



INTEGRAL STUDY OF THE SILK ROADS: ROADS OF DIALOGUE  
ÉTUDE INTÉGRALE DES ROUTES DE LA SOIE : ROUTES DE DIALOGUE



## THE SILK ROADS PROJECT

“INTEGRAL STUDY OF THE SILK ROADS: ROADS OF DIALOGUE”

1988-1997



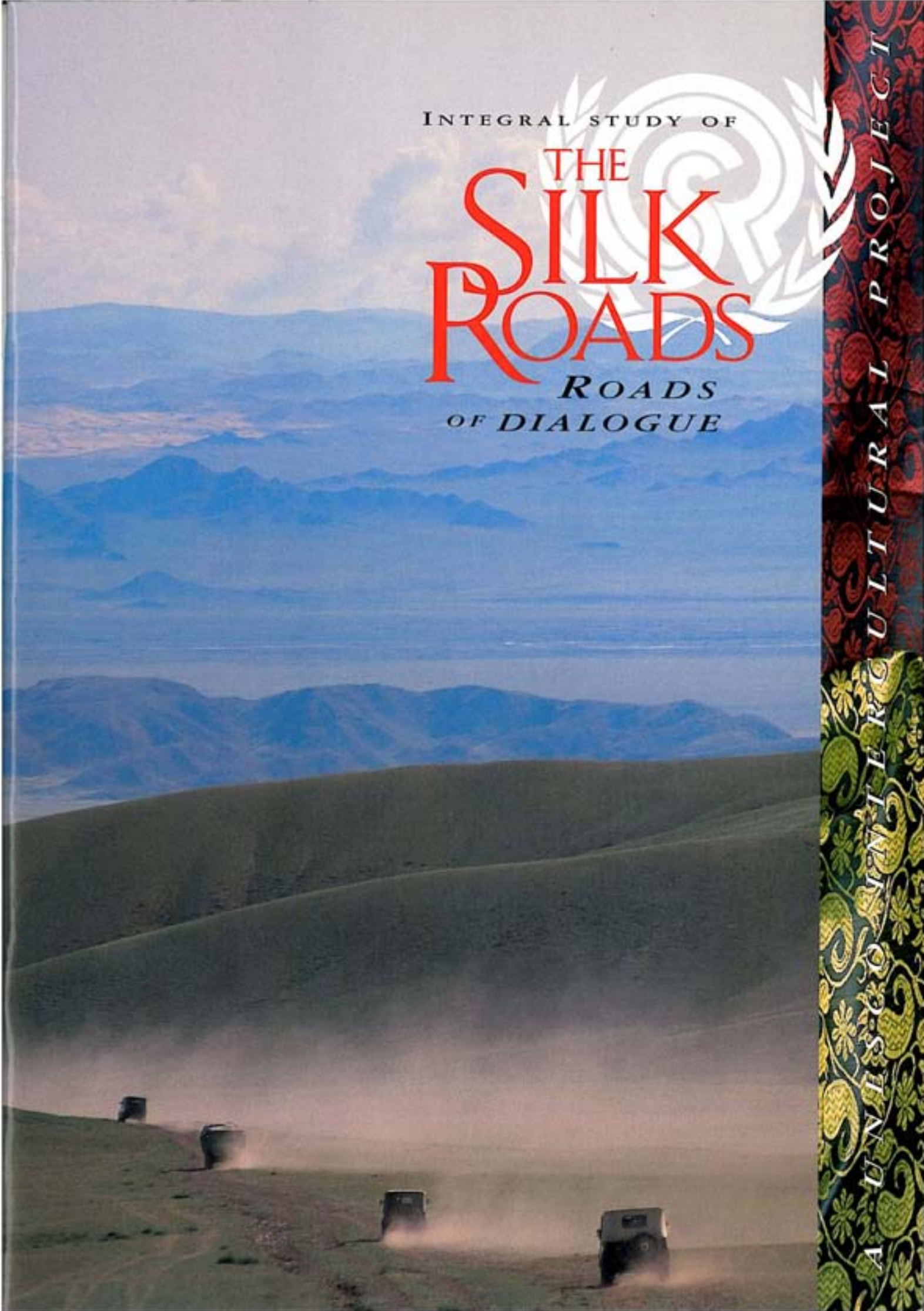
INTEGRAL STUDY OF

THE  
**SILK  
ROADS**

*ROADS  
OF DIALOGUE*

INTEGRAL STUDY OF  
THE  
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A UNNISECO INITIATED  
CULTURAL PROJECT



# DIRECTOR-GENERAL *of* UNESCO

**S**ince time immemorial, the movement of peoples and intercultural exchanges have played a crucial role in the evolution and transformation of human civilization. At a time when cultural identities are being fiercely defended in many parts of the world, a look into the past shows that these identities have been gradually forged through influences from elsewhere. Such influences have marked the different civilizations deeply and in doing so have helped to fashion all present-day societies.

The stimulating concept of 'routes' or 'roads' as vectors of culture constitutes the basis of several study projects undertaken by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The first, launched in 1988 under the title 'Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue', was a bold and ambitious venture that set to reopen doors to the past, thus shedding new light on the present. Through a vast programme of research that has mobilized scientists, academics and media worldwide, and that has included five expeditions mapping out again both land roads and sea routes, the Silk Roads Study has forcefully disproved those concepts and visions that today stand as obstacles to the harmonious coexistence of peoples. Indeed, the numerous studies carried out show that identity, seen from the perspective of history, must not be viewed as a ghetto or a form of confinement, but should rather be achieved and recognized as a process, a synthesis and an encounter.

