



# Non-fiction

Group 1

# The Silk Road Then and Now

*Carmel School Of Hong Kong, Benattar, Aiden – 6*

The Silk Road was a bunch of roads. The roads connected China to Europe. It was over 5000 kilometres long. The Silk Road was important because it helped China and Europe to trade. Trading is sharing special things. The Silk Road started 2163 years ago in the year 138 BC. It started when Emperor Han in China sent Zhang Qian to explore the west. China brought important stuff like silk, jade and paper to Europe. Then Europe brought horses, gold and cotton to China. They traded lots and lots of stuff. The Silk Road ended in 1434 because China closed its doors to Europe, so it can be alone. It also ended because people started using more boats to trade. But in 2013, China reopened the Silk Road to do even better trading. My dad does shipping to deliver things. This is the new way of trading. He is shipping directly from China to France by train!

# The Tales of Silk Road

*ESF Renaissance College, Chan, Charlotte – 7*

The New China Silk Road is an overt of China's power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. China created the New Silk Road to boost global trade and enhance its influence over the globe.

The New China Silk Road was initiated by President Xi Jinping in September 2013 and it is still working in progress until today on 11 January 2026. China has spent \$900 billion to \$1 trillion to build the Road. The Road runs from China to Asia, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Latin America to Central Asia. It involves over 150 countries and international organizations. It is important to China because China gets power by making partners who are people from other countries to trade.

In the past, people used 4 types of silk to trade useful stuff that they need through the Silk Road. Silks are called muga silk, mulberry silk, tasar silk and eri silk. The useful stuff includes gold, bronze and glassware. Today, people trade machinery, electronic, energy (oil/ gas), technology and infrastructure components.

# China's Amazing Silk Road

*ESF Renaissance College, Mak, Mateo – 7*

Have you ever heard about China's famous Silk Road? If you like learning more about the past and how people traded long ago, you are in the right place! The Silk Road was a very important trade route that connected China to faraway places like the Roman Empire. Fast forward to the present day, the idea of the Silk Road lives on as countries trade, share ideas, and grow together.

Silk was so valuable that it was once worth more than gold! Only China knew how to make it at first, and they kept the secret for hundreds of years. The Silk Road started because people wanted to trade goods they didn't have, like silk, spices, fruits and medicines. It began when Chinese traders traveled to other lands long ago, and over time, these trips slowly turned into a long trading path connecting many countries. In fact, over 24,400 different products were traded! That's like if students from 100 schools all brought different items to one huge market—can you imagine how busy and colorful that would be!

The Silk Road was not just one road, but a big network of paths that linked China to Europe starting around the 2nd century BC. Traders moved their goods using camels and wagons. But they didn't only trade items—they also shared ideas. Things like paper, gunpowder, stories, religions, and even new languages traveled along the Silk Road. This helped people from different lands learn from each other and made life better in many places.

Today, we do not see caravans of camels crossing deserts anymore. Instead, ships, planes, and trucks move goods around the world. However, the idea of the Silk Road lives on in modern global trade. The way countries exchange goods—like clothes made in Asia and cars from Europe—comes from the same spirit of connection that the Silk Road started. Thanks to global trade, I can enjoy Italian pizza, Mexican tortilla chips, and kiwis from New Zealand—all without leaving home. It is indeed a modern version of the Silk Road!

In the end, the Silk Road teaches us an important lesson. When people trade and share ideas, the world becomes more connected and more exciting. This ancient road helped shape the world we live in today, and its story is still traveling—just like it did long ago.

# The Silk Road

*ESF Renaissance College, Mattioli, Luca – 7*

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Do you want to learn about the Silk Road? Here are some facts.

## Chapter 1: About the road

There was a very very long road. And it was in a desert. And it was called the Silk Road. The silk road is actually a network of east–west paths connecting the Mediterranean sea and China. It stretched across more than 7,000 miles.

The Jade road from 5,000 BCE, the Tin road from 2,700 BCE and the Persian Royal road from 550 BCE were all parts of the Silk road.

## Chapter 2: Stories of the silk road

Alexander the leader of the Greek Empire opened the Silk Road between the East and the West around 330 BCE. The Chinese Empire Wudi of the Han Dynasty sent Zhang Qian west. After 10 years Zhang Qian brought Wudi wonders from the west around 138 BCE. Therefore Zhang Qian is called Father of the Silk Road.

## Chapter 3: Explorers, traded goods and religions

There were many different kinds of goods that were traded along the Silk Road. There were Silk, Embroidered Butterfly, Silk Embroidery, Glassware, Felt rug, Evil Eye Glass Marble and Spices. The Silk Road wasn't only for trading, It also helped spread religions such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism and Islam. There were many explorers along the silk road such as Marco Polo, Denis Belliveau, Francis O'Donnell, Ibn Battuta and Sir Aurel

## Chapter 4: Changes on the Silk Road

Now the people who traveled on the Silk Road still trade the same goods, but the different things are how they travel. Before they rode on Camels and Caravans, now they either go through the water or take a car or even take a train.

# New Tales of China's Silk Road

*ESF Renaissance College, Tong, Jean – 7*

The silk road is a group of routes from Europe to China. People used to trade goods over 2000 years ago. There were many countries and cities along the silk road, Like Venice, Europe, Africa, Arabia, Persia, India, Mongolia, Chian and so on. It was more than 6000 kilometers long.

The name of silk road came from silk, which was traded many years ago. Silk is beautiful and comfy material to make gorgeous clothes. But only Chinese people knew how to make silk at that time. It took long time and many silk cocoons to produce only one meter silk material. Therefore, silk clothes were popular and expensive in Europe and China.

Silk was not the only good that was traded along silk road. Over the time, more goods were bought from China and Asia to Europe, like perfumes, spices, tea, paper and porcelain. People also bought gold, silver, glass and jewelries from Europe to China and Asia.

People also share ideas and knowledge. Merchants had to learn new languages and cultures when they want to do trading in other countries. Trading and travelling made them know more about each other. Faiths, cultures and ideas of math, art and science spread along the silk road. People learned paper making skills and silk weaving skills in China. They went back and spread those skills in their hometown.

Merchants travelling in large groups called caravan. There were different animals in a caravan, camels, horses donkeys and so on. The animals had to carry people and goods. The views along the silk road were quite beautiful. Travelers may see salty lake, port cities, "roof of the world", large desert and sea of grass.

It was also very dangerous to travel in silk road. People may be attacked by robbers and wild animals. It was very hot in desert and very cold in mountain areas. People were also easy to get lost in desert and to die. They may also fall into sick without enough medicine and caring.

One of the most famous travelers was Marco Polo. He was born in a merchant family in Venice. He and his father came to China to meet the emperor. They also lived in China for several years. After returned hometown, he wrote a book which was about his journey to China. The book made more people to know China and Asia. Another person, ZHENG He, who was ordered by emperor to explore different countries, travelling as far as East Africa.

The silk road on land and in sea had connected people from different countries. New ideas and faiths also spread among those countries. People were more and more interested to explore other countries.

I would like to be a forest explorer when I grow up. I want to take photos of beautiful views, to find different animals and plants, and to talk to people living there. It's also interesting and cool to find treasures in forest.

# The New Silk Road

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Wei, Sebastian – 7*

Twenty-two centuries ago, Chinese people trekked to Europe to trade with the Europeans, this road was called the Silk Road. Then it disappeared in the 1400s before getting reviewed in year 2013.

Now it is the biggest international trade project with over 150 countries involved. I believe that 20 years later, the new silk road can help with the development of countries. They are going to trade by airplanes, ships and jets instead of by horses. They will also build high-speed train railways, high sky buildings, and new motorways. They may also have futuristic flying vehicles that are controlled by AI.

The new silk road will connect all continents to contribute, not only Asian and European countries.

For Asia, countries like China and South Korea are contributing to the trade. China is famous for its tea and silk, so it can trade with different countries for their different kind of tea and silk.

For South Korea, their K-pop and K-drama culture is famous and could be something they trade with other countries.

Countries in Europe such as France and Switzerland have many goods that they can trade.

France is famous for its designer brands, and they can trade bags, clothes, shoes and jewelries.

Switzerland is known for its cheese and chocolate, which is wanted by many people in Asia.

For African countries like Egypt, it is famous for their Spices and their crafts.

The new silk road will be very beneficial to a lot of countries, as they will get to share their signatures like teapots, bakeries and many more.

They also can share cultural celebrities such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Christmas.

# The Tale of Two Silk Roads – Old and New

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chan, Yee Chun – 8*

A very, very long time ago—more than 2,000 years—China was ruled by the Han dynasty. They conquered a corridor in the northwest part of China and began trading with other countries in Central Asia. China was famous for making silk, a beautiful and shiny cloth. Because silk was the most popular thing to trade at the time, the path got its name: the Silk Road!

The Silk Road started in the ancient China capital, Chang'an (now called Xi'an). It went through scary deserts and over huge mountains into places like Xinjiang, Iran, and even Turkey and Egypt. But guess what? It wasn't really one road—it was a network of routes that traders used to travel between the East and the West.

Traders did not just carry silk and spices. They also shared ideas, art, and even religions as they traveled. Some people consider diseases like the Black Death also spread to Europe along the Silk Road.

Traveling on the Silk Road was really tough and dangerous. It wasn't like a fun vacation! Traders had to worry about robbers and cross death traps like deserts and mountains. Most traders did not go the whole way. Instead, they passed their goods to other traders along the way, like a very long relay race.

Over hundreds of years, the Silk Road had good times and bad times. It was the safest and busiest when the Mongols ruled the whole area during the Yuan dynasty. It made passing through the area safer and easier. However, when the Yuan Dynasty fell apart, and people started trading more by ship, the old Silk Road became less and less important.

Now, zoom ahead to 2013. China had a new idea called the “Belt and Road Initiative” — some people call it the New Silk Road. This isn't a real dirt road anymore. It is a plan to help countries work together and trade, just like in the old days. China helps other states build roads, trains, and schools. In return, they can trade with those countries and access part of their resources.

Today, more than 150 countries are part of this New Silk Road! That includes almost three-quarters of all the people in the world. Just like the old Silk Road brought the East and West together long ago, the New Silk Road aims to help countries share success together in the centuries to come.

# China's Silk Road

*Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lau, Sing Yuen Taylor – 8*

Over two thousand years ago, there was something called the Silk Road. It was not really one road, but many paths that connected China to many places like Europe and Africa. People walked and used horses to carry things like silk, tea, and spices. It was very important because it helped people share not only goods but also ideas, stories, and even new inventions.

Now, let's think about the future of the Silk Road. What could it look like if it came back again? I imagine it would be very different from the old days. Instead of camels and horses, there might be super-fast trains, large airplanes, and even flying drones carrying goods across countries. The Silk Road of the future could be like a giant web that connects the whole world together.

One big change I think could be technology. In the past, people needed to travel for months to deliver silk or spices. In the future, robots and drones might fly packages across deserts and oceans in just a few hours. Imagine ordering something from China and having it arrive the same day, that would make trading much faster and easier.

Another part of the future Silk Road could be about friendship. The old Silk Road helped people from different countries meet and learn about each other. In the future, it could be even more about sharing cultures. Children in China could send videos of their festivals to children in Africa, and children in Europe might share their favorite foods with us in Asia. The Silk Road could be like a giant friendship bridge across the world.

The future Silk Road might also care more about the Earth. In the past, people didn't worry too much about pollution but now we know that the planet needs to be protected. Maybe the new Silk Road will use green energy like solar power and wind power. Trains could run on electricity instead of coal, and ships could use cleaner fuel. This way, trading would not hurt the environment as much as before.

I also think the Silk Road of the future could go beyond Earth. What if people started trading with space stations or even other planets? Maybe astronauts on Mars will want silk clothes or tea from China. The Silk Road could become the Space Road, connecting Earth to other planets in space.

In conclusion, the Silk Road was very important in history, and its future could be even more amazing. It might have robots, drones, green energy, and even space travel. But the most important thing is that it will continue to connect people around the world by trading goods or sharing ideas, the Silk Road will always be about bringing the world closer together.

The future Silk Road is not just about trading goods, but about friendship, learning, and caring for our planet.

# A Bridge Between East and West

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Tarzan – 8*

Silk Road, a bridge between East and West, a network of ancient trade routes. It was not a single road. It was a complex system of paths. It connected East Asia with the Mediterranean world. It is a traffic route in the ancient times that connecting China and Eurasia.

However, It could date back to the second century B.C. . When a Chinese man called Zhang Qian. He was a Chinese imperial envoy during the Han Dynasty. He embarked on a business trip along the trade route. He introduced goods like grapes and alfalfa to China and silk to the West, thus forming the vital network known as the Silk Road.

Moreover, Silk Road focuses on the trade of silk just like its name. But actually not only silk. The ancient Silk Road was also used to transport items like tea and porcelain to faraway countries. Silk Road not only included merchandise, technology and culture passed though, but also some important inventions like gunpowder and printing techniques.

To conclude, the ancient Silk Road bears testimony to the profound friendship of the world .Its unique culture greatly influenced us .This is the valuable inspiration we have drawn form the Silk Road. It is really an amazing thing that it seems like a road of friendship between East to West of the world.

# Tales of the New Silk Road

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Xue Xian – 7*

Have you ever wondered what was the difference between the old and the new Silk Road?

The Old Silk Road was a vast, ancient network of trade routes connecting East Asia with the Middle East, Mediterranean and Europe. It is opened during Han dynasty which was around 130 BCE. It was active during the second century BCE to the fifteenth century, facilitating not just silk, but crucial exchanges of goods, like spices, gold, wool, precious metals and China's famous silk which is how it got its name. It also exchanged ideas, for example: Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, music and art etc... Furthermore, they exchanged technologies. Unfortunately, diseases and the fragmentation of the Mongol Empire and the beginning of maritime trade routes made it inactive.

The reason why we need to wait for so long for the New Silk Road is because it's a massive, complex geopolitical & infrastructural project facing huge delays from political pushback (like EU countries leaving), debt issues in partner nations, corruption, technical challenges, and geopolitical rivalries (especially with Russia in Central Asia), slowing its progress despite China's ongoing investment, making it a slow, contested transformation rather than a quick fix.

Now, let's talk about the New Silk Road!

The New Silk Road, which is also known as the One Belt One Road or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is a global infrastructure and economic development strategy of the government of the People's Republic of China. The ideas of the New Silk Road is to boost global trade and China's influence by building vast infrastructure like ports, railways, pipelines, and digital networks across Asia, Europe, and Africa, reviving ancient trade routes to create modern economic corridors, foster regional cooperation, ensure resource access, and enhance connectivity. The BRI is central to Chinese foreign policy, promoting trade connectivity and China's leadership role in global affairs. As of 2024, participating countries account for nearly 75% of the world's population and over half of global GDP. Supporters highlight its potential to boost global trade and growth, particularly in developing countries. It concerns about over environmental impact, human rights, and debt-related dependence.

In a nutshell, by comparing the two Silk Road and their history, although the Old and New Silk Road improves lives by poverty through infrastructure like (roads, ports, railways, hospitals, schools) and fostering development, especially in emerging economies, by improving connectivity, lowering trade costs, and providing access to new markets and essential services like healthcare.

# Top Ten Amazing Facts that You Must Know about the Silk Road

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Tam, Hiu Cheung Alistair – 9*

Top Ten Amazing Facts that you must know about the Silk Road:

1. The Silk Road is not a road but a group of trails or routes that stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to Eastern China which was 6400 kilometers or 4000 miles long.
2. Chinese traders and merchants who bought and sold goods started using the Silk Road more than 2000 years ago.
3. The Silk Road got its name from the material that was first traded along its routes: silk, a beautiful and soft cloth that the people in China knew how to make long ago. You can imagine rich people from far away countries wanted to buy silk to make beautiful clothes.
4. Over time, more goods and variety of goods were carried between China and Europe. Merchants brought jade, tea, spices, paper, ceramic jars and vases to Europe and glass, wool, silver and gold back to China.
5. Goods were not the only things that traded. Traders met up along the way, shared ideas, exchanged religions and cultures, discussed ideas and other subjects.
6. The Silk Road led travelers through many different countries. In Europe, the journey may begin in the port of Venice, Italy. Travelers chose their routes depending on what goods they wanted. Travelers in different places travelled by sea, by land, through deserts...on camels, donkeys or horses or by caravans or boats. You can imagine travelling was not as easy as you think!
7. It was also not that safe. Travelers bringing extremely precious or expensive goods were often robbed. Traveler would often travel in groups and as they needed to find food and shelter, special hotels or inns were built up along the Silk Road.
8. It is also believed that diseases were spread along the Silk Road and enslaved persons were traded, so not all was good!
9. One of the most famous person known to have travelled the Silk Road was Marco Polo, born in Venice, who travelled on the Silk Road with his father when he was just seventeen years old and wrote a book about his travels after he returned twenty-four years later. However, it was General Zhang Qian who is believed to be the first to travel the Silk Road.
10. Whilst the Silk Road is no longer used for trading, China's One Belt, One Road Initiative is regarded by some to be the modern "Silk Road".

# Famous Travelers on the Silk Road

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Yuan, Ka Him – 8*

The Silk Road was established about twenty –two centuries ago. It was an important network that allowed people to exchange wonderful goods, remarkable inventions, stunning art, and creative ideas between East and West. Many brave and curious travelers traversed the Silk Road, and their journey left a lasting mark on history.

Zhang Qian (Han Dynasty)

Zhang Qian was a renowned diplomat and traveler of the Han dynasty in China. In 139 BCE, the Chinese Emperor Wudi sent Zhang Qian west to make an alliance with the people of Central Asia. Zhang Qian left from Chang'an and headed westward. Early in his journey, he was captured by Xiongnu and held prisoner for over ten years. After escaping, he continued traveling westward to Central Asia. The people there were unwilling to ally with the Han Dynasty against Xiongnu. So Zhang Qian returned to China, he brought with invaluable knowledge of the cultures, goods and geography of Central Asia. He forged the Silk Road. Because of that, trade between East and West began to grow. Today Zhang Qian is often called the "Father of the Silk Road" for his role in bridging East and West.

Xuan Zang (Tang Dynasty)

Xuan Zang was a Buddhist monk during the Tang Dynasty. In 629 CE, he traveled westward along the Silk Road to seek the true teachings of the Buddha. He walked across deserts and climbed over snowy mountains, facing great danger many times. Finally, he arrived in India, the birthplace of Buddhism. After studying in India for over ten years, he brought back over 600 Buddhist books to China. The "Records of the Western Regions" was written by Xuan Zang, based on his extensive 17 years journey to India and Central Asia. This book is a very detailed record of the geography, cultures, peoples, languages, and religions of over a hundred lands he passed through. His journey was a very important event in the history of Buddhism, and it also had a profound impact on the culture, regions and knowledge exchanges along the Silk Road.

Marco Polo (Yuan Dynasty)

Marco Polo was an Italian traveler who lived during China's Yuan Dynasty . In 1271, when he was 17, he left Venice with his father and uncle. They traveled east along the Silk Road. After a gruelling journey of over three years, they finally arrived in China. China was more advanced than Europe in many ways. He saw people using paper money, burning coal for heat. Marco Polo was amazed by what he saw. During his time in China, he traveled to many places and learned about the way people lived there. After about 17 years, he went back to Italy. There he met a writer who turned Marco's stories of his travels into a book called *The Travels of Marco Polo*. This book was full of exciting stories about the East. It became one of the most famous travelogues of all time. For people in Europe, it was the first time they learned how rich and advanced China was. His book made many Europeans curious about Asia. This made many people in Europe want to travel along the Silk Road and explore the Asia.

There were many other famous travelers on the Silk Road, such as Fa Xian, Ibn Battuta, Odoric of Pordenone ...Even though they were from different countries and backgrounds, their footsteps linked the world together. They wrote the glorious chapters of the Silk Road history.

# The Silk Road

*St. Mary Canossian School, Wan Ying Jocelyn, Hon – 9*

The Silk Road was a trading route that you can buy and sell or trade. The Silk Road was also a route that connected East to the West. People from the west comes to China because at that time only China has technology to make Silk and others do not. People trade for food, clothing, money, metals and silk, as well as exchange of culture, music and religion. The Silk Road is not just one road but a long trade route that connected with different cities and countries. Silk road is so long it has to crosses seas with their boats and pass through Chang'an, Beijing, Dunhuang, India, Hotan, Aksu, Tyre and Nisa.

Zhang Qian was the first traveler of the Silk Road. He was born in Chenggu. He always wanted to explore the world, not just living in his village. He often looks farther, looking forward to other places. One day, he was chosen to serve Emperor Wu. He has been told to do some missions that he has to leave his family, his village and villagers. He carried his things and left China on the Silk Road. He was riding on a camel. He was not alone, there were about a hundred men in their party. They were ordered to find allies to help them to fight their enemy. Of course, it was not easy to do the mission at as the road in search for allies is long and difficult. The enemies caught Zhang and his [company as](#) their prisoner. Several men died in the prison. This was not expected for Zhang. After ten years staying in the moulded walls of the prison, they had escaped the jail. They continued their path and did not decide to return to China.

They travelled far away from the enemy. They went to Hotan and stayed for a few weeks. Then they went to Nisa. Nisa is a place where the road has a lot of sand. Those buildings were built with sand, water and bricks too. After some years in Nisa, they decided to travel back to China. Even though the Silk Road was really long, they never gave up. On the way back to China, they were caught by the enemy again. They managed to escape, but it wasn't easy. Only Zhang and another man managed to return to China. They could not finish the mission but Zhang had brought back more important things then he imagined. He bought the whole Silk Road's map and a lot of trade. Zhang Qian died two years later. Nowadays, he is a hero, the First explorer of the Silk Road that everybody could hardly remember.

If I were there, I would ride a strong horse that would carry me to Italy, India, Hotan, Merv, and do some trading, exploring the sea, discovery. Most of all, I would tell them what I thought and discovered. I would bring two horses and several men with me to attack enemies. I would not give up. I have to learn Zhang Qian how he and his company were like a team and how they never gave up. It is really sad that Zhang Qian could not finish his mission. I think he did his best already.

# The Enduring Legacy of China's Silk Road

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Wing Audrey, Yiu – 9*

The Silk Road, an ancient network of trade routes spanning Asia and Europe, represents one of history's most remarkable conduits for human connection. Emerging over 2,000 years ago, it transcended mere commerce to become an interconnection for exchanging exquisite foods, groundbreaking inventions, beautiful art, and innovative ideas between East and West. People were really curious and wanted to share with one another, so it felt like an exciting adventure around the world, connecting far-off places and changing things in amazing ways!

## **Pioneers of the Ancient Pathway**

This extraordinary linkage was spearheaded by the intrepid Chinese diplomat Zhang Qian. In 138 BC, he embarked from the imperial capital of Chang'an (modern-day Xi'an) on a daring westward quest. Traversing unforgiving deserts and territories held by adversaries, he endured captivity for over a decade before returning with invaluable insights into Western regions. His adventure mapped out the main path through Central Asia, encouraging traders to team up in safe camel groups and create a busy two-way trade road that made Chang'an the biggest city in the world.

## **A Tapestry of Cultural and Material Exchange**

Beyond silk and spices, the Silk Road pulsed with intellectual and cultural vitality. China exported porcelain and tea while importing glass and wool; crucially, its Four Great Inventions—paper, printing, gunpowder, and the compass—along with silkworm cultivation techniques, disseminated westward. Ideologically, Buddhism journeyed from India to China, while Christianity, Islam, Arab astronomy, and medicine flowed eastward, enriching societies on both ends. For more than 1,500 years, this pathway flourished, drawing in adventurers like the 13th-century Venetian traveler Marco Polo, whose stories sparked wonder across Europe. However, by the mid-1400s, safer sea routes and changing political landscapes caused it to slowly fade away.

## **The Revival: A Modern Renaissance**

In 2013, China revitalized this legacy through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), reimagining the Silk Road with contemporary infrastructure and partnerships. Encompassing land "belts" and maritime "roads," it has engaged over 150 nations, emerging as the largest international trade endeavor in history. Projects like the China-Laos Railway—a "Golden Avenue"—have slashed delivery times for goods, such as Thai durians reaching China in four days, while transporting over 34 million tons of cargo. From Pakistani highways to cultural exchanges like Arabic-dubbed Chinese media, the BRI fosters multifaceted collaboration.

## **Future Horizons: What the New Silk Road Could Achieve**

As the world advances amid growing globalization and faces major challenges like climate change, the BRI offers great promise in promoting sustainable growth and shared success for all. With multi-million investments, it can address infrastructure deficiencies in emerging economies, thereby enhancing global trade through improved connectivity between Asia and Europe and alleviating funding shortages in developing countries. Politically and economically, it may confer advantages to China while elevating regions in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia via upgraded infrastructure, designated economic zones, and strengthened cultural linkages. In the future, the BRI

could support green energy projects, foster international partnerships in public health, and drive inclusive economic progress, ultimately creating a more unified and robust global community.

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# Zhang Qian – founder of the Silk Road

*The French International School, Salnke, Aarav – 6*

Long time ago, nearly 2000 years ago, in ancient China, a fearless explorer Zhang Qian went on an amazing adventure. This helped him to open new way of the famous silk road which connects China with west countries.

Emperor Wu of China wanted explorers to find friends to help him. He wanted to protect his land from a group of fierce horse-riders called the Xiongnu. He asked for an explorer to travel far to the West. Zhang Qian was military officer, so he bravely stepped forward to complete the mission of Emperor Wu.

One day, Zhang Qian went with a team of 100 men. But soon after they started, they were captured by the Xiongnu. Zhang Qian was held in prison for 13 years. But he never gave up. Even though he lived for a long time with them and even got married, he never forgot his mission.

One day, Zhang Qian and his friends saw a chance to escape and ran away! Instead of going home to safety, he kept traveling West to finish his job. He crossed hot deserts and giant mountains until he reached new, beautiful lands like modern day Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Zhang Qian didn't find a new army to help the emperor, but he found things even better. He saw strong, beautiful horses that were much faster than Chinese horses. He discovered yummy things the Chinese had never seen, like grapes, cucumbers, garlic, walnuts. He saw people using special tools and wearing different clothes.

After 13 years away, Zhang Qian finally made it back home to the emperor. Out of the 100 men who started the trip, only he and his guide Ganfu returned. When Zhang Qian finally returned to China, he told the emperor about the wonderful people and things he found. Even though he didn't find the army he was looking for, Zhang Qian told the emperor about all the rich kingdoms he saw. The emperor was so excited that he started sending traders to these lands. This made people want to travel and trade with each other. They brought back the horses and seeds for new fruits, and in return, they traded China's most famous treasure – silk. This path became the Silk Road, a giant highway of friendship and trade that connected the whole world.

Today, Zhang Qian is remembered as a hero because he was brave enough to explore the unknown places and bring people together. Soon, long lines of camels called caravans were carrying beautiful silk from China to the West and bringing back gold and spices. Because of his bravery and for opening the doors between East and West, Zhang Qian is known today as the "Father of the Silk Road". He became the founder of the Silk Road. Because of his courage the Silk Road was created. This mission made him hero who connected the world from east to west.

From Zhang Qian's story, we should learn to be resilient and make a positive attitude to complete our mission. We all should be brave and never give up!

# Friends Across the Silk Road

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Chiu, Pak Shun Jensen – 7.8*

I am a travel enthusiast who loves making new friends. The Silk Road is like the biggest social club ever, where people from faraway places meet and share cool stuff. It started many years ago when brave Chinese folks walked super long ways west to sell silky cloth that felt like clouds. It was a hit! Soon, it became a two-way path connecting Europe to China.

The Silk Road was awesome because east and west swapped wonderful things. They traded yummy food like sweet peaches from China and grapes from far lands, inventions like paper to write stories and fireworks for parties, stunning art with painted dragons and golden statues, and creative ideas about math and music. This road stayed busy for more than 1,500 years, until new boats made it quiet in the 1400s. But in 2013, it came back as the Belt and Road project – the biggest trade team in history with 150 countries playing along!

The Silk Road is all about how people from different countries learn about each other and become buddies. Back then, a Chinese trader named Wang rode a camel across sandy deserts to a market in Persia. He met a girl called Atusa who was selling spices that smelt like magic. Wang showed her silk scarves that changed colours in the sun, and Atusa taught him to mix cinnamon into rice for a tasty treat. They laughed about their funny words – Wang said "ni hao" for hello, and Atusa said something in her language that meant the same. By trading, they learned that even if you live far away, you can share joys like festivals with dances and songs.

Another time in ancient Rome, a boy named Gaius got a box of Chinese paper from a Silk Road caravan. Before, he wrote on bumpy clay, but paper is smooth and fun! He started drawing magnificent pictures of the Colosseum. Gaius's dad, a glass maker, sent shiny blue bottles back east. When they arrived in China's Chang'an, Chinese artists used the glass to make pretty lamps that glowed like stars. The artists learned Roman designs with curly vines, mixing them with their own flower patterns. Children in both places heard tales from the traders, like how Romans built big roads or Chinese made kites that fly high. It made everyone curious and delightful.

Today, with the new Silk Road, learning is even faster with trains and internet. Picture a kid in Italy video-chatting with one in Kazakhstan about horses – the Italian shares pizza recipes, and the Kazakh shows how to ride across steppes like in old Silk Road days. Or in Africa, builders learn Chinese ways to make strong bridges, then teach back about colourful bead art.

The Silk Road teaches us that learning about others is like opening a treasure chest. Being a keen member of China's new generation, I will help revive the fabulous Silk Road so that everyone around the world can benefit and build friendship.

# Seeing Angkor Wat on the New Silk Road

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Hu, Zhaotong – 8*

I bought a beautiful new refrigerator magnet at Siem Reap Airport when I visited Cambodia during the Christmas break. It has a picture of Angkor Wat at sunset. My mom told me that China helped Siem Reap build the new airport, so I could travel to Cambodia. I can't imagine how far China is from Cambodia, and yet we can still help them.

## How Angkor Wat Was Built on the Silk Road

I know Angkor Wat is related to China because I saw Chinese people carved on the walls in the Bayon Temple in Angkor Wat. Chinese knights joined the Cambodian army to fight against other countries. Chinese businessmen and Cambodian people also traded silk, umbrellas, and gold with people who needed them.

Today, Angkor Wat is a peaceful place for tourists to visit, but in ancient times it was a very crowded place on the Silk Road.

## How China Helped Restore Angkor Wat

Today, China is still connected to Siem Reap. A tour guide told me that China helped restore one of my favorite temples, Beng Mealea. I think Beng Mealea needs repairs because some bricks are falling down and trees block people's paths. China helped study Beng Mealea and design a plan to restore it. China even sent a team to repair parts of Beng Mealea.

After Angkor Wat was restored, Cambodia became a much more popular country for tourists. This is China's contribution to the New Silk Road.

