

IRANIAN MINERALS, METALS, AND PRECIOUS STONES

78. 呼洛 *hu-lo*, **xu-lak*, perhaps also **fu-lak*, **fu-rak*, a product of Persia,¹ which is unexplained. In my opinion, this word may correspond to a Middle Persian **furak* = New Persian *būrak*, *būra*, Armenian *porag* ("borax"). Although I am not positive about this identification, I hope that the following notes on borax will be welcome. It is well known that Persia and Tibet are the two great centres supplying the world-market with borax. The ancient Chinese were familiar with this fact, for in the article on Po-se (Persia) the *T'ai p'in hwan yü ki*² states that "the soil has salty lakes, which serve the people as a substitute for salt" (地有鹹池人代鹽味). Our own word "borax" (the *x* is due to Spanish, now written *borraj*) comes from Persian, having been introduced into the Romanic languages about the ninth century by the Arabs. Russian *burá* was directly transmitted from Persia. Likewise our "tincal, tincar" (a crude borax found in lake-deposits of Persia and Tibet) is derived from Persian *tinkār*, *tankāl*,³ or *tangār*, Sanskritized *ṭaṅkaṇa*, *ṭaṅka*, *ṭaṅga*, *ṭagara*;⁴ Malayan *tingkal*; Kirgiz *dānākār*, Osmanli *tāngar*.⁵ Another Persian word that belongs to this category, *šora* ("nitre, saltpetre"), has been adopted by the Tibetans in the same form *šo-ra*, although they possess also designations of their own, *ze-ts'wa*, *ba-ts'wa* ("cow's salt"), and *ts'a-la*. The Persian word is Sanskritized into *sorāka*, used in India for nitre, saltpetre, or potassium nitrate.⁶

79. The relation of Chinese *nao-ša* ("sal ammoniac, chloride of sodium")⁷ to Persian *nušādir* or *naušādir* is rather perspicuous; nevertheless it has been asserted also that the Persian word is derived from

¹ *Sui šu*, Ch. 83, p. 7 b.

² Ch. 185, p. 19.

³ It is not a Tibetan name, as supposed by ROEDIGER and POTT (*Z. f. K. Morg.*, Vol. IV, p. 268).

⁴ These various attempts at spelling show plainly that the term has the status of a loan-word, and that the Sanskrit term has nothing to do with the name of the people who may have supplied the product, the *Táγγαροι* in the Himalaya of Ptolemy (YULE, Hobson-Jobson, p. 923). How should borax be found in the Himalaya!

⁵ KLAPROTH, *Mémoires relatifs à l'Asie*, Vol. III, p. 347.

⁶ See, further, *T'oung Pao*, 1914, pp. 88-89.

⁷ D. HANBURY, *Science Papers*, pp. 217, 276.