

such a precious burden. Here was clearly a reference to the twenty pony-loads of sacred Buddhist texts which the historical pilgrim managed to bring safely with him from India to China, and also to the great risks to which they had necessarily been exposed in crossing the many rivers and mountain torrents on the long journey—all facts duly related in his authentic *Life*.⁴ But the question remained whether the Tao-shih would read aright the obvious lesson here illustrated and be willing to acquire spiritual merit by letting me take back to India some of the ancient manuscripts which chance had placed in his keeping.

⁴ Cf. Julien, *Vie*, pp. 263, 275, 296; Beal, *Life*, pp. 192, 200, 214. An incident, such as may, perhaps, be supposed to have given rise to the story illustrated by the scene described above, can be found in what the *Life* of Hsüan-tsang relates of his crossing the Indus at Wu-to-chia-han-ch'a (Skr. Udabhāṇḍa, the present Ūnd; see Stein, *Rājat*, ii. p. 338,

on v. 152-5), when 'fifty manuscript copies of Sūtras' were lost from the boat to which the 'Master of the Law' had entrusted the sacred books and other precious acquisitions.

A similar risk was encountered by the pious traveller in the Tangi-tar gorge, where his elephant was drowned, through the adventure discussed above, p. 79.