

“Sang’s” Swan Song

According to their spokesman, water is a food,
Perpetrate a hoax man, water is real good.
The FDA, it say, hey, ginsang’s also good,
Until it’s put in water, and then it ain’t no good

So that’s the way they play, hey, the good old FDA,
Ring along with dingdong, sing a song of “sang,” hey,
Done sung the “sang’s” swan song

Add the water to the “sang” and then it’s all OK,
Don’t add the sang to water, warns the FDA,
To add the sang to water, you have to prove “sang” safe,
That costs a pretty dollar, 1 million and a half

Let’s not get real neuro, cats, nor friends, nor FDA,
Another group of bureaucrats, will sell the “sang” away,
List endangered species, put a price upon its head,
Then comes the bounty hunter, and bang! the “sang” is dead

So that’s the way they play, hey, the good, great, grand, ESSA,
Ring along with dingdong, sing a song of “sang,” hey,
Done sung the “sang’s” swan song

A sad song for your soul son, endangered species we,
Water’s foul and the “sang” is sung, can’t drink no ginseng tea,
Water and “sang” are toxic, they’ve saved us from the worst,
FDA ted logic, we’ll only die of thirst ~

Root used as a panacea (cure-all) by wealthy Chinese and other orientals, who consider it carminative, diuretic, stimulant, and tonic, Chinese sick chew the root to recover health. Healthy Chinese chew it to increase their vitality. It is said to remove both mental and bodily fatigue, to cure lung disorders, dissolve tumors, and prolong life. Reportedly, it reduces blood sugar concentration and acts favorably on metabolism, the central nervous system, and on the endocrine secretions. Employed in the Orient in the treatment of anemia, diabetes, insomnia, neurasthenia, gastritis, and especially for sexual impotence, hence, used as an aphrodisiac. The American medical profession recognizes only its demulcent properties, although Appalachian folk uses include tonic and aphrodisiac. An infusion of the leaves is said to make a palatable tea. I can’t tell where Parvati learned that Chicana midwives give it to prevent any infection nor that Indians used it as a female contraceptive under the name “tartar root”.⁴⁸

Nutritionally, American ginseng is probably similar to Oriental ginseng. According to *Hager’s Handbook*, the herbage contains panasenoside, a kaempferol-3-glucogalactoside, kaempferol and trifolin, and something like panaxoside C. The roots contain a complex array of saponins, primary glycosides which are based on oleanolic acid or dammarol. Formulas of many of these are presented.³³ Additionally, ginseng contains the acetylene derivative panaxynol (C₁₇H₂₆O), a 1,9-*cis*-hepta-decadiene-4,6-diy-3-ol, beta-elemene, beta-sitosterol and its glucoside, 0.05% essential oil, panacene (C₁₅H₂₄), a pyrrolidone, 5-peptides (D-glucose and D-fructose), 3.3% disaccharides (saccharose and maltose). Among vitamins 0.66 mm/100 g pantothenic acid, 0.92 µg/100 g biotin, vitamins B₁, B₂, B₁₂, nicotinic acid, oleic acid, 0.1 to 0.2% choline, citric, fumaric, malic, maleic, panaxic, and tartaric acids, traces of Mn, V, Cu, Co, and As, and 0.15% S.

Toxicity — The LD₅₀ for mice (subcutaneously) is 1667 mg/kg.

* ©J. A. Duke, 1977. Following the 1st Herb Trade Association Meeting, Santa Cruz, California.