

Silk Road - Nick Middleton

Term	Explanation
flawless	Without a fault or blemish; perfect in appearance. Here it describes the clear outline of the half-moon. Example: A flawless half-moon floated in a perfect blue sky on the morning we said our goodbyes.
extended banks of cloud	Long, broad masses of cloud. Their comparison with French loaves makes the sky's appearance easy to visualise. Example: 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.
rose-tinted blush	A soft pink colouring resembling a blush. The phrase describes the sunlight colouring the distant mountain tops. Example: 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.
kora	A pilgrimage circuit around a sacred place. Here it is the religious journey around Mount Kailash that the narrator plans to complete. Example: 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.
ducking back	Moving quickly back into a place, often while lowering the head. Lhamo briefly returns to her tent to fetch a gift. Example: After ducking back into her tent, she emerged carrying one of the long-sleeved sheepskin coats that all the men wore.
sheepskin	The skin of a sheep with its wool, used for warm clothing. The coat is a practical gift for the narrator's high-altitude journey. Example: After ducking back into her tent, she emerged carrying one of the long-sleeved sheepskin coats that all the men wore.
sized me up	Looked at me carefully to form an opinion. Tsetan assesses the narrator's appearance in the local clothing. Example: Tsetan sized me up as we clambered into his car.
clambered	Climbed with some effort or awkwardness, using hands as well as feet if necessary. Here it describes getting into the car. Example: Tsetan sized me up as we clambered into his car.
drokba	A Tibetan nomadic herder. Tsetan jokingly applies the word to the narrator because of his sheepskin coat. Example: "Ah, yes," he declared, "drokba, sir."
mountain passes	Routes through gaps or lower points in mountain ranges. Crossing them exposes the travellers to steep terrain, snow and altitude. Example: It involved crossing several fairly high mountain passes, he said.
likelihood	The chance that something will happen. The narrator wants to know whether snow might block their route. Example: What was the likelihood of that I asked.
gently rolling hills	Hills that rise and fall in smooth, gradual curves. The phrase creates an impression of relatively gentle terrain at the start of the journey. Example: From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void.
gazelles	Slender, swift antelopes. Their presence adds to the description of wildlife on the open plains. Example: From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void.
nibbling	Taking small bites of food. Here the animals are feeding on the sparse vegetation. Example: From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void.
arid pastures	Very dry land on which animals graze. The phrase suggests how little vegetation the landscape supports. Example: From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains

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|                             | with nothing in them except a few gazelles that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| arid                        | Extremely dry, with little rainfall or moisture. Here it describes the grazing land. <b>Example:</b> From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void.                                                         |
| bounding away into the void | Leaping away into the vast, apparently empty landscape. The expression combines the animals' quick movement with the openness of the plains. <b>Example:</b> From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void. |
| void                        | An empty space or expanse. Here it conveys the apparent emptiness of the distant landscape. <b>Example:</b> From the gently rolling hills of Ravu, the short cut took us across vast open plains with nothing in them except a few gazelles that would look up from nibbling the arid pastures and frown before bounding away into the void.                                                  |
| kyang                       | The Tibetan wild ass. Tsetan identifies the animals before the travellers come close enough to see them clearly. <b>Example:</b> "Kyang," he said, pointing towards a far-off pall of dust.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| pall of dust                | A thick cloud or covering of dust. It signals the movement of the herd in the distance. <b>Example:</b> "Kyang," he said, pointing towards a far-off pall of dust.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| en masse                    | All together as a group. The expression emphasises the coordinated movement of the wild asses. <b>Example:</b> 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.                                                                                                        |
| manoeuvres                  | Planned or skilful movements, often associated with military training. The animals' coordinated turns are compared with organised exercises. <b>Example:</b> 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.                                                          |
| predetermined course        | A route decided upon beforehand. The narrator imagines the herd's movements as if they followed a planned path. <b>Example:</b> 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              | Long, rising clouds of dust resembling feathers or smoke. They give a vivid impression of the herd's passage. <b>Example:</b> Plumes of dust billowed into the crisp, clean air.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| billowed                    | Rose, swelled or spread in large rolling masses. Here it describes the dust lifted by the moving animals. <b>Example:</b> Plumes of dust billowed into the crisp, clean air.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| crisp                       | Fresh and pleasantly sharp or cool. It describes the clean air of the high landscape. <b>Example:</b> Plumes of dust billowed into the crisp, clean air.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| solitary                    | Alone or separated from others. The scattered herders appear isolated in the wide landscape. <b>Example:</b> As hills started to push up once more from the rocky wilderness, we passed solitary drokbas tending their flocks.                                                                                                                                                                |