The Silk Roads have highlighted the fruitful dialectic and give-and-take in the unending dialogue between civilizations and cultures. They show how the movement of people, and the flow of ideas and values, have served to transform cultures, and even civilizations, whether it be through the spread of Buddhism, Christianity or Islam between East and West, the transfer of technologies or the dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Through this project, UNESCO has sought to shed light on the common heritage, both material and spiritual, that links the peoples of Eurasia. To generate an awareness of the different civilizations' shared roots and to foster the concept of a plural world heritage that embraces the masterpieces of nature and culture in all countries is, in the final analysis, to encourage attitudes of openness and tolerance, so necessary in an essentially interdependent world. The fundamental issue at stake in the 'roads of culture' approach is to highlight the significance of pluralism in culture, no less vital than that of biodiversity in nature.

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*N.B: 'The Silk & Spice Routes' map was published by UNESCO and Belitha Press*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1988 UNESCO launched a ten-year project entitled '**Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue**'. As part of the project, several expeditions were organized to retrace, by land and by sea, some of these routes, with the participation of experts from all the countries involved. The purpose of the project, which uses a multidisciplinary approach, was to carry out field studies of the scientific, technological and cultural exchanges which took place between the East and the West along these routes with a view to stimulating further research at the international and national levels and promoting the concept of multiple identities and a common heritage.

The basic purpose of this project initiated by UNESCO in 1988 as part of the World Decade for Cultural Development was to highlight the complex cultural interactions arising from the encounters between East and West and helping to shape the rich common heritage of the Eurasian peoples.



## SILK ROADS

Human beings have always moved from place to place and traded with their neighbours. Thus, through the ages, the immensity of Eurasia was criss-crossed with communication routes which gradually linked up to form what are known today as the Silk Roads. Maritime Routes, or Spice Routes, linking East and West by sea were also developed.

These vast networks carried more than just merchandise and precious commodities: the constant movement and mixing of populations also brought about the transmission of knowledge, ideas, cultures and beliefs, which had a profound impact on the history and civilizations of the Eurasian peoples. Many travellers ventured on to the Silk Roads drawn by the attractions of trade, adventure and also knowledge and, in the nineteenth century, by new archaeological discoveries.

Nevertheless, these ancient roads, used for thousands of years and considered to have been 'opened up' by the Chinese General Zhang Qian in the second century BC, had no particular name. 'Silk Road' is a relatively recent designation dating from the mid-nineteenth century when the German geologist, Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen, named the trade and communication network *Die Seidenstrasse* (the Silk Road). The term, also used in the plural, has



remained to stir our imagination with its evocative mystery.

### *Travellers on the Silk Roads*

The Chinese were among the first intrepid travellers who, often risking their lives, ventured on to the Silk Roads, a vast network of routes linking East and West. Their uncontested hero was Zhang Qian. Sent to the West in 139 BC by the Han Emperor 'Wudi' to ensure alliances against the Xiongnu, the hereditary enemies of the Chinese, Zhang Qian was captured and imprisoned by them.

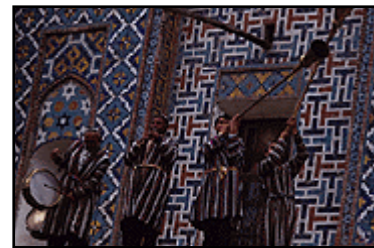
Thirteen years later he escaped and made his way back to China. Appreciating the wealth of detail and accuracy of his reports, the emperor sent Zhang Qian on another mission in 119 BC to visit several neighbouring peoples. The successful mission opened the way for future ambassadors and travellers from the East and the West.

Buddhism having spread as far as China, several Buddhist monks from China made pilgrimages to India to bring back sacred texts. Their travel diaries are an extraordinary source of information. For example, the diary of 'Fa Xian' (describing a 14-year voyage between 399 and 414) has made a substantial contribution to our knowledge of the history of Central Asia in the fifth century. The diary of Xuan Zang (whose 25-year journal lasted from 629 to 654) not only has an enormous historical value but also inspired a comic novel of the sixteenth century, 'Pilgrimage to the West', which has become one of the great Chinese classics.



During the Middle Ages, European monks and traders travelled in the opposite direction. Noteworthy among them were Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, sent by Pope Innocent IV on a voyage lasting from 1245 to 1247, William of Rubruck, a Flemish Franciscan monk sent by Saint Louis on a voyage lasting from 1253 to 1255, and Marco Polo, whose travels stretched over more than 20 years between 1271 and 1292.

With the nineteenth century a new type of traveller was born: archaeologists and geographers from the West, enthusiastic explorers looking for adventure. Coming from France, England, Germany and Japan, these researchers traversed the Taklamakan desert in western China, in what is now Xinjiang, to explore the ancient sites along the Silk Roads and look for traces of Buddhist influence. This explains how museums in the West acquired many frescoes and art objects from ancient Buddhist sites of China, buried in the sand and brought back, with or without the permission of the Chinese, by Sir Aurel Stein (British, 1862-1943), Paul Pelliot (French, 1879-1945), Albert von Le Coq (German, 1860-1930) and others.



## *Central Asia*

Ancient and medieval history was shaped in large measure by the successive waves of peoples from the steppes located between the Caspian Sea and the high plateaux of Mongolia, by the movement and intermixing of peoples during military conquests. Parallel to those developments, the nomadic peoples were founding a culture and civilization of their own in the region, adapted to the natural environment and their need for mobility.



Throughout history, these same steppes witnessed the ceaseless coming and going of caravans carrying foodstuffs and rare commodities such as silk, spices and precious stones. The many travellers, merchants, monks, pilgrims and artists crossing the region on rough and sometimes dangerous roads contributed not only to the circulation of merchandise but also to the transmission and knowledge of cultures and religions.



Since the emergence of the new independent states of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) after broke up of the Soviet Union, this key region is gradually reclaiming its place in the Eurasian land mass and becoming the geographic and cultural 'bridge' between Asia and Europe that it was for

3,000 years.

