

WONDERS

Seeking the Truth in a Universe of Mysteries

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MYSTERIES in S. E. Asia



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WONDERS

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Wonders is expanding. Issues will now consist of 26 to 30 pages. Costs of production have risen. Hopefully the new subscription rates can be maintained for a couple of years.

EDITORIAL

The Pace of Change

One hundred thirty years ago Philip Henry Gosse was sifting through the history of sea serpent reports looking for a basis for them in the animal kingdom (pp. 69-70 of this issue). Things have changed only marginally since then. We have more reports. A computerized study of them has produced some generic types of sea monsters. Today the subject appears to be less a topic of discussion than it has ever been.

The subject is no longer considered a "news" item. They do not have social significance or formal recognition. The mainstream of biology does not have a kind word for them. The number of persons openly interested in the subject is extremely small. The two relevant categories of people -- the sighters and the aficionados -- are unlikely to be put in touch with each other very often.

The subject is exemplary of the way the more things change, the more they stay the same. The situation cautions us not to expect too much in the way of the advancement of knowledge when pressing the tough questions of natural history.

When our marker for change is the culture that surrounds us we are lead to doubt the capacity for growth when questions such as this one remain shunned for so long. Our culture can be a drag upon the intellect. The better marker for each of us is how well we absorb new knowledge as individuals and then move on to still more.

MYSTERIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

by Mark A. Hall

In 1890, A.D. Frederickson, a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, had the journal of his travels in the Orient published in London. He had spent the years of 1870-71 and 1876-78 traveling in Southeast Asia. On one of his journeys he crossed the strait of Salat Tabrao between Singapore and Malaya and visited the state of the Maharajah of Johore. There Frederickson made the sketch shown here on the cover (p.47). He explained the sketch with these words:

A curious specimen of hairy humanity, not unlike Darwin's ideal "Origin of Species" was at the time of my visit being conveyed to the coast for shipment to some society at Calcutta. This is the individual as he appeared. He had been found in a wild state in the deep forest of Johore, where he had existed upon fruit and roots, and presumably had never seen a human soul. I have no doubt that in Barnum's possession this man would have turned out a mine of gold, although not a pleasant subject to look upon, rather like some of the hideous Santos one meets with in the Nubian desert. (*Ad Orientem*, p. 276-77)

This record is one of many mysteries in Southeast Asia about which we have too little information. Here with the aid of a map I will present summaries and references for some of these mysteries in the areas of Borneo, Sumatra, Java, and the Malay Peninsula. Your additions, corrections, and comments in response to this listing are invited.

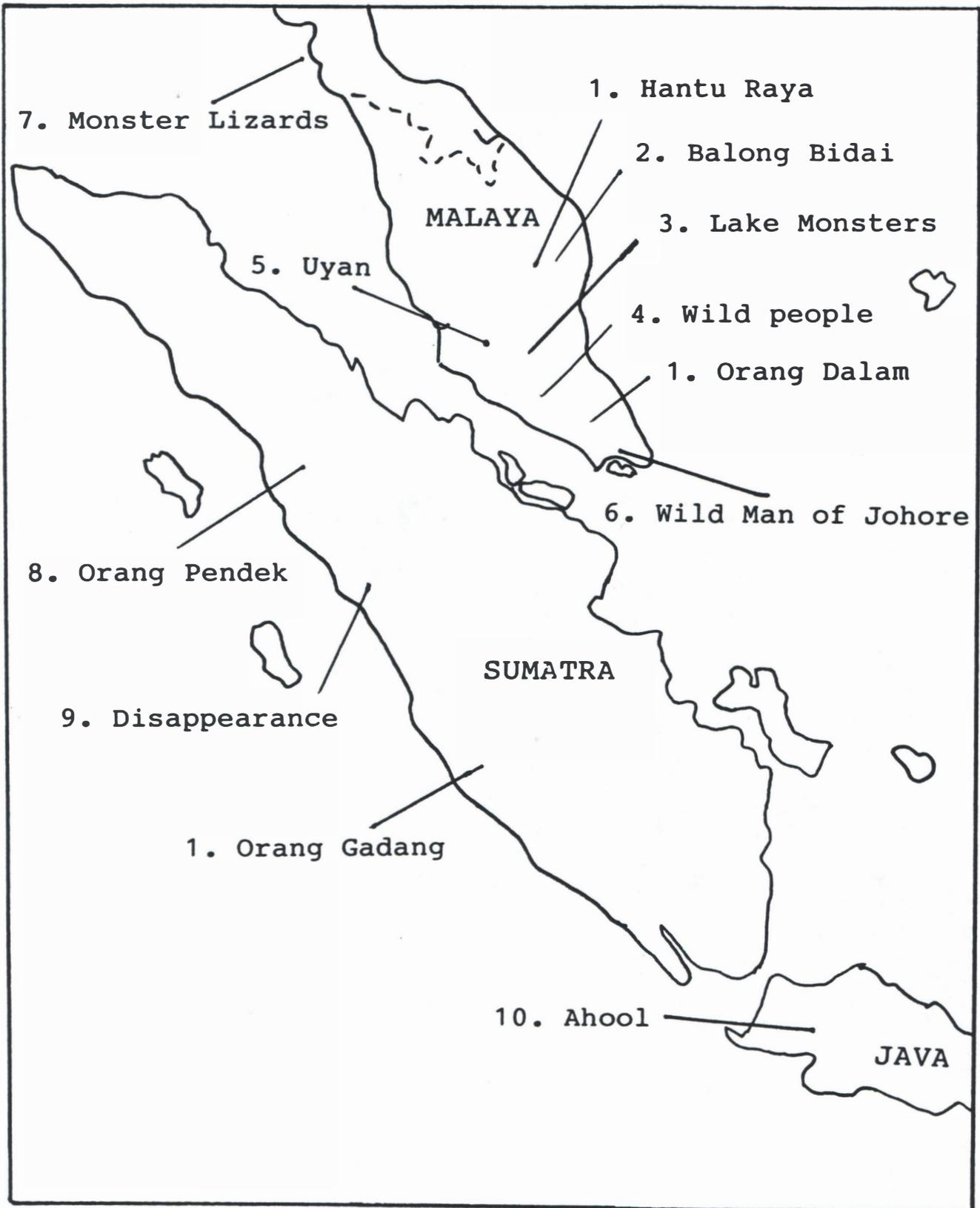
The following numbered items are keyed to the outline maps on pages 50-51.

