

FYZABAD :A GAZETTEER BEING VOLUME XL III
OF THE DISTRICT GAZETTEERS OF THE UNIED PROVINCES
OF AGRA AND OUDH
BY
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PREFACE

The articles dealing with the district of Fyzabad and its various subdivisions, towns and village in the old Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh, were taken almost wholly from the valuable and diffuse Settlement Report of Mr. A.F. Millett, which embodied a large proportion of the remarkable notes and reports of Mr. Patrick Carnegy and the late Sir John Woodburn. These contained much that is now obsolete and still more of a purely traditional and speculative character. In compiling the present volume I have found this work of great assistance, but I am far more deeply indebted to Mr. J.W. Hose, I.C.S., for the unsparing labour he has devoted to the collection of fresh material and to his valuable corrections and criticisms, The ancient history of the district has been furnished by Mr. R. Burn, I.C.S., and the rest I have collated from the various available sources.

ALLAHABAD:

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H.R.N.

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AHRAULI, *Pargana* MAJHAURA, *Tahsil* AKBARPUR.

A small village lying in latitude 26° 31' north and longitude 82° 35' east, on the west side of the road from Fyzabad to Akbarpur and Janunpur, at a distance of about two miles west of the Katahrystation on the Oudh and Rohilkhand loop line, five miles south-east of Goshainganj, and some nine miles north-west from Akbarpur. To the south of the village runs the Marhariver. The place is merely of importance as containing a police-station, a cattle-pound, and a small bazar in which markets are held twice a week. The population at the last census numbered but 233 inhabitants, the majority of whom were Brahmans. Ahrauli has a total area of 182 acres and is assessed to a revenue of Rs.75. The village lands are divided into three portions, two of which are held by the Saiyidtaludars of Pirpur and the third by a resident Rajput.

AJODHYA, *Pargana* HAVELI OUDH, *Tahsil* FYZABAD

The ancient city of Ajodhya stands on the right bank of the ghagra, or Sarju as it is called within the sacred precincts, in latitude 26° 48' north and longitude 82° 13' east, at a distance of some four miles north-east from the city of Fyzabad, with which it is connected by a metalled road. Parallel to the latter runs the branch line of railway to Ajodhyaghat on the river bank, leaving the main line at Ranupali. The Ajodhya station lies about a mile and a half to the south of the town, to which it has access by a metalled road. A similar road runs south from the centre of the town to join the Jaunpur road at Darshannagar. Besides these there are several other branch and cross roads giving access to all parts of the place. The river is crossed by a bridge of boats at Ajodhyaghat, leased to the Bengal and North-Western Railway; in the rains its place is taken by a ferry steamer.

Ajodhya is united with Fyzabad to form a single municipality, and the details of its administration will be found in the article on the district headquarters. The first enumeration of its inhabitants took place at the Oudh census of 1869, and it contained a population of 9,949 souls. Since that time the place has rapidly increased in size. By 1881 the total had risen to 11,643, but has since almost doubled. There are no figures extant to show the number of inhabitants in 1891, as the town was already merged in the Fyzabadmunicipality; but at the last census of 1901 it contained 21,584 souls exclusive of the large number of visitors from the district and elsewhere who had come to attend the great fair on the 2^d of March. They lived in 6,471 houses, of which 2,920 were of brick or of masonry. Watch and ward is maintained by a force of 40 municipal police, located in four *chaukis*. There is also a regular police-station, a post and telegraph office, a cattle-pound, and a number of schools. These include a vernacular middle school under the district board, and ten Sanskrit *patshalas* under private management, several of them maintained by the temple foundations. There is also a first class hospital given to the town by Rai Sri Ram Bahadur of Rasulpur and called by his name.

Ajodhya is undoubtedly a place of immense antiquity, but its early history is very obscure. The city is intimately connected with the mass of legend referring to Ram Chandra and the solar race, and was certainly the capital of several reigning dynasties. What is known for certain of its history in ancient times has already been recorded in the opening pages of

Chapter V. From the seventh century A.D. For a long period the place appears to have been almost deserted, though it rose again in importance under the Musalmans, who made it the seat of government for a large province. That it was still regarded as a holy spot by the Hindus is clear from the fact of its desecration by Babar and Aurangzeb, but it would appear that the presence of a Muhammadan governor and his court kept the Hindu shrines continually in the background. Ajodhya was a mint-town of Akbar and also of Muhammad Shah, some *dams* of the latter being inscribed "AkhtarnagarAwadh." It is not clear when Ajodhya first began to assume its present proportions: the change presumably occurred when the capital was removed to the new city of Fyzabad and the Qila Mubarak or fort of Saadat Khan near Lachhmangaht was abandoned for his country residence at "Bangla." With the departure of the court the Hindus were left to themselves, and numerous temples and monasteries sprang into existence. Probably the rise in importance was in some degree due to the growing popularity of the Ramayan of Tulsi Das. The progress has been even more rapid since annexation; but before the middle of the nineteenth century Ajodhya was regarded as a great and even dangerous stronghold of Hinduism, as the constant fights between the rival creeds and the alarm they occasioned in court circles bear witness. This development was not due to any particular person. The great family of Sakaldipi Brahmans, whose representative bears the recent title of Maharaja of Ajodhya, had but little to do with the place, and the fine palace of the Maharaja in the east of the city and its adjoining temples are of very recent origin.

