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THE BAD CUSTOMS OF THE PROVINCE OF CAMUL \neq MARCO POLO
and we shall speak to you of other cities¹ which are towards the plough-beam
close to the edge of this desert.

·59·

HERE HE TELLS OF THE PROVINCE OF CAMUL. Camul is a province which
 used to be² a kingdom by itself, in the great province of Tangut. There are
 towns and villages enough under it, and the chief town is called Camul
 like the province. And the province is towards the plough-beam between two deserts, for
 on the one side is the very great desert of Lop of which we have spoken above and on the
 other is a little desert of three days march in length. [24d] And the people of that
 province are all idolaters like the others narrated above, and have a language for them-
 selves. And they live on the fruit of the land; for they have things to eat and to
 drink enough, both for themselves and they give and sell them to the wayfarers who pass
 that way, to whom they will and as they please, and to merchants who carry them to other
 places. And they are men of very cheerful looks and all greatly given to amusement, for
 they are devoted to nothing else but the playing of instruments and singing and
 dancing and briefly in taking great bodily enjoyment. They delight also in reading and
 writing after their manner. And I tell you that, led astray from of old by their idols, these
 people have such a custom. If a stranger passes through the region and comes to him to his
 house to lodge, he is too much delighted at it, and receives him with great joy, and
 labours to do everything to please. And he tells his wife, daughters, sisters, and other
 relations to do all that the stranger wishes more than for him; and he leaves his house
 and his wife for the stranger, and goes immediately to do his work and stays two days
 or three on the farm or elsewhere, where he will. And from there they send all that their
 guests need (none the less with payment for them); nor do they ever return home while the
 stranger stays there. And the stranger stays with his wife in the house and does as he
 likes and lies with her in a bed just as if she were his wife, and they continue in
 great enjoyment. And in this way it can be said that all those of this city and province
 aforesaid of Camul are shamed by their wives as you have heard. But I tell you that
 they do not hold it as a shame to them but regard this as great honour and glory,
 because of the general custom which is in all that province; and very pleasing to their idols,
 when they give so good a reception to wayfarers in need of rest, and that for this reason all their
 goods, children, and wealth are multiplied and kept from all dangers, and all things succeed
 for them with the greatest happiness. And the women are very fair and gay and very
 wanton and most obedient to all that their husbands order, and greatly enjoy this custom.
 Now it happened one day that at the time when Mongu the great Kaan, fifth general

¹ LT: *de tribus terris* perhaps mistaking TA: *daltre terre*

² V: *fo ede* "was and is" (?)