CHAPTER 8
KARNAVATI

According to Merutunga¹ Kama I (1066-1094 AD) after invading Asa Bhilla at Asapalli (near modern Ahmedabad) received an omen from Bhairavi devi and built their a temple of the goddess Kocaraba. Interestingly the name of the goddess preserved in that of the present name of the suburb near Sabarmati (Paladi area) Karna I further, credited to have built the temple of Karnesvara presumably a Siva temple at Asapalli where he also erected another temple dedicated to goddess Jayanti². These temples do not exist at present. Santo and Udaya the Jaina ministers³, built a temple called Sāntuvasahikā and Uda built a large Jaina temple Udaya-vihāra at Karnavati built by Karna in the vicinity of old Asapalli. During the reign of Siddharaja there also existed Ariṣṭanemi Prāsāda and Vasupūjya Chaitya⁴. There also existed a temple of Bhabha Pārśvanāth at Asaul⁵ (Asapalli). None of these temples traced out so far. The above-said evidence indicate that after conquering Asaval (Asaul) Karnavati was established during the regime of Karnadeva and Siddharaja Jaysimha⁶.

This particular area located on river Sabarmati was selected for further development perhaps with a view to check raids and invasions coming from Lāta, Malwa and Saurashtra. Moreover, there already existed a small settlement at Asaval. Settlement of Karnavati on the river Sabarmati further grew and spread towards eastern side which included parts of Astodia–Raipur area and Dhalanipole situated on a distinct high mound. Subsequently, the ancient Asaval was merged with the townscape of Karnavati. It is interesting to note that the above mention areas of

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Figure 45

Courtesy: Surendra Vyas
Ahmedabad contains a lot of Hindu and Jaina Shrines. These shrines are described in the Sabarmati-mahatmya of Padma Purana. (Figure: 45)

The celebrated Al Biruni⁸ (AD 970-1039) is the first of the Arab geographers to mention Asaval. The next notice is by the Moroccan geographer writer Al Idrisi,⁹ at the end of eleventh century who refers to Asval as populous, commercial rich industrious and productive of useful articles. He compares the place both in size and in population with Dhavalakpur (Dholka). These foreign accounts also confirms that Asaval was a sizable township during 10th-11th century AD, which was absorbed by the growth of Karnavati. After the defeat of Karna Vaghela the last ruler of the Vaghela dynasty in 1304 AD, the Sultanate of Delhi ruled over Gujarat with Anhilapur Patan as its capital. During 15th cen. AD the capital was shifted to Karnavati and re-named it as Ahmedabad

The author of Mirat-I-Ahmadi furnishes that the citadel of Bhadra was first taken up for construction in 1411 AD. The Bhadra Citadel or Castle is rectangular in form and has several gates. i.e. Piran Pith, Mirku (north gate), Laldarvaja and Bhadra (eastern gates) Ram gate and Baradari gate towards river side in the west and other gates in the southern side. The Bhadra had palaces (named as Chanda and Suraj) royal mosque (Shahi mosque, still survives). Stables and servant quarters. The over all growth of the city now required to be fortified. The author of Mirat-I-Ahmedi further informs that the city was strengthened by Mahmud Begda (1486 AD) with a huge fort-wall. It had circumference of nearly 9 km with 12 gates, 189 towers or bastions and over 6000 battlements. Built of burnt brick and mortar. Its twelve gates are known as Shahpur, Idaria or Delhi and Dariapur
in the north Kalupur Sarangpur and Raipur in the east Astodia, Jamalpur and a closed gate (Dhedia) in the south and Sabar Khan Jahan, Raikhad and Khanpur in the west towards river. It is interesting to note that all the principal roads from all the gate were leading towards Manek Chowk (Chatvar area) dividing entire town into various sectors. This was a main open-market area of this capital town. There is a place called Dana pitha and Ghee-kata- located in this premises which are indicative of the main Bazar. (Figure: 46)

The sectors of the town consisted of inumerable “Pratolis” (प्रतोली पेल). These pratolis were made of wooden gates with upper storey, perhaps meant for watching /guard room. It had common street wells, private wells, under ground tanks for potable water, wooden Chabutaras (for birds). Chatslabs and Hawada for animals. Here, it may be noted that there was a long uninterrupted tradition in the society to regard offering food (roti etc.) to the cows and dogs and scattering grains to the birds. The Vedic scriptures describe such holy deeds as part of performing Pancamahayajna\(^\text{12}\). Perhaps, this ancient tradition of Pancamahayajna became a part of the daily life of the people, which was carried forward even upto this day. It is significant to note that such a Vedic tradition was translated into architecture and town planning of this region.

