

HOLOS UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SEMINARY

Indigenous Healing Studies

Ancient Healing Traditions Part 1

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AFRICA THE CRADLE OF HUMANKIND

Humanity was born in Africa, we all share the same African ancestors. The Out of Africa or African Replacement Hypothesis is based on the argument that every living human being is descended from a small group in Africa, who then dispersed into the wider world displacing earlier forms such as Neanderthal.¹ According to the Out of Africa Model, developed by Christopher Stringer and Peter Andrews, modern *Homo sapiens* evolved in Africa 200,000 years ago. *H. sapiens* began migrating from Africa around 50,000 years ago and eventually replaced existing hominid species in Europe and Asia.^{2,3} This model has gained support by recent research using mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). After analysing genealogy trees constructed using 133 types of mtDNA, the researchers concluded that all were descended from a woman from Africa.⁴

L1 is considered to be the first lineage to branch off from Mitochondrial Eve; giving birth to its descendants haplogroups L2 and L3, refer [Appendix](#). This L1 haplogroup is found in high proportions among the San (*Khoisan*) and the Mbuti People in Southern Africa.⁵ These groups branched off early in human history and have remained relatively isolated genetically since. The Khoisans, composing of L1 haplogroup are rich with ancient knowledge as it is depicted in their artwork found in the caves throughout Southern Africa, refer to [Appendix](#). This language of symbology is deeply rooted in cosmology and incorporates their ancient healing practices. It has been used by the San people for eons to communicate and share their experiences.

These paintings suggest that the early ancestors of the Khoikhoi and San staged ceremonial dances in which the leader would experience the presence of a sacred power

in his body, one that certain animals, among them the eland, were also believed to empower them with that sacred experience. He would then fall into a deep trance during which he would be empowered both to embody and control cosmic powers. These are probably not the earliest paintings of formal religious ritual practices in Africa. The subject matter of these rock paintings is likely to have changed over time, as it clearly did in the rock paintings found in the Sahara and elsewhere.

There is adequate evidence in support of the title “Africa the Cradle of Humankind. In addition to the genetic findings, the paleoanthropologists unearthed the three fossilized skulls in Ethiopia, and are said by scientists to be among the most important discoveries ever made in the search for the origin of humans.⁶ The crania of two adults and a child, all dated to be around 160,000 years old, were pulled out of sediments near a village called Herto in the Afar region in the east of the country. Professor Tim White, one of the co-leaders on the research team that found the skulls affirms, “All the genetics have pointed to a geologically recent origin for humans in Africa - and now we have the fossils.”⁷

Even Charles Darwin was one of the first to suggest that all humans had a common ancestor who lived in Africa. In the *Descent of Man* he writes:

In each great region of the world the living mammals are closely related to the extinct species of the same region. It is, therefore, probable that Africa was formerly inhabited by extinct apes closely allied to the gorilla and chimpanzee; and as these two species are now man's nearest allies, it is somewhat more probable that our early progenitors lived on the African continent than elsewhere.⁸

All this work confirms that we share a common ancestral heritage that emerged in Africa irrespective of our present varied locations in the globe which is the product of

the great exodus from Africa. Therefore all indigenous healing practices have their roots anchored in Africa, as the great exodus continued some form of variations evolved in order to adapt to the environment the people found themselves in. The writer believes the philosophy underlying them is the same. She bases this argument on her personal experience having participated in indigenous healing practices among Africans, Native Americans and Chinese.

INDIGENOUS HEALING PRACTICES

The WHO observes that it is difficult to assign one definition to the broad range of characteristics and elements of traditional medicine, but that a working definition is essential. It thus concludes that traditional medicines or indigenous healing: [Include] diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and/or mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises applied singularly or in combination to maintain well-being, as well as to treat, diagnose or prevent illness.⁹ The WHO draws a distinction between “traditional medicines” and “complementary and alternative medicines”. The latter terms relate to practices such as acupuncture, homeopathy and chiropractic systems – thus a ‘broad set of health care practices that are not part of a country’s own tradition, or not integrated into its dominant health care systems’¹⁰

Shamanism and Faith Healers

Shamanism is tightly interwoven with cosmology, mysticism, culture and religious background. When considering the essence of the practice, it is path to the Divine. This concept is beautifully expressed by Hermann Hesse, “The ultimate secret of existence cannot be imparted through words from one person to another. God is the divine harmony that permeates all things, and consequently all paths lead in this direction. Each individual must start on the journey that seems best suited to that person.”¹¹

The dream of every human is that of cosmic transformation: from our human nature to nature of the Divine. Shamanism endeavor to unravel the universal enigmas: the origins of the cosmos, the earth, humans, animals and plants. It ventures into illuminating the proverbial, existential quest for the meaning and sense of life and death. The Shaman fulfills numerous roles in the community namely, faith healer and prophet, mystic, ritual specialist, religious leader or Priest, soul guide, acts as a spiritual figure and mediator between the spirit world and the physical and maintains balance within the society and nature. People regard shamans as their memory bank because they are custodian of the sacred myths and traditions. They oversee and perform rites of passage.

