

SILK ROAD

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**SILK-ROAD
UNIVERSITIES
NETWORK**

COVER STORY

**How is Contemporary Climate
Change Affecting the
Landscapes and Environments
along the Silk Roads?**

INTERVIEW

**New Chairs List Priority
Initiatives for SUN**



SILKROADIA

Biannual webzine of the Silk-Road Universities Network (SUN) -
a non-governmental, non-profit international organization

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Shi-yong Chon

Looking Forward to Another Momentous Year for SUN

As we reflect on the events of the past year, 2023, it becomes apparent that the world has experienced a multitude of significant occurrences. From ongoing challenges such as polarization, demographic shifts, and environmental issues to war, disasters, and remarkable strides in scientific and industrial innovation, the global landscape has faced a myriad of complexities.

Notably, the year 2023 will be remembered for the human tragedies associated with the Israel-Hamas and extended Ukraine-Russia conflicts. The Silk-Road

Universities Network (SUN) community extends its heartfelt sympathy to the victims of these conflicts, particularly the innocent civilians, including children and women.

Furthermore, the misuse of nature by humanity has turned what was once a blessing into a curse for many inhabitants of the Earth. Last year, over 50,000 lives were lost in earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Additionally, escalating climate change made 2023 the warmest year on record. The world grappled with unprecedented challenges such as forest fires, floods, and heatwaves, emphasizing the urgent need for global attention to environmental issues.

In this issue, we shine a spotlight on the impact of contemporary climate change on the Silk Roads. Professor Jeffrey S. Owen, from the Department of Environmental Science at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea, delves into the subject with his cover story titled, “How is Contemporary Climate Change Affecting the Landscapes and Environments on the Silk Roads?”

Prof. Owen employs statistical data to underscore how climate change-in-

duced floods, erosion, and landslides pose threats to the cultural heritage and nature along the ancient Silk Roads. He particularly focuses on three key locations: Tabriz in present-day Iran, Kashgar in China's Xinjiang province, and Dunhuang in China's Gansu province.

The alarming revelation is that only a fraction of the identified valuable cultural properties along the Silk Roads are adequately monitored and managed concerning climate change impacts.

We hope that this SILKROADIA cover story rekindles awareness within the Silk-Road Universities Network (SUN) community regarding the importance of concerted international efforts to address climate change and safeguard the heritage and nature along the Silk Roads. There are compelling reasons for SUN to assume a leading role in this crucial endeavor.

This issue also features an interview with the new SUN leaders—Professor Karim Chelli, President and Vice-Chancellor of the Canadian University Dubai, who assumed the SUN chairmanship in February, and Professor Tiziana Lippiello, President of Ca 'Foscari University of

Venice in Italy, elected as SUN Vice-Chair. Explore the Interview Section to learn about SUN's future direction as it enters its ninth year since its establishment in Gyeongju, South Korea, in 2015.

As readers peruse the SUN News Section, they will discover that SUN plans significant events and programs in 2024 as well. Firstly, the next General Assembly and the International Conference of the International Association for Silk Road Studies will be jointly hosted by the University of Naples L'Orientale and SUN in Naples, Italy, in November 2024. Three major student contests in writing, photography, and speech-debate are scheduled before the GA. SUN and Ca'Foscari University of Venice will co-host events commemorating the 700th year after the death of Marco Polo.

SILKROADIA eagerly anticipates collaborating with all members of the SUN community in the coming year for another successful chapter in the network's journey. Wishing each of you a joyous and prosperous New Year.

Best regards,



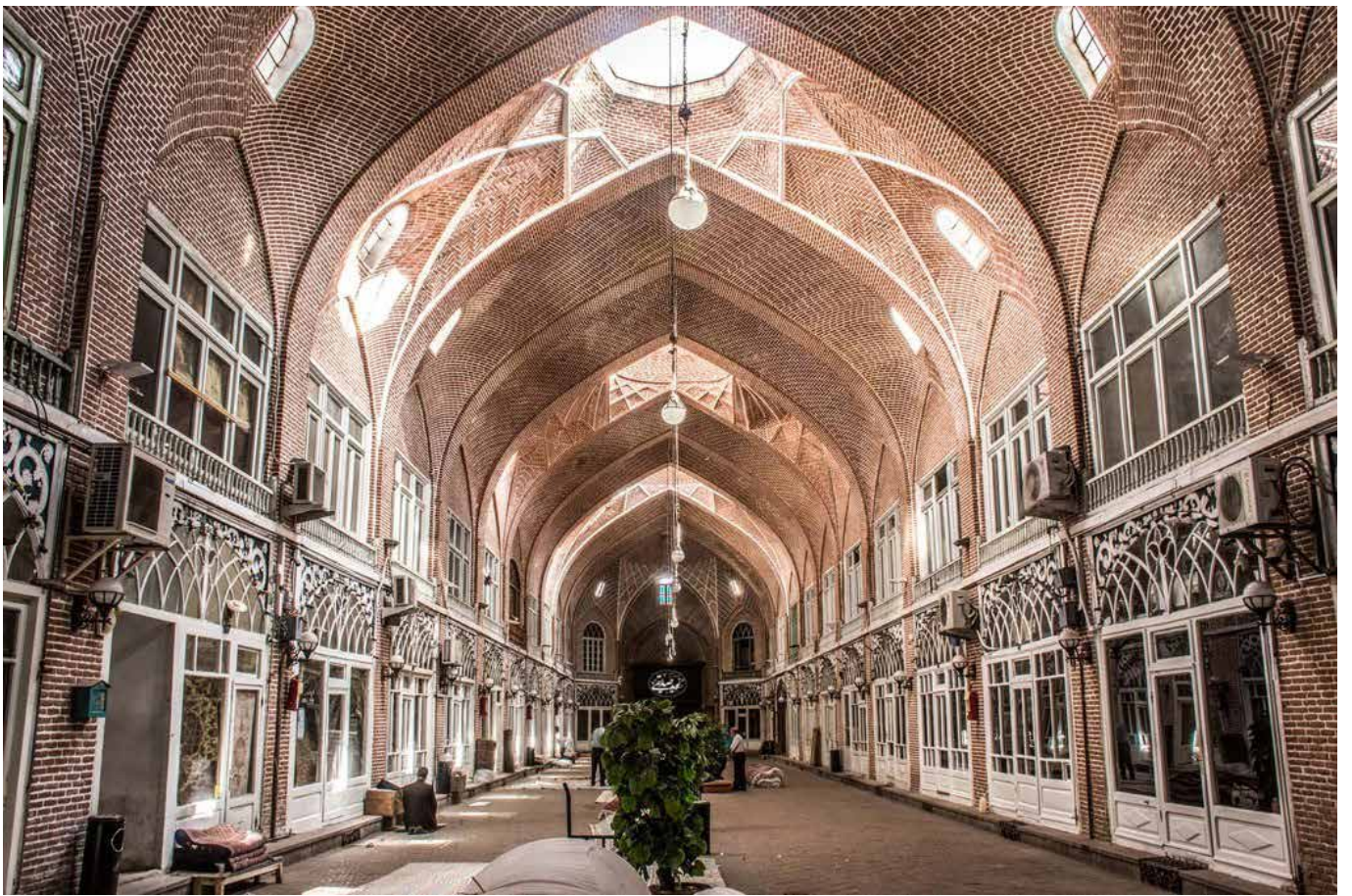
HOW IS CONTEMPORARY CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTING THE LANDSCAPES AND ENVIRONMENTS ALONG THE SILK ROADS?



Jeffrey S. Owen

Many readers are aware that the ancient network of trade routes that we often refer to as the Silk Roads still has significance today as related to multinational trade and the global economy, international travel and ecotourism, international relations and cultural exchanges, and probably many additional reasons. The Silk Roads have been within the news headlines in recent years because of the major international long-term development effort by China known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The ancient Silk Roads traversed a huge area of the Eurasian continent and even extended to the Pacific Ocean, Arabian Peninsula, and northern Africa. The regions that the Silk Roads crossed covered such a wide range of climate types and physical landscapes that exhaustive studies would be needed to characterize the impacts of climate change over such a large area.

In this article, I'd like to show just a few examples of locations along the Silk Roads in different climate zones and introduce some of the impacts of ongoing climate change in those places. Globally,



View within the Tabriz Historic Bazaar in Tabriz, Iran.

Source: Wikipedia

the impacts of climate change are becoming more apparent. For example, the most recent nine years have been the warmest ever measured. The increasing emissions of greenhouse gases and the resulting increased concentrations in the atmosphere are known to be causing the higher temperatures measured at Earth's surface and the upper depths of our global oceans. At smaller, more local scales, scientists still face some uncertainty about the exact impacts. With our focus today on the Silk Roads, the locations that I want to highlight here are, from west to east: Tabriz, in present day Iran; Kashgar, in China's Xinjiang province; and Dunhuang, in China's Gansu province.

TABRIZ, IRAN

Tabriz is the capital of East Azerbaijan province in northwest Iran. The region around Tabriz (latitude 38° 4' 53" N; longitude 46° 18' 2" E) is classified as having a cold temperate semi-arid climate with mean annual precipitation of about 289 mm. In ancient times, Tabriz was an important commercial, intellectual, and artistic center. Tabriz is the site of a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex. Even though much more research is needed on climate change impacts in Iran, scientists expect that ongoing and future climate impacts will be severe. This region is highly likely to experience severe impacts from heatwaves and

Urmia Lake, Tabriz, Iran

Source: Unsplash, by OMID



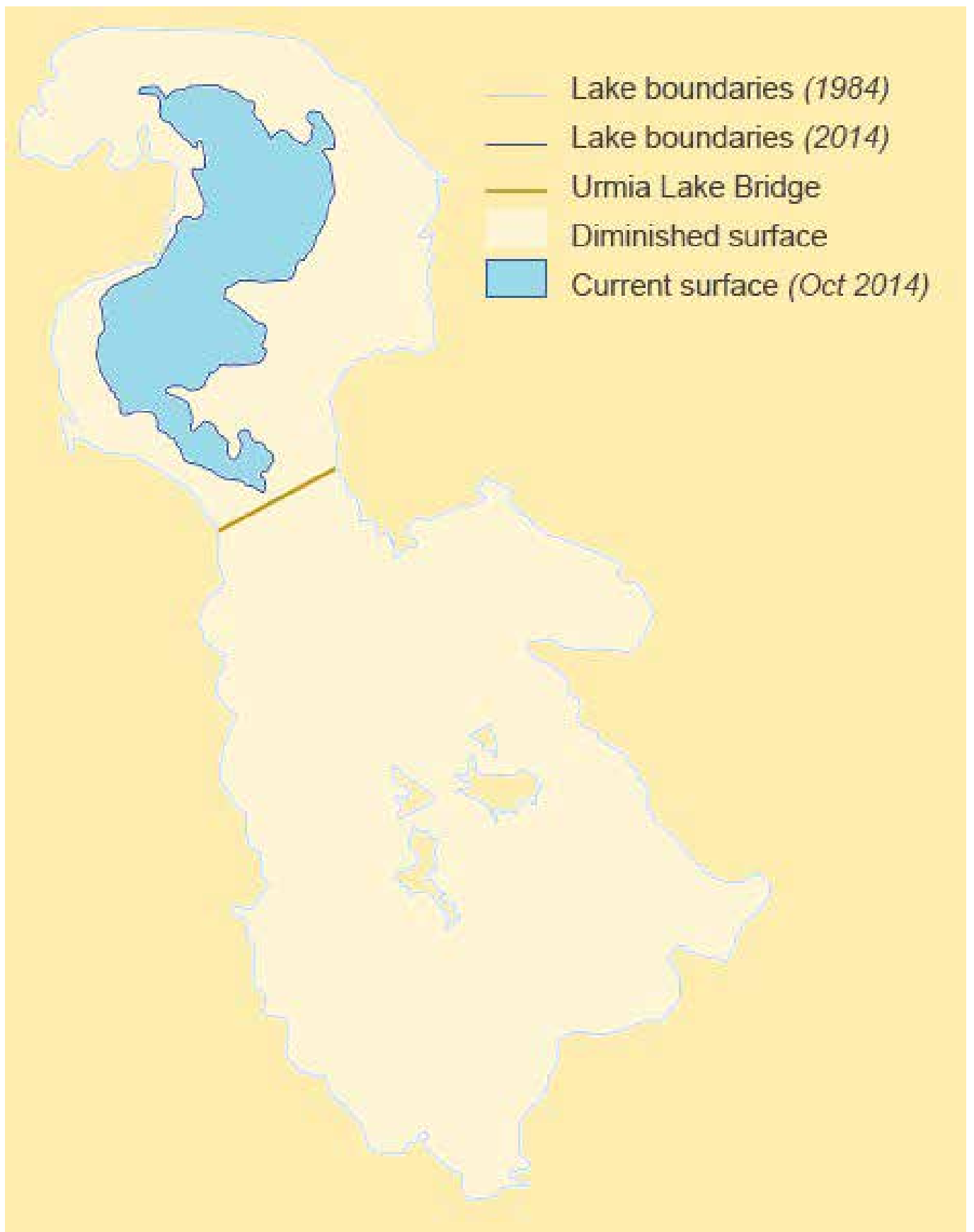


Illustration shows Urmia Lake's boundaries by year, Tabriz, Iran
Source: Wikipedia

longer time periods with dry conditions, longer time periods with wet conditions, and higher frequency of floods. Together, these findings from climate modeling studies such as the findings in Scientific Reports by Ashraf Vaghefi et al. (2018) might appear to be contradictory, but in fact are consistent with what climate scientists

know as the impact of increased air temperature and increased ability of warmer air to hold more moisture. Therefore, rainstorms characterized by short duration but high intensity rainfall can cause increased frequency of flooding. This region is already suffering from a lack of adequate groundwater supply in some locations and the dramatic loss of lake water surface area in Lake Urmia, a saline (salty) lake seen in the image below.

KASHGAR, CHINA

Kashgar is one of the westernmost cities in China (latitude 39° 28 '05" N; longitude 75° 59' 38" E). Located in the Tarim Basin, the climate in this region varies because of changes in elevation, but can be classified as arid continental with mean annual precipitation less than 200 mm. A comprehensive review by Yao et al. (2022) in the journal *Earth Science Reviews* showed that this region, in a similar way to the pattern measured around Tabriz, is also experi-



Mountains along the Tarim Basin region, Kashgar, China

Source: Unsplash

encing significant warming and intensification of the cycling of water and climate extremes. However, in contrast to what is happening to Lake Urmia, some lakes in the Tarim Basin have shown an increase in lake area because of increased precipitation and increased river runoff. The increase in inflowing water to lakes reflects rising rates of glacier melting in the region, as well as the increase in precipitation.



The Afaq Khoja Mausoleum in Kashgar, Xinjiang province, built about 1640.

Source: Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license



Silk painting from Dunhuang (10th century) now in the Guimet Museum, Paris.

Source: Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license

DUNHUANG, CHINA

Dunhuang (latitude 40° 08' 28" N; longitude 94° 39' 50" E) is the well-known site of ancient crossroads on the Silk Roads. Located near Dunhuang are Mogao Grottoes and Crescent Lake. Understanding the impacts of ongoing and future climate change on the cultural treasures in this area is of

great importance because of the significance of Buddhist art found there. The climate in this region is classified as cool-arid with mean annual precipitation as little as 39 mm. A study carried out by Greenpeace East Asia showed that while the number of days with rainfall has decreased, the total rainfall in the region has increased. That means that the rainfall intensity or extreme rainfall has increased.

Despite the dry climate, in 2012 extreme rainfall caused flash floods and mudslides at Mogao Grottoes, with rainfall seeping into some of the caves. In a press release, a senior researcher at Greenpeace East Asia's office in Beijing said "Increased bouts of rainfall in the desert pose an acute risk. Spikes in humidity, flash floods, and cave ins are already happening." The report noted that Dunhuang's cave paintings are especially at risk when the humidity in the atmosphere is near 60-65%. Within this range of humidity, salt crystals can accumulate on the surface of a fresco, leading to layers of pigment flaking and breaking away from the surface of a wall.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON SILK ROAD SITES

These examples illustrate some of the ways that climate change is affecting environments along the Silk Roads, and these effects are taking place as we communicate now. Near the time I was searching for materials to help prepare for this article, yet another new report was published that is directly relevant to today's topic. The article appeared in the journal Sustainability, and it lists a large number of UNESCO World Heritage sites that have associated surveys or studies mentioning the impacts of climate change related hazards such as floods, erosion, and landslides (Nguyen

Urmia Lake, Tabriz, Iran

Source: unsplash, by Aliasghar Fotovat



and Baker, 2023). The data used in the article are from the UNESCO State of Conservation Information System, known as SoC reports. The work of Nguyen and Baker show that only a small portion of identified valuable cultural properties are being properly monitored and managed as related to climate change impacts. Much work is needed to inventory, develop management plans and follow through by carrying out proper protective and management efforts on the impacts of climate change on these and other valuable cultural sites.

