

Training Handbook for Silk Road Heritage Guides



This project is funded by
the European Union

Revised and extended edition



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INTRODUCTION

Acclaimed as the “greatest route in the history of mankind”, the ancient Silk Road formed the first bridge between the East and the West and was an important vehicle for trade between the ancient empires of China, Central and Western Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Rome. The Silk Road was more than just trade routes; it symbolized the multiple benefits arising from cultural exchange. As a result, countless historic and cultural sites remain along the network of famous routes. Today these routes or “heritage corridors”, as they have been identified by UNESCO, create incredible opportunities for tourism.

Guides are ambassadors for their destination and are often a visitor’s only local contact during their stay in a foreign country. While interpreting sites and imparting valuable knowledge, guides create memories for visitors, leaving lifelong impressions and influencing travellers’ behaviour and opinions of a destination. Guides are in a unique position to provide an authentic, local perspective on a country and culture, promoting cultural understanding and peace in that they are experts in their own culture and history.¹

Guides’ influence on visitor behaviour is particularly important in sensitive or protected sites. Tourist guides on the Silk Road play an important role in keeping alive the history and incredible cultures of the region. In order to be able to play their role fully, guides in the Silk Road countries need to understand the overall history and culture of the Silk Road, as well as to be able to conduct guided tours in a professional manner, in keeping with international standards.

This handbook is designed as a source and reference book for a training course of the Silk Road heritage guides working in the Silk Road countries. Upon successful completion, the participants will be certified as Silk Road heritage guides, helping to achieve the goals stipulated in the UNESCO/UNWTO Silk Roads Heritage Corridors Project.

I. Newlands, R. (2013), ‘The Role of the Tourist Guide in Promotion of Dialogue between Civilisations’, in: Wohlmuther, C. and Wintersteiner, W. (2013), *Jahrbuch Friedenskultur 2013: International Handbook on Tourism and Peace*, Drava Verlag, Klagenfurt, pp. 247–255.

01 • THE SILK ROAD



Beautiful Curvy roads on Old Silk Route, Silk trading route between China and India. Sikkim, India. © Rudra Narayan Mitra / Shutterstock.com

A Short History

The Silk Road was an interconnected web of routes linking the ancient societies of Asia and the Near East, which contributed to the development of many of the world's great civilizations. The whole of the route is more than the sum of its constituent parts. Flourishing in particular between the 2nd century B.C.E. and end of the 16th century C.E., this network of routes started initially from Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, China) and ultimately stretched from East Asia to the Mediterranean in the west, and down into the Indian subcontinent.²

The network facilitated and generated a two-way intercontinental trade in a dazzling array of trading goods. Of these, Chinese silk and porcelain were amongst the most valuable. However the trade included materials such as precious metals and stones, ceramics, perfumes, ornamental woods and spices in return for cotton and wool textiles, glass, wine, amber, carpets and horses. This trade connected various civilizations, persisted over centuries and was sustained by a system of caravanserais, commercial settlements, trade cities and forts along its entire length of more than 50,000 km, which makes it arguably the longest cultural route in the history of humanity.

However, more than trading goods were transported over the network of the Silk Road. Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Nestorian Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Manicheanism spread over the Silk Road. Scientific and technological developments were also diffused by these routes. From China came paper, printing, gunpowder, cast iron, the crossbow, the magnetic compass and porcelain. Engineering developments (particularly bridge building), the cultivation and working of cotton, tapestry weaving, calendrical sciences, viniculture, as well as certain glazing and metal working techniques spread from Central Asia, Middle East, the Mediterranean and the West. There was also a substantial two-way exchange of medical knowledge and medicines, as well as of what are now seen as universal fruit and other food crops.

Some countries had a monopoly on certain materials e.g., China for silk to Italy. Goods were transported by pack animals and river boats by many merchants. This resulted

2. Williams, T. (2014), *The Silk Roads: An ICOMOS Thematic Study*, International Council of Monuments and Sites, Charenton-le-Pont.

in the development of cities, religious centres and the sharing of technology and knowledge. The goods varied in value and included wine, copper, tin, coral, topaz, silk and silver from as early as the 1st century C.E. High value, low weight goods like silk and spices were very important. Some goods were moved over long distances but the majority travelled shorter distances to regional markets.

There were many different routes, stretching both east–west and north–south, which varied in length. These routes included both land and sea routes which may have been interlinked at different times³. There is evidence that there was long distance trade as far back as the 4th millennium B.C.E. and silk was being transported from 1500 B.C.E.

There was an increase in momentum in the 1st century B.C.E. to 3rd century C.E. with the Roman, Parthian, Kushan and Han empires. Activity peaked in the 8th and 9th century C.E. with the Islamic, Tang and Byzantine Empires. There was a further resurgence in the 13th and 14th century C.E.

There has been relatively little exploration of the sites along the Silk Road and evidence is variable. Place names and languages also changed through different periods and over time. The most readable account is that of Marco Polo in his travels in China from 1271–1292. There are a number of online resources available for further research, referred to in the annexes of the *Silk Road Thematic Study*⁴, which also provides maps and geographical information.

Silk Road heritage corridors study

In recent years a team of experts at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and University College London (UCL) have conducted ground-breaking research into the sites and routes of the Silk Road as part of the transnational Silk Roads World Heritage Nomination project. With an unprecedented level of collaboration between 15 state parties, two World Heritage nominations for the Silk Roads heritage corridors in Central Asia and China were submitted to UNESCO:

- Chang'an-Tianshan heritage corridor crossing Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and China, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in June 2014; and
- Penjikent–Samarkand–Poykent transnational heritage corridor crossing Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Roadmap for Development

In 2013 in anticipation of a surge in traveller awareness and interest caused by the serial nomination of these two heritage corridors, the UNESCO/UNWTO Silk Roads Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy was launched.

Since then, the The Chang'an-Tianshan heritage corridor was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2014. The Penjikent–Samarkand–Poykent transnational heritage corridor is under redevelopment.

3. World Tourism Organization (2019), *The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Tourism Opportunities and Impacts*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284418749>; World Tourism Organization (2018), *Western Silk Road Roadmap*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284419494>
 4. Williams, T. (2014), *The Silk Roads: An ICOMOS Thematic Study*, International Council of Monuments and Sites, Charenton-le-Pont.

A key part of the strategy is the Roadmap for Development, which was created to provide a comprehensive and sustainable strategy on how to address the overarching principles of sustainable growth, community development and heritage management, conservation and preservation along the two Silk Road heritage corridors.

The *Roadmap* outlined three implementation phases:

Phase I: Situation analysis and needs assessment;

Phase II: Project development and prioritization; and

Phase III: Implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

This handbook for tourist guides refers to phase II of the *Roadmap*, and is aimed at guaranteeing a balanced approach between site-conservation and site-promotion. Guides function as the central link between visitors interested in exploring the treasures of the region and the local communities who have been enlivening the destinations for generations. By training professionals as official Silk Road heritage guides the project aims to strengthen the destination management capacities of the five participating countries can be strengthened to achieve the following overarching objectives:

- Ensure high quality visitor experiences that do not degrade or damage the corridor's natural and cultural environment;
- Provide high quality, consistent and informative heritage communication and interpretation;
- Develop appropriate standards and protocols applicable to all Silk Road heritage corridors;
- Develop monitoring systems at the local, national and transnational level to measure the impact of actions on sites; and
- Boost intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional handicrafts, gastronomy, ritual, music and other cultural expressions so as to enhance the visitor experience and contribute to intercultural understanding and exchange.

When the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)⁵ was conceived in the early 1970s, the impact of tourism was not fully addressed. The annual number of international arrivals at the time totalled about 180 million, in comparison to the 1.5 billion international arrivals surpassed in 2019. Today, cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing segments, accounting, for example, for 40%, of all European tourism and now accounts for around 40% of global tourism.⁶

When managed responsibly, tourism can be a driver for preservation and conservation of cultural and natural heritage and a vehicle for sustainable development. Tourism at World Heritage Sites stimulates employment, promotes local activity through arts and crafts and generates revenues. However, if not planned or managed effectively, tourism can be socially, culturally and economically disruptive, harming fragile environments and local communities.

Additionally, after a decade of continuous growth, a sharp decline in international tourism numbers is expected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. See: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/> (07-04-2020).

6. World Tourism Organization (2020), UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, volume 18, number 1, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://www.e-unwto.org/loi/wtobarometereng>; https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/cultural_en

During the first four months of 2020, a 44% fall in international tourist arrivals was registered, and on the back of these numbers, UNWTO set out three different scenarios, whereby the crisis could potentially lead to an annual decline of international tourist arrivals between 60% and 80%.

In 2019, tourism represented 28% of the world's exports of services (US\$ 1.7 trillion) and up to 45% of the total export of services in developing countries, so, whatever the ultimate size of the impact, any decline places millions of livelihoods at risk and threatens to roll back the progress made in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁷.



Commonly known as the Thousand Buddha Caves–Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang city, China © Carefreelion | Dreamstime.com

Spreading ideas, beliefs and culture along the Silk Road

The term 'Silk Road' refers to more than just the trade in silk between China and Rome over centuries. It stands for the exchange of ideas and things through trade, migration, pilgrimage, conquest and diplomacy. Some things, which were traded (including the domesticated horse, cotton, paper and gunpowder) actually had a far greater impact than silk. Warriors, missionaries, nomads, emissaries and artisans, as well as merchants contributed to spreading culture, ideas and religious beliefs along the Silk Road.

The many early interactions between China and India brought aspects of Indian science, technology, art and literature to China along with Buddhist doctrine and iconography. In the Islamic world, the temporal-religious Islamic system and the shared Arabic and Persian languages facilitated the circulation of knowledge over Eurasia. And from the 16th to the 18th century the Jesuits brought European astronomy, cartography, mathematics, art, music and other knowledge to the Chinese court and shared details about China back to Europe.

Source: Millward, J. (2013), *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

7. See: <https://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020>; UNWTO World Tourism Barometer May 2020 – Special Focus on the Impact of COVID-19: <https://web.unwto.org/s3fs-public/2020-05/Barometer%20-%20May%202020%20-%20Short.pdf>

02.

WORLD HERITAGE SITES



Giant Wild Goose Pagoda.
Xian, China © Suronin | Dreamstime.com

What is a World Heritage Site?

Throughout the world, there are cultural and natural heritage sites that are considered to be of outstanding universal value to humanity. A site becomes a World Heritage Site when it is inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List for its outstanding universal value (OUV). Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional that it transcends national boundaries and is of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.⁸

Inclusion in the World Heritage List requires attributes under the following categories:

- Topographical and natural features;
- Urban patterns and architectural designs;
- Socioeconomic development;
- Political events;
- Religious and spiritual values;
- Achievements in science and technology;
- Achievements in the arts (sculpture, painting, carving, etc.); and
- Intangible heritage.

This can be a single building or site or it can be a town or extended area.

World Heritage Site and the challenges of tourism

Recent years have seen an unyielding surge of poorly guided or unguided mass tourists at key heritage places. Burgeoning visitor arrivals and the general growth in tourism have exerted pressure on many World Heritage Sites. Growths in visitor numbers can exacerbate existing problems at World Heritage Sites if not managed properly – including vandalism, lack of awareness of the cultural and heritage significance of sites,

8. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2005, revised 2008). World Heritage Operation Guidelines, UNESCO, Paris.

congestion and cultural commodification. Souvenir hunters believe they are just taking a small thing but in fact the smallest loss might end in the disappearance of the remains.⁹

What is cultural heritage?

Heritage means something that has been inherited from the past and which can be passed on to future generations. A heritage site is a specific area or site, which can be as large as a region or landscape, or as small as a building – even a book or a cup.

Cultural heritage is the creative expression of a people's existence in the past and present. It tells us of the traditions, beliefs and achievements of a country and its people. Telling about our past, cultural heritage, such as archaeological sites, historic town centres, religious structures, rituals, festivals, provides knowledge about our history, our values and our technological and artistic excellence.

Cultural heritage is not only about something that happened in the past. It links our past with our present by showing us what we have achieved and how we have become what we are today. Cultural heritage, like many things from the past, is fragile and if we do not take good care of it, it can be damaged easily. This is the reason why special training is essential for tourist guides in this area.

Why preserve heritage?

- Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we will pass on to future generations;
- Heritage is what shapes our identity; an irreplaceable source of inspiration and emotion through travelling;
- A common heritage representing a diversity of cultures contributes to social cohesion;
- Heritage bears cultural, social and economic values. If we do not know where we come from it is difficult to know where we are going;
- Intangible heritage is a particularly fragile type of heritage e.g., music, dances, culinary arts, traditions; and
- Heritage represents the public good of humanity and a resource for development.

“Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”

UNESCO (2001), *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, Paris.

9. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (2003), *Introducing young people to heritage site management and protection: a practical manual for secondary school teachers in the Arab Region*, UNESCO and ICCROM (online), available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000149325>



Silk weaving.
Itchan Kala, Khiva, Uzbekistan © Antonella865 | Dreamstime.com

Female legends of the Silk Road

Silk was one of the most common exchanges along the Silk Road, a symbol closely associated with Eurasian elites. China discovered the production of silk and had a monopoly of the silk trade on the Silk Road. Legend attributes the invention of sericulture (the farming of silk worms for the production of silk) to Xi Ling, wife of the mythological Chinese progenitor, the Yellow Emperor. After accidentally dropping a cocoon into a cup of hot tea, Xi Ling realised that she could unwind it into a long continuous strand.

The spread of sericulture and silk to other regions along the Silk Road is attributed to a Chinese princess. Legend has it the princess smuggled silkworm eggs and mulberry seeds to Khotan in the 1st century C.E. by wrapping them in her headdress, in order to assure herself a supply of silk after her marriage to a Central Asian king.

Source: Millward, J. (2013), *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

Main threats to heritage

- Tourism congestion / absence of adequate tourism management;
- Inappropriate housing schemes and conversions e.g., not respecting the core zone in building infrastructures, non-appropriate presence of shops and guest houses;
- Using building material and architecture, which are incompatible with local culture and the spirit of the place;
- Non qualitative tourism services and guiding e.g., tourists in non-authorised areas, overcrowding, commoditisation of heritage;
- Inefficient management of water and waste;
- Poaching, looting and vandalism;
- Natural erosion; and
- Poor visitor management.

Who has responsibility to preserve heritage?

The responsibility to preserve heritage lies with many people and institutions including:¹⁰

- The state parties to the *World Heritage Convention*: ministerial departments;
- Experts and academics;
- Local governments;
- Resident communities and all parts of civil society;
- The tourism industry, including tourist guides; and
- The international community through UNESCO and other organizations.

10. Barre, H. (2011), 'World Heritage Common Goals UNESCO and WFTGA', *Handbook for Tourist Guides*, WFTGA, Vienna.



Horse riding trip in high mountain.
Kyrgyzstan, Asia © Pavel Svoboda Photography / Shutterstock.com

What is a tourist guide?

A person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area, and who normally possesses an area specific qualification, usually issued and/or recognised by the appropriate authority.¹¹

What is a tour manager?

A person who manages an itinerary on behalf of the tour operator ensuring the programme is carried out as described in the tour operator's literature and sold to the traveller/consumer and who gives local practical information.¹²

What is a Silk Road heritage guide?

A Tourist Guide with general knowledge of the Silk Road together with area specific knowledge of the region or country in which he or she is working.

The WFTGA *Code of Guiding Practice*¹³

The WFTGA *Code of Guiding Practice* provides an assurance of the high level of professionalism and a value-added service offered by the individual guides to their clients. Tourist guide associations, which belong to the WFTGA, accept on behalf of their members WFTGA's principles and aims:

- To provide a professional service to visitors, professional in care and commitment and professional in providing an objective understanding of the place visited, free from prejudice or propaganda;
- To ensure that as far as possible what is presented as fact is true, and that a clear distinction is made between this truth and stories, legends, traditions or opinions;

11. European Committee for Standardization (2003), *EN 13809:2003 / EN ISO 18513:2003 Tourism services – Travel agencies and tour operators terminology*, CEN, Brussels.

12. Ibid.

13. World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (n.d.), *Code of Guiding Practice*, WFTGA, Vienna (online), available at: www.wftga.org/tourist-guiding/code-guiding-practice (07-04-2020).

- To act fairly and reasonably in dealings with all those who engage the services of guides and with colleagues working in all aspects of tourism;
- To protect the reputation of tourism in our countries by making every endeavour to ensure that guided groups treat with respect the environment, wildlife, sites and monuments, and also local customs and sensitivities; and
- As representatives of the host country, to welcome visitors and act in such a way as to bring credit to the country visited and promote it as a tourist destination.

Role of a tourist guide

Guiding means researching, experiencing, stimulating, attracting, explaining, showing, linking, enlivening, beguiling and much more. Guides are the goodwill ambassadors of the areas they represent; experts on their local areas, cultures, heritage, customs and traditions. Visitors may spend more time with the guide than any other local tourism partner and promoting the area in its best light is an important part of being a guide.

To the best of their ability, tourist guides are responsible for the general care and safety of guests throughout the duration of the tour, and for informing guests, at every site, about safety hazards, and rules and regulations.¹⁴

In cross border travel, visitors are often accompanied by tour managers who can give general information but it is important to engage area specifically qualified local guides who will know in depth the cultural and natural heritage of the city, region or country to which they are travelling. In the case of important World Heritage Sites, such as those in the Silk Road corridors, this is particularly important so that correct information can be given and cultural understanding and ethical standards maintained.

Tourist guide profession

Benefits of the tourist guide profession

- It offers great variety;
- You can meet people;
- Programmes change regularly;
- You do your own planning;
- You show your love of the country;
- You enjoy telling stories and sharing knowledge;
- You like to travel and organize;
- You are open-minded; and
- You are comfortable performing in front of people.

Guides have the opportunity to show a visitor the best of their city, culture and heritage, creating lasting memories and impressions not only for visitors themselves, but also for their friends and family as they share their experiences on social media and when they return home.

¹⁴. World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (2012), *Reference Book: A Checklist for Professional Tourist Guides*, WFTGA Vienna.

Skills and knowledge for tourist guides

- **Knowledge of diverse topics:** for example, arts, economy, geography, history, music and politics, among others;
- **Cross-cultural skills:** there must be racial, religious, cultural and political tolerance and sensitivity. Everyone must be treated equally and guides should understand the stresses and strains of the traveller;
- **Communication skills:** Can you look into someone's eyes? Can you exert your authority without being authoritarian? Can you communicate with everyone and make it individual and interesting? Can you keep to time? Can you keep calm and be trustworthy? Can you present yourself and at the same time draw out your guests to discover their interests? Are you fluent in the language required?
- **Leadership skills:** including the ability to take charge of a group of people and convey the impression that matters are under control even if things go wrong; ability to take decisive action in an emergency;
- **Good physical condition:** Can you walk for a long time? Can you be on your feet for many hours?

Why do visitors go with a guide?¹⁵

- To learn about an area in terms of history, geography, architecture, everyday life;
- To be introduced to an area visited for the first time: to discover new places of interest or sites to see;
- To be time efficient: to see as much as possible in a short time;
- To benefit from expertise: to be introduced to an area by someone with detailed information and personal experience;
- To have their travel needs taken care of: to avoid stress, handling money, and to have reservations made in advance;
- To avoid being lost;
- To meet other people; and
- To enjoy guided tours included in the package.

