

# Indian History

## 16th Century

Gene Pittman



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## Chapter 1

# Kingdom of Cochin

**Kingdom of Cochin** (also known as *Perumpadappu Swaroopam*, *Mada-rajyam*, or *Kuru Swaroopam*; *Kochi* or *Perumpaṭappu*), named after its capital city of Kochi, (Cochin in English), was a late medieval kingdom and later princely state on the Malabar Coast, South India. Once controlling much of the territory between Ponnani and Thottappally, the Cochin kingdom shrank to its minimal extent as a result of invasions by the Zamorin of Calicut.

When Portuguese armadas arrived in India, the Kingdom of Cochin had lost its vassals like Edapalli, Cranganore etc to the Zamorins and was looking for an opportunity to preserve the independence of Cochin which was at risk. King Unni Goda Varma warmly welcomed Pedro Álvares Cabral on 24 December 1500 and negotiated a treaty of alliance between Portugal and the Cochin kingdom, directed against the Zamorin of Calicut. A number of forts were built in the area and controlled by the Portuguese East Indies, the most important of which was Fort Manuel,

Cochin became a long-time Portuguese protectorate (1503–1663) providing assistance against native kingdoms in India. After the Luso-Dutch War, the Dutch East India Company (1663–1795) was an ally of Cochin. This was followed by the British East India Company (1795–1858, confirmed on 6 May 1809), having suzerainty over the Cochin state. Travancore merged with the Kingdom of Cochin to form the state of Travancore-Cochin in 1950. The five Tamil-majority Taluks of



Vilavancode, Kalkulam, Thovalai, Agastheeswaram, and Sengottai were transferred from Travancore-Cochin to Madras State in 1956. The Malayalam-speaking regions of the Travancore-Cochin merged with the Malabar District (excluding Laccadive&Minicoy Islands) and the Kasaragod Taluk of South Canara district in Madras State to form the modern Malayalam-state of Kerala on 1 November 1956, according to the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 passed by the Government of India.

The Kingdom of Cochin, originally known as Perumpadappu Swarupam, was under the rule of the Later Cheras in the Middle Ages.

The Nambudiri (the Brahmin chief) of Perumpadappu (not present-day Perumpadappu in Ernakulam District, but an area which includes Chitrakoodam in Vanneri nadu, of the present day Ponnani taluk in Malappuram district) had married the sister of the last Later Chera king, Rama Varma Kulashekhara, and as a consequence obtained Mahodayapuram, and Thiruvanchikulam Temple along with numerous other rights, such as that of the Mamankam festival. After the fall of the Mahodayapuram Cheras in the 12th century, along with numerous other provinces Perumpadappu Swarupam became a free political entity. However, it was only after the arrival of Portuguese colonizers on the Malabar Coast that the Perumpadappu Swarupam acquire any political importance.

Perumpadappu rulers had family relationships with the Nambudiri rulers of Edappally. After the transfer of Kochi and Vypin from Edappally rulers to the Perumpadappu rulers, the latter came to be known as kings of Kochi.

## Territories

The Cochin kingdom (the Princely State) included much of modern-day Thrissur district excluding Chavakkad taluk, few areas of Alathur taluk and the whole of Chittur Taluk of the Palakkad district and Kochi Taluk (excluding Fort Kochi), most of Kanayannur Taluk (excluding Edappally), parts of Aluva Taluk (Karukutty, Angamaly, Kalady, Chowwara, Kanjoor, Sreemoolanagaram, Malayattoor, Manjapra), parts of Kunnathunad Taluk and parts of Paravur Taluk (Chendamangalam) of the Ernakulam district which are now the part of the Indian state of Kerala.

## History

### Origin

There is no extant written evidence about the emergence of the Kingdom of Cochin or of the Cochin Royal Family, also known as Perumpadapu Swaroopam. All that is recorded are folk tales and stories, and a somewhat blurred historical picture about the origins of the ruling dynasty.

The surviving manuscripts, such as *Keralolpathi*, *Keralamahatmyam*, and *Perumpadapu Grandavari*, are collections of myths and legends that are less than reliable as conventional historical sources. There is an oft-recited legend that the last *Perumal* (king from the Chera dynasty) who ruled the Chera dynasty divided his kingdom between his nephews and his sons, converted to Islam and traveled to Mecca on a *hajj*. The *Keralolpathi* recounts the above narrative in the

following fashion: *The last and the famous "Perumal" ruled Kerala for 36 years. He left for Mecca by ship with some Muslims who arrived at Kodungallur (Cranganore) port and converted to Islam. Before leaving for Mecca, he divided his kingdom between his nephews and sons.*

The *Perumpadapu Grandavari* contains an additional account of the dynastic origins: *The last Thavazhi of Perumpadapu Swaroopam came into existence on the Kaliyuga day shodashangamsurajyam. Cheraman Perumal divided the land in half, 17 "amsa" north of Neelaeswaram and 17 amsa south, totaling 34 amsa, and gave his powers to his nephews and sons. Thirty-four kingdoms between Kanyakumari and Gokarna (now in Karnataka) were given to the "thampuran" who was the daughter of the last niece of Cheraman Perumal.*

Keralolpathi recorded the division of his kingdom in 345 Common Era, Perumpadapu Grandavari in 385 Common Era, William Logan in 825 Common Era. There are no written records on these earlier divisions of Kerala, but according to some historians the division might have occurred during the Second Chera Kingdom at the beginning of the 12th century.

## **Early history**

The original headquarters of the kingdom was at Perumpadappu near Ponnani in present-day Malappuram district. The ruler of Perumpadappu (near Ponnani) fled to Kodungallur in the early medieval period, when the Zamorin of Calicut annexed Ponnani region, after Tirunavaya war. They later changed their headquarters to Kochi, probably due to the invasion of Zamorin of Calicut in the region surrounded by Kodungallur. Hence the *Perumpadappu Swaroopam* was

renamed as Kingdom of Cochin. When Vasco Da Gama landed at Kozhikode and the Zamorin of Calicut fought against the Portuguese under Kunjali Marakkars (The Muslim naval chief of the kingdom of Kozhikode), the ruler of Cochin aligned with the Portuguese.

Cochin kingdom ruled over a vast area in central Kerala before the Portuguese arrival. Their state stretched up to Ponnani and Pukkaitha in the north, Aanamala in the east, and Cochin and Porakkad in the south, with capital at Perumpadappu on the northern border. Calicut (Polathiri kingdom) was conquered by Zamorin of Eranad, who then conquered large parts of Cochin Kingdom, and began trying to assert suzerainty over Cochin.

### **As Chinese protectorate**

The port at Kozhikode held superior economic and political position in medieval Kerala coast, while Kannur, Kollam, and Kochi, were commercially important secondary ports, where the traders from various parts of the world would gather. On the Malabar coast during the early 15th century, Calicut and Cochin were in an intense rivalry, so the Ming dynasty of China decided to intervene by granting special status to Cochin and its ruler known as *Keyili* (可亦里) to the Chinese. Calicut had been the dominant port-city in the region, but Cochin was emerging as its main rival. For the fifth Ming treasure voyage, Admiral Zheng He was instructed to confer a seal upon *Keyili* of Cochin and designate a mountain in his kingdom as the *Zhenguo Zhi Shan* (鎮國之山, Mountain Which Protects the Country). Zheng He delivered a stone tablet, inscribed with a proclamation composed by the Yongle Emperor himself, to Cochin. As long as Cochin remained under the protection of

Ming China, the Zamorin of Calicut was unable to invade Cochin and a military conflict was averted. The cessation of the Ming treasure voyages consequently had negative results for Cochin, as the Zamorin of Calicut later launched an invasion against Cochin. In the late 15th century, the Zamorin occupied Cochin and installed his representative as the king.

The kingdom of Cochin was the only kingdom in South Asia to be a protectorate of China. The King of Cochin received special treatment, because he had sent tribute since 1411 and later also sent ambassadors to request the patent of investiture and a seal. The Chinese Emperor granted him both requests.

### **Portuguese period (1503–1663)**

The Portuguese arrived at Kappad Kozhikode in 1498 during the Age of Discovery, thus opening a direct sea route from Europe to India. Cochin was the scene of the first European settlement in India. In the year 1500, the Portuguese Admiral Pedro Álvares Cabral landed at Cochin after being repelled from Calicut. The raja of Cochin welcomed the Portuguese and a treaty of friendship was signed. The raja allowed them to build a factory at Cochin (and upon Cabral's departure Cochin allowed thirty Portuguese and four Franciscan friars to stay in the kingdom). Assured by the offer of support, the raja declared war on the enemy, the Zamorins of Calicut.

In 1502 a new expedition under the command of Vasco da Gama arrived at Cochin, and the friendship was renewed. Vasco da Gama later bombarded Calicut and destroyed the Arab factories there. This enraged the Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut, and he attacked Cochin after the departure of Vasco

da Gama and destroyed the Portuguese factory. The raja of Cochin and his Portuguese allies were forced to withdraw to Vypin Island. However, the arrival of a small reinforcement Portuguese fleet and, some days later by Duarte Pacheco Pereira and the oncoming monsoons alarmed the Zamorin. Calicut recalled the army and immediately abandoned the siege.

After securing the throne for the raja of Cochin, the Portuguese got permission to build a fort – Fort Emmanuel (at Fort Kochi, named after the king of Portugal) – surrounding the Portuguese factory, in order to protect it from any further attacks from Calicut and on 27 September 1503 the foundations of a timber fort, the first fort erected by the Portuguese in India, were laid. The entire work of construction was commissioned by the local raja, who supplied workers and material. In 1505, the stone fortress replaced the wooden fort. Later, for a better defence of the town, a fort called "Castelo de Cima" was built on Vypeen Island at Paliport. At the departure of the Portuguese fleet, only Duarte Pacheco Pereira and a small fleet were left in Cochin. Meanwhile, the Zamorin of Calicut formed a massive force and attacked them. For five months, Cochin kingdom was able to drive back Calicut's assaults, with the help of Pacheco Pereira and his men.

The ruler of the Kingdom of Tanur, who was a vassal to the Zamorin of Calicut, sided with the Portuguese, against his overlord at Kozhikode. As a result, the Kingdom of Tanur (*Vettathunadu*) became one of the earliest Portuguese Colonies in India. The ruler of Tanur also sided with Cochin. Many of the members of the royal family of Cochin in 16th and 17th centuries were selected from Vettom. However, the Tanur

forces under the king fought for the Zamorin of Calicut in the Battle of Cochin (1504). However, the allegiance of the Muslim Mappila merchants in Tanur region still stayed under the Zamorin of Calicut.

The raja of Cochin continued to rule with the help of the Portuguese. Meanwhile, the Portuguese secretly tried to enter into an alliance with the Zamorin. A few later attempts by the Zamorin to conquer the Cochin port were thwarted by the raja of Cochin with the help of the Portuguese. Slowly, the Portuguese armoury at Cochin was increased, presumably to help the king protect Cochin. And for a long a time, right after Goa, Cochin situated in the center of East Indies, was the best place Portugal had in India. From there the Portuguese exported large volumes of spices, particularly pepper.

In 1530, Saint Francis Xavier arrived and founded a Latin Christian mission.

Cochin hosted the grave of Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese viceroy, who was buried at St. Francis Church until his remains were returned to Portugal in 1539. Soon after the time of Afonso de Albuquerque, Portuguese alliance in Kerala declined. The failure is attributed to several factors like intermarriages, forcible conversions, religious persecution, etc.

### **Dutch period (1663–1773)**

Portuguese alliance was followed by that of the Dutch, who had by then conquered Quilon after various encounters with the Portuguese and their allies. Discontented members of the Cochin Royal family called on the assistance of the Dutch for help in overthrowing the Cochin Raja. The Dutch successfully

landed at Njarakal and went on to capture the fort at Pallippuram, which they handed over to the Zamorin.

### **Mysorean invasion**

The 1773 conquest of the Mysore by Hyder Ali in the Malabar region descended to Kochi. The Kochi Raja had to pay a subsidy of one hundred thousand of Ikkeri Pagodas (equalling 400,000 modern rupees). Later on, in 1776, Haider captured Trichur, which was under the Kingdom of Kochi. Thus, the Raja was forced to become a tributary of Mysore and to pay a nuzzar of 100,000 of pagodas and 4 elephants and annual tribute of 30,000 pagodas. The hereditary prime ministership of Cochin came to an end during this period.

### **British period (1814–1947)**

In 1814 according to the Anglo-Dutch Treaty, the islands of Kochi, including Fort Kochi and its territory, were ceded to the United Kingdom in exchange for the island of Banca. Even prior to the signing of the treaty, there is evidence of English residents in Kochi. During British Raj, the Princely State of Cochin was surrounded by British Malabar District to three sides (i.e., To north, west, and east), and by Travancore to the south. Towards the early 20th century, trade at the port had increased substantially and the king wanted to develop the port even further. The king brought a harbour engineer Robert Bristow to Cochin in 1920, with the help of Lord Willingdon, then Governor of Madras. Over a span of 21 years he helped the king of Cochin to transform Cochin into the safest harbour in south Asia, where ships berthed alongside the newly reclaimed inner harbour, which was equipped with a long array



of steam cranes. Meanwhile, Fort Cochin, which was a part of Malabar District until 1956, was made a municipality on 1 November 1866, along with Kannur, Thalassery, Kozhikode, and Palakkad, according to the Madras Act 10 of 1865 (Amendment of the Improvements in Towns act 1850) of the British Indian Empire, and its first Municipal Council election with a board of 18 members was conducted in 1883.

The Maharajah of Cochin initiated local administration in 1896 by forming town councils in Mattancherry and Ernakulam. In 1925, a Kochi legislative assembly was also constituted to help the public participate in the administration. The assembly consisted of 45 members, 10 were officially nominated. Thottakkattu Madhaviamma was the first woman to be a member of any legislature in India.

Kochi was the first princely state to willingly join the new Dominion of India in 1947. India lost dominion status in 1950 when it became a republic. Travancore merged with Cochin to create Travancore-Cochin, which was in turn unified with the Malabar district of Madras Presidency. Kasaragod was merged into it and Kanyakumari was removed from it. On 1 November 1956, the Indian state of Kerala was formed.

## **Administration**

### **Capitals**

The capital of Perumpadapu Swaroopam was located at Chitrakooda in the Perumpadapu village of Vanneri from the beginning of the 12th century to the end of the 13th century. Even though the capital of Perumpadapu Swaroopam was in

Vanneri, the Perumpadapu king had a palace in Mahodayapuram. When the Zamorins attacked Vanneri in the later part of the 13th century, Perumpadapu Swaroopam shifted their capital from Vanneri to Mahodayapuram. In 1405 Perumpadapu Swaroopam changed their capital from Mahodayapuram to Cochin. By the end of the 14th century the Zamorin conquered Thrikkanamathilakam and it became a threat for Mahodayapuram (Thiruvanchikulam), which may be the reason that Perumpadapu Swaroopam changed their capital to Cochin from Mahodayapuram. Moreover, in the year 1341 a flood created an island, Puthuvippu (Vypin), and Cochin became a noted natural harbour for the Indian Ocean trade. The old Kodungallore (Cranganore) port lost its importance, which may also be a cause for the shift of the capital. From there on Perumpadapu Swaroopam used the name Cochin Royal Family.

Finally, the arrival of the Portuguese on the Indian subcontinent in the sixteenth century likely influenced Cochin politics. The Kingdom of Cochin was among the first Indian nations to sign a formal treaty with a European power, negotiating trade terms with Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500.

The palace at Kalvathhi was originally the residence of the kings. In 1555, though, the royal palace moved to Mattancherry, and later relocated to (Thrissur). At that time Penvazithampuran (Female Thampuram) and the other Kochuthampurans (other Thampurans except the Valliathampuran (King)) stayed at a palace in Vellarapilly.

In the beginning of 18th century Thripunithura started gaining prominence. The kingdom was ruled from Thrissur, Cochin and

Thripunithura. Around 1755 Penvazithampuran (Female Thampuran) and the other Kochuthampurans (other Thampurans) left Vellarapalli and started to live in Thripunithura. Thus Thripunithura became the capital of the Cochin Royal Family.

## **Maharajas of Cochin**

Veerakerala Varma, nephew of Cheraman Perumal, is the person traditionally believed to be the first Maharaja of Cochin. The written records of the dynasty, however, date from 1503 CE. The Maharaja of Cochin was also called Gangadhara Kovil Adhikaarikal, meaning Head of all Temples.

### **As Portuguese and Dutch Ally**

- Unniraman Koyikal I (c. 1500 to 1503)
- Unniraman Koyikal II (1503 to 1537)
- Veera Kerala Varma I (1537–1565)
- Keshava Rama Varma (1565–1601)
- Veera Kerala Varma II (1601–1615)
- Ravi Varma I (1615–1624)
- Veera Kerala Varma III (1624–1637)
- Goda Varma I (1637–1645)
- Veerarayira Varma (1645–1646)
- Veera Kerala Varma IV (1646–1650)
- Rama Varma I (1650–1656)
- Rani Gangadharalakshmi (1656–1658)
- Rama Varma II (1658–1662)
- Goda Varma II (1662–1663)
- Veera Kerala Varma V (1663–1687)

- Rama Varma III (1687–1693)
- Ravi Varma II (1693–1697)
- Rama Varma IV (1697–1701)
- Rama Varma V (1701–1721)
- Ravi Varma III (1721–1731)
- Rama Varma VI (1731–1746)
- Kerala Varma I (1746–1749)
- Rama Varma VII (1749–1760)
- Kerala Varma II (1760–1775)
- Rama Varma VIII (1775–1790)
- Rama Varma IX (Shaktan Thampuran) (1790–1805)

### **Under British suzerainty**

- Rama Varma IX (Shaktan Thampuran) (1790–1805)
- Rama Varma X (1805 - 1809) – Vellarapalli-yil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Vellarapali")
- Kerala Varma III (Veera Kerala Varma) (1809–1828) – Karkidaka Maasathil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "karkidaka" month(ME))
- Rama Varma XI (1828–1837) – Thulam-Maasathil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Thulam" month (ME))
- Rama Varma XII (1837–1844) – Edava-Maasathil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Edavam" month (ME))
- Rama Varma XIII (1844–1851) – Thrishur-il Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Thrishivaperoor" or Thrishur)

- Kerala Varma IV (Veera Kerala Varma) (1851–1853) – Kashi-yil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Kashi" or Varanasi)
- Ravi Varma IV (1853–1864) – Makara Maasathil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Makaram" month (ME))

### **As a princely state Under British Empire**

- Ravi Varma IV (1853–1864) – Makara Maasathil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Makaram" month (ME))
- Rama Varma XIV (1864–1888) – Mithuna Maasathil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Mithunam" month (ME))
- Kerala Varma V (1888–1895) – Chingam Maasathil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Chingam" month (ME))
- Rama Varma XV (Sir Sri Rama Varma) (1895–1914) – aka Rajarshi, Abdicated Highness (died in 1932)
- Rama Varma XVI (1914–1932) – Madrasil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in Madras or Chennai)
- Rama Varma XVII (1932–1941) – Dhaarmika Chakravarthi (King of Dharma), Chowara-yil Theepetta Thampuran (King who died in "Chowara")
- Kerala Varma VI (1941–1943) – Midukkan Thampuran
- Ravi Varma V (Ravi Varma Kunjappan Thampuran) (1943–1946) – Kunjappan Thampuran (Brother of Midukkan Thampuran)
- Kerala Varma VII (1946–1947) – Aikya Keralam Thampuran (The King who unified Kerala)

## Post-Independence

- Rama Varma XVIII (1948-1964) was known by the name of Parikshith Thampuran. He was the last official ruler of the Cochin Empire.
- Rama Varma XIX (1964–1975) – Lalan Thampuran
- Rama Varma XX (1975–2004) – Anyian Kochunni Thampuran
- Kerala Varma VIII (2004–2011) – Kochunni Thampuran
- Rama Varma XXI (2011–2014) – Kochaniyan Thampuran
- Ravi Varma VI (2014–2020) – Kochaniyan Thampuran

## Chiefs of Cochin

The Paliath Achan, or head of the Paliyam Nair family of Chendamangalam, played an important part in the politics of Cochin State since the early seventeenth century, and held hereditary rights to the ministership of Cochin. The Paliath Achan was the most powerful person after the king, and he sometimes exerted more power than the king.

In addition, there were many *Desavazhis* around the Cochin area, among them *Paliyam swaroopam*, who was second to the *Perumpadappu swaroopam*. Other powerful lords around these areas were Cheranellore Karthavu who was the head of the Anchi Kaimals, Muriyanatt (Mukundapuram-Nadavarambu) Nambiar who was the head of Arunattil Prabhus, Kodassery Kartha Mappranam Prabhu-Vellose Nair, Chengazhi Nambiar (Chengazhinad Naduvazhi), and Edappali Nampiyathiri.

KP Padmanabha Menon in his *History of Kerala, Vol 2* mentions the Anji Kaimals whose Chief was the Cheranellur Kartha as owning all of Eranakulam. In fact, Eranakulam is known as Anji Kaimal in the early maps of Kerala. See Dutch in Malabar (Dutch Records No 13), 1910 shows a map from Common Era 1740 that shows the area of Anji Kaimal as almost twice as large as the Cochin State. The other chiefs he mentions quoting Gollennesse (Dutch East India Company) is the 1) Mooriantt Nambiar 2) Paliath Achan (mentioned above), 3) Codacherry (Kotasseri) Kaimal, 4) Caimalieone (female Kaimal) of Corretty, 5) Changera Codda Kaimal, and 6) Panamoocattu Kaimal (Panambakadu Kaimal). The last four Kaimals are known as the Kaimals of Nandietter Nadu. The Kaimals of Nandietter Nadu had Nayar troops of 43,000 according to Heer Van Reede of the Dutch East India Company from 1694.

Sakthan Thampuran destroyed their powers and controlled most of these lords. Again, following the rebellion of the Paliath Achan along with Velu Thampi Dalawa in 1810, the powers of this chief were curbed.

## **Matrilineal inheritance**

The Cochin royal family followed the system of matrilineal succession known as Marumakkatayam. Traditionally the female members of the family marry (Sambandham) with Namboodiri Brahmins while male members marry women of the Samanthan Nair class. These wives of the male members are not Ranis or Queens as per the matrilineal system but instead get the title of Nethyar Amma.

## **Traditional rituals**

The term "Shodasakriyakal" refers to sixteen rites to be performed by all members, as structured through "Smruthi".

- Sekom (Garbhaadhaanam): A rite to be performed just before the first sexual intercourse after marriage.
- Pumsavanom: To be performed just after conception.
- Seemantham: Performed after Pumsavanom.
- Jathakarmam: Performed just after birth.
- Naamakaramam: Naming ceremony of the child.
- (Upa)nishkramanam (Vaathilpurappadu): Involves taking the child out of the house for the first time.
- Choroonu: The first ceremonial intake of rice by the child.
- Choulam: The first haircut ceremony of the boy/ girl.
- Upanayanam: The wearing of sacred thread, known as poonool in Malayalam (only for boys).
- Mahaanamneevrutham (Aanduvrutham):
- Mahaavrutham
- Upanishadvrutham
- Godaanam: Rites as part of thanks-giving to the Acharyan (priest or teacher), which includes giving cows.
- Samaavarthanam: A long ritual for the completion of the above said Vedic education.
- Marriage
- Agniadhaanam: A rite performed as an extension of Oupaasanam and introduction to Sroutha rites, after the death.



## **Deities**

- Paradevatha (goddess): Vannery Chitrakoodam, Pazhayannur Bhagavathy, Chazhur Pazhayannur Bhagavathy
- Paradevan (god): Vishnu (Sree Poornathrayeesa), Tiruvanchikulathappan (Lord Shiva of Thiruvanchikulam between North Paravur and Kodungallore)
- Other deities: Chottanikkara Bhagavathy, Pulpalli Thevar and many more

## **Naming practice of male Thampuran**

In the Cochin royal family all the male Thampurans were named according to the following convention.

- Eldest son - Rama Varma
- Second son - Kerala Varma
- Third son - Ravi Varma.

## **Naming practice of female Thampuran**

In the Cochin royal family the female Thampurans were named according to the following convention.

- First daughter- *Amba*
- Second daughter - *Subhadra*

This naming convention is followed again to the third daughter and fourth etc.

Both the female and male members are called by the name "Thampuran" and have same last name (Thampuran).(in all other royal families in Kerala, males are called Thampuran and females – Thampuratti.

## **Parukutty Nethyar Amma**

Maharaja Rama Varma (popularly known as Madrassil Theepetta Thampuran), who reigned from 1914 to 1932, was assisted by a particularly able consort named Parukutty Nethyar Amma. She was a member of the family that had the traditional honour of anointing the kings of Palakkad. She married the Maharaja, then fourth in line to the succession when she was fourteen years old in 1888. Her husband ascended the throne as a result of the abdication of his predecessor. Since the Maharaja was a scholar and had other interests, she took over the finances of the state. Under her guidance salaries were quadrupled and the increased revenue earned her a 17-gun salute. Parukutty Nethyar Amma was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal by King George V in 1919 for public work and came to be known as Lady Rama Varma of Cochin.

## **The dynasty today**

Members of the dynasty are spread all over the world (In five continents). The family is one of the world's largest royal families, numbering more than 1000 people, and many members of the family still live in and around Thripunithura, Thrissur (Chazhur), and other parts of Kochi.

## Chapter 2

# Portuguese–Mamluk Naval War

The **Portuguese– Egyptian Mamluk Naval War** was a naval conflict between the Egyptian state of the Mamluks and the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, following the expansion of the Portuguese after sailing around the Cape of Good Hope in 1498. The conflict took place during the early part of the 16th century, from 1505 to the fall of the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517.

## Operations

### Background

- Following the Portuguese bombardment of Calicut in 1500–01 by the 2nd Portuguese India Armada under Cabral, the spice trade linking India to Egypt and then Venice was seriously diminished and prices shot up. Arab shipping was also being attacked directly: in 1503, the first Egyptian ship was looted and sunk by the Portuguese as it was returning from India. In 1504, 17 Arab ships were destroyed by the Portuguese in the Indian harbour of Panane.

In 1504, the Mamluk Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri first sent an envoy to the Pope, in the person of the Grand Prior of the Saint Catherine's Monastery, warning that if the Pope did not stop the exactions of the Portuguese against Muslims, he would

bring ruin to the Christian Holy Place in the Levant and to the Christians living in his realm.

In 1504, the Venetians, who shared common interests with the Mamluks in the spice trade and desired to eliminate the Portuguese challenge if possible, sent envoy Francesco Teldi to Cairo. Teldi tried to find a level of cooperation between the two realms, encouraging the Mamluks to block Portuguese navigations. The Venetians claimed they could not intervene directly, and encouraged the Mamluk Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri to take action by getting into contact with Indian princes at Cochin and Cananor to entice them not to trade with the Portuguese, and the Sultans of Calicut and Cambay to fight against them. Some sort of alliance was thus concluded between the Venetians and the Mamluks against the Portuguese. There were claims, voiced during the War of the League of Cambrai, that the Venetians had supplied the Mamluks with weapons and skilled shipwrights.

The Mamluks however had little inclination for naval operations: "The war against the Portuguese, being mainly a naval war, was entirely alien to the Mamluk and little to his taste. The navy and everything connected with it was despised by the land-minded Mamluk horsemen".

The Portuguese however kept blockading the Red Sea, and arresting Muslim merchant ships.

### **Mamluk expedition (1505)**

In 1505 the Mamluk Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri ordered the first expedition against the Portuguese. The fleet was built with timber and weapons from the Ottoman Empire, and crews and

shipwrights were recruited throughout the eastern Mediterranean. The expedition, under Amir Husain Al-Kurdi, left Suez in November and travelled by sea to Jeddah, where they fortified the city. The fleet then prepared itself to go to Aden. This coincided with the dispatch of the 7th Portuguese India Armada into the Indian Ocean, under Francisco de Almeida.

In 1506, another fleet under Afonso de Albuquerque started to raid the coasts of Arabia and the Horn of Africa, after defeating a Muslim fleet. In 1507, a fleet of about 20 Portuguese ships entered the Red Sea and raided Indian shipping there, bringing the Mamluk Indian trade to near collapse. The Portuguese attempted to establish a base at Socotra in 1507 in order to stop the Mamluk trade through the Red Sea, but the island proved too inhospitable and was ineffective in that role, so that the Portuguese left after a few months.

In August–September 1507, the Mamluk fleet of about 50 vessels was stationed at Aden, preparing to go to India.

### **Battle of Chaul (1508)**

The fleet, again under Amir Husain Al-Kurdi, was sent to India in 1507. The Mamluks allied themselves with the Muslim Gujarat Sultanate, the first naval power of India at that time. The fleet was warmly welcomed in Diu, and Husain Al-Kurdi joined Meliqueaz, a Mamluk admiral of Dalmatian origin serving Gujarat, as leader of the Mamluk fleet at the battle of Chaul, where they faced and defeated the fleet of Lourenço de Almeida, son of the Portuguese viceroy of India, D. Francisco de Almeida.

## **Battle of Diu (1509)**

Following this battle, the Portuguese fiercely fought back led by the viceroy himself, who was seeking to avenge the death of his son and free the Portuguese prisoners made at Chaul in 1508. The Portuguese eventually succeeded in eliminating the Mamluk southern fleet in 1509 at the Battle of Diu.

Mamluk resistance prevented the Portuguese from blocking Red Sea trade completely. However, supply interruption was enough to force prices in Egypt to astronomical levels.

## **Diplomacy**

### **Venetian diplomacy**

The Mamluks again attempted to secure the help of the Venetians against the Portuguese, and they did intervene by pleading their case with the Pope.

The Venetians, who had been at peace with the Ottomans since the signature of the 1503 Peace Treaty by Andrea Gritti after the Ottoman–Venetian War, continued to secure peace with the Ottomans, and renewed their peace treaty in 1511, leading them to encourage the Ottomans to participate on the Mamluk side in the conflict against the Portuguese.

The rapprochement was such that Venice authorized Ottoman provisioning in its Mediterranean ports such as Cyprus. Venice also requested Ottoman support in the War of the League of Cambrai, but in vain.

A Mamluk-Venetian commercial treaty was signed by the ambassador to Cairo Domenico Trevisan in 1513. After that point however, and the reverses of the Mamluks and the Persians against the Ottomans, Venice increasingly favoured a rapprochement with the Ottoman Empire.

### **Attempts by Albuquerque to create a Portuguese-Persian alliance**

On the other hand, the Portuguese, who feared a new expedition from the Mamluks, organized a rapprochement with Persia, and endeavoured to establish an alliance, that could give bases for the Portuguese on the northern shores of the Indian Ocean and create an eastern threat for the Ottomans and the Mamluks.

Albuquerque received an ambassador of Shah Ismail at Goa, and returned a letter as well as an ambassador in the person of Rui Gomes. In the letter to Shah Ismail, Albuquerque proposed a joint attack against the Mamluks and the Ottomans:

And if you desire to destroy the Sultan [Qansuh] by land, you can recount on great assistance from the Armada of the King my Lord by sea, and I believe that with small trouble you must gain the lordship of the city of Cairo and all his kingdoms and dependencies, and thus my Lord can give you great help by sea against the Turks, and thus his fleets by sea and you with your great forces and cavalry by land can combine to inflict great injuries upon them

- —□ *Letter from Albuquerque to Shah Ismail.*

## **Portuguese Red Sea campaign (1513)**

Following their victory at the Battle of Diu and the elimination of rival Muslim fleets in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese endeavoured to the systematic destruction of Muslim commercial shipping.

In 1513, Albuquerque led a campaign against the Red Sea in order to stop completely Mamluk trade with India, and defeat Mamluk plans to send a fleet to India. On February 7, 1513, he left Goa with 1,700 Portuguese and 1,000 Indian men in 24 ships.

Albuquerque landed at Aden on 26 March 1513, at the entrance of the Red Sea and attempted to take the city, but he was repulsed. Sailing into the Red Sea, he destroyed the port of Kamaran (June and July 1513). He failed to sail to Jeddah due to contrary winds, and then withdrew to India after again bombarding Aden.

Albuquerque thus failed to stop the spice trade through the Red Sea and to establish a trade monopoly for the Europe-India spice trade.

This campaign however had been a major threat to the Mamluk harbour of Suez and to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, which put the Mamluk Sultan under tremendous pressure. The Mamluk Sultan Qansuh was thus forced to seek Ottoman assistance, although the Ottomans had been a traditional rival, in his resistance against the Portuguese.



## **Ottoman-Mamluk campaign (1514–17)**

In 1514–16 the Ottomans cooperated with the Mamluks against the Portuguese. They provided an Ottoman commander in the person of Selman Reis, as well as firearms. Selman Reis entered the service of the Mamluks, and led a group of 2,000 armed Levantines, possibly against the own wishes of the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, and met with this force with the Sultan Qansuh at Suez in April 1514. Artillery defenses were also established in Jeddah and Alexandria.

This concentration on the Portuguese front had the ultimate effect however of weakening the Mamluk strengths that could be put against the Ottomans in the Levant. The investment was huge, as the fleet cost around 400,000 dinars to the Mamluk Sultan.

Following the disruption of the spice trade between India and Mamluk Egypt by the Portuguese, Selman Reis led a Mamluk fleet of 19 ships into the Indian Ocean in 1515. He left Suez leading the fleet on 30 September 1515. The fleet also included 3,000 men, 1,300 of whom were Turkish soldiers. The fleet built a fortress in Kamaran, but failed to take Yemen and Aden on 17 September 1516. The combined fleet was able to defend Jeddah against the Portuguese in 1517, but by then the war between the Ottomans and the Mamluks was already raging on.

As a consequence, the Portuguese were able to set up trading posts in the Indian subcontinent, and take-over the spice trade to Europe, which had been a major source of revenues for the

Mamluk state. The Mamluk Empire became financially crippled, and was finally vanquished by the Ottoman Empire under Selim I, on land, in the Ottoman–Mamluk War (1516–17). Cairo was captured by the Ottomans on January 26, 1517, leading to the disintegration of the Mamluk Empire.

## **Ottoman takeover**

The Ottomans, on the other hand, had thus managed to establish a strong presence in the Indian Ocean, which they would further develop during the rest of the century. The Ottomans took up the task of fighting the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, especially through their admiral Selman Reis, who in 1525 occupied the Aden and Yemen with a fleet of 18 ships and 299 cannons, forcing the Portuguese to retreat. The Ottoman failed however in the 1538 Siege of Diu.

Egypt, on the other hand, lost its status as a great power, and, deprived of the resources of the Indian Ocean trade, essentially faded into the background for the next three centuries.

## Chapter 3

# Portuguese India

The **State of India** (Portuguese: *Estado da Índia*), also referred as the **Portuguese State of India** (*Estado Português da Índia*, **EPI**) or simply **Portuguese India** (*Índia Portuguesa*), was a colonial state of the Portuguese Empire founded six years after the discovery of a sea route to the Indian Subcontinent by the Kingdom of Portugal. The capital of Portuguese India served as the governing centre of a string of Portuguese fortresses and settlements scattered along the Indian Ocean.

The first viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, established his headquarters at what was then *Cochim*, the present-day Fort Cochin (Fort Kochi), subsequent Portuguese governors were not always of viceroy rank. After 1510, the capital of the Portuguese viceroyalty was transferred to *Velhas Conquistas* (Old Conquests area) of present-day Goa and Damaon. Present-day Mumbai (Bombay) was part of Portuguese India as *Bom Baim* until it was ceded to the British Crown in 1661, who in turn leased Bombay to the East India Company. Until the 18th century, the Portuguese governor in Goa had authority over all Portuguese possessions in the Indian Ocean, from southern Africa to southeast Asia. In 1752, Mozambique got its own separate government, and in 1844 the Portuguese government of India stopped administering the territory of Macau, Solor and Timor, and its authority was confined to the colonial holdings on the Konkan and Malabar coasts of Western India.

At the time of the British Raj's dissolution in 1947, Portuguese India was subdivided into three districts located on modern-

day India's western coast, sometimes referred to collectively as *Goa*: namely Goa; Damão, which included the inland enclaves of Dadra and Nagar Haveli; and Diu. Portugal lost effective control of the enclaves of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1954, and finally the rest of the overseas territory in December 1961, when it was annexed by India under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In spite of this, Portugal only recognised Indian control in 1974, after the Carnation Revolution and the fall of the Estado Novo regime, by a treaty signed on 31 December 1974.

## **Early history**

### **Vasco da Gama lands in India**

The first Portuguese encounter with the subcontinent was on 20 May 1498 when Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on the Malabar Coast. Anchored off the coast of Calicut, the Portuguese invited native fishermen on board and immediately bought some Indian items. One Portuguese accompanied the fishermen to the port and met with a Tunisian Muslim. On the advice of this man, Gama sent a couple of his men to Ponnani to meet with ruler of Calicut, the Zamorin. Over the objections of Arab merchants, Gama managed to secure a letter of concession for trading rights from the Zamorin, Calicut's ruler. But, the Portuguese were unable to pay the prescribed customs duties and price of his goods in gold.

Later Calicut officials temporarily detained Gama's Portuguese agents as security for payment. This, however, annoyed Gama, who carried a few natives and sixteen fishermen with him by force.

Nevertheless, Gama's expedition was successful beyond all reasonable expectation, bringing in cargo that was worth sixty times the cost of the expedition.

## **Pedro Álvares Cabral**

Pedro Álvares Cabral sailed to India, marking the arrival of Europeans to Brazil on the way, to trade for pepper and other spices, negotiating and establishing a factory at Calicut, where he arrived on 13 September 1500. Matters worsened when the Portuguese factory at Kozhikode was attacked by surprise by the locals, resulting in the death of more than fifty Portuguese. Cabral was outraged by the attack on the factory and seized ten Arab merchant ships anchored in the harbour, killing about six hundred of their crew and confiscating their cargo before burning the ships. Cabral also ordered his ships to bombard Calicut for an entire day in retaliation for the violation of the agreement. In Cochin and Cannanore Cabral succeeded in making advantageous treaties with the local rulers. Cabral started the return voyage on 16 January 1501 and arrived in Portugal with only 4 of 13 ships on 23 June 1501. The Portuguese built the Pulicat fort in 1502, with the help of the Vijayanagar ruler.