## Why China Helped Build the New Airport

The old airport was only 5 km away from Angkor Wat, so airplane operations could damage the temple. China helped build the new airport to protect Angkor Wat. Now many more people can fly to Cambodia, even someone like me.

The new airport is very beautiful. I could see people from many different countries, and I could even see Angkor Wat from the windows. With the new airport, Cambodia is connected to China's New Silk Road.

## How I Made Friends with Cambodian People

I could visit Cambodia because of the new airport and the restoration of Angkor Wat. I met many Cambodian people, including a tour guide. He was very kind. When my family forgot my bag on the lake, he told the boat driver to bring it back to us.

From this trip, I learned that Cambodian people are very nice to people from other countries. I even made many friends in Cambodia.

My trip to Cambodia is connected to the New Silk Road because I saw the beautiful Angkor Wat, and China helped build the new airport so I could arrive in Cambodia. I had a great time because Angkor Wat was restored, and I enjoyed my trip very much. I want to visit more countries so I can also become part of China's New Silk

Road. When I am older, I want to visit Cambodia again and see more connections between China and Angkor Wat.

# Marco Polo and The Silk Road

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Li, Muchen – 8*

Did you know that thousands of years ago, China started building the world's longest trading route called the Silk Road? This route allowed China and many far-off countries to trade valuable items, including a rare and precious fabric first made in China – Silk. When merchants from other countries discovered it, they named the route the Silk Road, which then attracted many foreigners to visit China. A young man named Marco Polo became famous for embarking on an adventure along the Silk Road.

Marco Polo was a Venetian Merchant and explorer who enjoyed going on adventures with his dad. He was born in 1254, when the only ways to travel were by ships, camels, horses, donkeys, or on foot. At age 17, his dad thought Marco was old enough to undertake a more challenging quest, so he took Marco to the Silk Road, hoping to trade with China. The Journey started from their hometown, Venice, and went through Persia, Samarkand, the Pamir Mountains, the Taklamakan Desert to Beijing in China.

Despite the difficulties in traveling they encountered, such as extreme weather, brutal environments, and life-threatening diseases, Marco also experienced significant cultural shock when he first reached China. He struggled to understand the language and adjust to the food, which made him feel incredibly homesick and lonely.

However, after spending months there, he became fascinated by his new discoveries, such as paper money which Europeans had never used before, gorgeous porcelain with magnificent patterns, unique spices, and, of course, silk! He developed a strong desire to learn about the country. Marco and his dad ultimately stayed in China for a total of 17 years, serving the Chinese emperor Kublai Khan.

During that time, he was a trusted messenger, advisor, and administrator for the emperor. His duties included visiting other countries, collecting new information, reporting back to the king, and importing valuable goods. Marco became Kublai Khan's favorite servant because the emperor loved hearing his stories!

When Marco returned to Venice, he shared his magnificent stories with the whole town, but most people doubted him and were not convinced. Later, he wrote a journal called "The Travels of Marco Polo." The book soon became world famous, educating others about the Silk Road and different cultures.

While Marco was not the only person to travel the entire Silk Road, he was the first to leave his story behind. When Marco Polo died at age 69 in 1324; his last words were, "I have not told half of what I saw, for I knew I would not be believed."

And that was the story of Marco Polo and the Silk Road – a road full of history and cultures!

# The Silk Road: A Journey from Past to Future

*YK Pao School Shanghai, Chen, Yi An – 8*

The Silk Road only became known as The Silk Road in the 19th century, but the history of the route stretches back thousands of years.

Around 2000 years ago, Rome and China wanted direct travel between them because they wanted to trade. However, the Parthians were in the middle of the two great empires, and tried to stop them. The Romans then developed the Maritime Silk Road, which went across the sea just around the Parthians.

By around the 13th century, it became much easier to travel from China to Europe by land. However, the Silk Road was not only one main road. There were many branches of the Silk Road spread around the world. The main route started by going along the Great Wall, then continued to spread into the Taklamaken Desert, over the Pamir Mountains, and through Central Asia to Rome.

Around that time, explorers and merchants like Marco Polo began to travel along the Silk Road. Marco Polo was one of the greatest explorers of his time. He was famous for traveling from Venice along the Silk Road to China and working for Kublai Khan, who was the first Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty. Marco Polo stayed in and travelled around China for many years. He learned the Chinese language and was fascinated by the cities, culture, luxury and wealth of the country. Moreover, Marco Polo's journey on the Silk Road inspired an informative book called The Book of the Marvels of the World which opened a window for the West to the knowledge of the East.

Despite its name, silk was not the only product that was traded on the Silk Road. Recipes like dumplings, pilaf, noodles, and ice cream were traded too, as well as other foods such as onions and carrots. Valuables such as porcelain, medicine, tea, camels, glass, gold and silver were also bought and sold. The Silk Road made trading easier, and global trade flourished.

It was not just goods that flowed along the Silk Road; arts, technology, and knowledge did as well. Stories like Aladdin were developed first in Kashgar, China and spread along the Silk Road. Religions such as Christianity and Buddhism also traveled along the route. China's four great inventions—gunpowder, compass, paper and printing were too transported along the Silk Road, to the Middle East and Europe.

The Silk Road is a pathway of globalization. In recent years, China is working on developing a new “Silk Road”. While camel caravans have been replaced by China–Europe freight trains, more roads, railways and ports are being built to connect China with many countries in Asia, Africa and Europe. Nowadays, the trade of goods and products, and the sharing of cultures and ideas, are becoming more convenient and efficient.

China's Silk Road is a journey from the past to the future, and it is booming again. It bridges the eras, helps the world become more connected, and improves the lives of people all over the world.

# The True Story Of The Silk Road

*YK Pao School Shanghai, Teng, Huang Fei – 8*

## Introduction

The Silk Road was a very long friendly trading highway which got sea routes and routes on land. The overland stretches over 6500km from Europe to China, of course they even trade things during the route like gems and a lot of different valuable spices. It also connects China and the west to diverse on their culture. Of course, if you want to learn more then read on, it will be very interesting.

## Zhang Qian

The inventor of the Silk Road, called Zhang Qian, the time he was exploring was at Western Han Dynasty. His first exploration had been uncompleted. But Zhang Qian and his friends never gave up. After that he began his second exploration with his Mans with Han emperor's help. He took silk and gold coins with him. They crossed through the hot, Gobi Desert. At this time, they have no time to stop, they walked through riverbeds, climbed slippery mountain streams. Sometimes they even got only a little bit food and water. But finally, they reached Wusun safely.

## Marco Polo

At Yuan Dynasty there was an explorer from Venice, Italy called Marco Polo, he was born in 1254 and died in 1324, his exploration time is between 1271–1295. Marco Polo took oil from a lamp. It was a gift for Kublai Khan. However, he did know that the route he travelled was very famous, but the trip was hard; it was an old set of a trade route. They started from Europe. They also faced storms and sickness, and they climbed the steep slopes of the Pamir mountains, the highest peak was near China, India and Pakistan. They used camels to cross the Gobi Desert. On their way there was a sandstorm and some pirates that troubled most of the travelers, however the Polo escaped safely. During the travel, they went with other merchants to keep safe but sometimes they went by themselves. During, their road to Hormuz, the area is ruled by the Mongols. They travelled to Baghdad it was the most beautiful place in India at that time. The horses and donkeys had a great price in India; a donkey was worth 30 pieces of silver. They had done many trades on their trip.

## Vienna Cammarota

There was a modern explorer called Vienna Cammarota. She was born in 1949 who had been the oldest person who had travelled through the Silk Road. She went through the Silk Road because that she was deeply interested in history and archaeology. She used to be a tour guide when she wasn't retired. She started in April, 2022. During April, 2022 – Nov, 2024 she travelled through 8 countries in European and 7 countries in China.

## Conclusion

I write this essay to tell you that how the Silk Road is. Let more people know the famous people that had walk through Silk Road. Maybe one day I will travel on the Silk Road with warm heart.

# Echoes Across the Ocean: The Living Legacy of Zheng He in Africa

*YK Pao School Shanghai, Zhu, Kiu Yin Norah – 9*

Do you believe there are Chinese descendants in Africa? What if I told you these descendants have lived on African soil for over 600 years? And isn't it remarkable that, across centuries and continents, they never stopped searching for their roots in China?

In 2004, a girl named Sharif wrote a letter to the Chinese Embassy in Kenya, claiming she was a descendant of Zheng He(郑和)'s sailors. Sharif came from Siyu Village on Pate Island, an isolated community home to more than a thousand residents, many of whom bear striking physical resemblances to southern Chinese people. Oral history tells that, in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Zheng He's fleet reached the East African coast, two of his ships were wrecked in a storm near Pate island. Around twenty Chinese sailors survived and made landfall on the island. They earned the local people's respect by killing a monster python. Unable to return to their motherland, the sailors integrated into the local community, married islanders, and started new lives. Over time, their presence left subtle but lasting traces. Some families still preserve shards of ancient Chinese porcelain, believed to have been carried by their ancestors. In the letter, Sharif expressed her wish to visit China.

The Chinese ambassador took Sharif's request seriously. In 2005, at the age of 19, Sharif fulfilled her dream. She got admitted to the Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, becoming the first Kenyan student at this institution. After graduation, rather than staying in China for better opportunities, she returned to Kenya to serve her people as a doctor – mirroring her ancestors' legacy of compassion and service.

Sharif's story is more than a tale of lineage; it's a testament to what heritage truly means. Despite centuries of separation, these descendants held onto a quiet, persistent longing to reconnect with their ancestral homeland. For the Chinese, family and origin are sacred. No matter how far one travels, the question "Where do I come from?" remains central to identity. This story also embodies the deeper meaning of the Silk Road. Yes, it was once a network for trading silk, spices, and porcelain. But its true legacy lies in the exchange of cultures, values, and human connections. Six hundred years ago, Zheng He brought treasures to Africa – but his stranded sailors left behind something even more enduring: resilience, compassion, and integrity. These intangible gifts took root, merged with local traditions, and continue to live on in the hearts and lives of people like Sharif.

Today, the silk has faded. The spices have long since vanished. The porcelain lies broken. But the spirit of those who sailed so far endures – not in museums or textbooks, but in living communities where memory outlives material things. The story of Pate Island reminds us that the greatest legacy of the Silk Road is not what was traded, but what was shared – and remembered.



Creative Writing  
**Non-Fiction**

Group 1

## The Silk Road

*Lei Muk Shue Catholic Primary School, Lee, On Yi – 9*

The Silk Road was an important ancient route that linked Eastern and Western civilizations, which started in China's Han Dynasty. It stretched from ancient Chang'an to the Mediterranean, crossing countless difficulties over long distances and connecting many countries.

Long ago, merchants took Chinese silk, tea and porcelain to the West via this road, and brought back foreign spices, jewels and crops to China. It was more than a trade road; it also helped spread cultures and technologies between the East and the West. Chinese great inventions went to the West, and western cultures entered China, making different nations know each other better.

## Zhang Qian and the Silk Road

*The King's School Qianhai Shenzhen, Gu, Dastan – 7*

Zhang Qian went to the Silk Road. When he went to the middle of the Silk Road, he was captured. He was caught for ten years. After ten years, he continued the Silk Road adventure.

Sometimes Zhang Qian saw bad guys, and the bad guys stole Zhang Qian's things, but Zhang Qian was not afraid. Zhang Qian went all across the Silk Road. Zhang Qian asked the King of Rome if they could help China defeat the bad guys, but the King of Rome said they couldn't help them. Zhang Qian was very sad and went back to the Silk Road, but this time Zhang Qian knew he would find a road to get back. However, he was still caught by the bad guys.

This time, the king of the bad guys took Zhang Qian to a place that had a lot of sheep. The king of the bad guys said, "If you can make these sheep have more sheep, you can go." But Zhang Qian knew all the sheep were boys. He stayed there for one year. If he was hungry, he ate some leaves. One night, Zhang Qian took his camel and left in the morning.

Zhang Qian went back to China. The people were happy that Zhang Qian was back. Zhang Qian told the master all of his story. He brought some horses back, and the people gave Zhang Qian a big party.

## The Black Death

*The King's School Qianhai Shenzhen, Hu, Eliza – 7*

In the 1260s, the Black Death spread along the whole Silk Road. It was not just trade and conquest that flowed along the Silk Road—disease did, too. The most devastating one was the Black Death, which ravaged the Silk Road in the fourteenth century. People used the network to trade things like gold, silk, and spices. Tiny fleas that lived on rats and camels also spread along the routes. These fleas carried a bad sickness. When they bit people, those people got sick too. The sickness moved fast across many countries because of travelling. It originated from Asia and spread through coughing and sneezing. Around two hundred million died because of poor sanitation in the cities.

The huge number of deaths meant not many people came to the Silk Road. There were not many people in the factories. The lack of medicine led doctors to come up with other medicine ideas. Soon, the Black Death went away. The end.

# Silk Road Wonderings

*The King's School Qianhai Shenzhen, Luen, Benson – 8*

Have you ever wondered why people call it the Silk Road? It's not just a road. It was a route for many travellers in old days. People used it to trade things with other countries. China mostly traded silk, but they also traded cloth and other goods, such as wheat, tea, and precious stones.

A really big thing happened on the Silk Road. It was called the Black Death. More than 75 million people died in the 1350s because it spread so fast. People were scared, but some people still believed in themselves and kept travelling and trading. That's how the Silk Road became important in history.

The Silk Road lasted for a very long time. Many people, like traders and soldiers, travelled on it. There were robbers who tried to steal precious goods from travellers, so soldiers protected them. Some people even got sick along the way. There were caravansaries every 20 to 25 miles so travellers could rest. Monks also established temples along the way, where people could pray for good luck and safety.

Now, let's imagine we are in the future! In 2026, I saw road builders laying train tracks along the Silk Road. Suddenly, a newspaper blew past me, and I caught it. "Hey kid, you shouldn't be here!" one of the builders shouted. The newspaper showed that the Silk Road now has trains! Some trains can travel all the way to Rome, and some even have robots inside!

Then there were loud noises like hammers—boom, boom! Suddenly, a sandstorm came and everyone, including the road builders, fled away. "Run! The sandstorm is coming!" shouted one of the builders. I jumped into my time machine and travelled to the year 4530. There were flying cars and tall buildings everywhere. The Silk Road looked so different, but people were still travelling and trading, just in new ways!

The Silk Road has a really long history, from the past to the future! I find it amazing. The travellers who travelled on the Silk Road were very brave, and they inspired us to be brave too.

# Zhang Qian and the Silk Road

*The King's School Qianhai Shenzhen, Yang, Akira – 8*

Over two thousand years ago during the Han Dynasty, a man named Zhang Qian was sent to the West. He went through big mountains and rivers. Sometimes he felt hungry. Sometimes he got captured, but Zhang Qian never gave up. He finally found a way to the western regions and connected the East with the West.

From then on, China's silk, porcelain and tea were sent to far away western countries through this road. They love Chinese silk. They thought it was light, soft, and smooth to touch. Meanwhile, spices, glass and grapes from the West made life in China more colourful.

Later, during the Eastern Han Dynasty, there was another great man named Ban Chao, who worked to reopen the Silk Road, which had been blocked for many years. His efforts made the road wider and allowed even more countries to trade with China.

The Silk Road was not just for trade caravans; it was also a way to share culture and knowledge. Through this road, China shared many inventions with the world, like silk-making, pottery, paper-making, and iron-smelting. They became even busier. The monk Yuan Zang travelled West along the Silk Road to India to Buddhist scriptures. When he returned, he wrote a book called *Records of the Western Regions*. It described the people and places he saw, full of fascinating stories.

During the Yuan Dynasty, an Italian traveller named Marco Polo came to China along the Silk Road. He travelled in China for many years, and later wrote a book called *The Travels of Marco Polo*. The book described China.

The Silk Road was not just a trade route, it was also a bridge of friendship and culture. It helped people from different countries understand and help each other, making the world a better place. Many Chinese people and people from other countries like this long road, and now the Silk Road has changed into what it's becoming in future – a great train line.

The story of the Silk Road tells us we need to be brave and believe in ourselves – if you believe in yourself, you will be better and better. Zhang Qian was very brave, if he was not brave, he would never have crossed the Silk Road. After Zhang Qian came back, he told lots of people about the Silk Road story and the king liked Zhang Qian so much he held a big party for him. They thought Zhang Qian to be a hero. If Zhang Qian was alive today, I'd like to listen to his stories also.



# Non-fiction

Group 2

# A Path of Discovery on the Silk Road

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Chiu, Ying Chi Charmaine – 10*

Ever since I was a small child, I was always drawn by the history topics my relatives discussed at the 'adult table' during family dinners. I couldn't help but eagerly grab a chair to listen and ask questions curiously. One of the topics I have always been interested in is the Chinese Silk Road.

What was the Silk Road?

The Chinese Silk Road was an ancient and expansive Asian network that was established during China's Han Dynasty, but the network was also largely initiated by Zhang Qian, a Chinese explorer. Zhang Qian was a Chinese explorer and he is also regarded as "Father of the Silk Roads" due to his contributions.

How and why did the Silk Road start?

More than 2000 years ago, Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty had conflicts with some nomads called the Xiongnu. To fight back, Emperor sent Zhang Qian, a diplomat and explorer, on a mission to the West to find allies who were also having similar problems with the Xiongnu. After Zhang Qian set off from Xi'An, he unfortunately did not complete his mission successfully. Instead, he made some new friends from Central Asia and started trading a large variety of goods and items considered very luxurious back then. The Silk Road involved numerous countries across Asia, such as China, Iran, Iraq, and many more. It is remarkable that people from ancient times could be so successful considering the fact that they only relied on translators to communicate with one another.

Who was the first and last person to do the journey?

Zhang Qian, recognised as the first major traveller of the Silk Road, and embarked on a perilous and treacherous journey. He had to go through slow, difficult and life-threatening adventures, mostly relying on camels, horses and by foot! Imagine travelling for 4000 miles or more — without any phones or electronic devices to call for help when in danger. Although Zhang Qian had some stopping points along the journey, it wasn't certain whether he would survive through the night. A few of the seemingly never-ending obstacles that he had to face during the journey were braving bleak, deserted deserts, high mountains, and the continuously changing weathers, from being so hot that you thought you were going to melt to almost freezing to death on a snow-capped mountain, and that wasn't even the worst of it! To add on the difficulty, the first time Zhang Qian went on the journey, he travelled with a large group, but nevertheless, the Xiongnu still managed to kidnap the group and keep them as hostages for over a decade. During those times, most of the group's people had already died from starvation or depression, but Zhang Qian stayed resilient, quietly thinking of an escape route while working for the enemy. Soon enough, the Xiongnu had trusted Zhang Qian so much that they even gave him orders to go out and capture people, giving him a free chance to escape from that terrible, mortifying place. His resilience transformed failure into discovery, laying the foundation for one of history's greatest trade networks.

However, the last significant people of the ancient Silk Road were various merchants, caravans, and travellers from Asia, the Middle East and Europe, although the specific last person to do the journey wasn't recorded in history. However, arguably the most famous western traveller to do the journey of the Silk Road was the well-known Marco Polo, whose journeys with his father in the 13th century was quite prominent. Marco became very observant after travelling to China; since he was a merchant, he meticulously noticed goods and new innovations that Europe had never seen before, such as paper currency and coal, which gave Europe a crucial source of information. Marco Polo even learned new languages and served Kublai Khan, a former emperor of the Yuan Dynasty effectively for 17 years, gaining some inside knowledge and perspectives on the Mongol Empire even though he was European! Besides those achievements, Marco even wrote a book, introducing a network of trade routes connecting Europe to Asia, and even inspired many explorers to look for a way to sail there.

In conclusion, the Silk Road was more than a path for silk and spices—it was a bridge between worlds. Zhang Qian's resilience lit the first spark, and Marco Polo's curiosity carried it across continents. What began as a mission against nomads grew into a network that shaped history, connecting cultures, ideas, and innovations. For me, the Silk Road is not just an ancient story—it's a reminder of why I was drawn to history in the first place. Those family dinner conversations taught me that curiosity can open doors, just as Zhang Qian and Marco Polo opened routes across Asia.

# New Tales of China's Silk Road

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Ip, Wing Hei – 10*

China's silk road was known for being one of the most remarkable and important journeys in Asia history. It has remained very popular for around fifteen decades, finally disappearing afterwards. However, it was soon revived after about six hundred years and immediately became the largest trade project internationally in world history.

About twenty-two centuries ago, Emperor Wu of Han sent Zhang Qian, a wise and kind diplomat to the western regions in central Asia, such as Persia and the Roman Empire. The major point of the trip was to find allies against the Xiongnu, establishing diplomatic ties and securing routes.

However, instead of finding allies, when they reached the places, the local people loved their silk and requested to buy them. Afterwards, they kicked off the mission of finding allies and started trading culture and economy. The trading went smoothly as they exchanged the culture.

Chinese people led countless goods like ceramic and porcelain techniques, jade, tea, papermaking process, gunpowder, spices and lacquerware, and of course, most importantly, silk. Meanwhile, they received in return items such as horses, crops, woollen products, musical instruments like er hu, Hu dance acrobatics and other cultural arts, Buddhism and other religions.

However, they faced tons of challenges and difficulties, such as environmental and geographic hazards as they had gone through dry deserts and icy and high mountain ranges like the Pamir and Tien Shan. They also faced a disturbing difficulty – health and social issues, as the movement of people was uneasy.

The most significant and tragic challenge was the spread of diseases like smallpox, measles and the bubonic plague which caused the mission to be even more difficult.

After this trip, Chinese people joyfully presented their amazing products they bought in middle-east Asia. Similarly, the Western people showcased their new findings, sharing culture among everyone in Asia. Even though they failed the mission to find allies, the emperor was still satisfied with everything they had done throughout the journey.

Unfortunately, the Silk Road was declined due to the rise of safer and cheaper routes by bypassing costly overland taxes and dangers, spurred by European explorers finding sea routes to Asia as the Ottoman Empire's control led to high taxes and tolls. Meanwhile, the Ming Dynasty reduced engagements with western land routes.

After the journey, they learnt that western people loved Chinese culture, especially the silk. It was long, shiny and smooth, and it was absolutely incomparable. Also, they learnt a lot about western culture. They finally understood religious beliefs, artistic styles, scientific knowledge, and also tried to learn how to play er hu, finally changing it into a Chinese instrument. Meanwhile, they first met crops like grapes, walnuts, cucumbers, sesame and a lot more other food.

This journey changed our daily lives, our culture, our thoughts, our minds. Otherwise, we wouldn't have such amazing religions and arts, or delicious grapes and cucumbers, and advanced technology or knowledge. Without this journey, we wouldn't have much passion or fellowship, knowledge or thoughts.

Apart from the positive impacts, diseases also traveled along the routes, as the disease bubonic plague spread from central Asia to other parts of Asia and Europe, including China, killing millions. Also, there were bandits and security risks as travellers often faced violent attacks and loss of goods. Similarly, there were also negative impacts like harsh travel conditions; they faced extreme climates that caused starvation, dehydration and adaption, leading

to death. Sadly, they also faced cultural clashes as the mixing of cultures sometimes caused misunderstandings, cultural loss, or forced assimilation.

The China Silk Road, a well-known international journey, has brought back world history, knowledge and both positive and negative impacts to our country. It has changed our lives as they teach us more and more knowledge and history about the Silk Road of China. The history of middle-east Asia and China has lasted endless decades, and it will go even further soon.

# The Past and Present of Silk

*Discovery Mind Primary School, Davis, Nolan – 10*

Known as one of the most important networks of routes in the world, the silk route connected China and Western Countries and enabled trade. The name “Silk Route” came about because “silk” was one of the most valuable items used in trade. The Silk Route was most prominent during the Han Dynasty (206–220 BCE) and Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) in China and Mongol Khante in the 13th and 14th centuries. A German geographer names Ferdinand Richtofen gave this route its name. The Silk Route was crucial for spreading not only trade but also culture, technology, art and even diseases. All this had a huge impact on humankind.

The Silk Road started at the old capital of China, Lau Yang and Xian. The Silk Road crossed the yellow river also known as Huang He and Lan Zhou, followed by the Gansu corridor also known as Hexi corridor. The Silk Road reached Xin Jiang and parted 3 ways, 2 went north and 1 went south to the Tian Shang mountains. The network of roads eventually connected, making their journey to the west through countries like Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq ultimately connecting to the major European cities such as Constantinople and Rome. This linked the trade networks of the east with the Mediterranean and Europe spreading goods, culture and technology.

Trade activity was noticed about 4000 years ago in Xin Jiang between 1046 to 1600 BC. Jade and Silk were very popular at this time in many countries as part of the silk route. In many Egyptian tombs the evidence of silk has been found which proves this theory. Around 600 BC gold was also popular because of its rarity and worth in Eurasia. The countries active in the silk route include Greece, Persia, Yuezhi and Qin state. At the time the Qin state had control over the Gansu corridor.

The silk route also spread ideas, culture and technology. Religious like Buddhism spread from India into Central Asia and China. Islam and Christianity were also famous religious in the Silk Route. The technology and inventions were valuable for countries in the Silk Route like gun powder, paper making and printing. This made Chinese goods spread like wildfire growing their income.

During the time of the Silk Route, there were many legends and real-life incidents, such as the legend of the smuggling wilk worm eggs from China. Some Byzantine monks risked their lives stealing silkworm eggs from China. They hid it inside their bamboo sticks. The monks took it all the way to Byzantine to grow silkworms. Other events include the tales of the 13th century, Marco Polo. He was a venetian merchant and explorer who traveled all the way to Asia to write a diary on his journey. The Silk Road was also connected to the tragic Black Death. The Black Death spread from Asia all the way to Europe causing the death of thousands of people.

Around 1453 AD, the long and prosperous days of the silk route were over. One of the main reasons why the silk route came to an end, is because of the Ottoman Empire’s conquest of Constantinople. This led to the closure of roads in that region, so Europe had to find another way to reach the east. Also, the silk route became more dangerous because of bandits and thieves, trade was becoming more difficult. Adventurers found different ways to travel like the sea. So, most countries used seas instead of land.

After the Silk Route ended in BCE 206–220, China introduced the Belt and Road initiative on September 7th, 2013. Xi Jin Ping, the president of China initiated this, and this came to be known as the new Silk Road. The Belt and Road initiative (BRI) is aimed at investing in more than 150 countries. The BRI invests in many countries to develop their infrastructure. Some of the examples of the BRI includes China giving a big investment to Sri Lanka for an airport for 12.1 billion US Dollars. Chinas also invested in Pakistan to make a dam for 68 billion Dollars. Other infrastructure projects include Jakarta–Bandung in Indonesia, which is Southeast Asia’s first high speed rail line. YIWU–Madrid railways is the world’s longest freight railway route, integrating with the new Eurasian land bridge. Other projects of the BRI are in the energy sector like Yamal LNG project in the Russian Arctic region and many others. BRI is also investing in other sectors such as Health care and renewable energy projects.

China’s BRI has some pros and cons. The pros are that the BRI is helping with China’s growth with trade routes across the world and that they are increasing their investment and income. The cons are that some countries are in debt because most of the infrastructure projects that China invested in are not profitable and have made very

little impact in their economy. This has led to the countries not being able to pay back China and they are currently in debt to China. Most people believe that BRI should change their strategy from their large investments in infrastructure projects. They should work on more sustainable and digital projects. They could also make smaller investments in such projects so BRI can improve financially.

Can we expect BRI's new tales to be as promising as the Old Silk Road and will it make an impact as the earlier Silk Route? Will China's BRI make a difference in the world and make China the biggest economy in the world. Only time will tell.

# The Silk Road

*Discovery Mind Primary School, Gwen Asis, Natalie – 9*

The Story of the Chinese Silk Road is about a vast ancient Network of trade routes that linked East and West from 130 BCE to 1453 CE its foundation was the Han Dynasty's official opening of trade, which facilitated the exchange of goods like silk, spices, and paper from China for horses, glassware and other resources from the west. Beyond trade, the routes were a conduit for cultural and religious diffusion most notably the spread of Buddhism from India to China and artistic ideas across continents. The silk road may have formally opened up trade between the far east and Europe during the Han Dynasty. The Silk Road is over 2100 years old, officially established around 130 BCE during China's Han Dynasty to connect the East with the West for trade and cultural exchange. It was not a single road but a network of routes that remained active around 1453 CE, when the Ottoman Empire closed off trade with the west. However, throughout the history of these routes a number of goods have been introduced to China via the Silk Roads. These have included types of fruits, crops, herbs, and spices as well as various medicines. But the medieval superhighway also has a darker, lethal legacy. It enabled the first great pandemics – the plague known as the black Death – to spread along its route and eventually reach the edge of Europe, where it killed more than 50 million people. Whilst the entirety of the silk road is no longer in existence you can still experience it by visiting major modern cities and historic towns across Asia.

The Silk Road is over 2000 years old, with its informal establishment during China's Han Dynasty in 130 B.C.E when trade with the west began. However, the routes themselves have a much older, prehistoric origin, with evidence of human migration and exchange occurring over 50,000 years ago, long before the silk trade began. Between February 2011 and July 2013, the site facilitated sales amounting to 9,519,664 bitcoins. Shut down by the FBI in October 2013. Silk Road 2.0 shut down by FBI and Europol on 6 November 2014. In October 2013, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) shut down on the silk road website and arrested Ulbricht.

Whilst there are advantages of the silk road, there are also negative impacts like spread of diseases. One of the worst significant infectious diseases is the Bubonic Plague that spread along the Silk Road. Though it could have been transmitted via northern routes through Mongolia and Russia or Southern routes through India, the Silk Road provided a crucial pathway for its spread. Anthrax and leprosy are a disease that was also spread between East Asia and Europe along the silk road. Cholera is severe bacterial disease was another of the East and West during the Middle Ages. Tick borne encephalitis was a viral disease that was another of the diseases that spread across the Silk Road.

Other diseases include Smallpox whose spread is associated with the Silk Road. Public health measures like variolation, an early form of vaccination, were used to combat it. Behcet's disease is a chronic inflammatory disorder that is linked to the silk road through the spread of genetic variants. It is most common in regions like Turkey and Iran and has multiple manifestations including oral ulcers, skin lesions, and eye inflammation.

# Journey Through Time: Exploring the Secrets of China's Silk Road

*Discovery Mind Primary School, Kleigh Balot, Xandre – 10*

A Chinese explorer named Zhang Qian is often called the Father of Silk Road. His travels opened the way for trade between China and its western neighbors. The Silk Road was a vast trade network connecting Eurasia and North Africa via land and sea routes. The Silk Road earned its name from Chinese Silk, a highly valued commodity that merchants transported along these trade networks. The original Silk Road, which was a network of trade routes connecting the East and West from around 130 BCE to the 1450s CE, played a significant role in facilitating cultural exchanges between diverse civilizations. Figures like Zhang Qian, a Han diplomat, played a pivotal role in this exchange, facilitating the flow of goods such as silk, spices and precious stones, alongside knowledge in fields such as science, medicine, and philosophy.

