



Spiders of the genus *Sphingius* (Araneae: Liocranidae) from China, with description of two new species

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Abstract

The spider genus *Sphingius* Thorell, 1890, with four Chinese species, is reviewed. Among these, *Sphingius hainan* **sp. nov.** and *S. zhangi* **sp. nov.** are new to science. In addition, *Scotophaeoides sinensis* Schenkel, 1963, the type species of *Scotophaeoides* Schenkel, 1963 (Gnaphosidae), is transferred to *Sphingius* (Liocranidae), thus *Sphingius* is a senior synonym of *Scotophaeoides*. The species *Sphingius pingtung* Tso, Zhang, Zhu & Zhang, 2005 is redescribed and illustrated. A distribution map of Chinese *Sphingius* is provided.

Key words: Spider, taxonomy, distribution map, new synonymy, China

Introduction

The spider family Liocranidae currently contains 30 genera and 170 species worldwide, according to Platnick (2009). Members of this family are small to medium-sized, three to eight millimeters in length, cursorial, ground dwelling spiders inhabiting the forest floor in the litter and woody debris, usually in shady deciduous forests (Deeleman-Reinhold, 2001). Currently five genera and seven species of Liocranidae have been recorded from China (Song, 1987; Song *et al.*, 1991; Song & Zhu, 1994; Tso *et al.*, 2005; Marusik *et al.*, 2009; Platnick, 2009).

The spider genus *Sphingius* Thorell, 1890 was described based on the type species, *Sphingius thecatus* Thorell, 1890 from Malaysia, and is known from the male holotype only. Thorell's (1890) description lacks figures, which could be the main reason why the placement of this genus has aroused controversy and has undergone frequent transfers.

Sphingius was first mentioned by Thorell (1890) as a genus in the subfamily Thamphilinae (=Sphingiinae), Clubionidae. Then Simon (1897) transferred the genus to the Molycrariae, a tribe within the subfamily Micariinae (now in Gnaphosidae); he also synonymized *Thamphilus* with *Sphingius* (Deeleman-Reinhold 2001). This family placement was considered erroneous by Lehtinen (1967), who suggested that *Sphingius* should belong to the Corinnidae. Then Reiskind (1969) transferred *Sphingius* from the Micariinae (Gnaphosidae) to the Corinnidae. These transfers were followed by Brignoli (1983) and Platnick (1989, 1993 and 1997). Deeleman-Reinhold (2001) recognized *Sphingius* as belonging to the subfamily Phrurolithinae, Liocranidae; and in the same book she also synonymized *Alaeho* Barrion & Litsinger, 1995 with *Sphingius*. Bosselaers & Jocqué (2002) conducted a cladistic analysis of 38 corinnid and liocranid genera, which resulted in the subfamily Phrurolithinae (Liocranidae) to be the sister group of Trachelinae, and which also transferred the bulk of Phrurolithinae to Corinnidae. *Sphingius* was not considered a member of Phrurolithinae, hence, in this paper, it remains in the family Liocranidae.

The genus *Sphingius*, so far, includes 19 described species distributed only in the Southeast Asia (Platnick 2009). It is mainly in Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and