

PHILIPPINIANA RECORDS

- ***PHILIPPINIANA SACRA*, Vol. XXXI, No. 93 (Sept.-Dec., 1996) 509-547**

Capítulo 24

DE OTRAS HIERBAS Y RAICES OLOROSAS Y AROMATICAS, Y DE LAS MUCHAS TINTAS QUE ACA HAY

Comencemos por el *jengibre*, droga bien conocida en España. Y acá la llaman los indios *luia*,¹ que es tan común y ordinaria en estas Islas que apenas se halla sementera de indio que no la tenga plantada en cantidad, más o menos, según su curiosidad o codicia, más por lo medicinal, que sin ella no se hallan, que por lo aromático, que en sus comidas gastan poco de él, pero en sus enfermedades muchas veces y en todas, chicos y grandes, hombres y mujeres, pues en él hallan remedio para dolores de barriga, para la cabeza y de pechos; para heridas, para hinchazones, para los partos. Y, por decirlo de una vez, para todas sus enfermedades.

Diré de su virtud, lo que he visto muchas (veces) y es que en las veces (que no han sido pocas que me han llamado a partos peligrosos) en algunos vi varias criaturitas recién nacidas, sin movimiento alguno, y que más de una vez pensé yo estaban muertas. Y lo que vi hacer en estas ocasiones fue que una de las mujeres que allí suelen asistir, mascaba este jengibre y les untaba las sienes, y luego les soplaban por los oídos con el aliento de la dicha raíz, y también por el ombligo. Y con no poca admiración mía, veía que se comenzaban como a desperezar y menearse, y proseguían hasta que lloraba la criatura. Y en llorando, decían: “buena está ya, está viva!” Que parece que, con la fuerza de esta raíz, las recobraba a la vida, de que al parecer nacían, si no faltos

¹ *Luia*. Vide *luy-á*. Bisayan name for ginger, as Alcina says. It is used as medicine and as spice (Cfr. Antonio Sánchez de la Rosa, *Diccionario español-bisaya para las provincias de Samar y Leyte*, Manila, 1914, p. 197, Bisayan Part).

Chapter 24

CONCERNING OTHER FRAGRANT AND AROMATIC HERBS AND ROOTS OF MANY COLORS THAT ARE HERE

Let us begin with ginger, a drug well-known in Spain; here the natives call it *luy-á*. It is so common and ordinary in these islands that scarcely a cultivated native field can be found which does not have it planted in large or small quantities, depending upon the diligence or ambition of the owner. This is planted more for its medicinal purposes rather than for its aromatic quality. Little of it is used in their meals; its most frequent use is during illnesses. This includes everyone: the small and big, men and women. In it they find a remedy for pains of the abdomen, for the head and breasts, for wounds, for swellings, for parturition and for, to put it in a word, all their illnesses.

I shall speak about its benefits exactly from what I have seen many times. It happened at times that in some of these births I have seen (it has not been seldom that I have been called to dangerous births) various infants, newly born, were without any movement whatever. More than once I thought they were dead. What I saw done on these occasions was that one of the women, who were usually in attendance there, chewed up some ginger and anointed the sides of the head. Then she blew into the ears the scent of this root, and also through the umbilical cord. To my no little astonishment, I saw that the infant began to stretch and wiggle about. They persevered until the infant cried; when it cried they said: "Now it is well! It is alive!" It seems that with the strength of this root, they recovered their lives for

totalmente, como amortizados de los accidentes que en casos semejantes se ofrecen ¡Tanta como ésta es su eficacia!

Hay de este jengibre o *luia*, que es una mata pequeña, cuando mucho tendrá un palmo, o la que más cerca de dos de alto. El tronquillo y hojas como de una cañuela pequeña, cuya raíz es el dicho jengibre, que a las vecs es más ancho que toda la mano, aunque con diferencias de ramos como dedos. Acuérdome haber visto algunas que totalmente parecían una mano con sus dedos, dos o tres diferencias, que sólo se distinguen en ser mayor o menor la raíz, y más o menos picante.

Plántanla comúnmente los indios de las puntas de dicha raíz, que ellas mismas muestran donde está lo que se ha de plantar, y dásese también de suyo en el monte.

En la isla de Panay, a la parte de Oton,² hay un monte mediano, el cual está lleno todo de estas matas, sin tener otra hierba ni árbol; de donde se colí[g]e cuán propio y natural es de estas Islas, y con cuánta abundancia se da.

Es menester cogerla de sazón y con luna a propósito, porque si no le entra carcoma y viene a quedar sólo con el pellejillo superior, sin sustancia; pero, cogida con ella, dura muchos meses, y siempre con la viveza del sabor. El mejor es el que se coge en lugares secos, que con la demasiada humedad ni crece ni se logra.

De sus calidades escriben varios. De lo dicho arriba se verá lo que acá se hace de estima. Añado sólo que la dicha raíz conservada, dicen, es contra el almareo,³ y buena para los tocados de asma, cuando es de frío, pero siempre conforta el estómago de cualquiera manera que se use.

He oído decir que con el zumo se raja o corta una piedra, haciéndole canal en que dicho zumo esté una noche. No lo he probado.⁴

Muy parecida en su virtud a la raíz del jengibre es otra mata, llamada *cosol*, aunque muy distinta en hojas y flor (que el jengibre no

² In early Spanish times, and still during Alcina's time, Oton was a province of Panay Island. The province received the name from the town of Oton. Today Oton is a town of Iloilo province, some ten kilometers west of Iloilo City.

³ *Almareo*: Spanish for *mareo*.

⁴ The four words "no lo he probado" are missing in the Muñoz manuscript. They are found in the *Copia Museo Naval*.

to all appearances they were born as if completely dead. Such as this is its efficacy!

This ginger or *luy-á* is a small shrub that very often gets to be a *palmo*⁵ in height; or at most, two *palmos*. The stem and the leaves are like small fescue grass whose root is ginger. At times it is wider than the entire hand although with different lengths of finger-like branches. I remember seeing some that appeared completely like a hand with its fingers; two or three different ones which only varied in the fact that the root was larger or smaller and more or less sharp in taste.

The natives usually plant the ends of this root; these indicate which part should be planted. These also grow wild in the forests.

On the Island of Panay, in the vicinity of Oton, there is a moderate size mountain which is filled with these shrubs and has no other kind of herb or tree. From this can be deduced how proper and natural it is to these islands and in what abundance it yields.

It is necessary to gather it in season and at the proper phase of the moon. If not, it rots and is reduced to only the outer hull without any substance. But gathered with it, it lasts many months and always retains its vigor of taste. The best is that which is taken from dry places; for with too much moisture it neither grows nor ripens.

Various authors write about its qualities. From what has been said above we can see how highly esteemed it is here. I shall add only that this root is good against fainting and against asthmatic infections due to cold. It always soothes the stomach in whatever manner it is used.

I have heard it said that if a channel is made in a stone and the sap remains there overnight, it will break or cut the stone. I have not experienced this.

Very similar to the quality of the root of the ginger is another shrub called *cosol*;⁶ yet it is very distinct in leaves and flowers which

⁵ *Palmo* is a measure of longitude, the fourth part of a *vara*. It is also the measure of a man's palm-hand, from the extreme of the thumb to the extreme of the little finger.

⁶ *Cosol*. A herb of broad leaves, without trunk. It has a heavy smell. It is used as medicine against cough. It is also used as counter-poison (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, pp. 94; 400. Bisayan Part).

la da) y es la raíz mucho menor, pero mucho más olorosa. Usanla mucho por acá después de los partos las mujeres, y todos en común para dolores de *ijada*⁷ y de vientre.

Es su hoja muy parecida a la del azafrán de Castilla, aunque ésta siempre está apartada del suelo y es tan olorosa como la raíz. La florecilla es como campanilla, y en el color y hechura se parece totalmente a la flor de azafrán que se coge en Aragón con abundancia. Fáltanle las hebrillas, que con ellas diríamos era azafrán, que, aunque acá no lo hay como el de España, hay dos cosas que sirven en su lugar, y son las siguientes.

Dulao llaman estos naturales a una raíz que, por ser amarilla y teñir amarillo con ella, ha dado acá nombre al dicho color. Es muy parecida al jengibre, y no sé si más medicinal que él. La hoja es ancha y de un color verde muy claro. Es mata baja y echa una flor o un cipresillo todo lleno de flores, que se parecen a las *cosol*; sólo se diferencia que aquella mata echa solo una florecilla, y este *dulao* un ramillete como cipresillo, lleno de ellas, aunque de poco olor. Suelen ser sus raíces mayores que las del jengibre, y usan de ellas los indios para muchas medicinas y para dar color a sus guisadillos, cuando tienen fiestas grandes.

Es medicina muy eficaz, entre otras cosas, para dos, que la experiencia ha hecho célebres: la una es para sacar espinas, o puya (que por acá las de *bacacay*⁸ son muy usadas y muy venosas) que con esta raíz, machucada y hervida con aceite de coco y puesta a la parte contraria de la que está con la puya (como si se clavó en la planta, que es lo más común, encima en el empeine del pie) la saca por arriba con mucha facilidad sin añadir dolor, antes mitigando los que suelen semejantes heridas causar.

Hánse visto en muchos casos maravillosos efectos, y, faltando el arte y medicinas a los cirujanos españoles para semejantes curas, y puestos los pacientes en peligros de encancerarse, los suelen con esta sola raíz (algunos le echan un polvillo de cal, pero muy poco y dicen

⁷ *Ijada*. From the Latin *ilia*. Pain or ailment experienced in the region between the lower ribs and the bone of the hips (cfr. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, Real Academia).

