

## Identify these Silk Road Women ! Springer

These four interesting and talented women, two English, one Chinese and one of Arab descent, lived and traveled along the ancient Silk Road, some in recent times. They all influenced history and enhanced our understanding of the area. Who are they ???

1. This Englishwoman was an Intrepid and resourceful explorer, author, teacher, and medical missionary who won fame in 1920's by her travels along the Silk Road in Western China and Central Asia during a very turbulent and dangerous period. A prolific author of more than thirty books on this area, still one of the best sources of information on the period.

2. This woman was the wife of the king of Palmyra, a major Silk Road crossroad city. She became ruler at the death of her husband in 267AD. By strong and aggressive leadership, she expanded her empire, conquering Persia and Egypt. She then defeated the Romans and expelled them from the area.

Finally defeated by the Romans in 274AD, she was taken to Rome as a prisoner, where she died. She has been featured in four operas, including one by Rossini, two plays, and many books including Chaucer's Canteberry Tales (The Monk's Tale).

3. This woman, famous in Chinese history as one of the "Four Beauties of Ancient China," became consort of a Chinese Emperor in Silk Road city of Xian, during the Tang Dynasty. Although considered a decent and kind woman, her influence over the emperor, who loved her to distraction, earned her powerful enemies, and they eventually had her killed. Even today she is a popular and tragic figure in Chinese literature, and is the subject of many plays, books, poems, movies, and even a TV series.

4. In 1898 this young woman gave up the pleasant comforts of middle class English home to marry a British diplomat, who was consul-general in Kashgar. Kashgar was then said to be the world's most remote city. It took her several months to get there, traveling by ship, rail, horse, camel and ox cart over vast deserts and some of the world's highest mountains.

She gained renown by establishing, under the most primitive conditions, an oasis of Western civilization which became a center for archeological studies and a refuge for famous explorers, including Sven Hyden, Sir Aurel Stein, and Sir Charles Younghusband. She describes her adventures in a fascinating autobiography, which is still available.