

## REVIEW

C.M. PANNELL: A taxonomic monograph of the genus *Aglaia* Lour. (Meliaceae). Kew Bull. Add. Series XVI, viii + 378 pp., illus. Printed in UK for HMSO, London. Price £ 60.00.

As almost half of the Malesian species of Meliaceae are found in the genus *Aglaia*, we are glad to receive a sound monograph published for this ecologically so important genus. The format can be characterized as 'classical', with chapters on taxonomic history, morphology, floral biology and pollination, fruit and seed-dispersal, germination, cytology, variation and distribution, besides the pure taxonomic revision. The first part would have been a little more attractive for the reader if certain characters had been drawn, especially some of the very intricate or minute features as scales and stellate hairs which have been used intensively in the key and for which, unfortunately, every botanist seems to have his own definition.

The 105 species are described in great detail, including lengthy citations of representative specimens. An identification list at the end of the volume seems much more helpful for the users, especially curators of herbaria, and would have reduced the number of pages drastically without loss of important information. But what is really a little bit annoying is the key to the species. First of all the key is very difficult to read and especially to find the corresponding leads due to the chosen lay-out. Of course, it is obvious that it is an immense work to construct a key to 105 species that is user-friendly, but there are solutions which serve the reader much better, i.e., to give separate keys to the species of at least some of the phytogeographical entities. The bigger islands or island groups and the Asian mainland certainly deserve their own keys to facilitate the identification process.

Nevertheless, it is a book everybody interested in botanical diversity should have on his shelf, as the genus forms an important component of the humid tropical forest in the Indo-Malesian region and we can congratulate the author on her opus magnum.

We are expecting that the Meliaceae, of which most of the Malesian species are already revised now, will be covered in one of the next volumes of *Flora Malesiana*; this time hopefully with various keys for the larger islands.

PAUL J. A. KEßLER