⁸ *Bacacay*. Vide *bagácay*. Name given to a thin cane (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 26, Bisayan Part). *Bacacay* is a town in the province of Albay, Luzon.

the ginger does not bear. The root is much smaller but much more fragrant. They use it here a great deal after childbirth, and everyone in general for illnesses of the liver and the stomach.

Its leaf is very similar to that of the saffron of Castile, although it is always separated from the ground, and is as fragrant as the root. The little flower is like a bellflower and in color and appearance it resembles completely the saffron which is found in Aragon in abundance. It lacks the small fibers; if it would have these we would say that it is saffron. Although the latter here is not like that of Spain, there are two plants that serve in its place and they now follow.

The natives refer to a certain root as *dulao*;⁹ its yellow color and its use as a yellow dye has given that name to the color itself. It is very much like the ginger and I am not sure but perhaps with more medicinal qualities than the latter. The leaf is wide and of a very deep green; the plant is short and produces a single flower or a branch full of flowers that resemble those of the *cosol*. The only difference is that the latter produces a single little flower, while the *dulao* has a small branch like a small cypress full of them, although with little fragrance. Its roots are ordinarily larger than those of the ginger and the natives use them for many medicinal purposes and to give flavor to their small dishes of stew when they have large festivities.

Among other things, it is a very effective medicine for two things that experience has made famous. The one is for taking out a thorn or a splinter. Here those of the *bagacay* are very common and very poisonous. When this root is pulverized and boiled with coconut oil and placed on the opposite part to where the thorn or splinter is (if it was pierced in the sole of the foot, which is the most common, then it is applied at the instep of the foot) one pulls it out without added pain. It even alleviates the pain inflicted by similar wounds.

In many cases marvelous effects have been seen. The Spanish surgeons lacking the skill and the special medicines for such cures when patients are in danger of becoming infected the natives use this root alone and easily heal people. Some mix it with a little powdered

⁹ *Dulao*. A plant of broad, long, pointed leaves. The root is yellow and with it they make a dye, not very lasting though. The pounded root, mixed with grated coconut, heated in fire, can be applied as emplaster to wounds caused by poisonous thorns, especially those of some fish (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 401, Bisayan Part).

que llama la virtud interior) curar los indios facilísimamente, sirviendo ella no solo de llamar y sacar por la parte contraria la punta, o puya, que estaba escondida por dentro, sino que cura también la llaga, y dentro de breve tiempo la cierra y deja del todo sana. Cosa que parece increíble y la experiencia lo hace no sólo creíble pero vulgar aún y ordinaria.

Otra eficacia tiene esta raíz muy importante, y es que, machacada y sacado su zumo cuando verde, y, si seca, dejándola en infusión (y si urge calentándole un poco) y, administrado con instrumento competente, es eficacísima para llamar la orina a los que padecen detención de ella; que, al punto que la reciben, casi instantáneamente, obra; experiencia es que han hecho algunos, a cuya noticia ha llegado con muy buen efecto. Díjome esta virtud a mi un indio que sabía mucho de hierbas, y yo he comunicado a algunos otros, que la han experimentado.

Hecha también como calilla y, untada con una poca de sal y aceite de coco, tiene la misma eficacia aplicada en la vía mayor para los estílicos. Y de esta virtud puedo hablar por experiencia.

En la India Oriental sirve de azafrán, y se hacen cargazones de esta raíz para el efecto, que tiene mucho valor, aunque oí decir a una persona práctica de ella que a los que la usan con demasía les daña la vista.

Otros efectos le dan algunos, que, por no tenerlos por ciertos, no los pongo. De los dichos tengo experiencia.

En estas Islas, aunque esta raíz no sirve de azafrán (por haber otro que llaman *cachumba* los españoles, y los indios llaman *casubha*) sirve empero para teñir amarillo y da lindísimo color, aunque con sola esta raíz se deslustra presto. Dura más, añadida otra de que trataremos después, llamada *ninó*.¹⁰ La dicha *cachumba* es la que acá sirve de azafrán y es lo que en España llaman en algunas partes azafrán bastardo. Cógese en la flor, que está llena de unas hebritas amarillas, y, pues en España la hay, no me detengo en contar su calidad. Acá he visto teñir con estas hebras algunos paños, o lienzos, y medias de un color encarnada finísimo, sólo que dura poco.

¹⁰ *Ninó*. Name of a big, tall tree. The leaves are broad, long and pointed. The leaf is applied to the forehead to cure headaches due to heat. The fruit can be eaten. The roots are used to dye in red (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 420, Bisayan Part).

lime, but little, and they say it brings out its inner qualities. They use it not only to draw and extract through the opposite side the thorn or splinter which was hidden within, but also to heal the wound. Within a short time it closes and the whole thing is well. A remarkable thing, but experience shows that it is not only believable but very common and ordinary.

This root has another very significant usefulness. If it is ground and the sap extracted while it is still green or if dry, administered as inhalation, and if urgent, heating it a little, it is most helpful for causing the urine to flow in those who suffer from a retention of it. As soon as they apply it there is an instantaneous relief. Some who had heard about it have used it with very fine results. A native told me about this property who knew much about herbs and I have passed it along to some others who have tried it.

It distils a kind of lime and, smeared with a little salt and coconut oil, has the same efficacy applied to the major conduit against constipation. About this fine quality I can speak with experience.

In *India Oriental*, it is used as saffron and shiploads of this root are collected for this purpose and it has great value. Yet, I have heard a person say, who was acquainted with it, that those that use it too much damage their vision.

Other effects are ascribed to it by some, but since I am not certain of them I shall not set them down. These I know from experience.

In these Islands, however, this root is not used as saffron because they have another which the Spaniards call *cachumba*¹¹ and the natives *casubha*. It is useful especially for its yellow dye and provides a lovely color. However, with only this root it fades quickly; it lasts better with another added and about which I shall speak later, called *ninó*. This *cachumba* over here is a substitute for saffron, and it is what in some parts of Spain is called pseudo-saffron. It is taken from the flower which is full of some little yellow fibers. But since it is found in Spain, I shall not stop to describe its properties. Here I have seen various woollens or linens dyed with these fibers, and stockings of a very fine red color, except that it does not last long.

¹¹ *Cachumba*: Plant of the species of the safflower. It is proper to the Philippines and it is used as saffron (cf. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, Real Academia)

Dáse en la isla de Cebú en más abundancia que en otras de Visayas, por ser aquella tierra más seca y muy a propósito para esta planta que, verde, se semeja a las lechugas, y, cocida, sirve en su lugar.

Otra mata hay entre estos naturales, que llaman *tanglar*,¹² y es la especie, o aroma, de que más usan los bisayas por haber mucha y ser su uso más fácil, pues no hacen más de arrancar un pie de dicha mata, a que quitan las hojas (que son al modo de las hojas del trigo verde) y lo que está cerca de la raíz, que es a modo de una cebolleta pequeña, aunque mucho más sólida, lo echan en la olla donde cuecen el puerco o pescado, que con esta raíz recibe buen olor y mejor sabor.

Parécese al jengibre, aunque es menos picante. Plántanlo comúnmente cerca de sus casas, y cunde mucho, aunque no crece más que como matas de trigo o de arroz, si bien ahijan mucho y no dan flor ni fruta sino dicha como cebollaja, apegada a la tierra.

Dicen se saca de esta planta agua olorosa. No la he visto sacar a los bisayas, que solo la tienen para el dicho efecto de mezclar con la comida. Sirveles esta mata para varios remedios. El que yo he experimentado es para el dolor de dientes, que se mitiga con agua caliente en que esta raíz, o el pie de dicha mata, se hierve, y ella, aplicada, aprovecha también.

*Tara*¹³ llaman a otra mata que huele y sabe a nuestro anís de Castilla, y aún huele mejor. Es de hojas como la hierbabuena nuestra. Son dos veces más anchas. Echa las florecillas como ella, aunque son mayores y azules.

Mezclan los naturales estas hojas en el *buyo*, y le añade sabor y olor el agua sacada por alambique. Nadie, que no sepa de lo que es, dirá que es sino de nuestro anís, porque el color, olor y sabor no se distingue de ella, y a lo que yo he probado, ni en los efectos, porque los mismos he experimentado yo en una que en otra.

¹² *Tanglar*. Vide *Tanglad*. A plant of narrow, long, fresh and odorous leaves. The leaves are used as seasoning. The water in which the plant has been in infusion is used as medicine for those who feel chills. Pounded the plant is used to relieve the pain and reduce the irritations of hemorrhoids. The chopped trunk is used as emplaster to the wounds caused by the poisonous thorns of some fish. (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 420, Bisayan Part).

¹³ *Tara*. A herb of long and aromatic leaves. Some people chew the leaf because

It grows on the Island of Cebu more abundantly than in other of the Visayas because the soil is drier and very suitable to this plant. When green it resembles lettuce and when cooked, is used in its place.

There is another shrub among these native that they call *tan-glad*. It is a variety of aromatic plant that the Bisayans use most because it is plentiful and very easy to utilize. They just pull a stalk of this shrub out and strip off the leaves, which are in the fashion of those of green wheat. The part near the root which looks like a small onion, although much harder, they toss into the pot where they are cooking the pork or the fish. From this root the latter receives a pleasant fragrance and a better taste.

