

## Constituents of a Thai medicinal plant: *Clinacanthus nutans* Lindau

Walter C. Taylor<sup>a</sup> and Pittaya Tuntiwachwuttikul<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Chemistry, University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia

<sup>b</sup> Department of Chemistry, Silpakorn University, Nakorn Pathom 73000, Thailand

E-mails: w.taylor@chem.usyd.edu.au      pittayat@su.ac.th

This paper will report some results of an ongoing collaborative programme with Thai scientists to study the chemistry and pharmacology of Thai medicinal plants. As an example, some results obtained in a study of *Clinacanthus nutans* Lindau will be presented.

*C. nutans* (Acanthaceae) is a small shrub occurring throughout SE Asia. In Thailand an alcoholic extract of fresh leaves is used externally for treatment of skin rash, especially genital lesions caused by herpes simplex (HSV) and varicella-zoster (VZV) viruses. In support, leaf extracts have shown significant inhibitory activity in *in vitro* virucidal models and several clinical trials have reported the successful use of a cream containing *C. nutans* extract for the treatment of genital herpes in patients.

Bioassay-guided fractionation of an ethanolic extract of *C. nutans* leaves has led to the isolation of a mixture of cerebrosides (**1**), and a monolinolenylgalactosylglycerol (**2**). The isolation and structure elucidation of **1** and **2** by spectroscopic and chemical methods will be reported and the significance of the results will be discussed.

