

common danger have supported its old adversary through the chiefs of apparently Turkish race established in Ladāk and other Western portions of its territory<sup>23</sup>. The possibility of help from the powerful Uigur kingdom, which retained its Buddhism for centuries later and was the hereditary enemy of the Khāns of Balāsāghūn, is not to be ignored altogether; and, finally, inherited wealth and the great natural resources of the Khotan region may well have enabled its rulers to organize a strenuous resistance by means of mercenary forces, however unwarlike the population actually cultivating the oasis is always likely to have been.

Part of  
Buddhist  
church in  
political  
struggle.

In the face of such obscurity as hides from our view the internal condition of the kingdom and its political relations during the two centuries preceding the introduction of Islām, we must rest content with two observations. In the first place, it is evident that the frequent missions to the Chinese court from 938 onwards, with their rich offers of tribute, may be attributed to the need felt for protection against a growing external danger. In the second place, the repeated appearance of Buddhist ecclesiastics in these missions lends support to the belief that the Buddhist church was then an important political factor in the state and, perhaps, one which largely helped to make resistance against Muhammadan aggression the more determined and effective.

For Khotan, which had undergone the influences of Indian culture and of Buddhism longer than probably any part of Central Asia, and where transplanted elements of Chinese civilization, too, seem to have found a more congenial soil than elsewhere in the 'Western Regions'<sup>23a</sup>, the Muhammadan conquest must have signified a thorough break in the continuity of historical development. No records of any kind help us to realize its immediate effects upon the condition and social organization of the people. But there can be no doubt that the change must have meant the loss of much that had once given importance to the small state at the foot of the Kun-lun.

Resumption  
of trade  
relations  
with China,  
eleventh  
century.

It still retained the advantages of its position on a great route between China and the West, and efforts to utilize these for trade purposes may account to a great extent for the frequent references which the Sung Annals make to embassies from Khotan during the eleventh century. Already in the notice of the 'tribute' offered from Yü-t'ien in 1025 articles are enumerated which manifestly were introduced merely as objects of commerce<sup>24</sup>. The rich counter-presents accorded for such articles as were accepted by the emperor, and the manifold privileges enjoyed by the envoys during their stay in China, formed undoubtedly the main inducement for the frequent visits of such embassies. From the period 1068-1077 they are said to have become so numerous that not a year passed without their arrival, sometimes even twice in the same year; but the same notice also plainly shows that these so-called 'embassies' were often in reality little more than mercantile ventures<sup>25</sup>. They are represented as coming often without any credentials; they openly brought goods for sale in the markets of the empire and realized large profits. As their entertainment at public expense and the free transport of

<sup>23</sup> M. Grenard (loc. cit., pp. 64 sqq.) seems inclined to assume that Khotan in the tenth century had passed under the sovereignty of a Turkish dynasty established in Ladāk. But the few scattered notices of Muhammadan geographers on which this opinion is based are far too hazy to permit of sound historical conclusions. The passages of Mas'ūdī and Idrīsī which may possibly relate to Khotan only show how very vague Muhammadan knowledge of those regions was. In view of this a reference to Khotan as a part of Tibet proves little or nothing. The application of the term 'Turk'

by Al-Bērūnī to the chiefs of the valleys north and north-east of Kashmīr can also not be relied on very far. For the vague use of the term and the utter inadequacy of early Muhammadan knowledge about Khotan and Tibet, compare Richthofen, *China*, i. pp. 565 sq.

<sup>23a</sup> The designation of Khotan as 'Chin-u-Māchīn' (see above) has its significance.

<sup>24</sup> See Rémusat, *Ville de Khotan*, p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92 sqq.