Systematic Relationships of Korean Freshwater Snails of *Semisulcospira, Koreanomelania*, and *Koreoleptoxis* (Cerithiodiea; Pleuroceridae) revealed byMitochondrial Cytochrome Oxidase I Sequences

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ABSTRACT

Many freshwater snail taxa are difficult to identify using morphological traits due to phenotypic plasticity. However, using of molecular DNA marker in combination with morphological traits can provide a reliable means for discriminating among freshwater snail taxa including cryptic species. To discriminate among Korean freshwater snail taxa and resolve their systematic relationships, wesequenced a fragment of mtDNA cytochrome oxidase I (COI) gene from 82 specimens collected from ten different sites distributed along the Korean peninsula. We identified more than seven freshwater snail taxa including cryptic species in Korea. Whereas traditional shell morphology of freshwater snails offers only weak discriminatory power for recognizing 'good' taxa, DNA sequence data provided positive and reliable identification. In addition, a major *Semisulcospira* clade was clearly separated from the remaining lineages observed including cryptic species. However, a phylogenetic tree inferred from the COI gene data did not fully resolve systematic relationships among pleurocerid taxa in Korea. Establishing more robust shell characteristics for identifying taxa unambiguously and hence improving traditional key shell morphology characters for freshwater snail species is an urgent requirement and will require more rigorous examination of all nominal taxa. While molecular data generated here will be useful for species identification and for describing the systematic relationships among Korean freshwater snails, further analysis will be required.

Key words: freshwater snail, Semisulcospira, Koreanomelania, Koreoleptoxis, mitochondrial cytochrome oxidase I, systematic relationships

INTRODUCTION

Freshwater snails in the genera *Semisulcospira*, *Koreanomelania*, and *Koreoleptoxis* are widely distributed across East Asia (Davis, 1969). While

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snails have long been used for human consumption, over-exploitation, habitat degradation, and water pollution by insecticides and heavy metals have resulted in population declines and loss of species richness and diversity. Restoration efforts based on cytological and reproductive studies have been conducted (Kim *et al.*, 1987; Chang *et al.*, 2000) to address declining snail populations. However, accurate species identification remains problematic and can compromise restoration programs. As an initial step, understanding species delimitation is an important component in developing successful and sustainable

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long-term management of wild stocks.

Miyanaga (1942) reported that six nominal species and three subspecies in the genus Semisulcospira occur in Korea, but Kwon and Habe (1979) and Kwon (1990) proposed the existence of two genera, Semisulcospira and Koreanomelania. To further complicate the situation, Burch et al. (1987) suggested the presence of three genera including the genus Koreoptoxis in Korea. Recently, isozyme variation and external radulae analysis (Ko et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2001) identified three genera with seven species. However, many questions remain unanswered regarding the nature of cladogenesis in these organisms and their systematic relationships.

A number of previous studies have attempted to classify freshwater snail species in Korea belonging to the family Pleuroceridae based on isozyme variation (Burch and Jung, 1987; Kim, 1995; Jeong et al., 1999; Lee et al., 2001), cytological characteristics (Kim et al., 1987) and morphological characters including shell type and external radulae (Martens, 1905; Ko et al., 2001). Recently, Lee et al. (2007) undertook a phylogenetic analysis of Semisulcospira species using mitochondrial 16S ribosomal RNA (rRNA) and nuclear 28S rRNA genes. Mitochondrial (mt) cytochrome c oxidase I gene (COI) have been widely used for phylogenetic analysis among relatively closely related species.

We investigated the systematic relationships among Semisulcospira, Koreanomelania, and Koreoleptoxis species of Korean freshwater snails based on variation in the COI gene sequence. The results provide baseline information on the phylogenetic relationships among Korean freshwater snails as well as accurate identification of seed and broodstock species for snails, both of which are prerequisites for effective freshwater snail management programs and classification of newly unidentified snail taxa.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Sample collection and DNA extraction

Korean freshwater snails identified as belonging to three genera, based on their shell morphology, were sampled from four major drainages in South Korea (

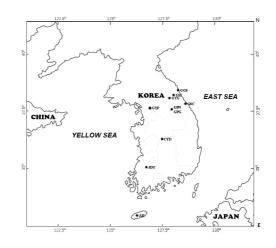


Fig. 1. Map of sampling locations of Korean freshwater snails. Abbreviation of sampling locations are explained in Table 1.

Fig. 1, Table 1). Genomic DNA was extracted from foot muscle using the TNES-urea buffer method (Asahida *et al.*, 1996). The extracted DNA was quantified by a spectrophotometer (Nanodrop) and stored at -20C until use.

