

rule Buddhism was persecuted, and images and temples of the faith prohibited. These restrictions, however, were relaxed in 451 A.D., and one temple was allowed in each city, with permission for forty or fifty of its people to become priests. But they were placed under the special supervision of the police, since it had become a too frequent occurrence for criminals to assume the priestly garb in order to escape the punishment of their offences; and for agitators under its protecting cloak the more conveniently to prosecute their seditious schemes. The fresh impetus now acquired by the new doctrine aroused the hostility of the followers of the system of Confucius, which had been from of old the orthodox religion of the land, and many attempts were made to banish it; but, though persecuted and patronized by turns, Buddhism continued slowly and steadily to spread throughout the Wei kingdom, and finally became established with an endurance commensurate with its very gradual growth. In 518 A.D. Tai Han, Empress Dowager of the Great Wei, commissioned Sung Yun, a native of Tan Wang in Little Tibet, to proceed to India for books of the Budha doctrine; and he returned after an absence of three years with 175 volumes. But the religion had at this time become corrupted by the use of charms and magic, an innovation that found favour mostly in the camps of the ignorant Tartar nomads, and the new importation effected apparently but little amelioration.

B.F.H.

Consequently, about a century later, 629 A.D., in the reign of Tae Tsung, second Emperor of the Tang dynasty, 620 to 904 A.D., another celebrated pilgrim set out from China to seek the true and pure doctrine in India. This was Hiouen Thsang. He set out from Liang Cheu by the old caravan route through Khámil, Turfán, and Karáshahr to Aksú. Here he crossed the Múz-art—"glacier pass" to Lake Isigh Kol, and thence went on to Taráz—Turkistán, and Shásh—Táshkand, Samarcand, and Balkh. From this he continued his way by Bámyán, and Lampáka—Lamghán or Lughmán into India, whence, after an absence of sixteen years, he returned to his home by the outward route of Fah Hian through Khutan.

Whilst the Buddhist doctrine, already fast decaying in India, was thus working its way to a new growth in China, the Christian religion, as represented by the Nestorian Church, was steadily advancing across the continent from the west. The activity and zeal of the early missionaries had already carried the Word far eastwards, and, so early as the fifth and sixth centuries, they had established bishoprics at Herat, Marv, and Samarcand; later at Yarkand, and finally in China itself. That of Yarkand still flourished in 1260 A.D., or 1272 A.D., when Marco Polo visited the country, and probably fell at the same time as the bishopric of Almalik or Almáligh in 1339-40 A.D., under the bigoted zeal of the usurper 'Ali Sultan, as will be noted hereafter.

Y.C.

The Chinese rule established over this region up to Bolor in 94 A.D., continued without interruption under Imperial Governors at the cities of Peshbalik or Beshbaligh = "The five towns," Karáshahr, Káshghar, and Khutan, until the decline of the Thang dynasty in the latter part of the ninth century when, owing to the internal divisions of the empire on the one hand, and the pressure of the conquering Arabs on the other, the border States of its distant western province gradually fell away, and became the possessions of petty local Chiefs who, to maintain the semblance of their assumed independence, preyed upon each other until they were in turn themselves swallowed up by more powerful enemies.

P.

Khutan, however, favoured perhaps by its position, appears to have maintained a more continuous communication with China than the other States of this frontier province, and we read of Envoys with tribute going to the Imperial capital through successive centuries almost up to the period of the recovery of the ancient frontier of the empire.

In the reign of Wooti, of the Han dynasty, 140-87 B.C., Chinese officers were first sent to Khutan, whose King resided in the western town, called Changan, which contained 2,300 families, or 19,300 souls, and had an army of 2,400 men.

R.K.

In the seventh year of Hian-ti, 202 A.D., Khutan sent caparisoned elephants as tribute. And in the following century, when China was divided into three