

UNIVERSITY OF RAJASTHAN  
STUDIES  
IN  
HISTORY



1967

*Published by the*

**Department of History & Indian Culture**

**UNIVERSITY OF RAJASTHAN**

**JAIPUR.**



Library

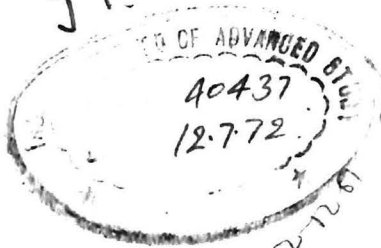
IAS, Shimla

PH 954.4 J 199 U



00040437

PH  
954.4  
J 199 U



22/2/72

PH  
378

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
1. The Jat Campaigns of Sawai Jai Singh.	
<i>Dr. H.C. Tikkiwal</i>	1
2. Foreign Policy of General Bhim Sen Thapa of Nepal Towards British India.	
<i>Dr. Ramakant</i>	9
3. The Administrative System in Medieval Rajasthan.	
<i>Dr. G.N. Sharma</i>	27
4. Origin of the Paramaras	
<i>Sri J.N. Asopa</i>	43
5. The Art of War and Indian History	
<i>Dr. S.N. Prasad</i>	51

---

## “THE JAT CAMPAIGNS OF SAWAI JAI SINGH 1716 A.D.—1722 A.D.”

by

HARISHCHANDRA TIKKIWAL, M.A. ( History & Pol. Sc. ) LL.B. Ph. D.  
*Lecturer, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.*

Sawai Jai Singh received commands in Aug. 1716 A.D. from Emperor Farrukhsiyar to lead a punitive expedition against Churaman, the Jat Chief, who, “throwing off the veil of allegiance” endeavoured hard to carve out an independent principality in the region contiguous to the Imperial Cities of Agra and Delhi. In April, 1713 A.D. Farruksiyar had thought to send Samsam-Ud-Daulah against him, but he begged for royal forgiveness.<sup>1</sup> He came to Delhi with a body of 2000 ‘Sawars’ and offered presents to the Emperor. On 11 Shawal 1125, he was made ‘Rao’ and his mansab was raised to 1500 Zat and 5000 ‘Sawars’.<sup>2</sup> However, within less than two years, Churaman re-started hostile activities : led predatory expeditions in the parganas of Kama ( 35 miles north of Bharatpur), Sahar ( Half a mile from Thun ), Thun ( 30 miles South-west Bharatpur) etc.<sup>3</sup> in his bid to hold indisputable sway in the region : he had the audacity to carry arms in Mewat (modern Alwar District) against Izzat Khan, the Mughal general, sent over there to suppress the local rebels.<sup>4</sup> Farruksiyar was highly annoyed when he fell upon ‘Mauza Dulhera’ in the pargana of Fatehpur Sikri; apprehensions ran high that he might not plunder Fatehpur Sikri itself.<sup>5</sup>

Finding Jai Singh competent, Farruksiyar deputed him to lead an expedition against Churaman, Jai Singh left Delhi at the end of September, 1716 A.D., as is testified from the letter sent by him to Maharana Sangram Singh.<sup>6</sup> “The Emperor has asked me to proceed to Mathura to punish the Jats, Accordingly I started from Jahanabad

---

1. Akhbarat 13 Rabi ii 1128 H. (Tuesday 28 April 1713 A.D.)

2. Ibid 20 October, 1713.

3. Ibid 15, 19, Shawal 1128 H. (b) 16 Ziqad 1128 H. (c) 24 Safar 1128 H.

4. Ibid 16 Rabi, ii 1128 H.

5. Ibid 28 Shawal 1128 H.

6. Letter of Jai Singh to Maharana Kartik Vadi 1773 V.S.



for Mathuraji and at present happen to encamp at Palwal on my way to the Jat Rebel". Raja Awadat Singh, Zamindar of Khandela, and Maha Rao Bhim Singh of Kotah were appointed as 'Chandrawals' in his over-all charge. Thakur Bijay Singh Kachhwa, ( his younger brother), Thakur Inder Singh of Nagor ( Marwar region), Budh Singh Hada of Bundi, and Bayazid Khan ( Commandant of Mewat) were among his Chief lieutenants. A powerful contingent of chosen 'Jawans' especially summoned from Amber formed the vanguard.<sup>7</sup>

### Jai Singh's Preliminary Successes :

On his arrival at Radhakund ( 15 miles North-east Deeg ) Jai Singh detailed a part of the advance columns, viz. 1000 cavaliers and 5,000 footmen, to move ahead under the charge of Bayzid Khan.<sup>8</sup> As the contingent moved ahead, Mokham Singh, son of churaman, evacuated the fort of Bahor without putting up resistance.<sup>9</sup> Badan Singh, another son of Churaman, of course, tried to blockade the advance of the imperialists in 'mauza Baharawal', but with a small force of 2000 foot-men he could not hold on<sup>10</sup> Subsequent to the seizure of his out-post, he retraced. Similar was the fate of Rupa, nephew of Churaman, who retreated-in wounded, leaving his brother, Anai Ram, dead.<sup>11</sup>

### Seige of Thun :

Jai Singh, after consultations with Jait Singh, the Chieftain of Kama, decided that first of all, as a preliminary to crush the Jats, the 'impregnable fortress of Thun' should be stormed.<sup>12</sup> Churaman lay entrenched there and appeared confident to dwarf the Imperialists. Jai Singh, as a part of well thought-out strategy, built a number of 'garhis-mud fortilaces' all round the open shleterless plain enviorns of Thun in order to shield his forces from the deadly Jat artillery-fire from the 'impregnable hide-out.'

The Jat forces made ferocious onslaughts without loosing much time to dislodge the Rajputs from their assumed positions lest they

7. (a) Kamwar 140, 168 (b) Jai Singh's letter to Ajit Singh (Destri Record).  
(c) Roznamacha Bhadovadi 8, 1773. (RSABD).  
8. Akhbar 15 Ziqad 1128 H.  
9. Ibid 18 Ziqad 1128 H.  
10. Ibid 12 July 1128 H.  
11. Ibid 17 zilliz 1128 H.  
12. Kamwar 168.

should not succeed in their bid to encircle. Thun. Amid the surreptitious sorties, the Rajputs, however, stood firm. Deep Singh hurled back a jat force which had been troubling the main camp at Saujadani.<sup>13</sup> Hatey Singh sought to over-power the mercenaries at Kotkhaura. Meg Raj and Kanwar Pal besieged the fort of Bhusawar which happen then under the control of Anant Ram, brother of Churaman.<sup>14</sup> Tara Chand, the Kachhwa Dewan, advanced as far as 'Salamat Kuncha', the main water-head to the fort of Thun.<sup>15</sup> Bayazid Khan, who lay encamped in the front, successfully hurled back the Jats as they made a charge to intercept Tara Chand.<sup>16</sup> Shyam Singh inflicted several defeats on the Jats in the encounters in 'Manza Nagar.'<sup>17</sup> Protracted skirmishes were, likewise, carried on tenaciously in 'Mauza Sesri, ( Sahi Garhi). Sistara-Badhera (garhi Sultanpur), Khatela. Tajauli etc.'<sup>18</sup>

Jai Singh received congratulatory messages and a 'special Khilat' from Emperor Farruksiyar.<sup>19</sup> The Emperor repeatedly enjoined Jai Singh either to arrest Churaman or seek his assassimation.<sup>20</sup> Jai Singh disapproved the suggestion to murder Churaman. He assured the emperor that the Fort of Thun would soon be conquered and the Jat Chief would be coerced to accept Imperial submission. Farruksiyar gave credence to the assurances. A special robe of Bansanti colour ( Safron ) was sent in appreciation of his tenacious efforts to round off the Jats.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Jai Singh fails to conquer Thun :**

The seige of Thun lingered on for more than a year. Jai Singh, unluckily, could not make any headway. The opponents of Jai Singh in the Imperial court felt elated. They lost not the opportunity to pour venom against him. Jai Singh's 'ability as an astute general' was put to askance. Farruksiyar castigated kim for his failure in an engagement at Sonlie, a garhi, 10 miles south-west of Mathura. Abdullah Khan, the vazir. counselled for a change in the command.

13. Roznamacha Reports.....Shah Waqat (RSAB).

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Vakil Reports No. 2123, 2544.

20. Farmans--No. 174, 176 & 171 Kapatdwara Record ( City Palace Jaipur).

21. Ibid No. 171.

The Emperor, however, opined to send reinforcements. Khan-i-Jahan Muzaffar, maternal uncle of the Saiyyid Brothers and then serving as the Subedar of Ajmer, was sent in June 1717 A.D. The situation did not change. The Emperor, in a state of vexations sent instructions to round off the seige any-how before the rainy season. The Jats, however, could not be over-powered. They unnerved the Imperialists by deadly firings from their fortress. They ambushed them whenever they moved out of the garhis to collect forage and other necessaries. Owing to the late rains, prices of corn and hay rose high.<sup>22</sup> Jai Singh had to arrange the supply from Amber at heavy costs and great inconvenience.

In fact, Churaman had gained the support of saiyyid Abdullah Khan. Khan-i-Jahan Muzaffar acted as the agent provocateur. Churaman expressed willingness to pay a tribute of thirty five lakhs to the emperor and a sum of rupees ten lakhs to the vazir on account of a personal present. Abdullah Khan pleaded before the Emperor that orders should be issued for the cessation of hostilities which, inspite of colossal expenditure and persistent battering extending over a period of two years, had served no purpose. The emperor, much against his will, bowed to the wishes of Qutub-Ul-Mulk.<sup>23</sup> Jai Singh received commands to wind up the operation. He was ordained to confer dresses of honour (Khilat) when "Churaman comes to him accompanied by Nasrat Yar Khan and Khan-i-Jahan Muzaffar".<sup>24</sup>

Jai Singh was, thus, prevented from carrying on operations against Churaman, who had gained favours of the Saiyyid brothers. The Vazir bore a deep-rooted grudge since he was not consulted by the Emperor prior to Jai Singh's appointment to lead the expedition. Nor did Jai Singh care to consult him about the task that lay ahead. He erred in the selection of the personnel as well. The majority of his generals happened to own affiliations with Abdullah Khan. Khan-i-Jahan proved treacherous to him because of his working as the Chief architect of the subversive negotiations with Churaman.

The reputation of Jai Singh was charred. The Imperial Farman<sup>25</sup> issued immediately after his arrival in Delhi on 21 May, 1718 A.D.,

22. (a) Kamwar 468, 169 (b) Khafi Khan ii 777.

23. Nasratyar's letter 25 Rajab 1130 (Vakil Reports No. 2635) RSAB.

24. Farman No. 185 Kapatdwara ( City Palace, Jaipur).

25. (a) Nasratyar's letter 25 Rajab 1130 RSAB misc. papers.

(b) Maharana Sangram Singh's letter Asad Sudi 11, 1774 S.K.

(c) Farman No. 187 Kapt.

giving him credit "for subduing the enemy without losing a battle" and the grant of "Mahimuratilb" were merely a sham. Jai Singh fell a prey to the diplomacy of Abdullah Khan.

**Jai Singh deputed to besiege Thun in the reign of Muhammad Shah :**

Jai Singh, after the sack of Abdullah Khan in the reign of Muhammad Shah got the opportunity to lead expedition against the Jats in April, 1722 A. D. Churaman was an ally of the Saiyyid Brothers. He had made 'a defensive alliance'<sup>26</sup> against the rising Kachhwa dominance with Ajit Singh of Marwar. "Ajit was the first Rajput Chief to recognise Churaman as a Thakur, by discarding the Rajput aristocratic pride in the beginning of Farrukhsiyar's reign. Churaman sent 'a strong force under the command of Mokham Singh, his son, to reinforce' Ajit Singh when Sadat Khan, the newly appointed Subedar of Agra in the beginning of the reign of Muhammad Shah proceeded against him to compel him to surrender Ajmer. Sadat Khan, to teach a lesson to the Jats, led an abortive expedition in their territory.<sup>27</sup> The Jats, embarked upon a course of predatory skirmishes. They 'defeated and killed Nilkant Nagar, the Deputy—Subedar of Agra, who had taken a position near Fatehpur Sikri with an army ten thousand horses and numerous infantry (26 September, 1721)'<sup>28</sup>

Emperor Muhammed Shah deputed Jai Singh to lead an expedition against the Jats. Assisted by some of the renowned nobles, such as, Raja Girdhar Bahadur Nagar, Maha Rao Arjun Singh of Orcha, Muzaffar Khan and an army 50,000 strong, Jai Singh advanced against his inveterate foe.<sup>29</sup> Churaman committed suicide in a state of exasperation owing to the family dissensions. His son, Mokham Singh, now, lay entrenched for resistance in his ancestral fortress of Thun. Jai Singh besieged the Jats with insurmountable Zeal. The operations continued for more than a month, but without tangible results. The Imperialists failed, as in the past, in making a headway. At such a juncture, Badan Singh, nephew of Churaman, who was inimical to his cousin Badan Singh on being denied a share in the patrimonial assets, came over to Jai Singh.<sup>30</sup> He pointed out the weak

26. Qanungo 'Historical Essays' P. 64.

27. Qanungo 'Historical Essays' 64.

28. Ibid 64.

29. Kamwar 254; Khafi Khan ii 946.

30. Kharita, Kapatdwara (Record (City Palace).

spots and helped the Imperialists to over-power the chivalrous Jats. Mokham, unable to hold on, fled away in the dead of night (17-18 Nov. 1722 A.D.) towards Marwar. Ajit Singh Rathor provided to him the haven of refuge. Next day, the impregnable fort of Thun fell into the hands of Jai Singh.<sup>31</sup>

Jai Singh's success was most timely; he was saved from eventual contests likely to be held after the arrival of Jodhpur army under the command of Bijay Singh Bhandari, which had been hired by Mokham Singh on 3 lakhs of rupees and had come as far as Jobner (24 miles west of Jaipur).<sup>32</sup>

Jai Singh was crowned with the laurels of "victory" without raising a decisive battle. The fort of Thun could be capitulated as a result of the treachery of Badan Singh. It did not bear stamp of 'Superior military talent' of Jai Singh. In token of his 'Victory' Jai Singh sent keys of the Fort to the Imperial Court at Delhi.<sup>33</sup> Emperor Muhammad Shah, eulogising Jai Singh sent a farman— ".....They keys were presented<sup>34</sup> before us..... Thanks to God, that in such a short time, your anxiety to conquer the rebel's hide-out bore fruit. These achievements are not definitely beyond your superb ability .....Mind would not be at rest until you capture the Kafir Raja and his family... ..". He expressed a desire for sending a sketch of the Fort of Thun.

Jai Singh recognised Badan Singh as the successor to Churaman, when he came to him for forgiveness. Emperor Muhd. Shah too enjoined upon Jai Singh to show necessary largeness of heart. He instructed that the family of Badan Singh should be treated humanely.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, Jai Singh bestowed upon Badan Singh the tika, Nishan, Kettledrums, the five coloured flag and the title of "Braj Raja". Badan Singh never assumed the title of "Raja but preferred to be called a Thakur of Jaipur Darbar. On 19th June, 1725, he

31. Muzma-Ul-Akbhar (Eilliot & Dawson vii 367), Tod iii 1358.

32. Rai Chand's letter Kartik Vadi 15, 1779 (RSAB) Wakil Reports.

33. Farman 4 Rabi 1139 H. Kapat Dwara Record (City Palace).

34. Ibid 19 Rabi Us Sani 1139 H.

35. Farman Kapat Dwara.

36. Kapatdwara No. 73 &  $\frac{42/K}{1407}$  ( City Palace Jaipur ).

made an agreement with Jai Singh which reads as follows ".....In lieu of kindly bestowing upon me Churaman's territory, I shall remain in the service of the Maharaja every year I would remit a sum of Rs. 83,000 as peshkash".

