

GOPAKAPATTAN : THE ANCIENT CITY OF GOA

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ABSTRACT

During the course of civilization human activities, villages, towns, ports and capitals are built. The names referring to Goa as Gomantak and Gomanchala appear in ancient religious texts like the Bhisnapava of the Mahabharat. The ancient city of Gopakattan located in Island of Tiswadi. Gopakattan was known by various names like Gove, Govapuri, Govapur, Gopakattan or simply Gopaka. Kadambas of Goa to shift their capital and harbour from Chandrapur to Gopakattan during the 11th century. Post-Mauran archaeological findings in Goa show the importance given by the Buddhism. The first direct rulers of Gopakattan were some Arab merchants and fleet owners. The Konkan Mauryan ruled North-Konkan before the Western Chalukyas uprooted them. Later Kadambas of Goa rulers ruled Goa under the feudatories of Chalukyas of Kalyan. During the reign of Jayakeshi 1st Gopakattan reached its zenith of Prosperity. It may be noted that important ancient villages frequently mentioned in Kadamba and Vijayanagar records. The merchant guilds in Gopakattan belonged mostly to the Jain Vanik Sanghas. The City must have had many markets near the port and close to the giant temple complex of Govesvara. Finally Gopakattan was burnt by Sinda King Acchugi in 1127 A.D. The Bahamanis annexed Goa in 1351-52 and demolished port town Gopakattan. Later Portugis captured Goa and made Capital.

Keywords : Gopakattan, Capital Of Kadambas of Goa, Ancient City, Trade Center, Vijayanagar.

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Introduction :

During the course of civilization, human activities alter the natural shape of land forms as communities, villages, towns, ports and capitals are built. Archaeology provides the important feedback to trace and delineate the areas of historical importance. Written records such as engravings, inscriptions, texts of the age-old local traditions could be relied upon to corroborate the geo-ecological, geo-morphological and comparative topographical evidences. An attempt has been made in this paper to demystify certain History, myths, legends, traditions and biased remarks related to that glorious city of Gopakapattana .

The names referring to Goa as ‘Gomanta’ and Gomanchala’ appear in ancient religious texts like the “Bhismaparva” of the Mahabharata. Goa was also known to Ptolemy and the author of the Periplus during the Post-Mauryan period. Goa on the West coast of India provides numerous shelter points for ships in Arabian sea. Mondovi and the Zuari must have played an important role in pre-history, proto-history and ancient history of Goa. This fact could be corroborated from a qualitative and quantitative study of the Neolithic sites, the sites of the Buddhist and the Brahmanic caves, ancient temples. And harbours. My paper focuses attention of the importance Gopakapattana the ancient city of Goa which located in Tiswadi Island. In South-Goa, which forced the Goa Kadambas to shift their capital and harbor from Chandrapur to Gopakapattana during the middle of the 11th century. The same processes were responsible again at the end of the fourteenth century, and the capital was transferred to Gopakapattana of present day Old Goa on the banks of the river Mandovi.

The Island of Tiswadi has an area of about 145 sq. kms. And formerly had 38 villages or Vadis. Most of these villages are located in and around the Siridao-Pilar lowlands, Chimbel, Panvel and Vanguinim hill-remges. A study of the ancient Gopakapattana specially the villages Siriodao, Bhati, Pillar and Goa-Velha was submerged during the prehistoric times.

History of Gopakapattana :

Island of Tiswadi must have been a sheltering place for ships involved in transcoastal trade, an embarking point for the Buddhist pilgrims, going to places as far flung as Simhala in Ancient times. The Post-Mauryan archaeological findings in Goa show the importance given by the Buddhist Bhikkus and probably the Buddhist vanik Sanghas and sarthavahas (Merchants) to

Goa. The Buddha idol found in the foundation of Mhamai kamat's majestic house in Panaji clearly point out the extent of the maritime activities. The 4th century Dated bronze-bust, presently exhibited in the state museum, Panaji. It is unfortunate that many archaeological objects like the bronze-buddha were discarded by the Portuguese while building the new-drainage system of the Adilshah's palace, the present day secretariat of Goa. Religious and trading settlements were combined during the Rashtrakuta period on the West-Coast of India. The first direct rulers of Gopakapattana were some Arab merchants. The Island of Tiswadi was developed first as a safe-harbour and exchange market for the hinterland trade by the Arab merchants who migrated from chaul near Bombay sometimes early in the 10th century.

