

YAMI ETHNOENTOMOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Fifty-seven names for land arthropods in Yami, the aboriginal language of Orchid Island (22 ° 03N 121 ° 33E), are listed and interpreted, based on field interviews with native speakers. These are compared with names recorded by Kano (1929). The Yami vocabulary of land-arthropod names is characterized in general terms. Attention is drawn to some conspicuous taxa which appear not to have specific names.

INTRODUCTION

The Yami are the aboriginal people of Orchid Island (22 ° 03N 121 ° 33E), a volcanic island of 47 km² lying 62 km east of the southern tip of Taiwan. "Orchid Island" is a direct translation of the Chinese name, Lanyu (蘭嶼). Synonyms include Irala in the local language, Botel Tobago in Western languages, and Kôtôsho (紅頭嶼) in Japanese. The island is relatively rugged, with a maximum elevation of 548 m and only a narrow perimeter of coastal lowland. It is this lowland area which is occupied by the Yami, who subsist mainly by fishing and growing root crops and appear to have little activity in the forested highlands. Liu (1962), Beauclair (1974) and Benedek (1991) have reviewed our knowledge of Yami culture.

For a broad discussion of the biota of Orchid Island, see Kano (1931) and others in the Bulletin of the Biogeographic Society of Japan (1931-1932, vol. 2-3). Kano (1929) published a list of 161 Yami names for animals, of which 41 refer to insects, two to myriapods, and two to spiders. The majority of his insect names can be readily identified with ones collected during this study.

This paper has as its main purpose to put on record a list of Yami names for land arthropods, recorded during two brief visits to Orchid Island, to compare these with

names listed by Kano (1929), and to define the names as closely as the data allow.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data are based on interviews conducted during two five-day visits to Orchid Island in 1991. Interviews were opportunistic in origin and conduct. During my first days on the island I assembled a reference collection of local insects and arachnids. I had also brought with me some picture books. Except where it is otherwise stated, scientific and English names refer to the most familiar life-stage or form.

My usual method was to approach a native person and ask the name of one or two specimens that I had handy in vials. If she / he seemed receptive, I then produced further specimens and the picture books. I wrote down names as they were given, as well as any doubts I had (e.g. if an informant seemed uncertain or had trouble seeing the specimen) and such other notes as informants' additional remarks. Reports from two individuals who seemed intoxicated and a very few obvious errors are omitted.

Because interviews were conducted in Chinese, of which neither I nor any of my informants is a native speaker, questioning was simple and repetitive. Typical questions were "And this? What is it called?" and "Are this one and this one the same?" Some elderly individuals appeared to know no Chinese at all. With these my approach was to point to a familiar insect and give its Yami name in order to indicate an interest in names, and then to point to others. Unless it was already very familiar, I repeated each name as it was said. Most informants seemed quite ready to correct any mispronunciation, in which case I persisted until they were satisfied before writing the name in my notes. Some of the women, especially, took an obvious delight in teaching the inept foreigner such poems as "masiyori no apoy" and "ngongaw nyonyoy".

Most interviews were in and around the three villages on the western side of the island: Yayo (椰油村), Iratay (漁人村) and Imoro (紅頭村). I received multiple names from about 20 individuals, of which about half were women and half men. I estimated the age of the youngest at about 30 years, while the oldest seemed to be in their 70s.

The spelling of Yami words follows Benedek (1991). I have also used an acute

accent to indicate stress in the few words where it does not fall on the last syllable. Hyphens are used to separate distinct vowel sounds, as well as to break up some repetitive words for easier reading. I have some difficulty in hearing glottal stops and so have not attempted to indicate them here. However, it is my perception that final stressed vowels are usually not stopped, while final unstressed vowels usually are. In addition, a hyphen after a vowel can generally be taken to indicate a glottal stop.

One possible source of error should be noted. In recording Yami words I initially followed a modification of the Tagalog spelling system which I have found useful with northern Luzon languages, and only later did I rewrite them according to the present system. I doubt that there is any significant error of transcription, as about half of the names were familiar from repeated hearing, and in most others the pronunciation is unambiguous.

