

Chapter 3

## THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO IN THE LAND OF BUDDHISM

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Ananda Abeydeera

*Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:  
Thus slowly, one by one,  
Its quaint events were hammered out -  
And now the tale is done,  
And home we steer, a merry crew,  
Beneath the setting sun.<sup>1</sup>*

**W**e owe the work that has sometimes been called the Book of Marco Polo to an accident of fate—the imprisonment of Marco Polo and his meeting with another prisoner, Rustichello of Pisa, a courtier and a writer by profession, who was a passionate teller of tales of chivalry and compiler of Round Table romances. Indeed, the book opens with a prologue not unlike the apostrophe used by the *trouvères* to attract their audience's attention. It instantly pinpoints the nature and purpose of the discourse. Rustichello addressed "Great Princes, Emperors and Kings, Dukes and Marquises, Counts, Knights and Burgesses, . . .<sup>2</sup> a court audience for the most part, avid for descriptions of the "various races of mankind and of the diversities of the sundry regions of the world" and for accounts of "great marvels" written by someone who had seen them with his own eyes. There can be no better definition of the kind of book that was in vogue during the Middle Ages when the exotic wider world was uppermost in people's minds. Marco Polo and his writer were well acquainted with such works, which were as much collections of fables as they were encyclopaedias.

The description of Sri Lanka is found in chapters 173 and 177 of the above-mentioned edition of the original manuscript which was

written by Rustichello in 1298. It was condensed into a single chapter (168) of the edition of the work that Marco Polo presented to Thiébauld de Cépoÿ in 1307 and which was published much later by G. Pauthier.<sup>3</sup> An entire passage about the life of the Buddha is absent from this edition, thereby making it necessary to consult both versions. Marco Polo apparently made two trips to Sri Lanka: the first in 1284 as official representative of Kublai Khan and the second in 1293 on his journey home to Venice. Sri Lanka was already a major port of call where ships took on water and provisions and, although his ship put in there in 1293, it seems that he did not stay long. At no point does he indicate the location or duration of his two visits, but his account would appear mostly to refer to his first stay there. He mentions the Khan's mission in Sri Lanka on only two occasions, and although as ambassador he must have gone to Yapahuva, the then capital, there is nothing in his story to confirm this.

Readers are bound to wonder what Marco Polo's role was in his missions outside China. The Mongol Emperor's expectations of his ambassadors, and hence of Marco Polo, emerge clearly in chapter 15, "How the Lord sent Mark on an Embassy of his Notes," and 16, "How Mark returned from the Mission whereon he had been sent":

'... and [the Great Kaan] would say: 'I had far lieber hearken about the strange things, and the manners of the different countries you have seen, than merely be told of the business you went upon;'—for he took great delight in hearing of the affairs of strange countries. Mark therefore, as he went and returned, took great pains to learn about all kinds of different matters in the countries which he visited, in order to be able to tell about them to the Great Kaan.'<sup>4</sup>

It is tempting to read these two chapters as pure fabrication designed to flatter the author of the tale. However, as the writings of Chinese chroniclers show, it was the custom among Mongol sovereigns to keep themselves informed about the situation in various countries—their resources, the customs of the inhabitants, their religions, rites, and peculiarities. The Chinese accounts were enriched by observations similar to those found in the Book of Marco Polo. Seen in this light, Marco Polo's description of Sri Lanka is the basis of a report he intended to make to the Mongol Emperor on returning from his mission.