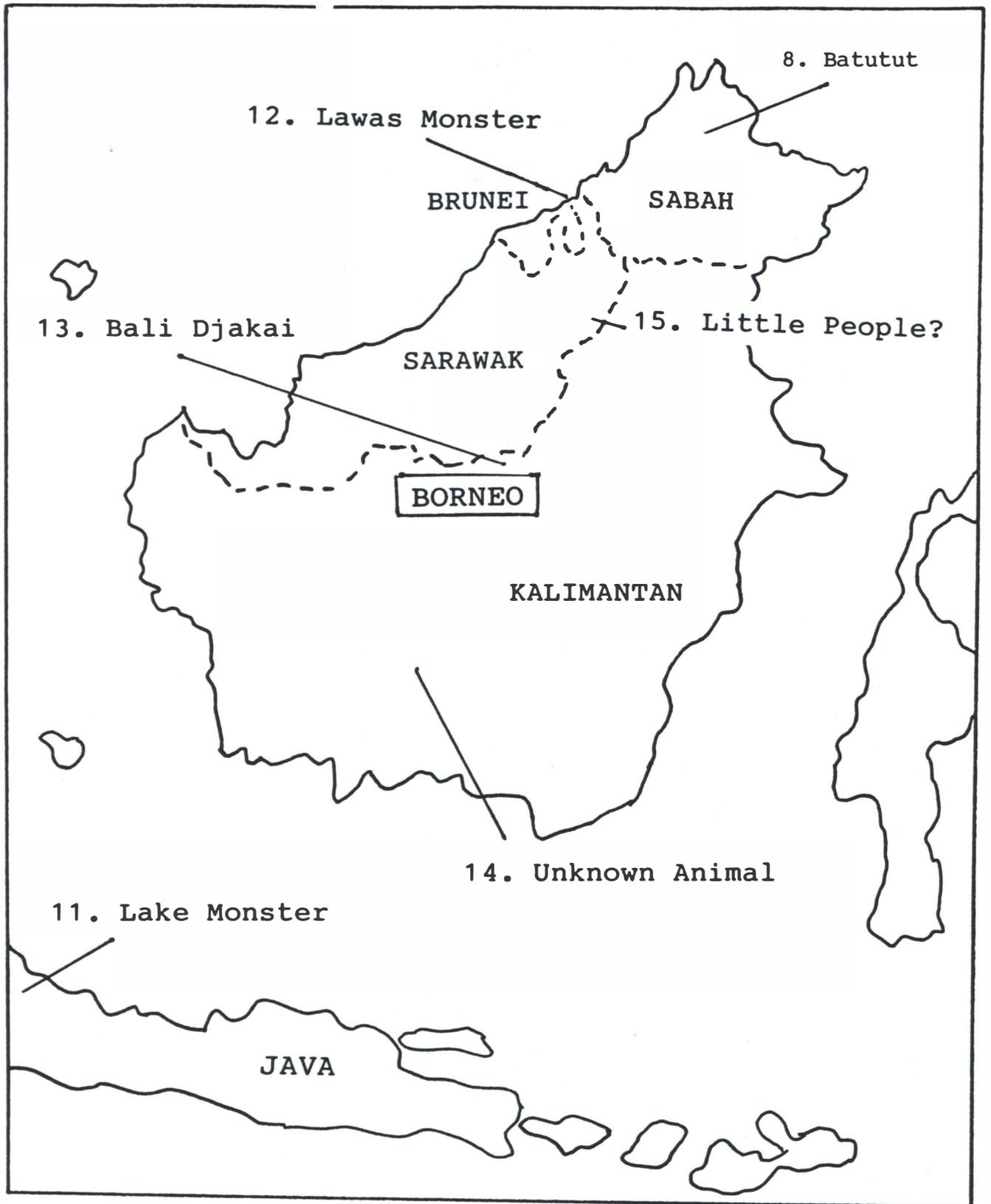
1. **True Giants** - Several traditions in this part of the world indicate the presence of True Giants, the wondrously tall survivors of the fossil primate Gigantopithecus. The clearest record of their presence can be found in the sightings and tracks observed on the Malay peninsula. The **Orang Dalam** ("Man of the Interior") has been reported from the provinces of Pahang and Johore. The creatures are 10 to 20 feet tall and leave four-toed tracks.

In the central portion of the peninsula that is today part of Malaysia the people know the Great Spirit of the Jungle, **Hantu Raya**. Ronald McKie relates an interview with a former game ranger, Mat Derani, who described an encounter his uncles had with Hantu Raya. They had been attracted to him by his strong smell, which was compared to fresh spring onions:

My uncles went to the forest to collect rotan and found Hantu Raya himself asleep beside a tree. They were very frightened. There he lay curled up like an immense sakai (aboriginal), much bigger than a man, with a lot of curly black hair and wearing only a short sarong. Although my uncles feared him, they wanted to talk to him and woke him up. (*The Company of Animals*, p.197)

This was accomplished by tapping on a tree. Hantu Raya opened his eyes which were compared to "the red of a tiger's eyes at night." Hantu Raya got up and "hopped" away down a path. This locomotion





is puzzling, but, according to the narrator, Hantu Raya does not walk but "can only hop on his heels."

There is more knowledge of True Giants to the north of the Malay peninsula. It is worth mentioning for the continuity of distribution that it suggests. In the mountains where Burma, Thailand, and Laos meet there is talk of the Kung-lu. Hossoldt Davis recorded these words on the subject:

...the report of a creature, the Kung-lu (the Mouth Man), which had terrified the people for centuries. The Kung-lu, according to Thunderface, was a monster that resembled a gorilla, a miniature King Kong, about twenty feet tall. It lived on the highest mountains, where its trail of broken trees was often seen, and descended into the villages only when it wanted meat, human meat. Elephants roamed hereabouts, we learned, and we were told also that no one in Kensi had been eaten by the Kung-lu for more years than the eldest could remember.

Despite this anticlimax the story was interesting because it was common all along the borders of Chinese Yunnan, French Indo-China, and Siam. Another curious thing about it was that the Mouth-man never ate fat people, as one would expect, but the very thinnest of them; what he liked was bones. (Land of the Eye, p.111)

In Sumatra True Giants are likely be equated to the Orang Gadang ("Big Man") about which too little has been collected to tell us just how big it is reputed to be.

Brief reports have told of True Giants elsewhere in Southeast Asia, specifically a 13-ft giant in Vietnam in 1965 and a 20-ft giant in Borneo in 1958.

2. **Balong Bidai** - This is the most feared of monsters on the rivers of peninsular Malaya. Ronald McKie noted that river Malays did not like to discuss these things with foreigners. McKie and wildlife ranger James Hislop were able to discuss this thing with a Malayan ex-game ranger, Mat Derani. The Balong Bidai was described as being like a long mat. It rolled up its victims and drowned them. It lived in rivers in deep pools. The informant knew of men who had died by this means. Their bodies were never recovered. Some people explain these notions as caused by natural gas eruptions or whirlpools. I see in it the possible presence of the "hide" known from freshwater lakes and rivers in North America, South America, and perhaps Africa. The "hide" appears to be a survival of the prehistoric sea scorpions and a deadly predator wherever it appears.

3. **Lake monsters** - Two lakes on the Malay peninsula, Tasek Bera and Tasek Chini, have been the scene of are appearances of lake monsters. The were immense with long necks. The head appeared to have horns that were soft.

4. **Wild people** - In 1953 some tall wild men and women were reported in Malaya and became a news sensation. They were not shy of approaching humans. They wore clothing and spoke a strange language. Rubber workers were too fearful of them to be friendly.

5. **Uyan** - David Labang told Jeffrey McNeely and Paul Wachtel of seeing one of the Uyan people in Pahang while collecting specimens 24 miles east of Kuala Lumpur. He saw a three-foot high, hairy man, very much like a human being, which sounds like the Orang Pendek.

6. **Wild Man of Johore** - As noted at the outset, A.D. Frederickson sketched this wild man in the last century. Without more details by way of description, a sketch with no scale is open to different interpretations.

7. **Monster Lizards** - In 1961 large lizards were observed by military fliers to be sunning themselves on small islands off the western coast of Malaya. They appeared to be up to 14 feet long, larger than the recognized monitor lizards in the area.

8. **Orang Pendek** - Much has been written about the Orang Pendek ("short fellow"), a small hairy man-like being. It has been described as two to four feet tall. It has been seen on Sumatra and has parallels on the Malay Peninsula and on Borneo. The latest evidence comes from John MacKinnon, an observer of orang-utans in the wild in Sabah. He came upon the tracks of the Batutut on the island of Borneo. The Batutut was described to him as a nocturnal jungle-dweller that walks upright like a man but is only four feet tall. It feeds on river snails but was said to sometimes kill people and remove their livers to feed upon.

The tracks MacKinnon saw were triangular and measured 6 inches long and 4 inches wide. He later saw casts from Malaya showing larger but similar tracks attributed to the Orang Pendek. MacKinnon thinks footprints of the **Sedapa** or **Umang** in Sumatra are made by the same type of creature.

9. **Disappearance** - In 1982 a foreign languages professor from the U.S.A. disappeared in western Sumatra. John Raede was 68 when he vanished after June 7 while studying a community 200 miles northwest of Jakarta, Indonesia.

10. **Ahool** - Giant bats were identified by Ernst Bartels on the island of Java. They were known as the "Ahool" for the sound they made. Bartels' research over many years found evidence of them also in Vietnam, Samoa, and parts of Africa.

11. **Lake Monster (Java)** - Lake Patenggang in western Java is reported to harbor lake monsters like those in No. 3 above.

12. **Lawas Monster** - A Malaysian news agency reported the sighting of a river monster from Sarawak in 1985. The creature was already known as the Lawas Monster for the Lawas River it inhabits. It had been reported some months earlier as well. The few particulars given described it as having "a neck as big as a 40-gallon drum, eyes like electric light bulbs, and head like a cow." Unnamed wildlife experts were of the opinion it was only a dugong.

