

Technology and the **Entheogenic Revolution**

Jeff Pappas

PRACTITIONERS of indigenous medicine have been persecuted throughout the entirety of our written history. This has particularly been the case for Europe and her former colonies. Europe, however, is not unique in its persecution of indigenous practices, like the use of entheogens. Even as early as the Song dynasty in China, 960 to 1279 AD, imperial edicts were printed and distributed condemning certain Buddhist sects, such as the White Lotus and her many incarnations, for “gathering at night, dispersing at dawn, wherein men and women intermingled freely, ate vegetables and served devils.” The punishments even then were severe and included fines, banishment and even death.

Prior to prohibition in the United States it was quite easy and socially acceptable to obtain a vast array of natural psychoactive substances. For the past sixty to seventy years, however, it has been quite difficult to obtain natural plant psychoactive chemicals without a prescription. Even on the ‘street’ it is easier to obtain heroin than opium which is virtually nonexistent in this country.

The internet has changed this status dramatically. By taking advantage of legal loopholes, Americans are now able to purchase virtually any natural psychoactive or at least the means for production and preparation. Examples include: the cannabis seed trade, psilocybin spores and syringes, coca leaf tea and extracts, poppy pods and seeds, mescaline containing cacti, ayahuasca analogues, seeds containing ergot alkaloids, absinthe kits, etc. The list goes on and on. The only exceptions that I could find were peyote and iboga.

This market is a potentially valuable resource for a country which has fifty million uninsured citizens. With some guts, a credit card, a mailbox and a little education from sites like erowid.org, one is empowered to the same degree if not higher than those medical physicians still choosing to practice amidst this social medical crisis. Natural online products can also serve as a very potent alternative to the toxic FDA-approved pharmaceuticals, whose adverse effects account for the third to fourth leading cause of death in this country.

Another technological innovation which cannot be ignored is that of using glass and ceramic heating elements for vaporization of plant products instead of smoking. Vaporization is an important way of ingesting potentially toxic compounds without the severity and

danger of direct gastrointestinal ingestion. Research in this area may be the floodgates which can be released to wash away the social stigma associated with smoking by providing a safer more effective alternative.

Personal Reflection

I have been researching entheogens online since 1996, but my genuine intimate experience occurred in January of 2005. I had purchased lotus and water-lily extracts upon learning that their flavonoid content and circulatory stimulating properties even rivaled ginkgo. As a result of my purchase being over fifty dollars, I was able to choose a free sample of some of their products. I chose the salvia divinorum enhanced leaf extract. I was familiar with salvia, had read about it, and had even tried smoking the leaf. I was rather skeptical of the effects reported online claiming that it had to be done in a dark environment and that the slightest distraction would end the experience. I abruptly found out that this was not the case at all.

Salvia has given me and continues to give me the most introspective experiences of my life and has sparked a renewed sense of wonder and amazement of the mystical intricacy of this existence. Not even my ‘heroic’ doses of indole alkaloids can compare to the intense humility which this plant specifically initiates. As a result, salvia has become my key ally and is most definitely a child of this technological age. It has gone unnoticed by the world, with the exception of the Mazatec of Mexico. But, even the Mazatec do not

utilize the power of pyrolizing or vaporizing this plant. This technique for consuming salvia would not have been popularized had it not been for the online community, in particular, Daniel Siebert of sagewisdom.org.

I would personally like to see MAPS take more of an interest in salvia and take advantage of this precious time in which it is still legal to conduct more research with less restrictions than researching schedule one drugs like marijuana, psilocybin, and LSD. Outside of its meditative properties there exist specific pain-relieving, psychotherapeutic, and probable antimicrobial and antiviral properties, which have been reported but not adequately researched. If salvia gets further restricted or placed in schedule one, Great Spirit forbid, this research may be delayed for years. The opportunity to research and utilize this most powerful plant, the most potent naturally occurring substance in the known world, exists now and must be taken advantage of. •



Jeff Pappas
Ethnobotanical Researcher
www.myspace.com/shennong7