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PROSE

Silk Road

—Nick Middleton



The story, 'Silk Road' is written by Nick Middleton. The chapter is about the narrator's journey from the slopes of Ravu to Mount Kailash to complete the Kora. The route that the narrator takes is known as the Silk Road. This account of the Silk Road describes the hardships and challenges that the narrator encounters during his journey to Mount Kailash.

Topic Notes

-  Characters in Brief
-  Chapter in Detail
-  Significant Morals
-  Dictionary





Characters in Brief

The Author– He is a Professor of Geography at Oxford University and an environmental consultant.

Tsetan– He is the owner of the car hired by the author for the journey, as well as a tourist guide.

Norbu– He is a Tibetan, working at an academy in Beijing who wants to carry out the pilgrimage to Mount Kailash.



Chapter in Detail

Departure from Ravu

Daniel, an interpreter, and Tsetan, a tour guide, as well as the author, left Ravu. Since, they were headed to Mount Kailash, where it would be quite cold, Lhamo, the woman who had given them lodging at Ravu, offered the author a present of a long-sleeved sheepskin coat before they left. Tsetan was aware of a shortcut to reach the mountain. If there was no snow, he claimed, the trip would go smoothly.



Character's Mood

↪ Confident

Example 1. Extract Based:

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

A FLAWLESS half-moon floated in a perfect blue sky on the morning we said our goodbyes. Extended banks of cloud like long French loaves glowed pink as the sun emerged to splash the distant mountain tops with a rose-tinted blush. Now that we were leaving Ravu, Lhamo said she wanted to give me a farewell present. One evening, I'd told her through Daniel that I was heading towards Mount Kailash to complete the kora, and she'd said that I ought to get some warmer clothes.

- (A) What farewell present did Lhamo give to the author?
- Long-sleeved sheepskin coat
 - Pashmina shawl
 - Wollen scarf
 - Wollen gloves
- (B) The figure of speech used in the line 'banks of cloud like long French loaves' is
- (C) Which of the following facts can be inferred from the above extract?
- Lhamo didn't try to understand the author.
 - Daniel was the translator of the author.
 - Moon and Sun were both visible in the sky.
 - Both (b) and (c)
- (D) Why did the author travel to Mount Kailash?
- (E) Who was Tsetan?

Ans. (A) (a) long-sleeved sheepskin coat

Lhamo gifted the author a long-sleeved sheepskin coat to keep him warm in the cold of Mount Kailash. Hence, (a) is correct.

(B) simile

Explanation: Simile has been used in the line 'banks of cloud like long French loaves' because the word 'like' has been used here. Hence, (a) is correct.

(C) (d) Both (b) and (c)

Explanation: Daniel was the translator of the author. The half moon in the morning means the moon was also seen in the morning along with the sun. Hence, (d) is correct.

(D) The purpose of the author's journey to Mount Kailash was to complete the Kora, which was a sacred religious ritual according to Hindu and Buddhist tradition.

(E) Tsetan was a local Tibetan, whose profession was to ferry visitors or tourists to places of interest in Tibet.

They Saw Drokbas on the Way

They observed solitary drokbas (nomadic shepherds) tending to their flocks as they travelled over the highlands. There were both men and women. They were dressed in heavy wool clothing. As they passed, they would occasionally wave, stop and turn to look at the author's car.

Example 2. Justify the title, 'Silk Road'.

Ans. The title of the article, "Silk Road," refers to the protagonist's exploration of the old silk route, one of the historically significant trading routes. The route linked Afro-Eurasian territory. Trade routes were established for Chinese silk, spices, tea, and porcelain; Indian textiles, precious stones, and pepper; and the gold, silver, exquisite glassware, wine, carpets, and gems of the Roman Empire. Because of the silk trade with China, the route was given the name Silk Road.



