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## 4 Jhallesvaras in War and Peace

Compiled by the late Maharaja Sir Mayurdhwajsinhji / Meghrajji III and his son Dr Jayasinhji Jhala

Santhan Halvad-Dhrangadhra can be classed as an ‘antique, archaic or ancient’ State<sup>1</sup> in that it predated both the Muslim and Mughal Empires. It was a state which operated in a polity that was galactic and vibrant.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of eight centuries, its development as a State relied variously on the creation and maintenance of relationships of political diplomacy and military alliance, and on occasion more aggressive action. This entailed battles with other Rajput clans as well as internal family feuds, clashes with the Muslim rulers of the Sultanate, and later battles with the Mughals, the Marathas and finally the British. Military force was essential to the extension and maintenance of the State and its continuing position of dominance, and this essay will examine a representative sample of the wars of the Jhallesvaras, from a total of 46 martial engagements that span the period of 1040 to 1805, a period of 765 years.

However, between 1805 and 2016, some 211 years, it is noteworthy that no army has marched over the lands of Jhalavad. Much of the information about the first ruler, Harpaldev, is drawn from bardic legend, folklore and mythology as researched and analysed by the late Maharaja Sir Mayurdhwajsinhji – later Jhallesvara Sriraj Meghrajji III – and his son Dr Jayasinhji Jhala. The reigns of rulers to follow have far more substantial written accounts. During the 855 years of the history of the kingdom from 1093 to 1948, the descendants of the founder Harpaldevji spread across north India and established seven additional Jhala Rajput kingdoms of Limbdi, Wankaner, Wadhvan, Than Lakhtar, Chuda and Sayla in Saurashtra and Jhalrapatan in Rajasthan. In addition, Jhala cadets established the large landed estates of Badi Sadri, Delvara, Gogunda and Tana in Mewar, and Kunadi in Haroti, both in Rajasthan, as well as Narwar in the province of Madhya Pradesh and Labhuva in the Uttar Pradesh. Furthermore, not all of the descendants of Harpaldevji remained Rajputs. Some married into the Kathis and Koli castes and established small kingdoms and estates of their own. This essay is concerned with the exploits of the premier Jhala dynasty founded by Harpaldev, who was succeeded by his eldest son Sodhaji and the succeeding line of Jhallesvaras who practiced primogeniture.

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1 Ramusack, Barbara N. (2004, 4).

2 Tambiah, S. (1973, 3–31).

## 4.1 Era of Eclipse and the New Dawn

The first example to be considered is that the founder of the Jhala Makhavana dynasty, Harpaldev. Harpaldev actually spent more time fighting for someone else than for himself, though the results of his efforts were to lead to the creation of his State. Harpaldev was born on 12 January 1066 to Kesardev, who had recently ascended the *gadi* of the Makhavanas at Kirtigadh, in Sindh, and his wife Vinayde. She was the sister of Karandev Solanki who, also in 1066 and as sixth in his line of succession, ascended the *gadi* of Gujarat on the abdication of his father, RajRajesvar Bhimdev I. The Solankis were themselves descended from the Chalukyas of Karnataka, a powerful ruling family. Both new rulers were 18 years old at the time of their accession.

In 1076 a defensive alliance was created between Kesardev and his maternal cousin, Raval Devraj of Thar Parkar guaranteeing that if one was attacked the other would come to his aid. As part of that alliance the young Harpaldev, then just ten years old, was betrothed to Devraj's child daughter, Rajesree. Kesardev had also entered into alliances with his brother-in-law, Karandev Solanki and with the Sodha king, both the Solankis and Sodhas being clans within the Agnivanshi lineage of the Rajput people, and he expected these to be honoured when called upon. In 1081, however, he was to be sadly disappointed when he needed assistance to defeat Hamir Sumra, Sultan of Sindh, who was conducting raids throughout the region, capturing and raping the women of the area. Despite these defensive treaties, no help came from the Solankis of Gujarat or the Sodhas. Nevertheless, in April 1082, Kesardev defeated the Sumras and rescued the captured women, though his eldest son was killed in a subsequent battle on 26 May 1082. His second son, Harpaldev, was wounded in the same battle while directly fighting Hamir, though he survived. Despite his immediate victory, and notwithstanding the failure of the Solankis to respond to a treaty call, at the conclusion of the battle Kesardev decided to send Harpaldev and his three younger brothers away to the home of their maternal grandmother with instructions that they should serve their uncle, Karandev Solanki. Before their departure Kesardev invested Harpaldev with the Omkar ornament from his turban, the symbol of Kingship among the Makhavanas, and instructed him to protect this symbol of his ancestors' legacy. Harpaldev and his two brothers, Vijaypal and Amarpal, and his half-brother Shantipal, left for Patan and the home of the Solankis. The following day, 28 May 1082, Kirtigadh fell against a renewed onslaught by the Sumras and Kesardev was killed in action. The sources do not relate the numbers of troops involved on either side, nor their armament or organisation, but it can be safely assumed that they included cavalry, infantry armed with spears, and bowmen.

Harpaldev and his brothers were well received in Gujarat. Karandev Solanki immediately appointed Harpaldev head of the Makhavanas. Harpaldev, however, proclaimed that he should not be called prince or king until he had earned the right. Harpaldev's education was supervised by his grandmother, Queen Udaymati, who later assigned the role to her daughter-in-law, Queen Minaldevi. Not only did Harpaldev

exhibit a keen intelligence, he also excelled in martial arts and sport, especially shield and mace, spear, bow and arrow and wrestling. Within Patan, criticism was growing of Karandev's failure to honour his treaty with the late Kesardev but still he gave shelter to all Makhavanas who arrived from Sindh. Harpaldev, through Karandev's permission, formed a new Makhavana Sindh Sena army, which he vowed would serve Karandev and his people. Again, there is no specific detail on the strength of this army or how it was organised. In effect, Harpaldev was acknowledging that, for as long as he was under Karandev's protection, he recognised Karandev as his suzerain.

In 1083 Karandev planned a second war against the Rajputs of Lat Desh, the old name for south Gujarat – he had made an earlier unsuccessful attack in 1071. He took Harpaldev and his brothers with him to serve as his bodyguard. Although successful this time the fight was not without its difficulties and Harpaldev was credited with saving the life of his uncle on three occasions, for which Karandev appointed him 'Lord of the Horse', as well as promising that, in time, he would provide sufficient forces for Harpaldev to recover Sindh. The following year Raval Devrajji of Thar Parkar requested of Karandev that Harpaldev should be required to honour the agreement of 1076 and marry his daughter, Rajasree. Harpaldev, now 19 years old, resisted on the grounds that Devrajji's people had not come to his father's aid two years earlier and had made no enquiries as to his or his brothers' well being in the intervening period. He declared that until he had recovered Sindh there would be no question of him marrying.

In January 1086 the Bhil Raja extended an invitation to Karandev to attend their Vasant Panchami festivities. The Bhils, now the third-largest (after the Gonds and Santals) and most widely distributed tribal group in India today were, even in the eleventh century, a diverse group of people. Karandev accepted the Bhil king's invitation and, taking Harpaldev and some shikari hunters with him, travelled to Bhil country. While on a hunting expedition he was attacked by some Bhils. Harpaldev intervened to save his uncle, killing many of the Bhils in the process, following which Karandev established a fortified outpost in the area which he garrisoned with part of his army. He also gave Harpaldev a flag-bearing horse, which Harpaldev named "Sankalp".

In 1092 Harpaldev met his future bride, Shakti-Ma, ten years his junior and the niece of Karandev. According to local legend she was a goddess who was to bear Harpaldev three sons who were destined to be the first kings of the three Jhala dynasties – Sodha of the Sodhan line from which all Jhallesvaras are descended, Mangu from which the Limbdi ruling family is descended, and Shekhar from which the Shekhar Shakha line is descended.<sup>3</sup> In that same year Karandev had conferred

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<sup>3</sup> This reference emerges from the Jain text *Sahastralingsar Prabandh*, composed in Pali around 1408. The inscription reads: 'King Jayasinhdev presides over a court assembly in Shri Patan. Forty four courtiers are present, including in premier position, the Prime Minister Santu, followed by the three Jhala Ranas, Mangu, Sadha and Sresha, in seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth position.'

ruling powers on his son, Jayasinhdev,<sup>4</sup> a young man with whom Harpaldev had been educated. The following year, 1093, Karandev and Jayasinhdev determined to re-take lands encroached upon by the Bhils. Harpaldev's Sindh forces and the Solanki's Patan army joined for the campaign, though Harpaldev did not participate since he had been appointed as Dharadhaskh<sup>5</sup> and left behind to protect the queen and royal household.

In October 1093<sup>6</sup> Asa Bhil's large forces engaged in battle which they lost, Asa Bhil was killed and his city, Ashapilli, destroyed. The Bhil surrendered and sought the protection of Karandev who built temples, constructed a lake and built the city of Karnavati.<sup>7</sup>

While Karandev and Jayasinhdev were away fighting the Bhils, one Babro<sup>8</sup> from Sindh, realising that the two kings were absent, decided to attack Patan. Bardic legend describes Babro as a demon and it is as such that he is depicted in miniature paintings. In reality he can probably best be described as a brigand leading a band of renegades, though once more the sources do not give an indication of the size of force under his command.

According to legend, Harpaldev engaged Babro in single combat and, after a hard fight, defeated him following which Babro submitted himself and his men to Harpaldev's service.<sup>9</sup> The following day, 23 October, Harpaldev married Shakti-Ma. On his return from his contact with the Bhils, and recognising the service Harpaldev had given, Karandev offered a reward. Harpaldev replied that he would like to establish his kingdom in the region based on the number of villages he could festoon in one night. Karandev offered him 84 villages but Harpaldev insisted on his solution, to which Karandev and Jayasinhdev agreed on condition that Harpaldev remained loyal to the Solanki rulers and would come to their assistance at all times. According to myth, on the night of Shakti-Ma's seventeenth birthday,<sup>10</sup> she and Harpaldev established the Makhavana kingdom by festooning 2300 villages from a celestial winged chariot and the first 'Assembly of the Sun' was held on the following day, 3 November, when

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<sup>4</sup> Also seen as Siddhraj Jaisin, Sid Raj Jai Sinh, Jayasinhji.

<sup>5</sup> Major domo of the household.

<sup>6</sup> Sources vary as to the exact date between 6<sup>th</sup> October, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 22<sup>nd</sup> October and 24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> October. Given the supposed fight between Harpaldev and Babro on 22<sup>nd</sup> October the last of these dates seems most likely.

<sup>7</sup> Today's Ahmedabad.

<sup>8</sup> Also seen as Babra, Babaro But, Babrasur.

<sup>9</sup> Some diary sources refer to Karandev witnessing the fight between Harpaldev and Babro. Given the sequence of subsequent events it seems more likely that he was told about it after the event on his return from fighting the Bhils.

<sup>10</sup> Opinions vary as to the exact date. Some sources attribute her birthday to 11 October 1076 and therefore the creation of the kingdom to 11 October 1093; others attribute the dusk to dawn ride to create the kingdom to 2 November 1093. Since Harpaldev did not marry Shakti-Ma until 23 October it seems probable that references to her birthday having anything to do with the magical ride are misplaced.

the Auspicious Kingdom, later to be known as Jhalavad, was proclaimed. Quite how the number of villages included was arrived at in reality shall never be known but it is known that Jayasinhdev objected to its size. Babro, who had now become a loyal servant, was embraced by Harpaldev. Despite his earlier agreement to the formula for establishing the size of Harpaldev's kingdom, Jayasinhdev objected to the size of grant once he had seen the final figure. Three days later Shakti-Ma was furious with Harpaldev when he gave Jayasinhdev's queen 500 villages in the Bhal region without consulting her first. Harpaldev retained 1800 villages for his kingdom which he then divided between his brothers; Vijaypal receiving 84 villages on the Sabarmati river, Samant receiving the same number but on the Rupen river and Amarpal on the Vatrak river. This distribution was re-confirmed in 1108 following the Makhavana-Sumra war.

On 7 January 1094 Karandev abdicated and Jayasinhdev was crowned and assumed full powers, though the lasting resentment he held for Harpaldev was noted. November 1094 witnessed the first anniversary of the Makhavana kingdom when Harpaldev and the eight chiefs of Makhavana estates began to plan for the re-conquest of Sindh. In 1102 King Jayasinhdev resolved to attack the kingdom of Sorath and the capital of the Chudasamas at Junagadh.<sup>11</sup> Harpaldev objected on the grounds that it was the home of Jayasinhdev's paternal grandmother and his own maternal grandmother, Queen Udaymati, and that this would therefore be an illegal intra-family war. Jayasinhdev reacted angrily but nothing further seems to have come of this, at least for ten years. In April 1106 the king visited Patadi and Harpaldev's brothers sought his permission to start preparing for an attack on Sindh, to which he agreed, particularly since the powers of the Sumras seemed to be growing.

Shakti-Ma had died in 1105 and so, in January 1108, Harpaldev married the girl to whom he had first become engaged, Princess Rajesree, the daughter of Thar Parkar's Sodha king Raval Devrajji and by whom he would have nine sons. In March of that year he gathered his forces in Sindh, supported by the forces of the Sodha Parmar princes. Barvakhor Amir's<sup>12</sup> Sumra army was large and was on the point of victory when he was caught in a pincer movement, with the forces of the Makhavana Chiefs on one side and the combined forces of Harpaldev and the Sodha army on the other. The Sumra king, Unnd Amir, was captured and Harpaldev tasted victory, perhaps his greatest achievement. The Makhavana Chiefs asked Harpaldev to remain in Sindh but he declared that his place was now in Gujarat, though he bound them all together in a one-clan defensive alliance. He restated his earlier distribution of villages to his two brothers, first made when the Kingdom was created, but now added to it a gift of 24 villages each to his three sons by Shakti-Ma, and 12 villages each to the nine sons of

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<sup>11</sup> Sorath – a kingdom in the south west of the Saurashtra peninsula – with its capital city, Junagadh. Watson (1876) described Saurashtra as at one time extending from the Indus to Daman, from which Ptolemy (A.D. 150) made Sytastrene, now called Sorath and Surat (p.2, f/n 1).

<sup>12</sup> Also seen as Unnd Amir.

Rajesree.<sup>13</sup> Unnd Amir was kept with Harpaldev pending payment of a ransom which, when paid, was divided between Jayasinhdev, his wounded soldiers and the widows of the fallen, his brothers and himself. This is regarded as Harpaldev's revenge for the earlier sacking of his father's kingdom and with his new-found wealth he did much to improve the port city of Jhinjhuvada.

Over time more and more Makhavana Sindhis moved to Patadi but their growing influence, and the introduction of Sindhi language and customs led to a falling out between Harpaldev and his older sons who did not want to embrace these traditions. They left for Jhinjhuvada.

