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A Collection of Yapese Riddles

By

GWLADYS HUGHES SIMON

These riddles were collected in 1957–8 in Yap District in the Western Carolines, Micronesia. Known also as U.S. Trust Territory of Pacific Islands, Micronesia had become a mandate of the United States after World War II. As Education Specialist and Teacher Trainer with the Department of the Interior, the writer visited repeatedly all Inner Islands of Yap District with tent and motorboat, interpreter and dog from Ceylon. Teachers from the Outer Islands were present at our summer sessions for teachers held at Yap Intermediate School.¹

Contributors of these riddles were mostly Inner Island teachers and students. Some riddles came from Outer Islanders at summer school, and several are from Yapese on Guam. Contributions were made also by Uag, Superintendent of Yap Elementary Schools, and by Gaangred,

1. Yap island, largest in Yap District, is 12 miles long and 2½ miles wide. The north has hills, of which the highest is 600 feet above sea level. Several dirt roads suitable for our few jeeps extended north and south. Villagers, some on bicycles, used the old footpaths. Maap, Tomil and Gagil are separated from each other by narrow areas of water. Each island is surrounded by a fringing reef. The Outer Islands, less than a hundred miles east, were visited at three month intervals by the field trip ship, to deliver materials and to pick up passengers and copra. Languages and customs in the Ulithi-Woleai area have been different from those of Yap, and at our summer schools we found it necessary to have 3 interpreters, each of them familiar with certain of the regional dialects. Although most Inner Island teachers knew some English, in some cases the vocabularies and range of understanding were quite limited. The first Westerns to visit these islands, especially Yap and Ulithi, were probably the Portuguese, in 1526. Then came English, Germans, Japanese. After World War I the islands were assigned to Japan as a mandate, by the League of Nations, and by the time of World War II the Japanese were well established there. Many of the older Yapese known to me still spoke German and some Spanish. My teachers, most of whom were young men in loin cloths (and there were two young women) had learned to read and write Japanese in schools set up by the Japanese. German and Japanese words are included in the old traditional dance party songs. English in 1958 was being taught in the more than twenty elementary schools, beginning in sixth grade. More and more young people were being sent to the University of Hawaii, or were being trained in Fiji or Guam, to become teachers, doctors, nurses.

interpreter-translator in the office of our District Administrator. Most of the translations were made by Keppin, Guam-trained head nurse at the Yap Hospital; by Mangegol, a young teacher who later was sent to the University of Hawaii; by Faimau, an older and very popular teacher on Yap; by Saroniyan, my house boy, who had attended the local Catholic schools; and by Teomal of Ulithi, and several other Outer Islanders whose names have been lost. With the cooperation of Mr. and Mrs. R. Curtis, who have been in Yap District for a number of years, Dr. Yilibu, a middle-aged dentist, has translated some materials and mailed them to me. Dr. Yilibu had heard at least 20 of these riddles, he said, "When I was a boy, 20 years ago."²

I am very much indebted to Dr. Archer Taylor for his willing help and advice, and his comments throughout this paper.

According to Dr. Taylor, the following collection of Yapese riddles "is perhaps the first of its kind. It enlarges our knowledge of riddling in the Pacific islands, and the annotation has been designed to serve this purpose. The texts were collected in the original language. The texts are few in number, but sufficient to make it possible to draw some conclusions about them and their place in an area where the traditions of riddling have not been much explored."

The form or forms of these riddles offer little of interest, Dr. Taylor has said. They show no preference for any single form. Many begin with "Someone" or "Something" (Nos. 1, 2, etc.) and go on to describe the man or thing thus introduced in the characteristic enigmatic fashion of stating descriptive and contradictory details. Others (Nos. 7, 17, 25, etc.) name at once creature or object with which the solution is being compared: "There is an animal which has bones outside its body.—Crab" (No. 25). A few are narratives telling how an actor behaves a strange

2. In Yapese the word from riddle is *sasalipou*, often written *silipow*. These words are used to begin a riddle, Dr. Yilibu says: "Then everyone knows they must guess, that it will not be a story or a conversation. The Ulithian word for riddle is *Hagel*. In Japanese it is *Nazo*. The Yapese had riddles before the Germans came. The purpose of riddles is to train the mind to think, and to amuse and train the kids. Older people don't tell riddles to each other, only to their children. In Yap today, riddles are being made, but none is written down." Dr. Yilibu contributed these sayings which he calls jokes: 1—Of slow and lazy walkers, we say that if they step on an egg, it won't break. 2—The poor dancer is said to dance like a turtle. The turtle's hard shell prevents gracefulness. 3—If someone says, "I am drowned with your words," this means you are saying too much, giving the other no chance to talk. It is said only to a friend. 4—If you are a poor fisherman, people will say as you go out, "Don't bother with the female ones. Try to catch the males." They mean they doubt you will catch any fish at all.

