

ART. II.—*Remarks on the Indo-Chinese Alphabets.*

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IN the Ultra-Indian peninsula different layers of nationalities may be distinguished, being successive arrivals from different quarters. In most cases it is difficult to determine with exactitude the time of their respective settlements; but, as a general rule, the later conquerors have driven the former possessors of the soil into the hills, appropriating to themselves the more fertile lands on the banks of the rivers; and it may be readily assumed that the inhabitants we now find in the valleys of the Menam and Irawaddi are the most recent immigrants. History shows this to be the case. Whenever, in the course of events, the empires stretching along the great rivers became weakened by luxury or broken up by internal dissensions, the rude and warlike tribes of the surrounding mountains, watchful of the growing weakness of their former masters, and the decay of their defences, have burst from their forests and made slaves of the populations of the towns. This phenomenon, not unknown in other parts of the world, has been frequently repeated in the histories of Assam and Burmah, of Siam and of Kambodia; and it is by keeping before our eyes these continual revolutions that we may collect the *disjecta membra* of arts and sciences from the different quarters to which they have been scattered, and arrange them under one comprehensive aspect, where each of them occupies its natural position.

Apart from the people of the mountains, among whom savage aborigines are mixed up with refugees from oppressed kingdoms, we may divide the Indo-Chinese nations, according to the languages spoken by them, into four or five main branches—the Thai (Siamese), the Myammas (Burmese), the Annamese (Tunquinese and Cochin-Chinese), the Mon (Talaing and Peguan), and the Khmer (Kambodian).

1. The Thai race constitute the most important stock in

the very heart of the peninsula. All the different tribes, known as Shans by the Burmese, or as Laos by the Siamese, belong to it; and they have, through the Ahom, extended their influence as far as Assam. The Siamese themselves are only a sub-division of the Laos, their nearest relations; and during the reign of the old princes of Mogoung, the Shans were rulers in many of those provinces which afterwards formed the nucleus of the Burmese empire.

2. The Burmese and Arracanese, the chief representatives of the Myamma race, are allied to the Singpho, the Kachars, the Manipuris, and the majority of those tribes which inhabit the countries extending to Bengal and North-western India.

3. The Tunquinese and Cochin-Chinese, in their geographically secluded country, stand in a nearer connexion with the Chinese than with the other nations of the peninsula, from whom they are separated by the mountainous barrier which is washed by the Mekhong, and filled with an unknown multitude of various tribes, designated by the general name of Kha in Siamese and of Prom in Kambodian.

4. The Mons or Talains, who line the coast opposite to Kalinga and Telingana, formed the ancient channel by which Indian arts and institutions found their way into Pegu.

5. The Kambodians (the Khmer, Khom or Khamen) are still considered by the surrounding nations as their original teachers in religion and science.

With the exception of the people of Annam, who follow the Chinese, all the other Indo-Chinese nations have received their alphabets from India, and have adapted them to their monosyllabic tongues by the introduction of the tones or accents, which are so remarkable a characteristic of the Chinese language. Most of these alphabets have adopted in their arrangement the Sanskrit divisions into the several classes of gutturals, palatals, cerebrals, dentals, and labials. In the forms of the letters they have adopted a cursive and more flowing character, which imparts an external resemblance to the alphabets of Southern India, the Tamil and the Telinga, and more especially the Singhalese.

The Pali alphabet of the Trai-Pidok is used everywhere in

the peninsula in writing the sacred books; and the variations which the letters have undergone among the different nations who have adopted them, do not deviate much from their primary form. The Mon possess only this one alphabet in their literature; but among the Thai tribes, another class of alphabets has been formed for ordinary use, which is traceable more directly to Sanskrit than to Pali influence. The prototype of these alphabets is that of the Siamese, who use it for all the common purposes of their vernacular idioms, and make use of the Pali letters only in their religious books. The Shans, although they speak a dialect cognate to the Siamese, have given preference to the Burmese alphabet, which is the only one they use; but they experience much difficulty in its application, because of its unfitness for expressing the sounds of the language. The Southern Laos have therefore imitated the Siamese in adopting, together with their sacred alphabet, another for common use; and this common alphabet has been brought to greater perfection by the Laos Pung-dam (the black-bellied Laos), than among the white Laos (the Laos Pung-khao). But in Zimmay or Xiengmai, from its proximity to the Burmese frontier the Pali alphabet is chiefly used, even for ordinary purposes. In Viengchan the letters of the vulgar alphabet are called Akson (Akshara) Lao-xai (letters for missives), to distinguish them from the Akson Lao-khom. The Kambodian alphabet claims to be the common source from which all the different forms in the peninsula took their origin; and in Siam, as well as through the whole of Laos, the religious books are mostly known by the name of Nongsü-khom (Khamen or Khmer), as having been brought by the earliest missionaries who issued from the convents of ancient Kambodia. But even among the Kambodians there are traces of another alphabet, which at present has nearly become obsolete, giving way to Pali forms, or supplanted by the alphabet now used in Siam. The alphabets of the Burmese and Peguans are nearly identical, and differ only in the methods of spelling. The Péguan alphabet appears to be anterior to that of the Burmese, and is based on that of the Tounghthoo (or at least on that of

