

learned secretary frankly acknowledged that to him the characters conveyed no sense whatever.

Was this evidence of a non-Chinese language, or merely an indication how utterly strange the phraseology of Chinese Buddhism is to the literatus brought up on a classical pabulum? However, a frequently repeated formula at once attracted our attention, containing the word 'Pu-sa,' the Chinese contraction of the Sanskrit term 'Bodhisattva.' This sufficed to show that the text must be Buddhist—enough to whet my appetite even more for the whole collection. The paper looked remarkably strong and fresh with its smooth surface and fine texture; but in a climate so dry and in a carefully sheltered hiding-place there was no judging of age from mere appearance. So I was obliged to put off all further speculation on this score until we should obtain access to the whole of the hidden library.

It was a novel experience for me to find these shrines, notwithstanding all apparent decay, still frequented as places of actual worship. But quite apart from the damage done by well-meant restorations, I reflected with some apprehension upon the difficulties which this continued sanctity of the site might raise against archaeological exploitation. Would the resident priests be sufficiently good-natured—and mindful of material interests—to close their eyes to the removal of any sacred objects? And, if so, could we rely on their spiritual influence to allay the scruples which might arise among the still more superstitious laity patronizing their pilgrimage place or 'Tirtha,' to use the familiar Indian term? Only experience and time could show.

Meanwhile I was glad enough to propitiate the young Buddhist priest with an appropriate offering. I always like to be liberal with those whom I may hope to secure as 'my own' local priests or 'Purohitas' at sites of ancient worship. But, unlike the attitude usually taken up by my Indian Pandit friends on such occasions, when they could—vicariously—gain 'spiritual merit' for themselves, Chiang-ssŭ-yeh in his worldly wisdom advised moderation. A present too generous might arouse speculations about