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Excerpt

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BOOK SECOND.—*CONTINUED.*



PART II.—JOURNEY TO THE WEST AND SOUTH-
WEST OF CATHAY.

VOL. II.

B

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THE
BOOK OF MARCO POLO.

BOOK II.—*CONTINUED.*

PART II.—JOURNEY TO THE WEST AND
SOUTH-WEST OF CATHAY.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HERE BEGINS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR OF CATHAY; AND
FIRST OF THE RIVER PULISANGHIN.

Now you must know that the Emperor sent the aforesaid Messer Marco Polo, who is the author of this whole story, on business of his into the Western Provinces. On that occasion he travelled from Cambaluc a good four months' journey towards the west. And so now I will tell you all that he saw on his travels as he went and returned.

When you leave the City of Cambaluc and have ridden ten miles, you come to a very large river which is called PULISANGHIN, and flows into the ocean, so that merchants with their merchandize ascend it from the sea. Over this River there is a very fine stone bridge, so fine indeed that it has very few equals. The fashion of it is this: it is 300 paces in length, and it must have a good eight paces of width, for ten mounted men can ride across it abreast. It has 24 arches and as many water-mills, and 'tis all of very

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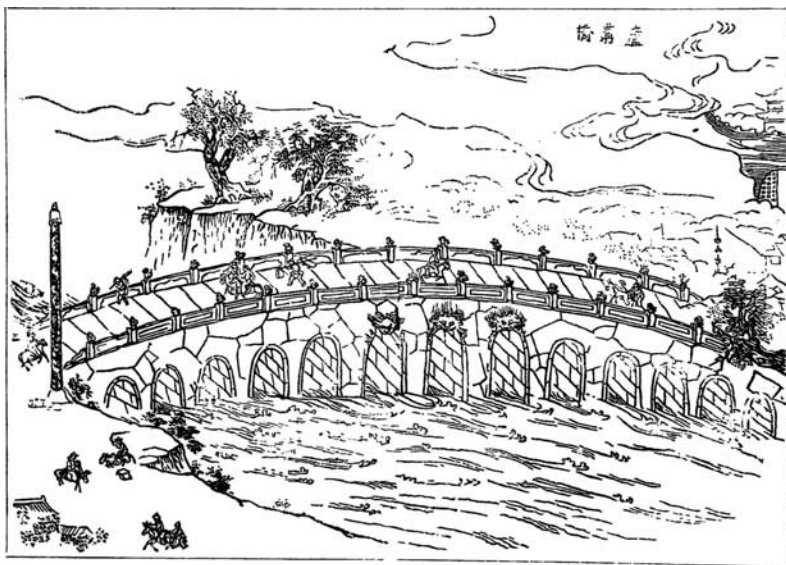
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fine marble, well built and firmly founded. Along the top of the bridge there is on either side a parapet of marble slabs and columns, made in this way. At the beginning of the bridge there is a marble column, and under it a marble lion, so that the column stands upon the lion's loins, whilst on the top of the column there is a second marble lion, both being of great size and beautifully executed sculpture. At the distance of a pace from this column there is another precisely the same, also with its two lions, and the space between them is closed with slabs of grey marble to prevent people from falling over into the water. And thus the columns run from space to space along either side of the bridge, so that altogether it is a beautiful object.¹



The Bridge of Pulisanghin (reduced from a Chinese original).

NOTE 1.—*Pul-i-Sangin*, the name which Marco gives the *River*, means in Persian simply (as Marsden noticed) “The Stone Bridge.” In a very different region the same name often occurs in the history of Timur applied to a certain bridge—I suspect a natural one of which Edrisi speaks—in the country north of Badakhshan over the Waksh branch of the Oxus. And the Turkish admiral Sidi 'Ali, travelling that way from India in the 16th century, applies the name, as it is applied

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here, to the river ; for his journal tells us that beyond Kuláb he crossed “the *River Pulisangin*.”

We may easily suppose, therefore, that near Cambaluc also, the Bridge first, and then the River, came to be known to the Persian-speaking foreigners of the court and city by this name. This supposition is however a little perplexed by the circumstance that Rashiduddin calls the *River* the *Sangin*, and that *Sangkan-Ho* appears from the maps or citations of Martini, Klaproth, Neumann, and Pauthier to have been one of the *Chinese* names of the river. Possibly, however, this *Sangkan* was a name which the Chinese took up from the foreign *Sangin*, and that again merely an abridgment of *Pulisangin*.

