

Buyer Beware: Herbal Remedies and Snake-oil Salesmen 草药，小心要你的命？

A century ago in North America, a herbal product called snake oil was used by Chinese laborers building the **transcontinental** railroads. Snake oil **soothes** the sore joints and relieved **arthritic** pain. Among the hardworking rail workers, it **sold like hotcakes**. Soon, traveling salesmen dressed as doctors appeared with their own snake oils. The salesmen were not real doctors, of course, and their oils were usually not effective enough. Some actually caused serious illness in the workers who took them. But still, the salesmen convinced a lot of people that they were **genuine** and made a lot of money off their **counterfeit** products.

在一世纪前的北美洲，建造跨州铁路的中国劳工使用一种叫做「蛇油」的草本产品。蛇油能减缓关节酸痛并消除关节炎，在这些辛勤的铁路工人之间相当畅销。很快地，开始有旅行推销员扮成医师自售蛇油。当然，这些推销员不是真的医师，而他们的蛇油通常也不够有效，有些甚至还会造成使用工人们身体严重不适。但是这些推销员仍说服许多人他们的蛇油是真品，进而从这些赝品中牟取暴利。

The use of herbs to treat disease has a long history. It is universal among **aboriginal** people and an **integral** part of traditional Chinese and western medicine. In fact, today almost eighty percent of the world's **population** still uses herbs as their first, if not only, form of medication. But buyers must beware! False herbal **remedies** have been around as long as genuine ones.

使用药草治病由来已久，像在原住民当中就相当普遍，而草药也是传统中西药的必备要素。事实上，药草几乎是全世界百分之八十的人口会优先选用(即使不是唯一选用的)治疗方式。但消费者也要注意，因为错误的药草疗法和真功效的药草疗法并行已久。

Since they are not classified as drugs, but food **supplements**, herbal remedies are not regulated very strictly. This means they are not tested for quality or safety, nor do they **undergo** clinical trials to determine side effects. Reports of **kidney** failure, eye **inflammation**, and **coma** have been **attributed** to the use of [over-the-counter](#) herbal remedies. Advertisers may shout “Miracle Herbal Weight Loss” and “Cure Depression with Herbs!” But be careful. There's no shortage of modern-day snake-oil salesmen willing to take your money for a fake product.

由于药草并非被归类为药物，而是食物补给品，因此药草疗法也未受到严格规范。这表示它们并没有经过质量或安全检验，也没有接受临床实验来检视其副作用。像肾衰竭、眼睛发炎及昏迷等报导都曾指向使用未经医师处方的药草疗法。广告商或许会大喊「神奇草药减重法！」和「药草解忧！」，但要小心，想用蛇油来骗你钱的现代蛇油商人可是无所不在的！

—by Laara Hinnegan

Vocabulary

beware [bi `wɛr] v. 当心, 小心

counterfeit [`kauntə ,fɪt] adj. 伪造的; 假冒的

integral [`ɪntəgrəl] adj. 构成整体所必需的; 不可缺的

population [,pɒpjə `leʃən] n. 人口

supplement [`sʌpləmənt] n. 补给品

undergo [,ʌndə `gɔ] v. 接受 (治疗, 检查等); 经历

More Information

transcontinental [,trænskəntə `nɛnt!] adj. 横贯大陆的

soothe [suð] v. 缓和; 减轻

arthritic [ɑr `θ rɪtɪk] adj. 关节炎的

sell like hotcakes: 销售很快, 畅销 to sell quickly and in large numbers

genuine [`dʒɛnjʊɪn] adj. 真的; 非伪造的

aboriginal [,æbə `rɪdʒən!] adj. 土著的; 原始的

remedy [`rɛmədi] n. 治疗; 治疗法

kidney [`kɪdnɪ] n. 肾脏

inflammation [,ɪnflə `meʃən] n. 炎症; 发炎

coma [`kɒmə] n. 昏迷

attribute [ə `trɪbjʊt] v. 认为.....是某人所做; 把.....归咎于