Vasco da Gama sailed to India for a second time with 15 ships and 800 men, arriving at Calicut on 30 October 1502, where the ruler was willing to sign a treaty. Gama this time made a call to expel all Muslims (Arabs) from Calicut which was vehemently turned down. He bombarded the city and captured several rice vessels. He returned to Portugal in September 1503.

## **Francisco de Almeida**

- On 25 March 1505, Francisco de Almeida was appointed *Viceroy of India*, on the condition that he would set up four forts on the southwestern Indian coast: at Anjediva Island, Cannanore, Cochin and Quilon. Francisco de Almeida left Portugal with a fleet of 22 vessels with 1,500 men.

On 13 September, Francisco de Almeida reached Anjadip Island, where he immediately started the construction of Fort Anjediva. On 23 October, with the permission of the friendly ruler of Cannanore, he started building St. Angelo Fort at Cannanore, leaving Lourenço de Brito in charge with 150 men and two ships.

Francisco de Almeida then reached Cochin on 31 October 1505 with only 8 vessels left. There he learned that the Portuguese traders at Quilon had been killed. He decided to send his son Lourenço de Almeida with 6 ships, who destroyed 27 Calicut vessels in the harbour of Quilon. Almeida took up residence in Cochin. He strengthened the Portuguese fortifications of Fort Manuel on Cochin.

The Zamorin prepared a large fleet of 200 ships to oppose the Portuguese, but in March 1506 Lourenço de Almeida (son of Francisco de Almeida) was victorious in a sea battle at the entrance to the harbour of Cannanore, the Battle of Cannanore, an important setback for the fleet of the Zamorin. Thereupon Lourenço de Almeida explored the coastal waters southwards to Colombo, in what is now Sri Lanka. In Cannanore, however, a new ruler, hostile to the Portuguese

and friendly with the Zamorin, attacked the Portuguese garrison, leading to the Siege of Cannanore.

In 1507 Almeida's mission was strengthened by the arrival of Tristão da Cunha's squadron. Afonso de Albuquerque's squadron had, however, split from that of Cunha off East Africa and was independently conquering territories in the Persian Gulf to the west.

In March 1508 a Portuguese squadron under command of Lourenço de Almeida was attacked by a combined Mameluk Egyptian and Gujarat Sultanate fleet at Chaul and Dabul respectively, led by admirals Mirocem and Meliqueaz in the Battle of Chaul. Lourenço de Almeida lost his life after a fierce fight in this battle. Mamluk-Indian resistance was, however, to be decisively defeated at the Battle of Diu.

### **Afonso de Albuquerque and later governors**

In the year 1509, Afonso de Albuquerque was appointed the second governor of the Portuguese possessions in the East. A new fleet under Marshal Fernão Coutinho arrived with specific instructions to destroy the power of Zamorin of Calicut. The Zamorin's palace was captured and destroyed and the city was set on fire. The king's forces rallied, killing Coutinho and wounding Albuquerque. Albuquerque relented and entered into a treaty with the Zamorin in 1513 to protect Portuguese interests in Malabar. Hostilities were renewed when the Portuguese attempted to assassinate the Zamorin sometime between 1515 and 1518. In 1510, Afonso de Albuquerque defeated the Bijapur sultan with the help of the Hindu Vijayanagar empire, leading to the establishment of a

permanent settlement in Velha Goa (or Old Goa). The Southern Province, also known simply as Goa, was the headquarters of Portuguese India, and seat of the Portuguese viceroy who governed all the Portuguese possessions in Asia, known as the Portuguese East Indies until the onset of the Hispano-Dutch War and the Luso-Dutch War.

There were Portuguese settlements in and around Mylapore. The Luz Church in Mylapore, Madras (Chennai) was the first church that the Portuguese built in Madras in 1516. Later in 1522, the São Tomé church was built by the Portuguese.

The Portuguese acquired several territories from the Sultans of Gujarat: Damaon (occupied in 1531, formally ceded 1539); Salsette, Bombay, *Baçaim* (Bassein) (occupied in 1534); and Diu (ceded 1535).

These possessions became the Northern Province of Portuguese India, which extended almost 100 km (62 mi) along the coast from Damaon to Chaul, and in places 30–50 km (19–31 mi) inland. The province was ruled from the fortress-town of *Baçaim* (Fort Bassein).

In 1526, under the viceroyship of Lopo Vaz de Sampaio, the Portuguese took possession of Mangalore. The territory included parts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi in Karnataka state, and Kasaragod in Kerala state (South Canara). Mangalore was named the islands of *O Padrão de Santa Maria*; later came to be known as St. Mary's Islands. In 1640, the Keladi Nayaka Kingdom defeated the Portuguese. Shivappa Nayaka destroyed the Portuguese political power in the Kanara region by capturing all the Portuguese forts of the coastal region.



In 1546, Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier requested the institution of the Goa Inquisition for the "New Christians" in a letter dated 16 May 1546 to King John III of Portugal. Various non-Christian communities were officially persecuted by the Portuguese colonisers.

By the start of the 17th century, the population of Goa and the surrounding areas was about 250,000. Holding this strategic land against repeated attacks by the Indian states required constant infusions of men and material; for instance, 25,000 soldiers died in Goa from 1604 to 1634.

However the quality of these men was low compared to those in Europe (often they were beggars, jailbirds, or people forcibly taken off the streets of Lisbon) and they were never very numerous or well-organized (proper regiments were not formed until the 18th century; there was no standardized weaponry and companies would disband outside of campaign seasons).

Portugal's important victories, such as the battle of Cochin in 1504, the defense of Diu in 1509, the conquest of Goa in 1510, the defenses of Diu in 1538 and 1546, and the defense of Goa in 1571 were always accomplished with a bare handful of men. In their largest deployments, the Portuguese could field perhaps 2,000 to 3,000 European and mestizo troops supported by a similar amount of local auxiliaries, while the larger Indian states could field tens of thousands each. Portuguese superiority in military technology (especially in regards to ships and artillery), training (especially in the skill of their gunners), and tactics, combined with the disunity of the Indian states opposing them, allowed them to keep their position and consistently win their wars.

Bombay (present-day Mumbai) was given to Britain in 1661 as part of the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza's dowry to Charles II of England. Most of the Northern Province was lost to the Maratha Confederacy in 1739 when the Maratha General Chimaji Appa attacked and plundered Fort Bassein in the Battle of Bassein. Later on Portugal acquired Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1779.

Goa was briefly occupied by the British from 1799 to 1813. In 1843 the capital was shifted to Panjim, then renamed *Nova Goa*, when it officially became the administrative seat of Portuguese India, replacing the city of Velha Goa (now Old Goa), although the Viceroys lived there already since 1 December 1759. Before moving to the city, the viceroy remodelled the fortress of Adil Khan, transforming it into a palace.

The Portuguese also shipped over many Órfãs d'El-Rei to Portuguese colonies in the Indian peninsula, Goa in particular. Órfãs d'El-Rei literally translates to *Orphans of the King*, and they were Portuguese girl orphans sent to overseas colonies to marry either Portuguese settlers or natives with high status. Thus there are Portuguese footprints all over the western and eastern coasts of the Indian peninsula, though Goa became the capital of Portuguese Goa from 1530 onward until the annexation of Goa proper and the entire Estado da Índia Portuguesa, and its merger with India in 1961.

## **1947 to 1961**

- On 24 July 1954 an organisation called "The United Front of Goans" took control of the enclave of Dadra.

The remaining territory of Nagar Haveli was seized by *Azad Gomantak Dal* on 2 August 1954. The decision given by the International Court of Justice at The Hague, regarding access to Dadra and Nagar Haveli, was an impasse. From 1954, the *Satyagrahis* (peaceful protesters) against Portuguese rule, outside Goa and Damaon's borders were violently suppressed through brute force. Many internal revolts were quelled by the use of force and leaders extrajudicially murdered or jailed. As a result, India broke off diplomatic relations with Portugal, closed its Consulate-General in Panjim and demanded that Salazar regime should close its delegation in New Delhi. India also imposed an economic embargo against the territories of Portuguese Goa. The Indian Government adopted a diplomatic "wait and watch" approach from 1955 to 1961 with numerous representations to the Portuguese Salazar dictatorship, and made attempts to highlight the issue of decolonisation before the international community.

To facilitate the transport of people and goods to and from the Indian enclaves, the Salazar dictatorship established an airline, Transportes Aéreos da Índia Portuguesa, and airports at Goa, Daman and Diu.

Finally, in December 1961, India militarily invaded the remaining Portuguese possessions of Goa and Damaon, where regardless of the odds the Portuguese forces put up a fight. Portuguese forces had been given orders to either defeat the invaders or die. Only meager resistance was offered due to the

Portuguese army's poor firepower and size (only 3,300 men), against a fully armed Indian force of over 30,000 with full air and naval support. The Governor of Portuguese India signed the Instrument of Surrender on 19 December 1961, ending 450 years of Portuguese rule in India.

## **Post-annexation**

### **Status of the new territories**

Free Dadra and Nagar Haveli existed as a *de facto* independent entity from its independence in 1954 until its merger with the Republic of India in 1961.

Following the annexation of Goa, Daman and Diu, the new territories became union territories within the Indian Union as Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Goa, Daman and Diu. Maj. Gen. K. P. Candeth was declared as military governor of Goa, Daman and Diu. Goa's first general elections were held in 1963.

In 1967 a referendum was conducted, where voters decided whether to merge Goa into the Mahratti majority state of Maharashtra, the pro-Konkani faction eventually won after many protests against the pro-Marathi faction led by Dayanand Bhandodkar. However full statehood was not conferred immediately, and it was only on 30 May 1987 that Goa became the 25th state of the Indian Union, with Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu being separated, continue to be administered as Union Territories.

The most drastic changes in Portuguese India after 1961 were the introduction of democratic elections, as well as the

replacement of Portuguese with English as the general language of government and education. In 1987, Konkani in the Devanagari script became the official language of the union territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. The Indians allowed certain Portuguese institutions to continue unchanged. Amongst these were the land ownership system of the *comunidade*, where land was held by the community and was then leased out to individuals. Goans under Indian Government left the Portuguese Goa civil code unchanged, hence Goa and Damaon today remain as the only territories in India with a common civil code that does not depend on religion.

## **Citizenship**

The Citizenship Act of 1955 granted the government of India the authority to define citizenship in the Indian union. In exercise of its powers, the government passed the *Goa, Daman and Diu (Citizenship) Order, 1962* on 28 March 1962 conferring Indian citizenship on all persons born on or before 20 December 1961 in Goa, Daman, and Diu.

## **Indo-Portuguese relations**

Portugal's Salazar dictatorship did not recognise India's sovereignty over the annexed territories, and established a government-in-exile for the territories, which continued to be represented in the Portuguese National Assembly. After 1974's Carnation Revolution, the new Portuguese government recognised Indian sovereignty over Goa, Daman and Diu, and the two states restored diplomatic relations. Portugal automatically gives citizens of the former Portuguese-India its citizenship and opened a consulate in Goa in 1994.

## **Portuguese Cemetery in Kollam (Quilon)**

Kollam (originally **Desinganadu**, a prominent seaport in ancient India) became a Portuguese settlement; in 1519 they built a cemetery at Tangasseri in Quilon city. After a Dutch invasion, they also buried their dead there. The Pirates of Tangasseri formerly inhabited the cemetery. Remnants of this cemetery are still in existence today at Tangasseri. The site is very close to Tangasseri Lighthouse and St Thomas Fort, which are on the list of centrally protected monuments under the control of Archaeological Survey of India.

## **Postal history**

Early postal history of the colony is obscure, but regular mail is known to have been exchanged with Lisbon from 1825 onwards. Portugal had a postal convention with Great Britain, so much mail was probably routed through Bombay and carried on British packets. Portuguese postmarks are known from 1854 when a post office was opened in Goa. The last regular issue for Portuguese India was on 25 June 1960, for the 500th anniversary of the death of Prince Henry the Navigator. Stamps of India were first used on 29 December 1961, although the old stamps were accepted until 5 January 1962. Portugal continued to issue stamps for the lost colony but none were offered for sale in the colony's post offices, so they are not considered valid stamps. Dual franking was tolerated from 22 December 1961 until 4 January 1962. Colonial (Portuguese) postmarks were tolerated until May 1962.

## Chapter 4

# Kingdom of Mewar under Rana

## Sanga

## Udaipur State

The **Udaipur State**, also historically known as **Kingdom of Mewar**, was an independent state in northwestern India prior to the formation of the Indian Republic.

## Geography

The geographical boundaries of Mewar have waxed and waned over the centuries, but as of 1941, the area of the state was 34,110 square kilometres (approximately the size of present-day Netherlands).

From the treaty with the British in 1818 to its accession to the Republic of India in 1949, the boundaries of Udaipur state were as follows: the state was bounded on the north by the British district of Ajmer-Merwara;

On the west by Jodhpur and Sirohi; on the southwest by Idar; on the south by Dungarpur,

Banswara and Pratabgarh; on the east by Bundi and Kotah; and on the northeast by Jaipur.

# History

## **State formation and emergence as regional power**

Mewar was founded by Bappa Rawal, formerly a chieftain of the Mori king of Chittor, who acquired control of Chittor in c.728. Nagda was the first capital of Mewar and continued to be so until c. 948 when the ruler Allat moved the capital from Nagda, Rajasthan to Ahar.

## **Mewar and the Mughals**



- Maharana Raj Singh (1629–1680)

In 1615, after four decades of skirmishing, Mewar finally surrendered to the Mughals and entered into a treaty under which Mewar rulers can now enter their old territories like Chittor and Mandalgarh under the Mughal vassalship and the



crown prince of Mewar attending the Mughal court and Mewar providing a force of 1,000 horsemen to the Mughals.

## **Maratha influence**



- Lake Palace in Lake Pichola

The Marathas made the first successful incursion into Mewar territory in 1725 and, subsequently, continued to exert increasing influence not only on Mewar but also surrounding states of Dungarpur, Banswara, and Bundi. To counter the Marathas, Maharana Jagat Singh of Mewar convened a conference of Rajput rulers in Hurda in 1734, but no agreement materialised. Maratha power continued to grow, with the Marathas regularly extracting hefty tributes from Mewar over the remaining part of the century.

## **Mewar in the British Raj**

By 1818, the armies of Holkar, Scindia, and Tonk had plundered Mewar, pauperising its ruler and people. As early as 1805, Maharana Bhim Singh of Mewar approached the British

for assistance but the Treaty of 1803 with Scindia prevented the British from entertaining the request. But by 1817, the British too were anxious to have alliances with Rajput rulers and the Treaty of Friendship, Alliances and Unity was concluded between Mewar and East India Company (on behalf of Britain) on 13 January 1818.

Under the treaty, the British Government agreed to protect the territory of Mewar, in return for which Mewar acknowledged British supremacy and agreed to abstain from political associations with other states and to pay one-fourth of its revenues as tribute for 5 years, and three-eighth in perpetuity. A constitution for Udaipur State was adopted on May 23, 1947. The last ruler of Udaipur State signed the accession to Independent India on 7 April 1949.

## **Maharanas**

Until 1303, the rulers of Mewar were called 'Maharawals'. Upon the death of Rawal Ratan Singh during the sack of Chittorgarh by Allauddin Khilji 1303, Hammir Singh became the ruler of Mewar and styled himself as 'Maharana', which is what its rulers were called until dissolution of the state in 1949.

## **British Residents and Political**

### **Agents**

Political Agents employed by the East India Company to oversee their affairs in the state included James Tod, who held the office from March 1818 to June 1822. The post of British

Resident that superseded this position was twice held by Alan Holme (1908 – 1911 and 1916 – 1919).

## **Administrative structure**

At the time of the 1901 census, the state was divided into 17 administrative sub-divisions - 11 *zilas* and 6 *parganas*, the difference between a *zila* and *pargana* being that the latter was larger and broken up into further subdivisions. Further, there were 28 principal *jagirs* and 2 *bhumats*. Each *zila* was administered by a *hakim*, a state official, supported at each *tehsil* (a *zila* sub-division) by an assistant *hakim*. The state was poorly managed before British rule. The revenue of Udaipur state was Rs.4,00,000 with a debt of Rs.29,00,000 in 1819, after which the British took over the administration. The state revenue showed improvement under British agents, the revenue rising to Rs.8,00,000 in 1821 and an average of Rs.28,00,000 in 1899–1900.

## **Land tenure**

The principal forms of land tenure in the state were jagir, bhum, sasan, and khalsa. Jagirs were grants of land made in recognition service of a civil or political nature. Jagirdars, the holders of jagir, usually paid a fixed annual tribute called *chhatund* on an annual basis, and *nazarana* on the succession of a new Maharana.

On the death of a jagirdar, the jagir reverted to the Maharana until the late jagirdar's successor was recognized by the Maharana. Those holding bhum tenures paid a small tribute or nominal quit-rent (*bhum barar*), and were liable to be called on

for local service. Sasan (also known as muafi) holders were not liable for payments to the Maharana but taxes were sometimes recovered from them. Khalsa (crown lands) holders were cultivators who were undisturbed in their possession as long as they continued to pay land revenue. As of 1912, 38% of the land revenue of the State was from khalsa land, the rest from other forms of tenure.

## **Rana Sanga**

**Sangram Singh I** (IAST: Rānā Sangrām Simha; c. 1482 – 1528 CE), popularly known as **Rana Sanga**, was a king from the Sisodia dynasty. He ruled Mewar, the traditional territory of Guhilas (Sisodias) in present-day north-western India. However, through his capable rule his kingdom turned into the greatest power of Northern India in early 16th century. He controlled present-day Rajasthan, North Gujarat and Western Madhya Pradesh. His capital was located at Chittor.

In his long military career, Sanga achieved a series of unbroken successes against several neighbouring Muslim kingdoms, most notably the Lodhi dynasty of Delhi. He united several Rajput clans for the first time since the Second battle of Tarain and marched against the Timurid ruler Babur. Despite initial success, Sanga suffered a major defeat at Khanwa through the Timurid's use of gunpowder, which was unknown in North India at the time. He was later poisoned by his own nobles. His defeat at Khanwa is seen as a landmark event in Mughal conquest of Northern India.

His reign was admired by several of contemporaries including Babur, who described him the "greatest Indian king" of that

time along with Krishnadevaraya of South India. The Mughal historian Al-Badayuni called Sanga as the bravest of all Rajputs alongside with Prithviraj Chauhan.

Sanga was the last independent Hindu king of Northern India to control a significant territory and in some contemporary texts is described as the *Hindu Emperor* in Northern India.

## **Early life and accession**

Sanga was born to the Sisodia king Rana Raimal and queen Ratan kunwar a (Chahamana (Chauhan) princess). Although contemporary texts of Sisodias does not mention the year of his birth, but provides some of the astrological planetary positions at the time of his birth, calling them auspicious. Based on these positions, assuming certain other planetary positions and on basis of Kumbhalgarh inscription Historian G.H Ojha calculated Sanga's birth year as 1482 CE. Sanga was youngest of the four sons of Raimal, However, due to the circumstances and after a fierce struggle with his brothers in which he lost one of his eye, he finally succeeded throne of Mewar in 1508.

## **Military career**

After his ascension to the throne, Sanga reunited the warring clans of Rajputana through diplomacy and martial alliances. Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, mentions in his memoirs mentions the challenges he faced in India, Babur described Sanga as the greatest infidel king (Hindu) of India along with Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara Empire in South.

Babur further said that *Sanga had recently grown so great by his audacity and sword that his kingdom include a significant portion of Northern India.*

According to legends, Sanga had fought a 100 battles and lost only once. In various struggle he lost his wrist and was crippled in leg. In his illustrious military career, Sanga defeated Sultans of Delhi, Malwa and Gujarat in 18 pitched battles and expanded his domain by conquering much of Present-day Rajasthan, Western Madhya Pradesh and North part of Gujarat. He re-established Rajput rule in Malwa first time after fall of Paramara kingdom in 1305 CE.

He also removed Jizya tax from the Hindus which was earlier imposed by Muslim rulers. He was the last independent Hindu king of Northern India to control a significant territory and in some contemporary texts described as *Hindu Emperor*.

## **Conquest of Malwa**

Medini Rai a rebellious minister of Malwa sultan was having a life and death struggle for throne of Malwa against Mahmud, he was promised aid by Rana Sanga. As a result, the combined Muslim forces of Gujarat and Malwa met the Sisodias led by Sanga at Gagron. The battle resulted in complete route of Muslim forces and decisive victory of Rajputs.

After the victory in the battle and other skirmishes aftermath Sanga conquered significant part Malwa along with Chanderi. Rai made Chanderi his capital and became king of Malwa. while Silhaditya Tomar establish himself as master of Raisen and Sarangpur region. According to historian Satish Chandra

this events took place between 1518 and 1519. After the victory and restoring Hindu rule in Malwa, Sanga order Rai to remove Jizya tax from Hindus of the region.

## **Wars against Lodhis**

After conquering Malwa, Sanga turned his attention towards northeastern Rajasthan which was then under the control Khilji's ally, Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi. Ibrahim Lodi, after hearing the news of encroachments by Sanga on his territory, prepared an army and marched against Mewar in 1517. The Rana with his army met Lodi at Khatoli on borders of Hadoti and in the ensuing Battle at Khatoli, Lodi army suffered serious reverses and fled.

One Lodi prince was captured and imprisoned. In this battle, Sanga lost an arm by a sword cut, and an arrow made him lame for life.

Lodi, reportedly stunned by this Rajput aggression (the extent of which was unprecedented in the preceding three centuries), once again moved against Mewar in 1518-19 but was humbled again at Battle of Dholpur.

Lodi fought Sanga repeatedly, only to be defeated each time, losing his entire land in present-day Rajasthan, while Sanga's influence extended up to the striking distance of Pilia Khar in Agra.

According to a 16th-century text "Parshvanath-Shravan-Sattavisi", Rana Sanga further defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Ranthambore after the Siege of Mandsaur.

## **Campaign in Gujarat**

In 1520, Sanga invaded Gujarat on the question of the succession of the state of Idar, with his powerful army of 40,000 Rajputs supported by his three vassals. Rao Ganga Rathore of Marwar too joined him with a garrison of 8,000 Rajputs, other allies of Rana were Rawal Udai singh of Vagad and Rao Viram deva of Merta. He defeated the Muslim army of Nizam khan and pursued them to Ahmedabad. Sanga call of his invasion 20 miles before capital Ahemdabad. He plunder down the royal treasuries of Gujarat and destroy several mosques and built temples over them. After a series of victories, Sanga successfully annexed Northern Gujarat and appointed one of his vassals to rule there.

## **War against Mughals**

On 21 April 1526, the Timurid king Babur invaded India for the fifth time and defeated Ibrahim Lodhi in the First Battle of Panipat and executed him. After the battle, Sanga unified several Rajput clans for the first time since Prithviraj Chauhan, built an army of 100,000 Rajput soldiers and advanced to Agra.

The Mughals captured Bayana fort which was part of Sanga's empire therefore a major clash took place in Bayana in February 1527 in which Mughal forces of Babur led by Chin Timur khan were defeated by Rajput forces led by Prithviraj kachwaha and later by Rana Sanga (in last parts of siege). The defeat was last of Rana Sanga success as a result the Mughals who were terrified by Rajput valour threatened Babur to leave



for Kabul, However Babur confronting a large Hindu army for first time used religious hatred against the Rajputs by declaring the battle as a *Jihad against the Kaffirs* he further sought divine favour by abjuring liquor, breaking the wine vessels and pouring the wine down a well.

In ensuing battle fought at Khanwa, 37 miles (60 km) west of Agra, on March 16. The Mughals were victorious due to their cannons, matchlocks and other firearms. Sangha was struck by an arrow in mid of the battle and was removed from the battle by his brother-in law Prithviraj Kachwaha of Amber along with prince Maldev Rathore in Unconscious state. Following his victory, Babur ordered a tower of enemy skulls to be erected, a practice formulated by Timur against his adversaries, irrespective of their religious beliefs. According to Chandra, the objective of constructing a tower of skulls was not just to record a great victory, but also to terrorize opponents. Earlier, the same tactic had been used by Babur against the Afghans of Bajaur.

Sangha was also betrayed by Silhadi during the battle who changed sides and went over to Babur.

The victory of Mughals is seen as a landmark event in Mughal conquest of North India as the battle turned out to be more historic and eventful than Panipat because it made Babur undisputed master of North India while crushing the threatening and reviving Rajput powers. According to historian Andre Wink after the victory at Khanua, The Centre of Mughal power became Agra instead of Kabul and continue to remain till downfall of the Empire after Aalamgir's death. According to modern historians had there not been the cannons of Babur,

Sanga might have achieved a historic victory against Babur. Babur's cannons had put an end to the outdated trends in Indian warfare.

## **Death and succession**

Sanga was taken away from battlefield in unconscious state by Prithviraj Singh I Kachwaha and Maldeo Rathore of Marwar. After regaining consciousness he took an oath to never return to Chittor till he defeated Babur and conquered Delhi. He also stopped wearing Turban and used to wrap up cloth over his head. While he was preparing to wage another war against Babur he was poisoned by his own nobles who did not want another Battle with Babur. He died in Kalpi in January 1528. He was succeeded by his son Ratan Singh II.

After his defeat his Vassal Medini Rai was defeated by Babur at Battle of Chanderi and Babur captured the capital of Rai kingdom Chanderi. Medini was offered Shamsabad instead of Chanderi as it was historically important in conquering Malwa but Rao refused the offer and chose to die fighting. The Rajput women and children committed Self-immolation to save their honour from Muslim army. After the victory Babur captured Chanderi along with Malwa which was ruled by Rai.

## **Ibrahim Lodhi**

**Ibrahim Khan Lodi** (died 21 April 1526) was the last Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate, who became Sultan in 1517 after the death of his father Sikandar Lodhi. He was the last ruler of the Lodi dynasty, reigning for nine years until 1526, when he was

defeated and killed at the Battle of Panipat by Babur's invading army, giving way to the emergence of the Mughal Empire in India.

## **Biography**

Ibrahim was an ethnic Pashtun. He attained the throne upon the death of his father, Sikandar, but was not blessed with the same ruling capability. He faced a number of rebellions. Ibrahim Lodhi also displeased the nobility when he replaced old and senior commanders with younger ones who were loyal to him. His Afghan nobility eventually invited Babur to invade India.

In 1526, the Mughal forces of Babur, the king of Kabulistan (Kabul, present Afghanistan), defeated Ibrahim's much larger army in the Battle of Panipat. He was killed in the battle. It is estimated that Babur's forces numbered around 12,000–30,000 men and had between 20 and 24 pieces of field artillery. Ibrahim Lodi had around 100,000–120,000 men along with at least 300 war elephants. After the end of Lodi dynasty, the era of Mughal rule commenced.

## **Tomb**

His tomb is often mistaken to be the *Shisha Gumbad* within Lodhi Gardens, Delhi. Rather Ibrahim Lodi's Tomb is actually situated near the tehsil office in Panipat, close to the Dargah of Sufi saint Bu Ali Shah Qalandar. It is a simple rectangular structure on a high platform approached by a flight of steps. In 1866, the British relocated the tomb during construction of the

Grand Trunk Road and renovated it with an inscription highlighting Ibrahim Lodi's death in the Battle of Panipat. He also built a Khwaja Khizr Tomb in Sonipat in 1522.

## **Battle of Khatoli**

The **Battle of Khatoli** was fought in 1518 between the Lodi dynasty under Ibrahim Lodi and the Kingdom of Mewar under Rana Sanga, during which Mewar emerged victorious.

## **Battle**

On the death of Sikander Lodi in 1518, his son Ibrahim Lodi succeeded him as the new Sultan of the Lodi dynasty in the Delhi Sultanate. He was engaged in putting down the revolts of his nobles, when news of Rana Sanga's encroachments reached him.

He prepared an army and marched against Mewar. Rana Sanga also had prepared a large army of Rajput warriors and had advanced to meet him and the two armies met near the village of Khatoli on the borders of Haravati (Haraoti) in present-day Lakheri, Rajasthan. Ibrahim Lodi's army could not stand the onslaught of the Rajputs, and after a fight lasting two pahars (five hours), the Sultan's army gave way and fled, followed by the Sultan himself, leaving a Lodi prince prisoner in the hands of Rana Sanga. The prince was released after a few days, on payment of a ransom. In this battle, Rana Sanga lost an arm by a sword cut, and an arrow also hit him in the leg which made him lame for life.

## **Aftermath**

The resources of Ibrahim were depleted by this war with Sanga so he could not renew the contest for some time. However, he sought vengeance on Maharana Sanga for the disastrous defeat inflicted by the Rana Sanga at Khatoli. And when the rebellion of Islam Khan, which had assumed serious proportions, was suppressed, the Sultan Ibrahim Lodi prepared another large army to attack Mewar, but was once again defeated by the Rajputs and Rana Sanga's forces in the Battle of Dholpur.

## Chapter 5

# Battle of Gagron and Dholpur

## Battle of Gagron

The **Battle of Gagron** was fought in 1519 between Sultan Mahmud Khalji II of Malwa and Rana Sanga of Mewar. The conflict took place in Gagron (in the present-day Indian state of Rajasthan) and resulted in Sanga's victory, with him taking Mahmud captive and annexing significant territory.

## Background

Following the death of the Sultan of Malwa, Nasir-ud-Din Khalji, a succession struggle erupted amongst his sons. Mahmud Khalji II emerged victorious, primarily with the aid of the Rajput chief Medini Rai.

The latter amassed considerable influence, resulting in the enmity of the Muslim nobles, with even the new sultan finding it necessary to appeal to Muzaffar Shah II of Gujarat.

A Gujarati army was dispatched to Mandu, held by Medini Rai's son, and besieged it. The Rajput chief in turn appealed to Rana Sanga of Mewar for aid, who then marched his army into Malwa, reaching Sarangpur.

However, Mandu was captured by the Gujaratis, prompting Sanga to return to Mewar alongside Medini Rai, who was then employed in his service.

## **Battle**

In retribution for them entering his territory, Mahmud marshalled an army against the Mewaris and marched it through Gagron. Sanga advanced with a large army from Chittor reinforced by the Rathors of Merta under Rao Viramdeva, and met Mahmud, accompanied by the Gujarat auxiliaries under Asaf Khan. The Mewari cavalry made a charge through that of the Gujarati, with the surviving men scattering. They subsequently did the same to the Malwa army, resulting in a decisive victory. Mahmud was wounded and taken prisoner, with most of his officers having died and his army decimated. Asaf Khan's son was killed, though he himself managed to escape.

## **Aftermath**

Sanga subsequently took control of Gagron, as well as the regions of Bhilsa, Raisen, Sarangpur, Chanderi and Ranthambore. Mahmud was kept captive at Chittor for 6 months, though the Rana himself is said to have personally tended to his wounds. He was subsequently allowed an "honourable" return to his own lands, though one of his sons remained at Mewar as a hostage. The Sultan later sent Sanga a jewelled belt and crown as gifts.

## **Battle of Dholpur**

**Battle of Dholpur** was fought between Kingdom of Mewar under Rana Sanga and Lodi dynasty under Ibrahim Lodi. Rana

Sanga defeated Ibrahim Lodi in Dholpur after defeating Lodi in battle of Khatoli. Ibrahim Lodi was seething because of his defeat at the Battle of Khatoli at the hands of Rana Sanga. To avenge it, he made great preparations and moved against Rana Sanga. The Rajput armies were stretched because of conflicts with the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat. Ibrahim Lodi was keen on taking advantage of this situation to crush the Rajputs. In hot action fought near Dholpur, the Rajputs, as in the earlier action, made a furious charge. "under its momentum, The Lodi army scattered like dead leaves caught in a gale". Ibrahim Lodi was once again humbled and Rana Sanga followed this victory by conquering most of present-day Rajasthan.

## **Battle**

When Ibrahim Lodi's army reached Rana Sanga's territory, the Maharana quickly advanced with his Rajputs. As the two armies came in sight of each other near Dholpur, Mian Makhan made dispositions for the battle. Said Khan Furat and Haji Khan were placed on the right, Daulat Khan commanded the center, Allahdad Khan and Yusuf Khan were placed on the left. The army of Ibrahim Lodi was fully prepared to give the Maharana a warm reception.

The Rajputs started the battle with a cavalry charge which was personally led by Rana Sanga, his cavalry with their accustomed valour, advanced and fell on the army of Ibrahim Lodi, and in a short time put the enemy to flight. "Many brave and worthy men were made martyrs and the others were scattered". The Rajputs pushed the army of Ibrahim Lodi up to Bayana.



Hussain Khan taunted his fellow nobles from Delhi: "It is a hundred pities that 30,000 horsemen should have been defeated by so few Hindus."

## **Aftermath**

By this victory, each part of Malwa which had been usurped by Muhammad Shah (Sahib Khan), younger brother of Sultan Mahmud Khilji II of Mandu, during his rebellion against his brother, and had subsequently been taken possession of by Sultan Sikander Lodi, father of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, now fell into the hands of the Maharana of Mewar, Rana Sanga. Chanderi was one of the many places which fell into the hands of the Maharana, who then bestowed it on Medini Rai as a gift.

## Chapter 6

# Vijayanagar Empire under Krishnadevaraya

The **Vijayanagara Empire**, also called **Karnata Kingdom**, was based in the Deccan Plateau region in South India. It was established in 1336 by the brothers Harihara I and Bukka Raya I of the Sangama dynasty, members of a pastoralist cowherd community that claimed Yadava lineage. The empire rose to prominence as a culmination of attempts by the southern powers to ward off Islamic invasions by the end of the 13th century. At its peak, it subjugated almost all of South India's ruling families and pushed the sultans of the Deccan beyond the Tungabhadra-Krishna river doab region, in addition to annexing modern day Odisha (ancient Kalinga) from the Gajapati Kingdom thus becoming a notable power. It lasted until 1646, although its power declined after a major military defeat in the Battle of Talikota in 1565 by the combined armies of the Deccan sultanates. The empire is named after its capital city of Vijayanagara, whose ruins surround present day Hampi, now a World Heritage Site in Karnataka, India. The wealth and fame of the empire inspired visits by and writings of medieval European travelers such as Domingo Paes, Fernão Nunes, and Niccolò de' Conti. These travelogues, contemporary literature and epigraphy in the local languages and modern archeological excavations at Vijayanagara has provided ample information about the history and power of the empire.

The empire's legacy includes monuments spread over South India, the best known of which is the group at Hampi. Different

temple building traditions in South and Central India were merged into the Vijayanagara architecture style. This synthesis inspired architectural innovations in the construction of Hindu temples. Efficient administration and vigorous overseas trade brought new technologies to the region such as water management systems for irrigation. The empire's patronage enabled fine arts and literature to reach new heights in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Sanskrit with topics such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, fiction, musicology, historiography and theater gaining popularity. The classical music of Southern India, Carnatic music, evolved into its current form. The Vijayanagara Empire created an epoch in the history of Southern India that transcended regionalism by promoting Hinduism as a unifying factor.

## **Alternative name**

*Karnata Rajya* (Karnata Kingdom) was another name for the Vijayanagara Empire, used in some inscriptions and literary works of the Vijayanagara times including the Sanskrit work *Jambavati Kalyanam* by King Krishnadevaraya and Telugu work *Vasu Charitamu*.

## **History**

### **Background and origin theories**

Before the early 14th-century rise of the Vijayanagara Empire, the Hindu states of the Deccan – the Yadava Empire of Devagiri, the Kakatiya dynasty of Warangal, and the Pandyan Empire of Madurai – were repeatedly raided and attacked by

Muslims from the north. By 1336 the upper Deccan region (modern-day Maharashtra and Telangana) had been defeated by armies of Sultan Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq of the Delhi Sultanate.

Further south in the Deccan region, Hoysala commander Singeya Nayaka-III declared independence after the Muslim forces of the Delhi Sultanate defeated and captured the territories of the Yadava Empire in 1294 CE.

He created the Kampili kingdom near Gulbarga and Tungabhadra River in the northeastern parts of present-day Karnataka state. The kingdom collapsed after a defeat by the armies of Delhi Sultanate and upon their defeat, the populace committed a *jauhar* (ritual mass suicide) in c. 1327-28. The Vijayanagara Kingdom was founded in 1336 CE as a successor to the hitherto prosperous Hindu kingdoms of the Hoysalas, the Kakatiyas, and the Yadavas with the breakaway Kampili Kingdom adding a new dimension to the resistance to the Muslim invasion of South India.

Two theories have been proposed regarding the linguistic origins of the Vijayanagara empire. One is that Harihara I and Bukka I, the founders of the empire, were Kannadigas and commanders in the army of the Hoysala Empire stationed in the Tungabhadra region to ward off Muslim invasions from Northern India.

Another theory is that Harihara and Bukkaraya were Telugu people, first associated with the Kakatiya Kingdom, who took control of the northern parts of the Hoysala Empire during its decline. They were believed to have been captured by the army of Ulugh Khan at Warangal. Historians agree the founders were

supported and inspired by Vidyaranya, a saint at the Sringeri monastery, to fight the Muslim invasion of South India.

## **Early years**

In the first two decades after the founding of the empire, Harihara I gained control over most of the area south of the Tungabhadra River and earned the title of "master of the eastern and western seas" (*Purvapaschima Samudradhishavara*). By 1374 Bukka Raya I, successor to Harihara I, defeated the chiefdom of Arcot, the Reddys of Kondavidu, and the Sultan of Madurai, and had gained control over Goa in the west and the Tungabhadra-Krishna River doab in the north. The original capital of the empire was in the principality of Anegondi on the northern banks of the Tungabhadra River in today's Karnataka. It was moved to Vijayanagara during Bukka Raya I's reign because it was easier to defend against the Muslim armies, who were persistently attacking from the northern lands.

With the Vijayanagara Kingdom now imperial in stature, Harihara II, the second son of Bukka Raya I, further consolidated the kingdom beyond the Krishna River and South India was controlled by the Vijayanagara Empire. The next ruler, Deva Raya I, was successful against the Gajapatis of Odisha and undertook works of fortification and irrigation. Firuz Bahmani of Bahmani Sultanate entered into a treaty with Deva Raya I in 1407 that required the latter to pay Bahmani an annual tribute of "100,000 huns, five maunds of pearls and fifty elephants". The Sultanate invaded Vijayanagara in 1417 when the latter defaulted in paying the tribute. Such wars for tribute payment by Vijayanagara repeated in the 15th century.

