

Phalaenopsis braceana (Hooker f.) Christenson – a new distributional record for Nagaland, India

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Abstract

A rare and endangered orchid, *Phalaenopsis braceana* (Hooker f.) Christenson was collected from the forest of Longkhum village, Mokokchung district and Chare village, Tuensang district, Nagaland, India. A new distributional record and addition to the orchid wealth of Nagaland.

Key words: *Phalaenopsis braceana*; New record; Nagaland

INTRODUCTION

Orchidaceae, one of the largest family of flowering plants, is represented by around 25,000 species under 800 genera distributed worldwide except Antarctica [Chen *et al* 2009; Nanda *et al* 2013]. India is a host to about 1331 species (Mishra 2007) and of this, 900 species in 165 genera are reportedly found in North East India (Rao 2007). Major part of North East India, including Nagaland, is falling within Indo-Myanmar Biodiversity Hotspot. The state is endowed with rich plant genetic resources supported by diverse vegetation types including orchids which are account for, at least, 396 species from 92 genera (Deb & Imchen 2008).

During field survey, one interesting and rare orchid were collected from the Longkhum area, 15 km west of Mokokchung district (26.267472° N, 94.442145° E) and Chare village under Tuensang district of Nagaland (26.16207° N, 94.36043° E), which on critical study and perusal of literature (Changkija *et al* 1992; Kumar & Manilal 1994; Deorani & Naithani 1995; Chowdhery 1998; Hynniewta *et al* 2000; Phukan 2002, Deb & Imchen 2008), the plant was identified as *Phalaenopsis braceana* (Hooker f.) Christenson. The present paper reports a new distributional record and an addition to the orchid flora of Nagaland.

Species Description

Phalaenopsis braceana (Hooker f.) Christenson, Selbyana 9: 169. 1986; Pearce & Cribb, Fl. Bhut. 3(3). 541. 2002; Nanda *et al.* Pleione 7(2): 562 – 563, photo f. 2013. *Doritis braceana* Hooker f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 196. 1890; *Kingidium naviculare* Tsi *ex* Hashimoto, New Orchids, 3: 40. 1984. *Kingidium braceanum* (Hooker f.) Seidenfaden, Opera Bot. 95: 187. 1988. *Aerides taeniale*. Lindley, Gen. Sp. Orchid. Pl. 239. 1833. **[Figure 1]**

Epiphytic herb in sub-tropical forest. Stem very short or not clear. Roots many, flattened, tortuous. Leaves 2, deciduous, 3 – 7 x 1.5 – 2 cm oblong- obovate, obtuse. Inflorescence sub-erect, 9-15 cm long, raceme 5-7 flowered. Flowers 2.5 cm across, spreading, pinkish violet, lip darker in colour. Sepals obovate, acute, narrow at base. Petals obovate obtuse, narrow towards base. Lip trilobe, pinkish-violet. Column fleshy. Pollinia 4, sub-globose, with a broad stipe.

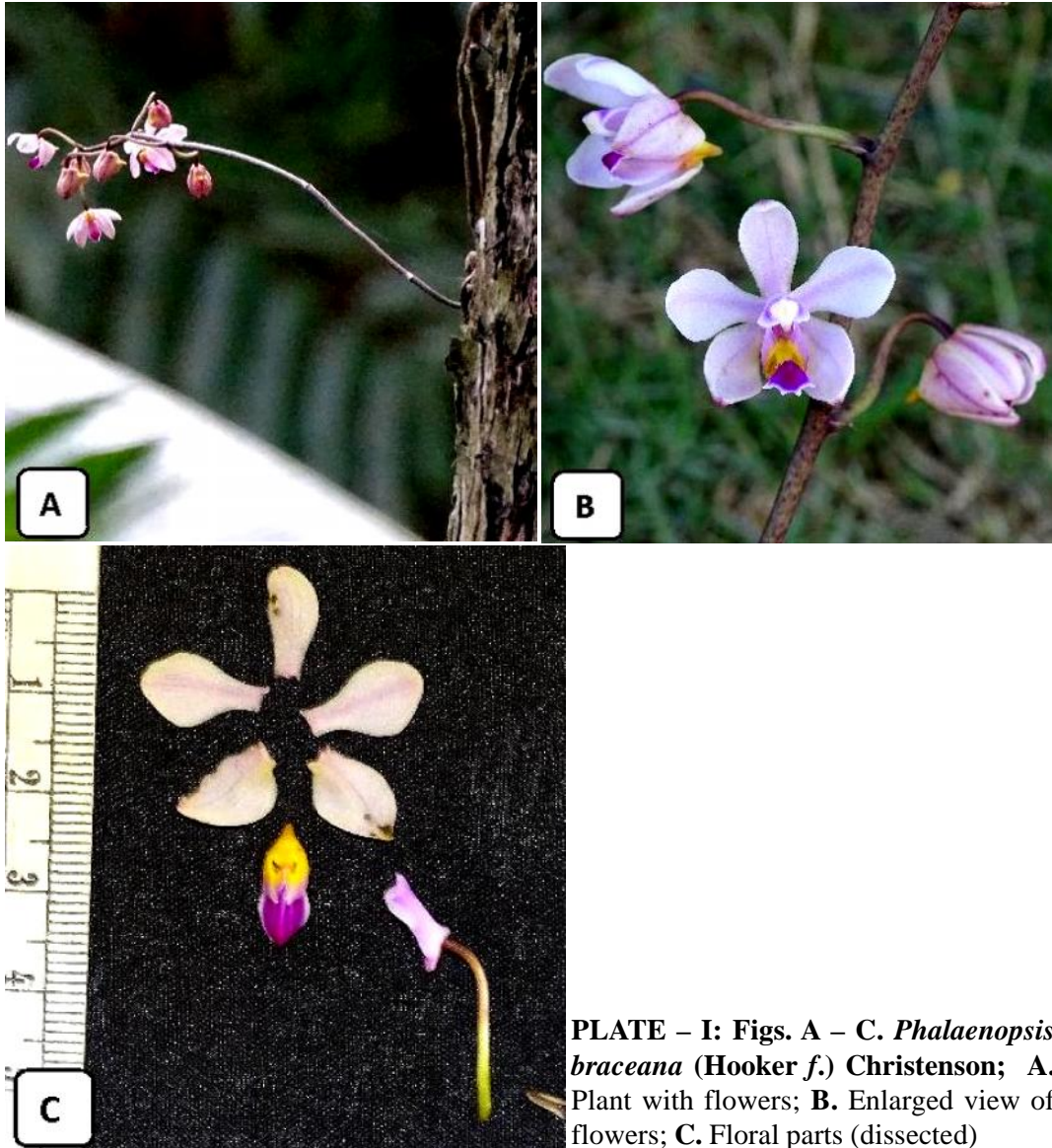


PLATE – I: Figs. A – C. *Phalaenopsis braceana* (Hooker f.) Christenson; A. Plant with flowers; **B.** Enlarged view of flowers; **C.** Floral parts (dissected)

Flowering: April – May

Specimen examined: Longkhum village, Mokokchung district 1500 AMSL and Chare village, Tuensang district, Nagaland 960 AMSL, 23.02.2015, Accession No. TI 005 and HJ 135. [Herbarium of the Department of Botany, Nagaland University]

Distribution: India [Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur], Bhutan, China, N. Vietnam

Conservation status: Protected under CITES Appendix II (UNEP WCMC 2003)

Note: This species has some similarity with *Phalaenopsis taenialis* (Lindley) Christenson & Pradhan but the flower colour and morphology are distinctly different from *Phalaenopsis braceana*.

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