Character's Mood

→ *Happy*

Encounter with Tibetan Mastiffs

They noticed some Tibetan mastiffs, the shepherds' dogs, as they passed the nomads' tents. They barked wildly and boldly when the car approached their tents. They followed the car for a while and then went home. In the past, Tibetan mastiffs were widely used as hunting dogs in China's imperial courts. They were sent from Tibet along the Silk Road as a kind of tax payment.



Character's Mood

→ *Amazed*

Ice Blocks the Road

As they climbed, the curves became sharper and more challenging. The author felt a terrible headache coming. Snow began to fall suddenly and quickly obstructed the path. To lighten the burden on the car while making abrupt turns, Daniel and the author got out of the vehicle. The author's altimeter watch revealed that they were 5210 metres above sea level. The icy top layer of the snow was dangerous, as the car could slip off the road. The atmospheric pressure dropped to such a low level when they ascended to the top of the pass that Tsetan had to open the lid of the petrol tank in order to release the evaporated fuel.



Character's Mood

→ *Panicky*

Back on the Highway

By late afternoon, they arrived in the little village of Hor, which is situated on the shore of Lake Manasarovar and was also an old trade route between Lhasa and Kashmir. From there, Daniel went back to Lhasa, and Tsetan had the car's flat tyre fixed. Hor was a gloomy, depressing place. There was only rock and dust, absolutely no flora. Accumulated trash was seen all around. The location no longer appeared holy, unlike in the past.

By 10:30 p.m., they reached Darchen, where they found a guesthouse to stay in. The author had a very troubled night. His nostrils were blocked, and he was not able to get enough air into his lungs. Most of the night he sat up, as he was unable to sleep.

The next day Tsetan took the author to the Darchen Medical College. The doctor told him it was just the

cold and the altitude was giving him trouble. The doctor gave him some medicine and that night the author was able to sleep well.

Tsetan drove the car back to Lhasa after leaving the author at Darchen. Tsetan did not care whether the author would die in Darchen. The author was a good Buddhist and believed in life after death. However, he was concerned that the author's passing may have an adverse effect on his business because he might not attract additional tourists who needed to be followed till the end of the route.

Example 3. What physical discomfort did the narrator experience in Darchen? How did he find relief?

Ans. While in Darchen, it became extremely tough for the narrator as he got extreme cold due to blocked sinuses. He was gasping for oxygen. He could breathe through only one nostril. He could not sleep, and felt utter restlessness. He had fear that he might die if he would sleep. So, he sat up the whole night. Next morning, Tsetan took him for the medical help to the Darchen Medical College. He was given a five-day course of Tibetan medicine which gave him a lot of relief and comfort. After undergoing the treatment, he felt somewhat better and he could sleep soundly.



Character's Mood

→ *Anxious*

The Author meets Norbu

Like Hor, Darchen was dusty, and trash was seen everywhere. The town seemed to have a small population. The season had not yet begun, thus there were no pilgrims. He arrived there too soon. The author genuinely desired to travel to Mount Kailash and complete the kora in order to experience what a pilgrimage was like. He didn't, however, want to go there alone. He was trying to find someone who could speak or understand English.

The author reading an English book in the only cafe at Darchen. Norbu, a fat Tibetan who works in Beijing at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences noticed him. He greeted the author and said hello. Despite not being religious, he was there to perform kora. They both decided to do kora together.



Character's Mood

→ *Happy*



Significant Morals

- (1) Focus and determination are crucial in achieving any aim in life.
- (2) It is important to stay positive throughout one's spiritual, emotional and physical journey.
- (3) A pilgrimage is a test for people who are devoted worshippers.