RESULTS

The first line of each entry gives the Yami name in bold. Where I am confident that different pronunciations are variants of the same word, these are grouped together. Where one variant prevailed in my experience it is underlined. Apparent equivalents recorded by Kano (1929) are given as he spelled them in brackets at the end of the first line. I have only commented on Kano's interpretations where they are not necessarily consistent with my own. On the second line within square brackets are taxa to which the name was applied. A superscripted F indicates identification from photographs; all others refer to specimens on hand. Below this line is my interpretation of the name.

a-a-awa, a-alawa, a-araw, alalawa, awawa

[*Gasteracantha* sp. and *Nephila* prob. *maculata* (Araeneae: Araneidae); jumping spider (Araneae: Salticidae)]

Orb-weaving spiders. One informant explicitly said that *Gasteracantha* and *Nephila* have the same name because both build webs. However, two informants called both *Nephila* and the jumping spider by this name, suggesting that it also serves as a

general term for spiders. See also sikep.

alalambang

[large black *Delta* sp. (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)]

Possibly wasps in general or just potter wasps (*Delta* and *Eumenes* spp.). The latter and their nests are probably a familiar sight in and around houses.

alilimpowan

[centipede^F (Chilopoda: Scolopendridae)]

Possibly a cognate of **alohipan** and **alupihan**, central Philippine words for "centipede".

amamenga

[male *Xylocopa ruficeps* (Hymenoptera: Anthophoridae)]

Large robust flies. The male *X. ruficeps* is smaller than the female and is not unlike an oversized calliphorid or tachinid fly. See also **amamenga**.

amomorok

[ladybird beetle (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae)]

Encountered only once, meaning unclear.

ananadang

[*Nephila* prob. *maculata* (Araeneae: Araneidae)]

Possibly specific to this very large, conspicuous, common spider. I heard the name only once.

anito no pad, pad no anito, papad no anito, parad-parad no anito (Kano: pagapaga no anito)

[various butterflies^F (Lepidoptera); *Troides magellanus* (Lepidoptera: Papilionidae); *Idea leuconoe* (Lepidoptera: Danaidae)]

Butterflies in general. In a broader sense the name may refer to all large

lepidoptera. An **anito** is a ghost or demon, while **pad** and its variants mean "soul", so that butterflies represent or bear the souls of ghosts. Kano (1929) explained this as a name for *Idea leuconoe* by noting that the species is often found around the screwpine, *Pandanus odoratissimus*, a characteristic plant of Yami burial grounds.

awod

[termites^F (Isoptera)]

I suspect that this term, heard only once, is cognate with a Philippine word for "worm" or "larva". My informant may have been mistaken in applying it to termites.

balasaw (Kano: **basau**)

[*Periplaneta americana* (Blattaria: Blattidae)]

Cockroach.

cila-cilan

[mantis^F (Mantodea)]

Possibly a particular term for mantises. See also **tilan-tilan**.

dadomok (Kano: **tatomukk**)

[*Cimex lectularius* (Hemiptera: Cimicidae)]

Possibly specific to the bed bug, *Cimex lectularius*. And possibly cognate with a widespread Philippine word for "mosquito" (e.g. **lamok** in Tagalog and major Visayan languages).

dadarowan, katatarowan

[various caterpillars^F (Lepidoptera)]

Caterpillar.

gagamaw (Kano: **kakamao**)

[orb-weaving spider^F (Araneae: Araneidae)]

Possibly cognate with the Tagalog **gagambâ**, a general term for "spider".

hâwla-hâwla

[mole cricket (Orthoptera: Gryllotalpidae)]

Heard only once, meaning unclear.

ipes, lipes

[*Periplaneta americana* (Blattaria: Blattidae)]

Cockroaches in general. Cognate with a widespread Philippine word for "cockroach".

ipes no wayo

[katydid^F (Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae)]

Katydid, or possibly grasshoppers in general.

kacisiken

In my notes this is associated with the spectacular weaver ant *Oecophylla* **kalalaki, kalalali, kalalavi** (Kano: **kararabi**)

[small green-yellow cicada (Hemiptera: Cicadidae)]

