

*STROPHANTHUS WALLICHII* A. DC. FROM NORTH BENGAL—A NEW RECORD

In April 1965, the authors accompanied a party led by Rev. H. Santapau, S. J., Director, Botanical Survey of India in a plant collecting tour in the Kalimpong Division of Darjeeling District. During the tour an interesting plant was collected along the road side midway between Teesta and Rangpo. The specimen was found to be *Strophanthus wallichii* A. DC.

The species has been reported from Assam, Chittagong, Andamans and Burma. Haines found it in Singhbhum and in the Mals of Orissa. Occurrence in North Bengal has not been reported. A search, however, in the Calcutta Herbarium revealed that it was collected from Mahakalguri in Jalpaiguri District by Heawood in 1891. It is, therefore, considered worth recording this extension in the distribution of the species. A specimen collected from Sikkim by J. D. Hooker is preserved

in the Calcutta Herbarium but this as stated on the sheet was from a cultivated plant.

The plant was in full bloom at the time of collection and attracted attention from a distance. Flowers are large with a funnel-shaped corolla pale yellow below with red lobes gradually tapering to blackish thread-like tips. The genus *Strophanthus* is well known for the two species *S. kombe* Oliver and *S. hispidus* DC., the seeds of which are the source of strophanthin. The seeds of *S. wallichii* do not contain this alkaloid. This species however is worth cultivating as an ornamental plant for the beauty of its large flowers which are produced in great profusion. The specimen collected has been deposited in the Central National Herbarium (CAL).

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OCCURRENCE OF *TETRACENTRON SINENSE* OLIV. IN N.E.F.A.

In the report on a botanical tour to Bomdi-La, N.E.F.A., Srinivasan (1959 : 32, fig. 36) enumerated and illustrated among others, one species under *Betula alnoides* Ham. from Bomdi-La. During the Japanese botanical expedition to Nepal conducted in 1963 under the leadership of H. Hara, an interesting primitive vesselless dicot tree, *Tetracentron sinense* Oliv. var. *himalense* Hara et Kanai was discovered in E. Nepal and while recording this taxon, Hara (1966 : 85) observed as follows: "The genus is new to Eastern Himalaya and is one of the most remarkable findings during our second botanical trip. It is highly probable that the plant will be found in Sikkim or Bhutan in future . . .". As surmised earlier, Hara, in another Japanese expedition in 1967, again led by him, discovered the species in Western Bhutan, which featured as a press-news in one of the dailies (Statesman, 25th April, 1967). Besides, Hara (1966 : 85) while referring to the fig. 36 of *Betula alnoides* Ham. from N.E.F.A., remarked it to be a young branch of *Tetracentron*. During a short visit to Calcutta in May, 1967, Hara examined the herbarium specimen from N.E.F.A. deposited in the Industrial Section, Indian Museum, Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta, and confirmed its identity as *Tetracentron sinense* Oliv.

The discovery thus of *Tetracentron sinense* Oliv. in N.E.F.A. is of more than usual interest as it represents the disclosure of one among the few phylo-

genetically important plants from this region as well. A closely related fossil species *Tetracentronites japonica* is already known from Central Japan from the Cretaceous beds.

The monotypic genus *Tetracentron* was earlier known as one of the commonest trees in the region of the Hupeh-Szechwan frontier, north of the Yangtze, in W. Szechwan and N. W. Yunnan (Smith, 1945). It is also known from the neighbouring regions of S. Tibet and N. Burma. Hara's discovery of *Tetracentron* in 1963 and 1967 from Nepal and Bhutan respectively has extended the distribution of this plant to the Eastern Himalaya also. The present discovery of this species in N.E.F.A. gives a further extension eastwards from Nepal and Bhutan in the Himalayas, thus bringing into closer proximity with the nearest known locality in N. Burma. It is also of interest to record here that the N.E.F.A. specimen collected from Bomdi-La on the 14th May, 1955, would probably represent the first collection of *Tetracentron sinense* Oliv. from the Himalayan region.

The specimen of Srinivasan (Bomdi-La, 14th May, 1955) in the Herbarium of the Industrial Section, is a portion of a young branch bearing leaves on short shoots, with the following characters: leaves, ovate to ovate-lanceolate, 10.0-12.5 cm long, 3.5-6 cm broad, cordate, caudate-acuminate, serrulate, teeth acute to subacute, occasionally obtuse or blunt, subspinulose; venation palmate with