XIII. ENDEMISM

In the Flore générale de l'Indochine, 217 families have been described, 1794 genera, c. 9000 species. There is an amount of endemism, on the basis of which attempts have been made towards an inner subdivision of the region. The problem is, that the endemism is of uncertain status. A few percentages in specific endemism are compared: in Capparis, Gagnepain 1939 has 70%, Jacobs 1961 has 24%, in Dillenia, Gagnepain 1938 has 53%, Hoogland 1952 has 12%, in Knema, Lecomte 1914 has 40%, Sinclair 1961 has 0%, in Rhododendron, Dop 1930 has 59%, Sleumer 1958 has 38%, in Anacardiaceae, Lecomte 1908 has 41%, Tardieu-Blot 1962 has 37%, in Connaraceae, Gagnepain 1951 has 76%, Vidal 1962 has 11%, in Sapotaceae. Lecomte 1930 has 83%, Aubréville 1963 has 66%.

Similar considerations hold for generic endemism. Five percent seems to be endemic, but several genera have been wrongly placed: Hadongia (Bignon.) = Citharexylum (Verben.); Tardiella (Canell.) = Casearia (Flac.); Saxifragites (Euph.) = Distylium (Hamam.); Capusia (Ochnac.) = Siphonodon (Hippocrat.); Ailanthopsis (Simar.) and Picroderma (Simar.) = Trichilia (Meliac.); Tetramyxis (Simar.) = Allospondias (Anac.); Kerrdora (Thymel.) = Cryptocarya (Laur.).

The following genera have been reduced to other genera in the same family: Elattosis = Tenagocharis (Butom.); Cryptanthela = Argyreia (Conv.); Dimerodiscus = Ipomoea (Conv.); Tridynamia = Porana (Conv.); Arachnodes = Phyllanthodendron (Euph.); Heterocalyx = Agrostistachys (Euph.); Parapentace = Burretiodendron (Tiliac.). This list is not complete but may emphasise the reserve required when dealing with Indo-Chinese endemism.

In 1951 Gagnepain recorded a Manotes (Connaraceous genus from Africa) for the first time in Indo-China. A plant-geographic puzzle? Vidal found it to be nothing but the common Eurycoma longifolia (Simaroubaceae).

Conclusions: it is desirable to work monographically, anyway regional with examination of adjoining floras, and scanning the literature. It is better to seek in a flora under study the known taxa from elsewhere than endemics. Always remember that there is no good phytogeography without good systematics.

J.E. Vidal, Comptes Rendus Soc. Biogéogr. 362, 1964, 153-159 (transl. and abbrev.).