Ajodhya is pre-eminently a city of temples and apart from these there are but few points of interest in the place. Not all of these places of worship are connected with the Hindu religion. There are six Jain shrines which have been already mentioned in Chapter III in connection with Jainism in this district; and there are also the Musalman mosques and tombs. It is locally affirmed that at the time of the Musalman conquest there were three important Hindu shrines at Ajodhya and little else. These were the Janamasthan temple, the Swargaddwar, and the Treta-ka-Thakur, and each was successively made the object of attention of different Musalman rulers. The Janamasthan was in Ramkot and marked the birthplace of Rama. In

1528 A.D. Babar came to Ajodhya and halted here for a week. He distorted the ancient temple and on its site built a mosque, still known as Babar's mosque. The materials of the old structure were largely employed, and many of the columns are in good preservation; they are of close-grained blackstone, called by the natives *kasauti*, and carved with various devices. Their length is from seven to eight feet, and the shape square at the base, centre and capital, the rest being round or octagonal. The mosque has two inscriptions, one on the outside and the other on the pulpit; both are in Persian and bear the date 935 Hijri. Of the authenticity of the inscription there can be no doubt, but no record of the visit of Ajodhya is to be found in the Musalman historians. It must have occurred about the time of his expedition to Bihar.

This desecration of the most sacred spot in the city caused great bitterness between Hindus and Musalmans. On many occasions the feeling led to bloodshed, and in 1855 an open fight occurred, the Musalmans occupying the Janamasthan in force and thence making a desperate assault on the Hanuman Garhi. They charged up the steps of the temple, but were driven back with considerable loss. The Hindus then made a counter-attack and stormed the Janamasthan, at the gate of which seventy-five Musalmans were buried, the spot being known as the Ganj Shahidan or the martyrs' resting-place. Several of the king's regiments were present, but their orders were not to interfere. Shortly afterwards Maulvi Amir Ali of Amethi in Lucknow organized regular expedition with the object of destroying the Hanuman Garhi; but he and his forces were stopped in the Bara Banki district. It is said that up to this time both Hindus and Musalmans used to worship in the same building; but since the mutiny an outer enclosure has been put up in front of the mosque and the Hindus, who are forbidden access to the inner yard, make their offerings on a platform which they have raised in the outer one.

The other mosques were built by Aurangzeb and are now in ruins. That on the Swargaddwar replaced an ancient temple which has never been restored. The Treta-ka-Thakur marked the place where Ram performed a great sacrifice and set up images of himself and Sita. This was reproduced by the Raja of Kulu in the Punjab more than two centuries ago; it was improved by Ahalya Bai, the widow of Jaswant Rai Holkar of Indore in 1784, and the same *person* built the adjoining ghat. As the temple could not commemorate her name, she built another called after herself and gave an

annual assignment of Rs.23 1 to it, the sum being still paid by the ruler of Indore. The ancient images were said to have been recovered from the river where they had been thrown by Aurangzeb, and were placed in the new Treta-ka Mandir. This temple is always closed during the day and is only opened at night on the 11th of the dark and light halves of each month, and for two or three nights on the occasion of the Ramnaumi and Kaki fairs. The temple is endowed with two or three villages in Basti. Purchased from the offerings made at the shrine.

Near the Mani Parbt are two tombs which are venerated as those of the patriarchs Seth and Tob. They are mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* as being of six and seven yards in length respectively. They are again spoken of in the *Araish-i-Mahfil*. To these Colonel Wilford adds that of Noah, which is still shown near the police-station. The story goes that they fell here fighting the Hindus and thus acquired the rank of martyrs; possibly there is some truth in the story, as it may be that certain Musalmans bearing these names were killed in one of the frequent religious conflicts some four centuries ago, the date which Colonel Wilford assigns to the erections. Other shrines held sacred by Musalmans include that of Shah Juran Ghori, who is said to have come with Shahab-ud-din and destroyed the Jain temple of Adinath in Murao tola near the Swargaddwar, giving his name to the mound on which his tomb stands; the shrine of Naurahni Khurd Makka, one of the earliest Musalman immigrants and a renowned saint, said to have been named Mir Ahmad and to have derived his cognomen from Naurahni whence he came, and from the muhalla of Ajodhya in which his tomb stands; that of Khwaja Hathi, a follower of Babar, whose enshrined tomb on the Kabir Tila, one of the chief bastions of Ramkot, is still revered; and that of Makhdum Shaikh Bhikha, a western devotee, who flourished some 200 years ago and was buried to the east of the city. The shrines of Shah Saman Fariad-ras and of Shah Chup are other relics of Muhammadan antiquity, of which all traditions are lost.

