

**ADULT DRAGONFLIES AS HUMAN  
FOOD IN THE NAGALAND STATE,  
INDIA**

In eastern and southern Asia dragonflies are relatively often used as materia medica in the traditional pharmacology, e.g. in Japan (S. ASAHINA, 1974, *Odonatologica* 3: 5-12), China (T.-h. YANG, 1976, *Investigations on the insects used for medicine in Chinese pharmacology*, PhD thesis, Univ. Taipei; — B.E. READ, 1977, *Chinese materia medica*, Vol. 2, Southern Materials Center, Taipei), and in Tibet (RECHUNG RINPOCHE JAMPAL KUNZANG, 1973, *Tibetan medicine illustrated in original texts*, Wellcome Inst. Hist. Med., London; cf. also M.A.J.E. KIAUTA, 1977, *Odonatologica* 6: 69-76), but little is known as to their use as human food. As an item of the human diet dragonflies were reported from Sumatra (J.C. VAN DER MEER MOHR, 1965, *Ent. ber., Amst.* 25: 101-107) and from Thailand (W.S. BRISTOWE, 1932, *Trans. ent. Soc. Lond.* 80: 387-404).

Recently, Capt. Dr. Arun Kumar Tyagi, A.M.C., India has notified the author about dragonfly consumption by the Angami Nagas, a tribe living in the East-Indian state of Nagaland. The adult dragonflies are reported to be sold there in some villages on the India-Burma border, such as Kheamungan and Yemchungar, and in some places in the interior. In the market of the state capital, the city of Kohima, 8-12 specimens are offered for sale at the price of 1.— Rupee. Often dragonflies are sold along with various other edible insects and other small animals. They are eaten as a desert, or are used, in semi-dried condition, as a refreshment.

From the description supplied by our informant, the "consumption dragonflies" are

probably referable to various *Crocothemis* and *Orthetrum* species.

It is interesting to note that dragonflies have been reported among the insect items of human food neither in Burma (cf. C.C. GHOSE, 1924, *Rep. Proc. ent. Meet. Pusa* 5: 403-405), nor in Vietnam (cf. NGUYỄN-CONG-TIÊU, 1928, *Bull. écon. Indochine* 31: 735-744, pls 1-4), and the Philippines (cf. H.D. GIBBS, F. AGCAOILI & G.R. SHILLING, 1912, *Philipp. J. Sci.*, A, 7: 383-401, pls 1-6).

B. K. Tyagi, Malaria Research Centre, Indian Council of Medical Research, Sector VI, Ukai-394680, District Surat, Gujarat, India.