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Medicine Magic And Religion Of The Lovedu

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MEDICINE MAGIC AND RELIGION OF THE LOVEDU.

Thesis

presented for the degree of Doctor of Literature

by

EILEEN JENSEN KRIGE.

[1940]

I hereby declare that this is my own work and has not been submitted as a thesis for a Doctor's degree at any other universij

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INTRODUCTORY.

The Lovedu, whose magico-religious system is described in the pages that follow, live in a native Reserve in the north-eastern Transvaal lowveld about twenty-one miles north-east of Duivelskloof. The original Reserve of just under 70 square miles, marked out in the 1890's, was enlarged by the purchase of tribal farms, the whole now being about 150 square miles in extent, an area falling far short of the 600 square miles within which the Lovedu queen used to exercise effective jurisdiction. The population of the Reserve is about 33000.

The importance of the Lovedu lies less in their overwhelming numerical preponderance in the lowveld area between the Olifants river to the south and the Klein Letaba in the north than in the fame of their queen, Mujaji. As the greatest rain-maker in the northern Transvaal she is not only regularly approached with gifts by other chiefs, but sometimes also places them on the throne (hu vea vuhosi) and is appealed to in cases of disputed succession. The Lovedu queen was wellknown even in Zululand, where she was depicted as a four-breasted marvel, immortal and mysterious, who had smitten to death Zwide when in his flight from Shaka, he came too near Vulovedu. The Swazi sent an embassy for rain and even the great Ngungunyane did homage to her powers.

The Lovedu tribe today is made up of a large number of different groups of people, chiefly of Sotho extraction, but the royal group had its origin in the north, migrating southwards round about 1600, when the Empire of Monomotapa was breaking

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up, to make its home in the seclusion of the Lowveld mountains where it built up its power. The royal group still uses the terms mukhalaga and mulozwi as praise-names while there are to be found within the tribe people with zimbabwe as a kind of totem name. All, however, have intermingled freely with the surrounding Sotho tribes, absorbing many of their culture traits.

Though owning cattle, the Lovedu are primarily an agricultural people. They never fought great wars but built up their influence by strategy and appeasement. A remarkable feature of their tribal organization is the position of the queen who, even today, leads a secluded life and has to end her reign by ritual suicide. There is no conscious belief that the growth of the crops, the welfare of the cattle and the regularity of the seasons are bound up with the life of the queen, but the phrase "the earth is hot" (mavu a fesa), used as a euphemism to denote the illness or death of the chief seems to imply some connection between her life and the fertility of the earth. Some such association seems implicit also in the feeling that the chief should have no physical defect (it is thought impossible for the queen to be ill and the present queen has never had a day's illness since the beginning of her reign in 1894) and should lead a secluded life, being seen only by a few close relatives and councillors. So close is the association between the queen and the country she rules that she may never leave it or cross its borders, a taboo which made it impossible for Mujaji to register her vote at the nearest Native Commissioner's office at the elections in 1937 for the Native Council.

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The Lovedu are patrilineal but women occupy a high position both in political life and in ritual. A large number of district heads are women; a woman may own cattle in her own right and has a good deal of control over the cattle coming in through the marriage of her daughter; as family priestesses women play an important rôle in ancestor worship, and they control most family affairs, sometimes even marrying a "wife" for themselves. The queen has many wives, the political organization of the tribe being closely bound up with the social links between her and her district heads created by the daughter which each one is by custom bound to give her in marriage. These women occupy an honoured position at the royal village, have on the whole less work to do than ordinary women and are a source of honour to their families who, through them, became relatives-in-law to the queen whom they call tsedze (son-in-law). There is no functioning clan in Lovedu society; instead one finds that not only are both father's and mother's side of the family of equal importance but that relative-in-law play a leading part in family life.

The first contact of the Lovedu with Europeans began fifty years ago with the arrival of the first missionary, and shortly after the first farmers made their appearance, taking up land in areas belonging to the tribe. The unhealthy nature of this low-lying fever-stricken country helped, however, to keep it relatively undeveloped. The first railway was built only in 1916 The mountainous nature of the Lovedu Reserve, absence of proper road communications, a laissez faire policy in administration have combinéd with the innate conservatism and suspicion of the Lovedu themselves to preserve the old manner of living

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to a considerable degree. There have been innovations, it is true, and 37% of the male population over 15 years of age in the tribe are away at work in the towns or on farms; yet tribal life is at a maximum, especially in matters of religion and ritual, and only 3% of the people are Christians.

My own contacts with the Lovedu began more than ten years ago with short visits of a month each in 1928, 1930 and 1932. These visits served as an introduction, but sustained field investigation was rendered possible only when, between 1936 and 1938, I held jointly with my husband, a Fellowship of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. During this period we were in the field sixteen and a half months in all (April to July, 1936; November, 1936 to July, 1937; September to October, 1937 and May to August, 1938). In some of the intervening periods while my husband was ill I maintained personal touch with the Lovedu, spending short periods of a week at a time in the field. Later in order to verify some of our observations and to investigate the girls' initiation ceremony then taking place, we also paid some visits of a few days each in 1939.

As regards the orthography adopted, I should like to mention that though Khilovedu is now practically a dialect of Sesotho, it cannot be adequately written in Sotho orthography It approximates to Venda in much of its vocabulary, falls midway between Sotho and Venda in grammatical structure and in Sothoized in phonology, but many of its sounds are unknown in Sotho. We have adopted the orthography recommend

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by the International Institute with some modifications: dental d and t are represented by ḍ and ṭ, but as in Sotho the semi-flapped ,alveolar ,lateral fricative, a phoneme of d, has not been distinguished from ordinary d; and we have deemed it unnecessary to have a special letter, ʃ, for the sound of English sh, or tʃ or c for the sound ch, in English church, which we write tsh. There are evident many variations in Lovedu which is changing towards Sotho, the language taught in the schools: there are differences in vocabulary and sound used by women and young children on the one hand and by those who go to town on the other, and by the young as compared with the old. The old sound, ʒ, that of English z in azure, becomes in the mouth of the younger generation the English j as in John; z as in prize alternates with dz which is more common among the young people; and an old prefixal farm, lu, is generally now le, except among the oldest people. I have used j never ʒ, dz more often than z, and le not lu in accordance with modern trends. The ɯ tends to become the closed o, and it is often very difficult to distinguish these sounds. But here again I have kept as close as possible to the most prevalent pronunciation, and have adopted mu, not mo, as the noun prefix.

CHAPTER I.

SOME GENERAL CONCEPTIONS UNDERLYING LOVEDU MEDICAL AND MAGICO-RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

In the magico-religious world of the Lovedu, underlying many of their medical practices and precautions for health are a number of conceptions foreign to the European. These ideas appear again and again in every-day life and conversation, while very often law-suits brought before native tribunals turn upon them. Just as many of our daily actions and medical practices would be inexplicable to someone ignorant of our theory of germs as carriers of disease, so a knowledge of these Lovedu conceptions is essential for an understanding of their medicine, magic and religion. These conceptions remind us of the Greek theory of humours which long dominated European medicine and was at the basis of mediaeval physiology: physical and mental qualities and dispositions were attributed to the four chief fluids or cardinal humours of the body, viz., blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy or black choler. Choler, probably derived from the Greek word for bile and from which we get our word cholera, was, for instance, the humour causing irascibility of temper. The Lovedu attach less importance to temperament and have based their cardinal categories, not upon physiological fluids, but upon conceptions associated with 'shadow' (muridi), 'mingling' (makhuma), 'heat' (hu fesa) and sex.

