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Registered Office: 3A2 Varadarajulu Nagar, FCI Road, Ganapathy, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641006, India
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Cover: *Minervarya cepfi* & *Nyctibatrachus petraeus*—mix media. © P Kritika



Addition of *Athyrium rhachidosorum* (Hand.-Mazz.) Ching, 1934 (Polypodiales: Woodsiaceae) to the pteridophyte diversity of India

Chhandam Chanda¹ & Christopher Roy Fraser-Jenkins²

¹ Botanical Survey of India, Arunachal Pradesh Regional Centre, Senki View, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh 791111, India.

² Rua de São Mateus 485 S/C Dt., Fontainhas 2750-141, Cascais, Portugal.

¹ chhandambotany@gmail.com (corresponding author), ² chrisophilus@yahoo.co.uk

Athyrium Roth is a large and complex pteridophyte genus with many taxonomically critical species. This genus has been assigned to a separate family Athyriaceae (PPG I 2016). We here consider it to be under the family Woodsiaceae (Fraser-Jenkins 2008; Fraser-Jenkins et al. 2018). A total of 50 species and 17 hybrids of *Athyrium* were reported to occur in India in 2018 (Fraser-Jenkins et al. 2018), whereas in Arunachal Pradesh, 28 species of *Athyrium* were reported to occur (Chanda et al. 2024).

A. rhachidosorum was first reported from Myanmar but predominantly occur in China. So far, it was known to occur from these two countries only. The present paper reports the occurrence of *A. rhachidosorum* in India.

The species was collected from forest of Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary of Dibang Valley District of Arunachal Pradesh. It was found to grow in a subtemperate forest with lavish vegetation, in a high-altitude area (2,800 m). This forest is on the way to 'Seven Lake' area inside the Wildlife Sanctuary.

Collection: Several field survey tours were undertaken by the first author in Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary for the 'Flora of India' project, titled 'Ferns and Fern-allies of Dihang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve of Arunachal Pradesh'. *A. rhachidosorum* was collected along with many other ferns during those field trips (Image 1).

Identification: The specimens were dried and mounted on herbarium sheets following the standard methods. Later, these were scanned with an Epson scanner, studied under a stereo microscope and photographed. During the process of identification of the collected specimens, the first author misidentified it to be *Athyrium pectinatum*. Later on, the second author identified it as *A. rhachidosorum*.

Athyrium rhachidosorum (Hand.-Mazz.) Ching, Index Filic. (C.Chr.), Suppl. Tert. 43. 1934 (as 'rhachidisorum') (Image 2).

Holotype: Northwestern Yunnan: in rainforest of the Burmese monastery in the valley below the Gombala Pass, in the Salwin-Irrawaddy catchment above Tschamutong, granite, 2,900 m, H. Handel-Mazzetti 4595, 12.vii.1916 (Wang et al. 2013).

Basionym: *Asplenium rhachidosorum* Hand.-Mazz., Symb. Sin. 6: 33. 1929.

Synonyms: *Athyrium densisorum* X.C.Zhang, Bull. Bot. Res., Harbin 11(3): 8. 1991.

Athyrium wuliangshanense Ching, Acta Bot. Boreal-Occid. Sin. 6: 15. 1986.

Description: Rhizome erect, scaly. Fronds tufted, tripinnate to quadripinnatifid; stipe brown, scaly at

Editor: Anonymity requested.

