



## FILE

Name: Jon786\_Jones\_3rdAnniversaryDiscourse1799.pdf  
Type: Searchable PDF/A (text under image)  
Encoding: Unicode (no standard diacritics)  
Date: 23.4.2008

## BRIEF RECORD

Author: Jones, William  
Title: The Third Anniversary Discourse, Delivered 2 February, 1786: "On the Hindús".  
Publ. in: *The Works of Sir William Jones. In Six Volumes* / London : Robinson 1799.  
Description: Vol. 1, pp. 19-34.

## FULL RECORD

[www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/ebene\\_1/fiindolo/gr\\_elib.htm](http://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/ebene_1/fiindolo/gr_elib.htm)

## NOTICE

This file may be copied on the condition that its entire contents, including this data sheet, remain intact.

THE  
WORKS  
OF  
SIR WILLIAM JONES.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

---

VOL. I.

---

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW;  
AND R. H. EVANS (SUCCESSOR TO MR. EDWARDS), NO. 26, PALL-MALL.  
MDCCXCIX.

THE THIRD  
ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED 2 FEBRUARY, 1786.

BY

THE PRESIDENT.

---

IN the former discourses, which I had the honour of addressing to you, Gentlemen, on the *institution* and *objects* of our Society, I confined myself purposely to general topics; giving in the first a distant prospect of the vast career, on which we were entering, and, in the second, exhibiting a more diffuse, but still superficial, sketch of the various discoveries in History, Science, and Art, which we might justly expect from our inquiries into the literature of *Asia*. I now propose to fill up that outline so comprehensively as to omit nothing essential, yet so concisely as to avoid being tedious; and, if the state of my health shall suffer me to continue long enough in this climate, it is my design, with your permission, to prepare for our annual meetings a series of short dissertations, unconnected in their titles and subjects, but all tending to a common point of no small importance in the pursuit of interesting truths.

Of all the works, which have been published in our own age, or, perhaps, in any other, on the History of the Ancient World, and *the first population of this habitable globe*, that of Mr. JACOB BRYANT, whom I name with reverence and affection, has the best claim to the praise of deep erudition ingeniously applied, and new theories happily illustrated by an assemblage of numberless converging rays from a most extensive circumference: it falls, nevertheless, as every human work must fall, short of perfection; and the least satisfactory part of it seems to be that, which relates to the derivation of words from *Asiatick* languages. Etymology has, no doubt, some use in historical researches; but it is a medium of proof so very fallacious, that, where it elucidates one fact, it obscures a thousand, and more frequently borders on the ridiculous, than leads to any solid conclusion: it rarely carries with it any *internal* power of conviction from a resemblance of sounds or similarity of letters; yet often, where it is wholly unaffected by those advantages, it may be indisputably proved by *extrinsic* evidence. We know *à posteriori*, that both *fitz* and *bijo*, by the nature of two several dialects, are derived from *filius*; that *uncle* comes from *avus*, and *stranger* from *extra*; that *jour* is deducible, through the *Italian*, from *dies*; and *rossignol* from *luscinia*, or the *singer in groves*; that *sciuro*, *écureuil*, and *squirrel* are compounded of two *Greek* words descriptive of the animal; which etymologies, though they could not have been demonstrated *à priori*, might serve to confirm, if any such confirmation were necessary, the proofs of a connection between the members of one great Empire; but, when we derive our *banger*, or *short pendent sword*, from the *Persian*, because ignorant travellers thus mis-spell the word *khanjar*, which in truth means a different weapon, or *sandal-wood* from the *Greek*, because we suppose, that *sandals* were sometimes made of it, we gain no ground in proving the affinity of nations, and only weaken arguments, which might otherwise be firmly supported. That Cu's then, or, as it certainly is written in  
one

one ancient dialect, Cu'r, and in others, probably, CA's, enters into the composition of many proper names, we may very reasonably believe; and that *Algeziras* takes its name from the *Arabick* word for an *island*, cannot be doubted; but, when we are told from *Europe*, that places and provinces in *India* were clearly denominated from those words, we cannot but observe, in the first instance, that the town, in which we now are assembled, is properly written and pronounced *Calicàt*; that both *Càt* and *Cút* unquestionably mean *places of strength*, or, in general, any *inclosures*; and that *Gujaràt* is at least as remote from *Jezirab* in sound, as it is in situation,