manner that calls for explanation: "I live under the ground. I eat leaves and fruits. You eat me. I pinch your fingers when you try to touch me. I carry a box on my back. My fingers are connected to my box. What am I?—Crab" (No. 22. See also Nos. 14, 17, 32, 37, 41, 44, 47, 56, 61, etc.). Such minor stylistic variations as these may reflect the usage of individual riddlers or a general instability or corruption of the tradition. A considerable number of these riddles are obviously rather recent inventions with little currency in Yapese tradition or elsewhere. Introductory elements suggesting a scene such as we find in some European riddles are lacking in Yapese tradition and so, too, are riddles ending with a formula promising a reward. Some Yapese riddles close with "Who (What) am I?" (Nos. 20, 22, 38, 41, 44, 47, etc.). These are often more or less adequate personifications of the solution and constitute a special stylistic category. In a rather large number of instances (Nos. 14, 32, 56, 57, 66, 86, 104, 106) this question appears at the beginning of the riddle. This collection includes no example of punning like that known in Hawaiian riddling: "You have grandparents, food (*awa*) in the upland, and fish (*puhi*) in the sea.—Ginger blossoms (*awapuhi*)."³ This device which is tiresomely frequent in Hawaiian riddling, is known in Ainu, Japanese, and Samoan tradition and elsewhere.³

Dr. Taylor has stated that the familiar subjects of Yapese riddling are also known in this use in the islands of the Pacific generally: coconut, soursop, pineapple, betel nut (surprisingly few in Yapese riddling), parts of the human body (also surprisingly few), a few tools and utensils, and nature generally (wind, clouds, moon, the sea). Nevertheless, the Yapese riddles, although the subjects may be known elsewhere in riddles, have very few parallels. This collection includes no riddles on subjects favored by riddlers such as egg, needle, stars, domestic animals, or boat. One or two riddles for which parallels can be easily cited raise questions that are difficult to answer. For example, the riddle of the Sphinx (No. 39), "Somebody who walks on four legs in his early life and walks on two legs in his middle life and walks on three legs near the end of his life.—Man," has also been reported from the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Hawaii, Fiji, and Samoa. From its wide distribution in the Pacific area we cannot safely infer that there was a general knowledge of riddles and of this riddle in particular. Much the same may be said about the riddle for a man's head (No. 35).

3. For examples see Archer Taylor, "An annotated Collection of Mongolian Riddles," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, XLIV (1954), 366, No. 1025 and the note.

The importance of this collection, Dr. Taylor has said, is to be found in its contribution to the establishment of a riddling tradition on the islands of the Pacific. Unfortunately there are only a few large collections at our disposal for this purpose, and these have not been studied for evidences of a common tradition. This Yapese collection makes a modest contribution to it. The collections cited by Dr. Taylor are:

Fijian: L. Fison, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, XI (1882), 406–410, containing 31 riddles and 2 parallels.

Filipino: Donn V. Hart, *Riddles in Filipino Folklore* (Syracuse, 1964), containing 909 riddles and 22 parallels; Frederick Starr, *A Little Book of Filipino Riddles* (Yonkers, 1909), containing 416 riddles and 20 parallels; Morice Vanoverbergh, "Isneg Riddles," *Folklore Studies* (Tokyo), XII (1953), 1–95, containing 645 riddles and 4 parallels and "Tales in Lepanto-Igorot or Kankanay," *University of Manila Journal of East Asiatic Studies*, II (1952), 83–102, containing 338 riddles and 4 parallels.

Gilbertese: H. G. A. Hughes, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, LIX (1950), 241–244, containing 12 riddles and 5 parallels.

Hawaiian: M. W. Beckwith, *American Anthropologist*, XXIV (1922), 311–331, containing 50 riddles and 3 parallels; H. P. Judd, *Hawaiian Proverbs and Riddles*, Bulletin of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 77 (Honolulu, 1930), containing 282 riddles and 8 parallels.

Marshallese: W. H. Davenport, *Journal of American Folklore*, LXV (1952), 265–266, containing 14 riddles and 2 parallels.

Samoan: E. Heider, *Archiv für Anthropologie*, XLII (1915), 119–137, containing 175 riddles and 12 parallels.

A study of the Pacific tradition should of course be based on the large collections rather than on this small Yapese collection with its many obviously foreign texts. Five Ponapean riddles that come to hand as I write, Dr. Taylor commented, include one that illustrates the problems involved in comparisons; see Blackburn, *Journal of American Folklore*, LXXX (1967), 248–249. It is "I have a group of soldiers. Some are wearing red uniforms. Some are wearing black uniforms. What is it?—Pepper." This has some similarity to Yapese riddles for papaya (No. 5) and pineapple (No. 14) below. Should we not see here and in the other parallels that are pointed out in the notes a riddling tradition in the Pacific? The annotation has been limited to the general discussion of subjects and patterns of riddles in Archer Taylor's English collection⁴

4. *English Riddles from Oral Tradition*, Berkeley, 1951. This will be cited as Taylor.

and to the collections just named. It should be stressed that this Yapese collection includes a rather large proportion of riddles of obviously foreign origin. It seems unnecessary to point them out. Although this collection is small, it gives us a good idea of the state of riddling on Yap, Dr. Taylor concluded.