Shadow (muridi) in the ordinary sense meaning shadow of persons or objects caused by sunlight, denotes also the life

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(yuphelo) of a person, it is the shadow-like counterpart of man that leaves him at death and is associated with the term moya (breath, wind, spirits, as in mɔmɔya). What happens to this shadow on death is hardly speculated upon though it is sometimes said that it enters the goat or shrine dedicated to a man. But the theory of shadow conceived of as an evil power has no connection with shadow-counterpart of the living, and of its many properties the most emphasized is the property of of aggravating disease. It is as if certain real evils cast a shadow which may infect those upon whom it falls. If they are normal, healthy people, generally speaking they suffer no discomfort themselves but they may act as carriers of the shadow and by contact with others especially those who are ill, they may transmit the evil as if they were intermediary hosts, weakening the patient and aggravating his illness. The host may transmit the shadow to both persons and things.

A person who has attended a funeral or lost a relative is infected by the shadow of death. Twins have such great shadow that if they come near a sick person he will die; hence twins must be killed at birth and are still generally killed despite European law and the example of Christians to whose grownup twins no specific evil can be attributed. A woman who has had a miscarriage has muridi. Pregnancy up to but not after, the end of the third month infects a woman with shadow, for a clear listinction is drawn between these two stages of pregnancy. Before the end of the third month the foetus is amarphous, not a human being, after this

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the foetus takes human form, the woman has grown (o hode) and a miscarriage is regarded as a death, so that people come to condole, and there is a mourning period ended by the (removal of) dirt rite (khitshila) just as for the most important adult. Thus, whereas a pregnant woman of two months may not enter the hut of a sick person, after the third month there are no such restrictions. After childbirth a woman has muridi but this is not the reason for her isolation. She remains in the hut till her child has been medically strengthened lest she bring to it shadows from outside. Girls over puberty and non-suckling, child-bearing women, though having no definite muridi are a potential source of danger to the sick, and men have not infrequently refused to allow us to wash their wounds with water drawn by such women. It is not at all clear, however, whether it is menstruation that is feared or the danger of possible early pregnancy.

Sex intercourse between husband and wife brings about a mild form of muridi; hence, if a very young child is ill, husband and wife sometimes abstain from intercourse and sometimes if there is an epidemic in a village, people may be told to refrain from intercourse lest muridi makes the illness worse. A warrior was never allowed to set out for war the day after he had slept with his wife lest he fell an easy prey to the enemy, while in the recent epidemic of small-pox (1938) it was said that people who were sleeping with their womenfolk were "hit" very badly by the disease, i.e., were worse than others. Muridi from sex intercourse is believed to effect the meat of slaughtered cattle or goats unless

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certain precautions are taken; such meat causes swelling of the stomach or other stomach trouble to those who partake of it. The man who slaughters an animal must, therefore, always be "clean"; and men who are sleeping with their wives are not allowed to approach a slaughtered animal before its stomach has been pierced or help skin it without first smearing their hands and knife with leaves of theebe (Amaranthus Thunbergi) or with the chewed root of khirugulo. Here again, so it seems, the danger is not the actual intercourse but the possibility of an unformed foetus in the womb. Thus, in the early stages of his wife's pregnancy, Nagambi was forbidden to approach slaughtered animals; but later, when pregnancy was advanced, the restriction fell away even though he was still cohabiting with his wife. These rules are today still strictly kept at the royal village and by most of the older men in the tribe, but there is an increasing number of young men, especially those who have long been in town, who do not always observe them.

A person whose upper teeth appear before the lower or whose molars appear first, is full of muridi and should be killed. In the area surrounding the royal village every child is brought to the queen for examination on the appearance of its first teeth, including even Christian children. The mother carries with her a small basket of eleusine and, if all is well, it is said that the child "has danced with joy" (u pebede); if not, there are no ululations of joy and though today the child is allowed to live, it must be treated by a doctor. When several children have been/...

been brought, beer must be made by their mothers for the older women of the area, the queen attends the party and there is much joy. If a person whose teeth have appeared in the wrong order is not killed, he is called a leshega. He is a danger to sick people and if he should bite anyone, the wound would not respond to healing treatment. But it is conceived that matter taken from the teeth of the leshega may be applied as an antidote, as an interesting case that we observed illustrates. Madinji in a fit of jealous rage bit another woman, Bilwana, in the chin (it is a common thing for women when fighting to bite one another). Bilwana's chin swelled up so that she was unable to speak and it would not respond to any treatment. The family of the wounded woman, concluding that Madinji must be a leshega demanded scrapings from her teeth, but this was refused on the grounds that Madinji's teeth had appeared in their right order when she was an infant, and action was instituted in the queen's court. The case dragged on for months owing to technical difficulties, such as whether the husband of Madinji or her parents were responsible in the case. In the end, however, it was decided that even though there was no proof that Madinji was a leshega she could not legitimately refuse to give something that might help to heal a sick person.

Muridi is on the whole dangerous not to its primary intermediary host but to others. Its source is conceived to be usually a person, but it may also be places such as cross-roads and large rivers, which become infected owing to the number of people crossing them. For this reason pregnant women/..

women are often told not to go on long journeys from home. Precautions are taken to protect the sick against its influence. A sick person may be smeared with medicine; in one case the patiant was rubbed all over the body with a mixture of vuloba-matsiba, a white chalky substance resembling excreta but said to come from the stomach of crocodiles, and fat, but theebe leaves (Amaranthus Thunbergi) or a plant called tsibisi mahabu may also be used. Very often the doctor orders this medicine to be applied by a person who has muridi, such as a widow or a woman who has had a miscarriage. When an illness is considered serious, a stick is placed before the door of the hut in which the patient is lying as a warning against entrande without permission. For the same reason (protection against muridi) a stick is always placed before the door of the hut of a new-born child, till the day when it is medically strengthened and allowed to come out of the hut when, medicines having been smeared on the stick, it is set aside and anyone may enter. Special precautions against muridi have to be taken in certain sicknesses, such as small-pox, measles and chicken-pox; here a stick is placed before the door and the patient isolated for the first few days, until the spots have appeared properly and, in the case of a child, its father and mother abstain from intercourse..

Allied to but not the same as muridi are leridi (monstrous shadow) and letala (sinister spoor, the word for an ordinary track being mutala. A warrior, who has killed an enemy, has leridi and unless purified he stands in grave

danger/...

danger of becoming mad or extremely quarrelsome (one of the worst social sins). Hence all such warriors ~~who~~ had in the old days to undergo an elaborate purification with medicine in which some portions of the body of the slain enemy played an important part. Leridi in a homicide or warrior sometimes manifests itself in a desire to go on killing. If two men have had sex relations with the same woman and one of them is ill, the other must on no account come near lest his track letala cause death. If the patient merely hears the voice of the other outside his hut, this may have drastic effects. Similarly, the husband's mistress should and usually does take care to remain away from the hut of his wife when she is ill or in childbirth.

Makhuma, from hu khuma, to mix together, is a conception similar to and often overlapping with muridi, but the evil, a kind of illness, infects the immediate host who cannot transmit it to others. Critical changes especially constitute the source of the evil which mingles with or contaminates or infects the person who has just undergone the change or who in the case of death comes into contact with its baleful emanations. In all the initiations strengthening medicine is given the novices as an antidote to the makhuma to which they might be subject after the initiation.
At a girls' puberty ceremony(khoba), medicine (in one case which we witnessed consisting of ground herbs mixed with ochre and the menstrual blood of the initiate herself) is smeared on various parts ofthe body in order to prevent her from becoming ill(hu khuma) when entering the villages of other people. The initiates in the boys' circumcision lodge are given black medicines towards

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the end of the isolation period just before the change from facing west while singing to facing east, to protect them from being injured (hu khuma) on once more entering the ordinary world. The elaborate strengthening rite at the opening of the girls bvali is similar in function. There used to be an attenuated puberty rite for boys, known as hufura khirugulo (chewing of the herb), now completely dead which took place after their first nocturnal emission. The boy went down to the river to wash, then was made to dig up a root, chew it and rub it between his legs in order to prevent the danger of makhuma. Even the hu thuswa ceremony at birth in which the child is smoked in burning medicines and inoculated with their charred, powdered remains is for the avowed purpose of preventing makhuma.

