

Kuṣumbhaka seems in one passage of the *Rigveda*¹ to mean a poisonous insect, **Kuṣumbha** in the *Atharvaveda*² clearly having the sense of a poison bag. *Sāyaṇa* renders it as 'ichneumon' (*nakula*).

¹ i. 191, 16. The sense of 'poison-bag' is possible in i. 191, 15, and is accepted there by *Böhtlingk* in his Dictionary.

² ii. 32, 6. Cf. *Zimmer, Altindisches Leben*, 99; *Griffith, Hymns of the Rigveda*, i, 257.

1. **Kuṣṭha** is the name of a plant (*Costus speciosus* or *arabicus*)¹ which is prominent in the *Atharvaveda*.² It grew especially on the mountains, along with the *Soma*, on the high peaks of the *Himālayā* (*Himavant*) where the eagles nest, and was thence brought east to men.³ Like *Soma*, it is said to have grown in the third heaven under the famous *Aśvattha* tree, where the gods were wont to assemble, and thence it was brought in a golden ship.⁴ As a remedy, it held the highest place among herbs, being called by the auspicious names *Naghā-māra* and *Naghā-riṣa*, and styled the offspring of *Jīvala* and *Jīvalā*, the 'lively' ones.⁵ It cured headache (*śirṣāmaya*), diseases of the eyes, bodily affliction,⁶ but especially fever—hence called 'fever-destroyer' (*takma-nāśana*)—and consumption (*Yakṣma*). From its general properties it was also named 'all-healing' (*viśva-bheṣaja*).⁷ Its aromatic qualities were apparently known, as it is classed with 'salve' (*Āñjana*) and 'nard' (*Nalada*).⁸

¹ Or *Saundersia auriculata*, *Hillebrandt, Vedische Mythologie*, i, 65.

² v. 4; vi. 102; xix. 139.

³ v. 4, i. 2, 8; xix. 39, 1.

⁴ v. 4, 3-6; vi. 75, i. 2; xix. 39, 6-8.

⁵ v. 4, i; xix. 39, 4.

⁶ v. 4, 10.

⁷ xix. 39, 9.

⁸ vi. 102, 3.

Cf. *Grohmann, Indische Studien*, 9, 420 et seq.; *Zimmer, Altindisches Leben*, 63, 64; *Bloomfield, Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, 415, 680; *Whitney, Translation of the Atharvaveda*, 227, 228.

2. **Kuṣṭha**.—In one passage of the *Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā*¹ there is a series of fractions, **Kalā**, **Kuṣṭha**, **Śapha**, **Pad**, which appear to denote one-sixteenth, one-twelfth, one-eighth, and one-fourth respectively.

¹ iii. 7, 7. Cf. *Böhtlingk, Dictionary*, s.v.