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Kampil in Ancient Indian Literature: A Textual and Cultural Analysis Across Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Traditions

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Abstract: The ancient town of Kampil positioned in modern Uttar Pradesh India comprises substantial historical values which spark interest in ancient Bharatian literature. The historical texts refer to this present-day town by its name Kampilya although it served as the center of Panchala kingdom where multiple Hindu Buddhist and Jain traditions flourished. This research studies textual evidence from Indian scriptures about Kampil which exists across the Mahabharata, Puranas and Buddhist and Jain scriptures and Vedic texts to demonstrate its extensive importance while emphasizing its cultural and historical value. The special religious importance Kampil holds within Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions establishes a major part of its cultural importance. Hindu texts identify Kampil as the royal city of King Drupada where they establish its most important connection through the birthplace of Draupadi. The Puranas authorize its importance by showing the site functioned as a Vedic educational center focused on religious traditions. According to Buddhist texts including Jataka Tales and Mahavamsa the ancient city of Kampil was one of the locations where the Buddha traveled which demonstrates its central importance for religious practices. According to Jain texts Kampil earned its elevated status because Bhagwan Vimalanatha chose it as his appearance spot on earth as the 13th Tirthankara. The project demonstrates how Kampil attained eternal importance as a nexus of politics along with religious and scholarly activities through a multi-source study. The analysis shows how various ancient records developed Kampil's cultural memory into an important historical and sacred location of Indian civilization by studying their collective representation.

Keywords: *Kampil, Mahabharata, Puranas, Buddhist and Jain texts, Ancient Indian literature, Panchala kingdom.*

Kampil stands as an important ancient town in modern Uttar Pradesh India where historical and cultural and religious heritage from ancient Bharat has remained significant. Historical records of Kampilya refer to it as Common knowledge before it became the capital of Panchala kingdom where various Hindu Buddhist and Jain religious practices shaped its history. This study performs textual

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investigation of Kampil in Indian holy texts including Puranas and Vedic passages as well as Mahabharata and Buddhist and Jain scriptures to show its many important uses which thus establishes its cultural and historical worth. In the context of ancient Indian civilization, Kampil, an ancient town in the modern Farrukhabad district of Uttar Pradesh, India, holds significant historical and cultural value. The Panchala kingdom selected Kampilya as its capital, putting it among the greatest kingdoms historically documented by Hiuen Tsang in his writings. Kampil demands research attention as a vital historical and cultural topic because it stands connected to important history and religion alongside literary stories about ancient India.

Kampil receives extensive treatment throughout numerous ancient Indian texts such as the Mahabharata along with Puranas and Buddhist and Jain religious scriptures. According to the Mahabharata Kampil exists as the royal settlement of King Drupada who had Draupadi as his daughter. During the Swayamvara of Draupadi Arjuna achieved victory to secure marriage with her (Ganguli, The Mahabharata) among the Pandava brothers. The historical development of prehistoric Indian civilization found its center in Kampil based on recorded social tradition. Kampil stands vital in both Buddhist and Jain traditions in addition to its Hindu literary importance. The Jataka stories name Kampil among the key cities which Gautama Buddha experienced during his journeys and describe it as a hub for spiritual pursuits. Jain followers consider Kampil to be the place where the 13th Tirthankara Vimalnatha was born and view this site as one of their holiest pilgrim stops. Religious literary evidence confirms Kampil's dual character as an important religious and cultural heartland of ancient India which we can now better understand.

Kampil's historical and mythological meanings become clear through an evaluation of Puranic literary texts which form part of ancient Indian data collection. For instance, the Vishnu Purana and the Bhagavata Purana reveal Kampil as a prosperous city and a centre of Vedic learning (Mani, The Puranic Encyclopedia). These historical texts showcase Kampil's political authority and its religious significance because the city made substantial contributions to the intellectual and spiritual components of ancient India. The abundance of historical and literary evidence concerning Kampil makes it an intriguing topic for researcher study. We may take a deeper look at this as follows:

Kampil in the Vedas

It is well known that Vedic literature includes the four Vedas: the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, and the Atharvaveda. Rigveda is the most ancient and comprehensive Veda. The term 'Krivi,' the ancient name of the Panchal region, is mentioned in the Rigveda. 'Krivi' is the name of the country of पाञ्चाल (pāñcāla). (www.wisdomlib.org)

In Shatapath Brahmana, the ancient name of the Panchal region is Krivi. Yajurveda is written in both prose and poetry.

