

# THE JADE ROAD

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The oldest part of the Silk Road was originally called the Jade Road along the string of oases watered by runoff from the Kunlun mountains of northern Tibet on the southern edge of the Takla Makan desert in Chinese Turkestan. This is where the finest jade was to be found, washed down from Tibet. This is the route that Marco Polo took with his father and uncle in 1272 to reach the court of the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan.

This is what the Jade Road looks like today, near the fabled oasis of Khotan. Save for the road being asphalted and the farmer's cart being towed by a small tractor instead of a donkey, Polo would recognize it. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #179* photo ©Jack Wheeler)

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