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Jeffrey S. Owen is an associate professor in the Department of Environmental Science at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea. His research areas include ecology, watershed studies, forestry, freshwater science with an emphasis on East Asia.



INTERVIEW

New Chairs List Priority Initiatives for SUN

Dr. Karim Chelli of CUD and
Dr. Tiziana Lippiello of
Ca' Foscari University share
thoughts and insights for
leading SUN



Amali Ranavi Thanthrige

The Silk-Road Universities elected new leaders in the eighth General Assembly in Dubai last February: Dr. Karim Chelli, President of the Canadian University Dubai and Dr. Tiziana Lippiello, Rector of Ca 'Foscari University of Venice, were elected Chair and Vice Chair of SUN, respectively. It was the first time that SUN has changed its chairmanship, which had been taken by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, Korea, when the Network was launched in 2015. It also marked the first time that SUN has named a vice-chair, who is to take over the chairmanship in due time.

SILKROADIA asked Dr. Chelli and Dr. Lippiello about their thoughts and plans for leading the organization for the coming five years, which could be crucial in its development. Following are full texts of the interview.

SILKROADIA: Dr. Chelli, could you please explain the relationship between CUD and SUN, as well as your feelings about becoming SUN's chair?

A: The Arabian Peninsula, especially Dubai with its strategic geographical location and historical seaports, has always been a crucial bridge in the East-West cultural and trade exchange. The local history of craftsmanship and trade has woven a tapestry of diverse communities, traditions, and connections – capturing the essence that the Silk Roads represent and reflecting the vision that SUN embodies. As the new chair of SUN, I'm deeply honored to be at the forefront of this cultural exchange. Interacting with individuals from varied cultures and witnessing the depth they bring to the global community, has been incredibly enriching both personally and professionally. It's a privilege that I cherish deeply, and it reinforces my commitment to fostering this spirit of diversity and collaboration.

SILKROADIA: The SUN chairmanship has a five-year term. What will you prioritize during this period?

A: Over the next five years, I envision SUN focusing on three main axes:

Student Engagement - Enhancing student exchange programs and contests will be crucial. I would like to see increased opportunities for our students to engage internationally, fostering an environment where they can share ideas, experience different cultures, and form lasting networks. This exposure is invaluable in developing well-rounded, globally aware citizens.

Faculty collaboration - Another focus will be on promoting faculty collaboration, exchange, and resource sharing. I see great value in encouraging our faculty to engage in joint research projects, and in facilitating their mobility through sabbaticals or temporary postings. This not only enriches the academic environment but also promotes cross-cultural academic dialogue.

Executive platforms - In today's interconnected world, sharing experiences and expertise among managers is vital. SUN provides an ideal platform for this exchange, where we can work together on initiatives like sustainability for a better world. This

collaboration will be instrumental in shaping the future of higher education and global community engagement.

SILKROADIA: What challenges do you anticipate as SUN chair, and how do you plan to overcome them?

A: Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, which halted physical mobility and interactions, we now face the challenge of reinvigorating these global connections. While virtual solutions have maintained our contacts, they cannot fully replace the richness of in-person interactions. I see this as a phase of opportunity to rebuild and strengthen our networks even further. Another challenge is the busy academic calendar, which limits the time available for all the events and interactions we envision. I anticipate leveraging AI, micro-credentials, and hybrid learning models to optimize our time and resources. These technologies will enable us to facilitate more academic collaborations, cultural exchanges, and enriching the experiences of our students and faculty.

SILKROADIA: What initiatives do you believe SUN could promote in the fields of academia, culture, and education?

A: I believe that SUN can play a significant role in advancing initiatives that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance:

- **Quality Education** - Promoting inclusive and equitable education across SUN's network, enhancing academic standards and access for all.
- **Good Health & Wellbeing** - Collaborative health and wellbeing research initiatives can have far-reaching impacts on communities along the Silk Road.
- **Clean Water & Affordable Energy** - Projects focusing on sustainable water and energy solutions are essential for our regions' development.
- **Sustainable Cities & Communities** - Fostering research and initiatives that contribute to building resilient and sustainable urban environments.
- **Climate Action** - Collective action on

climate change is imperative, and SUN can play a pivotal role in facilitating this through academic and cultural initiatives.

These goals and all 17 UN SDGs, crucial for the betterment of our world, are subjects of ongoing research and expertise within our universities. Collaborations between researchers, faculty, and students

Team Work

Image credits: President's Office, Canadian University Dubai



on these domains will be instrumental in driving sustainable change. Each of these initiatives inherently spans across the realms of academia, culture, and education, ensuring a comprehensive approach that nurtures knowledge, respects cultural heritage, and builds educational capacities.

SILKROADIA: How do you intend to collaborate with Ca ‘Foscari University of Venice as SUN vice-chair?

A: The collaboration between Canadian University Dubai and Ca ‘Foscari University of Venice, particularly under the guidance of Professor Tiziana Lippiello, has opened new frontiers for academic and cultural exchange. Our initial step in signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2020, was a landmark moment representing our shared commitment to fostering a rich educational and research environment. While our agreement was formalized during Dubai EXPO 2020, the scope of our collaboration extends beyond this one event. We’re focusing on areas

that resonate with the ethos of both universities, such as advancing environmental studies, particularly in urban water management, and exploring new dimensions in arts and humanities. These areas are not just academic interests but are integral to understanding and addressing the challenges facing our global community.

Our partnership aims to create novel platforms for student and faculty engagement, focusing on interdisciplinary research and knowledge transfer. One of the key ambitions of this collaboration is to develop initiatives that not only enrich academic discourse but also contribute to sustainable development and community welfare. This involves creating opportunities for joint research projects, student exchange programs, and collaborative seminars and workshops, all aimed at broadening the horizons of our academic communities.

Furthermore, our collaboration is set to embrace the challenges of the modern educational landscape, exploring innovative approaches to learning and research. We

envision a partnership that is dynamic and adaptable, capable of contributing significantly to the academic and cultural fabric of the Silk-Road Universities Network.

By bringing together the strengths and expertise of both Canadian University Dubai and Ca ‘Foscari University of Venice, we are not only honoring our commitment to the SUN but also paving the way for a future where education transcends geographical boundaries and fosters a global community of learners and leaders.

SILKROADIA: Finally, what message would you like to convey to SUN member universities as the new chair?

A: As SUN’s new chair, my message to all member universities is the steadfast commitment to a “student-first” approach. Students are the reason we are here – they are the driving force behind our daily efforts. I encourage students to actively engage in clubs and councils, to grasp the exceptional opportunities that SUN offers for international and cultural exchange. It’s essential that we channel our resources

and support effectively to foster cross-cultural interactions, allowing students from various cities and universities to meet, exchange, and discover. These interactions are not just activities, they are the hallmarks and added value that distinguish our students, giving them a multidimensional advantage—an edge gained through exposure to new knowledge and perspectives. Through these efforts, we aspire to cultivate a generation equipped to make a meaningful difference in the world. Our dedication to a student-first approach is a promise to prioritize the growth and potential of every student we serve, ensuring their experience leaves a lasting impact on their personal and professional lives.

Tiziana Lippiello, president of Ca 'Foscari University of Venice and SUN Vice Chair, stresses SUN's role in promoting scientific research and innovative, merit-based scholarships for students.

***SILKROADIA:* Please tell us about the Ca'Foscari University of Venice and its relationship with SUN.**

A: As Rector of an Italian public university and as a university in a city which has always been a bridge to the world, Venice, the city of Marco Polo, I would like to share and discuss our history, our values, our mission and projects, our dialogue. Today we need to know each other deeply, to respect and share our cultures, values, ideals. To learn from each other and respect others through students' exchange programs, double and joint degrees and common research projects and to respect must be one of our main goal

I would also like to share with all members of SUN our Strategic Plan (https://www.unive.it/pag/fileadmin/user_upload/ateneo/chi-siamo/piano_strategico_2026_170x240_eng_web.pdf). I hope we can collaborate on some of the following flagships:

- Flagship 1: Ca' Foscari for Venice: a big open workshop to work on future challenges
- Flagship 2: Ca' Foscari: cultural engine for the city of Venice
- Flagship 3: Becoming a scientific

landmark for sustainability

- Flagship 4: Ca' Foscari training should become a reference point to develop critical competencies capable of affecting the future and responding to its challenges
- Flagship 5: A city for Ca' Foscari students; Ca' Foscari students for the city
- Flagship 6: Streamlined Organisation: new organisational models and the digital challenge: being an example of innovation for Public Administrations
- Flagship 7: Inclusion, social justice, gender equality

SILKROADIA: As the vice chair, what roles do you think can your university do during the five-year term of office? What could be your relationship with the Chair, Dr. Chelli of Canadian University?

A: Canadian University Dubai is our partner since 2020; we signed an MOU to cultivate cultural and scientific collaboration, and to broaden the educational experiences that the two institutions offer to their

students, faculty, and administrative staff.

The agreement paves the way for CUD and Ca' Foscari to explore a wide range of opportunities for cooperation in academic and research activities. The two universities will discuss their ongoing priorities and initiatives, with a view to developing new collaborations in areas such as student mobility, joint programs, knowledge transfer, and research publications.

The MOU was formalized with an official signing ceremony during a recent showcasing event hosted in the Italy Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. The event, entitled 'Veneto Beyond the Future', brought together UAE and Italian institutions to share the future strategy and opportunities that the Italian region has to offer. In addition to cooperation around trade and business, the showcase also focused on the future opportunities for collaboration in education, with a speech from me as Rector of Ca' Foscari University and President of the Veneto Universities Foundation preceding the signing of the MOU.

In attendance to sign the agreement on behalf of CUD was University President

and Vice Chancellor, Prof. Karim Chelli, who said, “This partnership brings a new dimension to our international collaborations as we join forces with this renowned and historied Italian institution to explore a wide range of avenues for collaboration. With it come many exciting new opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff to encounter unique global experiences in higher education.”

Based in Venice, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice dates back over 150 years and was the first Italian institution to conduct advanced education in Business and Economics, together with the study of the languages and cultures of the world, Computer and Environmental Sciences, Nanotechnologies, World Humanities and Cultural Heritage, World Languages and Linguistics. CUD and Ca’ Foscari shares connections and collaborations with the Silk Road Universities Network (SUN), and this new bilateral agreement aims to strengthen and develop further the existing ties.

SILKROADIA: Could you please tell me

about your personal life and career?

A: I studied at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where I attended courses in Asian Studies (with a focus in Chinese studies) at the Department of Asian and North African Studies. During my studies at Ca' Foscari University I spent three months at the Beijing University of Languages, and later, at Fudan University at Shanghai.

After my graduation at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, I spent 4 years at Leiden University in the Netherlands, where I have obtained my Ph.D. I studied with Prof. Erik Zürcher and Prof. Mansvelt Beck, my promoter and co-promoter respectively. I learned a lot from them and will always cherish their memory in my heart.

After obtaining my Ph.D. in Leiden I returned to Italy where I started my career as Researcher at the University of Trieste and later as Professor of Classical Chinese, Religion and Philosophy of China at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. I became Head of the Department of Asian and North African Studies (2011-2014), then

Vice Rector for International Relations at Ca' Foscari University of Venice (2014-2020) and Rector of Ca' Foscari University since 2020. In 2021 Ca' Foscari joined the European Alliance EUTOPIA (<https://eutopia-university.eu/english-version/about-us/members>).

In 2022, I was elected President of EUTOPIA. Eutopia is a challenge for European researchers and students but also for researchers and students from all over the world. We share our European values, our mission, our teaching and research programs with Silk Road Universities network. You are welcome to visit us!

SILKROADIA: Finally, what do you think would be the challenges and opportunities for SUN in the coming five years? Would like to have a message to SUN member universities in this regard?

A: Our special partnership involves students and professors across the SUN universities working together and publishing together. Building on our existing collaborations through SUN, our aim is to involve

young people from all SUN in addressing the global challenges of the day, such as the environment and innovation.

Amali Ranavi Thanthrige is working on her Master's in International and European Union Relations at Linköping University, Sweden. She also serves as an editorial assistant of SILKROADIA.

A Tapestry Woven from Art and Anomie: The Legacy of Filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui



Cameron Shirvani Steiner

“**R**espected [culture] minister, listen to me, I can’t take it anymore. I want to fight [back]. Kill me, do whatever you want with me...destroy me, but I want my right.”

On March 6, 2022, Dariush Mehrjui appeared to have reached his breaking point. The pioneer Iranian New Wave director, no stranger to state censorship, had recently been informed by Iran’s Culture Ministry that the permit for his next film, “La Minor” (“A Minor” 2022), had expired, and that the film would not premiere on Norouz (Persian New Year) as planned

(Esfandiari, 2022). Mehrjui responded in a video posted on Twitter – with the screening permit in his hand – chastising the Ministry for issuing judgments “like a ghost behind the scenes,” and announcing that he would continue to protest “until I get my right.” He ended the video with a daring provocation, declaring he could no longer bear the weight of official censorship and that he would fight back until the state “[kills] me.” He seemed to have got his wish; on October 15, 2023, Mehrjui, along with his wife, actress Vahideh Mohammadifar, were fatally stabbed at their residence in the city of Karaj. Iranian police have arrested 10 suspects, with no stated motive at the writing of this article; many believe the Iranian government itself to be involved (Mouriquand, 2023).

The news of Dariush Mehrjui’s passing in May 2023 cast a long shadow across Iranian cinema and the hearts of cinephiles worldwide. Though the maestro himself may be gone, the echo of his groundbreaking films continues to reverberate across generations, each frame a testament to his unflinching artistic vision and unwavering

social conscience. From the stark social realism of his breakout film, “The Cow” (Gav, 1969), to his introspective surrealism, Mehrjui’s cinematic tapestry mirrored the tumultuous transformations of Iran, capturing the essence of everyday struggles and grappling with universal questions of human existence. His legacy extends far beyond national borders, his films sparking dialogues about political oppression, societal anxieties, and the unyielding human spirit in audiences beyond Iran’s borders (Hudson, 2023). Though the curtain has closed on a chapter of Iranian cinema, Dariush Mehrjui’s vision lives on, a beacon of artistic defiance and poignant storytelling, forever illuminating the human journey.

Early Life and Artistic Inspirations

The early life of Dariush Mehrjui, Iranian cinema’s master of sociopolitical critique, unfolded like a prelude to his future cinematic landscapes. Born in 1939 into an art-loving family in Tehran, his formative years were a tapestry woven from diverse threads. Music and painting, particularly

playing the santoor and piano, fueled his artistic sensibilities. This early immersion in creative expression laid the groundwork for his future visual storytelling.

Mehrjui's adolescence was further shaped by a profound spiritual exploration, initially nurtured by his devout Muslim grandmother. However, as critical thinking blossomed, this religious fervor transitioned into a passionate pursuit of philosophy, questioning faith and seeking deeper intellectual meaning (Hudson, 2023). This internal journey mirrored the turbulent political climate of post-war Iran, planting the seeds for his future artistic engagement with sociopolitical themes.

Cinema, however, emerged as his true calling. At 17, captivated by Vittorio De Sica's "Bicycle Thieves," Mehrjui delved into the world of film, his fascination fueled by a hunger to understand the power of storytelling to capture the human condition. This love affair with cinema led him to the United States, where he enrolled at UCLA. Though disillusioned by the technical focus of the film department, he found solace in the teachings of Jean Renoir, honing

his skills in directing actors and developing his signature blend of realism and theatrical flourishes (Horak, 2016).

Mehrjui's artistic inspirations during this period transcended geographical boundaries. Western literary giants like Ibsen and Chekhov resonated deeply with his penchant for exploring the complexities of human relationships and the anxieties of modern life. Simultaneously, Iranian authors like Gholamhosein Saedi and Goli Taraghi ignited his passion for storytelling rooted in his own cultural context, paving the way for his later adaptations of their works.

