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Smilax jiankunii, a new synonym in Chinese *Smilax* (Liliales: Smilacaceae)

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Smilax Linnaeus (1753: 1028), the only genus of Smilacaceae, consists of over 200 species (with ca. 90 in China), and is widely distributed from tropical to temperate areas (Qi *et al*. 2012). Li (1992: 21) published *Smilax jiankunii* H.Li, based on specimens collected in the Dulongjiang Valley, Gongshan County, northwestern Yunnan Province, China. *Smilax jiankunii* was characterized by having a smooth stem, abaxially glaucous leaves, slender peduncles 9 to 10 cm long, densely flowered umbels (with 60–100 flowers), and the whole plant becoming blackish when dried (Li 1992), a feature shared with *Smilax pottingeri* Prain (1900: 174). Since Wang & Tang (1978) transferred *S. pottingeri* to the genus *Heterosmilax* Kunth (1850: 270) as *H. pottingeri* (Prain) Wang & Tang (1978: 245), based on the leaf shape and flattened peduncles, it is understandable that Li failed to compare her new species with it at that time. However, the name *Smilax pottingeri* was more recently accepted under *Smilax* again, due to more collections and knowledge of this plant becoming available (Chen & Koyama 2000), and the genus *Heterosmilax* having been merged with *Smilax* based on morphological and molecular studies (Judd 1998, Cameron & Fu 2006, Qi *et al.* 2012, 2013). After comparing the descriptions of both, we recognized that *Smilax pottingeri* appears to be similar to *S. jiankunii*, which has smooth stems, abaxially glaucous leaves, a slender peduncle 3 to 6 cm long and densely flowered umbels (with 40–70 flowers), but a more southern distribution in eastern Myanmar, southeastern Yunnan, Vietnam, northern Laos and northern Thailand (Koyama 1975, Chen & Koyama 2000, Nguyên 2007).

We therefore examined the type specimens of *S. jiankunii* and *S. pottingeri*, as well as living plants, and found them to be identical. DNA barcoding markers (*matK*, *rbcL*) of the two were also analyzed to test the species boundaries. The results showed that *S. jiankunii* was within the range of morphological and genetic variation of *S. pottingeri* (Qi *et al*., unpublished data). Moreover, we simulated the potential distribution of *S. pottingeri* based on specimen occurrence (Fig. 1) with the ecological niche modeling method of Elith *et al.* (2011) and found *Smilax jiankunii* to be within the predicted distribution range of *S. pottingeri*, which further supported recognition of only a single species. Therefore, we here propose *S. jiankunii* as a synonym of *S. pottingeri*.

Smilax pottingeri Prain (1900: 174) = *Heterosmilax pottingeri* (Prain) Wang & Tang (1978: 245). Lectotype (designated by Koyama 1983: 76):—MYANMAR. Kachin: Myaungjong, 12 June 1897, *Pottinger s.n.* (K!). Syntype:—MYANMAR. Kachin: near Sadon, s. dat., *Prain's Collector s.n.* (K!).

Smilax jiankunii Li (1992: 21), *syn. nov.* Type:—CHINA. Yunnan: Gongshan Xian, Dulongjiang Valley, Meiliwang, 1800 m, 20 May 1991, *Dulongjiang Bot. Expedition 6962* (holotype KUN!). Paratypes:—CHINA. Yunnan: Nanpula, 1300 m, *Dulongjiang Bot. Expedition 4025* (KUN!), *6709* (KUN!); Bapou, *Dulongjiang Bot. Expedition 4102* (KUN!), *4749* (KUN!); Mabidan, *Dulongjiang Bot. Expedition 4073* (KUN!), *4625* (KUN!).

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