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ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES A. DAVIS



ROOTS

Reviving Traditional Remedies

By Genevieve Ekaete

With the yearly rise in the use of surgical operations to repair and arrest malfunctioning bodies, with a cure for cancer yet to be found, and with the dismal truth that doctors do not live longer than patients, many Blacks are taking a trip to the past—researching how their ancestors in Africa “made it” with little help from science.

A student organization at Howard University called ROOTS (Rebirth Of Old Time Substances) is inobtrusively but effectively leading the search and research into the medicinal and “healthful” uses of roots, herbs and other natural substances. In the words of the founders, the organization was established “to revive, revitalize and re-establish the scientific and spiritual validity of natural herbs and substances used throughout the centuries by Black people all over the world.”

ROOTS was born out of the musings of Blacks from different parts of the world who met at Howard and began to compare notes on their Black experiences.

Having found out how much they had in common, they decided to share it with people of similar interests, as well as make permanent records of their knowledge. Specifically, the seed for ROOTS began to germinate in late 1971, when Winson “Oluyemi” Clarke, a senior pharmacy student from Rose Town, Jamaica, shared with Dr. Kenneth R. Scott, associate professor of biomedical chemistry at Howard, his first-hand knowledge of folk medicines and their effectiveness. Both engaged in long discussions during which Dr. Scott assured Clarke that his experiences were not unique and added that he was very familiar with similar practices among Blacks in this country. A third person, freshman pharmacy student Leon “Musa” Mohammed, soon joined the picture. A South Carolinian, from John’s Island, he too had a lot to say to collaborate the other two.

The stirrings in the minds of the trio were not long in finding a catalysmic



agent which led to the formation of an organizational union. According to Winston Clarke, it all happened one day when Dr. Scott finished teaching a class on inorganic pharmaceutical chemistry 15 minutes before the official closing time. An animated discussion developed on the subject of traditional medicine. Speaking of that day, Clarke says: "Something profound happened. Students from all over the Black world—Africa, Caribbean and America—started one by one to talk about similar experiences in their lives. It was fantastic because here were *science* students talking with pride and respect about the value of folk medicines, the medicines of their foreparents. Even Dr. Scott said it was one of those rare occasions when a teacher is lucky enough to get almost 100 percent participation from his students."

It became immediately obvious to those present in that class that something tangible had to be done.

On December 8, 1972, at 7 p.m., 21 interested persons—mostly pharmacy students and Dr. Scott—met in the Student Lounge of the College of Pharmacy and Pharmacal Sciences. After an initial deadlock between the names RUTHS (Remedies Used to Heal the Sick) and ROOTS, the pioneers settled on the latter. It was determined at this first meeting of ROOTS, that its goals were: to "collect all possible information concerning folk remedies, medically categorizing each; to investigate the active constituents of various folk medicines which elicit pharmacological activity; to find methods and solutions of utilizing these folk remedies and preparations in pharmaceutical education, beginning at Howard University; and to publish papers, books, etc. on folk medicines indigenous to Pan-African nations."

With the paper work taken care of, the group of 21 handled down-to-earth concerns, including how to get a man and keep him, the other side of the coin, and

many "traditional" methods that have been found to work.

Winston Clarke told of a powder sold in Jamaican drug stores called Pigeon Powder. The owner of a pigeon which won't stay home pours it under the bird's wing. From then on, the pigeon develops a habit of returning home every day before dark. According to Clarke, a Caribbean sister who can't seem to get the affection of the man who has struck her fancy need only pour pigeon powder on his body or clothing to turn him around. A similar dose on a straying lover "makes the man return to his lady, the same way it makes the pigeon keep returning home before dark." And Clarke speaks from personal experience.

On the other hand, to win a woman's love, a man needs a natural strand of her hair (not pressed with hot comb), a grain of corn and a rooster. After boring a hole in the corn with a needle, he inserts the strand of hair through the hole and ties

ROOTS members on an exploratory field trip to Rock Creek Park in Washington, D. C. From left are: **James Simmons, Kenneth Palm, Ted McClure, Toni Palm, Lee Cook, Jack Shuler and Winston Clarke.**

6 both ends. He makes a form of incantation over this before throwing it to the rooster. If the rooster picks it up and swallows it, this means acceptance. From then on, any time the rooster crows, the desired girl thinks about her admirer and gradually grows to love him. Similar testimonies came from Black Americans, especially those from the South.