In December 1112 Jayasinhdev once again announced his intention of attacking Sorath, home of his paternal grandmother and Harpaldev's maternal grandmother in revenge for an attack made by Chudasama Ranak Khengar of Sorath during Jayasinhdev's absence. The ensuing estrangement between the two lasted almost until the end of Harpaldev's life. The disagreement did, however, led to a rapprochement for Harpaldev with his elder sons, Sodha and Mangu and he bestowed a number of villages on them as well as on his younger sons. Jayasinhdev was victorious in Junagadh,<sup>14</sup> though no Makhavana attended the victory celebrations. Fifteen years later, in 1127, Jayasinhdev celebrated his fiftieth birthday and invited Harpaldev and his sons to attend. Harpaldev declined because of the occupation of Sorath, but sent his sons instead.

Between 1127 and 1130 Jayasinhdev, accompanied by his family and by the sons of Harpaldev, went on a pilgrimage to Somnath, in Junagadh. During his absence one Yas'ovarman<sup>15</sup> marched into Gujerat and only left when Jayasinhdev's minister, Santu, agreed terms, an action which infuriated Jayasinhdev who, on his return from pilgrimage, started to prepare for war with the Paramaras Rajputs of Avanti<sup>16</sup> Mandal, Malwa. He called upon Harpaldev to support him with his Makhavana forces. Harpaldev declined to become involved personally on the grounds that he was about to abdicate but he pledged the support of eleven of his sons as well as his

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**13** The 9 sons, it has been argued, are not the sons of Rajesree's womb but rather sons the couple adopted from the war orphans of the second and victorious Sindh war. Rajesree was too old to have nine sons if she got married late in life, especially if we factor in the birth of daughters and miscarriages.

**14** Queen Ranakdevi, wife of Junagadh's ruler Rao Khengar, committed sati rather than submit to marriage with Jayasinhdev. He built a temple to her memory at Wadhwan, the place of her pyre, which still stands today.

**15** Though clearly not the more famous Yas'ovarman, king of Kannauj in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century – when Gujarat was nominally in allegiance with the Kannauj kings.

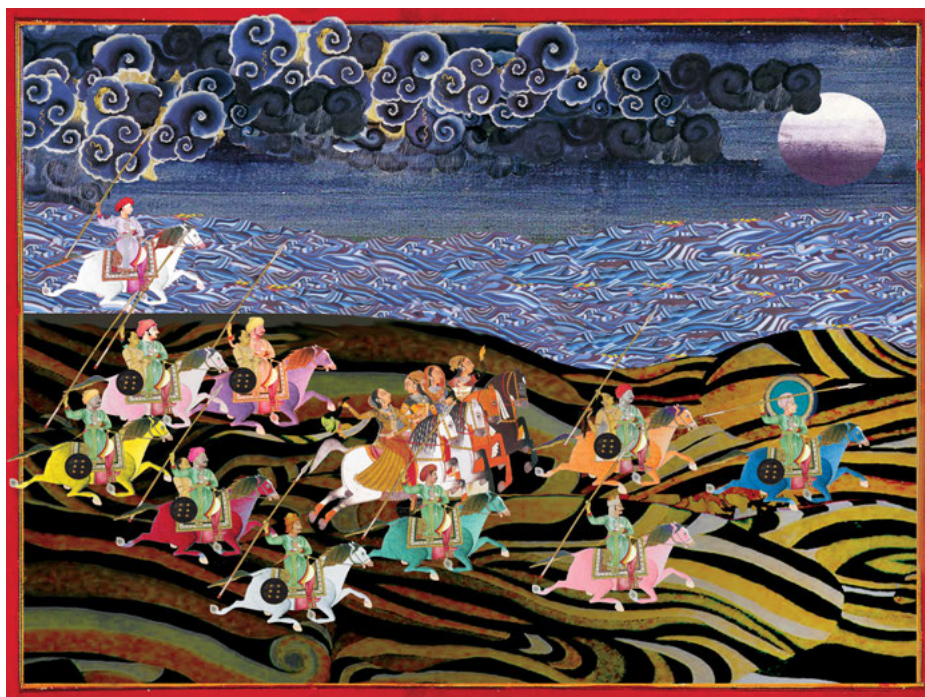
**16** Also known as Ujjain. It is interesting to note that Jayasinhdev's grandfather, Bhimdev I, had obviously enjoyed a closer relationship with the Paramaras at one time since, between 1026 and 1042, he worked with the then King Bhoj of Malwar to rebuild the Temple of Somnath following its destruction by the Muslim ruler, Mahmud of Ghazni in 1024.

confidant, Babro and his forces. Two of his sons, Mangu and Shekhra, were appointed cavalry commanders. Meanwhile, Harpaldev abdicated in favour of his son Sodha and retired with Queen Rajesree to Jhinjhuvada. The war against Malwa lasted for five years and looked at one stage as if it would fail, until Babro and his forces bridged the Sipra river. In January 1136, on Harpaldev's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, word reached him that all his sons were alive, though all were wounded. His wife, Queen Rajesree, died a couple of days later and Harpaldev left Jhinjhuvada for Patadi. In February Jayasinhdev made a triumphal return to Patan with the defeated Yasovarman seated beside him. They were preceded in the procession by Harpaldev's son Mangu. The following month Jayasinhdev visited Harpaldev at Patadi, the first meeting since their falling out 24 years earlier, when Jayasinhdev, praising the Makhavans for always being at his side protecting him, asked that Mangu be considered his son. This was agreed to and during the victory celebrations Mangu<sup>17</sup> married the daughter of the Junagadh king.

Just two weeks later, on 18 April 1136, Harpaldev died. He had seen much action in his long life, though mainly on behalf of others. At the age of 16 he helped his father defeat the Muslim Sultan Hamir Sumra in one fight, though had been sent away by his father before his own death at the hands of the Sumras at Kirtigadh. He then served his uncle, Karandev of Gujarat, and at the age of 17, while serving as his bodyguard, saved his life during a fight against Rajputs in south Gujarat. The same was to happen three years later while fighting against Bhil tribals who had attacked Karandev while out hunting. He took no part in the fighting against the Bhils in 1093 since he had been left behind as Dharadhaskh to protect the palace and the queen, but that occasion brought him into conflict with Babro of Sindh whom, having been defeated by Harpaldev became his loyal servant. His reward for the defeat of Babro was the gift of villages that went to make up his kingdom. His major campaign victory, in 1108, was not directly connected to the defence of his new kingdom, but exacted revenge on the Sumras of Sindh for their defeat of his father a quarter of a century earlier. Four years later he declined, on conscientious grounds, to support his cousin Jayasinhdev in his fight against Junagadh. Nor did he take any personal role in Jayasinhdev's conquest of Malwa on the grounds that he had just abdicated, though he did enable his sons to participate and all were wounded in protecting the king. Harpaldev was clearly a man of skill, of courage and of conscience and he set the tone for future rulers of Jhalavad.

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<sup>17</sup> Mangu was later to die at Patan defending Jayasinhdev from an assassination attempt (Merutunga (1982).



**Figure 4.1:** Raj Kesardevji rescues Rajput women captured by Hamir Sumra, 1073.

Within the exhibition of paintings<sup>18</sup> there are two that cover this period. One painting depicts Harpaldev's father, Kesardev, leading his troops against Hamir Sumra, Sultan of Sindh, in which he defeated the Sumra army and rescued women who had been captured by them. A second painting depicts the magical night ride with the demon Babro and the Goddess Shakti-Ma as Harpaldev establishes the Makhavana kingdom by festooning 2300 villages from a celestial winged chariot, though the painting actually shows him riding a horse.

This first period was a time of trial and revival of fortune. Following the destruction of their ancestral kingdom in Kiritgadh, Sindh by the emergent power of the Muslim Hamir Sumras, we decipher some key patterns and principles of clan identity and formation under Harpaldev. He founded the new kingdom of Jhalavad within the existing kingdom of Gujarat. Jhalavad was a unique independent palantine state established through royal grant by the Solanki kings, Karandev and Jayasinhdev. The governing 'law of the fish' is contained by the tenacity and obligations of marital ties and alliance pacts between the ruling dynasts, Solanki of Gujarat, Sodha Parmars of

<sup>18</sup> See Kevin McGrath's essay 'Landscape Poetry & the Hero' (in this volume) for a more detailed analysis of these paintings.





**Figure 4.2:** Night of November 6, 1093, SaktiMa, her Shiva incarnate husband Jhallesvar Raj Harpaldev, and demon servant Babrusur, ride to form the future kingdom of Jhalavad.



**Figure 4.3:** Jhallesvar Raj Harpaldev and RajRajesvar Jayasinhdev hunt the tiger at Bhilwada.

Thar Parker, Chudasamas of Sorath and the Jhall-Makhwans of Sindh that constrained to a degree the overlord from arbitrary actions of excess of power. The king, fellow subordinate rulers and his nobles are thus tied by the concept of *swami seva* or loyal service. For instance, Harpaldev is loyal to his uncle Karandev and younger cousin JayasinhDev. He also pledged his sons, forces and allies, even Babra the enemy he subdued and who in turn swore loyalty to him, to serve the Solanki dynasty. This was a time when kingdoms faced resistance from many sides: foreign Mlecha or Muslim forces, traditional foes from rival states such as Malva, and internal rebellious groups, including the Bhils and the Babras. The only time HarpalDev withheld his service and that of his sons and armies is when Jayasinhdev attacked the kingdom of their common grandmother's home, the kingdom of the Chudasamas of Sorath.

In victory, he was an exemplary Kshatriya king, the *danvir*, generous to his captives, such as Unnd, the Amir of Barakhor Sindh, whom he freed on condition that the Amir pay the agreed upon ransom. He distributed the spoils of war with due diligence, gifting proportionally appropriate treasure to the paramount ruler, King Jayasinhdev, the other Makhwan chiefs, his younger brothers, his sons as well as loyal and meritorious soldiers. He and his second wife Rajasree also provided sanctuary for the victims of these conflicts, including adopting many orphans of war. He was the responsible *Kuladhipati*, lord of the clan, in that he brought his displaced peoples from Sindh and settled them in the new kingdom he created through the protection of his fighting arm for the Solanki Dynasty and by his principled participation in matters of martial engagement, when he did not join the Solankis in an illegal war with the kingdom of Sorath to whom he and the Solanki Jaysinhdev were related.

Throughout his life, the paramount power supported him despite the differences which existed between these two cousins. Throughout Jayasinhdev's reign, Harpaldev was not prevented by Solanki forces from further consolidating his territory, or resettling refugees from Sindh to form his *Sidh Sena* ('Army of the Right'), which served both Jhalavad and the Solanki kingdom. During the entire period of Solanki dominance, no Solanki force is recorded to have ever attacked Jhalavad. The relationship between these two states was inviolable.

Harpaldev's greatest achievement was the making of a new kingdom within an existing larger kingdom of the Solanki which was to endure from 1093 to 1149. The kingdom was populated by local residents, as well as the incoming migrant Jhall-Makhwan clan, and the subdued Babariyas of Sindh. It was only after eleven years of Harpaldev's service to his maternal uncle Karandev that the kingdom was established in 1093. In the next twelve years, from 1093 to 1105, the divine and highborn Solanki wife SaktiMa and Harpaldev together laid the foundation of their kingdom. This foundation itself was built on marital relations between the Solanki kings and Harpaldev as well as his relationship with the Rajput Sodha kingdom of Thar Parker and the Chudasama kingdom of Sorath. These kin relations provided access, shelter in the time of trial and the opportunity to rebound and reclaim lost status.

From 1093 to 1325 the relationship of the rulers of Jhalavad and the paramount Rajput dynasties of the Solanki and Vaghela of Gujarat remained firm. There is no record of any Solanki or Vaghela army invading Jhalavad. The Jhala kings continued in military and administrative service as *mahamandalesvara* [governors] and *senanani* [military generals]. They served in wars against invading Muslim forces of Ghori and Khilji, incursions from Sindh, rival Rajput kingdoms of the Chauhans of Sambhar and Delhi and Paramaras of Malwa as well as against the indigenous tribes of the Bhils.

With the diminishment of Rajput power and the establishment of the Muslim Sultanates of Delhi and Gujarat, from 1325 to 1573, the Jhala kings entered a period of continuous war with Muslim powers, with some periods in which alliances fostered relative calm. They did not engage in collaborative enterprises nor established immediate kin ties. Whereas proximity marked the period prior, distance would characterize the relationship between paramount power and the Jhala kingdom in the following period.

## 4.2 Era of New Alliances

A jump of over 400 years introduces the second sample regnal period, that of Rayasinh I (Raisinh/Raysinh) (1563-1587) and his son, Chandrasinh I (1587-1628) where the Jhallesvaras enter into a period of new alliances with Muslim power their principal enemy from the early 1300 hundreds and 1580s. But before detailing the events it is worth digressing slightly to discuss sources for this period and dates in general.

There are three contemporary sources reporting on the times of Rayasinh's life and several later works. The contemporary sources are: Shaikh Abul Fazl, Emperor Akbar's diarist, who wrote his "*Akbarnama*",<sup>19</sup> Ahmad Nizam-ud-din,<sup>20</sup> Bakhshi<sup>21</sup> of Gujarat from 1584 to 1590, who wrote "*Tabakat-i-Akbari*",<sup>22</sup> Abdu-l-Qadir Ibn-i-Muluk Shah, also known as Badauni, appointed by Akbar to religious office in the royal courts in 1574 to translate the Ramayana and Mahabharata, but who also wrote the "*Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (Selection of Chronicles)".<sup>23</sup> Muhammad Arif Qandharis' "*Tarikh-i-Akbari*"<sup>24</sup> is particularly useful for the earlier period of Akbar but Abu Fazl does not use it and it does not seem to mention Rayasinh. Count Frederick Noer's "*Der Kaiser Akbar. The Emperor Akbar*" translated by H. Beveridge ignored Badauni but noted in his preface<sup>25</sup>:

19 Abul Fazl, A. (1873-1876, translated 1921) AN hereafter.

20 Also referred to as Nizami.

21 Paymaster - appointed by the fourth Viceroy, Itimad Khan Gujarati.

22 in Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, J. (1867-77), Vol. 5, Chapter XL.

23 Also referred to as *Tarikh-i-Badauni* (*Badauni's History*), translated 1889.

24 Translated by Tasneem Ahmad (1993).

25 Noer, Count F. (1890), p. xlv.

“On this [Nizami’s] chronicle my work is based because its records of fact are the most accurate and faithful; its style is simple and free from elaboration; ... It contains a wealth of material but, it must be confessed, in a state of uncritical disarray.” And his ‘To the Reader’ (p lv): “The knowledge of sources has deepened with the progress of the work, and the result has been that in this part the masterly accounts of Abul Fazl have assumed the first place in the place of those of Nizamuddin Ahmed. One reason, for this change, is the want of a trustworthy chronology in the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*.”

