

yield, under the parasitic influence of insects or otherwise, a sweet fluid called "manna." This is regularly collected and, like honey, enters more largely than sugar into the pharmaceutical preparations of the Hindu.

The silicious concretion of crystalline form, found in the culms or joints of an Indian bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*) and known as tabashir, is styled in India also "bamboo manna," — decidedly a misnomer. On the other hand, a real manna has sometimes been discovered on the nodes of certain species of bamboo in India.¹ The subject of tabashir has nothing to do with manna, nor with Sino-Iranian relations; but, as the early history of this substance has not yet been correctly expounded, the following brief notes may not be unwelcome.² Specimens of tabashir, procured by me in China in 1902, are in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.³

We now know that tabashir is due to an ancient discovery made in India, and that at an early date it was traded to China and Egypt. In recent years the very name has been traced in the form *tabasis* (*τάβασις*) in a Greek papyrus, where it is said that the porous stone is brought down [to Alexandria] from [upper] Egypt: the articles of Indian commerce were shipped across the Red Sea to the Egyptian ports, and then freighted on the Nile downward to the Delta.⁴ The Indian origin of the article is evidenced, above all, by the fact that the Greek term *tabasis* (of the same phonetic appearance as Persian *tabāšīr*) is connected with Sanskrit *tavak-kṣīrā* (or *tvak-kṣīrā*; *kṣīrā*, "vegetable juice"), and permits us to reconstruct a Prākṛit form *tabašīra*; for the Greek importers or exporters naturally did not derive the word from Sanskrit, but from a vernacular idiom spoken somewhere on the west coast of India. Or, we have to assume that the Greeks received the word from the Persians, and the Persians from an Indian Prākṛit.⁵

The Chinese, in like manner, at first imported the article from India, calling it "yellow of India" (*T'ien-čü hwan* 天竺黃). It is first mentioned under this designation as a product of India in the *Materia Medica* published in the period K'ai-pao (A.D. 968-976), the *K'ai pao*

¹ See G. WATT, *Agricultural Ledger*, 1900, No. 17, pp. 185-189.

² The latest writer on the subject, G. F. KUNZ (*The Magic of Jewels and Charms*, pp. 233-235, Philadelphia, 1915), has given only a few historical notes of mediæval origin.

³ Cat. No. 70, 13834. This is incidentally mentioned here, as Dr. Kunz states that very little of the material has reached the United States.

⁴ H. DIELS, *Antike Technik*, p. 123.

⁵ The Persian *tabāšīr* is first described by Abu Mansur (ACHUNDOW, p. 95), and is still eaten as a delicacy by Persian women (*ibid.*, p. 247). In Armenian it is *dabašīr*.