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CRITICAL NOTES ON *ANEMONE OBTUSILOBA* D. DON

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ABSTRACT

The status of *Anemone multisepala* and *A. neelamiana* recently described by Qureshi & Chaudhri (1978) is reassessed.

R. A. Qureshi & M. N. Chaudhri (1978) have described *Anemone multisepala* and *A. neelamiana,* both closely related to *A. obtusiloba* Don. The former is differentiated from *A. obtusiloba* Don in being glabrous and in having more sepals (6-8), and the latter in its 8 sepals and white flowers.

A review of the views held by earlier botanists on *A. obtusiloba* would be relevant before presenting our observations based on a critical study of the 3 species involved.

Hooker & Thomson (1855) had clearly pointed out that *A. obtusiloba* is a very variable plant. Their comments on *A. obtusiloba* are as follows: "Like most very common plants it varies a good deal in size and degree of hairiness; but these variations depend chiefly on situation and perhaps on the age of the plant. The difference in the colour of flowers is very remarkable but seems quite unconnected with the variations in leaves and hairiness."

"The glabrous state is very striking variety and we should have kept it separate had not the specimens collected in Balti & Kashmir by Mr. Winterbottom presented a series of gradations connecting it with the ordinary form of the species".

They had also described the calyx as follows : "Sepala obovata vel rotundata, 5-10".

Again Hooker & Thomson (1872) made the following remarks under *A. obtusiloba* Don : "Very variable in size, hairiness and colour of flower; the most abnormal form is described as var. *glabra* in Fl. Indica from Western Tibet (Winterbottom), it is quite glabrous with very many golden sepals".

The variation in flower colour of *A. obtusiloba* has also been noted by Lauener (1959-61) whose observations on the flower colour are as follows : "Flower colour is one of the main problems in this species as field notes show the flowers to be 'White or pale Yellow', 'Sulphur Yellow', 'Yellow tinged blue', 'White and Blue' ". Lauener further stated, "more recently in Pakistan in 1958, Mr. B. L. Burtt saw blue and white flowers but no yellow. Since the flower colours are so mixed, varietal separation on colour alone is not justified".

The above observations of earlier botanists on *A. obtusiloba* are significant in the light of the two species described by Qureshi & Chaudhri. A critical study of the specimens of *A. obtusiloba* Don at CAL was made. The specimens presented a wide range of variation in number, texture and colour of sepals. In one specimen of *Hooker f. & Thomson* s.n., Acc. no. 2222, one flower has 5 sepals whereas the other

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has 6. There are specimens (*Alcock* 17854, *Gammie* 2) which are densely hairy and possess 5-7 sepals. *Gammie* s.n. 2274 has white flowers with 7 sepals. Another specimen (*T. A. Rao* 7662) has bluish white flowers with 8 sepals.

In the original description of *A. multisepala* the authors mention "folia novella densa pubescentia" which only confirms the comments made earlier by Hooker & Thomson.

The comments and the specimens studied by the authors make it clear that *A. multisepala* and *A. neelamiana* are only different forms of the widely polymorphic *A. obtusiloba*. This has been confirmed by a study of the photographs of the types of *A. obtusiloba*, *A. neelamiana* and *A. multisepala*. They are therefore merged with *A. obtusiloba* Don.

A. obtusiloba Don, Prodr. Fl. Nep. 194. 1825 [Type : Gossaingsthan, Nepal, *Wallich* s. n. (BM, Photo-CAL 1)] ; Hook. f. & Thoms. Fl. Ind. 22. 1855 et Fl. Brit. Ind. 1 : 8. 1872. *A. multisepala* Qureshi & Chaudhri in Pak. Syst. 2(1 & 2) : 15.1978, **syn. nov.** [Type: Gujargol, 3000 m, Chitral Dist., N.W.F.P., 17th July 1977, *Shah & Khan* no. 2439 (ISL)]. *A. neelamiana* Qureshi et Chaudhri *Ibid.* 13. 1978, **syn. nov.** [Type : Dudgai. 4100 m, Upper Neelam valley, Muzaffarabad dt., Kashmir, 28th June 1978, *Iqbal & Abbasi* 1827 (ISL)].

Distribution : Temperate and Alpine Himalaya from Kashmir to Sikkim.

Specimens examined at CAL : HIMACHAL PRADESH: Bashahr, above Taranda 2700 m, June 1891, *Lace* 1144 ; Chamba, Kalatop forest 2500 m, 19 June 1895, *Lace* 754. KASHMIR: Burzil pass, 3700 m, 26 June 1895, *Alcock* 17854 ; Gulmarg 2700 m, 18 July 1891, *Gammie* s.n., Acc. No. 2274 ; Kagnag range, 3000-3300 m, 15 Feb. 1892, *Duthie* 10957 ; Kishtwar 3000-3600 m, 1877, *Hooker & Thomson* s.n., Acc. no. 2222 ; Pir pass/Banihal ridge, 3330-3835 m, 14 Sept. 1958, *T A. Rao* 7662. W. BENGAL: Sandakphu, 3540 m, 10 June, 1892, *Gammie* 2. PAKISTAN : Gilgit, Kamri Kotul, 3900 m, 1895, *G. M. Giles* 155.

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