

# Ganja Encyclopedia Article

## Ganja

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# Ganja

Ganja is a Hindi word (derived from Sanskrit) for the HEMP plant, *Cannabis sativa* (marijuana); the term *ganja* entered English in the late seventeenth century. Ganja is a selected and potent preparation of MARIJUANA used for smoking.

The hemp plant was introduced into the British West Indies by indentured laborers from India who arrived in Jamaica in 1845. Considered to be a "holy" plant, ganja is often used in religious ceremonies in both countries. The Indian Hemp Drug Commission traced the origin of ganja use to India.

Although usually smoked, *Cannabis* may also be mixed with foods or drinks; it is considered a remedy for many ailments in herbal medicine. A medical-anthropological study of ganja users in Jamaica was conducted in 1972; the results revealed little evidence of a deleterious effect among users, as compared with nonusers. These conclusions were criticized, however, by investigators who claim that the tests of maturation and mental capacity that were used were not sensitive enough to detect decrements in higher level mental skills or motivation.

## See Also

Bhang; Plants, Drugs From)

## Bibliography

RUBIN, V.& COMITAS, L. (1975). *Ganja in Jamaica: A medical anthropological study of chronic marihuana use*. The Hague: New Babylon Studies in the Social Sciences.