

inscription. The inscription refers to Viṣṇugopa of Kāñcī as one of the kings of Dakṣiṇāpatha defeated by Samudragupta but reinstated in their kingdoms. Kāñcī is the same as Kāñcīpura or modern Conjeevaram in the Chingleput district of Madras Presidency.⁵⁵⁴ The kingdom of Kāñcī extended from the mouth of the Krishna to the south of the river Palar and sometimes even to the Kaveri.⁵⁵⁵ It is also known as Kāñcīpeḍu.⁵⁵⁶ It is mentioned in several early records relating to the ancient history of the Pallavas of Kāñcī (of about A.D. 250 to 355)⁵⁵⁷ The Aihole inscription of Pulakeśin, the Cālukya ruler in the 7th century A.D. refers to his conquest of Kāñcīpura.⁵⁵⁸ The earliest literary reference to Kāñcī is in the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali.⁵⁵⁹

The Mahābhāṣya on Vārttika 26 to Pāṇini IV. 2.104 mentions Kāñcīpuraka (i.e. a resident of Kāñcīpura).⁵⁶⁰ Hiuen Tsang informs us that Kāñcī was 30 li or 5 miles in circuit, and that in the city there were eighty Deva temples and many heretics called Nirgranthas.⁵⁶¹

The Purāṇas attach great importance to Kāñcī.⁵⁶² It is included in a list of seven holy cities of India.⁵⁶³ The Brahmanāṇḍa Purāṇa⁵⁶⁴ associates Kāñcī with Kāśī, the two forming the two eyes of Śiva. It is stated in the Bārhaspatya sūtra⁵⁶⁵ that Kāñcī is a Śākta-kṣetra. In the Devībhāgavata⁵⁶⁶, Kāñcī is said to be a sthāna of the Devī called Annapūrṇā.⁵⁶⁷ The Vāmana Purāṇa⁵⁶⁸ mentions it as the best among the cities. The Skandapurāṇa⁵⁶⁹ counts it amongst the holy places. The Bhāgavatapurāṇa⁵⁷⁰ and the Yoginītantra⁵⁷¹ also mention it. In Daśakumāracaritam⁵⁷² it is referred to as a city of the Drāviḍa country.

Kāñcī is full of temples and shrines. Śiva Kāñcī and Viṣṇu Kāñcī form the western and eastern parts of the city, while the Jaina Kāñcī is known as Tiruparutti-Kunram.⁵⁷³ Of the temples at Conjeevaram, the most famous are the Kāmākṣī temple with a Cakra placed in front of the deity, the Vaiḥaṇṭha Perumal temple of Viṣṇu and the Śhiva temple of Kailāśanātha.⁵⁷⁴

Apart from its religious significance Kāñcī has been a famous centre of learning. The Pallava ruler Mahendravarman, the author of the Mattavilāsa-Prahasana; Bhāravi, the author