

Ancient Geography Of Northern India As Reflected In The Tīrtha Kaumudī

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Abstract:

The Ancient Indian Geography is represented through some areas along with rivers, mountains and forests and it helps in the growth of civilization of a country. The Sanskrit Literature contains evidences and sources of ancient Indian geographical facts. The Vedas, purāṇas and epics bear a great geographical value. Moreover, different Dharmasūtras, Dharmaśāstras, Smṛtiśāstras, Smṛti digests etc. gives a great contribution to know and understand the Ancient Indian Geography. The Tīrtha Kaumudī of Pītāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa Bhaṭṭācārya also has a great account of geographical information. Though the work Tīrtha Kaumudī is a work on pilgrimage and contains the subject matters about the rules, regulations, glory and so many topics related to pilgrimage, yet side by side, a clear picture of ancient Indian geography of medieval period is reflected here. So, here in this present paper attempt has been made to highlight Ancient Geography of Northern India as reflected in the Tīrtha Kaumudī.

Key Words: Geography, Northern, India, Tīrtha Kaumudī.

Methodology: This paper is basically based on the Primary sources as well as Secondary sources. In this present paper the texts of Tīrtha Kaumudī is used for Primary datas. References are put as foot notes. The Name of the books and original Sanskrit words and quotations are italicized in main body. The quotations mentioned as endnotes are not italicized.

I. Introduction:

The ancient Indian Geography can be renovated through the help of Vedic literature, Puranic literature, Epics, Dharmasūtras, Dharmaśāstras or Smṛtiśāstras etc. These great treatises include some chapters which give a huge amount of information and data regarding the geography of

Ancient India. These works establish not only the accurate account of different territorial divisions of India, but also talk about the mountains, rivers, forests, deserts, towns, countries and peoples of ancient India. The geographical accounts found in different purāṇas are matching.¹ Different purāṇas viz. Padmapurāṇa, Matsyapurāṇa, Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa, Skandapurāṇa, Bhaviṣyapurāṇa, Mārkaṇḍeya etc. contain the list of places of ancient India.

Tīrtha Kaumudī is a smṛti digest composed by Pītāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa Bhaṭṭācārya. This work is a compilation of numerous quotations. These collected are from different reliable sources like Purāṇas, epics, Smṛti Śāstras, Smṛti digests etc. In respect of those quotations, the

author Pītāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa gives some explanatory notes and saṁkalpavākyas. Due to the amalgamation of knowledge and information of different sources, specially from the purāṇas we can able to find a clear picture of ancient Indian geography of medieval period in this work. The quotations of so many verses from different purāṇas where we find the names of the mountains, rivers, places, pilgrimage sites of ancient India gives us a brief knowledge about the ancient geography of ancient India.

II. The Northern Geography of Ancient India:

The Northern Geography of India apparently includes the regions consisting of Northern division of India. The Northern region of India includes the states viz. Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and UT. The Northern Geography of Ancient India as reflected in the work Tīrtha Kaumudī is discussed here.

Ayodhya: Ayodhya is a very popular pilgrimage site for Hindus which is well known as the birth place of Sri Rama. It is adjacent to Faizabad city of Uttar Pradesh state of India. In ancient period, this place was one yojana in extend in the east, one yojana in the west, one yojana from the Sarayu in the south, and one yojana from Tamasa in the north.² Yojana is a measure of distance used in ancient India which denotes approximately eight to twelve kilometers.

Candrabhaga: In the Ancient geography of India Anundoram Barooah states that the river Indumati probably means the Candrabhaga or Candra. The Candrabhaga or Chenab appears to flow just above Kishtvar as a confluence of two

hill-streams and from Kishtvar to Rishtvar its course is southerly.³ It flows past Jammu, wherefrom it flows in a south-westerly direction forming a doab between it and the Vitasta (Jhelum).⁴

Citrakuta: Citrakuta denotes the beautiful mountain which finds its place among the holy places. Padmapurāṇa also talks about it.⁵ It is the modern Citrakuta, a famous hill, lying 65 miles west south west of Allahabad.⁶

Drishadvati: In the R̥g Veda (III, 23, 4) it is stated that the river Drishadvati is the southern and eastern boundary of India. In ancient time it was known as Brahnavarta. The confluence of Drishadvati and Kaushiki was of peculiar sanctity.⁷ This river has been identified with the name Citrang and it runs parallel to the Sarasvati.⁸

Gomati: It is a river of Northern India which is probably the present day's Gomti River, a western tributary of the Indus.⁹ The River Gomati or Gomti on the west of Ayodhyā was also known as Vasisthi or sacred to the sage Vashistha.¹⁰ It rises in the Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, passes Lucknow and Jaunpur and flows into the Gaṅgā about half way between Varanasi and Gazipur.¹¹

Govardhana: The name of the Govardhana hill is famous from the legend of Purāṇa where the story of lifting of Govardhana hill by Lord Kṛṣṇa with his little figure is found. It is located 18 miles from Brindaban in the Mathura District of Uttar Pradesh.

