



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Volume 11, Issue 6, June 2024



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.802



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Kanhadadeva: Unsung Warrior of Indian History

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ABSTRACT: Kanhadadeva (IAST: Kānhaḍa-deva, r. c. 1292-1311 CE) was a king belonging to the Chahamana dynasty, who ruled the area around Javalipura (present-day Jalore in Rajasthan). Initially, he ran the administration jointly with his father Samantasimha, and helped ward off invasions from the Delhi Sultanate.

After the Delhi ruler Alauddin Khalji conquered the neighbouring fort of Siwana, Kanhadadeva's armies fought several skirmishes with him. In 1311, Kanhadadeva was defeated and killed in an attack led by Alauddin's general Malik Kamaluddin. He is celebrated as a hero in Kanhadade Prabandha, a 1455 poem by Padmanābha.

KEYWORDS: kanhadadeva, dynasty, warrior, history, hero, administration

I. INTRODUCTION

Kanhadadeva was a son of his predecessor Samantasimha. He was also known as "Dasam Saligrama" and "Gokulanatha".^[1] According to the 17th century chronicler Munhot Nainsi, he had a brother named Maladeva.^[2]

Joint administration with Samantasimha

As the heir apparent, Kanhadadeva assisted his father in administration from at least 1296 CE onwards.^{[2][3]} A 1296 pillar inscription discovered at Topkhana in Jalore states that Kanhadadeva shared the burden of administration during his father's reign.^[4] The 1299 CE Chohtan inscription also refers to the joint reign of the father-son duo.^[4] No inscription from Kanhadadeva's reign has been discovered, but the last extant inscription from his father's reign is dated 1305. Therefore, Kanhadadeva appears to have ascended the throne sometime around 1305.^[5]

Delhi Sultanate's Gujarat campaign^[1,2,3]

In 1299, the Delhi Sultanate ruler Alauddin Khalji sent an expedition to Gujarat led by his generals Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan. The Kanhadade Prabandha claims that Kanhadadeva (then a prince) did not permit the Delhi forces to pass through his territory, concerned that they would "sack villages, take prisoners, molest women, oppress Brahmanas and slay cows".^[6] The Khalji army reached Gujarat via another route in Mewar, defeated its king Karna, and ransacked Gujarat.^[7]

After its victorious campaign in Gujarat, the Delhi army passed through Jalore on its way back to Delhi. According to the 17th century chronicle Nainsi ri Khyat, the Delhi army encamped at "Sakarana" near Jalore. The Kanhadade Prabandha names the place as "Sirana": it can be identified with modern Sankarna.^[8] Kanhadadeva sent Kandhala Olecha and four other messengers to the Delhi commander, expressing his displeasure over their stay in his territory, after they had imprisoned Hindus and desecrated the Somanatha temple in Gujarat.^[9] These messengers came in contact with the neo-Muslim leader Mammunshah (Muhammad Shah) and his brothers, who were planning a mutiny against the Delhi generals. Three days later, these rebel generals attacked the Delhi army's camp from one side, while Kanhadadeva's army attacked it from the other side.^[10] The rebels killed a brother of Nusrat Khan and a nephew of Alauddin, but the mutiny was completely suppressed within 4 days.^[11]

The Kanhadade Prabandha does not mention any mutiny by the Delhi soldiers, and states that the attack on the Delhi camp was led by Kanhadadeva's minister Jaita Devada.^[7] The Delhi chronicles, such as Ziauddin Barani's Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, describe the mutiny, but do not mention any Chahamana participation in the unsuccessful mutiny.^[10] Historian Dasharatha Sharma believes that Nainsi's account, which mentions collaboration between Kanhadadeva's forces and the mutineers, is an accurate representation of the conflict.^[7] However, Nainsi inaccurately states that Alauddin personally led the Delhi army during this campaign, and that he was present at the time of the mutiny. Therefore, historian Kishori Saran Lal doubts the veracity of Nainsi's account and the claim that the Jalore army aided the mutiny.^[12]