The Silk Road, a vast network of trade routes established during the Han Dynasty, is often celebrated for its profound impact on cultural exchange and commerce. Pioneering traders, travelers, and emissaries from various civilizations embarked on this arduous journey, seeking not only material wealth but also intellectual and cultural enrichment. Among the earliest travelers were Chinese envoys and merchants, who ventured westward to establish diplomatic ties and trade relationships with Central Asian states, Persian dominions, and eventually the Roman Empire.

The influences of the Silk Road on Cultural Exchanges was primarily a trade network where goods such as silk, spices, tea and precious stones were exchanged. However, alongside these tangible products, ideas, religions, and technologies also traveled. This exchange led to the spread of Buddhism from India to East Asia, the introduction of Persian and Greek philosophies to China, and vice versa. As traders and travelers moved through various regions, languages and literary traditions were shared and influenced one another. This resulted in the assimilation of vocabulary, literary forms, and storytelling techniques across cultures.

Historically, the original Silk Road was instrumental in the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures between East and West, enabling not just economic transactions but also intercultural dialogue. The contemporary iteration echoes this legacy, presenting opportunities for countries to learn from one another, share technological advancements, and collaborate on pressing global challenges such as climate change and public health. As countries engage in cooperative projects along this route, they cultivate a sense of mutual benefit and respect. This growing interdependence may foster peace and stability, helping to bridge political and ideological divides. In essence, the New Silk Road holds the potential to create a more interconnected and harmonious world, underscoring the enduring importance of cultural exchange amid globalization.

The New Silk Road, officially known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects ever conceived. Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping. He announced the initiative during official visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in 2013. The plan was two-pronged: the overland Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. The two were collectively referred to first as the One Belt, One Road initiative but eventually became the Belt and Road Initiative. This New Silk Road has the potential to reshape global trade dynamics in an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and shifting geopolitical landscapes. Some analysts see the project as an unsettling extension of China's rising power the costs of many of the projects have skyrocketed, opposition has grown in some countries.

Looking back on the past decade, under the framework of the BRI, almost 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have signed cooperation agreements with China. They have pushed the realization of over 3,000 infrastructure projects like railways, industrial park projects, and livelihood projects such as school and hospital, which span Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including some developed countries. The BRI has not only yielded tangible cooperation benefits for all parties involved but also provided a new pathway for global governance, bringing forward a China plan for global mutual benefits.

The goals of the BRI were officially presented for the first time in a 2015 document, the Vision and Actions on Jointly Building and Road. It outlines six economic corridors for trade and investment connectivity would be implemented. The BRI develops new markets for Chinese firms, channels excess industrial capacity overseas, increases China's access to resources, and strengthens its ties with partner countries. The initiative generates its own export demand because Chinese loans enable participating countries to develop infrastructure projects involving Chinese firms and expertise.

China has both geopolitical and economic motivations behind the initiative. Xi has promoted a vision of a more assertive China, even as the country's outstanding loans have grown to the equivalent of over a quarter of its GDP. Experts see the BRI as one of the main planks of a bolder Chinese statecraft under Xi alongside the Made in China 2025 economic development strategy.

Today, the relevance of the Silk Road is rejuvenated through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative, which seeks to enhance infrastructure and connectivity across Asia and beyond, modern interpretations of the Silk Road emphasize blending of cultures, as goods such as silk, spices and precious metals traversed its expanse. This revitalization can enhance global trade, cultural diplomacy, and mutual understanding, potentially creating a platform for unprecedented collaboration and growth.

Additionally, these narratives explore the role of technology and innovation in sustaining trade and fostering relationships among diverse populations. The Belt and Road Initiative, for example, encapsulates a modern revival of Silk Road ideals, promoting infrastructure development and economic collaboration throughout Asia and beyond. Furthermore, through art, literature, and academic scholarship, the exploration of the Silk Road continues to inspire a collective appreciation for intercultural dialogue. As we delve into these new tales, we recognize the Silk Road not merely as a historical relic but as a vibrant symbol of global unity and shared human experience that remains relevant today.

As nations navigate the complexities of globalization, the new Silk Road serves as a reminder of the enduring human spirit of exploration and solidarity with the promise of a more interconnected and harmonious future.

# A Sparkling Silk Road

*Discovery Mind Primary School, Kumar, Hridhay – 10*

## INTRODUCTION–

Have you ever heard of a road that sparkles with beauty through mountains and deserts? Well, let me tell you one of the most amazing roads in the world – “The Silk Road”! One of its famous parts is the Karakoram highway and it is a very special road that links China and Pakistan together.

## HISTORY–

The ancient Silk Road was a vast network of trade routes connecting East Asia with Middle East and Europe via both land and water. It stretches for 3000 km (1864.11 miles) going through high mountains, deep valleys and even deserts! It is used for trade and transportation which means people use it to move goods from one country to another. But, its not just for business, tourists also travel on this road to learn about the people who live along it.

The name “Silk Road” comes from the olden days when Chinese traders used to travel from one country to another to sell “Silk.” Silk is a very valuable cloth and people loved it. The old “Silk Road” had lots of paths and the Karakoram Highway is one of them. The “Silk Road” remained popular for 1500 years! It was revived in 2013. Shyan Kien was the first person to travel on the “Silk Road.”

## SCENIC BEAUTY–

If you ever get a chance to travel on the “Silk Road”, you will see so many fascinating things such as :

1. Snowy mountains – The Karakoram mountains are full of ice and snow. They look like giant white castles.
2. Green valleys – In some places, the road passes through deep green valleys with rivers, trees, and flowers.
3. Deserts – you will also see dry and rocky deserts with sand and various desert animals and plants

## TRADE AND CULTURE–

Technologies such as glass and paper making, religious ideas and beliefs, words, and language for example, roughly 35000 words entered the Chinese from Buddhist missionaries to Chinese. Towns along the route grew into multicultural and diverse cities. The horses introduced to China contributed to the might of the Mongol Empire, while gun powder from China reached Europe changing the nature of war in that region and beyond.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES –

The original silk road established more than 2000 years ago was a critical network of trade routes that promoted economic, political, and cultural exchange between Asia, Africa, and Europe. China’s new “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road” will do the same, with newly or upgraded building giving a free flow of trade, investments, culture, and ideas.

## ANCIENT RUINS –

Chinese archeologists say they have discovered silk at the Sanxingdui ruins for the first time and they believe the first textile was used 3000 years ago in rituals.

## BIG QUESTIONS –

Which is longer “The Great Wall” or the “Silk Road”? The answer is very stunning but the “The Great Wall of China” is 21196 km while the “Silk Road” is only 3000 km long. The old silk road was made during Xian dynasty while the “The Great Wall” was made in the Qing dynasty.

## CONCLUSION –

The “Silk Road” is a vast road that goes through quiet villages and bustling metropolitan cities. Although, there are some disadvantages like varying terrain and climate from one region to another it is still an adventurous and exciting route.

# Fragrance Of Adventure

*ESF Glenealy School, Mithaiwala, Mariya – 10*

Ciao Diario (hello dairy), I'm a special bottle of sacred oil from Italy. Humans call me the 'Holy Sepulchre', I can hardly believe what's about to happen. I'm going on an amazing adventure with Marco Polo, a merchant and explorer born in Venice around 1254. Last night I was spying on Marco and his Papà while resting in my cozy pouch. I heard them whispering about taking me on a journey on something called a Silk Road. For the rest of the night, I was feeling all tingly with excitement.

The Silk Road is a huge set of roads connecting Europe to the Middle East and Central Asia to China for business and has been here for over 1500 years. The Silk Road is filled with many different types of setting from bustling market squares in Europe with colourful textiles, spices and handicrafts to the Majestic Tianshan mountains which act like both a natural barrier and a route connecting the silk road featuring rugged peaks and deep valleys.

The main product is silk hence the name Silk Road, but you can find merchants trading not only a variety of goods like jade, spices, tea, precious stones, textiles but also cultures, horses and even diseases. It was originally established in the Han dynasty in 130BC by Zhong Qian.

The Silk Road is unfortunately also filled with dangerous diseases such as smallpox, Bubonic Plague and Cholera which are passed on from merchants and travelers capable of getting those with this high fever and even death. The next main downside of the Silk Road were robberies even though we were lucky not to stumble into one bandits and robberies fill the Silk Road looking for gold and wealth, ransom power and even revenge.

Today was the day I was setting off for China – Inner Mongolia to be exact. I have heard many tales of their sizzling hot volcanoes, lush green farms and colourful temples.

Marco is carrying some glassware to trade on the Silk Road along with luxury textiles.

It's been around three nights since we left, and we are in the middle of the desert. The campfire is blazing like the sun, and it seems like everyone is asleep but me. I cannot help staring at the crystal-clear sky with the shimmering stars and the endless mountain of sand appearing just like the back of the camels who brought us here. It's like a *pintura*(painting) coming to life.

After a long journey we finally reached Istanbul which is a vital crossroad connecting East and West. There are some boats and churches along with huge wooden buildings. Everyone was wearing vintage dresses (which I learned were called robes) and open wide trousers filled with patterns and vibrant colours. Marco traded glass ornate and luxury textiles for fine Turkish rugs.

We slept in Hans (caravanserais), which are many tiny houses squeezed into one building. After days of travel passing through Persia (modern day Iran) and Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan where Marco traded his remaining glass ornate with horses, we reached the spectacular and grand land of India.

We stopped in a local shop where we were greeted by a big bulky man. He looked at us curiously then said – *Nāṇ uṅkaḷukku eppaṭi utava muṭiyum?* (Hello, how may I help you? In Tamil).

By the look on Marco's face I knew he had no idea what the man had just said. We should learn new languages now, another thing the silk route has generated for us. Marco bought some glittering diamonds and pearls which are famous in India to give to Kublai Khan.

The good news is we are now on the way to our final destination – China. The bad news is I have just learned that I am a gift Marco is giving me as a present to Kublai Khan, why me out of all those things he bought.

Dear diary, we have arrived. China is like a whole different planet compared to Venice, there are huge palaces and Buddhist temples and out of every corner there are round decorations (which I later learned were lanterns). Did you know the prosperity of the Silk Road led to the introduction of Buddhism in China. It transmitted through two trade routes: the first, through Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Xinjiang region of China and then into the mainland, where it eventually reached Luoyang, the capital of the Han dynasty; the second, across the Indian and Pacific oceans, through the southeast Asian islands before arriving in Guangzhou, and then moving northward into the mainland reaching the Han Dynasty, Luoyang, Guang Zhao and more through numerous monks.

Merchants in China were mostly only trading silk. The soft material was so beautiful I can't believe they kept this luxurious fabric hidden for 3000 years. Did you know that silk is from silk worms and merchants can get them directly from cocoons or from different methods.

China played a big part on the Silk Road as they were like the protector, for generations the Han tang and Yuan dynasty sought to protect and promote the Silk Road through Military campaign diplomatic relations enduring safety for passing travellers Even parts of the Great Wall of China were specifically built for protecting travellers on the Silk Road.

When we reached Kublai Khan's palace I couldn't believe my eyes. It had thick walls with all sorts of things like dragons carved on, in Marco's words "magnificent marble palace with gilded and painted halls", guards wearing heavy outfits stood at every corner. When we stepped inside, we saw Kublai Khan wearing a long robe tightened by a leather belt giving a finishing touch. Marco and he talked for a while then Marco pulled me out and handed me to a girl next to Kublai Khan.

So, that's how my story goes. I now live with princess Jegukin China.

Maybe being a gift isn't that bad after all.

Marco had one said, "I will not tell half of what I saw, for I know I will not be believed". I agree this trip has truly been magical.

# How Does China Benefit From the Original Silk Road Today?

*ESF Sha Tin Junior School, Chan, Long Kiu Matty – 10*

The Silk Road was a busy trade route that stretched from Eastern China into Europe to Hungary and the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It formed in the Han Dynasty around 200BCE when Zhang Qian was sent West to establish trade in silk and other goods and soon became the Silk Road. It gained prominence as China knew the secret to producing silk and this became China's heart of international trade. To keep the flow of trade between the eastern parts of the world to the West, the Emperor started setting up military outposts to protect traders.

After the Han Dynasty fell, the Silk Road carried on but not at the same level of the Han Dynasty. Centuries passed and later the Tang Dynasty brought back the importance of the Silk Road. They rebuilt the military outposts and kept control of the silk road. The emperor deliberately made Chang'an (modern day Xi'an) a large attraction and centre for merchants and traders, he also reduced tax prices for merchants that welcomed foreigners to attract even more trade. Other dynasties also made changes to try and promote silk trade to another level but did not make the same impact as the Han and Tang dynasties.

Over history, each dynasty has made an impact on the Silk Road but the importance gradually faded around the 15<sup>th</sup> century due to different reasons.

One of them was the rise of the Ottoman Empire who raised taxes, forcing merchants to use sea trade which was cheaper and safer. The fall of the Mongol empire also affected the Silk Road as the unified empire also kept safety over the Silk Road. China at that time was still isolated from the rest of the world so making it hard to trade with other countries. Also the secret to producing silk was no longer a secret and other empires knew how to produce silk causing merchants to have no reason to trade with China for the silk. Between 1450–1500 the Silk Road was largely abandoned and by the end of the century the trade route was no more.

Although the traditional Silk Road has already been gone for centuries, China is now seeking new ways to bring back the idea of the Silk Road to boost China's economy. But to make the new reimagined Silk Road, there has to be different parts to build up the new Silk Road.

The new Silk Road will not be like the old Silk Road. It will not just be a physical road that you can walk on and trade on. The new Silk Road will see trade in ideas and new areas like technology.

One example of the new Silk Road is growing military activity from China. One way is China provides weapons and military support to different countries who foster alliances with China and be dependent on China. This can make countries rely too much on China which gives China lots of influence. This military support is also needed to protect ports and places to make sure no-one damages these places to help make sure trade and importing goods to other places can keep going.

China is also building new economic alliances with major countries along the Silk Road. China's new strategy for the new Silk Road is called the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). The plan is a big network of physical and digital connections to support new trade and alliances. There are two three things to support BRI.

The first is infrastructure which is building new transport lines like roads, railways and also ports for shipping and also energy supply lines like oil and gas. All these are built to support new steady trade.

The second thing to support BRI is policy and standards coordination which is basically laws and rules. If two places have the same laws and rules then the things that one person can do in one country then can also do in another country. This makes it easier to have relationship and alliances and foster trade between the two people and countries. This is why Presidents want to build alliances so they can talk and agree about laws and rules that favour both countries.

Finally there is also digital connections that are helping build the new Silk Road. China is doing this by using a network to connect different devices and people to trade information and also help connect the digital divide between some countries.

The history of the Silk Road shows how trade with strategic countries can build a strong economy and growth for not just China but for other countries as well. Building a new Silk Road can be made but requires China to do more than just a physical road, but a road that travels through networks and technology to help China trade not just goods but ideas, information and innovations. China is already making a start on this, by building up alliances that make use of military, infrastructure, economic and digital connections. All of this will ensure that the new Silk Road will be much stronger and advanced than the old Silk Road.

# Silk Road: A Journey Through Time

*German Swiss International School, Agrawal, Samar – 10*

138 BCE. What we know as Modern China did not exist. The middle kingdom was ruled by warring clans and tribes, with the Han dynasty being the most powerful. The Han Dynasty was at war with the nomadic Xiongnu people. Fearing defeat, Emperor Wu sent an explorer, Zhang Qian, to the west to contact potential allies against the Xiongnu. How these events led to the establishment of the Silk Road, is a fascinating tale.

Even before the Silk Road was founded, ancient China had some maritime trade linkages with South and South East Asia as well as land trade with empires in Central Asia, Persia and Rome with silk, spices and horses being major traded goods. However, trade and cultural exchanges truly bloomed after the Silk Road came into existence.

## HAN'S BATTLE WITH THE XIONGNU

Emperor Wu of Han was one of the leading figures in China's history. He significantly expanded the Han's sphere of influence through military campaigns into central Asia, Korea and Vietnam. He centralized imperial authority, established Confucianism as a state philosophy, developed imperial academies, civil service exams and supported arts, literature and cultural exchanges. His 54-year reign was momentous and changed China's trajectory. However, his most enduring legacy was the establishment of the Silk Road.

Towards the beginning of his reign, Emperor Wu faced an intractable foe in the form of the Xiongnu who controlled modern day Inner Mongolia. They were a powerful tribe of nomadic people who frequently raided Chinese settlements throughout the Qin and Han dynasties and thwarted Emperor Wu's attempts to expand commercial ties with the West.

After overtures for peace were rejected, Emperor Wu finally declared war on the Xiongnu in 133 BCE. The Xiongnu had made enemies with many other tribes, primarily the Yuezhi in modern day Tajikistan, who they had displaced. Emperor Wu decided to send an emissary to contact the Yuezhi and woo them to join his alliance against the Xiongnu. He chose Zhang Qian, an experienced military officer and diplomat to be his envoy.

## ZHANG QIAN'S TWO MISSIONS

Zhang Qian (195–114 BCE) was a Chinese military officer who is best known for his work on creating the Silk Road. Often called the Father of the Silk Road, Zhang was sent on two missions to find allies to help with China's battle against the Xiongnu.

In 138 BCE, Zhang led a party of one hundred men and a guide, but early in his journey, he was captured by the Xiongnu and enslaved for 13 years. He ultimately escaped and contacted the Yuezhi but they rebuffed Emperor Wu's entreaties. Although Zhang Qian didn't find any allies he returned with tales of riches, advanced civilizations and huge cities that he encountered through his travels across Central Asia, Tajikistan and all the way to Uzbekistan. This further fueled Emperor Wu's desire to establish trading ties with the wider world.

In 119 BCE, Emperor Wu dispatched Zhang to form a military alliance with the Wusun as well as explore routes to India, following the intelligence gathered on the first mission. Zhang was able to initiate relations with Persia, found new routes to India, making this mission more successful than the last. After the second mission, Wu urgently pressed his military into the Hexi corridor, defeated the Xiongnu and secured the key routes for traders. Thus the Silk Road was born.

## THE SILK ROAD: 1500 YEARS OF DOMINANCE

The Silk Road started in Chang-an/ Xian and stretched through Central Asia (Pamirs, Kashgar, Samarkand, Bukhara) to Persia, Anatolia and Mediterranean Ports. It was not a single road but a complex web including overland caravan routes and sea routes connecting to India, Africa and beyond.

The Silk Road was named after the high quality Chinese silk that was sought after in Europe and Central Asia, but that was not the only thing that passed through the Silk Road. Spices, tea, paper and porcelain were also key items that flowed east to west while China imported horses, glassware, textiles, weapons. Religions (Islam, Buddhism), philosophies, art and technologies (papermaking, gunpowder) also spread through these routes. Intrepid travelers like Marco Polo traveled along the Silk Road to get to Cathay (northern China) and meet the Yuan Emperor, Kublai Khan.

It is also now believed that the Black Death also travelled along these routes. These routes were also key targets for groups like the Huns (who were believed to have descended from the Xiongnu) who attacked merchants along the way.

The Silk Road was a major part of trade across Eurasia for over 1500 years. However, with the passage of time, issues such as safety started deterring merchants. In a major disruption, 1453 CE, the Ottoman empire flexed its control over the route to challenge the dominance of Europeans and imposed high taxes on the lucrative routes. This spelled a death knell for the traditional Silk Road networks as Europeans set out to find alternate routes to Asia, creating a lasting shift in global trade patterns and launching a new age of exploration. The Mongol– led Yuan Dynasty revived it for some time but when the Ming Dynasty came to power, they cut off China from the outside world and the silk road died out, till it received a new lease of life centuries later.

#### SILK ROAD TODAY

In 2013 China's president, Xi Jinping, revived it with the Belt and Road Initiative. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is China's attempt at creating trade with developing countries. The BRI will help China by bolstering existing alliances and creating new ones as well as developing the more remote parts of China like the Xinjiang autonomous area and Tibet.

China will share its wealth and expertise in building infrastructure such as power plants, ports, railway systems and highways, to assist developing countries and build strong financial trade and cultural linkages just like the original Silk Road once did.

# The Silk Road

*German Swiss International School, Lo, Clarissa – 10*

When people talk about the Silk Road, what do you think of? A long, twisting stone path? A road trading only silk? Well, both those theories and many more are wrong. So, what is the Silk Road? To find out, let us dive into the long and illustrious history of the Silk Road.

## The beginning of the Silk Road

The Silk Road dates back to 2nd century BCE in north-central China in the historic capital of Chang'an, now called Xi'an. Chang'an was the capital city for nine dynasties. These dynasties were the Western Han dynasty, Sui dynasty, Tang dynasty, Xin dynasty, Former Zhao dynasty, Former Qin dynasty, Later Qin dynasty, Western Wei dynasty and the Northern Zhou dynasty.

Chang'an was methodically built with a precise rectangle grid pattern of extensive avenues and enclosed residential units. The design of the city provided a model for other capital cities of East Asia such as Kyoto in Japan and Gyeongju in Korea. The Silk Road started with China establishing trade with the west, succeeding the expeditions of diplomat Zhang Qian.

Zhang Qian was a Chinese emissary and voyager during the Han dynasty who is usually called the "Father of the Silk Road" due to his role in the making of the Silk Road. Zhang Qian's missions, commissioned by Emperor Wu, brought about trade of goods and ideas with the West and initiated long-distance trade passages that proved to be vital to the development of the Silk Road. Zhang Qian is thought of as a fundamental character in Chinese history for his part in connecting China to the West, which helped establish the Silk Road.

## About the Silk Road

Chang'an was the eastern end of the overland Silk Road, trading for China: silk, porcelain, tea, spices, medicinal herbs, lacquerware, jade, paper and gunpowder. In exchange, China received: horses, glassware, precious metals, textiles, gems, fruit and ivory.

A connection that you may not believe, the Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, featuring the historic pilgrimage of the Tang Dynasty monk Xuanzang, also known as Tang Sanzang, who went to India to recover Buddhist scriptures, following the established path of the Silk Road. *Journey to the West* incorporates Chinese myths such as *The Monkey King* into the journey of Xuanzang.

The first person to use the term "silk road" was the German geographer and traveller Ferdinand von Richthofen, who came up with it in 1877 C.E., referring to the well-traveled pathway of goods between Europe and East Asia. The term "silk road" also serves as a metaphor for the trade of goods between two diverse cultures.

## On the Silk Road

The Silk Road's length extended across many outstanding landscapes including the Gobi Desert and the Pamir Mountains. While the goods sold were exotic, the condition of the roads were certainly not. No one supplied maintenance, therefore the routes grew decrepit and tumbledown. Along the way, robbers and thieves were common, hence traders joined together with other traders in caravans with pack animals such as camels. Gradually, bigger inns called caravanserais providing food and drink came along to shelter travelling traders.

Caravanserais weren't just rest stops, they were trading hubs for goods, thoughts, language, culture and information. Caravanserais were built with materials like mudbrick, baked brick, or stone, complete with high walls for keeping away thieves and natural disasters. Caravanserais construction increased from the 10th century and popped up all around Eurasia, many of which are still standing. Others have been restored and are used today. Many traders only travelled a part of the full route, not wanting to expose themselves to the harsh conditions of the road. To trade, these merchants sold their goods to other merchants at various points on the journey.

The Silk Road today

The old Silk Road has long since broken down but the current Silk Road either refers to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or the historical Silk Road, which is still available today through tourism and preservation in sites along the route. The BRI started in 2013 and is connecting China to Asia, Africa and Europe. BRI aims to encourage and elevate trade and communication between China, Asia, Africa and Europe, growing ever since 2013, with a doubling of trade between 2013 and 2022. Key elements are the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. What remains of the old Silk Road are remnants of the old route, museums and organisations like UNESCO that help protect and preserve the legacy of the Silk Road.

The journey to continue...

The Silk Road has progressed for a long time and has definitely made a mark on history. Life on the Silk Road was tough, but it paid off. The people of China got metals, horses, fruit and lots more. The countries of the West got silk, porcelain, spices, medicinal herbs, lacquerware, jade, paper and gunpowder. From Zhang Qian, Father of the Silk Road to Xuanzang the monk to China's BRI, there will be much more to come in the future of the Silk Road.

# New Journeys on the Silk Road

*German Swiss International School, Looi, Annabel – 9*

Imagine this: thousands of years ago, before airplanes, GPS, or even maps, a few brave Chinese merchants climbed onto their camels and set off toward the unknown. It was around 130 BCE, and they were traveling west to see if anyone wanted to buy China's beautiful, shimmering silk.

What they didn't know was that their journey would change the world.

Their trips grew into the Silk Road, a huge web of trade routes connecting China to Central Asia, the Middle East, and even Europe. For more than a thousand years, people along the Silk Road shared foods, inventions, stories, arts, and ideas. It became one of the most important cultural exchanges in all of history.

But after the mid-1400s, as wars blocked important pathways, especially between the Ottoman Empire and the Byzantine Empire, the ancient Silk Road slowly faded away and finally disappeared.

Until now, the Return of the Silk Road.

In 2013, China's president, Mr. Xi Jinping, announced a gigantic plan to bring the Silk Road back to life. It is now called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Also known as the "new Silk Road."

But this new Silk Road doesn't use camels. Instead, it uses high-speed trains, giant cargo ships, modern highways, and powerful trucks to connect China with more than 150 countries around the world.

And instead of silk, countries now trade things like high-tech electronics, clothing and textiles, machines and vehicles, building materials, energy and minerals.

The world is much bigger and more complicated now, but the goal is still similar to the ancient Silk Road: to connect people.

Many people think the Belt and Road Initiative is helpful because it focuses on building connections that make life easier for countries. Here are some of the best things about it:

Firstly, the new Silk Road focuses on infrastructure development. Just like how China helps countries build important things like highways, bridges, airports, ports and railways. A real BRI example: China and Pakistan worked together on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It includes new highways through the mountains, updated railways, and power plants that bring electricity to millions of people. These improvements help people travel faster, reduce blackouts, and make businesses grow. Projects like these can create jobs, bring investment, make trade easier and help communities grow stronger.

Secondly, the new Silk Road helps trading faster and easier. Just like the ancient Silk Road helped merchants sell their goods, the new Silk Road makes it easier for countries to trade. Faster travel means more exports, cheaper imports and stronger economies.

Lastly, it promotes ideas and culture sharing. Along the ancient Silk Road, travelers didn't just trade objects, they traded knowledge. They taught each other about astronomy, map-making, medicine, and different styles of art and storytelling. Today's new Silk Road continues that idea. Students and teachers travel between countries and festivals to celebrate different traditions, and people learn each other's languages. It's like creating a giant classroom across the world!

Even though the Belt and Road Initiative has many hopes and advantages, it also has real problems that people talk about.

Firstly, the debt traps could be pretty concerning. Some countries borrow a lot of money from China to build big projects. If they can't pay the money back, they get stuck. The most famous example is Sri Lanka. China helped build a huge port in Hambantota. But Sri Lanka couldn't repay the loan, so in 2017 it had to lease the port to a Chinese company for 99 years. People worry this gives China too much control over important places. Secondly, people are worried that China exerts too much influence. Some critics think China might use BRI projects to gain political or economic influence over smaller countries.

This could make poor or unstable countries rely too much on China.

Thirdly, there are environmental problems to be concerned about. More roads, bridges, and power plants sound useful, but they can also cause deforestation, pollution, damage to animal habitats and displacement of families. Some people think China should do more to protect nature when building these projects.

I think the Belt and Road Initiative can be a wonderful opportunity if countries make smart choices.

If a country has strong leaders who plan carefully, they can negotiate good deals and use the new roads, ports, and power plants to help their people. They can grow their economy, create jobs, and become more connected to the world.

But countries that already have weak governments or shaky economies might end up taking loans they can't repay. They could lose control over their resources, just like Sri Lanka did.

So in my opinion, the BRI can be a powerful force for good, but only if countries think long-term, protect their environment, and stay in control of their own decisions.

Sometimes I imagine what would happen if an ancient Silk Road merchant suddenly appeared on today's new Silk Road. He would stare at the huge cargo ships, the fast trains, and the sparkling highways and say: "Where are all the camels? And where did all these machines come from?" But then he would smile, because he would still see traders, ideas, and cultures flowing between East and West, just like in his time.

The world has changed, but the spirit of the Silk Road lives on.

# The China Silk Roads – 2000 Years of Shopping...

*German Swiss International School, Shin, Briella – 9*

Have you ever heard about the Silk Road?

Well, if you continue reading, you will get to know what the Silk Road is all about.

There are two Silk Roads. One is old and one is new. In this book, we are going to dive into both the new and old Silk Road.

WHAT IS...

The Old Silk Road

More than 2000 years ago, there were no airplanes and cars. But people still wanted fascinating things from other countries. So, China and many other countries worked together to make a long route connecting with each other. This included countries in Asia and Europe.

Then why is it called the Silk Road? It is called the Silk Road because silk is the most wanted product from China that people traded at the time.

The New Silk Road

Do you know that the new Silk Road has an official name? It is called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The Chinese government named it in 2013. The new Silk Road has not just a ground route. It actually has three parts: one is the land, one is the sea and the last one is the digital silk road.

The total cost of building the new Silk Road is over US \$1 trillion! That's \$1,000,000,000,000! You can actually buy 100 ice-creams for every kid on Earth!

OLD VS NEW SILK ROAD

Transportation

- Old Silk Road: Camels were the primary mode of transport. People used camels because they had to go through the desert carrying a lot of things.
- New Silk Road: People use giant ships, super-fast trains, big trucks and airplanes.

Days it takes to travel

- Old Silk Road: It depends. It may take 1–2 years to get to another place.
- New Silk Road: If people used trains, it would take 12–15 days. If people used ships, it would take 30–40 days. The new Silk Road can do things a lot faster.

What the Chinese give and get

- Old Silk Road: Chinese gave other countries silk, tea, perfume, gunpowder and paper. The Chinese received horses, glass, grapes, wool, gold and silver.
- New Silk Road: China sells phones, laptops, solar panels, and electric cars. The Chinese also help build gas pipelines, faster railways, ports and roads for other countries. China collects natural resources like gas, oil and precious metals. I also realize that China receives chocolate from Belgium – chocolate is one of my favourite foods!!!!

How does Hong Kong play a role?

- Old Silk Road: Hong Kong was not part of the main route.
- New Silk Road: Hong Kong acts as an important transportation hub for land, sea and air routes. It is one of the busiest container ports for giant cargos. Separately, Hong Kong is also the money collector for renminbi from all over the world.

WHO IS...

Who is Marco Polo?

Marco Polo is a person who travelled the old Silk Road at the age of 17 with his uncle and his dad.

It took them 4 years to get to China and get silk. Marco Polo stayed in China for 17 years before going back to Europe. Marco Polo wrote a book called "The Travels of Marco Polo". The book was about his journey on the Silk Road and the book became a bestseller widely sold in Europe. He is an important person because after people read his book, they also wanted to try and travel the Silk Road.

