Marco Polo

In the Service of Kublai Khan

Marco Polo (1254 – 1324) was 15 years old when his father and uncle returned to Italy from a trip to the Mongol Empire. The Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan, had asked Marco’s Father and uncle to bring back 1—Missionaries to help spread Christianity throughout the empire. The Pope did not send missionaries, but the Polos returned to China anyway and took Marco with them.

Kublai Khan was impressed by Marco and made him an Ambassador. He also named Marco the Governor of Yangzhou. But the Polos worried that Kublai Khan’s enemies would kill them if the emperor died, so they asked for permission to leave. The emperor finally agreed to let them go if they would take a princess to her scheduled wedding in Persia. The Polos sailed from China with the Princess in 1292.

Marco’s Version of History

Marco Returned to Italy and fought in a war against Genoa. He was captured in 1298 and thrown in prison. It was there that he wrote a book about his travels. Some historians now think that Marco did not tell the truth in his book. They think that he only reached Persia and never made it to China. Whatever the truth may be, Marco’s writings influenced history in many ways. For example, Christopher Columbus was inspired by the book to search for a quicker route to Asia. While searching for this route, he found the Americas instead.

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