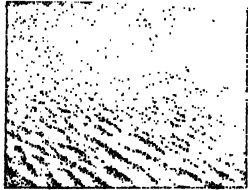


# Turquoise, The Stone That Stole Its Colour From The Sky

By Todd Rowe



"The temple I frequent is high,  
A turquoise-vaulted dome - the sky,  
That spans the world with majesty."  
Omar Khayyam

- Themes**
- Busy/Fastidious/Overwhelmed with all there is to do
  - Big/Small
  - Wealth/Selling/Rarity
  - Structural Problems
  - Injury/Brutality
  - Invulnerability/Vulnerability/Repair
  - Food/Weight
  - Low/Appetite
  - Going Slowly
  - Injustice
  - Wound Up/Unwound
  - Ethnic Minority
  - Servant
  - Vibrant/Colorful/Grey
  - Improved Senses
  - Old/Young
  - Water/Quenching Thirst
  - Foreign/Unfamiliar
  - Vision/Eye
  - Underground/Cave

A proving of Turquoise was performed in Phoenix Arizona at the Desert Institute School of Classical Homeopathy, in the summer of 2002. The proving was conducted by the Society for the Establishment of Research in Classical Homeopathy (SERCH). This is an extract from the full Hahnemannian proving.

The remedy *Turquoise* was chosen for a variety of reasons. Historically, turquoise has had a rich and varied use as a healing agent. It also is a powerful symbol for many cultures. We felt that the gemstone remedies have been neglected in homeopathic literature and needed further study. Lastly, our research centre has been interested in studying desert remedies. *Turquoise* is one of the few remedies that are strongly identified with the desert. We feel that desert remedies have been much neglected in the homeopathic literature and that in the United States, there has been a bias towards East Coast remedies historically.

### Geology And Origins

'Turquoise arises from arid, dusty, stripped-down, skinned-earth places. It occurs almost exclusively in the geography of asceticism, in broken lands of bare rock and infrequent green. Set against the palette of desolation, a piece of turquoise is like a hole open to the sky,' writes Meloy, in *The Anthropology of Turquoise*.

Turquoise is found mostly in China, Tibet, Persia and the American Southwest. Other smaller deposits have been found in Australia, Chile and Afghanistan. The largest source and oldest mines are in Persia. Turquoise has become a symbol of the American Southwest. It is worn by nearly every native of the Southwest as a symbol of relative wealth. In North America, turquoise is almost exclusively limited to the Southwest. Between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, the Cerillos Hills Mines are located and have been the largest producer of turquoise in the United States. These mines have been in use for 1,200 years and were originally mined with bone tools, stone hammers, mauls and axes. Turquoise from these mines would be polished at Chaco Canyon and then distributed throughout the Americas.

For the purposes of this journal, this is a summary article only. More detail can be found in the proving book, which is available through homeopathic booksellers. The proving consisted of 18 subjects who began taking *Turquoise* 30c on 8/1/2002. The proving was double-blinded: neither the provers nor the supervisors (or the proving administrators) knew what the remedy was until the proving was complete.

### Themes

Remedies that come from the desert tend to portray similar themes: big/small, going slowly, old/young, water, minority/servant, vision/eye, underground/cave and foreign/unfamiliar.

A major theme of the *Turquoise* proving was that of wealth or riches. For centuries, turquoise has been used as a symbol of rank and power and thought to inspire leadership. It is said to be the most valuable non-transparent mineral in the jewellery industry. This seems to be a theme of gemstone remedies in general, not just turquoise.

