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THE USE OF HEMP AND OPIUM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This article informs on the production and employment of hemp-preparations and soma-juice (possibly identical with *Cannabis sativa*) in Indian literature, especially Sanskrit and Tantric texts; on the preparation, social usage and intoxicating effects of opium and the three ways of hemp-preparation mainly used in India: ganja, bhang and charas; and finally on employment and medical effectiveness of hemp and opium preparations in Indian Medicine.

Among many young people in the West, India has a reputation of being a country where 'trips' are cheap and easily available. This notion is to some extent true, because since times immemorable the use of drugs has been widely spread all over the country, and the attitude towards drugs has largely been a positive one.

We do not know when the use of drugs started in India. There is no evidence concerning drugs in the early civilization of the Indus Valley. However, after the coming of the Aryans in approximately the middle of the second millenium B.C. we may suppose that especially hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) was used by the people.

In Sanskrit literature the products of hemp are considered as means and ways to achieve spiritual power. The most common names for hemp in Sanskrit are ganja, *sivapriyā* ('dear to Siva'), *siddhapatri* ('preserver of realization'), and *vijayā* ('conqueror'). The word ganja today is still commonly used, and also vijaya in modern Hindi still has the meaning 'the intoxicating hemp plant'. The Bengali name for hemp is *siddhi*, meaning 'last realization', and is also used quite often.

The Rigveda, the oldest Sanskrit text known to us, deals extensively with soma, the intoxicating drink of the gods. The soma plant, which is possibly identical with *Cannabis sativa*, was even deified, and Soma was – after Indra and Agni – the most important god of the Vedic pantheon. In the case of Soma the anthropomorphism was less developed than in the instances of the other two gods, the soma plant and

its juice being ever present before the Rigvedic poets (MAJUMDAR ed. 1951:374). The whole ninth book of the Rigveda is devoted to Soma – the deity and the plant – and the preparation of the soma juice: „The amsu (shoot or stalk) is pounded between stones called adri. The pressed juice, in the act of passing through the filter of sheep's wool, is called pavamana (or punana), i.e. 'flowing clear'. The juice thus purified and as yet unmixed is called sukra or suchī (bright), also suddha (pure). This filtered soma next flows into jars (kalasa) or vats (drona) where it is mixed (technically 'cleansed') with water and milk to sweeten it. The Soma has three kinds of admixtures (asir) – with milk (go), sour milk (dadhi) or barley (yava). The admixture is poetically described as a bright robe. Soma is thus pressed three times a day; the morning libation is the first drink of Indra, the midday one belongs to him exclusively, while the evening pressing is for the Ribhus (men)... The exhilarating power of Soma is appreciated. It is a divine drink conferring immortality on gods and men. It is called amrita, the „draught of immortality". Soma has curative powers also. As a deity, Soma is a wise seer, a poet, who stimulates thought and inspires hymns. The fact that Soma invigorates Indra in his fight with Vritra is repeated so often that Indra's exploits and cosmic actions come to be attributed to him..." (ibid: 375).

The exhilarating juice of the soma plant constituted the favourite drink of the gods, who gained splendour, strength, knowledge, and possession and feeling of truth as a result of consuming the beverage. Soma, though mildly inebriating, was an invigorating beverage, much less intoxicating than the popular surā, which was probably distilled from grain and which was condemned as „leading people to crime and godlessness' (ibid: 393).

As we said already above, it cannot be claimed with absolute certainty that soma is identical with *cannabis sativa*. However, apart from the similarities in the way of preparing soma and modern bhang, it seems to be a fact that should be taken into consideration, that soma grew on mountains, even if its true origin was said to be in heaven, from which it was brought to earth by an eagle. Hemp nowadays grows throughout India, but its original habitat were the Himalayas and Kashmir. Large scale cultivation is at present permitted for example in certain districts of the Indian State Uttar Pradesh, but – as is emphasized in publications of the Indian Government – the plant is cultivated only „for its fibre and not for the production of hemp drugs" (Maharashtra Gazetteer – Botany, 1961:24). However, hemp is cultivated as a narcotic drug on smaller scale in many parts of India.

