KURUKŞETRA IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

The antiquity of Kurukṣetra as a seat of Aryan culture and civilisation and the sanctity it had acquired on this account ensured for it a prominent place in Sanskrit literature of all classes and ages. Material on its history, geography and religious importance lies scattered from the earliest Vedic works to the latest composition in classical Sanskrit.

In the Rgveda¹ there is a reference to king Kuruśravaṇa, son of Trāsadasyu, and a king Pākasthāman Kaurayāna² is also mentioned. We also hear of two Bharata princes Devaśravas and Devavāta kindling fire on the banks of the rivers Sarasvati, Dr̥ṣadvatī, Āpayā and the lake Mānuṣa³. With the emergence of the Kurus the region came to be known as Kurukṣetra. The Rgveda⁴ refers to Devāpi and Śāntanu as the sons of Rṣītisena who in later Sanskrit literature finds mention as a Kurukṣetra king.

Yajurveda⁵ describes it as the place of sacrifice of the gods. It is also said to be associated with all the three gods of Hindu trinity. It was the Brahmaavedi,
i.e., the sacrificial altar of Brahmā. It was here that Brahmā, the creator, was believed to have practised penance and performed a number of sacrifices so that he might prove equal to the task of creation. It is the seat of creation, Prajāpati is said to have created the worlds and the four varṇas from his body at Prthūdaka, a conception formulated in Puruṣa Sūkta also. The Atharvaveda refers to a dialogue between a Kaurvya husband and his wife.

By the time of Brāhmaṇas, Kurukṣetra had become a very sacred place. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa narrates a legend that the gods performed a sacrifice in Kurukṣetra and at first excluded the two Aśvins from any share in it. It also speaks of the Kaurvya king Bālhika Prātipīya. We also find mention in this work the story of Pururavā and Urvaśī. The king while lamenting for his lost beloved the nymph Urvaśī, roams about in different places in search for her. Ultimately he finds her bathing in the company of several other nymphs in the lotus lake named Anyatahplakṣa in the region of Kurukṣetra. This story is later described in the Vāyu Purāṇa as well as in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. In the former the name of the tīrtha where the lotus lake was situated in Kurukṣetra is given as Plakṣa tīrtha. The Mahābhārata mentions a tīrtha named after her in Kurukṣetra. The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa says
that the gods held a sacrificial session in Kurukṣetra. It further informs us that the Kurupāṇcālas went towards the east in winter and to the west in summer apparently on their military expeditions. The references in the Aitereya brāhmaṇa are far more instructive. The legend about Kavaṣa Ailūṣa in which Sarasvatī helps the sage runs like this. The sages performed a Satra on the Sarasvatī and Kavaṣa who was sitting amongst them was driven out since he was not a brāhmaṇa but the son of a female slave and he was left in the sandy desert with the idea that he would die of thirst; but he praised the waters of Apām Napat with the hymn, called 'Aponaptriya and the sacred Sarasvatī came rushing towards the place where Kavaṣa stood and surrounded it, so that the spot thereafter came to be called Parisarka. The Aitereya brāhmaṇa also suggests that the Nygrodha tree originally grew in Kurukṣetra and then spread to other areas. Elsewhere the Aitereya Brāhmaṇa speaks of the countries of the Kurus and Pāṇcālas together with the Vaśas and Uśāṇarās.

In the Paṇcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa Ruṣamā is said to have run around Kurukṣetra. The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka mentions that the gods performed a sacrificial session with Kurukṣetra as their altar. The southern half of the Vedi (i.e. Kurukṣetra) was Khāṇḍava, the northern half
Trughana. The hinder part Pariñah and the country of Maru (desert) the rubbish pit. This shows that Khāndava, Trughana, Pariñah and Maru formed the border areas of Kurukṣetra. Names Khāndava represents the region around Delhi; Trughana is of Sugh near Jagadhari on the old Yamuna, about 40 miles from Thanesar and 20 miles to the north-west of Saharanpur and Maru the desert of Rajasthan. The identification of Parinah is not yet certain.

The Chāndogya Upaniṣad relates the story of Uṣastī cākrāyāṇa who was forced to live like a beggar with his virgin wife at the village called Ibhyagrāma when the Kurus were destroyed by a hailstorm. In the Jabalō- Upaniṣad, this land is described as fit for Yajñas. According to the Kauśitaki Upaniṣad, in the beginning of Satya-Yuga, Kuru, son of Tapati, the daughter of the Sun-god felt an urge for establishing a permanent monument of glory. He travelled all over the world and at last came to Dvaitavana. It is also known that one Matsya king, Drasana Dvaitavana, performed the horse-sacrifice and ruled in the present Jaipur-Alwar-region, where lake Dvaitavana may be placed.

