

Epigraphical Evidence and Historical Significance of Kampli (Kampili) Taluk

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Abstract:

The history of **Kampli**, also known as Kampili or Kampali, occupies a crucial yet understudied position in the political and cultural history of Karnataka. Although Kampila Raya and Kumara Rama are well known through literary and folk traditions, Kampli's historical importance predates them by several centuries. This paper critically examines the epigraphical evidence relating to Kampli from the 8th to the 19th century CE. Drawing upon inscriptions of the Gangas, Nolamba Pallavas, Kalyana Chalukyas, Hoysalas, and Vijayanagara rulers, the study reconstructs Kampli's changing political status—from an early administrative centre and capital to a regional town of religious and memorial significance. The paper also reassesses the long-held assumption that Kampli served as the capital of Kampila Raya or Kumara Rama and demonstrates, based on inscriptional and chronological analysis, that this claim lacks firm historical support. The study highlights the importance of epigraphy, memorial stones, and material culture in reconstructing regional history and emphasizes the need for further archaeological and archival research in the Kampli region.

Keywords: Early References; Nolamba Pallavas; Kalyana Chalukyas; Hoysala Period; Kampli Inscriptions; Veeragallu; Mastigallu; Lingamudra Stones ; Kampila Raya and Kumara Rama;

Introduction:

Regional history plays a decisive role in understanding the broader political and cultural processes of medieval South India. Kampli, situated on the right bank of the Tungabhadra River, represents one such historically layered region whose importance has been overshadowed by legendary narratives and limited scholarly attention. While Kampila Raya and Kumara Rama occupy a celebrated place in Kannada literature and folk traditions, the earlier and later historical phases of Kampli remain largely unexplored.

This research paper aims to reconstruct the historical trajectory of Kampli through epigraphical evidence. It seeks to examine the political status of Kampli under different dynasties, assess the reliability of inscriptions associated with Kampila Raya and Kumara Rama, and evaluate the role of memorial stones and religious inscriptions in understanding the social and cultural life of the region.

Sources and Methodology:

The primary sources for this study are stone and metal inscriptions discovered in Kampli and its surrounding regions. These include:

- Veeragallu inscriptions
- Administrative and donation records
- References preserved in Kaifiyats and epigraphical reports

Secondary sources include published volumes such as *Bellary District Inscriptions, A.R.I.E., Mysore Archaeological Reports*, and Vijayanagara research reports. The methodology adopted is critical epigraphical analysis, involving chronological verification, cross-referencing of inscriptions, and comparison with literary traditions.

Early References to Kampli (8th–10th Century CE)

The earliest reference to Kampili is found in a Veeragallu dated 750 CE from Bisanahalli in the Mulbagilu taluk of Kolar district. This inscription records an expedition by Dugga Mara, son of the Ganga king Sripurusha, against Kampili. The erection of a hero stone and its donation indicate that Kampili was a recognized political and military centre as early as the 8th century CE. This evidence strongly suggests that Kampli had administrative or strategic importance, sufficient to attract the attention of Ganga rulers operating far beyond their core territory.

The first mention of Kampali is found in a Veeragall of 750 AD. This Veeragall was found in Bisanahalli in Mulbagil taluk of Kolar district (A.K. Bisanahalli Mulbagil taluk, Kolar district). In 750 AD, when the Ganga king Sripurusha gave the power of Kuvalala to his son Dugga Mara, Dugga Mara attacked Kampali with his army. In this fight, Pandappa, the son of Komala, spoke. Dugga Mara planted the Veeragall and donated it to him. From this incident, it can be inferred that Kampali was famous in the 8th century AD and that it was probably the center of administration at that time. It can be inferred that Kampali was one of the important cities if this village attracted the Ganga rulers at that time.