But while some of the almost legendary sites such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Merv are well known, the public knows little about the region's history or the cultures which flourished in it and which are enjoying a genuine renaissance.

For more information on Central Asia visit the Website on **History of civilizations of Central Asia** (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/asia/index.html> )

## **ACTIVITIES**

Through international scientific **expeditions, seminars and meetings** and by adopting a multidisciplinary approach, the project promoted research on subjects related to the study of the Silk Roads and encouraged the awarding of fellowships to young researchers, the production of specialized works and **publications** for the general public such as the children's series 'The Silk and Spice Routes', **documentary films** and **exhibitions**, and a broader understanding of the concept of a common heritage and multiple identities.

By virtue of the synergy established at every stage between researchers and the media and the concrete nature and visibility of its activities and results, the project has renewed interest in the Silk Roads worldwide. In this way UNESCO contributed to establish the conditions under which people will become more aware of the need to renew intercultural dialogue and become more aware of their mutual ties, with a view to promoting a culture of peace and tolerance.

### *Expeditions*

Combining science with media coverage, five international scientific expeditions were carried out, adding an innovative aspect to the project:



THE DESERT ROUTE FROM XIAN TO KASHGAR IN CHINA  
(20 July-3 August 1990)

THE MARITIME ROUTE FROM VENICE TO OSAKA  
(13 October 1990-9 March 1991)

THE STEPPE ROUTE IN CENTRAL ASIA  
(18 April-17 June 1991)

THE NOMADS' ROUTE IN MONGOLIA  
(10 July-5 August 1992)

THE BUDDHIST ROUTE, PART I - NEPAL  
(21-30 September 1995)

THE DESERT ROUTE FROM XIAN TO KASHGAR IN CHINA  
(20 July-3 August 1990)

The international team was made up of 21 foreign experts, four members of the International Consultative Committee for the Silk Roads, eight Chinese experts and eight representatives of the foreign press.

Nineteen countries were represented in all.



An international seminar was held in Urumqi on the theme 'Land Routes of the Silk Roads and Cultural Exchanges between East and West before the Tenth Century' and a symposium at Dunhuang on 'Dunhuang and the Silk Roads'.

The expedition gave rise to the exhibition 'Serindia, Land of Buddha. Ten centuries of art on the Silk Road', held in Paris from 24 October 1995 to 19 February 1996.

### THE MARITIME ROUTE FROM VENICE TO OSAKA (13 October 1990-9 March 1991)

A voyage covering 27,000 kilometres in the ship 'Fulk al-Salamah', graciously loaned by His Majesty Qaboos, Sultan of Oman. Nearly 100 scientists and 45 journalists, representing 34 countries, were on board for all or part of the voyage.



During the 154-day trip, the expedition called at 21 ports in 16 countries and spent 54 days at sea. Regional and national authorities organized 17 international seminars and two symposia where experts presented several hundred papers.

The exhibition 'In Search of Sinbad: The Maritime Silk Route', held at the Musée de la Marine in Paris from 18 March to 15 June 1994, was based on the expedition.

### THE STEPPE ROUTE IN CENTRAL ASIA (18 April-17 June 1991)



**Duration:** nine weeks.

**Distance covered:** 5,000 kilometres, from Ashkhabad (Turkmenistan) to Almaty (Kazakhstan).

The international team was composed of 46 foreign experts, 74 Soviet experts and 26 representatives of the media. Twenty-three countries were represented. Two international seminars took place: Khiva (2-3 May 1991) on the 'Importance of caravanserais and cities built along the ancient Silk Route' and Almaty (15-17 June 1991) on 'Relations between sedentary and nomadic cultures along the major Silk Roads'.

Many art objects from Central Asia were included in the exhibition 'Serindia, Land of Buddha: Ten centuries of art on the Silk Road', held in Paris from 24 October 1995 to 19 February 1996. Also, the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS) was established in August 1995 in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) as a direct outcome of the UNESCO Silk Roads Expeditions (website: <http://www.iicas-unesco.org>).

## THE NOMADS' ROUTE IN MONGOLIA (10 July-5 August)



UNESCO organized the Nomads' Route Expedition in Mongolia in summer 1992, which composed of an international team of 44 foreign experts, 11 Mongol specialists and 28 representatives of the press, from some 25 countries in all, travelled the 3,500 kilometres of dust or grass tracks that separate Khobdo, in the West, from Ulan Bator, in the East. In order to highlight the difficulties involved in nomadic life, an international seminar was held at the end of the Expedition in Ulan Bator (3-5 August 1992,) on the theme "The Nomads of Central Asia and the Silk Roads".



Mongolia is the only steppe nation where such a large number of people still lead a nomadic existence and practice a culture particularly suited to a mobile way of life. Although sheep provide a lot of their needs: skins for clothing, mutton, milk and cheese for food; dung for fuel; and wool for the manufacture of the characteristic felt *gers*, or yurts (the nomads' mobile homes), most Mongolian nomads also possess large herds of horses, camels, goats and in the high regions, yaks.

During the Expedition, participants were able to experience some of the difficulties of nomadic life, due, amongst other things, to the harsh and very rapidly changing climate.

They were also able to see some of the more pleasant aspects, such as the traditional arts, crafts and games, knowledge of which has been passed down from generation to generation, like Mongolian wrestling, archery, horse riding as well as a great deal of music, and particularly the famous Altay "double tone" singing.

One of the important outcomes of this Expedition was the creation, in Ulan Bator in September 1998, of the International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations (website: <http://www.nomadic.mn> ).

## THE BUDDHIST ROUTE, PART I - NEPAL (21-30 September 1995)

The expedition to Nepal was organized and the programme designed for UNESCO by the Lumbini Development Trust, on behalf of the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO and the Department of Archaeology of Nepal. Dr Corneille Jest, Director of Research at the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), also contributed as



scientific adviser to the preparations for the expedition.