---



FOREIGN POLICY OF GENERAL BHIM SEN  
THAPA OF NEPAL TOWARDS  
BRITISH INDIA

*by*

RAMAKANT\*

In the history of Nepal General Bhim Sen Thapa occupies a place, which can only be compared with Prithvi Narayan Sah or Jung Bahadur. He had taken over the administration of the Kingdom after the murder of Maharaja Ran Bahadur Sah in 1805, and thereafter for three decades he ruled over Nepal with dictatorial powers. During his prime ministership the relations between Nepal and the East India Company remained at the lowest ebb.

The Kingdom of Nepal had been expanding in all directions since 1768. Towards the east the Gorkhas had reached upto the river Teesa. On the west they had expanded upto the river Sutlej and their further advance could only be checkmated by Ranjit Singh. Towards the north China had checked their expansion in 1792. Thus, being blocked from three sides, south remained the only direction for their expansion.

In order to understand the dynamics of their expansion, it is important to understand that the Gorkhas, who were the ruling section in Nepal at this time, had led a continuous career of fighting ever since their advent in the Central Himalayas in the 14th century. Arms had become their coveted profession and a cherished social value. It became necessary for every government to appease the army so as to stay in power. It should also be understood that for the last few generations kings had been infant and the real power came to be vested with the prime minister. Each contending faction tried to secure this esteemed post and control the army, which necessitated keeping the army in good humour.

---

\*Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.



Passive policy of the British after 1805 and the prevailing condition in India further encouraged Bhim Sen to pursue his policy of expansion with greater vigour.

These internal imperatives and external temptations were driving Bhim Sen towards a martial and expansionist foreign Policy. At the same time, he was apprehensive of the British imperial power. He understood the way the Indian states lost their independence due to trade and subsidiary alliance with the British. Thrice the Company had attempted to gain a foot-hold in Nepal by war as well as by diplomacy. The chief aim of his foreign policy, therefore, was to save Nepal from the clutches of the British imperialism. And yet, he had to provide employment to the martial races of Nepal. To resolve this dilemma Bhim Sen adopted a policy of slow but steady encroachment along the Indian boundary so as to keep the Gorkha soldiery busy and yet avoid provoking hostilities with the East India Company. For several years a systematic expansion of the Nepalese territory continued towards the Terai. This brought the Nepalese in contact with the Indian Zamindars, who in turn also came to be subjected to Bhim Sen's policy of expansion.<sup>1</sup> It would, of course, be wrong to suggest that the Indian Zamindars were entirely blameless. They also encroached upon the Nepalese territory and often made exaggerated complaints when their own territories were encroached upon. The Indian Government, however, could not take any stiff attitude for some time due to the necessity of employing all its resources against the French, in the Duccan, Tipoo in Mysore and Marathas in Central India.

From 1812 onwards, in keeping with their changed imperial policy the British attitude became more and more strict. By 1813, when Lord Hastings assumed the Governor Generalship, the attitude of the Indian Government had become rather uncompromising. In Governor General's final decision to go for a war with Nepal the border disputes did not figure so prominently. He observed that, "we are not through a point of honour of demanding atonement for the wanton invasion of our territories, the brutal massacre of our policeman.... But we were at issue with a nation so extravagantly presumptuous in representing its own strength and so ingnorant of

---

1. Chaudhuri, K.C., *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 150.

our superior means.”<sup>2</sup> In April, 1814 he addressed a letter to the Maharaja of Nepal demanding peremptory evacuation of the disputed territories within twenty five days and ordered the Magistrate of Gorakhpur to occupy them if the order of the Maharaja to that effect did not arrive in time.

This attitude and letter of Lord Hastings forced Bhim Sen to take a decision, which marked the end of the old moderate policy. In a grand council of the Nepalese Darbar the question of war and peace was fully debated.<sup>3</sup> The chiefs of elder generation advocated a policy of peace and moderation to avoid war. But the younger generation headed by the Prime Minister did not want to yield to the British demands and preferred to go for war.

It seems that Bhim Sen “could not bring himself to believe in the change” of the British attitude, which had not been forceful for the last few years. Or, may be, he thought that the two powers were bound to come in clash sooner or later and he considered the present occasion best to give a fight when the condition in India was far from being satisfactory. His speech in the grand council also reflected that he had overestimated the strength of mountains that protect Nepal. After a long debate Bhim Sen carried the day and the die was cast in favour of war. The most significant point that emerged from the debate was that the sense of grievance against the British Government on the border issue did not figure prominently. The chiefs, who were against war, pointed out that “there was no injury done to Nepal that called for an appeal to arms”, and those in favour of war advocated it on grounds other than the protection of their just territorial claims.

## II

The Indo-Nepalese War of 1814-16, which ended with the signing of the Treaty of Sagauli in March 1816, was a great disillusionment for Bhim Sen. The British arms had shattered the Gorkha pride and power. The Gorkhas were forced to accept a resident and also cede one third of their territory, including the fertile tract of the Terai. It made Bhim Sen realize that the era of conquest was over. He

2. Lord Hastings, *Summary of the Administration of Indian Government* 1824, p. 11.

3. Prinsep, H.T., *History of the Political and Military Transactions (1813-1823)* London, 1820, Vol. I. See the appendix.

understood that another war with the Company would reduce Nepal to the status of a protected state and even result in the extirpation of the Gorkha dynasty.

The mood and views of the Nepalese people, chiefs and soldiery were different from Bhim Sen. Being isolated since ages they had no idea of the British power. They only saw an intrinsic injustice in the fact that just for few disputed places they had been deprived of more than one third of their territory at the point of bayonet. They considered it unworthy of their warlike tradition to suffer such a loss without fighting. Nor, was it a mere sentiment. The present situation gave them no hope at all of following a successful policy of war and constant expansion. Now they had not only been stripped off their one third kingdom, but also hemmed on three sides by the British domains or those of its protected allies. A permanent Resident had been kept to watch their activities and ask explanations. It practically meant an end of all the hopes of expanding their empire, and also implied an end of their most cherished martial profession. In fact, the treaty was a blow to their most loved social values.

Naturally, after the war the Nepalese were seething with bitterness. But they were not demoralized. They were just baffled and full of vengeance. Edward Gardner, the first British Resident, when reached Kathmandu, did not find them obsequious and slavish. Instead, they were jealous, proud, insolent in their bearing and not yet clear whether to abide by the treaty or break it to try another contest.<sup>4</sup> Immediately after his arrival Lt. I. P. Boileau ( the *locumtenens* waiting the arrival of the Resident ) noted that he was "not aware of their having to this" period adopted any measure to ensure the performance of any one of the articles of the treaty."<sup>5</sup>

These were, thus, the two difficult contradictions which Bhim Sen set himself to reconcile : the British power that he dreaded and the appeasement of the Gorkha soldiery and the chiefs, on whose support even his own tenure of office depended. It goes without saying that being a Prime Minister, who had lately lost the war, he was faced with more than an ordinarily difficult situation. To keep

4. *Principal Transactions and Early Intercourse*, See Political consultation (P.C.), January 23, 1835-No. 50.

5. Secret Consultation (S.C.) May 4, 1816-No. 55.

his hold strong on the soldiery, he first of all wanted to keep them engaged and show that peace was not so dishonourable. For it he adopted a policy of keeping the war fever at its high pitch. Throughout the kingdom recruitment was made, military stores were accumulated, ammunition was manufactured, parades were held and rumours were spread that the "ministers were only awaiting the arrival of foreign aid."<sup>6</sup> But this was just to keep the soldiery engaged and the chiefs guessing. There was no ulterior intention of Bhim Sen to break the treaty.

With similar intentions the Resident was boycotted and treated with indifference. Boileau reported that, "A company of Sipahes have been ordered by Bhim Sen to be dispersed between my house and the city during all hours to apprehend any person who may be thought to hold communications with me."<sup>7</sup> It was with a double aim to show to his people that the existing administration had no *liaison* with the foreign agent, and secondly not to allow the Resident to collect any data or information about the country and to prevent any intrigue between him and the disaffected element.

To the British Government otherwise he extended a hand of friendship. Formally and in private interviews with the Resident he assured peaceful intentions of his Government. Bhim Sen's manners so much impressed Gardner that he was induced to believe in his sincerity regarding the maintenance of future relations.<sup>8</sup>

In a nutshell, there were three factors that determined the policies of Bhim Sen after the war, i.e. his recognition of the British strength and a corresponding anxiety to avoid hostilities; the appeasement of the Gorkha soldiery and chiefs, on whose support his own tenure of office depended; and, finally, his determination to render the treaty as little productive as possible for the British and to gain the maximum out of their ignorance and generosity.

After the war Lord Hastings aimed at converting Nepal from a troublesome neighbour into a peaceful and friendly frontier state. For it he was ready to accommodate with the irritated mood of the Nepalese. Lt. Boileau was instructed that his conduct "should be

6. S.C. June 15, 1816-No. 16.

7. S.C. May 11, 1816-No. 30.

8. S.C. September 14, 1816-No. 38.

regulated on all occasions by a spirit of conciliation and prudence which may be expected finally to remove the characteristic jealousy of the Nepalese Government and induce confidence and reciprocal goodwill into our intercourse with that state."<sup>9</sup> Resident Gardner was also asked to adopt a conciliatory attitude and to show every practicable degree of favour.

The very first problem that arose after the Treaty of Sagauli was of its implementation. Lord Hastings insisted that the treaty must strictly be looked upon as the basis of the new relations. Bhim Sen, on the contrary, followed a policy of rendering the treaty as much nugatory as possible. He took advantage of every opportunity to evade and revise the issue, and cleverly pointed out the vague phrases of the treaty. This attitude was clearly reflected in the negotiations to vacate the portions of the Terai which were to be ceded by Nepal to the Company. The Terai being a rich area, the Gorkha policy was directed to prevent and delay its transfer as long as possible.

The Indian Government ultimately restored whole of the eastern Terai from Kosi river to the western limits of Gorakhpur along the old southern frontier. It was indeed a master stroke of Bhim Sen's diplomacy, which not merely had a desirable effect on the Indo-Nepalese relationship, it also strengthened his position in eyes of the chiefs and the public.

Some writers hold that till 1818 Bhim Sen was trying by conspiracies and intrigues with the Chinese Emperor and the Indian States to recover his lost provinces.<sup>10</sup> They contend that even after the defeat he took some time to realise the British power and his policy was only a prudent waiting for a favourable opportunity to try another contest with the Company.

It is true that since the beginning of the Indo-Nepalese War, and even before that, the Gorkhas had been trying to involve the Chinese against the British.<sup>11</sup> After the loss of Kumaon their efforts

9. S.C. May 4, 1816-No.69.

10. See F. Taker, *Gurkha, the story of the Gorkhas of Nepal* London, 1957, p. 97., P. London, *Nepal*, London 1928, Vol. I. p. 75.

11. See *Papers Respecting Nepal War*. London, 1824, p. 45. Also see Chitranjan Nepali, *General Bhim Sen-Thapa Tatkaleen Nepal*, Kathmandu, 1956, letters No. 27, 28, 32, 33 and 34, given in the appendix.

became more persistent; with the result that after the war had ended, the Chinese Emperor despatched a small force of five thousand troops with an avowed object "to investigate the cause of the war and to ascertain who was in fault."

The war being over, the Chinese force did not have much practical value for Bhim Sen. Yet, he wanted to make its maximum use so long as it was there. Rumours were carefully spread that the recently concluded treaty with the British had given rise to the Chinese intervention. Gardner held the view that exaggerated reports about the Chinese intentions were "intended to create alarms in my mind and so lead me to suppose that Chinese were seriously preparing to afford some military aid", and thus "induce, as great latitude as possible in the concessions of the restoration of the Terai about to be made....."<sup>12</sup> Bhim Sen also hoped that the Chinese intervention might help in getting rid of the British Resident. However, the manner in which the Chinese retired without much fuss only confirms that Bhim Sen had deliberately exaggerated the Chinese intentions. It can be added that there was hardly a chance of the Chinese intervention taking a serious turn. The British, the Gorkhas and the Chinese realised the limitations of their respective positions and did not like to go beyond that.

The Nepalese were also trying to arouse the disaffected Indian States against the Company since the very beginning of the war.<sup>13</sup> Even after the war had ended the already sent emissaries were at work. During the Central Indian campaign of Lord Hastings in 1817-18, Bhim Sen again sent secret emissaries to China, Gwalior and Lahore. The British troubles naturally presented before the Gorkha chiefs and army an opportunity to recover their lost provinces. Resident Gardner was led to believe that these intrigues had an inimical character.<sup>14</sup> But if we examine the circumstances and the reports of the Resident closely, it may be said that Gardner took rather an alarming attitude and only fulfilled his official duties in conveying the various broken and unconfirmed pieces of information

---

12. See S.C. August 10, 1816-No. 18.  
S.C. January 11, 1816-No. 6 and 7.  
S.C. October 12, 1816-No. 23.

13. See General Amar Singh Thapa's intercepted letter dated April 12, 1815. Prinsep, n. 3, Appendix B. pp. 462-72.

14. S.C. November 21, 1817-No. 44.

His observations overlooked many important factors that determined the Nepalese foreign policy. Bhim Sen had no doubt in his mind about the policy of keeping peace. War atmosphere that he created was only to keep the army busy, and the intrigues with foreign states were made more to maintain an appearance of independence than with an ulterior intention to break with the British. It must not be forgotten that there always existed a permanent war party in the Darbar. He once explained to the Resident "that the procedure of this government had been in a great measure swayed by the violence of party spirit here."<sup>15</sup>

### III

By the middle of 1818 the Anglo-Nepalese relations had settled down and continued to remain straight and peaceful, but certainly not cordial, till the death of the Regent Maharani Tripura Sundari Devi in 1832. An outstanding feature of the Nepalese foreign policy was intense jealousy and mistrust towards the British. Anxious to maintain their independence and fearful of the British intentions, the Nepalese thought it best to exclude all the foreigners from their country as far as possible.

The first and the foremost target of their exclusion was the permanent British Resident. Popular feelings against the British coupled with the circumstances in which the Residency was established, made him particularly an object of their jealousy. While negotiating peace in 1816, General Ochterlony, literally following the instructions, told the Gorkha negotiators that "they must take the Resident or war." The Resident had to be accepted, but he was reduced almost to the status of a dignified prisoner, and there always existed a desire among the ministers and public to somehow get rid of him.<sup>16</sup> Even when amicable relations had been established after the defeat of Holkar, Gardner reported in June 1818, that "my intercourse with the court is confined to mere courtesies and attentions incidental to my public situation here".<sup>17</sup> His successor H. Maddock took the matter more seriously. He remarked that the intercourse between the Nepalese Darbar and the Residency had been confined to two public visits paid annually by the Resident to the

15. P.C. March 27, 1818-No. 31.

16. S.C. December 17, 1824-No. 8.

17. P.C. July 10, 1818-No. 87.

Maharaja, one at Holi and the other at Dashera festival, and two public visits of the Prime Minister to the Resident. The remaining communications with the Darbar were carried through the court Munshee. He added, "while the jealousy of the Nepal Government and its original aversion to the establishment of our mission here are still undiminished, the narrow bounds within which it studies to limit its intercourse with the Resident and the strict interdict placed upon its subjects who might otherwise seek our society, have conduced to render our situation more isolated, with reference both to the court and to the people of the country than is the case anywhere else."<sup>18</sup>

The rules regarding the foreign visitors were equally rigid. No European visitor was allowed to enter Nepal unless he had both the invitation of Darbar and the guarantee of the Indian Government. Nor, were they permitted to see any part of Nepal except the valley of Kathmandu. Entry of white women was strictly prohibited.

