

NAMES FOR TERRESTRIAL ISOPODS IN JAPAN

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INTRODUCTION

Sutton (1980) remarked that woodlice, being common everyday creatures, have been given local names in many parts of Britain. In some areas, one name is used to cover all types but in others, different groups of woodlice have been given different names - 'slater' and 'pillbug' for example.

A similar situation pertains in Japan. In this short article, I will describe a few of the names which are currently used throughout my country. I am researching local names but reporting of these will have to wait for a subsequent article.

JAPANESE NAMES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF TERRESTRIAL ISOPODS

Schmalzfuss (1984) divided terrestrial isopods into five 'ecomorphological' categories based on their skeletal construction: the runners; the clingers; the rollers; the spiny forms; the creepers (plus a sixth group - the non-conformists). In the Japanese language, there are special words to describe the first three categories: the runners (epigean, smooth, narrow, very mobile with long pereopods); the clingers (epigean, slow, flat and broad); the rollers (conglobating, with all transitional forms from clingers to completely smooth and perfectly round balls). These are as follows :-

1. **Runners** - 'Funa-musi'. The word 'Funa' is a modified form of 'Fune', a noun used as an adjective. The English word for 'Fune' is 'a boat', 'a ship' or 'a vessel'. 'Musi' is 'a bug'.
2. **Clingers** - 'Warazi-musi'. 'Warazi' means 'sandals or flat shoes made from rice stems (kept on by cords over the top of the foot)'.
3. **Rollers** - 'Dango-musi'. 'Dango' is 'a small ball of cooked paste.'

These three common Japanese words for terrestrial isopods are further defined in Koozi-en (3rd edition, edited by Niimura 1983), one of the most authoritative Japanese dictionaries, as follows :-

'Funa-musi': an arthropod of the Order Isopoda, Crustacea. The body has a long egg-like form, is coloured yellow-brown and

is about 4 cm long. The second antennae is long. They run in groups over rocks and the floors of ships, using their strong thoracic legs. They are distributed along every coast in Japan.

'Warazi-musi': an arthropod of the Order Isopoda, Crustacea. The body is about 1 cm long, coloured grey-brown and has an egg-like form. They are like 'Dango-musi' but flat. They are distributed all over the world and are common in dark and wet places, e.g. spaces under stones, spaces under house floors, cellars etc. They are also called 'Zi-situ', or 'Ome-musi'.

'Dango-musi': an arthropod of the Order Isopoda, Crustacea. The body length is about 1 cm. The body is made of many segments, bent round in the back, coloured dark grey-brown. When their enemies attack them, they make their body like the form of 'Dango'. They are common under stones and so on in fields and gardens, and are pests of plants. They are widely distributed in Japan and other countries. The related species 'Hama-dango-musi' occur among small stones in coasts.

In the above descriptions, three Japanese words 'Zi-situ', 'Ome-musi' and 'Hama-dango-musi' appear which need some explanation. 'Zi' is a modified form of 'Ti', which refers to 'the earth' or 'the land' and it is used as an adjective. 'Situ' is 'a louse'. 'Ome' is an adjectival form of 'Omu' which roughly translates as 'fear', 'be afraid of' or 'be scared of'. 'Zi-situ' and 'Ome-musi' are relatively old words and are not now used frequently in Japan. 'Hama' roughly means 'coast' or 'seashore'.

Koozi-en's descriptions of the names for woodlice, which include some details of their biological features, must give readers the impression that there are only three species in Japan. However, this is clearly not the case as Nunomura's recent work on the distribution of terrestrial isopods in Japan (1983, 1984, 1986a, 1986b, 1987) has shown. Table 1 summarizes Japanese names for terrestrial isopods, Chinese-Japanese characters ('Kanji'), Japanese sound signs ('Kana') and includes some representative genera.

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Table 1

THE RUNNER:	①	船	虫
	②	ふな	むし
	③	Funa	— musu
	④	<i>Ligia, Ligidium, Porcellionides</i>	
THE CLINGER:	①	草鞋	虫
	②	わらじ	むし
	③	Warazi	— musu
	④	<i>Porcellio, Nagrus</i>	
	①	億	虫
	②	おめ	むし
	③	Ome	— musu
	①	地	虱
	②	じ	しつ
	③	Zi	— situ
THE ROLLER:	①	団子	虫
	②	だんご	むし
	③	Dango	— musu
	④	<i>Armadillidium, Armadillo, Tylos</i>	

Table 1: Japanese names for different types of terrestrial isopods which are written in ① "Kanji", ② "Kana", and ③ Roman Alphabet. Representative Genera included in each type are shown in ④.