Dictionary

words	meanings	synonyms	antonyms
<i>Void</i>	empty space	vacant	occupied
<i>En masse</i>	together	as a whole	incomplete
<i>Clogged</i>	jammed	blocked	open
<i>Daubed</i>	spread on the surface	smeared	wipe
<i>Hunks</i>	large pieces	mass	whole
<i>Exited</i>	came out of	retire	entered
<i>Lurching</i>	moving unsteadily	shaking	smooth
<i>Careered down</i>	descended	rush	ascended
<i>Grim</i>	bleak or dreary	stern	bright
<i>Refuse</i>	rubbish	debris	asset
<i>Venerated</i>	respected	admired	despised
<i>Solitary confinement</i>	loneliness	isolation	together
<i>Hallowed</i>	holy	sacred	unholy
<i>Sanctity</i>	holiness	divinity	meanness
<i>Kicking around</i>	passing time aimlessly	idle	grind
<i>Set off</i>	started	commenced	ceased
<i>Nocturnal</i>	happening at night	nightly	diurnal
<i>Prostrating</i>	stretching and lying down with face down	reclining	erect
<i>Drifting off</i>	going to sleep	snooze	awake
<i>Derelict</i>	run down	negligent	meticulous
<i>Envisaged</i>	thought of	anticipated	surprised
<i>Tempered</i>	weakened	reduced	strengthened
<i>Incongruous</i>	totally out of place	unsuitable	suitable

OBJECTIVE Type Questions

[1 mark]

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What are the names of the rivers that lake Mansarovar consists of?

- (a) The Ganges, the Yamuna and the Sutlej.
- (b) The Yamuna, the Ganges and the Indus.

(c) The Indus, the Ganges, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra.

(d) The Indus, the Ganges and the Yamuna.

Ans. (c) The Indus, the Ganges, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra.

Explanation: Lake Manasarovar is considered to be the source of four great Indian rivers. These are the Indus, the Ganges, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra. Hence, (c) is correct.

2. Why was Hor an ugly and miserable place?

- (a) It had no modern markets.
- (b) It had no vegetation.
- (c) It didn't have any proper facilities.
- (d) It had no place to live.

Ans. (b) *It had no vegetation.*

Explanation: Hor was an ugly and miserable place which had no vegetation and just dust and rocks. It was scattered with accumulated trash and it was unfortunate that it was on the shore of Lake Mansarovar which is Tibet's most respected water. Hence, (b) is correct.

3. Which of the following quotes best describes the idea of the story?

- (a) A lack of focus leads to lack of progress.
- (b) Determination is an inside job.
- (c) Don't be afraid of being a beginner.
- (d) Anything is possible as long as you're focused, determined and you really want to do it.

Ans. (d) *Anything is possible as long as you're focused, determined and you really want to do it.*

Explanation: The story talks about the hardships and the challenges faced by the author in his journey to Mount Kailash. It talks about his focus and determination to go there and his possibility of achieving his goal with focus and determination. Hence, (d) is correct.

4. What does, 'billowed', mean?

- (a) descend (b) recede
- (c) surge (d) follow

Ans. (c) *surge*

Explanation: Another word for 'billowed' is surge. It means a sudden powerful forward or upward movement, especially by a crowd or by a natural force such as the tide. Hence, (c) is correct.

5. Why did the driver take a short cut to Changtang?

- (a) He wanted to avoid traffic
- (b) He knew the shortest route towards Mount Kailash.
- (c) He had to pick up another passenger.
- (d) He didn't want to go to that town.

Ans. (b) *He knew the shortest route towards Mount Kailash.*

Explanation: In the story 'Silk Road', the writer and Tsetan took a short cut to get off the Changtang. They took the shortcut because Tsetan knew a route that would take them to south-west towards Mount Kailash. Hence, (b) is correct.

Extract Based Questions

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Further on, where the plains became more stony than grassy, a great herd of wild ass came into view. Tsetan told us we were approaching them long before they appeared. "Kyang," he said, pointing towards a far-off pall of dust. When we drew near, I could see the herd galloping en masse, wheeling and turning in tight formation as if they were practising manoeuvres on some predetermined course. Plumes of dust billowed into the crisp, clean air.

(A) The phrase 'more stony than grassy' means:

- (a) terrain had become hilly.
- (b) terrain now had less greenery.
- (c) terrain had become plain.
- (d) both (a) and (b).