13. **Bali Djakai** - In the 1930s explorer, writer, and sometimes-secret-agent Leonard Clark was asking about the rumors of "tailed-men" that proliferated in the countries that bordered the China Sea. In doing so, while working his way north into Borneo, he first heard of the demons said to live there. A Lawangan chief (kapala) told him "...in the mountains where even the Lawangans never went...it was there the adat (legend) said the bali djakai (demons) lived! The devils had been seen for generations even south of the mountains. The kapala seemed disinclined to talk about them."

Clark moved on into those mountains and found a clearing with a spring at its head:

I could see that the clearing was a favorite haunt of animals seeking mineral salts. The ground, exposed to rains, was cut up with hoofs, paws, and feet. It was in the latter that we were most interested -- huge human-like tracks, not unlike a bear's. I took them to be those of some great ape. This need not be the tracks of the orang-utans, for the natives report apes never recorded by an explorer. (*Wanderer Till I Die*, p.189)

A nighttime vigil at the clearing gave Clark and his Dayak guide, Maanyan, a view of this track-maker. First, they watched a tiger that came to drink despite its detection of their tracks and a helmet left on the ground. Then, a large creature appeared at the edge of the clearing but it could not be seen fully. It disappeared and then reappeared twenty minutes later:

...I saw a movement on the opposite side of the clearing -- the beast moved just inside the shadow that fell over half the clearing. Then it moved out farther, its head and shoulders now bathed in the rays from the moon. Having satisfied itself that the tiger had left the clearing, the great beast moved slowly into the light. Beyond all doubt, it was a species of great ape. The hairy arms, shoulders, legs and chest were out of all normal man-like proportion. The head perched on a bull neck, and rose to a peak like a pistol bullet over the bulging shoulders. The thick legs were inadequately short, so that when the monster lumbered forward it used its arms for upright support.

The animal picked up the helmet, studied it, and then looked toward the two men concealed nearby. It approached them and twenty feet from their tree it came across their tracks. It took the scent from them and then stood on its legs and beat its chest. It circled the tree and beat its chest with fists the size of the helmet. It stood on its legs, gave a scream, and disappeared into the vegetation.

The Lawangans who later examined the tracks it left identified them as the prints of the bali djakai. The tracks of this creature were distinguished from those of the orang-utan by these people who knew the tracks of that great ape.

The characteristics that help the most to identify this animal are the tracks (both man-like and bear-like), the size and bulk, and

the locomotion on all fours with occasional resort to standing on its legs. The likely identity of the "demon" is the very same primate that has become known as the Yeti.

While the fossil primate identity of the Yeti is arguable (I favor the type known as *Dryopithecus indicus*), the characteristics of a large pongid listed by McNeely, Cronin, and Emery (in *Oryx*, 1973) are found elsewhere in the world. Borneo appears to be one such place. McNeely and Wachtel in *Soul of the Tiger* (1988) cite the Earl of Cranbrook for collecting information on the "beruang-rambai" in central Borneo. Odette Tchernine gives more of a description of the same thing when she quotes from her correspondence with Lord Medway, who was working at the University of Malaya at Kuala Lumpur. This creature was supposed to live in the Kelinggang Hills. It had long black hair on its arms and thighs. It went on all fours and on its hind legs. When standing it was six feet tall.

I have seen enough non-phonetic attempts to render foreign words to be able to suggest that the words "Beruang-rambai" may be attempting to convey the same name as "Bali-djakai." Which is the more correct -- if either is -- I cannot say. Leonard Clark's encounter tells us that the ape-like Yeti in Borneo is referred to as a "Demon" by those people who have on rare occasions encountered it.

Similar unknown animals (known as "cryptids" to collectors of such reports) seem to be appearing in areas bordering the South China Sea. Unknown goats and apes are reported both from Borneo and the island of Palawan in the Philippines. Clark refers to his Dayak guide as having seen some kind of wild goat. The cryptids on Palawan were sought by zoologist Dean Worcester in the 19th century. Except for the *bali-djakai* we have almost no descriptions being shared with us for these other cryptids, however. But these hints raise the possibility that both may extend through Borneo and to Palawan. They could be the ape-like Yeti and a goat such as the *Pseudoryx*, described from Vietnam by John MacKinnon in July of 1993.

14. Unknown animal (Borneo) - Leonard Clark preserved for us the following words about another cryptid, which is without a name:

...there is the story of that bear-like creature that gathers by the thousands on the unexplored banks of the Murung River. The Dyaks of this district -- the Murangs -- claim that this gigantic and ferocious beast comes out of the uninhabited jungle back from the river and feeds on river berries that bloom once a year. At such times, all traffic stops on the Murung -- for these beasts can swim, and will attack any boat in sight! In proof of this, they have brought bodies of men literally clawed to shreds and let Dutch authorities at Purak-Tyahu examine them.
[Wanderer Till I Die, p. 189]

15. Little People ? (Borneo) - Borneo may have "little people" known as the Ujit as well. The only source known to me is Frederick Boyle in his book *The Savage Life* (1876). The book is sufficiently rare that I have been unable to find a copy of it. He is reported to tell of the Ujit of Borneo on page 36.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Robert Bartholomew and Loren E. Coleman for material used to prepare this summary.

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13. Bali djakai: Leonard Clark, A WANDERER TILL I DIE (NY: Funk & Wagnalls, 1937), 174, 188-190, 192-195.
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14. Unknown animal: Clark, WANDERER TILL I DIE, 189.
15. Little people: Frederick Boyle, THE SAVAGE LIFE (1876), 36.

IN THE PHILIPPINES WITH DEAN WORCESTER

by Mark A. Hall

One hundred years ago Dean Conant Worcester was hunting specimens of wildlife in the Philippine Islands. He was engaged in the second of two such expeditions that took place prior to the Spanish-American War, a conflict that would set his homeland, the U.S.A., against the rulers of the islands, the Spanish.

Dean Worcester collected birds, mammals, and reptiles while visiting the major islands of the archipelago. He also pursued some stories of strange animals -- an ape, a kind of goat, a unicorn -- and recorded peculiar beliefs of the local people that may relate to the existence of still other wildlife. I will be reprinting here extracts from his description of the two expeditions, *The Philippine Islands and Their People* (NY: Macmillan, 1899 edition).

Dean Worcester was born in Thetford, Vermont, on October 1, 1866. In 1870-1874 an extensive collecting trip by zoologist Dr. Joseph Beal Steere was to have a considerable influence on Worcester's life. Steere did some collecting in the Philippines on that trip but felt more needed to be done. When he returned in 1887-1889 Worcester was on the expedition along with Dr. Frank S. Bourns, E.L. Moseley, and Mateo Francisco. Francisco was born in the Philippines but had left with Steere in 1874. The Steere expedition visited 15 of the islands. Worcester was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1889. He returned to the Philippines in 1890-1893 and made another circuit of the islands along with Bourns and Francisco. The three were financed by Louis F. Menage of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