The refreshments served at the meeting was "Maubi" drink, commonly used in Grenada and Trinidad as an aphrodisiac. Some drank ginger tea, which is said to be good for cramps.

ROOTS has been meeting regularly ever since on the first Friday of each month in Room 206 of the Pharmacy Building, from 7 to 9 p.m. At these meetings, students, professors, active folk doctors and community members make speeches, give reports of findings, watch films and sample foods and beverages made the "rootical" way with no artificial additives.

New members are inducted continually, as long as they meet the primary prerequisite of being of "African descent." This is meant in the broadest sense and takes in all "Third World" peoples.

Strict observance of this policy stems from the fact that members of ROOTS have a deeply rooted determination not to let in any potential source of distraction. Clarke puts it bluntly: "A white person will think he's right and outa sight." ROOTS members are most mindful of the psycho-political bearing of their work. They share the consensus that we in this country are in bad shape medically because of a run-away technology, combined with a pervasive racism and greed. ROOTS' working paper calls special attention to a quotation in J. A. Rogers' book, *Sex and Race*, which says:

"Even as the white manufacturers have bleached out our salt, sugar, flour, so the white historian has bleached out world history. The dark or mineral portion has been rejected. Of course this process has produced a product beautifully pleasing





chologized to admire it, but which, nevertheless, is constipative and harmful to the mental digestion."

Members of the organization often make the point that "ROOTS' foundation lies in the heart of Pan-Africanism, not Europeanism or Americanism." Their activities to date show that they mean business.

ROOTS has touched base with Africa and the Caribbean. In April, it sent a representative to Nigeria to participate in the first Pan-African Conference on Research Into Medicinal Plants and the Relationship Between Traditional and Modern Medicine, which was convened at the University of Ife where a sister branch of ROOTS is now in its embryonic stage.

For two months last year, three members of the organization—including Clarke—visited Jamaica and successfully organized a chapter in Kingston under the sponsorship of Henry Lowe, head of the Science Department, College of Arts, Science and Technology. On the same field trip, the three visited Kingston and the towns of St. Andrew, St. Catharine and St. Thomas. In Kingston, they visited the Coronation Market and interviewed a 78-year-old vendor of roots and herbs. They visited *Obiah-men* (witch doctors) and *Rastafarians*, known to be heavy users of marijuana. They talked for days with Malachi Reynolds Kappo of Kingston, who is a spiritual herbalist and one of Jamaica's foremost sculptors. The natural medicinal products they bought from Ashanti Manufacturing Center in St. Thomas are now being analyzed by ROOTS in an attempt to isolate the chemical properties from which they get their reputed strength.

During the course of ROOTS-related activities, at least one of its founders has received professional recognition for his work, both nationally and internationally.

Late last year, Winston Clarke received special recognition and a gift membership in the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy for "outstanding work in the history of pharmacy." On the heels of that

came an award from The Royal Society of Arts (based in England) of its "Silver Medal for 1974" in recognition of "outstanding work as a student." As part of the award, Clarke was offered, and has since accepted, associate membership in the Society.

Members of ROOTS, not unexpectedly, are highly influenced by the knowledge they have acquired during the course of their research. Kenneth Palm, its current chairman, eats neither meat nor meat products; milk, eggs and cheese. And he says, as a result of this new eating habit, his health and asthmatic condition have improved tremendously. For protein, he eats seeds. And for good reasons. As Dick Gregory—comedian and health food enthusiast—points out in his book, *Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat*, seeds are a better source of protein than meats. For example, Sesame seeds contain "50 per cent more protein (amino acid content) than meat," while sunflower seeds contain three times the protein of meat and are cholesterol-free.

Of course, there are those people who respect animals too much to want to kill them for food, though it is doubtful whether they would go as far as Dick Gregory who says, "Every time I pass a Colonel Sanders Kentucky Fried Chicken stand, I have the same thought. Wouldn't it be wild if Colonel Sanders got to Heaven one day and found out God were a chicken?" I doubt also that many people have had his visions of beings on another planet who are as intelligent compared with us as we are compared with turkeys, placing an order at a butcher's shop: "Give me a half dozen Oriental knees, two Caucasian feet and twelve fresh Black lips." And the butcher coming back with a smile, says: "These Black lips are so fresh they're still talkin.'"

