



MOXA

Moxa is a substance made from the dried leaves of the mugwort plant (*Artemisia vulgaris*). *Artemisia absinthium* is the absinthe species in the *Artemisia* genus. The name *Artemisia* is derived from the Ancient Greek *αρτεμισία* i.e. from Artemis, the goddess of hunting and the protection of forests and children. 'Absinthium' is derived from the Ancient Greek *αψίνθιον* i.e. absinthe. The English name 'wormwood' is derived from Middle English wormwode or wermode. Wormwood's name is attributed to its traditional use as a drug against parasitic worms.

The plant has been cultivated since biblical times as an insect repellent and to tackle epidemics. In the Bible, its bitterness symbolises sin. It's been in use since the time of Hippocrates and was mentioned by Lucretius. They thought it strengthened memory and reasoning, alleviated pain in the muscles, joints and connective tissues, improved vision and led to deeper sleep. Because of the latter property, villagers used to stuff their pillows with wormwood. During cholera and plague epidemics they used to hang the plant in their homes and would incense the rooms by burning wormwood shoots. Of wormwood, Dioscorides writes "...if ink is mixed with wormwood infusion, mice are kept away from papyrus...".

Burning it close to the skin above acupuncture points is intended to warm the meridians by eliminating the cold, promoting the smooth flow of Qi and the blood, boosting Yang energy and preventing illnesses by keeping the subject healthy. Moxibustion can be done with moxa in the form of cones (there are direct and indirect application methods) or in sticks ("cigars"). As a rule, it is not used in excess energy conditions or near to heat-sensitive areas.