

Lecture 7 Homework

Questions 1–12

Read the following text. Do the statements agree with the writer's views? Write:

YES if the statement agrees with the views of the writer

NO if the statement contradicts what the writer thinks

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to know what the writer's point of view is

Schoolchildren in China learn that the opening of the East-West trading route popularly known as the Silk Road occurred in 139 BC, when Zhang Qian, the Chinese ambassador-adventurer, travelled westward across the Pamirs, a mountain range in Central Asia. He was the first known Chinese person to do so. The term 'Silk Road' was actually first used late in the nineteenth century. Silk was not the only material that passed along these routes. Other goods included ceramics, glass, precious gems and livestock.

However, there are reasons to think that these roads were being used centuries earlier than Zhang's expedition. In Roman times, Pliny the Elder reported a 'stone tower', which he said existed on the Pamir Plateau where goods had been traditionally exchanged between traders from the East and the West. In the early second century, Maës Titianus, an ancient Roman-Macedonian traveller, reported reaching this famous Stone Tower. According to one theory, it was at Tashkurgan in the Pamirs ('Tashkurgan' means 'stone tower' in the Uyghur language). Scholars today, however, believe that its location was probably somewhere in the Alay Valley. Whatever the truth may be, it seems likely that some form of trade was taking

place in this region millennia before more formal recorded trade took place.

On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that people in those times were able to travel such huge distances. Travelling from West to East, the trader first had to cross the Pamir Plateau, through the 20,000-foot-high mountains. If the weather in the mountains was kind, the eastward bound traveller would then finally arrive at the city of Kashgar, a logical place for trade and rest, where they could exchange horses or camels and then start on the return journey back over the mountains before the winter snows.

It is unlikely that in these earlier times traders or travellers would have continued further eastwards from Kashgar, as they would have had to go round the Taklamakan Desert. Going through it may not have been an option: the name literally means 'Go in and you won't come out'. Beyond this desert, there still would have remained eight hundred miles of a dangerous journey before they would have found the first signs of Chinese civilization.

Adapted from The Moon over Matsushima – Insights into Mugwort and Moxa, by Merlin Young (Godiva Press).

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| 1 Another name for the East-West trading route is Silk Road. | 7 We know that Zhang Qian was the first person to use the Silk Road. |
| 2 Zhang Qian is admired by Chinese schoolchildren. | 8 The Romans may well have used the Silk Road. |
| 3 Zhang Qian was a Chinese adventurer. | 9 Reports of a 'stone tower' prove that the Romans used the Silk Road. |
| 4 At least one German used the Silk Road in the 19th century. | 10 Kashgar is a welcoming city. |
| 5 Silk was the main material to be traded on this route. | 11 People who go into the Taklaman desert never come back out. |
| 6 The Silk Road carried natural and man-made materials, as well as animals. | 12 The difficult journey from the west probably stopped travellers getting to China. |

Answer Keys:

1. YES
2. NOG GIVEN
3. YES
4. NOT GIVEN
5. NOT GIVEN
6. YES
7. NO
8. YES
9. NO
10. NOT GIVEN
11. NOT GIVEN
12. YES