Deva Raya II (eulogized in contemporary literature as *Gajabetekara*) succeeded to the throne in 1424. He was possibly the most successful of the Sangama Dynasty rulers. He quelled rebelling feudal lords and the Zamorin of Calicut and Quilon in the south. He invaded Sri Lanka and became overlord of the kings of Burma at Pegu and Tanasserim. By 1436 the rebellious chiefs of Kondavidu and the Velama rulers were successfully dealt with and had to accept Vijayanagara overlordship. After a few years of tranquility, wars broke out with the Bahamani Sultanate in 1443 with some successes and some reversals. The Persian visitor Firishta attributes Deva Raya II's war preparations, which included augmenting his armies with Muslim archers and cavalry, to be the cause of the conflict. Contemporary Persian ambassador Abdur Razzak attributes the war to the Bahamani Sultan capitalizing on the confusion caused by an internal revolt within the Vijayanagara Empire, including an attempt to assassinate the Raya by his brother.

Deva Raya II was succeeded by his elder son Mallikarjuna Raya in 1446. The Gajapati king removed the Vijayanagara control over the Tamil country by occupying the Reddi kingdoms of Rajahmundry, Kondaveedu, Kanchi, and Tiruchirpalli. These defeats reduced the Vijayanagara Empire's prestige, described by an inscription which described the Gajapati king as "a yawning lion to the sheep of the Karnatak King". Mallikarjuna's successor Virupaksha Raya II led a life of pleasure perusing wine and women leading to the loss of Goa and much of Karnataka to the Bahmani Sultanate. His governor Saluva Narasimha reduced the loss of territory by holding almost all of coastal Andhra Pradesh south of the Krishna river, Chittoor, the two Arcots and Kolar. Saluva Narashimha defeated the

Gajapatis and held Udayagiri, drove out the Pandyas from Tanjore, and took procession of Machilipatnam and Kondaveedu. He later defeated Bahmani forces and recovered most of the empire's earlier losses.

After the death of Virupaksha Raya II in 1485, Saluva Narasimha led a coup that ended the dynastic rule while continuing to defend the empire from raids by the Sultanates created from the continuing disintegration of the Bahmani Sultanate in its north. Saluva Narasimha left his two adolescent sons under the care of general Tuluva Narasa Nayaka who ably defended the kingdom from their traditional enemies, the Gajapati king and the Bahamani Sultan. He also subdued rebelling chiefs of the Chera, the Chola and the Pandya territories. Despite many attempts by nobles and members of the royal family to overthrow him, Narasa Nayaka retained control as a regent king till 1503.

In 1503, Narasa Nayaka's son Vira Narasimha had prince Immadi Narasimha of the Saluva dynasty assassinated and took over the rule in a coup thus becoming the first of the Tuluva dynasty rulers. This did not go well with the nobles who revolted. Seeing internal troubles grow, the Gajapati king and the Bahamani Sultan began to encroach on the empire even as the governors of Ummattur, Adoni, and Talakad colluded to capture the Tungabhadra-Krishna river doab region from the empire. The empire came under the rule of Krishna Deva Raya in 1509, another son of Tuluva Narasa Nayaka. Initially Krishnadevaraya faced a many obstacles including dissatisfied nobles, the rebellious chief of Ummattur in the south, a resurgent Gajapati kingdom under King Prataparudra, a growing threat from the newly formed Adil Shahi Sultanate of

Bijapur under Yusuf Adil Khan and Portuguese interest in controlling the west coast. Not one to be unnerved by these pressures he strengthened and consolidated the empire, one victory at a time. He was an astute king who hired both Hindus and Muslims into his army. In the following decades, the empire covered Southern India and successfully defeated invasions from the five established Deccan Sultanates to its north.

### **Empire's peak**

The empire reached its peak during the rule of Krishna Deva Raya when Vijayanagara armies were consistently victorious. The empire gained territory formerly under the Sultanates in the northern Deccan, such as Raichur and Gulbarga from the Bahamani Sultanate, territories in the eastern Deccan from wars with Sultan Quli Qutb Shahi of Golkonda, and Kalinga region from the Gajapatis of Odisha. This was in addition to the already established presence in the southern Deccan. Many important monuments were either completed or commissioned during the time of King Krishnadevaraya.

Krishna Deva Raya was succeeded by his younger half-brother Achyuta Deva Raya in 1529. When Achyuta Deva Raya died in 1542, Sadashiva Raya, the teenage nephew of Achyuta Raya, was appointed king, and Aliya Rama Raya, Krishna Deva Raya's son-in-law, becoming the caretaker. When Sadashiva Raya was old enough to assert his independent claim over the throne, Aliya Rama Raya made him a virtual prisoner and became the de facto ruler. He hired Muslim generals in his army from his previous diplomatic connections with the Sultanates and called himself "Sultan of the World". He was



keen interfering in the internal affairs of the various Sultanates and on playing off the Muslim powers against one another, while making himself the ruler of the most powerful and influential regional power.

This worked for a while but eventually made him very unpopular among his people and the Muslim rulers. He made a commercial treaty with the Portuguese whereby the supply of horses to Bijapur was stopped, then defeated the Bijapur ruler and inflicted humiliating defeats on Golconda and Ahmednagar.

### **Defeat and decline**

Eventually the Sultanates to the north of Vijayanagara united and attacked Aliya Rama Raya's army in January 1565 in the Battle of Talikota. Regarding the Vijayanagara defeat in battle, Kamath opines that the Sultanate armies, though numerically disadvantaged, were better equipped and trained. Their artillery was manned by expert Turkish gunmen while the Vijayanagara army depended on European mercenaries using outdated artillery.

The Sultanate cavalry rode fast moving Persian horses and used pikes that were fifteen to sixteen feet long giving them a greater reach, and their archers used metal cross bows which enabled them to reach longer distance targets. In comparison the Vijayanagara army depended on slow moving war elephants, a cavalry riding mostly locally bred weaker horses wielding shorter reach javelins, and their archers used traditional bamboo bows with a shorter range. Despite these disadvantages, Kamath, Hermann Kulke and Dietmar

Rothermund concur that the vast Vijayanagara army appeared to have the upper hand until two Muslim generals (identified as the mercenary Gilani brothers according to Kamath) switched sides and joined forces with the Sultanates turning the tide decisively in favor of the Sultanates. The generals captured Aliya Rama Raya and beheaded him, and Sultan Hussain had the severed head stuffed with straw for display. Aliya Rama Raya's beheading created confusion and havoc in the Vijayanagara army, which were then completely routed. The Sultanates' army plundered Hampi and reduced it to the ruinous state in which it remains today.

After Aliya Rama Raya's death, Tirumala Deva Raya started the Aravidu dynasty, founded a new capital of Penukonda to replace the destroyed Hampi, and attempted to reconstitute the remains of Vijayanagara Empire. Tirumala abdicated in 1572, dividing the remains of his kingdom to his three sons. The Aravidu dynasty successors ruled the region but the empire collapsed in 1614, and the final remains ended in 1646, from continued wars with the Bijapur sultanate and others. During this period, more kingdoms in South India became independent and separate from Vijayanagara, including the Mysore Kingdom, Keladi Nayaka, Nayaks of Madurai, Nayaks of Tanjore, Nayakas of Chitradurga and Nayak Kingdom of Gingee.

## **Governance**

- The rulers of the Vijayanagara Empire maintained the administrative methods developed by their predecessors, the Hoysala, Kakatiya and Pandya kingdoms. The King, ministry, territory, fort,

treasury, army, and ally formed the seven critical elements that influenced every aspect of governance. The King was the ultimate authority, assisted by a cabinet of ministers (*Pradhana*) headed by the prime minister (*Mahapradhana*). Other important titles recorded were the chief secretary (*Karyakartha* or *Rayaswami*) and the imperial officers (*Adhikari*). All high-ranking ministers and officers were required to have military training. A secretariat near the king's palace employed scribes and officers to maintain records made official by using a wax seal imprinted with the ring of the king. At the lower administrative levels, wealthy feudal landlords (*Goudas*) supervised accountants (*Karanikas* or *Karnam*) and guards (*Kavalu*). The palace administration was divided into 72 departments (*Niyogas*), each having several female attendants chosen for their youth and beauty (some imported or captured in victorious battles) who were trained to handle minor administrative matters and to serve men of nobility as courtesans or concubines.

The empire was divided into five main provinces (*Rajya*), each under a commander (*Dandanayaka* or *Dandanatha*) and headed by a governor, often from the royal family, who used the native language for administrative purposes. A *Rajya* was divided into regions (*VishayaVente* or *Kottam*) and further divided into counties (*Sime* or *Nadu*), themselves subdivided into municipalities (*Kampana* or *Sthala*). Hereditary families ruled their respective territories and paid tribute to the empire, while some areas, such as Keladi and Madurai, came under the direct supervision of a commander.

On the battlefield, the king's commanders led the troops. The empire's war strategy rarely involved massive invasions; more often it employed small-scale methods such as attacking and destroying individual forts. The empire was among the first in India to use long-range artillery commonly manned by foreign gunners. Army troops were of two types: the king's personal army directly recruited by the empire and the feudal army under each feudatory. King Krishnadevaraya's personal army consisted of 100,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalrymen, and over 900 elephants. The whole army numbered over 1.1 million soldiers, with up to 2 million having been recorded, along with a navy led by a *Navigadaprabhu* (commander of the navy). The army recruited from all classes of society, supported by the collection of additional feudal tributes from feudatory rulers, and consisted of archers and musketeers wearing quilted tunics, shieldmen with swords and poignards in their girdles, and soldiers carrying shields so large that armour was not necessary. The horses and elephants were fully armoured and the elephants had knives fastened to their tusks to do maximum damage in battle.

The capital city was dependent on water supply systems constructed to channel and store water, ensuring a consistent supply throughout the year. The remains of these hydraulic systems have given historians a picture of the prevailing surface water distribution methods in use at that time in the semiarid regions of South India. Contemporary records and notes of foreign travellers describe huge tanks constructed by labourers. Excavations uncovered the remains of a well-connected water distribution system existing solely within the royal enclosure and the large temple complexes (suggesting it was for the exclusive use of royalty, and for special

ceremonies) with sophisticated channels using gravity and siphons to transport water through pipelines. In the fertile agricultural areas near the Tungabhadra River, canals were dug to guide the river water into irrigation tanks. These canals had sluices that were opened and closed to control the water flow. In other areas, the administration encouraged digging wells, which were monitored by administrative authorities. Large tanks in the capital city were constructed with royal patronage while smaller tanks were funded by wealthy individuals to gain social and religious merit.

## **Economy**

The economy of the empire was largely dependent on agriculture. Sorghum (*jowar*), cotton, and pulse legumes grew in semi-arid regions, while sugarcane, rice, and wheat thrived in rainy areas. Betel leaves, areca (for chewing), and coconut were the principal cash crops, and large-scale cotton production supplied the weaving centers of the empire's vibrant textile industry. Spices such as turmeric, pepper, cardamom, and ginger grew in the remote Malnad hill region and were transported to the city for trade. The empire's capital city was a thriving business centre that included a burgeoning market in large quantities of precious gems and gold. Prolific temple-building provided employment to thousands of masons, sculptors, and other skilled artisans.

Land ownership was important. Most of the growers were tenant farmers and were given the right of part ownership of the land over time. Tax policies encouraging needed produce made distinctions between land use to determine tax levies. For example, the daily market availability of rose petals was

important for perfumers, so cultivation of roses received a lower tax assessment. Salt production and the manufacture of salt pans were controlled by similar means. The making of ghee (clarified butter), which was sold as an oil for human consumption and as a fuel for lighting lamps, was profitable. Exports to China intensified and included cotton, spices, jewels, semi-precious stones, ivory, rhino horn, ebony, amber, coral, and aromatic products such as perfumes. Large vessels from China made frequent visits, some captained by the Chinese Admiral Zheng He, and brought Chinese products to the empire's 300 ports, large and small, on the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The ports of Mangalore, Honavar, Bhatkal, Barkur, Cochin, Cannanore, Machilipatnam, and Dharmadam were the most important.

When merchant ships docked, the merchandise was taken into official custody and taxes levied on all items sold. The security of the merchandise was guaranteed by the administration officials. Traders of many nationalities (Arabs, Persians, Guzerates, Khorassanians) settled in Calicut, drawn by the thriving trade business. Ship building prospered and keeled ships between 1000 and 1200 *bahares* (burden) were built without decks by sewing the entire hull with ropes rather than fastening them with nails. Ships sailed to the Red Sea ports of Aden and Mecca with Vijayanagara goods sold as far away as Venice. The empire's principal exports were pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, myrobalan, tamarind timber, anafistula, precious and semi-precious stones, pearls, musk, ambergris, rhubarb, aloe, cotton cloth and porcelain. Cotton yarn was shipped to Burma and indigo to Persia. Chief imports from Palestine were copper, quicksilver (mercury), vermilion, coral, saffron, coloured velvets, rose water, knives, coloured camlets,

gold and silver. Persian horses were imported to Cannanore before a two-week land trip to the capital. Silk arrived from China and sugar from Bengal.

East coast trade hummed, with goods arriving from Golkonda where rice, millet, pulses and tobacco were grown on a large scale. Dye crops of indigo and chay root were produced for the weaving industry.

A mineral rich region, Machilipatnam was the gateway for high quality iron and steel exports. Diamond mining was active in the Kollur region.

The cotton weaving industry produced two types of cottons, plain calico and muslin (brown, bleached or dyed). Cloth printed with coloured patterns crafted by native techniques were exported to Java and the Far East. Golkonda specialised in plain cotton and Pulicat in printed. The main imports on the east coast were non-ferrous metals, camphor, porcelain, silk and luxury goods.

Mahanavami festival marked the beginning of a financial year from when the state treasury accounted for and reconciled all outstanding dues within nine days. At this time, an updated annual assessment record of provincial dues, which included rents and taxes, paid on a monthly basis by each governor was created under royal decree.

Temples were taxed for land ownership to cover military expenses. In the Telugu districts the temple tax was called *Srotriyas*, in the Tamil speaking districts it was called as *Jodi*. Taxes such as *Durgavarthana*, *Dannayivarthana* and *Kavali Kanike* were collected towards protection of movable and

immovable wealth from robbery and invasions. *Jeevadhanam* was collected for cattle graze on non-private lands. Popular temple destinations charged visitor fees called *Perayam* or *Kanike*. Residential property taxes were called *Illari*.

## Culture

### Social life

The Hindu caste system was prevalent, influenced daily life in the empire and the rulers who occupied the top of this hierarchy assumed the honorific *Varnasramadharm* (lit, "helpers of the four castes"). According to Talbot, caste was determined not just by the family lineage (*Gotra*) or the broad distinction described in sacred Hindu texts (the four *Varnas*; namely the *Brahmin* or priestly, the *Kshatriya* or warrior, the *Vaishya* or merchant and the *Shudra* or artisan), but more importantly by occupation or the professional community people belonged to. Further complicating the multilayered structure of society were the presence of sub-castes (*Jati*) and caste clusters.

According to Vanina, caste as a social identity was not fixed and was a constantly on the change for reasons including polity, trade and commerce, and was usually determined by context. Identification of castes and sub-castes was made based on temple affiliations, lineage, family units, royal retinues, warrior clans, occupational groups, agricultural and trade groups, devotional networks and even priestly cabals. It was also not impossible for a caste to lose its position and prestige and slip down the ladder while others rose up the



same. Epigraphy studies by Talbot suggests that members within a family could have different social status based on their occupation and the upward movement of a caste or sub-caste was not uncommon based on the breakthroughs achieved by an individual or a group of individuals from the community.

Caste affiliation was closely tied to craft production and members of a common craft formed collective memberships. Often members of related crafts formed inter-caste communities.

This helped them consolidate strength and gain political representation and trade benefits. According to Talbot, terminology such as *Setti* was used to identify communities across merchant and artisan classes while *Boya* identified herders of all types. Artisans consisted of groups such as blacksmiths, goldsmiths, brasssmiths and carpenters. These communities lived in separate sections of the city to avoid disputes and quarrels that may arise, especially when it came to social privileges. Conquests led to large scale migration of people leading to marginalization of natives of a place. The *Tottiyans* were shepherds who later gained marginal ruling status (*poligars*), the *Sourastras* were traders who came from Gujarat and rivaled Brahmins for some benefits, the *Reddys* were agriculturists and the *Uppilia* were salt makers.

According to Chopra et al., in addition to their monopoly over priestly duties, Brahmins occupied high positions in political and administrative fields. The Portuguese traveler Domingo Paes observed an increasing presence of Brahmins in the military. The separation of the priestly class from material wealth and power made them ideal arbiters in local judicial

matters, and their presence in every town and village was a calculated investment made by the nobility and aristocracy to maintain order.

Vanina notes that within the warrior *Kshatriya* class was a conglomerate of castes, kinship and clans that usually originated from land holding and pastoral communities that ascended the social ladder by abandoning their original occupations and adopting to a martial code of living, ethics and practices. In South India they were loosely called the *Nayakas*.

Sati practice is evidenced in Vijayanagara ruins by several inscriptions known as *Satikal* (Sati stone) or *Sati-virakal* (Sati hero stone). There are controversial views among historians regarding this practice including religious compulsion, marital affection, martyrdom or honor against subjugation by foreign intruders.

The socio-religious movements that gained popularity in the previous centuries, such as Lingayatism, provided momentum for flexible social norms that helped the cause of women. By this time South Indian women had crossed most barriers and were actively involved in fields hitherto considered the monopoly of men such as administration, business, trade and the fine arts. Tirumalamba Devi who wrote *Varadambika Parinayam* and Gangadevi the author of *Madhuravijayam* were among the notable women poets of the Sanskrit language. Early Telugu women poets such as Tallapaka Timmakka and Atukuri Molla became popular. Further south the provincial Nayaks of Tanjore patronised several women poets. The Devadasi system as well as legalized prostitution existed and

members of this community were relegated to a few streets in each city. The popularity of harems among men of the royalty and the existence of seraglio is well known from records.

Well-to-do men wore the *Petha* or *Kulavi*, a tall turban made of silk and decorated with gold. As in most Indian societies, jewellery was used by men and women and records describe the use of anklets, bracelets, finger-rings, necklaces and ear rings of various types.

During celebrations men and women adorned themselves with flower garlands and used perfumes made of rose water, civet musk, musk or sandalwood. In stark contrast to the commoners whose lives were modest, that of the king and the queens were full of ceremonial pomp.

Queens and princesses had numerous attendants who were lavishly dressed and adorned with fine jewellery. The numbers ensured their daily duties were light.

Physical exercises were popular with men and wrestling was an important male preoccupation for sport and entertainment. Even women wrestlers are mentioned in records. Gymnasiums have been discovered inside royal quarters and records mention regular physical training for commanders and their armies during peacetime.

Royal palaces and market places had special arenas where royalty and common people alike amused themselves by watching sports such as cock fight, ram fight and female wrestling. Excavations within the Vijayanagara city limits have revealed the existence of various types of community-based gaming activities. Engravings on boulders, rock platforms and

temple floors indicate these were popular locations of casual social interaction. Some of these games are in use even today and others are yet to be identified.

Dowry was in practice and can be seen in both Hindu and Muslim royal families of the time. When a sister of Sultan Adil Shah of Bijapur was married to Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar the town of Sholapur was given to the bride by her family. Ayyangar notes that when the Gajapati King of Kalinga gave his daughter in marriage honoring the victorious King Krishnadevaraya he included several villages as dowry. Inscriptions of the 15th and 16th centuries record the practice of dowry among commoners as well. The practice of putting a price on the bride was a possible influence of the Islamic Mahr system. To oppose this influence, in the year 1553, the Brahmin community passed a mandate under royal decree and popularized the *kanyadana* within the community. According to this practice money could not be paid or received during marriage and those who did were liable for punishment. There is a mention of *Streedhana* ("woman's wealth") in an inscription and that the villagers should not give away land as dowry. These inscriptions reinforce the theory that a system of social mandates within community groups existed and were widely practiced even though these practices did not find justification in the family laws described in the religious texts.

## **Religion**

The Vijayanagara kings were tolerant of all religions and sects, as writings by foreign visitors show. The kings used titles such as *Gobrahamana Pratipalanacharya* (literally, "protector of cows and Brahmins") that testified to their intention of

protecting Hinduism and yet at the same time adopted Islamicate court ceremonies, dress, and political language, as reflected in the title *Hindu-rāya-suratrā* (lit, "Sultan among Hindu kings"). The empire's founders, the Sangama brothers (Harihara I and Bukka Raya I) came from a pastoral cowherd background (the Kuruba people) that claimed Yadava lineage. The founders of the empire were devout Shaivas (worshippers of the god Shiva) but made grants to Vishnu temples. Their patron saint Vidyaranya was from the Advaita order at Sringeri. The *Varaha* (the boar, an Avatar of Vishnu) was the emblem of the empire. Over one-fourth of the archaeological dig found an "Islamic Quarter" not far from the "Royal Quarter". Nobles from Central Asia's Timurid kingdoms also came to Vijayanagara. The later Saluva and Tuluva kings were Vaishnava by faith, but worshipped at the feet of Lord Virupaksha (Shiva) at Hampi as well as Lord Venkateshwara (Vishnu) at Tirupati. A Sanskrit work, *Jambavati Kalyanam* by King Krishnadevaraya, refers to Lord Virupaksha as *Karnata Rajya Raksha Mani* ("protective jewel of Karnata Empire"). The kings patronised the saints of the dvaita order (philosophy of dualism) of Madhvacharya at Udupi. Endowments were made to temples in the form of land, cash, produce, jewellery and constructions.

The Bhakti (devotional) movement was active during this time, and involved well known Haridasas (devotee saints) of that time. Like the Virashaiva movement of the 12th century, this movement presented another strong current of devotion, pervading the lives of millions. The haridasas represented two groups, the *Vyasakuta* and *Dasakuta*, the former being required to be proficient in the Vedas, Upanishads and other Darshanas, while the *Dasakuta* merely conveyed the message

of Madhvacharya through the Kannada language to the people in the form of devotional songs (*Devaranamas* and *Kirthanas*). The philosophy of Madhvacharya was spread by eminent disciples such as Naraharitirtha, Jayatirtha, Sripadaraya, Vyasatirtha, Vadirajatirtha and others. Vyasatirtha, the *guru* (teacher) of Vadirajatirtha, Purandaradasa (Father of Carnatic music) and Kanakadasa earned the devotion of King Krishnadevaraya. The king considered the saint his *Kuladevata* (family deity) and honoured him in his writings. During this time, another great composer of early carnatic music, Annamacharya composed hundreds of *Kirthanas* in Telugu at Tirupati in present-day Andhra Pradesh.

The defeat of the Jain Western Ganga Dynasty by the Cholas in the early 11th century and the rising numbers of followers of Vaishnava Hinduism and Virashaivism in the 12th century was mirrored by a decreased interest in Jainism. Two notable locations of Jain worship in the Vijayanagara territory were Shravanabelagola and Kambadahalli.

Islamic contact with South India began as early as the 7th century, a result of trade between the Southern kingdoms and Arab lands. Jumma Masjids existed in the Rashtrakuta empire by the 10th century and many mosques flourished on the Malabar coast by the early 14th century. Muslim settlers married local women; their children were known as Mappillas (*Moplahs*) and were actively involved in horse trading and manning shipping fleets. The interactions between the Vijayanagara empire and the Bahamani Sultanates to the north increased the presence of Muslims in the south. In the early 15th century, Deva Raya built a mosque for the Muslims in Vijayanagara and placed a Quran before his throne. The

introduction of Christianity began as early as the 8th century as shown by the finding of copper plates inscribed with land grants to Malabar Christians. Christian travelers wrote of the scarcity of Christians in South India in the Middle Ages, promoting its attractiveness to missionaries. The arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century and their connections through trade with the empire, the propagation of the faith by Saint Xavier (1545) and later the presence of Dutch settlements fostered the growth of Christianity in the south.

### **Epigraphs, sources and monetization**

Stone inscriptions were the most common form of documents used on temple walls, boundary of properties and open places for public display. Another form of documentation was on copper plates that were meant for record keeping. Usually verbose inscriptions included information such as a salutation, a panegyric of the king or local ruler, the name of the donor, nature of the endowment (generally either cash or produce), the manner in which the grant would be used, obligations of the donee, share received by the donor and a concluding statement that officiated the entire donation and its obligations. Some inscriptions even record an instance of victory in war or religious festival, and retribution or a curse on those who do not honor the grant.

Most Vijayanagara empire inscriptions recovered so far are in Kannada, Telugu and Tamil, and a few in Sanskrit. According to Suryanath U. Kamath about 7000 stone inscriptions, half of which are in Kannada, and about 300 copper plates which are mostly in Sanskrit have been recovered. Bilingual inscriptions had lost favor by the 14th century. According to Mack,

majority of the inscriptions recovered are from the rule of the Tuluva dynasty (from 1503 to 1565) with the Saluva dynasty (from 1485 to 1503) inscribing the least in its brief control over the empire. The Sangama dynasty (from 1336 to 1485) which ruled the longest produced about one third of all epigraphs inscribed during the Tuluva period. Despite the popularity of Telugu language as a literary medium, majority of the epigraphs in the language were inscribed in the limited period from 1500 to 1649. Talbot explains this scenario as one of shifting political solidarity. The Vijayanagara empire was originally founded in Karnataka, with Andhra Pradesh serving as a province of the empire. However, after its defeat to the Sultanates in 1565 and the sacking of the royal capital Vijayanagara, the diminished empire moved its capital to Southern Andhra Pradesh creating an enterprise dominated by Telugu language.

The sources of Vijayanagara history, in addition to epigraphs and coins are the accounts of foreign travelers, literary sources in Sanskrit, Kannada, Persian and Telugu. The Portuguese visitors to the empire were Domingo Paes, Fernão Nunes (Fernão Nuniz), Durate Barbosa and Barradas, and Athanasius Nikitin came from Russia. Niccolò de' Conti (1420), Ludovico di Varthema(1505), Caesar Fredericci (1567) and Filippo Sassetti (1585) were travelers from Italy and Abdur Razzak visited from Persia. Contemporary Muslim writers who have left valuable works are Barani, Isamy (*Fatuhāt us salatin*), Syed Ali Tabatabai (*Burhan-i-Maisar*, 1596), Nisammuddin Bakshi, Firishta (*Tarik-i-Firishta*) and Rafiuddin Shirazi (*Tazkirat ul Mulk*, 1611). The important Sanskrit works that shed light on the empire are *Vidyaranya Kalajnana*, Dindima's *Ramabhyudayam* on the life of King Saluva Narasimha,



Dindima II's *Achyutabhyudayam* and Tirumalamba's *Varadambika Parinayam*. Among Kannada literary works, *Kumara Ramana Kathe* by Nanjunda Kavi, *Mohanatarangini* by Kanakadasa, *Keladiripavijayam* by Linganna and the recently discovered *Krishnadevarayana Dinachari* are useful sources, and among Telugu works, Srinatha's *Kashikanda*, Mallayya and Singayya's *Varahapuramamu*, Vishvanatha Nayani's *Rayavachakamu*, Nandi Timmanna's *Parijathapaharanamu*, Durjati's *Krishnaraja Vijayamu*, Peddanna's *Manucharitamu* and King Krishnadevaraya's *Amuktamalyada* are important sources of information.

The Persian visitor Abdur Razzak wrote in his travelogues that the empire enjoyed a high level of monetization. This is especially evident from the number of temple cash grants that were made. Coins were minted using gold, silver, copper and brass and their value depended on material weight. Coins were minted by the state, in the provinces and by merchant guilds. Foreign currency was in circulation. The highest denomination was the gold *Varaha* (or *Hun/Honnu*, *Gadyana*) weighted 50.65 – 53 grains. The *Partab* or *Pratapa* was valued at half a *Varaha*, the *Fanam*, *Phanam* or *Hana*, an alloy of gold and copper was the most common currency valued at a third of the *Varaha*. A *Tar* made of pure silver was a sixth of a *Phanam* and a *Chital* made of brass was a third of the *Tar*. *Haga*, *Visa* and *Kasu* were also coins of lower denominations.

## **Literature**

During the rule of the Vijayanagara Empire, poets, scholars and philosophers wrote primarily in Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit, and also in other regional languages such as Tamil

and covered such subjects as religion, biography, *Prabandha* (fiction), music, grammar, poetry, medicine and mathematics. The administrative and court languages of the Empire were Kannada and Telugu, the latter was the court language and gained even more cultural prominence during the reign of the last Vijayanagara kings. Telugu was a popular literary medium, reaching its peak under the patronage of Krishnadevaraya.

Most Sanskrit works were commentaries either on the Vedas or on the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics, written by well known figures such as Sayanacharya (who wrote a treatise on the Vedas called *Vedārtha Prakāsha* whose English translation by Max Muller appeared in 1856), and Vidyaranya that extolled the superiority of the Advaita philosophy over other rival Hindu philosophies. Other writers were famous Dvaita saints of the Udipi order such as Jayatirtha (earning the title *Tikacharya* for his polemical writings), Vyasatirtha who wrote rebuttals to the Advaita philosophy and of the conclusions of earlier logicians, and Vadirajatirtha and Sripadaraya both of whom criticized the beliefs of Adi Sankara. Apart from these saints, noted Sanskrit scholars adorned the courts of the Vijayanagara kings and their feudal chiefs. Some members of the royal family were writers of merit and authored important works such as *Jambavati Kalyana* by King Krishnadevaraya, and *Madura Vijayam* (also known as *Veerakamparaya Charita*) by Princess Gangadevi, a daughter-in-law of King Bukka I, dwells on the conquest of the Madurai Sultanate by the Vijayanagara empire.

The Kannada poets and scholars of the empire produced important writings supporting the Vaishnava Bhakti movement heralded by the Haridasas (devotees of Vishnu), Brahminical

and Veerashaiva (Lingayatism) literature. The *Haridasa* poets celebrated their devotion through songs called *Devaranama* (lyrical poems) in the native meters of *Sangatya* (quatrain), *Suladi* (beat based), *Ugabhogga* (melody based) and *Mundige* (cryptic). Their inspirations were the teachings of Madhvacharya and Vyasatirtha. Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa are considered the foremost among many *Dasas* (devotees) by virtue of their immense contribution. Kumara Vyasa, the most notable of Brahmin scholars wrote *Gadugina Bharata*, a translation of the epic *Mahabharata*. This work marks a transition of Kannada literature from old Kannada to modern Kannada. Chamarasa was a famous Veerashaiva scholar and poet who had many debates with Vaishnava scholars in the court of Devaraya II. His *Prabhulinga Leele*, later translated into Telugu and Tamil, was a eulogy of Saint Allama Prabhu (the saint was considered an incarnation of Lord Ganapathi while Parvati took the form of a princess of Banavasi).

At this peak of Telugu literature, the most famous writing in the *Prabandha* style was *Manucharitamu*. King Krishnadevaraya was an accomplished Telugu scholar and wrote the celebrated *Amuktamalyada*. *Amuktamalyada* ("One who wears and gives away garlands") narrates the story of the wedding of the god Vishnu to Andal, the Tamil Alvar saint poet and the daughter of Periyalvar at Srirangam.

In his court were eight famous scholars regarded as the pillars (*Ashtadiggajas*) of the literary assembly. The most famous among them were Allasani Peddana who held the honorific *Andhrakavitapitamaha* (lit, "father of Telugu poetry") and Tenali Ramakrishna, the court jester who authored several

notable works. The other six poets were Nandi Thimmana (Mukku Timmana), Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra, Madayyagari Mallana, Bhattu Murthi (Ramaraja Bhushana), Pingali Surana, and Dhurjati. This was the age of Srinatha, the greatest of all Telugu poets of the time. He wrote books such as *Marutracharitam* and *Salivahana-sapta-sati*. He was patronised by King Devaraya II and enjoyed the same status as important ministers in the court.

Though much of the Tamil literature from this period came from Tamil speaking regions ruled by the feudatory Pandya who gave particular attention on the cultivation of Tamil literature, some poets were patronised by the Vijayanagara kings. Svarupananda Desikar wrote an anthology of 2824 verses, *Sivaprakasap-perundirattu*, on the Advaita philosophy. His pupil the ascetic, Tattuvarayar, wrote a shorter anthology, *Kurundirattu*, that contained about half the number of verses. Krishnadevaraya patronised the Tamil Vaishnava poet Haridasa whose *Irusamaya Vilakkam* was an exposition of the two Hindu systems, Vaishnava and Shaiva, with a preference for the former.

Notable among secular writings on music and medicine were Vidyaranya's *Sangitsara*, Praudha Raya's *Ratiratnapradipika*, Sayana's *Ayurveda Sudhanidhi* and Lakshmana Pandita's *Vaidyarajavallabham*.

The Kerala school of astronomy and mathematics flourished during this period under such well known scholars as Madhava who made important contributions to Trigonometry and Calculus, and Nilakantha Somayaji, who postulated on the orbitals of planets.

## Architecture

Vijayanagara architecture is a vibrant combination of the Chalukya, Hoysala, Pandya and Chola styles, idioms that prospered in previous centuries. Its legacy of sculpture, architecture and painting influenced the development of the arts long after the empire came to an end. Its stylistic hallmark is the ornate pillared *Kalyanamantapa* (marriage hall), *Vasanthamantapa* (open pillared halls) and the *Rayagopura* (tower). Artisans used the locally available hard granite because of its durability since the kingdom was under constant threat of invasion. While the empire's monuments are spread over the whole of Southern India, nothing surpasses the vast open-air theatre of monuments at its capital at Vijayanagara, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the 14th century the kings continued to build vesara or Deccan-style monuments but later incorporated Dravida-style gopuras to meet their ritualistic needs. The Prasanna Virupaksha temple (underground temple) of Bukka and the Hazare Rama temple of Deva Raya are examples of Deccan architecture.

The varied and intricate ornamentation of the pillars is a mark of their work. At Hampi, though the *Vitthala* temple is the best example of their pillared *Kalyanamantapa* style, the *Hazara Ramaswamy* temple is a modest but perfectly finished example. A visible aspect of their style is their return to the simplistic and serene art developed by the Chalukya dynasty. A grand specimen of Vijayanagara art, the *Vitthala* temple, took several decades to complete during the reign of the Tuluva kings.

Another element of the Vijayanagara style is the carving and consecration of large monoliths such as the *Sasivekaalu* (mustard) Ganesha and *Kadalekaalu* (ground nut) Ganesha at Hampi, the Gommateshwara (Bahubali) monoliths in Karkala and Venur, and the Nandi bull in Lepakshi. The Vijayanagara temples of Kolar, Kanakagiri, Sringeri and other towns of Karnataka; the temples of Tadpatri, Lepakshi, Ahobilam, Tirumala Venkateswara Temple and Srikalahasti in Andhra Pradesh; and the temples of Vellore, Kumbakonam, Kanchi and Srirangam in Tamil Nadu are examples of this style. Vijayanagara art includes wall-paintings such as the Dashavatara and *Girijakalyana* (marriage of Parvati, Shiva's consort) in the Virupaksha Temple at Hampi, the *Shivapurana* murals (tales of Shiva) at the Virabhadra temple at Lepakshi, and those at the Kamaakshi and Varadaraja temples at Kanchi. This mingling of the South Indian styles resulted in a richness not seen in earlier centuries, a focus on reliefs in addition to sculpture that surpasses that previously in India.

An aspect of Vijayanagara architecture that shows the cosmopolitanism of the great city is the presence of many secular structures bearing Islamic features. While political history concentrates on the ongoing conflict between the Vijayanagara empire and the Deccan Sultanates, the architectural record reflects a more creative interaction. There are many arches, domes and vaults that show these influences. The concentration of structures like pavilions, stables and towers suggests they were for use by royalty. The decorative details of these structures may have been absorbed into Vijayanagara architecture during the early 15th century, coinciding with the rule of Deva Raya I and Deva Raya II. These kings are known to have employed many Muslims in their army

and court, some of whom may have been Muslim architects. This harmonious exchange of architectural ideas must have happened during rare periods of peace between the Hindu and Muslim kingdoms. The "Great Platform" (*Mahanavami Dibba*) has relief carvings in which the figures seem to have the facial features of central Asian Turks who were known to have been employed as royal attendants.

## **Krishnadevaraya**

**Krishnadevaraya** was an emperor of the Vijayanagara Empire who reigned from 1509–1529. He was the third ruler of the Tuluva Dynasty and is considered to be its greatest ruler. He possessed the largest empire in India after the decline of the Delhi Sultanate. Presiding over the empire at its zenith, he is regarded as an icon by many Indians. Krishnadevaraya earned the titles *Kannada Rajya Rama Ramana* (*lit.*, "Lord of the Kannada empire"), *Andhra Bhoja* (*lit.*, "Andhra Scholar King or King Bhoja of Andhra"), *Gaubrahmana Pratipalaka* (*lit.*, "Protector of cows and brahmins") and *Mooru Rayara Ganda* (*lit.*, "King of Three Kings"). He became the dominant ruler of the peninsula of India by defeating the Sultans of Bijapur, Golconda, the Bahmani Sultanate and the Gajapatis of Odisha, and was one of the most powerful Hindu rulers in India. Indeed, when the Mughal Emperor Babur was taking stock of the potentates of north India, Krishnadevaraya was rated the most powerful and had the most extensive empire in the subcontinent.

Portuguese travellers Domingo Paes and Fernao Nuniz also visited the Vijayanagara Empire during his reign. Travelogues indicate that the king was not only an able administrator but

also an excellent general, leading from the front in battle and even attending to the wounded. On many occasions, the king changed battle plans abruptly, turning a losing battle into victory. The poet Muku Timmana praised him as the destroyer of the Turkics. Krishnadevaraya benefited from the able prime minister Timmarusu, who was regarded by the emperor as a father figure and was responsible for his coronation.

## **Early life**

Krishna Deva Raya was the son of Tuluva Narasa Nayaka, an army commander under Saluva Narasimha Deva Raya, who later took control to prevent the disintegration of the empire and established the Tuluva dynasty in Vijayanagara Empire. He was married to Srirangapatna's princess Tirumala Devi and Coorg princess Chinna Devi.

He was father to Tirumalumba (from Tirumala Devi), Vengalamba (from Chinna Devi) and Tirumala Raya (from Tirumala Devi). His daughters were married to Prince Aliya Rama Raya of Vijayanagara and his brother Prince Tirumala Deva Raya.