1. a. Some who, if he is very little, sleeps on his bed.—Chestnut.
 b. There is something that when it is tiny sleeps on its cushion.—Chestnut seed.
 c. Somebody who sleeps on a very soft mattress when he is young and loses his comfortable mattress when he grows up.—Chestnut.
 d. Somebody who has a soft comfortable bed when he is young and when he is old his bed is hardened.—Chestnut kernel.
2. Something that when it is young, its bed was very clean and when it was old its bed was very dirty.—Chestnut.
3. What is this type of food (that is) enclosed in a hard shell and the shell has to be cracked before you can eat it?—Chestnut.
4. Someone who, if he is little, has clothes, and when he gets bigger, takes off his clothes.—Bamboo.
5. Someone and her little ones are white when they are young. In middle life the mother becomes green, while her little ones remain white, but when they become old, her little ones are black while she changes into yellowish.—Papaya (fruit and seeds).
6. Hidden somewhere is a container that contains a pure, sparkling, clear water which is inviting to drink.—Coconut.
7. A well that has some pure water in it. But when the king comes, he drinks the water and puts up his flag.—Coconut.
8. Something that has a mouth, a nose, two eyes, a belly, and a back.—Coconut.
9. Something that looks like the head of a man with eyes, mouth, nose, etc.—A Coconut shell.
10. Something that has only one bone and wears a coat with thorns all over its surface.—Soursop.
11. Somebody who has no thorns on his body when he is young but thorns cover his entire body when he is old.—Soursop.
12. Something that has no coat when it is small but grows into a coat with thorns all over it.—Soursop.
13. Somebody who does not have a sweet fragrance when he is young but produces a sweet fragrance when he is old.—Pineapple.

14. Who am I? I have a green crown on my head. I have a sweet smell. I have only one leg. My color is yellow. You like to eat me, don't you? I have three daughters. The youngest one is blue. The one next to her is red. The oldest one is turning yellow. They all have green crowns. Who am I? Who are my children?—Pineapple.
15. a. Somebody who has his eyes all over his entire body.—Pineapple.
b. Someone who has eyes on every part of his body.—Pineapple.
16. Something that is very weak when it is young and is still weak in its middle life but becomes hard and strong when it is old.—Betel nut (areca nut).
17. a. There are three people. If you beat only one of them, blood does not come out. If you beat two of them, blood does not come out. If you beat all of them, blood comes out.—The betel leaf, the nut of the areca palm, and lime (the ingredients used in chewing betel).
b. There are three friends. If one of them is missing during a fight, no blood will be shed, but if all are together in the progress of a fight, there will be a lot of blood.—Lime, betel leaf, and betel (areca) nut.
c. There are three different kinds of things. They don't live together. Each of them lives separately. However, if you take one or two and kill them by pounding them together, they won't bleed. But if you take all the three different kinds and kill them all together, they bleed a lot. If you see them bleeding, you would like to chew them. When you try to chew them, they taste very good and they also make your lips look pretty (red.)—Betel nuts, betel leaves, and lime.

Riddles about Animals

18. a. Someone who is always carrying his box.—Crab (or Samoan crab).
b. Someone that wherever he goes carries his box.—Crab.
19. Eight people carry a box every day.—Crab.
20. There is a box with eight sticks. What is it?—Crab.
21. a. Someone who carries his house wherever he goes.—Hermit crab.
b. Someone who always carries his house.—Hermit crab.
22. I live under the ground. I eat leaves and fruits. You eat me.

- I pinch your fingers when you try to touch me. I carry a box on my back. My fingers are connected to my box. What am I?—Crab.
23. Someone who is not afraid as long as he is in his house. As soon as one breaks down his house, he will run and hide himself.—Hermit crab.
 24. Someone who has his stomach outside his body.—Crab.
 25. a. This is an animal which has bones outside its body.—Crab.
b. Someone who has his bones outside his body.—Crab.
 26. There is an animal which does not have any bones at all.—Sea cucumber.
 27. Something which has two hands and each hand has ten fingers.—Swimming (mangrove) crab, coconut crab, and shrimp.
 28. This is someone whose leg is hard to pull off, but when he touches hot water, his leg will come off immediately.—Crab.
 29. There is something edible, but before it turns red it cannot be eaten.—Mangrove crab.
 30. Someone cries a lot without making a sound.—Samoan crab.
 31. a. There is a group of people who are always carrying a coconut tree.—Millipede.
b. Some people who are carrying part of the branches of a tree.—Millipede.
 32. Who am I? I have a very strong smell. I have many, many legs. When you see me, you may think hundreds of people are carrying the trunk of a tree.—Millipede.
 33. Somebody who sleeps mostly during the daytime, with his feet sticking up and his head down.—Bat.
 34. Somebody who travels with a mast but no sail.—Rat.

Riddles about People

35. a. It is a ball and there are seven holes in it.—Your head.
b. What ball has seven holes in it?—Head.
c. There is one hole in it.—Head.
36. a. A coconut tree that has only two leaves and two coconuts.—Eyebrows and eyeballs.
b. There is a coconut tree. There are only two coconuts and two leaves and two holes under the coconuts.—Your face.
c. What coconut tree has a well under its trunk end?—Nose and eyebrows.
37. A coconut tree is near a well. Around the well are two groups of

soldiers sitting still. However, if you drop something in the well, they begin to move and bump each other. The coconut tree which is near the well has only two leaves and two coconuts. When you become very old or if you don't take care of the soldiers, they disappear. But even if you do take care of them, the soldiers never last till the end of your life.—The well is your mouth and the soldiers are your teeth which bump together when you chew something. The coconuts are your eyes and the leaves your eyebrows.