**Duration:** 10 days 21 - 30 September 1995.

**International Team:** 72 participants from 17 countries, 44 experts (25 from Nepal), 11 media representatives, 5 UNESCO organizers, 12 Nepalese organizers.

**Programme:** Two international seminars 'Lumbini - birthplace of the Buddha', Lumbini, 25 September 1995;  
(10 communications presented) 'Buddhism in the Himalayas: yesterday and today' Kathmandu, 20 September 1995;  
(12 communications presented) 16 major study trips in the region of Lumbini and the Kathmandu Valley 6 monument areas, 6 archaeological sites 3 museums, the Lumbini Master Plan site.

**Other activities:** Cultural event Visit to a Buddhist religious community, 2 press conferences (22 and 29 September 1995).

## **EXHIBITIONS**

Among the exhibitions generated by the project were:

### • **Serindia, Land of Buddha. Ten centuries of art on the Silk Road**

This exhibition was inspired by the Desert Route expedition in China (1990) in which Jacques Giès, Head Curator of the National Museum of Asian Arts (Musée Guimet), participated as a member of the international team. The exhibition, held at the Grand Palais in Paris from 24 October 1995 to 19 February 1996, presented for the first time in the western world major pieces from collections of Central Asian Buddhist art, which are held in several museums around the world.



Jacques Giès and Monique Cohen, the organizers of the exhibition, explain: 'We are concerned here with a region for which we have no specific name; hence the use of several terms including 'Serindia', 'Central Asia' and even 'Silk Roads'. Each conjures up a multitude of images yet they all fail to convey the distinctiveness of their subject. The exhibition traces a phenomenal period in the region's history: the Buddhist 'millennium'

during which Buddhism used the oases of the Tarim Basin as staging posts in order to win over to its philosophical and religious doctrine the major countries of the Far East, China first and then, through China, Korea and Japan. Federico Mayor, the Director-General of UNESCO, adds: 'What precisely does Buddhist art bring to us from centuries past? Memories of ancient times and lost sites, naturally, but above all an ethic to live by, and, at all times, a sense of mystery, something that our technically-minded civilizations have not managed to take away from us'.

• **In Search of Sinbad: The Maritime Silk Route**

*held at the Musée de la Marine in Paris from 18 March to 15 June 1994, was inspired by the Maritime Silk Route expedition.*

In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Rear Admiral François Bellec, Director of the Musée de la Marine, writes: 'From the magic of the seas skirting the land routes, universal nautical science was born. From China to Arabia, through the Indonesian archipelago, ships of all kinds manned by crews speaking every language and from every culture opened up the high sea routes, carrying the fabulous cargoes the West dreamed of.

Plying the routes of incense, jade, perfume, gems, exotic woods, silk, spices, porcelain and tea, the fleets of the eastern seas, of which only a few astonished voyageurs ever caught a glimpse and which were practically ignored until the Renaissance, established a classic commercial monopoly. More importantly, they developed an advanced naval science at a time when Europe was still living in dread of the murky depths ... Striving to reconstitute the material and cultural aspects of the Maritime Silk Routes, "In Search of Sinbad" also pays tribute to the millions of unknown sailors who sailed with the silk fleets'.

• **Photographs of Mongolia by J.-F. Gaillard**

An exhibition of photographs of Mongolia by J.-F. Gaillard and paintings by Franyo Aatoth was organized with the Permanent Delegation of Mongolia and displayed in UNESCO house from 24 February to 03 March 1998.

**SYMPOSIA**

By organizing academic meetings and symposia for researchers from the countries along the Silk Roads, UNESCO brought a true cultural dimension to the international scientific programmes under the project, which dealt with the following subjects:

Study of the languages and scripts of the Silk Roads;

Study and preservation of caravanserais and postal systems;

Corpus and study of the Petroglyphs of Central Asia;

Use of remote sensing to study archaeological sites;

Epics along the Silk Roads.

## **HIRAYMA FELLOWSHIPS:**

The artist and teacher Prof. Ikuo Hirayama, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and the President of the National University of Tokyo for the Fine Arts and Music, provided the Organization with a one million dollar fund to enable UNESCO to offer ten yearly fellowships over a ten year period (1990-1999) aimed at helping 100 young scholars to undertake research in various fields relative to the Silk Roads.

### **• UNESCO International Symposium on the Silk Roads 2002**

In commemoration of the completion of the UNESCO Hirayama Fellowships Programme, Prof. Hirayama, UNESCO and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO jointly organized an International Symposium on the Silk Roads 2002 in Xi'an from 18 to 20 November 2002 in the framework of the United Nations Year of Cultural Heritage and on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Among 100 Hirayama fellowship beneficiaries, 39 fellows and International Experts on Silk Roads from 29 nations participated in the Symposium. The participants adopted the Xi'an Declaration and an official letter was signed on behalf of the participants by Mr Jalali, President of the UNESCO General Conference and Prof. Hirayama, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador "*requesting UNESCO and the relevant Member States to consider inscribing the Silk Roads on the World Heritage List. This would be the first time that a designated World Heritage "site" crosses the boundaries of many nations. The cooperation between Member States necessary to put forward this proposal would in itself be a manifestation of international cooperation and a contribution to dialogue between peoples*".

## **CULTURAL TOURISM**

UNESCO /WTO Cultural tourism programme in Central Asia:

At the request of the republics of Central Asia, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and UNESCO launched a joint cultural tourism programme on the Silk Roads in Central Asia based on the Steppe Route expedition. During a meeting in Uzbekistan in October 1994, WTO and UNESCO issued the Samarkand Declaration on Tourism along the Silk

Roads, which appealed to the governments concerned to work towards developing cultural tourism along those routes and encouraging a type of tourism that respect not only the cultural and natural environment, but also the traditions of the countries along the Silk Road, and which could increase awareness of the value of their heritage and benefit local communities. In addition to a number of promotion activities further meetings were organized in Germany (Berlin), Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Khiva and Bukhara).