## **Military career**

His main enemies were the Bahamani Sultans (who, though divided into five small kingdoms, remained a constant threat), the Gajapatis of Odisha, who had been involved in constant conflict since the rule of Saluva Narasimha Deva Raya and the Portuguese, a rising maritime power which controlled much of the sea trade.



## **Success in Deccan**

The annual affair of the raid and plunder of Vijayanagar towns and villages by the Deccan sultans came to an end during the Raya's rule. In 1509, Krishnadevaraya's armies clashed with the Sultan Samshuddin Zafar Khan of Bijapur at Diwani and the Sultan Mahmud was severely injured and defeated. Yusuf Adil Shah was killed and the Raichur Doab was annexed. Taking advantage of the victory, the Raya reunited Bidar, Gulbarga, and Bijapur into Vijayanagar and earned the title "establisher of the Yavana kingdom" when he released Sultan Mahmud and made him de facto ruler. The Sultan of Golconda Sultan Quli Qutb Shah was defeated by Timmarusu, who was the prime minister of Sri Krishnadevaraya.

## **War with Kalinga**

The Gajapatis of Odisha ruled a vast land comprising Andhra region, Odisha. Krishna Deva Raya's success at Ummatur provided the necessary impetus to carry his campaign into Coastal Andhra region which was in control of the Gajapati Raja Prataparudra Deva. The Vijayanagar army laid siege to the Udayagiri fort in 1512. The campaign lasted for a year before the Gajapati army disintegrated due to starvation. Krishna Deva Raya offered prayers at Tirupati thereafter along with his wives Tirumala Devi and Chinnama Devi. The Gajapati army was then met at Kondaveedu, where the armies of Vijayanagara, after establishing a siege for a few months, began to retreat due to heavy casualties. Then, Timmarusu, upon discovering a secret entrance to the unguarded eastern gate of the fort, launched a night attack that culminated with the capture of the fort and the imprisonment of Prince

Virabhadra, the son of Gajapati Emperor Prataparudra Deva. Vasireddy Mallikharjuna Nayak took over as governor of Kondaveedu thereafter.

Krishnadevaraya planned for an invasion of Kalinga, but the Gajapati Emperor, Prataparudra, was made privy to this plan. Prataparudra formulated his own plan to defeat Krishnadevaraya and the Vijayanagara Empire. The confrontation was to happen at the fort of Kalinganagar. But the wily Timmarusu secured the information of Prataparudra's plan by bribing a Telugu deserter, who was formerly under the service of Prataparudra. When the Vijayanagara Empire did invade, Prataparudra was driven to Cuttack, the capital of the Gajapati empire. Prataparudra eventually surrendered to Vijayanagara Empire, and he gave his daughter, Princess Jaganmohini, in marriage to Sri Krishnadevaraya. Krishnadevaraya returned all the lands that the Vijayanagara Empire captured to the North of the Krishna River; this made the Krishna river boundary between the Vijayanagar and the Gajapati Kingdoms.

Krishnadevaraya established friendly relations with the Portuguese, who set up the Portuguese Dominion of India in Goa in 1510. The Emperor obtained guns and Arabian horses from the Portuguese merchants. He also utilized Portuguese expertise in improving water supply to Vijayanagara City.

### **Final conflict and death**

The complicated alliances of the empire and the five Deccan sultanates meant that he was continually at war. In one of these campaigns, he defeated Golconda and captured its

commander Madurul-Mulk, crushed Bijapur and its Sultan Ismail Adil Shah, and restored Bahmani sultanate to the son of Muhammad Shah II.

The highlight of his conquests occurred on 19 May 1520 where he secured the fortress of Raichur from Ismail Adil Shah of Bijapur after a difficult siege during which 16,000 Vijayanagara soldiers were killed. The exploits of the military commander, Pemmasani Ramalinga Nayudu of the Pemmasani Nayaks, during the Battle of Raichur were distinguished and lauded by Krishnadevaraya. It is said that 700,000-foot soldiers, 32,600 cavalry, and 550 elephants were used in the Battle of Raichur. Finally, in his last battle, he razed to the ground the fortress of Gulburga, the early capital of the Bahmani sultanate. His empire extended over the whole of South India.

In 1524, Krishnadevaraya made his son Tirumala Raya the *Yuvaraja* (crown prince). The prince did not survive for long: he was poisoned to death. Suspecting the involvement of Timmarusu, Krishna Deva Raya had his trusted commander and adviser blinded. At the same time, Krishnadevaraya was preparing for an attack on Belgaum, which was in the Adil Shah's possession. Around this time, Krishnadevaraya took seriously ill. He died soon after in 1529. Before his death, he nominated his brother, Achyuta Deva Raya as his successor.

## **Internal affairs**

During his reign he kept a strict control over his ministers, and any minister who committed misdeeds was dealt with severely. He abolished some of the obnoxious taxes such as the

marriage fee. To increase revenues, he brought new lands under cultivation by ordering deforestation of some areas. A large-scale work to obtain water for irrigation around Vijayanagar was also undertaken by him. Foreign travelers, such as Paes, Nunez and Barbosa, who visited Vijayanagar spoke highly of the efficiency of administration and prosperity of the people during his reign.

The administration of the empire was carried along the lines indicated in his Amuktamalyada. He was of the opinion that the King should always rule with an eye towards Dharma. His concern for the welfare of the people is amply proved by his extensive annual tours all over the empire, during which he studied everything personally and tried to redress the grievances of the people and to punish the evil doers. With regard to the promotion of the economic progress of his people, Krishnadevaraya says: "the extent of the kingdom is the means for the acquisition of wealth. Therefore even if the land is limited in extent, excavate tanks and canals and increase the prosperity of the poor by leasing him the land for low ari and koru, so that you may obtain wealth as well as religious merit."

## **Art and literature**

The rule of Krishna Deva Raya was an age of prolific literature in many languages, although it is also known as a golden age of Kannada literature. Many Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit, and Tamil poets enjoyed the patronage of the emperor. Emperor Krishna Deva Raya was fluent in many languages. There remains a debate whether he was a Kannadiga or Telugu or Tuluva by lineage.

The poet Mukku Timma praised him as a great general and stated: "O Krishnaraya, you Man-Lion. You destroyed the Turks from far away with just your great name's power. Oh Lord of the elephant king, just from seeing you the multitude of elephants ran away in horror.

### **Kannada literature**

He patronised Kannada poets Mallanarya, who wrote *Veera-saivamruta*, *Bhava-chinta-ratna* and *Satyendra Chola-kathe*, Chatu Vittal-anatha who wrote *Bhaga-vatha*, Timmanna Kavi who wrote a eulogy of his king in *Krishna Raya Bharata*. Vyasatirtha, the great Dvaita saint from Mysore belonging to the Madhwa order was his *Rajaguru*. *Krishna Deva Rayana Dinachari* in Kannada is a recently discovered work. The record highlights the contemporary society during Krishna Deva Raya's time in his personal diary. However, it is not yet clear if the record was written by the king himself.

### **Telugu literature**

The rule of Krishna Deva Raya is known as golden age of Telugu literature. Eight Telugu poets were regarded as eight pillars of his literary assembly and known as Ashtadiggajas. Krishna Dev Raya himself composed an epic Telugu poem *Amuktamalyada*.

During the reign of Krishnadevaraya Telugu culture and literature flourished and reached their heyday. The great emperor was himself a celebrated poet having composed *Amuktamalyada*. In his court, eight Telugu poets were regarded as the eight pillars of the literary assembly. In the olden days,

it was believed that eight elephants were holding the earth in eight different directions. The title *Ashtadiggajas* celebrates this belief and hence the court was also called *Bhuvana Vijayam* (Conquest of the World). The period of the Empire is known as "Prabandha Period," because of the quality of the prabandha literature produced during this time.

Among these eight poets, Allasani Peddana is considered to be the greatest and is given the title of *Andhra Kavita Pitamaha* (the father of Telugu poetry). *Svarocisha Sambhava* or *Manucharita* is his popular prabandha work and was dedicated to Krishnadevaraya. Nandi Thimmana wrote *Parijathapaharanam*. Madayyagari Mallana wrote *Rajasekhara Charitramu*. Dhurjati wrote *Kalahasti Mahatyamu* and Ayyalaraju Ramabhadrudu wrote *Sakalakatha Sangraha* and *Ramaabhyudayamu*. Pingali Surana wrote *Raghava Pandaviyamu*, *Kalapurnodayam*, *Prabhavate Pradyamana*. *Raghavapandaveeyamu* is a dual work with double meaning built into the text, describing both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. *Kalapurnodayam* (means full bloom of art) has been treated as the first original poetic novel in Telugu literature. Battumurthy alias Ramarajabhushanudu wrote *Kavyalankarasangrahamu*, *Vasucharitra*, *Narasabhupaliyam* and *Harischandranalopakhyanamu*. Among these works the last one is a dual work which tells simultaneously the story of King Harishchandra and Nala and Damayanti. Tenali Ramakrishna first wrote *Udbhataradhya Charitramu*, a Shaivite work. However, he converted to Vaishnavism later and wrote Vaishnava devotional texts *Panduranga Mahatmyamu*, and *Ghatikachala Mahatmyamu*. Tenali Rama remains one of the most popular folk figures in India today, a quick-witted courtier ready even to outwit the all-powerful emperor.

Other well-known poets were Sankusala Nrisimha Kavi, who wrote *KavikarnaRasayana*, Chintalapudi Ellaya, who wrote *Radhamadhavavilasa* and *Vishnumayavilasa*, Molla, a poet wrote a version of *Ramayana*, Kamsali Rudraya wrote *Nirankusopakhyana*, and Addanki Gangadhara wrote *Basavapurana*. Manumanchi Bhatta wrote a scientific work called *Hayalakshana Sastra*.

### **Tamil literature**

Krishna Deva Raya patronised the Tamil poet Haridasa, and Tamil literature soon began to flourish as the years passed by.

### **Sanskrit literature**

In Sanskrit, Vyasatirtha wrote *Bhedo-jjivana*, *Tat-paryachandrika*, *Nyaya-mrita* (a work directed against Advaita philosophy) and *Tarka-tandava*. Krishna Deva Raya himself an accomplished scholar wrote *Madalasa Charita*, *Satyavadu Parinaya* and *Rasamanjari* and *Jambavati Kalyana*.

## **Religion and culture**

Krishna Deva Raya respected all sects of Hinduism and lavished on the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, numerous objects of priceless value, ranging from diamond studded crowns to golden swords. For this he is honored with installing his statues along with his two wives at the temple complex. These statues are still visible at the temple at the exit. He also contributed in building parts of Srisailam temple complex.

Krishna Deva Raya was formally initiated into the Vaishnava Sampradaya by Tathacharya. He was also his *Rajguru*. When Krishnadevaraya became the ruler Tathacharya was his guru. He patronised poets and scholars in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit.

## **Adil Shahi dynasty**

The **Adil Shahi** or **Adilshahi**, was a Shia, and later Sunni Muslim, dynasty founded by Yusuf Adil Shah, that ruled the **Sultanate of Bijapur**, centred on present-day Bijapur district, Karnataka in India, in the Western area of the Deccan region of Southern India from 1489 to 1686. Bijapur had been a province of the Bahmani Sultanate (1347–1518), before its political decline in the last quarter of the 15th century and eventual break-up in 1518. The Bijapur Sultanate was absorbed into the Mughal Empire on 12 September 1686, after its conquest by the Emperor Aurangzeb.

The founder of the dynasty, Yusuf Adil Shah (1490–1510), was appointed Bahmani governor of the province, before creating a de facto independent Bijapur state. Yusuf and his son, Ismail, generally used the title *Adil Khan*. 'Khan', meaning 'Chief' in Mongolian and adopted in Persian, conferred a lower status than 'Shah', indicating royal rank. Only with the rule of Yusuf's grandson, Ibrahim Adil Shah I (1534–1558), did the title of *Adil Shah* come into common use.

The Bijapur Sultanate's borders changed considerably throughout its history. Its northern boundary remained relatively stable, straddling contemporary Southern Maharashtra and Northern Karnataka. The Sultanate expanded



southward, first with the conquest of the Raichur Doab following the defeat of the Vijayanagar Empire at the Battle of Talikota in 1565. Later campaigns, notably during the reign of Mohammed Adil Shah (1627–1657), extended Bijapur's formal borders and nominal authority as far south as Bangalore. Bijapur was bounded on the West by the Portuguese state of Goa and on the East by the Sultanate of Golconda, ruled by the Qutb Shahi dynasty.

The former Bahmani provincial capital of Bijapur remained the capital of the Sultanate throughout its existence. After modest earlier developments, Ibrahim Adil Shah I (1534–1558) and Ali Adil Shah I (1558–1579) remodelled Bijapur, providing the citadel and city walls, congregational mosque, core royal palaces and major water supply infrastructure. Their successors, Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580–1627), Mohammed Adil Shah (1627–1657) and Ali Adil Shah II (1657–1672), further adorned Bijapur with palaces, mosques, mausoleum and other structures, considered to be some of the finest examples of Deccan Sultanate and Indo-Islamic Architecture.

Bijapur was caught up in the instability and conflict resulting from the collapse of the Bahmani Empire. Constant warring, both with the Vijayanagar Empire and the other Deccan Sultanates, curtailed the development of state before the Deccan Sultanates allied to achieve victory over Vijayanagar at Talikota in 1565. Bijapur eventually conquered the neighbouring Sultanate of Bidar in 1619. The Portuguese Empire exerted pressure on the major Adil Shahi port of Goa, until it was conquered during the reign of Ibrahim II. The Sultanate was thereafter relatively stable, although it was damaged by the revolt of Shivaji, whose father was Maratha

commander in the service of Adil Shah. Shivaji founded an independent Maratha Kingdom which went on to become the Maratha Empire, one of the largest empires in India, just before the British conquered India.

The greatest threat to Bijapur's security was, from the late 16th century, the expansion of the Mughal Empire into the Deccan. Although it may be the case that the Mughals destroyed the Adilshahi, it was Shivaji's revolt which weakened the Adilshahi control. Various agreements and treaties imposed Mughal suzerainty on the Adil Shahs, by stages, until Bijapur's formal recognition of Mughal authority in 1636. The demands of their Mughal overlords sapped the Adil Shahs of their wealth until the Mughal conquest of Bijapur in 1686.

## **Historical overview**

The founder of the dynasty, Yusuf Adil Shah, may have been a Georgian slave who was purchased by Mahmud Gawan from Iran. Yet, Salma Ahmed Farooqui, states, Yusuf was a son of the Ottoman Sultan Murad II. According to the historian Mir Rafi-uddin Ibrahim-i Shirazi, or *Rafi'*, Yusuf's full name was Sultan Yusuf 'Adil Shah Savah or Sawah'i (from the ancient town of Saveh, southwest of modern Tehran), the son of Mahmud Beg of Sawa in Iran, (*Rafi'* 36–38, vide Devare 67, fn 2). *Rafi'*'s history of the 'Adil Shahi dynasty was written at the request of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, and was completed and presented to the patron in AH 1017.

The Indian scholar T.N. Devare mentioned that while *Rafi'*'s account of the Bahmani dynasty is filled with anachronisms, his account of the Adilshahi is "fairly accurate, exhaustive,

and possesses such rich and valuable information about Ali I and Ibrahim II" (312). Rafi-uddin later became the governor of Bijapur for about 15 years (Devare 316).

Yusuf's bravery and personality raised him rapidly in Sultan's favour, resulting in his appointment as the Governor of Bijapur. He built the Citadel or Arkilla and the Faroukh Mahal. Yusuf was a man of culture. He invited poets and artisans from Persia, Turkey, and Rome to his court. He's well known as a ruler who took advantage of the decline of the Bahmani power to establish himself as an independent sultan at Bijapur in 1498. He did this with a military support which has been given to him by a Bijapuri general Kalidas Madhu Sadhwani – brilliant commander and good diplomat, who made quick career by supporting Yusuf Adil Shah and then his son – Ismail Adil Shah. He married Punji, the sister of a Rajput Raja of Indapur. When Yusuf died in 1510, his son Ismail was still a boy. Punji in male attire valiantly defended him from a coup to grab the throne. Ismail Adil Shah thus became the ruler of Bijapur and succeeded his father's ambition.



- Chand Bibi, the regent of Bijapur (1580–90)

Ibrahim Adil Shah I who succeeded his father Ismail, fortified the city and built the old Jamia Masjid. Ali Adil Shah I who next ascended the throne, aligned his forces with other Muslim kings of Golconda, Ahmednagar and Bidar, and together, they brought down the Vijayanagar empire. With the loot gained, he launched ambitious projects. He built the Gagan Mahal, the Ali Rauza (his own tomb), Chand Bawdi (a large well) and the Jami Masjid. Ali I had no son, so his nephew Ibrahim II was set on the throne. Ali I's queen Chand Bibi had to aid him until he came of age. Ibrahim II was noted for his valor, intelligence and leanings towards the Hindu music and philosophy. Under his patronage the Bijapur school of painting reached its zenith. Muhammad Adil Shah succeeded his father Ibrahim II. He is renowned for Bijapur's grandest structure, the Gol Gumbaz, which has the biggest dome in the world with whispering gallery round about slightest sound is reproduced seven times. He also set up the historical Malik-e-Maidan, the massive gun.

Ali Adil Shah II inherited a troubled kingdom. He had to face the onslaught of the Maratha leader Shivaji on one side and Mughal emperor Aurangzeb on another. His mausoleum, Bara Kaman, planned to dwarf all others, was left unfinished due to his death. Sikandar Adil Shah, the last Adil Shahi sultan, ruled next for fourteen stormy years. Finally on 12 September 1686, the Mughal armies under Aurangzeb overpowered the city of Bijapur.

## **Sufis of Bijapur**

Arrival of Sufis in Bijapur region was started during the reign of Qutbuddin Aibak. During this period Deccan region was under the control of native Hindu rulers and Palegars. Shaikh

Haji Roomi was the first to arrive in Bijapur with his companions. Although his other comrades like Shaikh Salahuddin, Shaikh Saiful Mulk and Syed Haji Makki were settled in Pune, Haidra and Tikota respectively.

According to Tazkiraye Auliyae Dakkan i.e., Biographies of the saints of the Deccan, compiled by Abdul Jabbar Mulkapuri in 1912-1913,

Sufi Sarmast was one of the earliest sufi of this region. He came to the Deccan from Arabia in the 13th century at a time when the Deccan was a land of unbelievers with no sign of Islam or correct faith anywhere. His companions, pupils (fakir), disciples (murid), and soldiers (ghazi), numbered over seven hundred. He settled in Sagar in Sholapur district. There, a zealous and anti-Muslim raja named Kumaram (Kumara Rama) wished to expel Sufi Sarmast, and his companions having also prepared to a struggle, a bitter fight ensued. Heroes on both sides were slain. Finally the raja was killed by the hand of his daughter. Countless Hindus were killed, and at this time Lakhi Khan Afghan and Nimat Khan came from Delhi to assist him. Hindus were defeated and the Muslims were victorious. The rest of the Hindus, having accepted tributary status, made peace. Since by nature he was fundamentally not combative, Sufi Sarmast spread the religion of Mohammed and befriended the hearts of Hindus. Having seen his fine virtues and uncommon justice, many Hindus of that time accepted Islam, finally he died in the year A.H.680 i.e., 1281 A.D.

After this period arrival of Sufis in Bijapur and suburbs was started. Ainuddin Gahjul Ilm Dehelvi narrates that Ibrahim Sangane was one of the early Sufis of Bijapur parish. Sufis of

Bijapur can be divided into three categories according to period of their arrival viz., Sufis before Bahmani and/or Adil Shahi Dynasty, Sufis during Adil Shahi Dynasty and Sufis after the fall of Adil Shahi Dynasty. And further, it can be classified as Sufis as warriors, Sufis as social reformers, Sufis as scholars, poets and writers.

Ibrahim Zubairi writes in his book *Rouzatul Auliyae Beejapore* (compiled during 1895) which describes that more than 30 tombs or Dargahs are there in Bijapur with more than 300 *Khankahs* i.e., Islamic Missionary Schools with notable number of disciples of different lineage like *Hasani Sadat, Husaini Sadat, Razavi Sadat, Kazmi Sadat, Shaikh Siddiquis, Farooquis, Usmanis, Alvis, Abbases* and other and spiritual chains like *Quadari, Chishti, Suharwardi, Naqshbandi, Shuttari, Haidari* etc.

## **Bijapur: The Great Metropolis Of The Medieval Deccan Region**

In the second half of the 16th century, and the 17th century under the aegis of Adil Shahis, the capital city of Bijapur occupied a prominent place among the celebrated cities of India. It was a great centre of culture, trade and commerce, education and learning, etc. It was known for its own culture called, Bijapur Culture. During Bijapur's heyday of glory there was a conflux of different communities and the people. Sometimes in many respects it surpassed the great cities of Delhi and Agra of Mughal India. Before Yusuf Adil Shah, the founder of the Adil Shahis could make Bijapur as capital of his newly carved kingdom; the town occupied a considerable

importance. The Khaljis made Bijapur their governor's seat, and after some time Khwajah Mahmud Gawan, the Bahmani premier constituted Bijapur region into a separate province. He owned property in Bijapur called "Kala Bagh". He constructed a mausoleum of Ain-ud-Din Ganj-ul-'ullum. The architecture of the mausoleums of Zia-ud-Din Ghaznavi, Hafiz Husseini and Hamzah Husseini etc. suggests that these edifices belong to the Bahmani period. Thus Bijapur was fairly large town under the early Sultans of Adil Shahi dynasty. The capital progressed slowly, however, its star was in ascendancy since the accession of Sultan Ali Adil Shah I in 1558. His victory in the Battle of Talikota in 1565 and further campaigns in the Krishna-Tunghabhadra regions brought enormous wealth. Hence he began to spend lavishly on its decoration. Under him every year saw some new building, a palace, a mosque, a bastion, or a minaret. His successor Ibrahim Adil Shah II added, so to say, a pearl necklace, Ibrahim Rouza to enhance the beauty of Bijapur, and Mohammed Adil Shah crowned it with a priceless gem called Gol Gumbaz. Thus the Adil Shahi monarchs poured their heart and soul in the capital city. The period between accessions of Ali Adil Shah I 1558 to the death of Mohammed Adil Shah 1656, can be called the golden age of the Adil Shahis as the kingdom flourished in all walks of life.

## **Population and Suburbs**

During the reign of Ibrahim Adil Shah II the population of Bijapur is stated to have reached 984,000 and had an incredible total of 1,600 mosques. Under Mohammed Adil Shah the population further increased. Historian J. D. B. Gribble writes

in and around the suburbs of Shahpur only a million people lived. Within fort walls when shelter became difficult the Sultans founded the suburbs of Fatehpur, Aliabad, Shahpur or Khudanpur, Chandpur, Inayatpur, Ameenpur, Nawabpur, Latifpur, Fakirpur, Rasoolpur, Afzalpur, Padshahpur, Rambhapur, Aghapur (wrongly called Ogapur), Zohrapur, Khadijahpur, Habibpur, Salabatpur, Yarbipur, Tahwarpur, Sharzahpur, Yakubpur, Nauraspur, Dayanatpur, Sikandarpur, Quadirpur, Burhanpur, Khwaspur, Imampur, Ayinpur Bahamanhall, etc, these suburbs spread in circumference of fifteen miles of Bijapur. From all sides, the gates of Bijapur fort were thoroughly connected with roads, and the people had good amenities.

## **Water system**

The Adil Shahi Sultans made an elaborate arrangement of pure and wholesome water for the people of Bijapur and its suburbs. At Torvi a masonry dam was constructed. We find another dam in its far eastern side. These two dams fed the reservoirs of Torvi and Afzalpur. Through these works, water was supplied to the suburbs of Shahpur, and the capital. Historian C. Schweitzer is of the opinion that the Torvi aqueduct is in itself a very credible engineering achievement of Adil Shahis. To augment the existing water supply in the city Mohammed Adil Shah constructed Jahan Begum Lake (Begum Talab) in the south of Bijapur. This Lake fed the southern and eastern sides of the city. Thus water reached every corner of the capital. In addition, to supplement the water needs of the people in and around, the Sultans and nobles constructed big and small wells. Captain Sykes who visited Bijapur in 1819 reports, there



were 700 wells (Boudis) with steps and 300 wells (Kuans or small wells) without steps within the walls of Bijapur. Moreover, we find the remains of tanks and lakes named Rangrez Talab, Quasim Talab, Fatehpur Talab and Allahpur Talab in the vicinity of Bijapur.

Begum Talab, which is 234.22-acre (0.9479 km) tank was constructed in 1651 by Mohammad Adil Shah in memory of Jahan Begum. This tank was used for ensuring drinking water supply to the city. To the right side of lake there is an underground room from where water was supplied to city in earthen pipes.

The pipes laid to depth of 15 feet (4.6 m) to 50 feet (15 m) were joined and cased in masonry. Many towers of height 25 feet (7.6 m) to 40 feet (12 m) called as "gunj" were built to release pressure of water and prevent pipes from bursting all along. These towers allowed dirt in pipes to remain at the bottom and clear water to flow.

## **Bazaars and Petes**

Bijapur being the capital and big business centre attracted merchants and travellers in large number from the Deccan and many parts of India and foreign lands. Abdal, a court poet in his Ibrahim Namah writes,

(at the markets of Bijapur) the wealthy merchants of different countries sat in every direction (with their costly items).. In Bijapur the merchants could stay in the Sarais (inns) attached to the mosques or other public buildings. Such Sarais are found at Taj Boudi, Sandal Masjid, Bukhari Masjid, Ballad

Khan Masjid etc. Nawab Mustafa Khan, a celebrated noble of Mohammed Adil Shah built a big Sarai in the west of Bijapur, which is now used as the District Jail.

The following market places were established respectively by the Adil Shahi Sultans in and around Bijapur. Yusuf Adil Shah: Markovi Bazar, Thana Bazar, Naghthana Bazar, Daulat Bazar, Dahan Khan Bazar, Markur Bazar, Murad Khan Bazar, Palah Bazar, Mubarak Bazar and. Shahpeth (old) Bazar. Ismail Adil Shah: Kamal Khan Bazar, NakaBazar and Bare-Khudavand Bazar. Ibrahim Adil Shah I: Jagate Bazar, Roa Bazar, Sher Karkhana Bazar, Rangeen Masjid Bazar, Fateh Zaman Bazar, Karanzah Bazar, Sara Bazar, and ShikarKhan Bazar Ali Adil Shah I: Jumma Masjid Bazar, SikandarBazar, FarhadKhan Bazar, Dilir Khan Bazar and Haidar Bazar. Mohammed Adil Shah: Padshahpur Bazar. Ali Adil Shah II: Shahpeth (new) Bazar. Others: Ikhlas Khan Bazar, Yusuf Rumi Khan Bazar, Shah Abu Turab Bazar, Abdur Razzaq Bazar, Langar Bazar, Mahmood Shah Bazar, etc. We found suburban markets called the Peths in the vicinity of Bijapur. They are as follows: Habibpur Peth, Salabatpur Beth, Tahwarpur Peth, Zohrapur Peth, Afzalpur Peth (Takiyah), Shahpur or Khudanpur or Khudawandpur Peth, Danatpur Peth, Sikandarpur Peth, Quadhpur Peth, Khwaspur Peth, Imampur Peth, Kumutagi Peth, etc.

## **Foreign accounts**

From different parts of world many envoys, merchants, travellers, etc. visited Bijapur in its heyday of magnanimity and grandeur, and they left behind their valuable accounts of past grandiosities of Bijapur. In 1013 corresponding to (1604–

1605) the Mughal Emperor Akbar, commissioner Mirza Asad Baig, one of grandees of his court to Bijapur for diplomatic dealings. He was a person who saw Agra and Delhi in their glorious days. He wrote his account called, "Haalat-e-Asad Baig or Wakiat-e-Asad Baig". From his account we shall be able to form some idea of the position which Bijapur occupied among the wonder cities of India in the Medieval Ages. He cites in his impression of the city the grandeurs of the Adil Shahi court and its customs:

On 17th of Shaaban I marched forward with attendants that were with me to meet Adil Khan (Ibrahim Adil Shah II), and was introduced to him in a building upon that lake Gagan Mahal at Bijapur appointed for such ceremonies. It was a very pleasant spot appropriately furnished. In two or three houses the rooms were in a perfect tip-top condition, and after prayer on that day Adil Khan came, with all pomp and circumstances, followed by a retinue of elephants... that palace, which they called "Hajjah" (?) All around the gate of my residence were lofty buildings with houses and porticoes; the situation was very healthy and airy.

It lies in open space in the city. Its northern portico is to the east of a "Bazaar" of a great extent, as much as thirty yards wide and about two Kos long. Before each shop was a beautiful green tree, and the whole "Bazaar" was extremely clean and pure. It was filled with rare goods, such as are not seen or heard of in any other town. There were shops of cloths sellers, jewellers, armourers, vintners, fish-mongers, and cooks... in the jeweller's shops were jewels of all sorts, wrought into variety. of articles, such as daggers, knives, mirrors, necklaces, and "laso" into the form of birds, such as parrots,

doves and peacocks, etc. all studded with valuable jewels, and arranged upon shelves, rising one above the other. By the side of this shop will be a baker's with rare viands, placed in the same manner, upon tiers of shelves in like manner. Then a clothier's, then a spirit merchant's with various sorts of China vessels, valuable crystal bottles, costly cups, filled with choice and rare essence, arrayed on shelves, while in the front of the shop were jars of double-distilled spirits. Besides that shop will be a fruiter's, filled with all kinds of fruits and sweetmeats, such as pistachios nuts, and relishes, and sugar-candy and almonds.

On another side may be a wine merchant's shop, and an establishment of singers, dancers and beautiful women adorned with various kinds of jewels, and fair-faced choristers, all ready to perform whatever may be desired of them. In short, the whole "Bazaar" was filled with wine and beauty, dances, perfumes, jewels, of all sorts, plates, and viands. In one street were a thousand bands of people drinking, and dancers, lovers, and pleasure-seekers assembled; none quarrelled or disputed with one another and this state of things was perpetual. Perhaps no place in the wide world could present a more wonderful spectacle to the eye of the traveller... (for Emperor Akbar) I purchased for Rs.25900 emeralds, "pokhraj", "Nilam" and birds made of jewels. I purchased the diamond and "Dugdugi" for Rs.55000 and agreed to pay the price after Mir Jamaluddin approves.

Mirza Asad Baig left Bijapur on 24 January 1604. His graphic account of Bijapur tells us how this city was prosperous, rich and flourishing. Another traveller Manctelslo, who visited the Deccan area in 1638 writes,

Bijapur was one of the greatest cities in the whole of Asia, more than five "leagues" (i.e., fifteen miles) the city had five great suburbs where most of the traders lived and in Scyanpur (Shahpur) were most of the jewelers dealing in costly pearls.

Similarly, Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who visited India between 1631 and 1667, was a jeweller, probably he had been to Bijapur for selling some of his jewels. He has left for us an account, in which he describes Bijapur was a great city ... in its large suburbs many goldsmiths and jewellers dwelt ... the king's palace (Arkillah or citadel) was vast, but ill-built and the access to it was very dangerous as the ditch with which it was girt was full of crocodiles,. in the same way, the Dutch traveller, Baldeous, the English geographer, Ogilby and others praise the greatness of Bijapur.

## **Gardens and Water Pavilions**

The Adil Shahi Sultans were fond of gardens, water pavilions and resorts; hence they beautified Bijapur by presence of such amusing spots. Rafiuddin Shirazi writes in his "Tazkiratul-Mulk" that during the rule of Ibrahim Adil Shah I a garden 60 yards long and 60 yards broad, was laid within the outer "Hissar" (i.e., Arbah) and another 20 yards long and 20 yards broad, within the inner one (i.e., Arkilla Wall or citadel) was constructed. In the reign of Ali Adil Shah I, many trees of fruits viz. odoriferous orange, date, grapes, pomegranate, figs, apple. "Naar" (quince-like fruit), etc. brought from the countries of hot and cold climates were set in gardens. From different historical sources we get references of gardens like Kishwar Khan Bagh, Ali Bagh, Dou-az-Deh (twelve) Imam Bagh, Alavi Bagh, Arkillah Bagh, Nauroz Bagh, Ibrahim Bagh, Murari

Bagh, Naginah Bagh, etc. in Bijapur. In southern side in the capital, a renowned Adil Shahi noble, Mubarak Khan constructed water pavilions and resort. Likewise, at Kumatagi village, about 12 miles in the east of Bijapur, the Sultans laid the water pavilions and resort for royal members.

## **Education and Learning**

Before the Muslims could establish their rule in Bijapur, it was a great centre of learning in South India. It is evident from the bilingual Marathi–Sanskrit inscription, which is inscribed just under the Persian epigraph in the Karimuddin mosque 16 that the city of Bijapur is given the title of “Banaras of the South”. Since ancient time Banaras in northern India was a celebrated centre of learning. The Khaiji governor of Bijapur, Malik Karimuddin, probably found at this place the great activities of learning; hence he entitled Bijapur as the Banaras of the South.

The Khaljis conquered whole south India and they were well acquainted with its famous cities like Daulatabad of Yadavas, Warangal of Kakatiyas, Dwarasamudra of Hoysalas and Madurai of Pandyas. However, they did not entitle any of these cities as the Banaras of the South, except Bijapur, though these cities were the capitals of ruling dynasties. During the rule of Bahmanis Bijapur retained its academic excellence. The renowned learned Sufi of India, Ainuddin Ganjuloom Junnaidi, who authored 125 works of Qur’anic commentaries, Quirat (art of Quranic recitation), Hadith (prophetic Traditions), Scholasticism, Principles of Law, Fiqe (Islamic Law), Suluk (behavior). Syntax, Lexicography, Ansaab (genealogy). History, Tibb (medicine), Hilmat, Sanf (grammaIj), Quasidah, etc. lived

in from 1371, until his death in 1390. His disciple and other Sufis like Ibrahim Sangani and his sons, Abdullah Al-Ghazani, Ziauddin Ghazanavi and Shah Hamzah Hussaini kept their noble litterateur's traditions alive in Bijapur. Under the aegis of Adil Shahis of Bijapur advanced very much in the field of learning. It was considered as the 'Second Baghdad' in scholastic activities in the Islamic world. Owing to its popularity in this sphere Ibrahim Adil Shah II named it "Vidhyapur" *All Sultans of Bijapur were men of letters. Ali Adil Shah I was well versed in religion, logic, sciences, syntax, etymology and grammar. He was fond of reading to the extent that he kept with him big boxes of books, while on tour. All Sultans patronised the teachers and scholars. It was routine in the capital that the scholars met at different places, and among them learned discussions were held.*

At the capital the Royal Library existed in which nearly sixty men, calligraphers, gilders of books, book binders and illuminators were busy doing their work whole day in the library. Sesh Waman Pandit was the Royal Librarian. Ibrahim-II's court poet Baqir Khurd-e-Kasm worked as transcriber in the Royal Library. The noted scholars in the capital were Shah Nawaz Khan, Abdul Rasheed-al-Bastagi, Shah Sibagatullah Hussaini, Shaikh Alimullah Muhaddis (a teacher of Sayings or Traditions of Mohummad, and Theology in Jumma mosque), Mullan Hassan Faraghi, MullanHabibullah, Shah Mohummad Mulki and Shah Habibullah Hussaini. Shah Zayn Muqbil, a great lover of learning and books, had eight hundred manuscripts in his library, out of these over three hundred were written by him. Miran Mohummad Mudarris Hussaini was also a great teacher. At the Asar Mahal there were two Madrasas (religious schools), one for teaching Hadith

(Tradition) and another for Fiqah and Imaan (Theology and Belief). Free education with delicious food, and stipend of one Hun to each student was provided. The Mosques had the Maktabas (elementary schools) where Arabic and Persian studies were taught. The state supplied books free of costs. The students who performed excellently in the annual examination, received prizes in Huns, and later appointed in high and honourable position.

Besides these, most of the Sufis maintained their own Khankhas (convents for disciples) and Kutub Khanas (libraries). Even to this day some of the descendants of Sufis in perpetuity continued this tradition. In consequence of state patronage, a bulk of literature in Arabic, Persian and Dakhani Urdu had come up. In addition, the languages like Sanskrit, Marathi and Kannada flourished. Pandit Narhari, a court poet of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, composed the poetic excellence on his master, called, Nauras Manzarf. Shri Laxmipathi, a disciple of Pandit Rukmangada composed a number of Marathi and Hindi devotional songs set in musical Ragas. Swamy Yadvendra was also a prominent contributor in Marathi literature. In the south of kingdom, the official transaction was carried out in Kannada.

## **Medical Aids and Darush-Shafa (Hospitals)**

Dr. Zaman Khodaey says, in the kingdom of Bijapur the medical aids and Darush-Shafa existed. In the hospitals the different Departments dealt and treated different fevers, eye and ear problems, skin and other diseases. We have references



that in the kingdom the physicians practised the Unani, Ayurvedic, Irani and European systems of medicine. Hakim Gilani and Farnalope Firangi, a European physician and surgeon worked under Ibrahim Adil Shah II. Farnalope treated his ailing patron wrongly, which caused Sultan's death. Khawas Khan caught him, and as a punishment his nose and lips were cut off. Nothing daunted, Fanalope returned to his home and cut off the nose and lips of one of his slaves, and so fastened the same to his own that he was soon cured even of scars. He lived long in Bijapur and resumed his practice with great success. Aithippa, an Ayurvedic physician, who was attached to a dispensary at Bijapur compiled for his son Champa, *Tibb-e-Bahri-o-Barri*, a treatise on medicine. It contains a short vocabulary of some parts of the human body and some drugs with their equivalent in Arabic and Urdu. It further contains hints as to the examination of patients and symptoms and treatment of diseases. He had spent a long time attending upon and getting instruction from Hakim Mohummad Hussain Unani and Hakim Mohammad Masum Isfahani.