38. There are two groups of soldiers. They are twenty-four all together. What are they?—Your teeth.
39. Somebody who walks on four legs in his early life and walks on two legs during his middle life and walks on three legs near the end of his life.—Man.

Riddles about Inanimate Things

40. Someone who eats his food on his back and the food comes (out) through his stomach.—Chestnut grinder.
41. I grind your food, especially your chestnuts. I chew them first before you eat the food. I chew things on my back and pass them down through my chest. What am I?—Tin grinder.
42. Something that eats its food through its back and the food comes (out) through the stomach.—Can of Sardines.
43. Someone who eats his food with his stomach and the food comes out through its back.—Plane.
44. I make things for you. I make your chairs, tables, and houses. When I begin my work, you push me along as I begin. I do my work by chewing it. I chew things on my chest and throw them up (vomit) on my back. What am I?—Plane.
45. Someone who eats his food with his mouth and his food comes out through his mouth also.—Bottle.
46. Somebody who eats through his mouth and gives out wastes through his mouth.—Bottle.
47. I swallow my food through my mouth. I also send it out there too. When you drop me, I break into small pieces. If you step on a piece of me with your bare foot, I hurt you. Do you know what I am?—Bottle.
48. Who are we? We have different colors and shapes. Some of us are fat and round. Some of us are slender and tall. When we eat or swallow our food, you can see through our body. We break into small sharp pieces when you drop us on hard objects. Who

- are we?—Bottles.
49. Who am I? I eat and drink through my back. I vomit through my nose. Who am I?—Teapot.
50. Something that if you beat his head, he works. If you do not beat his head, he does not work.—Nail.
51. Somebody whom you hit many times before he holds two things together.—Nail.
52. What am I? I am very strong. I have only one leg and a strong head. You use me to hold parts of your house. I do work for you. But I can't work unless you pound my head.—Nail.

Riddles Which May Be of Recent Origin

53. What is something which has many mouths and devours people?—House.
54. What is something which has a preference for eating fire and water?—Cooking pot.
55. Somebody that does not work unless he drinks a certain kind of liquid.—Lamp.
56. Who am I? I usually live in the deepest part of the sea. I have a screw-like tail. I always take care of it. You can't even hear me when I am alive. But when I die you can hear me several miles away. Who am I?—Conch (used as a trumpet).
57. Who am I? I am very valuable. You give me to somebody as exchange for something. When you move me, I make noises. Who am I?—Shell money.
58. Something that has tremendous speed. It travels as fast as lightning.—Thought.
59. a. Somebody that follows you wherever you go except when you are in darkness of the shadow of something.—Shadow.
b. Someone who, if you go somewhere in the daytime, goes with you. If you go in the dark, he does not go with you.—Shadow.
60. Somebody who has tremendous power and is also very weak.—Water.
61. I am very soft and cold. But I am very, very strong. I can lift millions and millions of tons. Yet I can't lift even a stone or a piece of iron that weighs an ounce. Who am I?—Ocean.
62. Something that you know: it lives on this island every day and is very strong, but you cannot see it.—Wind.
63. Someone who is always smiling. He smiles once every minute or more often. But when the wind blows him, he becomes very happy. Then he starts to laugh more loudly. You can see his

- teeth when he smiles. His teeth are white. What is he?—Waves that break on the reef. On stormy days you can hear them in the distance. The white teeth are the white things you see when the waves break.
64. What is this things which resembles the larger variety of bamboo and, unlike bamboo, is fit to eat?—Sugarcane.
65. What is something which the Yapese use as an umbrella?—Swamp taro leaf.
66. Who am I? I am very valuable. I give many things to you. I give you your food, your drink, money, and things to use. You use every part of me. Who am I?—Coconut tree.
67. Something that does not close its eyes when it sleeps and never closes its eyes when it dies.—Shrimp.
68. Someone who sleeps but has not closed his eyes. He never closed his eyes in his lifetime but when he died, he closed his eyes.—Grasshopper.
69. Somebody that swallows his food and tries to drink water when he takes it.—Chicken.

Riddles Employing Numbers

70. You can kill a pig and not salt it and not put it in an icebox and the next year you can eat it.—Yes, it can be. You can kill it on December 31, 1957 and on January 1, 1958 you can eat it.
71. There were two birds on one branch. You get a rifle and shoot one. How many are left?—None.

Riddles of Recent Manufactured Origin

72. What is an immense ball which contains on it trees, oceans, houses, and animals?—The earth.
73. Four things that live in every place in this world.—The four parts of the world: North, East, South, West.
74. There is only one thing we can use in this world.—Fire.
75. Guess something which cannot be reached because it is very, very hot.—Sun.
76. Guess something on which there is nothing. Sometimes it appears during the day sometimes it appears during the night. It does not shine during the day. It shines during the night.—Moon.
77. Guess something that is sometimes round when we see it and sometimes it is only half when we see it.—Moon.
78. Guess something which usually changes and rain comes from