Kampali under the Nolamba Pallavas and Kalyana Chalukyas :

The next reference is in the Bagali inscription of 1018 AD. This large inscription found in the Kalleshwara temples there states that Jagadekamalla Nolamba Udayaditya, a vassal of the Chalukya king Jagadekamalla Jayasinghadeva, ruled Gangavadi 96000, Kadambali-1000, Kogali-500, Masavadi-140, Ballakunde-300, Kudiharavi-70, and Ededore-2000 from Kampili. This suggests that Kampili was the capital of the Nolambas, a vassal of the Kalyana Chalukya kings, during this period. Nothing else is known about Kampili from this inscription. It is clear from the above inscription that most of the present Kolar district, Bellary district, Chitradurga, and Tumkur districts belonged to these kings. (Bellary District Inscriptions Volume Bagali 97).

Another inscription of the same king, dated 1022 AD, mentions Kampili. (Vijaya Nagar Research Report 1987-88 - Page 195)

According to an inscription of 1046 AD, Kampili was surrounded by fragrant gardens and was a beautiful city, and the Cholas attacked and destroyed the beautiful palace of the Chalukyas there. Based on this inscription, it is known that Kampili continued to be the capital of the Chalukya kings or their vassals, the Nolambars, until this time. (A.K. Devanahalli, 75) According to the Kalyana Chalukya inscription of 1054 AD, Kampili was ruled by Someshwara I (A.R.I.E. 1916 No. 561)

According to an inscription of 1062 AD, Vishnuvardhana Maharaja Vijayaditya, son of the Kalyana Chalukya king Trailokyamalla, ruled with Kampili as his capital. (Bellary District Inscriptions Volume Hadagali 86)

In an inscription of 1068 AD, Nomlaba Pallava Permadi Deva had chosen Kampili as his capital. He was the younger brother of the Kalyana Chalukya king Bhuvanaika Malla. (A.R.I.E. 1916 No. 814)

During the Hoysala Period :

From the above inscriptions, it can be said that Kampili was very famous as the capital of the Kalyana Chalukyas and their vassal Nolambars. But by 1217 AD, Kampili lost its glory as a capital and merged with the Kurugod region. This is mentioned in an inscription of the time of the Hoysala king Veeraballala. This inscription is found in Oruvai in Bellary district. It is mentioned that Yechasetty donated several villages including Kampili to the Cheelrashi Guru.

It is known from an inscription of 1121 AD found in Raravi in Bellary district that Kampili was the capital. In this inscription, the brothers Thippasetty Marisetty and Sovi Setty of Kampili unanimously mentioned the Moolsthan, the temple Kammatেশwara temple, the two-faced assembly hall and a lake. The last inscription mentioning the construction of a basadi seems to indicate that Kampile had lost its position as the capital for some reason by the time of the Oruvai inscription of 1217 AD, i.e. during the Hoysala period. However, it is known from the Raravi inscription that the Kampileya Setts were very wealthy and were also prominent in charity. No other inscriptions are available about Kampile. Neither the inscriptions of Kampila Raya nor the inscriptions of Kumara Rama mention Kampile. Some inscriptions of the Vijayanagara kings only mention the villages of the Magana district of Kampile. According to the Kampile Kaifiyattu, Kampile was the capital during the time of the Chalukya king Trailokya Malladeva.

Kampila Raya and Kumara Rama: Kummatadurga Kings :

The first inscription available about him is the inscription of Sangur in Haveri district in 1407 AD, the second is the inscription of Kokkod near Thirthahalli in 1432 AD, and the third is the inscription of Ramgarh in 1528 AD. According to these inscriptions, a problem arises. It is known that Kumararama's father Kampila Raya died in a conflict with Muslims in 1327 AD. The associations and epithets of Kumararama already indicate this time. This means that Kumararama must have been at least thirty years old when Kampila Raya died. Because it is also known that he was fighting on the battlefield on behalf of his father. If we take the previous record of Kumararama appearing in the inscriptions in the inscriptions of 1407 AD, then Kumararama would have been 110 years old by this time. Therefore, it can be said without a doubt that the Kumararama mentioned in the inscriptions was not his son. The inscriptions are silent about Kumararama, the son of Kampila Raya, only in the poems. Moreover, the poetic epithets describe Kumararama fighting in the war and dying while Kampila Raya was still alive.

