

NOTE ON THE LANGUAGE OF FU-LIN

48. The preceding notes on Fu-lin plants have signally confirmed Hirth's opinion in regard to the language of Fu-lin, which was Aramaic. There now remains but one Fu-lin plant-name to be identified. This is likewise contained in the *Yu yan tsa tsu*.¹ The text runs as follows:—

“The *p'an-nu-se* 槃努稽 tree has its habitat in Po-se (Persia), likewise in Fu-lin. In Fu-lin it is styled *k'ün-han* 群漢. The tree is thirty feet high, and measures from three to four feet in circumference. Its leaves resemble those of the *si žun* 細榕 (the Banyan tree, *Ficus retusa*). It is an evergreen. The flowers resemble those of the citrus, *kü* 橘, and are white in color. The seeds are green and as large as a sour jujube, *swan tsao* 酸棗 (*Diospyros lotus*). They are sweet of taste and glossy (fat, greasy). They are eatable. The people of the western regions press oil out of them, to oint their bodies with to ward off ulcers.”

The transcription *p'an-nu-se* answers to ancient **bwan-du-sek*; and *k'ün-han*, to ancient *g'win-xan*. Despite a long-continued and intensive search, I cannot discover any Iranian plant-name of the type *bandusek* or *wandusek*, nor any Aramaic word like *ginxan*. The botanical characteristics are too vague to allow of a safe identification. Nevertheless I hope that this puzzle also will be solved in the future.²

In the Fu-lin name *a-li-k'ü-fa* we recognized an Indian loan-word in Aramaic (p. 423). It would be tempting to regard as such also the Fu-lin word for “pepper” **a-li-xa-da* 阿梨訶陀 (*a-li-ho-t'o*), which may be restored to **alixada*, *arixada*, *arxad*; but no such word is known from Indian or in Aramaic. The common word for “pepper” in Aramaic is *filfol* (from Sanskrit *pippala*). In certain Kurd dialects J. DE MORGAN³ has traced a word *alat* for “pepper,” but I am not certain that this is

¹ Ch. 18, p. 10 b.

² My colleague, Professor M. Sprengling at the University of Chicago, kindly sent me the following information: “Olive-oil was used to ward off ulcers (see WINER, *Bibl. Realwörterb.*, Vol. II, p. 170; and KRAUSS, *Archaeologie des Talmud*, Vol. I, pp. 229, 233, 683). Neither in Krauss nor elsewhere was I able to find the name of an oil-producing tree even remotely resembling *ginxan*. There is a root *qnχ* (‘to wipe, to rub, to anoint’). It is theoretically possible that *q* is pronounced voiced and thus becomes a guttural *g*, and that from this root, by means of the suffix *-an*, may be derived a noun **qinχan*, **ginχan* to which almost any significance derived from ‘rubbing, anointing’ might be attached. But for the existence of such a noun or adjective I have not the slightest evidence.”

³ *Mission scientifique en Perse*, Vol. V, p. 132.