I am not sure if it is because he is so famous that someone invented a game using his name! This game involves a group of people playing together. One of them has to close his or her eyes and be "Marco". All the other people are "Polo"s. Marco has to say out loud "MARCO!", and the others shout back "POLO!". Marco has to follow the sound and tag a person who is Polo. But the Polos are able to see where Marco is!

Apart from the game, I also noticed that there is a hotel in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong that is called the Marco Polo Hotel. The hotel is named after him because of his adventurous spirit.

Who is Xi Jinping?

Xi Jinping is the President of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is the head architect of the BRI. He helped by having the idea in 2013 to trade with other countries. He made sure that the Chinese government could support it and find the money for the BRI, and he reached other partner countries to help.

Xi Jinping has invited some developing countries to join the BRI. He aims to assist smaller countries to grow. China will also benefit from having more trading partners.

## INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE OLD AND NEW SILK ROADS

Old Silk Road:

- There was not just one route but a lot of routes. The main route of the old Silk Road was 6400 km long. Do you know how long that is? Imagine 8 million kids standing together shoulder to shoulder, that will be 6400 km!
- People shared knowledge of making frozen desserts. Maybe this is where ice-cream came from – ice-cream is my favourite dessert.
- There is a legend saying that a sneaky princess from China carried silkworms in her hair to go to her husband's country! Very sneaky!
- There is also a bad thing about the silk route. Diseases also travelled the route. The bubonic plague (Black Death) traveled from Asia to Europe via the Silk Road in the 14th century.

New Silk Road:

- The BRI is considered the largest project in history including 150 countries and 30 international organizations across Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America.
- There's a train that can go through icy mountains and dry deserts without stopping.
- A new Silk Road train can carry 60 cars or more!

So now you know about the Silk Roads, do you want to travel on the old Silk Road? Teleport with me to go to China in the 1280s to find Marco Polo! Let's Go! 3,2,1 Blast Off!

# The Silk Road

*German Swiss International School, Yao, Xavier – 9*

The Silk Road now is one of the biggest international trade projects in world history, with 150 countries becoming involved.

But how did it start? It started over 2200 years ago...

A group of intrepid Chinese explorers were looking for a place, or road, or anything that they could sell their silk by.

So cobbly-cobbly-cobbly they went, going to the place which would later be known as The Silk Road.

Eventually, they made it and it became a big success!

It slowly transformed into a two-way trading system between Europe and China's 长安 (pronounced Chang An), which then became the biggest city in the world.

Now we have fast-forwarded more than one thousand years. The Silk Road is now one of the most popular ways to transport goods from Europe or China (like wonderful foods, remarkable inventions, stunning art, and creative ideas), but about five hundred years later, it got lost in the mid-1400's.

It finally had been rediscovered recently in 2013 and has reclaimed its position as one of the biggest trade projects ever.

Now that human technology is advancing and that we can now ship goods around the world, it is hard to imagine what will happen to the Silk Road in these upcoming years.

Through over two thousand years of trading, exploring, and delivering goods, the Silk Road has been through many diverse historical and cultural times, and now, the Silk Road might just be in yet another.

# The Silk Road

*German Swiss International School, Zhang, Lucas – 11*

It is not known exactly who the first travellers of the Silk Road were, but if not for one famous Chinese explorer, there might never have been a Silk Road at all.

This explorer, Zhang Qian, was pivotal in the mapping and planning of the early trade routes which would eventually be known as the Silk Road. Though not well known internationally, Zhang Qian's impact on world history is great and because of that, his story needs to be told.

Zhang Qian was born during the Han dynasty, near Chenggu, Hangzi province. He later went to the capital, Chang'an, (today Xi'an), between 140 BC and 134 BC, serving the Emperor Wu. He went with ninety men, a guide and a captured Xiangnu to the Western Regions to build an alliance with Western Asian tribes. He was captured and enslaved for 13 years during his mission by the Xiangnu. Eventually, Zhang, his guide and his new Xiangnu wife were able to escape their captors and made their way to the land of the Yuezhi tribes which the emperor wanted to build an alliance with in the first place.

Zhang Qian was unable to convince the Yuezhi to agree to an alliance, but during his time there, he learned many things about the culture and economy of the Yuezhi people which he documented in detail in his writings. Zhang Qian eventually returned to China in 125 BC with detailed reports of his journey for the Emperor, proving that sophisticated civilizations existed to the West, with which China could advantageously develop diplomatic and trade relations.

After being released from captivity by Xiongnu, Zhang Qian visited Dayuan, located in the Fergana region west of the Tarim basin. The people of Dayuan were being portrayed and estimated by Zhang Qian as complex city dwellers. Seven years later he was sent on another mission, this time to the Wusun, another Indo-European people living in the Ili river valley north of the Tarim Basin.

In addition to traveling himself, he sent his assistant to visit Ferbena (Uzbekistan), Bactria (Afghanistan), and Sogdiana (west Turkestan, now in Uzbekistan). He gathered information on Parthia, India and other states in the area. His mission brought the Chinese into contact with the outposts of Hellenistic culture and opened the way for exchanges of envoys established between these Central Asian states and the Han. Unlike last time, Zhang Qian faced more logistical challenges rather than severe-life threatening situations. For example, travelling through unfamiliar terrain and rationing supplies on long journeys for his team.

Zhang Qian was considered a national hero and the pride of his country. He officially opened the Silk Road, fostering trade and cultural exchange between the East and West. His reports provided valuable intelligence on Central Asia, which led to military expansion and diplomacy and trade. Zhang Qian's intelligence helped Emperor Wu launch successful campaigns against the Xiongnu, leading to the expansion of Han control into modern-day Central Asia, adding another piece to the Han dynasty.

Lastly, he also helped a religious cause, His journeys helped him to contact with Hellenistic culture and provided the first accounts of Buddhism in Central Asia, which eventually played a crucial role in its introduction to China. He peacefully passed away in his hometown in 114 BCE.

# The Great China Silk Road

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Hong, Adam – 9*

A long time ago, The China Silk Road is a vast/wide network of trading routes that's very ancient because it was connected to East Asia with the Mediterranean for over 1,500 years that's why it was very ancient. It started at around 130BC and it is still here today. The overland trade routes were functional until around the mid-15th century when it has slowly faded away because it became too much of a hassle compared to another option, boats were just better for transport, there were new upgrades of the boat. Also because of bandits and local wars, because it made the trip so dangerous that many traders just stopped going. The China Silk Road journey starts at Xi'An there were 838,000 visitors every day! That's a lot! Also, did you know why they made the Silk Road? Of course it's because they wanted silk! Did you know that the name "Silk Road" was only coined in 1877 by German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen? Travelers faced the treacherous Takla Makan Desert, nicknamed the "Land of No Return" because many travelers went and never returned! It's also 4,000-mile (6,400-km) road, actually a caravan tract, followed Great Wall of China the northwest, and bypassed the Takla Makan Desert. The Han emperors and governments posed as having a temporal dispensation that had received the blessing of heaven together with its instructions to spread the benefits of a cultured life as widely as possible. By a cultured life the Chinese had in mind a clear distinction between their own settled agriculture and the delights of the cities, as opposed to the rough and hardy life spent in the saddle by the nomads of Central Asia. The growth of Han government both depended on and encouraged the development of literary accomplishment, scholastic competence, religious activity, scientific discovery, and technological achievement. Some great facts: The Silk Road began over 2,100 years ago, it began to trade silk for horses, the total length of the Silk Road was about 9,000 kilometers, There were 5 "Silk Roads" from China, The Silk Road was the longest ancient overland trade route and finally, Marco Polo was the most famous Silk Road trader/adventurer/explorer. Surprisingly, and humorously, Did you know that the Romans actually thought silk grew on trees, because China kept the secret of silk production for over 1,000 years, Romans speculated that the fabric was harvested from colorful flowers or combed from the leaves of trees. Also, the value of silk was so great that it functioned exactly like modern currency in Central Asia. Now let's learn about the whole journey of China's Silk Road, The Starting Point: Xi'An, (As we learned at the beginning) Then, 2: the Hexi Corridor can be described as a natural, 1,000-kilometer-long "funnel" that forced all Silk Road traffic through a single, narrow passage. It is also (ZhangYe) Famous for its "Rainbow Mountains" and its history as a major commercial hub where Marco Polo reportedly stayed for a year. Imagine Dunhuang as the world's most important rest stop! Think of it like a giant, sandy crossroads where travelers had to make a big decision: "Do I go left or right around the scary desert?" – The "Last Hug" before the Desert: Dunhuang was like a giant green hug in the middle of a sandbox. It was the very last place travelers could find fresh water and yummy food before they spent weeks crossing the super-dry desert. – The World's Coolest Art Caves: Inside the Mogao Grottoes, people carved hundreds of "secret rooms" into a cliff. Instead of wallpaper, they covered the walls with colorful paintings of flying people and giant statues of Buddha. – Praying for Good Luck: Before heading out into the wind and sand, travelers would stop at these caves. They would light candles and pray, basically saying: "Please keep me safe from sandstorms and help me find my way back!" 4. – The Fork in the Road: Bypassing the Taklamakan "The Taklamakan Desert acted as a 125,000-square-mile "dead zone" that split the Silk Road into two distinct arcs, forcing travelers to choose between two treacherous logistical paths. 5. The Grand Finale: Kashgar (Where the World Collided) If the Silk Road was a giant river, Kashgar was the massive delta where every current finally smashed together. Sitting at the far western edge of China, this city was the ultimate "make or break" point for every trader in history. The Silk Road wasn't just a dusty path; it was the world's first global "internet," using camels instead of cables. Stretching 4,000 miles, this massive network connected China to the Mediterranean, acting as the ultimate high-stakes relay race. It all kicked off in Xi'an, the imperial headquarters and the world's original logistics hub. From there, every traveler had to squeeze through the Hexi Corridor. Think of this as a 600-mile "green straw" of oases wedged between the Gobi Desert and freezing mountains. It was so vital to global trade that the Great Wall was specifically extended just to guard this narrow passage. The real "boss level" was the Taklamakan Desert, nicknamed the "Sea of Death." Most traders were too smart to go through the middle; they split into northern and southern routes, "island-hopping" between tiny towns fed by melting glacial water. Along the way, silk was so valuable it wasn't

just cargo—it was used as actual cash to pay taxes and government fines. Everything converged at Kashgar, the ultimate "continental pivot." This was the finish line for the Chinese segment where desert camels were swapped for mountain yaks to scale the 15,000-foot Pamir Mountains. While silk gave the road its name, the most world-shaking "downloads" were ideas: paper, gunpowder, and Buddhism. By 2026, the journey has been totally rebooted. The ancient "Sea of Death" is now circled by the world's first desert railway loop, turning a 100-day camel trek into a smooth afternoon ride. The road is still moving the world. Finally thank you for reading my Non-Fiction Friendly China's Silk Road Description/Essay hope you learned exciting things!

# The Old And New

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Neo, Jayden – 9*

As the name suggests, the **Silk Road** was like a long silk that can link various objects together. In this case, it linked over 40 Asian trade routes and countries. It was active from the second century BCE until the mid–15th century. The Silk Road derives its name from the highly profitable trade of silk textiles that were mainly produced in China. The network began with the expansion of the Han dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE) into Central around 114 BCE, through the missions and explorations of the Chinese imperial envoy Zhang Qian.

It stretched over 6,400 km on land, it played an important role in connecting economic, cultural, political, and religious interactions between the Eastern and Western Worlds

The first people to venture through the Silk Roads was the Chinese, followed by the Persian Ottoman Empire and also the Romans.

For over 1,500 years, it had helped to create huge global exchanges. For **Food**, merchants introduced exotic ingredients that redefined cuisines. Spices (like cinnamon and ginger), tea, and rice traveled westward, while the East received grapes, walnuts, honey and wine. **In inventions and innovations**, China exported tools like paper, gunpowder, the magnetic compass, and printing techniques. In return, the West shared advancement in glassmaking, metallurgy, and astronomy. The routes also give rise to **Arts and Cultural Ideas**. Buddhism travelled from India to China, while Islam and Christianity, moved along the same paths. This also led to musical instruments (like the ancestors of the guitar), to be blended into an unique form. The Silk Road also leads to globalization, creating multicultural cities like Samarkand and Chang'an where diverse people lived and shared knowledge.

Chinese was concerned in the security of their trade products, and extended the Great Wall of China to ensure the protection of the trade route. The Parthian Empire provided a vital bridge connecting the network to the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the rise of the Roman Empire in the west further established the western terminus of the interconnected trade system.

The network was highly decentralized, and security was sparse: travelers faced constant threats of banditry and nomadic raiders, and long expanses of inhospitable terrain. Few individuals traveled the entire length of the Silk Road, instead relying on a succession of middlemen based at various stopping points. Diseases such as plague also spread along the Silk Road, possibly contributing to thousands of deaths.

Despite the popular imagination, Silk Road was never a singular east–west trade route that linked China to the Mediterranean, nor was there unrestricted trade before the Mongol Empire. It was a network of routes. Even Marco Polo, often linked to the Silk Road, never used the term despite traveling during a time of the Mongols.

Fast forward and in 2013, in a changing world, the modern "New Silk Road"—officially known as the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** was proposed and funded by China, a massive infrastructure project for global economic and digital integration.

As of early 2026, it aims to achieve several key outcomes, linking over 150 countries. It is an ambitious project, and no one knows if it will be successful finally. It will have the world's longest expressway tunnel, **Tianshan Shengli Tunnel**, completed in late 2024 in China's Xinjiang region. It dramatically cuts travel time through the Tianshan Mountains from several hours to about 20 minutes, boosting connectivity along a major trade route. Malls will be built along minor cities of the underground tunnels and just like a MTR station, each different city can hop into these Malls and buy different types of food, clothing etc..

**Temperature** will vary from country to country; at one moment you can be feeling the extreme cold Russia and then the sweltering heat of the Sahara Desert.

There will be **tunnels across deserts and overhead high–speed rails**, which enables one to enjoy the magnificent view from the Himalayas mountains. Freight trains can travel directly from China to Europe in about 12 days.

With **Global warming**, a lot of money will be invested in “**Green Energy**” like solar, wind, and hydropower. In early 2026, projects like natural gas storage expansions will make heating very inexpensive. The less developed countries will benefit immensely from this savings. **Economic Integration:** By reducing trade costs through improved roads, there will be increased global income of the poorer nations. As many as 9 million people will come out of extreme poverty. As for the internet age, it focuses on connecting nations through 5G networks, satellite systems, and cross-border e-commerce, helping developing countries enter the global digital sphere.

I hope the future of the new Silk Road, The Belt and Road Initiative, will not end up like the Old Silk Road, which disappeared after 1,500 years.

As the saying goes, there are always 2 sides to a coin. On the flip side, some of the dangers of the BRI are the implementation and security of each country, given that such humongous project is not easy to monitor. One may also ask who will be the “policeman”? Controlling the funds and schedule will be an uphill task as different countries may have their own schedule given individual priority and development.

If the BRI is successful, I can travel from Hong Kong to as many as 150 countries along The Line, High Speed Rails and Tunnels. When successful, China will become the world richest country and helped the poorer countries to become more prosperous.

Products made in less expensive countries can also reach out to those developed countries and uplift the entire world economy. Ideas and innovations can be shared with people of diverse cultures. With AI, there will be no obstacles in communications, and it will be amazing to see different races conversing in different languages and even with Robots.

I can even meet my friends from as far as Russia and perhaps watch a football match from city to city. Can you imagine the World Cup being held alongside the different cities in this BRI?

Finally, I hope I will be able to see and enjoy the benefits of BRI in my lifetime.

# The China Silk Road

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Ren, Yingfei Fiona – 9*

## Why was it made?

The China silk road was made to create a centralized trade network (a single central hub or authority) from China's Han dynasty (Emperor Wu) therefore they can boost their economy, gain strategic alliances, and secure imports like powerful Central Asian horses, exchanging them for luxury goods like silk, spices and porcelain (porcelain is a high-quality ceramic made from fine clay), and facilitating massive cultural exchange such as religions ideas and technology across Eurasia (Eurasia is the massive combined landmass of Europe and Asia forming the largest continent on Earth)

## History and Culture

The silk road was a vast network of ancient trade routes (it combined many routes) connecting China and the Far East and the Middle East and Europe, flourishing from the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 BCE) through the Tang dynasty (618– 907) fostering trade in silk, gems, art (music, dance theatrical performances, and architectural styles blended across cultures) and a few more, while also facilitating diseases, creating a dynamic east–west fusion for nearly 2 millennia! Their shared prosperity included facilitated economic independence and shared cultural prosperity. The Enduring spirit among the China silk road today is promoted peace, cooperation, openness, and mutual learning.

## When did it become famous?

Now, you're probably wondering when did the silk road become famous? Well, it all was because in the nineteenth century when a German geographer named Ferdinand von Richthofen coined the term 'Seidenstralle' which meant silk road and popularized it in academia, though the ancient trade network itself began around 130 BCE. Before it was name 'The Silk Road's name before it was the silk road had a variety of names, such as Oasis Route, Prairie Route, Mountain Route and also the earlier Persian Royal Road.

## Fun facts about The famous China Silk road!

- 1) Route starts at Xi'an
- 2) It reaches the Mediterranean
- 3) Facilitating paper and gunpowder
- 4) Spanned over 4000 miles which is 6400 km across Asia, through mountains (Pamir), deserts (Taklamakan) connecting China with the roman empire and beyond
- 5) Transmitted religions like Buddhism into China, philosophies, technologies, and innovations, fostering multicultural cities.
- 6) Facilitated major historical developments, including the spread of gunpowder, influencing warfare and progress
- 7) Also carried diseases, with the plague (that started in England) potentially spreading along these routes in the fourteenth century.
- 8) The Chinese envoy Zhang Qian's journey helped establish the routes; Marco polo famously travelled them later.
- 9) China's current Belt and road initiative (the BRI) revives and expands these ancient connections for modern trade and influence.
- 10) The Buddhist art hub is at the Dunhuang as known as Mogao Grottoes
- 11) The Jiayuguan pass includes a great wall fort.
- 12) Key oasis city is at Turpan (Jiaohe Ancient city, flaming mountains)
- 13) Kashgar is a historic, culturally rich city.
- 14) The silk roads' name before 'the silk road' had a few: Oasis Route, Prairie route, Mountain route and the earlier Persian Royal Route.
- 15) The Silk Road began 2100 years ago

- 16) began to trade silk for horses
- 17) There were 5 'silk roads' from mainland China
- 18) The silk road was the longest ancient overland trade route
- 19) Marco polo was the most famous silk road trader/explorer
- 20) The silk road was severed around 1368
- 21) The silk road changed the world radically
- 22) Buddhism entered China by the silk road
- 23) China has opened major new silk road transport
- 24) In 1877, the German explorer Ferdinand von Richthofen defined 'the western region traffic road' mediated by silk trade between China and Central Asia as well as 'India' as 'the silk road' in his book
- 25) The silk road is neither an actual road nor a single route. The term instead refers to a network of routes used by traders for more than 1500 years, from when the Han dynasty of China opened trade in 130 BCE until 1453 CE, when the Ottoman Empire closed off trade with the west.
- 26) Marco polo (the famous traveller on the silk road) was born into a wealthy family in Venice, Italy.

### **How did countries agree on it?**

As we all know, there are a lot of countries in the silk road, but how did they agree together to build it? Here's how, Countries agreed to the silk road due to mutual economic benefits, the promise of development, cultural exchange, and shared security. With modern agreements, often formalized through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and financial backing from institutions like the AIIB, fostering cooperation over competition for trade, infrastructure, and peace, rather than a single, unified agreement. Countries gained access to lucrative trade routes, promoting exports (like silk from China) and imports (like wool, gold, spices), fostering economic growth and investment. The Belt and Road initiative modernizes infrastructure (railways, highways, digital networks), creating jobs and improving connectivity, with China providing financing. Countries sign formal MoUs with China to participate in the BRI (The belt and road initiative, signaling their commitment. Essentially, nations joined for a mix of trade advantages, development funding, improved infrastructure, and the promise of shared prosperity and peace, building upon the historical legacy of interconnectedness (which is the state of being connected with each other).

# All About the China Silk Road

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Wong, Jarvis – 10*

The China Silk Road was a trade network spread across from Europe to Asia. Twenty-two centuries ago, some Chinese people spent long months trekking the roads westwards to see if they can sell silk to customers. The trip turned out to be a huge success, and it soon grew into the one of the largest trade networks in all time history. It remained popular for 1,500 years, finally disappearing in the mid-1400s.

## **What was the Silk Road?**

The Silk Road was a network of trade connecting China with Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe, it was also about 4,000 miles long. The Silk Road started in Xi'an, China and stretched all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. The trade network was used for over 1,500 years.

## **Who traveled on the Silk Road?**

Merchants traveled the magical roads of Central Asia, alongside camel caravans with guards journeying through the harsh deserts of China. Explorers like Marco Polo paced through the amazing roads of India. Nomads, monks and soldiers advanced through roads full of desert bandits. Desert officers race through the parched sands of the Gobi Desert. Diplomats and envoys (Zhang Qian, Gan Ying) helping people exchange goods and ideas across Eurasia for centuries, connecting civilizations from Rome to China.

## **What was traded?**

From the East, Silk (most famous), tea, porcelain, spices, sugar and salt were traded mostly in China.

From the West, Gold, Silver, wool, glass, ivory and horses (especially the "Heavenly Horses") were traded mostly in Europe.

## **What Cultures and Ideas spread?**

Buddhism started travelling all the way from India to China. Christianity and Islam spread into Central Asia. Art, music, inventions and stories moved across continents. Technology (papermaking, gunpowder, compasses, waterwheels) were one of the most important changes to present technology. Philosophy spread quickly around Eurasia. Diseases, the well-known Black Death spread like skittles causing the deaths of 200 million.

## **What were dangers on the Silk Road?**

Harsh Deserts like the Gobi Desert prevented many people from travelling across. The sun was super bright in the Gobi Desert, and the sand scratched your skin. High mountains like the Pamir Mountains were extremely dangerous, a single trip can cause your life! Sandstorms, sunburns and long distance can cause burnt skin, scratched skin and dehydration. Political conflicts between empires caused humongous problems since kings were primarily driven by intense competition for control over the trade routes which made people rich, the immense wealth they generated, and the strategic advantages they offered.

### **What were the cities of the Silk Road?**

The key cities of the Silk Road were separated into different groups. On the Eastern end, it was Xi'an, this was the major starting point. In Central Asia, there was Samarkand, Bukhara and Merv, they were crucial Central Asian centers of trade and culture. In the Middle East, Baghdad, Damascus, Ctesiphon and Aleppo were vital places in the middle. Finally, the western end containing Constantinople now known as the famous Istanbul, Antioch and Venice served as major European termini.

### **Why isn't there an exact number of Cities?**

- . It was a network not a road: The Silk Road comprised multiple land and maritime routes that shifted over time.
- . Evolving Importance: Cities grew, declined or even bypassed as empires rose and fell. (e.g., Mongol influence and the rise of sea trade.)
- . Oasis towns: Countless smaller settlements like Dunhuang and Kucha in the Taklamakan Desert were essential for rest, water and commerce.
- . Variability in Historical Records: Historical texts that mention distances and locations often use different measurement units and place names that do not always align with modern data and locations, making it difficult for historians to precisely map every settlement.
- . Definition of a 'City': What constituted a 'city' varied widely across different cultures and time periods. Some were large urban centers, while others were temporary military garrisons, small trading posts, or simple caravanserais.
- . Trade that happened in many different places: Few merchants traveled the entire length of the network. Instead, goods were passed through a succession of middleman and local traders from one market town or caravanserai (roadside inn) to the next. This meant that many different settlements served as important hubs at various times.

### **What caused the end of the Silk Road?**

- . Rise of Sea Routes: The most significant factor was the discovery of sea routes to Asia by Europeans (like the Portuguese), which were faster, cheaper and could carry more goods than camel caravans.
- . Ottoman Control: The capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453 made overland trade to Europe more difficult and costly, prompting Europeans to seek sea route alternatives.
- . Conflicts between countries: The collapse of the unified Mongol empire in the 14<sup>th</sup> century disrupted the peace and security that has facilitated trade, weakening the Silk Road's infrastructure.
- . Chinese Isolation: The Ming dynasty in China eventually made policies to cut itself off from the rest of the world, stopping trade and further diminishing the eastern end of the routes.
- . Disease: The Black Death (bubonic plague) in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century significantly weakened trade networks and populations, contributing to the decline.

### **How did the Black Death end up affecting the Silk Road?**

- . Transmission Vehicle: Flea-infested rats, carried by merchants and their caravans, hitched rides on ships and along land routes, moving the plague from Central Asia to the Mediterranean and beyond.
- . Pax Mongolica: The relative peace and interconnectedness under the Mongol empire, which secured the Silk Road, ironically facilitated the rapid, widespread transmission of the disease across the vast distances.

. Key Entry Points: The plague Europe via Italian trading posts like Caffa in the Crimea, carried by fleeing merchants.

### **Where is the Silk Road now?**

The silk road isn't a single road today but a vast network of ancient routes now existing as modern highways, railways, and cultural trails through Asia, connecting China, Central Asia and beyond, with parts preserved a UNESCO sites and inspiring modern infrastructure projects like China's belt and road initiative. Travelers can follow remnants like the Pamir Highway and visit historic cities like Bukhara and Merv, while China's BRI aims to revive the economic connectivity.

The Silk Road served not only as route for exporting goods such as silk, spices, precious metals, minerals handicrafts, architecture and paintings but also transmitted cultural exchange including theatric performance, dance and music art

–UNESCO

# I Am the New Silk Road

*Heep Yunn Primary School, Yiu, Tsz Yin Ariadne – 11*

In a world filled with conflict, like the current wars in Gaza and Ukraine, the New Silk Road reminds us of a path towards harmony. For me, the Silk Road isn't just part of history books. It is the space between my dinner table. To my left, my father's perfect English, tinted with a Danish accent, articulated the details of his workday. To my right, my mother's Cantonese flowed melodically as she shared her Chinese family stories. And there I sit, their mixed child living in Hong Kong, sometimes feeling like a puzzle with missing pieces, unsure which culture I actually belong to. When the competition theme, *New Tales of China's Silk Road*, was announced, I knew I had to share my story. I see myself as the living connection bridging my mother's rich Chinese traditions with my father's Danish roots. Just as the Silk Road once carried goods and cultures between East and West, my identity embodies a blend of both cultures too. In June, we celebrate Sankt Hans Aften by gathering around bonfires. In February, we wear red to celebrate Chinese New Year. Both these holidays bring so much joy to my family as both celebrate togetherness, a value which we treasure. I believe the New Silk Road is just like me. It's not merely a trade route but proof that the most enduring connection is human unity, when our strengths can be amplified.

My research began as a quest for understanding. I delved into the history of the ancient Silk Road and discovered that it was never just about silk. It was the first great sprawling network for ideas. The very paper this is printed on? It was invented in China and travelled west, revolutionising communication. And the mathematical concepts that power my father's projects? They were shared by Indian thinkers and carried by Arab scholars along these routes. And the spices that flavoured my mother's cooking? They were once worth their weight in gold, transported by merchants who braved deserts and mountains. And the intricate floral patterns on the ceramic bowl holding my soup? The cobalt pigment was mined in Persia, traded east to Jingdezhen, and fired by Chinese artisans into porcelain. The Silk Road was the world's first internet, a slow but magnificent route of cultural and intellectual exchange.

In that moment of historical clarity, my own world snapped into focus. At bedtime, my mother would share folklore from China, while my father would recount tales of Viking adventures, blending history and imagination from both worlds. At dinner, my mother's traditional Cantonese dishes often met my father's love for *stegt flæsk*, the national dish of Denmark. Our dining table became a modern day caravanserai. It was the stopping point where cultures could rest, share, and blend. My home is a place rich in both Western and Eastern cultures where I can feel comfort as I embrace both. I am the scribe recording this new exchange! As my parents tell me, I'm living in the garden where diverse flowers bloom together to create a breathtaking landscape of unity. It's here where I learnt to treasure my uniqueness.

This new understanding led me to see Hong Kong with fresh eyes as this thriving metropolis built upon ancient crossroads. As I gazed at this New Silk Road, I was struck by the gleaming infrastructure that surrounds me. Last Saturday, my grandfather drove across the elegant Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macau Bridge that stretches across the sea, binding the Pearl River Delta into a single economic powerhouse. Each morning, as my mother drove me to school, I marvelled at the colossal container ships with their decks stacked high like floating Lego blocks. Now, however, these containers no longer carry silk, but smartphones and medical supplies that sail to every corner of the world. This morning, I read about the 'Digital Silk Road' where data now flows like a virtual river along fibre-optic cables connecting cloud computing hubs from Hong Kong all the way to Helsinki. The means of exchange have transformed from camel caravans to container ships and data streams. That's just purely amazing! The ancient Silk Road connected bazaars, and the new one connects digital marketplaces and financial hubs. What fascinates me is that the fundamental purpose remains unchanged — connection for the better. Both Silk Roads remind us that we are all part of a shared journey connected by our shared dreams.

I finally understood! The New Tale of the Silk Road is like the story of my parents choosing to build a common language of love. It is the story of data and goods flowing seamlessly across borders, and of scientists on different

continents sharing research to heal our sick planet. We all know that life can be a struggle, but we never have to face it alone. The power of togetherness is the key to a better future.

My personal tale is a small one, but isn't every story significant and unique in its own way? I am two strands of DNA twisted together like the filaments in a fibre-optic cable, carrying a brighter signal and a stronger connection than either could alone. Collaboration creates something neither culture could achieve alone. The New Tale of the Silk Road is my story and it can be yours too. Have you ever dared to learn a new language or embraced a different perspective? In this endless and generous exchange, we can find peace. The world may be tempted to build walls, but can we choose to construct steel and light instead? Can we continue to open up a world of possibilities in peace?

The Silk Road is a journey of connection, exchange, and the beauty of diversity and my family is the modern tale of the New Silk Road. I'm the bridge between Chinese and Danish cultures. I think the greatest thing two continents can build is not a pipeline. It's me! It's a child, a family, a new generation carrying both cultures forward.

So, what will your story be?

# New Tales of China's Silk Road

*Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School,  
Ko, Kam Ho Alie – 12*

The Silk Road is one of the most famous trade routes in history. It connected China with many other place in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Along this road, traders brought silk tea, and pottery from China and took back gold, wood and glass from the West. These exchanges helped different cultures learn from one another.

The Story of the Silk Road began more than two thousand years ago, during the Han Dynasty. At that time, China was a powerful kingdom, known for its wonderful silk. People from the West heard about this beautiful fabric, light as air and shinning like moonlight, and they wanted it. But there was one problem – nobody knew how to reach China.