The Srautasūtras of Āśvalāyana, Lāṭyāyana, and Kātyāyana closely follow Tāṇḍya and other Brāhmaṇas and mention several holy places at which parts of the
Sarasvata and Dārśadvata sacrifices were performed such as Plakṣa prāsravana, where Sarasvatī originates, the vaitandhavahṛada of Sarasvatī, the tract called Parinah in Kurukṣetra, Yamunā flowing through the country of Kārapacava and the country of Triplakṣāvaharna.

The Nirukta explains that Devāpi and Śāntanu mentioned in the Ṛgveda were historical persons and brothers being sons of Rṣṭisena, a king of the Kurus. Pāṇini explains the formation of the word Kaurvya from 'Kuru'. If the father was a brāhmaṇa, he and his younger son were both called Kaurvya, but if a Kṣatriya they would be Kaurvya and Kaurvyāṇī. Kurukṣetra was known to Pāṇini as a Janapada and a kingdom. It appears that according to the celebrated grammarian, the region within the triangle of Thānesar, Hissar and Hastinapur was distinguished by three different names Kuru-rāṣṭra proper between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā with its capital at Hastinapura, Kurujāṅgala covering Rohtak, Hansi and Hissar; and Kurukṣetra to the north with the centre at Thānesar, Kaithal and Karnal. The Kāśikā mentions all the three as distinct geographical units.

The name Āsandivat, the place with the king's throne where Janamejaya Parikṣita is stated in the Mahābhārata to have performed his sacrifice, is also noticed by Pāṇini.
Paninī also refers to the householder way of life obtaining amongst the Kurus as against the ascetic way. It seems to have laid emphasis on the purity of family life and the cultivation of proper domestic relations and virtues, a way of life and philosophy that are reflected in the basic doctrine of the Bhagavadgītā expounded in Kurukṣetra.

According to the Rāmāyaṇa Kuru-jāṅgala in a narrow sense was the forest region of Kuru-realm, which stretched from the Kāmyaka forest on the bank of Sarasvatī to Khāṅdava near the Yamunā. The Rāmāyaṇa describes that the northern Kuru country was the place where the inhabitants enjoyed natural perfection and complete happiness. It is described as a land rich in delights, having beautiful woods, streams, flowering trees, mansions, wide halls, elephants, horses, gates, triumphal gates etc. Rāmachandra referred to the beauty of northern Kuru-land.

Thus Kurukṣetra was already well known before the composition of the Mahābhārata. The Mahābhārata frequently speaks of the highly sanctifying virtues of Kurukṣetra. It is the main centre of operation of the Great Epic. It appears that the territory to the south of Sarasvatī and the north of Drīḍavatī was included in Kurukṣetra and
according to the great Epic those who resided there lived, as it were in the paradise.\(^{42}\)

As a matter of fact that whole story of the Mahābhārata revolves round Kurukṣetra. The term 'Kuru' meaning a particular race or tribe is as old as the days of the composition of the Rgveda as the Kuruśravana suggests term 'Kuru' meaning 'the land of the Kurus' is familiar to the later vedic literature. The Epico-Pauranic tradition associating Kurukṣetra with the famous king Kuru of the lunar dynasty\(^{43}\) is obviously a later development.

The city of Kurukṣetra is said to have been founded by Kuru\(^{44}\). The region that lies between Tarantuka or Arantuka, the lakes of Rāma and Macakruka was Kurukṣetra\(^{45}\). According to Papañcasūdanī\(^{46}\), the commentary of Kajjhima Nikāya, the Chieftains from the Kuru country were known as the Kurus and the country was later named after them. Originally Kurukṣetra is said to have been the Vedi or the sacrificial altar of Brahmā\(^{47}\), when Parśurāma made five pools of the blood of Kṣatriyas in revenge for his father's murder which was subsequently turned into holy pools of water by the blessings of his Pitṛs\(^{49}\). Lastly it came to be called Kurukṣetra when king Kuru, son of Saṁvarṇa, ploughed the land with a golden plough for
seven Krosas all round. Really speaking Kurukṣetra was so called because the noble king Kuru of great prowess, who was a royal sage, ploughed it well for many years. He did it with great care quiet unfatigued, because those who would die here would reach the holy regions where there was no sin.

In ancient times the name Kurukṣetra stood not only for the city but also for the vast region between the Sarasvatī and Drśadvatī rivers, a holy area also called Brahmāvarta. It was also called Avimuktaka-Kṣetra, Brahma-Sadana and Deva-yajña Bhūmi.