the former possessors of Tathung). According to the Rev. Dr. Mason, the Tounghthoo speak at present a dialect nearly allied to that of the Pwo-karen. In an old book which I saw at Bangkok, and which pretended to give the veritable Xieng of King Phra Ruang, the Peguan letters had even at that early date attained very nearly their present shape, whereas the Burmese alphabet bore a greater resemblance to the so-called Khom alphabets, which (according to Leyden) recall the Sinhala Pushpâkshara of Ceylon. These have preserved (even in writing the vernacular) the reduplication and subscription of consonants, to teach the rules of which the Pali letters are represented in the primers under two aspects—first as unconnected, and then as joined with the abbreviated forms. On the decline of learning, the illiterate readers, forgetting the right application of these consonants, jumbled them together, and many Pali words, which at first sight are unintelligible, become quite clear when the consonants and vowels are placed in their right positions.

A peculiar alphabet was in use among the Tsiampa before their once flourishing kingdom was destroyed by the Cochin-Chinese. The race is now almost extinct; and as European travellers had never previously visited the country, nothing of their literature has become known. I happened to fall in with a colony of fugitives, settled near Lawek, the former capital of Lower Kambodia, and I had the good fortune to see their vernacular alphabet, of which they gave me a copy at my request. As they have been converted to Islam, all their productions on religious subjects are written, as a matter of course, in the Arabic character; and this is the case generally with their ordinary writings. These people have been often mistaken for Siamese (both being called Siem by the Chinese, although their names are written with different characters), and this error has given rise to much confusion in the conclusions drawn by European writers from the Tonquinese records. The Arabic letters of their sacred books they call Akson Chwea or Xava, because they have received them from the Malays or Khek. Their vernacular books are sometimes written on palm-leaves, but the more modern ones

on a rough kind of paper. The Cham, settled at Battabong, showed me printed books in their peculiar alphabet, purchased from Cochin-Chinese traders, who bring them for sale, although they themselves do not understand them. An alphabet given to me by a Shan of the Yuns, who live at Küntun, near the frontier of Yunan, may probably resemble that of the Quantos, the ancestors of the Tunquinese, before the wild Yiaochi were civilized by the Chinese colonists. The old Ahom character, which has been supplanted by the Burmese alphabet, is now intelligible only to Pandits.

During my stay in Further India, I took from the very first a particular interest in the Brahmans, who are frequently met with in Burmah as well as in Siam and Kambodia, partly wandering about as cowherds or begging alms, partly employed as astrologers and diviners in the royal courts. In visiting their houses, I soon got sight of books peculiar to them, and easily obtained copies of the alphabets in which they are written. Of the different Laos alphabets, some were collected by missionaries, who allowed me to copy them; and others I had written down for me by Laos priests, who, for the benefit of their travelling countrymen, live in convents at Bangkok and other towns of Siam and Kambodia.

The Kambodians pretend to have received their alphabet by direct importation from Langka, on the arrival of Buddhaghosa; but the same claim is raised by the Arracanese or Rakhaing, who allege that the famous apostle brought it to their shores. Another candidate for that honour is the ancient town of Thatung, in the country afterwards called Pegu, when Hongsavadi was built by the Talaings or Raman. The rock inscription at Ramree mentions not only the arrival of Buddhaghosa, but also of still earlier missionaries; and the Burmese themselves acknowledge that they built the pagodas in Pagan after the model of those they saw at the conquest of Thatung.