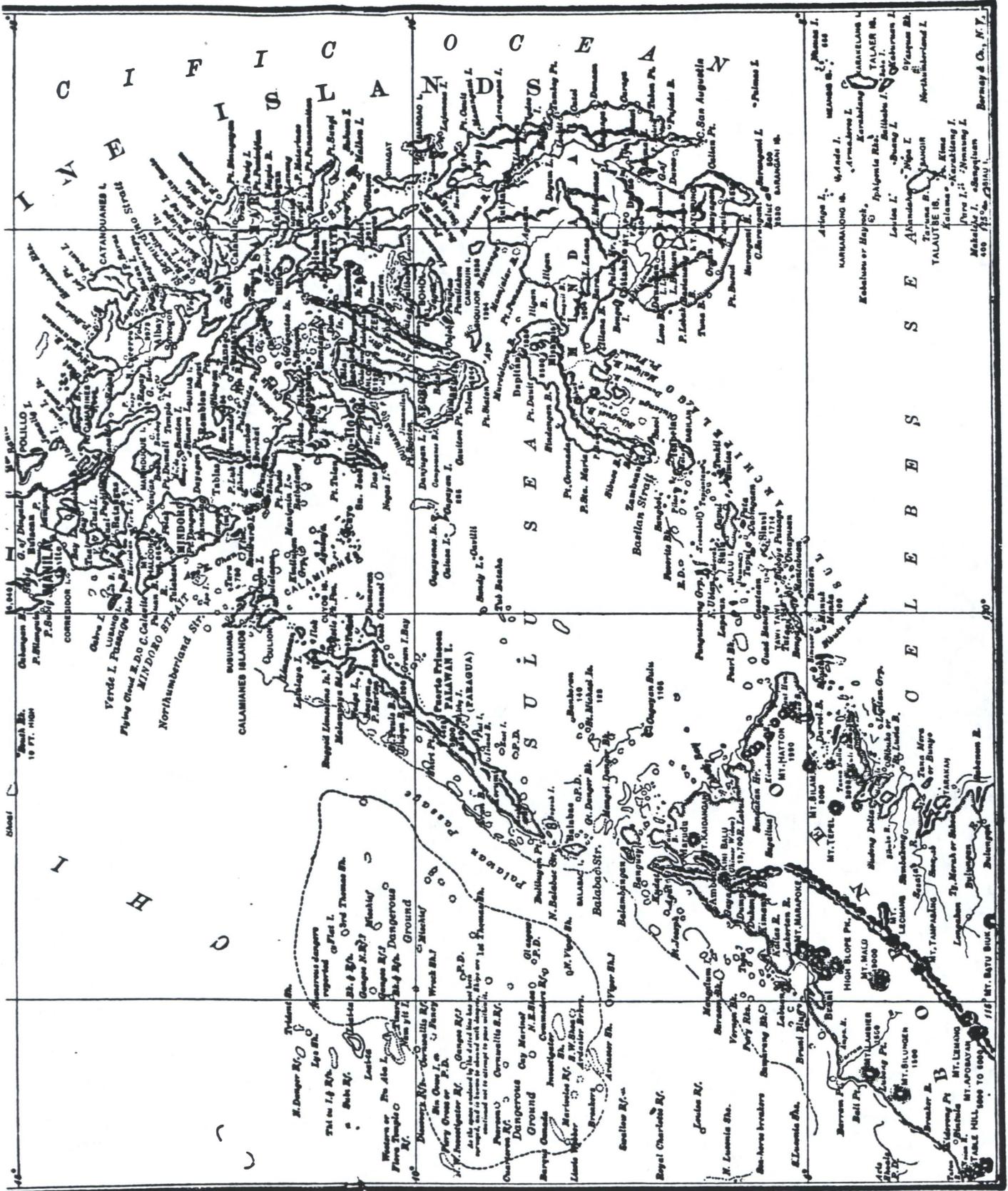
The following extracts are mainly from collecting experiences on the islands of Palawan and Mindoro. Page numbers for the original text and my insertions appear in brackets.

The population of the Philippines is roughly estimated at about 8,000,000. Of the natives, who form the bulk of it, there are more than eighty distinct tribes, each with its own peculiarities. They are scattered over hundreds of islands, and one who would really learn to know something of the country and its people must travel widely. More than that, he must leave cities and towns behind, and turning from the beaten path, push into the almost unexplored regions where the wild tribes are to be found. [p. 57]

* * *

Palawan is the westernmost of the larger islands of the Philippine group. It is about three hundred miles in length by twenty in average breadth. There are high mountains in the interior throughout a considerable extent, but there is said to be a large plain in the northern part of the island. Here, too, if accounts are to be believed, is a lake opening to the sea by a subterranean river. The whole island is well watered, but the numerous streams are necessarily small, as the distance from the mountains to the coast is everywhere short. [p. 80]

* * *



A portion of Dean Worcester's map of the Philippines including his corrections.

In the southern part of Palawan **Moros** are found, in the central portion and along the northern coasts a tribe called **Tagbanuas**, and in the northern mountain region **Battaks**. We knew the Tagbanuas to be a pacific people, and we hoped they might be of use to us. We had heard circumstantial accounts of two strange mammals said to inhabit the mountain region. One was a large ape, and the other a goat. A Spanish officer who had been stationed at one of the outposts in the island had assured us that a wild goat had been brought him by the Tagbanuas, and had been kept in captivity by him for some time. Another Spaniard had vowed that he had himself seen the apes, which were as large as men.

While we did not take much stock in the goat story, the proximity of the island of Borneo led us to give some consideration to the big-monkey tale, and we were anxious to get hold of the mountain people and learn the truth.

There happened to an engineer in the place, who was conducting a private experiment in civilization. He had won the confidence of a considerable number of Tagbanuas, and had persuaded them to come down from the mountains and construct a village under his direction....

He promised to make inquiries among his people in regard to strange animals, and a few days later sent a messenger to summon us to his house, where we found a number of Tagbanuas assembled. They assured us positively that both the goat and the big ape existed in the island. Not only did they have names of their own for these animals, but one of the young men insisted that he had actually seen a goat within two weeks. He described it in detail, and as his account sounded plausible, and there were no tame goats which he could have seen, we were inclined to believe him....

Mateo started at once to look for the goats, taking the man who professed to have seen one as guide, while for the next week Bourns and I studied our strange hosts, or hunted near their village.

[pp. 96-99]

* * *

The day after the **mascala** festival Mateo returned. His trip had resulted in complete failure. His guide had at first stood by his assertion that he had seen a goat himself. As they drew nearer their destination, he decided that it was **his uncle** who had seen it, and when they were finally on the ground, admitted that he had only heard from "the old men" that there **used** to be goats there! As there was nothing to indicate that even the old men had spoken the truth, Mateo returned.

We at once decided to attempt the ascent of Mt. Pulgar (Thumb Mountain), lying southwest of Puerto Princesa. We had been assured that both goats and apes abounded on it, and as we knew that the few attempts to climb it had failed, we expected to find conditions undisturbed by man.

Three previous attempts had been made to ascend this mountain, but in each case Tagbanua guides had got lost in the forest, and had led the exploring party aimlessly about until its members were only too glad to get back to the place from which they had started. The Tagbanuas had always insisted that there was no path to the base of Pulgar, but this we did not believe. We wanted to win their confidence, and learn the truth from them; and it was decided that I should

go back to town, cross the bay, ascend the Iwahig River until I struck a **rancheria**, and devote my energies to getting into their good graces.... [pp. 105-106]

* * *

While a corpse is awaiting burial, the Tagbanuas are in dread of a mythical creature called **balbal**, which they say comes from the Moro country. It sails through the air like a flying-squirrel. In form it is man-like, with curved nails which it uses to tear up the thatch of houses, and a long tongue with which it reaches down and "licks up" the bodies. [p. 109]

[The presence of giant bats in Java, Vietnam, and Samoa has been suggested by naturalist Ernst Bartels. (Ernst Bartels with Ivan T. Sanderson, "The One True Batman," Fate July, 1966; Reader's Digest, **Man and Beast**, London: DK Direct, 1993, p.33). The mobility of bats has made them the most widespread and naturally-appearing genus of mammals known except for human beings. Knowledge of the **balbal** may indicate that giant bats also occur in the Philippines. In northwestern Luzon among the Tinguian anthropologist Fay-Cooper Cole has noted the **alan** which I find again suggestive of giant bats.

The **alan**...are to-day considered deformed spirits who live in the forests: "They are as large as people but have wings and can fly; their toes are at the back of their feet and their fingers point backwards from their wrists." (Fay-Cooper Cole, "Traditions of the Tinguian," Field Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Series, Pub. 180, vol. 15 no. 1, Chicago, 1915)]

* * *

When we first broached the subject of ascending Pulgar, the Tagbanuas declared it to be impossible. They said there was no path to the mountain, they did not know the way; that even if we could find it, the "**packda**" (big apes) would roll stones down on us; and finally the old men had told them that near the top the sides of the mountain were perpendicular, so that we could not get up anyhow. No Tagbanua had ever yet climbed Pulgar; how then could a white man hope to do it? We assured them that we were looking for "**packda**," and after watching the effect of our heavy rifles they gained some confidence. It took us a long time to win them over, but they finally consented to accompany us on condition that they should be allowed to run as soon as the dreaded apes appeared.

