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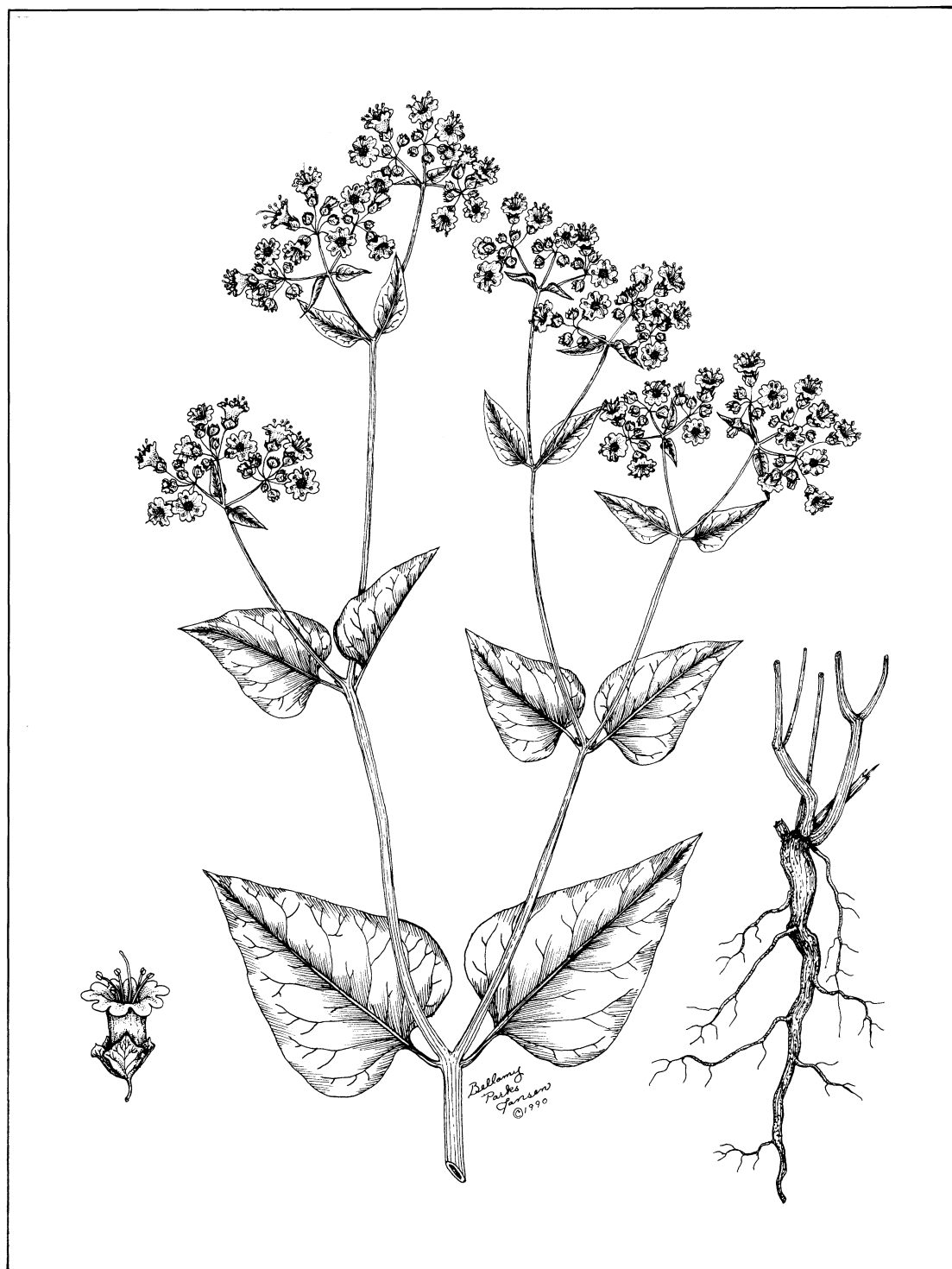


FIG. 1. Po ípiye, Wild Four O'Clock, *Mirabilis nyctaginea* (Michx.) MacM.

OGLALA SIOUX USE OF MEDICINAL HERBS

GEORGE ROBERT MORGAN, COMPLETED BY

RONALD R. WEEDON

Despite the turmoil of Sioux cultural losses since contact with Anglo-European culture, the Oglala Sioux have maintained an interest in herbal medicines, although with each passing generation the number of plants actively used for curing has diminished. Fewer people have been learning the identification of plant medicines and their uses, the procedures for preparing plants, and the techniques of herbal cures. Many of the older Sioux blame reservation boarding schools for the disruption of cultural transmission, but other factors have been at work as well.

George R. Morgan was professor of geography at Chadron State College at the time of his death in 1985. His primary research interests included peyote as an Indian ceremonial plant and the ethnobotany of sweet flag. An excellent scholar, Dr. Morgan was also a beloved and respected teacher, advisor, and friend, who is sorely missed by the Chadron State College community. This paper was completed after Dr. Morgan's death by Ronald R. Weedon, director of the Chadron State College Herbarium, which now houses the Dr. George R. Morgan Memorial Archive.

Since 1889 the home of the Oglala Sioux has been the Pine Ridge country of southwestern South Dakota, east of the Black Hills. The Pine Ridge Reservation, one of the largest in the United States, is remote from any major population centers or highways. Its mostly scenic but semiarid grasslands are largely given over to cattle ranching. A 1984 census showed 16,500 Oglalas at Pine Ridge, of whom about 45 percent are under 18 years of age and another 35 percent between the ages of 21 and 55. This age composition, a growing youthful population with few elders, is characteristic of developing countries, as is the abounding poverty and an unemployment rate of more than 70 percent. Alcoholism has been prevalent since 1953, along with "white man's diseases" such as cirrhosis of the liver and diabetes. For some people, the move away from the land began in the 1960s, when the government began building housing communities and many Sioux sold their land to non-Indians. The gap between the people and the land has been widened by ration issues, commodity distributions, and foodstamps, all of which removed the necessity for Indians to gather their native food plants. Some food and medicinal plants have become scarce or disappeared as overgrazing on the reservation has reduced