The Indo-Chinese nations have mostly borrowed philosophical and scientific expressions from the Pali, with which language the era of their civilization commenced; but for such terms the Siamese frequently possess two words, one of

which appears to have been directly taken from the Sanskrit, and the other to be derived through the medium of Pali, in the same way as in the modern languages of Europe we find technical terms still retaining distinctly their Greek origin, and others which came to us after passing through the Latin. As it is not so easy for monosyllable languages to assimilate the complex Sanskrit words as the simplified forms of the Pali, these are naturally preferred in speaking Siamese; but the Sanskrit root will be recognised in writing, as those words are generally encumbered by a long tail of mute letters, which have been "killed" by the sign of *Thanthakhath* written over them, but which, if pronounced, would give the sound as it exists in Sanskrit.

The common numeral figures are called *Lek-vat* by the Siamese, to distinguish them from the more elegant forms of the *Lek-pachong*. When used in calculations, the *tua-lek* (full-bodied numerals) are shortened to the *hong-lek* (the tail of the numerals), in which nothing remains of the full body (*tua*) but the extreme lines, drawn in different directions. The principal arithmetical rules are contained in the book *Sut-lek* (the accomplishment of numbers), which boasts of an august origin, having been composed by *Phrom* (*Brahma*) in the *Pathomma-klab* (the first or *Lotus-kalpa*). The mathematical work of *Tamrah-lek* or *Chot-lek*, which treats of land-measuring, is jealously kept from the common people by those magistrates who have got possession of a copy. The Burmese have borrowed all their ordinal numbers from the Pali, whereas the Siamese have formed their ordinals from their own cardinals. But in some cases, when a ceremonial language is employed, the latter also use the Pali terms, not only for the ordinals but also for the cardinals. It is always observed among the Siamese, that men of any education affect to have forgotten the terms of the vulgar tongue, and employ Pali expressions in preference; and in course of time words really get quite lost by this fondness for pedantic phraseology. The language of the present *Kambodians* is so rapidly getting intermixed with Siamese words by the people affecting to imitate the speech of their

Siamese masters, that it has often been mistaken for a dialect of Siamese.

The Indo-Chinese people, in writing out their alphabets, usually begin by the well-known invocation, "Namo Phut-thaya," "Namo tassa bhagavato," etc. etc., followed by an enumeration of the short and long vowels. The latter are, therefore, styled the Namo, whereas the series of consonants is called the Ka-kha after the first letters of the alphabet. The alphabetical arrangement of the letters is followed by the combinations of consonant and vowel, as in Devanagari alphabets. In Siamese the different combinations of vowels and consonants are distributed over nine tables, the last of which is the longest, and rather difficult for beginners. In the Khyoungs a separate spelling-book is added for those who wish to study Pali.

The peculiar Siamese mode of denoting the vowels has been developed gradually; in the oldest rock inscription, that of Sukkhothay, the vowels are still written in a line with the consonants on the same level. The accentuation also can be shown to have passed through different phases, till it arrived at its present complicated arrangement, which is due to grammarians of the last century. In the Kamphi-hon (the text-books of astrologers), the vowels are converted into a kind of diacritical signs, being no longer written as distinct letters on a line with the consonants. The chief, and almost the only difference, between the spoken tongues of the Laos and of the Siamese consists in the circumstance that the former know nothing of the tones,—the artificial display of which constitutes the delight of a Siamese speaker. The number of influential Chinamen in Siam may have contributed to bring them into fashion. Next to the Chinese, the Siamese language is richest in tones; whereas they are more sparingly used by the other Indo-Chinese nations, the Burmese, for instance, having only two tones,—the light and the heavy. In the native Hokkœen (Fo-kien) pronouncing dictionaries, the Chinese characters are classed under eight sections, in accordance with the number of tones. Of the Kam-bodian language, neither grammar nor dictionary has ever been

published, but in a manuscript grammar which I found at the house of a missionary in Battabong, it was said: "*Lingua Camboica sat facilis est ad loquendum, utpote plane est carens tonis, ut sunt in Sinica, Annamitica et Siamitica, attamen paullisper dura videtur et agrestis in pronunciatione.*" In a Siamese book, which celebrates the discovery of the holy Phrabat on the rock near Naphaburi, and which was probably written about that time (1601), accents very seldom occur, and my moonshee, who pointed out the fact, stated the same to be the rule in the works of that period.

