

54
ASIATIC RESEARCHES;

OR,

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

SOCIETY INSTITUTED IN BENGAL,

For inquiring into the

History and Antiquities;

THE

ARTS, SCIENCES, AND LITERATURE,

OF

A S I A.

VOLUME THE TENTH.

PRINTED VERBATIM FROM THE CALCUTTA EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR VERNOR, HOOD, AND SHARPE; J. CUTHELL; J. WALKER;
LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.; OTRIDGE AND SON; LONGMAN, HURST,
REES, ORME, AND BROWNE; R. FAULDER; SCATCHARD AND LETTERMAN;
R. LEE; J. MAWMAN; J. MURRAY; J. ASPERNE; BLACK, PAREY, AND
KINGSBURY; AND E. LLOYD;

At the Union Printing-Office, St. John's Square, by W. Wilson.

1811.

III.

On the LANGUAGES and LITERATURE of the INDO-CHINESE NATIONS.

BY J. LEYDEN, M. D.

THE inhabitants of the regions which lie between *India* and *China*, and the greater part of the islanders of the eastern sea, though divided into numerous tribes, and equally dissimilar in their languages and manners, may yet with propriety be characterized by the term *Indo-Chinese*. Situated between *India* and *China*, each of which proudly styles itself the most ancient among the nations of the earth, they have contented themselves with more modest claims to antiquity, and professed to borrow from one or other of their neighbours the principal features of their religion, laws and manners. The different periods, however, at which these were adopted in different countries, the various degrees of civilization, and the pre-existing habits on which they were engrafted, have produced a diversity of national characteristics, by which they are not only distinguished from the *Indian* and *Chinese* nations, but also from one another, notwithstanding their common mixed origin.

The intercourse of *Europeans* with the *Indo-Chinese* nations, though, for the first two centuries after the arrival of the *Portuguese* in the east, scarcely inferior to that which was carried on with *India* or *China*, was not of such a kind as to furnish us with a very accurate or extensive knowledge of their laws, manners or literature; and for more than a century it has been rather declining than increasing. Neither, since our

230 ON THE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

a child, which is also *Barma*, and *mateinay*, which seems to be an error, as it does not signify *to sit*, either in *Rukhéng* or *Barma*, but literally “*does not stand*,” the proper *Rukhéng* term being *ra't chowk*. The words in the vocabulary certainly exist in *Rukhéng* as well as in *Barma*; but in some instances different words are in more general use, in the former; as *ahri*, *long*, instead of *shé*, and *po-mro-naing-grong*, *beast*, instead of *taraitzan*. The *Rukhéng* pronunciation, sometimes too, is modified by the *Burma*, and the letter *r* is almost always omitted in the specimen, though it is a distinguishing characteristic of the *Rukhéng* pronunciation. Thus, the *Rukhéng* requires *mri-gri*, *earth*, instead of *myægyee*, in the specimen; *kri*, *great*, instead of *kyee*; *kripamb*, *foot*, instead of *kiæpamo*; *krowk*, *six*, instead of *kiouk*; *kri*, *a star*, instead of *kyay*, and *ni*, *the sun*, instead of *nay*. These errors, however, are not to be attributed to Dr. FR. BUCHANAN, nor detract, in the least, from the merit of his exertions in commencing the investigation; they evidently proceed from the inaccuracy, hurry, and indistinct pronunciation of his *Barma* assistants, and in his situation were perhaps not to be avoided, unless by attending to the native orthography.

Dr. F. BUCHANAN has also exhibited comparative specimens of two mixed dialects, spoken in *Arakan*; the first termed *Ruïnga*, spoken by the *Moslems* of the country, and consisting of a mixture of *Arabic*, *Hindi*, and *Rukhéng*; the second, termed *Rusán*, used by the *Hindús* of *Arakan*, who adhere to the system of BRAHMA, and formed by a large proportion of corrupted *Sanscrit* and *Bengali*, united to a comparatively small portion of *Rukhéng*. The dialect of the province of *Yo*, as it is pronounced by the *Barmas*, and *Ró* as it is termed by the *Rukhéng*, is