

K'un-lun of the Southern Sea;¹ and Su Kuñ of the T'ang says that, of the two kinds of *mu-hian* (known to him), that of K'un-lun is the best, while that from the West Lake near Hañ-čou is not good.² In the time of T'ao Huñ-kiñ (A.D. 451-536) the root was no longer brought from Yuñ-č'añ; but the bulk of it was imported on foreign ships, with the report that it came from Ta Ts'in (the Hellenistic Orient),³—hence presumably the same article as the Arabian or Syrian costus of Dioscorides. The *Nan fan ts'ao mu čwan* is cited by Čen Kwan of the seventh century as saying that the root is produced in India, being the product of an herbaceous plant and of the appearance of licorice. The same text is ascribed to the *Nan čou i wu či* of the third century in the *T'ai p'in yü lan*,⁴ while the *Kwan či* attributes the product to Kiao-čou (Tonking) and India. A different description of the plant is again given by Su Suñ. Thus it is no wonder that the specimens from China submitted for identification have proved to be from different plants, as *Aplotaxis auriculata*, *Aristolochia kaempferi*, *Rosa banksia*, etc.⁵ If, accordingly, costus (to use this general term) was found not only in India and Kashmir, but also in Arabia, Syria, Tibet, Mongolia, China, and Malacca, it is equally possible also that Persia had a costus of her own or imported it from Syria as well as from India.⁶ This is a question which cannot be decided with certainty. The linguistic evidence is inconclusive, for the New-Persian *kust* is an Arabic loan-word, the latter, of course, being traceable to Sanskrit *kuṣṭha*, which has obtained a world-wide propagation.⁷ Like so many other examples in the history of commerce, this case illustrates the unwillingness of the world to tolerate monopolies for any length of time. The real costus was peculiar (and still is) to Kashmir, but everywhere attempts were constantly made to trace equivalents or substitutes. The trade-mark remained the same, while the article was subjected to changes.

59. Under the term *ñan* (or *an*)-*si hian* 安西香 the Chinese have

¹ PELLIOU, *Bull. de l'Ecole française*, Vol. IV, p. 226.

² The attribution of the root to K'un-lun is not fiction, for this tradition is confirmed by Garcia da Orta, who localizes pucho on Malacca, whence it is exported to China.

³ This text is doubtless authentic; it is already recorded in the *T'ai p'in yü lan* (Ch. 991, p. 11).

⁴ Ch. 982, p. 3.

⁵ HANBURY, *Science Papers*, p. 257; STUART, *Chinese Materia Medica*, p. 43.

⁶ In the sixteenth century, as we learn from GARCIA (Markham, *Colloquies*, p. 150), costus was shipped from India to Ormuz, and thence carried to Persia and Khorasan; it was also brought into Persia and Arabia by way of Aden.

⁷ In Tokharian it is found in the form *kaṣṣu* (S. LÉVI, *Journal asiatique*, 1911, II, p. 138).