

Zang Yiping

THE OPENING OF 丝绸之路的开通 THE SILK ROAD

张一平 著

ROADS TO THE WORLD



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China Intercontinental Press

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The Opening of the

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FOREWORD

It has been a long and exciting history of tremendous cultural exchange between China and other countries. In terms of culture, economy, ideology, and personnel, these exchanges between China and other countries can be dated back to the times of Qin and Han dynasties—directly or indirectly, by land or sea. The long-term and multi-faceted cultural exchange helps the world to understand more about China and the rest of the world, enriching the common wealth of mankind—both materially and spiritually.

The book series entitled *Roads to the World* offers the most splendid stories in the entire history of Sino-foreign cultural exchange. We hereby offer them to foreign students learning the Chinese language, and to foreign readers who have a keen interest in Chinese culture. These stories depict important personalities, events, and phenomena in various fields of cultural exchange between China and other nations, and among different peoples. By reading the books, you may understand China and Chinese civilization profoundly,

and the close link between Chinese civilization and other civilizations of the world. The books highlight the efforts and contributions of Chinese people and Chinese civilization in the world's cultural interchange. They reflect mankind's common spiritual pursuit and the orientation of values.

This book tells the story of Zhang Qian, an explorer in the Han Dynasty of China, who adventured to the Western Region twice and opened the worldly-renowned Silk Road. Zhang Qian was the first to open the gate to the Western Region, and the Silk Road that he pioneered ushered in a new era in economic and cultural exchanges between the East and the West. This brave and dedicated explorer and diplomat has made a permanent mark on the history of Sino-foreign cultural exchange.



中国与其他国家、民族之间的文化交流具有悠久而曲折的历史。在中国与外国之间，通过间接的和直接的、陆路的和海路的、有形的和无形的多种渠道，各种文化、经济、思想、人员方面的交流，可以上溯至秦汉时代，下及于当今社会。长期的、多方面的交流，增进了中国与其他国家、民族之间的了解，使人类的共同财富（物质的和精神的）更加丰富。

中外文化交流故事丛书（Roads to the World）的宗旨，是从中外文化交流的历史长河中，选择那些最璀璨的明珠，通过讲故事的方式，介绍给学习汉语的外国学生和对中国文化感兴趣的外国读者。这些故事描述中国与其他国家、民族在各个领域文化交流中的重要人物、事件和现象，以使外国读者能够更深入地理解中国，理解中国文明，理解中国文明与其他各文明之间的密切关系，以及中国人和中国文明在这种交流

过程中所作出的努力和贡献，并尽力彰显人类共同的精神追求与价值取向。

本书讲述的是中国汉代张骞两次出使西域，打通举世闻名的丝绸之路的历险故事。张骞第一个打开了西域的大门，由他开拓的丝绸之路，开启了东西经济文化交流的新时代。这位勇敢而富有献身精神的探险家和外交家书写了中西文化交流史上最生动传奇的一页。

I

No Spring Breeze Goes through Yumen Pass

The Origins of Silk

The process of growing mulberry trees, raising silkworms, and weaving raw silk threads into silk fabric was a great invention of the ancient Chinese people. The history of making raw silk into clothing goes back about 5,000 years. As early as the later Neolithic Age, the people of the Yellow River basin and the lower Yangtze River had already learned how to produce silk thread, ribbons, and a type of thin, tough silk material called *juan*.

There are many beautiful legends about the origin of silk that have



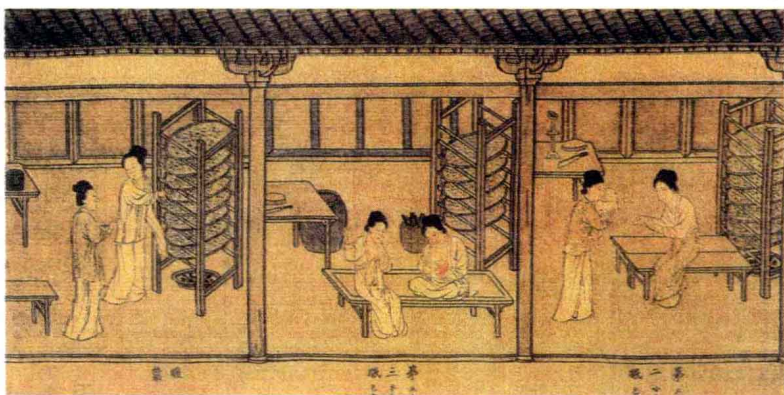
蚕母娘娘，本名嫘祖，是黄帝的妻子。她是蚕桑业的发明者，因而被奉为蚕桑业的保护神。
Mother of Silkworms, whose original name was Lei Zu, was the Yellow Emperor's wife. She was regarded as the patron saint of silkworm breeding and mulberry growing industry.