The Mahābhārata and the Vāmana purāṇa also refer to the boundaries of Kurukṣetra and its guardian Yakṣás Tarantuka, Arantuka, Kapila and Macakruka. According to the Alexander Cunningham here four names belongs to four Yakṣás who are said to have sung and danced with joy during the battle while they drank the blood of the slain. He also tries to identify these corners when he states that the south-west corner is placed at Ramray, 5 miles to the southwest of Jind where there are said to have been both a Rāmahṛada and Kapila tīrtha. The South-East corner is at Šinkh, very nearly between Jind and Panipat, on the bank of a stream which is said to be the old bed of the Rakṣi or the Drśadvatī. There is still a
Yakṣa-Kundā at the village Sinkh. The North-East corner is at Ratna Yakṣa or Ratna-Jakha close to Pipli on the Sarasvati. Lastly the North-West corner is at Ber or Baher to west north-west of Kaithal where also there is a Yakṣa Kundā. 58

Rāmahṛada is said to be the place where the Bhargava Parasū-Rāma filled and dedicated to his forefathers five tanks of blood after exterminating the tyrant Kṣatriya kings at the end of Treta-Yuga. 59

According to the Mahābhārata 60 the region of Kurukṣetra was about 12 yojanas in area although elsewhere Samantapancaka is described as five Yojanas in each direction 61. In the Buddhist literature the extent of Kurukṣetra is variously given as five Yojanas or three hundred leagues. 62

Thus in the Mahābhārata and other ancient literature Kurukṣetra is described at many places and loosely referred to under various names like Brahmasaras, Rāmahṛada 63, Samantapancaka 64, Samihati 65 and Sthānu tīrtha 66. It was called Dhammakṣetra or a land of piety and Taphakṣetra or a land of penance 67. Brahamakṣetra was another names of Kurukṣetra according to the Jabaleśṇiṣad quoted by Nilakanṭha, the commentator of the Mahābhārata 68. There were about hundred tīrthas in Kurukṣetra according to Nārdīya 69. Māndhāṭṛs sacrificed in the country afterwards
called Kurukṣetra which was then Druhyu or Anavaland. The Vaiśāk king named Marutta, son of Avikṣit, sacrificed on the banks of the Yamunā river near Kurukṣetra. By visiting it one acquired the same amount of merit as can be obtained by making a gift of one thousand cows or by performing a Rājāyu sacrifice. Kurukṣetra was so very holy that even its dust removed the sins of the sinner. It was the most important of all the holy places of the three worlds and those who live at Kurukṣetra are said to be living in heaven.

The great lawgiver Manu speaks of the country of Kurus and other allied peoples as forming the sacred land of Brahmṛṣis i.e. Brāhmaṇical sages rank it immediately after Brahmāvarta. Manu describes Kurukṣetra is a part of Brahmārṣideśa, which is situated adjacent to Brahmāvarta, the tract of the land between the Sarasvatī and Drṣadvatī. The Manusmṛiti further places Vīnaśana, or the region of Sarasvatī's disappearance in the sands, on the western border of Madhyadeśa. Later in the medieval period the lexicons loosely equate Vīnaśana with Kurukṣetra itself. The Matsyas comprised the region of Jaipur, Alwar and Bharatpur, the Pāṇcālas contained Rohilkhanda in U.P. and the Saurasenas comprised the country about Mathura. Sometimes Uttarapāṇcāla was
included in Kurukṣetra. The Kurus of Madhyadeśa were called the Dakśina Kurus. There existed a mutual hostility between the north and south Kuru families. Śivis acquired the land on the north of Kurukṣetra in the Epic times, and the Vāinarās, who were an ancient petty tribe dwelt to its south. The Kurus were the people of Kurukṣetra of the Upper part of Doab, about Delhi, the lower part of the Doab was occupied by the Pāṅcālas. The territory of Kurus appears to have been in the Mahābhārata divided into three parts as Kuru, Kurukṣetra and Kuru-jāngala or the waste land of Kurus.

The Purāṇas mention in detail the holy spots of Kurukṣetra. During the seventh century A.D. Kurukṣetra was more well known by the name Sthāneśvara or Sthāṇaviśvara probably after the Sthāṇu-tīrtha whose sanctity has been referred to in various purāṇas.

