

predicted that after his death the lake would dry up and become a country called *Li-yul*, with the city of 'U-then' (*Hu.then* in Mr. Thomas' transcription) as its capital.

Resem-
blance of
Khotan and
Kashmīr
legends.

Mr. Rockhill has compared with this tradition the legends relating to the draining of the lakes which were believed to have once occupied the present valleys of Kashmīr and Nepāl, as well as Bod-yul or Tibet. Its resemblance to the ancient legend which represents Kashmīr as having been originally the lake of Satīsaras deserves special attention, in view of that close connexion of Khotan legendary lore with Kashmīr which we shall have occasion to note hereafter. I have fully discussed the Kashmīr legend, as told by the Nilamata Purāṇa and also by Kalhaṇa, in my 'Memoir on the ancient geography of Kashmīr'¹¹. A reference to it will show how closely the rôle here ascribed to Buddha and his two companions corresponds to the part played in the Kashmīr legend by Brahman and the gods Viṣṇu and Balabhadra, who upon the former's command drained the lake by piercing the mountains. Buddha's stay on Mount Gośṛṅga seems to reflect the position taken up by Brahman and his divine host on the lofty peaks of the Naubandhana Tīrtha in the mountains south-east of Kashmīr. This close relation between the Khotan legend and the one told of Kashmīr in the Nilamata Purāṇa is all the more noteworthy because the Kashmīr legend had assumed in Buddhistic lore a materially different form, as seen from the account of Hsüan-tsang and Mr. Rockhill's extracts from the Tibetan canon^{11a}. Thus the transfer of the Kashmīr legend to Khotan cannot be attributed to any specifically Buddhist channel or agency.

Tibetan
story of
foundation
of Khotan.

The 'Annals of Li-yul' begin the story of the foundation of Khotan with a reference to King Aśoka, who is said to have ruled over India 234 years after the death of Buddha¹². 'At that time the lake had dried up, but Li-yul was uninhabited.' In the thirtieth year Aśoka's consort bore a son, whom the king, alarmed by the soothsayers' prediction that he would be king in his father's lifetime, caused to be abandoned. 'But when the child had been abandoned, there arose a breast on the earth from which he derived sustenance.' For this reason he was called Kustana or 'breast of the earth' (*sa.nu*)¹³. This child was miraculously carried off by Vaiśravaṇa to the king of China (*Rgya*), who had 999 sons, but wanted one more to complete a thousand, and brought up the boy. Kustana having found out his true origin 'wanted a kingdom for himself', and accordingly when twelve years old he 'got together a host of 10,000 men, and with them went to seek a home in the west, and while thus employed he came to Me-skar of Li-yul'.

About that time Yaśas¹⁴, a minister of Aśoka, had been obliged to leave India as 'his relatives had become obnoxious to the king; so he left the country with 7,000 men, and sought a home to the west and to the east, and thus he came into the country below the river of U-then'¹⁵. Two followers of Kustana who had run away from Me-skar, came at *Tola*

¹¹ See Stein, *Rājat.*, II. pp. 388 sq.; also i. 26-27 with note.

^{11a} See *Mémoires*, i. pp. 168 sqq.; Rockhill, loc. cit., pp. 167 sq.

¹² If this date refers to the year of Aśoka's accession, it approaches closely to the probable chronology of Buddha and Aśoka as ascertained by recent researches. Aśoka's accession took place about 272 B.C. and circ. 487 B.C. appears to have been in Aśoka's time the accepted date for Buddha's death; see V. Smith, *History of India*, pp. 40, 137. That the chronology of the 'Annals of Li-yul', such as it is, was derived from sources different from those which Tibetan Buddhism generally relied on, becomes evident from the fact that, according to Mr. Rockhill, none of the Northern Buddhist texts

known to him place Aśoka the Pious later than a hundred years after Buddha; comp. *Life of the Buddha*, p. 233, note 4.

¹³ *Life of the Buddha*, p. 234. The spelling *Kusthana*, regularly followed in Mr. Rockhill's extracts is evidently an error of transcription. The text, according to Mr. Thomas, has always *sa.nu*. The meaning indicated shows that Skr. *Kustana* is intended.

¹⁴ Mr. Rockhill gives two forms of this name *Yaśa* and *Yāśas*; but it is evident that the Sanskrit name *Yāśas* is meant, borne by a person who figures in the traditional story of Aśoka as current in Northern Buddhism.

¹⁵ Mr. Rockhill notes that here and elsewhere the rivers of Khotan are referred to by the expression *shel-tchab* or