Then came a brave man named Zhang Qian. The emperor of Han sent him on a long journey to explore the lands of the West. This journey was dangerous. Because there were many evil Huns people. Zhong Qian travelled across mountains and deserts, met many tribes and faced countless dangers. Although he was captured once, he never gave up. Years later, he returned with precious information about foreign countries, their goods and their customs. His journey opened the door for trade – and soon, caravans began to travel between China, Central Asia, India, and even places as far as Rome.

Along the Silk Road, merchants carried not only silk tea and paper from China but also gold, glassware, and perfumes from the West. More importantly, the road became a bridge for culture, art, and knowledge. Chinese people learned about grapes, music, and new ways to build cities, while their inventions like paper, gunpowder, and the compass spread to the rest of the world. The Silk Road turned the world into a colorful painting filled with sound, smell and life.

Today, the old Silk Road exists only in history books and ruins, but its spirit lives on in the twenty-first century. China started a new project called the “One Belts Road initiative” also known as the Modern Silk Road. This Is not a Road made of Sand, but a large network of trade routes, ports, railways and digital connections that link Asia, Africa, and Europe. Instead, of camels and horses, we now have high speed train and airplanes. Instead of old map and compasses, we have satellites and navigation systems. Cargo ships travel across oceans carrying electronics, good and clothing to every corner of the world.

Through the Belt, oceans carrying electronics, food and clothing to build schools, hospitals, and clean energy projects. It contains the ancient dream – to bring people closer through cooperation and sharing.

To me, this new Silk Road is not just about business and money. It is about understanding between nations. When countries trade and communicate, they learn from each other. A Chinese engineer can build bridges in Africa, while an artist from Italy may come to China to teach about painting These exchanges make the world smaller, warmer, friendlier.

Whenever I read stories about the Silk Road, I imagine myself as one of those travelers. Maybe I am a young merchant riding a camel under the moon, guiding my caravan through the Gobi Desert. The stars above enemy map. The road may be long and hard but every step brings me closer to new discoveries. One Day, I might meet strangers who become friends, share a meal in a quiet town, or see a new invention that changes my life.

In modern world, my version of the Silk Road could be studying with friends from different countries or sharing ideas online with someone far away. Every time we connect with others and exchange ideas, we are creating a new story along the Silk Road.

I believe both the ancient and modern Silk Roads carry the same message: that people should stay open, curious and kind. We all come from different lands and cultures, but we share the same sky and hopes. The Silk Road reminds us that peace and friendship are stronger than walls and distance.

One day, I hope I can travel along the new Silk Road myself. I want to see the deserts of Dunhuang, the ports in Greece, and the bustling markets in Central Asia. I want to meet people, taste their food, listen to their stories, and write my own The Road, to me, is not just a road from China to the world. It is a journey of the heart, connecting past, and future, east and west, and most of all, people to people.

# New Tales of China's Silk Road

*Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School,  
Lau, Ho Yeung – 11*

The Silk Road, a term coined in the 19th century, refers to an extensive interconnected network of trade routes that spanned from the Eastern shores of China to the heart of the Mediterranean Sea. This ancient highway, utilized from 130 BCE to 1453 CE, was more than a mere pathway for the exchange of goods; it was a significant conduit for cultural, technological, and religious exchange that shaped civilizations.

## Origin and Development

The inception of the Silk Road can be traced back to the Han Dynasty under the leadership of Emperor Wu. The dynasty's geopolitical conflicts with the nomadic Xiongnu tribes in the north prompted the emperor to seek alliances with distant peoples. The young and daring envoy Zhang Qian was dispatched to forge an alliance with the Dayuezhi, a tribe originally living in the western regions. Although Zhang's mission did not succeed in its primary diplomatic aims, his extensive travels opened up direct contacts between China and the vast regions of Central Asia.

Zhang Qian's journeys marked the beginning of regular and organized routes forming what would be known later as the Silk Road. These routes allowed merchants, pilgrims, missionaries, and others to traverse continents and exchange commodities and ideas.

## Commerce along the Silk Road

Silk, the hallmark of Chinese luxury, was perhaps the most famous commodity traded along these routes, but it was by no means the only one. Goods such as gold, ivory, precious stones, and ceramics flowed from the West to the East. In return, China exported silk, lacquerware, bronze goods, and other fine crafts. Moreover, agricultural products like grapes, walnuts, cucumbers, and various spices made their way into China, enhancing the diversity of Chinese cuisine and agriculture.

## Cultural Exchanges

The Silk Road was equally significant for the spread of knowledge, ideas, and religious beliefs. Technologies such as paper-making and gunpowder traveled westward, while the East learned about glassmaking and improved irrigation techniques. Perhaps most notably, Buddhism spread from India into China and other parts of Asia through these trade routes. This exchange was facilitated by monks who traveled between Buddhist centers across Asia, carrying with them texts and artifacts that helped establish monastic communities far from their origins.

## Impact on Societies

The impact of the Silk Road on the societies it touched was profound. It facilitated not only the exchange of goods but also the interaction between diverse cultures. Artistic influences flowed across borders, with Greco-Buddhist art representing one of the most striking examples of this cultural synthesis. The transmission of the Greek artistic style to India, and later to Central Asia and China, demonstrated the deep cross-cultural exchanges that were a hallmark of the Silk Road interactions.

## Decline and Legacy

The decline of the Silk Road began with the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the rise of the Ottoman Empire, which blocked the traditional routes to the West. The maritime discoveries by European explorers opened new sea routes to Asia, reducing the reliance on the overland Silk Road. However, the legacy of the Silk Road remains evident today, as it laid the foundational principles for international trade and cultural exchange.

In modern times, the concept of the Silk Road has seen a revival through China's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to reinvigorate the trade routes primarily via extensive infrastructure investments across Asia and beyond. This modern iteration seeks to enhance connectivity and cooperation between East and West, echoing the historical Silk Road's spirit of exchange and mutual benefit.

## Conclusion

The Silk Road stands as a testament to the power of human connection across cultures and continents. It was not merely a series of trade routes but it is a bridge linking disparate worlds through commerce, culture, and communication. The enduring legacy of the Silk Road is a reminder of how that trade can transcend the exchange of goods to foster broader understanding and cooperation among different peoples. As we move forward, the principles of the Silk Road — openness, inclusivity, and mutual respect — will always continue to hold and teach us valuable lessons for global harmony and prosperity.

# New Tales of China's Silk Road

*Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School,  
Leung, Chi Yan – 12*

The Silk Road was built by China to connect to other countries for the exchange of goods. It wasn't just a path carved onto the Earth. It was like a capillary for exchanging goods. It was a bridge between China and places in Europe, for which the Chinese could not previously reach.

The journey often began in Chang An. People usually set out to trade for goods. Some people even gambled with fate; they transversed to the Taklamakan Desert, i.e. the most isolated desert on earth. They were caravans; they had tried to intrepidly explore the unknown. They weren't just businessmen; they were explorers, ready to sacrifice themselves for the exotic walk (and the next oasis, of course).

People traded a lot of things. Here and there, you might see people trading silk for some horses in Ferghana, Uzbekistan, or maybe some tools like the lapis lazuli. But people didn't stop there. At night, when you wouldn't expect any trade,

monks would gather and share philosophical and scientific ideas. That's how the west learnt about the Buddhist religion.

There was even art along the way. Like I said above, the lapis lazuli was also traded along the Silk Road. The lapis lazuli is a rock which could be used to paint after being grinded to powder. Such a rock simply didn't exist in China.

Looking back at the past, we are often reminded that innovation comes from interaction, and we simply wouldn't have the technology nowadays if it wasn't for the Silk Road.

# The Silk Road's Spicy Secret to Connecting the World

*International Christian School, Hui, Lucas – 8*

Have you ever taken a bite of hot, fragrant curry and wondered where its magic comes from? It's all thanks to the Silk Road, a giant network of paths that tied the world together two thousand years ago, long before planes or trains zoomed across the globe.

The Silk Road wasn't just one straight road; it was like a tangled spider web stretching over scorching deserts and snowy mountains, linking China's silk workshops to India's spice bazaars and even Rome's bustling markets. It all started with Zhang Qian, a brave explorer from China's Han Dynasty. He spent thirteen tough years traveling far from home, getting captured twice, walking through sandstorms and icy peaks, just to map new routes. Those paths became the foundation of the Silk Road, changing China and the world forever.

Merchants hopped on camels which are desert superheroes and they can go days without water and carry goods across these tricky paths. China sent soft, shiny silk to other lands. In return, Indian traders packed bags of turmeric, cumin and coriander, the secret spices of curry. In dusty oases, an Indian merchant might hand a pouch of spices to a Persian traveler, who then passed them to someone heading to Rome. That's how curry's spiciness hopped from country to country!

The Silk Road boomed when empires kept travelers safe. The Mongol Empire created a peaceful time called Pax Mongolica, building rest stops with warm bread and clean water, and chasing away bandits. Caravans of hundreds of camels rumbled along, bells jangling like music. In cities like Samarkand, you could hear ten different languages, smell curry spices mixing with roasted meat, and watch traders laugh and shake hands. For China's economy, this was a game-changer: selling silk brought tons of gold, while new technologies like Persian plows and Indian weaving tools made Chinese farms and workshops more productive.

The impact of the Silk Road went far beyond just trading food, it was a ticket to friendship and the sharing of culture and ideas. Chinese cooks blended Indian spices with local ginger to create new and tasty dishes. Even monks carried tiny spice bags to make their plain rice meals more exciting! This sharing enriched China's culture, as new art styles from Persia decorated Chinese cave walls, and Indian Buddhism traveled along the routes to become an important part of life in China.

By the 1500s, faster sea routes made the Silk Road fade eventually. But its magic still lives on! When I enjoy curry at my favorite restaurant or share curry rice with my classmates at school potlucks, I know we are keeping the Silk Road's legacy alive!

The Silk Road shows us that sharing spices, stories, or a bowl of curry makes the world better. When you taste curry, think of the brave traders who crossed hot deserts for months, facing sandstorms to bring joy and flavor to others. Their journey reminds us that sharing connects us, no matter where we come from!

# New Tales of China's Silk Road

*Korean International School, Ng, Andrew Jing Ho – 11*

The Silk Road was made in the Han Dynasty from 130 BCE. It was created because some Chinese people wanted to sell silk to new customers. It was a success due to the Silk Road revolutionizing trading as it connected Europe to China. The Silk Road also made travelling a lot easier, as there was now a route people can follow. The Silk Road was not a single road instead it was many roads connected to one another.

The origin of its name comes for the 19th century German Geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen who named it The Silk Road because silk was the primary commodity.

There are many tales from the silk road such as “The Legend of the Silk Princess” where a Chinese princess smuggled silk eggs and mulberry seeds out of a China in her elaborate headdress to start a silk industry in her new kingdom. There are many other tales such as “Goose that laid golden eggs” were created because the Greeks and Indians that travelled along these routes saw the animals there and made a fable there are many versions of the story.

The Silk Road allowed people from different places to share ideas and products such as spices and jewellery. The Silk Road went through many countries such as China, India, Persia, Turkey, Italy, Egypt, Spain, and parts of East Africa. Many countries used the Silk Road for trading and were able to make lots of money from trading they traded stuff like strong horses, grapes, corals, textiles gold and silver and coloured glass from Europe to Asia. Meanwhile China traded silk, spices, gunpowder, printing techniques and porcelain. Aside from making money, they were able to spread their culture and beliefs into other countries which was good because there could be more support for that country and it can help break down stereotypes.

The journey was very dangerous because of the wild animals, the weather and natural disasters, plus there were no doctors along the trail, so there was nothing you could do unless you reached another city in time for a doctor. Many of these traders and travellers would hire mercenaries to protect them and the traders would go in groups and would carry swords to protect themselves and their cargo. The Silk Road also transmitted disease and viruses so many people got sick. Thankfully there were things called caravanserais which were basically hotels and roadside inns where travellers can stay there and they were provided food, water, and shelter plus there were usually other travellers that were in those caravanserais and they were able to exchange language, goods, and ideas but you would need an ancient passport to stay in the caravanserais which were just clay tablets or were letters written by the higher ups of the country to ensure safe – passage.

The Silk Road was abandoned because sea travel was becoming more convenient for trading. Even though the Silk Road was abandoned, it made people realize connecting the east and the west was not that hard and there were now multicultural cities and innovations. Plus, it opened new possibility for the future.

# The Silk Road

*Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Lin, Emily – 11*

The Silk Road, an ancient network of trade routes that connected China to the West, has long been a symbol of cultural exchange and economic prosperity. Revived with new stories and adventures in trade and culture, new tales are emerging and reshaping our understanding of this legendary pathway.

Today, China is leading a new initiative called the Belt and Road Initiative. The project aims to improve trade connections across Asia, Europe, and Africa. It is building roads, railways, and ports that make it easier for countries to cooperate.

For instance, the construction of highways and railways in the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor is transforming local economies. Villagers in Pakistan who once struggled can now sell their crafts to Chinese markets, creating a vibrant marketplace of textiles, spices, and handmade products. This not only helps them earn a living but also renews traditional skills passed down through generations.

The Silk Road was not just about trade; it was also a bridge for cultures. Today, many activities celebrate this heritage. Xi'an, which was once the starting point of the Silk Road, hosts cultural events that bring people together to enjoy dance, music, and cuisine from different countries along the route.

These activities encourage connections between various cultures. For example, during the Silk Road International Cultural Festival, performers from China, Central Asia, and beyond showcase their traditional arts. Such cultural exchanges encourage understanding and respect among nations and remind us that our shared history can unite us.

The story of the Silk Road continues, connecting people and cultures across the world. As trade routes expand and cultural exchanges flourish, the spirit of the Silk Road continues to inspire.

The Silk Road isn't a part of history, it's a living journey that helps us appreciate and to respect one another, guiding us toward a brighter future.

# China's Silk Road

*Sacred Heart Canossian School, Chan, Chin Wing – 11*

Have you ever wondered how luxury silk could have traveled from China all the way to Europe? When China could have gatekept every single thing?

So, it turns out it's not just about the fancy fabric. The Silk Road carries history, a pathway of all different cultures and ideas. Combining to one is a huge successful exchange between China and the rest of the world. But surprisingly, only was it just silk, but a lot of other different spices and produces like tea, rice, ginger, medicine, and more. Along with those came our different stones and metals like: Jade, Lapis lazuli, gold, and bronze were also exported. Other than those, even China's greatest inventions traveled alongside toward the western continents. Now, to this day, nearly every country has paper for any use.

And besides all that, the Silk Road has not only been there for different types of goods. But also exchanging ideas and religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and more. Technology, on the other hand, is not as modern as it is now. But papermaking, printing, gunpowder, which I've mentioned earlier. With magnetic compasses. The four China's greatest inventions, all traded to foreign countries in one single road. You may wonder why the Silk Trade is even a thing? Well, twenty-two centuries ago, the Silk Road was thriving since the cause of empires sought wealth and power, merchants risked deserts for foreign delicacies while civilians craved for the ownerships of exotic luxury goods that wouldn't be found anywhere near home. Through months or even years of exports and exchanges, there, the well-known Silk Road was made.

The Silk Road reached its golden age during China's Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), when ambitious emperors like Wu saw trade as a path to power. Desperate for strong horses from Central Asia to defend their borders, Emperor Wu funded daring expeditions, including Zhang Qian's legendary journey west across deserts and mountains. These missions opened routes that connected East and West for centuries after, turning dusty caravan trails into lifelines of exchange. Merchants risked bandits carrying silk eastward while bringing back spices like cinnamon, all because empires craved wealth and exotic luxuries.

The Silk Road wasn't just about moving goods, it carried knowledge too. Chinese scholars absorbed Indian mathematics, especially zero, while Persian astronomers taught Chinese how to predict eclipses using precise star charts. The most famous exchange? The adoption of Arabic numerals by European merchants via traders from Central Asia, replacing clunky Roman numbers that limited calculations. One example is the magnetic compass, invented in China during the Han, but perfected through Islamic navigation techniques before spreading westward centuries later. This single tool reshaped ocean travel forever.

The Silk Road wasn't just a trade route. It was the world's first global highway, carrying silk, spices, and ideas that shaped civilizations. From Buddhist monks spreading enlightenment to European scholars adopting Arabic math, its legacy is still with us today. In our smartphones powered by Chinese techs, our compasses guiding travel... even in that cinnamon you sprinkle on toast, without dusty caravans and daring merchants risking deserts for profit? Our modern world might look very different from now.

# China's Silk Road

*Sacred Heart Canossian School, Li, Yi Kiu Jenna – 11*

**The Silk Road** is the world's longest and most historically important overland trade route. Trade began thousands of years ago because the tradesmen found that ferrying products was profitable, and silk was one of the main trade items.

Through trade and travel along the road, the cultures throughout Eurasia developed economically, technologically and culturally, and religions and ideas spread east and west. The Han, Tang, and Yuan Empires especially prospered due to the trade, but during other eras, trade stopped for various reasons.

The region of China was isolated from the civilizations of the West by the world's highest mountains, some of the largest and most severe deserts, and long distances. In between, nomadic people raided travellers and traders.

However, the people of the Shang, Zhou, and Han dynasties mastered producing several kinds of products that were important and unique such as silk, porcelain, and paper, and these were greatly prized in the West.

But to reach the West, there were only two overland routes. Sea travel was as yet too primitive. One land route passed through the Gansu Corridor, extended westwards to Xinjiang, and then split into several routes. This is called the Silk Road. The other called the Tea Horse Road started from Yunnan and Sichuan and crosses Tibet.

The products such as silk were very valuable to those in Central Asia and as far away as Europe. They paid with precious metals, animal skins, and some of their own manufactured products such as woollen goods, carpets, and glass products that were prized in the East.

I think it is the greatest road for all the peoples.

# China's Silk Road

*Sacred Heart Canossian School, Wong, Sum Yu Ella – 11*

The revival of the Silk Road through China's Belt and Road initiative offers exciting opportunities for our world. This new Silk Road aims to connect countries by building better roads, railways, and ports. This makes it more convenient for nations to trade goods, helping other countries to enter the global market. As trades increase, our economies will grow stronger. However, the New Silk Road isn't just about trading. It is also about helping people from different cultures meet and learn more from each other, building friendships. Educational exchanges and tourism can help break down barriers and promote peace. This also encourages collaboration on technology, enabling countries to address challenges like such as climate change. Sharing knowledge can lead to innovative renewable energy solutions. Environmental protection is another key focus. Projects should use green technologies to benefit the Earth, ensuring that this does not harm our environment. In conclusion, the New Silk Road can create a more connected world, enhancing economic benefits and teamwork on global challenges.

# Comparison Between the Ancient and New Silk Road

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Hing Lun – 11*

The ancient Silk Road and the modern Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are two extraordinary efforts to connect distant parts of the world through trade and exchange. Both began in China and reached across continents, yet they belong to very different times. This entry mainly compares their origins, methods, goods, exchange, challenges, and lasting importance.

## Origins and Structure

The ancient Silk Road emerged more than 2,000 years ago, around 130 BCE, during the Han Dynasty. Emperor Wu sent the explorer Zhang Qian westward to build alliances and explore trade opportunities. His journeys opened a network of trade routes that stretched roughly 4,000 to 9,000 kilometres from Chang'an (today's Xi'an) through Central Asia and the Middle East to the Roman Empire. It was never a single road but a web of land paths used by merchants, pilgrims, and travellers. In terms of scale, it connected mainly Asia and Europe, involving regions like Central Asia, India, and the Mediterranean, but it was limited compared to today's global networks.

In contrast, the modern Silk Road—the Belt and Road Initiative—was officially launched in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping. It is a carefully planned global project with two main parts: the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt and the sea-based 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. The initiative now involves more than 150 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, and even Latin America, covering two-thirds of the world's population and 40 percent of global GDP. This makes its scale much larger than the ancient routes, with investments already over \$1 trillion and potential costs up to \$8 trillion for infrastructure projects worldwide.

## Transportation and Travel

Travel on the ancient Silk Road was slow and dangerous. Caravans of camels and horses carried goods across scorching deserts, high mountain passes, and bandit-infested regions. A one-way journey from China to the Mediterranean could take months or even years. Rest stops called caravanserais provided shelter along the way. The technology was basic, relying on animal power, simple navigation tools like stars and landmarks, and later some naval ships during the Ming Dynasty under Admiral Zheng He.

The BRI uses advanced technology to make travel faster and safer. High-speed railways, massive container ships, aeroplanes, and new highways move people and goods quickly. For example, the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train in Indonesia travels at 350 kilometres per hour, cutting a three-hour trip to just 45 minutes. China has also funded ports, pipelines, airports, and even digital networks like 5G and undersea internet cables in partner countries. This modern technology transforms transportation from slow animal caravans to efficient, high-tech systems, allowing goods to reach Europe from China in about two weeks by train.

## Goods and Trade

The ancient routes earned the name "Silk Road" because silk was China's most famous export. Merchants also carried tea, porcelain, paper, and spices eastward, while bringing back horses, glassware, gold, wool, and precious stones from the West. Trade was mostly in luxury items that wealthy people desired, with a focus on physical exchanges driven by private merchants.

Today's trade under the BRI is much larger and more varied in scale. Countries exchange electronics, machinery, cars, oil, clothing, and construction materials. The initiative also involves building factories, power plants, and digital networks. Instead of only trading finished goods, China invests directly in infrastructure to help partner countries develop their economies, with a purpose to boost global trade and create jobs. This includes energy projects like pipelines and renewable sources, showing a shift from simple trade to large-scale economic development.

## **Cultural and Idea Exchange**

Both Silk Roads have carried more than goods—they have spread ideas and cultures. Along the ancient routes, Buddhism travelled from India to China, and Chinese inventions such as papermaking, gunpowder, printing, and the compass reached Europe. Art styles, music, food, and languages mixed as people met in trading cities. The purpose was not just trade but also sharing knowledge and religions, fostering connections between empires.

The modern initiative continues this exchange on a bigger scale. Students study abroad, engineers share technology, and joint projects bring people together. Universities, hospitals, and cultural centres built with BRI funding help countries learn from one another. Digital cables laid under the sea now carry information instantly, connecting minds in ways the ancient travellers could never imagine. The purpose includes promoting cultural bonds and people-to-people ties, alongside economic goals like energy security and spreading Chinese technology standards.

## **Challenges Faced**

The ancient Silk Road faced natural dangers—sandstorms, extreme cold, and disease—as well as wars and taxes imposed by local rulers. Plagues sometimes spread along the routes, and shifting empires could close paths overnight. Its purpose of trade was often disrupted by these issues.

The BRI encounters different challenges despite its advanced technology. Some countries worry about borrowing large sums to pay for projects, environmental damage from construction, and geopolitical tensions. Critics question whether all partners benefit equally, and there are concerns about debt and sustainability. However, the initiative adapts by focusing more on green energy, like solar and wind power, to address climate change.

## **Conclusion**

The ancient Silk Road and the Belt and Road Initiative show how the dream of connecting the world has endured across centuries, but with evolving scale, technology, and purpose. The old routes grew slowly through merchant efforts on a regional scale, using basic animal transport for trade and cultural sharing. The new one is a government-led global powerhouse, leveraging cutting-edge technology like high-speed rails and digital networks to drive massive economic development and international cooperation. Yet both prove the same powerful idea: when people and nations link together through trade and shared knowledge, everyone can gain. The story of the Silk Road—ancient and new—reminds us that bridges between cultures are among humanity's greatest achievements.

# The Chinese Silk Road

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Leung, Chit Yu Kieran – 9*

The Chinese Silk Road stands as one of history's most famous symbols of connection. It was not a single highway but a growing network of overland trails and sea lanes that linked the East and West for centuries. At its heart was China, the creator of its most famous commodity and the civilization that most consistently drove its traffic. The story of the Silk Road is, in a lot of ways, the story of China opening its doors to the world and, in turn, inviting the world in.

The Road's foundations were laid during the Han Dynasty about over two thousand years ago, inspired by both strategy and curiosity. A court official named Zhang Qian is often called the "pioneer" of the Silk Road. Sent on a political mission to Asia, he returned with stories of powerful horses and wealthy kingdoms ripe for trade. The Han emperors saw the potential, and soon, guarded corridors were established westward. The primary export that gave the road its name was, of course, silk. This fabric, light yet strong, was a marvel to the Romans and Persians, who coveted it as a luxury of the highest order. But China sent forth more than just cloth; it exported revolutionary technologies like papermaking and gunpowder, which would slowly but in a way that can't be reversed change the course of global history.

The journey westward was a formidable trial. Caravans of camels, known as "ships of the desert," departed from the splendid capital of Chang'an (today's Xi'an). They faced the terrifying Taklamakan Desert, whose name was a sign that they are at a point of no return, and scaled the scary mountain passes of the Pamirs. Survival depended on a chain of oasis towns that blossomed into thriving cultural centers. Towns like Dunhuang and Kashgar were where the real magic of exchange happened. They were bustling, where languages mixed, goods were bartered, and ideas were freely shared. At Dunhuang, the famous Mogao Caves became a spiritual library of the route, with hundreds of temples carved into cliffs and filled with Buddhist art, paid for by merchants giving thanks for safe passage.

For China, the Silk Road was a source of immense richness and cultural enrichment. The constant flow of merchant gold and silver strengthened dynastic treasure. But perhaps more importantly, the road was a conduit for new influences. Which originated in India, entered China via these Central Asian routes and took root so deeply that it became a core part of Chinese culture, influencing art, and daily life for millennia. Foods like grapes, walnuts, and sesame transformed Chinese cuisine. New musical instruments, artistic styles, and even games arrived from Persia and beyond, making the Tang Dynasty capital of Chang'an perhaps the most cosmopolitan city on earth in its time.

The maritime Silk Road, often less celebrated but equally vital, flourished alongside the land routes. From southern ports like Guangzhou and Quanzhou, great Chinese junks set sail across the South China Sea. They carried porcelain, tea, and silk to Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and eventually the east coast of Africa. In return, they brought back spices, precious gems, tropical woods, and exotic animals. This sea lane was less vulnerable to the political upheavals that sometimes closed the land routes and ensured that trade could continue even when the overland journey became perilous.

The Silk Road was not always a story of steady flow. Its vitality pulsed with the rhythm of Chinese dynastic power. It thrived under strong, outward-looking empires like the Tang and the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty. During the Yuan, the entire span from Beijing to the Mediterranean was under one administrative rule, creating a "Pax Mongolica" that made travel safer than ever before. However, during periods of instability or inward focus, the routes grew dangerous and faded in importance. By the Ming Dynasty, with the rise of European sea power and the discovery of direct maritime routes to Asia, the slow caravans across Central Asia could no longer compete. The ancient land bridges faded into legend, reclaimed by the desert sands.

Yet, the legacy of the Silk Road never truly disappeared. It reshaped the world by creating the first sustained network of global exchange. It facilitated not just trade in goods, but the trade of knowledge—in astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. It inadvertently spread diseases like the Black Death, which traveled from East to

West with devastating consequences. Most of all, it created a template for globalization, proving that distant cultures are interdependent and that contact, however difficult, drives human progress.

Today, China has consciously revived the symbolism of this ancient network through its Belt and Road Initiative, a massive modern infrastructure project aimed at building new trade corridors across Eurasia and beyond. This ambitious plan is a direct nod to history, framing China once again as the central hub in a web of global connections. It shows how the idea of the Silk Road—a vision of interconnected prosperity—remains powerfully alive.

In the end, the Chinese Silk Road's greatest export may not have been silk or porcelain, but an idea. It was the idea that no civilization, not even one as vast and self-sufficient as China, exists in a vacuum. The road was a two-way street of influence: China gave the world transformative technologies and luxuries, while the world introduced China to new faiths, flavors, and art forms. It reminds us that cultures grow not through isolation, but through the challenging, rewarding, and essential act of reaching out. The physical roads may be silent, but the echo of that exchange still defines our innerconnected world.

# The Silk Road That Never Ends

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Leung, Chun Pui – 10*

Imagine travelling along the desert 2000 years ago, only able to hear the gentle chimes of bells hanging from groups of camels. Fast forward to today. Camels and nomads give way to loud trains, the roar of port cranes and the clanging of shipping containers. This is all connected to the Silk Road.

Did you know there was a special trading route called the Silk Road over 2000 years ago? A Chinese man, Zhang Qian, was commissioned by Emperor Wu to go on a dangerous journey to persuade Yuezhi to join forces with the Han Dynasty against the Xiongnu. He battled the scorching hot desert, turbulent sandstorms, and was even captured by enemies and held prisoner for ten years. Despite this, he did not give up. Once released, Zhang Qian spent thirteen years trying to get back to his hometown, never abandoning his mission. His detailed reports on the states of Central Asia transformed blank spaces on the Han maps into potential allies and trade partners, effectively drawing the first reliable line between China and western countries. Afterwards, thousands of Chinese traders trekked on camels, following in his footsteps, and expanded the route. The Chinese traded their precious silks, and crafts for grapes, carrots and even rare and special horses from the west. This was the first time people from different countries could exchange their products and culture.

Why did the Silk Road disappear? The Ottoman Empire blocked the road by building tollbooths, imposing exorbitant taxes and creating bureaucratic hurdles on the key land routes they controlled. They made the ancient overland trade too expensive and unreliable. Additionally, trading by sea became more popular. Overtime, the sounds of bells worn by camels, slowly disappeared. However, the Silk Road wasn't gone, it was just sleeping quietly, like a giant dragon.

For hundreds of years, the Silk Road lay dormant, until a magic spell woke it up in the spring of 2015. The spell cast the Belt and Road Initiative, a global project started by China that connected countries to help them build important items, and to make it easier for everyone to trade, share ideas, and succeed together. This time, the Silk Road is not just a trading route, it is a vast network. The slow camels and caravans of the past have been surpassed by steel trains used to transport goods. The original Silk Road consisted of physical marketplaces where people traded in person. On the other hand, the new Silk Road has evolved with the times, trading on land, on sea and online. With over 150 countries participating in this plan, it has become the biggest trading network in history.

Today, we do not only exchange silk and spices, we exchange China's skills in high-speed trains, eco-friendly air equipment, and life-changing technology. According to data from China State Railway Group, by the end of 2023, the China-Europe Railway Express had made over eighty-two thousand trips, reaching two hundred and nineteen cities across twenty-five European countries. This train carries an ever-growing variety of goods, from electronics in its early days to more than fifty thousand different types of products today, such as medical devices, luxury cars and daily necessities. Beyond trading goods, it trades the most valuable resource of all -- knowledge and experience. This is a partnership of shared learning. For example, China has helped Thailand build a high-speed railway using Chinese technology and funding.

The new Silk Road builds more than roads and ports, it builds bridges of partnership and hope. It brings hope by connecting a farmer in Kenya to solar-powered irrigation technology, a student in Pakistan to digital classrooms, and a doctor in Uzbekistan to telemedicine networks. It helps communities not just by giving them tools, but by teaching them how to build, grow, and heal on their own.

