

UNIT VIII

15

MARCO POLO



Have you even heard the name of Marco Polo ? He was a brave traveller of Venice. He was born in 1254 at Venice. His father, Niccolo Polo, and uncle Maffeo had travelled widely.

Kubla Khan wanted to convert the people of Cathay (present China) to Christianity. So he asked the two merchants to carry a message to the Pope. In the meantime, the Pope was dead. They waited for a long time. A new Pope was elected. They were to receive Holy Oil at Jerusalem. Two missionaries were also sent. The Polo brothers began the long return journey to Cathay. Marco Polo, a youth of 17 went too. They had to face war, storm, mountain and flood on their way. They pushed on slowly. They travelled by horse or mule or on foot. They halted from time to time in strange cities. They crossed the vast of the Gobi desert. After a long journey of three and a half year, they arrived at the court of Cathay.

The last part of their journey, however, was easy. The Emperor sent his men to welcome them. The Polos were received in a royal assembly. They bowed down to pay their respect to the Emperor. Niccolo introduced his son, "This is your servant, and my son". The grand Khan replied, "He is welcome, and it pleases me much."

Marco was a fine young man of twenty. He served in the court of the Emperor for about seventeen years. He quickly rose in the service of the Prince. His father and uncle also were in the service of the Emperor. They enjoyed power, wealth and dignity in the court.

At last the Polos felt homesick. They wanted to take their wealth home. The Emperor was growing old. Their fate under a new king might be uncertain. And it was also very far from Venice.

They had a good fortune. There came to the Emperor's court an Embassy from Arghun, King of India. The wife of the Indian king had lately died. This queen had requested her husband to take a new wife from among her own people who lived with Kubla Khan. A beautiful damsel was selected.

So far, all was well. The Polos were to join the party of the queen and her train in a fleet. They recieved many rubies and jewels from the Emperor. The journey took 21 months to reach the shore of the Indian King. Then they turned and headed for home. The Polos came back to Venice in the year 1295. They were happy to settle down in their native city.

Marco's travel was full of marvels.

New Words :

- convert : to change ones beliefs, one's religions
- halt : a short stop during a long journey
- wastes : a large area of land where there are very few people, animal and plants.
- dignity : a high rank or position
- homesick : longing for home
- damsel : young unmarried woman
- train : number of persons travelling with a high-ranking person
- Marvels : wonderful things

EXERCISES

1. (a) Answer the following questions :

- (i) Who was Marco Polo ?
- (ii) Who was Kubla Khan ?
- (iii) Who wanted to convert the people of Cathay to christianity
- (iv) How long did the Polos serve the Emperor?
- (v) How did the Polos serve the Emperor?
- (vi) Why did the India King send an Embassy to the Emperor?
- (vii) How many months did the journey take to reach the shore of the Indian King?
- (viii) What did the Polos do when they reached Venice ?
- (ix) In which year did the Polos come back to Venice ?

(b) Answer the following question:

- (i) Describe the journey of the Polos to Cathay.
- (ii) How did the Polos serve the Emperor ?
- (iii) Why did the Polos fell homesick ?
- (iv) What was the request of the late queen of India to her husband?

(c) Fill in the blanks with the correct word from those given in the brackets:

- (i) Marco Polo was born ----- 1245 at Venice (in/ on).
- (ii) They ----- bold merchants (was/were).
- (iii) Marco quickly rose in the service----- the Prince (in/of).
- (iv) They wanted to take ----- wealth home (there/ their).
- (v) The journey was ----- exciting (much/very).

2. Project work

Collect one picture or photograph each of Marco Polo and Kubla Khan for your album.

A dictionary contains words and their meanings. All the words are always in ALPHABETICAL order. If you know your ABC in the right order, then you will soon be able to find any word you want in the pages of a dictionary.

(a) *Here are a few words. Look at the first letter of each word. Try to put these words in alphabetical order :*

school	
pen	
book	
monkey	
library	
act	

(b) *Open your dictionary and observe how the words are listed. All the entries in the series begin with the same letter. We arrange the alphabetical order of the words on the basis of the first letter, the second letter, the third letter and so on. Try to put the following words in alphabetical order by looking at the second letter of each word :*

b	d	p
1.boat	1. doll	1. pants.....
2. bear	2. daughter	2. purse
3. big	3. dirty	3. polite.....
4. bull	4. devil	4. paper.....

Now, arrange the following words in alphabetical order :

son daughter bee pond air cow queen
fan egg go house jug I orange
knife nest milk you lion rose violin
water uniform tree zoo x-ray

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To the teacher : The teacher is to guide and help the learners the skills of using a dictionary for word study.

3.(a) Read the following passage :

Mary and Rose are Mr. Gangte's children. Mary has her food at 8 p.m. She goes to bed at 8.30 p.m. Rose begins reading at 8 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. Gangte and Rose have their dinner at 9 p.m. Rose goes to bed at 10 p.m. Mrs. Gangte too goes to bed at 10 p.m. and Mr. Gangte at 11 p.m.

Now, the time is 8 p.m. Make sentences by filling in the blanks. The words must say something about the persons written in the brackets :

Example :

It is time for (Mary)

It is time for Mary to have her food.

1. It is time for (Rose)
2. It is too early (Rose)
3. It is too early for (Mrs. Gangte)
4. It is too early for (Mr. Gangte)
5. It is too early for (Mrs. Gangte)

(b) It is now 9 p.m. Make more sentences. Tell about the persons in the brackets :

1. It is time for (Rose)
2. It is time for (Mr. Gangte)
3. It is time for (Mrs. Gangte)
4. It is too early for (Rose)
5. It is too early for..... (Mrs. Gangte)

(c) It is now 10 p.m. Make more sentences. Tell about the persons within the brackets :

1. It is time for (Rose)
2. It is time for (Mrs. Gangte)
3. It is too early for (Mr. Gangte)