



Oberonia jenkinsiana Griff. ex Lindl. (Orchidaceae): A new record for Nepal

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***Oberonia jenkinsiana* Griff. ex Lindl. (Orchidaceae), a new record for Nepal**

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Abstract

The occurrence of *Oberonia jenkinsiana* Griff. ex Lindl. (Orchidaceae) as new record for Nepal is reported. Detailed description, illustration and relevant notes are provided.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Oberonia* is represented by 15 species in Nepal (Banjerji & Pradhan, 1984). Most of the species are distributed from eastern to mid-western part of the country. Recently a species of *Oberonia* was collected from Chappak, Lalitpur District, Bagmati Zone, at an altitude of 1402 m. During the revisionary work of the genus *Oberonia* from the Himalayas, a critical study of this specimen was carried out and also compared with the Isotype deposited at CAL. On close examination, the species was turned out to be *Oberonia jenkinsiana* hitherto unknown from Nepal. The present report is, therefore, an addition to the orchid flora of Nepal.

Oberonia jenkinsiana was first collected by Major Jenkins from Debroo Mookh, Assam (Isotype, CAL) and described by John Lindley in 1859. Later on, collections made by Sir Robert Pantling from Valley of Teesta (Pantling 185, CAL) and Dr. Prain's Collector from Jowai, Meghalaya (Dr. Prain's Collector 4, CAL) were deposited in the Central National Herbarium, Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta (CAL) but there is no record of further collection of this species in Indian Herbaria (ASSAM and CAL). This indicates the species is in danger of extinction from its natural habitat.

Very surprisingly the species appeared from Central Nepal which is far away from its type locality. The population of this species was very scanty in its natural habitat. The species was found approximately within an area of 400 sq. m. Thus, due to limited population the conservation of this species is highly recommended.

***Oberonia jenkinsiana* Griff. ex Lindl.**, Fol. Orch. Oberon. 4. 1859; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 676. 1888; King & Pant., Ann. Roy. Bot. Gard. Calcutta 8: 7. 1898; Seidenfaden, Dansk. Bot. Ark. 25(3): 107. 1968; Pradhan, Indian Orch. 2. 1979; Ansari & Balakrishnan, Orchid Monographs 4: 37. 1990 (Fig. 1).

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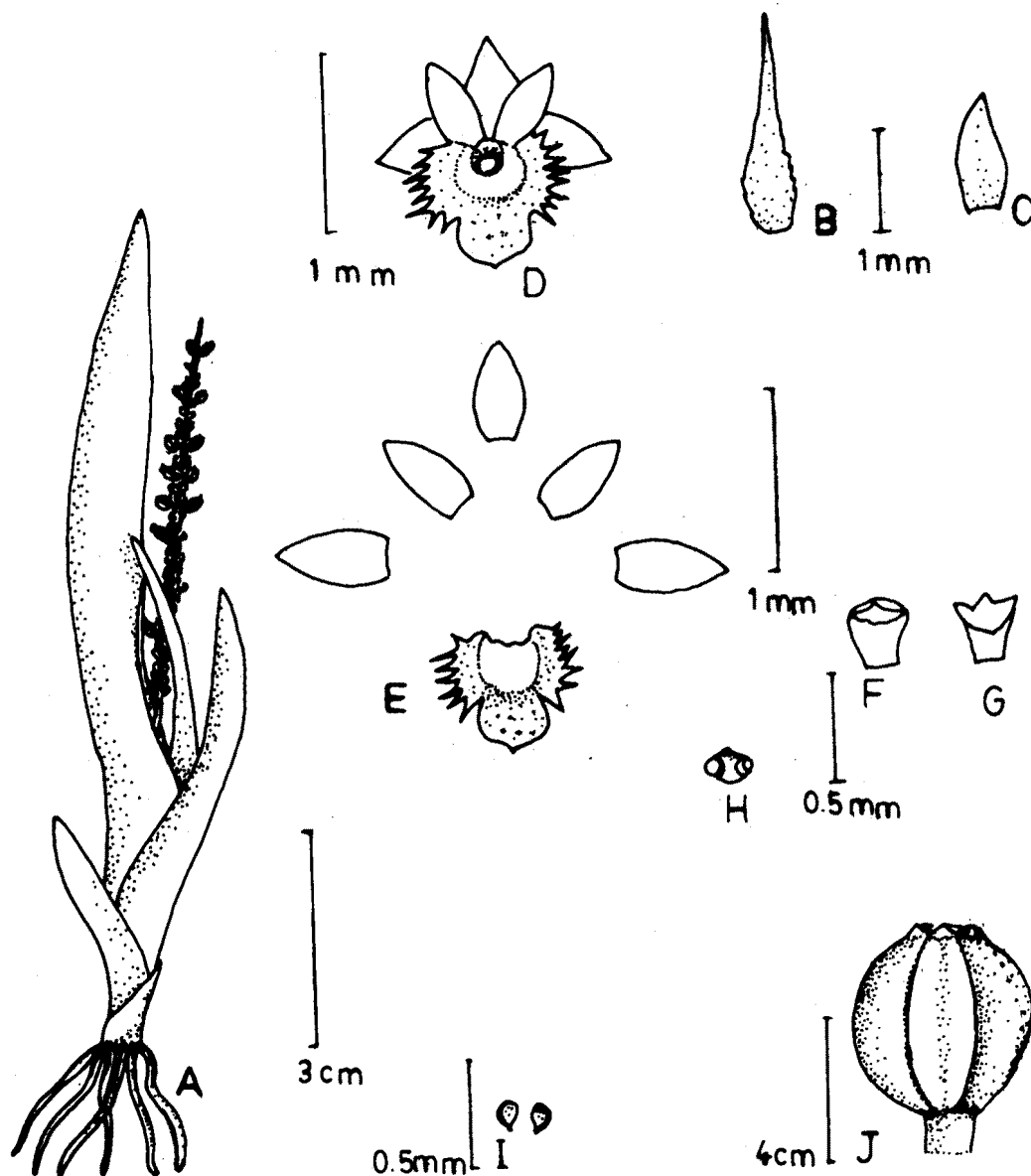


