

*fœtidum*).<sup>1</sup> It is generally used in India as a condiment, being especially eaten with pulse and rice. Wherever the plant grows, the fresh leaves are cooked and eaten as a green vegetable, especially by the natives of Bukhāra, who also consider as a delicacy the white under part of the stem when roasted and flavored with salt and butter. In the pharmacopœia it is used as a stimulant and antispasmodic.

Abu Mansur, the Persian Li Ši-čen of the tenth century, discriminates between two varieties of asafoetida (Persian *anguyān*, Arabic *anjudān*), a white and a black one, adding that there is a third kind called by the Romans *sesalius*. It renders food easily digestible, strengthens the stomach, and alleviates pain of the joints in hands and feet. Rubbed into the skin, it dispels swellings, especially if the milky juice of the plant is employed. The root macerated in vinegar strengthens and purifies the stomach, promotes digestion, and acts as an appetizer.<sup>2</sup>

The *Ferula* and *Scorodosma* furnishing asafoetida are typically Iranian plants. According to Abu Hanīfa,<sup>3</sup> asa grows in the sandy plains extending between Bost and the country Kikān in northern Persia. Abu Mansur designates the leaves of the variety from Sarachs near Merw as the best. According to Istaxrī, asa was abundantly produced in the desert between the provinces Seistan and Makran; according to Edrīsi, in the environment of Kaleh Bust in Afghanistan. KAEMPFER observed the harvest of the plant in Laristan in 1687, and gives the following notice on its occurrence:<sup>4</sup> "Patria eius sola est Persia, non Media, Libya, Syria aut Cyrenaica regio. In Persia plantam hodie alunt saltem duorum locorum tractus, videlicet campi montesque circa Heraat, emporium provinciae Chorasaa, et jugum montium in provincia Laar, quod a flumine Cuur adusque urbem Congo secundum Persici sinus tractum extenditur, duobus, alibi tribus pluribusve parasangis a litore." Herat is a renowned place of production, presumably the exclusive centre of production at the present day, whence the product is shipped to India.

The exact geographical distribution has been well outlined by E. BORSZCZOW.<sup>5</sup> Aside from Persia proper, *Scorodosma* occurs also on the Oxus, on the Aral Sea, and in an isolated spot on the east coast of the Caspian Sea. Judging from Chinese accounts, plants yielding asa appear to have occurred also near Khotan (see below), Turfan, and

<sup>1</sup> The genus *Ferula* contains about sixty species.

<sup>2</sup> ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> LECLERC, *Traité des simples*, Vol. I, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> *Amoenitates exoticæ*, p. 291.

<sup>5</sup> *Ferulaceen der aralo-caspischen Wüste (Mémoires de l'Acad. de St. Pétersbourg*, Vol. III, No. 8, 1860, p. 16).