



Diamonds form around 100 miles below the ground and are brought to Earth's surface because of volcanic eruptions.

The braveheart Prithviraj

The human heart has always been stirred by tales of valour and adventure, and whenever we hear such stories, we cannot help but look up to those heroes who have chiseled their names onto the stone of history with the weight of their accomplishments. Such legends deserve to be celebrated and remembered for their bravery and all that they have done in the past to make the present better. Here's presenting the saga of one such warrior, **Prithviraj Chauhan**, who changed the course of history for the better.

WARRIORS of INDIA Part 13

Name: Prithviraj Chauhan (also known as Prithviraj III)

Born in: 1166 BCE

Died in: 1192 BCE

Position held: The ruler of Hindu Chauhan (Chauhamana) dynasty as well as the emperor of Sapadalaksha

Noteworthy achievements: Battles of Tarain fought in 1191 and 1192 against Ghurid force led by Muhammad Ghori

Biography to watch: Prithviraj (to be released on June 3, 2022)

Biography to read: Prithviraj Raso, by Chand Bardai; Prithviraj Chauhan: The Emperor of Hearts, by Anuja Chandramouli

The roots of the warrior

Prithviraj Chauhan was born to the Rajput Chauhan dynasty's Chahamana king, Someshvara and queen Karpuradevi in Gujarat. He belonged to a clan of Agnivanshi Rajputs, who, according to the legend, emerged from a sacrificial fire-pit. Prithviraj received a holistic and in-depth education in scriptures, languages, and battlecraft where he proved to be quite a proficient learner. Some medieval texts state that he mastered about six to 14 languages and became well-versed in various subjects. He also became skilled in the art of archery. When Prithviraj was about eleven years old, his father, Someshvara died in 1177 CE. Even though he was still a minor, he ascended to the throne, with his mother serving as a regent to rule the realm. During his early years as a young ruler, Prithviraj was supported in administering the kingdom by a team of devoted officials, and he assumed the actual control over the empire in 1180 CE according to ancient scriptures.

The sword of the warrior

The young Prithviraj inherited a kingdom that stretched from Sthanvishvara (Thanesar which was once the capital of the seventh century ruler Harsha) in the north to Mewar in the south. Within a few years, Prithviraj personally assumed control of the administration, but shortly after acquiring power, he was confronted by a revolt led by his cousin Nagarjuna, son of Vighraharaja IV, who claimed the crown for himself. This endeavour for the Chahamana throne led to rivalry between the two branches of the family. The suppression of the rebellion and the recapture of Gudapura was the first military achievement for Prithviraj.

After crushing the uprising, Prithviraj shifted his attention to the Bhadanakas, a nearby country. The Bhadanakas had been a continual menace to the Chauhan-controlled region around Delhi, but he defeated and crushed the Bhadanaka tribes in 1182 and expanded the borders of the Chauhan kingdom till Mahoba.

Prithviraj also gained military victories against several neighbouring Hindu kingdoms early in his reign, most prominently against Chandela king Paramardi. In the Battle of Tumul in 1182, he fought Parmardi Dev Chandel of Mahoba and seized the kingdom of Mahoba by defeating and killing his famous generals Alha and Udal. In the course of his aggressive campaigns, he came into conflict with Jayachandra, the Gahadavala ruler of Kannauj. Jayachandra was eager to curb Prithviraj's growing ambitions and quest for territorial expansion. Tradition, however, ascribes the immediate cause of their intense and bitter rivalry to a romance between Prithviraj and Jay-

achandra's daughter, Sanyogita. The love of Prithviraj and Sanyogita and the princess's eventual abduction have been immortalised in Chand Bardai's epic Prithviraj Raso (or Chand Raisa). That event is popularly believed to have occurred after the first battle of Tarain or Taraori in 1191 and shortly before the second battle of Tarain (Taraori) in 1192, but the historicity of the Sanyogita episode remains a matter of debate.

However, if Prithviraj is to be renowned for just one war, it would be the battle of Tarain (Taraori), which was fought against Muhammad Ghori, emperor of the Muslim Ghurid dynasty. Ghori was trying to assert his authority in northern India by consolidating his empire there. That included acquiring Sindh, Multan, and the Punjab to supplement his dominions of Ghazna and Ghor (in present-day Afghanistan). Ghori invaded India in 1191, commanding a force of 1,20,000 troops over the Khyber Pass. To oppose Ghori's army, Prithviraj led two regiments. He won the first battle of Tarain which left Ghori captive in his hands. Prithviraj then, against his courtiers' counsel, pardoned the aggressor and politely freed the defeated Ghori. In 1192, Ghori once again reassembled a force of 1,20,000 armoured horsemen and fought Prithviraj at the second battle of Tarain. He dispatched his envoy to Lahore to demand surrender, but Prithviraj refused. Although he had no allies, Prithviraj amassed a large army, which is believed to have included elephants, horsemen, and a significant amount of infantry. However, fighting and enmity within the Rajput camp had weakened Prithviraj's position. The Rajput army broke ranks and fled when Ghori marched with his force to the heart of the Rajput line. Prithviraj attempted to flee but was captured and imprisoned in Ghor. According to stories, Prithviraj's eyes were burned out, rendering him blind. Even in the face of death, he refused to acknowledge Ghori's power. However, the reason behind Prithviraj Chauhan's death is a mystery till today. Different medieval sources suggest different reasons.

According to many historical texts, Prithviraj was brought to Ajmer by Muhammad Ghori and maintained as a Ghurid vassal. After a brief rebellion against Ghori, Prithviraj was executed for treason. According to Hasan Nizami, a Muslim historian, Prithviraj was caught plotting against Muhammad Ghori, allowing the king to behead him. According to Hammira Mahakavya, after his loss in the second battle of Tarain, Prithviraj refused to eat, which resulted in his death. Prithviraj Raso claims that he was kidnapped and taken to Ghazna, where he was blinded and later killed in prison. Finally, another source, the Viruddha-Vidhi Vidhvansa, claims that Prithviraj was killed immediately after the war.

The legacy of the warrior

Prithviraj Chauhan died in 1192 and with his death, a period of bravery, patriotism and principles came to an end. Though he was officially the king of Ajmer, medieval folk stories portray him as the king of Delhi and as a symbol of pre-Islamic Indian power. He is considered one of the last sovereign Hindu kings in northern India. Known as a courageous warrior king, Prithviraj is credited with putting up a valiant fight against Muslim invaders.

