RECORD OF BUDDHISTIC KINGDOMS.

A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms: being an account, by the Chinese Monk Fâ-hien, of his travels in India and Ceylon (A.D. 399-414) in search of the Buddhist books of discipline. Translated and annotated, with a Corean recension of the Chinese text, by James Legge, M.A. LL.D., Professor of the Chinese Language and Literature.—Oxford, at the Clarendon Press. 1886. (All rights reserved.)

The first translation of Fa-hien's travels published in 1836 was, we are all told, an event of great importance in the history of Buddhist learning in Europe.* Fifty years have gone by since this first translation, the work of Rémusat, Klaproth and Landresse, appeared. In the interval of half a century Fa-hien has found other translators.

When the character both of pilgrimage and narrative is taken into account, it would indeed be matter of wonder if among the enthusiastic admirers of Chinese-Buddhist literature (and since the date of the French treatise the number of those has been constantly increasing) some had not been found to walk in the steps of M. Rémusat. The first to do so was Mr. Beal in 1869. To justify himself, to mark his own sense of the importance of his undertaking, and doubtless also to bespeak the attentive interest of his readers, this second translator of Fa-hien chose as the motto of his book a remark of Bigandet, Vicar Apostolic of Ava and Pegu, in praise of Fa-hien and the no less celebrated Chinese pilgrim Hsüen-tsang. 'The voyages of two Chinese travellers (says Bigandet), undertaken in the fifth and seventh centuries of our era, have done more to elucidate the history and geography of Buddhism in India than all that has hitherto been found in the Sanscrit and Pali books of India and the neighbouring countries.'*

Next after Mr. Beal in order of time came Mr Herbert A. Giles, who, having elected to be the third translator of Fa-hien, brought out in 1877 his 'Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms,' a series of papers first published in the Shanghai *Courier*. Mr. Giles' book is written in his most characteristic manner. He does not 'spare the feelings of Mr. Beal,' and the severe strictures bestowed on the latter's performance are in the greater number of instances richly deserved. Whether Mr. Giles was at that period of his Buddhistic studies exactly the man to constitute himself critic and censor is greatly open to question. Mr. Watters (*China Review*, Vol. VIII, p. 107), while ascribing to Mr. Giles rare abilities as a translator, affirms that he was not acquainted

* *China Review*, Vol. VIII, p. 107.

* The Right Rev. P. Bigandet, Vicar Apostolic of Ava and Pegu, quoted by Mr. Beal in his Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims. In his new work, Buddhism in China, published in 1884, Mr. Beal makes further use of the same statement of Bigandet.

with even the beggarly elements of Buddhism. From a perusal of Mr. Watters' articles, *China Review*, Vol. VIII, p. 107, 131, 217, 323, 393, it will be seen that the reviewer was not disposed to regard with favour the performances of Fa-hien's two English translators. His opinion is that neither Mr. Giles' translation nor Mr. Beal's can be used as a work of authority (VIII, p. 108), and he adds, 'a faithful translation with notes and commentary is very much needed.'

A faithful translation of Fa-hien's travels with notes and commentary describes accurately and aptly the last new book from the pen of the indefatigable Dr. Legge. There is little doubt that the volume before us was 'very much needed' and as little doubt that it will be widely read and appreciated. It will not, we are persuaded, prove the least useful of the professor's many valuable and helpful translations now numerous enough to form in themselves a small library of reference.

Mr. Giles would fain have seen the task he felt constrained (so flagrant were Mr. Beal's transgressions) to undertake 'in the hands of some such accomplished scholar as Mayers, Edkins, or Eitel, for then future students would have at their disposal an English version proof against any criticisms that could be brought to bear (Giles' *Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*, p. ii.). That is certainly going rather far. But we intend no disparagement to the eminent men living and dead whose hard-won laurels have been gained partly in the field of Buddhism and whom Mr. Giles selects as best fitted to translate Fa-hien, when we affirm that if in the rank of Chinese scholars there is one who can give to students of the early Buddhism a translation of the pilgrims which shall be proof against criticism, that person is Dr. Legge.

This new version of Fa-hien may not be proof against 'any criticism,' but it is at least free from the grave faults of former versions. The more carefully the reader compares Dr. Legge's book with the older translations, the more masterly and thorough will appear this last effort of the famous Sinologist.