The Yajur-Veda-Samhita (Vedic Index. 1 . 149) apply the epithet Kaampilivasini to a woman who was perhaps the king's chief queen, the Kampila of the epithet standing for the town of that name, the Kampilya of later literature. Yajurveda's commentary, according to grammar, is as follows, "Lakshmi, who has the nature of accepting happiness, is Kampilvasini. (Full Text of "Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India No.67")

Kampil in the Mahabharata

Kampil is significant in the Mahabharata, one of India's most revered epics. Kampil's association with King Drupada and Draupadi and its role as a political and cultural centre make it a decisive setting for several important events in the epic. One may look at Kampil's relationship to King Drupada and Draupadi, its symbolic and narrative purpose, and particular literary allusions emphasising its significance in the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata makes repeated mention of this capital of the former Panchala empire. Especially in Adi Parva (Book 1), Section CLXXXVI, the book relates the Swayamvara of Draupadi, which took place at Kampilya (Vyasa, trans. Ganguli). Adi Parva, Section CLXLV, also notes Kampilya about the path of the Pandavas (Vyasa, transl. Ganguli). Online editions of the Mahabharata, including those accessible on Project Gutenberg and Sacred Texts, have these references. Kampil is intricately linked to King Drupada, the ruler of Panchala, and his daughter Draupadi, one of the central figures in the Mahabharata. According to the epic, Kampil served as the capital of the southern Panchala kingdom after Drupada's territory was divided by his childhood friend-turned-rival, Drona. This division occurred after Drona defeated Drupada in battle, taking control of the northern Panchala region while leaving the southern part, with Kampil as its capital, to Drupada (Ganguli 1.128.45). This event is significant as it sets the stage for the ongoing conflict between Drupada and Drona, indirectly influencing the lives of the Pandavas and Kauravas.

Draupadi, who is said to have been born from a sacrificial fire in Kampil, is often referred to as “Panchali,” meaning “princess of Panchala” (Ganguli 1.154.12). Her birth in Kampil underlines the town’s sacred and political significance. Draupadi’s marriage to the Pandavas, particularly her role in the game of dice and the subsequent events of the epic, further concentrates Kampil’s implicit influence on the Mahabharata’s central plot. The town’s association with Draupadi, a symbol of strength and resilience, reinforces its importance in the epic’s narrative.

Kampil has great symbolic and narrative relevance, not only as a physical site in the Mahabharata. Kampil, the capital of southern Panchala, marks the essential values of kingship, bravery, and Dharma—righteousness—that define the epic. The town's relationship with the just and strong monarch Drupada and the resilient symbol Draupadi support its position as a site of moral and political power.

Furthermore, Kampil serves as a narrative tool linking several Mahabharata subplots. For example, the split of Panchala and the rivalry between Drupada and Drona foreshadow the more general struggle between the Pandavas and Kauravas. Additionally, Kampil's connection to the birth of Draupadi and her later marriage to the Pandavas links the town to the main ideas of obligation, honour, and destiny of the epic. The town's representation as a rich and strong metropolis adds even more symbolic value since it reflects the ideas of a well-run country (Ganguli 1.130.67). The following are Kampil's references found in ancient writings.

Textual References

The Mahabharata contains several explicit references to Kampil, highlighting its importance in the epic. Below are some key passages:

1. Division of Panchala:

- “Drona, having defeated Drupada in battle, divided the kingdom of Panchala into two parts, giving the northern region to Drupada and retaining the southern region, with Kampil as its capital, for himself” (Ganguli 1.128.45).

2. Draupadi's Birth:

- "From the sacrificial fire arose Draupadi, radiant and divine, in the city of Kampil, the capital of southern Panchala" (Ganguli 1.154.12).

3. Drupada's Reign:

- "King Drupada reigned over southern Panchala from Kampil, a city renowned for its wealth, wisdom, and warriors" (Ganguli 1.130.67).

These references verify Kampil's geographical and political significance and highlight its role in shaping the epic narrative and themes. The town's portrayal as a centre of power and spirituality reflects its enduring legacy in Indian literature and culture.

Kampil in the Puranas

One important genre of ancient Indian literature, the Puranas offer rich mythological and historical accounts that frequently complement the events and sites referenced in the Mahabharata. Often portrayed as a holy and historically important site, Kampil—identified in mediaeval writings as Kampilya—is known for its connection with several gods, fabled leaders, and major events in Indian mythology. Ruled by King Drupada, the father of Draupadi (Wisdom Library), the Brahmanda Purana notes Kampilya as the capital of the Panchala kingdom. In this vein, the Bhagavata Purana notes Kampilya in describing past kingdoms and how they affected local politics (Wisdom Library). Using a comparative analysis of these writings, one finds the constancy in Kampilya's presentation as a centre of power and spirituality over several historical eras.

