

šu and *ma-šu*, are sufficient to raise serious doubts of the indigenous character of *Curcuma*; and for my part, I am strongly inclined to believe that at least two species of this genus were first introduced into Se-č'wan by way of Central Asia. This certainly would not exclude the possibility that other species of this genus, or even other varieties of the imported species, pre-existed in China long before that time; and this is even probable, in view of the fact that a fragrant plant *yü* 鬱, which was mixed with sacrificial wine, is mentioned in the ancient *Čou li*, the State Ceremonial of the Čou Dynasty, and in the *Li ki*. The commentators, with a few exceptions, agree on the point that this ancient *yü* was a *yü-kin*; that is, a *Curcuma*.¹

In India, *Curcuma longa* is extensively cultivated all over the country, and probably so from ancient times. The plant (Sanskrit *haridrā*) is already listed in the Bower Manuscript. From India the rhizome is exported to Tibet, where it is known as *yün-ba* or *skyer-pa*, the latter name originally applying to the barberry, the wood and root of which, like *Curcuma*, yield a yellow dye.

Ibn al-Baiṭār understands by *kurkum* the genus *Curcuma*, not *Crocus*, as is obvious from his definition that it is the great species of the tinctorial roots. These roots come from India, being styled *hard* in Persian; this is derived from Sanskrit *haridrā* (*Curcuma longa*). Ibn Hassan, however, observes that the people of Basra bestow on *hard* the name *kurkum*, which is the designation of saffron, and to which it is assimilated; but then he goes on to confound saffron with the root of *wars*, which is a *Memecylon* (see below).² Turmeric is called in Persian *zird-čūbe* or *darzard* ("yellow wood"). According to GARCIA DA ORTA, it was much exported from India to Arabia and Persia; and there was unanimous opinion that it did not grow in Persia, Arabia, or Turkey, but that all comes from India.³

The name *yü-kin*, or with the addition *hian* ("aromatic"),⁴ is frequently referred in ancient documents to two different plants of Indian and Iranian countries,—*Memecylon tinctorium* and *Crocus sativus*, the

¹ Cf. BRETSCHNEIDER, Bot. Sin., pt. II, No. 408.

² LECLERC, Traité des simples, Vol. III, p. 167.

³ C. MARKHAM, Colloquies, p. 163.

⁴ As a matter of principle, the term *yü-kin hian* strictly refers to saffron. It is this term which BRETSCHNEIDER (Bot. Sin., pt. II, No. 408) was unable to identify, and of which STUART (Chinese Materia Medica, p. 140) was compelled to admit, "The plant is not yet identified, but is probably not *Curcuma*." The latter remark is to the point. The descriptions we have of *yü-kin hian*, and which are given below, exclude any idea of a *Curcuma*. The modern Japanese botanists apply the term *yü-kin hian* (Japanese *ukkonkō*) to *Tulipa gesneriana*, a flower of Japan (MATSUMURA, No. 3193).