During the regime of Mahmud Begda (1484-1535 AD) and the successors of Sultanate at Ahmedabad (c.1556AD), ornamented the town with the construction of several mosques (e.g. Ranirupmati ni mosque on Mirzapur road, Kutbuuddin ni mosque in Delhi-Chakla area and others)
Besides this, various tombs rojas, stepwells (Bai Harimi vav). The famous mosque with shaking minarets near Kalupur Railway Station was built by Sultan Kutbuddin in 1454 AD\textsuperscript{13}. The mosque with famous stone-cut grill work popularly known as Sidisaiyedni Jali was also built by the end of Sultanate period\textsuperscript{14}. (Figure: 47)

From AD 1572 to 1758 Ahmedabad remained under the Mughal power. Abu Fazal, the author of Aine-Akbari gives vivid description of Ahmedabad as town with broad roads, innumerable mosques enough water resources, two forts, Barbosa-the traveler from Lisbon (1510 AD) describes Ahmedabad as a larger city even than Champaner. This rich and well supplied town had several streets, squares (Chatrars), well built houses, wooden havelis and many orchards and gardens.

Interestingly Miratfть Ahmedi gives a list of 360 caste groups residing in 360 pratolis of the town. The growth of the town now extended outside the outer fort wall of the town. The extension of the town can be seen in Madhavpura, Bardolpura, Asarva (in the east), Kagda Pith in the south-east while Behrampura and Kangalpura in the south. The further growth of the suburbs were now across the river on the west side of the town. These suburbs were occupied by the weavers (khatris) and Dyzrs (Chhipas) potters-kumbhara leather-workers (such as Chamars an Dubgar) Golwad, Vaghrivad and various shudra classes (Their duty was to dispose the waste garbages from the pratolis) and its Chhindis.

During 16-17\textsuperscript{th} century AD Ahmedabad reached to the peak of prosperity due to the increase in the industries and trade regard to its main
industries. Mirat-I-Ahmedi describes that Ahmedabad was a famous centre of textile industry which included cotton, silk (with golden or silver thread) kinkhab, malmal etc. Moreover, it was Asia's largest money-transaction centre. Interestingly there was a Mint-House in the Bhadra area and golden coins with different zodiac signs were issued during the regime of Jahangir.

Regarding the planning of Ahmedabad it may be pointed out that first the royal campus was constructed called 'Bhadra'. Generally as per the Indian tradition there should be a temple (religious structure) in the nucleus area of the town. And here there was a Jami mosque (instead of a temple) built prior to the gate of Bhadra (royal enclosure) and its royal courtiers, commander-in-chief and other officers lived in southern area of the fort (Raikhad area). Its northern and eastern area was resided by the professionals and service men.

The Bhadra (royal enclosure), Jami mosque as nucleus, fort with several gates, roads and palace. The river Sabarmati—more or less follow the townscape tradition prescribed in the Aparajitaprcchha. Its growth in the subsequent centuries gave it the shape of a bow (Dhanu). Such a bow-shaped town has been described in various scriptures prevalent in western India as Karmukha type of nagar, But considering its status as the place of royal throne, Asia's largest centre of money transaction and prominent centre of mercantile activities and industries-situated on the bank of river Sabarmati. Karnavati-Ahmadabad can be named as Patan also. It is interesting to note that it inherited so many features of town planning from Anhilpur Patan.
Therefore perhaps several scholars have pointed out similarity between the townscape of Anhilpur Patan and (Karnavati) Ahmedabad. However, its Dhanu pattern of settlement and its radiating road-pattern meeting at nucleus point at Manek Chowk-Bhadra, is indicative of Karmuka-crescent form of town as referred to in various medieval texts on Vastusastra. (Figure: 48)
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5. ibid and see also Tirthabhasa Cattisi Pl.- 3, P. 874.

   see also Prabandhacintamani, P. 55 Dvayasraya -11, verse 111

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