

How this key was found since by Dr. Hoernle, with the help of two bilingual texts I brought away from the 'Thousand Buddhas,' will be related hereafter.

Apart from all philological interest, these texts in Indian script, whatever their language, possess historical value as tangible proofs that the monastic communities established at Tun-huang among a population mainly Chinese were, until a relatively late period, maintaining direct connection with their co-religionists in the Tarim Basin, from which Buddhism first reached China. That, in addition to this ancient connection with the 'Western Regions,' Tun-huang Buddhism had also been exposed at a certain period to a powerful influence from the south was attested strikingly by the abundance of Tibetan texts (Fig. 129, 9). From the first in the 'miscellaneous' bundles I had come upon leaves from Tibetan Pothis by hundreds, evidently representing large sections from works of the Buddhist Canon. The packets of leaves were usually mixed up in great confusion, but the greatly varying sizes, up to two feet and more in length, would help to restore order thereafter.

Besides these books of loose leaves, with their traditional string-holes but no strings to keep them together, I found out before long that there was a not inconsiderable proportion of packets with Tibetan rolls among the solid mass of 'library' bundles still left in the chapel. Not being a Tibetan scholar, I had no means to make sure whether these rolls contained different portions of that huge canonical collection, commonly known as the Tanjur and Kanjur, or mainly such endless repetitions of certain favourite texts and prayers as Tibetan piety still fondly cherishes. But I easily noticed that the paper of the Tibetan Pothis looked decidedly older than that of the rolls, and that in texture it also differed markedly from that of the Chinese texts. So the conclusion suggested itself that the Pothis represented mainly imports from Tibet itself, while the rolls had been written by Tibetan monks established locally.

But luckily it needed no conjectures to account for this conspicuous presence of Tibetan manuscripts in the walled-up library; nor could I be in doubt about the chronological