



Article

Mugwort Culture and its Applications in Physical and Mental Healing

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Abstract: The document explores the profound influence of ancient Chinese myths of Fuxi and Nuwa on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), particularly in the context of mugwort culture and its applications. Fuxi and Nuwa, as the creators of humanity and protectors of mankind, are deeply connected with the origins and development of TCM. Their legends have inspired the creation of acupuncture and the exploration of herbal medicine, including the use of mugwort. The document also examines the positive impact of these myths on the theoretical foundation, practical origins, and the shaping of the humanistic spirit of TCM. Furthermore, the document discusses the global applications of mugwort, including its use in Japan for medicinal pillows and moxibustion therapy, in South Korea for cosmetics and skincare products, and in Southeast Asian countries for moxibustion sticks, patches, footbaths, and essential oil. It also touches upon the acceptance of moxibustion products in Canada and Australia, where traditional Chinese medicine has been legalized and clinics are increasingly using mugwort products. The document concludes with stories of mugwort's role in cultural heritage and rural revitalization, as well as its significance in the fight against AIDS among 108 American patients. It highlights the cross-cultural exchange and collaboration between Eastern and Western medical communities in exploring the potential of mugwort as an adjunct therapy for AIDS. The event of California's first Mugwort Culture Festival is also mentioned, which aimed to promote cultural exchange and cooperation between Chinese and Western medicine.

Keywords: Mugwort Culture; Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) ; Cross-cultural Exchange

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1. The relationship between Fuxi and Nuwa and wormwood, and its influence on Chinese medicine

1.1 Introduction

In the grand narrative of ancient Chinese mythology, Fuxi and Nuwa occupy an important position. They are not only the first gods of the Chinese nation, but also have left a profound mark in many fields. For a long time, people marveled at their great achievements in creating human beings and expanding territory, but often ignored the inextricable links between them and traditional Chinese medicine. Their legends have injected a steady stream of impetus into the birth and evolution of traditional Chinese medicine.

1.2 The Mythological Legends of Fuxi and Nuwa

Fuxi and Nuwa are two very important figures in ancient Chinese mythology, carrying the deep memory of the origin and development of the Chinese nation. They are not only the stories passed down from mouth to mouth, but also the important carrier of Chinese culture inheritance, which has had an immeasurable impact on the philosophy, art, religion and many other fields of the later generations, and also left a strong mark in the development process of traditional Chinese medicine.

1.2.1 The Mythological Legend of Fuxi

Fuxi is an extremely important mythological figure in ancient Chinese myths and legends. He is respected as "the head of the Three Emperors" and "the ancestor of humanity". He and Nuwa are called the ancestor of the Chinese nation. According to legend, his mother, Huxley, conceived after Lazer stepped on the giant's footprints and gave birth to Fuxi, who had a human head and a snake body. Fuxi had the status of the god of creation. He looked up to the sky, looked down to the geography, and drew eight diagrams to explain the changing laws of heaven and earth. He also invented the fishing net, taught people to fish and animal husbandry, and promoted the transition from the primitive gathering life to fishing, hunting and animal husbandry. He not only had a profound impact on the creation of culture and civilization, but also made outstanding contributions in the field of medicine. According to the records in the Imperial Century, Fuxi "tasted a hundred medicines and made nine needles" and pioneered acupuncture therapy. In addition, Fuxi also accumulated rich knowledge of medicine through tasting hundreds of herbs, which provided valuable experience for the development of Chinese medicine in later generations. These legends are still widely revered today, reflecting the profound influence of Fuxi as the "ancestor of humanity" on Chinese culture.

1.2.2 The Mythological Legend of Nuwa

Nu Wa is the great goddess of creation in ancient Chinese mythology and is respected as one of the first gods of the Chinese nation. According to legend, she created human beings by

making small clay figures out of loess and water in her own likeness, and allowed them to multiply through the marriage system. In the disaster of the collapse of heaven and earth and the flood, Nuwa made up the sky with five-colored stones, cut off the turtle and held up the four poles of the sky with four legs, killed the black dragon, and soothed the flood, saving mankind. She also created Musical Instruments such as seer and Sheng reed, which enriched the spiritual life of mankind, and was revered as the God of marriage, laying the foundation of the human marriage system. The legend of Nuwa not only reflects the ancient people's interpretation of human origin and natural phenomena, but also shows the greatness and wisdom of women in matriarchal society. In addition to her contributions to culture and social institutions, Nuwa also had a profound influence in the field of medicine. According to the records in the *Century of the Emperors*, Nuwa "prepared the hundred medicines of Shennong". She laid the foundation for the development of Chinese medicine in later generations by tasting hundreds of herbs and distinguishing their medicinal properties. Her wisdom and practical spirit make her one of the pioneers of traditional Chinese medicine culture. At the same time, the legend of the goddess patching the sky also symbolizes her protection of human health, and her image is still widely praised today, becoming an important symbol of Chinese culture.

1.3 The Relationship Between Fuxi, Nuwa, and Mugwort

Regarded as the ancestors of Chinese civilization, Fuxi and Nuwa are said to have created the basic laws of human existence and played a crucial role in warding off natural disasters and protecting human health. Although in ancient Chinese mythology, there is no direct relationship between Fuxi, Nuwa and wormwood. But delve deeper into the roots of traditional Chinese medicine culture and folk customs, and you will find that there are inextricable links between wormwood and the ancient wisdom represented by these two ancestors.

