

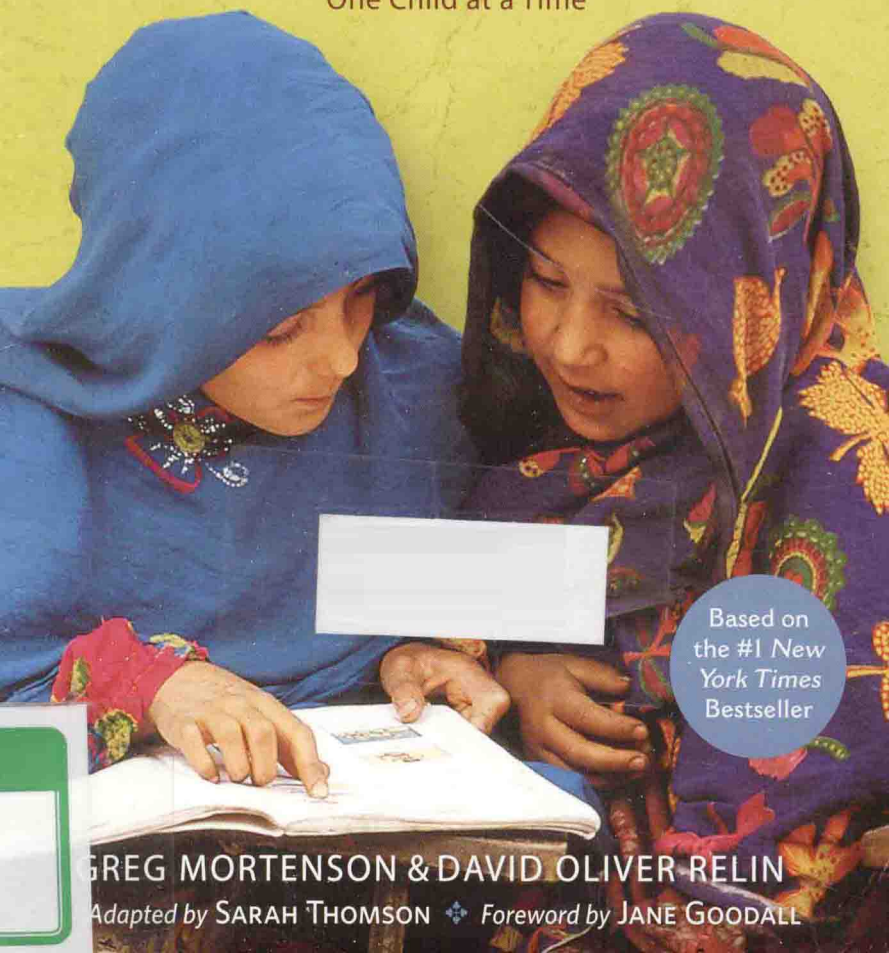
#1 New York Times Bestseller

THE YOUNG READERS EDITION



# Three Cups of Tea

One Man's Journey to Change the World...  
One Child at a Time



Based on  
the #1 New  
York Times  
Bestseller

GREG MORTENSON & DAVID OLIVER RELIN

Adapted by SARAH THOMSON ♦ Foreword by JANE GOODALL



# Three Cups of Tea

*Young Readers Edition*

Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

Adapted for young readers by  
Sarah Thomson

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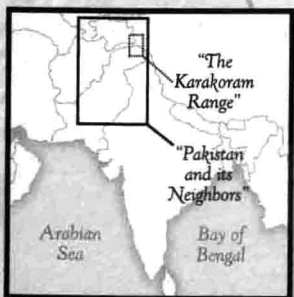
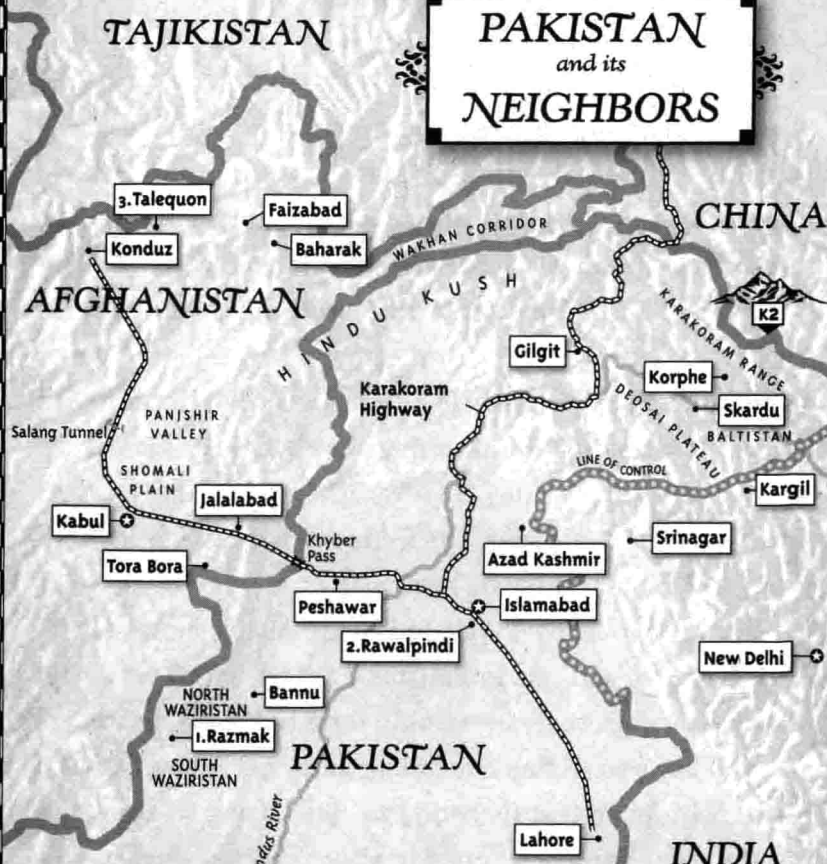
## The Promise

Greg watched and listened as the children sang Pakistan's national anthem to start their school day. He saw Twaha's seven-year-old daughter, Jahan, standing tall and straight beneath her headscarf as she sang. When the song ended, they sat down in the dirt and began writing out their multiplication tables. A few, like Jahan, had slates on which they wrote with sticks dipped in mud. The rest scratched in the dirt with sticks. "Can you imagine a fourth-grade class in America, alone, without a teacher, sitting there quietly and working on their lessons?" Greg asked later. "I felt like my heart was being torn out. . . . I knew I had to do something."

But what could he do? He had barely enough money left to travel by jeep and bus to Pakistan's capital, where he would catch an airplane to fly home. Still, there had to be something.

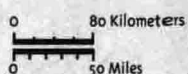
Standing next to Haji Ali, looking at the mountains that he'd come halfway around the world to climb, Greg suddenly felt that reaching the summit of K2 to place a necklace there wasn't really important. He could do something much better than that to honor his sister, Christa. He put his hands on Haji Ali's shoulders. "I *will* build a school," he said. "I promise."