Guiding and interpreting at Silk Road World Heritage Sites

All tourist guides require area specific skills and knowledge but those who also work in World Heritage Sites e.g., Silk Road heritage guides require additional specialised knowledge and skills. Through interpreting heritage sites, guides can create awareness about the value of cultural heritage. They can also educate visitors and communities about how to take care of heritage sites and how to respect each other's values. By sharing tourism benefits with local communities, heritage guides help foster local support for the protection of sites.

Guides must be passionate advocates for cultural heritage and must commit to a rigorous programme of self-learning, training and constant improvement as part of a formal training and certification programme. A heritage guide is also part of a community and needs to understand the concerns of different industries and communities, sometimes acting as a mediator between different groups of people. To

15. World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (2012), *Reference Book: A Checklist for Professional Tourist Guides*, WFTGA Vienna.



Large system of mountain ranges in Central Asia.
Tien Shan, Kyrgyzstan © Qumrran | Dreamstime.com

Did you know?

The first section of the Silk Road to be inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage List was the Chang'an-Tianshan Silk Road heritage corridor through China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in June 2014, for its outstanding universal value. The UNWTO Silk Road Programme and UNESCO are working together to submit more Silk Road heritage corridors for World Heritage listing, including one corridor through Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and another through South-East Asia.

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perform the above-mentioned tasks well, the heritage guide needs to acquire some additional skills:

- To be able to communicate knowledge of the historical and cultural significance of World Heritage Sites and be aware of the ways to protect these;
- To be able to transform the knowledge into interesting and informative accounts and interpretation;
- To facilitate the highest level of visitor experience and satisfaction at these sites; and
- To contribute to the sustainable development of heritage tourism at these sites in order to maximise tourism benefits to the community and visitors.

Heritage interpretation

All World Heritage Sites have more than one important story to tell about their history: the way they were constructed or destroyed, the people who lived there, the various activities there and the happenings, the previous uses of the site and perhaps tales of the notable treasures. In presenting and interpreting the historical story of the heritage site, it is necessary to be selective and to decide which elements will be most interesting to the kind of people that the site will attract. Human-interest stories are often the most popular.

Heritage interpretation is an integral part of heritage tourism. It is about communicating a site's heritage values to others. By communicating the meaning of a heritage site, interpreters facilitate understanding and appreciation of sites by the general public. They also create public awareness about the importance of heritage and its protection. Among different forms of interpretation, tours by heritage guides have the most influence on the visitors' experience and their understanding and enjoyment of heritage. Very often, it is the only form of interpretation that a visitor has access to when visiting a heritage site.¹⁶

16. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2005, revised 2008). *World Heritage Operation Guidelines*, UNESCO, Paris.



Did you know?

Local guides have played an important role in the history of the Silk Road. The famous explorer Marco Polo (1254–1324) from Venice was credited with introducing European travellers to the Silk Road in Central Asia and China. He relied on the help of local guides appointed by silk merchants and others who knew the areas well to complete his expeditions.

Heritage interpretation skills

The key principles that heritage guides should consider in heritage interpretation are as follows:¹⁷

- **Access and understanding:**
 - The appreciation of cultural heritage sites is a universal right;
 - The public discussion of their significance should be facilitated by effective, sustainable interpretation, involving a wide range of associated communities, as well as visitor and stakeholder groups;
- **Information sources:** the interpretation of heritage sites must be based on evidence gathered through accepted scientific and scholarly methods, as well as from living cultural traditions;
- **Context and setting:** the interpretation of cultural heritage sites should relate to their wider social, cultural, historical and natural contexts and settings;
- **Authenticity:** the interpretation of cultural heritage sites must respect their authenticity;¹⁸
- **Sustainability:**
 - The interpretive plan for a cultural heritage site must be sensitive to its natural and cultural environment;
 - Social, financial and environmental sustainability in the long term must be among the central goals;
- **Inclusiveness:** the interpretation of cultural heritage sites must actively involve the participation of associated communities and other stakeholders; and
- **Research, evaluation and training:** the interpretation of a cultural heritage site is an ongoing, evolving process of explanation and understanding that includes continuing research, training and evaluation.

17. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2006), *Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Programme*, UNESCO, Bangkok (online) available at: www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/AAHM/heritage_guides_training/training_kit/Core_module/English_version.pdf (07-04-2020).

18. International Council of Monuments and Sites (1994), *The Nara Document of Authenticity*, ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont.

Themes

A heritage site may have many stories to tell and it is never possible to share everything about a site. Therefore, the use of themes can help to keep interpretation focussed and create a more memorable experience for visitors.

If guides are going to be able to organize their information into themes, they have to understand and know the site, the visitors and the community:

- **Knowledge of the site:** this is more than knowing the facts. Knowing what is significant about the site is important. However, to develop an interesting interpretation, it is equally important to know what different community members know and think about the site;
- **Understanding the audience:** different types of visitors have different kinds of interests and expectations. Not everyone visits a site for an in-depth study. Knowledge about the nature of the audience helps guides to decide how to interpret:¹⁹
 - Who are they?
 - What are they expecting?
 - What do they already know about your place?
 - How long will they stay?
 - Who do they come with?
 - Where will they go after they leave your place?
 - Where would you like them to go?
- **Understanding the community:** if the guide is from the community where the site is situated, then he or she may already know the community well. However, if the guide comes from a different part of the region or country, then he or she needs to know the values and traditions of the host community so that they can avoid any negative impact on the community's social structure and cultural integrity. This knowledge will help the guide understand how communities can be made part of interpretive activities.

Guides must be able to distinguish what is really important for their visitors. What do they want them to go away with as memories?

Guides also need to be aware that people are better travelled than ever before and in many instances their top interest is how people live today, what they eat, how they dress, how much they earn, how children are educated. Guides therefore also need to keep up to date with contemporary information and remain objective when relaying it.²⁰

Influencing visitor behaviour

Because guides are often the people visitors spend the most time with, they have a strong influence on visitor behaviour. Visitors can have a strong impact on heritage sites and this has to be managed. Although it is not the sole responsibility of the tourist

19. Carter, J. (ed., 1997, revised 2001), *A Sense of Place – An Interpretive Planning Handbook*, Tourism and Environment Initiative, Inverness.

20. Prince, K. (1997), *The Art of Guiding – Handbook for Tourist Guides*, Frontline Tourism Training Limited, London.

guide, he or she can have a considerable effect. If a guide does not stick to paths or touches objects or stands on top of important monuments, the visitors will see no reason not to follow. It is also important that guides make clear what is appropriate and what is not appropriate behaviour for visitors. This is particularly important in the case of sacred heritage sites. Guides must explain the relevant rules and behaviour, as well as beliefs, traditions and customs. They should also explain why things are important and be ready to clarify or answer questions if necessary.²¹

Practical applications for Silk Road heritage guides

Guides have an important role to play in:

1. Contributing to the achievement of the World Heritage Convention's goals;
2. Raising visitors' awareness on the value and fragility of heritage, conservation issues and responsible behaviour of tourists at sites;
3. Contributing to the improvement of site management and the mitigation of threats; and
4. Guaranteeing a consistent and high quality visitor experience.

A. Fulfilment of the World Heritage Convention's goals

- Preserving the authenticity and integrity of the properties, recognising their outstanding universal value (OUV);
- Providing access to the largest public for its understanding of the sites' values and sharing its values as a human experience; and
- Interpretation and presentation should be an integral part of the conservation process enhancing the public awareness of specific conservation problems encountered at the site and explaining the efforts being taken to protect the site's physical integrity and authenticity and OUV.²²

Guides link to these roles by:

- Facilitating understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage sites;
- Fostering public awareness and engagement on the need for their protection and conservation;
- Informing on the respective roles of the governments, UNESCO and other institutions towards the World Heritage Convention and conservation in general;
- Communicating the meaning of cultural heritage based on documented sources;
- Referring to the statement of the OUV of the property; and
- Indicating clearly what is replaced, rebuilt and what is authentic.

B. Raising visitor awareness

The public interpretation of a cultural heritage site should clearly distinguish and date the successive phases and influences in its evolution. It should also take into account all groups that have contributed to the historical and cultural significance of the site. Intangible elements of a site's heritage such as cultural and spiritual traditions, oral tradition, stories, myths, music, dances, theatre, literature, social customs and culinary heritage should be considered in the interpretation.

21. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2006), *Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Programme*, UNESCO, Bangkok (online) available at: www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/AAHM/heritage_guides_training/training_kit/Core_module/English_version.pdf (07-04-2020).

22. International Council of Monuments and Sites (n.d.), *Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites*, ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont.



Osh Bazaar.

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan © Curioso / Shutterstock.com

Silk Road banking system

Central Eurasians participated in and influenced transcontinental economics and other exchanges in many ways. Common nomads traded at border markets, visited oases to exchange livestock and other pastoral goods in bazaars, and protected merchant caravans. Loot from conquests provided much needed revenue, but extracting tributes from conquered people and taxing trade was more sustainable in the long run. The movement towards this systematic exchange of goods on the Silk Road marks the beginning of the economic trading system we use today.

Source: Millward, J. (2013), *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

The role of guides is also to:

- Respect the authenticity of cultural heritage sites by communicating the significance of their historic function and cultural value;
- Avoid inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation including the use of preconceived notions, cultural clichés and historic versions which are ethno, culturally or nation centric; and
- Prevent inappropriate and irresponsible behaviour from tourists towards the sites and populations.

C. Contributing to site management and protection

Guides also have a role in site protection. They can contribute to the improvement of site management by reporting comments from tourists to the site managers. They can encourage tourists to adopt responsible behaviour through raising awareness of the fragility and value of heritage.²³

D. Guides will contribute to a successful tourist experience by:

- Presenting cultural heritage in an interesting way;
- Making the visitor discover a site with pleasure and emotion and giving him/her the feeling of living a unique experience; and
- Finding the right balance between the rigorous communication and methods for keeping the attention and interest of visitors.

23. Barre, H. (2011), 'World Heritage Common Goals UNESCO and WFTGA', *Handbook for Tourist Guides*, WFTGA, Vienna.



Silk Road cities

“Cities grew up along the Silk Roads as essential hubs of trade and exchange, where merchants and travellers came to rest themselves and their animals, and to start the process of trading their goods. From Xi'an in China to Bukhara in Uzbekistan, from Jeddah in Saudi Arabia to Venice in Italy, cities supplied the ports and markets that punctuated the trade routes and gave them momentum.

After travelling for weeks on end across inhospitable deserts and dangerous oceans, they provided an opportunity for merchants to rest, to sell and buy, and moreover, to meet with other travellers, exchanging not only material goods but also skills, customs, languages and ideas. In this way, over time, many Silk Road cities attracted scholars, teachers, theologians and philosophers, and thus became great centres for intellectual and cultural exchange, and building blocks in the development of civilizations throughout history.”

.....
www.unesco.org/silkroad

Best practice for heritage guides

A good heritage guide should adhere to the following statements of best practice:²⁴

- I am knowledgeable and proficient in multiple fields e.g., heritage management and conservation, history, tourism management, architecture, hospitality;
- I can make the visitors feel they are heard, and that they feel inspired and empowered to venture out on their own and experience new places for themselves;
- I can convince the visitors to be part of the heritage conservation and management process;
- I can teach and reinforce travel skills which are appropriate for the local sites and cultures e.g., dress code, ways of eating, behaviour;
- I know key spots at the heritage site, including important artistic and social and religious attractions, interpretive signs, trails, and many other heritage related attractions, as well as smooth access to all of these attractions;
- I am well aware of do and don'ts in terms of security and safety at sites;
- I always provide interpretation which is not offensive to visitors or local communities;
- I know how to provide friendly help to both visitors and local communities;
- I can facilitate connections between people in natural way;
- I understand the needs of visitors;

24. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (2003), *Introducing young people to heritage site management and protection: a practical manual for secondary school teachers in the Arab Region*, UNESCO and ICCROM (online), available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000149325>

- I can inspire visitors' interests in local culture and the local communities' interest in foreign culture; and
- I act as a conduit and emphasise to the visitor the importance of local culture and the travel experience at the heritage site.

Self-evaluation

Heritage guides should ask themselves the following questions:²⁵

- How can I help visitors to understand the concept of World Heritage and the outstanding universal value of the sites?
- How can I convey the cultural significance of heritage sites?
- How can I communicate the need for good conservation and tourism management practices?
- How can I highlight potential threats to World Heritage Sites?
- How can I stimulate interest in local culture and heritage while taking care to separate historic facts and interesting legends?
- How can I influence visitors towards responsible behaviours at heritage sites?
- How can I influence commitment from local communities towards sustainable cultural heritage tourism practices?
- How can I involve local communities in my interpretation?
- How can I help to bring visitors to responsible local businesses and promote the consumption of authentic local produce?
- How can I help to mediate between interests of tourism business, heritage and local communities?

Conclusion

It is in the heritage guide's interest to protect World Heritage Sites as these sites stimulate cultural tourism. Cultural tourism, in turn, brings socioeconomic and other benefits, such as community ownership and participation, local business development and qualitative visitor experiences, to the community. Guides should be constantly aware of developments surrounding World Heritage Sites and have a keen eye for developments that may compromise the significance and value of World Heritage Sites. The best means for heritage guides to help protect these sites is by learning how to deliver effective guiding and interpretation to visitors.

Cultural heritage is important. It attracts tourists and other visitors who bring economic benefits. In addition to embodying humankind's achievements, knowledge and traditions, heritage is also the vital link to the past. World Heritage Sites are the best examples and attract many visitors. It is crucial that these visitors are guided properly to reduce adverse impacts. Heritage guides are ambassadors, leaders and advocates for sustainable heritage tourism and community development. They must ensure their guiding and interpretation is effective so as to achieve the dual aims of providing quality visitor experience and safe-guarding the heritage treasure house.²⁶

25. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (2003), *Introducing young people to heritage site management and protection: a practical manual for secondary school teachers in the Arab Region*, UNESCO and ICCROM (online), available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000149325>

26. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2006), *Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Programme*, UNESCO, Bangkok (online) available at: www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/AAHM/heritage_guides_training/training_kit/Core_module/English_version.pdf (04-07-2020).



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Tourist guides in the nominated Silk Road countries (Silk Road heritage guides) should have area specific qualifications. This means that they need to have specialist knowledge of the cultural and natural heritage of their own region and country, as well as knowledge and understanding of the common features of the various areas and regions of the Silk Road. The general information on the Silk Road will allow the Silk Road heritage guides to be able to give general information and make comparisons and connections. This is particularly important if they intend to act as tour managers, as well as tourist guides to enable visitors to have a seamless experience.

It is important that the guides are trained according to WFTGA and international standards. The European standard for Professional Tourist Guide Training Programmes (EN 15565) has been adopted by WFTGA for tourist guide training worldwide. These international standards require that tourist guide training courses include Area Specific Subjects, related to the country and region in which the respective tourist guides will operate plus Common Subjects that are applicable to professional tourist guides around the world. Following the EN 15566 standard, tourist guide training courses accredited by WFTGA require a minimum of 600 hours of training of which 40% will be practical training.

Practical training must include a Communications Seminar, of two consecutive days, as well as workshops on professional guiding skills, field trips and opportunities for structured practice by participants, on site and in the class-room. Practical training allows participants to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding gained in the Common and Area Specific Knowledge courses and to present and tailor this information to a range of visitors. The WFTGA believes that the simultaneous teaching of Common and Area Specific Knowledge and Professional Guiding Skills is essential in all tourist guide training courses.

The area specific subjects for Silk Road heritage guides require detailed knowledge and understanding of the archaeology, prehistory, history, physical and historical geography, culture and modern life of the host country in the context of both Silk Road and world developments. The purpose of the latter is for heritage guides to be able to relate the story of the Silk Road to visitors from around the world.

The WFTGA Hands on Tourist Guide Training Course (HOT) includes the two-day Communication Seminar, as well as an introduction to many of the common subjects.

Specific Subjects for Silk Road heritage guides

Silk Road heritage guides must have detailed knowledge of the following subjects in relation to their own region or country. All courses must include field trips or site visits to allow participants to practise their skills and apply their knowledge. Field trips and site visits can be counted as part of the practical training of guides. Specific subjects are:

- **Archaeology and prehistory;**
- **Medieval and modern history,** including chronological developments, as well as the history of the peoples of the region, industries, religion, culture and crafts;
- **Physical, natural and human environment,** including the effect of people on the environment, settlements, land use and modern developments;
- **Art and architecture,** including historical developments;
- **Cultural diversity,** including tangible and intangible heritage; and
- **Modern context,** including government and politics, health and social care, education and science, sport, leisure and entertainment and food and drink.

All of the above needs to be seen in the context of the Silk Road as a whole and in particular the heritage corridors developed by UNESCO/UNWTO. This includes covering the common political, economic and historical heritage of the Silk Roads.

The main responsibility of a heritage guide is to communicate heritage values to the audience through interpretive activities. In order to do this effectively, a guide needs to know the site well. In addition to its history, knowledge about the site should include why the site is important and how it is being protected.

Cultural and natural heritage is among the priceless and irreplaceable assets, not only of each nation but also of humanity as a whole. The loss – through deterioration or disappearance – of any of these most prized assets constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of all the people of the world. Tourist guides must have:



- An appreciation of the importance of cultural heritage;
- An understanding of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in their own country and the region as a whole;
- An understanding of the ways in which tourist guides can help in the protection of World Heritage Sites;
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of the sites in the country of guiding; and
- General knowledge of links between the sites in the country of guiding and the sites in other countries covered by the UNESCO Silk Road World Heritage Corridors.



Common Subjects and practical training for Silk Road heritage guides (HOT)

In addition to competence in the Specific Subjects above the guides will require competence in common subjects and practical skills, which will be provided as part of the WFTGA Hands on Tourist Guide Training Course (HOT) course. The HOT course is delivered by WFTGA International Trainers who are themselves experienced, qualified and professional tourist guides.

It is important that the area specific and common knowledge learned and skills acquired are applied in a practical way during the training so that the guides are competent in their profession on completion of the training.

The WFTGA Hands on Tourist Guide Training Course (HOT) introduces the basic concepts of guiding and communication techniques in the context of the growing tourism industry and increased visitor expectations. The course is designed as an introduction to practical guiding skills and is also suitable for guides who are already competent in local knowledge but require improvement in practical guiding skills.