(B) Fill in the blank with an appropriate answer:

The word which means the same as 'manoeuvres' is

(C) What are 'drokbas'?

Ans. (A) (d) *both (a) and (b)*

Explanation: As they moved ahead, the greenery was reducing and the terrain had started to become hilly. Hence, (d) is correct.

(B) movement

Explanation: The synonym of the word 'manoeuvres' is movement. It means a movement or series of moves requiring skill and care.

(C) Drokbas are the people, men or women, who were tending their flocks in the rocky wilderness. They wear long-sleeved sheepskin coat to protect themselves from the cold of the high mountains.

7. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

The snow didn't look too deep to me, but the danger wasn't its depth, Daniel said, so much as its icy top layer. "If we slip off, the car could

turn over," he suggested, as we saw Tsetan grab handfuls of dirt and fling them across the frozen surface. We both pitched in and, when the snow was spread with soil, Daniel and I stayed out of the vehicle to lighten Tsetan's load. He backed up and drove towards the dirty snow, eased the car on to its icy surface and slowly drove its length without apparent difficulty.

(A) Antonym of the word 'apparent' is:

- (a) supposed (b) hidden
(c) probable (d) possible

(B) What happened about ten minutes after the Tsetan eased the car on the road's icy surface?

(C) Fill in the blank with an appropriate answer.

After reading the extract, one can say that the author has crossed the height of

Ans. (A) (b) hidden

Explanation: Antonym of the word 'apparent' is hidden. Apparent means something is clearly visible or understood. Hence, (b) is correct.

(B) Ten minutes later, the narrator, Daniel and Tsetan faced another snow blockage. Tsetan jumped out of the car to survey the scene and decided to drive around the snow.

(C) 5,210 meters

Explanation: The author has just crossed the height of 5,210 metres above sea level and they were ascending towards Mount Kailash.

SHORT ANSWER Type Questions (SA)

[2 marks]

Answer the following questions in about 40 - 50 words:

8. Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China's imperial courts. Discuss.

Ans. Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs. They were brought along the Silk Road as payment of tax from Tibet. These canines were large-headed creatures that would cock their heads and fix their hunting eyes on an stranger. They usually wore red collars and barked furiously with massive jaws. They were used as watchdogs by the Tibetans.

9. Who was Norbu? How did the other strike friendship with Norbu? [Delhi Gov. QB 2022]

Ans. Norbu was a Tibetan scholar who used to write articles about holy lake. He was working at an academy in Beijing. It was his first to the place. He knew a bit of English. This brought him closer to author. He suggested that they should hire some yaks to carry their luggage and start their journey. He turned out to be an ideal companion.

10. How did Tsetan support the narrator during the journey?

Ans. Tsetan was a good and efficient driver. He drove the car carefully on slopes studded with major rocks. During the journey, he kept on giving information about the places to the

narrator. At Darchen, he took the narrator to the medical college and got medicines for him. Thus, he supported the narrator very much.

11. What did the narrator notice about the drokbas?

Ans. As the narrator went through the rocky wilderness, he noticed the solitary drokbas tending their flocks. Sometimes, these well-wrapped men and women would stop and stare at their car. Sometimes, they waved them. When the road took them close to their animals, the sheep would veer away from the fast car.

12. When did the narrator feel unwell for the first time after they started their journey and what did he do?

Ans. When they continued further up the trail, they were 5,400 metres above sea level. The narrator got an awful headache. He took gulps from his water bottle, which was supposed to help him. As they descended the other side of the pass, his headache soon disappeared.

13. What was the sight on the plateau ruins of the Tethys Ocean?

Ans. The plateau was filled with salt flats and brackish lakes that were the remains of the Tethys Ocean. This place was bustling with activity. Men in large sheepskin coats and salt-covered boots were moving back and forth with pickaxes and shovels. They all wore

sunglasses as protection against the dazzling light of blue trucks that emerged from the white lake filled with piles of salt.

