

PROMOTING THE SPIRIT OF THE SILK ROAD AND BUILDING A COMMUNITY  
OF HUMAN DESTINY

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**Abstract:** The Silk Road Spirit is a valuable asset of human civilization and an important member of the spiritual spectrum of the Chinese Communists. With the development of the times, the Silk Road Spirit has accumulated the rich connotation of "peace and cooperation, openness and tolerance, mutual learning and learning, mutual benefit and win-win", carrying the aspiration of the world's people for peace and development. The world today is facing a major change that has not been seen in a century. The world economic landscape, the international power landscape, the global governance system and rules of governance, and human civilization and modes of interaction are undergoing great development and change. At the same time, protectionism and populism are on the rise, counter-globalisation is on the rise and competition among major powers is intense. Against this backdrop, the world is full of uncertainties and instabilities. In the face of the world problem of "what is happening to the world and what are we going to do about it", the spirit of the Silk Road has brought together the consensus of all countries on development, illuminated the path of humanity and taken on the important mission of building a community of human destiny in the new era.

**Keywords:** Silk Road Spirit, Community of Human Destiny, The "Belt and Road"

**Introduction.**

On 13 September 2013, Chinese leader Comrade Xi Jinping first proposed the "Silk Road Spirit" at the 13th meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and on 22 June 2016, in a speech at the Legislative Chamber of the Supreme Assembly of Uzbekistan, Xi Jinping emphasized the relationship between the Silk Road Spirit and the community of human destiny. In 2021, the centenary year of the founding of the Communist Party of China, the Spirit of the Silk Road was incorporated into the spiritual genealogy of the Chinese Communists, carrying the wisdom and emotions of the Chinese people in their exchanges with the world. From the ancient Silk Road to the major initiative of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and tolerance, mutual learning and learning, and mutual benefit and win-win situation is inherent in the same lineage, which has injected inexhaustible spiritual impetus for all countries in the world to join hands in building a community of human destiny.

**1. Peaceful cooperation**

Peace and development are the themes of the times in today's world. At the same time, the world is undergoing major changes unprecedented in a century, the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial change has brought about fierce competition like never before, and global issues such as climate change and epidemics have had an unprecedented impact on human society. Under the new historical conditions, it is of great significance to inherit and carry forward the Silk Road spirit of "peace and cooperation" in order to promote the development of friendly and cooperative relations among countries.

Looking back in history, China has been a peace-loving country since ancient times. More than 2,100 years ago, Zhang Qian of the Han Dynasty, on a mission of peace and friendship, made two trips to Central Asia, opening the door to friendly relations between China and the Central

Asian countries and opening up the Silk Road, a road linking East and West and Europe and Asia. Formed in the Qin and Han dynasties, flourishing in the Tang and Song dynasties, and transformed in the Ming and Qing dynasties, the ancient Maritime Silk Road has been an important bridge between the economic and cultural exchanges between East and West since its inception. During the Tang and Song dynasties, the route from Guangzhou to the countries of the Persian Gulf via the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean was the longest ocean route in the world at that time. During the Yuan Dynasty, Quanzhou became the world's largest port, with maritime trade reaching as far east as Japan and as far west as Southeast Asia, Persia, Arabia and Africa. During the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He led more than 200 ships of the Chinese Ming Dynasty across the world's seas, visiting various countries, strengthening the ties between China and the world and promoting exchanges between eastern and western civilisations. The ancient Silk Road was a road of peace and cooperation, where countries along the route worked together to promote the progress of human civilisation, facilitate mutual exchanges and cooperation between different peoples and cultures, and became a friendly symbol of the integration and development of Eastern and Western civilisations, and a valuable historical and cultural heritage shared by all peoples of the world. The world today is undergoing profound changes, the international landscape is undergoing profound adjustments, the number of factors affecting regional and global instability is increasing, hotspot issues are emerging one after another, and the multipolarization process is developing in a tortuous manner. The global economy is recovering slowly and the momentum of development is insufficient. Against such a backdrop, the more people of all countries aspire for peaceful and cooperative development, so that they can emerge from the gloom and lead a happy life as soon as possible. As far as the countries along the route are concerned, most of them are at an important stage of transformation and development, facing unprecedented international and domestic challenges. The only way to win more development opportunities and win the future is to expand regional cooperation with a broader mind and a broader vision. Over the past decade, China has drawn wisdom and strength from the ancient Silk Road, based on the times, rooted in reality, vigorously promoted the Silk Road spirit of "peace and cooperation", evoked the historical memory of the countries along the Belt and Road, resolved differences through dialogue, settled international disputes through peaceful negotiations, planned high-quality development and built a new development pattern, and achieved fruitful results. Whether at the global or regional level, consensus has been forged to promote greater scope, higher level and deeper cooperation, creating a policy synergy to promote common global development. By the end of 2021, China had signed more than 200 cooperation documents with 145 countries and 32 international organizations<sup>1</sup>, covering investment, trade, finance, science and technology, social, humanities and people's livelihood. By the end of 2022, Chinese enterprises had invested a total of RMB 397.9 billion in cooperation zones in countries along the Belt and Road, creating 421,000 local jobs. From 2013 to 2022, China's import and export with countries along the Belt and Road will grow at an average annual rate of 8.6%. In 2022, China's import and export with the countries along the Belt and Road will increase by 19.4% to RMB 13.83 trillion, 11.7 percentage points higher than the overall growth rate.<sup>2</sup> By the end of 2021,