2. PCR amplifications and sequence analysis

(LCO: universal primer Α pair GCTCAACAAATCATAAAGATATTGG and HCO: TAAACTTCAGGGTGACCAAAAAATCA; Folmer et al., 1994) was used to amplify the partial COI gene. PCR reactions performed in 30 l reaction volumes containing 50 ng of genomic DNA, 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.8, 0.1% Triton-X-100, 5 mM KCl, 1.5 mM MgCl₂, 0.2 mM of each dNTP, 5 pmol of each primer, and 0.5 units EX-Taq DNA polymerase (TaKaRa). Amplification was carried out using a PTC-200 thermocycler (MJ research) under the following conditions: an initial denaturation at 95° for 5 min followed by 35 cycles of 30 s at 95° C, 30 s at 58° C, 1 min at 72° C, and a final extension period of 10 min at 72°C. PCR products were visualized by electrophoresis in a 1.5% agarose gel after staining with ethidium bromide. PCR products were purified using a Qiagen PCR purification kit. The purified products were directly sequenced using the HCO and LCO primers with a BigDye Terminator Cycle Sequencing Ready Reaction Kit on an ABI 3100xl automated sequencer

Taxa	Sampling locations	Abbreviation	Sample number	GenBank accession no.
S. libertina	Jeju-si, Jeju-do, Korea	111	10	HM991871
S. gottschei	Inje-gun,Gangwon-do, Korea	GIJ	9	HM991872-5
S. gottschei	Yangpyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do, Korea	GYP	7	HM991876
S. forticosta	Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do, Korea	GSC	8	HM991877-8
S. tegulata	Damyang-gun,Jeollanam-do, Korea	JDY	4	HM991879
S. coreana	Yanggu-gun,Gangwon-do, Korea	GYG	7	HM991880-1
S. coreana	Goseong-gun,Gangwon-do, Korea	GGS	10	HM991882-3
S. coreana	Yeongdong-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do, Korea	CYD	7	HM991884-7
Koreanomelania nodifila	Pyeongchang-gun, Gangwon-do, Korea	GPN	10	HM991888-9
Koreoleptoxis globus ovalis	Pyeongchang-gun, Gangwon-do, Korea	GPG	10	HM991890-3
*Juga nigrina	U.S.A.		1	EF586984

Table 1. Freshwater snail species used in this study, their sampling locations, abbreviations and GenBank accession numbers

*Designated outgroup for our phylogenetic analyses.

(Applied Biosystems).

3. Statistical analysis

Nucleotide sequence data analyzed in this study were deposited in GenBank under accession numbers HM991871-HM991893. The resulting sequences were edited and aligned using SeqMan II (DNASTAR). For clarity and convenience, all sequences were trimmed to the same length after removal of primer sites. Estimates of nucleotide and haplotype diversity were obtained using DnaSP v5.10 (Rozas et al., 2003). The best-fitting model (HKY + I + G a = 1.1362 and I = 0.5975) was selected through a hierarchical likelihood ratio test in Modeltest 3.7 (Posada and Crandall, 1998). Α systematic relationship tree was reconstructed using the neighbor-joining (NJ) method in Phylip v3.67 (Felsenstein, 1989), the maximum likelihood (ML) method in PhyML v3.0 (Guindon and Gascuel, 2003), and Bayesian inference (BI) analysis in MrBayes v3.1.1 (Huesenbeck and Ronquist, 2001). Tree manipulation was performed using TreeDyn (Chevenet et al., 2006). Non-parametric bootstrapping with 1000 pseudo-replications was performed to estimate the confidence of all tree topologies. For Bayesian analysis, the same model used for the ML analysis was adapted, and Markov chain Monte Carlo runs of 10^6 generations long in four chains were conducted, sampling trees every 100 generations. Burn-in was determined by plotting parameters across all runs for a given analysis. North American taxa *Juga nigrina* (EF586984) were employed as outgroups in all phylogenetic analyses.

RESULTS

1. DNA sequence analysis

The alignment of 82 Korean freshwater snail sequences resulted in 74 putatively positive species after identification following Martens' (1905)diagnostic shell characters. COI gene sequences revealed a total of 27 haplotypes including four haplotypes from eight ambiguous sequences in Semisulcospira, Koreanomelania and Koreoleptoxis taxa. The COI fragments were composed of 658 sites after alignment. All observed mitochondrial single nucleotide polymorphisms (mtSNPs) within populations constituted silent mutations. Eight, five, one, and three silent mutations were detected in S. gottschei (Inje-gun in Gangwon-do and Yangpyeong-gun in Gyeonggi-do), S. coreana, Koreanomelania nodifila, and Koreoleptoxis globus ovalis, respectively.