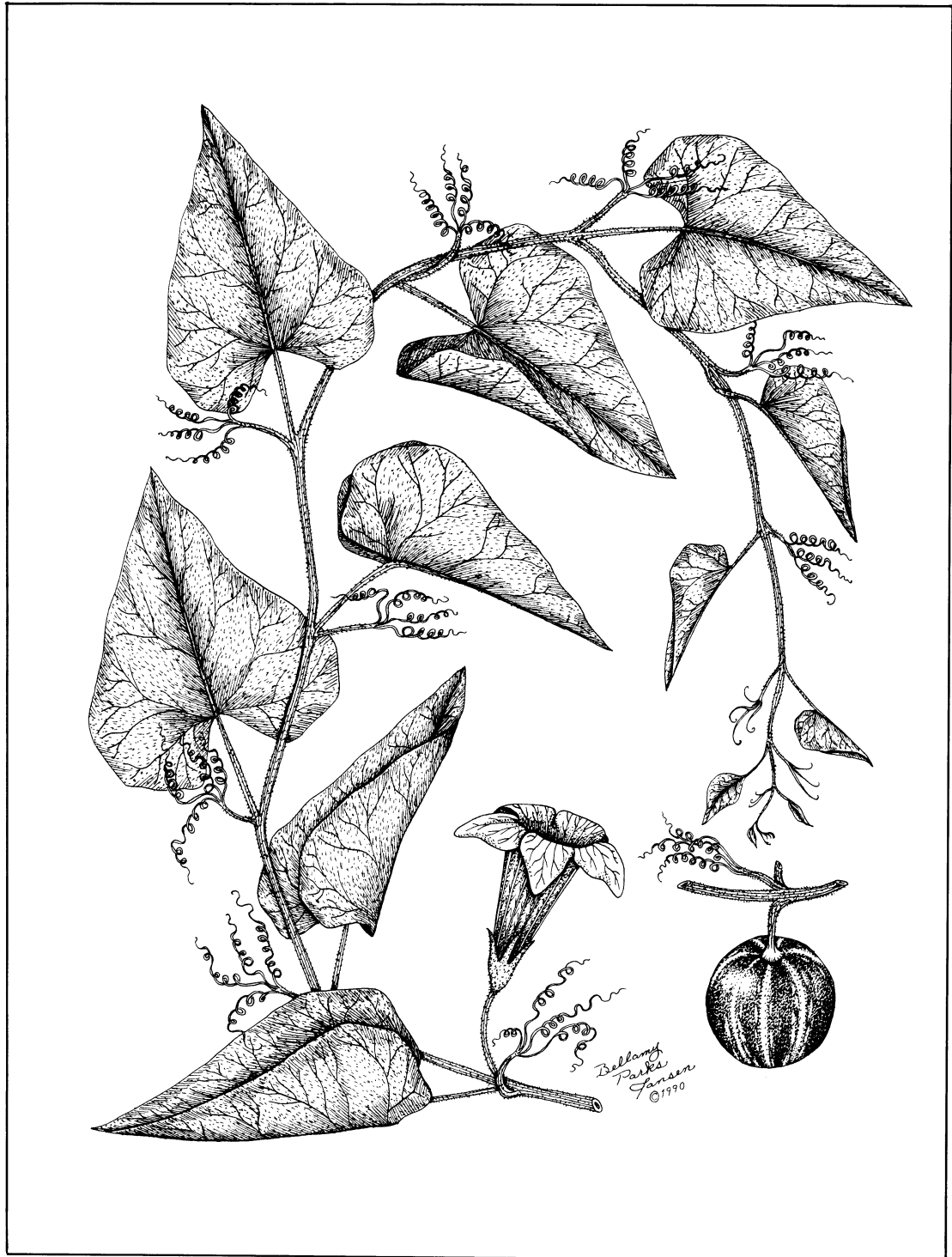


FIG. 2. Waghú Pejúia, Wild Gourd, *Cucurbita foetidissima* H. B. K.

the floristic composition and biomass of upland prairie and bottomland. The refuge of some medicinals is along the roadsides.

With all these changes, the use of medicinal plants among the Oglala has noticeably decreased, as it has in most twentieth-century societies, but it has not entirely disappeared. In some cases it has even increased, for although Indians usually seek "white man's medicine" for "white man's disease," some Oglalas claim plants such as sweet flag and sage cure diabetes. The purpose of the following paper is to evaluate the pharmacopoeia of today's Oglala Sioux and to note the uses of medicinal plants within contemporary Pine Ridge culture. Melvin Gilmore's 1914 thesis, "Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region," provides a baseline against which to measure how such uses have changed during this century. Although his work also reviews uses of plants by the Omahas, Poncas, Winnebagoes, and Pawnees, it is the only comprehensive study of cures among the Oglala. Gilmore's baseline is augmented and clarified by reference to Father Eugene Buechel's studies of plants on Pine Ridge and the neighboring Rosebud Reservation, conducted in the 1920s and recently made available by Dilwyn J. Rogers (1980a, 1980b).

Sioux use of medicinal herbs cannot simply be generalized, however, because much depends on the practice of the individual medicine man (*wakaŋ wicáša*). Many Sioux traditionally expect in a medicine man a certain eccentricity that is reflected in the unique assortment of medicinal plants stored within his medicine bag. Some of the plants a healer uses are common medicinals used by the populace, but others are surrounded by professional secrecy. The Oglalas generally acknowledge that only the "right man" can successfully use certain plants; unqualified persons, including other medicine men, will not be able to cure with the same plants because healing powers are said to come from the spirit world. A medicine man obtains his knowledge about plants and their uses from elder medicine men and through his own visions while fasting in the wilderness. Oglala religious belief holds that visions endow the beholder with special

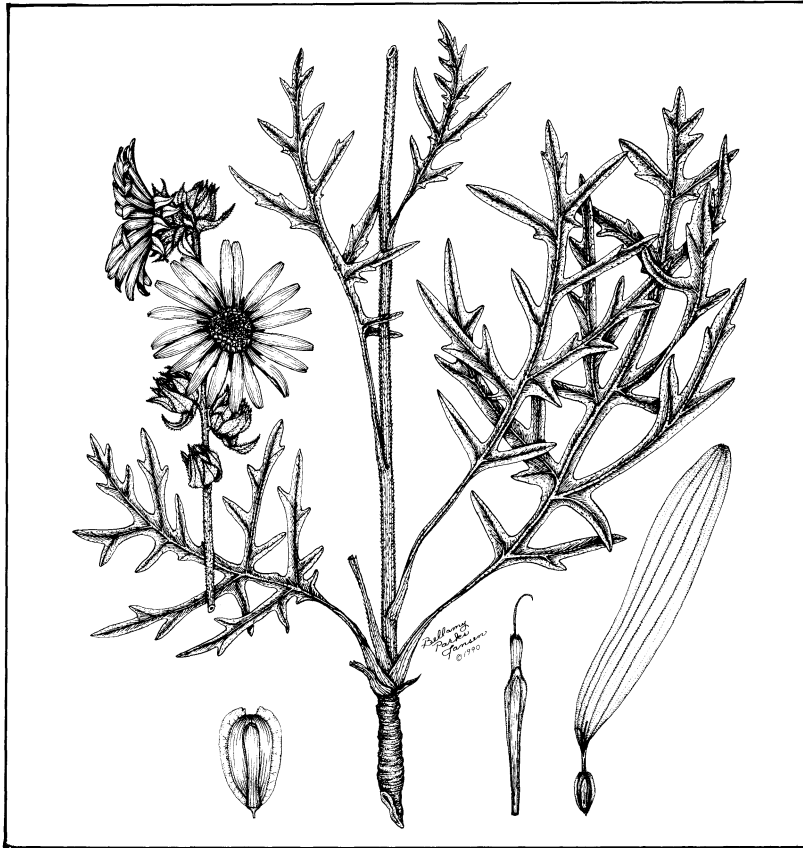
healing powers that may include the revelation of new medicinal plants or new uses for well known medicinals. This study attempts to list ordinary uses of common medicinal herbs rather than those specific to individual medicine men.

ĤO ĪPIYE (REMEDY FOR SWELLING)

Ĥo ĩpiye means literally "a remedy for swelling," but informants identify it as wild four o'clock [*Mirabilis nyctaginea* (Michx.) MacM.], an herbaceous plant more frequently associated with medicine men than with the populace. Many people fear the plant and indicate that it should be harvested only by medicine men, who must gather it carefully in the spring months before the arrival of the "Thunder Beings." Otherwise misfortune will befall the harvesters and their kin. The appropriate procedure for anyone harvesting plant medicines is to place a pinch of tobacco offering at the place where the plant is removed. According to Melvin Gilmore, the popular use of *ĥo ĩpiye* was to boil the roots and drink the tea to alleviate fever (Gilmore, 1914). While some contemporary Sioux tell only of external use of the plant, others use the tea to cure stomach discomfort and to alleviate swelling (Afraid-of-Bear, 1989). William Conquering Bear, an elderly Oglala informant, stated that the roots were boiled and the tea was used on the skin as a lotion for sores. According to Paul Vestal, the Ramah Navajo also used a tea from the root as a lotion for swellings (Vestal, 1952). The Sioux consider the plant holy and powerful; mystery prevails about the *ĥo ĩpiye* and its various uses among Oglala medicine men.

