4 January 1977

Subject: A Classification of Medicinal Folklore Terminology

To: Robert E. Perdue, Jr.

The attached classification, which includes about 300 terms that describe medicinal ailments or disorders, was put together sometime in early 1975. In 1975, such a classification was being developed for the folklore paper to be presented at the symposium. I discarded the classification for two reasons:

1. It is difficult to separate general terms from the specific terms - like trying to define species and genera and families, and
2. I was uncertain about which terms and disorders are most frequently reported in the folklore literature. Before this classification was prepared, more than 600 terms were compiled from a review of Watt & Breyerbrandijk "Medicinal and Poisonous Plants of Southern and Eastern Africa", and definitions were written and typed on many of these (about 50 pages).

A major emphasis in this classification concerning physiological disorders (IV) was:

A. Plants used as remedies for diseases or symptoms that appear externally and often treated by external application (dermatotherapy) - pages 1-3.

B. Plants used to treat internal diseases or symptoms of internal disorders - pages 4-9.

On page 7, number 11, should read - "Plants used as remedies for parasitic diseases". The word parasitic was apparently left out. This is the category that is of interest to you but also see page 2 under #1.

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POSIBLE CLASSIFICATION
OF FOLKLORE TERMINOLOGY

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(Date)
I. PLANTS REGARDED, BELIEVED, SUSPECTED OR REPORTED AS BEING POISONOUS

II. PLANTS USED AS POISONS, INSECTICIDES

A. Poisons (Arrow and Fish)
   1. arrow poisons
      homicidal
      suicidal
      lion and leopard poison
      ordeal poison
   2. fish poison
      narcotic poison

B. Insecticides
   vermin
   kills maggots

III. PLANTS USED TO TREAT OR HEAL WOUNDS AND OTHER MECHANICAL TYPES OF INJURIES

   septic wounds
   scarifications
   cuts
   bruises
   sprains
   fractures
   dressings
   contusions

IV. PLANTS USED TO TREAT PHYSIOLOGICAL OR MORPHOLOGICAL ABNORMALITIES

A. Plants Used As Remedies For Diseases Or Symptoms That Appear Externally And Often Treated By External Application (Dermatotherapy)
1. Skin problems referred to as diseases or from disease-causing organisms (except eyes)
   
a. Skin diseases from parasitic organisms
   
   - scabies
   - head lice
   - ringworm

b. Skin diseases usually from bacterial organisms
   
   - eczema
   - erysipelas
   - leprosy
   - lupus
   - venereal diseases (gonorrhea and syphilis)
   - furuncles
   - yaws
   - impetigo

   c. Skin diseases or symptoms of viral origin
   
   - measles
   - smallpox
   - oedematous eruptions

   d. Cancerous skin conditions
   
   - benign tumours
   - cancerous sores
   - callous ulcer (?)
   - warts (?)
   - corns (?)
   - cancer

2. Skin problems which are not usually associated with disease-causing organisms

   a. Dermal problems which are often localized
      but are not swellings of organs or major glands

   - abscesses
   - boils
   - blisters
   - carbuncles
   - chafes of the skin
   - chancre
   - chaps
   - cutaneous lesions
dandruff
eczema
itches
leucoderma
pimples
purulent sores
pustules
skin eruptions
skin lesions
suppurations of the skin
ulcers
urticaria

b. Swellings and related conditions

abdominal swellings
angina
dropsy
edema
glandular swellings
goitre
hemorrhoids
hydrocele
oedema
piles
scrofulous sores
scrofulous swellings
sore breasts (?)
spongy gums (?) swollen gums (?)
swellings (general)
swellings of the groin (?)
swellings of the legs
swelling of the mumps
swelling of the neck
swollen feet

3. Eye problems or diseases

maladies of the eye
inflamed eyes
sore eyes
conjunctivitis
ophthalmia
ulcer of the eye
pink eye
B. Plants Used To Treat Internal Diseases Or Symptoms Of Internal Disorders

