

***Kaushambi* City and Buddhist Tradition in Ancient India: A Review**

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Abstract

Buddha visited the kingdom of *Avanti* and came to *Kaushambi*. Then the king of *Kaushambi* was *Udayan*. But King *Udayan* was a bitter Buddha-hater. He had his reasons. *Magandiya*, a *Brahmin* daughter of *Srāvastī*, was fascinated by the Buddha and wanted to marry him. Angered by the Buddha's rejection and his disdain for his form, *Magandiya* became angry. *Magandia* was very beautiful. *Magandiya's* uncle brought him to *Kaushambi*. King *Udayan* was impressed by his appearance. She came to the palace as a princess. But even as a queen, she could not forget the Buddha and made the king anti-Buddha. Knowing that the Buddha was coming to *Kaushambi* and staying at *Ghositaram Vihara*, *Magandiya* started propagating the Buddha with the help of some wicked people with a lot of money. They began to abuse and abuse the Buddha and his disciples. Fed up with this, *Ananda* requested that Buddha leave this city. Just as the elephant endures the pelts hurled on the battlefield, so the Buddha remained at *Kaushambi* and lived in the ninth monsoon, ignoring all troubles. However, later, King *Udayana* realised his mistake, repented, and took refuge with Buddha. The discussion article presents various aspects of *Kaushambi*, an ancient city in India, and its Buddhist tradition.

Keywords: *Kaushambi, Buddhism, Archaeology, Ancient India, Udayana*

1. Introduction

One of the sixteen *Mahajanapadas* is *Rajya Vansa*, or *Vatsa*. Its capital was *Kaushambi*. There was a communal or clan-based system of governance. The mention of republics is seen in various places in the '*Suttapiṭaka*' and '*Vinaya Piṭaka*' of the *Tipiṭaka*. The people referred to their rulers as kings. *Kaushambi* was a famous city in ancient India. The kingdom of *Batsa* existed over *Allahabad* and adjoining areas in present-day Uttar Pradesh, India. Today it is known as *Kosam*. A mass rule system was prevalent here. But it was during the Buddha's lifetime that this system of governance deteriorated somewhat. At that time, a very comfortable and luxurious king named *Udayan* became the ruler of this place. *Udayan* had enmity with King *Chandapradhyot* of *Ujjain*. As a demonstration of their glory and power, warlike incidents arose between these two kings in the border areas of the state. The *Raja* of *Ujjiyi* once imprisoned *Udayan*. However, a clever trick freed *Udayan* from this captivity and led to her marriage with the prince. The discussion article presents various issues related to *Kaushambi* city and Buddhist tradition.

2. Review of Literature

The works so far on the topic under discussion are: *Buddhist Civilization and Buddhist Achievement in Deshe Deshe* (Barua, 2016), gives a brief description of the Buddhist traditions of different countries. *An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism* (Lars, 2015),

the author has made a statement on Indian Archeology and Buddhism. In *Char Punyasthan* (Ghosh, 1921), the author gives a statement about *Purnatirthas*. *Buddhist Art and Architecture* (Sarkar, 1997), the author presents a series of descriptions of Buddhist art and architecture. *Pali Sahitye Nagar Vinnyas & Nagar parikalpana* (Karunananda, 1994) in the book, the author has discussed various topics of cities and rivers and archaeology from various texts of Buddhist philosophy. So it appears that the article in question is a complete dissertation to my knowledge. The research paper has been written to fill that gap.

3. Objectives of the Research

The purpose of the discussion article is: 1. To know the meaning and nomenclature of the word *Kaushambi*; 2. To get an idea about the main city of *Kaushambi*; 3. To gain an accurate understanding of *Kaushambi's* location; 4. To know the relationship between *Kaushambi* and Buddhism; 5. To gain knowledge about why the conflict took place at *Kaushambi*; 6. To get an idea of the archaeological excavations and artefacts discovered at *Kaushambi*; and 7. To get an accurate idea of how the tourists are coming and going there.

4. Research Methodology

Qualitative approaches are among the three methods used in the study to compose the discussion paper. It should be further clarified that the research has been completed using the historical method. For this purpose, Buddhist archaeological texts, Buddhist religious and philosophical books, ancient Indian history books, different types of inscriptions, and related articles have been analysed and presented.

5. Meaning and Nomenclature of the word *Kaushambi*

'*Kosambi*' is a Pali 'word.' And its Sanskrit word is '*Kaushambi*.' Its current name is '*Kosam*.' It is known from the Pali *Aṭṭhakathā* that the city was founded on the site occupied by a sage called '*Kosamba*,' or because of the abundance of '*Kosamba*' trees inside and outside it, the name '*Kosambi*' was given.

