

## BRASSICA

32. Of the two species of mustard, *Brassica* or *Sinapis juncea* and *S. alba*, the former has always been a native of China (*kiai* 芥). The latter, however, was imported as late as the T'ang period. It is first mentioned by Su Kuñ in the *Pen ts'ao* of the T'ang (about A.D. 650) as coming from the Western Žuñ (Si Žuñ),<sup>1</sup> a term which, as noted, frequently refers to Iranian regions. In the *Šu pen ts'ao* 蜀本草, published about the middle of the tenth century by Han Pao-šen 韓保昇, we find the term 胡芥 *hu kai* ("mustard of the Hu"). Č'en Ts'añ-k'i of the T'ang states that it grows in T'ai-yüan and Ho-tuñ 河東 (Šan-si), without referring to the foreign origin. Li Ši-čen<sup>2</sup> annotates that this cultivation comes from the Hu and Žuñ and abounds in Šu (Se-č'wan), hence the names *hu kai* and *šu kai* ("mustard of Se-č'wan"), while the common designation is *pai kai* ("white mustard"). This state of affairs plainly reveals the fact that the plant was conveyed to China over the land-route of Central Asia, while no allusion is made to an oversea transplantation. As shown by me on a previous occasion,<sup>3</sup> the Si-hia word *si-na* ("mustard") appears to be related to Greek *sinapi*, and was probably carried into the Si-hia kingdom by Nestorian missionaries, who, we are informed by Marco Polo, were settled there. The same species was likewise foreign to the Tibetans, as is evidenced by their designation "white turnip" (*yuns-kar*). In India it is not indigenous, either: WATT<sup>4</sup> says that if met with at all, it occurs in gardens only within the temperate areas, or in upper India during the winter months; it is not a field crop.

This genus comprises nearly a hundred species, all natives of the north temperate zones, and most of them of ancient European cultivation (with an independent centre in China).

Abu Mansur<sup>5</sup> distinguishes under the Arabic name *karnab* five kinds of *Brassica*,—Nabathæan, *Brassica silvestris*, *B. marina*, *B. cypria*

<sup>1</sup> The same definition is given by T'añ Šen-wei in his *Čeñ lei pen ts'ao* (Ch. 27, p. 15).

<sup>2</sup> *Pen ts'ao kañ mu*, Ch. 26, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *T'oung Pao*, 1915, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> *Commercial Products of India*, p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 110.