

- Introduction to Silk Road
- Summary of Silk Road

Introduction to Silk Road

The chapter "Silk Road" from the Hornbill textbook narrates the author's adventurous pilgrimage to Mount Kailash. Unlike a purely religious journey, the author emphasizes his desire for adventure and exploration. Starting from the town of Ravu, he describes the diverse landscapes, people, and animals encountered along the way. The main purpose of the journey is to perform the Kora, a sacred circumambulation around Mount Kailash, alongside other pilgrims.

Key Elements

- **Setting:** The journey begins in Ravu and proceeds through various terrains including grassy plains, stony plains, and snow-capped mountains.
- **Purpose:** To complete the Kora around Mount Kailash, a significant pilgrimage in Tibetan Buddhism.
- **Characters:** The author, Lhamo (who gifts the author a sheep skin coat), Tsetan (the driver), Daniel (the author's companion), and Norbu (a fellow pilgrim).

Textual Evidence

The author states, "He wants to be more adventurous than to be religious," highlighting his spirit of adventure. The description of the landscape and encounters with nomads and Tibetan mastiffs enrich the narrative.

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- Where does the author start his journey?
- What is the main purpose of the author's journey?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Describe the landscape the author encounters on his way to Mount Kailash.
- Who is Lhamo and what does she give the author?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Explain the significance of the Kora in the context of the pilgrimage.
- How does the author's attitude towards the journey differ from a purely religious pilgrimage?

Answer Key

- The author starts his journey from Ravu.
- The main purpose is to complete the Kora around Mount Kailash.
- The landscape includes grassy plains, stony plains, hills, and snow-capped mountains.
- Lhamo is a person who gives the author a long sleeved sheep skin coat as a gift.
- The Kora is a sacred circumambulation around Mount Kailash, symbolizing spiritual purification and devotion.
- The author is more focused on adventure and exploration rather than solely religious devotion.

Quick Reference

- **Mount Kailash:** A sacred mountain in Tibet.
- **Kora:** The ritual of circumambulating a sacred site.
- **Ravu:** Starting point of the journey.

Glossary

- **Pilgrimage:** A journey to a sacred place for religious reasons.
- **Nomads:** People who move from place to place rather than settling permanently.
- **Cairn:** A pile of stones built as a memorial or landmark.

Summary of Silk Road

The Journey Begins

The author begins his journey early in the morning from Ravu. Before leaving, he informs Lhamo about his plan to perform the Kora around Mount Kailash. Lhamo gifts him a long sleeved sheep skin coat to protect him from the cold.

Took Short Cut

Tsetan, the driver, takes a shortcut across vast grassy and stony plains. The air is clean and fresh. Along the way, they spot wild animals such as gazelles and wild asses.

The Mastiffs

As they enter the hills, they meet drokba (shepherds) and nomads living in dark tents. Giant Tibetan mastiffs guard these tents and chase the car for some distance.

The First Big Hinderance

They reach a valley with a wide river and snow-capped mountains in the distance. The road becomes difficult with sharp turns. The driver stops at a snowy patch at 5210 metres altitude. They throw dirt on the icy surface to gain traction and carefully cross it.

Next Hurdle

Another obstacle appears after ten minutes, but Tsetan manages to negotiate it. The author suffers a severe headache due to the high altitude.

The Cairn

At 5515 metres, they reach the top of the pass marked by a large cairn of rocks. Following tradition, they walk around the cairn. The author's headache clears and they stop for lunch.

The Town Hor

By late afternoon, they arrive at Hor, a small town on the shore of Lake Man Sarovar. Despite the lake's sacredness, the town appears grim and dirty. Daniel leaves to return to Lhasa. The author faces a delay due to two punctured car tyres.

The Town Darchen

They reach Darchen late at night. The author experiences a difficult night at 4760 metres altitude. The next day, a Tibetan doctor at the medical college gives him medicine that helps him recover and sleep well. Tsetan leaves, leaving the author alone.

The Author's Worry

The author is concerned because he does not see other pilgrims, although he expected to arrive during the pilgrimage season.

Arrival of Norbu

While sitting in a cafe in Darchen, the author meets Norbu, a fellow pilgrim. They introduce themselves and decide to undertake the Kora together, providing companionship and support.

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- Who is Tsetan and what role does he play?
- What problem did the author face at the snowy patch?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Describe the significance of the cairn at the top of the pass.
- Why was the author worried in Darchen?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Explain how the author's journey reflects both physical and spiritual challenges.
- Discuss the importance of companionship during the pilgrimage as shown in the chapter.

Answer Key

- Tsetan is the driver who guides the author through difficult terrain.
- The author faced a slippery snowy patch and they had to throw dirt to cross it safely.
- The cairn marks the highest point of the pass and is a traditional landmark where pilgrims perform rituals.

- The author was worried because he did not see other pilgrims during the expected pilgrimage season.
- The journey involves physical hardships like altitude sickness and difficult roads, as well as spiritual devotion through the Kora.
- Companionship, as with Norbu, provides emotional support and safety during the pilgrimage.

Quick Reference

- **Cairn:** A pile of stones marking a significant place.
- **Darchen:** A town near Mount Kailash where pilgrims stay.
- **Kora:** The ritual circumambulation around Mount Kailash.

Glossary

- **Altitude sickness:** Illness caused by high elevation.
- **Nomads:** People who move frequently with their livestock.
- **Giant Tibetan mastiffs:** Large guard dogs native to Tibet.