

Encyclopedia of Indian History 18th Century, Vol 1

Arthur Rodgers



**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
INDIAN HISTORY
18TH CENTURY, VOL 1**

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by Arthur Rodgers

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Chapter 1

Battle of Anandpur (1700)

The **Battle of Anandpur** was fought at Anandpur, between the armies of the Sikh Guru Gobind Singh and the Mughal forces aided by the Nawab of Bahawalpur state, Rajas of the Sivalik Hills.

Cause

The increasing power of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and his establishment of a military order (Khalsa) alarmed the Rajas of the Sivalik hills. After some failed attempts to check the Guru's power, the Rajas teamed with the Mughal General Wazir Khan to help them against the Guru.

The Mughal viceroy of Delhi sent his generals Din Beg and Painsa Khan, each with an army of five thousand men, to subdue the Guru. The Mughal forces were joined by the armies of the hill chiefs at Rupar. The Guru appointed the *Panj Piare*, his five beloved Sikhs, as the generals of his army.

The battle

According to the Sikh chronicles, Guru Gobind Singh refused to play the role of an aggressor, as he had vowed never to strike except in self-defence. In the course of long action near Anandpur, northeast of Ludhiana, Painsa Khan was killed—reputedly in single combat by Guru Gobind Singh. After Painsa Khan's death, Din Beg assumed the command of his troops.

However, he failed to overpower the Guru's forces. The hill Rajas fled from the battlefield, and Din Beg was forced to retreat after being wounded. He was pursued by the Guru's army as far as Rupar.

Aftermath

After the Mughal generals failed to drive off the Guru from Anandpur, the hill Rajas formed an alliance and attacked Anandpur, leading to the Battle of Anandpur (1701).

Chapter 2

Battle of Nirmohgarh (1702)

The **Battle of Nirmohgarh** was fought between Sikhs and the Mughal Empire in 1702.

Background

The Imperial Mughal Army was defeated in the bloody Battle of Anandpur (1700). After hearing the news about the defeat of the Mughal Army in the battle,

Aurangzeb personally himself sent a fresh army under Wazir Khan against Guru Gobind Singh. Wazir Khan thus proceeded with a large number of troops, reinforced by the Hill Rajas of the Sivalik Hills.

The battle

Wazir Khan met the Sikhs just outside Anandpur on the banks of the River Sutlej at Nirmohgarh. The Mughals attacked the Guru from one side and the Hill Rajas attacked them from the other side. The fight continued fiercely for the whole day and at night until eventually the combined forces of the Mughals and Hill Rajas were exhausted and were compelled to retreat.

The next morning, the Mughals and the Hill Raja's forces restarted the attacking and Guru Gobind Singh, finding himself greatly outnumbered, decided to retire from the place. The enemy troops pursued him and the Sikhs decided to give

them another final battle in which the combined forces of Mughals and Hill Rajas were decisively defeated and the imperial Mughal army was forced to withdraw after two days of fighting.

Chapter 3

Birth of Suraj Mal Son of Badan Singh

Suraj Mal

Maharaja Suraj Mal (13 February 1707 – 25 December 1763) or **Sujan Singh**, was a Hindu Jat ruler of Bharatpur in Rajasthan, India. Under him, the Jat rule covered the present-day national capital Delhi and districts of Agra, Aligarh, Alwar, Bharatpur, Bulandshahr, Dholpur, Etah, Etawa, Faridabad, Firozabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Hathras, Jhajjar, Kanpur, Mainpuri, Mathura, Mewat, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Palwal, Rewari, and Rohtak.

A contemporary historian had described him as "the Plato of the Jat tribe" and by a modern writer as the "Jat Odysseus", because of his "political sagacity, steady intellect and clear vision". The Jats, under Suraj Mal, overran the Mughal garrison at Agra. Suraj Mal was killed in an ambush by the Rohilla troops on the night of 25 December 1763 near Hindon River, Shahadra, Delhi. In addition to the troops stationed at his forts, he had an army of 25,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry when he died.

Early life

Suraj Mal was born on 13 February 1707, to Badan Singh and Rani Devki into a Hindu Jat family of Sinsinwar clan in

Bharatpur, Mughal India (present-day Rajasthan, India). Suraj Mal was the founder of Kingdom of Bharatpur. The Hindu Jat Kingdom reached its zenith under Maharaja Suraj Mal. He fought 80+ battles in our life and won all the battles. Suraj Mal was famously known as a hindua suraj. He had won Delhi twice, first time on 10 May 1753 and second time on 24 December 1763. He had political rivalry with several local Rajas and civilizational rivalry with Muslim chieftains and powers like Mughals, Pathans, Afghans, Rohillas and Balochs etc.

Established the Bharatpur

Maharaja Suraj Mal conquered the site of Bharatpur from Khemkaran Sogaria, the son of Rustam, in the year 1733 and established the Bharatpur town in the year 1743. He fortified the city by building a massive wall around the city. He started living in Bharatpur in year 1753.

Lohagarh Fort

Lohagarh Fort was built in 18th century by Raja Suraj Mal. Besides this, Suraj Mal built many other forts and palaces. This fort is the only fort in India that no one in history has won. Lohagarh Fort is considered as one of the strongest fort as British could not capture it in spite of several attacks. Lord Lake made a siege of the fort in 1805 for six weeks but in spite of so many attacks he could not annex it.

Jawahar Burj and the Fateh Burj were built to celebrate the victory over Mughals and British. The fort is surrounded by

deep moats. There is a legend which states that the fort will fall down if a crocodile takes up all the water of the moats.

There is also a legend which states that a gate of the fort was brought from Delhi which Alauddin Khilji brought from the fort of Chittorgarh. The gate was brought and fixed in the fort in 17th century.

Attack on the fort by British General Lake wanted to create enmity between Rajput and Marathas so he reminded Raja Ranjeet of the treaty.

At that time Holkar was in his protection and Raja refused to hand him to the British. British laid a siege on the fort and attacked it under the command of Lake but were defeated badly. Many of their soldiers and officers were killed. After two days British broke the wall and the Jats attacked them through artillery.

In the third attack, the British successfully crossed the moat but the attack of Jats filled the moat with the bodies of soldiers. General Lake was asked to have a peace treaty but he refused saying that reinforcement is coming. The combined forces of Holkar, Amir Khan and Ranjeet Singh attacked the British.

When the British force was reinforced from the troops that came from Mumbai and Chennai, they renewed the attack. The British soldiers were attacked by boulders but still some of them succeeded to enter the fort but British suffered heavy losses. Around 3000 were killed and several thousand were injured. After this Lake went into peace treaty with the Rajputs.

Capture of Delhi

Maharaja Suraj Mal attacked Delhi on 9 May 1753. The Nawab of Delhi Ghazi al-Din III was defeated on 10 May 1753 and Delhi was occupied by Jats many people left Delhi and headed for what is now New Delhi. The Mughal army could not protect them. On 13 May Safdar Jang was dismissed as wazir and appointed in his place Intijam, with Imad as Mir Bakshi. On Suraj's advice, Safdar Jang reacted by appointing Akbar Ādilshāh as emperor. On 14 May the Jats sacked Chārbāg, Bāg-e-kultāt and Hakīm Munīm Bridge, and the next day Jaisinghpura, burning several areas. On 16 May the Jats attacked Delhi and defeated Sādil Khan and Raja Devidatta in a battle. On 17 May the Jats captured Feroz Shah Kotla. In the fight against the rohilles, Najib Khan was wounded and 400 rohillas died. The Nawab of Delhi called for help from the Marathas.

Battle of Kumher

Mughal Emperor Alamgir II and his rebellious courtier Siraj ud-Daulah were having a factional feud. Suraj Mal had sided with Siraj. Alamgir sought the help of the Holkar Marathas of Indore. Khanderao Holkar, son of the Maharaja of Indore, Malhar Rao Holkar, laid a siege on Suraj Mal's Kumher in 1754. While inspecting the troops on an open palanquin in the battle of Kumher, Khanderao was hit and killed by a cannonball from the Bharatpur army. The siege was lifted and a treaty was signed between Jats and Marathas, which later proved helpful for Suraj Mal in consolidating his rule.

Capture of Farrukhnagar

The successive Nawabs ruled over a large tract of land in the area, for over 70 years until they were overthrown by the Jat ruler of Bharatpur, Farrukhnagar was captured by Suraj Mal of Bharatpur, a Jat state in around 1757, defeating Musa Khan son of Kamgar.

Battle of Bharatpur

It was fought between Jats and Afghans on 12 february 1757. Ahmad Shah Durrani a afghan ruler attacked on Bharatpur. Durrani dared not proceed to attack on Deeg. Maharaja Surajmal's troops fought against him in Ballabgarh, Chaumunha, Gokul, Kumher and in Bharatpur. Jat army stopped Afghan army. Surajmal's forces defeat the Abdali's forces. At last Abdali had to leave the war and retreat. During this he ruined and looted the holy places of Mathura and Vrindavan.

Suraj Mal and Abdali

After his victory over Dattaji on 10 January 1760, Ahmad Shah came to Delhi, and called upon Raja Surajmal to pay him tribute and join his camp. On such occasions Surajmal invariably played a humble role, pleading that he was a petty zamindar. He informed the Shah that he would readily pay his share to the lawful Government of Delhi at the fixed time of payment. If the Durrani stayed in India and assumed sovereignty, he would obey him as his legal master. At the time

of demand he possessed no money as his country had been ruined by the constant movements and pillage of Marathas and Afghans. It was not in Durrani's nature to tolerate such defiance. He besieged Surajmal's fort of Dig on 6 February 1760*. After a short while he realized that it would require a very long period to reduce a strongly fortified, largely garrisoned and heavily provisioned fortress. In such cases he did not make it a matter of prestige. He quietly raised the siege, and marched in pursuit of Malhar rao.

Having routed the Maratha chief at Sikandarabad on 4 March 1760, Ahmad Shah marched upon Koil (modern Aligarh) which belonged to Raja Surajmal, and invested the Jat fort of Ramgarh. It was commanded by Durjansal. The fort was well-garrisoned and fortified , and large stocks of provisions had been stored therein.

The fort could have resisted for long; but the qiladar was disheartened at the occupation of the entire upper Ganga Doab by the Afghans, and to save himself from massacre he capitulated in a fortnight or so.

Protect Marathas after Third Battle of Panipat

The Marathas were defeated by Afghan armies at the third battle of Panipat and a hundred thousand Maratha survivors reached Suraj Mal's territory while returning south, sans arms, sans clothes and sans food. Maharaja Suraj Mal and Maharani Kishori received them with tender warmth and hospitality, giving free rations to every Maratha soldier or camp follower.

The wounded were taken care of till they were fit to travel. Thus, Maharaja Suraj Mal spent no less than three million rupees on their sick and wounded guests.

Capture of Agra Fort

Agra was the richest town during that period. Maharaja Suraj Mal decided to capture Agra fort to re-establish his influence in doab region. On 3 May 1761 the Jat army of Suraj Mal with 4000 Jat soldiers reached Agra under the command of Balram and gave the message of Maharaja Suraj Mal to the kiledar (in charge) of Agra fort that the army wanted to cross the Yamuna and needed camping place. The kiledar gave the sanction for camping.

Meanwhile the Jat army started entering the fort, which was resisted by the guards in which 200 people died. Jat army started war from Jamamasjid. During this period Maharaja Suraj Mal stayed at Mathura to observe the situations. On 24 May 1761 Maharaja Suraj Mal along with Imād and Gangadhar Tantya moved from Mathura, crossed Jamuna and reached Aligarh. From Aligarh his army moved and captured the areas of Jat ruler koīl and Jalesar.

They reached Agra to help his army at Agra in the first week of June. Maharaja Suraj Mal arrested the family members of the guards staying in Agra town and pressurized the guards of fort for surrender. At last the kiledar agreed to surrender by receiving a bribe of Rs 1 lakh and jagir of five villages. Thus after a seize of one month Maharaja Suraj Mal captured Agra Fort on 12 June 1761.

Death

Fight with Surajmal and Najib. The Rohilla under Najib-ud-daula had now been encircled and the war was inevitable. Ruhella alongside Baloch Sayyidu Muhammad Khan, Afzal Khan, Zaibita Khan had mobilized the troops which was still weaker in number and weaponry against King Surajmal Military. Jat foray on to the enemy was mobilized from both front and rear end and it was potent enough to have decimated the combined Rohilla and Baloch in two days, but a deceitful ambush by Sayyidu near the Hindon river base took the King Surajmal with surprise. Outnumbered and suddenly the King Surajmal attained Martyrdom on the night of 25 December 1763.

Legacy

His large cenotaph is at Kusum Sarovar, Govardhan, Uttar Pradesh. His imposing chattri is flanked on either side by two smaller chattris of his two wives, "*Maharani Hansiya*" and "*Maharani Kishori*". These memorial chattris were built by his son and successor Maharaja Jawahar Singh. The architecture and carving is in the pierced stone style and the ceiling of cenotaphs are adorned with paintings of the life of Krishna and Suraj Mal. His court poet Sūdan recorded his biography in *Sujān Charitra*.

Notable institutes named after him include Maharaja Surajmal Institute of Technology, Maharaja Surajmal Brij University, Bharatpur and Surajmal Stadium metro station.

In popular culture

- In 2019 Hindi film *Panipat*, Suraj Mal's character was portrayed by Manoj Bakshi.
- In 1994 Hindi TV series *The Great Maratha*, Suraj Mal's character was portrayed by Arun Mathur.

Badan Singh

Badan Singh (Reign: 1722–21 May 1755) was the formal founder of the princely state of Bharatpur. He was nephew of Rao Churaman Singh. After the death of Churaman Singh on 22 September 1721 there were family disputes between Badan Singh and Muhakam, son of Churaman. Badan Singh aligned with Jai Singh II of Jaipur to avoid the anger of Muhakam Singh. In this family feud Jai Singh supported Badan Singh.

Muhakams downfall

Muhakam was a capable leader, he had proved his martial ability by defeating and killing the deputy subedar of Agra and by defeating Sadat Khan, the viceroy of Agra. Muhakam had also challenged Mughal authority by helping rebels like Ajit Singh of Mewar and Chattrasal of Bundi. The Mughal emperor had no choice but to send Jai Singh II of Amber against the Jats. Jai Singh prepared an army of 14,000 men and marched towards the Jat strongholds. Muhakam was forced to retreat to the fort of Thun, he attacked Jai Singh's army at night several times leading to heavy losses on both sides. However day by day the heavy artillery of the besiegers was felt by the

garrison. Muhakam knew that the fort would fall within a short time so he carried as much treasure as he could and destroyed the rest with gunpowder. On 7-8th November 1722 Muhakam fled to Jodhpur where he paid the Jodhpur Maharaja three lakh rupees to help him against Jai Singh. A Jodhpur army was sent under Bijairaj Bhandari to save Thun, however by the time the Jodhpur army reached Jobner, it was too late as most of the Jat strongholds had fallen and many smaller forts had been dismantled. Muhakam had no choice but to go into exile, a Mughal army was sent to chase him, however he was saved by the Maharaja of Jodhpur. Badan Singh was thus made the Thakur of Bharatpur by Jai Singh.

Chapter 4

Guru Granth Sahib

The **Guru Granth Sahib** (Punjabi: ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, pronounced [ɡʊː ɡɾənt̪səː hɐb]) is the central holy religious scripture of Sikhism, regarded by Sikhs as the final, sovereign and eternal Guru following the lineage of the ten human gurus of the religion.

The **Adi Granth**, its first rendition, was compiled by the fifth guru, Guru Arjan Dev (1564–1606). Its compilation was completed on 29 August 1604 and first installed inside Golden Temple in Amritsar on 1 September 1604. Baba Buddha was appointed the first Granthi of the Golden Temple. Shortly afterwards Guru Hargobind added Ramkali Ki Vaar. Later, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru, added hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur to the Adi Granth and affirmed the text as his successor. This second rendition became known as the Guru Granth Sahib and is also sometimes referred to as the Adi Granth.

The text consists of 1,430 *angs* (pages) and 5,894 *śabads* (line compositions), which are poetically rendered and set to a rhythmic ancient north Indian classical form of music. The bulk of the scripture is divided into 31 main *rāgas*, with each Granth *rāga* subdivided according to length and author. The hymns in the scripture are arranged primarily by the *rāgas* in which they are read. The Guru Granth Sahib is written in the Gurmukhi script, in various languages, including Lahnda (Western Punjabi), Braj Bhasha, Kauravi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, and Persian. Copies in these languages often have the generic title

of Sant Bhasha. The Guru Granth Sahib was composed predominantly by six Sikh gurus: Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, and Guru Tegh Bahadur. It also contains the poetic teachings of thirteen Hindu Bhakti movement *sant* poets and two Sufi Muslim poets.

The vision in the Guru Granth Sahib is of a society based on divine freedom, mercy, love and justice without oppression of any kind. While the Granth acknowledges and respects the scriptures of Hinduism and Islam, it does not imply a moral reconciliation with either of these religions. It is installed in a Sikh *gurdwara* (temple). A Sikh typically bows or prostrates before it on entering such a temple. The Granth is revered as eternal *gurbānī* and the spiritual authority in Sikhism.

History

Guru Nanak composed hymns, which were sung by his followers in *rāga* set to music. His successor, Guru Angad, opened centers and distributed these hymns. The community would sing the hymns and his agents collected donations. This tradition was continued by the third and fourth gurus as well. The fifth guru, Guru Arjan, discovered that Prithi Chand – his eldest brother and a competing claimant to the Sikh guruship – had a copy of an earlier *pothi* (palm-leaf manuscript) with hymns and was distributing hymns of the earlier gurus along with his own of hymns. Guru Arjan considered these as spurious and became concerned about establishing an authentic anthology of approved hymns.

Guru Arjan began compiling an officially approved version of the sacred scripture for the Sikh community. He sent his

associates across the Indian subcontinent to collect the circulating hymns of Sikh gurus and convinced Mohan, the son of Guru Amar Das, to give him the collection of the religious writings of the first three gurus in a humble manner by singing the hymns registered in *Guru Granth Sahib*, 248.

O Mohan, your temple is so lofty, and your mansion is unsurpassed. O Mohan, your gates are so beautiful. They are the worship-houses of the Saints.

- — [Sri Guru Granth Sahib page 248 Full Shabad](#)

As his associates returned with their collections, Guru Arjan selected and edited the hymns for inclusion in the *Adi Granth* with Bhai Gurdas as his scribe. This effort yielded several drafts and manuscripts, some of which have survived into the modern era.

The oldest surviving manuscript version of the *Adi Granth* is the *Guru Nanak Dev University Manuscript 1245*, which has been dated to c. 1599. Other early editions of the *Adi Granth* with some variations include the *Bahoval pothi* (c. 1600), *Vanjara pothi* (c. 1601) and *Bhai Rupa pothi* (c. 1603).

Another early variant manuscript is called the *Guru Harsahai pothi*, preserved by Sodhis and is believed to be the one that existed before Guru Arjan's compilation and one he gave to his eldest brother Prithi Chand. It was initially installed in Amritsar, then was moved in the 18th-century and preserved in *Guru Harsahai* (35 kilometers west of Faridkot, Punjab) till 1969, when the state government requested it be displayed for the 500 years celebrations. It was moved for the first time in over 200 years and briefly displayed in Patiala for the event.

Thereafter, the Sodhis consented to transfers. In 1970, however, during another such transfer, this early version of the Adi Granth manuscript was stolen. However, photos of some pages have survived.

This manuscript is claimed by the Sodhis to be the oldest and one written in part by Guru Nanak. However, this claim is first observed only much later, in texts attributed to the 17th-century Hariji, the grandson of Prithi Chand. Based on the evidence in the surviving photos, it is unlikely that Guru Nanak wrote or maintained a pothi.

The features in its Gurmukhi script and the language suggest that the hymns are significantly older, and that the pre-canonical hymns were being written down in early Sikhism and preserved by the Sikh Gurus prior to the editing by Guru Arjan. The existence of Guru Harsahai manuscript attests to the early tradition of Sikh scripture, its existence in variant forms and a competition of ideas on its contents including the Mul Mantar.

Many minor variations, and three significant Adi Granth recensions, are known; these provide insights into how the Sikh scripture was compiled, edited and revised over time. There is a fourth significant version called the Lahori bir, but it primarily differs in how the hymns are arranged and the final pages of the Adi Granth.

Editions

In 1604, the first edition of the Sikh scripture, Adi Granth, was complete and officially approved by Guru Arjan. It was installed at the Golden Temple, with Baba Buddha as the first

granthi or reader. No hymns were added by Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai and Guru Har Krishan. In the Sikh tradition, Guru Hargobind is credited for adding the *rāga* tunes for nine out of 22 Vars. The hymns of IX Guru Tegh Bahadur, after his beheading in Delhi, were added to the scripture by his son and successor Guru Gobind Singh.

In 1704 at Damdama Sahib, during a one-year respite from the heavy fighting with the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh and Bhai Mani Singh added the religious compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur to the Adi Granth to create the final edition, called the Guru Granth Sahib. Prior to Guru Gobind Singh, three versions of the Adi Granth pothi with minor variations were in circulation at Sikh shrines across the Indian subcontinent.

In addition, several unauthorized versions were in circulation, issued by sects founded by one of the sons or relatives of earlier Sikh Gurus such as Prithi Chand, Guru Arjan's elder brother.

Guru Gobind Singh issued the definitive final edition that included the hymns of his father, and closed the canon. This manuscript is called the Damdama bir, and a 1707 rare copy of this manuscript is now preserved at the Toshakhana in Nanded, Maharashtra.

The compositions of Guru Gobind Singh were not included in the Guru Granth Sahib and set into the *Dasven Padsah ka Granth*, which is more popularly known as the *Dasam Granth*. The compilation and release of this definitive edition of the latter was completed by Bhai Mani Singh.

Contributors

- The Guru Granth Sahib contains predominantly hymns of the following Sikh Gurus: Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur. It also contains hymns and verses of thirteen Hindu Bhakti movement *sant poets* (saints) and two Muslim saint poets. There are also idolatry verses for the Gurus such as Guru Nanak fused into some pages, those composed by bards (Bhatts). The hymns and verses are different lengths, some very long, others being just a few line verses. Twenty-two of the thirty-one ragas contain the contributions of *bhagats*. The following is a list of contributors whose hymns are present in the Guru Granth Sahib as well as the number of hymns they contributed: Sikh Gurus:

- Guru Nanak Dev (974)
- Guru Angad Dev (62)
- Guru Amar Das (907)
- Guru Ram Das (679)
- Guru Arjan Dev (2218)
- Guru Hargobind (1)
- Guru Har Rai (4)
- Guru Tegh Bahadur (116)
- Guru Gobind Singh (12)

Bhagats:

- Bhagat Jayadeva (2)
- Bhagat Ramanand (1)
- Bhagat Namdev (60)

- Bhagat Trilochan (5)
- Bhagat Parmanand (1)
- Bhagat Pipa (1)
- Bhagat Sain (1)
- Bhagat Surdas (1)
- Bhagat Ravidas (41)
- Baba Sundar (6)
- Balvand Rai (1)
- Bhatt Kalshar (54)

Bhatts:

- Bhatt Balh (1)
- Bhatt Bhalh (5)
- Bhatt Bhika (2)
- Bhatt Gayand (13)
- Bhatt Harbans (2)
- Bhatt Jalap (5)
- Bhatt Kirat (8)
- Bhatt Mathura (14)
- Bhatt Nalh (16)
- Bhatt Salh (3)

Pirs:

- Bhagat Farid (134)
- Bhagat Bhikhan (2)
- Bhagat Beni (3)
- Bhagat Kabir (541)
- Bhagat Sadhana (1)
- Bhagat Dhanna (4)

Gursikhs:

- Bhai Satta (4)
- Balvand Rai(8)
- Bhai Mardana(12)
- Baba Sunder(10)
- Bhai Piara(53)

Manuscript versions

In the 19th and 20th-century, several manuscript versions of the Adi Granth and the Guru Granth Sahib hymns were discovered. This triggered contesting theories about authenticity and how the canonical text of Sikhism evolved over time. There are five views:

- The first view held by scholars such as Balwant Singh Dhillon states that there was a consistent "mother tradition", where the hymns of Guru Nanak were carefully preserved as a single codex without any corruption or unauthorized changes, to which the later Gurus added additional hymns. The Sikh scripture developed in linear, pure form becoming first the Adi Granth and finally the closed version of the Guru Granth Sahib. According to this view, there was no pre-canonical diversity, the scripture developed in an organized and disciplined format, and it denies the existence of alternate hymns and texts that were cherished by Sikhs of an earlier era.
- The second view held by scholars such as Gurinder Singh Mann states that the scripture started from a single process, proceeded linearly, then diversified into separate textual traditions with some variations, over time. This school of scholars supports their

theory by highlighting the similarities of the manuscripts and close match particularly between the three manuscripts called the Guru Har Sahai MS, the Govindval MS, and the Guru Nanak Dev University MS 1245. This theory is weakened by variations observed in 27 manuscript variants now dated between 1642 and 1692. The alternate formulation of this theory states that two branches developed over time, with the Peshawar pothi and Kartarpur pothi being the two branches.

- The third view held by scholars such as Piar Singh states that independent versions of the Sikh scripture developed in geographically distant regions of the Indian subcontinent. These versions developed because of the forgetfulness or creativity of the local Sikh leaders, errors made by scribes, attempts to adopt popular hymns of bhagats or adapt the hymns to local regional languages where Gurmukhi was not understood. It is these manuscripts that Guru Arjan collected and considered, then edited to produce an approved version of the Adi Granth. The Sikh scripture, according to this school, was thus a collaborative effort and there was no authentic version of the pre-canonical text in Sikhism.
- The fourth view builds upon this third view and is supported by scholars such as Jeevan Deol. According to this view, there were independent textual traditions in Sikhism before Guru Arjan decided to edit and redact them into the Adi Granth. These textual traditions developed in different parts of the Indian subcontinent, greatly influenced by the popularity of regional bhagats and their Bhakti

movement ideas about *nirguna* and *saguna* forms of the divine, with Guru Arjan favoring the *nirgun* versions. The Adi Granth reflects the review, editing and compilation of complex and diverse textual traditions before him.

- The fifth view held by scholars such as Pashaura Singh develops and refines the fourth view. It states that the Sikh scripture emerged from a collaborative effort of Guru Arjan and his trusted associates, particularly Bhai Gurdas and Jagana Brahmin of Agra. His collaborators were his devout admirers, well versed in the Sikh thought, Sanskrit traditions and philosophical schools of Indian religions. The variant manuscripts support this theory, as does the handwriting analysis of the Kartarpur bir (manuscript) approved by Guru Arjan which shows at least four distinct scribal styles. The variations in the manuscripts also affirm that the Adi Granth did not develop in a linear way, i.e. it was not simply copied from a previous version.

Composition

The entire Guru Granth Sahib is written in the Gurmukhi script, which was standardized by Guru Angad in the 16th century. According to Sikh tradition and the *Mahman Prakash*, an early Sikh manuscript, Guru Angad Dev had taught and spread Gurmukhi at the suggestion of Guru Nanak Dev who invented the Gurmukhi script. The word *Gurmukhī* translates to "from the mouth of the guru". It descended from the Laṅkā scripts and was used from the outset for compiling Sikh

scriptures. The Sikhs assign a high degree of sanctity to the Gurmukhī script. It is the official script for writing Punjabi in the Indian State of Punjab.

Gurus considered divine worship through *shabad kirtan* as the best means of attaining that state of bliss -- *vismad* -- which resulted in communion with God. The Guru Granth Sahib is divided by musical settings or rāgas into 1430 pages known as *angs* "limbs" in Sikh tradition. It can be categorized into two sections:

- Introductory section consisting of the Mul Mantar, Japji Sahib and Sohila, composed by Guru Nanak;
- Compositions of Sikh gurus, followed by those of the *bhagats* who know only God, collected according to the chronology of *ragas* or musical settings. (see below).

The word *raga* refers to the "color" and, more specifically, the emotion or mood produced by a combination or sequence of pitches. A rāga is composed of a series of melodic motifs, based upon a definite scale or mode of the seven svara psalmizations, that provide a basic structure around which the musician performs. Gurbani raags are not time dependent.

Following is the list of all sixty rāgas under which Gurbani is written, in order of appearance with page numbers:

- Asa — 8,
- Gujari — 10,
- Gauri Deepaki — 12,
- Dhanasri — 13,
- Gauri Poorabi — 13,

- Sri — 14,
- Majh — 94,
- Gauri Guarairee — 151,
- Gauri — 151,
- Gauri Dakhani — 152,
- Gauri Chaitee — 154,
- Gauri Bairagan — 156,
- Gauri Poorabi Deepaki — 157,
- Gauri Majh — 172,
- Gauri Malva — 214,
- Gauri Mala — 214,
- Gauri Sorath — 330,
- Asa Kafi — 365,
- Asavari — 369,
- Asa Asavari — 409,
- Devgandhari — 527,
- Bihagra — 537,
- Vadhans — 557,
- Vadhans Dakhani — 580,
- Sorath — 595,
- Jaitsri — 696,
- Todi — 711,
- Bairarri — 719,
- Tilang — 721,
- Tilang Kafi — 726,
- Suhee — 728,
- Suhee Kafi — 751,
- Suhee Lalit — 793,
- Bilaval — 795,
- Bilaval Dakhani — 843,
- Gound — 859,
- Bilaval Gound — 874,

- Ramkali — 876,
- Ramkali Dakhani — 907,
- Nut Narayan — 975,
- Nut — 975,
- Mali Gaura — 984,
- Maru — 989,
- Maru Kafi — 1014,
- Maru Dakhani — 1033,
- Tukhari — 1107,
- Kedara — 1118,
- Bhairo — 1125,
- Basant — 1168,
- Basant Hindol — 1170,
- Sarang — 1197,
- Malar — 1254,
- Kanra — 1294,
- Kaliyan — 1319,
- Kaliyan Bhopali — 1321,
- Parbhati Bibhas — 1327,
- Parbhati — 1327,
- Parbhati Dakhani — 1344,
- Bibhas Parbhati — 1347,
- Jaijavanti — 1352.

Meaning and role in Sikhism

In 1708, Guru Gobind Singh conferred the title of "Guru of the Sikhs" upon the Adi Granth. The event was recorded in a *Bhatt Vahi* (a bard's scroll) by an eyewitness, Narbud Singh, who was a bard at the Rajput rulers' court associated with gurus. Sikhs since then have accepted the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred

scripture, as their eternal-living guru, as the embodiment of the ten Sikh Gurus, the highest religious and spiritual guide for Sikhs. It plays a central role in guiding the Sikh's way of life.

No one can change or alter any of the writings of the Sikh gurus written in the Guru Granth Sahib. This includes sentences, words, structure, grammar, and meanings. This tradition was set by Guru Har Rai. He sent his eldest son Ram Rai as an emissary to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in Delhi. Aurangzeb, a devout Muslim ruler, objected to a verse in the Sikh scripture (*Asa ki Var*) that stated, "the clay from a Musalman's grave is kneaded into potter's lump", considering it an insult to Islam. Ram Rai tried to please the emperor by explaining that the text was miscopied and modified it, substituting "Musalman" with "Beiman" (faithless, evil) which Aurangzeb approved. The willingness to change a word led Guru Har Rai to bar his son from his presence, and name his younger son as his successor.

Recitation

The Guru Granth Sahib is always the focal point in any gurdwara, seated on a raised platform known as a *Takht* (throne), while the congregation of devotees sits on the floor and bow before the guru as a sign of respect. The Guru Granth Sahib is given the greatest respect and honour. Sikhs cover their heads and remove their shoes while in the presence of this sacred scripture, their eternal living guru. The Guru Granth Sahib is normally carried on the head and as a sign of respect, never touched with unwashed hands or put on the floor. It is attended with all signs of royalty, with a canopy

placed over it. A *chaur* (fan whisk) is waved above the Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru Granth Sahib is taken care of by a Granthi, who is responsible for reciting from the sacred hymns and leading Sikh prayers. The Granthi also acts as caretaker for the Guru Granth Sahib, keeping the scripture covered in clean cloths, known as *rumala*, to protect from heat and dust. The Guru Granth Sahib rests on a *manji sahib* under a *rumala* until brought out again.

Rituals

There are several rituals performed every day in major Sikh gurdwaras (temples) such as the Golden Temple. These rituals treat the scripture as a living person, a guru, out of respect. The rituals include:

- Closing ritual called *sukhasan* (*sukh* means "comfort or rest", *asan* means "position"). At night, after a series of devotional kirtans and three part ardās, the Guru Granth Sahib is closed, carried on the head, placed into and then carried in a flower decorated, pillow-bed palki (palanquin), with chanting to its bedroom. Once it arrives there, the scripture is tucked into a bed.
- Opening ritual called *prakash* which means "light". About dawn everyday, the Guru Granth Sahib is taken out its bedroom, carried on the head, placed and carried in a flower-decorated palki with chanting, sometimes with bugles sounding its passage. It is brought to the sanctum. Then after ritual singing of a series of Var Asa kirtans and *ardas*, a random page is opened. The first complete

verse on the left page is the *mukhwak* (or *vak*) of the day. It is read out loud, and then written out for the pilgrims to read over that day.

Translations

Ernest Trumpp – a German philologist, published the first philological study and a major but incomplete translation of the Guru Granth Sahib in 1877, after an eight-year study of the text and field interviews with Sikh intelligentsia of his time. Trumpp included his criticism of the Sikh scripture in the preface and introductory sections, and stated "Sikhism is a waning religion, that will soon belong to history". Many in the Sikh community regarded these introductory remarks to his translation as extremely offensive.

According to the Indologist Mark Juergensmeyer, setting aside Ernest Trumpp's nasty remarks, he was a German linguist and his years of scholarship, translations, as well as field notes and discussions with Sikhs at the Golden Temple remain valuable reference works for contemporary scholars. While Akshaya Kumar holds Trumpp's translation to be "literal and mechanical" emphasizing preciseness and fastidiously retaining the words as well as the syntax of the original verses, avoiding any creative and inventive restatement to empathize with a believer,

Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair noted the clear influence from the Brahmanical leanings of his Nirmala collaborators, among the British-supported Sikh class which had been long enjoying British patronage as they helped to keep "hostile" elements under control, who for example induced Trumpp to omit the

numeral “one” in the phrase Ik Oankar in his translation, in an attempt to bring the scripture closer to the Brahmanical-influenced interpretation of the sects that differed with the interpretation of the orthodox Khalsa.

