

evidence it afforded. From Chinese historical records, interpreted by M. Chavannes, including the fine Chinese inscription of the year 894 A.D. in one of the southernmost of the 'Thousand Buddhas' grottoes, I knew that the territory of Tun-huang, along with a great portion of Kan-su, had been conquered by the Tibetans about 759 A.D. But scarcely a century later, in 850 A.D., Chang I-ch'ao, the hereditary governor of Tun-huang, broke with the Tibetan power, and making his submission to the Emperor allowed the Chinese to re-establish a sort of suzerainty over these westernmost Marches. This must have ceased again during the troubles which followed the downfall of the T'ang dynasty at the beginning of the tenth century. When a Chinese envoy to Khotan about 938 A.D. passed through the territories corresponding to An-hsi and Tun-huang, he found them under Tibetan dependence, though the population remained mainly Chinese and the administration in the hands of a chief belonging to the great local family of the Ts'ao.

This Tibetan predominance at Tun-huang must have been at its height from the middle of the eighth to that of the ninth century, which is exactly the period when Tibet was a great power in Asia, holding in subjection vast tracts of Kan-su and even Central China. It was by way of Tun-huang that the Tibetans from about 766 A.D. onwards gradually overran the territories of Eastern Turkestan, and finally in 790 A.D. overwhelmed the isolated Chinese garrisons which had long struggled to maintain the imperial protectorate in the distant lands north and south of the T'ien-shan. Though the expansive strength of Tibet had largely spent itself by the latter part of the ninth century, its influence in the Tun-huang region evidently continued a good deal longer, and this political connection, directly attested for two centuries or so, made it easy to understand why Tibetan Buddhism was so amply represented among the literary remains of the walled-up cave.

But not from the Tibetan south alone had the old temple library received its foreign additions. Considering how flourishing Buddhism was throughout the powerful