One may khuma if, after an absence from home during which a death has occurred, one eats food without some precautionary measure such as chewing a piece of antheap (khithoni), goats dung or the bark of the moreje (Acácia sp.) tree or even smearing the whole body with voloba matsiba and theebe leaves, the medicine used to ward off muridi. The medical treatment of the surviving relations after a death has occurred is chiefly to prevent the onset of hu khuma among relatives: early in the morning of the day following burial, after the hut of deceased has been sprinkled with medicine, the relatives are purified, sometimes by being sprinkled, often in other ways according to the wishes of the doctor in attendance. In one case, roots were placed in a wooden dish containing hot water; then all knelt and taking a mouthful to spit out to the right and another to spit out on the left/...

left side, swallowed the third mouthful. Next, medicine was sprinkled by means of a branch on their hands and feet. Then chips of root and bark were roasted in a potsherd and the people made to inhale the smoke through a reed. The charred remains were ground to a fine powder which all present partook of (hu goma), some being kept to be given to relatives who might later come to sympathise. Even the cattle khuma after death unless they are treated. In the case of the death of Andrew's child he and his wife stood at the entrance to the cattle pen with a shard of medicine which they flicked on to the cattle as they were driven through; on another occassion a fire, in which cattle bones and muthoxauma (Erythroxylum Brownianum) were burnt, was lit in the cattle kraal; then the mother of the dead child entered and scattered a mixture of river sand and medicine on the cattle. Cattle are similarly khuma or figehela if women ad girls over puberty have been breaking the rules against entering the cattle kraal. To prevent this, treatment is necessary: medicine is generally scattered over the cattle by a young girl under puberty, as occurred on april 27th, 1938. When a woman loses her baby the next child will khuma if it is given the breast before being treated by a doctor. Thus it was that Hoveri's wife waited for a week for a doctor to come and sprinkle (foga) her breasts with medicine, before putting her last child to the breast, as the previous one had died and they feared makhuma.

One is liable to khuma if one sleeps with any woman after the death of her child (of whatever age) before the removal of defilement (khitshila) ceremony. Such a woman may not give food to other children before first putting a pinch of medicine in their mouth/...

mouth and smearing some on their body; if she does not do this the child may get ill and die. Possessed people khuma if they eat the new fruits of the year without powdered medicine; but here, in contrast to the other cases where makhuma follows naturally, it is the possessing spirit that causes illness, saying, "Why did'nt you tell us ancestors?".

Though usually associated with the stomach, the symptoms of makhuma are not very definite, diagnosis being chiefly ex post facto. If one child has died, any illness of its successor, even even beating of the fontanelle which is considered dangerous is liable to be attributed to makhuma: when Magwela's baby was ill and vomited a lot, his wife thought it might be makhuma from the death of some relative though they had heard of no death. After the miscarriage at six months of Mamchudi, Ntayi, an unrelated person living in the same village, did not trouble to take precautions against makhuma especially as it is supposed to affect only relatives. Yet when, soon after, his stomach began to show signs of disorder, he immediately attributed it to makhuma and hastened to take medicine for its removal. It is possible to die of makhuma.

The conception of khuma has been extended into other fields. Divining bones khuma at the end of each month as well as when used to divine about a death, and must be washed in medicine before being used again. On certain occasions when the chief sets the country in order by sending boys to plant medicated sticks on its boundaries, it is strictly taboo to bring these sticks near a village lest they khuma and are rendered powerless to act. Similarly the rain charms of the queen are liable to khuma or

(figehela) /...

(fingehela) unless given the first-fruits and the first termites of the year to bite (luma) before anyone else in the royal area eats them, as also when people neglect certain observations, such as burial in wet soil of infants dying before their teeth have appeared. Hu khuma of the rain charms has serious consequences, causing drought throughout the country. That Christians do not observe these regulations has as little effect on the rain as when Europeans do not conform.

Hu fesa or the state of being "hot", is a conception far wider than muridi or Makhuma and is the antithesis of the condition of coolness which is conceived of as healthy, propitious or right. The properties of this "heat", which may be caused in a variety of ways, are not unlike physical heat. Bodily illness, even muridi causes the blood to be "hot", or to be boiling, and may be treated by cooling the body: thus the khitshila ceremony which removes the "dirt" of death also cools people. The hair of near relatives is shaved with medicine, usually only on the four corners of the head, and put in a wet place or in certain kinds of drought-resisting plants, such as titiwane (Hypoxis villosa) or khituzi (Aloe floroscens). But it is usually the source of the heat, not the heat itself, the symptom of the disease, that is treated, though both may be dealt with. The blood of a woman in certain conditions, for example after an abortion, is said to "burn"; she has (or is) leswa (great burning) and the man who has sexual intercourse with her also "burns", but whether it is because the heat is conducted to him or because of the disease dere (coughing illness) or urethritis, which he contracts, is by no means clear. The treatment is directed at

at the disease in him not towards counteracting the heat. Often, after steaming a patient, a river stone is pressed against all joints of the body and then taken back to the river, a treatment in which we may discern an attempt to "cool" though it also contains the conception of "throwing out".

Since heat withers the vegetation and causes drought, it is opposed to rain. Precautions must therefore be taken against whatever is thought to cause the country to be hot and dry. A man succumbing to dere , a person struck by lightning, a woman dying in childbirth, and the foetus of a miscarriage, all these must be buried in wet soil or with rain medicine if the country is to be kept "cool" and the rains are to fall. Coolness connotes rightness. Charms protecting the village against witches are sometimes called mashithoja because they rothoja (cause to be cool) the village. Cooling is an effective weapon against sorcery. When the doctor made Ngambi vomit the foreign object introduced into his stomach by a sorceror and causing the illness khitoso (thing caused to be eaten), he ordered it to be buried in a wet place and water to be squirted hu phasa) over it with an injunction to the disease to return to its sender. Even the gods must be kept cool, for if hot they stand up (va eme), are discontented and make trouble, hence the black river stone in many shrines and perhaps also the river stones in the large, round drums.

Sex has an important place in the medical conceptions of the Lovedu; many illnesses and even death are attributed to sex intercourse in certain circumstances or to some supposed abnormality in the sexual organs. Some men and women are believed to have

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a small, thick hair (levoya) in their genitals which enters the stomach of anyone with whom they cohabit and there pecks (hu goba). The levoya from a man will cause the woman he impregnates to die in childbirth, and the levoya of a woman kills all her lovers. Phedull, whose wife's death was attributed to levoya found some difficulty in re-marrying, and the parents of the girl whose love overcame her fear, insisted on his submitting to curative treatment before the marriage. But usually there is merely rumour that so-and-so has levoya and then people fear becoming intimate with him, but no definite precautions are taken. Men avoid intercourse with a menstruating woman, not because of danger to her, but because even as educated men in the towns still firmly believe, they are liable to become afflicted with swollen penis or urethritis. In its cure some of the menstrual blood of the woman is used, mixed with other medicines.

