NUS National University of Singapore | Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

SEMINAR

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Hosted by Mr. Tan Ming Kai

Intangible Natural Heritage — Chinese Culture of Singing Insects



By **Dr Jin Xingbao**

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Dr. Jin Xingbao is a senior researcher in Entomology, specialising in taxonomy of Meconematinae (see photographs below), Orthoptera. She received her Ph.D. from the McGill University, Canada, and has retired from the vice-director position of the Shanghai Natural History Museum (now part of Shanghai Science and Technology Museum) in 2013. She is now working as an amateur researcher in the Shanghai Entomology Museum, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and focuses more on the natural education for urban residents.

Although crickets and katydids are typically considered agricultural pests, these insects have also been appreciated by the Chinese for more than a thousand years. People enjoyed their lovely tunes of the songs produced by the male insects, which can provide reminiscence to the sounds of their childhood, homeland, and peacefulness. Cricket fighting and betting in the casino were controversial and yet often involved high-stakes. Katydids were kept for symbols of luck and auspicious virtue such as vitality. Over the years, various business related to field collection, insect trade, artificial selection and training, along with all sorts of traditional hand crafts and modern technologies have flourished into a sizeable insect market. These signifies a deep ontological connection between the Chinese and crickets and katydids. As such, crickets and katydids, which presents a rich and intangible natural heritage for eco-civilization of contemporary China, can be considered as flagship species for conservation.







Artwork by Ann Nee, DBS, NUS