- them.—Clouds.
79. What am I? You always see me in the sky. I water your flowers and crops. I sometimes move very fast. And sometimes I move very slow. The wind pushes me along. I am sure you can't touch me even if you stand on top of your house.—Clouds.
80. Guess something which surrounds us while we live.—Air.
81. What is something which is everywhere?—Air.
82. Something that, if one did not have it, one must die.—Breathing.
84. Guess something which cannot burn without air.—Candle.
85. What are the two things that help people?—Food, air.
86. Who am I? I keep your animals and you alive. You can feel me. But you can't see or smell me.—Oxygen.
87. Guess three things that are necessary for a plant to manufacture its food.—Air, water, minerals.
88. Guess one thing that is necessary for a plant to manufacture its food.—Photosynthesis.
89. What are the two things that, if one lacks them, one cannot go places?—Eyes.
90. Something that if it is on the road you must go around it.—Tree.
91. What is the thing which has its mouth under its leaves?—Tree.
92. What is a thing which is not alive but grows rapidly?—Coral.
93. Something that is round and green with assorted stripes.—Watermelon.
94. Something that is round and is eaten with a sweet flavor.—Orange.
95. What is something which without seeing what it eats can identify immediately what it has eaten?—Mosquito.
96. Someone who can see in the night as in the day and in the day can see as in the night.—Cat.
97. What animal is this that is shaggy and has four legs?—Dog.
98. What is an animal that has horns?—Cow.
99. Someone who does not have hands and legs.—Snake.
100. Someone who walks on two legs but has no arms.—Chicken.
101. Name a group of soldiers whose helmets are of the same color.—Matches.
102. A group of people who have red hats and white clothes.—Matches.
103. There are some things which have heads and bodies but are without limbs.—Matches.
104. Who are we? We look alike. We live in one house. When you take one of us and strike his head on our house, you get fire from him. Who are we?—Matches.

105. I look just like a human being. I cannot walk, but I can move and can travel a long distance. Who am I? Can you go with me?—Doll.
106. What is this thing? We write with its leg and erase with its head.—Pencil.
107. Something that is used for writing and uses its head for erasing.—Pencil.
108. My track will help you to remember what you want to remember.—Pencil.
109. I have an eye but cannot see with it.—Needle.
110. What is that something that helps the lid of a box so that it can't be opened, but if you give it a very particular piece of metal which is in its favor, it will open the lid for you?—Lock and key.
111. Something that never stops calling.—Clock.
112. Something which is entirely whitish in color. If you bathe with it, it will give your body a clean appearance.—Soap.
113. What is something used to catch fish? It is like a spider's home.—Fishing net.
114. Guess something that has a nice room inside and no doors at all, but we can enter it.—Mosquito net.
115. What is something that is not a bird but flies?—Airplane.
116. Something that works more easily than a man.—Machine.
117. What is something that makes loud noises when it is ready to go?—Truck.
118. I carry a load on my back. I run very fast. When I see many people in my way, I say, "Peep-peep-peep!" My boss sits in my head. What is it?—Truck.
119. Which is heavier, a pound of steel or a pound of wooll?—They weigh the same.

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, the references are to the number of the riddle.

1-3. Riddles for a chestnut refer usually to the contrast of the rough exterior and the morsel within. A smooth interior is not often mentioned; see the Georgian "On the outside a thousand, on the interior satin" (Taylor, headnote to 1355, n. 2).

3. Cf. Hawaiian: Judd, 13 My food: it takes two stones to crack it.—Hala nut.

4. This is the widely known riddle for bamboo; see Taylor, headnote to

587, citing versions from India and the Pacific generally. See further Filipino: Hart, 80 When a child, clothed; when a man, naked, 81 Here comes the King of the Mountain. When a child, etc.; Starr, 255, 256. See Hart's note, p. 242. Samoan: Heider, 18 Who is the man who comes from the bush unclothed, then is clothed in the village, and wears this one dress until his death?—*Lafu*, a kind of bamboo.

5. Samoan: Heider, 28 There are five hundred brothers. They grow up as real whites. Later, however, when they are grown, one sees that they are coal-black and live in a house that has no door, invisible to the world. The house, however, hangs in the air. Gilbertese: Hughes, 4 There is a small island. It has many houses and there are only two kinds of them. One sort is painted green, while the other is painted red. For riddles of this sort describing a plant (not however a papaya) see Taylor, 1074–1089 and No. 14 below. There is some resemblance to an Arabic riddle for a watermelon; see Taylor, headnote to 668–669 @ 8. Curiously enough the Filipino riddles for a papaya do not allude to its various colors; see Hart, 50–59.

6, 7. For riddles about the water (milk) in a coconut see Taylor, 1072 with the note. Hawaiian: Judd, My spring up a cliff, 28 My sweet water-spring, suspended in air; Beckwith, 3 My spring suspended in air.

7. The meaning of "puts up his flag" is not clear.

8, 9. For the comparison of a coconut to a man's head see Taylor, 279, 523, 524 (A man has three eyes. He can only cry out of one) with the notes citing West Indian and India parallels. Hawaiian: Judd, 6 My little fish-pond. It contains one fish. It has three outlets. The Yapese extension of the comparison to other members than the eyes seems to be unusual.

10–12. For similar riddles see Taylor, 577a and the note. Filipino: Starr, 116 Head of a prince stuck full of pins. Bangeol (a fruit). The comparison is widely used to describe a hedgehog; see Taylor, 576 and note.

14. This resembles the description of a papaya; see 5 above. For references to the crown see Filipino: Hart, 63 There is a woman who has a crown on her head; everywhere she has eyes. Starr, 141.

