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Notice these expressions in the text.
Infer their meaning from the context.

- ducking back
- swathe
- careered down
- manoeuvres
- cairn of rocks
- salt flats
- billowed

Answer:

ducking back: quickly going inside and then coming out

manoeuvres: military exercises involving a large number of soldiers, ships, etc.

billowed: filled with the air and swelled out

swathe: literally: a long strip of land of something; contextually: a land stretched with snow

cairn of rocks: a pile of stones that mark a special place such as the top of a mountain or a place where somebody is buried.

careered down: descending the slope

salt flats: thatched roofed houses covered with snow.

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Understanding the Text

I. Give reasons for the following statements.

1. The article has been titled 'Silk Road.'

Answer: The title of the article has been named on the historic silk road or routes. The network connected the Afro-Eurasian landmass. It established trade of Chinese silk, spices, teas and porcelain; Indian textiles, precious stones and pepper; and the Roman Empire's gold, silver, fine glassware, wine, carpets and jewels. The road was named Silk Road largely because of the silk trade with China. In the chapter the author travels to Mount Kailash, exploring the Himalayan belt in Tibet. Since the author explored this region, the chapter is titled as Silk Road.

2. Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China's imperial courts.

Answer: Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs. They were brought along the Silk Road in ancient times as tribute from Tibet. They were huge black dogs used as watchdogs. They explode into action like bullets. They are furious and fearless.

3. The author's experience at Hor was in stark contrast to earlier accounts of the place.

Answer: Hor was a grim, miserable place. The dust and rocks were scattered everywhere in abundance; there was little vegetation. The place seemed unfortunate and dejected, though it sat on the shore of the Lake Manasarovar. The author was flabbergasted to realise

the contrast in his experience to that of the earlier read accounts. A Japanese monk, Ekai Kawaguchi, who had arrived there in 1990, was so moved by the sanctity of the lake that he burst into tears. The hallowed waters had a similar effect on Sven Hedin, a Swede who was not prone to sentimental outbursts. However, for the author, when he reached Hor, first he had to get two punctures mended. The only relaxation was the tea served by a Chinese youth in the only café in the town, which was constructed from badly painted concrete and had three broken windows. The good view of the lake through one of them helped to compensate however.

4. The author was disappointed with Darchen.

Answer: The author was disappointed with Darchen. The high altitude was giving him health problems. He had a bad cold and was not able to sleep at night. Since he was one of the early arrivals there weren't any pilgrims coming to the place. The place was dusty, partially derelict and punctuated by heaps of rubble and refuse.

5. The author thought that his positive thinking strategy worked well after all.

Answer: The author was disappointed with Darchen. He also complained of bad health. Tsetan had left for Lhasa. He was feeling rather lonely with no pilgrims around. It was then he met Norbu, a Tibetan who too wanted to visit Kailash. They would be a good team as both of them were academicians who had escaped from the library. The author started thinking positively and it gave him some delight and a new enthusiasm.

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