

CHAPTER XIX

PLACES OF INTEREST

Bahadurgarh (tahsil Jhajjar)

The town is situated in 28° 41' north latitude and 76° 56' east longitude, 18 miles west of Delhi on the Delhi-Rohtak road. According to the census of 1961, it had a population of 14,982.

The town settled by Rathi Jats was formerly known as Sharafabad. In A.D. 1755, it was given in jagir with 25 other villages by Alamgir II, the Mughal Emperor, to two Baluches of Farrukhnagar, namely, Bahadur Khan and Taj Muhammad who built a fort and called it Bahadurgarh. After they had ruled over it for 40 years, their nephew succeeded them. The jagir was taken over by Sindhia in 1793, but not for long because in 1803 the British forces under Lord Lake defeated Sindhia and bestowed the town and its dependent villages upon Mohammad Ismael Khan, brother of the Jhajjar Nawab. Ismael Khan's family retained this estate till 1857 when it was confiscated after the Uprising of 1857 because the Nawab had sent an offering to the Emperor of Delhi and had also addressed him a letter of praise. The estate became part of the Rohtak district in 1860.

The places of historical note in this town are the tank of Bhagwan Dass, the temple of Murli Manohar, the *Naqar Khana*, the Mahalsarai (now in ruins) and the Qila Mohalla.¹

The tank of Bhagwan Dass with underground cells was constructed in 1865. It has separate ghats for men, women and cattle. The tank is scientifically built and its surplus water is removed through a channel to a *kachcha* pond nearby. The *samadhis* of the builder and his son are located on the same site. A temple dedicated to Devi is situated near the tank.

The temple of Murli Manohar contains five feet high idols of Radha and Krishna. It is said that these were being taken to

1. A few old residents of the town also speak of a tank called Kanchan Johar on which site now stands a house. According to one version, the tank was named after a singer mistress of the Nawab of Bahadurgarh. The other version ascribes the name to its staircases built of glass.



Idol of Parsapanath recovered from Khokrakot, Ashtal Bohar



Idol of Jain Deity (male) recovered from Khokrakot, Aithal Bohar



Idol of Jain Deity (female) recovered from Khokrakot, Aithal Bohar

some other place. While passing through Bahadurgarh, the bulls carrying the idols stopped because the load became too heavy to carry any further. This [was] brought to the notice of the Nawab, who ordered a temple to be built to house the idols.

The *Nagar Khana* was the main gate of the palace of the Nawab. A Kettle-drum (*naqara*) was placed at the entrance. The residential houses of the Nawab as well as a mosque called Jama Masjid were situated within the Qila Mohalla which was once bounded on all sides by walls and gates.

The places of public utility in Bahadurgarh include a P.W.D. rest house, post and telegraph office, telephone exchange, Kamla Nehru Municipal hospital, Employees' State Insurance dispensary, maternity and child welfare centre, veterinary hospital, Government girls J.B.T. centre, Government industrial school for girls and 4 high/higher secondary schools (2 for boys and 2 for girls).

Bohar or Asthal Bohar (tahsil Rohtak)

Bohar is situated in 28° 50' north latitude and 76° 36' east longitude, four miles to the east of Rohtak. It is a comparatively large village with a population of 7,825.

The village is known for its *math* (a monastery of *Kanphatta Jogis*)¹ and ancient finds of large and sculptured bricks, sculptured stone idols and some stone images found at Khokrakot. The discovery of idols of Parsvanath and male and female Jain dieties indicate that this area was under Jain influence in ancient times.

According to a legend, Pooran Bhagat son of Salbahan of Sialkot, known in Haryana as Chowrangi Nath, the disciple of Guru Gorakh Nath, came here and founded this place. The establishment of the *math* is also ascribed to him and to the same period. After being neglected for centuries, the *math* was revived in 1791 or so when Bawa Mastnath came here. Dhuin Chowrangi Nath and Kala Mahal are old buildings attached to the *math*.

The places of public utility include a post office, Shri Mastnath Ayurvedic degree college and a free hospital.

1. They claim to be spiritual descendants of Buddha's earliest *Bhikshus*. They represent Nath cult which originated as one of the branches of the Mahayana form of Buddhism. Guru Gorakh Nath is believed to be its founder.