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<sup>1</sup> The "Belt and Road" construction has been fruitful in promoting the formation of a comprehensive pattern of opening up to the outside world, National Bureau of Statistics, [http://www.stats.gov.cn/xxgk/jd/sjkd2020/202210/t20221009\\_1889044.html](http://www.stats.gov.cn/xxgk/jd/sjkd2020/202210/t20221009_1889044.html), 9 October 2022.

<sup>2</sup> China's trade with ASEAN, RCEP member countries and countries along the "Belt and Road" in 2022, Economic and Commercial Section in ASEAN Missions, <http://asean.mofcom.gov.cn/article/jmxw/202301/20230103379195>.

China has established scientific and technological cooperation with 84 co-construction countries, supported 1,118 joint research projects, invested a total of RMB 2.99 billion, and initiated the construction of 53 joint laboratories in agriculture, new energy, health and other fields.<sup>3</sup> Under the impact of the new pneumonia epidemic, China has launched the "One Belt, One Road" vaccine partnership initiative with 31 partners to actively assist in the fight against the epidemic. In 2020, China provided protective clothing, masks, respirators and other large quantities of epidemic prevention materials to 150 countries and 13 international organisations, and dispatched 37 teams of medical experts to 34 countries. By the end of 2021, China has provided over 2 billion doses of New Crown vaccine to more than 120 countries and international organisations. These achievements could not have been achieved without a peaceful and stable environment, and more importantly, without the sincere cooperation of all countries. With the development of the times, the spirit of the Silk Road is constantly being given a richer connotation, continuing to guide the direction and inject momentum into the building of a community of human destiny, interests and development.

## **2. Open and inclusive**

2000 years ago, the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi said in Zhuangzi Qishui that "the water of the world is greater than the sea, and all rivers are included in it", which fully demonstrates the traditional concept of openness and tolerance of the ancient Chinese. This traditional gene is deeply embedded in the blood of the Chinese people. The ancient Silk Road became a link for cultural, ideological, technological and commercial exchanges between East and West, becoming a road of peace, culture, trade and civilisation that embodied the idea of openness and tolerance. However, with the development of modern civilisation, the logic of capital has brought more and more problems to human society, with periodic economic crises, confrontation between man and man, man and nature, and the destabilisation of human society. For example, a few countries are still pursuing power politics and unilateralist policies of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries in order to maintain global hegemony and pursue their own selfish interests; local conflicts and unrest are frequent; populism and trade protectionism are gaining momentum; anti-globalization" thinking is surging; "withdrawal", "abrogation" and "decoupling" and other "anti-globalization" practices are popping up; the three-year new epidemic continues to hit; global poverty and environmental problems remain serious; and the level of openness in the world continues to decline. In the face of this series of problems, taking an open and inclusive path has become an inevitable choice for human society, a brand new concept to overcome the flaws of capital logic, and a proper way to build a community of human destiny. In April 2021, President Xi Jinping stressed in his video keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) 2021 Annual Conference that we will work together with all interested parties willing to participate in a spirit of openness and inclusiveness to make the Belt and Road a "road to poverty reduction" and a "road to growth", making a positive contribution to the common prosperity of mankind. The "open and inclusive" spirit of the Silk Road, which has been inherited from the Chinese people for thousands of years, has evolved with the times and taken on a new lustre. It is an important member of the spiritual spectrum of the Communist Party of China and provides the right direction for the harmonious development of all countries in the world, guiding them to overcome doubts and barriers, seek common ground while reserving differences and develop

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Shtml, 13 January 2023.