Others criticise Abul Fazl for his fawning attitude towards Akbar, failing to mention or raise any issue which casts an aspersion on Akbar. Badauni, whose rivalry with Abu Fazl is renowned, is considered to have had an analytical independent mind who did not gloss over uncomfortable questions on Akbar’s ability as an administrator.<sup>26</sup>

J.W. Watson’s “History of Gujarat” (1876) draws largely on two earlier Persian works; the *Mirat-i-Sikandri* by Sikandar ibn Muhammad Manjhu, which covers the period up to Akbar’s conquest (A.D. 1573), and the *Mirat-i-A’hmadi* by Ali Muhammad Khan, which covers the period A.D. 1573-1760. Watson’s work, which in itself is a masterly synopsis of the two Mirats, describes them as “are the two most authentic of the Persian histories of Gujarat”.<sup>27</sup>

Emperor Akbar introduced the solar Ilahi Era with Persian names of months on March 10 1584<sup>28</sup>. The Era was back-dated to commence on Akbar’s accession to the throne, on 10/11 March 1556; its years begin on 10/11 March and coincide with his regnal years – referred to in the following pages as ‘Akbari’ (AA = Anno Akbari). Both Abul Fazl and Nizami’s chronicles record their events per Akbari years, “..... but ‘The Tabakat and Badauni go astray at the 22nd year’”<sup>29</sup>

There is, therefore, much cause for confusion in citing dates and the research by the late Maharaja Jhallesvara Sriraj Meghrajji III and his son Dr Jayasinhji Jhala, on which this paper has been based, has attempted to clarify this.

To return to the narrative of Rayasinh and his son Chandrasinh, much had happened in the intervening 400 years since Harpaldev’s reign, including seven rulers being killed, either in battle or by intrigue. Perhaps one of the most significant events was the relocation of the State capital by Rayasinh’s great grandfather Rajodharji, from Kuwa-Kankavati to Halvad. Rajodharj’s son Ranoji had succeeded to the gaddi in 1500 but was killed in 1523 by Shahjiv, son of Malik Bakhan of Dasada whom Ranoji had killed. Ranoji had been succeeded by Mansinh, also known as Man Ghelo, whose

<sup>26</sup> “Compare the writings of Abu Fazl and Badauni on Akbar’s reign”, [www.preservearticles.com](http://www.preservearticles.com). Accessed 15 February 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Watson, John W. (1876), Preface.

<sup>28</sup> AN 2.p17 and AN 3.p644. Majumdar, R.C. (1984, 138-139) gives the date as 1582 and makes the point that it is difficult to define the Divine Faith. “.....neither inspired by Revelation nor based on any well-defined philosophy or theology.....[it is] no wonder that the *Din-i-Ilahi* could obtain hardly twenty-five converts of note and died with its author”.

<sup>29</sup> Elliot and Dowson (2014, 246).

first act was to avenge the death of his father by attacking Dasada and killing Shahjiv. This resulted in the Sultan sending a punitive force against him and he was forced to flee to Cutch. With his State annexed by the Sultan, Mansinh lived as an outlaw and, supported by his brothers Adoji and Varsoji and with his band of horsemen, spent several years attacking the Sultan's officers and officials throughout Jhalawar. Their mother was a princess from Bikaner whose sister was married to Bahadur Shah and he offered the two brothers the State of Jhalawar in return for expelling Man Ghelo and giving their subordination to the Sultanate, an offer they spurned. Eventually Mansinh did submit to the Sultan at Diu, was pardoned and reinstated with honour.



**Figure 4.4:** Jhallesvar Raj Ranoji slays Shahjiv, the son of Malik Bakhan of Dasada, 1523.

Just prior to his death there occurred a serious argument with his son, Rayasinh who, according to the Kondh record and Dadubha Saheb of Kondh,<sup>30</sup> was ‘hot-headed’ (*“uccard vriaj-na/ svabhav-na hata”*). The Raja had appointed Charab Dhanaji Raba to mediate between himself and his two brothers, Varsoji and Adoji of Kondh, to decide the number and names of villages to be assigned as additional appanage,

<sup>30</sup> Dadubha Saheb Bahadur Devisinh Saratsinh Jhala of Kondh. Police Commissioner of Dhrangadhra State.



to his younger brothers. (Adoji later died without issue while Varsoji was Dadubha Saheb's ancestor.) Rayasinh maintained that there had never been, and never could be, mediation between a sovereign and what he regarded as blackmailers but he was overruled. As heir-apparent he was required, by established custom, to confirm and ratify the award. He was outraged by the generosity of the award to Kondh and insisted that it be disregarded by his father. But Mansinh told Rayasinh that he did not know what his brothers had suffered and lost on Mansinh's account when he did not have the state or power in his hands. Rayasinh argued that everyone knew and praised them for what they had done, but it was their *dharma*, and what they were now demanding amounted to *adharma*, thus negating any good there may have been in their original service. Although Man Ghelo was bitter about the generosity of the awards he had no option but to grant it. The resulting serious argument between Mansinh and Rayasinh led to the Raj expelling his son from the State and he made the awards to Kondh and granted six villages to the arbitrator, Charab Dhanaji Raba.

The loss of his son seems to have had a direct bearing on Mansinh's death four or five months later. The date of his death, and therefore of Rayasinh's succession, is subject to dispute. The DharVahi says VS 1620 (A.D. 1564) and this is repeated in various sources including SivaKatha and Watson. However, the date is clearly inscribed in the Halvad Kirti-Deri No 3 as VS 1620 Kartik Sud 15 (A.D. 31 October 1563) and that is the date accepted for this paper. According to Abu Fazl he spent the first three years of his rule in Halvad, attacking the neighbouring zamindars such as the Jam of Nawanagar and Khengar (Rao of Kutch) but probably his most significant battle during this time was against his maternal uncle and his father's enemy, Thakur Jassaji of Dhrol, on 3 December 1565 during which Thakur Jassaji was killed. Rayasinh's name was celebrated in song and story in the towns of Gujarat for the courage he displayed and he earned great renown.<sup>31</sup>

On 2 March 1566, Rayasinh was involved in the costly battle of Malia against Jadejas of Kacch. Badly wounded in the fighting, he was carried away from the field by his faithful golden mare 'Sihan' (Lioness), pursued by two Kacchi horsemen. Their horses were not swift enough, however, and they lost him in the falling dusk. The loyal mare went on through the jungle for many miles until her master fell off and lay unconscious in a ditch. The following morning Mukund Bharati<sup>32</sup> and his fellow pilgrim sadhus were passing by, returning from a pilgrimage to Dvarka and Hinglaj

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<sup>31</sup> Sources do not give details of the composition of his army at this time. Some fifty years before this date the Portuguese traveller Barbosa (1511-1514) described the Gujarat cavalry as comprising "Moors and Gentiles armed with thick round shields edged with silk, [with] two swords each, a dagger and a Turkish bow with very good arrows...some carry maces, and many of them coats of mail, and others tunics quilted with cotton" (Watson, 1876, 40, f/n 1). Might the composition of the force become more local by 1563? Difficult to say.

<sup>32</sup> The Bharatis are one of the ten Orders of religious mendicants founded by Adi Sankaracarya's most famous disciple Suresvara (800-840). They add 'Bharati' after their adopted name.

Mata on the Baluchistan coast, a 100-mile sea journey west from Karachi when, alerted by the noise and movement of the horse, they found Rayasinh. They tended him back to health and he then joined them on their round trip of Bharatavarsa, an absence that was to last for nineteen years. Had it not been for his horse and the Sadhus, Rayasinh would have surely perished.

Word was brought to his capital that Rayasinh had been badly wounded and his horse had carried him away towards the Rann. They had disappeared in the dark and an assumption was made that they must surely have perished in the cold night in the vast Rann. Rayasinh had made Bhati Govind Das, a close confidante of his mother Jamjadi Gangama Dhrolvala, his Pradhan or Vizier. Neither Rayasinh's mother nor his Pradhan would accept that their king had died. There was ill feeling between the Pradhan and Varsoji of Kondh, Rayasinh's uncle. Matters were already strained, therefore, when Varsoji and the Purohit Narottamdas Raval came before Rayasinh's mother and said it was unseemly for the queens not to put on the garments of widowhood and for the young Chandrasinh not to mount the throne. Still the Pradhan, Govind Das would not agree. Ultimately when Gangama and Jamjadi Lalajirajba, Rayasinh's chief queen agreed, the Pradhan had to agree and call a court gathering, just as the Pradhan of Mansinh had called when that king died and Rayasinh was away having been banished.

Varsoji took the premier place at the meeting and questions were raised as to whether Rayasinh would have left his queens and his people in such a state had he been alive, the obvious inference being that he must have died. Varsoji made the point that with a king on the throne the state was safe and sound, the people were happy and go about their business without fear; without a king everything would go into disarray and vassals and neighbours would take advantage. Others said that in according with tradition, whether the king was dead or merely absent, Chandrasinh had already succeeded and it only remained to anoint him and proclaim him – it was what his father would have said and wished. Yet others pointed out that Chandrasinh was only a child and it would do no harm to wait, suggesting that he should become regent. This argument was countered by Varsoji who asked how a minor could be regent when he himself would need a regent. The Purohit said that Rayasinh should be mourned as lost and the queens should break their bangles.<sup>33</sup> Rani Lalajirajba, Chandrasinh's mother, would not agree but eventually the voice of the people carried and the Purohit and the Nagar Seth both went before Gangama, Lalajirajba and the Pradhan and said, "Let the earth wait but let the throne be filled before the sun begins its southward journey". Thus it was that Chandrasinh was anointed and proclaimed king, though one of Rayasinh's queens, Mirade or Lilijirajba, refused to believe that her lord was dead: she did not wear black and did not destroy her bangles. Later, when Chandrasinh had grown up, Bhati Govind handed over the Pradhanpad to another, though he continued to serve the gadi all his life.

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33 An act performed by Hindu women on becoming widows.

Meanwhile, Rayasinh was still travelling with his fellow Bharatis but at some point, probably January 1584, the company arrived within the precincts of the Imperial court at Fatehpur Sikri where Rayasinh sprang to prominence by defeating the wrestling champion, Eko Mal with a punch of his fist.<sup>34</sup> There are two considerations in arriving at this statement. First, from his early youth Emperor Akbar was known to have been fond of the company of faqirs and yogis<sup>35</sup> and in 1578 began preaching the universality of God and religion. In April 1582 he promulgated the Din-i-Ilahi, his eclectic religion which attracted religious people of all persuasions, something he had set out to do. Badauni<sup>36</sup> noted that in A.H. 991 [1583]:

*In the same year His Majesty built outside the town two places for feeding poor Hindús and Musalmáns, one of them being called Khaipúrah, and the other Dharmpúrah. Some of Abu-l-Fazl's people were put in charge of them. They spent His Majesty's money in feeding the poor. As an immense number of Jogís also flocked to this establishment, a third place was built, which got the name of Jogípúrah.*

*His Majesty also called some of the Jogís, and gave them at night private interviews, enquiring into abstract truths; their articles of faith; their occupation; the influence of pensiveness: their several practices and usages; the power of being absent from the body; or into alchemy, physiognomy, and the power of omnipresence of the soul.*

*..... On a fixed night, which came once a year, a great meeting was held of Jogís from all parts. This night they called Sivrát. The Emperor eat and drank with the principal Jogís, who promised him that he should live three or four times as long as ordinary men. His Majesty fully believed it, and connecting their promises with other inferences he had drawn, it became impressed on his mind as indelibly as though it were engraved on a rock.*

This account corroborates very well the received account that the venerable Mukund Bharati made a tilak of vibhuti (ash) on the Badshah's forehead and gave him 'baudh'.

The second consideration concerns the presence of wrestlers in the vicinity of the Emperor, but again Abu Fazl provides the clue:

*Whenever His Majesty holds court they beat a large drum, the sounds of which are accompanied by Divine Praise. In this manner, people of all classes receive notice. His Majesty's sons and grandchildren, the grandees of the Court, and all other men who have admittance, attend to make the kornish, and remain standing in their proper places. ... His Majesty with his usual insight, gives orders, and settles everything in a satisfactory manner. During the whole time, skilful gladiators and wrestlers from all countries hold themselves in readiness, and singers, male and female, are in waiting. Clever jugglers and funny tumblers also are anxious to exhibit their dexterity and agility.<sup>37</sup>*

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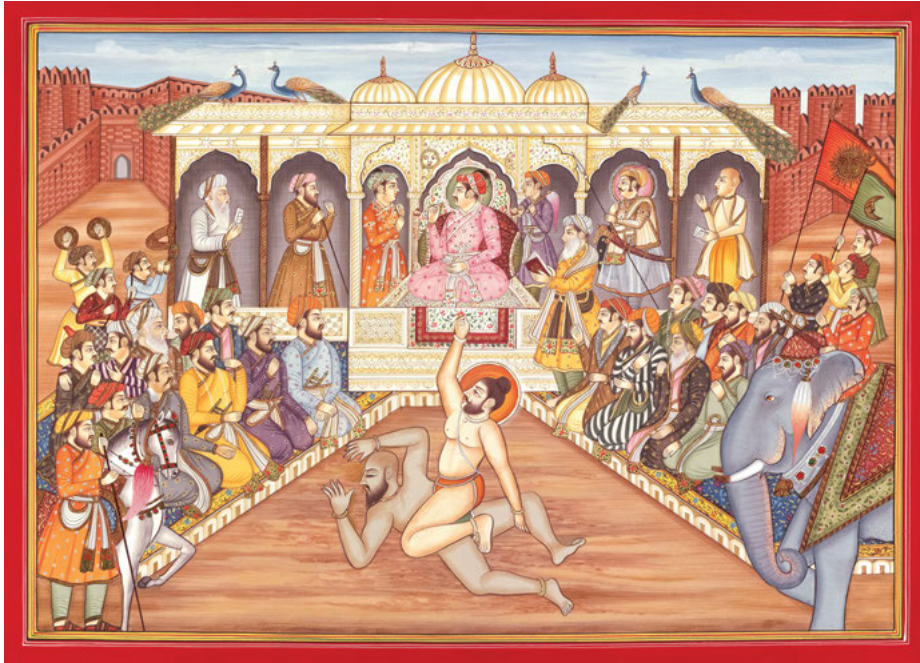
<sup>34</sup> If the much vaunted and trumpeted incident is factual and not a bardic fancy, it is curious that the punctilious Abul Fazl does not allude to it but then, despite being renowned as a conscientious recorder of every birth, death, and marriage in the imperial family, he does not mention the marriage of Prince Salim, the future emperor Jahangir, to Jodhbai, who bore him the future emperor Shahjahan!

<sup>35</sup> Majumdar, R.C. (1984), op.cit, p.133.

<sup>36</sup> Badauni, Abd al Qadir, (1867-77), vol 5. p538, though Majumdar (ibid.) p.134 gives the date as 1575.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p.166.





**Figure 4.5:** On August 7 1585 in Fatehpur-Sikri Jhallesvar Raj Rayasinhji I defeats Emperor Akbar's wrestler Eckomal Hebat Khan. Emperor Akbar, Raja Udaisinh of Jodhpur, Sufi Rahimji and Mukand Bharatiji look on.

