



Pueraria stracheyi, a new synonym to *Apios carnea* (Fabaceae)

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Abstract

Pueraria stracheyi has long been recognized as erroneously placed in the genus *Pueraria*. Here we examined the history behind this collection, past hypotheses concerning its taxonomic affinities, and morphological and ecological comparisons with *Shutteria* and *Apios carnea*, wherein we conclude that *Pueraria stracheyi* represents a synonym of the latter.

Key Words: Leguminosae, taxonomy, India, Sir Richard Strachey, *Shutteria*

Introduction

Pueraria stracheyi Baker (1876: 198) was described from a single collection made by Sir Richard Strachey, the species' namesake, and Mr. J.E. Winterbottom during their 1848 expedition across the Himalayas that extended from the Rohilkhand Plains of Uttarakhand (formerly designated the province of Kumaon) to Rakas-Tal and Manasarowar Lakes of Tibet. This expedition produced the bulk of plants that constituted the Strachey & Winterbottom Herbarium, a collection of over 2000 specimens enumerated in the *Catalogue of the Plants of Kumaon and of the Adjacent Portions Garhwal and Tibet: Based on the Collections Made by Strachey and Winterbottom During the Years 1846 to 1849 and on the Catalogue Originally Prepared in 1852* (Strachey 1906). The collection "...was principally made along a line extending through the province of Kumaon, across the Himalaya in a direction generally perpendicular to that of the ranges of mountain of which the chain consists, over a distance of some eighty or ninety English miles. The region traversed passes from South-West to North-East, commencing in the plain of Rohilkhand at an elevation of about 1,000 ft. above the sea-level, through the snowy ranges, following for the most part the customary routes, and terminating in the Tibetan plateau at an altitude of between 14,000 and 15,000 ft. on the upper course of the river Sutlej." Very little is known about this collection. To our knowledge, only one herbarium specimen exists and is found at Kew Herbarium (K) (Fig. 1).

Geography

Pueraria stracheyi is annotated as collected from 'Kalimundi', Kumaon province around 7300 ft. This locality information is confirmed in print in the above mentioned catalogue (pg. 50–51; Strachey 1906). 'Kalimundi' is a locality listed on numerous collections by Strachey & Winterbottom, but is rarely mentioned in any other context and not found in any online gazetteer. A rigorous internet search aimed at determining the geographical placement of "Kalimundi" yielded only two results. The first originates from a random text upload (source unknown) discussing the geographic range of *Cupressus tortulosa* D. Don ex Lambert (1824: 18), stating "In north-eastern Kumaun, it occurs along the Kalimundi range, separating the Ramganga from the Gori..." (<http://202.41.82.144/rawdataupload/upload/0105/106/TXT/00000861.txt>; accessed on 3 April 2015). The second clue comes from the work of Gibbons & Spanner (2009) during their study of *Trachycarpus takil* Beccari (1905: 50) in Northern India: "Kalamuni (or