Ideas related to wealth were selling, exclusivity and rarity. These recurred throughout the dreams. Another recurring theme was of individuals charging exorbitant amounts of money, which ties in with another theme of largeness. Much of what was offered to the provers in their dreams was only offered at a price. The idea of wealth was coupled to that of power. The feeling was that wealth signified a degree of invulnerability. When that invulnerability was broken, it was met with feelings of injustice. One of the central dreams in the proving describes this well:

"I saw myself as if I was an actor in a movie and I was also watching the movie; it was set in rural Europe in the 1600-1700s and I was a very rich land-owner with a beautiful home and a large estate. My wife and children and I were happy there, as were the many servants and workers, for I was very kind and generous to everyone. One day, bandit barbarians overran the estate. I don't know what happened to all the servants and workers; my family and I had been captured by these men and were to be punished for being rich; these men were not thieves or bandits who wanted to steal from me; it seemed rather they were here to carry out a sentence or punishment as if it were a crime to be rich. In the beautiful courtyard of my home they had us bound: parents and five children. They wanted to see me suffer most of all so they took my small two-year-old son and hung him. Each child in turn met this same fate, and being restrained and bound I had the most overwhelming feeling of helplessness and injustice, which was almost suffocating. Nothing I said would change what these men were determined to do; my children, my wife and myself were left hanging with hands still bound. There was a feeling of disbelief, mourning, foggy, unclear and detached. I was angry at the injustice and very angry that others died because of me."

The other side of this power was servitude and minority status. Several provers dreamt of hobos (tramps). Many provers had dreams relating to ethnic minorities. The theme of foreign and unfamiliar related to this.

### Central Motion and Core Sensation

The core sensation that ran through the proving was that of injury. This took a variety of forms. Several of the provers were injured during the proving, including one prover who broke several bones. Bruising was found in several provers. Images of healing also recurred throughout the proving. The feeling was that even though one was injured, the condition was repairable. Falling was a particularly prominent form of this injury and represented the central motion accompanying the sensation. This was a recurring theme in the dreams. Also, several provers described faintness on standing and unsteadiness on their feet, with a tendency to fall.

The idea of injury was often combined with the feeling of invulnerability. The prover who broke several bones was stepping down from a ladder (four feet in the air) and felt that in doing so she would not be injured. This also took the form for several of the provers of dreams of narrowly escaping injury. One prover described it as, "Invulnerability: I think that anything and everything is possible."

The concept of injury went beyond the mechanical level. Several provers described relationship break-ups or injuries in relationship. The prover who broke several bones had just determined to break up her relationship at that time. Turquoise was described by ancient cultures as supplying the heart. The substance has been noted historically for its soothing properties and has been said to increase relaxation and reduce hypertension.

'Injury' also expanded to structures, mainly houses. A recurring theme in the dreams was broken down houses that were in need of repair. This was coupled with the theme of repair of these structures. Injuries and repair of vehicles (cars and bicycles) was also seen.

Historically turquoise has been used as a substance to protect the wearer from injury. It was often thought to confer invulnerability during battle. Its colour would indicate the wearer's health. When placed on the bridle of a horse, it was said to protect riders from falling. It also was used to protect relationships from breaking apart.

Sensations noted during the proving that were most prominent included both 'squeezing' and 'stitching'. Several provers noted a squeezing sensation in the back of the neck/head as if being grasped by a hand.

Another important sensation was that of feeling 'wound up'. This was associated with tension and stress. The opposite feeling of 'unwound' was also noted. One prover described it as, "I feel like a rubber band that has been unwound; sense of going more slowly; during the proving it was wound tight; now it is unwound." The feeling of 'unwound' was associated with a feeling of freedom.

### Additional Themes

Vision and seeing was another important theme in the proving. Turquoise has been used historically to improve vision and eyesight as well as curing cataracts. Two of the provers described improvements in eyesight and several noted that they felt as though they needed to change their optical prescription. Another aspect of this theme was that of observing and watching.

The theme of largeness was strong. This was most often coupled with the ideas of food, money and power. In a few provers this was also tied to mania and feelings of expansiveness and euphoria. A few provers also

described smallness. That which was small was described as vulnerable. This is described well in the following dream:

"Tiny kittens or mice had been born and were nestled under my white wool rug; they were little living humps every few inches, barely visible; I was very concerned that with a step I might crush one; They were so small and could only be seen when they moved or hunched up a little as they slept; soft bumps under the rug; they looked so helpless and hurttable."

There was a theme regarding age (both old and young). One prover became depressed during the proving, feeling that he was no longer young and that he was too old. Another prover noted that she felt younger and in particular that her skin was less wrinkled and seemed younger. One prover described it as feeling old and young at the same time.

