

Japan to support Silk Road extension bid / 4 nations seek to expand UNESCO registration

The Yomiuri Shimbun Japan will help four Central Asian countries register a portion of the Silk Road (see below) that runs through those nations on the UNESCO list of World Cultural Heritage sites, The Yomiuri Shimbun has learned.

Aiming to extend the stretch of the Silk Road that UNESCO has already recognized, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will combine Silk Road-related sites in their countries and recommend registration possibly in 2020, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Japan plans to dispatch experts to these countries to offer guidance on research and the preservation of historic remains. The project will be promoted by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage that Japan established within UNESCO. Japan has so far contributed \$67.6 million to the fund.

The Silk Road portion linking Luoyang, China, with the southeastern part of Kazakhstan was registered as a World Cultural Heritage site in 2014 on the recommendation of China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz, and with the support of Japan. The envisioned project calls for extending the Silk Road farther westward.

The extended Silk Road is likely to consist of 20 to 30 ruins in a section more than 1,500 kilometers long called the Fergana-Syrdarya Corridor, which runs from western Kyrgyz to the Aral Sea coast in the southern part of Kazakhstan.

■ Silk Road

A network of ancient trade routes used to transport Chinese-made silk westward. The route called the Fergana-Syrdarya Corridor prospered from the second century B.C. to the 16th century. It includes the Fergana Basin, where Emperor Wu of the former Han dynasty of China sent an expedition to capture sturdy horses, and the ruins of Otrar, an ancient oasis city in present-day Kazakhstan. In 2015, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev issued a joint statement citing Otrar as a subject of joint cooperation in the field of archaeology. [Speech](#)