With a focus on cultural studies, business studies and information about the cultural and natural environment, as well as an understanding of the needs of individual tourists, the course will enable participants to work successfully as heritage guides. Upon completion successful participants will be able to:

- Show an understanding of guiding techniques by applying them on the spot;
- Be competent in guiding walks in urban and rural areas;
- Be competent in guiding archaeological and cultural sites;
- Be competent in guiding inside a museum or art gallery;
- Be competent in adventure or nature guiding;
- Be able to research tours and critically evaluate information using a range of applications including web based information, publications and original sources;
- Be able to critically evaluate solutions and responses to issues and problems which may arise in the course of a tour;



The Tea-Horse Road¹

The Tea-Horse Road, sometimes called southern Silk Road, comprised a network of horse, mule and human caravan paths through the mountains from Yunnan Province in south-west China to South Asia. These are argued as having developed, at least in part, around tribute rather than trade goods, but the routes encompassed trade migration and strategic military activity. “Salts, medicines, silver, pelts, jewels and all manner of other goods would in time find their way along the Tea Horse Road, making it what some locals called a ‘conductor of economies’”.²

The routes are thought to have started in the early T’ang Dynasty (618 to 907 C.E.) and by the 10th century C.E. a complex network of routes linked Yunnan to India, Nepal, Tibet and central China (via Sichuan Province).³ However, this should not mask the fact that routes between south-west China and South Asia had operated over considerable periods of time: in the 2nd century B.C.E. Zhang Qian observed bamboo canes and cloth from south-west China in a market in Bakh (Afghanistan), and was informed that merchants had brought them from India, indicating trade routes from south-west China to India, and then on to Central Asia, were operating at that time.⁴

1. Williams, T. (2014), *The Silk Roads – An ICOMOS Thematic Study*, ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont.

2. Fuchs, J. (2008), *The Ancient Tea Horse Road – Travels with the Last of the Himalayan Muleteers*, Penguin Group, New York, p. 64.

3. Rapoport, Y. (2008), ‘The Book of Curiosities – A Medieval Islamic View of the East’, in: Kaplony, A. and Forêt, P. (eds.), *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 155–171.

4. Gosch, S. and Stearns, P. (2008), *Premodern Travel in World History*, Routledge, New York.

- Understand the importance of cultural heritage and its interpretation; and
- Be able to deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with the UNWTO Code of Ethics for Tourism and the WFTGA Code of Guiding Practice.

WFTGA Hands on Training (HOT) curriculum for Silk Road heritage guides

The course is divided into the following sections:

Practical tourist guiding skills

The two-day Communication Seminar includes presentation skills, organizing knowledge and tailoring the commentary to the audience. Participants will give presentations, which will be video-recorded and discussed with self-evaluation and feedback, from the group and trainer. Topics such as the use of voice and positioning, as well as the control of nerves will be introduced and put into practice. Showcasing and practising interpretation skills will be at the core of the seminar as will relating a commentary to the audience and making it relevant to the surroundings. The use of microphones and other audio systems will also be mentioned. The aim of the seminar is to enable participants to improve their presentation skills and to develop their own style. The video recordings allow participants to see themselves as others see them. The skills introduced or refreshed during the Communication Seminar will then be practised in the field – during walks, in sites and on a moving vehicle.



- **Guiding in various situations:** participants will discuss and then practice guiding in the following situations:
 - Town or city walk;
 - Countryside walk including flora and fauna;
 - Archaeological site;
 - Museum or art gallery;
 - Spiritual site e.g., church, mosque, synagogue, temple;
 - Safari or wilderness tours; and
 - Moving vehicle e.g., coach, car, boat, ship.



Khorezm, Uzbekistan © UNESCO/ Muhayyo Makhmudova

The practical part of the course will include presentations by the trainers, discussions, role play and then practical application in the field. This will include model tours by the trainers or other experienced guides, followed by practice by the participants in real situations with feedback from the trainers and their colleagues. The varied and specialised skills for each of these situations will be demonstrated, discussed and then practised by the participants.

Applied knowledge

These modules will be delivered through lectures and talks by the WFTGA international trainers supported by local experts. They will include information related to World Heritage Sites and the Silk Road. They will cover ecology, environmental issues and sustainable development. There will also be mention of the development of the built heritage in relation to the local landscape and geology, as well as comparison and discussion of the common political, cultural and economic heritage of the Silk Road countries.

Cultural studies

Through lectures, talks and discussions led by WFTGA international trainers, participants will explore the issues of group psychology, including group dynamics, how groups work together and how to encourage visitors to behave in a responsible and culturally aware manner. Participants will also have the opportunity to consider the cultural sensitivities of their visitors and how to interpret and explain the culture of the host community. Guides need to be culturally aware and understand how to remain neutral and avoid offending when dealing with potentially contentious issues like politics or religion. Participants will be made aware of how to confidently approach and deal with all visitors, including visitors with mobility issues, physical impairments and disabilities, learning difficulties, as well as children and older visitors.



Khorezm, Uzbekistan © UNESCO/ Muhayyo Makhmudova

Business studies

Through workshops and discussions, participants will learn how to run a professional tourist guide business, including dealing with invoicing, taxation and other business records. Participants will look at how to plan and prepare a tour, research effectively and work with colleagues in the industry especially their local sites and other places of interest.

Special modules with regard to trans-border relations for Silk Road heritage guides

WFTGA international trainers supported by local experts will discuss with the students issues pertaining specifically to the Silk Road corridors. This will include working out:

- How to research and evaluate effectively in cooperation with neighbouring countries;
- How to plan itineraries in the region;
- The variations within the Silk Roads over time and countries; and
- They will also specifically consider the issues presented by difficult terrains and natural obstacles such as mountains and waterways.

There will be discussions on how to lead tours across borders and the distinction between the role of a tour manager and that of a tourist guide. The common heritage of the Silk Road countries is extremely important so that connections and comparisons can be made.

Advice will be given on where to obtain further information and conduct further research on the Silk Road historically and today. This will include the World Heritage corridors and sites, as well as the ecology of the region. Participants will be encouraged to research various aspects e.g., crafts, food, traditions, cultural differences and codes of conduct.



Khorezm, Uzbekistan © UNESCO/ Muhayyo Makhmudova



Unidentified people visit the Registan square. UNESCO World Heritage Site.
Samarkand, Uzbekistan © posztos / Shutterstock.com

The routes network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor

The routes network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor holds the crucial starting position for the transportation and communication system of the entire Silk Roads.

As a significant component of the Silk Roads, it built up a long-lasting contact between central China, the ancient civilization centre of East Asia, and the Zhetysu Region, civilization sub-centre in Central Asia. Started from the capital city Chang'an/Luoyang of ancient China, winding westward through the Hosi Corridor into the area of Tianshan Mountains, this section of the Silk Roads crosses a distance of nearly 5000 km, and linked by a routes network of over 8700 km in total length. It is constituted by sites distributed within the present-day territories of China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The 33 heritage sites include capital cities and palace complexes of various empires and Khan kingdoms of different historic periods across Asian continent, central towns, trading settlements, Buddhist cave temples, ancient paths, posthouses, passes, beacon towers, sections of the Great Wall, fortifications, tombs, all kinds of archaeological sites, religious buildings and remains.

33 elements of the Silk Road's Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor

A. Sites of central towns

I. Weiyang Palace in Chang'an City of the western Han Dynasty

The earliest eastern starting point of the Silk Roads, the site of Weiyang Palace is the palace remains of the capital city of the western Han Empire (2nd century B.C.E. to 1st century C.E.) at the early period of the unified imperial history of China. The Guanzhong Basin in which the city was located was an important traditional farming district of China and one of the cradles of the Chinese civilization.

With grandiose scale (4.8 km²), square contour with the main hall (front hall) in the centre, enormous high platform architecture and other surrounding buildings of all types, the remains of the palace form a perfect witness to the urban cultural tendency of the early Chinese empires in displaying its imperial power through the shaping of grand scale capital city image and to the sublime oriental civilization located on the eastern end of the Silk Roads. As the power centre of the Han Empire, the Weiyang Palace is the decision-making and commanding centre for the empire's ambitious mission to pioneer a route leading to the west regions. It witnessed the empire's efforts in seeking possibilities of dialogue and exchange, and its significant historical accomplishments in pioneering the Silk Roads and the progress of Chang'an City.

2. Luoyang City from the eastern Han to northern Wei Dynasty

The site of Luoyang City hosted the capital cities of four important imperial dynasties in the history of Chinese civilization (1st to 6th century C.E.). It demonstrates cultural characteristics of the Central Chinese dynasties from the eastern Han to northern Wei Dynasty and testifies to the unique urban culture resulted from the assimilation of nomadic Xianbei people with farming people during the Northern Wei Dynasty.

The features of Luoyang City, including a trio of city walls, Lifang system (enclosed residential area, or neighbourhood), a single imperial palace, the concentrated layout of markets and handicraft district, the arrangement of important architectures along the city's north-south axis avenue, military defence area on the north of the imperial palace and government buildings on the south of it, and the many Buddhist temples, inherited and developed the tradition of capital architecture in central and southern China.

3. Daming Palace in Chang'an City of Tang Dynasty

The site of Daming Palace in Chang'an City of Tang Dynasty was situated in the east origination of the Silk Roads in its flourishing period. It witnessed the advanced development of economy and culture of Tang Empire (7th–10th century C.E.) in the time when the ancient agricultural civilization of China reached its peak. Covering an area of 3.42 km², Daming Palace was the royal residence and power centre of Tang Dynasty. Many key decisions on Western Regions administration, including setting up protectorate, prefecture and county, military towns “Four Garrisons of Anxi” and Jimi Prefectures, were made in the Daming Palace. Its axis-symmetrical layout and the grandness of the royal architectural complex reflect distinct ritual characteristics of the time.

4. Site of Dingding Gate, Luoyang City of Sui and Tang Dynasties

The site of Dingding Gate (*dingding* means “a new dynasty founded”), located in Henan Province in China, consists of remains of south city gate and its blocks built in Sui and Tang Dynasties (7th–10th century C.E.). Covering an area of 0.91 km², the main relics include the remains of the gate, city wall, Lifang, as well as the water system remains.

The remains of piers and abutments, archway, partition walls, corridors of overhanging eaves, pavilion, horse path and culvert of the Dingding Gate, the gate architecture with rammed earth and surfaced bricks, the platform bridge all witnessed the urban characteristics and advanced architectural skills during the flourishing period of the Silk Roads.

The camel hoof prints discovered on the southern side of the gate are unique evidence of the Silk Roads trade activities, of which camels were the major transportation vehicles, and prove the close relationship between the Western Regions and the Central China.



Street Remains Outside Dingding Gate from the Sui and Tang Dynasty. UNESCO World Heritage Site. Luoyang, Henan, China © beibaoke / Shutterstock.com

5. Site of Qocho City

Qocho City, also known as Iduq-qut (meaning “City of King” in Uyghur), was the largest central town at the southern foot of the Tianshan Mountains from the 1st century B.C.E. to the 14th century C.E. It witnessed historical evolution as Qocho Garrison, Qocho Commandery and the capital of the Kingdom of Qocho successively. The city played an important role in facilitating and safeguarding the pioneering and prosperity of the Silk Roads.

Remains on the site of Qocho City, tombs and Buddhist cave temples outside, dating back from the 5th to the 13th century C.E., reflect unique characteristics of urban planning, architectural skills, religious beliefs, funeral customs and living styles of the ancient Qocho Kingdom and the Uyghur Kingdom of Qocho.

The relationship between the Qocho Kingdom and the Central China can be traced from the triple-circle layout of the city, building techniques using rammed earth and the presence of Buddhist murals.

6. Site of Yar City

Yar (Jiaohe in Chinese) City was an important central town on the Silk Roads from the 2nd century B.C.E. to the 14th century C.E. In 640, the Tang Dynasty set up the Anxi Protectorate in Jiaohe, turning it into an important administrative, military, religious and

transport centre from which the empire controlled the region south of the Tianshan Mountains and much of the Western Region. The city is built on a distinctive high natural terrace, has a unique urban layout with ruins of many different styles of buildings and graves from different periods.

The city covers an area of about 0.38 km², and is divided into distinct functional sections. There is a residential district, an administrative district, a warehouse district, a temple district and a tomb district. The city layout and the ruins built using different construction techniques all attest to the extensive interchange between Central China, Western Regions and Middle Asia. The central Buddhist Pagoda, the Grand Buddhist Temple and the Forest of Stupas demonstrate the transmission and boom of Buddhism in the region.

7. Site of Bashbaliq City

Bashbaliq City (Beiting in Chinese) used to be the largest city on the Tianshan Northern Route of the Silk Roads and a major military, political and transport centre in the area north of Tianshan Mountains. It was the seat of government of Ting Prefecture, Beiting Protectorate, and the Beiting Military Governor in Tang Dynasty. After establishing the capital in Qocho the Uyghur tribe made Beiting the alternate capital.

The site of Beiting City demonstrates the use of Central China's fortification, building method and techniques in the region north of Tianshan Mountains in Tang Dynasty, with evidence including the sites of Ditai, turrets, Mamian, Yangmacheng wall and moat, the building method of using wall frames built of rammed clay, as well as the same building components like brick, tile and eaves tiles, etc., with those in two-capital region of Tang.

The ruins at the site of Bashbaliq City reflect the exchange and blending among various ethnical groups in the areas north of Tianshan Mountains during Tang Dynasty and the Uyghur Kingdom of Qocho.

8. City of Suyab (site of Ak-Beshim)

The emergence of the city of Suyab (6th–7th century C.E.) is closely related to considerable expansion of transcontinental trade along the Northern Silk Route accompanied by an important migration of Turkic tribes, Sogdians, Tocharians and other merchants, which together fostered development of cities in the region. The Ak-Beshim site is one of the largest and most important monuments of medieval archaeology in Central Asia. Remnants are located south 50 km east of Bishkek, the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The layout of the city displays three areas: the First Shakhristan, the Second Shakhristan and Rabad (city suburbs). The First Shakhristan, occupying 0.35 km², is surrounded by massive walls with towers and comprises the citadel – fortress of the governor, in its south-west corner. The Second Shakhristan, covering 0.6 km², has less massive walls and adjoins the First Shakhristan from the east. Inhabitants of this part of the city combined crafts with agricultural activities. City suburbs surrounded Shakhristans within a radius of 1.5 km and were protected by a long wall. This part of the city included gardens and fields.

Buddhist and Christian constructions (two Buddhist temples and a Christian church with necropolis) discovered by archaeologists in Suyab, confirm that natives of distant countries lived there permanently.

9. City of Balasagun (site of Burana)

The Burana site – remains of the city of Balasagun – belongs to the last period of existence of settlements in the Chuy valley. Balasagun was established in the 10th century C.E. on the site of an older settlement of the Turkic Dynasty Karakhanids. At the time, Balasagun was one of the largest medieval cities in the Chuy Valley. It is an example of a new development of cities in the region during the high middle ages (11th–12th century).

Balasagun witnessed the introduction of Islamic arts, the application of various systems of writing and the development of Turkic literature. However it lost its importance and had disappeared by the 15th century.

The town covering about 30 km² was surrounded by two circles of walls. Ruins of a central fortress or palace complex (12th – beginning of 13th century), religious buildings, dwellings, a bathhouse, as well as a water supply system with ceramic water pipes, were discovered at the site.



The dominant feature at Burana site is the minaret, built at the end of 10th century. It probably represents the most ancient of preserved minarets of common style (conical or cylindrical towers of equal cross-section) in the whole Islamic world. The Burana minaret became a prototype of the basic type of minarets of Central Asia, as well as a model of building technique using advanced engineering methods and architectural decorations of the time.

10. City of Nevaket (site of Krasnaya Rechka)

The Krasnaya Rechka site, situated 40 km to the east of Bishkek, is the largest medieval settlement in the Chuy valley. Identified as the city of Nevaket, ruins of the site cover an area of more than 4 km².

A blend of Turkic, Indian, Sogdian and Chinese cultures can be seen in the materials used in both the religious and civil buildings, constituting a fascinating expression of cultural dialogue. Archaeological excavations have revealed a Zoroastrian gravesite in the western suburbs, Nestorian Christian votive stones in the citadel and Buddhist temples south of town walls.

Among the early medieval Buddhist buildings that have been excavated in the Chuy Valley, temples of Nevaket are the only that have been well preserved.

The area of the site includes two shakhristans and an extensive area of the suburbs surrounded by a long wall of 20 km. The citadel is located at the south-east corner of the walled shakhristan. With a relative height of 21 m above the surrounding plane, it is the highest structure of the entire site.

11. Site of Kayalyk

The city of Kayalyk, according to the sources dating back to the 11th to the early 13th century, was known as the capital city of Karluk (*dzhabgu*) – an independent possession of Turkic-Karlucs in Karakhanids Khanate, representing an important trade centre along the Silk Roads.

Kayalyk is the largest settlement in the Ili Valley. It consists of a shakhristan, comprising the citadel and the suburbs, the whole surrounded by high outer walls made of clay. Remains of several structures were discovered on the site, including a medieval residence, a Buddhist temple, a hammam bath, a mosque, as well as two mausoleums.

Discovered artefacts and monuments testify to peaceful coexistence in the city of religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Manichaeism and Shamanism. Such diversity of confessions in the medieval city reflects not only the tolerance of the population, but also a constant contact between religious communities due to the proximity of caravan routes also used by missionaries bringing along spiritual values.

B. Sites of trading settlements

12. Site of Talgar

Situated in the Ily Valley, Talgar was an important trading city established in the 8th century C.E. remaining active until the 13th century. Covering an area of 0.28 km², the settlement was composed of a fortified part and the surrounding area of residential constructions with an organized street network and irrigation system. The distinctive feature of Talgar dwellings is the presence of large courtyards in the houses with outbuildings for livestock and remains of the yurt grounds used as living quarters in the summer time.

Talgar was known as a centre of blacksmith. A developed iron industry was one of the main attractions for merchants, contributing to the strengthening of trade relations between the regions along the Silk Roads.

13. Site of Aktobe

Situated in the Chu valley, Aktobe was an important trade and craft town, as well as a cultural centre from 7th to 13th century C.E. The settlement was located on both sides of Aksu River; however, the central ruins are located on the left bank of Aksu. The settlement consisted of a citadel, an adjacent shakhristan, surrounded by walls and an unfortified rabad.

Various coins made of copper, bronze and silver, uncovered by archaeologists, as well as the attributes of their production, suggest the presence of a mint on the site. Besides, artefacts found on the site, indicate that wine was produced in Aktobe. Wine culture was spread in Chu valley by the Sogdians who were experts in the business, providing Christian Nestorians with wine for their religious rites.

14. Site of Kulan

Kulan City is known from the written sources from 8th to 13th century C.E. Surrounded by walls, dozens of hills indicate the presence of residential buildings and other constructions on the site. Among them, remains of a unique architectural complex, the palace of the rulers of the city, were revealed following archaeological excavations. The walls of this poly-bedroom construction were covered with paintings and walls sculptures of people and animals, represented with great precision and detail indicating the high artistic and technic skills of their creators.

15. Site of Ornek

The town of Ornek formed on the basis of a Turkic seasonal settlement in the 8th century C.E., after the nomads got involved in trade, craft and agricultural activities. Silk Roads acted as a catalyst for the development of the former settlement into a town.

In the fortified centre of Ornek were located residences of the nobles, guard barracks, water reservoirs, as well as one of the earliest mosques of pillar type on the territory of modern Kazakhstan. Remains of workshops of potters and craftsmen of burnt bricks were also discovered by archaeologists.



Judging by the pottery (ritual vessels and lamps), Ornek population was heterogeneous in ethnic and confessional terms. Sogdians practiced Zoroastrianism, settled Turks were Shamanists and Tengrians. The discovery of the remains of a mosque and Muslim mausoleums testify to the arrival of Islam in the region around 9th–10th century.