A three-day symposium at Howard on Roots, Herbal Medicines, and Spiritualism which was sponsored early this year by ROOTS captured the essence of the organization. It had participants coming from as far away as Jamaica and Nigeria.

8 All were ostensible embracers of the philosophy of Pan-Africanism. Most also held ostensible certificates from the Western establishment—certificates in varying forms, M.D.'s, Ph.D.'s, Ed.D.'s and others. And the irony of it all is that such validation, instead of being a contradiction, served to buttress the points of the speakers. It removed them from the ranks of those who "knew no better" and placed them among those who have worked within two systems and were in a better position to pass judgment on both.

Henry Lowe, sponsor of ROOTS' sister chapter in Jamaica, gave a tone to the posture the organization must take when he reminded the conferees that "much of modern medicine has had its origin in folk remedies, and in some instances, those folk remedies have not been replaced with any drugs which modern technology can provide."

There was place at the symposium for an astrologer. After all, ROOTS is all about promoting harmony among humans, animals, plant-life and the universe. And it is no secret, even in scientific circles, that the radiation from cosmic agents do influence humans. This accounts for the drastic mood changes lunatics experience during the "new moon."

Some of what the panel speakers had to say at that symposium promises to hold the attention of those who have not kept track of recent developments in areas relating to roots, herbal medicines and spiritualism.

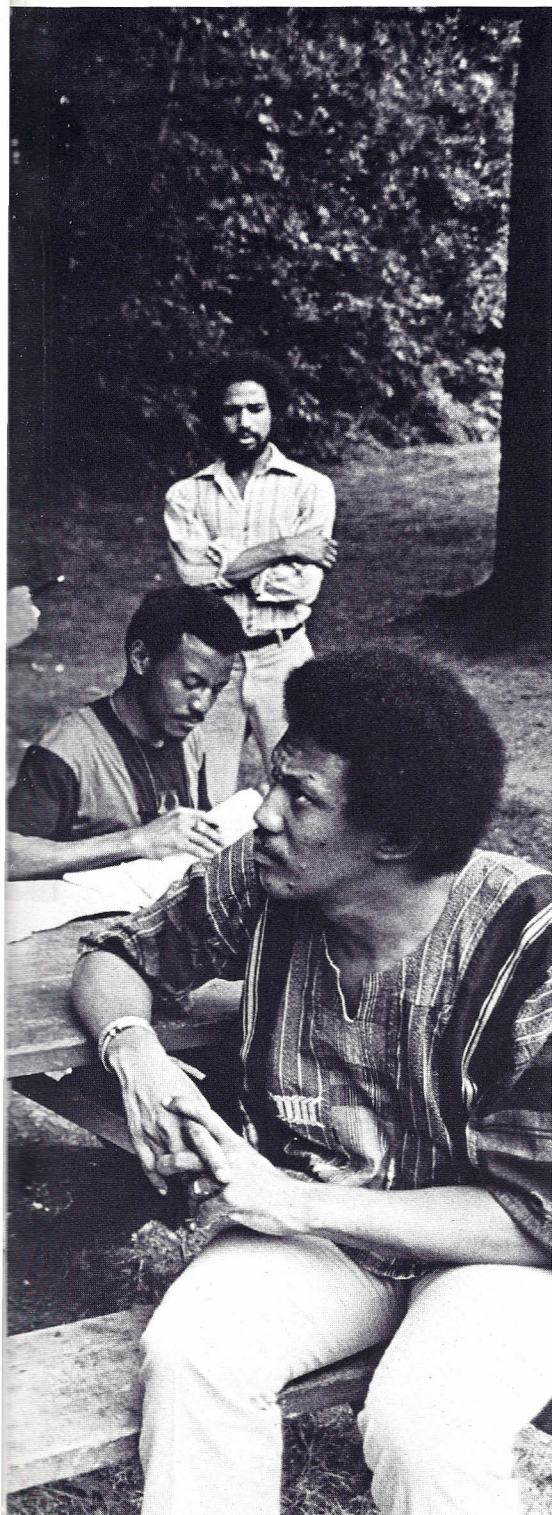
The speakers spoke of different things, yet they spoke of the same thing.