Vāmana Purāṇa contains ample material on Kurukṣetra. It speaks of Kuru-jāngala as the country between the Sarasvatī and Drṣadvatī. It also mentions that the land called Kurukṣetra was originally named as the Vedi (sacrificial altar) of Brahma. It came to be known as Samantapancāka when Parsurāma made five pools of the blood of Kṣatriyas in revenge for his father's murder which were subsequently turned into holy pools.
of water by the blessings of his pitrs; and lastly it
came to be called Kurukṣetra because it was ploughed the
king Kuru, son of Sāmartha. As the name of a city
also Kurukṣetra was well known in ancient times. It
was the most sacred region of the Dvāpara age according
to Matsya and Kūrma purāṇas. Vāmana purāṇa describes
seven forests in the region of Kurukṣetra named as
Kāmaya, Aditi, Vyāsa, Phalkī, Sūrya, Madhu and Sītāvana.
It also says that the linga worship was first originated
at Sthānviśvara. The king Kuru is said to have asked
from Indra the boon that the territory he ploughed
might be known as 'Dharmakṣetra' and that those who bathe
or die here might reap a rich harvest of merit.

Skanda Purāṇa describes Kurukṣetra as a land of
piety and the place where the Bharata war was fought.
Kuru-Deśa is said to consist of Kuru-kṣetra, Kuru-jāṅgala
and Kuru. It is also mentioned as a Kauryakṣetra.
It is the holy region and special sanctity is attached to
it on the occasion of Solar Eclipse.

ŚrīmadBhāgavata purāṇa also explains the sanctity of
Kurukṣetra at the time of Solar Eclipse. People from
all over the country said to have assembled there before
the scheduled time of Eclipse. They were extremely
anxious to attain Puṇya and so they observed fast, had
their bath and distributed garlands and cows among the brāhmaṇas. It is further stated that the great assembly at Kurukṣetra on this Lunar and Solar Eclipse occasion included even the rulers of various states and countries i.e. from Matsya, Usināra, Kālīeya, Kambūja, Madra, Ānareta etc. who came to acquire religious merit.

According to the Matsya purāṇa those people who specially come here during the Lunar Eclipse will attain religious merit. The Liṅga Purāṇa describes that when king Kuru performed Yajña here then due to his devotion, the river Surenu left the Rasbhadeśa and entered Kurukṣetra. In the Saura purāṇa this region is described as a city of pilgrimage.

In the Vāyu and Kūrma purāṇas, Kuru-jāngala is said to be a country eminently suitable for the performance of Śrāddha. The Garuḍa purāṇa states the merit of residing at this place and observing Muṇḍana and Upavāsa. It describes the battle scene of Bharata war and compares it with the battle between the Devās and Asurās. It also describes that the water of this region is one of the best waters besides the Gaṅgēs at Gayā. It further informs us that one who dies at Kurukṣetra shall attain heaven while giving the genealogy of the Kurus the Brahma purāṇa says that Kuru son of Saṁvataṇa overtook to prayāga and then founded Kurukṣetra.
In the Viṣṇu purāṇa Kurukṣetra is mentioned as the place where king Puruṣottama reaches for his lost beloved nymph Urvaśī and finds her in a lotus lake along with four other nymphs. Thus in purāṇas the holy Kurukṣetra got a very sacred place.

The Buddhist literature also throws light on the importance of Kurukṣetra. The Buddha is said to have delivered a number of profound religious discourses in the Kuruland and a large number of people embraced Buddhism. All the inhabitants of the Kuru kingdom gave gifts and performed good works following their king. A Kuru king together obeyed the Kurudhamma which consisted in the observance of the five rules of moral conduct and it possessed the mystic virtue of bringing prosperity to the country. The Jātaka contains an account of the incidents connected with Dhananājya and Vidura, notably the defeat of Dhananājaya at dice and the meditation of Vidurapandita in a friendly rivalry between the kind of and Sakka (Indra). King Dhananājaya had a seraglio containing 16,000 dancing girls (-mahāntam Pariggaham Solasashasra natakittbi paripunnam). Jarāsandha is mentioned as the king of Kurukhetra King Korabba belonging to the family of Yudhīṭṭhila-goota made large gifts, but he got no pleasure in making such fights, as there was none among the
recipients possessing five moral qualities. Further it mention that Uttara-Kuru is very often mentioned as a mythic region, but there are some passagew which go to show that there was a faint memory of a country that once had a historical existence.  