Dujana (tahsil Jhajjar)

It lies 37 miles west of Delhi, in 28° 41' north latitude and 76° 37' east longitude. The population of the place according to the 1961 Census was 3,939.

The place is named after Durjan Shah, an ascetic who built a hut, on the present site of the village which was at that time a jungle. Subsequently, one Mohammed Khan alias Malik Jutta who had quarrelled with his brother Malik Bahram of Jhajjar, settled at this place with the permission of Durjan Shah. He reclaimed and cultivated the jungle and the population rapidly increased with the influx of other settlers.

The place was the seat of Dujana State till 1949 when it was merged with the adjoining district of Rohtak.¹ The palaces of Nawab Khurshid Ali Khan and a mosque may be counted as places of minor historical importance. Khurshid Palace or Zanana Mahal, one of the palaces, now houses the Government Janta College.

The places of public utility include a post and telegraph office, civil rest house, the Government Janta college (a J. B. T. institution), a civil dispensary and a high school for boys.

Gohana (tahsil Gohana)

It is the headquarters of the tahsil of the same name. It is situated in 29° 08' north latitude and 76° 42' east longitude, near the northern extremity of a great natural depression, extending about 50 miles southwards. It had a population of 11,076 according to the 1961 Census.

The ancient texts² mention Gavambhavana, as a place of pilgrimage which may probably refer to present day Gohana, but this matter cannot be pursued with any certainty. There are two popular versions for the origin of the name of the town. First, Gohana is composed of two words, *gao* and *hani*, the former meaning 'cow' and the latter 'loss'. It is however difficult to ascribe such a loss if it occurred, to any definitely known cause. The second version is that

1. Lord Lake was not in favour of holding territories beyond the Yamuna. After the treaty of Surji Arjungaon in 1803, Abd-us Samad Khan who was a *risaldar* was granted Dujana territories for his good services to Lord Lake. He refused the grant as being unwieldy but retained Dujana in 1811.

2. *Mahabharata, Vanu Parva* (Poona Ed), Ch. 81, V. 40.

Gohana is composed of two words, *gao* and *dahana*, the latter meaning a small water course in local dialect. The cows of Taga Brahmans occupying Daryapur used to sit at the *pal* (mound) where present Gohana is situated and hence the name. The latter version appears to be more convincing.

A story is current about the original settlement. It is said that it was the site of a fort of Prithviraja Chahamana (Chauhan), ruler of Delhi and was called Daryapur, after one of his chiefs. This fort was destroyed by Shihab-ud-din Muhammad Ghuri who defeated Prithviraja. Later it was occupied by Taga Brahmans. A tank known as Rohta or Rohtas Jhil with its natural spring attracted the attention of the neighbouring chiefs. Two Rajputs, Tej Singh and Fateh Singh with the help of two traders of Butana, Dhamar Mal and Pheru Mal exterminated the Brahmans and occupied the place. Later, this place drew the attention of the Muslim rulers of Delhi, who captured these two Rajputs. One of them accepted Islam. The other refused to do so and was ordered to be executed. One of the two traders Dhamar Mal managed to survive by putting his family priest in his place. The other, Pheru Mal at first accepted Islam but later renounced the world and died as a recluse. Known popularly as Baba Pheru after his forced conversion to Islam, he lived as an ascetic in order to check further propagation of the religion. It is said that the tomb of Baba Pheru existed till recently on the village *shamlat* (common). This story is mentioned in the district record of 1861 which speaks of the town owing its existence to a Rajput named Tej Singh and a Bania named Pheru. Both of these were forcibly converted to Islam in A.D. 1238 and 1239 respectively, and allowed to settle at Gohana, which, at that time was an enclosed common used for keeping cattle and known by the name of Gow Dhana, later corrupted into Gohana.

When Ali Mardan Khan constructed the Western Jumna (Yamuna) Canal it was discovered that in consequence of an error, the water of the canal could not flow beyond Gohana. The resulting floods swept away the embankments. The floods inundated the country and destroyed Lalpoora, a town of considerable fame, the ruins of which may still be seen.