Another early document concerning the use of drugs in India is the „Aphorism of Yoga” by Patāñjali from the 4th century B.C. The author says that the perfect state of the mind, inducing a Yogic condition, can be obtained through four different factors, the most important one being drugs, followed by mantras (prayers, magic formulas). By the general term ‘drugs’ mostly hempdrugs are meant.

In the literature of the Classical Age the intoxicants are mentioned in connection with the castes which may use them. There are few expressis verbis references to hemp. In the Lañkāvatara Sūtra, for example, it is excluded from the list of intoxicants. – One of the greatest travellers of those days, the Chinese HIUEN TSANG, visited India in the seventh century and mentions a number of intoxicant drinks: syrup of grapes and sugar-cane for members of the Brahmin castes and for Buddhist monks; ‘wine’ made from grapes and sugar-cane for the Kṣatriyas, the members of the warrior class; Vaiśhyas, traditionally referred to as merchants, were permitted to drink strong distilled drinks, whereas the intoxicants of the lower castes are not specified and could include everything (MAJUMDAR ed. 1954: 574). However, this division gives us only an idea of the generally approved behaviour, whereas there is little doubt that hemp drugs were in use even among higher castes. The great poet Kālidāsa repeatedly describes queens and other highborn ladies enjoying aphrodisiac drinks, which were nothing else but hemp preparations, as hemp was and is considered to be the most popular aphrodisiac.

In spite of all positive indications there may remain some doubt as to whether the plant from which the intoxicating soma was prepared really was *cannabis sativa*, and whether hemp drugs were later on used freely by members of all castes. No such doubts are possible when we consider the Tantric literature. This literature is generally known under the name of Āgamas. They are books dealing with the mythical worship of god Śiva and his female counterpart Śakti. Tantrism is considered as alternative knowledge, or rather as rival of the strong traditional apparatus of Vedic Hinduism, which is represented by Brahmins and other high Hindu castes.

In Tantric literature, the most common synonym for bhāṅg – a hemp preparation – is śivapriyā, i.e. ‘dear to Śiva’. Mahādeva (‘the great god’, i.e. Śiva) is believed to use hemp drugs, and he is said to be fond of snakes, as their poison can be used as a disintoxicant after the abuse of bhāṅg. Allegedly it is even possible to cure drug

addicts by administering small quantities of snake poison.

In the Rudrayāmala Tantra, a text from Kashmir from the 8th century A.D., a 'cocktail' of five different herbs is mentioned: The same quantities of vilva (*Aegle marmelos*), nirgundi (*Vitex negundo*), tulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*), and durva (*Cynodon dactylon*) have to be mixed together with a double quantity of vijāyā, i.e. hemp. Sacrificing this mixture of the five plants while mantras were recited, and afterwards drinking it, was said to have the effect of „making man godlike and immortal". In the Rudrayāmala, vijāyā is addressed in the following way, "You are worthy of being worshipped, you are the guide in the path of yoga, you are the conqueror of three worlds, grant me the real fruit of samādhi (i.e. the highest stage of yoga)" (PILLAI 1978).

In tantrism the so-called pañchamakaras, i.e. "the five M", are well known as a way to advance spiritually. They are five actions, whose Sanskrit names all start with an 'm': mudra (gesture), matsia (fish), mansa (meat), madhya (wine), and maithuna (sexual intercourse). The first four are nothing but preparative actions for the last one, sexual intercourse, which is considered as having cosmic dimensions, the woman being regarded as goddess Śakti, performing the eternal act of creation with Śiva. The first four 'm' are considered as nothing but sexual stimulants, and it seems strange that hemp, as the most effective aphrodisiac, should not be mentioned. But there is a simple explanation for this apparent omission: The panchamakaras are performed in a quick succession, one after the other, whereas hemp is already taken one and a half hours before the intercourse, and therefore is not included in the list of the five 'm'. (BHARATI 1970: 251).

