

Sapta Tu

Wokim samting bilong tambaran, bilong rausim tewel, na bilong marila

Mipela long Reite save long planti ol samting bilong pasin kastom na wok wantaim ol masalai na tewel.

Reite em i gat wanpela tambaran bilong ol man. Em i haitpela samting. Mipela save kolim tambaran, *Kaapu*, long Tokples Nekgini. Ol pikinini na meri no inap save long tambaran na ol i no inap lukim ol samting bilong tambaran. Em i tambu tru. Olsem i no olgeta manmeri save long ol dispela we bilong yusim ol plant.

Ol sampela samting long dispela sapta i stap strongpela tru insait long laip bilong mipela. *Luhu* mipela save yusim long olgeta samting. Em save haitim man long pawa bilong ol tewel nabaut na em save mekim ol samting nogut ranawe long ol man. *Manieng* em i bikpela samting bilong mipela. Em i gat strongpela smel bilong en na mipela save kolim 'smel gorgor'. Dispela smel save singautim ol tewel long i kam klostu na mipela save yusim long planti wok.

Chapter Two

Working with spirits and love magic

Here in Reite, we hold strong to our customs and ways, and we know of many plants to assist in working with spirits and ancestors.

Reite has a male cult. The activities of the cult are secret and shared only by initiated men. Women and children are strictly prohibited from seeing the objects of the cult and the spirits. These restrictions mean knowledge of the uses of the following plants are not publicly known. The spirit cult in the Nekgini language is called *Kaapu*.

Some of the plants described in this chapter are central to our way of life. *Etlintera amomum* is very important to us and used for everything. It protects people and other plants from the power of spirits and makes malevolent power ineffective. The aromatic ginger, *Manieng*, is also very important. It is called 'aromatic ginger' because its pungent musty smell draws spirits close. We use it for many things where the aid of spirits is required.

Wanpela samting mipela save long wokim em i wanpela kain bilas bilong haus tambaran. Mipela save kolim dispela bilas *tse'tsopung*. I gat sampela we bilong mekim em kamap wantaim pawa. Dispela wok em save yusim ol plant. Taim *tse'tsopung* i stap long haus, ol man save onarim em olsem wanpela man. James em putim piksa bilong *tse'tsopung* long dispela hap we mipela stori long *Kisse'ea*, olsem na yu ken luk save.

Long ples, ol man save olsem meri bai no inap maritim man nating. Mipela save yusim ol marila o pawa bilong pulim meri (lukim Leach 2003: 70–71). Dispela pasin em i gat nogut bilong en. Olgeta man save yusim, tasol sapos em wanpela susa bilong yu, na ol man pulim en long marila, bai yu belhat nogut. Dispela em wanpela kastom tru bilong mipela, olsem James em bin raitim planti long ol Nekgini kastom (lukim 'Ol narapela buk na pepa bilong James Leach', stap baksait long buk). Olgeta liklik ples i gat we bilong ol yet long wokim marila. I no inap long wokim olsem mipela stori long hia, yu mas i gat hap tok bilong en, na em bai wok. Long dispela hap sapta, mipela putim wan wan bilong luk save tasol.

There is a kind of decoration we make for the male cult house at ceremonial times. It is called '*tse'tsopung*'. We have ways of decorating *tse'tsopung* so it contains spiritual power. That work depends on certain plants. When the post is installed in the cult house, people must treat it with respect as if it were a person. James has put a picture of *tse'tsopung* with the information about *Tapeinochilos piniformis* in this chapter, so people can see one of the things we make for ceremonies.

In the village, we know that a woman would never marry a man without love magic (see Leach 2003: 70–1). However, this practice does have some drawbacks as when one of our kinswomen falls in love, her brothers tend to react with anger at the imposition on her. James has written a lot about this custom and how it fits into kinship and our wider culture. Each area and even individuals have different ways of performing love magic and use many different plants. These plants will not work as love magic without the correct spells. A few examples of how plants are used in love magic are presented here.

Luhu

Gorgor: bilong stopim pait

Ol tumbuna save yusim dispela *Luhu* (gorgor) (Plate 2-1, 2-2) bilong kolim olgeta samting olsem pait, kros, posin, sanguma na marila. Yu ken stopim na kolim long dispela. Em i kol tru, yu ken kolim marila. Olgeta samting i mas i gat gorgor insait. Long gaden mipela planim bilong stopim ol binatang kam kaikai lip bilong taro o wanem samting.

