

use cannot have been general, since it is not to be found in the *Hsi yü wen chien lu*, the Chinese description of the Western Countries, published in 1777, though the various towns of the Khotan territory are there specified in some detail²⁴. In Khotan itself the name Ilchi is now rarely heard. The designation 'Khotan' is generally applied *κατ' ἐξοχήν* to the chief town of the whole oasis, in accordance with a usage which finds its parallel in many territories of Central Asia. We may in this case safely assume it to be of very early date, since neither the Chinese Annals nor any of the old travellers, from Fa-hsien onwards, ever record any other name for the capital than Khotan²⁵.

SECTION II.—THE LEGENDARY TRADITIONS OF KHOTAN

Historical records of Khotan begin from the period of the Former Han Dynasty when, during the reign of the Emperor Wu ti (140–87 B. C.), the territory was first brought into political relations with China. The Chinese notices of that period tell us nothing of the previous history of the state. But Khotan itself preserved traditions relating to an earlier epoch and connected with the very foundation of the kingdom. Some record of these traditions has been handed down to us by Hsüan-tsang and by the Tibetan texts already described. The legendary character of these traditions becomes evident on a perusal of the two narrations. Yet their substantial agreement proves that the legends were old and of genuine local growth. A closer examination may, perhaps, still reveal to us traces of that substratum of historical fact upon which those traditions originally grew up.

Hsüan-tsang's *Hsi-yü-chi* tells the story of the origin of the Khotan kingdom and its dynasty, after referring to its actual ruler and his claim to descend from the god Vaiśravaṇa (*Pi-sha-mên*) or Kubera¹. The pilgrim does not state distinctly the source from which he obtained this story. But the reference he makes in a preceding passage to the chronicles possessed by the Khotanese², and still more the close correspondence between his account and the Tibetan 'Annals of Li-yul' which must be based on Khotan tradition, render it highly probable that Hsüan-tsang here reproduces information received directly or indirectly from some Khotanese chronicle. His story runs thus in its main points³. In old times this country (of Khotan) was waste and uninhabited. The god Vaiśravaṇa (*Pi-sha-mên*) came to take up his abode there. King Aśoka's eldest son, who dwelt in Takṣaśilā (*Ta-ch'a-shih-lo*), having had his eyes put out, his royal father in anger sent one of his ministers with the order to banish the men of great family to the north of the snowy mountains and to establish them there in a desert valley. When the men thus banished arrived at the western frontier of this territory (of Khotan) they placed one of their chiefs at their head and gave him the title

²⁴ See Klaproth, *Mémoires rel. à l'Asie*, ii. pp. 289 sqq.

²⁵ It is only as a conjecture that I suggest the possibility of Ilchi being the original name of the locality to which the head quarters of the territory were transferred after the abandonment of the site of the ancient capital at Yōtkan. This transfer must be supposed to have taken place after the eleventh century; but the period cannot be fixed more accurately at present; see below, chap. VIII. sec. iii.

¹ See *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 224 sq.; *Si-yu-ki*, transl. Beal, ii. pp. 309 sqq.

² The reference does not appear in Julien's translation

nor in that of Beal (which is based on the former); but it is found in Rémusat's rendering of that portion of the *Pien i tien* which faithfully reproduces the whole of Hsüan-tsang's notice of Khotan. See *Ville de Khotan*, p. 37: 'Ils ont des chroniques et leurs caractères sont, ainsi que leurs lois et leur littérature, imités de ceux des Hindous, &c.' Rémusat justly adds in a note: 'Les traditions qu'on trouvera rapportées plus bas prouveront la vérité de cette assertion; elles ne peuvent en effet être tirées que des chroniques du pays'.

³ In the résumé given here I follow Julien's version except where otherwise indicated.