There are still some difficulties remaining unsolved—geographical, historical, and textual, not to mention those arising out of the use of Sanscrit terms. Nevertheless the new translation will be found of abounding merit and excellency. For the first time, always excepting the short notice in Mr. Watters' article (*China Review*, Vol. VIII, p. 108), something is said about Fa-hien the pilgrim. The account of Fa-hien's life, though occupying only two pages of preface, helps us to comprehend and enjoy the narrative of his pilgrimage. Some knowledge of Bunyan's spiritual history is a requirement of those who desire to appreciate thoroughly the adventures of his pilgrim, and a brief insight into the character and training of this Buddhist pilgrim is an advantage to his readers.

Fiction has been the friend of Hsüen-tsang the monkish traveller of the seventh century. His journeys form the story of the universally popular Si-yeu-ki. Nothing of this kind has been done for our traveller. But some facts concerning him, gleaned by Dr. Legge from the memoirs of ancient monks, published in 519, are now at the reader's disposal. Fa-hien's surname was 龔 Kung, and his birthplace the 武陽 Wu-yang district in the 平陽 P'ing-yang department of the Shan-hsi province. Dedicated when an infant to the service of Buddha, he exhibited in the earliest years a strong prepossession of mind in favour of the Buddhist religion. At ten he had come to regard the doings of the great world outside the monastery as the 'dust and vulgar ways of life.' When he became a monk, 'earnest courage, clear intelligence, and strict regulation of demeanour' were his striking characteristics, qualities alas most conspicuous by their absence in Chinese monks of the present day. These person[1] characteristics come to the front many

times in the course of the narrative. Earnest courage alone could sustain Fa-hien amid the privations and perils of his journey and cause him to push on 'not regarding his own poor life' (Chap. XI, p. 116.) 'Clear intelligence' he had wherewith to gather instruction from what he saw throughout his long wanderings and to learn when settled at Patna the Sanscrit books and the Sanscrit speech and write out the Vinaya rules' (Ch. XXXVI, p. 99). His strict regulation of demeanour, in other words consistency of character, is seen in his oft-expressed admiration of those persons whom he saw to be Buddhists in heart and life 道人 Vide Ch. III p. 18. VIII p. 29. XV p. 92 and passim).

Still more striking proof of Fa-hien's sincerity and earnestness is visible in scenes like his solitary night watch on Gridhrakuta hill (Ch. XXIX. p. 83). Here, standing on the Olivet of Buddhism, he has much ado to restrain his feelings and at length breaks out in words of a devout and sorrowing regret, the utterance of a fine spiritual nature. 'I, Fa-hien, was born when I could not meet with Buddha, and now I only see the footprints which he has left and the place where he lived and nothing more.' As the holy city Rome to the monk Luther, as Mecca to the disciples of the prophet, as Palestine to the devout Christian worshipper, so were the scenes sanctified by the presence of Gautama to this earnest and sincere disciple.

> Spirat adhuc amor
> vivuntque .....colores.

It would be a pleasant and not unprofitable task, by the help of the excellent sketch map and geographical notes in the volume, to trace the route of our pilgrim from the day of his setting out from Ch'ang-an in company with Hwuy-king, Tao-ching, Hwuy-ying and Hwing-wei, down to the day fifteen years later when with no sympathising companions, storm-driven and seemingly desolate, he once more beheld the shores of his native land. It would not however be practicable to do this within the limits of the present notice. Suffice it to say that of more than fifty places mentioned from the starting point to the close of the journey, the identity of the larger number has been established fully, and the most recent information is in most instances furnished by the notes.

Fa-hien and his companions crossed the Indus three times:—

1. At Skardo (Jokardu) or at some point to the East of Skardo (cf. note p. 22 and notes to the sketch map). The direction was then South West from Khoten.

2. After fifteen days' journey along the foot of the Onion mountains and following the course of the range (cf. VII. 26 with VIII. 28). This time the direction was from East to West.

