

after bundle was brought out by the priest to be opened by us with an eagerness which it was hard to disguise, there emerged also in plenty Tibetan manuscripts, long rolls as well as whole packets of leaves, both belonging to the huge Buddhist canon of Tibet. These obviously dated from the period of Tibetan domination which we know in this frontier region of China to have extended from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century. That the closing up of the chapel had taken place some time after this period was clear from a fine Chinese inscription on stone dated A.D. 851 which the priest had first come upon within the recess and subsequently set up outside.

Mixed up with the Chinese and Tibetan texts (Fig. 91) and in utter confusion there were plenty of oblong paper leaves with Indian script belonging to different manuscripts, some in Sanskrit, some in one or another of the indigenous languages which the Buddhists of Turkistan had used for their translations of the sacred texts (Fig. 92). None of my previous finds of such manuscripts equalled these in extent or in excellence of preservation.

But even more grateful I felt for the protection afforded by this strange place of deposit when, on opening a large packet, carelessly wrapped in a discoloured sheet of stout canvas, I found in it paintings mostly on fine gauze-like silk or else on linen. They were mixed up with miscellaneous papers as well as a mass of small pieces from fine figured and printed silk textiles suggesting *ex-votos*. Most of the paintings first found were narrow pictures from two to three feet in length. By their triangular tops and floating streamers they could at once be recognized as having been intended for temple banners. When unfurled, these silk banners showed