There are three different forms in which *Cannabis sativa* is used in India, viz.ganja, bhang, and charas:

- The ganja consists of the unfertilized resinous flowering shoots of the female plant grown on the plains. The narcotic principle which is only developed in the unfertilized flowers entirely disappears after fertilization has taken place.
- For bhang the leaves and fruiting shoots of the plant that grows on the lower hills of the Punjab are needed. This plant does not develop its narcotic properties until the fruits are mature. Another name for bhang is siddhi. It is used to.

make the well-known intoxicating drink hashish, or to prepare majun (majum), a sweet-meat.

- Charas is the cannabis resin which exudes naturally on the leaves, stems, and fruit of the plants growing on the mountain tracts at an altitude of 6000 to 8000 feet. It is powerfully narcotic and is smoked together with tobacco (NADKARNI 1910: 78). ¹⁾

Ganja contains about 20%, bhang 10%, and charas 40% of pure resin. The resin contains the active principles – three or four very powerful cannabinoids, besides fatty matters and chlorophyll.

The ways of consuming the three hemp preparations are different. Ganja is smoked. It is rubbed together in the palm with a little tobacco and a few drops of water. Into by clay pipe (chillam) or the water pipe (hookah) at first a little tobacco is placed, then a layer of the prepared ganja, and finally more tobacco. The pipe is lit, and usually passed around from one man to another. This mode of smoking is not particular to smoking ganja. In the villages the clay pipe and even cigarettes or bide (small leafcigarettes, in which the paper is substituted by leaves of e.g. *Bauhinia Racemosa*) are smoked in the same way. Pipe or cigarettes are never touched with the lips, but they are held between the second and third fingers of the right closed hand, and the smoke is drawn through the opening between thumb and forefinger. There are elaborate regulations concerning the social rules, which castes are permitted to share a pipe with each other without bringing about ritual pollution. Younger people nowadays do not smoke ganja only in pipes, but they often remove the tobacco from ordinary cigarettes and fill them with a ganja-tobacco-mixture.

The intoxication after smoking ganja ensues almost immediately. The effects are heaviness and a pleasant laziness. The outer world appears to be far away and a little unreal, leaving the hemp-smoker beyond the reach of earthly troubles and withdrawn into a strange world of peace and happiness. If the quantity smoked is not too much, a person after smoking ganja may very well continue his daily chores, if they are of the type of pulling a cycleriksha, or something similar. Heavy hemp smokers usually look thin and emaciated, and have little energy, but they also show a certain degree of immunity against diseases. However, once they get sick, they are difficult to cure as medicines have little effect on their system. (FUCHS 1950: 362).

Charas is also smoked together with tobacco. It is less easily available than ganja and bhang, and is often used for medical purposes, for example to produce sleep in cases of insomnia, in which opium is contraindicated. Charas does not cause nausea, constipation or headache as opium does. It is valuable in curing sick headaches, malarial and periodical headaches, whooping cough, asthma and dysuria; it increases appetite and it is aphrodisiac. For asthma and tetanus the dose of the extract is from 1/4 to 2 grains.

Another very common way of using hemp is in form of bhang or siddhi. There are different ways of preparing a drink of bhang. NADKARNI (1910:79) gives two recipes: „Three tolas (one tola is 13,996 grams) weight of bhang are well washed with cold water, then rubbed to powder, mixed with black pepper, cucumber and melon seeds, sugar, half a pint of milk and equal quantity of water”. This is considered sufficient to intoxicate an habituated person; half the quantity is said to be enough for a novice. This way of preparing bhang is chiefly used by the Muslims of the better classes, whereas many Hindus prefer a simpler way of preparing the drink: The same quantity of bhang is washed and ground, mixed with black pepper, and a quarter of cold water is added.

