

Triratna.¹ From the application of *adhimuktaka* it becomes self-evident also that sesame-oil must be included in this series. The frequent mention of this oil for sacred lamps is familiar to all readers of the Buddhist Jātaka. The above Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary adds the following comment: "This plant is in appearance like the 'great hemp' (*Cannabis sativa*). It has red flowers and green leaves. Its seeds can be made into oil; also they yield an aromatic. According to the *Tsun kin yin nie lun* 宗鏡引攝論, sesame (*kü-šen*) is originally charcoal, and, while for a long time buried in the soil, will change into sesame. In the western countries (India) it is customary in anointing the body with fragrant oil to use first aromatic flowers and then to take sesame-seeds. These are gathered and soaked till thoroughly bright; afterwards they proceed to press the oil out of the sesame, which henceforth becomes fragrant."

Of greater importance for our purpose is the antiquity of sesame in Iran. According to Herodotus², it was cultivated by the Chorasians, Hyrcanians, Parthians, Sarangians, and Thamanæans. In Persia sesame-oil was known at least from the time of the first Achæmenides.³ G. WATT⁴ even looks to Persia and Central Asia as the home of the species; he suggests that it was probably first cultivated somewhere between the Euphrates valley and Bukhara south to Afghanistan and upper India, and was very likely diffused into India proper and the Archipelago, before it found its way to Egypt and Europe.

Sesamum indicum (var. *subindivisum* Dl.) is cultivated in Russian Turkistan and occupies there the first place among the oil-producing plants. It thrives in the warmest parts of the valley of Fergana, and does not go beyond an elevation of two thousand five hundred feet. It is chiefly cultivated in the districts of Namanga and Andijan, though not in large quantity.⁵ Its Persian name is *kunjut*.

While there is no doubt that this species was introduced into China from Iranian regions, the time as to when this introduction took place remains obscure. First, there is no historical and dependable record of this event; second, the confusion brought about by the Chinese in treating this subject is almost hopeless. Take the earliest notice of *hu ma* cited by the *Pen ts'ao* and occurring in the *Pie lu*: "*Hu ma* is also called *kü-šen* 巨勝. It grows on the rivers and in the marshes of

¹ Cf. EITEL, Handbook of Chinese Buddhism, p. 4.

² III, 117.

³ JORET, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 71. Sesame is mentioned in Pahlavi literature (above, p. 193).

⁴ Gingly or Sesame Oil, p. 11 (Handbooks of Commercial Products, No. 21).

⁵ S. KORŽINSKI, Vegetation of Turkistan (in Russian), p. 50.