Firstly, from the perspective of folklore, Fuxi and Nuwa were the protectionists of mankind, and they were always committed to helping mankind resist natural disasters and diseases. In traditional culture, wormwood has always been regarded as a spiritual herb with the effect of driving away evil spirits and avoiding epidemics, which is in line with the mythological theme of Fuxi and Nu Wa protecting human beings. Every Dragon Boat Festival, people have the custom of hanging wormwood, its purpose is to drive away evil to avoid the epidemic, pray for health and peace. This culture of exorcism may have been formed under the influence of the mythological subjects of Fuxi and Nuwa, because in ancient legends, their images were often associated with protecting human beings from disasters and diseases, and became the spiritual support in people's hearts to resist disasters.

Secondly, from the symbolic meaning of life reproduction and protection, Fuxi and Nuwa are mythological figures who create human beings and open the inheritance of life, and their bodies symbolize the continuation of life and health. Wormwood is used in traditional Chinese medicine to warm the meridian, dispel cold, regulate qi and blood, especially in gynecological diseases (such as irregular menstruation, abortion) has an important role,

which coincides with the "life guardian" image of Fuxi and Nuwa. The myth of Fuxi and Nuwa, bearing the Chinese nation's original cognition of human origin, reproduction and survival wisdom, is an important source of national cultural genes.

Thirdly, Nuwa, as the originator of medicine, is considered to be one of the discoverers of herbs. According to legend, she taught humans to use herbs to cure diseases. Although wormwood is not explicitly mentioned in the myth, wormwood, as an important medicinal plant, may be regarded as part of the knowledge of herbs taught by Nuwa, and may also be regarded as the discoverer and disseminator of the value of wormwood for medicinal use. Similarly, it is said that Fuxi invented the prototype of acupuncture, and moxibustion is an integral part of acupuncture therapy, with wormwood as the main material. This inheritance relationship may suggest that there is some indirect but profound connection between wormwood and Fuxi's contributions in the field of medicine, as if it is the continuation and echo of ancient wisdom at different levels.

1.4 The Positive Impact of Fuxi and Nuwa's Myths on TCM

In the brilliant starry sky of Chinese civilization, Fuxi and Nuwa, as the core characters of the creation myth, are not only the ancestors of human reproduction, but also have a profound and mysterious connection with the origin of traditional Chinese medicine. Just like two invisible but tough silk threads, they weave the ancient and wise web of traditional Chinese medicine.

1.4.1 Laying the Theoretical Foundation of TCM

First, the enlightenment of yin-yang concept. Fuxi looked up at astronomy, looked down at geography, took things far away and bodies near, and created eight diagrams. The seemingly simple symbol combination of eight trigrams contains profound philosophical thoughts and cosmological views, which has become an important cornerstone for the construction of the theoretical system of traditional Chinese medicine. In the theory of traditional Chinese medicine, the theory of Yin-yang and five elements occupies the core position. The opposites, dependencies, vicissitudes and transformations of Yin and Yang, and the five elements, which explain the physiological and pathological phenomena of the human body, guide the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The Yin and Yang Yao in eight diagrams is the embryonic form of Yin and Yang theory. The dry is heaven, the kun is earth, the earthquake is thunder, the sun is wind, the kan is water, the distance is fire, the gen is mountain, and the fen is ze. Based on natural phenomena, the eight trigraph divides all things in the world into two categories of Yin and Yang, reflecting their basic properties and mutual relations. This profound insight into the laws of nature and the universe provides a philosophical framework for TCM to understand human life activities.

According to Chinese medicine, everything in the world can be divided into Yin and Yang, and the human body is no exception. The physiological function of human body, pathological changes and the diagnosis and treatment of diseases can not be separated from the guidance of yin-yang theory. In the human body, the upper part is Yang, the lower part is Yin; The

body surface is Yang, the body is Yin; The back is Yang, the abdomen is Yin; The six fu-organs are Yang, the five viscera are Yin and so on. Only when Yin and Yang are in harmony and balance can the human body stay healthy. Once Yin and Yang are out of alignment, disease will follow. This concept of Yin and Yang is in the same line with the Yin and Yang thought in Fuxi's eight trigram, which reflects the profound enlightenment of myth to the theory of traditional Chinese medicine.

The second is the prototype of the whole concept. The eight basic phenomena of nature, such as heaven, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountains and zeroes, correspond to the viscera, meridians, qi and blood of the human body, and build a whole model of the interrelation between man and nature. This holistic concept of "unity of nature and man" has become one of the core ideas of traditional Chinese medicine theory. Traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes that the human body is an organic whole, each internal organs, tissues and organs are interrelated and influence each other, and the human body is also closely related to the external environment. The change of seasons, the change of climate, and the difference of regions will have an impact on the physiology and pathology of the human body. Therefore, in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, Chinese medicine pays attention to the whole, taking into account the internal and external factors of the human body, in order to achieve the purpose of treating diseases and restoring health. The myth that Nuwa kneaded the earth to create man also implies the close connection between man and nature, and that man is a part of nature and interdependent with nature, which further strengthens the holistic concept of Chinese medicine.

