

Belt and Road Initiative

The West's Exploration of the East
 In 1271 AD, Marco Polo, his father Nicholas, and his uncle Matthew set off in Venice, Italy, sailed eastward along the Mediterranean Sea, then crossed the Black Sea, and entered the Crimea and Caucasus regions. Then they passed through Persia, Afghanistan, the Pamirs, and arrived in Xinjiang, China. In 1292 A.D., Marco Polo left China and returned to Europe. He set off from Quanzhou, China through India, Persia, Turkey and the Black Sea, and finally returned to Venice, Italy. Marco Polo told a beautiful myth that astonished the Western world based on his experience traveling in China for seventeen years. "Travels of Marco Polo" is "a wonderful book in the world". It is the first book in human history that Westerners perceive the East. It opens the mysterious East door to the whole of Europe.

The Land Silk Road originated in the Western Han Dynasty (202-8 BC) when Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty sent Zhang Qian as an envoy to the Western Regions. It started from the capital Chang'an (now Xi'an), passed through Xinjiang, went to Central Asia, West Asia, and connected Mediterranean countries land passage. The main means of transportation in ancient times were camels and horsedrawn carriages. The starting point of the land Silk Road was Chang'an in the Western Han Dynasty, which is today's Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, China. The modern overland Silk Road relies on high-speed railways (the Second Eurasian Continental Bridge) to connect port cities in eastern China and European port cities.

Silk Road Economic Belt ————

Maritime Silk Road ————

WGS 1984 Web Mercator
 Pinzhe Chen 12/12/2023

1,000
 Kilometers

"Silk Road." Encyclopedia Britannica, 27 Mar. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/Silk-Road-trade-route.
 Polo, Marco. The Travels of Marco Polo. Arcturus, 2019.

The Maritime Silk Road was an ancient sea route for trade, transportation, and cultural exchanges, primarily centered on the South China Sea. Originating during the Qin and Han Dynasties (2nd century BC), it flourished until the Ming Dynasty. This route connected ancient China with various foreign countries, expanding globally during its peak. A notable event was Zheng He's seven voyages (1405-1433) during the Ming Dynasty. These voyages opened new routes, including from Europe to India, and influenced global exploration like Magellan's circumnavigation. Remarkably, the Guangzhou-Latin America Route (1575) even reached the New World, illustrating the Silk Road's extensive reach.