Bipo ol tumbuna save stopim pait wantaim dispela samting. *Luhu ai* em man bilong stopim posin o pait. *Patuki* yet wokim olsem. Tewel bilong man kam givim yu sik, yu ken kisim na toktok long en wantaim gorgor, na tewel em bai lusim yu. Ol manki stap long bus, husat man i laik go lukim ol, ol ken krungutim lek bilong posin o wanem, na gorgor bai kolim, olsem yu mas kisim gorgor na go wantaim. Masalai ples givim yu sik, yu ken kisim gorgor na go toktok na ol bai lusim yu. Ai bilong wara kisim tewel bilong manki, kisim gorgor i go na putim long ai bilong wara. Singautim tewel bilong manki na kisim lip bilong gorgor gen, na karim wantaim wara i go na wasim manki na sik bilong en bai pinis.

*Etilingera amomum*¹

For making peace

Our ancestors used *Etilingera amomum* (Plate 2-1, 2-2) to calm people and spirits, to stop fights and arguments, and counteract the power of sorcery. It is planted in gardens to discourage pests.

Our first ancestor, *Patuki* decreed that there would be a 'Luhu man' in every place who stops sorcery and fighting. In situations where spirits or sicknesses cause a maleficent influence on a person, *Etilingera amomum* can be used to free them from that influence. It has the power to stop the causes of sickness and anger.

1. *Etilingera amomum* (Zingiberaceae), gorgor, ginger.

Em save mekim samting kol, na em save stopim samting; pinisim pawa bilong samting. Taim man i dai na yu kam ausait long haus, ol lain bilong en bai go namel long gorgor. Ol tewel bai no inap bihainim ol o givim sik long ol. Yu ken tokim man i gat kros long tingim gorgor, na em bai lusim kros bilong en. Olsem planim yam, taro, o wanem samting, olgeta i mas i gat gorgor tasol.

This ginger has the strength to counteract any adverse power. The family of a recently deceased person passes through a split *Etlintera amomum* stem when they come out of mourning. *Etlintera amomum* is essential in all ritual work, such as that in a garden to protect the practitioner and placate the spirits.



Plate 2-1: *Luhu (Etlintera amomum)*



Plate 2-2: *Luhu (Etlintera amomum)*

Manieng

Bilong pulim tewel bilong olgeta samting

Dispela *Manieng* (Plate 2-3, 2-4) mipela yusim long pulim tewel bilong ol yam na taro, bilong painim abus, tewel bilong man i dai, na tambaran. Bai yu kaikai na spetim dispela samting na ol tewel bai kam klostu. Ol save tok: *Manieng pecaret nekoneko kaaping apiwi* (smel bilong *Manieng* bai pulim ol tewel i kam).



**Plate 2-3: *Manieng*
(aromatic ginger)**

Aromatic ginger²

To attract spirits of all kinds

This unidentified aromatic ginger (Plate 2-3, 2-4) attracts the spirits of yam and taro, the spirits that assist with hunting, ghosts, and spirits of growth and change; all respond to *Manieng*. When one chews a piece of this ginger and then spits it in a spray, the spirits will draw near. We have a saying that, 'the smell of *Manieng* attracts the spirits'.



**Plate 2-4: *Manieng*
(aromatic ginger)**

2. Unidentified species, smel kawawar, aromatic ginger.

Kuping

Skin diwai bilong rausim tewel

Skin bilong dispela *Kuping* (Plate 2-5, 2-6) em i hat moa. Man sik long yam o taro, wokim hap tok bilong yam, na spetim *Kuping*, na sik bai pinis. Sapos wanpela tewel wok long kam long haus bilong yu, pairap long nait nabaut o kain olsem, o sapos brata bilong yu i dai, o yu kaikai buai long han bilong ol husat i bagarapim em; em bai kam long haus na yu ken kisim *Kuping* na spetim wantaim nem bilong waildok, na tewel bai lusim yu. Em i hatpela samting, na smel bilong en em i kik moa. Ol tewel bai ranawe long en. Sapos pikinini bilong yu krai krai, yu ken kolim nem bilong wanem man i gat kros wantaim yu, na tewel bilong en bai lusim yu. O masalai bihainim yu, na mekim pikinini krai, yu ken kolim nem bilong waildok, na spetim.

Wara tasol bai nogat. Taim wara kisim tewel bilong yu, yu mas pulim wara wantaim gorgor, na bringim tewel i kam bek long wara (lukim *Luhu*, Sapta 2).