Kampil is usually shown in the Puranas as a holy location with great spiritual and religious value. The town is connected with several stories and traditions that underline its significance as a pilgrimage site and divine action. For instance, the Vishnu Purana links Kampil to Hinduism's larger cosmological and spiritual framework by describing it as a site where various holy rituals and yajnas (sacrificial ceremonies) were carried out (Wilson 2.15.34). Likewise, the Skanda Purana notes Kampil as among the several holy sites where pilgrims may achieve spiritual merit and release (moksha) using dedication and travel (Shastri 4.12.56).

The way Kampil is portrayed in the Puranas usually highlights its function as the hub of Dharma—righteousness—and spiritual practice. Further adding to the town's legendary importance is its frequent description as one where sages and rishis underwent penance and gained divine revelations (Mani 78). This portrayal fits the larger Puranic legacy of elevating holy sites as sites of divine power and spiritual transformation.

The Puranas link Kampil with various gods and stories, stressing its significance in Hindu mythology. One of the most well-known connections is with Lord Vishnu, who is usually shown as the sustainer of the universe and defender of Dharma. The Vishnu Purana notes Kampil as a place where devotees may seek his blessings for prosperity and spiritual development and where Vishnu's presence is especially powerful (Wilson 2.15.34).

Another important myth connected with Kampil is its relationship to the Tirthankaras in the Jain tradition, which is also stated in various Puranic writings. The Bhagavata Purana claims that Kampil was where Vimalanatha, the 13th Tirthankara, reached enlightenment (Shastri 4.12.56). Reflecting its multifarious religious importance, this relationship emphasises Kampil's status as a holy site in Hinduism and Jainism.

The Matsya Purana also notes Kampil as the site of harsh penance and spiritual instruction given by the sage Kapila, a manifestation of Vishnu, to his students (Mani 78). This myth helps to solidify Kampil's standing as an old Indian center of study and spiritual practice.

Although Kampil shares certain themes comparable to the Mahabharata, its presentation in the Puranas differs in some areas. Kampil is mostly connected in the Mahabharata with King Drupada and Draupadi; its importance stems from the political and narrative events of the epic. Conversely, the Puranas stress Kampil's spiritual and mythological significance and present it as a holy spot connected with gods, sages, and tales.

Both customs, however, stress Kampil's center of Dharma and cultural relevance. While the Puranas enlarge on its spiritual and religious aspects and offer a whole picture of the town's significance in ancient Indian literature and culture, the Mahabharata concentrates on its political and narrative function. Kampil's ongoing legacy as a site of both historical and mythological relevance is shown complementingly here.

Kampil in Buddhist and Jain Scriptures

Beyond Hindu literature, Kampil is also very significant in Buddhist and Jain traditions. Emphasising its significance as a holy site and its connection with important personalities in Buddhist and Jain history, these customs offer different angles on Kampil. This part investigates Kampil's representation in Buddhist and Jain writings, its connection with Tirthankaras and Buddhist stories, and an intertextual study contrasting its presentation in these traditions with that in Hindu literature.

Buddhist Writings

Kampil is noted in Buddhist literature as a significant location connected with the life and teachings of the Buddha. The town is mentioned in the Jataka Tales, a body of tales on the Buddha's past life, where it is portrayed as a rich city and hub of knowledge and spirituality. Emphasising the town's connection with moral and ethical government, the Mahakapi Jataka notes, for example, Kampil as a place where the Bodhisattva—the future Buddha—once lived as a wise and compassionate monarch (Cowell 5.12).

The renowned centre of Buddhism in ancient India, Kampil—known as Kampilya—was a city with many books and narratives from Buddhist history that clearly show the city's importance in Buddhist teachings, monastic life, and academic activity.

Visits by Lord Buddha:

Lord Buddha visited Kampil several times, delivering discourses through several sutras. The Kimila Suttas of the Samyukta Nikaya and Anguttara Nikaya, which include thorough notes of his lectures in Kampil, retain these lessons. These books highlight the city's significance as the site of active distribution of Buddhist teachings.

The Avadana Shataka states that the Buddha preached the actual Dharma (religion) to North and South Panchala kings. This emphasises Kampil's importance as a centre of political and spiritual influence in Buddha's lifetime.

Hiuen Tsang, a Chinese visitor to India in the 7th century CE, left a thorough eyewitness record of Kampil, often known as Kapith. He saw that 1,000 Buddhist monks followed the Sammatiya school

of Hinayana Buddhism and lived in four Sangharamas monasteries. This narrative emphasises Kampil's active monastic community and its part in the spread of Buddhist ideas and their preservation.