16. Site of Akyrtas

Located on the foothills of Kyrgyz Alatau, a large range in northern Tianshan Mountains, Akyrtas trading settlement was founded in the 8th century C.E. and remained active until the 14th century.

Akyrtas archaeological complex is an example of the spread of Middle Eastern architecture along the Silk Roads. The Akyrtas fortress was built by Arabs with the use of traditional Middle Eastern architectural elements. A rectangular red-stone fortified structure with a courtyard at its centre, the fortress is similar to complexes in Iraq, Syria and Jordan of the same period.

One of the distinctive features of Akyrtas is a complex system of water collection and preservation. Situated in a corridor between the Kyzylkum Desert and the mountain range, the town played a crucial role in supplying caravans with water.

17. Site of Kostobe

Kostobe settlement was founded in the 6th century C.E., however most of the remains date back to the 9th to 10th century. It was a major cultural and commercial centre of the south-western Talas Valley. Its planning, architecture, ceramics, and various household and ritual objects, as well as funerary rites are similar to those of the south and north-eastern Kazakhstan, Central Asia and Middle East.

Kostobe fortress interior had a rich and varied decor: coloured carved pieces on a thick layer of plaster, architectural details made of alabaster and paintings. The planning of the fortress is similar to the complexes of other settlements in Central Asia. This testifies to the cultural links between the towns of the Talas Valley and the cities of Central Asia and Middle East.

C. Sites of transportation and defence facilities

18. Site of Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty in Xin'an County

The site of Han'gu Pass of Xin'an County is an important pass remain that the Han Empire built to defend the capital Chang'an in Central China. The pass was the main gateway for a westward journey from the starting point of the Silk Roads when Luoyang was the capital city of the eastern Han Dynasty.

The facility remains, including the pass gate tower, pass walls, ceremonial Que towers, ancient road remains, building sites, and long walls, form the site of Han'gu Pass along with the two hills facing each other and two converging rivers.

Built in 114 B.C.E., the pass was used from the 2nd century B.C.E. to the 3rd century C.E. for controlling transportation between Luoyang Basin and Guanzhong Basin. It witnessed the transport management system and the defence system of the Han Dynasty, guaranteeing long-distance transportation and communication along the Silk Roads.



Ancient tower closeup on xian city wall at dusk.
Xi'an, China © chuyuss / Shutterstock.com

19. Site of Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route

The Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route located in the hilly areas of Central China east of Qin Mountains came into shape as early as 2nd century B.C.E. It was part of the Xiaohan Ancient Route connecting Luoyang and Chang'an, two imperial capital cities of Han and Tang Dynasties, and had continued being used until the 20th century.

The archaeological work proved that this section of the Ancient Route had a total length of 1317 m. Main remains include limestone road pavement and three roadside water tanks. In the middle of the natural rock road remains, there are traces of deliberate cutting and chipping, apparently manual improvement to the natural land form, including three stone steps cut in three different periods, each with a height of 50 cm.

20. Site of Suoyang City

The site of Suoyang City was the transportation hub linking the Central China with the Western Regions. As an outstanding example of land use in Hosi Corridor, it is a representative defensive town safeguarding long-distance transportation and communication, demonstrating mankind's dependence, utilization and transformation of natural environments of Gobi deserts, and closely involved in trade and commercial activities along the Silk Roads.

The site of Suoyang City dates back to the 7th–13th century. The City remains contain the inner city, the outer city, and two fortress sites at the north-west corner of the outer city. Remains of facilities like city gate, barbican, Mamian (horse-faced bulge wall for defence) and turret have been discovered. Yangmacheng, a wall of 20–30 m has been found outside the inner city, on the east and north sides respectively, which was built as defence fortification. The remains of an ancient canal are distributed around Suoyang, including the dredging system, dams, trunk canal, branch canal, lateral canal and sub lateral canal with a total length of about 90 km. The 2016 tombs of Suoyang City are located on the south and south-east of the Suoyang city, belonging to the Tang Dynasty.

21. Site of Xuanquan Posthouse

The site of Xuanquan Posthouse refers to the remains of an important courier station in the Hosi Corridor built in the Han Dynasty during 2nd century B.C.E. and 3rd century C.E., located in the Gobi Desert. The heritage site has a complete structure and a large number of Chinese documents written in bamboo and wooden slips from Han Dynasty were unearthed there, recording the postal system in the large transportation system of the Han Empire.

Covering an area of 0.02 km² Xuanquan Posthouse is part of the ancient transport system set up by the Han Dynasty in the Hosi Corridor. Its main function is to pass a variety of mails and information and to entertain passing messengers, officials and foreign guests.

22. Site of Yumen Pass

The site of Yumen Pass is the most important pass set by the Han Empire from the 2nd century B.C.E. to the 3rd century C.E. on the west end of the Hosi Corridor. Located

in the Gobi Desert, it served as a landmark dividing the east and west transport routes. As the best-preserved and most intact ancient pass of large scale, the site of Yumen Pass witnessed the transport management system, beacon tower system and Great Wall defence system as part of the comprehensive transport support system built by the Han Dynasty of China.

Major remains of Yumen Pass are: Small Fangpan Castle remains (*Fangpan* refers to its square shape), Big Fangpan Castle remains, remains of Han Dynasty Great Wall and of beacon towers (20 beacon towers and 18 sections of the Great Wall). The sites were distributed in a belt area of 45 km long and 0.5 km wide, with Small Fangpan Castle in the centre.

The Yumen was an important pass on the Silk Roads controlling the traffic into and out of Central China. The bamboo and wooden slips, as well as pieces of silk products unearthed provide direct evidence of large-scale trade and interchange of culture and technology along the Silk Roads.

23. Kizilgaha Beacon Tower

Kizilgaha Beacon Tower used from 2nd century B.C.E. to 3rd century C.E. as one of the military communication security facilities on Tianshan Mountains Southern Route west of Yumen Pass, is the best-preserved and largest existing ancient beacon tower on the Silk Roads. The Gobi terrace east of Yanshuigou Ravine offered the beacon tower an open view. It was situated on a vital route connecting Yumen Pass with ancient Kucha,



Unfinished part of the beautiful medieval mausoleum of the famous 12th century poet and sufi Khoja Ahmed Yasavi. UNESCO World Heritage Site. Turkistan, Kazakhstan. © Dmitry Chulov / Shutterstock.com

Shule and finally Uisin to the west in the north of Tian-shan Mountains. 13 m high, the beacon tower was built with rammed earth.

24. Site of Karamergen

Karamergen was the largest and most northern medieval city of agricultural civilization in the ancient delta of the Ili River in the 9th to 13th century C.E.. The closest and most convenient trade way from the Ili Valley to the eastern Turkistan passed through Karamergen. The city served as an important transit point of the Balkhash section of the Silk Road.

Karamergen was a fortified settlement protected by defensive walls with angled twin towers, L-shaped ramps and ditches, insuring the safety of caravans.

D. Religious sites

25. Kizil Cave-Temple Complex

The Kizil Cave-Temple Complex is the earliest, largest and most important remains among existent Buddhist caves in the Western Regions of China. Built from 3rd century to 9th century C.E. and situated in ancient Kucha Region south of Tian-shan Mountains, the Kizil Cave-Temple stands as a model of Western Regions Buddhist cave temple, with influences of Indian and northern Central China Buddhist arts. Its unique cave pattern and mural style clearly demonstrate Buddhism's dissemination via the Western Regions eastbound.

There are 349 caves of different types and purposes (central-pillar caves, great Buddha caves, square caves, monk's quarter caves, niche caves, special-shaped caves, and a large variety of cave combinations) with 10,000 m² of murals, a small number of sculptures, and a number of architectural elements in front of the caves.

26. Subash Buddhist Ruins

Subash Buddhist Ruins site is the largest and best-preserved Buddhist architectural complex in the Western Regions. As an important Buddhist architectural complex site in Kucha, south of Tianshan Mountains, it presents the history of Kucha as the centre of Western Regions Buddhism transmission along the Silk Roads.

The temple complex was built in the 3rd century C.E. and gradually turned obsolete after the 10th century. Subash Buddhist Ruins include two areas of temple ruins alongside the banks of Kucha River with a distribution area of 0.2 km². The East Buddhist Ruins and West Buddhist Ruins are both comprised of Buddhism Halls, Buddhism Pagodas and Monks' quarter houses.

27. Bingling Cave-Temple Complex

Bingling Cave-Temple Complex, continuously carved from 4th century to 10th century C.E., are the 185 caves with earliest history dating inscription along the Yellow River on the Silk Roads. As the earliest Buddhist cave temple on the transitional zones between

Hosi Corridor and Central China, it bears exceptional testimony to the early period of Buddhism transmission in China.

The caves built in the Sixteen Kingdoms and the Northern Dynasty period (4th–6th century C.E.) embody influences from figure of Kasmira monk Dharma-priya, Amitayus Buddha popular at that time in south China and images in Saddharmapundarika Sutra in Chang'an. The influence of Tibetan Buddhism is observed through a large number of Ming Dynasty murals. Niche 6 of the cave 169 preserves the earliest ever found clear dating inscription (420 C.E.) in Buddhist cave-temples in China.

The caves embodied the transmission of Buddhism eastbound and its fusion with Central China culture. In particular, the caves, sculptures and murals demonstrate the India Gandhara and Mathura artistic style transmitted by Kucha caves under the influence of Liangzhou Style. Meanwhile, the caves also embrace the stone carvings and painting techniques of Han and Jin Dynasties in Central China to exemplify the characteristics of the preliminary fusion of Chinese and western art.

28. Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex

The Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex, built and carved from mid-5th to 13th century C.E., is the second largest Buddhist Cave-Temple Complex in Hosi Corridor, comprising 198 Buddhist caves. The caves, connected by plank ways at various levels, are carved in different layers on the western, southern and eastern cliff of the isolated peak of red sandstone surrounded by mountains.



Bin County Cave Temple. UNESCO World Heritage Site.
Shaanxi, China © beibaoke / Shutterstock.com

It is a representative cave-temple complex of western Wei and northern Zhou Dynasties and demonstrates further localization and development of Chinese Buddhist caves. Located in a strategically important transport location, Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex was influenced by Yungang and Longmen Caves in central and north China, as well as south China and western cultures.

Palpable Chinese Buddhist architecture style and earliest illustrations of Buddhist Sutra can be observed in the complex, which marked the turning period in Buddhism transmission westbound along the Silk Roads.

29. Bin County Cave Temple

Bin County Cave Temple is an important Buddhist Temple adjacent to Chang'an capital of Tang Dynasty, built in the 7th to 10th century C.E. at the peak of Central China culture. With the largest clay sculptured Buddhist figure of Tang Dynasty in Chang'an city and surrounding areas, it embodied the transmission of Buddha carving art from Central China and its prevalence in Guanzhong Basin.

116 caves were constructed on the sandstone cliff in an area of 400 m in length on the mountains of the Jing River Valley. The cave carving started from the 5th C.E. and intensified in the 7th–10th century, advocated by emperors. The caves, divided into five groups, comprise a total of 466 niches and over 1980 statues.

The Great Buddha Cave of Bin County Cave Temple has a semicircle shape with a 34-m diameter. Inside there are three stone-clay statues, including one Buddha and two Bodhisattva statues. The Amitabha Statue ("the Great Buddha Statue") stands in the middle, leaning on the cliff, 20 m in height with a 13-m wide shoulder. Built in early Tang Dynasty, it is among the remains of the special Buddhist artistic form spreading from the west to central China. The figure of Amitabha Statue is related to the development and prevalence of Pure Land Buddhism School in Tang Dynasty.

30. Great Wild Goose Pagoda

Great Wild Goose Pagoda was built in the 8th century C.E. to preserve the sutras and Buddhist figurines brought from India by the eminent Buddhist monk Xuanzang via the Silk Roads. It is the earliest and largest one among existent square pavilion-style brick pagodas of Tang Dynasty.

The Da Ci'en Temple, where the pagoda locates, whose construction was instructed by the royalty and presided over by Xuanzang, was the most famous and splendid temple, as well as one of the three major sutra translation centres in Chang'an City.

Great Wild Goose Pagoda was a 64.1 m high, seven-floor square-shaped brick building built on a square brick base. The construction of the Great Wild Goose Pagoda was an evidence of the eastbound spread of Buddhism and Buddhist architecture from India to China. Its original version imitated stupas in the Western Regions. It was made of rammed earth inside and brick exterior façades. Through later dynasties' alterations and repairs, the original stupa style evolved into brick pagoda with imitation wood structure of Central China architectural features.



Terracotta Warriors in a museum.
Xi'an, China © Izf / Shutterstock.com

Did you know?

From around 4800 B.C.E., with the rise of chariots cementing their strategic and military importance, horses were seen to represent power, virility and nobility. Horses, with or without chariots, were interred in royal burials in the Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Siberia and Xinjiang. One account describes a Bronze Age Scythian royal burial with a sacrifice of 50 horses. Outside Xi'an the tomb of the first Qin emperor echoes this tradition, as it not only included thousands of terracotta warriors, but also terracotta horses and carriages for the emperor himself to ride in the after world.

Source: Millward, J. (2013), *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

31. Small Wild Goose Pagoda

The Jianfu Temple, where the Small Wild Goose Pagoda was located in, was one of the three sutra translation centres in Chang'an City of Tang Dynasty. The Small Wild Goose Pagoda was built in the beginning of the 8th century C.E. and is well-preserved to this day. As a dense-eaves brick pagoda, it offers precious evidence of the dissemination of the Buddhist architecture into Central China.

The Small Wild Goose Pagoda was built to preserve the sutras and figurines brought back to China by Yi Jing. Yi Jing (635–713 C.E.) was an eminent monk in Tang Dynasty and one of the four major Buddhist scriptures translators. Having left Guangdong in 670, he sailed westward to the Indian peninsula to bring back sutras and he returned in 695 to engage in their translation. Having gone through several earthquake damages and restorations in history, the current pagoda has 13 tiers, is 43.38 m high and composed of three parts: the base, the main body and the top.

32. Xingjiaosi Pagodas

Xingjiaosi Pagodas site is composed by well-preserved remains of three Buddhist Pagodas, namely Xuanzang Pagoda, Kuiji Pagoda and Yuance Pagoda. Built between the 7th and 12th century C.E., Xingjiaosi Pagodas testify to Buddhist development after its arrival in Chang'an via the Silk Roads and its influence on the Korean peninsula.

The Xuanzang Pagoda is directly associated with Xuanzang, the important monk in the history of Buddhism transmission. The remaining pagodas are those of his two disciples: Yuance and Kuiji. Both Yuance Pagoda and Kuiji Pagoda preserve the sariras of the eminent monks Yuance (613–696) and Kuiji (632–682). According to historical records, Yuance was descendent of the King of Silla on the Korean peninsula and also a known master of Weishi School in Buddhism. His pagoda and inscriptions reflect the development of Buddhism in Central China and its further influence on Korean peninsula.

E. Associated sites

33. Tomb of Zhang Qian

The Tomb of Zhang Qian is the burial site of Zhang Qian, a celebrated diplomat of Chinese Han Empire, adventurer and the pioneer for the opening up of the Silk Roads. The site is situated on the territory of a cemetery, centred on the earth-covered tomb with brick chamber of the Han Dynasty. Zhang Qian Memorial Hall is built to the south of the tomb. Two limestone animal carvings of Han Dynasty face each other south of the tomb standing in the protective pavilion.

According to excavation conducted on burial pathway in 1938, the mound form, rammed techniques, tomb patterns, as well as excavated relics including bricks, ceramic fragments, Wuzhu coins and animal bones, truthfully represent the historical characteristics of tomb and objects of the Han Dynasty. Particularly, the seal excavated with the name Bowang on it is in accordance with the event of Zhang Qian's promotion as Marquis of Bowang and further proves that it was Zhang Qian who was buried here.

Penjikent–Samarkand–Poykent Corridor

The Great Silk Roads are one of the most remarkable achievements of ancient civilizations. An extensive network of caravan routes connecting east and west of Eurasia, the Silk Road led to Korea and Japan in the east, to Europe in the west, to India in the south and to the Middle and Near East in the south-west. This interconnected network covered an area of about 10,000 km in length and about 3000 km in width, crossing at least 28 modern countries, being probably the longest route in the cultural history of mankind.

This is the path of integration, exchange and dialogue between East and West, which has made a significant contribution to the common prosperity and development of human civilization for nearly two millennia.

Starting in the ancient town of Penjikent in Sogd Province of Tajikistan and ending in the ancient town of Poykent in Bukhara region of Uzbekistan, for a long time the Silk Road Penjikent–Samarkand–Poykent Corridor constituted the main route from China to the west. The corridor extends over 365 km, passing through two Central Asian countries Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Monuments and sites along the Silk Road Penjikent–Samarkand–Poykent Corridor are unique examples of urban, architectural and monumental art, representing exceptional testimony to cultural traditions of Central Asia.

The corridor consists of 10 component sites, namely, Ancient Town of Penjikent, Qosim Shaikh Complex, Mir-Sayid Bakhrom Mausoleum, Raboti Malik Caravansera, Vobkent Minaret, Raboti Malik Sardoba, Chashma Ayub Mausoleum, Bahouddin Naqshband Complex, Chor-Bakr Complex and Poykent City. Besides, there are two World Heritage properties, the Samarkand-Crossroad of Cultures and the Historic Centre of Bukhara, situated along the corridor.

Ten elements of the Silk Road's Penjikent–Samarkand–Poykent Corridor

I. Ancient Town of Penjikent

The ruins of the Ancient Town of Penjikent lie on the elevated terrace above the floodplain of the river Zarafshan, under the modern city of Penjikent. The ancient city or shahrستان covered a total area of 0.13 km². Encircled by strong walls, the city was heavily built up with blocks of two to three-store houses, with two temples facing the town square.

The citadel, the administrative core of the city, where palatial and defensive structures can be found, lays apart from the shakhristan.

Once a flourishing city, connected to internal and external trade routes, the Ancient Town of Penjikent suffered from the Arab invasion and was gradually abandoned in the 7th century C.E. The local population went on to settle in the location of the modern day city.

The most impressive characteristic of the settlement is its monumental art that preserved here much better and in much greater extent compared with other monuments of Central Asia. These are primarily wall paintings, as well as three-dimensional relief sculptures made of wood and clay. The paintings and sculptures were used to decorate not only the temples and the governor's palace but also the front rooms of most wealthy and sometimes even ordinary houses. The paintings of Penjikent are characterized by the ornamentation, brightness, and inventiveness in forming the story, as well as special canon of beauty, formed under the Chinese influence, though some earlier paintings are characterized rather by the Middle Eastern and Iranian style.

2. Qosim Shaikh Complex

Qosim Shaikh Complex is located in the ancient city of Karmana and was built in the 16th century; and functioned until the 19th century. It is a memorial complex for Qosim Shaikh a spiritual figure and advisor to the Sheibanids Dynasty. The complex formed around a namazgoh mosque that Qosim Shaikh himself ordered to be erected just outside the gates of the city. After his death, the mosque became a funeral complex and he was buried in the yard across from the *mihrab* (prayer niche) of the mosque. Over the shaikh's grave a vast memorial structure called *dakhma* was later installed in a separate courtyard. Westwards from the grave and dated to 1581 the oldest surviving structure of the complex are located: a one-story domed arcade called *ziaratkhana*, the prayer house arcade together with the adjoining brick walls.