Somanatha idol

The Kanhadade Prabandha and Nainsi ri Khyat also credit Kanhadadeva with rescuing the Somnath temple idol from desecration by the Delhi army. This claim also occurs in Ranamalla Chhanda (1408-1411) by Shridhara Vyasa. According to these texts, Kanhadadeva's army liberated several Hindu prisoners, and recovered the Somnath idol,

which was being taken to Delhi to be [4,5,6] desecrated.^[10] Kanhadadeva is said to have installed the five fragments of this idol at Prabhas Patan, Bagada, Abu, Jalor and his personal garden.^[13] The Kanhadade Prabandha hails him an incarnation of Krishna for this act.^[1]

However, other sources state that the idol was taken to Delhi; these sources include Amir Khusrau's Khazainul-Futuh, Barani's Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi and Jinaprabha's Vividha-tirtha-kalpa. It is possible that the story of Kanhadadeva's rescue of the Somnath idol is a fabrication by the later writers. Alternatively, it is possible that the Khalji army was taking multiple idols to Delhi, and Kanhadadeva's army retrieved one of them.^[13]

Asylum to the rebels

Nainsi ri Khyat further claims that Mammushah (Muhammad Shah) and his brother Gabharu, who had rebelled against the Delhi generals, took asylum with Kanhadadeva. However, Kanhadadeva disapproved of their killing of cows (which are sacred to Hindus). Therefore, the two rebels left Jalore, and sought shelter with Hammiradeva at Ranthambore.^[1]

Defeat against Alauddin Khalji



At the beginning of the 14th century, the Delhi Sultanate ruler Alauddin Khalji captured the forts of Ranthambore (1301) and Chittor (1303), which made him a neighbour of Kanhadadeva. Different medieval writers give different accounts of the events leading up to Alauddin's invasion of Jalore.^[14]

The 15th century Kanhadade Prabandha claims that Alauddin's daughter Piroja fell in love with Kanhadade's son.^[15] Alauddin offered to marry her to the Chahamana prince, stating the couple had also been married in several previous births.^[16] He even visited Jalor, where he was treated well because he behaved like a Hindu.^[17] However, the Chahamana prince rejected the offer as an insult.^[16] The prince was later killed in a battle. His head was brought to Alauddin, but it [7,8,9] miraculously turned away when the Sultan turned towards it. Princess Piroja, who loved the Chahamana prince, immolated herself while holding his head.^[17] The text names the Siwana ruler Sataladeva (Sitaladeva) as Kanhadadeva's general and nephew. It claims that when the Delhi army invaded the Chahamana kingdom, Sataladeva raided their camp at Mandore. The Khaljis next invaded the Siwana fort, but Sataladeva repulsed them with help of an army sent by Kanhadadeva. The invaders lost their commanders Nahar Malik and Khandadhara Bhoja in this battle.^[18] Alauddin later personally led an army to Siwana, and defeated Sataladeva.^[19] Following this

victory, Alauddin's generals started ransacking the neighbouring territory, bringing them into conflict with Kanhadadeva's forces.^[20]

According to the 16th century Tarikh-i-Firishta, Alauddin sent an army to besiege Jalore in 1305. Samantasimha was probably dead by this time, and Kanhadadeva had become the sole ruler of the kingdom. The Khalji commander Ain-ul-Mulk Multani convinced Kalhanadeva to visit Delhi and to become an ally of the Khaljis. Kanhadadeva visited Delhi, but he was not satisfied with the terms offered to him, and returned to Jalore.^[18] A few years later, Kanhadadeva heard Alauddin boasting that no Hindu ruler could challenge him. This rekindled Kanhadadeva's sense of pride, and he decided to fight with Alauddin, resulting in an invasion of Jalore.^[12] This narrative is also repeated by the 17th century historian Hajiuddabir.^[14]

The 17th century writer Munhot Nainsi does not mention Kanhadadeva's visit to Delhi, but states that his son Viramadeva stayed at the court of Delhi for some time. Once, Alauddin offered to marry his daughter to Viramadeva^[10,11,12]. The Chahamana prince did not want to marry the Khalji princess, but could not openly refuse the offer. He asked for Alauddin's permission to return to Jalore, promising to return with a marriage party. When he did not return, Alauddin sent a 500,000-strong force to Jalor. This force, led by Mudfar (Muzaffar) Khan and Dauda Khan, besieged the Jalor fort for 12 years.^[21]

