

The Travels of Marco Polo

Translated by Teresa Waugh (1984) [original by Rustichello da Pisa in 1298]

Note to reader: Marco Polo [MP] dictated his 26 yr journey to a scribe in prison. It seems they are more story tellers than historians. This book inspired Columbus & others to travel.

Niccolo & Matteo were asked to visit the great Kublai Khan [KK] in Khan-balik, who asked them to be his ambassadors to the Pope. He sent with them a 3-lb tablet of gold to show his authority. The pope died before they arrived so they went to Venice to see their family, but found MP's mom had died. They took MP with them. KK loved & trained MP & sent them on many missions.

It is believed that Noah's ark came to rest in Turkey. 3 wise men were given a rock by the Christ child; a flame from heaven came down when they threw it away; now they have a perpetual flame in Persia [Iran] [p.29]. The Persians are evil people. An old man built a garden up the mtn flowing with milk & honey, and filled beautiful girls & great food. He called it Mohammed's Paradise. He told boys they would go to paradise if they murdered for him [38].

Marauders cause darkness during the day so they can raid villages without being seen [33]. At times the wind is so hot that it will kill anyone not immersed in the river [35]. The air is so pure in Badakhshan, people are healed & animals fatten in 10 days [42, 44]. A column remains suspended in air to this day [45]. In Pem, when men leave for 3 weeks their wives take another husband [46]. The Gobi Desert has voices that get people lost out there [47].

In Tangut, a dead body might wait months in the house before the astrologer says it is OK to burn [48]. In Kamul & Kaindu, men feel they are blessed if he lets his wife sleep with a traveler [49, 102]. Asbestos cloth can be cleaned by placing in fire [50]. Bakhshi magicians can make cups float to the king [63]. KK wanted the Pope to send men would make the magicians powerless & he would convert. There is a fine for touching the threshold to the khan's banquet hall [79].

KK has 12,000 barons & a military leader over 100; 1000; 10,000 & 100,000 men. He has a civil & military court. On the New Year, gifts are sent to KK from all over the world (separate from the taxes). 1000 carts of silk are sent to KK every day. There is no hunting during the animal's mating season.

The tree-lined roads leading to Khan-balik have posts every 25 miles where travelers can rest & messengers can get fresh horses every 3 miles. KK saves food in good years to feed the poor in famine. Burning green wood at night keeps animals away (crackling noise). Tibetan men do not want to marry virgins so the girls are given to travelers to show they are desirable [101].

In Zar-Dandan, after a woman gives birth, the husband stays in bed with the baby for 40 days & lets his wife rest as she waits on her husband [106]. The silver mines are 5 months journey from there so it is expensive compared to gold (silver traders do well there). A king in Mien built a gold tower mausoleum (& another silver). A man on horseback with 2 well trained dogs

can kill a lion. The girls in Cathay are modest & well mannered. In Manzi nothing was ever stolen & the king took care of the poor. Siang-yang-fu finally surrendered after a 3-yr siege when large stones were catapulted in. Soldiers overtook Chang-chau & got drunk then the men of that town killed them.

Kinsai is the majestic & wealthy city in the world; with its 100-mile moat-levi perimeter, grand palaces, lakes, bath houses, ornate homes, 10 lb pears, (43) 223-lb carts of pepper is consumed daily there. KK gets 14.7 million pieces of gold in taxes from there. Chamba sends KK elephants as tribute.

In Java, they worship the 1st thing see in the morning. Wine drips out of trees in Sumatra. If the magicians in Dagroin say a sick person is going to die, then a person kills the incurable. The men in Lambri have tails & dog heads in Andaman. A ruby was found the size of an apple.

When a king in India dies, his son does not spend his father's money, but adds to it. They use their left hand to wash their bottom & bath twice a day. Some place the length of a man's shadow can be good luck or bad. At 13, a boy is sent out with small change to trade & earn money for food that he takes home & his mom cooks.

After a rain in India, diamonds are caught in unreachable crevices. Men throw meat into it so diamonds will stick to it. Birds get the meat out & they get it back from the bird's nest. Some monks live 150-200 yrs & can fast for a yr. They won't kill a fly since it has a soul. If a ship comes into Ely, India, the locals will steal everything & thank God.

There are pirates in India & East Indies. There is a male & female island in the Arabian Sea that they live separate except 3 months a yr. I bird in Africa is so big it can pick up an elephant.

Salt mines in Talikhan; rubies & sapphires in Badakhshan & Ceylon; coal in Cathay; pearls in Kaindu & India; silk in Tandinfu; sugar from Fu-chau; china from Tinju; gold in Japan; ivory in Madagascar & furs in Russia.

MP found strange animals like unicorns, chickens with fur & 50' long white bears.

1187 Genghis Khan was elected leader of the Tartars

1225 Baghdad Muslims wanted to kill Christians if they could not move a mtn [p.26]

1250 Niccolo & Matteo Polo [MP's dad & uncle] became traveling merchants

1254 Marco Polo was born

1260 Kublai Khan [KK] became leader of the Tartars

1262 Hulagu destroyed the old man of the mtn & his garden

1271 they met the new Pope Gregory & returned to see KK

1278 Sergius was the first Christian to come to Chin-kiang-fu

1281 KK men commandeered a Japanese ship & took the capital, but then could not escape

1295 MP returned to Venice where he was imprisoned by invading armies

1324 Marco Polo died