Returning to Iran, Mehrjui found himself amidst a burgeoning artistic movement. The 1960s and 70s saw the rise of the Iranian New Wave, a group of filmmakers determined to defy censorship and engage with the social and political realities of their time. Within this fertile ground, Mehrjui blossomed. His second film, "The Cow," a tragicomic tale of a butcher driven mad by the loss of his bovine companion, became the movement's defining masterpiece. It was a film that dared to grapple

with poverty, alienation, and the absurdity of a society teetering on the brink of change (Hudson, 2023).

Mehrjui's Evolving Social Commentary and the Censor's Needle

Dariush Mehrjui, the titan of Iranian cinema, has wielded his camera like a scalpel, dissecting the underbelly of society with unflinching precision. His films, pulsating with social commentary, have evolved through shifting political landscapes, adapting to the prickling needle of censorship both before and after the 1979 revolution. Understanding Mehrjui's artistry necessitates deciphering the threads of social critique woven into his narratives, tracing their transformation alongside the changing tides of Iranian history.

In the pre-revolution era, Mehrjui grappled head-on with the Shah's authoritarian regime. Films like "Postchi" ("The Postman," 1971) and "Mr. Naive" ("Āghā-ye Hālū," 1971) were searing indictments of political repression and intellectual disillusionment. He wielded scathing wit and surreal imagery to expose the cracks in the

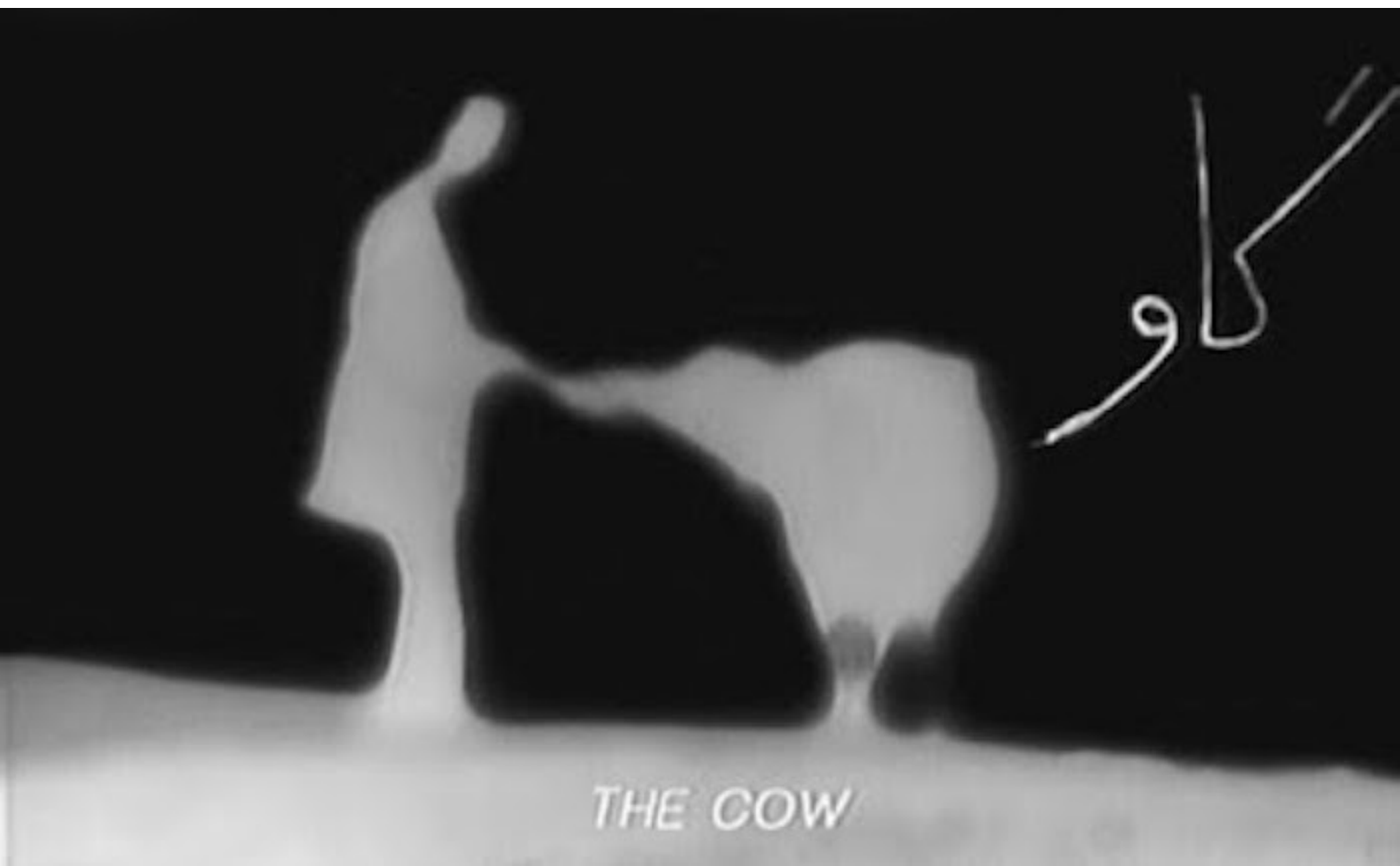


Dariush Mehrjui's social media complaint to the Iranian Cultural Ministry: "I can't take it anymore... Kill me!" (Screen capture)

carefully constructed façade of modern Iran.

Censorship, however, was ever-present, forcing Mehrjui to hone his artistry as a weaver of subtext. As in his first masterpiece, "The Cow," Mehrjui's films implied stark social commentary through symbolism and minimalist aesthetics. This mastery of allegory became a hallmark of Mehrjui's style, allowing him to critique societal ills while navigating the censor's watchful eye.

The revolution ushered in a new era of constraints, demanding even greater finesse in weaving dissent. Overt political allegories gave way to introspective examinations of the human condition under fun-



"The Cow," 1969. Promotional image.

damentalist rule. His 1975 film "Dayereh Mina" ("The Cycle") presaged this theme, so that what is ostensibly a simple coming-of-age story instead subtly critiqued gender roles and religious dogma through the protagonist's journey. Similarly, "Pari" (1995), a fantastical fable, offered veiled commentaries on the stifling conformity imposed by the new social order.

Humor, often dark and ironic, became another weapon in Mehrjui's arsenal. His films could blend quirky comedy with poignant exploration of marital dynamics, providing a veiled critique of gender dynamics within the institution of marriage.

Yet, when deemed necessary, Mehrjui still dared to confront reality head-on. “Leila” (1996), the heartbreaking story of a young woman forced into unwanted marriage, sparked controversy for its unflinching portrayal of domestic violence and female subjugation, forcing audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about Iranian society (Jafar Panahi, in a 2020 interview, lauded the film’s “courageous” exploration of “taboo subjects”).

Through these diverse approaches, Mehrjui maintained his unwavering commitment to social commentary. He adapted his style like a chameleon, navigating the shifting sands of censorship while never losing sight of his artistic truth. His post-revolution films, layered with allegory and imbued with subtle nuances, became testaments to the human spirit’s capacity for resistance.

You Can Destroy an Artist; You Cannot Destroy an Idea

The tapestry woven by Mehrjui’s films extends far beyond his lifetime, offering a vibrant legacy that continues to inspire and

empower artists grappling with repression even today. His unflinching honesty in the face of censorship, his willingness to dissect societal anxieties, and his masterful blend of realism and surrealism provide a blueprint for resistance through art (Hudson, 2023).

For artists in countries where creative expression is stifled, Mehrjui's work serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating the transformative power of art to shed light on injustice and ignite social dialogue. His films offer an at times subtle critique of patriarchal control, such as the exploration of female agency within societal constraints in "Leila" (1996), providing tools and strategies for navigating the delicate dance between artistic expression and political subversion.

Moreover, Mehrjui's legacy transcends national borders, offering a universal language of artistic defiance that resonates with artists facing repression anywhere in the world. His masterful portrayal of the human condition under duress, the struggles against alienation and absurdity, and the enduring spirit of hope in the face

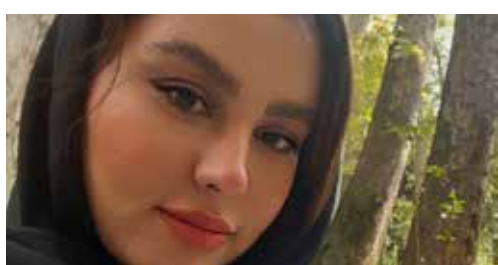
of darkness resonates with artists everywhere who dare to challenge the status quo through their work.

As we mourn his passing, Dariush Mehrjui's cinematic legacy is not merely a collection of films but a living testament to the power of art to illuminate the cracks in society, to challenge authority, and to offer solace and solidarity to those struggling in the shadows. For artists facing repression today, his work stands as a beacon of courage, a call to action, and a reminder that the human spirit's capacity for creative expression can never be truly silenced.

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Zin al-Din Caravanserai: A 400-Year-Old Oasis in the Heart of Yazd Desert, Iran

“Circular Marvel Resembling a Spacecraft”



Seyedeh Fatemeh Ansari

Ribat Zin-al Din Caravanserai located in the heart of Yazd Deswrts, Iran

Resources: <http://srchilearn.net/blog>



Zin al-Din Caravanserai, situated on the ancient Silk Road, is a site in the Yazd province of Iran which boasts a rich history spanning over 400 years, making it one of the most captivating attractions in the region. Often referred to as Ribat Zin al-Din by locals, this circular caravanserai stands majestically amidst the deserts of Yazd, specifically in Meybod city.

Situated 60 kilometers from the Yazd to Kerman Road, a mere 500 meters from the main highway, Zin al-Din Caravanserai is strategically positioned. Its proximity to Meybod (approximately 30 kilometers or 25 minutes) and Yazd city (around 70 kilometers or 55 minutes) makes it easily accessible. The caravanserai is approximately 690 kilometers (seven and a half hours) from Tehran, offering a unique and historical stop for travelers.

Originally built in the 10th century Hijri during the Safavid era (16th century CE), Zin al-Din Caravanserai served as a residence for local nomads. It underwent extensive restoration and conservation efforts from 2001 to 2003, transforming it into a distinctive tourist attraction while



Traditional and unique style of Caravanserai

Resources: <http://safamarket.com.blog/attractions/iran/yazd/zein-o-din-caravanserai-yazd>

preserving its architectural authenticity. The caravanserai, designed in a traditional and unique style, accommodates up to a hundred guests and tourists.

The experience of witnessing the sunset from the rooftop of Zin al-Din Caravanserai, observing the mountains change colors to shades of blue, and feeling the desert air thicken as night falls, provides an unparalleled journey into the heart of Yazd. Architecturally significant, this caravanserai stands as a testament to the Safavid era, standing as a circular masterpiece along the Silk Road.

Caravanserais, integral to Iran's histor-

ical landscape, stand as magnificent and significant monuments. In bygone eras, these establishments served as havens for traveling caravans, offering respite, sustenance, and a tranquil pause along their journeys.

What are Caravanserais?

As trade flourished along the Silk Road, the construction of caravanserais multiplied. These structures weren't merely shelters from harsh weather but also served as protection against bandits targeting valuable goods like silk and spices. Reflecting their protective function, caravanserais were strategically positioned just outside towns or villages, enclosed by formidable walls resembling fortifications, complete with watchtowers.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Iran's bustling roads were adorned with these caravanserais, a testament to the commitment of local rulers to ensure safety, security, and comfort for caravan travelers. Spaced approximately 32-40 kilometers apart—equivalent to a day's journey—along the busiest Silk Road routes, they

stood as remarkable achievements of their time.

Once thriving, these captivating monuments hold within them numerous tales and, at times, serve as the keepers of their guests' secrets. Today, some of these ancient caravanserais have been meticulously restored and transformed into traditional hotels, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the serenity of the desert during their brief sojourns.

Establishment of Caravanserais

Caravanserais found their origins in religious foundations along pilgrim routes, merchants' guilds, and the initiatives of local rulers or kings seeking to secure normal commercial routes. Notably, during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great (1588-1629 CE), when Iran's road system expanded extensively, the central government in Isfahan played a significant role in constructing caravanserais along new routes.

Surviving caravanserais from the Safavid Empire and Qajar eras indicate the existence of a state architectural department dedicated to their construction. In urban

settings, caravanserais emerged as lodging houses, depots, and commercial offices near Iran's bustling bazaars, mirroring the form of road caravanserais, albeit with two floors in many cases.

The Silk Road and Caravanserais

The Silk Road, a complex network of trade routes connecting China, India, the Middle East, and the West, relied heavily on caravanserais. These structures, also known as “Ribat,” “Khan,” or “Serai” in Persian, strategically dotted the Silk Road, showcasing evolving architectural styles and cultural influences across different Iranian dynasties.

Iran proudly hosts a diverse array of caravanserais, each exuding its unique charm. From the iconic Zein-o-din Caravanserai in Yazd to the picturesque Sa'ad al-Saltanah in Qazvin, these structures offer glimpses into Iran's rich heritage. While their original functions have evolved, caravanserais continue to be integral to Iran's cultural tapestry, with many repurposed as museums, restaurants, or boutique hotels, inviting tourists to im-

merse themselves in their storied history.

A History of Zin al-Din Caravanserai

In the Safavid period of Iran, Shah Abbas Safavi, during his reign, commissioned the establishment of approximately 999 caravanserais throughout Iran. Zin al-Din is hailed as one of the most beautiful among them. Historical records suggest that the caravanserai was built in the 10th century Hijri to commemorate Shah Abbas's meeting with Zin al-Din Ganjali Khan, the governor of Kerman province. The architect behind this masterpiece was Mohammad Sultan Yazdi, renowned for his work on the exquisite Ganjali Khan Complex in

Zin al-Din Caravanserai - A unique architectural achievement of the Safavid era.

Resources: <http://safamarket.com.blog/attractions/iran/yazd/zein-o-din-caravanserai-yazd>



Kerman.

Distinguished by its circular plan, Zin al-Din Caravanserai stands as a unique architectural achievement of the Safavid era, serving as the only round building on the Iranian section of the Silk Road, located in the central part of Meybod and 50 kilometers from Yazd city, one of the oldest cities of ancient Iran. Marco Polo mentions Yazd in his book, remarking that it was “as big as seven days walk”.

Utilized in the 10th century Hijri as a



Location of Zein-o-din Caravanserai in Iran

(Image from Inbound Persia)

garrison for riflemen and guards, the caravanserai continues to maintain its original purpose, which today are preserved and used as hotel accommodations for tourists.

Architecture of Zin al-Din Caravanserai

Designed with a circular plan and five semi-circular towers attached to an octagonal wall, Zin al-Din Caravanserai is constructed using brick. The northern part of the complex contains the royal chambers, currently repurposed as a dining hall, with the remaining space adorned with hand-woven carpets and beautiful cushions for relaxation.

Staircases on both sides of the caravanserai lead to the rooftop, allowing visitors to witness the breathtakingly beautiful desert sky. Upon entering, a wooden door leads to a large circular courtyard. Surrounding this courtyard are arcades with alcoves, and beyond them, Shah-Neshin rooms and octagonal rooms display the pinnacle of Iranian artistry.

A notable feature of Zin al-Din Caravanserai is its spatial organization, where the surrounding arcades lead to identical rooms at the end of each arcade, reminis-



The octagonal rooms of Caravanserai

Resources: <http://www.kojaro.com/attraction/24433>

cent of the architectural style prevalent in Yazd.

For those eager to journey back five centuries, the caravanserai provides an opportunity to sit in one of the royal chambers around the courtyard and immerse themselves in the historical ambiance. Beyond the central courtyard, the caravanserai unveils expansive and elongated corridors, once stables for four-legged companions such as camels or horses.

To experience the mesmerizing views of the mountains and the desert sky, visitors can ascend the staircases on either side of the caravanserai, reaching the rooftop for an unforgettable night under the stars.

Accommodations and Gardens

Zin al-Din Caravanserai, now transformed into a unique hotel and eco-friendly accommodation, encompasses an outdoor area and two courtyards—the main one open to the sky and the other sheltered. The main courtyard features a large twelve-sided basin, while the secondary courtyard is covered with translucent cloth. The central area contains a polygonal basin surrounded by small trees and traditional flowerpots.