The great historian Firishta was an expert Ayurvedic physician. He studied this system under Hakim-e-Misri and other Hindu physicians. After attaining proficiency, he started his own dispensary and prepared patent drugs and popular medicines. He possessed a great knowledge of Sanskrit, hence studied thoroughly works of Ayurveda like the Samhitas of Wagbhat, Charak and Sushrut, and wrote *Dastur-e- Attibba* or *Iktiyarat-e-Qasmi*. In this book, he mentioned the names of famous Ayurvedic physicians like Jagdeva, Sagarbhat and Sawa Pandit. He cites in the names of various diseases, herbs and drugs and also discusses simple and compound medicines and formulae of their preparation. The book is fairly comprehensive

as its scope extends to anatomy, physiology and therapy. It seems Firishta was an expert in Botany as well. He gave details of minutes regarding characteristics of medicinal herbs, plants and fruits of India. Another physician Hakim Rukna-e-Maish skilled in medicine stayed in the court of Ibrahim Adil Shah II for some time before he joined the Mughals. At the instance of the same Sultan; Yunus Beg completed Kitab-e-Tibb, a work on medicine. The court poet of Mohammed Adil Shah, Hakim Aatishi possessed a unique skill in medicine and served as the Royal Physician. He was a personal physician of the Sultan, without his permission he could not attend other patients. With permission once he cured Khan-e-Khanan Ikhlas Khan. Aatishi took this onerous duty only when other physicians altogether failed. By his miraculous treatment patients recovered within three weeks. Thus the Adil Shahi Sultans and the nobles never overlooked the medical services and always encouraged the physicians giving them handsome rewards. It because of such encouragement some of the physicians produced literature on medicine.

## **Abode of Music**

The Adil Shahi monarchs were great lovers of music; some of them attained high order. Yusuf Adil Shah played "Tambur"(Tambourine) and "Ud" (lute). Ismail Adil Shah had high admiration for Central Asian music. Music received greater encouragement under Ibrahim Adil Shah II. He was the greatest musician of his age. He was poet and singer and maintained an inordinately a large number of musicians and minstrels (three or four thousand) at his court. The band of musicians was known as Lashkar-e-Nauras (army of Nauras)

they were paid by the government regularly. At Nauraspur he constructed Sangeet Mahal and residential mansions for songsters, minstrels and dancing girls. With great pomp the festival of Nauras (musical concert) was celebrated during his time. In a number of paintings Ibrahim Adil Shah II was depicted playing musical instruments like "Tambur", "Sitar", "Veena" and "Guitar". Emperor Jahangir, and Mirza Asad Baig the Mughal envoy considerably praised Ibrahim Adil Shah II's love for music. Mirza Asad Baig writes in his "Wakiyat" that he was invited to the royal palace to bid farewell to Ibrahim Adil Shah II

a grand show of music had been arranged for this occasion. He found the Sultan so wrapped up in listening to the music that he could hardly reply to Asad Baig's questions. The conversation between them for some time mainly concerned music and musicians. The Sultan wanted to know whether Emperor Akbar was fond of music and Asad Baig informed him that the Emperor did sometime listen to music. The Sultan then wanted to know whether Tansen stood or sat while singing before the Emperor and was told that in the Darbar or during day time Tansen had to stand while singing, but at night and on the occasion of Nauroz and Jashan festival Tansen and other musicians were permitted to sit while singing. The Sultan told Asad Baig, "Music is such that it should be heard at all times and always, and musicians should be kept happy.

## **Art and architecture**

The Adil Shahi Sultans had concentrated their energies almost exclusively on architecture and the allied arts, each Sultan

endeavouring to excel his predecessor in the number, size, or splendor of his building projects. The architecture of Bijapur is a combination of Persian, Ottoman Turkish and Deccani styles. It is amazing to note that in Ibrahim Rouzah, Dilkusha Mahal (Mahatar Mahal), Malikah-e-Jahan Mosque, Jal Mahal, etc. the Bijapur sculptors have carved beautiful designs in stones, as the carpenters do in wood. The stucco plaster designing in some monuments is superb.

### **Adil Shahi arts and heritage**

The contribution of the Adil Shahi kings to the architecture, painting, language, literature and music of Karnataka is unique. Bijapur (Kannada form of the Sanskrit *Vidyapur* or *Vidyanagari*) became a cosmopolitan city, and it attracted many scholars, artists, musicians, and Sufi saints from Turkey, Persia (Iran) Iraq, Turkey, Turkestan, etc.

The unfinished Jami Masjid, started in 1565, has an arcaded prayer hall with fine aisles supported on massive piers has an impressive dome. The Ibrahim Rouza which contains the tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, is a fine structure with delicate carvings. Persian artists of Adil Shahi court have left a rare treasure of miniature paintings, some of which are well-preserved in Europe's great museums.

The Dakhani language, an amalgam of Persian-Arabic, Urdu, Marathi, and Kannada, developed into an independent spoken and literary language. Under the Adil Shahis many literary works were published in Dakhani. Ibrahim Adil Shah II's book of poems and music, *Kitab-e-Navras* is in Dakhani. The *Mushaira* (poetic symposium) was born in the Bijapur court

and later travelled north. The Dakhani language, which was growing under the Bahamani kings, later came to be known as Dakhan Urdu to distinguish it from the North Indian Urdu. Adil Shah II played the sitar and ud and Ismail was a composer.

## **Adil Shahis of Bijapur**

- Yusuf Adil Shah (1490–1510)
- Ismail Adil Shah (1510–1534)
- Mallu Adil Shah (1534)
- Ibrahim Adil Shah I (1534–1558)
- Ali Adil Shah I (1558–1579)
- Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580–1627)
- Mohammed Adil Shah (1627 – 4 November 1656); his mausoleum is the Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur
- Ali Adil Shah II (1656 – 24 November 1672; his mother Khadija Sultana acted as regent until 1661)
- Sikandar Adil Shah (1672 – 26 September 1686)

## **Asar Mahal**

Muhammad Qasim Firishta wrote that in the year AH 1008, Mir Mohammed Swaleh Hamadani came to Bijapur. He had with him hair of the Muhammad ("Mooy-e-Mubarrak"). Sultan Ibrahim Adil shah heard of this and rejoiced. Met Mir Swaleh Hamdani, the King saw the hair and gave priceless gifts to Mir Sahab. Mir Sahab gave two strands of the hair to Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah. At first, they were kept in Gagan Mahal, but during the reign of Adil Shah a huge fire burned down Gagan Mahal. Everything there burnt up, except the two boxes

in which two strands of hair were kept. In the midst of the conflagration, a Sufi Saint named Syed Saheb Mohiuddin braved the flames, entered and carried the boxes out on his head; the Sultan then kept these boxes in Asar Mahal.

The custody of "Mooy-e-Mubarrak" has been given to the saint Syed Saheb Mohiuddin issued by AdliShahi Diwan. Till today, the Original Sanad is with Saint's family. Annual function is celebrated every year on 12th Rabi-ul-awwal (Sandal & Urs Asar Mahal). This function is held regularly since from more than 350 years.

It is said that in the year AH 1142 Adil Shah used to frequently view these strands of hair. On one occasion he asked all the Sufis of that time to come and see them. So Hashim Husaini and Sayyad Shah Murtuza Quadri came there and asked to open the boxes; they were opened in front of the noble persons. But as they were opened a bright ray was everywhere. Nobody could bear the brightness of the ray and they all became unconscious.

Everywhere there was a perfume and then everybody saw the hair. After that period it is said that the boxes were neither opened nor had a privilege.

## **Battle of Raichur**

The **Battle of Raichur** was a battle fought between the Vijayanagar Empire and the Sultanate of Bijapur in 1520 CE in the town of Raichur, India. It resulted in a decisive victory for Vijayanagara forces, and the Bijapur ruler was defeated and pushed across the river Krishna.

## **Background**

The fort of Raichur was built by Kakatiya king Rudra in 1284 CE, and passed on to the Vijayanagar Kingdom after the decline of Kakatiyas. Ever since, the fort had been under dispute for nearly two centuries. The fort, along with other areas of the northern Deccan, was captured by Muhammad Bin Tughluq in 1323 CE. The Bahmani Sultanate captured the fort in 1347.

Saluva Narasimha Deva Raya attempted to recapture the city of Raichur from the Bahmanis, but failed.

The immediate prelude to the Battle of Raichur began in the year 1520. In that year, Krishnadevaraya sent Seyed Maraikar, a Muslim in his service, to Goa with a large sum of money to buy horses. Maraikar betrayed Krishnadevaraya's cause and went to Adil Khan with the money and offered his services. Krishnadevaraya made a demand that Maraikar be returned along with the money which was duly refused. During the period of peace Krishnadevaraya made extensive preparations for a grand attack on Raichur Doab. After the court decided that Raichur should be attacked, the king invited Military Commander Pemmasani Ramalinga Nayudu (Nayakas) in his service to take part in the battle.

## **Battle**

The battle was fought in Raichur between the armies of Krishnadevaraya and the Sultanate of Bijapur. The Vijayanagara Empire had a force consisting of 32,600 cavalry

and 551 elephants. The Bijapur Sultanate had a force consisting of 7,000 cavalry and 250 elephants. Modern and contemporary writers disagree on the number of infantry personnel that each side had.

The contemporary sources say that Krishnadevaraya had an infantry force consisting of a bit over 700,000 soldiers. Moreover, the use of a Portuguese contingent commanded by Cristovão de Figueiredo with the use of fireweapons help to conquer the fortress, there is a high probability that matchlocks, which were obtained through contact with the Portuguese, were used as well by the army of the Vijayanagara Empire.

Additionally the Portuguese with their arquebuses picked off the defenders from the walls, and thus enabled the besiegers to approach close to the lines of fortification and pull down the stones. Driven to desperation, and their governor being slain, the garrison surrendered. Portuguese accounts state that cannons were used extensively by the Bijapur Sultanate; the Vijayanagara Empire used them minimally, at best. The Vijayanagara Empire emerged victorious despite the Bijapur Sultanate having superior firepower.

## **Aftermath**

When the city of Raichur surrendered, Krishnadevaraya made a triumphal entry into it. Krishnadevaraya was brutal towards Bahmani Generals of Raichur. Many Bahmani generals lost their lands. The other Muslim kings sent envoys to the emperor on hearing of his success and received a haughty reply.. The king conveyed that if Adil Shah would come to him, do



obeisance, and kiss his foot, his lands would be restored to him. The submission never took place. Krishnadevaraya then led his army as far north as Bijapur and occupied it. He took prisoner three sons of a former king of the Bahmani dynasty, who had been held captive by the Adil Shah and he proclaimed the eldest as king of the Deccan.

This attempt to subvert the rule of the five Sultans who had established themselves on the ruins of the single Deccan sovereignty only resulted in stiffening their hostility towards their common foe. Krishnadevaraya began to make preparations for an attack on Belgaum, which was in Adil Shah's possession. Soon after, he fell seriously ill to carry out his project and died at the age of forty-five years, in the year 1530 CE. He was succeeded by Achyuta Deva Raya.

## **Political consequences**

The battle of Raichur had far-reaching effects. The Vijayanagara victory weakened the power and prestige of the Adil Shah. He turned his attention to making alliances with the other Muslim neighbours.

The victory also caused other Sultans in Deccan to form an alliance to defeat the Vijayanagar Empire. The war also affected the fortunes of the Portuguese on the west coast. Goa rose and fell simultaneously with the rise and fall of the Vijayanagar dynasty because their entire trade depended on Hindu support.

## Chapter 7

# First Battle of Panipat

The **First Battle of Panipat**, on 21 April 1526, was fought between the invading forces of Babur and the Lodi dynasty. It took place in North India and marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire and the end of the Delhi Sultanate. This was one of the earliest battles involving gunpowder firearms and field artillery in the Indian subcontinent which were introduced by Mughals in this battle.

## Background

After losing Samarkand for the second time, Babur gave attention to conquer Hindustan as he reached the banks of the Chenab in 1519. Until 1524, his aim was to only expand his rule to Panjāb, mainly to fulfil his ancestor Timur's legacy, since it used to be part of his empire.

At that time, most of North India was under the rule of Ibrahim Lodi of the Lodi dynasty, but the empire was crumbling and there were many defectors.

He received invitations from Daulat Khan Lodi, Governor of Punjab and Ala-ud-Din, uncle of Ibrahim. He sent an ambassador to Ibrahim, claiming himself the rightful heir to the throne of the country, however the ambassador was detained at Lahore and released months later.

Babur started for Lahore, Punjab, in 1524 but found that Daulat Khan Lodi had been driven out by forces sent by

Ibrahim Lodi. When Babur arrived at Lahore, the Lodi army marched out and was routed. In response, Babur burned Lahore for two days, then marched to Dipalpur, placing Alam Khan, another rebel uncle of Lodi's, as governor. Alam Khan was quickly overthrown and fled to Kabul. In response, Babur supplied Alam Khan with troops who later joined up with Daulat Khan Lodi and together with about 30,000 troops, they besieged Ibrahim Lodi at Delhi. He defeated them and drove Alam's army off; and Babur realised Lodi would not allow him to occupy the Punjab.

## **Battle**

Hearing of the size of Ibrahim's army, Babur secured his right flank against the city of Panipat, while digging a trench covered with tree branches to secure his left flanks.

In the centre, he placed 700 carts tied together with ropes. Between every two carts, there were breastworks for his matchlock men.

Babur also ensured that there was enough space for his soldiers to rest their guns and fire. Babur referred to this method as the "Ottoman device" due to its previous use by the Ottomans during the Battle of Chaldiran.

When Ibrahim's army arrived, he found the approach to Babur's army too narrow to attack. While Ibrahim redeployed his forces to allow for the narrower front, Babur quickly took advantage of the situation to flank (*tulghuma*) the Lodi army.

Many of Ibrahim's troops were unable to get into action, and fled when the battle turned against them. Ibrahim Lodi was killed while trying to retreat and beheaded. 20,000 Lodi soldiers were killed in battle.

### **Advantage of cannons in the battle**

Babur's guns proved decisive in battle, firstly because Ibrahim lacked any field artillery, but also because the sound of the cannon frightened Ibrahim's elephants, causing them to trample his own men.

### **Tactics**

Tactics used by Babur were the *tulghuma* and the *araba*. *Tulghuma* meant dividing the whole army into various units, viz. the Left, the Right, and the Centre. The Left and Right divisions were further subdivided into Forward and Rear divisions. Through this, a small army could be used to surround the enemy from all sides. The Centre Forward division was then provided with carts (*araba*) which were placed in rows facing the enemy and tied to each other with animal hide ropes. Behind them were placed cannons protected and supported by mantlets which could be used to easily manoeuvre the cannons.

These two tactics made Babur's artillery lethal. The cannons could be fired without any fear of being hit, as they were shielded by the bullock carts held in place by hide ropes. The heavy cannons could also be easily traversed onto new targets, as they could be manoeuvred by the mantlets which were on wheels.

## **Aftermath**

Ibrahim Lodi died on the field of battle along with 20,000 of his troops. The battle of Panipat was militarily a decisive victory for Timurids. Politically it gained Babur new lands, and initiated a new phase of his establishment of the long-lasting Mughal Empire in the heart of the Indian subcontinent.

## Chapter 8

# Ahoms under King Suhungmung

## Defeat Turbak Khan

The **Ahom kingdom** (/ɑː hɑː m, ɑː həm/, 1228–1826) was a late medieval kingdom in the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam. It maintained its sovereignty for nearly 600 years having successfully resisted Mughal expansion in Northeast India. Established by Sukaphaa, a Tai prince from Mong Mao, Yunnan Province, China, it began as a mong in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra based on wet rice agriculture. It expanded suddenly under Suhungmung in the 16th century and became multi-ethnic in character, casting a profound effect on the political and social life of the entire Brahmaputra valley. The kingdom became weaker with the rise of the Moamoria rebellion, and subsequently fell to repeated Burmese invasions of Assam. With the defeat of the Burmese after the First Anglo-Burmese War and the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, control of the kingdom passed into East India Company hands.

Though it came to be called the Ahom kingdom in the colonial and subsequent times, it was largely multi-ethnic, with the ethnic Tai-Ahom people constituting less than 10% of the population toward the end. People from different ethnic groups became a part of the Ahom population due to the process known as Ahomisation. The identity of the Ahom people in this kingdom was fluid, with the king controlling who belonged to it and who did not. The Ahoms initially called their kingdom *Mong Dun Shun Kham* till 1401 (Assamese: xunor-xophura; English: casket of gold), but adopted *Assam* in later times. The

British-controlled province after 1838 and later the Indian state of Assam came to be known by this name.

## **History**

The Ahom kingdom was established in 1228 when the first Ahom king Sukaphaa came from Mong Mao and entered the Brahmaputra valley, crossing the rugged Patkai mountain range. He was accompanied by his three queens, two sons, several nobles and officials and their families, and soldiers totaling more than nine thousand persons. He crossed the Patkai and reached Namruk (Namrup) on 2 December 1228 and occupied a region on the south bank with the Burhidihing river in the north, the Dikhau river in the south and the Patkai mountains in the east. He befriended the local groups, the Barahi and the Marans, finally settled his capital at Charaideo and established the offices of the Dangarias— the Burhagohain and the Borgohain. In the 1280s, these two offices were given independent regions of control and the check and balance that these three main offices accorded each other was established. The Ahoms brought with them the technology of wet rice cultivation that they shared with other groups. The people that took to the Ahom way of life and polity were incorporated into their fold in a process of Ahomization. As a result of this process the Barahi people, for instance, were completely subsumed, and some of the other groups like some Nagas and the Maran peoples became Ahoms, thus enhancing the Ahom numbers significantly. This process of Ahomization was particularly significant till the 16th century when under Suhungmung, the kingdom made large territorial expansions at the cost of the Chutiya and the Kachari kingdoms.

The expansion was so large and so rapid that the Ahomization process could not keep pace and the Ahoms became a minority in their kingdom. This resulted in a change in the character of the kingdom and it became multi-ethnic and inclusive. Hindu influences, which were first felt under Bamuni Konwar at the end of the 14th century, became significant. The Assamese language entered the Ahom court and co-existed with the Tai language for some time in the 17th century before finally replacing it. The rapid expansion of the state was accompanied by the installation of a new high office, the Borpatrogohain, at par with the other two high offices and not without opposition from them. Two special offices, the Sadiakhowa Gohain, and the Marangikowa Gohain were created to oversee the regions won over from the Chutia and the Kachari kingdoms respectively. The subjects of the kingdom were organized under the Paik system, initially based on the *phoid* or kinship relations, which formed the militia. The kingdom came under attack from Turkic and Afghan rulers of Bengal, but it withstood them. On one occasion, the Ahoms under Ton Kham Borgohain pursued the invaders and reached the Karatoya river, and the Ahoms began to see themselves as the rightful heir of the erstwhile Kamarupa kingdom.

The Ahom kingdom took many features of its mature form under Pratap Singha (1603–1641). The Paik system was reorganized under the professional *khel* system, replacing the kinship-based *phoid* system. Under the same king, the offices of the Borphukan, and the Borbarua were established along with other smaller offices. No more major restructuring of the state structure was attempted until the end of the kingdom. The kingdom came under repeated Mughal attacks in the 17th century, and on one occasion in 1662, the Mughals under Mir



Jumla occupied the capital, Garhgaon. The Mughals were unable to keep it, and in at the end of the Battle of Saraighat, the Ahoms not only fended off a major Mughal invasion but extended their boundaries west, up to the Manas river. Following a period of confusion, the kingdom got itself the last set of kings, the Tungkhungia kings, established by Gadadhar Singha.

The rule of Tungkhungia kings was marked by achievements in the Arts and engineering constructions and also festering internal conflicts that tore the kingdom asunder. Rudra Singha (1696–1714) introduced Islamic prayers in the court that his successors continued. The later phase of the rule was also marked by increasing social conflicts, leading to the Moamoria rebellion. The rebels were able to capture and maintain power at the capital Rangpur for some years but were finally removed with the help of the British under Captain Welsh. The following repression led to a large depopulation due to emigration as well as execution, but the conflicts were never resolved. A much-weakened kingdom fell to repeated Burmese attacks and finally after the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, the control of the kingdom passed into British hands.

## **Ahom economic system**

The Ahom kingdom was based on the Paik system, a type of corvee labor that is neither feudal nor Asiatic. The first coins were introduced by Suklenmung in the 16th century, though the system of personal service under the Paik system persisted. In the 17th century when the Ahom kingdom expanded to include erstwhile Koch and Mughal areas, it came into contact with their revenue systems and adapted accordingly.

# Ahom administration

## Swargadeo and Patra Mantris

The Ahom kingdom was ruled by a king, called *Swargadeo* (Ahom language: *Chao-Pha*), who had to be a descendant of the first king Sukaphaa. Succession was generally by primogeniture but occasionally the great Gohains (*Dangarias*) could elect another descendant of Sukaphaa from a different line or even depose an enthroned one.

**Dangarias:** Sukaphaa had two great Gohains to aid him in administration: Burhagohain and the Borgohain. In the 1280s, they were given independent territories, they were veritable sovereigns in their given territories called *bilat* or *rajya*. The Burhagohain's territory was between Sadiya and Gerelua river in the north bank of the Brahmaputra river and the Borgohain's territory was to the west up to the Burai river. They were given total command over the *paiks* that they controlled. These positions were generally filled from specific families. Princes who were eligible for the position of Swargadeo were not considered for these positions and vice versa. In the 1527, Suhungmung added a third Gohain, Borpatrogohain. The Borpatrogohain's territory was located between the territories of the other two Gohains.

**Royal officers:** Pratap Singha added two offices, Borbarua and Borphukan, that were directly under the king. The Borbarua, who acted as the military as well as the judicial head, was in command of the region east of Kaliabor not under the command of the *Dangarias*. He could use only a section of the

paiks at his command for his personal use (as opposed to the Dangariyas), the rest rendering service to the Ahom state. The Borphukan was in military and civil command over the region west of Kaliabor, and acted as the *Swargadeo's* viceroy in the west. Borbaruas were mostly from different Kachari communities, while Borphukans were from the Chutia community. The Borbarua and Borphukan offices were not hereditary and thus could be chosen from any families.

**Patra Mantris:** The five positions constituted the *Patra Mantris* (Council of Ministers). From the time of Supimphaa (1492–1497), one of the *Patra Mantris* was made the *Rajmantri* (Prime Minister, also *Borpatro*; Ahom language: *Shenglung*) who enjoyed additional powers and the service of a thousand additional paiks from the Jakaichuk village.

### **Other officials**

The Borbarua and the Borphukan had military and judicial responsibilities, and they were aided by two separate councils (*sora*) of *Phukans*. The Borphukan's *sora* sat at Guwahati and the Borbarua's *sora* at the capital. Six of them formed the council of the Borbarua with each having his separate duties. The Naubaicha Phukan, who had an allotment of thousand men managed the royal boats, the Bhitaraul Phukan, the Na Phukan, the Dihingia Phukan, the Deka Phukan, and the Neog Phukan formed the council of Phukan. The Borphukan also had a similar council of six subordinate Phukans whom he was bound to consult in all matters of importance. This council included Pani Phukan, who commanded six thousand *paiks*, Deka Phukan who commanded four thousand *paiks*, the Dihingia Phukan, Nek Phukan and two Chutiya Phukans.

The superintending officers were called *Baruas*. The *Baruas* of whom there were twenty or more included *Bhandari Barua* or treasurer; the *Duliya Barua*, who was in charge of the royal palanquins; the *Chaudang Barua* who superintended executions; *Khanikar Barua* was the chief artificer; *Sonadar Barua* was the mint master and chief jeweler; the *Bez Barua* was the physician to the Royal family, *Hati Barua*, *Ghora Barua*, etc.

Other official included twelve *Rajkhowas*, and a number of *Katakis*, *Kakatis*, and *Dolais*. The *Rajkhowas* were governors of given territories and commanders of three thousand *paiks*. They were the arbitrator who settled local disputes and supervised public works. The *Katakis* were envoys who dealt with foreign countries and hill tribes. The *Kakatis* were writers of official documents. The *Dolais* expounded astrology and determined auspicious time and dates for any important event and undertaking.

## **Governors**

Members of the royal families ruled certain areas, and they were called *Raja*.

- *Charing Raja*, the heir apparent to the *Swargadeo*, administered the tracts around *Joypur* on the right bank of the *Burhidihing* river.
- *Tipam Raja* is the second in line.
- *Namrup Raja* is the third in line

Members of the royal families who occupy lower positions are given regions called *mels*, and were called *meldangia* or *melkhowaraja*. *Meldangia Gohains* were princes of an even

lesser grade, of which there were two: *Majumelia Gohain* and *Sarumelia Gohain*. Royal ladies were given individual *mels*, and by the time of Rajeshwar Singha, there were twelve of them. The most important of these was the *Raidangia mel* given to the chief queen. Forward governors, who were military commanders, ruled and administered forward territories. The officers were usually filled from the families that were eligible for the three great Gohains.

- *Sadiya Khowa Gohain* based in Sadiya, administered the Sadiya region that was acquired after the conquest of the Chutia kingdom in 1524.
- *Marangi khowa Gohain* administered the region that was contiguous to the Naga groups west of the Dhansiri; acquired from the Kachari kingdom in 1526.
- *Solal Gohain* administered a great part of Nagaon and a portion of Chariduar after the headquarters of the Borphukan was transferred to Gauhati.
- *Kajalimukhiya Gohain* served under the Borphukan, administered Kajalimukh and maintained relations with Jaintia and Dimarua.
- *Khamjangia Gohain* administered the region of Khamjang(part of Naga hills).
- *Banrukia Gohain* administered the region of Banruk(part of Sibsagar district).
- *Tungkhungia Gohain* administered the region of Tingkhong.
- *Banlungia Gohain* administered the region of Banlung(Dhemaji) that was acquired after the conquest of the Chutia kingdom in 1524.

- *Bhatialia Gohain* administered the region of Habung acquired from the Chutia kingdom in 1524. Later Borpatrogohain was created in its place.
- *Dihingia Gohain* administered the region of Mungklang(Dihing) that was acquired after the conquest of the Chutiya kingdom in 1524.
- *Kaliaboria Gohain* administered the region of Kaliabor.
- *Jagiyal Gohain* served under Borbarua, administered Jagi at Nagoan and maintained relations with seven tribal chiefs, called *Sat Raja*.
- *Mohongia Gohain* and *Mohongor Gohain* based in the salt mines of Sadiya and Mohong(Naga hills) conquered from Chutia kingdom and Nagas.

Lesser governors were called Rajkhowas, and some of them were:

- Bacha
- Darrang
- Solaguri
- Abhaypur

The dependent kings or vassals were also called *Raja*. Except for the Raja of Rani, all paid an annual tribute. These Rajas were required to meet the needs for resources and paiks when the need arose, as during the time of war.

- Darrang Raja ruled the later-day Darrang district and were the descendants of Sundar Narayan, a great-grandson of Chilarai of the Koch dynasty
- Rani

- Beltola ruled the tracts southwest of Guwahati and were the descendants of Gaj Narayan, a grandson of Chilarai of the Koch dynasty
- Luki
- Barduar
- Dimarua
- Tapakuchi

### **Paik officials**

The Ahom kingdom was dependent on the Paik system, a form of corvee labor, reorganized in 1608 by Momai Tamuli Barbarua. Every common subject was a *paik*, and four *paiks* formed a *got*. At any time of the year, one of the *paiks* in the *got* rendered direct service to the king, as the others in his *got* tended to his fields. The Paik system was administered by the Paik officials: Bora was in charge of 20 *paiks*, a Saikia of 100 and a Hazarika of 1000. A Rajkhowa commanded three thousand and a Phukan commanded six thousand *paiks*.

### **Land survey**

Supatphaa became acquainted with the land measurement system of Mughals during the time he was hiding in Kamrup before he succeeded to the throne. As soon as the wars with Mughals were over he issued orders for the introduction of a similar system throughout his dominions. Surveyors were imported from Koch Behar and Bengal for the work. It was commenced in Sibsagar and was pushed on vigorously, but it was not completed until after his death. Nowgaon was next surveyed, and the settlement which followed was supervised by Rudra Singha himself. According to historians, the method of

survey included measuring the four sides of each field with a *nal*, or bamboo pole of 12 feet (3.7 m) length and calculating the area, the unit was the "lucha" or 144 square feet (13.4 m) and 14,400 sq ft (1,340 m). is one "Bigha". Four 'bigha' makes one 'Pura'. A similar land measurement system is still being followed in modern Assam.

## Classes of people

Subinphaa (1281–1293), the third Ahom king, delineated the *Satgharia Ahom* ("Ahom of the seven houses") aristocracy: the *Chaophaa*, the Burhagohain and the Borgohain families, and four priestly lineages—the *Deodhai*, the *Mohan*, the *Bailung* and the *Chiring Phukan*. These lines maintained exogamous marital relationships. The number of lineages increased in later times as either other lineages were incorporated, or existing lineages divided. The king could belong to only the first family whereas the Burhagohain and the Borgohain only to the second and the third families. Most of the Borphukans belonged to the Chutia ethnic group, whereas the Borbaruas belonged to the Morans, Dimasas, Chiring and Khamti groups. Later on Naga, Mising and Nara (Mogaung) oracles became a part of the *Bailung* group. The extended nobility consisted of the landed aristocracy and the spiritual class that did not pay any form of tax.

The *apaikan chamua* was the gentry that was freed from the *khels* and paid only money-tax. The *paikan chamua* consisted of artisans, the literati and skilled people that did non-manual work and rendered service as a tax. The *kanri paik* rendered manual labor. The lowest were the *licchous*, *bandi-beti* and other serfs and bondsmen. There was some degree of movement



between the classes. Momai Tamuli Borbarua rose from a bondsman through the ranks to become the first Borbarua under Prataap Singha.

## Suhungmung

**Suhungmung** (r. 1497–1539) was one of the most important Ahom Kings who ruled at the cusp of Assam's medieval history.

His reign broke from the early Ahom rule and established a multi-ethnic polity in his kingdom. Under him the Ahom Kingdom expanded greatly for the first time since Sukaphaa, at the cost of the Chutia and the Dimasa kingdoms.

He also successfully defended his kingdom against Muslim invasions, first by a general called Bar Ujjir and another by Turbak Khan. During his time, the Khen dynasty collapsed and the Koch dynasty ascended in the Kamata kingdom. His general, Ton-kham, pursued the Muslims up to the Karatoya river, the western boundary of the erstwhile Kamarupa Kingdom, the farthest west an Ahom king had ventured in its entire six hundred years of rule.

He was the first Ahom king to adopt a Hindu title, Swarganarayana, indicating a move towards an inclusive polity; and Ahom kings came to be known as the *Swargadeo* which is the Assamese translation of Ahom word *Chao-Pha*.

He is also called the Dihingia Raja, because he made Bakata on the Dihing River his capital. Suhungmung was the last progenitor Ahom king (all subsequent kings were his descendants).

## **Expansion**

Under Suhungmung the Ahom Kingdom acquired a vision of an extended polity and consolidated rule. He began by suppressing the revolt of the Aitonia Nagas in 1504 and making them accept Ahom overlordship. As he embarked on military expeditions he organized the first recorded survey of the adult population in 1510 to consolidate and reorganize the militia. He annexed Habung, a Chutiya kingdom dependency, in 1512. But his biggest successes was against the rest of the Chutiya Kingdom.

### **Against Chutiya Kingdom**

As Suhungmung had annexed Panbari of Habung (previously a Chutiya principality) in 1512, the Chutiya king Dhirnarayan attacked the Ahoms at Dikhoulukh the next year, but was unsuccessful. The Chutiyas again attacked the Ahoms in 1520 and occupied the areas up to Namdang and Mungkhlang. But, soon Dhirnarayan died and the reign of the kingdom was passed to the son-in-law named Nitipal who was weak and inefficient in ruling. Many other vassal chiefs of the kingdom became independent and were eventually annexed by the Ahoms. In 1522, the Ahoms fought back, re-occupied their lost territories and erected a fort at Dibrumukh (Dibrugarh). Although, Nitipal tried to attack the fort the following year, he was unsuccessful. Suhungmung then extended the Ahom Kingdom to the mouth of the Tiphao River, where a new fort was constructed. The Chutiyas fortified Sadia but they were soon defeated. The Chutiyas were pursued further and their king and prince were killed in battle. Upon annexing the

Chutia territories, the Ahoms came in contact with hill tribes like Miris, Abors, Mishmis and Daflas. Suhungmung established the office of the Sadiyakhwa Gohain and gave charge to Phrasengmung Borgohain to look after the newly acquired Sadiya region. The rest of the newly acquired territories were divided among the Buragohain and Borgohain, while new offices were created to administer the country more efficiently. These included *Thao-mung Mung-teu* (Bhatialia Gohain) with headquarters at Habung (Lakhimpur), *Thao-mung Ban-lung* (Banlungia Gohain) at Banlung (Dhemaji), *Thao-mung Mung-klang* (Dihingia gohain) at Dihing (Dibrugarh and northern Sibsagar) and *Chaolung Shulung* at Tiphao (northern Dibrugarh). In 1527, a new ministerial position named Borpatrogohain was created and Konsheng was given charge. Though this was not the end of the conflict it brought to an end the first major expansion of the Ahom Kingdom.

### **Against Kachari Kingdom**

In 1526, Suhungmung marched against the Kachari Kingdom. In 1531 Khunkhara, the Kachari king, sent forces under his brother Detcha to drive the Ahoms away from Marangi but the Kachari army was defeated and their commander killed. The Kacharis were pursued up to the capital Dimapur and Khunkhara had to flee. Suhungmung established a Kachari prince, Detsung, as the Kachari king. But Detsung rose in revolt in a few years, and the Ahoms pursued him till Jangmarang where he was killed. The Kachari Kingdom abandoned Dimapur permanently and established their new capital at Maibong. Unlike the Chutiya Kingdom, Suhungmung did not take direct possession of the Kachari Kingdom.

## **Muslim invasions**

The first Muslim invasion of the Ahom Kingdom occurred in 1527, but it was defeated and pushed back to the Burai River. A few years later, there was another attempt when a commander advanced up the Brahmaputra in fifty vessels. This too was defeated. In yet another expedition, the Barpatra Gohain slain the commander, Bit Malik, and captured cannons and guns. The most successful among these initial raids on the Ahom Kingdom was the one led by Turbak.

Turbak, a Gaur commander, advanced against the Ahom Kingdom in April 1532 with a large force. He first faced Suklen, Suhungmung's son, at Singri. In this battle Suklen was defeated and wounded and the Ahoms retreated to Sala.

The Ahoms again faced reverses at Sala and some other expeditions thereafter, but won the first significant victory in March 1533 when a naval force was defeated with heavy losses to Turbak's forces. This led to a period of stalemate with the two armies encamped on opposite banks of the Dikrai River.

The Ahoms finally attacked the invaders and defeated them in a number of battles. Nang Mula was also martyred in this battle. In the final battle fought near the Bharali River, Turbak was killed and his army pursued till the Karatoya river in present-day North Bengal. The captured soldiers subsequently became the first significant Muslim population of the Ahom Kingdom. They were called *Garia* since they were from Gaur, and the appellation was later extended to all Muslims. This population finally became well known as expert brass craftsmen.

The Buranjis mention the first use of firearms by the Ahoms in these battles.

## Death

Suhungmung was assassinated by a servant, Ratiman, who stabbed him as he slept in his palace. It is suspected that Suhungmung's son Suklenmung along with Suhungmung's Kachari princess, who became the next king, was responsible for the death.

## Descendants

Suhungmung had four sons. The eldest, Suklen, who succeeded him, was established as the *Tipam Raja*. His second son, Suleng (also spelled Sureng and sometimes called Deoraja), was established as the *Charing Raja*. Though Suleng himself did not become a king, some of his descendants enjoyed kingship for some time. The third son, Suteng, was established as the *Namrupiya Raja*, and his descendants established the Tungkhungia line. The fourth son, Sukhring, also called *Dop Raja*, remained without any estate.

## New offices

Suhungmung established new Ahom positions.

- **Borpatrogohain** is the third of the great Gohains (the others being Burhagohain and Borgohain,

instituted by Sukaphaa). The first Barpatra Gohain was an Ahom prince brought up by a Naga chief.

- **Sadiakhowa Gohain** looked after the Sadia region taken from the Sutiya in 1523.
- **Marangikhowa Gohain** looked after the lower Dhansiri river valley taken from the Kacharis.

## Chapter 9

# Battle of Chausa Fought between Humayun and Sher Shah Suri

The **Battle of Chausa** was a notable military engagement between the Mughal emperor, Humayun, and the Afghan, Sher Shah Suri. It was fought on 26 June 1539 at Chausa, 10 miles southwest of Buxar in modern-day Bihar, India. Humayun escaped from the battlefield to save his life. Sher Shah was victorious and crowned himself *Farīd al-Dīn Shēr Shah*.

## Humayun

- **Nasir-ud-Din Muḡammad** (6 March 1508 – 27 January 1556), better known by his regnal name, **Humayun** was the second emperor of the Mughal Empire, who ruled over territory in what is now Afghanistan, Pakistan, Northern India, and Bangladesh from 1530 to 1540 and again from 1555 to 1556. Like his father, Babur, he lost his kingdom early but regained it with the aid of the Safavid dynasty of Persia, with additional territory. At the time of his death in 1556, the Mughal Empire spanned almost one million square kilometres.

In December 1530, Humayun succeeded his father to the throne of Delhi as ruler of the Mughal territories in the Indian subcontinent. Humayun was an inexperienced ruler when he came to power, at the age of 22. His half-brother Kamran Mirza

inherited Kabul and Kandahar, the northernmost parts of their father's empire. Kamran was to become a bitter rival of Humayun. Humayun lost Mughal territories to Sher Shah Suri, but regained them 15 years later with Safavid aid. Humayun's return from Persia was accompanied by a large retinue of Persian noblemen and signalled an important change in Mughal court culture. The Central Asian origins of the dynasty were largely overshadowed by the influences of Persian art, architecture, language, and literature. There are many stone carvings and thousands of Persian manuscripts in India dating from the time of Humayun.

Subsequently, Humayun further expanded the Empire in a very short time, leaving a substantial legacy for his son, Akbar.

## **Background**

The decision of Babur to divide the territories of his empire between two of his sons was unusual in India, although it had been a common Central Asian practice since the time of Genghis Khan. Unlike most monarchies, which practised primogeniture, the Timurids followed the example of Genghis and did not leave an entire kingdom to the eldest son.

Although under that system only a Chingissid could claim sovereignty and khalifal authority, any male Chingissid within a given sub-branch had an equal right to the throne (though the Timurids were not Chingissid in their paternal ancestry). While Genghis Khan's Empire had been peacefully divided between his sons upon his death, almost every Chingissid succession since had resulted in fratricide.