The most significant construction dominating the complex is the *khonako*, built adjacent to the *ziaratkhana* by the order of Abdulla Khan, the Sheibanid Khan to whom Qosim Shaikh was adviser; it still dominates the complex today and is its most significant construction.



Qosim Shaikh Complex.
Karmana, Uzbekistan © UNESCO | Tashkent Office



Mir-Sayid Bakhrom Mausoleum.
Karmana, Uzbekistan © UNESCO | Tashkent Office

3. Mir-Sayid Bakhrom Mausoleum

The Mir-Sayid Bakhrom Mausoleum is located in the western part of the historic city of Karmana among the residential low-rise buildings. Dating back to 10th or 11th centuries C.E., it is one of the earliest among the studied structures of this type in Central Asia. It has retained its original appearance, with a distinguishable and unique façade made from burnt bricks. Ornamentation and epigraphy of the façade makes this monument comparable to the famous mausoleum of Ismail Somoni and Magoki Attori in Bukhara, as well as the mausoleums of Uzgent and Aisha Bibi in Mazar Manas.

The Mir-Sayid Bakhrom Mausoleum marks an important step in the development of mausoleums in Central Asia in form and design. There are several properties that can either be traced back to other mausoleums of the region or that have been developed further here. One of these properties are the flanking columns on the sides of the main façade.

4. Raboti Malik Caravanserai

Raboti Malik (or Royal Rabot) is one of the largest structures of civil architecture of pre-Mongol Central Asia. It is located in the steppe near the city of Karmana.

The monumental Raboti Malik Caravanserai with its large *sardoba* (water reservoir), located between the Karmana and Dobusia is of great interest. The complex is dominated by its main building – *khonako*. The façades contain deeply arched portal niches adjoining portal wings from both sides continuing with arched walls: the main façade is highlighted by the high portal. The monument shows harmony in the proportions of its architectural volumes, distinguishing it from other similar structures. The overall composition is strictly symmetrical combining an outer square structure with an inner complex multi-yard structure.

5. Raboti Malik Sardoba

The Raboti Malik Sardoba's construction dates back to the 14th century. This monument is an integral part of the Raboti Malik Caravanserai. It was built as a water intake structure on the Great Silk Road. The *sardoba*, traditional for this type of structures, consists of a cylindrical base covered with a spherical dome and buried in the ground at 6 m. Four arched windows illuminating the interior are located in the above-ground parts. It has a diameter of 12.8 m and a height of 20 m. The *sardoba* received water from Zarafshon River through a canal that was nearly 30 km long. Traces of this canal are still visible near the construction.

6. Chashma-Ayub Mausoleum

Chashma-Ayub, dating back to the 13th century, is located in the district of Vobkent, about 20 km north-east of Bukhara. It lies in the centre of an ancient cemetery with an area of 0.02 km² that is functioning to the present time. It is associated with the cult of the character of Prophet Job who made a well of healing water form by hitting his stick on the ground. The mausoleum was built around this well together with a memorial mosque.

The monument consists of an ancient portal and a fragment of the west wing, as well as of a harmonious entrance portal in combination with remains of a fencing wall.

The latest achievements of construction technology of that time were used in the portal's decoration. The portal has a unique decor of carved terracotta. The ornaments and epigraphy are proof of the high development of the decorative monumental art along this segment of the Great Silk Road in pre-Mongol times. Currently, Chashma-Ayub is a place of pilgrimage.



Vobkent Minaret.
Bukhara, Uzbekistan © UNESCO | Tashkent Office

7. Vobkent Minaret

The Vobkent Minaret built in the 12th century is located in the city centre of Vobkent, 45 km north-east of Bukhara. It is a so-called Bukharian type of Minaret, similar to the Kalyan Minaret in Bukhara that was built earlier but slightly differs in decoration and proportion. Despite the changed historical environment, the Minaret in Vobkent has been preserved in its original form.

The minaret is topped by a lamp with arched openings from where the muezzin was calling believers to prayer. The minaret still functions as the landmark of Vobkent, located on the central square. In ancient times, parallel to its function of a minaret, it also functioned as a lighthouse. It was illuminated at night and, since the buildings surrounding it are quite low, could be seen from far away, thus leading the way to the city of Vobkent for travellers on the Silk Roads.

8. Bahouddin Naqshband Architectural Complex

The architectural ensemble Bahouddin arose from the tomb of the most distinguished representatives of Middle Eastern Sufism of the 14th century, the founder of the religious flow (*tariqat*) Nakshbaidiya. Shaikh Bahouddin was a major clergy representative of the Naqshbandi Order. It is still nowadays a landmark location for adherents of Islam.

The architectural complex of Bahouddin Naqshband, is located 10 km to the north-east of Bukhara. Occupying a vast territory with an area of 0.37 km², it is preserved in its original three-dimensional structure. The architectural complex consists of several buildings built over 500 years.



Bahouddin Naqshband Architectural Complex.
Bukhara, Uzbekistan © UNESCO | Tashkent Office

The oldest gravestone construction of the complex is *dakhma* of Bahouddin Naqshband.

Other large structures of the complex: *khonako*, mosques, *madrasahs* and the minaret are preserved in their original form. In the 15th century, the nearby *khazira*, was distinguished the most prestigious part of it, known as Dakhma Shohon or Royal *dakhma*, topped with a carved marble balustrade.



Chor-Bakr complex.
Bukhara, Uzbekistan © UNESCO | Tashkent Office

9. Chor-Bakr Complex

The architectural complex of Chor-Bakr is located in a settlement of the same name 9 km west of Bukhara, and still today is a place of active pilgrimage. The total area occupies 0.03 km², comprising a functioning cemetery, as well as population living within the buffer zone.

The memorial complex consisting of numerous religious buildings and necropolis structures is dedicated to Abu Bakr Said, a spiritual figure who lived in the 10th century. It is emerged around his supposed burial place, after he died in the year 360 of the Muslim Calendar (970–971 C.E.). He was the first of the four of Abu-Bakrs, the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad that are all buried here.

The complex comprises a total of 25 buildings: *khonako*, mosque, *aiwan* with *khujras*, *darvazahona* (entrance), minaret and 20 small graves with dome covers and freestanding portals. It is known for its well-planned and three-dimensional structure. Many constructions of the complex have rich decorated polychromatic tiles or mosaics, *majolicas*.

10. Poykent City

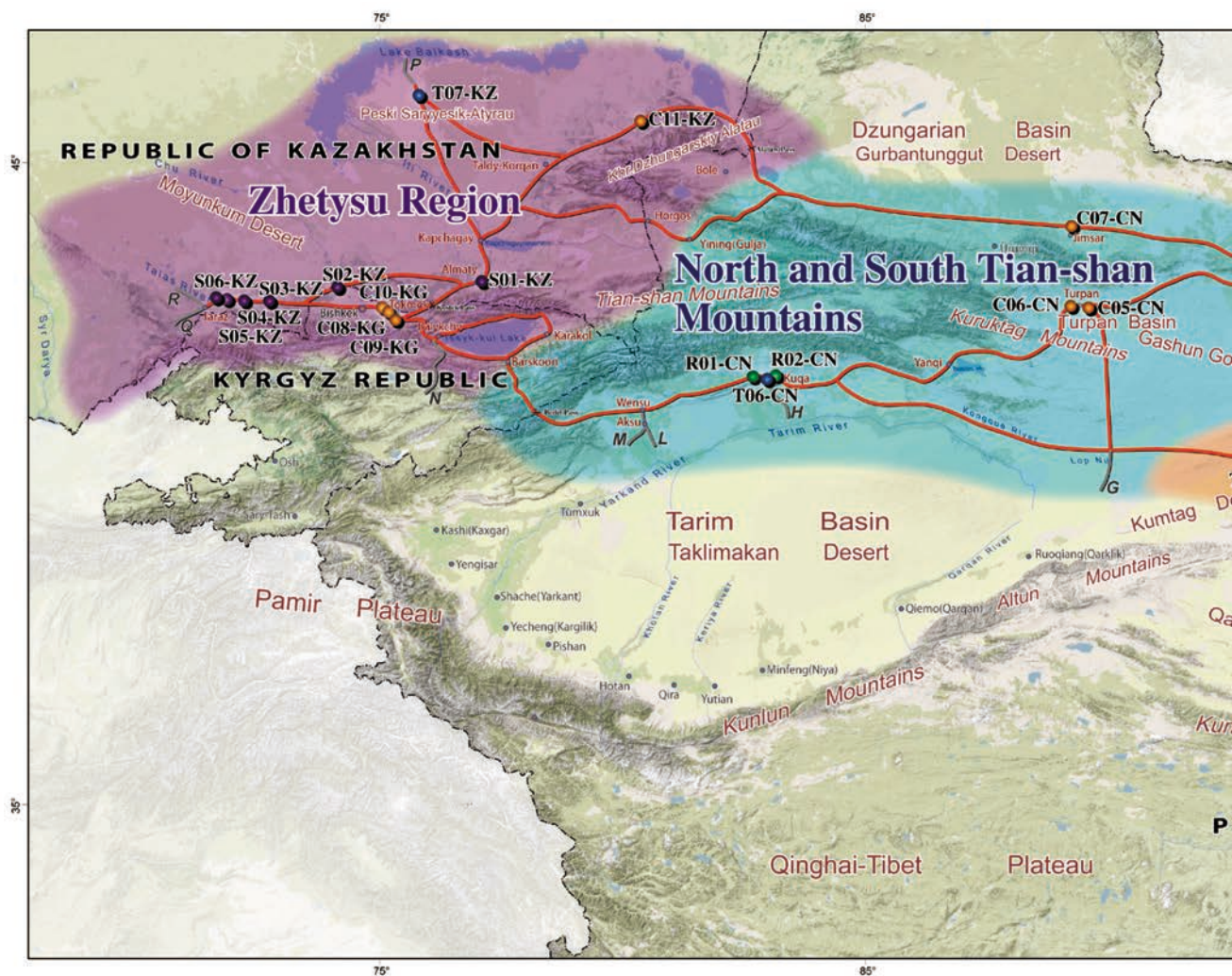
Poykent City was once one of the largest cities of the Bukhara oasis. The ruins of this once prosperous major trading town that existed from its foundation around 3rd century B.C.E. until it was left by its inhabitants at the beginning of the 11th century C.E. are partly buried under sand, while another part lies in a green oasis.

The city consists of a citadel with two fortified shakhristans, and town territories or suburbs. Originally a fortress, the Poykent location on an important trade route of Eurasia led to its transformation into the city. Numerous rabot buildings, including caravanserais were located adjacent to the citadel and the shakhristans. Oriental authors were telling of a thousand of caravanserais in Poykent and some of their ruins have remained to the present day.

The basis of economy of the city was not only trade, but also the domestic market. During the archaeological excavations, workshops of glassblowers and potters and evidence of bronze, chemical and pottery manufacture were discovered, among these findings were also the remains of the most ancient pharmacy known in Central Asia.





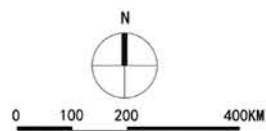


LEGEND

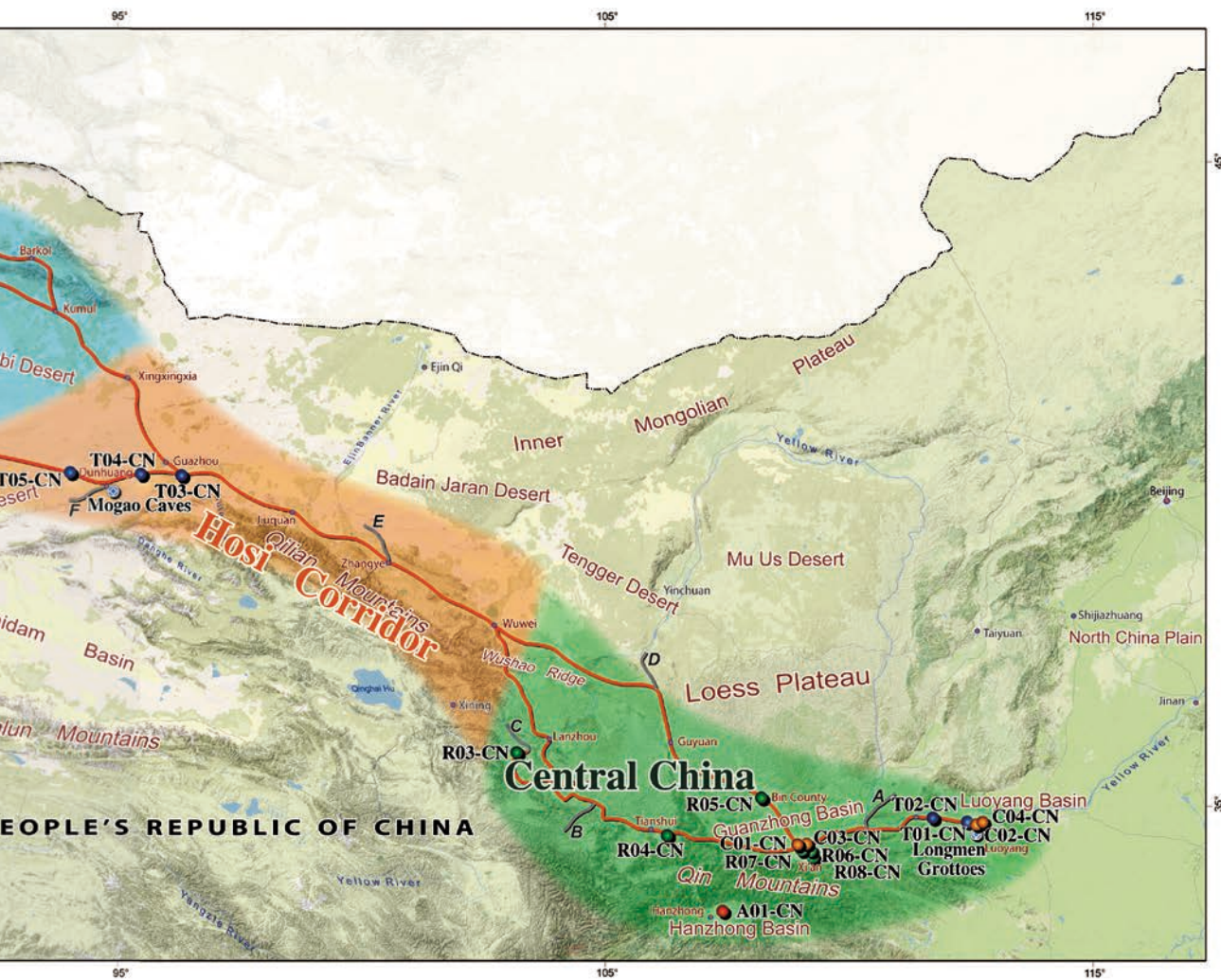
- Nominated Routes
- Connection with Other Routes
- Nominated Sites
- National Boundaries
- Undetermined Boundaries
- River
- City
- World Heritage

CATEGORY OF SITE

- Sites of Central Towns
- Sites of Trading Settlements
- Sites of Transportation and Defense Facilities
- Religious Sites
- Associated Sites

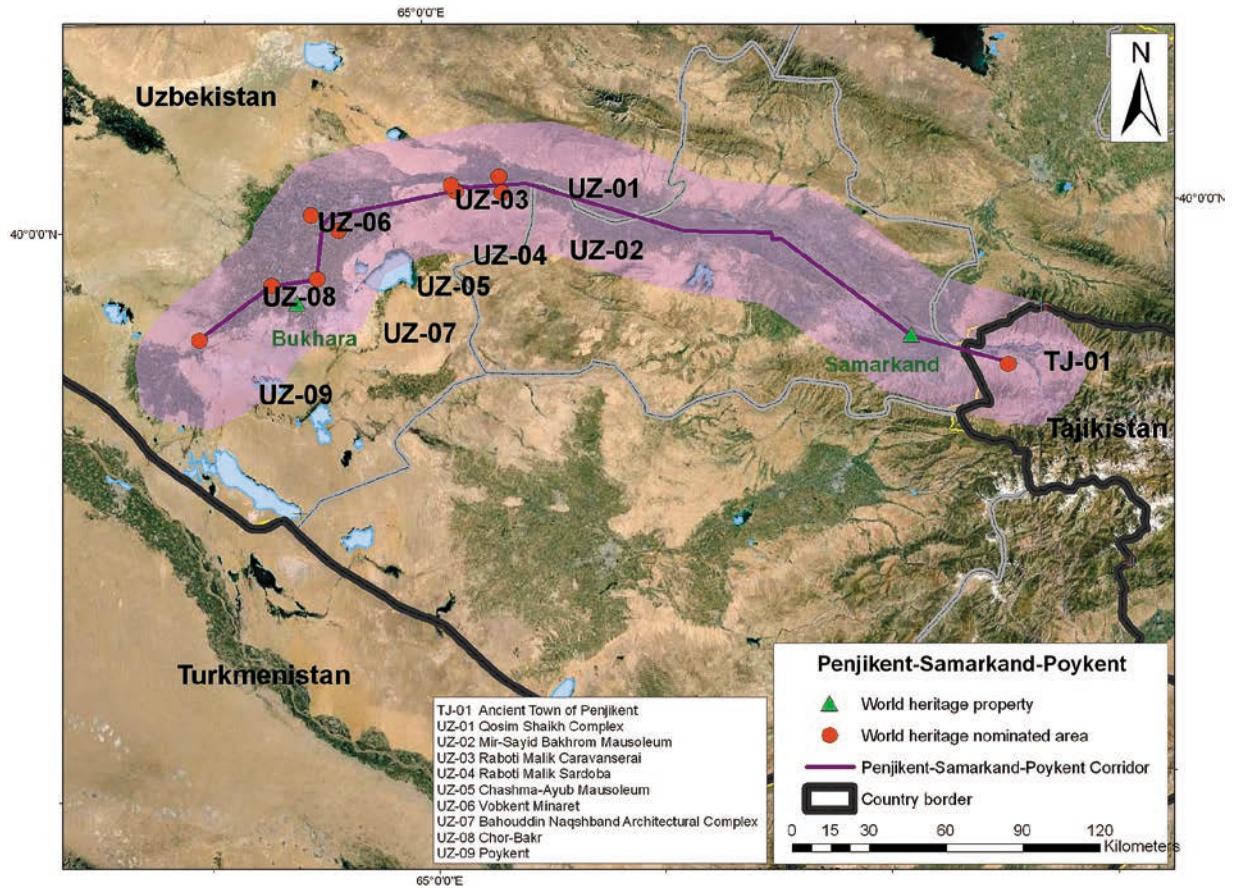


No.	Name of Site
C01-CN	Site of Weiyang Palace in Chang'an City of the W
C02-CN	Site of Luoyang City from the Eastern Han to No
C03-CN	Site of Daming Palace in Chang'an City of Tang I
C04-CN	Site of Dingding Gate, Luoyang City of Sui and T
C05-CN	Site of Qocho City
C06-CN	Site of Yar City
C07-CN	Site of Bashbaliq City
C08-KG	City of Suyab (Site of Ak-Beshim)
C09-KG	City of Balasagun (Site of Burana)
C10-KG	City of Nevaket (Site of Krasnaya Rechka)
C11-KZ	Site of Kayalyk



	No.	Name of Site	No.	Name of Site
Western Han Dynasty	S01-KZ	Site of Talgar	T06-CN	Kizilgaha Beacon Tower
Northern Wei Dynasty	S02-KZ	Site of Aktobe	T07-KZ	Site of Karamergen
Dynasty	S03-KZ	Site of Kulan	R01-CN	Kizil Cave-Temple Complex
Yang Dynasties	S04-KZ	Site of Ornek	R02-CN	Subash Buddhist Ruins
	S05-KZ	Site of Akyrtas	R03-CN	Bingling Cave-Temple Complex
	S06-KZ	Site of Kostobe	R04-CN	Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex
	T01-CN	Site of Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty in Xin'an County	R05-CN	Bin County Cave Temple
	T02-CN	Site of Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route	R06-CN	Great Wild Goose Pagoda
	T03-CN	Site of Suoyang City	R07-CN	Small Wild Goose Pagoda
	T04-CN	Site of Xuanquan Posthouse	R08-CN	Xingjiaosi Pagodas
	T05-CN	Site of Yumen Pass	A01-CN	Tomb of Zhang Qian

Source: Nomination file





Khorezm, Uzbekistan © UNESCO / Muhayyo Makhmudova



Girls and women in national dresses dancing in Tajikistan.
© artistVMG / Shutterstock.com

What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.²⁷

Cultural heritage is not restricted to tangible aspects, such as monuments and artefacts, but also includes intangible cultural heritage aspects as defined above. Therefore, it is important that cultural heritage guides clearly explain and interpret the nature of the elements of ICH present in the areas in which they are working. Interpretation should also be presented with sensitivity to the understandings of the people who have developed them over centuries, and it is important that it be done with respect, mindful of the feelings of the people involved. For instance, if attending a festival, local sensitivities must be considered, and cultural heritage guides have the responsibility to ensure that the presence of their guests does not in any way impinge on or interfere with the events and ceremonies taking place.