Site-specific haplotype diversity ranged from a minimum of 0.286 ± 0.196 to a maximum of 0.905 ± 0.103 among sequences for the *S. coreana* group (Table 2). One major haplotype was present in all *S. coreana* collection sites regardless of geographical

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Presumptive species identification ^a	Abbrevia- tion	No. of individuals sequenced	No. of positive species ^b	No. of haplotypes	Clade affiliation in COI phylogenetic analysis	(H) ^c	$(\pi)^d$
S. libertina	111	10	10	1	S. libertina	0	0
S. gottschei	GIJ	9	9	4	S. gottschei	0.583 ± 0.183	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00135 \ \pm \\ 0.00055 \end{array}$
S. gottschei	GYP	7	7	1	S. gottschei	0	0
All S. gottschei [†]		16	16	5	S. gottschei	0.684 ± 0.081	0.00456 ± 0.00039
S. forticosta	GSC	8	3	2	<i>S. forticosta</i> and Cryptic or new species	0.667 ± 0.314	$\begin{array}{r} 0.00101 \pm \\ 0.00048 \end{array}$
S. tegulata	JDY	4	4	1	S. tegulata	0	0
S. coreana	GYG	7	7	2	S. coreana	0.286 ± 0.196	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00217 \ \pm \\ 0.00149 \end{array}$
S. coreana	GGS	10	10	2	S. coreana	0.356 ± 0.159	0.00270 ± 0.00121
S. coreana	CYD	7	7	4	S. coreana	0.905 ± 0.103	0.00926 ± 0.00221
All $S. \ coreana^{\dagger}$		24	24	5	S. coreana	0.857 ± 0.108	0.00939 ± 0.00148
Koreanomelania nodifila	GPN	10	9	2	<i>Koreanomelania</i> <i>nodifila</i> and cryptic or new species	0.389 ± 0.614	0.00059 ± 0.00025
Koreoleptoxis globus ovalis	GPG	10	8	4	<i>Koreoleptoxis</i> <i>globus ovalis</i> and cryptic or new species	0.643 ± 0.184	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00141 \ \pm \\ 0.00051 \end{array}$

Table O Constitutions it		-
Table 2. Genetic diversity	y of Korean freshwater snails inferred from mitochondrial cytochrome c oxidase I gene	s

All statistical values were analyzed by DnaSP V 5.10 (Rozas et al., 2003).

[†]All S. gottschei meant samples collected from GIJ and GYP.

[‡]All S. coreana meant samples collected from GYG, GGS and CYD.

^a Initial species identification done by field observation. ^b Clade affiliation in COI phylogenetic analyses.

^c Haplotype diversity (H). ^d Nucleotide diversity (π)

region. Estimates of nucleotide diversity (π) were fairly similar across populations (Table 2). The average sequence diversity among *Semisulcospira* species was less than 9%. Sequence divergence also exceeded 14% in *Semisulcospira*, *Koreanomelania*, and *Koreoleptoxis*. Interestingly, *Koreoleptoxis* spp. GPG5, which was originally collected as *K. globus* ovalis from Pyeongchang-gun in Gangwon-do and *Semisulcospira* spp. GSC3 that was originally collected as *S. forticosta* from Samcheok-siin Gangwon-do were highly divergent from the Semisulcospira, Koreanomelania, and Koreoleptoxis groups, with 15–19.5%, 17–18%, and 17–18% divergence, respectively. High sequence diversity (16.5%) was also observed between species (GPG5 and GSC3). Another interesting result was observed for Koreoleptoxis spp. GPG6, which was originally collected as K. globus ovalis from Pyeongchang-gun in Gangwon-do, and Koreanomelania spp. GPN3, which was originally collected as K. nodifila from Pyeongchang-gun in Gangwon-do.

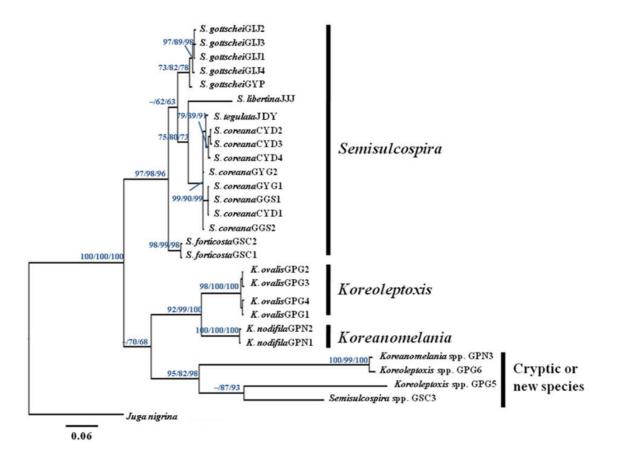


Fig. 2. Molecular phylogeny of Korean freshwater snails inferred from nucleotide sequences of mitochondrial cytochrome oxidase I gene. The numbers on branches indicate bootstrap support in percent based on 1000 pseudo-replications in the neighbor-joining, maximum likelihood analyses and the posterior probabilities in Bayesian analysis, respectively. The dashes (-) at a node indicate bootstrap support lower than 50%. *Juga nigrina* was used as a designated outgroup.