A woman who has lost a child before its weaning, or who has had a miscarriage, is a source of great danger to husband or lover. No sex intercourse may take place till the removal of defilement (khitshila) ceremony has taken place (usually about a month after the death) and then before intercourse both husband and wife or lover and woman have to undergo a purification treatment. This consists of steaming both under one blanket (hu orela), followed by mutual inoculation by means of which their blood is mixed, then medicinal roots which have to be placed in light beer have to be partaken of daily for about a week. In the case of miscarriage or abortion before the foetus has been formed, the treatment is somewhat different. The man must obtain medicines, the vital ingredient in which is portion of the abortion itself, to be drunk in

in light beer. It is important therefore, to remember where the abortion has been buried, for not only is it necessary to prevent the death of husband or lover, but unless the woman herself takes a little with medicine herself when she wishes to have a child she may be barren. The barrenness of Mujaji II, was attributed to this. In accordance with custom she had been made to abort when she was pregnant by a lover other than her chosen husband. The abortion was entrusted to Masolata, a councillor, but he carelessly let the ants eat it and she never had a child.

An abortion by a nursing mother has serious effects on the child she is nursing. In 1938 we witnessed a case in the Queens court in which the death of a child was attributed to an abortion on the part of its mother during the absence of her husband in town. It was said her "milk" had killed it. The husband, who had left his work and returned home immediately on receiving news of the death, refused to accept the decision of the native court, which had imposed a fine on the lover responsible. Much against the wishes of the court he took the matter to the European administration at Louisdkloof but the case was dismissed owing to insufficient evidence. Therefore he returned to the queen's court where the matter was settled by the offer on the part of his wife's mother, who had given the medicine for the abortion, of 10/- and a small girl to replace the dead child. The girl would be married when grown up and would thus create a further link between the two families.

Sex intercourse with a widow without previous steaming and inoculation affects deceased's brother in a manner different from ordinary lovers because of the "dirt" of the brother. He con-

tracts mafa, swelling of the whole body.

The disease contracted by a man having sexual relations with a woman who has aborted or whose child has died, is dere or vulwede vya vasadi, the woman's disease. It is the most dreaded of all diseased and to it more than 30% of the deaths of men during our stay among the Lovedy was attributed. So fatal is it thought to be that, unless cured immediately, the patient's chances of getting well are seriously impaired by the weight of subtle mass suggestion and his complete surrender to the inevitable. One illustration, the death of an educated man (teacher and later court interpreter) and a close friend of ours, will suffice. He had an irritating cough which everyone believed to be dere, but one European doctor found nothing wrong while another, to whom we explained our anxiety, diagnosed miocardiosis which would readily respond to hospital treatment. Our friend had no faith in the diagnosis and refused to go to hospital "simply to die". He resorted to one native doctor after another and vainly endeavoured to get medicine from the girl he suspected. He became more and more emaciated, resigned himself to his fete and within a month after examination by the second European doctor was dead.

Dere is not syphilis or a sexual disease. Its main sympton is coughing, but any illness, even if there is hardly / coughing, may be diagnosed as dere if the circumstances of the personal relations of the patient justify such a diagnosis. People thought that Madarabani's cough was dere but when he insisted that he had no lovers it was diagnosed as khilese (illness caused by introduction of a foreign substance into the body); Mulada's debility we attributed to chronic malaria, but his friends suspected that

he had taken no precautionary measures before resuming co-habitation with his wife who had miscarried after seven months. dere can be cured only in its earliest stages, and it is distinguis ed from consumption (lefiha; by its rapid course and the fact that lefiha (hufiha - to breathe) is not caused by women. The prevalence of dere suggests that abortions are common and abortifacients in general use. In reality, however, innocent women are accused as soon as a lover falls ill, and, rather than be thought murderers, they often give him medicine purporting to be portion of the abortion mixed with sand to be used as a cure. It is thought that if the woman responsible for the dere of a man is pregnant (no matter by whom), the sick lover will, unless cured almost immediately, die when the child is born.

There are many other Lovedu conceptions associated with medicine, religion and witchcraft, most of them of somewhat narrower application than the above. These will be dealt with in their proper context. There is, however one, that of lesola , which we may discuss here. A lesola is similar to an omen. If you dream of a dead relative this is a lesola predicting death of the living; other omens of death are the whistling or bleating of a certain snake at night and the legulvela or black lizard; when a mamodnaduvane wasp drops something in the courtyard or the woodpecker (gogonya) flies along with you and whistles as you walk, they thola the death of a relative.

But the conception of lesola is wider than that of an omen in that it is at once the omen itself and a cause of the resulti evil. If, for example, you commit adultery with your elder brother's wife, you thola his death, just as a lover who sleeps

with the wife of a warrior while he is at war does. In the old days it was believed that a woman whose husband was away at Kimberley (where they used to go for guns) should not shave her hair lest she thola his death. For a man with holes in his trousers to sit negligently in the presence of women is a lesola which may cause some evil to befall them. When one person scolds another out of all proportion to the crime or suddenly begins to swear at him for no reason, this is a lesola which may cause illness or death. When the chief wife of the queen died in childbirth, many people blamed Segoregore who, they said, had tholela the death by having a bad row with the mother of the woman a few days before; but the death was thought by others to be due to the witchcraft of a jealous woman.

Though a person can thola evil or death, a lesola is not witchcraft; a snake which is an omen is distinguished from a snake sent by a witch and there is thus a clear distinction between masola and dithomya (things sent by witches). A person who thola's a death by swearing at you is not a witch; but he becomes hated if it happens several times and may later come to be suspected of witchcraft.

CHAPTER 2

LOVEDU MEDICAL TREATMENTS.

Since the greater proportion of religious rites among the Lovedu is occasioned by illness and the main objective of witchcraft and sorcery is to bring about disease and death, the practice of medicine, the means of restoring the health of the human body, provides a common meeting-ground for religion, medicine, magic and witchcraft. For to the Lovedu the magico-religious is less a theory of the universe and the forces that work in it than a system directed towards securing practical ends, one of the most important of which is health. Lovedu healing is based to some extent upon observed relations between cause and effect, though more largely upon practices and beliefs which, though they will not stand the tests of our science, constitute the psychotherapy of the society. We are far too apt to discount the value of their empirical body of knowledge instead of using it to construct a sound scientific approach to medicine. We can also do better than scorn as superstitious absurdities those indispensable techniques of medicine which, because our medical profession takes little account of them, enable the charlatan and quack to flourish among us.

To understand Lovedu conceptions of the causation of disease, we must orientate ourselves from their knowledge of human anatomy. It is indeed very meagre. All they know has been gleaned indirectly from the slaughter of cattle and goats or from miscarriages and abortions, for they practise neither embalming nor dissection

of corpses. As a result, though they have names for all the more important organs of the body, they are not always sure of their correct location. Nor have they much idea of physiological function. They know that the stomach and intestines are digestive organs and that the bladder contains urine, but lungs, liver and the diaphragm are vaguely connected with breathing. It is the heart rather than the brain which is associated with knowledge and thinking; yet when a person is mad it is said 'his head is no good'; the head is also thought to be the seat of obstinacy. The womb, ovaries and testicles are definitely reproductive organs but in medical practice this function is obscured by the role of an internal snake believed to be intimately bound up with fecundity and childbirth. Everyone is said to have a snake in his stomach. It is not a real snake yet it is conceived as having a head and of being able to crawl up to a man's neck (causing what we call indigestion) and running back again when he coughs. When a person has stomach ache it is often said, 'The snake is biting', while dysentery is referred to as 'red' or 'white' snake according to the stage of the disease. The most important function of this snake, one that forms a common subject of conversation in connection with barrenness, is however its reproductive one. It is believed that semen comes from a man's snake; if his snake is 'no good' a child will not be born. The snake of a woman is sometimes identified with the womb and for conception it is necessary that this snake should accept the semen. There are two possibilities preventing conception: either the snake's head may be wrongly oriented or it may catch up the semen but spit it out again. In the first case the remedy is to 'turn round'

(hu fetulusa) its head by medical treatment in which very often the womb of a scapegoat is used. In the second case, since the snake rejects the semen unless the bloods of husband and wife agree and the snake of the man may be as much at fault as that of the woman, it is usual to include both husband and wife in treatment for barrenness. It is sometimes said the snake has khuma'd owing to adulterous relations of the husband. If six to nine months elapse after marriage without conception having taken place steps are at once taken to set the matter right.