The intoxication caused by either of these beverages „is of the most cheerful kind causing the person to sing and dance, to eat food with great relish and to seek aphrodisiac enjoyments. The intoxication lasts about three hours when sleep supervenes. No nausea or sickness of stomach follows, nor are the bowels at all affected. Next day there is slight giddiness and vascularity of the eyes, but no other symptoms worth recording” (ibid).

Bhang is also used for preparing sweets. Majum or majun is a hemp confection made of sugar, butter, flour, milk and bhang. One can buy it sometimes in sweet shops, beautifully wrapped in silver tinfoil paper. It is prepared in the following way: „Four ounces of siddhi and an equal quantity of ghee (clarified butter) are placed in an earthen or well-tinned vessel, a pint of water is added, and the whole warmed over a charcoal fire. The mixture is constantly stirred until the water all boils away, which is known by the crackling noise of the melted butter on the sides of the vessel. The mixture is then removed from the fire, squeezed through cloth while hot, by which an oleaginous solution of active principles and coloring matter of the hemp is obtai-

ned; the leaves, fibres etc. remaining on the cloth are thrown away. The green oily solution soon concretes into a buttery mass and is then well washed by the hand with soft water, so long as the water becomes coloured. The colouring matter and an extractive substance are thus removed and a very pale green mass of the consistence of simple ointment remains. The washings are thrown away as these are intoxicating and producing constriction of the throat, great pain and very disagreeable dangerous symptoms. The operator then takes two pounds of sugar and adding a little water, places it in a pipkin over the fire. When the sugar dissolves and froths, two ounces of milk are added; a thick scum rises and is removed; more milk and a little water are added from time to time and the boiling continued about an hour, the solution being carefully stirred until it becomes an adhesive clear syrup, ready to solidify on a cold surface; four ounces of tyre (new milk dried before the sun) in fine powder are now stirred in and lastly, the prepared butter of hemp is introduced, brisk stirring being continued for a few minutes. A few drops of attar of roses are then quickly sprinkled in and the mixture poured from the pipkin on a flat, cold dish or slab. The mass concretes immediately into a thick cake which is divided into small lozenge-shaped pieces..." (NADKARNI op.cit: 80-81).

The taste of this preparation is sweet, and the odour very agreeable. It is supposed to be fascinating in its effects, producing „ecstatic happiness, a persuasion of high rank, a sensation of flying, voracious appetite, and intense aphrodisiac desires". The resulting intoxication is said to promote talkativeness.

Apart from its stimulating qualities, Indian hemp is anodyne, antispasmodic and anaesthetic. It is used by Indian doctors, who do not yet treat their patients with factory-made tablets and syrups only, „in bowel complaints, as appetisers, as a nervous stimulant and as a source of great stayingpower under severe exertion. The juice of the leaves is applied to the head to remove dandruff and vermin; dropped into the ear it allays pain and destroys worms; it checks the discharge in diarrhoea and gonorrhœa and is diuretic. The powder of the leaves applied to fresh wounds promotes granulation; a poultice of the plant is applied to local inflammations, erysipelas, neuralgia, etc., as an anodyne or sedative. The dose of the leaves is 40 grains internally. Externally in the form of poultice it relieves haemorrhoids; a poultice of the fresh bruised leaves is useful in affections of the eye with photophobia; also applied to relieve pain and swelling in orchitis... The leaves mixed with sugar and well



fried in ghee and with black pepper are administered in chronic diarrhœa; with poppy seeds the extract is given in dysentery; with asafœtida it is given in hysteria. In cases of chronic colic, wonderful effect is produced by the administration of one grain of the extract in combination with 1/4 grain of ipecacuanha... The oil extracted from the seeds is used for rubbing in rheumatism" (ibid).