It resembles the ginger, although not so sharp. It is ordinarily planted near the houses and spreads widely, although it grows no taller than the plants of wheat or rice, yet it has many shoots. It bears no flowers nor fruit except this onion-like growth adhering to the ground.

They say that they draw odorous water from this plant. I have never seen the Bisayans make it. They only use it for the purpose mentioned, of mixing it with their food. This shrub is used for various kinds of remedies. The one I have experienced is for toothache, which is reduced with the hot water, in which this root is boiled. The shrub applied directly can also lessen the pain.

Another shrub is called *tara* which smells and tastes like our anise from Castile; it even smells better. The leaves are like our mint, but they are twice as wide. It produces little flowers like they do, although these are larger and blue.

The natives mix these leaves into the *buyo*¹⁴ and it adds flavor and aroma. The fluid is drawn off by distillation and anyone who does not know what it is, will say that it is nothing but our anise, because the color, fragrance and taste is not distinguishable from it. From what I have discovered it is not even different in the effects because I have tried one as well as the other.

it has a pleasant flavor. Placed and boiled in water it confers a balsamic and agreeable smell to it. The plant is medicinal (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 420, Bisayan Part).

¹⁴ *Buyo*. Vide *Buyó* [Spanish fr. Bisayan *buyó*]. *Philippines*: a masticatory consisting of betel leaf, the areca nut, lime, and often tobacco (Cf. Webster's *Third New International Dictionary*, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1981, p. 306).

Nace esta mata y se extiende mucho (aunque nunca es alta sino como la dicha hierbabuena) en partes húmedas y aguanosas. No sé que la haya en España, y aquí la puso Dios en lugar del anís, que no se da acá, aunque se trae de Castilla y de China.

Y, porque de esta tierra de la gran China se trae acá otro género de anís, que se da también en estas Islas y lo tengo por natural de ellas, por hallarse en algunas de ellas en los montes, diré su diferencia y distinción del nuestro, que es mucha.

Es este que acá llaman "anís de China" que los indios llaman *pansipansi*,¹⁵ muy diferente en todo del nuestro. El pie o mata crece de modo que viene a ser como un arbolillo; las hojas algo anchas y olorosas; la flor que viene a ser el fruto es como una estrella del tamaño de un real de a cuatro. Esta estrella es hueca dentro y tiene unas pepitillas como las de la cañafistola, o algarrobas de España. Son muy sólidas y sirven sólo de semilla. Aquella estrella, o como estrella, es el anís que huele y sabe a nuestro anís, y aún es más eficaz, y acá sirve para todo lo que el nuestro en particular. Y dicen es mucho mejor para tomar sudores, y no se acaba con dar fruto una vez sino que dura muchos años y da casi siempre. En la isla de Bohol se halla con alguna abundancia.

Otro género, que llaman *lamudio* y es natural de estas Islas, es más pequeño en mata, hojas y frutilla que nuestro anís, y en el sabor es un medio entre anís y cominos. También lo gastan con el *buyo* estos naturales. Es casi como el apio de Castilla.

Barioco llaman a otra hierba, que en la hoja se semeja al *anglar*, aunque es más corta y más suave. La raíz es muy aromática y muy olorosa, y tanto que dudo haya otra que lo sea más que ella. Sácanla las indias y la mezclan con el aceite que preparan para los cabellos, que, hirviéndolo con dicha raíz, queda muy oloroso.

Y de este modo hay otras muchas hierbas y raíces olorosas: unas que siempre lo son; otras que sólo cuando las calientan y hierven, y, entre estas, las hojas de un árbol llamado *laion*, que las hacen pequeñas

¹⁵ *Pansipansi*. The name of a small tree (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 238, Bisayan Part). *Pansi Pansi*: a kind of a small tree. Its fruit and smell is similar to the anise of China (Cfr. Juan Felix de la Encarnación, *Diccionario bisaya-español*, Manila, 1885, p. 281). The Dictionary of Sánchez is of the Bisayan language from Samar and Leyte, or Waray-Waray. The Dictionary of Encarnación is of the Bisayan language from Cebu, Bohol, etc., that is, *Cebuano*.

The shrub emerges and spreads out greatly in humid and marshy places. It is never tall but is like the mint. I do not know whether it grows in Spain; here God put it in place of the anise which does not grow here, although it is brought from Castile and China.

And since from the land of *Great China* another kind of anise is brought here which grows also in these Islands, and I hold it to be native to them by reason of finding some of them in the forests, I shall speak of their difference and distinction from ours, which is very great.

What is called here "*anise of China*", and the natives call it *pansipansi*, is altogether different from ours. The stalk or shrub grows so that it comes to resemble a little tree. The leaves are somewhat wide and fragrant. The flower which turns into a fruit is like a star of the size of a *real de a cuatro*. This star is hollow within and has some little seeds like those of the cassia or smooth podded tares of Spain. The seeds are very hard and are only used as seeds. That star or so-called star, is the anise which smells and tastes like our anise and is even more useful. Here it serves for everything that ours does especially, and they say it is better for causing sweating. It does not die after bearing fruit once, but lasts for many years and yields almost continually. In the Island of Bohol it is found in some abundance.

Another kind is called *lamudio*, and a native of these islands. It is smaller in the branches, leaves and fruit than our anise. In taste it is midway between the anise and the cumin plant. The natives also enjoy this with *buyo*; it is almost like the celery of Castile.

Barioco is another herb which has a leaf similar to the *tanglad*, although it is shorter and softer. The root is very aromatic and very fragrant, so much so that I doubt that there is another to surpass it. The native women gather it and mix it with oil to prepare it for their hair. The oil boiled with the root becomes very fragrant.

In like manner, there are many other aromatic herbs and roots; some of which are always so, others only when they are heated and boiled. Among these, the leaves of a tree called *laion* are cut into

¹⁶ *Lamudio*. Name of an aromatic plant. (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 178, Bisayan Part). The liqueur has similarities with the anisette.

tiras, las hierven y se ponen con eso blancas, las asolean o dan un hervor, y tejen unos como cordones de ellas, dejándoles unos fluecos en poca distancia como sartas.

Es gala entre las mujeres, y es muy oloroso, que por esta causa las traen casi siempre en el cuello como cadenas, y, en perdiendo el olor con el uso, los renuevan, pues no les cuesta más que el cogerlos y hacer dicho beneficio.

También lo que llaman *borac*¹⁷ o *alangilan*¹⁸ es flor verde, de hechura de estrella; aunque, por ser las hojas blandas se tuercen con facilidad y parecen como lirio. Es de olor muy eficaz, aunque es suave. Hacen también largas sartas de esta flor, que usan como de la otra para gala y para buen olor; que todos estos preservativos, y otros, son necesarios, porque huelen naturalmente los naturales de estas Islas no muy bien, y más los que no tienen cuidado con sus personas, que son los más.

Vengamos ya a las tintas, árboles, plantas y hierbas que sirven de dar varios colores; que de todos ellos se halla acá con abundancia.

El palo de brasil, que acá llaman *sibucac*,¹⁹ se nace naturalmente en los montes, y en algunas islas son los que hay maleza, así por lo espinosos, que todo el tronco y ramas está lleno de espinas muy recias, como por lo espeso.

Cogen los indios para vender el que hallan ya seco en los montes, que es el corazón, por no cansarse en desbastarlo, por ser muy grueso lo blando, que es de color blanco, y acá llaman *aramay*, que se rodea a lo que se vende, que es sólo el tuétano colorado.

Pero, aunque este palo del Brasil es muy bueno para teñir colorado, no tiene que ver con otro palo que acá hay, y se llama *ninó*.

¹⁷ *Borac*. *Borac* is not found in Sánchez' Dictionary. We find *baroc baroc*, a medicinal tree growing near the beach (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 40, Bisayan Part). It is not rare to find some changed words in Alcina's manuscript.

¹⁸ *Alangilan*. Although this word *Alangilan* is not found in Sanchez' Dictionary, we found it, however, in Encarnación's *Diccionario bisaya-español*, where we read: "A well-known tree because of the fragrant smell of its flowers." (p. 9)

¹⁹ *Sibucac*. A tree of thick, high trunk and narrow leaves. The wood is hard and red and it is used to dye in red. The water in which the wood has been boiled is given as medicine to women whose menstruation has been retarded. It is also used

small strips, boiled which makes them white and dried in the sun. Others are boiled and woven into cords leaving some of them rounded at a small distance apart like beads.

It is a festive decoration among the women and very fragrant; for this reason they wear them almost always about the neck like chains. After losing their fragrance with use, they are replaced for they cost no more than to collect them and fashion this adornment.

There is also one called *borac* or *alangilan*. It has a green flower in the shape of a star. However, because the leaves are soft they become bent easily and look like the iris. It has a very striking fragrance, although mild. They also make long strips of this flower which they use like the other decoration and for its fine aroma. All these preservatives are necessary because the natives of these islands naturally do not smell very good and especially those that do not take care of their persons, which constitutes the majority.

We now come to the dyes or the trees, plants and shrubs which are used to produce various colors. All of these are found here in abundance.

Brazilwood, which is called here *sibucão*, grows naturally in the forests. In some islands there are those which are like bramble patches, both because of their spiny quality, since the whole trunk and branches are full of very sharp thorns, and because of their thickness.

The natives gather what they find already dried out in the forests in order to sell it. This is the heart [pith], so as not to tire themselves in trimming it, because it is very heavy. The soft part, which is white in color, is called here *aramay*.²⁰ The portion which is for sale only is the reddish pith of the tree.