After a stopover of five months in Sumatra, probably awaiting the winter monsoon, Marco Polo went to sea once more, and a thousand miles west of the Nicobar Islands "You come to the Island of Seilan, which is in good sooth the best Island of its size in the world."<sup>5</sup> As is to be expected, the dimensions of the island of Sri Lanka are overstated (2,400 miles in circumference), but he adds: "... in old times it was

greater still, for it then had a circuit of about 3,600 miles, as you find in the charts of the mariners of those seas”<sup>6</sup> and part of the island had been swallowed up by the sea. This theory of the encroaching sea might well come from the Sinhalese tradition which records, with some exaggeration, several floods, in particular one in the third century B.C.: “In the times of King Kelanitissa, one hundred thousand port towns, 970 fishing villages and 400 villages inhabited by pearl divers were submerged, taking with them eleven-twelfths of the territory of Lanka [which formed the domain of the king to the west of the island].”<sup>7</sup>

It is somewhat surprising that Marco Polo should explain the larger dimensions of Sri Lanka on medieval maps in terms of the laws of nature, since the medieval mind was perfectly willing to be convinced not only by what could be observed and proved by natural law, but also by all things extraordinary, marvelous, and supernatural. His explanation is all the more surprising in that it did not resurface until the sixteenth century, admittedly in a more elaborate version, when the Portuguese historian, João de Barros, attributed the new dimensions of the island to a geological process, i.e., the erosion of the land by the ocean:

According to what the geographers have written about it, it would seem that in those very ancient times, it [the island] was as big as the natives claim it to have been when they say that it was more than 700 leagues in circumference and that the sea had gradually eaten it away; that is probably why he [Ptolemy] said that it stretched to 2 and a half degrees beyond the equinoctial line towards the south.<sup>8</sup>

The annals of the island recount several major floods to explain its modest size and thus avoid contradicting the Indian Brahmins who attached great significance to Lanka, exaggerating its dimensions: “On the other side of this ocean is an island of 100 yojana in surface area.”<sup>9</sup> In that way they provided Westerners with evidence substantiating the claims of the geographers of antiquity: “Taprobane may be considered to be a very large island, or, to follow the opinion of Hipparchus, as the beginning of another world.”<sup>10</sup>

Marco Polo goes on to describe some of the islanders’ customs and such descriptions are often repeated from one chapter to the next: the people of the country spoke a language of their own and were independent; they paid tribute to nobody and had a king of their own. The description of Taprobane in Pierre de Beauvais’s *Mappa Mundi* had already indicated that the islanders spoke “a separate language which none understand, and they themselves understand no other,” a deduction made from the strange method of trading described by Pliny: “In order to trade with foreign merchants, they spread their products out along the shore and the exchanges take place in silence.”<sup>11</sup> The name

given by Marco Polo to the King, Sendemain, probably corresponds to a title. The King of Sri Lanka in 1284 was, according to the Sinhalese chronicles, Bhuvanaika Bahu, and in 1293 Parakramabahu IV was on the throne. The historian Paranavitana identifies Sendemain with Chandrabhanu, a title commonly used at the time by the Malays who occupied the region of Jaffna in the north of the island.<sup>12</sup>

The rest of the description of the islanders' customs is not specific to Sri Lanka: "The people are Idolaters and go quite naked except that they cover the middle. They have no wheat, but have rice, and sesamum [sesame] of which they make their oil. They live on flesh and milk and have tree-wine such as I have told you of. And they have brazil-wood, much the best in the world."<sup>13</sup> Marco Polo was especially struck by sights that were unknown in the West, and more particularly the Christian West. Not only had they not heard of the true God in Sri Lanka, but they went about practically naked, a sure sign of sin in the Middle Ages. In this connection, it should be noted, as Atkinson<sup>14</sup> pointed out, that Marco Polo did in fact raise the question of nudity. The indigenous people's reply inverted the equation "nudity equals lust":

We go naked because naked we came into the world, and we desire to have nothing about us that is of this world. Moreover, we have no sin of the flesh to be conscious of, and therefore we are not ashamed of our nakedness, any more than you are to show your hand or your face. You who are conscious of the sins of the flesh do well to have shame, and to cover your nakedness.<sup>15</sup>

The inhabitants of Sri Lanka did not have bread or wine made from grapes either, which also had religious connotations as they symbolize the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We will return to the religion of the island's inhabitants later, because Marco Polo goes on to devote a whole section of his account to it. The attitude of the indigenous people did not make a good impression on him: "The people of Seilan are no soldiers, but poor cowardly creatures. And when they have need of soldiers they get Saracen troops from foreign parts."<sup>16</sup>

Marco Polo thus corrected the image, firmly planted in people's minds at the time, of a race of "giants." It is true that the naval and military forces of Sri Lanka, whose population had little inclination for warfare, had always been made up of mercenaries, sometimes recruited in India, to reinforce the troops mobilized locally as the need arose. It is true too that the islanders, with their peaceful disposition and softened as they were by Buddhism, a non-violent religion, had only very limited experience of large-scale military operations.