Gohana has four gates; Rohtak gate, Delhi gate, Panipat gate and Hissar gate. The town has three Jain temples.

The places of public utility include a post and telegraph office, telephone exchange, canal rest house, primary health centre, veterinary

hospital, Haryana War Heroes' Memorial college, Samaj Kalyan Sabha industrial school for girls, 4 high schools (3 for boys and 1 for girls).

Husaingunj alias Jahazgarh (tahsil Jhajjar)

It is situated in 28° 38' north latitude and 76° 34' east longitude. The population of the village according to the 1961 Census was 2,256.

George Thomas built a fort at a distance of five miles from Jhajjar to overawe the towns of Jhajjar and Beri, and named it after him as Georgegarh. Later this name seems to have been corrupted to Jahazgarh. The walls of the fort and the ruins of its *burj* (tower) can still be seen. Later the fort came into the possession of the Nawab of Jhajjar and he called it Husaingunj.

The places of public utility include a post office, *panchayat samiti* rest house, veterinary hospital, and a higher secondary school for boys.

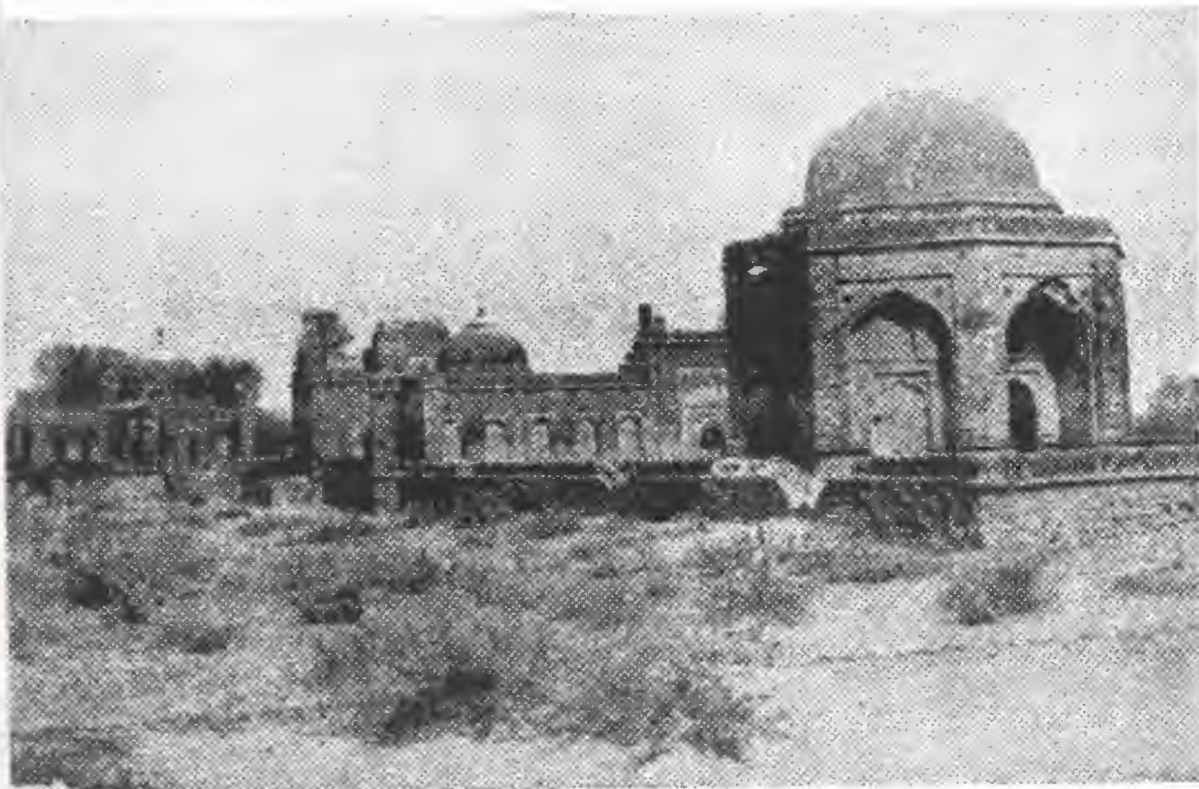
Jhajjar (tahsil Jhajjar)

It is the headquarters of the tahsil of the same name. It is situated in 28° 37' north latitude and 76° 40' east longitude. It is 21 miles south of Rohtak and 35 miles west of Delhi. The population of the town according to the 1961 Census was 14,234.