Peter T.Furst writes,

Now, as we know from ethnology, the symbolic systems or religions of hunting people everywhere are essentially shamanistic, sharing so many basic features over time and space as to suggest common historical and psychological origins. At the center of shamanistic religion stands the personality of the shaman and the ecstatic experience that is uniquely his, in his, in this crucial role as diviner, seer, magician, poet, singer, artist, prophet of game and weather, keeper of the traditions, and healer of bodily and spiritual ills.¹²

The writer will focus on faith healing and the healing power of nature. The Washeshu Tribe, traditionally referred to as Washoe Tribe, located in Lake Tahoe, Nevada, also referred to their shaman (medicine man or woman) as faith healers. Faith Healers are considered to be a Shaman who is a diviner, healer, and spiritual counselor. I had an opportunity to partake in their healing practices including the rituals in spring 2008. The shamans possess the gift to cure by removing the spirit or inanimate objects that has intruded into their patients' body, the intruder is believed to possess the ability to dry out the body of its water and blood content. Art George, the shaman who hosted me during this period, informed me that in order to be able to fulfill his calling, he maintains a closely knitted relationship with his guardian spirits; the first one the shamans receive is referred to Chief Helper or controlling spirit. The Washo Shamans who were regarded as faith healers lived in a world pervaded with supernatural powers; this supernatural power finds its embodiment in multitude of spirits.¹³ The incarnate forms of this spirit are lodged in the realms of the natural and supernatural- birds, animals, reptiles, water babies and stones. In addition to the help and guidance from nature, abundant guidance was from their spirit guides, ancestors, cosmos, and Divine (Great Spirit commonly referred to as God).

Art George and others shaman whom I interacted with, brought to my attention that most shamans are loners in order to accommodate the need for solitude and trance. They tend to practice their craft alone and spend more time communing with spirits in between attending to the needs of the community. Through their method of healing they are able to encourage healing in two societies widely separated geographically, the secret

is working together with nature to effect healing and maintain balance within the society and nature. These practices were similar to those observed among faith healers in South Africa, this information is based on the writer's personal experience as a faith healer and the knowledge she has gathered from her mentor, the Prophet Mr. Phasa and other faith healers. The use of water, sweat lodges, herbal infusion and bloodletting technique is a common phenomenon among them.

Water is the second element in the cosmological wheel the first is Fire, the key element that at the beginning cooled the raging fires and brought stability, reorienting the cosmic energy towards producing continuity and community. The most important element used because of its innate nature to give birth to spirit. The sacred water of life sustains, nurture, purify, reconcile and seal our spirit. Water has the ability to create peace in the face of the onslaught of life challenges. The water ritual is the gateway to the spirit world. Malidome Some, a gifted medicine man of the Dagara tribe with three master's degree and two doctorates, from the Sorbonne and Brandeis informs us, "The water ritual ties up loose ends. These loose ends are obstacles to our balance and reconciliation, our peace and serenity".¹⁴ Water is the medium for the goddess's power and is associated with death and rebirth. The spirit of water watches over the fetus as it develops, providing it with a home for the spirit to thrive. After birth, the needs required to fulfill its purpose are lodged in the sacred water of life. Water has qualities of refining our focal point, thus ensuring that we remain centered in our vision.

African healing wisdom looks at physical illness as a fire moving a person's energy beyond the limit of what he or she can bear this a principle embraced by most indigenous healers. Using water as the medium of healing is an ancient art; the healer is a

vessel through the water spirit operates. Depending on the guidance and messages received from the guiding spirit, the water will be collected from the location that is associated with the given (channeled) message; the necessary ritual will be performed. Water collected from a spring is used more often because is regarded as the Earth's womb. The overflowing spring is obviously a sexual symbol of fertility.