The southern Kurus are mentioned in the Pāpañcasūdanī, while the Aṅguttara Nikāya tells us that Kuru was one of the sixteen Mahājanapadas or prominent countries of Jambudīpa (=India), having abundant food and wealth, and the seven kinds of gems. In Buddhist literature, as in the Brāhmaṇa literature, the Kurus are comparatively seldom mentioned alone, their name being usually coupled with that of Pāñcālas. We read in the Pāpañcasūdanī that there was no Vihāra for the Buddha's habitation in the Kuru Kingdom, but that there was a beautiful forest outside the town of Kammāsādhamma where he used to dwell. We are told further that the inhabitants of the Kuru kingdom enjoyed good health, and their mind was always ready to receive instruction in profound religious truths, because the climate was bracing at all seasons, and the food was good. The Buddha is said to have delivered a number of profound religious discourses to the Kurus e.g., the Mahānidāna and Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Suttantas of the Dīgha Nikāya and result is that the large number of people embraced Buddhism.
The Buddhist literature is full of stories in which the land of Kuru and its princes and people play a leading part. For instance, the Thera Raṭṭhapāla, who contributed some verses to the Theragāthā, was born in the town of Thullakotṭhika in the country of the Kurus, and we are told that he converted the King 'Koravya' to Buddhism. The Dhammapada Commentary relates the story of Aggīdatta, the Chaplain of King Kośala. After his retirement, Aggīdatta dwell on the borders of the Kuru country and Aṅga-Māgadha, together with his 10,000 disciples, and the inhabitants of these countries used to supply the whole company with food and drink. Eventually Aggīdatta and all his followers were converted by the Buddha.

In the Therīgāthā commentary, we read that a theri named Nanduttarā was reborn in a Brāhmaṇa family in the city of Kammasadhamma in the kingdom of the Kurus. She first became a Jain, but was later converted by Mahākaccāyana, accepted ordination from him, and attained arabanship. In the Paramatthadīpanī we have an account of the miseries suffered after death by a certain Serinī, a heretical woman of the Kuru capital.

In the Papañcasūdanī, there is a fanciful story of the origin of the Kurus. Mahāmandhāta, king of Jambudīpa,
was a Cakravartin, and therefore subject to no restrictions of place. He conquered Pubbavideha, Aparagoyana and Uttara-Kuru, besides the Devalokas. When he was returning from the Uttara-Kuru, a large number of the inhabitants of that country followed Mahāmandhātā to Jambudīpa, and the place where they settled became known as Kururaṭṭhām. Another city of the Kuru country, according to the Prākrit legend given in the commentary on the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, was Isukāra (Prākrit Usuyāra or Isuyāra) 'a wealthy and famous town, beautiful like heaven'. It is already referred to the town of Kammāsadhamma, which must be well known in Buddha's time. It is also called Kammāsadamma, derived by popular etymology from Kammāsa (a prince) and damma (from dam, to tame), because Kammāsa was brought under control by the Bodhisattva when he was born as a son of King Jayaddisa of Pāṇcāla. The story of Kammāsa is narrated in full in the Jayaddisa Jātaka, in which we find that the Bodhisattva was born as the son of king Jayaddisa of Pāṇcāla. One of the king's other sons was carried away by a Yakkhinī (ogress) who brought him up, and caught him Cannibalistic habits. After many attempts to capture him had failed, he was at last brought under control by the Bodhisattva. He was called Kammāsa
(spotted, blemished) because of a boil which appeared on his leg. It is apparent that this story is simply a variation of the Purānic story of Kalmāśapada.

For Instance the Bodhisattva is described in the Dhammapada commentary as having once been born to the chief queen of the Kuru king, in the capital city, Indapatta (Indraprastha). He went to Taxila to complete his education, and was then appointed a Viceroy by his father. When he came to the throne, he together with his family and his chief officials, used to obey the 'Kuru-dhamma'. This Kuru-dhamma consisted in the observance of the five 'Silas' or rules of moral conduct, and it possessed the mystic virtue of bringing prosperity to the country. At this time the king of Kalinga was troubled by the Kurus, had a royal elephant named Añjana-vasabha, which was brought to the kingdom of Kaliṅga in the belief that its mere presence would bring rain. This device not having the expected result, it was concluded that rain did not fall in Kaliṅga because the Kuru-dhamma was not observed there; and Brāhmaṇas were sent to the kingdom of Kuru to make themselves acquainted with the Kuru-dhamma, and write it out for the king of Kaliṅga. Thereupon, King Kaliṅga observed the Kurudhamma faithfully, and forthwith the longed-for rain poured down in showers in his kingdom, and his crops were saved.
The Kurudhamma Jātaka cited above, also narrates this story, and there are further references to king 'Dhanañjaya Koravya' in other Jātakas. In the latter passage we are told that the kingdom of Kuru extended over three hundred leagues. The king's chief minister is called Sucirata in one story, and Vidhura in another. In each case the king is said to have been very righteous and charitable. In yet another Jātaka version of the story, we are told, as usual, that there reigned the city of Indapattana, in the kingdom of the Kurus, a king named Dhanañjaya, of the race of Yudhiṣṭhila (Yudhiṣṭhira). Bodhisattva was born in house of his family priest. After learning all the arts of Taxila, he returned to Indapattana and after his father's death he became family priest and advisor to the king. He was called Vidhurapandita.