On the day appointed for the start Bourns was ill, but the time remaining was so short that delay was out of the question, so Mateo and I went on without him, accompanied by nine Tagbanuas. We soon found that, as I had all the time suspected, there was a path straight to Pulgar. [pp.115-116]

* * *

We tarried at this settlement only long enough for lunch, and hastened on. By four o'clock I was ready to make camp, 2500 feet up on the side of Pulgar. I chose to stop at this point because above it the mountain was one huge moss-grown stone pile, and the streams were all deep down in the crevices between the rocks. Near the site of our camp a fine brook came gushing from the mountain-side, and furnished us with a plentiful supply of delicious water....

In the morning we left one man to watch the camp, and pushed on, taking with us food, water, extra clothing, two rubber blankets, and two guns. We soon got above the line of large trees. At no point had we seen the palms on the buds of which the big apes were said to feed, and we knew they would not inhabit the mass of ferns and wet scrub which lay between us and the summit. Our men soon realized that the "packda" theory was exploded, and the mere mention of the word was enough to set them off into fits of laughter. Our climb was not without its rewards, however. Exquisite ferns and orchids were on every hand, but what especially interested us were the remarkable pitcher-plants, of which we found two species....

We soon found ourselves in the clouds. It was fortunate that I had mapped out a route the night before, for otherwise we should never have made the summit. As it was, our progress was steady, though slow. The scrub grew thicker as we climbed higher, and we had to wait for our men to cut their way through the tangle, foot by foot.

The summit proved to be one of the disappearing sort. A dozen times we thought we had almost reached it, but it was after two o'clock when we finally stood on the point of the thumb.

A cold wind swept the crest of the mountain, and in five minutes after we stopped climbing we were chilled to the bone. Our Tagbanuas had never experienced such cold, and were much alarmed; but we gave them heavy clothing, and when they had built a fire they felt better. We had been shut in by dense clouds, but suddenly they broke away, and it was worth all the fatigue of the trip to see the astonishment of those savages. They now realized for the first time that they were in the clouds, and we could hardly make out which surprised them most, that fact, or the wonderful view which spread out before them. They had never dreamed of anything like it, nor, for that matter, had we. To the north and south lay absolutely unbroken forest, as far as the eye could reach. To the east we looked over the Mindoro Sea to distant mountain peaks beyond it, and to the west we searched the China Sea in vain for any sign of land; but our eyes ever came back to that vast expanse of splendid forest, which seemed to stand as it was in the beginning, with never a trace of the marring hand of man. [pp. 118-120]

[It is worthwhile to note that one hundred years ago Worcester found the Philippine Islands showing considerable deforestation. Much of the time of the collecting expeditions was spent just locating suitable forested areas where collecting efforts could be undertaken. While on Palawan Worcester collected a large python. He makes no mention, however, of anything like the things reported there in 1976. The tropical depression "Sisang" swept over the island that year dropping heavy rains. Giant snake-like creatures were seen in the rivers, one of them sixty-feet long (Manila Post, 21 Jan 1976). Worcester spent time on the island of Cagayan Sulu but made no mention of the "Berbalangs" reported by Ethelbert F. Skertchly, whose study of the island's customs was made in that era. His work drew the attention of Rupert T. Gould and is discussed in "The Berbalangs of Cagayan Sulu" in *Oddities: A Book of Unexplained Facts* 3rd ed (NY: University Books, 1965)]

* * *

Mindoro is an island of some 4500 square miles. It lies directly south of Manila Bay, and its capital, Calapan, is distant about a hundred twenty miles from Manila. Nowhere in the northern Philippines is there an island so little known, or one so universally avoided by white men. The natives frequently refer to it significantly as the "white man's grave." At the present time it is celebrated chiefly for the unsavoury reputation of its people, the heaviness of its rainfall, and the deadliness of the miasma in its fever-smitten lowlands...

In the interior of the island are a number of lofty mountains, the highest peak attaining an altitude of 8865 feet. These mountains and the adjacent lowlands are clothed in magnificent forest which the hand of man has never disturbed. Under the shadows of its mighty trees dwell a race of primitive savages, the Mangyans. They bear a very bad reputation, which is wholly undeserved.

Between the mountains and the west coast are extensive plains, covered with high grass. East of the mountains are heavily timbered lowlands, crossed by numerous rivers. The surface details given in the best charts are wholly unreliable, and such large rivers as the Baco are left out altogether.

The rainfall is enormous. There are no statistics available, but it rains heavily during nine months of the year, and not infrequently during the other three, as I have learned to my sorrow. Exploration in the interior can be carried on only at the height of the dry season, in March, April, and May....

We had been tempted to visit the island by stories of a strange animal called the "timarau," which was said to abound in the interior. No two descriptions of the creature seemed to agree. One man solemnly assured us that it had but one horn, which grew from the top of its head. Another was in some doubt as to its horns, but was positive that it possessed only one eye, which was situated in the middle of its forehead.

Now, while we did not expect to discover a unicorn or a cyclops, we did feel reasonably sure that there must be some foundation for all these improbable tales. and we had determined to have a timarau, if such a thing existed, in spite of the climate and the people. [pp. 362-65]

* * *

Moseley decided to go home, and left us. Our party was now reduced to four, and in order to cover more ground, it was decided that Dr. Steere and Mateo should go up the Baco River, while Bourns and I tried the Adlobang, at the mouth of which there was said to be a town called Naujan. [p. 367]

* * *

...we at once began to hunt for the (to us) half-mythical timarau. The Mangyans knew it well. The account which they gave of it sounded reasonable, and ultimately proved correct. They said it was like a small buffalo, with horns running upward and backward, like those of a goat. They added that it was very shy and very vicious, that it attacked and killed much larger water-buffalo when opportunity offered, and that it did not hesitate to charge a man if encountered at close quarters.

The water in the river was very low, and we found plenty of timarau trails in its partially dry bed. At first we tried still-

hunting, but without success. Then we followed the trails for hours, without ever catching sight of the beasts that made them. We procured Mangyan guides and crawled through the dense jungle to the places where timarau were supposed to bathe or sleep, but they were never at home. We found that the bulls were in the habit of coming out on the sand-bars at night to settle their private differences, and in the full light of the moon we watched for them all night long, but they were too sharp for us.

We learned from the Mangyans that nearer the coast there was a lake, named after the town of Naujan, and they described it as a veritable hunter's paradise....and timarau were plenty along its shores....

Naujan Lake empties into the Adlobang River by a sluggish stream, in which a current is hardly perceptible. In fact, if the Adlobang rises suddenly, it often happens that the current sets back into the lake....

The lake itself was some ten miles long and six wide. Its waters were very warm, and almost stagnant. The Captain told us that sharks ran up from the sea during the rainy season, and could not make their way over the bar and into the Adlobang again after the floods were over, so that they were forced to remain in the lake. This proved to be true. Later on we ourselves repeatedly saw large sharks. [pp. 378-82]

[Worcester continued to hunt the timarau. He succeeded in catching sight of them. And he wounded two of them. But his efforts did not obtain a specimen. In Manila Bourns and Worcester rejoined Dr. Steere and Francisco, who had obtained five specimens for the expedition. On later visits to Mindoro Worcester was able to take more after engaging the same tracker who had helped Steere. The timarau is the Dwarf Water Buffalo (*Bubalus mindorensis*), similar to animals found on the island of Celebes.

While on the island of Busuanga Worcester made the following notes on beliefs that may or may not relate to other unknown creatures in the Philippines. "Spirits" and "gods" can be living things in some cultures. It could also be that "babalyán" relates to "berbalangs."]

Unlike the Mangyans, Tagbanuas care for their sick. They have doctors called "babalyán." The babalyán are persons who are supposed to have encountered in the forest a "man of the wood," said to be "like a human spirit, but small in stature." This mysterious being makes as though he would hurl his lance at the person who meets him, but if the latter shows no fear, gives him a pearl. The fortunate owner of such a pearl never allows any one else to see it, but when called to a sick-bed, looks at it himself. If it is dark and lustreless, he will not undertake the case; but if it is translucent, he prescribes what he considers to be the proper remedy.... [p. 494]

* * *

The gods of the Tagbanuas are the "Dwēndi," which have the form of men, live in caves, and are very powerful. They eat a peculiar food, which looks like boiled rice, but moves as if alive. The Dwēndi deceive men and children, and carry them away.