A natural consequence of the elaborate system of accentuation is the accumulation of euphonic and expletive particles, because our oratorical or emphatical intonation must necessarily be inadmissible in the speech of a Siamese or a Burmese, where the modulation of voice will at once change the meaning of any particular word, instead of giving a colouring to the spirit of the entire sentence. In a lucid treatise on the tones, which circulates in manuscript at Bangkok, the late Rev. Mr. Caswell says in regard to this:—"In Siamese, difference of orthography without change of sense occurs more frequently than change of tones without change of sense." We, on the contrary, often intentionally, change the orthography to distinguish to the eye two words of like sound (such as beech and beach), but we leave the tone entirely at the option of the speaker. In Siamese the emphasis influences the prosody.

There is a great variety of secret modes of writing both among the Burmese and the Siamese. Some of these may have been employed for political purposes or in the mysteries of religion; but most of them are nothing more than an idle game with letters and ciphers, without use or meaning. A Burmese savant gave me a list of sixty-six of these ciphers with long names attached to them. Sometimes the rounded forms of the Burmese letters have been made angular to give them a strange look, after the manner of the kyouk-tsa or the so-called square Pali, which is, in fact, merely a graphic variation of the ordinary writing. This square alphabet is employed in writing the Kammavâcha, and it may be seen in Lassen and Burnouf's "*Essai sur le Pali,*" and in Latter's



Grammar. The square form of the letters arose, no doubt, from attempts made to engrave the Burmese letters on stone, when it was found more easy to cut them in straight lines than in circles. In this way the character would get its name of *kyouk-tsa* (stone-writing); but now, being found only in the ancient inscriptions of ruined pagodas, it has acquired an odour of sanctity, and is looked upon by the people as something peculiarly sacred and mysterious. In like manner the alphabet of the Siamese stone-inscriptions, which are supposed to embody the mysteries of the *Sinlaprasat* (various sciences) has an aspect of stiffness, which is naturally lost when the characters are traced on a softer material.

The Sanskrit is at the head of a long array of occult languages in Burmah, and the first who spoke to me about it (a young scholar in Prome, just returned from the high school of Mandalay,) assured me that any one who was well versed in this wonderful tongue would have no difficulty whatever in understanding the language of birds. The specimens which he gave me were composed in a corrupt style of Sanskrit, and full of orthographical blunders.

The favourite and the simplest method of secret writing consists in replacing the letters by numerals, of which kind a specimen is found in *Latter's Grammar*, under the name of *Dû:-gaṇan*, where the consonants, with the exception of the third or fourth class, are represented by the first nine numerals. The substitution of vowels by numerals, instead of their usual symbols, occurs not only in the *Kyouktsa-gaṇan*, but also in other modes of occult writing. The *Paligaṇan*, which is used in Burmese, also means a numerical figure, and it occurs in Siamese in the form *gaṇan*, "to keep accounts." My informant, in giving me copies of these alphabets, added, that the *Dû:-gaṇan* was used in correspondence by persons who wished to conceal their meaning; and that the *Kyouktsa-gaṇan* was placed on the foundation-stones of pagodas to indicate in what direction the treasure lay buried. A more complicated illustration of the *Gaṇan-myo* is that called *Puṇṇā:-yeik-gaṇan* (the arithmetical writing of Brahmins), in which not only the

twenty principal letters, but all the thirty-three which compose the Burmese alphabet were represented by different combinations of numerals. Of the other sixty kinds, I will only mention two species of the Thinghya-gaṇan, one of which was said to represent the letters of the Ka-dû: and the other was the Tsun-katha-gaṇan, or the supposititious alphabet of the Kakhyens, north of Burmah.

