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On the Colour Variations of the Mud Loach, *Misgurnus anguilllicaudatus* (Cantor)

By

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(With 2 Text-figures and 1 Plate)

Since S. Tanaka (1930) reported the orange individual of the mud loach, "Akadojo" from Honshu, several investigators have recorded the similar individuals from several localities. The present author collected in Hokkaido a large number of the mud loaches from 1952 to 1955 and found in them several forms of different colours. In the present paper, will be described the colour variations and the results of cross-breeding between these different forms.

**Material and method**

The material used in this study was collected from rivers, bogs and pond-fields in 6 regions of Hokkaido: Iwamizawa, Tsukigata, Chitose, Oyafuru, Sapporo and Asahigawa. In these regions, the localities having the greatest number of specimens of different colours were Iwamizawa and Tsukigata. The eggs were easily obtained by injection of the hypohyses of a loach, and were inseminated according to Kawamura's method. The embryos were reared in a glass aquarium at room temperature. In each series of experiments, 30-50 embryos were reared each for one kind of hybrid and the controls. Afterwards they were removed into a cement aquarium set in a field.

**Body colour**

The colour variations of these specimens can be divided into 6 types as follows (Plate II, 2-7):

1. **Yellow form**: The lateral dorsal surface of the body and all the fins are yellow or orange; and the ventral surface of the body is white or light-yellow. In addition to this, there is an yellowish scarlet one showing the colour of the muscle and blood over the entire surface of the body. The integument of head and scales of the mud loach of this type lack melanophores entirely, and possess xanthophores of approximately the same size and quantity as those in the normal individual (Fig. 1). The majority of the specimens showing aberrant body colour belongs to this type, and they were collected approximately 200 individuals per year.

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2. **Yellow body speckled with many black spots**: The body is orange above, light-yellow underneath; many small black spots are scattered between the middle-dorsal and the lateral line, and on the caudal, dorsal and anal fins. There were only 2 individuals of this type in all the specimens.

3. **Yellow body marked with one or two black spots**: The orange or yellow body is marked with one or two black spots on the dorsal surface. These specimens were collected about 4–5 individuals per year.

4. **Intermediate form between the normal and the yellow**: The body is dark green above, yellowish white underneath, and marked with yellow marks of irregular shape on the side or the tail. Seven individuals of this type were found in the whole collection.

5. **Entirely black form**: The entire body-surface of this type is dark green, and speckled with many small black spots. Only a male specimen of this type was captured in 1954.

6. **White form**: The body is reddish white, showing the colour of the muscle and blood, and the integument of head and scales have neither melanophores nor xanthophores. But some individuals of this type are marked with yellow spots on the head or median part, and all specimens of this type have black pigments in the eyes; then these white loaches cannot be regarded as of an albino type. Four to five individuals of this type were collected each year.
Recently, I received the information that a true albino mud loach was captured in the vicinity of Osaka City.

**Results of cross-breeding experiments**

Cross-breeding experiments with 8 kinds of combinations of loaches of different body-colours were carried out as follows: normal form × yellow form, yellow form × yellow form, yellow form × yellow form marked with one black spot, normal form × yellow form marked with one black spot, white form × yellow form, white form × normal form, white form × white form and entirely black form × normal form. The results are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of crossing</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Number of crossing</th>
<th>Average hatching ratio(%)</th>
<th>Body-colour of F₁</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Yellow form × Yellow form</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Yellow form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Normal form × Yellow form</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Normal form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Yellow form × Normal form</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Normal form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Yellow form × Yellow form marked one black spot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Yellow form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Yellow form × Yellow form marked one black spot</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Yellow form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Normal form × Yellow form marked one black spot</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Normal form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>White form × Yellow form</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yellow form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>White form × White form</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Yellow form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>White form × Normal form</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Normal form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Normal form × Entirely black form</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Normal form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the crossings of yellow form with normal form their F₁ showed all normal forms, and just after hatching these larvae became to possess normal melanophores. On the other hand, the F₁ crossing between the yellow forms which lack melanophores, just after hatching, developed all yellow form. Therefore, the yellow character seems to be inherited recessively against the normal colour character, and appears as the homozygote of the yellow colour genes.

The crossing of the normal colour female with the entirely black male was observed only once. In this case the F₁ was all of normal colour. Therefore, the entirely black character is possibly a recessive mutant from the normal colour character.

Both the crossing of the yellow form marked with one black spot and the yellow form and normal colour type did not bring satisfactory results in the hatching ratio; however their F₁ which hatched from the crossing of the yellow...
form marked with one black spot and the yellow form were all yellow in colour; and their $F_1$ from the crossing of the yellow form marked with one black sport and the normal form were all normal in colour; therefore, the yellow character marked with one black spot is probably regarded as an independent character inherited recessively against the normal colour character and also the yellow character.

As to the white form, the author is of opinion that it has no connection with the inheritance from their parents, because, not only the $F_1$ crossing of the white form with yellow form were all yellow in colour, but also the $F_1$ crossing between the white forms were all yellow in body colour and among the adult loaches cultured in our laboratory, were discovered several individuals which changed from yellow into white.

In concluding, it is the author's great honor to dedicate this piece of work to his teacher Professor Dr. Tohru Uchida of Hokkaido University under whose guidance this work was carried out, in commemoration of his 60th birthday. The author is also indebted to Professor Sajiro Makino for invaluable advices in the course of the experiments.

**Literature**


**Explanation of Plate II**

Body colour variations in the mud loach.
1) Normal form. 2) Yellow form. 3) Yellow form, speckled with many black spots. 4) Yellow form marked with two black spots. 5) Intermediate-coloured form between the normal and the yellow. 6) Entirely black form. 7) White form.
H. Kobayasi: Colour Variations of a Mud Loach