Recognizing its outstanding preservation efforts, UNESCO awarded Zin al-Din Caravanserai the Best Restoration and UNESCO Honorary Diploma in 2006. The renowned travel magazine Tatler also acknowledged it as one of the top 101 hotels worldwide. Registered as a national heritage site with the number 926, the caravanserai stands proudly, inviting travelers to relish its historical charm and genuine environment.

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Glass Wares from Hwangnam Daechong Tomb:

A Testament to Vibrant International Exchanges on the Silk Roads



Lee Ga-ram

The Silk Roads, the ancient network of trade routes around Asia, Africa, and Europe, were more than mere pathways for the exchange of silk goods. They served as conduits for a great abundance of cultural treasures and commodities, among which glass wares stand as eloquent testaments to the dynamic exchanges that characterized this historic network.

Origins of glassmaking

The origin of glassmaking can be traced back to ancient times, around 3500 BCE in

Mesopotamia and Egypt, where basic glass objects were created by chance through natural processes like the melting of sand and certain minerals due to high temperatures from fires. One of the earliest forms of glassmaking was glass beads crafted by winding molten glass around a metal rod. These beads served as currency, decoration, and were also buried with the dead, especially in oriental cultures.

The ancient Romans played a significant role in advancing glassmaking techniques around the 1st century BCE. They developed methods for blowing glass, a significant innovation that revolutionized the industry by allowing the creation of more intricate and larger glass objects. This led to the production of various glass items, including glass cups and bottles, during an era of glassmaking that is now called 'Roman Glass'. This Roman Glass was traded from the areas surrounding the Red Sea to the East and has even been discovered in archaeological sites in the Far East, offering significant proof of extensive Silk Roads trade connections and dynamic interactions between various cultures.

Examples of Glass Wares demonstrating active international exchanges on the Silk Roads

One of the most remarkable chapters in the glass ware's narrative unfolds in the heart of ancient Korea, particularly during the Silla Dynasty period. The excavation of glass wares in Silla's royal tombs, like the phoenix-shaped pitcher found in Hwangnam Daechong tomb (image 1), revealed a fascinating story of the travel of 'Roman Glass' through the Silk Roads to East Asia.

The phoenix-shaped glass pitcher was



Korean National Treasure No. 193, phoenix-shaped pitcher from Hwangnam Daechong tomb



Bronze trefoil mouthed Oinochoe with Dionysus head on handle attachment

discovered in 1975 in the southern section of Hwangnam Daechong, Silla's largest royal tomb. It was named due to its likeness to a Phoenix's head. Shown on the images, the phoenix-shaped pitcher's luminous green color and bowed shape are similar with the ancient Greek vessel 'Oinochoe'. When unearthed, this bottle revealed a distinctive feature — a handle adorned with a golden cord. This indicates that these kinds of bottles were considered extremely valuable and scarce during the ancient era, therefore even members of the royal family would reuse them by repairing damaged ones.

Roman glass entered East Asia through the Silk Roads via maritime routes, oases, and the steppes. And one of the conclusive pieces of evidence of this entry was discovered in recent research, which found that during the 5th century, regions like the Northern Wei and the Song Dynasty in China lacked glass wares to the extent found in Silla. This indicates that Western artifacts made their way to the Korean Peninsula through the northern steppes of the Silk Road. While the Romans produced



Fishnet-designed glass cup excavated from Hwangnam daechong.



Fishnet-designed glass cup excavated from the Kara-Agachi tomb in Kazakhstan.

glassware in Rome itself, as well as in Syria, Alexandria, and the Roman colony of Cologne in Germany, it is assumed that the phoenix-shaped pitcher reaching Silla originated from Syria.

Another fragment of evidence was found in Central Asia, specifically in Kazakhstan, indicating that Roman glassware discovered in the southern section of Hwangnam daechong had traveled through the steppes of the Silk Roads. Comparing a fishnet-designed glass cup

found in the southern section of Hwangnam daechong in Gyeongju (image 3) with a cup from the Kara-Agachi tomb in Kazakhstan (image 4), one may notice a remarkable similarity between the pattern designs of these two artifacts. These glass vessels, reminiscent of luxury akin to present-day iconic brands, traversed extensive distances well beyond Kazakhstan. They embarked on a journey from Rome, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula, through the territories of Kazakhstan, Mongolia's grasslands, Manchuria, and Gyeongju, S. Korea, eventually reaching Japan.

Significance of the glass wares as the Silk Roads heritage

The journey of glass bottles along the Silk Roads is a testament to the enduring legacy of cultural exchanges and global connectivity. They not only carried the contents inside, they also carried the stories of ancient civilizations, the echoes of trade, and the beauty of cross-cultural encounters along the Silk Roads.

Today, as we admire these kinds of artifacts displayed in museums, we're not

just witnessing relics of a past era; we're looking at the tangible evidence of a world linked by Silk Roads commercial, cultural exchange, and the timeless allure of the Silk Roads. The glass wares, once just a humble container, emerges as a cultural icon—a silent testament to the remarkable human endeavor that bridged continents and united civilizations along the Silk Roads.

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The Enchanting Harmony of the “Sheng”: Distinctive Chinese Wind Instrument



Ju Han-Yang

Sheng, China’s Ancient Musical Gem Unearthed from the Tomb of Marquis Yi Zeng

Sheng is one of the oldest musical instruments in China. In 1978, several sheng dating back 2400 years were unearthed in the tomb of Marquis Yi Zeng, the prince of the Zhou Dynasty in China - the earliest sheng found in China. There was already a written record of “He (small Sheng)” in the oracle bone inscriptions of China’s Shang Dynasty. By the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, sheng had become very popular; it was widely used in the court band in the pre-Qin period,

and the musicians in charge of playing the sheng were called Sheng masters. Sheng is widely used in aristocratic banquet music, recorded in some ancient sites in China, and a Sheng master has a high status in the court orchestra. For example, there are six sheng poems in the Book of Songs, which are instrumental music played by sheng.

The sheng has a history of more than 3,000 years. There is a very similar instrument called “Yu”. The sheng and the yu were used side by side during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period until the Southern and Northern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang Dynasties. In the Southern and Northern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the yu was mostly used in “yayue” (which refers to the positive music used by the ancient emperors to offer sacrifices to heaven and earth, ancestors, greetings, and feasts), and gradually lost its role in history, but the sheng was used in some other music (Xiliang music, Gaoli music, etc.). Early sheng were made of bamboo and later copper. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the sheng

had different styles of square, round, large and small.

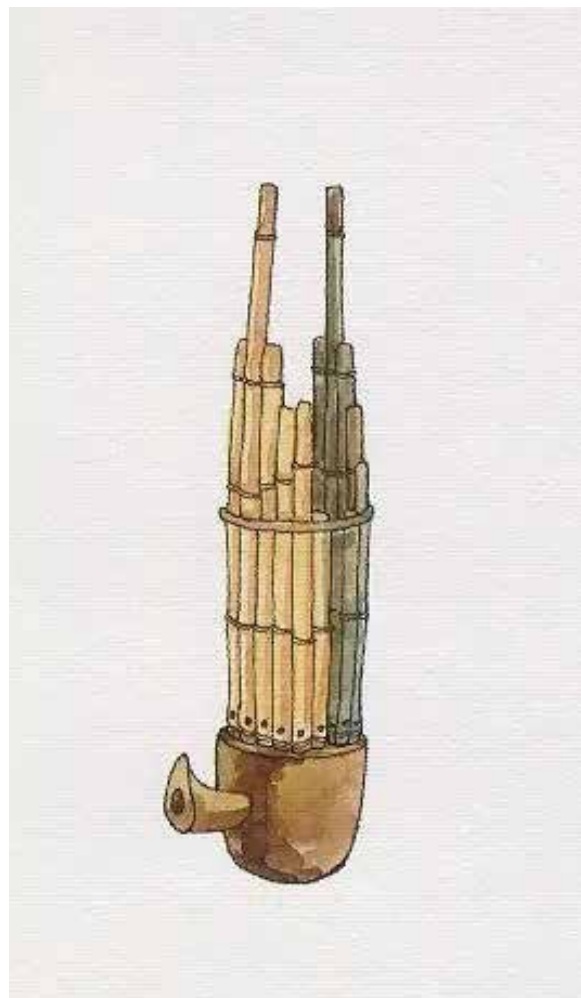
Sheng's Journey from Ancient China to Influencing Western Musical Instruments"

Chinese sheng has played a positive role in promoting the development of western Musical Instruments. Sheng was first introduced to Persia through the Silk Road and then to Japan during the Tang Dynasty. In 1777, the French missionary Jean Joseph Marie Amiot introduced the Sheng to Europe. In 1780, Franz Kirsnick, a German organ builder who had worked in Copenhagen and St. Petersburg, copied the reed principle of the Chinese "sheng" to produce the reed handle of the organ, and from this time on, the organ began to use a soft free spring. In 1810, the French instrument maker Gabriel-Joseph Grenié created the first really functional reed organ and in 1821, German instrument maker Christian F.L. Buschmann drew on the design of the sheng in developing the harmonica and later the accordion.

The Sheng's tone is sweet and bright,

The images below feature both an image and an illustration of the sheng.

Source: Baidu Encyclopedia



with a large volume. Among the traditional Chinese “wind instruments” the sheng is the only instrument that can blow “harmony”. The wind and breath of the sheng can play the same sound, which means that the sheng can blow very, very long melodies in the case of natural breathing.

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Bibimbap: A Colorful Korean One Pot Meal



Amali Ranavi Thantrige

Jeonju Bibimbap

Photo by the author



© wordsnpic19

If it wasn't BTS or kimchi, what would be the first thing that comes to you when you hear 'South Korea'? You got it, it's Bibimbap. Bibimbap is a typical South Korean food that has a long history, and people from many different social statuses enjoy it in their day-to-day life. The idea of Bibimbap contains the word Bibimbap itself; in Korean language the word 'Bibi' comes from the verb 'Bibida' means 'mix' and the word 'bap' means 'rice'. In other words, 'Bibimbap' means 'mixed rice'.

Korean food culture is quite well-known for its balanced combinations of nutrition and taste. Generally, the Korean diet includes 'bap' (rice), kuk (soup) and 'banchan' (side dishes). For 'banchan' Korean people have various types of meat, vegetables and specially 'namul' (seasonal plants and grass). Bibimbap can be identified as a combination of 'bap' and 'banchan' along with one of Korean 'Jjigae'; Kimchijigae and Doenjangjigae. Someone can understand 'Bibimbap' as a 'rice bowl' which includes everything in one plate/bowl. As it sounds, making Bibimbap is not complicated at all, as well as applicable to

any time and person, as it allows the eater to decide the ingredients – an especially good option for vegetarians.

Story of Bibimbap

Looking back to the story of Bibimbap reveals a history that even pre-dates the ‘Hangeul’ Korean Alphabet. According to historical resources and studies that have been done on ‘evaluation of Bibimbap’, the origin of Bibimbap dates back to around the 16th century, or the Joseon period.

Bibimbap served in a hot stone pot

Photo by the author



During this time, the term Bibimbap was not yet invented, and hence speakers used ‘Goldongban’, a Chinese phrase which has the meaning of ‘a rice bowl mixed with vegetables and sauce.’ Although there is no time restriction to have Bibimbap, it seems like ancient Korean people ate these bowls as a ritualistic habit on the eve of the Lunar new year (usually in the beginning of February). Historical stories say that people intended to have Bibimbap as a way of clearing leftovers before they begin the new year. Considering the ingredients and how to make Bibimbap, one can assume these stories to be practically correct. In this sense, Bibimbap also provides a solution to food waste.

Later on, ‘Goldongban’ became ‘Bubimbap’ and, as outlined in a Korean Cuisine website, the term ‘Bubimbap’ first appeared in the “Joseon Yori-Jebeop”, or Joseon Cook Book. Then around 1810 ‘Bubimbap’ turned into the present term ‘Bibimbap’ because of the introduction of the Korean alphabet ‘Hangeul’. Despite how the original word for ‘Bibimbap’ has changed several times throughout history,

the meaning ‘a rice bowl mixed with various vegetables’ has remained the same. Bibimbap not only has a long history, but it carries the vibrancy of harmony. Along with the white or red rice in the middle, the bowl includes yellow bean sprouts, egg yolk, orange carrots, brown mushrooms and lots of green ‘namul’ (plants that would easily receive anyone’s attention). Once these ingredients are mixed with red gochujang and some ganjang (soy sauce) it produces a beautiful texture as well as a deep unique taste that can be enjoyed in every spoonful. Since Bibimbap was not limited to a certain class, everyone in the community regardless of social status is able to enjoy it, demonstrating an ability to unite diverse groups in a shared experience.

A deep dive into Bibimbap reveals that, depending on the area, its ingredients and characteristics are slightly different in terms of ingredients and how they are served. Among various locations, Jeonju Bibimbap is widely known even today. In addition, cities like Andong and Jinju are also famous for their own styled Bibim-

bap. It is notable that although most of the vegetables are replaceable, ‘namul’ and bean sprouts are used in every location.

Bibimbap and the Silk Road

Relationships between food and nations have always been at the center of the Silk Road conversations as these ancient routes played a significant role in exchanging goods and services. Considering that Korea did not have required conditions for some vegetables and spices, scholars suggest that the Silk Road supported Koreans in obtaining various food items from neighboring countries – food items which became essential in the creation of dishes such as Bibimbap. For example, one of the



**Dolsot Bibimbap
(Hot stone pot
Bibimbap)**

Photo by the
author

main ingredients of Bibimbap is Gochujang, known to be introduced by Japan; other items such as Gochchu (Chili), Pumpkin, Onion and species like sesame seed, have entered Korea from countries like Persia through Silk Road routes.

With increasing globalization and modernization, Bibimbap also has developed various types that help to maintain its uniqueness. The increasing popularity of Korean culture has taken Bibimbap beyond domestic borders, and many foreigners have now come to deeply enjoy Bibimbap. As now there are fast ways to import goods and services, people around the world have access to most Korean foods. Are you thinking of what you should have for dinner tonight? How about trying Bibimbap. All you need is some rice, vegetables according to your preference, and an egg. Obviously, adding some meat or seafood would give it a rich flavor.

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TRAVEL

Library of Celsus In Ephesus

Source: fromsalih

Ephesus: The Most Well-Known Ancient City in Turkiye



Sercan Yeşilköy

If you are interested in the Silk Road, you would enjoy visiting places like museums, ancient cities, etc. Today, I would like to take you to the most well-known ancient city in Turkiye: Ephesus, which is near my hometown. Since it is very close to where I used to live, I have had the chance to visit it dozens of times. Each time I visited, I

discovered more precious and interesting facts, places, and feelings in my heart. So, I feel honored and privileged to introduce and promote Ephesus in SILKROADIA Web Magazine.

To delve into the history of Ephesus, we should go back to the Neolithic Age, around 6000 BCE, which is when Ephesus was established. Even if it were the ancient root of Ephesus, the city may not resemble what we know today because Ephesus has undergone numerous changes throughout its history, having been ruled by various ancient kingdoms, political entities, and people, including the Kingdom of Arzawa, Ionians, Atticans, Hittites, Alexander the Great, the Seljuk dynasty, the Ottomans, and others. However, today's Ephesus has been primarily influenced by the Hellenistic and Ancient Roman periods.

Ephesus, a jewel of the ancient world, experienced its most transformative era between the reign of Alexander the Great and the dominance of Ancient Rome. After Alexander's death in 323 BC, his general Lysimachus relocated the city to its final location closer to the sea and estab-

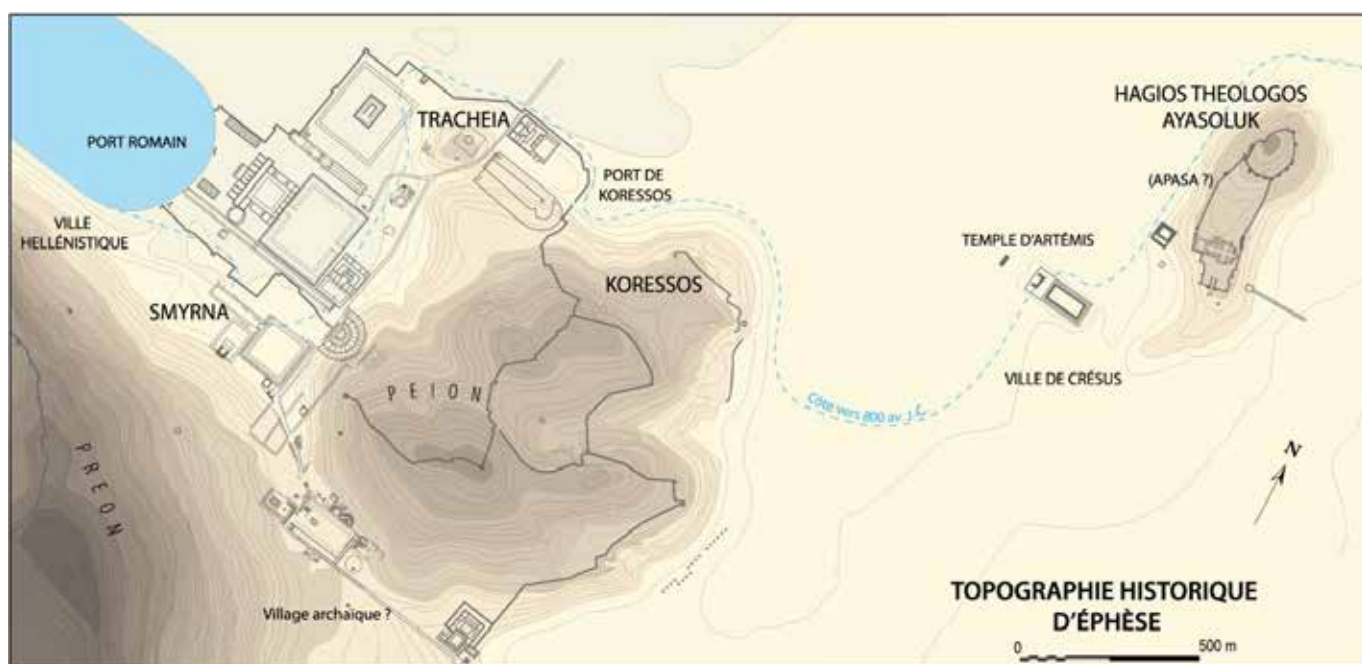
lished a port. This strategic move laid the foundation for Ephesus to become a major economic and cultural hub, and it was a significant milestone for the Silk Road, symbolizing trade and the exchange of culture and materials. However, the port of Ephesus is not visible today, as the region's geography has drastically changed due to tectonic movements. Over centuries, these changes led to the silting up of the harbor, distancing the city from the sea and contributing to its decline. The once bustling port that connected Ephesus to the vast networks of trade and cultural exchange across the Mediterranean and beyond is now buried under layers of history and geological shifts.

The city's golden age began during the

Illustration of Ephesus Port by DALL-E AI model

Source: OpenAI





Historical Topography of Ephesus

Source: Wikipedia

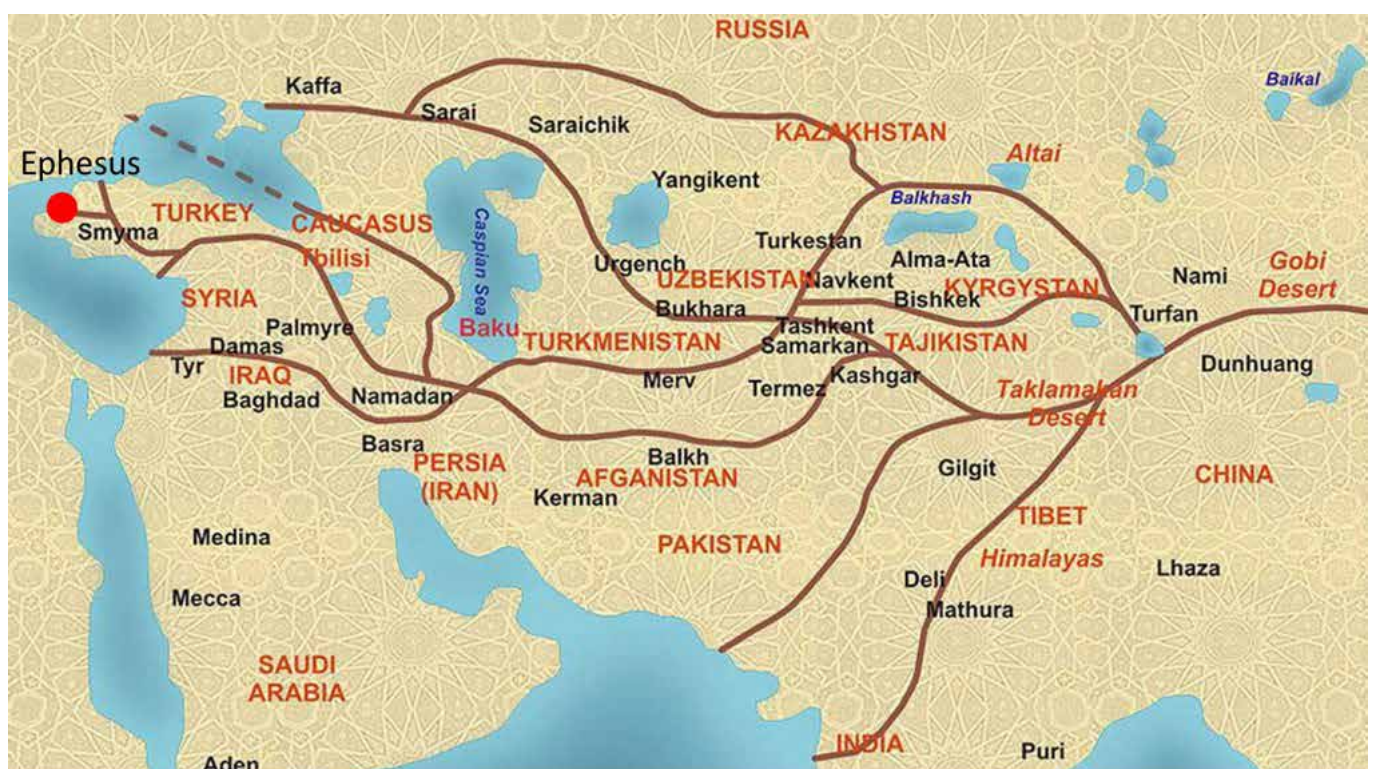
Hellenistic era, marked by extraordinary urban development. It was during this period that many of its famous landmarks were constructed, including the Library of Celsus and the Great Theatre. The Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, was also rebuilt after its destruction in 356 BC. Ephesus' incorporation into the Roman Empire in the 2nd century BC marked another chapter of prosperity. It became the capital of the Roman province of Asia, a testament to its significance. The city's population soared, becoming one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean world.

Ephesus, during its pivotal era, showcased a unique blend of Anatolian, Greek, and Roman influences in its architecture

and culture. The city's public buildings, luxurious homes, and advanced urban infrastructure, including aqueducts and sewer systems, were clear indicators of its wealth and importance. Much of this prosperity can be attributed to the trade and exchange facilitated by the port of Ephesus. The city was, however, more than just a commercial hub; it was also a beacon of religious and philosophical thought. Its decline began only after the Roman period, primarily due to the silting of its harbor, but Ephesus' legacy as a center of ancient civilization remained unparalleled. Several architectural treasures in the city bear testament to how trade, cultural exchange, and philosophical thought could drive the

Ephesus map on the Central Asia, Middle East and East Europe with Silkroad

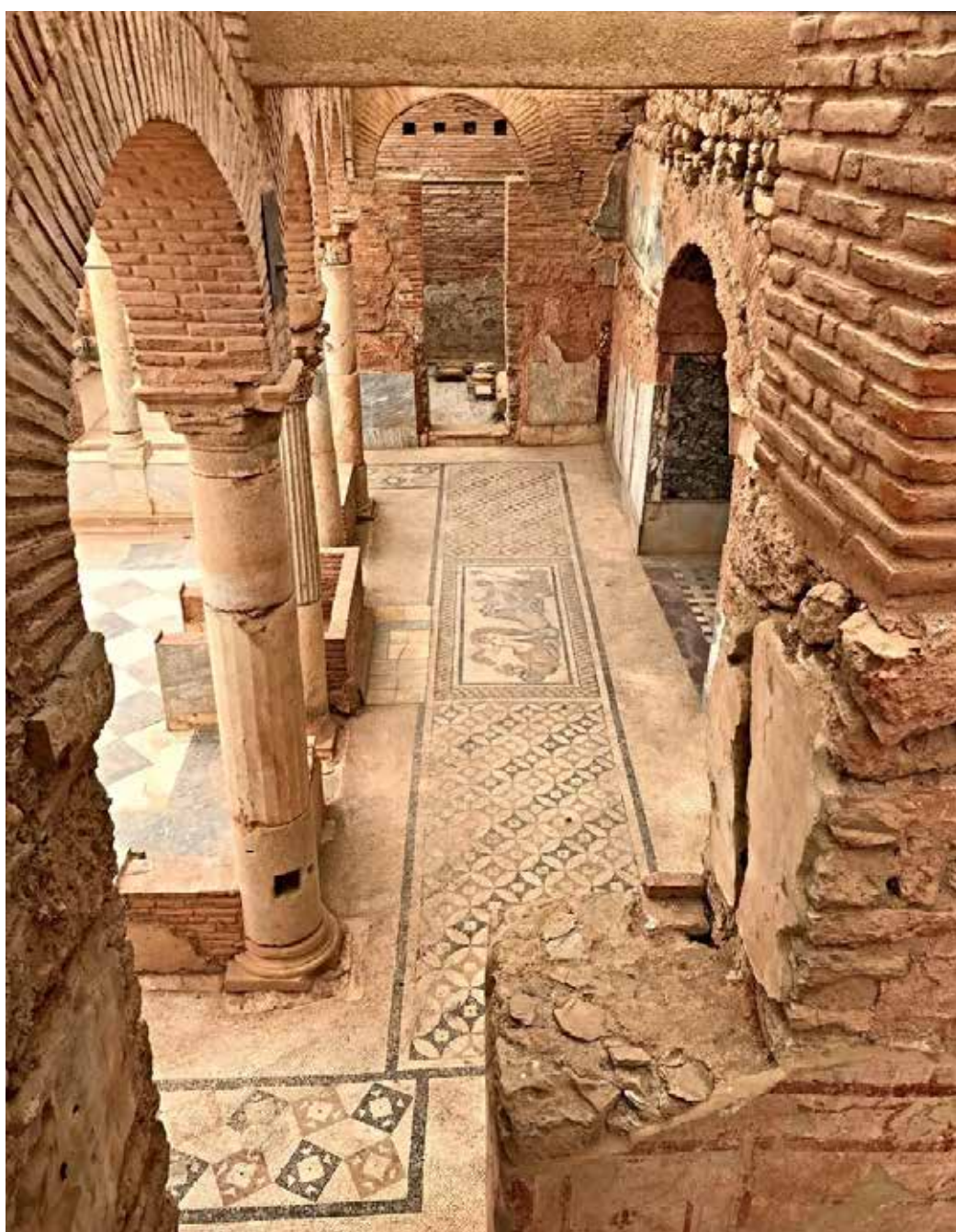
Source: Wikipedia



development of a city in ancient times. Let's explore some of these architectural marvels and uncover their stories.

Terrace Houses

The Terrace Houses, also known as Yamacevler, are located within the Ephesus Archaeological site, consisting of seven ancient Roman houses. These well-preserved houses, constructed on terraces along the slopes of Mount Koressos, once housed Ephesus' most prominent residents. Originally, during the Hellenistic period, the area served as a cemetery before



The Terrace Houses

Photo

Source:

Sercan YESILKOY

the Romans transformed it into a residential zone. When constructing their homes, the new settlers repurposed materials from their predecessors.

Dating back to around 1 AD, these ancient dwellings underwent various modifications over the years before they were eventually abandoned. The two-story houses, encircling an open peristyle courtyard, are a testament to the wealth of their occupants. The interiors boast floors adorned with colorful mosaics and walls lined with marble. These homes are further embellished with frescoes depicting mythological scenes. A notable feature of these houses is their advanced floor heating systems (called hypocaust, invented in the 1st century BCE), an interesting fact considering that the Korean-style floor heating system was also invented in the 1st century BCE during the Proto-Three Kingdoms period. These systems highlight the sophisticated living standards of the time. Along with the presence of fountains, they demonstrate the remarkable architectural and engineering skills of the ancient Romans.

The Temple of Hadrian

The Temple of Hadrian, dedicated to the Roman Emperor Hadrian, is known for its beautiful architecture and intricate decorations. It was built in the 2nd century CE, a period marked by prosperity and cultural flourishing in Ephesus under Roman rule. The temple's facade is adorned with a beautifully sculpted arch and columns (no wonder it is one of the most photographed monuments in Ephesus). One of the most remarkable features of the Temple of Hadrian is the frieze in the upper section, which contains various reliefs depicting scenes from the foundation of Ephesus. This includes depictions of the

The Temple of Hadrian

Photo Source: Sercan YESILKOY



Amazons, who, according to myth, played a vital role in the city's establishment. The temple has undergone several restorations over the centuries, and it stands today as a testament to the grandeur of Roman architecture and the historical significance of Ephesus as a major urban center in the ancient world. Visitors to the site can appreciate not only the artistic and architectural achievements of the period but also gain insight into the religious and cultural practices of the Roman Empire.

The Theatre of Ephesus

The Theatre of Ephesus is an impressive testament to the grandeur of ancient Roman architecture. Built in the Hellenistic period and later expanded during Roman times, this structure could accommodate approximately 25,000 spectators, making it one of the largest theatres in the ancient world. The theatre's design is characterized by a steeply sloping auditorium, which not only provided unobstructed views for the audience but also excellent acoustics, a crucial feature for the performance of plays and musical events.



The Theatre of Ephesus

Photo Source: Sercan YESILKOY

The semicircular shape, typical of Greek and Roman theatres, is divided into sections with marble seats and has a large, two-story stage building at the front. Over the centuries, the Theatre of Ephesus was used for various purposes, including theatrical performances, gladiatorial combats, and political gatherings. Its role as a venue for diverse spectacles and events reflects the cultural and social dynamics of Ephesus as a major urban center in the ancient world. Archaeological excavations and restorations have revealed intricate details of the theatre's construction and artistic embellishments. Today, it remains a signif-

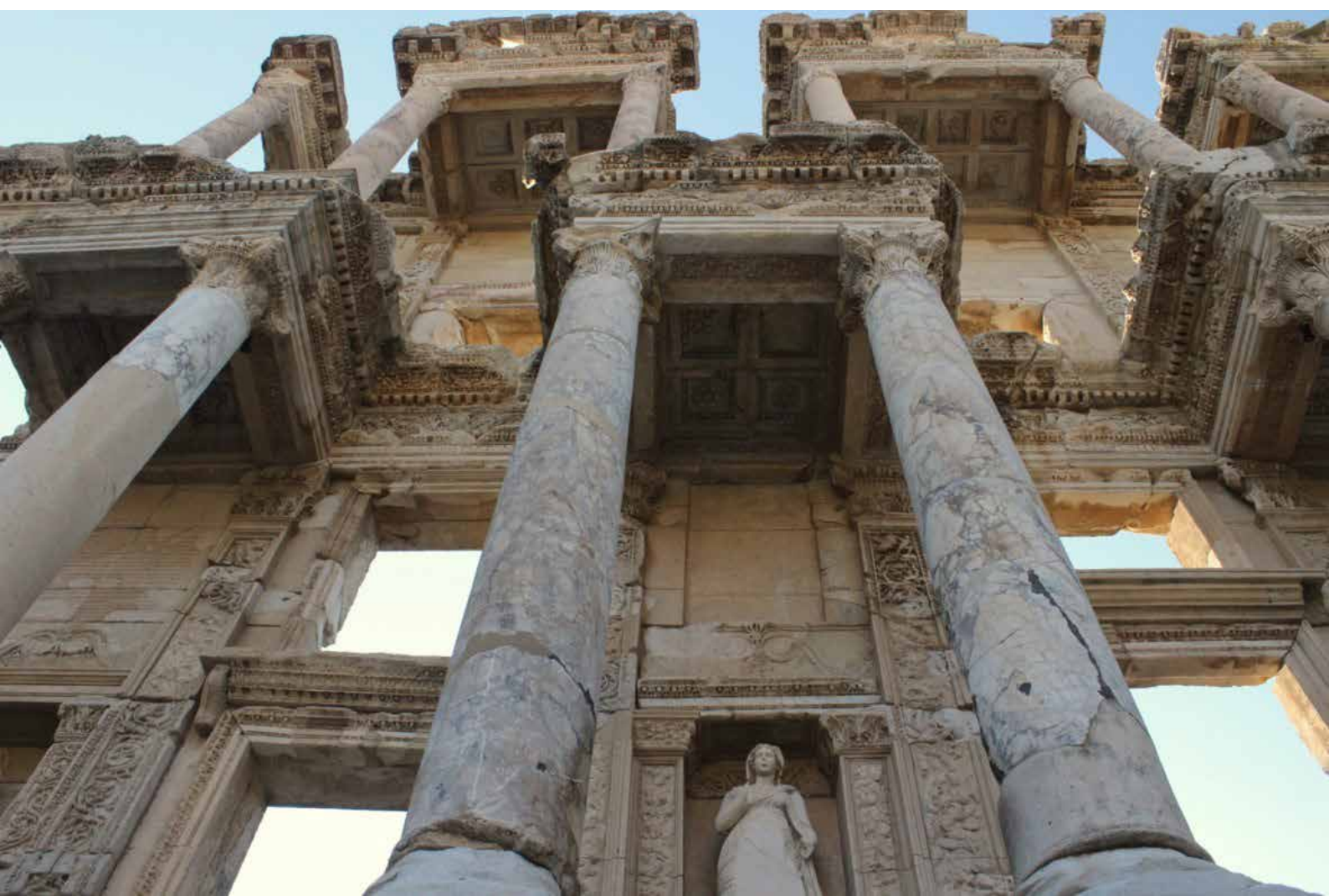
icant historical site, attracting tourists and scholars alike, allowing them to immerse themselves in the legacy of the ancient world and gain a deeper understanding of Roman engineering and cultural practices.

