Novelty in \textit{Tibetia} (Leguminosae) for China

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\textbf{ABSTRACT.} A new white-flowered form is described as \textit{Tibetia himalaica} (Baker) H. P. Tsui forma \textit{alba} X. Y. Zhu (Leguminosae) from Sichuan Province, China.

\textit{Key words:} China, Leguminosae, \textit{Tibetia}.

In identifying specimens of Leguminosae in PE for the \textit{Flora of China}, the present author found several specimens that are described as a new form, \textit{Tibetia himalaica} (Baker) H. P. Tsui forma \textit{alba} X. Y. Zhu. This differs from the typical form in having white flowers. The typical \textit{T. himalaica} (Baker) H. P. Tsui forma \textit{himalaica} has dark purple, violet, or blue flowers. The species was originally described in 1879 by Baker as \textit{Gueldenstaedtia himalaica} and later moved to \textit{Tibetia} by Tsui in 1979.

The occasional appearance of a white-flowered variant of a purple- or blue-flowered species of legume is not uncommon. White-flowered forms may occur in otherwise blue-flowered species, perhaps due to a single-gene difference. I would agree with this if these different flower colors appeared within a single population. For the new form, the white flower color was observed as a different and separate population, and the two flower colors were clearly distinctive from one another. During my expedition to Sichuan and Xizang in August of 2000, I investigated two populations in fields of Dégeà Xian in Sichuan Province. For these, one population had only white-flowered plants while the other displayed only blue flowers. Both populations were separated by 100 m and were never mixed in flower color. There are also many duplicate specimens of \textit{T. himalaica} deposited in PE, and I have identified all as \textit{Tibetia} specimens. White flowers were never mixed with blue flowers in collections from the same population. Based on the above observations, I treat the white-flowered plants as a new form.

A similar example can be seen in my treatment on \textit{Oxytropis anertii} Nakai ex Kitagawa forma \textit{albiflora} (Zh. J. Zong & X. R. He) X. Y. Zhu \& H. Ohashi (Zhu \& Ohashi, 2000). Here I also observed the white-flowered population of \textit{O. anertii} forma \textit{albiflora} to be absolutely separate from the violet or blue-flowered population of \textit{O. anertii} forma \textit{anertii} in the Changbai Mountains of China, although they share a close relationship.


A typo floribus albis differt.

This form is different from the typical one in having white flowers.

\textit{Distribution.} This white-flowered form, collected from Kangding Xian and Dégeà Xian in western Sichuan, China, was observed to grow in alpine meadows or along riverbanks at 3700–4000 m altitude, where it is apparently restricted.

\textit{Paratype.} CHINA. Sichuan: Dégeà Xian, Babang Xiang, Shanbaike, on meadow of riverbank, alt. 3700 m, 9 July 1974, s. coll. 7341 (PE). [Other collections made of the Dégeà Xian white-flowered population were inadvertently lost by the flooding from mountain torrents in 2000.]

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\textbf{Literature Cited}