WAGMÚ PEJÚTA (PUMPKIN OR GOURD MEDICINE)

The wild gourd (*Cucurbita foetidissima* H.B.K.) is another plant with mystic, powerful properties, more within the ken of the medicine man than the ordinary Oglala. One Oglala considered the plant to be dangerous and said that it should be used by a medicine man (Red Cloud, 1984). The root of the plant resembles the human form; there are recognized female and male

FIG. 3. *Caṇṣiṇṣila*, Compass Plant, *Silphium laciniatum* L.TABLE 1
CONTEMPORARY OGALALA MEDICINAL HERBS

Lakota Name	Literal Translation	Common English Names	Scientific Names
<i>po ʔpiye</i>	remedy for swelling	wild four o'clock	<i>Mirabilis nyctaginea</i> (Michx.) MacM.
<i>wagmú pejúta</i>	pumpkin or gourd medicine	wild gourd	<i>Cucurbita foetidissima</i> H.B.K.
<i>caṇṣiṇṣila</i>	plant form which gum oozes	compass plant	<i>Silphium laciniatum</i> L.
<i>pteiciyuḥa uṇma</i>	translation undetermined	stickyhead, curly cup gumweed	<i>Grindelia squarrosa</i> (Pursh) Dun.
<i>icáhpe hu</i>	translation undetermined	coneflower, purple coneflower, black sampson	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i> DC.
<i>wináwizi cik'ala</i>	translation undetermined	wild licorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza lepidota</i> Pursh
<i>ḥaṇié</i>	cedar	cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> L.
<i>wacaṇga</i>	sweet grass	sweet grass	<i>Hierochloa odorata</i> (L.) Beauv.
<i>wacaṇga iyéceca</i>	like sweet grass	sweet clover	<i>Melilotus officinalis</i> (L.) Lam. and <i>Melilotus albus</i> Desr.
<i>ḥejihóta apé blaskáska</i>	flat leafed sage	wild sage	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> Nutt.
<i>ḥejihóta waṣtemna</i>	women's sage	little wild sage	<i>Artemisia frigida</i> Willd.
<i>ceyáka</i>	mint	wild mint	<i>Mentha arvensis</i> L.
<i>hokśicekpa</i>	baby's navel	puffball	<i>Lycoperdon gemmatum</i> Batsch.
<i>caṇḥilógan</i>	hollow stem	sunflower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.
<i>wahcázizi</i>	yellow flower		
<i>uṇjiniṇtka</i>	rose, rose hip	wildrose, rose hip	<i>Rosa arkansana</i> Porter
<i>pejúta naṭtyazilya</i>	incense medicine for the head	purple mallow	<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i> (T.&G.) A. Gray
<i>heyóka tapejúta</i>	heyoka's medicine	red false mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i> (Pursh) Rydb.
<i>siṇkpe tawote</i>	muskrat's food	sweet flag	<i>Acorus calamus</i> L.
<i>peyote</i>	peyote	peyote	<i>Lophophora williamsii</i> Lem.

forms. Because cures are based on the "Doctrine of Signatures," the shape of the root indicating the cure, *wagmú pejúíta* is a general medicine. A Sioux related that Joe Bear Nose had warned him that the plant should be carefully harvested: because it is very holy, it must be pulled slowly from the ground, and it cannot be left in the house because it may attract snakes (Walks, 1983). In former times all medicine was left outside to retain its purity and power, as medicine in the house (or tipi) would be influenced by evil thoughts, words, and actions (Long Visitor, 1984). *Wagmú pejúíta* must be cultivated and it is grown less frequently than it was in the past (Walks, 1983). Keller thinks some of the curative powers of the plant may be derived from the rattle made then and now from dried gourds with seeds (Keller, 1989).

CAŋŚINŚILA (PLANT FROM WHICH GUM OZES)

Buechel suggests *caŋśinśila* is chamomile; *caŋśin* is gum or resin and is used to mean pine resin, which was chewed by children (Keller, 1989). Gilmore, however, identified *caŋśinśila* with compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum* L.), the root of which was considered to have magical properties. The dried root was burned during electrical storms as a protection (Gilmore, 1914). A contemporary Sioux, Jonas Walks, stated that the powdered root was burned over charcoal for headaches and as a soporific (Walks, 1983). Beatrice Weasel Bear noted that, in 1933, she had witnessed powdered bark of the plant placed on an open wound (Weasel Bear, 1985). Weasel Bear also stated that *caŋśinśila* was used at *yuwípi* ("to tie") ceremonies, religious seances with the spirit world. A medicine man performs a *yuwípi* ceremony at night in a darkened room, summoning the grandfather spirits to enter our plane of reality to assist in healing, interpreting, and predicting the future (Blindman, 1989).

PTEÍCIYUHA UŋMA (TRANSLATION UNDETERMINED)

The leaves and tops of sticky head, curlycup

gumweed [*Grindelia squarrosa* (Pursh) Dun.] were used as a remedy for children with colic (Gilmore, 1914). A tea from the whole plant was consumed for kidney problems, especially to arrest frequent urination; the plant was also used for many other ailments, such as bronchial problems (Walks, 1985). Buechel notes that the blossoms of *pteíciyuha uŋma*, boiled with *pis-píza tawóte* (prairie dog food or fetid marigold) are a remedy for spitting blood (Buechel, 1970).

ICÁHPE HU (TRANSLATION UNDETERMINED)

A commonly used medicinal has been *icáhpe hu*, coneflower, purple coneflower, black sampson (*Echinacea angustifolia* DC.). The roots of this late summer upland prairie plant have reportedly been a cure-all among the Sioux. Gilmore listed several uses. The plant may have been used as an antidote for snake bite; a smoke treatment was used for headaches, and the root was used for toothaches. Furthermore "Jugglers" rubbed the juices of the plant on their hands to keep them from being scalded (Gilmore, 1914). The jugglers of Gilmore are better known as heyokas, the sacred clowns. During the heyoka ceremony, the heyoka dances around a pot of boiling dog meat then plunges his hand into the pot to fish out the dog's head (Blindman, 1989). Gilmore also noted that a tea made by boiling the roots of *icáhpe hu* with the roots of *po ípiye* was used to expel intestinal worms or to rub on swelling limbs. Present day Oglalas use *icáhpe hu* for skin problems (Red Cloud, 1984), for washing away poison ivy (Weasel Bear, 1985), and most commonly, to alleviate toothaches. The root is lodged next to the area of pain. The fresh root was also used to treat hydrophobia, septic conditions, tonsillitis, pain in the bowels, and more than one hundred types of cancer (Foster, 1985). Early settlers learned the uses of the plant from the Indians and used *icáhpe hu* in a variety of ways, including spring tonics. Extravagant claims and the resulting controversy over its use gradually led to its decline in the American medical scene. In the last several years, however, the results of research,

