

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a tropical country situated between $5^{\circ} 40'$ and $20^{\circ} 30' N$ latitude; $97^{\circ} 30'$ and $105^{\circ} 45' E$ longitude, on the Indochina Peninsula. The country is bounded by Andaman Sea on the west and the Gulf of Thailand on the east and south (Plate 1), with 450 miles of coastline on the Indian Ocean and 1,200 miles along the Gulf of Thailand.

The annual range of temperatures in Thailand is between $55^{\circ} F$ and $95^{\circ} F$, with mean annual rainfall between 51 and 175 inches. The topographic nature and climatic condition are favorable for many kinds of plants, including algae. Many kinds of algae can be found all year round but only a relative small part has been utilized. The phycological knowledge of Thailand is still imperfect, only few works have been done and not many references are available.

Among the rich algal flora of Thailand the genus Padina is one of the most common algae found along the coasts of the Gulf. They have been investigated by some authors but still incomplete. Present study deals with the taxonomy and distribution of this genus. The investigator hopes that this study would contribute to further knowledge on algae of Thailand especially to those who are interested in Phycology.