

雜識¹ by Čou Mi 周密 (1230-1320), who makes the following observation: "As regards the red variety of the *fun sien* flower (*Impatiens balsamina*), the leaves are used, being pounded in a mortar and mixed with a little alum.² The finger-nails must first be thoroughly cleaned, and then this paste is applied to them. During the night a piece of silk is wrapped around them, and the dyeing takes effect. This process is repeated three or five times. The color resembles that of the *yen-či* (*Basella rubrum*). Even by washing it does not come off, and keeps for fully ten days. At present many Mohammedan women are fond of using this cosmetic for dyeing their hands, and also apply it to cats and dogs for their amusement." The *Pen ts'ao kan mu* quotes only the last clause of this text. From what Čou Mi says, it does not appear that the custom was of ancient date; on the contrary, it does not seem to be older than the Sung period.

None of the early *Pen ts'ao* makes mention of *Lawsonia*. It first appears in the *Pen ts'ao kan mu*. All that Li Ši-čen is able to note amounts to this: that there are two varieties, a yellow and a white one, which bloom during the summer months; that its odor resembles that of *mu-si* 木犀 (*Osmanthus fragrans*); and that it can be used for dyeing the finger-nails, being superior in this respect to the *fun sien* flower (*Impatiens balsamina*). Čen Kañ-čun 鄭剛中, an author of the Sung period, mentions the plant under the name *i hian hwa* 異香花 ("flower of peculiar fragrance").

It has generally been believed hitherto that the use of henna and the introduction of *Lawsonia* into China are of ancient date; but, in fact, the evidence is extremely weak. In my opinion, as far as the employment of henna is concerned, we have to go down as far as the Sung period. It is noteworthy also that no foreign name of ancient date, either for the plant or its product, is on record. F. P. SMITH and STUART parade the term 海蔘 *hai-na* (Arabic *hinnā*) without giving a reference. The very form of this transcription shows that it is of recent date: in fact, it occurs as late as the sixteenth century in the *Pen ts'ao kan mu*,³ then in the *K'ün fañ p'u* of 1630⁴ and the *Nun čen ts'üan šu* 農政全書, published in 1619 by Sü Kwañ-k'i 徐光啟, the friend and supporter of the Jesuits. It also occurs in the *Hwa kin* of 1688.⁵

It is well known what extensive use of henna (Arabic *hinnā*, hence

¹ 續集上, p. 17 (ed. of *Pai hai*).

² In this manner the dye is also prepared at present.

³ Ch. 17 B, p. 12 b.

⁴ *Kwañ k'ün fañ p'u*, Ch. 26, p. 4 b. The passages of the first edition are especially indicated.

⁵ Ch. 5, p. 23 b.