6. Main city

There are six main cities of ancient India. Namely: *Champa*, *Rajgriha*, *Varanasi*, *Saket*, *Srābantī* and *Kosambi*. According to the '*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*' of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Kaushambi* was one of the six major cities of ancient India. A clear inference can be made from the mention of *Kosambi* in almost all ancient and later Pali texts. It was a vibrant city in the relevant period.

7. Location of '*Kaushambi*'

On the northern bank of the *Yamuna*, mentioned in the *Aṅguttar-Nikāya*, the *Aṭṭhakathā*, and many other Pali texts.¹ Located at *Kosambi* (Pali-*Kosambi*) was the capital of *Vatsaraja Udayan*. The present district was part of the *Allahabad* district until 4th April 1997. In other words, the district underwent division into the *Allahabad* district in the same year. The district headquarters and *Manjhanpur* are approximately 55 km away, situated on the north bank of the *Yamuna* River, southwest of *Allahabad*. The distance from *Varanasi* to *Kosambi* is thirty *yojanas*, or about 240 miles by river.

According to legend, the Buddha received an invitation to visit *Kaushambi* from the three *Shresthis* of *Kaushambi*—*Ghosit*, *Kukkut*, and *Pabarik*—*Sravasti* during his stay at *Jetavana Vihara*. These nobles built three *saṃgharāmas* in honour of the Buddha, according to their respective names. The *Ghositaramsaṃgharam* is particularly notable among these, as the Buddha and his chief disciples, *Sariputra* and *Ananda*, spent several years here.²

8. *Kaushambi*

A huge forest can be seen if you go southwest from *Prayag*. It is full of wild animals and wild elephants. It moves in groups, causing various dangers to passengers. For this reason, if you do not go this way in a big group, there is a risk of danger. This is the way to proceed. If you walk about 530 *li* on this road, you will find *Kaushambi*.³ The area of this country is like 6000 *li*. The capital is close to 30 *li*. The soil here has a reputation for its fertility. The trees in the vegetable and crop fields are amazing to look at. *Chala's* sugarcane crop is very good. It gets a little hot. The manners of the people are harsh and rough. There is a tendency towards knowledge. Many different religious people live there.

9. *Kaushambi* and the history of Buddhism

Parantapa was the king of *Kaushambi* during Buddha's time. His son *Udena* succeeded him.⁴ There is no doubt that *Kosambi* was clearly a significant city during the Buddha's time. Because it mentions *Ananda* as one of the suitable places for Buddha's *parinibbāna*.⁵ There is no doubt that *Kosambi* was clearly a significant city during the Buddha's time. Because it mentions *Ananda* as one of the suitable places for Buddha's *parinibbāna*.⁶ The city of *Kaushambi* was thirty *li* by river from *Ajak's* modern city of *Varanasi*. The river was the natural route from *Rajgriha* to *Kosambi*. There is also believed to have been a land route. The palace was accessible via *Anupia* and *Kosambi*.⁷ The entire route from *Mahishati* to *Rajgriha* is given according to the Buddhist text '*Sutta Nipāta*.' The Buddhist text mentions stopping places while passing through *Kosambi*. Namely: *Ujjiyini*, *Gonadha*, *Bedisa*, *Vanasadhya*, *Kosambi*, *Saketa*, *Srāvasthī*, *Sebatya*, *Kapilavastu*, *Kushinara*, *Pava*, *Bhognagar*, and *Vesali*. Near *Kosambi*, on the banks of the river, was the Garden of Gardens. *Ananda* and *Pindola Bharadvaj* delivered two sermons to the ladies of the *Udayan* palace.⁸ *Simsapaban* in *Kosambi* once hosted the Buddha.⁹ *Mahā Kākkāna* lived in a forest near *Kosambi* after holding the First Buddhist Council.

10. *Saṃgha Bheda*

A remarkable incident occurred during the Buddha's stay at *Kaushambi*. A little before the 10th *varsavasya*, disputes and factions started among the monks based on the trivial incident of breaking the rules of a monk. Buddha tried to pacify both parties with admonitions but failed. Then the Buddha got bored and went to *Parileya* forest to live alone in the rainy season. An elephant and a monkey reportedly accompanied the Buddha at all times. Here, *Bhādra-Pūrnimā* is known as '*Madhu Pūrnimā*' in the Buddhist world, as monkeys offered honey to Buddha on the full moon day of the *Bhādra* month. After spending a year in the *Parileya* forest, Buddha went to *Sravasti*. Meanwhile, after *Kaushambi* left, the discord between the monks increased, and the *Bhikkhu Saṃgha* became divided. Gradually the people of *Kaushambi* got fed up with them and stopped giving them alms. Eventually, these quarrelsome monks realised their mistake and repented. Then they approached the Buddha on foot at *Srāvastī*.¹⁰