In Siamese, the occult modes of writing, called Kho-lablük (profound objects) are mostly based on the same principles of replacing the letters by numerals, and the knowledge of them may become useful in deciphering inscriptions, because the dates, when written with letters (as is also frequently the case in Java) do not always possess their usual numeral powers, but sometimes those which they have acquired by the artificial arrangement of their substitutes. In the writing called Fonsen-ha (rains in great abundance), the consonants are replaced by regular combinations of numerals, but the vowels retain their usual form. The Sala-lek, on the contrary, replaces the vowels by certain combinations of numerals, leaving the consonants untouched. In the Rüsi-pleng-san (the mutations in the epistles of hermits), the writer transposes the letters of words according to a regulated system, which can only be read by one possessed of the key. A similar modification of the alphabet is that called Ko-kho-phalat-kan (the alternate changes of the letters in the alphabet); but the Thai-nabsam and the Thai-long follow a method of their own, which consists in multiplying the arithmetical powers of the letters by a number previously agreed upon. To this class belongs a vast variety of riddles, puns, rebuses, and anagrams, which form an inexhaustible source of amusement for the Siamese youths. A punster is highly valued among them, and still more by the Burmese girls, who are in the habit of putting their lovers to very severe tests of witticism. Another fund of equivoques exists in the different modes of accentuation; and the Siamese find a rich store of jokes and quibbles by intermixing the rude dialects of the peasantry with the polished pronunciation of the townspeople. The Siamese never lose an opportunity for a laugh at the people of Ligor (Nakhon Srithammarat or

Myang Lakhon), who speak the Siamese language with an even delivery, without any regard to the tonic accents. Nevertheless, it is Ligor that produces most of the actors in theatrical representations at Bangkok; but the intonation in the Lakhon (dramas) is in itself so peculiar that the irregularities of the provincial idiom become indifferent. In Burmah, also, the language of the stage is a language of its own, changing frequently the meaning of words and employing high-sounding and far-fetched synonyms, although not to the same extent as the language of poetry, or the Linga-tsaga. Whimsical vagaries, which it would be difficult to reduce to a system, are found in the style of books professing to teach the art of gold-making, which are mostly ascribed in Siam to a great adept in that science named Maha-thay. In Burmese translations of the Pitakat-thon-pon, sentences in Pali are regularly followed by the Anet or explanation in the vulgar tongue. Most of the Siamese translations have likewise a copious sprinkling of Pali; but Pali forms are carefully avoided in the Mon or Mantras, which consist of prayers for the use of women, because it would be a great sin (bab) if a female eye should fall upon the sacred character of the Nongsü-khom. They might even be injured and die by the innate power (Rith) of these holy symbols.

Those Kambodian priests who occupied themselves with reading (of whom, it is true, there are only a few) told me that originally letters had been divided into three kinds,—the Akson-xieng or xrieng, Akson-mûl, and Akson-ming. Xieng means inclined, and the Akson-xieng were described as angular letters, in contradistinction to the Akson-mûl or khloṃ of the present day,—khloṃ being the Siamese, and mûl the Kambodian word for “round;” the Akson-ming are the large-headed letters, which are now extant in the inscriptions of Lalai and Vat-ek. In the Siamese history of the Phongsavadan-myang-nya, it is related that Phra Ruang, or Phra Lung, the mythical king of Sukkhothay, invented the Xieng-phama, Xieng-mon, Xieng-khamen, Xieng-thay, etc.; and characters formed of straight lines were used in several parts of the Archipelago, among the Rejang, the Wugi (Bugis),

the Batta, etc. etc. The authentic forms of these ancient letters have been lost, and are of course unknown to the Siamese ; but the Siamese still give the value of “ ancient ” to the word *Xieng*, and employ it to denote several kinds of antiquated alphabets. Most of these are supposed to have been devised by *Maharaxakhru*, which name, however, is no patronymic, and only means the King’s great Guru, or teacher. In *Kambodia*, the word *Chieng* serves to distinguish the letters in ordinary use from the sacred letters. The *Laos* allude directly to *Phra-maha-anon* (*Rahanda* or *Ananda*) as the inventor of their modes of writing ; and they place *Phra-phuttha-khosa-chan* (*Buddhaghosa*) only in a second line among the later reformers and improvers of the *Akson-lao-xai*. Some innovations are attributed to *Nāgasena*, known as *Nāgārjuna* in his discussions with *Milinda*, king of the *Yonas* or *Janaka* ; and the *Laos* claim for themselves the name of *Janaka*, in accordance with their fancy of transferring the names of Western India to the transgangetic peninsula.

On entering the convent, the *Laos* boys are first taught the invocation of *Buddha*, the so-called *Namo*. After having learned the ten *Sīla*, or precepts, they begin to read the *Akson-lao-khom*, and when these are mastered the *Akson-lao-xai*. The last finish is given by instruction in some cursive kinds of writing and by lessons in arithmetic, unless they prefer, by assuming the yellow robe, to enter upon the long and dreary road of *Buddhistic* theology.