| tending their flocks        | Looking after groups of grazing animals. The phrase describes the daily work of the nomadic herders. <b>Example:</b> As hills started to push up once more from the rocky wilderness, we passed solitary drokbas tending their flocks.                                                                                                                                                        |
| evasive action              | Movement intended to avoid danger or an approaching object. The sheep move out of the speeding car's way. <b>Example:</b> When the track took us close to their animals, the sheep would take evasive action, veering away from the speeding vehicle.                                                                                                                                         |
| veering away                | Changing direction sharply to avoid something. The expression describes the sheep's response to the vehicle. <b>Example:</b> When the track took us close to their animals, the sheep would take evasive action, veering away from the speeding vehicle.                                                                                                                                      |

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| nomads                 | People who move from place to place rather than living permanently in one settlement. Here they move with their animals across the plateau. <b>Example:</b> We passed nomads' dark tents pitched in splendid isolation, usually with a huge black dog, a Tibetan mastiff, standing guard.                                                                             |
| splendid isolation     | A striking state of being far apart from other people or dwellings. The phrase emphasises the remoteness of the tents. <b>Example:</b> We passed nomads' dark tents pitched in splendid isolation, usually with a huge black dog, a Tibetan mastiff, standing guard.                                                                                                  |
| Tibetan mastiff        | A large, powerful dog traditionally used to guard livestock and property in Tibet. These dogs fiercely defend the nomads' tents. <b>Example:</b> We passed nomads' dark tents pitched in splendid isolation, usually with a huge black dog, a Tibetan mastiff, standing guard.                                                                                        |
| fix us in their sights | Focus their attention steadily on us as a target. The expression makes the dogs' watchfulness seem deliberate and threatening. <b>Example:</b> These beasts would cock their great big heads when they became aware of our approach and fix us in their sights.                                                                                                       |
| explode into action    | Suddenly begin moving with great speed and energy. It conveys the dogs' abrupt change from watching to charging. <b>Example:</b> As we continued to draw closer, they would explode into action, speeding directly towards us, like a bullet from a gun and nearly as fast.                                                                                           |
| shaggy monsters        | Large, frightening animals with long, rough hair. The dramatic description emphasises the mastiffs' size and intimidating appearance. <b>Example:</b> These shaggy monsters, blacker than the darkest night, usually wore bright red collars and barked furiously with massive jaws.                                                                                  |
| shaggy                 | Covered with long, thick or untidy hair. Here it describes the dogs' coats. <b>Example:</b> These shaggy monsters, blacker than the darkest night, usually wore bright red collars and barked furiously with massive jaws.                                                                                                                                            |
| swerve                 | Change direction suddenly. Tsetan has to steer sharply to avoid the charging dogs. <b>Example:</b> They were completely fearless of our vehicle, shooting straight into our path, causing Tsetan to brake and swerve.                                                                                                                                                 |
| easing off             | Reducing speed, effort or intensity. The dogs slow down after chasing the car away from their territory. <b>Example:</b> The dog would make chase for a hundred metres or so before easing off, having seen us off the property.                                                                                                                                      |
| seen us off            | Driven us away or ensured our departure. Here it describes the dogs' success in guarding the property. <b>Example:</b> The dog would make chase for a hundred metres or so before easing off, having seen us off the property.                                                                                                                                        |
| ferocious              | Fierce and aggressively threatening. It explains why the mastiffs were valued as hunting dogs. <b>Example:</b> It wasn't difficult to understand why ferocious Tibetan mastiffs became popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs, brought along the Silk Road in ancient times as tribute from Tibet.                                                        |
| imperial courts        | The households and establishments associated with emperors. The phrase refers to the royal settings in which the dogs became prized. <b>Example:</b> It wasn't difficult to understand why ferocious Tibetan mastiffs became popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs, brought along the Silk Road in ancient times as tribute from Tibet.                  |