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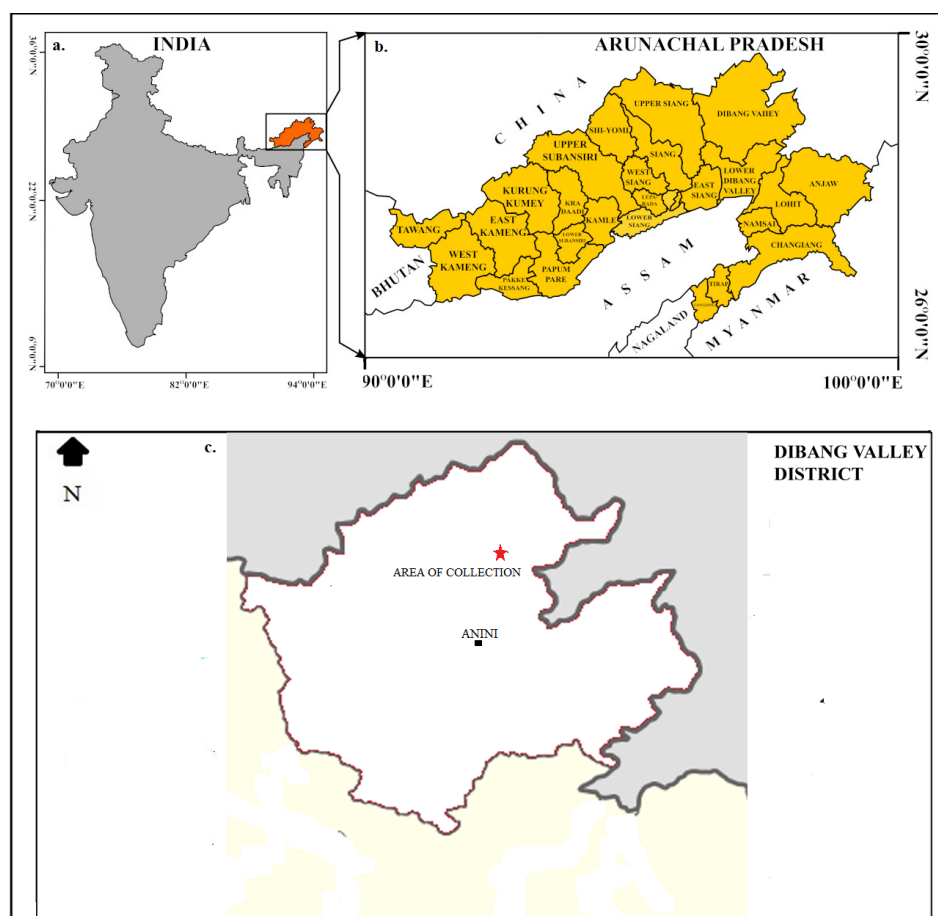


Image 1. Map of the area: a—Position of Arunachal Pradesh in the map of India | b—Map of Arunachal Pradesh showing its districts | c—Map of Dibang Valley District showing the area of collection.

lower half, dorsally grooved, $37\text{--}45 \times 0.35\text{--}0.4$ cm; scales dark brown with a pale brown margin, basifixed, lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate, base truncate, margin entire, apex acuminate to caudate, $3\text{--}6 \times 1\text{--}2$ mm; rachis stramineous, glabrous; lamina oblong-lanceolate, herbaceous, $40\text{--}45$ cm $\times$ $15\text{--}18$ cm; pinnae bipinnate to tripinnatifid, subopposite to alternate, stalked, triangular-lanceolate, apex caudate, $7\text{--}18 \times 1.7\text{--}4$ cm, lower 2 pairs slightly shorter; costae stramineous, often very narrowly winged; pinnules pinnate to bipinnatifid, subopposite to alternate, stalked, lanceolate, asymmetrical with slightly larger acroscopic pinnulets, base truncate acroscopically and cuneate basiscopically, apex obtuse to acute, with minute dentation, $1\text{--}2.5 \times 0.35\text{--}0.6$ cm, few pairs of lower pinnules in lower pinnae gradually shortened; costules with 2–3 short setae; pinnulets simple to pinnatifid, alternate, sessile, oblong-lanceolate, anadromous, base adnate, margin entire to lobed, apex obtuse, dentate, $2\text{--}4 \times 1\text{--}1.5$ mm, basal acroscopic one largest; ultimate lobes linear, apex obtuse to acute, up to 2×0.7 mm; veins inconspicuous,

forked, free. Sori oblong, indusiate, central, one at the base of each pinnule; indusia thin; spores brown, monolet, reniform, surface irregularly tuberculate, perispore absent, $38\text{--}42 \times 25\text{--}28$ μm (Image 2).

Note: This species can be circumscribed by the following characters – erect rhizome; tripinnate to quadripinnatifid fronds; oblong-lanceolate lamina with slightly shorter basal pairs of pinnae; asymmetrical pinnule bases; slightly larger acroscopic pinnulets than basiscopical ones; linear ultimate segments; 2–3 setae on costules and centrally arranged, oblong sori.

Habitat: A very rare, high-altitude, terrestrial species, growing on forest floor, in dense forests.

Distribution: India (Arunachal Pradesh), China (Sichuan, Xizang, & Yunnan), and Myanmar (Flora of China 2013).