As to the date of the incident with the wrestler Eko Mal Hebat Khan, short of an actual notice of the event in a chronicle<sup>38</sup> the indications of timing could not be better. The “Sivaratri” of the traditional account and the annual “Sivrat” of Badauni’s account cannot be other than the yearly Maha Sivaratri. The two ‘purās’, and then the third, were built in AH 991 which began on 15 January 1583. Based on Abu Fazl’s testimony, Rayasinh probably returned to Halvad in the last two months of Akbar’s 30<sup>th</sup> year, i.e. 10/11 January to 9/10 March 1585. Two Maha Sivaratris fall in the material period: either 11 February 1583 (AH 991 Muharram (1st month)), which is too early, OR, and the most likely:- Maha Sivaratri on 31 January 1584 (AA 29; AH 992 Muharram 28). This significant event, even if it existed only in folklore, is an important occasion in the life of Rayasinh and is represented in painting in the collection. Emperor Akbar, Crown Prince Salim, Markand Bharati, Sufi Rahimji and Mota Raja Udaisinhji of Jodhpur watched the contest, as a result of which Rayasinh became a court intimate

<sup>38</sup> If indeed it actually took place. See f/n 32 – Abu Fazl makes no mention of it and Badauni makes no specific reference to it. It may, therefore, be Bardic fancy but clearly something occurred that brought Rayasinh to the notice of Akbar and led to his staying at Fatehpur Sikri for about 8 months.

and stayed on at Fatehpur Sikri for about 8 months before bidding farewell to his Jogi friends and returning to his home in Halvad between January and March 1585.<sup>39</sup> His stay in Akbar's court was to have a long-standing influence on his subsequent reign as well as those of his successors. He became an adherent of Akbar's personal faith, *Din-e-ilahi*, and shared some of his views on alternate religious thinking as well. At the Emperor's suggestion, Rayasinh married his son and heir, Chandrasinh, to Satyabhamaji, the daughter of the Jodhpur ruler Mota Raja Udaisinh, to whom Akbar had granted Jodhpur in 1583. Meanwhile Akbar's own son, Crown Prince Salim (later Emperor Jahangir) was married to Satyabhamaji's sister, Mani Bai. This relationship by marriage would remain significant for the Jhallesvaras, both during times of peace and war, in the subsequent reigns of Emperors Jahangir, Shahjehan and Aurangzeb since it ensured they remained free from harassment from the emperor's armies for 80 years.

Although some sources refer to Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan,<sup>40</sup> Khan-Khanan, viceroy of Gujarat, as being present at Fatehpur Sikri at the same time as Rayasinh, this is contradicted by other sources which clearly show him defeating Muzafar at this time. His presence at Fatehpur Sikri is therefore discounted but it would seem possible that, on his eventual return to Halvad in the first quarter to 1585, Rayasinh sought the assistance of Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan to regain his throne from his son, though even this is only speculation since there is conflicting evidence in the sources. According to the Kondh story<sup>41</sup> on his first return to Halvad Rayasinh pointed to his *bhagva* raiments and proclaimed that he was "*bairagi*"<sup>42</sup> and had no desire or intention to rule. The fact is that he did become king once again, though as a simultaneous sovereign with his son,<sup>43</sup> he did wear saffron clothes even after assuming the *gaddi* again and he was called Bava.<sup>44</sup> Whether Rayasinh did or did not seek the assistance of Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan in regaining his throne, it is worth saying something more about this most influential figure.

Some twenty years before Rayasinh came to the notice of the Emperor, Akbar had been fighting his opponents in the Gujarat/Kathiawar/Rajasthan region. In 1562, the year in which he had captured Jodhpur, he had repealed the Islamic law of forcibly converting prisoners of war and their families to Islam, but in 1568 he conquered Chittor and massacred many of the prisoners before carrying off the bronze gates

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<sup>39</sup> See analysis of Abul Fazl's dating below in regard to a subsequent appearance before Akbar.

<sup>40</sup> Referred to by Watson (1876) as Mirza Khan, son of Beiram Khan. First appointed Viceroy 1575-77 and then for a second time 1583-90.

<sup>41</sup> See f/n 28 above.

<sup>42</sup> Possibly meaning *vairagi* – free from passion, an ascetic, one free from worldly desires.

<sup>43</sup> An untenable situation for Chandrasinh who left that night for Wadwan and, according to some sources, went on to Wankaner, then a Babaria country under Jhala protection.

<sup>44</sup> *Sadhu* or renounces, it also means *cobweb* and, of course, *father* and it is in that context that Bava became the accepted form of addressing the Jhallesvaras, and this still applies in local circles.

from Padmini's Palace to adorn his new Red Fort at Agra. In 1573 he conquered the Muslim rulers of Gujarat and Sultan Muzafar was placed in custody, though eight years later he escaped and fled to Saurashtra where he remained in hiding until 1583 when he raised a rebellion. Akbar appointed Mirza Aziz Kokaltash as his first Viceroy, though he retired after just two years and the young Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan was appointed Viceroy, with the more experienced Wazir Khan as his diwan. Wazir Khan's administration was not particularly successful and in 1577 the Viceroyalty was transferred to Shahab-ud-din Ahmad Khan, the Governor of Malwa. With Muzafar Shah's re-emergence in 1583 Shahab-ud-din was recalled and his place as Viceroy taken by Itimad Khan. He in turn appointed his officers, including his Paymaster, Ahmad Nizam-ud-din, author of "Tabakat-i-Akbari". Itimad Kahn proved to be ineffectual in his post and within months Muzafar attacked and held Ahmedabad on 3 September 1583, proclaiming himself Sultan. Later that month Akbar appointed Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan to his second term as Viceroy, sending him some strenuous men as officers "in order that they might go by a straight road to Gujarat, and address themselves to the punishment of the evildoers".<sup>45</sup> He was delayed at Fatehpur Sikri while he collected his officers and in the meantime Muzafar had taken Baroda on 23 November, Broach on 29 November, had plundered Khambhat<sup>46</sup> and had increased the size of his force to almost 30,000 men. Finally, at the end of December Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan was on the move, though his army halted at Patan. Despite the various changes of Viceroy it is worth recording that Ahmad Nizam-ud-din was retained as Bakhshi until 1590 and so was ideally placed to record his history of events.

On 16 January 1584 Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan defeated the forces of Muzafar near Sarkhej, though Muzafar escaped and was pursued towards Khambhat and then on to Baroda, Petlad, Rajpipla and Nadia. News of Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan's victory did not reach Akbar until early February, shortly before his arrival at Fatehpur Sikri. Muzafar renewed his war effort and it was at Nandod, in the Rajpipla Hills, that Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan's forces engaged and defeated the enemy on 10 March. In recognition of his victory Akbar bestowed on him "a horse, a dress of honour, a jewelled girdle and dagger, a *tumantoq/tuman tugh* <sup>47</sup> and the rank of a commander of 5,000 which was the highest dignity of Amirs"<sup>48</sup> and made him Khan-i-Khanan. After this second defeat Muzafar fled to Champaner, Birpur/Virpur<sup>49</sup>, Jhalawar and then on towards Surath before seeking shelter with Amin Khan Ghorī, ruler of Sorath at Junagadh who then allocated Gondal to him. Both Amin Khan Ghorī and Jam Satarsal

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<sup>45</sup> AN, 3, p.613

<sup>46</sup> Khambhat/Cambay.

<sup>47</sup> A standard of the highest dignity (Bloch. P.50) as quoted by Badauni (year 992); Elliot and Dowson, 5, p.437.

<sup>48</sup> Equivalent to Panch Hazari – commander of 5,000 troops.

<sup>49</sup> 50 miles north-east of Ahmadabad (Elliot and Dowson, 5, p.437, f/n 3).

of Nawanagar<sup>50</sup> accepted 1 lakh Mahmudis<sup>51</sup> from him and agreed to support him in his attack on Ahmedabad where Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan had based himself. Muzafar advanced from Nawanagar to Morbi<sup>52</sup> but Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan learnt of the move and advanced to meet him. By the time Muzafar had reached Viramgam<sup>53</sup> he realised that his two allies had failed him; and he retreated towards the Barda hills. Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan marched into Surath where Amin Khan Ghorī and Jam Satarsal made submission and offered to help against Muzafar. The Jam's men were supposed to guide Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan's men but instead ravaged and looted the area of the Barda hills while Muzafar fled towards Othaniya in Gujerat. There he raised a large force before clashing with the Mughal division at Paranti, though again he was soundly defeated and only managed to escape barefoot and half dead.

While Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan was engaged in the Barda hills the Jam's duplicity was discovered and his vakils dismissed before Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan marched on Nawanagar to punish him. The Jam collected a large body of horse<sup>54</sup> and "innumerable" infantry but when Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan came within seven kos<sup>55</sup> he sent his son with a number of gifts of appeasement<sup>56</sup> which were accepted. Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan then returned to Ahmedabad where, five months later he was summoned to the Imperial Court.

For reasons that are far from clear it would seem that Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan chose to take Rayasinh with him to Fatehpur Sikri. The event was recorded by Abul Fazl, though not by Nizam-ud-din:

"An occurrence was the arrival at court of the Khan-Khanan<sup>57</sup>. A message had been sent to him that he should come as soon as he was satisfied with the condition of affairs in Gujarat. ... he left Ahmedabad on the 8th (Tir) and did homage on the 24th id. Rai Singh Jhala had the bliss of performing the kornish<sup>58</sup>. His adventures are somewhat remarkable. ...<sup>59</sup> ... he travelled about in the wilds with the jogi. ... In the end of the previous year, he, after nineteen years took leave

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**50** Confusingly Nizam ud din refers to Jhalawar rather than Nawanagar (Elliot and Dowson, 5, p.438).

**51** Mahmudi – a small silver coin circulated in Surat in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century which bore the name and titles of Akbar, and directly copied the style of the contemporary Kalima-type silver coins of Ahmadabad, but they were not products of the Mughal mint. The Raja of Baglana struck the mahmudis at his Mulher mint on order for the traders of Surat. The coins carried Akbar's name posthumously as long as they were produced. Bruce, Deyell, Rhodes, Spengler. (1971), p.28.

**52** Also Morvi, in the north of Kathiawar where the route crosses the Ran (Elliot and Dowson, 5, p.438, f/n 3).

**53** Nizam ud din refers to Paramgam (ibid. p.438).

**54** Nizam-ud-din - 20,000 (ibid., p.439); Badauni - 8,000 (ibid., p.439, f/n 4).

**55** Approximately 14 miles.

**56** Sources vary as to a number of elephants plus some valuable horses and/or other gifts.

**57** Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan.

**58** Obeisance.

**59** At this point Abul Fazl gives a long biographical sketch of Rayasinh.

of the jogi, and came to his own house.<sup>60</sup> He took again upon his shoulder the burden of social life. Those who had known him recognized him ... By the help of the Khan-Khanan he regained the chieftainship of his district.”<sup>61</sup>

The date of this event is considered important and has been the subject of much additional analysis. What did Abul Fazl mean by “in the end of the previous year”? Abul Fazl reckons his years by Akbari/Ilahi years. The then current year AA 30, began on 10/11 March 1585 so the previous year, AA 29, ended on 9/10 March 1585. “In the end of” probably refers to the last quarter of the year, thus the earlier assessment that Rayasinh returned home to Halvad between January and March 1585.<sup>62</sup> “Nineteen years” is an odd number to invent and thus Abul Fazl probably obtained his information directly from Rayasinh or someone extremely close to him, hence the placing the Battle of Malia/Malva, at which Rayasinh disappeared, at 2 March 1566. Both Abu Fazl and Noer reckon the date of the appearance of Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan and Rayasinh at Fatehpur Sikri as 7 August 1585, a date accepted by this paper. They remained at Court until 24 August when they left together for Gujarat, though they parted company on the way so that the Khan-Khanan could settle some matters at Sirohi and Jalor, where he was joined by Nizami and his men. Meanwhile, Mirza Khan Koka, viceroy of Malwa, had been put in charge of operations in the Deccan, and Khan-Khanan had advanced in his aid, when Mirza Khan Koka suddenly postponed the war, because of “the rainy season”. Khan-Khanan returned to Ahmedabad and remained there “for five months” until the end of 1586.

As previously recounted, the disappearance of Rayasinh after the Battle of Malia in 1566 led to a disagreement between two of his wives, Lalajirajba and Lilijirajba, as to whether or not he was dead. With his return from his nineteen year absence relations between Lalajirajba and Lilijirajba steadily worsened. Lilirajba was at last proved right, he was still alive, but Lalajirajba had the last word. She pronounced an ‘ad’ that the Halvad house should not accept a lady from the house of Vav. Now it happened that Lalajirajba’s brother, Jam Lakhoji of Khilos, was on his sick-bed. Taking advantage of this his uncle, the reigning Jam Satoji sent camel-riders to Halvad, as if coming from Khilos, saying that Lakhoji was on his death-bed and was remembering his sister, brother-in-law and nephew. The ruse worked: Lalajirajba and Chandrasen immediately left Halvad for Khilos with a small force. Rayasinh stayed behind and soon afterwards met his end at Ghantila. And as it so happened, Lakhoji was indeed on his death-bed and soon died.

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<sup>60</sup> As previously noted (f/n 34) Abul Fazl makes no mention of the supposed appearance at Akbar’s Court in January 1584 – the ‘Fist’ incident.

<sup>61</sup> AN, 3, pp.699-700.

<sup>62</sup> See f/n 28 & 40 above.

Ahmad Nizam-ud-din's "Tabakat-i-Akbari"<sup>63</sup> provides the account of the end of Rayasinh's life on 19 February 1587 at the Battle of Ghantila:

"Intelligence arrived that the Emperor was marching towards Kabul and had arrived at Atak Banaras, intent upon effecting the conquest of Badakhshan. Khan-Khanan wrote a letter soliciting the honour of being allowed to serve under him and the Emperor sent a farman summoning him to his presence. . . . Khan Khanan and Azdu-ud-daula . . . went off to join the Emperor. Just as the Khán-khánán started, the news was brought in that the men of Khangár [Ráo of Kach], as allies of Muzaffar Gujarátí, had attacked and killed Rái Singh, the zamíndár of Jháláwár.....The people of that neighbourhood [Ghântilâ], who had long been at enmity with him, assembled in force to attack him. The intelligence of their rising was brought to him while he was in the chaugan<sup>64</sup> ground. He immediately started to meet them, and came up to them in a moonlight night. They sent a person to him to say that if he were really Rái Singh he would not attack them by night. He magnanimously assented to their wish, and rested where he was, and went to sleep. His opponents here found their opportunity, and encouraging their followers they drew near to him, and when morning broke their whole party fell upon him. He and eighty men that were with him fought on foot, and he was killed. When Muzaffar Gujarátí heard of the departure of the Khán-khánán with his troops and family, he came to Amarún<sup>65</sup>, ... and laid the foundations of an army. ... I with Saiyid Kásim and \* \* went to disperse the insurgents who had killed Rái Singh. When I reached Halwad, I sent a detachment to ravage the villages in the pargana of Mália, which belongs to Khengár; and I sent another detachment, under Mediní Rái, to Amarún, against Muzaffar. Upon their approaching that place, Muzaffar went off to Káthíwár [sic] and hid himself. The Jám sent his son to me to make excuses for his cruel treatment of Rái Singh, and Khangár also sent his agents to renew his promises of loyalty. I then returned to Ahmedábád."

This hostile action – the first of many – by the Jám, a supporter of Sultan Muzaffar III of Gujarat, – against Halvad, an ally (and a relation by marriage) of the Mughal, sealed the long lasting enmity between Halvad and Nawanagar.