Coming as he did from a feudal society, Marco Polo could only feel contempt for the placidity of the local population such as lords would

for villains. It was also by contrast a way of praising the warrior virtues of the Great Khan and the prowess of his armies which he extols at length elsewhere:

All their harness of war is excellent and costly. Their arms are bows and arrows, sword and mace; but above all the bow for they are capital archers, indeed the best that are known. On their backs they wear armour of cuir-bouly, prepared from buffalo and other hides, which is very strong. They are excellent soldiers, and passing valiant in battle.<sup>17</sup>

And now we come to the marvelous: “*So if you will allow me to talk of these things I shall tell you of the most precious thing in the world.*” The Venetian, let us not forget, was interested in luxury goods such as the island’s rich store of precious stones: “You must know that rubies are found in this Island and in no other country in the world but this. They find there also sapphires and topazes and amethysts, and many other stones of price.”<sup>18</sup> Of course, the Polos were involved in Venetian trade and at that time merchants basically sold expensive products which made them enormous profits; but here the reason for Marco’s interest seems to have been quite different in that he wished to create an impact, captivating with descriptions of marvels of which the public never tired.

One particular marvel, worthy of the Lapidaries, is described with considerable talent. It was the ruby owned by the King of Sri Lanka for which Kublai is said to have offered the value of a city: “And the King of this Island possesses a ruby which is the finest and biggest in the world; I will tell you what it is like. It is about a palm in length, and as thick as a man’s arm; to look at, it is the most resplendent object upon earth; it is quite free from flaw and as red as fire. Its value is so great that a price for it in money could hardly be named at all.”<sup>19</sup> The Khan’s emissaries returned without the “jewel” as the King of Sri Lanka refused to part with it: “But the King replied that on no account whatever would he sell it, for it had come to him from his ancestors.”<sup>20</sup>

The King’s ruby is mentioned in other fourteenth-century travelers’ tales. Some attempt may be made to identify it. Ibn Battuta in his *Travels* dates the origin of the royal heritage to the tenth century, in other words, when Arab merchants began to settle in Sri Lanka. But this is probably the date of origin of what turned into a legend. It was, Ibn Battuta tells us, the great Sheikh Abu Abdullah, who taught the path on the mountain of Serendib, who gave rubies to the king. The Sheikh, known as the founder of Shiraz orthodox Sufism, lived in the tenth century: “Nevertheless we set off for the Bay of Bamboos from which Abu Abdullah, son of Khafif, took the two rubies which he gave to the Sultan of this island.”<sup>21</sup>

Ibn Battuta provides us with a further, almost anecdotal clue:

It is said that the sheikh, who had one day dived in the presence of the king of these idolaters, emerged from the water with his hands tight shut, and said to the king: "Choose the contents of one of my hands." The king chose what was in the right hand, and the sheikh threw it to him. It was three matchless rubies which remain in the possession of the kings of this country and are set in their crown. These princes hand down the jewels as heritage.<sup>22</sup>

In order to establish his legitimacy the King of Sri Lanka needed a harmonious and protective alliance of three jewels symbolizing the Buddha (awakened one), the *dhamma* (doctrine) and the *sangha* (fraternity), also known as "Trividha Ratna" which in Pali means "three kinds of ruby."<sup>23</sup> Ibn Battuta's three rubies might very well be a reference to Buddhism and the religious power of the king. Rubies, according to popular belief, must be kept in pairs; in this duality resides their power. This tradition apparently accounts for the fact that Ibn Battuta speaks of two rubies and not three in the rest of his account.

