



Travels Of Marco Polo

[Excerpted from Marco Polo, *The book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the East* 1871)]

Thirteenth Century Eurasia was dominated by the greatest empire in history, founded by Genghis Khan. In a period of 40 years, the Mongols under Genghis Khan and his successors conquered most of Eurasia (including China, Korea, Central Asia, Persia, Iraq, Siberia, Russia, and much of Eastern Europe). For the next 50 years, most of Eurasia was under one rule. This allowed merchants and missionaries from western Europe to travel freely along trade routes previously dominated by Muslims. One of the earliest European descriptions of Asia is that of Marco Polo, a Venetian who reputed served in the court of the last Great Khan, Kublai Khan. http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/Polo.html

] *Kubla Khan* is a fascinating and exasperating poem. Almost everyone has read it, almost everyone has been charmed by its magic, almost everyone thinks he knows what it is about...

By far the most intriguing question about this most intriguing of poems is "What does it mean?" -- if, indeed, it has or was ever intended to have any particular meaning

We must learn to take the poem on its own terms and reconcile ourselves to the fact that no single interpretation will ever resolve the complexities of (such a) a product of the human imagination. *Kubla Khan* ... reflects, though darkly, Coleridge's largely subconscious (thoughts) on poetry, paradise, and the heights and depths of his own intellectual and spiritual being.

What do you think it is about ?