Yet, although this Brazilwood is very good for dying things red, it does not compare with another wood here which is called *ninó*. It is

to wash blisters and wounds. It is also good as drink because through the urine it purifies of certain evil humours. The water in which the root is boiled is a tested medicine against blood vomiting (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 417, Bisayan Part).

²⁰ *Aramay*. The segment of wood near the bark and near the heart. It easily rots and disintegrates because it is soft (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 21, Bisayan Part)

Es árbol de hojas muy lozanas y de lindo verde, tan grandes como la mano cada una, y casi de su hechura, teniendo los dedos juntos.

Lo que sirve de este palo es la raíz, y de ella no el palo o madera sino la corteza, que, raspada y exprimida, mezclándole una poca de cal, da un color finísimo y que jamás se quita ni altera. Y suelen teñir las mantas, que acá llaman *pinaiusan* (de que trataremos en su lugar) o poniéndolas al sol en remojo, con el zumo de dicha raíz, o dándoles un hervor manso al fuego, pero al sol sale mucho mejor. Y es tan connatural este color del *ninó* para las mantas del *abaca* de los bisayas, que si las tiñen con el *sibucáo* solo, salen como moradas, y con el otro, de finísimo colorado, y tan bueno como el que llaman en la Gran China²¹ de *lacha*, que en otro lugar diremos cómo es, por hallarse también *lacha*²² acá en abundancia, que les sirve a estos naturales de sahumero, que aunque no es muy oloroso, es más preservativo de malos olores que los otros sahumeros, y esta *lacha*, como veremos, son las casas de ciertas hormigas que tienen este nombre.

La raíz, o palo, de lo que llamamos *ninó* sirve para teñir amarillo, y, aunque no sola ella sino en compañía del *dulao* (que como dijimos arriba, da nombre a este color), es experiencia cierta que el *dulao* solo, aunque da buen color, se pierde presto; pero, mezclándole la dicha raíz, raspada o hecha astillas, se conserva y dura mucho más tiempo.

Otro palo hay, que llaman *cabac*,²³ con que se tiñe también de amarillo, que la madera lo es. Y son palos muy grandes y de madera buena y jugosa, de modo que se conserva mucho más en el agua que otras, sin entrarle broma; si bien, estando aún verde y vivo este árbol, hay un género de gusanos que gustan mucho de él y le hace algunos agujeros como el dedo de anchos, y muy profundos, que es causa de malograrse muchas tablas de este género por estar acribilladas de dichos gusanos.

Para dar color azul siembran acá, y dan naturalmente estas Islas, mucho añil, que acá llaman *tagum*. Es de hoja menuda que

²¹ *Gran China*. The Spaniards, dazzled by the greatness and wealth of China and its millennial civilization, spoke oftentimes of the *Great China*.

²² *Lacha*. Rotten fruit of bad smell (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 174, Bisayan Part). This meaning has nothing to do with the *lacha* mentioned here by Alcina. Alcina says that *lacha* is the dwelling place of a certain kind of ant which has this name.

²³ *Cabac*. Big, tall tree, with straight trunk. The leaves are broad and long. When fresh they are used as medicine for headaches. The water in which the wood

a tree of very luxuriant foliage, of a pretty green, each leaf as large as a hand and almost its size with the fingers held together.

The useful portion of this wood is the root, and of this not the wood but the bark. Pared-off, pressed, and mixed with a little lime it gives a very fine color which never ceases nor changes. It is used to dye blankets which they call here *pinaiusan*, about which we shall speak in its place. They either put them in the sun to soak in the juices of the root or they give them a gentle boiling over the fire; however, they come out better in the sun. This color of the *ninó* is so normal for the blankets of *abaca* of the Bisayans that if they dye them with *sibucan* alone they come out somewhat violet. But with the other, the finest red and as good as that which they call in Great China, *lacha*. In another place, we shall tell how *lacha* is found here in great abundance also. It is used by these natives as an aromatic, and that although it is not very fragrant, it is more of a preventive against bad odors than the other perfumes. This *lacha*, as we shall see, is the dwelling place of a certain kind of ant which has this name.

The root or the wood of what we call *ninó* serves as a yellow dye; however not alone but together with *dulao*. As we related above, it gives its name to the color. It is a certain experience that the *dulao* alone, although it gives a good color, loses it quickly; but by mixing this root, pared or splintered, the color is preserved and lasts a much longer time.

There is another wood which they call *cabac* which also dyes things yellow. Its wood is that color; it has very large limbs and the wood is good and full of sap so that it lasts much longer in water than the other without the barnacles getting into it. While this tree is still green and alive there is a kind of worm which likes it very much. These make various holes about the width of a finger and very deep. This is the reason why many boards of this kind disintegrate because they are riddled like a sieve from these worms.

In order to get a blue coloring, indigo is sown and grows wild in these islands. Here they call it *tagum*.²⁴ It has a small leaf and

was boiled is used as medicine for women during child delivery. The fruit is yellow. The wood is used as planks for housing (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 395, Bisayan Part).

²⁴ *Tagum*. A shrub of thin and fresh leaves. The leaves are used to dye in black. The leaves and roots, boiled in water, are used as medicine against sickness

semeja al alfalfe [*sic*] de España, aunque es más negro que verde su color; o, por mejor decir, verdinegro.

Son arbolillos, si se dejan, de tres a cuatro palmos de alto, y estas hojas son las que tienen azul, mezclándole un poco de cal, y, además de ser tintas, son medicinas, y muy necesaria en estas Islas, porque sirve para curar a muchas indias que quedan del parto heridas, que con el zumo y hojas de esta mata se curan si se aplican a su tiempo.

Luego diré, en el Capítulo siguiente, de otro árbol con que (si así se puede decir) hice yo milagros, así para esta enfermedad (que es muy ordinaria por acá, y parece no había de ser así, por ser gente hecha el trabajo) como para otras heridas, por ser eficacísimo remedio y más si se aplica luego, corriendo sangre la herida. De este *tagum* hay dos géneros; el uno mucho mejor que otro, y que con la mitad de las hojas en cantidad tiñen más y mejor.

Para dar color verde, aunque algunos usan juntar estas hojas del *tagum* con el *dulao*, que hacen un color verde bueno, añadiendo o quitando según lo quisieren más o menos subido, hay, con todo, cantidad de hierbas que por si solas dan muy buen color verde, poniendo y renovando, lo que quieren teñir, al sol que con su templado calor, menos violento que el fuego, suele salir muy bueno, aunque de este color verde no gustan los indios de por acá. El más estimado de ellos, así de hombres como de mujeres, es el colorado y el azul, porque son los que duran más y conservan mejor su color, y, aunque tal vez tiñan de amarillo, o naranjado, o encarnado las mujeres sus sayos, que acá llaman *chininas*²⁵ o *baros*, en comenzando a perder el color, le dan otro de los dichos, y el colorado suele salir bien encima del amarillo, que hace un naranjado muy encendido y vistoso.

Ya dijimos cómo el *quiliquili* sirve de dar color naranjado, y, cuando es nuevo, es buen color, aunque con las calidades que dijimos;

due to cold. The pounded leaf, mixed with vinegar, can be applied as emplaster to the throat, against those who suffer from difficulty in breathing. The water in which the root has been in infusion can be given to those who suffer spasms due to heat. It is also drunk as medicine for those who have ulcers (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 418, Bisayan Part). *Tagum* is the capital town of Davao del Norte, Mindanao, Philippines.

²⁵ *Casabha*, *barioco*, *laion*, *pinaiusan*, *chininas* are not found in Sánchez' Dictionary.

resembles the lucerne of Spain. However, its color is more black and green or better to say, greenish-black.

The trees if left to grow reach three to four *palmos* in height. The leaves mixed with a little lime, dye a blue color. Besides being dyes, they are medicinal and are very much needed in these islands because they are used for healing many native women who have been injured by child birth. With the sap and leaves of this plant they are cured if they apply them at the proper time.

Later I shall speak, in the next chapter, about another tree with which I performed miracles for this illness, which is very common here. It seems it ought not to occur because they are a people inured to hardship. Secondly, it is good for other wounds because it is a most effective remedy especially if it is applied while the wound is still bleeding. This *tagum* is found in two varieties: the one much better than the other and with half of the quantity of leaves dyes better.

In order to get the green color, some commonly mix these leaves of the *tagum* with that of the *dulao*. This makes good green color, adding or taking out according to whether they wish it lighter or darker. There are also a number of herbs which by themselves give a very good green. They place and replace what they wish to dye in the sun which, with a tempered heat less violent than a fire, causes them to come out very well. However, the natives here do not like the green as a color. Those most liked both by men and women is red and blue because these are the ones which last longest and retain their color best. Although the women sometimes dye their skirts which here are called *chininas* or *baros*²⁶ yellow or orange or pink, when they once begin to lose color they use another dye of those mentioned. The red comes out well over the yellow and makes a very vivid and brilliant orange.

We have already related how the *quiliquili*²⁷ is used to produce an orange color. When it is newly done it is a good color but with the characteristics we spoke about. With the *casubha* or *cachumba* is

²⁶ *Baros*. This is a Tagalog word used here by Alcina, in the plural. *Baro* is a kind of a long chemise, shirt used by both men and women (cfr. Juan de Noceda - Pedro de Sanlúcar, *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala*, Manila, 1860, p. 40).

