

Book Reviews

WHENCE COME THESE STONES?

PHILIPPINE TEKTITES. A Contribution to the Study of the Tektite Problem in General, in the Light of both Past and Recent Discoveries. By H. Otley Beyer. (Volume One in Four Parts—paged separately) Parts I and II. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Publication, 1962. 160, 290 pp.

"Ask the man who owns one" was a commercial slogan intended to sell a well known product. In the two parts of the book under review we have the answer of the man who owns not merely one but half a million, a large proportion of all the tektites on record in the world. When Professor H. Otley Beyer, a senior scientist in tektite matters, presents his well documented views, the reader can be sure that he speaks from thorough knowledge and close acquaintance with his subject.

Tektites are a curious group of naturally occurring glassy objects consisting chiefly of silica together with smaller quantities of metallic oxides. These black stones usually weigh less than 200 grams. The name, tektites, was given to these bodies by Professor F. E. Suess in 1900 after the Greek word *tektos* meaning molten. This arises from their various shapes and appearances suggesting a molten origin. Since that time, and more especially since 1926 when they were first known scientifically in the Philippines, tektites have been carefully studied and compared for chemical composition, terrestrial location, physical dimensions and markings together with any other features which might give a further clue to their nature.

The problem of tektites is chiefly that of their origin. Where do they come from? Primitive people who found these distinctive stones thought they fell from the skies and so used them as charms. Later a large body of tektite scientists, after serious study, saw indications that they did fall from the skies, at least, that they came from outer