14. Describe the narrator's thought on reaching Hor.

Ans. According to the narrator, Hor was a grim and miserable place. There was no vegetation. It had only dust and rocks along with years of accumulated refuse. The narrator found this unfortunate as the town sat on the shore of Lake Manasarovar, Tibet's most venerated stretch of water, and it was regarded as the source of great Indian rivers by the Ancient Hindu and Buddhist cosmology.

15. 'Darchen didn't look so horrible after a good night sleep'. What did the narrator mean by these words?

Ans. The first night at Darchen was very uncomfortable for the narrator as he was not well. After the medication and a good night sleep, it didn't look so horrible to the narrator. Although Darchen was dusty with heaps of rubble and refuse, the bright sun gave the narrator a vision of the Himalayas. He also noticed a huge, snow-capped mountain, Gurla Mandhata with a cloud suspended over its peak.

16. Describe the initial phase of the narrator's journey.

Ans. As they set out towards Mount Kailash to complete the Kora, Tsetan suggested taking a shortcut to get off the Changtang. It was a route that would take them south-west directly towards Mount Kailash. It involved crossing high mountain peaks and he assured that they would have a comfortable journey unless there was snow. From the gentle sloping hills, they came across vast open plains with few gazelles grazing in the arid pastures. As they rode further, the plains became stony. The herd of wild asses was seen galloping in masses filling the clean air with plumes of dust.

17. What impression did the two towns Hor and Darchen leave on the author's mind?

[Delhi Gov. QB 2022]

Ans. Hor was a small town, close to Mansarovar lake. It was a miserable place, with no greenery. The author found the place in contrast to the accounts he had read about lake Manasarovar. He drank some herbal tea in the cafe there.

The author's next half was at Darchen. It was also a dusty place with heaps of rubble and litter lying here and there. His cold had become worse and he could not breathe.

He stayed awake all night. The town had a couple of general stores which sold Chinese goods.

18. Why, according to the narrator, was the sight of Darchen calm and unhurried?

Ans. Darchen had few general stores which sold Chinese cigarettes, soaps and other basic provisions. In the afternoon, men used to gather for the game of pool on the worn-out table in the open and women used to wash their long hair in the icy water of a narrow brook that ran past the narrator's guest house. Thus, Darchen looked relaxed and unhurried to the narrator.

19. Describe the hardships and mishaps that the writer faces on his journey to Darchen.

[Diksha]

Ans. The author arrived in Darchen with a cold and a plugged nose as a result of the extremely cold winds at Hor. He struggled to breathe and could only use one nostril. He struggled to fall asleep at night. He felt better when he sat up.

20. Describe the café where the narrator had met Norbu.

Ans. The café was small and dark like a cave. It had a long metal stove and the walls and ceiling were covered with sheets of multi-colored plastic. It was made into a firm and big shopping bags which were sold over China and in many other countries of Asia and Europe. The café had a single-window where the narrator used to sit so that he could see the pages of his novel.

21. What according to the narrator are the salt flats?

Ans. Salt flats are a small part of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward.

22. 'The hill - folk are more sensitive to nature and fellow human beings than the urban people.' Justify this statement on the basis of the lesson 'Silk Road'.

[Diksha]

Ans. The people of the hills are simple and innocent. They are quite traditional and cultural. They are not exposed to the stresses of city life. They are uncomplicated and unpretentious. They are used to the slow pace of country life. They are always willing to assist. For instance, when the author became unwell in Darchen, Tsetan took care of him. The mountains of trash that city dwellers left on the hills were proof of their callous attitude.

LONG ANSWER Type Questions (LA)

[5 marks]

Answer the following questions in about 120 - 150 words:

- 23. Justify the statement—“The narrator’s experience of Hor was in stark contrast to earlier accounts of the place.”**

Ans. According to the narrator, Hor was a grim and miserable place with no vegetation around. The rocks were scattered everywhere in abundance. The place seemed dejected though it sits on the shore of Lake Manasarovar which was the source of four great Indian rivers according to the ancient Hindu and Buddhist cosmology. The narrator’s experience was in contrast to accounts that he had read of earlier traveler’s first encounter with Lake Manasarovar. Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese monk, who arrived in 1900 was so much moved by the purity of the lake that he burst into tears. A couple of years later, the pure water had the same effect on Sven Hedin, a Swede.

