

Antiquity Of Tobacco

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Abstract

Tobacco and humans have had a long-standing relationship, much like food and tea. Many uses of tobacco appear to have originated from snuffing, as snuffing implements are among the oldest tobacco-related items yet discovered. In this review we have compiled together various history of tobacco from its origin to deepening of its roots in different regions in different forms. Purpose of this review is to provide detailed history of tobacco.

Key words – Tobacco, History, Addiction

Introduction

Tobacco and humans have had a long-standing relationship, much like food and tea. Many uses of tobacco appear to have originated from snuffing, as snuffing implements are among

the oldest tobacco-related items yet discovered. Tobacco was chewed, eaten, drunk (like tea), smeared on bodies (to kill lice and other parasites), and used in eye drops and enemas, in addition to being sniffed and smoked. It was also blown into the faces of warriors before battle, over agricultural fields before planting, and over ladies before sex. Tobacco was thought to have medical benefits, such as analgesic and antibacterial properties, and could be used to treat a number of ailments. Tobacco was often offered to gods in religious rituals. *Nicotiana tabacum* and *Nicotiana rustica* are the Americas' oldest plants, having evolved in the Andes near Peru and Ecuador. People first learned about these plants, as well as other species like tomatoes, potatoes, maize, cacao, and rubber, when they travelled from Asia to the American continents beyond the Bering Straight land bridge around 18 000 years ago. Tobacco use had spread over the American continent and Cuba by the time Christopher Columbus landed in 1492[1]

Tobacco and tobacco-related products have a 6,000-year history. Tobacco, or *Nicotiana tabacum*, is a plant belonging to the *Nicotiana* genus, which is related to the toxic nightshade and was originally only found in the Americas. When Columbus first set foot on the new continent in 1492, he was greeted enthusiastically by Native American tribes who brought him presents of fruit, food, spears, and other items, including dried tobacco leaves. Those leaves, which Native Americans have been smoking for medical and religious purposes for over two millennia, were not edible and had an unique odour. However, Columbus quickly discovered that dried tobacco leaves are a cherished possession among the Indians, since they frequently bartered for them and offered them as gifts. Tobacco was planted around practically all of Portugal's trading outposts in the 15th century, with plenty for personal use and presents. By the mid-nineteenth century, they had begun commercially growing tobacco in Brazil;

it became a highly sought-after commodity that was transported throughout European and American ports. Tobacco plants and tobacco use were imported to nearly every country in Europe by the end of the 16th century. Tobacco was snuffed or smoked according to personal choice, and doctors said it had curative powers. Some, like Nicolas Monardes in 1571, went so far as to write a book outlining 36 diseases that tobacco was said to heal.[2]

Tobacco was first brought to Europeans by the Spanish about 1528, and by 1533, Diego Columbus had listed a tobacco dealer from Lisbon in his will, demonstrating how swiftly the trade had grown. Because of its valuable medical powers, the French, Spanish, and Portuguese dubbed the plant "holy herb." [3]

In 1559, the French envoy to Portugal, Jean Nicot, sent samples to Paris. Nicot brought tobacco leaves and seeds to Francis II and his mother, Catherine of Medici, with orders to use it as snuff. Snuff was said to have "marvellously alleviated" the king's persistent headaches (perhaps sinus problems). (However, after a reign of less than two years, Francis II died on December 5, 1560, at the age of seventeen.) Herbe de la Reine (Queen's herb) was first cultivated in France in 1560. By 1570, botanists were referring to tobacco as Nicotiana, notwithstanding André Thevet's claim that he, not Nicot, was the first Frenchman to bring tobacco to France. Historians doubt this, although Thevet was the first Frenchman to bring tobacco to France[4]

In the late 16th century, tobacco was introduced to the Ottoman Empire.[5]

In 1633, Sultan Murad IV outlawed smoking in the Ottoman Empire. When his successor, Ibrahim the Mad, abolished the ban, it was replaced with a tax. "Tobacco has now become exceedingly popular in all of Islam's lands," Damascene jurist Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi remarked in 1682. It has been utilised by and committed to people of all kinds... I've even seen little children as early as five years old engage in it." "A number of women greater than the men, sitting along the bank of the Barada River," a Damascene townman noticed in 1750. They ate, drank, smoked, and drank coffee, just like the males.[6]

In the seventeenth century, tobacco was brought to India.[7] Since at least 2000 BC, cannabis has been smoked in India.[8] The Atharvaveda is the first to mention it (compiled c.1200 BC). Smoking, dhumrapana (meaning "drinking smoke"), has been practised for at least 2,000 years, while fumigation (dhupa) and fire offerings (homa) are advised in Ayurveda for medical purposes and have been practised for at least 3,000 years. Other ingredients, such as clarified butter (ghee), fish offal, dried snakeskins, and various pastes moulded around incense sticks and torched to disperse the smoke over large distances, have been used to perform fumigation and fire offerings. Inhaling smoke as a treatment for a variety of ailments was not limited to cannabis, but also included a variety of other plants and therapeutic herbs compounds that are said to be beneficial to one's overall health Chillums, or pipes with variable length stems, were used to smoke before modern times. Cigarette smoking has nearly completely supplanted dhumrapana today, but dhupa and homa are still practised. Beedi is a modern descendant of the old dhumapana, a sort of handrolled herbal cigarette made of cloves, crushed betel nut, and tobacco, with a low tobacco content.[9]

Tobacco has been known to have harmful consequences for over 1000 years. In the 16th century, three contemporary monarchs, King James I of England, Shah Abbas of Persia, and Mughal emperor Jahangir of India, all recognised tobacco's deleterious consequences and

attempted to prohibit its use. "A custom unpleasant to the eye, hateful to the nose, damaging to the brain, and deadly to the lungs," King James had also said about smoking. Jahangir had even issued decrees outlawing cigarette smoking. Khalil Pasha was stricter, issuing an order prohibiting tobacco smoking, stating that "anyone discovered smoking tobacco will have his lips cut off and his eyes removed.". Russia had likewise enacted anti-smoking laws in 1014 Hijri.[10]

In India, former rulers (such as Jahangir) and religious leaders have enforced tobacco prohibitions at various times in the country's history. Smoking was forbidden for Sikhs by the famous Indian Sikh Guru Gobind Singh. "Wine is bad, Indian hemp (bhang) is awful, but tobacco is bad for all generations," he remarked[11]

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