

A new mecistocephalid centipede from Ryukyu Islands and a revisitation of '*Taiwanella*' (Chilopoda: Geophilomorpha: Mecistocephalidae)

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Abstract

Proterotaiwanella tanabei n. g. n. sp. is described for a mecistocephalid centipede collected in Kume Island, Ryukyu Archipelago, Japan. Of the two Taiwanese species originally included in the genus '*Taiwanella*' Takakuwa, 1936 (invalid name), '*Taiwanella sculptulata*' Takakuwa, 1936 is recognised as belonging to the new genus (as *Proterotaiwanella sculptulata* (Takakuwa, 1936), n. comb.) while '*Taiwanella yanagiharai*' Takakuwa, 1936 is recognised as belonging to the large genus *Mecistocephalus* Newport, 1843 (as *Mecistocephalus yanagiharai* (Takakuwa, 1936), n. comb.). The geographical range of the two species of *Proterotaiwanella* (Taiwan and Ryukyu Islands) parallels a distribution pattern common to some mecistocephalid taxa.

Key words: *Proterotaiwanella*, *Proterotaiwanella tanabei*, *Taiwanella*, Mecistocephalidae, Chilopoda, taxonomy

Introduction

Maximum genus and species diversity of the geophilomorph centipede family Mecistocephalidae is in Eastern Asia, from the Japanese Archipelago to Taiwan: in this area all subfamilies and almost all currently recognised genera are represented (Bonato et al., in press). However, following the large taxonomic work of Yosioki Takakuwa in the '30s (culminating in his monograph on Japanese geophilomorphs; Takakuwa, 1940) and the contributions of Yasunori Miyosi, Yu-hsi Moltze Wang and Keizaburo Shinohara mainly in the '50s and '60s, the mecistocephalids of these regions were quite neglected. As a consequence, our present knowledge of these faunas remains largely incomplete and the taxonomic arrangement and the nomenclature of many nominal taxa are still unsatisfactory.