<sup>3</sup> "China Belt and Road Trade and Investment Development Report 2022", Half Moon, [http://www.banyuetan.org/qyzz/detail/20221002/1000200033137541664704093201027282\\_1.html](http://www.banyuetan.org/qyzz/detail/20221002/1000200033137541664704093201027282_1.html), October 2, 2022.

together, thus making humanity more harmonious and the world more colourful. To be open and tolerant is not only a kind of tolerance, a kind of world-oriented vision, but also a kind of thinking to learn from all, specifically, its connotation is to look at the world, open-minded, learn and absorb advanced experience and excellent civilizational achievements, create an open culture of seeking common ground while reserving differences, tolerance, harmonious coexistence and common development, gather capital, technology, talents, information and other factor resources at home and abroad, and accelerate the internationalization of the city. Countries need to take into account the actual situation of their countries, broaden their horizons, improve their horizons, update their concepts, think big, grasp the big picture, focus on the big issues, vigorously break down conceptual barriers, correctly view different ideas, different concepts, different cultures and different aspirations of different countries, seek common ground in differences while reserving differences, and coexist harmoniously in diversity, profoundly grasp the development and changes in the international and domestic political and economic situation and social situation, grasp the direction of development, find the right entry point and focus of work, deeply understand and grasp, and solidly promote practice, so as to lay a solid foundation for building a community of human destiny.

### **3. Learning from each other**

To learn from each other means to learn from each other and learn from each other on the basis of respect for differences in civilizational diversity, diversity of paths and uneven levels of development, to learn from each other's strengths and complement each other's weaknesses, and to improve together.<sup>4</sup> The history of human development is also a history of the symbiosis of multiple civilisations. The formation, development and prosperity of human civilisation cannot be achieved without exchange and mutual appreciation between civilisations. There are more than 200 countries and regions, more than 2,500 ethnic groups and many religions in the world. Different histories and national conditions, different peoples and customs have given birth to different civilisations. Civilisations communicate through diversity, learn from each other through exchange and develop through mutual appreciation. Chinese leader Comrade Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed that "the exchange and mutual appreciation of civilisations is an important driving force for the progress of human civilisation and the peaceful development of the world. Humanity has always moved forward through the encounter and knowledge of different peoples and cultures." China has a long history and civilisation of more than 5,000 years, and the words 'harmony and difference' and 'harmony and coexistence' illustrate the way in which different civilisations get along. The Silk Road spirit of "mutual learning and mutual appreciation" is an important embodiment of the excellent traditional Chinese culture, which follows the objective laws of human civilization, deepens the understanding of the exchange and mutual appreciation of world civilizations, responds to the common desire of people from all countries for interconnection, and is of great significance in promoting the building of a community of human destiny.

However, after the end of the Cold War, as the US hegemonic system was implemented around the world, a hurricane of "clash of civilisations theory" was created in the academic world. He emphasised the superiority of Western civilisation over the rest of the world's civilisations and attributed all international political conflicts to a clash of civilisations. This kind of materialism, which distorts reality, to guide the development of international relations is a serious violation of the Silk Road spirit of "mutual learning and mutual appreciation" and a serious obstacle to the process of building a community of human destiny. In the Rites of Passage, it is said: "All things nurture together without harming each other, and the Way runs

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<sup>4</sup> Li Houqiang Deng Ziqiang. Carrying forward the spirit of the Silk Road, People's Daily, 2 July 2014.