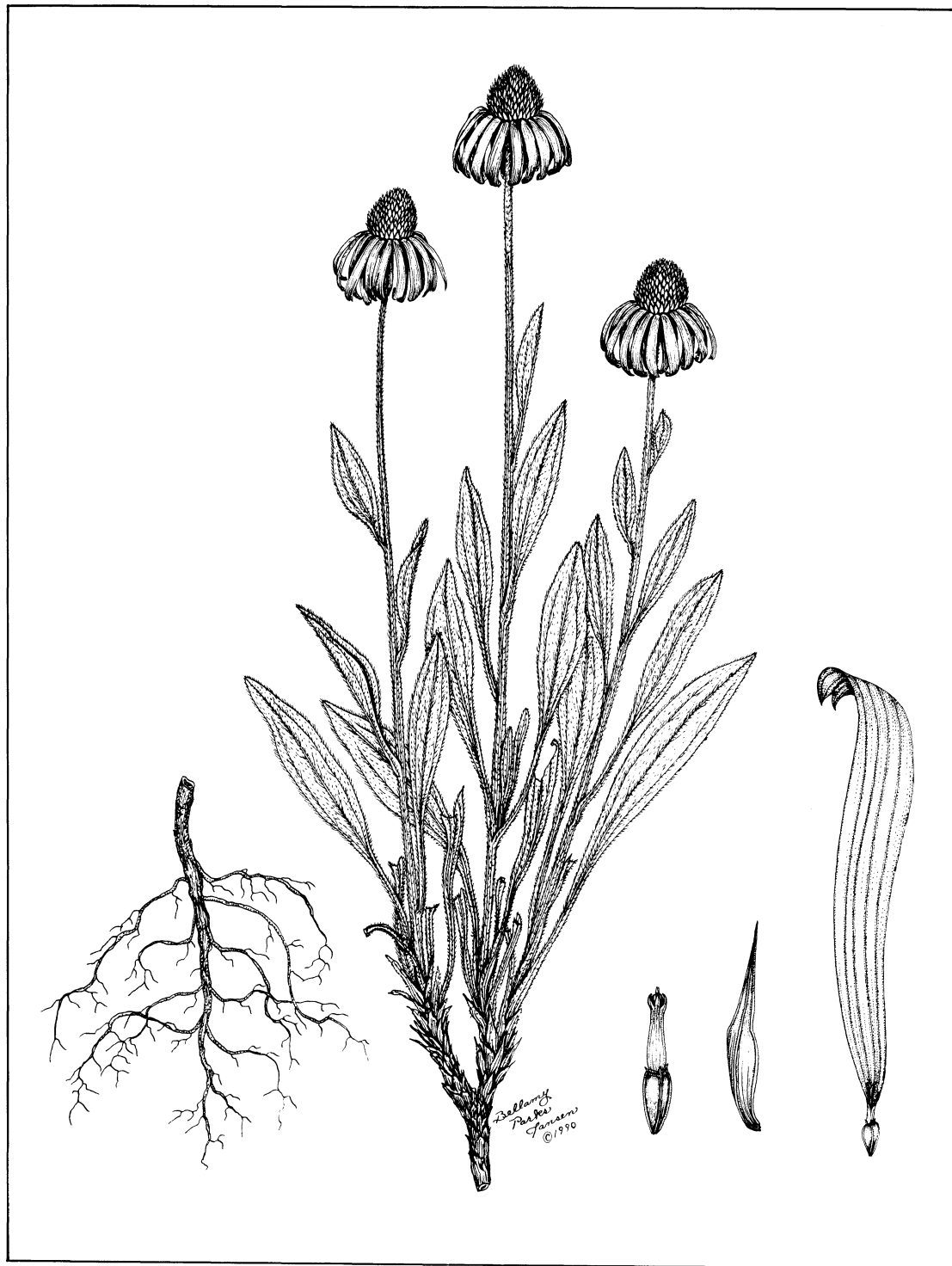


FIG. 4. Icăhpe Hu, Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea angustifolia* DC.

particularly in Germany, have vindicated many of the earlier claims made for the therapeutic value of this plant, including its antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, and anti-exudative activity (Foster, 1985). Researchers have identified a wide range of compounds with diverse pharmacological activity, making *icáhpe hu* a substantial success story as a native medicinal plant.

WINÁWIZI CIK'ALA (TRANSLATION
UNDETERMINED)

The root of *wináwizi cik'ala* has also reportedly been used for toothaches (Gilmore, 1914). The leaves of this plant, wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota* Pursh), were steeped and applied to the ears for earache, and a poultice of the leaves was used for sore-backed horses (Gilmore, 1914). For quick delivery, a woman in labor was given a concoction of the roots (Walks, 1983). The whole plant is also boiled for kidney troubles (Weasel Bear, 1985). The sweet, fragrant smoke of the root (*wináwizi hut-kaḥ*) when dried and burned is used as a sleep aid (Blindman, 1989).

HAṇTÉ (CEDAR)

Haṇté, the cedar (*Juniperus virginiana* L.), is an important medicinal and religious plant among today's Sioux. The leaves are commonly burned at religious ceremonies and the smoke purifies the body, mind, and spirit. The steam of boiling cedar berries is said to cure tuberculosis (Weasel Bear, 1985). Gilmore indicated that the fruits and leaves were boiled and taken internally for coughs; twigs were burned and the fumes inhaled for colds (Gilmore, 1914). Cedar leaves and shavings of the plant were infused for a weak tea to cure stomach troubles (Conquering Bear, 1984).

WACAṆGA (SWEET GRASS) AND
WACAṆGA IYÉCECA (LIKE SWEET
GRASS)

The smoke of sweet grass [*Hierochloa odorata* (L.) Beauv.], or *wacaṅga*, continues to be

valued for purifying participants in religious ceremonies. *Wacaṅga* is braided in one- or two-foot lengths and tied at the ends with string. The braids are burned for incense at sweat bath ceremonies, which many people hold throughout the year. The plant is also burned at *yuwípi* ceremonies, at fasting ordeals, and at the Sun Dance ceremony. The sweet odor of the grass is due to an essential oil of *coumarin*, similar to vanilla. *Wacaṅga* rarely grows at Pine Ridge, so Oglalas obtain it from tribes of Wyoming and Montana. Throughout the northern plains, many medicinal plants are exchanged during the summer powwows. Sweet clover [*Melilotus albus* Desr. and *Melilotus officinalis* (L.) Lam.] also contains *coumarin*. Known among the Oglala as *wacaṅga iyéceca*, the plant occasionally has been hung in the house because of its odor (Walks, 1983) and is one of the many aromatics that are burned as incense for pleasure, purification, or curing (Keller, 1989).

PEJÍHÓTA APÉ BLASKÁSKA (FLAT
LEAFED SAGE) AND *PEJÍHÓTA*
WAŚTEMNA (WOMEN'S SAGE)

Wild sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana* Nutt.) has also been consistently used at religious ceremonies. *Pejíhóta apé blaskáska* commonly grows on the reservation. The plant is not used for matting during the winter months because the scent and freshness of the leaves are missing. For medicinal purposes the leaves are boiled; the tea is used for colds and upset stomach (Walks, 1984). In the past few years, sage tea has been used by an increasing number of diabetic women, who claim that the bitterness of the tea lowers their blood sugar (Weasel Bear, 1985). A lotion of the plant has also been used for skin problems (Red Cloud, 1984).

Pejíhóta waśtemna is little wild sage (*Artemisia frigida* Willd.). Gilmore indicates that women consumed the plant internally when their menstruation was irregular (Gilmore, 1914). Contemporary Oglala women bathe with the plant after monthly menstruation. It is also used as a sop for perspiration, a mild deodorant, and possibly as a sanitary napkin (Keller, 1989).