In his chapter on precious stones, Ibn Battuta describes another ruby, this one in the possession of the king of the northern region of the island: "I have also seen in the presence of the sultan Arya Chakaravarti a ruby dish as big as the palm of my hand, which contained oil of aloe. I expressed my astonishment at seeing the dish; but the sultan said to me: 'We own objects made of rubies still larger than this.'<sup>24</sup> This passage from Ibn Battuta is germane to our subject.

A Chinese chronicle written in 1349 describes the occasional dispatch of embassies to Sri Lanka under the Yuan Mongol dynasty to procure jewels and medicinal drugs. On three occasions ambassadors were instructed to negotiate the purchase of the Buddha's sacred alms bowl which was part of the King of Sri Lanka's collection of relics:

Opposite the altar of the Buddha was placed a great alms bowl made of a substance that was neither jade nor copper nor iron. It was crimson in colour and luminous, and when struck it rang out like glass. So at the beginning of this dynasty [Yuan], ambassadors were dispatched on three separate occasions to bring it back.<sup>25</sup>

The bowl placed before statues of the Buddha contained an offering of water or food. There was one in front of each statue and they were not considered as relics. This report by the Chinese authorities confirms in part Marco Polo's account of the embassy sent to the King of Sri Lanka.

The second part of Marco Polo's tale makes it easier to identify the purpose of his mission in 1284. Missing from some of the manuscripts in Latin,<sup>26</sup> it is located between the description of the "Maabar" coast (coast of Coromandel in the southeast of India) and that of the Malabar coast (southwest India) in the *Soci t  de G ographie* edition. This passage,

which is not in the initial chapter on Sri Lanka, has a certain significance, as indicated by the care taken to include it further on. Marco Polo was careful not to neglect anything which might amuse or please, or for that matter to leave out anything important, so he returns to tell us:

certain particulars which I omitted when before speaking of the island of Zeilan: Now it befel that the Great Kaan heard how on that mountain there was the sepulchre of our first father Adam, and that some of his hair and of his teeth, and a dish from which he used to eat, were still preserved there. So he thought he would get hold of them some how or another, and dispatched a great embassy for the purpose, in the year of Christ, 1284. The ambassadors, with a great company, travelled on by sea and by land until they arrived at the Island of Seilan, and presented themselves before the King. And they were so urgent with him that they succeeded in getting two of the grinder teeth, which were passing great and thick; and they also got some of the hair, and the dish from which the personage used to eat, which is of a very beautiful green prophry. And when the Great Kaan's ambassador had obtained the object for which they had come they were greatly rejoiced, and returned to their lord. And when they drew near to the great city of Cambaluc, where the Great Kaan was staying, they sent him word that they had brought back that for which he had sent them. On learning this the Great Kaan was passing glad, and ordered all the ecclesiastics and others to go forth to meet these relics, which he was led to believe were those of Adam.<sup>27</sup>

Buddhists venerate Sri Pada, a footprint they believe to be that of the Buddha. Situated at the top of the summit commonly known as Adam's Peak,<sup>28</sup> Sri Pada has given its name to the whole mountain. The sacred footprint is a hollow form in the rock which only vaguely resembles a human footprint and which is supposed to represent the mark left by the Buddha's foot on one of his visits to Sri Lanka. During the first millennium B.C. the divinities of the Indian world were often only represented by a footprint marking the supernatural presence and its occupation of a sacred place. Buddhists had established a sanctuary there in the third century B.C. and pilgrimages to it were encouraged from around 100 B.C. and continue to this day.<sup>29</sup> Muslims saw the footprint as the mark of their first parent fallen from Paradise, the other foot being placed on the Kaaba in Mecca.