Trumpp's translation was seen to be a challenge to the administration's already-established view that the Sikhs were a distinct community, prompting the Khalsa to commission its own translation. Trumpp, as well as other translators, were commissioned by colonial administrators.

Max Arthur Macauliffe – a British civil servant, was next to publish a major but incomplete translation of the Guru Granth Sahib, covering the same ground as Trumpp but interspersed his translation between *Janamsakhis*-based mythical history of the Sikh Gurus. A major source of his historical information was *Suraj Prakash* of Santokh Singh, and his primary translation advisor was the prominent Khalsa Sikh scholar Kahn Singh Nabha – the author of *Gurmat Prabhakar* and *Hum Hindu Nahin*. Macauliffe's translation appeared embedded in the six-volume *The Sikh Religion* and was published by Oxford University Press in 1909. Unlike Trumpp who had disregarded the sensibilities and empathy for the Sikhs,

Macauliffe used his creative editorial abilities to incorporate these sensibilities. While Trumpp criticized Sikhism and the Guru Granth Sahib, Macauliffe criticized Hinduism and wrote an introduction that presented the hymns of Sikh Gurus as Christian-like with affinities to "Protestant virtues and ethics", presumably for a British audience, states Indologist Giorgio Shani. Macauliffe's translation was well received by the Sikh community and considered by them as closer to how they

interpret their scripture. Post-colonial scholarship has questioned Macauliffe's accounting for and incorporation of Sikh traditions as "uncritical" and "dubious", though one that pleased the Sikh community. Macauliffe's version has been widely followed by later scholars and translators. According to Christopher Shackle – a scholar of Languages and Religion, Macauliffe's approach to translation was to work with Khalsa Sikh reformists of the 1890s (Singh Sabha) and exegetically present the scripture in a "progressive monotheism" fold that deserved the support of the British administration as a distinct tradition, and of the native Sikh clergy. He used considerable freedom in restating the archaic poetry into a "vaguely psalm-like translation".

• **ranslation by Ernest Trumpp (1877)**

By (his) order are made the forms (of all things), his order (however) cannot be told. By his order are made the living beings, by his order greatness is obtained. By his order are the high and the low, by his order pain and pleasure are set down. By his order some are pardoned, some are by his order always caused to wander about (in transmigration). Every one is under (within) his order, exempt from his order is no one. Nanak! if one understand his order, he will not speak in self-conceit. [2]

One sings his (i.e. God's) power, if one has power (so to do). Another sings (his) liberality, if he knows (his) sign. One sings his beautiful qualities and greatnesses. — Another sings a difficult thought of science. One sings: having made the body he reduces it to ashes. Another sings: having taken life he gives

it again. One sings: he is known (manifest), (but) seen afar off. Another sings: being present he sees in the presence. There is no end of sayings and tellings. The story, story is told by crores, crores, crores. He (i.e. God) goes on giving, they taking become tired. For ages and ages they go on eating. The Lord goes on executing his order. O Nanak! he expands unconcerned.

**Translation by Max Arthur Macauliffe
(1909)**

By His order bodies are produced; His order cannot be described. By His order souls are infused into them; by His order greatness is obtained. By His order men are high or low; by His order they obtain preordained pain or pleasure.

By His order some obtain their reward; by His order others must ever wander in transmigration. All are subject to His order; none is exempt from it. He who understandeth God's order, O Nanak, is never guilty of egoism. [2]

Some sing His power according to their abilities; Some sing His gifts according to their knowledge of His signs; Some sing His attributes, His greatness, and His deeds; Some sing His knowledge whose study is arduous; Some sing

<p>that He fashioneth the body and again destroyeth it; Some that He taketh away the soul and again restoreth it; Some that He appeareth far from mortal gaze; Some that He is all-seeing and omnipresent. Millions of men give millions upon millions of descriptions of Him, but they fail to describe Him. The Giver giveth; the receiver groweth weary of receiving. In every age man subsisteth by His bounty. The Commander by His order hath laid out the way of the world. Nanak, God the unconcerned is happy. [3]</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • —Guru Granth Sahib Japji Sahib 2-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • —Guru Granth Sahib Japji Sahib 2-3

The first complete English translation of the Guru Granth Sahib, by Gopal Singh, was published in 1960. A revised version published in 1978 removed archaic English words such as "thee" and "thou".

In 1962, an eight-volume translation into English and Punjabi by Manmohan Singh was published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. In the 2000s, a translation by Sant Singh Khalsa appeared on major Sikhism-related websites such as 3HO/Sikh Dharma Brotherhood's Sikhnet.com.

Printing

Official versions of the Guru Granth Sahib are produced in Amritsar by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). The SGPC printers are the only authorized worldwide publisher of the scripture, states the Sikh religious body Akal Takht. Prior to 2006,

Jeewan Singh Chattar Singh & Sons used to print the official versions and were the oldest publisher in Amritsar. However, in 2006, the Akal Takht banned them from printing the Sikh scripture after a sting operation showed that they were printing and mishandling the scripture as well as selling an illegal copy of the Sikh scripture to a Muslim seer.

A subsidiary of the SGPC, the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee, is the authorized printer and supplier of the Guru Granth Sahib to Sikhs outside of India. These facilities are a part of the Gurudwara Rakabganj in New Delhi.

The original Guru Granth Sahib is in the possession of the Sodhi family of Kartarpur village, and is placed at Gurdwara Thum Sahib.

The Sodhis are descendants of Guru Arjan Dev and Kartarpur was founded by him in 1598. Since the early 20th century, it has been printed in a standard edition of 1430 Angs. Prior to the late nineteenth century, only handwritten copies were prepared.

The first printed copy of the Guru Granth Sahib was made in 1864. Any copies of the Guru Granth Sahib deemed unfit to be

read from are cremated, with a ceremony similar to that for cremating a deceased person. Such a cremation is called Agan Bhatta. The Guru Granth Sahib is currently printed in an authorized printing press in the basement of the Gurudwara Ramsar in Amritsar; misprints and set-up sheets, and printer's waste with any of its sacred text on, are cremated at Goindval.

Chapter 5

Sikh Army under Banda Singh

Bahadur

The **Sikh Khalsa Army** also known as **Khalsa** or simply **Sikh Army** was the military force of the Khalsa, formed in 1598 by Guru Hargobind. It was a cavalry unit until the time of Guru Gobind Singh ji. From Maharaja Ranjit Singh on the army was modernized on Franco-British principles. It was divided in three wings: the Fauj-i-Khas (elites), Fauj-i-Ain (regular force) and Fauj-i-Be Qawaid (irregulars). Due to the lifelong efforts of the Maharaja and his European officers, it gradually became a prominent fighting force of Asia. Ranjit Singh changed and improved the training and organisation of his army. He reorganized responsibility and set performance standards in logistical efficiency in troop deployment, manoeuvre, and marksmanship. He reformed the staffing to emphasize steady fire over cavalry and guerrilla warfare, improved the equipment and methods of war. The military system of Ranjit Singh combined the best of both old and new ideas. He strengthened the infantry and the artillery. He paid the members of the standing army from treasury, instead of the Mughal method of paying an army with local feudal levies.

Background

Before the reign of Ranjit Singh, the armies in Punjab consisted purely of cavalry. After Ranjit Singh became the Sardar of Sukerchakia Misl he gradually unified most of the

Punjab through conquests and diplomacy. However the Afghans, the British and the Gurkhas remained a threat while his empire was in its infancy. Therefore, in 1805, he began recruiting regular forces and employing deserters from the East India Company as officers or soldiers. This latter tactic did not work particularly well because most of the deserters were constantly in touch with the British. The British were alarmed with the rapid conquests of Ranjit Singh and sent many diplomatic missions to help the Phulkian sardars from a possible conquest of their lands and to check the growing power of the Sikh sovereign. The Sikhs under Maharaja Ranjit Singh had already defeated the British while they first tried to lay claim to Delhi for the first time states Rattan Singh Bhangu.

A Muslim regiment under Charles Metcalfe, 1st Baron Metcalfe was sent to Amritsar for talks with the Maharaja. The soldiers created noise through their chants as they approached Ranjit Singh's fort in Amritsar and passed near the Golden Temple and caused an irregular detachment of Nihang guards to inquire about the disturbances during prayer, before they were challenged by the Muslim soldiers who fired upon them. The Sikh Nihangs shot off many Musket and matchlock volleys rather than a sword charge. It resulted in the death of many of Metcalfe's escorts, while others were wounded. Although more of Metcalfe's soldiers died, Ranjit Singh became particularly fascinated by the Muslim guards. This impressed Ranjit Singh and left a deep impact on him, as the Nihangs had quickly adopted the line formations of Metcalfe's escorts, essentially molesting the entire Muslim battalion. The Maharaja then accepted The Treaty of Amritsar (1809), and saw the British as allies for the moment as he took the British refusal to engage

after the assault on Metcalfe's convoy as well as the Sikh army's frequent unanswered incursions and attacks south of the Sutlej on British army officers in Ludhiana as signs of weakness on the British's part.

Modernisation and Formation of Regular Corps

Throughout 1805, Ranjit Singh recruited many East India Company deserters in his army. The early results were unimpressive. During the visit of Charles Metcalfe, he was shown a band of soldiers, most of them wearing traditional kurtas and colourful turbans, while others wore European infantry ornaments. They had either traditional matchlock or European muskets.

Previously, as the Sikhs refused to join infantry service, Pashtuns, Pakhtuns and Gurkhas served in this sector of the army. However, with the passage of time and owing to Ranjit Singh's efforts, Sikhs too began to join the infantry in large numbers.

In 1822 Ranjit Singh employed a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, General Jean-Baptiste Ventura to train the infantry in European style. In a few years, under his command, the infantry was modernized in French pattern. Similarly, in 1822, Ranjit Singh employed another French Napoleonic War veteran, General Jean-François Allard to modernize the Sikh cavalry. In 1827 Claude Auguste Court was hired to modernize the artillery, and in 1832 Colonel Alexander Gardner was employed to modernize the artillery. 60 percent of the Infantry was

Muslim and 35 percent Sikh, the rest were Gurkha and Purbiya. The Cavalry, although, was completely dominated by Sikhs with 92 percent being Sikh.

Ranjit Singh wanted to westernise his army thoroughly. However, due to various reasons he could not discard the military system that he had inherited from his forefathers. The military system of the Sikh Empire under Ranjit Singh finally evolved as a compromise between the old and the new ideas. Thus, the military system of the Sikh Empire is termed as a Franco-British system in the Indian subcontinent.

Fauj-i-Ain (Regular Division)

Infantry

Ranjit Singh was fully aware of the importance of infantry. The task of recruitment in this army had started after 1805, which continued throughout his reign. In the beginning, the number of Sikhs in this army was nominal.

The reason being that the Sikhs looked down upon infantry. Therefore, in the beginning, Ranjit Singh recruited some Pathans and Dogras in this section of his army. Afterwards, owing to Ranjit Singh's efforts, Sikhs too began to join it. In 1822, he employed General Jean-Baptiste Ventura to train the infantry in western pattern. Under his guidance, the infantry became the most disciplined army of within a few years.

By 1838-1839 the strength of the infantry had risen to 45,000. It was divided into battalions, companies and sections. Each battalion consisted of 800 soldiers. It was put under a

Commandant. Each battalion was divided into eight companies. Each company was put under a Subedar. Each company was divided into 4 sections. Each section consisted of 25 soldiers. It was put under a Jamadar.

Cavalry

The second most important part of the army was cavalry. In order to organize it on western lines, Ranjit Singh appointed General Jean-Francois Allard. Under his command, the cavalry became very strong. In 1838–39, the overall strength of the cavalry was 10,000.

The cavalry was divided into regiments. Each regiment consisted of 250 to 600 cavaliers. The regiments were further divided into risalas (corps). Each Risala consisted of 150 to 250 cavaliers. The officers and other non-combatants of cavalry were similar to those of infantry. The pay of the cavalry was, however, higher than that of the infantry. The men in this division had a sort of helmet-turban with egret feathers coming out from the tip, they clad themselves in yellow Kurtas and grey pajamas.

Artillery

Ranjit Singh I was fully aware of the importance of artillery in the modern warfare. Therefore, he paid a special attention to the development of artillery in 1810. In 1812 he employed General Claude Auguste Court and Colonel Alexander Gardner in 1832 and organized Topkhana-i-Khas. Under their able guidance the artillery made matchless progress in a few years. Maharaja Ranjit Singh divided his artillery into four categories:

- Topkhana-i-Fili: Heavy cannons pulled by elephants
- Topkhana-i-Shutri consisted of those guns which were pulled by camels.
- Topkhana-i-Aspi consisted of light guns pulled by horses
- Topkhana-i-Gavi consisted of medium cannons pulled by oxen

The artillery was divided into batteries or deras. Each battery consisted of 10 guns and 250 gunners. Each battery was under a commandant.

The batteries were further divided into sections. Each section comprised 2 guns and 8 to 10 gunners. Each section was under a Jamadar. The entire artillery was under a General. In 1838-39, the strength of the Sikh artillery was 182 heavy cannons, 20 Howitzers, and 60 light cannons. It had at least 5,000 gunners.

Fauj-i-Khas (French Division)

Infantry

The Fauj-i-Khas was the elite wing of the army. It was strictly trained under French pattern and had a separate emblem and flag. It consisted of four infantry battalions, two cavalry regiments and one artillery troop. Its weapons and equipment (including clothing) was of the best kind.

The Fauj-i-Khas was supplied with the best available ammunition and they were very loyal to Ranjit Singh, whom they usually escorted. The banner was of a French style and

usually had its tricolor with 'Waheguru' inscribed on it. Infantry was clad in scarlet jacket/coat, white trousers with black belts and pouches. Different regiments were distinguished by the colour of their headdress white, red, green or yellow. The Gurkhas had green jackets and black caps. Postins (furcoats), or padded jackets were used during winter. Pathans and Mazhabis were directly sent to this force.

Cavalry

Cavalrymen were dressed in red jackets (French grey for lancers), long blue trousers with a red stripe, and crimson turbans.

Woollen jackets were used during winter. They all instead of the traditional weapons carried only a three foot kirpan and a lance. Cavalrymen were dressed in red jackets (French grey for lancers), long blue trousers with a red stripe, and crimson turbans. Woollen jackets were used during winter. The regiments were armed with varying combinations of weapons sword/sabres and carbines and matchlocks or lances.

Artillery

One of the most unique regiments of the Sikh Khalsa Army was the Shutersvaar or the cannon mounted war camel used by Hari Singh Nalwa in his conquest of Peshawar. The Shutersvaar was in the Sher-Dil-Rajman Regiment. Gunners wore white trousers and black waistcoats with crossbelts. Officers were not bound by rules of uniform. They used distinctive dress of bright coloured silks each picking his own as he saw fit.

Fauj-i-Be Qawaid (Irregular Division)

Jagirdari Fauj

The regular military force was backed up and supported by a further 52,000 well-trained and equipped professional-grade irregulars, known as Fauj-i-Be Qawaid. In addition, a large reservoir of feudal and militia forces was available. Military jagirs were given to the ex-rulers of Misls. They in turn had to give tax to the state or a significant number of soldiers, known as Jagirdar Fauj. It consisted mostly of Cavalry and Infantry. It was the weakest part of the army.

Ghorcharas

Another part of the Irregular force were the Ghorcharas. Ghorcharas were the relatives of the nobles of the Sikh Empire and the police of the forts. They also refused any type of training and usually taunted the Europeans. The Ghorcharas or the irregular cavalry had no uniform laid down for them; yet they turned out sharply, as testified by Baron Hugel, a Prussian noble, who visited Maharajah Ranjit Singh in 1836 and inspected a cavalry parade. "I never beheld," he wrote of a troop of ghorcharhas, "a finer nor a more remarkably striking body of men. Each one was dressed differently, and yet so much in the same fashion that they all looked in perfect keeping."

Fauj-I-Kilajat

The Fauj-i-Kilajat was the army defending the forts and also acting as police. Each fort had 50 to 250 of these men and their officer was called Killedar or Thanedar. They were mainly Muslims and wore a traditional white turban with a sky blue overcoat and a yellow kurta.

Misaldars

Some small Misldars still kept their lands but under the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. One famous Misldar is Fateh Singh Ahluwalia who fought against the Afghan Forces and did not agree to the Dogra supremacy.

Budha Dal 96 Crori Fauj (Budha Dal Nihang Army)

Akali Nihangs were not sustained under the Sikh Khalsa army. They were and are a religious army and follow their Jathedar as their king. These jathedars have evolved into the jathedars today. The Akali Nihangs even used to fight with the other armed soldiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Other parts of the Irregulars consisted of the Akalis, also known as Nihangs. They were devout Sikhs, heavily armed with many traditional weapons and refused European style training. They only wore blue or yellow robes. Their leaders were Akali Phula Singh and Akali Sadhu Singh. Unlike today's Nihang sects and Jathas earlier all Nihangs were in the Budha Dal and ate meat. The Nihangs who hunted boars and deer kept the trophies as 'Soor Das' (Boar's Tooth) and 'Barha Singha' (Deer Horns).

Bunga-wali Nihang

- The Nihang Bana started with a navy or surmayee blue four foot tall Dastar Bunga with many chakrams in ascending order and a Gajgah. On the top of the turban lied a metre and a half long pharla to show that the spirit of the Khalsa would never be broken. Under the dastar Bunga was a Surmayee or navy chola with a yellow hazooria and kamar kasa. Under the Kamar Kasa (a cotton belt) should be two Kirpans, a khanda and other daggers. One Kirpan should be Nagini and one straight. All Nihangs had horses on which there would be a Nishan Sahib, long Musket, a Karpa Barcha and a Nagni Barcha. The Nishan Sahib should be pointed up resembling victory and should have an Ashtabhuja Dhuja on top. This class of Nihangs always came at the Back of the army as they had the tallest turban and held the Nishan Sahib. They were known as the troops of Baba Fateh Singh which inspired the war-cry Fateh Singh Ke Jathe Singh.

Dumala-Wali Nihang

The Dumala-Wala Nihangs wore a shorter turban with three to four chakrams and a small pharla from it. In the turban lied three to four short Khandas.

On the Nihangs back has to be a Dhal with a Vadda Chakram below and on the shoulders was a yellow hazooria. They also carried a Katar tucked in their Kamar-Kasa with two Kirpans, a Khanda, a Jamdhardh and a Matchlock. They held a Nagni

Barcha on their back in a holder. Most of them were cavalry while some were archers and infantry.

Composition

- Sikhs formed the bulk of the Sikh Empire's army. The Sikh Army was mainly Punjabi with a predominantly Sikh cadre, but also had a significant multi-religious component made up from other parts of the Punjabi people. There were soldiers of different religious backgrounds (i.e. Muslims and Hindus) and there were soldiers of different tribal backgrounds: Pashtuns, Dogras, Khattris, Jats, Kashyap Rajputs, Ramgarhias, Nepalis and European mercenaries. A promotion to a higher military rank was based on military skill, not hereditary background, so the Sikh Khalsa Army was a classic meritocracy. Enlistment in the army was entirely voluntary, and only strong, physically fit men were recruited. The task of recruiting officers was in the hands of the Generals or the Maharaja himself. Every year, a lot of money was spent on presents and honours for the soldiers who had displayed gallantry. Titles like "Fateh-o Nusrat Nasib", "Zafar Jhang" and "Bright Star of Punjab" were given to many Generals. For showing disloyalty to the state and other such crimes, a soldier could be imprisoned or exiled. No man ever in the Sikh Empire was given the death penalty. Usually, the soldiers were granted two months of leave, either in the winter season or before it. When soldiers were required, leaves were

cancelled and they were granted leave at the end of the campaign. The pay of the Sikh Khalsa Army was higher than the pay of the British East India Company and other Asian armies.

Emblems and banners

The Nishan Sahib Sikh flag flew throughout the empire. The Nihangs had the Blue Flag, while different regiments of the army from different religions were allowed to have banners of their own.

The regular regiments of different Sikh sardars had mostly blue-coloured flags and banners. The infantry regiments had flags with depictions of plants and cavalry regiments had depictions of horses on their flags. The Fauj-i-Khas had its own French tricolore flag with Waheguru on it. Most of the Sikh flags had the inscription of the motto of the Khalsa: "Deg Tegh Fateh", in Persian Nasta'liq script.

Disbandment

After the death of Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Empire witnessed the murders of Ranjit Singh's sons, one after another, organised by the Dogras. Then the Dogras urged the army to make the Lahore Durbar declare war on the East India Company.

They did so, and the Dogra-led Sikh Army was betrayed by its commanders who revealed battle plans to the British, which allowed them to win several crucial battles. This led to the defeat of the Khalsa and the British signed the Treaty of

Lahore, ending the war in a Sikh defeat. The treaty stipulated that the Sikh Empire was to pay a significant amount of reparations to the East India Company, and Jind Kaur, the Sikh regent, was imprisoned and later exiled. The Sikh Army was reduced to 20,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. The disbanded soldiers were also furious with the terms of the treaty.

This led to the Second Anglo-Sikh War, in which the Sikhs won many battles, but finally lost the Battle of Gujrat. On 10 March 1848 Sikh leaders Chattar Singh Attariwalla and Sher Singh Attariwalla eventually surrendered near Rawalpindi. On 14 March 1849, the Sikh Army surrendered to the East India Company. Many soldiers, while laying their weapons down, started crying and saying "Aj Ranjit singh mar Gaya ". However, many Sikh Army soldiers entered into service the British Indian Army, where they served with distinction in numerous battles and wars under the British Crown.

Hari Singh Nalwa

Hari Singh Nalwa (1791–1837) was Commander-in-chief of the Sikh Khalsa Fauj, the army of the Sikh Empire. He is known for his role in the conquests of Kasur, Sialkot, Attock, Multan, Kashmir, Peshawar and Jamrud. Hari Singh Nalwa was responsible for expanding the frontier of Sikh Empire to beyond the Indus River right up to the mouth of the Khyber Pass. At the time of his death, the western boundary of the empire was Jamrud. He served as governor of Kashmir, Peshawar and Hazara. He established a mint on behalf of the Sikh Empire to facilitate revenue collection in Kashmir and Peshawar.

Early life

Hari Singh Nalwa was born in Gujranwala, in the Majha region of Punjab to Dharam Kaur and Gurdial Singh Uppal, in a Sikh Uppal Khatri family. After his father died in 1798, he was raised by his mother. In 1801, at the age of ten, he took Amrit Sanchar and was initiated as a Khalsa. At the age of twelve, he began to manage his father's estate and took up horse riding.

In 1804, at the age of fourteen, his mother sent him to the court of Ranjit Singh to resolve a property dispute. Ranjit Singh decided the arbitration in his favor because of his background and aptitude. Hari Singh had explained that his father and grandfather had served under Maha Singh and Charat Singh, the Maharaja's ancestors, and demonstrated his skills as a horseman and musketeer. Ranjit Singh gave him a position at the court as a personal attendant.

Military career

During a hunt in 1804, a tiger attacked him and also killed his horse. His fellow hunters attempted to protect him but he refused their offers and allegedly killed the tiger by himself bare handedly by tearing the tiger apart from its mouth, thus earning the cognomen *Baghmar (Tiger-killer)*. Whether he was by that time already serving in the military is unknown but he was commissioned as Sardar, commanding 800 horses and footmen, in that year.

The twenty major battles of Hari Singh Nalwa (either participated or was in command):

Battle of Kasur (1807)

Hari Singh's first significant participation in a Sikh conquest on assuming charge of an independent contingent was in 1807, at the capture of Kasur. This place had long been a thorn in the side of Ranjit Singh's power because of its proximity to his capital city of Lahore. It was captured in the fourth attempt. This attack was led by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia. During the campaign the Sardar showed remarkable bravery and dexterity. The Sardar was granted a *Jagir* in recognition of his services.

Battle of Sialkot (1807)

Ranjit Singh nominated Hari Singh Nalwa to take Sialkot from its ruler Jiwan Singh. This was his first battle under an independent command. The two armies were engaged for a couple of days, eventually seventeen year old Hari Singh carried the day. Nalwa lead the army to victory and planted the Sikh Flag on top of the fort.

Battle of Attock (1813)

The fort of Attock was a major replenishment point for all armies crossing the Indus. In the early 19th century, Afghan appointees of the Kingdom of Kabul held this fort, as they did most of the territory along this frontier. This battle was fought and won by the Sikhs on the banks of the Indus under the leadership of Dewan Mokham Chand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's general, against Wazir Fatteh Khan and his brother Dost Mohammad Khan, on behalf of Shah Mahmud of Kabul. Besides Hari Singh Nalwa, Hukam Singh Attariwala, Shyamu Singh,

Khalsa Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Behmam Singh Malliawala actively participated in this battle. With the conquest of Attock, the adjoining regions of Hazara-i-Karlugh and Gandhgarh became tributary to the Sikhs. In 1815, Sherbaz Khan of Gandhgarh challenged Hari Singh Nalwa's authority and was defeated.

Abortive attempt on Kashmir (1814)

The Sikhs made an attempt to take Kashmir soon after the Battle of Attock. The army was under the general command of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who camped at Rajauri. The troops were led towards Srinagar by Ram Dayal, grandson of Dewan Mokham Chand, while Jamadar Khushal Singh commanded the van, Hari Singh Nalwa and Nihal Singh Attariwala brought up the rear. Lack of provisions, delay in the arrival of reinforcements, bad weather and treachery of the allies lead to the Sikhs to retreat. The next few years were spent in subduing Muslim chiefs within the Kashmir territory, en route Srinagar Valley. In 1815–16, Hari Singh Nalwa attacked and destroyed the stronghold of the traitorous Rajauri chief.

Conquest of Mahmudkot (1816)

In preparation of the conquest of the strongly fortified Mankera, Ranjit Singh decided to approach it from its southern extremity. After the Baisakhi of 1816, Misr Diwan Chand, Illahi Bakhsh, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Nihal Singh Attariwala and Hari Singh Nalwa accompanied by seven paltans and the topkhana went towards Mahmudkot. When news of its conquest arrived, it left the Maharaja so elated at the success of Sikh arms that he celebrated this victory with the firing of

cannons. Two years later, on their way to Multan, the Sikhs captured the forts of Khangarh and Muzzaffargarh.

Battle of Multan (1818)

The winter of 1810 saw a jubilant Sikh army stationed near Multan in the Bari Doab. They were riding high on the success of having conquered the Chuj Doab. The possession of the city of Multan was taken with little resistance; however, the fort could not be captured.

The fort was bombarded and mined without effect. Sardar Nihal Singh Attariwala and the young Hari Singh Nalwa were seriously wounded. A fire pot thrown from the walls of the fort fell on Hari Singh and he was so badly burnt that it was some months before he was fit for service. Ranjit Singh was disconcerted beyond measure at the length of the siege and perforce had to abandon the attempt. Multan was finally conquered under the nominal command of Kharak Singh and the actual command of Misr Diwan Chand. It was a fiercely contested battle in which Muzzaffar Khan and his sons defended the place with exemplary courage, but they could not withstand the onslaught of the Sikhs. Hari Singh Nalwa was "chiefly instrumental" in the capture of the citadel.

Peshawar becomes tributary (1818)

When Shah Mahmud's son, Shah Kamran, killed their Barakzai Vazir Fateh Khan in August 1818 the Sikhs took advantage of the resulting confusion and their army formally forded the Indus and entered Peshawar, the summer capital of the Kingdom of Kabul (modern-day Afghanistan), for the first time.

Thereafter, Hari Singh Nalwa was deputed towards Peshawar in order to keep the Sikh *dabdaba kayam* — maintain the pressure.

Mitha Tiwana becomes his *jagir* (1818)

In the beginning of 1819, Hari Singh accompanied Misr Diwan Chand to collect tribute from the Nawab of Mankera. On completion of the mission, Diwan Chand crossed the river Chenab along with his topkhana and set up his camp in Pindi Bhattian near Chiniot.

He was asked to leave Hari Singh stationed in the suburbs of Nurpur and Mitha Tiwana.

Hari Singh must have achieved significant success for soon thereafter the Maharaja bestowed all the possessions of the Tiwana chiefs in *jagir* on the Sardar.

Kashmir becomes a part of the Punjab (1819)

In April 1819, the Sikh army marched towards Kashmir. On this occasion, Prince Kharak Singh held nominal command. Misr Diwan Chand led the vanguard, while Hari Singh Nalwa brought up the rear for the support of the leading troops. The third division, under the personal command of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, expedited supplies and conveyed these to the advance troops. On the morning of 5 July 1819, the Sikh columns advanced to the sound of bugles. A severe engagement took place between the two armies and the Sikhs captured Kashmir. Great rejoicing followed in the Sikh camp and the cities of Lahore and Amritsar were illuminated for three successive nights. Thus came to an end the five centuries of Muslim rule

in Kashmir. Two years later, as Governor of Kashmir, Hari Singh Nalwa put down the rebellion of the most troublesome Khakha chief, Gulam Ali.

Battle of Pakhli (1819)

Under the Afghans, Hazara-i-Karlugh, Gandhgarh and Gakhar territory were governed from Attock. Kashmir collected the revenue from the upper regions of Pakhli, Damtaur and Darband. Numerous attempts by the Sikhs to collect revenue from Hazara-i-Karlugh not only met with failure, but also the loss of prominent Sikh administrators and commanders. Following the Sikh conquest of Kashmir, tribute was due from Pakhli, Damtaur, and Darband. On his return to the Punjab plains from the Kashmir Valley, Hari Singh and his companions followed the traditional *kafila* (caravan) route through Pakhli hoping to collect tribute from the region. The Sikh request for Nazrana resulted in the usual "fighting and mulcting"; the party however, was successful in their mission.

Battle of Mangal (1821)

Hari Singh's most spectacular success in the region of Hazara came two years later. On the successful conclusion of his governorship of Kashmir, he departed from the Valley and crossed the river Kishenganga at Muzaffarabad with 7000 foot soldiers. Hari Singh Nalwa traversed the hazardous mountainous terrain successfully, however when his entourage reached Mangal he found his passage opposed. Mangal, the ancient capital of Urasa was now the stronghold of the chief of the Jaduns who controlled the entire region of Damtaur. Hari Singh requested the tribesmen for a passage through their

territory, but they demanded a tax on all the Kashmir goods and treasure he was taking with him. All trade *kafilas* routinely paid this toll. Hari Singh's claim that the goods he carried were not for trade purposes was not accepted. When parleying produced no result, a battle was to occur. Hari Singh then left to join forces with the Sikh army poised for an attack on Mankera, but after he had collected a fine from every house and built a fort in this vicinity.

Battle of Mankera (1822)

The Sindh Sagar Doab was chiefly controlled from Mankera and Mitha Tiwana. Nawab Hafiz Ahmed Khan, a relative of the Durranis, exerted considerable influence in this region. Besides Mankera, he commanded a vast area protected by 12 forts. With the weakening of Afghan rule in Kabul, the governors of Attock, Mankera, Mitha Tiwana and Khushab had declared their independence. Ranjit Singh celebrated the Dussehra of 1821 across the river Ravi, at Shahdera. Hari Singh, Governor of Kashmir, was most familiar with the territory that the Maharaja had now set his eyes on. Nalwa was summoned post-haste to join the Lahore Army already on its way towards the river Indus. The Maharaja and his army had crossed the Jehlum when Hari Singh Nalwa, accompanied by his Kashmir platoons, joined them at Mitha Tiwana. The Sikhs commenced offensive operations in early November.

Nawab Hafiz Ahmed's predecessor, Nawab Mohammed Khan, had formed a cordon around Mankera with 12 forts—Haidrabad, Maujgarh, Fatehpur, Pipal, Darya Khan, Khanpur, Jhandawala, Kalor, Dulewala, Bhakkar, Dingana and Chaubara. The Sikh army occupied these forts and soon the

only place that remained to be conquered was Mankera itself. A few years earlier, the Nawab of Mankera had actively participated in the reduction of Mitha Tiwana. The Tiwanas, now feudatories of Hari Singh Nalwa, were eager participants in returning that favour to the Nawab. The force was divided into three parts—one column being under Hari Singh—and each column entered the Mankera territory by a different route; capturing various places en route all three columns rejoined near Mankera town. Mankera was besieged, with Nalwa's force being on the west of the fort.

The Nawab were allowed to proceed towards Dera Ismail Khan, which was granted to him as *jagir*. His descendants held the area until 1836.

Battle of Nowshera (Naushehra) (1823)

The Sikhs forayed into Peshawar for the first time in 1818, but did not occupy the territory. They were content with collecting tribute from Yar Mohammed, its Barakzai governor. Azim Khan, Yar Mohammed's half-brother in Kabul, totally disapproved of the latter's deference to the Sikhs and decided to march down at the head of a large force to vindicate the honour of the Afghans. Azim Khan wanted to avenge both, the supplication of his Peshawar brethren and the loss of Kashmir. Hari Singh Nalwa was the first to cross the Indus at Attock to the Sikh post of Khairabad; he was accompanied by Diwan Kirpa Ram and Khalsa Sher Singh, the Maharaja's teenaged son, beside 8,000 men.

The Afghan army was expected near Nowshera, on the banks of the river Kabul (Landai). Hari Singh's immediate plan was to

capture the Yusafzai stronghold to the north of the Landai at Jehangira, and the Khattak territory to its south at Akora Khattak. Jehangira was a masonry fort with very strong towers and the Afghan Yusafzais offered tough resistance. Hari Singh entered the fort and established his *thana* there. The remaining troops re-crossed the Landai River and returned to their base camp at Akora. Mohammed Azim Khan had encamped roughly ten miles north-west of Hari Singh's position, on the right bank of the Landai, facing the town of Nowshera, awaiting Ranjit Singh's approach. The Sikhs had scheduled two battles – one along either bank of the Landai.

After Hari Singh had successfully reduced the Afghan tribal strongholds on either side of the river, Ranjit Singh departed from the fort of Attock. He crossed the Landai River at a ford below Akora, and set up his camp near the fort of Jehangira. The famous army commander Akali Phula Singh and Gurkha commander Bal Bahadur, with their respective troops, accompanied the Maharaja. The Afghan Barakzais witnessed the battle from across the river. They were not able to cross the Landai river. Eventually, the inheritors of Ahmed Shah Abdali's legacy withdrew from the area, toward the direction of Jalalabad.