²⁷ *Quiliquili*. The name of a large tree. It is yellow in color and good for housing (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 261, Bisayan Part).

con la *casubha* o *cachumba*, encarnado finísimo; con el *higot*, morado o violado muy bueno, cuando nuevo; muy obscuro cuando antiguo. Y de esta manera van mezclando colores, con que tienen acá en abundancia para darlo a su ropa, si bien por introducción nuestra, como veremos en su lugar, casi todas las mujeres bisayas, cuando vienen a la iglesia, vienen vestidas de negro, saya y cobija o manto negros y *baros* blancos cuando son de lienzo o *lompote*,²⁸ aunque en sus casas usan vestirse de los colores que más les placen, si bien lo más es colorado en algunos pueblos donde hay mucho *ninó*.

Cantius J. Kobak, O.F.M
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
February 22, 1994

Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P.
University of Santo Tomas, Manila
July 1, 1996

²⁸ *Lompote*. Vide *lompot*. A kind of cloth like tiffany. *Walang lompot ngayon sa parian*: There is no lompot now in the Parian (cfr. Domingo de los Santos, *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala*, [Manila], 1835, p. 642; p. 6, Second Part). *Lompot*. A kind of linen cloth of cotton, very common among the natives. *Par excellance lompot* means a piece of cloth (cfr. Juan Felix de la Encarnación, Manila, 1885, p. 219). Alcina and the Spaniards hispanized and pluralized the word as *lompotes*. It was used as a payment for the tributes, especially in the Visayas Islands. The word *lompot* is not found in the modern Tagalog and Bisayan Dictionaries.

produced a very fine red; with the *higot*²⁹ mulberry color or very good violet when new but very dark when old. In this way they proceed to mix the colors which they have here in abundance for dying their clothing. Yet through our influence, as we shall see in its proper place, almost all the Bisayan women come to church dressed in black, their outer petticoat and cloak or veil, are black and a feeble white when they are of linen. However, in their homes they are accustomed to dress in the colors that please them most, but for the most part it is red in the villages where there is an abundance of *ninó*.

Cantius J. Kobak, O.F.M.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA
February 22, 1994

Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P.
University of Santo Tomas, Manila
July 1, 1996

²⁹ *Higot*. In Sánchez we find only *higot balotó*, partly fitting Alcina's meaning. A plant of broad, long and pointed leaves. The trunk is surrounded by a kind of thin hair. The root boiled in water is given to women during child delivery, specially if there is bleeding. The root, trunk and leaves boiled in water are applied as medicine to those who suffer lapses. The plant is also used to reduce pimples and swellings (Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 404, Bisayan Part)

Capítulo 25

DE LOS MUCHOS PALOS, MATAS, RAICES Y HIERBAS DAÑOSAS QUE HAY EN ESTAS ISLAS Y DE SUS CONTRA MEDICINALES

Si hubiéramos de contar la cantidad de hierbas, árboles y raíces que hay en esta tierra, dañosas y que matan sin duda y con notable violencia, pudiéramos hacer un gran libro. Y también por el contrario, de las medicinales que llaman contras, por ser opuestas a las dañosas, que no son menos, pues no menos pródiga la naturaleza y su autor infinitamente sabio, si dieron virtud a la tierra para producir las nocivas, se la dieron para las opuestas.

Y es cosa muy ordinaria en estas Islas, y que se debe notar mucho, que casi siempre van juntas o nacen juntas, la buena y la mala hierba. Y a las veces, en el mismo árbol, es la raíz ponzoñosa y las hojas son su remedio, y en otros al revés.

Diré algo de las más particulares y que tengo mejores noticias y aun experiencias para que de lo que dijéremos se colija lo demás. Y de todo sea Dios alabado.

Dos géneros hay en estas islas que han quedado muy arraigados de sus antepasados de hacer mal con hierbas y ponzoñas. Al uno llaman *barang*,¹ que quiere decir hechizo mortal y este es propio de los hombres. Otro que llaman *dalongdong*, significa lo mismo, y es propio de las mujeres.

¹ *Barang*. Witch, sorcerer. The natives used to say that *barang* was a snake that the ancient people placed in a jar. It was taken as a protection against evil (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 37, Bisayan Part).

Chapter 25

CONCERNING THE MANY POISONOUS TREES, SHRUBS, ROOTS AND HERBS THAT THERE ARE IN THESE ISLANDS AND ABOUT THEIR ANTIDOTES

If we were to count the number of herbs, trees and roots that are injurious in this land and which kill with notable violence, without any doubt, we would be able to write a large book. On the other hand, much could be written about the medicinal value produced by others which are antidotes for the harmful ones. Nor are these fewer in number, because nature and her infinitely wise Author do not provide less of these. If the ability is given to the land to produce noxious things, it is also given power for its opposite.

It is an ordinary circumstance in these Islands, which one often becomes aware of, that almost always the good and the bad herbs grow close together or sprout together. At times in the same tree the root is poisonous and the leaves are the antidotes; in others, the reverse.

I shall treat some of the more peculiar ones of which I have the best information and even experience, so that from what we shall say the rest can be inferred and God may be praised for it all.

There are two groups in these islands who have acquired the habit from their ancestors of doing evil with herbs and poisons. One, they call *barang* which means "fatally bewitched" and is exclusively for men; the other, they call *dalongdong*,² which means the same, and is only for women.

² *Dalongdong*. Vide *dalong dong*. The name of a tree. Herbs and roots used for witchcraft. (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.* p. 155, Bisayan Part).

De estos dos trataremos cuando de sus abusos y maleficios, que por andar estos dos géneros de maleficios con pactos con el demonio, no trato ahora de ellos; pero porque por acá parece cosa averiguada que en sus principios les dio el demonio noticia, así de las hierbas nocivas como de sus contras y ha quedado su conocimiento entre estos naturales, trataremos ahora de lo que por medio de aquella noticia, o por la experiencia y casos fortuitos, se sabe hoy de uno y de otro género, escogiendo lo más sabido y experimentado, por no alargar sobrado esta materia, de que se han hecho³ varios escritos y tratados por algunos ministros curiosos. Diré lo que yo he visto y oído a los indios famosos en esta materia y lo que por común y averiguado es corriente y cierto entre ellos, porque en esta materia hay mucho que no lo es.

El árbol más célebre *in malum* que hay en estas islas de Leyte, Ibabao⁴ y Samar es uno que llaman *ipo*. Es según dicen de mediano tronco, la hoja menuda y verdinegra, su calidad tan mala que no solo los que pasan por su sombra quedan muertos, sino todos aquellos que pasan a sotavento y les alcanza el contagio, con que se inficiona el viento que pasa por sus hojas. Y a la causa está todo cercado de huesos de puercos, venados y otros animales, y aun hombres si van sin cuidado, que por ser cosa notoria caminan con advertencia y atención hacia la parte donde dicen que está. Pero pasando por la parte oriental de dicho árbol, no es dañoso, si es que corra vendaval, que es el viento opuesto.

No tiene cerca de si éste, árbol alguno, ni hierba. Solo a la parte oriental nace una matilla muy pequeña, según dicen, y tan eficaz que, en llevándola consigo, se puede sin temor pasar y llegar bajo de dicho árbol, porque es tanta su virtud que reprime la mala del dicho.

Solo un indio de crédito topé que hubiese visto este árbol, acaso yendo a casa (pero prevenido por saber de otro donde estaba). Y este me dijo que había visto todo el árbol rodeado de huesos y de cuernos de

³ The original manuscript is very blurred. Our reading of hecho is a conjecture.

⁴ *Ibabao*. We have said more than once that Ibabao was the name given to the eastern part of Samar Island. It spread from the northeast, where Palapag is, and went down to Guiuan, the southernmost eastern part of Samar. Samar and Leyte are separated by the *San Juanico* Strait. The brigantine carried by Legazpi on the poop deck of his flagship was called *San Juanillo*, later changed or corrupted to *San Juanico*. The Bay is called *San Pedro*, the name of Legazpi's flagship.

About these two we shall speak when we treat their abuses and evil witchcrafts. Since these two groups enter into pacts with the Devil, I shall not speak of them now. But it seems to be an ascertainable fact here that in the beginning the Devil gave them information both of the harmful herbs and their opposites. This knowledge has been preserved by these natives. We shall not treat about that which, either by reason of that information or because of discovery by chance circumstances, they know today about the one and the other kind. I shall select the best known and experienced, in order not to prolong this subject about which there have been various writings and treatises by some learned ministers. I shall speak about what I have seen and heard from the natives who are well-known for their knowledge in these matters and what is commonly ascertainable as generally received and certain among them, for there is much in these matters that is not so.

The most celebrated tree, *in malum*,⁵ that there is in these islands of Leyte, Ibabao and Samar is one which they call *ipo*.⁶ It is, they say, of medium size trunk with a small and greenish-black leaf. Its properties are so evil that, not only those who pass through its shade, but all those who pass to the leeward are killed. They catch the infection which is picked up by the wind on passing through the leaves. For this reason, the surrounding area is strewn with the bones of hogs, deer and other animals and even of humans, if they travel without caution. Since this is a well-known fact, they travel with alertness and care in the area which the tree is said to be located. But by passing on the eastern side of this tree it is not dangerous, unless a strong wind is blowing from the southwest which is the opposite wind.

Near it there are neither trees nor herbs; only on the eastern side there grows a very small shrub, so they say; so powerful that by carrying it with them they can without fear pass by or come under the tree. Such is its good quality that it counteracts the evil of the latter.

I happened upon only one native of good reputation who had seen this tree, perhaps while going home (but advised by the knowledge of others where it was). He told me this: that he had seen the whole tree

⁵ *In malum*: for evil. The sense is of the poisonous or evil trees.