The world is changing rapidly, the new Silk Road is becoming stronger, bigger and has a bright future.

The future Silk Road may evolve into a system of smart sharing. Each country would contribute data, technology, logistics and other resources that can be used to share solutions to threats, securing our world by acting like a global immune system. When one part is in danger, the whole network will respond to protect it. For example, if a glacier is rapidly melting in the Himalayas, threatening floods that could impact millions in India and Bangladesh, the Silk Road will activate immediately. Sensors in China and Nepal would send real-time data, an AI hub in Singapore could calculate the flood path, and factories in Turkey would be able to prepare flood barriers and ship them via Pakistan's ports. As a result, all countries could work together to efficiently resolve or prevent a potential disaster.

Once, the Silk Road connected East and West. Today, it connects us to the world. And tomorrow? Tomorrow, waits for us to explore, to understand, and to thrive together. The road began in the past, and it now stretches toward the future. And what a future we shall build, side by side.

# The Origins of Ancient Roads, the Silk Route

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Leung, Chung Kiu Moses – 11*

Ever wondered how the old trading caravan roads compare to shimmering modern high-speed trains? Both serve as symbolic bridges for connection and commerce over long stretches. Modern high-speed rails are swift and safe, but the ancient Silk Road was constructed on something slower yet stronger: the human heart. This 4,000-mile network was not just for silk and spices; it was a road for heroes.

Road began during the Han Dynasty. Emperor Wu sent a brave envoy named Zhang Qian on a perilous mission to the West. Zhang Qian was a pioneer who spent thirteen years facing hunger and imprisonment, yet he never gave up. He opened the gates of trade, but hundreds of years later, another traveller would walk this same path to open the gates of the soul. He was the monk Xuanzang, the real-life inspiration for the "Tang Monk" in the famous story Journey to the West.

In the story, the Tang Monk has a magical Monkey King to protect him from demons. However, the real Xuanzang had no magic. He had only a thin horse and a heart as hard as iron. In the year 627 CE, he set out for India to find sacred books of wisdom. He walked across bustling cities. His greatest challenge was the Gobi Desert, a place so terrifying it was called the "River of Sand."

One day as soon as Xuanzang was trying to take a drink, Xuanzang accidentally spilled his water and it absorbed with the sand. In the desert, water is life. Without the crucial water he longed for his throat would dry up. Looking at the endless waves of yellow sand, Xuanzang felt a moment of deep fear. He turned his horse back toward the east, toward safety and home. But after only a few miles, he stopped. He whispered a vow to the wind: "I would rather die pushing westward than live by retreating eastward." This vow became very renowned nowadays.

For five days and four nights, he travelled without a single drop of water. The sun felt like scorching fire on his skin, and the night wind was as shivering as ice. He saw terrifying mirages and felt his body failing, but his mind remained focused on his goal. It was not physical strength that saved him, but perseverance.

Xuanzang finally reached India, studied there for years, and returned to China carrying treasures of wisdom and Knowledge of Buddhism. His odyssey proved that no mountain is too high and no desert is too wide for someone with a true dream. Today, that ancient Silk Road has transformed into the modern "Belt and Road Initiative," using technology and high-speed trains to boost global growth and foster links between countries across continents.

We can now cross deserts in a matter of hours, but we must never lose the "Silk Road Spirit" of Zhang Qian and Xuanzang.

As a student, it becomes clear that we are also walking our own “Western Pilgrimage.” Our “deserts” are the difficult exams we must pass, and our “moments of dehydration” are the moments when we feel like abandoning our hobbies or studies. Xuanzang’s story reminds us that greatness is not about being the fastest or the strongest; it is about having the courage to take one more step when everyone else would turn back.

The Silk Road is ultimately a story of courage. From Zhang Qian’s first daring steps into the unknown to Xuanzang’s unyielding perseverance, this ancient road reminds us that even an ordinary person can help bridge the world—as long as they keep steering forward and never stop walking.

# What the New Silk Road could Achieve

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Ma, Yin Hang – 11*

China has launched the China–Europe Freight Trains, which currently operate on more than 100 distinct rail corridors.

From March 2011 to June 2025, China–Europe Freight Train trips officially surpassed 110,000, together transporting goods worth over \$450 billion. These trains run through key city hubs such as Chongqing, Xi'an, Yiwu, and Zhengzhou. At Khorgos, developers have created logistics systems using heavy–lifting cranes to overcome differences in rail gauge between China and Kazakhstan, quickly transferring containers and minimising delays. This innovation has transformed Khorgos into a fast–growing inland port, expected to handle over 30 million tons of cargo per year by 2035 and reduce China–Europe delivery times to about ten days, making rail more competitive than sea transport.

For the landlocked countries in Central Asia, it turns them into an important transit corridor. Furthermore, it could give China an alternative to sea cargo, which would bypass the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea, reducing the risk of naval blockades in any future crisis. To sum up, Khorgos can turn an empty desert into a new centre of continental trade, which can be faster than ocean travel, and would let China be the centre of the whole system.

The Chancay megaport in Peru is a key project under China's Belt and Road Initiative and is supported by Cosco Shipping Ports, a shipping and logistics services supplier company. The megaport is set to become one of Latin America's top deepwater ports. It has a 1500–meter berth that can accommodate even the largest post–Panamax container ships, which are ships that were designed to the maximum lock size of the Panama Canal (locks are devices that are used for raising and lowering watercraft between different waters of different levels).

Along with the fully electric, self–automated operations and cutting–edge technology, the megaport could dramatically transform global trade dynamics. By 2035, the Chancay megaport could achieve an annual capacity of over 3.5 million TEUs, becoming Peru's primary gateway to Asia and a key hub for South American exports. It would decrease shipping times to China by up to 20 days compared to routes through the Panama Canal, allowing faster and cheaper delivery of goods from Peru, such as copper, zinc, iron, fruits and fish to Asian markets. It could boost export volume significantly, attracting billions in trade and investment, while also generating thousands of jobs for the unemployed.

Moreover, Chancay could reorient Central and South American trade routes by creating a Pacific corridor that is better than the crowded traditional routes, fostering deeper economic ties between Latin America and Asia. People in Peru would gain many benefits, like new jobs, giving them the chance to live better lives without leaving their hometowns. The port would draw more investors from all around the world to spark growth in local businesses.

However, investing in China's Belt and Road Initiative also has its downsides, including debt distress and asset concessions. Sri Lanka built a port called the Hambantota Port. The port was underused, so they were unable to repay \$1.3 billion in loans. Thus, they had no other choice but to lease it to a Chinese state–owned company for 99 years in 2017, raising fears of losing strategic control. The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a project under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It includes highways, power plants, railways and the development of the Gwadar Port on the southern shore of Pakistan, aiming to connect China's Xinjiang to the Arabian Sea for shorter trade routes. However, Pakistan owes China \$26–\$30 billion. Unpaid bills to Chinese power producers reached \$1.5 billion by mid–2025, leading to high electricity costs. Many projects are stalled due to political changes, funding gaps and security issues, such as attacks in Balochistan. Laos' investment in the BRI, spotlighting the \$6 billion China–Laos Railway, which was completed in 2021, has resulted in severe financial problems. Chinese loans helped finance most of the project, resulting in Laos' public debt above 110% of GDP in recent years, with China accounting for approximately half of the total external debt. Debt

repayments to China alone reach hundreds of millions annually, with estimates for 2025 peaking at \$1.7 billion. It consumes a large share of government revenue, limiting spending on health, education and other priorities. Even though the railway has carried over 15 million passengers in the first 10 months of 2025 and cargo exceeding 67 million tons by late 2025, the revenue is still insufficient to cover debt service payments.

In conclusion, the New Silk Road could revolutionise global trade, decrease transit times, avoid vulnerable chokepoints like the Malacca Strait, and position China as the centre of Eurasian and trans-Pacific commerce. However, it also has serious downsides: loans have triggered debt crises in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Laos, leading to financial problems.

# The Chessboard of Silk and Strategy: Old Roads, New Dreams

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Ng, Daryl – 10*

As dusk settles and the harbour lights dance like chess pieces waiting for their turn, I open my book on the Silk Road, ready to step into a timeless game of journeys and exchanges. The pages feel like squares on a board, caravans like knights, and the ships outside glide like rooks across the glittering board. Through stories, I hear camel bells, smell cinnamon and pepper, and see silk shimmer like water.

The Silk Road isn't just history to me, but a game that never ends. Each move across the board carried treasures, e.g. silk from China, glassware from Rome, spices from India, paper from our own scholars. Each move also carried ideas about religions, technologies, scientific knowledge, and art forms, changing shape as they travel. I feel like a player waiting for my turn, wondering what piece I'll place on the board of the New Silk Road.

In 139 BC, Emperor Wu sent Zhang Qian west to find new lands and allies, a single bold move that opened the Silk Road. I picture Chang'an buzzing like a chessboard at the start of play. The Silk Road was not a single road but a web of paths stretching over 6000 kilometres across the Gobi Desert and the Pamir Mountains. Traders travelled in caravans with camels to protect themselves from robbers, stopping at caravanserais. Few people journeyed the entire route; instead, middlemen and trading posts kept the goods and ideas moving, square by square, like a long strategic game. Merchants carried silk soft as clouds, jade symbolizing wisdom, and porcelain shimmering under the sunlight. In return, caravans brought baskets of Persian grapes bursting with sweetness, ruby-bright pomegranates from distant valleys, powerful horses from Central Asia and Roman glassware sparkling like captured rainbows. Tea drifted west with its fragrance, spices and gemstones added colour to the journey, while textiles and crafted tools moved east.

The Silk Road carried more than goods. It carried games too. Chaturanga from India evolved into Shatranj in Persia, later into international chess, while in China, Xiangqi took shape with a river on the board and Generals who cannot meet. Yet as pieces changed, strategy held. Children in caravan camps learnt rules the way they learnt words, swapping moves like they swapped stories by the fire. Across the centuries, chess blossomed into thousands of identifiable variants and hundreds of millions of people play.

Religion and ideas spread just as fluidly. Buddhist monks carried scriptures eastward, Islamic scholars shared astronomy and medicine, and Christian missionaries travelled across continents. Towns along the routes grew into multicultural cities, where languages mixed and innovations flourished. Horses introduced to China strengthened the Mongol Empire, while gunpowder from China reshaped the European warfare. One famous traveller was Marco Polo, who journeyed from Venice to Xanadu in 1275. His adventure made the Silk Road famous in Europe, inspiring generations to imagine lands beyond their own.

When I imagine the Silk Road, I don't picture merchants first. I see children. A boy from Persia might hand me a carved horse piece; I'd give him a flat Xiangqi disk with Chinese characters. We'd grin at the differences, then play on the same board. Under a tamarisk tree, families traded not only silk and jade but also inventions, e.g. compasses to steer ships, papermaking that spread learning, and remedies for fevers. Musicians carried rhythms and cooks swapped noodles, spices, olives, and dates. Imagine tasting a Roman grape while teaching someone how to move a knight across the board. Every encounter was a lesson, every friendship a discovery, and every invention a new piece added to the board.

By the 1400s, ships had begun to sail across oceans, carrying goods faster than camels could cross deserts. The caravans faded, and the road grew quiet. The story felt unfinished until 2013, when China revived the idea with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Now the pieces become high-speed trains, cargo ships, airplanes, and digital networks. Countries trade machines, medicines, and ideas that travel instantly online. The BRI stretches across land and sea, building lanes where goods, services, capital, and ideas can move. Today, more than 150 countries are part of this new game, each placing their pieces on the global board.

Hong Kong, being a vital connector in the BRI, links Mainland projects to global capital and expertise while deepening cultural and educational exchanges. Its role isn't only economic but symbolic. Hong Kong is a place where East meets West, resembling the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road.

China's high-speed rails, ports, and digital Silk Road have already made the game alive again. But its future depends on us, the new players. I imagine sitting in a classroom with students from faraway places, each of us telling stories of our homes, then playing a match of chess. The Silk Road isn't only about trade. It's about people finding ways to understand each other through moves and ideas.

I wonder what my move will be. Perhaps I'll be an engineer, building bridges that connect countries like rooks across the board. Or a scientist, working on clean energy projects that shine like bishops guiding the way. Maybe I'll design games that teach history, so children across continents can play together and learn how the Silk Road once carried both silk and strategy.

The Silk Road has always been more than a road. It's a thread weaving people together across time and distance. Once, the Silk Road shimmered with silk, jade, spices, and games. Now, it hums with trains, ships, satellites, and digital sparks. In the future, it may carry treasures no caravan ever held—our imagination, our friendships, and the dreams we dare to share. The story of the Silk Road isn't finished. It's still being written, move by move, step by step. And one day, we'll place our own pieces onto the board, adding a new chapter to its endless tale of connection and discovery.

# The Silk Road

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Zuo, Francis – 11*

Did you know that in ancient times, Chinese and European people were travelling through passages known as the Silk Road? The silk road was a vast network of routes, passing through and connecting China, Middle East, Europe and Africa. It lasted about 1,300 years, from the 2nd century to the 15th century. The routes were dangerous, with bandits lurking everywhere, from the deserts to the mountains.

What was the purpose of these routes? They were intended for trading. People traded silk, hence the name, spices, ideas and spread culture and religions. The routes were dangerous, with bandits lurking everywhere, from the deserts to the mountains.

The network began with the expansion of the Han Dynasty, being the byproduct of multiple missions of the Chinese imperial envoy Zhang Qian. The Chinese worked with the Parthian Empire, which provided a crucial bridge that connected the Silk Road with the Mediterranean, and the Roman Empire, which established the west end of the routes. Not long after, trade through the routes were flourishing and business was booming.

People traded a variety of goods. The many riches the Chinese had was sought after in many places. Teas, dyes, perfumes, and porcelain were also really popular and trendy. The West also had a lot to offer. They traded horses, honey, wine and gold, to name a few. This made countries rich and wealthy. It was safe at the start. It seemed perfect— it was like a money printer. But, problems started to emerge.

The Silk Road had many problems. There were bandits trying to take advantage of the unarmed merchants. Wealth was spreading, so were diseases. The Black Death was a problem. The disease spread through the routes. It was also affected by politics, specifically the Mongol Conquests. The network was not secure or safe. After the 15th century, these routes disappeared.

In conclusion, the Silk Road trade routes were great, but it wasn't perfect. It had problems. However, it was a great idea, and there is something called the "New Silk Road". This term described different infrastructure projects along many of the ancient routes. The Silk Road, old or new, is the result of countries and empires working together.

# The Powerful Ancient Silk Road

*St. Mary Canossian School, Cheuk Yi, Chow – 10*

Have you ever heard of the historical Silk Road? The Silk Road is a literal road that connects many countries. There were five main roads. This road started in 130 BC and ended in 453 AD. In this essay, I will explain how the Silk Road changed travel, trade, and exploration in finding new routes.

Travelling along the Silk Road wasn't just one road, but a network of routes. The most well-known routes were from China to Turkey. Other roads went through Russia, India and Southeast Asia. Travelers would have used caravans. Caravans would have food, water, tents, horses, camels, mules and trade goods. Do you know how long it took to travel along the Silk Road? Three long years! Travelers would have seen hot deserts, tall snowy mountains, famous landmarks and met many interesting people. The Silk Road was extremely dangerous. Travelers would fear meeting robbers, having accidents, and losing supplies. The Silk Road was worth the risk because travelers wanted to make a fortune.

Trading was important during the time of the Silk Road because it allowed countries to develop the friendships, get supplies and make friends. Some items that were traded were cotton, silk, food such as spices, exotic animals, shoes, weapons, knowledge, history and more. Cultural exchanges included art, music, literature and religion. Societies were changed because of the exchange of the five top world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Many cities were built along the Silk Road. This road was a prime spot for making money and trading. Trading along the Silk Road brought new technology, people, medicine, plays, books and inventions.

For 1500 years, the Silk Road had been travelled by thousands of people. People wanted to find faster routes to Asia and the spice islands. They wanted to save money, get rich and explore new lands. Explorers, like Marco Polo, encouraged people to investigate new routes to China. The Silk Road stopped because of the Ottoman Empire and explorers trading on water routes.

In conclusion, the Silk Road had a major impact on the world. People from Asia, Europe and the Middle East experienced new ideas, products, culture and more. The Silk Road brought exploration, knowledge and cooperation from different countries. The Silk Road was an extremely important thing in history too!

# The Modern Silk Road: A Bridge Across Continents

*St. Mary Canossian School, Tsz Ham, Huang – 9*

Thousands of years ago, the ancient Silk Road was a busy path. Traders carried silk from China to Europe, spices from India to the Middle East, and stories from one culture to another. Today, we have a new "Modern Silk Road" — officially called the Belt and the Road Initiative (BRI). It follows the old road's spirit but connects our world with faster, smarter ways.

The modern network has two big parts. The first is the Silk Road Economic Belt — land routes with high-speed trains and wide highways. For example, a freight train called "China Railway Express" can take toys and electronics from Xi'an, China, to Berlin, Germany in just 15 days. Before, this trip took months by ship! The second part is the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road — sea routes with large cargo ships. These ships carry things like rice from Thailand to Kenya and cars from China to Indonesia, making sure goods reach more people.

The Modern Silk Road is not just about moving products. It brings people closer too. It helps build important projects in many countries. In Pakistan, a new port called Gwadar was built with BRI help. Now, local fishermen can sell their catch to other countries easily, and more jobs have been created. In Ethiopia, a new railway connects the capital city to a port, so farmers can send their coffee to Europe faster than ever. Schools and hospitals have also been built in some poor areas, giving kids better education and families better health care.

As a student, I find the Modern Silk Road exciting. It means I can eat apples from New Zealand for breakfast, use a pen made in Japan at school, and watch cartoons made with artists in Brazil. One day, I hope to travel along it — maybe visit the ancient sites in Afghanistan that were part of the old Silk Roads or learn about new technologies in a Chinese school.

The ancient Silk Roads taught the world that friendship grows when we share. The modern Silk Road carries this idea further. It shows that when countries work together, we can make life better for everyone. It's not just a road of goods — it's a road of hope and future.

# The Silk Road

*St. Mary's Canossian School, Hazel, Cheng – 11*

The Silk Road is a term used for a trading route that once stretched across three continents: Asia, Europe and Africa. It was approximately 6400 kilometers long. People first used it around 22 centuries ago and stopped using it in the 15th century since people found out that it is better to transport goods by sea.

The route is known as The Silk Road today because silk was mainly traded through this route back in the day. At the time, silk was a very valuable material and it was only produced in China, so people from the West found it hard to buy these materials. This trading route helped China to become a prosperous country which was an important step for their development later. Other goods such as spices, gold, horses, gems, etc, were also traded on The Silk Road.

Although the Silk Road might be a term we always hear today, it wasn't always called The Silk Road. It only became The Silk Road when German explorer, Ferdinand von Richthofen, named it in the late 19th century.

The Silk Road was important in many ways. It helped people exchange ideas, goods, culture and inventions. Towns along the route became rich and later grew into big cities. In 2013, China launched a project called the Belt and Road Initiative. It got its idea from The Silk Road used more than one thousand years ago. This project focused on trading goods and technology with African and European nations.

In conclusion, the Silk Road has had a great impact on humans even until now. We should make good use of this route to communicate with people from a diverse range of nations.

# The Silk Road

*St. Mary's Canossian School, Pui Shuen, Lui – 11*

The Silk Road was an ancient network of trade routes that connected the East and West, facilitating different goods, cultural exchanges and the spread of ideas. It connects China to other places across the world, including Central Asia, Persia, and mostly parts of the Middle East. As silk was the most representative of the goods traded. It was named the Silk Road, so now let's see what people do and trade on the road!

Let's start with the most popular item—— silk, the smooth Chinese silk was regarded as a treasure in ancient Central Asia, West Asia, Africa, and Europe. People paid high sums of money to buy the precious silk. The colorful silk even fabric dazzled the eyes of the Roman Empire in the vast Roman Empire. That is why silk is the most popular trade in the Silk Road as the rich and powerful often paid huge sums of gold to obtain it, making the country richer.

Different countries receive more exotic food, people in different countries share and trade unique food. such as India trade or share cucumbers and watermelons, and in China, people share lychee and bayberry. The food trade in the Silk Road made people understand other cultures and types of food.

Inventions like silk fabric making, stained glass, paper, books, gunpowder, and gun production spread to the West. And at the same time, inventions are also spread to different places; this way people across the world have a more convenient way in daily lives.

The Silk Road not only helps us understand cultures and countries, but also connects people around the world. So people should know and respect the Silk Road.

# New Tales of China's Silk Road

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Ching Hei, Cheung – 11*

Silk Road—older than empires, but younger than hope, has never once stayed still. The magnificent road — the merging of religions, spices, wealth, and ideas, the highway that for ages has bridged the divide between east and west — once flickered off, but is now evolving back.

Two thousand years ago, she was born in the eyes of a tired explorer who had walked with nothing but stories. He whispered to the emperor, “There are people out there who have never seen silk, nor once touched it, yet they already dream of it.” That whisper became her heartbeat. She stretched herself across deserts, wrapped herself around mountains, and learned to speak every language under the stars, by herself, and shone brightly when no one was looking.

Silk Road was never silent, yet some people never stood to understand. She was one who carried the shimmer of silk across her shoulders like dawn across water, slipped the secret of paper into ancient scrolls, and hid gunpowder in the path between footsteps. To China she brought horses as swift as storms; to Rome she delivered the glow of their world no one had ever imagined. She guided Buddhist monks along tangled paths and golden fields of sunburnt bronze, until their prayers became part of her and integrated into her harmonious symphony of shared aspiration. She spread recipes across continents, and long before anyone knew the word “global,” she taught strangers that the same stars watch over all of us.

For her, the Tang years were the nicest. She dressed in bright colors and danced in the Chang'an markets, and through her embrace, Chang'an became the largest, most radiant city ever, a heroic and bold blend of a million souls who walked her paths: Chinese, Persian, monks and more. She watched them greet each other through affirmations delivered with mutual respect, handshakes instead of open swords, smiles rather than scowls, mutually beneficial exchanges of food and tools and knowledge rather than bloodshed and tyranny. This made her proud of herself, and for the first time, she felt that she could be more than a path, more than a line drawn on a map, but a place to gather and unite, where difference became harmony and peace. She shone like a diamond, brighter than ever.

Then, with the passage of time, the oceans spoke louder, the spray of the pulse of salty waves an irresistible force, alluring travellers to foreign shores. For Silk Road, it was a wreck. Ships were faster, cheaper, and shinier. She grew tired, overwhelmed, exhausted. She couldn't possibly take it anymore, and like a grayscale, becoming darker with no way out, dull and dim, her trails filled with sand, her cities fell asleep, and in a blink of an eye, the world said, “She's gone.”

But little did anyone know, she had only closed her eyes for a nap.

In 2013, Silk Road felt the loving caress of a traveller, and she started slowly to stir, to feel the pulse of life in her veins, and her heart beat with a quickened step. A voice from China said, “Dear friend, we miss you. Come walk again.” She opened her eyes and smiled the biggest smile the world had ever seen.

Bit by bit, with the strength and courage from the traveller, she gathered her pieces, and reconstructed herself once again. Now, she's renamed as the Belt and Road Initiative, envisioned as a majestic array of interconnected paths, and interlaces continents through grand passages of modern structures.

This is her now, revitalised and strong, powerful and bold, wearing steel shoes instead of camel bells, a belt and road upon which she races on rails that make her fly, and she glides like a whisper at 300 km/h. She lights up villages that need hope. In Pakistan she lifts mountains aside, delivering inspiration and turning dreamers into believers, where kids can attend school and realise impossible realities. In Greece she turned a sleepy port into a heartbeat again, and the world realized they needed her.

Silk Road has grown enormously, but she is still the same road who loves transforming strangers into friends. She still carries valuables, now printing presses instead of porcelain, solar panels instead of spices, and dreams bigger than anyone could ever dream. Sometimes people argue about her. Some say she asks for too much, others say she gives too much. Regardless, she just keeps walking, because that's what she does. She knows every road has two directions, and everything can become a bridge if people choose kindness.

Now, she is everywhere at once. She is the light flickering on in a mountain village that waited centuries for her return. She is the road that doesn't know she is riding inside a two-thousand-year-old promise, to light up this world and remind us that no matter what, everyone should be at peace, and differences should never set us apart. Silk Road never went away, but she evolved. She installed elegant highways, radiant ports, and resilient energy networks, in hopes of creating countless jobs and lifting communities into the warm glow of hope, while also sewing everlasting ties of friendship together. Around the world, wise leaders and people dream for a shining future filled with shared wealth, joyful learning from one another's traditions, and a peaceful family of nations, a community with a shared future for mankind, where everyone's dreams can bloom beneath a vast sky of unity and kindness. She is still walking and smiling. Now she's an iconic figure filled with quiet determination, with few to little people knowing her history, and somewhere right now, she is waiting for you to walk with her.

# The Silk Road: from Ancient World to Nowadays

*The French International School, Forti, Gaetan – 9*

The mysterious Silk Road was important because it helped to trade and commerce between a number of countries, kingdoms and empires. This helped for ideas, culture, inventions and unique products to spread across the settled world. The Silk Road has lasted more than 1500 years. The decline of the Silk Road was in the middle of the 15th century with the rise of maritime trade routes discovered by European explorers.

It was called the Silk Road because one of the big major products traded was silk fabric from China. People throughout Asia and Europe praised Chinese silk for its softness and luxury. The Chinese sold silk for thousands of years and even the Romans called China the “land of silk”. Besides silk, the Chinese also exported teas, salt, sugar, porcelain, spices, dried exotic fruits, and dead animal skin. Most of what was traded was expensive, luxury goods. This was because it was a long trip and merchants didn't have a lot of room for goods. They imported, or bought, goods like cotton, ivory, wool, gold, and silver. Beyond products, the routes spread religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam), artistic styles, musical instruments, theatrical performances, and scientific knowledge.

Merchants and tradesmens travelled in large caravans. They would have many guards with them. Travelling in big groups like a caravan helped to defend themselves against bandits. Camels and horses were popular animals for transportation because much of the road was dry and harsh. Although there was trade between China and the rest of the world for some time, the silk trade was significantly expanded and promoted by the Han Dynasty from 30–J.C. Later, under the rule of the Yuan Dynasty set up by Kublai Khan of the Mongols, trade for China along the Silk Road would reach its peak. During this time, the Mongols controlled a significant portion of the trade routes, enabling Chinese merchants to travel safely. Also, merchants were granted more social status during the Mongol rule.

The Silk Road was over 4 000 miles long! Marco Polo travelled to Europe from the Silk Road. Not all that was traded along the Silk Road were goods, it is thought that the bulbonic plague, or Black Death travelled to Europe from the Silk Road. Very few merchants travelled along the entire road. Goods were traded at many cities and trade ports along the way. Some roads were shorter but more dangerous. Others took longer but were safer. The Silk Road could be by land or by sea. There wasn't just one road but a vast network connecting China, through Central Asia and Iran, to the Middle East and ultimately Europe and North Africa, down to India and maritime routes reaching Southeast Asia and beyond.

In 2013, Xi Jinping (People's Republic of China President) launched a project to create a new Silk Road. It is called the Belt and Road Initiative and aims at boosting trade and China's international influence, connecting Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond with roads, railways, ports, and other projects, reviving ancient trade routes.

# My Summer Trip to The Silk Road

*The French International School, Huang, Charlotte – 9*

The Silk Road is a road that was first used by Chinese people who wanted to see if they could sell silk to people in the West. That's why it was named the Silk Road. It stretches from Chang'an (today's Xi'an) in the East to Europe in the West.

For people like me, who grew up in Hong Kong, we got used to seeing a blue sky, skyscrapers and mountains, but as I stepped out of the plane this past summer in 2025, I realized I set foot in a totally different world. We started the road trip from Lanzhou to Dunhuang in Gansu province. Although it wasn't the complete Silk Road due to our limited time, the section we covered was significant part of it. From a big metropolitan city with yellow river running through to the desert as our endpoint. As we were going westwards in Gansu, instead of a blue sky, it was a warm yellow colored sky. In the desert, the wind whistles in your ears as the sand flies into your mouth.

The Jiayuguan, a passage that is famous for its high walls made of lots of bricks. It was used during war times. The Jiayuguan is surrounded by two mountains, Qilian Mountains to its South, and Hei (meaning black) Mountain to its North, which leaves the distance in between one of the narrowest along the way to the West, around 15 kilometers. First it was just a military gate, then slowly developed into a town.

At the Mingsha Mountain, you could do many different activities, like sand sliding, riding camels, flying on a helicopter, etc. I luckily had a chance to ride on a camel. You could go up to the top of the sand dunes on a camel back and then go back down. I was very fortunate to see the exquisite sunset while riding on the camel. Usually there would be a long line queuing for the camel ride despite hundreds of camels are out for riding. I suggest trying to avoid the peak hours (middle of the day) for less crowd. As the night falls, we went to the Ten Thousand People Night Concert. The night concert is unlike any I've been to, there was no seats! Everyone sat the tall sand dune. I tried to climb and climb on the sand dune, but after a while, I thought I climbed high enough to see the concert stage, it was only a few meters above the ground. During the concert, the lyrics of the songs were projected onto another sand dune in the near distance.

As the night concluded, I walked with the crowds out of the Mingsha Mountain and rode the car back to glamping park in the desert, where we rented a caravan for night. Surrounded by the tall sand dunes under the dark sky, it was a perfect spot for stargazing. I could also hear different sounds, such as bugs chirping (mostly crickets), and soft clink of camel bells.

Even though my Silk Road trip was completed several months ago, memories from this vacation still flash in my mind from time to time. That shows how fascinating the Silk Road truly is, comparing to my original thoughts about this trip – another boring road trip my mother has planned. In the Mogao Grottoes, you might think the cave might just be a dark spooky cave, but once you entered the cave, you would see thousands of colorful drawings, the carvings, and the gems that stun you. It is like a painting that just unfold in front your face. If you traverse the ancient Silk Road, you will stumble upon breath taking marvels – cliffs carved by time, rivers glistening in the sun, and villages nestled in valleys like hidden gems. It is surely a trip full of surprises and exquisite scenery that is worth taken.

# The Silkroad of Tomorrow

*The French International School, Kim, Siena – 10*

Have you ever wondered what the Silk Road of the future will be like? Maybe it would be millions of robots on drones, cars, and boats traveling the distance to deliver a package, perhaps a message with a sign of love; or an autonomous car or truck that stops in every country and trades items with others and then returns to their origin. The Silk Road of the future can have so many possibilities. Why? Because our world has changed a great deal since the first Silk Road and our world is always changing. But why would they start the Silk Road again after ending nearly five hundred and eighty years ago? How will it help our communities? How might countries respond? And most importantly, how will this help the Earth for decades to come?

