

## CRICKET-FIGHTING

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In 1927 Dr. B. Laufer published a very interesting account of cricket-keeping and cricket-fighting in China (Insect Musicians and Cricket Champions of China, Leaflet No. 22 of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago). At the time of writing he was not aware that the Siamese, Malays and Javanese amuse themselves similarly in matching these insects in battle. Crawford in his History of the Indian Archipelago, 1, 1820, p. 114, mentions cricket-keeping, and Augusta de Wit in her 'Java Facts and Fancies,' 1905, p. 129, has given some information regarding the pastime in Java, where it is officially forbidden along with cock-fighting, on account of the accompanying betting, but carried on in a secret way.

The Chinese, according to Laufer, use all the following species of crickets:—

<i>Gampsocleis inflata</i> , Uvarov,	<i>Gryllus conspersus</i> , Schaum.
<i>Gampsocleis gratiosa</i> , subsp.	<i>Gryllus mitratus</i> , Burmeister,
<i>G. infuscata</i> , Uvarov,	<i>Loxoblemmus taicoun</i> , Saussure,
<i>Oecanthus rufescens</i> Serville	<i>Homoeogryllus japonicus</i> , Haan.

The Siamese make use of *Liogryllus bimaculatus*, DeGreer and *Gryllus confirmatus*, Walker.

The Malays use *Brachytrypes portentosus*, Licht. and the Javanese a *Liogryllus*.

The males of every one of these insects, except the *Homoeogryllus*, fight at sight: but the *Homoeogryllus* needs that a female should be present.

Cricket-fighting is much more of a sport among the Chinese than among the Siamese and Javanese. Among the Malays it is only a boys' amusement, with insects caught when wanted. The Chinese, Siamese and Javanese cage, match and bet on their champions: and the Chinese go yet further, for they breed them. In breeding, surplus males and all the females are used as food for cage-birds.

The feeding of champions is done with great care. Dr. Laufer and Mrs. de Wit have described it. In Siam, where the cage is a baked clay cup closed by means of thin strips of bamboo, one being

removable that the captive may be fed and taken out, the food consists of fresh leaves of the spinach *Amaranthus spinosus*, Linn. and the grass, *Cynodon dactylon*, Pers. The Siamese say that the insects live in captivity for a month or two. *Gryllus confirmatus*, they call ai-et ( อ้าย แอ็ด ) and regard as the better fighter, though the smaller, *Liogryllus bimaculatus*, they called changrit ( จิ้งหรีด ).

The Malays of the south of the Peninsula use the word chëngkërek ( or sometimes chëngkëret ) for *Brachytrypes* but the Malays of Kedah use këridek. The Javanese use changkrik and ang krek. The words changrit, chënkëret and changkrit are obviously variants of one common to the languages of the three peoples, the equivalent of "cricket" and onomatopoeic; and it may be suggested that the Siamese borrowed their word from the Malays. If so, did they adopt cricket-fighting at the same time?

The Siamese *Liogryllus* has been identified by Dr. B. Uvarov, the Siamese *Gryllus* by Dr. L. Chopard, and the Malayan *Brachytrypes* by Mr. H. M. Pendlebury. To these and also Dr. H. H. Karny, Mr. F. Muir, Mr. F. N. Chasen and Mr. A. W. B. Hamilton for information I tender my best thanks.