

kingdom which the Turkish tribe of the Uigurs established after 860 A.D. in Turfan, Hami and the north-eastern portion of the Tarim Basin, and which in the tenth century extended even as far as Kan-chou, I was not surprised when Uigur manuscripts also cropped up in various bundles (Fig. 192, 4, 6). Some had the shape of small quarto volumes, being written on thin sheets of paper folded and stitched after the fashion of Chinese books and complete from cover to cover. Chinese glosses and rubrics found in a few of them clearly indicated Buddhist contents, a conclusion which has since been confirmed by the examination of my learned Orientalist friend, Dr. E. Denison Ross.

This 'Uigur' script is a derivative of Syriac writing, and was already known to have been widely used for Turki writings before the spread of Muhammadanism among the Turkish populations of Central Asia. We found it also on the reverse of numerous Chinese rolls (Fig. 192, 8). From the first I noticed that in most of these the characters were distinctly less cursive and of a firmer shape than in the manuscript books and the specimens of Uigur texts I knew otherwise. But it was only after my return to Europe that I became aware of the language of these rolls. It is Sogdian, that Iranian dialect which Professor F. W. K. Müller's brilliant researches on manuscript finds from Turfan show to have been used for early translations of Buddhist literature in what is now Samarkand and Bokhara. What a large share this Iranian element must have had in the propagation of Buddhism along the old 'Northern route' to carry its peculiar language and writing to these Marches of China proper!

I had further proof of the remarkable polyglot aspect which Buddhist religious places must have presented in these parts, when I came upon fragments of texts in that earliest Turkish script known as Runic Turki. Until a few years ago this had been known only from the famous inscriptions of a Turkish prince discovered on the Orkhon river in Southern Siberia and first deciphered by Professor V. Thomsen. Stranger still it seemed when there emerged from one of those miscellaneous bundles a narrow roll