Fig. 1. *Oberonia jenkensiana* Griff. ex Lindl.: A. Habit; B. Empty bract; C. Flowering bract; D. Flower; E. outer three sepals, inner two petals and the lip spreadout; F. Column - front view; G. Column - back view; H. Operculum; I. Pollinia; J. Fruit.

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Herbs, 7-17 cm long, pendulous, caespitose, acaulescent, epiphytic. Leaves 4, rarely 5, 1-17 x 0.5-1.2 cm, fleshy, distichous, equitant, laterally compressed, subfalcate, linear, acute, dark green. Inflorescence a spike, 4-10 cm long, presence of many spirally arranged empty bracts at the base, flowers arranged spirally on the terete rachis, ribbed, ribs prominent in the dry condition, bract and flower arising from rigid portion of rachis. Flowers shortly pedicelled, c. 1.2 mm across, dark orange-brown, bracteate. Bracts many-spirally arranged empty bract c. 1.8-2.4 x 0.3-0.4 mm, ovate-lanceolate, acuminate; flowering bract longer than pedicel and ovary, c. 0.8.1 x 0.3 mm, persistent, ovate, acuminate, entire. Sepals dissimilar; dorsal sepal c. 0.52 x 0.3 mm, ovate, entire, acute; lateral sepals c. 0.6 x 0.36 mm, broadly ovate, entire, acute. Petals c. 0.52 x 0.2 mm, lanceolate, entire, acute. Lip c. 0.84 x 0.85 mm, fleshy, larger than sepals and petals, sub-orbicular in outline, 3-lobed; lateral lobes large, auriculate, pectinate; mid-lobe blunt, entire, with minute projection at the centre; presence of large, semi-orbicular, concavity on mesochile. Column c. 0.28 mm long, subglobose; clinandrium dorsal, orbicular, laterally winged; rostellum distinct; operculum c. 0.16 x 0.28 mm, laterally elongated, apex shortly pointed; stigma laterally elongated; pollinia c. 0.15 x 0.12 mm, globose. Fruit shortly pedicelled, c. 2.5 x 1.5 mm, subglobose.

Distribution: Himalayas and its adjoining areas (Nepal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya), Myanmar, S. China and Thailand.

Flowering: August - September

Specimens examined: Nepal: C. Himalaya, Bagmati Zone. Chappak, 1402 m, Dec. 1995, Shaky & Bajracharya 20 (KATH). India: E. Himalaya, Sikkim, Teesta Valley, 1500 ft, Pantling 185 (CAL); Meghalaya, Jowai, Sept. 1899, Prain's Collector 4 (CAL).

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