Against diarrhœa, indigestions and loss of appetite a special preparation may be used, which is called jatuphaladya churna: Equal quantities of nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, cardamon, tejapatra leaves (*Laurus cassia*, flowers of *Mesua ferrea*, camphor, sande-wood, sesamum seeds, bamboo manna, flowers of *Tabernaemontana coronaria*, chebulic and emblic myrebalans (*Phyllanthus* spp.), long pepper, black pepper, ginger, leaves of *Pinus webbiana*, plumbago root, cumin seeds and the seeds of *Embelia ribes*, are mixed with purified bhāng equal in weight to all the above ingredients, and sugar twice as much as bhāng. All ingredients are powdered and well mixed.

In indigestion and loss of appetite with nausea and vomiting another medicine, called jvalanala rasa, is used: Equal parts of carbonates of potash and soda, borax, mercury, sulphur, long pepper, black pepper, Piper chabe, and ginger, fried leaves of *Cannabis sativa* equal to all the above ingredients, and root of *Moringa pterygosperma* half the weight of bhāng, are powdered; the mixture is then soaked for three days in each of the following fluids, namely, a decoction or fresh juice of the leaves of *Cannabis indica*, the roots of *Moringa pterygosperma*, and *Plumbago rosea*, and then it is dried in the sun. Then the mass is roasted lightly and made into a pill mass with the juice of the leaves of *Wedelia calendulacea*. The dose is half a drachm (one drachm or dram is 1,772 g), to be taken with honey.

Madana modaka is prepared in the following way: Ginger, long pepper, black pepper, *Rhus succedanea*, pachak (*Saussurea lappa*) root, coriander, rock salt, zedoary root, leaves of *Pinus webbiana*, bark of *Myrica sapida*, flowers of *Mesua ferrea*, ajowan (*Carum roxburghianum*), seeds of *Seseli indicum*, liquorice root, seeds of *Trigonella faenum graecum*, cumin and nigell seeds are used in equal parts; hemp leaves with flowers and seeds fried in clarified butter is used equal in weight to all other ingredients; sugar equal in weight to hemp is used to prepare a syrup. Into the syrup the other substances are added in fine powdered forms, and made into a confection. Lastly, clarified butter, honey, powdered sesamum seeds, cardamom, cinnamon,

tejapatra leaves and camphore are added in equal quantities. Boluses of about 80 grains each (one grain 0,0648 g) are formed and used in cough, chronic bowel complaints and impotence.

Among some of the tribes the hemp plant is used for medical purposes, even if the medicines are not prepared in as elaborate a way as described above. The Bhils of Jhabua District, for example, smoke hemp to reduce the sensation of pain, when a broken bone has to be set. The Minas of South Rajasthan make a jaundice patient smoke ganja and believe that it helps to cure his disease, etc. The hemp drug may also be used to gain courage. FUCHS describes for example the jhenda-festival of the Balahis, an untouchable caste of Madhya Pradesh: A tall pole is set up, its bark removed, and the pole made slippery with soap. A bag with a coconut and a little money is tied to its top. The Balahi women stand in a circle around the pole, whereas the men stand at some distance. All of a sudden the men make a rush at the pole, and one of them tries to climb up and reach the bag at the top, while the other men shield him and themselves against the vigorous blows of the women who try to ward them off. To bolster up their courage some women have taken a glass of country liquor or a pinch of bhanga... (see FUCHS op,cit: 300).

There are religious practitioners, sadhus, and magicians who take hemp regularly. Many consider the drug a help to get into a mood for their performances, and for preparing themselves to get possessed by their tutelary deity. This state of possession may be necessary to be able to diagnose a sickness in a person, or to recognize the identity of a spirit, by whom another person got possessed. Only if the identity of this supernatural being has been revealed, an exorcism can be performed and it can be forced to leave the body of the person it got hold of.

