

and extremely hard. The interior [the pulp] is as black as [Chinese] ink and as sweet as sugar-plums. It is eatable, and is also employed in the pharmacopœia."

The tree under consideration has not yet been identified, at least not from the sinological point of view.¹ The name *a-lo-p'o* is Sanskrit; and the ancient form **a-lak*(rak, rag)-*bwut*(bud) is a correct and logical transcription of Sanskrit *aragbadha*, *aragvadha*, *āragvadha*, or *ārgvadha*, the *Cassia* or *Cathartocarpus fistula* (*Leguminosae*), already mentioned by the physician Caraka, also styled *suvarṇaka* ("gold-colored") and *rājataru* ("king's tree").² This tree, called the Indian laburnum, purging cassia, or pudding pipe tree from its peculiar pods (French *canéficier*), is a native of India, Ceylon, and the Archipelago³ (hence Sumatra and Malayan Po-se of the Chinese), "uncommonly beautiful when in flower, few surpassing it in the elegance of its numerous long, pendulous racemes of large, bright-yellow flowers, intermixed with the young, lively green foliage."⁴ The fruit, which is common in most bazars of India, is a brownish pod, about sixty cm long and two cm thick. It is divided into numerous cells, upwards of forty, each containing one smooth, oval, shining seed. Hence the Chinese comparison with the pod of the *Gleditschia*, which is quite to the point. These pods are known as cassia pods. They are thus described in the "Treasury of Botany": "Cylindrical, black, woody, one to two feet long, not splitting, but marked by three long furrows, divided in the interior into a number of compartments by means of transverse partitions, which project from the placentæ. Each compartment of the fruit contains a single seed, imbedded in pulp, which is used as a mild laxative." Whether the tree is cultivated in Asia I do not know; GARCIA DA ORTA affirms that he saw it only in a wild state.⁵ The description of the tree and fruit in the *Yu yan tsa tsu* is fairly correct. *Cassia fistula* is indeed from twenty to thirty feet high (in Jamaica even fifty feet). The seed, as stated there, is of a reddish-brown color, and the pulp is of a dark viscid substance.

¹ STUART (Chinese Materia Medica, p. 496) lists the name *a-p'o-lo* (instead of *a-lo-p'o*) among "unidentified drugs." Bretschneider has never noted it.

² A large number of Sanskrit synonymes for the tree are enumerated by RÖDIGER and PORT (*Zeitschrift f. d. K. d. Morg.*, Vol. VII, p. 154); several more may be added to this list from the Bower Manuscript.

³ GARCIA DA ORTA (Markham, Colloquies, p. 114) adds Malacca and Sofala. In Javanese it is *teṅguli* or *treṅguli*.

⁴ W. ROXBURGH, *Flora Indica*, p. 349.

⁵ Likewise F. PYRARD (Vol. II, p. 361, ed. of Hakluyt Society), who states that "it grows of itself without being sown or tended."