Healing is conducted in the spirit world, which is governed by different laws that govern the physical, time and space have no relevance to the effect of healing. During the healing ritual the faith healer journeys into the spirit world, establishes connection with the spirit of the individual or community and their guides. The parties engage in a dialogue to analyze the source of the imbalance and the transformation process that is required to maintain peace and harmony. Among the healers a strong belief is held that water is a spirit and has other nature spirits dwelling in it therefore it must be approached with deepest gratitude and acknowledgement of its divine powers. The faith healer communes with water spirit frequently, it is imperative that the channel of communication be kept open. In all the healing ceremony, prayer is the pillar. The consent is obtained from all the parties including spirit guides and ancestors.

When I arrived in Lake Tahoe, Art George took me to one of the sacred caves for the medicine people in order to meet with the grandmother spirit and the gods who had revealed this visitation to his late father , a powerful medicine man of the Washeshu tribe. We left quite early in the morning and spend the day in that cave communing with the spirits. He informed me that there are different rituals that can be performed to maintain balance within the society and nature, are namely the ritual of reconciliation, ritual of prosperity, and ritual of libation. Ritual of reconciliation is associated with cleansing and

purifying the psyche. The ritual of prosperity is done annually during the spring season. During my stay with the Washesho I had a privilege of partaking in this familiar rituals that I have been partaking in back home, i.e. South Africa.

One afternoon I was informed by one of the healers whom I had participated with in their peyote ritual the previous night that a sweat lodge ceremony had been scheduled to succeed the peyote ceremony. The peyote ritual was quite an experience that facilitated quick soul journeying into the spirit world using hallucinogenic substances namely peyote, an experience I am familiar with. He emphasized that I was the sponsor, meaning it was conducted solely for me to share the gifts of the medicine I was bringing with from Africa. The day of the ceremony I went to the mountain where the ceremony was to be conducted, instructed to collect (invite) forty stone people that will partake in the fire ritual. Rebecca highly intuitive and knowledgeable with the practices of the Native Americans helped me build a sweat lodge together with chief healer, Buck. We had to ensure that the layers of the canvas material used were not filtering any light through; complete darkness ensured elimination of any distraction that might appeal to our physical sense. The sweat lodge door had to face the east, the path of enlightenment, illumination and new hope. We found a snake beautifully coiled in the material we used to build the sweat lodge, I jumped out of fear and immediately I was reprimanded for allowing fear to sidetrack me. It is believed that to have a snake visiting indicates honor and blessing from the spirit world. The ceremony became that which was revealed to us by the snake being that presented itself to us; it was blessed by a presence of the sky gods and grandmother moon.

The layout of the sweat lodge was based on the Medicine Wheel principles; the four directions were considered namely: East representing hope and purity of a new day, South - love, West – strength, and North – wisdom. We opened the ceremony with a tobacco offering; inviting the spirit of fire, ancestors of the land, and the primal mother. They were consulted and their protection and guidance was requested to abide with us during the ceremony, especially their abundant presence to guide the sponsor, in this ceremony. They were also requested to keep the fire of life where it belongs. Among the stone people who contributed in partaking in the fire ritual, there was a special one named the creator stone and one representing my being, and they were neatly packed together on top of the rest their relation. In most cases the spirit wind determines the direction of the fire, and observing the direction of the fire spirit give insight on one's path.

The sweat lodge ceremony composed of four rounds of intensive prayer and communing with the spirits, there was singing, chanting, drumming and the use of rattles to call upon the spirits, followed by prayer for self and others. Then a healing ceremony which was open for those with special request for healing, sage was used for purification and cleansing followed by prayer with laying of hands by the chief medicine man. A thanksgiving ceremony was given to culminate the events that took place in the sweat lodge. During the fire ritual in the sweat lodge was intense and there was a powerful presence of the spirits. It was a humbling experience to be able to partake in this ceremony.

Malidome Some defines ritual as the principal tool used to approach that unseen world in a way that will rearrange the structure of the physical world and bring about material transformation.¹⁵ Indigenous people commonly incorporate ritual practices in

order to effect healing. The source of the physical illness is addressed by focusing on the root underlying energetic disorder. Therefore healing and awareness precede spiritual enlightenment. The rituals performed increase our awareness; they uproot the person from the insatiable rigid ego that wants to limit growth and experience.

