

Avelōkitēśvara has been compared with Śiva, and Maitrēya with Brahmā. And in fact there are representations of Brahmā which are hardly different from some of Maitrēya. Thus, for instance, among the wood-carvings of the Śakti temple at Chhatrārḥī in Chambā State, there is a four-armed Brahmā, carrying a rosary and a water-pot, and accompanied by a pair of geese. The Chhatrārḥī sculptures date from about 700 A.D., and the Maitrēya of Mulbe is of the same time, approximately. Cunningham, without any foundation, assigns it to the 17th century! We visited the little temple below the huge sculpture, and found that its keepers were of an old family of On-pos (Astrologers). They said that their family had always been in charge of the sculptures, and that their family name was On-po-pa. The small temple in front of the sculpture was built by Wazīrb Sod-nams, who is the present baron of Mulbe. According to these On-pos, the sculpture is either of Rin-chen-bzang-po's time, or a little older. Rin-chen bzang-po is at any rate credited with having taken an interest in it. The On-pos say that the image was carved by "the eight great sons of Nyeba," whose figures are shown carved at the feet of Maitrēya.¹ It is particularly interesting to notice that one of these sons of Nyeba is shown wearing a round hat with a brim, as is the fashion with On-pos who probably inherited this costume from the ancient Bon-po priests of Tibet. The name *Nyeba* means "friend" (*Skr. mitra*). In the modern little temple of Wazīr bSod-nams there are fanciful fresco paintings, representing "the eight great sons of Nyeba." They are of various complexions, one has a blue, another a green face; some are even yellow black- and brown-faced. Except several repetitions of the *Om maṇi padme hūm* formula no inscriptions are found on the sculpture.

As regards the other antiquities at Mulbe, *viz.*, a Dard castle, two monasteries, and several important rock inscriptions, they have been fully treated in my article "The rock inscriptions at Mulbe."²

From Mulbe we marched to Kargil by way of Shargola, on the 5th October. The name of the village of Shargola (*Shar-'ago-lha*) seems to mean "Lord of the first rising" and to refer to the morning star. This amounts almost to a certainty when we examine the "Song of the *gDung-rten* at Shargola." A *gDung-rten* is a kind of *stūpa*. The song begins with the eulogy of an ancient hero, called Agu Drumba, who is the supposed builder of the monastery as well as of the *stūpa*, and ends with a direct praise of the morning star. The morning star is called here *nam-langs-kyi-skar-chen-po*, "the great star of the rising heaven." Agu Drumba is probably a personification of the morning star, as is the case with Agu 'aBu-dmar-lam-bstan of the Kesar Saga.³ The morning star is the herald of the sun, and therefore its personification would

¹ As we learn from S. Ch. Das' Dictionary, the eight great sons of Nyeba are Buddhist saints. Their names are given on p. 485 of the dictionary. But on p. 91 of the same book, we find a group of eight Bon-po deities who are called *sku-sras-brgyad*, the 'eight great sons.' It is evident that the Mulbe sculptures originally represented eight Bon-po deities who were converted into eight Buddhist deities at a later time.

The custom of representing the donors at the feet of the deity is met with both in Christian and Buddhist art. See *Note sur une statue du Gandhāra*. B. E. F. E. O. Hanoi, Vol. III, 1903, p. 149. [Ed.]

² *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 72 ff.

³ A lower Ladakhi version of the *Kesar Saga*, Bibliotheca Indica. [Can Drumba be connected with Dhruva as the Polar Star is called in Sanskrit?] [Ed.]