

interesting data can be gathered about local history and the like, while this region together with the Tarim basin westwards was under Tibetan domination from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century. It was then that Buddhism in its Tibetan form first gained that footing in Central Asia which later on through the conversion of the conquering Mongols developed into the ecclesiastical predominance it still retains over a great part of Asia.

The plentiful manuscript remains in Indian Brahmi script (Fig. 92) have been completely catalogued through the labours of that nestor of Central-Asian philology, the late Professor Hoernle, and have proved to comprise texts in three distinct languages. Most of the texts are Buddhistic, but some medical. Among the Sanskrit ones I may mention a large palm-leaf 'Pothi' which, as its material proves, undoubtedly came from India. It counts among the oldest Indian manuscripts discovered. One of the ancient languages of Central Asia, formerly 'unknown' and now designated as Khotanese or 'Saka', is represented by several dozens of 'Pothis' and rolls, including a gigantic roll over seventy feet long. The manuscript remains of another ancient tongue, the Kuchean or 'Tokhari', once spoken in the north of the Tarim basin and in Turfan, claim special interest, because this tongue has proved to be more nearly related to the Italic and Slavonic branches of the Indo-European language family than to those spoken in Asia.

In a geographical sense nothing, perhaps, illustrates better the variety of cross-currents of Buddhist propaganda once meeting at Tun-huang than the fact that there came to light from the Thousand Buddhas also texts in the Iranian language of ancient Sogdiana, the region of the present