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Places mentioned in abhigyana-sukantalam and their locations

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Abstract

The drama Abhigyana-Sukantalam is purely a romantic story and the story line allegorically deals with Indian concept Karma yoga and dutifulness. Among the three dramas of Kalidasa, the Abhigyana-sakuntalam is the most cited drama. This drama is the perfect assimilation of Indian culture and tradition. In spite of cultural diversities, this drama helps to Indian culture to reach the every corner of the world. Therefore, this drama has been selected to identify the historical places which are mentioned in this drama and identified those zones in recent context. This famous drama connects the vast geographical area and it starts from the foot hill zone of Himalaya (Malini river, Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand), in west it extends up to Gujarat (Somtirtha or the Somnath temple of Gujarat) and in south it covers Tungabhadra riverine area of Hampi hill of Karnataka.

Keywords: Hastinapur, Kanva Asharama, Malini River, Place of Royal Hunting

Introduction

The drama Abhigyana-Sukantalam is purely a romantic story and the story line allegorically deals with Indian concept Karma yoga and dutifulness. Among the three dramas of Kalidasa, the Abhigyana-sakuntalam is the most cited drama. This drama is the perfect assimilation of Indian culture and tradition and through this drama Indian culture reached to the every corner of the world (irrespective of language barrier and spaces).

Objective

The focal theme of this paper is to identify the exact locations of places mentioned in this drama and to match the identified locations to recent context.

Methodology

The basic method is the descriptive and based on literature survey. The basic information gathered through intensive analysis of the drama. The places and geographical location which are mentioned in this drama has been identified and those identified places and geographical location have been plotted on map.

Abhigyana-Sakuntalam and its Numerical Attributes

Among three dramas of Kalidasa, the Abhigyana-Sakuntalam deals with more human characters. Though the centuries, oriental and occidental philosophers and literary persons expressed their views and made remarks on this classical drama. The great poet Kalidasa was the person of four century A.D and this drama comes in reality in 4th century A.D (Devadhar, 2015) [8]. Since 4th century A.D, this drama is still popular. There is a similarity in scripts, languages, grammar and alignment among the dramas of Kalidasa. Here language is purely Sanskrit, a few sentences of Prakrit language have observed.

The Abhigyana-Sakuntalam allegorically deals with number seven. At first, the drama is divided in seven chapters. Secondly, here the time span of the drama is seven years. The light is the assimilation of seven colors and a week is assimilation of seven days, earth has seven seas, and moreover lyric contains seven principal सुरः (सप्तसुरः) tunes. Here the 'Abhigyana-sakuntalam' contents seven chapters and the fact of drama related to seven years.

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Therefore, the drama deals with number seven to keep the view of eternity related to the number seven.

Alignment of story line

The theme of this drama and the alignment and the consequences of facts of drama is not new one. The very similar story line of Abhigyana-Sakuntalam is already mentioned in the कटहरिजातक (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7]. The story of the king Brahmadutta of Varanasi is quite similar to the facts depict in Abhigyana-Sakuntalam. Here three incidents; the premarital affair of a young and beautiful lady and extramarital affair of King, and the second the incident, offering a ring to beloved lady and third incident; ultimately refusal of lady (when she claimed that she is the wife of the king) by this king are already mentioned in Jataka story. These three facts are the prime pillar of the story line of Abhigyana-Sakuntalam. Therefore, story line of Sakuntala has borrowed from Jataka but the unique flavor is added by the Kalidasa.

The plot of Jataka story was the Varanasi (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7]. That is the urban center and in Abhigyana-Sakuntala, 'Hastinapur' is the capital and that was an urban unit where the dominant male character was dwelling. In Mahabharata the similar story line is observed (Sastri). Extramarital affair of king, ring given to the lady and refusal of lady (would be mother of king son) all are mentioned in Mahabharata.