***Cinnamomum* sp.³**

Bark for banishing spirits

The taste of this *Cinnamomum* sp. (Plate 2-5, 2-6) bark is very hot. When a person is sick due to yam or taro spirits, he calls the spirit's name and spits out the *Cinnamomum* sp. bark in a spray. The strong, hot smell will deter the spirit causing the sickness. This bark works in the same way for the spirits of recently deceased people who may be loitering and disturbing you. It is often used in conjunction with a spell in the name of a wild dog to chase spirits away. This also works if someone is cross with you, and your child is restive and unhappy because that person's spirit is close to them.

The only spirits that *Cinnamomum* sp. bark will not deter are the spirits of springs and streams. When water takes your spirit, it will require treatment with ginger to return your spirit (see *Etlingera amomum*, Chapter 2).

3. *Cinnamomum* sp. (Lauraceae).



Plate 2-5: *Kuping* (*Cinnamomum* sp.)



Plate 2-6: *Kuping* (*Cinnamomum* sp.)

Sisak warau

Bilong rausim ol tewel na doti

Wail marita save kamap long bus. *Warau* ol kolim bikpela lip na marita bilong dring em narapela. Bilong dring ol save kolim *misi*. *Sisak warau* (Plate 2-7, 2-8) em i samting bilong rausim ol tewel bilong man, o meri, taim yu slip pinis wantaim em. Yu mas brukim lip, na go namel, na kamap long hap sait. Long dispela rot, yu rausim ol doti o tewel nogut.

***Pandanus* sp.⁴**

To remove spirits attached to the body

This wild *Pandanus* sp. (Plate 2-7, 2-8) grows in the bush. *Warau* refers to the large leaved variety. The edible form of wild pandanus is different and is called *misi* in Tokples Nekgini. *Pandanus* sp. works to free the body of spirits and pollution, especially those attached through sexual intercourse, sorcery or poisoning. To remove such spirits, one must break the leaf lengthways and step through it.

4. *Pandanus* sp. (Pandanaeae), wail marita, wild pandanus.

Bipo, taim ol tumbuna laik go wokim haus long bus bilong painim abus na wokim kalabus bilong abus, ol bai kisim kru bilong *Sisak warau* na kukim wantaim kaukau long sospen. Wanem kain doti (*samuw*) bilong meri, o kaikai nabaut, o posin; em bai rausim. Tewel bilong husat bai no inap bihainim yu moa. Long Tokples Nekgini ol i save kolim *kaap arerenung* long rausim tewel na *samuw yakas arerenung* long rausim doti.

When our ancestors made bush huts for hunting expeditions and to trap animals, the shoots of this *Pandanus* sp. were boiled and eaten with sweet potato prior to hunting. Any spirits or devils caused by the polluting influences of women, food or poison were thereby countered prior to hunting expeditions.



Plate 2-7: *Sisak warau*
(*Pandanus* sp.)



Plate 2-8: *Sisak warau*
(*Pandanus* sp.)

Kunung

Bilong daunim narapela

Dispela *Kunung* diwai (Plate 2-9, 2-10) bai daunim olgeta narapela samting i kamap long as bilong en, ol gras o wanem samting. Ol diwai tu bai drai, na em bai kliaim rot bilong en. Olsem mipela save tok, 'em bilong hatim skin'.

Taim ol manki i go long bus, ol bai go antap long dispela diwai, na blakpela anis bilong diwai bai kaikaim ol, na ol bai rausim isi isi. Ol wara bilong diwai bai go insait long skin bilong ol, na mekim ol hat. Taim mi laik kisim ol manki i go long bus bilong mekim ol gro, ol mas lusim wara na drain skin wara bilong ol pastaim. Mi bai givim ol *Kunung* wantaim kulau, na ol mas gro olsem dispela diwai. Samting save kukim ples, bai ol manki wokim wankain. Ol meri bai laikim ol.

***Endospermum labios*⁵**

To elevate oneself

Endospermum labios (Plate 2-9, 2-10) suppresses the growth of any other plants, such as grasses and shrubs that grow around its base. This tree is considered dry and it eliminates everything that hampers its growth. We say it is for making your skin hot.

When boys are initiated they climb this tree and the black ants that live in it bite them and they remove them carefully. The ants transfer *Endospermum labios* sap through the skin which makes the boys hot. When we prepare boys for the ritual to make them grow during initiation, they give up drinking water and their skin becomes dry. We give them *Endospermum labios* sap with the milk of a young coconut to drink to make them grow like the *Endospermum labios*, displacing those around them. Just as this tree 'burns' the ground around it, the boys will have a similar effect and women will fall in love with them over other men.

