

An Indo-European Plant-Teacher

... a note from underground by *Gracie & Zarkov*

Number 10

Introduction

Encounters with entities who teach or guide are a characteristic feature of hallucinogenic ayahuasca trances. For discussion purposes, we have granted ontological status to these entities without regard for the epistemological or metaphysical implications of that status.

We have been interested in these phenomena for several years, but the South American vine, *Banisteriopsis caapi*, which is the basis for ayahuasca, is not readily available in North America. The DMT-containing admixture plants, *Psychotria viridis*, and *Diplopteris cabrarana*, which produce the vivid hallucinations, are even harder to obtain. Therefore, we have been investigating¹ combinations of synthetic DMT with various β -carboline containing plants, not only *B. caapi*, but also *Passiflora incarnata* and *Peganum harmala*.

Peganum Harmala

P. harmala, or Syrian Rue, is the plant from which harmine was first isolated, as well as a source of harmaline and tetrahydroharmine. Total β -carboline content runs almost 4% by weight in the seeds of Syrian Rue. These alkaloids occur in roughly the same proportions as in *B. caapi*. Ten grams of Syrian Rue seeds provide about 400mg of total β -carbolines, about the amount in a typical dose of ayahuasca.

Syrian Rue grows in semi-arid conditions. It originated in Central Asia, and is held in high esteem throughout Asia Minor as a medicinal, aphrodisiac and dye plant. There is no solid historical evidence of ritual or religious use. It is sometimes known as *ruin weed* since it often grows on the tells covering the ruins of ancient cities in the Near East. It now grows wild in Eurasia and has recently been spread to Texas, Nevada, New Mexico and Southern California. Dye quality seeds are available from several West Coast seed services for about \$50.00 per pound.

Preparation

We prepared our hallucinogenic brew in a manner similar to that used to prepare ayahuasca. Fifty grams of seeds were finely ground in a spice mill. The powdered seeds

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¹editor's note: cf. "a note from underground" number 7.

were added to 4 quarts of water and boiled in a slow cooker overnight. The resulting liquid was poured off and saved, and 4 quarts of fresh water were added to the residue. This second wash was also boiled for 12 hours. Both washes had a noticeable yellow color, indicating the possible presence of harmine. Both washes were strained while hot through a cloth coffee filter and then reduced to a final volume of 500ml. Synthetic N,N-DMT-HCl was boiled in during the final reduction (not boiling in the DMT adversely affects the brew's potency).

The High

We drank the brew on empty stomachs. First effects were noticed in about five minutes. Physical side effects include tingling extremities, slight tremor, lassitude and very slight nausea. The mental effects of the come-on are similar to the initial effects of smoked DMT but are milder and in slow motion. The anti-depressant effects of the β -carbolines are quite striking; a strange calm elation is felt.

The DMT-like effects peak in about 25-30 minutes with strong visual disturbances. We were in a darkened room and the closed-eye geometric patterns were very vivid. We felt a 'presence' in these patterns which we could bring into direct contact by a combination of repeated nonsense babbling (which turned into glossolalia) and direct address to the 'entity,' e.g. 'Who are you?' 'Show yourself!' 'Do you want to talk?' etc.

The Plant Teacher

On both occasions, we contacted a 'teacher' who identified himself with the Syrian Rue plant. During our discussions with him (which were out loud; subvocalizing was ineffective) the teacher showed us visions, answered questions and provided specific health, emotional and psychological advice. The 'voice in the head' phenomenon was not as strongly constituted as on high dose mushrooms. However, the vividness, clarity and understandability of the visionary illustrations which often accompanied the conversations were striking. Intense feelings (which shifted with the visions), changes in tone of voice and manner of speaking, including glossolalia (as recorded on tape) and strong contact highs were additional phenomena noted. The plant teacher had a definite personality which was strongly male, very friendly, humorous, with an interest in story-telling bordering on the garrulous.

We have independent confirmation of contact phenomena by an associate who tried the same combination.

The Visions

Representative visions and raps included:

- Plant diagrams and information on watering, plant diseases and placement of the Syrian Rue plant in our garden.
- A diagram of a human heart, showing the auricular node and the neurology of the heartbeat.