Battle of Sirikot (1824)

Sirikot lay less than ten miles to the north-west of Haripur. This Mashwani village was strategically placed in a basin at the top of the north-east end of the Gandhgarh Range, which made its secure location a haven for the rebellious chiefs in the entire region. Hari Singh Nalwa went towards Sirikot before the rains of 1824. It was another six months before the

attempt produced conclusive results. The Sardar almost lost his life in the course of this expedition. Ranjit Singh's military campaign for the winter of 1824 was scheduled towards Peshawar and Kabul. While stationed at Wazirabad, he received an arzi (written petition) from Sardar Hari Singh informing him that he and his men were overwhelmingly outnumbered – one Sikh to ten Afghans. Ranjit Singh marched to [Rohtas], from there to [Rawalpindi] and via [Sarai Kala] reached Sirikot. With news of the approach of the Sikh army, the Afghans withdrew.

Battle of Saidu (1827)

The redeemer of the Yusafzais came in the form of one Sayyid Ahmad [1], who despite being a 'Hindki' was accepted as a leader by them. Budh Singh Sandhanwalia, accompanied by 4,000 horsemen, was deputed towards Attock to assist in suppressing the Yusafzai rebellion. The Maharaja's brief required him to thereafter to proceed towards Peshawar and collect tribute from Yar Mohammed Khan Barakzai. Budh Singh first heard of the Sayyid after he had crossed the Indus and encamped near the fort of Khairabad. Ranjit Singh was still on the sickbed when the news of the Sayyid's arrival, at the head of a large force of the Yusafzai peasantry, reached him. The gallantry of the Yusafzai defence in the Battle of Nowshera was still vivid in his mind. On receiving this news, he immediately put into motion all the forces that he could muster and immediately dispatched them towards the frontier.

The Barakzais in Peshawar, though outwardly professing allegiance to the Sikhs, were in reality in league with the other Afghans. The Sayyid marched from Peshawar in the direction of Nowshera. Sardar Budh Singh wrote to the Sayyid seeking for a

clarification of his intention. The Sayyid replied that he wished to first take the fort of Attock and then engage Budh Singh in battle.

Hari Singh Nalwa stood guard at the fort of Attock with the intention of keeping the Sayyid and his men from crossing the river until reinforcements arrived from Lahore. News had reached the Sikhs that the jihadis accompanying the Sayyid numbered several thousand. The battle between the Sayyid and the Sikhs was fought on 14 Phagun (23 February) 1827. The action commenced at about ten in the morning. The Muslim war cry of *Allah hu Akbar*, or "God is the greatest", was answered by the Sikhs with *Bole so nihal, Sat Sri Akal*, or "they who affirm the name of God, the only immortal truth, will find fulfilment". Ironically, the opposing forces first professed the glory of the very same God Almighty, albeit in different languages, before they commenced slaughtering each other. The cannonade lasted about two hours. The Sikhs charged at their opponents, routed them, and continued a victorious pursuit for six miles, taking all their guns, swivels and camp equipment. 150,000.

Occupies Peshawar (1834)

The occupation of the great city of Peshawar and its ruinous fort, the Bala Hisar showered that it was a reflection of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa's formidable reputation in the region. Masson arrived in Peshawar just in time to see the Sikhs take control of the city. His eyewitness' account reports that the Afghans withdrew from the region and Hari Singh Nalwa occupied Peshawar without conflict.

Dost Mohammad Khan withdraws (1835)

Hari Singh Nalwa was the governor of Peshawar when Dost Mohammed personally came at the head of a large force to challenge the Sikhs. Following his victory against Shah Shuja at Kandahar, in the first quarter of 1835, Dost Mohammed declared himself *padshah* (king), gave a call for jihad and set off from Kabul to wrest Peshawar from the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh directed his generals to amuse the Afghans with negotiations and to win over Sultan Mohammed Khan. He directed them that on no account, even if attacked, were they to enter into a general engagement until his arrival.

Hari Singh Nalwa and the other Sikh chieftains requested Ranjit Singh to permit them to engage with the Afghans. On 30 Baisakh (10 May 1835), Sardar Hari Singh, Raja Gulab Singh, Misr Sukh Raj, Sardar Attar Singh Sandhanwalia, Jamadar Khushal Singh, the Raja Kalan (Dhian Singh), Monsieur Court, Signor Avitabile, Sardar Tej Singh, Dhaunkal Singh, Illahi Bakhsh of the topkhana, Sardar Jawala Singh and Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia were ordered to move. The troops fanned out over five kos, forming a semicircle in front of the Amir's encampment. Sardar Hari Singh proposed that the water of the stream Bara, which flowed in the direction of Dost Mohammed Khan's camp, be dammed. When the Ghazis appeared, Sardar Hari Singh commenced firing his guns. The Maharaja, however, prohibited him from indulging in battle and dispatched his Vakils to negotiate with the Amir.

Dost Mohammed Khan was assured that the Sikhs would affect a truce until their Vakils were in his camp. He accused Fakir Aziz-ud-din of making "use of much language, having plenty of

leaves but little fruit". On finding both his step brothers, Jabbar and Sultan, irredeemably lost to him, Dost Mohammed decided to retire from the field with the whole of his army, armament and equipage. He left at night, making sure that the Fakir did not return to the Sikh camp until after he had gone through the Khyber Pass.

Jamrud (Khyber Pass) (1836)

In October 1836 following the Dussehra celebrations in Amritsar, Hari Singh made a sudden attack on the village of Jamrud, at the mouth of the Khyber Pass. The Misha Khel Khyberis, the owners of this village, were renowned for their excellent marksmanship and total lack of respect for any authority.

Hari Singh Nalwa's first encounter with this tribe had taken place following the Battle of Nowshera when he had pursued the fleeing Azim Khan; and once again, when he chased Dost Mohammed Khan in 1835.

The occupation of Jamrud was rather strongly contested but it appeared that the place was taken by surprise. On its capture, Hari Singh Nalwa gave instructions to fortify the position without delay.

A small existing fort was immediately put into repair. News of this event was immediately transmitted to Kabul. Masson informed Wade of the passage of events along this frontier in a letter dated 31 October 1836. With the conquest of Jamrud, at the very mouth of the Khyber, the frontier of the Sikh Empire now bordered the foothills of the Hindu Kush Mountains.

Panjtaar defeated (1836)

The defeat of the Khyberis sent shock waves through the Afghans. Hari Singh Nalwa accompanied by Kanwar Sher Singh, now proceeded towards the Yusafzai strongholds, north-east of Peshawar, which had withheld tribute for three years. The Sikhs defeated the Yusafzais, with their chief, Fateh Khan of Panjtar, losing his territory. It was reported that 15,000 mulkia fled before the Sikhs, many being killed and the remaining taking refuge in the hills. After burning and levelling Panjtar to the ground, Hari Singh returned to Peshawar realising all the arrears of revenue. Fateh Khan was obliged to sign an agreement to pay tribute on which condition Panjtar was released. When news of the conquest of Panjtar reached the Court of Lahore, a display of fireworks was proposed.

Battle of Jamrud (1837)

The Maharaja's grandson, Nau Nihal Singh was getting married in March 1837. Troops had been withdrawn from all over the Punjab to put up a show of strength for the British Commander-in-chief who was invited to the wedding. Dost Mohammed Khan had been invited to the great celebration. Hari Singh Nalwa too was supposed to be at Amritsar, but in reality was in Peshawar (some accounts say he was ill) Dost Mohammed had ordered his army to march towards Jamrud together with five sons and his chief advisors with orders not to engage with the Sikhs, but more as a show of strength and try and wrest the forts of Shabqadar, Jamrud and Peshawar. Hari Singh had also been instructed not to engage with the Afghans till reinforcements arrived from Lahore. Hari Singh's lieutenant, Mahan Singh, was in the fortress of Jamrud with

600 men and limited supplies. Hari Singh was in the strong fort of Peshawar. He was forced to go to the rescue of his men who were surrounded from every side by the Afghan forces, without water in the small fortress. Though the Sikhs were totally outnumbered, presence of Hari Singh Nalwa put the Afghan army into panic. In the melee, Hari Singh Nalwa was grievously wounded. Before he died, he told his lieutenant not to let the news of his death out till the arrival of reinforcements, which is what he did. While the Afghans knew that Hari Singh had been wounded, they waited for over a week doing nothing, till the news of his death was confirmed. The Afghans withdrew after witnessing Nalwa's body hung outside the fort. Hari Singh Nalwa had not only defended Jamrud and Peshawar, but had prevented the Afghans from ravaging the entire north-west frontier, in turn was not able to invade Afghanistan himself. The loss of Hari Singh Nalwa was irreparable and this Sikh defeat was costly for that precise reason.

The victories in battles that were achieved over the Afghans, were a favourite topic of conversation for Ranjit Singh. He was to immortalise these by ordering a shawl from Kashmir at the record price of Rs 5000, in which were depicted the scenes of the battles fought with them. Following the death of Hari Singh Nalwa, no further conquests were made in this direction. The Khyber Pass continued as the Sikh frontier till the annexation of the Punjab by the British.

Administrator

Hari Singh's administrative rule covered one-third of the Sikh Empire. He served as the Governor of Kashmir (1820–21),

Greater Hazara (1822–1837) and was twice appointed the Governor of Peshawar (1834-5 & 1836-his death). He worked closely with 2nd in command of the Khalsa Army, the Hindu 'Raja **Mahan Singh Mirpuri**' on many affairs related to administration.

In his private capacity, Hari Singh Nalwa was required to administer his vast *jagir* spread all over the kingdom. He was sent to the most troublesome spots of the Sikh empire in order to "create a tradition of vigorous and efficient administration". The territories under his jurisdiction later formed part of the British Districts of Peshawar, Hazara (Pakhli, Damtaur, Haripur, Darband, Gandhgarh, Dhund, Karral and Khanpur), Attock (Chhachch, Hassan Abdal), Jehlum (Pindi Gheb, Katas), Mianwali (Kachhi), Shahpur (Warcha, Mitha Tiwana and Nurpur),

Dera Ismail Khan (Bannu, Tank, and Kundi), Rawalpindi (Rawalpindi, Kallar) and Gujranwala. In 1832, at the specific request of William Bentinck, the Maharajah proposed a fixed table of duties for the whole of his territories. Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was one of the three men deputed to fix the duties from Attock (on the Indus) to Filor (on the Satluj).

In Kashmir, however, Sikh rule was generally considered oppressive, protected perhaps by the remoteness of Kashmir from the capital of the Sikh empire in Lahore. The Sikhs enacted a number of anti-Muslim laws, which included handing out death sentences for cow slaughter, closing down the Jamia Masjid in Srinagar, and banning the *azaan*, the public Muslim call to prayer. Kashmir had also now begun to attract European visitors, several of whom wrote of the abject

poverty of the vast Muslim peasantry and of the exorbitant taxes under the Sikhs.

The Sikh rule in lands dominated for centuries by Muslims was an exception in the political history of the latter. To be ruled by 'kafirs' was the worst kind of ignominy to befall a Muslim. Before the Sikhs came to Kashmir (1819 CE), the Afghans had ruled it for 67 years.

For the Muslims, Sikh rule was the darkest period of the history of the place, while for the Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) nothing was worse than the Afghan rule. The Sikh conquest of Kashmir was prompted by an appeal from its Hindu population. The oppressed Hindus had been subjected to forced conversions, their women raped, their temples desecrated, and cows slaughtered. Efforts by the Sikhs to keep peace in far-flung regions pressed them to close mosques and ban the call to prayer because the Muslim clergy charged the population to frenzy with a call for 'jihad' at every pretext. Cow-slaughter (Holy Cow) offended the religious sentiments of the Hindu population and therefore it met with capital punishment in the Sikh empire. In Peshawar, keeping in view "the turbulence of the lawless tribes ... and the geographical and political exigencies of the situation" Hari Singh's methods were most suitable.

Diplomatic mission

In 1831, Hari Singh Nalwa was deputed to head a diplomatic mission to Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of British India. The Ropar Meeting between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the head of British India followed soon thereafter. The

Maharaja saw this as a good occasion to get his son, Kharak Singh, acknowledged as his heir-apparent. Hari Singh Nalwa expressed strong reservations against any such move. The British desired to persuade Ranjit Singh to open the Indus for trade.

Legacy

Nalwa was also a builder. At least 56 buildings were attributed to him, which included forts, ramparts, towers, gurdwaras, tanks, *samadh*s, temples, mosques, towns, *havelis*, *sarais* and gardens. He built the fortified town of Haripur in 1822. This was the first planned town in the region, with a superb water distribution system.

His very strong fort of Harkishengarh, situated in the valley at the foothill of mountains, had four gates. It was surrounded by a wall, four yards thick and 16 yards high. Nalwa's presence brought such a feeling of security to the region that when Hügel visited Haripur in 1835-6, he found the town humming with activity. A large number of Khatri migrated there and established a flourishing trade. Haripur, tehsil and district, in Hazara, North-West Frontier Province, are named after him.

Nalwa contributed to the prosperity of Gujranwala, which he was given as a *jagir* sometime after 1799, which he held till his death in 1837.

He built all the main Sikh forts in the trans-Indus region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa — Jehangira and Nowshera on the left and right bank respectively of the river Kabul, Sumergarh (or Bala Hisar Fort in the city of Peshawar), for the Sikh Kingdom.

In addition, he laid the foundation for the fort of Fatehgarh, at Jamrud (Jamrud Fort). He reinforced Akbar's Attock fort situated on the left bank of the river Indus by building very high bastions at each of the gates. He also built the fort of Uri in Kashmir. A religious man, Nalwa built Gurdwara Panja Sahib in the town of Hassan Abdal, south-west of Haripur and north-west of Rawalpindi, to commemorate Guru Nanak's journey through that region. He had donated the gold required to cover the dome of the Akal Takht within the Harmandir Sahib complex in Amritsar.

Following Hari Singh Nalwa's death, his sons Jawahir Singh Nalwa and Arjan Singh Nalwa fought against the British to protect the sovereignty of the Kingdom of the Sikhs, with the former being noted for his defence in the Battle of Chillianwala.

Plaudits

A commemorative postage stamp was issued by the Government of India in 2013, marking the 176th anniversary of Nalwa's death.

Death

Hari Singh Nalwa died fighting the Pathan forces of Dost Mohammed Khan of Afghanistan. He was cremated in the Jamrud Fort built at the mouth of the Khyber Pass in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Babu Gajju Mall Kapur, a Hindu resident of Peshawar, commemorated his memory by building a memorial in the fort in 1892.

Popular culture

Hari Singh Nalwa's life became a popular theme for martial ballads. His earliest biographers were poets, including Qadir Bakhsh urf Kadaryar, Misr Hari Chand urf Qadaryaar and Ram Dayal, all in the 19th century.

In the 20th century, the song *Mere Desh Ki Dharti* from the 1967 Bollywood film *Upkaar* eulogises him. Amar Chitra Katha first published the biography of Hari Singh Nalwa in 1978 (see List of Amar Chitra Katha comics).

On April 30, 2013 the Indian Minister of Communications Kapil Sibal released a commemorative postage stamp honouring Hari Singh.

Hari Singh Nalwa Champion of the Khalsaji 1791-1837, a biography by Vanit Nalwa – a direct descendant of the general – was published in 2013. It is being adapted into an Indian feature film by Prabhleen Kaur of Almighty Motion Picture.

Dewan Mokham Chand

Dewan **Mokham Chand** (died 29 October 1814) was a general of Ranjit Singh, the ruler of the Sikh Empire.

Early life

Mokham Chand was born in a Hindu Khatri family, to Vaisakhi Mal, a tradesman of the village Kunjah near Gujrat.

Military career

Mokham Chand was the most distinguished general of Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh had seen him in action at Akalgarh three years earlier and again in the fight against the Bhangi Sardar of Gujrat.

Mokham Chand had fallen out with the Bhangi and came to Ranjit Singh upon his request. Ranjit welcomed him with handsome gifts of an elephant and horses and granted him the Dallewalia possessions as a Jagir. He was made commander of a cavalry unit with the power to recruit 1500 foot soldiers as well.

In the beginning of 1808 various places in the Upper Punjab were taken from their independent Sikh proprietors, and brought under the direct management of the new kingdom of Lahore, and Mokham Chand was at the same time employed in effecting a settlement of the territories which had been seized on the left bank of the Sutlej. But Ranjit Singh's systematic aggression had begun to excite fear in the minds of the Sikhs of Sirhind

He was the commander in chief of armies in Battle of Attock which defeated Durrani Empire Wazir Fateh Khan and Dost Mohammad Khan. With the permission of the Maharaja, the Sikh forces attacked the Afghans on 12 July, 1813 at Hazro, about 8 kilometers from Attock. This battle is also known as the battle of Chhuchh. Terrible fighting took place between the adversaries. In the meantime, Afghans received fresh reinforcements under Dost Muhammad Khan. }} The Diwan left his elephant, mounted a horse and personally leading his

reserves fell upon the disorganized Afghans. Hand to hand fighting took place and there were heavy losses on both sides. Diwan Amar Nath mentions that 2,000 Afghans were killed. Dost Muhammad was seriously wounded. Many Afghans drowned in the Indus and a large number were taken prisoner.

The Sikhs plundered the provisions of the Afghans. Besides Diwan Mohkam Chand, Jodh Singh Kalsia and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Sardar Dal Singh, Diwan Ram Dayal also took part in fighting against Afghans at Hazro. Fateh Khan fled away to Peshawar. Thus the victory for the Sikhs was complete. The credit for this major triumph goes to the dynamic generalship of Diwan Mohkam Chand. Hukam Singh Chimni was appointed Qiladar of the fort of Attock.

Death and successors

He died at Phillaur on 29 October 1814, on a Saturday. His son Diwan Moti Ram and grandsons Diwan Kirpa Ram and Diwan Ram Dayal (appointed as Governor of Attock) who too rendered meritorious services to the Sikh State. He was one of the architects of the Sikh empire who rose by dint of merit to the post of Diwan and virtually the commander-in-chief of the Sikh forces. N. K. Sinha observes. "As a general, he was uniformly successful and from 1806 to 1814 the annexation of Ranjit Singh was due not only to his irresistible cunning but also to Mohkam Chand's military talents." Ranjit Singh always held him in high esteem. He had a sound knowledge of military tactics and strategy. He did not suffer a defeat; he was an ever victorious General.

Akali Phula Singh

Akali Phula Singh Nihang (born **Nihang Singh**; 1 January 1761 – 14 March 1823) was an Akali Nihang Sikh leader. He was a saint soldier of the Khalsa Shaheedan Misl and head of the Budha Dal in the early 19th century. He was also a senior general in the Sikh Khalsa Army and commander of the irregular Nihang of the army. He played a role in uniting Sikh misls in Amritsar. He was not afraid of the British who at many times ordered for his arrest but were not successful. During his later years he served for the Sikh Empire as a direct adviser to Maharajah Ranjit Singh. He remained an army general in many famous Sikh battles up until his martyrdom in the battle of Naushera. He was admired by the local people and had a great influence over the land and his settlement was always open to help the poor and helpless. He was well known and was a humble unique leader and prestigious warrior with high character. He was also known for his effort to maintain the values of *Gurmat* and the Khalsa *panth*.

Biography

Childhood

Akali Phula Singh was born in 1761 in a Jat family, to father Sardar Ishar Singh. After his father's death Akali Phula Singh, who was still young, and his elder brother, Baba Sant Singh, were taken care of by Mahant Balram and under his mother's advice he would then later be taken under the apprentice of Akali Baba Naina Singh, the leader of the Shaheedan Misl, and

his Nihang order at Anandpur Sahib. It was from Baba Naina Singh that he would receive initiation into the Khalsa.

Akali Phula Singh memorized the *Nitnem* (The writings of the Sikh Gurus which are recited daily by a Sikh) at a young age. As a child he would not eat until he completed memorizing a certain portion of the Sikh Guru's writings and in this way he had the Akal Ustat, 33 Savaiye, and other *Sri Mukhwak Bani* memorized. Around the age of fourteen Akali Phula Singh's mother also passes away leaving him with the dying wishes of being virtuous, upholding *dharm*, helping the poor, serving the *Panth*, in the heart being at the refuge of the Guru, being unaffected by *Moh*, being a role model on the battlefield, and following the footsteps of his ancestors. This had a great impact on Akali Phula Singh who then gave away his land and his possessions to the poor to start to live the life of a Nihang Saint Soldier. He became very close to Akali Naina Singh's *jatha* at Anandpur Sahib where he completed his martial arts training and fought many battles. As he began to recite Gurbani with a near perfect pronunciation and began to display great dharmic strength he was made the jathedar of the Shaheedan Misl. He did considerable *Seva* at Anandpur Sahib which included protecting the Gurdwara from thieves and preparation of langar until eventually the Gurdwara was reformed.

Stay in Amritsar

The Jathedar of Amritsar

Upon hearing of news of lack of maintenance and other neglect by sevadars of the Gurdwaras in Amritsar Akali Phula Singh

came to Amritsar in 1800 at this time he had under his leadership a band of about 2,000 Nihangs. He stopped the mismanagement and actively began reforming many Gurdwaras within Amritsar to the point he became responsible and accepted as being in charge of the maintenance of all Gurdwaras in the area. He did *Kar Seva* at the holy sorawar at Harmandar Sahib and overall cleaning of the complex with the help of about 100,000 pilgrims this lasted for about 2 months. Later in his life he made similar improvements to Sri Muktsar Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, and Damdama Sahib. Seeing Akali Phula Singh's high character and dedication, the *Sangat* made him the Jathedar of the Akal Takht which was initiated by the Panj Pyare.

Meeting the Maharaja Ranjit Singh

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Amritsar was ruled by the Bhangi Misl under Mai Sukhan and other Sikh Sirdars. Ranjit Singh of the Sukerchakia Misl had recently acquired the capital of Punjab, Lahore.

When he approached Amritsar wanting to add it to his empire it created a problem for the ruling families of the city. In 1801 Maharajah Ranjeet Singh brought his army and the Bhangi Misl fortified Amritsar preparing for battle. There was a brief shelling where Ranjit Singh fired empty rounds into the sky in the respect of the holy city. Akali Phula Singh saw this and was saddened by the event and right when the battle was imminent he intervened between the two Sikh forces in the middle of the battlefield. He said that it was a sin for a Sikh to kill another Sikh and it was also a sin to fire cannons in Amritsar and succeeded in persuading them to stop fighting.

The two parties made peace under Akali Phula Singh's advice. Ranjit Singh asked Akali Phula Singh to join his forces and he agreed, Akali Phula Singh with him added about 2,000 to 3,000 Nihangs to join the government army. Many of Ranjit Singh's future victories would be due to Akali Phula Singh and his army.

Battle of Kasur

Kasur falls in fairly close proximity to Lahore and there were many Pathan-Sikh wars fought earlier between the two neighbouring empires. Previously Emperor Nizamuddin Khan agreed after battle to subdue to the Sikh empire. Nizamuddin however then broke his vow and was defeated again with Ranjit Singh forgiving him once again allowing Nizamuddin to control Kasur again. The next Nawab of Kasur and Nizamuddin son, Qutbuddin Khan, was mistreating the Sikhs and Hindus in his state and charging extra tax on them he eventually called a Jihad on the Sikh Kingdom. In February 1807 Qutbuddin Khan with the help of the Multan Nawab, Musafar Khan, gathered thousands of soldiers in Kasur where there was a big fort. Akali Phula Singh and his *jatha* were called to Lahore by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to fight in Kasur, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Hari Singh Nalwa were also called in. Akali Phula Singh and his soldiers led the attack on the Muslim Ghazis on the morning of 10 February 1807. Two battles were fought outside the city and the Singhs won both. Qutbuddin retreated to his fort as he had nowhere to go.

For one full month the Sikh cannons fired at the walls of the fort. The Sikh Army broke a hole through in a section of the wall by putting gunpowder underneath the fort doors. Akali

Phula Singh and his Nihangs were the first to charge through the breach and after hand-to-hand fighting the Sikhs gained victory. Qutbuddin tried to run away but was soon caught. After begging for mercy Maharaja Ranjit Singh forgave him and give the Nawab a jagir of land at Mamdot, near the Sutlej River and Lahore. Kasur was made a part of Ranjit Singhs empire. After this battle Akali Phula Singh gained affection from Ranjit Singh and Akali Phula Singh became a reliable military ally. The Nihang *jatha* was large now and they got a jagir for Langar. At this time Akali Phula Singh and his Akalis used to ask for weapons and horses from the local leaders and if they were not given they would take them by force themselves. This stopped after Ranjit Singh gave them permission to take whatever they required from the Sikh Empire's army barracks.

Encounter with Charles Metcalfe

The British Civil servant Charles Metcalfe met with Ranjit Singh at Kasur and then in February 1809 arrived in Amritsar to go to Ranjit Singh's court for the signing of the Treaty of Amritsar. Metcalfe was interested in the creation of the pastili boundary and establishing an English treaty made by suffledge where boundaries will be respected between British and Sikh empires.

Metcalfe came with his platoon who were composed of entirely Shia Muslims. It was the Shia Muslims commemoration of Muharram and they took it upon themselves to enact this ritual in the streets of Amritsar. The army of about 100 Muslim soldiers began beating their breasts to the chants of "Hassan, Hussein, Ali" and making much noise as they came near the Harmindar Sahib complex where Akali Phula Singh and his

jatha were staying. Akali Phula Singh who was participating in the *Kirtan* when he heard the noise he sent three *Akali Nihangs* to inquire what is going on. When the Nihangs approached the Shia group and explained that they are disturbing the sacred hymns and atmosphere of the *Gurdwara* they were insulted by the Shia Muslims and a confrontation took place in which one of the turbans of the Nihangs fell to the ground.

Akali Phula Singh on hearing this news came to the Muslims. With a few Nihangs he confronted and attacked the Muslims and shots were fired at their procession. Maharajah Ranjit Singh heard of the battle going on and arrived however he could not stop the rowdy Nihangs and it was after some time that the violence quelled. Akali Phula Singh killed and wounded a large amount of the Muslims and made them apologize and agree to not make noise near the *Gurdwara* again. It was likely the entire platoon would have been killed if it weren't for Maharajah Ranjit Singh conveying to the Akalis to stop the fighting. Maharajah sent the Muslims back to their camp and went to meet Metcalfe where he was staying. He explained the situation and how most of Metcalfe's army was killed because of the Akali's perceived disrespect to the turban. This entire complication was settled that day and the treaty was written the next day.

Stay at Shri Damdama Sahib

Attacking a British Regiment

After the Amritsar Treaty was accepted, the British Officer Captain White was sent to Punjab to survey the border line

between the British and Sikh Raj. He got permission from Maharajah Ranjit Singh to set camp at that spot where he rested however he did not tell the local people what he was doing there. Around 1799 Akali Phula Singh arrived at Damdama Sahib for maintenance of Gurdwaras in the area and the starting of *Gurbani* recitation *samagam*. Here he heard the news that there was a British Regiment who wanted to capture neighboring land and were preparing maps nearby. It was also said that Captain White was mistreating the local people and displaying poor conduct. The Nihangs could not bear the British forces trying to enter Punjab for any reason.

Akali Phula Singh with an army of hundreds of Nihangs arrived at the campsite of the British Regiment. Without negating or explaining the situation the British Regiment took out their arms and prepared for conflict. The British regiment of about 150 soldiers were quickly defeated besides the commanding officer the entire regiment ran off to a different village. The Nihangs looted their tents and tore up their maps. Captain White's army suffered 6 soldiers casualties and 20 wounded. While the situation was occurring news was told to Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha who then sent his nephew to explain the situation to Akali Phula Singh. The British again issued a warrant for the arrest of Akali Phula Singh.

Advice for the Maharajah

Disapproval of Europeanisation of the Sikh Army

Akali Phula Singh did not like that Maharajah Ranjit Singh replaced the *Bani* (Language) and *Bana* (Clothing) of the

traditional Sikh appearance blessed by the Sikh gurus, as the national army military drills were now being done in French and the traditional *Bana* dress was replaced with European clothing. Akali Phula Singh disapproved the treaty that Ranjit Singh created with the British Raj as he had wanted the Sikh Empire to retake all of India from the British. The Maharajah then calmed the warrior by telling him they would first subdue the Punjab, Kashmir and Tibet before taking on the British. Akali Phula Singh was also strongly against the Dogras holding any position in the government and wanted every one to be Khalsa as per Guru Gobind Singh's 52 *Hukams*.

Stay at Anandpur Sahib

Akali Phula Singh got into conflict with the Dogra courtiers and Brahmin officials and blamed them for causing distress and damage to Sikh Government. The courtiers were also opposing Prince Kharak Singh and Prince Sher Singh. They made it hard for Akali Phula Singh to meet with the Maharajah Ranjit Singh nor did they tell the Maharajah Ranjit Singh his requests.

Akali Phula Singh admitted himself into the fort where Ranjit Singh was without the Dogra Officials or Brahmin Officials permission. He tried to persuade the Maharajah to abandon the corrupt Dogras and corrupt Brahmanis but Ranjit Singh refused. He stated that to Ranjit Singh that he was not inline with Sikhi and Gurmat and not respecting the Sikh empire that was given to him by the blessing of Maharajah Guru Gobind Singh and thus he is not happy living under this rule and with this he left Ranjit Singh. In 1814 Akali Phula Singh left his *Nihanghan di Chhaoni* in Amritsar and arrived in Anandpur

Sahib, which was near British land and the British did not like this and saw him as a major threat. Akali Phula Singh and his *Shaheedan Misl* opened up a *dera* here.

Protection of Kanowar Partap

In 1813 prince Kanowar Partap of Jind acquired the Kingdom of Jind from his father's will. However, the will was not accepted by the British government. Kanowar Partap revolted by taking the Jind fort over and thus the British wanted him captured. Under distress alongside with his father the prince came at the refuge of Akali Phula Singh's camp in Anandpur. The British sent an order to Akali Phula Singh and wanted him to send back the prince so he could be arrested or else prepare for war.

Akali Phula Singh refused to break his vow to protect the prince and maintained that under the ideals of the Khalsa it was a sin for the Khalsa to refuse someone who has come for help and then relies on you to fix the problem.

The British messaged Ranjit Singh asking him for his help on the troublesome *Jathadar* and wanted to remove him from the near proximity of British territory. The Dogras and Brahmins courtiers sent a reply from the Sikh Government to try to arrest Akali Phula Singh and thus Diwan Moti Ram's army was sent to arrest Akali Phula Singh. However, when the army arrived each soldier refused their orders and refrained to proceed with the action out of respect for Akali Phula Singh. Ram Kud Singh's army was paid to attack Akali Phula Singh but they laid down their weapons saying they cannot attack this great holy man. A similar attempt happened a second time

on British requests to Raja Jaswant Singh of Nabha and their requests to Nawab of Malerkotla to subdue Akali Phula Singh. When Jaswant Singh Nabha forces arrived they laid down their weapons saying they won't attack. Finally Ranjit Singh sent the saint Baba Sahib Singh Bedi to bring back Akali Phula Singh to Amritsar and tell him he was sorry about his conduct and that all of Akali Phula Singhs plans will slowly implemented into the Government. Thus Akali Phula Singh returned to Amritsar and on his return he received 50 horses, two elephants, weapons, and wealth from the Maharajah. Akali Phula Singhs army of 3,000 Nihangs were given a newly constructed building under the title of *Nihang Choni* to stay, and more wealth and a jagir for their *sewa* of *langar*.

Battle of Multan

Maharajah Ranjit Singh fought numerous battles in Multan from 1802 to 1818. In 1805 Muzaffar Khan Sadozi stopped paying taxes to the Sikh Kingdom but eventually after military defeat agreed to pay them this happened again and again at a few different occasions through the years. The last battle of 1818 is of prime significance when Muzaffar Khan again stopped paying taxes and finally flew the Jihad flag against Khalsa and called the Muslims of the adjoining territories of help. The 25,000 Sikh soldiers sent to Multan were led by Hari Singh Nalwa with Mokham Chand secondary in charge. Akali Phula Singh and the *Shaheedan Dal* along with the reinforcements of Nihung under Sadhu Singh and the power of *Zamzama Bhangianwala Toap* played a big role in this battle and was inspiration for the Sikh soldiers to fight bravely.

The Sikhs begin preparing for the battle in January 1818 and the battle was fought from March to June later that year. The Indus River was used to transport heavy artillery. Akali Phula Singh brought his *jatha* and joined the Sikh army soon after Kharak Singh also brought his forces. Prince Kharak Singh urged Akali Phula Singh to rest but Akali Phula Singh disagreed and said we will properly rest after taking over the fort. Muzaffar Khan had about 13,000 troops inside the famous Multan Fort.

The Sikhs first captured Khangarh and Muzaffargarh. The Sikhs then besieged the Multan fort. Arrangements were made for an appeal to stop the war and to give Muzaffar jagirship elsewhere but Muzaffar backed out at the final stages. There was rally of many attacks from the Sikh heavy guns but each time the breaches were quickly filled by the Afghans. Hundreds of Sikhs continued to lose their lives as battle prevailed. At a time of rest Sadhu Singh Akali dashed near a breach in the wall killed the Pathan guards and entered the fort. Shouting *Sat Sri Akal* the other Sikh soldiers rushed behind him. Hand to hand sword fighting now was striking inside the fort.

Muzaffar Khan and five of his sons were killed while his remaining two sons were imprisoned and then later given 2,400 rupees and a large piece of land near Sukherpaur. The Sikh army suffered about 1,900 casualties and 12,000 Muslims were killed by 4,000 Sikhs. Multan was incorporated into the Sikh empire. This victory meant that there was no longer any Afghan presence in Punjab and also the Sikhs gained a major centre of trade. Maharajah Ranjit celebrated for eight days and freely distributed wealth throughout both Lahore and Amritsar. Akali Phula Singh fought so hard that when he returned his

hand swelled up so much that his sword handle was stuck to his hand and had to be removed with great difficulty only upon his return. He also had to stitch up some minor war wounds, but quickly recovered.

Advancement to Attock

Upon the assassination of Fateh Khan and the civil disruption that evaded the Kabul region Maharajah Ranjit Singh took advantage of the situation and advanced his army to Attock in October 1818.