KAMUTI KITEME, Ed.D.—The son of a traditional doctor in Kenya, East Africa, he now teaches Black Studies subjects at City University of New York.

Dr. Kiteme set a tone for the day when in stressing the importance of the meeting he declared: "We as African people are at a stage of critical crisis, having been captive and subject peoples whether we are in the Motherland, Africa, or whether we are in the Caribbean, or living as exiles in North America or Latin America."

A time to meet and exchange notes in a secluded section of Rock Creek Park, surrounded by trees and plants.





ca." But fight, he said we must, though knowing that it won't be easy to "regain what we have lost under the umbrella and the hegemony of the European peoples."

Speaking of the experience he knows very much about—the African experience—Dr. Kiteme spoke bitterly of how the European colonizers have made Africans into "European caricatures who are neither in Europe nor in Africa." Africans, he said, are "sitting on the fence, with one leg in Africa—because of our skin color—and one leg in Europe. Yet Europe has never really accepted us as a people. So we try to go back to Africa and we find, 'oh my goodness,' this business about sitting on the fence is extremely difficult and we have to try and get our level, so to speak, as the water gets its own level."

Dr. Kiteme spoke of the so-called European experts who after "three days of speaking to a couple of Uncle Toms or some psychologically oreofied Black Europeans, come up with a huge research which says, 'As far as objective observation is concerned, I have conclusively determined that these people have no medicine at all. As a matter of fact, what they do practice is witchcraft.' The problem with this is that it denies the fact that Africans had their own doctors. Moreover, it is quite obvious that Africans stayed alive before the advent of the white man in Africa and not on aspirin, Geritol, Alka Seltzer or Milk of Magnesia."

Then Dr. Kiteme set about painting a picture of medical apprenticeship from what he knew of his ethnic group in East Africa. Medical training, he said, is a life-long experience, training and orientation which starts as early as three years of age. During the training, the child—whether female or male—learns from the trained doctor through observation and apprenticeship, passing through different grades of expertise and knowledge in the profession. Graduation from one grade to another brings with it added responsibility and authority. The training involves visiting bushes with the trained doctor, learning from him how to identify different

herbs with proven medicinal values and identifying what diseases they cure. 9

Another aspect of the training is a rigorous self-denial. During this period, the doctor-in-training subjects himself to a state of powerlessness. He might escape to the forest to live alone where he would deliberately starve himself and inflict pain on his body. The idea is for him—when he finally returns to town to practice—to learn to empathize with his patients, having known first-hand, how it felt to be hungry, sick, in pain and powerless.

The self-denial usually goes along with long meditations. This involves the doctor trying to understand the mysteries of the universe. Questions that flood through his mind seeking answers would include: "Where is God and what is ghost? Why does the sun rise and set? Can we talk with the birds, the animals, and trees? What is the origin of death? How can I channel whatever spiritual insight I gain into helping my patients and my people?"

The traditionally trained doctor assumes responsibility for the spiritual, social, mental and physical health of his people. In Western terms, he is a priest, physician, psychiatrist, psychologist and a myriad other names in one.

Having given his brethren this insight and more, Dr. Kiteme exhorted all "people of African descent, children of Africa, to try and really dig up this knowledge and contribute it to ourselves (charity begins at home) and then to the rest of the world." This, he predicted, "would be one of the aspects in our struggle toward the revitalization of a people, the rebirth of a people, the recognition of a lost people and a reconstruction of the culture of a people with pride."

KAMAL MAJIED, minister of Muhammad's Temple No. 11 in Boston—during his 14 years of training in medical research, Minister Majied said he has detected a natural harmony within and outside the body.