1.4.2 The practice of traditional Chinese medicine began

Firstly, it is said that Fuxi was inspired by sharp objects in nature to stimulate the human body to produce wonderful reactions, and invented the prototype of acupuncture. He used tools such as bone needles and stone needles to stimulate acupuncture points in the human body to treat diseases. This great invention laid the foundation for the development of TCM acupuncture therapy. With the passage of time, acupuncture therapy has been developed and improved, forming a complete theoretical and technical system. Moxibustion is an important part of acupuncture therapy, with wormwood as the main material. The warm stimulation produced by wormwood burning can penetrate into the human body through acupuncture points, and play a role in warming meridians, harmonizing qi and blood, and fuzheng and dispelling evil. The legend of Fuxi's invention of acupuncture not only reflects the ancients' spirit of exploring human physiology and disease treatment, but also provides inspiration and enlightenment for the development of TCM acupuncture in later generations.

Secondly, Nuwa was regarded as the protector of mankind in mythology. In order to save mankind from disease, she laboriously searched for herbs. According to legend, she tasted hundreds of herbs, distinguished medicinal properties, and imparted the efficacy and use of herbs to humans, opening the way for humans to use herbs to cure diseases and save people. Although there is no clear record of the specific herbs Nuwa discovered in the myth, this legend reflects the ancient people's understanding and exploration of herbs to cure diseases. In the long history of the development of Chinese medicine, the application of herbal medicine occupies an important position. Through long-term practice and summary, Chinese

medicine has accumulated rich knowledge of herbal medicine and formed a huge Chinese medicine system. The theory of sexual taste, sutra, efficacy and indications of herbal medicine is gradually improved in constant practice and exploration. The legend of Nuwa's search for herbs inspired later generations of doctors to continue to explore and study herbs and make contributions to the cause of human health.

1.4.3 Shaping the humanistic spirit of TCM

The first is the benevolence of doctors who are compassionate. As the ancestors of mankind, Fuxi and Nuwa showed a selfless spirit of compassion in their care and protection for mankind. In the traditional Chinese medicine culture, the doctor's benevolence is one of the core values. Traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes that doctors should be patient-centered, care for patients' physical and mental health, and do their best to relieve patients' pain. This kind of spirit of compassion is in accord with the spirit conveyed by the fairy tales of Fuxi and Nuwa. In the process of treating diseases, doctors should not only use exquisite medical skills, but also give patients humanistic care, so that patients feel warmth and hope. Just as Nuwa sought herbs in order to save mankind, doctors of traditional Chinese medicine, with the same compassion, strive to study medicine for the health of patients and save the dying and heal the wounded.

Secondly, the innovative spirit of exploration. Fuxi created the eight trigui, invented acupuncture, and Nuwa searched for herbs. These mythological stories all show their courage to explore the unknown and innovate. This innovative spirit has also been crucial in the development of TCM. The continuous development of TCM theory and practice is inseparable from the courageous exploration and innovation of successive generations of doctors. From the Huangdi Neijing laying the theoretical foundation of traditional Chinese medicine, to the establishment of the syndrome differentiation and treatment system in the Treatise on Febrile and Miscellaneous Diseases, to the formation and development of various medical schools in later generations, every progress is inseparable from the in-depth thinking and innovative practice of traditional medicine. They continue to sum up experience and explore new treatment methods and drugs, injecting a steady stream of vitality into the development of traditional Chinese medicine. The innovative spirit contained in the fairy tales of Fuxi and Nuwa inspired later generations of doctors to break through the tradition and promote the development of TCM.

The myth of Fuxi and Nuwa has exerted a profound and positive influence on Chinese medicine from many aspects, such as theoretical basis, practical origin and humanistic spirit shaping. These mythological stories are not only the treasure of Chinese culture, but also an important cultural support for the development of traditional Chinese medicine. In the modern society, we should dig deep and inherit the wisdom contained in these ancient myths, so that the ancient medical system of TCM will glow with new vitality and vitality in the new era.

1.5 Conclusion

To sum up, there is a close and profound relationship between the myth of Fuxi and Nuwa and traditional Chinese medicine, which provides rich nutrients for the development of traditional Chinese medicine from different dimensions. At the theoretical level, the yin-yang

concept and the whole concept in Fuxi's eight baguaries provide the core framework for the construction of the theoretical system of TCM, so that TCM can understand the law of human life activities from both macro and micro perspectives, and then guide the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. In the field of practice, Fuxi invented the embryonic form of acupuncture and the legend of Nuwa's search for herbs, which opened the way for TCM to explore the application of acupuncture and herbs, laying a solid foundation for the medical practice of later generations, and countless doctors have continuously improved and innovated on the basis of their predecessors, so that these treatment methods are passed down to the present day. In terms of humanistic spirit, the spirit of compassion and courage to explore shown by Fuxi and Nuwa has become the soul of Chinese medicine culture, inspiring generations of Chinese medicine practitioners to uphold the benevolence of doctors, constantly break through the tradition, and make unremitting efforts for the cause of human health.