Another exception (and a third could hardly be discovered by any candid criticism) to the *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, is, that the *method* of reasoning and arrangement of topics adopted in that learned work are not quite agreeable to the title, but almost wholly *synthetical*, and, though *synthesis* may be the better mode in pure *science*, where the principles are undeniable, yet it seems less calculated to give complete satisfaction in *historical* disquisitions, where every postulatium will perhaps be refused, and every definition controverted: this may seem a slight objection, but the subject is in itself so interesting, and the full conviction of all reasonable men so desirable, that it may not be lost labour to discuss the same or a similar theory in a method purely analytical, and, after beginning with facts of general notoriety or undisputed evidence, to investigate such truths, as are at first unknown or very imperfectly discerned.

The *five* principal nations, who have in different ages divided among themselves, as a kind of inheritance, the vast continent of *Asia*, with the many islands depending on it, are the *Indians*, the *Chinese*, the *Tartars*, the *Arabs*, and the *Persians*: *who* they severally were, *whence*, and *when* they came, *where* they now are settled, and *what* advantage

*advantage* a more perfect knowledge of them all may bring to our *European* world, will be shown, I trust, in *five* distinct essays; the last of which will demonstrate the connexion or diversity between them, and solve the great problem, whether they had *any* common origin, and whether that origin was *the same*, which we generally ascribe to them.

I begin with *India*, not because I find reason to believe it the true centre of population or of knowledge, but, because it is the country, which we now inhabit, and from which we may best survey the regions around us; as, in popular language, we speak of the *rising* sun, and of his *progress through the Zodiack*, although it had long ago been imagined, and is now demonstrated, that he is himself the centre of our planetary system. Let me here premise, that, in all these inquiries concerning<sup>t</sup> the history of *India*, I shall confine my researches downwards to the *Mohammedan* conquests at the beginning of the *eleventh* century, but extend them upwards, as high as possible, to the earliest authentick records of the human species.

*India* then, on its most enlarged scale, in which the ancients appear to have understood it, comprises an area of near *forty* degrees on each side, including a space almost as large as all *Europe*; being divided on the west from *Persia* by the *Arachosian* mountains, limited on the east by the *Chinese* part of the farther peninsula, confined on the north by the wilds of *Tartary*, and extending to the south as far as the isles of *Java*. This trapezium, therefore, comprehends the stupendous hills of *Potyid* or *Tibet*, the beautiful valley of *Cashmir*, and all the domains of the old *Indoscythians*, the countries of *Népal* and *Butánt*, *Cámrúp* or *Asám*, together with *Siam*, *Ava*, *Racan*, and the bordering kingdoms, as far as the *China* of the *Hindus* or *Sín* of the *Arabian* Geographers; not to mention the whole western peninsula with the celebrated island of  
*Sinhala*,

*Simbala*, or *Lion-like men*, at its southern extremity. By *India*, in short, I mean that whole extent of country, in which the primitive religion and languages of the *Hindus* prevail at this day with more or less of their ancient purity, and in which the *Nágarí* letters are still used with more or less deviation from their original form.