The central theme among the indigenous healers is the continual need to obtain blessing of peace and good fortune, this is achieved through the ritual of libation. It is a thanksgiving ceremony to our companions in the spirit world, for their guidance and presence in our life. It is the simplest of all the rituals, for someone with a prayer altar is just requires water in a container and communing with the Divine and guides early in the morning. This act sets the tone for the day's events, the Divine, spirit guides and ancestors are invited to be the main artisan of the day ahead. A day that begins this way offers more returns for the journey, one is assurance with Divine guidance. Some states, "A libation is salutary every time you face something with a little challenge".¹⁶

Traditional Chinese Medicine

We are of water and the spirit; composed of the elements of nature namely: Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water, to these four the Chinese added one more element, Wood. Wood symbolizes the Spirit or Life force. The Pentagram, the symbol of man, symbolizes the five Chinese elements (*Wu Hing*). These elements are symbolic and represent five forces in nature. The constant interplay between these five forces constitutes the structure and make-up of creation. The elements interplay both constructively and destructively in order to harmonize nature.

Kaptuchuk advocates that Chinese philosophy thinks of each person as a cosmos in a miniature. A person manifests the same patterns, as does the universe.¹⁷ By using the symbols, Sage People saw all the spirit forces in the world we live in. The symbols determine forms and appearances and connect all things. Lao Tze states it beautifully, “Therefore Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the Sovereign also is great. In the Universe, there are four powers, of which the Sovereign is one. Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from Tao; but the law of Tao is its own spontaneity”.¹⁸

The changing of the four-seasons affect all living things in nature, causing them to be born, grow, flower, wither and hibernate. In working a pattern diagnosis in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the changes of the five elements in climates characterized by chill, heat, dryness, damp and wind are taken into account. TCM is rooted in Taoism and the theory of yin and yang. Galante shares the same views, he states, “Man is the microcosm (yin) and the Universe is the macrocosm (yang). The yin and yang components must be kept in harmony in order for peace and prosperity to exist. The human body also is divided into binaries of yin and yang components which should be in relative equilibrium if good health is to be maintained.”¹⁹ Thus, illness is defined, in TCM, as an imbalance or inadequate circulation of life energy referred to as Qi. The idea of energy circulating through the body is not only unique to Chinese Medicine; it is the basis of an ancient Indian system of medicine called “Ayurvedic Medicine.

Katptchuk gives a full view of Chinese Medicine in this brief elaboration of how the psyche and soma contributes to the diagnosis of the disharmony, he states:

The clinical gaze of Oriental medicine recognizes the continuum and interaction of the psyche and soma. The methodology has always taken

into account the psychosomatic truth that psychological and physiological processes are interactive and have a shared clinical significance. For example, on a very simple level, Oriental medicine can see anxiety and heart palpitations; fear and sweating; revulsion and nausea; anger and changes in metabolism; despair and sighing; as being emotional and physical concomitants of a single yin-yang manifestation. Nevertheless, contemporary Eastern and Western people tend to experience different ends of this continuum in their lives. What is a single 'energetic' phenomenon in Oriental medical theory can be a totally different experience for peoples of different cultures.

The Chinese traditional healers or shamans use the oracle book that is called the I Ching. I Ching the Chinese, Book of Changes is an ancient Chinese book, one of the classics of Confucianism, used for divination and as a moral, philosophical, and cosmological text. It is based on 64 symbolic hexagrams, each consisting of a pair of trigrams which are made up of three parallel lines. The lines can be either solid representing the yang, or active principle while the broken represents the yin, or passive principle, following early Chinese cosmology, which explained all phenomena in terms of alternation of yin and yang. There are eight basic trigrams, each named after a natural phenomenon, and the full 64 hexagrams exhaust all possible combinations of the six lines. They are held to be in state of continual transition, one changing into another, just as transition from one phenomenon to another is continually taking place in the physical world.²⁰

The book is consulted by dividing up and counting off 50 stalks of the supposedly magical yarrow plant, or by tossing coins, yielding numbers that give the lines for the resulting hexagram. The numbers determine whether each line is yin or yang, and whether it is “still” or “moving”. The hexagrams are thus envisaged as perpetually changing into each other, following the cyclical order of the universe. In this case the hexagrams evolved as divination tool. The I Ching speaks of the Tao and its

interrelationship to life. Lao Tzu a mystic must have been familiar with the I Ching, he taught that nature was man's finest teacher and that man can only reach a state of serenity and happiness by living in accordance with the Way of nature. When we contradict this Way, the inevitable consequence is pain and suffering, it is important for man to practice stillness and meditation.

