

Rápti with Sarávāti, &c., sufficiently shows, how much care is necessary in seeking the derivation of words less frequently mentioned in history, or words not belonging to a language so well known as Sanskrit, but to one of the aboriginal languages.¹ There are also some geographical names parts of which have undergone most unexpected alterations. As an instance, I may give Kríshna, with its modifications into Kíshan, Kístna, Kírshan, Kāh.

Occasionally, some assistance in finding out the meaning of a name may be derived from the following considerations:—

When a name is applied to a district and to its principal place too, the meaning generally shows that its original reference is to the town, and that only later it has been extended over the district; as Nágpur, *town of serpents*; Haidarabád, *Háidar's town*; Zánkhar, *the copper fort*, &c.² If a spring, river, tank, or lake, and an inhabited place near them, bear the same name, the interpretation of the word shows the latter to be the secondary object, as in Mínchu, *the perfect water*; Hímbab, *the snow-descended river*; Nainítál, *Náini's lake*, &c.

Nearly every language has instances to show of the fact, that, in the course of time, the meaning of some words, which originally stood for something good, has become indifferent or even bad.³ Such modifications may offer considerable difficulties in interpretation if unexpectedly met with in geographical terminology.

3. MODIFICATIONS IN THE DIFFERENT LINGUISTIC GROUPS.

Sanskrit, Hindostáni, Arabic, Persian, and Tibetan.

The Sanskrit-Hindu names have a particular tendency to connect topographical terminology with the sacred ideal beings of Indian mythology and ancient history;

¹ For the connection of ancient with modern geographical terminology, I should recommend as indispensable Lassen's Map of Ancient India (added to his "Indische Alterthumskunde") with the Indian classical and principal modern names, drawn by H. Kiepert, Berlin 1853, and the map, "India in the second century A.D.," added to the 3rd volume of Lassen's work, 1858.

² Foreigners, either from ignorance of the details, or from neglecting them, not unfrequently use the name of a country for that of its capital. So we hear Kashmir for Srinágar, Ladák for Leh. Compare Marco Polo's *Tubet*, p. 253, note 2.

³ A few striking examples may be found in the following: In German *ver*, in *verachten* and *verehren*, *versprechen* and *versagen*, the words *schlicht*, plain, and *schlecht*, bad, may be quoted. Instances of analogous alterations in Hindostáni may be found in *míhtar*, or *méhtar*, a *prince*, a *chief*, now a *sweeper*; in the Arabic element of Hindostáni *ein gharíb*, originally *stranger*, now *poor*; for this we have another surprising analogous case in German, where *elend*, miserable, is only a slightly modified form of *ausländisch*, foreign. I might quote a great many more instances if the occasion allowed of my entering into such details.