⁶ *Ipo*. Poisonous tree. According to the Bisayans it even kills those who get near its shade (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 165, Bisayan Part).

venados y jabalíes. Y me contó el tamaño y figura del dicho árbol y de sus contra. Y por ser tan general su noticia, no tengo duda ser así.

*Camandag*⁷ llaman a otro árbol muy parecido al *ipo* en lo ponzoñoso, pero más ordinario que él. Usan de la goma o leche que llaman *taque* para envenenar las flechas que acá llaman *sumpit*⁸ (que las tiran en *salbatanas*⁹ o cañutos largos de *bacacay*) o las de arco también, porque matan muy apriesa en sacando sangre; aunque si matan puercos con ellas, no por eso los dejan de comer; porque luego le quitan un buen pedazo de carne alrededor de la herida y se comen lo demás.

Dicen que las hojas que caen en el agua, matan el pescado, o si no, le dan tan mala calidad que matan ellos a quien lo comen. Y en las sardinas se experimenta todos los años que cuando las comienzan a coger o pescar, no se atreven a comerlas porque son ponzoñosas y matan. Alguno lo atribuyen a que comen de estas hojas que las avenidas echan a la mar. Pero yo pienso que no son la causa dichas hojas, pues es cosa constante entre estos naturales que en sabiendo que ha muerto alguno, aunque sea un perro (que en ellos suelen hacer la experiencia primero) las comen sin recelo¹⁰; y así otra causa obra, si no es cosa natural, que parece que no, pues a todos hicieran igualmente mal.

La contra de este veneno de las sardinas es una que llaman *abur*, que es como cebolla albarrana de España, que aunque tiene otros muchos efectos para cosas ponzoñosas, el más sabido es éste. Y el *tambal*, que acá llaman, o la contra del *camandag*, dicen es otro arbolillo que también nace cerca de él, a la parte del oriente del mismo

⁷ *Camandag*. Resin extracted from a tree to poison the arrows (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 81, Bisayan Part).

⁸ *Sumpit*. Long tube into which pellets or similar things are introduced to eject them later, by blowing strongly, from the other side (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.* p. 316, Bisayan Part).

⁹ *Salbatana*. Vide *Cerbatana*. (From the arabic *zarbatana*, a tube to throw against the birds). A tube in which pellets or other things are introduced to eject them, by blowing strongly, from the other side. (cf. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, Real Academia). The definition of *Salbatana* and *Sumpit* are the same.

¹⁰ The meaning of the text must be that the natives try first with dogs; if these die, they would not eat them. Yet, the text says that the natives eat them without fear. The sense then seems to be contradictory.

surrounded by the bones and the horns of deer and wild boar and he described to me the size and shape of this tree and its antidotes. Since his knowledge was so widely accepted, I do not doubt that it is true.

Camandag is the name of another tree very similar to the *ipo* in its poisonous quality, but more common than the other. They use the resin or milk from it, which they call *taque*, to poison their darts, which they call here *sumpit*. They carry these in *salbatanas* or long tubes of *bacacay*. They also poison their arrows. They all kill very quickly on drawing blood. Yet when they kill hogs with these poisoned arrows they do not hesitate for this reason to eat them, because immediately they cut away a good piece of the flesh about the wound and eat the rest.

They say that the leaves which fall into the water poison the fish or if not, they give such a bad quality to them that those who eat them die. Every year this is experienced with the sardines. When the natives begin to catch them or fish for them they do not dare to eat them because they are poisonous and deadly. Some attribute this to their eating these leaves which the floods have carried into the sea. But I do not think that these leaves are the cause. For it is a common thing among these natives that on finding out that something has died, even thought it may be a dog (they usually try with dogs first), they eat it without suspicion. Thus another cause is operating: perhaps it is a natural one, which seems unlikely, for it would act badly upon all without exception.

The antidote to this poisoning of the sardines is a shrub which is called *abur*.¹¹ It is like the squill of Spain which, although it has many other uses against poisonous substances, this is the best known. The *tambal*,¹² as they call it here or the antidote for the *camandag*, they say, is another little tree which also grows near it, on the eastern side of the same tree, whose leaves, bark or splinters of wood give protection

¹¹ *Abur*. To sow the palay by opening a hole in the ground and placing in some grains (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 7, Bisayan Part). The meaning of the *abur* of Alcina does not seem to fit Sánchez' meaning.

¹² *Tambal*. To cure by applying to the sick the corresponding remedy to his/her sickness. Medicine, medical remedy to cure some sickness (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.* p. 338, Bisayan Part). Alcina has hispanized and pluralized the word *tambal*. Thus he speaks of *tambales*, the medicines used against various sicknesses.

árbol, con cuyas hojas, cortezas o raja del palo no daña dicho *camandag*. Hay una isla de este nombre quizás por dar dicho palo.

A otro árbol que llaman *dita*¹³ adelantó la naturaleza a estos dos el ser él mismo ponzoña y medicina. La leche de este árbol, que herido la destila con abundancia, cocida al fuego es venenosa y mata así a animales como a hombres. Y se pone, cuando está bien hervida, de color colorado o negro, como sangre podrida.

Usan mucho de esta ponzoña para matar puercos, que comen con la diligencia que dijimos de quitarle lo cercano a la herida.

Las hojas de este árbol son como estrellas que parecen trepadas con tijeras y la raíz es su contra, de modo que si el herido con saeta envenenada con la leche que dijimos, come o masca algo de la raíz, no muere. Y es buena para mordeduras de culebras ponzoñosas y contra otras hierbas que lo son de suyo, bebidas con un poco de agua caliente en que haya estado en insucción. Es medicina que quita calenturas y cámaras; y aunque es árbol grande, la madera no es de provecho porque en quitándole el jugo y estando seca se vuelve polvo y carcoma, de modo que no durará un año una tabla que ya está podrida.

La mata a que llaman *tuba*¹⁴ estos naturales es arbolito pequeño; las hojas de hechura de corazón; la fruta como avellanas de España, aunque la corteza es blanda; y tiene una o dos pepitillas, como piñoncitos.

La fruta y hojas machucadas matan a los peces del mar o de los ríos con gran facilidad. Y así, machucando cantidad y echándola en los ríos, o en el mar en ensenadas, inficionan el agua de modo que muere todo el pescado, y cuando menos queda atontado, tanto que lo cogen en las manos; y de esta manera hacen grandes pescas los indios y cogen mucha cantidad de peces.

Algunos usan para purgarse tomar un piñoncito de éstos, deshecho en agua y bebido; pero es peligrosa purga y que algunos, que

¹³ *Dita*. Big tree, with long broad leaves. The root is medicinal, like the quina, the juice poisonous. The trunk has plenty of resin. The bark, placed in infusion, is given to drink to those who suffer inflammation in the body (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 401; 113, Bisayan Part).

¹⁴ *Tuba*. *Tuba* must not be confused with *tubá*, the wine distilled from the *nipa*, coconut and *buri* palms. *Tuba* here refers to a shrub. The fruit is poisonous and kills

from this *camandag*. There is an island of this name,¹⁵ perhaps because the wood grows there.

The potency of another tree, which they call *dita*, surpasses these two in being at the same time a poison and a medicine. The sap from this tree, which it yields in abundance when cut, if heated in fire, is poisonous and will kill both animals and people. When it is thoroughly boiled it turns red or black in color, like rotted blood.

They use this poison very often to kill hogs, which they eat with the precaution we have mentioned of cutting away the area around the wound.

The leaves of this tree are like stars that appear to be serrated with scissors. Its root is an antidote. So, if one is wounded with a dart poisoned with this sap we spoke of, and eats or chews some of the root he will not die. It is good for bites of poisonous snakes and against other herbs, which are poisonous in themselves, when drunk with a little hot water in which it has been soaked. It is a good medicine which stops fevers and diarrhoea. Even though the tree is large, the wood is not useful because when the juice has been drawn and it is dry, it crumbles to powder and dust, so that a board will not last a year rotted.

The shrub which these natives call *tuba* is a very small tree; the leaves are heart-shaped and the fruit like the hazelnuts of Spain but the shell is soft. It has one or two seeds like little pine nuts.

The fruit and the leaves, when pounded, kill the fish of the sea and rivers very easily. Thus by grinding up a quantity and throwing it into the rivers or in the coves of the sea it infects the water with the result that all the fish die, or at least they become drugged so much that they can be caught with the hands. In this manner the natives do much fishing and take great quantities of fish.

Some use it as a purgative, taking one of these little nuts and dissolving it in water and drinking it. However, it is a dangerous

the fish. The fruit when pounded and thrown in the sea or in the river poisons and kills the fish (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 367, Bisayan Part).

¹⁵ *Camandag Island*. A small island near the islands of *Santo Niño*, *Almagro*, *Tagapula* and *Libucan*. They are off the west coast of Calbayog City, in Samar Island. I have seen them clearly from Calbayog City proper.

alguna vez les fue bien, tomando la cantidad muy moderada, han muerto después tomándolo en mayor cantidad, porque son un fuego que abrasa las entrañas. Y así, si no es con mucho tiento, no se puede usar de estos piñoncillos.

