

A Note on Translation, Transliteration, Terminology, and Teaching

When translating poetry from Sinhala and Tamil, I strive to render the original verses into English as literally as possible while still preserving intelligibility. In many instances, I have added punctuation to clarify meaning. In others, I have minimized these interventions in the imagistic interest of the poetics. Foreign terms in italics are transliterated with diacritical marks. Names of interviewees are rendered phonetically into English. For place names or major landmarks like mountains or rivers, as well as names of gods and other famous personages, I use conventional English spellings, allowing readers to better cross-reference these. Many names for the mountain appear in the pages that follow, including Sumanakuta or Samantakuta from Pali, Sri Pada or Samanala from Sinhala, Samanai or Sivanolipadamalai from Tamil, al-Rahun from Arabic, Adam's Peak from English, etc. In my own prose, I mostly use the term "the Peak." This is not only the pithiest option, but is also meant to avoid endorsement of any one sectarian affiliation at this plural site. For those interested in teaching with this book, I have designed an accompanying module of course content, which is hosted by the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies: <https://www.aishl.org/resources/teaching-about-sri-lanka/teaching-about-adams-peak/>. This includes a virtual pilgrimage comprising photographs from my fieldwork, which serves as a good introduction to the Peak. It is an especially useful way to orient students when only teaching selections from the book.