The Library of Celsus

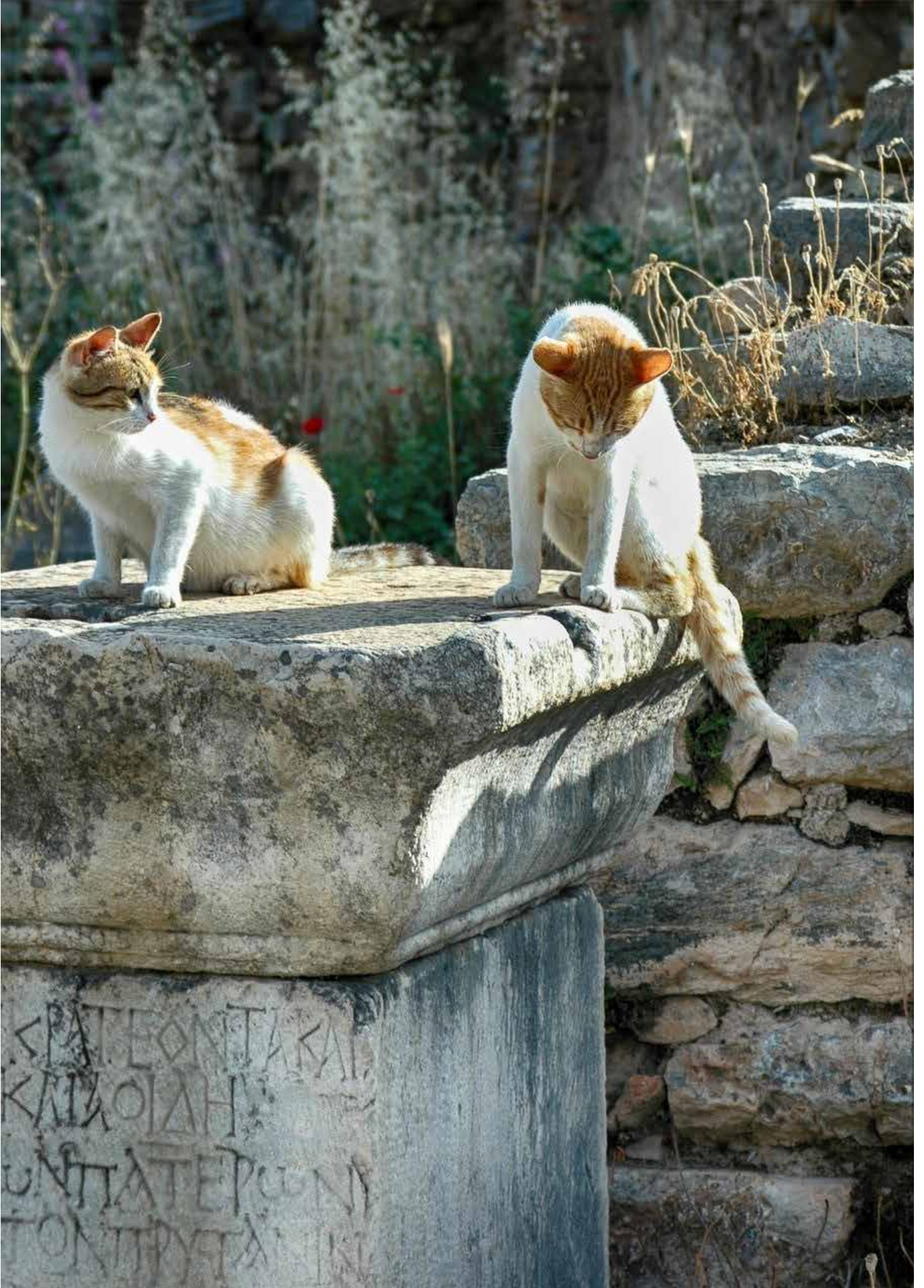
The Library of Celsus in Ephesus is a remarkable monument that stands as a testament to the architectural and cultural achievements of the ancient Roman world. Constructed in the early 2nd century AD, it was built to honor Tiberius Julius Celsus Polemaeanus, a Roman Senator and General Governor of Asia. This library was renowned not only for its collection of

The Library of Celsus

Photo Source: Sercan YESILKOY



scrolls and books but also for its magnificent architectural design. The facade of the library is particularly striking, characterized by its ornate Corinthian columns and an elaborate arrangement of steps leading up to the entrance. The building originally had three stories, with the ground floor housing the main chamber of the library. One of the most distinctive features of the Library of Celsus is the set of four statues that adorn its facade, each representing a virtue associated with Celsus: Wisdom (Sophia), Knowledge (Episteme), Intelligence (Ennoia), and Virtue (Arete). These statues symbolize the values that were celebrated in the ancient scholarly world. The Library of Celsus, with its grandeur and decorative sculptures, served as both a monumental tomb for Celsus and a public library, reflecting the Roman emphasis on public works and learning. Though the library was partially destroyed by an earthquake in the late antique period, its facade has been meticulously reconstructed, allowing visitors to appreciate its historical and architectural significance.



**Some 'locals' from Ephesus Ancient city
that currently living in there**

Source: DenisDoukhan

As we reflect on the remnants of Ephesus, we are reminded of the pivotal role that trade, cultural exchange, and the movement of materials played in the development of civilizations. This ancient city, a jewel along the Silk Road, stands as a magnificent testament to these interac-

tions. Ephesus was not just a center of architectural and cultural splendor; it was also a hub where the tapestry of human connection was woven through the exchange of goods, ideas, and traditions. The prosperity and beauty that once defined this city were in large part due to its strategic position on the Silk Road, facilitating exchanges that enriched not only its economy but also its cultural and intellectual life.

In this context, Ephesus serves as a beacon, illuminating the importance of connectivity and exchange in shaping the history and progress of civilizations. The Silk Road, a network that connected diverse cultures, played a crucial role in this dynamic, enabling regions like Ephesus to flourish. Today, as we traverse the modern Silk Roads of our globalized world, we are part of a continuing legacy of exchange and interaction. Ephesus, with its storied past and enduring allure, is a powerful reminder of how connections across distances and cultures can lead to monumental achievements in human civilization. So, let us journey through Ephesus not just as

tourists, but as participants in the timeless narrative of trade and cultural exchange that continues to shape our world today.

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A Silk Road Town in Seoul: Gwanghuidong Central Asian Street, Seoul



Lee Yu-jeong

Dongdaemun Silk Road Town Displays an Exotic Atmosphere

Gwanghui-dong, central Seoul, used to be a busy place for entertainment and lodging in the past. However, with the beginning of diplomatic relations between Korea and Russia in the early 1990s, the area began to change as Russian clothing merchants started business exchange between Dongdaemun clothing stores and Russia. Gwanghui-dong had the advantage of being able to easily export its products thanks to its proximity to Dongdaemun Market at the time. With the establishment of Russian peddlers, Gwanghui-dong developed into a



Gwanghuidong Central Asian Street, Seoul, Korea

Photo by Lee Yu-jeong

center for Central Asian migrant workers. Gathering them for currency exchange and remittance, Gwanghui-dong became a second home for migrant workers.

Currently, the Central Asian Street is a place where restaurants from Silk Road countries gather, and it is a unique space

where you can experience the diversity and dynamics of the Silk Road in the center of the city. Cyrillic characters from Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkey, and Mongolia stand out, and you can feel the characteristics of each country whenever you walk along the street, lined with restaurants and shops that modernize the spirit of the Silk Road. Shops with the scent of traditional Central Asian culture proudly display the diversity of the Silk Road, offering rich experiences to visitors who want to experience different cultural flavors within the city.

The flow of immigration, which began with the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and Russia, is reimagining the city's appearance. These changes transformed Gwanghui-dong into a place where the taste and culture of Central Asia intersect. These Central Asian streets are a place that enriches the diversity of Seoul, providing a new world of experiences and flavors for those who come to feel the special atmosphere.

The Taste of Central Asia -

“Lepeshka (Лепёшка)”

Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan in Central Asia are famous for their colorful food culture. Among the culinary delights, Lepeshka (Лепёшка), the representative bread of Uzbekistan, holds a prideful place on the tables of residents., both from Uzbekistan and the wider area. The special bread, crafted in a traditional clay oven called a Tandoor, seen at a local restaurant in the images below, is particularly renowned for its unique flavor and distinctive shape.

Lepeshka is made of whole wheat and is large and round, with a unique hand-pressed shape in the middle. It is crispy

Traditional clay oven called Tandoor

Photo by Lee Yu-jeong



on the outside but soft on the inside. The more you season it with salt, the more savory it becomes, stimulating your appetite. The baking process involves shaping the dough on the inner walls of the kilns, which brings out its unique aroma and taste. A central treat in daily lives of many from Uzbekistan, this bread is made in traditional kilns in most households.

Beyond Uzbekistan, Lepeshka is also found throughout Russia as well as the other Central Asian countries. In Russia, it is a thin form of bread that is enjoyed with Shawarma (Шаурма). These foods are eaten with meat and vegetables wrapped in a Lepeshka, which has different names depending on the region, but the taste is equally delicious.

The bread culture of Central Asia showcases its charm through its unique characteristics and diversity – culinary traditions facilitated by the cultural exchanges between regions that were central to the Silk Road. These foods offer new experiences for those who wish to indulge in the diverse culinary culture of Central Asia.



A wall with a Silk Roads image

Photo by Lee Yu-jeong

Silk Road Trip in Seoul

Dongdaemun-gu Central Asia Street is a modern symbol of the Silk Road, and it has established itself as a place where visitors can experience the diversity and dynamics of the Silk Road in the center of the city; a place that at once retains the local culture while also providing unique taste and diversity to visitors.

Travelers will be given special memories by going to Central Asia Street in Dongdaemun-gu to experience amazing Central Asian cuisine and culture. With the colorful scents and flavors of Central Asia that have been hard to experience in Seoul so far, the time here will surely be remembered as a new discovery. You should

also visit Central Asia Street and enjoy the colorful charm of the Silk Road.

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SUN NEWS

The 8th IASS International Conference

The International Association for Silk Roads Studies (IASS) held its eighth International Conference on November 2-4, 2023. The annual IASS conference was hosted by the Transilvania University of Brasov in Romania.

The Faculty of Furniture Design and Wood Engineering, Department of Wood Processing and Design of Wood Products of Transilvania University of Brasov also organized the international conference “Wood Science and Engineering in the Third Millennium” – ICWSE 2023, on November 2-4, 2023.

The conference coincided with the 8th IASS conference, whose theme this year was “The Use of Wood along the Silk Road”. Experts from several member universities shared their



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informative and interesting papers, highlighting various aspects of wood utilization along the historic Silk Road. The conference fostered a rich exchange of ideas, encouraging further study of how to preserve the historical significance of wood. It also provided a platform for experts to share innovative approaches, which ensured a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between wood, trade, and cultural exchange in the ancient trade route of the Silk Road.

2023-2024 WRICOS, PHOCOS, S-DECOS

SUN has started work for its three major student contests for 2023-2024 -- PHOCOS, WRICOS, and S-DECOS. WRICOS has one

theme for poems and two themes for essays: Poem - 'Trees', and for Essay - (1) "Trees and People along the Silk Roads", (2) "How is Contemporary Climate Change Affecting the Physical Landscapes and Environments along the Silk Roads?". The submission deadline is June 31, 2024, and the results will be announced on July 31, 2024. The schedules and themes of PHOCOS and S-DECOS are under discussion, and it will be announced as soon as the new year comes up.

To promote our contests, all the other awardees will be introduced at the Award Ceremony during the General Assembly. The works of those students will be also exhibited on SUN's website, and you can also check the previous awardee's works on the website as well. Please visit 'www.sun-silkroadia.org' for more information about our contests, and we look forward to seeing your enthusiastic participation.

Upcoming GA and IASS Conference 2024 in Italy

The 9th General Assembly and the 9th IASS Conference will be co-hosted by University of Naples L'Orientale and SUN in Naples, Italy. The General Assembly and the International Conference of IASS will be held together as four-day events from November 10 to 15,

2024. The theme for the 9th GA and the 9th IASS Conference is under discussion and more detailed information will be posted on the SUN website (<http://sunsilkroadia.org/>).

Upcoming event for Commemorating the 700th year after death of Marco Polo

Ca'Foscari University of Venice (CFU) and the Silk-Road Universities Network (SUN) will be co-hosting a meaningful event -- Commemorating the 700th year after the death of Marco Polo, the iconic traveler of the Silk Road regions. Students from SUN member universities are especially welcomed to join the commemorating event, learning from his adventurous characteristics - courage, commitment, creativity, and intelligence. There will be 4 main events: 1) Video Contest, 2) Photo Contest, 3) Essay Contest, and 4) T-Shirt Pattern Design Contest. Students of SUN member universities, as well as those of non-member universities, are eligible to this contest. The exhibition and award ceremony will be held at Ca'Foscari University of Venice (CFU), Venice, Italy, November 18 ~ 20, 2024. More details about the schedule of contests will be announced soon on the SUN official website.

USSUN NEWS

USSUN-HUFS Holds 'Mini PHOCOS'

As the second semester began, USSUN-HUFS held a 'Mini PHOCOS'. 'Mini PHOCOS' is a scaled-back photo exhibition of PHOCOS by SUN. 'Mini PHOCOS' is a photo exhibition that allows people to understand the culture and history of Silk-Road and have an opportunity to communicate about it. The purpose of holding 'Mini PHOCOS' is to shed new light on ancient culture and history in modern societies of the Silk Road by using current media. Many students applied for 'Mini PHOCOS' over the course of a month, and then USSUN-HUFS's management and coordinator of SUN judged the entries through an evaluation table (each item being given a detailed score). Ultimately 7 students received awards. The first place went to Mr. Kwon Soonha from the Department of Spanish language, but USSUN-HUFS would like to thank all applicants for their submissions.



USSUN-HUFS

Korea's culture MINI WITH SILK ROAD PHOCOS

Eligibility

Students enrolled in Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

Topic (Choose 1 out of 3)

- Korean Technology
- Silkroad culture within Korea
- World in HUFS

How to submit

File name : Student number_Department_Description_Miniphocos submission

Submit to QR CODE with the work file and the title of the photo

Prizes

- 1st place: 50,000 won (1 person)
- 2nd place: 30,000 won (2 people)
- Special prize: Boo doll (6 people)

Deadline

2023.10.10 ~ 2023.11.15



About MINI PHOCOS

What is USSUN-HUFS MINI PHOCOS?

: MINI PHOCOS is a Photo Exhibition that offers an opportunity to understand the culture and history of the Silk Road providing routes for communication.



Purpose of MINI PHOCOS

: To re-examine ancient culture and history in modern society through experiential programs using pictures.