At no point does Marco Polo mention this object of worship. He seems to be quite unaware of its existence: "Furthermore you must know that in the Island of Seilan there is an exceeding high mountain; it rises up so steep and precipitous that no one could ascend it, were it not that they have taken and fixed to it several great and massive iron chains, so disposed that by help of these men are able to mount to the top."<sup>30</sup> This description of the chains that help pilgrims to climb to the summit of

Adam's Peak and which are still there today should not mislead us about Marco Polo's visit to the mountain.<sup>31</sup> Marco Polo did not know the real reason for the pilgrimages to Adam's Peak, and drew his own conclusions, placing the tomb of "Sagamoni Borcan"<sup>32</sup> and his relics there. It is not very likely that the relics, preserved so carefully by the Sinhalese kings for the power they conferred on them, would have been offered to the Great Khan. The person who possessed them was not only acknowledged as king, but was also invested with supernatural powers; the procession of the Buddha's Tooth Relic served the additional purpose of bringing rain and thus prosperity to the land.<sup>33</sup>

The importance attached to rubies as described by Marco Polo brings vividly to mind the magical and religious role of the Buddha's Tooth Relic. In fact, we believe that the two elements "relic" and "ruby" should be inverted. Would Marco Polo's readers have been quite so impressed if he had said that the relics, which they would in any case have regarded as worthless if they were not connected with Adam, had been refused to the Mongol Emperor but that he had been given a "bowl" in green porphyry and other precious stones? The other relics were in fact soon forgotten in favor of the dish with such magical powers: "That if food for one man be put therein it shall become enough for five men." The myth of this bowl dates back to Indian antiquity as a didactic Tamil novel of the second century A.D. shows: "I have brought you the magic bowl called 'Cow of Abundance' which once belonged to Aputra. Each and everyone of you must venerate this divine bowl."<sup>34</sup> It would have been difficult for Marco Polo to admit that the Khan had asked for relics of the Buddha at a time when the Christian West believed him to be favorable to the Christian religion. It was far better to pretend that he thought they were Adam's relics, which would be far more acceptable.<sup>35</sup>

Who was "Sagamoni Borcan"? Sagamoni is Sakyamuni, one of the most common names for the Buddha, meaning the ascetic of Sakya. Sakya is the princely clan to which he belonged and the Sanskrit word "muni" which is translated as sage or saint, derives in fact from "mauna" or silence. Bourkan is the Mongol name for the Buddha. It means a person who will provide proof, a witness and, by extension, a saint.

Up to this point Marco Polo had described the various Buddhist communities he came across in his travels, recounting with astonishment the extraordinary powers and some of the practices of the "idolaters." He felt he had to include an account of the life of Gotama in his description of Sri Lanka, and the version he gives is no doubt that of the Tibetan lamas who lived in great number at Kublai's court. Buddha, which means "enlightened one," was used only at the end of his life. Gotama is one of the names of the future Buddha. The passage giving



two of the reasons (old age and death) that impelled Gotama to abandon his life as a prince for that of an ascetic is not included in the manuscript published by Pauthier.

In his account Marco Polo introduced dialogues as well as touches of lyricism which he generally avoided. His conclusion is rather surprising for a thirteenth-century Italian Catholic:

So what did he one night but take his departure from the palace privily, and betake himself to certain lofty and pathless mountains. And there he did abide, leading a life of great hardship and sanctity, and keeping great abstinence, just as if he had been a Christian. Indeed, and he had but been so, he would have been a great saint of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so good and pure was the life he led.<sup>36</sup>

Even though Marco Polo was fascinated by the life of the Buddha and came close to acknowledging that he was worthy of inclusion in the ranks of the saints, his tone changes when evoking his accession to the status of god and his various rebirths or Jataka. The Jataka, numbering 549, are the subject of very popular stories which are part of the Buddhist literary canon.<sup>37</sup> He also mentions the belief in metempsychosis without really understanding it, which goes some way to explaining the distance he took:

And they all *declared* him to be a god; and so they still *say*. They *tell* moreover that he hath died four score and four times. The first time he died as a man, and came to life again as an ox; and then he died as an ox and came to life again as a horse, and so on until he had died four score and four times; and every time he became some kind of animal. But when he died the eighty-fourth time they *say* he became a god.<sup>38</sup>

The way in which Marco Polo stressed the origin of his information, e.g. “so they say” or words to that effect like a refrain, is clearly an effort to distance himself from the “idol.” In that regard it must not be forgotten that on the occasion of an initial journey in 1266, Kublai had sent the two Polo brothers to Rome to ask the Pope to send him “As many as an hundred persons of our Christian faith; intelligent men, acquainted with the Seven Arts.”<sup>39</sup> As they returned to the Khan without the missionaries one may wonder whether they had assumed that role themselves.