The Silk Road was a huge network of trade routes that connected China with the Middle East, Korea, Japan, India, Egypt, Greece, Ancient Persia, and Europe for over 1,500 years, from approximately 130 BCE until 1453 CE. The Silk Road was a system of routes, not a single physical road; it facilitated the profound exchange of goods, ideas, religions, and technologies across continents. It originated in China in around the 2nd century BCE. It was initially for finding allies and horses but became world famous trade routes that made history. Its name came from a German geographer named Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877 because plenty of Chinese silk was being traded. But as time passed, more people started calling it the Silk Routes because there were more than one route and there were not actually roads but just a network of routes that goods were traded on. Through this route, they transported various items like tea, gunpowder, paper, glass, gold, silver, and even traded large goods such as livestock and wood. The items were often traded by merchants or middlemen, traveling the whole length of the routes usually on horses or camels. Not only did they deliver all these commodities but also shared their cultures and ideas.

Nowadays, humans do not use the Silk Road to trade items or cultures. Instead, we have cars, ships, trucks, planes, motorcycles and more, to do the job. But the use of these vehicles has many problems. First, the use of this transportation creates air pollution. Second, they are very easy to break down or to run out of fuel. Third, it usually takes a long time to get from one place to another which makes the possibility of losing your package higher.

I believe the Silk Road of the future will be very different. I imagine that this road will not be a network of routes, but this time, it will be the opposite. It will be a very long, extended road that starts from one point of the world and circles back to the exact same place, going through nearly all the countries in the world. It will not only pass through all the countries that the Silk Road has passed before but also many others. I believe it will start again because people would want a faster way to deliver packages as well as messages to their houses. The Silk Road of the future would not have humans traveling the astounding distance, but robots on cars and other electric vehicles that are programmed so that they can travel at high-speed so the items can be traded. The goods to be traded are the newest technology, foods, and other important items.

The Silk Road's name could be changed into something more modern, for example, the Internet Passage, the Trading Network, or the Digital Trading Pathway. On this future route, people will get their items delivered more easily, quickly and without having the animals to work too much. It will also help our planet Earth by not using too much electricity and gas so we could see the crystal-clear sea and the bright blue sky once more. Ultimately, the Silk Road of the future will help humanity to get back our clean and nature friendly world.

# Chichi and the Silk Road

*The French International School, Nguyen, Elliot – 9*

The vast trade networks of the Silk Roads carried more than just merchandise and precious commodities. In fact, the constant movement and mixing of populations brought about the widespread transmission of knowledge, ideas, cultures and beliefs, which had a profound impact on the history and civilizations of the Eurasian peoples. Travellers along the Silk Roads were attracted not only by trade but also by the intellectual and cultural exchange taking place in cities along the Silk Roads, many of which developed into hubs of culture and learning. Science, arts and literature, as well as crafts and technologies were thus shared and disseminated into societies along the lengths of these routes, and in this way, languages, religions, and cultures developed and influenced one another.

The cultivation of silkworms for the process of making silk, known as sericulture, was, according to Chinese tradition, developed sometime around the year 2,700 BCE. Its production technique was a fiercely guarded secret within China for some 3,000 years, with imperial decrees sentencing to death anyone who revealed to a foreigner the process of its production. Tombs in Hubei province dating from the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE contain the first complete silk garments as well as outstanding examples of silk work, including brocade, gauze and embroidered silk.

At some point during the 1st century BCE, silk was introduced to the Roman Empire, where it was considered an exotic luxury that became extremely popular, with imperial edicts being issued to control prices. Silk's popularity continued throughout the Middle Ages, with detailed Byzantine regulations for the manufacture of silk clothes, illustrating its importance as a quintessentially royal fabric and an important source of revenue for the crown.

Knowledge about silk production was very valuable and, despite the efforts of the Chinese emperor to keep it a closely guarded secret, it did eventually spread beyond China, first to India and Japan, then to the Persian Empire and finally to the west in the 6th century CE. They said that they were formerly in Serinda, which they call the region frequented by the people of the Indies, and there they learned perfectly the art of making silk. Moreover, to the emperor who plied them with many questions as to whether he might have the secret, the monks replied that certain worms were manufacturers of silk, nature itself forcing them to keep always at work; the worms could certainly not be brought here alive, but they could be grown easily and without difficulty; the eggs of single hatchings are innumerable; as soon as they are laid men cover them with dung and keep them warm for as long as it is necessary so that they produce insects. When they had announced these tidings, led on by liberal promises of the emperor to prove the fact, they returned to India. When they had brought the eggs to Byzantium, the method having been learned, as I have said, they changed them by metamorphosis into worms which feed on the leaves of mulberry. Thus began the art of making silk from that time on in the Roman Empire."

Beyond Silk: a diversity of routes and cargos

These routes developed over time according to shifting geopolitical contexts throughout history.

The history of maritime routes can be traced back thousands of years, to links between the Arabian Peninsula, Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley Civilization. Indeed, maritime trading links were established between Arabia and China from as early as the 8th century CE. The map above illustrates the great variety of routes that were available to merchants transporting a wide range of goods and travelling from different parts of the world, by both land and sea. Most often, individual merchant caravans would cover specific sections of the routes, pausing to rest and replenish supplies, or stopping altogether and selling on their cargos at points throughout the length of the roads, leading to the growth of lively trading cities and ports.

Routes of Dialogue

Buddhism is one example of a religion that travelled the Silk Roads, with Buddhist art and shrines being found as far apart as Bamiyan in Afghanistan, Mount Wutai in China, and Borobudur in Indonesia. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Manicheism spread in the same way, as travellers absorbed the cultures they

encountered and then carried them back to their homelands with them. Thus, for example, Hinduism and subsequently Islam were introduced into Indonesia and Malaysia by Silk Roads merchants travelling the maritime trade routes from the Indian Subcontinent and Arabian Peninsula.

### Travelling the Silk Roads

As trade routes developed and became more lucrative, caravanserais became more of a necessity, and their construction intensified across Central Asia from the 10th century onwards, continuing until as late as the 19th century. This resulted in a network of caravanserais that stretched from China to the Indian subcontinent, Iranian Plateau, the Caucasus, Turkey, and as far as North Africa, Russia and Eastern Europe, many of which still stand today.

Maritime traders had different challenges to face on their lengthy journeys. The development of sailing technology, and in particular of ship-building knowledge, increased the safety of sea travel throughout the Middle Ages. Ports grew up on coasts along these maritime trading routes, providing vital opportunities for merchants not only to trade and disembark, but also to take on fresh water supplies, as one of the greatest threats to sailors in the Middle Ages was a lack of available drinking water.

### The legacy of the Silk Roads

Today, many historic buildings and monuments still stand, marking the passage of the Silk Roads through caravanserais, ports and cities. However, the long-standing and ongoing legacy of this remarkable network is reflected in the many distinct but interconnected cultures, languages, customs and religions that have developed over millennia along these routes. These societies across Eurasia and far beyond. The passage of merchants and travellers of many different nationalities resulted not only in commercial exchange but in a continuous and widespread process of cultural interaction.

The Silk Road had a beautiful story.

# The China's Silk Road Fact File

*The French International School, Tan, Yi Zhen – 9*

What is the Silk Road?

The Silk Road is not an actual road nor a single route. The term instead refers to a web of routes used by traders for more than 1,500 years, from when the Han dynasty of China opened trade in 130 B.C.E. until 1453 C.E., when the Ottoman Empire shut down trade with the West. German geographer and voyager Ferdinand von Richthofen first used the term “Silk Road” in 1877 C.E. to describe the well-traveled pathway of goods between Europe and East Asia. The term also serves as a metaphor for the exchange of goods, merchandise and ideas between diverse cultures. Although the trade web is commonly referred to as the Silk Road, some historians prefer the term Silk Routes. It better describes the many routes used by traders.

How long is the Silk Road and which places in the world does it pass through?

The Silk Road extended approximately 6,437 kilometers (4,000 miles) across some of the world’s most beautiful landscapes, including the Gobi Desert and the Pamir Mountains. With no government to provide maintenance, the roads were typically in very poor condition. Robbers and gangsters were very common. To protect and to defend themselves, traders joined together in caravans with camels or other herded animals. Over time, large inns called caravanserais accumulated up to house travelling merchants. Not many people traveled the entire route, giving rise to a host of middlemen and trading posts along the way.

What is traded along the Silk Road?

An abundance of merchandise traveled along the Silk Road. Merchants carried silk from China to Europe, where it dressed royalty and wealthy patrons. Other favorite commodities from Asia included jade and other precious stones, porcelain, tea, and spices. In exchange, horses, glassware, textiles, and manufactured goods traveled eastward.

What are the most important or famous people that travelled along the Silk Road?

One of the most famous and well known voyages that travelled the Silk Road was Marco Polo (1254 C.E. – 1324 C.E.). He was born in a family of wealthy merchants in Venice, Italy, Marco traveled with his father to China (then Cathay) when he was just 17 years old. They traveled for more than three years before arriving at Kublai Khan’s palace at Xanadu in 1275 C.E. Marco stayed on at Khan’s court and was sent on missions to parts of Asia that were never visited by Europeans. When he returned, Marco wrote about his adventures, making him, and the routes he traveled, very famous.

Why is the Silk Road so important?

It is hard to overstate the importance of the Silk Road in history. Religion and ideas spread along the Silk Road just as fluidly as goods. Towns alongside the route grew into multicultural cities. The exchange of information gave birth to new technologies and inventions that would change the world. The horses introduced to China contributed to the power and might of the Mongol Empire, while gunpowder from China changed the nature of war in Europe and beyond. Diseases also traveled along the Silk Road. Some research suggests that the Black Death, which devastated Europe in the late 1340s C.E., likely spread from Asia along the Silk Road. The Age of Exploration gave birth to faster routes and paths between the East and West, but pieces of the Silk Road continued to be important pathways among diverse cultures. Even today, parts of the Silk Road are on the UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

What were the key spices traded along the Silk Road?

The key spices traded along the Silk Road were...

**Pepper (Black Pepper):** A highly solicited spice from India, most of the time worth its weight in gold.

**Cinnamon & Cassia:** From Sri Lanka and China, these were two of the first spices traded.

Cloves& Nutmeg: Highly treasured spices from the East Indies, central to the spice trade.

Ginger: A very common spice that traveled from the East to the West.

Saffron:A luxurious spice,highly well known for its color and flavor, used in royal households.

Tumeric: Spread globally thanks to the Silk Road, touching the Middle East and North Africa.

Caradamon&Star Anise: Highly–appreciated spices used in Asian cuisines and traded westward.

Cumin: Used in dishes across Asia, Europe, and Africa, bonding a strong trade connection.

Why They Were Traded:

Culinary Usage:To give taste to foods , make new dishes and enhance flavours.

MedicinalUsage: Used for their health characteristics in ancient medicine.

Ritualistic Usage: Vital in religious ceremonies and spiritual activities and worship.

Luxury Usage: Sign of wealth and sophistication for the rich and important people.

Economic & Historical Impact:

The immense value of spices led to the development of extendable trade routes (Silk Roads, Indian Ocean) and started European exploration (Columbus, da Gama) to find fresh and direct access to diverse spices .

Spices were very highly sought after in the 16th–century in Europe due to their powerful culinary, medicinal, and symbolic value, paired with extreme scarcity and high cost and value from their faraway Eastern origins, making them a super status symbols for the wealthy, used to flavor and texture food, cure ailments, perfume homes, and demonstrate huge wealth. They were seen as rare, essentials for balancing bodily humors (medicine usage), and used in religious rituals and activities, while also enriching merchants controlling the trade paths.

Key Reasons for High Demand:

Medical Properties: Believed to cure illnesses, balance the body's "four humors," and repel"bad air" (miasma), making them vital to health supplements.

Status & Luxury: Their rarity and high value , controlled by distant districts (Arab/Venetian), using spices was a visible sign of wealth, like modern luxury goods.

Culinary Enhancement: Used to highly flavor bland foods, hide and cover spoilage ( salt was the main preservative), and add zests to banquets.

Religious& Ritual use: Nice–smelling spices were (and still are) used in religious activities and for incense, representing heavenly smells and aromas.

Exotic Allure: Spices come from mysterious and unknown, in far away lands (India, Indonesia, China), in addition to their mysterious desirability.

The past of the “Silk Road”is very interesting. We are still looking forward to future information about this road.

# The Silk Road: Ancient China's Bridge to the World

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Cheong, Aiden – 9*

## **Introduction**

Imagine trekking through the Tianshan Mountains, carrying a frustrating amount of silk, jade, and tea from China. That's the Silk Road – or the Silk Routes. The Silk Road was not a single road but a network of different trading routes. It was of utmost significance, especially to China, because traders from the West exchanged gold and spices for jade, silk and tea, which were precious commodities. This trade made China more prosperous and wealthy. The Silk Road was named after silk, one of the most commonly traded items during its time.

## **Section 1: The Han Dynasty—How the Silk Road Began**

The Silk Road was created during the Han Dynasty by Emperor Wu, who aspired to open a route to the West to defend his country from the Xiongnu, who spanned a vast territory across modern-day Mongolia, Siberia, and part of China (including Gansu and Xinjiang).

Emperor Wu sent Zhang Qian to look for a route to trade with other kingdoms, such as Yuezhi and Dayuan. Zhang Qian, a Chinese diplomat, envoy, and explorer was also known as the “father of the Silk Road.” The places he traveled to include Dayuan, Daxia, and Yuezhi.

In addition, Zhang Qian reported on the existence of neighboring kingdoms he did not visit, such as Anxi, Tiaozhi, and Shendu.

Not only did Zhang Qian secure alliances with other kingdoms for China, but he also brought home a wealth of knowledge about other cultures and goods. To illustrate, he shed light on the economic potential and ardently advocated for opening the Silk Road. The influential diplomat provided his emperor with useful information about the geography, customs, and leaders of various nations west of the Empire.

## **Section 2: The Tang Dynasty—The Golden Age**

During the Tang Dynasty, China was formidable and there were not many wars. It was safe, so merchants did not have to worry about thieves and bandits, and prisons were often vacant. The government encouraged free markets. Consequently, merchants could trade freely and utilized the Grand Canal for domestic commerce.

At the time, China was very affluent, exporting goods such as silk, tea, ceramics, and paper. Animals, glass, jade, ivory, spices, and more were imported into China. Another important import was religion. Buddhism was introduced to China from India, and other religions such as Islam and Judaism also arrived. Religions no longer widely practised, such as Zoroastrianism, gained a presence in China during that Dynasty. People were happy to have different religions in the country, especially Buddhism, which was significant then. Buddhism was featured in poems and other works of literature.

## **Section 3: The Journey—Adventures and Dangers**

Although many traders traveled the Silk Road, their journeys were often riddled with difficulties. The climate was extremely dry, and oases were scarce, so dying of thirst was unfortunately common. In summer, temperatures could reach up to 50°C, while in winter, they could plummet to –20°C. People could freeze to death! Temperatures could shift by up to 17°C from morning to afternoon. Bandits made the road even more perilous.

Apart from bandits, countless civilians were deterred from traveling there because of venomous creatures such as scorpions and snakes. Those who braved the path had to endure sandstorms and deserts like the Taklamakan, also known as the “Place of Ruins.”

At the end of the day, merchants would spend the night in the caravanserais – hostels with animal pens for horses and a giant courtyard in the middle. These offered merchants shelter from bandits at night. Caravanserais also had bathhouses and rooms for religious baths, which were very accommodating.

#### **Section 4: The Yuan Dynasty—A Change in Control**

The Silk Road experienced many changes during the Yuan Dynasty under the reign of Kublai Khan, a skilled and tolerant leader. Kublai Khan started the Pax Mongolia with the help of a strong army. During that, the Silk Road was safe, and many merchants flocked to China. Marco Polo traveled to China (then called Cathay). When he visited Xanadu, the emperor was impressed by his intelligence. Polo stayed in the emperor's lands for 17 years, sharing his travels. Once returned to Venice, he brought back silk, jade, tea, and other goods from China.

Because of Polo's travels, Asian countries like China were no longer myths. Europeans realized that foreign cultures existed, and sailing to Asia became possible.

#### **Section 5: The End and a New Beginning**

The Silk Road became less important in the Ming Dynasty due to isolation policies, the rise of maritime trade, and geopolitical fragmentation. Maritime routes were safer and cheaper, so travelers and merchants no longer needed to cross the Taklamakan Desert or stay in caravanserais. Other tribes grew stronger, convincing the Ming Dynasty to close its borders. The death of Mongol ruler Tamerlane resulted in a number of warring states, making the Silk Road even more dangerous.

The Silk Road was later "rediscovered" in 1877 by Ferdinand von Richthofen, who named it "Seidenstraße" (meaning Silk Road). After that, explorers from different countries attempted to "rediscover" the Silk Road. That's why we know about the Silk Road today. China has even created something similar: President Xi Jinping launched the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, aiming to build a massive network of trade routes to connect China to the world, boost global trade, and make China more influential and central.

"Belt" is the land route through Central Asia, Russia and the Middle East to Europe, while "Road" is a maritime route. Around 140 countries have signed cooperation agreements under the BRI.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, international trade is of paramount importance because it boots economic growth, creates employment opportunities, and improves living standards. The Silk Road was not always prosperous and successful, but it reached its peak in the Yuan Dynasty. China would not have been so successful without the Silk Road, as the idea for the Belt and Road initiative was inspired by it. Therefore, it should be studied and is worthy of research.

# The Belt and Road Initiative – New Tales of China's Silk Road

*YK Pao School Shanghai, Chen, Phil – 10*

Do you know what the Silk Road is? The silk road is a very old road. It is not just one small road. However, it consisted of many roads that connect the east and the west. For thousands of years, people walk on these roads. They bring goods, they share stories, they make friends. The silk road is not only a road for trade. It is a road for hearts and minds to meet. Now, the Belt and Road Initiative follows the old silk road's spirit. It lets people from different lands work together and care for each other. Every part of the silk road has small and warm stories. These stories are easy to understand, and they all tell us about kindness, courage and sharing.

In the past, people have to ride horse or walk all the way on the Silk Road,

But when train and boat are invented, use boat and train to go through the Silk Road

And the silk roads start at Xi'an and end at Rome. The time is one hundred and thirty-eight BC to one hundred and nineteen BC. They carried silk, plate, porcelain, spice, tea and trade goods with the western region merchants and share stories through country to country.

It all began with a man called Zhang Qian and his emperor told him to lead a team of merchants to trade with the world and walk around in mountains and rowed boat in seas. They start off at China edge crossing deadly desert and through wide blue oceans, and ride across huge grasslands. His first mission to the Western Regions (138 B.C.): Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty sent Zhang Qian to ally with the states in the Western Regions against the Hun. He was detained by the Hun for 10 years but never forgot his mission. After escaping, he traveled across the Western Regions, found out the terrain and conditions of all states there, and reported back to Chang'an, paving the way for the opening of the Silk Road. After many years, Zhang Qian began a new journey. He kept walking west. He saw new rivers, new mountains, new villages. He met people who wore different clothes, ate different food, and spoke different words. He saw grapes and walnuts and pomegranates that no one in his homeland knew. He saw strong horses that ran very fast. He told these people about his home, about the soft silk, the white porcelain, and the tea from the east. Then he turned around and sailed back home. His trip took more than ten years. When he got back, only two people from his group were with him. He was tired, he was thin, but he brought so many new stories and new ideas. And here is some of things and stories about this:

In 627 AD, Xuanzang traveled west to India to seek Buddhist scriptures. After leaving Yumen Pass, he entered the Moga Yan Desert — a boundless sea of death with yellow sand everywhere. At night, strange fires flickered in the desert; during the day, quicksand would swallow people in an instant. He accidentally knocked over his water bag and had no water to drink for five days and four nights. He was so thirsty that he almost died, crawling hard on the sand with his last strength. Finally, his old horse led him to a clear spring, and he survived by luck.

When he arrived at the Gaochang Kingdom, the king wanted to keep him and forced him to preach scriptures for the country. Xuanzang refused firmly and went on a hunger strike to protest. He did not eat or drink for three days until he was on the verge of death. The king was moved by his perseverance and finally let him go. Later, he climbed the Pamir Plateau, where the air was thin and the snow was endless. He suffered from severe cold and hypoxia, and many of his followers froze to death on the mountain road. He walked through countless difficulties and finally reached India, bringing back precious Buddhist scriptures. He and all the other people that walk on the Silk Road use their own hands to create a wonderful story, a wonderful world and a new Silk Road. Now Silk Road are more modern and people sent and trade not just using walking, but use technology, like new big boats and trains to carry good for each other and trade with each other. They bring back good memories ideas and stories, and speed up commerce. Even though they are captured and escaped, walked through the sandstorm and the Silk Road trade was full of hardships, but it still connected the East and the West. Their determination always went to the last minute. And that take China on a new step forward.....

The Modern Silk Road, officially known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is the new chapter of the ancient Silk Road with a time-honored history of over 2,000 years. First proposed in 2013, it consists of the

Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, carrying forward the profound Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit.

Different from the ancient Silk Road that mainly connected Asia and Europe through land and sea trade, the Modern Silk Road is an open and inclusive international platform, covering more than 150 countries and 30 international organizations across Asia, Africa and Europe. It is built on the core principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits,

The Modern Silk Road has built a multi-dimensional connectivity network including railways, highways, ports and digital communication lines. Iconic projects such as the China-Laos Railway and the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway have become solid bridges for regional development, greatly boosting economic and trade exchanges among participating countries. It is not just an economic cooperation initiative, but also a bond that links different together, bringing peoples together, cultures together, and countries together.

People invent Modern Silk Road was because first, they want the Three Keys:

Fast, safe and effective. so they invent high-speed train, bigger cargo ship and more long bridge to make the Three Keys more reality for the future. And make peoples and country's dream and plan true—The Silk Road on the sea helps the trade to be faster and better.

The End, hope you can go on modern Silk Road sometime in the future!

## Karakorum: A Key City on the Silk Road (1220–1260)

*YK Pao School Shanghai, Xu 许贝拉, Bella – 11*

The morning sunshine shone brightly into the wagon, shining on me, shining on my owner...

I am a guzheng. I am made from red wood and decorated with golden paint and luminous pearls which shine in the dark, spun into a carving of a lark. Before my journey on the Silk Road, my owner had played me in the palace for the King and his court. The King loved the performance and thought that my owner should take me to Dayuezhi in the Western Regions to share the culture of Han. For a normal person who had lived only in the country and never left, this trip would be amazing, but hazardous.

The King arranged a caravan with three wagons. Our wagon was not very luxurious, but for me and my owner, it was the best we had ever seen and it was ours.

In our first month on the road, someone felt something... uncomfortable. The dry desert heat stung our eyes in the daytime with the wind freezing us at night. When the sandstorms came, the sand and dust were everywhere, even in the wagons. Even worse, the horses were sick because of the sand storms, so our speed was slow. Different kinds of deadly animals could appear anywhere at any time. Scorpions and snakes were the things the horses hated most, with one sting or bite by them equal to death. But the most important thing was water. They could not find water anywhere, all the water they drank was given by the aborigines. One of the drivers started to vomit and had diarrhea. But the journey had to continue. At first, the driver was the only person who felt sick. But slowly everyone did. The driver even died. With everyone falling ill, we had no alternative, but to stop. They stayed at a little city to wait, but they didn't know what they were waiting for. Someone tried to find a doctor to cure the disease, but they failed.

One day, one of the travelers went out to search for hope and to everyone's surprise, he found a doctor who could cure them.

The doctor told them that the reason they caught the illness was because their body was not accustomed to the climate.

The doctor gave them a local cure to fight the illness and told them that they had to take the medicine every day of their journey. And this is what they did.

Day after day, they were closer and closer to their destination. My owner and I stayed in our own little wagon watching the outside. People here were different-looking: they had bronzed faces and curly whiskers on their chins and even had wavy hair. This was the first time I had seen these kinds of people. My owner took me out of my case and started to practice. Graceful music appeared in her hands. The people outside looked like they also enjoyed the music I made. I was proud of myself and my owner, the performance must be perfect.

The wagon suddenly stopped. I thought we were already at Dayuezhi. But no, we were still only halfway. I heard someone shouting and yelling in a crazy voice. And then my owner left the wagon, leaving me alone. I heard the sound of a man's voice and fighting. My owner ran back to the wagon and she quickly tried to put me back in my case, but there was no time, so she had to cover me with a blanket. I heard more shouting but I couldn't see anything except the bright colors of the blanket. Everyone on the street was quiet, I heard a crash, the crack of wood and screaming before my owner's voice, more chaos and the angry roar of the wind.

"Sandstorm! Run! Run!" Another sand storm, but this time, the sand storm did not hurt or kill them; it saved them.

Yes, we survived. The nature we hated helped us. My owner must have thought this too. After food and rest, we started our journey again, because the driver said that the deadline to get to Dayuezhi was close. But we, for many reasons were slow. We needed to be faster.

For the next few days, the driver didn't even stop for rest. Day and night, the horses never stopped until finally, we were out of the desert. "Ah, it is so great to breathe air without sand." My owner said, with a happy voice. The next day, we entered the capital city of Dayuezhi.

People there were very interested in us, pale, strangely dressed people in two poor wagons with a strange long wooden instrument.

We went straight into the palace, and everything was so 'smooth,' with the walls and floors shimmering under the afternoon sunlight.

That night, the palace was filled with a hundred candles all shining on me and my gold paint and pearls. We were in the middle of the palace and there were two rows of people on either side. They were the most important people in the country!

Yes. After all our incredible experiences on the Silk Road, it was time to perform.

The same song as months before but a different place. The same musician and her guzheng, but a different audience. Our music resounded all around the massive palace. Everyone enjoyed the music and from their faces I could tell that they were impressed! My body was vibrating, it was the same feeling. But now I am here to perform for Han, to show others our country's culture.

Now, I am more than just a guzheng. I am a traveler, a bridge, a story of connection and adventure. The Silk Road has not only carried me from East to West but also transformed me from silence to song. As the melody lingers, I know my adventure has only just begun. I think everyone will remember us, like millions of others who also traveled the new Silk Road.



Creative Writing  
**Non-Fiction**

Group 1

# The Silk Road

*Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School, Lam, Tsz Ying – 11*

Do you know what silk is? This passage will tell you all about it! Along with pottery and beautiful writing, silk is a famous product from China. But how is it made? Silk comes from cocoon threads spun by silkworms. First, people raise silkworms in a process called “sericulture,” until they make their cocoons. Then, they heat the cocoons to kill the little caterpillars inside and make it easier to separate the silk threads. After that, they unwind the silk from the cocoons, twist several strands together to make a strong thread, and then dye and weave it into fabric.

Silk, which got its name from the trade that started because people wanted Chinese silk, was used to make clothes long ago. Whether it’s winter or summer, silk is great for every season because it can keep you warm or cool. In summer, it lets your skin breathe and keeps you from getting too hot. In winter, silk helps you stay warm by trapping heat close to your body without being too heavy, making it great to wear under other clothes.

Before cotton was invented, people used silk for many things. It became a popular material for making clothes, especially for rich families. This shows that in ancient China, having silk meant you were wealthy. Besides clothing, silk is also used for bedding, medical stitches, furniture covers, bike tyres, parachutes, windows, wall decorations, and even in military gear. Silk is easy to dye because it soaks up colours really well, resulting in bright and lasting shades.

Silk, which is one of the most famous products from China for people around the world, has an amazing history that goes back more than 5000 years to the Neolithic age. Back then, people wore linen clothes. Even though linen is better than animal skin, it can feel itchy when you sweat. People discovered silk when they saw silkworms making cocoons on trees. They thought, "If we can use linen for clothes, can we use silkworm silk too?"

Silk started being sent to foreign lands around 202–208 B.C. when Zhang Qian was sent as a messenger to the western areas. The Silk Road is one of the most famous trade routes ever. For many years, China was the only place that made silk, keeping the secrets of how it was made to themselves. It took about 3000 years for the secret of how to make silk to spread beyond China. This knowledge didn’t just spread quickly; it took a long time and different people learned about it in various places over the centuries. During this time, Chinese traders earned around 40 billion dollars from selling silk.

In 202 B.C., Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty ordered a messenger to go from Chang’an to the western areas to help fight against the Huns. Even though the emperor's mission didn’t succeed, he did help open the Silk Road for trading. After that, traders from Central Asia began to exchange goods with the Chinese, swapping things like gold, wool, horses, and jade for silk. Along with goods, ideas and new technologies also spread along the Silk Road. From then on, silk became a well-known and popular product in the western regions, marking an important time for the development of the Silk Road.

# The History of the Silk Road

*Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School, Ng, Cheuk Him – 11*

Do you know what the Silk Road is? Or even why it's called the Silk Road? The Silk Road isn't a road made of silk; it is a route connecting China to Europe. It is also a place where many countries exchange goods and traditions.

Many countries have used the Silk Road to trade with one another, for example, Afghanistan, Iran, and Kazakhstan. In the past, China was the only place that produced silk. It is made from bugs called silkworms. They were so precious that China guarded the secret of silk production for thousands of years. Smuggling eggs or cocoons outside the empire was punishable by death.

The reason silk was so precious is that it was a source of immense wealth, a symbol of imperial power and luxury, a driver of technological innovation, and a cultural cornerstone. It shaped language, rituals, and the famed Silk Road trade that connected China to the world for millennia, bringing riches and cultural exchange. The earliest example of silk fabric was discovered as the wrappings for the body of a child. Silk was used to make many useful items, such as lightweight clothing.

The Silk Road evolved due to the demand for Chinese silk, which was exchanged by Central Asian traders for gold, wool, horses, and jade. Alongside goods, ideas and technology spread along the Silk Road. Many different foods, such as lemons, pepper, and olive oil, also travelled along the Silk Road.

However, there were many dangers associated with travelling the Silk Road, including thieves, enormous mountains, vast deserts, and more.

On the other hand, did you know that paper came to Europe from China in the eighth century, and gunpowder a little later? Meanwhile, the Chinese acquired knowledge of winemaking and glassmaking in return.

Additionally, do you know that tea, also known as chai, evolved due to the Silk Road? Tea has many names in different countries, ranging from Tee to Chai. Today, in more than 56 languages and many local dialects around the world, tea, or thee, cha, or chai, and its many derivatives mean only one thing: the cup that cheers!

# The Silk Road

*Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School, Tam, Ching Tevez – 11*

Do you know about the Silk Road? If you haven't heard of it, you can learn about it in this article.

Central Eurasia, including countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, has been known since ancient times for its horse-riding and horse-breeding communities. Over time, German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen began referring to this route as the Silk Road, and it became widely known by that name. The Silk Road was a vast network of land and sea trade routes that connected East Asia with the Mediterranean world, Europe, and Africa for over 1,500 years. This network facilitated the movement of a wide variety of goods, including silk, spices, precious metals, gems, livestock, and handicrafts. Moreover, the Silk Road served as a major channel for the spread of religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as for philosophies and technologies.