Religious practitioners who deal with spirits mostly belong to the low-Hindu castes, and in fact especially those groups have the reputation of being addicted to strong drinks, tobacco, and drugs. 'Bhangi' for example is the name of the sweepers, an untouchable caste of the country. There are even deities, who are especially worshipped by the lower strata of Hindu society, who are supposed to be fond of hemp, and who need a pipe (chillam) with ganja in it as part of the offering. In Maharashtra two such examples are Bahiroba and Mhaskoba, who are considered as belonging into the particular pantheon of Siva (KARVE 1968: 186).

However, although it is usually emphasized that members of the low castes take drugs, BHARATI reports that the Brahmins of and around Benares and Allahabad take hemp regularly every Friday, although this was not part of the formalized ritual. We ourselves came across a number of high-caste Hindus and Jainas, who were very fond of hemp. Generally speaking, the high-caste Hindus prefer to take hemp in the form of bhang, as a drink, whereas the smoking of ganja is considered as 'dirty'.

The second famous drug of India is opium. But whereas ganja and bhang are commonly used and easily available, the case is different with opium. Among the Indians themselves the use of opium is much less common than the use of hemp drugs, and in fact mostly only those people, who grow *Papaver somniferum* on their own fields, can easily get hold of the drug, for which they otherwise would have to pay much money – which especially members of economically weak low castes cannot afford. Cultivators of *Papaver somniferum* have to keep exact records concerning the quantity of opium-output of their fields, and have to hand over theoretically each and everything to the government officers. But the cultivators say that they always manage to keep small quantities for their own use – normally only as medicines in case of sickness – and that they even manage to sell substantial quantities to private brokers, who naturally pay much more for the opium than the government. The tribals of Rajasthan, for example, where quite a lot of *Papaver somniferum* is grown, put a little opium into the dishes that are served to sick people. Thus even children get into early contact with the drug, and the inhabitants of the villages estimated that in tribal settlements of about 300 to 400 people, where opium was easily available, about four of five people took the drug regularly and „would have to die if they could not get it” (see VETSCHERA 1974: 329).

Opium was in India in use among large numbers of Muhammadans and Rajputs, especially during the time of the Mughul Empire.²⁾ The Rajputs would double the dose on the eve of a battle. „Its stimulating effect animated them with extraordinary courage and bravery to fight more violently and heroically” (MAJUMDAR ed. 1974: 683). Of the Mughul emperors HUMAYUN and JAHANGIR were especially fond of opium. HUMAYUN is considered the worst of the early Moghuls. He was a brave warrior, but incapable of planning ahead and unfit to rule, due to his many weaknesses. One of them was that after a successful stage in a campaign, or the capture of a pleasant fort, he invariably found the first fruits of victory more appealing than

any possible long-term gains, and would happily settle down to enjoy for months on end his favourite pleasures of wine, opium (which he took in pellet form with rosewater) and poetry. (GASCOIGNE 1971: 47).

HUMAYUN'S love for opium was only surpassed by his grandsons' JAHANGIR'S love for alcohol. JANHANGIR was not the worst of his family – two of his brothers and his son died of drink. When JAHANGIR reached the stage, of drinking 20 cups of double-distilled spirits a day, his doctor told him that he would be dead within six months. The emperor managed to reduce the quantity to six cups of milder drinks and a daily allowance of opium of the weight of 14 berries.

The quality of Indian opium depends largely on the area of cultivation of the plants. Well known is Patna opium from Bihar, Malwa opium from Rajasthan, and Benares opium from Uttar Pradesh. The opium that is procurable in the bazaars is always more or less adulterated and cannot be used as a medicine. As the drug is very strong, only pure opium may be used for medical purposes, as otherwise the effect cannot be predicted. As a medicine, opium is narcotic, stimulating, anodyne and antispasmodic. It is used in India in many diseases, such as rheumatism, tumours, cancer, carbuncles, abscesses, ulcers connected with leprosy, syphilis or scrofula. The antispasmodic action of opium is made use of in cases of spasmodic affections of the bowels, violent colic and the passage of all stones. It is taken orally, in the form of suppositories or in enema. It is used in the case of diabetes and in affections of the uterus. Opium is often advantageously combined with camphor, or with astringents like catechu (betelnut), in the treatment of diarrhoea.