It can also be said that neither Kampila Raya nor Kumara Ram made Kampli the capital. The reason is that there is no mention of this in the inscriptions and poems. According to the inscriptions, it is known that Kummata, Hosamaledugga and Dorevadi were the capitals, and according to the poems, it is known that along with these, Taktaneya was also the capital. Until new inscriptions or other evidence are found in Kampli and its surroundings through new discoveries, it is not possible to say for sure on this matter. There may be copper inscriptions and documents related to this in some houses and monasteries in

Kampli. If these come to light, there is no doubt that the veil over the history of Kampli will be lifted and a clear picture will be obtained.

Kampli Inscriptions :-

Kampli, located on the right bank of the Tungabhadra River, has a history of about twelve hundred years. The number of inscriptions found there is a handful, Four stone inscriptions and a metal inscription have been found.

Of the Four stone inscriptions found, but 4th one inscription is no longer available. This inscription is the oldest inscription in Kampli. The date of this inscription is probably the 12th century. The details of this inscription are given in the Kampli Kaifiyat. The writer of the Kaifiyat says this. "I came to the village while searching to read this inscription and came across it and got a copy of it." But he also did not give a correct copy of the inscription. He also misread the part that was read.

The next inscription is the inscription put up by Achyuta Raya around 1529 AD. There is no mention of Kampli in it. There is a story of donating the gold revenue of the town of Vijaya Virupapura to Mallikarjuna Devaram. There is also a reference to the Virupaksha deva of Hampi. This 16-line inscription has now fallen in two pieces in front of the Anjaneya temple in the town.

The next inscription is the one placed near the Virupaksha temple on Sunday, 24-4-1552 AD. During the reign of Sadashivaraya, Sunkarasa, the son of Banadarasa of Sunka of Mudanad in Adavani, built a stone pavilion with a column in the Virupaksha deva temple in Kampili and installed Hampadevi. After installing the temple, he gave a donation of 1000 rupees in the Agrahara to the deva to perform the Mahanavami, Navratri puja, Dhanurmasada puja, Karthika Deeparadhana, Panchaparva and other tithis without fail. He also donated a garden and other lands.

According to this inscription, it is known that the Virupaksha deva existed before the time of the inscription. It is not said in which period.

Another inscription is in front of the Hanuman temple. But now this inscription is buried in the ground. Only a small part of the upper part is visible. Its date is 1691 February 5 (Thursday). This inscription from the period of Venkataparathiraya is an inscription that marks the way to some temples in Kampili. "It is said that one should pay homage to the Narasimha Murthy and walk to see him from the well of Janekallava. If one fails to do so, one should pay a fine to the palace-gurumane.

The only metal inscription found in Kampli is the inscription on the door of the Someshwara temple, which mentions the service rendered by the wife of Gurayappa, the son of Munegowda of Muddapura, to Hampamma. The date of this inscription is 1879 AD.

These are the inscriptions found in Kampli. Another Veeramastikallu inscription is located opposite the high school. This is very recent, i.e., around the 18th century. Its letters are also very worn out and it tells about the fight and victory of Kalarasa. There are no further details.

In front of the Chaudamma temple, there is a 3-line inscription of the 18th century near the foot sculpture. It is very faded.

However, the memorial stones such as Veeramastikallu, Mastigallu, and Linga Mudra stones There are many in Kampli. In the Navaranga near the Someshwara temple, you can see two beautiful Veeragallu of the 14th century AD. Both are similar, and his fighting posture, his clothes, his hair, and the bow he is holding are well depicted. There is a tiger-hunting Veeragallu on the outer wall of this temple. Its period can be said to be the 14th century AD. He has described that the hero and the tiger are depicted equally in this Veeragallu. Not many tiger-hunting Veeragallu have been found in Hospet taluk. Therefore, this

Veeragallu is of great importance. A small temple is being built near the check post and worshipped for a Veeragallu. Many Veeragallu are worshipped on the river bank. There are also some Veeragallu and Mastikallu next to it.