The Gorkhas were also very apprehensive of the Indian traders coming from the British India. They dreaded introduction of British trade in any form. There was an oft-quoted saying in Nepal that, "The tradesman brings the Bible, the Bible brings the bayonet." They had seen that the British came to India as traders and became its masters. It was, however, not on account of the fear of adverse trade balance that the Darbar did not give usual privileges to the Indian traders, but because it apprehended political motives behind it. Naturally, the Darbar adopted every means to put obstacles in the way of free commercial intercourse between the inhabitants of both the countries, so much so that even the security of traders was not guaranteed. The direct access of traders to the Resident was debarred, and they had practically no legal status or the means of redress.

Various factors were responsible for this attitude of the Nepalese. Religion itself contributed a lot towards it. Nepal was a country where the untouchability of Hinduism, inspite of the impact of Buddhism, had been retained in some measure and the very sight of a Christian was regarded inauspicious. It had been a matter of faith with them that if the *Firangees* got a foothold in the country their religion would be lost. For a Prime Minister situated in Bhim

---

18. P.C. August 27, 1832-No. 18.



Sen's position it must have been a very important factor in the beginning of the relations. Any step in the direction of unrestricted influx of the Europeans into the country would have been most unpopular.

Besides religion, there was another important political consideration. One regular phenomenon the Gorkhas had witnessed in India, since their own rise, was the gradual expansion of the British Empire. They looked at the British as a dangerous and encroaching neighbour fully convinced that, "Once British gain a foothold in the Valley (even though of a friendly character) that would mark the knell of their independence." The past experience with the British was also in no way encouraging. In 1767 the British Government intervened on behalf of their enemies and in 1801 it had tried to make capital out of their internal dissensions. Extensive losses in the late war confirmed their apprehension of British motives. They were now convinced that isolation was the best guarantee of their independence.

Along with intense mistrust towards the foreigners, maintenance of a big army and its constant increase was another feature of Bhim Sen's foreign policy. It was not merely because a particular Prime Minister had deliberately fostered such a policy, but so many socio-economic pressures were also responsible for it. The Gorkhas, who were originally from the martial Rajput race, had settled down in Nepal as refugees in the fourteenth century. Gradually they conquered the less warlike Newars of Nepal, established their kingdom and spread in every direction with an amazing rapidity. Arms constituted their main profession and most of the chieftainry and higher classes were in military service. Any other occupation was regarded as degrading and a mark of cowardice. Even in peace time parades, reviews of troops and manufacture of arms were the common "amusement of princes."<sup>19</sup> The ruling class had nothing to do with agriculture and trade, which was entirely in the hands of the Newars. Therefore, the class which governed the country had its vested interest in the maintenance of army. The state had to keep a big standing army and pay for it.

The system of recruitment also kept the martial spirit alive.<sup>20</sup> The Gorkha method of recruitment was by rotation. According to

19. S.C. January 16, 1818-No. 78.

20. P.C. February 12, 1833-No. 160.

it, by usage, Government required an entire change in the whole army every year. After a service of one year every soldier had to retire for the next two years and only after that he could come up again on rolls. These discharged soldiers lived in a very precarious condition. They received no pay and abhorred any other occupation. Consequently, they desired nothing so much as war, because only war could have brought them on rolls. As for their efficiency they did not lose it due to fast recurring period of recruitment.

These factors were assisted by two political considerations. Being face to face with a growing imperial power, the Nepalese thought that ultimately a constant military preparation was the only defence against the British. No Gorkha statesman could have neglected this aspect of their relations with the British. Moreover, the internal politics of the Darbar was such that only one who appeased the martial races and kept them engaged could control the Government. There were many rival factions in the Darbar and each was contesting to grapple the control of the state. Therefore, both Bhim Sen and the Queen Regent knew that their own tenure of office depended in the long run on their fulfilling the fundamental condition of providing a career of arms to the chiefs and martial races of Nepal.

The results of this condition of affairs were most unfortunate. Instead of realising that the days of constant expansion and warfare were over, the Prime Minister persisted in maintaining a big army. Daily parades were held, ammunition was manufactured and military displays were organised. The mood of army was kept in perfect readiness for war. In 1816 Gardner estimated the number of the Gorkha army at ten thousand, which was much more than the country needed for internal security or could have easily afforded. But the Prime Minister could not dare attempt a reduction. In 1831 Hodgson estimated the number of army at fifteen thousand. This was, however, not all; the Dhakaria-off-the-roll-soldiers-were always anxious to join at any time. Thus the army could have been doubled within three months and trebled within six months.

This was, then, Nepal sixteen years after the war. Lord Hastings's idea that its power had been crippled proved greatly mistaken. Now she had an army more than one and half times than in 1814; trade with her could not in any substantial degree be developed, nor could her people be made friendly to the British.

This period, however, is one of the most peaceful. From 1818 to 1832 the Resident had been regularly informing the Government about the tranquil state of affairs. The reason for this lay in the great personality of Bhim Sen. It was his strong hand that controlled the army and in him the army acknowledged a master. Bhim Sen realized the British power and was determined to maintain friendly relations. Therefore, so long as he lived and dominated all was safe. But after him there was a real danger. There was no one in Nepal who could have filled his place or had a clear idea of the British power. National current of martial enthusiasm, the ignorance of the relative strength vis-a-vis the British, or an unmanageable soldiery tired of peace, could have precipitated a crisis. In view of Bhim Sen's advanced age and considering the fact that the Maharaja was growing adult, it was not a remote possibility. In such a contingency the long suppressed energies of soldiery would either have found an outlet in a civil war or a foreign invasion. The former was not likely on account of strong Gorkha patriotism and the habit of sinking their mutual differences in national crisis; but the latter was a distinct possibility. For the British it was a serious situation. But they thought it better not to muddle in the internal affairs, and only hoped the Bhim Sen would gradually be induced to smoothen the Gorkha System.

Bhim Sen was indeed a great statesman; he gave his country power, prosperity and peace. It was due to his great efforts that Nepal after a shattering war could again emerge as a power within less than two decades. Yet, his foreign policy suffered from grave weakness and did not take the reality of the situation into account. It is really difficult to understand how a statesman of his calibre and understanding failed to realise the altered political, economic and geographical situation of Nepal. The war of 1814-16 meant that the era of conquest was over and Bhim Sen understood it. What then was the necessity of maintaining a big army ?

Partly it was because of the social and martial habits of the people and partly because Bhim Sen thought that ultimately only arms could save Nepal against the British. But he failed to understand that no extent of military preparedness could have saved Nepal if the British had decided to annex her. Herein lay the fundamental weakness of his foreign policy. He failed to galvanize

the nation in a proper direction, which Jung Bahadur successfully attempted a decade after Bhim Sen's fall.

The dire consequences of Bhim Sen's political system became apparent soon after his fall. Long suppressed factions tried every means to grab power, exploited the anti-British sentiments of the people and even abandoned the age old maxim of keeping the Resident away from the internal affairs. The turbulent decade that followed was most unfortunate and Bhim Sen cannot be absolved of his bit of responsibility therein.

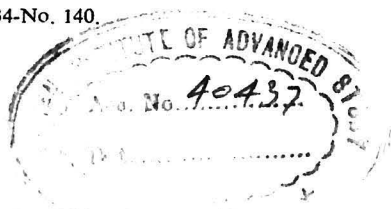
#### IV

The Regent, Maharani Tripura Sundari, passed away in 1832. This proved a turning point and marked the first crack in the hegemony of the Prime Minister. The young King and the various suppressed parties started making efforts to gain power in the changed circumstances. The British attitude also took a gradual turn towards Bhim Sen under the impact of the personality of the new Resident B.H. Hodgson.

Hodgson realised that the real obstacles in the way of the development of trade and commerce with Nepal were the socio-economic institutions of the Gorkhas. As a way out, Hodgson envisaged two methods. Recruitment of the surplus Gorkha soldiers in the Indian army. This could have relieved the Nepalese state of its age old burden and have moderated the martial policy of the Darbar.<sup>21</sup> This proposal could not be accepted by the Indian government till the 1850's. Hodgson also wanted that free trade and commerce with and through Nepal should be encouraged. This positive outlet would have provided a healthy way out for the Gorkhas.<sup>22</sup> He also understood that Bhim Sen was himself the main obstacle in the way of free trade. He was bent upon maintaining the old exclusive and hostile policy. It became very clear that so long as such a policy was followed peace and commerce would be ineffective in producing any change either in the habits of the martial races or in the political institutions. At the same time,

21. Principal Transactions, n. 4, para 74.  
Also see Hodgson, B.H., "Origins and classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal". *Selection from the Records of the Government of Bengal.* Vol. XXVII.

22. P.C. June 12, 1834-No. 140.



despite his anti-British attitude and declining position, Bhim Sen was the only man who realised the relative strength of Nepal vis-a-vis the British. If before his death or retirement such a change could not be effected, an upsurge of military mania and aggression on the Indian territory was most likely. Hodgson, therefore, remarked that, "we must procure a relaxation in the anti-social and hostile politics of extra-ordinary man (Bhim Sen) while he is there."<sup>23</sup>

The Prime Minister Bhim Sen found himself in a dilemma as regards his policy towards the East India Company. On the one hand, he observed that the British were the main enemy in the eyes of the Gorkha soldiery. An anti-British bogey was essential to cater to this section, which he could not have avoided at a time when every faction was keen to win over the soldiery. On the other hand, Bhim Sen also shrewdly realised that he could utilize the British support to maintain his tottering authority.

Soon after Regent Maharani's death Bhim Sen followed a policy of giving satisfaction to the British on minor points but restricting them to their traditional mode of intercourse with the Darbar. Since the accession of Maharaja Rajendra Vikram Sah the established custom was that the Resident and his subordinates carried the business only through the Minister or his representative. On the plea of his minority no direct access to the King was allowed.<sup>24</sup> Now, the Maharaja had become major and, yet, the traditional mode of intercourse continued because it suited the interests of the Prime Minister. The Resident and his suite were also restricted from going out for excursions in the neighbourhood. And surprisingly all these restrictions could easily be turned - by Bhim Sen in his favour.<sup>25</sup> He disseminated the rumour that the Indian Government, it not pledged, was strongly disposed to countenance his former unrestricted power, which was quite possible for him to do in the absence of any direct contact between the Resident and other chiefs.<sup>26</sup>

Hodgson now realised that the most important factor in the Nepalese politics was the King and not this or that party or faction.

23. P.C. October 9, 1834-No. 17.

24. P.C. November 6, 1834-No. 25.

25. Indian Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, No. 11, dated 10 July 1834.

26. P.C. April 24, 1837-No. 82.

Therefore, in January 1834 he firmly demanded right of direct access and audience with the Maharaja.<sup>27</sup> In view of his declining position it was not possible for Bhim Sen to come in direct clash with the Resident. He also perceived that by keeping the Resident in good humour he could put up a show of British support to him against his rising opposition. Hodgson was at first told that the Maharaja would be glad to see him as often as he chose but his Munshi (the Resident's) was to continue business as usual exclusively with Minister, except on rare occasions. After a few months, in May 1834, the Resident and his subordinates were granted full access to the Maharaja. Likewise, the Darbar voluntarily waved the right to search Resident's personal baggage and a willingness was also manifested to permit the suite of Residency to go out a few miles from the capital.<sup>28</sup>

Indian government, however, was not willing to press the issue of direct access to the King.<sup>29</sup> This led Bhim Sen to again restrict the Resident from approaching the Maharaja directly and freely. Yet, his fundamental policy was to win over the British support for the Thapas.

Having failed to secure direct access to the King, Hodgson opened up the question of trade and commerce between Nepal and the British India. In the first instance he wanted to raise the issue of the commercial treaty of 1792. According to it a uniform duty of two and half percent advelorum invoice was to be levied mutually. In practice it occupied a very ambiguous position. From the British side it was uniformly observed, while the Nepalese government charged almost ten percent duty on the goods imported from India. Hodgson insisted that this disparity must be removed.

This move by the Resident put Bhim Sen in an awkward position. In the prevailing situation he did not like to estrange the Indian Government. Moreover, income from duties and trade with the British India had gradually become an important source of material benefit for Nepal. Free intercourse with the plains would also have removed the popular prejudice, which he had so long

---

27. P.C. Feb. 13, 1834-No. 6.

28. P.C. May 22, 1834-No. 46.

29. P.C. October 9, 1834-No. 19.

nursed. Prime Minister's trusted nephew, Mathbar Singh, frankly admitted that the "recognition of the treaty would cause the whole country to sing the praises of the Company and that the Maharaja (that is Minister) would lose all considerations among his own subjects."<sup>30</sup> Consequently, there was no way out for Bhim Sen except procrastination.

The Indian government, however, could not support the Resident, and wanted to know whether the Darbar still recognised the treaty of 1792.<sup>31</sup> It gave Bhim Sen an opportunity to outright refuse to recognize the treaty. But, owing to his anxiety to win the British support for himself, Bhim Sen soon came out with a proposal for a new commercial treaty in December 1934.<sup>32</sup> This proposal provided for an import duty of four percent. But the British Government in India considered the proposed duties as "too low", and preferred to exempt the Nepalese goods from custom duties.<sup>33</sup>

While the negotiations for commercial treaty were still going on, a very important development took place in the factional politics of Nepal, which also affected Bhim Sen's foreign policy. In December 1934, the Kala Pandes, the old rivals of the Thapas, came into limelight. They had gained the support of the senior Maharani and now petitioned the Maharaja for the restoration of their family honours and property. The Maharaja favourably received the petition. Bhim Sen's authority no longer appeared unchallenged. The new alliance against him was indeed formidable. Now, more than ever, he realised that the Indian government could be used to maintain him in power. It is worth noting that despite the non-interference of the Resident, the Indian Government had been a very important factor in Nepal and since the times of Bahadur Sah no prime Minister could neglect it.

The year 1835 opened with Bhim Sen well disposed to conciliate Indian Government by every practicable means and in return trying to secure the British support for the Thapas. He was ready to meet Hodgson's demands for a commercial treaty. The attitude of the Darbar became cooperative in apprehending and surrendering

30. P.C. October 9, 1834-No. 17.

31. P.C. October 9, 1834-No. 19.

32. P.C. December 19, 1834-No. 9.

33. P.C. July 20, 1835-No. 21.

dacoits. Hodgson, however, had made it very clear that he was not particularly disposed towards the Thapas and will definitely not support the Prime Minister against the King. Failing with the Resident, Bhim Sen tried to get in touch with the British authorities in London. In May 1835 a proposal was made to send a complimentary mission to London headed by General Mathbar Singh.<sup>34</sup>

There can be no doubt this step of Bhim Sen was taken with an intention highly injurious to his royal master. Since the death of Maharani Tripura Sundari, he was not secure against the young King and the Senior Maharani, and throughout 1832 to 1834 he tried by various means, short of force, abdication of the Maharaja. Having failed there, he wanted to use British support for the maintenance of his position. According to Assistant Resident A. Campbell, who later accompanied Mathbar Singh during his mission to India, the plan of Bhim Sen was to open negotiations with the Governor General for the removal of the Resident and retrocession of Kumaon.<sup>35</sup> In the event of his failure at Calcutta, Mathbar Singh was to proceed to England for the same purpose. In case all these attempts failed Bhim Sen wanted the British government to "grace Mathbar's return" in lieu of which he was ready, as a "show not in substance", to lift the restrictions imposed on the Resident and the British trade and to stop all military preparations,

Eventually, due to Resident's steadfast refusal to support these objectives, Bhim Sen wrote a letter to the President of the Board of Control hoping some "personal share in the small advantage." The Indian government was least prepared to be a party to such aims. It extinguished all the zeal of Darbar to despatch the mission to England. Mathbar's mission was confined to Calcutta.