The *Majalók* are evil spirits, which devour the hearts and livers of very sick persons. They, too, have the form of men, but can fly through the air. They go about putting their ears to the ground, and listening for the sound of weeping, in order to learn where they can find food. [p. 497]

[Worcester suffered one of several bouts with illness in the islands just prior to his departure. He went down with typhoid fever. While recovering he boarded a ship back to the United States at Manila. He concluded his book with this paragraph.]

At ten o'clock that evening the lights of Manila sank into the bay as we steamed toward Corregidor, and when I awoke the next day nothing was visible save gray mist and the ever-restless waters of the China Sea. I had seen my last of the Philippine Islands and their people. [p. 502]

These final words proved not to be correct. Worcester married Nanon Fay Leas on April 22, 1893. In 1893-94 he was an instructor in animal morphology at the University of Michigan; he was assistant professor in 1894-95; and in 1895-99 he was assistant professor in zoology and curator of the university's Zoological Museum. His first book came out in 1898 and went through at least four printings.

The Spanish-American War in 1898 concluded with Spain surrendering Cuba, and ceding Guam and Puerto Rico to the U.S.A. The States also paid Spain \$20 million for the Philippine Islands. This brought Worcester back to the islands as described in this extract from one biographical sketch:

In January 1899, he was appointed one of the United States commissioners to the islands to investigate and report on conditions there. In March, 1900, he was appointed a member of a Civil Commission under the presidency of Judge William H. Taft to "continue and perfect the work of organizing and establishing civil government already commenced by the military authorities, subject in all respects to any laws which Congress may hereafter enact." Under the work of this commission civil government for the Philippines was inaugurated at Manila, July 4, 1901, with Judge Taft as first civil governor.

Taft went on to become U.S. President (1909-13). Worcester served as the Secretary of the Interior for the Philippine Insular Government from 1901-13. He went on to write two more books: *The Non-Christian Tribes of Northern Luzon* (1906), *The Philippines Past and Present* (1913). In 1915 he received his Doctor of Science degree. He resided in Cebu on the island of the same name. In his later years he worked as vice-president and general manager of the Agusan Coconut Co., as assistant to the president of the Philippine Refining Corp., and as president of the Philippine Dessicated Coconut Corp. His final good-bye to the Philippines did not come until May 2, 1924 when he died.

THE CRESTED AND WATTLED SNAKE

by Philip Henry Gosse

[Editor's note: Wishing to present a sample of Gosse's work, I have balked at abridging or abstracting his treatment of any topic. Here is Chapter 6 of his *Romance of Natural History* as it appeared in the Second Series published in London in 1862, pp. 211-219.]

About the middle of the last century there existed in Amsterdam a Museum of Natural History, which, though accumulated by the zeal and industry of a private individual, far exceeded in extent and magnificence any collection then in the world. It had been gathered by Albert Seba, a wealthy apothecary in the Dutch East India Company's service, who fortunately published an elaborate description of its contents. This great work, "*Locupletissimi Rerum Naturalium Thesauri accurata Descriptio*," -- in four volumes folio, published from 1734 to 1765, -- is even now remarkable for the accuracy and beauty of its copious engravings, which still are referred to as authorities, though the descriptions are devoid of scientific value. Many of these figures and descriptions, about whose reality no shadow of doubt exists, are those of creatures which are altogether unknown to modern science, and some of them are highly curious.

Serpents seem to have been a special hobby of Seba's; and he has delineated a vast number of species. Among them are two* about which a singular interest hangs. They are of rather small size; the one pale yellow, marked with oval reddish spots, the other reddish, with five green transverse bands. The head in each case has a horny-pointed muzzle, and the cheeks are furnished with depending wattles of a coral-red hue.

From the expressions of wonder with which Seba introduces his descriptions of these animals, it is evident that they were no ordinary forms. He does not know whether to call them Eels or Serpents, the critical characters, which in our day would instantly determine this point, being then scarcely heeded. He calls them "marine," but whether on any evidence other than the pendent processes of the cheeks, which he calls "fins," does not appear. But no fish known to naturalists will answer to these representations. The pointed head, indeed, resembles in some respects that of *Muroena*, but this genus of fishes is altogether destitute of pectoral fins, while the vertically-flattened tail, and the long dorsal and anal fins confluent around the extremity of the body in *Muroena*, are totally unlike these figures. These and all similar fishes are, moreover, destitute of visible scales; but in these the scaling is decidedly serpentine, and the second, in particular, has large symmetrical plates across the belly, while the head in both is shielded with broad plates like a Colubrine Snake. The tail is drawn out to a long conical point, without the slightest appearance of compression or of bordering fins. In one figure there is seen a little projecting point at the edge of the lower belly, which at first sight suggests the idea of the anal hook of a *Boa*, but which, by comparison with other figures, we

* *Op cit*; vol. ii p1.40.

discover to be intended to represent the projection of the pre-anal scale. The very minuteness of this character makes it valuable; its value was doubtless unheeded by the artist, who merely drew what he saw; it is, however, a very decisive mark of distinction between a serpent and a fish.

Seba records that he had received these Serpents from the Island of St. Domingo [i.e., Hispaniola -- MAH]. This was at that time a flourishing French colony, and its natural productions were far better known to Europe than they now are. When I visited the neighboring island of Jamaica in 1845-46, I heard accounts of a wonderful animal occasionally seen in the eastern districts of the island, which was reported as a Snake with cock's comb and wattles, and which crowed like a cock. A good deal of mystery attached to this strange Serpent.

It was appropriated to a very remarkable and peculiar character of scenery: -- a wild mountain-region, formed of white limestone, abounding in narrow glens, bounded by abrupt precipices, and permeated by whispering streams that frequently pour in slender cascades over the rocks. The limestone rock rises in abrupt terraces, wall above wall, and its entire surface is most singularly honeycombed, "as if wrought by graving tool into rough diamond-points," alternating with smooth and rounded holes of various sizes, from that of a hazel-nut upward. In many of these hollows lie the small land-shells of the country, bleached perfectly white, like the stone itself, of the genera *Helix*, *Cyclostoma*, *Helicina*, *Cylindrella*, *Achatina*, &c., many of them perfect, but many more in fragments. They exactly resemble fossil shells *in situ*, but the species are absolutely identical with those that crawl over the shrubs and trees in the same region. In very many cases the dead shells accurately fit the hollows in the rock, whose interior is impressed with the form and sculpturing of the shell in *intaglio*: a most curious and interesting fact, as it points to the very recent formation of the region, the stone bearing evident tokens of having been in a plastic condition when the shells were enveloped in it. Out of the hollows of the rock, their roots fast grasping the sharp-edged projections and tooth-like points of stone, and twining through the tortuous cavities, and insinuating their fibrils into every minute hollow where water may lodge, grow many tall trees of various kinds, interlaced with climbers, and hung with festoons of *lianes*, that resemble long and twisted cords, thrown from one to the other, or depending from the branches towards the ground. The noble *Agave*, or what we in England call the American *Aloe*, here throws out its broad, fleshy, spine-edged leaves, and lifts its tall flower-like stalk loaded with candelabra-like branches of bloom; and numerous thick *Cacti*, some erect and massive, others whip-like, long and trailing, give a peculiar aspect to the vegetation. Great tufts of *Orchidae*, -- the lovely *Broughtonia*, with its thick ovate leaves, and racemes of elegant crimson flowers, the *Brasalova*, with long leaves resembling porcupine-quills in form, and blossoms of virgin white, the *Oncidium*, with its yellow and red flowers, like a score of painted butterflies dancing in every breath, and many others, -- crowd the forks or droop from the twisted boughs of the trees.