There is no direct evidence of any ruler of the Island of Goa between the seventh and the tenth centuries A.D. The Konkan Mauryas ruled North-Konkan before the Western Chalukyas uprooted them. The Island of Cumbarjua is mentioned in a sixth century grant of the Konkan Mauryas as Kumaradvipa. The Bhojas gave donations of villages bordering the Island of goa in the fifth century. The first reference to the Island of Goa is 'Simhala' in the grants of the shilaharas of South Konkan who ruled from Valipattana or Balipatana modern Kharepatan near Vijayadurga, Ratnagiri. At the same time we find influential Arab merchants ruling from San-jan near Bombay. As the chiefs retained their command over the settlements. The Arabs however, were defeated by the settlements. The Arabs however, were defeated by the North and South Konkan Shilaharas by 970 A.D. and their settlements, mentioned hereafter as Hanjaman Nagaras were annexed by the victors.

Chimbel had a majestic temple of Goddess Bhagavati on the same model of Sanjan in North-Konkan. The worship of Goddess Bhagvati was popular during the Rashtrakuta rule. Traders, merchants, sailors and even the Arab governors offered respect to Goddess Bhagavati. Travellers were offered food and shelter in specially built Dharama Shalas and small bridges were built across the Creeks to facilitate communication. A similar tradition must have existed at Chimbel which has derived its name from Vemulaya the original town of Mahmud, first governor of Goa's Hanjaman Nagar. His son 'Chaddam' who loves god or doorkeeper (Pratihast) was a great help to Jayakeshi in developing Gopakapattana and building a powerful naval armada.

The Island of Tiswadi with the Hanjaman Nagara was occupied by the Goa Kadamba King, Shasthdeva I, in 1020-24 A.D. When Biravarmadev shifted the capital to Gopakapattana, the Island of Goa might have been entrusted to Chaddama who developed it to win the favors of Jayakeshi I in 1053-9 A.D. The time Jayakeshi I formed his capital in the Island of Tiswadi, Hanjaman Nagara might have transformed the whole island by its intense commercial activity. During the reign of Jayakeshi I Gopakapattana reached its zenith of prosperity due to the well-established cosmopolitan trading port, a powerful protective navy, a system of inland communications and development of the maritime trade. The boundaries of the capital proper extended from Agashi in the south to Karmali in the north, Pale-Talauli in the west, and Neura in the east. As gopakapattana had an import based economy the agrarian development show that the rulers and donors were contended with growing orchards of betel-nut trees. These orchards and gardens find frequent mention in the Kadamba and Vijayanagara copperplates.

Ancient topography of Gopakapattana was criss-crossed with creeks, rivulets, estuaries and channels, providing the means of inland communication. A study of surface geodynamics, river drainage pattern, stream frequency and orientation, etc. today helps to draw a clear picture of the communication system of Gopakapattana during the Kadamba and the Vijayanagara days from c. 1000 to c. 1400 A.D.

Ancient Roads Of Goa :

The great royal road (Rajavithi) or Rajpath extended from 'Elegrama' to the mercantile harbor of Gopakapattana situated near the mouth of the Siridao creek. A small section of this 8 km road still survives near Pilar. The port of Gopakapattana extended from the mouth of the Siridao river to Dandiwada at Agashi. This road after circumventing the Pillar hillock emerged behind the site of the Goveshwar temple and passed through the Ganci-Moula plateau and sloped down to Brahmapuri Ella. It may be noted that important ancient villages frequently mentioned in the Kadamba and the Vijayanagara records are situated close to this river. The Manchalapur agrahara, Bhattika grama and Talauli are notable examples.

Madhva's grant of 1391 A.D. mentions the construction of a dam across 'Manchala Samudra' and the permission to collect taxes from boats on four rivers near the Manchalapur agrahara. The four rivers could have been the tributaries of the once magnificent Gopakapattana(Siridao) river which bifurcates near Santana bridge. The normal courses of the four rivers joining the siridao river.