In modern society, traditional Chinese medicine is facing new opportunities and challenges. With the growing demand for health and the re-examination of traditional culture, the value of traditional Chinese medicine has become increasingly prominent. At this time, dig deep Fuxi and Nuwa the wisdom contained in fairy tales is particularly important for the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese medicine culture. We should take these ancient myths as a link and integrate their cultural essence into modern TCM education, scientific research and clinical practice, so that TCM will continue to maintain its unique charm in the wave of the new era, radiate new vitality and vitality, and make greater contributions to the health and well-being of mankind around the world.

2. Application of mugwort in other countries

2.1 Japan

2.1.1 Mugwort Medicinal Pillow

In recent years, "mugwort medicinal pillows" have become popular in Japan. These pillows are made by crushing and drying mugwort leaves, and they are believed to have effects such as eliminating odors and insects, relieving headaches, and reducing fatigue. Japan imports over 2,000 tons of mugwort from China annually. Additionally, Japan has a more mature understanding of the basic research and application of mugwort's active components, and its mugwort industry market is relatively large. Mugwort essential oil and other deep-processed products are sold at high prices on Japanese online platforms.

2.1.2 Moxibustion Therapy

Moxibustion is widely used in Japan and has developed into a unique culture. Japanese moxibustion often involves rolling mugwort fluff into small granules the size of rice grains by hand and placing them directly on the skin to ignite and perform moxibustion therapy, a method known as "direct moxibustion." This method is believed to enhance the body's immune system and balance the constitution, and it is applicable to various conditions, including fatigue, rheumatic pain, menstrual irregularities, and urinary system diseases.

2.1.3 History of Japanese Moxibustion:

First Stage: Japanese moxibustion originated from China. In 514 AD, acupuncture studies were first introduced to Korea, and in 550 AD, Chinese moxibustion was transmitted to Japan through Korea. Initially, moxibustion was used in the Japanese imperial court. Over time, it spread from the court to the general public and was widely adopted. Based on traditional Chinese medicine, it developed significantly in Japan, forming a unique Japanese-style moxibustion method focused on heat penetration (as shown in the figure below). In Japan, both men and women are expected to undergo moxibustion four times in their lives: at seventeen or eighteen years old, moxibustion is applied to the Fengmen acupoint to prevent colds, which ancient Japanese believed to be the root of all diseases; at twenty-four or twenty-five years old, the Sanyinjiao acupoint is treated to enhance reproductive capacity; at thirty or forty years old, the Zusanli acupoint is targeted to strengthen spleen and stomach functions, prevent diseases, and increase lifespan; and in old age, to prevent vision decline, Zusanli and Quchi acupoints are often treated together, with the Quchi acupoint being used to improve eyesight and strengthen teeth. This custom continued until the eve of the Meiji Restoration.

Second Stage: Modern Japan's emphasis on the development of moxibustion. In the 1920s, when Japan had 1.2 million tuberculosis patients and Western medicine was unable to effectively control the disease, a Japanese medical practitioner discovered that moxibustion was quite effective. He proposed that moxibustion was the only method to prevent tuberculosis, which led to the "National Zusanli Moxibustion" movement in Japan. "Zusanli moxibustion" was widely implemented in factories, schools, and the military, effectively curbing the spread of tuberculosis. The proponent of this method, Harashimataro, lived to be 108 years old and remained sharp and active, providing medical treatment and moxibustion services to others even after the age of 100. In modern times, the Japanese moxibustion industry has become increasingly popular, refined, and industrialized. The fine production of Japanese mugwort fluff requires a special technique using a bamboo curtain for wind selection.

2.2 South Korea

South Korea has a high demand for mugwort essential oil and other mugwort products. Mugwort is widely used in both traditional medicine and daily health care in South Korea.

Cosmetics Field: In recent years, the South Korean cosmetics industry has experienced an "Artemisia craze," with many brands launching cosmetics made from Artemisia, mainly in the basic skincare product series, such as creams, lotions, and facial cleansers.

Essence: For example, VELY VELY launched the "Artemisia Essence Water," which claims to be made from 100% Artemisia extract and has moisturizing and antioxidant effects. After being promoted on South Korean social media platforms like Instagram, it sold 130,000 bottles in just one month. Another product, the Missha Time Revolution Artemisia Treatment Essence, is also popular for its high-purity Artemisia extract and moisturizing effects.

Mask: I'm From's Artemisia mask, made with 100% pure Artemisia extract, is known for its soothing, cooling, and brightening effects and is suitable for sensitive skin.

Other Products: Artemisia is also used to make makeup removers, lotions, and creams, which are favored by consumers aged 20-30.

2.3 Southeast Asian Countries

Moxibustion is widely popular in Southeast Asian countries, and mugwort products such as moxibustion sticks, moxibustion patches, mugwort footbaths, and mugwort essential oil are in high demand in these regions.

2.3.1 Moxibustion Sticks and Patches

Moxibustion Sticks: These are traditional products made from processed mugwort. By burning mugwort fluff to stimulate acupuncture points on the body, they are believed to have effects such as warming the meridians, dispelling cold, and promoting blood circulation. In Southeast Asian countries, moxibustion sticks are widely used for traditional health care and wellness, especially among local Chinese communities and consumers interested in traditional Chinese medicine.

