

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### 1. INDIAN BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPTS IN TIBET.

DEAR PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS,—It may be worth recording that, in the course of some conversations which I had with His Excellency Shad-sgra Shab-pe, one of the Tibetan Governors ('bKah-blon') of Lhāsa, while he was at Darjiling about a year ago on political business, he informed me that many ancient Buddhist manuscripts, written on Birch-bark and Palm-leaf, which had been brought from India by mediæval Indian and Tibetan monks, are still preserved in Tibet, especially at the old monasteries of Sāmyé (where many were destroyed during the great fire there about eighty years ago), Sakya, Narthāng, and Tarannātha's old monastery of Phüntsho-ling. These manuscripts, being considered materially sacred as relics, and written in a character more or less unknown to the Lāmas, are kept sealed up and rarely seen even by the Lāmas themselves. They may possibly, however, become available to the Western world by-and-bye.

L. A. WADDELL.

18th January, 1894.

### 2. POLYCEPHALIC IMAGES OF AVALOKITA IN INDIA.

With reference to the Indian origin of the Eleven-headed form of Avalokita's image (see page 59 of the January number of the *Journal*), I find that Dr. Burgess has recorded and figured (*Cave Temples of India*, p. 357) a large

sculptured image of this form in the Kānheri Caves on the West Coast of India, near Bombay harbour; and these caves are ascribed to a period about 850 A.D. (*loc. cit.* p. 186). This form is also found in the ruins of Nakou Thom in Cambodia (GARNIER, *Atlas*, p. viii.).

Avalokita, as The Defender from the Eight Dreads (see *Journal*, p. 76, No. IV.), is found in sculptured form in Ajanṭa Cave IV. and outside Cave XXVI., also in the Dherwāra Cave at Elura, Aurangābād Cave VII., and in several caves at Kānheri, from one of which a fine group is figured by Burgess (*loc. cit.* pl. lv. fig. 1).

L. A. WADDELL.

3.

*The Homestead, Barnes,*  
1st February, 1894.

DEAR SIR,—In connection with the biography of the Buddha, and with the evolution of the Buddhist Canon, it will be of interest to some members of the Royal Asiatic Society to know that there is an unedited Pāli Sutta in the Majjhima Nikāya which destroys certain views generally entertained by scholars. The accepted view is that it is only in the later commentaries, and not in the very earliest canonical texts, that the miraculous incidents attending the conception and birth of Gotama the Buddha are narrated in the imaginative detail familiar to readers (e.g.) of the Sanskrit *Lalita Vistara* and of the introductory portion of the Pāli Jātakas, as translated in your *Buddhist Birth Stories*. In conflict with this view is the Acchariyabbhuta-Sutta (No. 123 of the Majjhima Nikāya). This Sutta, which—as its name implies—deals with marvels and mysteries, makes the Buddha himself declare :

- (1) That he passed from the Tusita Heaven to his human mother's womb;
- (2) That the universe was thereon illuminated with brilliant light;