

of king. At that time the son of the emperor of the eastern region (i.e. China), having been exiled, was dwelling upon the eastern frontier of the same territory (of Khotan). Urged by the people under him he also assumed the position of king.

Some time passed before the two colonies came into contact⁴. One day the two kings, while hunting, met each other in a desert. Having questioned each other as to their descent, they came to dispute about the supremacy. After angry speeches, they were about to resort to arms, when upon some one's representation they agreed each to return to his own place and to meet again in battle upon an appointed day. Having turned back, each engaged in training his warriors. Upon the appointed day the two forces were arrayed face to face. When the attack had been sounded at break of day, the western king was defeated; pursued northward, he was caught and beheaded⁵.

The eastern king profiting by his victory, collected the scattered fugitives, transferred his residence to the middle of the territory and fortified it with walls. But having no (surveyed) site he feared that his plan might not succeed. When he had issued a proclamation calling for a surveyor, there appeared a heretic clothed in ashes who carried a great calabash full of water on his shoulder, and claimed to know the right method of surveying. He then walked round with the water of his calabash running out until he had completed an immense circle, whereupon he rapidly disappeared. Following the traces of the water the king laid the foundations of a city and soon accomplished his plan. This became the capital of the kingdom, and it is here, says Hsüan-tsang, that 'the ruler actually resides with his court. Though the walls be not of a great height, it would be difficult to take it by assault. From ancient times to the present day nobody has ever been able to conquer it'.

Foundation
of capital.

The king built more towns, firmly established his rule and secured peace to the people, but had arrived at extreme old age without obtaining an heir. Fearing the extinction of his line he went to the temple of Vaiśravaṇa and fervently prayed for a son. Thereupon the head of the god's statue opened at the top, and there came forth a young boy. The king took him and returned with him to the palace; but while the kingdom rejoiced, the child would not drink milk and the king feared for its life. So he returned to the temple and asked the god for means to nourish the child. Then the earth in front of the statue suddenly swelled up into a shape resembling a woman's breast and the divine child drank from it eagerly. Arriving at adult age, he shed glory on his ancestors by his wisdom and courage and extended far the influence of his laws. He raised a temple in honour of Vaiśravaṇa as his ancestor. 'From that time to the present day', thus Hsüan-tsang concludes his account, 'the kings of Khotan have succeeded in regular order, have transmitted to each other the royal power, and have ruled without interruption. That is the reason why the god's temple to this day is full of rare and precious objects and is visited constantly to receive worship and offerings. From the first king having been nourished by a breast issued from the earth (*ku-stana*), the kingdom has derived its name.'

Ku-stana,
'the breast
of the earth'.

Before we proceed to compare the tradition here presented with the version contained in the Tibetan text, attention may be drawn to the different elements which can clearly be distinguished in the story. That part of it which relates to the miraculous birth and nourishment of Kustana, the legendary founder of the dynasty, is but an instance of that widely spread class of folklore which, based upon 'popular etymology' of a local name, provides a territory or town with its eponymous hero and with appropriately invented legends concerning

'Popular
etymology'
of *Ku-stana*.

⁴ Thus Rémusat, *Ville de Khotan*, p. 38.

⁵ Thus Rémusat, loc. cit., p. 38, and Beal, loc. cit., p. 310.