"You know," he said at one point, "if we were born to be smokers, nature would

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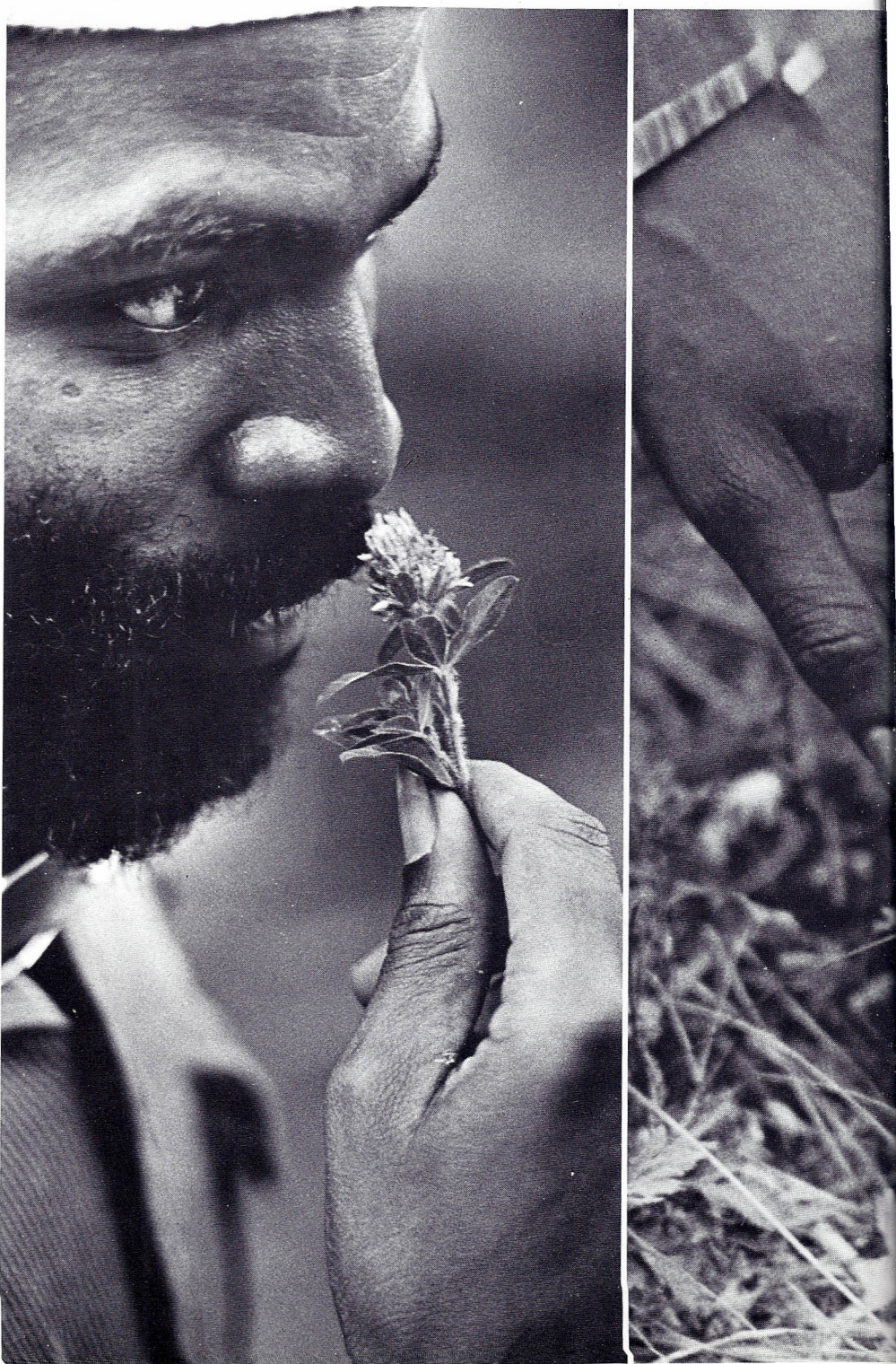
The plant Clover undergoing a thorough nasal examination by **James Simmons**.

10 have provided us with a built-in chimney. But since there are no built-in chimneys, some of the residue of that smoke remains in our bodies and throws it out of harmony."

He saw harmony in the fact that every cell in the body—muscles, nerves and all—is obedient to the brain. He saw a relationship between the fact that there are nine major systems in the body (skeletal, muscular, nervous, digestive, respiratory, circulatory, lymphatic, reproductive and endocrine) and nine major planets in the Universe. "And do not these nine major planets all revolve around the sun in obedience similar to the way the nine major systems obey the dictates of the brain?" he asked rhetorically. He went on to say, "blood circulates around the body once in approximately eight minutes—the same amount of time that it takes the sunlight to leave the sun and strike the earth." He might have added, but did not, a point made by Elijah Muhammed in *How To Eat To Live*, that "Our bodies are made of the earth and contain a little of every matter of the earth's chemicals, stone, gold and silver."