The story of king Dhanañjaya-Korabba and his wise minister appears to have been very popular in Jātaka times, for its events find repeated mentions in the tales. The Jātaka contains an account of further incidents concerning Dhanañjaya and Vidhura, notably the defeat of Dhanañjaya at dice, and the meditation of Vidhura-Pandita in a friendly rivalry between the king and Sakka (Indra).

Though the Buddha principally confined his ministering...
activity to N.E. India, the Buddhist Pāli texts show that he travelled widely over regions in northern India; and the Kuru country too appears to have been favoured by his discourses. It is in nearly every case that the town of Kammasadhama is mentioned as the scene of the Buddha's discourses.

In the classical literature Mahākavi Kālidāsa in his Meghdūtta pointed out the Brahmāvāraṇa when he describes the way of Megha. The Rājatarāgini of Kalhana too informs us that the place was visited by the prince on the occasion of Solar Eclipse. A. st ein further informs us "that Eclipse of the Sun in India took place in July 23 of 1134 A.D. and it was visible at Thānesar. The Solar Eclipse occurred on the occasion of Kothesvara's meeting with Mallārjuna at Kurukṣetra. The Brhatasthāmita of Varāhamihira too refers to the Eclipse and its effect at Kurukṣetra. The Yoginītantra states the sanctity of this region. The great poet Dandi also refers to Kurukṣetra in Avantisundri Kathā. Bāna, the great Sanskrit poet, describes the capital, Thānesar in glowing terms Prabhakaravardhana, father of Harṣa and of his brother Rajyāvardhana, was the king of Sthānaviśvara according to the Harṣacarita of Bāna. Harṣa removed his seat of Government from Thānesvara of Kanauj. In A.D. 648, a Chinese Ambassador was sent to Harṣavardhana of
Thanesvara. He found that the General or Senāpati Arjuna had usurped his kingdom and the dynasty then became extinct. In the later part of the 6th century A.D. Prabhākara-vardhana, king of Thanesvara, rose to eminence by successful wars against his neighbours, including the Mālavas, the Hun settlements in the N.W. Punjab and Gurjara as, probably those of Rājputana, but possibly those of the Gurjara kingdom in the Punjab, now represented by Gujrat and Gujranwalā districts. The fact that his mother was a princess of the Gupta line age undoubtedly stimulated his ambition and aided its realisation.  

The traditional character of Kurukṣetra was also described in the Inscriptions. According to the Talangere inscription of Jayasinha, the king made a land-grant to Mochabbarasi and said that the violator of the terms of the grant would incur the sin of 'destroying cows and Brāhmaṇas' in Kurukṣetra. It is said in the Huli inscription of the reign of Vikramaditya VI, dated 1082 A.D., that the protector of the temple of Viśādhra, Viṣṇu and others and of the holy pool would achieve the merit of making gifts at the holy places, viz., Varanasi, Kurukṣetra, Arghya-tīrtha, Prayāga and Gayā. In the inscription of Niralgi, dated 1200 A.D., and the Hulgur inscription of Vikramaditya VI, dated 1077 A.D., Kurukṣetra is mentioned.
conventionally along with Varanasi, Gangesagara and Prayaga. The Ramtek Stone inscription of the time of Rama Candra (13th century A.D.) also Kuruksetra is mentioned. After remaining in comparative obscurity for several centuries, Kuruksetra seems to have recovered its importance before the rule of the Lodis in Delhi. The pilgrims used to visit the holy spots of Thanesar and Sikendar Lodi wanted to kill them. Abul Fazl also speaks of the pilgrimage of ascetics of Kuruksetra.

The account of Abu Rihan too "records on the authority of Varahamihira, that during the eclipse of the moon, the waters of all the other tanks visit the tank of Thanesar so that the bather in the tank, at the moment of the eclipse obtains the additional merit of bathing in all other tanks at the same time."

The above list of notices of Kuruksetra in Sanskrit literature is by no means exhaustive. A detailed account of such references indeed requires too much space than could be available here. Suffice it is to say that this holy region retained its importance in the eyes of Sanskrit writers from their earliest generations right up to the mediaveal period when everything relating to the cultural expression of this country became a target for destruction by the invading hoards from across the western mountains. The Sanskrit writers have thus given to this region a sufficient importance.
REFERENCES

1. Rg. X.33.4.

(Kurusravana may mean literally heard or famous in the land of Kurus).