11. Buddha statue

An old royal palace in the city has a large temple as high as 60 feet. *Raja Udayan* crafted it. Until now, the kings of many countries have tried to take away this statue by force. But he could not move it from here despite his efforts. So they worship its image. Many people also falsely propagate that theirs is the real idol and all others are fakes.¹¹ After attaining the first Buddhahood, the *Tathagata* went to heaven for three months to explain the *Dhamma* to his mother. Intrigued by his sight, the king plans to make an idol. He requested *Mudgalayan-putra* send an artist to heaven as a spiritual power. He made this request to enable the artist to accurately depict the Buddha in sandalwood, taking into account his unique physical features. When the Buddha returned from heaven, the wooden statue stood up and bowed to the Lord. *Jagatpati* Buddha then pointed at him and said in a compassionate voice, your only task will be to change the minds of the different people and lead them to the path of religion in the future." This is all I hope for from you.¹²

12. Wells and baths

If you go about 100 feet to the east of the temple, you will see the footprints of the past four Buddhas sitting and walking. Beside it, a little further is a well and bathhouse used by the *Tathagatas*. There is still water in the well, but the bathhouse has long been destroyed. Inside the town are the remains of an old homestead at the southeast corner. This is the residence of the elite *Ghoshir*. There is a *Buddha-vihara* in between. There is also a pile of hair and nails. Also here are the remains of Buddha's bath.¹³

13. Stūpa

An old *saṃgharām* can be seen a little to the northeast of the city. Here used to be *Ghoshir's* garden. *King Ashoka* constructed a *stupa* here. It is about 200 feet high. There is also a pile of Buddha's hair and fingernails.¹⁴

14. Residence of Vasubandhu

To the southeast of *Samgharām* is an old brick house on a two-storied bastion. *Vasubandhu Bodhisattva* lived here. Sitting in this room, he wrote the book '*Vidyamatra Siddhi*.' In this book he refuted the doctrines of *Hinayana* and different religions. To the east of the *saṃgharām*, an old house can be seen in *Ambanani*. Here *Asaṅga Bodhisattva* wrote the scripture '*Hin-Jang-Shing-Kiau*.'¹⁵

15. Famous saṃgharām

Kosambi Nagar on the banks of the *Yamuna* River. There were three friends named *Ghosit*, *Kukkuṭ*, and *Pabarik*. A single individual constructed three *viharas* in a specific garden, made donations to the *Saddhamma*, and enhanced the flow of the Buddha *Dhamma*. At the time of the Buddha, a large number of monks lived in the four famous *saṃgharāmas* of *Kosambi*. The *saṃgharāms* are *Kukkuṭaram*, *Ghositaram*, *Pabarikaram*, and *Radrikaram*. Buddha used to stay in *Ghositaram*. It is known from *Chullavarga* that he ended his ninth monsoon here and initiated many people into *Swadharmā*. Notable among them are *Brahmin Chulgavachh*, *Tissa Thera*, and *Bangsraj Uden*.



*Ghasitaram Sangharam, Kaushambi, Uttar Pradesh, India*¹⁶

16. Excavations and artifacts

Excavation of *Koshambi Nagar* was conducted four times. Four settlement sequences are determined at the excavated site. The first phase was conducted from 1165 BC to 885 BC. The second phase was conducted from 885 BC to 605 BC. The third phase was conducted from 605 BC to 45 BC. The fourth phase was conducted from 45 BC to 580 AD. Archaeological excavations have uncovered many artefacts. Such as forts, North Indian *Chikkan Krishna Boulal*, defence walls, *garhs*, *patakuas*, brick canals, coins, seals, ramparts, terraces, guard rooms, terracotta structures, inscriptions, etc, are notable.