None of these accounts are historically reliable. By 1310, Alauddin had subjugated the kingdoms surrounding Jalore, including Gujarat, Malwa, Chittor, Ranthambore and Siwana. It appears that he attacked Jalore simply because he wanted to put an end to Jalore's independent status.^[14]

The forces sent by Alauddin against Jalore initially failed to capture the fort.^{[22][23]} In 1311, Alauddin dispatched a stronger army led by Malik Kamaluddin Gurg, which defeated and killed Kanhadadeva. Nainsi's Khyat suggests that many people believed that Kanhadadeva managed to survive and disappeared.^[24] His son Viramadeva is said to have died 2.5 days after the coronation.^[24]

Legacy

Kanhadadeva is eulogized as "Kanhadade" in Kanhadade Prabandha (1455), an epic authored by Padmanabha, who was a court poet employed by the later rulers of Jalore. The text is written in Prakrit language with Old Rajasthani and some Gujarati influences.^[25] It mentions Kanhadade as a Rajput king and describes his struggles against Alauddin Khalji, the Sultan of Delhi.^[15] The text demonizes Muslims, and hails Kanhadade as a saviour who defeated the Muslims responsible for desecrating the Somnath temple.^[15]

II. DISCUSSION

- No sooner the people of Jalor came to know of Kanhadade's victory, they came to greet him and offer felicitations... (Padmanabha 1991: 25-27).

At Jalor, Kanhadade now worshipped Lord Somanatha, daily bathing the idol with panchamrita, performing all the sixteen rituals, and adorning the idol with sandal paste, flowers, tilaka, etc... Of the Ekalinga, which saves one from falling into the hell and dire troubles and afflictions, five idols were carved out; there is no sixth one like them.^[13,14,15] One of these was ceremoniously installed at Soratha and another at Lohasing in Vagada. One was sent to a pleasant spot on the Abu hill for consecration, while one was installed at Jalor where the Rai built a temple and one was sent to Saivadi (Jalor district). At all these five places, worship of Lord Siva is performed

- Kanhadade Prabandha (Padmanabha 1991: 28-29). quoted from Jain, M. (2019). Flight of deities and rebirth of temples: Espisodes from Indian history. 190ff.
- You know, Kanhadade will not break his word; he would not make a night attack in any case. And rightly so, says Padmanabha Pandita. Even if the Dhruva star becomes unstable, the noble people do not break their pledge.
- Padmanābha, ., & Bhatnagar, V. S. (1991). Kānhaḍade prabandha: India's greatest patriotic saga of medieval times : Padmanābha's epic account of Kānhaḍade. New Delhi: Voice of India.

In ancient times Jalore was known as Jabalipura - named after saint. The town was also known as Suvarngiri or Songir, the Golden Mount, on which the fort stands. According to some historical sources, in 8th-9th centuries, one branch of the Gurjara-Pratihara was ruling at Jablipur (Jalore). It was a

