

## A LITERATURE REVIEW OF KUSHMANDA (BENINCASA HISPIDA) IN AYURVEDIC CLASSICS

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### ABSTRACT

Kushmanda (*Benincasa hispida*) is described in Samhitas and Nighantus under Shakvarga. It belongs to family Cucurbitaceae. It is also known as Ash Gourd or white gourd or wax gourd. Kushmanda is a large climbing or trailing herb cultivated as a vegetable throughout India up to an altitude of 1,200 m. Flowering and fruiting time is during June to October. Its juice is useful in various diseases. Kushmanda is useful in various diseases like kasa, shwas, Apasmar, Unmad, Mutrakrishtra, Mutraghat. Kushmanda is described as rasayan, brihan, balya and dhatupushtikar due to its madhura rasa, madhur vipak, sheeta veerya and laghu and snigdha property. Unripe Kushmanda is described as Guru. Pakva Kushmanda is described as Tridoshar, Bal Kushmanda is pittashamak and madhyam fruit

increases kapha. In this article, complete review of Kushmanda has been taken in ayurvedic classics.

**KEYWORDS:** *Kushmanda, Diseases, Madhur.*

### INTRODUCTION

Kushmanda is described under Valliphala Gana and Koshatiki kula. Its latin name is *Benincasa hispida* Thum. and family is Cucurbitaceae. (Lat. cucurbita = gourd, large fleshy fruit). Commonly it is called as Ash gourd or Wax gourd.

Kushmanda is a large climbing or trailing herb with stout, angular, hispid stems, cultivated as

a vegetable throughout India up to an altitude of 1,200 m. Fruits are fleshy, hairy when young, waxy bloom when mature, flesh white, spongy; seeds white, yellowish white or pale brown. It is found in India, Ceylon and Burma. Flowering and fruiting time is during June to October.

In vedic literature very rare references were observed regarding Kushmanda. Kushmanda is used instead of animal in yajna for sacrifice (Kullukbhata Tika). In Vishnu Dharma Sutra it is described as Shaka Vishesh (Vi.Dh.Su.79.17)<sup>[1]</sup>

In Taiteeriya Aaranyak (2/7/1; 2/8/1) Kushmanda is specified for the mantravishesh. Same is mentioned in Dharmasutra.<sup>[2]</sup>

Brihat trayee have described it under Phala varga. It is mainly used in Mutra vikaras, Apasmara, Kasa, Unmada, Arsha etc. All Nighantus quoted it extensively. Dhanvantari Nighantu mentions it as the best among the valli phalas. Kaiyadeva described the properties of unripen fruits, ripen fruits, juice, pulpe and leaves separately. In Kshemkutuhul many recipes are described as balyakar. Also in Nighanturatnakar, Properties of Kushmanda are described in Gunadoshaprakaranam as vrishya, pushtikar, dhatuvardhak, bastishudhikar, balya, Madhur, sheet, hridya and kaphkar. Also it is agnipradipak, laghu and pathyakar.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Sanskrit names

Karkotika, Kushmandi, Suphala, Kumbhaphala, Kshirphala, Kushmandaki, Karkati, Mahaphala, P ushpaphala, Peetpushpa, Valliphala, Somaka

### Vernacular names

**Sansk.:** Pushpaphalam, Brihatphalam

**Aasam.:** Kumra

**Beng.:** Chal Kumra

**Eng.:** Ash gourd, White guard melon

**Guj.:** Safed Kohalu, Bhuru, Kohalu, Bhuru kolu

**Hindi:** Kushmanda, Petha

**Kan.:** Boodi Humbala

**Mal.:** Kumbalanga

**Mar.:** Kohala

**Ori.:** Kakharu, Panikakharu

**Punj.:** Petha

**Tam.:** Pooshanikkai

**Tel.:** Boodida Gummadi

**Urdu.:** Petha

### **Pharmacodynamics**

Rasa – Madhura Veerya – Sheeta Vipak – Madhura Guna-Laghu, Snigdha

Doshagnata-Vatapittashamak

Sarvdoshhara (Pakva phala)

### **Kushmanda in samhita kala**

Acharya Charaka has mentioned the Kushmanda dravya in Shaka varga in the chapter “Annapanvidhi Adhyaya”

Charak has described here that vegetables like Kushmanda are heavy, unctuous, sweet, cold in potency and purgative. They produce draught during the process of digestion. They become wholesome for intake when boiled and drained of the juice and added with fatty substances in plenty.<sup>[4]</sup>

Charak specifically mentioned properties of ripe Kushmanda. Ripe Kushmanda is sweet and sour in taste, slightly alkaline and light. It helps elimination of urine and faces and alleviates all the three vitiated Doshas.<sup>[5]</sup>

In Chikitsasthana Chardichikitsa Adhyaya 20, Valliphala (Kushmanda) is cited for vaman prayog with other vamankarak drugs.<sup>[6]</sup>

Acharya Sushrut described Kushmanda in different context.