1st century copper coins found at *Kaushambi*, British Museum¹⁷

Two coins of *Damru*

shape¹⁸

17. *Koshambi* in the eyes of travelers

Emperor *Ashoka's* *Discipline-Lipistambha Emperor Akbar relocated this inscription from Kaushambi to the Mughal Fort in Allahabad*. (Nos. 1-6), except an epitaph of his second queen, *Charubaka* (mother of the *Karubaki* prince *Tivar*), who built an *amrakunja*, a garden, and an orphanage at *Kaushambi*. *Hiuen-tsang's* travelogue mentions that Emperor *Ashoka* built a *stūpa* near the *Ghositaram* (*Kyo-shang-mi*) *saṃgharām* at *Kausambi*. An epitaph found here indicates that in the third year of the reign of the *Kushan* king *Kanishka* (*AD 81*), a *Bodhisattva* statue made at *Mathara* by *Janaika Bhikkhuni*, named *Tipiṭaka Buddha-mitra* (disciple of *Bhikshu Ball*), was installed here. In addition, researchers discovered the base of a large brick *vihara* and a *stūpa*. There were three dedicated leaps to *Buddha*, *Bodhisattva*, *Hariti*, and other gods of the local king *Brihatswatimitra* (around 1st century BC) and King *Bhadramag* (around 2nd century AD).¹⁹ The *Mahāvamsa* also says that King *Dutthagamani* of *Sri Lanka* (around 101–77 BC) laid the foundations of the *Mahastap* at *Anuradhapura* with the help of about 30,000 *Hinayana* monks led by *Sthabira Urudharmaksita* from *Ghositaram Saṃgharām*.

Fa-Hien (c. 400-411 AD) describes the prosperity of *Kausambi* and the *Hinayan* ascetics in his travelogues. But *Hiuen-tsun* (630-644 AD), who came to India about two hundred and twenty years later, mentions the ruins of the ten *Viharas* of *Kausambi*, though in his account the '*Dityaguha*' (situated on the nearby *Povas Hills*) and *Vasubandhu's Vasubandhu* composed the *Krydhana Matrata Siddhi* here. He mentions a two-storied residential building. *Buddhacharya Asaṅga* also lived here for some time. *Hiuen-Tsang* saw the ruins of the *Ghositaram saṃgharām* and three hundred *sramanas* (Hinayani).²⁰ In addition to this, the inscription mentions more than fifty temples dedicated to non-Buddhist gods and goddesses, along with countless devotees. Many believe that the Hun chief, *Torman Kausambi*, destroyed Buddhist cultural and religious centres in the early sixth century AD.²¹ The remnants of ancient *Kaushambi* continue to disperse across a vast expanse. It is pertinent to mention that the Archaeology Department has recovered the archaeological site of *Ghositaram Saṃgharām* and many antiquities.

18. Direction of travel

Kaushambi is about 52 km southwest by road from the present *Kosham Nagar-Allahabad* city in the *Allahabad* district. Regular buses ply from *Allahabad* to *Kaushambi*.

19. Conclusion

Given the previous discussion, I can conclude that the state of *Vatsa* encompassed present-day *Allahabad* and its surrounding areas in Uttar Pradesh. The capital is *Kaushambi*. Buddha entered the city of *Kaushambi* in his ninth monsoon. Although *Kausambiraja Udayana* was initially opposed to Buddhism, he and his cowherd *Samavati* accepted the discipleship of *Pindol Bharadwaja* and became staunch devotees of the Buddha. The granting of storehouses to monks and the construction of several Buddhist monasteries are special indications of their patronage. He initiated Prince *Bodhirajkumar* during his stay at *Sunsuma Giri*, in the land of *Bhagga* Buddha. Buddha stayed several times at *Ghositaram Vihara* in this kingdom. *Kaushambi*, a memorial to Buddha, is now a ruin. From the bus stand, three kilometres of straight roads lead to the site of the broken *Ashoka Pillar*. Archaeological excavations have uncovered the ruins of the famous *Ghositaram* and *Kukkutaram Viharas*. The earthen walls surrounded the rectangular fort or city square, spanning 6 km in extent. A large number of local and foreign tourists visit here every year. Even many pilgrims come here to visit this place, which is filled with memories related to the life of the Buddha. They attain peace of mind by visiting the said place. It is undoubtedly a historical city in the history of Buddhism.

References

1. The location is on the banks of the *Ganges* attached. It doesn't feel right.
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12. Gupta, P. D. (2022). *Op. cit.*
13. Gupta, P. D. (2022). *Op. cit.*, p. 81.
14. Gupta, P. D. (2022). *Op. cit.*
15. Gupta, P. D. (2022). *Op. cit.*
16. *Wikipedia*
17. *Wikipedia*
18. *Wikipedia*
19. These included statues of gods and goddesses, as well as numerous coins from the first century BC to the seventh century BC. The galleries at *Allahabad* University and the *Allahabad* Municipal Institute preserve some of these artefacts.
20. N. N. Ghosh's "Early History of *Kausambi*" mentions the presence of *Srāmanas* from the *Kashyapian* community in the ancient inscription.
21. Indian Antiquary, 1954–1955, found two seals here, inscribed '*Torman*' and Hun *Raja*. *G. R. Sharma* conducted the excavation of *Kausambi* from 1957 to 1959.