

A new subspecies of *Neptis armandia* (OBERTHÜR, 1876) from Hainan, China

(Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae, Limenitidinae)

by

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Abstract: In this paper, the population of *Neptis armandia* (OBERTHÜR, 1876) from Hainan, China is described as an endemic subspecies, viz., *Neptis armandia leishuaimini* LI & LIU **subspec. nov.**

Basing on GU & CHEN (1997), LANG (2012) firstly noticed and proposed that the *Neptis armandia* (OBERTHÜR, 1876) from Hainan should be an undescribed subspecies. However, this race is quite scarce in Hainan Island making neither additional specimens available nor further study reported thereafter. Fortunately, one individual from this island was obtained recently by the second author, which bears external characters exactly the same as the two illustrated in GU & CHEN (1997), confirming the morphological stability of the Hainan race, and meanwhile, verifying LANG's hypothesis. Hence, the present study is devoted to describe this insular race as a new subspecies. The terms of the wing venation and markings follow those of ELIOT (1969).

Neptis armandia leishuaimini H. Z. LI & Z. LIU **subspec. nov.** (figs. 1-2)

Neptis armandia armandia (OBERTHÜR): GU & CHEN, 1997: 206-207, fig. 231 for ♂ and ♀; GU, 2002: 698 for checklist.

Holotype ♀, 6.V.2023, Mt. Wuzhi, Hainan, China, 850 m, Z. LIU leg. (will be deposited in Chongqing Museum of Natural History, Beibei, Chongqing).

Diagnosis: Hitherto seven subspecies of *N. armandia* (OBTH.) are recognized (BOZANO, 2019): subspec. *melba* EVANS, 1912 (TL: Sikkim), subspec. *maculodistincta* HUANG, 1999 (TL: Metok, S.E. Tibet, China), subspec. *pila* TYTLER, 1940 (TL: Loimwe, S. Shan States, Burma), subspec. *gafuri* TYTLER, 1940 (TL: Naga Hill, N.E. India), subspec. *armandia* OBTH. (TL: China), subspec. *manardia* ELIOT, 1969 (TL: Tse-Kou, N.W. Yunnan, China) and subspec. *morrisi* MONASTYRSKII & DEVYATKIN, 2003 (TL: Lam Dong, Vietnam). Based upon the original and relevant literature, this new insular subspecies can be distinguished from all known subspecies by the combination of following features: (1) upperside markings are yellow, whereas are white in subspec. *melba* EVANS or light yellow in subspec. *pila* TYTLER; (2) forewing upperside yellow markings are broader than in other subspecies, except subspec. *morrisi* MONASTYRSKII & DEVYATKIN, in which the lower postdiscal spots are joined together; (3) forewing underside brown area is developed as in subspec. *armandia* OBTH., whereas is reduced in other subspecies; (4) forewing underside subcostal white spots are obscure in space 9, whereas often present in other subspecies.

Remarks: Although only a female from Hainan is introduced, seemingly genitalia of both sexes from subspecies on diverse localities are similar to each other (ELIOT, 1969; MONASTYRSKII & DEVYATKIN, 2003; LANG, 2012; CHEN, 2016), showing internal significance is hardly detected from subspecific variation. However, this individual does not differ from the other two known specimens from Hainan, and can be separated from other subspecies in appearance (GU & CHEN, 1997).

The information about subspec. *gafuri* TYTLER is scattered with texts only. The characters given in the original description and the arrangement by some authors demonstrate that the subspec. *gafuri* TYTLER is with wing patterns identical to the taxon *melba* EVANS, except the color (EVANS 1932; KUNTE et al., 2023). Consequently, the Hainan population should be distinct from subspec. *gafuri* TYTLER by the broad upperside markings and developed underside brown areas, and this conclusion is also supported by the biogeographical perspective.

As far as other three yellow-type subspecies, the nominate subspecies is well documented and ranges through most areas of China, except S.W. Sichuan and Yunnan, where subspec. *manardia* ELIOT is flying, whose distribution also extends to N. Indochina (LANG, 2012; WU, 2017; HE et al., 2022; INAYOSHI, 2022). The two taxa forementioned are similar in external appearance, but the latter has the upperside yellow markings slightly wider (ELIOT, 1969; BOZANO, 2019). In terms of the development of the yellow markings, the new subspecies resembles an intermediate population with markings more enlarged than in subspec. *armandia* OBERTHÜR and subspec. *manardia* ELIOT but not as prominent as those in subspec. *morrisi* MONASTYRSKII & DEVYATKIN from C. Vietnam, the southernmost representative of this species (MONASTYRSKII & DEVYATKIN, 2003; MONASTYRSKII, 2019). The secondary diagnosis to separate these yellow subspecies is the brown areas on underside. The nominate and the new subspecies hold brown dominant, especially in the forewing apex and tornus, while those areas are tinged with yellow and somewhat in color with the postdiscal spots regarding to subspec. *manardia* ELIOT and subspec. *morrisi* MONASTYRSKII & DEVYATKIN. Moreover, the obscure subcostal spot in space 9 of forewing underside, contrasting with spots in space 6 and 10, seems to be a constant feature. This geographically isolated population from Hainan is deserved to be a new subspecies by superficial distinction.

Etymology: The subspecific name is dedicated to Mr. SHUAI-MIN LEI, who directed the first author to the way of taxonomy.

Distribution: China (Hainan Island).

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Figs. 1-2: Holotype ♀ of *Neptis armandia leishuaimini* LI & LIU **subspec. nov.**, Mt. Wuzhi, Hainan, China.

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