15. Filipino: Hart, 64 The head of St. Domingo is surrounded by eyes, 65 What is the head that is covered with eyes?

16. On Yap, people chew the young nuts of the areca palm. On Guam and Ceylon they prefer the older, harder nuts.

17. Filipino: Hart, 742 There are three siblings, one red, one white, one green. They entered the church and all came out red, 744, 745=Starr; 18 Three maidens went to church. One wore green, the second white, and the third red. But when they came out all were red. For other riddles describing a plant by reference to changing colors as circumstances change (usually the change from young to old) see Taylor, headnote to 1544.

17a. For reference to the failure of the red color (blood) to appear when one element is lacking, see Filipino: Hart, 746 Three judges do not pass sentence if one of them is absent. The Yapese informant comments, "If you chew them together, they form a red color."

18. For parallels see the headnote to Taylor, 727 @ 3. The eastern (Pacific) have the solution "Crab" and the western (European) usually "Snail"; see Taylor, 727 and the note. The solution "Turtle" is widely known, but occurs less often than crab or snail. For the solution "Turtle" see Taylor, headnote to 727 @ 6 and Filipino: Starr, 322–325. It is curious that Hart found no riddle of this sort in studying a culture in which crabbing has a significant role; see his 180–190.

21. Samoan: Heider, 113 Someone is always going about with the burden

of his house on his back. Fijian:—Fison 21. Filipino: Vanoverbergh, Isneg, 221 It always carries its house. This riddle is peculiarly appropriate to a hermit crab that lives in a shell belonging to another animal. I do not understand Vanoverbergh, Kankanay, 187 He carries his house with him.—Birds appearing at fixed intervals. Dr. Yilibu of Yap:—Someone who travels with his home in his stomach.—Spider.

24. The informant explains that the “stomach” is the segmented abdomen.

25. A riddle that enjoys worldwide currency; see Taylor, headnote to 588 @ 2.

26. Dr. Yilibu: What is a boneless creature in the sea that is stronger than fish with bones?—Octopus.

29. Always the crab must be cooked.

30. Dr. Yilibu:—“When you catch a crab and tie it up, something like foam comes from its mouth. People refer to it as ‘crying’, but there is no sound.” (Air mixes with water in the gills, due to the abrupt change in location).

31. This riddle is very common in Yap, Dr. Yilibu says. The solution is often “centipede”; see Taylor, 84 and note. The riddle is generally known in Indonesia, Malaysia, and adjoining areas, but not eastward into the Pacific.

32. Compare Filipino: Hart, 177 One boat but many paddlers.—Centipede, 178 Only one person but with many legs.—Millipede.

33. Filipino: Starr, 1 What thing that God made sleeps with its head down? Samoan: Heider, 104 Who is it whose feet are in the air but his head is directed downward?—“Der Fliegende Hund” (a kind of bird).

34. This riddle has been obviously derived from a tale said to be Yapese in origin and told in Yap as a legend. It is as follows:

Long, long ago there was only one mouse and one bat on Yap. The mouse had a boat and a sail. The bat, however, crawled on the ground because he had no mast or sail to travel with. One day the bat approached the mouse and said very softly and sadly, “Would you be kind enough to lend me your mast and sail for only one day?” The mouse nodded his head and gave only the sail to Mr. Bat. Mr. Bat’s heart filled with happiness and he forgot to take the mast with him. He took the sail on both his arms and sailed away. The mouse waited a day and Mr. Bat never returned the sail. He waited several days and he hasn’t seen Mr. Bat any more. So Mr. Mouse became very bashful and finally he ran in the boondocks with the mast and hid there. Mr. Bat was very happy sailing along. When he got very tired, he stopped and rested for a while and then he went on and on. Unfortunately he just sailed along without the mast. At that time he got his wings as the sail from Mr. Mouse. Mr. Mouse has the long tail which was the mast he kept.

35. For parallels see Taylor, headnote to 1101; Taylor, *Mongolian*, 707, 719, 720 with the notes. Filipino: Hart 357, 358, 360; Starr, 39 (seven windows, only one will shut) 51=60 (a guava with seven holes), 67. Chinese: Josef Trippner, “Rätsel aus der Provinz Chinghai, NW-China,” *Sinologica*, IX (1966), 35, No. 2 A pumpkin with seven holes, 3 A northern melon with seven holes. Water flows out of two and there are two more that can move, 5 A little board with seven little eyes.—Face (The Chinese think that the Chinese face is flat and call it a “board.”): Compare Samoan: Heider, 129 There is a marvelously beautiful house with five doors.—Man and the five senses. A similar riddle for the human body occurs less often. For an example see Filipino: Vanoverbergh, Kankanay, 161 It has nine holes. For discussion see W. A. Kozumplik, “Seven and Nine Holes in Man,” *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, V (1941), 1–24; Howard Meroney, *ibid.*, XI (1947), 257–259.

36a. Marshallese: W. H. Davenport, Coconut trees which are above a pond.

36c. The solution should be "Nose and mouth."

37. Compare Chinese: Trippner (as above, n. 35), 1 By day very busy; by night reeds cover the room.—Eyelashes.

38. For parallels see Taylor, headnotes to 841 and 966–968 @ 6. Hawaiian: Judd 196 My red cave, where the soldiers stand in rows dressed in white; Beckwith, 5. Compare Chinese: Trippner (as in note 35 above), 21 Brothers, more than thirty. The younger are born first, the elder later. The whole body is a pure white like silver. When important matters come up, one relies on the big brothers (i.e., in chewing a large or tough morsel).