Specimen examined: India, Arunachal Pradesh, Dibang Valley, Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary, north-east of Emuli Village, towards 2nd camp, c. 2,800 m, 17.xi.2021, C. Chanda 43661, ARUN (Image 3).

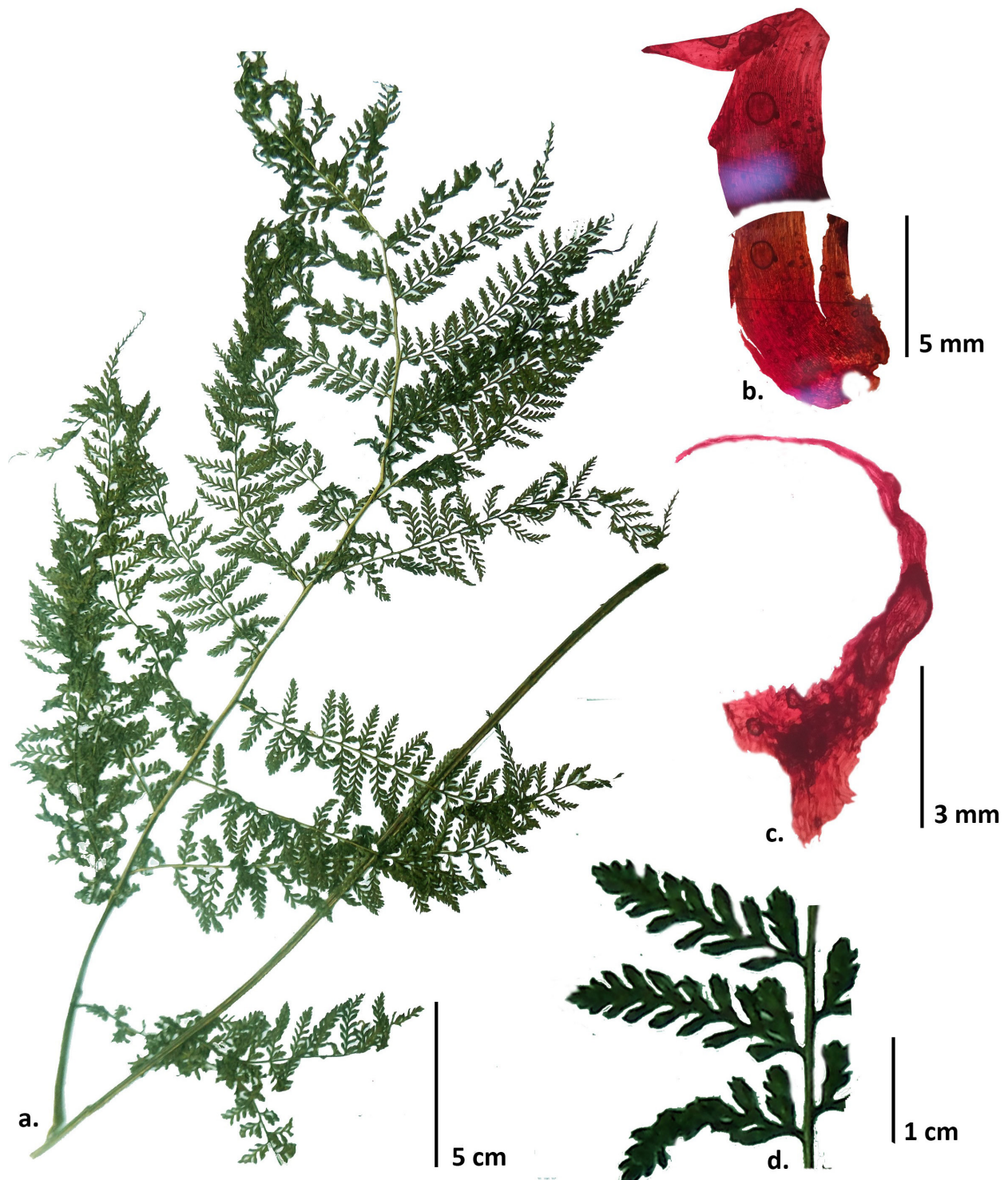


Image 2. Habit and different parts of *Athyrium rhachidosorum* (Hand.-Mazz.) Ching: a—Habit of the plant | b— Rhizome scale | c—Stipe-base scale | d—Part of a pinna showing pinnules and pinnulets. © C. Chanda.

