SPECIAL ISSUE: PROCEEDINGS OF A SEMINAR, 14 JULY, 1979

'MAGIC AND MEDICINE'

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APPENDIX

Prior to the Seminar, the Honourary Secretary received the following letter and notes from Mr. John Dymock, a member of the Society and a Field Officer with the Northern Land Council. They were accompanied by samples of the plants to which the notes refer (illustrated here by sketches).

Both the notes and the plant specimens were tabled at the Seminar, much to the interest of participants. The Society wishes to express its appreciation to Yooroombarinya, Widooga and John Dymock for their contribution.

Mt. Isa, Queensland

A Small Sample of WANYI Medicine

Location: Nicholson River, Northern Territory, along the China Wall Escarpment.

The sample was collected within the space of one hour's travel along a mountainous track between Seigal Creek Outstation and the southern slope of the China Wall.

A comprehensive list of WANYI medicines could be arranged and samples collected for pharmaceutical analysis, but as I was rather rushed at the time I could not do justice to the subject, and submit these few items as a small contribution to your seminar as a matter of general interest.

On behalf of Yooroombarinya (Limmerick),
Widooga (Lewie Mick),
and myself, we trust that your Seminar on Magic and Medicine is an outstanding success.

Yours sincerely,
John Dymock.
NOTES TO ACCOMPANY PLANT SAMPLES

Authority: Vooroombarinya (Limmerick), an elderly lady of the WANYI language group, currently living at Doomadgee Mission, Queensland.

External Skin Treatments

1. Gooyal-Gooyal (Cymbopogon sp.)

'Gooyal-Gooyal is grass that grows along mountain. He is grass with white head, and red grass at bottom. We use him that red grass at bottom. Whitefellow they call him eucalypt grass I think. We boil that red grass until water turns yellow then we throw him away that grass and use that yellow water to wash skin when you have cold or sick or you got him flu. Him poison - you can't drink him.'
2. *Ngalunyi* (Dianella revolta)

'Ngalunyi he wild onion that one you can find him in flat place (i.e., black soil hollows) along a mountain country. He got top (leaves) like onion but him red underneath. Another one onion him white one underneath. *Ngalunyi* properly red onion. You get him that red onion part and boil him up, he goes really red that water. He really good one for sores and scratches; you wash that sore and him make it better. Same like white man use that red paint (i.e., mercurochrome and iodine) to make that sore and scratch go away. That *ngalunyi* him good dye too! I use him to make red pillowcase and sheet! You can't drink that one, him really poison.'
3. Marooloo (Melaleuca leucadendron)

'Marooloo is stinking tee tree; he grows along flat. He is thin leaf tee tree that one. You get big mob of leaves from this tree, boil him up and throw leaf away. If you got cold or flu he really good for you. Old people wash with marooloo medicine when they got bad cold or flu. Can't drink him.'

NOTE: Limmerick described numerous other barks and gums that are used as medicines, as well as a number of seeds and leaves used as poisons - or as she put it, "Make him 'soapy water' to catch him fish." - J.D.
4. **Wana-Ngari**

'Baraqi, the spinifex ant, make him that wana-ngari (spinifex wax) and take him along his nest. That nest is small and along a ground, he looks like black stump. Wana-ngari good medicine he got good smell. You find him nest and break off dirty black part along top and throw him away. Bottom part got wax; you grind him up into powder and rub him all over you. **Wana-ngari** is good medicine - good for sickness and cold.'