

Šan-tai 上黨 (south-eastern portion of Šan-si), and is gathered in the autumn. What is called *ts'in zan* 青蘘 are the sprouts of the *kü-šen*. They grow in the river-valleys of Čuñ-yüan 中原 (Ho-nan).” Nothing is said here about a foreign introduction or a cultivation; on the contrary, the question evidently is of an indigenous wild swamp-plant, possibly *Mulgedium sibiricum*.¹ Both *Sesamum* and *Linum* are thoroughly out of the question, for they grow in dry loam, and sesame especially in sandy soil. Thus suspicion is ripe that the terms *hu ma* and *kü-šen* originally applied to an autochthonous plant of Šan-si and Ho-nan, and that *hu ma* in this case moves on the same line as the term *hu šen* in the *Li sao* (p. 195). This suspicion is increased by the fact that *hu ma* occurs in a passage ascribed to Hwai-nan-tse, who died in 122 B.C., and cited in the *T'ai p'in yü lan*.² Moreover, the *Wu ši* (or *p'u*) *pen ts'ao*, written in the first half of the third century by Wu P'u 吳普, in describing *hu ma*, alludes to the mythical Emperor Šen-nuñ and to Lei kuñ 雷公, a sage employed by the Emperor Hwai in his efforts to perfect the art of healing.

The meaning of *kü-šen* is “the great superior one.” The later authors regard the term as a variety of *Sesamum*, but give varying definitions of it: thus, T'ao Huñ-kiñ states that the kind with a square stem is called *kü-šen* (possibly *Mulgedium*), that with a round stem *hu ma*. Su Kuñ of the T'ang says that the plant with capsules (*kio* 角) of eight ridges or angles (*pa len* 八稜) is called *kü-šen*; that with quadrangular capsules, *hu ma*. The latter definition would refer to *Sesamum indicum*, the capsule of which is oblong quadrangular, two-valved and two-celled, each cell containing numerous oily seeds.

Moñ Šen 孟詵, in his *Ši liao pen t'sao* (written in the second half of the seventh century), observes that “the plants cultivated in fertile soil produce octangular capsules, while those planted in mountainous fields have the capsules quadrangular, the distinction arising from the difference of soil conditions, whereas the virtues of the two varieties are identical. Again, Lei Hiao 雷敫 of the fifth century asserts that *kü-šen* is genuine, when it has seven ridges or angles, a red color, and a sour taste, but that it is erroneous to style *hu ma* the octangular capsules with two pointed ends, black in color, and furnishing a black oil. There is no doubt that in these varying descriptions entirely different plants are visualized. Kao Č'eñ of the Sung, in his *Ši wu ki yüan*,³

¹ STUART, Chinese Materia Medica, p. 269. This identification, however, is uncertain.

² Ch. 989, p. 6 b.

³ Ch. 10, p. 29 b (see above, p. 279).