

Sapta Tri

Wokim ol samting bilong daunim sik

Long taim bipo, ol tumbuna save olsem as bilong olgeta sik i stap long kros o wari wantaim ol narapela man, o tumbuna/masalai givim sik long ol man. Long dispela taim bipo insait long ples bilong tumbuna bilong mipela, i gat wanpela kain rot bilong givim sik long ol narapela man. Mipela save kolim dispela rot, 'posin', na wan wan ples (*palem*) i gat posin man bilong ol bilong lukautim ol. I no olsem posin stret. Posin em min olsem kisim hap samting bilong narapela na putim long mambu long paia, na sik bai kisim dispela man. Nau yet, mipela i no save long kain samting, na nogat posin man i stap long Reite. Long taim bilong Yali [Singina, 1912–75], ol papa tumbuna bin lusim olgeta kain samting olsem.

Long sait bilong stretim posin sik, i gat wanpela kawawar, ol kolim *Kusin tong*. Ol tumbuna bin tok olsem dispela kawawar em bilong 'brukim mambu'. Kisim dispela kawawar, *Kusin tong*, na yu no inap dai long posin. Bilong wanem ol i tok, 'brukim mambu'? Em i min olsem brukim mambu bilong posin.

Chapter Three

Medicinal plants

In the past, our ancestors understood that all illness came from the ill will of other people, or from spirits of ancestors or places, and the only known method of causing sickness here was through 'poison'. Every place (*palem*) had a poison man for their protection from others. This was not direct chemical poisoning, but involved placing some substance from the person to be poisoned in a bamboo tube. We do not know about or practice these things any more. Our fathers and grandfathers gave them up during the time when Yali [Singina, 1912–75] was influential on the Rai Coast.

There was only one thing that could cure 'poison', a kind of ginger called *Kusin tong*. Our ancestors said this ginger was to 'break the bamboo'. After eating this ginger, you would not die of poisoning. It is said that the ginger 'broke the bamboo tube' that contained the poison substances.

Long dispela sapta, i gat ol narapela samting bilong mekim sik kol. Olgeta kolpela samting, i kam long hap bilong san i go daun. Long san i go daun, ol i gat sanguma. Em i narapela samting long posin. Taim ol lain long hap salim sanguma man i kam bilong kilim mipela, ol bai tokim ol lain bilong ol long hia; 'Sapos sanguma kisim yu, bai yu kisim ol dispela kolpela samting'. Nau mipela save gut long ol dispela.

I gat wan wan ol narapela samting wantaim, bilong stopim blut na kain samting olsem, na mipela putim hia wantaim.

In this chapter, there are other plants said to 'make sickness cold'. To the west, they have sorcery practices of other kinds and sorcerers. Ill health as a result of sorcery comes from the west. In the past, when those in the west sent a sorcerer to harm people in this area, they would tell any relatives they had that live here that if they were affected by ill health, they must use certain plants to counteract the sorcery. Now we know many of these plants well.

There are a few other plants we know about which slow the flow of blood and so forth, and we have included them in this chapter.

Wariwi mapoming/ Kusing tong

Brukim mambu: *Kusing tong*

Sapos yu gat posin sik, kaikai dispela *Wariwi mapoming* (Plate 3-1) na bai yu pekpek wara. Em olsem yu rausim sik. Tu, yu ken kisim lip, na rabim long skin, na pen bilong yu bai pinis. 'Brukim mambu', olsem mipela tok: '*Kusing tong*; bilong brukim posin mambu'.

Potent medicinal ginger¹

Counteract poison

This unidentified ginger (Plate 3-1) is used to counter the effect of poisoning. When eaten, it causes diarrhoea which is said to remove the illness. Leaves can also be rubbed over skin in the areas of the body that aches. *Kusing tong* means 'break the bamboo' [containing the poison substances and material from the victim].

