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Book Review: *The Cetoniine Beetles of the World* (Sakai, K. and S. Nagai)

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BOOK REVIEW

SAKAI, K. AND S. NAGAI. 1998. **The Cetoniine Beetles of the World**. Mushi-Sha, Tokyo. 421 pp., 144 plates. ISBN: 4-943955-03-7. Hard cover. Available from Mushi-Sha, 23-1-209 Nakano 2, Nakano, Tokyo, 164-0001, Japan. FAX: 81-3-3383-1417. Price ¥28,000 or \$237, postage extra.

What a book! This fabulous contribution by Sakai and Nagai is Mushi-Sha's third volume in its Iconographic Series of Insects. The first volume was a similarly stunning treatment of the stag beetles (Lucanidae) of the world. In the cetoniine volume, the authors have illustrated, with the most superb photos imaginable, nearly 2,000 color photographs of cetoniine scarabs. The number of species illustrated is 1,704, and many of these are represented by multiple pictures to show color and pattern variation or sexual differences. Photos of 59 type specimens are also included. In what has to be a remarkable achievement, ALL of the specimens (except the types) have had their legs and antennae perfectly positioned. There are 144 full color plates, each with six (for the larger species) to 36 (for the smaller species) beetles shown. The main text is in Japanese, but each figure is accompanied by a scientific name. The plates are arranged by tribes and are preceded by a synopsis page, in English, of nomenclatural changes proposed in the book. Of great importance to non-Japanese readers is the extensive English summary at the end of the volume. Here you will find, by tribe, a list of genera (with authors and dates) and a brief statement of the number of species included and their general distribution. For each species illustrated there is a scientific name, author, date, and distribution. Although not every species in every genus in the world is illustrated (a virtually impossible task), a high percentage is illustrated. A page of the more synoptic literature references to Cetoniinae is also included. This treatment is definitely going to facilitate identification of cetoniines, and, I predict, with a fair degree of accuracy. In a brief test, I was unable to find a couple of species of Central American *Euphoria* species (25 species illustrated out of 37). On the other hand, entire drawers of previously unidentified African and Asian cetoniines in our collections can now be identified to genus and many to species. Even with Miksic's comprehensive treatment of the Palearctic and Oriental Cetoniinae (R. Miksic, Monographie der Cetoniinae der paläarktischen und orientalischen Region, Vols 1-4, 1976-1987), it was still difficult to identify many taxa. A picture being worth a thousand words comes into play here with this volume. The Japanese have a long and distinguished tradition, like no one else in the world, of publishing beautifully illustrated faunal works, and this series sets new standards of excellence.

The book is published on quality paper, and it is nicely bound and boxed. While \$237 is a relatively high price, I believe it is a bargain for what you get. For anyone interested in Cetoniinae, I unequivocally recommend this book.

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