SILK ROAD CHRONOLOGY

5000-500 B.C.

- 3200 Horse domesticated on south Russian steppe.
- 3000 Minoan civilization starts, the earliest in Europe.
- 3000 Silk first produced in China.
- 3000 Sumerians develop first writing system.
- 2500 Domestication of the Bactrian and Arabian camel, vital for desert travel.
- 1700 Horse-drawn chariot introduced in Near East.
- 1500 Iron technology developed in Asia Minor.
- 1500 Seminomadic stockbreeding tribes inhaabit steppes.
- 900 Spread of mounted nomadism.
- 753 Rome founded.
- 707 Cimmerians, earliest-known mounted nomads, defeat kingdom of Urartu in Near East.
- 900-700 Scythians and Sarmatians appear in the northern steppes - two of the first races learn to ride horses and wear trousers. stirrup.
- 600s Zoroaster born in Persia.
- 560s Buddha born in Nepal.
- 550 Achaemenid Empire established in Persia.
- 500s Chinese adopt nomadic style, wear trousers and ride horses.
- 450 Herodotus visits Greek trading colony of Olbia to gather information on Scythians.

400 B.C.

- Empire of Alexander the Great expands into Asia. Greek culture into Central Asia.

300 B.C.

- Roman expansion begins.
- Greco-Bactrian kingdom develops in Central Asia.
• Parthians establish their empire in Iran.
• Qin dynasty unites the entire China for the first time.
• Chinese complete Great Wall as defense against the northern nomads' invasion.
• Han dynasty overthrows Qin and develops its vast empire.
• Buddhism begins to spread north. Gandhara art type emerges and starts a new art style - Serindian.
• Paper first made in China.
• Achaemenid Empire of Persia.

200 B.C.

• Stirrup appears in Indian and Central Asia
• Greek city-states come under Roman rule.
• The Xiongnu, later called Huns rise to power in Central Asia and invade Chinese western border regions.
• Han Emperor, Wu-ti's interests in Central Asia cause him to command the Chang Ch'ien expeditions to the West, (Fergana and the Yueh-chih). Celestial Horses introduced to China.
• Han power reaches Tarim region. The Silk road under China's control and the route to the West now open.

100 B.C.

• Mithridates, Parthian king, sends ambassadors to both Sulla and Wu-ti to provide an important link between Rome and China.
• Parthians defeat Romans at Carrhae. One of the most disastrous in Roman history.
• Roman conquers Gaul.
• Egypt under Roman rule. Gives Rome access to Red Sea and Spice Route trade.
• Rome officially becomes an empire.
1 A.D.

- Silk first seen in Rome.
- Buddhism begins to spread from India into Central Asia.
- Roman Syria develops the technique of blowing glass. The industry expands.
- Kushan Empire of Central Asia. Sogdians trading on Silk Route.
- Xiongnu raids upset Chinese power in Tarim region.
- Death of Jesus Christ. Spread of Christianity begins.
- Chinese General Pan Ch'ao defeats Xiongnu and keeps the peace in the Tarim Basin. The stability of the Silk road popularizes the caravan trades into two routes - north and south.
- China sends the first ambassador to Rome from Pan Ch'ao's command, but he fails to reach Rome.
- Graeco-Egyptian geographer, Claudius Ptolemy, writes his Geography, attempts to map the Silk road.

100 A.D.

- Rome sends the first Roman envoy over sea to China.
- Roman Empire at its largest. A major market for Eastern goods.
- Buddhism reaches China.
- For the next few centuries, Buddhism flourishes, becoming the most popular religion in Central Asia, replacing Zoroastrianism.
- The four great empires of the day - the Roman, Parthian, Kushan, and Chinese - bring stability to the Silk road.

200 A.D.

- Silk is woven into cloth across Asia, but using Chinese thread.
- Han dynasty ends. China splits into fragments.
- Sassanians rise to power from Parthians. Strong cultural influence along the trade routes.
- Barbarian attacks on the Roman Empire.
- Death of Mani in Persia. Manichaeism spreads throughout Asia, not to die out until the 14th century.
300 A.D.

- Stirrup introduced to China by the northern nomads
- Secret of sericulture begins to spread west along the Silk road.
- Xiongnu invade China again. China further dissolved into fragments.
- Constantinople becomes Rome's capital.
- Christianity becomes the official Roman religion.
- Dun Huang caves starts to appear and becomes the world's largest Buddha caves.
- Huns attack Europe.
- Roman Empire splits into two.
- Fa-hsien, one of the first known Chinese Silk road travellers by foot and a Buddhist monk, sets out for India.

400 A.D.

- New techniques in glass production introduced to China by the Sogdians.
- Visigoths invade Italy and Spain.
- Angles and Saxons rise in Britain.
- Western Roman Empire collapses.
- Frankish kingdom formed.

500 A.D.

- Silkworm farms appear in Europe.
- Nestorian Christians reach China.
- Kingdom of Hephthalites (White Huns) in northern Asia, conquering Sogdian territory.
- Buddhism reaches Japan.
- Split of the Turkish Kaganate into Eastern and Western Kaganates. Western Turks move to Central Asia from Mongolian plateau. At the Chinese end of Central Asia, the Eastern Turks or Uighurs is in control.
- Sui dynasty reunites China.
600 A.D.

- Sassanian Empire at its greatest extent in Central Asia.
- Roman Empire becomes Byzantine Empire.
- Tang dynasty rules in China. For the first two centuries, the Silk Road reaches its golden age. China very open to foreign cultural influences. Buddhism flourishes.
- The Islamic religion founded.
- Death of Muhammad. Muslim Arab expansion begins.
- Xuan Zang's pilgrimage to India.
- The Avars from the steppes introduces stirrups to Europe.
- Sassanian Persia falls to the Arabs.
- Muslims control Mesopotamia and Iran, along with the Silk and Spice routes.

700 A.D.

- Arabs conquer Spain in Europe, which introduces much Eastern technology and science to Europe.
- Arabs defeat Chinese at Talas and capture Chinese papermakers, who introduces paper making into Central Asia and Europe.
- Block printing developed in China
- Tang dynasty begins to decline, and with it, the Silk road.
- Glassmaking skill introduced to China by Sogdians.

800 A.D.

- First porcelain made in China.
- Gunpowder invented in China and spread to the West by the 13th century.
- All foreign religions banned in China.
• Compass begins to be used by Chinese.
• Diamond Sutra dated 11 May 868, the world's oldest known printed book made in Dunhuang.
• Venice established as a city-state.

900 A.D.

• Kirghiz Turks in control of Eastern Central Asia, establish kingdoms at Dunhuang and Turfan.
• Tang Dynasty ends. China fragmented.
• England unified for the first time.
• Playing cards invented in China and spread to Europe toward the end of 14th century.
• The Islamic Empire divides into small kingdoms.
• Sung Dynasty reunites China.
• Porcelain developed in China and exported to western Asia.

1000 A.D.

• First Crusade. Exchange of technology between Europe and Middle East.

1100 A.D.

• China divided into Northern Sung and Southern Sung.
• Muslim oust the Franks from the Levant.
• Genghis Khan unites Mongols. Expansion of Mongol Empire begins.
• Silk production and weaving established in Italy.
• Paper money first developed in China.

1200 A.D.

• Death of Genghis Khan.
• Mongols invade Russia, Poland, and Hungary.
• The Europe's first envoy to the East, Friar Giovanni Carpini leaves Rome for Mongol capital at Karakorum.
• Friar William Rubruck sent to Karakorum by the King of France.
• Seventh, and last, Crusade.
• Mongol control central and western Asia.
• Silk road trade prospers again under the "Pax Mongolica."
• Kublai Khan defeats China and establishes the Yuan dynasty.
• Paper money introduced to Central Asia and Iran by Mongols.
• Marco Polo leaves for the East.

1300 A.D.

• Turkish Ottoman Empire in power.
• Tamerlane, with capital in Samarkand, rises and conquers Persia, parts of Southern Russia, and northern India.
• Third Silkroad route appears in the north.
• Ibn Battuta, the first known Arab travels on a 750,000 mile journey to China via the Silkroad.
• The Black Death spreads throughout Europe.
• Paper made across Europe.
• Spinning wheel in Europe.
• Battle of Crecy between French and English, where cannons used first in Europe.
• Mongol Yuan Dynasty collapses. Chinese Ming Dynasty begins.

1400 A.D.

• Tamerlane defeats the Ottoman Turks, and causes the deaths of seventeen million people.
• Renaissance period in Europe.
• Chinese explore the Spice Routes as far as Africa
• Death of Tamerlane leads to the decline of Mongol power. Ottoman rises again in the Central Asia.
- Ottomans conquer Constantinople.
- Gutenberg printing press in use.
- China closes the door to foreigners.
- Fearing the power of Uighurs, Ming China reduces the trade and traffic dramatically in the Silkroad. The Silkroad comes to an end for purposes of silk.
- Lyon becomes the new center of the silk trade.
- Columbus reaches America.
- Vasco da Gama discovers the sea route from Europe to the East via the cape of Good Hope to Calicut in India.

1500 A.D.

- Islam becomes the religion of the entire Taklamakan region.

1600 A.D.

- Uzbek Turks appear from the north, settle in today's Uzbekistan.
- Prince Babur, descendant of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, extends his empire from the Ferghana valley to India. Founder of Mogul dynasty.
- Manchuria rises and invades China. Qing Dynasty established.

1700 A.D.

- Numbers of severe earthquakes in Central Asia damage some of the great monuments.
- Porcelain produced in Europe.
- The Manchus, a Tungusic people from Manchuria, absorb the Gobi and Altai districts.

1800 A.D.

- German scholar, Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen uses the term "Silkroad" (Seidenstrasse) for the first time.
- Manchus take over the Tarim Basin.
• Xinjiang Province created under Qing Dynasty.
• Elias crosses the Pamirs and identifies Muztagh Ata. Recommends the Wakhan corridor be established.
• Younghusband crosses the Gobi Desert, pioneering a new route from Peking to Kashgar via the Muztagh Pass.
• Hedin explores the Kun Lun and Takla Makan desert, unearthing buried cities along the old Silkroad.
• Conway in the Karakoram Mountains.
• Stein’s archaeological investigations of the Takla Makan and central Asia.
• The Great Game - Tsarist Russia and British India expand in Central Asia.

1900 A.D.

• Sven Hedin expeditions -1883 – 1935.
• Chinese revolution; end of Chinese dynasties - 1949.
• Tibet under China's control – 1950.
• Karakoram highway from Islamabad to Kashgar built by China and Pakistan – 1978.
• Beginning of Trans-Siberian Railways – 1916.
• Reopening of the Nathu La Pass – 2006.