The Silk Road was an ancient network of trade routes that connected the East and West, playing a crucial role in cultural, commercial, and technological exchange over centuries. Spanning from China through Central Asia, the Middle East, and into Europe, it facilitated the movement of goods, ideas, and people across continents.

Originating during the Han Dynasty around the 2nd century BCE, the Silk Road earned its name from the lucrative silk trade, which was a primary commodity transported along its routes. However, it was not just silk that traversed these paths; spices, tea, precious metals, textiles, ceramics, and other luxury items also moved across this vast network. Traders, merchants, pilgrims, and explorers used these routes, often facing harsh terrains and political barriers, to reach distant markets.

Beyond commerce, the Silk Road significantly influenced cultural exchange. It facilitated the spread of religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam. Artistic styles, technological innovations like papermaking and printing, and even culinary traditions travelled along these routes, enriching societies along the way.

The Silk Road was not a single road but a complex web of trade routes, encompassing land routes like the Silk Road proper while also connecting with maritime paths across the Indian Ocean. Its importance peaked during the Tang and Song dynasties in China, as well as during the Islamic Golden Age, but it gradually declined with the rise of maritime trade routes in the late medieval period.

Today, the Silk Road remains a symbol of global connectivity and cultural exchange. Modern initiatives, such as China's Belt and Road Initiative, seek to revive and emulate this historic network, emphasising its enduring significance in fostering international cooperation and economic development. The legacy of the Silk Road endures as a testament to the power of trade and cultural exchange in shaping human history.

# The Silk Road

*Beanstalk International Bilingual School (BIBS), Ning, Victoria – 10*

## Introduction

The Silk Road is an amazing invention that helped Chinese culture evolve through history. It has a major impact on global trade, and even though time has passed, it still helps connect one great culture to another.

## History

The earliest stages of the road wasn't exactly the same as the Silk Road we see nowadays — it formed a small part of it instead. The ancient road started with the Persian Empire creating the Persian Royal Road in the 6th century BCE. The Royal Road stretched a surprisingly long distance of 2700 kilometers, connecting the capital of the country, Susa (modern-day Iran), and a distant, small city, Sardis (somewhere near the Mediterranean Sea next to Turkey). After that, the Chinese emperor of the Western Han Dynasty, Emperor Han Wu Di (汉武帝) officially started the project, following Persia's steps. However, Han Wu Di was aiming to connect not only cities within the country, but also those outside the Chinese borders. This route stretched 4,350 miles (7,000 kilometers) from Chang'an (now known as Xi'an) to other countries like Kazakhstan, passing through important cities in China, for example Shan'xi and Xin'jiang. The Chinese were well-known for breeding silkworms in trees and making a fabric from their silk. Soon, the fabric was named after their material, silk. When silk fabric was introduced to the world, European countries were particularly fascinated by silk — what they called “picking fabric off trees”. Due to the Europeans' love of silk, the Silk Road was constructed all the way to the faraway countries of Europe. In 1877, the trading route became named after the rare fabric that it was used to trade so often by Ferdinand von Richthofen — the route's name became: The Silk Road.

## The Golden Age of the Silk Road

The Silk Road's popularity reached its peak in the Tang dynasty, when the mathematicians in India shared their ideas: Arabian astronomers brought useful, smart star-gazing tools; Chinese poets shared their poems, Persian metalsmiths introduced fascinating metalworking strategies — teaching other cultures how to make weapons and gear. Every day, numerous caravans led by horses and camels from different countries would carry tons of spices, dozens of rolls of silk, jewelry embroidered with gold, and much more across to other countries. The Tang Empire welcomed foreign guests and influenced their own culture with them. Soon, countries connected to the Silk Road had similar, or even related cultures. Being part of the Silk Road trade at that time was like being in a huge community of complicated relationships, influencing and learning from each other. The Silk Road didn't only share physical objects like gold and china, it also shared ideas and plans, religion and traditions, and a lot more.

## The Silk Road Today

Although some of the main routes of the Silk Road have disappeared in time, part of it still remains as a monument which reminds us of the history of Eastern and Western cultures being connected. Archaeologists have discovered many interesting relics along the pavement of the road, such as the Dunhuang Grottoes, recording Chinese people's wisdom.

Accompanying long-term trades on the Silk Road, many cultures combined due to the existence of this road in terms of cooperation, learning from differences and understanding each other, gradually forming the inclusive society today.

The idea of the Silk Road also inspired China's Belt and Road initiative, a global infrastructure development strategy, which benefits the overall improvement of many developing countries.

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# The Silk Road – The Golden Path

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Lee, Hoi Ki Sophia – 10*

## **The Road to Victory**

One of the most pivotal roads in the world was known as the Silk Road. This extraordinary road began in China and ended in far eastern Europe. It is well known as what started the import and export trade between Western civilisation and the Eastern.

The Silk Road was created in 130 BCE during the Han Dynasty and abandoned in 1453 CE, over 1500 years later. It got its name, Silk Road, from the valuable silk that China invented. A staggering number of more than 150 countries across Asia and Europe got involved. The road is not just one road; it is a complex web of different paths, both on land and sea. Chang'an, known today as Xi'an, was the birthplace of the start of the Silk Road. The road stretched to different corners of Europe and Asia, such as the Gobi Desert bordering Northern China and Southern Mongolia, the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan, all the way beyond France. Because the road ran for over 6400 km, it would be tiring and time-consuming for any person to travel. In fact, if one person were to travel the Silk Road on their own, it would take up to three years to complete it one-way. To resolve this problem, they had many checkpoints along the route where vendors would trade with each other and pass the inventory along.

## **Sharing Is Caring**

The Silk Road all started when China realised it had an abundance of unique materials and goods, which they wanted to share with the rest of the world. They knew if they could achieve this, they would put China on the map by increasing its power and bringing wealth to its citizens. The Western civilisation was amazed by what China had to offer and wanted to give many goods back as well, and thus, the long trade started.

Chinese people traded silk, gunpowder, jade, porcelain, and paper. These were all items that the West had not seen before as they were invented in China. They also traded their own blend of spices and tea.

The Western people traded gold, silver, horses, glassware, textiles, wool, linen, and grapes. China already had these goods. However, being such a big country, they needed more inventory. Apart from material things, the West also traded slaves in return for China's precious goods.

## **The Spread of Knowledge**

Monks and missionaries travelled along the Silk Road too. They hoped to share their religion, wisdom, and knowledge across many countries. These missions were successful and are one of the reasons why religions that originated in one country have spread to another, even if that country is far away.

The Silk Road also enabled scholars to have the opportunity to share their knowledge and the languages they knew.

On top of that, warriors of trade exchanged horses and also taught others how to ride them. Artists and workers shared their skills around, which led to the spread of innovative technologies like the exquisite silk-making from China, glassmaking from the West, and advanced printing paper from China. Moreover, knowledge of science, art, literature, crafts, and technologies was shared with different countries in the East and West.

## **A Bumpy Road**

Travelling across the Silk Road was extremely dangerous since there was extreme heat and cold, bleak deserts, high mountains, and robbers robbing unlucky people. It was said that servants at resting inns were working with bandits, and when visitors were sleeping, servants secretly looked inside their luggage and the items they carried, and brought anything valuable and extraordinary to the bandits. To protect travellers, many safe fortified rest stops were established with honest, hard-working servants to let people rest and sleep in peace. Military patrols, watchtowers, and very strict laws and rules were put in place to keep citizens safe (and less stressed).

## **The End of The Road**

Sadly, the Silk Road came to an end due to the rise of the Ottoman Empire from South East Europe and the Mongol Empire from East Asia to the Middle East. They closed down routes and greedily taxed goods heavily. Moreover, a bubonic plague called the Black Death, which broke out in Europe, was also a threat to travellers. Those travellers were not only sharing their inventory but also the plague to other countries as well. Soon, in 1453 CE, the Silk Road had completely disappeared.

**Gone But Not Forgotten**

The Silk Road was definitely more than just a road. It achieved the purpose of trading goods between countries. It brought the East and West together. On top of that, it shared knowledge, religion, skills, and experience. China achieved its goal of bringing wealth and becoming more powerful—a position it still holds today. Even though the Silk Road has ended, it left behind a more advanced world for us to live in.

# The Winding Silk Road

*Shanghai Singapore International School, Fan, Suran – 10*

We all know the sun moves from east to west, but there is also a road as famous as the sun's movement that moves from west to east. The Silk Road. It was a series of famous trade routes, like the veins of an old man's hand, that stretched 6400 kilometers and passed through China, the Middle East and Europe.

The three most famous paths of this well-known historical route are Samarkand, Uzbekistan, which is known for its stunning architecture and as a center of Islamic learning, Athens, the capital of Greece, which linked sea trade routes and led cultural exchange and Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, which was a major trading post on the Silk Road. Thousands of travelers traded their spice, silk and even honey on this vast route.

Imagine if we didn't have the Silk Road. There would be so many foods and other items that would have never reached the west!

Not surprisingly, the Silk Road was created during the great Han Dynasty (206BCE–20CE) when Emperor Wu Di had an ingenious idea to increase the wealth of the country and to encourage foreign trade. Firstly, he sent Zhang Qian, who was a Chinese explorer, to Yuezhi in 139BC, where he became a pioneer of the Silk Road. Later, special envoys were sent to the west, which opened up China even more to exploring trade routes which traversed between the west and Chang'an (which was the old capital of China)

Imagine the noise of the trading, animals, chattering, the dust swirling down the road while traders pitched their caravan tents along the route.

Have you heard of the Columbus of the east? It's Zhang Qian who was a diplomat, traveler and explorer. In 139BC, he led 100 people to the west of China and eventually opened the north south road to the west, named the Silk Road. Zhang Qian also promoted trade with the countries in the west by introducing horses, grapes, dyes and pomegranate to Zhong Yuan.

Imagine the fear and excitement traveling on a new trade route and you don't know where it will lead you because it is so vast.

After many years, after many footprints had made their mark on the Silk Road, it was a political decision which reduced and finally ended the traffic and created a vast echo in the landscape where this busy route had once hosted travellers from all over the world. The Ottoman Empire, boycotted trade with China. This empire was so vast that this simple act ended thousands of years of trade, language, religion, science and philosophy to name a few cultural exchanges. The Ottoman Empire began in 1300 and controlled the Middle East, North Africa, Greece, Hungary and South East of Europe.

Imagine how the road and people changed over 1000 years and the passing of historical events was carried along the Silk Road by travelers from far away seas, words carried away by the dusty, cold wind.

If the Silk Road had a voice, it would be interesting to find out which famous people it would proudly admit had traversed its long and winding road from country to country. In fact, many celebrated people did pass along this notable route. Of course, there were many notable Chinese diplomates and explorers. Xuan Zhang traveled along the silk road to India, then returned to China many years later, where he translated Indian sutras and wrote a book about his journey. Marco Polo also to China along the silk road and stayed for 17 years before returning to Venice. Also Iban Battuta who was a Moroccan explorer born in 1304 and died in 1369. He started traveling as a Muslim on a religious journey and spent his whole life traveling. He came to China and became an envoy to the Emperor in 1342, who spent some time on the Silk Road.

How many renowned travelers have voyaged on the Silk Road? I am sure that if it were a person, it could tell so many secrets and stories.

Nowadays the once busy Silk Road, with the noises of animals calling and complaining, travellers chattering and bartering and the wind howling or gently sweeping over the path have been replaced. In the present day, whilst we acknowledge the significance of these trade routes, the route is mostly deserted unless tourists are visiting with mobiles to snap photos. Instead, the dust, mud and rocks that made this long-worn road are now hard concrete and smooth tarmac. Signposts for towns that were used as key trade routes are now history museums. People travel quickly by car or transport goods by lorries and trucks instead of the slow and steady donkeys, camels and horses. The silk road now is different from the past but it still holds a valuable place in the history of the eastern and western worlds.

# The First Person Who Travelled on The Silk Road and all About The Silk Road

*Shanghai Singapore International School, Vargova, Hannah-Choi – 9*

Have you ever heard of the Silk Road and the important people who travelled across it? We all may not know Chinese general ZHANG. One of the first officials who travelled the Silk Road and returned with reports that helped open trade routes and opened contact. I'm going to tell you all about his long, fantastic, special journey on the majestic Silk Road. There'll also be some of my opinions and so many stories. When did he travel there? Well, keep reading and you'll find out more answers and interesting things.

The Silk Road was a network of trade routes that linked China with Central Asia and beyond. People traded many things. such as silk, precious types of stone, species of fabric cotton, and woollen goods. Silk was one of the most famous items from China. Most people travel across the Silk Road on horses and camels to carry heavy loads. Many people have travelled on the special road to trade, and one of the first people who travelled on the Silk Road was Chinese General ZHANG.

Now imagine yourself on the Silk Road; if you were on the Silk Road and you really wanted something, what would you trade for it?

Why did General Zhang travel to the Silk Road? He travelled there to forge an alliance against the Xiongnu, who were enemies of the Han. He travelled there in 138 BC. That was 2162 years, 10 months and 11 days ago.

Some important facts about Chinese General Zhang are that he was born on the fifth of October 1914.

He was from Pingjiang County, Hunan Province. He is the son of Zhang Zongxun, and his mother is Zhang Yulian.

The Silk Road is 11,265 km (7000 miles). That's approximately about 1,126,500 blue whales lined up on a line. The Silk Road is longer than the Great Wall of China! Now try imagining this: if students lay down head to toe, you would need tens of millions of people to reach the same length. That really shows how huge this journey was.

If you travelled by camel or horse, it could take around six days just to reach two or three places, depending on the weather and the road conditions. The first destination is Xi'an. The second destination is Dun Huang, which is well known for the Mogao Caves and is a World Heritage Site. A third well-known stop was Turpan, which has unique landscapes and famous ruins such as Jiaohe. People often say there were many key stops along the route, and the Silk Road had different paths and branches, not just one straight line.

There are a total of 6 destinations along the Silk Road. On the journey on the Silk Road you will see colourful sweet fruits and tasty nut crops. Imagine walking through a busy market and seeing colourful dried fruits, sweet treats, and sacks of tasty nuts. Would you want to try them? Some more fun facts: the Silk Road began about 2,100 years ago, in BC. BC! Isn't that fascinating?

Even though this is a non-fiction piece, I also like imagining what I would do if I were an explorer on the Silk Road. First, I would research as much as I could so I would be prepared. I would find out what the weather is like, what food people eat, and what dangers to watch out for. I would pack plenty of water, food that would not spoil easily, and supplies to keep warm at night. I would also travel with others, because journeys are safer and less scary when you are not alone.

I think first I might walk with foot for maybe 10 minutes and then use camels or horses to travel the other hundred kilometres to go. Then I'll probably trade some wool and woollen goods to trade for some precious gems and silk. Travellers needed to be smart, patient, and alert. To me, the best rule is: never travel unprepared. Reading and researching before a journey can help you stay safe, make better choices, and enjoy the adventure more.

If I am able to make a character travelling on the Silk Road, I would probably choose someone strong and fit, because the journey would be tiring. I would also make sure the character is curious and kind, so they

can learn from others and make friends along the way. If they face danger, I would want them to stay calm, think carefully, and get help from companions.

To sum everything up we can learn a lot about the Silk Road and the people connected to it, including General Zhang, who travelled to build connections and gather important information. I really hope you learnt a lot of things from my writing. If you are curious, you can research more and find even more amazing facts. Thank you for reading!

# The Silk Road: A Simple Story of Travel, Learning, and Change

*Shanghai Singapore International School, Wangkheimayun, Agastya – 10*

The Silk Road is one of the most famous networks of travel and trade in world history. Even though it is called a “road,” it was really a large group of paths, trails, and routes that spread across Asia, the Middle East, and into parts of Europe and Africa. For many centuries, people used these routes to move goods, ideas, and culture. The Silk Road helped people from many different countries learn about one another, and it changed the world in important ways.

## The First Travelers

Long before the Silk Road had its famous name, people were already travelling across Central Asia. Many of the first travellers were nomads—people who moved with their animals from place to place. Nomads knew the deserts, mountains, and grasslands very well, and they knew how to survive long journeys. They traded useful things like animal skins, tools, and food. Even these early trades helped ideas spread from one group to another.

One of the most important early travellers was a Chinese explorer named **Zhang Qian**. In **138 BCE**, the emperor of China sent him westward to learn about other kingdoms. His journey was long and difficult. He was captured, escaped, and travelled through dangerous areas. When he finally returned to China many years later, he brought back valuable information. He described stronger horses from Central Asia, new foods like grapes and alfalfa, and cultures with customs that China had never seen before. His reports helped China to develop trade with western regions. His journey helped shape what we now call the Silk Road.

## People Learning About One Another

As more people began to travel along the Silk Road, it became a meeting place for many cultures. Merchants, explorers, religious teachers, and scholars used the routes to move from place to place. Some carried goods to trade, while others carried knowledge, stories, and beliefs.

Many different items travelled along the Silk Road. China sent silk, tea, and paper. India sent spices, ivory, and cotton cloth. Persia sent carpets, jewellery, and beautiful glassware. The Roman Empire sent gold, silver, and strong glass cups and bottles. Many items travelled very far from where they were made, passing through many hands before reaching their final destination.

Goods were not the only things that moved along the Silk Road. Ideas and religions travelled too. Buddhist monks from India used the Silk Road to bring Buddhism into China. Over time, Buddhism influenced Chinese art, architecture, and ways of thinking. Later, Chinese monks travelled back along the same route to learn more. One of the most famous monks, **Xuanzang**, spent many years crossing deserts and mountains to collect Buddhist teachings. When he returned, he shared what he had learned and helped spread these ideas further.

Along the Silk Road, people heard many languages, tasted foods from faraway places, and saw many styles of clothing and buildings. Cities along the route—such as **Kashgar** and **Samarkand**—became rich and full of culture. In these cities, travellers traded goods, shared music, told stories, and learned new skills from one another. The Silk Road became a powerful example of how cultures can mix and grow.

## The Last Great Travelers

Over time, sea routes opened up, traveling by ship became faster and safer than crossing deserts and mountains. Still, some famous travellers made their journeys along Silk Road routes during its later years.

One was **Marco Polo**, a merchant from Venice. In the 1200s, he traveled to China and spent many years exploring Asia. When he returned home, he wrote a book describing what he had seen. People in Europe were amazed by his stories about Chinese cities and powerful rulers. His writings inspired curiosity about Asia.

Another famous explorer was **Ibn Battuta** from Morocco. He travelled through North Africa, the Middle East, India, Central Asia, and China. He wrote detailed descriptions of the people he met, the foods he ate, and the traditions he observed. His writing gives historians useful information about life across many regions at that time.

By the 1400s and 1500s, the land travel along the Silk Road were less common. Wars, bandits, and shifting borders made travel harder. Sea routes took over most long-distance trade. Even so, the cultural connections built through the Silk Road lasted for centuries.

### **A New Silk Road for Today's World**

Today, people sometimes talk about building a “new Silk Road.” This means creating new connections—such as highways, railways, ports, airports, and digital communication—that link countries across Asia, Africa, and Europe. These links no longer use camels and caravans, but the purpose is similar: to support trade, travel, and learning.

A modern Silk Road could bring several benefits. One benefit is stronger cooperation between countries. When nations work together on shared projects, they can build better relationships and solve problems more peacefully.

Another benefit is cultural exchange. Just like the ancient Silk Road connected people, a modern one can help people share music, art, stories, and traditions. The internet makes this easier, allowing students and teachers from different places to learn from one another.

A new Silk Road could also support economic growth, especially in developing areas. Better transportation can help regions sell goods more easily, create jobs, and improve living standards. Cities along modern routes could become busy and successful, just as Silk Road cities once were.

Finally, modern connections can support cooperation in science and technology. Countries can work together on climate research, health care, clean energy, and new inventions. Just as the ancient Silk Road helped spread inventions like papermaking, modern networks can help spread new discoveries.

### **Why the Silk Road Still Matters**

The Silk Road is important today because it shows the power of human connection. It teaches us that when people meet and share ideas, they learn and grow. The Silk Road was more than trading objects. It was also about sharing beliefs, art, traditions, and knowledge.

It reminds us that the world is always changing. Today we can travel across continents in hours or send messages in seconds. The main idea of the Silk Road—connecting people across distance—still matters. Whether someone was walking across deserts hundreds of years ago or joining an online class today, the spirit of learning from others continues.

### **Conclusion**

The story of the Silk Road is a story of travel, discovery, and learning. It began with early travellers crossing hard landscapes. It grew into a network that connected many cultures. It continued through explorers like Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta. Today, it inspires new ideas about how countries can cooperate and share knowledge.

No matter which part of the Silk Road we focus on, the message is the same: when people trade, share, and learn from one another, the world becomes a richer and more connected place.

# The Wonders Of The Silk Road

*The International School of Macao, Dai, William – 9*

A man from Hong Kong orders a laptop made from Washington in 5 seconds. None of that could have happened if it wasn't for the Silk Road. Have you heard of the Silk Road? If you haven't you will learn about it. We can go back to around the 2nd century where you are a traveler who wants to trade spice for silk.

You are travelling in the mountains in China where you meet a lot of people you can trade items like, foods, spices and silk with, but some of them are thieves or scammers, thieves and scammers were common in the Silk Road they would steal and scam people. The Silk Road was actually not a single road, but a web of routes leading from place to place. Also Mongolian hordes protected the Silk Road and that's how gun powder made its way from China to the Middle East.

Marco Polo was one of the travelers in the Silk Road on his way, he met some travelers like him who told him stories about magical lands, treasures and mysterious creatures. Marco Polo soon reached China and he saw the marvels of Chinese craftsmanship, paper money and fireworks that lit up the sky, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! He soon became a favourite. Years later, when Marco returned to Venice, he told about his adventure. The people of Venice didn't believe him so they called him "Marco the liar". In his death bed, Marco's last words were "I have not told half of what I saw."

Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Christian all spread along these routes, leaving a lasting impact on the regions they touched. While more goods were traded. Chinese goods made their way to Rome. Causing an outflow of gold, leading to a ban of silk. Roman glasswork was highly prized in China. The disease called the bubonic plague was passed through the web of routes, leaving a mark in history.

Did you know that the Silk Road did not just trade silk? It traded spices, fruits and food. But the most traded stuff was horses, surprised? It was traded by the Mongols. The Silk Road's secret weapon was deadly small, invisible fleas wiping out cities in weeks. People would leave cities, passing the plague, the plague usually hid in the boxes. While people outside were trading, merchants inside were dying.

The Silk Road was the first internet ever. Cultures were passed, food was passed and myths were passed. The Silk Road was a food network, it had grapes from Persia, noodles from China and spices from India. The city of Samarkand was the trade and culture hub of the Silk Road. The secret of silk was kept a secret in China, until 2 spies (or monks) snuck silk worms in bamboo tubes. Revealing the secret of silk. It was the greatest heist in ancient history.

Some rulers actually demanded camels as tribute along the Silk Road. Silk was so prized, it was often used as currency! Now, China is in the process of constructing a new Silk Road. The Silk Road was actually more than 4000 miles long! That's like walking from New York to Los Angeles and back! While the fall of the Mongol empire was happening China withdrew from international trade.

Even though there was no going back, without the Silk Road, none of us would have all the technology we have now. Almost the whole world works together now! Japanese shoppers buy T-shirts made in China, Korean audiences watch American films and movies and Chinese gamers play American made games. So just remember, next time you hear the phrase "Silk Road" remember that the Silk Road was a web of trade routes that connected all of us in Asia and Europe, and that the Silk Road crossed Asia and Europe.

# A Magical Bridge Between East and West.

*The King's School Qianhai Shenzhen, Zimeng, Mo – 8*

A long ago, there was a very special road called the Silk Road! It was not made of real silk, but it connected China to faraway countries in Europe and Africa. This road stretched across many lands and took many months to travel. The Silk Road was very important because it helped people trade goods, share ideas, and learn from each other. People from different cultures met, talked, and learned new ways of living. It was like a magical bridge between the East and the West.

Who started the Silk Road?

A long time ago, during the Han Dynasty, a man named Zhang Qian became a hero. He was sent by Emperor Wu to find friends and fight against the Xiongnu, a group of strong nomadic warriors. Although Zhang Qian faced many dangerous — like scorching deserts, freezing mountains and even being capture by the Xiongnu for 11 years — he never gave up. He had to travel very far without maps and vehicles. His bravery and determination helped him survive. Finally, he opened the path to the Western Regions, connecting China to the world.

What did people trade on the Silk Road?

Chinese Silk was the most famous item. Traders carried silk, porcelain, and tea to West. In return, they brought back spices, glass, grapes and even horses. These items were special and many people were excited to see them. Imagine riding a camel through the desert with these treasures! Feeling the wind and sand and meeting people from different countries along the way.

# Formation of the Silk Road

*Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road), Chan, Sin Hang – 11*

Around 2100 years ago, it was the Han Dynasty. The Emperor of Han sought to form an alliance with Yuezhi. Yuezhi were nomads who sought fresh pastures for their livestock to graze. In the meantime, Xiongnu, a political union of nomadic tribes, was planning to attack both of them because of their resources. When the Emperor of Han heard this, he quickly selected a person who was capable of making an alliance with Yuezhi. The prime candidate was an explorer named Zhang Qian because he was familiar with Xiongnu. Soon afterwards, the war between Han and Xiongnu broke out.

Zhang Qian travelled from Chang An (known as Xian nowadays) to the Middle East. Despite having a hard time travelling, he had a couple of adventures. He navigated through modern regions of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan. In addition, he passed Parthia (known as Iran in the present). On his way, he collected valuable information about the cultures, economies and peoples that he encountered. The road or route on which he walked is called the Silk Road today. When he reached Xiongnu's territory, the Han delegation was intercepted and held prisoners. When he was held in captivity, he married a woman and fathered a son.

After serving his sentence for 11 years in jail, he finally planned to flee. He spent over 4 years to escape successfully and continued his task assigned by the emperor. However, sadly it was impossible for him to reach Yuezhi. He had no choice but to return China. He returned to China in 125 BC. Although he could not accomplish his task, he made a huge impact on China.

He established routes which connect the East and the West and later became the Silk Road. In addition, he brought back detailed, reliable information about the western regions of China (known as Central Asia now) which were previously unknown for the Han dynasty. Furthermore, he introduced new plants, such as pomegranates and grapes, which were formerly cultivated only in the west.

His journey to the Xiongnu settlement became famous. As a result, many merchants started traversing the Silk Road to sell their products. Not only did the Silk Road enable trade between Chinese and the habitants in the west of China, it also led to cultural exchange and fame in the world.

The Silk Road closed in 1453 because of some illegal trades between Chinese merchants and those in the west. Since the re-opening in 2013, over 150 nations have been involved and it has become the biggest international project in world history. What an impact of Zhang Qian!

# Zhang Qian and the Silk Road

*Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road), Kwan, Kwan Chak – 10*

Long time ago, there was an emperor of China named Emperor Wudi. At that time, many regions of China were at war. There was a political union of nomadic tribes called Xiongnu. They were very fierce warriors who wanted to invade China. Consequently, Emperor Wudi had to dispatch a palace attendant to connect the west to fight them. He selected Zhang Qian, a military officer who was familiar with Xiongnu.

Xiongnu wanted to attack China because the Mongolian steppe was a "wasteland" with no iron for tools, no wood for fuel, or no grains for food. Raiding China was the only option to obtain these essential goods. In addition, Xiongnu had severe winters, droughts and locust plagues which could kill up to 70% of their livestock. They could either battle China or face total starvation. It was a life-or-death situation they had to face. Xiongnu frequently attacked to retake the territory that they had lost to Chinese expansion, such as the fertile Ordos region seized by the Qin dynasty. Large-scale invasions were often used to "bully" the Chinese emperors into reopening trade markets or increasing annual tribute payments.

Zhang Qian travelled through Taklamakan Desert and Pamir Plateau. In the desert, Zhang Qian suffered from the heat and he did not have much water. He barely survived with "food" that was actually edible plants. On the plateau, it snowed so Zhang Qian was freezing. When he was going through Hexi Corridor, he got caught by Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty with over a hundred men. Then, the emperor commanded him to make an alliance with Yuezhi people to fight against Xiongnu.

On his way to the west, Zhang Qian accidentally opened up a road between China and the west. The road enabled China to exchange goods with the west. The name of the road comes from one type of the goods they traded. It was silk. At that time, silk was very rare and valuable. It came from silkworms. They are actually the larvae of a specific type of moths: the *Bombyx mori* moths.

The production of silk is part of a natural process of giving birth to silkworms. First, a female silkworm lays hundreds of eggs on the leaves of mulberry trees which can be found in a wide range of temperate and subtropical regions across the globe. Once the eggs hatch, silkworms enter a period of rapid growth. After the whole process is done, the humans take the silk and sell it.

When Zhang Qian was returning to China, hoping to avoid Xiongnu who had captured him at the start of his journey, he chose a more southern route through Kunlun Mountains. Despite this, he was seized again by Xiongnu patrols and held in custody for over a year. In 126 BC, a major power struggle broke out within the Xiongnu leadership following the death of their leader (Chanyu). Zhang Qian took advantage of this internal chaos to escape for the final time. At Zhang Qian's first departure, he returned alone. This time, unlike his first departure, he fled with his Xiongnu wife, whom he had married during his decade of initial captivity, and their son, as well as his loyal servant Ganfu. After 13 total years away, Zhang Qian finally reached the Han capital, Chang'an. Of the original delegation of over 100 men who had set out in 138 BC, only Zhang Qian and Ganfu were fortunate enough to be able to see China again.

Although his original military mission failed—the Yuezhi people refused to ally against Xiongnu—Zhang Qian's return was celebrated because he brought back the first detailed reports of Central Asian civilizations. This information eventually led to the creation of the Silk Road.

Zhang Qian reported on rich, sedentary civilizations like Dayuan (Ferghana) and Daxia that valued Chinese silk and goods. He famously described the superior Ferghana horses, which were larger and stronger than Chinese horses, sparking the Emperor's desire to acquire them for the Han cavalry. He suggested that China could trade its silk for these horses and other products, effectively proposing the foundation of what would become the Silk Road. Besides, Zhang Qian used his geographical knowledge to assist in the Han-Xiongnu War. In 123 BC, he served as a colonel under General Wei Qing. Since he knew where to find water and pasture in the desert, he ensured that the army did not suffer from resource shortages. For his successful guidance, the Emperor honored him with the title Marquis of Bowang. In addition, Zhang Qian was credited with bringing several foreign plants to China, including grapes, alfalfa, walnuts, pomegranates and garlic.

After his return, Zhang Qian was sent on another major mission to seek an alliance with the Wusun people to further weaken Xiongnu in 119–115 BC. In his final years, he was promoted to Grand Messenger, making him one of the nine highest ministers in the government. He died in around 114 BC as a national hero celebrated for "opening the window" between China and the West.

Silk was not only priceless goods in the past, now it is still one of the most expensive materials for tailoring clothes. For that, let us all hope that all these historical contexts will last forever.