La raíz de esta mata es medicinal y contra ponzoña y sirve para varias dolencias, en particular si son de frío; y aunque sean de calor, no es peligroso su uso, como el de la fruta. Y así usan mucho los indios de esta contra; pero se ha de coger la raíz que está a la parte del oriente. Y es cosa muy vulgar entre los indios, y asentada entre ellos, que aunque en el mismo árbol las raíces que salen hacia el ocaso del sol, [son] o dañosas o poco eficaces y las que salen hacia el oriente son medicinales y aún las que [no] lo son, siempre son mucho más eficaces las de la parte oriental.¹⁶ Tanto como ésto va en ser o no prevenidos del sol. Y la experiencia muestra (y lo he experimentado yo para ver si era verdad más de una vez) que un mismo tronco partido o rajado (como acá usan) de alto abajo, y sacando dos tablones de él, el de la parte oriental dura mucho más que el de la occidental. Y si no se atendió a ésto cuando lo partían en un mismo tablón, la mitad que correspondía al oriente dura mucho más tiempo que la otra que corresponde al occidente. Y ésto es cosa indubitable y que cada día lo experimentamos por acá.

Largo fuera de decir y contar todas las hierbas o hojas de árboles o matas que matan y la eficacia de éstas, que será increíble a quien no lo ha visto, como yo por acá, y experimentado. Diré lo que no pocas veces tocamos con las manos los padres ministros que estamos entre estos naturales, a quienes con particulares providencias nos guarda Dios de tantas hierbas ponzoñosas como ellos usan, aunque ya menos que en su antigüedad.

Suelen algunos arbolarios de estos llegarse a un hombre o mujer, a quien o quieren mal por alguna pasión oculta, o por su mala e inicua voluntad, y con hablarle una palabra, o con un soplo solo que le dan en la cara, derribarlos instantáneamente; y patalean y echan espumarajos, con ansias de muerte. Y si no se les acude luego, mueren sin volver jamás en sí. Y es menester no pocas veces abrirles los dientes que están rechinando con más ruido que si lo limaran, y por fuerza hacerles tragar la contra (de que hay mucha abundancia y pocos hay que no tengan muchas consigo); con lo cual suelen volver en

¹⁶ The sense seems to demand here the use of the words son and no.

purgative. Some individuals, who once fared well, taking it in moderate quantity, have died afterwards by using a greater amount because it is hot and burns the intestines. Hence one may not use these little nuts except with great caution.

The root of this bush is a curative and an antidote to poison. It is used for various afflictions, especially if they derive from cold and even though they may come from heat, it is not dangerous as its fruit. Therefore, the natives frequently use this antidote, but they must take the root that is on the eastern side. It is a common place among the natives and agreed among them that in the same tree the roots which extend toward the east are medicinal. And even of these which are not entirely so, those of the eastern side are much more effective since they are continually exposed to the sun. Experience shows that (and I have discovered it by testing to see if it were true more than once) when the trunk is divided or split, as they do here, from top to bottom and they cut two planks from it, the one from the east side of the tree lasts longer than that from the west. If one did not pay attention when the same trunk was cut, the half corresponding to the east lasts longer than that from the west. This is an absolute fact which we experience daily.

It would take long to tell about and recount all the herbs or leaves of trees and bushes that are deadly and their potency; it would be unbelievable to anyone who has not seen and experienced them here like I have. I shall relate here what we Father Ministers, who work here among these natives, touch with our own hands, how God guards us with special protection from so many poisonous herbs they use. However, they use them less now than in ancient times.

Some of these herbalists are accustomed to visit a man or a woman whom they wish evil for some secret grudge, or because of their evil and wicked design. Simply by speaking a word or with a single breath blown into the face they bring them down instantly, kicking about and foaming at the mouth in deadly anguish. Unless the victims are assisted immediately they die without recovering. Oftentimes it is necessary to open their teeth which grind together more noisily than if they were being filed, so as to get them to open their mouth in order to swallow the antidote. Of the latter there is an abundance and few are the individuals who do not carry a large amount with them. As a result they revive, although some, linger

si, aunque algunos tardan muchos días en acabar de arribar de la infección que casi instantáneamente le pegó el arbolario o hechicero.

Y si preguntare alguno cómo mascando ellos la hierba con que matan, no se mueren, que es muy buena duda, responderé que porque traen la contra en la misma boca, de modo que sin peligro pueden mascar la hierba dañosa y la provechosa. Y si quieren, con la misma facilidad que la amortiguan la vivifican.

Y sucede no pocas veces errar el arbolario el golpe, y sin querer, respirar o a su mujer o a su hijo con la ponzoñosa infección; y reconocido el yerro sudarlo, usando luego de la contra, pues la tienen en otra parte de la boca.

Muchísimas cosas pudiera contar de éstos. Diré uno solo para prueba y calificación de lo que en ésta parte pasa.

En un pueblo de la isla de Leyte,¹⁷ en que es fama común haber muchos de éstos, y la experiencia muestra que con mucho fundamento, apenas se juntaban a misa los domingos y fiestas (y en las grandes y de mucho concurso de pueblos circunvecinos, como las Pascuas y Corpus,¹⁸ mucho más), en que no cayesen dos o tres o más amortiguados y pataleando, de modo que era menester acudirles luego con la contra, que siempre la tenemos nosotros prevenida para estos lances. (Luego diré cómo se hace y sus maravillosos efectos) y sacarlos en brazos al pueblo.

Llegué yo de nuevo con estas noticias y a pocos días me mostró la experiencia que no eran menos sino aun más de lo que yo había oído, y así en uno que estaban todos juntos les dije que cada cual reconociese sus coraterales [*sic*] y que se sentaban a sus lados o cerca; y que en cayendo habría castigo y se entregaría a la justicia los más culpados. Con eso cesó mucho. Y si sucedía algo luego le acudía con la contra. Pero en un lance de éstos (que por esto traje esto) me avisaron de uno en especial, notado de este maleficio, a quien mandé luego fuese a casa de uno que había caído (y dijeron tenía oposición con éste, con que se entendió ser él la causa) y al gobernador con él, para que no le curando

¹⁷ I have not been able to identify the name of the town referred here by Alcina.

¹⁸ *Pascuas*. *Pascua de Resurrección* or Easter, to distinguish it from *Pascua de Navidad*, or Christmas. *Paskó ng Pagkabuhay* (Easter) and *Paskó* (Christmas) in Tagalog. *Corpus Christi*. Body of Christ. The Feast of the *Corpus Christi*, today the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. These feasts were celebrated with great

many days in recovering from the infection which the herb doctor or witch doctor communicated to them in almost an instant.

If someone should ask how the latter while chewing the herb with which they kill others do not die themselves, and it is a good question, I would reply that it is because they have the antidote in the mouth at the same time. Thus, without any danger, they can chew the deadly herb with the helpful one. If they wish, with the same ease with which they kill, they could revive.

It happens frequently that the herb doctor strikes in error and without wishing to do so, breathes upon his wife or his son with the poisonous infection. Realizing his error, he corrects it using then the antidote, for he has this in another portion of his mouth.

I could recount many instances of this. I shall relate just one as proof and verification of what goes on in this place.

In a town on the Island of Leyte there is widespread rumor about the many instances of this; experience shows that there is basis for it. [On some occasions] scarcely had they gathered for Sunday Mass or Feast Days (on the greater feasts, I have seen a large gathering of neighboring peoples and many more on Easter and *Corpus Christi*) when two or three or more did not fall down senseless and kicking. Whereupon it was necessary to assist them immediately with the antidote which we always have on hand for such emergencies and take them in our arms to the town. I shall describe later how the antidote is made.

I came now to the town with this information and within a few days experience showed that it was not better but worse than I had heard. So on an occasion when they were all together I said that all should see who his neighbors were and those who sat at their side or nearby. If someone fell, they would be punished and the more guilty ones would be handed over to justice. With this it stopped a great deal and if it happened I would come with the antidote. But in a case of this kind they told me of an individual especially known for this evil doing and which is the reason why I relate this. I ordered him to go to the house of the one who had fallen whom they said he had a dispute with and [take him] to the Governor. If he did not cure the man he might

pomp and solemnity. Alcina's text shows that a new civilization had been born. The *fiesta*, a religious liturgical event, had become an occasion for large gatherings of people from other towns.

le prendiese y castigase. Fue y aunque negó, la experiencia mostró que luego que él llegó cerca del medio muerto, revivió y pudo venir con los demás a verme. Y conocido el malhechor y amenazado, cesó por muchos días el caerse en la iglesia como antes pataleando.

Por esta y otras causas tenemos prevenidos siempre los padres un aceite confectionado de contras, que es eficaz remedio y muy experimentado. Hácese con aceite de coco y con varias raíces que se sabe son contras, con tan buen efecto que bebiendo un poco de él, truecan al instante cosas increíbles, y que parece no pudieran tan en breve fraguarse los estómagos; como son brujones negros como pelotas, cantidad de cóleras o humores amarillos cuajados, como claras de huevo, y mucho más; algunos pelos como cabellos, bolsillos llenos de gusanos y otras vascosidades que casi instantáneamente producen aquellos ponzoñosos alientos en las entrañas de los otros.

Y por providencia divina son pocos los que mueren habiendo este aceite, con que es el refugio no solo de los indios y españoles que viven entre nosotros acá, sino en las ciudades como Manila, Cavite, Cebu y otras.

Tiene la Compañía dispuesta cantidad y prevenida esta contra, contra todo género de venenos, ponzoñas, malos aires y otros contagios.