Moxibustion Patches: These convenient mugwort products can be directly applied to specific body parts to achieve effects similar to moxibustion. They are suitable for modern fast-paced lifestyles.

2.3.2 Mugwort Footbath Bags

These bags, made from mugwort and other traditional Chinese medicinal herbs, are used for footbaths and are believed to have effects such as removing dampness, dispelling cold, and relieving fatigue. They are popular in Southeast Asian countries, especially in regions with a strong awareness of health and wellness.

2.3.3 Mugwort Essential Oil

Extracted from mugwort, this essential oil has a unique aroma and medicinal value. It can be used for aromatherapy and massage to help relieve stress and improve sleep quality. In Southeast Asian countries, mugwort essential oil is commonly used in health and beauty care.

2.3.4 Mugwort Tea

This tea is made from dried mugwort and is believed to have effects such as warming the meridians and regulating the body. As a natural health drink, it is popular among consumers in Southeast Asian countries.

2.3.5 Mugwort Daily Care Products

Mugwort Shampoo and Body Wash: These products, utilizing the natural components of mugwort, have effects such as cleaning, relieving itching, and removing dampness, making them suitable for people living in tropical climates who sweat easily.

Mugwort Skin Care Products: Products like mugwort masks and hand creams are popular in Southeast Asia for their natural ingredients and gentle skin care effects.

2.3.6 Mugwort Health Products

Products such as mugwort capsules and oral liquids are convenient to carry and use, making them suitable for modern lifestyles and in demand in the Southeast Asian market.

2.4 Canada

On March 15, 2022, the Medical Devices Directorate of Health Canada notified that moxibustion products would be classified as Class I medical devices. This classification indicates that Health Canada recognizes the medical efficacy of moxibustion and allows related products to claim medical benefits on their packaging. This move not only lowers the import and sales barriers for moxibustion products but also brings convenience to traditional Chinese medicine clinics and Chinese consumers. Moxibustion products related to mugwort extract have also appeared on the Canadian market. For example, Provita, a Canadian company, has launched Artemisia Extract Capsules, a high-purity product extracted from mugwort (*Artemisia*) for health care.

2.5 Australia

Legalization of Traditional Chinese Medicine: Australia was the first Western country to legislate traditional Chinese medicine. In 2012, Australia passed the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, formally recognizing the legal status of traditional Chinese medicine, including acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine massage, and Chinese herbal medicine. This legislation has provided a legal basis for the application and promotion of mugwort products in Australia.

Popularity of Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinics: With the legalization of traditional Chinese medicine in Australia, the number of traditional Chinese medicine clinics and wellness centers has been increasing. These institutions widely use mugwort products such as moxibustion sticks, mugwort fluff, and mugwort footbaths to provide traditional therapies. The spread of traditional Chinese medicine culture has continuously improved the acceptance of mugwort products in Australia.

2.6 Other Applications

The practice of mugwort smoke fumigation has a long history and has been used for air disinfection and epidemic prevention in international anti-epidemic efforts. Studies have shown that mugwort smoke fumigation has a significant sterilizing effect on various bacteria and viruses, even better.

3. Application: Herbal Cigarette

3.1 Definition and characteristics of Herbal Cigarette

3.1.1 Definition of Herbal Cigarette

Herbal Cigarette is a burning product primarily composed of non-tobacco plant materials (such as dried flowers, herbs, or medicinal plants). Its production process is similar to that of traditional cigarettes but aims to reduce nicotine intake and lower the release of harmful substances through the substitution of tobacco components. Depending on their use, flower tobacco can be categorized into two types: tobacco alternatives and medicinal smoke inhalers, with the latter often combined with traditional medical theories for specific health interventions.

3.1.2 The main characteristics of Herbal Cigarette

Ingredients: usually made from natural plant materials such as mugwort, lavender, sandalwood, rose and so on.

Form: can be incense stick, incense cone, incense powder, incense tablet or dry plant that can be burned directly.

Uses of Aromatherapy: Used to relax the body and mind, relieve stress or improve sleep;

Religious rituals: used in Buddhist, Taoist and other religious rituals to purify space or express respect;

Cultural traditions: In some traditional cultures, Herbal Cigarette are used to ward off evil, pray for blessings or celebrate festivals;

Leisure and recreation: Some people use it as a way to relax or enjoy the aroma.

3.2 The difference between Herbal Cigarette and ordinary cigarettes

Ingredients: Herbal Cigarette is made mainly from natural plant materials and does not contain tobacco or nicotine.

Use: Herbal Cigarette is mainly used for aroma and atmosphere creation, rather than to satisfy nicotine dependence.

Burning mode: Herbal Cigarette usually burns slowly and releases its fragrance for a long time.

3.3 The efficacy of Herbal Cigarette containing mugwort

3.3.1 The medicinal basis of mugwort

Mugwort (*Artemisia argyi*), a plant of the genus *Artemisia* in the family *Asteraceae*, is recorded in the Pharmacopoeia of the Peoples Republic of China (2020 edition) as having dried leaves (mugwort leaves) that have the effects of warming the meridians, stopping bleeding, dispelling cold, and relieving pain, suitable for treating bleeding and pain due to deficiency-cold conditions. Modern research shows that the main active components in mugwort oil (such as eucalyptol and camphor) have in vitro antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects, but their clinical efficacy still requires further validation.