| tribute                | A gift or payment presented to a ruler as a mark of respect or acknowledgement of authority. The dogs travelled from Tibet to China in this capacity. <b>Example:</b> It wasn't difficult to understand why ferocious Tibetan mastiffs became popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs, brought along the Silk Road in ancient times as tribute from Tibet. |
| clogged                | Blocked or obstructed by accumulated material. Here ice partly blocks the river. <b>Example:</b> We entered a valley where the river was wide and mostly clogged with ice, brilliant white and glinting in the sunshine.                                                                                                                                              |
| glinting               | Giving off small, bright flashes of reflected light. The ice shines in the sunshine. <b>Example:</b> We entered a valley where the river was                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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|                  | wide and mostly clogged with ice, brilliant white and glinting in the sunshine.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| meanders         | Curving bends in the course of a river. The trail follows these bends as it climbs. <b>Example:</b> The trail hugged its bank, twisting with the meanders as we gradually gained height and the valley sides closed in.                                                                                |
| daubed           | Covered or marked with irregular patches of colour or material. Here it describes the appearance of lichen on the rocks. <b>Example:</b> The track moved away from the icy river, labouring through steeper slopes that sported big rocks daubed with patches of bright orange lichen.                 |
| lichen           | A growth formed through an association between a fungus and an alga or cyanobacterium. It often grows on exposed surfaces such as rocks. <b>Example:</b> The track moved away from the icy river, labouring through steeper slopes that sported big rocks daubed with patches of bright orange lichen. |
| hunks            | Large, thick pieces or masses. Here it describes patches of snow remaining beneath the rocks. <b>Example:</b> Beneath the rocks, hunks of snow clung on in the near-permanent shade.                                                                                                                   |
| swathe           | A broad strip or stretch of something. The snow forms a band across the track. <b>Example:</b> A swathe of the white stuff lay across the track in front of us, stretching for maybe fifteen metres before it petered out and the dirt trail reappeared.                                               |
| petered out      | Gradually became smaller or weaker and then ended. The snow patch eventually gives way to the dirt trail. <b>Example:</b> A swathe of the white stuff lay across the track in front of us, stretching for maybe fifteen metres before it petered out and the dirt trail reappeared.                    |
| scale            | Climb a steep surface. The bank is too steep for the vehicle to climb around the snow. <b>Example:</b> The bank was too steep for our vehicle to scale, so there was no way round the snow patch.                                                                                                      |
| encrusted snow   | Snow covered with a hardened outer layer. Its icy surface makes crossing it hazardous. <b>Example:</b> I joined Daniel as Tsetan stepped on to the encrusted snow and began to slither and slide forward, stamping his foot from time to time to ascertain how sturdy it was.                          |
| slither          | Slide in a slipping, sometimes uncontrolled manner. Tsetan carefully tests the icy surface underfoot. <b>Example:</b> I joined Daniel as Tsetan stepped on to the encrusted snow and began to slither and slide forward, stamping his foot from time to time to ascertain how sturdy it was.           |
| ascertain        | Find out or establish something with certainty. He checks whether the snow is firm enough to bear the vehicle. <b>Example:</b> I joined Daniel as Tsetan stepped on to the encrusted snow and began to slither and slide forward, stamping his foot from time to time to ascertain how sturdy it was.  |
| sturdy           | Strong and firm enough to withstand pressure. Here it refers to the condition of the snow's surface. <b>Example:</b> I joined Daniel as Tsetan stepped on to the encrusted snow and began to slither and slide forward, stamping his foot from time to time to ascertain how sturdy it was.            |
| pitched in       | Joined others in helping with a task. The narrator and Daniel assist Tsetan by throwing soil over the ice. <b>Example:</b> We passed nomads' dark tents pitched in splendid isolation, usually with a huge black dog, a Tibetan mastiff, standing guard.                                               |
| survey the scene | Look over an area carefully to assess the situation. Tsetan examines the next obstruction before deciding what to do. <b>Example:</b> "Not good, sir," Tsetan announced as he jumped out again to survey the scene.                                                                                    |
| studded          | Scattered or covered with numerous projecting objects. Large rocks make the slope difficult to cross. <b>Example:</b> The slope was steep and studded with major rocks, but somehow Tsetan negotiated them, his four-wheel drive vehicle lurching from one obstacle to the next.                       |
| negotiated       | Managed to pass through or around a difficult place. Tsetan skilfully guides the vehicle between the rocks. <b>Example:</b> The slope was steep and studded with major rocks, but somehow Tsetan negotiated them,                                                                                      |

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|                      | his four-wheel drive vehicle lurching from one obstacle to the next.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| lurching             | Moving with sudden, unsteady jolts. The rough ground makes the vehicle pitch from side to side. <b>Example:</b> The slope was steep and studded with major rocks, but somehow Tsetan negotiated them, his four-wheel drive vehicle lurching from one obstacle to the next.                                            |
