CHAPTER 6
VADAPADRAKA

Baroda (22°17’55”N; 73°15’8”E) the erstwhile capital of the Gaekwads is today famous as the centre of education, culture and industry. It carries archaeological relics of its origin, dessertation, re-occupation, shifting of nucleus, expansion, retardation, regeneration and several such phenomena. It is situated on the fertile banks of a perennial rivulet the Visvamitri in the region traditionally known as Vakala region\(^1\). The first inhabitants of this area around Baroda were hunters and food gatherers who lived on either banks of river Visvamitri, behind the present central Jail during Mesolithic period some 5000 years ago\(^2\).

Our knowledge about the history of Baroda is based mainly on Jain literature, Visvamitri mahatmya and a few old inscriptions to Baroda. The excavations carried out by the department of Archaeology of M.S.University in 1951 have thrown fresh light on the antiquity of Baroda\(^3\). According to literary tradition, Baroda was also known as “Chandanavati”, “Vatapadra”, and “Virpur”. The city of Baroda developed out of a nucleated village, the large village with a number of dependent hamlets on the left bank of river Vishvamitri. We do not know the names of that group of villages till we come to the 9\(^{th}\) century AD. At the beginning of this century there was town called Ankottaka (modern village of Akota to the west of Railway line) with a number of villages and other landmarks of which we have reference to Vadapadraka, Vagachchaka etc. It was the administrative headquarters of a
unit or Visaya called “Anakottaka”. During the early medieval period, Vadapadaraka displayed Anakottaka as the administrative headquarter. In the 16th century the center shifted eastward to the modern fort area, when it was built by prince Khalil khan and named it as “Daulatabad”. Again in the 19th century, the whole present area of the city of Baroda came into existence.

The earliest settlement of this area which grew up into the town during early historic period (c.200BC to c.9th century AD) is mentioned for the first time in the Baroda copper-plate grant of the Rashtrakuta king “Karka Suvarnavarsa”5. According to this inscription Anakottaka perhaps derived from the “Anna Kuta” meaning heap of grains was an important centre of trade and commerce during early historic period. The recovery of Roman bronze jar handle depicting Eros (Greek god of Love) as seaman, two clay tablets seals showing prancing horses, Amphorae pottery used for containing wine and olive oil etc. and several other antiquities put together indicated that the people of “Ankotaka-84?” were in contact with the Roman world. Moreover, the strategic location of Baroda on the ancient trade routes linking Gujarat, Madhyapradesh, Deccan and Rajasthan has played a vital role in the prosperity and development of Anakottaka nagar located on the western side of the river Vishvamitri6. A large number of world famous Jain Akota Bronzes (c.5th century to 11th century AD) were discovered at Akota7.

This earliest settlement which is mentioned in the inscription as “Anakottaka” was located on the high land area along the river side. These archaeological mounds were locally known as “Dhan tekri” area which was
excavated by Subbarao in 1951. The excavation yielded remains of brick structure, kshatrap coins, Roman antiquities, amphorae and other antiquities. It seems that, the settlement of Ankottaka town followed linear pattern. There was a mahapath (highway) running on its west.

The above said town was a centre of grain markets. Evidently its name Ankottaka (meaning the heap of grains) also points out this. The Rashtrakuta inscription further refer to the hemlets e.g., Vadapadraka, Jambuvāpika, Vāgacchaka and Mahāsenaka (Tadāga). Further exploration and close examination of the places mentioned in the inscription, revealed that the archaeological mound located on the eastern side of river Vishvamitri (opposite to Akota), central Jail area and the medical college represent the old Vadapadraka. To its further north on the high mound (Kothi area) existed the settlement of Vagacchaka⁸ (present Anandapura ward), while there was a small hamlet at Jambu-bet (ancient Jambuvāpika), identified with present Dandia bazar area. Thus, the early settlement of “Ankottaka-84 nagar was a “Dandaka” type of town surrounded by several hamlets. The excavation furnished evidence of two disastrous floods. During the Gupta period (c. 5th /6th cent. AD) the settlements seems to have shifted in the interior at a higher and safer area on the left bank of Vishvamitri to Medical college area. This suburb area assumed the name of “Vadapadraka” meaning a settlement near banyan trees. The excavation conducted in this area and the discovery of post Gupta Upasyamurti of Surya⁹ found from this site indicate the growth of settlement from a small hamlet into Vadapadraka nagar from post Gupta period to the Chaulukyan period is quite noteworthy(Figure: 38).
VADAPADRAKA (VADODARA)

Phase I

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Fig: 39
The second recorded reference to this town occurs in Vastupal charita of Jino Harsa gawa according to which Virdhaval (AD 1200-1238) passed through Baroda on his way back after conquering Ghughula of Godhraha (Gohara) who repaired the temple of Adishvar at Utkota (Akota)\(^{10}\). This shows that Akota continued to be a Jaina centre during c.12-13\(^{th}\) century AD. Though it must have been reduced to a small suburb of Vadapadraka nagar.