The River is that which appears in the maps as the Hwen Ho or Yongting Ho, flowing about 10 miles west of Peking towards the south-east and joining the Pe-Ho at Tientsin ; and the Bridge is that, adjoining the town of Fencheu, which has been known for ages as the *Lu-kyu-Kiao* or Bridge of Lukyu. It is described both by Magaillans and Lecomte, with some curious discrepancies, whilst each affords particulars corroborative of Polo's account of the character of the bridge. The former calls it the finest bridge in China. Lecomte's account says the bridge was the finest he had yet seen. “It is above 170 geometrical paces in length. The arches are small, but the rails or side-walls are made of a hard whitish stone resembling marble. These stones are more than 5 feet long, 3 feet high, and 7 or 8 inches thick ; supported at each end by pilasters adorned with mouldings and bearing the figures of lions. . . . The bridge is paved with great flat stones, so well joined that it is even as a floor.”

Magaillans thinks Polo's memory partially misled him, and that his description applies more correctly to another bridge on the same road, but some distance further west, over the Lieu-li Ho. For the bridge over the Hwen-Ho had really but *thirteen* arches, whereas that on the Lieu-li had, as Polo specifies, twenty-four. The engraving which we give of the Lu-kyu Kiao from a Chinese work confirms this statement, for it shows but thirteen arches. And what Polo says of the navigation of the river is almost conclusive proof that Magaillans is right, and that our traveller's memory confounded the two bridges. For the navigation of the Hwen-Ho, even when its channel is full, is impracticable on account of rapids, whilst the Lieu-li Ho, or “Glass River,” is, as its name implies, smooth and navigable. The road crosses the latter about two leagues from Cho-chau (see next chapter).

The Bridge of Lukyu is mentioned more than once in the history of the conquest of North China by Chinghiz. It was the scene of a notable mutiny of the troops of the *Kin* Dynasty in 1215, which induced Chinghiz to break a treaty just concluded, and led to his capture of Peking.

This bridge was begun according to Klaproth in 1189, and was five years a-building. On the 17th August, 1688, as Magaillans tells us, a

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great flood carried away two arches of the bridge, and the remainder soon fell. The bridge was renewed, but with only nine arches instead of thirteen, as appears from the following note of personal observation with which Dr. Lockhart has favoured me :

“ At 27 *li* from Peking, by the western road leaving the gate of the Chinese city called Kwang-an-măn, after passing the old walled town of Fencheu, you reach the bridge of *Lo-Ku-Kiao*. As it now stands it is a very long bridge of nine arches (real arches) spanning the valley of the Hwan Ho, and surrounded by beautiful scenery. The bridge is built of green sandstone, and has a good balustrade with short square pilasters crowned by small lions. It is in very good repair, and has a ceaseless traffic, being on the road to the coal-mines which supply the city. There is a pavilion at each end of the bridge with inscriptions, the one recording that Kanghi (1662-1723) *built* the bridge, and the other that Kienlung (1736-1796) *repaired* it.” These circumstances are strictly consistent with Magaillans' account of the destruction of the medieval bridge.

(*P. de la Croix*, II. 11, &c. ; *Erskine's Baber*, p. xxxiii. ; *Timour's Institutes*, 70 ; *J. As.* IX. 205 ; *Cathay*, 260 ; *Magaillans*, 14-18, 35 ; *Lecomte* in *Astley*, III. 529 ; *J. As.* ser. 2, tom. i. 97-8 ; *D'Ohsson*, I. 144.)

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF JUJU.

WHEN you leave the Bridge, and ride towards the west, finding all the way excellent hostelries for travellers, with fine vineyards, fields, and gardens, and springs of water, you come after 30 miles to a fine large city called JUJU, where there are many convents, and the people live by trade and manufactures. They weave cloths of silk and gold, and very fine taffetas.¹ Here too there are many hostelries for travellers.²

After riding a mile beyond this city you find two roads, one of which goes west and the other south-east. The westerly road is that through Cathay, and the south-easterly one goes towards the province of Manzi.³

Taking the westerly one through Cathay, and travelling by it for ten days, you find a constant succession of cities

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and boroughs, with numerous thriving villages, all abounding with trade and manufactures, besides the fine fields and vineyards and dwellings of civilized people; but nothing occurs worthy of special mention; and so I will only speak of a kingdom called TAIANFU.

NOTE 1.—The word is *sendaus* (Pauthier), pl. of *sendal*, and in G. T. *sandal*. It does not seem perfectly known what this silk texture was, but as banners were made of it, and linings for richer stuffs, it appears to have been a light material, and is generally rendered *taffetas*. In ‘Richard Cœur de Lion’ we find

“Many a pencil of sykelatoun
And off sendel grene and broun,”

and also *pavilions* of sendel; and in the Anglo-French ballad of the death of William Earl of Salisbury in St. Lewis’s battle on the Nile—

“Le Meister du Temple brace les chivaux
Et le Count Long-Éspée depli les *sandaux*.”