More info on the Silk Road project (cultural tourism) could be found at WTO's website: [http://www.unwto.org/silk\\_road/index.php](http://www.unwto.org/silk_road/index.php)

## AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL

The documentary films made by the television companies participating in the various expeditions have mainly been shown in the countries concerned, especially in China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Mongolia. Others have been produced or co-produced by UNESCO on particular themes in response to specific requests.



- ***The Silk Roads (PAL) Roads of Encounter***

A unique documentary in its wealth and depth of information.

The Silk Roads documentary film based on the UNESCO Silk Roads land expeditions co-produced by UNESCO and NDR, Germany, "Sur la Piste des Caravanes : l'Endroit de toutes les Rencontres", was shown on French/German TV channel ARTE on 19 February 1998 in the framework of a theme evening on "The Silk Roads" (Les Routes de la Soie).

The original documents were filmed by local television teams of nine countries in Central Asia as the expedition, organized within UNESCO's programme 'Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Route of Dialogue' retraced the 2,000-year-old 20,000 km silk and spices route linking East and West and thus ideas, religions, people, products and cultures in both directions. John Lawton composed later a fascinating kaleidoscope, where, from Xian in China to Constantinople at the doors of Europe, the legendary and the present meet and the dialogue is still alive.

UNESCO Publishing : [http://publishing.unesco.org/details.aspx?Code\\_Livre=3115](http://publishing.unesco.org/details.aspx?Code_Livre=3115)

- ***Silk, Scents and Spice – DVD***

Tracing the world's great trade routes throughout history and around the globe.

This DVD, based on a documentary co-produced with Arté, traces the history of peoples along the Incense Trail, the Silk Road and the Spice Route. These



routes left an everlasting imprint on the history of ideas, technologies and religion. An excellent complement to the book of the same name, it offers viewers the chance to see the history and sights of these fascinating regions and cultures unfold before their eyes.

UNESCO website:

[http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=16325&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=16325&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

The UNESCO project has fired the imagination of writers and publishers and a large number of books are now available. In addition, the Organization's publishing house has published on its own or jointly various works intended essentially for the academic community, or for children.

UNESCO – Belitha publications on the Silk Road

( [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=36922&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=36922&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) )

- *Inventions and Trade*
- *Cultures and Civilizations*
- *Exploration by Land*
- *Exploration by Sea*

Address by Federico Mayor, Director-General of Unesco, Seminar on Sri Lanka as the Mid-point in the East-West Silk Route and the Centre of Convergence of the Cross-currents of Buddhist Philosophy; Colombo; 1990

( <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000894/089458eo.pdf> )

Address by Federico Mayor, Director-General of Unesco, at the ceremony to launch the Maritime Route Expedition of the Unesco Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue; Venice, 23 October 1990

( <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000880/088051eo.pdf> )

*Les routes de la soie - Patrimoine commun, identités plurielles* (in French, available at the UNESCO library) - Road Silks – Common heritage, plural identities

This book is dedicated to the study of the ancient silks, petroglyphs in Central Asia, papermaking workshops, Buddhist iconography in the Imperial China and Asian epics of oral traditions.

( <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=97729&gp=1&mode=e&lin=1> )

Diogène, N° 171, 1995 (available at the UNESCO library)

Diogene is a quarterly publication by Gallimard Publishing, edited by ICPHS jointly with UNESCO. The publication N°171 is entirely dedicated to the Languages and Cultures of the Silk Road and includes seven articles of well-known specialists such as Denis Sinor, Edwards Tryjarski, James Hamilton, Louis Bazin, Wolfgang-Ekkehard Scharlipp, Stephen Wurm and Nahal Tajadod. In addition, further materials are included in the annex section: a synoptic chart, some alphabets of the Silk Roads, the Empires of the Steppes, a presentation of the UNESCO project, a map and an interview on Mongolia with Pierre-Henri Giscard.

To purchase Diogenes: <http://dio.sagepub.com/>

## **INSTITUTES**

The passage of expeditions organized by UNESCO has inspired several countries to establish or make plans for research institutes or international institutes in fields closely linked to the Silk Roads:

Maritime Silk Roads Study Centre (Fuzhou, China);

Buddhist Research Centre, Pali University (Colombo, Sri Lanka);  
<http://www.pgipbs.net/>

International Institute for Central Asian Studies (Samarkand, Uzbekistan);  
<http://www.icas-unesco.org/>

International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Cultures (Ulan Bator, Mongolia);  
<http://www.nomadic.mn/>

Hirayama Institute of Silk Road Studies (Kamakura, Japan)

Nara International Centre for Silk Roads Studies, (Nara, Japan).  
<http://www.nifs.or.jp/>





# ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE *SILK ROADS* project

Total

## EXPEDITIONS

<b>1990:</b> Desert Route <i>across China</i>	<b>1990/1991:</b> Maritime Route <i>from Venice to Osaka</i>	<b>1991:</b> Steppe Route <i>across Central Asia</i>	<b>1992:</b> Nomads' Route <i>across Mongolia</i>	<b>1995:</b> <i>First stage of Buddhist Route in Nepal</i>
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In all, 227 specialists from 47 countries took part, plus local scholars and more than 100 representatives of the world's media.



*Omani royal  
yacht sailing the  
Maritime Route*

## SEMINARS

26 seminars were held during the expeditions and 17 organized either by the Project or in the framework of its programme.