The *Hindus* themselves believe their own country, to which they give the vain epithets of *Medbyama* or *Central*, and *Punyabhúmi*, or the *Land of Virtues*, to have been the portion of BHARAT, one of *nine* brothers, whose father had the dominion of the whole earth; and they represent the mountains of *Himálaya* as lying to the north, and, to the west, those of *Vindhya*, called also *Vindian* by the *Greeks*; beyond which the *Sindhu* runs in several branches to the sea, and meets it nearly opposite to the point of *Dwáracà*, the celebrated seat of their Shepherd God: in the *south-east* they place the great river *Saravatya*; by which they probably mean that of *Ava*, called also *Airávatí* in part of its course, and giving perhaps its ancient name to the gulf of *Sabara*. This domain of *Bharat* they consider as the middle of the *Jambudwípa*, which the *Tibetians* also call the Land of *Zambu*; and the appellation is extremely remarkable; for *Jambu* is the *Sanscrit* name of a delicate fruit called *Jáman* by the *Muselmans*, and by us *rose-apple*; but the largest and richest sort is named *Amrita*, or *Immortal*; and the Mythologists of *Tibet* apply the same word to a celestial tree bearing *ambrosial fruit*, and adjoining to *four* vast rocks, from which as many sacred rivers derive their several streams.

The inhabitants of this extensive tract are described by Mr. LORD with great exactness, and with a picturesque elegance peculiar to our ancient language: “A people, says he, presented themselves to mine  
“ eyes, clothed in linen garments somewhat low descending, of a  
“ gesture and garb, as I may say, maidenly and well nigh effeminate,  
“ of

“ of a countenance shy and somewhat estranged, yet smiling out a  
 “ glozed and bathful familiarity.” Mr. ORME, the Historian of *India*,  
 who unites an exquisite taste for every fine art with an accurate know-  
 ledge of *Asiatick* manners, observes, in his elegant preliminary Differ-  
 tation, that this “ country has been inhabited from the earliest an-  
 “ tiquity by a people, who have no resemblance, either in their figure  
 “ or manners, with any of the nations contiguous to them,” and that,  
 “ although conquerors have established themselves at different times  
 “ in different parts of *India*, yet the original inhabitants have lost very  
 “ little of their original character.” The ancients, in fact, give a de-  
 scription of them, which our early travellers confirmed, and our own  
 personal knowledge of them nearly verifies ; as you will perceive from  
 a passage in the Geographical Poem of DIONYSIUS, which the Analyst  
 of Ancient Mythology has translated with great spirit :

“ To th’ east a lovely country wide extends,  
 “ INDIA, whose borders the wide ocean bounds ;  
 “ On this the sun, new rising from the main,  
 “ Smiles pleas’d, and sheds his early orient beam.  
 “ Th’ inhabitants are swart, and in their locks  
 “ Betray the tints of the dark hyacinth.  
 “ Various their functions ; some the rock explore,  
 “ And from the mine extract the latent gold ;  
 “ Some labour at the woof with cunning skill,  
 “ And manufacture linen ; others shape  
 “ And polish iv’ry with the nicest care :  
 “ Many retire to rivers shoal, and plunge  
 “ To seek the beryl flaming in its bed,  
 “ Or glitt’ring diamond. Oft the jasper’s found  
 “ Green, but diaphanous ; the topaz too  
 “ Of ray serene and pleasing ; last of all

“ The



“ The lovely amethyft, in which combine  
 “ All the mild shades of purple. The rich foil,  
 “ Wash’d by a thousand rivers, from all fides  
 “ Pours on the natives wealth without control.”

Their fources of wealth are ftill abundant even after fo many revolutions and conquests ; in their manufactures of cotton they ftill furpafs all the world ; and their features have, moft probably, remained unaltered fince the time of DIONYSIUS ; nor can we reafonably doubt, how degenerate and abafed fo ever the *Hindus* may now appear, that in fome early age they were fplendid in arts and arms, happy in government, wife in legiflation, and eminent in various knowledge : but, fince their civil hiftory beyond the middle of the *nineteenth* century from the prefent time, is involved in a cloud of fables, we feem to poffefs only *four* general media of fatisfying our curiofity concerning it ; namely, firft, their *Languages* and *Letters* ; fecondly, their *Philofophy* and *Religion* ; thirdly, the actual remains of their old *Sculpture* and *Architefture* ; and fourthly, the written memorials of their *Sciences* and *Arts*.

