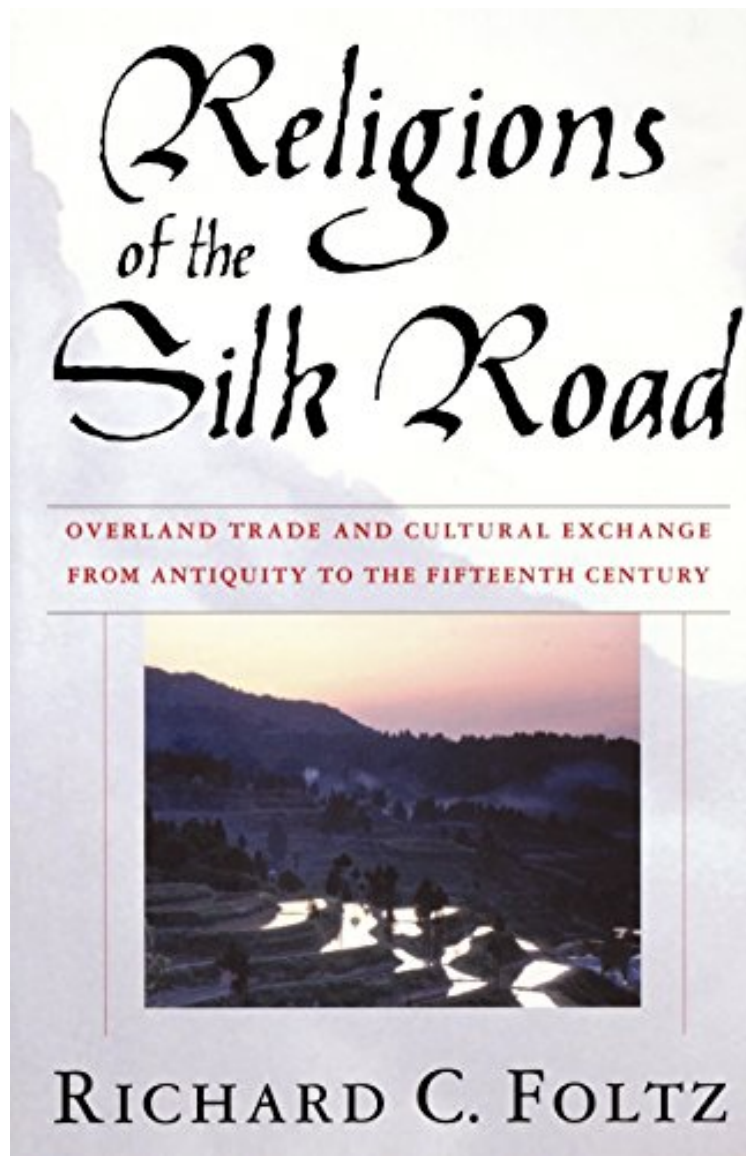


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Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century

R. Foltz

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R. Foltz : Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century:

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Religion handbook for people interested in Central Asia
By Magalini Sabina
I came around this book because it is often cited in books on Central Asia, the Silk Road, Buddhism and also in the last book I read on Xuanzang. The Authors that use it as a citation do not want to explore more deeply some concepts they are treating at the moment so they indicate this text with such an encompassing title as the ultimate resource for omitted information. So when you finally see the book, the small dimensions dampen a little the enthusiasm. Certainly, the subject is large and the chronological time interval extends from the first millennium BCE to the fifteenth century CE, while the geographical boundaries go from China to Persia and from North India to Russia considering all the Silk Road extensions. Simplification of such a vast panorama is evidently necessary and this is precisely what the Author has done. He has succeeded in condensing the history of well known and less well known religions into a comprehensive didactic text. The first chapter states the epistemological guidelines utilized: the importance of trade for diffusion of religion, the supposed role of women in the transmission of faiths, the division between proselytizing and non proselytizing religions and the difference in acceptance of new beliefs from the center to the periphery, the consideration of the practicality and belonging to the dominant social class as the main drive to acceptance of new forms of faith. In the following chapters Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Nestorian Christianity and Islam are all described and a brief story of their expansion and fortunes is delineated. The book makes two really good points in these chapters one is on the syncretism of all these religions in time and space on the Silk Roads and the other is the concept of Central Asia as a refuge for heretics. Another interesting aspect for non academics is the description of less well known sects such as the Radanites (merchant Jews from France that practically converted the Khazars) and the description of the Kushan reign that disappeared forever in the sands of history. Finally there is a wide overview on the religious conquest by Islam of the entire Central Asia and the fading away of all other religious beliefs. The role of sufis is emphasized more than that of the sword. There is one chapter called "Ecumenical mischief" that seems like a small essay inserted in this otherwise schematic text, that dwells on the attempts of missionaries of all faiths to convert the Mongols and on the intestine quarrels between Nestorians and Muslims in the Il-Khan lands. The in-depth outlook of these episodes makes one desire the whole book were written with such a research detail since the bird view approach is one of its defects. Academic reviewers affirm Prof. Foltz makes a few mistakes in dates and historical interpretations and that he has utilized exclusively English sources. The general reader, naturally, does not capture these subtle details. However, since this book is really very cited and has the great advantage of covering such a wide time and space span, a new and revised edition would be welcomed. The reading is fluent and sometimes it is necessary to reread in order to fully appreciate all the information. The Notes and the Bibliography are rich, so this text can be of help to students, entertain historical fans even if it does fall short of completeness and real satisfaction.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. NOT THE SAME BOOK AS THE PIC
By Connie Wen
I received an older version of the book, meaning content was different. Could not use for the class. The posted image is false advertisement.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great author
By XiGua
This book covers all the basics of religion that you need to know. It also helps you better understand the Silk Road and its importance to the global spread of religious ideas.

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, popular European fascination with the world beyond reached an all-time high. The British and French empires spanned the globe, and their colonial agents sent home exotic goods and stories. The Silk Route dates from this romantic period, in name if not in reality. In the century since its invention as a concept, the Silk Route has captured and captivated the Western imagination. It has given us images of fabled cities and exotic peoples. Religions of the Silk Road tells the story of how religions accompanied merchants and their goods along the overland Asian trade routes of pre-modern times. It is a story of continuous movement, encounters, mutual reactions and responses, adaptation and change. Beginning as early as the eighth century BCE, Israelite and Iranian traditions travelled eastwards in this way, and they were followed centuries later by the great missionary traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam. The Silk Route was more than just a conduit along which these religions hitched rides East; it was a formative and transformative rite of passage, and no religion emerged unchanged at the end of that arduous journey.

"An absolute gem...well researched and well-written." - Jerry H. Bentley, Editor, Journal of World History
"The first comprehensive description of the presence and interplay of various religions in Central Asia." - Hans. J. Klimkeit, Bonn University
From the Publisher "Foltz has done a very good job of putting together the various pieces of evidence for the different religions on the Silk Road...a fine synthesis, which up to now is the only one of its kind. For all interested in the present global relationship between religions, the history of that relationship in Central Asia is of the greatest interest." --Hans-J. Klimkeit, Director, Religionswissenschaftliches Seminar, Bonn U. "...an absolute gem...a really valuable contribution...well researched and well written, it brings together a huge amount of information in an attractive package. The attention to trade and cultural exchanges is most welcome." --Jerry H. Bentley, Editor, Journal of World History
About the Author RICHARD C. FOLTZ is Professor of Religion at Columbia University. He is the

author of *Mughal India and Central Asia and Conversations with Emperor Jahangir*.