Though the Lovedu have no knowledge of the circulation of the blood, they assign to it properties which lie at the basis of their medical theory. Blood is so generally believed to be the root of most ills that a native describing his symptoms always says, 'I am pierced by blood'. Rheumatism, stiffness after exercise, a pain or swelling in any part of the body, are attributed to blood that has collected there or blood which is 'boiling', making the body hot and feverish. Swellings of all kinds including goitre are therefore always cupped to get rid of surplus blood and blood-letting as a cure for head-ache and other ills is as popular with the Lovedu as it was in Europe not so long ago. If anyone has been hit hard on the head and it does not bleed, this is thought to be very dangerous and may end in death unless the head is cupped and laxative medicine administered.

The beating of the heart is not believed to be continuous: it is associated with sudden fright and with illness; but though it is known that often the heart beats loudly when one is not ill, they have no idea why it should do so. Veins contain blood but go by the same name as sinews and muscles, all of which are be-

lieved to give strength to the body. Occasionally, though infrequently, individuals are to be found who have other ideas. Thus David, a Christian who has often worked in towns and has a mind of his own, has his own theory as to the function of the heart, a deduction from his observations on dying fowls. He believes that the heart beats, not to circulate, but to exclude the blood from the heart and the moment the heart stops beating, the blood enters it causing death to the fowl or person.

A considerable list of terms for different diseases (See Appendix 1) indicates that distinctions are recognised, but it is easy to be misled into believing that their knowledge is greater than it is in fact. Some terms are peculiarly native without any corresponding category among us, but many like small-pox, measles, mumps, fever, consumption, migraine, syphillis, epilepsy show appreciation of causes or symptoms which fit into our scheme of classification. Practice is characterised by vagueness and a very wide and loose, instead of a specific use of many of these terms. All colds, coughs and pains in the chest, lungs or ribs go by the name khikhuva, one of the commonest ailments in the society; while any discomfort in the stomach or intestines ranging from constipation to acute appendicitis are called mala (intestines). Hence the terms 'blood', khikhuva (cough) and mala cover almost all conceivable ailments and greatly simplify the diagnosis of doctors. The term Khitshipidi denotes primarily a swelling or tumour containing white matter. In practice we found it applied to scrofula or glandular swellings below the ear which were cut open and squeezed, to slime coughed up and said to be internal khitshipidi, and to general aching of all the teeth or

tenderness of the gums with no sign of matter. Similarly the term nobe, bleeding of the nose, is often used when there is no bleeding but general debility, in which case the trouble is thought to be caused by blood in the body that should but has not come out. Zwiso, small pimples or lumps, is another term of wide and vague connotation ranging from irritation of the skin or throat to internal zwiso.

Such false correlations are due not merely to wrong conceptions of cause and effect - any evidence suggesting the presence of blood sufficing to incriminate that arch enemy of health - but also to careless observation and loose reasoning. This laxity in medical conceptions is in marked contrast to the logic and coherence of other arrangements of the society. Inaccurate observation and undeveloped symptomatology must be attributed to the extensive reliance firstly, for diagnosis of all but the most everyday illness, upon the divining dice, and, secondly for curing, upon what in the last resort is the psychological rather than the physical. There is little or no idea of the relative seriousness or danger of different diseases, a cut in the finger being looked upon as an illness in the same manner as pneumonia or dysentery. This is due to more than the astonishing but traditional verbal exaggeration which makes a person with a sprained ankle tell you he is very ill indeed, 'being killed by his leg'. In actual fact peopl are known to die from a plain cut in the finger (blood-poisoning having set in) just as they have from pneumonia, and where witchcraft is concerned the most innocent complaint may be deadlier than the worst of fevers.

Lovedu therapeutics includes a number of treatments that have undoubted curative value, but many more are based on purely magical assumptions. On the whole those which we should consider to be of some medical value are chiefly home remedies of the humble, non-divining herbalist. The higher one goes in the medical scale, the more divorced from scientific principles become the treatments. Simple ailments are dealt with very much as among Europeans: snuffing up water (hu loreja) is used for colds, the milk of a certain euphorbium is applied to draw out deep-lying thorns; splints (khifaraga) of strips of wood are used for broken limbs or sprains; teeth are extracted by being levered up by means of an instrument like a poker (murogola) which is inserted between the roots, a method said to be no more painful than the clumsy use of European forceps which are sometimes also found today.

For sore ears or eyes one sometimes pours (hu shela) in medicine by means of a leaf, a buck's horn or nowadays also a teaspoon. In some children's illnesses strong-scented leaves are crushed and placed round the head of a sleeping child or rubbed over its body so that it may inhale (hu hkha) the smell. Eating powdered medicine (hu goma)usually forms part of other treatments. Simple cuts are treated by applying the juice of plants, that of mushiji, the common blackjack or khivalavadimo (Jatropha zeyheri) being very soothing. Very detrimental to the speedy recovery of sores and wounds is, however, the practice of scraping with a feather or washing off all matter before each application of healing powders. This destroys the new young tissues, delaying for months the healing of sores that normally take weeks or even days.

Natives insisted on taking off bandages we had tied in order to do this in spite of all our prostestations that our medicines could draw out foreign matter better and less painfully than any scrapings on their part.

With the Lovedu as with us the commonest treatment is the drinking of medicines (hu nwa). Instead, however, of the bottle of medicine we receive, a native is given a small bundle of roots or twigs cut into even lengths of two to four inches to take home and boil in water which is drunk; or they are bruised, hot or cold water added and the infusion left to stand for a while before being drunk. Sometimes, after the roots have been boiled the water is used for making a soft porridge which is eaten (hu kapola) with a spoon or in the hand. For dysentery two or three pieces of the root of the matshilone plant are scraped a little, then boiled till the water is quite red. Ground eleusine is then added to make a soft porridge which is eaten. Madume claimed to have been cured after one administration of this medicine. Hu kapola is the term used also for eating the froth of churned medicine: to cure chest trouble and difficult breathing Philip was given a root to stir up in cold water; the resulting foam had to be eaten.

There is among the Lovedu none of the careful measurement of quantities characteristic of the mediaeval apothecary or of prescriptions found on Egyptian papyruses; but the amounts used are not wholly undetermined, for in practice the smallest pot is used and one ½ to two and a half pints of water added. The dose seldom exceeds a few mouthfuls taken once or twice a day for a few days only. If this is not effective something else will be tried.

This desire for quick results is seen even in treatment for barrenness which is, according to their own admissions one of the most difficult things to 'cure'. Unless there is immediate conception some other treatment or a new doctor is tried. Thabametse (a species of aloe), used as a laxative is one of the few medicines in the administering of which great care has to be taken lest it kills or greatly weakens the patient. Even here it is the quantity of the medicine used, not that of the water added that is controlled. A small piece of the inside of the dried fruit is ground, cold water is added, stirred and then drunk.

