

Gingseng

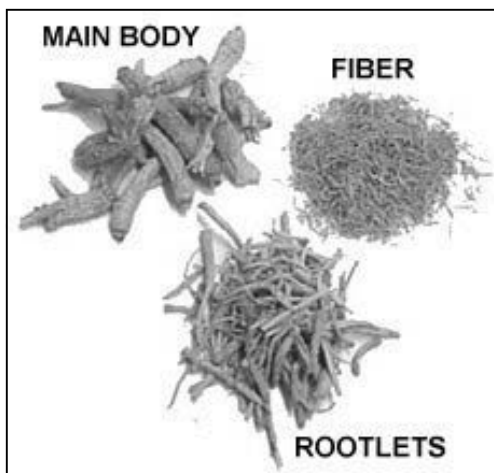
Gingseng's Medicinal Properties

In recent years Western culture has become increasingly interested in aspects of oriental culture and medicine. Along with the adoption of such Eastern medical practices as acupuncture and imaging, many North Americans have been won over to the healing effects of the ginseng root. It is being taken as a tonic to enhance vitality, to increase stamina and to build up resistance to the psychological and physical stresses of modern life. The curative powers of ginseng are unique in the way they affect the whole body. According to ancient Chinese doctrines, a plant part that resembles a human body part will have a therapeutic value in that location. That the ginseng root resembles the entire human form indicates its use as a restorative that will bring the body into harmony. This harmony, expressed as the Chinese philosophy of yin and yang, is held to be essential to a healthy body and a peaceful spirit.

Western medicine evaluates the effectiveness of ginseng in a different but complementary way. The active ingredients in ginseng are complex carbohydrates called saponins or ginsenosides. Individual ginsenosides appear to have separate effects. Whereas one particular ginsenoside stimulates the central nervous system, another may sedate the central nervous system. Other ginsenosides produce such effects as balancing metabolic processes, de-

creasing blood sugar, improving muscle tone, stimulating the endocrine system and maintaining proper hormone levels. Research has even shown that ginseng is effective in maintaining and even restoring the cell's capacity to function and therefore may reduce a number of symptoms of old-age.

Although research into the effects of ginseng is ongoing, Dr. I.I. Brekham, a pioneer in ginseng research, has come to the following conclusions after twenty-five years of experimentation:



1) *Ginseng stimulates physical and mental activity especially in tired or weak patients.*

2) *Ginseng defends the human system from the effects of prolonged physical strain.*

3) *Ginseng acts as a mental stimulant without*

the side effects of other stimulants.

4) *Ginseng stimulates the endocrine glands, including the sex glands.*

Usage of Gengsing

According to tradition, the optimal dose of ginseng is two to three grams per day, or a slice of root about the size of an almond sliver, or if using powder, a capsule of powder. The root can be brewed and taken as tea, simmered for one hour in chicken soup to make a healing broth, aged for three months in a quart of liquor and consumed as a nightcap or may be simply chewed.