

THE CARROT

52. The carrot¹ (*Daucus carota*), *hu lo-po* (Japanese *ninjin*) 胡蘿蔔 (“Iranian turnip”), a native of northern Europe, was first introduced into China at the time of the Yüan dynasty (A.D. 1260–1367). This is the opinion of Li Ši-čen, who states that the vegetable first appeared at the time of the Yüan from the land of the Hu; and it is likewise maintained in the *Kwan k'ün fan p'u*² that the carrot first came from the countries beyond the frontier 邊塞. I know of no text that would give a more detailed account of its introduction or allude to the country of its origin. Nevertheless it is very likely that this was some Iranian region. Li Ši-čen states that in his time it was abundantly cultivated in the northern part of the country and in Šan-tuñ, likewise in middle China.³

The history of the carrot given by WATT⁴ after G. Birdwood suffers from many defects. A fundamental error underlies the statement, “In fact, the evidence of cultivation would lead to the inference that the carrot spread from Central Asia to Europe, and if so it might be possible to trace the European names from the Indian and Persian.” On the contrary, the carrot is a very ancient, indigenous European cultivation, which is by no means due to the Orient. Carrots have been found in the pile-dwellings of Robenhausen.⁵ It is not to the point, either, that, as stated by Watt and Birdwood, “indeed the carrot seems to have been grown and eaten in India, while in Europe it was scarcely known as more than a wild plant.” The Anglo-Saxons cultivated the carrot in their original habitat of Schleswig-Holstein at a time when, in my opinion, the carrot was not yet cultivated in India; and they con-

¹ From French *carote*, now *carotte*, Italian *carota*, Latin *carōta*; Greek *καρωτόν* (in Diphilus). This word has supplanted Anglo-Saxon *moru*, from **morhu* (Old High German *moraha*, *morha*; Russian *morkov'*, Slovenian *mrkva*). Regarding the origin of the word *lo-po*, cf. *T'oung Pao*, 1916, pp. 83–86.

² Ch. 4, p. 24.

³ A designation for the carrot not yet indicated is *fu* 伏 *lo-po*, derived from the three *fu* 三伏, the three decades of the summer, extending from about the middle of July to the middle of August: during the first *fu* the seeds of the carrot are planted, in the second *fu* the carrots are pale red, in the third they are yellow (*Šan hwa hien č'i* 善化縣志, Ch. 16, p. 14 b, ed. 1877).

⁴ Commercial Products of India, p. 489, or Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 45.

⁵ J. HOOPS, *Waldbäume und Kulturpflanzen*, p. 297; G. BUSCHAN, *Vorgeschichtliche Botanik*, p. 148.