As among the peasants of Italy to this day, wet-cupping (hu lomeha) is, among the Lovedu, a common home-remedy, as the numerous scars on the head and shoulders of most people testify. After scarification a cupping horn is applied, the narrow end of the horn being closed by a piece of beeswax in which a small hole can be made when the mouth is applied for suction. Usually about half a horn-full (about a third of a tumbler full) of blood , which is generally buried near the ash heap, is cupped. Wet-cupping, resorted to chiefly in the case of head-ache and to reduce glandular swellings or fever, may be done only on the head, shoulders or back, never on other parts of the body. It is also the means whereby the 'worm' half-an-inch in length which appears in the foot in the case of khivungu (jiggers) is extracted. When used to extract foreign bodies, such as objects inserted in the body by wizards, the process is called hu lomulla.

Vein-cutting (hu ripa lesiga) requires greater skill, though even this operation is outside the province of the diviner. A

vein on the back of the hand or on the instep is lifted with an awl and cut with a piece of iron or a razor blade. When enough blood has spurted out into the small hole made to receive it near the ash heap, cold water is applied and the cut held tightly with the fingers to stop the bleeding. Often people faint when this is done. This is a common treatment for illness believed to be due to too much blood in the body, as the small transverse scars on the hands and feet of many people indicate. John, whom I saw treated, had his vein cut because for a week he had been ill with a 'hot head' and he 'smelt blood ' in his nose.

Scarification (hu thavala), except in the mutual inoculation and blood-mixing of husband and wife prior to their first sex intercourse after marriage and after the death or miscarriage of a child, is a treatment that is directed less at the evils of blood than towards a strengthening of the body or part of the body by the insertion of medicine. For general strengthenings incisions are made on all the joints and on other parts of the body such as neck-depression and head which are considered important. To cure sprains or broken limbs small cuts are made in a circle round the affected part and black powder inserted (after which splints may or may not be used). The medicine for this, known as thovehi (from rovehe - to be broken) is usually kept outside the village lest it cause many people to sprain their limbs. People have the greatest faith in thovehi, and when we sprained our ankle all attributed its slow recovery to the fact that we had not allowed them to treat it. Scarification is done for 'blood', to 'fix' the body against witche and lightning and to ward off epidemics. Even sore eyes are sometimes scarified: Nagambi for inflamed and watering eyes had a row

of cuts made under each eye and into these black powder was smeared. Scarification forms part of most strengthenings, such as fortification of a new-born child before being taken out of the hut for the first time and exposed to the dangers of the outside world.

Strengthening of a new-born babe (hu thuss) consists of smoking the child in the fumes of charred medicines, scarifying it and inserting powdered medicine, but many magical elements also enter. Rathaga's strengthening took two hours. Into a potsherd on a fire in the hut were placed two pieces of root, a mass of chips from various roots and stems, a piece of asbestos and some feathers of a bird. Over this was placed a lid. While these were being charred the doctor smeared some 'dirt' from the rafters (a mixture of soot and cockroach eggs and carcases) and some ash from the hearth all over the body of the child; then, the lid having been lifted from the sherd, the child was held naked in the smoke. It was turned this way and that to allow the smoke to reach every part of its body, then the lid was replaced and the same process repeated later. The child cried and spluttered a little but on the whole the fumes had a soporific effect.

Next, the grandmother was asked to make incisions, a process which took a long time and while this was being done some of the charred remains from the sherd were ground and mixed with fat. Cuts were made by means of a razor blade on the centre of the forehead, the right and left sides of the head, under each ear, on the shoulder joints, the back of the head and back of the neck, at the end of the coccyx, in the depression of the neck, on the end of the breastbone, on the elbows, wrists, joints of the last finger, the

knees, ankles and toes. Into these were rubbed the mixture of powder and fat which was then smeared all over the body, special care being taken with the head. The rest of the charred powder, mixed with ground pea-nuts and salt to give it a good taste, was put in a special bag to be used for the first month in the child's food and later to be administered when ~~it is~~ ill or upon entering a strange village (to prevent hu khuma). This was followed by some additional rites: the mother had to smear her child's body w with fat and ochre, pass it under each leg in turn, then throw it up and catch it, step over it when it was placed before the door, after which it was put for a few minutes in the sun on its skin cradle. This completed the strengthening which was followed by a family beer-party.

Mutual inoculation of husband and wife (hu tagantja) is done in various ways according to the doctor employed, but essentially it consists of blood-mixing. Cuts are made on various parts of the body of husband and wife, often near the navel, on the back and round the hips. In Madarabani's case where husband and wife were separately treated, cuts were made round the stomach, below the navel, one behind each ear, one on the centre of the forehead, one at the back of the head and three large scarifications on the inside of each thigh. The blood from these cuts is generally caught in a small calabash or potsherd, mixed with black powdered medicine and applied to the scarifications of both husband and wife. Then some of the powder is put in light beer which is drunk by both husband and wife. Some doctors order in addition that a goat be killed. A piece of the raw liver is then eaten by husband and

wife as they sit facing one another, each with one end in the mouth. They must eat till their mouths meet.

Scarification is, with the drinking of medicine or eating of powders, quite the most common form of medical treatment; it is used in the home as much as by doctors (who, however, always require some member of the family to make the actual cuts) and forms part of many other treatments such as the vapour bath. By far the most interesting form of scarification is, however, hu themela (vaccination) against smallpox, in which matter from the postules of affected persons, mixed with other medicines, is inoculated to introduce the disease in a mild form. The cuts are made on the dorsal side of the wrist or the centre of the forehead where many people have large scars. The position of the cuts supports the claim that this treatment was known prior to the advent of the European; moreover, the ingredients of the serum used by Europeans are not known. Possibly the treatment was borrowed by the Lovedu and the Shangana-Thonga who, according to Junod also practise it, from Arabs who were the first to study smallpox and measles. The old method was still widely practised in the 1938 small-pox epidemic for, though it was realized that it 'called' the disease in a mild form instead of preventing it, people noted that despite European vaccination there was still much illness.

Steaming and the vapour bath also form part of the practical elements in Lovedu medicine. There are various forms of steaming and smoking, most of which go by the same term hu orela. To 'loosen' a cough or to cure bleeding nose, chips of a certain root may be placed in a pipe with a live coal and smoked (hu daha ditsemo;

to purify a person after the death of a relative, chips may be charred and the smoke inhaled through a reed; to cure sickness due to bad blood (madi a maholo), dry chips of roots and bark are charred in a covered earthen dish, the lid is removed and the fumes inhaled under a blanket. Usually the remaining cinders are ground to a powder which is eaten in soft porridge first thing every morning for three days to a week. When a person has fainted on seeing the familiar of a wizard, he is revived or later cured by having burning chips held under his nose which makes him sneeze (hu etsimudisa). Boils and swellings are brought to a head by the application of the steam of boiling roots while in treatment for barrenness a woman is sometimes made to sit over smoking chips of bark.

To cure fever or general weakness of the body after an illness and for purification of husband and wife after the death of their child, the procedure is more complicated (hu orela khikhuma). Barks of different kinds are bruised and placed in a large pot half filled with water to which powders from the medicine bags of the doctor may be added and which is sometimes left standing overnight to get the full benefit of the medicines. Early next morning a large fire is made with wood collected for the purpose by relative of the patient, in order to heat eight or more large, white stones. When the stones are red-hot they are put into the water and when it bubbles and boils the patient, naked except for a cloth passed between the legs, is covered with a blanket and steamed, more stones being added at intervals to keep up the temperature. After much spluttering and shouting he is taken out, sprinkled or washed

down with cold water (usually he is too dazed to wash himself) and then either scarified with medicine on the joints or subjected to hu hata, that is, a river stone which is later taken back to the river is pressed on the joints to cool the body and chase out the aches. Sometimes the pot of water containing the stones is emptied at the cross-roads near the village with the words, 'Let them depart with their defilement' (A gwi yo le vusola vya jena). This treatment, which takes place in the sheltered storage enclosure before the sun is hot enough to cause undue strain, is considered too drastic for a really weak patient.