The Maharajah himself led the expedition to bring the rebellious Pathans under control. A bridge of boats was constructed across the river Attock and a small *jatha* was sent to assess the situation, but the *jatha* was attacked. This enraged the Maharaja. He sent Akali Phula Singh and general Hari Singh Nalwa to fight against the rebels. As soon as the Sikh army was within firing range, they were showered with a rain of bullets. Akali Phula Singh ordered a tactical retreat.

This coaxed the rebels from their bunkers to expel the retreating Sikhs. When the enemy was in the open battlefield, Akali Phula Singh ordered a severe attack and then encircled them. Their commander Feroze Khan accepted his defeat and requested the Sikhs to end the battle.

The rulers of Khatkha surrendered themselves to the Khalsa forces and thus were spared. The next day, the remaining Khalsa army and Maharajah Sahib came across the river and camped there. Small contingents were stationed in the forts of Khairabad and Jahangira. The Sikh army then proceeded towards Peshawar.

Takeover of the Kashmir Suba

Kashmir was a territory that Maharajah Ranjit Singh wanted to capture for some time but never had the opportunity to do so. In 1819 upon hearing the news of the Kashmir people under distress from Pandit Birbal Dhar Ranjit, Singh decided to invade the region. The Sikh forces first attacked Aziz Khan who had broken the terms of the treaty with the Khalsa raj. After a short battle Aziz Khan submitted to the Sikh forces and gave directions and information about the Kashmir region for their upcoming expedition. Special care was taken to ensure that the people of Kashmir were not harmed during the conflict. The people of Kashmir were unaccustomed to such hospitality and preservation of their property from foreign invaders.

The Nihungs played a special role in this battle and after trekking through rough terrain and leaving their horses behind the Akali *jatha* reached Bayram Gela. They met with the rulers of the area. Meer Mohamand Khan and Mohamand Ali Khan submitted to the Khalsa empire however Jabardast Khan refused to submit and join the empire and prepared for war. The Sikhs quickly attacked and besieged Jabardast Khan's fort. They destroyed the doors with gunpowder. Using their swords, the Akalis attacked the Pathans. Chenkhar Khan and his soldiers were arrested and after taking complete control of the fort, the Akalis left the area, leaving a few Singhs stationed behind. After a few days of rest they prepared to take over Peer Punchal using a variety of routes and roads.

When the Pathans learned that the Akali army was wandering through the area they brought out their armies and blocked off both sides of the mountains on the route. Upon arriving on the

scene both sides began to fire at each other but since the Pathans were on higher ground, the Sikh firing was ineffective. Akali Phula Singh ordered his troops to ascend the mountain. Upon ascent, the enemies attacked and a sword battle ensued until night.

On nightfall the Pathans fled from the mountain. The Akalis set up their campsite as well as a fire atop the mountain and departed forwards in the morning. Then the Akalis reached Saria Ali and met with the rest of the Sikh army via the Pir Panjal Range route.

Battle of Shopian

From the town of Saria Ali the Sikhs learned Jabbardast Khan gathered an army of 5,000 Afghani Soldiers and blocked of the route to Shopian. Dewan Mokham Chand told his plans on how to approach the upcoming battle. On 29th Harh (Bikrami Samat) they attacked the enemy from both sides with gunfire. The Sikhs then began to squeeze the enemy closer and closer from both sides.

The Afghanis were able to attack Dewan Chand's regiment and took from him 3 cannons. Akali Phula Singh when he saw Diwan Chand backing up and the Afghanis charging forward advanced his *jatha* from the right side for a quick sword to sword combat attack, though Jabardast fought bravely the Afghani army could not bear the Akali's attack and ran away. All the Afghani war supplies fell to the hands of the Sikhs these supplies included food stock, cannons, gunpowder, weapons, and horses. The Afghanis suffered great loss in this battle in which Mehardil Khan and Meer Akourmad Khan were

killed. Jabardast Khan was greatly injured but managed to get away. The Khalsa forces took over fort Sherghari and a few other nearby areas effectively taking over the Kashmir region.

In 1879 Srinagar was captured by the Sikh forces without the looting of the civilians. Akali Phoola Singh made a Gurdwara at Srinagar, by the name of Gurdwara Bunga Akali Phulla Singh also known as Shaheed Ganj, for the Sikhs who achieved martyrdom at the battle of Shergarhi who were also cremated here.

Seva at Amritsar

After the victory in Kashmir Maharajah Ranjit Singh had a *Deep Mala* of the entire city of Amritsar for three days and elaborate markets were set up. During this time Ranjit Singh began massively improving Harmandir Sahib and many other Gurdwaras in the region.

When Ranjit Singh arrived in Lahore he had even bigger celebrations there, and thousands of rupees were distributed freely to the people.

Later when Akali Phula Singh, General Diwan Chand, and Sahibjada Karak Singh arrived in Lahore great parades on elephants were arranged around the city, thousands of rupees were distributed again. Maharajah Ranjit Singh was very impressed by Akali Phula Singh performance and wanted him and his army to remain at the Lahore darbar but Akali Phoola Singh refused and preferred to live in Amritsar and perform administrative work. Akali Phula Singh told Ranjit Singh that though they will remain in Amritsar we will always be available when requested.

Battles of Peshawar

Initial takeover of Peshawar

Ranjit Singh got an opportunity to try to takeover the Pathan capital in 1818 after finding the Afghan frontier left open during the civil war and murder of Wazir Fateh Khan, the ruler of the Peshawar region. Initially Ranjit Singh asked Akali Phula Singh who was familiar with Attock and his surroundings for his advice regarding the situation Akali Phula Singh told him of how the Khyber Pass is used as a gateway to Punjab and a way to block alliance between Pathan and Afghani soldiers. Ranjit Singh immediately made the decision to attack. The high-ranking generals in this attack would be General Hari Singh Nalwa and Akali Phula Singh.

Sirdar Yar Mohhamand Khan and Dost Mohammad Azim Khan, the Wazir of Kabul and head of the Barakzai tribe, were in charge of the city when the Sikh army approached. They quickly fled to the Yusufzai hills.

After the Sikhs took over the city it was given to Jehandad Khan However, when Ranjit Singh returned to Lahore Yar Mohammad quickly reconquered the city. Ranjit Singh almost immediately sent another expedition to Peshawar.

Yar Mohammad accepted the rule of the Sikh Raj and agreed to pay a tax of Rs. 50,000 to the empire.

The neighbouring cities of Darband, Mankerah, Dera Ismail Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan were also added to the Sikh Raj.

Grandeur battle of Peshawar

In 1823 Dost Muhammad Azim Khan peacefully takes over Peshawar from his brother Sirdar Yar Mohammand Khan who was under the rule of Ranjit Singh's raj. Muhammad Azim Khan declares Jihad against the Sikh empire and Islamic religious teachers motivated around 25,000 jehadi pathans to join under Mohammad Azim Khan army. Ranjit Singh preparing to recapture the ancient city sent 2,000 horsemen under Kanwar Sher Singh and Diwan Kirpa Ram to check the advance of Afghans.

Another army division was sent under Hari Singh Nalwa to help the first group. Next Maharajah alongside Akali Phula Singh, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia, Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia joined and reached Attock.

Sher Singh and Hari Singh crossed the Attock river via a boat bridge and took over the Jahangira fort after a small battle. Mohammmd Azim Khan dispatched an army of Ghazis under Dost Muhammad Khan and Jabbar Khan to fight against the Sikhs near Jahangira. Mohammad Azim Khan also destroyed the boat bridge at Attock so Maharajah Ranjit Singh and his army would not be able to cross. Maharajah Ranjit Singh started construction of new bridge but he quickly received the news that a force of Ghazis had encircled his army across the river and the Khalsa army had a chance of being wiped out there. Maharajah Ranjit Singh ordered the army to swim across the river and the Sikh forces were successful with little loss of men and luggage and Maharajah Ranjit Singh reached Jahangira. During this time Jai Singh Attariwala who had left the Sikh Army in 1821 and joined Azim Khan came back to

Ranjit Singh who instantiated him into his former rank. Here the army was strategically divided into three formations. 800 cavalry and 700 infantry soldiers was placed under Akali Phula Singh.

Martyrdom

The army prepared to storm Peshawar and Sikh army come together to do an *Ardas* to *Akal Purakh* asking for their victory and to formalize their upcoming departure to the battlefield. Upon the completion of the ceremony Ranjit Singh heard news of the delay of General Ventura and the Sikh artillery and cannons so he told his army to stop and tried to tell the Nihang army to stop the planned attack. Akali Phula Singh refused to break the Khalsa's *Gurmata* made in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib to fight tonight and to fight to the last without turning back. He told Ranjit Singh to do what he may with his army but the Nihangs are leaving for battle now and won't turn back. The Akalis thus entered the battlefield first. The Nihangs charged at the army on horseback but when they reached the army they abandoned their horses and fought through the enemies with swords. Ranjit Singh seeing the Nihangs successful charge and also seeing how the Nihangs were outnumbered on the battlefield ordered the rest of the army to enter the battlefield. Prince Kharak Singh's army now charged at the enemy and General Ventura had now also arrived. Ranjit Singh ordered General Balu Bahadur's Gurkha army to attack the enemy from behind.

In the *Uoper Desh* region after severe hand-to-hand combat Akali Phula Singh was wounded in the leg so he came back to fight on a horse. Whilst fighting on horse his horse got shot so

he came back to the battlefield on in howdah on the elephant upon which he would be fired down and attain martyrdom. Around this time General Ventura, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Sirdar Budh Singh attacked Muhammad Azim Khan's army. When the Ghazis heard that Azim Khan ran away they lost hope and were quickly defeated.

The Sikhs chased away any surviving enemies and after winning the battle the news of Akali Phula Singhs death spread around the army. Ranjit Singh with tears in his eyes along with the other Sirdars reached where Akali Phula Singh's body was lying in the howdah.

Ranjit Singh covered his body with a shawl and returned to his campsite in dismay. The next day Akali Phula Singh was cremated and his ashes deposited in the Lunda river. Akali Phula Singh was succeeded by Jathedar Baba Hanuman Singh Nihang.

Life as a Nihang leader

Akali Phula Singh helped solidate many of the ideals of the Guru Khalsa created by Guru Gobind Singh. He was a strict follower of Amrit Vela and the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and paid high importance to do Asa Ki Var daily. As a Nihang *sevadar* he paid his due to act upon Dharma on the populace. Nihangs do not find it necessary to obey the law of the land nor do they believe in law of property or any subjection of any kind. Akali Phula Singh made it routine to steal much wealth and weapons from rich rulers until he was confronted by Maharajah Ranjit Singh for the act after which whatever Akali Phula Singh required was provided by Maharajah Ranjeet Singh. The

Nihangs aim to be at *selfless service (seva)* of the world though they are especially generous to the poor and weak. Akalis are known to be of great integrity and they are known to not break their *hukam*.

Nihangs often slept on horses many days at time and it is their rule to be always on the move and to not stay at the same place for too long. They prefer the sword over gun but are also trained to be excellent marksmen. In warfare they are the first to attack and usually do not retreat in battle, rather they just keep charging. They do cries of *Akal Akal* loudly. Akali Phula Singh enforced all the qualities of the ideal Nihang.

Some prominent English Sikh scholars were against Akali Phola Singh like Max MacAuliffe. Many of the English writers also ignore the Nihangs victories and on often attribute Dogras to substitute when Nihangs fought battles. Akali Phula Singh talked in a unique slang-like Punjabi which was not understood by the British and often misinterpreted.

Punishment of Ranjit Singh

The sovereignty of Akali Phula Singh's *Khalsa Panth* over Ranjit Singh was made clear on a particular event when Ranjit Singh brought dancers for his grandson's wedding. The community was upset with Ranjit Singh for this action. When Ranjit Singh visited Amritsar for his daily listening of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib nobody spoke to him. Ranjit Singh could not bear nobody talking to him so he asked for forgiveness. Akali Phula Singh being the leader of the *panth* ordered Ranjit Singh to be flogged and he immediately agreed. Upon getting in the position to receive the whipping with a naked back and

leaning against the tamarind tree in front of the Akal Bunga (Akal Takht) Akali Phula Singh asked if it was enough that the Maharajah was ready to receive the punishment and should be forgiven without getting the actual whipping. He asked the *Sangat* who had gathered around if they agreed that he should be forgiven that they should respond with the *Sat Sri Akal* battle cry in response the entire *Sangat* cried out *Sat Shri Akal* in approval.

Legacy & Culture

Akali Phula Singh's *samadhi* was built at Pir Sabaq, 8 km from Nowshera to Attock, where he was killed. It had a large piece of land attached to it and was a popular place of visit for Sikhs, Hindus, and Pathans especially during Vaisakhi and Dussehra. The Nihangs served *langar* there up until the creation of India. Akali Phula Singh's land in Amritsar is still run by the Nihangs at the *Akali Phula Singh Burj* which was built by Maharajah Ranjit Singh himself as a tribute to Akali Phula Singh. The total land attached to *Akali Phula Singh Burj* was originally over 13 acres but now that number has been greatly reduced.

Fateh Singh Ahluwalia

Fateh Singh Ahluwalia (also spelled as **Ahluwalia**) (b. 1784 – d. 1837) was the ruler of the Kapurthala State between 10 July 1801 – 20 October 1837. He was awarded the Companion of Order of the Indian Empire.

Fateh Singh was the son of Bagh Singh Ahluwalia, and the grandnephew of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, leader of the Ahluwalia

misl and of the Dal Khalsa, who in 1758 proclaimed the sovereignty of the Sikhs in the Punjab. The Ahluwalia Dynasty was founded by Jassa Singh. Fateh Singh succeeded to the Ahluwalia chiefship in 1801. He was the chosen companion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, with whom he, in 1802, exchanged turbans in a permanent bond of brotherhood.

Fateh Singh took part in almost all the early campaigns of Ranjit Singh:

- Kasur (1802-03)
- Malva (1806-08)
- Kangra (1809)
- Haidru (1813)
- Multan (1818)
- Kashmir (1819)
- Mankera (1821).

He held command in the Bhimbar, Rajauri and Bahawalpur expeditions. In 1806, Fateh Singh acted as the plenipotentiary of Ranjit Singh and signed the first Anglo-Sikh treaty with Lord Lake at the time when the Maratha chief, Yashwant Rao Holkar, had sought shelter in the Punjab.

Close association with the ruler of Lahore brought Fateh Singh ample rewards. The Maharaja had bestowed upon him the districts of Dakha, Kot, Jagraon, Talvandi, Naraingarh and Raipur after his Malwa campaigns. He possessed extensive territories on both sides of the Sutlej yielding an annual revenue of 1,76,000 rupees in 1808; in 1836, his territories were estimated to be worth 16,00,000 rupees annually.

The cordiality between the two chiefs was strained by Fateh Singh's direct communications with the British over the question of the Bhirog and Kotla chiefships, the construction by him of a strong citadel at Isru and his constant pleas for British protection.

Feeling unsafe at Lahore, Fateh Singh fled across the river in 1825 to his cis-Sutlej territory and sought British protection. Ranjit Singh promptly seized his trans-Sutlej possessions, but showed willingness to forgive him if he returned to Lahore.

The rift between the Ahluwalia chief and the Maharaja of Lahore was, however, soon repaired. Fateh Singh returned to Lahore in 1827, and the Maharaja received him with honour restoring to him all his possessions. Later in his life, Fateh Singh lived at Kapurthala where he died in October 1836.

Jodh Singh Ramgarhia

Jodh Singh Ramgarhia (1758 – 23 August 1815) was a prominent Sikh leader in the Punjab, the son of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia who inherited Jassa's position on his death in 1803. His Ramgarhia followers played an important role in the struggle when Maharaja Ranjit Singh was establishing the Sikh Empire.

Jodh was instrumental in persuading Mai Sukhan, widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi and ruler of Amritsar to surrender to Ranjit Singh on 24 February 1805 and to hand over the massive Zamzama gun. He fought with Ranjit Singh in the Battle of Kasur, and was awarded many estates by the Maharajah. He was responsible for the construction of the

Ramgarhia Bunga adjoining the Golden Temple of Amritsar, a residence for guards of the temple, using materials that had been collected by his father.

On his death in 1815 there was a dispute over succession to his estates between his widow, his brother Vir Singh and his cousins Diwan Singh and Mehtab Singh. The Maharajah eventually split the estates between them.

Ghaus Mohammad

Ghaus Mohammad Khan (2 November 1915 – 1982) was an Indian tennis player from Malihabad. He was the first Indian to reach the quarterfinals at Wimbledon, achieved in 1939 where he lost to second-seeded and eventual champion Bobby Riggs. With compatriot Iftikar Ahmed he reached the third round in the doubles event in 1947.

For this efforts in the realm of sports Mohammad Khan received the Padma Shri award from the Government of India in 1971.

Veer Singh Dhillon

Veer Singh Dhillon (1792–1842) was a Sikh who was born in Gurdaspore, Punjab. He was a general in the Sikh Khalsa Army, army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and was the founder of one of the most highly honoured Sikh warrior families.

Veer Singh was awarded the title *Jallaha* (Duke) of Gurdaspore after his army single-handedly won the eastern areas of Punjab

for the Maharaja. Later when the Sikh Empire fell to the British forces, the armies of the Jallaha of Gurdaspore (then under the son of Veer Singh) were not defeated due to their strong defenses. But later the British signed a treaty with the ruler in which his areas would come under the British Empire but the Jallaha would still remain the supreme commander of the military forces and also the chief administrator of the area.

Early life

Veer Singh was born in a Dhillon Jat family, and was raised a Nihang. He was a master in the art of Gatka a Sikh martial art. At an early age his family was forced out of Gurdaspore (now Gurdaspur a district in Punjab) after the Raja of Kapurthala attacked the rather peaceful town. Later Veer Singh led his armies against the Raja, and won back Gurdaspore.

Military career

Dhillon participated in the following conquests: Sialkot, Kasur (1807), Multan (1818), Kashmir (1819), Pakhli & Damtaur (1821-2), and finally Gurdaspore (1831). He served as the governor of Peshawar for a short period and was later Jallaha (duke) of Gurdaspore.

Diwan Sawan Mal Chopra

Diwan Sawan Mal Chopra was the Khatri Diwan (governor) of Lahore and Multan. He was originally from Peshawar and was originally a 'Munshi' to Malik Mohan Lal, Subahdar of Multan

under the Durranis. Along with Hari Singh Nalwa, he was a top commander in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army. As a general under Ranjit Singh, he assisted in wresting the 'subah' (province) of Multan from the Durrani Afghans in 1823, after which he was made Diwan of the region. He instituted improvements in agricultural production through irrigation schemes.

In 1834, he signed an agreement on behalf of the Maharaja with Sardar Karam Khan, a Mazari warrior respected highly in his tribe as well as in the Sikh Army. Sardar Karam Khan was the younger brother of Mir Bahram Khan, Chief of the Baloch Mazari tribe, thereby ending the long war between the Sikhs and the Mazaris of Rojhan. He was succeeded to the governorship of Multan by his son, Diwan Mulraj Chopra, who was the last ethnic Punjabi to administer Multan.

Misr Diwan Chand

Misr Diwan Chand was a notable officer of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. He rose from petty clerk to the chief of artillery and commander-in-chief of the armies that conquered Multan and Kashmir. He was a notable pillar of the state. Diwan Chand was the son of a Brahmin shopkeeper of Gondlanwala village (in present-day Pakistan). Diwan Chand was honoured with the title of Zafar Jang Bahadur—Brave Victor of Battles from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Diwan Chand captured Multan in 1818. In 1819, he led an expedition to Shupiyani in Kashmir region, along with Ranjit Singh's son Kharak Singh.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a great regard for the general. Once at Amritsar, the Maharaja had purchased a very precious

hookah from a Hindustani merchant, although this was against the injunctions of his own religion. He presented the hookah to Misr Diwan Chand to mark the high esteem in which he was held by the Maharaja. Permission was also given to him to smoke.

The contribution of Misr Dewan Chand in the making of the Maharaja's empire has also been under-estimated by British historians who have described him as a "hookah-smoking general'.It is a fact that Maharaja had once presented him a hookah himself. He was a great warrior and general who achieved the title of *Fateh-o-Nusrat-Nasib* (one who never loses in war) from Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself and made him Governor of Kashmir.

Misr Diwan Chand was the Commander-in-Chief of Khalsa Army from 1817 to 1825. He was a pillar on whose back the powerful Sikh kingdom arose.

Nau Nihal Singh

Nau Nihal Singh (9 March 1821 – 5 November 1840) was the third Maharaja of the Sikh Empire. His reign began with the dethronement of his father Kharak Singh and ended with his death at the age of 19 on the day of his father's funeral.

Background

He was the son of Maharani Chand Kaur and Maharaja Kharak Singh, himself the eldest son and heir of Maharaja Ranjit

Singh Sher-e-Panjab and a grandson of Maharani Datar Kaur of the Nakai Misl.

Early life

In April 1837 at the age of sixteen he was married to Bibi Sahib Kaur, a daughter of Shaheed Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala (1790–1846) of the village of Attari in Amritsar district of Punjab.

Nau Nihal was raised outside the court politics at Lahore however at the age of eighteen, and forced by his father's incapacity he returned to Lahore. He was instructed to govern in the name of his father under the direction of the vizier, Dhian Singh. When Kharak Singh became gravely ill, the court physician Johann Martin Honigberger noted that despite his father begging him to see him every day, Nau Nihal rarely visited his father.

Death

Nau Nihal was popular with the royal courtiers and the general public, and was seen as a worthy successor to his father during the latter's sickness. After Kharak Singh died on 5 November 1840, Nau Nihal performed his last rites beside the Ravi River in Lahore. After the ceremony, he started returning to the palace via the Hazuri Bagh, where a massive block of stone from a gate fell upon him and two of his companions. One of the companions - Udham Singh (nephew of Dhian Singh)- broke his neck and died on the spot.

According to Alexander Gardner, who was just steps behind Nau Nihal when the incident took place, the prince had sustained only minor injuries during this episode: he was well enough to walk on his own, and agreed to be taken on a stretcher only because of Gardner's insistence. However, when the court physician Johann Martin Honigberger came to attend Nau Nihal in a tent, he observed that the prince's skull had been crushed, and the bedsheet was covered with blood and brain tissue.

Dhian Singh insisted that the prince had suffered these injuries during the alleged accident in Hazuri Bagh. Nau Nihal died hours later, although the courtiers did not make this news public until three days later in an attempt to avoid panic. According to Gardner, five artillery men had carried Nau Nihal from Hazuri Bagh to the tent: two of these men died under mysterious circumstances, two went on leave and never re-joined the service, and one disappeared without explanation. L.H. Griffin in *The Punjab Chiefs* says, "The only reason for the mystery which shrouded the death-bed of the Prince, was the necessity which Dhyan Singh felt for keeping the fatal news from being generally known until the arrival of Sher Singh. If there had been an organised plot, the Raja would have taken care that Sher Singh should have been present in Lahore at the time of the catastrophe. The absence of Sher Singh proves the innocence of the Raja (Dhian Singh)".

The contemporary English political correspondence, which details even the most insignificant happenings at the Darbar, makes no references to any suspicion entertained in any quarters regarding the Jammu Rajas. It has been asserted that as far as contemporary European writers go, it was their

studied policy to denounce the Jammu Rajas, especially Dhian Singh, because of his anti-European attitude which he had consistently maintained throughout his career. On enquiry into the matter of the 'accident', J.M. Honigberger found "more reason to suppose that the partisans of Kurruck Singh and Chet Singh were the authors of this plot against the prince, as he had intended to ask them for an account of their perfidious behaviour during his father's long illness... He(the prince) to order seven of their houses to be closed and inquiries to be made".

Nau Nihal was cremated on 6 November 1840 at the age of 19. His mother Maharani Chand Kaur became the Empress of Sikh Empire. She was killed by poisoning her food on 11 June 1842.

Succession

After Nau Nihal's death, a court faction proclaimed his uncle Sher Singh as the rightful heir, while another declared his mother Chand Kaur as the ruler. The faction supporting Chand Kaur hoped that Nau Nihal's pregnant wife would give birth to a son. However, the widow gave birth to a stillborn baby six months later, and Sher Singh besieged Lahore with a 70,000-strong army. Ultimately, Chand Kaur agreed to acknowledge Sher Singh's claim to the throne in return for a generous settlement and safe passage, and Sher Singh was crowned on 18 January 1841. A few months later, on 11 June 1842, Chand Kaur's maids killed her by crushing her skull, just like her son had died. While being punished by Prime Minister Dhian Singh, they insisted that they had killed Chand Kaur on Sher Singh's orders.

Nau Nihal Singh had ordered the construction of a bunga (tower) in the complex of Tarn Taran Sahib, one of the Holiest Sikh Shrines in the Majha Region of Punjab Kingdom.

Child adoptions

When Nau Nihal Singh was declared as Maharaja of Sikh Empire, he adopted a son of Kanhaiya Misl, a powerful remaining confederation that remained after all Misls substantially divided with Kanhaiyas undivided.

He married with a Kanhaiya girl and lastly he had his biological child. His first heir was his adopted son. He, his father and his grandfather linked with Kanhaiyas.

Sher Singh

Sher Singh (4 December 1807 – 15 September 1843) was the fourth Maharaja of the Sikh Empire. A legitimate son of Ranjit Singh, founder of the Sikh Empire, his reign began on 18 January 1840 following his assault on Lahore which ended the brief regency of Chand Kaur. He was assassinated on 15 September 1843 by Ajit Singh Sandhawalia.

Birth

Sher Singh was the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Maharani Mehtab Kaur, who was also the mother of Prince Tara Singh (1807-1859).

Early life

In 1820, Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted him the privilege of being seated in the Darbar and bestowed civil and military honours on him.

From 1831 to 1834 he acted as Governor of Kashmir and in 1834 he was a commander in the force that captured Peshawar from the Afghans.

Reign

Sher Singh became the maharaja on 27 January 1841, after the sudden death of Nau Nihal Singh whose death was set in motion, some say purposely, while returning from his father's cremation. He was the half brother of Nau Nihal Singh's father, former maharaja Kharak Singh.

Proclaimed Maharaja by his wazir (prime minister) Dhian Singh Dogra, he won the throne after a protracted siege of the Lahore Fort which was held by the Royal family. Thousands died in the siege.

Death

Sher Singh was killed as he reached for a new shotgun held by Ajit Singh Sandhawalia, who pulled the trigger. Sher Singh only had time to utter, "what treachery." The Sandhawalias also murdered Dhian Singh. The Sandhawalias were thought to have also had designs on the empire.

Legacy

His palace is leased to Baring Union Christian College.

Zorawar Singh Kahluria

Zorawar Singh Kahluria (1784–12 December 1841) was a military general of Dogra Rajput ruler Gulab Singh of Jammu. He served as the governor (*wazir-e-wazarat*) of Kishtwar and extended the territories of the kingdom by conquering Ladakh and Baltistan. He also boldly attempted the conquest of Western Tibet (*Ngari Khorsum*) but was killed in battle of To-yo during the Dogra-Tibetan war. In reference to his legacy of conquests in the Himalaya Mountains including Ladakh, Tibet, Baltistan and Iskardu as General and Wazir, Zorowar Singh has been referred to as the "Napoleon of India", and "Conqueror of Ladakh".

Early life and career

He was born in September 1784 in a Hindu Kahluria Rajput family in the princely state of Kahlur (Bilaspur) state, in present-day Himachal Pradesh. His family migrated to the Jammu region where, on coming of age, Zorawar took up service under Raja Jaswant Singh of Marmathi (modern Doda district). Zorawar Singh was employed by the ambitious Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and was placed under the commandant of the Reasi fort (Bhimgarh fort). While delivering a routine message to the Gulab Singh, Zorawar told him of the financial waste occurring in the fort administration and boldly presented

his own scheme to effect savings. Gulab Singh was impressed by Zorawar's sincerity and appointed him commandant of Reasi.

Zorawar Singh fulfilled his task and his grateful ruler made him commissariat officer of all forts north of Jammu. He was later made governor of Kishtwar and was given the title of *Wazir* (minister).

Even though it was a newly conquered region Zorawar had no trouble in keeping the peace; many of the local Rajputs were recruited into his army. In 1835 the nearby region of Paddar was taken from Chamba (now in Himachal Pradesh) in the course of a battle. Paddar later became known for its sapphire mines. But this was a mere sideshow to General Zorawar Singh's more famous expeditions, on which he had already embarked in the previous year.

The Ladakh campaigns

To the east of Kishtwar and Kashmir are the snow-clad mountains of the upper Himalayas — the rivers of Zaskar Gorge, Suru River, and Drass rise from these snows, and flow across the plateau of Ladakh into the Indus River. Several petty principalities in this region were tributary to the Gyalpo of Ladakh (King). In 1834 one of these, the Raja of Timbus, sought Zorawar's help against the Gyalpo. Meanwhile, the Rajput general had been burning to distinguish himself by expanding the territory of Raja Gulab Singh — also at that time, according to the *Gulabnama*, Kishtwar went through a drought that caused a loss of revenue and forced Zorawar to extract money through war.

The Rajputs of Jammu and Himachal have traditionally excelled in mountain fighting; therefore Zorawar had no trouble in crossing the mountain ranges and entering Ladakh through the source of the Suru River where his 5000 men defeated an army of local Botis.

After moving to Kargil and subduing the landlords along the way Zorawar received the submission of the Ladakhis — however Tsepal Namgyal, the Gyalpo (ruler), sent his general Banko Kahlon by a roundabout route to cut off Zorawar's communications. The astute general doubled back to Kartse, where he sheltered his troops through the winter. In the spring of 1835 he defeated the large Ladakhi army of Banko Kahlon and marched his victorious troops towards Leh. The Gyalpo now agreed to pay 50,000 rupees as war-indemnity and 20,000 rupees as an annual tribute.

Alarmed at the gains of the Dogras, the governor of Kashmir, Mehan Singh, incited the Ladakhi chieftains to rebel but Zorawar quickly marched back to the Himalayan valleys and subdued the rebels, now forcing the Raja of Zanskar to also pay a separate tribute to Jammu.

But in 1836 Mehan Singh, who was in correspondence with the Lahore durbar, this time instigated the Gyalpo to revolt — Zorawar force-marched his army in ten days to surprise the Ladakhis and forced them to submit. He now built a fort outside Leh and placed there a garrison of 300 men under Dalel Singh — the Gyalpo was deposed to an estate and a Ladakhi general, Ngorub Stanzin, was made King. But the latter did not prove to be loyal hence the Gyalpo was restored to his throne in 1838.

Baltistan campaign

To the northwest of Ladakh, and to the north of Kashmir, lies the region of Baltistan. Muhammad Shah, the son of the ruler of Skardu, Raja Ahmad Shah, fled to Leh and sought the aid of the Gyalpo and Zorawar against his father. But some of the Ladakhi nobles allowed Ahmad Shah to imprison his son and sought his aid in a general rebellion against the Dogras. After defeating the Ladakhi rebels Zorawar invaded Baltistan in the winter of 1839/40 (Petech, Kingdom of Ladakh, p. 144, Datta, Ladakh, p. 122 etc. etc.), adding a large contingent of Ladakhis to his army.

The advance brigade of 5,000 under Nidhan Singh lost its way in the cold and snow and was surrounded by the enemy; many soldiers perished from the cold. Then Mehta Basti Ram, a prominent Rajput from Kishtwar, established contact with the main force. On their arrival the Botis of Skardu were defeated and forced to flee. They were chased to the fort of Skardu which was invested by Zorawar for a few days. One night the Dogras scaled the steep mountain behind the fort and after some fighting captured the small fort on its crest. From this position the next day they began firing down at the main fort and forced the Raja to surrender. Zorawar built a fort on the banks of the Indus where he placed a contingent of his soldiers.

After placing Muhammad Shah on the throne for an annual tribute of 7000 rupees, a Dogra contingent under Wazir Lakhpat advanced westwards, conquered the fort of Astor and took its Darad Raja prisoner. However this Raja was tributary to Mehan Singh, the governor of Kashmir, who was alarmed at

the Dogra conquests since they only expanded the kingdom of Gulab Singh while not bringing any benefit to the Lahore durbar. His complaint at Lahore was forwarded to Raja Gulab Singh at Jammu and he ordered the Darad Raja to be released.

Tibet expedition

One column under the Ladakhi prince, Nono Sungnam, followed the course of the Indus River to its source. Another column of 300 men, under Ghulam Khan, marched along the mountains leading up to the Kailas Range and thus south of the Indus. Zorawar himself led 3,000 men along the plateau region where the vast and picturesque Pangong Lake is located. Sweeping all resistance before them, the three columns passed the Lake Manasarovar and converged at Gartok, defeating the small Tibetan force stationed there. The enemy commander fled to Taklakot but Zorawar stormed that fort on 6 September 1841. Envoys from Tibet now came to him as did agents of the Maharaja of Nepal, whose kingdom was only fifteen miles from Taklakot.

The fall of Taklakot finds mention in the report of the Chinese Imperial Resident, Meng Pao, at Lhasa:

On my arrival at Taklakot a force of only about 1,000 local troops could be mustered, which was divided and stationed as guards at different posts. A guard post was quickly established at a strategic pass near Taklakot to stop the invaders, but these local troops were not brave enough to fight off the Shen-Pa (Dogras) and fled at the approach of the invaders. The distance between Central Tibet and Taklakot is several thousand li...because of the cowardice of the local troops; our

forces had to withdraw to the foot of the Tsa Mountain near the Mayum Pass. Reinforcements are essential in order to withstand these violent and unruly invaders.

Zorawar and his men now went on pilgrimage to Mansarovar and Mount Kailash. He had extended his communication and supply line over 450 miles of inhospitable terrain by building small forts and pickets along the way. The fort Chi-T'ang was built near Taklakot, where Mehta Basti Ram was put in command of 500 men, with 8 or 9 cannon. With the onset of winter all the passes were blocked and roads snowed in. The supplies for the Dogra army over such a long distance failed despite Zorawar's meticulous preparations.

As the intense cold, coupled with the rain, snow and lightning continued for weeks upon weeks, many of the soldiers lost their fingers and toes to frostbite. Others starved to death, while some burnt the wooden stock of their muskets to warm themselves. The Tibetans and their Chinese allies regrouped and advanced to give battle, bypassing the Dogra fort of Chi-T'ang. Zorawar and his men met them at the Battle of To-yo on 12 December 1841—in the early exchange of fire the Rajput general was wounded in his right shoulder but he grabbed a sword in his left hand. The Tibetan horsemen then charged the Dogra position and one of them thrust his lance in Zorawar Singh's chest.