'Mini PHOCOS' Photo Exhibition Illuminates Silk-Road Culture

USSUN-HUFS proudly presented entries to the 'Mini PHOCOS' in an exhibition, an exquisite showcase of winning photographic works complemented by insightful explanations from the talented applicants. This captivating exhibition, dedicated to unraveling the mysteries and beauty of Silk-Road culture, graced the Silk-Road Zone on the first floor of the Seoul Campus Cyber Hall for a week.

Hosted in the specially designated Silk-Road Zone, the exhibition immersed visitors in a sensory journey, allowing them to explore the winning works that intricately captured the essence of the Silk-Road's rich heritage. The carefully curated photographs, accompanied by the articulate explanations provided by the

applicants, offered a nuanced and profound perspective on the historical significance embedded in the Silk Road.

For a week, patrons were invited to wander through the exhibition, delving into the visual narratives that celebrated the vibrant traditions and stories of the Silk Road. The first floor of the Seoul Campus Cyber Hall became a haven for cultural exploration, bridging the past and present through the lens of talented photographers and their captivating works. The 'Mini PHOCOS' exhibition stands as a testament to USSUN-HUFS's commitment to fostering an appreciation for the cultural gems embedded in the Silk-Road's intricate history.

Silk-Road Exploration Goes Global: USSUN-HUFS Collaborates with Allameh Tabataba'I University in Iran and Moscow State Linguistic University in Russia

For two months from November to December, USSUN-HUFS collaborated with Allameh Tabataba'I University and Moscow State Linguistic University. The theme was "Let's Visit the Silk-Road," a program that was broadcast live on



Instagram.

Two members of the USSUN-HUFS RS team first held an Instagram live broadcast, and they introduced the National Museum of Korea, where many special and important Korean relics are stored. They visited the National Museum of Korea in person and walked around the museum to introduce it. The second presentation was Allameh Tabataba'i University, who introduced us to the Sa'dabad Historical and Cultural Complex. Lastly, the Moscow State Linguistic University team introduced us to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Everyone gave detailed and interesting explanations, and re-



sponded sincerely to comments made during the live. You can watch these videos on Instagram @ussunhufs or @silkroad.students. We hope that more countries and various universities would participate in the next collaboration.

Park Si-won Elected as USSUN-HUFS President for 2024-25

USSUN-HUFS held an election for the new president. Since it was a single candidate, the vote was held by acclamation and Ms. Park Si-won was elected as the new president of USSUN-HUFS for 2024-25. Please look forward to her upcoming announcements of activities.



Park Si-won,
College of
Central and E
ast European
Studies,
Department of
Romanian

As the elected leader of USSUN-HUFS, Ms. Si-won Park offered a message reviewing her journey within the organization, recounting her year-long involvement in the PF team and highlighting her contributions to activities such as online exhibits and field trips. The message serves as a brief introduction to the new president, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of her qualifications and aspirations. Ms. Si-won Park also outlines her commitment to steering the organization towards success. Reflecting her meticulous approach to her plans for fostering meaningful activities, her message offers a professional and insightful perspective on the incoming leadership.

Message from President-Elect Park Si-won

Hello, I'm Si-won Park, and I'm going to be the next president of USSUN-HUFS. I have been a member of the PF team for a year and have been involved in various activities such as building online exhibits and field trips. I have met various people and gained a lot of insight and wisdom in the process of planning and executing the entire process of activities. I expect to be able to provide practical help in running USSUN-HUFS. I hope to make good memories based on my meticulousness and flexibility. I will also actively seek the best solution to any problematic situations or ideas so that USSUN-HUFS can be remembered as a meaningful activity. Thank you.

NEWS FROM **MEMBER UNIVERSITIES**

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea

HUFS President Park Delivers Keynote Speech at 4th GAFSU Presidential Forum

THUFS President Park Jeong-woon participated in the 4th Presidential Forum of the Global Alliance of Foreign Studies Universities (GAFSU) at Shanghai Foreign Studies University on Wednesday, September 13, 2023. This forum, co-hosted by Shanghai Foreign Studies University and Peking Foreign Studies University, was held from September 13 to 16 under the theme “Mission of Foreign Language Disciplines and Area Studies in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.” At the event, the presidents of various foreign language universities discussed pertinent topics. Representing HUFS were President Park Jung-woon and Seoul Campus Vice President Kim Tae-Seong.



During his keynote address, President Park highlighted how AI technology can enhance personalized language learning experiences and provide immediate feedback in language teaching. He emphasized that advancements in learning tools and platforms driven by AI can revolutionize foreign language education. President Park also showcased examples of academic restructuring and collaboration within Korean universities, particularly in the ELLT department. He underscored that while AI technology plays a pivotal role in improving language skills, its development and application should be guided by a sense of responsibility that encompasses cultural understanding and linguistic expertise. GAFSU is an international consortium of universities known for their excellence in foreign language teaching and research. Comprising 37 member universities from 15 countries, including institutions like Peking University, Shanghai

University, and Tokyo University, GAFSU aims to foster collaborative research in foreign language education and regional studies as well as promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges among its members.

HUFS Hosts Town Hall Meeting with U.S. Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg

HUFS held a town hall meeting with U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Philip S. Goldberg on May 12, 2023, in Aekyung Hall of the International Building on the Seoul Campus.

Moderated by the chair of the Division of Language & Diplomacy (LD), Professor Kim Jin-Ah, the event featured a special lecture by Ambassador Goldberg on the theme “The U.S.-ROK Alliance at 70,” followed by a Q&A session with students. The town hall meeting was particularly meaningful in that Ambassador Goldberg emphasized the significance of reaching the diplomatic milestone right after the bilateral



summit to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the U.S.-South Korea alliance. Extending warm greetings to the student audience in the Korean language, he shared the reasons why he chose HUFS for his first speech after returning to Seoul from the summit: first, because HUFS students, driven by their global perspective, understand the complexity of current global issues; and second, because HUFS is one of the academic institutions that produce the most successful candidates for the Korean diplomatic service examination. During the town hall meeting, he stressed the importance of recognizing that the U.S.-South Korea alliance goes beyond the abstract notions covered in the news. He also encouraged the participating students to embrace a global mindset and actively pursue their academic and career goals, receiving warm applause from them.

University of Coimbra, Portugal

UC Stands Out Once Again in the Shanghai Ranking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects

The University of Coimbra (UC) has once again been recognized by the prestigious Shanghai Ranking, in its 2024 edition, as one of the world's best higher education institutions for research in scientific fields such as Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences (ranked 76-100), Civil Engineering (ranked 151-200) and Geography, Mechanical Engineering, Dentistry & Oral Health Sciences and Hospitality & Tourism Management (ranked 201-300).

As far as the other academic subjects assessed, the University of Coimbra stands in the 301-400 range in Ecology, Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Biological Sciences, Agricultural



Sciences and Agricultural Sciences and Medical Technology, and in the 401-500 range in Biotechnology, Human Biological Sciences and Economics.

University of Coimbra at the World Health Summit 2023

The University of Coimbra (UC) participated in the World Health Summit 2023 (WHS 2023), in Berlin, Germany from October 15 to 17. The World Health Summit is the leading international strategic forum on global health, designed to strengthen collaboration, promote open, science-based dialogue, and foster debate aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The UC was represented at this unique summit by the “Coimbra Health” consortium - made up of the UC and the Coimbra Hospital and University Centre (CHUC) - with the presence of the CHUC Chairperson of the Board, Carlos Santos; the Deputy Director of the UC Faculty of Medicine and Coordinator of the Coimbra Institute for Clinical and Biomedical Research, Henrique Girão; and the Coordinator of the UC R&D International Networks Unit, Jorge Figueira.



Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Silver Medal and Special Award for the Student Team iGEM of AUTH for their Innovative «Weapon» of Assisting in the Consequences of Forest Fires

The student interdisciplinary team of AUTH, “iGEM Thessaloniki,” earned a silver medal at the International Contest of Synthetic Biology, “iGEM 2023,” along with the special award for “Best Sustainable Development Impact.”

The team was honored with the “Best Sustainable Development Impact” award in the undergraduate teams category. The judges recognized that their research project aligns exceptionally well with the Sustainable Development Goals established by the UN in 2015 and is poised to make a positive impact on sustainable development. For more information: <https://newsbulletin247.com/opinion/437542.html>



«Inspireurope+»: A European Alliance against Discrimination, Prosecution, Harassment and the Violence that Researchers and Academics Might Face

On Monday 23rd of October, various high-ranking representatives from universities, boards of education, and other governmental institutes from South-Eastern Europe arrived at AUTH to participate in an event which was organized by the European research program, Inspireurope+.

The program's main purpose was to establish a strong European alliance against the discrimination, prosecution, harassment and violence that researchers and academics might face, such as displacement, threats to their careers or their lives, and to support them in their search for a safe working environment in Europe. Moreover, the program wanted to achieve the consolidation of the institutional



framework, so this human right can be used on a pan-European scale, promoting the principles of academic freedom.

More specifically, through various actions, Inspireurope+ aims to develop researchers' skills which are necessary for them to access funding and support on a European, national, and institutional level. The program also aims to raise the readiness and the capacity of the possible employment agencies (academic or non-academic) to welcome and support researchers in danger, but also encourage the creation of national programs for support and funding, offering the necessary know-how. The biggest goal of the program is to improve the relevant politics at a European level.

For more Information about Inspireurope+ programme in AUTH: <https://inspireurope.auth.gr/welcomeguide/>

Memorandum of Understanding between AUTH and UNICEF for the Foundation of a Center for Children's Rights in AUTH

On Tuesday, November 14, 2023, the Rector of AUTH and the Diplomatic Representative of UNICEF in Greece signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the foundation of a Center for Children's Rights at AUTH. With the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding, both parties sealed their shared commitment for



advocating and promoting children's rights in Greece, through knowledge production, research, data and documentation, the dissemination of children's rights, but also through their integration in academic, teaching, and research work.

Furthermore, the Memorandum also foresees the dissemination of information about children's rights using every conducive means, such as workshops, conferences, events for the public, and campaigns to raise awareness. Meanwhile, UNICEF will support the planning and the implementation of actions for professional development related to these themes and in collaboration with the central administration and the schools and departments of AUTH.

For more information: <https://www.unicef.org/greece/en/press-releases/unicef-and-aristotle-university-establish-%E2%80%AF-child-rights-centre-thessaloniki>

Ankara University, Türkiye

In the Disaster of the Century, We Heal Wounds Together

In Kahramanmaraş's Pazarcık and Elbistan districts, two earthquakes measuring 7.7 and 7.6 on the Richter scale occurred 9 hours apart on February 6, 2023. These earthquakes caused significant destruction in Kahramanmaraş, Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, Malatya, Kilis, Osmaniye, Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, and Elazığ. To address the aftermath, a mobilization effort began across Turkey, including at our University. Immediately following the disaster, the Ankara University Board of Management convened an extraordinary meeting and made strategic decisions regarding the crisis. Our students, academic and administrative staff, and alumni filled 9 trucks and 6 large aid vehicles with donations. These vehicles, accom-



panied by our staff representatives, were sent to various centers in the affected region. Additionally, a campaign for in-kind and cash donations was initiated to assist the earthquake victims. Around 2,000 people affected by the earthquake received treatment at Ibn Sina and Cebeci Hospitals.

Ankara University Increases Collaboration with Polish Universities

Focused on quality and excellence in internationalization, Ankara University continues its efforts to enhance collaborations with universities around the world. A delegation from Ankara University, including Rector Prof. Dr. Necdet Ünüvar, Coordinator of External Relations Prof. Dr. Özge Ülker, and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Prof. Dr. Begüm Yurdakök Dikmen conducted significant discussions with leading universities in Poland as part of these efforts. The delegation's first visit was to the University of Warsaw, with which Ankara University has a bilateral cooperation agreement. They met with Rector Prof. Dr. Alojzy Z. Nowak and his administration. During the meeting, discussions focused on ongoing and potential future collaborations between the two universities, particularly student exchanges between the Department of Polish Language and Literature at Ankara University's Faculty of Languages,



History and Geography, and the Department of Turkology at the University of Warsaw. Rector Prof. Dr. Alojzy Z. Nowak noted that the University of Warsaw and Ankara University could expand academic collaboration in various fields including the Polish language, tourism, politics, economics, physics, and mathematics. The Ankara University delegation then visited the Warsaw School of Economics and met with a team led by Vice-Rector for External Relations Prof. Dr. Jacek Prokop. Vice-Rector Prokop highlighted the close collaboration between the Warsaw School of Economics and the business world. Rector Ünüvar mentioned the possibility of joint projects between the Warsaw School of Economics and the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University. In the final university visit of the day, the delegation led by Rector Prof. Dr. Necdet Ünüvar visited the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. They exchanged ideas with Rector Prof. Dr. Michal Zasada and the university administration, particularly regarding future collaborations in fields such as veterinary science, agriculture, and big data.

Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran

ATU Organizes First National Competitions in International Relations Simulation

Thanks to the joint efforts made by the Vice Dean's Office for Research at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences and the ECO College of Insurance at Allameh Tabataba'i University (ATU), the first national competition in International Relations Simulation, themed "Simulation of the JCPOA in the Security Council," was organised at ATU. The event was convened at the library of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences and attended by Dr Abdollah Motamedi, ATU President; Dr Abbas Araghchi, Secretary of the Strategic Council for Foreign Relations; Dr Aliakbar Salehi, Vice President for Research at Iran's Academy of Sciences and former Pres-



ident of the Atomic Energy Organisation; Dr Majid Abbasi, Dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, and professors and students from universities of Tehran. At the beginning of the event, Dr Motamedi thanked the organizers and conveyed his best wishes to the students, stating that the organization of these competitions is an innovative measure: "I hope we will use the experience gained here and convene stronger, more comprehensive programs in the future. In the world today, international relations, influenced by major powers, have moved away from the principles of truth, justice, and fairness." ATU President emphasized the significance of knowledge in creating power, highlighting the role of students as future contributors to the Islamic Republic system.

He stressed the need for confident individuals who can actively engage in various arenas, including international relations, to build a strong Iran. Further, he emphasized the importance of the deterrent conditions created by the Islamic Republic of Iran, not only in the military sphere, but also in scientific, cultural, and cognitive fields, to safeguard against potential harm. He then criticized the world's response to the tragedies in the oppressed Gaza, attributing it to the flawed international relations governing the world today. In his con-

cluding speech, ATU President encouraged the students to advocate for the oppressed in the international arena and represent the Islamic Republic's voice. He also expressed hope for the establishment of international structures and behaviors that promote justice worldwide. Dr Majidreza Momeni, Vice Dean for Research at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences and the organizer of the competitions, then explained that the event aims to familiarize students with the complexities and challenges of negotiation in organizations and multilateral spaces. He underscored the significance of reviewing and reenacting crucial international agreements like the JCPOA to provide students with a profound understanding of international issues and the rules and complexities of global politics, preparing them to play a constructive role in future international negotiations. Noting that six teams from various Iranian universities participated in the event, Dr Momeni added that the event was being held for the first time, and they will try to convene the event at the international level and provide enhanced facilities in the following years. At the close of the competition, the team from ECO College of Insurance, ATU, secured first place, followed by the team from Islamic Azad University of Karaj. The International Studies Quarterly team also clinched the third position in this round of com-

petitions.

ATU Faculty Member Participates in International Conference, Visits Centers in Vienna

From 14 July to 4 August 2023, Dr Esmaeil Zaraii Zavaraki, Faculty Member at the Department of Educational Technology, Faculty of Psychology and Education, had a visit to Vienna, participated in the International Conference of EdMedia+Innovate Learning and delivered his paper on “The role of Integrated Learning Approach in the Interaction Process of Students with Special Educational Needs”. The conference has been held in different countries ever since 1987. The first round of this event was held in Canada, and last year the conference was convened in the United States. Dr Zaraii Zavaraki then had a visit to a number of academic and



scientific centers in Vienna, including the Educational Technologies Center, Teacher Training Center, Learning and Innovation Center, and the Center for Development and Promotion of Education and Learning. During his visit, Dr Zavaraki had a meeting with Professor Renate Motschnig, faculty member at the Faculty of Computer Science and Center for Teacher Education, University of Vienna.