Minister Majied suggested that if we "lived correctly" and ate the right foods, we might not need doctors. We continually have an increase of doctors and hospital beds, he said, and "pharmaceutical houses work around the clock manufacturing drugs of all types. But these drugs don't heal. They just mask or temporarily relieve the illness. When medical doctors prescribe surgery or the use of drugs, that's like closing the barn door after the horse has got out. It would be better to keep the horse from getting out."

WILBERT JORDAN, M.D.—this Washington, D.C., physician whose father is a "ritual medicine man" in the South, believes stoutly in the effectiveness of herbal medicine. He has had patients on whom synthetic drugs did not work, but who found cure or relief after resorting to herbal medicine. In at least one case, a woman patient after finding relief in her herbal medicine, returned to him the pill



A gentle hand over Plantain, a herb used for treating snake bites and open wounds.



he had prescribed for her. "So I decided to be open-minded and yield to the lady's better expertise. She had found the roots, and I hadn't. So I let her use it," Dr. Jordan said.

In another instance, two sisters with the same type of intestinal tapeworms were admitted to the hospital where Dr. Jordan was working. One was treated the "scientific" way, the other the traditional way. Both were cured.

In endorsing herbal medicine and validating its efficacy, and perhaps suggesting a new route of openmindedness for his medical colleagues, Dr. Jordan said: "I consider myself a well-trained doctor. And I'm going to use anything that I know is going to be effective."

Dr. Jordan gave a list of folk alternative remedies for many areas of medical needs, including: how to stop external bleeding, arrest excessive vaginal discharge, induce abortion, treat skin burns and cure venereal disease.

Verifiable Research

Dr. Govind J. Kapadia, a native of India and chairman of the Department of Biomedical Chemistry at Howard, and natural medicinal consultant to ROOTS, cautioned against the indiscriminate and wholesale use of herbs, in an interview several months after the symposium. He became interested in herbal medicine 20 years ago after receiving the master's degree from Bombay University in India in the study of vegetable drugs. Five years later, he received a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in a related field.

A great danger in indiscriminate use of herbs is the fact that two like-looking plants or herbs may actually be entirely different and belonging to different plant families. And even where it has been established that both plants belong to the same family, sometimes a very thin line exists between inadequate dosage and an overdose because plants from the same family can have varying chemical content depending on where they are grown or time of year.

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And then, a particular herb which has a curative element for one ailment, might also have other chemical compounds with disastrous side effects. This is where the bio-medical chemist is needed.

Using the opium poppy as an example, Dr. Kapadia explained how the juice from this plant's fruit contains morphine, codeine, and noscapine, among other potent chemical compounds which make it toxic if eaten. The seed of the opium poppy plant is used in baking rolls. The oil in the seed is used for food and salad.

Dr. Mohamed B. E. Fayez, professor of biomedical chemistry at Howard (until his return to Egypt last July) who still serves ROOTS as natural medicine consultant, talked about his interest in herbal medicine and his work in the field a few months before he left Howard. He spoke of how when he was an impressionable undergraduate at the University of Alexandria in Egypt he had a teacher who spoke affectionately of plants and influenced him considerably. The teacher would look at a tree and say: "There could be in this tree very useful medical compounds which could be used to heal some human ailments. It awaits a man of vision to examine the plant and extract the useful substances from it and put them to test."

With a bachelor's degree and impressive knowledge of plants, he went to Glasgow University in England in 1952 where his background was considered so good that he was allowed to work on his doctorate rather than the master's degree. His doctoral dissertation was on the "Chemistry of Medicinal Plants." Upon receiving the Ph.D. in 1956, he returned to Egypt to join the Natural Research Center in Cairo where he established the Natural Products Laboratory. To date, 15 of his students have been awarded Ph.D.'s, and 18 the master's degree in the field of medicinal plants and natural products.

Dr. Fayeze's discussion about *Vitiligo* (a peculiar skin disease) was most interesting, especially the fact that its cure has been found in a plant.

Vitiligo is a skin disease which causes the skin to lose its natural color. It is purely a cosmetic problem since it does not cause any pain. It is one of the four most common skin diseases in India. Some scientists believe that the cause of the disease is closely associated with the central nervous system since there are many recorded case histories of people who upon receiving a shock (such as in a car accident or experiencing a dreadful fright) had vitiligo appear on their body. Furthermore, Dr. Fayeze said, the shape of vitiligo patches tend to follow a particular nerve, thus suggesting that the nerve is probably damaged. This damage causes skin melanocytes (the pigment producing and containing cells in the human skin) to completely lose its normal ability to produce skin pigment or color. Thus the skin becomes milk-white, even on whites.