1

春风不度玉门关

丝绸的故乡

植桑、养蚕和利用蚕丝织造丝绸，是古代中国人的伟大发明。利用蚕丝作为衣料的历史，到现在大概有5000年了。早在新石器时代晚期，黄河流域和长江下游地区的人们，已经学会制造丝线、丝带和绢（一种薄而坚韧的丝织物）。



中国古代绢画——《采桑养蚕图》

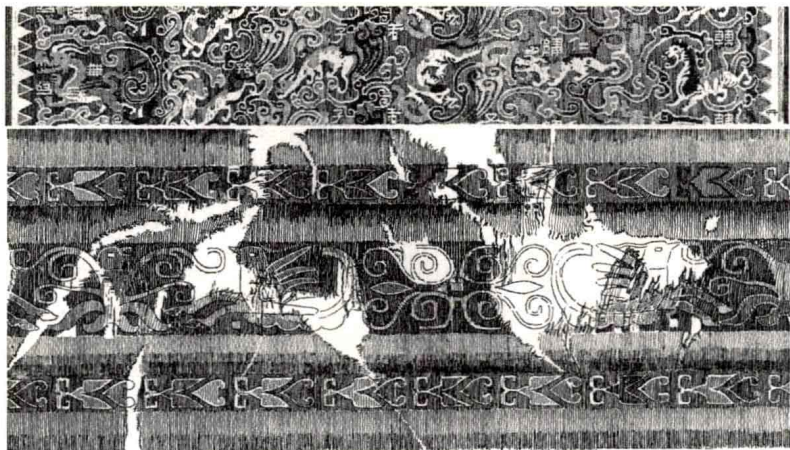
An ancient Chinese silk painting entitled "Mulberry Leaves and Silkworms."

been passed down by the Chinese people. One of them says that 4,000 years ago, when the Chinese ancestor Yellow Emperor was a tribal leader, he once held a victory celebration. During the celebration, a beautiful girl appeared out of thin air, holding bright and shining bundles of yellow and silver silk threads in her hands. To the Yellow Emperor's great joy, she presented the silk to him, and he immediately had it woven into a light and soft thin silk. From then on, the girl bearing the silk was reverently referred to as "silkworm spirit." Another well-known legend also involves the Yellow Emperor. It says that his imperial concubine Lei Zu discovered silk. It wasn't until she taught people to pull raw silk out of silkworm cocoons that the production of silk gradually began to flourish in China...

By the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), the silk industry had progressed a step further. It is said that Emperor Wu of Han, when inspecting his vast empire, used one million *pi* of silk (*pi* is a unit for measuring silk, one of which is equal to 23 meters) as rewards for his local officials. His taking that much silk all at once to give to subordinates demonstrates just how much the silk industry thrived in China in those days. Among the relics unearthed at the Han Tombs at the Mawangdui site near Changsha, there are over 100 silk goods, including a robe of 128 centimeters in length that weighs only 49 grams.

关于最早的丝，在中国民间流传着不少美丽的传说。相传在4000多年以前，中国人的祖先黄帝做部落首领的时候，有一次举办庆功会，一位美丽的姑娘从天而降，手捧着两束分别为黄色和银色的光泽鲜亮的蚕丝，将其献给了黄帝。黄帝非常高兴，立刻派人把它织成了又轻又软的细绢。后来，这位献丝的姑娘被人们尊为“蚕神”。另外一个著名的传说也与黄帝有关，说的是他的妃子嫫祖首先发现了蚕丝，并把养蚕缫丝（从蚕茧抽出蚕丝）的方法传授给人民，中国的蚕丝生产才逐渐兴盛起来……

到了汉代（前206—公元220），丝织业进一步发展。据说，汉武帝在视察他幅员辽阔的帝国时，用了



斯坦因20世纪初在丝路古道上发现的中国古代丝织物

A piece of ancient Chinese silk found by Stein on the Silk Road in early 20th century.

Another piece of silk cloth is 49 centimeters wide and 450 centimeters long, and only weighs 2.8 grams. The superb craftsmanship of the silk is astounding.

Fine silk did not just influence the lives of the ancient Chinese people; it also received great recognition across the world. Before Chinese silk emerged in Europe, clothing in Greece and Rome was primarily made of wool and flax. One can imagine people's wonder and joy upon first touching the soft, shiny, and colorful Chinese silk. When Chinese silk was first passed on to the West, people there regarded it as the finest clothing material. With a high manufacturing cost to begin with, plus a merchant monopoly and all the taxes imposed upon it as it passed through countries, by the time it was sold in Europe, silk was more expensive than gold. Even in the city of Rome, the political and economic center of Europe at the time, only a small number of aristocrats and high-class women could afford to wear silk. Therefore, wearing silk became a way to show off one's wealth and position. It is said that, in the Roman Empire, one hundred million *sestertii* (the currency unit of ancient Rome) was spent on silk every year, accounting for half of all of the total goods imported into the empire each year. Such an enormous amount of financial pressure caused Westerners in those days to exert much energy trying to come up with a method for producing silk from silkworms. However,



1972年湖南长沙马王堆1号汉墓出土的帛画，用三幅棕色细绢拼合而成。

A silk painting unearthed in 1972 from No.1 Han Dynasty Tomb of Mawangdui in Hunan Province, a combination of three pieces of brown thin silk.