| hairpin bends        | Very sharp turns that double back on themselves. The name compares their shape to a bent hairpin. <b>Example:</b> In so doing he cut off one of the hairpin bends, regaining the trail further up where the snow had not drifted.                                                                                     |
| throb                | Ache with a repeated pulsing sensation. The narrator develops a painful headache as the vehicle gains height. <b>Example:</b> We crept past 5,400 metres and my head began to throb horribly.                                                                                                                         |
| rapid ascent         | A quick movement to a higher level or altitude. Here it describes the climb towards the mountain pass. <b>Example:</b> I took gulps from my water bottle, which is supposed to help a rapid ascent.                                                                                                                   |
| ascent               | An upward climb or rise. The journey's increase in altitude affects the narrator physically. <b>Example:</b> I took gulps from my water bottle, which is supposed to help a rapid ascent.                                                                                                                             |
| cairn of rocks       | A pile of stones used as a marker or memorial. Here it marks the high point of the pass. <b>Example:</b> It was marked by a large cairn of rocks festooned with white silk scarves and ragged prayer flags.                                                                                                           |
| cairn                | A deliberately arranged heap of stones. Travellers move around this one according to local tradition. <b>Example:</b> It was marked by a large cairn of rocks festooned with white silk scarves and ragged prayer flags.                                                                                              |
| festooned            | Decorated with hanging strings, strips or garlands. Scarves and prayer flags adorn the stone pile. <b>Example:</b> It was marked by a large cairn of rocks festooned with white silk scarves and ragged prayer flags.                                                                                                 |
| ragged               | Torn, frayed or uneven at the edges. It describes the weather-worn prayer flags. <b>Example:</b> It was marked by a large cairn of rocks festooned with white silk scarves and ragged prayer flags.                                                                                                                   |
| emitted              | Gave out or released something. Air or vapour escapes with a hiss when the tank cap is loosened. <b>Example:</b> He stopped at the petrol tank and partially unscrewed the top, which emitted a loud hiss.                                                                                                            |
| atmospheric pressure | The pressure exerted by the surrounding air. The narrator connects the changed conditions at the pass with the behaviour of the fuel. <b>Example:</b> The lower atmospheric pressure was allowing the fuel to expand.                                                                                                 |
| careered down        | Moved rapidly downwards in a way that seemed difficult to control. The expression conveys the speed of the descent. <b>Example:</b> My headache soon cleared as we careered down the other side of the pass.                                                                                                          |
| erected              | Put up or constructed. The workcamp has been established beside the salt lake. <b>Example:</b> We ate hot noodles inside a long canvas tent, part of a workcamp erected beside a dry salt lake.                                                                                                                       |
| plateau              | An extensive area of relatively flat land at a high elevation. It forms the broad geographical setting of the journey. <b>Example:</b> The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward. |
| pockmarked           | Marked by many scattered pits, patches or irregular features. Here the plateau is dotted with salt flats and lakes. <b>Example:</b> The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward.    |
| salt flats           | Flat areas covered with salt left by evaporating water. They are prominent features of the high plateau. <b>Example:</b> The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward.               |
| brackish lakes       | Lakes containing somewhat salty water. They are described as remnants associated with the region's geological past. <b>Example:</b> The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of                                                                                                         |

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|                       | the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| brackish              | Slightly salty. Here it describes the water of the lakes. <b>Example:</b> The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward.                                                                                                                        |
| vestiges              | Surviving traces or remains of something that once existed. The narrator presents the lakes and salt flats as reminders of an ancient ocean. <b>Example:</b> The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward.                                     |
| continental collision | The coming together of large land-bearing tectonic plates. The phrase describes the geological process associated with the region's uplift. <b>Example:</b> The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward.                                      |
| a hive of activity    | A place filled with busy, energetic work. The comparison evokes bees moving around a hive. <b>Example:</b> This one was a hive of activity, men with pickaxes and shovels trudging back and forth in their long sheepskin coats and salt-encrusted boots.                                                                                                                       |
