

fron."¹ It is borne out by the very form of these transcriptions that they cannot be older than the Mongol period when the final consonants had disappeared. Under the T'ang we should have *dzap-fu-lam and *sat-fap-lañ. This conclusion agrees with Li Ši-čen's testimony that saffron was mixed with food at the time of the Yüan,—an Indo-Persian custom. Indeed, it seems as if not until then was it imported and used in China; at least, we have no earlier document to this effect.

Saffron is not cultivated in Tibet. There is no *Crocus tibetan us*, as tentatively introduced by PERROT and HURRIER² on the basis of the Chinese term "Tibetan red flower." This only means that saffron is exported from Tibet to China, chiefly to Peking; but Tibet does not produce any saffron, and imports it solely from Kashmir. STUART³ says that "*Ts'an huñ hwa* 藏紅花 ('Red flower from Tsan,' that is, Central Tibet) is given by some foreign writers as another name for saffron, but this has not been found mentioned by any Chinese writer." In fact, that term is given in the *Pen ts'ao kañ mu ši i*⁴ and the *Či wu miñ ši t'u k'ao* of 1848,⁵ where it is said to come from Tibet (Si-tsañ) and to be the equivalent of the *Fan huñ hwa* of the *Pen ts'ao kañ mu*. *Ts'an hwa* is still a colloquial name for saffron in Peking; it is also called simply *huñ hwa* ("red flower").⁶ By Tibetans in Peking I heard it designated *gur-kum*, *ša-ka-ma*, and *dri-bzañ* ("of good fragrance"). Saffron is looked upon by the Chinese as the most valuable drug sent by Tibet, *ts'an hian* ("Tibetan incense") ranking next.

Li Ši-čen⁷ holds that there are two *yü-kin* 鬱金,—the *yü-kin* aromatic, the flowers of which only are used; and the *yü-kin* the root of which is employed. The former is the saffron (*Crocus sativus*); the latter, a *Curcuma*. As will be seen, however, there are at least three *yü-kin*.

Of the genus *Curcuma*, there are several species in China and Indo-China,—*C. leucorrhiza* (*yü-kin*), *C. longa* (*kian hwan* 姜 or 薑黃,

¹ The Arabs first brought saffron to Spain; and from Arabic *za'farān* are derived Spanish *azafran*, Portuguese *açafrão* or *azafrão*, Indo-Portuguese *safrão*, Italian *zafferano*, French *safran*, Rumanian *sofrán*. The same Arabic root (*ašfur*, "yellow") has supplied also those Romance words that correspond to our safflower, safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*), like Spanish *azafranillo*, *alazor*, Portuguese *açafroa*, Italian *asforo*, French *safran*; Old Armenian *zavhran*, New Armenian *zafran*; Russian *safran*; Uigur *sakparan*.

² Mat. méd. et pharmacopée sino-annamites, p. 94.

³ Chinese Materia Medica, p. 132.

⁴ Ch. 4, p. 14 b.

⁵ Ch. 4, p. 35 b.

⁶ It should be borne in mind that this name is merely a modern colloquialism, but *huñ hwa*, when occurring in ancient texts, is not "saffron," but "safflower" (*Carthamus tinctorius*); see below, p. 324.

⁷ *Pen ts'ao kañ mu*, Ch. 14, p. 18.