

B.C. according to the Rev. R. Main's calculations.<sup>24</sup> The questions on the age of this little treatise and the origin of the Nakshatra<sup>25</sup> system, about which

<sup>24</sup> See the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal of the year 1862, pages 49-50. Max Müller's Preface to the 4th volume of his edition of the Rigveda Samhitâ, page lxxxv.

<sup>25</sup> There can be hardly any doubt, that the Nakshatra system of the Indians, Chinese, Persians and Arabs is of a common origin, but it is very difficult to determine with what nation it originated. The original number was twenty-eight. I do not intend fully to discuss here the important question, but I wish only to direct attention to the circumstance overlooked as yet by all the writers on the subject, that the terms which the Indians, Arabs, and Chinese use for expressing the idea "constellation" have in all the three languages, Sanscrit, Chinese, and Arabic, precisely the same meaning, viz. a place where to pass the night, a station. This is certainly no mere chance, but can only be accounted for by the supposition, that the framers of the Nakshatra system regarded the several Nakshatras as heavenly stations, or night quarters, where the travelling moon was believed to put up on his journey through the heavens. Let us examine these terms.

The Chinese expression for *Nakshatra* is *Siu* (spelt by Morrison *sūh* and *sew*, by Medhurst *sew* with the third or departing tone). The character representing it which is to be found under the 40th radical, strokes 8 (see Morrison's Chinese Dictionary, vol. 1. page 847) is composed of three signs, viz. that for a *roof*, that for *man*, and that for a *hundred*. Its original meaning therefore is "a place where a hundred men find shelter, a station or night quarters for a company of soldiers." The word is, as is the case with most of the Chinese words, used as a substantive, adjective, and verb.

As a substantive it denotes "a resting place to pass the night at" with a road-house (*lu shih*) i.e. an inn, or a halting place in general: such places were situated at the distance of every thirty Li. Thence it is metaphorically employed to express the stations on the heavens where the travelling moon is supposed to put up. In this sense the Chinese speak of *ōlh shih pǎ siu* "the twenty-eight halting places" (on the heavens).

As an adjective it means *past, former, i.e.* the night-quarters which were just left.

In the sense of a verb, but never in that of a substantive, we find it frequently used in two of the so-called Sse-shu or four Classical books of the Chinese, viz. the *Lun-yu* (the Confucian Analects) and in *Meng-tse*.

In order to show the use of this important word in the Classical writings, I here quote some instances:

- a) intrans. *to pass the night, to stop over night*. Lun-yu 14, 41;  
*tse lu siu yu Shih-man, i.e.* Tse-lu (one of the most ardent and