In the Temple-court of the royal palace at *Bangkok*, three stone-inscriptions have been placed, which had been discovered on the sites of ancient cities. These have recently been copied by order of the king. They have not yet been translated. The oldest of them is that of *Sukkhothay*, which celebrates the auspicious reign of king *Ramkhamheng*, his deeds and institutions, with many details relative to the description of the capital and the extent of the kingdom. In my endeavours to decipher it, I applied to all those natives who were pointed out to me as particularly sagacious ; and although my questions were often asked in vain, I received from some of them valuable aid, and was able to avail myself of their sug-

gestions and corrections. Among the missionaries residing at Bangkok, I am greatly indebted to Mr. Chandler and his learned lady for the identification of the alphabet. The letters bear a more ancient type than that of the other two inscriptions, which have rather a religious than a political purport.

According to the inscription brought from Labong, in Laos, Somdet-bophit-maha-raxa-chao, king of Xiengmai, buried many relics enclosed in an iron chest, which was to last the 5000 years of the Phuttha-sâsana (Buddha's religion), invoking Phra-In (Indra) and Phrahm (Brahma), and founding the holy period. He made his parents partakers of the merits distributed, and accumulated thereby merits in such abundance that even oxen, elephants, and horses could profit by the opportunity, and proceed direct to Niruphan (Nibban).

The inscription found at Kampheng-phet (the city of the diamond-wall), near Rahaing, contains many details, which I hope may be useful in bringing some order into Siamese chronology, but I have not yet succeeded in making out the whole reading to my satisfaction; I therefore limit myself to a short summary. Phra-lüthai-rat, who, on his coronation in the town of Srisatxanalai-sukkhothay, received the title of Sri Suriya Phra Maha Thammarâxâthirât, buries in several places some holy relics which had been brought from Langkathavib (the island of Ceylon), together with the seeds of the Phra-sri-maha-phot (the great Bodhi tree of felicitous blessedness). At the time of Phra-phutth (Phra-pen-chao, or the lord, who is the master), the life of man reached a hundred years; the king enters into a calculation how many years had elapsed to shorten it to the seventy years of the period of the inscription; and then being continually importuned, as he says, by questions about the duration of the religion of Phra-phutth on earth, he tries to satisfy the inquirers: he tells them that, after ninety-nine years, the knowledge of the Phra-pidok-trai will become imperfect; after a thousand years the observance of the precepts will be discontinued; in another thousand years there will be nobody left wearing yellow garments (not so much yellow cloth will be found as would suffice to be placed behind the ear), and after a thousand years more all the holy relics will fly through the air to

Langka, and having been collected there, will be burnt in the flames which rise up to Phrohmalok. Thenceforth all beings will go to Naraka until the arrival of Phra-sri-arimatheia, the believers in the Phra-phuttha-sâsana having died already after the second thousand. But the precise time of these events cannot be fixed, because nobody can compute the exact amount of merits accumulated by the pious actions of king Phra Maha Thammarâxâthirât. These continual changes of the era make all historical events in ultra-India matters of much doubt and uncertainty unless they can be subjected to a certain control by counting them both ways, forwards and backwards.

King Ramkâmheng, who records on the stone-pillars of Sukkhotay the invention of the letters now called Nongsüteh-boran (writings of old) by the Siamese, is often identified with one of the representatives of Phra Ruang, a favourite name of frequent recurrence in Siamese history. Phra Ruang is to the Siamese the founder of their nationality, to him all their proud romances are referred, when the name of Thay, the "freemen," was acquired, and the yoke of the Kambodians was broken; but there are also some obscure traditions, considered as the most ancient, which are never written, but only handed down orally; and in these it is said that Phra Ruang belonged to the Khot Phrahmana, was of Brahminical descent, and that he reigned over the Lava. I must leave the reconciliation of these conflicting statements for another opportunity, and will only remark that the Siamese critics themselves distinguish generally two different personages as bearing the title of Phra Ruang. The first of these resided at Savankhalok, and abolished the era, introducing in its stead the Chunlo-sakkharat. He was the son of a Nâga or Nakh (a subterraneous serpent in dragon-like form), an expression which in further India, as once in Attica, expresses relationship to the aborigines of the soil. The second Phra Ruang is known also in Peguan history as the father-in-law of Chaofarua, who expelled the Burmese governor of Martaban, and founded an independent kingdom in that town. The date of Ramkâmheng must be assigned to a period anterior to the time of the latter king, so that his reign falls between the