| trudging              | Walking slowly and heavily with effort. The workers move back and forth carrying out their tasks. <b>Example:</b> This one was a hive of activity, men with pickaxes and shovels trudging back and forth in their long sheepskin coats and salt-encrusted boots.                                                                                                                |
| glare                 | A strong, dazzling light that makes seeing uncomfortable. The bright salt surface causes the workers to wear sunglasses. <b>Example:</b> All wore sunglasses against the glare as a steady stream of blue trucks emerged from the blindingly white lake laden with piles of salt.                                                                                               |
| laden                 | Heavily loaded with something. The trucks carry large quantities of salt. <b>Example:</b> All wore sunglasses against the glare as a steady stream of blue trucks emerged from the blindingly white lake laden with piles of salt.                                                                                                                                              |
| bade him farewell     | Said goodbye to him. The formal expression marks Daniel's departure towards Lhasa. <b>Example:</b> Daniel, who was returning to Lhasa, found a ride in a truck so Tsetan and I bade him farewell outside a tyre-repair shop.                                                                                                                                                    |
| in quick succession   | One after another with little time between. The two punctures leave Tsetan without spare tyres. <b>Example:</b> We had suffered two punctures in quick succession on the drive down from the salt lake and Tsetan was eager to have them fixed since they left him with no spares.                                                                                              |
| grim                  | Unpleasant, bleak or depressing. The narrator's first impression of Hor is strongly negative. <b>Example:</b> Hor was a grim, miserable place.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| accumulated refuse    | Rubbish that has collected over time. It contributes to the narrator's disappointment with the town. <b>Example:</b> There was no vegetation whatsoever, just dust and rocks, liberally scattered with years of accumulated refuse, which was unfortunate given that the town sat on the shore of Lake Manasarovar, Tibet's most venerated stretch of water.                    |
| refuse                | Waste material or rubbish. Here it describes the litter scattered around the settlement. <b>Example:</b> There was no vegetation whatsoever, just dust and rocks, liberally scattered with years of accumulated refuse, which was unfortunate given that the town sat on the shore of Lake Manasarovar, Tibet's most venerated stretch of water.                                |
| venerated             | Regarded with deep respect, especially because of religious significance. Lake Manasarovar is sacred to many believers. <b>Example:</b> There was no vegetation whatsoever, just dust and rocks, liberally scattered with years of accumulated refuse, which was unfortunate given that the town sat on the shore of Lake Manasarovar, Tibet's most venerated stretch of water. |
| cosmology             | Ideas or beliefs about the origin and order of the universe. Here it refers to traditional religious understandings of the lake's place in the world. <b>Example:</b> Ancient Hindu and Buddhist cosmology pinpoints Manasarovar as the source of four great Indian rivers: the Indus, the                                                                                      |

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|                          | Ganges, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| headwaters               | The streams or upper reaches from which a river begins. The narrator locates several rivers' beginnings near the mountain. <b>Example:</b> Actually only the Sutlej flows from the lake, but the headwaters of the others all rise nearby on the flanks of Mount Kailash.                        |
| flanks                   | The sides of something large. Here it describes the slopes of Mount Kailash. <b>Example:</b> Actually only the Sutlej flows from the lake, but the headwaters of the others all rise nearby on the flanks of Mount Kailash.                                                                      |
| within striking distance | Close enough to reach the intended destination soon. The narrator feels that the sacred mountain is now near. <b>Example:</b> We were within striking distance of the great mountain and I was eager to forge ahead.                                                                             |
| forge ahead              | Continue moving forward with determination. He is eager to proceed towards Mount Kailash. <b>Example:</b> We were within striking distance of the great mountain and I was eager to forge ahead.                                                                                                 |
| compensate for           | Make up for a disadvantage or unpleasant condition. The view partly offsets the discomfort of the café. <b>Example:</b> The good view of the lake through one of them helped to compensate for the draught.                                                                                      |
| draught                  | A current of air passing through a room or opening. The broken window lets in cold air. <b>Example:</b> The good view of the lake through one of them helped to compensate for the draught.                                                                                                      |
| solitary confinement     | Being kept alone and apart from others. The narrator uses the phrase humorously for his lonely wait in the café. <b>Example:</b> Half an hour later, Tsetan relieved me from my solitary confinement and we drove past a lot more rocks and rubbish westwards out of town towards Mount Kailash. |