3. At Banna in the Punjab; where Fa-hien and his companions recrossed the Indus in their journey from West to East.

From the setting out at Ch'ang-an to the first crossing of the Indus, the way lay through the desert of Gobi where are 'many evil demons and hot winds.' And 'the only way marks are the dry bones of the dead.' It is after the pilgrims have crossed the desert that the difficulties of the reader who 'in mind's eye' desires to follow their course begin. The student is however in good company and may count on having the best assistance. If the reader will refer for this part of the journey to the articles on Fa-hien and his English translators (*China Review*, VIII. p. 115 and fg.), he will see how great a fund of learning and research and ingenious reasoning have been brought to bear to determine localities, especially the position of the Kingdom of 鄯善 Shen Shen* and of 僞夷 Woo E, the most northern point of Fa-hien's wanderings. Where the arguments of Mr. Watters are

* Mr. Wylie is Dr. Legge's authority for the position of Shen Shen, which is placed near to Lobnor and to the south of the Lake (p. 12 note 3). Long. 38 E. in the note is evidently a misprint.

Mr. Kingsmill, in his article 'Ancient Geographical names in Central Asia' (*China Review*, VIII. 163), has a note on Shen Shen which he says is now Charchan or Charchen.

not entirely convincing, they are still enlightening, and the reader will feel with Dr. Legge that the articles are of the highest value. Mr. Watters is of opinion that Fa-hien and his companions took the middle of the three old routes from China to India. The Indus once crossed, geographical names begin to grow familiar. From Strado the first from Bannu the third place of crossing the Indus, ten names of localities are mentioned and with one important exception all are identified.

The quotations, giving page and article, and referring the reader to Dr. Eitel's *Hand-book of Buddhism* make the geographical notes which follow of additional value. One or two examples of identification will here be sufficient. Woochang 'The Park' is just north of the Punjab. Purusapura, the place of Buddha's alms-bowl, is the modern Peshawur; whilst Nagara, famous for the sacred skull bone, staff, robe, and shadow, is on the southern bank of the Cabul river about thirty miles from Jellalabad.

Five years after leaving the monastery in Ch'ang-an, Fa-hien, now with only one companion Tao-ching, crossed the Indus for the third time. At length the two travellers approached the course of their long and hazardous journey, the holy land of the Buddhists.

Twenty chapters, XVI. to XXXVI, contain the account of Fa-hien's experiences in India up to the date when he settled at Patna to study Sanscrit and copy the Vinaya. A special feature of Dr. Legge's new book is the pictures chosen to illustrate this part of the travels. The pictures are taken, the translator tells us, from an edition of the life of Buddha published at Hang-chau in Cheh Kiang. These illustrations, including the frontispiece, give the reader a bird's eye view of those scenes in the history of Shakyamuni Gautama Buddha which have the greatest significance for all Buddhists.

They are in fact the great 'way marks' in the pilgrimage of the Buddha himself onward to Nirvana. They show something of what Buddhism is, what it teaches and what it promises to its votaries. Whilst admitting therefore that the pictures enhance the attractiveness and utility of the book, we yet submit that they are also somewhat incongruous and out of place in the narrative of Fa-hien the pilgrim.

Dr. Legge's pictures are such as would be presented to the imagination of the untravelled monk in the far-away monastery at Ch'ang-an. Take e.g. No. 1, the dream of Buddha's mother of his incarnation, and let it be borne in mind that the pilgrims Fa-hien and Tao-ching are now at Kapilavastu gazing on its ruins and desolation, striving to recall the glorious past, that momentous event with all its attendant circumstances, the appearance in the world of the last and greatest of the seven Buddhas.

Buddhism, it has been truly said, is 'the worship of association or of memory.' The spots rendered famous by Buddha's presence during his life-time are consecrated in the mind of his disciple to sacred recollection, and worship is offered on those spots to the invisible presence of the object of faith. Of our pilgrims therefore now at the birthplace of Buddha we may say in the words of the poet,

> 'Memory too with her dreams shall come,
> Dreams of a former happier day,
> Glimpses of glory ne'er forgot.'

Our contention is that the illustrations, however helpful in other respects, do not aid the reader in his endeavours to understand Fa-hien and to gaze on the scenes as they were pictured to the mind of the pilgrim. This dream of Buddha's mother shows us the approach to a Chinese palace. A Chinese princess lies dreaming on a couch in the women's apartments. Two Chinese eunuchs watch in the court-yard in front. On their right hand is a fine specimen of the Aleurites tree 梧桐, and at the back of them a fine piece of Chines palisading. The rest of the architecture, carving, etc., beautifully shown, is thoroughly in keeping