In 2005 while in China the experience I had was no different from the one back home. During meditations as I connected with past life, I remembered the richness of unfiltered culture and tradition. During my stay I had an opportunity to practice Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in Beijing, Guang An Men hospital, affiliated to China Academy of TCM. The hospital is known for its continual contributions to the whole medical system in China, is the leader in TCM for patient care, education, and medical research. In 1994, it was rated by the State Administration Bureau of TCM as a Grade III A Class TCM Hospital and "National Key Model TCM Hospital."²¹ It has been rated the nation's best TCM since 1994, it is a place to experience integrative healthcare. The practice of integrative healthcare involve bringing Allopathic and Traditional Chinese Medicine together bringing, choosing the best components from the individually practices in order to create a unified power. When released it creates life, energize the decaying Qi or life energy thus harmonizing the multidimensional being. The TCM includes the Chinese Herbs, Acupuncture, Tuina, and Qigong. They were demonstrated daily to consulting patients by more than 600 doctors and nurses from all the 28 clinical departments. In the Acupuncture Department we incorporated techniques such as Electro-Acupuncture, Moxibustion, Cupping and, Blood Letting in the treating patients.

The spirit of stewardship that is displayed by healthcare providers penetrate one's heart, the communal lifestyle and suffering they have endured over the years as a nation has soften their hearts and awaken them to a higher purpose in life. Life is honored and it is sacred to them because it goes beyond matter, cutting through to the spirit. This was life transforming experience and was humbled, challenged to accept suffering for it birth enlightenment and reinforce the spirit of Ubuntu (spirit of Holism).

When the I left South Africa for China in 2005 I had been informed the pap smear test was positive indicating abnormal cells classified non-malignant based on the previous lesion which I was diagnosed in 1999 as cervix cancer, stage four. Cervix cancer was brought under control using Allopathic Medicine, even though the symptoms had abated, the health continued to deteriorate, life energy depleted with a sense of loss and hopelessness. While practicing and studying in Guan An Men Hospital the writer consulted with team of doctors in gynecology and professors in Oncology departments. An assessment was done incorporating all dimensions of my being i.e. body, mind, and spirit with thorough pulse and tongue examination; an individualized Chinese herbal formula was prescribed based on the presenting pattern diagnosis.

During the duration of treatments, herbal decoctions were prepared in their fully equipped Raw Herbs Pharmacy department that specializes in preparing decoction. During this period the soul was nurtured using practices that nurture the whole namely: qigong and I was also encouraged by the elders who are prominent professors and rooted in ancient healing practices to engage in shamanic practices that connected me with my roots. It was evident that the team received guidance from the spirit world; incorporating outer knowledge acquired through observation with intuitive inner knowledge prior to

execution of their task. The treatments were individually tailored in order to restore the whole, therefore the sacredness of the individual is acknowledged. Every interaction was an opportunity to allow an exchange of energy from a divine source, allowing it to permeate our chakras and meridians in order to transform and spiritually awaken us.

African Traditional Medicine

African traditional medicine like all other ancient healing practices is holistic in its approach, it adheres without question to the acceptance of the functional and organic unity and interdependence of the universe; taking for granted, the dialectical unity and interaction of the world and of the universe, and the mutual influence of all the parts and processes. Dis-ease is viewed holistically, incorporating the individual's relationship with self, environment and the spirit world. It is difficult to separate African medicine from African religion. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the African general theory of illness is very broad; it includes African theology, cosmology and mysticism. In other words, the theory not only attempts to explain illness and disease but also the relations between God and the universe. The second reason, related to the previous one, is that many traditional healers are mystics with a religious background.

African traditional healers do not get their medicine from factories or laboratories, but directly from nature –from herbs, plants, bushes, grasses, trees, even certain rocks. In the world-view of traditional healers, nature is at once a Master Being and a Unity of Beings with built-in purposes; nature is not a lifeless thing, there to be manipulated and used for purposes decided solely by human beings; nature has mind, spirits, and

personality of its own. When traditional healers go to the forest and fields and mountains to collect raw material for their healing mixtures, they go there as Human beings with personality encountering a part of nature with personality, too. They approach each plant, tree, grass, or mineral-laden rock, with respect, and ask for a partnership with this aspect of nature for healing purposes. Certain trees or bushes, or plants, can only be approached at certain specific times of the day, at specific angles, accompanied by specific ritual. This is Personality meeting Personality.

Traditional healers base their healing methods on the assumption that most, if not all, illnesses are caused by “supernatural” power and that; consequently “supernatural” powers are required to cure them. The individual may fall ill through having offended one of the gods, through the machinations of witchcraft or sorcery, or through the unprovoked attack of an evil spirit. In this case the task of the healer is to diagnose the disease, usually by divination, and then to apply the spiritual remedy, such as retrieving a lost soul, removing a disease-causing object, or exorcising an evil spirit. In conjunction with these spiritual techniques, traditional healer may also at times employ physical remedies such as herbal tea decoctions and rituals that form part of the healing program. The traditional healers specifically medicine man or woman commonly referred to “*ngaka /inyaga /sangomas*. They use the Bone Oracle; the bones of divination are made up of beads of ivory, shells, bones and other things which healer has received guidance to use during divination. This are used in the same way as the Chinese use the oracle book that is called the I Ching.