| stark contrast           | A very clear and striking difference. His unpleasant experience differs sharply from earlier travellers' spiritual responses. <b>Example:</b> My experience in Hor came as a stark contrast to accounts I'd read of earlier travellers' first encounters with Lake Manasarovar.                  |
| sanctity                 | The quality of being holy or sacred. The lake's religious importance deeply affects the earlier traveller. <b>Example:</b> Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese monk who had arrived there in 1900, was so moved by the sanctity of the lake that he burst into tears.                                     |
| hallowed waters          | Waters regarded as holy or sacred. The expression conveys the reverence associated with the lake. <b>Example:</b> A couple of years later, the hallowed waters had a similar effect on Sven Hedin, a Swede who wasn't prone to sentimental outbursts.                                            |
| hallowed                 | Honoured as sacred. Here it describes the religious status of the lake. <b>Example:</b> A couple of years later, the hallowed waters had a similar effect on Sven Hedin, a Swede who wasn't prone to sentimental outbursts.                                                                      |
| prone to                 | Likely or inclined to experience or display something. Hedin is described as not usually given to emotional displays. <b>Example:</b> A couple of years later, the hallowed waters had a similar effect on Sven Hedin, a Swede who wasn't prone to sentimental outbursts.                        |
| sentimental outbursts    | Sudden, strong displays of tender or emotional feeling. The phrase underlines how unusually moving the lake was to the traveller. <b>Example:</b> A couple of years later, the hallowed waters had a similar effect on Sven Hedin, a Swede who wasn't prone to sentimental outbursts.            |
| gasping                  | Breathing with difficulty in sudden, urgent breaths. The narrator describes his discomfort during the nights at altitude. <b>Example:</b> It wasn't much higher than Ravu, and there I'd been gasping for oxygen several times every night.                                                      |
| nocturnal disturbances   | Interruptions or difficulties occurring at night. Here they refer to repeated problems with breathing and sleep. <b>Example:</b> I'd grown accustomed to these nocturnal disturbances by now, but they still scared me.                                                                          |
| nocturnal                | Occurring during the night. It identifies when the narrator's distressing episodes take place. <b>Example:</b> I'd grown accustomed to these nocturnal disturbances by now, but they still scared me.                                                                                            |
| drifting off             | Gradually falling asleep. His attempt to sleep is interrupted by an                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|                         | uncomfortable sensation. <b>Example:</b> After a while, I switched to single-nostril power which seemed to be admitting enough oxygen but, just as I was drifting off, I woke up abruptly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| nasal passages          | The channels inside the nose through which air travels. Sitting up temporarily eases the narrator's blocked breathing. <b>Example:</b> My chest felt strangely heavy and I sat up, a movement that cleared my nasal passages almost instantly and relieved the feeling in my chest.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| the land of nod         | A humorous expression for sleep. It lightens the tone while describing a frightening night. <b>Example:</b> I was on the point of disappearing into the land of nod when something told me not to.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| sinuses                 | Air-filled spaces in the bones around the nose and face. The narrator describes a feeling of congestion when lying down. <b>Example:</b> But as soon as I lay down, my sinuses filled and my chest was odd.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| propping myself upright | Supporting myself in a sitting or nearly vertical position. He tries this posture because lying down makes him uncomfortable. <b>Example:</b> I tried propping myself upright against the wall, but now I couldn't manage to relax enough to drop off.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| drop off                | Fall asleep. Despite changing position, he cannot relax enough to sleep. <b>Example:</b> I tried propping myself upright against the wall, but now I couldn't manage to relax enough to drop off.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| put my finger on        | Identify or explain something precisely. He cannot clearly explain the cause of his fear. <b>Example:</b> I couldn't put my finger on the reason, but I was afraid to go to sleep.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| monastery               | A building or community in which monks live and practise their religion. The medical college's exterior reminds him of one. <b>Example:</b> The medical college at Darchen was new and looked like a monastery from the outside with a very solid door that led into a large courtyard.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| paraphernalia           | The equipment, clothing or accessories associated with an activity or profession. The doctor lacks the conventional appearance the narrator expected. <b>Example:</b> We found the consulting room which was dark and cold and occupied by a Tibetan doctor who wore none of the paraphernalia that I'd been expecting.                                                                                                                                  |