and makes up a Chinese picture of a truthful and attractive kind. The other illustrations are good, and we submit also equally out of place in this work. A Chinese Obstinate and Pliable, a Chinese Wordly Wise-man and even a Chinese Great Heart may be as true to the life as their English originals. But we think for historical purposes at least it is otherwise with the Chinese illustrations of the Pilgrim's Progress we are now considering. Having accompanied Fa-hien to the birthplace of Buddha, we here take leave of the intrepid traveller and devout pilgrim, regretting much that we cannot go with him from one sacred spot to another throughout his holy land, staying with him at Patna, travelling with him to Ceylon, voyaging with him on his homeward journey by sea to Shantung, sharing his perils and rejoicing in his deliverance and safe return. Those who do this for themselves will find each page of Dr. Legge's book extremely, it may be said intensely, interesting. It will delight the ordinary reader no less than the thorough-going student of Buddhism. For it may be said that Fa-hien's narrative, as here translated and annotated, serves better than most so-called explanations to account for the hold which the system of Gautama has on its votaries, its wide diffusion as a religion and the influence it still exerts over so large a portion of the race. These are some of the not insignificant or unimportant lessons which underlie Fa-hien's miracle-stories and place-legends. Best of all perhaps, the book gives a most life-like account of Buddhism at its best in its native seat and chief stronghold.

One of the beauties of the book is the addition of the original text printed in full at the end of the volume. Dr. Legge, as intimated on the title page, has translated from a Corean recension of Fa-hien's travels obtained from Japan where it was printed in 1779. More than three hundred various readings are given in footnotes, each reading being marked with a letter showing whether it appears in the Japanese or Chinese editions and, if in either of the latter, to which of the two it belongs, S. standing for Sung and M. for Ming.

Of the translation itself it is almost enough to say that it is done after the manner of Dr. Legge. He eschews the points of contention between Beal and Giles, while acknowledging indebtedness to Mr. Watters who was the first to 'disentangle knots' in the text. Both the English and Chinese texts are clearly printed with very few errors.

The following are among the noticeable instances of unproved renderings.

受歲—in Ch. V. refers to the annual portion of the wheat which the monks receive.

法顯得符行當公孫經理 Ch. II. is to be translated 'Fa-hien through the management of Foo Kung-sun maitre d'hotellerie was able to remain,' &c.

There is now no doubt about 安居 in its Buddhist sense of keeping a retreat. Ch. IV., c.f. Ch. XI.

旃荼羅 the Chandalas of Ch. XVI. are simply 'butchers,' nothing more.

The 高三十肘 thirty chow in height, of Chapter XVII, is explained to be *thirty times the distance from the elbow to* the finger tip. Note p. 50.

Whether the 十八部 of Chapter XXXVI are to be translated eighteen schools, or whether the opening and shutting of that passage is equivalent to the 'binding and loosing' of the New Testament and the Christian Church, many readers will be likely to regard as doubtful.

Not the least interesting of the textual notes are those which explain common phrases like 和尙, the ordinary expression for Buddhist priest, and give the derivation of such words as 塔 pagoda. And here again, part of their value lies in the references to Sanscrit authority.

The time occupied by Fa-hien's journeyings and stay in India and Ceylon was fifteen years. In his title page Dr. Legge

makes the period extend from A. D. 399 to A. D. 414. He has not, however, cleared up the difficulties pertaining to the chronology of the book, or reconciled the conflicting statements in regard to time.

That Fa-hien left Ch'ang-an in the first and not the second year of 弘始, cyclic name 己亥 corresponding to A. D. 399, may be assumed as true, seeing that there is reliable evidence from other sources to show that he did so, and as Dr. Legge says 二 for 一 might easily creep into the text.

But we have read several times the note in page 116 referring to the traveller's return, and after comparing it with the statements of the text find one less difficulty than Dr. Legge. 甲寅 was the tenth not the twelfth year of the period 義熙 of the Eastern Tsin, of which country our author was not a subject and therefore the more liable to be mistaken.

We think, however, it is allowable to reckon 甲寅 as the year of the pilgrim's return supposing him absent 15 years in all, thus:—

己亥 庚子 申丑 壬寅 癸卯
A.D. 399, 400, 401, 402, 403.
甲辰 乙巳 丙午 丁未 戊申
404, 405, 406, 407, 408,
己酉 庚戌 辛亥 壬子 癸丑
409, 410, 411, 412, 413,
甲寅.
414.