The incredible story is that for centuries people all over north Africa had a cure for this complex nervous disorder in a plant called Khella.

Research in Cairo resulted in the identification of the active substance in Khella. Only in the mid-1950s did Western scientists learn about the plant, said Dr. Fayeze. And it wasn't until around 1958 that scientists succeeded in collecting the active substance in the plant and marketing it.

This might sound like a miracle but it isn't. Though scientists cannot quite pinpoint how the substance works, Dr. Fayeze speculated that the drug in the Khella plant probably stimulates the healthy and active melanocytes around the vitiligo patch to proliferate and advance inward to invade the once-affected area and restore it to health. He believes that the drug (or active chemical substance in the plant) absorbs energy from the ultraviolet light of the sun—something active melanocytes do—and puts it to work to correct the damage in the disordered melanocytes. The fact that the Khella plant's active ingredient is now used to induce sun-tanning (in sun-tanning lotions) seems to lend credence to this.

Another fascinating insight came in Dr.

Fayeze's discussion of the fact that scientists have discovered that some hormones—Steroid hormones: those responsible for female and male characteristics; cortisone; progesterone or pregnancy hormones—are found in raw forms in plants. In his words: "Plants contain the raw materials (chemicals) that, when subjected to chemical transformations, lead to the production of all the types of Steroid hormones."

Any country interested in developing its hormone industry must search for suitable vegetable sources in her own environment that contain the desirable raw materials. Egypt is in the process of establishing a hormone industry now, said Dr. Fayeze. This relatively new discovery of hormone materials in plants will inevitably affect the cost of medicine—but for the better. Plants are cheap and can be cultivated on acres of land, whereas reliance on animals for hormones had always meant "reliance on the slaughter house by-product" as Dr. Fayeze put it.

There seems to be no end to the discovery of the invaluable potentialities in plants, yet, in a sense, the whole exploration has only just begun. Dr. Fayeze says that a group of American scientists have extracted two successful anti-tumor drugs from the plant Vince Rosea. On the other hand, at least three plants are known to exist which have tumor-causing agents in them. The implication is inescapable: use of one set of plants could mean protection from or cure of cancer, while the avoidance of the other would also mean avoidance of incurring the dreaded disease.

This brings to mind the fact that statistics show that the rate of cancer of the prostate among Blacks in Washington, D. C., is 42.2 per 100,000 (among California Blacks, it is 65.3 per 100,000) whereas in Nigeria it is only 9.7 per 100,000. When Howard University received more than a half a million dollars last year to study cancer of the prostate, the point was made that the contents of Black American diets

Lee Cook studying in the park.



will be compared to those of Nigerian diets. 13

Meanwhile, other studies are taking place in Africa in the area of herbology. Bode Ladejobi, editor-in-chief of *African Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*, revealed at ROOTS' symposium early this year that four African universities are carrying on scientific research into the value of herbal medicine. The universities participating in this unique enterprise are the University of Ife in Nigeria; the University of Science and Technology in Ghana; the University of Dakar in Senegal; and the University of Cairo in Egypt.

So far, he said, they have seen African herbalists and traditional medicine doctors continually baffle "scientists" with their proficiency and expertise. In one instance, Ladejobi said, a patient's urine sample was taken and tested: Diagnosis: Positive diabetic patient. Two months later, the person again had his urine tested. Result: Negative.

An interview with the herbalist showed that this traditional doctor believed that his patient's grandfather who had been a very successful but unscrupulous businessman had ripped-off the poor and a vengeful spirit was after his grandson in thirst for retribution. So the traditional doctor's first order of business was to break the connection between the spirit and the patient. Once that was done, the rest was easy.

As a pharmacist, Ladejobi said he knew there was no complete cure for diabetes—especially as in this case where it was established that the grandfather had also died of the same illness. But he also had scientific proof that the patient was *cured*, even though he has no scientific means of finding out whether or not the vengeful spirit ever existed.

