

BRYOPHYTES IN THAILAND compiled by **Renoo Sornsamran and Obchant Thaitong**, Office of Environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Science Technology and Environment. 19 colored photographs + One Map + 274 pp (1995). Free upon request from the Office of Environmental Policy and Planning of the Ministry of Science Technology and Environment at 60/1 Soi Pibulwattana Rama VI Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand.

This nicely designed checklist of bryophytes of Thailand with good quality printing came to my attention in 1997 when an announcement of its existence was made public through the Bryonet listserve system.

According to the two authors, the checklist was compiled to help researchers in Thailand who have little access to references of Thai bryophytes. Yet, for reasons beyond my comprehension, the authors limit their reference sources to publications dated from 1900 to 1979. Prof. Z. Iwatsuki and I published in 1993 an updated checklist of the mosses of Indochina, Thailand included, in Vol. 74 of the widely circulated *Journal of Hattori Botanical Laboratory*. Our 1993 checklist and many monographs published in the 80's (e.g., Iwatsuki and Suzuki 1982; Mohamed and Reese 1985; Reese and Mohamed 1985) were not consulted by the compilers for nomenclatural update of their new checklist. As a result, this is the first checklist of mosses that I know which became outdated on the day it was published.

Since I study mainly mosses of East and Southeast Asia, I shall confine my review to the moss part of this new publication. The 1995 listing included 644 species of mosses for the entire country while Tan and Iwatsuki (1993) counted 563 species of mosses in Thailand. The increase in the number of mosses is not due to later discovery but is the result of extensive use of old and discarded synonyms, and even basionyms. Furthermore, the compilers of the checklist under review have not been careful and accurate in their bibliographical work. In a number of instances, the same binomial has been repeated on two different pages, thus, inflating further the total number of moss species. Misspelled names of taxa are not uncommon.

The new checklist of Thai bryophytes is done in a tabulated format consisting of four columns entitled Order/Family, Species, Site Found, and Reported by/year. Unfortunately, the arrangement of moss taxa is alphabetical by their ordinal names first, and then the families and genera. Most practising taxonomists, not to mention the students of bryophytes in general, may know well the genera and families of mosses, but will not know by heart the classification of various orders of mosses. This arrangement has made it a difficult reference from which to retrieve information. To aggravate the confusion, the arrangement of liverwort

genera in the book is done in a different manner. The hepatic taxa are arranged alphabetically by family and genus after grouping them first under Marchantiales, and followed by Metzgeriales, Calobryales and Jungermanniales. This inconsistency of system of arrangement of taxa leaves the finding of a taxon only by way of the Index of Species that concludes the book.

Because of the limitation to references only from 1900 to 1979, the locality information of each species is neither complete nor up-to-date in coverage. However, for local consumption, the compilers are correct to include the names of mountains and other specific locations where the species had been reported in literature. Compared with the latest and electronic catalogue of Thai mosses prepared by the Missouri Botanical Gardens (<http://www.mobot.org/MOBOT/moss/Thailand/thailand.htm>), this 1995 checklist, with its enumeration of localities under each province reported for a species, is more useful this way. In the MO's catalogue of Thai mosses, the locality information stops at the provincial level.

One other feature that I like about the new publication is the coloured pictures of a number of Thai bryophytes identified to genus. Unfortunately, the usefulness of this Thai checklist of bryophytes is handicapped by the outdated nomenclature and limited search of literature.

References

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