1. Unidentified species (Zingiberaceae), kol kawawar.



Plate 3-1: *Wariwi mapoming/Kusin tong* (potent medicinal ginger)

Sowa so

Kolim posin

Dispela diwai *Sowa so* (Plate 3-2), inap long mekim kol ol sik bilong sanguma na posin. Em i ken daunim pawa bilong marila tu; em kol samting. Taim yu laik wokim long sik yu ken kisim lip o kru, na tu, sikrapim skin wantaim. Em i orait long pneumonia tu; holim long ples we pen i stap wantaim *Kakau* (Plate 3-6).

***Pisonia longirostris*²**

Counteract poison

Pisonia longirostris (Plate 3-2) works to counter illness caused by sorcery and love-spells. It is a powerful agent. To treat for illness due to such sorcery; leaves or shoots can be taken or rubbed over the skin. Also, making a poultice with *Crinum asiaticum* (Plate 3-6) applied to affected areas is effective for pneumonia.



Plate 3-2: *Sowa so* (*Pisonia longirostris*)

Popitung

Kolim posin

Dispela *Popitung* (Plate 3-3, 3-4), wankain *Sowa so* (Plate 3-2), em bilong daunim ol sanguma na posin. Em bai kolim kambang nogut ol save wokabaut wantaim taim sanguma kisim yu. Na tu, em bilong givim long ol yangpela meri. Mipela wokim wel wantaim ol rop bilong *Popitung*, na marila bai no inap kisim ol. Taim ol kaikai nabaut, ol mas smelim dispela, na marila bai kol.



**Plate 3-3: *Popitung*
(*Angiopteris evecta*)**

***Angiopteris evecta*³**

Counteract poison

Angiopteris evecta (Plate 3-3, 3-4), works as antidote to the effects of the lime powder that sorcerers use; similar to *Pisonia longirostris* (Plate 3-2). Also, we make an oil from the *Angiopteris evecta* leaf midribs, for unmarried women. When young women have eaten from the hands of someone performing love magic on them, smelling this oil will nullify its effect.



**Plate 3-4: *Popitung*
(*Angiopteris evecta*)**

3. *Angiopteris evecta* (Marattiaceae), turnip fern.

Makama kung

Kolim posin

Makama kung (Plate 3-5) mipela save yusim wantaim ol narapela samting, olsem, *Sowa so* (Plate 3-2) na *Popitung* (Plate 3-3, 3-4), bilong mekim kol ol sik bilong sanguma. Olsem mipela bungim wantaim ol yangpela rop na kru bilong *Makama kung*, na kaikai.

Kakau

Kolim posin

Kakau (Plate 3-6) mipela yusim long kolim sik bilong posin wantaim *Sowa so* (Plate 3-2). Mipela paitim ol lip na bun bilong en, na holim long hap pen i kirap.

Holochlamys beccarii⁴

Counteract poison

Holochlamys beccarii (Plate 3-5) is used in conjunction with *Pisonia longirostris* (Plate 3-2) and *Angiopteris evecta* (Plate 3-3, 3-4) to counter the impact of sorcery. The young roots and shoots are chewed.

Crinum asiaticum⁵

Counteract poison

Crinum asiaticum (Plate 3-6) has already been mentioned as used with *Pisonia longirostris* (Plate 3-2) in conjunction with counteracting the effect of poisoning. The midrib of the leaf or young stems are pounded to a pulp and held against the painful area.

4. *Holochlamys beccarii* Engl. (Araceae).

5. *Crinum asiaticum* (Amaryllidaceae or Liliaceae).



Plate 3-5: *Makama kung (Holoclamys beccarii)*



Plate 3-6: *Kakau (Crinum asiaticum)*

Musiresan

**‘Tumora o hap tumora’:
sanguma**

Musiresan mipela yusim long posin na sanguma. Sapos ol laik kilim yu i dai, ol bai tok: ‘Maski, tumora o hap tumora’. Olsem, ol i tok, bai pulim taim. Em bai givim taim long ol ken stretim yu long kol samting. Yu mas kaikaim ol lip bilong *Musiresan* (Plate 3-7) long dispela taim.

Sasaneng

Painim sanguma

Liklik kaikai long as bilong *Sasaneng* diwai (Plate 3-8), yu kaikai na bai yu slip na lukim wanem ples bagarapim yu. Yu no lukim wanpela ples, em sik nating. *Sasaneng* ken kolim sik tu. Sampela taim mipela bai givim nem *tupongneng*: ‘mama bilong wara’, bilong dispela *Sasaneng*.