Trade Center Of Goa :

The ancient city of Gopakapattana was a cosmopolitan city. It had trade relations with Ceylon, Zanzibar, Kuwait, Muscat, Bengal, Gujarat, Saurashtra, and Kerala, to mention only a few. There was a flourishing trade in noble metals, textiles, spices, camphor, coconut, betel, perfumes, etc. Horses were probably imported from Arabia and the Persian Gulf. The overlords of the Kadamba, of the Kalyani chulukayas, must have encouraged their feudatories of Gopakapattana to develop the port as they needed strong horses for their cavalry just like their successive rulers in the Deccan. The town had industries like spinning, weaving, jewelry and carpentry. Ship-building dockyards must have occupied a large part of the city, as the Kadambas had to build, maintain and repair a large fleet and also render necessary services to the ships anchored at the port. Vanik Sanghas were established in the city to look after financial transactions. Taxes were collected on ships and merchandise.

The rich merchant guilds were centres of activity in the towns. Kalappa An amatya of Shasthadeva I was a rich merchant who founded the village Calapur or Kalappur. His grandson gandgopala Kelima established a Brahmpuri in 1107 and built a tank and a temple there. The merchant guilds in Gopakapattana belonged mostly to the Jain Vanik Sanghas. An elegant Jaine basadi was built by the vanik Sangha at Narve, divar Island, in 1150 A.D. as can be seen from the vestiges and the engraved Parsvanatha idol found at the Jaina-Kota at Narve and the recent excavations at Cudnem. There was a class of sailors and skilled navigators in Gopakapattana who might have helped the Kadambas to embark upon their long Voyhages to Somnath. A temple of Somnath did exist in Agacaim before the Inquisition.

The town of gopakapattana was not laid according to any plan. But the identification of certain landmarks shows that the Royal quarter was probably small. Its foundation has been

located near Posrebhat and Kuzmorayache Tolem. The army quarters were located near the Palem village and the palace must have been guarded by the Siridao river in the west, moats and walls in the north and the east. The tank called Kuzmorayach Tolem is the corruption of the word 'Kadamba rayache tole' (The tank of the Kadamba King). It could have formed a part of the ronal annexe.

The city must have had many markets near the port and close to the giant temple complex of Govesvara. The temple was modelled after the Mahadeva temple on the divar hillock and was situated on the Pilar hillock with a tank at the foot of the hill. Govesvara has been mentioned as the "presiding" deity of Gopakapattana in the grant of Shastha III (1250 A.D.) The temple proper of Goversvara was located on the highest point in the valley and the descriptions fits the location many vestiges were found by Fr. Henry Heras on the pilar hillock in the 1930's all belonging to the Govesvara temple. AS basalt lion sculpture, studied by Gritli Mitterwallner, has confirmed the potation of the location of the Govesvara Shet is still traceable.

The navy of the Kadambas was anchored at velakula harbor, now a khazan Inad, enclosed by two creeks at Neura to the east of the town on the bank of the zuari. This place is now called 'Velfaly' a corruption of the word, 'Vela Kula' where it is said that Jayakeshi I organized a strong fleet (1052, Gopaka plate). The village of Karmali was originally know as 'Kadambahalli' and it was famous for its market.

Education centres :

The Brahmapuri mentioned in the grant of Tribhuvanmalla (1107 A.D) cannot be identified precisely as the Brahmapuri was a big cultural complex with a temple of Saraswati, house for the Brahmins and a tank called as Ganda Gopala setu close by Some experts have identified Ella as site of the Brahmapuri, but the tank is missing there. This tank is probably the one near Bhatim.

The Agrahara of Manchalapur recoded in the grant of Madhavamantri (1391 A.D) has been located on the hill slope of the moula village. The boundaries and the village names in the grant also support this. A survey of the area revealed vestiges of basult stone pillars engraved in late Hoysala style. According to local traditions, several wells were excavated and bricks and

pottery pieces were found in paddy fields of the Moula village. Manchala samudra is identified with the Talauli lake and Madhav Tritha with a group of streams and fountains on the Moula hill where we see the remnants of a palace of the sunda kings belonging to late eighteenth century. An idol of Vishnu was found by the kings along with some gold coins which were reported to the Portuguese Governor. The Brahmपुरi of Ella, Madhava Tirtha and the Manchallapura Agrahara with its Brahmपुरi formed a religious, social complex of about 5 Sq. kms on the plateau of Moula and the hills of Ella till late fifteenth century.