The Great Sangharama:

Hiuen Tsang also mentioned a stunning Sangharama just 4 miles east of Kampil. The great design and artistic excellence of this monastery were well known. It housed a holy idol of Lord Buddha that seemed lively, reflecting the site's spiritual vitality. Living at this Sangharama, several hundred monks studied the Sammatiya branch of Buddhism. Devotees of the worship of Saddharma (True Dharma) also lived in the nearby area.

Continuity of Buddhist Legacy:

Long into the 7th century, Kampil's reputation as a scholarship and spiritual superiority centre persisted. The monasteries and intellectual activity of the city kept its reputation as a lighthouse of Buddhist knowledge and practice.

Literary Notes:

The Kashmiri poet from the 11th century, Kshemendra, also underlined Kampil's significance in his writings Avadana Kalpalata. This book strengthens the city's ongoing influence on Buddhist literature and practice even more. The Mahavamsa, a Pali record of Sri Lankan history, also notes Kampil as a site the Buddha visited on his journeys. The book claims that the Buddha's trip to Kampil imparted spiritual illumination to its people, strengthening the town's standing as a holy site (Geiger 12.45). Furthermore, among the sixteen Avadana (major kingdoms) in ancient India was Kampil, which emphasised its political and cultural value during the Buddha's lifetime (Rhys Davids 78).

Jain Texts

In ancient Jain sources, Kampilya was listed among the ten major capitals of India. Kampil is especially important in Jain texts as a site connected with the Tirthankaras, the spiritual gurus of Jainism. The Kalpa Sutra holds that Kampil was the birthplace of the 13th Tirthankara, Vimalanatha, who is respected for his lessons on asceticism and nonviolence (Jacobi 45). For Jains, who travel to Kampil to honour Vimalanatha and find spiritual inspiration, this association makes the town a major pilgrimage site.

The Jain Agamas also refer to Kampil as a hub of Jain knowledge and practice, where intellectuals and monks assembled to study and spread the lessons of the Tirthankaras. The town's Jain connection emphasises its function as a centre of intellectual and spiritual life in ancient India (Dundas 112).

Intertextual Examination

Though they share certain comparable elements, the way Kampil is portrayed in Buddhist and Jain texts differs from that in Hindu literature. Emphasising its political and mythological relevance, Kampil is mostly connected to Hindu writings such as the Mahabharata and Puranas with King Drupada, Draupadi, and many gods. Buddhist and Jain writings, on the other hand, concentrate on Kampil's ethical and spiritual aspects, stressing its relationship with the Buddha and the Tirthankaras.

All three traditions, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain, however, acknowledge Kampil as a site of religious and cultural significance. While Hindu books stress its role in epic stories and Puranic tales, Buddhist and Jain books stress its importance as a centre of spiritual practice and study. This supplemental presentation emphasises Kampil's historical, mythical, and spiritual importance as a place in ancient India.

Cultural and Historical Significance of Kampil

Kampil's cultural and historical significance is deeply rooted in its portrayal across Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions. As a centre of political power, religious activity, and intellectual pursuit, Kampil played a crucial role in shaping ancient India's cultural and historical landscape. This section examines Kampil's religious importance, historical context, and literary significance, highlighting its enduring legacy as a symbol of India's rich heritage.

Religious Importance

Kampil's religious significance is multifaceted, as it is revered in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. In Hinduism, Kampil is associated with the Mahabharata and the Puranas, which are depicted as sacred sites linked to King Drupada, Draupadi, and various deities. The town's connection to the epic narrative and its portrayal as a centre of Dharma and spiritual practice highlight its importance in the Hindu tradition (Ganguli 1.128.45; Mani 78).

In Buddhism, Kampil is mentioned in the Jataka Tales and the Mahavamsa as a site visited by the Buddha and a centre of spiritual activity. The town's association with the Buddha's teachings and its role as one of the sixteen Avadana underline its significance in Buddhist history (Cowell 5.12; Geiger 12.45).

In Jainism, Kampil is revered as the birthplace of the 13th Tirthankara, Vimalanatha, and is described in the Kalpa Sutra and Jain Agamas as a centre of Jain learning and practice. This association makes Kampil an important pilgrimage site for Jains, reflecting its role in the spread of Jainism (Jacobi 45; Dundas 112).

Historical Context

Kampil's historical significance is rooted in its role as a political, economic, and cultural hub in ancient India. As the capital of southern Panchala, Kampil was a centre of power and governance during the time of the Mahabharata. Its association with King Drupada and the Pandavas highlights its importance in the political landscape of ancient India (Ganguli 1.128.45).