Chattar Singh Attariwala

General Raja Chattar Singh Attariwala, also spelt **Chatar Singh Aṁārivālā**, was Governor of Hazara province and a military commander in the army of the Sikh Empire during the

reign of Maharaja Duleep Singh in the Punjab. He fought in the Second Anglo-Sikh War against the British. Raja hatar Siṅgh died in Calcutta on 27 December 1855.

Family

Chatar Singh was the son of Jodh Siṅgh Aṅārīvālā. He had two sons, Raja Sher Singh Attariwalla and Avtār Singh. Sher Singh dealt a devastating blow on the army of the British East India Company at the Battle of Chillianwala. His daughter Tej Kaur was betrothed to Duleep Singh, but after the First Anglo-Sikh War the British Resident, Sir Frederick Currie did not honour the betrothal.

Career

On the death of his father in August 1815, Chatar Singh inherited large jagirs and occupied himself with farming his estates. He rose into political prominence in 1843, after the assassination of Maharaja Sher Singh, and his daughter Tej Kaur was betrothed to Maharaja Duleep Singh. In 1846 he was made Governor of Peshawar and the following year the Council of Regency recommended him for the title of Raja, but he asked that instead the title be conferred on his son, Sher Singh.

In 1848 he was appointed as Governor of the Hazara province. There he came into conflict with Captain James Abbott the British Deputy Commissioner of the Hazara District. Abbott alleged that Chatar Singh was conspiring to subvert British authority in the Punjab. The British Resident at Lahore, Sir Frederick Currie commissioned an investigation by Captain

John Nicholson who exonerated Chatar Siṅgh, and also justified the defensive measures he had taken to save the besieged capital of Hazārā from Abbott's Muhammadan mercenaries. Despite this, Currie virtually dismissed Chatar Singh and confiscated his jagirs. After this, and the failure of the Resident to honour the betrothal of his sister, Sher Singh, who had been fighting alongside the British, changed sides. In the second Anglo-Sikh War, Sher Singh inflicted a serious blow on the British at the Battle of Chillianwala, but was defeated at the subsequent Battle of Gujrat. Following the battle, Chatar Siṅgh and his sons, Rājā Sher Siṅgh and Avtār Singh, were imprisoned at first at Allāhābād and then at Fort William at Calcutta.

Balhadra Kunwar

Balhadra KunwarChhetri (30 January 1789 – 13 March 1823) was a Nepalese military commander and administrator in the Kingdom of Nepal. He is one of the National heroes of Nepal. He was highly praised for his military skill for the defence of the Nalapani fort in the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–1816). He was Captain in the Nepalese military and was tasked as commander to protect the forts of Dehradun.

Name

His given name *Junge* is the name of *Baladeva* (*Balarama*), the elder brother of *Krishna*. It is an amalgamation of two words; *Bala* (Sanskrit: बल, lit.□'strength') and *Bhadra* (Sanskrit: भद्र, lit.□'auspicious')

Family and Early life

He was born to father Chandrabir Kunwar, a resident of Bhanwarkot of Panchkhal Municipality in Kavrepalanchowk District. His mother Ambika Devi was a sister of Kaji Ranajor Thapa and daughter of Bada Amar Singh Thapa. His father Chandrabir was son of Jaya Krishna Kanwar, a son of Ashiram Kanwar. His brother Birabhadra Kunwar was military commander in Kumaun and Kangra front (1809 A.D.) as well as governor of Garhwal.

The Anglo-Nepal War 1814–1816

As commander of the Gorkhali forces in Dheradun, Capt. Balbhadra Kunwar was handed the responsibility of defending the area. The expanding Nepali/Gorkhali State had since the mid-late 18th century expanded the nation's border on all sides, which eventually led to conflict with the British East India Company and a war followed.

Realizing he could not defend the town of Dehradun, Capt. Balbhadra Kunwar withdrew to the strategic hill fort of Khalanga with an army strength of 600 including women and children against the British East India Company British stronghold of 3000–3500 troops. He turned down an incentive proposal of the British who would make him Governor of the Western Garhwal should he surrender or leave Nepal.

In the month of October 1814, Major General Sir Rollo Gillespie of the British army had advanced along with 3,500 troops and eleven pieces of cannon to occupy the Nepali

territories situated between the Ganges and Yamuna rivers in the Gharwal and Kumaon regions that had been occupied by the Nepali forces. Captain Balabhadra Kunwar had maintained his position at a 400 cubits high hill in a place called Nalapani, situated north-east of Dehradun, to check his advance.

On Kartik 8, 1871, Bikram Samvat (October 1814), British troops reached Dheradun. A battle took place between British and Nepali troops at Nalapani on Kartik 10, 1871 B. Samvat. The British were unsuccessful and withdrew to Dehradun. Another battle was fought between the two sides at Nalapani on Kartik 17, 1871 Samvat (ca. Oct 31, 1814). General Gillespie, the British Commander, lost his life in that battle along with Col. Alice.

The siege continued for a month until the British, convinced that they could not win by military ways, blocked the source of water to the fort so that the Nepalese would die of thirst. For the Nepali Army it was a hard struggle fighting a very well equipped and trained modern army, belonging to one of the largest colonial Empires of the world. Balbhadra Kunwar had asked for reinforcements from the capital but Kathmandu could not send them any soldiers as the Nepali army had no reserve army and were an emerging power which means that they did not have troops to match the East India Company. The Nepalese army was outnumbered in Nalapani as it was in every battlefield.

Even though the Nepali army lacked water they were still determined to defend their position. Because the walls had collapsed, cannonballs fired by the British started reaching the

interior of the fort. Many men were killed or injured. Despite losing their comrades and friends the remaining men were still determined to defend their position. In order to drink water from the river they came out of the fort in a single line, and the British forces watched in surprise as the Nepali troops quenched their thirst and returned to their fort.

On Marga 16 (Nov 1814), four of the commanders, including Capt. Balabhadra Kunwar, in the night was forced to abandon the fort of Nalapani with their remaining Gorkhali troops. On seeing the Nepalis abandon the fort, the British attacked them. The Nepalis resisted the attack but continued to advance. They reached Dwara in the morning of Marga 17, 1871 and stayed the whole day there.

Balabhadra sent a courier to the British with the following message: *We had handed over to you your dead and injured soldiers on your request. We now request you to hand over our injured soldiers to us.* The British replied that they would look after the injured (Nepali) soldiers themselves. Accordingly, they treated the 180 injured soldiers at the Nalapani fort.

The next day, Marga 18, 1871 Samvat, the Nepalis left Dwara for the Gopichand Hill, where they had decided to build a fort. Dwara was not considered suitable for that purpose.

The Nepalis spent the night at the Gopichand hill. At midnight, the British forces started shelling their camp. The Nepalis retaliated. Meanwhile, Sardar Ripumardan Thapa sustained an injury in his right arm from an enemy shell. He was unable to walk, and so was helped by his jamadar to climb the hill. However, he could not go on and was forced to stop. The other Nepalis continued to ascend the hill.

The next day, Marga 19, 1871 B. Samvat, men sent by Balabhadra carried Ripumardana to Chamuwa. Kaji Ranadipa Simha Basnyat also had arrived at that place.

On Marga 20, Kaji Rewanta Kunwar reached there Subedar Dalajit Kanwar were killed by enemy fire.

Ultimately after 4 days of thirst, and a severe loss of troops, without surrendering, Capt. Balbhadra emerged from the fort with drawn kukris in his hands (along with other 70 survivors) and roared to the British – "You could have never won the battle but now I myself voluntarily abandon this fort. There is nothing inside the fort other than dead corpses of the children and women"! He and his remaining troops escaped into the hills on November 30, 1814.

A peace treaty was signed on Dec 2, 1815 between the then King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah and the British East India Company, known as the Sugauli Treaty.

Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

He did not lose his life during the Anglo-Nepalese war. After the war, he went to Lahore, capital of the Punjab where many Nepalis had gone, to join the two new regiments formed by the Sikh Maharajah Ranjit Singh of the Punjab, following the war with the British but a tradition formed prior to the war. Capt. Balbhadra Kunwar was appointed General and commander of the new "Goorkha" regiments consisting entirely of Gorkhali/Nepali troops. Those that had taken service under the Mughal Emperors were known as "Munglane" and was seen as very powerful.

Under Hari Singh Nalwa and death

During the Sikh-Afghan war of 1879 B. Samvat (1822), the Nepalis in the Sikh Military had fought bravely, but was also in which Balabhadra Kunwar was killed by Afghan artillery in Naushera, Peshawar region, Afghanistan on Chaitra 3 (March/April in the Roman calendar and is the last month in the Hindu Lunar calendar). Bhimsen Thapa had sent men to Lahore to collect information about this war and the death of his nephew. He was under the great and famed General Hari Singh Nalwa who honoured him during the battle. Hari Singh Nalwa continued the campaign and reached as far as Jamrud.

Following the Anglo-Nepali War, the British East India Company erected a war memorial at Nalapani in honor of the Gorkhalis and Capt. Balbhadra Kunwar (often referred to wrongly as Bulbuder Singh or Balbudder Thapa) praising their bravery.

Alexander Gardner (soldier)

Alexander Haughton Campbell Gardner (or Gardiner), also known as Gordana Khan (Persian: گوردانه خان; Punjabi: ਗੋਰਦਾਨਾ ਖ਼ਾਨ; 1785–1877), was an American traveller, soldier, and mercenary. He travelled to Afghanistan and Punjab and served in various military positions in the region. Details of his life remain obscure, though several colourful accounts have been written. Although corroborating evidence is sparse, Scottish historian John Keay wrote biographies in 1977, 1979, and, most thoroughly, *The Tartan Turban: In Search of Alexander Gardner*, in 2017.

Biography

By Gardner's own accounts he was born in Wisconsin to a Scottish father and Anglo-Spanish mother. Baron von Hügel met Gardner in 1835 and claimed he was Irish, but supporting evidence for this is lacking.

Gardner went to Ireland in about 1809. He returned to America in 1812, but finding his father dead sailed for Europe and never went back to America. From Europe he traveled to Astrakhan where his brother was working. Upon his brother's death in 1817 Gardner tried to secure a position in the Russian Army. When that failed he left Russia and spent the next 13 years wandering through Central Asia.

In 1823 he was captured in Afghanistan by Habib Ullah Khan, the nephew of Dost Mohammed Khan. Habib Ullah was fighting his uncle for the throne of Kabul, and he recruited Gardner to his cause as the commander of 180 horsemen. After an attack on a pilgrim caravan Gardner married one of the captives, a native woman, and went to live in a fort near Parwan where a son was born. When Habib Ullah was defeated in 1826, Gardner's wife and his baby boy were murdered by Dost Mahommed's forces. Later that year Gardner fled north with a few companions and near the River Oxus his party was attacked by fifty horsemen: they lost eight out of their thirteen men and the survivors were all wounded but able to escape. Their route now lay towards Badakhshan and the valley of the Kokcha; the Oxus was finally crossed opposite the Shakhdara to reach the valley of Shignan. From this point his narrative is fragmentary and difficult to understand, large parts being highly improbable or impossible. He claimed to have reached

Yarkand on 24 September but the year is uncertain, either 1827, 1828 or 1829 are possible, certainly he was there by 1830. He returned to Afghanistan, and visited Kafiristan, possibly the first westerner to do so. In August 1831 he left Afghanistan as an outlaw for the Punjab, where he was appointed Commandant of Artillery. He served in this position for many years before he was transferred to the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, where he was one of between 32 and 100 Western soldiers in Ranjit's army. He was later promoted to the rank of colonel by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

He remained in the Sikh army after Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, til the First Anglo-Sikh War.

Gardner was involved in numerous gun and sword fights during his career. He was described as being six-foot, with a long beard, an all around warrior and fighter. Gardner was known to have saved the City of Lahore in 1841 when his comrades abandoned him and he fired the guns that killed 300 enemies.

Gardner remained in the service of the Maharajas as they came and went, and witnessed the fall of the Punjab as a sovereign kingdom. This he vividly described in his book on the Fall of the Sikh Empire.

He is described as continuing to suffer the effects of fourteen wounds in later life. He is supposed to have been difficult to understand due "variously to his lack of teeth, his liking for alcohol, his considerable age or the sing-song lilt of his rusty English; it could equally have been caused by the gash in his throat which was the most obvious of his many wounds and

which obliged him to clamp a pair of forceps to his neck whenever he ate or drank."

Gardner kept a journal, much of which was lost. Extracts were published in 1853, and attracted controversy. His exploits were so bizarre that the geographer Sir Henry Yule disbelieved them. In later life, Gardner related his adventures to several prospective biographers, and after his death the surviving material was published in *Soldier and Traveller: memoirs of Alexander Gardner*; edited by Major Hugh Pearse.

Gardner appears as a major supporting character in the novel *Flashman and the Mountain of Light*. Parts of his journey are added into *The Man Who Would Be King*, particularly his visit to Kafiristan.

Josiah Harlan

Josiah Harlan, Prince of Ghor (12 June 1799 – October 1871) was an American adventurer, best known for travelling to Afghanistan and Punjab with the intention of making himself a king. While there, he became involved in local politics and factional military actions, eventually winning the title *Prince of Ghor* in perpetuity for himself and his descendants in exchange for military aid. Rudyard Kipling's short story *The Man Who Would Be King* is believed to be partly based on Harlan.

Harlan's childhood

Josiah Harlan was born in Newlin Township in Chester County, Pennsylvania. His parents, Joshua Harlan and Sarah

Hinchman, were Quakers, and Josiah and his nine siblings, including Richard Harlan, were raised in a strict and pious home. His father was a merchant broker in Philadelphia and several of his sons would later enter the merchant business.

Losing his mother at the age of thirteen, Josiah delved into reading. A contemporary records that Harlan, at the age of fifteen, amused himself with reading medical books and the biographies of Plutarch, as well as the inspired Prophets. He read Latin and Greek, while speaking fluent French. He also developed a passion for botany that would last his entire life. He also studied Greek and Roman Ancient history, particularly taken by stories of Alexander the Great. A muscular man standing at over 6 feet tall, described as being handsome when he was young, Harlan impressed everyone he met as precociously intelligent, brash, ambitious, and more than a little arrogant as he was convinced that he was destined to achieve great things like his hero Alexander the Great.

Early travels

In 1820, Harlan embarked on his first travels while joining the Freemasons. His father secured him a job as supercargo on a merchant ship bound for the East, sailing to Calcutta, India, then Guangzhou, China and back. Returning from this first trip and preparing for the next, he fell in love quite "accidentally" with a Miss Elizabeth Swaim, for whom he wrote several verses of poetry to honor. They became engaged and were to be married when he returned from the voyage to India and China. However, in Calcutta he received notice from his brother Richard that his fiancée had broken the engagement and already married another.

Broken by this news, Harlan vowed never to return to America, instead seeking adventure in the East. After learning his fiancée had married somebody else, a heartbroken Harlan used the words *solitude* over and over again in his writings as the historian Ben Macintyre noted: "He reached out and grasped a thorn; he would never clasp love in the same way again". Harlan was deeply hurt and heartbroken by Swaim's unfaithfulness, all the more so as she never bothered to tell him herself about what she had broken, had broken her engagement less than a week after he left Philadelphia, and married the other gentleman two months after he had departed for Asia. To cope with the pain and heartbreak, Harlan developed the persona of the aloof, romantic loner, a man of action who lived only for glory that was to last for the rest of his life.

In July 1824, without any formal education, he enlisted as a surgeon with the East India Company's army. Macintyre noted: "That he had never actually studied medicine was not, at least in his own mind, an impediment". The Company was about to enter a war in Burma, and was in need for qualified surgeons, and Harlan wanted to forget about his heartbreak and to be far away from America as possible; serving in Burma seemed to fulfill both criteria. Relying on his self-studies and some practice while at sea, Harlan presented himself to the medical board for examination and was appointed as surgeon to the Calcutta general hospital. From January 1825 he served with the army in Burma, until he was injured or became ill. Harlan admired the impressive capacity of the Company's sepoy who "consumed nothing, but parched grain, a leguminous seed resembling the pea", and yet kept going. Harlan was trained and worked as a surgeon, but owing to heavy losses suffered

by the Company's troops due to disease and war in the jungles of Burma, Harlan sometimes fought with the Bengal Artillery, acquiring military knowledge that was later to serve him well. Harlan was present at the Battle of Prome, where Anglo-Indian forces stormed the city of Prome (modern Pyay) and engaged in fierce hand-to-hand fighting with the Burmese. Meanwhile, the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826 ended hostilities.

Once recuperated, Harlan was posted to Karnal, north of Delhi, where he soon grew weary with taking orders from the Company. During this time, Harlan read the 1815 book *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and its dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India, comprising a View of the Afghaun Nation and history of the Dooraunee Monarchy* by East India Company's Mountstuart Elphinstone, who visited Afghanistan in 1809 to meet its King, Shuja Durrani, who wore the world-famous Koh-i-Noor ("Mountain of Light") diamond on his left arm and who was deposed by half-brother Mahmud Durrani during Elphinstone's visit. Afghanistan was for people in the West at the time a remote and mysterious country in Asia, and Elphinstone's book describing his visit to a nation that no Westerner had ever visited before was a best-seller. Harlan began to dream of going to Afghanistan, an essentially medieval country with a feudal economy where tribal chiefs who owned most of the land battled each other for supremacy, inspiring Harlan to write about Afghanistan in his usual purple prose: "Audacious ambition gains by the sabre's sweep and soul-propelling spur, a kingdom and a name amongst the crowned sub deities of the diademed earth". Throughout his life, Harlan was a martinet who would not tolerate any insubordination from those serving under him, but at same time, he had much difficulty with taking orders from those

above him, and Harlan was openly insubordinate towards his superiors in the Company. By this time, Harlan began learning Hindi and Persian, two languages that were to prove to be very useful to him. In the summer of 1826, he quit his service with the Company. As a civilian, he was granted a permit to stay in India by the Governor General Lord Amherst.

India at this time was a proprietary colony granted by the Crown to the East India Company. The East India Company had become the world's most powerful corporation, being granted monopolies on trade with India and China. In its proprietary colony of India the Company by the early 19th century ruled 90 million Indians and controlled 70 million acres (243,000 square kilometres) of land under its own flag, issued its own currency and maintained its own civil service and its own army of 200,000 men led by officers trained at its officer school, giving the Company an army larger than that possessed by most European states. The East India Company was not owned by the Crown, but many of its shareholders were MPs and aristocrats, leading to a powerful Company lobby in Parliament. The Company was sufficiently powerful that several British Army regiments were sent out to serve alongside the Company's army. The East India Company was so powerful that it was known simply as "the Company" in India as the corporation dominated the political and economic life of India. Harlan never hid his dislike of the Company, which he charged had no interest in the welfare of the Indians as the Company sought to maximize profits for its shareholders, and had politically emasculated the Indian maharajahs and nawabs, reducing them down to mere ceremonial rulers without power. Harlan had an ambivalent attitude towards royalty, on one hand being fiercely proud that his country was a republic, and

on the other having a romantic, sentimental love of the pomp and ceremony of a monarchy; nevertheless, he wanted to go to the Punjab and Afghanistan in part to see lands where the monarchs had real power, instead of the marionettes maintained by the Company.

Entering Afghanistan

After a stay in Simla, Harlan came to Ludhiana, a border outpost of British India on the Sutlej river which formed the border between the Punjab and British India at the time. Harlan had decided to enter the service of Ranjit Singh, the Maharaja of Punjab. Though Ranjit Singh was prepared to hire Westerners who could be useful to him, as a general rule he did not allow white people to enter the Punjab as he had seen the way that the East India Company had gobbled much of the Indian subcontinent, and as far he was concerned, the less that whites knew of the Punjab the better, making the Punjab into a rather mysterious region for Westerners. The East India Company's agent in Ludhiana was a Captain Claude Martin Wade, who described Harlan as an enigmatic character who dressed well, knew much about the flora of India and the classics, and whose main interest was working as a mercenary for Ranjit Singh, making him into the first classicist/botanist/soldier of fortune that Wade had ever met. Reflecting his interest with horticulture, Harlan planned to study all of the flora of the Punjab, which were unknown in the West, with the aim of publishing a book about the botany of the Punjab with a special focus on the flowers.

Here, while awaiting an answer on his request to enter the Punjab, Harlan met the exiled Afghan ruler Shuja Shah

Durrani of the Durrani Empire and eventually entered his service. Harlan heard the story of the deposed King of Afghanistan living in exile in Ludhiana, who rumor had it was fabulously wealthy, and decided to enter his service, sending him a letter offering "a general proposition affecting the royal prospects of restoration". Upon arriving in Shuja's palace, Harlan discovered Shuja was surrounded by a court of grotesquely deformed men as Shuja had a habit of removing the ears, noses, tongues, penises and testicles of his courtiers and slaves whenever they displeased him in the slightest, and all of them had offended him at some point along the line. Harlan commented Shuja's court was an "earless assemblage of mutes and eunuchs in the ex-king's service". Harlan knew no Pashto and Shuja no English, so they spoke to each other in a mixture of Hindi and Persian.

Harlan praised "the grace and dignity of His Highness's demeanor", observing the sense of power that Shuja projected, but also that the "years of disappointment had created in the countenance of the ex-King an appearance of melancholy and resignation." When Shuja went out for a picnic with his wives, a gust of wind blew down his tent. Shuja flew into a rage, and much to Harlan's horror, had his chief slave, an African named Khwajah Mika who arrived in India via the slave markets of Zanzibar, castrated on the spot to punish him for not erecting the tent more firmly. After Shuja agreed to hire him, Harlan had a tailor in Ludhiana sew up an American flag, which he used to imply that he was working for the U.S. government, as he went about recruiting mercenaries to restore Shuja. By fall of 1827, Harlan had recruited about hundred mercenaries, a mixture of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs only interested in loot and plunder.

Writing about Afghanistan's unstable politics where its monarchs were frequently overthrown, and the penchant for sons to intrigue against their fathers, and brothers against brothers, Harlan noted: "The prize was literally handed about like a shuttlecock. The king who in the battle may have dispatched a favorite son in the command of his army would probably before night find himself flying from his own troops". Afghanistan was dominated by a feud between two families, the Durrani and the Barakzai, and furthermore, the men of the Durrani and Barakzai families were just as much inclined to feud with other family members as they were with the rival families. Shuja, who belonged to the Durrani family, had together with his brother Mahmud overthrown and blinded their brother Zaman; Shuja had then deposed Mahmud and had in his turn had been overthrown by Mahmud, who had in his turn had been overthrown by the Barakzai brothers after he had their father Fateh Khan publicly chopped to pieces; and in their turn the Barazkais were now feuding among themselves. There were 72 Barakzai half-brothers now ruling Afghanistan as the Muslim tradition of polygamy where a man could have four wives at once together with an unlimited number of concubines meant that their father had a surplus of sons. Given this history, and the fact that the Afghan tribal chiefs tended to be loyal only to those who paid them the most, Harlan believed that despite the small size of his force that he could topple the Emir, Dost Mohammad Khan, who was the most able and intelligent of the fractious Barakzai brothers.

With financial support from Shuja Shah Durrani, Harlan travelled along the Indus and into Afghanistan, first to Peshawar then to Kabul. During his journey, Harlan discovered in Ahmedpur two deserters from the East India Company's

Army, James Lewis, better known by his pseudonym Charles Masson and Richard Porter aka "John Brown", who tried to persuade him that they were Americans, but Harlan couldn't help but notice their English accents. Harlan correctly guessed that the only reason why two Englishmen out in the wilderness would try to pass themselves off as Americans was that they were deserters. The two deserters joined Harlan's army and maintained the pretense of being two gentlemen from Kentucky who had decided to explore the Hindu Kush. As he entered Afghanistan, Harlan first met the war-like Pashtun tribes, whose principal interest in life was killing each other, and learned about their strict code of *Pashtunwali* ("the way of the Pashtuns") under which any insult, real or perceived, to a man had to be avenged with swift and blinding violence while at the same time, a man had to be courteous and honorable to all, including his enemies. As Harlan's army was close to mutiny, he decided he would enter Afghanistan disguised as a Muslim *derwish* (holy man) returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca. Much to Harlan's fury, Masson deserted his army and inspired several others to follow his example. Harlan knew only a few phrases in Arabic, but it was sufficient to convince a Pashtun chief that he was a *derwish* returning from Mecca. Shuja had followed up Harlan's force with his own troop of mercenaries, seizing Peshawar, the summer capital of Afghanistan, and behaved with such outrageous arrogance towards the Pashtun chiefs who had come to swear loyalty to him out of the expectation of lavish financial rewards that they went back to their loyalty to the Bazakzai brothers, who did not obsessively use court etiquette to humiliate chiefs as Shuja did.

Harlan met in Kabul the man who he had come to depose, Dost Mohammad Khan, at the Bala Hisar fortress/palace. The

custom of *Pashtunwali* ensured that the Pashtun Dost Mohammad chose to treat Harlan as an honored guest. By this time, Harlan had become fluent in Persian, the *lingua franca* of the Muslim world, and it was in that language that he and Dost Mohammad talked. Even though Harlan had come to Afghanistan to overthrow Dost Mohammad, upon meeting him, he discovered he rather admired Dost Mohammad, who was a "worthy adversary", a polite, courteous gentleman who was extremely intelligent, a brave warrior, and despite being an Emir, very modest. Unlike the rulers from the House of Durrani, who used the title of *Shah* (Persian for king), the monarchs of the House of Bazakzai used the less grand title of *Emir* (Arabic for prince)-Pashto had such low status in the Muslim world that both the Durranis and Bazakzais used Arabic and Persian titles to improve their prestige.

Harlan had arrived with the assumption of the superiority of the West over the East, but meeting Dost Mohammad challenged his thinking as he found Easterners could be just as intelligent as Westerners. When Dost Mohammad asked Harlan to explain the American system of government to him, Harlan spoke about the tripartite separation of power between the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court, which led the Emir to remark the American system did not sound to him much different from the Afghan system, where there was a tripartite separation of power between the Emir, the tribal chiefs and the *Ulama* (the Islamic clergy who also served as judges). Harlan also noted that despite being a Muslim that Dost Mohammad was a heavy drinker who had brought prostitutes to his court; Harlan describes them as "promiscuous actors in the wild, voluptuous, licentious scene of shameless bacchanals".

Dost Mohammad allowed Harlan the freedom to wander and explore Kabul, the "city of ten thousand gardens", which Harlan fell in love with, observing that there were so many gardens in the city full of sweet-smelling flowers and fruits to almost cancel out the smell caused by the human and animal excrement dumped in the streets. Harlan wrote Kabul was a "jewel encircled with emerald with flowers and blossoms whose odors perfume the air with a fragrance elsewhere unknown". Harlan called Kabul a "sweet assemblage of floral beauty" full of "ornamental trees, apple orchards, patches of peach and plum trees, vast numbers of mulberry of various species, black, white and purple, with the sycamore, the tall poplar, the sweet scented and the red and white willows, the weeping willow, green meadows, running streams and hedges of roses, red, white, yellow and variegated".

Harlan was also curious about Afghan women who always wore burkas that covered their faces and bodies with none of their flesh to be seen. Harlan observed Kabul had a lively red light district full of "professional courtezans [sic] or female singers and dancers, libidinous creatures whose lives are passed in the immodest and secret intrigues of licentiousness". Macintyre wrote that Harlan's disapproving tone suggested considerable experience of the red light district of Kabul.

A difficult moment for Harlan emerged when Hajji Khan, a mercenary working for Dost Mohammad approached him with a plan to assassinate the Emir and restore Shuja to the throne; Harlan was uncertain if Khan was working as an agent provocateur sent by Dost Mohammad to test his loyalty (meaning he would be executed if he agreed to the plot) or was sincere (meaning he would kill Harlan if he refused to join the

plot). Harlan suggested that the two should go off and invade the Sindh together; when Khan persisted, Harlan said he could never violate the rules of *pashtunwali* by conspiring to murder his host, at which point Khan told him that the Emir extended him his thanks for his willingness to observe *pashtunwali*. Shortly afterwards, a cholera epidemic hit Kabul, killing off much of the population, owing to the feces-ridden water of Kabul.

Harlan himself was infected with cholera, and in a desperate state, wandered into a mosque one night which he discovered had become a morgue full of the bodies of cholera victims. As Harlan left the mosque, he tripped over bodies piled up in the streets.

At point, an anonymous man told Harlan that the only cure for cholera was to drink alcohol and plenty of it, saying if one consumed enough alcohol that cholera could be survived. The alcohol was not of course distilled from the local water full of feces that spread cholera. Harlan was raised a teetotaler, but he broke with his Quaker values by drinking as much wine and whisky that had been smuggled into Afghanistan from India as possible to survive cholera. An attack of cholera typically lasts 48 hours, during which the body excretes fluids, causing intense dehydration that leads to death, which can be countered if one consumes enough non-cholera infected fluids such as alcohol. After surviving cholera, Harlan later stated he looked death in the eye, and was never again afraid of death.

In Peshawar, Harlan had met a *Nawab* Jubbar Khan, who was a brother of Dost Mohammad Khan. Jubbar Khan was important as a possible rival of Dost Mohammad, and thus a

possible ally to Shuja Shah. During this time, Harlan first met an Afghan *maulvi* (Islamic scholar) who also worked as an alchemist and doctor, whose name no-one knew and whom Harlan called "the Moolvie". Harlan discovered much to his amazement that the *maulvi* "was an enthusiastic Rosicrucian" who was seeking the Philosopher's Stone, and who kept Jubbar Khan happy with the supposed medical secrets that his occult knowledge gave him. Harlan soon discovered that the *maulvi* was a fraud, who once insisted that his alchemy could only work if he was provided with a large number of unusually large fish from a local river; when after much difficulty the requisite number of big fish were caught, the *maulvi* only then "remembered" that they all had to be of the same sex for his alchemy to work, at which point the fishing season had passed. Harlan often argued with the *maulvi*, telling him that modern chemists in the West had firmly established it was not possible to turn lead into gold, much less turn fish into silver, as he insisted that he could.

While staying with Jabbar Khan, Harlan evaluated the situation and realised that Dost Mohammad's position was too strong, and that influence from outside Afghanistan was needed. He decided to seek his luck in Punjab. Upon his return to the Punjab, Wade admitted to Harlan that Shuja would never be restored to the throne of Afghanistan, saying "There is now no possible chance for Shuja's restoration, unless an ostensible demonstration of Russian diplomacy should transpire in Kabul". Wade's reference to "Russian diplomacy" in Kabul was Harlan's initiation into the struggle for influence in Central Asia between Russia and Britain known to the British as the "Great Game" and to the Russians as the "Tournament of Shadows".

In the service of a Maharaja, Ranjit Singh

Harlan came to Lahore, the capital of Punjab, in 1829. He sought out the French general Jean-François Allard, who introduced him to the Maharaja. Allard had been awarded the *Légion d'honneur* by Napoleon, and was the Western officer that Ranjit Singh trusted the most, perhaps because Allard wrote poems in Punjabi praising the greatness of his master while calling himself a "slave". Ranjit Singh, the "Lion of Lahore" had conquered much of what is today north-western India and Pakistan, and was considered to be one of the most powerful rulers in the Indian subcontinent, which explained why Harlan sought to work in his service.

As a rule, Ranjit Singh was against taking anybody British into his service as he held deep suspicions of the Company, and was mistrustful of the loyalties of those few Britons in his service. Though it was his European, especially his French and Italian officers, who had turned the *Dal Khalsa* into one of the most formidable military machines in Asia, Ranjit Singh had a low opinion of his European officers, once saying: "German, French or English, all these European bastards are alike". However, Ranjit Singh paid well for the services of his Western officers and Harlan noted that Allard lived in a grand mansion, which he called "a miniature Versailles in the midst of an Oriental bazaar". Allard who felt lonely in the Punjab, being unable to relate to the Indians, and was known to welcome any Westerner, received Harlan as a guest, warning him "It is a very difficult to get an appointment here, but still more to get

one's dismissal, when once in office". Allard had written the poem calling himself a happy "slave" of Ranjit Singh because he wanted to visit his homeland, France, with his Kashmiri wife, and Ranjit Singh had initially refused him permission to leave, thus requiring an obsequious poem to being allowed a visit home. When Allard introduced Harlan to Ranjit Singh, Harlan described the Maharaja as an extremely short man with one eye and a face scarred by smallpox who was dressed all in white with a matching white turban who proudly wore the Koh-i-Noor diamond (which he had taken from Shuja) and who radiated an aura of power. As Harlan knew no Punjabi, he spoke to Singh in Hindi.

Despite being very brave on the battlefield, Ranjit Singh was a maniacal hypochondriac, having doctors see him everyday to treat him for one imaginary ailment after another, and Harlan by emphasizing his claim to be a doctor preyed upon Ranjit Singh's principle weakness, who immediately demanded that Harlan start treating him. Macintyre noted Ranjit Singh was "...a sensualist with a passion for beautiful women and boys, a taste for laudanum, and an addiction to alcohol in the form of his own lethal homemade cocktails. His parties were fantastic bacchanalian bouts, and his sexual stamina legendary..." "with a particular highlight being Ranjit Singh's practice of getting his dancing girls drunk and then having them engage in wild catfights for his amusement". "The hard-drinking Ranjit Singh made his own wine, called "firewater", whose exact ingredients remain a mystery even today, but was believed to contain among other things grape juice, orange seeds and grounded down gems, which he drank in conspicuous amounts. The more honest of Ranjit Singh's doctors told him to curb his drinking and to stop consuming his homemade "firewater" wine, advice

that Ranjit Singh never took." Harlan had abandoned the pacifism of his Quaker faith, but as a teetotaler refrained from drinking Ranjit Singh's wine and tried to avoid attending his parties.

Harlan was offered a military position but declined, looking for something more lucrative. This, he eventually found: after lingering at the court for some time he was offered the position of Governor of Gujrat District, a position he accepted. Ranjit Singh told Harlan: "I will make you Governor of Gujrat and give you 3, 00 rupees a month. If you behave well, I will increase your salary. If not, I will cut off your nose". Before giving him this position, however, the Maharaja decided to test Harlan. In December 1829, he was instated as Governor of Nurpur and Jasrota, described by Harlan himself as "*two districts then newly subjugated by the King in Lahore, located on the skirt of the Himalah mountains*".

