

Hsüan-tsang but also by Sung Yün, the *Pei shih*, and other historical texts, as well as by the 'Annals of Li-yul'.

According to the account uniformly told in the *Hsi-yü-chi* as well as in the 'Life' there stood to the south of the royal city at a distance of 10 li a large convent built by an ancient king in honour of the Arhat Vairocana (P'i-lu-chê-na), to whom was attributed the introduction of Buddhism into Khotan³⁴. In old days, when the law of Buddha had not yet reached the country, the Arhat came to this spot from Kashmîr, and in a wood practised meditation. When the king, informed of his strange appearance and dress, came to see him the Arhat discoursed to him of the boons of Tathāgata's doctrine, and exhorted him to follow the Law. The king offered to believe in Buddha if he could see his appearance; and Vairocana promised fulfilment of his desire after the building of a convent. The convent was accordingly built, and a great assembly of monks had gathered, but as yet there was no *ghanṭā* to call together the congregation. When the king then inquired for the promised appearance there suddenly descended from heaven an image of Buddha presenting a *ghanṭā*. Thereupon the king became confirmed in the faith and eager for its propagation. Hsüan-tsang's biographer, on concluding the story, specially notes that this convent was thus the first built in the kingdom.

Sung Yün has left us a record of the same shrine, which in several respects is of special interest³⁵. The king of Khotan, so we are told, was not a believer in the law of Buddha when a merchant brought a Bhikṣu called Vairocana (P'i-lu-chan) to a spot under an apricot tree south of the city. When he announced to the king that he had brought a Śramaṇa from abroad the prince became very angry, and proceeded at once to see Vairocana. The latter thereupon announced that he had been sent by Tathāgata to exhort the king to build a Stūpa of the turned-up *pātra* [shape], and thus to gain religious blessings. The king promised to obey if he were allowed to see Buddha. Thereupon Vairocana sounded a bell, and Buddha sent Rāhula, who appeared to the king in the form of Buddha himself. The king prostrated himself at the sight, and built at the foot of the apricot tree a structure to serve as a temple, with a representation of Rāhula, but this structure suddenly disappeared of itself. Thereupon the king built a new Vihāra to shelter the image, in such a way that the image, though placed under the turned-up *pātra*, appeared constantly outside—a miracle which greatly benefited the spiritual state of all beholders. Near this place the shoes of a Pratyekabuddha (Pi-chih-fo) were seen, miraculously preserved without any alteration, of neither leather nor silk, but of an unknown substance.

The learned comments of M. Chavannes have removed the obscurities which beset Sung Yün's account of this shrine in earlier versions. At the same time M. Foucher, by a convincing reference, already quoted in a preceding chapter, to a passage of the *Hsi-yü-chi*³⁶, has made it clear that by the 'turned-up *pātra*' is meant a Stūpa dome of the orthodox shape, originally hemispherical. The miracle, which appears to have made the sacred image enclosed in the Stūpa dome visible to the eyes of pious visitors on frequent occasions, is also capable of explanation in view of certain structural features which have been noted elsewhere in extant Stūpa ruins or in descriptions by the Chinese pilgrims³⁷. Thus Sung Yün's notice, besides confirming Hsüan-tsang's account of the origin of Vairocana's shrine, supplements it by some interesting

Sung Yün's
version of
legend.

Stūpa of the
'turned-up
pātra.'

³⁴ See *Mémoires*, ii. 227 sqq.; *Vie*, pp. 282 sqq.; *Si-yu-ki*, ii. pp. 312 sq.; *Ville de Khotan*, pp. 40 sqq.

Julien translates, 'premier roi,' but the interpretation given above from Beal and Rémusat's versions is evidently more correct; see, below, the Tibetan version.

³⁵ See Chavannes, *Voyage de Song Yun*, pp. 17 sq.

³⁶ See above, p. 83, *Si-yu-ki*, i. p. 47; also *L'Art du Gandhāra*, p. 53.

³⁷ Foucher, *L'Art du Gandhāra*, pp. 86 sq.