39. For parallels see Taylor, headnotes to 841 and 966–968 @ 6. Hawaiian: Judd, 123; Marshallese: Davenport (as above, n. 36a), 5. Filipino: Hart, 879, 894, 895. Samoan: Heider, 130. Fijian: Fison, 31. Note the curious comparison in terms of a house in Chinese: Trippner (as above, n. 35) 1 When small, it has four pieces (posts); when large, two; when old, three.

40. The translator comments that the grinder is a bent lid of a can and has a small hole. For parallels see Taylor, headnote to 240 @ 11. Gilbertese: Hughes, 1 A man who eats through the top of his head and empties his bowels from underneath his chin.—Pandanus-fruit grater. The Samoan Heider, 87 Who is the man who is always grumbling? employs another theme.

43, 44. For parallels see Taylor, 240 with the note. Hawaiian: Judd, 216 My little man, his mouth is at his stomach and is opened from the back, Filipino: Vanoverbergh, *Kankanay*, 240 His stomach eats and food comes out at his back. Samoan: Heider, 170 Someone eats with his stomach. Although the solution "Plane" is probably of recent origin, the Hawaiian adze-riddle "My man that eats at the back and voids at the front" (Judd, 243=Beckwith, 24), as well as the preceding riddles for a grater, suggest that the conception may be an old one.

45. Marshallese: Davenport, *Journal of American Folklore*, LXVI (1953), 232 Riddle, riddle, there is a man who drinks with his mouth and afterward urinates with his mouth, what? Gilbertese: Hughes (as in n. 40 above) 12 A man whose stomach contents can be seen from the outside of his skin, when he eats. The food which he has swallowed cannot be concealed. Compare riddles for a pot, pitcher, or barrel cited in Taylor, headnote to 240 @ 9.

47. The riddler should not mention breaking into pieces. This notion conflicts with the personification of a bottle. 50–52. The contributor comments, "These riddles probably date from the time when Germans brought nails to Yap."

53. Compare Taylor, headnote to 906, nn. 8, 12.

56. Compare Hawaiian: Judd, 118 The command to *o'io* the long fish: if you live and I die, make a loud lament for me. (This involves a pun on the word to eat and the name of the fish), 119 The shell will weep for the fish. Samoan: G. Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (2d ed., Malina, Samoa, p. 129), 25 There is a man who shouts continually, then the storm comes.—Conch-shell trumpet, which responds with the wind.

57. Shell money consists of strings of pearl oyster shells tied together at intervals of five or ten shells.

58. For parallels see Taylor, headnote to 1680 @ 1. Compare Filipino: Vanoverbergh, *Isneg*, 442 (sunshine), 527 (index-finger). "As quick as thought" is an old and widely used proverbial comparison; see Archer Taylor and Bartlett Jere Whiting, *A Dictionary of American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases 1820–1880* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 370.

59. For parallels see Taylor, headnote to 1131. Filipino: Starr, 332; Hart,

902 My Negrito *compadre* accompanies in the light. But in the dark he cannot be seen. Dr. Yilibu:—Somebody who when you call him, he will call himself.—Echo. “We had this in Japanese song and riddle.”

60. For parallels see Taylor, 728 and the note.

61. Filipino: Vanoverbergh, *Isneg*, 58 It can lift up a *baray*. I cannot carry something small.—Water.

62. For parallels see Taylor 226, 753. Samoan: Heider, 151 Who is the strong giant whose body is invisible?, 155 Who is the giant who is overcome by no one? Filipino: Starr, 343, 344; Hart, 504 Here it is, here it is, but it cannot be seen, 505 Here it is, here it is, only on the leaves can it be seen, 506 There it is There it is! But you cannot see it.

63. Riddles for waves and surf refer characteristically to sound rather than appearance; see, with headnote and notes, Taylor 750 I know a man every talk he make his mouth foam, 751 I know a man talk every second, which illustrate the different conceptions. Samoan: G. Pratt (as cited above, n. 56), 13 There is a man, cries out continuously day and night.—Surf on the reef.

66. See Taylor, 1239 with headnote and footnote, citing versions of the notion that a coconut provides food, drink, and material for a fire and serves other uses also.