Cicada. This name was consistently associated with the specimen on hand. One informant imitated the shrill sound of a male cicada. See also **lânga-lânga**.

kalaw

[*Periplaneta americana* (Blattaria: Blattidae)]

Heard only once, meaning uncertain.

kaman cilancilan

[mosquito^F]

Mosquito, or possibly a general term for biting flies. The use of this term and **cila-cilan** for very different insects of no apparent relationship is puzzling and may indicate an error of identification or interpretation.

karamsin, karamsim no minangavang, karakaramsen no minangavang (Kano: **kararamsi no minagabon**)

[*Pachyrhynchus sarcitis*, *P. sonani*, *P. tobafolius*, *P. yamianus* and *Metapocyrtus immeritus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae: Pachyrhynchinae)]

Pachyrhynchus species. The name may also have a broader sense referring to short-snouted weevils in general, as indicated by one informant's use of it for the smaller, less colorful *Metapocyrtus*. The derivation of this name is obscure. **Minangavang** was explained to me as "from afar" or "not native", but I have no idea how pachyrhynchines are seen as foreign or of any **kararamsi no minagabon**)

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kararangci, karingjing (Kano: **karanchin, kararinchin**)

[*Attacus atlas*^F (Lepidoptera: Saturniidae), various moths and butterflies^F (Lepidoptera)]

Moths and butterflies in general. I provisionally treat these terms as forms of a single word, yet available testimony about their meanings is inconsistent. The one informant who used **kararangci** applied it to the giant silk moth *A. atlas* and told me it did not apply to butterflies, as indicated by book pictures. On the other hand, Kano's informant(s) applied **kararinchin** and **kararinchin** only to butterflies.

kararowad, karorowad (Kano: **karorowan**)

[ants^F and *Polyrhachis dives* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)]

Ants in general.

karorowad no kayo

[termites^F (Isoptera)]

The term means " wood ant " and is most likely a general term for termites. It is curious that I never heard the word **anai**, a widespread and commonly encountered Austronesian name for termites, also recorded by Kano (see Table 2).

kataktakowan

[winged queens of a myrmicine ant (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)]

Possibly winged ants and termites attracted to lights.

katangtang, katángo-tángo (Kano: **katagatagun**)

[*Epepeotes ambigenus* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae); water strider^F (Hemiptera: Gerridae; cotton stainer^F (Hemiptera: Pyrrhocoridae)]

Meaning uncertain, possibly a general term for beetle-like insects. Kano's record applies this term to a cerambycid beetle.

kayo

[*Xylocopa collaris* and *X. ruficeps* (Hymenoptera: Anthophoridae); large, metallic green wood-boring beetle (Coleoptera: Buprestidae); large dark click beetle (Coleoptera: Elateridae)]

This seems like an odd collection of insects to bear the same name. **Kayo** usually means " wood ", and one possible connection is that these insects can all be seen emerging from holes in wood.

koto (Kano: **koto**)

[louse^F (Anoplura)]

Sucking lice, probably most specifically the human louse, *Pediculus humanis*. Cognate with a widespread Austronesian word for " louse " .

koto no káram (Kano: **koto no kora**)

[ladybird beetle (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae)]

Fleas (Siphonaptera). The name translates literally as "rat louse", perhaps reflecting knowledge that fleas usually enter the house on rats. Kano's **koto no kora**, meaning "flea", is almost certainly the same term, although he elsewhere gives **karam** and not **kora** as the name for "rat". Application of this term to a ladybird beetle is most likely a simple lapse.

lalabongan (Kano: **ararabogan**)[*Vespa affinis* (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)]

Possibly a general term for wasps. The next name is consistent with this interpretation. Kano's referred his term to a species of *Sphex*.

lalabongan dokeysakan[black *Sphex* sp. (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae)]

Dokeysakan means "seashore", where the wasp nests in sand above the tidal zone. Recognition by informants of pinned specimens out of their usual context shows that this is a familiar insect.

lalagit[dragonfly (Odonata: Libellulidae); several dragonflies^F and damselflies^F (Odonata)]