Mathbar Singh's mission was a complete failure from Bhim Sen's point of view. Its failure, in fact, broke the well nourished impression in Nepal that the British were particularly well disposed towards Bhim Sen and the Thapas. It also encouraged the Maharaja and other factions to break Bhim Sen's position.

---

34. P.C. May 25, 1835-No. 34.

35. See a Memorandum prepared by Asstt. Resident A. Campbell, P. C. April 24, 1837-No. 82.



Attitude of the Indian government convinced Bhim Sen that he would not be supported against the King. As an alternative he tried to rouse the anti-British sentiments of the soldiery so as to maintain his tottering hold. Opposition against the Prime Minister steadily mounted, which pushed him more and more towards hostility with the British. He had, perhaps, come to the conclusion that exploitation of the Gorkha prejudices remained the only means to stay in power.<sup>36</sup> It did not, however, mean that Bhim Sen had finally decided to cast his lot with the war party. But the way he had now adopted was fraught with grave consequences. The number of army was raised to seventeen thousand and a professedly complimentary mission was despatched to Lahore in the beginning of 1837. The movements of the Resident and his suite were rigidly restricted. Attempts were also made to cripple the existing Indo-Nepalese trade. Bhim Sen hoped that thus harassed, the Resident will be forced to seek his protection and in turn fall in line with him.

Fall of Bhim Sen was not far to come. His power was thoroughly shaken and number of his enemies daily increased. His chief rivals, Kala Pandes, soon got an opportunity. Youngest son of the Maharaja died on July 24, 1837. The Pandes lost no time in spreading the rumour that the child had died of poisoning designed by Bhim Sen for his mother—the Senior Queen. In the confusion thus created the King grasped the opportunity of dismissing the Prime Minister and got him arrested.

Fall of Bhim Sen marked the end of an era in the history of the Anglo-Nepales, relations. So long as Bhim Sen controlled the affairs of Nepal, his strong hand kept the army in check. After him jingoism engulfed every party and even the Maharaja. In fact it will be nearer the truth to say that Bhim Sen had himself left this legacy. He had maintained an enormous standing army without a purpose consistent with the geographical position of Nepal. Trade and commerce were prevented from shaping the destiny of the nation and popular prejudice against the British had been nourished. Consequently, after him, very few were aware of the relative strength of Nepal and the British in India. Only Jung Bahadur in 1846 succeeded in bringing the country under his full control and giving new direction to the Nepalese foreign policy.

---

36. P.C. August 14, 1837-No. 34.

## THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN MEDIEVAL RAJASTHAN

by

DR. G. N. SHARMA, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT.

Reader in History, Rajasthan University, Jaipur.

### The position of the ruler :

In Rajasthan, kingship was in most cases hereditary. The ruler was, at times, in advance, nominated by his predecessor, but the formal succession was approved by the councillors, who were the leading nobles and the princes of the blood. Among notable instances of this kind of approval are the enthronement of Rana Pratap by the leading nobles, and the choice of Bhim Singh by the body politic of Marwar. Once a ruler accepted as their master the nobles and the people usually co-operated with him and regarded him as the wielder of the destiny of the State. With this recognition he would make himself responsible for all deeds-good and bad. This sort of responsibility earned for him a name. Around his person a halo of superhuman destiny was created. This is why the common way of addressing the rulers of Rajasthan was 'Shreeji' and 'Shree Huzur'. These were the adjuncts which revered them as a great being of their generation. 'Bhanu Tej', 'Deva' and 'Mahideva', etc., were other qualifying attributes which were used with the names of the rulers of Rajasthan, as being the counterpart of God on earth.

On account of occupying a privileged position, the actions of the rulers received wide acceptance as the command of God. This is why when the rulers of Rajasthan entered into matrimonial alliances with the Mughal emperors no voice of open resentment of the people against them ever arose. The fact was that the traditional glory and sacred position won for them a blind confidence and devoted following. With a view to associating them with the divinity and representing themselves as the supreme head of the State they adopted, as the State emblem, the *lingam* of Shiva in Mewar and form of eagle in Marwar—the signs of supreme power.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. G.N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 184-186.

**Functions of the rulers :**

From the foregoing account of the position of the rulers of Rajasthan we are led to believe that they were at the apex of the administrative set up of the State and held the titles of the Maharana, Maharaja, Maharao, etc. They exercised supreme civil, criminal and military powers within the jurisdiction of the States. In the absence of any written constitution and law, they enjoyed extensive powers. Of course, the customary law, conventions and the interference by the feudal lords were the moral restraints on their actions and policies. All the high officials of the State, including the *divan* and the *pradhan* were appointed by them, and they remained in the office at their sweet will.

The functions of the rulers in Rajasthan are further emphasized in the adoring phrases, '*go-Brahman-pratipal*' and '*maibapa*'. These phrases adequately explain that the rulers should make their supreme exertion in defending the cows and brahmins and should qualify themselves by having paternal love towards their subjects. The rulers thus exalted must naturally possess these requisite qualities for the fulfilment of their duties. In brief, the rulers of Rajasthan were vested with both temporal and religious powers, and as such no deed was beyond their authority.<sup>2</sup>

**Feudalism and Administration :**

Along with such a tribal suzerainty and strong monarchy there existed a powerful feudal order of the nobles which was always prepared to sacrifice its all for the ruling dynasties of its clan. Though this kind of institution, in theory, may be regarded as a negation of political power, it was one of the most powerful of institutions in Rajasthan which made the monarchy stable and strong. The entire structure of feudal order was so adjusted that a large number of men could join the banner of the rulers when a call for duty was made. The vassals were expected to pay regular tribute to their rulers and to assist them, even at a short notice, with their contingencies in need of wars. A review of several *parwanas* in the possession of the *Jagirdars* and the archival offices of Rajasthan shows that each *Jagirdar* enjoyed a particular area of land consisting of towns, villages and *Kheras*, and in return he was expected to supply a fixed quota of men and lead them to the battle-field. In brief, the feudal

2. Major Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

lords formed the backbones of the defence system of the States, and it was with their support and active participation that the rulers could exercise their power and undertake military expeditions against external or internal disturbances.<sup>3</sup>

When there was a period of peace the vassals were duty-bound to attend the court of their respective rulers and add grace to the ceremonies which were observed at the capitals. They had also to pay proper homage to their rulers and carry out the orders for the executions of the tasks assigned to them. They were bound to serve the rulers according to the terms of their holdings in times of peace and war. The higher status of the rulers is evident from the fact that the successions of the new *Jagirdars* were confirmed through the issuing of *hukmanama* by the rulers.<sup>4</sup>

However, these feudal lords were at full liberty to act in their own manner regarding the collection of duties and assessing land revenues within their estates. They were also free to exercise civil and criminal powers over their subjects and sub-vassals. But the rulers of the States preserved with them the power of interference as and when the actions of the *Jagirdars* were branded as undesirable. The *odhabahis* of Jodhpur, the *naginavadi records* of Udaipur and the *tajimi sardars files* of Bikaner, Kota and Jaipur preserve instances of demotions or confiscations of *jagirs* on account of the acts disapproved by the Maharajas. There are also instances, recorded in these documents, of sending a number of troopers by the order of the rulers, for a specific period, at the cost of the *jagirdars*, in order to mend their ways. Sometimes the *jagirs* were transferred from one *Jagirdar* to another *Jagirdar* for maintaining balance of power within the States. Amar Singh I of Mewar, Ajit Singh of Marwar and many others did it for keeping equilibrium within their kingdoms.<sup>5</sup>

But in certain cases such as, the minority of the rulers, the defence problem and the disputed succession the opinions of the

3. Arzi File, No. 1/5/jd. V.S. 1858; *Bhandar Mutfarkat* V.S. 1697; Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, Vol. III, p. 1.

4. *Rathor Daneshwar Vamshavali*, f. 330-338; *Parihar Khyat of India*, ff. 26-27; *Arji Bahi*, No. 6, p. 232; *Haqiqat Bhai*, No. 13, p. 464; *Khasa Ruqqa Bahi*, No. 2; *Kagzat Sardars, Bhandar Kota*, V.S. 1707-1718.

5. A letter from Ajit Singh to *Shiqdar* Dayal das dated 7th of the dark-half of *Chaitra* V.S. 1766, *Haqiqat Bhai*, No. 69; *Khasa Ruqqa Parwana Bahi*, No. 2; Tod, *Annals*, I, p. 409; Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, etc., p. 446.

*Jagirdars* were the factors to be counted. The Rawat of Salumbar and the Thakurs of Ahua and Pokran enjoyed the privilege of attesting the grants issued by the orders of the rulers of Mewar and Marwar. The *Thakur* of Bagri enjoyed an exceptional honour of putting the *tilak* on the forehead of the rulers of Marwar, with the blood drawn from his own thumb, on the occasion of a coronation. Of course, the existence of the feudal order sometimes became a source of trouble. Duda of Merta, as for example, set aside the allegiance he owed to the house of Marwar and assumed independence. Bika also undertook an expedition to Jangal as a part of his expansionist tendency adopted during the life time of his father Jodha.<sup>6</sup>

#### The Councillors, Ministers and other officials :

The states under absolute monarchies needed the help of gifted men to shoulder the burden of administration and share in the formulation of policy. In the early medieval period, as referred to in the *Sarnath Inscription*, there was a Council in Mewar consisting of the *Amatya*, *Sandhivigrahik* (minister in charge of peace and war), *Akshapatalik* (minister in charge of records), *Vandipati* and *Bhishakadhiraj* (Incharge medicine). In the *Eklinga Inscription* we find reference to the *Durga Raj* (the chief-keeper of the forts), the *mantri* (the confidential adviser), *Skandhavarik* (the commander of the forces), etc. The frequent warfares made it necessary that these office-holders should also function as military dignitaries. Hence, there was no clear cut division between civil and military officials. What was true in case of Mewar may not be true in case of other States, but it is certain that many of these and other officials, who figured as ministers for peace and war, generals, councillors and departmental officers, existed in one form or other in some of the major States in the early medieval times.<sup>7</sup>

The contact of the rulers of Rajasthan with the Mughals was a significant factor in the evolution of a new administrative system in the States. Many of the rulers of Rajasthan entered into alliances with Akbar and his successors, which resulted into the elaboration of the administrative machinery in certain departments. On many occa-

6. *Rathor Daneshwar Vamshavali*, f. 338, *Parihar Khyata of India*, ff. 26-27; *Haqiqat*, 27; G. N. Sharma, *Social Life in Medieval Rajasthan*, pp. 85-90;

7. *Bhawnagar Inscriptions*, vv. 35, 44 etc.

sions the Rajput rulers and princes attend the Mughal Court in person and saw with their own eyes the working of the administration. The rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Kota either acted as *Subedars* of the Mughal *Subas* or served in the Mughal army as important officers. This kind of their active participation made them familiar with the Mughal administrative structure in detail. Besides, many a parts of Rajasthan such as Nagor, Ajmer and Marwar (for sometime) remained directly under the Mughal control, where the entire administrative system was after Mughal pattern. These kinds of closer affinities of the Mughals and the Rajputs necessarily created a fair chance of adopting the Mughal pattern in Rajasthan, wherever a need was felt.

### The Pradhan :

Although the idea of the council of the early medieval days underwent a change with the efflux of time and need, yet the time-honoured designation of the *pradhan* remained unaltered. According to the administrative traditions of Rajasthan the *pradhan* was one who was next to the ruler. He exercised all powers—civil, financial, judicial and military. In Mewar the *pradhan* was an immediate subordinate to the *divan*, who was no other than the Maharana. Pancholi Himmat was the *pradhan* of Maharana Raimal. Girdhar Pancholi was the Chief-minister of Maharana Sanga. Udai Singh's *pradhan* was Shah Asha, while that of Rana Pratap was Shah Bhama. In Amar Singh's time Dungar Shah was designated *Mukhya Mantri* instead of the *pradhan*. According to Man Kavi Raj Singh's *pradhan* was styled *Mantri Pravar*.<sup>8</sup>

In Jodhpur the office of the *pradhan*, was hereditary in the House of Ahua. During the reign of Maharaja Bijaya Singh the office was transferred to the Chief of Asop. During the early years of Man Singh's reign the *Thakur* of Pokran occupied this office. He enjoyed all powers—civil and military. In Marwar and elsewhere the *pradhan* enjoyed the right to attest by his signature all grants of land made by the Maharaja. In the ceremonial procession, it was the *pradhan* who occupied the back seat on the *howdah* of the elephant on which the Maharaja was seated. In brief, the vast powers of the *pradhan* carried with them the vast responsibilities of the office. With

8. *Amarsar*, I, *Adhikar*, vv. 199 and 259; *Raj Vilas*, canto 2, vv. 67-72, f. 33; G. N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 189-190.

a view to making him a successful *pradhan* he was required to possess all the arts of an accomplished courtier, besides a thorough understanding of the various branches of the administration.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Divan :

In the absence of definite rules and regulations governing the appointment of the *divan*, it would be not fair to give accurate details of the position and function of the *divan*. In fact, in some of the States like Kota there was no *pradhan*. and as such the *divan* was the head of both civil and military services. After the Mughal contact even the rulers in Mewar designated themselves as *divanji* of God Eklinga. Since then all the orders from the Maharana used to bear the phrase '*divanji adeshatu*', that is by the order of the *divan*. However, in the States like Jodhpur, where there was a *pradhan* the *divan* was in charge of supervising the financial and revenue departments of the State only. All accounts of the collection of the revenue and the details of deposits in the treasury were submitted to him by the concerned officers of the various administrative units. If we closely compare his duties with those of the *divan* of the *Ain* we find that they more or less resemble. In view of heavy responsibilities he was usually assisted by one or two *naib divans* who looked after the treasury. The *divan* had a specific seal with his own name engraved.<sup>10</sup>

#### The Bakshi :

Next to the *divan* was an important post of the Bakshi who checked and passed the salary bills of all the officers of the States and the armed forces. Along with this function he was also in charge of taking the musters. The documents dealing with his functions reveal that a *bakshi* must be familiar with the diseases common among the animals. He was also required to know remedies of the diseases. At the time of war it was the duty of the *bakshi* to look after the wounded soldiers. The cure and care of such soldiers and animals was his concern. From the study of these functions there is every reason to assume that the *bakshi* belonged to the military department.<sup>11</sup>

9. *Haqiqat Bahi*, No. 37, p. 162, *Oudha Bahi*, No., p. 6 ; Tod, *Annals*, vol. I, p. 152.

