



Silk Road people

Asia's Silk Road regions have been a network of highways for trade, commerce and cultural exchange for over 2,000 years.

Tea, spices and silk and other treasures were traded from Europe to Asia via the perilous deserts and mountain ranges of Central Asia and Western China. Buddhism, Islam and Christianity all entered East Asia along these Silk Road trade routes.

These regions are now home to different peoples, including eleven people groups that are traditionally Muslim and have their own language, culture and traditions.

Hui, Uyghur, Kazak, Dongxiang, Kyrgyz, Salar, Tajik, Bonan, Uzbek, Tatar and Alxa Mongol—each group is precious in God's eyes. Pray with us for five important areas in their lives.

We long to see the people of the ancient Silk Road regions blessed by the abundant love of God and a growing understanding of the teachings of Jesus.



1 >> PRAY FOR EDUCATION

For many young people in Silk Road communities in China, they are the first generation to receive formal higher education, and access a key pathway to their family's financial security. As a result, children can often feel pressured to excel in school. Yet, because Mandarin is not always their first language, schooling—especially in higher education—can be a struggle for students from Muslim people groups.

Lord, thank you for creating each child uniquely. We pray parents will seek to nurture their children's strengths, not only academically but also physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Lord, thank you that more of these Silk Road communities' young people can study through to higher education. We pray that these students will learn much and become the people you created them to be.

Lord, thank you for these families' chances to have potential financial security. We ask that parents gain wisdom on how to encourage their children's learning and that they find their security in you.

2 >> PRAY FOR HOSPITALITY

Each Silk Road community has their own unique traditions of generous hospitality. While customs may vary across each people group, guests are always highly honored and welcomed with delicious dishes, such as mutton, noodles, naan bread, or other special foods. At times, visits to Muslim families include spontaneous bursts of song and dance or poetry recitation that make the visit even more memorable. These meals help strengthen and build relationships and community among family and friends.

Lord, thank you that your generosity is reflected in these communities' hospitality. May you bless such gatherings and enable hosts and visitors to experience more of your love.

Lord, you know these meals are prepared by skillful and busy wives, mothers and daughters, who spend days in the kitchen to prepare festive food. May they experience joy from you, who knows their hearts and desires.

Lord, in these shared meals, we ask you use these times together to rebuild any hurting relationships between family, friends, and you.

Lord, there is often miscommunication and tension between different ethnic groups in Silk Road communities. We ask for reconciliation and for real friendships to grow.

3 >> PRAY FOR BUSINESS

As with many of their ancestors before them, many Muslims are renowned for their business skills. In China, Central Asia and major cities around the world, they own shops, restaurants, or small transport companies. This way of providing for their families can take them to places far away, with the need to live apart.

Lord, thank you for enabling many Silk Road Muslims with excellent business skills. We ask that you bless their businesses and help them look to you to provide for their families.

Lord, for those who have had to move away from their home and community to earn a living, we pray that local people will befriend and help newcomers in unfamiliar surroundings.

Lord, please help small business owners whose businesses are struggling. We pray for you to give wisdom and hope to those who can't see a way forward.

Lord, we pray for those who are living far away to feel well supported by their families at home.

4 >> PRAY FOR FAMILY & SOCIETY

Muslim communities along the Silk Road place a high value on the family, and parents see it as a sacred responsibility to see their children married. However, like communities around the world, there are also many challenges to healthy family life on the Silk Road. Let's ask for God's blessing and help for families as they respond to the realities of life in the region.

Lord, it is good that Silk Road communities value marriage. We ask that you bless parents as they do their best to find their child a suitable spouse and we pray that you grant wisdom to Silk Road singles as they try to choose a partner for a life-time. We pray that new couples will look to you for help to develop healthy marriages.

Lord, we pray for the men in some of the Muslim communities who struggle with alcoholism. Many of these men want to change, but have never found a different way to face life's troubles. We pray that they will get to hear what Jesus teaches about how to handle difficulties.

Lord, we pray for women who face trauma in their homes. We pray for their comfort. Please give them good friends who can give wise counsel.

5 >> PRAY FOR LEISURE

As modernization accelerates, some Silk Road peoples have moved from their semi-nomadic or agrarian lives to urban or industrialized employment in other areas. But when warm weather arrives, they enjoy outings that help them to reconnect with their heritage and relax in beautiful fields and mountain valleys.

Lord, thank you for the Silk Road peoples' love of nature. We ask that they will be blessed as they spend time outdoors and experience your glory revealed in nature.

Lord, we ask that nature's peacefulness will create a deeper desire in the hearts of these hardworking peoples, to have good patterns of work and rest - as you intend for us to have.

Lord, we thank you for the heritage of raising sheep which several Silk Road people groups have. We pray that they would learn more about Jesus the Good Shepherd.

Lord, we ask that during joyful outings, Silk Road peoples can share their heritages with local friends from different ethnic backgrounds, increasing understanding for each other's cultures and lives.