

## **Nicotiana Rustica:**

May the scent of the Tobacco  
I have thrown on the Sacred Fire  
Reach Thee, Creator Father, to let Thee know  
We are still good and that thou mayest give us  
All that we have asked.

### Iroquois Prayer

Those human cultures which demonize death or pain or sickness are thus less able to deal with the bitter side of nature, with intoxications; and make themselves doubly sick.

Gary Snyder

A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want?

Oscar Wilde

I believe that pipe smoking contributes to a somewhat calm and objective judgment in all human affairs.

Albert Einstein

## **Introduction**

A homeopathic proving is one of the most profound ways to find out about the essential nature of a substance. The proving substance allows us to explore the “consciousness” of a substance – be it plant, animal or mineral – and reveals the potential to its healing power through the physical and psychological experiences of each prover. Every substance in nature is unique, and the relationship between humans and the proving material offers a great amount of information and knowledge about both the substance and human beings.

One of the most essential aspects of a homeopathic proving is its experiential nature. It is an immediate empirical process, a journey into the essence of the substance. However, in order for a proving to help us understand the full spectrum of a substance, that substance has to be taken by as large number of people as possible. One prover’s response cannot reveal all there is to see in any substance. Likewise, a substance needs to be given in a number of homeopathic potencies to reveal a more complete remedy picture. In practical terms, this means that many homeopathic provings are incomplete and only reveal a shell or foundation of information about the substance being proved.

The complete healing potential of a substance can only be seen and confirmed in clinical practice. The challenge involved in a proving is therefore to accurately analyze and apply the information derived from the proving to the treatment of real patients in clinical situations.

Another way to find out about the “nature” of a substance is to study it in its natural (unpotentized) form and observe its impact on the world of nature and human activity. Nearly every substance interacts with or influences humans in some ways, and many are used for practical and economic benefit. Information about these interactions can also give us insight about the nature of a substance and its possible clinical effects. Considering that every characteristic may be an expression of some quality or facet of the whole, interesting – or even essential – information about a substance can be gleaned in many ways.

Given that a homeopathic proving is a means of exploring the healing power of a substance that has been ingested in some form by human beings, the knowledge gained through this method can be usefully compared to knowledge about the substance gained from other sources. The relative importance of possible therapeutic information taken from sources outside of provings is a matter of contention in homeopathic thinking. Some homeopaths are inclined to dismiss the significance of any information that does not come directly from provings, adhering to the idea that only information gleaned directly from provings is acceptable. However, as is well known to those who have been involved with provings, the challenge of extracting authentic remedy information from such a large amount of subjective material can be difficult, as can be seen in some of the original provings of Hahnemann, as well as in some provings conducted in modern times.

Therefore, if it is possible to study correspondences between provings and other more “observational” phenomena, this may add to our knowledge of the substance and its homeopathic affinity. It should be kept in mind, however, that the homeopathic healing potential of a substance can only be reliably verified by clinical results.

The chapters that follow – before the information from the proving is presented – will explore the substance *Nicotiana rustica* from many different angles. A brief overview of botanical and pharmacological aspects of tobacco is given, followed by a more detailed story of the relationship between humans and tobacco. Considering the extraordinary impact tobacco has had on human civilizations, it seems worthwhile to explore this history, even if it is not directly connected to the proving. The next chapter is a study comparing tobacco with other homeopathic remedies, including other Solanaceae. Next comes an elucidation of some of the main themes from the proving. We then take a deeper look at some of the symptoms, thoughts, and feelings arising during the proving and compare them with experiences described by Native Americans who have used these plants in other ways. This is followed by the complete picture of the proving, followed by the repertorization of the proving and a case in which the remedy *Tabacum* was given. The final part of the book is a more

detailed discussion of proving methodology and the challenges of doing homeopathic provings.

The information in this book is by no means a complete description of the remedy-picture of *Nicotiana rustica*. It would be interesting to conduct future provings using even higher potencies. The presentation of this material is, however, an attempt to use the foundation of a homeopathic proving as a means to study one of the most intriguing substances known to humans, which has had a significant impact on the history, lives, and consciousness of human beings.