I. It is much to be lamented, that neither the *Greeks*, who attended ALEXANDER into *India*, nor thofe who were long connected with it under the *Bactrian* Princes, have left us any means of knowing with accuracy, what vernacular languages they found on their arrival in this Empire. The *Mohammedans*, we know, heard the people of proper *Hindufthan*, or *India* on a limited fcale, fpeaking a *Bhâshâ*, or living tongue of a very fingular conftruction, the pureft dialect of which was current in the diftricts round *Agrâ*, and chiefly on the poetical ground of *Mat’burâ* ; and this is commonly called the idiom of *Vraja*. Five words in fix, perhaps, of this language were derived from the *Sanscrit*, in which books of religion and fciences were compofed, and which appears to have been formed by an exquisite grammatical

*arrangement*, as the name itself implies, from some unpolished idiom ; but the basis of the *Hindustànì*, particularly the inflexions and regimen of verbs, differed as widely from both those tongues, as *Arabick* differs from *Persian*, or *German* from *Greek*. Now the general effect of conquest is to leave the current language of the conquered people unchanged, or very little altered, in its ground-work, but to blend with it a considerable number of exotick names both for things and for actions ; as it has happened in every country, that I can recollect, where the conquerors have not preserved their own tongue unmixed with that of the natives, like the *Turks* in *Greece*, and the *Saxons* in *Britain* ; and this analogy might induce us to believe, that the pure *Hindì*, whether of *Tartarian* or *Chaldean* origin, was primeval in Upper *India*, into which the *Sanscrit* was introduced by conquerors from other kingdoms in some very remote age ; for we cannot doubt that the language of the *Vèda's* was used in the great extent of country, which has before been delineated, as long as the religion of *Brahmà* has prevailed in it.

The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure ; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident ; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists : there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothick* and the *Celtick*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit* ; and the old *Persian* might be added to the same family, if this were the place for discussing any question concerning the antiquities of *Persia*.

The

The *characters*, in which the languages of *India* were originally written, are called *Nágarí*, from *Nagara*, a City, with the word *Déva* sometimes prefixed, because they are believed to have been taught by the Divinity himself, who prescribed the artificial order of them in a voice from heaven. These letters, with no greater variation in their form by the change of straight lines to curves, or conversely, than the *Cufick* alphabet has received in its way to *India*, are still adopted in more than twenty kingdoms and states, from the borders of *Cashgar* and *Khoten*, to *Ráma's* bridge, and from the *Sindhu* to the river of *Siam*; nor can I help believing, although the polished and elegant *Dévanágarí* may not be so ancient as the monumental characters in the caverns of *Jarásandha*, that the square *Chaldaick* letters, in which most *Hebrew* books are copied, were originally the same, or derived from the same prototype, both with the *Indian* and *Arabian* characters: that the *Phœnician*, from which the *Greek* and *Roman* alphabets were formed by various changes and inversions, had a similar origin, there can be little doubt; and the inscriptions at *Candrab*, of which you now possess a most accurate copy, seem to be compounded of *Nágarí* and *Ethiopick* letters, which bear a close relation to each other, both in the mode of writing from the left hand, and in the singular manner of connecting the vowels with the consonants. These remarks may favour an opinion entertained by many, that all the symbols of *sound*, which at first, probably, were only rude outlines of the different organs of speech, had a common origin: the symbols of *ideas*, now used in *China* and *Japan*, and formerly, perhaps, in *Egypt* and *Mexico*, are quite of a distinct nature; but it is very remarkable, that the order of *sounds* in the *Chinese* grammars corresponds nearly with that observed in *Tibet*, and hardly differs from that, which the *Hindus* consider as the invention of their Gods.

