

the festival of Shar-rgan which was distinguished by a human sacrifice, was apparently celebrated in her honour.¹ A little above the old dancing place, the remains of a pit into which the victims were thrown, are shown to the traveller. The pit is said to have been of considerable depth, but now-a-days it is only a yard or so deep. Every year a child of eight years of age was thus sacrificed. Now-a-days a goat is offered instead. This happens at the new Shar-rgan place. Old people in the village say that their own grandmothers were witnesses of human sacrifices in their young days. Behind the pit, there are several terraces, on which people used to sit on the occasion of such sacrifices. The Shar-rgan festival, Mr. Schnabel tells me, as celebrated now-a-days, is a kind of thank-offering by those parents who have been blessed with a son during the past year.

On the occasion of the festival, 'songs of the Shar-rgan festival,' are sung. I discovered a manuscript containing these songs in the village, and had it copied. Although their meaning is not yet intelligible to me in every part, I can see that they are of great importance, with regard to the study of the pre-Buddhist religion of Kanāwar as well as of Tibet in general. The first songs of the collection remind me strongly of songs of the pre-Buddhist religion, as we find them in Ladakh, the *Ling-glu* and the 'Marriage ritual,' some of which have been published by me. It is of great importance that the religion they represent is spoken of as *Lha-chos* and *Bon-chos* in the Poo songs.² I have all along been of opinion that in the gLing-chos we have remnants of the earliest type of the Bon-chos, called *Jo-la-Bon* in the *Grub-mtha-shel-gyi-me-long*. This has been ridiculed by men like Dr. B. Laufer who know the Bon religion only from its latest productions, when it took sides with various forms of Hinduism, in antagonism to Buddhism. Literary productions like the "Songs of the Shar-rgan festival" go far to prove that the gLing-chos as brought to light by my efforts, is precisely the Jo-la-Bon religion of Tibet. But the songs of the Shar-rgan festival do not only speak of deities of the Bon religion, Gung-sngon-snyan-lha, the god of heaven, sPang-dmar-lha, the god of the red meadow, the earth, Byargod, the sun, King Ke-sar, etc., but make also mention of new deities, the *pho-lha* and the *mo-lha*, the deities of the 'male and female creative principle.'² These are unmistakably the Tibetan names of Śiva and Kālī, the gods of the pre-Tibetan population of the Sat-luj valley. And it is very probable that the human sacrifices which used to form part of the Shar-rgan festival, belong to the religion of this aboriginal population, and not to the

¹ The following proverb, discovered by Rev. R. Schnabel, refers to the former custom of human sacrifices at Poo :

Dang-po-nga-rgya-gar-nas-yong-tsa-na,
glang-phrug-lo-gsum-byis-pa-lo-brgyad.

Translation :—When I (Tārā) came here from India,

[I used to receive] a calf, three years old, and a child of eight years of age.

² A class of deity which is of great fame at Poo and surrounding districts are the *dGra-lha* who are also mentioned in the *Shar-rgan* songs. As Mr. Schnabel tells me, there are nine *dGra-lha* of different names said to exist in nine villages of Upper Kanāwar. They are the following : *Khro-mo-min*, at Poo ; *Chags-drul* at Kanam ; *Pal-lim-bzang-mo* at Dabling ; *Chos-lha bzang-rig-pa*, at Dobbaling ; *Tsa-khang* at Lid or Sarkhung ; *Klu 'abrug bkra-shis*, at Shasu ; *Ju-ti-dung-mo*, at Khab ; *gSer-jen-chen-po*, at Namgya ; *dMag-gi-dpon-po*, at Hang. Six of them are of the male, and three of them, those at Poo, Dabling, and Khab, are of the female sex.