# PAKISTAN and its NEIGHBORS

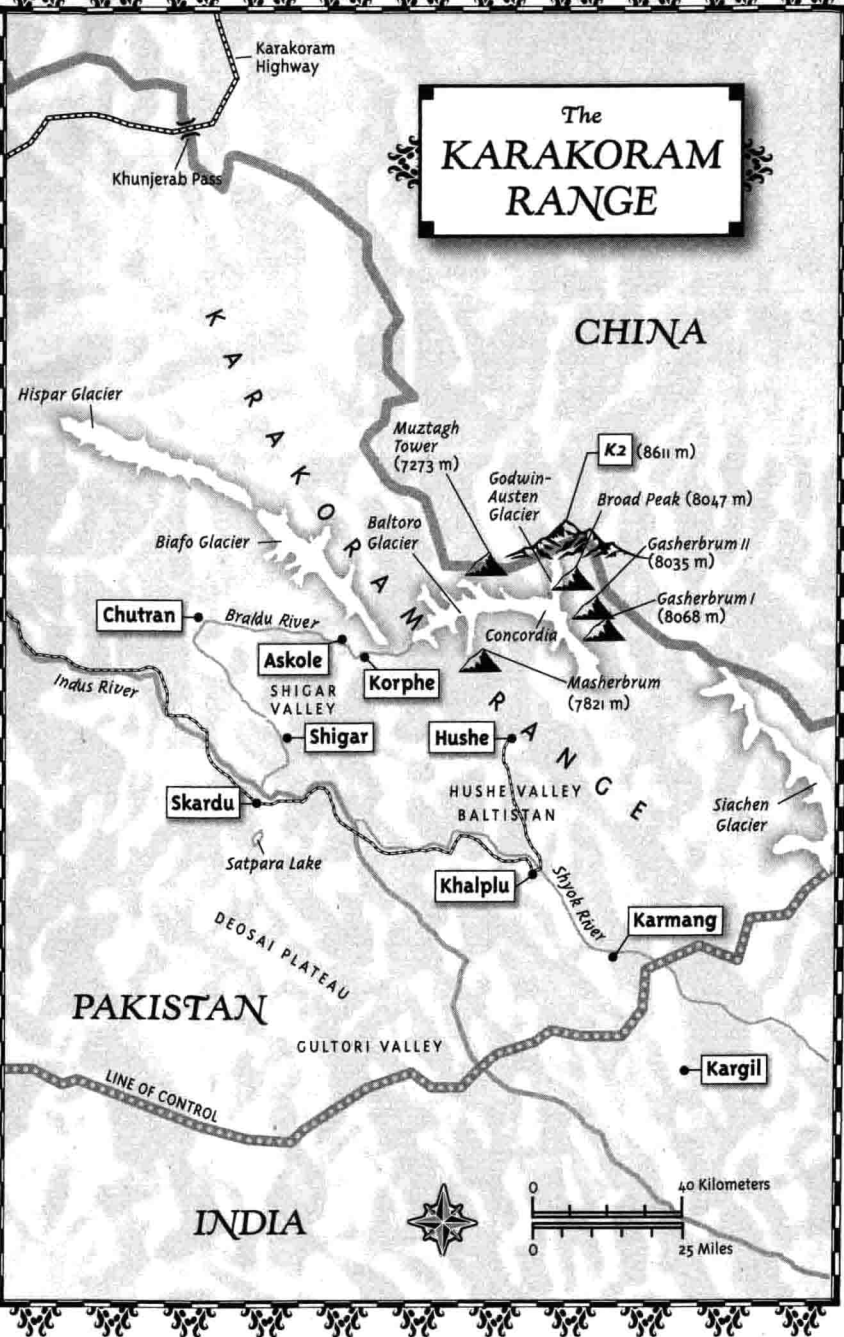


## NOTES:

- 1. Razmak:** July 1996;  
Greg kidnapped
- 2. Rawalpindi:** Sept 1994;  
Greg buys school supplies  
in the Raja Bazaar
- 3. Talequon:** October 2004;  
Greg escaped Afghan opium  
warlord feud by hiding under  
putrid animal hides



# The KARAKORAM RANGE



Dedicated to the living memory of  
Christa Eliana Mortenson and Haji Ali

With the hope that this book will help inspire people to all join  
together to promote peace, and honor every child in the world  
with the right and privilege to learn to read, write,  
and go to school as stated in Article 26 of the United Nations  
Declaration of Human Rights.

[www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Introduction.aspx)

—G.M.