II. Of the *Indian* Religion and Philosophy, I shall here say but little ; because a full account of each would require a separate volume : it will be sufficient in this dissertation to assume, what might be proved beyond controversy, that we now live among the adorers of those very deities, who were worshipped under different names in old *Greece* and *Italy*, and among the professors of those philosophical tenets, which the *Ionick* and *Attick* writers illustrated with all the beauties of their melodious language. On one hand we see the trident of NEPTUNE, the eagle of JUPITER, the satyrs of BACCHUS, the bow of CUPID, and the chariot of the *Sun* ; on another we hear the cymbals of RHEA, the songs of the *Muses*, and the pastoral tales of APOLLO NOMIUS. In more retired scenes, in groves, and in seminaries of learning, we may perceive the *Bráhmans* and the *Sarmanes*, mentioned by CLEMENS, disputing in the forms of *logick*, or discoursing on the vanity of human enjoyments, on the immortality of the soul, her emanation from the eternal mind, her debasement, wanderings, and final union with her source. The *six* philosophical schools, whose principles are explained in the *Dersana Sástra*, comprise all the metaphysics of the old *Academy*, the *Stoa*, the *Lyceum* ; nor is it possible to read the *Védánta*, or the many fine compositions in illustration of it, without believing, that PYTHAGORAS and PLATO derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the sages of *India*. The *Scythian* and *Hyperborean* doctrines and mythology may also be traced in every part of these eastern regions ; nor can we doubt, that WOD or ODEN, whose religion, as the northern historians admit, was introduced into *Scandinavia* by a foreign race, was the same with BUDDH, whose rites were probably imported into *India* nearly at the same time, though received much later by the *Chinese*, who soften his name into FO'.

This may be a proper place to ascertain an important point in the Chronology of the *Hindus* ; for the priests of BUDDHA left in *Tibet*  
and

and *Cbina* the precise epoch of his appearance, real or imagined, in this Empire; and their information, which had been preserved in writing, was compared by the *Christian* Missionaries and scholars with our own era. COUPLET, DE GUIGNES, GIORGI, and BAILLY, differ a little in their accounts of this epoch, but that of *Couplet* seems the most correct: on taking, however, the medium of the four several dates, we may fix the time of BUDDHA, or the *ninth* great incarnation of VISHNU, in the year one *thousand* and *fourteen* before the birth of CHRIST, or *two thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine* years ago. Now the *Cáshmirians*, who boast of his descent in their kingdom, assert that he appeared on earth about *two* centuries after CRISHNA the *Indian* APOLLO, who took so decided a part in the war of the *Mabábbárat*; and, if an Etymologist were to suppose, that the *Athenians* had embellished their poetical history of PANDION's expulsion and the restoration of ÆGEUS with the *Asiatick* tale of the PA'NDUS and YUDHISHTIR, neither of which words they could have articulated, I should not hastily deride his conjecture: certain it is, that *Pándumandel* is called by the *Greeks* the country of PANDION. We have, therefore, determined another interesting epoch, by fixing the age of CRISHNA near the *three thousandth* year from the present time; and, as the three first *Avatàrs*, or descents of VISHNU, relate no less clearly to an Universal Deluge, in which eight persons only were saved, than the *fourth* and *fifth* do to the *punishment of impiety* and the *humiliation of the proud*, we may for the present assume, that the *second*, or *silver*, age of the *Hindus* was subsequent to the dispersion from *Babel*; so that we have only a dark interval of about a *thousand* years, which were employed in the settlement of nations, the foundation of states or empires, and the cultivation of civil society. The great incarnate Gods of this intermediate age are both named RA'MA but with different epithets; one of whom bears a wonderful resemblance to the *Indian* BACCHUS, and his wars are the subject of several heroick poems.