2. Rg. VIII.3.21.

3. Rg. III.23.4.

4. Rg. X.98.5; See also Nirukta II.10.

5. Mait Samhita, II.1.4 (Black Yajurveda).


7. Rg. X.90.12.


10. Šat. Br. XII.9.3.3. See also SBE. Vol.44, P.269.

11. Šat. Br. XI.5.1.4.
12. Vāyu Purāṇa. 91.31-32.


14. Vana Parva. 84.157.

15. Taittṛiya Brāhmaṇa. V.I.1.

16. Ibid. (1.6.4.2), tiṣṭhaṁ jātvam adhyātmaṁ kṛṣṇo bhūtāṁ.


18. Rg. X.30.

19. Ait. Br. ... 35.4 = VII.30


12. Vāyu Purāṇa. 91.31-32.


14. Vana Parva. 84.157.

15. Taittṛiya Brāhmaṇa. V.I.1.

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19. Ait. Br. ... 35.4 = VII.30


12. Vāyu Purāṇa. 91.31-32.


14. Vana Parva. 84.157.

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16. Ibid. (1.6.4.2), tiṣṭhaṁ jātvam adhyātmaṁ kṛṣṇo bhūtāṁ.


18. Rg. X.30.

27. Lat. Sr. X.15 ff.
28. Kāṭ. Sr. 24,6,5,6,7,10,31,32,36.

29. Nir. II.10.

30. Bṛg. X.98.5.
33. Kā ṣ. II.47. श्रावणेषु बुध्दीपि प्रवाहमात्र नामस्य।
35. Ibid. VI.2.42.
37. Rāmāyana II.68.13. See also PHAI, PP.23-24.
40. Ibid. XCIV, P.242.
41. HDS by P.V. Kane, Vol.IV, P.682.
42. Mbh. III.83.3.

43. Ibid. I.89, 42-43, IX.52.
44. Ibid. I.75.66-68; Ch.85, P.96; Harivamśa, Ch.32.84-85. See also Viś. Pu. IV, Ch. 19, Tr. by Wilson, Vol.IV, P.143.
45. Ibid. III.83.4; 9, 15, 52.
47. Mbh. III.83, V.206; 208, IX.53; Vmn. Pu.22.59-60.
48. Ibid. IX.52.20.

49. Ibid. III.83.28.
50. Ibid. IX.52.2. See also Viś. Pu.IV.19.74-77; Vmn.Pu.I.13 and 32.24.

51. Ibid. IX.52.2; cf. Vāyu Pu. 99.115-116; Mat.Pu.50.20-21.
52. Mbh. IX.52.5.
53. Ibid. IX.52.6.
54. Ibid. III.83.5. See also Vmn. Pu. 33.6-9.
55. Manu Smr. II.17.

57. Mbh. III.81.178. IX.53.1.
58. CASR, XIV. P.90.
60. Mbh. III.

कंगायणुवासः पेयवाचकादं समस्यावतः
ब्रह्मवाच तरस्वया हुप्तस्वारः मध्यः
ब्रह्मक्षेत्र कुस्कें च मघामुनि स्तरसमारे।
धर्मीऽस्कें नानाधिकरणानि विध्यार्।

61. Mbh. III. See also 22.15-16. (Vmn.Pu.).

वेदी प्रजापतिभाषा समस्याका प्रायोजना।
करोदेशक्षनलय क्षेत्रेशकालमां।
समस्याम् व पुण्यमुर्गो रन्ध्नस्ततः।
समस्याका नाम
थथायथानुसरत्तमस्म आत्मानाप्रायोजनानि विंपं विं सर्वत:।

62. Jātaka, V.57.484; Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, P.27.
63. Mbh. III.83.40.
64. Ibid. 129.22; IX.54.5; Vmn. Pu.22.15-16.
65. Ibid. III.129.22; Vmn. Pu.22.15-16. See also P.V.Kane, HDS ,Vol.IV, P.683.
66. Ibid. III. Ch.83.
68. Mbh. III.83.6.
70. Mbh. XII.10.167.
71. Mbh. III.129. See also Pargitor, AIHI, P.268. fn.
72. Ibid. III.83.20.
73. Ibid. III.83.1-8 and 203-208.
74. Ibid. III. 81.173-175. (Suk. ed.).

कप्याणामपितलोकानां कुस्कें तु विभिन्दयोः
ये द्वानिति कुस्केः ते द्वानिति निविद्योः।

75. Manu Smr. II.17-19. Mbh. III.83.53. (Gita Press ed.).

कुस्केः व मर्यादाय प्रावचाला: वैगस्तेकाः।
स्माः प्रामाण्यं देशं ॥ वै ब्रह्माचार अपनस्त:।

76. Manu Smr. II.17.

तरस्वया हुप्तस्तत्वम् देवं नवं पदन्तराय।
तद्व देवर्णामिति देशाः ॥ ब्रह्माचार्य प्रसी।
77. Manu Smr. II.21.