3.3.2 The efficacy of Herbal Cigarette containing mugwort

The fragrance of mugwort is widely believed to have calming and relaxing effects. Burning mugwort-infused incense can help alleviate stress, improve mood, and even promote sleep. The volatile oil components in mugwort, such as 1,8-camphor and camphor, are thought to regulate the nervous system and influence emotional and stress responses through olfactory pathways.

The smoke released when mugwort burns is believed to have insect-repelling effects and is commonly used to drive away mosquitoes. Additionally, the smoke from burning mugwort flowers is also used for air purification and eliminating odors. Studies show that mugwort essential oil has a repellent effect on certain insects (such as mosquitoes), and the smoke produced by burning it can inhibit bacteria and fungi in the air.

Mugwort holds a significant place in traditional Chinese culture and is regarded as a spiritual plant. During traditional festivals such as the Dragon Boat Festival, mugwort is often hung

or burned to ward off evil spirits and bring blessings. Incense containing mugwort is also used in religious ceremonies or cultural activities.

Some people hold the view that the smoke produced by burning mugwort can have the effect of warming the meridians and dispelling cold, as well as promoting blood circulation and unblocking meridians. In particular, in traditional Chinese medical theory, mugwort is widely used in moxibustion therapy. According to TCM theory, mugwort is considered to have the function of warming yang and dispelling cold. The heat generated from its combustion and the volatile oil components may have positive effects on human health.

Modern people use incense as a tool to relax the body and mind, and the natural fragrance of mugwort makes it a popular choice. Mugwort incense is often used to create a relaxing atmosphere, suitable for meditation, yoga or leisure occasions because of its unique fragrance and smoke effect.

3.4 Stories and visions related to Herbal Cigarette

3.4.1 Mugwort Herbal Cigarette drive away the epidemic during the Dragon Boat Festival

In 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic forced many traditional festival activities to be canceled. However, in some rural areas of China, villagers continued to use mugwort Herbal Cigarette to ward off evil and disease, praying for health and safety. In a small village in Hunan Province, the villagers spontaneously organized a "Mugwort Herbal Cigarette Blessing Ceremony." They gathered a large amount of mugwort, made it into Herbal Cigarette, and lit it on the village square. The smoke filled the entire village, and the villagers believed that the fragrance of mugwort could purify the air and drive away viruses.

This ceremony not only continued the traditional customs of the Dragon Boat Festival but also provided psychological comfort and strength to the villagers. The local government expressed support and invited media coverage, calling for more people to pay attention to the value of traditional culture. This event quickly spread on social media, with many netizens expressing their gratitude and following suit by lighting mugwort smoke at home, praying for an early end to the pandemic. Mugwort smoke has become not only a symbol of traditional culture but also a spiritual support for people to unite and overcome difficulties together.

Mugwort smoke is not just a symbol of cultural heritage; it also carries peoples deep hopes and beautiful aspirations for health and safety. Whenever the mugwort smoke rises gently, it seems to remind us to cherish the power bestowed by nature and to pass on ancient wisdom and knowledge. This traditional custom not only enriches our lives but also connects us closely with the wisdom of our ancestors, maintaining cultural continuity and identity.

3.4.2 Mugwort Herbal Cigarette help rural revitalization

In a remote mountain village in Guizhou Province, mugwort cultivation and flower tobacco production have become key industries for local rural revitalization. In 2021, the local government collaborated with a traditional Chinese medicine company to promote mugwort cultivation and develop mugwort flower tobacco products. Villagers have increased their income and achieved prosperity through growing mugwort and making flower tobacco.

The local government organized several training sessions to teach villagers how to grow mugwort and make flower cigarettes. Not only did the villagers learn the techniques, but they also formed a cooperative to jointly produce and sell mugwort flower cigarettes. Due to its natural fragrance and health benefits, mugwort flower cigarettes quickly gained recognition in the market and became a local specialty product.

This project not only boosts the local economy but also preserves traditional culture. Many young people have returned to their hometowns to participate in mugwort planting and Herbal Cigarette making, infusing new vitality into rural revitalization. The local government has also organized the "Mugwort Culture Festival," attracting a large number of tourists and further promoting mugwort Herbal Cigarette and local culture.

Mugwort Herbal Cigarette is not only a powerful help for rural revitalization, but also carries the important mission of cultural inheritance. This unique phenomenon reminds us that we should continue to pay attention to the development process of rural areas, and at the same time, cherish and maintain our precious traditional culture.

These stories profoundly reveal the far-reaching impact of Herbal Cigarette and mugwort-infused Herbal Cigarette on cultural heritage, rural revitalization, and modern life. They are more than just material products; they embody peoples pursuit of natural and healthy living concepts. In the smoke of these flowers, we can sense a profound sense of history. They act as messengers of time, bringing ancient wisdom and traditions into contemporary life. At the same time, they convey a positive and uplifting value system, encouraging people to find balance in the fast-paced modern life, return to nature, and focus on health. The popularity of these Herbal Cigarettes and mugwort-infused Herbal Cigarettes not only brings new vitality to the rural economy but also offers a new way of living, allowing traditional culture to thrive anew in modern society.