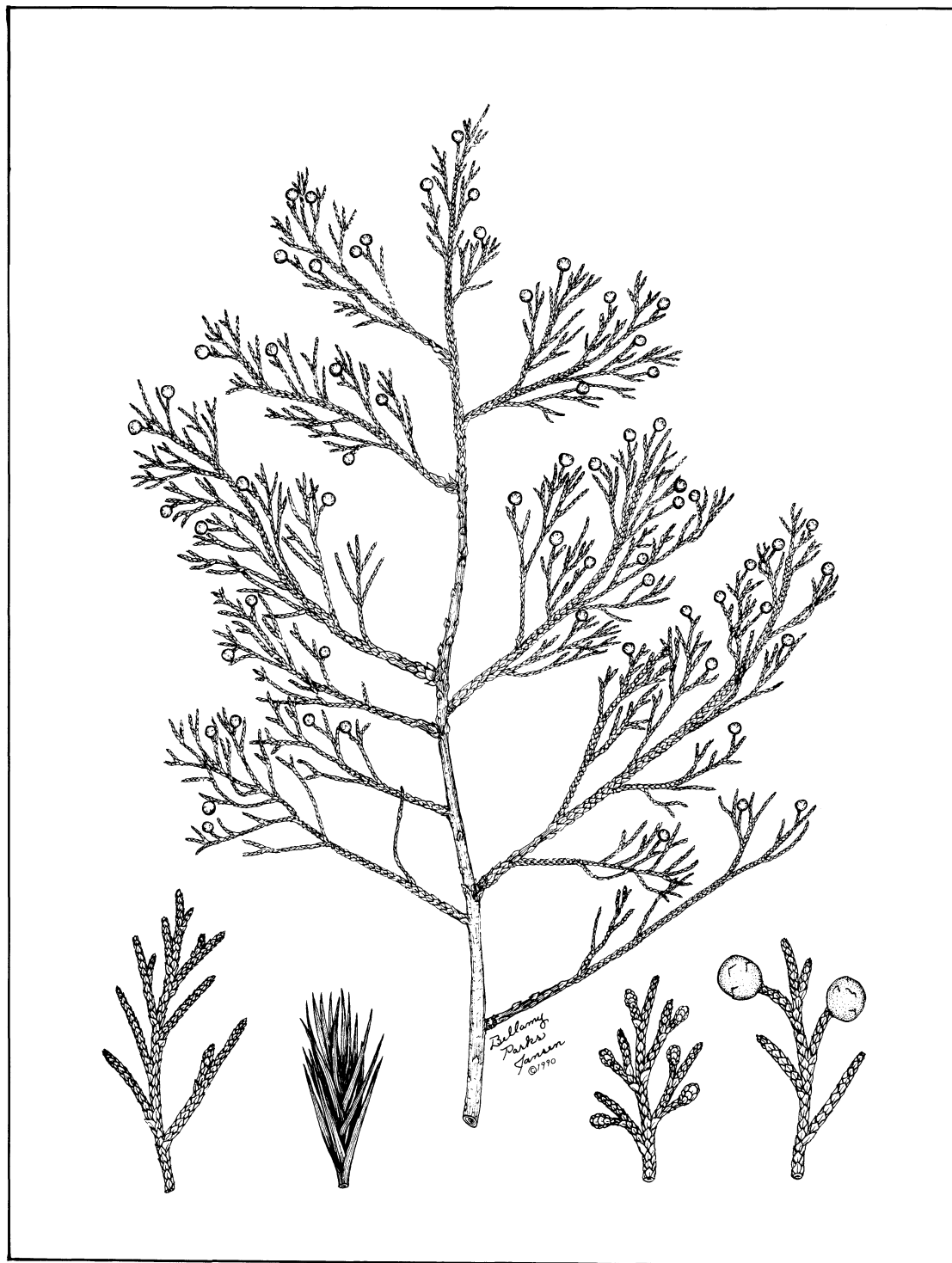


FIG. 5. Hą́tíé, Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana* L.

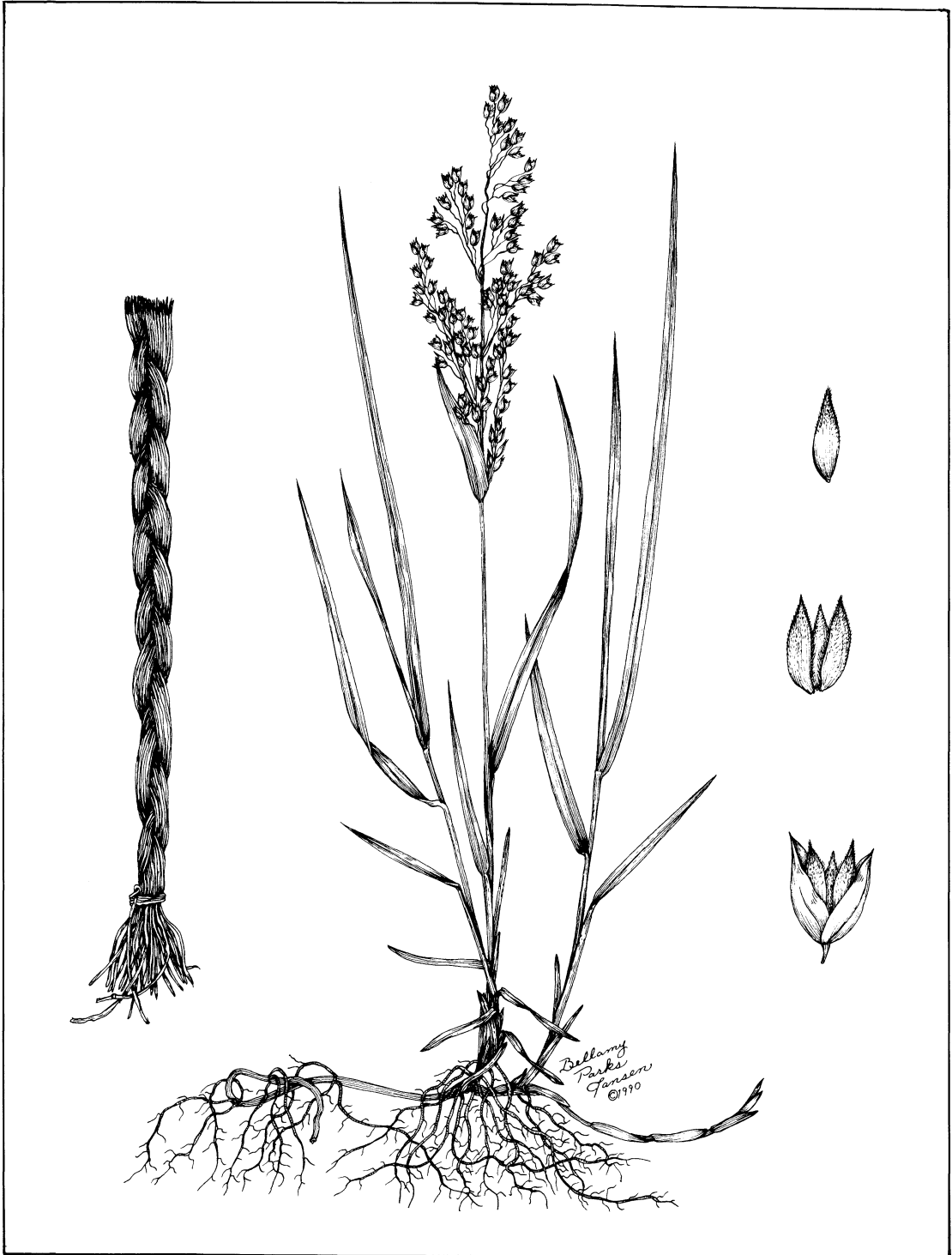


FIG. 6. Wacah̄ga, Sweet Grass, *Hierochloa odorata* (L.) Beauv.