Dragonflies and possibly damselflies. The one informant who used this name said that it is a synonym of the much commoner puney.

lánga-lánga, langa-langan (Kano: **ragaragan**)[small green-yellow cicada, cicada^F (Hemiptera: Cicadidae)]

Cicada. I am not aware of any distinction in meaning between this name and **kalalaki**. Both seem onomatopoeically based on the shrill sounds of male cicadas, which one informant imitated here, as did one with **kalalaki**. I doubt that the Yami distinguish different classes of cicadas. Rather, the two names may reflect regional usage within the island.

masored do apoy, masiyori do apoy, masiyori no apoy

[*Asota heliconia* (Lepidoptera: Arctiidae); hawk moth^F (Lepidoptera: Sphingidae)]

Night-flying moths in general. The name seems based on the attraction of moths to fire (**apoy**). Note **mangret no apoy** (Table 2), an apparent synonym recorded by Kano.

miyorong, niyorong, orong

[*Epepeotes ambigenus*, *Bumetopia stolata* and a smaller brown longhorn beetle (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae)]

Longhorn beetles.

momo

[flower beetle (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Cetoniinae)]

I suspect that this is a variant of the next name.

mongaw, mongo, ngôngaw, ngôngo (Kano: **gôgao, môgao**)

[two flower beetles (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Cetoniinae); *Oryctes rhinoceros* (Coleoptera: Dynastidae); large shield bug (Hemiptera: Scutelleridae)]

A general term for large beetles and beetle-like insects. See also **momo**.

mosi, mesi

[*Pachyrhynchus sarcitis*, *P. sonani*, *P. tobafolius*, and *P. yamianus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae: Pachyrhynchinae)]

Pachyrhynchus species. These brilliantly marked black beetles are common and familiar on Orchid Island (Starr & Wang, in press). It is unclear to me why the Yami should have two distinct names (see **karamsin** above) for these insects. Most informants unhesitatingly gave one name or the other upon being shown specimens, and when asked about the alternative name affirmed that they are synonymous. At first it seemed that people around Yayo used **mosi**, while those around Iritay and Imoro used **karamsim no minangavang**. However, when I tested this hypothesis by

showing a vial of specimens to many individuals along the west coast of the island, the correlation broke down and was not replaced by any other that I could see.

naned (Kano: **naned**)

[blow fly^F (Diptera: Calliphoridae); *Musca domestica*^F (Diptera: Muscidae); four medium-sized higher flies (Diptera: Calyptratae)]

House flies and similar higher flies.

ngongaw nonyoy, ngongaw nyonyoy, ngongaw no nyonyoy, ngongo nwaney, ngongo nonyoy, ngongo nyonyoy, o-o nyonyoy (Kano: **gaogao no annyoi**)

[*Oryctes rhinoceros* (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae); various beetles^F (Coleoptera)]

Oryctes rhinoceros. My informants usually unhesitatingly called this species by this name, and the name was rarely applied elsewhere. Use of **nyonyoy** (= coconut palm) or a variant in this name clearly shows that the association of the beetle with the palm is common knowledge.

o-ongaw

[*Xylocopa ruficeps* (Hymenoptera: Anthophoridae)]

Possibly a variant of **mongaw**, mistakenly applied to this large, robust bee. See also **o-ongong**.

o-ongong

[two flower beetles (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Cetoniinae)]

Possibly a variant of **mongaw**. See also **o-ongaw**.

pasangatan

[large katydid (Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae)]

Kano (1929) records **pasagatan**, apparently the same word, as referring to an echinoderm.

ponay, poney, poni (Kano: **ponai**)

[dragonfly (Odonata: Libellulidae); various dragonflies^F and damselflies^F (Odonata)]

This was consistently and unhesitatingly applied to dragonflies, although one informant indicated **lalagit** as a synonym. Another informant implied that it applies most specifically to dragonflies and more generally to these plus damselflies. This would be consistent with usage of analogous terms in Tagalog, Chinese and English, among others.

rakowa tamonong

[crane fly^F (Diptera: Tipulidae)]

