

## THE GLORY OF KAMPILYA IN ANCIENT INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Kampil (ancient Kampilya) stands between lat.27°39' N and long.79°20' on the old cliff of river Ganga, at a distance of 40 kms. north west of Farrukhabad town of Uttar Pradesh and 10 kms. from Kaimganj, Tahsil. The epithet Kampila-Vasini has been applied to a woman of Kampilya. This name occurs in the Taittiriya<sup>(1)</sup> and the Maitrayani Samhitas<sup>(2)</sup> and the Taittiriya,<sup>(3)</sup> and the Satapatha Brahmanas<sup>(4)</sup>. Scholars take Kampilya as the name of the town known as Kampilya/ in the later literature, the capital of Panchala,<sup>(5)</sup> in the Brahmadata jataka it is referred to as Kampilaratta (or Kampilyarastra)<sup>(6)</sup> The Skanda Purana calls it Kampilyanagara<sup>(7)</sup> Ramayana compares it with the abode of Indra<sup>(8)</sup> The Mahabharata mentions it as the capital of southern Panchala<sup>(9)</sup>.*

**Keywords:** Ancient India, Mahabharata, Avasyaka Niriyukti, Metropolises.

### Introduction

The town is frequently referred to in the Buddhist and Jaina literature. We learn from the Buddhist Jatakas that the artistic tunnel was dug out from the river Ganga to the royal palace at Kampilya. The mouth of the great tunnel was on the bank of the river. It was dug out by many warriors. It was built up with bricks. There were many chambers and lamp-cells in it. It was well decorated<sup>(10)</sup>

We learn from the *Avasyaka Niriyukti* that the town was the birth place of thirteenth Tirthankara Vimalnatha<sup>(11)</sup> It was hallowed by the five auspicious incidents in the life of the Tirthankara. On account of the happening of these incidents, namely the descent, the nativity, the corporation, the initiation and the Jinahood, the place become as Pancakalyanaka<sup>(12)</sup>. The town also finds mention in the Yognitantra.<sup>(13)</sup> It was included among the ten metropolises of India<sup>(14)</sup> The Uvasagadasao mentions that Kampillapura was visited by Tirthankara Mahavira.<sup>(15)</sup> Panini also refers to it as a city.<sup>(16)</sup> Alexander Cunningham depicts Kampilya in A.S.I.R.<sup>(18)</sup> like this.

"According to the Mahabharata, the great kingdom of Panchala extended from the Himalaya Mountain to the Chambal River. But just before the great war, Drupada, the king of Panchala was conquered by Drona, the preceptor of the five Pandavas. Drona restored to Drupada the southern half of the country with its capital of Kampilya, but the northern half he retained for himself and made Ahikshar (Ahichhatra) his capital. The capital of North Panchala I have already described but the southern capital of Kampilya was not visited until March, 1878. I had long wished to see this old city, which is famous as the scene of the 'Swayamvara' of Draupadi, the beautiful daughter of Raja Drupada. I did not of course expect to find any ancient buildings of the time of Mahabharata, but I thought that the people would be able to point out the place where the great 'Swayamvara' was believed to have been held. Whatever ancient buildings may have existed at Kampil when the Mohamedans first took possession of the Gangetic doab must have been swept away long ago by mad

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despot Muhammad Tughlaq who in A.H.745, A.D. 1345 encamped his army near Kampil and Patiali on the banks of the Ganga and drew supplies from Oudh and Kare. The people of his camp here built houses till at length a town arose under the name of SARGDWARI (Suargadvari) Here he remained till the rest year."

I found no traces of old buildings, but only a succession of undulating ground, rising in some places to high mounds with broken bricks thinly scattered here and there. The only sites that have got names are on the banks of Burganga or old Ganges, there are several holy ghats in Kunds and ponds in which pilgrims bathe, but there is no running stream. On the night of full moon of Chaitra, a great mela or fair is held here.

