(2405) Proposal to conserve the name *Chirita hamosa* (*Microchirita hamosa*) (*Gesneriaceae*) with a conserved type

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(2405) ***Chirita hamosa*** R. Br., Cyrtandreae: 117. Dec 1839, nom. cons. prop.

Typus: Thailand, Tak, Umphang, Umphang [Doi Hua Mot] Wildlife Sanctuary, 915 m, dry dipterocarp forest on degraded limestone rocks and sandy soil, 17 Oct 2014, *Middleton & al. 5762* (E; isotypi: BKF, SING), typ. cons. prop.

The name *Chirita hamosa* R. Br. (l.c.), and its homotypic synonym and currently considered correct name, *Microchirita hamosa* (R. Br.) Yin Z. Wang (in J. Syst. Evol. 49: 60. 2011), has long been applied to a range of different species now treated in the genus *Microchirita* (C.B. Clarke) Yin Z. Wang (l.c.: 59), but most consistently to a species common in central, northern and eastern Thailand and also found in Myanmar (Burma), northern Laos and northern Vietnam. *Microchirita hamosa* is the type of *Microchirita* but the type material is only in fruit and it is not possible to match it to flowering material to determine the application of the name. It is, however, possible to be sure that it is not the same taxon as the species most commonly called *Chirita*/*Microchirita hamosa*.

Chirita hamosa R. Br. was described to accommodate Wallich's collection 788 from "Trogla in Martabania" in the modern day Mon or Kayin States of Myanmar. Wallich (Numer. List: 788. 1829) had named this plant "*Didymocarpus? hamosa*" but this was not a validly published name. Apart from *Wallich 788.C* (K-W), which is a specimen of

Microchirita mollissima (Ridl.) A. Weber & D.J. Middleton and does not match the protologue, all other available duplicates of *Wallich 788* are of specimens in fruit, lacking any flowers and lacking any description of possible flower colour. Brown's original description lacks the stigma character he noted in other species which suggests he also saw no flowers. Clarke (in Hooker, Fl. Brit. India 4: 360. 1884) later placed *Chirita hamosa* as the only species in *Chirita* sect. *Microchirita* and expanded the species concept to include specimens from Burma, northeastern India and southwestern India. He noted the corolla colour to be "nearly white, mouth pale blue or somewhat rose". The idea that *Chirita hamosa* is a species that had white or "nearly white" flowers was then taken up by later authors such as Pellegrin (in Lecomte, Fl. Indo-Chine 4: 527. 1930 – also allowing for the flowers to be violet), Barnett (in Fl. Siam. 3: 224. 1962 – indirectly due to the citation of a number of white-flowered specimens), Wood (in Notes Roy. Bot. Gard. Edinburgh 33: 191. 1974), Wang & al. (in Wu & Raven, Fl. China 18: 345. 1998), Li & al. (Pl. Gesneriaceae China: 260. 2004) and Wei & al. (Gesneriaceae S. China: 454. 2010). In his revision of *Chirita*, Wood (l.c.: 123–205) included 18 species in *Chirita* sect. *Microchirita* with a wide range of flower colours from predominantly yellow to predominantly purple/blue to predominantly white. Only two species were described as having white flowers: the large-flowered *Chirita tubulosa* Craib and the small-flowered *Chirita hamosa*. He noted that *Chirita hamosa*, the type of the sectional name, is a very variable species with a wide distribution.

Chirita sect. *Microchirita* has now been raised to generic rank and *Chirita* as a whole has been remodelled into five genera by Weber & al. (in Taxon 60: 767–790. 2011). Including those yet to be described, there are around 30 species in *Microchirita*. Middleton & Triboun (in Thai Forest Bull., Bot. 41: 13–22. 2013) discussed the variability of the small white-flowered species and concluded that there were several discrete entities that were relatively easy to distinguish from each other, leading to the description of several new species. The most common and widespread small white-flowered species is one with yellow lines ventrally inside a relatively straight corolla tube (curved in most species of *Microchirita*), and a densely pubescent ovary and fruit (glabrous or only very sparsely pubescent in most species). This has long been the plant most consistently identified as *Chirita hamosa*, and now *Microchirita hamosa*, despite the fact that the fruit of the type material, *Wallich 788*, is more or less glabrous. Middleton & Triboun (l.c.) acknowledged that it was not the same taxon as the type material of the species and routinely referred to it as "the species currently called *Microchirita hamosa*", but could also not unequivocally identify an existing name for the taxon. The problem arises from the fact that Brown's original description (l.c.) easily applies to the majority of species in *Microchirita* and that the material of *Wallich 788*, without flowers and sufficient label data, could equally well belong to a number of different yellow-flowered and white-flowered species as recognised by Wood (l.c.: 123–205) and by Middleton & Triboun (l.c.). The region where the type was found has been very poorly collected in modern times and it is not possible to ascertain the identity of *Wallich 788*, nor whether it is even a white-flowered species.

A solution would be the conservation of *Chirita hamosa* with a conserved type using material belonging to "the species currently called *Microchirita hamosa*". If this solution is not adopted the type of the generic name will need to be listed in taxonomic works as insufficiently known and the common and widespread taxon currently called *Microchirita hamosa* will require a new name.