Gandaki or Gandak: According to the Bhāgavatpurāṇa (X.79, 11; V.7, 10) the river Gandaki is also known as Cakranadi. It is a great upper tributary of the Ganges. It has its origin in

the hill in south Tibet and the upper tributary of Gandak. It joins as a place to the north-west of Nayakot in Nepal on its right side and the lower tributary called Rapti joins it just above the district of Camparan.¹² The main stream flows into the Ganges between Sonpur in the Sara district and Hajipur in the district of Muzaffarpur.¹³

Ganga or Ganges: The River Ganga or Ganges is regarded as the most sacred river in India. Other names of this River are Alakānandā¹⁴ or Dyudhuni.¹⁵

Jalandhara: Jalandhara includes the state of Chamba on the north, Mandi and Sukhet on the east and Satadru on the south-east.¹⁶ The length of this land was 1000 li or 167 miles from east to west and the breadth is 800 li or 133 miles from north to south.¹⁷

Kanakhala: Kanakhala is a sacred place situated in the Haridwar district of Uttarakhand state of Northern India. The name of Kanakhala is also mentioned in Mahabharata, Vāyu purāṇa, Meghaduta etc.

Kalanjar: In modern age Kalanjar is named as Kaalinjar.¹⁸ It is located in Banda District of Uttar Pradesh.

Kanchi: Kanchi is famous pilgrimage site of Hindus and it is also included in the list of 18 Mahājanapadas.¹⁹ It is situated 80 miles below Allahabad on the north bank of Ganges.²⁰

Kedar: Kedar or Kedarnath temple of Lord Siva is a famous Hindu temple situated at Uttarakhand

state of India. It is located at the bank of the river Mandakini.

Kurukshetra: Though the Kurukshetra is famous for the war between Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas of Mahābhārata, yet now it is regarded as a famous holy place. It is also known as Dharmaksetra i.e. the place of justice. It is situated in the Hariyana state of India.

Prabhasa: Pabhosa is the modern name of the village which represents the ancient Prabhasa. The village is situated on a cliff which is situated in tehsil Manjhanpur, thirty two miles south west of Allahabad. The hill of Prabhasa or Prabhasa is the only rock in the Antarvedī i.e. the Doab between the Ganges and the Jumna. It is situated three miles to the north west of the great fort of Kosam- Khiraj, the ancient Kaushambi, where some inscriptions were discovered.²¹

Prayaga: Prayaga is a celebrated place of pilgrimage at the confluence of the river Ganges and Yamuna near the modern Allahabad.²²

Praci: It is a temple of Lord Siva situated at the southern bank of river Sarasvati in the Pehowa town of district Kurukshetra.

Sarasvati: Sarasvati is a holy river situated in Kurukshetra in the Hariyana state of India. The name of this river is also mentioned in Vedic texts.

Praci and river Sarasvati both are the famous pilgrimage sites in Kurukshetra and it is mentioned by Pītāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa in Tīrtha Kaumudī as- prācī sarasvatī kurukṣetre²³

Vadarikasrama: Vadarikasrama or Badrikasrama (Badrinath) is a most sacred place situated at Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. This temple is dedicated to the Lord Viṣṇu. It is located at the bank of the river Alakananda

Varanasi: Varanasi or Banaras is regarded as a sacred city situated at the bank of the river Ganges in the Uttar Pradesh state of North India. Actually there are approximately eighty eight Ghats i.e. river pier in Varanasi and in most of the ghats are used for bathing and ritual ceremonies. Moreover a few are used as cremation sites.

Vetravati: In the M.R Kale edition of the Meghadūta of Kalidasa, we find a map of those places of India which are mentioned in Meghadūta. There clearly stated that in modern days the Vetravati River is known as Betwa River. The River Betwa or Vetravati is a tributary of Yamuna River.

Vindhya: Vindhya or Vindhyachala is near Mirzapur on the top of which stands the celebrated temple of Binduvasini.²⁴ The town of Vindhyaçala is also known as Pampapura.²⁵

Vipasa: The Vipasa River is known as Beas River in modern age. The river Beas has its source at Beas Kund. Beas Kund is situated near the southern face of the Rohtang pass in Kullu. Through this region, it flows for a few kilometers and then cuts through the Dhauladhar Range in a deep gorge near Koti and Larji.²⁶

III. Conclusion:

From the above discussion it can be concluded that the Tīrtha Kaumudī of Siddhāntavāgīśa bears a great geographical importance. The ancient geography of India is beautifully portrayed here. It is a noteworthy fact that most of the places, hills, rivers etc of all over India are still remained same and some of them are changed by their name. But it is true that, we do not able to get the existence of some locations in present geography

of India. The reason might be some are ruined in course of time or they were must be imaginary.

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