Although Marco Polo no longer had any illusions about the possibility of converting the Mongols and could talk articulately with their emperor about Buddhism, he had every reason to fear that on reading his tale Christians might come to doubt the “true God.” Did that fear not lead to the omission of this chapter in certain manuscripts? How-

ever, Marco Polo stressed the importance of Holy Scripture as the supreme authority and guarantee of the truth, as the judgement of God was the proof *par excellence* of truth:

The Idolaters come thither on pilgrimage from very long distances and with great devotion, just as Christians go to the shrine of Messer Saint James in Galicia. And they maintain that the monument on the mountain is that of the king's son, according to the story I have been telling you; and that the teeth, and the hair, and the dish that are there were those of the same king's son, whose name was Sagamoni Borcan, or Sagamoni the Saint. But the Saracens also come thither on pilgrimage in great numbers, and *they say* it is the sepulchre of Adam.

Whose they were in truth, God knowest; howbeit, according to the Holy Scriptures of our Church, the sepulchre of Adam is not in that part of the world.<sup>40</sup>

While it is true that Marco Polo was accused by his contemporaries of being an impostor, it seems that this was more because of the new insight he brought to their vision of the world than because of the fables which were, as we shall see, so much cultural background. Marco Polo was certainly aware that he might not be taken seriously, which explains why he hesitated, oscillating between new facts and fable. He did indeed arouse suspicion, and was in fact accused of lying, but his standing is attested to by the number of times it was felt necessary to repeat and recall his "lies." The missionaries who followed him such as Jourdain de Catala<sup>41</sup> and Odoric of Pordenone<sup>42</sup> used his descriptions as a basis for their own.

## Notes

1. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Bilingual edition (Paris: Aubier-Flammariion, 1970), p. 78.
2. Marco Polo in *Recueil de voyage et de mémoires* (Société de Géographie), vol. 1, p. 1. The prologue is not in the later manuscripts published by G. Pauthier.
3. *Le Livre de Marco Polo*, published by G. Pauthier (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1865). The English version used is *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the East*, translated and edited, with notes, by Colonel Sir Henry Yule, R.E., C.B., K.C.S.I., Corr. Inst. France, 3d ed. (London: John Murray, 1903).
4. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 1, p. 28.
5. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, p. 312.
6. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, pp. 312-13.
7. B. Gunasekara, ed., *The Rajavaliya or a Historical Narrative of Sinhalese Kings from Vijaya to Vimala Dharma Surya II* (Colombo: George J.A. Skeen, Government Printer, 1900; reprint, 1954), p. 23.
8. J. de Barros, *Terceira Década da Ásia* (Lisbon, 1563), bk. 2, ch. 1, f. 26r. Quoted by W.G.L. Randles in *De la terre plate à la terre ronde* (Paris: Armand Colin).
9. "Vālmiki, Le Ramayana, II, Aranyakānda, Kiskinhākānda et Sundarakānda," *Sarga* 41: 23-5, tr. A. Roussel (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1979), p. 371. See also *Sarga* 48: 10-11, 140-41.
10. Pomponius Mela (44 A.D.), *Description de la Terre*, 3, 7. On the exaggerated dimensions attributed to the island, see A. Abeysdeera, "Aspects mythiques de la cartographie de l'île de Ceylan," in the collection *L'Île, territoire mythique* (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres, 1989), pp. 1-17.
11. Ch. Langlois, *La vie en France au Moyen Age*, vol. 3 (Geneva: Slatkine, 1970), pp. 127-28.
12. C.W. Nicolas; S. Paranavitana, *A Concise History of Ceylon* (Colombo: Ceylon University Press, 1961), p. 289. See also S. Paranavitana, *Ceylon and Malaysia* (Colombo: Lake House), p. 122.
13. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, p. 313.
14. G. Atkinson, *Les nouveaux horizons de la Renaissance française* (Paris: Droz, 1935), p. 70.
15. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, p. 366.
16. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, p. 314.
17. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 1, p. 260.
18. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, p. 313.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. I. Battuta, *Voyages*, Arabic text accompanied by a French translation by C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti, vol. 4 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1922), p. 177. Also *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, translated into English by Sir Hamilton Gibb (Hakluyt Society).
22. Battuta, *Voyages*, vol. 2 (1914), pp. 81-82.
23. For the allusion to the three jewels, see *Pujavaliya*, "The thirteenth-century literary work of Mayurapada Buddhaputra," in C.H.B. Reynolds, ed., *An Anthology of Sinhalese Literature up to 1815, selected by the UNESCO National Commission of Ceylon* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), p. 190.
24. Battuta, *Voyages*, vol. 3, p. 260.

