

B.F.H. his palace. A conclave of astrologers and priests was assembled to interpret the dream, and they unanimously referred the personage to Budha, of whom a golden image, as before mentioned, had already, 121 B.C., reached the country; and a mission was forthwith deputed to the Great Yuchi and to India for the purpose of studying the doctrine. The mission returned, after an absence of eleven years, with a number of Buddhist priests and books. These last were translated about 76 A.D., and thus the doctrine of Budha, already firmly established in Tokháristán and the adjoining countries, was now fairly introduced into China. It was eagerly adopted, and spread rapidly, so that in Loyang alone there were in 350 A.D. forty-two richly embellished pagodas, besides others of inferior note.

The discipline of the monks, however, was yet very imperfect; a source of sorrow to the devout disciples of the great teacher, and a cause of trouble to those charged with the maintenance of public order. To remedy these evils, one of the former class, Chi Fah Hian, set out on a pilgrimage to India to study in its native seat the law of which he was an enthusiastic follower. About the same time the Emperor, Yao Hing, 397-415 A.D., sent an army to Koutche=Kúchá, a petty principality at the foot of the mountains, and to the north-west of Lake Lob, to fetch one Kumárajivá, a learned Indian priest residing there, to instruct the native priesthood in the right way.

P. Kúchá, in early times, appears to have been the site of a large Buddhist monastery. I have been informed of the existence there at the present day of very extensive ruins, originally built of great blocks of dressed and sculptured stone. A series of chambers or galleries is said to be excavated in a hill hard by, and their interior is described as decorated with a rich variety of paintings, remarkable alike for the superiority of their execution, and the freshness of their colours. Some figures, too, are mentioned as carved on the rocks in the vicinity, and numerous sculptured fragments are found about the ruins; whilst tales are told of the marvellous size and rare excellence of the gems that are occasionally picked up amongst the *debris*.

One of these, described as '*áin-ul-harr*, or "cat's eye," the size of a hen's egg, and of a lustre equal to that of a lamp in a dark room, is said to have been found here some years ago by a poor shepherd who was murdered for the possession of the gem through the instrumentality of a China merchant by whom the ill-gotten treasure was sold to the Emperor for a fabulous sum. The unscrupulous trader, however, as the story goes, did not long enjoy his wealth; for on his return journey homeward, to spend the rest of his days in the thus ill-purchased ease, he was overtaken by a whirlwind in the passage of the desert of Gobi, and overwhelmed in a storm of sand, amidst the wild cries, shouts, and jeering laughter of the evil spirits that haunt this dread region, and, by such convulsions of the elements they rule over, flourish upon the destruction of their victims.

B.F.H. Fah Hian set out on his journey in 400 A.D., and passed from the frontier town of Chang Yeh in Kansu to Tun Wáng, the Sackin of Marco Polo, in Tangut. From this he crossed the desert of Gobi to Shenshen in seventeen days, and thence in fifteen days, through the country of the Uighúr, he came to Khutan, where he arrived in deplorable plight, after experiencing inconceivable hardships and dangers from the difficulties of the roads and rivers. At Khutan he met an hospitable reception, and found a highly flourishing Buddhist community, with ten thousand priests, many magnificent temples, commodious monasteries, and a general devotion to the rites of the religion.

With these two instances of Kúchá on the north and Khutan on the south, we may fairly understand that the Budha doctrine here found a congenial soil, took firm root, and made a rapid growth. It was not so, however, further to the east. Fah Hian returned from India by way of Ceylon and Java in 415 A.D., after an absence of fifteen years. A few years later, in 420 A.D., the Tsin dynasty was overthrown by that of the northern Wei Tartar, and during the first years of their