The only remaining institutions of Muslaman origin are the Hayat Bakhsh and the Farhat Bakhsh, formerly royal gardens which have now passed into Hindu hands. The former was assigned to Pandit Uma Datt by the British Government, and the latter is partly owned by the Raja of Jaipur and partly by the Digambarifaqirs to whom it was made over in part compensation for the Guptar Park in cantonments.

The Hindu temples are all intimately connected with the history of Ajodhya. Most of them are of comparatively recent origin, as it would appear that almost all the ancient shrines were destroyed by Aurangzeb and other Musalman zealots. The sacred places of Ajodhya are exceedingly numerous. The spot according to Hindu mythology represents the forehead of Vishnu and is the seat of learning and the chief of the seven *tirths*. It is undoubtedly the most important centre of Vishnu worship in Oudh, if not in the whole of Upper India, and claims precedence over Muttra and Hardwar. It is only natural, therefore, that the sacred places connected with Vishnu in his various incarnations and especially that of Ram Chandra, the best known of all, should be many in number and should extend beyond the immediate precincts of the city, even as far as Bhadarsa and Bilharaghat. In 1902 a local committee was formed with the object of commemorating the coronation of His Imperial Majesty King Edward VII, and a sum of over Rs.1,000 was collected and expended on the erection of stone pillars marking the sacred spots in Ajodhya and its neighbourhood. This work has been carried out and no fewer than 145 such stones have been erected; their ostensible purpose being to preserve the memory of the various holy spots and to serve as a guide to pilgrims and others interested in the place. A complete enumeration would be useless without some descriptive and historical account of each, and only the more important need be here mentioned.

The chief place of worship in Ajodhya is the ancient citadel of Ramkot which stood on elevated ground in the western portion of the city. The old ramparts have long disappeared, but the mound remains, and on it sat and a number of large temples. Foremost among these is the Hanuman Garhi, massive structure in the shape of a four-sided fort with circular bastions at each angle. Above this on the hill to the west stood the Janamasthan or birthplace of Rama, and close by are the KanakBhawan, a very fine building erected by the Rani of Tikamgarh or Orchha; the SitaRasoi or Sita's kitchen; the Bara Asthan, the headquarters of a fraternity called the Bara Akhara; the RatanSinghasan marking the place where Rama was installed after his return from exile; the Rank Mahal, AnandBhawan, KaushaliaBhawan or JanamBhumi, and the temple of Amar Das, as well as many smaller temples and shrines.

From the Hanuman Garhi the main road leads north to the river, passing, the Bhur and Shisha Mahal temples on the left, and on the right those of Krisna, Uma Datt, and Tulsi Das. Along the river to the west of the road are the bathing ghats and above them a number of temples, the most important places being the Swargaddwar, the JankiTirath, the ancient Nageshwarnath temple of Mahadeo, the Chandra Hari, Lachhmanghat or Sahasradhara, and the LachhmanQila, on the site of the old Nawabi fort known as the Qila Mubarak. East of the road along the river bank are many more temples and holy places extending as far as Ramghat, near which is a cluster of shrines of more or less importance. Mention may be made of the SugrivaKund, the DharamHari, the temple built by the Babu of Sursur in Muzaffarpur, the Mani Ram Chhaoni and Maharaja's marble temple a little north of the *kotwali*.

Beyond the Maharaja's palace and the Rani Bazar to the south, in the direction of Darshannagar, is the peculiar mound know as the Mani Parbat. This stands some sixty-five feet high and is undoubtedly of artificial origin, possibly representing the remains of a Buddhist stupa. One legend, however, states that when Hanuman was sent back from Ceylon to the Himalayas to bring thence a healing herb for Lachhman's wound, he brought with him a whole mountain in order to makd certain of the errand, and a portion of this broke off and fell in Ajodhya. A second account, which is the locally accepted tradition, states that the mound was made by Rama's labourers who, when returning home in the evening, cleaned their baskets at this spot; hence the name Orajhar or basket shakings. To the south-east of Ramakot are two smaller mounds, one of which is known as the Sugriva Parbat; and these, too, were supposed by General Cunningham to be of Buddhist origin.
