

hastening of a momentous change in the great Empire. It was here that the Chinese came into close contact with Buddhism, which had come over the snowy mountains to call men's minds away from this sorrowful world of desire.

The devoted missionaries from India would doubtless have found their way across nature's hazards to the multitudes who swarmed on the eastern ocean, even if the Tarim basin had not already heard the gospel and had now become a Chinese province. But the facilitation of missionary effort, due to such conditions, is obvious, and may have meant centuries, rather than decades, in the progress of one of the world's most important religious movements.

Burmah, Siam, and Tibet offered possible paths to the missionary who would go from India to China; but they were themselves converted only in the fifth, sixth, and seventh century, respectively. Nor did the way through Turkestan long remain open. Shortly after China had received the words of peace, all intercourse with Turkestan was much disturbed by the violence of the times—the Mongols intruding themselves between China and her distant province. Had the Buddhist propaganda not been made just when it was, Christianity might have disputed, centuries ago, the great field in which now its labours yield so little fruit.

Behold the complexity of things: Mongolian nomads, the Hueng-nu, attack the settled Chinese and are repulsed. Then they attack neighbouring tribes, and are successful, driving their victims to seek new homes afar off. Later they again attack