The identity of *Senecio lancifer* (Asteraceae, Senecioneae)

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We clear up a taxonomic and nomenclatural confusion, in which *Senecio lancifer* (Asteraceae, Senecioneae) has been involved. This name is determined to belong to a *Ligularia* species, which is identical with *L. leesicotal*. The correct name of the species is *L. lancifera* (Drummond) Srivastava & Jeffrey.

Key words: Compositae, taxonomy, Xizang

Introduction

The purpose of this note is to clear up a taxonomic and nomenclatural confusion, in which *Senecio lancifer* Drummond (1911: 270) (Asteraceae, Senecioneae) has been involved. It will be convenient to review the question chronologically.

Drummond (1911) described *Senecio lancifer* on the basis of five collections from Xizang (Tibet), China. Hu (1968a, 1968b) did not include this species in her enumeration of the Chinese *Senecio* Linnaeus (1753: 866). Jeffrey & Chen (1984) referred the species to *Ligularia* Cassini (1816: 198) but failed to further determine its identity in the genus. Liu (1985, 1989) did not mention the species in his account of *Ligularia* in both *Flora Xizangica* and *Flora Reipublicae Popularis Sinicae*. Mathur (1995) considered that *S. lancifer* was intermediate between *Senecio* and *Ligularia*, probably representing a new genus. Srivastava & Jeffrey (1996) formally treated *S. lancifer* as a species of *Ligularia* and proposed a new combination, *L. lancifera* (Drummond) Srivastava & Jeffrey. Later, obviously unaware of this combination, Grierson & Springate (2000) published it again as *L. lancifera* (Drummond) Grierson and designated *H.M. Stewart s.n.* (K) as the lectotype. The latter combination was adopted by Grierson & Springate (2001) in *Flora of Bhutan*. In a note on *Senecio* in *Flora of China*, it was stated that Jeffrey, one of the co-authors of the Asteraceae, treated *S. lancifer* as a *Ligularia* species, i.e. *L. lancifera* (Drummond) Srivastava & Jeffrey, while another of the co-authors of the family, Illarionova, did not know to which genus it belonged, as she had not seen any material of this species and, according to the description, *S. lancifer* was unlike any species of *Ligularia* distributed in Xizang (Chen et al. 2011). Indeed, some statements in the protologue of *S. lancifer* are wrong and rather misleading. For instance, the species was described to be a suffruticose herb, and to have phyllaries often connate at the base. In fact, the species is a purely herbaceous plant, and the phyllaries are totally free from each other. In the genus *Ligularia*, none of the species are suffruticose, and in only two species, *L. schmiditi* (Maximovicz 1871: 222) Makino (1903: 191) from northeastern China (Heilongjiang), Far East of Russia and Korea, and *L. biceps* Kitamura (1941: 239) endemic to Liaoning, northeastern China, the phyllaries are connate entirely or below the middle.

Recently we reinstated the independent specific status of *Ligularia leesicotal* Kitamura (1953: 74), a plant which is fairly common in Xizang (Wang et al. 2016). It was regrettable that in doing so we had been unable to check any material of *Senecio lancifer*. Thanks to the rapid progress in the digitalization of type specimens at BM and K, we have just had an opportunity to see high-resolution images of three syntype specimens of *S. lancifer*, namely King's Collector s.n. (BM), *H.J. Walton 70* (BM), and *H.M. Stewart s.n.* (K; Fig. 1A).

A careful comparison of the type specimens of *Senecio lancifer* with the holotype (Fig. 1B) and other ample material of *Ligularia leesicotal* convinced us that the former species is identical with the latter, and thus the two names encompass only one species. As it is illustrated in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, the species in question belongs undoubtedly to the genus *Ligularia*. Its correct name should be *L. lancifera* (Drummond) Srivastava & Jeffrey, with *L. leesicotal* being a synonym and *L. lancifera* (Drummond) Grierson an isonym.

Taxonomic treatment


Type:—CHINA. Xizang: Saogong, 20 July 1907, H.M. Stewart s.n. (lectotype K!, designated by Grierson & Springate 2000: 402). Fig. 1A.

*Ligularia leesicotal* Kitamura (1953: 74), syn. nov.

Type:—CHINA. Xizang: Nagarzê, Pali Shan, 23 August 1914, *E. Kawaguchi SM 96920 (= E. Kawaguchi 132)* (holotype TNS!). Fig. 1B.

Note:—For other information on this species, including a full description, additional specimens examined, habitat, distribution, phenology, and putative affinities, see Wang *et al.* (2016).

Although Drummond (1911) cited one of original localities of this species (*King’s Collector s.n.*) as situated in Sikkim, this gathering, as noted by Mathur (1995), was actually made in Xizang according to the label attached to the specimen sheet. So far, no specimens of this species collected from Sikkim have been seen. Its occurrence in Bhutan is also doubtful (Grierson & Springate 2001).

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