The archaeological topographical and toponomical perspective indicate the Chatuhsima the boundaries of the growth of Vadapadrak nagar from Rashtrakuta period to the close of the Solanki period. The Rashtrakuta record very precisely mentions “the Chatuhsima” of medieval Vadapadraka nagar. According to this record there were Vagachi chaka no tekro in the north, Jambu Vapika (present Jambubet in Dandia bazar area), Mahasenak tadag located in the south (present pologround area) while Akota in the west. Due to increase of population and prosperity these higher mounds merged with Vadapadraka which formed a Chaturastra type (square form) of township. This type of township has been described in the scripture prevalent in western India as “Mahendra nagar” also\(^ {11}\). During the Chaulukyan period (c.10\(^{th}\)–13\(^{th}\) century AD) it enjoyed the status of being administrative and mercantile headquarter. This medieval township was an open settlement which endured flood, attacks of the invaders and raiders due to increasing prosperity. Perhaps due to these reasons Vadapadraka once again shifted and moved to further east to a safer and higher area which was located on the junction of Champaner-Malwa route.

In 1451 AD, the Sultan of Malwa looted Baroda. So the Sultan of Gujarat, Khalilkhan son of Sultan Mahmud Begda, fortified the town of
during c.15th century AD. And named it as Daulatabad. Interestingly, he constructed Mandavi (the junction of trade and commerce) to follow the tradition of Mandavi of Champaner which was built during the regime of Mahmud Begada (Figure:39).

royal enclosure:

built in square with very thick high walls and four giant dons at the four corners with a main entrance gate on its side. Indoubtedly there was a palace for the Sultan inside this strong design. Interestingly, Junigadhi was built at the north east corner of the main fort. The medieval texts on Vastusastra also prescribe residence of royal families in the north-east direction of the town. Perhaps, regarded symbol of divinity in medieval period hence Isāna was considered best for the royal residence.

A large square fort around the Vadapadraka was built in had four gates (Northern gate: Champaner gate, Easter gate: northern gate Gendigate, Western gate: Laheripura gate and two principal roads crossing each other at the central town. Little later a beautiful pyramidal structure known as Mandapika) was added. Such structures of Mandapika also in and Champaner. This centrally located structure was built for the collection of tax on various import and export of the goods in the town. Due to its principal road system, i.e., running east west and north south, divided the town naturally into four main sectors. The bazars were either sides. This pattern continued even till date. Each sector the pratolis (pole) and vinthis (sub lanes at back of the houses
disposal of garbages. Coloqually such sub lanes, usually meant for the sudras are called as “Chhindis”. There were public wells, Chabutara for birds. Hawāda, and Chāt-slabs for animals outside almost all the pratolis of the town. The planning of the town shows close resemblance with grid-iron pattern.

Later on due increase of the population, the fort was extended on east and southern side. This extension of fort included Bavamanpura, Wadi and Barhanpura. This extended fort had two more gates i.e., Ghoya gate and Gajarawadi gate on southern side and Laldarwaja in the eastern side (Fig:40).

The growth of the Vadapadraka might indicate its squarish form right from c.10th century onward. The medieval scriptures on Vastusastra give different names for squarish form of the town Aparajitapraccha¹³ and Rajvallabha call it as “Mahendra” type of town while Visvakarma Vastusastra describes it as “Sarvatobhadra”¹⁴ Chaturmukha nagar. However Vadapadraka nagar seems to have become the seat of the royal family during the regime of the Sultans. Evidently, the Junigadhi (royal enclosure) was built in the Isana corner which was traditionally prescribed for the king. This very well justify that the town of Vadapadraka alias Vatadara - Vadodara¹⁵ follow the features of “Rajdhani” type of nagar which continued to be the royal seat of the Gaekwads till the independence (Fig:41).
REFERENCES

8. The name Waggachaka has been identified by the present investigator “Shastrini pole”- Anandpura area.