

king)<sup>1</sup> there are ants living on coarse creepers. The people, on examining the interior of the earth, can tell the presence of ants from the soil being freshly broken up; and they drive tree-branches into these spots, on which the ants will crawl up, and produce a lac that hardens into a solid mass." Aside from the absurd and fantastic notes of Aelian,<sup>2</sup> this is the earliest allusion to the lac-insect which is called in Annamese *con mōi*, in Khmer *kandier*, in Čam *mū*, *mur*, or *muor*.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese half-legendary account<sup>4</sup> agrees strikingly with what Garcia reports as the Oriental lore of this wonder of nature: "I was deceived for a long time. For they said that in Pegu the channels of the rivers deposit mud into which small sticks are driven. On them are engendered very large ants with wings, and it is said that they deposit much lacre<sup>5</sup> on the sticks. I asked my informants whether they had seen this with their own eyes. As they gained money by buying rubies and selling the cloths of Paleam and Bengal, they replied that they had not been so idle as that, but that they had heard it, and it was the common fame. Afterwards I conversed with a respectable man with an enquiring mind, who told me that it was a large tree with leaves like those of a plum tree, and that the large ants deposit the lacre on the small branches. The ants are engendered in mud or elsewhere. They deposit the gum on the tree, as a material thing, washing the branch as the bee makes honey; and that is the truth. The branches are pulled off the tree and put in the shade to dry. The gum is then taken off and put into bamboo joints, sometimes with the branch."<sup>6</sup>

In the *Yu yan tsa tsu*<sup>7</sup> we read as follows: "The *tse-kun* tree 紫釧樹 has its habitat in Camboja (Čen-la), where it is called 勒怯 *lo-k'ia*, \*lak-ka (that is, *lakka*, *lac*).<sup>8</sup> Further, it is produced in the country

<sup>1</sup> Regarding this locality, cf. H. MASPERO, *Etudes d'histoire d'Annam*, V, p. 19 (*Bull. de l'Ecole française*, 1918, No. 3).

<sup>2</sup> *Nat. Anim.*, IV, 46. There is no other Greek or Latin notice of the matter.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. AYMONIER and CABATON (*Dictionnaire čam-français*, p. 393), who translate the term "termite, pou de bois, fourmi blanche."

<sup>4</sup> Much more sensible, however, than that of Aelian.

<sup>5</sup> The Portuguese word for "lac, lacquer," the latter being traceable to *lacre*. The ending *-re* is unexplained.

<sup>6</sup> C. MARKHAM, *Colloquies*, p. 241.

<sup>7</sup> Ch. 18, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> The *Pai-hai* edition has erroneously the character 鉗.

<sup>9</sup> From Pāli *lākhā* (Sanskrit *lākṣā*, *laktaka*); Čam *lak*, Khmer *lāk*; Siamese *rak* (cf. PALLEGOIX, *Description du royaume Thai*, Vol. I, p. 144). We are thus entitled to trace the presence of this Indian word in the languages of Indo-China to the age of the T'ang. The earliest and only classical occurrence of the word is in the *Periplus* (Ch. 6: *λάκκος*). Cf. also Prākṛit *lakkā*; Kawi and Javanese *lākā*; Tagalog *lakha*.