27 Member States hosted the seminars at which more than 700 papers were presented.

26

## RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Petroglyphs of  
Central Asia

Epics of the  
Silk Roads

Silk Roads'  
Scripts and  
Languages

Preservation of  
Caravanserais

Space  
Archaeology  
on the  
Silk Road

5

## RESEARCH CENTRES

Set up through  
the Project or  
linked to its  
activities:

- China Maritime Silk Roads Study Centre, Fuzhou

- Buddhist Information and Research Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka

- Nara Research Centre for Silk Road Studies Japan

- International Institute for Central Asian Studies, Samarkand

- International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilisations, Ulan Bator

- International Institute for the Comparative study of Civilizations, Taxila, Pakistan (in preparation)

6

## FELLOWSHIPS

Hirayama Fellowships Programme 1990-1999: 10 awards each year for research in fields relating to Silk Road studies. To date, 90 scholars from 38 countries have received awards.

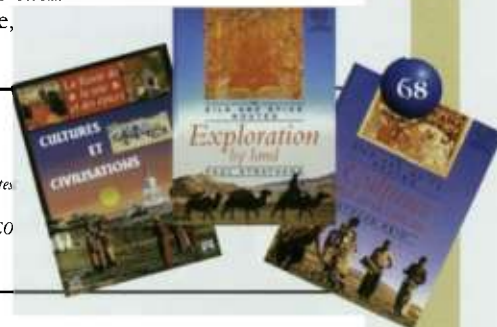
90

## PUBLICATIONS

By UNESCO or generated by the Project

UNESCO: 10  
Seminar proceedings: 19  
Associated Projects: 22  
Others: 17

*The Silk and Spice Routes  
a children's book series  
co-published by UNESCO  
and Belittha Press*



68

## AUDIO/VISUAL

**Films:** UNESCO/ARTE/NDR -  
"Die Seidenstrasse" (German)  
"Sur la piste des caravanes la soie" (French)  
UNESCO "La Chine et les Routes de la soie"  
UNESCO/ IMA - "Les Potiers de Samarcande"

**Videos:**  
UNESCO/WTN - "Travelling the Silk Road"  
UNESCO - "Central Asia and the Silk Road"

**National TV documentaries:** 41

**Exhibitions:** Staged at UNESCO and in Member States

**Image Bank:** Some 400 hours of film footage, photos and slides from the expeditions

**Radio programmes**

**Articles:** Some 400 in specialised magazines and national newspapers

**Posters**

**Wallchart** for schools

**CD** of religious music of Mongolia

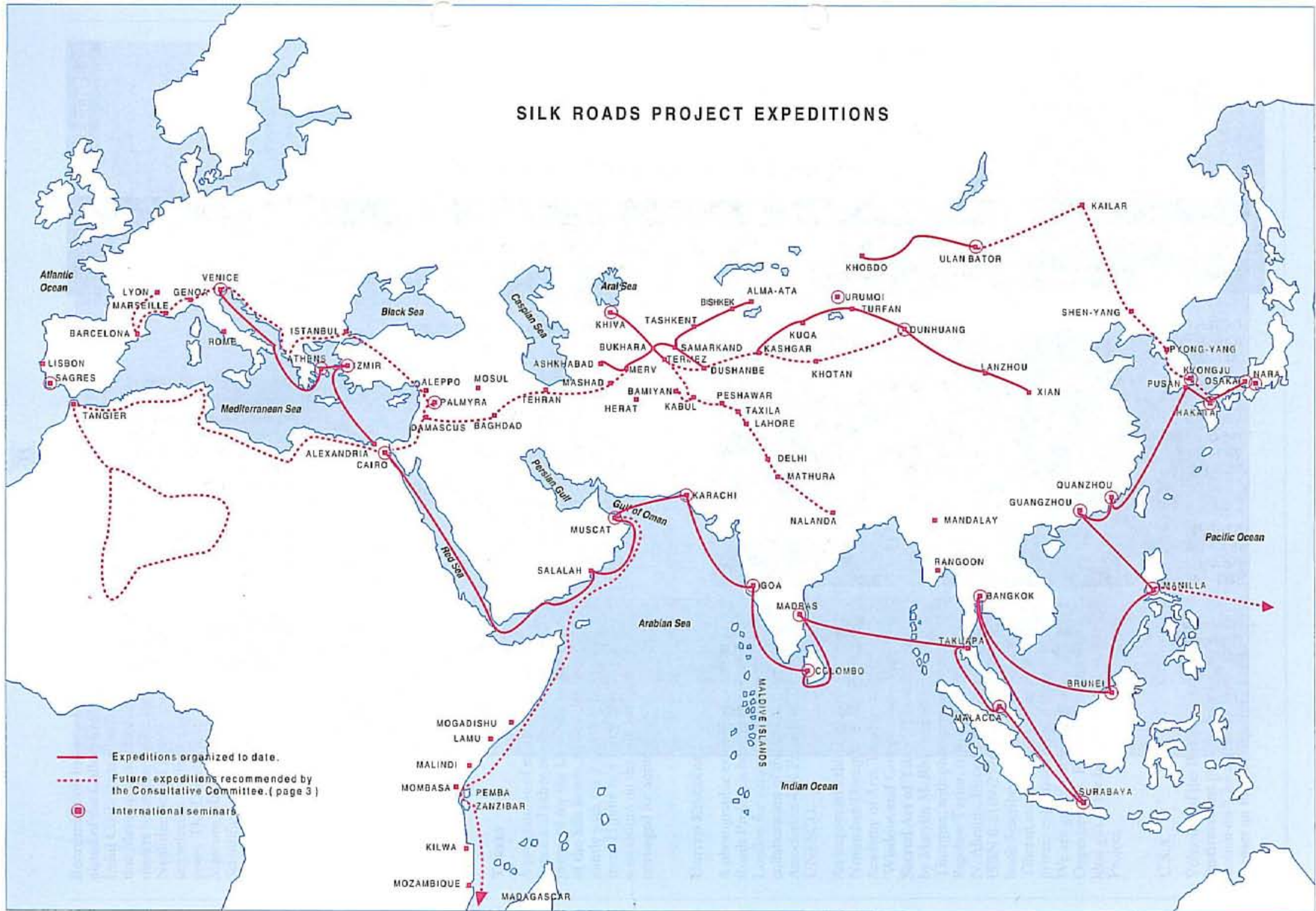
**CD ROM** on the Silk Road (in preparation)

