

that even thus the rich storehouse of notices on ancient Khotan which the Chinese Annals and similar historical works contain is still far from being exhausted ⁴.

Tibetan
notices of
Khotan.

The Tibetan notices of Khotan history bear a very different character. They are contained in four texts forming part of the great canonical collections of Tibetan Buddhism, and claiming to contain Buddha's predictions concerning events which were to take place in Li-yul or Khotan. The text described as 'The Annals of Li-yul' seems the largest and most important among these. To Mr. W. W. Rockhill, scholar and diplomatist, belongs the merit of having first called attention to these texts, and of having furnished systematically arranged abstract translations from them in his *Life of the Buddha* ⁵. Mr. Rockhill's analysis makes it appear very probable that they are translations or adaptations from works written in the language of Khotan. That these works reproduced traditions, legendary or historical, then current in Khotan becomes evident from the substantial agreement which the stories related in the Tibetan texts about the foundation of the Khotan kingdom, about the origin of various Buddhist sanctuaries, &c., show with the corresponding legends recorded by Hsüan-tsang.

Sources of
Tibetan
notices.

There is no definite indication of the date when the translations were made or the original texts composed. Yet it seems probable that the latter could not have differed much in character and contents from those Khotan chronicles to which Hsüan-tsang alludes, and from which his accounts of various ancient shrines and traditions are likely to have been borrowed directly or indirectly. The Tibetan texts may thus claim the merit of having preserved for us at least a reflex of what traditional records Khotan itself possessed during the centuries immediately preceding the Muhammadan era. But it does not require a prolonged inquiry to realize that the information supplied by them is, notwithstanding its indigenous origin, greatly inferior in historical value to that of our Chinese sources. A perusal of Mr. Rockhill's extracts shows that, apart from the legendary traditions recorded about the origin of the Khotan dynasty and people, and about that of certain prominent Buddhist shrines, the 'Annals of Li-yul' acquaint us only with a long string of royal names diversified by occasional reference to pious foundations and matters of doctrine. The same holds good also of the information given about the last twenty-eight kings who are not specified by Mr. Rockhill, but whose names will be found in the supplementary extracts which Mr. F. W. Thomas, the learned librarian of the India Office, has been kind enough to place at my disposal ⁶.

Tibetan list
of Khotan
kings.

In the present state of our knowledge it is difficult to form any definite view as to the critical value to be attached to this long traditional list of kings or to any specific part of it. Leaving aside the legendary founder of the dynasty, who is represented as a son of King Aśoka, no chronological indications are furnished to us. None of the royal names, which are all Indian and formed with *Vijaya-* as their first part, has so far been found on coins or in the ancient documents discovered. If the latter portion of the list is authentic the reigns specified in it must partly at least fall within the period of the T'ang dynasty, for which the Chinese Annals give us relatively ample information about the rulers of Khotan. The repeated references made to dynastic relations with China and to Chinese ministers at Khotan seem to confirm

⁴ Compare Dr. Bushell's remark in Hoernle, *Report on C.-A. antiquities*, ii. Supplem. p. 3.

⁵ See Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 230-48.

The texts extracted are: (1) 'The Annals of Li-yul', from the *Tanjur*, vol. xciv (u), foll. 426-44; (2) 'The Prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) of Li-yul', *ibid.* foll. 420-5; (3) 'The prediction of the Arhat Saṅghavardhana', *ib.* foll. 412-20; (iv) 'The Gośṛṅga Vyākaraṇa' from the *Kanjur*,

vol. xxx, foll. 336-54. In the case of the last-named text, which seems to form a kind of 'Māhātmya' or legendary of the sacred site of Gośṛṅga (Kohmārī) to be discussed below (chap. viii. sec. i; comp. S. Lévi, *Notes Chinoises sur l'Inde*, iv. p. 39), the colophon distinctly records that it 'was translated into Tibetan from the language of Li-yul'; see *Life of the Buddha*, p. 231.

⁶ Compare, for these extracts, Appendix E.