

CHAPTER VI.

HSÜAN-CHUANG.

1. OUTWARD JOURNEY.

The greatest of all the Chinese pilgrims and one of the greatest travellers of all times was the learned HSÜAN-CHUANG 玄奘, who, during the T'ang dynasty, 629—645 A. D., accomplished his brilliant journey through Central Asia and the Ts'ung-ling mountains to India, and thence again through the same mountains and eastwards back to China. The result of his experiences and other material he had collected was the *Hsi-yü-chi* or »Records of the Western Countries». We are only concerned with the parts of his narrative where the Ts'ung-ling mountains and the regions particularly belonging to them are described. On his outward journey he only skirted the northern parts of our system, on his homeward march he crossed its central parts. I will quote the passages of his narrative where he mentions our system and we shall see to what conclusions his information leads.

Coming from *Bakhuān* or Aksu and continuing westwards he says:¹

Après avoir fait environ trois cents li au nord-ouest de ce royaume, il traversa un désert pierreux, et arriva à une montagne de glace, qui est située au nord des monts *Tsong-ling*. Les eaux des plateaux coulent en général vers l'est. Les montagnes et les vallées sont couvertes de monceaux de neige; on y voit de la glace au printemps et en été. Quoiqu'elle fonde de temps à autre, elle ne tarde pas à se reformer de nouveau. Les chemins que l'on traverse sont difficiles et dangereux; un vent froid souffle avec violence, et l'on est souvent en butte à la férocité des dragons qui attaquent les voyageurs... Après avoir fait environ quatre cents li à travers les montagnes, il arriva à un grand lac appelé *Thsing-tchi*. Il a environ mille li de tour. Il est allongé de l'est à l'ouest, et resserré du sud au nord. De tous côtés, il est entouré de montagnes;...

The great mountains forming the northern part of the Ts'ung-ling, VIVIEN DE SAINT-MARTIN identifies with the snowy mountains called Muzur-ula by the Mongolians, which is

¹ Voyages des pèlerins bouddhistes. II. — Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales, traduits du sanscrit en chinois, en l'an 648, par Hiouen-thsang et du chinois en français par M. STANISLAS JULIEN. Tome II, Paris MDCCCLVII, p. 11 et seq. — I prefer to quote the translation of Stanislas Julien, as being the classical work on Hsüan-chuang. VINCENT A. SMITH is no doubt right in saying: »M. Stanislas Julien's great work... has never been superceded.» But the commentary both in this work and in Beal is now out of date. — The Early History of India, Oxford 1914, p. 24. — M. A. STEIN seems also to prefer St. Julien's translation, which, at least in certain details, »appears more accurate». — Ancient Khotan, p. 42, note 6. Cf. also WATTERS, On Yuan Chwang's travels in India, Vol. I, II; in: Oriental Translation Fund, New series, Vol. XIV, XV, London 1904 f.

The transcriptions of the characters 玄奘 are Hsüan-chuang (according to Wade's system), Hüan-chuang, Hüan-ts'ang, Hiouen-thsang. Watters proposes Yüan-chuang, because he believes that the original characters were 元奘 (loc. cit., p. 6). A. H.