



Lethe gregoryi Watkins (Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae, Satyrinae), a distinct species

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Abstract

In this paper, *Lethe helle gregoryi* Watkins, 1927 is raised to specific status, viz. *L. gregoryi* **stat. nov.**, and *L. moelleri bitaensis* Yoshino, 1999 **syn. nov.** is found to be a junior synonym of *gregoryi*. *Lethe gesangdawai* Huang, 2001 is sunk to a subspecies of *L. gregoryi*, viz. *L. gregoryi gesangdawai* **stat. nov.**

Key words: Satyrini, *Zophoessa*, new status, new synonym

Introduction

Lethe (Zophoessa) helle gregoryi Watkins, 1927 was described based upon a pair of worn specimens from Yangtze Valley, N. Yunnan. For a long time, nearly no lepidopterist knew what the true *gregoryi* was, probably because D'Abbrera (1990) illustrated typical *Lethe helle* (Leech, 1891) from C. Sichuan (Wa Shan [Dawa-shan, Jinkouhe], Tien Tsuen [Tianquan]) as “*L. helle gregoryi*”. In recent years, a species of *Lethe* closely related to *L. moelleri* Elwes, 1887 was reported from N. Yunnan and SE Tibet under different names by different authors. The butterfly was described independently as two new taxa: *Lethe moelleri bitaensis* Yoshino, 1999 from Jinshajiang (upper Yangtze) Valley, N. Yunnan and *L. gesangdawai* Huang, 2001 from Nujiang (upper Salween) Valley, SE Tibet. A sample from Medog, SE Tibet was identified as *Lethe moelleri moelleri* by Lang ([2014]) and that from Lancangjiang (upper Mekong) Valley, NW Yunnan as *Lethe helle* by Bozano (2015). Describing *Lethe gesangdawai*, Huang (2001) noticed that it was a species different from *L. moelleri* and doubted that *L. moelleri bitaensis* was probably a subspecies of *L. procne* Leech, 1891. Later, Huang (pers. comm.) obtained photographs of the holotype of *gregoryi* kept in the Natural History Museum and found that *gregoryi* was a quite different species. It is neither *L. helle* nor *L. moelleri* but has a closer relationship with *L. gesangdawai*. Furthermore, Huang (pers. comm.) also thought that *bitaensis* was possibly just a junior synonym of *gregoryi*. Examining photographs of relevant type materials and a large series of specimens of *gregoryi*, *gesangdawai* and *moelleri* from Yunnan as well as Tibet, the present author believes that it is safe to conclude that *gregoryi* is a bona species with its junior synonym *L. moelleri bitaensis* **syn. nov.** and that *L. gesangdawai* is a subspecies of *L. gregoryi*, viz. *L. gregoryi gesangdawai* **stat. nov.**

Material

Photographs of the type specimens kept in the Natural History Museum, London, UK (BMNH), Museum of Nature and Human Activities, Hyogo, JAPAN (MNHAH) and Hao Huang's private collection, Qingdao, Shandong, CHINA (HH) were provided by Mr. P. Ackery, Mr. N. Nakamura, and Mr. H. Huang respectively. Specimens examined in this research are deposited in the author's collection, Chengdu, Sichuan, CHINA (LSY) and HH. Specimens of the following related taxa are also studied: *Lethe moelleri bruno* Tytler, 1939: 8 ♂♂, CHINA: Yunnan, Gongshan, East slope of Mts. Gao-li-gong, 2800 m, 20.VI.2015, leg. S-y. Lang (LSY); 13 ♂♂, *ditto*, 2800–3200 m, 20–26.VII.2015, leg. S-y. Lang (LSY); 1 ♂, *ditto* (HH); *L. helle*: 34 ♂♂ 1 ♀, CHINA: Sichuan, Ebian, Heizhugou, 1800–3000 m, 21.VI.2014, 14–18.VII. 2014, legs. Yi Lang & S-y. Lang (LSY); 2 ♂♂, CHINA: