Marihuana: Professor Roger Adams

The term “marihuana” is commonly used to represent any part of the hemp plant or extract therefrom which induces somatic and psychic changes in man.

The hemp plant has been known since remote antiquity, having originated in central Asia and spread into practically all countries of the world. For centuries, the fiber of the plant has been used for clothing and rope; the seed have been pressed for oil. The oldest known reference to the hemp plant is in a Chinese treatise, “Rh-yu,” written in the fifteenth century B.C. That hemp contains an intoxicating principle has also been known for centuries and records of this fact date back to 1000 to 1500 B.C. The medicinal action is mentioned in Sanscrit, Hindu and other medical treatises published about the beginning of the Christian era. Hundreds of other references during the past nineteen hundred years discuss the physiological action of this plant.

Hemp is an herbaceous annual growing three to eighteen feet in height, depending on soil and climate. Botanically it belongs to the genus Cannabis, of which there is only a single species, Cannabis sativa, occurring in a few varieties; Cannabis indica is one of these. When the female plant is about to flower, the tops, which have large quantities of hairs, become covered with a multitude of pluricellular glandulose hairs. These appear as minute glistening points and are so numerous that the tops appear to be shining with dew. The tops are very sticky and when pressed emit a strong mint-like smell. The resin often spreads to the surface of the leaves or branches. It is largest in amount when flowers begin to appear and continues...