What happened to Rayasinh's severed head in the hands of his victorious enemies and its dramatic retrieval by the Halvad Rajkavi, is the subject of a stirring poem. His had been a strange rule, marked by an absence of nineteen years when he wandered with a party of ascetics and during which his son had inherited the gaddi. He had then returned and, whether by design or not and whether with the assistance of Mirza Abdur-Rahim Khan or not, he had reclaimed his throne from his son. He enjoyed a brief but important relationship with Emperor Akbar as a result of which his house was joined by marriage with that of Jodhpur, as was the Emperor's, and this relationship by marriage had a positive effect on the well-being of the State for a period of about 80 years. This relationship also kept the Jadejas, his mother's clan in the Gujarat peninsula, in check, though in the end they were responsible for the murder of Rayasinh.

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<sup>63</sup> Elliot and Dowson, 5, pp.443-446.

<sup>64</sup> Polo ground.

<sup>65</sup> Or Ambarun.

With Rayasinh's death the title reverted to his son, Chandrasinh. Having witnessed two bloody battles in his youth, the first at Dhrol in which his father's maternal uncle and his father's enemy, Jassaji had been killed, the second at Malia in which his brother had died and from which his father had disappeared for 19 years, Chandrasinh had an aversion to war and bloodshed. Nevertheless, he did not shy away from his duty when needed.



**Figure 4.6:** Before 14 July 1591, near the battlefield of Bhucharmori, Jhallesvar Raj Chandrasinhji negotiates peace between the forces of the Mughals and the Sultan Muzaffar III and his Muslim, Jadeja and Kathi allies. He was brother-in-law of Mughal crown Prince Salim and his sister was married to the Jadeja Jam Sataji.

Sultan of Gujarat Muzaffar III, called Muzaffar Gujarati by the Mughals, continued to be a thorn in the side of the Mughals and in 1591 was instigated by the Jam to rise again against them, as was Daulatkhan Ghori of Junagadh. The confrontation took place at Bhûchar Morî on 18 July 1591. Chandrasinh's role has largely gone unnoticed, even by Watson, though Abu Fazl mentions it, as does the Nawanagar Rajkavi.<sup>66</sup> At the outset he had interceded with the viceroy, Mirza Aziz Kokaltash ('Kokâ') to avert the war, meeting him at Viramgam, an outpost of Jhalavad. The viceroy entertained Chandrasinh's

<sup>66</sup> *Vibhâ-Vilâs* (1897).

proposals and dispatched three imperial grandees to the enemy, encamped beyond Morvi, to negotiate peace, but the overture was spurned. The Ghorī taunted and insulted Chandrasinh (according to the Halvad version) and the mission failed.

At Bhûchar Morī three armies on each side faced each other. On one side, Muzaffar commanded the centre, supported by the Lon, a Kathis, and with Ghorī's Junagadh contingent as his right wing and the Jam's Navanagar contingent on his left. On the Mughal side, Koka commanded the centre. The Halvad version puts Chandrasinh and his sena in the centre with the viceroy, but Abul Fazl, (who gives him little importance) places him in the left wing (opposite Junagadh). It rained incessantly for two days and two nights. Then, without sounding the 'Be prepared' on trumpets and war-drums, a customary etiquette in Rajput warfare, the Junagadh advance guard suddenly thrust forward. The imperial left wing, caught unprepared, fell back. Seeing a gap open in the enemy ranks Chandrasinh led a headlong cavalry charge straight at Daulat Khan.<sup>67</sup> The Ghorī was unhorsed, fatally wounded, and carried away and the Junagadh forces dispersed. Finding their right wing disappearing, the Kathis started fleeing while the viceroy advanced. Both Muzaffar and the Jam fled and, observing that it was over and his part done, Chandrasinh reined in his horse, and the Makhavân Siddhasenâ left the field. Then all at once the Jam's heir Ajoji and his vazir Jesoji Ladak arrived and joined the fray, rallying the Jadejas. Most were killed, though heroism on that day cannot be denied.

Chandrasinh continued to rule earning a reputation as a great administrator and governor. He took an interest in the affairs of his subjects, particularly in agriculture, and constructed both the Chandrasar tank and the bund across the Maha Nadi near Than. In 1628 he was deposed by his heir Askaranji and retired to a quieter life of cultivating his flower garden and orchard before he died in 1636.

The narrative now leaps forward briefly to the mid-seventeenth century to consider a significant event during the rule of Meghraj II. At this time the Mughal rule was beginning to show a familiar tortuous and chaotic pattern of succession in the closing years of Shah Jahan's rule with father set against son, and brother against brother. In 1657 Shah Jahan was taken seriously ill and, though he survived, the rumours of his impending demise set his four sons against each other in the battle for succession. Initially the most likely to win the contest appeared to be Dara Shikoh, the eldest and Shah Jahan's favourite. Dara Shikoh had already intervened with his father to curtail Aurangzeb's military adventures in Golconda and Bijapur but Aurangzeb's advances to meet his father's army led by Dara Shikoh led to the defeat of the latter and Aurangzeb's occupation of Agra where he imprisoned his father for the last eight years of this life. Aurangzeb then set about eliminating the competition of his three brothers. Murad and Shuja were easily dealt with but Dara Shikoh moved between the Punjab, Sind and Gujarat at the head of a large army.

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67 According to the Halvad version, drawn from the Purana-sangrah.



Meghraj received information that Dara Shikoh had arrived in Bhuj. The Raj's daughter, Sajjankunvar/Sajuba, who was married to Raydhanji, heir apparent of Kutch, informed her father that the Mughal prince with his army, accompanied by her husband at the head of a Kutch contingent, would be arriving in Halvad on their way to Ahmedabad. Dara Shikoh, who claimed consanguinity with her father (both being the grandsons of sisters (so also, of course, was Aurangzeb), was in extreme need of succour. Raj Meghraj was paying the annual tribute of 32,000 Mahmudis<sup>68</sup> for all of Jhalavad but had stopped paying after Ahmedabad was taken by Aurangzeb, Dara Shikoh's younger brother. Meghraj sent word to the rulers of Siani, Wadhwan, Wankaner, and Than-Lakhtar, and the Parmar of Muli, saying that he would no longer be paying the tribute<sup>69</sup> and that they should come to Halvad immediately with their armies to support the "Bâdshâh Salâmat", the living emperor.

All the Jhalavadi sardars, save Wankaner, responded. Wadhwan came but because he was given his place below Siani he left in high dudgeon.<sup>70</sup>



**Figure 4.7:** In 1658, Mughal crown prince Dara Shikoh gifts distant cousin and ally Jhallesvar Raj Meghrajji II a jewel in Halvad garden in 1658.

<sup>68</sup> See f/n 50 above.

<sup>69</sup> There are two versions to account for this decision: (i) that Meghraj stopped paying because of his abhorrence of Aurangzeb or (ii) that it was a concession he obtained from Dara Shikoh or that the latter freely gave it.

<sup>70</sup> Meghraj's father, Amarsinh I had bestowed the 'Sardari' of Wadhwan on his cousin-brother Rana Ranoji.

Meghraj struck up a friendship with Dara Shikoh and sent a powerful Makhavan contingent, under his only son Gajsinh, to accompany and aid Dara Shikoh against Aurangzeb. Dara Shikoh entered Ahmedabad in triumph on 8 January 1659 and forged an alliance with Maharaja Jaswantsingh of Jodhpur with whom he stayed for a month. The Kutch and Makhavan contingents returned home, but Gajsinh stayed on. In the battle of Devrâi Ghât, (near Ajmer), Gajsinh fought with dauntless courage. Unhorsed and badly wounded in his left arm and leg, he was granted the title of 'Bahadur'. Nevertheless, Dara Shikoh was defeated by Aurangzeb, with the timely help of Maharaja Jaswantsingh of Jodhpur who had switched sides. Returning to Ahmedabad, Dara found the gates shut against him. He retired via Patdi, Halvad and Bhuj to Sindh, where he was ultimately caught. On 30 August 1659 Aurangzeb had him paraded through the streets of Delhi in chains and then, having dismembered him, had his body parts similarly paraded through the streets. After the debacle at Devrâi Ghât, Meghraj sent a powerful remonstrance to Raja Jaswantsingh.

In the last year of his father's reign Gajsinh had proved himself a hero. Wounded in the war, he was disabled and in pain for the rest of his life. Gajsinh had formed a personal bond with "Châchâ" Dara Shikoh and was deeply aggrieved by the hideous fate that had overtaken him and a hatred for Aurangzeb developed. In his short reign of 13 years (1661-1672) he awaited and prepared for retribution from the new Master of Hindostan but Aurangzeb and his viceroys were otherwise engaged. It was to be his son, Jaswantsinh I of Halvad who faced eviction. Maharaja Jaswantsingh of Jodhpur was appointed viceroy of Gujarat by Aurangzeb and, as some sources would have it, for no apparent rhyme or reason he descended on Halvad, like a bolt from the blue, and forced his namesake to quit. Why did he do this? Watson (1884)<sup>71</sup> followed the version in the Dhrangadhra Vahi and since then every historian, British and Gujarati, has followed Watson.

Chandrasinghji, however [had] left a daughter (Bâi Jhinjhûbâ) who had married Ajitsinghji of Jodhpur. Ajitsinghji's father Jaswantsinghji Râthor was appointed Sûbahdâr of Gújarât in about A.D. 1617, ... at his daughter-in-law's intercession he sent an army against Halvad and, after some fighting, expelled Jhâlâ Jaswantsinghji.

This ignores the fact that Ajitsinghji was born *after his father's death*. Not knowing any reason for the viceroy's inexplicable action, nor being able to think of one, the historians have mindlessly followed the nonsensical reason invented by the writer of the Vahi. The reason was quite different. It was a *farman* dated 8 February 1659, issued by Aurangzeb to the Jodhpur Maharaja, a year after the emperor's accession to the throne.<sup>72</sup> The *farman* says in brief:

<sup>71</sup> Watson, Lt Col J W. (1878, 29).

<sup>72</sup> Mughal rulers referred to Indian rulers as Jamindars.

The fact of sedition by Megh Raj, Zamindar of Halud<sup>73</sup> had repeatedly come to the notice of the Emperor. Therefore oust the Zamindar from there and settle Rai Singh Jhala, Zamindar of Wankaner, in that place and recover from him the *Two Lakhs Mahmoodis* he has offered and also *Thirty-Two Thousand Mahmoodis* annually, and credit the same in the Imperial Treasury.<sup>74</sup>

Although Aurangzeb had been quick in issuing his punitive *farman* in order to punish the Halvad ruler for siding with Shah Jahan and Dara Shikoh in the previous year, its execution was delayed. Meghraj II had been succeeded by Gajsinh I and he by Jaswantsinh I. The Jodhpur Maharaja did not act until the last year of his second viceroyalty. He had had his hands full. Moreover to take on the Halvad Jhalas was a troublesome undertaking, – and so it was to prove. The Maharaja first tried to tempt Jhala Jaswant's brother Jagat (grandson of the Maharana Rajsingh of Udaipur-Mewar) that if he crossed over he would install him in Halvad. Jagat was unflinching in his loyalty.<sup>75</sup> Thereupon the viceroy descended on Halvad in full force and expelled his namesake.

Evidently the Wankaner ruler was unable to make good his offer of payment because Halvad was given in jagir to Nazar Ali Khan Babi and its name changed to Muhammadnagar (and Navanagar's to Islamnagar). He held it for six years before he was expelled by Chandrasingh of Wankaner in 1679, who held Halvad for three years. He in turn was expelled by Jaswantsingh I, who in 1682 received a sanad from Aurangzeb confirming him in possession of Halvad, thus bringing it back under the control of the Jhallesvaras.

Whereas [it has come to the notice] of His Majesty a submission from the Viceroy of Ahmedabad in Goojerat, representing that the Mahal of Halud was entirely assigned in accordance with the sanads of the former Rulers in Jagir to the ancestors of the Zamindar Rajput Jhala, namely Jasuantsing,<sup>76</sup> and his descendants generation after generation and whereas at this time it is represented that the abovementioned Mahal was assigned in Jagir to Nazar Ali Khan by the Court of His Majesty and whereas he, Nazar Ali Khan, receives every year the sum of twenty five thousand rupees by virtue of holding the Jagir, and whereas the above named Jasuantsing, expects that the claim for the abovementioned sum be rendered void; THEREFORE the order of His Majesty has attained the honour of manifestation as follows:

*[Here follows a paragraph in which much of the text of the above Preamble is repeated – in command form.]*

*It is necessary that the present and future Viceroys and Officers and Accountants and Jagirdars, considering the abovementioned Mahal, together with the abovementioned villages and the*

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<sup>73</sup> Halvad.

<sup>74</sup> The original Farman is in the Jodhpur Collection of the Rajasthan Archives in Bikaner. Its copy was obtained by Dr Raghubir Singh of Sitamau, D.Litt., LL.B., and supplied by him (by his letter dated 7 Feb 1988) to Maharaja Sir Mayurdhwajsinhji.

<sup>75</sup> See previous references to brothers Adoji and Varsoji for an earlier and similar example of loyalty.

<sup>76</sup> Jaswantsinh.

*abovementioned salt pits, as given to and confirmed in the possession and control of the former Jagirdar with his children and dependents, generation after generation, shall not demand Nazar Ali Khan's sum.*

*And all cases with regard to civil suits and criminal matters and other things being referable to him, Jasuantsing, these said Officers, &c., shall refrain from collecting any revenue from him. They shall consider the Zamindar Rajput as the independent Jagirdar of that place, without partnership with any person. And they shall neither change nor alter the same by any manner of means. And understanding that all demands of the Emperor and civil impositions are remitted and cancelled, they shall neither obstruct nor annoy him with regard to the revenues received from the land and expenses, and in respect of all the old and new customary payments and allowances, and shall not interfere in any way. And they are to consider the abovementioned Jagirdar as possessing mükhtar-e-kul (full authority). In this matter therefore, they are not every year to require a new Sanad (warrant) or Paravanah (permit). – Any other writings, &c., in this respect shall be deemed to be without effect. – Written on the fifteenth day of Shawal, in the twenty-fourth year of His Majesty's reign.*

Nevertheless, despite the sanad it can be said that the previously close relationship between the Jhallesvaras and the Mughals had changed forever and much of this must be to do with the attitudes and behaviour of Aurangzeb. Both Jahangir and Shah Jahan had shown the same sort of tolerance for others as displayed by Akbar, receiving from them “sanctuary when in revolt and support when in power”<sup>77</sup> but Aurangzeb had no time for such niceties, whose priority was to restore the Muslim credentials of Mughal rule. He actively discriminated against Hindu and other religious groups through the re-introduction of a tax on Hindu pilgrims, previously lifted by Akbar, and either the imposition of new revenue duties on merchants and temples, including the re-imposition of the *jizya*,<sup>78</sup> or the removal of previously enjoyed endowments. Aurangzeb engaged in a number of military campaigns against both Rajputs and Marathas, many of them successful though none of them decisive. He died in 1707, to be succeeded by Shah Alam I, though he only lived for another 5 years but this time, and certainly by the time of the rule of Raysinh II<sup>79</sup> (1730-1745), the central authority of the Mughals was in steep decline while the power of the Marathas was in the ascendancy.