The oriflamme of France was made of *cedal*. Chaucer couples *taffetas* and *sandal*. His ‘Doctor of Physic’

“In sanguin and in perse clad was alle,
Lined with taffata and with sendalle.”

The origin of the word seems also somewhat doubtful. The word *Σενδῆς* occurs in *Constant. Porphyrog. de Ceremoniis* (Bonn, ed. I. 468), and this looks like a transfer of the Arabic *Sändäs* or *Sundus*, which is applied by Bakui to the silk fabrics of Yezd (*Not. et Ext.* II. 469). Reiske thinks this is the origin of the Frank word, and connects its etymology with Sind. Others think that *sendal* and the other forms are modifications of the ancient *Sindon*, and this is Mr. Marsh’s view (see also *Fr.-Michel, Recherches, &c.*, I. 212; *Dict. des Tissus*, II. 171, *seqq.*).

NOTE 2.—Jújú is precisely the name given to this city by Rashiduddin, who notices the vineyards. Juju is CHO-CHAU, just at the distance specified from Peking, viz. 40 miles, and 30 from Pulisangin or Lu Kyu Kiao. The name of the town is printed *Chechow* in a late Report of a journey by Consul Oxenham. He calls it “a large town of the second order, situated on the banks of a small river flowing towards the south-east. It had the appearance of being a place of considerable trade, and the streets were crowded with people.” (*Reports of Journeys in China and Japan, &c.* Presented to Parliament, 1869, p. 9.) The place is called *Jíjū* also in the Persian itinerary given by ‘Izzat Ullah in *J. R. A. S.* VII. 308.

NOTE 3.—“About a *li* from the southern suburbs of this town, the

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great road to Shantung and the south-east diverged, causing an immediate diminution in the number of carts and travellers" (*Oxenham*). This bifurcation of the roads is a notable point in Polo's book. For after following the western road through Cathay, *i.e.* the northern provinces of China, to the borders of Tibet and the Indo-Chinese regions, our traveller will return, whimsically enough, not to the capital to take a fresh departure, but to this bifurcation outside of Chochau, and thence carry us south with him to Manzi, or China south of the Yellow River.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE KINGDOM OF TAIANFU.

AFTER riding then those ten days from the city of Juju, you find yourself in a kingdom called TAIANFU, and the city at which you arrive, which is the capital, is also called Taianfu, a very great and fine city. [But at the end of five days' journey out of those ten, they say there is a city unusually large and handsome called ACBALUC, whereat terminate in this direction the hunting preserves of the Emperor, within which no one dares to sport except the Emperor and his family, and those who are on the books of the Grand Falconer. Beyond this limit any one is at liberty to sport, if he be a gentleman. The Great Kaan, however, scarcely ever went hunting in this direction, and hence the game had increased and multiplied to such an extent, particularly the hares, that all the crops of the Province were destroyed. The Great Kaan being informed of this, proceeded thither with all his Court, and the game that was taken was past counting.]¹

Taianfu² is a place of great trade and great industry, for here they manufacture a large quantity of the most necessary equipments for the army of the Emperor. There grow here many excellent vines, supplying great plenty of wine; and in all Cathay this is the only place where wine is produced. It is carried hence all over the country.³

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There is also a great deal of silk here, for the people have great quantities of mulberry-trees and silkworms.

From this city of Taianfu you ride westward again for seven days through fine districts with plenty of towns and boroughs, all enjoying much trade, and practising various kinds of industry. Out of these districts go forth not a few great merchants, who travel to India and other foreign regions, buying and selling and getting gain. After those seven days' journey you arrive at a city called PIANFU, a large and important place, with a number of traders living by commerce and industry. It is a place too where silk is largely produced.⁴

So we will leave it and tell you of a great city called Cachanfu. But stay—first let us tell you about the noble castle called Caichu.

NOTE 1.—Marsden translates the commencement of this passage, which is peculiar to Ramusio, and runs "*E in capo di cinque giornate delle predette dieci,*" by the words "At the end of five days' journey beyond the ten," but this is clearly wrong.* The place best suiting in position, as halfway between Chochau and Thai-yuanfu, would be CHINGTINGFU, and I have little doubt that this is the place intended. The title of *Ak-Baligh* in Turki, or *Chaghan Balghassun* in Mongol, meaning "White City," was applied by the Tartars to Royal Residences; and possibly Chingtingfu may have had such a claim, for I observe in the *Annales de la Prop. de la Foi* (xxxiii. 387) that in 1862 the Chinese Government granted to the R. C. Vicar-Apostolic of Pecheli, the ruined *Imperial Palace* at Chingtingfu for his cathedral and other mission establishments. Moreover, as a matter of fact, Rashiduddin's account of Chinghiz's campaign in northern China in 1214, speaks of the city of "Chaghan Balghassun which the Chinese call *Jintzinfu*." This is almost exactly the way in which the name of Chingtingfu is represented in 'Izzat Ullah's Persian Itinerary (*Jigdzinfu*, evidently a clerical error for *Jingdzinfu*), so I think there can be little doubt that Chingtingfu is the place intended. The city is described by Consul Oxenham as being now in a decayed and dilapidated condition, consisting of only two long streets crossing at right angles. It is noted for the manufacture of images of Buddha from Shansi iron. (*Consular Reports*, p. 10; *Erdmann*, 331.)