Veeragallu, Mastigallu, and Lingamudra Stones :

There are countless Lingamudra stones in Kampli, on the street of the town, on the side of Someshwara temple, near the Pampapati temple, and on the fort path. There are stones. These indicate land donations given to Shaiva temples or monasteries.

The inscriptions of Kampila Raya and Kumara Rama, which popularized the history of Kampli, are found in different parts of Karnataka. They are as follows.

In the inscription of Belur village in Hassan district dated 1276 AD, Khandeya Raya or Kampila Raya fights against the Hoysalas on behalf of the Sevunas near Dummi. (M.A.R. 1937 No. 23)

In the inscription of Hirekogalur village in Shivamogga district dated 1280 AD, in the inscription of the same place dated 1283 AD, in a Veeragall of Lokadolu village in Chitradurga district dated 1281 AD, in a Veeragall of Challakere in the same period, and in the inscription of Lakshevara dated 1287 AD, Mummadi Singhaya Nayaka is mentioned. According to these inscriptions, it is known that he was standing on the side of the Yadavas and facing the Hoysalas.

Many inscriptions have been found about his son Kampila Raya, the first of which is the Harihara inscription of 1300 AD. Then there is the inscription of Jenukallu (Chitradurga district) of 1303 AD, the inscription of Bagavala village in Hassan district of the same period, the inscription of Chittanahalli in Mandya district, two inscriptions found in Kummata of 1313 AD, the inscription of Hospet village in Shivamogga district of 1320 AD, the inscription of Ramgad near Sandur of 1323 AD, the inscription of Yaraballi in Hiriya taluk of 1325 AD, the inscription of Kadasur in Tiptur taluk, and the inscription of Kudligi in Shivamogga district. Based on the above inscriptions, it is known that Kampila Raya was a vassal of the Yadavas like his father and continued the war.

Inscriptions in Kampli Taluk – Topographical Index		
Sl No	Place	Number of Inscriptions
1	Kanavi Thimmalapura	05
2	Kampli	04
3	Muddapura	02
4	Gonahalu	02
5	Ramasagara	01
6	Chikka Jayiganuru	01
7	Hampadevanahalli	01
8	Sankalapura	01
9	Metri	01
10	Ittigi Muddapura	01
11	Somalapura	01
12	Ballapura	01
13	Devasamudra	01

Conclusion:-

Kampli History Even the residents of Kampli, who have been famous since their birth, did not know this glorious history of Kampli so deeply. This research provided an opportunity to know how ancient it is that our own land has hidden so much history in itself. It is known that Gandugalikumaram here was famous for his bravery and adventures and his beauty. Research is necessary to know such important ideas of history. Reading and understanding the writings of others can be said to be a kind of experience. The history of Kampli from the reign of the Nolamba Pallavas to the post-Vijaynagara period can be called an important milestone. This study shows that history includes the practice of researching, inquiring, criticizing and then bringing it to the point.

The Kampli region is a geographically powerful region. Due to the convenience of rivers, streams, water, and the habitability of the hills and mountains, man has made this a place of activity since ancient times. Based on the monuments found in this area and the style of the sculptures of the temples, it is helpful to know which kings ruled here. We can know the history from some inscriptions, statues, sculptures, forts, etc. Mainly because Kampli was a geographically beautiful country, it was able to attract the attention of the kings of that time and have historical traces in it. The fact that these traces have survived to this day, albeit to a small extent, is a complement to the study. Since the Kampli region was under the rule of kings, colonists and the British, it has developed as a taluk today.

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