While depression was a feature, one prover experienced the opposite: elation and euphoria. The busyness and fastidiousness seen during the proving reflects this manic energy. Turquoise has been said to induce hilarity in those who wear it. This raised the question whether this remedy may be useful in manic depression.

Water images recurred throughout the proving. It is interesting to note that the substance turquoise is made through a slow long-term process of water seeping through igneous rock. This may also tie into the theme of underground and cave, as well as the theme of going slowly. The water images were often accompanied by feelings of gushing tidal waves. Urinary symptoms were also noted during the proving. In particular, several provers noticed large amounts of urine after taking the remedy. The substance has historically been noted to be useful for the treatment of bladder problems.

### Generals

Another major theme was that of food and appetite. This was the most surprising outcome of the proving. Eleven of the 18 provers lost weight during the proving, between three to 21 pounds. This was coupled with loss of appetite and easy satiety. Interestingly, the proving of the colour turquoise by Ambika Wauters showed an obese woman who lost weight during the proving. She suggests that turquoise is useful for hypothyroidism. Although it was impossible to determine this from the proving alone, without clinical confirmation, it certainly seemed to bear out this hypothesis.

Images of food and especially gigantic food were recurrent. An example is the following: "Play ends, critics disappear and are seen later with loaded car/tractors full of huge farm food (asparagus as big as trees), being chased by barking dogs; feeling of wonder and wanting to find the big food."

Suddenness was a general quality noted in many of the physical symptoms.

### Physical Characteristics

The organ systems that most were prominently affected included the eye, urinary tract, skin and endocrine systems. Chest constriction and difficulty breathing were often noted, accompanied by a feeling of constriction in the chest. Electrical current sensations were noted in several provers' arms. Several provers reported influenza-like symptoms associated with

*"A Hopi legend tells of their people dancing and rejoicing with the rains. When their tears of joy mixed with the rains and seeped into the earth, this became turquoise."*

squeezing gastro-intestinal pain and vomiting. Acne symptoms were strong and in particular skin symptoms on and around the mouth were noted. This was reflected in the results of Ambika Wauters proving. She also noted turquoise for strengthening and improving the will and as an aid in helping people verbalize what is difficult for them to say.

#### Mental and Emotional Characteristics

Senses were more acute during the proving. This was particularly noted with smell and colour. Vibrant and even neon colours were noted throughout the proving. These seemed to bring a feeling of peace, contentment and even joy. The opposite was also seen in the idea of greyness, which many provers experienced. It is the colour that ultimately makes turquoise valuable.

Depression was prominent in several provers. Weight loss and lack of appetite sometimes accompanies this. Several provers described 'crying like my heart was ripped out'.

Several of the provers noted increased candour and honesty during the proving. They felt like they could more easily speak their truth. At times they were overly blunt.

#### Comparison

The chemical analysis of the substance confirmed high amounts of phosphate, aluminium and copper. This remedy can be compared to these elements, other gemstone remedies and other desert remedies.

#### Colour

Precious stones are about status and power but also 'how humans hold great space in their souls for colour' (Meloy, 127). Turquoise is a phosphate. Phosphates are known for their bright colours. Some mineralogists feel that the blue comes from the copper, while green comes from the presence of iron in the impurities. The addition of zinc creates a more yellow green colour.

Turquoise is a peculiar shade of blue/green. Many have described it as the colour of the water at the seashore or as sky colour. The Pueblo Indians describe turquoise as the stone that stole its colour from the sky. Stones vary in colour; some are more in the sky blue spectrum while others are greener. The most popular stones historically have been more royal blue. The turquoise from Iran is an intense medium blue (robin's egg blue). American and Mexican turquoise is more blue green to light blue. Egyptian turquoise even borders on yellowish green.

Turquoise turns darker and greener with aging or when it dries out. It is also said to lose its coloration when removed from the desert. Nomad merchants were known to hold turquoise in their mouths on long journeys to retain the best colour for selling it at their destination. When turquoise is handled, the natural oils from the skin can give it a beautiful patina.

