

The Taklamakan Times

THE SILK ROAD

ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES TRANSFORM EURASIA



Connections

The Silk Road was a network of trade routes that linked many empires, stretching from China to empires including India, Persia, and Rome. It facilitated not only the trade of goods but also the trade of ideas, including philosophies like Confucianism and religions like Buddhism and Christianity. Many highly sought-after items, including China's silk, India's spices and textiles, Persia's metals and luxury goods, and Rome's precious metals and wine, traversed throughout The Silk Road from empire to empire. Including both land routes and maritime trade, The Silk Road greatly facilitated communication within empires that spanned thousands of miles that otherwise would not have been connected.



Safety on The Silk Road

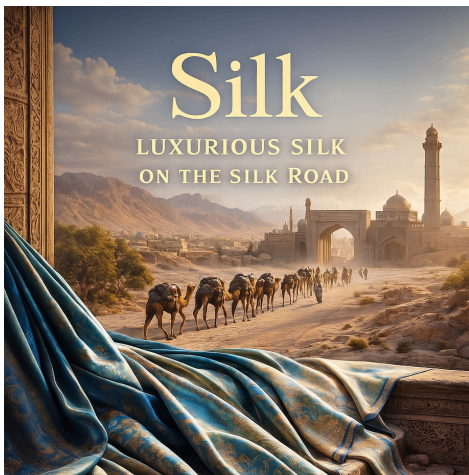
The Silk Road was split into many sections, with the traders carrying both goods and ideas across them, enabling them to enrich their culture. Traders also formed groups called caravans to allow for safer travel, ensuring goods would make it safely to their destination. Furthermore, small inns called caravanserais were prominent along The Silk Road, providing safe lodging and food for merchants and

trade animals. The stability of large empires was crucial to the safety of merchants on The Silk Road. When large empires had stability, they were able to maintain proper control of their portion of The Silk Road, which helped create safe routes that allowed for merchants to traverse across empires safely. The safety of the routes promoted its popularity, which caused more merchants to spread their goods and ideas.

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The Silk Road promoted not only trade but also the spread of religion and the exchange of intellectual ideas; it was a conduit for much more than Silk, promoting a variety of communication and cultural expansion. It enabled the spread and sharing of many technologies, helping many civilizations develop quicker.

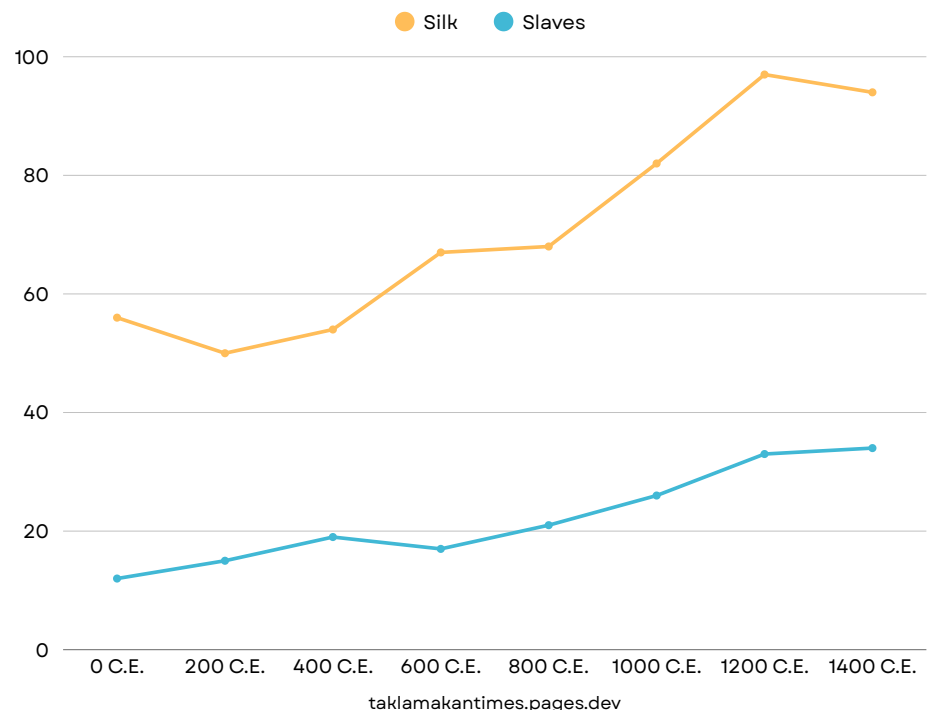


Market Watch: Goods on the move!

