“Insects of the Hengduan Mountains Region Vol. 1 and 2 - The Series of the Scientific Expedition to the Hengduan Mountains, Qinghai-Xizang Plateau.”

Tadauchi, Osamu

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Book Review

"Insects of the Hengduan Mountains Region Vol. 1 and 2 – The Series of the Scientific Expedition to the Hengduan Mountains, Qinghai-Xizang Plateau." Chief Editor: Chen Shixiang, 1,547 pp., Vol. 1: 1992, 50.20 yuan; Vol. 2: 1993, 41.00 yuan, Science Press, Beijing (In Chinese with English summary).

This monograph consists of two voluminous books. It treats faunistic results of the expedition carried out by the Comprehensive Scientific Expedition to Hengduan Mountains Region, Academia Sinica, China, in 1981-1984. The area is a transitional zone from Qinghai-Xizang Plateau to Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau and Sichuan Basin, located at 26°-34°N and 90°-104°E, including many high mountains and deep valleys. The result shows a total of 4,826 species belonging to 1,998 genera, 236 families, 20 orders, of which 24 genera and 850 species are new to science.

According to a paper included, the basic characteristics of the insect fauna of the Hengduan Mountains Region are as follows: 1: the Oriental elements advance to the north, and the Palaearctic ones spread to the south and both faunas meet at this region; 2: because of many high mountains, persentage of endemic species are high; 3: comparing with the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau proper in the west, the alpine species are richer in this region; 4: stenotopic species which show very narrow in distribution, either geographically or ecologically, are rich and many geographical or ecological replacements are produced; 5: many primitive groups are found because of the region never having been covered by glacier in large area. With respect to fauna1 composition, 4 elements, Oriental, Palaearctic, eurytopic and endemic are found, of which the percentage of Oriental elements ranging first, followed by Palaearctic and eurytopic, excluding of endemic species in most families and orders. The typical Oriental elements distribute in the east and southeastern part of the region, while Palaearctic ones chiefly confined to the plain of the high plateau. As to the vertical boundary of the two elements, Oriental affinity distributes below 2,800m, Palaearctic above 3,200m and 2,800-3,200m is regarded as a transitional zone. This monograph is an important achievement after the publication of "Insects of Xizang (Tibet)" including great many species and suggestions of the formation and evolution of insect fauna in this region and its relationship with the neighbouring area.

(Osamu Tadauchi)