***Rungia* sp.⁶**

**‘Tomorrow or the next
day’: sorcery**

This *Rungia* sp. is used in cases of poisoning and sorcery. When a sorcerer decides to kill you, they will delay using the expression: ‘Tomorrow or the next day’. This gives time for other ‘cold’ plants (Plate 3-7) to be administered to counter the sorcerer’s spell.

***Curcuma* cf. *australasica*⁷**

Discover source of attack

Small nodules attached to the roots of *Curcuma* cf. *australasica* (Plate 3-8) are eaten, and in dreams that follow, you will see visions of the place that sent sorcery to kill you. If you have no vision, your sickness is not caused by sorcery. It can also counteract the illness. We also call *Sasaneng*, ‘*tupongneng*’ which means ‘water’s mother’.

6. *Rungia* sp. (Acanthaceae). Alternative identification: *Platyclusus* sp. (Lamiaceae).

7. *Curcuma* cf. *australasica* (Zingiberaceae).



Plate 3-7: *Musiresan*
(*Rungia* sp.)

Sisela

Bilong daunim sik, haitim man long bus na wokim ofa

Dispela *Sisela* (Plate 3-9), mipela save yusim long taim man i sik. Long kastom bilong mipela, yu mas go na toktok wantaim *Sisela* rop. Olsem bai yu tok: 'Man i sik, na mi laik kolim nau'. Bihain long dispela toktok bai katim rop na putim wara bilong en long mambu. Ol narapela samting bilong kol, long taim yu putim long mambu em bai stap pinis insait. Bai tanim wantaim wara na bai yu givim long sik man long dring.



Plate 3-8: *Sasaneng*
(*Curcuma* cf. *australasica*)

***Dioscorea merrillii*⁸**

Illness, initiation and ritual

When someone is suffering an illness due to sorcery, a ritual prayer is spoken to the *Dioscorea merrillii* vine (Plate 3-9) to counteract the spell. Other plants which are also able to counteract sorcery are placed into a bamboo tube. The *Dioscorea merrillii* sap is poured in, and this is given to the sick person to drink.

8. *Dioscorea merrillii* Prain & Burkill (Dioscoreae).

Narapela wok bilong dispela *Sisela*, em wantaim ol manki. Mipela save kisim ol manki na subim ol i go insait long rop bilong *Sisela*. Skin bilong ol bai kamap olsem wel, na sik bai no inap pas long ol. Ol bikpela boi, mipela save givim wantaim kulau, bilong stretim skin. Skin bilong ol bai kamap klin, nogat das long en. Taim ol i dring, ol bai tuhat, na skin bai klin.

Taim mipela kaikai ol nupela samting, mipela save givim ofa long dispela samting. Long dispela ofa mipela bai kisim kukamba, bin (*Puti* Plate 7-9), smel purpur (*Asarsing* Plate 5-4), kain lip taro em gat smel bilong en (*Wikiwiki* Plate 5-18), na smel gorgor (*Saari* Plate 2-13). Mipela putim dispela ol ofa long as bilong *Sisela* rop na wokim hap toktok olsem beten long *Patuki*; olsem, *alulik ya'ketem*, em minim, mi givim kaikai long yu nau. Sapos i gat liklik klaut pairap o ren, mipela tok: 'Em kisim ofa bilong en'. Sapos em bai nogat pairap, *Patuki* em i no kisim. Sapos mipela strong na bai yu lukim ren, yu bai tok: 'Dispela pawa i wok liklik'.

Poing ging

Bilong olgeta sik

Bai yu kisim namel bilong *Poing ging* (Plate 3-10) na tanim. Dring wara bilong en, na sik bai lus long skin bilong yu. Narapela, kisim liklik kru bilong en, na givim ol manki kaikai. Ol bai kamap smat tasol, nogat sik o sua, na bihainim diwai na sanap stret na strong.

