

Market Survey for Phansomba, a Medicinal Mushroom from Pune, Mumbai, and Konkan for Reconfirming Its Authenticity

Jitendra G. Vaidya, Prasad Y. Lamrood, and Girija Deshpande

Department of Botany, University of Pune, University Road, Pune 411 007, M.S. India

This report deals with reconsideration of authenticity of medicinal samples of phansomba from the local market and from the field. Earlier studies were carried out in the early 1990s, and the present work has been carried out during the last 3 years. The information that we could gather regarding phansomba and comparison with other medicinal species of *Phellinus* suggest that there are many reports of the medicinal properties of *Phellinus* spp., for example, in *P. gilvus* (Schwein.) Pat., *P. linteus* (Berk. et M.A. Curt.) Teng, *P. pini* (Thore) Fr., and so forth, and a Korean medicine sanghawang. All these species have common characteristics with respect to antitumor activity and immune enhancing property.

The discussion that we had with ayurvedic doctors and a learned local doctor (vaidu) revealed that phansomba is also administered as an effective drug not only for childrens' ailments but also for throat problems (antitumor), as an antimicrobial agent, as an antiinflammatory agent in rheumatoid arthritis, and also as a general health

enhancer along with other ayurvedic drugs.

Our survey surprisingly revealed that the data we have gathered are quite a new addition to our previous records because one of the authors (J. G. V.) reported that *Phellinus fastuosus* (Lév.) Ryv. and *Ganoderma lucidum* (Curt.: Fr.) P. Karst. were sold under the name phansomba. The present work revealed that in addition to the above species, species such as *Phellinus adamantinus.*, *P. carteri*, *P. conchatus* (Pers.) Quél., *P. merrillii*, *P. melanodermus* (Pat.) Fidalgo, *P. pectinatus* (Klotzsch) Quél., *Phellinus sanjarii*, *P. sublinteus*, and *Ganoderma applanatum* (Pers.) Pat. were also sold as samples of phansomba. Even the bark of the jackfruit tree (*Artocarpus integrifolia* L.) was sold under this name as an adulterated sample.

We therefore believe that the majority of the heartwood rot-causing species of *Phellinus*, having a markedly thick conk and shiny hymenial surface, is knowingly or unknowingly collected and sold as a sample of phansomba in the market.