The name of the town is said to be derived from its supposed founder, one Chaju, and Chajunagar became corrupted into Jhajjar. Another derivation connects the name with a natural fountain called Jhar Naghar. A third derivation is from *Jhajar*, a water vessel, because the surface drainage of the country for miles around runs into the town as into a sink.

The history of Jhajjar is involved in obscurity. Tradition says that the town was first destroyed by the Ghuris. The old site is 2½ miles south of the town and was called Bhagulan. It existed in the times of Firuz Shah Tughluq who had a canal dug from the Satluj to Jhajjar. The place came into some historical eminence when its Nawab, Abdul Rehman Khan defied the authority of the British and took part in the Uprising of 1857.

The places of antiquity in the town include the tomb and tank of Shah Ghazi Kamal and a group of seven large tombs of local celebrities. The tomb of Shah Ghazi Kamal is in the north of the



A group of seven tombs at Jhajjar



Maham Baoli

town. Shah Ghazi Kamal is supposed to have fought against Prithvi Raj and his head was cut off in the encounter. Besides the tomb, there is a tank with a large ghat of 17 steps flanked by 2 octagonal towers on its western side. In the southern tower, there is an inscription which records that Durgah Mull made the tank in A.D. 1626. North and west of the tank are a mosque, a *baradari* (a summer house with several indoors), and a wall. All of these are now in ruins.

The group of seven tombs is in the eastern part of the town on the Delhi road. This elegant group of tombs presents an imposing appearance. Some of these have a mosque and an *idgah* around them; others have cupolas supported on pillars and still others have heavy domes supported on walls. The men buried here were local celebrities. Besides, there are tombs of minor importance which include the tombs of Ghaiti Pir, Zahar Pir and Naugaza. A mosque, a resting place, a well and a tank surround the tomb of Naugaza.

The places of public utility in this town include a post and telegraph office, telephone exchange, civil rest house, civil dispensary, maternity and child welfare centre, a *gurukul* which has an archaeological museum attached to it, Nehru college, industrial training centre and 2 high/higher secondary schools (1 for boys and 1 for girls).

Maham (tahsil Gohana)

The town is situated in 28° 58' north latitude and 76° 18' east longitude. 20 miles west of Rohtak on Rohtak-Hissar road. According to the census of 1961, it had a population of 9,300.

Tradition assigns the settlement of the town to the Mahabharata period when it was the site of a big fort. Later, it is said to have been re-founded by Rai Ballu, a Powar Rajput, before the reign of Prithviraja Chauhan. It is said to have been destroyed by Muhammad Ghuri. But this place of antiquity is not historically recorded before the reign of Akbar when he gave it in jagir to Shahbaz Khan, an Afghan. The place flourished under the Afghans until it was snatched away by the Rajputs under Durga Dass in the reign of Aurangzeb.

Ancient monuments in the town include a *bain* or *baoli* (well with steps leading to it) and two mosques, the Jama Masjid and the Pirzada Masjid. The *baoli* is towards the south of the town with

broad flights of 101 steps leading down to the water. It has suites of rooms near the well. An inscription on a marble slab records the fact that it was made by Sidu, a Chobdar in A.D. 1656-57. It is built of *kankar* (gravel) and sand stone. It is, however, not the oldest *baoli* of the town, having been built to replace another one which had fallen into disuse due to a change in the alignment of the Delhi-Hissar road. The old *baoli* is in the east of the town and is in ruins.

The Jama Masjid is situated in the middle of the town. The mosque was erected in A.D. 1531, in Humayun's time as seen from the inscription under the pulpit stairs. Outside, over the south arch is another inscription of the time of Aurangzeb, A.D. 1667-68, stating that the mosque was built by Khwaja Rahmat Ullah by order of the Emperor in the tenth year of his reign. But there are two Arabic inscriptions, which tend to show that a mosque existed here even before the reign of Humayun.

