

PROBLEM

With recent years, science has become increasingly aware of the vast possibilities for medical knowledge, which lie in the ancient and time-honored medical practices of remote peoples, and their usages in the maintenance of health and the prevention and cure of diseases that still baffle Western science. In example of this, one may cite quinine, ephedrin, opium, chaunmoogra oil, cocaine, strophanthus, veratrine, strychnine, cannabis indica, castor oil, rhubarb, aloes, jalap and other remedies of equal potencies that have been discovered by the scientific world through inquiry into the usages of supposedly untutored races.

The two richest fields before the scientific world are those of the American Indian and of Tibet --- and of these, the Tibetan field is acknowledged to be far richer since the ancient cultures and knowledge have been preserved with consistent purity through centuries, and priestly and tribal learning still abound.

Despite the incalculable opportunities of human service provided therein, the field of ancient and tribal medicines has scarcely been more than approached by the intensive methods of modern research.

UNUSVATI, HIMALAYAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF ROERICH MUSEUM,

Possibilities for the exploration of this richest field have been established through the foundation of an American outpost of scientific research in the Western Himalayas --- the Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum, at Naggar, Kulu, India. This Institute was founded by Professor Nicholas Roerich, as a result of his Central Asiatic Expedition of five years through Sikhi, Kashmir, Ladak, Chinese Turkestan, Mongolia and Northern and Western Tibet. During these years, Prof. Roerich was able to see the remarkable results obtained by native medical practitioners through the uses of remedies and methods unknown to the West. Professor Roerich also saw the prospect of the greatest benefits accruing to Western civilization from competent scientific enquiry into such of these ancient remedies and methods as have proved their efficacy. To this end, Professor Roerich donated the necessary land and headquarters building for the work. Through a special gift, the Biochemical Laboratory Building now nears completion, although still further means are required for its complete equipment as well as a hydro electric plant.

In choosing the location of the Himalayan Research Institute, Professor Roerich sought the site which all again seemed to him best suited to the pursuit of the desired researches. In this site, as well as the Summer Headquarters chosen by him for the

2

Institute in Lahul, Western Tibet, the ancient traditions are maintained in the purest form. Here may be found the rare plants in constant use in Indian, Tibetan and Central Asian medical practices. Conditions of climate, altitude and soil are so varied as to permit of horticultural experimentation of unusual variety and promising character under conditions permitting a control which could not be exercised elsewhere. Moreover it is believed that the fields of cancer and tuberculosis study are unrivaled since it is known that the Tibetan pharmacopoeia and diet gave great attention to these scourges. In witness to the possibilities in this study, it may be pointed out that Western Tibet shows localities of entire immunity to cancer.

The confidence of the Founder of the Institute, have been fully supported by the work thus far undertaken. Five expeditions have already been operating in Lahul, Lashahr, Kangra, the plains of the Punjab, Ladak and Zaskar. Thousands of specimens of local plants of medical promise have been collected and extensive collections forwarded to such institutions as the Bureau of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction, Department of Agriculture; Harvard University; New York Botanical Gardens, Jardin des Plantes of Paris and others. Under Dr. George Roerich one of the leading Tibetan authorities, and with the cooperation of local scholars among them the distinguished lama Lobzang Mingyur Dorje, vital work has been accomplished in the collection of native books on Tibetan medicine and translations of these works. Altogether the important ground work already accomplished offers most eloquent arguments of the great possible success in this field, and it is the conviction of the Trustees that with cooperation, the foundations thus far laid, may yield the greatest medical treasures yet brought to western knowledge in the field of native and ancient medical lore as well as diet.

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

In order that these significant possibilities may not be lost to American scientific achievement, the Trustees of Trusvati, Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum beg to bring this problem to the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture has a Division of Drug Plant Investigation, which, however is limited in its departmental activities to research in plants of an already demonstrated commercial demand. The Bureau of Public Health Service of the Department of the Treasury might supplement such activity through its own province. It is therefore respectfully suggested that a cooperative research plan, forwarding the disinterested work for science already begun by the Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum, be developed between the Division of Drug Plant Investigation of the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Public Health Service of the Department of the Treasury, with the possible enlistment of some foundation which might be made aware of the great possibilities residing in such research.

The Trustees of the Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum beg to recall that the foundation by Nicholas Roerich of this Institute as a scientific outpost of an American institution, was consecrated to the ideal that America should be the first country to bring this treasure of human knowledge to western usage.

The initial stages of labor already begun by the Himalayan Research Institute have already attracted attention to this field, and it is already evident that other countries are not unmindful of the important results which this research may offer.

In view of the great steps made by Grusvatli, Himalayan Research Institute of Noarich Museum thus far, it would be an irreparable loss if this priority should be lost to America through lack of means to carry further this historic humanitarian task.

The Trustees therefore beg the Honorable Secretary of the Treasury and the Honorable Secretary of Agriculture to consider the vast possibilities of service which present themselves in this task and further beg that a united cooperation be brought to this work which now must have added assistance. They are convinced that the most gratifying scientific glory will come to America in this field, and that the ideals which inspired the foundation of the Himalayan Research Institute -- that of bringing a gift to America in service to mankind -- may thus be consummated.

*There are slight changes in
wording still to be made*