* And I see Ritter understood the passage as I do (IV. 515).

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NOTE 2.—Tainfu is, as Magaillans pointed out, THAIYUAN-FU, the capital of the Province of Shansi, and Shansi is the “Kingdom.” The city was however the capital of the great Thang dynasty for a time in the 8th century, and is probably the *Tajah* or *Taiunah* of old Arab writers. The Rev. Mr. Williamson, who has visited it recently, speaks of it as a very pleasant city at the north end of a most fertile valley. It was a residence, he says, also of the Ming princes, and is laid out in Peking fashion. There is an Imperial factory of artillery, matchlocks, &c.; and fine carpets like those of Turkey are also manufactured (*Cathay*, xcvi, cxiii, cxiv.; *Rennie*, II. 265; *Notes on North China* in *J. N. C. B. of R. A. S.* for 1866, p. 46-7). The district is much noted for cutlery and hardware, iron as well as coal being abundantly produced in Shansi. Apparently the present Birmingham of the province is a town called Hwai-lu, about 20 miles west of Chingting-fu. (*Oxenham*, u. s. 11; *Klaproth* in *J. As.* ser. 2, tom. i. 100; *Izzat Ullah's Pers. Itin.* in *J. R. A. S.* VII. 307).

NOTE 3.—Martini observes that the grapes in Shansi were very abundant and the best in China. The Chinese used them only as raisins, but wine was made there for the use of the Missions. Klaproth however tells us that the wine of Thaiyuan-fu was celebrated in the days of the Thang dynasty, and used to be sent in tribute to the Emperors. Under the Mongols the use of this wine spread greatly. The founder of the Ming accepted the offering of wine of the vine from Thaiyuan in 1373, but prohibited its being presented again (*J. As.* u. s.).

NOTE 4.—Pianfu is undoubtedly, as Magaillans again notices, P'INGYANG-FU. It is the *Bikan* of Shah Rukh's ambassadors. It is said to have been the residence of the primitive and mythical Chinese Emperor Yao. A great college for the education of the Mongols was instituted at P'ing-yang by Yeliu Chutsai, the enlightened Minister of Okkodai Kaan. The city suffered much from the Taeping rebels, but it is reviving. It is now noted for its large paper factories. (*Cathay*, ccxi.; *Ritter*, IV. 516; *D'Ohsson*, II. 70; *Williamson*, u. s.)

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CONCERNING THE CASTLE OF CAICHU.

ON leaving Pianfu you ride two days westward, and come to the noble castle of CAICHU, which was built in time past by a king of that country, whom they used to call the GOLDEN KING, and who had there a great and beautiful

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palace. There is a great hall of this palace, in which are pourtrayed all the ancient kings of the country, done in gold and other fine colours, and a very fine sight they make. Each king in succession as he reigned added to those pictures.¹

[This Golden King was a great and potent Prince, and during his stay at this place there used to be in his service none but beautiful girls, of whom he had a great number in his Court. When he went to take the air about the Fortress, these girls used to draw him about in a little carriage which they could easily move, and they would also be in attendance on the King for everything pertaining to his convenience or pleasure.²]

Now I will tell you a pretty passage that befel between this Golden King and Prester John, as it was related by the people of the Castle.

It came to pass, as they told the tale, that this Golden King was at war with Prester John. And the King held a position so strong that Prester John was not able to get at him or to do him any scathe; wherefore he was in great wrath. So seventeen gallants belonging to Prester John's Court came to him in a body and said that, an he would, they were ready to bring him the Golden King alive. His answer was that he desired nothing better, and would be much bounden to them if they would do so.

So when they had taken leave of their Lord and Master Prester John, they set off together, this goodly company of gallants, and went to the Golden King, and presented themselves before him, saying that they had come from foreign parts to enter his service. And he answered by telling them that they were right welcome, and that he was glad to have their service, never imagining that they had any ill intent. And so these mischievous squires took service with the Golden King; and served him so well that he grew to love them dearly.

And when they had abode with that King nearly two