



# SOME EXPERIENCES WITH *ANADENANTHERA COLUBRINA*

## FINALLY, I TASTE THE SEED

I'd been thinking about *Anadenanthera* for several years. I first researched it back in ancient times—the 1980s—when it was as rare as rare could be. Along with *Viola*, it was a great mystery. I had seen a film that showed it being used, and it looked very painful. I am not drawn to pain, especially in the nasal passages, so I gave it a pass for a long time (even though the reports that I heard from many people were positive). It showed up in my consciousness again about two years ago. I saw my first trees—albeit baby ones—in the hills of Oakland. Then, all of a sudden, seeds were available on the market. The carrier wave kicked in, and I started asking questions again. But changes in my life occurred and my interest was taken in other directions, so I let it go.

Earlier this year, I received the new copy of *Plants of the Gods*, by SCHULTES and HOFMANN, with additions and revisions by CHRISTIAN RÄTSCH. This lovely book has been greatly expanded and has RÄTSCH's influence all over it. I read through it off and on for a couple of months until I stumbled on a chapter I had never seen before on *Anadenanthera colubrina* (*cebíl*), which complemented the chapter on *Anadenanthera peregrina* (*yopo*) that appeared in earlier versions of the book. I had previously thought that *cebíl* was just another name for *yopo*; but no, they are different. I read the chapters repeatedly, and discovered that there are some basic differences in the chemistry of these plants' seeds. *Yopo* seems to have a strong representation of DMT and bufotenine, as well as ringed tryptamine derivatives such as 2-methyl- and 1,2-dimethyl-6-methoxytetrahydro- $\beta$ -carboline. Some varieties of *cebíl* have only bufotenine, while others may also contain 5-MeO-MMT, DMT, DMT-*N*-oxide, and/or 5-OH-DMT-*N*-oxide. Intriguing stuff; some of these compounds I knew little or nothing about.

Based on evidence from archaeological investigations, it appears that *Anadenanthera colubrina* could be the psychedelic that has been in use for the longest period of time in South America. Seeds, snuff kits, and pipes with burnt seeds have

been found buried with mummies that are at least 4,500 years old. I have an affinity for smoking, and the fact that this was one of the early methods of consumption once again got me excited about possibly “tasting” these seeds. I made enquiries. A friend gave me ten seeds with a caution: “It can be very uncomfortable, watch your dosage.” I am cautious, and I did nothing but physically examine them for several weeks. Then I headed off to the MIND STATES IV conference in Berkeley.

While I am visiting in California, I come across some more seeds. Obviously, this was meant to be. I obtain them, and ask acquaintances about dosage and experiences. Some are positive and others not. Some say two-plus seeds, others caution that such a dose could be very uncomfortable. One friend reports back that one seed smoked drove him to suicidal thoughts for the length of the voyage. Obviously, a plant not to be taken lightly. When following this line of enquiry I found people were also using it a third way: doing it sublingually combined with the same lime used for *betel* chewing. This method is said to bring it on slowly. Although it sounds like a sensible approach, I settle on smoking.

Summoning my courage, I toast two seeds until they make a popping sound. I take off the outer shell and grind the seed meat to a powder. Then I gently toast the powder again. I clean out my favorite pipe, and—as is my habit—wait for midnight. I load the pipe with the seed powder, settle back in darkness, fire up and take a small hit. I close my eyes, put the pipe down, and I drift.

At first, I feel like I have had a large dose of niacin. My face becomes quite warm. My heart seems to be swelling in my chest, just beating a regular tattoo. I drift a bit, and everything shifts ever so slightly. I fire up again, and then again. Something is taking form in front of me. Then the realization comes that the boundaries have gone. All that is, is this place, this moment. All that I was concerned about was for naught. In the inky blackness, red swirls pulsate, and slowly a form begins to emerge through the patterns. It is a black





multi-faceted jewel, the facets delineated by pulsing silver lines, and white pooling globules. It is beautiful, floating starkly alone. My mind reaches out to it and something occurs. From behind the gem emerges an ancient Indian woman. Bent with age she excitedly hobbles up to me. She smiles, and says in some language (not English nor Spanish), "You are here! You have arrived!" She is beside herself with excitement. More forms emerge around the jewel. It seems the whole village is there. They gesture, reach out, touch and converse with me, and amongst themselves. Great excitement fills the air. I look beyond the slowly disappearing jewel. I see rolling hills, a village, and *cebil* trees, swaying in the hot breeze. All seems achingly familiar, then I slowly drift off to sleep as the visions fall from me like dust. Little snakes of color remain, guarding where the jewel once hung, suspended in consciousness.