- 24. “As a Buddhist, he told me, it didn’t matter to him if I passed away, but he thought it would be bad for business.” Comment.**

Ans. Tsetan was a true Buddhist as well as a professional man. Though, he made this statement in a witty manner, it had a deep meaning. He was perhaps indirectly mentioning the sermon by the Buddha where he had mentioned that anyone who is born has to die. However, Tsetan is very witty. He doesn’t want that any harm should come to the narrator. He did everything to get him treated, but added jokingly in the end that he would not mind if the narrator really died, but it would be bad for his business. Nevertheless, Tsetan was a good-natured fellow who took great care of the narrator.

- 25. Describe briefly the topographic variations that the narrator came across on his way to Mount Kailash. [Delhi Gov. QB 2022]**

Ans. The narrator and his companion, Tsetan set off to Mount Kailash. Tsetan knew a route that would take them south-west, directly towards Mount Kailash. From the gentle rolling hills of Ravu, the shortcut took them across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles. The plains ahead became stony and a great herd of wild ass also came into view. Hills ahead also became steep. From

the rocky wilderness, they passed solitary drokbas and Tibetan mastiffs. The path led them to snow-capped mountains and then to the valley where the river became wide and clogged with ice. The turns became sharper and ride bumpier. At a height of 5,210 metres above sea level, piles of stones marked the landscape. Next was the plateau which was pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes that were the remnants of the Tethys Ocean. Hor came further. It was a grim and miserable place with no vegetation. Dust and rocks were scattered with years of accumulated refuse. Then came Darchen. It was a dusty place with heaps of rubble and refuse. The bright sun gave the narrator a vision of the Himalayas covered by a huge, snow-capped mountain, Gurla Mandhata with a cloud suspended over its peak.

- 26. Describe the narrator’s encounter with the Tibetan doctor.**

Ans. The narrator spent a sleepless night in Darchen. He gasped for oxygen the entire night as one of his nostrils was blocked. The next morning, Tsetan took him to the Darchen Medical College. The consulting room was dark and cold and was occupied by a Tibetan doctor. The doctor asked the narrator a few questions while checking his pulse. Finally, he said it was the cold and the effects of the high altitude. But the narrator would be well enough to do the Kora. He gave him a brown envelope that had fifteen screws of paper. Each package had a brown powder that had to be taken with hot water. It tasted like cinnamon. The contents of lunchtime and bedtime contained small spherical brown pellets which looked like sheep dung. But the medicine helped the narrator recover quickly.

- 27. How did the narrator and his companions cross the snow hurdle on their way to Mount Kailash?**

Ans. As the narrator and his companions moved towards Mount Kailash, they entered a valley where the river was wide and filled with ice. As they continued to climb further, the track moved away from the icy river to steep slopes that had big rocks full of bright orange patches of lichens. Under the rocks, there was the snow that lay across the track. The track was so steep that they could not go around

it. The danger was that if they slipped off, the car could turn over. Tsetan grabbed handfuls of soil and covered the snow completely. The narrator and Daniel stayed out of the car to lighten Tsetan's load. Meanwhile, Tsetan backed the car and slowly drove the car over the snow.

28. "It wasn't difficult to understand why ferocious Tibetan mastiffs became popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs." Justify this statement.

Ans. When the narrator passed the tents of the nomads, he noticed that a huge black dog, a Tibetan Mastiff standing as their guards. They fixed their gaze on the approaching car and ran behind it as a bullet fired from a gun. These shaggy monsters were blacker than the night and wore bright red collars. They barked furiously with huge jaws. They were fearless and ran straight into the narrator's path. They chased them to about a hundred meters. Now, the narrator could understand why these ferocious dogs were popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs.