4. Friendly Witness: The Sino-American Stories of Mugwort

4.1 Mugwort and 108 American AIDS Patients

The Light of Mugwort: The Journey of 108 Americans in the Fight Against AIDS and the Hope of Eastern Herbal Medicine: Under the shadow of AIDS, people around the world are searching for that glimmer of light that can pierce through the darkness and bring hope. In this long and arduous journey of exploration, an unexpected element—mugwort—quietly entered the lives of 108 American AIDS patients, offering them a ray of hope and spiritual solace.

4.1.1 Mugwort: A Natural Gift from Ancient East

Mugwort, a herb with a long history and profound significance in Chinese culture, has been revered since ancient times as a sacred plant for warding off evil, dispelling plagues, and warming the meridians. Its unique aroma and medicinal value hold an important place in the traditional Chinese medicine system. However, when this ancient wisdom from the East crossed the ocean and met those suffering from AIDS on the other side of the world, a miracle about life, hope, and cross-cultural exchange quietly unfolded.

4.1.2 108: Not Just a Number, but the Weight of Life

In Buddhist culture, the number 108 symbolizes the troubles and karmic obstacles of human life. But when this number is connected to AIDS patients, it becomes a symbol of resilience and courage in the face of adversity. These 108 Americans come from different backgrounds and have their own stories, yet they are all bound together by the invisible hand of AIDS. Facing the countdown of life, they did not choose to give up but actively sought various possible treatment options, including the study and application of mugwort.

4.1.3 From Skepticism to Trust: Modern Scientific Validation of Mugwort

Initially, when mugwort was proposed as a potential treatment for AIDS, it faced considerable skepticism from the modern medical community. After all, AIDS, as a complex viral disease, often requires highly precise drugs and therapies. However, as research progressed, scientists gradually discovered that certain active components in mugwort, such as volatile oils and flavonoids, possess anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and immune-regulating properties. These characteristics, in theory, could have positive effects on alleviating symptoms and improving the quality of life for AIDS patients.

4.1.4 Cross-Cultural Collaboration: The Clash and Fusion of Eastern and Western Medicine

In this context, collaboration between Eastern and Western medical communities became particularly important. On one hand, American research teams used modern technology to precisely extract and analyze the active components of mugwort. On the other hand, Chinese traditional medicine experts provided valuable traditional knowledge and clinical experience. Together, they worked to explore the best application of mugwort in the adjunctive treatment of AIDS. This cross-cultural collaboration not only advanced medical science but also built a bridge for the community of shared human destiny.

4.1.5 The Light of Hope: Mugwort Brings Not Just Treatment, but Hope

As research on mugwort continued to deepen, more and more AIDS patients began to feel the warmth and strength from the East. Mugwort not only improved their physical condition to some extent but, more importantly, it inspired their confidence and courage to fight the disease. The stories of these 108 Americans became a bright spot in the global fight against AIDS, reminding us that even in despair, hope can be found. At the intersection of ancient wisdom and modern science, humanity can always find answers to overcome challenges.

The encounter between mugwort and the 108 American AIDS patients is not just a journey of treatment and recovery but also a spiritual awakening. It reminds us that no matter what difficulties we face, as long as we hold onto hope and dare to explore, there is no obstacle we cannot overcome.

4.2 From Tradition to Modern Exploration

4.2.1 Theoretical Basis in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

In TCM theory, AIDS is considered to be related to insufficient "righteous qi" (zheng qi) and the invasion of "pathogenic qi" (xie qi). Mugwort, with its warm nature, bitter and pungent taste, and its affinity for the liver, spleen, and kidney meridians, has the effects of warming the meridians, stopping bleeding, dispelling cold, relieving pain, and eliminating dampness to stop itching. Its pure yang nature can replenish the body's yang energy, strengthen the

righteous qi, and help resist pathogenic factors. From the perspective of TCM, using mugwort as an adjunct therapy for AIDS has a theoretical basis. For example, moxibustion on acupoints such as Zusanli (ST36) and Guanyuan (CV4) can help reinforce the body's foundation, support the righteous qi, and expel pathogenic factors, thereby regulating the body's qi and blood circulation, enhancing organ function, and boosting the body's resistance. Modern medical research has found that mugwort contains various chemical components, including volatile oils, flavonoids, and polysaccharides. Among these, compounds such as eucalyptol and camphor in the volatile oils have anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, which can help alleviate infection symptoms in AIDS patients caused by weakened immunity. Flavonoids possess antioxidant properties, helping to clear free radicals and reduce oxidative damage, which is significant for protecting immune cells and maintaining immune function. Polysaccharides can promote the proliferation and differentiation of immune cells, enhance the body's immune response, and help improve the immunity of AIDS patients.

4.2.2 Clinical Practice

Symptom Relief Effects:

In the study of these 108 American AIDS patients, some patients experienced a certain degree of improvement in symptoms such as fatigue and weakness after using mugwort-related therapies. For example, some patients were initially extremely weak and had limited mobility reported reduced fatigue and were able to engage in light daily activities after a period of mugwort moxibustion or mugwort baths. For common symptoms such as skin itching and eczema in AIDS patients, the use of mugwort preparations for topical application or bathing also alleviated skin symptoms, improving the patients' quality of life.

