

Shrine and
legend of
P'o-ch'ieh-i.

P'o-ch'ieh-i contained a shrine with a miraculous statue of Buddha, the legend of which is told at length both in the *Hsi-yü-chi* and in Hsüan-tsang's 'Life', as gathered 'from ancient tradition'. Once the pupil of an Arhat, living in Kashmîr, when dangerously ill, asked for a cake of rice of a peculiar sort⁶. His saintly teacher obtained this for him from Kustana or Khotan, whereupon the Śrāmaṇera, who much relished the dish, prayed to be reborn in that country. Having obtained his wish and become king of Khotan in his new birth, he crossed the snowy mountains and attacked Kashmîr. A battle between him and the ruler of Kashmîr was averted by the Arhat who, showing to the Khotan chief the clothes he had worn of yore as a Buddhist disciple, revealed to him his previous existence and induced him to desist from his attack. Before retiring to Khotan the king presented himself before the Buddha statue to which he had paid worship in his former birth, and took it homewards with his army. When the statue arrived at P'o-ch'ieh-i it refused to be moved further. Thereupon the king constructed a convent around the statue and placed upon its head his own diadem adorned with precious stones. This diadem, ever spreading a brilliant light, was still seen by Hsüan-tsang on the head of the statue. The latter is described as being 'seven feet high and marked with all the distinguishing signs of beauty', and its appearance as 'imposing and dignified'⁷.

Traditions
indicated by
legend.

This legend is of interest in several respects. It proves that Kashmîr was credited with having supplied to Khotan statuary of ancient date, a fact throwing light on the channel, or one of the channels, through which Khotan art derived its unmistakable connexion with the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra. It is the only trace we possess of a Khotan tradition pointing to an invasion of Kashmîr across the great mountain barrier of the Karakorum. Legendary as this tradition may be, it deserves to be noted in view of the political connexion between the two territories which has been supposed to have existed at an early historical period⁸. Topographical interest, too, attaches to the legend; for it seems to indicate that Piälma was believed to have already in ancient times marked the frontier of Khotan for those coming from the west or south. The easiest route and, in fact, the only one frequented by caravans, from Khotan to the Karakorum Passes and Ladāk leads via Piälma and Zanguya to Sanju. From there the Upper Kara-kāsh Valley is gained over the Sanju Dawān, the direct route through the difficult gorge formed by the middle course of the Kara-kāsh river being quite impassable except in the depth of winter, and then only for men and possibly unladen animals⁹.

Position of
Hsüan-
tsang's
shrine at
P'o-ch'ieh-i.

As to the position of the convent which contained the miraculous statue from Kashmîr I have no definite opinion to offer; I regret not to have made inquiries while passing through Piälma for any modern shrines in the vicinity. These, in view of the well-established tenacity of local worship proved for the Khotan region, might perhaps furnish some clue. The location of the Vihāra at the ruin of Karakîr-Tim, of course, readily suggests itself. The distance of the latter from the site of the old capital of Khotan would accurately agree with Hsüan-tsang's estimate of 300 li; the isolated position of the ruin might find a natural explanation in the traditional belief of a miracle which fixed the statue at a particular spot of

⁶ Julien translates 'riz sur' in *Mémoires*, ii. p. 231; 'riz imprégné de vinaigre' in *Vie de Hiouen-Tsang*, p. 280. Beal, ii. p. 314, speaks of a 'cake of sown rice,' whatever that may mean; in *Life*, p. 204, he suggests the rendering 'sour meal'. Rémusat, *Ville de Khotan*, p. 46, has 'riz fermenté'. Some particular delicacy of Khotan must be meant.

⁷ See *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 230 sqq.; *Si-yu-ki*, transl. Beal, ii. pp. 314 sq.; *Vie de Hiouen-Tsang*, pp. 279 sqq. The

Si-yu-ki describes the statue as seated, the *Vie* as standing. But Beal, *Life*, p. 204, has 'sitting figure'.

⁸ See Dr. Hoernle's hypotheses in *J.A.S.B.*, 1899, Extra No. 1, pp. 13 sq.

⁹ There is a more southern route from Khotan to Sanju, followed by Grombchevski in 1895, via Ujāt, Pujiya and Duwa; but it is longer and certainly not as easy as the regular caravan route via Piälma.