

Po-se 波斯. The tree grows to a height of ten feet, with branches dense and luxuriant. Its leaves resemble those of the Citrus and wither during the winter. In the third month it flowers, the blossoms being white in color. It does not form fruit. When heavy fogs, dew, and rain moisten the branches of this tree, they produce *tse-kun*. The envoys of the country Po-se, Wu-hai 烏海 and Ša-li-šen 沙利深 by name, agreed in their statement with the envoys from Camboja, who were a *če č'un tu wei* 折衝都尉¹ and the *çramaņa* 施沙尼拔陁 Ši-ša-ni-pa-t'o (Çiçanibhadra?). These said, 'Ants transport earth into the ends of this tree, digging nests in it; the ant-hills moistened by rain and dew will harden and form *tse-kun*.² That of the country K'un-lun is the most excellent, while that of the country Po-se ranks next.'³

¹ Title of a military officer.

² "The gum-lac which comes from Pegu is the cheapest, though it is as good as that of other countries; what causes it to be sold cheaper is that the ants, making it there on the ground in heaps, which are sometimes of the size of a cask, mix with it a quantity of dirt" (TAVERNIER, Travels in India, Vol. II, p. 22).

³ The story of lacca and the ants producing it was made known in England at the end of the sixteenth century. JOHN GERARDE (The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes, p. 1349, London, 1597, 1st ed; or, enlarged and amended by Thomas Johnson, p. 1533, London, 1633) tells it as follows: "The tree that bringeth forth that excrementall substance, called *Lacca*, both in the shops of Europe and elsewhere, is called of the Arabians, Persians and Turkes *Loc Sumutri*, as who should say *Lacca* of Sumutra: some which have so termed it, have thought that the first plentie thereof came from Sumutra, but herein they have erred; for the abundant store thereof came from Pegu, where the inhabitants thereof do call it *Lac*, and others of the same province *Trec*. The history of which tree, according to that famous Herbarist Clusius is as followeth. There is in the countrey of Pegu and Malabar, a great tree, whose leaves are like them of the Plum tree, having many small twiggie branches; when the trunke or body of the tree waxeth olde, it rotteth in sundrie places, wherein do breed certaine great ants or Pismires, which continually worke and labour in the time of harvest and sommer, against the penurie of winter: such is the diligence of these Ants, or such is the nature of the tree wherein they harbour, or both, that they provide for their winter foode, a lumpe or masse of substance, which is of a crimson colour, so beautifull and so faire, as in the whole world the like cannot be seene, which serveth not onely to phisicall uses, but is a perfect and costly colour for Painters, called by us, Indian Lack. The Pismires (as I said) worke out this colour, by sucking the substance or matter of *Lacca* from the tree, as Bees do make honie and waxe, by sucking the matter thereof from all herbes, trees, and flowers, and the inhabitants of that countrey, do as diligently search for this *Lacca*, as we in England and other countries, seeke in the woods for honie; which *Lacca* after they have found, they take from the tree, and drie it into a lumpe; among which sometimes there come over some sticks and peeces of the tree with the wings of the Ants, which have fallen amongst it, as we daily see. The tree which beareth *Lacca* groweth in Zeilan and Malavar, and in other partes of the East Indies." The second edition of 1633 has the following addition, "The Indian Lacke or Lake which is the rich colour used by Painters, is none of that which is used in shops, nor here figured or described by Clusius, wherefore our Author was much mistaken in that he here confounds together things so different; for this is of a resinous substance, and a faint red colour, and wholly unfit for Painters, but used alone and in composition to make the best hard