Timur himself had divided his territories among Pir Muhammad, Miran Shah, Khalil Sultan and Shah Rukh, which resulted in inter-family warfare. Upon Babur's death, Humayun's territories were the least secure. He had ruled only four years, and not all *umarah* (nobles) viewed Humayun as the rightful ruler. Indeed, earlier, when Babur had become ill, some of the nobles had tried to install his Brother-in-law, Mahdi Khwaja, as ruler. Although this attempt failed, it was a sign of problems to come.

## **Early reign**

When Humayun came to the throne of the Mughal Empire, several of his brothers revolted against him. Another brother Khalil Mirza (1509–1530) supported Humayun but was assassinated. The Emperor commenced construction of a tomb for his brother in 1538, but this was not yet finished when Humayun was forced to flee to Persia. Sher Shah destroyed the structure and no further work was done on it after Humayun's restoration.

Humayun had two major rivals for his lands: Sultan Bahadur of Gujarat to the southwest and Sher Shah Suri (Sher Khan) settled along the river Ganges in Bihar to the east. Humayun's first campaign was to confront Sher Shah Suri. Halfway through this offensive Humayun had to abandon it and concentrate on Gujarat, where a threat from Ahmed Shah had to be met. Humayun was victorious annexing Gujarat, Malwa, Champaner and the great fort of Mandu.

During the first five years of Humayun's reign, Bahadur and Sher Khan extended their rule, although Sultan Bahadur faced

pressure in the east from sporadic conflicts with the Portuguese. While the Mughals had obtained firearms via the Ottoman Empire, Bahadur's Gujarat had acquired them through a series of contracts drawn up with the Portuguese, allowing the Portuguese to establish a strategic foothold in north western India.

In 1535 Humayun was made aware that the Sultan of Gujarat was planning an assault on the Mughal territories with Portuguese aid. Humayun gathered an army and marched on Bahadur. Within a month he had captured the forts of Mandu and Champaner. However, instead of pressing his attack, Humayun ceased the campaign and consolidated his newly conquered territory. Sultan Bahadur, meanwhile escaped and took up refuge with the Portuguese. Like his Father, Humayun was a frequent user of Opium.

## **Sher Shah Suri**

Shortly after Humayun had marched on Gujarat, Sher Shah Suri saw an opportunity to wrest control of Agra from the Mughals. He began to gather his army together hoping for a rapid and decisive siege of the Mughal capital. Upon hearing this alarming news, Humayun quickly marched his troops back to Agra allowing Bahadur to easily regain control of the territories Humayun had recently taken. In February 1537, however, Bahadur was killed when a botched plan to kidnap the Portuguese viceroy ended in a fire-fight that the Sultan lost.

Whilst Humayun succeeded in protecting Agra from Sher Shah, the second city of the Empire, Gaur the capital of the *vilayat* of

Bengal, was sacked. Humayun's troops had been delayed while trying to take Chunar, a fort occupied by Sher Shah's son, in order to protect his troops from an attack from the rear. The stores of grain at Gauri, the largest in the empire, were emptied, and Humayun arrived to see corpses littering the roads. The vast wealth of Bengal was depleted and brought East, giving Sher Shah a substantial war chest.

Sher Shah withdrew to the east, but Humayun did not follow: instead he "shut himself up for a considerable time in his Harem, and indulged himself in every kind of luxury". Hindal, Humayun's 19-year-old brother, had agreed to aid him in this battle and protect the rear from attack, but he abandoned his position and withdrew to Agra, where he decreed himself acting emperor. When Humayun sent the grand *Mufti*, Sheikh Buhlul, to reason with him; the Sheikh was killed. Further provoking the rebellion, Hindal ordered that the *Khutba*, or sermon, in the main mosque be surrounded.

Humayun's other brother, Kamran Mirza, marched from his territories in the Punjab, ostensibly to aid Humayun. However, his return home had treacherous motives as he intended to stake a claim for Humayun's apparently collapsing empire. He brokered a deal with Hindal providing that his brother would cease all acts of disloyalty in return for a share in the new empire, which Kamran would create once Humayun was deposed.

In June 1539 Sher Shah met Humayun in the Battle of Chausa on the banks of the Ganges, near Buxar. This was to become an entrenched battle in which both sides spent a lot of time digging themselves into positions. The major part of the

Mughal army, the artillery, was now immobile, and Humayun decided to engage in some diplomacy using Muhammad Aziz as ambassador. Humayun agreed to allow Sher Shah to rule over Bengal and Bihar, but only as provinces granted to him by his Emperor, Humayun, falling short of outright sovereignty. The two rulers also struck a bargain in order to save face: Humayun's troops would charge those of Sher Shah whose forces then retreat in feigned fear. Thus honour would, supposedly, be satisfied.

Once the Army of Humayun had made its charge and Sher Shah's troops made their agreed-upon retreat, the Mughal troops relaxed their defensive preparations and returned to their entrenchments without posting a proper guard. Observing the Mughals' vulnerability, Sher Shah reneged on his earlier agreement. That very night, his army approached the Mughal camp and finding the Mughal troops unprepared with a majority asleep, they advanced and killed most of them. The Emperor survived by swimming across the Ganges using an air-filled "water skin", and quietly returned to Agra. Humayun was assisted across the Ganges by Shams al-Din Muhammad.

## **In Agra**

When Humayun returned to Agra, he found that all three of his brothers were present. Humayun once again not only pardoned his brothers for plotting against him, but even forgave Hindal for his outright betrayal. With his armies travelling at a leisurely pace, Sher Shah was gradually drawing closer and closer to Agra. This was a serious threat to the entire family, but Humayun and Kamran squabbled over how to proceed. Kamran withdrew after Humayun refused to make a quick

attack on the approaching enemy, instead opting to build a larger army under his own name.

When Kamran returned to Lahore, Humayun, with his other brothers Askari and Hindal, marched to meet Sher Shah 200 kilometres (120 mi) east of Agra at the battle of Kannauj on 17 May 1540.

Humayun was soundly defeated. He retreated to Agra, pursued by Sher Shah, and thence through Delhi to Lahore. Sher Shah's founding of the short-lived Sur Empire, with its capital at Delhi, resulted in Humayun's exile for 15 years in the court of Shah Tahmasp I.

## **In Lahore**

The four brothers were united in Lahore, but every day they were informed that Sher Shah was getting closer and closer. When he reached Sirhind, Humayun sent an ambassador carrying the message "I have left you the whole of Hindustan [i.e. the lands to the East of Punjab, comprising most of the Ganges Valley]. Leave Lahore alone, and let Sirhind be a boundary between you and me." Sher Shah, however, replied "I have left you Kabul.

You should go there." Kabul was the capital of the empire of Humayun's brother Kamran, who was far from willing to hand over any of his territories to his brother. Instead, Kamran approached Sher Shah and proposed that he actually revolt against his brother and side with Sher Shah in return for most of the Punjab. Sher Shah dismissed his help, believing it not to be required, though word soon spread to Lahore about the treacherous proposal, and Humayun was urged to make an

example of Kamran and kill him. Humayun refused, citing the last words of his father, Babur, "Do nothing against your brothers, even though they may deserve it."

### **Withdrawing further**

Humayun decided it would be wise to withdraw still further. He and his army rode out through and across the Thar Desert, when the Hindu ruler Rao Maldeo Rathore allied with Sher Shah Suri against the Mughal Empire. In many accounts Humayun mentions how he and his pregnant wife had to trace their steps through the desert at the hottest time of year. Their rations were low, and they had little to eat; even drinking water was a major problem in the desert.

When Hamida Bano's horse died, no one would lend the Queen (who was now eight months pregnant) a horse, so Humayun did so himself, resulting in him riding a camel for six kilometres (four miles), although Khaled Beg then offered him his mount. Humayun was later to describe this incident as the lowest point in his life. Humayun asked that his brothers join him as he fell back into Sindh. While the previously rebellious Hindal Mirza remained loyal and was ordered to join his brothers in Kandahar. Kamran Mirza and Askari Mirza instead decided to head to the relative peace of Kabul.

This was to be a definitive schism in the family. Humayun headed for Sindh because he expected aid from the Emir of Sindh, Hussein Umrani, whom he had appointed and who owed him his allegiance. Also, his wife Hamida hailed from Sindh; she was the daughter of a prestigious *pir* family (a *pir* is an Islamic religious guide) of Persian heritage long settled in

Sindh. En route to the Emir's court, Humayun had to break journey because his pregnant wife Hamida was unable to travel further. Humayun sought refuge with the Hindu ruler of the oasis town of Amarkot (now part of Sindh province).

Rana Prasad Rao of Amarkot duly welcomed Humayun into his home and sheltered the refugees for several months. Here, in the household of a Hindu Rajput nobleman, Humayun's wife Hamida Bano, daughter of a Sindhi family, gave birth to the future Emperor Akbar on 15 October 1542. The date of birth is well established because Humayun consulted his astronomer to utilise the astrolabe and check the location of the planets. The infant was the long-awaited heir-apparent to the 34-year-old Humayun and the answer of many prayers. Shortly after the birth, Humayun and his party left Amarkot for Sindh, leaving Akbar behind, who was not ready for the grueling journey ahead in his infancy. He was later adopted by Askari Mirza.

For a change, Humayun was not deceived in the character of the man on whom he has pinned his hopes. Emir Hussein Umrani, ruler of Sindh, welcomed Humayun's presence and was loyal to Humayun just as he had been loyal to Babur against the renegade Arghuns.

While in Sindh, Humayun alongside Emir Hussein Umrani, gathered horses and weapons and formed new alliances that helped regain lost territories. Until finally Humayun had gathered hundreds of Sindhi and Baloch tribesmen alongside his Mughals and then marched towards Kandahar and later Kabul, thousands more gathered by his side as Humayun continually declared himself the rightful Timurid heir of the first Mughal Emperor, Babur.

## Retreat to Kabul

After Humayun set out from his expedition in Sindh, along with 300 camels (mostly wild) and 2000 loads of grain, he set off to join his brothers in Kandahar after crossing the Indus River on 11 July 1543 along with the ambition to regain the Mughal Empire and overthrow the Suri dynasty. Among the tribes that had sworn allegiance to Humayun were the Leghari, Magsi, Rind and many others.

In Kamran Mirza's territory, Hindal Mirza had been placed under house arrest in Kabul after refusing to have the *Khutba* recited in Kamran Mirza's name. His other brother, Askari Mirza, was now ordered to gather an army and march on Humayun. When Humayun received word of the approaching hostile army he decided against facing them, and instead sought refuge elsewhere. Akbar was left behind in camp close to Kandahar, as it was December, too cold and dangerous to include the 14-month-old toddler in the march through the mountains of the Hindu Kush. Askari Mirza took Akbar in, leaving the wives of Kamran and Askari Mirza to raise him. The Akbarnama specifies Kamran Mirza's wife, Sultan Begam.

Once again Humayun turned toward Kandahar where his brother Kamran Mirza was in power, but he received no help and had to seek refuge with the Shah of Persia

## Refuge in Persia

Humayun fled to the refuge of the Safavid Empire in Persia, marching with 40 men, his wife Bega Begum, and her



companion through mountains and valleys. Among other trials the Imperial party were forced to live on horse meat boiled in the soldiers' helmets. These indignities continued during the month it took them to reach Herat, however after their arrival they were reintroduced to the finer things in life. Upon entering the city his army was greeted with an armed escort, and they were treated to lavish food and clothing. They were given fine accommodations and the roads were cleared and cleaned before them. Shah Tahmasp, unlike Humayun's own family, actually welcomed the Mughal, and treated him as a royal visitor. Here Humayun went sightseeing and was amazed at the Persian artwork and architecture he saw: much of this was the work of the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqarah and his ancestor, princess Gauhar Shad, thus he was able to admire the work of his relatives and ancestors at first hand.

He was introduced to the work of the Persian miniaturists, and Kamaledin Behzad had two of his pupils join Humayun in his court. Humayun was amazed at their work and asked if they would work for him if he were to regain the sovereignty of Hindustan: they agreed. With so much going on Humayun did not even meet the Shah until July, some six months after his arrival in Persia. After a lengthy journey from Herat the two met in Qazvin where a large feast and parties were held for the event. The meeting of the two monarchs is depicted in a famous wall-painting in the Chehel Sotoun (Forty Columns) palace in Esfahan.

The Shah urged that Humayun convert from Sunni to Shia Islam, and Humayun eventually accepted, in order to keep himself and several hundred followers alive. Although the Mughals initially disagreed to their conversion they knew that

with this outward acceptance of Shi'ism, Shah Tahmasp was eventually prepared to offer Humayun more substantial support. When Humayun's brother, Kamran Mirza, offered to cede Kandahar to the Persians in exchange for Humayun, dead or alive, Shah Tahmasp refused. Instead the Shah staged a celebration for Humayun, with 300 tents, an imperial Persian carpet, 12 musical bands and "meat of all kinds". Here the Shah announced that all this, and 12,000 elite cavalry were his to lead an attack on his brother Kamran. All that Shah Tahmasp asked for was that, if Humayun's forces were victorious, Kandahar would be his.

## **Kandahar and onward**

With this Persian Safavid aid Humayun took Kandahar from Askari Mirza after a two-week siege. He noted how the nobles who had served Askari Mirza quickly flocked to serve him, "in very truth the greater part of the inhabitants of the world are like a flock of sheep, wherever one goes the others immediately follow". Kandahar was, as agreed, given to the Shah of Persia who sent his infant son, Murad, as the Viceroy. However, the baby soon died and Humayun thought himself strong enough to assume power.

Humayun now prepared to take Kabul, ruled by his brother Kamran Mirza. In the end, there was no actual siege. Kamran Mirza was detested as a leader and as Humayun's Persian army approached the city hundreds of Kamran Mirza's troops changed sides, flocking to join Humayun and swelling his ranks. Kamran Mirza absconded and began building an army outside the city. In November 1545, Hamida and Humayun were reunited with their son Akbar, and held a huge feast.

They also held another, larger, feast in the child's honour when he was circumcised. However, while Humayun had a larger army than his brother and had the upper hand, on two occasions his poor military judgement allowed Kamran Mirza to retake Kabul and Kandahar, forcing Humayun to mount further campaigns for their recapture.

He might have been aided in this by his reputation for leniency towards the troops who had defended the cities against him, as opposed to Kamran Mirza, whose brief periods of possession were marked by atrocities against the inhabitants who, he supposed, had helped his brother.

His youngest brother, Hindal Mirza, formerly the most disloyal of his siblings, died fighting on his behalf. His brother Askari Mirza was shackled in chains at the behest of his nobles and aides. He was allowed go on Hajj, and died en route in the desert outside Damascus.

Humayun's other brother, Kamran Mirza, had repeatedly sought to have Humayun killed. In 1552 Kamran Mirza attempted to make a pact with Islam Shah, Sher Shah's successor, but was apprehended by a Gakhar. The Gakhars were one of the minority of tribal groups who had consistently remained loyal to their oath to the Mughals. Sultan Adam of the Gakhars handed Kamran Mirza over to Humayun. Humayun was inclined to forgive his brother. However he was warned that allowing Kamran Mirza's repeated acts of treachery to go unpunished could foment rebellion amongst his own supporters. So, instead of killing his brother, Humayun had Kamran Mirza blinded which would end any claim by the latter to the throne. Humayun sent Kamran Mirza on Hajj, as

he hoped to see his brother thereby absolved of his offences. However Kamran Mirza died close to Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula in 1557.

## **Restoration of the Mughal Empire**

Sher Shah Suri had died in 1545; his son and successor Islam Shah died in 1554. These two deaths left the dynasty reeling and disintegrating. Three rivals for the throne all marched on Delhi, while in many cities leaders tried to stake a claim for independence. This was a perfect opportunity for the Mughals to march back to India.

The Mughal Emperor Humayun gathered a vast army, which included the Baloch tribes of Leghari, Magsi and Rind, and attempted the challenging task of retaking the throne in Delhi. Humayun placed the army under the leadership of Bairam Khan, a wise move given Humayun's own record of military ineptitude, and it turned out to be prescient as Bairam proved himself a great tactician. At the Battle of Sirhind on 22 June 1555, the armies of Sikandar Shah Suri were decisively defeated and the Mughal Empire was re-established in India.

### **Marriage relations with the Khanzadas**

*The Gazetteer of Ulwur* states:

Soon after Babur's death, his successor, Humayun, was in AD 1540 supplanted by the Pathan Sher Shah, who, in AD 1545, was followed by Islam Shah. During the reign of the latter a battle was fought and lost by the Emperor's troops at Firozpur Jhirka, in Mewat, on which, however, Islam Shah did not loose

his hold. Adil Shah, the third of the Pathan interlopers, who succeeded in AD 1552, had to contend for the Empire with the returned Humayun. In these struggles for the restoration of Babar's dynasty Khanzadas apparently do not figure at all. Humayun seems to have conciliated them by marrying the elder daughter of Jamal Khan, nephew of Babar's opponent, Hasan Khan and, by causing his great minister, Bairam Khan, to marry a younger daughter of the same Mewatti.

Bairam Khan led the army through the Punjab virtually unopposed. The fort of Rohtas, which was built in 1541–1543 by Sher Shah Suri to crush the Gakhars who were loyal to Humayun, was surrendered without a shot by a treacherous commander.

The walls of the Rohtas Fort measure up to 12.5 meters in thickness and up to 18.28 meters in height. They extend for 4 km and feature 68 semi-circular bastions. Its sandstone gates, both massive and ornate, are thought to have exerted a profound influence on Mughal military architecture.

The only major battle faced by Humayun's armies was against Sikander Suri in Sirhind, where Bairam Khan employed a tactic whereby he engaged his enemy in open battle, but then retreated quickly in apparent fear. When the enemy followed after them they were surprised by entrenched defensive positions and were easily annihilated.

After Sirhind, most towns and villages chose to welcome the invading army as it made its way to the capital. On 23 July 1555, Humayun once again sat on Babur's throne in Delhi.

## **Ruling Kashmir**

With all of Humayun's brothers now dead, there was no fear of another usurping his throne during his military campaigns. He was also now an established leader and could trust his generals.

With this new-found strength Humayun embarked on a series of military campaigns aimed at extending his reign over areas in the east and west of the subcontinent.

His sojourn in exile seems to have reduced his reliance on astrology, and his military leadership came to imitate the more effective methods that he had observed in Persia.

## **Character**

Edward S. Holden writes; "He was uniformly kind and considerate to his dependents, devotedly attached to his son Akbar, to his friends, and to his turbulent brothers.

The misfortunes of his reign arose in great, from his failure to treat them with rigor." He further writes:

"The very defects of his character, which render him less admirable as a successful ruler of nations, make us more fond of him as a man.

His renown has suffered in that his reign came between the brilliant conquests of Babur and the beneficent statesmanship of Akbar; but he was not unworthy to be the son of the one and the father of the other."

Stanley Lane-Poole writes in his book *Medieval India*: "His name meant the winner (Lucky/Conqueror), there is no kind in the history to be named as wrong as Humayun", he was of a forgiving nature. He further writes, "He was in fact unfortunate ... Scarcely had he enjoyed his throne for six months in Delhi when he slipped down from the polished steps of his palace and died in his forty-ninth year (Jan. 24, 1556). If there was a possibility of falling, Humayun was not the man to miss it. He tumbled through his life and tumbled out of it."

Humayun ordered the crushing by elephant of an imam he mistakenly believed to be critical of his reign.

## **Death and legacy**



- Tomb entrance view



- Humayun's Tomb in Delhi, India, was commissioned by his chief wife, Bega Begum

On 24 January 1556, Humayun, with his arms full of books, was descending the staircase from his library when the muezzin announced the Azaan (the call to prayer). It was his habit, wherever and whenever he heard the summons, to bow his knee in holy reverence.

Trying to kneel, he caught his foot in his robe, slipped down several steps and hit his temple on a rugged stone edge. He died three days later. His body was laid to rest in Purana Quila initially, but, because of an attack by Hemu on Delhi and the capture of Purana Qila, Humayun's body was exhumed by the fleeing army and transferred to Kalanaur in Punjab where Akbar was crowned. Humayun's Tomb in Delhi is the first very grand garden tomb in Mughal architecture, setting the precedent later followed by the Taj Mahal and many other Indian monuments. It was commissioned by his favourite and devoted chief wife, Bega Begum.

Akbar later asked his aunt, Gulbadan Begum, to write a biography of her brother, the *Humayun nameh* (or *Humayun-nama* etc.), and what she remembered of Babur.



The full title is *Ahwal Humayun Padshah Jamah Kardom Gulbadan Begum bint Babur Padshah amma Akbar Padshah*. She was only eight when Babur died, and was married at 17, but her work, in a simple Persian style.

Unlike other Mughal royal biographies (the *Zafarnama* of Timur, *Baburnama*, and his own *Akbarnama*) no richly illustrated copy has survived, and the work is only known from a single battered and slightly incomplete manuscript, now in the British Library, that emerged in the 1860s. Annette Beveridge published an English translation in 1901, and editions in English and Bengali have been published since 2000.

## **Sher Shah Suri**

**Sher Shah Suri** (1486 – 22 May 1545), born **Farīd Khān**, was the founder of the Suri Empire in India, with its capital in Sasaram in modern-day Bihar. He introduced the currency of rupee. An ethnic Afghan ruler, Sher Shah took control of the Mughal Empire in 1540. After his accidental death in 1545, his son Islam Shah became his successor.

He first served as a private before rising to become a commander in the Mughal army under Babur and then the governor of Bihar. In 1537, when Babur's son Humayun was elsewhere on an expedition, Sher Shah overran the state of Bengal and established the Suri dynasty. A brilliant strategist, Sher Shah proved himself as a gifted Muslim administrator as well as a capable general. His reorganization of the empire laid the foundations for the later Mughal emperors, notably Akbar,

son of Humayun. During his five-year rule from 1540 to 1545, he set up a new economic and military administration, issued the first *Rupiya* from "Tanka" and organized the postal system of the Indian Subcontinent.

Some of his strategies and contributions were later idolized by the Mughal emperors, most notably Akbar. Suri further developed Humayun's *Dina-panah* city and named it Shergarh and revived the historical city of Pataliputra, which had been in decline since the 7th century CE, as Patna.

He extended the Grand Trunk Road from Chittagong in the frontiers of the province of Bengal in northeast India to Kabul in Afghanistan in the far northwest of the country. The influence of his innovations and reforms extended far beyond his brief reign; his arch foe, Humayun, referred to him as "Ustad-I-Badshahan", teacher of kings. In this seven years of his reign he never lost a battle.

## **Early life and origin**

His grandfather Ibrahim Khan Sur, who started out as a horse trader, became a landlord (Jagirdar) in Narnaul area (present-day Haryana), representing his patron Jamal Khan Lodi Sarangkhani, who assigned him a few villages in Hissar. Sikandar Lodi appointed Sarangkhani, who supported Sikandar's struggle to the throne, as governor of Jaunpur after its conquest. Jamal's son and successor Khan-i-Azam Ahmad Khan Sarangkhani, with a rank of 20,000 sawars, further appointed Ibrahim Sur's son Hasan, a leader of Afghan freebooters, to the *iqta* of Sasaram and Khawaspur-Thanda with a rank of 500 sawars.

It was at the time of this bounty of Sultán Bahlol, that the grandfather of Sher Sháh, by name Ibráhím Khán Súri,\*[The Súri represent themselves as descendants of Muhammad Súri, one of the princes of the house of the Ghorian, who left his native country, and married a daughter of one of the Afghán chiefs of Roh.] with his son Hasan Khán, the father of Sher Sháh, came to Hindu-stán from Afghánistán, from a place which is called in the Afghán tongue "Shargarí,"\* but in the Multán tongue "Rohrí." It is a ridge, a spur of the Sulaimán Mountains, about six or seven kos in length, situated on the banks of the Gumal. They entered into the service of Muhabbat Khán Súri, Dáúd Sáhú-khail, to whom Sultán Bahlol had given in jágír the parganas of Hariána and Bahkála, etc., in the Panjáb, and they settled in the pargana of Bajwára.

- —□ *Abbas Khan Sarwani, 1580*

Mazar of Suri's grandfather Ibrahim Khan Sur still stands as a monument in Narnaul.

Historian Satish Chandra writes that, "We do not know precisely when and where Farid, later Sher Shah, was born. The consensus of opinion among modern scholars is that he was born in Narnaul in 1486 or so, during the reign of Bahlol Lodi." However, the online *Encyclopædia Britannica* states that he was born in Sasaram (Bihar), in the Rohtas district.

He was one of eight sons of Hassan Khan. Farid came to Jaunpur, where he studied literature, poetry, and history.

During his early age, Farid was given a village in Fargana, Delhi (comprising present-day districts of Bhojpur, Buxar, Bhabhua of Bihar) by Omar Khan Sarwani, an ethnic Pashtun himself, the counselor and courtier of Bahlul Khan Lodi. Farid

Khan and his father, a jagirdar of Sasaram in Bihar, who had several wives, did not get along for a while so he decided to run away from home. When his father discovered that he fled to serve Jamal Khan, the governor of Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, he wrote Jamal Khan a letter that stated:

Faríd Khán, being annoyed with me, has gone to you without sufficient cause. I trust in your kindness to appease him, and send him back; but if refusing to listen to you, he will not return, I trust you will keep him with you, for I wish him to be instructed in religious and polite learning.

Jamal Khan had advised Farid to return home but he refused. Farid replied in a letter:

If my father wants me back to instruct me in learning, there are in this city many learned men: I will study here.

His surname 'Suri' was taken from his Pashtun Sur tribe. He was a distant kinsman to Babur's brother-in-law, Mir Shah Jamal, who remained loyal to Humayun. The name *Sher* (means *lion* or *tiger* in the older pronunciation of Persian) was conferred upon him for his courage, when as a young man, he killed a tiger that leapt suddenly upon the king of Bihar.

## **Conquest of Bihar and Bengal**

Farid Khan started his service under Bahar Khan Lohani, the Mughal Governor of Bihar. Because of his valour, Bahar Khan rewarded him the title *Sher Khan* (*Lion Lord*). After the death of Bahar Khan, Sher Khan became the regent ruler of the minor Sultan, Jalal Khan. Later sensing the growth of Sher Shah's

power in Bihar, Jalal sought the assistance of Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah, the independent Sultan of Bengal. Ghiyasuddin sent an army under General Ibrahim Khan. But, Sher Khan defeated the force at the battle of Surajgarh in 1534 after forming an alliance with Ujjainiya Rajputs and other local chiefdoms. Thus he achieved complete control of Bihar.

In 1538, Sher Khan attacked Bengal and defeated Mahmud Shah. But he could not capture the kingdom because of the sudden expedition of Emperor Humayun. On 26 June 1539, Sher Khan faced Humayun in the Battle of Chausa and defeated him. Assuming the title *Farīd al-Dīn Shēr Shah*, he defeated Humayun once again at Kannauj in May 1540 and forced him out of India.

## **Conquest of Malwa**

After the death of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 1537, Qadir Shah became the new ruler of Malwa Sultanate. He then turned for support towards the Rajput and Muslim noblemen of the Khilji rule of Malwa. Bhupat Rai and Puran Mal, sons of Raja Silhadi accepted service under the regime of Malwa in recognition of their interest in the Raisen region. By 1540, Bhupat Rai had died and Puran Mal had become the dominant force in eastern Malwa. In 1542, Sher Shah conquered Malwa without a fight and Qadir Shah fled to Gujarat. He then appointed Shuja'at Khan as the governor of Malwa who reorganised the administration and made Sarangpur the seat of Malwa's government. Sher Shah then ordered Puran Mal to be brought before him. Puran Mal agreed to accept his lordship and left his brother Chaturbhuj under Sher Shah's service. In exchange Sher Shah vowed to safeguard Puran Mal and his

land. The Muslim women of Chanderi, which Sher Shah had taken under his rule, came to him and accused Puran Mal of killing their husbands and enslaving their daughters. They threatened to denounce Sher Shah on the Day of Resurrection if he did not avenge them. Upon reminding them of his pledge to safeguard Puran Mal, they told him to consult his ulema. The ulema issued a *fatwa* declaring that Puran Mal deserved death. Sher Shah had his troops encircle Puran Mal's camp. Upon seeing this, Puran Mal beheaded his wife and ordered the other Rajputs to kill their families too. Nizamuddin Ahmad writes that 4,000 Rajputs of importance were there. `Abd al-Qadir Bada'uni puts the number of Rajputs at 10,000.

Historian Abbas Sarwani describes a scene of Jauhar thus, "While the Hindus were employed in putting their women and families to death, the Afghans on all sides commenced the slaughter of the Hindus. Puran Mal and his companions... failed not to exhibit valour and gallantry, but in the twinkling of an eye all were slain." Only a few women and children survived. Puran Mal's daughter was given to minstrels to be a dancing girl while his three nephews were castrated. As an excuse for the treachery, Sher Shah claimed it as a revenge for enslavement of Muslim women and that he had once, when seriously ill, pledged to wipe out the Rajputs of Raisen.

## **Conquest of Marwar**

In 1543, Sher Shah Suri with a huge force of 80,000 cavalry set out against Maldeo Rathore (a Rajput king of Marwar). Maldeo Rathore with an army of 50,000 cavalry advanced to face Sher Shah's army. Instead of marching to the enemy's capital Sher Shah halted in the village of Sammel in the

pargana of Jaitaran, ninety kilometres east of Jodhpur. After one month of skirmishing, Sher Shah's position became critical owing to the difficulties of food supplies for his huge army. To resolve this situation, Sher Shah resorted to a cunning ploy. One evening, he dropped forged letters near the Maldeo's camp in such a way that they were sure to be intercepted. These letters indicated, falsely, that some of Maldeo's army commanders were promising assistance to Sher Shah. This caused great consternation to Maldeo, who immediately (and wrongly) suspected his commanders of disloyalty. Maldeo left for Jodhpur with his own men, abandoning his commanders to their fate.

After that Maldeo's innocent generals Jaita and Kumpa fought with just a few thousand men against an enemy force of 80,000 men and cannons. In the ensuing battle of Sammel (also known as battle of Giri Sumel), Sher Shah emerged victorious, but several of his generals lost their lives and his army suffered heavy losses. Sher Shah is said to have commented that "for a few grains of bajra (millet, which is the main crop of barren Marwar) I almost lost the entire kingdom of Hindustan."

According to Mughal historian Badauni, Sher Shah's use of elephant troops helped him defeat the Rajput army. After this victory, Sher Shah's general Khawas Khan Marwat took possession of Jodhpur and occupied the territory of Marwar from Ajmer to Mount Abu in 1544.

## **Government and administration**

The system of tri-metalism which came to characterise Mughal coinage was introduced by Sher Shah. While the term *rūpya*

had previously been used as a generic term for any silver coin, during his rule the term *rūpee* came to be used as the name for a silver coin of a standard weight of 178 grains, which was the precursor of the modern rupee. *Rupee* is today used as the national currency in India, Indonesia, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka among other countries. Gold coins called the *Mohur* weighing 169 grains and copper coins called *Paisa* were also minted by his government. According to numismatists Goron and Goenka, it is clear from coins dated AH 945 (1538 AD) that Sher Khan had assumed the royal title of Farid al-Din Sher Shah and had coins struck in his own name even before the battle of Chausa.

Sher Shah was responsible for greatly rebuilding and modernizing the Grand Trunk Road, a major artery which runs all the way from modern day Bangladesh to Afghanistan. Caravanserais (inns) and mosques were built and trees were planted along the entire stretch on both sides of the road to provide shade to travelers. Wells were also dug, especially along the western section. He also established an efficient postal system, with mail being carried by relays of horse riders.

Sher Shah built several monuments including Rohtas Fort (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Pakistan), many structures in the Rohtasgarh Fort in Bihar, the Sher Shah Suri Masjid in Patna, the Qila-i-Kuhna mosque inside the Purana Qila complex in Delhi, and the Sher Mandal, an octagonal building also inside the Purana Qila complex, which later served as the library of Humayun. He built a new city, Bhera, in present-day Pakistan in 1545, including within it a grand masjid named after him.



Sher Shah is generally viewed as tolerant of Hindus, except in the massacre following the surrender of Raisen.

*Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi (History of Sher Shah)*, written by Abbas Khan Sarwani, a *waqia-navis* under later Mughal Emperor, Akbar around 1580, provides a detailed documentation about Sher Shah's administration.

## **Death and succession**

Sher Shah was killed on 22 May 1545 during the siege of Kalinjar fort in Bundelkhand against the Rajputs of Mahoba. When all tactics to subdue this fort failed, Sher Shah ordered the walls of the fort to be blown up with gunpowder, but he himself was seriously wounded as a result of the explosion of a mine. He was succeeded by his son, Jalal Khan, who took the title of Islam Shah Suri. His mausoleum, the Sher Shah Suri Tomb (122 ft high), stands in the middle of an artificial lake at Sasaram, a town on the Grand Trunk Road.

## **Legacy**

### **Destruction of cities**

Sher Shah Suri is accused by `Abd al-Qadir Bada'uni and other Muslim historians for destroying old cities while founding new ones on their ruins after his own name. Shergarh is one of the prime examples, representing a deserted town with a fort in ruins, which, in old times, used to be a thriving place where Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism co-existed peacefully. This can be evidently derived from the various inscriptions found in

the area. Sher Shah is also said to have destroyed Dinpanah, which Humayun was constructing as the "sixth city of Delhi". The new city, Shergarh, built by him, was itself destroyed in 1555 after Humayun re-conquered the territory from the Surs. Tarikh-i-Da'udi states, however, that he destroyed Siri. Abbas Sarwani states that he had the older city of Delhi destroyed. Tarikh-i-Khan Jahan states that Salim Shah Suri had built a wall around Humayun's imperial city.

## **In popular culture**

*Sher Khan* (1962) an Indian Hindi-language action film by Radhakant starring Kamaljeet in the titular role along with Kumkum is ostensibly based on the emperor's life. *Shershah Suri*, a television show about the emperor aired on Doordarshan, the Indian national public broadcaster.

## Chapter 10

# Guru Angad Dev becomes Second Guru of Sikhs

**Guru Angad** (31 March 1504 – 29 March 1552) was the second of the ten Sikh gurus of Sikhism. After meeting Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, becoming a Sikh, and serving and working with Guru Nanak for many years, Guru Nanak gave Lehna the name Angad ("my own limb"), and chose Angad as the second Sikh Guru.

After the death of Guru Nanak in 1539, Guru Angad led the Sikh tradition. He is remembered in Sikhism for adopting and formalizing the Gurmukhi alphabet. He began the process of compiling the hymns of Guru Nanak and contributed 62 or 63 hymns of his own. Instead of his own son, he chose his disciple Amar Das as his successor and the third Guru of Sikhism.

## Biography

Guru Angad was born with birth name of Lehna in village of Harike in the Punjab region. He was the son of a small but successful trader named Pheru Mal. His mother's name was Mata Ramo (also known as Mata Sabhirai, Mansa Devi and Daya Kaur). Lehna came from Hindu Khatri caste/family.

At age 16, Angad married a Khatri girl named Mata Khivi in January 1520. They had two sons (Dasu and Datu) and one or two daughters (Amro and Anokhi), depending on the primary sources. The entire family of his father had left their ancestral

village in fear of the invasion of Babar's armies. After this the family settled at Khadur Sahib, a village by the River Beas near what is now Tarn Taran.

Before becoming a disciple of Guru Nanak and following the Sikh way of life as Angad, Lehna was a religious teacher and priest who followed the Sanatan dharma. Bhai Lehna in his late 20s sought out Guru Nanak, became his disciple, and displayed deep and loyal service to his Guru for about six to seven years in Kartarpur and renounced the Sanatan way of life.

### **Selection as successor**

Several stories in the Sikh faith describe reasons why Bhai Lehna was chosen by Guru Nanak over his own sons as his choice of successor. One of these stories is about a jug which fell into mud, and Guru Nanak asked his sons to pick it up. Guru Nanak's sons would not pick it up because it was too dirty or menial a task. Then he asked Bhai Lehna, who however picked it out of the mud, washed it clean, and presented it to Guru Nanak full of water. Guru Nanak touched him and renamed him Angad (from *Ang*, or part of the body) and named him as his successor and the second Nanak on 7 September 1539.

After Guru Nanak died on 22 September 1539, Guru Angad unable to bear the separation from Guru Nanak retired into a room in a disciple's house in a state of Vairagya. Baba Buddha later discovered him after a long search and requested him to return for Guruship. The Gurbani uttered at the time *Die before the one whom you love, to live after he dies is to live a*

*worthless life in this world.* was the first hymn in Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Angad and signifies the pain he felt at the separation from Guru Nanak. Guru Angad later left Kartarpur for the village of Khadur Sahib (near Goindwal Sahib). Post succession, at one point, very few Sikhs accepted Guru Angad as their leader and while the sons of Guru Nanak claimed to be the successors. Guru Angad focused on the teachings of Nanak, and building the community through charitable works such as langar.

### **Relationship with the Mughal Empire**

The second Mughal Emperor of India Humayun visited Guru Angad at around 1540 after Humayun lost the Battle of Kannauj, and thereby the Mughal throne to Sher Shah Suri. According to Sikh hagiographies, when Humayun arrived in Gurdwara Mal Akhara Sahib at Khadur Sahib Guru Angad was sitting and teaching children. The failure to greet the Emperor immediately angered Humayun. Humayun lashed out but the Guru reminded him that the time when you needed to fight when you lost your throne you ran away and did not fight and now you want to attack a person engaged in prayer. In the Sikh texts written more than a century after the event, Guru Angad is said to have blessed the emperor, and reassured him that someday he will regain the throne.

### **Death and successor**

Before his death, Guru Angad, following the example set by Guru Nanak, nominated Guru Amar Das as his successor (The Third Nanak). Amar Das was born into a Hindu family and had been reputed to have gone on some twenty pilgrimages into the

Himalayas, to Haridwar on river Ganges. About 1539, on one such Hindu pilgrimage, he met a *sadhu*, or ascetic, who asked him why he did not have a guru (teacher, spiritual counsellor) and Amar Das decided to get one.

On his return, he heard Bibi Amro, the daughter of the Guru Angad who had married his brother's son, singing a hymn by Guru Nanak. Amar Das learnt from her about Guru Angad, and with her help met the second Guru of Sikhism in 1539, adopting Guru Angad as his spiritual Guru, who was much younger than his own age.

