



INTRODUCTION TO PART 2

A study on Hkakaborazi National Park of North Myanmar

This part of the book presents and discusses information and data on Hkakaborazi National Park within the context of conserving its unique ecosystems and biodiversity. A wide range of aspects are addressed. There are reviews of the flora and fauna of the area and detailed information about endemic species, in particular orchids, rhododendrons, large mammals, and birds; and threats to their survival are also considered. Details of the physical geography of the area and social, economic, and cultural conditions of local communities are presented. Also discussed are organisations involved in conserving this area, the prospects for ecotourism in the area, and community-based approaches to conservation in the region. Most of this was presented at a workshop 'Sub-regional Consultation on Conservation of Hkakaborazi Mountain Ecosystems in the Eastern Himalayas' held in Putao, north Myanmar, from 25-29 October 1999, and the workshop report is included.

Biodiversity in north Myanmar

North Myanmar is one of the most important and biologically diverse regions in Indo-China. It contains the headwaters of major river systems in Myanmar, and it is a transition zone between the tropical Indo-Malaysian fauna and flora from the south and the temperate and alpine Sino-Himalayan fauna and flora from the north. Much of north Myanmar is sparsely populated and contains good areas of forest and other habitats. However, continued degradation of north Myanmar's resources not only threatens the future biological wealth of the country, but also could threaten the abundant water resources that emanate from this region.

Hkakaborazi National Park

At about 3,812 sq.km Hkakaborazi National Park is the largest in Myanmar. It is located between north latitude 24°-28° and east longitude 97°-99° in Naung-Mung Township of Putao District in the north of Kachin State, in the northernmost part of Myanmar. It is bounded by India in the west and by China in the north and east and the southern boundary is demarcated along the Nam Tamai and Taron rivers. It incorporates 11 villages with a population of 948. It was designated as a protected area in January 1996 and as a national park in October 1998. Of particular interest in this area are the country's highest peak (Mount Hkakaborazi –

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5,881 m), snow-capped mountains of the eastern Himalayas, the richness of flora and fauna, a unique ecosystem, and unspoiled primary forests. The area is entirely mountainous and is characterised by broad-leaved evergreen rainforest, sub-tropical and temperate, up to 2,438-2,743m, then broad-leaved, semi-deciduous forest, and finally needle-leaved evergreen, snow forest. Above 3,352m the highest forest zone is alpine.

Hkakaborazi region is recognised to be one of the richest areas in the world in terms of biological resources incorporating rare, endangered and, highly likely, unknown flora and fauna. Within the Eastern Himalayan Ecoregion with its unique biodiversity, a particular significance of the Hkakaborazi region lies in the fact that it is considered an Asiatic centre of endemism and a repository of origin of the angiosperm flora. Thus conservation of the region should be addressed as an important priority.