

Quamme; Secretary, R. C. Rom; Treasurer, L. D. Tukey; Resident Agent, Mass., J. F. Anderson; to the Executive Board, M. Dana (3 years); and to the Advisory Committee, B. W. Barritt, A. J. Caggiano, H. W. Fogle, A. Hutchinson, M. H. Kolbe, K. O.

Lapins, C. Perleberg, D. Ramming, W. Sherman, D. H. Scott, and F. T. Street.

Honorariums were approved for the Editor, Treasurer and Secretary.

F. J. Lawrence,
Acting Secretary

A 1,200 Year-Old Litchi Tree Flourishes in the People's Republic of China

TIENG SANG¹

A litchi tree planted in the 8th century in Putien county, Fukien province, east China, is still luxuriant and produces fruit every year. This 1,200-year-old tree is now 6.43 meters in height, and its oval-shaped crown is 8.9 meters long and 7.17 meters wide.

Recent tests by a fruit research institute in the province have confirmed that the fruit is normal in shape, rich in color, with thick, juicy and sweet flesh, and a thin, crisp rind. The tree is considered a good strain of litchi.

The tree has the name of "Sung Family Fragrance" and stands in the courtyard of an ancestral temple in Putien county. It is said that in 1056 Sung Hsien, the owner of the tree, treated Tsai Rsiang, a famous calligrapher of the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127), to litchi from the tree at the temple. The guest praised the fruit in an improvised poem. He remarked in a postscript to the poem that "the litchi tree is known to have existed for 300 years." Later, he mentioned the tree, "Sung Family Fragrance," in his famous book, "Notes on

Litchi," the earliest work on fruit culture in China.

At the beginning of the present century, an American missionary, W. N. Brewster, brought some saplings grown from "Sung Family Fragrance" seeds back to the United States, together with information on litchi culture. Since then, the fruit tree, which was named after Brewster, has been grown in Florida and certain other states, as well as in some Latin American countries.

The local government in Putien county is presently maintaining this ancient litchi tree. In 1976, steps were taken to protect the tree by pruning, manuring and spraying. Three saplings grown from its seeds have been planted nearby, and they have been successfully grafted to the trunk of the tree one meter above the ground to add nutrients to the tree. In time they will help in providing support.

This ancient tree has been listed as a major monument under state protection.

¹China Features, Peking, People's Republic of China.