Amar Das displayed relentless devotion and service to Guru Angad. Sikh tradition states that he woke up in the early hours to fetch water for Guru Angad's bath, cleaned and cooked for the volunteers with the Guru, as well devoted much time to meditation and prayers in the morning and evening. Guru Angad named Amar Das as his successor in 1552. Guru Angad died on 29 March 1552.

## **Influence**

### **Gurmukhi script**

Guru Angad is credited in the Sikh tradition with the Gurmukhi script, which is now the standard writing script for Punjabi language in India, in contrast to Punjabi language in Pakistan where now a Perso-Arabic script called Shahmukhi is the standard. The original Sikh scriptures and most of the historic Sikh literature have been written in the Gurmukhi script.

Guru Angad standardized and made improvements to the scripts of the region to create the Gurmukhi script. Examples of possible forerunners of the script including at least one hymn written in acrostic form by Guru Nanak, and its earlier history is yet to be fully determined.

He also wrote 62 or 63 Saloks (compositions), which together constitute about one percent of the Guru Granth Sahib, the primary scripture of Sikhism. Rather than contribute hymns, Angad's importance was as a consolidator of Guru Nanak's hymns. Guru Angad would also supervise the writing down of Nanak's hymns by Bhai Paira Mokha and scrutinize the resulting compilation, preparing the way for a Sikh scripture, as well as the beginning of a vernacular Punjabi literature, as tradition holds that he may have also commissioned an account of Guru Nanak's life from earlier disciples. The collection of hymns would also be increasingly important for the expanding community.

### **Langar and community work**

Guru Angad is notable for systematizing the institution of langar in all Sikh temple premises, where visitors from near and far could get a free simple meal in a communal seating. He also set the rules and training method for volunteers (*sevadars*) who operated the kitchen, placing emphasis on treating it as a place of rest and refuge, being always polite and hospitable to all visitors. Guru Angad visited other places and centres established by Guru Nanak for the preaching of Sikhism. He established new centres and thus strengthened its base.

## ***Mall Akhara***

The Guru, being a great patron of wrestling, started a *Mall Akhara* (wrestling arena) system where physical exercises, martial arts, and wrestling was taught as well as health topics such as staying away from tobacco and other toxic substances. He placed emphasis on keeping the body healthy and exercising daily. He founded many such *Mall Akharas* in many villages including a few in Khandur. Typically the wrestling was done after daily prayers and also included games and light wrestling.



## Chapter 11

# Maharana Pratap

**Pratap Singh I**, popularly known as **Maharana Pratap**, was a Hindu Rajput king of Mewar. He was titled as "Mewari Rana" and was notable for his military resistance against the expansionism of the Mughal Empire and is known for his participation in the Battle of Haldighati and the Battle of Dewair.

## Early life and accession

Maharana Pratap was born in Hindu Rajput family to Udai Singh II of Mewar and Jaiwanta Bai. His younger brothers were Shakti Singh, Vikram Singh and Jagmal Singh. Pratap also had 2 stepsisters: Chand Kanwar and Man Kanwar. He was married to Ajabde Punwar of Bijolia and he had married 10 other women and was survived by 17 sons and 5 daughters including Amar Singh I. He belonged to the Royal Family of Mewar. After the death of Udai Singh in 1572, Rani Dheer Bai wanted her son Jagmal to succeed him but senior courtiers preferred Pratap, as the eldest son, to be their king.

The desire of the nobles prevailed. Udai Singh died in 1572, and Prince Pratap ascended the throne as Maharana Pratap, the 54th ruler of Mewar in the line of the Sisodia Rajputs. Jagmal swore revenge and left for Ajmer, to join the armies of Akbar, and obtained the town of Jahazpur as a *Jagir* as a gift in return for his help.

# **Military career**

## **Battle of Haldighati**

The bloody Siege of Chittorgarh in 1567-1568 had led to the loss of the fertile eastern belt of Mewar to the Mughals. However, the rest of the wooded and hilly kingdom in the Aravalli range was still under the control of Maharana Pratap. Mughal Emperor Akbar was intent on securing a stable route to Gujarat through Mewar; when Pratap Singh was crowned king (Maharana) in 1572, Akbar sent a number of envoys entreating him to become a vassal like many other Rajput leaders in the region. When the Pratap refused to personally submit to Akbar, war became inevitable.

The Battle of Haldighati was fought on 18 June 1576 between Pratap Singh and Mughal forces led by Man Singh I of Amer. The Mughals were victorious and inflicted significant casualties among the Mewaris but failed to capture the Pratap. The site of the battle was a narrow mountain pass at Haldighati near Gogunda, modern day Rajsamand in Rajasthan. Pratap Singh fielded a force of around 3000 cavalry and 400 Bhil archers. The Mughals were led by Man Singh of Amber, who commanded an army numbering around 10,000 men. After a fierce battle lasting more than three hours, Pratap found himself wounded and the day lost. He managed to retreat to the hills and lived to fight another day.

Haldighati was a futile victory for the Mughals, as they were unable to kill or capture Pratap, or any of his close family members in Udaipur. While the sources also claim that Pratap

was able to make a successful escape, Mansingh managed to conquer Gogunda within a week after Haldighati then ended his campaign. Subsequently, Akbar himself led a sustained campaign against the Rana in September 1576, and soon, Gogunda, Udaipur, and Kumbhalgarh were all under Mughal control.

## **Reconquest of Mewar**

After Akbar Mewar campaign in 1576-77 was failed . Akbar sent his Genral Sahbahz Khan 3 times to invade Mewar in 1577, 1578 and 1579 but he was neither able to establish Mughal rule in Mewar or capture Pratap each of his invasion failed. During this time Pratap also captured the areas of Vagad ( Dungarpur, Banswara ).

Mughal pressure on Mewar relaxed after 1579 following rebellions in Bengal and Bihar and Mirza Hakim's incursion into the Punjab. But after this Akbar sent Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khanan to invade Mewar but when he was defeated by Pratap's son Amar Singh. He returned back to Ajmer. In 1582, Pratap Singh attacked and occupied the Mughal post at Dewair (or Dewar) in the Battle of Dewair.

This led to the automatic liquidation of all 36 Mughal military outposts in Mewar. After this Akbar send Jagannath Kachhwa to invade Mewar but he was also failed infront of Pratap warfare. After this Invasion, Akbar stopped his military campaigns against Mewar. The victory of Dewair was a crowning glory for the Maharana, with James Tod describing it as the "Marathon of Mewar". In 1585, Akbar moved to Lahore and remained there for the next twelve years watching the

situation in the north-west. No major Mughal expedition was sent to Mewar during this period. Taking advantage of the situation, Pratap recovered almost whole Mewar (except its former capital, Chittorgarh) and Vagad regions by defeating Mughal forces there. During this period, he also built a new capital, Chavand, near modern Dungarpur.

## **Patronage of art**

Maharana Prataps court at Chanvand had given shelter to many poets, artists, writers and artisans. The Chavand school of art was developed during the reign of Rana Pratap.

## **Revival of Mewar**

Maharana Pratap took refuge in the Chappan area and started attacking the Mughal strongholds. By 1583 he had successfully captured western Mewar, which included Dewar, Amet, Madariya, Zawar and the fort of Kumbalgarh. He then made Chavand his capital and constructed a Chamunda mata temple there.

The Maharana was able to live in peace for a short time and started establishing order in Mewar. From 1585 till his death, the Rana had recovered a large part of Mewar. The citizens who had migrated out of Mewar started returning during this time. There was good monsoon which helped to revive the agriculture of Mewar. The economy also started getting better and trade in the area started increasing. The Rana was able to capture the territories around Chittor but could not fulfill his dream of capturing Chittor itself.

## Death

Reportedly, Pratap died of injuries sustained in a hunting accident, at Chavand on 19 January 1597, aged 56. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Amar Singh I. On his death bed, Pratap told his son never to submit to the Mughals and to win Chittor back.

## Legacy

Maharana Pratap is a prominent figure in both folk and contemporary Rajasthani culture and is viewed as a celebrated warrior in that state, as well as in India as a whole.

Historian Satish Chandra notes -

*"Rana Pratap's defiance of the mighty Mughal empire, almost alone and unaided by the other Rajput states, constitute a glorious saga of Rajput valour and the spirit of self sacrifice for cherished principles. Rana Pratap's methods of guerrilla warfare was later elaborated further by Malik Ambar, the Deccani general, and by Emperor Shivaji".*

Bandyopadhyay also seconds Satish Chandra's view with the observation that Pratap's successful defiance of Mughals using guerrilla strategy also proved inspirational to figures ranging from Emperor Shivaji to anti-British revolutionaries in Bengal. In 2007, a statue of Maharana Pratap was unveiled in the Parliament of India.

## Chapter 12

# Akbar

- **Abu'l-Fath Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar** (October 1542– 27 October 1605), popularly known as **Akbar the Great**, and also as **Akbar I** was the third Mughal emperor, who reigned from 1556 to 1605. Akbar succeeded his father, Humayun, under a regent, Bairam Khan, who helped the young emperor expand and consolidate Mughal domains in India.

A strong personality and a successful general, Akbar gradually enlarged the Mughal Empire to include much of the Indian subcontinent. His power and influence, however, extended over the entire subcontinent because of Mughal military, political, cultural, and economic dominance. To unify the vast Mughal state, Akbar established a centralised system of administration throughout his empire and adopted a policy of conciliating conquered rulers through marriage and diplomacy. To preserve peace and order in a religiously and culturally diverse empire, he adopted policies that won him the support of his non-Muslim subjects. Eschewing tribal bonds and Islamic state identity, Akbar strove to unite far-flung lands of his realm through loyalty, expressed through an Indo-Persian culture, to himself as an emperor.

Mughal India developed a strong and stable economy, leading to commercial expansion and greater patronage of culture. Akbar himself was a patron of art and culture. He was fond of literature, and created a library of over 24,000 volumes written in Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian, Greek, Latin, Arabic and Kashmiri,

staffed by many scholars, translators, artists, calligraphers, scribes, bookbinders and readers. He did much of the cataloging himself through three main groupings. Akbar also established the library of Fatehpur Sikri exclusively for women, and he decreed that schools for the education of both Muslims and Hindus should be established throughout the realm. He also encouraged bookbinding to become a high art.

Holy men of many faiths, poets, architects, and artisans adorned his court from all over the world for study and discussion. Akbar's courts at Delhi, Agra, and Fatehpur Sikri became centres of the arts, letters, and learning. Timurid and Perso-Islamic culture began to merge and blend with indigenous Indian elements, and a distinct Indo-Persian culture emerged characterized by Mughal style arts, painting, and architecture.

Disillusioned with orthodox Islam and perhaps hoping to bring about religious unity within his empire, Akbar promulgated Din-i-Ilahi, a syncretic creed derived mainly from Islam and Hinduism as well as some parts of Zoroastrianism and Christianity.

Akbar's reign significantly influenced the course of Indian history. During his rule, the Mughal Empire tripled in size and wealth. He created a powerful military system and instituted effective political and social reforms. By abolishing the sectarian tax on non-Muslims and appointing them to high civil and military posts, he was the first Mughal ruler to win the trust and loyalty of the native subjects. He had Sanskrit literature translated, participated in native festivals, realising that a stable empire depended on the co-operation and good-

will of his subjects. Thus, the foundations for a multicultural empire under Mughal rule were laid during his reign. Akbar was succeeded as emperor by his son, Prince Salim, later known as Jahangir.

## **Early years**

Defeated in battles at Chausa and Kannauj in 1539 to 1541 by the forces of Sher Shah Suri, Mughal emperor Humayun fled westward to Sindh. There he met and married the then 14-year-old Hamida Banu Begum, daughter of Shaikh Ali Akbar Jami, a Persian teacher of Humayun's younger brother Hindal Mirza. Jalal ud-din Muhammad Akbar was born the next year on 15 October 1542 (the fourth day of Rajab, 949 AH) at the Rajput Fortress of Amarkot in Rajputana (in modern-day Sindh), where his parents had been given refuge by the local Hindu ruler Rana Prasad.

During the extended period of Humayun's exile, Akbar was brought up in Kabul by the extended family of his paternal uncles, Kamran Mirza and Askari Mirza, and his aunts, in particular Kamran Mirza's wife. He spent his youth learning to hunt, run, and fight, making him a daring, powerful and brave warrior, but he never learned to read or write.

This, however, did not hinder his search for knowledge as it is always said when he retired in the evening he would have someone read. On 20 November 1551, Humayun's youngest brother, Hindal Mirza, died fighting in a battle against Kamran Mirza's forces. Upon hearing the news of his brother's death, Humayun was overwhelmed with grief.



Out of affection for the memory of his brother, Humayun betrothed Hindal's nine-year-old daughter, Ruqaiya Sultan Begum, to his son Akbar. Their betrothal took place in Kabul, shortly after Akbar's first appointment as a viceroy in the province of Ghazni. Humayun conferred on the imperial couple all the wealth, army, and adherents of Hindal and Ghazni. One of Hindal's *jagir* was given to his nephew, Akbar, who was appointed as its viceroy and was also given the command of his uncle's army. Akbar's marriage with Ruqaiya was solemnized in Jalandhar, Punjab, when both of them were 14-years-old. She was his first wife and chief consort.

Following the chaos over the succession of Sher Shah Suri's son Islam Shah, Humayun reconquered Delhi in 1555, leading an army partly provided by his Persian ally Tahmasp I. A few months later, Humayun died. Akbar's guardian, Bairam Khan concealed the death in order to prepare for Akbar's succession. Akbar succeeded Humayun on 14 February 1556, while in the midst of a war against Sikandar Shah to reclaim the Mughal throne. In Kalanaur, Punjab, the 14-year-old Akbar was enthroned by Bairam Khan on a newly constructed platform, which still stands. He was proclaimed *Shahanshah* (Persian for "King of Kings"). Bairam Khan ruled on his behalf until he came of age.

## **Military campaigns**

### **Military innovations**

Akbar was accorded the epithet "the Great" because of his many accomplishments, including his record of unbeaten

military campaigns that consolidated Mughal rule in the Indian subcontinent. The basis of this military prowess and authority was Akbar's skilful structural and organisational calibration of the Mughal army. The Mansabdari system in particular has been acclaimed for its role in upholding Mughal power in the time of Akbar. The system persisted with few changes down to the end of the Mughal Empire, but was progressively weakened under his successors.

Organisational reforms were accompanied by innovations in cannons, fortifications, and the use of elephants. Akbar also took an interest in matchlocks and effectively employed them during various conflicts. He sought the help of Ottomans, and also increasingly of Europeans, especially Portuguese and Italians, in procuring firearms and artillery. Mughal firearms in the time of Akbar came to be far superior to anything that could be deployed by regional rulers, tributaries, or by zamindars. Such was the impact of these weapons that Akbar's Vizier, Abul Fazl, once declared that "with the exception of Turkey, there is perhaps no country in which its guns has more means of securing the Government than [India]." The term "gunpowder empire" has thus often been used by scholars and historians in analysing the success of the Mughals in India. Mughal power has been seen as owing to their mastery of the techniques of warfare, especially the use of firearms encouraged by Akbar.

### **Struggle for North India**

Akbar's father Humayun had regained control of the Punjab, Delhi, and Agra with Safavid support, but even in these areas Mughal rule was precarious, and when the Surs reconquered

Agra and Delhi following the death of Humayun, the fate of the boy emperor seemed uncertain. Akbar's minority and the lack of any possibility of military assistance from the Mughal stronghold of Kabul, which was in the throes of an invasion by the ruler of Badakhshan Prince Mirza Suleiman, aggravated the situation. When his regent, Bairam Khan, called a council of war to marshal the Mughal forces, none of Akbar's chieftains approved. Bairam Khan was ultimately able to prevail over the nobles, however, and it was decided that the Mughals would march against the strongest of the Sur rulers, Sikandar Shah Suri, in the Punjab. Delhi was left under the regency of Tardi Baig Khan. Sikandar Shah Suri, however, presented no major concern for Akbar, and avoided giving battle as the Mughal army approached. The gravest threat came from Hemu, a minister and general of one of the Sur rulers, who had proclaimed himself Hindu emperor and expelled the Mughals from the Indo-Gangetic plains.

Urged by Bairam Khan, who re-marshalled the Mughal army before Hemu could consolidate his position, Akbar marched on Delhi to reclaim it. His army, led by Bairam Khan, defeated Hemu and the Sur army on 5 November 1556 at the Second Battle of Panipat, 50 miles (80 km) north of Delhi. Soon after the battle, Mughal forces occupied Delhi and then Agra. Akbar made a triumphant entry into Delhi, where he stayed for a month. Then he and Bairam Khan returned to Punjab to deal with Sikandar Shah, who had become active again. In the next six months, the Mughals won another major battle against Sikander Shah Suri, who fled east to Bengal. Akbar and his forces occupied Lahore and then seized Multan in the Punjab. In 1558, Akbar took possession of Ajmer, the aperture to Rajputana, after the defeat and flight of its Muslim ruler. The

Mughals had also besieged and defeated the Sur forces in control of Gwalior Fort, the greatest stronghold north of the Narmada river.

Royal begums, along with the families of Mughal amirs, were finally brought over from Kabul to India at the time – according to Akbar's vizier, Abul Fazl, "so that men might become settled and be restrained in some measure from departing to a country to which they were accustomed". Akbar had firmly declared his intentions that the Mughals were in India to stay. This was a far cry from the political settlements of his grandfather, Babur, and father, Humayun, both of whom had done little to indicate that they were anything but transient rulers. However, Akbar methodically re-introduced a historical legacy of the Timurid Renaissance that his ancestors had left.

### **Expansion into Central India**

By 1559, the Mughals had launched a drive to the south into Rajputana and Malwa. However, Akbar's disputes with his regent, Bairam Khan, temporarily put an end to the expansion. The young emperor, at the age of eighteen, wanted to take a more active part in managing affairs. Urged on by his foster mother, Maham Anga, and his relatives, Akbar decided to dispense with the services of Bairam Khan. After yet another dispute at court, Akbar finally dismissed Bairam Khan in the spring of 1560 and ordered him to leave on Hajj to Mecca. Bairam Khan left for Mecca but on his way was goaded by his opponents to rebel. He was defeated by the Mughal army in the Punjab and forced to submit. Akbar forgave him, however, and gave him the option of either continuing in his court or resuming his pilgrimage; Bairam chose the latter. Bairam Khan

was later assassinated on his way to Mecca, allegedly by an Afghan with a personal vendetta. In 1560, Akbar resumed military operations. A Mughal army under the command of his foster brother, Adham Khan, and a Mughal commander, Pir Muhammad Khan, began the Mughal conquest of Malwa. The Afghan ruler, Baz Bahadur, was defeated at the Battle of Sarangpur and fled to Khandesh for refuge leaving behind his harem, treasure, and war elephants. Despite initial success, the campaign proved a disaster from Akbar's point of view. His foster brother retained all the spoils and followed through with the Central Asian practice of slaughtering the surrendered garrison, their wives and children, and many Muslim theologians and Sayyids, who were the descendants of Muhammad.

Akbar personally rode to Malwa to confront Adham Khan and relieve him of command. Pir Muhammad Khan was then sent in pursuit of Baz Bahadur but was beaten back by the alliance of the rulers of Khandesh and Berar. Baz Bahadur temporarily regained control of Malwa until, in the next year, Akbar sent another Mughal army to invade and annex the kingdom. Malwa became a province of the nascent imperial administration of Akbar's regime. Baz Bahadur survived as a refugee at various courts until, eight years later in 1570, he took service under Akbar.

Despite the ultimate success in Malwa, the conflict exposed cracks in Akbar's personal relationships with his relatives and Mughal nobles. When Adham Khan confronted Akbar following another dispute in 1562, he was struck down by the emperor and thrown from a terrace into the palace courtyard at Agra. Still alive, Adham Khan was dragged up and thrown to the

courtyard once again by Akbar to ensure his death. Akbar now sought to eliminate the threat of over-mighty subjects. He created specialised ministerial posts relating to imperial governance; no member of the Mughal nobility was to have unquestioned pre-eminence. When a powerful clan of Uzbek chiefs broke out in rebellion in 1564, Akbar decisively defeated and routed them in Malwa and then Bihar.

He pardoned the rebellious leaders, hoping to conciliate them, but they rebelled again, so Akbar had to quell their uprising a second time. Following a third revolt with the proclamation of Mirza Muhammad Hakim, Akbar's brother and the Mughal ruler of Kabul, as emperor, his patience was finally exhausted. Several Uzbek chieftains were subsequently slain and the rebel leaders trampled to death under elephants. Simultaneously the Mirzas, a group of Akbar's distant cousins who held important fiefs near Agra, had also risen up in rebellion. They too were slain and driven out of the empire. In 1566, Akbar moved to meet the forces of his brother, Muhammad Hakim, who had marched into the Punjab with dreams of seizing the imperial throne. Following a brief confrontation, however, Muhammad Hakim accepted Akbar's supremacy and retreated back to Kabul.

In 1564, Mughal forces began the conquest of Garha, a thinly populated, hilly area in central India that was of interest to the Mughals because of its herd of wild elephants. The territory was ruled over by Raja Vir Narayan, a minor, and his mother, Durgavati, a Rajput warrior queen of the Gonds. Akbar did not personally lead the campaign because he was preoccupied with the Uzbek rebellion, leaving the expedition in the hands of Asaf Khan, the Mughal governor of Kara. Durgavati committed

suicide after her defeat at the Battle of Damoh, while Raja Vir Narayan was slain at the Fall of Chauragarh, the mountain fortress of the Gonds. The Mughals seized immense wealth, an uncalculated amount of gold and silver, jewels and 1000 elephants. Kamala Devi, a younger sister of Durgavati, was sent to the Mughal harem. The brother of Durgavati's deceased husband was installed as the Mughal administrator of the region. Like in Malwa, however, Akbar entered into a dispute with his vassals over the conquest of Gondwana. Asaf Khan was accused of keeping most of the treasures and sending back only 200 elephants to Akbar. When summoned to give accounts, he fled Gondwana. He went first to the Uzbeks, then returned to Gondwana where he was pursued by Mughal forces. Finally, he submitted and Akbar restored him to his previous position.

### **Attempt to murder Akbar**

Around 1564 is also when there was an assassination attempt on Akbar documented in a painting.

The attempt was made when Akbar was returning from a visit to the dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin near Delhi, by an assassin shooting an arrow. The arrow pierced his right shoulder. The assassin was apprehended and ordered beheaded by the Emperor. The culprit was a slave of Mirza Sharfuddin, a noble in Akbar's court whose rebellion had recently been curbed.

### **Conquest of Rajputana**

Having established Mughal rule over northern India, Akbar turned his attention to the conquest of Rajputana. No imperial

power in India based on the Indo-Gangetic plains could be secure if a rival centre of power existed on its flank in Rajputana. The Mughals had already established domination over parts of northern Rajputana in Mewat, Ajmer, and Nagor. Now, Akbar was determined to drive into the heartlands of the Rajput kings that had never previously submitted to the Muslim rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. Beginning in 1561, the Mughals actively engaged the Rajputs in warfare and diplomacy. Most Rajput states accepted Akbar's suzerainty; the rulers of Mewar and Marwar, Udai Singh and Chandrasen Rathore, however, remained outside the imperial fold. Rana Udai Singh was descended from the Sisodia ruler, Rana Sanga, who had fought Babur at the Battle of Khanwa in 1527. As the head of the Sisodia clan, he possessed the highest ritual status of all the Rajput kings and chieftains in India. Unless Udai Singh was reduced to submission, the imperial authority of the Mughals would be lessened in Rajput eyes. Furthermore, Akbar, at this early period, was still enthusiastically devoted to the cause of Islam and sought to impress the superiority of his faith over the most prestigious warriors in Brahminical Hinduism.

In 1567, Akbar moved to reduce the Chittor Fort in Mewar. The fortress-capital of Mewar was of great strategic importance as it lay on the shortest route from Agra to Gujarat and was also considered a key to holding the interior parts of Rajputana. Udai Singh retired to the hills of Mewar, leaving two Rajput warriors, Jaimal and Patta, in charge of the defence of his capital. Chittorgarh fell on February 1568 after a siege of four months. Akbar had the surviving defenders and 30,000 non-combatants massacred and their heads displayed upon towers erected throughout the region, in order to demonstrate his



authority. The booty that fell into the hands of the Mughals was distributed throughout the empire. He remained in Chittorgarh for three days, then returned to Agra, where to commemorate the victory, he set up, at the gates of his fort, statues of Jaimal and Patta mounted on elephants. Udai Singh's power and influence was broken. He never again ventured out his mountain refuge in Mewar and Akbar was content to let him be.

The fall of Chittorgarh was followed up by a Mughal attack on the Ranthambore Fort in 1568. Ranthambore was held by the Hada Rajputs and reputed to be the most powerful fortress in India. However, it fell only after a couple of months. Akbar was now the master of almost the whole of Rajputana. Most of the Rajput kings had submitted to the Mughals. Only the clans of Mewar continued to resist. Udai Singh's son and successor, Pratap Singh, was later defeated by the Mughals at the Battle of Haldighati in 1576. Akbar would celebrate his conquest of Rajputana by laying the foundation of a new capital, 23 miles (37 km) W.S.W of Agra in 1569. It was called Fatehpur Sikri ("the city of victory"). Rana Pratap Singh, however, continuously attacked Mughals and was able to retain most of the kingdom of his ancestors in the life of Akbar.

### **Annexation of Western and Eastern India**

Akbar's next military objectives were the conquest of Gujarat and Bengal, which connected India with the trading centres of Asia, Africa, and Europe through the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal respectively. Furthermore, Gujarat had been a haven for rebellious Mughal nobles, while in Bengal, the Afghans still held considerable influence under their ruler, Sulaiman Khan

Karrani. Akbar first moved against Gujarat, which lay in the crook of the Mughal provinces of Rajputana and Malwa. Gujarat, with its coastal regions, possessed areas of rich agricultural production in its central plain, an impressive output of textiles and other industrial goods, and the busiest seaports of India. Akbar intended to link the maritime state with the massive resources of the Indo-Gangetic plains.

However, the ostensible *casus belli* was that the rebel Mirzas, who had previously been driven out of India, were now operating out of a base in southern Gujarat. Moreover, Akbar had received invitations from cliques in Gujarat to oust the reigning king, which served as justification for his military expedition. In 1572, he moved to occupy Ahmedabad, the capital, and other northern cities, and was proclaimed the lawful sovereign of Gujarat.

By 1573, he had driven out the Mirzas who, after offering token resistance, fled for refuge in the Deccan. Surat, the commercial capital of the region and other coastal cities soon capitulated to the Mughals. The king, Muzaffar Shah III, was caught hiding in a corn field; he was pensioned off by Akbar with a small allowance.

Having established his authority over Gujarat, Akbar returned to Fatehpur Sikri, where he built the Buland Darwaza to commemorate his victories, but a rebellion by Afghan nobles supported by the Rajput ruler of Idar, and the renewed intrigues of the Mirzas forced his return to Gujarat. Akbar crossed the Rajputana and reached Ahmedabad in eleven days – a journey that normally took six weeks. The outnumbered Mughal army then won a decisive victory on 2 September 1573.

Akbar slew the rebel leaders and erected a tower out of their severed heads. The conquest and subjugation of Gujarat proved highly profitable for the Mughals; the territory yielded a revenue of more than five million rupees annually to Akbar's treasury, after expenses.

Akbar had now defeated most of the Afghan remnants in India. The only centre of Afghan power was now in Bengal, where Sulaiman Khan Karrani, an Afghan chieftain whose family had served under Sher Shah Suri, was reigning in power. While Sulaiman Khan scrupulously avoided giving offence to Akbar, his son, Daud Khan, who had succeeded him in 1572, decided otherwise. Whereas Sulaiman Khan had the khutba read in Akbar's name and acknowledged Mughal supremacy, Daud Khan assumed the insignia of royalty and ordered the khutba to be proclaimed in his own name in defiance of Akbar. Munim Khan, the Mughal governor of Bihar, was ordered to chastise Daud Khan, but later, Akbar himself set out to Bengal. This was an opportunity to bring the trade in the east under Mughal control. In 1574, the Mughals seized Patna from Daud Khan, who fled to Bengal. Akbar returned to Fatehpur Sikri and left his generals to finish the campaign. The Mughal army was subsequently victorious at the Battle of Tukaroi in 1575, which led to the annexation of Bengal and parts of Bihar that had been under the dominion of Daud Khan. Only Orissa was left in the hands of the Karrani dynasty as a fief of the Mughal Empire. A year later, however, Daud Khan rebelled and attempted to regain Bengal. He was defeated by the Mughal general, Khan Jahan Quli, and had to flee into exile. Daud Khan was later captured and executed by Mughal forces. His severed head was sent to Akbar, while his limbs were gibbeted at Tandah, the Mughal capital in Bengal.

## **Campaigns in Afghanistan and Central Asia**

Following his conquests of Gujarat and Bengal, Akbar was preoccupied with domestic concerns. He did not leave Fatehpur Sikri on a military campaign until 1581, when Punjab was again invaded by his brother, Mirza Muhammad Hakim. Akbar expelled his brother to Kabul and this time pressed on, determined to end the threat from Muhammad Hakim once and for all. In contrast to the problem that his predecessors once had in getting Mughal nobles to stay on in India, the problem now was to get them to leave India. They were, according to Abul Fazl "afraid of the cold of Afghanistan." The Hindu officers, in turn, were additionally inhibited by the traditional taboo against crossing the Indus. Akbar, however, spurred them on. The soldiers were provided with pay eight months in advance. In August 1581, Akbar seized Kabul and took up residence at Babur's old citadel. He stayed there for three weeks, in the absence of his brother, who had fled into the mountains. Akbar left Kabul in the hands of his sister, Bakht-un-Nisa Begum, and returned to India. He pardoned his brother, who took up de facto charge of the Mughal administration in Kabul; Bakht-un-Nis continued to be the official governor. A few years later, in 1585, Muhammad Hakim died and Kabul passed into the hands of Akbar once again. It was officially incorporated as a province of the Mughal Empire.

The Kabul expedition was the beginning of a long period of activity over the northern frontiers of the empire. For thirteen years, beginning in 1585, Akbar remained in the north, shifting his capital to Lahore in the Punjab while dealing with challenges from beyond the Khyber Pass. The gravest threat came from the Uzbeks, the tribe that had driven his

grandfather, Babur, out of Central Asia. They had been organised under Abdullah Khan Shaybanid, a capable military chieftain who had seized Badakhshan and Balkh from Akbar's distant Timurid relatives, and whose Uzbek troops now posed a serious challenge to the northwestern frontiers of the Mughal Empire.

The Afghan tribes on the border were also restless, partly on account of the hostility of the Yusufzai of Bajaur and Swat, and partly owing to the activity of a new religious leader,

Bayazid, the founder of the Roshaniyya sect. The Uzbeks were also known to be subsidising Afghans.

In 1586, Akbar negotiated a pact with Abdullah Khan in which the Mughals agreed to remain neutral during the Uzbek invasion of Safavid held Khorasan. In return, Abdullah Khan agreed to refrain from supporting, subsidising, or offering refuge to the Afghan tribes hostile to the Mughals.

Thus freed, Akbar began a series of campaigns to pacify the Yusufzais and other rebels. Akbar ordered Zain Khan to lead an expedition against the Afghan tribes. Raja Birbal, a renowned minister in Akbar's court, was also given military command.

The expedition turned out to be a disaster, and on its retreat from the mountains, Birbal and his entourage were ambushed and killed by the Afghans at the Malandarai Pass in February 1586. Akbar immediately fielded new armies to reinvade the Yusufzai lands under the command of Raja Todar Mal. Over the next six years, the Mughals contained the Yusufzai in the mountain valleys, and forced the submission of many chiefs in

Swat and Bajaur. Dozens of forts were built and occupied to secure the region. Akbar's response demonstrated his ability to clamp firm military control over the Afghan tribes.

Despite his pact with the Uzbeks, Akbar nurtured a secret hope of reconquering Central Asia from today's Afghanistan. However, Badakshan and Balkh remained firmly part of the Uzbek dominions. There was only a transient occupation of the two provinces by the Mughals under his grandson, Shah Jahan, in the mid-17th century. Nevertheless, Akbar's stay in the northern frontiers was highly fruitful. The last of the rebellious Afghan tribes were subdued by 1600. The Roshaniyya movement was firmly suppressed. The Afridi and Orakzai tribes, which had risen up under the Roshaniyyas, had been subjugated. The leaders of the movement were captured and driven into exile. Jalaluddin, the son of the Roshaniyya movement's founder, Bayazid, was killed in 1601 in a fight with Mughal troops near Ghazni. Mughal rule over today's Afghanistan was finally secure, particularly after the passing of the Uzbek threat with the death of Abdullah Khan in 1598.

### **Conquests in the Indus Valley**

While in Lahore dealing with the Uzbeks, Akbar had sought to subjugate the Indus valley to secure the frontier provinces. He sent an army to conquer Kashmir in the upper Indus basin when, in 1585, Ali Shah, the reigning king of the Shia Chak dynasty, refused to send his son as a hostage to the Mughal court. Ali Shah surrendered immediately to the Mughals, but another of his sons, Yaqub, crowned himself as king, and led a stubborn resistance to Mughal armies. Finally, in June, 1589, Akbar himself travelled from Lahore to Srinagar to receive the

surrender of Yaqub and his rebel forces. Baltistan and Ladakh, which were Tibetan provinces adjacent to Kashmir, pledged their allegiance to Akbar. The Mughals also moved to conquer Sindh in the lower Indus valley. Since 1574, the northern fortress of Bhakkar had remained under imperial control. Now, in 1586, the Mughal governor of Multan tried and failed to secure the capitulation of Mirza Jani Beg, the independent ruler of Thatta in southern Sindh. Akbar responded by sending a Mughal army to besiege Sehwan, the river capital of the region. Jani Beg mustered a large army to meet the Mughals. The outnumbered Mughal forces defeated the Sindhi forces at the Battle of Sehwan. After suffering further defeats, Jani Beg surrendered to the Mughals in 1591, and in 1593, paid homage to Akbar in Lahore.

### **Subjugation of parts of Baluchistan**

As early as 1586, about half a dozen Baluch chiefs, that were still under nominal Pani Afghan rule, had been persuaded to attend the imperial court and acknowledge the vassalage of Akbar. In preparations to take Kandahar from the Safavids, Akbar ordered the Mughal forces to conquer the rest of the Afghan held parts of Baluchistan in 1595. The Mughal general, Mir Masum, led an attack on the stronghold of Sibi, situated to the northwest of Quetta and defeated a coalition of local chieftains in a pitched battle. They were made to acknowledge Mughal supremacy and attend Akbar's court. As a result, the modern-day Pakistani and Afghan parts of Baluchistan, including the areas of the strategic region of Makran that lay within it, became a part of the Mughal Empire. The Mughals now bordered Persian ruled Kandahar on three sides.

## **Safavids and Kandahar**

Kandahar was the name given by Arab historians to the ancient Indian kingdom of Gandhara. It was intimately connected with the Mughals since the time of their ancestor, Timur, the warlord who had conquered much of Western, Central, and parts of South Asia in the 14th century.

However, the Safavids considered it as an appanage of the Persian ruled territory of Khorasan and declared its association with the Mughal emperors to be a usurpation. In 1558, while Akbar was consolidating his rule over northern India, the Safavid emperor, Tahmasp I, had seized Kandahar and expelled its Mughal governor. For the next thirty years, it remained under Persian rule.

The recovery of Kandahar had not been a priority for Akbar, but after his prolonged military activity in the northern frontiers, a move to restore Mughal rule over the region became desirable. The conquests of Sindh, Kashmir and parts of Baluchistan, and the ongoing consolidation of Mughal power over today's Afghanistan had added to Akbar's confidence. Furthermore, Kandahar was at this time under threat from the Uzbeks, but the Emperor of Persia, himself beleaguered by the Ottoman Turks, was unable to send any reinforcements. Circumstances favoured the Mughals.

In 1593, Akbar received the exiled Safavid prince, Rostam Mirza, after he had quarrelled with his family. Rostam Mirza pledged allegiance to the Mughals; he was granted a rank (mansab) of commander of 5000 men and received Multan as a jagir. Beleaguered by constant Uzbek raids, and seeing the



reception of Rostom Mirza at the Mughal court, the Safavid prince and governor of Kandahar, Mozaffar Hosayn, also agreed to defect to the Mughals.

Mozaffar Hosayn, who was in any case in an adversary relationship with his overlord, Shah Abbas, was granted a rank of 5000 men, and his daughter Kandahari Begum was married to Akbar's grandson, the Mughal prince, Khurram. Kandahar was finally secured in 1595 with the arrival of a garrison headed by the Mughal general, Shah Bayg Khan.

The reconquest of Kandahar did not overtly disturb the Mughal-Persian relationship. Akbar and the Persian Shah continued to exchange ambassadors and presents. However, the power equation between the two had now changed in favour of the Mughals.

### **Deccan Sultans**

In 1593, Akbar began military operations against the Deccan Sultans who had not submitted to his authority. He besieged Ahmednagar Fort in 1595, forcing Chand Bibi to cede Berar. A subsequent revolt forced Akbar to take the fort in August 1600. Akbar occupied Burhanpur and besieged Asirgarh Fort in 1599, and took it on 17 January 1601, when Miran Bahadur Shah refused to submit Khandesh.

Akbar then established the Subahs of Ahmadnagar, Berar and Khandesh under Prince Daniyal. "By the time of his death in 1605, Akbar controlled a broad sweep of territory from the Bay of Bengal to Qandahar and Badakshan. He touched the western sea in Sind and at Surat and was well astride central India."