25. Wang Ta-Yuan, "Notices of Ceylon in Tao i Chich Lüeh," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 27 (73) (Ceylon): pp. 31-32. Wang Ta-Yuan visited Ceylon in 1432 with the naval expedition of Cheng Ho.
26. See H. von Tscharnier, ed., *Der Mitteldeutsche Marco Polo nach der Admonter Handschrift: Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, vol. 40, Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1935), pp. 58-59.
27. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, pp. 319-20.
28. On the Edenic vision of Adam's Peak by a Franciscan, see A. Abeydeera, "Jean de Marignolli: envoyé du pape au jardin d'Adam," *L'Inde et l'Imaginaire, Purusartha No. 11* (Paris: EHESS, 1988), pp. 59-67.
29. See S. Paranavitana, *The God of Adam's Peak*.
30. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, p. 316.
31. For the chains which help people to the summit, see the miniature in *Le livre des Voyages de Marco Polo*, translated by Robert Frescher, Manuscript 5219 (675 H.F.), folio 133 verso (Paris: Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal).
32. See Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 3 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1959-1973).
33. For descriptions of the disappearance and appearance of rain after displays of the Buddha's Tooth Relic, see *The Chulavamsa being the more recent part of the Mahavamsa*, part 2, translated by Wilhelm Geiger (Colombo: The Ceylon Government Information Department, 1953), chap. 83: 5-13, pp. 177-78, and also *The Rajavaliya*, p. 56.
34. Shattan, *Manimékhalai ou Le scandale de la vertu*, Chant 11: 137, p. 88, translated from the ancient Tamil by Alain Danielou (Paris, Flammarion, 1987); see also Manimekhalai, R.N. Saltore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Culture*, vol. 3 (New Delhi, Bangalore, and Jalandhar: Sterling Publishers, 1914), pp. 911-14.
35. See the excellent study by J. Witte, *Das Buch des Marco Polo als Quelle für Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin: Hutten-Verlag, 1916), in particular pp. 20-36: "Der Buddhismus, Ceylon, Adam's Grab, Buddhas Lebensbeschreibung, Buddha-Reliquien."
36. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, p. 318.
37. See *Choix de Jâtaka: extraits des Vies antérieures du Bouddha*, translated from the Pali by G. Terral (Paris: Gallimard, Collection de Connaissance de l'Orient, 1979).
38. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 2, p. 318. The emphasis is ours.
39. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 1, p. 13.
40. *Book of Ser Marco Polo* vol. 2, p. 319.
41. Fr Jourdain Catalani de Sévécac, *Les Merveilles de l'Asie*, translation with introduction and notes by Henri Cordier (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1925).
42. *Les voyages en Asie au XIVe siècle du bienheureux frère Odoric de Pordenone, religieux de Saint-François*, published with an introduction and notes by Henri Cordier (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1891).