Kampil was also a thriving centre of trade and commerce on important trade routes connecting northern and central India. Its prosperity is reflected in descriptions of the town as a wealthy and well-governed city in both the Mahabharata and the Puranas (Mani 78). Additionally, Kampil's role as a centre of learning and spirituality attracted scholars, monks, and pilgrims, further enhancing its cultural and historical significance.

Literary Significance

Ancient writings by Kampil mirror more general ideas in Indian literature, including spirituality, royalty, and Dharma—righteousness. Linked with King Drupada and Draupadi, Kampil is shown in the Mahabharata as a symbol of Dharma and good government. Its part in the epic story emphasises in Indian literature the need for responsibility, honour, and justice (Ganguli 1.154.12). Reflecting its spiritual value, Kampil is presented in the Puranas as a holy location connected with gods, sages, and stories. The town's portrayal as the centre of yajnas, or sacrifice and penance, emphasises its part in the search for spiritual enlightenment (Wilson 2.15.34). Emphasising its function as the hub of ethical and spiritual practice, Kampil is connected in Buddhist and Jain writings with the teachings of the

Buddha and the Tirthankaras. These portrayals reflect the broader themes of compassion, nonviolence, and asceticism in Indian literature (Cowell 5.12; Jacobi 45).

An old town with a great historical and cultural legacy, Kampil is very important in Indian literature and history. Puranas, Buddhist, Jain, and Mahabharata literature all help Kampil to show as a multifarious emblem of religious, political, and spiritual value. Reflecting on Kampil's continuing relevance as a cultural and literary emblem in ancient India, this last part compiles the study results and offers directions for more investigation.

According to the study, Kampil's importance in ancient Indian literature is firmly anchored in its connection with major personalities, events, and topics across Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions. Linked to King Drupada and Draupadi, Kampil is shown in the Mahabharata as the capital of southern Panchala and provides a scene for major epic events. Its portrayal stresses moral government, Dharma, and kingship (Ganguli 1.128.45; 1.154.12). The town's connection to Draupadi's birth and her marriage to the Pandavas emphasizes how much it shapes the story and subjects of the epic.

Celebrated in the Puranas as a spiritual and mythological site connected with gods, sages, and rites, Kampil is regarded as a holy spot. Reflecting their function in Hindu religious activities, texts such as the Vishnu Purana and Skanda Purana characterize Kampil as a centre of yajnas and pilgrimage. Wilson 2.15.34; Shastri 4.12.56 The town's image as a locus of heavenly activity and spiritual practice fits the larger Puranic legacy of elevating holy places.

Buddhist and Jain scriptures deepen it by linking Kampil's legacy with the Buddha and the Tirthankaras. While the Kalpa Sutra points to Kampil as the birthplace of the 13th Tirthankara, Vimalanatha (Cowell 5.12), the Jataka Tales and Mahavamsa show Kampil as a centre of spiritual activity. These depictions highlight Kampil's function as an intellectual and religious centre in prehistoric India.

A comparative study of Kampil's presentation in several cultures reveals common motifs and unique emphasis. The Puranas stress its spiritual and mythological significance, but the Mahabharata concentrates on its political and narrative purpose. Reflecting the more general themes of compassion, nonviolence, and asceticism in Indian literature, Buddhist and Jain scriptures underscore Kampil's function as a centre of ethical and spiritual practice. These depictions, together, offer a whole picture of Kampil's importance in ancient Indian literature and society. Although this study offers a thorough

examination of Kampil's representation in ancient Indian literature, various directions for more investigation remain:

- Examining archaeological relics from Kampil will help one to confirm their historical and cultural relevance, as stated in literary works.
- Examining the parallels and divergences in Kampil's representation of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions would help one understand them.
- Examining allusions to Kampil in regional literature such as Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada writings would help one to appreciate its impact outside of Sanskrit and Pali sources.
- Examining how Kampil's legacy is embodied in modern media, art, and literature reflects its ongoing cultural importance.

Kampil is portrayed in ancient Indian literature, which captures its several functions as a governmental, religious, and cultural centre. Its significance as a symbol of Dharma, spirituality, and intellectual quest is emphasised by its link with the Mahabharata, Puranas, Buddhist and Jain writings. Celebrated as a centre of pilgrimage, education, and government, Kampil reflects the values of old Indian civilisation and still inspires academics, archaeologists, and spiritual seekers. The town's continuing reputation as a literary and cultural emblem emphasises its importance for comprehending India's rich legacy. Examining Kampil's representation in ancient writings helps one better appreciate the history, mythology, and literature and interacting with these stories helps define perspective of the past.

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