

*pen ts'ao*; but at the same time we are informed that it was then obtained from all bamboos of China,<sup>1</sup> and that the Chinese, according to their habit, adulterated the product with scorched bones, the arrowroot from *Pachyrhizus angulatus*, and other stuff.<sup>2</sup> The *Pen ts'ao yen i* of 1116<sup>3</sup> explains the substance as a natural production in bamboo, yellow like loess. The name was soon changed into "bamboo-yellow" (*ču hwan* 竹黃) or "bamboo-grease" (*ču kao*).<sup>4</sup> It is noticeable that the Chinese do not classify tabashir among stones, but conceive it as a production of bamboo, while the Hindu regard it as a kind of pearl.

The earliest Arabic author who has described the substance is Abū Dulaf, who lived at the Court of the Samanides of Bokhāra, and travelled in Central Asia about A.D. 940. He says that the product comes from Mandūrapatan in northwestern India (Abulfeda and others state that Tāna on the island of Salsette, twenty miles from Bombay, was the chief place of production), and is exported from there into all countries of the world. It is produced by rushes, which, when they are dry and agitated by the wind, rub against one another; this motion develops heat and sets them afire. The blaze sometimes spreads over a surface of fifty parasangs, or even more. Tabashir is the product of these rushes.<sup>5</sup> Other Arabic authors cited by Ibn al-Baiṭār derive the substance from the Indian sugarcane, and let it come from all coasts of India; they dwell at length on its medicinal properties.<sup>6</sup> GARCIA DA ORTA (1563), who was familiar with the drug, also mentions the burning of the canes, and states it as certain that the reason they set fire to them is to reach the heart; but sometimes they do not follow this practice, as appears from many specimens which are untouched by fire. He justly says that the Arabic name (*tabašir*, in his Portuguese spelling *tabaxir*) is derived from the Persian, and means "milk or juice, or moisture." The ordinary price for the product in Persia and Arabia was its weight in silver. The canes, lofty and large like ash-trees,

<sup>1</sup> The *Čen lei pen ts'ao* (Ch. 13, p. 48) cites the same text from a work *Lin hai ĩ* 臨海誌, apparently an other work than the *Lin hai i wu ĩ* mentioned by BRETSCHEIDER (Bot. Sin., pt. I, p. 169).

<sup>2</sup> The following assertion by STUART (Chinese Materia Medica, p. 64) is erroneous: "The Chinese did not probably derive the substance originally from India, but it is possible that the knowledge of its medicinal uses were derived from that country, where it has been held in high esteem from very early times." The knowledge of this product and the product itself first reached the Chinese from India, and naturally induced them to search for it in their own bamboos.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. 14, p. 4 b (ed. of Lu Sin-yüan).

<sup>4</sup> *Pen ts'ao kañ mu*, Ch. 37, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> G. FERRAND, Textes relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient, p. 225.

<sup>6</sup> L. LECLERC, Traité des simples, Vol. II, pp. 399-401.