

## CHAPTER LXIX

### A POLYGLOT TEMPLE LIBRARY

THE interchange of influences from varied regions and races is also illustrated in characteristic fashion by the manuscript remains from the hidden temple library. A rapid review of them will suffice to bring out the large part played by Buddhist propaganda in linking civilizations right across Asia, and how much of its current must have passed through Tun-huang during successive periods.

Regard for the original home of Buddhist doctrine—and personal attachment to my old Indian field of work—induces me to mention in the first place the relics of Sanskrit manuscripts. They all belong to Buddhist religious literature. Though their number and extent are relatively modest, Professor L. de la Vallée Poussin, who has kindly undertaken the examination of them, has discovered texts of considerable interest for the critical history of the Sanskrit Canon of Northern Buddhism, which in India itself has been almost completely lost through the vicissitudes of the Buddhist church in the country of its origin. The large and well-preserved manuscript on palm leaves (Fig. 192, 1) which I had occasion to mention previously contains portions of a famous canonical work, and has on account of its great age and undoubtedly Indian production proved of particular value. Other manuscripts written on paper evidently represent text recensions which were current in Central Asia.

Far more numerous and of exceptional linguistic as well as palaeographical interest are the rolls and Pothis on paper written in several Central-Asian varieties of Indian Brahmi script but in non-Indian language (Fig. 192, 5, 7).