

REVIEW

Butterflies of the Himalaya by Prof. M. S. Mani, (Oxford & IBH Publ. Co.), New Delhi, X + 181 pp., 34 figs., 25 pls. b. & w., Col. Rs. 240.00.

This handy volume on Butterflies of the Himalaya is yet another in the series of High altitude Entomological and Ecological publications from the pen of Prof. Mani, an authority on High Altitude insect life.

The volume is divided into X chapters. General information on the characters of taxonomic importance, classification, the seasonal dimorphism and colour variation, succession, Ecotypes, migration, hostplant associations coupled with a brief description of the panorama of the Himalaya makes an interesting and useful reading to both the specialist and generalist. The genera and species have been discussed under their respective natural families. Keys to families, subfamilies, (and in some cases genera), and the species have been provided in a most comprehensive way. Even in those cases where generic keys were not given the author has provided a brief general description. The distribution maps are undoubtedly useful.

The biogeography of the extant Himalayan butterflies has been discussed specially in the light of the evolution of the Himalayan mountain system in the past. The discussion on the centres of evolution of the various genera and species may provide comparative guide line for the other Lepidopterists to checkup their observations on the origin, dispersal and evolution of their respective groups of Lepidoptera. The larval colour variations though not discussed except in a passing way, may form an interesting subject of study in relation to the altitude and host association-wise. Perhaps in some of the groups like Lycaenidae, one may find more species complexes than have been hitherto recorded and provide an interesting material for taxonomic study.

The volume is provided with 94 useful references. A good index to genera and species discussed is also provided in the end. The printing and get up are good except for few typographical errors.

Naturally one would expect a lot more colour in a book on butterflies, but then it would also push up the production cost of this already high priced volume.

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