Young children are passed through the broken stem of the growing vine to make them resistant to illness giving their skin a smooth sheen. Adolescents are given the sap to drink to induce sweating and make the skin shiny and smooth. When they drink this liquid they feel very hot and their skin will be cleaned.

At the time of first harvest each year, an offering is made to *Patuki* using this vine. New produce, such as cucumbers and beans (Plate 7-9) as well as fragrant plants and gingers (Plate 2-13, 5-4, 5-18) are used to decorate the base of the *Dioscorea merrillii* vine. If it thunders or rains, we know that *Patuki* has accepted our offerings. If there is no thunder but rain can be seen and you remain in good health, then we say the ritual had a little power.

***Gastonia spectabilis*⁹**

General tonic

Squeeze the juice from the *Gastonia spectabilis* (Plate 3-10) stem and drink the sap to cure sickness. The young shoots can be given to children to eat. They will grow well without sickness or sores, just as the *Gastonia spectabilis* tree grows; upright and strong.

9. *Gastonia spectabilis* (Araliaceae).



Plate 3-9: *Sisela* (*Dioscorea merrillii*)



Plate 3-10: *Poing ging* (*Gastonia spectabilis*)

Alalau

Bilong stopim blut

Alalau (Plate 3-11, 3-12) nogat blut long bun bilong en, olsem mipela save kisim bilong stopim blut i ran ausait long bodi. Sapos yu kisim bikpela sua long skin, yu ken kisim bun insait long graun bilong *Alalau*, na kaikai.

Anangisowung

Sik bilong lewa

Mipela save yusim *Anangisowung* (Plate 3-13, 3-14) taim mipela pilim lewa kamap na man i sik wantaim yelopela skin. Mipela kisim kru bilong *Anangisowung*, karamapim wantaim lip na kukim long paia. Wara bilong en bai kamaut. Putim dispela wara long ai bilong susu na bebi bai dring. Bikpela ken dring long spun. Bihain bai ol pekpekim dispela lewa bilong ol. Long Tokples Nekgini, *anangi*, em i min olsem lewa na *sowung*, em i minim lip bilong diwai.

Sphaerostephanos

sp.¹⁰

Stop blood loss

This *Sphaerostephanos* sp. fern (Plate 3-11, 3-12) has very little sap. The underground part of the stem is chewed to lessen the flow of blood from a wound and to assist with ulcers and boils.

***Spathiostemon* sp.¹¹**

Enlarged spleen and jaundice

New shoots of *Spathiostemon* sp. (Plate 3-13, 3-14) are used for the treatment of an enlarged spleen or jaundice. The shoots are wrapped in leaves and heated on a fire to release the sap from the shoots. The sap is given to babies by placing it on the mother's nipple and adults take it by spoon. This treatment causes the substances causing illness to be excreted with the faeces. In Nekgini, *anangi* means liver and *sowung* means leaf.

10. *Sphaerostephanos* sp. (Thelypteridaceae), kumu gras. Alternative identification: *Christella arida* (Pteridophyta or Thelypteridaceae).

11. *Spathiostemon* sp. (Euphorbiaceae).



Plate 3-11: *Alalau*
(*Sphaerostephanos* sp.)



Plate 3-12: *Alalau*
(*Sphaerostephanos* sp.)



Plate 3-13: *Anangisowung*
(*Spathiostemon* sp.)



Plate 3-14: *Anangisowung*
(*Spathiostemon* sp.)

Kinga'lau

Kus marasin

Katim dispela rop bilong *Kinga'lau* (Plate 3-15, 3-16) na dringim wara bilong en. Em i sol na bai mekim kus i lus long nek.

Upi tapoli

Mekim traut

Dispela *Upi tapoli* (Plate 3-17, 3-18) em bilong mekim yu traut. Tanim wantaim banana o galip. Ol tumbuna save kisim bilong mekim yu traut, na rausim ol sik long bel. Traut bilong yu yelopela o blakplela, ol bai tok; 'Yu gat posin sik'.

Sauce'a

Mekim traut

Mipela yusim *Sauce'a* (Plate 3-19, 3-20) bilong mekim man traut na painim sik. Bai yu putim wara bilong *Sauce'a* long kulau na bai kamap olsem susu. Sapos yu traut, ol bai givim yu *Puti* (Plate 7-9), sol diwai (*paap*) wantaim kawawar, na em bai pinisim dispela traut.

