

SUGAR

28. The sugar-cane (*Saccharum officinarum*) is a typically Indian or rather Southeast-Asiatic, and merely a secondary Iranian cultivation, but its history in Iran is of sufficient importance to devote here a few lines to this subject. The Sui Annals¹ attribute hard sugar (*š'i-mi* 石蜜, literally, "stone honey") and *pan-mi* 半蜜 ("half honey") to Sasanian Persia and to Ts'ao (Jāguḍa). It is not known what kind of sugar is to be understood by the latter term.² Before the advent of sugar, honey was the universal ingredient for sweetening food-stuffs, and thus the ancients conceived the sugar of India as a kind of honey obtained from canes without the agency of bees.³ The term *š'i-mi* first appears in the *Nan fan ts'ao mu čwan*,⁴ which contains the first description of the sugar-cane, and refers it to Kiao-či (Tonking); according to this work, the natives of this country designate sugar as *š'i-mi*, which accordingly may be the literal rendering of a Kiao-či term. In A.D. 285 Fu-nan (Camboja) sent *č'u-čö* 諸蔗 ("sugar-cane") as tribute to China.⁵

It seems that under the T'ang sugar was also imported from Persia to China; for Moñ Šen, who wrote the *Ši liao pen ts'ao* in the second half of the seventh century, says that the sugar coming from Po-se (Persia) to Se-č'wan is excellent. Su Kuñ, the reviser of the *T'an pen ts'ao* of about A.D. 650, extols the sugar coming from the Si Žuñ, which may likewise allude to Iranian regions. Exact data as to the introduction and dissemination of the sugar-cane in Persia are not available. E. O. v. LIPPMANN⁶ has developed an elaborate theory to the effect that

¹ *Sui šu*, Ch. 83, p. 7 b.

² It is only contained in the *Sui šu*, not in the *Wei šu* (Ch. 102, p. 5 b), which has merely *š'i-mi*. The sugar-cane was also grown in Su-le (Kashgar): *T'ai p'in hwan yü ki*, Ch. 181, p. 12 b.

³ Pliny, XII, 17.

⁴ Ch. I, p. 4.

⁵ This word apparently comes from a language spoken in Indo-China; it is already ascribed to the dictionary *Šwo wen*. Subsequently it was replaced by *kan* 甘 ("sweet") *čö* or *kan* 芋 *čö*, presumably also the transcription of a foreign word. The *Nan Ts'i šu* mentions *č'u-čö* as a product of Fu-nan (cf. PELLIOT, *Bull. de l'Ecole française*, Vol. III, p. 262). In Č'i-t'u 赤土 (Siam) a wine of yellow color and fine aroma was prepared from sugar and mixed with the root of a Cucurbitacea (*Sui šu*, Ch. 82, p. 2 b).

⁶ *Geschichte des Zuckers*, p. 93 (Leipzig, 1890); and *Abhandlungen*, Vol. I, p. 263. According to the same author, the Persians were the inventors of sugar-refining; but this is purely hypothetical.