

December 8, 1969

Dr. Nathan Kline
Rockland State Hospital
Orangeburg, New York

Dear Nate,

It was a pleasure to read the typescript from Nepal describing the experiences of a psychiatrist with the male natives called "Sandus" - natives who are unconventional in dress and behavior, monastic, and depending on the good will of society for survival. They also are users of cannabis, and some of the cannabis rituals are described in detail.

The author presents his data - in a small population (less than 70) collected over 25 years - with an obvious, anti-cannabis bias. Without stating directly, he suggests that withdrawal, dependence, asceticism and strange patterns of thought are related to cannabis use.

The assessment of the effects of chronic cannabis use is our pressing problem. It is difficult to picture this author obtaining reliable data, but the questions that should be answered may be phrased as follows.

1. Given the population of Sandus as described, from what cannabis user population is this sample derived? That is, how many adult males use cannabis now (for how long) or, how many used cannabis over the period of this sample?
2. What is the history of cannabis regulation and availability in Nepal during the past 30-40 years? Sources of cannabis and any data as to potency (user ratings are enough). Can samples of local cannabis be made available for assay?
3. Are there other populations, i.e., criminal, mentally ill, artist, political, known to be cannabis users; with what incidence; and with what degree of dysfunction - if these can be estimated?

4. Are there any physical or medical characteristics common to cannabis users in Nepal?

The document is of interest for its local flavor. Before publication; it needs editing to reduce redundancy; and checking for the proper use of English. The questions raised above may provide the additional data needed to put this effort into perspective.

Again, my thanks for the opportunity to read these notes, and my best wishes for a successful trip.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry

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