Geographical reality of drama

The main story line and climax of drama starts with absence of महर्षिकण्व (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7] and during his absence the all responsibility of आश्रम was on शकुन्तला (Basu, 1981) [6]. This is the entry point of Sakuntala on main drama (Basu, 1981) [6]. The conversation, इदानीमेवदुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय सन्दिश्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थ गतः (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7] indicates the name of a holy place "सोमतीर्थ" (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7]. During 4th century in India (northern India), Somanath temple of Gujrata was the most popular holy place for sages of ancient India (www.maharshiKanvaashram.com). The absence period of Kanva describes in this drama, was near about a few month and in reality if someone starts journey from the bank of river Malini to the Somanath temple of Gujrata as an expedition and it approximately takes five to six months. The line दुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय सन्दिश्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थ गतः. महर्षिकण्व (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7] indicates that कण्व went Somanath temple, Gujarat that was the Somatirtha (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kotdwar) in ancient India. The plot up to 4th chapters of was in the bank of river Malini at the hermitage of महर्षिकण्व (Fig.1). The river Malini is the very small left hand tributary of river Ganga and the Malini river is popularly known as Girija river in colloquial conversation. The ancient Malini river is still flowing and it meets river Ganga at Chaukपुरी, Shahajadpur, Ahatamali (Fig.1). An ancient asharam lies in the bank of river Malini near Kotadara and that asharam is known as Kanva asharam and that it is 5500 year old (Kotdwara District, Garhwal, Utrakhand). The associations of river Malini, presence of 5500 years old asharam, with vicinity of biodiversity zone of Jim Corbett National Park indicate this area is the very similar in description and the geographical location of Kanva asharam. "एष खलु कण्वस्य कुलपतेः अनुमालिनी दृश्यते" - this statement indicates the महर्षिकण्व was vicinity to the river Malini (Fig.1). The river Malini lies in between Somanath temple (ancient Somtirtha) and Jim Corbett National Park. The Jim

Corbett National Park zone was the ancient biodiversity zone and famous for its tiger and black deer species. A small ancient rural habitat area (Kanalda, Kotdwara District) is observed (Praci-Jyoti., 1982) [5] in the bank river Malini. The word Kanalda is phonetically very similar to the word Kanva (Praci-Jyoti., 1982) [5]. Therefore the recent कण्वआश्रम of Kotdwara district to Kanalda village was the extension of महर्षिकण्वआश्रम. कृष्णसारे ददत्त्वक्षुस्त्वयि चाधिज्यकार्मुकि /मृगानुसारिणम् साक्षात् पश्यामीव पिनाकिनम् //

This description depicts the king Dushyanta went for the royal hunt and the king enjoyed his royal hunting to hunt black deer. That hunting plot was closer to the river Malini and Kanva ashrama. In northern India, the only zone of deer diversity with the association river Malini has observed in Jim Corbett National Park (Utrakhand). This sequential context reveals that the Jim Corbett National Park was the royal hunting place of the king (Fig.1).