The Pirzada Masjid is towards the south of the Jama Masjid. It is a small mosque and one of the inscriptions tells us that it was built in the reign of Babar by Shaikh Yusuf of Hissar.

The places of public utility in this town include a post and telegraph office, P.W.D. rest house, civil dispensary, maternity and child welfare centre, veterinary hospital and a high school for boys.

Rohtak (tahsil Rohtak)

Rohtak is the headquarters of the Rohtak tahsil and Rohtak district. It is situated in 28° 54' north latitude and 76° 35' east longitude, on the Delhi-Ferozepur railway line, 44 miles north-west of Delhi and 150 miles south of Chandigarh. The population of the town according to the 1961 Census was 88,193.

It is identified with Rohitaka, mentioned in the *Mahabharata*. It was quite possibly the capital of Bahudhanyaka¹ the kingdom of the Yaudheyas. In the *Vinaya* the of Mulasarvastivadins Jivaka is represented as taking journey from Taxila in the north-west to Bhadramkara, Udumbara, Rohitaka and Mathura in the Ganga Doab. The ancient highway carried the trade of the Ganga valley to Taxila passing through Rohitaka to Sakala.²

1. The land of plenty, of whose Rohtak was a part.

2. Quoted in Motichandra's, *Geographical and Economic Studies in the Mahabharata: The Upayana Parva*, pp. 88-89.



Khokrakot



(Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi)

Kushana 'Pillar Capital' decorated with carving of winged lions in a seated pose, facing opposite directions and a couple riding them, recovered recently from Khokrakot (Rohtak)



Dini Mosque, Rohtak



Guokara Tank, Rohtak

The ruins of the ancient town are found at Khokrakot or Rohtasgarh,¹ a mound near the present town. Sahni holds that the town is probably as old as the Indus Valley Civilization sites.² Minor finds at Khokrakot are typical of the Indus Valley sites. Clay moulds of coins discovered here have thrown important light on the process of casting coins in ancient India. The existence of the town during the rule of the Kushanas is testified by the recent recovery of a Kushana Pillar Capital decorated with carving of winged lions and riders. The Pillar Capital represents the sculptor's excellence in his professional skill. An example of a lion capital of the first-second century A.D., it resembles the lion capital in the British museum at London, famous for its inscriptions. The riders on it are similar to the riders on elephants at Karle Cave and figures at Sanchi Gateway. It is a significant example of the sculptural art of Haryana towards the beginning of the Christian era.

The coin-moulds of the later Yaudheyas of the third-fourth centuries A.D. have been discovered in large numbers here. Of the same and subsequent dates are several clay sealings. A Gupta terracotta plaque and a head of a later date have also been discovered. The town continued to flourish till the tenth century A.D., as coins of Samantapala, the Hindu king of Kabul have been found here.

The town is said to have been rebuilt in the time of Prithviraja. In 1828, General Mundy speaks of "the ancient and consequently ruinous town of Rohtak. The wide circuit of its dilapidated fortifications and the still elegant domes of many new-worn tanks tell melancholy tales of gone-by grandeurs." At one time, the town had a wall all around with gates. Only three gates can now be seen and these too are in a dilapidated condition. The town has a number of old mosques, some of which remind us of Muslim elegant structures. Dini Mosque or Adina Masjid is the best among these. At the north end of this mosque is a *khana* (cell). Over its *mihrab* (arch) is an inscription of the time of Ala-ud-din Khalji, A.D. 1308.

There is an old and mythical tank with ghats on three sides known as Gaokarn tank. Its complex of structures includes Siva, Devi and Hanuman temples in addition to a dharmshala and a park.

1. Rohtak is said to be a corruption of Rohtasgarh, named after Raja Rohtas whose time the city is said to have been built.

