

ably be in India; and WATT¹ observes, "There seems to be no doubt that one at least of the original homes of the cucumber was in North India, and its cultivation can be traced to the most ancient classic times of Asia." DE CANDOLLE² traces the home of the plant to northwestern India. I am not yet convinced of the correctness of this theory, as the historical evidence in favor of India, as usual in such cases, is weak;³ and the cultivation of the cucumber in Egypt and among the Semites is doubtless of ancient date.⁴ At any rate, this *Cucurbitacea* belongs to the Egypto-West-Asiatic culture-sphere, and is not indigenous to China. There is, however, no trace of evidence for the gratuitous speculation that its introduction is due to General Čan K'ien. The theory that it was transmitted from Iranian territory is probable, but there is thus far no historical document to support it. The only trace of evidence thereof appears from the attribute Hu.

Abu Mansur mentions the cucumber under the name *qittā*, adding the Arabic-Persian *xiyār* and *kawanda* in the language of Khorasan.⁵ The word *xiyār* has been adopted into Osmanli and into Hindustānī in the form *xīrā*. Persian *xāwūš* or *xāwaš* denotes a cucumber kept for seed; it means literally "ox-eye" (*gāv-aš*; Avestan *aši*, Middle Persian *aš*, Sanskrit *akṣi*, "eye"), corresponding to Sanskrit *gavākṣi* ("a kind of cucumber"). A Pahlavi word for "cucumber" is *vātrañ*, which developed into New Persian *bādrañ*, *bālañ*, or *vārañ* (Afghan *bādrañ*).⁶

¹ Commercial Products of India, p. 439. In Sanskrit the cucumber is *trapuṣa*.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 265.

³ Such a positive assertion as that of de Candolle, that the cucumber was cultivated in India for at least three thousand years, cannot be accepted by any serious historian.

⁴ V. LORET, *Flore pharaonique*, p. 75; C. JORET, *Plantes dans l'antiquité*, Vol. I, p. 61.

⁵ ACHUNDOW, *Abu Mansur*, p. 106.

⁶ This series is said to mean also "citron." The proper Persian word for the latter fruit is *turunj* (Afghan *turanj*, Balūči *trunj*). The origin of this word, as far as I know, has not yet been correctly explained, not even by HÜBSCHMANN (*Armen. Gram.*, p. 266). VULLERS (*Lexicon persico-latinum*, Vol. I, p. 439) tentatively suggests derivation from Sanskrit *suran̄ga*, which is surely impossible. The real source is presented by Sanskrit *mātuluṅga* ("citron," *Citrus medica*).