

were supposed to raise it above their head before opening it, a mark of respect, as M. Chavannes points out, reserved in China to official letters from the emperor. The reference made to pieces of wood which were used at Yü-t'ien for writing with instead of brushes, is of special interest in view of my finding such wooden pens among the ruins of the Niya Site⁷. The use of seals engraved in jade which the same passage asserts, need not surprise us, though I am not aware of any authentic find from Khotan sites to illustrate it.

Of the kings of Yü-t'ien the Annals note that 'ever since the time of the Emperor Wu ti (140-86 B. C.) to our own days they have handed down, each to his successor, the edicts and insignia of investiture which had been bestowed upon them by the Middle Kingdom'. We need not accept this statement as evidence of that unbroken succession which, as we have seen, Khotan tradition in Hsüan-tsang's time assumed for the ruling house; nor are investitures, however nominal, likely to have been obtained from the Imperial court with regularity during the centuries when Chinese political influence had ceased to extend to the 'Western Regions'. Yet it seems safe to conclude from it that some recollection of the ancient political tie with China had survived in Khotan even during that period, and that popular traditions concerning it were, perhaps, more cherished there than in other territories of the Tārīm Basin.

The Annals distinctly tell us that the family name of the ruling dynasty was *Wei-ch'ih* 尉遲 and in fact the names of almost all Khotan rulers whom the T'ang Annals mention are formed with this praenomen⁸. I am unable to judge whether *Wei-ch'ih* could possibly represent a real Chinese name adopted by the ruling family, just as the personal names by which its individual members are referred to in the T'ang Annals are unmistakably Chinese. Otherwise a connexion might be suggested between *Wei-ch'ih* and the word *Vijaya* which invariably forms the first part in the long string of royal names recorded by the Tibetan 'Annals of Li-yul'⁹. The question can scarcely be decided until non-Chinese documents are forthcoming to furnish us with the indigenous names of some Khotan rulers during the T'ang period.

Before we proceed to examine the detailed historical data furnished by the T'ang Annals, it will be convenient to compare with the general notes just extracted the description which Hsüan-tsang has left us of Khotan and its people. The pilgrim, as we have seen, reached the oasis from the direction of Karghalik in the year 644 A. D., at a time when the predominance of the Western Turks was already broken and Chinese influence had begun to make itself felt throughout the Tārīm region. Fame was preceding the Master of the Law here as elsewhere towards the close of his great wanderings, and the king of Khotan as a devout Buddhist came to meet him at the very border of his territory¹⁰. Escorted by the king's son and state officers he then, after three more marches, reached the capital where another solemn reception

Dynasty
reigning at
Khotan.

Hsüan-
tsang's stay
at Khotan.

⁷ See below, chap. xi. sec. v., and for illustrations Plate CV; also Chavannes, *Les livres chinois avant l'invention du papier* (*J. asiat.*, 1905), p. 74.

⁸ See below, pp. 175 sqq., and for a list, Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, p. 375 (Index).

⁹ On phonetic grounds *Wei-ch'ih* might well be accepted as a transcription of *Vijaya*. For characters read *wei* which reproduce Skr. *vi*, compare Julien, *Méthode pour transcrire*, &c. pp. 224 sq.; for example of *ch'ih* (*tche*) representing Skr. *ji*, *je*, *dyā* (probably pronounced *jyā*), see *ibid.*, pp. 201 sqq.

¹⁰ It is not quite clear, from the account of the 'Life' as presented in Julien's translation (*Vie de H.-Th.*, p. 281),

whether the first meeting with the king took place at P'o-ch'ieh-i (*Po-kia-i*) which, as shown above, p. 117, may be looked for near Piälma and which is described (*Vie*, p. 279) as being just within the frontier of Yü-t'ien, or at the border of the oasis proper, i. e. about Kum-rabāt-Pādshāhim. The point, of no great consequence, would be cleared up if we knew whether by 'the second day' at the end of which the pilgrim is said to have arrived within 40 li of the capital was meant the day next after the meeting or the second day of march from P'o-ch'ieh-i (*Po-kia-i*). Considering the distance from Piälma and Hsüan-tsang's preference for easy marches, the first supposition seems more likely.