***Uncaria cf. lanosa*¹²**

Medicine used to treat colds

Sap of the *Uncaria cf. lanosa* vine (Plate 3-15, 3-16) is used to treat colds and 'flu. Drinking the bitter juice of *Uncaria cf. lanosa* loosens phlegm.

Plant for spiritual poisoning

Induce vomiting

Since the time of our ancestors we have used this unidentified plant (Plate 3-17, 3-18) to remove the cause of sickness by vomiting. It is mixed with banana or 'galip' nuts and eaten. Yellow or black colour vomit is confirmation of spiritual poisoning.

Plant for determining illness

Induce vomiting

This unidentified plant (Plate 3-19, 3-20) is used to induce vomiting and discover the cause of illness. The milky sap is mixed with coconut milk and drunk. Wingbean (Plate 7-9) and salt-wood with ginger is then administered as antidote to stop the vomiting.

12. *Uncaria cf. lanosa* (Rubiaceae).



Plate 3-15: *Kinga'lau*
(*Uncaria cf. lanosa*)



Plate 3-16: *Kinga'lau*
(*Uncaria cf. lanosa*)



Plate 3-17: *Upi tapoli*
(plant for spiritual poisoning)



Plate 3-18: *Upi tapoli*
(plant for spiritual poisoning)



Plate 3-19: *Sauce'a*
(plant for determining illness)



Plate 3-20: *Sauce'a*
(plant for determining illness)

Samandewung

Mekim traut

Mipela yusim *Samandewung* (Plate 3-21) long mekim man traut bilong painim sik. Boilim *Samandewung* na kisim wara bilong en na dring. Taim yu traut, ol bai givim yu *Puti* (Plate 7-9), sol diwai (*paap*) wantaim kawawar, na em bai stopim dispela traut.

***Dysoxylum cf. mollissimum*¹³**

Induce vomiting

Dysoxylum cf. mollissimum (Plate 3-21) is used as an alternative to *Sauce'a* (Plate 3-19, 3-20) to induce vomiting and discover the cause of illnesses. The *Dysoxylum cf. mollissimum* is boiled and the liquid drunk. To stop the vomiting, a mixture of wingbean (Plate 7-9) and salt-wood with ginger is then administered as antidote.



Plate 3-21: *Samandewung* (*Dysoxylum cf. mollissimum*)

Saping

Mekim sua drai

Dispela *Saping* (Plate 3-22, 3-23) mipela yusim long mekim sua drai. Kisim kaikai bilong *Saping* na brukim long ai bilong sua. Susu bilong en bai kamap, na tanim yelo.



Plate 3-22: *Saping* (*Ficus botryocarpa* Miq. var. *subalbidoramea*)

***Ficus botryocarpa* Miq. var. *subalbidoramea*¹⁴**

Treat sores

Ficus botryocarpa Miq. var. *subalbidoramea* (Plate 3-22, 3-23) is used to draw out and heal sores. This is done by painting the milky yellow discharge of the seeds over the effected area.



Plate 3-23: *Saping* (*Ficus botryocarpa* Miq. var. *subalbidoramea*)

14. *Ficus botryocarpa* Miq. var. *subalbidoramea* (Elm.) Corner (Moraceae).

Masau

Mekim sua drai

Kisim yangpela kru lip bilong *Masau* (Plate 3-24), karamapim, na kukim long paia. Taim em hat yet, tanim na putim wara i go long sua bilong yu. Skin em bai kamap ret na solap na mipela kolim dispela, *tsaking melendewiyung*. Bihain, sua bai pinis.

Sapos i gat ol liklik mak i kamap long skin na i sikrap, mipela save kolim *gninsi gninsing*. Taim i gat olsem, yu kisim retpela kaikai bilong pikinini bilong *Masau* na rabim wara bilong en long skin. Olgeta liklik mak bai bruk bruk na pinis.

