

Marco polo's book, the travels of marco polo

People



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Marco Polo was no doubt one of the most influential explorers in the world. His tales of the East opened the minds of the Europeans, and his tales were a catalyst for the Age of Exploration in Europe. His influence on geographical exploration was so pivotal that many years later Christopher Columbus used Marco Polo's book on his voyage to the New World. Marco Polo's book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, was widely published and thousands of copies were printed in different languages. However, many skeptics believe that Marco Polo never actually set foot in China, but used other traveler's accounts of China as his own.

Despite Marco Polo's huge influence on Europe, the false and wildly exaggerated claims and the amount of Chinese Culture he failed to mention in his book made it evident that Marco Polo was really a fraud and never really made it to China. Historians have questioned Marco Polo's credibility with his many dubious claims in his book, suggesting that he also fabricated his story about setting foot in China. One false claim Marco Polo made was that he assisted Kublai Khan as a military advisor during the siege of Hsiang-Yang.

According to records, the Chinese siege ended on January 1273, which was two years before Marco Polo actually got to northern China. Another doubtful claim Marco Polo made was that he was the governor of Yangzhou, and served as an ambassador under Kublai Khan. Yet despite his high-ranking positions, his name does not appear in any of the Chinese records. Historians have argued that Marco Polo's publisher, Rusticello, might have exaggerated his stories to make it more interesting, but that just furthermore questions the credibility of Marco Polo's book.

If Marco Polo and Rusticello exaggerated and lied about so many things, they might have lied or exaggerated about Marco Polo even setting foot in China. In addition to his questionable claims, Marco Polo also fails to mention important aspects of 13th century Chinese life and culture. Marco Polo also omits many important aspects of Chinese life and culture from his book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which would have been hard to leave out as an European if he really set foot in China. Marco Polo claimed that he spent many years traveling around China, serving as “The Eyes” of Kublai Khan.

Yet during the time he spent traveling South China, he fails to mention anything at all about tea drinking, which was popular in southern China during Polo's time. He also fails to mention the binding of a woman's feet, which would have fascinated the Europeans due to how strange and different it was. This raises suspicion, since Marco Polo vividly describes other aspects of Chinese culture and life with so much detail; yet he fails to mention the slightest bit about tea drinking and feet binding, strongly proving that he only borrowed descriptions from other travelers.

Other aspects of Chinese Culture and life he omitted from his book were the use of chopsticks, Chinese writing, Chinese books and printing, and porcelain; all important aspects of Chinese life and culture. However, the most alarming thing Marco Polo failed to mention was the Great Wall of China. Though some historians might argue it was in tatters during this period of time, it still remained China's greatest architectural achievement, and shouldn't have been missed out from Marco Polo's book if Marco Polo actually went to China.

Marco Polo may have missed out on many aspects of Chinese culture and life, but his book never ceased to amaze the Europeans from the moment it was published. Marco Polo's book told of a land to the east never known to the Europeans before, and opened up the Europeans' medieval minds whether or not those accounts of China actually belonged to him. At first, Europeans found his tales hard to believe, but instead of rejecting Marco Polo's stories, they embraced it as a romantic fantasy.

Nonetheless, The Travels of Marco Polo became Europe's most widely read book, due to the fascinating and detailed descriptions of Kublai Khan's wealth and his magnificent empire. His descriptions of China was that of a country with thriving towns, and with cities far richer than any place in Europe in terms of goods, services and technology. Marco Polo may not have included everything about Chinese culture, but he still managed to amaze the Europeans with descriptions of paper money, at the same time introducing Europe to coal, a substance they had never heard of before.

Marco Polo may have opened up the minds of European and his stories may have been a major cause of the Age of Exploration, but in the end evidence proves that he was merely a useful "recorder of Information", as deemed by Frances Wood, Marco Polo's No. 1 critic. Despite Marco Polo's book about China, which fascinated readers all around Europe, the amount of false and dubious claims in Marco Polo's book combined with the amount of important aspects of Chinese life and culture omitted from the book strongly proves that Marco Polo was not a credible source and never really set foot in China.

His false statements and wild exaggerations in his book have caused historians to question his credibility, and the amount of omissions in Marco

<https://assignbuster.com/marco-polos-book-the-travels-of-marco-polo/>

Polo's book are simply too great to confirm that he really set foot in China. Nonetheless, Marco Polo was a huge influence to Europe, whether or not his tales were fabricated from other travelers, and remains one of the most famous explorers to this day.