two Phra Ruangs. The true history of the Siamese race in the valley of the Menam commences with the building of Ayuthia, and the modern part of the annals is therefore called the history of Ayuthia. Between this city and Pechaburi is situated the most ancient pagoda of Siam, the Pathommachedi, which the Siamese themselves acknowledge to have been erected before their arrival in that country. On its restoration by the now reigning king, some curious inscriptions were found in an old kind of Devanagari, resembling the stone records which exist in the province of Ligor and in other parts of the Malayan peninsula. At present the kings do not go so far as to record their actions on stone. They follow the general practice, and are satisfied with writing them on paper, at least in Siam, where the first king has become an author, and has composed books on Buddhism, history, and grammar. In Mandalay I saw one of the court-yards in the palace converted to a dwelling for stonemasons, some dozen of whom were engaged in cutting the Prajñâpâramitâ of the Abhidhamma on massive stone-posts, which the king intended to place in lines along the highways of his kingdom. As it is not unusual, however, in those parts of the world to see many things begun with much parade which are never expected to come to an end, I fear that such has been the fate of this project also, which would have threatened Asoka's fame with a rival. The King of Siam has invented an alphabet, the letters of which he thinks adapted to the Indo-Chinese languages as well as to those of the Arian family: he has called it therefore Aryaka (Arekyamatthu). Some books have been printed in this character at Bangkok at the King's own press, and it was at one time studied eagerly by all those who wished to court royal favour. This same king, who holds the first rank in his kingdom, not only by his birth but by his learning, has composed a Pali Grammar, in which he abandons Kachchâyana for the system of Latin Grammar, which he has been taught by the French missionaries. It is written in usum Delphini for the princes entering the priesthood.

The alphabets collected in my travels are the following:—

1. Alphabet of the Thounghthoo or Pa-au.

2. Alphabet of the Shans.
3.     "     "     Shans, as used in Mone.
4.     "     "     Yuns (near Küntun).
5.     "     "     Talains.
6. An older form of the Talain alphabet.
7. An antiquated form of the Burmese alphabet.
8. Xieng Khom.
9. Xieng Khrün (of Lakhon). [(Xiengmai).
10. Alphabet used by the Shans (or Laos) at Zimmay
11. Sacred alphabet of the Kambodians.
12. Vulgar alphabet of the Kambodians.
13. Pali alphabet of the Nongsü Khom (at Udong).
14. Sacred alphabet of the Western Laos.
15. Vulgar alphabet of the Western Laos.
16. Sacred alphabet of the Eastern Laos.
17. Vulgar alphabet of the Eastern Laos.
18. Akson Lao Khom (used in Viengchan).
19. Akson Lao Xai (used in Viengchan).
20. Alphabet of the Brahmans in Siam.
21. Alphabet of the Brahmans in Kambodia.
22. Alphabet of the Cham or Tsiampa.
23. Alphabet extracted from the stone-inscription of Sukkhotay. [vacha.
24. Alphabet of the Kyouk-tsa in the Burmese Kamma-
25. Letters of the alphabet invented by the first king of Siam under the name of Aryaka.

For comparison are added—1. The Burmese alphabet. 2. The Siamese alphabet of the present day. 3. A Siamese alphabet of the 17th century, as given by Loubère. 4. The Pali alphabet of the 17th century, as given by Loubère. 5. The Pali alphabet of the Siamese (Burnouf and Lassen). 6. The Singhalese alphabet. 7. The Javanese alphabet. 8. The Khamti alphabet, according to Brown. 9. The alphabet of the Ahom.

Three kinds of secret writing used by the Burmese (Punṇā-yeik-gaṇan, Thinghya-gaṇan, and Tsun-katha-gaṇan)

Two kinds of sacred writing used by the Siamese (Fonsinha and Salalek).

The Siamese numerals in three different forms.

A kind of musical notes found in a book of chants at Bangkok.

Siamese verses with the metre marked by accents.

Specimen of the inscription at Labong.

"     "     "     Kampheng-phet.

Stone-inscription of Sukkhotay.

For comparison's sake is added the commencement of the stone-inscription of Ramree.