Sushrut mentioned Kushmanda in Madhurvarga in Sutrasthana Adhyaya “Rasavishesh Vigyaniya”<sup>[7]</sup> In Chapter “Dravadravya Vidhi” Adhyaya Sushrut mentioned properties of Tail of Kushmanda seeds. Kushmanda oil is sweet in taste and vipaka, Sheet veerya, pacify vata and pitta, slimmy, diuretic and lower agni.<sup>[8]</sup> In annapanvidhi Adhyaya, Acharya Sushrut described properties of ripe and unripe Kushmanda separately.

Young fruit of Kushmanda pacifies pitta while middle aged one increases kapha, the white (ripe) fruit is light, hot, alkaline, appetiser, diuretic, alleviates all doshas, is beneficial for

heart and wholesome for those having mental disorders.<sup>[9]</sup> Sushrut described anupan of various Aahar dravyas in sutrasthan. He said that it is beneficial to take Aasav of Darvi and Karira after eating Kushmanda shaka.<sup>[10]</sup> Acharya Sushrut compared the shape of *Vikrit Garbha with Kushmanda* fruit in Sharira Sthana Adhyaya “Shukrashonitashudhi Sharira”<sup>[11]</sup> In chapter “Snehopayogic Chikitsasthana” of Chikitsa sthana Sushrut mentioned that oil of Kushmanda is useful in retention of urine.<sup>[12]</sup> In Sushrut Samhita, reference of Madhurvalliphalam is seen in causes of aggravation of Shleshma. This is explained as either (1) sweet fruits like those of *Tal* and *Narikela* etc. and (2) Cucurbitaceous fruits or only sweet Cucurbitaceous fruits such as *Kushmanda* etc.<sup>[13]</sup> In Sushrut Samhita, Valliphala (Kushmanda) is mentioned as unwholesome (poison) combination mixed together with milk.<sup>[14]</sup> Valliphala is mentioned in Dushyodar chikitsa in Sushrut Samhita Chikitsasthana 14/8.<sup>[15]</sup> Pushpaphala (Kushmanda) is mentioned as *Yogya for pratyaksha karmabhyas for demonstration of different ways of excision on various fruits.*<sup>[16]</sup> In Panatyayapratishedham Adhyaya Uttarsthana, Acharya Sushrut described Kushmanda swaras prayog in madataya.<sup>[17]</sup>

In Annaswarupa Vigyaniya Adhyaya, Acharya Vagbhat mentioned the properties of Kushmanda along with other vegetables.

Kushmanda increases kapha and vata, breaks the hard faeces, Abhishyandi -causes more secretions in the tissues, sweet in taste and not easily digestible.<sup>[18]</sup> Acharya described the Kushmanda as the best among the creepers, mitigates vata and pitta, cleanses the urinary bladder, and aphrodisiac.<sup>[19]</sup> Acharya described importance of Kushmanda in Apasmar chikitsa. Ghee boiled with eighteen times its quantity of juice of Kushmanda, added with paste of Yashti cures epilepsy and gives good intelligence, speech and voice.<sup>[20]</sup> Acharya Vagbhat described Kushmanda Rasayan yoga in “*Kasa Chikitsa*” chapter of Chikitsa sthana. He also described its benefits if Kushmanda kalpa used in appropriate dose daily, it cures cough, hiccup, fever, dyspnoea, bleeding disease, injury to chest and consumption, heals the ulcer in the chest, improves intelligence, memory and strength. Formulated by Ashwini Kumar, this Kushmanda rasayan is a tonic to the heart.<sup>[21]</sup> In “Arsha Chikitsa” Adhyaya, Acharya Vagbhat mentioned Kushmanda along with Gunja and Surana for rectal suppository in Piles.<sup>[22]</sup> Ashtang Sangrahar also quote same references of Kushmanda properties, Kushmanda ghrita, Kushmanda rasayan. In Sharandhar Samhita, Kushmandavleha procedure and benefits are described. Kushmandavleha is useful in Raktapitta, Kshay, Jwara, Aruchi, Grahani, Pandu, Kamla, Shosha, Trushna, Bhrama, Kasa, Urashat and also it is balya