Kartiping sangomar

Pekpek wara

Lip bilong *Kartiping sangomar* (Plate 3-25) mipela save yusim bilong pasim pekpek wara. Olsem, kisim lip na tanim wara bilong en i go daun long spun, na dring. Em bai mekim bel bilong yu strong na pinisim pekpek wara.

***Cordyline fruticosa*¹⁵**

Treat sores

Cordyline fruticosa (Plate 3-24) is also used to treat sores. Young leaves and shoots are covered in leaves and heated over the fire. The hot sap is squeezed over the sore which will swell and become red.

For little pimples as occurs with a rash, cover the effected area with sap from the red seeds. After rubbing the sap onto the skin, the sores will break and gradually the skin will heal.

***Desmodium ormocarpoides*¹⁶**

Diarrhoea

The *Desmodium ormocarpoides* leaves (Plate 3-25) are used to make a preparation to relieve diarrhoea. The juice of the leaves is extracted and drunk by the patient. The juice congeals the contents of the bowel and relieves diarrhoea.

15. *Cordyline fruticosa* (Laxmanniaceae), tanget.

16. *Desmodium ormocarpoides* DC. (Fabaceae).



Plate 3-24: *Masau (Cordyline fruticosa)*



Plate 3-25: *Kartiping sangomar (Desmodium ormocarpoides)*

Uli tokai

Bun na skru pen

Uli tokai (Plate 3-26) mipela save yusim long taim yu gat sik long baksait o join i lus. Kukim skin bilong yu wantaim dispela retpela lip salat. Em bai solap liklik na skin o bun pen bai pinis.

Mosong rop, *Yuyung* (Plate 4-7, 4-8), kukim yu, yu ken rabim dispela salat mipela kolim, *Uli tokai*, na em bai pinis.

***Laportea decumana*¹⁷**

Bone and joint pain

Laportea decumana (Plate 3-26) is a stinging nettle used for joint or back pain. The affected area is rubbed with this red-leaved nettle. The skin will swell as a result of the nettle but the joint or bone pain will disappear.

When the stinging vine *Pueraria lobata* (Plate 4-7, 4-8) scratches your skin, the *Laportea decumana* nettle soothes it.



Plate 3-26: *Uli tokai* (*Laportea decumana*)

17. *Laportea decumana* (Urticaceae), salat, nettle.

***Karimbang/Sowi tokai* *Laportea* cf. *interrupta*¹⁸**

Joinim bun

Narapela salat, dispela *Karimbang* (Plate 3-27) mipela yusim bilong joinim bun. I gat ol hap tok bilong en. Kukim ples bun bruk long en pastaim na bai karamapim wantaim lip. Kukim pinis, putim lip gen long dispela hap, na strongim long ol hap mambu, na pasim wantaim. Em ken i stap sampela mun, inap bun join gen.

Mend broken bones

The *Laportea* cf. *interrupta* nettle (Plate 3-27) is used in Reite for joining broken bones. There is a spell that is associated with this treatment using the nettle. Heat the area of the break and cover it with this *Laportea* cf. *interrupta* leaf. Place a split bamboo around the leaves to hold the bone in place. It can stay there for a month or more.



Plate 3-27: *Karimbang/Sowi tokai* (*Laportea* cf. *interrupta*)

18. *Laportea* cf. *interrupta* (Urticaceae), salat, nettle.

Malaap/Anang barar

***Musa sp.*¹⁹**

Skin i solap

Sapos yu pundaun na skin i no bruk tasol hap i solap bikpela na pen i stap, ol save kisim namel bilong *Malaap* (Plate 3-28, 3-29), na kukim long paia. Ol tekewe skin, na tanim, bikpela wara i go pinis, ol bai kisim wara stret bilong en na rabim long skin bilong yu.

Skin swelling

This *Musa sp.* (Plate 3-28, 3-29) is used for swellings without broken skin. The *Musa sp.* stem is heated over a fire and the bark removed. The first water is allowed to run off and then the remaining sap is squeezed over the effected area.



Plate 3-28: *Malaap/Anang barar* (*Musa sp.*)



Plate 3-29: *Malaap/Anang barar* (*Musa sp.*)

19. *Musa sp.* (Musaceae), cultivated banana.