Tourism congestion, to be understood as the absence of good tourism management and the surpassing of a destination's carrying capacity, can have a serious adverse impact on the viability of ICH and can, if not monitored carefully, result in its discontinuation. Globalization and other outside influences affect the vitality of ICH, the survival of which is dependent on the continuation of local practices and the transmission of knowledge and skills.

27. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

Cultural heritage guides must be aware of the ethical principles for safeguarding ICH, and ensure that their interpretation of the ICH and visitor management comply with these principles:²⁸

1. Communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should have the **primary role** in safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage;
2. The **right of communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals** to continue the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills necessary to ensure the viability of the intangible cultural heritage should be recognised and respected;
3. **Mutual respect**, as well as a respect for, and mutual appreciation of, intangible cultural heritage, should prevail in interactions between States and between communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals;
4. All interactions with the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals who create, safeguard, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage should be characterized by **transparent collaboration**, dialogue, negotiation and consultation, and contingent upon their **free, prior, sustained and informed consent**;
5. **Access** to the instruments, objects, artefacts, cultural and natural spaces, and places of memory necessary to express intangible cultural heritage should be ensured for relevant communities, groups and individuals, including in situations of armed conflict. Customary practices governing access to intangible cultural heritage should be fully respected, even when they may limit broader public access;
6. Each community, group or individual should assess the value of their own intangible cultural heritage, and this intangible cultural heritage should **not be subject to external judgements of value or worth**;
7. The communities, groups and individuals who create intangible cultural heritage should **benefit from the protection** of the moral and material interests resulting from such heritage, and particularly from its use, research, documentation, promotion or adaptation by members of the communities or others;
8. The **dynamic and living nature of intangible cultural heritage** should be continuously respected. Authenticity and exclusivity should not constitute concerns and obstacles in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage;
9. Communities, groups, local, national and transnational organizations, and individuals should carefully assess the direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, potential and definitive **impact** of any action that may affect the viability of intangible cultural heritage or the communities who practice it;
10. Communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should play a significant role in determining what constitutes **threats to their intangible cultural heritage**, including the decontextualization, commodification and misrepresentation of it, and have a say in deciding how to prevent and mitigate such threats;
11. **Cultural diversity** and the identities of communities, groups and individuals should be fully respected. In the respect of values recognized by communities, groups and individuals and sensitivity to cultural norms, specific attention to **gender** equality, **youth** involvement and **respect for ethnic identities** should be included in the design and implementation of safeguarding measures; and

28. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>

12. The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is of **general interest to humanity** and should therefore be undertaken through cooperation among bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international parties; nevertheless, communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should never be alienated from their own intangible cultural heritage.

UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage proposes five broad domains in which ICH is manifested:²⁹

1. **Oral traditions and expressions**, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage, encompass an enormous variety of spoken forms including proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances and more. Oral traditions and expressions are used to pass on knowledge, cultural and social values and collective memory. They play a crucial part in keeping cultures alive. Some types of oral expression are common and can be used by entire communities while others are limited to particular social groups, e.g. only men or women or certain age groups. In many societies, performing oral traditions is a highly specialized occupation, and the community holds professional performers in the highest regard as guardians of collective memory. Because oral traditions are passed on by word of mouth, there can be significant variations which can add to the fragility of the tradition. Language itself has an important role as a vehicle of ICH, and loss of specific languages can result in the permanent loss of oral traditions but, conversely, the continued performance in public of the oral expressions can in itself protect the language. Oral traditions can be negatively affected by globalization and modern communications, but they can also be safeguarded by being recorded and written down for future generations.

Tourism also plays a role not only in transmitting the traditions to a wider audience but also in avoiding over-commodification and, therefore, destruction of living heritage elements. Story-telling festivals can be a very positive way of promoting oral culture and traditions and introducing them to visitors in a sensitive way. The use of mass media and recording of events can also make them available to a wider audience. Tourism partners have a role to ensure that any interpretation is authentic and involves local people wherever possible. This may require translators and/or local interpreters in addition to guides and tour managers.

2. **Performing arts** relate to various aspects of ICH and may include vocal and instrumental music, sung verse, dance, theatre and pantomime. Any of these can be part of wider festivals or rituals, and in some cases are part of every-day life, e.g. lullabies to put a baby to sleep, music or singing to accompany work. Religious dances and songs can be performed on many occasions, such as marriage or funerals. Some of them, like theatre, incorporate several aspects, including music, dance, song, dialogue, narration, puppetry and pantomime, as well as the musical instruments, masks, costumes, body decoration, scenery, props and the specific spaces in which they are performed.

29. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

Performing arts can suffer from globalization and standardization of cultural practices. Music, for example, can be affected by so-called *world music* which can make it difficult for traditional forms to survive. Music, dance and theatre are often used to attract and entertain visitors. This can have a positive effect on visitor numbers and can give people insight into the local culture. However, it can result in distortions, like the commoditization of culture and adaptations, and changes to meet tourist demands. The physical development of an area can also have a detrimental effect on a performing art tradition; e.g. building development may cause deforestation in an area, resulting in damage to traditional venues and a lack of wood for traditional instruments.

Performing arts lend themselves to attendance by people from outside the community. Within such a context, cultural heritage guides and other tourism practitioners can ensure an adequate comprehension of traditional art forms.

- 3. Social practices, rituals and festive events** are ongoing activities that structure the lives of communities and groups. They are significant because they reaffirm the identity as a group or society of those who practice them and, whether performed in public or private, are closely linked to important events. Social practices, rituals and festive events include a huge variety of forms, such as worship rites; rites of passage; birth, wedding and funeral rituals; oaths of allegiance; traditional legal systems; traditional games and sports; kinship and ritual kinship ceremonies; settlement patterns; culinary traditions; seasonal ceremonies; practices specific to men or women only; hunting, fishing and gathering practices, to mention only a few. They also include a wide variety of expressions and physical elements: special gestures and words, recitations, songs, dances, special clothing, processions, animal sacrifice and special food.

Social, ritual and festive practices may help mark the passing of the seasons, events in the agricultural calendar or the stages of a person's life. They shape everyday life and are familiar to all members of the community, even if not all participate. They are closely linked to a community's view of the world and their perception of their own history and memory. They can vary from small gatherings to large-scale social celebrations and commemorations.

In many communities, greeting ceremonies are informal while in others they are more elaborate and ritualistic, acting as a marker of identity for the society. Similarly, practices of giving and receiving gifts may range from casual events to formal arrangements with significant political, economic or social meanings. Rituals and festive events often take place at special times and places and remind a community of aspects of their history and view of the world. In some cases, access to rituals may be restricted to certain members of the community; initiation rites and burial ceremonies are two such examples. Some festive events, however, are a key part of public life and are open to all members of society; carnivals and events to mark the New Year, beginning of spring and end of the harvest are inclusive occasions common all over the world.

Social practices, rituals and festive events are strongly affected by the changes communities undergo in modern society due to their reliance on the participation of practitioners and the wider community. Processes like migration, widespread formal education, the growing influence of major world religions and other effects

of globalization have a particularly marked effect on these practices. Migration, especially of young people, may draw those who practice forms of ICH away from their communities and thus endanger the continuation of some cultural practices. At the same time, however, social practices, rituals and festive events can be special occasions when people return home to celebrate with their family and community, thus reaffirming their identity and links to the community's traditions. Migrants often take their home practices to their new locations, where they may adapt them to the new environment.

Many communities find that tourists increasingly participate in their festive events and that this can have both positive and negative effects. For instance, a festival may be altered to appeal to tourists in a way that damages its initial meaning. Cultural heritage guides should gather free prior consent from community members before inviting visitors to attend community events. Through their sensitive interpretation, guides play a large role in ensuring that visitors understand, appreciate and respect the event they are privileged to attend. They can also compel their visitors to behave in an appropriate and respectful manner without disrupting community events. Photography can be an issue if it becomes intrusive or is regarded as inappropriate by the host community, e.g. during religious and ritual events. It is also important that the tourists do not disrupt or interfere with restricted rituals and ceremonies, e.g. funerals in a place of worship open to the public.

The expense of holding events and other economic factors can negatively affect the viability of such events, but the financial benefit of tourism can help offset these costs and boost attendance, if the presence of tourists is managed correctly and funds are reinvested in the local community. Large numbers may be necessary to make the event viable but on the other hand, congestion could have a negative effect on access for local community members. It may be necessary to impose legal restrictions to ensure local people's full and continued access. Again, guides and tourism practitioners can help ensure that numbers of visitors are controlled and that visitors show proper respect.

4. **Traditional craftsmanship** is a tangible manifestation of ICH. It is primarily concerned with the skills and knowledge involved in craftsmanship, rather than the craft products themselves. Safeguarding efforts should thus concentrate on encouraging artisans to continue to produce craft and to pass their skills and knowledge onto others, particularly within their own communities, in addition to focusing on preserving craft objects. The encouragement of craft production must also take care to avoid over-commercialization, a process which could overwhelm the primary goal of continuing the transmission of knowledge and living heritage, and its safeguarding.

There are numerous material expressions of traditional craftsmanship: tools; clothing and jewellery; costumes and props for festivals and performing arts; objects used for storage, transport and shelter; decorative art and ritual objects; musical instruments and household utensils; and toys for amusement and education. Many of these objects are intended to be used for a short time, such as those created for festival rites, while others may become heirlooms that are passed from generation to generation. The skills involved in creating craft objects are as varied as the items themselves and range from delicate, detailed work, such

as producing paper votives, to robust rugged tasks like creating a sturdy basket or a thick blanket.

Like other forms of ICH, globalization poses significant challenges to the survival of traditional forms of craftsmanship. Mass production, whether on the level of large multinational corporations or local cottage industries, can often supply goods needed for daily life at a lower cost than artisanal production, both in terms of expense and time. Many craftspeople struggle to adapt to this competition. Environmental and climatic pressures impact traditional craftsmanship too, with deforestation and land clearing reducing the availability of key natural resources. Even in cases where traditional artisanship develops into a cottage industry, the increased scale of production may result in damage to the environment. Mass production, either home-grown or imported, may also produce cheap copies of traditional crafts purely for the tourist industry, and this can have a detrimental effect on the genuine local products.

As social conditions or cultural tastes change, festivals and celebrations that once required elaborate craft production may become more unadorned, resulting in fewer opportunities for artisans to express themselves. Young people may also find that the lengthy apprenticeship necessary to learn many traditional forms of craft is too demanding and instead seek work in factories or service industry, where the work is less exacting and the pay better. Many craft traditions involve 'trade secrets' that should not be taught to outsiders. If family members or community members are not interested in learning them, however, the intrinsic knowledge thereof may disappear, due to a reluctance to transmit it with strangers.

The goal of safeguarding is to ensure that the knowledge and skills associated with traditional artisanship are passed on to future generations so that crafts can continue to be produced within their communities, both providing livelihoods and expressing creativity. Many craft traditions have age-old systems of instruction and apprenticeship.

Local traditional markets for craft products can be bolstered and new markets can be created. In response to urbanization and industrialization, many people around the world enjoy handmade objects that are imbued with the accumulated knowledge and cultural values of craftspeople as an alternative to the numerous high-tech items that dominate global consumer culture. Cultural heritage guides and other tourism practitioners can encourage their guests to purchase local artisan products through an explanation of how they are made and an interpretation of their purpose and function. It is important that visitors understand the difference between genuine handmade objects and copies which may be imported and of little benefit to the host community.

- 5. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe** include knowledge, knowhow, skills, practices and representations developed by communities through interaction with the natural environment. These ways of thinking about the universe are expressed through language, oral traditions, feelings of attachment towards a place, memories, spirituality and worldview. They strongly influence values and beliefs and underlie many social practices and cultural traditions, which are then shaped by the natural environment and the community's wider world. This includes traditional knowledge and wisdom about ecology, local practices, flora and fauna, healing systems, rituals, beliefs, cosmologies, shamanism,

possession rites, social organizations, festivals, languages and visual arts. Traditional knowledge and practices lie at the heart of a community's culture and identity, but is under serious threat from globalization.

Even though some aspects of traditional knowledge, such as medicinal uses of local plant species, may be of interest to scientists and corporations, many traditional practices are disappearing. Rapid urbanization and the extension of agricultural lands can have a marked effect on a community's natural environment and its members' knowledge of it; for example, clearing land may result in the disappearance of a sacred forest or the need to find an alternative source of wood for building. Climate change and continued deforestation inevitably threaten many endangered species and result in the decline of traditional craftsmanship and herbal medicine, as raw materials and plant species disappear.

Increased tourism can also threaten the natural environment, as large numbers of visitors can encroach on natural areas and disturb their flora and fauna. Cultural heritage guides and other tourism practitioners can help by avoiding sensitive areas, ensuring wildlife is not disturbed and interpreting the natural environment. This encourages visitors' knowledge, understanding and involvement in conservation and preservation³⁰.

Safeguarding a view of the world or system of beliefs is even more challenging than preserving the natural environment. Beyond the external challenges to the social and natural environment, many underprivileged or marginalized communities are themselves inclined to adopt a way of life, or a purely economic development model, which are far from their own traditions and customs. Protecting the natural environment is often closely linked to safeguarding a community's cosmology, as well as other examples of its ICH.

As can be seen, these domains are fluid and vary from culture to culture, e.g. festivals could include performing arts, storytelling, sports, food and crafts at one and the same time. Some communities might regard storytelling as a ritual, and others a part of oral tradition, or even both at the same time. While UNESCO sets out a framework for identifying forms of ICH, the list of domains it provides is intended to be inclusive rather than exclusive; it is not necessarily meant to be *complete*. States may use a different system of domains. There is already a wide degree of variation, with some countries dividing up the manifestations of ICH differently, while others use broadly similar domains to those of UNESCO yet with alternative names. They may add further domains or new subcategories to existing domains. This may involve incorporating *subdomains* already in use in countries where ICH is recognized, including 'traditional play and games', 'culinary traditions', 'animal husbandry', 'pilgrimage' or 'places of memory'.

It is essential, however, that guides be able to employ a broad thematic approach and make internal and cross-border links as described in chapter 3. For this reason, grouping the various cultural elements under the UNESCO domains is helpful. Guides must be flexible in their approach and in their interpretation of what visitors see, while being mindful of local sensitivities and concerns.

30. For further consultation, refer to: World Tourism Organization and Guangzhou Chimelong Group (2020), Sustainable Development of Wildlife Tourism in Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284421572>

Intangible Cultural Heritage Silk Road: Central Asia

For the purposes of this handbook the countries included are: **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan**. Some elements included exist in additional locations, and in this case the countries are shown in plain text, whereas the countries included in the project are in **bold**. In these countries, UNESCO has inscribed elements that relate to various domains, such as: **Oral traditions and expressions; Performing arts; Social practices, rituals and festive events** and **Traditional craftsmanship** which are listed below. although there are no examples related to the domain **knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe** that are inscribed in this area, examples in neighbouring countries and the Islamic world will have influenced the area through travel and trade. This includes scientific advances, like studies of the solar system, mathematics and traditional medicine. In addition, local knowledge and practices have influenced other elements like rituals and festivals.

Please note that the descriptions of the elements that follow are summaries, and the full text provided by the States concerned can be found in the links below each element.



Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements

I. Oral traditions and expressions

Art of akyns, Kyrgyz epic-tellers

Kyrgyzstan

The predominant form of cultural expression among Kyrgyz nomads is the narration of epics. The art of *akyn*, Kyrgyz epic-tellers, combines singing, improvisation and musical composition. The pre-eminent Kyrgyz epic is the Manas trilogy (see below). The Kyrgyz people have also preserved over forty 'lesser' epics. While the Manas is a

solo narration, these shorter works are generally performed to the accompaniment of the *komuz*, the three-stringed Kyrgyz lute. Each epic possesses a distinctive theme, melody and narration style. *Akyn* were once highly respected people who toured from region to region and frequently participated in storytelling contests. The epics remain an essential component of Kyrgyz identity and inspire contemporary writers, poets and composers. Master *akyn* continue to train young apprentices, helped by recent revitalization initiatives supported by the Kyrgyz Government.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/art-of-akyns-kyrgyz-epic-tellers-00065>



Kyrgyz epic trilogy: Manas, Semetey and Seytek

Kyrgyzstan

The 1000 year-old Kyrgyz epic trilogy of Manas, Semtey and Seytek is the key symbol of the Kyrgyz people's cultural identity, traditions and beliefs. Variations are found in Kyrgyz communities in the Xinjiang region of China, **Kazakhstan** and **Tajikistan**. Performances last up to 13 hours and take place in local and national celebrations. The epic is the story of three heroes: Manas, his son Semetey and his grandson Seytek, who were crucial to the unification of the scattered Kyrgyz tribes into a nation in the 8th and 9th centuries. Manas survives through a community of male and female storytellers (*manaschya*) who believe that they are personally obliged to transmit the epic. They hold that the text of the legend comes to them in a prophetic dream and when they perform, they enter a trance-like state. They also act as moral and spiritual supporters in their communities at times of danger or crisis.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kyrgyz-epic-trilogy-manas-semetey-seytek-00876>

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/manas-00209>

Askiya, the art of wit

Uzbekistan

Askiya (in Arabic: *witty* or *resourceful*) is a genre of Uzbek verbal folk art, dating to the 15th century in the Ferghana Valley and Tashkent region. It is a dialogue between two or more participants, who eloquently debate and exchange witticisms around a traditional or modern theme. Practitioners must master the peculiarities of the Uzbek language and be able to improvise and reason quickly and skilfully, using humour and banter to great effect without offending their opponents. *Askiya* plays an important role in drawing attention to contemporary issues through acute observation of daily life. It is often performed in folk celebrations, festivities, family rituals and get-togethers organised in cities and villages across Uzbekistan. At present, more than thirty forms of *askiya* are known, some professional and some amateur, each with its own distinctive features. *Askiya*-related knowledge and skills are predominantly transmitted through traditional master-apprentice teaching. Most practitioners are men, although some women have started to become involved in the art.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/askiya-the-art-of-wit-00971>

<http://ich.uz/en/ich-of-uzbekistan/elements-included/88-askiya>

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/askiya-the-art-of-wit-00971>

<http://ich.uz/en/ich-of-uzbekistan/elements-included/88-askiya>

Epic art of Gorogly

Turkmenistan

The epic art of *Gorogly* is an oral performing tradition that describes the achievements of the legendary hero *Gorogly* and his forty cavalymen. The epic incorporates narration, singing, composition, prose, poetry and vocal improvisation, and also functions as an oral encyclopaedia of traditional customs and knowledge. The tradition is said to develop character, creative capacity and artistic skills, and provide bearer communities with a strong sense of social and cultural identity. The epic reflects the aspirations of the Turkmen people for a happy life, freedom and justice, and promotes values such as bravery, honesty, friendship, tolerance and fairness. Its performance is traditionally accompanied by stringed musical instruments, such as the *dutar* or *gyjak*. It is considered a vocation, and its masters combine informal teaching of pupils with transmission of knowledge and skills during public performances. Bearers and practitioners of the *Gorogly* epic art take an active part in all national celebrations, cultural festivals and social gatherings, as well as annual competitions between *Gorogly* epic performers.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/epic-art-of-gorogly-01028>



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2. Performing arts

***Aitysh/Aitys*, art of improvisation**

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

Aitysh/aitys is a contest centred on improvised oral poetry spoken or sung to the accompaniment of traditional musical instruments – the Kazakh *dombra* or Kyrgyz *komuz* (similar to a lute). Two performers (*akyn*) compete to improvise verses on topical themes in a battle of wits which alternates between humorous ripostes and penetrating philosophical reflections. They sit opposite one another and improvise a dialogue on topics chosen by the audience. The winner is the performer considered to have demonstrated the best musical skills, rhythm, originality, resourcefulness, wisdom and wit. The most meaningful and witty expressions often become popular sayings. *Aitysh/aitys* is performed during local festivities and at nationwide events, where practitioners often use the contest to raise social issues. It was traditionally performed only by men, but now women participate as well and use the contest to express their own aspirations and viewpoints. Older performers teach and transmit their knowledge and skills to younger generations.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/aitysh-aitys-art-of-improvisation-00997>



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Kazakh traditional art of *dombra kuy*

Kazakhstan

The art of *dombra kuy* refers to a short solo composition performed on a *dombra*, a long-necked Kazakh lute popular in Turkic communities in **Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan**, Afghanistan and Mongolia. A combination of classical and improvised pieces of music, usually accompanied by stories and legends about the Kazakh culture, connects people to their historic roots and traditions and engages the audience at a spiritual and emotional level. It is one of the most important means of social communication between people, traditionally performed at social gatherings, holidays and festive celebrations, amid a rich variety of food and musical entertainment. Aspiring and talented musicians are apprenticed to masters from the moment the child demonstrates an interest in the philosophy and virtuosity of traditional music and performance. Amateur musicians then apprentice themselves to other more experienced and talented performers from their region in order to increase their skills and repertoire.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kazakh-traditional-art-of-dombra-kuy-00996>



***Shashmaqom* music**

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan

For over 1000 years, the classical music tradition of *shashmaqom* (six modes) evolved in the urban centres of Central Asia formerly known as *mâwarâ al-nahr*, present-day **Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan**. It is a fusion of vocal and instrumental music, melodic and rhythmic idioms, and poetry. It is performed solo or by a group of singers with an orchestra of lutes, fiddles, frame-drums and flutes. *Shashmaqom* generally opens with an instrumental introduction followed by the main vocal section (*nasr*), which is comprised of two distinct sets of songs based on Sufi poems of divine love. In the 9th and 10th century, music schools were founded mainly by the Jewish community in Bukhara. In the 20th century, emigration to Israel and the United States of America brought the tradition to the West. Since Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, there have been efforts to safeguard the oral tradition, including training at the Tashkent Conservatory.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/shashmaqom-music-00089>

<http://ich.uz/en/ich-of-uzbekistan/national-list/domain-2/262-shashmaqom>

Katta ashula

Uzbekistan

Katta ashula ('big song') is a type of traditional song performed by two to five singers. It forms a part of the identity of various peoples of the Fergana Valley in **Uzbekistan**, which is also home to Tajiks, Uyghurs and Turks, and of some regions of **Kyrgyzstan**, **Tajikistan** and **Kazakhstan**. *Katta ashula* is a combination of performing arts, singing, instrumental music, poetry and sacred rites. It covers a range of subjects and improvisation, including the topic of love, as well as philosophical and

theological concepts of the universe and nature. It is transmitted orally from a master to an apprentice during a demanding apprenticeship. It is an important expression of Uzbek cultural identity. The Government of Uzbekistan organizes festivals, contests and various other activities to keep the tradition alive.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/katta-ashula-00288>

***Kushtdepdi* rite of singing and dancing**

Turkmenistan

The *kushtdepdi* rite of singing and dancing begins by the performer reading out the verses of the song. This sets the rhythm of the dance, including measured dance movement in a circle with participants' hands in the air. When the round is over, the dancers stop and say, *kusht, kusht, kushtdepdi*, thus hailing a new and auspicious life cycle and warding off failure.

The rite is an inseparable part of ceremonies and national celebration, as it is thought to spread good wishes in a demonstration of shared traditional spiritual and cultural values. The community of master singers and dancers are actively involved in safeguarding this rite through their performances, passing it on to younger generations, compiling teaching resources and gathering information through regular field trips. The traditional informal oral transmission of the skills is now supplemented by specialized music schools and cultural centres offering formal training in the development of the required respective skills.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kushtdepdi-rite-of-singing-and-dancing-01259>

Khorazm dance, *lazgi*

Uzbekistan

The movements of Khorazm dance, *lazgi*, encapsulate human creativity by reflecting the sounds and phenomena of nature and the feelings of love and happiness. Initially associated with the Khorazm Region, *lazgi* has become widespread in Uzbekistan. Paintings of the dance can be found in the archaeological site of Tuproqqala (the Khorazm Region), testifying to its centuries-old roots. During the dance, all the musicians, singers and dance performers act in a harmonised way and spectators start dancing voluntarily. Two types of dance exist: the *scenery* dance and the *interpretive improvised* form. While the *scenery* dance represents feelings through concrete movements, its *interpretive* form focuses on improvisation, with more dynamic and variable rhythm and dance movements. *Lazgi* is a key form of self-expression transmitted across generations as new versions of performances are created. It is performed during national holidays and folk festivities in scenery forms, as well as in the daily-based interpretation form during community and family events.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/khorazm-dance-lazgi-01364>



3. Social practices, rituals and festive events

Nawrouz, Novruz, Nowrouz, Nauryz, Nooruz, Nowruz, Navruz, Nevruz, Nowruz

Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyzstan**, **Uzbekistan**, Pakistan, **Tajikistan**, **Turkmenistan** and Turkey

This holiday, which translates as 'New Day,' is a festival for the vernal equinox on March 21st, and originated more than three thousand years ago in Persia. Marking the start of a new year, it celebrates the end of winter – originally an important time for farmers dependent on the seasons. A variety of rituals, ceremonies and other cultural events take place over the course of approximately two weeks. People gather round the table with loved ones. Women cook a special dish called Samanu, Samani, Samanak, Sumanak, Sumolok, Semn, Sumalak, Semeni or Harisa, with sprouted wheat mixed with oil, flour and sugar, accompanied by wine, milk, sweets, sugar, sherbet, a candle and a new bud. These seven items represent purity, brightness, livelihood and wealth. People wear new clothes and visit relatives, especially neighbours and the elderly. Traditional gifts made by artisans are exchanged and especially given to children. There are street performances of music and dance, public rituals involving water and fire, traditional sports and the making of handicrafts.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/nawrouz-novruz-nowrouz-nowrouz-nawrouz-nauryz-nooruz-nowruz-navruz-nevruz-nowruz-navruz-01161#>

Traditional spring festive rites of the Kazakh horse breeders

Kazakhstan

This three-week rite takes place in Terisakkan Village in the Ulytau District of Karaganda Oblast, and combines a new cycle of reproduction with traditional Kazakh hospitality. It is rooted in traditional knowledge about nature and the relation between humankind and the horse. This ritual involves skills inherited from nomadic ancestors (who domesticated horses around 5,500 years ago), which have been adapted to the present day. There are three main sections: *biye baylau* (tethering mares), when mares and foals are separated from the herd and the mares are milked, during which there are celebrations of songs, dances and games; *ayghyr kosu* ('stallion's marriage'), during which stallions are brought to the herds; and *kymyz muryndyk* ('initiation of koumiss'), during which mare's milk is fermented into a drink called *koumiss* which is shared in every household.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/traditional-spring-festive-rites-of-the-kazakh-horse-breeders-01402>



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***Kok boru*: Traditional horse game**

Kyrgyzstan

Kok boru is a traditional game played by two teams on horseback, in which players try to manoeuvre an *ulak* (a goat carcass that today is replaced by a mould) and score by placing it in an opponent's goal. There are professional, semi-professional and amateur teams. The most experienced players act as referees, while *kalystar* (elders) ensure the game's fairness. *Kok boru* comprises these traditional practices, performances and the game itself. Knowledge is primarily transmitted by demonstration and during festive and social events. The National Kok Boru Federation, established in 1998, plays a key role in promoting and safeguarding the game through the development and organization of activities. All players are actively involved in the sport's promotion and safeguarding.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kok-boru-traditional-horse-game-01294>



Falconry, a living human heritage

Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, **Kazakhstan**, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates.

Originally a method of obtaining food, the practice of falconry has evolved over time to come to be associated with nature conservation, cultural heritage and social engagement within and amongst communities. Following their own set of traditions and ethical principles, falconers train, fly and breed birds of prey (falcons, eagles and hawks), developing a bond with them and becoming their main source of protection. Methods are similar around the world. Falconers regard themselves as a group, and may travel weeks at a time engaging in the practice, recounting the day's stories to each other in the evening. They consider falconry to provide a connection to the past, which is especially true for communities for which the practice is one of their few remaining links with their natural environment and traditional culture. Knowledge and skills are transmitted in an intergenerational manner within families, through formal mentoring, apprenticeship or training in clubs and schools.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/falconry-a-living-human-heritage-01209>

Kuresi in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan

Kuresi is a type of wrestling in which players fight standing up and aim to get their opponents' shoulders to the ground. It is a traditional practice in which trainers would coach young boys (aged 10 and older) who would then take part in local contests. These days, *kuresi* in Kazakhstan is a national sport up to the professional level, practiced by both men and women. International competitions also take place, such as the annual tournament called the 'Kazakhstan Barysy', broadcasted in more than 100 countries. *Kuresi* in Kazakhstan is transmitted in sports clubs, which may also be affiliated with schools, and in master classes run by experienced *kuresi* wrestlers. In traditional folklore, wrestlers (*baluan*) are regarded as strong and courageous, and they are depicted in epics, poetry and literature. Youngsters are encouraged to emulate the heroic *baluan*.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kuresi-in-kazakhstan-01085>

Kazakh traditional assyk games

Kazakhstan

Each player has their own set of *assyk*, game pieces traditionally made from sheep ankle bones, and a *saka*, a target dyed in bright colours. Players use their *assyk* to knock out their opponents' *assyk* from the designated playing area, concentration on the position of the bones. Many Kazakh people, including members of the Assyk Atu Federation and children aged between four and eighteen, play *assyk*. It is an outdoor activity that develops children's mental and physical faculties and fosters friendship and inclusiveness. *Assyk* unites people irrespective of their age, ethnicity or religion, and is widely played at festive celebrations and gatherings. The local community maintains a key role in safeguarding and spreading the game to other ethnic groups, and the game itself has become a national symbol of childhood. Older children teach younger ones, and there are radio and TV documentaries encouraging children to play and understand their cultural heritage.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kazakh-traditional-assyk-games-01086>



Heritage of *Dede Qorqud/Korkyt Ata/Dede Korkut*, epic culture, folk tales and music

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey

The epic culture, folk tales and music of *Dede Qorqud/Korkyt Ata/Dede Korkut* are based on twelve heroic legends, stories and tales, and thirteen traditional musical compositions that are transmitted through oral expressions, performing arts, cultural codes and music. The legendary *Dede Korkut* ('Grandfather' Korkut) is a widely renowned soothsayer and bard, whose words, music and wisdom concern birth, marriage and death traditions, linking these stories together. Music is played mainly on the *kobyz* and includes nature sounds, such as wolf's howls or swan's calls, interconnected by the verbal epics it accompanies. The moral and cultural values it imparts include heroism, productive dialogue, physical and spiritual wellness, unity, and respect for nature. In doing so, this tradition reveals the deep historical and cultural knowledge of Turkic-speaking communities. Well-rooted in society, this epic culture is practiced and sustained widely at family events, national and international festivals, and is a form of intergenerational connection.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/heritage-of-dede-qorqud-korkyt-ata-dede-korkut-epic-culture-folk-tales-and-music-01399>



Cultural space of Boysun District

Uzbekistan

Located in south-eastern Uzbekistan, the Boysun District (82,000 inhabitants) lies on the ancient routes from Asia Minor to India, and is one of the oldest inhabited areas of Central Asia. Due to its isolation, as the importance of these routes diminished, ancient traditions, including shamanistic beliefs, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Islam were preserved. These traditional rituals and family rites include a planting ritual with food offerings on the eve of Navruz, the banishment of evil spirits with fire and ashes forty days after a birth, and the a boy's circumcision being celebrated with goat fights, horse races and wrestling. Shamanistic healing rituals are still practiced, and weddings and funerals are often conducted according to ancient practices. Annual festivals, epic legends and dances include lyrics accompanied by wind or string instruments. The local Shalola folk music ensemble has collected popular songs, made an inventory of traditional instruments, and documented legends, epics and old melodies in the villages.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/cultural-space-of-boysun-district-00019>



4. Traditional craftsmanship

Flatbread making and sharing culture: *lavash*, *katyrma*, *jupka*, *yufka*
Azerbaijan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan** and Turkey

The culture of making and sharing flatbread (known variously as *lavash*, *katyrma*, *jupka* or *yufka*), has social functions that enable it to continue as a widely-practiced tradition. Transmitted within families and from master to apprentice, at least three people (often family members) are involved in preparing and baking the bread. In rural areas, traditional bakeries operate alongside neighbours baking together. As nomads did not have fixed ovens, the bread is baked in a *tandyr/tanūr* (an earth or stone oven set in the ground), *sāj* (metal plate) or *kazan* (cauldron). Flatbread is shared daily and at weddings, births, funerals, prayers and festivals. In Azerbaijan and Iran, flatbread is put on the bride's shoulders or crumbled over her head as a wish for prosperity; in Turkey, it is given to the couple's neighbours; at funerals in Kazakhstan, it protects the deceased while they await God's judgment; while in Kyrgyzstan, it is shared to provide a better afterlife for the deceased.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/flatbread-making-and-sharing-culture-lavash-katyrma-jupka-yufka-01181>



***Palov* culture and tradition**

Uzbekistan

Palov is a traditional dish made and shared throughout the rural and urban communities of **Uzbekistan**. It is prepared with ingredients such as rice, meat, spices and vegetables. In addition to its consumption during everyday meals, it is also served as a gesture of hospitality, to celebrate special occasions like weddings and the New Year, to help those in need who are underprivileged; and to honour loved ones who have passed away. Guests may only leave after *palov* has been offered. *Palov* may also feature at events alongside other rituals like prayers and traditional music performances. It is a dish cooked by men and women irrespective of age or social status. Knowledge and skills associated with the practice are informally and formally handed down from older to younger generations using a master-apprentice model, or through demonstration and participation within families, peer groups, community-based establishments, religious organizations and vocational education institutions.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/palov-culture-and-tradition-01166>

***Oshi Palav*, a traditional meal and its social and cultural contexts**

Tajikistan

Oshi palav (pilaf) is a traditional dish made and shared in communities in **Tajikistan**. There are up to 200 varieties of this dish which uses vegetables, rice, meat and spices. *Oshi palav* is prepared at regular mealtimes and for social gatherings, celebrations and rituals. The importance of the dish to communities in Tajikistan is revealed in sayings such as “No osh, no acquaintance” or “If you have eaten somebody’s osh, you must respect them for 40 years”. Men and women prepare the dish in their homes or at teahouses while socializing, playing music and singing. Knowledge and skills are

handed down in families and from master to apprentice in cooking schools. Once an apprentice masters the dish, he hosts a dinner for his master and guests. During this meal the master receives a skullcap and traditional garment while the apprentice receives a skimmer (a tool for cooking *oshi palav*) that symbolises the apprentice's independence.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/oshi-palav-a-traditional-meal-and-its-social-and-cultural-contexts-in-tajikistan-01191>



***Ala-kiyiz* and *shyrdak*, the art of Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets** (inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding)

Kyrgyzstan

The art, skill, diversity and ceremonies of *ala-kiyiz* and *shyrdak* felt carpet-making are an integral part of Kyrgyz cultural heritage and identity. They are an essential part of nomadic life, used for warmth and decoration. These carpets are primarily made by older women in rural and mountainous areas, who pass on their skills and knowledge to their daughters and granddaughters. Making *ala-kiyiz* appliqued carpets requires a team effort: the oldest woman supervises, and men help with sheep shearing, felt pressing and selling. *Shyrdak* carpets are more individualized, with unique elaborate ornamentation that reflects its maker's own conceptualizations of earth, water, celestial bodies and fertility. Carpets originally were bartered and exchanged with neighbours during special times like the harvest. *Ala-kiyiz* carpets have practically disappeared from Kyrgyz homes, and *shyrdak* carpets are under a serious threat of being lost, due to a lack and poor quality of raw materials, disinterest from younger women and the availability of inexpensive synthetic carpets.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/ala-kiyiz-and-shyrdak-art-of-kyrgyz-traditional-felt-carpets-00693>

