

3. *Trigonella fœnum graecum*. In this case the compromise is a failure, or the identification of *kuñci* with *kan-suñ* even results from an error; the Sanskrit term for the spikenard is *gandhamāmsī*.

We must not draw inferences from mere Sanskrit names, either, as to the origin of Chinese plants, unless there is more substantial evidence. Thus STUART¹ remarks under *li* 李 (*Prunus domestica*) that the Sanskrit equivalent 居陵迦 *kü-lin-kia* indicates that this plum may have been introduced from India or Persia. *Prunus domestica*, however, is a native of China, mentioned in the *Ši kin*, *Li ki*, and in *Moñ-tse*. The Sino-Indian word is given in the *Fan yi min yi tsi* (section 24) with the translation *li*. The only corresponding Sanskrit word is *kulingā*, which denotes a kind of gall. The question is merely of explaining a Sanskrit term to the Chinese, but this has no botanical or historical value for the Chinese species.

Thus the records of the Chinese felicitously supplement the meagre notices of alfalfa on the part of the ancients, and lend its history the proper perspective: we recognize the why and how of the world-wide propagation of this useful economic plant.² Aside from Fergana, the Chinese of the Han period discovered *mu-su* also in Ki-pin (Kashmir),³ and this fact is of some importance in regard to the early geographical distribution of the species; for in Kashmir, as well as in Afghanistan and Baluchistan, it is probably spontaneous.⁴

Mu-su gardens are mentioned under the Emperor Wu (A.D. 265-290) of the Tsin dynasty, and the post-horses of the T'ang dynasty were fed with alfalfa.⁵

The fact that alfalfa was used as an article of human food under the T'ang we note from the story of Sie Lin-č'i 薛令之, preceptor at the Court of the Emperor Yüan Tsun (A.D. 713-755), who wrote a versified complaint of the too meagre food allotted to him, in which alfalfas with long stems were the chief ingredient.⁶ The good teacher, of course, was not familiar with the highly nutritive food-values of the plant.

¹ Chinese Materia Medica, p. 358.

² It is singular that A. DE CANDOLLE, in his *Origin of Cultivated Plants*, while he has conscientiously reproduced from Bretschneider all his plants wrongly ascribed to Čan K'ien, does not make any reference to China in speaking of *Medicago* (pp. 102-104). In fact, its history has never before been outlined correctly.

³ *Ts'ien Han šu*, Ch. 96 A.

⁴ A. DE CANDOLLE, *op. cit.*, p. 103; G. T. VIGNE, *Travels in Kashmir*, Vol. II, p. 455.

⁵ S. MATSUDA 松田定久, *On Medicago sativa and the Species of Medicago in China* (*Botanical Magazine 植物學雜誌*, Tōkyō, Vol. XXI, 1907, p. 243). This is a very interesting and valuable study written in Japanese.

⁶ Cf. C. PÉTILLON, *Allusions littéraires*, p. 350.