Ca' Foscari University, Italy

AQUAGRANDA 2023: **Meetings and Dialogues around Tides**

Four years ago on November 12, Venice was submerged by 187 cm of water. It was an exceptional and disastrous tide which strained the delicate and precarious balance between lagoon, city, and community. The water destroyed infrastructures, stores, private homes, monuments, equipment, libraries, and laboratories; it challenged the economy of the city and of the lagoon, and its livability. Memory contained in various devices can take us back to those moments: photographs, videos, chats, audio and written messages present us with the digital traces of an entire community. The Aquagranda project started in 2020 as a “digital community memory”, an archive of digital information and creative output bridging across science, art, and citizenship. It was developed in the framework of Odyceus, a European Union Horizon 2020 research project. The role of collectors in this endeavor has been assigned to Ca' Foscari and to the Venetian District for Research and Innovation (DVRI). AquaGranda is in its third edition, held between Nov. 12 and Dec. 12 in a series of meetings and dialogues



around tides. First-hand experiences, textual, visual, audio, and multimedia materials on recent climate events will come together in an exhibition moving around town on a regular ACTV vaporetto. “AquaGranda is not only an archive, but also an active memory of the Venetian community. It is an evolving project with a goal: bringing citizens into a discussion on the relationship between the city, the lagoon, and the tides, with an eye to the future,” according to Professor Massimo Warglien, scientific director of the project. “From the outset, AquaGranda has seen collaboration with artists as a means to bring scientific reflection closer to a shared emotional experience. It is an award-winning, innovative citizen science project that wants to grow and open up internationally.”



Department of Management Accredited by EQUIS

The Department of Management at Ca' Foscari University of Venice has been awarded the prestigious international EQUIS accreditation, issued by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). This certifies the excellence of the Department, now known internationally as Venice School of Management (VSM). The EQUIS certification - issued to only 1% of the Business Schools in the world engaged in training and development of management studies - thus places VSM on a par with 215 accredited institutes in the world. The parameters considered include internationalization, quality of teaching and innovative academic programs, training opportunities for students, excellence in research, deep and solid synergy with local businesses, and the inter-

national network of the School and its alumni. Venice School of Management joins a group of five Italian business schools already accredited by EQUIS, becoming the second public department in Italy to obtain this recognition. EQUIS is the most comprehensive accreditation system for business schools at a global level. Based on a rigorous review process, it audits the quality of business and management schools by verifying high standards in areas such as internationalization, composition of faculty and students, structure of the academic programs, and good practices in sustainability and inclusion. The school's growth strategy and its ability to attract students, academics and professionals from all over the world was also positively assessed. VSM's accreditation process lasted more than three years, and required a profound transformation to bring the Department up to the required standards of excellence. This transformation was made possible by intense and efficient teamwork, and it culminated in the audit visit which took place this year in September. The audit ascertained VSM's top level in the study environment, the portfolio of courses and research activities, and in the relations with the local community.

Source:

AQUAGRANDA 2023: Meetings and dialogues around tides,
https://www.unive.it/pag/16584/?tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=1

5150&cHash=df092d8d49a86c7d3b7522e31771e912

The Department of Management is accredited by EQUIS,
https://www.unive.it/pag/16584/?tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=15196&cHash=972a2b90c011cf4e7654c34a7fa9ae1c

Chapman University, United States

Chapman Announces \$1 Million Gift from Doy Henley for Innovation

At Chapman University's annual Winterfest holiday celebration on Nov. 29, the man who founded the beloved event gave his newest gift to Chapman. At the event, Chapman unveiled a \$1 million gift from Board of Trustees Chairman Emeritus Doy Henley that will endow a fund for strategic innovation initiatives at the Argyros College of Business and Economics.

"During the past several decades, our alumni have been thriving in the business community and increasingly taking on positions of leadership within various companies and organizations," said Henley, who owned several



manufacturing companies. “I’m proud to support our students and Dean Henrik Cronqvist as the Argyros College continues towards its goal of becoming a Top 50 business school.” New innovation initiatives will help Argyros continue to distinguish itself and reach the Top 50, Cronqvist said. “The new fund will support new and innovative research our faculty is doing and help students accelerate their careers,” he said. Argyros’ new Leadership Crisis Challenge and enhanced Career Scholars Program are examples of recent innovations, he said. The career program provides individualized coaching and mentoring to help students accelerate their careers. Faculty support includes the resources to publish research in top academic journals and sending faculty to present at conferences. “Doy’s visionary leadership and generosity have, in many ways, shaped our university, and this new gift will keep Chapman at the vanguard of universities that meet the needs of businesses now and into the future,” said President Daniele C. Struppa, who awarded Henley the Presidential Medal, Chapman’s highest honor, on Nov. 15.

Creating Global Citizens: Empowering Underserved Students to Explore the World

Study abroad programs have traditionally offered students opportunities for personal

growth, academic enrichment and a deeper understanding of the world. However, the path to studying abroad can be filled with obstacles for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Underserved students often face unique challenges when thinking about studying abroad. Financial constraints, familial responsibilities or a limited access to resources and services can deter them from pursuing these opportunities. “I think it is very important for students and families to understand that we are here to help break down the barriers,” said Kristin Beavers, director of global education at Chapman University’s Center for Global Education (CGE). “We have developed plans for helping all of our underserved students to ensure they have access to resources and support that will allow them to travel abroad.” This year, 703 Chapman University students studied abroad following a two-year lull during the COVID-19 pandemic. “This is a great number for a university of our size,” said Beavers. “The number of students



traveling abroad this year was comparable to the number of students we have sent in previous years. What you'll see is that the composition of students sent abroad closely reflects the diversity of the university as a whole." Through initiatives such as the Chapman Promising Futures Program, Gilman Scholarship Program, Diverse International Women of Color Study Abroad Scholarship and more, Chapman provides tailored support, mentorship and financial assistance to underserved students aspiring to study abroad.

Source:

Chapman Announces \$1 Million Gift from Doy Henley for Innovation

<https://news.chapman.edu/2023/11/29/chapman-announces-1-million-gift-from-doy-henley-for-innovation/>

Creating Global Citizens: Empowering Underserved Students to Explore the World,

<https://news.chapman.edu/2023/10/25/creating-global-citizens-empowering-underserved-students-to-explore-the-world/>

University of Malaya

Aerobics and Kayaking Activities with UM Management and Chancery Staff 2023

A vibrant morning on August 16, 2023, at the crack of dawn – 7:45 am, to be precise. Something exciting was about to unfold right in the heart of the Chancellery's foyer. It wasn't your typical early morning scene – it was a gathering that felt more like a mini-adventure with colleagues. Led by none other than the Vice Chancellor, a dynamic crew of around 50 folks showed up, including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation), some seasoned staff, and the gang from various corners of the Chancellery. The action kicked off with an energetic aerobic session that was the brain-child of the incredibly skilled Ms. Ferlynda Fa-



zleen Jamaluddin, an Academic Development and Enhancement Centre (ADeC) superhero. Tunes pumped, feet shuffled, and laughter echoed through the air as people got moving. It wasn't just about getting fit – it was about shaking off the cobwebs and having a blast. For those who had been more cozy with their desks lately, the exercise brought a mix of relaxation and relief. As the clock struck 8:15 am, the spotlight shifted to the nearby UM Varsity Lake, where the gang was in for a treat – kayaking time! Imagine the scene: kayaks in the water, sun glinting off the lake, and faces lit up with excitement. Making it even cooler were three top-notch instructors – Mr. Lotfi Amir, Mr. Shamsudin, and Mr. Azizir – from the Sports Services Division. They had the scoop on safety and how to paddle like a pro. Over the next 1.5 hours, it was all about soaking in the view – the tranquil lake, feathered friends like geese and ducks wading along the banks – it was like stepping into a nature postcard. Teamwork was the name of the game, especially with tandem kayaks that made folks row in sync and high-five for every paddle conquered together. But hey, let's rewind a bit and dive into why these shindigs matter. Those moments of free-spirited fun do more than just make you sweat and laugh. They're like a secret weapon against the stress monsters lurking around the corner.

They connect people, let them swap stories, and build friendships that don't just stop at the water cooler. And here's the twist: this isn't just about burning calories. It's a bit like a mental power-up. Stepping away from desks and meetings, diving into adventures like kayaking, they reset your brain and give your creativity a nudge. You come back to work feeling sharper and ready to rock. This whole deal wasn't just a one-time spectacle. Nope, it's part of a bigger plan, one that the Vice-Chancellor and the Chancellery crew cooked up to keep the good times rolling. This is just the start; a teaser of the awesomeness they've got in store for more memorable escapades. Because, let's face it, a happy team is a powerhouse team. It's all about work hard, play hard, and come together for the win.

Source:

AEROBICS AND KAYAKING ACTIVITIES WITH UM
MANAGEMENT AND CHANCELERY STAFF 2023,

<https://www.um.edu.my/news/aerobics-and-kayaking-activities-with-um-management-and-chancellery-staff-2023>

University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh City National University hosts Korean Cultural Festival

On October 27 and 28, the “Korean Cultural Festival - Hangeul 2023” was held at the Student Cultural House in the urban area of Ho Chi Minh City National University, attracting over 1,000 students. Participating in the Festival, students were involved in numerous interesting activities, namely: playing Korean folk games, making kimbap and enjoying dishes at the food booth, wearing the Korean traditional costumes at the Hanbok booth, etc. There was also a consulting booth for students who wished to study in Korea. There were also two workshops: one on calligraphy led by Korean speaker Hong Sung-ran, a calligraphy artist



with 40 years of expertise, and the other on Korean makeup led by expert Seo Min Ji. The workshops provided students with exposure to traditional Korean values. The “Korean Cultural Festival - Hangeul 2023” was organized by King Sejong Academy Center Ho Chi Minh 6 in collaboration with Ho Chi Minh City Student Cultural House, Youth Union & Student Association of the Korean Studies Department, the Club from the Department of Theater and Cinema, under the Faculty of Literature of the USSH, VNU-HCM, to commemorate the 577th anniversary of the birth of the Korean language (October 9, 1446 - October 9, 2023).

Write for us

SILKROADIA is the official webzine of the Silk-Road Universities Network (SUN). We have more than 800,000 subscribers including professors, researchers, students, presidents, rectors, and chancellors of universities & research institutions located along the land and maritime Silk Roads. We welcome your articles and images on any of the topics related to the Silk Roads. The topics are those mentioned below but not limited to:

Culture on the Silk Roads: religion, local cuisine, artwork, jewelry, toys, pottery, dance, music, musical instruments, traditional / contemporary dress, types of dwelling, festivals, rituals, weddings, funerals, taboos.

Heritage on the Silk Roads: archaeological / historical heritage sites, literature, paintings, statues and sculptures.

Travel on the Silk Roads: natural wonders, markets, hotels, caravan-serais, transportation.

Any interesting and diverse stories about people, places and events in your area, including the life of ordinary people and interview.

*All articles and images shall be original and not infringe upon copyright rules. The working language is English and contributors' contact information must be included.

Please send to sunwebzine@gmail.com

SILKROADIA seeks student reporters

SILKROADIA is looking for students who are willing to write articles about the Silk Roads and other topics of their interest.

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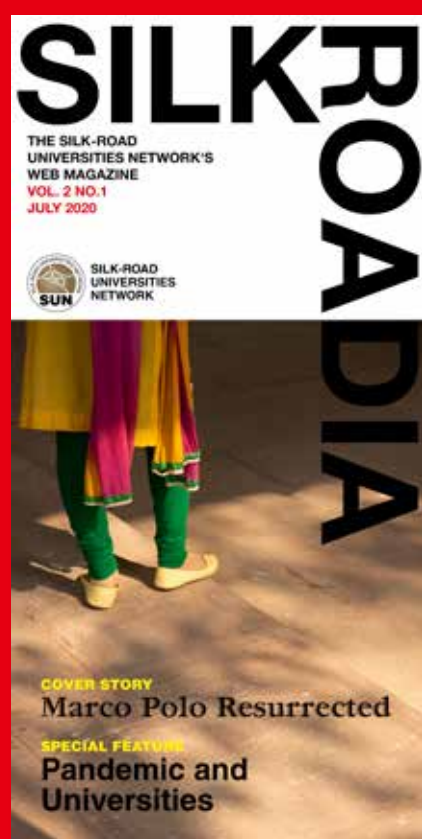
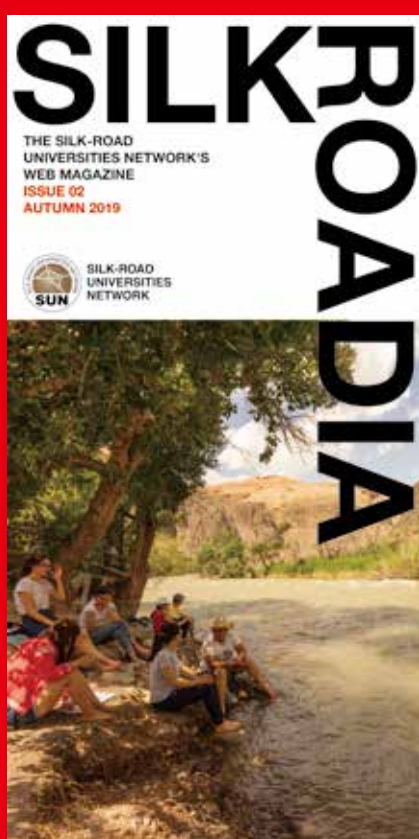
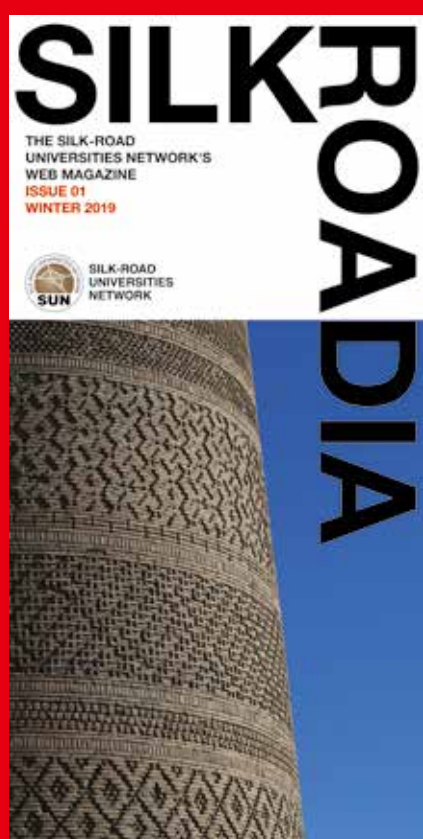
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SILKROADIA, the official webzine of the Silk-Road Universities Network, is a biannual publication which was launched in 2019. All the editions published so far are available at the SUN website.

As the official publication of SUN, ***SILKROADIA*** aims to serve as an effective medium of communications among the SUN Family members and between SUN and the outside world.

In order to fulfill its mission, ***SILKROADIA*** features a variety of interesting, informative and insightful articles and images, most of them provided by professors and students of the SUN member universities and institutes. The contents vary from in-depth academic articles and com-

mentaries authored by experts to easy-to-enjoy stories on heritage and travel on the Silk Roads. We are proud of having published genuinely original contents – like the imaginary interview which highlighted people like Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, the legendary travelers and adventurers who are identified with the ancient Silk Roads.

Such an abundance of interesting contents on **SILKROADIA** draws a lot of readers from around the world. The webzine already boasts of a regular audience of about 800,000 people, including the faculty members and students of the 82 member universities and institutes in 65 cities of 28 countries along the Silk Roads. This is one of the reasons we began thinking about the potential of **SILKROADIA** as a potential place for advertisements.

Carrying advertisements on **SILKROADIA** has two objectives: First, advertisement revenue will certainly help SUN stand on its own financially, which has become more urgent in the wake of the ceasing of support from the Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Government. Second, advertisements on **SILKROADIA** will help the webzine raise its standard to a higher level. Good publications draw good advertisers and a genuinely popular publication cannot go without advertisements.

It is against this backdrop that **SILKROADIA** will carry advertisements from the next issue, which is expected to be published around June 2021. The first potential advertisers could be member universities and institutes of SUN who wish to promote their academic programs, exchange of students and other international programs and events. The advertisement pages of course will be open to those outside SUN, including educational associations, organizations and companies.

Details, including the rates and formats, will be released soon, which will be delivered to member universities and institutes and outside organizations through the official communication channel of the SUN Secretariat and **SILKROADIA**.

We expect active support from SUN members. Thank you.

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