

more deeply divided, and that it rises less from the ground.¹ A. DE CANDOLLE states that "spinach has not yet been found in a wild state, unless it be a cultivated modification of *Spinacia tetandra* Steven, which is wild to the south of the Caucasus, in Turkistan, in Persia, and in Afghanistan, and which is used as a vegetable under the name of *šamum*." The latter word is apparently a bad spelling or misreading for Persian *šomīn* or *šūmīn* (Armenian *zomin* and *šomin*), another designation for the spinach.

The spinach is not known in India except as an introduction by the English. The agriculturists of India classify spinach among the English vegetables.² The species *Spinacia tetrandra* Roxb., for which ROXBURGH³ gives the common Persian and Arabic name for the spinach, and of which he says that it is much cultivated in Bengal and the adjoining provinces, being a pot-herb held in considerable estimation by the natives, may possibly have been introduced by the Mohammedans. As a matter of fact, spinach is a vegetable of the temperate zones and alien to tropical regions. A genuine Sanskrit word for the spinach is unknown.⁴ Nevertheless Chinese *po-liñ*, **pwa-liñ*, must represent the transcription of some Indian vernacular name. In Hindustānī we have *palak* as designation for the spinach, and *palan* or *palak* as name for *Beta vulgaris*, Puštu *pālak*,⁵ apparently developed from Sanskrit *pālanka*, *pālankya*, *palakyū*, *pālakyā*, to which our dictionaries attribute the meaning "a kind of vegetable, a kind of beet-root, *Beta bengalensis*"; in Bengālī *paluñ*.⁶ To render the coincidence with the Chinese form complete, there is also Sanskrit Pālakka

¹ Perhaps related to *Atriplex* L., the so-called wild spinach, chiefly cultivated in France and eaten like spinach. The above description, of course, must not be construed to mean that the cultivated spinach is derived from the so-called wild spinach of the Nabathæans. The two plants may not be interrelated at all.

² N. G. MUKERJI, Handbook of Indian Agriculture, 2d ed., p. 300 (Calcutta, 1907); but it is incorrect to state that spinach originally came from northern Asia. A. DE CANDOLLE (*op. cit.*, p. 99) has already observed, "Some popular works repeat that spinach is a native of northern Asia, but there is nothing to confirm this supposition."

³ Flora Indica, p. 718.

⁴ A. BOROAH, in his English-Sanskrit Dictionary, gives a word *çākāprabheda* with this meaning, but this simply signifies "a kind of vegetable," and is accordingly an explanation.

⁵ H. W. BELLEW, Report on the Yusufzais, p. 255 (Lahore, 1864).

⁶ *Beta* is much cultivated by the natives of Bengal, the leaves being consumed in stews (W. ROXBURGH, Flora Indica, p. 260). Another species, *Beta maritima*, is also known as "wild spinach." It should be remembered that the genus *Beta* belongs to the same family (*Chenopodiaceae*) as *Spinacia*.