# Administration

## Political government

Akbar's system of central government was based on the system that had evolved since the Delhi Sultanate, but the functions of various departments were carefully reorganised by laying down detailed regulations for their functioning

- The revenue department was headed by a *wazir*, responsible for all finances and management of *jagir* and *inam* lands.
- The head of the military was called the *mir bakshi*, appointed from among the leading nobles of the court. The *mir bakshi* was in charge of intelligence gathering, and also made recommendations to the emperor for military appointments and promotions.
- The *mir saman* was in charge of the imperial household, including the harems, and supervised the functioning of the court and royal bodyguard.
- The judiciary was a separate organisation headed by a chief *qazi*, who was also responsible for religious beliefs and practices

## Taxation

Akbar set about reforming the administration of his empire's land revenue by adopting a system that had been used by Sher Shah Suri. A cultivated area where crops grew well was measured and taxed through fixed rates based on the area's crop and productivity. However, this placed hardship on the

peasantry because tax rates were fixed on the basis of prices prevailing in the imperial court, which were often higher than those in the countryside. Akbar changed to a decentralised system of annual assessment, but this resulted in corruption among local officials and was abandoned in 1580, to be replaced by a system called the *dahsala*. Under the new system, revenue was calculated as one-third of the average produce of the previous ten years, to be paid to the state in cash. This system was later refined, taking into account local prices, and grouping areas with similar productivity into assessment circles. Remission was given to peasants when the harvest failed during times of flood or drought. Akbar's *dahsala* system (also known as *zabti*) is credited to Raja Todar Mal, who also served as a revenue officer under Sher Shah Suri, and the structure of the revenue administration was set out by the latter in a detailed memorandum submitted to the emperor in 1582–83.

Other local methods of assessment continued in some areas. Land which was fallow or uncultivated was charged at concessional rates. Akbar also actively encouraged the improvement and extension of agriculture. The village continued to remain the primary unit of revenue assessment. Zamindars of every area were required to provide loans and agricultural implements in times of need, to encourage farmers to plough as much land as possible and to sow seeds of superior quality. In turn, the zamindars were given a hereditary right to collect a share of the produce. Peasants had a hereditary right to cultivate the land as long as they paid the land revenue. While the revenue assessment system showed concern for the small peasantry, it also maintained a level of distrust towards the revenue officials. Revenue officials were

guaranteed only three-quarters of their salary, with the remaining quarter dependent on their full realisation of the revenue assessed.

### **Military organization**

Akbar organised his army as well as the nobility by means of a system called the *mansabdari*. Under this system, each officer in the army was assigned a rank (a *mansabdar*), and assigned a number of cavalry that he had to supply to the imperial army.

The *mansabdars* were divided into 33 classes. The top three commanding ranks, ranging from 7000 to 10000 troops, were normally reserved for princes. Other ranks between 10 and 5000 were assigned to other members of the nobility. The empire's permanent standing army was quite small and the imperial forces mostly consisted of contingents maintained by the *mansabdars*. Persons were normally appointed to a low *mansab* and then promoted, based on their merit as well as the favour of the emperor. Each *mansabdar* was required to maintain a certain number of cavalymen and twice that number of horses.

The number of horses was greater because they had to be rested and rapidly replaced in times of war. Akbar employed strict measures to ensure that the quality of the armed forces was maintained at a high level; horses were regularly inspected and only Arabian horses were normally employed. The *mansabdars* were remunerated well for their services and constituted the highest paid military service in the world at the time.

## Capital

Akbar was a follower of Salim Chishti, a holy man who lived in the region of Sikri near Agra. Believing the area to be a lucky one for himself, he had a mosque constructed there for the use of the priest. Subsequently, he celebrated the victories over Chittor and Ranthambore by laying the foundation of a new walled capital, 23 miles (37 km) west of Agra in 1569, which was named Fatehpur ("*town of victory*") after the conquest of Gujarat in 1573 and subsequently came to be known as Fatehpur Sikri in order to distinguish it from other similarly named towns. Palaces for each of Akbar's senior queens, a huge artificial lake, and sumptuous water-filled courtyards were built there. However, the city was soon abandoned and the capital was moved to Lahore in 1585. The reason may have been that the water supply in Fatehpur Sikri was insufficient or of poor quality. Or, as some historians believe, Akbar had to attend to the northwest areas of his empire and therefore moved his capital northwest. Other sources indicate Akbar simply lost interest in the city or realised it was not militarily defensible. In 1599, Akbar shifted his capital back to Agra from where he reigned until his death.

## Economy

### Trade

The reign of Akbar was characterised by commercial expansion. The Mughal government encouraged traders, provided protection and security for transactions, and levied a very low custom duty to stimulate foreign trade. Furthermore, it strived

to foster a climate conducive to commerce by requiring local administrators to provide restitution to traders for goods stolen while in their territory. To minimise such incidents, bands of highway police called *rahdars* were enlisted to patrol roads and ensure safety of traders.

Other active measures taken included the construction and protection of routes of commerce and communications. Indeed, Akbar would make concerted efforts to improve roads to facilitate the use of wheeled vehicles through the Khyber Pass, the most popular route frequented by traders and travellers in journeying from Kabul into Mughal India.

He also strategically occupied the northwestern cities of Multan and Lahore in the Punjab and constructed great forts, such as the one at Attock near the crossing of the Grand Trunk Road and the Indus river, as well as a network of smaller forts called *thanas* throughout the frontier to secure the overland trade with Persia and Central Asia.

## **Coins**

Akbar was a great innovator as far as coinage is concerned. The coins of Akbar set a new chapter in India's numismatic history. The coins of Akbar's grandfather, Babur, and father, Humayun, are basic and devoid of any innovation as the former was busy establishing the foundations of the Mughal rule in India while the latter was ousted by the Afghan, Sher Shah Suri, and returned to the throne only to die a year later. While the reign of both Babur and Humayun represented turmoil, Akbar's relative long reign of 50 years allowed him to experiment with coinage.

Akbar introduced coins with decorative floral motifs, dotted borders, quatrefoil and other types. His coins were both round and square in shape with a unique 'mehrab' (lozenge) shape coin highlighting numismatic calligraphy at its best. Akbar's portrait type gold coin (Mohur) is generally attributed to his son, Prince Salim (later Emperor Jahangir), who had rebelled and then sought reconciliation thereafter by minting and presenting his father with gold Mohur's bearing Akbar's portrait. The tolerant view of Akbar is represented by the 'Ram-Sita' silver coin type while during the latter part of Akbar's reign, we see coins portraying the concept of Akbar's newly promoted religion 'Din-e-ilahi' with the Ilahi type and Jalla Jalal-Hu type coins.

The coins, left, represent examples of these innovative concepts introduced by Akbar that set the precedent for Mughal coins which was refined and perfected by his son, Jahangir, and later by his grandson, Shah Jahan.

## **Diplomacy**

### **Matrimonial alliances**

The practice of arranging marriages between Hindu princesses and Muslim kings was known much before Akbar's time, but in most cases these marriages did not lead to any stable relations between the families involved, and the women were lost to their families and did not return after marriage.

However, Akbar's policy of matrimonial alliances marked a departure in India from previous practice in that the marriage itself marked the beginning of a new order of relations, wherein

the Hindu Rajputs who married their daughters or sisters to him would be treated on par with his Muslim fathers-in-law and brothers in-law in all respects except being able to dine and pray with him or take Muslim wives. These Rajputs were made members of his court and their daughters' or sisters' marriage to a Muslim ceased to be a sign of degradation, except for certain proud elements who still considered it a sign of humiliation.

The Kacchwaha Rajput, Raja Bharmal, of the small kingdom of Amer, who had come to Akbar's court shortly after the latter's accession, entered into an alliance by giving his daughter in marriage to the emperor. Bharmal was made a noble of high rank in the imperial court, and subsequently his son Bhagwant Das and grandson Man Singh also rose to high ranks in the nobility.

Other Rajput kingdoms also established matrimonial alliances with Akbar, but matrimony was not insisted on as a precondition for forming alliances. Two major Rajput clans remained aloof – the Sisodiyas of Mewar and Hadas of Ranthambore. In another turning point of Akbar's reign, Raja Man Singh I of Amber went with Akbar to meet the Hada leader, Surjan Hada, to effect an alliance. Surjan accepted an alliance on the condition that Akbar did not marry any of his daughters. Consequently, no matrimonial alliance was entered into, yet Surjan was made a noble and placed in charge of Garh-Katanga.

The political effect of these alliances was significant. While some Rajput women who entered Akbar's harem converted to Islam, they were generally provided full religious freedom, and



their relatives, who continued to remain Hindu, formed a significant part of the nobility and served to articulate the opinions of the majority of the common populace in the imperial court. The interaction between Hindu and Muslim nobles in the imperial court resulted in exchange of thoughts and blending of the two cultures. Further, newer generations of the Mughal line represented a merger of Mughal and Rajput blood, thereby strengthening ties between the two. As a result, the Rajputs became the strongest allies of the Mughals, and Rajput soldiers and generals fought for the Mughal army under Akbar, leading it in several campaigns including the conquest of Gujarat in 1572. Akbar's policy of religious tolerance ensured that employment in the imperial administration was open to all on merit irrespective of creed, and this led to an increase in the strength of the administrative services of the empire.

Another legend is that Akbar's daughter Meherunnissa was enamoured by Tansen and had a role in his coming to Akbar's court. Tansen converted to Islam from Hinduism, apparently on the eve of his marriage with Akbar's daughter.

## **Foreign relations**

### **Relations with the Portuguese**

- At the time of Akbar's ascension in 1556, the Portuguese had established several fortresses and factories on the western coast of the subcontinent, and largely controlled navigation and sea-trade in that region. As a consequence of this colonialism, all

other trading entities were subject to the terms and conditions of the Portuguese, and this was resented by the rulers and traders of the time including Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

In the year 1572 the Mughal Empire annexed Gujarat and acquired its first access to the sea after local officials informed Akbar that the Portuguese had begun to exert control in the Indian Ocean. Hence Akbar was conscious of the threat posed by the presence of the Portuguese and remained content with obtaining a *cartaz* (permit) from them for sailing in the Persian Gulf region.

At the initial meeting of the Mughals and the Portuguese during the Siege of Surat in 1572, the Portuguese, recognising the superior strength of the Mughal army, chose to adopt diplomacy instead of war. The Portuguese Governor, upon the request of Akbar, sent him an ambassador to establish friendly relations. Akbar's efforts to purchase and secure from the Portuguese some of their compact artillery pieces were unsuccessful and thus Akbar could not establish the Mughal navy along the Gujarat coast.

Akbar accepted the offer of diplomacy, but the Portuguese continually asserted their authority and power in the Indian Ocean; in fact Akbar was highly concerned when he had to request a permit from the Portuguese before any ships from the Mughal Empire were to depart for the Hajjpilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. In 1573, he issued a *firman* directing Mughal administrative officials in Gujarat not to provoke the Portuguese in the territory they held in Daman. The Portuguese, in turn, issued passes for the members of Akbar's

family to go on Hajj to Mecca. The Portuguese made mention of the extraordinary status of the vessel and the special status to be accorded to its occupants.

In September 1579 Jesuits from Goa were invited to visit the court of Akbar. The emperor had his scribes translate the New Testament and granted the Jesuits freedom to preach the Gospel. One of his sons, Sultan Murad Mirza, was entrusted to Antoni de Montserrat for his education. While debating at court, the Jesuits did not confine themselves to the exposition of their own beliefs but also reviled Islam and Muhammad. Their comments enraged the Imams and Ulama, who objected to the remarks, but Akbar ordered their comments to be recorded and observed the Jesuits and their behaviour carefully. This event was followed by a rebellion of Muslim clerics in 1581 led by Mullah Muhammad Yazdi and Muiz-ul-Mulk, the chief Qadi of Bengal; the rebels wanted to overthrow Akbar and insert his brother Mirza Muhammad Hakim ruler of Kabul on the Mughal throne. Akbar successfully defeated the rebels, but he had grown more cautious about his guests and his proclamations, which he later checked with his advisers carefully.

### **Relations with the Ottoman Empire**

In 1555, while Akbar was still a child, the Ottoman Admiral Seydi Ali Reis visited the Mughal Emperor Humayun. In 1569, during the early years of Akbar's rule, another Ottoman Admiral Kurtoğlu Hızır Reis arrived on the shores of the Mughal Empire. These Ottoman admirals sought to end the growing threats of the Portuguese Empire during their Indian Ocean campaigns. During his reign Akbar himself is known to

have sent six documents addressing the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent.

In 1576 Akbar sent a very large contingent of pilgrims led by Khwaja Sultan Naqshbandi, Yahya Saleh, with 600,000 gold and silver coins and 12,000 Kaftans of honour and large consignments of rice. In October 1576 Akbar sent a delegation including members of his family, including his aunt Gulbadan Begum and his consort Salima, on Hajj by two ships from Surat including an Ottoman vessel, which reached the port of Jeddah in 1577 and then proceeded towards Mecca and Medina. Four more caravans were sent from 1577 to 1580, with exquisite gifts for the authorities of Mecca and Medina.

The imperial Mughal entourage stayed in Mecca and Medina for nearly four years and attended the Hajj four times. During this period Akbar financed the pilgrimages of many poor Muslims from the Mughal Empire and also funded the foundations of the Qadiriyya Sufi Order's dervish lodge in the Hijaz. The Mughals eventually set out for Surat, and their return was assisted by the Ottoman Pasha in Jeddah. Because of Akbar's attempts to build Mughal presence in Mecca and Medina, the local Sharif's began to have more confidence in the financial support provided by Mughal Empire, lessening their dependency upon Ottoman bounty. Mughal-Ottoman trade also flourished during this period – in fact merchants loyal to Akbar are known to have reached Aleppo after journeying upriver through the port of Basra.

According to some accounts Akbar expressed a desire to form an alliance with the Portuguese, mainly in order to advance his interests, but whenever the Portuguese attempted to invade the

Ottomans, Akbar proved abortive. In 1587 a Portuguese fleet sent to attack Yemen was ferociously routed and defeated by the Ottoman Navy; thereafter the Mughal-Portuguese alliance immediately collapsed, mainly because of the continuing pressure by the Mughal Empire's prestigious vassals at Janjira.

## **Relations with the Safavid Dynasty**

The Safavids and the Mughals had a long history of diplomatic relationship, with the Safavid ruler Tahmasp I having provided refuge to Humayun when he had to flee the Indian subcontinent following his defeat by Sher Shah Suri. However, the Safavids differed from the Sunni Mughals and Ottomans in following the Shiite sect of Islam. One of the longest standing disputes between the Safavids and the Mughals pertained to the control of the city of Qandahar in the Hindukush region, forming the border between the two empires.

The Hindukush region was militarily very significant owing to its geography, and this was well-recognised by strategists of the times. Consequently, the city, which was being administered by Bairam Khan at the time of Akbar's accession, was invaded and captured by the Persian ruler Husain Mirza, a cousin of Tahmasp I, in 1558. Subsequent to this, Bairam Khan sent an envoy to the court of Tahmasp I in an effort to maintain peaceful relations with the Safavids. This gesture was reciprocated and a cordial relationship continued to prevail between the two empires during the first two decades of Akbar's reign. However, the death of Tahmasp I in 1576 resulted in civil war and instability in the Safavid empire, and diplomatic relations between the two empires ceased for more

than a decade. They were restored only in 1587 following the accession of Shah Abbas to the Safavid throne. Shortly afterwards, Akbar's army completed its annexation of Kabul, and in order to further secure the north-western boundaries of his empire, it proceeded to Qandahar. The city capitulated without resistance on 18 April 1595, and the ruler Muzaffar Hussain moved into Akbar's court. Qandahar continued to remain in Mughal possession, and the Hindukush the empire's western frontier, for several decades until Shah Jahan's expedition into Badakhshan in 1646. Diplomatic relations continued to be maintained between the Safavid and Mughal courts until the end of Akbar's reign.

### **Relations with other contemporary kingdoms**

Vincent Arthur Smith observes that the merchant Mildenhall was employed in 1600 while the establishment of the Company was under adjustment to bear a letter from Queen Elizabeth to Akbar requesting liberty to trade in his dominions on terms as good as those enjoyed by the Portuguese.

Akbar was also visited by the French explorer Pierre Malherbe.

## **Religious policy**

Akbar, as well as his mother and other members of his family, are believed to have been SunniHanafi Muslims. His early days were spent in the backdrop of an atmosphere in which liberal sentiments were encouraged and religious narrow-mindedness was frowned upon. From the 15th century, a number of rulers in various parts of the country adopted a more liberal policy of religious tolerance, attempting to foster communal harmony

between Hindus and Muslims. These sentiments were earlier encouraged by the teachings of popular saints like Guru Nanak, Kabir and Chaitanya, the verses of the Persian poet Hafez which advocated human sympathy and a liberal outlook, as well as the Timurid ethos of religious tolerance in the empire, persisted in the polity right from the times of Timur to Humayun, and influenced Akbar's policy of tolerance in matters of religion. Further, his childhood tutors, who included two Irani Shias, were largely above sectarian prejudices, and made a significant contribution to Akbar's later inclination towards religious tolerance.

Akbar sponsored religious debates between different Muslim groups (Sunni, Shia, Ismaili, and Sufis), Parsis, Hindus (Shaivite and Vaishnava), Sikhs, Jains, Jews, Jesuits and Materialists, but was partial to Sufism, he proclaimed that 'the wisdom of Vedanta is the wisdom of Sufism'.

When he was at Fatehpur Sikri, he held discussions as he loved to know about others' religious beliefs. On one such day he got to know that the religious people of other religions were often intolerant of others religious beliefs. This led him to form the idea of the new religion, Sulh-e-kul meaning universal peace. His idea of this religion did not discriminate other religions and focused on the ideas of peace, unity and tolerance.

### **Association with the Muslim aristocracy**

During the early part of his reign, Akbar adopted an attitude of suppression towards Muslim sects that were condemned by the orthodoxy as heretical. In 1567, on the advice of Shaikh

Abdu'n Nabi, he ordered the exhumation of Mir Murtaza Sharifi Shirazi – a Shia buried in Delhi – because of the grave's proximity to that of Amir Khusrau, arguing that a "heretic" could not be buried so close to the grave of a Sunni saint, reflecting a restrictive attitude towards the Shia, which continued to persist until the early 1570s. He suppressed Mahdavidism in 1573 during his campaign in Gujarat, in the course of which the Mahdavi leader Bandagi Miyan Sheik Mustafa was arrested and brought in chains to the court for debate and released after eighteen months. However, as Akbar increasingly came under the influence of pantheistic Sufi mysticism from the early 1570s, it caused a great shift in his outlook and culminated in his shift from orthodox Islam as traditionally professed, in favour of a new concept of Islam transcending the limits of religion. Consequently, during the latter half of his reign, he adopted a policy of tolerance towards the Shias and declared a prohibition on Shia-Sunni conflict, and the empire remained neutral in matters of internal sectarian conflict. In the year 1578, the Mughal Emperor Akbar famously referred to himself as:

Emperor of Islam, Emir of the Faithful, Shadow of God on earth, Abul Fath Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar Badshah Ghazi (whose empire Allah perpetuate), is a most just, most wise, and a most God-fearing ruler.

In 1580, a rebellion broke out in the eastern part of Akbar's empire, and a number of *fatwas*, declaring Akbar to be a heretic, were issued by Qazis. Akbar suppressed the rebellion and handed out severe punishments to the Qazis. To further strengthen his position in dealing with the Qazis, Akbar issued a *mazhar*, or declaration, that was signed by all major *ulemas*



in 1579. The *mahzar* asserted that Akbar was the *Khalifa* of the age, a higher rank than that of a *Mujtahid*: in case of a difference of opinion among the *Mujtahids*, Akbar could select any one opinion and could also issue decrees that did not go against the *nass*. Given the prevailing Islamic sectarian conflicts in various parts of the country at that time, it is believed that the *Mazhar* helped stabilize the religious situation in the empire. It made Akbar very powerful because of the complete supremacy accorded to the *Khalifa* by Islam, and also helped him eliminate the religious and political influence of the Ottoman *Khalifa* over his subjects, thus ensuring their complete loyalty to him.

Throughout his reign Akbar was a patron of influential Muslim scholars such as Mir Ahmed Nasrallah Thattvi and Tahir Muhammad Thattvi. Whenever Akbar would attend congregations at a mosque the following proclamation was made:

The Lord to me the Kingdom gave, He made me wise, strong and brave, He guides me through right and truth, Filling my mind with the love of truth, No praise of man could sum his state, Allah Hu Akbar, God is Great.

## **Din-i-Ilahi**

Akbar was deeply interested in religious and philosophical matters. An orthodox Muslim at the outset, he later came to be influenced by Sufi mysticism that was being preached in the country at that time, and moved away from orthodoxy, appointing to his court several talented people with liberal ideas, including Abul Fazl, Faizi and Birbal. In 1575, he built a

hall called the Ibadat Khana ("*House of Worship*") at Fatehpur Sikri, to which he invited theologians, mystics and selected courtiers renowned for their intellectual achievements and discussed matters of spirituality with them. These discussions, initially restricted to Muslims, were acrimonious and resulted in the participants shouting at and abusing each other. Upset by this, Akbar opened the Ibadat Khana to people of all religions as well as atheists, resulting in the scope of the discussions broadening and extending even into areas such as the validity of the Quran and the nature of God. This shocked the orthodox theologians, who sought to discredit Akbar by circulating rumours of his desire to forsake Islam.

Akbar's effort to evolve a meeting point among the representatives of various religions was not very successful, as each of them attempted to assert the superiority of their respective religions by denouncing other religions. Meanwhile, the debates at the Ibadat Khana grew more acrimonious and, contrary to their purpose of leading to a better understanding among religions, instead led to greater bitterness among them, resulting in the discontinuance of the debates by Akbar in 1582. However, his interaction with various religious theologians had convinced him that despite their differences, all religions had several good practices, which he sought to combine into a new religious movement known as *Din-i-Ilahi*.

Some modern scholars claim that Akbar did not initiate a new religion but instead introduced what Dr. Oscar R. Gómez calls the transtheistic outlook from tantric Tibetan Buddhism, and that he did not use the word *Din-i-Ilahi*. According to the contemporary events in the Mughal court Akbar was indeed angered by the acts of embezzlement of wealth by many high

level Muslim clerics. The purported Din-i-Ilahi was more of an ethical system and is said to have prohibited lust, sensuality, slander and pride, considering them as sins. Piety, prudence, abstinence and kindness are the core virtues. The soul is encouraged to purify itself through yearning of God. Celibacy was respected, chastity enforced, the slaughter of animals was forbidden and there were no sacred scriptures or a priestly hierarchy. However, a leading Noble of Akbar's court, Aziz Koka, wrote a letter to him from Mecca in 1594 arguing that the discipleship promoted by Akbar amounted to nothing more than a desire on Akbar's part to portray his superiority regarding religious matters. To commemorate Din-e-Ilahi, he changed the name of Prayag to Allahabad (pronounced as *ilahabad*) in 1583.

It has been argued that the theory of Din-i-Ilahi being a new religion was a misconception that arose because of erroneous translations of Abul Fazl's work by later British historians. However, it is also accepted that the policy of *sulh-e-kul*, which formed the essence of Din-i-Ilahi, was adopted by Akbar not merely for religious purposes but as a part of general imperial administrative policy. This also formed the basis for Akbar's policy of religious toleration. At the time of Akbar's death in 1605 there were no signs of discontent amongst his Muslim subjects, and the impression of even a theologian like Abdu'l Haq was that close ties remained.

### **Relation with Hindus**

Akbar decreed that Hindus who had been forced to convert to Islam could reconvert to Hinduism without facing the death penalty. In his days of tolerance he was so well liked by

Hindus that there are numerous references to him, and his eulogies are sung in songs and religious hymns as well.

Akbar practised several Hindu customs. He celebrated Diwali, allowed Brahman priests to tie jewelled strings round his wrists by way of blessing, and, following his lead, many of the nobles took to wearing *rakhi* (protection charms). He renounced beef and forbade the sale of all meats on certain days.

Even his son Jahangir and grandson Shahjahan maintained many of Akbar's concessions, such as the ban on cow slaughter, having only vegetarian dishes on certain days of the week, and drinking only Ganges water. Even as he was in the Punjab, 200 miles away from the Ganges, the water was sealed in large jars and transported to him. He referred to the Ganges water as the "water of immortality."

### **Relation with Jains**

Akbar regularly held discussions with Jain scholars and was also greatly impacted by some of their teachings. His first encounter with Jain rituals was when he saw a procession of a Jain Shravaka named Champa after a six-month-long fast. Impressed by her power and devotion, he invited her guru, or spiritual teacher, Acharya Hiravijaya Suri to Fatehpur Sikri. Acharya accepted the invitation and began his march towards the Mughal capital from Gujarat.

Akbar was impressed by the scholastic qualities and character of the Acharya. He held several inter-faith dialogues among philosophers of different religions. The arguments of Jains against eating meat persuaded him to become a vegetarian.

Akbar also issued many imperial orders that were favourable for Jain interests, such as banning animal slaughter. Jain authors also wrote about their experience at the Mughal court in Sanskrit texts that are still largely unknown to Mughal historians.

The Indian Supreme Court has cited examples of co-existence of Jain and Mughal architecture, calling Akbar "the architect of modern India" and that "he had great respect" for Jainism. In 1584, 1592 and 1598, Akbar had declared "Amari Ghosana", which prohibited animal slaughter during Paryushan and Mahavir Jayanti. He removed the Jazia tax from Jain pilgrim places like Palitana. Santichandra, disciple of Suri, was sent to the Emperor, who in turn left his disciples Bhanuchandra and Siddhichandra in the court. Akbar again invited Hiravijaya Suri's successor Vijayasena Suri in his court who visited him between 1593 and 1595.

Akbar's religious tolerance was not followed by his son Jahangir, who even threatened Akbar's former friend Bhanuchandra.

## **Historical accounts**

### **Personality**

Akbar's reign was chronicled extensively by his court historian Abul Fazl in the books *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-akbari*. Other contemporary sources of Akbar's reign include the works of Badayuni, Shaikhzada Rashidi and Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi.

Akbar was a warrior, emperor, general, animal trainer (reputedly keeping thousands of hunting cheetahs during his reign and training many himself), and theologian. Believed to be dyslexic, he was read to everyday and had a remarkable memory.

Akbar was said to have been a wise emperor and a sound judge of character. His son and heir, Jahangir, wrote effusive praise of Akbar's character in his memoirs, and dozens of anecdotes to illustrate his virtues. According to Jahangir, Akbar was "of the hue of wheat; his eyes and eyebrows were black and his complexion rather dark than fair". Antoni de Montserrat, the Catalan Jesuit who visited his court described him as follows:

"One could easily recognize even at first glance that he is King. He has broad shoulders, somewhat bandy legs well-suited for horsemanship, and a light brown complexion. He carries his head bent towards the right shoulder. His forehead is broad and open, his eyes so bright and flashing that they seem like a sea shimmering in the sunlight. His eyelashes are very long. His eyebrows are not strongly marked. His nose is straight and small though not insignificant. His nostrils are widely open as though in derision. Between the left nostril and the upper lip there is a mole. He shaves his beard but wears a moustache. He limps in his left leg though he has never received an injury there."

Akbar was not tall but powerfully built and very agile. He was also noted for various acts of courage. One such incident occurred on his way back from Malwa to Agra when Akbar was 19 years of age. Akbar rode alone in advance of his escort and was confronted by a tigress who, along with her cubs, came out

from the shrubbery across his path. When the tigress charged the emperor, he was alleged to have dispatched the animal with his sword in a solitary blow. His approaching attendants found the emperor standing quietly by the side of the dead animal.

Abul Fazl, and even the hostile critic Badayuni, described him as having a commanding personality. He was notable for his command in battle, and, "like Alexander of Macedon, was always ready to risk his life, regardless of political consequences". He often plunged on his horse into the flooded river during the rainy seasons and safely crossed it. He rarely indulged in cruelty and is said to have been affectionate towards his relatives. He pardoned his brother Hakim, who was a repented rebel. But on rare occasions, he dealt cruelly with offenders, such as his maternal uncle Muazzam and his foster-brother Adham Khan, who was twice defenestrated for drawing Akbar's wrath.

He is said to have been extremely moderate in his diet. *Ain-e-Akbari* mentions that during his travels and also while at home, Akbar drank water from the Gangesriver, which he called 'the water of immortality'. Special people were stationed at Sorun and later Haridwar to dispatch water, in sealed jars, to wherever he was stationed. According to Jahangir's memoirs, he was fond of fruits and had little liking for meat, which he stopped eating in his later years.

Akbar also once visited Vrindavan, regarded as the birthplace of Krishna, in the year 1570, and gave permission for four temples to be built by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, which were Madana-mohana, Govindaji, Gopinatha and Jugal Kisore.

To defend his stance that speech arose from hearing, he carried out a language deprivation experiment, and had children raised in isolation, not allowed to be spoken to, and pointed out that as they grew older, they remained mute.

## **Hagiography**

During Akbar's reign, the ongoing process of inter-religious discourse and syncretism resulted in a series of religious attributions to him in terms of positions of assimilation, doubt or uncertainty, which he either assisted himself or left unchallenged. Such hagiographical accounts of Akbar traversed a wide range of denominational and sectarian spaces, including several accounts by Parsis, Jains and Jesuit missionaries, apart from contemporary accounts by Brahminical and Muslim orthodoxy. Existing sects and denominations, as well as various religious figures who represented popular worship felt they had a claim to him. The diversity of these accounts is attributed to the fact that his reign resulted in the formation of a flexible centralised state accompanied by personal authority and cultural heterogeneity.

## **Akbarnāma, the *Book of Akbar***

The *Akbarnāma* (Persian: اکبر نامه), which literally means *Book of Akbar*, is an official biographical account of Akbar, the third Mughal Emperor (r. 1542–1605), written in Persian. It includes vivid and detailed descriptions of his life and times.

The work was commissioned by Akbar, and written by Abul Fazl, one of the *Nine Jewels* (Hindi: Navaratnas) of Akbar's royal court. It is stated that the book took seven years to be



completed and the original manuscripts contained a number of paintings supporting the texts, and all the paintings represented the Mughal school of painting, and work of masters of the imperial workshop, including Basawan, whose use of portraiture in its illustrations was an innovation in Indian art.

## Marriages

Akbar's first wife and chief consort was his cousin, Princess Ruqaiya Sultan Begum, the only daughter of his paternal uncle, Prince Hindal Mirza, and his wife Sultanam Begum. In 1551, Hindal Mirza died fighting valorously in a battle against Kamran Mirza's forces. Upon hearing the news of his brother's death, Humayun was overwhelmed with grief. Out of affection to the memory of his brother, Humayun betrothed Hindal's nine-year-old daughter Ruqaiya to his son Akbar. Their betrothal took place in Kabul, shortly after Akbar's first appointment as a viceroy in the province of Ghazni. Humayun conferred on the imperial couple, all the wealth, army, and adherents of Hindal and Ghazni which one of Hindal's *jagir* was given to his nephew, Akbar, who was appointed as its viceroy and was also given the command of his uncle's army. Akbar's marriage with Ruqaiya was solemnized near Jalandhar, Punjab, when both of them were 14-years-old. Childless herself, she adopted Akbar's favorite grandson, Prince Khurram (the future emperor Shah Jahan). She died on 19 January 1626.

His second wife was the daughter of Abdullah Khan Mughal. The marriage took place in 1557 during the siege of Mankot. Bairam Khan did not approve of this marriage, for Abdullah's sister was married to Akbar's uncle, Prince Kamran Mirza, and

so he regarded Abdullah as a partisan of Kamran. He opposed the match until Nasir-al-mulk made him understand that opposition in such matters was unacceptable. Nasir-al-mulk arranged an assemblage of pleasure and banquet of joy, and a royal feast was provided.

His third wife was his cousin, Salima Sultan Begum, the daughter of Nur-ud-din Muhammad Mirza and his wife Gulrukh Begum also known as Gulrang, the daughter of Emperor Babur. She was at first betrothed to Bairam Khan by Humayun. After Bairam Khan's death in 1561, Akbar married her himself the same year. She died childless on 2 January 1613.

In 1562, he married the daughter of Raja Bharmal, ruler of Amer. The marriage took place when Akbar was on his way back from Ajmer after offering prayers to the tomb of Moinuddin Chishti. Bharmal had conveyed to Akbar that he was being harassed by his brother-in-law Sharif-ud-din Mirza (the Mughal *hakim* of Mewat). Akbar insisted that Bharmal should submit to him personally, it was also suggested that his daughter should be married to him as a sign of complete submission. She was entitled Mariam-uz-Zamani after giving birth to Akbar's eldest surviving son, Prince Salim (the future emperor Jahangir). She died on 19 May 1623.

The same year, Akbar married the former wife of Abdul Wasi, the son of Shaikh Bada, lord of Agra. Akbar had fallen in love with her, and ordered Abdul Wasi to divorce her. Another of his wives was Gauhar-un-Nissa Begum, the daughter of Shaikh Muhammad Bakhtiyar and the sister of Shaikh Jamal Bakhtiyar. Their dynasty was called Din Laqab and had been

living for a long time in Chandwar and Jalesar near Agra. She was Akbar's chief wife. His next marriage took place in 1564 to the daughter of Miran Mubrak Shah, the ruler of Khandesh. In 1564, he sent presents to the court with a request that his daughter be married by Akbar.

Miran's request was acceded and an order was issued. Itimad Khan was sent with Miran's ambassadors, and when he came near the fort of Asir, which was Miran's residence. Miran welcomed Itimad with honor, and despatched his daughter with Itimad. A large number of nobles accompanied her. The marriage took place in September 1564 when she reached Akbar's court. As dowry, Mubarak Shah ceded Bijagarh and Handia to his imperial son-in-law.

He married another Rajput princess in 1570, who was the daughter of Kahan, the brother of Rai Kalyan Mal Rai, the ruler of Bikanir. The marriage took place in 1570, when Akbar came to this part of the country. Kalyan made a homage to Akbar, and requested that his brother's daughter be married by him. Akbar accepted his proposal, and the marriage was arranged. He also married the daughter of Rawal Har Rai, the ruler of Jaisalmer in 1570. Rawal had sent a request that his daughter be married by Akbar. The proposal was accepted by Akbar. Raja Bahgwan Das was despatched on this service. The marriage ceremony took place after Akbar's return from Nagor. She was the mother of Princess Mahi Begum, who died on 8 April 1577.

Another of his wives was Bhakkari Begum, the daughter of Sultan Mahmud of Bhakkar. On 2 July 1572, Akbar's envoy I'timad Khan reached Mahmud's court to escort his daughter to

Akbar. I'timad Khan brought with him for Sultan Mahmud an elegant dress of honour, a bejewelled scimitar-belt, a horse with a saddle and reins and four elephants. Mahmud celebrated the occasion by holding extravagant feasts for fifteen days. On the day of wedding, the festivities reached their zenith and the ulema, saints and nobles were adequately honoured with rewards. Mahmud offered 30,000 rupees in cash and kind to I'timad Khan and farewelled his daughter with a grand dowry and an impressive entourage. She came to Ajmer and waited upon Akbar. The gifts of Sultan Mahmud, carried by the delegation were presented to the ladies of the imperial harem.

His ninth wife was Qasima Banu Begum, the daughter of Arab Shah. The marriage took place in 1575. A great feast was given, and the high officers, and other pillars of the state were present. In 1577, the Rajah of Dungarpur State petitioned a request that his daughter might be married to Akbar. Akbar had regard to his loyalty and granted his request. Rai Loukaran and Rajah Birbar, servants of the Rajah were sent from Dihalpur to do the honour of conveying his daughter. The two delivered the lady at Akbar's court where the marriage took place on 12 July 1577.

His eleventh wife was Bibi Daulat Shad. She was the mother of Princess Shagr-un-Nissa Begum, and Princess Aram Banu Begum born on 22 December 1584. His next wife was the daughter of Shams Chak, a Kashmiri. The marriage took place on 3 November 1592. Shams belonged to the great men of the country, and had long cherished this wish. In 1593, he married the daughter of Qazi Isa, and the cousin of Najib Khan. Najib told Akbar that his uncle had made his daughter a present for

him. Akbar accepted his representation and on 3 July 1593 he visited Najib Khan's house and married Qazi Isa's daughter.

At some point, Akbar took into his harem Rukmavati, a daughter of Rao Maldev of Marwar by one of his mistresses. This was a *dolo* union as opposed to a formal marriage, representing the bride's lower status in her father's household, and served as an expression of vassalage to an overlord. The dating of this event is not recorded.

## **Death**

On 3 October 1605, Akbar fell ill with an attack of dysentery from which he never recovered. He is believed to have died on 27 October 1605, after which his body was buried at his mausoleum in Sikandra, Agra.

## **Legacy**

Akbar left a rich legacy both for the Mughal Empire as well as the Indian subcontinent in general. He firmly entrenched the authority of the Mughal Empire in India and beyond, after it had been threatened by the Afghans during his father's reign, establishing its military and diplomatic superiority. During his reign, the nature of the state changed to a secular and liberal one, with emphasis on cultural integration. He also introduced several far-sighted social reforms, including prohibiting *sati*, legalising widow remarriage and raising the age of marriage. Folk tales revolving around him and Birbal, one of his *navratnas*, are popular in India.

*Bhavishya Purana* is a minor *Purana* that depicts the various Hindu holy days and includes a section devoted to the various dynasties that ruled India, dating its oldest portion to 500 CE and newest to the 18th century. It contains a story about Akbar in which he is compared to the other Mughal rulers.

The section called "Akbar Bahshaha Varnan", written in Sanskrit, describes his birth as a "reincarnation" of a sage who immolated himself on seeing the first Mughal ruler Babur, who is described as the "cruel king of Mlecchas (Muslims)".

In this text it is stated that Akbar "was a miraculous child" and that he would not follow the previous "violent ways" of the Mughals.

Citing Akbar's melding of the disparate 'fiefdoms' of India into the Mughal Empire as well as the lasting legacy of "pluralism and tolerance" that "underlies the values of the modern republic of India", Time magazine included his name in its list of top 25 world leaders.

On the other hand, his legacy is explicitly negative in Pakistan for the same reasons. Historian Mubarak Ali, while studying the image of Akbar in Pakistani textbooks, observes that Akbar "is conveniently ignored and not mentioned in any school textbook from class one to matriculation", as opposed to the omnipresence of emperor Aurangzeb.

He quotes historian Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, who said that, due to his religious tolerance, "Akbar had so weakened Islam through his policies that it could not be restored to its dominant position in the affairs."

A common thread among Pakistani historians is to blame Akbar's Rajput policy. As a conclusion, after analyzing many textbooks, Mubarak Ali says that "Akbar is criticized for bringing Muslims and Hindus together as one nation and putting the separate identity of the Muslims in danger. This policy of Akbar contradicts the theory of Two-Nation and therefore makes him an unpopular figure in Pakistan."