and bruhankarak.<sup>[23]</sup>

Aacharya Bhavmishra described Kushmanda properties under Shak varga in Nighantu part. In Grahanirogadhikar, Bhavmishra mentioned procedure and properties of Kushmanda Kalyan Guda which cures all types of Grahani diseases, skin diseases, haemorrhoids, fevers, anaemia, chest diseases, distension, jaundice, diseases of urinary system, arthritis, etc. It brings balance among vata, pitta and kapha doshas. Emaciated persons, aged people are benefitted by its use. This preparation is strengthening, nutritious and vitalizer.<sup>[24]</sup> Kushmand Ghrit is mentioned in Apasmaradhikar which can cure Apasmara very well.<sup>[25]</sup> Kushmanda Kshara is stated in Shooladhikar. This Kshara gives relief from severe colic which is considered incurable.<sup>[26]</sup> Kushmandakvati is mentioned in Mishraprakaran in Krutanna varga. It control the diseases of pitta and rakta and are light to digest.<sup>[27]</sup>

In Raktapitta Chikitsa, Chakradutta described Khanda kushmandaka Rasayan and Vasakhanda kushmandaka<sup>[28]</sup> In Vrushyadhikar, Gudkushmandak yog is described which is useful to increase appetite, destroys kasa, shwas, jwara, hikka, chardi and aruchi and it is also a good vajeekaran drug.<sup>[29]</sup> In Yogratnakar, Kushmanda properties are described in Purvardha dhanyadiphalak and shakguna<sup>[30]</sup> Khandkushmanda is described in Amlapitta chikitsa.<sup>[31]</sup> In Apasmar chikitsa, Kushmandadi yog and kushmandadi ghrutam is described and specified that Mature kushmanda is pathyakar in Apasmar.<sup>[32]</sup> In Vangsen Samhita, Kushmanda Rasa with Laksha is mentioned in Rajyakshamadhikar. This yog is useful in Raktshaya.<sup>[33]</sup> Vangsen described Khandkushmanda in Amlapittarogadhikar adhaya.<sup>[34]</sup> Kushmanda Ghruta is described in Apasmarogadhikar adhaya.<sup>[35]</sup> In Harit Samhita prathamsthan, Kushmanda is described under Shakavarga and kushmandagunas are described.<sup>[36]</sup> In Tiritiya sthan, kushmandavleha is stated which cures raktapitta.<sup>[37]</sup> In Tiritiya sthan, Kushmanda leha and Kushmanda ghrut is described in Apasmar chikitsa.<sup>[38]</sup> In Tiritiya sthana, Kushmanda is mentioned in mutrakrucshtra chikitsa.<sup>[39]</sup>

In Kshemkutuhel, Kushmanda is mentioned in types of Shaka. Also mentioned procedure of Kushmanda Shak, Suswadusundaram (Frying of Kushmanda), procedure of Kushmanda Gulika, Khandkushmandakam, Bharjeetsundari which is taste increasing, Amlakushmanda which is useful as appetizer and also described chelika and Kushmanda rajika and aasuri. In kshemkutuhel, many procedures of Kushmanda kalpa is described and stated that these all kalpas of Kushmanda are bruhan, sheet, raktapittanashak, Also described properties of Bala, madhyam and pakva Kushmanda.<sup>[40]</sup> In Dashamotsav, Kushmand modak procedure is

described and stated that it is pittanashak, balkarak, vatnashak, ruchivardhak, kaphkarak and sheetveerya. Also described kushmandadi beejmodak Nirman vidhi.<sup>[41]</sup> In Bhaishajyaratnavali, In Unmadchikitsa prakaran, Kushmandakbeej prayog is mentioned.<sup>[42]</sup> In Raktapitta chikitsa prakaran, Kushmanda khanda and Vasakhandakushmanda are described.<sup>[43]</sup> In Grahanirogchikitsa prakaran, Kushmandakalyanak yog is described.<sup>[44]</sup> In Apasmarchikitsa prakaran, Kushmanda ghrut is described.<sup>[45]</sup> In Hikkashwaschikitsa prakaran, Kushmanda churna with kosha jala is stated to cure Shwas and Kasa.<sup>[46]</sup> In Mutrakruetra Chikitsa prakaran, Kushmandrasa Prayog with Yavakshar and Sugar is mentioned.<sup>[47]</sup>

### **Kushmanda in nighantu**

Classification: Bhavprakashnighantu - Shakvarga

Dhanvantarinighantu – Guduchyadi varga Kaiydevnighantu – Aushadivarga  
Madanpalnighantu – Shakvarga Saraswatinighantu -Latadivarga Rajnighantu –  
Mulakadivarga Shodhalanighantu -Guduchyadivarga Hridayadipakanighantu – Dwinama  
varga

Ashtangnighantu -Shyamadigana Nighantuaadarsh – Kushmandadi varga Priyanighantu –  
Pipalyadivarga Amarkosh – Vanaushadivarga Saushrutnighantu – Prakirnagana.

