NOTES ON CHINESE MATERIA MEDICA.

BY CHARLES FORD, F.L.S.,

Director of the Botanical Gardens, Hongkong;

HO KAI, M.B., ABERD., &c.;

AND WILLIAM EDWARD CROW, M.P.S.,

Government Analyst, Hongkong.

(Continued from page 276).

4.-Strychnos paniculata, *Champ.* ,, angustiflora, *Benth.*

N. O. LOGANIACEÆ.

We have no evidence to show that the seeds of these two species are used in medicine by the Chinese, nor can any reference to them be found in native botanical works. As any information regarding the genus *Strychnos*, even though it be of a negative character, is of interest, it was considered advisable to insert these few details before leaving the Natural Order LOGANIACEÆ.

Both these species are to be found on the island of Hongkong; but *S. angustiflora*, although very common in the colony, is not recorded from elsewhere. *S. paniculata* is unknown out of South China.[1]

A good supply of the attractive orange-like fruits, presumably of both species, were gathered by us near the village of Sheko on the island of Hongkong, in November 1884. The seeds, when freed from the surrounding pulp and dried, weighed on an average eight grains. They closely resemble, in form, the seeds of *S. nux vomica*, but are much smaller, being only $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch in diameter.

Neither Strychnine nor Brucine could be detected in these seeds. A fluorescent body —the exact nature of which has not yet been determined, and which gives an alcoholic extract of a yellowish-green appearance—was however observed.

The pulp has not been chemically examined. Mention might be made that on several occasions we have found pulpless fruits scattered on the ground beneath the trees, the pulp having evidently been pecked out by birds. We are reluctant, however, to receive this as evidence that the pulp is harmless, because, in India, some birds are said to be very fond of the strychnine-containing pulp of the nux vomica fruit.[1]

1. *Flora Hongkongensis*, (1861), p. 232.

5.—Basella rubra,[2] *Linn.*

N. O. CHENOPODIACEÆ.

紅藤菜 { Cantonese.—*Hung t'ang ts'oi.* Mandarin.—*Hiung têng ts'ai.*

Some months ago this plant was sent to us by a correspondent, with the remark that he had been recommended to use it, by several intelligent Chinese, for a severe case of dysentery, one of the members of his family was suffering from.

1. *Pharmacographia*, (1879), p. 428.

2. *Flora Hongkongensis*, (1861), p. 283. *Pên ts'ao kang mu*, Chap. XXVII., No. 594; *Chih wu ming shih t'u kao*, Part II, Vol. IV., p. 6.

If anything was needed, to demonstrate the necessity of the Chinese being trained in the art of Western medicine, it would certainly be found in the fact, that a plant in common use as a pot herb, both in India and China, is selected for the treatment of such a disease as dysentery.

Many plants of the natural order CHENOPODIACEÆ furnish material suitable for culinary purposes. The one here noticed is said to yield, in addition, a fine purple dye, but the colour, according to native opinion, is not a very lasting one.

By the Chinese in Hongkong it is also regarded, when boiled with lean pork, as a remedy for hæmoptysis.

In addition to the above name, the one by which this plant is commonly designated in Canton and Hongkong, we subjoin the following taken from the *Pên ts'ao*:—落葵 C. *Lok k'wai*, M. *Lo k'wei*; 蔂葵 C. *Chung k'wai*, M. *Chiung k'wei*; 藤葵 C. *T'ang k'wai*, M. *T'êng k'wei*; 天葵 C. *T'in kwai*, M. *T'ien k'wei*; 繁露 C. *Fán lu*, M. *Fan lu*; 御菜 C. *Yü ts'oi*, M. *Yü ts'ai*; 燕脂菜 C. *Yin chi ts'oi*, M. *Yien chih ts'ai*.

Loureiro in his *Flora Cochin-chinensis*, (1793), ed. Willdenow, p. 229, states that it is met with, both wild and cultivated, in Cochin-China, where it is known as *Cây boung toi*.

The author of the *Pên ts'ao* ascribes refrigerant and emollient properties to this herb: the juice of the fruit is sometimes used by the Chinese ladies as a face paint.

6.—Platycodon grandiflorum,[1] *A. DC.*

N. O. CAMPANULACEÆ.

Syn., *Wahlenbergia grandiflora*, Schrad., *Platycodon chinense*, Lindl.

桔梗 { Cantonese.—*Kit kang.* Mandarin.—*Chieh kêng.*

We have confirmed the observations of previous investigators[2] as to the identity of the drug *Chieh kêng* with the root of this beautiful Campanulaceous plant. Specimens from the native drug warehouses exactly correspond with the characters of the root of *P. grandiflorum* gathered by us on the island of Hongkong. A fairly accurate figure of the shrub may be seen in the Chinese Botanical Work *Chih wu ming shih t'u kao*, Part II., Vol. VIII., p. 11.