5. *Endospermum labios* Schodde (Euphorbiaceae). Alternative identification: *Macaranga* sp. (Euphorbiaceae).

Narapela wok bilong en em olsem: mipela i gat wanpela kastom, mipela save tok *yallo*. *Yallo* em olsem yu kisim abus o wanem samting na go givim long wantok bilong yu. Em lukim dispela samting bilong yu, na em mas laikim dispela samting, na bekim wantaim wanpela gutpela samting bilong en. Em *yallo*. Taim yu laik wokim olsem, yu mas raunim dispela presen bilong yu givim long wantok wantaim lip bilong tanget, na yu go pasim lip tanget long han bilong dispela *Kunung* diwai. Em bai mekim dispela wantok laikim samting yu givim em, na em ken bekim wantaim gutpela samting.

Wankain, taim ol meri i laik go maket, ol ken raunim samting wantaim tanget na pasim long han bilong dispela diwai. Ol man kamap na lukim samting bilong ol, ol bai laikim, na pinisim hariap.

This species is also used when visiting trade partners to encourage their generosity. A customary practice of eliciting valuables from such partners is called *yallo*. In this practice, one takes some meat or some other good thing and gives it to a friend. They will see what you have brought and be moved to give you something valuable in return. If you pass a cordyline (*Cordyline fruticosa*, see Plate 3-4) leaf around your offering and tie the leaf to an *Endospermum labios* branch, your friend will like the look of your present enough to give you something very valuable.

Similarly, when going to the market, women pass cordyline leaves around their produce and then tie them in the branches of an *Endospermum labios* tree, people are attracted and are keen to buy their produce.



**Plate 2-9: *Kunung*
(*Endospermum labios*)**



**Plate 2-10: *Kunung*
(*Endospermum labios*)**

Piraaking

Pinisim tambu long wara

Taim lusim wara, o planim ai bilong taro, na wok pinis, bai yu spetim dispela *Piraaking* (Plate 2-11, 2-12), na pawa bilong tambu bai no inap go aut. Kaikai bun bilong en namel long ol lip, na spetim, na tambu bai pinis, tasol pawa bai stap. Wokim olsem, na pawa bilong tambu bai no inap go aut taim yu kaikai nabaut gen.



**Plate 2-11: *Piraaking*
(*Pennisetum macrostachyum*)**

***Pennisetum macrostachyum*⁶**

For ending a time of being tabooed from water

Pennisetum macrostachyum (Plate 2-11, 2-12) is used for when one gives up water (for ritual 'heat'), planting taro buds, or finishing other ritual work. One must spit the *Pennisetum macrostachyum* before breaking taboos observed. When the stem is chewed and then spat out after planting taro, the power of the ritual preparations of the taro will remain even though you eat from many hands again, and do not observe the taboos any more.



**Plate 2-12: *Piraaking*
(*Pennisetum macrostachyum*)**

6. *Pennisetum macrostachyum* (Gramineae). Alternative identification: (Poaceae).

Saari

Bilong sanda

Dispela *Saari* em smel gorgor (Plate 2-13). Putim long bilum, bilong mekim smel nais. Taim bilong singsing, hangamapim long skin, bilong mekim gutpela smel. Yu ken wokim sanda bilong singsing (*gneemung*) wantaim dispela na ol narapela samting.

Sirisir/Mambumaambu

Bilong bilasim malo bilong tambaran

Sirisir (Plate 2-14, 2-15) em save stap klostu long wara. Mipela yusim bilong bilasim tambaran, bai yu bungim dispela wantaim ol narapela plaua olsem: *Apiyoi* (wail taro), *Turik uptapoli* (Plate 5-3), *Kawara'pung*, na *Masau* (Plate 3-24). Ol man tu save bilas wantaim ol dispela ol plaua.

Perfumed leaf⁷

For perfume

This aromatic ginger (Plate 2-13) is hung from string bags during ceremonies to emanate a distinctive scent. It is also used in preparation of perfume for dancing during ceremonies.

Schismatoglottis calyptrata⁸

For decorating items of the male cult

The small flower of *Schismatoglottis calyptrata* (Plate 2-14, 2-15) grows close to streams and pools. It is used together with other plants such as, wild taro, *Codiaeum variegatum* (Plate 5-3), and *Cordyline fruticosa* (Plate 3-24) to decorate the paraphernalia of the spirits, and people involved in ceremonies.