He

He is represented as a descendent from SU'RYA, or the SUN, as the husband of SI'TA', and the son of a princess named CAU'SELYA': it is very remarkable, that the *Peruvians*, whose *Incas* boasted of the same descent, styled their greatest festival *Ramafitoa*; whence we may suppose, that South *America* was peopled by the same race, who imported into the farthest parts of *Asia* the rites and fabulous history of RA'MA. These rites and this history are extremely curious; and, although I cannot believe with NEWTON, that ancient mythology was nothing but historical truth in a poetical dress, nor, with BACON, that it consisted solely of moral and metaphysical allegories, nor with BRYANT, that all the heathen divinities are only different attributes and representations of the Sun or of deceased progenitors, but conceive that the whole system of religious fables rose, like the *Nile*, from several distinct sources, yet I cannot but agree, that one great spring and fountain of all idolatry in the four quarters of the globe was the veneration paid by men to the vast body of fire, which "looks from his sole dominion like the God of this world;" and another, the immoderate respect shown to the memory of powerful or virtuous ancestors, especially the founders of kingdoms, legislators, and warriors, of whom the *Sun* or the *Moon* were wildly supposed to be the parents.

III. The remains of *architecture* and *sculpture* in *India*, which I mention here as mere monuments of antiquity, not as specimens of ancient art, seem to prove an early connection between this country and *Africa*: the pyramids of *Egypt*, the colossal statues described by PAUSANIAS and others, the sphinx, and the HERMES *Canis*, which last bears a great resemblance to the *Varábávatár*, or the incarnation of VISHNU in the form of a *Boar*, indicate the style and mythology of the same indefatigable workmen, who formed the vast excavations of *Cánárah*, the various temples and images of BUDDHA, and the idols, which are continually dug up at *Gayá*, or in its vicinity. The letters  
on

on many of those monuments appear, as I have before intimated, partly of *Indian*, and partly of *Abyssinian* or *Ethiopic*, origin; and all these indubitable facts may induce no ill-grounded opinion, that *Ethiopia* and *Hindustàn* were peopled or colonized by the same extraordinary race; in confirmation of which, it may be added, that the mountaineers of *Bengal* and *Babàr* can hardly be distinguished in some of their features, particularly their lips and noses, from the modern *Abyssinians*, whom the *Arabs* call the children of CU'SH: and the ancient *Hindus*, according to STRABO, differed in nothing from the *Africans*, but in the straightness and smoothness of their hair, while that of the others was crisp or woolly; a difference proceeding chiefly, if not entirely, from the respective humidity or dryness of their atmospheres: hence the people who *received the first light of the rising sun*, according to the limited knowledge of the ancients, are said by APULEIUS to be the *Arü* and *Ethiopians*, by which he clearly meant certain nations of *India*; where we frequently see figures of BUDDHA with *curled hair* apparently designed for a representation of it in its natural state.

IV. It is unfortunate, that the *Silpi Sástra*, or *collection of treatises on Arts and Manufactures*, which must have contained a treasure of useful information on *dying, painting, and metallurgy*, has been so long neglected, that few, if any, traces of it are to be found; but the labours of the *Indian* loom and needle have been universally celebrated; and *fine linen* is not improbably supposed to have been called *Sindon*, from the name of the river near which it was wrought in the highest perfection: the people of *Colchis* were also famed for this manufacture, and the *Egyptians* yet more, as we learn from several passages in scripture, and particularly from a beautiful chapter in EZEKIAL containing the most authentick delineation of ancient commerce, of which *Tyre* had been the principal mart. Silk was fabricated immemorially by the *Indians*, though commonly ascribed to the people of *Serica* or  
Tancùt,

*Tancùt*, among whom probably the word *Sèr*, which the *Greeks* applied to the *filk-worm*, signified *gold*; a sense, which it now bears in *Tibet*. That the *Hindus* were in early ages a *commercial* people, we have many reasons to believe; and in the first of their sacred law-tracts, which they suppose to have been revealed by *MENU* many *millions* of years ago, we find a curious passage on the legal *interest* of money, and the limited rate of it in different cases, with an exception in regard to *adventures* at *sea*; an exception, which the sense of mankind approves, and which commerce absolutely requires, though it was not before the reign of *CHARLES I.* that our own jurisprudence fully admitted it in respect of maritime contracts.