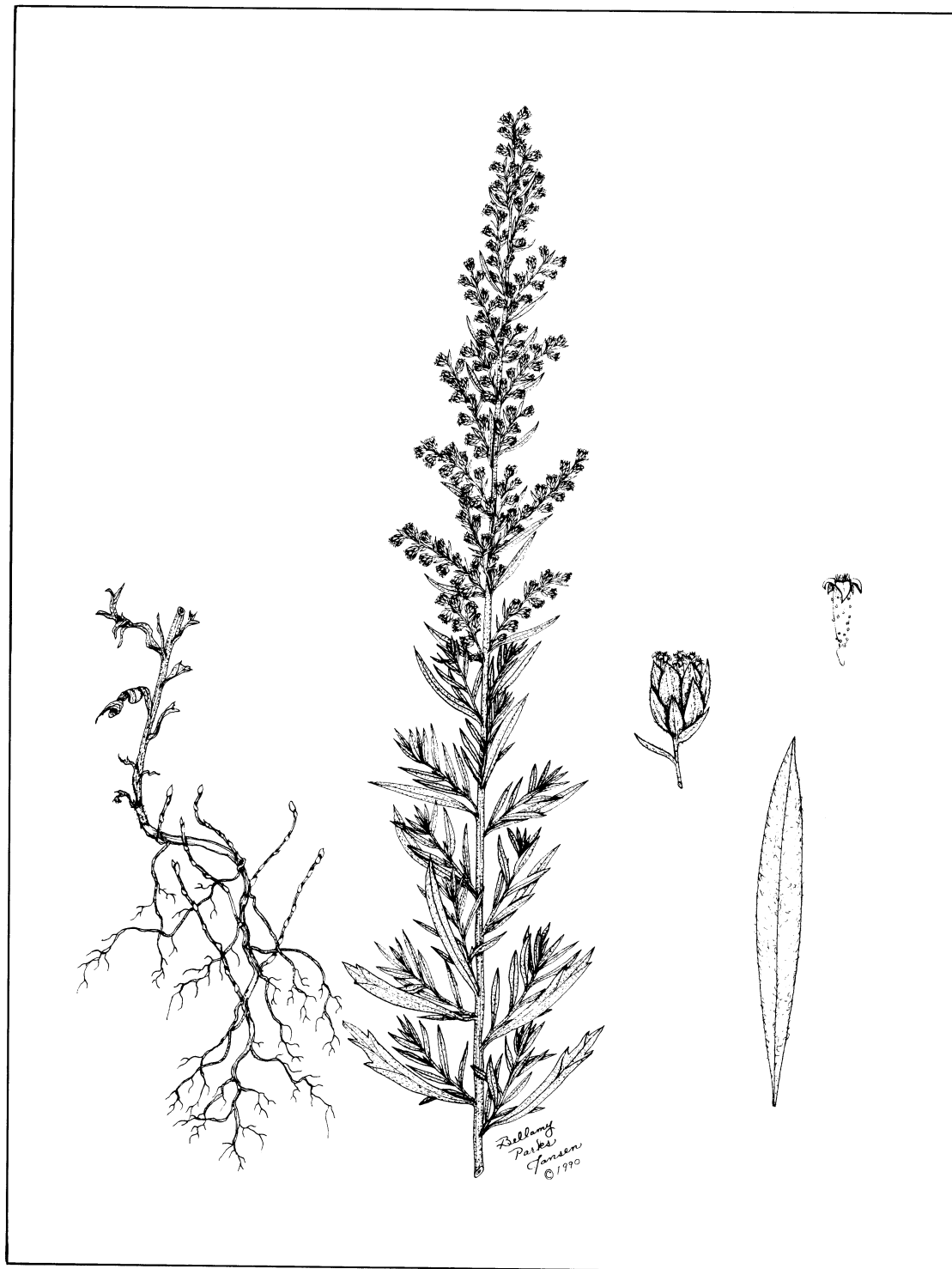


FIG. 7. Pejíhóta Apé Blaskáska, Wild Sage, *Artemisia ludoviciana* Nutt.

Some Lakotas still believe that a woman who is menstruating may suffer a uterine hemorrhage if she comes near an area where any other medicinal plant is being prepared or used. The prepared plant will be rendered powerless and must then be thrown away in a remote area where no one will step over it (Blindman, 1989).

CEYÁKA (MINT)

Although wild mint (*Mentha arvensis* L.) continues to be infused to make a popular traditional beverage, *ceyáka* is occasionally used as a medicine. Gilmore noted that mint tea was sweetened and used to expel gas (Gilmore, 1914). Mint tea has been used for colds (Bear Killer, 1984) and for upset stomach (Conquering Bear, 1984). *Ceyáka* is also used as a sachet to ward off or mask mildew (Keller, 1989). It is commonly found growing along creeks of the reservation.

HOKŚÍCEKPA (BABY'S NAVEL)

The puffball (*Lycoperdon gemmatum* Batsch.) is called *hokśícekpa*, "baby's navel," among the Oglalas because the plant's spores are applied to the umbilicus of newborn infants. The plant is still being used as a styptic for wounds, but some discomfort is involved (Blindman, 1989). Spores were also used for diapering babies (Keller, 1989). Commonly found on the upland prairies, the dried plant is harvested in August and September.

CAŋHLÓGAŋ (HOLLOW STEM) OR WAHCÁZIZI (YELLOW FLOWER)

Gilmore remarked that the Sioux used the sunflower (*Helianthus annuus* L.) for pulmonary troubles and that the heads of the flowers minus the involucre bracts were boiled for a tea (Gilmore, 1914). *Caŋhlógaŋ* is a generic name for many weedy plants. It is currently used along with *wahcázizi*, noted by Gilmore and Buechel, to refer to the sunflower (Gilmore, 1914; Buechel, 1970). An Oglala informant noted that the tea from the flower heads was used for upset stomach and diarrhea (Bear Killer, 1984).

UŋJÍŋJÍŋTKA (ROSE, ROSE HIP)

Gilmore did not mention the wild rose (*Rosa arkansana* Porter) as a medicinal plant among the Oglala. A contemporary Sioux stated that the roots of the plant were used for stomach ailments (Red Cloud, 1984).

PEJÚTA NAŦÍYAZILYA (INCENSE MEDICINE FOR THE HEAD)

An important plant for smoke treatment has been purple mallow [*Callirrhoe involucrata* (T. & G.) A. Gray], known among the Oglala as *pejúta naŦíyazilya*. Gilmore noted that when the dried root was burned, the smoke was inhaled for head colds or used to bathe aching parts of the body. A tea from the boiled root was drunk for internal pain (Gilmore, 1914). Weasel Bear explained that a sufferer from headaches, nose bleeds, strokes, or menstrual problems stands over a charcoal fire on which the tops of the plant are laid, inhaling smoke caught in a blanket that covers the cure-seeker's head. She also stated that the plant had cured the leg of a person injured by a spike. The plant's odor is said to be similar to the smell of coconut (Weasel Bear, 1983).

HEYÓKA TAPEJÚTA (HEYOKA'S MEDICINE)

Red false mallow [*Sphaeralcea coccinea* (Pursh) Rydb.] appears to be no longer used by the Sioux. Gilmore mentioned the juices of the plant as a healing salve for sores and wounds (Gilmore, 1914). The mucilaginous paste of *heyóka tapejúta* was also rubbed on the hands of the heyokas to protect them as they snatched meat from boiling water. Although today's Sioux recognize this upland prairie plant and know of its past use among the heyokas, one of Buechel's informants denied that it was so used (Buechel, 1970). Present day heyokas and sweat bathers sometimes rub themselves with sage rather than *heyóka tapejúta* to protect against scalding (Gibson, 1989).