I had a privilege to be born into a lineage of healers, one of our great aunt (Ngaka Mmathane) served as my mentor during her earthly walk but like all the others who have

crossed my path, they emphasized that our calling and sacred contract is unique to each individual. They were willing to share their experiences with me, and allow me to partake with them in the healing ceremonies and rituals. One evening in 2003 we had a couple visiting Ngaka Mmathane from Johannesburg, which is six hours drive to her place in Limpopo. The husband was very sick and had lost weight, biomedicine was of no help since test conducted by the doctors were all negative and no abnormality was detected on examination. The doctor had advised the wife to consider traditional medicine. They arrived in the afternoon, as they entered the court yard of her *ndumba* (a special place (hut) set aside for the ancestors to reside in) they immediately were invited to her water shrine in order to commune with ancestors and introduce the couple and the accompanying spirits to the ancestors.

They were immediately taken to the *ndumba*; Ngaka Mmathane for divination threw her bones and started chanting to the ancestors, followed by her readings. The bones spoke to all the aspect of the couple's condition: home, money, relationship, ancestral and foreign spirits, travel, and shadows on their lives, and destiny. Ngaka Mmathane pointed out that the man had angered his ancestors by ignoring the gift they had bestowed upon him on his incarnation; he had been called to be a medicine man. Therefore, she gave orders to the couple to get a white chicken from a nearby farmer to be used for a ritual ceremony.

She instructed her daughter to inform the three elderly chief traditional healers and request their presence in the ceremony scheduled for nine in the evening. The *ndumba* was to be kept completely dark; we began the ceremony with drumming, rattling, chanting and dancing in order to assist Ngakane Mmathane to undergo her soul

journeying on behalf of the sick man for the purpose of soul retrieval. In the spirit world time and space is insignificant, therefore all the activities were conducted under the guidance of the ancestors and Great Spirit. After moments spent on drumming, dancing, and chanting; one of the elder of the chief healers requested that we return to stillness (Tiyoweh) with complete surrender to the ancestors and nature. The presence of the spirits was deeply felt, they channel (*a medium for communication with the spirit world*) the messages to us through Ngaka Mathane. Her voice changed to several deep tones of masculine voices that spoke with vigor and authority. In honor of the channeled messages delivered, we gently clapped our hands, chanted briefly and returned to stillness. The elders informed me that when we are silent and empty, we are in our most powerful position for this is a state that lends a warrior the necessary sobriety and dispassion to come through and fulfill effectively whatever tasks fate may place along the path.

Later the chief healer informed me that, what took place was a dialogue among the spirits as it was witnessed by the change of tone as they emerge into the scene. The man laid on the centre of the floor in the *ndumba*, expressing different emotional reactions as a reflection of the activities that were occurring in the spirit world. The groaning were spontaneous and unpredictable; as the journey continues it felt lighter as the aura within the *ndumba* gradually transformed into a serene state. The man was overhead breathing deeply in his calm composure. The elders later pointed at the top of my forehead (third eye) and said to me, “*Moya* (life force spirit) perceived as the serpent coiled at the root is the source of wisdom and longevity, the more we cultivate it, the more the energy will protrude through the third eye. A healer who can “see” will be able to discern the

emerging serpent from there, as it uncoil and lengthen to this sacred spot that house the creative potential of a magical being.

We all rested before sunrise we woke up in order to culminate the activities we had partaken in the spirit world. The man's head was shaved, symbolic of the union that took with the spirits and acceptance of his gift. He was escorted to a nearby valley, wrapped in a white cloth and allowed to bathe in the water. Ngaka Mmathane informed me that the valley spirit never dies for it is the woman the primal mother, her gateway is the root of heaven and earth, perceived as a veil that is barely seen. We had a thanksgiving ceremony shared some of the traditional food and African brew with the neighbors. The man having understood the source of his dis-ease, decided to be initiated into shamanism since the channeled message explicitly revealed where to find his mentor, "You will meet *Baba* (male chief healer) behind this mountain in his tribal village, he is expecting your arrival." The report I gathered from the wife was, "He completed his initiation which lasted few months with full recovery; displaying enthusiasm and willingness to serve the universe.