| aversion                | A strong dislike or reluctance. Here it describes the narrator's fear of lying down. <b>Example:</b> When I explained my sleepless symptoms and my sudden aversion to lying down, he shot me a few questions while feeling the veins in my wrist.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| altitude                | Height above sea level. It forms part of the doctor's explanation of the narrator's symptoms. <b>Example:</b> "A cold and the effects of altitude.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| screws of paper         | Small pieces of paper twisted or folded into packets. They hold the separate doses of medicine. <b>Example:</b> I walked out of the medical college clutching a brown envelope stuffed with fifteen screws of paper.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| spherical               | Shaped like a sphere or ball. It describes the small brown pieces of medicine. <b>Example:</b> Both contained small, spherical brown pellets.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| pellets                 | Small, rounded pieces of a substance. Here they are portions of the prescribed medicine. <b>Example:</b> Both contained small, spherical brown pellets.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| passed away             | Died. Tsetan uses this indirect expression while reflecting on the narrator's recovery. <b>Example:</b> As a Buddhist, he told me, he knew that it didn't really matter if I passed away, but he thought it would be bad for business.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| derelict                | Neglected and in poor condition. It describes some of the buildings and surroundings of Darchen. <b>Example:</b> It was still dusty, partially derelict and punctuated by heaps of rubble and refuse, but the sun shone brilliantly in a clear blue sky and the outlook across the plain to the south gave me a vision of the Himalayas, commanded by a huge, snow-capped mountain, Gurla Mandhata, with just a wisp of cloud suspended over its summit. |
| punctuated by           | Interrupted or marked at intervals by something. Heaps of waste repeatedly break up the view of the town. <b>Example:</b> It was still dusty, partially derelict and punctuated by heaps of rubble and refuse, but the sun shone brilliantly in a clear blue sky and the outlook across the plain to the south gave me a vision of the                                                                                                                   |

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|               | Himalayas, commanded by a huge, snow-capped mountain, Gurla Mandhata, with just a wisp of cloud suspended over its summit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| rumble        | Broken pieces of stone, brick or other building material. It contributes to the settlement's neglected appearance. <b>Example:</b> It was still dusty, partially derelict and punctuated by heaps of rubble and refuse, but the sun shone brilliantly in a clear blue sky and the outlook across the plain to the south gave me a vision of the Himalayas, commanded by a huge, snow-capped mountain, Gurla Mandhata, with just a wisp of cloud suspended over its summit. |
| wisp of cloud | A small, thin strand of cloud. The delicate image contrasts with the size of the mountain beneath it. <b>Example:</b> It was still dusty, partially derelict and punctuated by heaps of rubble and refuse, but the sun shone brilliantly in a clear blue sky and the outlook across the plain to the south gave me a vision of the Himalayas, commanded by a huge, snow-capped mountain, Gurla Mandhata, with just a wisp of cloud suspended over its summit.              |
| rudimentary   | Basic and lacking sophistication. The town's stores offer only simple goods and facilities. <b>Example:</b> The town had a couple of rudimentary general stores selling Chinese cigarettes, soap and other basic provisions, as well as the usual strings of prayer flags.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| provisions    | Supplies needed for daily life or a journey, especially food and essentials. These are sold in the small local stores. <b>Example:</b> The town had a couple of rudimentary general stores selling Chinese cigarettes, soap and other basic provisions, as well as the usual strings of prayer flags.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| battered      | Damaged or worn through repeated use or rough treatment. The pool table looks old and heavily used. <b>Example:</b> In front of one, men gathered in the afternoon for a game of pool, the battered table looking supremely incongruous in the open air, while nearby women washed their long hair in the icy water of a narrow brook that babbled down past my guest house.                                                                                               |
| incongruous   | Out of place or not fitting naturally with the surroundings. The outdoor pool table appears unexpected in this setting. <b>Example:</b> In front of one, men gathered in the afternoon for a game of pool, the battered table looking supremely incongruous in the open air, while nearby women washed their long hair in the icy water of a narrow brook that babbled down past my guest house.                                                                           |
| brook         | A small stream. It runs past the guest house and provides water for washing. <b>Example:</b> In front of one, men gathered in the afternoon for a game of pool, the battered table looking supremely incongruous in the open air, while nearby women washed their long hair in the icy water of a narrow brook that babbled down past my guest house.                                                                                                                      |
| babbled       | Flowed with a gentle, continuous murmuring sound. The verb makes the stream's movement audible to the reader. <b>Example:</b> In front of one, men gathered in the afternoon for a game of pool, the battered table looking supremely incongruous in the open air, while nearby women washed their long hair in the icy water of a narrow brook that babbled down past my guest house.                                                                                     |
