

Hsi-yü-chi that 300 li to the east of the Khotan capital the pilgrim was shown in the middle of a great desert marsh an area of several thousands of acres where the ground was completely bare and of a dark-red colour³. Tradition asserted that this was the spot where in old days a large army from the Eastern kingdom, i.e. from China, counting a million of men, was met in battle by the king of Kustana at the head of a hundred thousand horsemen. The troops of Kustana having been defeated, the king was made a prisoner, and all his men slaughtered. Their blood gave to the soil its red colour. Similar local legends, intended, no doubt, to account for pieces of ground of which the striking red colour exercised popular imagination, were heard by Hsüan-tsang elsewhere on his travels⁴.

Going thirty li or so to the east of this battle-field, the pilgrim arrived at the town of *P'i-mo* 憍摩. Here there was a miracle-working statue of a standing Buddha carved in sandal-wood, and about twenty feet high⁵. 'Those who have any disease, according to the part affected, cover the corresponding place on the statue with gold-leaf, and forthwith they are healed. People who address prayers to it with a sincere heart mostly obtain their wishes.' The local tradition, which the *Hsi-yü-chi* relates at great length, asserted that this statue had been made by Udayana, king of Kauśāmbī, and that after Buddha's death it came through the air to the town of *Ho-lao-lo-chia* 曷勞落迦. The people of that town were rich and prosperous, but had no regard for Buddhist teaching. Hence, though the image displayed its miraculous power, no worship was paid to it. When subsequently an Arhat came and respectfully saluted the statue, the king, to whom his strange appearance had been reported, ordered him to be covered with sand and earth. The Arhat in this condition was deprived of food, but a pious man who had previously worshipped the statue, secretly supplied him with nourishment. When the Arhat was at the point of departure he predicted to this pious person that in retribution for what he had suffered the town would within seven days be covered by sand and earth and all the people perish.

Warned to look to his own safety, the pious man told his relatives and friends of the impending doom, but was treated by all with ridicule. On the second day there arose a great wind, which 'carried before it all the dirty soil, whilst there fell various precious substances'⁶. The pious man, who was thereupon reviled afresh, prudently 'excavated for himself a secret passage leading outside the town. On the night of the seventh day there fell a rain of sand and earth which filled the interior of the town. The pious one escaped through his passage, and going eastwards came to this country, and took up his abode in P'i-mo. At the same time appeared there the statue which he worshipped. Ancient tradition said: "When the law of Śākya is extinct, then this image will enter the dragon-palace." The town of *Ho-lao-lo-chia* is now a great sand mound. The kings of the neighbouring countries and persons in power from distant spots have many times wished to excavate the mound and take away the precious things buried

Sacred
image at
P'i-mo.

Legend of
destruction
of *Ho-lao-
lo-chia*.

³ See *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 242 sq.; Beal, ii. p. 322; Watters, *Yuan Chwang's Travels*, ii. p. 298. There is apparently nothing in the wording of the text to justify Julien's assumption that the battle here related is the one which was supposed to have preceded the foundation of the kingdom of Kustana; see above, p. 157. The very mention of a 'king of Kustana' speaks against it. Rémusat, *Ville de Khotan*, pp. 60 sq., assumes an error in the text and attributes the victory to the Khotan king.

⁴ See, e.g., his description of the spot of Buddha's 'body-offering' (*Mémoires*, i. pp. 164 sq.; Beal, i. p. 146), which

I have had occasion to discuss in detail in my *Archaeological Report, N.W. Frontier Province*, 1904-05, pp. 41 sqq.

⁵ The *Life*, which gives an abbreviated account of P'i-mo, makes the statue thirty feet high, and describes it as 'distinguished at the same time by the beauty of its form and an attitude grave and severe'; see *Vie de H.-Ths.*, p. 289.

⁶ This version of Beal's is supported by Watters. Julien, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 245, assumed a corruption of the text and substituted characters meaning 'sand and earth' for 'various precious substances.'