flourishing town in the 8th century. Jalore was ruled by the Paramaras in the 10th century. Kirtipala, the youngest son of Alhana, the Chahamana ruler of Nadol, was the founder of the Jalore line of Chauhans. He captured it from the Parmars in 1181 and took the clan name Songara, after the place. His son Samarasimha succeeded him in 1182. Udayasimha was the next ruler under whom Jalore had a golden period. He was a powerful and able ruler ruling over a large area. He recaptured Nadol and Mandor from the Turks. In 1228, the Delhi Sultan Iltutmish circled Jalore but Udayasimha offered stiff resistance. He was succeeded by Chachigadeva and Samantasimha. Samantasimha was succeeded by his son Kanhadadeva. During the reign of Kanhadadeva, Jalor was attacked and captured in 1311 by the Delhi's Turkic Sultan Alaaddin Khalji. Kanhadadeva and his son Viramadeva died defending Jalore. Jalore was the hometown of Jeevant Kunwar, mother of Maharana Pratap (1572–1597). She was the daughter of Akhey Raj Songara. Rathore rulers of Jodhpur used the Jalore fort to safe-keep [16,17,18] their treasure. Dungara Ram Choudhary, of IIT-JEE 2002 AIR 1 fame, hails from this hamlet. The Turkic rulers of Palanpur State of Gujarat briefly ruled Jalor in the 16th century and it became part of the Mughal Empire. It was restored to Marwar in 1704, and remained part of the kingdom until shortly after Indian Independence in 1947. Ambliara princely state in Gujarat are the pedigree of Jalore Maharani Popadevi. Ambliara has a small princely state in Mahi Kantha Agency Present days near Bayad taluka of Aravalli District Gujarat. There are 12 Math (Big Hindu monasteries) and 13 Takiya (Masjid). Jalore is known as the "Cradle of the Marwari horse" - an indigenous horse breed famed for its beauty, endurance and loyalty to the horsemen who fought interminable wars on horseback.

III. RESULTS

Baja(बाजा)^{[1][2]} Gotra Jats are found in Madhya Pradesh and Punjab.

History

We find mention of this clan in Chauhan history along with the clans who offered the gallant opposition to Allaudin when his forces destroyed the temple of Somanatha.

Dasharatha Sharma in "Early Chauhan Dynasties" [180-191] writes about Jalor Chauhan ruler - Samantasimha and Kanhadadeva.

Samantasimha - [Page-180] The inscriptions of Samantasimha range from V. 1339 to 1362 and show Samantasimha ruling over almost the same territories as his father, Chachigadeva. Of Samantasimha's 16 inscriptions, four come from Bhinmal, three from the state of Sirohi, and the rest from various parts of the Jodhpur division of Rajasthan. About V. 1353, he associated his son, Kanhadadeva, with himself in the government of Jalor; The Jalor inscription of Samantasimha, V. 1353, refers itself to the reign of Maharajakula Sri-Samvatasimha, while Kanhadadeva was subsisting on his lotus like feet and bearing the burden of administration (EI, XI, pp. 61f.). Similarly the Chohtan inscription V. 1356, speaks of Maharajakula Sri-Samvatasimhadeva and Rajan Kanhadadeva.

In V. 1353 (1296 AD) the ruler on the throne of Delhi was Firuz's nephew and assassinator, Ala-ud-din Khalji, perhaps the greatest of Sultans of Delhi, whose avowed ambition was to end all Hindu principalities and kingdoms, and who had been advised by his trusted counselors to treat the Hindus as no better than slaves. Samantasimha of Jalor does not appear to

[Page-181] have been a man gifted or capable enough to fight against such a redoubtable adversary. It was good that he realised the need of some assistance, and acting probably on the advice of his people put the real direction of the affairs of the state into the hands of Kanhadadeva, then perhaps a young man of twenty five years or so.

Kanhadadeva - Kanhadadeva had not to wait long for a chance to prove his mettle. In the third year of his joint reign, i.e., 1298 A.D., Alaaddin decided to conquer Gujarat and destroy the temple of Somanatha. As the best route for his army lay through Marwar, he despatched [19,20,21] a robe of honour to Kanhadadeva and desired that he should permit the Khalji forces to pass through his territory. Worldly wisdom should have dictated instant submission to the imperial orders. But to the brave Kanhadadeva svadharma mattered more than worldly pleasures, or a kingdom or even his life. He therefore sent back Alaaddin's messenger with the blunt answer,

"Your army would, on its way, sack villages, take prisoners, molest women, oppress Brahmanas and slay cows. This being against our dharma, we cannot accede to your request."