We are told by the *Grecian* writers, that the *Indians* were the wisest of nations; and in moral wisdom, they were certainly eminent: their *Niti Sástra*, or *System of Ethicks*, is yet preserved, and the *Fables* of *VISHNUSERMAN*, whom we ridiculously call *Pilpay*, are the most beautiful, if not the most ancient, collection of apologues in the world: they were first translated from the *Sanscrit*, in the *sixth* century, by the order of *BUZERCHUMIHR*, or *Bright as the Sun*, the chief physician and afterwards *Vezir* of the great *ANU'SHIREVA'N*, and are extant under various names in more than twenty languages; but their original title is *Hitópadésa*; or *Amicable Instruction*; and, as the very existence of *ESOP*, whom the *Arabs* believe to have been an *Abyssinian*, appears rather doubtful, I am not disinclined to suppose; that the first *moral fables*, which appeared in *Europe*, were of *Indian* or *Ethiopian* origin.

The *Hindus* are said to have boasted of *three* inventions, all of which, indeed, are admirable, the method of instructing by *apologues*, the *decimal scale* adopted now by all civilized nations, and the game of *Chefs*, on which they have some curious treatises; but, if their numerous works on Grammar, Logick, Rhietorick, Musick, all which are  
extant



extant and accessible, were explained in some language generally known, it would be found, that they had yet higher pretensions to the praise of a fertile and inventive genius. Their lighter Poems are lively and elegant; their Epick, magnificent and sublime in the highest degree; their *Purāṇa's* comprise a series of mythological Histories in blank verse from the *Creation* to the supposed incarnation of BUDDHA; and their *Vēdas*, as far as we can judge from that compendium of them, which is called *Upaniṣhat*, abound with noble speculations in metaphysics, and fine discourses on the being and attributes of GOD. Their most ancient medical book, entitled *Cbereca*, is believed to be the work of SIVA; for each of the divinities in their *Triad* has at least one *sacred* composition ascribed to him; but, as to mere human works on *History* and *Geography*, though they are said to be extant in *Cashmir*, it has not been yet in my power to procure them. What their *astronomical* and *mathematical* writings contain, will not, I trust, remain long a secret: they are easily procured, and their importance cannot be doubted. The Philosopher, whose works are said to include a system of the universe founded on the principle of *Attraction* and the *Central* position of the sun, is named YAVAN ACHA'RYA, because he had travelled, we are told, into *Ionia*: if this be true, he might have been one of those, who conversed with PYTHAGORAS; this at least is undeniable, that a book on astronomy in *Sanscrit* bears the title of *Yavana Jātica*, which may signify the *Ionic Set*; nor is it improbable, that the names of the planets and *Zodiacal* stars, which the *Arabs* borrowed from the *Greeks*, but which we find in the oldest *Indian* records, were originally devised by the same ingenious and enterprising race, from whom both *Greece* and *India* were peopled; the race, who, as DIONYSIUS describes them,

——— ' first assayed the deep,

' And wafted merchandize to coasts unknown,

- ‘ Those, who digested first the starry choir,
- ‘ Their motions mark’d, and call’d them by their names.’

Of these cursory observations on the *Hindus*, which it would require volumes to expand and illustrate, this is the result: that they had an immemorial affinity with the old *Persians*, *Ethiopians*, and *Egyptians*, the *Phenicians*, *Greeks*, and *Tuscans*, the *Scythians* or *Goths*, and *Celts*, the *Chinese*, *Japanese*, and *Peruvians*; whence, as no reason appears for believing, that they were a colony from any one of those nations, or any of those nations from them, we may fairly conclude that they all proceeded from some *central* country, to investigate which will be the object of my future Discourses; and I have a sanguine hope, that your collections during the present year will bring to light many useful discoveries; although the departure for *Europe* of a very ingenious member, who first opened the inestimable mine of *Sanscrit* literature, will often deprive us of accurate and solid information concerning the languages and antiquities of *India*.