| drawback      | A disadvantage or difficulty. The absence of other pilgrims prevents the narrator from beginning as he hoped. <b>Example:</b> Darchen felt relaxed and unhurried but, for me, it came with a significant drawback.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| pilgrims      | People travelling to a place of religious importance. The narrator hopes to find companions for the sacred circuit. <b>Example:</b> There were no pilgrims.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| bustling      | Full of busy movement and activity. Darchen is normally crowded during the main pilgrimage season. <b>Example:</b> I'd been told that at the height of the pilgrimage season, the town was bustling with visitors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| pondering     | Thinking carefully about a question or choice. The narrator considers what he can do while waiting. <b>Example:</b> One afternoon I sat pondering my options over a glass of tea in Darchen's only cafe.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| well-trodden  | Frequently walked along and clearly established through use. Although the route is familiar to many pilgrims, the narrator does not want to follow it alone. <b>Example:</b> The pilgrimage trail was well-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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|                          | trodden, but I didn't fancy doing it alone.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| liable to                | Likely to experience or be affected by something. Parts of the route may be blocked by snow. <b>Example:</b> The kora was seasonal because parts of the route were liable to blockage by snow.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| cavernous                | Resembling a cave in its enclosed or hollow appearance. Here it conveys the café's dark interior. <b>Example:</b> The cafe was small, dark and cavernous, with a long metal stove that ran down the middle.                                                                                                                                                                |
| wreathed                 | Covered, surrounded or wrapped with something. Plastic sheets cover the café's walls and ceiling. <b>Example:</b> The walls and ceiling were wreathed in sheets of multi-coloured plastic, of the striped variety— broad blue, red and white—that is made into stout, voluminous shopping bags sold all over China, and in many other countries of Asia as well as Europe. |
| stout                    | Strong and thick. It describes the durable material used for shopping bags. <b>Example:</b> The walls and ceiling were wreathed in sheets of multi-coloured plastic, of the striped variety— broad blue, red and white—that is made into stout, voluminous shopping bags sold all over China, and in many other countries of Asia as well as Europe.                       |
| voluminous               | Large and able to hold a great deal. The word describes the capacity of the shopping bags. <b>Example:</b> The walls and ceiling were wreathed in sheets of multi-coloured plastic, of the striped variety— broad blue, red and white—that is made into stout, voluminous shopping bags sold all over China, and in many other countries of Asia as well as Europe.        |
| rickety                  | Unsteady and poorly supported, usually because of age or weak construction. It describes the table at which the narrator sits. <b>Example:</b> Norbu saw my book when he came in and asked with a gesture if he could sit opposite me at my rickety table.                                                                                                                 |
| struck up a conversation | Began talking with someone, usually in a friendly, informal way. This marks the beginning of the narrator's acquaintance with Norbu. <b>Example:</b> I told him I was, and we struck up a conversation.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| windcheater              | A jacket designed to protect its wearer from wind. Norbu's clothing helps distinguish him from the local people the narrator has seen. <b>Example:</b> I didn't think he was from those parts because he was wearing a windcheater and metal-rimmed spectacles of a Western style.                                                                                         |
| fieldwork                | Research carried out in the place or community being studied. The narrator initially assumes that Norbu is visiting for academic work. <b>Example:</b> I assumed he was on some sort of fieldwork.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| academic papers          | Scholarly writings presenting research or analysis. Norbu has studied the pilgrimage through literature without previously completing it himself. <b>Example:</b> Norbu had been writing academic papers about the Kailash kora and its importance in various works of Buddhist literature for many years, he told me, but he had never actually done it himself.          |
| tempered by              | Moderated or reduced by another feeling or consideration. The narrator's relief is limited by doubts about their preparedness. <b>Example:</b> My initial relief at meeting Norbu, who was also staying in the guest house, was tempered by the realisation that he was almost as ill-equipped as I was for the pilgrimage.                                                |
| ill-equipped             | Lacking suitable equipment, preparation or ability for a task. Both men appear poorly prepared for the demanding pilgrimage. <b>Example:</b> My initial relief at meeting Norbu, who was also staying in the guest house, was tempered by the realisation that he was almost as ill-equipped as I was for the pilgrimage.                                                  |
| transpired               | Became known or was revealed. The narrator learns that Norbu is not a practising Buddhist. <b>Example:</b> He wasn't really a practising Buddhist, it transpired, but he had enthusiasm and he was, of course, Tibetan.                                                                                                                                                    |
| envisaged                | Imagined or expected a future situation. The narrator had pictured undertaking the walk with deeply religious companions. <b>Example:</b> Although I'd originally envisaged making the trek in the company of devout believers, on reflection I decided that perhaps Norbu would turn out to be the ideal companion.                                                       |
| devout believers         | People deeply committed to their religious faith. They were the                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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