In ancient India before 900BC, the Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh) was the first recorded state level society in India Sub-continent (Thaper). Here कः पौरवे वसुमतीं शासति शासितरि दुर्विनीतानाम् this statement depicts the king दुष्यन्त is the decedent of Puru clan of northern India. The Puru tribes were common during the Iron age in north India. The capital of दुष्यन्त was the Hastinapur एतेखलु हस्तिनापुरगामिन ऋषय शब्दायन्ते (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7]. The Hastinapur is the ancient urban town (1300-600 BC) during Iron era. The Hastinapur is a historical place and now it is on the right bank of river Ganges (https://www.Hastinapur wikipedia). Present context, ancient Hastinapur town was the near the Meerut and Ganga is near by the Meerut city (Thaper). The river Ganga is 35 km away from the Meerut city. Now if someone starts journey from Kotadwara ashram to Meerut, then he or she has to cross Ganga near Mujaffaranagar. The water logged zone of river Ganga is very common near Mujaffaranagar. The water logging area (in hindi) is called 'Talab' (Ganguli). In 4th chapter describes that Sakuntala started her journey from hermitage of Kanva to capital of king दुष्यन्त. During her journey they take a plunged in Sachitirtha (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7] नूनम् ते शक्वावताराभ्यन्तरे शचीतीर्थसलिलं वन्दमानायाः प्रभ्रष्टं अङ्गुलीयकम् (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7]. Now if someone starts journey from Kotadwara (Utrakhand) ashram to Meerut (Uttar Pradesh), then he or she has to cross river Ganga near Mujaffaranagar (Fig.1). Therefore, the ancient route from Hastinapur to Kotdwara, the river Ganga was in between (Fig.1). Now near the Mujaffaranagar there is a holy lake name शक्वाताल. "शक्वाताल" is actually old river channel (palaeo channel) of river Ganga. Most probably this holy शक्वाताल is the ancient शचीतीर्थ. कतमोऽयमृषीपरसमुद्रावगाढः कनकरसनिस्स्यन्दी सान्ध्य इवमेघपरिघः सानुमानालोक्यते (Chakrabraty, 1992) [7] this description indicates, this is the zone of peninsular India and the हेमकूट indicates this terrain land and it is the suitable place for observation of sunrise and sunset (www.hampi.in.hampi.in). Therefore these descriptions indicate that Marich asharam was in Hemakuta hill of Karnataka and it covers the riverine zone of Thngabhadra (Tributary of Krishna). Here कनकरसनिस्स्यन्दी description indicates the lateritic terrain which is the reddish in color for iron bedding.

Places related to abhigayna-sakuntalam

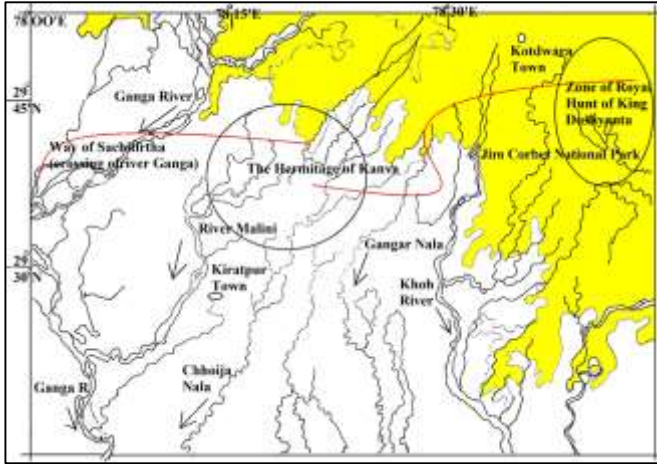


Fig 1: R.F.1:250,000

Source: Topographical Sheet, Survey of India, Map No. NH 44.9

Conclusion

This famous drama connects the vast geographical area and it starts from the foot hill zone of Himalaya (Jim Corbett National Park of Uttarakhand). The starting plot of the drama was Siwalik Himalaya zone and in second step the plot of the drama was the riverine area of Malini (Uttar Pradesh), in west it extended up to Gujarat (Somtirtha or the Somnath temple of Gujarat) and in south it crossed Vindhya hilly terrain and extended upto Hampi in Karnataka which was Krishna riverine area. The upper catchment of river Malini (part of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh) is rich bio diversity zone and it lays vicinity to the Jim Corbett National Park. The drama starts with the inter fluvial zone of river Malini and Chhoija nala and this zone lies in northern part of Kiratpur Town (Uttar Pradesh) (Fig.1) and it ends crossed Vindhya (Madhya Pradesh) terrain and the last plot was on Hampi hill of Karnataka (vicinity to river Tungabhadra).

This drama connects two contrasting physiographical and cultural realms within India. It connects typical north Indian alluvial track with the touch of Aryan culture and crossed Vindhyan terrain of central India and Godavari basin and extended upto Krishna basin near the Hampi terrain with the touch of Dravidian culture. This drama is the physical and cultural bridge in between Himalaya foot hill zone to Hampi (Hemkut hill) terrain zone of Karnataka and it also connects the core zone of Aryan cultural realm to Dravidian cultural realm.

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