These districts had been seized by the maharajah of the Punjab in 1816 and were fairly wealthy at the time Harlan arrived. Little, if anything, is known of Harlan's tenure here, but he must have fared well. One visitor noted that given Ranjit Singh's habit of cutting off the noses of those who failed him that "The fact of his nose being entire, proved that he has done well". In May 1832 he was transferred to Gujrat. In Gujrat, Harlan was visited soon after his instatement by Henry Lawrence who later described him as "*a man of considerable ability, great courage and enterprise, and judging by appearance, well cut out for partisan work*". Harlan later wrote "I was both civil and military governor" with unlimited powers to do whatever he pleased as long taxes were collected and order maintained. While serving the durbar, Harlan often

encountered the Akalis, militant and heavily armed Sikh fundamentalists, who Harlan noted were seen "riding about with sword drawn in each hand, two more in the belt, a matchlock at the back and then a pair of quoits fastened around the turban-an arm peculiar to this race of people, it is a steel ring, ranging from six to nine inches in diameter, and about an inch in breadth, very thin, and at the edges very sharp; they are said to throw it with such accuracy and force as to be able to lop off a limb at sixty or eighty yards". The weapon that Harlan described as a "quoit" is better known as the Chakram.

One of Harlan's visitors was the Reverend Joseph Wolff, a Bavarian Jew who had converted successively to Catholicism, Lutheranism and finally Anglicism, and was now travelling all over Asia as a missionary. After being ordained a minister at Cambridge, the Reverend Wolff had set off to Asia to find the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and to convert all the peoples of Asia to the Church of England. Wolff had arrived at Gujrat and asked to see the governor, expecting him to be a Sikh *sardar* (nobleman) and was surprised that the governor was whistling Yankee Doodle Dandy as he introduced himself as: "I am a free citizen of the United States, from the state of Pennsylvania, city of Philadelphia. I am the son of a Quaker. My name is Josiah Harlan". Wolff described Harlan as wearing a very expensive Western suit and who liked to smoke a hookah. Wolff was one of the few people with whom Harlan spoke of his love for Swaim, as Wolff wrote in his journal: "He fell in love with a young lady who promised to marry him. He sailed to Calcutta; but hearing that his betrothed lady had married somebody else, he determined never again to return to America". However, Harlan was not indifferent to women. Besides for

paying well, Ranjit Singh rewarded those served him well with beautiful concubines with the most successful being given harems, and Harlan himself if not given a harem, had several concubines given to him by Singh for his sexual enjoyment. Harlan also confessed to Wolff his dream of ruling Afghanistan and Wolff noted: "He speaks and write Persian with great fluency; he is clever and enterprising. Dr. Harlan is a high Tory in principles, and honors kingly dignity; though on the other hand he speaks with enthusiasm of Washington, Adams and Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence".

While appointing a European governor was rare, Harlan was certainly not the only one. His colleague Paolo Avitabile was made governor of Wazirabad, and Jean-Baptiste Ventura was made governor of Dera Ghazi Khan in 1831. Avitabile once had a group portrait done of all the Westerners in Ranjit Singh's service, which depicted him, Allard, Ventura, Claude Auguste Court, and Harlan all standing together. Unlike Ventura and even more so Avitabile who believed that violence was the only language Indians were capable of understanding and who terrorized their provinces, Harlan attempted to crack down on corruption and avoided brutality, which caused his relations with Ventura and Avitabile to decline. Harlan was also in turn followed in his position in Gujrat by an Englishman named Holmes, who failed Singh, and lost more than his nose, being publicly beheaded as an example of the fate of those who failed the Maharajah. During his time as governor of Gujrat, Harlan's principle friend was the *maulvi* as the alchemist from Afghanistan unexpectedly showed up at his palace one day. The *maulvi* taught Harlan about "the traditional lore of Arabia" while the alchemist wanted Harlan to sponsor him to join a Masonic lodge as Harlan noted "My refusal to explain the craft

of Freemasonry added to his conviction that in the secrecy of that forbidden region of science lay the Philosopher's Stone".

Joining Harlan in Gujrat was the American adventurer Alexander Gardner who had come down from Central Asia, looking for employment with Singh and arrived at Harlan's palace to seek the company of a fellow American. Gardner, who claimed to have been born in a fur-trading post on Lake Superior in what is now Wisconsin to a Scots father and an Anglo-Spanish mother in 1785, was always very proud of Scottish heritage. Gardner wore a turban and Asian-style clothing that were all tartan-colored, a colorful reminder of his Scots heritage, as Gardner was insistently Scottish-American in his identity during his various adventures as a mercenary in Central Asia, where he had fled after deserting from the Imperial Russian Army in 1819. Gardner claimed that during his childhood on the shores of Lake Superior the Ojibwe Indians had taught him how to fight. Regardless whether the Ojibwe were his teachers, Gardner was a fighter whose body was covered with wounds, most notably a gaping hole in his throat that required him to wear a neck-brace to drink. Gardner told Harlan that he and his followers "... did not slaughter except in self-defense" during his time in Central Asia. While fighting against Dost Mohammad in pay of the warlord Habibullah Khan, Gardner's wife and his infant daughter had been killed by the Emir's forces after being captured, causing him to head to the Punjab. Gardner, who was known as "Gordana Khan" in Central Asia, recalled: "I remained a few days with Dr. Harlan and on meeting my countryman, I resumed the character of a foreigner, and resumed also the name of Gardner, which I abandoned for so long that it sounded strangely in my ears".

In 1834, the Sikh general Hari Singh Nalwa finally captured the contested city of Peshawar for the Punjab, leading Dost Mohammad Khan, the Emir of Afghanistan, to send the Maharajah an insulting letter demanding the return of Peshawar or else face war, leading Ranjit Singh to reply with an equally insulting letter challenging Dost Mohammad to retake Peshawar if he dared. In the spring of 1835, Dost Mohammad, anxious to regain Peshawar, declared *jihad* on the Punjab and invaded the Sikh empire. The traditional hatred between the Sikhs and Afghans meant there was no shortage of volunteers in Afghanistan to go kill Sikhs, and a huge number of tribesmen rallied to Dost Mohammad's banner. Macintyre noted the Afghans had a "fanatical" hatred of the Sikhs, which to a certain extent compensated for the superior training and firepower of the *Dal Khalsa*. As the *Dal Khasla* faced off against the Afghans, the no-man's land between the two armies was soon littered with corpses as tribesmen from the Pashtun Ghazi tribe faced off in skirmishes against the Akalis. Gardner observed "the Sikhs sadly lost many lives at the merciless hands of the Ghazis, who, each with his little green Moslem flag, boldly pressed on, freely and fairly courting death and martyrdom". The Akalis were equally enthusiastic in using their quoits to cut down Ghazis.

Ranjit Singh, knowing that the feuding Barakzai brothers were as much inclined to fight among themselves as against their enemies and that Harlan knew the Barakzai brothers, ordered him up to the front to see if he could divide the Afghan leaders. The Emir's half brother Sultan Mohammad Khan had fallen in love with a dancing girl at the court, whom he was planning to take into his harem to make into another of his concubines, but Dost Mohammad who also desired her, had used his right

as Emir to take her into his harem, causing much discord between the Barakzai brothers, which Harlan knew about. Viewing the Afghan camp outside of Peshawar, Harlan reported seeing: "Fifty thousand belligerent candidates for martyrdom and immortality. Savages from the remotest recesses of the mountainous districts, many of them giants in form and strength, promiscuously armed with sword and shield, bow and arrows, matchlocks, rifles, spears and blunderbusses, concentrated themselves around the standard of religion, and were prepared to slay, plunder and destroy, for the sake of Allah and the Prophet, the unenlightened infidels of the Punjab". The French-trained *Dal Khalsa* was a powerful army, but Singh as usual preferred to achieve his goals via diplomacy rather than war if possible, and so sought to find a peaceful way to send the Afghans home.

Under the flag of truce, Harlan went to the camp of Sultan Mohammad Khan, the half-brother of the Emir, to negotiate the right price for defecting, and he was motivated by his resentment of Dost Mohammad for taking away the dancing girl he desired to turn him against the Emir. Already, many Sikhs and Afghans, anxious to spill each other's blood, had engaged in skirmishes and the ground between the two armies that Harlan traveled through was littered with corpses. Harlan offered Sultan Mohammad a generous bribe on the behalf of Ranjit Singh in exchange for going home with that part of the Afghan host under his command. Dost Mohammad had heard that Harlan had arrived in his half-brother's camp. But he then received a letter from Sultan Mohammad Khan "stating the fact of Mr. Harlan's arrival, and that he had been put to death, while his elephants and plunder had been made booty". The news was received with loud cheering in Dost Mohammad's

camp and it was announced that "now the brothers had become one, and wiped away their enmities in *Feringhi* blood". After agreeing to consider whether to accept Singh's bribe, Harlan and Sultan Mohammad Khan rode into Dost Mohammad's camp, where Harlan told the Emir to go home, telling him that despite his 50, 000 men that "If the Prince of the Punjab chose to assemble the militia of his dominions, he could bring ten times that number into the field, but you will have regular troops to fight, and your *san culottes* militia will vanish like mist before the sun". Dost Mohammad then made a veiled threat to kill Harlan, reminding Harlan that when "Secunder" (Alexander the Great) had fought in Afghanistan one of his envoys had been killed under the flag of truce. A servant brought in some *doug* (fermented milk) to drink, which Sultan Mohammad refused to drink, believing his half-brother was attempting to poison him.

When Dost Mohammad insisted that Sultan Mohammad drink some of the *doug* under the grounds it was rude to refuse his hospitality, his half-brother insisted that the Emir drink some of the *doug* first, which he refused under the grounds it too hot of a day to drink a *doug*, leading to a lengthy argument between the two about who was drink the *doug* first. Dost Mohammad finally drank some of the *doug* just to prove it was not poisoned. Dost Mohammad had played a cunning trick on his half-brother as the reluctance of Sultan Mohammad to drink the *doug* first proved to the assembled tribal chiefs that he had been engaging in treachery, as Dost Mohammad had intended. The meeting was first of several tense meetings as Harlan traveled back and forth between the Sikh camp and the two half-brothers before Sultan Mohammad was finally bribed into switching sides while Ranjit Singh had brought up his

heavy artillery, which finally persuaded Dost Mohammad that discretion was the better part of valor, leading him to go home. Harlan had played the role of a diplomat well, seeing off an Afghan invasion with minimal losses to the *Dal Khalsa*; but Ranjit Singh decided after the fact that it would have better to have given battle after all, and publicity criticized Harlan for preventing a battle that he now believed he would have won, the beginning of a rift between the two.

On 19 August 1835, Ranjit Singh suffered a stroke, which left him with slurred speech, and demanded that Harlan use his knowledge of Western medicine to cure him. In the 19th century it was widely believed that running electrical jolts through the body had restorative effects, and following Harlan's advice, an electrical machine was brought to Lahore to pump Ranjit Singh full of electricity, an experience that did not restore his speech. However,

Ranjit Singh was always proud of his physical toughness and discovered much to his delight that electricity could pass from one human body to another, which led him to devise a game, where all his courtiers had to hold hands in a line with one man holding Ranjit Singh's hand as he was pumped full of electricity, which caused the others to let go in pain while Ranjit Singh continued to be electrified. Ranjit Singh rather enjoyed this game, through it is doubtful his courtiers found much enjoyment from being zapped and shocked by the electricity. The final blow to his friendship with Ranjit Singh occurred when Harlan's enemies at the court mentioned to Ranjit Singh that Harlan had the *maulvi* living with him who was alleged to be able to turn base metals into precious ones (knowledge that Ranjit Singh expected to be shared with him),

and that Harlan was allegedly minting counterfeit coins (for which the penalty was death). In some fear of his life, Harlan left Ranjit Singh's employ in early 1836. An Indian historian Khushwant Singh called Harlan "an incredible windbag" who was somehow able to convince Ranjit Singh that he was a "doctor, scholar, statesmen and soldier".

To Afghanistan

In 1836 after a falling-out with Ranjit Singh, Harlan defected over to the service of Dost Mohammad Khan, the Emir of Afghanistan and the arch-enemy of Singh. Even though Harlan, while in the service of Singh and Shah Shujah, had fought against Dost Mohammad in the past the Emir was sufficiently impressed with Harlan's ability to accept his former enemy into his service. In the treacherous world of Afghan politics, where today's enemy was likely to be tomorrow's friend, and today's friend to be tomorrow's enemy, Dost Mohammad had learned not to hold grudges.

Arriving in Kabul, Harlan ran into Charles Masson who had deserted his earlier expedition to Afghanistan, an act that Harlan had not forgiven him for. Harlan sent a letter to the East India Company telling them that Masson, the "American" explorer and amateur archaeologist of Central Asia, was actually the Englishman James Lewis, a deserter from the Company's army sentenced to death in absentia. Captain Wade used this information to blackmail Masson into working as a spy for the Company, promising him a pardon if he agreed to work as a spy, and to have him extradited back to India to be executed if he refused his offer. Masson was a most unwilling player in the "Great Game", not the least because he knew Dost

Mohammad would have him executed if he found out he was working as a spy for the Company. Masson, who suspecting that it was Harlan who had denounced him to the Company, started denouncing him to the Company as a "violent and unprincipled man".

In March 1836, Lord Auckland, the governor-general of India, received a letter in English purportedly from Dost Mohammad (who did not know English), whose flowery style and a number of Americanisms strongly suggest that Harlan was the real author, asking him to sign an alliance and force Ranjit Singh to return Peshawar to Afghanistan. Writing as Dost Mohammad, Harlan declared: "The field of my hopes, which had before been chilled by the cold blast of the wintry times, has by the happy tidings of your Lordship's arrival become the envy of the Garden of Paradise", going on to ask the British to ensure "the reckless and misguided Sikhs" to return Peshawar to the Afghans. Lord Auckland replied: "My friend, you are aware that it is not the practice of the British government to interfere with the affairs of the independent states".

Dost Mohammad wanted Harlan to train his tribal levy (Afghanistan had no army) how to fight in the Western style of war. The French had traditionally excelled at artillery, and as befitting an army trained by French officers, the *Dal Khalsa* had excellent artillery, which had been repeatedly used to decimate the Afghan tribesmen in various battles. Singh had pushing steadily into the "badlands" that make the modern border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, but in 1837 he recalled the best of the *Dal Khalsa* for a parade to honor his son's wedding in Lahore, which Dost Mohammad took advantage of by attacking the Sikhs. Under the banner of

jihad, about 10,000 Afghan tribesmen swept down the Khyber Pass under the command of Dost Mohammad's son Wazir Akbar Khan to attack the Sikhs, accompanied by Harlan as his special military adviser. On 30 April 1837, the Afghans defeated the Sikhs at the Battle of Jamrud. At Jamrud, the Sikh artillery blasted holes in the Afghan ranks, with a single cannonball killing or wounding dozens of men, but when the Sikh infantry advanced through the gaps in the Afghan line, the Afghans following Harlan's advice used their numerically superior reserves to crush the *Dal Khalsa* in furious hand-to-hand fighting. The Afghans lost about 1,000 killed while the Sikhs lost about 2,000 dead, including General Hari Singh Nalwa, Ranjit Singh's favorite general. Harlan wrote that Singh must have been beside himself with fury, imagining that "The proud King of Lahore quailed upon his threatened throne, as he exclaimed with terror and approaching despair, 'Harlan has avenged himself, this is all his work'". Singh reacted by sending his best general, the French mercenary Jean-François Allard to avenge the Sikh defeat while the Afghans-unable to take the fortress of Peshawar-retreated back beyond the Khyber Pass, starting on 9 May 1837. Feeling his hold on Peshawar was weak, Singh appointed the Neapolitan mercenary General Paolo Avitabile the new governor of Peshawar with orders to terrorize the city into submission, using methods that Harlan called barbaric.

Harlan liked and admired Dost Mohammad, whom he called a hard-working, self-disciplined and efficient emir who always got up early every morning to pray towards Mecca and read the Koran before receiving tribal chiefs except on Thursday, which was the only day of the week that Dost Mohammad took a bath. After discussing the affairs of Afghanistan, Dost Mohammad

would have his breakfast at 11 am, to be followed by new meetings before retiring to his harem to enjoy his concubines, to be followed by a ride around Kabul in the afternoon to hear the complaints of his subjects. After he turned thirty, Dost Mohammad ceased drinking and having orgies with prostitutes, becoming a more much pious Muslim than he had been when he was younger. Harlan noted that Dost Mohammad had *shirrun i huzzoor*, the Pashtun quality of modesty and politeness, but that he was also an "exquisite dissembler" capable of "the most revolting cruelty", very greedy for gold, and was extremely cynical, doubting every motive except for self-interest as a reason for a man's actions. Harlan noted that Dost Mohammad was a hypocrite who denounced slavery as a great evil, but who owned slaves himself and did nothing to shut down the slave markets of Kabul, where Uzbek slavers were always bringing in Hazara slaves captured in their raids. Harlan observed that Dost Mohammad was stern in his rule as once he was presented with a man and a woman had been captured when a "nocturnal orgie" had been discovered; the others had escaped, but the couple were too drunk to manage their own get-away. Harlan observed that Dost Mohammad "listened to the charges of licentiousness and immorality", and with a wave of his hand ordered the man's beard to be burned off while the woman was to be put into a bag and given 40 lashes with a whip. When Harlan asked why the woman had to be put into a bag before whipping her, the Emir replied "To avoid the indecency of exposure".

As part of the "Great Game" between Britain and Russia for influence in Central Asia, on 20 September 1837, Alexander Burnes, the Scotsman who had been appointed the East India Company's agent in Kabul arrived, and immediately become

Harlan's rival. Harlan wrote that Burnes was "remarkable only for his obstinacy and stupidity". Together with the pseudo-American Charles Masson, Burnes and Harlan were the only westerners in Kabul, and all three men hated one another. In Afghanistan, the Emir was expected to reward loyal chiefs with gifts, which given the poverty of Afghanistan meant the Emirs expected equally lavish gifts from foreign ambassadors, and Harlan recorded that Dost Mohammad was greatly offended when the only gifts that Burnes brought with him were two pistols and a spyglass. Joining the three quarreling Westerners in Kabul in December 1837 was a Polish orientalist in Russian service, Count Jan Prosper Witkiewicz, who had arrived in Kabul as the representative of the Emperor Nicholas I of Russia. With Witkiewicz's arrival, the "Great Game" entered an intense new phase, and Burnes was visibly disconcerted by Witkiewicz's presence in Kabul, believing Afghanistan was falling into the Russian sphere of influence. Burnes had Christmas dinner with Dost Mohammad, Harlan and Witkiewicz, writing about the latter: "He was a gentlemanly and agreeable man, of about thirty years of age, spoke French, Turkish and Persian fluently, and wore the uniform of an officer of the Cossacks".

Prince of Ghor Province

In 1838, Harlan set off on a punitive expedition against the Uzbek slave trader and warlord Mohammad Murad Beg. He had multiple reasons for doing this: he wanted to help Dost Mohammad assert his authority outside of Kabul; he had a deep-seated opposition to slavery; and he wanted to demonstrate that a modern army could successfully cross the

Hindu Kush. Taking a force of approximately 1,400 cavalry, 1,100 infantry, 1,500 support personnel and camp followers, 2,000 horses, and 400 camels, Harlan thought of himself as a modern-day Alexander the Great. In emulation of Alexander the Great, Harlan also took along with him a war elephant. He was accompanied by a younger son and a secretary of Dost Mohammad. Dost Mohammad sought to collect tribute from the Hazara who were willing if the Afghans also ended Murad Beg's raids. Before leaving Kabul to hunt down Murad Beg, Dost Mohammad knowing of Harlan's fascination with ancient Greece, gave him a gift of a piece of jewelry found at Bagram, the site of the ancient Greek city of *Alexandria ad Caucasum*, depicting the goddess Athena, which greatly moved him. Just like his hero Alexander the Great, Harlan discovered that his war elephant could not handle the extreme cold of the Hindu Kush mountains, and Harlan was forced to send the elephant back to Kabul. High up in the Hindu Kush at the pass of Khazar, a good 12,500 feet above sea level, Harland had the Stars-and-Stripes raised on the highest peak with troops firing a twenty-six-gun-salute as Harlan wrote: "the star spangled banner gracefully waved amid the icy peaks and soilless rugged rocks of the region, seeming sacred to the solitude of an undisturbed eternity". Harlan then led his army down "past glaciers and silent dells, and frowning rocks blackened by age", battling rain and snow as "these phenomena alternately and capriciously coquetted with our ever changing climate".

After an arduous journey (which included an American flag-raising ceremony at the top of the Indian Caucasus), Harlan reinforced his army with local Hazaras, most of whom lived in fear of the slave traders. The Hazaras are believed the descendants of the Mongols who conquered Afghanistan in the

13th century, which made them different both culturally and to a certain extent linguistically from the rest of the Afghan peoples. (The Hazaras speak a distinctive sub-dialect of Dari, which itself is a dialect of Persian.) Harlan himself noted the Hazaras did not look like other Afghans. Because the Hazaras are ethnically distinct and are Shia Muslims, the Sunni Muslim Uzbeks and Tajiks liked to raid their lands in search of people to enslave. Harlan noted that because of the fear of Uzbek slavers, the houses of the Hazaras were "half sunk into slopes of hills" under "a bastion constructed of sun-dried mud, where people of the village can resort in case of danger from the sudden forays of the Tartar robbers." Harlan further noted the brutality of the Uzbek slavers who sewed their victims together as they marched them off to the slave markets, observing:

To oblige the prisoner to keep up, a strand of course horsehair is passed by the means of a long crooked needle, under and around the collar bone, a few inches from its junction at the sternum; with the hair a loop is formed to which they attach a rope that may be fastened to the saddle. The captive is constrained to keep near the retreating horseman, and his hands tied behind his person, is altogether helpless.

Harlan's first major military engagement was a short siege at the Citadel of Saighan, controlled by the Tajik slave-trader Mohammad Ali Beg. Harlan's artillery made short work of the fortress. As a result of this performance, local powers clamored to become Harlan's friends as various Hazara chiefs asked to see Harlan, the man who had brought down the walls of the mighty fortress of Saighan, and who promised to end the raids of the slavers.

One of the most powerful and ambitious local rulers was Mohammad Reffee Beg Hazara, a prince of Ghor, an area in the central and western part of what is now the country of Afghanistan. He and his retinue feasted for ten days with Harlan's force, during which time they observed the remarkable discipline and organization of the modern army. They invited the American back to Reffee's mountain stronghold. Harlan was amazed by the working feudal system. He admired the Hazaras both because of the absence of slavery in their culture and by the gender equality he observed (unusual in that region at the time). Harlan observed that the Hazara women did not wear veils, worked out in the fields with their husbands, loved to hunt deer with their greyhound dogs while riding horses at full gallop and firing arrows aside their mounts, and even went to war with their menfolk. Writing about relations between the sexes among the Hazaras, Harlan noted: "The men display remarkable deference for the opinions of their wives...The men address their wives with the respectful and significant title of *Aga*, which means mistress. They associate with them as equal companions, consult with them on all occasions, and in weighty matters, when they are not present, defer a conclusion until the opinions of their women can be heard".

A strong advocate of sexual equality, Harlan was greatly impressed with the Hazara women who were the equals of the Hazara men, and whom he also praised as most beautiful. Macintyre noted that Harlan's purple prose tended to be at its most purplest when he was in love, and in his descriptions of the Hazarjat, Harlan's flowery style was at its most florid, leading Macintyre to speculate Harlan found love with a Hazara girl. At the end of Harlan's visit, he and Reffee came to an

agreement. Harlan and his heirs would be the *Prince of Ghor* in perpetuity, with Reffee as his vizier. In return, Harlan would raise and train an army with the ultimate goal of solidifying and expanding Ghor's autonomy. At another fortress, that of Derra i Esoff, ruled by an Uzbek slaver Soofey Beg, who had recently enslaved 300 Hazara families, Harlan began a siege and soon his artillery had smashed holes in the wall of the fortress. Harlan sent his Hazara tribesmen into the breach, writing: "In the storming of Derra i Esoff these men were amongst the first to mount the breach, along with their regimental colours. Their firmness and bravery, and, more especially their fidelity to their officers, were creditably displayed on many occasions". After taking the fortress, Harlan found about 400 Hazara slaves, whom he promptly had "released from a loathsome confinement in the dry wells and dungeons of the castle and sent home to their friends".

Harlan tracked down Murad Beg to his fortress in Kunduz, who dragged out the only cannon at his fort, an old Persian gun left over from the days of Nadir Shah to try to intimidate Harlan. A great amateur horticulturist, Harlan was offended that the Uzbeks were much more interested in raiding for slaves than in growing flowers, noting "Little attention is bestowed upon the elegant in horticulture. Their flowers are, consequently, few and not of a pleasing variety". As soon as Harlan reached Kunduz, Murad Beg sent out emissaries to resolve a diplomatic solution as Harlan noted: "The Uzbecks [Uzbeks] have a great horror of bloodshed, and think that prudence is the better part of valor". Harlan further noted that Uzbek armies always fought the same way: "a few individual sallies of vaunting cavaliers are made in advance, the parties uttering unearthly yells of defiance, and assuming threatening attitudes. A parley

ensures, an interview between the leaders follow, and the affair terminates with the harmless festivals of a tournament." As Harlan surrounded Kunduz, Murad Beg, who was terrified of giving battle, chose to make a treaty with Harlan recognizing Dost Mohammad as the Emir of Afghanistan and to stop slave raiding in exchange for being allowed Kunduz. Harlan described Murad Beg as: "A great bear of a man with harsh Tartar features. His eyes were small and hard as bullets, while his broad forehead was creased in a perpetual frown. He wore no beard and was no more richly dressed than his followers, except that his long knife was richly chased, as was the smaller dagger with which he toyed with while talking".

However, when Harlan returned to Kabul the British forces accompanying William Hay Macnaghten arrived to occupy the city in an early stage of the First Anglo-Afghan War. The British had restored Shuja, and Harlan heard a proclamation read by Shuja's herald from the Bala Hisar fortress: "Everyone is commanded not to ascend the heights of the vicinity of the Royal harem under the pain of being disemboweled alive. May the king live forever!". Harlan commented that Shuja's "harsh barbarity" had not changed, and he was going to be just as hated by his people now that he was restored as he was when was overthrown the first time back in 1809. Harlan quickly became a *persona non-grata*, and after some further travel returned to the United States.

Homeward bound

After leaving Afghanistan, Harlan spent some time in Imperial Russia. A woman he knew in England sent letters to Russian nobility in which she claimed that Harlan was an experienced

administrator who could help the Russian peasantry better itself. Though he was well liked by Russia's society women, Harlan made no important government contacts and soon decided to go back to America.

Once he returned to America, Harlan was feted as a national hero. He skillfully played the press, telling them not to dwell on his royal title, as he "looks upon kingdoms and principalities as of frivolous import, when set in opposition to the honourable and estimable title of American citizen". His glory quickly faded after the publication of *A Memoir of India and Afghanistan – With observations upon the present critical state and future prospects of those Countries*, published in Philadelphia. Harlan had been working on a longer book called *The British Empire in India*, but the news of the almost total annihilation of the British force retreating from Kabul in the Hindu Kush in January 1842 attracted much media attention in the United States, causing Harlan to try to cash in with his hastily written and published *A Memoir of India and Afghanistan*. Harlan used his book to attack enemies he made in India, both European and Indian. Most alarmingly, he wrote about the ease with which Russia could, if it so chose, attack and seriously harm the British Empire. Harlan was denounced in Britain, although, as one historian has observed, his book was "officially discredited, but secretly read, under the table, by historians and British strategists". The American press did not pan him, but the controversy ensured that he would never publish another book. The writer Herman Melville appears to have read *A Memoir of India and Afghanistan* as the references to the First Anglo-Afghan war in *Moby Dick* seemed to be based on Harlan's book.

With his funds dwindling, Harlan began taking on new tasks. He began lobbying the American government to import camels to settle the Western United States. His real hope was that they would order their camels from Afghanistan and send him there as purchasing agent. Harlan convinced the government that camels would be a worthy investment (Secretary of War Jefferson Davis was particularly interested), but it was decided that it would be cheaper to import them from Africa than from Afghanistan. When the US Army discovered the resistance of American horses, mules, and cows to the aggressive camels, the Camel Corps was disbanded in 1863. Camels were set free in Arizona. On 1 May 1849, Harlan was finally married, to an Elizabeth Baker in Chester County in Pennsylvania. As Miss Baker was a Quaker like Harlan, who abandoned the pacifism of his faith during his time in Asia, her family were scandalized to have her marry a man who had fought in wars. In 1852, Harlan's wife bore him a daughter, Sarah Victoria, whom he greatly loved, being by all accounts a doting father. However, Harlan's massive unpublished manuscript telling his life story only mentions his wife once and very briefly at that, and he always carried with him a poem he had written in 1820 for Elizabeth Swaim until the day of his death.

Harlan next decided that he would convince the government to buy Afghan grapes. He spent two years working on this venture, but the coming of the American Civil War prevented this. Harlan then proposed to raise a regiment.

In 1861, when the American Civil War began, Harlan wrote to the Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, declaring that "General Josiah Harlan" was ready and willing to fight for the Union against the Confederate States of America. Macintyre noted:

"The man who had trained the Afghan army and humbled the slaving warlord Murad Beg saw no reason why he should not go into battle, once more, with a private army. Bizarrely, nor did the authorities in Washington, and permission was duly granted for the formation of "Harlan's Light Cavalry". Harlan had no formal rank, no experience of the American army, and had no knowledge of modern warfare. He was also sixty-two years old, but gave his age as fifty-six".

Always horrified by slavery, he raised a Union regiment 11th Pennsylvania Cavalry of which he was colonel, but he was used to dealing with military underlings in the way an oriental prince would. This led to a messy court-martial, but the aging Harlan ended his service due to medical problems. Harlan collapsed on 15 July 1862 while serving in Virginia from the effects of a mixture of fever, dehydration, and dysentery, was ordered to give up command of his regiment, and was reluctantly invalidated out of the United States Army on 19 August 1862 on the grounds he was "debilitated from diarrhea".

He wound up in San Francisco, working as a doctor, dying of tuberculosis in 1871. He was essentially forgotten. His remains were buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery in San Francisco (now defunct), but were moved and his gravesite is unknown. However, Harlan proved to be an inspiration for Rudyard Kipling's 1888 short story *The Man Who Would Be A King*, which in its turn became a popular 1975 film starring Sean Connery and Michael Caine. Many critics have noted a close resemblance between Daniel Dravot, the hero of *The Man Who Would Be King* and Harlan as both were ambitious adventurers full of a burning desire to conquer a kingdom in Central Asia

and other similarities such as the Afghan settling, both entered Afghanistan disguised as a Muslim holy man, both were Freemasons, both wanted to emulate Alexander the Great, and both were granted Afghan titles of nobility. However, Harlan had no counterpart to Peachey Carnehan, Dravot's sidekick, but the character of Carnehan was created by Kipling to explain to the narrator of *The Man Who Would Be A King* how Dravot was killed in Afghanistan. Kipling, who was a Freemason himself, had always said he received the inspiration for *The Man Who Would Be A King* while working as a journalist in 1880s India, saying that an unnamed Freemason had told him the stories that gave him the idea for *The Man Who Would Be King*, which suggests that Harlan's adventures in Afghanistan were still being retold in Masonic lodges in India in the 1880s.

Banda Singh Bahadur

Banda Singh Bahadur (born **Lachman Dev**) (27 October 1670 – 9 June 1716), was a Sikh warrior and a commander of Khalsa army. At age 15, he left home to become an ascetic, and was given the name **Madho Das Bairagi**. He established a monastery at Nānded, on the bank of the river Godāvarī. In 1707, Guru Gobind Singh accepted an invitation to meet Bahadur Shah I in southern India. He visited Banda Singh Bahadur in 1708. Banda became disciple of Guru Gobind Singh and was given a new name, Banda Singh Bahadur, after the Baptism Ceremony. He was given five arrows by the Guru as a blessing for the battles ahead. He came to Khanda in Sonipat and assembled a fighting force and led the struggle against the Mughal Empire.

His first major action was the sacking of the Mughal provincial capital, Samana, in November 1709. After establishing his authority and Khalsa rule in Punjab, Banda Singh Bahadur abolished the zamindari system, and granted property rights to the tillers of the land. Banda Singh was captured by the Mughals and tortured to death in 1715–1716.

Early life

Banda Singh Bahadur was born in a Hindu family to farmer Ram Dev, at Rajouri (now in Jammu and Kashmir). Sources variously describe his father as a Rajput of Bhardwaj gotra or a Dogra Rajput. Hakim Rai's *Ahwāl-i-Lachhma* *Dās urf Bandā Sāhib* ("Ballad of Banda Bahadur") claims that his family belonged to the Sodhi sub-caste of the Khatri. However, this claim appears to have been an attempt to portray him as Guru Gobind's successor, since the preceding Sikh Gurus were Sodhis.

Early conquests

After meeting with Guru Gobind Singh, he marched towards Khanda and fight the Mughals with the help of the Sikh army in Battle of Sonipat.

In 1709, he defeated Mughals in the Battle of Samana and captured the Mughal city of Samana (30 km southwest of Patiala). Samana minted coins. With this treasury, the Sikhs became financially stable. The Sikhs soon siezed Mustafabad (now Saraswati Nagar) and Sadaura (both places in present Yamunanagar district, Northern eastern Haryana). The Sikhs

then captured the Cis-Sutlej areas of Punjab, including Malerkotla and Nahan. On 12 May 1710, in the Battle of Chappar Chiri, the Sikhs killed Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind and Dewan Suchanand, who were responsible for the martyrdom of the two youngest sons of Guru Gobind Singh. Two days later, the Sikhs captured Sirhind. Banda Singh was now in control of territory from the Sutlej to the Yamuna. He ordered that the ownership of the land should be given to the farmers and to let them live in dignity and self-respect.

Military Invasions

Banda Singh Bahadur developed the village of Mukhlisgarh and made it his capital. He then renamed it to Lohgarh (fortress of steel) where he issued his own mint. The coin described Lohgarh: "Struck in the City of Peace, illustrating the beauty of civic life, and the ornament of the blessed throne".