This account of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries reveal how the Jhala kings retained their lands from the aggressive incursions of the emergent Jadejas from Kacch who established their rule in the lands on the northern shore of the peninsula. Three battles, that of Dhrol 1565, Maliya 1566, Ghantila, 1587 mark this relationship. They fostered alliance with the new paramount Muslim power of the Mughals and from 1584 to 1673 participated in the war with the Mughals in Gujarat at Bhucharmori and against the combined forces of the Sultan of Gujarat Muzaffar III, Jadejas and

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<sup>77</sup> Keay, John. (2000, 329).

<sup>78</sup> A financial contribution paid by all male adult non-Muslims towards their supposed protection under Mughal supremacy, instead of the liability placed on Muslims for military service in a *jihad* if required.

<sup>79</sup> Also known as Rayoji.

Kathis. They later participated in the Mughal war of succession at the battle of Devrai Ghat in Rajasthan. Between 1584 and 1673, their relationship with the Imperial Mughal emperors was strong perhaps in large part due to their kinship relations with Emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjehan through their common kin ties with the Rathore kings of Jodhpur and in the common interest of containing the Jadejas.

Paradoxically, during this same period Jhalas and Jadejas lineages were actively engaging in building alliances with the Jhala dynasts through marriage. Before the early 1500s, no Jhala king took a Jadeja woman in marriage. From that time onwards, all Jhala dynasts but two, Askaran in the 1600s and Meghraj III in the 1940s, did not have a Jadeja queen. In fact there have been more Jadeja wives, Jadeja queens, and Jadeja mothers of Jhala kings of this dynasty than those of any other Rajput clan. Daughters of Jhala queens married to Jadeja kings have also actively participated in the politics of their married homes.

The deterioration of good relations between the imperial Mughals and the Jhala kings from 1673 to 1717 occurred due to a change in imperial policy under Emperor Aurangzeb, by the imposing of the intolerant Jezia tax on Hindus. This led to the fact that Jhallesvaras Meghraj II, Gajsinh I and Jaswantsinh I refused to align themselves with the new Emperor. During this period, Jaswantsinh I sought the aid of his Jadeja relatives, in a period building stability in relations between Jadejas and Jhalas. No Jadeja army has approached Jhalavad with intent to war since the fateful battle at Ghantila, where Rayasinh I was slain in 1587.

In addition, during the 1700s, Jhala royal progeny by mistresses were given to Muslim Viceroys and commanders of the Mughals, to secure political alliances.

### 4.3 Era of Reassertion and the End of Warfare

The three successive reigns of Raysinh II, Gajsinh II cum Rani Jijiba/Jijima, and Jaswantsinh II, are of singular importance in a long line of, up to then, 35 monarchs. With the overall Mughal authority in Gujarat on the wane and being overthrown by the Marathas, and with Maratha excursions into Saurashtra beginning, Halvad represents a native domain, an Indian kingdom, an indigenous polity, with a modicum of outside interference and relatively free of external influence. It is only when an organism isn't being poked at, isn't being impinged upon, and isn't under stress, that its internal organs, their functions and workings, can be best observed. It presents here a monarchy as it were, in a pristine state but one which is in turmoil and is, therefore, all the more interesting.

The importance of the stretch covered by the first two of the above three reigns, 52 years, (1730-82), lies not only in the geopolitical circumstance of the domain but also because of the access to information generally unavailable for the earlier periods. There are glimpses into some earlier reigns, but nothing so graphic, the source of information being the paramparâ (lineal tradition) of a cadet branch, its vahis and

bardic lore. Rana Kalyansinh<sup>80</sup> of Bavali, Raj Raysinh's brother, was *pradhan*<sup>81</sup> to both him and his son Raj Gajsinh. He received Bavali in apanage and is the primogenitor of that proud Jhala branch. His third son Mûlu (Mûlarâj) was the *pradhan* of Gajsinh II and his son, Jaswantsinh II and, as it were, the bridge between these two once-estranged regimes. It is to him and his *paramparâ* that the source for the fuller and truer accounts of Raj Raysinh's and Raj Gajsinh's reigns must be accredited.

It has been said that Raj Raysinh II was one of those strong rulers who mean to do good to people whether the people want it or not. This is a mistaken impression. The situation he was forced into was not of his own making. There is no doubt that his intentions were benevolent and his intended measures exemplary, but his prime concerns were the security, and with it the prosperity, of his realm and his country with the marauding Marathas poised on his borders.<sup>82</sup>

The people he was concerned with and came in conflict with were his Bhayats, the Jhala fraternity, or more broadly the *garasdars*,<sup>83</sup> the landed gentry. They owned more than two-fifths or nearly half the arable land of the state and much of it lay fallow and unproductive because of their chronic quarrels with each other and with their cultivators. The discontent among the latter had come to a head. The root of the problem probably lay with Raysinh's father, Pratapsinh (1718-1730), who enjoyed the good things of life and especially the annual gathering of his *garasdars* at Dasrah, traditional martial displays and sports and festivals. Revenue from Hariana swelled his coffers. Like his father before him, he considered that he owed the accession of Hariana and its revenue, and his father having regained his state, to the loyal wartime support of the *garasdars*. He gave them loans and grants for the asking, and spoilt them. They gambled, were extravagant, and became indebted. They were arrogant and quarrelled amongst themselves and with their peasantry who began to desert the land and became discontented. Pratapsinh had appointed his heir, Raysinh,

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**80** Also known as Kaloji.

**81** Principal minister.

**82** In the marble inscription (dated 9 May 1759) in the Maninâges'var temple in Dhrangadhra (which was completed during Raj Raysinh's son-and-successor's incarceration by the Marathas, – and the interim regency of his grandson) he is hailed as Jhâlâvâd Despati.

**83** Feudals, called *garasdars* in Saurashtra (Watson calls them vassals), were those who had received villages or lands in *garas* or apanage and their descendants. Most of the territory was *khalsa* or crown held by the king and the rest, the *garasia* land, belonged to the feudals. It was granted for their hereditary enjoyment and to enable them to come forward for the defence of the realm, with men, horses, weapons and the personal service of the able-bodied amongst them. (When these functions, their *raison d'être*, which had kept them constantly vigilant and in a state of readiness, lapsed, with *Pax Britannica*, the order deteriorated.) The *garasdars* were in most part the king's younger sons or cadets, who received 'kapalgaras' ('*garas* of the forehead') and their descendants, – and hence they were his fellow-clansmen, his BHÂYÂTS, brethren. In lesser part were those who had received *garas* in reward for past services, mostly Rajputs, and in expectation of future service. (Land grants were also made to temples, monasteries, bards, etc. for other kinds of services.)

gadhpati of Sitha<sup>84</sup> (modern day Rajsitapur), a customary appointment after the loss of Wadhwan. In an incident in Sitha Raysinh, as gadhpati, had a brush with a garasia, – in defending a khedut (a cultivator) he had assaulted a garasia. He was summoned to Halvad and, in the presence of the complainant, reproved, not for defending the khedut but for resorting to physical violence. Where Pratapsinh was sympathetic and partial to the nobles, Raysinh was sympathetic and partial to the peasantry.

In later life Pratapsinh left the administration to his two able sons Raysinh and Kalyansinh. The two brothers were a remarkable pair, a rare combination, a united team all their lives. On his succession Raysinh made Kalyansinh his *pradhan* and his other two brothers Vajerâj of Ingorâlâ and Râno of Vegadvâ, *gadhvals* of Dhrangadhra and Sitha, and Prthurâj of Susvâv, *senapati* (army commander). Kunvars Gajsinh<sup>85</sup> and Asoji stayed in Halvad for training under Kalyansinh and the brothers Seshoji and Meruji were sent to their uncle in Sitha. Later, on Kalyasinh's advice, Raysinh called Gajsinh and Asoji to take part in discussions of policy and niceties of administration and external affairs. He also called Gajsinh's quick-witted wife Jijiba, in spite of Kalyansinh's protests. Raysinh had chosen her for his son and she was treated more like a daughter of the house than a wife. A strain was to develop between her (the future *de facto* ruler of Dhrangadhra) and Kalyansinh, which increased with the years.

Raysinh and Kalyansinh were full brothers. They looked alike, would have attended the same school and, like their father and grandfather they were well-versed in Persian. Their characters were complementary: Raysinh was strong-willed and took a forward view of things; Kalyansinh was conservative and a capable administrator. The elder was a people's man; the younger was 'a state's man, a statesman'. Kalyansinh's visits to Ahmedabad and his informants there kept him apprised of the decay of the Mughal authority in Gujarat and its impending collapse. They warned the Darbar of the aggressive intents of the Marathas in the first flush of their triumph in Gujarat. The royal brothers, king and minister, turned their attention to harnessing the state's resources, mainly agricultural and salt production. Their first care was to reinforce the eastern bounds, from which direction the trouble would come, re-strengthen the walls of Sitha, and fortify Dhrangadhra with a surrounding wall and turrets. Raysinh built his residence there and resided there from time to time.

On Kalyansinh's advice the Raj recalled his brother Vajeraj from Dhrangadhra and in his place appointed his Patvikumar, Gajsinh, as gadhpati and to reside there with his

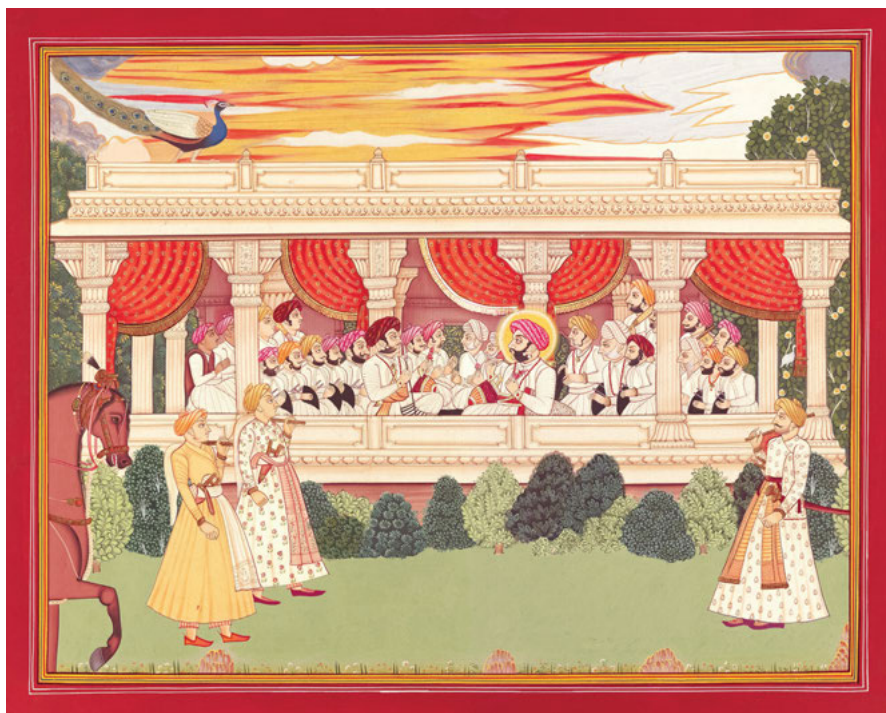
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<sup>84</sup> The original name of Sitha is Sinhashtala. "It is said that Sitha was founded during the rule of Jhâlakdevi between A.D. 1185 and 1210. The name is derived variously from the name of an Ahirâni, who became a Sati here, and from a supposed corruption of the word Sinhashtala or abode of lions. It is certainly a tradition in the village that formerly there was a forest here and many lions. There were lions doubtless, both here and at Jhinjhûvâdâ and Dhrangadhra, but the derivation seems fanciful and strained." (Watson, 50).

<sup>85</sup> Also known as Bhabhoji Bholo the simple.

wife. Because of unpleasantness between Jijiba and Seshoji, he and Meruji moved to Khambhada.

The state maintained a small standing army for garrisoning forts and manning the outposts. In time of need the garasdars were bound to render service and to furnish men, horses, and weapons. They indeed vied with each other and gloried in what they could muster, but not if they were bankrupt and paying interest to the money-lenders and their lands lay barren. Their quarrels were legion. They appealed to the Darbar for loans, which were impractical to grant, and to settle their quarrels, which if undertaken would leave one party, if not both, dissatisfied. The peasantry were in ferment. Disgruntled peasants importuned the pradhan. A sammelan<sup>86</sup> of bhumayati cultivators supported by headmen of khalsa villages waited on the Raj. They asked for loans and for being settled in khalsa villages with land to farm. On high occasions a sammelan of village headmen to make representations to the ruler were normal, but otherwise rare and usually serious. The situation had become grave, unprecedented. The Mahajan, who controlled the commerce of the state, took up the cause and pressed the Darbar for action.



**Figure 4.8:** In 1732 Jhallesvar Raj Rayasinhji II summons a meeting to discuss rights and duties of his nobles.

<sup>86</sup> Gathering.



Raysinh called a convention of his uncles and brothers. He had four uncles (father's three brothers and a cousin), three brothers and seven sons. Mansinh of Malvan was the foremost amongst them. He was Raj Pratapsinh's first younger brother, his confidante, and the chief in his forum. He had received nine villages in apanage. With their concurrence, Raysinh issued a proclamation which – to resort to modern phraseology – alerted the garasdars to the perils of the hour and exhorted them to rise to the occasion and put their houses in order. The Darbar enacted a law which said, *inter alia*, that fields allowed to lie fallow for two seasons or more would be taken over and farmed by the Darbar for three years. This was seen by many as a subterfuge and opposition to it began to take root. Raysinh sent his manager Makanji Jhala to call the elders and leaders of the opposition to Halvad and reassured them that nothing adverse was contemplated and justice would be done. They believed his words but some unfortunate incidents between hot-tempered youths and the Darbar's men (the accounts vary), caused bloodshed, inflamed tempers and led to the Darbar's intentions being called into question.

Raysinh had not thought of consulting his sons. His eldest was away as gadhpati of Dhrangadhra. His second son, Kunvar Asoji, was a deeply religious youth, quietly devoted to his father. (There is a shrine to him where he is still worshipped.) The third son Kunvar Seshoji<sup>87</sup> “was of a restless and daring disposition”.<sup>88</sup> The fourth son Meruji was simple and open-hearted, like his eldest brother and a hero-worshipper of Seshoji. Asoji and Seshoji excelled in horsemanship, not so Gajsinh or Meruji. In childhood Gajsinh and Seshoji were spoken of as a pair like Raysinh and Kalyansinh. In fact the younger brother was quick and hot-tempered where the elder was slow and mild-tempered. He may have resented his eldest brother's primacy and the power that would devolve on him. It is rumoured that it was he who had given vent to the suspicion that the Darbar's motive was to appropriate garasia land. He called the rebels to Khambhada and organized them for resistance.

