

another, and the people seem to employ their services indifferently. In Eastern Thibet, however, a creed known as Bön exists, and in Southeastern Thibet has a considerable following. The *Bonbo* or *Bonpo* system, as it is called, closely resembles the Lamaist in teaching, dress, lamaseries, etc., but this resemblance has no conciliating effect on the Lamas, who regard the Bonbos with feelings akin to what the Jews entertained toward the Samaritans. The people, however, do not partake of this prejudice, and scruple not to requisition their services "in beating the drum," the more so that their charges are low.

What the Bonbo religion is, and whether it is to be regarded as an integral part of Buddhism or not, is hard to say. To an ordinary Thibetan it is very much a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other. He notices that the Bonbo in going round a sacred building or monument keeps it on his left hand, whereas a Lama ever keeps it on his right; and this he will tell you is the sum of the difference. The probability is that the Bön religion, while it has become overlaid by Lamaism, yet points to a period anterior to its existence, and is in Thibet what Taoism is in China, a relic of a more primitive faith. One fact in particular would incline us to this view—namely, the significant fact of sacrifice; for "the Bonbo sacrifice living animals, especially fowls, to their gods, and this is an abomination in the eyes of Lamas."

The women of Thibet, by the place of authority which they occupy and the menial functions which they discharge, furnish a problem which thus far has baffled the reflective powers of the foreigner, be he Chinese or European. The Chinese, the more they see of the phenomenon, the wider they open their eyes in wonder; and the European traveller is equally at his wits' end for an explanation. The Thibetan woman is a coin of a double stamp—on one side she is a drudge, on the other a queen. Tasks far fitter for masculine than feminine shoulders are hers, which the ignoble males would deem it a degradation to perform, such as the carrying of water from rivers up to homes built on giddy heights; and yet, while the women of Thibet fill the place of drudge, they also sit on the throne of power. No good boy was ever more systematically subject to his mother, or dependent at every turn on her leave, than is the Thibetan husband on his wife. He cannot buy, and certainly he will not sell, save as his wife directs or permits. If the wife is from home, the husband will mention it, to any one wishing to deal with him, as the reason why necessarily all business in his case is at a standstill. How the women of Thibet have acquired such an ascendancy over the men, who otherwise are rough and intractable and by no means always pliant even to their chiefs, is one of the mysteries of the East which, like the esoteric teachings of Madame Blavatsky, lies beyond the range of the human faculty. Perhaps some day the women of Thibet may themselves furnish the clew. Till then the words of Horace concerning the hidden gold—

"Aurum irreperitum et sic melius situm
Quum terra oclat, spernere fortior"—