Ancient Temples :

Several sites ancient temples in and around Gopakapattana have been located⁴⁰. The tank at pale- Siridao belong to an ancient Ganesh temple. A 'Simhamukha' style 'tirthadwara' (water conduit) of the 12th century was noticed at the newly constructed santeri temple. Granite and basalt slabs belonging to an ancient temple were noticed in the Siridao Church foundation and an ancient Mukhaling of Shiva was located at the entrance wall of the siridao cemetery. A Brahmanic cave with laterite steps was found on the sea side near the Nazareth Chapel, Siridao which was constructed over a Shiva temple. There were three temples of Brahmadeva in Gopakapattana, one at Karmali and others at Murda (Merces) and Bhati. Besides, the Murthinarayana temple of Bhati was located near the present church. The Bindhumadhava temple was situated in Ambete or the Amrvat part of the Neura village. Only the temple of Somnath in Gopakattana was located in Agashi. The Brahmadeva and the Saptamatrika idols were brought during the Chalukya period and those of Mahalaxmi and Bhagwati during the Shilahara regime. The Ravalnath and the santeri or Bhaukadevi worship in the island of Tiswadi shows the influence of the Shakta and the Goddess in Gopakapattana. The influence of the Shakta and the Natha sects, is felt by the presence of the number deities of these sects like Bhavnath, Bhannath, Bhairava and Betu which were worshipped at the ancient temples of Gopakapattana. Some of these might have been destroyed by the Bahmanis.

The ancient village names of Gopakapattana can be easily identified, Gopaka = Goa velha or 'vodle Goem'. Through the centuries Gopakapattana was known by various names like Gove, Govapuri Gokapattana or simply Gopaka. The ancient place names are a curious mixture

of traditional folk Sanskrit, Kannada and Arabic names. An etymological analysis of the place-names of the Gopakapattana region shows the impact of the Kannada language due to the Kadamba rule. The village names of Gowali Mowali, Khadga or Gurca, Manini or Maina, Bhattika or Bhatti Talvali or Talauli occur in the Manchalapur grant of 1391 A.D. Panjanikhalli or Panaji was an important trading post. The word might have had its roots in the two Sanskrit words 'Panja' meaning a small boat and 'Khali' meaning a canal. Both these descriptions fit ancient Panaji which was a submerged area, with narrow passes, canals and creeks.

The village Muddakal, Ranva, and Madiyagombu occur in an inscription of 1380 A.D. These were not identified in Goa. In my opinion Muddakal is the village of Murda (Merces) which is close to Ranvadi (Ranva). A missing link in the history of Gopakapattana is thus established. We see that a commander of Vijayanagara Timmanayaka, was stationed at Murda and that he died battle to defend Gopakapattana in 1380. The influence of Vijayanagar is seen in the village name Raibandar, meaning a 'Port' of the king'. This might have been established during the Vijayanagara rule over Goa to facilitate the import of horses from Arabia. Formerly it was a part of Panvel and Chimble.

According to records Gopakapattana was burnt by Sinda king Achugi in 1127 A.D. Danda Nayaka Chandugideva ravaged it in 1181 A.D. on the order of Kalachuri king Ahavamalla. Malik Kafur on his way to the South probably plundered it in 1313 A.D. and the Kadambas' latter capital was also destroyed in 1327 A.D. the Kadambas again shifted to Gopakapattana which had lost its glory. In 1342 the Nawab of Honawar, Jamaluddin, attacked the town with 52 ships. He captured the palace and destroyed it. The Bahamani annexed Goa in 1351-52 and the notorious iconoclasts Hasan Gangu and Mahmudshah demolished the port town of Gopakapattana. A circular stone inscription in Sanskrit-Kannada poetic style has been found at Kalapur which dates back to the period of Harihara II (1378-1403 A.D.). The destruction of Gopakapattana in the fourteenth century, the defeat of the Goa Kadambas, and the Arab domination of the maritime trade reduced the importance of this capital. A new port and township was carved out by Yusuf Adilshah to form the nucleus of old Goa, the fourth capital in the history of Goa finally Goa captured by Portuguese. It has been immortalized by the 'Sutasam ita' and the 'Sahyadri Khada' of the Skandapurana. Gopakapattana remains today a glorious chapter of the history of Goa which attracted by researchers and investigators around the world.

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