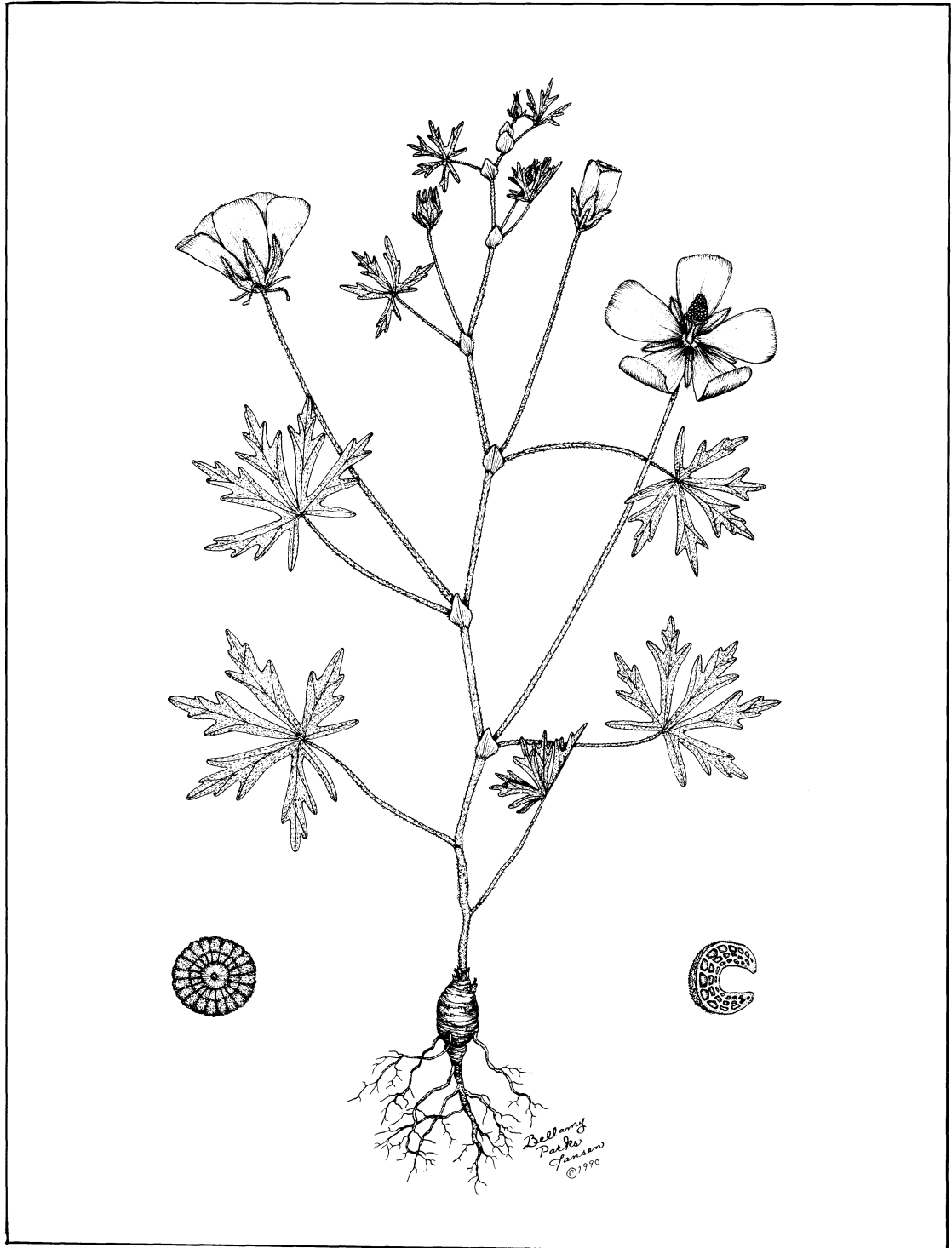


FIG. 8. Pejúta Naíyazilya, *Purple Mallow*, *Callirhoe involucrata* (T. & G.) A. Gray.

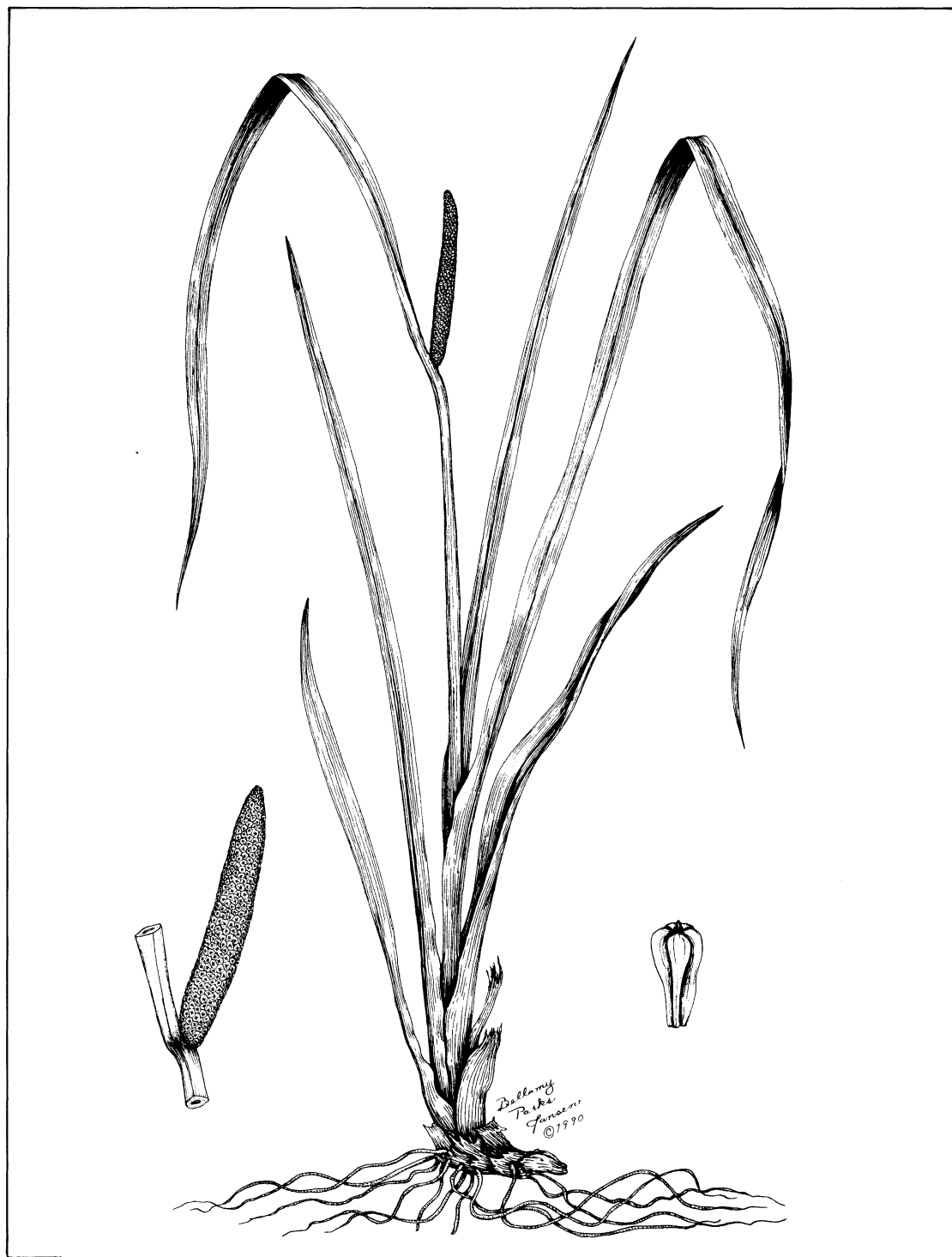


FIG. 9. Siŋkpé Tawoie , Sweet Flag, *Acorus calamus* L.