To Lloyd Henry Relin

—D.O.R.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

اسرار

We hope you enjoy the young readers edition of *Three Cups of Tea* and it inspires you to go out and make a difference in your city, town, country, or around the world. It has been incredibly exciting to work with Puffin to create the young readers edition, and to listen and respond to your requests to make it a better learning experience by adding maps, a glossary, Who's Who, a time line, photos, and more.

اسرار  
glossary

First of all, thanks to all the dedicated teachers, workers, staff and dedicated communities and children in Pakistan and Afghanistan, who have given everything so that their children can learn to read and write and attend school.

Thank you to all the teachers all over the world, who dedicate their lives to education. You are our heroes, who constantly inspire, motivate, and give children the light of hope for the future.

Thanks to librarians who promote literacy and books, and help guide us with access to knowledge and information.

Thanks to David Oliver Relin, the coauthor of *Three Cups of Tea*, who worked hard for two years to get this story told. David's wife, Dawn, an elementary school teacher, was also a source of inspiration for this book.

Thank you Sarah Thomson (and your two cats), who from a small room in Maine adapted and wrote the superb young readers edition (her twentieth book).

Thanks to Paul Slovak, the Penguin editor of the adult version, who has been a constant source of support for *Three Cups*



of *Tea* and who helped encourage it to be written in a young readers edition.

Thank you Eileen Kreit, publisher of Puffin, for your amazing energy and enthusiasm that never stops ("Go Girl!"), and for your extra interest and support because of your own children.

A special thanks to Jen Bonnell, senior editor at Puffin, who worked patiently day and night for months to help get the book down and was a source of encouragement to Amira to share with her fellow students the experiences and feelings she has being a part of the *Three Cups of Tea* family. You rock!

Thanks also to the very dedicated people at the Penguin Young Readers Group, who helped with this book and also the Dial picture book, *Listen to the Wind*, including Deborah Kaplan, Lauri Hornik, Alisha Niehaus, Theresa Evangelista, Nick Vitiello, Teresa Kietlinski, and also Pat Shuldiner, who copyedited and proofed the book.

Thank you to Dr. Jane Goodall and the Roots & Shoots organization for the foreword, and for inspiring all of us to realize that all life is sacred, which we should cherish and protect.

Thanks to the humanitarian workers in the world, who work hard to help bring education, health, and environmental conservation to make our home, planet Earth, a better place. We also thank the peacemakers, and people serving in the military around the world, who also dedicate their lives to peace. Your sacrifices are always appreciated, and you are in our thoughts. *scholarship*

Thanks to my mother-in-law, Lila Bishop, and her late husband,

Dr. Barry Bishop, who were both educators and instilled in us a love for geography and different cultures.

Thank you to all my cousins, extended family, and especially my sisters, Sonja Joy and Kari, brother-in-law Brent Bishop, and their spouses and children (spouses) for blessing us with their love and strength of family.

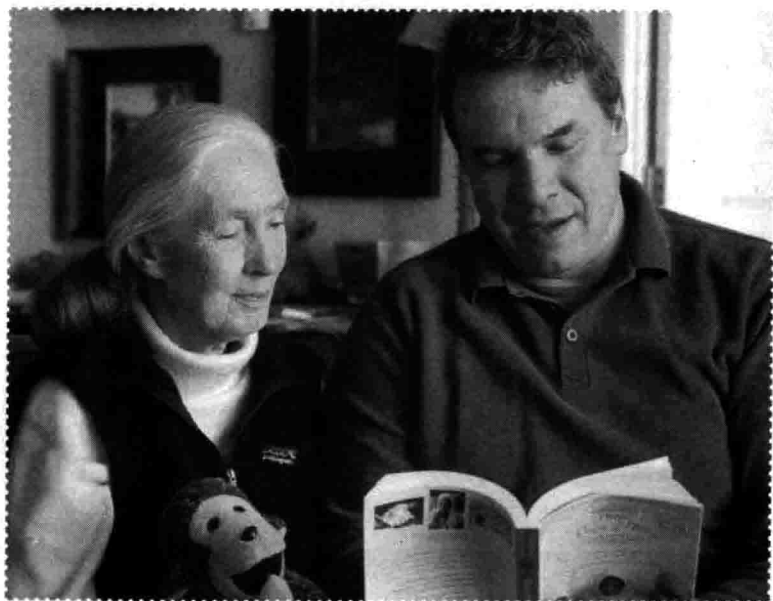
Thanks to my mother, Jerene Mortenson, a lifelong educator, and my late father, Dempsey. From the time we were babies, they read books to us every night in Africa and taught us how important a life of service and education is.