Sprinkling (hu hadulla) and hu hata, combined very often with other treatments, are also used alone. Hu hata, pressing a counter-irritant to the affected part, is used for tooth-ache, when large pieces of heated bark are held to the cheek, for bruises which are treated by the application of the hot, boiled leaves of certain plants, such as theebe (Amaranthus Thunbergii), muduva (Combretum holosericeum) or mukhuro (Rhamnus sp.) and after childbirth when hot porridge placed in a small flat basket is pressed daily to the stomach to ward off pains and put the muscles into position. To cure head-ache the skull of a sheep or dog is medicated, heated and pressed to the affected part of the head in order that the pain may be transferred to the dog's skull; and for back-ache one hata's with an assegai that has killed a man.

When there is an epidemic of coughing or dysentery, it is said 'A wind has come' and a doctor is called to sprinkle the people in the village to ward it off. In Mutsere's village in which an epidemic of stomach trouble broke out, a large fire was kindled just

outside the gate and two large pots of water put on to heat. Into these the doctor put finely-cut pieces of bark and root, later adding a little black and red powder from his medicine bags. The red powder was also smeared round the rims of the pots. When all was ready men, women and children were collected and lined on either side of the pots. Dipping a piece of musuzu (Terminalia sericea) creeper in the water, the doctor pointed to the four cardinal points, then sprinkled the hot water on the face and legs of the men and women, but in the case of children on the back and chest as well. The scene was one of much confusion: many of the children ran away to hide only to be hauled back by their parents, while the majority screamed and howled as the stinging, hot water, thrown hard by the doctor came in contact with their bodies. Most of the women and some of the children also drank of the medicine but no steps were taken to sprinkle the village, an Nguni custom unknown to the Lovedu.

Emetics (hu tatzisa) are well-known but not nearly as common as among the Zulu. They are used chiefly for stomach trouble which has been diagnosed as khileso, due to the introduction by a witch of some foreign substance in your food. In general the contents of a letadyane (Haemanthus sp.) bulb is stamped, much water or milk added and the mixture together with a little powder from the medicine bags of the doctor given to the patient to drink. He vomits either into a potsherd or into a hole made near the ash heap. When khivalavadimo (Jatropha Zeyheri) is used, only half the bulb is taken with about a cupful of water lest the action is too severe. Use of milk for emetics partly accounts for the general dislike of milk by adults.

When we accompanied Nwagu for hu tatziss treatment, we were taken to the storage enclosure where he was scarified by the doctor's wife in four places (the depression of the neck, back of the neck end of the breast-bone, and on the centre of the back). A black powder, some of which was also eaten, was inserted. The doctor then put some yellow and black powder into an earthen dish, added about one to one and a half pints of goat's milk and made the patient drink it off very quickly. In the meanwhile a pot of medicine (roots and water) was boiling; an earthen dish (merifi) holding about three pints was filled with this and given to Nwagu. He had great difficulty in swallowing it all and stopped many times to protest but the doctor made him go on. He said he felt 'full to the throat'. In a short time he began to vomit into a large piece of broken pot and when he was finished, water to wash out his mouth and wash his face and head was brought. He was again scarified, this time on all the joints, and given some of the powder to eat. We had seen no foreign object in the potsherd but the doctor came with a paper parcel which he said contained the introduced piece of meat which had caused all the trouble. This was to be buried in wet soil. Roots were given to be taken home, cooked in water and drunk warm twice a day for three days so that 'what is left will be finished truly'. It never occurred to Nwagu to look into the potsherd to see what object came out and he never opened the parcel given him. This to his mind was the doctor's business; he was interested only in the cure - just as few Europeans concern themselves with the gallstones or appendix that is removed in hospital. The enema is unknown among the Lovedu.

Characteristically the above-mentioned treatments are used both on occasions where they might be of real therapeutic value and for purifications and strengthenings where they might not. The principle of inoculation, which immunizes in diseases such as small-pox, is widely applied to effect cures and to further magical ends with which an empirical relation in our sense is wholly obscure. The relation must be sought not in the objective link between cause and effect as we see it, but in the Lovedu conceptions of disease, their causation and symptomatology and in the cultural pattern of the methods by which evil may be cast out or symbolically laid upon a scapegoat. This is by no means as foreign to European thought as might at first be supposed. The mediaeval cure for consumption - 'Cut the hair and nails, grind and leave them in a hole in the root of a cherry tree' - is typical of many Lovedu treatments and these principles are common to this day among the more backward peasants both in Europe and South Africa.

A cure for head-ache among the Lovedu is to tie a piece of medicated string or sinew round the head for a day, after which it is cut and allowed to fall, with the evil it has absorbed, into a hole. To cure gout, you scarify the leg to insert medicine, wiping off the blood with the leaves of a growing Mutagola bush (Euclea sp) to leave the disease on it. For migraine (nɔhakhotho)roots are burnt and ground to a powder which mixed with fat is smeared on two twigs of murilo (Vanqueria floribunda). These are 'shot' on to the temples, then taken to a hole in an antheap of matsenya ants. Treatment for makhumm (defilement) consists in going to the cross-roads early in the morning with various barks that have been left overnight in water, accompanied by an old woman who smears the

patient all over the body with the chips. These and the water are then thrown out for the illness to depart. This 'throwing out' of disease in reality forms part of all cures, for according to Lovedu theory the end of all illness should be marked by the shaving of the patient by the doctor (on the day that payment beer is brought). This hair is placed inside a bulb and buried in a wet place ~~inside-a-bulb~~ in the same manner as at the khitshila rite which marks the end of mourning.

The illness may be thrown out on to a live animal. The Lovedu scape-goat is generally the frog, perhaps because frogs live in wet places, associated with 'coolness' and order. We once witnessed how, in the case of pulsating fontanelle of a baby, considered to be a grave danger, some of the medicine inserted into the scarifications made around the throbbing spot and on other parts of the body, was placed on a green and white frog. The frog was stood on the fontanelle where it puffed itself up by rhythmic inhalations not unlike the beating of the fontanelle and finally, as a scape-frog to which the evil had been transmitted, it was taken back to the river. Similarly if a woman has been bewitched into deserting her husband, she is first smeared with the stomach contents of a goat then medicine which has been inserted into scarifications on her body is placed also on a frog which is returned to the river.

One method of curing teething troubles leading to convulsions (called dichwane because the nervous movements of the child resemble those of a baboon or also khipade (bark cockroach) after its cure) is to shave the hair in two 'paths' which cross in the centre of the child's head and to make a bark cockroach smeared with medicine run

along each path till it drops off. Then the body is smeared with a mixture of black powder and fat containing burnt hair shaved off at the four corners of the head. Often in addition the hair that has been shaved off, together with finger and toe-nails are burnt on a potsherd, placed in a hollow letadyane (Haementhus sp.) bulb which is either planted or left at the cross-roads with the broken potsherd. A fowl is said sometimes to be used to cure nervous diseases: it is smeared with medicine that has been used to rub over the patient, carried away and abandoned in some far-off place.

