

FENUGREEK

50. In regard to the fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*, French *fenugrec*), Chinese *hu-lu-pa* (Japanese *koroha*) 胡蘆巴, STUART¹ states without further comment that the seeds of this leguminous plant were introduced into the southern provinces of China from some foreign country. But BRETSCHNEIDER² had correctly identified the Chinese name with Arabic *hulba* (*xulba*). The plant is first mentioned in the *Pen ts'ao* of the Kia-yu period (A.D. 1056-64) of the Sung dynasty, where the author, Čan Yü-si 掌禹錫, says that it grows in the provinces of Kwañ-tuñ and Kwei-čou, and that, according to some, the species of Liñ-nan represents the seeds of the foreign *lo-po* (*Raphanus sativus*), but that this point has not yet been investigated. Su Suñ, in his *T'u kin pen ts'ao*, states that "the habitat of the plant is at present in Kwañ-tuñ, and that in the opinion of some the seeds came from Hai-nan and other barbarians; passengers arriving on ships planted the seeds in Kwañ-tuñ (Liñ-wai), where the plant actually grows, but its seeds do not equal the foreign article; the seeds imported into China are really good." Then their employment in the pharmacopœia is discussed.³ The drug is also mentioned in the *Pen ts'ao yen i*.⁴

The transcription *hu-lu-pa* is of especial interest, because the element *hu* forms part of the transcription, but may simultaneously imply an allusion to the ethnic name Hu. The form of the transcription shows that it is post-T'ang; for under the T'ang the phonetic equivalent of the character 胡 was still possessed of an initial guttural, and a foreign element *xu* would then have been reproduced by a quite different character.

The medical properties of the plant are set forth by Abu Mansur in his Persian pharmacopœia under the name *hulbat*.⁵ The Persian name

¹ Chinese Materia Medica, p. 442.

² Bot. Sin., pt. I, p. 65.

³ STUART (*l. c.*) says wrongly that the seeds have been in use as a medicine since the T'ang dynasty; this, however, has been the case only since the Sung. I do not know of any mention of the plant under the T'ang. This negative documentary evidence is signally confirmed by the transcription of the name, which cannot have been made under the T'ang.

⁴ Ch. 12, p. 4 b (ed. of Lu Sin-yüan).

⁵ ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 47. Another Persian form is *hulya*. In Armenian it is *hulbā* or *hulbe* (E. SEIDEL, *Mechithar*, p. 183). See also LECLERC, *Traité*