Although the two species were highly divergent from the *Semisulcospira*, *Koreanomelania*, and *Koreoleptoxis* groups (17% divergence), they were only 1.4% divergent (GPG6 and GPN3).

2. Systematic analysis

Given that Korean freshwater snails are well known for presenting taxonomic difficulties, phylogenetic trees were inferred from partial mitochondrial COI sequences to improve our understanding of the systematic relationships among them. Neighbor-joining (NJ), maximum likelihood (ML), and Bayesian inference (BI) analyses yielded monophyletic tree topologies (Fig. 2). Haplotypes from each Semisulcospira species collected from several locations were monophyletic and supported with high bootstrap values. Although S. coreana clades showed a polytomy, all three phylogenetic approaches generated essentially the same tree topologies with significant statistical support. Assuming this tree to be accurate, S. tegulata JDY formed a sister clade with S. coreana groups, and S. libertina JJJ formed a basal clade with S. tegulata and S. coreana. The placement of S. gottscheiamong Semisulcospirataxa was, however, not clearly resolved here (low bootstrap support). The remaining S. forticosta were recovered as a sister clade to Semisulcospira with high statistical support.

The remaining clade of *K. globus* ovalis and *K. nodifila* formed a monophyletic group and are clearly sister taxa. The remaining four species, *Koreanomelania* spp GPN3, *Koreoleptoxis* spp GPG5 and GPG6, and *Semisulcospira* spp. GSC3 formed an

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additional monophyletic group clearly separated from Semisulcospira taxa. However, these cryptic taxa were not clearly separated from K. globus ovalis and K. nodifila (low bootstrap vales). While these relationships were recovered partially here, the precise positioning of Koreanomelania spp GPN3, *Koreoleptoxis* GPG5 and GPG6. spp and Semisulcospira spp. GSC3 within the Korean freshwater snail clade remains ambiguous (Fig. 2). Further observation of the cryptic species and their clear identity within the COI tree could indicate that more than seven species are present in Korea but a more detailed study (molecular and morphological data) will be required to resolve these systematic relationships.

DISCUSSION

1. Species composition of Semisulcospira

Despite several attempts to characterize Semisulcospira andother species of Pleuroceridae using molecular markers (Minton and Lydeard, 2003; Lee et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2007), this is the first study to usea substantial number of partial COI Korean freshwater snails. sequencesfrom The monophyly of all presumed Semisulcospira individuals in this study (excluding Semisulcospira spp. GSC3) suggests that the Korean Semisulcospira species form asingle natural group. The tree-based species delimitation approach using NJ, ML, and BI analyses strongly indicates the presence of multiple species in Korea (at least seven taxa).

In ML and BI analyses, S. tegulata JDY was identified as sister to S. coreana, while S. libertina JJJ was identified as sister to both S. coreana and S. tegulata JDY with reasonable statistical support (NJ = 84, ML = 80, BI = 91). These results may imply that the endemic S. coreana, S. tegulata, and S. libertina all share a most recent common ancestor. Despite use of only small samples sizes, S. coreana was most closely related to S. tegulata and S. libertine, and this outcome from mtDNA was congruent with reported isozyme relationships (Kim, 1995).

The maximum sequencedivergence within a

putative species was 1.8% for S. coreana and 0.9% for S. gottschei. The genetic divergences observed for Semisulcospira were comparable to the largest published values for mitochondrial 16S rDNA (3.7%) and COI (4.27%) sequence variation in other Pleuroceridae (Lydeard et al., 1997, 1998; Holznagel and Lydeard, 2000; Minton and Lydeard, 2003). While the maximum putative intra- and intergeneric divergence observed here was 19.5%, previously reported maximum intra- and intergeneric differences were 15% for 16S rDNA (Holznagel and Lydeard, 2000) and 15.5% for COI (Minton and Lydeard, 2003). Additional studies are required to understand the dispersal history of S. coreana across Korean rivers and drainages because the genetic distances among the observed haplotypes were small and haplotypes were shared among S. coreana sites (CYD, GGS, and GYG). A possible explanation is that insular S. coreana populations may have attained their unique morphological features rapidly following recent dispersal events. Alternatively, samples could have come from restocking program strains from aquaculture lines. If so, this suggests that potential gene flow by human-made activities could have produced the patterns of genetic mixing observed here. Unlike in S. coreana, the genetic distances among observed S. gottschei haplotypes (GIJ and GYP) were small, and no haplotypes were shared between the two collecting sites, suggesting limited gene flow.