A simple opium liniment, made by rubbing a drachm of bazaar opium in two ounces of any bland oil (coconut, sesamum, etc.) is useful for many external or local diseases, like chronic rheumatism, lumbago and other muscular or neuralgic pains, spasms and bruises, enlarged glands, etc. Great relief in eye-troubles may be obtained by fumigating the eye with the vapour of boiling water to which some grains of opium have been added. Toothache may be relieved by a grain of opium put into the hollow of the decayed tooth. Earache frequently yields to a mixture of equal parts of laudanum and any bland oil inserted into the outer passage of the ear on a piece of cotton wool. A soothing application in the case of painful piles, where there is much swelling and heat, is a soft rice poultice, sprinkled over with laudanum, or smeared

over with opium liniment..

Some well known opium preparations are the following:

Grahani kapata rasa: One part nutmeg, borax, prepared talc and Datura seeds, and two parts of opium are made into two-grain pills with the juice of *Poederia foetida*. It is used in chronic diarrhœa and dysentery.

Another medicine for diarrhœa is dughavati: 24 grains each opium and aconite, 10 grains prepared iron, 12 grains prepared talk, are beaten with milk into a mass, of which four-grain pills are made. Along with the treatment, the diet is restricted to milk only, water and salt being prohibited.

In diarrhœa with high fever, sambunatha rasa may be administered: Orpiment, realgar, cinnabar, white arsenic, borax aconite and alum each one part, mercury, sulphur and opium each seven parts, are mixed together and soaked for seven days in each of the following fluids: juice of the leaves of *Cannabis sativa*, *Vitex negundo*, *Datura sp.* and nim (*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.)

As an aphrodisiac a medicine called *akaradi churna* may be used: Two tolas pellitory root, ginger, kakkola seeds, saffron, long pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and red sandalwood are mixed with eight tolas opium. The mixture is passed through a cloth, then the same quantity of sugar is added to the powder. The dose is 6 to 12 grains, taken with honey.

Against diabetes a mixture of each one part of camphor and musk, with each four parts of opium and mace is recommended (NADKARNI op,cit. pp. 282-286).

The innocuous seeds of poppy are used as food. They are considered nutritive and useful in cough and asthma. Especially in Maharashtra they are an important part of the masala, i.e. the mixture of spices that is added to a typical curry. Poppy seeds are also used in the preparation of sweets and for other dishes.

The capsules of the poppy are slightly narcotic. Empty capsules are broken up and boiled in water. The liquid is drunk in cases of sleeplessness. Allegedly this decoction promotes talkativeness and diminishes or even destroys the sexual power, if taken in too large quantities.

It has already been mentioned earlier that of the two drugs – hemp and opium – the latter is much less in use throughout India. It seems that the drug is more popular among the Muslims, whereas the Hindus generally avoid taking it. Opium addicts are not held in high esteem. A proverb says, „A Dom, a shopkeeper, and an opium eater are not to be trusted” (BRIGGS op,cit: 147). The Dom are an untouchable caste; a Dom has the reputation that „crime was his native avocation” (ibid: 146). Shopkeepers are generally considered as cheats who are always only after their own advantage, and the opium eater is considered of being able to do anything to get hold of his quota of opium.

NOTES

1) Against this, BRIGGS describes bhang as the „dried leaves and small stalks of *Cannabis indica* smoked or eaten in sweets”; charas as „the resin exudations of *Cannabis indica*, smoked or eaten in sweets”; and ganja as „flowering or fruiting shoots of *Cannabis sativa*”.

2) Mughul – or Moghul – monarchs ruled in India from 1526 to 1707.

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