*The Nomads' Route expedition camped for the night by Mongolia's Lake Dungan Nuur* ■

## A Silk and Spice Route Time Chart

Date	Europe	Middle East & Central Asia	China & the Far East
3000–0 BCE	<p>c.3000 Minoan civilization, the earliest in Europe, develops in Crete.</p> <p>c.1000–800 Greek speaking peoples move into Greece and begin to trade by sea throughout the Mediterranean.</p> <p>753 Rome founded.</p> <p>c.450 Athens emerges as the strongest city-state in Greece and the centre of Greek cultural development.</p> <p>336–323 Empire of Alexander the Great. Asian influences introduced into European culture.</p> <p>c.250 Roman expansion begins.</p> <p>146 Greece comes under Roman rule.</p>	<p>c.3000 Egyptian hieroglyphics in use.</p> <p>c.1500–600 Vedic Period in India, Hindu religion established.</p> <p>c.500 Buddhism founded in India.</p> <p>550–330 Achaemenid Empire of Persia. Zoroastrianism official state religion. Dynasty falls to Alexander, bringing Greek influences to Asia.</p> <p>250–139 Graeco-Bactrian kingdom of Central Asia.</p> <p>247–170 Parthians establish their Persian Empire.</p> <p>200s Buddhism begins to spread north. Gandhara art style emerges.</p>	<p>c.3000 Silk first produced in China.</p> <p>c.2205–1766 Xia Dynasty in China. First use of written symbols.</p> <p>c.1766–1027 Shang dynasty in China.</p> <p>1027–221 Zhou dynasty in China.</p> <p>221–206 Qin dynasty unites whole of China for first time.</p> <p>202 Han dynasty founded. Further develops a sophisticated civil service to administer its vast empire.</p> <p>c.100 Han empire expands in Tarim region of Central Asia. Enables Silk Route to operate right across Asia, connecting China with the West.</p>
1 CE–500	<p>117 CE Roman Empire at its largest; a major market for eastern goods.</p> <p>310–337 Reign of Emperor Constantine. Christianity adopted as official Roman religion. Constantinople replaces Rome as capital.</p> <p>395 Roman Empire splits into two.</p> <p>476 Western Roman Empire collapses.</p> <p>486 Frankish kingdom, with lands in Germany and France, formed.</p>	<p>c.29 CE. Death of Jesus Christ. Spread of Christianity begins.</p> <p>c.70–224 Kushan Empire of Central Asia. Sogdians trading on Silk Route.</p> <p>224 Sasanians seize power from Parthians. Their empire a strong cultural influence along trade routes.</p> <p>c.276 Death of Mani in Persia.</p> <p>Manichaeism spreads through Asia and Europe. Dies out by 14th Century.</p>	<p>100 CE First Buddhist conversions in China.</p> <p>220 Han Dynasty collapses. China fragments into three.</p> <p>316–598 Rival dynasties in north and south China.</p> <p>300s Secret of sericulture begins to spread west along the Silk Route.</p> <p>c.400 Chinese script introduced into Japan.</p>
501–1000	<p>610 Roman Empire now focused around eastern Mediterranean; known as Byzantine Empire.</p> <p>711 Arabs conquer Spain.</p> <p>793–94 Vikings begin to raid northern Europe.</p> <p>800 Charlemagne crowned Emperor of a new Frankish Western (later Holy Roman) Empire.</p> <p>800s Venice formed as a city-state.</p>	<p>500s Turks establish empire across northern Asia, taking in Sogdian territories. Sogdians still trade.</p> <p>622 The religion of Islam founded.</p> <p>632 Death of Muhammad. Muslim Arab expansion begins.</p> <p>651 Sasanian Persia falls to the Arabs. Islamic culture developing with Sasanian and Byzantine influences.</p> <p>mid-900s Muslim Empire fragments.</p>	<p>552 Buddhism introduced into Japan.</p> <p>589 Sui dynasty reunites China.</p> <p>618–907 Tang dynasty rules in China. For first two centuries, Buddhism flourishes and China very open to foreign cultural influences.</p> <p>794–1185 Heian Period in Japan.</p> <p>800s First porcelain made in China.</p> <p>907–76 China divided by civil wars.</p> <p>976 Song dynasty reunites China.</p>
1001–1400	<p>1001 Start of Medieval Period.</p> <p>1096–1291 European Christians undertake crusades to regain the Holy Land from its Muslim rulers.</p> <p>1100s Silk production and weaving established in Italy.</p> <p>1236 Mongols invade Russia.</p> <p>1271 Marco Polo sets out for the East.</p>	<p>1260–1368 Mongols control Central and much of Western Asia. Silk Route trade prospers under Pax Mongolica.</p> <p>1281–1326 Reign of Osman I, founder of Turkish Ottoman Empire.</p> <p>1325–48 Ibn Battuta travels throughout Asia.</p>	<p>1126 China divided into two.</p> <p>1196 Ghengis Khan unites Mongols. Expansion of Mongol Empire begins.</p> <p>1227 Death of Ghengis Khan.</p> <p>1264 Kublai Khan founds Mongol Yuan dynasty in China.</p> <p>1368 Yuan dynasty overthrown and replaced by Chinese Ming dynasty.</p>
1401–1750	<p>c.1401 Renaissance period begins.</p> <p>1453 Constantinople falls to Ottoman Turks. Byzantine Empire ends.</p> <p>1488 Bartolomeu Dias sails round the southern tip of Africa.</p> <p>1492 All Muslim power in Spain ends.</p> <p>1492 Columbus reaches America.</p> <p>1497–99 Vasco da Gama sails from Portugal via Africa to India.</p> <p>c.1600 Dutch and English begin to trade direct with India and beyond.</p> <p>c.1750 The start of the European Industrial Revolution.</p>	<p>1405 Death of Tamerlane marks final collapse of Mongol power. Silk Route no longer operates internationally.</p> <p>1500s Gradual decline of trade routes linking the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean.</p> <p>1510 Portuguese capture Goa on west coast of India.</p> <p>1526–1857 Muslim Mughal dynasty of India. Encourages European trade.</p> <p>1566 Ottoman Empire at its largest.</p> <p>1594 English first trade with India, the start of their influence there.</p>	<p>1405–33 Chinese explore the Spice Routes as far as Africa.</p> <p>c.1450 Chinese adopt an isolationist foreign policy. Discourages trade.</p> <p>1511 Portuguese take the Spice Route port of Malaka.</p> <p>1570–1637 Nagasaki, Japan, open to foreign traders. After this brief period Japan closed to foreigners until 1853.</p> <p>1596 Dutch arrive in East Indies.</p> <p>1644–1912 Qing (Manchu) dynasty rules China. Limited foreign trade until forced to open ports in 1842.</p>