The two species are known to co-exist in one site even though clear morphological differences exist between them. This observationled to speculation that reproductive isolation between them was limited, indicating possible crossbreeding in the wild (Kim, 1995 Minton and Lydeard, 2003). Cytological research on S. forticosta and S. gottschei found that karyotypes were different but the two taxa possessed the same chromosome numbers (Kim et al., 1987). The close relationship among them was also denoted using isozyme markers, a result consistent with previous findings (Kim, 1995). Based on molecular data, it is possible that the Semisulcospira taxa studied here do phylogenetic species constitute 'true' however.

additional studies, including those of detailed ectopic placement, possible hybrids, and ecological and genetic comparisons of *Semisulcospira* species populations within the archipelago, are needed to further clarify the mechanisms underlying their morphological variations.

2. Species delineation of *Koreanomelania* and *Koreoleptoxis*

Melania nodifila and M. globus (Martens, 1886) were originally classified as S. nodifila and S. globus, respectively, by Kuroda (1929). They were placed into the genus Koreanomelania based on their oviparous LHTs (Kwon and Habe, 1979). Burch et al. (1987), however, recorded K. nodifila (Kwon and Habe, 1979) as Hua nodifilaand Burch and Jung (1987) doubted that M. globus was present in Korea so they denoted a new subspecies, K. globus ovalis, which was separatedfrom previous recorded species. In addition, features were identical its morphological to Koreanomelania globus (Kwon, 1990; Kwon et al., 1993). Thus, Semisulcospira globus and Koreanomelania globus (Kwon et al., 1993) were treated as a new subspecies as suggested by Burch and Jung (1987). In recent studies, nine species were identified in Korean freshwater ecosystems (Choi and Yoon, 1997), and seven species were classified by isozyme studies and external radulae analysis (Ko et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2001). In this study, systematic analysis of mtDNA COI sequence divergence recognizedmore than seven taxa in Korea. However, several previous studies indicated the presence of divergent mitochondrial haplotypes among the pleuroceridae, which has been attributed to undocumented cryptic species being present (Lydeard et al., 1998; Minton and Lydeard, 2003, Lee et al., 2007). This recognition needs to be treated cautiously, however, due to the limited genetic and morphological information available for these taxa. The remaining two focal taxa (K. globus ovalis and K. nodifila) were monophyletic in our analysis. However, according to previous isozyme variation studies (Lee et al., 2001) and a study of external radulae (Ko et al., 2001), three genera in the pleuroceridae are present in Korea, indicating a separate genus between

Koreoleptoxis and Koreanomelania.

Phylogenetic analysis can provide evidence for discrete lineages based on sequence diversity when morphological plasticity makes species delineation problematic (Wilke and Falinowski, 2000). This could be useful in pleurocerids, where cryptic species that are not closely related have been observed regularly (Chambers, 1978). Based on this assumption, potentially five (Semisulcospira) and six (Koreoleptoxis and *Koreanomelania* including cryptic species) phylogenetic species may be recognized based on mtDNA COI sequence divergence in Korean pleurocerids (Fig. 2). Further morphological and molecular work will be required to determine the identity and placement of the four cryptic species (Koreanomelania spp GPN3, Koreoleptoxisspp GPG5 and GPG6, and Semisulcospira spp. GSC3). The remaining taxa formed a well-supported clade that should be recognized as two lineages, Semisulcospira and a group of Koreoleptoxis and Koreanomelania (as a sister genus) here. It is, however, still difficult to say how many extant species are present in Korea. Although use of shell characters has led to many errors and confusion in freshwater snail taxonomy, the data here suggest that at least more than nine species could be present in Korea based on phylogenetic analysis inferred from the mitochondrial COI gene sequence. The results here suggest that cryptic taxa could also be present in other freshwater snail taxa in Korea and are awaitingrecognition. Long-term secure protection for cryptic taxa will require both analyses of genetic (mitochondrial and nuclear markers) and morphological data, as well as redefinitions of key shell morphology characters for freshwater snails to improve recognition of natural biodiversity in the region.

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Eco-technopia 21 project".

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