71. The informant adds the variant introduction, “If you have a sling-shot. . .” Filipino: Starr, 233; Hart, 173 Seven birds were shot by archers. Three were hit. How many were left?—Three, i.e., three died and four flew away. This is old and widely known. It is very likely a borrowing of European tradition. For English versions see (three birds) Wolfenstein, *Children’s Humor*, p. 114; Jonson, *Antigua*, p. 84; No. 19; (five birds) Waugh, *Canada*, p. 72, No. 822; (ten blackbirds) Fauset, *Nova Scotia*, p. 175, No. 206; Oral, Texas; (eleven blackbirds) Parsons, *Sea Islands*, S.C., p. 172, No. 148; (one hundred blackbirds) Parsons, *Barbados*, p. 283, No. 41; (eight sparrows) Oral, Texas; (six ducks) Beckwith, *Jamaica*, p. 208, No. 218; (two doves) Parsons, *Lesser Antilles*, Saba, 17; (ten wild turkeys) Oral, Texas. For European versions see Welsh: Hull and Taylor, 301. Scotch Gaelic: Nicolson, p. 79. Dutch: (Mone’s) *Anzeiger*, VII (1837), col. 267; Joos, 1108. German: Wossidlo, 879; Haffner, 308; Hanika-Otto, 503. Swiss: Sahler, *Münchenbuchsee*, 191. Danish: Kristensen, p. 246, XVIII, @ 1, Nos. 1 a–b. Norwegian: Bugge, *Telemarken*, 136. Swedish: Ström, p. 396, “Skamtsamma äknegator,” 12. Latin: [Mone’s] *Anzeiger*, VII (1837), col. 267, No. 273. French: Tabarin, *Oeuvres*, I, 110 (cited from Pelay y Bris); *Polissoniana*, p. 12; Rolland, 390–391; Ledieu, *Démuin*, p. 136; Carneau, p. 36. Breton: Sauvé, 155; LePennec, 32. Walloon: Colson, *Wallonia*, V, 136, No. 4. Catalan: Pelay y Briz, 259. Spanish: Demófilo, 381, 991; Rodríguez Marín, 248; Espinosa, 153. Portuguese: Pires de Lima, 276. Italian: Ferraro, *Archivio*, XXI (1902), 534. Argentinian: Lehmann Nitsche, 707 a–c. Chilean: Flores, 248. Finnish: Lönnrot, 376=Henssen, 295. For versions in European literary tradition see A. Spamer, *Die deutsche Volkskunde*, I (Berlin, 1935), 1935), 265; A. Andrae, “Zu einigen Schnäcken,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, XXIII (1913), 189; Lenz, *Cuentos*, pp. 295 and 378, Nos. 21 a–b. For an Indonesian version see Klinkert, p. 49, No. 30.

These references are cited in full in Archer Taylor, *A Bibliography of Riddles*, *FF Communications*, 126 (Helsinki, 1939) and I therefore hesitate to increase the length of this note by citing more bibliographical details.

74. The import of the riddle is not clear.

75. This notion of the sun is rare in riddling. Compare Taylor, 1657. Something touch you but you can’t touch it.

93. The failure to mention the red flesh of the watermelon is curious. For several varieties of riddles for a watermelon see the index of solutions in Taylor, but none resembles this Yapese riddle at all closely.

95. Dr. Yilibu comments that it eats at night, cannot see in the dark.

97. Compare Chinese Trippner (as in n. 35) 62 Four hairy youths (lit. Four named "Hair") bear a hairy beam. In front, "chi chi chi" (i.e., barking); behind, it bears a sabre and lance. For a reference to a dog having four legs see Taylor, headnote to 1476-1494 @ 10, but this world-riddle has little more than that fact in common with the Yapese riddle.

98. A few cows have been imported by agriculturists working with the people.

99. Compare Taylor, 263 What can walk on eart' an' ain't got no feet? with the note citing Indic parallels and the headnote to 561-562, n. 6. The collector comments, "This riddle is new. There are no snakes on Yap. Yapese see snakes in the movies."

100. Filipino: Hart, 270 The house of Parokangdokang has only two posts.

101, 102. See Taylor, 583 and 584 with the note, 924 with the note. Note especially Taylor, 583a Somet'in' in de house have red hair, 924 A whole lot of little red-head chilrun stay in a flat-top house. Samoan: Heider, 161 There is a company of almost a hundred brothers, all with black hats, but one puts all of them in a box, 175 A company of soldiers numbering a hundred men of small stature lives in a single house, but something violent can happen by which all are destroyed.

104. Gilbertese: Hughes, 9 A beautiful house and the number of people in it is sixty. The people in this house all lie sleeping. When anyone is going to leave, he gets up and goes out and strikes his head against the side of the house, in order to say goodbye to his friends inside and also to the house itself. When his head has been knocked against the house, he says goodbye in this fashion *Tsee* and he goes away, never to return—Matchbox.

105. Riddles for a doll are rare and the few examples that can be found employ other themes. See, for example, Taylor, 287 What has a mouth, but cannot eat?

The collector comments, "Lifelike Yapese dolls about a foot high are carved out of wood by a few experts. Other dolls with joints are imported from Japan and the United States and can be bought at the Yap Trading Company. Dolls were available or at least were seen during the German occupation."

106, 107. The riddler should not include so unequivocal a descriptive detail as "erasing."

109. Compare Taylor, 282 What has an eye, but cannot see?, with the note.

111. Compare Taylor, headnote to 751-754. Filipino: Starr, 87 Day and night I cry.

113. It is unusual to name the function (to catch fish) before the shape (like a spider's web). Compare Samoan: Heider, 112 Who is the man: he lives in a house built of a net?—Spider.

114. The collector comments, "The nets now in use are bedsize. They are made in Japan or have been obtained from the U.S. Military. During the Japanese occupation the Yapese no doubt saw and used room-size mosquito nets of the sort commonly used in Japan."

117, 118. Compare Samoan: Heider, 174 Something very quick that has no feet.—Automobile.

119. The collector comments, "This would seem to have been taken from a schoolbook. Steel is known to students and workcrews on construction pro-

jects. There is no wool on Yap." Compare Filipino: Hart, 906.

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