parallel without contradicting each other", meaning to emphasise that each individual and group has its own characteristics and to oppose the imposition of a single principle of value on different individuals, peoples or nations. "Parallelism" and "parallelism" mean that different things not only coexist, but also coexist equally and mutually beneficially and develop together. Throughout history, the ancient Silk Road has spanned the birthplaces of Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian and Chinese civilisations, and the settlements of people of different nations and colours, becoming a model of civilisational exchange, mutual learning and coexistence in the history of humanity. Through the Silk Road, Chinese papermaking, gunpowder, printing and compasses were spread to Europe via the Arab region, which in turn introduced Arab astronomy, calendars and medicine to China. Today, through the Belt and Road, mutual trust between China and Central Asia has grown politically and economically, cooperation in the security sector has deepened, and new economic growth poles have been nurtured. The huge potential of the great maritime economic corridor has been further explored, with the continued development of maritime Silk Road connectivity, economic and trade cooperation, humanistic exchanges and more. These are vivid manifestations of the Silk Road spirit of "mutual learning and mutual appreciation". The countries along the Silk Road not only traded goods and commodities, but also respected each other's culture and religious beliefs in their cultural exchanges, jointly promoting the progress of human civilisation. It has been proven that only through dialogue and exchange among civilisations, drawing on their strengths and complementing their weaknesses, and seeking common ground while preserving differences, can we remove mutual doubts and barriers, achieve common development and promote the progress of human civilisation. The spirit of the Silk Road transcends time and space, transcends national boundaries, and is a powerful response to the "theory of the superiority of civilisations", "the theory of the clash of civilisations" and "the end of history", a spiritual guide for rejecting arrogance and prejudice and building friendly relations among nations on the basis of equality, mutual respect and appreciation, and mutual learning, a cultural foundation for building consensus among nations to build a better world, and a spiritual impetus for building a community of human destiny.

#### **4. Mutual benefits**

Mutual benefit and win-win means taking into account the interests and concerns of all parties, seeking the point of convergence of interests and the maximum convention of cooperation, adhering to the principle of mutual benefit and win-win, opposing narrow national egoism and hegemony, and not engaging in win-win for me and lose for you, but achieving win-win for both sides. The Silk Road spirit of "mutual benefit and win-win" embodies the correct concept of righteousness and profit. In the framework of the community of human destiny, instead of engaging in a zero-sum game or an either/or way of thinking, we should realise the interests and common interests of all countries and pursue common development. In today's society, the interests of countries around the world are increasingly intertwined, and various issues of global interest such as climate change, cyber security and counter-terrorism are becoming more and more prominent. There is an old Chinese saying that it is better to be happy alone than to be happy with others. Adherence to mutual benefit and win-win situation is the fundamental guarantee for building a community of human destiny and the source of power to promote the development of all countries. National interests are the most fundamental motivation for the external behaviour of states. The fundamental purpose of cooperation between states is to promote and safeguard national interests. Therefore, only when individual countries and regions enjoy mutual benefits and prosperity will they be able to give lasting impetus to cooperative development. Only in a good international environment that is inclusive and win-win can a country participate equally in international affairs and develop a fairer, more

reasonable and efficient system of international rules, so that all countries and their people around the world can gain a greater sense of access, happiness and security from it. The Silk Road spirit of "mutual benefit and win-win" illuminates the prospects for peaceful cooperation and mutual benefit for countries along the Silk Road, and lights up the beacon for building a community of human destiny. In today's world, the interests of all countries are highly integrated, with one prosperity and one loss, and human society has become a community of destiny where you have me and I have you. The Silk Road spirit of "mutual benefit and win-win" is conducive to building consensus and strength among countries along the route, developing partnerships and creating a community of interests, destiny and responsibility. The Silk Road spirit of "mutual benefit and win-win" is conducive to gathering the consensus and strength of countries along the route, developing national partnerships and jointly building a community of interests, destiny and responsibility with mutual political trust, economic integration and cultural tolerance. President Xi Jinping has put forward a series of initiatives and propositions, such as promoting policy communication, facility connectivity, smooth trade, financial integration and people-to-people exchanges, building a Green Silk Road, a Health Silk Road, an Intellectual Silk Road and a Peace Silk Road, and constructing mutually beneficial cooperation networks, new modes of cooperation and diversified cooperation platforms, which fully demonstrate China's active practice of the Silk Road spirit. This has injected powerful positive energy into a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation at its core and the building of a community of human destiny.

It is difficult for those who lift alone to rise, but it is easy for those who walk in crowds to move. The spirit of the Silk Road is of great significance in promoting the spiritual integration of people from different countries and regions and in building a community of human destiny. At present, the international situation is complex and volatile, making it all the more necessary for countries to respect each other's cultures, strengthen mutual understanding, exchange and cooperation, and enhance mutual political trust, economic integration and cultural tolerance between them. In this regard, under the guidance of the Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and tolerance, mutual learning and learning, mutual benefit and win-win situation, we should promote mutual appreciation of civilisations, respect the choice of path, insist on win-win cooperation and advocate dialogue and peace, so as to promote the democratisation of international relations, build multi-level cooperation mechanisms and platforms, raise the level of exchange and mutual appreciation among civilisations, enhance the resilience and depth of relations between countries, and move forward together towards the ambitious goal of building a community of human destiny.

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