He briefly established a state in Punjab for half a year. Banda Singh sent Sikhs to the Uttar Pradesh and Sikhs took over Saharanpur, Jalalabad, Muzaffarnagar and other nearby areas.

Revolutionary

Banda Singh Bahadur is known to have halted the Zamindari and Taluqdari system in the time he was active and gave the farmers proprietorship of their own land. It seems that all classes of government officers were addicted to extortion and corruption and the whole system of regulatory and order was subverted.

Local tradition recalls that the people from the neighborhood of Sadaura came to Banda Singh complaining of the iniquities practiced by their landlords. Banda Singh ordered Baj Singh to open fire on them. The people were astonished at the strange reply to their representation and asked him what he meant. He told them that they deserved no better treatment when being thousands in number they still allowed themselves to be cowed down by a handful of Zamindars. He defeated the Sayyids and Shaikhs in the Battle of Sadhaura.

Persecution from the Mughals

The rule of the Sikhs over the entire Punjab east of Lahore obstructed the communication between Delhi and Lahore, the capital of Punjab, and this worried Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah. He gave up his plan to subdue rebels in Rajasthan and marched towards Punjab.

The entire Imperial force was organized to defeat and kill Banda Singh Bahadur. All the generals were directed to join the Emperor's army. To ensure that there were no Sikh agents in the army camps, an order was issued on 29 August 1710 to all Hindus to shave off their beards.

Banda Singh was in Uttar Pradesh when the Mughal army under the orders of Munim Khan marched to Sirhind and before the return of Banda Singh, they had already taken Sirhind and the areas around it. The Sikhs therefore moved to Lohgarh for their final battle. The Sikhs defeated the army but reinforcements were called and they laid siege on the fort with 60,000 troops. Gulab Singh dressed himself in the garments of Banda Singh and seated himself in his place.

Banda Singh left the fort at night and went to a secret place in the hills and Chamba forests. The failure of the army to kill or catch Banda Singh shocked Emperor, Bahadur Shah and on 10 December 1710 he ordered that wherever a Sikh was found, he should be murdered.

Banda Singh Bahadur wrote Hukamnamas to the Sikhs to reorganize and join him at once. In 1712, the Sikhs gathered near Kiratpur Sahib and defeated Raja Ajmer Chand, who was responsible for organizing all the Hill Rajas against Guru Gobind Singh and instigating battles with him. After Bhim Chand's death the other Hill Rajas accepted their subordinate status and paid revenues to Banda Singh. While Bahadur Shah's four sons were killing themselves for the throne of the Mughal Emperor, Banda Singh Bahadur recaptured Sadhaura and Lohgarh. Farrukh Siyar, the next Mughal Emperor, appointed Abdus Samad Khan as the governor of Lahore and Zakaria Khan, Abdus Samad Khan's son, the Faujdar of Jammu. In 1713 the Sikhs left Lohgarh and Sadhaura and went to the remote hills of Jammu and where they built Dera Baba Banda Singh. During this time Sikhs were being persecuted especially by Mughals in the Gurdaspur region. Banda Singh came out and captured Kalanaur and Batala (both places in modern Gurdaspur district) which rebuked Farrukh Siyar to issue Mughal and Hindu officials and chiefs to proceed with their troops to Lahore to reinforce his army.

Siege in Gurdas Nangal

In March 1715, the army under the rule of Abd al-Samad Khan, the Mughal governor of Lahore, drove Banda Bahadur and the Sikh forces into the village of Gurdas Nangal, 6 km to

the west of city Gurdaspur, Punjab and laid siege to the village. The Sikhs defended the small fort for eight months under conditions of great hardship, but on 7 December 1715 the Mughals broke into the starving garrison and captured Banda Singh and his companions.

Execution

Banda Singh Bahadur was put into an iron cage and the remaining Sikhs were chained. The Sikhs were brought to Delhi in a procession with the 780 Sikh prisoners, 2,000 Sikh heads hung on spears, and 700 cartloads of heads of slaughtered Sikhs used to terrorise the population.

They were put in the Delhi fort and pressured to give up their faith and become Muslims. The prisoners remained unmoved. On their firm refusal these non-converters were ordered to be executed. Every day 100 Sikh soldiers were brought out of the fort and murdered in public. This continued for approximately seven days. He was told to kill his four-year-old son, Ajai Singh, which he refused to do. So, Ajai Singh was murdered, his heart was cut out, and thrust into Banda Bahdur's mouth. However, his resolution did not break under torture, and so he was martyred. After three months of confinement, on 9 June 1716, Banda Singh's eyes were gouged out, his limbs were severed, his skin removed, and then he was killed.

Battles fought by Banda Singh

- Battle of Sonipat
- Battle of Samana

- Battle of Chappar Chiri
- Battle of Sadhaura
- Battle of Lohgarh
- Battle of Jammu
- Battle of Rahon, (1710)
- Battle of Jalalabad (1710)
- Battle of Gurdas Nangal or Siege of Gurdaspur
- Battle of Sirhind

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur War

Memorial

A war memorial was built where Battle of Chappar Chiri was fought, to glorify heroic Sikh soldiers.

The 328 feet tall Fateh Burj was dedicated to Banda Singh Bahadur who led the army and defeated the Mughal forces. The Fateh Burj is taller than Qutab Minar and is an octagonal structure.

There is a dome at the top of the tower with Khanda made of stainless steel.

In popular culture

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indian Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal at the commemorative event to mark the 300th anniversary of the martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur.

- *Sarbans Dani Guru Gobind Singh*, a 1998 Indian Punjabi-language drama film directed by Ram Maheshwari. The film follows the Guru and Banda Singh Bahadur's struggle against the Mughal Empire.
- *Chaar Sahibzaade: Rise of Banda Singh Bahadur*, a 2016 Indian computer-animated film by Harry Baweja. A sequel to *Chaar Sahibzaade*, it follows Banda Singh Bahadur's fight against the Mughals under the guidance of Guru Gobind Singh.
- *Guru Da Banda*, a 2018 Indian animated historical drama film by Jassi Chana.

Battle of Chappar Chiri

The **Battle of Chappar Chiri** was fought between Mughal Empire and the Sikhs in May 1710.

The Battle

The Mughal and Sikh forces met outside modern Sahibzada AjitNagar(Mohali) in a village named Chappar Chiri.

The Mughals were armed with artillery, well equipped cavalry and large infantry whereas the Sikhs had cavalry and infantry but no artillery. In the battle,

Sikhs gave a crushing blow to the Mughal empire. Wazir Khan (Sirhind) was killed in the battle and Sikhs established their first Raj in Punjab. Banda Singh Bahadur established his capital at Lohgarh (Haryana).

Popular culture

- A Punjabi animated film *Chaar Sahibzaade: Rise of Banda Singh Bahadur* which was released on 11 November 2016 depicts the battle of Chappar Chiri.
- Fateh burj is the highest victory tower constructed in remembrance of this battle.

Chapter 6

Meitei King Pamheipa (Gharib Nawaz (Manipur)) Introduces Hinduism

The **Meitei people**, or **Manipuri people**, are an ethnic group native to the state of Manipur in northeastern India. The Meitei primarily settled in the Imphal Valley region in modern-day Manipur, although a sizable population have settled in Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram; with notable presence in the neighbouring countries of Myanmar and Bangladesh. The Meitei ethnic group represents about 53% of Manipur's population.

Endonyms and exonyms

The Meitei are known by a number of endonyms, *Meitei*, *Meetei*, *Meithei* (Meitei), and as well as by numerous exonyms, such as *Meckley*, *Manipuri*, *Cassay-Shan*, and *Kathe* (Burmese). The term *Manipuri* is widely used, but problematic because of its ambiguous scope: next to being a synonym for *Meitei/Meetei*, it can also refer in a wider sense to the native ethnic groups in the hills of Manipur. Meitei is not pronounced as "Mai-Tai" in Chinese Pinyin, but is simply read as Mei-Tei.

The etymological origins of the word "Meitei" are contested; the term may have descended from the word *Mitei*, which means "modeled in God's image." Another etymological origin of

"Meitei" is that it comes from two different Meitei words: *mei* meaning "fire", and *tei* meaning "wipe", "smear" or "paint." Combining the two words gives a philosophical meaning of "purified by fire": after death, Meitei burn the deceased body hoping the soul gets purified and goes to Koubru the place which Meitei believe human originated.

History

The Cheitharon Kumpapa (CK) gave written records of events of the line of Meitei kings from 33 CE to the end of the kingship in 1955. The CK is a national chronicle which is quite common in South East Asia, but it is rare in India. The CK mentions that in the year 1485 CE, King Kyampa began to keep the already existing CK more accurately after his sojourn with the king of Pong, an ancient kingdom in upper Burma. The Pongs were migrants from south China. There is compelling evidence that the Meeteis also migrated into their present valley from the same direction during the Shang dynasty before the Christian era. Meeteis also worshipped their ancestors till today similar to the religion of the Shang dynasty. Chinese historiography is also well preserved and keeping CK itself is a pointer to origin of Meeteis to the Chinese.

MEETINGU PAKHANGPA, KALI AGE 3135 (33 CE)

In 33 CE, Meetingu Pakhangpa became the first king, after taking Laisna to wife. The queen Laisna came with Poireiton. According to the Poireiton Khunthoklon, Poireiton was in search of a place which is devoid of sickness and death and the first settler of Manipur valley with a group of his followers. He brought the fire (which kept burning since then) in Andro

village in the eastern part of the valley. According to oral tradition, Poirei was an old name for Manipur. Meetei is referred to 'other people', the incoming Pakhangpa group (mee people, atei other, not one of us). The fire from the Andro is used in the coronation of Meetei kings in the later period. It may signify the subjugation of Poireiton by the Pakhangpa group by taking over a ritual belonging to the Poirei. The Pakhangpa was the founder of line of Meetei kings. His successors were KHUIYOI TOMPOK, SAKABDA 76 (154 CE), TAOTHINGMANG, SAKABDA 186 (264 CE), MEETINGU KHUI NINGNGONPA, SAKABDA 286 (364 CE) and so on.

The origins of the Meitei people are not conclusively known. What is known is that their settlement on a fertile plain and valley regions of the Imphal River and the tributaries of the Manipur River enabled the Meitei to develop sophisticated wet rice cultivation systems, which supported a denser population and drove the development of a more complex political and social system than in adjacent hill areas.

According to the royal chronicle, *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, the Manipuri valley was ruled by 9 different clans, which later merged into seven. Before the reign of King Nongta Lairen Pakhangba (1st century), some ethnic groups of people lived in the Valley. They were the Mangangs, the Chakpas, the Khabas and the Chengleis (See also Kinship system). Between the 1st and 10th centuries, the clans consolidated under a feudal system over time, owing to the military prowess of the Mangang or Ningthouja clans. During this process, neighboring hill tribes were also absorbed into the seven clans through migration, a process that continued well into the 1800s.

The Meiteis are East Asian, but they also have some Indo-European admixture. Sir James Johnstone, who was the political agent in Manipur, writes: "The Manipuris themselves are a fine stalwart race descended from an Indo-Chinese stock, with some mixture of Aryan blood, derived from the successive waves of Aryan migration that have passed through the valley in pre-historic days". Jhalajit Singh believes Indo-Aryans came to Manipur and married local women in the first centuries of the common era (CE). Scholars and writers, such as E. Dun (1992), Hodson (1908, 2), and M. Bhattacharya (1963, 183) also support the tradition that the Meiteis were originally East Asian, a close kin with the tribal people in the hills, and later intermarried with Indo-European people.

The people from the East came to Manipur in different periods of history. They were Shans, a little of the Chinese and the Burmese. There were some immigrants from the Upper Burma in the reign of Nongta Lailen Pakhangba (1st century), Naoting Khong (7th century) and King Khunmomba (13th century) and they became Meiteis. In the reigns of Ningthou-Khomba, Kyamba and Ming Yamba, some of fresh immigrants also became Meiteis. But after reign of King Khangemba (1597–1652) there was little immigration from the East.

The earliest written record of their existence dates back to 1445 CE, during the kingdom of Kangleipak.

With the Meitei kingdom's expansion eastward (beyond the Chindwin River by the 1400s) came increased interaction and conflict with the Tai-speaking Shans and Burmans. The Meitei conquest of the Kabaw valley accelerated the establishment of social and trade relationships between the Burmans and the

Meitei, including matrimonial alliances between the royal houses. The Meitei however, remained a staunch constant threat to security, with constant raids and battles fought close to the Burmese royal capitals.

The Burmese Toungoo dynasty was endangered by frequent invasions under Garib Niwaz. However, the Burmese underwent a military renaissance in the latter half of the 1700s, with the rise of Alaungpaya's Konbaung dynasty, which ended this persistent pattern of Meitei raids, through devastating defensive military campaigns waged on the Meitei kingdom, which led to the demise of the Meitei monarchy;

Burmese interference in Manipur came to an end with the First Anglo-Burmese War, in which the Burmese ceded complete control of Manipur to the British.

In 1891, the British Indian Empire suppressed a rebellion in Manipur and incorporated it as part of British Raj as a princely state. Before the British departed India, Manipur King Maharajah Bodhchandra signed an instrument of accession on 11 August 1947 whereby he agreed to accede three subject "Defense", "Communication" and "External Affairs" on the assurance that autonomy and independent be granted to Manipur when dealing with the new India (Dominion of India). On 21 September 1949, Manipur signed a merger agreement, ostensibly under coercion, after which the princely rule was abolished and Manipur was incorporated as a Union Territory of India. Since 1980, armed conflict against India by separatist rebel groups started, that combines elements of a national liberation war as well as an ethnic conflict.

Language

The Meitei people speak Meiteilon (also known as Manipuri), a Tibeto-Burman language. Meiteilon is one of the officially recognized languages of India, and was included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India in 1992.

Historically, Meitei was written in an indigenous Meitei Mayek script; the script was replaced by an alphabet based on the Bengali-Assamese script in the early 18th century. The Meitei Mayek script has seen a revival in recent decades, and is now seen in street signs, newspapers, literature, and legislative proceeding records.

In Assam Manipuri language is taught at the primary level, and at the graduate level in Gauhati University; though it is not one of the associate languages in the state. In Bangladesh Manipuri is not language and the Manipuri people are educated in Bengali rather than in their native Manipuri.

Some of the most notable Meitei historical literary works, written by court scholars, include:

- Cheitharol Kumbaba, the royal chronicle of Meitei kings
- Wakoklon Heelel Thilel Salai Amailon Pukok Puya, the oldest extant Meitei manuscript, first written in 1400 CE and rediscovered in 1971
- Puya (Meitei texts), preserved manuscripts (lit. meaning "accepted by ancestors")

Kinship system

The Meitei people are made up of seven major clans, known as *Salai Taret*. The clans include Mangang, Luwang, Khuman, Angom, Moilang, Khaba-Nganba and (Chenglei) Sarang-Leishangthem.

Meiteis reckon kinship through both affinal and consanguineal relationships. The Meitei word for "kin" is *mari mata* and the relationship *mari-mata thoknaba* literally means "to have relationship". Schematically, there are two types of kinship: *luhonglaga thok naba mari* (affinal relation) and *ee-gi mari leinaba* (consanguineal relation).

Meitei kinship is classified at three levels: by clan or kin (*yek-salai*), by lineage (*sagei*) and by family (*imung manung*). Under each of the 7 Meitei clans exists many *sageis*.

The kinship terms in Meitei are unilineal, patrilineal and patrilocal. Meitei kinship terms are classificatory with an exception of some descriptive terms. There are only four descriptive kin terms in Meiteilon

- *ima* 'mother'
- *ipa* 'father'
- *iku/ikubok* 'father-in-law'
- *inem/inembok* 'mother-in-law'

Meitei clans in pre-historic period

Some ethnic groups of people were lived in Kangleipak, now known as Manipur, before the accession of King Nongta Lairen

Pakhangba (1st century). They were the Mangangs, the Chakpas, the Khabas and the Chengleis etc. These ethnic groups had well defined separate regions in the valley and surrounding hills. Mangangs Ningthou Punsiba, Ngasapa, Sakappa, Wankakpa, Kaksuba, Ton Konpa, Pitingkoi, Lampicha, Tali and Konphucha were the chiefs of Mangangs. The chiefs names are mentioned in various manuscripts of Manipur . A group of people lived in Manipur before Christ which can be known from the tale of God Koriphaba where two families were mentioned i.e. Haorakchams and Konthaojams .They were belonged to the Chengleis. Nongtam Shangba, Pakhang Yoirenba, Ningthou Langba and Maliya Pambalcha (who introduced Palcha kumching) etc. were chiefs of the Chengleis. In the period of Naophongba (428–518 AD), the Chengleis were known as Sarang leisangthems.

According to Royal Chronicle, King Naophongba had two sons viz Sameirong and Thamalong. Sameirong ascended the Manipur Valley. Thamalong descendants were called Ningthouja clan which was introduced during the reign of King Sameirong. later on, Mangangs and Ningthouja came to be known as Ningthouja clan. According to a meitei manuscript, the chiefs who lived in the Nongmaijing hills and in the middle portion of Irin river were addressed by the word 'Angom'. The Angoms are one of the clans of Meiteis who are found during the reign of Pakhangba. The Luwangs and the Khumans were descendents of Poirenton who occupied south east of Imphal valley before the accession of King Pakhangba. Later, they were expelled from there by King Pakhangba and their domain ceased. So, they were concentrated on Koubru Hills. As per historical records Pakhangba was Brother's in law of Poireiton as Pakhangba's Queen was Poirenton's sister. Poirenton and

his horde belonged to Mongolian race. The Chakpas can be considered as Moirangs. Chakpas were known as Keke Moirang in earlier times. The Mangangs, the Khabas and the Chengleis were closely allied people inhabiting in the Manipur were the first race and another race, called Nganbas, a clan of Meiteis were assimilated with Khabas and came to be known as Kha Nganbas. Nganbas can be considered as the Shans of Upper Burma. Later on, all these seven clans were United and known as Meiteis. Besides, Ningthouja clan, other remaining clans had their own kingships though they were known as the nobles of the Meiteis. The royal Chronicle says that no one knows when and how the first seven ancient Kings of each clan died and vanished. They were considered as Gods and their children were considered as human beings. It may be due to the fact that Meeteis worshipped their ancestors after their deaths similar to the religion of the Shang dynasty.

Calendar

The Meitei follow a traditional calendar called Maliyafam Palcha Kumsing, which has 12 months and a 7-day week, like the Gregorian calendar.

Culture

Most of the rich culture of Manipur can be credited to the Meiteis. Since ancient times the valley region of Manipur was trading crossroads between India and Myanmar and gradually the valley portion of Manipur became the melting pot of Indo-Burman culture. The famous Manipuri dance form had its roots from the Lai Haraoba dance form.

They are also known for their contribution to art, literature and cinema. M.K. Binodini Devi, Khwairakpam Chaoba Singh, Ratan Thiyam, Aribam Syam Sharma, Rajkumar Shitaljit Singh, Elangbam Nilakanta Singh, Heisnam Kanhailal and Sabitri Heisnam are some of the prominent personalities in the field.

The Meitei people are very fond of horse riding.

Art

The Manipuri martial art *Thang-ta* is a combative sport which had its origin from the Meitei knights during the kings rule. It involves various fighting techniques with swords and spears.

Theatre and cinema

The first Manipuri film, *Matamgi Manipur*, was released on 9 April 1972. *Paokhum Ama* (1983) is the first full-length **colour feature film** (according to the Academy's definition of a feature film) of Manipur and was directed by Aribam Syam Sharma. *Lammei* (2002) is the first Manipuri Video film to have a commercial screening at a theatre. As the production of video films gained momentum, the Manipur film industry got expanded and around 40–50 films are made each year.

Religion and festivals

According to the 2011 census, Meiteis follow only two religions, with overwhelming majority of Meiteis practicing variants of Hinduism. Around 14% of Meiteis traditionally believe in Sanamahi religion named after god Sanamahi. Meiteis follow

both Hindu as well as Sanamahi religious traditions and rituals. For example, they worship Sanamahi in the south-west corners of their homes. The various types of festivals that are the most significant, and are celebrated with great joy by meiteis are Rasalila, Janmastami, Holi, Lai Haraoba, Cheiraoba, Yaosang, Jagannath Rath Yatra, Holi, Diwali, Ram Navami etc.

Cuisine

Rice, vegetables, fish and meat are staple food of the Meiteis. Rice is the main carbohydrate source in a Meitei dish served with vegetables, fish, meat, etc. The vegetables are either made as stews (Kangsoi) with less oil/no oil used in sauteing, or stir fried directly in oil with various added spices to make an oily spicy side dish (Kanghou). Roasted/Smoked and Sun-dried fish or fried fresh fish is usually added in most of the stews and curry to impart special taste. The vegetables, herbs and fruits consumed in the region are more similar to those in Southeast/East/Central Asian, Siberian, Polynesian and Micronesian cuisines such as Myanmar, Thailand, etc. E.g. treebean (yongchak), galangal (loklei), culantro (awa phadigom), lime basil (mayangton), fishwort (tokningkhok) and many others, which are not cultivated in northern India. One of the most important ingredients in Meitei cooking is Ngari (fermented fish). Roasted ngari is used in the singju (a kind of salad), morok metpa (chilli chutney), iromba (boiled and mashed veggies with chillies). A variety of fermented bamboo shoots (soibum) as well as fresh bamboo shoots (Ushoi/Shoidon), and fermented soya beans (hawaijaar) also form an important part of Meitei cuisines. All meals are served with some fresh aromatic herbs on the side.

A typical every day Meitei meal will have rice, vegetable or fish curry, a piquant side dish (either morok metpa or iromba accompanied with herbs), a champhut (a steamed/boiled vegetable with little sugar, e.g., carrot, pumpkin or cucumber slices or steamed/boiled mustard green stems, etc without sugar), and a Kanghou. Meat cuisines are also common amongst the Meiteis and some of the common meat curries are *Yen Thongba*(Chicken Curry), *Nganu Thongba* (Duck Curry), *Oak Thongba* (pork curry), "San Thongba" (Beef Curry), "Hameng Thongba" (Mutton Curry), etc. Smoked meats (Chicken,Pork& Beef) have also become common and popular amongst the younger meitei generations.

Subsistence

The Meitei are mainly agriculturists in which rice is a staple crop. However, they also grow mangoes, lemons, pineapples, oranges, guavas, and other fruits. Fishing is also common among the Meitei that can either be a profession or a hobby. Women tend to dominate the local markets as sellers of food items, textiles, and traditional clothing.

Sports

Traditional Meitei sports are still in existence, with some even spreading throughout the world.

Some sports are worth mentioned as follows:

- Sagol Kangjei: It is the earliest form of modern-day Polo which traces its origin to Manipur. According to Guinness World Records (1992), " Polo can be traced

to origins in Manipur state, India, C. 3100 CE when it was played as 'Sagol Kangjei'".

- Mukna Kang-jei: It is a form of Meitei Wrestling. It is considered to be the most masculine form of sports.
- Khong kangjei: It is a form of Meitei Hockey.
- Kang Sanaba
- Mukna Kangjei
- Oolaobi (Woo-Laobi)
- Arambai Hunba

They introduced polo to the west when the British came to Manipur valley during the kings rule. It is locally called Sagol Kangjei. It is believed that the game was played by the Gods of Meiteis as a practice of warfare.

Mukna a unique form of wrestling popular amongst the Meiteis.

Yubi lakpi is a traditional full contact game played by Meiteis using a coconut, which has some notable similarities to rugby.[1] Yubi lakpi literally means "coconut snatching". The coconut is greased to make it slippery. There are rules of the game, as with all Manipur sports. It is played on the lush green turf. Each side has 7 players in a field with about 45x18 meters in area.[6] The goal post is 4.5x3 meters box in the central portion of the goal line. The coconut serves the purpose of a ball and is offered to the king, the chief guest or the judges before the game begins. The aim is to run while carrying the greased coconut and physically cross over the goal line, while the other team tackles and blocks any such attempt as well as tries to grab the coconut and score on its own.

Heeyang Tanaba (Hi Yangba Tanaba) is a traditional boat rowing race[1] and festivity of the Panas.

Notable Meitei

- Angom Gopi – Manipuri writer, 18th century poet
- A. Boby Singh – professional bodybuilder, 12 times Mr. India title winner
- Bodhchandra Singh – last Maharaja of Manipur State.
- Ngangom Dingko Singh - Professional boxer.
- Hijam Irabot - Freedom Fighter, activist, politician.
- Heisnam Kanhailal- Theatre art personality.
- Irom Chanu Sharmila - Human rights activists
- K. Himalay Singh – former Lieutenant General in Indian army.
- Nameirakpam Kunjarani Devi - decorated sportswoman in weightlifting.
- Major Laishram Jyotin Singh – recipient of Ashok Chakra, India's highest peacetime military decoration.
- M. Koireng Singh – 1st Chief Minister of Manipur.
- N. Biren Singh – current Chief Minister of Manipur.
- Raj Kumar Jaichandra Singh – former Chief Minister, Union Minister of Sports and Youth affairs.
- Ratan Thiyam - playwright and theatre director.
- Saikhom Mirabai Chanu - decorated olympic silver medalist at Tokyo 2020 in weightlifting
- Thounaojam Chaoba Singh – former Union Minister of State, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports.

- Rajkumar Ranjan Singh – Union Minister of External Affairs.
- Tikendrajit Singh – revolutionary, freedom fighter, Commander of Manipur State Force.
- Rajkumar Shitaljit Singh - noted writer, scholar and educationalist of Manipur.

Diaspora

Myanmar (Burma)

Myanmar is home to a sizable community of Meiteis, who are called *Kathe* in Burmese. Unlike other Hindu communities in Myanmar, the Meitei resemble other Burmese ethnic groups in terms of physical appearance, which has accelerated their assimilation and integration into Burmese society. In the early 1950s, Burmese Meiteis numbered approximately 40,000, with a third of them residing in Mandalay. Current estimates are approximately 25,000. Meiteis have resettled throughout the country, including in villages near Myitkyina to the north, Homalin, Kalewa, Pyay, in the center of the country, and Yangon to the south. They continue to practice Hinduism in Myanmar.

As a result of wars between Meitei kingdom and the Konbaung dynasty between the 17th and 18th centuries, many Meiteis were resettled in the Burmese kingdom. Some Meitei settlements in modern-day Myanmar originate from the 1758–1759 war, and from the Burmese occupation of Manipur from 1819 to 1826. Alaungpaya, during the former campaign, resettled Meiteis in Sagaing and Amarapura. The Meitei

people's horsemanship skills were employed in the Burmese royal army, where they formed the elite Cassay cavalry and artillery regiments which were employed during the Burmese–Siamese wars. The Burmese court also retained a retinue of Meitei Brahmins called Bamons, also called *Kathe Ponna* to advise and conduct court rituals.

Gharib Nawaz (Manipur)

Gharib Nawaz (born **Pamheiba**, 1690–1751) was a Meetei king of Manipur, ruling from c. 1709 until his death. He introduced Hinduism as the state religion of his kingdom (1717) and changed the name of the kingdom to the Sanskrit *Manipur* (1724). He changed his royal name from his birth name *Pamheipa* to the Persianate Garib Nawaz. During most of his reign he was engaged in warfare against the weakened Burmese Toungoo Dynasty.

Early life

Pamheiba was born on 23 December 1690 in Manipur to Pitambar Charairongba and was crowned *Meidingu* ("king") on 28 August 1709 (the 23rd of Thawan, 1631 Saka Era). After converting to Hinduism Pamheiba took the Persianate name "Gharib Nawaz" (also spelt "Garibniwaz").

Military conquests

His reign lasted 39 years. During that time, the realm of Manipur extended from the Irrawaddy in the east to Cachar

and Tripura in the west. At some points during his reign, his realm extended into the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Burma

Shortly after taking power from his father Charairongba he invaded Burma after the Burmese King insulted his sister. The Burmese King asked for the hand of another of Charairongba's daughters in marriage in 1724. Instead of a princess, the King of Burma was met by cavalry, led by Pamheiba that massacred the Burmese army, and brought many prisoners of war to Imphal. The Burmese sent an expedition in revenge, but it was ambushed in the swamps near Heirok, southwest of Thoubal, and losing heavily retreated in haste. In 1735, Pamheiba invaded Myedu in Shwebo district and carried off loot, cattle and a thousand people. In 1737, Pamheiba again invaded Burma, killed two-thirds of a royal levy, including commander, who came to oppose the invading Manipuris, and swept down to Tabayin in Shwebo district, burning everything they met. Again in 1738, Manipuris went and camped in Thalunbyu west of Sagaing, burnt every house and monastery up to the walls of Ava, stormed the stockade built to protect the Kaunghmudaw pagoda, slaughtering the Burmese troops like cattle in a pen and killing the commandant, a minister of the Hluttaw Council; the old door-leaves of the pagoda's eastern gateway show a gash made by the sword of Maharaj Pamheiba when he was forcing an entrance.

Tripura

In 1734, Pamheiba invaded Tripura and captured 1100 prisoners, who were absorbed into the Meitei community.

Shan

On account of rise of Burmese Kingdom, the Shan Kingdom of Pong was in danger. In march 1739, the Shans requested Manipur to help them. The envoys from Pong returned to their country after about 19 days. Pamheiba started for Burma to invade Sagaing. After the Battle of Sagaing, Pamheiba made the elder brother of the king of Pong king.

Mon

The king of Ava according to *Ningthourol lambuba* is called by the name Mangdra who sent a emissary in the court of King Pamheiba with very soft and flattering words requesting him for a matrimonial alliance, in which Mangdra requested to give Princess Satyamala in marriage to him. Further the king of Ava invited king Pamheiba to visit his country. Pamheiba accepted the request and sent back the emissary.

Pamheiba then thought out, if the request was sincere, he would give his daughter Satyamala in marriage and on the other hand if it was a pretension, he would teach him a lesson. When he reached the bank of Irawaddy river, he collected information and found the request was a sincere one as the king of Ava was between two fires, one the Meiteis and other the Mons. He wanted to make Manipur his friend and ally to strengthen his force in crushing the Mons. On king of Ava's request, king Pamheiba crossed Irawaddy river and assaulted the Mons where he captured two prominent chiefs of Mons, destroyed the revolting Mons of Koi, he also presented several chopped heads of Mon rebels to his son-in-law king Mangdra.

Religious policy

During the early 18th century, Hindu priests from Sylhet arrived in Manipur to spread Gaudiya Vaishnavism. They were led by Shantidas Adhikari and his associate Guru Gopal Das who succeeded in converting the King from the old Meitei religion to Vaishnavism in 1710. Later during his reign, Pamheiba made Hinduism the official religion, and converted nearly all the Meitei people to Hinduism.

Family

Pamheiba had eight wives, and a large number of sons and daughters. His eldest son, Samjai Khurai-Lakpa, was assassinated by his younger son Chitsai, who came to power after Pamheiba's grandson Gaurisiam. The reign was then followed by Ching-Thang Khomba.

Chapter 7

Attingal Outbreak and Pre-1890

North Indian Ocean Cyclone

Seasons

Attingal Outbreak

Attingal Outbreak (Anjengo Revolt; April–October 1721) refers to the massacre of 140 East India Company soldiers by native Indians and the following siege of Fort Anjengo. The Attingal Outbreak is often regarded as the first organized revolt against British authority in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The main reasons behind the resentment was large scale corruption and the manipulation of black pepper prices by the Company.

The chief factor at the Anjengo factor, Gyfford refused to hand over the customary gifts meant for the Rani of Attingal to the agents of the local feudal lords (Pillamar) and tried to hand them directly to the Rani at the head of a force of 140 soldiers on 15 April 1721. This show of force had the opposite effect and the local people rebelled, attacked and destroyed the entire force and then laid siege to the fort. Gunnar Ince led the defence of the fort for six months till the arrival of the Company's troops from the English controlled Tellicherry.

Following the turn of events, the Company and the Rani of Attingal entered into an agreement under which;

- the Company was compensated for all losses sustained during the attack on Anjengo
- was also given the sole monopoly of trade in pepper
- the right to erect factories in places of its choice

Details

The Attingal revolt of 1721 was the first organised uprising against the English East India Company in Kerala. But, there is an opinion among a group of historians that the revolt took place with the prior permission of the queen. Whatever it may be, it is an indisputable fact that local people hated Gyffort. The British used to send to the Queen costly gifts from the Fort of Anjengo annually. In 1721, around 140 Britons started their journey from Anjengo to the palace of Attingal. Meanwhile, the Pillamars, the local rulers, demanded that the gifts be presented to the Queen through them only. But Gyffort was not ready to accept it. The people became furious and they attacked and killed the Britons. Then the local people laid siege to the fort and it was said that the siege continued for about 6 months. The English troops from the Fort of Tellichery came to Anjengo and suppressed the revolt. The Company completed the completion of the fort at Anjengo in 1695.

NB: For more details- "Early Resistance to Colonialism in South Kerala"- Leela More and "Maritime Malabar and the Europeans" edited by K.S Mathew. [Old View of Pondichery] Marthanda Varma became the King of Travancore (Venad)

When the English strengthened in the south of Kerala in the north the French had already stepped in. At last what the Dutch feared happened. In 1725 the French forces, under the

orders of the Govt: of Pondichery seized Mayyazhy of Kadathanadu located at a little distance away from Tellichery and rechristened it as Mahi. During the revolt of Attingal, it was Adhitya Varma who ruled over Venad. After his death, Rama Varma (1721–29) became the king. It was during this tumultuous period that the King of Venad signed a treaty with the English East India Company. The treaty, aimed at suppressing the insurrection of Yogakkar and Pillamar, gave the English the permission to construct a fort at Kulachal. The Battle of Kulachal was fought on 10 August 1741 [O.S. 31 July 1741] between forces of the Indian kingdom of Travancore and the Dutch East India Company, during the Travancore-Dutch War. The treaty was signed by the heir-apparent Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma for and on behalf of the king reaching the fort of Anjengo. Sharp-witted and steel-hearted the heir-apparent was for making use of any means, fair or foul, to suppress the insurrection of the Yogakkars and the Pillamars. It was because of his advice that Rama Varma, the King, signed the treaty with the British in 1729. After his death, Marthanda Varma became the King of Travancore (Venad) and there began an era in the history of Kerala.