Impact on Psychological State:

In addition to physical symptom relief, the use of mugwort also had a positive impact on the patients' psychological state. As patients experienced improvements in their physical condition, their fear and anxiety about the disease decreased, boosting their confidence and courage to fight the illness. This provided them with psychological comfort and hope, enabling them to approach treatment with a more positive mindset.

4.2.3 Cross-Cultural Exchange and Collaboration

Exchange and Integration:

During the application of mugwort in the treatment of these 108 American AIDS patients, medical experts from China and the United States engaged in close communication and collaboration. Chinese experts shared traditional knowledge and clinical experience regarding mugwort, including its harvesting, processing methods, and the selection of acupoints and techniques for moxibustion. American experts, using modern medical research methods and technologies, conducted in-depth studies on the components and mechanisms of mugwort. Together, they explored how to better apply mugwort in the adjunctive treatment of AIDS.

Collaboration Models and Achievements:

The two sides established joint research projects, using clinical trials and laboratory testing to evaluate the effectiveness of mugwort in the adjunctive treatment of AIDS. Through this

collaboration, not only was the medicinal value of mugwort further understood, but suitable application protocols for AIDS patients were also developed. For example, they explored the optimal timing and dosage for combining mugwort with modern antiretroviral drugs, providing new ideas and methods for the comprehensive treatment of AIDS.

4.3 California's First Mugwort Culture Festival

4.3.1 Event Overview

Time and Location: Held on June 18, 2023, at the University of California Silicon Valley campus in Sunnyvale, South Bay.

Organizers and Co-organizers: The event was hosted by the American Chinese Herbal Medicine Association, University of California Silicon Valley, American Senior Citizens Association, Five Branches University, and the U.S.-China Friendship Alliance. Co-organizers included the American TCM Association, American Traumatology Association, Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine (U.S. Campus), American Academy of Chinese Medicine, American Institute of Chinese Herbal Medicine, Qianfan University, Feiyang Workshop, and Daoist Medicine and Qi School, among others.

Participants: Over 500 people from across the Bay Area attended, including notable figures such as Sunnyvale Mayor Larry Klein, Saratoga Vice Mayor Yan Zhao, Fremont Vice Mayor Jieyi Huang, and Deputy Consul General of China in San Francisco, Pan Qingjiang.

4.3.2 Event Activities

Health Lectures: Indoor health lectures were arranged to educate the public on TCM knowledge and the health benefits of mugwort, such as its ability to dispel dampness, warm the meridians, and improve circulation. Participants learned how to incorporate mugwort into daily health practices.

Free Clinics and Experiences: Acupuncture and Tuina Clinics: Professional TCM teams provided free acupuncture and tuina services on-site, helping attendees alleviate physical pain and experience the remarkable effects of these traditional therapies.

Moxibustion Robot Experience: The event showcased and allowed attendees to experience the first moxibustion robot in the U.S. This robot can program acupoints and integrates various traditional moxibustion techniques, such as suspended moxibustion and sparrow-pecking moxibustion. It is safe, odorless, and highly effective. Attendees could register to try it out.

Cultural Exhibitions and Experiences: Qigong and Tai Chi demonstrations and teaching sessions were held, allowing participants to learn from professional instructors and experience the integration of TCM health practices with physical exercise. Professionals stirred medicinal herbs such as Bupleurum, Chinaberry, and Cyperus on-site, filling the air with their aromatic scents. Specially formulated herbal teas, such as "Little Bliss" Liver-Soothing Tea and "Thunder Ignites the Fire Beneath the Sea" Kidney-Yang Boosting Tea, were offered for tasting. A variety of mugwort-based foods, such as mugwort rice cakes and mugwort pastries, were prepared, allowing attendees to savor the unique flavor of mugwort and its application in culinary culture. The "Daoist Medicine and Qi School" presented a

captivating display, including free pulse diagnosis, qigong lessons to open the Ren and Du meridians, and the unveiling of the Daoist "Qi Circulation Pill," which reappeared after a century. The group also performed dynamic qigong exercises, chanting their core cultural motto: "Transcend the self, establish a heart for heaven and earth, set a purpose for the people, carry on the wisdom of the sages, and create peace for all generations. Great virtue endures forever."

4.3.3 Significance and Future Plans

Deputy Consul General Pan Qingjiang noted that the event promoted cultural exchange and cooperation between Chinese and Western medicine, fostering friendship and improving U.S.-China relations. Liang Jianfeng, President of Sing Tao Daily's Western U.S. Edition, stated that the event helped spread TCM culture, enabling California residents to better understand the health benefits of mugwort and improve their well-being.

To promote the regular practice of moxibustion culture, the event organizing committee established the "American Qi Ai (Mugwort) Club." Guided by research and education, and rooted in Li Shizhen's Compendium of Materia Medica and mugwort culture, the club will collaborate with experts worldwide to conduct comprehensive, multi-level exchanges. It aims to help Qi Ai (mugwort) gain global recognition and contribute to the advancement of TCM.

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