29. Finding a friend like Norbu made the narrator feel relieved. Explain.

Ans. The Kora had to be completed by the narrator. He anticipated joining the groups of pilgrims. However, it was too early, by the time he arrived at Darchen. He grew so dejected and lonely. In the absence of a friend, he felt uncomfortable and alone. He found it tough to fill his free time. But after meeting Norbu, he swiftly overcame this disappointment.

He interacted with him and became extremely comfortable around him. They were ideally suited to one another because they shared same traits and ideas. The narrator chose to perform Kora with him. Both of them were against performing Kora traditionally on foot, therefore they decided to hire yaks.

The best part was that in spite of being a Tibetan, Norbu could converse well in English. The narrator felt that Norbu would be a perfect companion.

30. What was the purpose of the narrator's journey? What route did he take to reach his destination?

Ans. The author had travelled to Mount Kailash and the Manasarovar Lake as part of a religious trip. To get to Manasarovar, he took the ancient Silk Road over the Himalayas, which approaches Tibet. To get here, one must travel via a number of snow-covered high mountain

passes and huge open plains. The narrator passed through Hor and Darchen en route. He experienced unusually frigid conditions. Hor was a gloomy, unkempt place. The narrator experienced intense cold in Darchen, and needed medical attention.

31. What difficulties did the author encounter and overcome when he set out to reach Mount Kailash? [Delhi Gov. QB 2022]

Ans. The narrator, Nick Middleton, had to tackle harsh conditions in order to reach Mount Kailash. The path was completely covered in snow, and because it was so steep, they couldn't go around it. They overcame it in some way. The risk was that they would trip. They threw dirt in all directions, totally covering the snow. Tsetan drove the car across the snow and the narrator and Daniel stepped out to reduce the burden. He had a headache as a result of the low air pressure. Due to the low pressure, the gasoline of the car also expanded, which could be dangerous for them. The narrator also experienced severe cold symptoms and respiratory difficulties in Darchen because of blocked sinuses. He took the help of a Tibetan doctor and felt better.

32. Nick Middleton is an environmental consultant who sets out on a journey to do kora of Mount Kailash. As, Nick Middleton, create a diary entry, expressing his journey and his thoughts on seeing Hor.

Ans. 31st March, 1984

Tuesday

4.00 p.m.

Dear Diary,

My journey towards Mount Kailash has been quite adventurous as I faced many difficulties along the way. The hilly and snow covered path made it difficult for us to ascend further but eventually we did overcome that. Due to low atmospheric pressure, I got a severe headache and the fuel of our car expanded which could be quite dangerous had we not have Tsetan, our taxi's owner and guide, with us. But the thing that had depressed me the most was the condition of the town, Hor. My experience with the holy Lake Manasarovar has been quite contrasting to the experiences of a Japanese monk, Ekai kawaguchi and the Swede, Sven Hedin who got emotional by the purity of the lake. Hor has become a shabby place. There is no natural beauty in the place but litter all around the area left by tourists. I am disappointed how man is destroying the

environment. I am disturbed to see how human activities are deteriorating the environment. I hope that people change their behaviour before it's too late.

Nick

33. What opinion do you form about the author, Nick Middleton on the basis of the reading of the chapter, 'Silk Road'? [Diksha]

Ans. In the story, it is revealed that the author is a bald headed man who knows English. He is a thorough gentleman. He wanted to go for the Kailash Kora so he hired Tsetan's car and called Daniel till Darchen as a companion.

He is a lover of adventure and that is obvious in his efforts to take a short cut through high mountain passes and the risk of slippery paths. The author is also a man of keen observation and learning. He does have a sharp eye on all the manners and decorum of the place and the journey. He gives a graphic account of difficulties faced by him like that of his headache and loss of sleep. Also the detail of him about Manasarovar and Hor is sparkling and trustworthy. One can conclude by saying that Nick Middleton was a man of vision, thought, ideas, sensitivity and warm thoughts.

