

GARDEN PEA AND BROAD BEAN

13. Among the many species of pulse cultivated by the Chinese, there are at least two to which a foreign origin must be assigned. Both are comprised under the generic term *hu tou* 胡豆 ("bean of the Hu," or "Iranian bean"), but each has also its specific nomenclature. It is generally known that, on account of the bewildering number of species and variations and the great antiquity of their cultivation, the history of beans is fraught with graver difficulties than that of any other group of plants.

The common or garden pea (*Pisum sativum*) is usually styled *wan tou* 豌豆 (Japanese *širo-endō*), more rarely *ts'in siao tou* 青小豆 ("green small pulse"), *ts'in pan tou* 青斑豆 ("green streaked pulse"), and *ma lei* 麻累. A term 畢豆 *pi tou*, *pit (pir) tou, is regarded as characteristic of the T'ang period; while such names as *hu tou*, *žun šu* 戎菽 ("pulse of the Žun"),¹ and *hui-hu tou* 回鶻豆 ("pulse of the Uigur;" in the *Yin šan čen yao* of the Mongol period changed also into *hui-hui tou* 回回豆, "Mohammedan pulse") are apt to bespeak the foreign origin of the plant.² Any document alluding to the event of the introduction, however, does not appear to exist in Chinese records. The term *hu tou* occurs in the present editions of the *Ku kin ču*,³ *hu-ša* 虎沙 being given as its synonyme, and described as "resembling the *li tou* 狸豆, but larger, the fruit of the size of a child's fist and eatable." The term *li tou* is doubtfully identified with *Mucuna capitata*;⁴ but the species of the *Ku kin ču* defies exact identification; and, as is well known, this book, in its present form, is very far from being able to claim absolute credence or authenticity. Also the *Kwan či*, written prior to A.D. 527, contains the term *hu tou*;⁵ but this name, unfortunately, is ambiguous. Li Ši-čen acquiesces in the general statement that the pea has come from the Hu and Žun or from the Western Hu (Iranians); he cites, however, a few texts, which, if they be authentic, would permit us to

¹ This term is ambiguous, for originally it applies to the soy-bean (*Glycine hispida*), which is indigenous to China.

² Cf. *Pen ts'ao kan mu*, Ch. 24, p. 7; and *Kwan k'un fan p'u*, Ch. 4, p. 11. The list of the names for the pea given by BRETSCHNEIDER (*Chinese Recorder*, 1871, p. 223) is rather incomplete.

³ Ch. B, p. 1 b.

⁴ STUART, *Chinese Materia Medica*, p. 269. The word *li* is also written 黎.

⁵ *T'ai p'in yü lan*, Ch. 841, p. 6 b.