10. *Haqiqat Bahi*, No. 10, p. 107; *Ain-i-Akbari*, (2nd ed.), p. 6.

11. *Havala Bhai*s, 19th century; *Toji Records*, Jaipur and Udaipur, 18th century; G.N. Sharma, *Social Life in Medieval Rajasthan*, p. 308.

**The Khan-i-Saman :**

From the *Dastri Records* of Jaipur and the *toji records* of Jaipur we learn that department of household was in charge of an officer styled *Khan-i-Saman*. The department purchased and stored all kinds of articles, needed for the State. It was expected of him that he should be a trustworthy officer and should have a fair knowledge of keeping accounts. His duties were just the same as were the duties of the *mir-suman* of the Mughal set-up. In fact, he was a chief executive officer responsible for the successful working of the various *karkhanas* under different *daroghas*. He exercised general supervision over the internal working of each *karkhana*. In Mewar we come across an important functionary, styled *kothari*, who had to purchase and store articles for several *karkhanas*.<sup>12</sup>

**The Kotwals :**

The officer in charge of peace and public security in Rajasthan was *kotwal*. He discharged duties most of which are now-a-days performed by Municipal boards. To maintain law and order within the State, to detect thieves, to regulate prices and check weights and measures, to operate census, to keep watch at night, etc., were the multifarious tasks entrusted to the *kotwal*. In those days it was the practice that no one moved out in streets after ten o'clock in the night. In case it was necessary to do so he had to keep a burning lamp or torch and should accompany a person of the same *muhalla* who was well known to the persons on duty of patrol, and who can stand responsible for his conduct, and if needed, who can identify him. This kind of precaution was taken to minimise the chances of violent crimes and thefts.<sup>13</sup>

**The Khazanchi :**

Another important officer was a treasurer who was styled as *khazanchi*. His appointment to this post was made on the integrity of his character and truthfulness. He should be person free from favour and prejudice for and against any person. It was his duty to put before his master the accounts of income and expenditure of the State occasionally. A competent *khazanchi* was one who could keep aside a reserve fund out of the daily income, so that such an

12. *Haqiqat Bhai*, No. 10; *Bhandar*, V.S. 1711-1725;

13. *Raj Vilas*, canto II, 131, f. 39 (b);

My article in *Dastri Records*, *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. I.



amount can be spent at the time of need. He was styled as *koshpati* in Mewar.<sup>14</sup>

#### Other departmental heads :

The other officers, somewhat inferior in status to those mentioned above, were the *daroga-i-Dakchowki* (head of the correspondence department), the *darogha-i-Sayar* (Collector of taxes), the *mushriff* (the revenue secretary), the *waqa-i-Navis* or News Reporter, the *darogha-i-Abdarkhana* (the *paneri* or keeper of water), the *darogha-i-Farashkhana* or In charge furniture and royal tents, the *darogha-i-naqqarskhana* or In charge music gallery, etc.<sup>15</sup>

#### The Pargana Administration :

The division of a State into units of administration was in vogue since the early medieval days. The inscriptions of the Chauhans, the Guhilots and the Rathors, not only testify to the existence of units within the States, but also throws light on the administrative pattern of the units variously known as the *gram*, the *mandal* and the *durga*. The head of the *gram* was styled as the *gramin* and that of a *durga* as *ataraksha* and *durgadhipati*. The *mandalpati* was designated after a *mandal*. After Akbar's occupation of Chitor, in 1568, it was made the *Sarkar* and which was divided into a number of *parganas*. After the treaty of peace of 1615 when the entire part of the north, north-east and central Mewar, which was under the Mughals, was handed over to the Rana the Mughal administrative units, were retained. The *Rampal*, *Inscription* of Chitor refers to the *parganas* of Mandalgarh, Phulero and Bhinavda. The copper-plates of Rana Jagat Singh and Raj Singh refer to several villages which were within the *parganas* of Rajnagar, Pur, Arya, Kanerá, Rashmi, Sahada, Kapsin and Badnor.<sup>16</sup>

As regards Marwar, it seems that it was Sher Shah who introduced the units of *Shiqq* in the State during his temporary occupation of Marwar. In the time of Akbar Udai Singh adopted Mughal pattern in terming groups of villages of Marwar into six *parganas*. The

14. *Haqiqat Bahi*, V.S. 1780-1800, etc.,

15. *Haqiqat Bahi*, V.S. 1780-1800, etc; *Dastur Kamwar* V.S. 1780-1790, 1800 etc; *Kagazat Karkhanezat*, Udaipur, 18th century; *Toji Records*, Jaipur, 18th century;

16. *Chirva Inscription*, V.S. 1330; *Rampal Inscription*, 1621; *Ain-i-Akbari*, (P.T.), Vol. I, p, 286.

number further rose to twenty-one during Ajit Singh's time. Bhati Govind Das, later on, introduced some of the important traits of Mughal administration in the State. In Jaipur the *pargana* unit was introduced by Raja Man Singh. In Kota too the *pargana* units were introduced from Maharao Madho Singh's time.<sup>17</sup>

We do not know exactly the designations of the *pargana* officers. They varied from State to State and time to time. It is confirmed from the *Haqiqat Bahis* that there were two important officers in a *pargana*, namely, the *Hakim* and *Faujdar*. The *Hakim* was the supreme head of the *pargana*. He exercised both executive and judicial powers under the direct control of the ruler. He was appointed directly either by the Maharaja by a *khasa Ruqqa* or by the orders of the *pradhan*. The day to day administration of the *pargana* was his concern. In the military affairs too he was the final authority.<sup>18</sup>

The *faujdar*, as the designation signifies, was in charge of police and army. His main function was guarding the area of the *pargana* and keeping the local militia well-equipped. It was his duty to assist the *amalguzar*, *amin* and *amil*, whosoever he may be, in the realisation of revenue if the cultivators showed reluctance in paying it. Under his authority there were *thanadars* posted at various *thanas* covering the *parganas* to discharge policing functions. Their main duty was to trace the whereabouts of thieves and punish the wrongdoers.<sup>19</sup>

In some of the extensive *parganas* there were *odhedars* also who used to help the *Hakim* in administrating the area under his jurisdiction. Besides these there were other important officers, namely, the *shiqdar*, the *amin* and the *qanungo*, in a *pargana*. They were of course, assisted by a *patwari* and a treasurer. A numerous staff of *shahanas* and peons were also attached to each *pargana*. Of these the *qanungo* was a very important official who maintained accounts of the *pargana*. A fixed share of certain cesses, and a lump

17. *Hat bahi*, No. 4, pp. 228-229; *Report Jodhpur Administration*, p. 2; *Records, Kota Bhandar*, V.S. 1720-25.

18. *Haqiqat Bahi*, 1887; *Records Kota, Bhandar*, 18th century.

19. *Havala Bahi*, 19th century (ppj).

sum of seasonal wages, and a fixed amount for extra written work constituted his remuneration.<sup>20</sup>

Although the pattern of the *pargana* administration exactly conformed to that of the *pargana* of the Mughals, yet the functions and the designations of the officials corresponded with the officials of both the *Sarkar* and the *pargana* of the Mughal empire. The simple reason for doing so was for achieving efficiency and good government even without adopting the unit of the *sarkars* in small States.

### The Village Administration.

Below the *pargana* was the village. The village, as it is to-day, was the lowest administrative unit. We have already noticed that in the early medieval days the village officer was known as *gramik* from the *gram* or village to which he was attached. Gradually the office of the *gramik* was identified with the person of a *patwari* who became a very important officer by virtue of his being related to the *patta* or the papers concerning assessment and collection of revenue. The other officers who assisted the *patwari* were *kanvaria* (guard of the fields), the *tafedar* (keeper of accounts of the *darbar*), the *talvati* (one who measured and weighed the produce), the *shanaha* (incharge of the collection and controlling duties) and the *chaukidar* (the watchmen).<sup>21</sup>

No account of the administrative structure of a village would be complete without a brief note on the time-honoured institutions by which a vast majority of rural population was administered. There are evidences of the existence of village assemblies called village *panchayats* presided over by the village headmen and represented by important elders of the villages. These bodies decided disputes of all kinds—civil, criminal, religious and social, arranged for watch and ward, managed education, regularised irrigation, etc. Besides, the caste *panchayats*, which concerned the welfare of the members of the individual castes were also functioning in their own way. Both these institutions—village *panchayats* and caste *panchayats* functioned simultaneously without coming in conflict with each other. The working of these bodies regarding the socio-economic problems of the villagers

20. My Article, *Political and Social Condition of Rajasthan in the 19th century, as revealed from Havala-Bahis, 1960* (uju).

21. *Havala Bahis*, V.S. 1900-1911.

become so harmonious that it assumed a general administrative system in which no individual institution seemed isolated. That is, the caste *panchayats* and the village *panchayats* worked in co-operation in a manner that both the institutions became the integral part of the village administration. This is why the decision of these *panchayats* were usually respected by the official machinery and the rulers of the States.<sup>22</sup>

### The Revenue System.

Although the revenue system varied from State to State, yet the basic division of land under *khalsa*, *havala*, *Jagir*, *Bhom* and *sasan* remained the same. The *kalsa* land was directly under the *divan* for revenue purposes. The *havala* villages in Marwar were looked after by the *havaladar*. The *Jagir* villages were directly under *jagirdars*, but the *hakim* of the *pargana* was responsible to see that the fixed tribute has been deposited by the *jagirdar* in the State treasury. He had also to see that besides the regular tribute the *peshkash* is being offered by *jagirdar* time and again. The *sasan* lands were free from the direct revenue control of the concerned officers, but the cases of disputes of such lands were referred to the *hakim* of the region. The *Bhom* lands were given to the persons who had rendered important services to the State. The lands conquered and successively enjoyed for generations were also categorised as *Bhom*. Their owner paid only a fixed sum termed as *faujbal*. Such lands were subject to resumption in case of grave offence committed by the *Bhomiyas*,

No uniform system of assessment of land was in vogue in Rajasthan. It varied from State to State, *pargana* to *pargana* and *jagir* to *jagir*. The *battai* or division of crops was the usual method of ascertaining the share of the government and the cultivators. *Lata* mode or the thrashing out the corn on the spot was adopted in some *pargana*, specially in case of the divergence of the opinion of the party which assessed the crop. *kunta* was another mode under which the total amount of the harvest was calculated while the crop was standing. A fixed rate, called *mukata*, in cash or kind was also charged from the cultivator. An additional cess called *bigori* was also levied over and above the actual collection from the farmer to meet out the expenses

22. *Hatundi Inscription*, V.S. 1335;  
*Jain Insertion*, Vol. I, Nos. 894, 897;  
*Kanhadha Prabandha*, IV, v.40.

G. N. Sharma, "*Corporate life and organization of villages in medieval Rajasthan*," *Rajasthan Research Institute*, 1960.

liable to be incurred during the process of assessment. One-third or one-fourth was the accepted share of the States in Rajasthan.<sup>23</sup>

### Land tenure

The lands of a village partially or wholly were the property of those who cultivated them. Basically they were classed as *bapi* or lands of ancestral inheritance from the *bap* or father. Of course, their title was confirmed either by the ruler or *jagirdar* as the case may be. These lands became the perpetual inheritance of the cultivator, and could not, except under extraordinary circumstances, be resumed. In case of the death of the original holder of the land it was necessary that the new holder, who has inherited such land by right, should get his name entered in the register. This practice is termed *dakhala*. Only in case of the death of the owner who died without any heir land was appropriated by the ruler and made over to any other party. The feudal aristocracy too held its land by right of companionship to the ruling prince. The nobles paid yearly *rekh* for the lands held and were bound to offer their services to the ruler as and when demanded. In the event of the death of a *jagirdar* the right of the ownership of the *jagir* was conferred upon the successor on payment of the *hukmanamah* or the succession tax.<sup>24</sup>

### Sources of State revenue :

In addition to the land revenue, the *khata Bahis* give the list of many taxes and cesses which contributed to the income of the State. Some of them were the *chulabarar* (the tax per house), *zakat* (tax on articles imported); *anqah* (tax on adults), *kawari* (house-tax), *chasmari* (tax on the use of pasture land) and others. In addition to them there were many other taxes such as the *Sawar kharch*, *duna fuuzbal*, *sayar* etc. Besides these the States income was derived from the tribute from feudatary chiefs, fees, fines, salt, trade, irrigation,<sup>25</sup> etc.

23. *Hat Bahi* No. 3, p. 42; *Hat Bahi* No. 4, pp. 94-97;

*Sanad Bahi*, No. 63, p. 16, No. 108, p. 119;

G.N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 190-92;

G. N. Sharma, *Social Life in Medieval Rajasthan*, pp. 290-293;

24. *Hat Bahis* No. 57-51, pp. 47-111; *Jama Kharcha* File No. 43, Jodhpur; *Zakat Kagzat Kota*, V.S. 1900-1712, etc.

25. *Sanad Bahi*, No. 105, p. 581; *Hat Bahi* No. 4; *Jama Bandi Kakzat*, Kota, V.S. 1700-1718; G. N. Sharma, "Political and Social Condition of Rajasthan in the 19th century, as revealed from *Havala Bahis*, *Journal of Research of the Universities of Uttar Pradesh*, 1960.

**Judicial organisation :**

The judicial organisation of medieval Rajasthan was modelled after that of the Hindu system of old with such modifications as they were needed on account of the Mughal contact. The rulers, in fact, were the fountain of justice. They administered justice themselves being guided by convention, common sense and shastric injunctions. The *darndapati* was styled as *daogha-i-Adalat* in Jodhpur and Bikaner. There were Qazis to decide civil and criminal cases in important towns like Ajmer, Nagour, Mandal and Jaipur which happened to remain for sometime under Mughal control. In the *parganas* the *hakim* performed judicial functions. Appeals against the decisions of the *hakims* were to be laid before the *dasogah-i-Adalat*. In villages the *Panchayats* decided all kinds of cases religious, civil and criminal. The cases were also decided by exposing the suspected party to the trial of ordeal. Other judicial methods adopted were punishments and tests of curious nature.

Some works which prescribed the Code of conduct of the officers laid down that a judge should be a man of character. For administering justice he had to refer to the Hindu *Shastras* and *Manusmriti*. To justify his position he was supposed to be a scholar of Hindu Law and should have an interest in studying the *shastras* or hearing them from the learned *pandits*.<sup>26</sup>

**Military organisation in Rajasthan :**

The carvings of the temples of Chitor, Eklingji, Mandor Vijayasthambha, Osian and certain literary works lead us to suggest that the armies of the rulers in Rajasthan, during the early medieval age, consisted of charioteers, infantry, cavalry and elephant and camel troops. These sources further inform us that they were armed with bows, arrows, spears, lances, dagger, shields, and slings. It seems that simple wrappings for the loin and narrow pieces of cloth round the shoulder constituted the general uniform of the soldiers. The warriors of position had additional headgear.