In view of such and similar findings, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is taking steps to preserve herbalism. The OAU, according to Ladejobi, has set up three research centers in Africa—Nigeria, Ghana and Egypt—and has given

14 **The substance in the jar is Bee Pollen**, good for retarding the aging process.





Values of the plant Fern are the subject of a discussion between Dr. Kenneth Scott (left) and Winston Clarke.

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each center \$120,000 to work with herbalists and produce an African pharmacopoeia and traditional African medicines.

The effect of herbalists were strengthened by the convening of the historic "First Pan African Conference on Research into Medicinal Plants and the Relationship Between Traditional and Modern Medicine" at the University of Ife. Winston Clarke was there. To him, the dialog between traditional and modern doctors which characterized the four-day conference was a profound and rare privilege. He estimated that at least 6000 persons attended the conference—some from as far away as France, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, and Italy. One of the papers he brought back with him is that presented by Chief J. O. Lambo, president of the Nigeria Herbalist Association. In it Chief Lambo stated authoritatively that:

"Those who merely study and treat the effect of diseases are like persons who imagine that they can drive away the winter simply by brushing off the snow from their doors. Unless the root cause of a disease is known, the disease will relapse. Man and nature are one and those who know the anatomy of nature know also the constitution of man."

Chief Lambo couldn't have put it better for ROOTS. □

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A glossary of familiar medicinal herbs and their reputed therapeutic effects when used:

- Poppy plant, Indian hemp, Hops.**—Ease or alleviate pains (Anodyne)
- Male fern, Worm seed, Worm wood**—Expel and destroy intestinal worms (Anthelminthic)
- Lemons, Citrus fruits**—Counteract and prevent scurvy. Also, a source of vitamin C (Antiscorbutic)
- Onion, Garlic, Wild alum root**—Destroy and inhibit bacterial growth (Antiseptic)
- Scull cap, Black haw, Black cohosh, Asafoetida**—Prevent and allay spasms or cramps (Antispasmodic)
- Yohimbe bark, Saw palmetto, Gensing root**—Stimulate the sex organs (Aphrodisiac)
- Quassia chips**—Stimulate the appetite (Appetizer)
- Wild alum root, Comfrey, Witch hazel**—Cause contraction of tissues (Astringent)
- Jamaican Quassia, Gold thread**—Contain bitter tasting properties which stimulate the flow of saliva and gastric juice. Used to increase the appetite and aid the process of digestion (Bitters)
- Kola nut, Lily of the Valley, Tonka beans**—Contain agents which have an effect on the heart (Cardiac)
- Garlic, Ginger root, Peppermint leaf**—Expel gas from the stomach, intestines and bowels (Carminative)
- Senna, Castor oil, American mandrake**—Cause evacuation from the bowels (Cathartic)
- Black currant, Southernwood, Ackee skin**—Cleansing agents or detergents (Detergent)
- Paw-paw (Papaya), Paw-paw seed**—Aid digestion (Digestive agent)
- Scull cap, Wild carrot, Fennel**—Increase the flow of urine (Diuretics)
- Garlic, Onions, Golden seal**—Induce expulsion and loosen phlegm of the mucous membranes of the nasal and bronchial passages (Expectorant)
- Marijuana, Indian hemp, Poppy, Ganja**—Induce sleep (Sedative, narcotic)
- Dandelion, Golden seal, American mandrake, Prunes, Raisins**—Mildly and gently expel feces from the bowels (Aperient or laxative)
- Kola nut, Kola, Scull cap, Snake root**—Contain an agent which acts on the nervous system to temporarily relax nervous tension or excitement (Nervine)
- Irish moss, Slippery elm, Saw palmetto, Linseed**—Contain nutritive agents (Nutrient)
- Aloe, Cascara**—Cause copious evacuations from the bowels (Purgative)
- Red root, Witch hazel**—Calm the nerves (Sedative)
- Ginger, Blue cohosh**—Increase and quicken various functional actions of the system (Stimulant)
- Fennel, Gentian root**—Contain substances which give strength and tone to the stomach. Also used to stimulate the appetite (Stomachic)
- Blue cohosh**—Produces copious perspiration (Diaphoretic)
- Quassia, Hops, Gentian, Golden seal, Chamomile, Witch hazel**—Invigorating and strengthening to the system (Tonic)
- Garlic, Onions, Mandrake**—Expel and destroy worms (Vermifuge)