Pitpit and Gum Story   Frederick   27 Sept. 1982   #9

Once upon a time, there were two brothers called Sankon and Seravitti. They were living together when a famine started. The people had gone out to build small sleeping shelters in the bush near where they were beating sago. Sankon and Seravitti grew impatient for them to return. Sankon said to his younger brother Seravitti, "Our younger brothers are taking a very long time. You go and look for them." So Seravitti walked up to the garden and stood at one end. He looked across what was a very large garden. He stood right under the taro leaves — the taro were that tall. He walked up to their brothers' hut, but they had already left to beat sago. As he walked across to the other end of the garden, he saw that the taro were very large indeed. He pulled a big taro out and brought it back to show to his brother Sankon. Sankon was impressed with what he saw.

  The next morning, Sankon came to see his brothers. He walked into that same garden, stood at its edge and admired it. He saw the beautiful taro and the ripe bananas growing there. He pulled out a big taro. Carrying it on his shoulder, he walked to where his younger brothers were working. "The garden is ready," he told them. "The taro are big. I pulled this one out to show you. Break your sago prying sticks (*kai*). Throw them away! Tear up the sago strainers and throw them away too! Let's take the sago that is here and go home." So they left off and carried their sago back to the village. That afternoon Sankon gave a speech. "This famine lasted a long time," he said. "But now food is available. Get out your drums and conch shells." So they took down their drums and began to dance. They celebrated in the village plaza.

Frederick's comment: It is my father's story so it is something like history. *Sankan* and *seravitti* are two trees. So when they see *seravitti* in flower they know it is time for the taro to be ready. There will be lots of food. This is our calendar.

This translation: June 22, 1995