Sircar Locates a Pancala country to the north and west of Kuruksetra on the basis of a medieval work named Śaktisāṅgamatantra. See also Cosmography and geography in Early Indian Literature, p.109.

78a. See Sircar, Cosmography and Geography in Early Indian Literature, p.16 note 58.


82. Wilson, Viṣṇu Purāṇa Tr., Vol.II, P.133.


84. The Saura Pu. (Ānandāśrama Series), 67,12-13; Vmn.Pu. Ch.43 and 46. Ling Pu. (Calcutta ed.), 36.70. Mbh. (Suk. ed.)III.81,141-142.

85. Vmn. Pu. 22.47.

86. Vmn. Pu. 22.59-60.

87. Vis. Pu. IV.19,74-77. The geneology of Ajamīḍha-Rksha-Sāṁvara-Kuru, about whom it says 'Ya edam Dharmakṣetram Kurukṣetram Cakara'.

88. Mat. Pu. 106.57. v.


90. Vmn. Pu. 34.3. Nār.Ut.Kh.65.4-7. See also ASI.XIV. PP.90-91.

91. Vmn. Pu. Ch.44. See also N.L.Dey, Geog. Dict. P.191.

92. Vmn. Pu. 22.33-34.

The geneology of Ajamīḍha-Rksha-Sāṁvara-Kuru, about whom it says 'Ya edam Dharmakṣetram Kurukṣetram Cakara'.

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88. Mat. Pu. 106.57. v.

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92. Vmn. Pu. 22.33-34.

The geneology of Ajamīḍha-Rksha-Sāṁvara-Kuru, about whom it says 'Ya edam Dharmakṣetram Kurukṣetram Cakara'.
94. Sk. Pu. VII.1.35.5.
95. Sk. Pu. I.1.65.16.
96. Śrīmad. Bhāg. Pu. (ed. by Govind Dass) II. Ch.82. P.450 ff.
97. Śrīmad. Bhāg. 82.9.
98. Ibid. 82.12-13.
100. Liṅg. Pu. Ch.53.
101. Saura Pu. 67.12.
102. Vāyu Pu. 77.93.
105. Ibid. I.84.4
106. Ibid. I.145.23.
107. Ibid. I.145.25.
108. Ibid. I.205.115.
109. Ibid. II.28.19.
111. Viṣ. Pu. 4.6.63.
117. See e.g. the reference to Kurudipa', Dipavāma, P.16 and the statement in the Āsanaṇavaṇā P.12, that the place of the inhabitants of Uttaradvipa is called the kingdom of Kurus(Kururattham).
125. Papañca, PP.225-6.
129. Dhanañjaya, according to the Kurudhamma Jātaka, Fausboll, Vol. II, PP.366.
132. Jātaka (Fausboll), V, P.37.
133. Ibid. IV, P.361.
134. Ibid. VI, PP.255.
135. Ibid. Vol. VI, PP.255.
139. Ibid. op. cit. P.212.
140. Ibid. op. cit. P.171.
142. Yogi. Tan. 2.1; 2.7-8.
143. S.K. Pillay, P.94.
144. Ṣaracarita of Bāṇa, Ch.III.P.108.
146. V.A. Smith, Early Hist. of India, 4th ed. PP.348-349.
147. Ep. Ind. Vol. XXLX, P.208-9; vide also the inscription of Ablur (ibid.,Vol.V, PP.259-60), the Kelawadi inscription (1053 A.D.) of the time of Someśvara I (ibid.,Vol. IV, P.262), the Bankapur inscription (Saka 977) of Someśvara I (ibid.,Vol.XIII,PP.172,175), the Momigatti inscription (1124 A.D.) of Vikramāditya VI, (ibid., Vol. XVII, P.119) the Kothapur inscription of Saka 1058 (ibid., Vol. XIX, P.34), the Miraj inscription of Saka (1065 and 1066) (ibid., Vol.XIX, PP.38 and 40), etc.
148. Ibid., Vol. XVIII, PP.179 and 181.
149. Ibid., Vol. XVI, PP.67 and 71.
150. Ibid., P.331.
151. Ibid., Vol.XXV, P.167-aṣtame ca Kurukṣetra-nāmni tīrtha-vare narah).
152. ASI, Vol. XIV, PP.95-96, adopted from the Tārikh-i-Qaudī.
153. H. Elliot and J. Dowson, The History of India as Told by its own Historians, Vol. V, P.318.
154. Reinaud, Memoire Surl'Inde, P.287.