

Rhopalomastix janeti (Hym. Formicidae) a species of ant new to Science.

By HORACE DONISTHORPE, F.Z.S., F.R.E.S., etc.
(Department of Entomology, British Museum, Natural History).

Rhopalomastix janeti, sp.n.

♂ Head and thorax, reddish yellow, petiole and post-petiole, base of gaster, antennae and legs paler, yellow; sides of base of first segment of gaster and following segments, brownish. Eyes and teeth of mandibles black. Decumbent pubescence very short and sparse, more abundant on gaster; a few longer erect yellow hairs scattered over whole body. Head and thorax very finely and closely longitudinally striate; head covered with numerous small punctures. Gaster shining, covered with numerous extremely small punctures, second and following segments with extremely fine transverse striae.

Head subquadrate, slightly narrower at anterior margin, sides slightly rounded, posterior angles rounded, posterior border very slightly emarginate; *mandibles* rather massive, masticatory border armed with a few short blunt teeth, the penultimate one somewhat longer, the apical one longest; *clypeus* convex with a distinct projection in centre of anterior border; *antennae* 10-jointed, with large two-jointed club; *scape* short, when bent back not reaching beyond middle of head; *antennal forvae* large; *frontal carinae* short, flat, rather broad, close together, with a deep impression between them, forming a broader shallow pit posteriorly; *eyes* rather small, slightly projecting, composed of some 15-18 facets. *Thorax* parallel sided, flat, without any trace of sutures, rounded anteriorly and posteriorly; *epinotum* convex and rounded above, *declivity*, rather steep and somewhat concave. *Petiole* high, narrowed anteriorly and posteriorly to bluntly pointed summit; *post-petiole* transverse, rounded at sides and above, straight at anterior border, considerably rounded at insertion with gaster; *gaster* oval, pointed at apex; *sting* exerted, rather long. *Legs* short, characters of the tribe. *Long*, 1.8-1.9 mm.

This species is a little larger and a little darker in colour than *R. rothneyi*, Forel; it is less shining and the sculpture (striae, etc.) is much more distinct. The head is broader in proportion and slightly more narrowed in front, the eyes are larger, more prominent and possess fewer facets; the thorax is more parallel sided, the post-petiole is much less transverse and much more rounded posteriorly and the gaster is larger and more rounded at sides.

♀ Brown, shining, neck, anterior border of pronotum, pedicel and femora dirty yellow, mandibles and clypeus reddish yellow, sides of face, antennae, tibiae and tarsi paler yellow; pubescence, etc., as in ♂, but more sparing.

Head much as in ♂, but with no striae; eyes larger and with more facets; *ocelli* present; *antennae* 11-jointed. *Thorax*, flat on disc; *pronotum* very transverse, rounded anteriorly and posteriorly; *mesonotum* large, closely and finely longitudinally striate; *scutellum* and *epinotum* also finely longitudinally striate; *pedicel* and *gaster* much as in ♂. *Wings* opaque, veins and stigma light brown, one cubital cell. *Long*, 2.7 mm.

The female differs from the female of *R. rothneyi* (according to Forel's description) in not having a frontal furrow reaching to the

median ocellus, and in not having the head striate; and from *R. escherichii* in having the thorax striate.

♂ Lighter or darker blackish brown, head darker, funiculus, tibiae and tarsi brownish yellow.

Characters of the genus—12-jointed antennae, mandibles rudimentary, clypeus convex distinctly projecting in centre of anterior border, etc.

Head covered with very fine small punctures, somewhat triangular, broadest in front, rounded behind, *vertex* high with fairly large *ocelli*, *eyes* large. *Thorax* much as in the ♀, extremely finely longitudinally striate; *petiole* considerably longer than post-petiole, with a distinct projection beneath anteriorly; *post-petiole* broader, bell-shaped, and completely joined to the gaster as in some Ponerine species; *gaster* long oval, *genitalia* large, exserted. Wings as in ♀, but more transparent. *Long*, 2.1 mm.

Described from a number of workers, males, and one winged female, taken under bark of Mango at Bangkok, in Siam, by Mr. A. Manjikul in March, 1936. Types and allotype in Brit. Mus. Coll.

The ants were destroying the bark, and are said sometimes to kill the trees.

This Myrmicine ant comes in the tribe *Melissotarsinii* in which there are two genera, *Rhopalomastix* and *Melissotarsus*. *Melissotarsus* is confined to Africa and Madagascar and possesses four species. *Rhopalomastix* has only been found in India and Ceylon heretofore, and only possessed two species—*R. rothneyi*, Forel, from Bengal and Ceylon, and *R. escherichi*, Forel, of which only the female is known, from Ceylon; and two subspecies—*R. rothneyi* subsp. *johorensis*, Wheeler from Singapore, and *R. rothneyi* subsp. *javana*, Wheeler from Java. All that is known of their habits is that they nest in and under bark of trees.

LITERATURE.

- Emery, C., *Genera Insectorum*, Fasc. 174B., p. 118 (1922).
 Forel, A., *Termitenleben*, p. 217 (1911).
 Forel, A., *Ann. Soc. Ent. Belg.* 44 24 (1900).
 Wheeler, W. M., *Psyche* 36 95-101 (1929).

ENTOMOL. REC. J. VAR 48: 55-56