2. Biral Sahni, *Techniques of Casting Coins in Ancient India*, 1945, p. 7.

The places of public utility in the town include a post and telegraph office, telephone exchange, P.W.D. rest house, canal rest house, Kisan rest house, Sainik rest house, railway rest house, veterinary hospital, medical college and hospital, civil hospital, civil hospital for women, police and jail hospital, school health clinic, Employees' State Insurance dispensary, family planning clinic, tuberculosis clinic and mud-hut colony dispensary. The educational institutions comprise Government college, Government college for women, Punjab University evening college, All-India Jat Heroes' Memorial college, Vaish college, Chhotu Ram college of education, Chhotu Ram polytechnic, Vaish technical institute, industrial training institute, Government industrial school, Government industrial school for girls, Janta Sudhar industrial school for girls and 16 high/higher secondary schools (9 for boys and 7 for girls).

Sonepat (tahsil Sonepat)

The town is the headquarters of the tahsil of the same name. It lies in 29° 00' north latitude and 77° 01' east longitude at a distance of 27 miles from Delhi and 32 miles from Rohtak towards the north-east. The population of this town according to the 1961 Census was 45,882.

In the *Mahabharata*, it is referred to as one of the well known five *patas*¹ or *prasthas* which were demanded by Yudhishtira from Duryodhana. In 1871, some 1200 hemi-drachms of Graeco-Bactrians were unearthed, which indicate it to be a town of great antiquity. The evidence of its occupation by Yaudheyas is available through the recovery of a large hoard of their coins here. In the 11th century A.D., one Dipal Har was governor of Sonepat and was defeated by Sultan Masud of Ghazni in A.D. 1037 when he marched through the Punjab in an attempt to expand his empire in Hindustan.

Among the ancient monuments, the Mosque of Adbullah Nasir-ud-din and the Tomb of Khwaja Khizr are worth mentioning. The mosque was built in A.D. 1272 in Balban's reign in the memory of a celebrated saint. The Tomb of Khwaja Khizr, a local celebrity who flourished in the reign of Ibrahim Lodi, is a fine structure of stone.

1. These included Panipat, Sonepat, Inderpat (Delhi), Bhagpat and Talpat. (Hari Ram Gupta, *Marathas and Panipat*, p. 176, f.ii.).

The places of public utility in this town include a post and telegraph office, telephone exchange, P.W.D. rest house, veterinary hospital, civil hospital, Employees' State Insurance dispensary, industrial training institute and Government institute of surgical instruments technology, Chhotu Ram Arya college, Hindu college and 6 high/higher secondary schools (3 for boys and 3 for girls).

Places of Minor Importance

A few more places which have not been mentioned in the foregoing pages but are important for one reason or another are briefly described below :

Banyani (tahsil Rohtak).—The village is known for 17 Naugaza graves. Of these, there is hardly any trace now except a few stones bulging out of the ground.

Beri (tahsil Jhajjar).—It is known for its old temple dedicated to Bhimeshwari Devi. It is said that long ago the image of Goddess Bhimeshwari Devi was brought down from the hills and installed here.

Kundli (tahsil Sonapat) and Shamri (tahsil Gohana).—These are two small villages whose people revolted against the British in the Uprising of 1857. They attacked and murdered some Englishmen who passed through these villages. The British, after the Uprising, confiscated the lands of the villagers as a measure of punishment.

Lakhan Majra (tahsil Gohana).—It is known for its famous *gurdwara*, Manji Sahib, built in the memory of Guru Tegh Bahadur who stayed here on his way to Delhi.

Mohanbari (tahsil Jhajjar).—The excavations at this site yielded the coins of Sri-Samanta connecting the place with 10th century A.D.

Sanghi (tahsil Rohtak).—The place is known for Sadashiv Rao Bhau's *samadhi* on the outskirts of the village. According to a story related by the people of the village, Bhau came here after his defeat and lived in the guise of a mendicant. The story seems unreliable since Bhau Sahib, when he saw that all was lost, galloped into the thick of the battle to find a soldier's death.¹ The tradition of his association with Sanghi might perhaps have arisen from his cremation there or in the neighbourhood.

1. *The Cambridge History of India, Mughal Period*, 1963, p. 424.

General

The foregoing account of places of interest in the district shows that their local history and monuments can well be fitted into the pattern of India's history. While the antiquity of some localities goes far back into the past, the record of happening in others finds its place in the jigsaw historical picture of the medieval period. The student of Indian history therefore comes across historical evidence which is valuable, if not for constructing history, at least for illustrating and placing together the course of historical events.