Amira and Khyber, my two dear children, you are the angels in my life. It is never easy to have a father gone up to half of the year, for most of your childhood. You have given up many precious times we could have shared together—to read, play, explore life, and snuggle—so that other children could have hope through education. Your love and courage are the shining stars of our lives.

Lastly, thanks to my wife, Tara Bishop. You are a <sup>(saint)</sup> saint and love of my life. You are the rock that gives me hope and for which there are no words better to say than “I love you.”

—Greg Mortenson

FOREWORD BY  
*Dr. Jane Goodall*



Tara Bishop

Jane Goodall and Greg Mortenson

*Three Cups of Tea* is a fantastic book of adventure, courage, and determination. As you read it you will become increasingly amazed at how much one determined person can accomplish. It all began when Greg Mortenson lost his way up in the high mountains of Pakistan and was, just in time, rescued by his porter, Mouzafer. But Greg got lost again and wandered into a village. There, slowly, he recovered from the effects of exposure and got to know the people. He was horrified to find that there

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was no school. Imagine trying to learn from a teacher who comes only three days a week when you have no classroom and are sitting on the ground outside, often in freezing weather, and mostly without books and paper and pens. Greg made a promise that he would return and build a school.

Back in America almost no one believed in him or his mission, but finally he returned to Pakistan with enough money to honor his promise. This book describes the challenges he faced. Few people would have carried on against such daunting odds, surrounded by danger. (Indeed, he was kidnapped <sup>once</sup>, for eight terrifying days.) And few would have agreed to building other schools when, finally, the first one was completed. No wonder Greg Mortensen is a legendary figure in the remote villages where he works. Again and again he has risked his life in order to help the villagers educate their children.

The more I learned about this extraordinary man, the more I wanted to meet him. But as my schedule is always so full, and booked months in advance, and as Greg is so often traveling, I thought it would be a long time before this could happen. It seems, however, that we were meant to get together. For it happened that, within two months of finishing *Three Cups of Tea*, I was scheduled to give a talk in Bozeman, Montana, where Greg and his family live. And I had a few free hours and Greg was at home. And so it was that I found myself sitting and enjoying a cup of tea with Greg and his family—his wife, Tara, and their children, Amira and Khyber. And what a wonderful meeting it was. We had so much to talk about, including the

years he had spent in Tanzania, where my team and I have been studying chimpanzees since 1960. Soon it seemed as though we had known each other for years.

Greg is a very big man: not only is he tall, but he has a huge heart. He is also very warm and gentle. (He is the sort of person I admire most.) He has achieved, and is achieving, marvelous things in Pakistan and, more recently, in Afghanistan, enabling children—especially girls who otherwise would have no chance to get educated—to learn about the world outside their villages. And Greg (helped now by his organization, the Central Asia Institute) is not only providing schools, he has gained the trust—and the hearts—of the people. This contributes more to world peace than misguided attempts to change the world through violence and war. Yet Greg, who has accomplished so much, is modest and unassuming. (And's just mgl)

We spent some time talking about the Jane Goodall Institute's youth program, Roots & Shoots (R&S). It is the perfect complement to the education provided for the children in the schools that Greg and his team are building, for it encourages young people, from preschool though university, to think about the problems around them, and then to take action to try to solve them. Members work to make this a better world for people, for animals, and for the environment. R&S began in Tanzania in 1991 and is now in nearly a hundred countries, and the nine thousand or so active groups are encouraged to make contact with one another, learn about one another's cultures, and share their hopes, their dreams. The most important

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message of R&S is that each one of us makes a difference every day. We must stop polluting Mother Earth and using up her natural resources. We must show respect for all living things. And we must learn how to live in peace and harmony within our families and our communities, and break down the barriers that divide people of different nationalities, cultures, and religions, and that exist between us and nature.