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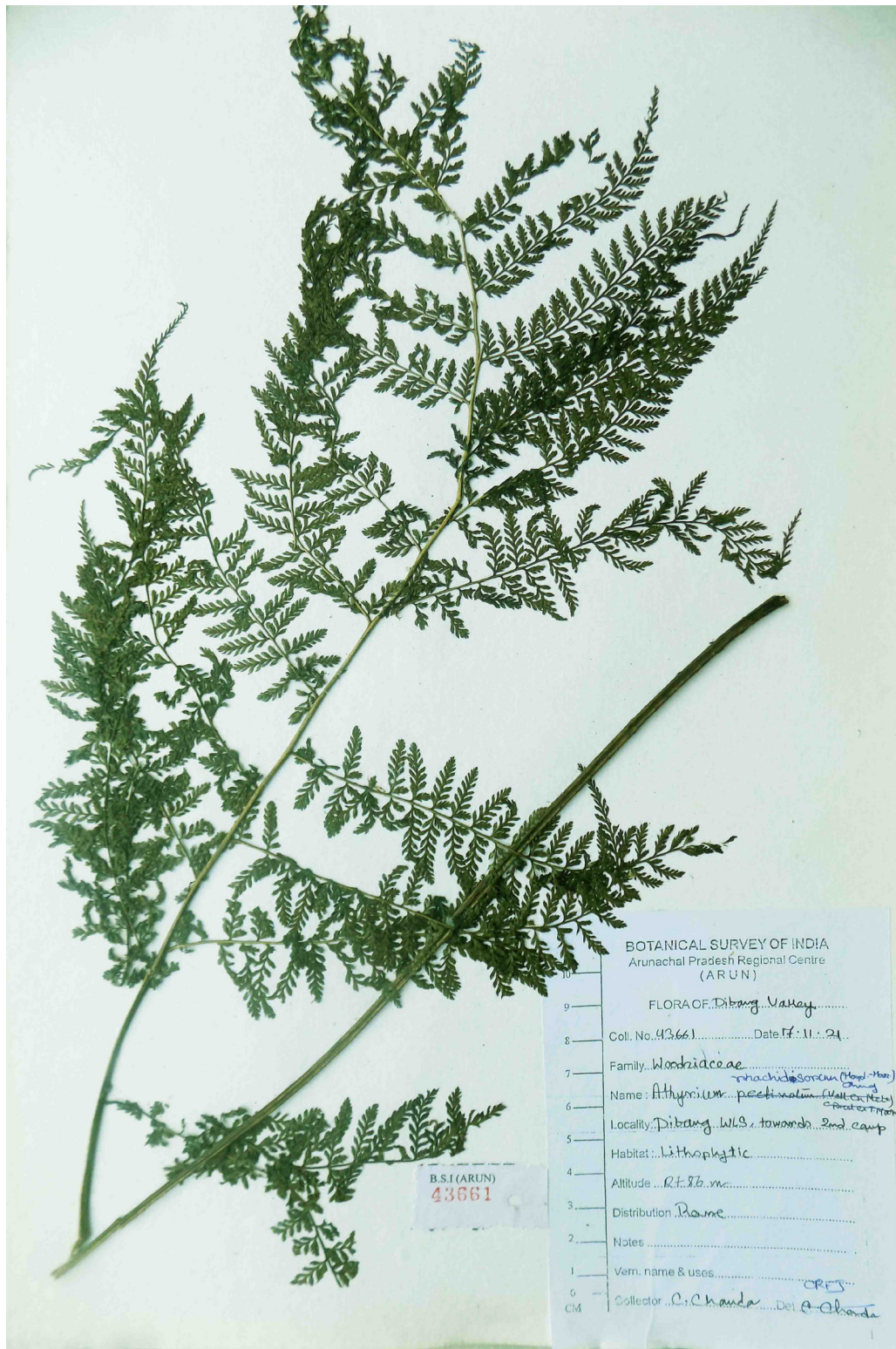


Image 3. Herbarium specimen of *Athyrium rhachidosorum* (Hand.-Mazz.) Ching. © C. Chanda.

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The Managing Editor, JoTT,
c/o Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society,
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Tamil Nadu 641006, India
ravi@threatenedtaxa.org & ravi@zooreach.org

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