Literally "big mosquito" and most likely an ad-hoc characterization. Crane flies are inconspicuous, innocuous insects, and so seem unlikely to have a specific name.

roron (Kano: **roron**)

[various spur-throated grasshoppers (Orthoptera: Acrididae: Cyrtacanthacridinae); cone-headed grasshopper (Orthoptera: Acrididae); large katydid (Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae); mantis^F (Mantodea)]

Grasshoppers in general.

sapi, **tabibi**, **tapipi** (Kano: **tapipi**)

[*Polistes japonicus*, *P. rothneyi* and *Vespa affinis* (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)]

Probably a particular term for *Polistes* wasps, of which *P. japonicus* and *P. rothneyi* are present on Orchid Island (Starr 1992-a). See further remarks under **telel**.

sikep

[jumping spider (Araneae: Salticidae); crab spider^F (Araneae: Thomisidae); various other spiders^F (Araneae)]

Spiders in general. One informant explicitly equated **sikep** with 蜘蛛, the Chinese general term for spider. It may in a narrower sense be restricted to hunting spiders. See also **a-a-awa**.

talakan, tavakan

[*Xylocopa collaris* and *X. ruficeps* (Hymenoptera: Anthophoridae); *Vespa affinis* and *V. ducalis* (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)]

Possibly a particular term for carpenter bees, of which *X. collaris* and *X. ruficeps* are present on Orchid Island. See further remarks under **telel**.

tamono, tamonong (Kano: **tamono, tamonon**)

[mosquito^F (Diptera: Culicidae)]

Mosquito, generalized to crane flies and other mosquito-like flies.

tavayangyang

[large, metallic green wood-boring beetle (Coleoptera: Buprestidae)]

This name arose only once in the interviews. My suspicion is that it is a variant of **tovoyangyang** and that the beetle was mistaken for a cicada.

telel, tolel, tolol (Kano: **tolol**)

[*Xylocopa collaris* and *X. ruficeps* (Hymenoptera: Anthophoridae); large, black *Megachile* species (Hymenoptera: Megachilidae); large black *Delta* species, *Rhynchium* species, *Vespa affinis* and *V. ducalis* (Hymenoptera: Vespidae)]

Wasps and bees in general. Kano mistakenly applies **torol no kayo**, meaning "wood wasp" or "wood bee", to bumble bees (*Bombus* spp.). There appear to be no bumble bees on Orchid Island and certainly none in the lowlands (Starr 1992-b), while carpenter bees (*Xylocopa* spp.) are abundant and usually nest in wood.

The three names **tapipi**, **tavakan** and **tolel** (in their most common variants) were heard repeatedly and with frequent contradictions among informants. The Yami themselves are often unclear about distinctions between these names. This is illustrated by one informant, who called the two **Xylocopa** species **tolel** and minutes later called them **talakan**.

In an attempt to make some sense out of these three names, I have tabulated their application to species by the seven respondents who used at least two of them (Table 1). This shows **tapipi** closely associated with the two *Polistes* species (neither of

which was ever called anything else) and **tavakan** somewhat more equivocally associated with the two *Xylocopa* species. **Tolel** is clearly the most general term, applied at least once to all but the two *Polistes*.

tilan-tilan

[cone-headed grasshopper (Orthoptera: Acrididae)]

I suspect that this is a variant of **cila-cilan** and that it is a particular term for mantises, mistakenly applied here. My informant said the **tilan-tilan** bites, possibly referring to the grasping defensive motions of the spiny forelegs in mantises.

tovoyangyang

[small green-yellow cicada (Hemiptera: Cicadidae)]

I heard this term only once. I suspect that it is an infrequent name for cicadas, the **yangyang** component being onomatopoetic. As suggested above, **tavayangyang** may be a variant pronunciation.

vawawo

[*Aphaenogaster* sp. and *Polyrhachis dives* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)]

Probably ants in general. Benedek (1991) gives **vahawo** as a word for "ant". Kano's **wagao** (Table 2) may be a variant of this term.

