

from the lost 荊州記 *Ching chou chi* of 盛弘之 Shêng Hung-chih, who lived under the Liu Sung (420-479; cf. *Sui ching-chi chih k'ao-chêng*, 6, 13 b); it concerns a tree which in A.D. 300 appeared all of a sudden and grew to gigantic proportions in a temple of Pa-ling (Yo-chou-fu, now Yo-yang, in Hu-nan) and which a foreign monk stated to be a *so-lo* tree, the *sāla* species of Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*; the tree long gave quite ordinary small white flowers, and then, in 434, a flower of the shape and the colour of the nelumbium (? or hibiscus; *fu-jung*) appeared on it (I combine the more or less corrupt versions of the *Ch'i-min yao-shu*, 10, 47 a, *Yu-yang tsa-tsu*, 18, 4 b, and *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, 961, 3 b; the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*, 406, 4 b, in fact copies Tuan Ch'êng-chih, but our editions now have *p'o-lo* instead of *so-lo*; cf. also *T'u-shu chi-ch'êng*, *ts'ao-mu-tien*, 309, *i-wên*, 3 b; *tsa-lu*, 2 a). The main interest of this tale of *mirabilia* is to establish that the *so-lo* tree was almost unknown in China. In the same way, when, in the 8th cent., the Chinese «protector» of Kučā forwarded to the Court 200 twigs of *so-lo* which he said came from Ferghāna, it created quite a sensation, and we possess various official and private accounts of this event (cf. *Yu-yang tsa-tsu*, 18, 4 b-5 a, and the texts in *T'u-shu chi-ch'êng*, *ibid.* by Chang Wei and Li Yung). A poem of Mei Yao-ch'ên (1002-1060) speaks of 杪羅 *so-lo* (*T'u-shu chi-ch'êng*, *ibid.*, *i-wên*, 3 a), which is more exactly the name of another tree, but his reference to Li Yung's text proves that he actually means our first *so-lo*, the *sāla* tree. Hung Mai (1123-1202) speaks of the *so-lo* tree of Li Yung's tablet both in his *Jung-chai ssü-pi* and in his *I-chien chih* (end of ch. 45; but, in some editions, *so-lo* is altered into *p'o-lo*). On the ultimate fate of that *so-lo* tree and the younger ones which took its place, cf. Yü Yieh's *Ch'a-hsiang-shih hsü-ch'ao*, 25, § *so-lo shu*. In the Hung-chi-ssü, a Buddhist temple located 45 li north-east of Nanking, two *so-lo* trees were said to have been brought back from abroad by the famous eunuch Chêng Ho in the first quarter of the 15th cent. (cf. Lang Ying's *Ch'i-hsiu lei-kao*, 40, 4 a; 談遷 T'an Ch'ien's 棗林雜俎 *Tsao-lin tsa-tsu*, *chung-chi* section [*Hsiao-shuo pi-chi ta-kuan* ed.], 36 a); but, from the description, they seem to have been not *Shorea robusta*, but an *Aesculus* (cf. *infra*).

Of the other possible meanings of *so-lo*, one will not detain us. In the account of Chu-lien, *i. e.* the Čoḷa (Coromandel coast), the *Sung shih* (489, 9 a), in a long list of local products, speaks of flowers called «blue-green (*ch'ing*), yellow and green-blue (*pi*) 娑羅 *so-lo*» (?), and PARKER (*China Review*, XIX, 193) has stated that *so-lo* was there the designation of «a sort of cotton». This is possible, but no more than possible, since we have no indication of what these *so-lo* of different colours could have been, nor even are we certain that we must read *so-lo*; in the preceding line, the *Sung shih* gives a wrong reading *so-lo-mi*, instead of *po-lo-mi*, «jack-fruit»; the reverse error is possible here, and, as a matter of fact, we find *p'o-lo* in the corresponding list of Chao Jukua (*HR*, 96). Nor shall I dwell on the identification of the *so-lo* tree (*shu*) with the 優曇花 *yu-t'an hua*, «*yu-t'an* flower», which seems to have been known in some parts of Yün-nan in the 17th cent. *Yu-t'an* is a shortened transcription of Skr. *udumbara* (not «*udambara*» as in LAUFER, *Sino-Iranica*, 411), *Ficus glomerata*, the fig-tree, to which many legends attached. I do not know the origin of this mistaken identification (on which cf. Yü Yüeh's *Ch'a-hsiang-shih hsü-ch'ao*, 25, § *so-lo shu*). It may have arisen from a confusion between *so-lo* and *yu-t'an-p'o-lo* (one of the transcriptions of *udumbara*), with the common misreading of the latter part of the transcription as *so-lo* instead of *p'o-lo*. Under the name of «seeds of the *so-lo* tree» (*so-lo shu tzü*), Hung