- Art and artifacts from the Old European civilization circa 10000 BC, e.g., Catal Huyuk; including pottery and statuary.
- A vision of the Goddess, holding the plant teacher and the human contactee intertwined in Her hands.
- An amazingly vivid and intense ‘movie’ of the last scene from Robert A. Heinlein’s *Starship Troopers*, showing the destruction of an insect planet by human warriors.
- The ruins of Persepolis, then, upon request, Persepolis in its original polychrome, sunlit splendor.
- A vision of the plant teacher as a Mongol warlord, in golden armor, astride an armored and caparisoned woolly mammoth.
- A vision of Gracie’s mother at Gracie’s age, from the inside, that is, Gracie experienced her mother from her mother’s point of view.
- Various pieces of psychological and relationship advice, including insights into both our childhoods.

The visions faded about three hours after ingestion with the presence slowly fading in the fourth hour. The total trip lasts about 6 hours.

Dosage

This brew can be *very intense* and we could not recommend it to anyone who has not had significant experience with similar visionary states such as high dose mushrooms (5g+), smoked DMT (40mg+) or mescaline (500mg+). Individual sensitivity to the β -carboline/DMT combination varies greatly, so we recommend that one ‘sneak-up’ on the effects. While our nominal dose would be 10 grams of seeds with 40 mg of DMT, 30 mg of DMT will definitely allow for contact. Five grams of seeds with 20 mg of DMT seems to be the threshold dose. The intensity of the visual effects seems most dependent upon the dosage of DMT. The length of the effects and the depth of the contact seem most dependent upon the dose of Syrian Rue. Our personal preference is 7 grams of seeds with 30 mg of DMT, with a booster dose of 5 grams Rue and 20 mg DMT after one hour.

Warning

THE INTERACTION OF CERTAIN FOODS AND DRUGS WITH THE MAO INHIBITION BROUGHT ON BY β -CARBOLINES CAN BE FATAL!! The following substances *must not* be ingested within 48 hours before and after taking the brew:

- All amphetamines or related compounds, such as MDA, MDMA, phenylpropanolamine, ephedrine, etc. [add ‘smart drugs’ to this category.]
- Any foods containing tyramine, or where enzymatic processes have been used: e.g., yoghurt, sour cream, aged cheeses, wines, especially port or Chianti, beer, fermented sausages (pepperoni), soy sauce, etc.

- Certain other foods, including: shellfish, bananas, liver, avocados, broad beans, chocolate, coffee and others.

This list is not all-inclusive. Please do further research before attempting to experiment! The dangerous interaction usually precipitates a hypertensive crisis and certain people are especially sensitive to the effects, particularly those with heart abnormalities or high blood pressure. We ourselves have had a few close calls while investigating the β -carbolines.

Good physical health and the advice of a ‘hip’ physician are helpful, nevertheless, exercise caution if you become interested in these combinations.

Comparison With Ayahuasca

While our direct experience with *B. caapi* and DMT admixtures is very limited, we have these preliminary comments. The Syrian Rue experience is less heavy, and the entity more casual, garrulous and intimate. The *caapi* entity seems more formal, more experienced with human contact, especially in health and psychology, and seems to be a more powerful teacher.

Chemical Analysis

The chemical analysis of ayahuasca can be found in Stafford, *Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, and Schultes and Hoffman, *The Botany and Chemistry of Hallucinogens*. A more detailed analysis of the brew is in McKenna, et. al., *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, 10 (1984), 195-223.

Conclusion

A full account of our various experiments with β -carbolines and DMT will be in our forthcoming book: *Notes from Underground: Psychedelic Perspectives for the Next Millennium*, which will be published by High Frontiers Press sometime early in 1992.

We’d like to acknowledge the information and moral support provided by Dennis, Terence and Kat McKenna, which made it possible for us to structure the experiments so as to make contact on our first attempt.

Finally, the plant teacher said that it would like to communicate with any human willing to take the brew.

Stay High and Stay Free!

Gracie & Zarkov

Watch for the book in 1992.

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