CONCLUSION

The indigenous healers adopt a holistic approach in considering the factors that led up to the disease. The treatment is tailored in such a way that addresses the needs of the physical bodies, their psyches, their families and the community. This approach is based on the conviction that all beings and elements of nature are interconnected and affect each other in profound and subtle ways. Disease provides a valuable clue to what needs to change in our lives. It needs to be approached with love instead of fear, the body

engages in that language in order to make us aware of the disharmony that exists in our whole being. It brings about transformation and growth. Rudolph Ballentine puts it beautifully, “Sickness and Health become a major way you learn from life. Although dysfunction and disease point to what you need to work on; they also hold the seeds of your enfoldment..., illness is an opportunity for growth and transformation”.²²

Spiritual healing is fundamental to all kinds of healing. When the spirit is nurtured, the physical being flourishes and a serene state is achieved. The spirit is immortal and contains all the files of our lives, forms the template of our core being. Ignoring its presence is detrimental to our health. The understanding of the relationship of the body, mind and spirit is crucial to all healers for it is the doorway to holistic healing. When the spirit incarnates, it receives a body. The purpose of the body is to serve as a vehicle so that the spirit can experience and explore itself further so that it remembers its true nature, which is the nature of the Divine. The body, once it tastes the pleasures of this world, chooses to suffer amnesia, and immediately a disharmonious relationship is created. The dis-ease drains our life energy; we lose the rhythm of nature; thus, the signs and symptoms of the dis-ease manifest in the physical while the roots are strongly anchored at an emotional level.

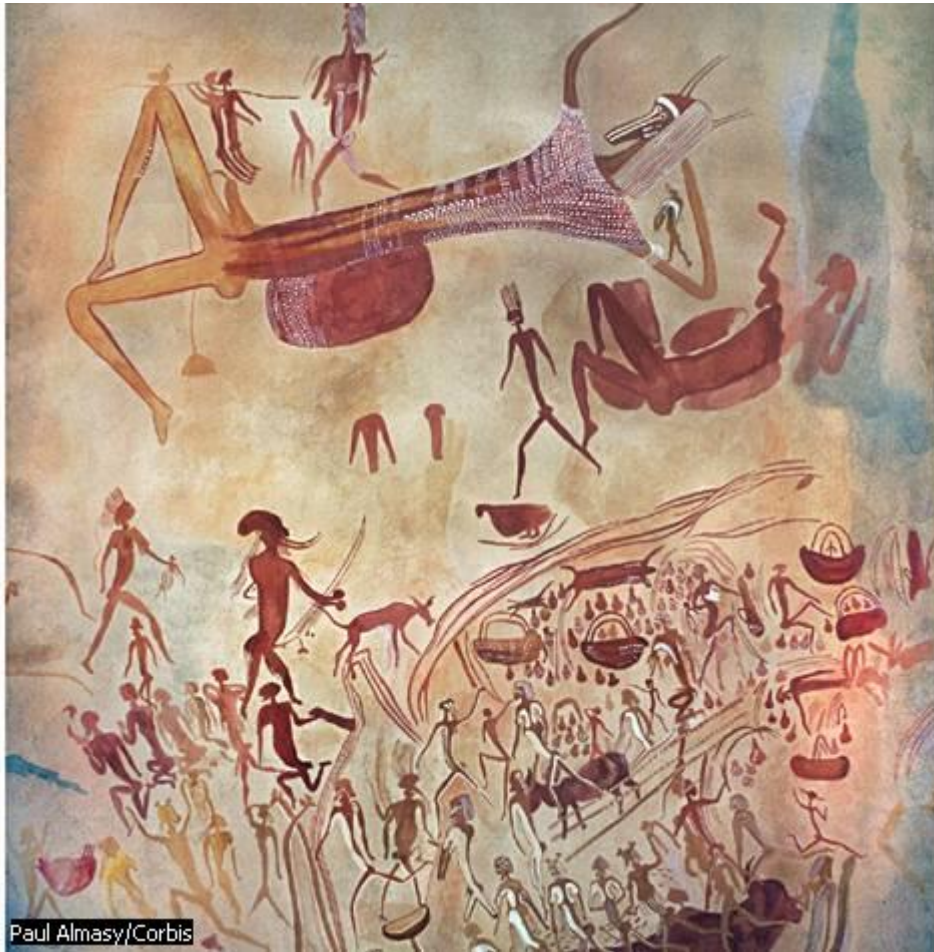
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- ¹¹ Michael Ripinsky – Naxon, *The nature of shamanism* (New York: State University of New York, 1993) , 18.
- ¹² Peter T.Furst, *Hallucinogens and Culture* (Novato, California: Chandler and Sharp,1982). 4.
- ¹³ Edgar E. Siskin. *Washo Shamans and Peyotist*. Religious conflict in an American Indian tribe. Utah: University of Utah, 1983.
- ¹⁴ Malidoma Patrice Some, *The healing wisdom of Africa: Finding life purpose through Nature, Ritual, and Community*. (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Putnam, 1999), 218.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 230.
- ¹⁷ Ted J. Kaptuchuk, *The Web that has no weaver : Understanding Chinese Medicine* (New York: Congdon & Weed, Inc, 1983), 18.
- ¹⁸ *The Sayings of Lao-Tzu*, Lionel Giles translation [1905], <www.sacred-texts.com/tao/salt/index.htm>.
- ¹⁹ Lawrance Galante, *Tai Chi: The supreme ultimate* (Boston: Red Wheel / Weiser, 1981),6.
- ²⁰ I Ching, Wilhem translation, Bollingen Series (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967).
- ²¹ **Cisco Solutions bring Traditional Medicine into the future in China,**
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- ²² Rudolph Ballentine, *Radical Healing* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999), 5.

