

The man who introduced the fruit into China proper was Huñ Hao 洪皓 (A.D. 1090-1155), ambassador to the Kin or Jurči, among whom he remained for fifteen years (1129-43). In his memoirs, entitled *Sun mo ki wen* 松漠紀聞, he has the following report:¹ "The water-melon (*si kwa*) is in shape like a flat *Acorus* (*p'u* 蒲), but rounded. It is very green in color, almost blue-green. In the course of time it will change into yellow. This Cucurbitacea (*t'ie* 瓠) resembles the sweet melon (*tien kwa* 甜瓜, *Cucumis melo*), and is sweet and crisp.² Its interior is filled

China during his lifetime (that is, prior to the year 949), we might justly assume that his secretary Hu Kiao must have possessed knowledge of this fact, and would hardly speak of the fruit as a novelty. Further, the alleged introduction of the fruit by Siao Han conflicts with the tradition that this importation is due to Huñ Hao in the twelfth century (see above). It would be nothing striking, of course, if, as the fruit was cultivated by the Kitan, several Chinese ambassadors to this people should have carried the seeds to their country; but, as a rule, such new acquisitions take effect without delay, and if Siao Han had imported the seeds, there was no necessity for Huñ Hao to do so again. Therefore it seems preferable to think either that the text of the above quotation is corrupted, or that the tradition, if it existed, is a subsequent makeshift or altogether erroneous.

¹ Not having access to an edition of this work, I avail myself of the extract, as printed in the *Kwan k'ün fan p'u* (Ch. 14, p. 17 b), the texts of which are generally given in a reliable form.

² In regard to the melon (*Cucumis melo*), A. DE CANDOLLE (Origin of Cultivated Plants, p. 261) says with reference to a letter received from Bretschneider in 1881, "Its introduction into China appears to date only from the eighth century of our era, judging from the epoch of the first work which mentions it. As the relations of the Chinese with Bactriana, and the north-west of India by the embassy of Chang-Kien, date from the second century, it is possible that the culture of the species was not then widely diffused in Asia." Nothing to the effect is to be found in Bretschneider's published works. In his Bot. Sin. (pt. II, p. 197) he states that all the cucurbitaceous plants now cultivated for food in China are probably indigenous to the country, with the exception of the cucumber and water-melon, which, as their Chinese names indicate, were introduced from the West. In the texts assembled in the *Pen ts'ao kan mu* regarding *tien kwa*, no allusion is made to foreign origin. Concerning the gourd or calabash (*Lagenaria vulgaris*), A. DE CANDOLLE (*l. c.*, p. 246) states after a letter of Bretschneider that "the earliest work which mentions the gourd is that of Tchong-tchi-chou, of the first century before Christ, quoted in a work of the fifth or sixth century." This seems to be a confusion with the *Čuñ šu šu* of the T'ang period (BRETSCHNEIDER, Bot. Sin., pt. I, p. 79). The gourd, of course, occurs in ancient canonical literature (Bot. Sin., pt. II, p. 198). The history of this and other cucurbitaceous plants requires new and critical investigation, the difficulty of which is unfortunately enhanced by a constant confusion of terms in all languages, the name of one species being shifted to another. It means very little, of course, that at present, as recently emphasized again by H. J. SPINDEN (Proceedings Nineteenth Congress of Americanists, p. 271, Washington, 1917), *Lagenaria* is distributed over the New and Old Worlds alike; the point is, where the centre of the cultivation was (according to A. de Candolle it was in India; see, further, ASA GRAY, Scientific Papers, Vol. I, p. 330), and how it spread, or whether the wild form had a wide geographical range right from the beginning, and was cultivated independently in various countries. In view of the great antiquity of the cultivation both in India and China, the latter assumption would seem more probable; but all this requires renewed and profound investigation.