

Yoshida, T.: **Portraits of Himalayan Flowers.** - Timber Press, Portland - Cambridge 2002. 124 pp. EUR 45.00. ISBN 0-88192-551-9.

Toshio Yoshida is an associate researcher at the University Museum of the University of Tokyo and a member of the Society of Himalayan Botany. This marvellous book is the product of ten years of travel, research and photography in Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, northern India, Kashmir, Pakistan, and southern Tibet. While the drier seasons might be more hospitable for travellers, the botanists have to trek throughout the Himalayas during rainy monsoon season which is more suitable for plant growth and flowering and they had to wait days or weeks until the sky cleared.

The book contains 108 glorious colour photographs of Himalayan plants with detailed description of each plant species, place of its occurrence including above sea level (which is in the range 2 600 to 6 150 m). The plant photographs are arranged in taxonomic order. High diversity of Himalayan plants is demonstrated: presented

plants are from 27 different families. On the contrary, readers can identify many similarities between species and genera growing in this extreme climate. The author took detailed photographs to reveal the special adaptations that different species have evolved to survive in this harsh environment. As example can be dense coverings of hairs or paper-thin "tents". He also mentioned mechanisms that flowers employ to achieve pollination in the midst of the monsoon.

A detailed map of the region and index of botanical names are included. The reader can also find here the "History of the Study of Himalayan Plants" written by H. Ohba.

The book is well arranged and produced. It is not only informative and inspiring to specialists but brings beauty to everybody.

J. POSPÍŠLOVÁ (*Praha*)