Goats are used both for ordinary curing when the doctor says he needs a goat to cure the patient' and uses certain parts with medicine, and as scape-goats which, however, are never abandoned alive. In initiation into the cult of possession described elsewhere and in some treatments for barrenness, the scapegoat plays an important part, though very often when people refuse to give it, knowing that it is probably an excuse on the part of the doctor for obtaining meat, he finds it possible to continue treatment without it.

Pekɛla, whose wife eight months after her marriage had not yet conceived, was advised by his mother to take her to a lelepɔ (possessed) doctor. The spirit of the doctor having descended upon her, she ordered the patient to sit on the ground holding the horns of a goat which was made to smell her stomach, her back and her armpits. She was next told to breathe into the mouth of the goat which was now given medicine to drink and killed. After some blood and small pieces cut from all parts of the body had been set aside for the spirits of the doctor, the liver was roasted with

powdered medicine and given to the patient to eat. Taking the womb of the goat in her hands, the doctor exclaimed, 'Gracious, how on earth can a person bear a child when her snake (womb) is like this. Why, it's all curled up and can't possibly bear!' It was placed with chips of roots and bark on a potsherd and burnt, the patient being smoked in the fumes, then with the powdered remains husband and wife were mutually inoculated. A white root was given them to take home and chew, husband from one end, wife from the other, before intercourse. Only the juice was to be swallowed the remains had to be taken early the following morning to a hollow tree and abandoned without looking back.

Lovedu medicines appear to us to be a jumble of science and magic. Fully 80% are of vegetable origin. There is hardly a plant in that rich lowveld vegetation which is not used in the pharmacopoeia of some herbalist or doctor and it is significant that new plants are constantly tried out. The pattern of supposed relations that are conceived to exist between symptoms and diseases, of unscientific analogies such as the use of murodo(Pterocarpus angolensis) bark which exudes a red sap for illnesses due to 'blood' or milky plants for inducing milk in the breasts of a woman, all of which we call sympathetic magic, and the use of roots and barks more frequently than leaves or flowers and fruits limits the value of this testing out of medicines. Nevertheless many drugs have effects which either obscure or cure the symptoms and whether for that reason and its psychological effect or because of a truly curative value, men have great faith in the medicines.

There are undoubtedly ingredients in Lovedu medicines which cannot be empirically related to either symptom or cure since they operate mainly by a technique of analogies which we relegate to the

magical world. Such are animal products like hair, skins, excrement, ovaries; minerals like ironstone or asbestos used for strengthening babies, and sea or river products, sand and shells indispensable for keeping witches out of the village. But to Lovedu men and women the use of such ingredients in no way differs from the use of a herb: both are thought to have curative value and for them our distinction between magical and scientific treatments, between cause and effect and false analogy, does not exist. Just as a herb may have properties for curing disease, so, for example, the backbone of a python is effective in curing general debility or backache. The bone is pounded and the powder inoculated into scarifications along the back by which means the immense power of the python is thus imparted to the patient. But note the sequel. So powerful is this medicine thought to be that the patient, when his time has come, will have difficulty in dying. His eyes will remain alive though the body is dead until once more the python powder is applied by being burned under his nose that he may inhale the smoke. This strengthening and the reversal of its influence are like injection and desensitization in our medical practice.

Except when powdered, medicines are almost always dug for immediate use; there are no apothecaries with large stocks of medicine though it is common to find many roots and pieces of bark under the eaves of the hut of a doctor or herbalist. There is no special method of digging medicines, and there are no spells or observances or time of day associated with such work, though tales are told of a very powerful medicine obtained from trees growing south of the Olifants river and which have to be approached with the greatest

care and preparation to avoid illness and death. Some medicines have dangerous powers and must therefore be kept outside the village such are thobohi, which we have already mentioned, and sandawana, skin of a certain animal obtained by trade far from Lovedaland. Not only has this medicine to be kept outside the village, but it has to be smeared with disarming or forgetting medicines (hu fera) lest it brings trouble upon its owner. Dr Mudike attributed his arrest for abortion to sandawana which he had in his possession, and took immediate steps to bury it near a river where, to his misfortune it was washed away with the next rains.

There are names associated with the functions of certain classes of medicine . Lesiwaba is luck medicine which is usually burnt; it is used by hunters who smoke themselves and their weapons in it to attract animals; by doctors who hold their dice in the smoke to attract patients; by traders to call customers to them; by young men to attract girls and, in the old days, to strengthen and render lucky the army before war. Muralelo is medicine used to make people or dogs keen; it is given dogs to make them keen in hurting and, was applied before war when a human spine was introduced into the medicine. Buzulome enables one to pass places in safety or to avoid accidents such as a motor smash on a journey; maime is medicine to make people honour you - it gives you weight (hu imala).

When we pursue Lovedu conceptions as regards nursing and treatment of patients, we have once more to orientate ourselves from their point of view. Cleanliness and hygiene are very remotely related to health. Flies are freely tolerated because it is considered unlucky to kill them, not because, as is held in some other tribes,

abundance of flies among riches in cattle. The use of pieces of stick and stones to clean or scratch into wounds and scrape off white matter makes sores turn septic very easily. Nor is their healing rendered easier by the fact that people sit on the ground, eat on the floor and move about in germ-laden dust.

Many Lovedu cures appear to be very drastic. Ditshoye, conjunctivitis or inflammation of the eye accompanied by the appearance of numerous pimples on the mucous membrane of the eyelids, is cured by turning the lid inside out and scratching it with a leaf of the mukhoba tree (Dombeya rotundifolia) till the blood flows freely. This must be done before the pimples turn white. Then an insoluble mixture of powder and water is poured into the eye, presumably to soothe it. In one case where this treatment was administered to a child of three, it cried and would not sleep at night for two days. This was attributed to the fact that the lower lids also needed scraping and that the upper ones had been treated too late. On the third day, therefore, the lower lids were scraped; that evening the child slept and the swelling began to go down, a sure sign they told us of the efficacy of a method that we had disapproved of!

Invalids are not given a special diet, so that instructions by European doctors that a mother should feed her ailing child on vitamin-containing foods or fruits are ignored unless medicine is given to be mixed with that food. It is equally fatal to appeal to the curative powers of nature: an invalid will impute unwillingness to help, ignorance or even sinister designs, if you tell him, for example in a case of a dislocated knee, that nature will heal him and give him no medicine. It is medicine and medicine alone that is thought to heal. But even medicine is never allowed much time in which t

do its curative work. If one drug is not effective within a week it will be changed for another. Often a number of medicines is used at the same time so that if one is ineffectual the other may heal. In every case we attended we found native treatment was being given at the same time as, and often to the detriment of, our own. Nor would our protests be of any avail. Even in state hospitals there are secret chewings of herbs and surreptitious steamings. Though it is admitted that certain medicines may not 'agree' when used together, use of the wrong medicine is not thought to have any harmful effects. At the most a medicine merely does not heal; it never definitely harms the patient.

Inexactness in the quantity of medicine taken is accompanied by a laxness in the carrying out of doctors' instructions which, though of no consequence where native medicines are used, may do immense harm if the medicines are European. A careful comparison between instructions of native doctors at consultations and the actual manner in which these were carried out showed great discrepancies between the two. There are certain general principles known to all, and on the whole people trust to their knowledge of these and the powers inherent in the medicines rather than slavishly following instruction.

The sick like to be in the open air or in the sun, but it i for comfort and warmth , not because the curative power of nature or the need for nursing is recognised. A Patient generally spends the day lying wrapped up in his blanket in or near the courtyard or in the sheltered storage enclosure. This open-air sick-room, sunny or shady as the needs of the body dictate and protected from wind is, in the absence of light, well-ventilated rooms, the best possible place for the health of the patient. At night, however, or when the

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