



0. THE DIAMOND SUTRA - Story Preface

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Why is this book referred to as "The Diamond Sutra?" One translation of the work's full name is "The Diamond That Cuts Through Illusion." From this it seems reasonable to infer that thousands of years ago, just like today, a diamond was capable of cutting through an object. Why not have a diamond also cut through concepts which we ponder in our minds? This image depicts the Frontispiece of the *Diamond Sutra* from Cave 17, Dunhuang. The original, maintained at the British Library, is ink on paper. This image is online via Wikimedia Commons.

In China, during the 9th century AD, a man named Wang Jie copied a book significant to his Buddhist religion. Translated from the Sanskrit, the title of Wang Jie's book is *The Perfection of Wisdom which Cuts Like a Thunderbolt*.

It is the earliest dated, printed book known in the world today and is commonly called the *Diamond Sutra*. It is at the British Library in London.

The book's inscription is interesting:

Reverently caused to be made for universal free distribution by Wang Jie on behalf of his two parents on the 13th of the 14th moon of the 9th year of Xiantong.

In English, that's May 11, 868 AD.

The book was part of a library that was sealed in a walled-up cave in Dunhuang, China in about 1000 AD. It was rediscovered in 1907 by Sir Marc Aurel Stein.

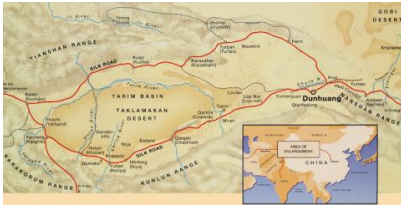
We don't know why it was sealed in the cave, but protecting religious works from invading enemies had been the role of monks for centuries.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-DIAMOND-SUTRA-Book-Burning-and-Censorship>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-DIAMOND-SUTRA-Book-Burning-and-Censorship>



Dunhuang - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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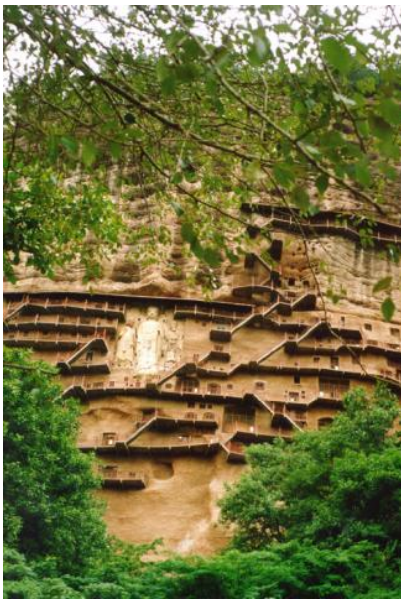


Sir Marc Aurel Stein

Image of Aurel Stein, online courtesy Sir Aurel Stein.org.uk

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Cave in Dunhuang

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