It was a period of intense internal conflicts in south Kerala and mid-Kerala when Marthanda Varma was enthroned in 1729 in Travancore (Venad). He had to confront the opposition of chieftains besides the disputations of the right of succession among the members of the royal family. Because of internal conflicts, he could not initially rule over the kingdom. The king, who spent his life in hiding or in the open, came at different times face to face with death. He saved his life either by disguising or keeping his eyes peeled for the enemies. But the Dutch commander Stein Van Gollenesse recorded that

Marthanda Varma was a cruel, audacious, greedy, unkind but efficient person who wanted to rule entire Kerala. This opinion may be true if we consider his later deeds. His mind was harder than steel. To achieve his aims he did not take into consideration moral obligations and wasn't ready to examine kindness and truth. He started confronting the enemies by creating an armed force of his own and by procuring gunpowder and war equipment with the help of the British at Anjengo. He tightened his grip on the administration by brutally suppressing the revolt in the royal family by murdering his own kin and by killing mercilessly the Madambis and Pillamars. He confiscated the properties of Madambis and Pillamars and brought all of them under the control of the Government. This ultimately led to the collapse of the feudal system that existed in Travancore kingdom. His advancement became a threat to neighboring countries. The Dutch were also in confusion. He was going to attack the countries with which they traded pepper or other goods.

Pre-1890 North Indian Ocean cyclone seasons

The years before 1890 featured the **pre-1890 North Indian Ocean cyclone seasons**. Each season was an event in the annual cycle of tropical cyclone formation. The North Indian tropical cyclone season has no bounds, but they tend to form between April and December, peaks in May and November. These dates conventionally delimit the period of each year when most tropical cyclones form in the northern Indian Ocean. Below are the most significant cyclones in the time

period. Because much of the North Indian coastline is near sea level and prone to flooding, these cyclones can easily kill many with storm surge and flooding. These cyclones are among the deadliest on earth in terms of numbers killed.

Before 18th century

- 1582 – A tropical cyclone impacted the Sundarbans and West Bengal which killed 200,000 people. According to Banglapedia, a five-hour hurricane and thunderstorm destroyed houses and boats in the coast near Bakerganj (presently in Barisal and Patuakhali). Only Hindu temples with a strong foundation were spared.
- 1584 – A tropical cyclone impacted Bangladesh and killed 200,000 people.
- 1688 – A tropical cyclone impacted the Sundarbans and West Bengal.
- 1699 – A tropical cyclone impacted Kolkata and killed 60,000 people.

18th century

- November 13–14, 1721 – A tropical cyclone impacted Madras.
- October 7–12, 1737 – A tropical cyclone impacted the Sundarbans and West Bengal and killed 300,000 people.
- December 1789 – A tropical cyclone impacted Coringa, India and killed 20,000.

Early 19th century

- 1807 – A tropical cyclone impacted West Bengal and killed 90,000 people.
- 1831 – An intense tropical cyclone impacted Odisha.
- 1833 – A tropical cyclone impacted West Bengal and killed around 50,000 people, with a record low of 891 milibar in North Indian Ocean, lowest over Indian Ocean.
- 1847 – A tropical cyclone impacted Bengal where it caused 75,000 deaths and 6000 cattle.

1839 India cyclone

A tropical cyclone impacted Andhra Pradesh, India on November 25, 1839 and killed around 300,000 people.

Late 19th century

1864 Calcutta cyclone

On October 5, a powerful cyclone hit near Calcutta, India, killing around 300,100 people. The anemometer in the city was blown away during the cyclone. Over 100 brick homes and tens of thousands of tiled and straw huts were leveled. Most ships in the harbor (172 out of 195) were either damaged or destroyed. The cyclone of 1864 destroyed the ports at Khejuri and Hijli.

November 1867 Great Calcutta cyclone

The anemometer in the city was blown away during the cyclone. A lack of storm surge minimized the overall damage from this system.

October 1874 Bengal cyclone

This severe cyclone killed 80,000 people and caused significant damage.

October 1876 Backergunge cyclone

- On October 31, a cyclone hit the Meghna River Delta area of India. The storm surge killed 100,000, and the disease after the storm killed another 100,000.

June 1885 Aden cyclone

A cyclone had formed near the Laccadive Islands on May 24, 555 kilometres (345 mi) west of southern India. The SS *Mergui* encountered the cyclone off the Horn of Africa, 400 kilometres (250 mi) east of Socotra on June 1 and reported it stronger than the tropical cyclone which struck Calcutta in 1864. Just before midnight on the night of June 1, the *Diomed* reported winds of hurricane force and a pressure of 984 millibars (29.1 inHg). The ship *Peshawar* reported a westerly hurricane at the east end of the Gulf of Aden towards midnight on the night of June 2. At noon on June 3, the *Tantallon* reported a pressure of 943 millibars (27.8 inHg) near 12.5N 45.5E. On June 3, the German corvette *Augusta*, the French dispatch boat *Renard*, and the British ship SS *Speke Hall* were lost in

the storm in the Gulf of Aden. The system continued westward and shrank in scale as it moved into the entrance of the Red Sea, crossing the coast of Djibouti.

1885 Odisha cyclone

An intense cyclone struck Odisha. It killed one person.

1888 Gujarat Cyclone

On November a violent cyclonic storm with hurricane-force winds struck Gujarat causing a ship sunk, killing 1300 people.

Chapter 8

Bajirao I Appointed by Shahu

Maharaj as Peshwa

Baji Rao I (18 August 1700 – 28 April 1740), born as **Visaji**, also known as **Bajirao Ballal**, was the 7th Peshwa of the Maratha empire. In his 20-year military career, he never lost a battle and is widely considered as the greatest Indian cavalry general. His relationship with his Muslim wife, a subject of controversy, has been adapted in Indian novels and cinema.

Baji Rao is the most celebrated personality after Shivaji in the history of the Maratha Empire. His achievements are establishing Maratha supremacy in South and political hegemony in North. During his 20-year career as Peshwa, he defeated Nizam-ul-Mulk at the Battle of Palkhed and responsible for establishment of Maratha power in Malwa, Bundelkhand, Gujarat, as redeemer of Konkan from Siddis of Janjira and liberator of western coast from the rule of Portuguese.

Early life

Baji Rao was born into the Bhat family in Sinnar. His father, Balaji Vishwanath, was a Peshwa of Shahu and his mother was Radhabai Barve. Baji Rao had a younger brother, Chimaji Appa, and two younger sisters, Anubai and Bhiubai. Anubai was married to Venkatrao Ghorpade of Ichalkaranji and Bhiubai was married to Abaji Naik Joshi of Baramati.

Baji Rao spent his childhood in his father's newly acquired fiefdom of Saswad. He and Chimaji were very close. Baji Rao was inspired by the lives of Shivaji, Ramchandra Pant Amatya and Santaji Ghorpade.

He was trained as a diplomat and a warrior under his father. Being born in a Brahmin family, his education included reading, writing and learning Sanskrit however, he did not remain confined to his books. Baji Rao displayed a passion for the military at an early age and often accompanied his father on military campaigns. He was with his father when his father was imprisoned by Damaji Thorat before being released for a ransom. Baji Rao had been on the expedition to Delhi in 1719 with his father and was convinced that the Mughal Empire was disintegrating and unable to resist northward Maratha expansion. When Balaji Vishwanath died in 1720, Shahu appointed the 20-year-old Baji Rao as Peshwa despite opposition from other chieftains. He is said to have preached the ideal of a *Hindu Pad Padshahi* (Hindu empire).

Appointment as Peshwa

Baji Rao was appointed Peshwa, succeeding his father, by Shahu on 17 April 1720. By the time of his appointment, the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah had upheld Maratha claims to the territories held by Shivaji at his death. A treaty gave the Marathas the right to collect taxes (chauth) in the Deccan's six provinces. Baji Rao convinced Shahu that the Maratha Empire had to go on the offensive against its enemies to defend itself. He believed that the Mughal Empire was in decline, and wanted to take advantage of the situation with aggressive expansion into North India. Baji Rao compared the Mughals' declining

fortune to a tree which, if attacked at its roots, would collapse. He is reported to have said: Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree and the branches will fall off themselves. Listen but to my counsel and I shall plant the Maratha flag on the walls of Attock.

As a new Peshwa, however, he faced several challenges. His appointment at a young age had evoked jealousy from senior officials such as Naro Ram Mantri, Anant Ram Sumant, Shripatrao Pant Pratinidhi, Khanderao Dabhade and Kanhoji Bhosle. Baji Rao promoted young men like himself, such as Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Shinde, the Pawar brothers and Fateh Singh Bhosle, as commanders; these men did not belong to families who were hereditary Deshmukhs in the Deccan sultanates.

The Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I, had created a *de facto* autonomous kingdom in the region. He challenged Shahu's right to collect taxes on the pretext that he did not know whether Shahu or his cousin, Sambhaji II of Kolhapur, was the rightful heir to the Maratha throne. The Marathas needed to assert their rights over the nobles of newly acquired territories in Malwa and Gujarat. Several nominally-Maratha areas were not actually under the Peshwa's control; for example, the Siddis controlled the Janjira fort.

Military conquests

The Nizam

On 4 January 1721, Baji Rao met Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I at Chikhalthana to resolve their disputes. However, the Nizam

refused to recognize the Maratha right to collect taxes from the Deccan provinces. He was made vizier of the Mughal Empire in 1721 by emperor Muhammad Shah, alarmed at his increasing power, transferred him from the Deccan to Awadh in 1723. The Nizam rebelled against the order, resigned as vizier and marched towards the Deccan. The emperor sent an army against him, which the Nizam defeated at the Battle of Sakhar-kheda; this forced the emperor to recognise him as viceroy of the Deccan. The Marathas, led by Baji Rao, helped the Nizam win this battle. For his valor, Baji Rao was honored with a robe, a 7,000-man mansabdari, an elephant, and a jewel. After the battle, the Nizam tried to appease the Maratha Chhatrapati Shahu and the Mughal emperor; in reality, however, he wanted to carve out a sovereign kingdom and considered the Marathas his rivals in the Deccan.

In 1725, the Nizam sent an army to clear Maratha revenue collectors from the Carnatic region. The Marathas dispatched a force under Fateh Singh Bhosle to counter him; Baji Rao accompanied Bhosle, but did not command the army. The Marathas were forced to retreat; they launched a second campaign after the monsoon season, but again were unable to prevent the Nizam from ousting the Maratha collectors.

In the Deccan, Sambhaji II of Kolhapur State had become a rival claimant to the title of Maratha King. The Nizam took advantage of the internal dispute, refusing to pay the chauth because it was unclear who was the real Chhatrapati (Shahu or Sambhaji II) and offering to arbitrate. Shripatrao Pant Pratinidhi advised Shahu to begin negotiations and agree to arbitration. Sambhaji II was supported by Chandrasen Jadhav, who had fought Baji Rao's father a decade earlier. Baji Rao

convinced Shahu to refuse the Nizam's offer and launch an assault. The Nizam invaded Pune, where he installed Sambhaji II as the King. He then marched out of the city, leaving behind a contingent headed by Fazal Beg. The Nizam plundered Loni, Pargaon, Patas, Supa and Baramati, using his artillery. On 27 August 1727,

Baji Rao began a retaliatory guerilla attack on the Nizam with his trusted lieutenants Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Shinde and the Pawar brothers.

He began to destroy the towns held by the Nizam; leaving Pune, he crossed the Godavari River near Puntamba and plundered Jalna and Sindkhed. Baji Rao destroyed Berar, Mahur, Mangrulpir and Washim before turning north-west to Khandesh. He crossed the Tapi River at Kokarmunda and entered eastern Gujarat, reaching Chota Udaipur in January 1728. After hearing that the Nizam had returned to Pune,

Baji Rao feinted toward Burhanpur; he thought that after hearing about the threat to the strategically-important Burhanpur, the Nizam would try to save it. Baji Rao did not enter Burhanpur, however, arriving at Betawad in Khandesh on 14 February 1728. When the Nizam heard that his northern territories had been devastated by Baji Rao, he left Pune and marched towards the Godavari to meet Baji Rao on an open plain where his artillery would be effective. The Nizam went on ahead of his artillery; on 25 February 1728, the armies of Baji Rao and the Nizam faced each other at Palkhed, a town about 30 miles (48 km) west of Aurangabad. The Nizam was quickly surrounded by Maratha forces and trapped, his lines of supply and communication were cut. He was forced to make peace; he

signed the Treaty of Mungi Shevgaon on 6 March, recognising Shahu as the King and the Maratha right to collect taxes in the Deccan.

This battle is considered as an example of brilliant execution of military strategy. In his *Military History of India*, Jadunath Sarkar wrote: "This campaign gives a classic example of what the predatory horse, when led by a genius, could achieve in the age of light artillery."

Malwa

In 1723, Baji Rao organised an expedition to southern Malwa. Maratha chiefs, including Ranoji Shinde, Malhar Rao Holkar, Udaji Rao Pawar, Tukoji Rao Pawar and Jivaji Rao Pawar, had collected chauth from several parts of the province. (Later, these chiefs carved out their own kingdoms: Gwalior, Indore, Dhar and Dewas State - Junior and Senior, respectively). To counter Maratha influence, the Mughal emperor had appointed Girdhar Bahadur governor of Malwa.

After defeating the Nizam, Baji Rao again turned his attention to Malwa. He consigned a large army in October 1728 to his younger brother, Chimaji Appa, and aided by his trusted generals Udaji Pawar and Malhar Rao Holkar. The Maratha force reached the southern bank of the Narmada River on 24 November 1728. The following day, they crossed the river and encamped near Dharampuri. Marching rapidly northwards, they crossed the ghat near Mandu and halted at Nalchha on 27 November. The Mughal forces, led by Girdhar Bahadur and his cousin Daya Bahadur, hastily prepared to oppose them on hearing that the Maratha army had begun to climb the ghats.

Girdhar Bahadur believed that the Marathas, thinking that the pass near the Mandu fort was well guarded, would climb the ghat near Amjhera; he and his army marched to Amjhera and took up a strong position there. Since the Marathas did not appear there, he suspected that they climbed near the Mandu fort and set out for Dhar on 29 November 1728. Girdhar Bahadur found Maratha horsemen coming towards him. In the 29 November Battle of Amjhera, Chimaji's army defeated the Mughals; Girdhar Bahadur and Daya Bahadur were killed. The Mughal forces fled, and their camp was plundered; eighteen elephants, horses, drums and other loot were taken by the Marathas. News of the victory reached the ears of Peshwa, who was visiting Chhatrasal. Chimaji marched towards Ujjain, but had to retreat due to lack of supplies. By February 1729, Maratha forces had reached present-day Rajasthan.

Bundelkhand

In Bundelkhand, Chhatrasal rebelled against the Mughal Empire and established an independent kingdom. In December 1728, a Mughal force led by Muhammad Khan Bangash attacked him and besieged his fort and family. Although Chhatrasal repeatedly sought Baji Rao's assistance, he was busy in Malwa at the time. He compared his dire situation to that of Gajendra Moksha. In his letter to Baji Rao, Chhatrasal wrote the following words:

Know you, that I am in the same sad plight in which the famous elephant was when caught by the crocodile. My valiant race is on point of extinction. Come and save my honour, O Baji Rao.

In March 1729, the Peshwa responded to Chhatrasal's request and marched towards Bundelkhand with 25,000 horsemen and his lieutenants Pilaji Jadhav, Tukoji Pawar, Naro Shankar, and Davalji Somwanshi. Chhatrasal escaped capture and joined the Maratha force, increasing it to 70,000 men.

After marching to Jaitpur, Baji Rao's forces surrounded Bangash and cut his supply and communication lines. Bangash launched a counterattack against Baji Rao, but could not pierce his defences. Qaim Khan, son of Muhammad Khan Bangash, learned of his father's predicament and approached with fresh troops. His army was attacked by Baji Rao's forces, and he was defeated. Bangash was later forced to leave, signing an agreement that "he would never attack Bundelkhand again". Chhatrasal's position as ruler of Bundelkhand was restored. He granted a large jagir to Baji Rao, and gave him his daughter Mastani. Before Chhatrasal's death in December 1731, he ceded one-third of his territories to the Marathas.

Gujarat

After consolidating Maratha influence in central India, Baji Rao decided to assert the Maratha right to collect taxes from the wealthy province of Gujarat and sent a Maratha force under Chimaji Appa there in 1730. Sarbuland Khan, the province's Mughal governor, ceded the right to collect chauth to the Marathas. He was soon replaced by Abhay Singh, who also recognized the Maratha right to collect taxes. This irked Shahu's senapati (commander-in-chief), Trimbak Rao Dabhade, whose ancestors had raided Gujarat several times and asserted their right to collect taxes from the province. Annoyed at Baji Rao's control of what he considered his family's sphere of

influence, he rebelled against the Peshwa. Two other Maratha nobles from Gujarat, Damaji Rao Gaekwad and Kadam Bande, also sided with Dabhade.

After Girdhar Bahadur's defeat in 1728, the Mughal emperor had appointed Jai Singh II to subdue the Marathas. Jai Singh recommended a peaceful agreement; the emperor disagreed, replacing him with Muhammad Khan Bangash. Bangash formed an alliance with the Nizam, Trimbak Rao and Sambhaji II. Baji Rao learned that Dabhade and Gaikwad had made preparations for an open fight on the plain of Dabhoi with a force of 40 thousand, while Baji Rao's numbers hardly reached 25 thousand in all. Baji Rao repeatedly sent messages to Dabhade to solve the dispute amicably in the presence of Chatrapati Shahu.

But Dabhade was stiff and stubborn, disagreeing Baji Rao's proposition, therefore on 1 April 1731, Baji Rao struck at the allied forces of Dabhade, Gaekwad and Kadam Bande. The Dabhade was seated on elephant and Baji Rao was on horseback. But during the battle, a bullet pierced Trimbakrao's head and he died on the spot. Later it was discovered that the shot that killed Dabhade was fired by Dabhade's maternal uncle Bhau Singh Thoke. Baji Rao resolved the dispute with Sambhaji II on 13 April by signing the Treaty of Warna, which demarcated the territories of Shahu and Sambhaji II. The Nizam met Baji Rao at Rohe-Rameshwar on 27 December 1732, and promised not to interfere with Maratha expeditions.

Shahu and Baji Rao avoided a rivalry with the powerful Dabhade clan after subduing Trimbak Rao; Trimbak's son, Yashwant Rao, was appointed as Shahu's senapati. The

Dabhade clan were allowed to continue collecting chauth from Gujarat if they deposited half the revenue in Shahu's treasury.

Siddis

The Siddis of Janjira controlled a small, strategically-important territory on India's west coast. Although they originally held only the Janjira fort, after Shivaji's death they expanded their rule to a large part of central and northern Konkan.

After the death of Siddi chief Yakut Khan in 1733, a war of succession broke out among his sons; one, Abdul Rehman, asked Baji Rao for help. Baji Rao sent a Maratha force led by Sekhoji Angre, son of Kanhoji Angre. The Marathas regained control of several portions of Konkan, and besieged Janjira.

Their strength was diverted after Peshwa's rival, Pant Pratinidhi, occupied Raigad Fort (near Janjira) in June 1733. Sekhoji Angre died in August (further weakening the Maratha position), and Baji Rao signed a peace treaty with the Siddis.

He allowed the Siddis to retain control of Janjira if they accepted Abdul Rehman as the ruler; they were also allowed to retain control of Anjanvel, Gowalkot and Underi. The Marathas retained Raigad, Rewas, Thal and Chaul.

The Siddis launched an offensive to regain their lost territories soon after the Peshwa returned to Satara, and Baji Rao dispatched a force to prevent them from taking over Raigad Fort in June 1734. Chimnaji made a surprise attack on a Siddi camp near Rewas on 19 April 1736, killing about 1,500 (including their leader, Siddi Sat). On 25 September of that

year, the Siddhis signed a peace treaty which confined them to Janjira, Gowalkot and Anjanvel.

Rajputana

With Shahu's consent, Baji Rao began a northward journey on 9 October 1735. Accompanied by his wife, Kashibai, he intended to visit Rajput courts and persuade them to pay chauth. Baji Rao arrived at Mewar's southern frontier in January 1736, where Rana Jagat Singh had made arrangements for his visit.

Diplomatic talks got underway. Baji Rao also visited Jagmandir Palace, in the centre of Pichola Lake (at Rana Jagat Singh's invitation), and Nath-Dwara. After resolving matters in Mewar, Baji Rao advanced towards Jaipur. Jai Singh hastened south with his forces, and they met in Bhambholao (near Kishangarh).

Their meeting lasted for several days, with talks about chauth and the cession of Malwa from the Mughal Emperor. Baji Rao then returned to the Deccan. The emperor did not agree to his demands, however, and he planned to march on Delhi to force him to agree.

March to Delhi

After the death of Trimbak Rao, Bangash's alliance against the Marathas fell apart. The Mughal emperor recalled him from Malwa, and re-appointed Jai Singh II as governor of Malwa. However, the Maratha chief Holkar defeated Jai Singh in the 1733 Battle of Mandsaur. After two more battles, the Mughals decided to offer the Marathas the right to collect the equivalent

of ₹22 lakh in chauth from Malwa. On 4 March 1736, Baji Rao and Jai Singh reached an agreement at Kishangad. Jai Singh convinced the emperor to agree to the plan, and Baji Rao was appointed deputy governor of the region. Jai Singh is believed to have secretly informed Baji Rao that it was a good time to subdue the weakening Mughal emperor.

The Peshwa began to march on the Mughal capital, Delhi, from Pune on 12 November 1736 with a force of 50,000 cavalry troops. Learning of the advancing Maratha army, the Mughal emperor asked Saadat Ali Khan I to march from Agra and check the advance. The Maratha chiefs Malhar Rao Holkar, Vithoji Bule and Pilaji Jadhav crossed Yamuna and plundered the Mughal territories in the Doab. Saadat Khan led a force of 150,000, defeated them, and retired to Mathura. Malhar Rao Holkar rejoined Baji Rao's army near Gwalior. Samsam-ud-Daulah, Mir Bakshi and Muhammad Khan Bangash invited Saadat Ali Khan to a banquet in Samsam-ud-Daulah's tent in Mathura, thinking that the Marathas had retreated to the Deccan. During the feast, they learnt that Baji Rao had slipped along the Jat and Mewati hill route (avoiding the direct Agra-Delhi route) and was at Delhi. The Mughal commanders left the feast and began a hasty return to capital. The Mughal emperor dispatched a force, led by Mir Hasan Khan Koka, to check Baji Rao's advance. The Marathas defeated his force in the 28 March 1737 Battle of Delhi. Baji Rao then retreated from the capital, concerned about the approach of a larger Mughal force from Mathura.

Baji Rao's dash on Delhi was executed with such daring and audacity that neither the Mughal generals nor the Mughal intelligence could comprehend or predict his moves.

Battle of Bhopal

Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah sought help from the Nizam after Baji Rao's march to Delhi; the Nizam set out from the Deccan, met Baji Rao's returning force at Sironj, and told the Peshwa that he was going to Delhi to repair his relationship with the Mughal emperor. The Nizam was joined by other Mughal chiefs, and a 30,000-man Mughal army (reinforced by artillery), was dispatched against Baji Rao. The Peshwa assembled an 80,000-man force. To counter aid to the Nizam from the Deccan, Baji Rao stationed a force of 10,000 (under Chimaji Appa) on the Tapti River with instructions to prevent Nasir Jung from advancing beyond Burhanpur. He and his forces crossed the Narmada in early December 1737, communicating with agents and spies posted to observe enemy moves. The Nizam sheltered in Bhopal, a fortified town with a lake at his rear, to keep his army and artillery secure.

Baji Rao besieged the Nizam, cutting off outside provisions. Because of the Nizam's artillery, the Marathas kept their distance and harassed their lines; no food could come in from outside, and the men and their animals were starving. The Nizam, unable to hold out any longer, signed a peace agreement at Doraha on 7 January 1738. Malwa was ceded to the Marathas; the Mughals agreed to pay the equivalent of ₹5,000,000 in reparations, with the Nizam swearing on the Quran to abide by the treaty.

The Portuguese

The Portuguese had colonised several regions of India's west coast. They violated an agreement to give the Marathas a site

on Salsette Island for a factory, and were intolerant of Hindus in their territory. In March 1737, the Peshwa dispatched a Maratha force (led by Chimaji) against them. Although the Marathas captured Ghodbunder Fort and nearly all of Vasai in the Battle of Vasai and gained control of Salsette on 16 May 1739 after a long siege, Nader Shah's invasion of India then diverted their attention from the Portuguese. The war trophies from Vasai included several Church bells which are found in many prominent Hindu temples in Maharashtra.

Battle tactics and character

Baji Rao was known for rapid tactical movements in battle, using cavalry inherited from Maratha generals such as Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav. Two examples are the Battle of Palkhed in 1728, when he outmaneuvered the Mughal governor of the Deccan, and in the battle against Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah at Delhi in 1737. His skill was in moving large numbers of cavalry at a great speed. British field marshal Bernard Montgomery studied Baji Rao's tactics in the Palkhed campaign, particularly his rapid movements and his troops' ability to live off the land (with little concern about supply and communication lines) while conducting "maneuver warfare" against the enemy. In his book, *A Concise History of Warfare*, Montgomery wrote the following about Baji Rao's victory at Palkhed:

They (Marathas) were at their best in the eighteenth century, and the Palkhed campaign of 1727-28 in which Baji Rao I outgeneralled Nizam-ul-Mulk, is a *masterpiece of strategic mobility*. Baji Rao's army was a purely mounted force, armed only with sabre, lance, a bow in some units and a round

shield. There was a spare horse for every two men. The Marathas moved unencumbered by artillery, baggage, or even handguns and defensive armour. They supplied themselves by looting.

Montgomery also wrote

Baji Rao resented the Nizam's rule over the Deccan and it was he who struck the first blow. In October 1727, as soon as rainy season ended, Baji Rao burst into the territories of Nizam. The lightly equipped Marathas moved with great rapidity, avoiding the main towns and fortresses, living off the country, burning and plundering.

They met one reverse at the hands of Nizam's able lieutenant, Iwaz Khan, at the beginning of November 1727, but within a month they had fully recovered and were off again, dashing east, north, west, with sudden changes in direction. The Nizam had mobilised his forces, and for a time pursued them, but he was bewildered by the swift unpredictable movements of Marathas, and his men became exhausted.

Jadunath Sarkar called Baji Rao, "a heavenly-born cavalry leader". Baji Rao used local terrain to cut enemy supply lines.

Leading from the front, he used the traditional Maratha tactics of encircling the enemy quickly, appearing from the rear, attacking from an unexpected direction, distracting the enemy's attention, keeping them off-balance, and defining the battlefield on his own terms. Baji Rao kept detailed information about enemy forces to himself, attacking where least expected and thus inspiring fear.

Baji Rao is considered as the most charismatic and dynamic leader in the Maratha history after Shivaji. He is also considered to be one of the greatest military generals of his time. In his introduction to *Baji Rao I: The Great Peshwa*, K. M. Panikkar wrote:

Baji Rao, the great Peshwa, was without doubt the most outstanding statesman and general India produced in [the] 18th century. If Shivaji was the founder of Maratha State, Baji Rao could claim that he was the one who saved it from disruption and transformed what was national state in[to] an Empire.

Chatrapati Shahu also had an implicit faith on Baji Rao. He had issued orders that, "all should obey Baji Rao faithfully and should do nothing to offend his temper". On the other occasion he has called Baji Rao as "the man with iron nerves".

Personal life

Baji Rao's first wife was Kashibai, the daughter of Mahadji Krishna Joshi and Shiubai of Chas (a wealthy banking family). Baji Rao always treated his wife Kashibai with love and respect. Their relationship was a happy one. They had three sons Balaji Baji Rao (also called Nanasaheb), Raghunath Rao (also called Ragoba) and Janardhan Rao, who died at an early age. Nanasaheb was appointed Peshwa by Shahu in 1740, succeeding his father.

Baji Rao took Mastani as his mistress, the daughter of Rajput king Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand and his Muslim concubine. The relationship was political one, arranged to please

Chhatrasal. Mastani had a son, Krishna Rao, in 1734. Since his mother was Muslim, the Hindu priests refused to conduct upanayana ceremony and he became known as Shamsher Bahadur. After the deaths of Baji Rao and Mastani in 1740, Kashibai raised six-year-old Shamsher Bahadur as her own. Shamsher received a portion of his father's dominion of Banda and Kalpi. In 1761, he and his army fought alongside the Peshwa in the Third Battle of Panipat between the Marathas and the Afghans. Wounded in the battle, Shamsher died several days later in Deeg. Baji Rao moved his base of operations from Saswad to Pune in 1728, laying the foundation for the transformation of a kasba into a large city. He began the construction of Shaniwar Wada in 1730. It was completed in 1732, beginning the era of Peshwa control of the city.

Death

Baji Rao's body was exhausted due to ceaseless wars and military campaigns. He caught a virulent fever when he was encamped in Raverkhedi and died on 28 April 1740. He was cremated that day on the Narmada River. Balaji Baji Rao ordered Ranoji Shinde to build a chhatra as a memorial. The memorial is enclosed by a dharmashala. The compound has two temples, dedicated to Nilkantheshwara Mahadeva (Shiva) and Rameshvara (Rama).

In popular culture

- *Bajirao Mastani*, a 1925 Indian silent film about the Peshwa directed by Nanubhai B. Desai and Bhalji Pendharkar.

- *Rau*, a 1972 fictional Marathi novel by Nagnath S. Inamdar, featured a love story of Baji Rao I and Mastani.
- *Mastani*, 1955 film directed by Dhirubhai Desai. It starred Nigar Sultana, Manher Desai, Shahu Modak and Agha.
- The 2015 historical drama film *Bajirao Mastani*, directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, starred Ranveer Singh as Baji Rao I.
- *Shrimant Peshwa Bajirao Mastani*, another Indian TV series broadcast on ETV Marathi in 2015.
- *Peshwa Bajirao*, a 2017 TV series starring Rudra Soni as young Baji Rao and Karan Suchak as the adult Baji Rao, aired on Sony TV.

Peshwa

The **Peshwa** was the appointed (and later hereditary) Prime Minister of the Maratha Empire of the Indian subcontinent. Originally, the Peshwas served as subordinates to the Chhatrapati (the Maratha king); later, under the Bhat family, they became the *de facto* leaders of the Maratha Confederacy with the Chhatrapati becoming a nominal ruler. During the last years of the Maratha Empire, the Peshwas themselves were reduced to titular leaders, and remained under the authority of the Maratha nobles and the British East India Company.

All the Peshwas during the rule of Chhatrapati Shivaji, Sambhaji and Rajaram belonged to Deshastha Brahmin community. The first Peshwa was Moropant Pingle, who was appointed as the head of the Ashta Pradhan (council of eight

ministers) by Chhatrapati Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire. The initial Peshwas were all ministers who served as the chief executives to the king. The later Peshwas held the highest administrative office and also controlled the Maratha confederacy. Under the Chitpavan Brahmin Bhat family, the Peshwas became the *de facto* hereditary administrators of the Confederacy. The Peshwa's office was most powerful under Baji Rao I (r. 1720-1740). Under Peshwa administration and with the support of several key generals and diplomats, the Maratha Empire reached its zenith, ruling major areas of India. The subsequent Peshwas brought in autonomy and as a result later on many provinces were controlled and administered by the Maratha nobles such as Scindias and Gaekwads.

First use

The word Peshwa is from Persian شویپ *pēshwā*, meaning "foremost, leader". After the coronation of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in 1674, he appointed Moropant Trimbak Pingle as the first Peshwa. Shivaji renamed this designation as *Pantpradhan* in 1674 but this term was less commonly used. Moropant Trimbak Pingale's son, Nilopant Moreshvar Pingale, succeeded him during Sambhaji's rule after Moropant Pingle's death in 1683.

Ramchandra Pant Amatya

(Bawadekar)

Ramchandra Amatya recaptured many forts from the Mughals between 1690 and 1694, some in person, as well as personally

conducting guerilla war techniques. When Chhatrapati Rajaram fled to Jinji in 1689, before leaving from Maharashtra, he gave "Hukumat panha" (King Status) to Pant. Ramchandra Pant managed the entire state under many challenges such as the Mughal influx, the betrayal of Vatandars (Feudal Chiefs), and scarcity of food. With his help, Sachiv kept the Maratha State on a sound economic footing.

Bhat Family

The Maratha war of succession between Tara Bai and Shahu resulted in latter's victory and assumption of Maratha throne as Chhatrapati. In 1713, Shahu appointed Balaji Vishwanath (Bhat), as Peshwa. The appointment of Balaji's son, Baji Rao I, as Peshwa in 1719 by Shahu made the position hereditary in the Bhat family. Baji Rao proved his loyalty by controlling the feudal chieftains who wanted independence from the Maratha Empire. The rebellion of General Trimbak Rao Dabhade, the *senapati* (commander in chief), over Chauthai (revenue collection) of Gujarat is one example of such internal Maratha feuds. The followers of Baji and Trimbak clashed at the Battle of Bilhapur on April 1, 1731, and Trimbak was killed. In gratitude, Shahu gave the Peshwas and the Bhat family unchallenged control over Maratha empire. who also appointed Baji Rao's son as Peshwa in 1740, gave considerable authority to the Peshwas to command the Maratha armies, and they responded well during his reigns.

At the time of his death in 1749, Shahu made the Peshwas his successors under these conditions: Shivaji's descendants, who remained as the titular Raja of Satara, were called *Swami* (Marathi for the 'real owner') by the Peshwas who reported to

them, and officially they were to seek guidance from the Raja. However, the Peshwa also became a ceremonial head of state after the battle of Panipat and the death of Madhavrao.

Legac

- The first Peshwa to receive the status of a pantpradhan was Ramchandra Pant Amatya Bawdekar in 1689 by Chhatrapati Rajaram. The first (Bhat) Deshmukh family Peshwa was Balaji Vishwanath (Bhat) Deshmukh. He was succeeded as Peshwa by his son Baji Rao I, who never lost a battle. Baji Rao and his son, Balaji Baji Rao, oversaw the period of greatest Maratha expansion, brought to an end by the Marathas' defeat by an Afghan army at the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761. The last Peshwa, Baji Rao II, was defeated by the British East India Company in the Battle of Khadki which was a part of Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818). The Peshwa's land (Peshwai) was annexed to the British East India Company's Bombay province, and Bajirao II, the Peshwa was pensioned off.