

REVIEW

"SIAMESE PLANT NAMES"

Published by the Royal Forest Department, Siam, 1948.

Price Baht 32/-

The Royal Forest Department is to be congratulated for the above-mentioned publication. The book consists of two parts in two separate volumes. Part I, which is under this review, contains a list of 3,462 botanically and locally-known species of flowering plants, ferns and a few edible fungi found in Siam, covers 504 pages. The book, beside being an object of direct appeal to the botanists or those who take an interest in plants, should also serve as a reference book for commercial and other uses when corresponding vernacular or local names are required of the botanical names of certain woods or plants. Part II, which is still under compilation, and contains a list of local vernacular names with their corresponding botanical names, or vice versa of part I, is, therefore, looked forward by those concerned, in order that the reference could, so far, be an all-round possibility.

The list which is arranged alphabetically is essentially composed of generic and specific names, family names, habits of plants, local names and localities, available foreign or trade names, and appropriate synonyms. All these constituents are explained in the introduction and the explanatory notes on page 2 and 5 with which readers are advised to first acquaint themselves.

For the benefit of the foreigners, all the Siamese characters in the list have been transcribed into *Roman*, and the system used is the general system of phonetic transcription of the Royal Institute of Siam, published in 1930. The system is fully explained on page ๓.

A map of Siam of 1: 5,000,000 scale is attached to the explanatory notes showing the positions of the various localities from where certain plants etc. were recorded. Readers, especially foreigners, should study this map in conjunction with the explanatory notes on same and note the abbreviations for the name of each locality.

Whilst it is not proposed to review this book in detail, further comments which may be ventured briefly by way of suggestion, in view of the errors and other short-comings, had also been remarked and called for by the compiler, are :

Mistakes and errors in spellings etc., apart from those already dealt with in the accompanying corrigenda, could be further rectified by re-checking up and an additional corrigenda issued and forwarded to those already in possession of the book.

The regional divisions of the country are not marked out in the map to fit in with the explanatory notes. This could have been done approximately with no extra costs, and should benefit those who are not acquainted with the country, especially the foreigners. An example for this may be taken from the map of Zoo-Geographical Divisions of Siam attached to the Journal of the Siam Society Natural History Supplement, Vol. VII No. 4, issued November 1930.

Comparatively large blank spaces are left over on the front part of almost every page. Such an arrangement may make reading easier but heavier type faces and the insertion of the first letter of the alphabet of all the generic names to precede all the specific names, as generally practiced, cannot fail to make easy reading. On the other hand, the reduction in size of the book which may result in the saving of paper and labour in printing will also help to cheapen the price of the book.

A. W.