It grows on exposed situations on the island of Hongkong, near Cape Collinson and the village of Stanley &c.; also according to the Rev. Father David in Mongolia, Kiangsi and the plains of Pehchili. It is common also in Manchuria. In the *Pen ts'ao* it is said to be common, on exposed roads and hill sides, all over China.

The root, as found in the Hongkong drug shops, occurs in pieces from 5-9 inches long and $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch broad, much shrivelled, of a whitish colour the epidermis having been removed. On most of the specimens the crown of the root may be seen. A section shows the yellow meditullium, occupying fully $\frac{3}{4}$ths. of the entire diameter, surrounded by the brownish cortical layer. Near the base of the root the latter is quite as thick as the meditullium, and of a much lighter colour, and a distinct brown line marks the line of demarcation between the two.

The native merchants state that the supply comes chiefly from Szechuen. A quantity is also said to reach the Hongkong market from Tientsin and Kwangsi.

It appears to be a favourite drug with the Chinese, being used as a tonic, astringent, sedative, vermifuge and carminative. It is also regarded as efficacious in dysentery, cholera, and in pulmonary and nervous affections.

1. *Flora Hongkongensis*, (1861), p. 197.

2. Tatarinov, *Catalogus medicamentorum sinensium*, (1856); No. 444. F. Porter Smith, *Contributions towards the Materia Medica & N. History of China*, (1871) p. 173. Soubeiran and Dabry de Thiersant, *Matière Médicale chez les Chinois*, (1874), p. 170. Bretschneider, *Journal of the N. China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XVI., Part I., p. 57. *Pên ts'ao kang mu*, Chap. XII., No. 93.

7.-Melodinus suaveolens, *Champ.* vel **Melodinus monogynus,** *Roxb.*

N. O. APOCYNACEÆ.

山橙 { Cantonese.—*Shán ch'ang* / Mandarin.—*Shan ch'éng*

Mountain Orange.

Dr. Porter Smith, on p. 146 of his *Materia Medica*, states that *M. monogynus* 'is said to be found in China, but is unknown to the Chinese here' (Hankow). This species, as well as *M. suaveolens*[1] and *M. fusiformis*, is indigenous to Hongkong.

1. Syn. *Lycimma suaveolens*, Hance; found also on the adjacent continent: *Flora Hongkongensis*, p. 218. The specimens of this species in the Hongkong Botanic Gardens do not bear fruit.

The bright red fruits of one or more species of *Melodinus* are familiar objects in the herbalists' shops in Hongkong, where they may be usually seen suspended by a portion of the branch of the tree. The berries are globular and from 2 to 3 inches in diameter.

The Chinese employ them for the treatment of glandular swellings, particularly those of the neck. They are also said to produce a soothing effect when used to allay troublesome coughs. In both instances the drug is used internally.

It is not an 'official' medicine. No mention is made of it in the *Pén ts'ao*, but a good illustration of the plant in fruit may be seen in the *Chih wu ming shih t'u kao*, Part II., Vol. XXI., p. 57.

CHINESE ROOTS ENDING IN K, T, P, AND VOWELS.

(*Continued from Vol. XV., page 295.*)

該 kai, 7 kak, ought, regulations in an army, all, the whole. Origin in (隔) verb of cutting 刻, k'ak, cut. The modern sense 'ought' seems to come out of the sense 'regulations.'

絞 bind, 胲 great toe, 垓 boundary, limit.

咳 steps in a temple. 荄 roots of grass. 骸 5 hai, tibia, the hundred bones of the body. 駭 6, to be alarmed. 核 8 hak, stone of fruit.

The root hak to interpose a check, 隔, may have originated the sense limit, and boundary, root, steps. Same as 礙 7 ngai, a check, hindrance. Perhaps the same root may account for the sense, stone of fruit, bone, shin bone, great toe, chin 頦 5 hai. To be alarmed is 嚇 hia, 4, hak, and by restoring the lip initial we have 怕 p'a, fear.

If we restore the labial initial for bind, we have 縛 8 bok, tie up. This also takes as a derivative the sense all, the whole. When you wish a word for the whole, nothing is more to the purpose than a collection of things held in the hand. This is clear from the fact that one in Chinese often precedes the word used for whole. To obtain a word for all, we adopt some root which unites all the existing particulars or individuals in a whole. Thus 一筒 originates 一同. That is to say the hollow bamboo that holds several slips is used as a name for the whole of the slips held in it. Thus 該, when it means the whole, points to all the individuals inclosed within the cut line kai, kak. Words for all are just as common with lip initials as with other initials, and the other words may be derived from them by change of p into tooth or throat letters. The real root then of kai may be pak or shak or some such syllable, and we must accept the earliest form of it which research can discover. Many instances occur of change in initials. In