We have little information about the maintenance of a large standing army by the rulers of Rajasthan, but this much is certain that all able-bodied citizens were ready to serve in the army. In fact the major part of the army consisted mostly of levies from vassal

26. *Amarsar*, I, v. 34; *Raj Vilas*, canto II, v. 131; *Jagat Singh Kavya*, canto 7, v. 48; *Hat Bahi* No. 4, pp. 57-58, 229 etc.,

chiefs and volunteers from various communities which could be called on duty at a short notice. This at least supplemented the absence of the standing army.<sup>27</sup>

But as the princes of Rajasthan began to serve in the Mughal army after concluding peace with Akbar there appeared radical changes both in the military organisation and in the uniform of the soldiers. The use of artillery, muskets, cannons, long swords, double edged dagger, small sized shields and coat-of-arms were used as war implements. Several paintings preserved in the *Pustak Prakash Library*, Jodhpur, the *Saraswati Bhandar*, Udaipur and the *Pothi Khan*, Jaipur preserve the *Ramayana* paintings in which Rama and Lakshmana have been painted as Mughal warriors with uniform and equipments befitting a Mughal general. The warriors of Ravan's side have been depicted in helmet, iron chained cover and iron-mask over the body and face. The *khatas* of *karkhejat* record the purchase of these implements, which corroborates the pictorial evidence.<sup>28</sup>

The cavalry line sculptured on the outer body of Jaswant Singh's *deval*, Jagat Singh's temple of Jagadish and Raj-Singh's *bund* of Raj Samudra testify that due to Mughal contact greater reliance was laid on cavalry line in place of infantry. One of the duties ennumerate in the *Odha Bahis* of Jodhpur regarding the *Bakshi* is that he should be conversant in looking after the horses and mares, and should fully know the diseases and remedies of horses and mares. His one of the functions was also to establish an organized stables. This clearly indicates that cavalry began to be regarded as an important branch of the military organisation in Rajasthan.

The early rulers of Mewar in respect of introducing new changes in warfare were rather conservative. They had firm belief in the traditional method of swordsmanship and display of various feats of chivalry. But due to the Mughal influence, later on, they had also to make vital changes in their method and organisation of warfare. Instead of choosing their defence in forts they began to gather their forces in the defiles, passes and hilly regions where the heavy and slow moving artillery could not reach with ease. The selection of Udaipur as capital by Rana Udai Singh at the time of Akbar's invasion is a case in point. It was a new strategy of counter-

27. *Kumbhalgarh prashasti*, V.S. 1517;

28. *Jama Kharcha Bahis*, Bikaner, Jodhpur, and Udaipur 18th century.

acting the plans of the enemies and was a new method of defence against the attacks of the Mughals. In Marwar also the Rathors adopted specific plan of fighting defensive and offensive wars against Aurangzeb and his successors.<sup>29</sup>

As regards the supervision of the army, formerly the entire force, consisting of footmen, horses and elephants, was led by one Commandant, but gradually specialized supervision of the different branches of the army was entrusted to different heads. The Chief-Commandant co-ordinated various branches and units to introduce efficiency.<sup>30</sup>

The Mughal influence further introduced new changes in the army. The use of artillery at the battle of Haldighati referred to by the authors of the *Raj Ratnakar* and the *Amarkavya Vamshavali* was a new technique of war adopted by the *Sisodias*. Heavy and light cannon pieces preserved in the forts of Chitor, Gagran and Jodhpur, mostly casted after Mughal pattern, or brought from Barhatpur, Ahmadnagar and other places, were used as defensive weapons for the protection of forts and towns against the raids of the enemies.

Similarly, owing to the growing power of the nobles and the increasing menace of the Maratha depredations, the rulers of Rajasthan were compelled to recruit a special force of trusted Rajputs and foreign mercenaries, including the Afghans, Rohillas, Sindhias and Purbias.<sup>31</sup>

In the military history of Rajasthan the forts also played an important role. Maharana Kumbha and Sanga built up a defensive line of forts to strengthen their position. Gradually, when forts were given up as the main source of defence, their importance was never minimized. Rana Jagat Singh in spite of repeated warnings from Shah Jahan tried to repair the fort of Chitor as a defensive

29. *Raj Ratnakar*, Canto 7, v. 15;  
*Amar Kavya Vamshavali*, Folio 45;  
*Raj Vilas*, Canto 8, ff. 102-111;  
*Ajitodaya*, *Yudhavarmana*.

30. *Amarsar*, I, v. 199.

31. *Amarsar*, I, v. 235;  
*Khasa Ruzqa Parwana Bahi*, No. 68, p. 196;  
*Sanad Bahi*, No. 7, p. 128;  
*Haqiqat Bahi*, No. 7, p. 48;  
*Kakzat Imarat*, *Kota Bhandar*, 17th century.



measure. From the *pargana Bahis* of Jodhpur it seems that the Rathors during the invasions of the Mughals counted their defence on forts. Mukand Singh Hada made special provision in his budget for repairs of the forts. We learn that the chief officer in charge of the forts was a *kiledar*. He was assisted by the *Chelas, gulams, darhans*, porters, *chowkidars*, black-smiths, guards etc., who were vigilant to face any eventuality. For the purpose of safety the gates of the forts were closed after sun-set, and were not opened in any case without the permission of the *kiledar* who kept the keys of all the gates and minor door-ways. It was also customary for the *kiledar* to stock provisions of war and food which may last for several months. In the forts of Chitor the stock of salt, in Gagron that of *gur* and in Jodhpur that of shells, belonging to the medieval age, has been discovered in our own days.<sup>32</sup>

Although the administrative structure in Rajasthan suffered from several drawbacks, yet the great merit attending upon it was that the village administration and the governmental machinery were never in isolation. They endeavoured to promote a sense of co-operation, welfare and prosperity of the community. This is why in spite of so many convulsions that Rajasthan had to face it remained a unit, preserving everything local in essence and spirit. This kind of stamina bound by tradition and experience left a lasting impress on the present administration in many a spheres. Of course, it suffered from the disadvantage of being weak essentially, as it was a centralized monarchical system, depending much on the efficiency of the ruler.

---

32. *Haqiqat Bahis*, Nos. 10 and 18, pp. 44, 384.

# ORIGIN OF THE PARAMARAS

By

JAI NARAYAN ASOPA

*Lecturer in History,*

University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

There are a number of theories about the origin of the Paramaras. Most of them have been quoted by D.C. Ganguli in his history of the Paramaras and he has added one of his own to them. Our purpose here is to re-examine them all in the light of the inscriptions and literature available to us about the Paramaras and finally to give our own views.

The First theory is that the Paramaras are Gurjaras. Campbell<sup>1</sup> seems to be the first writer to point it out. On the basis of Watson's<sup>2</sup> conclusion he accepts that Chavadas originated from Vikramaditya of the Paramara clan. It may be said here that Watson himself bases it on a Gujarati tradition corroborated by no historical evidence. Further Campbell<sup>3</sup> taking the Chavadas (Chapas) as Paramaras says that in Bombay Gazetteer 1896, Vol. I, Pt. I on page 138, there is a reference to the Chavadas being Gurjaras. We would quote here the above foot note verbatim to make it clear that there is nothing to indicate the assumption. The passage runs thus "The inscription calls Chapa the founder of the dynasty. The name is old. A king Vyaghraraja of the Chap Vamsa is mentioned by the astronomer Brahma-Gupta as reigning in Saka 550 (A.D. 628) when he wrote his book called Brahma Sphuta Siddhanta. The entry runs 'In the reign of Shri Vyaghramukha of the Sri Chapa dynasty, five hundred and fifty years after the Saka King having elapsed.'<sup>4</sup> This argument of Campbell is evidently not sound.

The second argument which he advances is that the Gurjara Osvals are Paramaras. He has taken up this information from

1. Bombay Gazetteer 1901 Vol. IX, pt. I, page 485.
2. Watson in I.A. IV p. 145.
3. Bombay Gazetteer 1901 Vol. IX, pt. I, p. 488.
4. Bombay Gazetteer 1891 Vol. I Pt. I page 138 f. n. 1.

transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society Vol. III p. 352. It may be said that Osvals are named after a village Osian or Upakesapur of old. If the osvals are called Gurjara Osvals, it would only indicate that they were living in the territory known as Gurjaratra.<sup>5</sup> Eastern Marwar was called Gurjaradesa or Gujaratra in the classical and post classical period and that the Gurjara Pratihara Kingdom included Osian is proved by an inscription<sup>6</sup> at Osian. But the Paramaras did not live in this territory in this period. Moreover in the 325 branches of Osvals counted in the Census of 1891<sup>7</sup>, Paramara does not figure.

D. R. Bhandarkar<sup>8</sup> supports Campbell and draws our attention to the fact that "the Firojpur Gurjaras of the Punjab have a tradition that they came from Darnagar (Dhara) in the South. As Dhara was from the beginning the seat of the Paramaras it is very likely that the Firojpur Gurjaras were a collateral branch of the former." He further argues that as all the four clans viz. the Chahamanas, the Chalukyas, the Paramaras, and the Pratiharas claim descent from the Agnikunda (Fire-fit), it may be assumed that they belonged to one and the same race. Further, believing that the Pratiharas can undoubtedly be treated as Gurjaras on the basis of the Rajore Stone Inscription E. I. Vol. III p. 266, he thinks that the three other Agnikunda, clans can be treated as Gurjara. A.F.R. Hornle<sup>9</sup> supports this view.

Now as far as Firojpur Gurjaras coming from Darnagar in the South is concerned it may be noted that this area was under the Gurjaras before it passed into the hands of the Paramaras so it is not necessary to assume that they were a collateral branch of the Paramaras. As far as the Pratiharas' Gurjara origin is concerned, we think Gurjara or Juzr to be a territory round about river Jozri in Marwar.<sup>10</sup> Thus the Gurjara origin of the Pratiharas is geographical and not racial. It was again Campbell<sup>11</sup> who supported the theory of the Gurjara (Khazar) migration to India under their great

5. Bhoja Pratiharas Daulatpura Ins. of V. S. 900 E. I. V p. 211.

6. Osian Ins. of V.S. 1013 Nahar Jain Lekha Sangraha pt. I p. 193.

7. Report Mardumsumari Raj Marwar 1891 pt. III, p. 408-409.

8. J. Bo. Br. R.A.S. Vol. XXI, pp. 428-29.

9. J.R.A.S., 1905 p. 31.

10. University of Rajasthan Studies, Arts 1962-63 p. 8.

11. Bombay Gazetteer 1901 vol. IX, pt. I, p. 476.

King Vakhtang (A.D. 469-500). But the whole story is based upon a Georgian tradition. It has no historical evidence to corroborate it. Thus the Gurjara origin of the Paramaras is simply a myth.

Second theory is that the Paramaras are of the Hun extraction. Tod says that in ancient times there was Raja Hun who is said to be of the Paramara race<sup>12</sup>. Firstly it is based on hearsay and secondly Tod has given the lists of the 36 races of the Rajputs in which the Huns are mentioned separately from the Paramaras and the other branches of the Rajputs, hence no serious note can be taken of this hearsay evidence which does not bear out evidence.

The third theory is of divine origin. Campbell<sup>13</sup> has narrated a story from hardic stock that once Indra made an image of *durva* grass (*panicum dactylon*), sprinkled over it the water of life, and threw it into the fire pit. Next the Sanjivan mantra (life giving spell) was repeated, whereupon a mace-bearing figure sprang from the flames, shouting "Mar, Mar" ("Slay, slay"). He was given the name "Paramara" ('Slayer of the enemy') and received Abu, Dhar, and Ujjain as his heritage. According to Mukji<sup>14</sup>, the bard of the khichi-Chauhan the Pawar (Paramara) originated from the essence of Siva'. Both the evidences are self-contradictory and not worthy of belief.

The fourth theory is that of the Rastrakuta origin of the Paramaras. D. C. Ganguli says that an inscription, dated V. S. 1005=948 A.D. of the reign of Siyaka II was discovered in Harsola in the Ahmedabad District of Gujarat. It is the earliest known record of the dynasty and runs as follows:—

“Parama-bhattaraka-maharajadhiraja-paramaes'vara-Srimad—  
Amoghavarsa-deva padanudhyata-parama-bhattaraka-maharajadhira-  
ja-paramaes'vara-s'rimad-Akalavarsadeva-prthvivallabha-s'rivallabha-  
narendra-padanam !

Tasmin kule kalmasa-mosa-dakse-jatah pratapagnihutari-paksah  
V (B) appaiya-rajeti nrpah prasiddhas tasmāt suto bhud anu Vairi-  
simhaś drpt-ari-vanita-Vaktracandra v(b)imv(b)a-kalamkata no

12. Annal and Antiquities of Rajasthan 1873. Vol. II, p. 422.

13. B. G. 1901 IX p. 485, quoted by Ganguli on p. 2.

14. A.S.I. (Cunnigham) II p. 255; quoted by Ganguli on p. 2.

dhauta yasya Kirtyapi Hara hasavadataya durvvara-ripu-bhupalara-ramgaika-nayakah nrpah-Sri-Siyakas tasmāt kula-kalpadrumo bhavat<sup>15</sup>.

D. C. Ganguli has summarised it thus :—

“Parama-bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Parames’vara Akalavarsa-deva Prthvivallabha meditated upon the feet of Parama bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Amoghavarsa-deva. In the renowned family of that sovereign was born the King Vappaiyadeva, who was efficient in eradicating crime and who burnt his enemy by the flame of his power. His son and successor was the famous Vairisimha, who was followed by Siyaka, a brave warrior invincible to his enemies in battle”<sup>16</sup>.

He further says that Akalavarsa, in whose family Bappaiyaraja was born, is evidently the Rashtrakuta Akalavarsa Krishna III King of Mandyakheta<sup>17</sup>. His last date is 951 A.D.

Dasharatha Sharma<sup>18</sup> has given a number of arguments against this theory. Firstly Padmagupta, who flourished in the time of Munja who was in the throne of Malwa in 974 A.D. just within 23 years of Krishna III’s passing away, in his Navasahasankacharita does not mention the above lineage but instead mentions their origin from Abu. Secondly it is very difficult to place Bappaiyaraja and Vairisimha between Krishna III and Siyaka II who was a contemporary of the above mentioned Rashtrakuta ruler. Thirdly from the grammatical point of view something seems missing after the description of the first dynasty. This seems to be the cause of the confusion. Fourthly the editors of the inscription K. N. Dikshit and D. V. Diskalkar propose that probably Siyak II might be the son of some Rashtrakuta princess and to show her lineage this description might have been given there. Dasharatha Sharma completes the first Sanskrit passage by adding ‘pravardhamana-Kalyana-Viyayarajye’. Thus he makes Paramaras feudatories of the Rashtrakutas. Some more arguments can be added to a few quoted above. Firstly the inscriptions of the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta are in Kannada as

15. E.I. XIX p. 237.

16. Ganguli p. 8.

17. Ibid, p. 9.

18. Rajasthan Bharati, July 1951, No. 2, p. 7.

they hailed from the Kannada area into Maharashtra where as all the inscriptions of the Paramaras are in Sanskrit. Secondly they originated from a family which was efficient in delivering from Sin ('Kalmasa-mosa-dakse'). This edifying adjective is more fit for a Brahman or Brahma-kshata family. Thirdly the Paramaras and Rashtrakutas (Rathors) inter marry hence they cannot belong to the same family as the Rajputs do not marry in their clan. For their intermarriage we have the instance of Pabu Rathor marrying a lady called Sodhi (of the Paramara clan)<sup>19</sup>. Thus the Rashtrakuta origin of the Paramaras is unacceptable.