Silk was one of the most prized commodities exported from China, as it was elaborately crafted by skilled silk workers. Silk was prominently traded with European countries including Italy and France. Silk had an immense impact on the economic gap between the rich and the poor, since it was a luxury item only that the rich could afford, while the poor



Price of Silk and Slaves On The Silk Road Over Time



would never obtain it. Over time, Silk became a symbol of wealth and high status across many empires, and it helped stimulate the economy in many regions involved with its trade. Silk ended up being so influential that historians name The Silk Road after it today. Additionally, slaves were commonly traded on The Silk Road. Slaves on The Silk Road came from many locations, like

Central Asia, Europe, China, and Africa. Many of these slaves consisted of war captives and people forcibly sold into slavery. These slaves went everywhere, as all empires at the time used slave labor for many purposes, including in the military and as personal servants. These slaves served diverse roles over many empires, fueling economies of many different empires.

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Exclusive Interview with a Roman Merchant!

Interviewer: What goods are you carrying?

Roman Merchant: "I am carrying expensive glassware all the way from Rome."

Interviewer: What dangers are you facing on the journey?

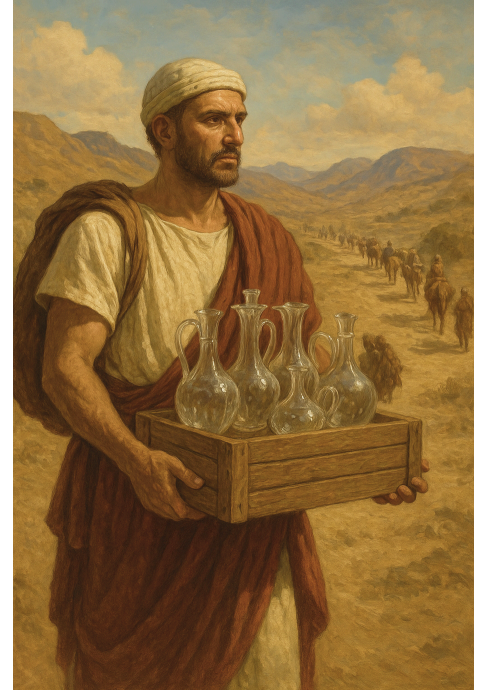
Roman Merchant: "I face quite a few different dangers, like disease and injury, but the worst danger I face is the bandits. They are everywhere, just waiting to rob me of my goods."

Interviewer: What new ideas or philosophies have you learned from other cultures?

Roman Merchant: "One major idea I have learned during my journey on The Silk Road is Buddhism. I was talking with a Buddhist missionary, and he was telling me about ahimsa and not harming animals. Even though I don't completely agree with his belief that every animal has a soul inside them, I still believe that ahimsa is a very noble cause."

Interviewer: What kind of people do you normally travel with?

Roman Merchant: "I normally travel with other merchants in caravans because it allows for conversations which help pass the time, and it protects us against all the bandits. Sometimes I travel with missionaries, which is an experience I greatly enjoy because it allows me to learn more about many new and different beliefs."



Gaius Lentulus - Roman Merchant

Editorial: The Many Perils of Long-Distance Travel

Long-distance travel on The Silk Road is undeniably dangerous. Travelers face countless perils including illness, severe injury, and even attacks from bandits, and in reality, the chances of surviving a long-distance trip are far from perfect. Yet this raises an important question: why do people choose to go? Long-distance travel is highly profitable, meaning those who do end up surviving improve

their life and status immensely. So, while long-distance travel is extremely unsafe, many believe it is the only way for them to improve their life and believe the potential gains outweigh the risk of death. Nevertheless, many efforts were made to reduce this risk, including traveling in caravans and the patrol of many portions of The Silk Road.

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