

2. ARAKANESE DIALECT.

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to make a few remarks on Mr. B. Houghton's article on the Arakanese Dialect, in which I find a few points likely to lead to mistake.

He admits that the Arakanese branched off at a very early date, and that their dialect is archaic, but that it *by no means represents exactly the sounds of Burmese as it is spelt.*

As regards *final* consonants this is true, but not so as regards *initials*. Whenever ရ R ought to occur it is pronounced as R, and so written. It is only the Burman who confounds ရ R with ဝ Y, and Judson, when making his Dictionary, had to consult Arakanese authorities on this point. As regards finals, it is simply impossible, in many cases, to find out which is the true one, and there are no valid reasons for supposing that a final ဝ c (or ts) was even pronounced otherwise than as a sharp t̄. The men who adapted the Pali alphabet to the Burmese speech had to supply vowel sounds which they did not find in Pali, and so they had to do it by means of final consonants. They wanted to express i as in *it*, and they did it by laying down the rule that *ac = it*, the *t* being swallowed and scarcely perceptible. Again, ဝ ny, the Pali ñ, has two final sounds ñ and i, one representing the *y* or *j* part of the letter and the other the ñ. When it is to be pronounced ñ a small circle is put over it, thus: ချည် 'kyi 'to tie,' ချည် 'kyin 'sour.' I consider it a mistake to say that ဝဝ = sañ; it represents *si*, or, when lisped, *thi* (*θi*), and this aorist affix is commonly pronounced *de*.

Burmese is evidently undergoing changes in its pronunciation, and words beginning with *ky* are now pronounced as

if spelt with 'ky: thus ကြဲ ကြဲ *kyet* 'a fowl' is, I am told, now pronounced *chet* as if it were ခြဲ ကြဲ *chet* 'to cook.' *Kyun* is pronounced *chun*. The Burman says *chut* 'to deliver,' but the Arakanese sticks to *kyut*. This was not so thirty years ago.

Mr. Houghton gives 'san as the Arakanese for 'elephant'; it may be so now, but the older and rougher Arakanese pronounced it *chan̄g*.

Certain words ought not to have been put in the list: *chā-pwā* 'a Shan chief' is probably not Burmese, and the same may be said of *san̄-kran*.

Dāyā should not be compared with *pat-sō*, for the former is a Bengali word, and does not mean exactly the same thing. I always understood that the word was 'dōlyā, and Mr. Blumhardt is of opinion that it may be a form of 'dotiya, the diminutive of 'doti.

In comparing dialects a word borrowed from another language should always be noted as such.

In the case of *raik* 'to beat,' is it certain that the word does not exist in Arakanese? In Burmese *that* means 'to strike with a swinging motion of the arm; to beat': *raik* 'to strike' (with something).

As regards foreign fruit, the Burman calls the guava *mālakā*, possibly because it came from Malacca; but where did the Arakanese get *kū-yain*? The Burman calls the papaya *θimb'ā-θi*: 'ship-fruit,' but what is the Arakanese *padagā*? Is it Portuguese or West Indian?

Names of fish should be omitted as they have mostly been borrowed by the Burmese from the Mun (or Mōn).

K'rē-tā-rā 'the presence,' is not intelligible, as I can find no such word in the dictionary, and *fox* is a misprint for *box*. In comparing dialects the greatest care is required, and every little difference should be explained if possible.—
Yours truly,

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