



**PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE**  
**NEW ENGLAND ZOÖLOGICAL CLUB**

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A GENUS FOR *JUNCO SIEMSSSENI* MARTENS

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FROM time to time it has been said of many birds, "one of the rarest and most local of all known species." Usually, however, as we know more about the form so styled, we find that though perhaps very local it is really not rare, and only a very few existing species remain in this class.

One that perhaps particularly stands out is the delicate little bunting named *Junco siemsseni* by Martens, (Orn. Monat., vol. 14, p. 192, 1906). Of this bird La Touche ('A Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China,' vol. 1, part 4, p. 335, August, 1927) tells us that only five individuals ever have been taken, all by the Chinese collector Tang Wang-wang, now dead, and all from near Kuatun. No one of the white ornithologists who have visited Fohkien, ever has seen the bird alive, and nothing is known of it except from skins.

The five specimens are now distributed among institutions as follows: The type, an adult male, is in the Natural History Museum, Hamburg. Two, a headless and otherwise mutilated male and a good female, both presented by La Touche, are in the British Museum. And the beautiful pair (the birds described and figured in the Ibis, 1913, p. 277, pl. 6) in the La Touche Collection, are now in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy.

Hartert in 'Die Vögel der paläarktischen Fauna' (p. 2018) correctly says that the bird is not a Junco, but he calls it an *Emberiza* related to *E. variabilis*. La Touche, though he continues to call it an *Emberiza*, declares that it differs widely from *variabilis*, and should have a genus or subgenus made for its reception. This is my opinion also.

*Variabilis* is not an *Emberiza* at all, but the sole representative of the genus *Tisa*, and is not at all like the little delicate *siemsseni*, its heavy bill, long, pointed wing, and long tail, unmarked with white, at once distinguishing it. *Tisa* also differs from *Emberiza* in some structural characters. I am sorry to say I do not know just what they are, but I well remember one day in 1925 when Professor Sushkin sat beside me, working at the long table in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, and I mentioned *Tisa*, whereupon he exclaimed with emphasis, "I do not like that bird." When I asked him why, he told me that he had found an excellent character that separated the Old World *Emberizinae* from those of the New World, and which had held good for all species he had dissected until he worked on the anatomy of *Tisa*, and, lo and behold, *Tisa* stood exactly connecting the two groups. He then added that, from its distribution and general appearance, it was perhaps what one might expect of *Tisa*.

I dislike to see genera broken up more than can be helped, but *Emberiza*, as it stands in Hartert's 'paläarktischen Fauna,' is certainly a most heterogeneous assemblage, and the tendency since has been to subdivide it. By removing from it a few peculiar, sometimes monotypic, forms, there is left surely a much more natural group. One such form, that bears no near relationship to any other species, is *Junco siemsseni* which, it seems to me, is much better placed in a genus by itself and may well be named for the great authority on Chinese birds, J. D. D. La Touche.

## LATOUCHEORNIS gen. nov. (monotypic)

*Type, Junco siemsseni* Martens

*Characters.*—*Latoucheornis siemsseni* differs from *Emberiza*, as represented by the type species *E. citrinella* and many related forms, in the following characters: It has a very small, weak, slender bill; the cutting edge of the maxilla is less fluted and the mandible straighter, less upturned. The first primary is short; the wing is much rounded, the first primary being equal to the sixth, the second equal to the fifth, the third and fourth subequal and longest. The tail is short with wide rectrices, the middle pair similar to the others, not noticeably narrowed and pointed toward the tip. The coloration is peculiar: the male is slate-color, except the belly, under tail-coverts, wing lining, axillars and mark across outer tail feathers, which are pure white; the female is reddish brown where the male is slate-color, becoming more olivaceous on the rump and lower sides, but it has the same white areas.

## MEASUREMENTS (in millimeters)

Sex	Wing	Tail	Culmen to base of forehead	Exposed culmen	Tarsus
♂	67	49	10.0	8.5	17.0
♀	64	47	10.5	9.0	17.5