

which A. DE CANDOLLE introduces as evidence for the early diffusion of the cultivation into Asia, I cannot find any trace. The Sanskrit designations of the water-melon, *nāṭāmra* ("mango of the Nāṭa"?), *goḍumba*, *tarambuja*, *sedu*, are of recent origin and solely to be found in the lexicographers; while others, like *kāliṅga* (*Benincasa cerifera*), originally refer to other cucurbitaceous plants. WATT gives only modern vernacular names.

Chinese *si kwa* has been equated with Greek *σικύα* by HIRTH,¹ who arbitrarily assigns to the latter the meaning "water-melon." This philological achievement has been adopted by GILES in his Chinese Dictionary (No. 6281). The Greek word, however, refers only to the cucumber, and the water-melon remained unknown to the Greeks of ancient times.² A late Greek designation for the fruit possibly is *πέπων*, which appears only in Hippocrates.³ A. DE CANDOLLE⁴ justly remarked that the absence of an ancient Greek name which may with certainty be attributed to this species seems to show that it was introduced into the Graeco-Roman world about the beginning of the Christian era. The Middle and Modern Greek word *χαρπουζά* or *καρπούσια*, derived from Persian or Turkish, plainly indicates the way in which the Byzantine world became acquainted with the water-melon. There is, further, no evidence that the Greek word *σικύα* ever penetrated into Asia and reached those peoples (Uigur, Kitan, Jurči) whom the Chinese make responsible for the transmission of the water-melon. The Chinese term is not a transcription, but has the literal meaning "western melon"; and the "west" implied by this term does not stretch as far as Greece, but, as is plainly stated in the *Wu tai ši*, merely alludes to the fact that the fruit was produced in Turkistan. *Si kwa* is simply an abbreviation for *Si yü kwa* 西或瓜; that is, "melon of Turkistan."⁵

According to the *Yamato-honzō*⁶ of 1709, water-melons were first introduced into Japan in the period Kwan-ei (1624-44).

¹ Fremde Einflüsse in der chinesischen Kunst, p. 17.

² A. DE CANDOLLE, Géographie botanique, p. 909.

³ Even this problematic interpretation is rejected by L. LECLERC (Traité des simples, Vol. I, p. 239), who identifies the Greek word with the common gourd. Leclerc's controversy with A. de Candolle should be carefully perused by those who are interested in the history of the melon family.

⁴ Origin of Cultivated Plants, p. 264.

⁵ Illustrations of Chinese water-melon fields may be seen in F. H. KING, Farmers of Forty Centuries, pp. 282, 283.

⁶ Ch. 8, p. 3.