Raysinh summoned Seshoji to Halvad but his followers ‘would not allow him to go there’, or so it was said, so Raysinh gave orders for his son's arrest, thus leading to further turmoil. The Mahajan in a body waited on Raysinh and pleaded with the Darbar to show restraint. They sent a deputation to Seshoji and the rebel leaders pointing out that by taking the wrong road they would bring ruin upon themselves and the country but they claimed in turn that they were the legitimate defenders of the country. Raysinh now had no alternative but to quash the uprising and assert his royal authority or forfeit it. He had the vocal backing of the people at large. A muster was called which the loyal garasdars answered but although bardic sources say that although less than a third were with the Darbar and more than half were opposed, the might of the Raj would prevail. At this point Seshoji took his brother Meruji and the

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<sup>87</sup> Seshmallji, the founder of the non-salute offshoot and state of Sayla.

<sup>88</sup> Watson.

rebel leaders to Gajsinh at Dhrangadhra where the rebels praised Raysinh as a just and benevolent ruler but castigated Kalyansinh as a usurper of royal powers.

There are contrary opinions about Gajsinh. On the one hand he is seen as kind-hearted and helpful to people in difficulty, and during his reign he certainly overlooked misdemeanours, forgave debts, ran a lax government, and left a debt; on the other hand he is seen as weak, timid and vacillating and there seems little doubt that during his time the Bhayats made encroachments on the crown lands with impunity. His wife Jijiba was made of sterner stuff, as was to become apparent. Flattered by the appeal made to his sense of justice and for once being asked to take the lead, he was persuaded by Seshoji and the rebel leaders about the threatened infringement of their rights and their fears of dispossession. There was a heated argument with the two brothers on one side and Jijiba on the other, the first recorded occasion of an open quarrel between husband and wife. Whatever might have been said between them, it provoked Gajsinh 'to take the bit between his teeth'.

The Patvikumar led a deputation of the rebels to his father in Halvad. Raysinh was stunned, refusing to meet them, and it fell to Kalyansinh to admonish the princes and upbraid Gajsinh, saying that what was being done was in the long interests of the state and ultimately in his own future interests. Gajsinh had always resented his uncle's proximity to his father and ascendancy in the chovat.<sup>89</sup> He demanded a private audience of his father for himself and his brothers, Seshoji and Meruji but this was denied. Kalyansinh did his best to make Raysinh relent, but to no avail. Chagrined and aggrieved the kunvars left Halvad and returned to Sitha, with the rebels taking an oath and making known their resolve to resist the decree.

Kalyansinh sent a message that the royal decree would be withdrawn and settlement made, but the rebels must first lay down their arms and disperse. They agreed, but on condition that the settlement be granted by the king and the deed signed and sealed before them and God. Raysinh agreed, but his spirit was broken and what might be achieved in his time would be undone by his successor. Raysinh left it to Kalyansinh to discuss terms who told Gajsinh that it would not be well or fitting for him or any scion of the house to attend.

Signing of the Bhomiyati Pattâ - as the Bards tell it

IN THE ROYAL FORECOURT (râjângana) in varied colours on daris sat, – the Rajputs (sic), with sword-hilts in their laps, facing the high (elevated) throne (râjâsan, royal seat). On the (along its) left sat the mahâjan and the witnesses (sâkshi). Below the râjâsan on cushions (gâdis) sat the four Ranas, two uncles and two brothers of the Raj. Rana Man came not. The shadows lengthening,

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<sup>89</sup> Forum, consultation - in this context a most important term, meaning a select meeting of those called and/or concerned.

Rano Kalyansinh pradhân went within where the rājparivâr waited. Kanvar Seshoji neither came nor was called. Kanvar Meroji came. Led by the pradhan and the rājkanvars, bearing their bound swords, the nagârâs (drums) beating, Rayalji, all in white, white-bearded, (and) without a sword, came, with Kanvar Âsoji by his side, and chammar-bearers and others behind. All standing made obeisance. Âsoji assisting, the Raj mounted the throne and there he sat erect. Kalyansinh came and making obeisance to the rājan, placed his sword on the ground, touched his dhani's (lord's) feet, and picking it up offered it to him to touch or to take. Then stood away to the right. In the sandhyâ kâl (twilight), the sun setting, the choghadiâ sounded, torches were brought. The Rajputs (sic) came one by one and in the same manner performed the rite. They returned to their places and stood before the presence. The rāj masâlci (torch-bearer) made acclamation. In the silence Rano Kalyansinh said, 'Let the daftari read the deed for all and the witnesses to hear'. The daftari read. Kalyansinh himself helped move the pātālâ before Raysinh and placed the deed upon it. The Raj took the kalam from the inkpot and with a firm hand signed the deed. Then the pātvikano var (Gajsinh) signed the grant in keeping with royal custom. Raysinh gave his rāj mudrikâ (royal signet) into the cupped hands of his brother (Kalyansinh). The pradhân sealed the deed and wrote upon it. And himself signed as witness. The other twelve witnesses came up and making obeisance signed, – the nagar-seth, the gadhvi, and last the daftari, who rolled up the pattâ. The Raj arose, the drums sounding, all made obeisance. Gajsinh gave his sword into his father's hands and fell at his feet weeping. His father clasped him to his bosom. With his sons Raysinh went within and retired to his chamber and evening prayer.<sup>90</sup>

Raysinh went into a decline. He was depressed that his attempts to work for the good of the kingdom and the future strength of his heir Gajsinh, were rejected by his son. Kalyansinh tried to explain that the agreement had achieved more than they had contemplated. It had assured the garasdars their permanent rights, which they had always had, - he was himself one of them, - yet it had provided for the arbitration of disputes, asserted the Darbar's prerogatives and supreme authority in matters of justice and his status as guardian of the people tied to the law and head of all castes, and it had moreover procured the interests of the raiyat in being freed from excess levy harassment and secure in their legitimate occupations and tenures. But the Raj had lost interest and, in solitude, read and wrote poetry, played chess with close family members and played with his grandchildren. He forgave his son Gajsinh, whose heart was full of remorse, and appointed him regent, though it was Kalyansinh who still

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<sup>90</sup> The practice of offering the hilt to be touched by the Ruler, on ceremonial occasions by those carrying a sword has since become a *remembrance* and court etiquette observed to this day in Dhrangadhra for those in uniform and carrying swords.

held the administration together. In course of time, Raj Raysinh II, far-sighted ruler, passed away. A wise chief, it was his last act which brought stability and set a pattern for the future.

As regent, Gajsinh was content to leave governance of the State to his uncle and pradhan, Kalyansinh. He introduced the even-handed approach that would give effect to the intent of the charter which was to last, in spite of the change of regimes. Kalyansinh was able to demonstrate to his fellow garasdars, young and old, examples of how the hauteur and high-handedness of a few, and the flight of their cultivators, was ruining them and bringing a bad name to all.

As ruler, Gajsinh had to contend with the demands of his wilful lady, Rani Jijiba, and the curbs on his indulgences and indiscretions by his pradhan, who controlled his administration. Like his father, he was constantly under the threat of a Maratha invasion, but like his grandfather he was popular with his garasdars whose martial support was needed for defence. He and Seshoji had been their champions against their father.

Kalyansinh had to bring it to Gajsinh's notice that Seshoji was acting as if he was ruler and was throwing his weight about. The brothers had words but Seshoji took offence and went to live in Mathak. The half-brothers Seshoji and Meruji had been granted Mathak and its six villages in a joint appanage, but Meruji's mother complained to Jijiba that Seshoji was harassing her son and encroaching on his rights and, he being a violent man, she feared for her son's life. Kalyansinh worked out a fair division which Raysinh was persuaded to put to his brother. Seshoji was offended by the accusations but agreed to accept whatever the Raj commanded, requesting permission to stay in Narichana, which was granted to him.

Gajsinh was by now tired of the wrangling between his wife, Jijiba, and his chief minister, and their either ignoring him or pulling and pushing him in different directions and in a fit of exasperation or self-assertion he took Seshoji into his Darbar. This was too much for Rani Jijiba who now preferred to live in Sitha with her son and her co-wife Rani Vadubâ. Gajsinh came ever more under Seshoji's influence and resided sometimes at Halvad and sometimes at Dhrangadhra, from where he would visit his family at Sitha. During one such visit to Sitha Kalyansinh was hearing a dispute between garasdars in Halvad. He did this habitually in open court in the morning. Seshoji joined him, but then exclaimed that he was making a big mistake in his approach and spoke to him rudely. In council disputes Gajsinh tended to side with his brother and began countermanding the pradhan's orders. Seshoji, playing on his brother's fears of a Maratha raid, demanded more money for defence which, after a hot argument, Kalyansinh refused. Gajsinh overruled him. Kalyansinh had had enough, took his virtual dismissal with good grace, resigned, and retired to Bavali. He called his brother Vajabhai from Dhrangadhra, gave him charge of the pradhanpad

and, from Bavali, wrote to Gajsinh urging him to make his son Jaswantsinh,<sup>91</sup> then aged 15 or 16 years, gadhpati and put him in charge of Dhrangadhra. He also urged that Gajsinh should stay in Dhrangadhra. Gajsinh did as advised.<sup>92</sup>

On his return to Halvad, Gajsinh discharged Seshoji from the council and his brother, in order to show contrition, rode to Bavali and apologised to his uncle, though it was a hollow apology. Taking advantage of the disorder at Halvad, Khavad Kathis<sup>93</sup> had seized Sayla and its neighbouring villages. The council was in a quandary as to how to respond and, Seshoji hearing of this and hoping to get back into his brother's favour, volunteered to evict the Kathis, if the Darbar gave him the means for war and permission to muster the garasdars, conditions that were agreed to. Gajsinh, attended by his kamdar Bhagvanji Jhala and bodyguards, accompanied the expedition and watched the action from afar. Seshoji kept his word and regained Sayla. Gajsinh was awed by the way his brother had rallied the garasdars and how they had responded to his command. At the celebration after their triumphant return to Halvad, the Raj made much of Seshoji and presented him with a banner with a SeshaNâg bearing the earth on its head, and made him Senapati.<sup>94</sup> The die was cast for further trouble!

Meanwhile Rani Jijiba sent word to her husband that she and their son Jaswantsinh were going to her father's hometown, Varsodâ, where her father was ailing. One school of thought had it that she planned to recruit her own bodyguards from her own clansmen. Gajsinh sent Kaka Vajoji to take charge of Dhrangadhra again and, to compound his follies, gave temporary charge of the pradhanpad to Seshoji. He and Seshoji then went to Sitha to give a send-off to Jijiba and Jaswantsinh. On the eve of the Rani's departure an unholy row took place between her and Seshoji, for which Gajsinh rebuked him and sent him back to Halvad. Jijiba sent a warning to Kalyansinh and took her departure while Gajsinh stayed on at Sitha.

At this time Gajsinh's sister Bai Phuljiba, who had married Jam Jasaji of Nawanagar, was visiting Halvad. One evening the chamberlain of the royal household informed her that Seshoji was plotting to overthrow the Raj. She despatched the chamberlain to Sitha, before the town gates were closed for the night, to ask the Raj to return with a force secretly to Halvad with all speed. News soon came that Seshoji had taken control of Halvad. Gajsinh was distraught and was persuaded to go to his uncle at Bavali. Kalyansinh was expecting him and had made arrangements to receive him. Gajsinh wept at the treachery of his trusted brother and Kalyansinh, duty-bound, agreed to be reinstated as pradhan.

<sup>91</sup> Also known as Jasaji/Jasoji and Kunwar Bapji.

<sup>92</sup> The first entry in Jaswantsinh's name in the *sât, â-pothi chopda* is dated 24 November 1757.

<sup>93</sup> Khavad Kâthis are the descendants of Khavadji, the eldest son of Harpaldev by his second lady. Their subsequent prowess in conflicts with the Marathas was so great that the latter named the peninsula Kathiawar, i.e. "the home of the Kathis," after them. They were notorious freebooters and cattle-rustlers, adept at guerrilla warfare and, as light cavalry, were formidable opponents.

<sup>94</sup> Army Commander.

Seshoji, ensconced in Halvad, thinking he had nothing to fear from his brother, and with Kalyansinh out of the game, felt secure in his possession. He began collecting resources to take Dhrangadhra and Sitha by stealth or open attack. Kalyansinh and Gajsinh infiltrated Halvad with a number of followers and one day, when Seshoji sallied out with a detachment of troops to levy a toll on, or to loot, a caravan that was crossing the Rann at Tikar, surprised the gatekeepers and overpowered them. Drums were beaten, the loyal soldiers rallied round the Raj, Criers went round the town and Phuljiba and citizens of the town gathered to welcome and garland Gajsinh. Kalyansinh had regained the rājdhāni (capital) for his nephew with little expense and no bloodshed, for which he was rewarded with the addition of the village of Manekvada to his kapal-garas, and a banner with the device of the Gujarati letter S in the form of a sathia.<sup>95</sup> Kalyansinh was now all powerful in the state.

Seshoji, with his detachment of troops, encamped at Khambhada, from where he marched to Dhrangadhra and took possession of it. While the Raj in council agonized, the garasdars pledged their support to Gajsinh, favouring Kalyansinh's plan to mobilize the garrison and the garasia strength and to take Dhrangadhra by storm. Gajsinh, fearful of a Maratha incursion, was averse to war. The Mahajan, however, said that to leave Halvad undefended would be to invite the Marathas since Dhrangadhra, now strongly fortified, could not be stormed and could withstand a long siege. Some other stratagem had to be found to oust Seshoji. The Mahajan's view prevailed – it would be fateful for the Marathas to find them embroiled in domestic war. With Gajsinh's consent Kalyansinh sent reinforcements to Sitha while Gajsinh sent a message to Rani Jijiba not to return, but this crossed with her own message to him.

On hearing of developments at Dhrangadhra Rani Jijiba travelled from Warsoda to Sitha with her son Jaswantsinh. She had raised a force from among her fellow-clansmen loyal to her, borrowed money, and collected the accoutrements of war. At Viramgam she had engaged the services of one Muhammad Muchālo to recruit Kasbatis<sup>96</sup> from Viramgam and Dholka. Arriving at Sitha she took command of the gadhisena, which had been reinforced by Halvad, and without waiting for the strong force she had asked for from Halvad, she laid siege to Dhrangadhra and, using the Kasbatis, prepared for an assault on the city.

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<sup>95</sup> Swastika.

<sup>96</sup> Colonel Walker says of the Dholka Kasbatis that “they were a bold and turbulent people, some of whom commanded the services of a considerable number of horsemen whom they hired out to such of the neighbouring powers as required them. ... We have it also on the authority of Colonel Walker that the Kasbatis, “soldiers of fortune” as he called them, from their numbers and warlike character, were feared by that predatory race of men, the Kathis. Such were the allies whom Rani Jijiba called to her aid in attempting to dispossess Sheshabhai of Dhrangadhra.” (Mayne, 1921, 113-4).

As chance would have it *three armies* converged on Dhrangadhra. Watson's account suggests that this was contrived by Rani Jijiba, but the circumstance was fortuitous.