I wake the next morning, totally refreshed. I am very happy, and feel that something momentous has happened. Life, usually good, is even better. I am excited for the coming evening, as I am going back in. I want to see that landscape and to behold the jewel.

Midnight again. I settle back and take a large hit. As my head hits the pillow I can feel a great pressure beginning to bear down on me. My heartbeat increases and my face begins to feel hot. The pressure grows. I sit up, feeling like I have taken about 4–6 mg of 5-MeO-DMT. The universe is pressing against me with great urgency. I surrender to it. I feel the tryptamine carrier-wave vibrating and sounding through my being, all beings, throughout creation. The feeling recedes. Another hit, and in I go. Fractals, spiral nebulae, and the presence.

Out of the void, the jewel returns. I smile inwardly, I have been awaiting this. The jewel, pulsing with its blackness and expanding facets, fills the inner sky. I reach for the pipe once more. The jewel grows in detail and presence. It is everything. The pressure I had been feeling was coming from this source. Everything I was searching for would be answered in this place. The tryptamine carrier-wave grows louder. Out of the jewel comes a jaguar, its head thrashing about. The vision moves in a stuttering motion, and as it stutters, the jaguar's head becomes a dragon's, then back again to the jaguar. It starts snapping its jaws together, flailing its head(s) back and forth. It sees me and lunges—grabs me by the chest, deep into my heart—and shakes me like a puppet. It goes on and on. I feel like it is feeding on me, and yet I feel detached, like an observer to all of this. The vision recedes back into the

jewel. I lay there exhausted. The sky is pulsing with color, and the jewel's presence is now a brooding one. I hear a noise and feel a vibration. My eyes open, and out of the jewel and sky, a giant dancing figure comes forth. It is an Eastern North American Indian with a mohawk. He dances from foot to foot, shaking the earth. His head reaches into the sky, fading into stars. He perceives my form lying there, hesitates for a moment, then jumps into my chest and sinks into my being. He is chanting the whole time. He jumps out of me and then grabs me again, and we merge and become one. The carrier wave is now screamingly loud. I start to fade and then lose consciousness altogether.

I wake up two hours later. Colors are swimming, and my sense of self is morphing, flowing from object to object, into the walls, the trees, then back into the house again. I feel like I am going mad. I walk out into the living room, and gather my thoughts slowly as I look out the window into the darkness. The panic subsides. By the time I get up and head to bed, all parts of my being have reassembled and are whole again. I fall asleep, smiling.

The morning comes with all its beauty, and I decide to give *cebil* a rest for awhile. What I have harvested from these excursions will keep me busy for several weeks, examining all parts of the experiences. Even just sitting with eyes closed, I can feel the warmth on my face and see the rolling hills with the *cebil* trees. A place of complete calm, fraught with unfolding myth and mystery. — GWYLLM LWYDD

## POTENTIATION

In a past issue of *The Entheogen Review*, I read where a snuff was prepared from the powdered stem-bark of *Banisteriopsis caapi* combined with *A. peregrina* and an alkaline base of some sort. But nowhere have I heard any actual bioassay reports that used the combination of a MAOI and bufotenine.

When I got my *Anadenanthera colubrina* seeds, I asked the vendor if he knew the percentage of bufotenine in them. He said that he had no idea, but he did know that the seeds from his latest batch were very active when smoked. He sent me six pods, each full of seeds. They averaged about 12 seeds per pod. The seeds were extremely thin and around 13–16 mm in wide. The black outer shell harbored a white-meat interior. This shell is so thin that it seemed to me to be a waste of time to attempt to bother with removing it. I was told that people using the seeds were breaking them up,





drying them out in a warm place, and then smoking them. Some people apparently also make a snuff out of the seeds, but I wasn't interested in doing that.

