

JOURNEYS ON THE SILK ROAD

*A desert explorer, Buddha's secret library, and the unearthing
of the world's oldest printed book*

JOYCE MORGAN & CONRAD WALTERS



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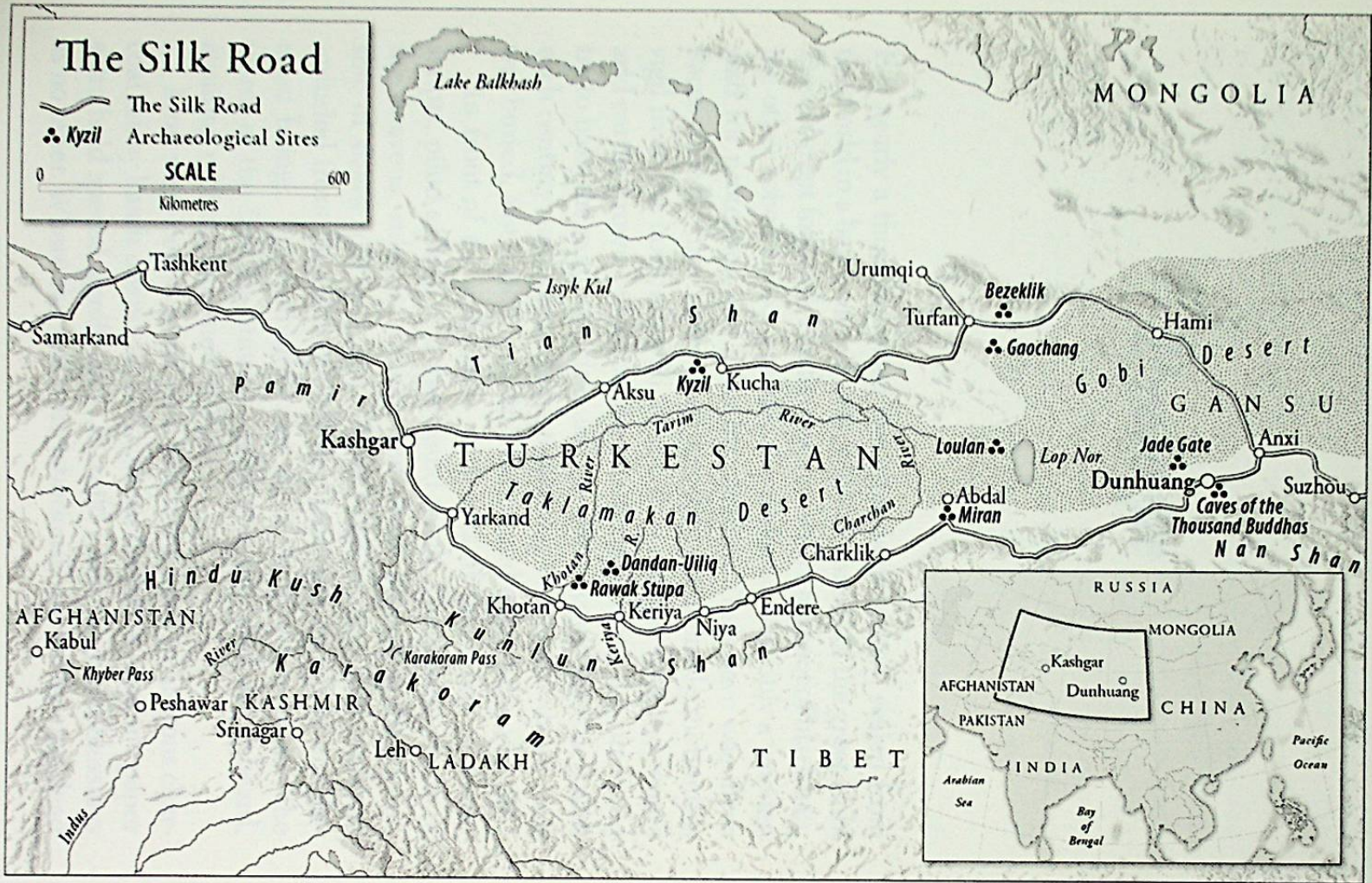
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The Silk Road

 The Silk Road
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When a Chinese monk broke into a hidden cave in 1900, he uncovered one of the world's greatest literary secrets: a time capsule from the ancient Silk Road. Inside, scrolls were piled from floor to ceiling, undisturbed for a thousand years. The gem within was the Diamond Sutra of AD 868. This key Buddhist teaching, made 500 years before Gutenberg inked his press, is the world's oldest printed book. While Christians fought the Crusades and Magellan circled the globe, while Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* and Genghis Khan united nomadic tribes, while the Black Death consumed Europe and Galileo imagined the cosmos, the Diamond Sutra existed in meditative silence. Then, on the cusp of a new century, a seam of light opened into the darkness.

The Silk Road once conveyed merchants, pilgrims, and ideas from China to the Mediterranean, but it was swallowed by shifting sands. Central to the Silk Road's rediscovery was a man named Aurel Stein, a Hungarian-born scholar and archaeologist employed by the British service.

Undaunted by the vast Gobi Desert, Stein crossed thousands of desolate miles to meet with the Chinese monk and secure the Diamond Sutra. The scroll's journey—by camel through the desert, by boat to London—merges an explorer's adventures, political intrigue, and continued controversy.

The Diamond Sutra has inspired Jack Kerouac and the Dalai Lama. Its journey has coincided with the growing appeal of Buddhism in the West. As the Gutenberg Age cedes to the Google Age, the survival of the Silk Road's greatest treasure is testament to the endurance of the written word.



Joyce Morgan's work has appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Australian*, the *Guardian*, and the *Bangkok Post*. A senior arts writer at the *Sydney Morning Herald*, she is a former arts editor of the paper and has also worked as a producer with ABC Radio. Born in Liverpool, England, she has traveled extensively in Asia, including India, Pakistan, China, and Tibet.

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"Brilliantly combines literary thriller, travel adventure,
and popular history." —*Good Reading Magazine*

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through the perils of the London Blitz, a story of
an epic adventure and an extraordinary Buddhist
text that has touched millions of lives

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