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BOOK REVIEW

By Jan Schlauer

Catalano, M. “Nepenthes della Thailandia – Diario di viaggio” (*Nepenthes* of Thailand – Travel Diary, text in Italian, descriptions of new taxa in Latin/English) 207 pp., 209 col. photos, 1 line drawing, 13 maps, hard cover, published February 2010 by the author (Marcello Catalano, via Ronchi 2, 20134 Milano, Italy, <rafflesiana@yahoo.com>); 30 € (ca. 40 US\$)

In a narrative style that only Italians master (“se non è vero, è ben trovato”), the author describes his remarkable experience from roughly a decade of training and research both at herbaria and in the field. The present work is understood as a contribution to the knowledge of the genus *Nepenthes* in the whole region of Indochina, so there is potential for future supplements covering Burma (Myanmar), Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Taxonomy is presented here as learning by travel, observation, and discovery, and the author also does not spare the reader the frustrating experience when herbarium/literature-based expectations were disappointed by an adverse field reality.

The diversity of the genus in Thailand as featured in the present book is far greater than expressed by any previous author. Five new taxa are described (*N. andamana*, *N. chang*, *N. kerrii*, *N. mirabilis* var. *globosa*, *N. suratensis*), and one further is introduced as a *nomen nudum* (“*ined.*”) as its formal description is credited to yet unpublished work by Martin Cheek (Kew Gardens, UK).

According to recent research at Kew, *N. smilesii* (type from Thailand or Laos; so far the type locality “Baw Saw” does not seem to have been located precisely, and “Northern Siam” covers territory of both contemporary countries) is the correct name for the species that has been called *N. anamensis* (type from Vietnam) before. Most of the Thai taxa are said to be close relatives of the recently described *N. bokorensis* (type from Cambodia) that is intermediate between *N. smilesii* and *N. thorelii* (type from Vietnam). It is thus most unfortunate that neither *N. bokorensis* nor *N. thorelii* is featured in the present book in detail, but they apparently have not been found in Thailand so far. Differences in indumentum, leaf shape, peristome width, presence/absence of bracteoles in the inflorescence, and androphore length are used to distinguish individual taxa in this complex aggregate.

Of the five new taxa, one is classified as a variety of *N. mirabilis* with large ovoid pitchers. This *N. mirabilis* var. *globosa* is the plant that has informally been called “Viking” in cultivation.

An English translation of this book is announced (in <http://www.carnivorousplants.it/indochina.htm>) to be published in 3-4 years.