

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



Thailand which is situated within the continental south-east Asia between $5^{\circ}40'$ to $20^{\circ}30'$ north latitude and $97^{\circ}15'$ to $105^{\circ}45'$ east longitude is another tropical country having different geographical regions. The upper part, which is influenced by the prevailing seasonal climates, comprises the flooded lowland central, the high plateau with scattered table - topped mountainous northeastern, and the northern mountaineous and high plain regions. The low part is the southern insular region which is prevailed by the insular climate. The natural conditions favour the existence of a luxury plant life of great diversity throughout the whole kingdom, and of course the flora is fairly rich. However all divisions of plants but the flowering ones have received comparatively little attention. The knowledge of bryophyte, in particular is scanty, and within the limit, though some collections have been made and the materials have been determined from time to time. Moss might be plants of limited economic value, but as the primitive land plant having prominent alternation of generation, it is for academic and ecological reason which is quite important and could not be neglected.

This present study is intended to augment the knowledge of the moss flora with special reference to morphology and geographical distribution of certain species of moss in the family Sematophyllaceae in Thailand.

An attempt is made here to re-examine all the species of Sematophyllous mosses deposited at The Forest Herbarium, Royal Forest Department, Bangkok (B.K.F.) and at The Bangkok Herbarium of the Department of Agriculture (B.K.). The aims of this work are:

1. To provide descriptions and illustrations of the Sematophyllous mosses in an attempt to clarify their morphology.
2. To provide a key for identification of the genus and species.
3. To map the distribution pattern of the Family Sematophyllaceae in Thailand for further studies.