If the Chinese invariably reckoned the dates in a book of travels as they do the years of a man's age, we could better understand why Dr. Legge makes 癸丑 the year of Fa-hien's return. They do not do so invariably, and this we think accounts for the statement that he arrived in China in the year 甲寅.

Before laying down this narrative of Fa-hien's travels, it is fair to inquire what did the energy and devotion, the toils and sufferings, of the early Buddhist monks and pilgrims do for the cause of their religion in China. Concerning the influence of the pilgrim Fa-hien, Mr. Watters relates that a party of twenty-six young monks, headed by one of their number who had heard Fa-hien tell his story, was moved to undertake the same pilgrimage.

Dr. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism* p. 91, remarks, the earnestness and vigour of the Chinese Buddhists of that early period are shown sufficiently by the repeated journeys they made along the tedious and dangerous route by Central Asia to India. Even at the end of the thirteenth century we read of a pilgrimage to India and translations of Buddhist books by a Chinese monk. Nevertheless we are bound to believe that the scene described on p. 114 of Fa-hien, as regards the mass of the Chinese people, 'holds the mirror up to nature.' Tempest-tossed and driven out of their course, Fa-hien and his fellow-voyagers in the ship which brought him home reached China without being aware of the fact. Two hunters were discovered on the shore and being naturally desirous to know to what land the ship had come, the travellers questioned the sons of Nimrod, Fa-hien acting as interpreter. Slowly and distinctly he asked them, 'Who are you?' They replied (hoping to find favour in his eyes), 'We are disciples of Buddha.' He then asked, 'What are you looking for among these hills?' They began to lie. Surely no further evidence was needed that the voyagers had reached China and that the eyes of Fa-hien rested once more on his native hills! Among the crucial passages of the book is the phrase 今故, frequently used in the narrative, which Dr. Legge on the authority of the Imperial Thesaurus of phrascology makes the equivalent of 古今 'anciently and now,' note 4 to p. 25. 'Anciently and now' is a most fitting comment on the above scene. The two hunters are probably fair representatives of the ace as it was and is. If it be deemed necessary or expedient, the Chinese will still say 'we are disciples of Buddha,' and if the occasion serves they

will 'begin to lie.' The last of the five constant virtues of Confucianism is also one of the five great commandments of Buddhism. But the discrepancy between teaching and practice reminds one of the law that passage boats on the rivers may not use large lateen sails, tack or 'walk like the character 之,' in other words zigzag. That law is worse than a dead letter. Plain sailing is the moral law enjoined by the books. Moral zigzagging is the common practice 古今 'anciently and now.' And to make the crooked straight, requires something higher and better than either Buddhism or Confucianism.

The learned translator concludes the introduction to his book with some remarks on the number of Buddhists in China at the present day. He does not agree with Dr. Eitel that '*most*' of the Chinese are 'emotionally' Taoists or Buddhists, but is content to say that '*many*' are. Religion, whether Buddhistic or otherwise, must be held to appeal to each side of man's nature, to the heart and feelings, the mind and conscience and the practical life. Buddhism may appeal to Chinese human nature in such a way that the heart and feelings of the people respond, while yet they may not be entitled to be called emotionally Buddhists. The question is how much Buddhism must be in a man to constitute him a Buddhist 'emotionally' or 'intellectually.' Within the limits of their religious knowledge and capacity the Chinese are everything by turns. If the derivation of religion from *religo* is correct, the figurative meaning of the word as applied to the Chinese has a certain aptitude, if we regard the 'tie that binds' them to the unseen and spiritual as having several strands or twists. These twists are tortuous as the characters of the people. So closely indeed are the strands interwoven that it is not easy to separate the parts and assign to each its relative strength. It is a safe statement to make that without its Buddhistic elements the common every-day working faith of the Chinese would be something utterly unlike what it is now seen to be. The Buddhistic strand runs through the religious tie from beginning to end. In this limited sense perhaps most Chinese may be denominated Buddhist monks of the Fa-hien type, but as for laymen who in the language of the book are 'strenuous followers of the Law,' few such persons are to be found in the eighteen provinces of China.

If, on the other hand, we are prepared to take the widest view of things and esteem those to be Buddhists in whom some faint shadow of Buddhism is, although like the people of Woo E (p. 15) they 'neglect the duties of propriety and righteousness,' then our estimate of the number of Buddhists in China must be exceedingly high.

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