

## IRANO-SINICA

After dealing with the cultural elements derived by the Chinese from the Iranians, it will be only just to look also at the reverse of the medal and consider what the Iranians owe to the Chinese.

1. Some products of China had reached Iranian peoples long before any Chinese set their foot on Iranian soil. When Čan K'ien in 128 B.C. reached Ta-hia (Bactria), he was amazed to see there staves or walking-sticks made from bamboo of Kiuñ 邛竹杖<sup>1</sup> and cloth of Šu (Se-č'wan) 蜀布. What this textile exactly was is not known.<sup>2</sup> Both these articles hailed from what is now Se-č'wan, Kiuñ being situated in Žuñ čou 榮州 in the prefecture of Kia-tiñ, in the southern part of the province. When the Chinese envoy inquired from the people of Ta-hia how they had obtained these objects of his own country, they replied that they purchased them in India. Hence Čan K'ien concluded that India could not be so far distant from Se-č'wan. It is well known how this new geographical notion subsequently led the Chinese to the discovery of Yün-nan. There was accordingly an ancient trade-route running from Se-č'wan through Yün-nan into north-eastern India; and, as India on her north-west frontier was in connection with Iranian territory, Chinese merchandise could thus reach Iran. The bamboo of Kiuñ, also called 筴, has been identified by the Chinese with the so-called square bamboo (*Bambusa* or *Phyllostachys quadrangularis*).<sup>3</sup> The cylindrical form is so universal a feature in bamboo, that the report of the existence in China and Japan of a bamboo with four-angled stems was first considered in Europe a myth, or a pathological abnormality. It is now well assured that it represents a regular and normal species, which grows wild in the north-eastern portion of Yün-nan, and is cultivated chiefly as an ornament in gardens and in temple-courts, the longer stems being used

---

<sup>1</sup> He certainly did not see "a stick of bamboo," as understood by HIRTH (*Journal Am. Or. Soc.*, Vol. XXXVII, 1917, p. 98), but it was a finished product imported in a larger quantity.

<sup>2</sup> Assuredly it was not silk, as arbitrarily inferred by F. v. RICHTHOFEN (*China*, Vol. I, p. 465). The word *pu* never refers to silk materials.

<sup>3</sup> For an interesting article on this subject, see D. J. MACGOWAN, *Chinese Recorder*, Vol. XVI, 1885, pp. 141-142; further, the same journal, 1886, pp. 140-141. E. SATOW, *Cultivation of Bamboos in Japan*, p. 92 (Tokyo, 1899). The square bamboo (Japanese *šikaku-dake*) is said to have been introduced into Japan from Liukiu. FORBES and HEMSLEY, *Journal Linnean Soc.*, Vol. XXXVI, p. 443.