Amira knew about Roots & Shoots, and plans to start a group in her school. She told me she loves and respects animals and wild places. She told me about the "Pennies for Peace™" project, now in nearly two thousand schools—it is a perfect activity for R&S groups everywhere. Amira is determined to do her part in making the world a better place. She will help to introduce R&S not only in Montana, but maybe also in Pakistan and Afghanistan—for often Greg takes his family with him, to share the work, the excitement . . . and the danger. And Amira is a born leader.

We cannot all travel to Pakistan. Few people could do what Greg has done. But we can all, every one of us, make a difference in the world, every day. You can plant a tree, recycle, collect trash, care for an animal in need, give a penny for peace. You can learn about the problems faced by children in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and then perhaps you can find ways to communicate with them, to help them. And they, in turn, can learn about your culture and your problems. When we truly understand about people and their lives in other countries,

when we write and receive letters from them, when we become friends, then the world becomes a happier and a safer place.

Thank you, Greg, for opening so many minds and hearts, for your courage, your determination, and your indomitable spirit. . . . And for attempting a seemingly impossible task—and succeeding in a way you cannot have predicted in the beginning. Your schools provide not only education, but hope for the future—for the future of the people you and your family have come to understand and love. Hope for the future of the world. Every brick in every school represents another step toward a more peaceful world.




Jane Goodall, Ph.D., DBE

Founder of The Jane Goodall Institute

UN Messenger of Peace

[www.janegoodall.org](http://www.janegoodall.org)

[www.rootsandshoots.org](http://www.rootsandshoots.org)



## Introduction

**A***s-salaam alaikum!* Peace be with you! This is how over 1.3 billion Muslims greet each other around the world.

I want to thank you for picking up the young readers edition of *Three Cups of Tea*. I hope that my story inspires you and that it's fun to read and learn about children like you, who live in other countries and have different cultures, faiths, and traditions.

Reading and literacy are very important to me and my family. When I was growing up in Africa, my parents read bedtime stories to me and my sisters before we could even walk. It was our favorite time of day. Today, my wife, Tara, and I continue that tradition with our children, Amira and Khyber. We often go to the library with them to choose books.

But there are about 110 million children ages five to fifteen around the world who don't have a chance to learn how to read and write or to go to school. They can't get an education because



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of slavery, poverty, discrimination against girls, religious extremism, or corrupt governments. In India, some kids are forced to go out on the streets and beg for money. They're punished and beaten if they don't bring home enough at the end of the day. Some young people in Cambodia can't go to school because they have to work on rice farms. In China, thousands of children work in sweatshops making fireworks that we set off on the Fourth of July. West African boys and girls who aren't in school work on cocoa plantations, harvesting two million tons of cocoa that's used to make chocolate. In Africa, Asia, and South America, there are tens of thousands of children who have never been to school and are forced to become soldiers and learn to kill at a very young age. In Pakistan, thousands of illiterate children work sewing soccer balls; and in Afghanistan, many kids are forced to work in dimly lit rooms making carpets. Only their small fingers can weave the tiny knots that make up the expensive high-thread-count carpets that Westerners like to buy. Yet also in Pakistan and Afghanistan, some of the twenty-eight thousand students who go to the schools built by the Central Asia Institute will do anything for the privilege of going to school. Many walk two to three hours a day just to get an education.

Every child should have the right and privilege to have an education, as mandated in Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. It's a big challenge to educate these children all over the world, but we should make it a top global priority. Ignorance breeds hatred, and the simplest way to stop that is to educate kids.