This formation of honeycombed limestone is full of caverns, many of which lead into one another in chains, and which have invested the region with a sort of superstitious mystery. Runaway slaves and

outlaws have availed themselves of the facilities which its ravines and inaccessible fastnesses afford, to defy capture; and during the rebellion of the Maroons, it attained a considerable notoriety. There is one estate about eight miles from Kingston, in the immediate vicinity of which the famous hero, Three-fingered Jack, made his headquarters. It is a district of wild torrents and waterfalls of the most romantic character; "the imagination of no painter of theatrical spectacles can surpass the wild wonders of the mountain-hold of the real Three-fingered Jack. Part of the road by which you ascend the falls is a subterranean passage; and caverns are entered by simple crevices which seem mere chinks in the irregular surface of the rock, all which natural peculiarities account for the mysterious disappearances which the mountain hero was enabled to enact from his pursuers."

It was at this spot I first heard reliable tidings of the strange Crested Snake. A medical gentleman of reputation informed me that he had seen, in 1829, a serpent of about four feet in length, but of unwonted thickness, dull ochry in colour with well-defined dark spots, having on its head a sort of pyramidal helmet, somewhat lobed at the summit, of a pale red hue. The animal, however, was dead, and decomposition was already setting in. He informed me that the negroes of the district were well acquainted with it; and that they represented it as making a noise, not unlike the crowing of a cock, and as being addicted to preying on poultry.

Nor is it in Jamaica alone that the Crested Snake is known. In the island of St. Domingo, whence Saba received his curious specimens, my friend Mr. Hill heard reports of it. A Spanish gentleman whom he visited in Hayti, told him that he had seen it, and begged him to note it among the remarkable things of the country. It was in that far east of the island, known to the ancient Caciquedom of Higüey, where the Indians were of a more warlike disposition than their meek brethren of the centre and west, and where the cruelties perpetrated upon them by their Spanish invaders reached such a superhuman pitch of diabolism, that even Las Casas says he almost feared to repeat them. The limestone mountains are here of exactly the same description as those in Jamaica, and the scenery assumes exactly the same romantic character. My friend's Spanish informant had seen the serpent with mandibles like a bird, with a cock's crest, with scarlet lobes or wattles; and he described its habits, -- perhaps rather from common fame than from personal observation, -- as a frequenter of hen-roosts, into which it would thrust its head, and deceive the young chickens by its imitative physiognomy, and by its attempts to crow, like their own Chanticleer. "Il canta como un Gallo;" was the report in Hayti, just as in Jamaica.

I was much interested in this mysterious reptile, and mentioned in the public papers my wish to possess a specimen. A gentleman of the vicinity, Mr. Jasper Cargill, was so desirous to oblige me that he offered a sovereign for one; but though several persons were prompt to promise the capture, no example was forthcoming.

After my return from Jamaica, the occurrence of two specimens found came under the notice of my friend, but neither of them was preserved. Mr. Cargill had informed him that some years before, when visiting Skibo, in St. George's, an estate of his father's, in descending the mountain-road, his attention was drawn to a snake of

a dark hue, that erected itself from amid some fragments of limestone-rock that lay about. It was about four feet long, and unusually thick-bodied. His surprise was greatly increased on perceiving that it was crested, and that from the side of the cheeks depended some red-coloured flaps, like gills or wattles. After gazing at him intently some time, with its head well erect, it drew itself in, and disappeared among the fragmentary rocks.

The son of this gentleman met with another specimen under the following circumstances, as detailed to me by my friend: -- "It was, I think, on Easter Eve, the 30th of March last [1850,] that some youngsters of the town came running to tell me of a curious snake, unlike any snake they had ever seen before, which young Cargill had shot, when out for a day's sport among the woodlands of a neighboring penn. They described it as in all respects a serpent, but a very curious shaped head, and with wattles on each side of its jaws. After taking it in hand and looking at it, they placed it in a hollow tree, intending to return for it when they should be coming home, but they had strolled from the place so far that it was inconvenient to retrace their steps when wearied from rambling; but they had lost no time in relating the adventure to me, knowing it would interest me much, particularly as young Cargill's father had thought it a snake similar to the one he had seen at Skibo, in St. George's, or to the crested serpent for a specimen of which, when in [the parish of] St. Thomas's in the East, he had offered the sum of twenty shillings. The youth that shot the snake fell ill on the following morning with fever, and could not go back to the woodlands to seek it, but he sent his younger brother who had been with him; but although he thought he rediscovered the tree in which his brother had placed it, he could not find the snake. He conjectured that the rats had devoured it in the night. When his adventure was related to me, another youth, Ulick Ramsay, a godson of mine, who came with the young Cargills to tell me of their discovery, informed me that not long previously, he had seen in the hand of the barrack-master-serjeant at the barracks in Spanish Town, a curious snake, which he, too, had shot among the rocks of a little line of eminences near the railway, about two miles out, called Craiggallechie. It was a serpent with a curious shaped head, and projections on each side, which he likened to the fins of an eel, but said they were close up to the jaws. Here are, unquestionably, two of the same snakes with those of Seba's Thesaurus, taken near Spanish Town, and both about the honeycombed rocks that protrude through the plain of St. Catherine's in detached ridges and cones and hummocks, being points of the greater lines of limestone, which have been covered by the detritus of the plains, leaving masses of the under-rocks here and there uncovered. These are the spots frequented, too, by the *Cyclura* [i.e., the ground iguana -- MAH]; and are continuous of our Red Hills -- a country that so much resembles the terraced cliffs and red-soil glens of Higüey.

It is remarkable that I have heard nothing more of this serpent of renown, this true Basilisk, from that time till now; though I have no doubt my Jamaica friends, who had become much interested in the matter, would have communicated the specimen to me if any one had been obtained. There is, however, sufficient evidence to assume the existence of such a form in the greater Antilles, whether Seba's figures be identical with it or not.

AUTHORS

Philip Henry Gosse (1810-1888)

The life of Philip Henry Gosse was summarized as follows in *The Student's Reference Work* (1904):

British zoologist, was born at Worcester, England, April 6, 1810, and died at Torquay, Devon, Aug. 23, 1888. His early life he spent in Newfoundland, after which he spent three years as a farmer in western Canada, and a year in Alabama as a school teacher. He then went to Jamaica for a short while, where he developed his tastes as a naturalist, and returned to England, where, with the exception of a further brief visit to the West Indies, he settled down to literary work, and, in 1856, was elected a fellow of the Royal Society. His publications embrace *Letters from Alabama*, *The Canadian Naturalist*, *Birds of Jamaica*, and *A Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica*, a *Text-Book of Zoology*, *A Naturalist's Rambles*, *The Aquarium*, *Handbook of Marine Aquarium*, *Marine Zoology*, *Evenings at the Microscope*, *Romance of Natural History*, and *Land and Sea*.

Our primary interest in Gosse centers on the editions of his *Romance of Natural History*. I own my own copy of a first edition of the book published in 1860 by James Nisbet & Co., London. I have been able to examine two other editions, each under the identical title. They are the Second Edition, Vol. 1 (1861) and the Second Series (1862). I am not aware of any reprints of his books.

Gosse advocated taking on the tough questions in natural history. Here are his own words from his chapter titled "The Great Unknown":

A sailor lad, after his first voyage, having returned to his country home, was eagerly beset for wonders. 'What hast t' seen in furrin parts?' Among other things he reported having been where the rum flowed like rivers, and sugar formed whole mountains. At last, his inventive powers being exhausted, he began to speak of the shoals of tropical flying-fishes, a phenomenon which his familiar sight had long ceased to regard as a wonder. But here his aged mother thought reproof needful; raising her horn spectacles, and frowning in virtuous indignation, she said, 'Nae, nae, Jock! mountains o' sugar may be, and rivers o' rum may be; but fish to flee ne'er can be!'

Old Dame Partlet did only what philosophers in all ages have done; she had formed her schedule of physical possibilities, outside of which nature could not go, nay, **must** not go. It so happened, however, that old Dame Nature was obstreperous, and refused to be confined within possibilities; and the lawless fishes fly to this day, in spite of Dame Partlet's virtuous protest.