I decided that since the outer shell is practically insignificant, and the seed itself is so thin, that I would just break it up and smoke it directly, without any drying. I did this with one seed and it put me into a fairly strong journey with strange but very clear, rapidly-moving patterns. This lasted about five minutes, with a particularly beautiful afterglow. The material was potent, but I never felt the slightest amount of fear as I do when I smoke DMT. The body sensation was mostly neutral, but perhaps slightly pleasant.

About five hours later, I broke up another fresh seed and threw it in my pipe with a pinch of crushed *Peganum harmala* seeds, which couldn't have been more than 150 milligrams (although I didn't actually weigh it). I smoked this mix and noticed that it was an odd tasting but mild smoke, with virtually no irritation on the throat and lungs. When I finished the pipeload, I realized that the body sensation was very powerful, although the closed-eye visuals were mild. I felt no desire to smoke more. Over the next five minutes, the closed-eye visuals became fantastically beautiful—strong, clear, and quite colorful. They seemed to have a central overall pattern/design theme, in spite of the rapidly moving motifs. After a couple of minutes, the “theme” would instantly and dramatically change into something totally different, which would again last a few minutes or so until the next radical change. I found this to be novel and a lot of fun, because the changes were so surprising. The visuals had an amazing 3-D depth to them. As striking and colorful as the visual patterns were, they could only be experienced with my eyes closed. With eyes open, I merely felt very stoned with a mild nondescript visual alteration. There also was a slow, rhythmic body sensation that was so regular I thought that maybe it was in synch with my heartbeat. But when I took my pulse, I realized that the wave-like ebb and flow was somewhat slower than my heartbeat.

The seed smoked alone lasted around seven minutes. The seed smoked with the crushed *Peganum harmala* took five minutes to peak and stayed there for 15 minutes, with an additional slow 25-minute comedown. The added *P. harmala* produced an obvious quantum-leap potentiation in both strength and duration, not to mention a greatly improved quality in the feelings and visions. For me, this combo is an absolute winner, and comes in a very close second to my favorite, which is DMT-based ayahuasca. The next step is to

boil a crushed seed with *P. harmala* and drink it; I don't think that anyone has done that yet. [Note: JONATHAN OTT has discussed his bioassays of bufotenine free-base combined with harmaline in his book *Shamanic Snuffs or Entheogenic Errhines*. He tried this combination intranasally, sublingually, orally, and rectally, and found there to be definite potentiation in all cases. Strangely, he didn't report on any vaporization experiments, and yours is the first that we have seen regarding this.—Eds.]

As an aside, those who are habituated to opiates will not get off well on ayahuasca. Any kind of opiate, including codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, and even natural opium, are my drugs of choice when I am in an “ayahuasca overdose” situation. It renders the emotional, sensorial, and “alien contact” aspects of the journey virtually non-existent, leaving only a few mild visuals that have no emotional impact on me. I have tested this extensively, both on myself and with others, and the results are entirely predictable. In my opinion, those who regularly use opiates will *never* have a genuine ayahuasca experience. Interestingly, the use of tobacco can also be a powerful inhibitor of the effects of ayahuasca. —B. GREEN

## NO VISUALS

I smoked one seed of *Anadenanthera colubrina*, which weighed 230 mg. I didn't bother removing the seed-coat or toasting it; I just chopped up the seed and stuck it into my pipe. It took me about 8–10 big hits to dust the bowl, holding in the smoke about 25 seconds per hit. I felt a pins and needles sensation at first, and then some pressure in my head and a bit of general warmth, but no other effects aside from a mild cloud-headed feeling. About 15 minutes later, I still had some pressure in my head and the cloudy feeling, but I gave up on getting any closed-eye or open-eye visuals. I know people who have gotten strong effects from one seed, but obviously that is not the case with the seed that I smoked. Yields of bufotenine from *Anadenanthera colubrina* var. *cebil* have been reported from 0.5% (RENDÓN & WILLY 1985) to 12.4% (TORRES & REPKE 1996). If the seed that I smoked was somewhere in this range, this would place its bufotenine content at 1.15 mg to 28.52 mg. The range of activity for vaporized free-base bufotenine is said to be 2–8 mg (OTT 2001). This would appear to indicate that I either have fairly impotent *A. colubrina* seeds, that I am a “hard head” when it comes to bufotenine, or perhaps both. In the future, I may make a crude ethanol-based extraction of the seeds to smoke instead of smoking them directly. —FORK