Chakan, embroidery art

Tajikistan

Chakan embroidery is the widespread practice of sewing ornaments, images of flowers and symbolic drawings with colourful threads on cotton or silk fabrics, decorating clothing and household items like women's shirts, headscarves, curtains, pillows, bedspreads and cradle coverlets. It features symbolic and mythological images relating to nature and cosmos and expresses the maker or giver's hopes and wishes. The practice of making *chakan* involves selecting the textile and threads to be used, tracing ornaments, creating needlepoint images and sewing clothes. In the past, threads were prepared from cotton and silk fibres and dyed with natural paints made from plants and minerals, yet fabric-based threads are now used. In the Khatlon region, women and girls wear a *chakan* dress at festivals and holidays, brides wear a *chakan* blouse and grooms wear an embroidered *tāqi* (skullcap). Young girls learn the art from their mothers, grandmothers and older sisters, and transmission also occurs in groups through the so-called *ustod-shogird* (master-student) method.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/chakan-embroidery-art-in-the-republic-of-tajikistan-01397>



Traditional knowledge and skills in making Kyrgyz and Kazakh yurts (Turkic nomadic dwellings)

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

A traditional *yurt* (a portable, round tent with a circular frame and felt cover) is used as a dwelling by nomadic people on the steppes of Central Asia. A yurt, made of natural and recyclable materials, is designed to be dismantled so that the parts can be carried to and reassembled at another site. A *yurt's* creation involves the whole community. Men hand-make the wooden frames with wooden, leather, bone

and metal details. Women, working in community-based groups, make the interior decorations and exterior coverings ornamented with animals, plants or geometric patterns, using traditional techniques like weaving, spinning, braiding, felting, embroidering, sewing and others. Traditionally, knowledge and skills are transmitted within families or from teachers to apprentices. All major rituals, including festivities, ceremonies, births, weddings and funeral rites, have traditionally taken place in a *yurt*, which remains fundamental to the identity of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples as a symbol of family and hospitality.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/traditional-knowledge-and-skills-in-making-kyrgyz-and-kazakh-yurts-turkic-nomadic-dwellings-00998>



Margilan Crafts Development Centre, safeguarding of the *atlas* and *adras* making traditional technologies (selected in 2017 on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices)

Uzbekistan

The history of *ikat atlas* and *adras* fabric-making technologies in the territory of modern-day Uzbekistan dates to the Late Antiquity. Historically, Margilan was the centre of fabrication for these exquisite and vivid traditional fabrics. The Soviet period was a turbulent time for traditional craft production, which jeopardised some ancient handcraft production technologies. Due to the acute need to revive and safeguard these traditions at risk of disappearing, the local community came up with an initiative to launch the Crafts Development Centre (CDC) in 2007. The CDC promotes the traditional method of Uzbek *atlas* and *adras ikat* production, as well as related sustainable development practices. Its operations encompass different types of safeguarding activities, including revitalization, preservation, enhancement, transmission through non-formal education and promotion. The CDC's success stems from its focus on a spirit of partnership, and local communities play a key role

in its initiatives, since there is a common understanding that *atlas* and *adras* fabrics are central to their identity.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/BSP/margilan-crafts-development-centre-safeguarding-of-the-atlas-and-adras-making-traditional-technologies-01254>

***Ak-kalpak* craftsmanship, traditional knowledge and skills in making and wearing Kyrgyz men's headwear**

Kyrgyzstan

Ak-kalpak is a traditional Kyrgyz handicraft, a men's hat made of white felt that bears deep spiritual meaning. *Ak-kalpak* craftsmanship is a cumulative, ever-evolving body of knowledge and skills comprising felting, cutting and sewing and pattern embroidery that is passed down by craftswomen. Related knowledge and skills are transmitted in workshops via verbal instruction, hands-on training and collaborative production. There are more than eighty distinguishable varieties of *ak-kalpak*, each decorated with various patterns that carry sacred meanings and history. Environmentally friendly and comfortable, an *ak-kalpak* resembles a snow peak, with four sides representing the four elements: air, water, fire and earth. The four old lines symbolise life, with the pattern symbolising the family tree and the tassel on the top symbolising the memory and of ancestors and their posterity. *Ak-kalpak* unites Kyrgyz tribes and communities, identifying the Kyrgyz people to other ethnicities. It can foster inclusivity when members of other ethnic groups wear it on holidays or days of mourning to express unity and sympathy.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ak-kalpak-craftsmanship-traditional-knowledge-and-skills-in-making-and-wearing-kyrgyz-mens-headwear-01496>

Traditional Turkmen carpet making art

Turkmenistan

Traditional Turkmen carpets are hand-woven woollen textiles. Rectangular in shape, this densely textured craft is ornamented with coloured patterns characteristically associated with one of the five main Turkmen tribes. The environmental context in which the carpet weaver lives, including local flora and fauna, is reflected in the combination of threads, pictures and colours developing the carpet designs. The carpets serve as floor coverings and wall decorations, and special carpets are also woven for the birth of a child, for wedding ceremonies, and for prayer and mourning rituals. Carpet-making – as an art – is broadly integrated into the social life of Turkmen people and is considered a sign of cultural identity and unity. Related skills and knowledge are transmitted within the family, and community members have ensured the viability of the tradition. The annual Carpet Day celebration contributes to its transmission by gathering together various communities, thereby strengthening social ties and cooperation.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/traditional-turkmen-carpet-making-art-in-turkmenistan-01486>

Background Information to the ICH Elements Included

Cultural heritage guides are expected to draw regional comparisons, relationships and themes. Therefore this section summarises some aspects of ICH which are shared among various areas of Central Asia. Visitors may not be aware of these links, so it is the guide's role to help them understand what they are looking at and relate it to their own experience and knowledge.

Much of the ICH included in this handbook is the outcome of the centuries-old nomadic lifestyle that arose in the semi-arid steppes of Central Asia. Uzbeks and Tajiks were traditionally sedentary peoples whereas the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen peoples were mostly nomadic. Centuries of migration have resulted in not only ethnic and cultural diversity but also the sharing of traditions and cultures. The very nature of nomadic life meant that people moved around, taking their culture with them and adapting to those they encountered. Conflict with larger sedentary centres could also result in the exchange of cultures. The celebration of New Year at the vernal equinox shares common elements across many countries in the region which extend beyond those covered by this handbook. Guides' cross-border interpretation is thus crucial to make these comparisons.

The contemporary division of countries is a relatively recent phenomenon, and cultural heritage guides have the opportunity to interpret and describe elements that transcend these modern borders. Guides are expected to make these connections for visitors, and there are ample opportunities to do this along the former Silk Roads.

As nomadic people moved around often, the horse became critical to transport their belongings. It is likely that horses were domesticated in the area over 7000 years ago. In Kazakhstan, for example, horse teeth 5500 years-old have been found which display grooves formed by metal bits. Horses were also essential for warfare and protection. Many children are still taught horsemanship from a very early age. Games were developed to improve and demonstrate strength, concentration and skills. Today, the World Nomad Games are held annually in which participants compete in traditional nomadic games and sports.

As nomads needed easily transportable homes, tent-like *yurts* were developed which were then decorated with quilts, carpets and bags. According to local traditions, these were made from woollen felt from their sheep. Goods also needed to be transportable, so metal rather than pottery was used. As there were no permanent ovens, flat breads were baked in metal pans. Food was considered sacred and part of many celebrations and events, with special dishes reflecting hospitality and abundance. Many traditions reflect the role of nature in governing people's lives, in stories, music or in crafts themselves. Designs often reflect nature, for instance, snow on a leaf, an ibex horn or the flowers of the steppe. As wealth had to be portable, status was shown through *yurt* decoration, horse adornment, as well as weapon and jewellery adornment.

In traditional craftsmanship, everyone is involved, so that men, women and children each have their own roles and responsibilities. Women have always an important role in traditional crafts like felt-processing, carpet-making and embroidery, but are now starting to become more involved in traditional games which used to be an area

of culture reserved only for men. Women's role is also important in passing down traditions, skills and ideas to children and grandchildren. Women belonging to a nomadic tradition had more freedom than in more sedentary societies – for instance, women did not traditionally wear the veil and were expected to ride horses and take part in agriculture.

While being a form of ICH itself, craftsmanship also enables other elements of ICH, as in portable musical instruments, like the *dombra* or *komuz* (three-stringed lute). The music of the *dombra* is said to resemble the gait of a horse and can be heard over long distances.

As people moved around, the elders felt the need to pass on cultural knowledge and traditions, as well as the skills necessary to continue their lifestyle. This was done orally which resulted in variation of traditional expressions as they were passed on, but overall similarities and links can still be seen. Epic stories, such as the Kyrgyz Manas epic, celebrate strength and success in warfare. It was only in the 19th century when they were first written down, despite comprising more than 500,000 verses which can take several days to be recited. Throughout Central Asia, itinerant minstrels or bards (*bakshi* or *datanchi* in Turkmen and Uzbek and *akyn* in Kazakh and Kyrgyz) would travel around telling epics and stories. People would also meet at certain times of the year to celebrate and discuss new ideas and later integrate them into their own lives.

From a tourism perspective, we have seen that many of the cultural elements are extremely fragile, so it is important that tourism congestion does not damage traditional practices. Hospitality plays a core role in many of the traditions, and this may be the only thing that local can offer to visitors. A casual visitor could drain a host's resources and never know it. It would, however, be an insult for a guest to refuse an invitation or to offer to help with costs. Therefore it is important that visitors understand and respect local customs and avoid straining the resources of the area. Cultural heritage guides can help with understanding and appreciating the local culture and advise on correct behaviour, e.g., if one is offered bread, one should at least have a small taste. In some cases, it might be more appropriate for visitors to have the opportunity to live within a community and take part in their rituals and festivals, rather than organising events intended for short-term tourists, as this can result in commoditization and does not necessarily benefit the communities concerned. There could also be opportunities for educational tourism, allowing visitors to learn about and take part in traditions and skills.

Key Points for Cultural Heritage Guides in Interpreting Intangible Cultural Heritage

Inscription to Intangible Cultural Heritage List

Criteria

Guides must be aware of the Criteria that follow for the inscription of ICH elements.

Inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List

Criteria

An element proposed for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List satisfies all of the following criteria:

- U.1** The element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in **Article 2** of the Convention.
- U.2** a) The element is in urgent need of safeguarding because its viability is at risk despite the efforts of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals and State(s) Party(ies) concerned;
(or)
b) The element is in extremely urgent need of safeguarding because it is facing grave threats as a result of which it cannot be expected to survive without immediate safeguarding.
- U.3** Safeguarding measures are elaborated that may enable the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned to continue the practice and transmission of the element.
- U.4** The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent.
- U.5** The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in **Article 11** and **Article 12** of the Convention.
- U.6** In cases of extreme urgency, the State(s) Party(ies) concerned has (have) been duly consulted regarding inscription of the element in conformity with **Article 17.3** of the Convention.

Inscription on the Representative List

Criteria

In nomination files, the submitting State(s) Party(ies) is (are) requested to demonstrate that an element proposed for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity satisfies all of the following criteria:

- R.1** The element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in **Article 2** of the Convention.
- R.2** Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and to encouraging dialogue, thus reflecting cultural diversity worldwide and testifying to human creativity.
- R.3** Safeguarding measures are elaborated that may protect and promote the element.
- R.4** The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent.

- R.5** The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in **Article 11** and **Article 12** of the Convention.

Register of Good Safeguarding Practices

Criteria for selection: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/select-for-the-register-00300>

Inscription to the Lists and of selection of Good Safeguarding Practices

Procedure of inscription of elements on the list: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/procedure-of-inscription-00809>

Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage guides must be aware of and share the Ethical Principles adopted by UNESCO for the safeguarding of ICH elements, be they inscribed or not on any of UNESCO's lists.

The Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage have been elaborated in the spirit of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and existing international normative instruments to protect human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples. They represent a set of overarching aspirational principles that are widely accepted as constituting good practices for governments, organizations and individuals directly or indirectly affecting intangible cultural heritage. These principles are meant to ensure the viability of intangible cultural heritage, thereby recognizing its contribution to peace and sustainable development.

Complementary to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention, and national legislative frameworks, these Ethical Principles are intended to serve as a basis for the development of specific codes of ethics and tools adapted to local and sectoral conditions.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>

Making Links and Developing Themes in Interpretation of ICH

Cultural heritage guides should be aware that:

- ICH is not exclusive to certain regions and cultures and may be shared with other cultures; and
- Ideas and traditions may have been carried by people migrating or traveling from one area to another. In the case of the historic Silk Roads, traders had taken their

cultural traditions with them, many of which were adopted by the people they encountered; then they evolved and modified according to their environment, giving people a sense of identity and continuity from past to present and into the future.

Moreover, guides must be aware of the following **key points** in particular while interpreting ICH:

- ICH thrives when it is passed on and transmitted, and is therefore not exclusive or secret (with some exceptions, like in the case of secret rites or customary practices);
- ICH must be recognized by the local communities who create, maintain and transmit it to others;
- ICH requires sustainability and safeguarding; and
- It is important to refrain from personal judgment while interpreting ICH.

In general, cultural heritage guides have a strong influence on visitors and help them understand and respect the local culture, including Intangible Cultural Heritage. They are often the only people who engage and communicate with visitors. That is why they also have a special responsibility to ensure that ICH is not damaged, mis-interpreted or mis-used by their guests.

ANNEX I

About UNWTO, UNESCO and WFTGA

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability, and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

UNWTO encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to maximize tourism's socioeconomic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts, and is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development.

UNWTO generates market knowledge, promotes competitive and sustainable tourism policies and instruments, fosters tourism education and training, and works to make tourism an effective tool for development through technical assistance projects in over 100 countries around the world.

UNWTO's membership includes 159 countries, 6 territories, two permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

UNWTO's Technical Cooperation and Silk Road Department

UNWTO's Technical Cooperation and Silk Road Department is a unique collaborative platform of 35 Member States that aims to develop sustainable and internationally competitive tourism along the historic Silk Road routes. It aims to maximize the benefits of tourism development for local Silk Road communities and public/ private tourism stakeholders, while stimulating investment and promoting the conservation of the routes natural and cultural heritage.

UNWTO's Silk Road initiative carries out activities within the following key areas of work:

1. Silk Road knowledge creation;
2. Marketing and promotion;
3. Capacity building and destination management; and
4. Travel facilitation.

Currently (as of March 2020), the Member States participating in the UNWTO's Silk Road initiative include: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Georgia, Greece, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Montenegro, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, San Marino, Spain, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET)³¹

A fundamental frame of reference for responsible and sustainable tourism, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) is a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide key-players in tourism development. Addressed to governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists alike. It aims to help maximise the sector's benefits while minimising its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage and societies across the globe.

Adopted in 1999 by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, its acknowledgement by the United Nations two years later expressly encouraged UNWTO to promote the effective follow-up of its provisions. Although not legally binding, the Code features a voluntary implementation mechanism through its recognition of the role of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE), to which stakeholders may refer matters concerning the application and interpretation of the document.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was created on 16 November 1946. It works to facilitate dialogue between cultures and people based upon respect for shared values.

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UNESCO's overarching objectives

- Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning;
- Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development;
- Addressing social and ethical challenges;
- Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue; and
- Supporting freedom of expression and press.

UNESCO's objectives in the field of culture

- Promoting cultural diversity by safeguarding heritage in its various dimensions and enhancing cultural expressions as humanity's "public good"; and
- Promoting social cohesion by fostering pluralism, intercultural dialogue, as well as securing the central role of culture in development.

A set of conventions has been established to ensure the protection and safeguarding of humanity's shared heritage in both tangible and intangible forms.

World Heritage Convention

The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, an international agreement adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972, was founded on the premise that certain places on Earth are of «outstanding universal value» and as such should form part of the common heritage of humankind. The nations or "States Parties" that adhere to the Convention (191 signatories as of August 2014) have become part of an international community, united in a common World Heritage mission to identify and safeguard our world's most outstanding natural and cultural heritage. Whilst

31. World Tourism Organization (1999), *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, UNWTO, Madrid (online), available at: www.unwto.org (19-05-2020).

fully respecting the national sovereignty, and without prejudice to property right provided by national legislation, the States Parties to the Convention recognize that the protection of the World Heritage is the duty of the international community as a whole.

The Convention is profoundly original in that it links together in a single document the concept of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural sites. Cultural identity is strongly related to the natural environment in which it develops. Just as the creative works of humankind are often inspired by the beauty of their natural surroundings, some of the most spectacular natural sites bear the imprint of thousands of years of human activity.

World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA)

The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) was founded to bring together licenced and qualified tourist guides from around the world. WFTGA was officially registered as a not for profit organization under Austrian law after a second International Convention held in Vienna in 1987. At each international convention the WFTGA has grown and today the organization has members from more than 70 countries. Representing well over 200,000 individual tourist guides, WFTGA has established an international network of professional tourist guides. Today WFTGA is the only global forum for tourist guides. It has also developed training programmes, which enhance the professionalism of tourist guides around the world.

WFTGA's main purpose is to promote and market licensed and qualified tourist guides and to ensure that tourist guides are recognised as the ambassadors of a region. WFTGA offers services to its members and also communicates to those in search of the services of professional, area specific tourist guides. WFTGA also actively promotes its members' associations and industry partners worldwide.

WFTGA Code of Guiding Practice

Adherence to the WFTGA Code of Guiding Practice provides an assurance of the high level of professionalism and a value-added service offered by the individual guides to their clients. Tourist Guide Associations, which belong to the WFTGA, accept, on behalf of their members, WFTGA's principles and aims.

In addition, members of WFTGA comply with the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.³²

32. World Tourism Organization (1999), *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, UNWTO, Madrid (online), available at: www.unwto.org (19-05-2020).

ANNEX II

List of World Heritage Sites by country

Silk Road route	Country	Site
Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor	China	Site of Weiyang Palace in Chang'an City of the western Han Dynasty
		Site of Luoyang City from the eastern Han to northern Wei Dynasty
		Site of Daming Palace in Chang'an City of Tang Dynasty
		Site of Dingding Gate, Luoyang City of Sui and Tang Dynasties
		Site of Qocho City
		Site of Yar City
		Site of Bashbaliq City
		Site of Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty in Xin'an County
		Site of Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route
		Site of Suoyang City
		Site of Xuanquan Posthouse
		Site of Yumen Pass
		Kizilgaha Beacon Tower
		Kizil Cave-Temple Complex
		Subash Buddhist Ruins
		Bingling Cave-Temple Complex
		Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex
		Bin County Cave Temple
		Great Wild Goose Pagoda
		Small Wild Goose Pagoda
		Xingjiaosi Pagodas
		Tomb of Zhang Qian
	Kazakhstan	Site of Kayalyk
		Site of Talgar
		Site of Aktobe
		Site of Kulan
		Site of Ornek
		Site of Aktyras
		Sites of Kostobe
		Site of Karamergen
	Kyrgyzstan	City of Suyab (Site of Ak-Beshim)
		City of Balasagun (Site of Burana)
		City of Nevaket (Site of Krasnaya Rechka)
Penjikent–Samarkand–Poykent Corridor	Tajikistan	Ancient Town of Penjikent
	Uzbekistan	Qosim Shaikh Complex
		Mir-Sayaid Bakhrom Mausoleum
		Raboti Malik Caravanserai
		Raboti Malik Sardoba
		Chashma-Ayub Mausoleum
		Vobkent Minaret
		Bahouddin Naqshband Architectural Complex
		Chor-Bakr
		Poykent

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.C.E.	Before the Common Era
C.E.	Common Era
GCET	Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
HOT	Hands on Tourist Guide Training Course
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
WFTGA	World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations

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