

Sasanian Persia;¹ and it is stated in the T'ang Annals that Persia produces coral not higher than three feet.² There is no doubt that Persian corals have found their way all over Asia; and many of them may still be preserved by Tibetans, who prize above all coral, amber, and turquois. The coral encountered by the Chinese in Ki-pin (Kashmir)³ may also have been of Persian origin. Unfortunately we have no information on the subject from ancient Iranian sources, nor do we know an ancient Iranian name for coral. Solinus informs us that Zoroaster attributed to coral a certain power and salubrious effects;⁴ and what Pliny says about coral endowed with sacred properties and being a preservative against all dangers, sounds very much like an idea emanating from Persia. Persian infants still wear a piece of coral on the abdomen as a talisman to ward off harm;⁵ and, according to Pliny, this was the practice at his time, only that the branches of coral were hung at the infant's neck.

The Chinese word for coral, 珊瑚 *šan-hu*, **san-gu* (Japanese *san-go*), possibly is of foreign origin, but possibly it is not.⁶ For the present there is no word in any West-Asiatic or Iranian language with which it could be correlated. In Hebrew it is *ra'mot*, which the Seventy transcribes *ραμοθ* or translates *μετέωρα*. The common word in New Persian is *marjān* (hence Russian *maržan*); other designations are *birbāl*, *xuruhak* or *xurohak*, *bussad* or *bissad* (Arabic *bessed* or *bussad*). In Armenian it is *bust*.⁷

91. The identification of Chinese 婆娑 *p'o-so* (**bwa-sa*) with Persian *pāzahr* or *pādžahr*⁸ ("bezoar," literally, "antidote"), first proposed by HIRTH,⁹ in my opinion, is not tenable, although it has been indorsed

¹ *Čou šu*, Ch. 50, p. 6; *Sui šu*, Ch. 83, p. 7 b; regarding coral in Fu-lu-ni, see above, p. 521, note 9.

² *T'an šu*, Ch. 221 B, p. 6 b. The *Lian šu* (Ch. 54, p. 14 b) attributes to Persia coral-trees one or two feet high.

³ *Ts'ien Han šu*, Ch. 96 A, p. 5. This passage (not *Hou Han šu*, Ch. 118, as stated by HIRTH, Chau Ju-kua, p. 226, after Bretschneider) contains the earliest mention of the word *šan-hu*.

⁴ Habet enim, ut Zoroastres ait, materia haec quandam potestatem, ac propterea quidquid inde sit, ducitur inter salutaria (II, 39, § 42).

⁵ SCHLIMMER, Terminologie, p. 166.

⁶ According to BRETSCHNEIDER (*Chinese Recorder*, Vol. VI, p. 16), "it seems not to be a Chinese name."

⁷ Cf. PATKANOV, The Precious Stones according to the Notions of the Armenians (in Russian), p. 52.

⁸ Pāzand *pādazahr* (see HÜBSCHMANN, Persische Studien, p. 193). STEINGASS gives also *pānzahr*. The derivation from *bād* "wind" (H. FÜHNER, *Janus*, Vol. VI, 1901, p. 317) is not correct.

⁹ *Länder des Islam*, p. 45.