

MALAY POISONS AND CHARM CURES

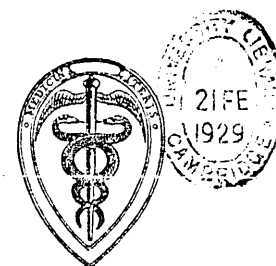
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rengut, when compounded as a deadly poison (*rachun besar*), is to take bones of a whale, the solid casque of a rare hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*), a sea-porcupine's spine, stag's horn and rhinoceros horn, and rub them down together in hot water to make a draught. The following prescription, "beyond help from antidote," was given to me by the headman of the Kēsial district in Kelantan, a district with an evil reputation in the art of poisoning: "Take *rengut* fruit, bristles of the 'hairy sea-worm,' hairs of the caterpillar (*ulat buku darat*), juice of the millepedes (*pinang kotari* and *jēlantor*), bile of toad and crow (*čmpėdu katak puru* and *burong gagak*), and *miang rėbong* (bamboo hairs), mix them, then add shreds of the dry *ibul* nut." The effect of this mixture is said to be a cough with spitting of blood, quickly followed by insensibility and death.

TANGIS SARANG BURONG

The *Tangis Sarang Burong* tree (*Heynea trijuga*, Roxb.—Meliaceæ) is not a very poisonous tree; but the fruit is sometimes mixed with *chandu* (opium prepared for the pipe), or with *chandu* dross (*tengkoh*, opium prepared for resmoking), and with ripe areca-nut, and then used by thieves to stupefy people. *Chandu* dross, the *tengkoh* of the Chinese, is cheaper to buy than *chandu*; it is a black, hard, dry stuff, which on the application of heat gives off the peculiar fumes of the opium pipe.

Heynea trijuga is one of the Indian medicinal plants described by Kirtikar and Basu; the bark and leaves are said to possess tonic principles. *Heynea trijuga* is rare in the Malay States. Kirtikar and Basu describe it as a small, somewhat shrubby jungle tree, but attaining a large size when cultivated, with small whitish flowers: calyx campanulate, three to five cleft; petals valved in bud; fruit small, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to

$\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter, red. Kelantan Malays say that the very pretty red fruit is a fatal poison to birds, hence the name *tangis* ("weeping") and *sarang burong* ("a bird's-nest"); but this is denied in Pahang, where the derivation of the word is taken as being due to the fruit, which, though so attractive in appearance, is useless as food. A dozen half-ripe fruits freshly gathered early in September from a large *tangis sarang burong* tree growing near the Sultan's palace, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, had no effect on a lesser adjutant bird which swallowed them.

A bitter stuff has been obtained from *Heynea trijuga*, but it is not a glucoside. Greshoff says that the bitter extract taken from the seeds of the allied *H. sumatrana*, Miq., was apparently not poisonous (Ref. 11, Vol. XXV, p. 40). Borsma, however, says that with 50 mg. of an extract obtained from the bark and branches he caused a marked intoxication with fatal effect in frogs.

THE UPAS CLIMBER

The Upas climber, *Strychnos ovalifolia*, Wall.—Loganaceæ, is *akar ipoh*, a jungle climbing plant, the *chettik* and *upas tieuté* of Java, the *ipoh gumong* of the Kedah negritos, the *blay hitam* of Vaughan Stevens, and Cerruti's *legop*. It is one of the poisonous plants used in making arrow and dart poisons by the jungle tribes of the Malay Peninsula, and has been botanically described by Ridley as follows: "A strong woody creeper attaining the length of 100 feet or less, and a diameter of 3 inches. The bark is smooth and black. The branches usually fairly stout, climbing by means of rather large woody hooks. Leaves, polished dark green, oblong acuminate, with the characteristic three parallel nerves as in other species, 3 inches long and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ wide. The flowers are small and tubular,