# SILK ROADS PROJECT EXPEDITIONS





# The Silk and Spice Routes

 Silk Routes	 Other trade and connecting routes
 Spice Routes	 Great Wall of China
 Eurasian Steppe Route	 Incense Road



UNITED NATIONS YEAR FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE  
ANNÉE DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LE PATRIMOINE CULTUREL  
AÑO DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURAL  
سنة الأمم المتحدة للتراث الثقافي  
ГОД КУЛЬТУРНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ  
联合国文化遗产年

## **Xi'an Declaration**

**20 November, 2002**

**In commemoration of the UN Year for Cultural Heritage 2002, and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, we are assembled in Xi'an, China from 18 to 20 November, 2002, to attend the “UNESCO International Symposium on the Silk Roads 2002”, jointly organized by UNESCO, Prof. Ikuo Hirayama, as a Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO, and the National Commission for UNESCO of the People's Republic of China. This symposium, which has brought together beneficiaries of the UNESCO Hirayama Fellowship Programme and international experts in the field from 29 nations, aims to exchange and share research results in the Integral Study of the Silk Roads and to promote world peace by fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.**

**Mankind has left numerous examples of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, throughout its history. Cultural heritage represents irreplaceable properties that cannot be retrieved once they are lost. It is our strong belief that all nations and their citizens have a duty to protect and to pass on the world's cultural heritage to future generations.**

**As the 21<sup>st</sup> century dawns, this duty has become of the utmost importance and urgency. Cultural heritage is continuously threatened by destruction not only as a result of natural causes, but also as a consequence of man-made threats, such as urbanization, international conflict, civil war and terrorism. Although 33 sites have been included on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger as of June 2002, there are numerous other examples of cultural heritage that require urgent preservation and protection.**

**In order to pass on our precious cultural heritage and diversity to future generations, UNESCO has established “a Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict” and other related conventions. UNESCO has been urging the international community to ratify these conventions. It is our sincere belief that the prevalence of the spirit of these conventions is of the utmost importance at a time of peace as well as at a time of armed conflict.**

**We hereby resolve to respect the spirit of the preamble to the UNESCO constitution, which states that “it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”; to protect cultural diversity; to promote dialogue amongst civilizations and international understanding through the protection of the world's cultural heritage; and to make further efforts to consolidate world peace.**

**(Adopted by UNESCO International Symposium on the Silk Roads 2002)**

# *The Samarkand Declaration on Silk Road Tourism*

We the modern travellers along the ancient Silk Roads of Central Asia meeting at the crossroads of these historic highways in the magical city of Samarkand to revitalize this avenue of contacts between East and West through tourism,

Fully aware of the cultural interactions between the peoples of Central Asia, highlighted by the UNESCO project "Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue",

Launch our appeal to all concerned for a peaceful and fruitful re-birth of these legendary routes as one of the world's richest cultural tourism destinations, and in particular we appeal

**To governments** so that

they create and implement joint strategies and programmes to promote both international and domestic tourism, calling on the professional assistance and expertise of the World Tourism Organization, where appropriate;

they consider, as soon as possible, the adoption of facilitation measures that would reduce travel barriers and stimulate tourist flows along the Silk Roads.

**To the travel trade** so that

travel and tourism along the Silk Roads be developed respecting the established political, social, moral, and religious order;

priority be given to developing sustainable and environmentally-friendly tourism;

local populations always be the net beneficiaries of all tourism development.

**To travellers and tourists** so that

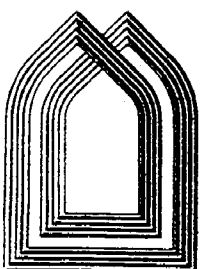
when travelling, they show the greatest understanding for the customs, beliefs, and behaviour of the host communities and the highest respect for the natural and cultural environments.

**To the host populations** so that

they increase their awareness and appreciation of the immense heritage of their countries and enjoy it by participating in tourism activities.

**To other international organizations** so that

they take note of how effective results can be obtained and common goals can be achieved through practical and unimpeded cooperation, such as that undertaken between the WTO, United Nations and UNESCO.



This declaration has been adopted on 5 October, 1994 at Samarkand, Uzbekistan, by people of goodwill convened in Registan Square by the World Tourism Organization under the inspiration of H.E. Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and H.E. Antonio Enriquez Savignac, Secretary-General of the WTO.