100万匹（匹是纺织品的计量单位，汉代一匹约为23米）帛（丝织品）作为对地方官员的赏赐。他一下子拿出这么多丝绸来赏赐下属，可见当时中国丝绸业的繁盛。1972年在长沙马王堆汉墓出土的文物中，仅丝织品就多达100多件，其中一件素纱单衣，长128厘米，重仅49克；另一块宽49厘米、长450厘米的纱料，只有2.8克重，制丝技术之高超，令人惊叹。

精美的丝绸不仅在古代中国人的生活中产生重大影响，在国际上也获得极高的声誉。中国丝绸未传入欧洲前，希腊、罗马人做衣服的主要原料是羊毛和亚麻。不难想象他们触摸到轻柔光亮、色彩绚丽的中国丝绸时的惊奇和喜悦。在中国丝绸西传之初，它被西方人视为最上等的衣料。生产成本高

昂，再加上商人垄断经营、沿途各国关卡收取重税等原因，丝绸运到欧洲已贵比黄金。因此，即使当时作为欧洲政治、经济中心的罗马城，也只有少数贵族和上层妇女才能穿得上丝绸，并以此炫耀自己的财富和地位。据说，罗马帝国为购买丝绸，每年约支出1亿赛

their final mastery of this technique was actually the result of transmission from China, through Hotan in Xinjiang to South Asia, then Central Asia and West Asia and the various countries of Europe.

In approximately the third century BC, the Greeks were already referring to China as "Seres," meaning "the place of silk production" or "silk peddlers." In his book *Naturalis Historia*, which was a great encyclopedic collection of Roman knowledge in that day, Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) included an account of silk from Seres, which today reads as pure myth:

"The Seres are famous for the wool that is found in their forests. They collect this white down from the leaves of the trees, and then steep it in water. Finally it is the job of the women to wind the threads (coiling them into the rolls of a certain shape), and then spin them (spinning the silk thread on to a spindle with a wooden spinning wheel). It is only by such complex techniques that those distant regions can produce such dazzling and resplendent products, enabling aristocratic Roman women to flaunt themselves in public in their transparent finery."

Remnants of Chinese silk clothing were discovered on a body buried in a tomb from 500 BC in Stuttgart, Germany. On the Crimean Peninsula, more Chinese silk was unearthed. Judging by the script on the other articles found at the same site, that silk is said to date back to the



家蚕和蚕茧
Silkworms and cocoons.

斯太斯（古罗马货币单位），占当时罗马帝国每年商品进口总额的一半。巨大的财政压力使当时的西方人绞尽脑汁，想尽快掌握养蚕缫丝的方法，而他们最终掌握这项技术，还是养蚕方法通过中国新疆的和田传播到南亚、中亚、西亚和欧洲各国的结果。

大约在公元前3世纪时，希腊人已经把中国称作“赛里斯国”。“赛里斯”是蚕丝产地或贩卖丝绢人的意思。普林尼（23—79）所写的《博物志》，是集当时罗马人知识之大成的百科全书式作品，其中有关于赛里斯国和丝绸的叙述，在今天看来也只能当作天方夜谭似的神话：

“赛里斯人以他们的森林里盛产毛织品著名。他们从树叶中采取白绒丝，然后加入水，最后由妇女们承担络丝（把丝线转绕成一定形状的筒子）和纺线（用

third century BC Such articles indicate that, even before Zhang Qian (approximately 164–114 BC) reached the Western Region, silk had already been transported to the West, and the road established by the interaction and circulation of Eastern and Western people and goods was already in existence.

In Greece, a great number of carvings and pottery painted with human figures have been preserved. Due to the thin, transparent clothing depicted on these figures, some believe that Chinese silk was already the preferred clothing for those belonging to the upper echelons of Greek society in the 5th century BC. For instance, images of goddesses such as those of the Parthenon (dated from 438 to 431 BC), the Erechtheion Karyatids, and late archaic female figures (*korai*) from the Athenian Acropolis (dated from 530 to 510 BC) are all clad in soft, thin, transparent robes, all of which were made of Chinese silk. Similar silk clothing can be found in Greek paintings, particularly in the third century BC Greek painting on ivory “The Judgment of Paris,” which perfectly depicts the fine, thin clothing worn by the goddesses, the transparent silk that completely exposes the goddesses’ breasts and navels.

All of this indicates that, even prior to the opening of the Silk Road, pathways for interchange between Europe and Asia were already in existence. These pathways crossed through the wilderness and desert areas with