



A new species of *Sunipia* (Orchidaceae) from Nepal

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Abstract

Sunipia nepalensis, a new orchid species from Nepal is described and illustrated. Notes to distinguish it from related taxa are provided.

Key words: orchid, taxonomy, Himalaya

Introduction

Sunipia Lindley (1826: 21, 25), (including *Ione* Lindl.) is a genus of about 23 species in the world (Govaerts *et al.* 2011) restricted to southeast Asia. Until now it is known from Bhutan, China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam (Seidenfaden 1969, 1986, Pearce & Cribb 2002, Chen & Vermeulen 2009). In Nepal *Sunipia* is represented by three species, namely *S. bicolor* Lindley (1833: 179), *S. cirrhata* (Lindl.) Hunt (1971:184) and *S. scariosa* Lindley (1833: 179, = *S. racemosa* (Smith) Tang & Wang 1951: 90).

A species of *Sunipia* was collected by the first author during an orchid survey in the Daman Makawanpur District, central Nepal. The characteristics of this plant do not match any of the previously described species in the genus. Therefore it is illustrated and described here as a new species.

Species description

Sunipia nepalensis B.B.Raskoti & R.Ale, *sp. nov.* Figs. 1 & 2.

Species Sunipia candida affinis, sed inflorescentiis pendens, 2–3 flores, petalis late ovatis, apex obtusis, labello medio vesiculosus et marginibus integris differt.

Type:—NEPAL. Makawanpur District: Daman, Simbhanjyang ca. 27 degrees 36' N and 85 degrees 03' E, 2400 m, May 2008, B.B. Raskoti 270 (holotype KATH, isotype TUCH).

Epiphytic herbs. Rhizomes terete, stout, creeping, dark brown, 4 mm thick, enveloped by overlapping tubular papery sheaths. Roots numerous, rigid, wiry, flexuose. Pseudobulbs obliquely ovoid-conical, apex 1-leaved, greenish, 1–4 cm apart, 1.0–1.8 cm long and 2–3 cm in diameter, lower half enclosed by a transparent, net-veined sheath. Leaves ligulate-lanceolate, apex subacute, obscurely bilobed, leathery, 3.0–8.5 cm long, 0.7–1.5 cm wide. Inflorescences pendulous, arising laterally from the base of the pseudobulb, 1–3-flowered, 3.5–5.0 cm long; peduncles slender, with 3 overlapping brown membranous tubular sheaths. Floral bracts lanceolate, apices acute, concave, brownish, tinged purple-brown, ca. 7 × 2 mm. Pedicels terete, 10 mm long. Flowers widely opening, 15 mm wide, sepals pale greenish white with five purple veins of which only one