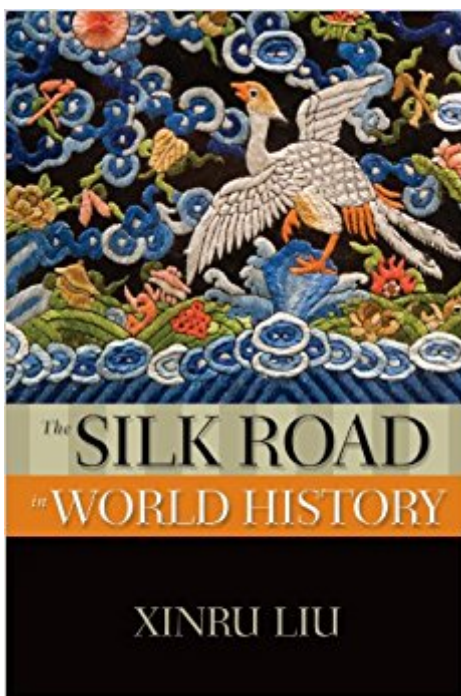


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The Silk Road In World History (New Oxford World History)



Synopsis

The Silk Road was the contemporary name for a complex of ancient trade routes linking East Asia with Central Asia, South Asia, and the Mediterranean world. This network of exchange emerged along the borders between agricultural China and the steppe nomads during the Han Dynasty (206BCE-220CE), in consequence of the inter-dependence and the conflicts of these two distinctive societies. In their quest for horses, fragrances, spices, gems, glassware, and other exotics from the lands to their west, the Han Empire extended its dominion over the oases around the Takla Makan Desert and sent silk all the way to the Mediterranean, either through the land routes leading to the caravan city of Palmyra in Syria desert, or by way of northwest India, the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, landing at Alexandria. The Silk Road survived the turmoil of the demise of the Han and Roman Empires, reached its golden age during the early middle age, when the Byzantine Empire and the Tang Empire became centers of silk culture and established the models for high culture of the Eurasian world. The coming of Islam extended silk culture to an even larger area and paved the way for an expanded market for textiles and other commodities. By the 11th century, however, the Silk Road was in decline because of intense competition from the sea routes of the Indian Ocean. Using supply and demand as the framework for analyzing the formation and development of the Silk Road, the book examines the dynamics of the interactions of the nomadic pastoralists with sedentary agriculturalists, and the spread of new ideas, religions, and values into the world of commerce, thus illustrating the cultural forces underlying material transactions. This effort at tracing the interconnections of the diverse participants in the transcontinental Silk Road exchange will demonstrate that the world had been linked through economic and ideological forces long before the modern era.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A welcome addition to the New Oxford World History series...Any general reader interested in silk or textiles will enjoy this book, but so too will one who is captivated by any other aspect of the Silk Road, for it provides a quick but fascinating historical narrative. As a textbook for a world history class, its appeal lies not only in the romance of the Silk Road but also in its use of material culture to write world history by connecting economic and political activities with the religious values of various traditions."--Journal of Asian Studies
"A carefully constructed narrative and analysis...This is an excellent text that will be useful for orientating students and introducing them to the sources and interpretive problems of ancient and medieval Central Asian history."--World History Bulletin

Xinru Liu teaches in the Department of History at The College of New Jersey and was formerly Senior Researcher at the Institute of World History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

A very readable and concise outline of the role of the Silk Road in the development of international trade. Necessarily broad in scope, this is a great starter book for understanding not only early world trade but also the development of Central Asia.

great

For several years I have been interested in the early developement of Mahayana Buddhism and changes of interpretations as the teachings were adapted to Chinese culture. From my understanding the early developement took place in Gandhara and the surrounding area at the western end of the Silk Road. I have read several books on the Silk Road that have used Prof. Liu's ANCIENT INDIA AND ANCIENT CHINA: TRADE AND RELIGIOUS EXCHANGES AD 1-600, as a primary resource. Although the that book was only published 13 years ago, it is out of print and I am unable/willing to pay the \$200+ asking price for the used book. I was very happy to see this current work made available a few weeks ago. I feel that we are fortunate that while Prof Liu was educated in China where she was acknowledged as a gifted scholar, and is able to keep current on all that is being published in this field in China without waiting for selected works to be translated and

interpreted by other western scholars; she has since earned her Ph.D at the University of Pennsylvania, and whose current interest is the History of India, which she teaches today. While her book is half the length of many of the books on this subject, the information is very pertinent. The book is divided into six chapters: China Looks West, Rome Looks East, The Kushan Empire and Buddhism, A Golden Age Emerges, Transforming the Eurasian Silk Market, and The Mongols and the Twilight of the Silk Road. Each of these chapters provide new material for those interested in each of the selected areas. As far as my interest in Buddhism and related religions; she presented her/ a interpretation on the development of Mahayana for non-Indians. She also explained the Chinese names given to these western monks, with the family name given as an abbreviation of their county of origin, and that the Buddhist monks developed the wineries and became rich providing for the needs of the merchants along the silk road. She also went on to explain the two way trade of finished silk goods both east and west and later that while Europe and Islam were in a holy war that Europe continued buying silk goods used as vestments by priest and altar coverings with decorative edging praising Allah. Without a reissue of her original work, I believe that this is the best book in this field of study available today. R. Jensen

very interesting book

Book came as described.

The Book is of good quality, and it is delivered at the proper time.

good

This is a must for anyone with an interest in the rise and decline of the Silk Road . It is an orderly and concise history and just like a tapestry it fills in the missing gaps that makes the Silk Road history readable and enjoyable . My one criticism is the lack of good mapswhich would make it easier to remember. I had to refer to Internet to clarify certain territories etc . However I loved it . Enjoy !

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