#### Natural History of Turquoise

Pliny referred to turquoise as 'callais', which comes from the Greek 'kalos' meaning beautiful stone. The word turquoise first appeared around the 13th century. Its name derived from the French word for Turkey, where it was most commonly mined. Turquoise has also been called sky-stone, stone of the sky, fallen sky-stone, stone

of water, stone of blessings, stone of life, good fortune and the gem of the centuries. There is no Latin name for turquoise.

#### Geology

Turquoise occurs in limestone, batholithic and feldspathic granites, shale and trachyte rocks. It is almost universally found only in arid regions, down to a depth of about 100 feet. Higher-grade turquoise is found deeper in the ground. It is often discovered in veins and thin seams of the matrix stone.

Turquoise is a secondary mineral (formed by the alteration of a pre-existing mineral in an igneous rock). Most turquoise is created when groundwater percolates through alumina, apatite (phosphate of lime) and copper-rich minerals in igneous rock. This process takes at least 30 million years, gradually leaving a deposit. Over time, the mineral becomes more dense and the higher the density, the deeper the colour. Most turquoise occurs in igneous rock, although occasionally it is found in metamorphic rocks and some sedimentary rocks. Turquoise is most often found on the south slopes of mountains. In winter southern slopes receive more sunlight and snow tends to melt more rapidly there. It is this runoff that forms turquoise.

#### Chemistry

The most commonly described chemical structure for turquoise is  $\text{CuAl}_6(\text{PO}_4)_4(\text{OH})_8 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . Turquoise is a hydrous phosphate of copper and aluminium. It is the only phosphate to find a place amongst the precious stones and is typically unusual in the absence of silica (although our lab analysis showed that our sample contained some silica).

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## **Symbolism & Uses of Turquoise, by Todd Rosen.**

**Protecting from injury:** Aristotle said that many kings were never permitted to wear turquoise because it prevented the wearer from being killed. He also claimed that it was useful to treat the stings of scorpions and venomous reptiles when ground into a powder. Turquoise was said especially to preserve eyesight from external injuries when it was superimposed on the eyes (Poggie, 13). It would protect its wearer from sudden falls by taking on the injury.

**Protection from evil:** Turquoise was said to drive away pains that resulted from evil influences. The Pima Indians of Southern Arizona believe that the loss of turquoise is by magic and that the one who loses the turquoise will be afflicted with an ailment, which will only improve by treatment from a medicine man. He places another turquoise in water and gives this as a medicine to drink. The Hopi and Navajo believe that turquoise will bring good fortune and bring the favour of the Gods. There is an ancient Persian saying that turquoise helps a person intuit the difference between good and evil. Tibetan folklore indicates that turquoise helps to ward off the evil eye and would banish unpleasant dreams.

**Destroying poisons:** In a mineralogical text of the 15th century from India, 'the turquoise quickly destroys every poison, whether vegetable or arising within a living body, or a mixture of or both.'

**Indicator of wearer's health:** Many believed that turquoise indicated the state of the wearer's health. It would turn pale when someone sickened or died and regained its full colour when worn by someone who was healthy. It was also said that by wearing it, one would have a long life. A fading stone also was said to indicate a lover's unfaithfulness.

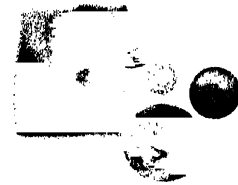
**Indicator of rank and power:** The Aztecs wore turquoise to denote rank. In India, it was said that if you wore a turquoise ring on your smallest finger and looked at it after looking at the new moon, it would bring wealth. Indians thought that turquoise brought the spirits of the sea and sky to bless the hunter. An arrow shot from a bow inlaid with turquoise was said never to miss. Turquoise has never been as popular in Europe.

**Cooling nature:** Its cooling nature is said to help with high blood pressure and to purify the blood and benefit the liver (Tibetan medicine). Dipping it in water was said to help patients with bladder problems. Ancient healers would make it into a paste to treat ailments of the hip. It was believed to be useful in stomach disorders and to cure internal bleeding. Turquoise was said to relax the mind, calm the emotions and ease stress. It could strengthen the mind and bring a feeling of serenity. It was thought to be useful for any type of mental illness.



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