Bhavmishra described Kushmanda is nourishing, aphrodisiac, heavy, controls Pitta, Rakta and Vata. Young fruit reduces Pitta, grown up moderately enhances Kapha and fully matured fruit is not too cold, palatable, alkaline, appetizer, light to digest, clears the urinary bladder, pacifies psychological disorders and alleviates all the Doshas.<sup>[48]</sup>

The smaller variety of Kushmanda is called Kushmandi and its other name is Karkaru as per Aacharya Bhavmishra. Karkaru is absorbent, cooling, controls haemorrhage and heavy to digest. Its ripe fruit is bitter associated with alkaline taste, enhances appetite and pacifies kapha and vata.<sup>[49]</sup>

In Dhanvantari Nighantu, Kushamanda is described as the best fruit vegetable amongst creepers. It pacifies vata and pitta *dosas*. It is purificatory of urinary organs, Varshya, cordial and useful in psychological disorders.<sup>[50]</sup>

Also mentioned in Tailvishesh in Suvarnadivarga. Kushmanda oil pacifies vata and pitta, increases kapha, beneficial for hairs, heavy and sheet veerya.<sup>[51]</sup>

In Kaiydevanighantu, Kushmanda dravya is kept under Aaushadi Varga. Synonyms and properties are described.<sup>[52]</sup>

Madanpal mentioned Kushmanda in Shaka Varga. He described synonyms and properties of Bala, Madhyam and Pakwa Kushmanda separately and also properties of Kushmanda Majja.<sup>[53]</sup>

Also Kushmanda is specified in Trapushadi tail in Paniyadi varga<sup>[54]</sup> and in modak in dhanyakrutannadi varga.<sup>[55]</sup>

Rajnighantu described Kushmanda in Mulakadi Varga. Described synonyms and properties of Kushmanda. Also stated best fruit among valliphala.<sup>[56]</sup>

Shodhala mentioned Kushmanda under Guduchyadi Varga. Synonyms are described in Namsangrah<sup>[57]</sup> and properties are described in Gunasangrah.<sup>[58]</sup>

In Nighantu Aadarsh, Kushmanda is described under Kushmandadi varga and. Nirukti of Kushmanda and its synonyms are described in it.

Also follows Charak, Sushrut and Raj Nighantu while describing gunas.<sup>[59]</sup>

In Nighantu Ratnakar, Properties of Kushmanda are described in Gunadoshaprakaranam. Kushmanda is vrishya, pushtikar, dhatuvarhdhak, bastishudhikar, balya, Madhur, sheet, hridya and kaphkar. It is beneficial in mutraghat, prameh, mutrakruchtra, ashmari, trishna, aruchi. Also it is agnipradipak, laghu and pathyakar.<sup>[60]</sup>

Shaligramnighantu is said to be the last Nighantus of the 19<sup>th</sup> A.D. Kushmanda is described under Shaka varga in this Nighantu. Shaligram followed Bhavprakash Nighantu while quoting synonyms and Shodhal Nighantu, Nighantu Ratnakar, Sushrut and Raj Nighantu while quoting properties of Kushmanda.<sup>[61]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Kushmanda is described as pathyakar, balya, brihan, dhatupushtikar, rasayan, medhya, hridhya, deepan, pachana, bhedana, bastishodhak, vrishya, in various nighantus and samhitas. Kushmanda has madhura Rasa and veepak and sheet veerya, laghu guna dhatuvarhdhak and balyakar property. All kalpas of Kushmanda are described as balykar in Kshemkutuhul.

**Therapeutic uses of Kushmanda are described in following diseases**

Unmada-Aspasm, Kasa, Shwas, Rajyakshma-Kshaya, Madatyaya, Amlapitta, Parinamshool, Arsha, Trishana, Mutraghat, Mutrakichha, Ashmari, Grahani, Raktapitta, Aruchi, Hikka, Jwara, Chhardi etc.

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