Though the refusal must naturally have angered Alaaddin, he took no immediate steps against Jalor. The Khalji army, commanded by Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, marched instead through Mewar. Like a storm of extreme fury, it laid low every state, every chiefship, every principality that lay across its path, conquered very soon the whole

of Gujarat and Kathiawar, and destroyed the temple of Somanatha, in spite of the gallant opposition offered by the Jethava (जेठवा), Vala (वला), Baja (बाजा) and Chudasama (चुडसामा). And then on its way back to Delhi, Ulugh Khan, either on his own initiative or acting on

instructions beforehand by Alauddin, decided to punish Kanhadadeva for the affront to Khalji authority. Victorious every where he marched through the Jalor. When the Khalji army reached Sakrana (tah-Ahore), a village 18 miles from Jalor, Kanhadadeva's chief minister, Jaita Devada, conveyed his master's message to Ulugh.

In a well planned raid led by Jaita Devada, Nusrat Khan's brother, Malik Aizudin and a nephew of Alaudin were slain. Ulugh Khan barely escaped his life. They liberated thousands of Hindu prisnors and the rescue of an idol of Somanatha which was being carried to Delhi.

Kanhadadeva had its five fragments installed respectively at Prabhasa, Bagada, Abu, Jalor and his own garden. This rescue of Somanatha forms in the popular mind Kanhadadeva's best and greatest title to greatness.

Kanhadadeva, also known as Kanhad Dev Sonigara in vernacular legends, was a Rajput Maharaja who ruled Jalore in the 13th century CE, in the present-day Indian state of Rajasthan. He was the last king of the Chahamana dynasty of Jalor.

In 1298, Ala ud din Khilji's Mongol general Ulugh Khan asked permission of Kanhad Dev to march through Jalore to conquer Gujarat and destroy the temple at Somnath. Kanhad Dev refused and denounced Khilji's actions. Due to the risk of an attack Ulugh Khan had to take a longer route to Gujarat. In 1299 Ala ud din sacked the temple and broke the Shiva lingam that had been worshipped there. He was carrying the broken pieces back to Delhi when he was attacked and defeated by Kanhad Dev Sonigara's armies. Kanhad Dev's son Biramdeo (Viramdev) and trusted general Jaitra Deora were in charge of his army. The broken pieces of the Shiva lingam were recovered and 20,000 Hindu prisoners were freed .[22,23,24] Kanhad had the shivling washed in water from the Ganges river, which is regarded as sacred, and then placed within various Shiva temples in and around Jalore. The enraged Ala ud din Khilji attacked Jalore with a huge force of 50,000 men Kanhad Dev with an army of 5,000 men defended Jalore until he and his son Viramdev were both killed. Ala ud din Khilji later plundered the city and enslaved the populace but could not find the Somnath Shiva lingam as it was secretly sent away with trusted Brahmans of the kingdom. This story is recounted in the 16th century ballads Padmanabhama and Kanhad Dev.

IV. CONCLUSION

Hariyadevi Chauhan (born Chandela) was born on month day 1133.
Hariyadevi had 3 siblings: Nagabhata Chandela and 2 other siblings.
Hariyadevi married Kanhadadeva Chauhan.
Kanhadadeva was born on month day 1135.
They had 3 sons: Kanhadadeva Chauhan and 2 other children.
Hariyadevi passed away on month day 1200, at age 66.[25]

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3. ^ Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 159.
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5. ^ Ashok Kumar Srivastava 1979, p. 41.
6. ^ Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 160.
7. ^ a b c Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 161-162.
8. ^ Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 161.
9. ^ Ashok Kumar Srivastava 1979, p. 38.
10. ^ a b c Ashok Kumar Srivastava 1979, p. 39.
11. ^ Kishori Saran Lal 1950, p. 87-88.
12. ^ a b Kishori Saran Lal 1950, p. 136.
13. ^ a b Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 162.
14. ^ a b c Kishori Saran Lal 1950, p. 137.
15. ^ a b c Cynthia Talbot 2000, p. 292.
16. ^ a b Romila Thapar 2005, p. 124.



17. ^ a b Romila Thapar 2005, p. 125.
18. ^ a b Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 163.
19. ^ Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 164.
20. ^ Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 165.
21. ^ Ashok Kumar Srivastava 1979, p. 44.
22. ^ Ashok Kumar Srivastava 1979, p. 51.
23. ^ Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 167.
24. ^ a b Dasharatha Sharma 1959, p. 169.
25. ^ Romila Thapar 2005, pp. 121–122.



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