

## SECTION V.—BUDDHIST SITES DESCRIBED BY HSÜAN-TSANG

We must feel grateful to Hsüan-tsang for having left us unusually full descriptions of various places of Buddhist worship outside the capital, not only on account of their intrinsic interest for the *topographia sacra* and the folklore of Khotan, but also because they furnish evidence which enables us to test and, as we shall see, to confirm the location of the capital at Yōtkan. The positions of these sacred places is invariably indicated by distances and bearings from the capital. Hence I was naturally led to make my search for them in close connexion with my investigation of the latter site, and it is fitting that I should record the results in this place.

The nearest among these sanctuaries was the convent of *So-mo-jê* 娑摩若, with a Stūpa a hundred feet high in its centre, which the pilgrim visited at a distance of 5 or 6 li (a little over a mile) to the west of the royal city<sup>1</sup>. This is the distance indicated by Rémusat's and Beal's versions, whereas Julien's translation, either by mistake or owing to a variant, gives it as 50 or 60 li. The legend as told by Hsüan-tsang distinctly favours the nearer location. It relates that at one time an Arhat coming from a distant foreign land had taken up his abode there in the middle of a wood. The miraculous light spread around by his spiritual power was noticed by the king as he stopped at night in a double-storied pavilion of his palace. Having been informed of its cause the king proceeded to the holy man and respectfully invited him into the palace. On the Śramaṇa refusing to leave the wood, the king full of reverence built a convent for him and a Stūpa. When afterwards the king had procured a quantity of sacred relics and regretted not to have been able to insert them under the Stūpa, the Arhat directed him to have the precious objects enclosed successively in receptacles of gold, silver, copper, and stone. When this had been done and the relics had been transported by the king and his chief officers on an ornamented car to the convent,<sup>2</sup> the Arhat raised the Stūpa on the palm of his hand and held it while the king's workmen dug a place for the sacred deposit. Then on the work being accomplished the Arhat once more lowered the Stūpa to its original position without any damage<sup>3</sup>.

Legend of  
*So-mo-jê*  
convent.

That the Stūpa which had been thus uplifted and replaced in so miraculous a fashion was an object of special veneration in Khotan is evident also from the reference made to it in the 'Annals of Li-yul'. These tell us of king Vijayavīrya, the eighth successor of Vijayasambhava under whom Buddhism was believed to have been first introduced: 'One day while looking out of Srog-mkhar<sup>3a</sup> he perceived a light brilliant as gold and silver at the spot where now stands the Hgum-stir Caitya. When the king learned that the Buddha had foretold that at that spot a Vihāra would be built, he called to his presence the Buddhist Buddhādūta, and having made him his spiritual adviser, ordered him to direct the building of the Hgum-stir Vihāra<sup>4</sup>.' I think that, notwithstanding the somewhat different form in which the legend as to the origin of the shrine is here told, it can scarcely be doubted that the same locality is intended and that Buddhādūta corresponds to Hsüan-tsang's Arhat.

Tibetan  
form of  
legend.

<sup>1</sup> See *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 235 sqq.; *Si-yu-ki*, ii. pp. 316 sq.; Rémusat, *Ville de Khotan*, pp. 50 sqq. [Also Watters, ii. p. 297, has 'five or six li'.]

<sup>2</sup> For sculptural representations of such solemn relic depositions, comp. Foucher, *L'Art du Gandhāra*, i. pp. 592 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> This legend and a somewhat similar one told by Hsüan-tsang of a Stūpa near Kapiśa (*Mémoires*, i. pp. 45 sq.;

*Si-yu-ki*, i. p. 60) have been discussed by M. Foucher, *L'Art du Gandhāra*, i. p. 52, with reference to the light they throw on the purpose of Stūpa construction.

<sup>3a</sup> [*Srog-mkhar*, as Mr. Thomas informs me, means literally 'Life-fort'.]

<sup>4</sup> See Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, p. 238.