DINGAKENG: A CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

CREATING A LINK BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MEDICINE

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John kagiso molebatsi 96078512 M. Arch [Prof]
Mentor: Prof. Roger Fisher
Zimbabwe healer moots magic chastity portion

A ZIMBABWEAN healer wants to promote the use of a traditional spell that ensures fidelity, alongside the more conventional methods of condoms and abstinence to curb the spread of Aids in the country.

Healer Mutsa Chikede came up with the idea of using a technique that involves magically “locking” women and immobilising men, to bar them from having extra-marital sex, alongside condoms and abstinence because the latter only have a limited impact on stemming the spread of Aids in Zimbabwe.

Around one in four of Zimbabwe’s adult population is infected with the HIV virus, and Aids kills an average of 3 000 people in the country each week. Chikede’s proposed technique uses traditional herbs to cast a spell that can be administered by a healer even in the absence of the subject. It has become popularly known in Zimbabwe as the “central locking system,” or “immobiliser”. When applied, the spell is supposed to ensure that one cannot have sex outside marriage.

Source: Mail & Guardian, 10 October 2001
Overview

This dissertation explores the fusion of traditional health practise in the context of the city. The primary objective of this dissertation is to expose people to the spirituality and sacredness of the indigenous South African health practices but also help reverse the guilt and inferiority complex usually associated with such practices.

People in the city find themselves having to travel long distances to rural areas to consult inyangas and/or sangomas. This dissertation also tries to find a solution on how to design a facility in an urban context that is going to accommodate inyangas and sangomas that is going to reflect the indigenousness of the practice.

Therefore, people will have easy access and not have to travel long distances for consultation. The Dingakeng Centre is going to be the first step in creating a link between the traditional and the modern health practice. The name Dingakeng is a Setswana word meaning a place of the traditional healers.
I AM AN AFRICAN

I am an African.

I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter-day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun.

The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope. The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld.

The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThukela, and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.

A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say - I am an African!

(Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, 1996, at the adoption of the Constitution)

(Source: http://www.gov.info.co.za)
Glossary of terms

“Abakhetwa”: means traditional male initiates at circumcision schools
“Badimo”: Ancestors or the departed; they communicate with God on behalf of the people
“Lethwasa”: means a person studying to become a traditional healer
“Muti”: means an object or substance used in traditional health practice for the purpose of:
(a) the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of a physical or mental illness; or
(b) for any curative or therapeutic purpose, including the maintenance or restoration of physical or mental health or wellbeing
(c) in human beings, but does not include a substance used for the satisfaction or relief or a habit or craving for the substance used.

“traditional health practitioner” means a person registered or required to be registered in terms of the Traditional Health Practitioner’s Act (2003), and includes a traditional birth attendant and a traditional surgeon (inyanga and sangoma);

“traditional health practice” means the performance of a function, activity, process or service that includes the utilization of a traditional medicine or a traditional practice and which has as its object

“traditional birth attendant” means a person who attends at and assists with the birth of a child or who assists and advises pregnant women or women who have just given birth concerning prenatal, perinatal and postnatal matters;

“traditional surgeon” (ingcibi) means a person who performs circumcision as part of an African cultural initiation ceremony.
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