Los *tambales* ordinarios de que los hacemos son los siguientes (de que en breve pondré aquí con su virtud): *manungal*.¹⁹ Es una raíz tan liviana que aunque sea (como las suele haber) tan grande como el cuerpo de un muchacho de ocho a diez años, no pesará una libra; más liviana sin duda que corcho de España. Sus hebras como telas anchas y amarillas y cuanto más amarillas mejor. Es amargo más que medianamente (y casi todos los *tambales* que son éstas raíces medicinales lo son). Es para todo género de personas y venenos. Quita ventosidades y dolores de estómago, empachos y haitos²⁰; cura calenturas de cámaras, de lombrices y, en una palabra, es tan medicinal que nadie lo ha usado o tomado, aunque sea solo en infusión, que no

¹⁹ *Manungal*. Vide *manung gal*. A shrub also called *manungal* or *manungala* (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 204, Bisayan Part)

²⁰ The text clearly says *haitos*. It should read *hiatus*.

be tried and punished. He went and although he denied guilt, experience showed that as soon as he arrived near the man half-dead, he revived and was able to come with the rest to see me. The malefactor having been found out and threatened, his victim stopped for a long time his habit of falling down in the church kicking about as before.

For this and other reasons we Fathers have provided ourselves always with an oil compound of the antidotes which are a definitely efficacious remedy. It is made with coconut oil and with various roots which are known to be antidotes. It is so effective that drinking a little of it brings an immediate change. It is incredible and appears impossible that in such a brief time there should form in the stomach, black growths like balls, kinds of pellets, a quantity of bile or yellow humors, curds like the white of eggs and more often hairs like those of horses. Little sacks full of worms and other filth which those poisonous breaths produce almost instantaneously in the entrails of others.

Through Divine Providence, there are very few who die having this oil, so that it is the recourse not only of the natives and Spaniards who live among us here, but also of those in the cities like Manila, Cavite, Cebu and others.

The Society²¹ has arranged for and provided a quantity of this against all kinds of venomous poisons, disease laden airs and other contagions.

The ordinary *tambales* from which we make these medicines are the following (which I shall briefly treat here with their benefits): *manungal* is a root so light that, even though it may be as large as the body of a boy of eight or ten (as it usually is), it will not weigh a pound. It is lighter, without doubt, than the cork of Spain. Its fibers are like wide yellow cloth, the more yellow the better. It is more than moderately bitter. Almost all these *tambales*, which are these medicinal roots, are bitter. It is used for every kind of person and venom; it takes away flatulence and distresses of the stomach, indigestion and hiatus; it cures fevers of diarrhoea, of worms. In a word, it is so effective a medicine that no one has used it or taken it, even though it may be only in infusion form, who does not experience its marvelous

²¹ *Society of Jesus*, founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1534. Less commonly known in English as the "Company of Jesus." For short, like in Alcina, *La Compañía*.

sienta maravillosos efectos. A esta raíz llaman otros *ponoan*,²² que quiere decir el príncipe y cabeza de todos los *tambales*. Algunos dicen ser este nombrado *luisaraién* o *magus*, del reino de Ceilán, famoso en la India Oriental. En el color y sabor imita a aquel, aunque (si es el mismo) acá es mucho mayor, pues el dicho *magus* apenas (lo que yo he visto traído de allá) es mayor que el dedo, cuando mucho dos dedos y éste llega a ser tan grande como dije arriba.

El que nace hacia el oriente es más eficaz, como dijimos arriba. Es eficaz también para los mordidos de culebras que acá las hay ponzoñosísimas, de ciento pies,²³ que tal vez matan a los puercos sin remedio. Es contra alacranes que acá los hay en abundancia, aunque no tan ponzoñosos como en otras partes. Y no hay achaque o enfermedad que si no la quita, la mitiga mucho. Y así es muy usado de estos naturales y no menos de los españoles, que hacen más aprecio de su virtud.

Ngalasun llaman a otro árbol que es mayor que el *manungal*, amarilla su raíz como el dicho, amarga también, y aunque es más pesado y más sólido y el corazón es casi colorado (y el *manungal* no tiene corazón, que todo él lo es) es su compañero para el dicho aceite, porque tiene las mismas calidades que el *manungal*.

El *borotongon* es de menor raíz y la mayor no llegará al tamaño del dedo, poco más a mi ver. Es este más semejante que el *manungal* al *magus*, que dijimos, o *luisaraién* y sus virtudes las mismas que las del *manungal* y en especial para dolores de todo el cuerpo que llaman quebranta huesos. Es probado y eficaz y entra en la confección de aceite medicinal que llamamos acá, con palabra de los indios, *haplas*, que significa unto o confección saludable y medicinal.

Pangiavan es el cuarto que solemos poner en dicha confección. Y es algo morenilla la corteza. Es arbusto, no árbol grande. Y además de lo dicho se sabe que es muy bueno y eficaz para quitar dolores de cabeza.

Con estas cuatro raíces se hace dicho aceite medicinal, poniéndolas hechas rajadas menudas o muy machucadas en unas vasijas

²² *Ponoan*. Superior, chief, principal. It also refers to the very person who exercises power and authority (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 252, Bisayan Part)

²³ Today *ciempiés*.

results. Others call this root *ponoan*, which is to say the principal and head of all the *tambales*. Some say that it is called *luisaraïen* or *magus* of the Kingdom of Ceylon,²⁴ famous in Oriental India. In color and taste it resembles the latter and even if it is the same, it is much larger here. This *magus* is scarcely larger than a finger or at the most, two; whereas the one here comes to that great size described above.

The root which sprouts toward the east is stronger, as we said above. It is effective also for the bite of snakes, some of which are extremely poisonous, of centipedes, which at times kill even the hogs without any remedy. It is also useful against scorpions which are abundant here, although not as poisonous as in other places. There is no ailment or illness which if not cured, and if not it is much relieved by it. Thus it is used extensively by these natives as well as by the Spaniards who have greater regard for its powers.

Ngalasun is what they call another tree which is greater than the *manungal* and the root is yellow like the latter. It is also bitter and yet it is heavier and harder and the heart is almost red. The *manungal* has no heart section for all is heart. It is the companion plant for the making of this oil because it has the same properties as the *manungal*.

The *borotongan* is a smaller root. The largest scarcely bigger than the size of a finger, in my opinion. This is more like the *magus* or *luisaraïen* as we said, than the *manungal*. It has proved helpful especially for illnesses of the whole body which they call *breaking the bones*. It is a part of the making of the curative oil which we call here, with the native word, *haplas*,²⁵ which signifies "an ointment or compound that is healthful and medicinal."

Pangiavan is the fourth substance that we are accustomed to put into this remedy. The bark is somewhat brown; it is a shrub and not a large tree. Aside from what has been said, it is known to be good and effective for stopping headaches.

It is from these four roots that the medicinal oil is prepared. When these are cut up into small pieces or thoroughly crushed into

²⁴ *Ceylon*. The name was changed to Sri Lanka in 1974. We still use here Ceylon because of the historical connotation of the words *Kingdom of Ceylon*.

²⁵ *Haplas*. To administer or prescribe some medicine with odorous things. Ointment. (cf. Sánchez, *op. cit.*, p. 141, Bisayan Part).

vidriadas (según su capacidad, con más o menos cantidad) llenándola de aceite y dejándolo al sol algunos días; (o calentándola con moderado fuego, si lo quisieren confeccionar más apriesa) queda con su virtud. Y aunque se vaya cebando y hechando de nuevo tanto como se sacó, con revolverlo un poco queda todo con la misma virtud y conserva muchos días, y cuanto más añejo más eficaz.

Y por remate pondré aquí la eficacia de otro aceite de contras (que por ser notable no la quiero pasar en blanco). Hácese ésta de cierta mata como zarza y le imita no poco en lo espinoso, si bien sus espigas amagan a serlo no más. Llámase *paliaran*²⁶ entre los Bisayas y *macabuhay*²⁷ entre los tagalos. El dicho aceite hecho en infusión del tronco y raíces de dicha planta [es] tan eficaz que no solo expelle todo género de veneno sino que puesta en una redomita de él, en parte donde llega cualquiera que trae hierbas ponzoñosas, hierve el aceite y se altera, avisando del maleficio.

Cantius J. Kobak, O.F.M.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
February 27, 1994

Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P.
University of Santo Tomas, Manila
October 1, 1996

²⁶ *Taque, luisaraien, magus, ngalasun, borotongan, pangiavan, paliaran* are not found in Sánchez Dictionary. It might happen that the spelling is wrong and I have not been able to identify them.

²⁷ *Macabuhay*. A kind of medicinal rattan. Herb (cf. Juan de Noceda - Pedro de Sanlúcar, *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala*, Manila, 1860, p. 197).

some glass jars, filling them with as much as they will hold, they fill them with oil and let them stand in the sun for some days and thus it gains its potency. Or if they wish to make the compound more quickly they may heat it over a moderate fire. Even though more is continually added for whatever is taken out, by stirring it a bit the whole retains the same strength and lasts for many days. The more it ages the more effective it is.

As a conclusion, I shall indicate here the efficacy of another curative oil which, because it is remarkable, I do not pass over in silence. It is made of a certain shrub like the common bramble, and closely resembles it in thorniness, although the spines only appear like those of the bramble, but they are not. It is called *paliaran* among the Bisayans and *macabuhay* among the Tagalog people. This oil is made by soaking the trunk and roots of this health-giving plant. It not only expels all kinds of poison, but if a small bottle of it is placed in the area where someone is coming who is carrying poisonous roots, the oil begins to boil and to dance, giving notice of the evil thing.

Cantius J. Kobak, O.F.M.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
February 27, 1994

Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P.
University of Santo Tomas, Manila
October 1, 1996