

VI. The Siamese names of some Snakes.

Having read articles on the subject of Snakes in this Journal, the following may be of interest to your readers.

To the people of Mondhol Payap the Malayan Viper (*Ancistrodon rhodostoma*) is not an unfamiliar snake and is generally known as “ngu tūng chāng (งูตึงช้าง)” or “ngu tūng kabā (งูตึงกะบ่า),” the former name being applied to the bigger-sized ones. In Rajburi, Petchaburi, and Prachuab Kirikhan districts the Siamese call it “ngu kapa (งูกะปาดะ),” or more descriptively correct, “ngu kapa fālamī (งูกะปาดะฝาฝามิ).” Fālamī” is the vernacular name for the lid of the ordinary Siamese earthen cooking-pot, the shape of which the snake sometimes simulates when it has coiled itself up into a broad conical mass, with its head projecting out on the top. If what I am told is correct, this viper is known round Bandon as “ngu pāk book (งูปากบุก).” There are other names beginning with “ngu kapa” but these, it appears, are given to *Ancistrodon rhodostoma* of different sizes and shades or colours.

So far as I have been able to observe, the species occurs as far north as Latitude 19° 20', and as high up as 1500 feet elevation. Judging from the different places the snake has been known from, the range of distribution of *Ancistrodon rhodostoma* in Siam may, I think, practically be said to cover the whole of the country.

This snake is partial to dry localities, such as those with sandy or laterite soil. It is often to be met with on the sandy coast of the Peninsula. Further inland and further north it may generally be looked for in places where grow “mai tūng” or “mai pluang” (*Dipterocarpus tuberculatus*) and “mai teng” and “mai rang” (*Shorea sp.*), which form tree-growths generally characteristic of localities having laterite soil. The Payap name of the snake, “ngu tūng” derives its origin from “mai tūng,” in which forest it is generally found.

The bite from *Ancistrodon rhodostoma* is said by some of the people to be deadly, but by the majority it is considered to have an effect more or less equal to that of the common Green Pit-Viper (*Lachesis gramineus*) which rarely, if ever, proves fatal to man.

The other snakes of Chiengmai and neighbourhood that go by the local generic name of “ngu tūng” are the common and widely spread *Simotes cyclurus*, “ngu tūng hua kieng, (งูตึงหัวเกียง)”

and a somewhat rare *Simotes* species known on account of its uniform red colour as “ngu tung fai (งูตึงไฟ).”

Of names for the Hamadryad (*Naiia bungarus*) there are several, the common black variety, with or without whitish or yellowish cross-bars on the body, being known to the central and southern Siamese as “ngu hao dong, (งูเห่าตึง)” and to the Payap people as “ngu hao hawn (งูเห่าห้อม).” and the olive-brown or pale variety being generally known as “ngu chong arng, (งูจงอาง).” In the same way the black variety of the Cobra (*Naiia tripudians*) is known to the Siamese as “ngu hao maw, (งูเห่าหม้อ),” and to the Payap people as “ngu hao pak, (งูเห่าปาก),” and the lighter coloured form as “ngu hao pluak” or “phüerk (งูเห่าปลวก or ผือก).”

There is a certain kind of big poisonous snake in the Chiengmai district known to the people as “ngu hao kaw kam (งูเห่าคอกำ).” It is said to be a hill denizen, but occasionally comes down to the neighbouring plains. It grows to the size of a man’s thigh, and has a uniform black colour, with a patch of golden-yellow on the throat, hence the name. It is notoriously aggressive in disposition, and its bite is fatal to man.

From this description of the snake one might consider it a variety of the Hamadryad with the ordinary whitish or pale-yellowish throat. But since the natives claim it to be distinct from the Hamadryad, and I have not seen the snake myself, I shall be interested if any of your readers can tell me what the “ngu hao kaw kam” of the North really is.

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