The site of Raja Drupada's palace is pointed out as the most eastry one of the isolated mounds on the bank of Budhganga. It is about 400 ft long and from two hundred to two hundred fifty feet broad, rising to 20/25 ft height.

To add, kankar blocks are seen everywhere and apparently the walls of ancient temple must have been built of these stones. Mouldings and even figures are found on some of them. Amongst the latter I saw a figure of the Ganges on her crocodile hold up a jar of water in her right hand. It is a lower piece of door jam and is therefore of comparatively late date, say from 600 to 900 A.D. I saw also a second river goddess in reddish yellow stone of large size which must have belonged to some grand temple. Amongst the figures I found the Brahmanical Ganesha and the Jain Adinath. There are several Jain temples with some inscribed statues, but as the ministering priest would not allow them to be touched and would not move them himself, the inscription could not be copied. They appeared to be not more than 300- or 400-years old excepting one figure of black stone which was behind the others, so that the characters could not be distinguished. It is said to be the oldest and it certainly looked much older than others."

There is another extract regarding Kampil, Pargana Kampil, Tehsil Kaimganj from the Gazetteer of Farrukhabad district.<sup>(17)</sup>

"This, the chief village of the pargana to which it gives its name, stands on the old cliff of the Ganges, 23 miles north-west of Fatehgarh in 27° 39' and 79° 20' E. Near the foot of the Ganges cliff flows Burhganga. In 1901 the population was 2336 with Brahmans in majority. The provisions of the Village Sanitation Act (U.P. Act II of 1892) have been applied to Kampil in 1912. The Kayasth proprietary has fallen on evil days and been succeeded by Brahmans, who now own nearly the whole village. The village contains a police station, a branch post office, a large upper primary school, and a cattle pound. Despite there being no market days, Kampil has a local reputation for the tobacco and potatoes which it exports. A good second-class road runs from Kaimganj through Kampil to Patiali in the Etah District. The road from Aliganj connects it with Rudani railway station and runs north-east across the Ganges at Surajpur Ghat into Budaun and another road crosses the Ganges at Jatighat."

Kampil's chief claim to notice is its great and undoubted antiquity. Its name appears in Mahabharata which figures as the capital of Southern Panchala. Here King Drupada held his court, and here his fair daughter Draupadi was won by the Pandava Arjun. The villagers can still point to the exact spot on which was held great contest of the stringing of the Bow; tradition confidently indicates the site of the castle of 'Raja Durupat' and a small hollow still bears the name of the Pool (Kund) of Draupadi. Local legend goes back beyond the days of Draupadi to a king named Brihmdat (Brahmadatta) who ruled the town after its foundation by a saint called Kampila Rikh. The first mention of Kampil in historical times was in the thirteenth century, where it is spoken of as a den of highway robbers. To suppress these, the emperor Ghiyas-ud-din Balban marched in person and built here a fort in which he placed an Afghan garrison. But it would seem to have since fallen back into the power of the Rajputs, for in 1414 another imperial expedition was required to humble the neighbouring Rathores, and less than fifty years later it is mentioned as forming part of dominions of the Chauhan Chief of Bhogaon. Henceforward, Kampil sank into insignificance.

In the Ain-i-Akbari, Kampil is recorded as a Mahal of Dastur, Kannauj and Sarkar Agra, and paying a revenue of 16,51,586 Dams or Rs. 41289. About 120 years later it passed on to the hands of the Farrukhabad Nawabs. The new regime was a bad one for the old landlords. All clans were more or less impartially ejected to make room for the Nawabs, Pathans and kinsmen, but the principal losers seem to have been the Chaurasi Brahmans and Kathia Rajputs. On the cessation to the British in 1802, both Kampil and its neighbour Shamsebad served to contribute towards the formation of a new Pargana Kaimganj but at the sixth settlement, the whole of Pargana Kaimganj was annexed to Kampil."

**References**

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