There are several questions in natural science which are **questiones vexatae**, because a certain amount of evidence of facts is on one side, and a certain amount of presumption of impossibility on the other. If eyewitnesses (or those who present

themselves as such) could decide the points, they would have been decided long ago; but those who are believed to be best acquainted with natural laws, claim that theoretic impossibilities should overpower even ocular demonstration. There is far more justice in this claim than appears at first sight. The power of drawing correct inferences from what we see, and even of knowing what we do really see, and what we only imagine, is vastly augmented by the rigorous training of the faculties which long habits of observing certain classes of phenomena induce; and every man of science must have met with numberless cases in which statements egregiously false have been made to him in the most perfect good faith; his informant implicitly believing that he was simply telling what he had seen with his own eyes. A person the other day assured me that he had frequently seen humming-birds sucking flowers in England. I did not set him down as a liar, because he was a person of indubitable honour; his acquaintance with natural history, however, was small, and he had fallen into the very natural error of mistaking a moth for a bird.

It is quite proper that, when evidence is presented of certain occurrences, the admission of which would overturn what we have come to consider as fixed laws, or against which there exists a high degree of antecedent improbability, that evidence should be received with great suspicion. It should be carefully sifted; possible causes of error should be suggested; the powers of the observer to judge of the facts should be examined; the actual bounding line between sensuous perception and mental inference should be critically investigated; and confirmatory, yet independent, testimony should be sought. Yet, when we have done all this, we should ever remember that truth is stranger than fiction; that our power to judge of fixed laws is itself very imperfect, and that indubitable phenomena are ever and anon brought to light, which compel us to revise our code.

We can endorse these words fully. Where we are likely to fall out with current scientists is over the issues of whether sufficient sifting of evidence is taking place and if confirming evidence is ever sought. Scientists, when pressed on such points, plead the lack of time and resources to make such efforts. These are the universal excuses for doing nothing about anything. Those scientists who can overcome these complaints will do something memorable. Those who do not will spend their time and resources in ways that will leave them deservedly forgotten.

Gosse certainly set himself to the work of sifting evidence. The above paragraphs introduced his 65-page discussion of the Great Sea Serpent. Few have followed him in this particular work. Note-worthy are Anthonie Cornelius Oudemans in 1892 (*The Great Sea Serpent*), Rupert T. Gould in 1934 (*The Case for the Sea Serpent*), and Bernard Heuvelmans in 1968 (*In the Wake of the Sea Serpents*). They share the distinction with Gosse of having their works out of print.

Elsewhere in the editions of *Romance of Natural History* you will find such topics as unicorns and mermaids. But don't wait for me to tell you more. Please seek out this work and enjoy it for yourself.

Rupert Thomas Gould (1890-1948)

Lt.-Commander Rupert T. Gould wrote a history of the marine chronometer that was published in 1923. He might have stopped there and been remembered only for that highly praised work. But I am sure -- like other pursuers of wonders -- he couldn't stop himself. He went on to write five other books that have endeared him to lovers of the curious and the puzzling ever since. Most of those works have remained in print and are likely to be available for a long time.

What most distinguishes his work for me is the agelessness of his essays. They are well researched and a model for others. One can scarcely write on the topics without making mention of Gould's views. While he is familiar to many, more people will always be discovering him for the first time. For that reason I am describing those five works here. A biographical sketch and a nearly complete bibliography of his works appears on pp. v-viii of the University Books edition of *Oddities*. Gould's book on Loch Ness was left out of that bibliography, however.

ODDITIES: A BOOK OF UNEXPLAINED FACTS, P.Allan, London, 1924. Revised 1944. Third edition from University Books, 1965.

ENIGMAS: ANOTHER BOOK OF UNEXPLAINED FACTS, P.Allan, London, 1929. Revised 1945. Reprinted by University Books, 1965. The revised edition drops two essays that appear only in the first edition: "New South Greenland," and "The Strait of Anian." Both *ODDITIES* and *ENIGMAS* have appeared in paperback.

THE CASE FOR THE SEA-SERPENT, P.Allan, London, 1930. Also New York: Putnam's, 1934. Reprinted by Singing Tree Press, Detroit, 1969.

THE LOCH NESS MONSTER AND OTHERS, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1934. Reprinted in 1969 by University Books. A softbound edition has also been printed by University Books.

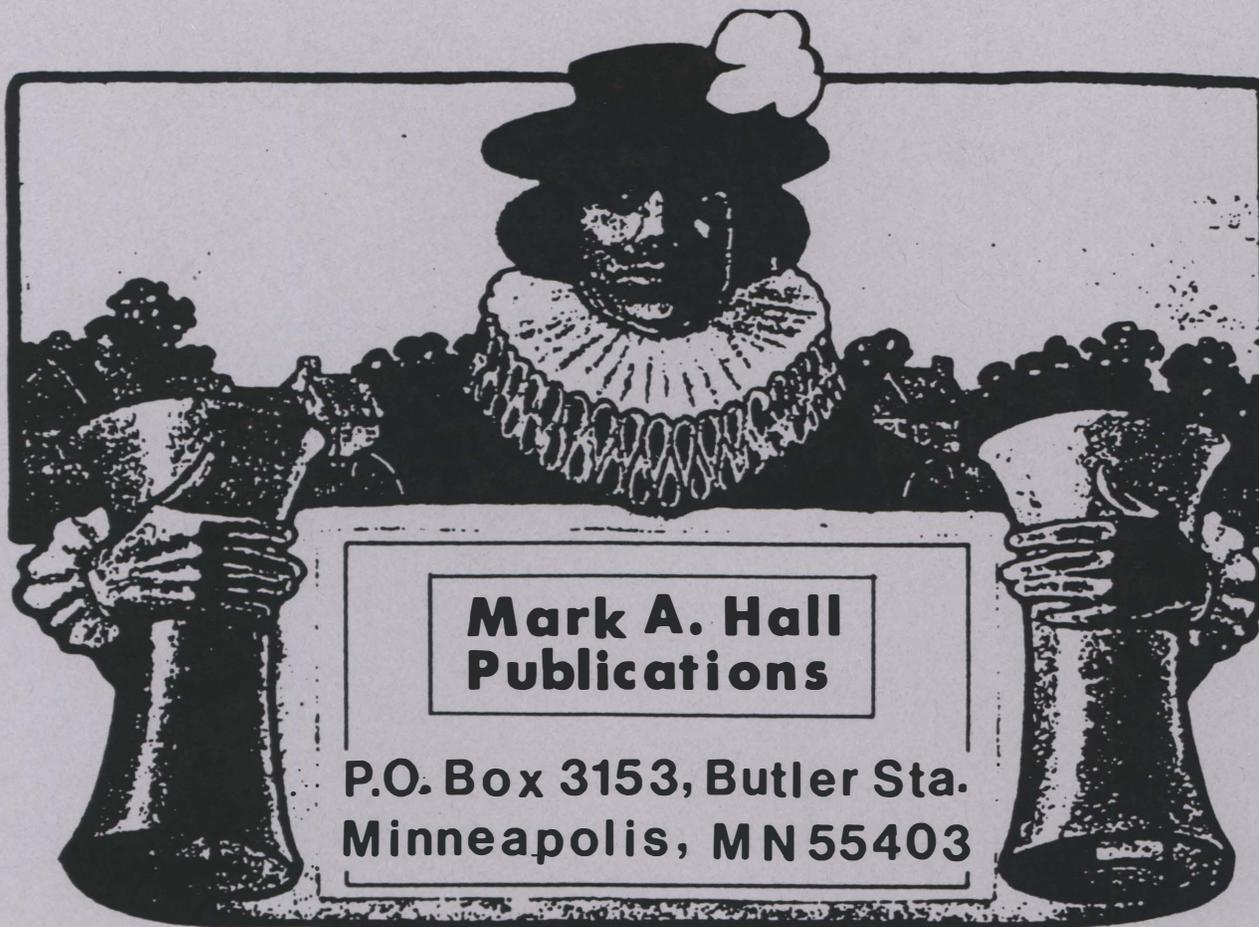
THE STARGAZER SPEAKS, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1943. Reprinted as **MORE ODDITIES AND ENIGMAS** by University Books, 1973. A collection of radio broadcasts.

The 1930 first edition of *The Case for the Sea-Serpent* lists one book by Gould "in preparation." The title was to be *Nine Days' Wonders*. Sadly this work appears not to have found a publisher.

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