

garding the introduction or cultivation of saffron.¹ The confusion of Li Ši-čen is simply due to an association of the two plants known as "red flower." Safflower is thus designated in the *Ts'i min yao šu*, further by Li Čuñ 李中 of the T'ang and in the *Suñ ši*, where the *yen-či* red flower is stated to have been sent as tribute by the prefecture of Hiñ-yüan 興元 in Šen-si.²

The fact that Li Ši-čen in the above passage was thinking of saffron becomes evident from two foreign words added to his nomenclature of the product: namely, 泊夫藍 *ki-fu-lan* and 撒法郎 *sa-fa-tsi*. The first character in the former transcription is a misprint for 咱 *tsa* (*tsap, dzap); the last character in the latter form must be emended into 郎 *lan*.³ *Tsa-fu-lan* and *sa-fa-lan* (Japanese *safuran*, Siamese *faran*), as was recognized long ago, represent transcriptions of Arabic *za'ferān* or *za'farān*, which, on its part, has resulted in our "saf-

¹ BRETSCHNEIDER (*Chinese Recorder*, 1871, p. 222) asserts that saffron is not cultivated in Peking, but that it is known that it is extensively cultivated in other parts of China. I know nothing about this, and have never seen or heard of any saffron cultivation in China, nor is any Chinese account to that effect known to me. *Crocus sativus* is not listed in the great work of F. B. FORBES and W. B. HEMSLEY (An Enumeration of All the Plants known from China Proper, comprising Vols. 23, 26, and 36 of the *Journal of the Linnean Society*), the most comprehensive systematic botany of China. ENGLER (in Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen*, p. 270) says that *Crocus* is cultivated in China. WATT (Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 593) speaks of Chinese saffron imported into India. It is of especial interest that Marco Polo did not find saffron in China, but he reports that in the province of Fu-kien they have "a kind of fruit, resembling saffron, and which serves the purpose of saffron just as well" (YULE, Marco Polo, Vol. II, p. 225). It may be, as suggested by Yule after Flückiger, that this is *Gardenia florida*, the fruits of which are indeed used in China for dyeing-purposes, producing a beautiful yellow color. On the other hand, the *Pen ts'ao kañ mu ši i* (Ch. 4, p. 14 b) contains the description of a "native saffron" (*t'u huñ hwa* 土紅花, in opposition to the "Tibetan red flower" or genuine saffron) after the Continued Gazetteer of Fu-kien 福建續志, as follows: "As regards the native saffron, the largest specimens are seven or eight feet high. The leaves are like those of the *p'i-p'a* 枇杷 (*Eriobotrya japonica*), but smaller and without hair. In the autumn it produces a white flower like a grain of maize (*su-mi* 粟米, *Zea mays*). It grows in Fu-čou and Nan-nen-čou 南恩州 [now Yañ-kiañ 陽江 in Kwañ-tuñ] in the mountain wilderness. That of Fu-čou makes a fine creeper, resembling the *fu-yuñ* (*Hibiscus mutabilis*), green above and white below, the root being like that of the *ko* 葛 (*Pachyrhizus thunbergianus*). It is employed in the pharmacopœia, being finely chopped for this purpose and soaked overnight in water in which rice has been scoured; then it is soaked for another night in pure water and pounded: thus it is ready for prescriptions." This species has not been identified, but may well be Marco Polo's pseudo-saffron of Fu-kien.

² *T'u šu tsi č'eñ*, XX, Ch. 158.

³ Cf. WATTERS, *Essays on the Chinese Language*, p. 348. This transcription, however, does not prove, as intimated by Watters, that "this product was first imported into China from Persia direct or at least obtained immediately from Persian traders." The word *zafarān* is an Arabic loan-word in Persian, and may have been brought to China by Arabic traders as well.