

Studies on the Genus *Cuora* of the Testudoformes

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The genus *Cuora* was named by Gray in 1855, and this genus contains seven species now. The box turtles, which are distributed mainly over the areas of Southeast Asia, especially in China. In addition, *C. amboinensis*, six other species, *C. aurocapitata*, *C. flavomarginata*, *C. galbinifrons*, *C. pani*, *C. trifasciata* and *C. yunnanensis*, have been found in China. This paper will make a fundamental analysis of morphological characteristics, distribution and serum protein electrophoretograms of related specimens, which will assure us that seven species are valid, and that *C. hainanensis* described by Li and *C. galbinifrons* is a synonym; and which will also assure us that they belong to the same genus, according to the following characteristics:

1. Hexagonal neural plates short-sided behind.
2. Entoplastron intersected by the humero-pectoral suture.
3. Skull with a bony temporal arch (incomplete in *C. galbinifrons*).
4. Alveolar surfaces of jaws narrow.
5. Plastron joined to carapace by ligament; the hinge between hyoplastron and hypoplastron of plastron appears from the time of hatching.
6. The serum protein SDS gel electrophoretograms of *C. aurocapitata*, *C. flavomarginata*, *C. galbinifrons* and *C. trifasciata* show that they all have 11 to 13 bands, and they have two common bands at positions A and B. They are considerably different from *Cyclemys mouhotii* which has only 7 bands.

Furthermore, since fossil specimens have been discovered in some areas of Zhejiang and Yunnan Province in China, it is considered that China is the centre of derivation of the genus *Cuora*. All these factors will provide a basis for further research on their origin and differentiation.