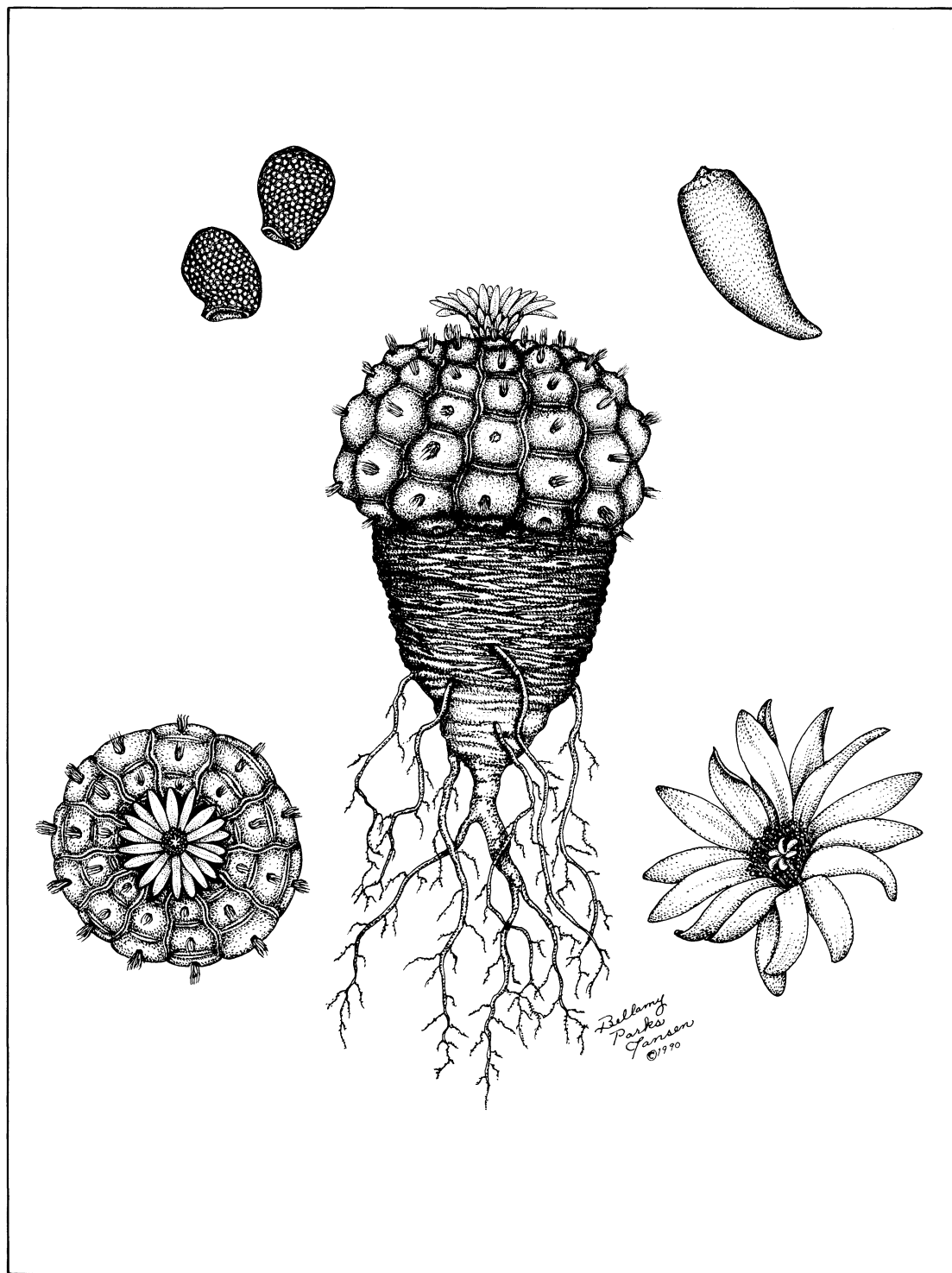


FIG. 10. *Peyote*, *Lophophora williamsii* Lem.

SINKPÉ TAWOTE (MUSKRAT'S FOOD)

The most important traditional panacea medicinal plant among the Oglala is sweet flag (*Acorus calamus* L.). The Sioux call the plant *sinkpé tawoie*, but some of the elders refer to the plant by the English name, "bitter root." This plant of the Arum family grows in the shallows of lakes and rivers and is valued for its aromatic and pungent tasting rhizome. Although the plant has been used to cure almost every known ill, its dominant uses are for cold, congestion, throat problems, and upset stomach. The rhizome is chewed or made into tea. At powwows singers place pieces of *sinkpé tawoie* in their mouths to keep clear voices.

Sinkpé tawoie is also used as a tonic and stimulant, the Sioux often placing pieces in their mouths in order to combat fatigue. The plant is also used externally for sores. The Oglala give two or three doses of tea from the boiled or masticated rhizome to puppies so that they will grow up to be mean watchdogs. The plant is also burned to keep away night spirits. Many elderly Sioux carry a small piece of *sinkpé tawoie* with them as an amulet. *Sinkpé tawote* is an important plant in the medicine man's bag, and it is also commonly used by the people.

In South Dakota, the plant usually grows in the glacial lake country in the northeast, the home of the Sisseton Sioux. The Oglalas have attempted to grow sweet flag on their reservation, notably during the 1930s when it was planted in a lake east of the Pine Ridge Agency, but none remains today, although the plant is known to grow along Bordeaux Creek in the Pine Ridge of northwestern Nebraska, where it is believed to have been planted by Indians (Red Cloud, 1984). The Oglalas obtain most of their supply of *sinkpé tawoie* at powwows.

PEYOTE

Peyote (*Lophophora williamsii* Lem.) is not a traditional plant of the Sioux but was introduced into Pine Ridge between 1904 and 1912. Since the small, spineless, subtropical cactus will not grow in climates colder than its native range in northern Mexico and southern Texas,

Sioux peyotists must obtain their supply by journeying to south Texas or by mail order. Peyote is a powerful hallucinogenic plant that the Indians consider a holy medicine, a gift to the Indian from the Great Spirit. The plant is called *pejúta*, "medicine," by those who consume it; it is often called, *uñhcéla* "cactus," by those who do not.

The Native American Church has formalized use of the plant into an all-night ceremony during which participants normally consume fifteen to twenty plant tops in a powdered form or as a porridge. Peyote tea always accompanies the powder or porridge. Members of the church claim that the "holy herb" will save one's soul and will cure any sickness. Other plants associated with the peyote ceremony are sage and cedar. Different kinds of cedar from diverse geographical areas are tribally exchanged. Peyote prayer meetings are normally held every Saturday night, and on some weekends several meetings occur simultaneously on the reservation. Members of the Church are predominantly full-blood traditional Sioux whose first language is Lakota. Traditional Indians who are non-members often disapprove of peyote because it is not a traditional plant and the ceremony originated elsewhere. Many medicine men do not use or approve of peyote, and only about 2 percent of the Pine Ridge Oglalas are Peyotists. Many members of the church visit other tribes to attend meetings of this pan-Indian religion with adherents in more than thirty tribes in the United States and Canada.

CONCLUSION

Although it is difficult to generalize, it seems that the most frequently used medicinal herbs among the Oglala Sioux are sage, cedar, sweet flag, sweet grass, and peyote. All except peyote are highly aromatic and all except peyote have been continuously used by the Oglalas since considerably before they were settled at Pine Ridge. Two of the traditional plants, like peyote, do not grow on the reservation and must be obtained by trade. The continuing trade in medicinals and the efforts to establish sweet flag

on the reservation indicate considerable cultural stability during a period of great stress and change. The common use of the smoke treatment for healing also represents cultural continuance. While some Sioux associate plant teas and poultices with the chemistry of healing as implied by the Euro-American tradition of medicine, purification by smoke is associated with spiritual healing. Thus the most frequently used traditional plants, the aromatics, which are commonly burned as incense, demonstrate a cultural continuity more significant than just the ongoing use of herbs in a generally curative context.

Amidst Oglala cultural change, the threads of tradition have persisted. Since the 1960s there has been a nationwide revitalization of Indian values among Indians, including a resurgence of traditional religion at Pine Ridge. The continuing use of medicinal plants among the Sioux seems assured, for plants are an integral part of Indian religious life locked into the cultural patterns of religious ceremonies. The traditional fires of the Oglala Sioux have not been extinguished; religious ceremonies have been rekindled from the embers. Indian people still possess knowledge of medicinal plants, where they are found, how and when they are gathered, and how they are used. Many of them are not medicine men, but like the medicine men, they understand the mystical essence of the medicinal plant world. These people are now increasing in number and they are more actively seeking information. At the same time medicine men are using a relatively large number of plants for both pharmaceutical and spiritual cures. To the extent the latter are considered sacred, they cannot be shared with non-Indians, and this writer has tried to avoid trespassing on such beliefs. This paper has tried to show that contemporary uses of medicinal herbs among the Oglala Sioux are one aspect of a culture that is both revitalizing tradition and, like any other living culture, growing and adapting.

NOTE ON LAKOTA SPELLINGS

Because Lakota has, until very recently, been

an oral language, spellings are not as regularized as they are in English. In this article we have followed the most generally used orthography, that developed by the Reverend Eugene Buechel and edited by the Reverend Paul Manhart as *A Dictionary of the Teton Dakota Sioux Language* (1970). The diacritical marks indicate pronunciation and thus distinguish between words that might be confused if transliterated more simply. Some diacritical marks commonly used by Lakota linguists in 1990 have been added to those Buechel used.

Symbols include the acute accent (´) over a vowel, which marks an accented syllable; the straight accent (') after a consonant, which marks a glottal stop; the eta (η), which marks a nasal vowel preceding; and the dot (·) or ligature (·) over a letter, which usually marks gutturalization. The following table indicates how letters used in the Lakota words in this article diverge from the sounds they usually represent in English:

c sounds *ch* as in *chair*
ġ sounds *ch* as in *machen* (German)
h sounds *h* as in *hog* (gutturalized)
η sounds *n* as in *ink*
ḑ sounds *b* as in *bill*
ḑ sounds *p* as in *pill* (gutturalized)
ś sounds *sh* as in *ship*
ḑ sounds *d* as in *day*

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