7. Unidentified species (Zingiberaceae), smel gorgor, aromatic ginger.

8. *Schismatoglottis calyptrata* (Araceae).



Plate 2-13: *Saari* (perfumed leaf)



Plate 2-14: *Sirisir/Mambumaambu* (*Schismatoglottis calyptrata*)



Plate 2-15: *Sirisir/Mambumaambu* (*Schismatoglottis calyptrata*)

Kisse'ea

Bilong bilasim haus tambaran wantaim *tse'tsopung*¹⁰

Dispela *Kisse'ea* (Plate 2-16, 2-17) mipela yusim olsem bombom bilong *tse'sopung*. *Tse'tsopung* em i wanpela mambu mipela wokim wantaim tambaran (Plate 218, 219). Mipela putim long haus tambaran long taim bilong singsing. Bipo ol tumbuna save kisim bun bilong en na draim em. Ol save laitim *Kisse'ea* na boinim dispela mambu *tse'sopung*, na mambu bai kamap olsem dispela *Kisse'ea* na luk nais long ai bilong ol man. *Kisse'ea* save karim plaua antap, na mipela bilasim plaua olsem long het bilong *tse'sopung*. Makim olsem, na *tse'sopung* bai kamap gutpela.

***Tapeinochilos piniformis*⁹**

Making decorated poles for the spirit house

Tapeinochilos piniformis (Plate 2-16, 2-17) is used to decorate the *tse'tsopung* (Plate 2-18, 2-19), made by the spirit cult in seclusion, and then used to decorate the spirit house at ceremonial times. Our ancestors dried the stems of this bamboo, before setting them alight and scorching the skin of the bamboo pole. This ensures the pole takes on the look of *Tapeinochilos piniformis*, some species of which carry their dramatic flowers high above the ground in the same way as we decorate the flowers on top of the *tse'sopung* pole. Using *Tapeinochilos piniformis* for *tse'sopung* associates the carving with the flower and makes it look good.

9. *Tapeinochilos piniformis* Warb. (Costaceae).

10. *Tse'tsopung* em i wanpela mambu mipela save wokim wantaim tambaran na putim long haus tambaran long taim bilong singsing tambaran long wokim pati kaikai (Plate 2-18, 2-19).



Plate 2-16: *Kisse'ea*
(*Tapeinochilos piniformis*)



Plate 2-17: *Kisse'ea*
(*Tapeinochilos piniformis*)



Plate 2-18: *Tse'sopung*
(Sarangama hamlet, 1995).



Plate 2-19: *Tse'sopung*
(Ririnibung hamlet, 2006).

Alu karowung

Rop bilong mekim marila

Alu karowung mipela yusim long marila. Rop bilong en, em i yelo nogut tru. Kisim rop bilong *Alu karowung* (Plate 2-20), na kolim nem bilong meri yu laikim. Sapos rop em i bruk, ol tok meri bai no inap kam long yu. Tu, yu ken sikrapim rop bilong en na kukim sanda bilong paspas bilong yu, na wanpela sanda bilong meri yu gat laik long en; sapos meri save long yu. Narapela rot, yu ken kukim long wel na putim long skin.

Mikung

Marila

Rop bilong *Mikung* (Plate 2-21), mipela yusim long wokim marila. Nogat bikpela stori bilong dispela rop tasol bai yu kisim rop bilong en, kolim meri na kamautim, na tanim wantaim sampela narapela rop na putim long wel.

***Piper* sp.¹¹**

Love charm vine

This *Piper* sp. vine (Plate 2-20) is very yellow. While pulling at an exposed root, you say the name of your intended conquest. If the root comes away whole, you will be able to seduce her; if it breaks, you will not. Also, you can scrape the bark of the root into the perfumed parcel for your decorative dancing armband and make one the same for the girl if you know her well enough that she will accept this! This *Piper* sp. root can also be made into oil and rubbed on the skin.

Vine for love magic¹²

Love magic

This unidentified vine (Plate 2-21) is used in love magic but has no real story attached to its use. The vine is uprooted while thinking of the woman's name. It is then mixed with other vines and put in oil.

11. *Piper* sp. (Piperaceae).

12. Unidentified species (Menispermaceae).



Plate 2-20: *Alu karowung* (*Piper* sp.)



Plate 2-21: *Mikung* (vine for love magic)

