pay homage to his spirit. In addition, the Manchu dynasty, trying to demonstrate the hereditary power of the monarchy, paid homage to the spirit of the last Ming emperor, Chun Zheng. Even the tree from which he hanged himself was preserved as a sacred relic. The coming to power of the Manchus led to certain economic changes in Chinese society. The Manchus, who did not have a realistic opportunity to occupy all the land areas of China, left a large part of these lands in the hands of Chinese owners. The Manchus allocated land to themselves from the Zhili capital region, as well as from other areas with a dense Chinese population. Manchuria's own territory (on the borders of 1644) became a kind of reserve. All lands were the property of the bogdikhan, and ethnic Chinese were forbidden to live there. The main part of the land was conditionally private property, and the owner paid

taxes for its use. In order to facilitate harvesting, strict control over the population was established. Peasant households paying land, soul and other taxes to the state were united into tens and hundreds. In addition, the personal obligations of the peasants were preserved. Taxes were measured in silver, but mostly paid in crops. The state took over the production of salt, and additional taxes were imposed on tea, alcohol, property sales, and the like.

Conclusion.

The farmer was obliged to give a large part of the harvest to the owner of the land and to fulfill his various personal tasks. Nevertheless, in order to strengthen their rule, the Manchus reduced and partially abolished the taxes that existed during the Ming period, and gave some of the state-owned reserve lands to farmers for use. All this led to some economic growth and stabilization of social relations by the end of the 17th century. As a result, the population increased, arable land expanded, and handicrafts developed. Some historians believe that a capitalist way of life began to emerge as a result of stabilization in China. In fact, all these positive changes were very superficial and counterintuitive. Other researchers argue that Chinese society remained completely traditional until the beginning of the 19th century and that there was no shift towards capitalist development. After the Manchurians strengthened their position in China, they gradually returned to the previous system of taxes and duties. In such conditions, usurious capital began to play an important role, since many peasants could not pay taxes and run their own farms without its help. Many peasants left their homes and went to the cities, where they began to make a living as beggars.

To sum up, today's economic and social power of China was strong in ancient times and in the developed Middle Ages. For example, Paper has significantly democratized access to information and education. It promoted the spread of literature, philosophy, and scientific knowledge, and encouraged cultural exchange and intellectual growth. Furthermore, the cheapness and accessibility of paper enabled widespread literacy and empowered people across social strata. The invention of movable type revolutionized publishing, making books more affordable and accessible to the masses. It facilitated the spread of knowledge and ideas on an unprecedented scale, fueling the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution in Europe. Movable type also played a crucial role in standardizing the written language and promoting literacy around the world.

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