The fifth theory is that propounded by Lassen.<sup>20</sup> He thinks that the Paramaras (Purwar & Power) are the Porourai mentioned by Ptolemy. Ptolemy has mentioned a place and people by the name of Porourai<sup>21</sup>. Burgess<sup>22</sup> objects to this identification on the basis that the Porourai of Ptolemy are a people and not a family like the Paramaras and secondly that no district is known by their name. Ganguli<sup>23</sup> accepts these objections. In this case the attention may be drawn to Patnarayana's inscription<sup>24</sup> of V.S. 1344 where Paramara jati (clan) has been referred to. Secondly Purnapala's Vasantgarh inscription<sup>25</sup> of V. S. 1099 may be referred to where Paurala courtesans, bacchanals, and heroes of Vatapura (Sirohi Distt.) have been described. This town was at that time under the Paramaras and as all the people of that place are called by the name Paurala the Paramaras cannot be excluded. Secondly Porourai of Ptolemy seems to be Pragvata of the later Sanskrit inscriptions from which the Porval<sup>26</sup> a merchant class of Rajasthan takes its own name. Thus it seems probable that the Paramaras were Porourai of Ptolemy.

The sixth theory is that they originated from Paramara who was born from the fire pit of Vasistha at Abu. This theory is first

19. Rajasthan Bharati, July 1951, No. 2, p. 79.

20. Ind-Atterthumsk, III, p. 822 quoted by Ganguli, p.8 f. n.

21. M.C. Crindle's Ancient India as described by Ptolemy 1927 Ed. p. 164-65.

22. I.A. XXXVI, p. 166.

23. Ganguli p. 8 f. n.

24. I-A. XLV p. 77.

25. E.I. IX. p. 14.

26. Nagari Pracharini Patrika part II p. 336; G.H. Ojha History of Rajputana Vol. I, 1927 Ed. p. 305 f. n. I.

mentioned by Padmagupta in his Navasanaska charita<sup>27</sup> and then followed by others.<sup>28</sup> Some inscriptions mention that the person who sprang from fire pit was Dhumaraja<sup>29</sup> or Dhaumaraja<sup>30</sup>. G.H. Ojha<sup>31</sup> is of the opinion that the name Dhumaraja (smoke-king) might have led Padmagupta to the fire-pit imagery. But there seems to be more truth in the fire-pit origin than an imagery. Tod,<sup>32</sup> Crooke<sup>33</sup> and Smith<sup>34</sup> see in it the purgation of the foreign tribes. B.N. Reu<sup>35</sup> without producing any evidence imagines the purgation of a clan of Kshatriyas whose forefathers had embraced Buddhism. In reference to their fire-pit origin it may be said that they are called Agni-vamshis ( fire-born) by the bards. We know of Solar and Lunar Kshatriyas in Ancient times but for the first time we come to know of the Agni-vamshis and the Paramaras are one among them.

The seventh theory is that the Paramaras are of the Brahma-kshatra kula (Brahmana & Kshatriya family). Halayudha a contemporary of Padmagupta in his 'Pingala Sutravritti' mentions Raja Munj of the Paramara dynasty belonging to Brahma-Kshatra kula.<sup>36</sup> B.N. Reu<sup>37</sup> explains it as combined Brahma and Kshatriya dynasty. In the same paragraph he has called them a clan of Kshatriyas whose forefathers had accepted Buddhism. His explanation is self contradictory unless we accept the theory that after their recognition as Kshatriyas they became Brahmanas. G.H. Ojha<sup>38</sup> has come out with the theory that in ancient times Brahma-kshatra word has been used

27. Sarga xi vv. 64-76.

28. Udaipur pras'asti of Udayaditya of about 1072 A.D. (E.I.I. p. 236) Arthuna Ins. of Chmudaraja of V.S. II 36 (E. I. XIV p. 298) Naravarmadeva's inscription of 1161 V.S. (E. I. II p. 180) Visadadevas Jalor Ins. of 1174 V.S. (I.A. LXII p. 41) Vastupal Tejpal's inscription of 1293 V.S. (Asiatic Researches Vol. 16 p. 320; Bhavnagar Inscriptions p. 174) and Vimal's inscription of 1378 V.S. (E.I. ix p. 148).

29. Solanki Bhimdeva II's Abu Inscription of V.S. 1287 (Bhavnagar Inscriptions p. 218).

30. Patnarayana's Inscription of 1344 V.S. (I.A. XLV p. 77).

31. History of Rajputana Vol. I 1927 Ed. p. 67.

32. Annals and Antiquities for Rajasthan Vol. I reprinted 1957 p. 76.

33. Quoted by Smith in his Early History of India, 3rd Ed. p. 41

34. Early History of India, 3rd Ed. p. 412

35. Indian culture III No. 2, p. 290

36. ब्रह्मचक्रकुलीनः प्रलीनसामन्तचक्रनुतस्वरणः । सकलसुकृतैकपुञ्जः श्रीमान्मुञ्जशिचरं जयति ॥

37. Indian culture III No. 2, p. 290

38. History of Rajputana Vol. I, 1927 Ed. p. 66

for those royal families who had the qualities of both Brahmatva and Kshatratva or for those whose progeny had become Brahmanas having been kshatriya before. We have not come across any reference which would show that any Brahmana group derives its origin from the Paramaras. Now only two possibilities remain with us that either they possessed the virtues of both or they became kshatriyas having been Brahmanas erstwhile. The subjects learnt by the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas were the same in ancient India. The Brahmanas could take up to arms in difficult times says Manu. The Sungas, the Satvahanas, the Kadambas and the Pallavas are the examples to the point. The Kshatriyas, though they learnt the Vedas and could sacrifice for themselves, they could not preside over the sacrifices for others. If they attained this status that would lead to their Brahmanisation, we have the examples of Vishnuvridha and Harita attaining it in the Ikshvaku dynasty and Visvamitra and Arishta-sena in the Puru dynasty but no such examples are available to us in the historic times. It would show that the practice had become obsolete. The only other alternative left to us is that they took up to arms just like the dynasties mentioned above.

There is no contradiction in the geographical basis taken by Lassen, fire-ogin by Padmagupta, and Brahma-Kshatra origin by Halayudha. They were probably the residents of Pragvata and were known as Paurala after their territory which had Aravali range as its defence (vata) in the east (Prak). Their centre was Arbuda (Mt. Abu). The first man of their dynasty was born out of the sacrificial fire of Vasistha and was named Paramara or Dhumraraja or Dhaumaraja. The last two names would again stress their relation with fire. In combination with their Brahma-kshatra-kula origin, it would suggest that they were fire worshipping Vasistha Brahmanas who took up to arms.

Our contention is that they were fire-worshipping Vasistha Brahmanas of Arbuda territory who took up to arms and achieved success in killing the enemies. Vasantagadh inscription of V.S. 1099 corroborates this view when it says that through the anger of Vasistha was produced a youth who achieved efficiency in killing.<sup>39</sup> The Patnarayana's inscription<sup>40</sup> of V.S. 1344 also mentions that Vasistha

39. E.I. 1 x p. 12

“वशिष्ठकोपाञ्जितः कुमारः प्रमारतामवाप यः ॥”

40. I.A. XLV p. 77.



gave Paramara clan to the person born from his fire-pit. This would prove our contention that the Porourai were a people living near Abu, that the Vasishtha Brahmanas were one of them, and that in difficult circumstances (perhaps at the time of Arab invasion of Rajasthan) they led the defence by taking up Sastra (arms) in place of sastra (books) and thus achieved Paramarata (efficiency in killing the enemies).

It may be mentioned here that Powar is a geographical name which is borne by a number of communities who lived in this territory irrespective of the fact whether they were Hindus or Musalmans members of the four-fold division or the tribals.<sup>41</sup> Thus the conclusion is that they were Porourai or Powar geographically. Out of them, the Brahmanas of the Vasishtha's gotra (Sept.) achieved Paramarata and became Rajas, their progeny was naturally treated as Rajputs and included among the thirtysix royal races of the Rajputs.

---

41. Mardumshumari raja Marwar 1891 Third part.  
pp. 112, 128, 129, 131, 230, 428, 478, 481, 486, 505 etc.

# THE ART OF WAR AND INDIAN HISTORY

*by*

DR. S. N. PRASAD

In our own history, the overall effect of the progress in armaments and the art of war is obvious—it resulted in our military inferiority and enslavement. But detailed studies in this field have yet to be attempted in our country. It happens to be an unfortunate fact that our military history is largely an unexplored field, and there are many more books on the Napoleonic War, or the American Civil War, the First Great War or World War II than there are on the whole of our military history of thousands of years.

The coming of the cannon strengthened the king and weakened the feudal barons in Europe. It is interesting to note that corresponding developments are traceable in Indian history also. Except for isolated examples, artillery made its debut in our history with Babar's invasion. It was his superior artillery which gained him the decisive victories at Panipat and Khanwa. These victories led to the replacement of the Lodi dynasty by the Mughals at Delhi. It is significant that the Mughals were far more absolute and unbridled rulers than the Lodis, or Tughlaks or their predecessors, had been. The nobility, as we know, had been a power to reckon with in the courts of the earlier Muslim kings. The Mughals became far more independent of the nobility. It is true that feudalism did not totally disappear in the Mughal period. It is also true that the comparative weakness of the Mughal nobility was partly due to Akbar's ambivalent policy of making the Rajput vassals one of the main props of his empire. But it is undeniable that the cannon also made a significant contribution to the total result.

But, although the Mughals were strong and absolute rulers, feudalism survived. Instead of keeping all the armed forces directly under the crown, recruited by the State and paid out of the Imperial

---

Dr. S.N. Prasad is Director, Historical Section, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Delhi. This is the second talk in which he has shown the effect of the progress in armaments and the act of war on Indian History.

treasury, Akbar's Mansabdari system created feudal lords charged with the duty of recruiting and maintaining designated forces. The Marathas also soon gave up Shivaji's excellent system, and from the reign of Shahuji onwards, military leaders received hereditary jagirs to join in war with the prescribed quantum of forces. Some of these military leaders who had been granted a territorial base became independent rulers, so that the Maratha empire became a loose confederacy in the eighteenth century. The process was carried to the absurd limit of granting the 'province' of Aligarh to De Boique in 1792 for Mahadji Sindhia's army. We thus see a feudal lord creating a smaller feudal lord—just the opposite of the process witnessed in Europe. Even the Khalsa army, modern in other ways, was not free of feudalism, and the Jagirdari Fauz formed a substantial proportion of the total, and included cavalry, infantry as well as artillery, drilled as well as undrilled. Who can doubt that Maharaja Gulab Singh would have become another Sindhia in the Khalsa durbar if the British had not intervened ?

As a result of the feudal system in army organisation, no Indian power ever realised its full military potential. The system produced poor quality of troops, false musters and lack of loyalty to the State. No feudal troops could compare in quality and efficiency with the contingents maintained directly by the State, such as the Mughal 'artillery of the Stirrup,' Peshwa's "Khasgi Paga', the 'Sher-Buchhas' of Shuja-ud-Dowla, or Tipu's Tiger Grenadiers.' Jagirdars inevitably tried to maintain lesser number of troops than contracted for, and false musters reached the stage in the later Maratha armies when rich merchants kept numbers of horses to be hired by the Jagirdars for inspection parades. Worst of all, the troops considered themselves servants of the feudal lord and not of the State or King. They often belonged to the jagirdar's clan, were recruited by him, officered by him, and knew no higher master. The king, it seems, never approached them even by a special Order of the Day; all orders were communicated through a 'news writer' to the feudal lord, and by the feudal lord to the troops. If the feudal leader was brought over by the enemy or fled from the battlefield, or was killed, his contingent immediately followed him, or dispersed. There are innumerable instances of contingent commanders switching sides on the battle field and being followed instantly by all his troops. But it is remarkable that when Sayyad Husain Ali was suddenly assassinated in 1720, his

powerful army melted away within a few hours without any battle, and even his camp was plundered and burnt.

The same phenomenon of individual loyalty, which was so marked a trait of the Indian character, appeared in battle when the king or general was himself incapacitated or killed or simply disappeared from sight. We all know what happened when Hemu got an arrow through his eye and swooned in his howdah at Panipat in 1556. The story was repeated again and again, at Tukaroi in 1557, Samugarh in 1658, Ashti in 1817. The only instance of an army fighting on after the death of its leader appears to have been the battle of Daulambapur in 1612, when the Afghans in Bengal kept fighting staunchly and retreated in good order even after the death of their leader, Khwaja Usman Lohani.<sup>1</sup>

Along with feudalism, the feudal knight's concept of war as predominantly a trial of valour also persisted in India. Generally speaking, and at least with the Rajputs and Mughals, the effort in war was simply to reach the enemy army and assault it. Manouevres, stratagems feigns, and all the finer points of strategy, received scant attention. Lines of communication or supply, which practically monopolised strategic thinking in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, seem to have hardly figured at all in the Indian campaigns of the same period. Even the earlier Maratha armies of swift horsemen avoiding pitched battles had really a Fabian strategy of exhausting the enemy, and not of unbalancing him by well-planned moves threatening his L of C or bases, preliminary to bringing him to battle in a disadvantageous condition, or to make him retreat and give up valuable territory. Sometimes, indeed, a Nizam-ul-Mulk or Baji Rao or Haider Ali would present a sparkling campaign of dynamic strategy, but these were the exceptions. Even such celebrated battles as Khanwa, Haldi Ghat, Jajau (1707) and Plassey show little of strategic competence on the part of the Indian generals. They reveal valour but not generalship. There can be no generalship without the option to retreat which, it appears, went against the grain for the Rajputs and the later Mughals. The Rajput did not believe in running away to fight another day. Their death charges in Kesaria Bana are famous. But it is interesting to note that the same medieval concept of war was often revealed by their adversaries, and the

---

1. Sarkar, *Military History of India*.

Sayyads of Barna also used to dismount from their horses if the battle seemed to be going against them, thus deliberately giving up the option to retreat and fighting on till the end. This custom of 'Utara' was indeed a noble form of the death-wish, but definitely not part of modern war.

The military successes of the Mughals were due to their strong cavalry and artillery. The cavalry was their favourite service. Their Turki and Arabian horses had greater speed, weight and stamina than the Indian horses available to the Rajputs etc. The Mughal horseman was covered in armour from head to foot, using the chain mail; the plate and also the fish-scale armour as his fancy dictated. So also was the Rajput. This armour, of which numerous specimens are still available in our museums was often beautifully worked in gold, but the steel was mild, and useless against a musket ball or even arrows at times. The Mughal trooper was essentially a horse archer, and had a partiality for the bow even in the days of the matchlock. His bow was 4 ft. long of laminated wood, with a double recurve. It could shoot six arrows per minute, compared to the two bullets per minute of the musket. Although the Mughal bow was not as powerful as the Bhil long bow (which could penetrate an elephants' thick hide) its range was adequate, and archers were taught that if they aimed at an enemy's helmet 200 yds. away, they would get the arrow through his chest. Like the Central Asian horse archer the Mughal also was fond of approaching at a gallop, discharging his arrow as he whirled away. These tactics, together with their famous Tulaqma charge against the flanks and rear of the enemy, won them many victories.

The Mughal artillery, though a new weapon in India and superior locally, soon fell behind the European standard. Heavy guns were seldom cast, they were 'built up' of iron bars placed parallel to one another in concentric circles, and bound together with rings, even into the eighteenth century. Only the lighter field guns throwing 4 to 6 pound short and drawn by 4 to 8 pairs of bullocks had any mobility. The bigger 24, 40, and 70 pounders took months to travel a few miles if the road was bad. A 100 pounder gun took 1700 oxen and several elephants to move. Their rate of fire was perhaps only 4 shots per hour in favourable conditions. That is why Babar and others chained them together in the battle field, so that the

enemy did not find it easy to over-run them while they were being reloaded. The Zamburak, Gajnal, Shuturnal, or Swivel guns mounted on camels and elephants, threw a 1 lb. ball about a 1000 yds. and were mobile, and similar weapons fired from tripods and called Jazails were found formidable as late as the First Afghan War (1842). But it seems that the Zamburak and Jazail could not be fired from elephant or camel back and no light carriage was developed for them. Therefore they also could not be moved from one spot to another during the course of the battle. As a result of this lack of tactical mobility on the battle field, almost all guns were lost in case of defeat.

