

will no doubt supply the correct form of this word. We have to be mindful of the fact that the speech of those East-Iranian tribes, the advance-guard of Iran proper, with whom the Chinese first came in contact, has never been committed to writing, and is practically lost to us. Only secluded dialects may still harbor remnants of that lost treasure. We have to be the more grateful to the Chinese for having rescued for us a few words of that extinct language, and to place *buksuk or *buxsux on record as the ancient Ferganian appellation of *Medicago sativa*. The first element of this word may survive in Sariqolī (a Pamir dialect) *wux* ("grass"). In Waxī, another Pamir idiom, alfalfa is styled *wujerk*; and grass, *wiš*. "Horse" is *yaš* in Waxī, and *vurj* in Sariqolī.¹

BRETSCHNEIDER² was content to say that *mu-su* is not Chinese, but most probably a foreign name. WATTERS, in his treatment of foreign words in Chinese, has dodged this term. T. W. KINGSMILL³ is responsible for the hypothesis that *mu-su* "may have some connection with the *Μηδική βοτάνη* of Strabo." This is adopted by the Chinese Dictionary of GILES.⁴ This Greek designation had certainly not penetrated to Fergana, nor did the Iranian Ferganians use a Greek name for a plant indigenous to their country. It is also impossible to see what the phonetic coincidence between *muk-suk or *buk-suk and *mēdikē* is supposed to be.

The least acceptable explanation of *mu-su* is that recently propounded by HIRTH,⁵ who identifies it with a Turkish *burčak*, which is Osmanli, and refers to the pea.⁶ Now, it is universally known that a language like Osmanli was not in existence in the second century B.C., but is a comparatively modern form of Turkish speech; and how Čan K'ien should have picked up an Osmanli or any other Turkish word for a typically Iranian plant in Fergana, where there were no Turks at that time, is unintelligible. Nor is the alleged identification phonetically correct: Chinese *mu*, *muk, *buk, cannot represent *bur*, nor can *su*,

¹ Cf. R. B. SHAW, On the Ghalchah Languages (*Journal As. Soc. Bengal*, 1876, pp. 221, 231). According to TOMASCHEK (*op. cit.*, p. 763), this word is evolved from *bharaka, Ossetic *bairāg* ("good foal").

² Bot. Sin., pt. III, p. 404.

³ *Journal China Branch Roy. As. Soc.*, Vol. XIV, 1879, p. 19.

⁴ No. 8081, wrongly printed *Μεδική*. The word *βοτάνη* is not connected with the name of the plant, but in the text of Strabo is separated from *Μηδικήν* by eleven words. *Μηδική* is to be explained as scil. *πόα*, "Medic grass or fodder."

⁵ *Journal Am. Or. Soc.*, Vol. XXXVII, 1917, p. 145.

⁶ *Kara burčak* means the "black pea" and denotes the vetch.