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APPENDIX A



Paul Almasy/Corbis

San Cave Paintings

These prehistoric cave paintings, in eastern Zimbabwe, were made by San (or Khoisan) people thousands of years ago. San cave paintings are found throughout Zimbabwe's central granite plateau.

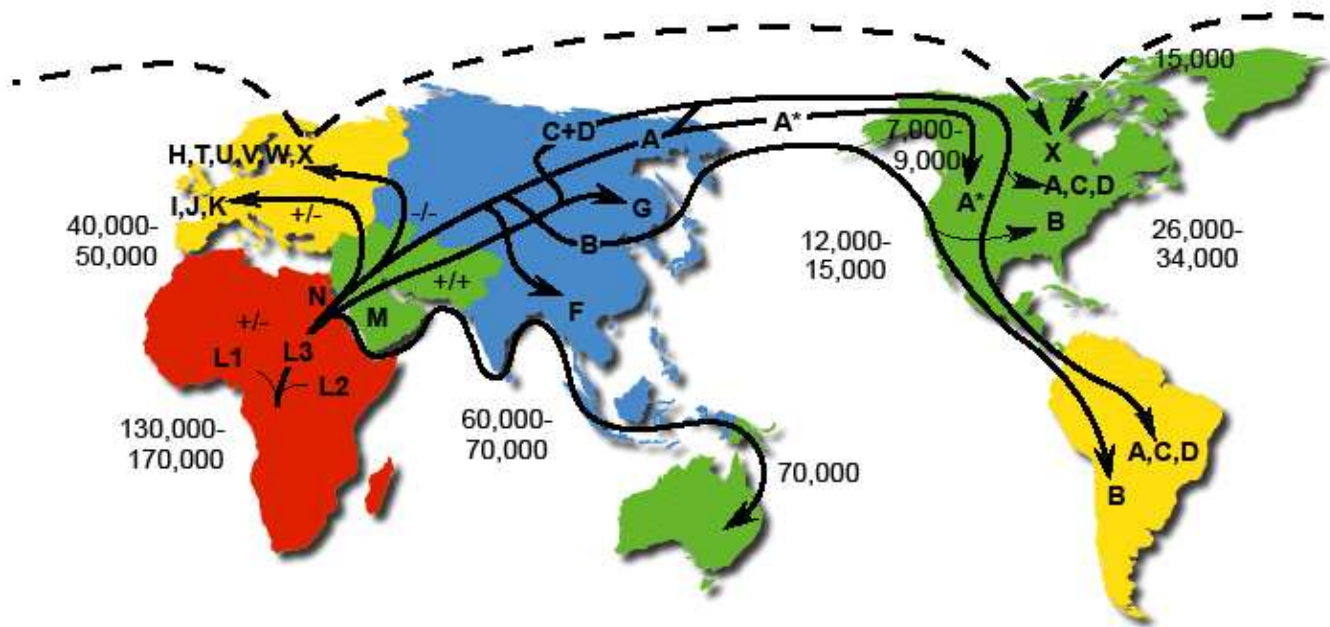
Paul Almasy/Corbis

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APPENDIX B

Human mtDNA Migrations

<http://www.mitomap.org/mitomap/WorldMigrations.pdf>
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+/-, +/+, or -/- = Dde I 10394 / Alu I 10397
* = Rsa I 16329

Mutation rate = 2.2 - 2.9 % / MYR
Time estimates are YBP