The Mughals also used war rockets. A rocket was simply a one foot iron tube filled with the propellant and powder and attached to a stick or lathi of 8 to 12 ft. length. A dagger or burning rag was tied to the head of the stick. If correctly launched by an expert, these rockets had a range of 1000 yds. and sufficient force to pierce through the body a man or horse. The accuracy, however, was almost nil, and the rockets' erratic flight sometimes carried it back to its own army.

Artillery soon found a place in all Indian armies, and improved in numbers, and somewhat in performance also. The Muslim army had 600 field guns at Talikota (1565). The battle of Jajau (1707) was decided mainly by artillery, and in 1720 Sayyad Abdullah Khan was beaten by his enemy's strong artillery, and rockets, one of which exploded his powder magazine. Nizam-ul-Mulk's many brilliant victories were also won by superior artillery, apart from his excellent generalship.

Mughal infantry was just a huge rabble, unskilled, ill-armed, neglected. Often the infantryman was just a stalwart peasant armed with a rusty sword or just a 'danda'. The best infantry had matchlocks, and in the eighteenth century some flint-locks also appeared. But we know how slow firing, short-ranged, and liable to misfire, the matchlocks were, and that was why European armies had taken to drill and volley firing by successive lines, to withstand cavalry charges. Indian infantry did not learn these tactics till near the end of the eighteenth century, and even the bayonet is heard of only in Ranjit Singh's army. No wonder, then, that the infantry was simply cannon-fodder, or rather, "Gajar-Mooli" for the armoured cavalry.

The fatal weakness of the Mughal armies, however, was neither in their arms nor tactics; it was in their supply and marching system. Instead of organising a supply system based on State granaries, depots and arsenals, the Mughals depended on civilian traders. Banjaras brought food grains, fodder was collected by foraging, merchants supplied cloth. The Darzi, the Dhobi, the Mistri (armourer), the Mithaiwala, and the jeweller, the money-lender, the priest, the prostitutes—all accompanied the army on a campaign. The generals and nobles carried with them their sell-stocked harems, each lady having a retinue of female attendants. If the Emperor moved with the army, the entire secretariat and all government records moved with him. An army of the later Mughals on the march has been well described as a moving city. As the size of the armies and standards of luxury increased, so did the impedimenta. The "tail to teeth ratio" was 1:10, so an army of 80,000 fighters meant '8 lakhs of people on the move. No wonder that the army could cover only 3 to 8 miles per day. As computed by Irvine, Prince Muazzam in his frantic dash from Jamrud to Agra in 1707 averaged only 11 miles per day, and his rival brother Azam Shah hurrying to meet him in battle could cover on the average only 5½ miles per day.<sup>1</sup> If a river had to be crossed, it took 10 days to build a boat bridge and 3 days for the whole army to cross over it. Bahadur Shah took over a week in 1709 to cross the Mukand Dara Pass with his army. What a far cry from Badar crossing over the Indus with his cavalry in an afternoon, swimming behind his own horse.

The armies of the Peshwas came to resemble the Mughal armies. Shivaji had more infantry than cavalry, and all of Marathas, hardy and imbued with patriotic fervour. The position was reversed in the later Maratha armies, in which cavalry and 'foreigners' predominated. These 'foreigners' comprised Sikhs, Rajputs, Karnatakis, Poorbias, Rohillas and Arabs, the last being greatly prized and the highest paid of these mercenary soldiers. It was the depredations and plunderings of these foreigners which earned the Maratha armies the hatred of the populace everywhere. The Maratha cavalry preferred the short sword and the lance to the Mughal bow or musket, and this was hardly an improvement over the Mughal and was a drag on their mobility. The guns were named after the Hindu gods, and were worshipped more often than they were cleaned. The

---

1. Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghals*, p. 219.

carriages were crude and rickety with small, solid wheels of wood, and, as a contemporary reports, "a march of 5 days shook the carriages to pieces". The guns were purchased from the British, French or Portuguese in India, and were naturally poor in condition or obsolescent in design. The Maratha infantry was as untrained and ill armed as the Mughal and Rajput had been, till near the end of the eighteenth century, when Sindhia and others raised drilled infantry battalions under European officers. These battalions, of which Sindhia had 68 and Holkar 24 by 1800, were just as good as the sepoy battalions of the East India Company. The musket was the same, the drill was the same (though executed by commands in French), even the men were the same Poorbias. But the officers were far inferior to the scientifically trained and patriotic British officers of the sepoy battalions. The European adventurers in the Maratha armies were, with few exceptions, men of low education, low birth, low morals. Perron, Borquin and George Thomas were all sailors who had run away from their ships to get rich quick in the Maratha service.

The Peshwas took to the Mughal ways and began to take along ladies on their campaigns. Soon the large and busy bazars appeared in Maratha armies also. There were even moving idols, and tents were carried along for them as temples. It is estimated that the bazar alone required 20,000 bullocks for its transport.<sup>3</sup> The innovation of using Pindaris to forage and collect supplies was tactically an improvement, but it brought misery to millions and earned their undying hatred for the Marathas. The strategic result was that the Maratha armies often operated under the profound handicaps of being in enemy country, getting no willing help from the people.

In view of all this, it is not wrong to say that the army which Abdali destroyed at Panipat was in strategy, tactics and manpower a Mughal army, not a Maratha army except in name.

By and large, the picture of the Mughal and Maratha armies was reflected in the other Indian armies, such as the Mysore army, the Nizam's army and the Oudh army. There was nothing remarkable about their organisation equipment or tactics, though the generalship of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Baji Rao, Madhav Rao, and Haider Ali showed the brilliance of genius. Their strategies and tactics deserve

2. Sen, military system of the Marathas p. 133.



detailed study, but went unheeded by their successors, and seem to have left no lasting influence.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Khalsa army, on the other hand, marked a radical departure from the earlier armies in many directions. Though a part of the Fauz was Jagirdari, that was perhaps unavoidable in a transitional period. In the State army, recruited and paid directly by the State, the Ghorcharas and Garrison companies (Fauzi-Kilajat) were undrilled. But they had their distinct roles in war, and were cheaper to maintain. The Ghorcharas were as hardy and spirited as the drilled troops and were superior to the drilled cavalry in mobile operations against the enemy's rear areas. The Khalsa artillery was formidable having "jinsi" or heavy batteries (derahs) of 12 and 15 pounders, and field batteries of 4 to 6 pounders forming part of the infantry brigades. The guns were of excellent design and construction, and horse artillery was organised for the first time in India to enable the guns to keep up with a fast moving force. The drilled infantry was well trained, staunch and hardy, though in the excitement of the battle the troops often discarded their muskets in favour of the old sword, broke rank and charged tumultuously with lusty yells. The army was supplied from State granaries and arsenals, by civil officers of the district, and the bazar. The Sikhs also kept up their Spartan habits in camp, so the army was unencumbered with bulky baggage and ladies of rank. This enabled them to keep up a pace of 25 miles a day for 12 days, and small bodies of horsemen are said to have covered 60 miles a day for many days. Excellent flint-lock muskets were produced in the State, and Ranjit Singh imported two million percussion caps also, so that his troops could be armed with the latest infantry weapons just introduced in European armies. Gun founderies and 'Karkhanas' were set up by the State to fabricate cannon and howitzers, though many had still to be imported.

In personnel also, the Khalsa army was superior to the later Mughal or Maratha armies. The Sikh formed only one sixth of the population, but provided the majority of troops in the Khalsa army. In the drilled infantry they numbered 45000 out of the total of 54000.<sup>4</sup> In the irregular cavalry, 17000 out of 19000 were Sikhs. The Sikh was hardy, brave and devoted to the State. In the irregular infantry, the majority of troops were Dogras, Gurkhas, Poorbias and Pathans, which the artillery was manned mostly by Muslims. The

senior officers of the drilled troops were European adventurers till they were wisely dismissed as undependable in case of war against the British.

These brief descriptions of the main Indian armies show a baffling pattern compared to the well ordered, easily explained progress of the art of war in Europe. The Indian armies and wars from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries show a strange mixture of the characteristics of feudal warfare, dynastic warfare and modern warfare, which were three distinct and separate phases in the evolution of the art of war in the west.

The survival of the medieval ideal of valour and of the medieval institution of feudalism right up to the nineteenth century has already been noted. Firearms were adopted, but the bow continued in use up to the nineteenth century. The bayonet and horse artillery were not adopted till almost the middle of the nineteenth century. Drilled soldiers appeared on Indian battle fields only in the second half of the eighteenth century. Even then the Indian military leaders did not take to it, and foreigners had to be employed to raise and train the troops. These foreigners went over to the enemy when the Marathas had to fight the British, and because of the feudal set-up, their trained battalions followed them. The Sikh nobles found military drill funny, and called it "Raqse-Lulan" or contortions of the dancing girls! It should be noted that the employment of foreigners to train the drilled battalions of the Maratha or Sikh armies was not treated as a temporary expedient for a transitional period, and no steps seem to have been taken to train up quickly a body of Indian officers to take over these vitally important duties.

Firearms, drill and the tactics that went with them in fact weakened the Marathas, the Mysoreans, etc. By giving up their traditional warfare based on mobility and aimed at attrition of the enemy, they played into the hands of the British. Instead of remaining out of reach of "the death scattering cannon" of the Company's armies, as Sen calls it, and starving and exhausting them physically and financially, the Marathas accepted pitched battles. These they were bound to lose, since the Company's spoys were just as staunch and better equipped and better led. Improved weapons and scientific

---

4. Bajwa : Military System of the Sikhs, p. 140.

military leadership flowed from Europe to India; the Company tapped this stream at the source.

The success of the strategy based on mobility and aimed at the enemy's attrition and moral dislocation was amply demonstrated by the Palkhed campaign (1727-28) of Baji Rao I against Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Carnatic Operations (1767) of Madhav Rao I against Haidar Ali, Haidar Ali's wide ranging moves against the British in the First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69), and Yashwant Rao Holkar's famous struggle against the British in 1804-05.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if the Marathas had opposed the British with their traditional mode of warfare based on mobility. Most probably in that case they would have preserved their power and independence, at least for many more decades. Against such a strategy the British in 1800 could not have fared better than Nizam-ul-Mulk did 60 years earlier. The British, being a commercial concern, were in fact much more vulnerable to a strategy of attrition—the Ermattungs stratagie of Hans Delbruck—and they did not have either the resources or the will to continue an inconclusive contest for years and years. Even if a Wellesley persisted with such a war, he would have been recalled by the money-minded Court of Directors, as Wellesley himself was. On the other hand, the Marathas depending on mobility could hardly have driven away the British from Bengal and Madras. Then, after a few decades of stalemate, the arrival of the railways, breech-loading rifles and machine-guns would have enabled the British to wipe off the Maratha horseman as all cavalry was wiped off from the battle fields of the world. Such a fate the Marathas could have escaped, to my mind, only by rapid industrialisation and by simultaneously developing guerilla warfare. Industrialisation and guerilla warfare both involve profound changes and a transformation of society in all respects, and the Maratha leadership would itself have been transformed before it succeeded in its stupendous task. In that sense the eclipse of the Maratha power, as then constituted, was inevitable in the end.

The defeat of the Khalsa army was mainly due to a cracking up of the home front. It was still a new army, and time had little chance to decay the excellent organisation created by the genius of Ranjit Singh. It should be noted that the Maratha armies also pre-

served the purity and vigour of Shivaji's excellent system for a couple of generations. There appears little reason to doubt that the Sikh armies would have gone through the same process of decay if they had not been destroyed earlier. But the Khalsa Panchayats destroyed discipline and frightened the leadership, which deliberately smashed its own army by flinging it at the enemy and then cooperating with him to ensure his victory.

The top leaders of the Sikh army turned traitors in the First Sikh War. But the subordinate commanders showed no strategic abilities in either the First or the Second Sikh War. In fact there appears to have been no strategic plan at all. Ferozepur was not attacked when it lay at their mercy, and the mobility of the Khalsa army was never utilised. All the battles were defensive struggles. There can be no victory without an offensive plan vigorously executed. The junior Sikh commanders had no training in strategy or the higher direction of war—no military academies or staff colleges seen to have been established even by Ranjit Singh, creator of the most modern military machine in India. Failure of the military leadership also led to the collapse of the revolt of 1857, apart from other causes. This was our last armed struggle against British forces, and it could never have been won without scientifically trained officers to lead the mutinous sepoy.

The national feeling had still to arise in India. The wars left the common people unmoved and indifferent. Sometimes the populace was uprooted or fled away before a particularly brutal invader. "More usually, however," as Irvine puts it, "the peasants continued with tranquil unconcern to plow, sow or reap within a stones' throw of a raging battle. They 'bowed low before the blast', and 'let the legions thunder past'. What had they to hope or fear from defeat or victory.<sup>1</sup>" Even the nobility had no conception of nationalism, and openly served as agents of foreign powers, like the Portuguese at Indian courts. Nana Farnavis himself received a jagir from the Nizam, the enemy of the Marathas. Poorbias and Rohillas served in Maratha armies in operations against their own kith and kin, and remained loyal. The Indian rulers, therefore, could not imagine or understand that their European generals would not fight against the British, but would either go over openly to the enemy, or act as fifth columnists.

---

1. Irvine, p. 194.

After all, the Indian outlook on life has been basically individualistic. Our philosophies postulate personal salvation by personal conduct. The Indian soldier seems to have carried it in war also. He was meticulous about his daily exercise or 'Kasrat' and weapon practice, but had few team exercises or manoeuvres in a body. As a result, he was formidable as an individual, but ineffective in a team. Time and again, it was found that a few squadrons of drilled cavalry could scatter thousands of undrilled Indian cavalry, as the drilled troopers charged in a solid mass, divided and reassembled on a single trumpet call. But whenever they tried skirmishing in open order, the Indian horsemen of the irregular cavalry almost invariably proved superior in individual combat.

Progress in European warfare was the result of the new spirit of enquiry, of research, of scientific and industrial growth. We have no knowledge of parallel developments in India. Indians appear to have made no new inventions or major improvements in the cannon or the musket. Even the jazail and the rocket, which were typically and exclusively Indian weapons, were developed neither in performance nor employment. Theoretical writings on war appear conspicuous by their absence. There do not seem to have been even military academies to teach the young officers the lessons of previous wars, and the approved doctrine in strategy or tactics. As a result, neither the weapons nor their employment in war progressed. Millions of Indians were directly concerned with war for centuries as fighters, armourers, transport men, but we know nothing of any constructive thinking on their part about their problems. Crores of rupees were spent on armaments, but we do not know why a big armaments industry and techniques of mass production did not develop in India. Why did iron foundaries not develop and multiply? Was it only their shortage which reduced to insignificance the great Wadia shipbuilders of Bombay, whose wooden ships were considered among the best in the world? In Europe, war helped the emergence of the middle class and the shift from the rural to urban civilisation. Why not in India? Perhaps some of these trends and developments occurred, but have yet to be discovered and brought to light. The impact of warfare on our history can be properly understood only after our scholars have given us the answers to these questions.