DISCUSSION

The present list of names is derived from a small number of informants. Nonetheless, toward the end of the field work I found that I rarely heard novel terms. This suggests that the list of about 60 names for land arthropods in the Yami language approaches completeness for those in common use. At the same time, let me note that Kano (1929) listed several names that I cannot confidently match with any spoken by my informants (Table 2). If the list given here is nearly complete, then the Yami vocabulary in this group is significantly smaller than that in other Austronesian languages for which I have compiled similar lists (unpublished). This result is not surprising. Given their subsistence base in fishing and undiversified agriculture, with

relatively little use of minor forest products, the Yami are unlikely to have their attention regularly drawn to a broad range of insects and related organisms. In addition, they apparently do not utilize any insect as a regular source of food (Kano 1929), in contrast to customs in northern Luzon (Starr 1991). It is predicted that much the same pattern will emerge in Yami ethnobotany.

Nonetheless, I find the Yami vocabulary unpredictably simple in some respects, of which two stand out. First, it seems odd that one name should suffice for all butterflies. Orchid Island has at least 115 species of butterflies (Chen 1986), which form a conspicuous part of the environment. Furthermore, the conception of these insects as bearing the souls of ghosts suggests that a knowledge of the different kinds should be important, yet the average Yami seems to make no such distinction. In particular, I was surprised to find no special name for the very distinctive birdwing butterfly, *Troides magellanus*, about which I specifically asked.

It is also puzzling that there appears to be no special name for the hornet *Vespa affinis*, whose overall form and color pattern set it apart even at a distance. This species nests above ground and is evidently much more common than the underground-nesting *V. ducalis*, the one other hornet on the island (Starr 1992-a). It is very likely that most serious stings received by people and livestock are from *V. affinis*, so that there is good reason to distinguish this species and to reliably communicate this distinction. Yet my information indicates considerable vagueness on this point. One informant even called it **tolel** and then moments later called it **tapipi** and told me that the terms were equivalent.

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Table 1. Incidence among seven informants of use of three names for large aculeate hymenoptera. Further explanation in text.

Species	tapipi	tavakan	tolel
solitary bees			
<i>Megachile</i> sp.			2
<i>Xylocopa collaris</i>		2	2
<i>Xylocopa rufipes</i>		4	1
solitary wasps			
<i>Delta</i> sp.			2
<i>Rhynchium</i> sp.			4
social wasps			
<i>Polistes rothneyi</i>	5		
<i>Polistes japonicus</i>	2		
<i>Vespa affinis</i>	2	2	1
<i>Vespa ducalis</i>		1	1

Table 2. Land arthropod names reported by Kano (1929) but not encountered in this study. The left-hand column gives each name as spelled by Kano. The middle column gives the inferred spelling according to the system used by Benedek (1991). Kano's identification is in the right-hand column.

Original spelling	Transformed spelling	Identification
achichimiga	ajjijimiga	millipedes (Diplopoda)
ananabogan	ananabongan	crickets in general (Orthoptera)
anai	anay	termites (Isoptera)
anakua? [sic]	anakowa	<i>Eurema</i> sp. (Lepidoptera: Pieridae)
bakabakk	bakabak	<i>Onthophagus</i> (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae)
bakabaku	bakabak	small ground beetles (Coleoptera: Carabidae)
gaogao no raragan	ngongaw no lalangan	<i>Gymnopleurus</i> sp. (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae)
goragoran		
iiran no ranom	ngora-ngoran	spiders in general (Araneae)
kachichiris	i-iran no ranom	<i>Cybister</i> sp. (Coleoptera: Dytiscidae)
kamaroparopa	kajijiris	earwig (Dermaptera)
magretnapoi	kamaroparopa	katydid (Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae)
meipos no ranom	mangret no apoy	moths (Lepidoptera)
	me-ipos no ranom	<i>Lethocerus deyrollei</i>
nichigit		(Heteroptera: Belostomatidae)
	nijingit	longhorn beetles (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae)
nôgô		
tao	nongo	leaf beetles (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae)
wagao	tawo	millipedes (Diplopoda)
yatungai	wangaw	ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)
	yatungay	mole cricket (Orthoptera: Gryllotalpidae)