1. Plants used as tonics, stimulants or excitants for anemia, nausea, weakness or delirium

2. Plants used as stomachics

   - loss of appetite
   - anorexia

3. Plants used as antiemetics

   - vomiting
   - vomiting in yellow fever

4. Plants used as antibilious

   - hepatic conditions
   - biliousness

5. Plants used as hemeostatics

   - hemorrhage

6. Plants used to treat abdominal and intestinal disorders of a general nature

   - peptic ulcer (?)
   - dyspepsia
   - abdominal pains
   - abdominal upsets
   - abdominal troubles
   - abdominal heaviness
   - stomach-ache or pain
   - intestinal complaints
   - indigestion
   - epigastric pains
   - flatulence
   - heartburn
   - colic
   - gastritis
   - cramps
7. Plants used for treating pains or aches (often as analgesics)
   a. Bodily and muscular pains
      
      - rheumatism
      - shoulder aches
      - lumbar pain
      - lumbago
      - pains in the back
      - gout
      - sciatica
      - thoracic pain
      - acute appendicitis
      - pains in the loin
      - chest complaints (?)
   b. Dental problems
      - toothache
      - gingivitis
      - inflammation of the gums
      - pain of gum boils
      - bleeding gums (?)
   c. Throat problems
      - sore throat
      - tonsillitis
   d. Head problems
      - earache
      - headache
      - migraine
   e. Menstrual and pregnancy problems
      - post partum pain
      - menstrual pain
      - uterine pain

8. Plants used for treating respiratory problems (often as expectorants)
   
   - colds
   - coughs
   - asthma
   - influenza
   - cataract
bronchitis
pulmonary tuberculosis
croup
pulmonary affections
difficult breathing
pleurisy
lung ailments
pneumonia
coryza
tuberculosis
congestion in the head
inflammation of mucous membranes - eye and throat
throat maladies
laryngitis
catarrhal affections
emphysema

9. Plants used as febrifuges (antipyretic)
fevers
chills
intermittent fevers

10. Plants used to treat excretory ailments

   a. renal conditions
      kidney conditions

   b. bladder conditions (pains)

   c. strangury
      urethritis
      urinary diseases
      dysuria

   d. proctitis
      gangrenous rectitis (?)

   e. Plants used as purgatives for:
      chronic constipation
      bowel complaints
      griping

   f. antidysenteric
      antidiarrhetic

   g. diuretic

   h. antidiuretic
11. Plants used as remedies for diseases (anthelmintics and antibiotics)

a. Plants used as anthelmintics (vermifuges and vermicides)

- tapeworm
- roundworm
- guinea worm
- bilharziasis
- elephantiasis
- schistosomiasis
- "dinhana" (white worm)
- ascites
- bilhazia
- intestinal parasites
- ancylostomiasis

b. Plants used as remedies against diseases caused by protozoan parasites

- blackwater fever
- malaria
- sleeping sickness
- typhoid

C. Plants used as remedies against diseases from bacterial organisms (antibacterial)

- venereal diseases (gonorrhea, syphilis, blenorhrea)
- whooping cough
- typhoid

d. Plants used as remedies against diseases caused by viral organisms (antivirucic)

- cholera
- yellow fever

12. Plants used to treat diabetes

13. Plants used as antidotes for poisons and bites

a. Poisons

- ptomaine
- clematis poisoning
- synadenium poisoning
- ammonia poisoning
- blood poisoning
- alcohol poisoning
b. Bites

snakebites
scorpion stings
centipede bites
insect bites

14. Plants used as antilethics

cystitis
calculous diseases
cysts
lithias
gravel

15. Plants used against internal cancer

internal tumors
internal sores (?)
enlarged spleen (?)

16. Plants used as emmenagogues

female ailments
irregular and excessive menses
menstruation
barrenness
menstrual disorders
amenorrhoea
menorrhagia
uterine discharges

17. Plants used to treat women with pregnancy problems

a. pregnant women
   post parturient troubles
   calm fetal movements

b. abortifacients

18. Plants used to treat sexual problems

a. sterility
   impotency

b. contraceptives
19. Plants used to treat nervous disorders or symptoms

- epilepsy
- spasms
- mental diseases
- hypertension
- convulsions
- palpitations
- restlessness
- madness
- rabies
- nervous disorders
- insomnia
- sleeplessness