

The Miracle¹ of Silk

- ¹ *Silk*. The word itself is beautiful. The story of silk starts in China over 4,000 years ago. One **legend** says a silkworm's cocoon fell into a woman's teacup. It then opened into a single, **unbroken** thread. This was an important **discovery**.
⁵ The Chinese learned they could use the cocoons to make **cloth** that was both beautiful to look at and soft to touch.

Making silk was a protected secret in China for many years. In other countries, silk was very **rare** and **valuable**. Often it was **worth** more than gold. Legend tells us that the secret
¹⁰ finally got out when a princess left China to go to India. In her hair, she secretly carried many silkworms.

By the year 1 A.D., silk was sold as far west as Rome, and all along the Silk Road, which connected China with places in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Eventually, around
¹⁵ the year 300, silk also traveled from China to Japan. Centuries later, in 1522, the Spanish brought silkworms to Mexico.

- Nowadays** people around the world still make many beautiful things from silk. But silk isn't only beautiful. It looks delicate,² but it's actually very strong. For example, it has been used to make bicycle tires. And some
²⁵ doctors even use silk threads in hospital operations.³ Silk is also lightweight and warm. This makes it great for clothes like winter **jackets**, pants, and boots.
³⁰ All of this from a little **insect**—the silkworm. That is the miracle of silk.



▲ Silk shoes on sale at a market in China



▲ A silk robe

¹ A **miracle** is something that is very surprising or fortunate.

² If something is **delicate**, it is easy to break and needs to be handled carefully.

³ An **operation**, is when a surgeon cuts open a patient's body to remove, replace, or repair a diseased or damaged part.