"In the meantime Bhagwant Ráo, an officer of the Peshwá entered Jháláwár to collect tribute. Jijibá obtained his assistance and that of the Ráadhanpúr Bábi and compelled Sheshábhái to quit Dhrángadhrá on condition that he and his men should be allowed to depart with the honours of war. These terms being accepted Sheshábhái quitted Dhrángadhrá ..."<sup>97</sup>

The Nawab Babi Jawan Mard Khan II of Radhanpur had indeed stopped by on his way home to Radhanpur with his dispirited and exhausted army, having failed to install his son as Nawab of Junagadh. He was in a desperate hurry to reach Radhanpur where a crisis was brewing. Jijiba and Jaswantsinh entertained him and, in need of wealth he could carry while at the same time anxious to dispose of the cannons which were slowing down his progress, he sold his artillery to Jijiba for the cost of her jewellery. He agreed to march with her to Dhrangadhra and to array his forces with hers as if for an assault.

As a prelude the Rani opened with a cannonade on the walls of Dhrangadhra but had no intention of damaging them. Seshoji sent his senani,<sup>98</sup> Viraji, to sue for peace. Negotiations were proceeding and Seshoji was holding out when the Marathas arrived. Seeing the two armies on terms of amity Bhagwant Rao made common cause with them. There is a suggestion from Jijiba's Chopda that she paid the Peshwa's officer but, if true, the amount has not been determined. Jijiba granted that Seshoji would be allowed to keep the village of his kapal garas, Narichana and would be given the township of Sayla (which he had conquered), provided he surrendered the booty he had looted from the townsfolk of Dhrangadhra, and only if he swore perpetual allegiance to the Raj would he be allowed to depart "with the honours of war". He agreed and departed with drums beating and his Nag flag flying.

This event is captured in the collection which depicts the surrender of Seshoji to Jijiba on 10 April 1758, and his seeking her forgiveness. It chronicles not only an internecine conflict, but also the rare occurrence of a male dynast surrendering to a female relation and shows Seshoji and his wives bowing before Jijiba and her 18 year old son Jaswantsinh. Muslim commander Kasbati Muhammad Muchalo [Muhamad the Moustaches] stands beside her. Jijiba herself showed clemency, telling her kinsman through marriage: "I don't wish to see my sisters-in-law break their bangles",<sup>99</sup> thereby sparing his life.

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<sup>97</sup> Watson, p.32.

<sup>98</sup> Commander.

<sup>99</sup> An act performed by Hindu women when they are widowed.

Much later Seshoji was to give proof of the sincerity of his profession of allegiance during the absence of Raj Jaswantsinh II. Some Kathi raiders had stolen cattle from Dhrangadhra villages. Seshoji went after them and recovered the cattle. "In recognition of this service Sheshabhai was given a [sic] handsome estate of Liya by the Raj Saheb".<sup>100</sup> Seshoji's was clearly an unbridled spirit. It could be that he was misunderstood from youth and that his undoubted talents were unrecognized, unappreciated and unused. The antipathy or bias against him in the Bavali and the Dhrangadhra accounts is understandable. But it must be recorded here, and the fact celebrated, that from the time of his oath and undertaking of allegiance given by him to Rani Jijiba, coupled with the concessions made to him by her, later confirmed by the Dhrangadhra Darbar, he and his successors proved themselves true to the oath and firm in their loyalty to the House of Dhrangadhra.

There is no question that the intrepid queen had astonished the world with her prowess. Nor is there a question that she had cast all norms to the winds, flaunted her lord and husband's commands and arrogated sovereign prerogatives. When Pradhan Kalyansinh and other Halvad ministers came to take over Dhrangadhra, a misunderstanding arose. There had been diverse criticisms of Jijiba, such as her disregard of the Raj's command not to wage war,<sup>101</sup> of conceding territory to Seshoji, and even for going about unveiled and on horseback. The three main charges against her were:

1. That without any right or authority she had, on behalf of the Darbar, spoken (negotiated) with the Marathas and had entered into a disgraceful engagement with them, with all solemnity on Ram-Navami, that the Darbar would pay them a fixed tribute every year, – a shameful commitment which no rajvada had made and which the Darbar was not bound to honour nor would.
2. That she had allowed the treacherous Seshoji to depart with honour and had granted him or had promised to grant him a village, namely Liya, for quitting. The grant of land was a sovereign prerogative of Dhrangadhra. This was hotly denied. She said she had allowed Seshoji to depart with honour provided he surrendered his loot, and that the future grant would depend on his proving his loyalty to the Raj.
3. She and her son had made a desavari (foreign) alliance, – i.e. with the Nawab of Radhanpur and given Jhali in marriage to his son.

The outcome was that the Rani took umbrage, declined to give up the walled town, and declared herself independent. The state was bifurcated into Halvad and Dhrangadhra.

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<sup>100</sup> Anonymous. *The Ruling Princes, Chiefs ... in Western India Agency*, 1935.

<sup>101</sup> It has been shown conclusively that the Halvad despatch riders had not reached her in time. The unanswered question is whether she would have heeded the orders had she received them.



'Bái Jijiba took possession of the town and paid the tribute as well as the nazaranáh, and commenced to govern this portion of the estate. From this date till Gajsinghji's death Jijibá and her son ruled at Dhrángadhra and Sithá; and Gajsinghji ruled at Halvad, each of them paying half the tribute.'<sup>102</sup>

It was only later that the amount of the 'tribute' (annual ransom) was 'fixed' by Jijima (as she was now called) with the Maratha chiefs, the first and only instance of its kind until Colonel Walker's famous 'Permanent Settlement'.

Nowhere is found a prince, a ruler, who suffered such a succession of misfortunes and humiliations as did the gentle Raj Gajsinh, – (with three as yet to come, – his incarceration by the Marathas, the payment of ransom by his wife, and the murder of his sister). What sustained him in his time of trial and tribulation? The steadfast management by his pradhan Kaka Kalyansinh, the spiritual comfort by his gurubandhu Mahant Balgiri, the loyalty of his bhayat and the love of his people, the fussing care by his sister Phuljiba, the personal attendance of his kamdar Bhagvatji Jhala and daroga Ajo Khavas, and, perhaps most importantly, meditation and yoga.

The Bavali bards tell the tale:

Gloom descended on Halvad. Never in the history of a thousand years [actually about 680 in Gujarat] had the domain been cleft in twain. Râno Kalyansinh returned to Halvad downcast and in a fury. He banned commerce with Dhrangadhara. Gajsinh, for whom it was yet another adversity in a life of adversities, took the humiliation with yogic calm and royal dignity. He asked Kalyansinh not to be sudden but to call a chovat of leading men. Rana Kalyansinh told the chovat that what Raniji had achieved single-handed and unsupported was beyond belief. 'Nowhere in the Puranas or in the long history of Hindustan is found such a deed by a lone lady. Have we not said so and openly praised her? We have given no offence. For the Bai to have taken offence is a fancy, a pretext in order not to restore the panthak to the Raj. It is unworthy of a wife. It is intolerable. It is shaming for the Raj and for all of us. She has broken up our Jhala state. Can it be allowed? She must be persuaded or compelled to yield. I have placed an embargo on all commerce with Dhrangadhra.'

Others argued against him. Bai Phuljiba said, 'If you allow this you will blacken my brother's face. You will disgrace yourselves in the world. You will be laughed at in the entire rajavâdâ'. Balgiri Maharaj said, 'please listen. A vevar bandhi<sup>103</sup> would hurt the townsfolk of Dhrangadhra. Whatever else that has been said is all true. But the townsfolk worship the Rani as their saviour, they are the subjects of the king,

<sup>102</sup> Watson, p.32.

<sup>103</sup> Embargo.

they are our own people, they are not aliens, and they would be antagonized.’ This time the aged Pradhan was unable to carry the assembly, – neither the Garasias nor the Mahajan. One said, ‘What if she marches with her mercenaries and cannon on Halvad?’ Once again the voice of the Mahajan, supported by the Raj and the Garasias, prevailed: that there be no further disturbance, tension should cease, commerce be resumed, and Patvikumar Jasoji<sup>104</sup> be appointed pātodhar for Dhrangadhra. [Would it not have been more appropriate to have appointed the lady patodharâ (regentess)?] An elder summed it up, ‘Long live our king, Raj Gajsinh Bava, yet some day, God willing, the state will be reunited’.

Kalyansinh was persuaded to continue as pradhan. He agreed on the condition that his efforts to undo the shameful partition of the state would not cease and both he and Phuljiba continued to exert themselves in this aim. He incurred the Rani’s inveterate hate. Some references imply that, no matter the great services Kalyansinh had rendered to the House, he and his Bavali line fell out of favour with the Rani and her successors, the Dhrangadhra rulers. This is untrue.<sup>105</sup>

Another consequence of the break in continuity of State governance has also gone unnoticed. Jijima had done all she could to calm the agitation led by her husband against his father, Raj Raysinh. She would have regarded it as foolish, shortsighted, almost suicidal. The charter (pattâ) that the Raj, her beloved father-in-law, was forced to sign was for her an anathema. It became unmentionable in her presence and a dead letter for her and so for her successors. But its essence and even its terms had become a part of the paramparâ of the State. After all it had ushered in the things Raysinh Bava had wanted. These the Rani honoured, as did her successors. After the treachery by Seshoji and the skilful regaining of Dhrangadhra town, the attitude of the garasdars had undergone a change. They had been shocked and disillusioned by the usurpation of Halvad and then of Dhrangadhra by Seshoji. They now remembered the words of Raysinh, had honoured him and mended their ways. Their fields bore harvest. They were beholden to Raj Gajsinh and felt bound to him. But they admired and feared the fearless Rani.

One year after the split, the Maratha viceroy sent word of his coming to Dhrangadhra and then cleverly bypassed it. “In 1759 Sadâshiva Râmchandra marched against Dhrangadhra and Gajsinh sent an army to its aid. The Marathas now secretly

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**104** Jaswantsinh - Tension did not cease. There is no evidence that Jaswantsinh was appointed pātodhar. He was already gadhpati. However when Raj Gajsinh was taken captive by the Marathas, he did, on the advice of Kalyansinh, appoint him pātpātodhar. In the stone inscription (dated VS 1815•Vaishakh Sud 13, Wednesday, 9th May 1759) in the Maninâgesvara temple in Dhrangadhra, Jaswantsinh, who performed the pûrnâhuti, on the completion of the temple (during his father’s incarceration in Ahmedabad), is saluted.

**105** There are a number of important posts that descendants of the Bavali line have held, including Salt Commissioner, Controller of Civil Supplies during the Second World War; OC, Makhwan Infantry, Revenue Commissioner and Port Commissioner Navanagar.

dispatched a force and made a night attack upon Halwad".<sup>106</sup> The Marathas laid siege to Halvad and took it on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1759. On 6<sup>th</sup> April Jaswantsinh was appointed Regent and administrator of the kingdom and the following day Gajsinh was carried off to Ahmedabad in a great carriage. It was Rani Jijima who collected, from a willing people, the huge ransom demanded.<sup>107</sup> She sent the money, with a delegation of citizens, to Ahmedabad for the release of her estranged husband, who was kept in custody for a few months. Even then he had to part with the lid of Arjundev Dwarkadasji's gold locket, which contains Chaturbhujaji's image, which he wore round his neck and which he had obtained from the Dwarka Temple in the mid 1200s. On his eventual return, Gajsinh gave the precious locket to his son (which is now in the Raj's daily puja) as well as the pargana of Hariana. The pargana was visited by Rani Jijima, where she made a settlement of vâdis,<sup>108</sup> as recorded in her Hariana account book. For all of this support, however, the relationship between husband and wife remained unfortunate.

Gajsinh died at Halvad in 1782 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Jaswantsinh II, who ascended to the gaddi on 5 April 1782 and ruled until 1801. He had clearly inherited his mother's skill and flair for good governance. By 11 July of that year, he had successfully reunited the kingdom which had been torn asunder by the intrigues and mismanagement of his uncle and father, which was thereafter called Halvad Dhrangadhra. The following year, on 19 August 1783, Raj Jaswantsinh II moved the capital to Dhrangadhra and a few weeks later, by 28 September, had relocated the royal family there. On Dassera day, 5 October 1783, Dhrangadhra was proclaimed the kingdom's new capital.

The next ruler, Raysinh III, reigned 3 ¾ years and a little after his son and successor, Amarsinh II, began to rule, the British arrived in the peninsula and soon took control. It can be fairly claimed that British hegemony sapped the relations between the ruler and the ruled.

From 1700 to the early 1800s, Mughal power waned, while the Hindu Marathas from Maharastra strove to establish overlordship over Gujarat. During this period the three Jhallesvaras Rayasinh II, Gajsinh II and Jaswantsinh II were less constrained from above, and contended for power with neighbours, cadets and even with their own Bhayat or nobility and clan leaders. Enterprising and able individuals, such as Jhala cadets like Kalyansinh of Bavali and the Muslim Kasbati commander Muhammad Muchalo [Muhamad the Moustaches], advanced their careers as they served the Jhallesvaras. The era also saw the introduction of paid mercenaries, mainly Muslim

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**106** Watson.

**107** The figure of the ransom, – Rs 1,20,000, – in Rani Jijima's chopadâ tallies exactly with the figure in the Peshwa Daftar in Poona (which is quoted in the *Gujarât-no Râjakiya ane Sânoskr.tika Itihâsa*, – *Marât.hâ Kâla*).

**108** Irrigated terms.

soldiers, as a part of their standing armies, who supplemented traditional forces comprising of Bhayati forces drawn from the clan lineages. Muskets and cannon now formed part of the armed forces earlier reliant on the horse and sword, spear and the bow and arrows.

Most significantly we see in some detail the roles played by an assertive Jhala queen JijiBa and Jhala princesses who as queens in their married home affected succession and the administration of their husband's kingdoms. This detailed account of JijiBa allows us to consider with greater confidence the roles of former queens in earlier generations, about whom information is not as extensive.

Unsettled times enabled Jaswant II to recover much of the territory lost in earlier generations and it was at this time that the last kingdom of the Jhala's, Sayla, was established by the cadet Sheshmalji from lands wrested from other landholders, the Kathis and Babariyas.

## 4.4 Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, several themes emerge from this examination of the Jhallesvars' military history. The first is that Jhalavad is a middling kingdom that has endured over nine centuries despite the arrivals and departures of eight imperial overlords: that of the Rajput Solankis and Vaghelas, Delhi and Gujarat Sultanates, Mughals, Marathas, English East India Company and finally the British Crown. The Jhallesvar kingdom has been both tenacious and fragile as it contends with each of these forces. In the process, it witnesses not only change in regional power in Gujarat, but also the jockeying between larger imperial states for suzerainty over the subcontinent, particularly northern India. Such wrangling for political influence includes the arrival of the first Islamic states in western India during the tenth and eleventh centuries, the shifting of the guard after the Mughal emperors wrested control from the Gujarat sultanate in the sixteenth, and lastly the collapse of Mughal imperium in the eighteenth century with the rise of competing Maratha and British forces.

During the same period, it is important to note that the Jhallesvars grappled with resistance both within and outside their state. These included the Babariya and Bhil tribes during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the rival Rajput states and forces of the Jadejas, Kathis and Dedas during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the Kathis and roving mercenary Kasbatis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through studying the dynastic history of the Jhallesvars, historians can better understand how long lived kingdoms, like Jhalavad, which are found throughout the Indian subcontinent, endured, accommodated change and 'reinvented' themselves, long after more dominant states and their dynasties had lapsed.

In particular, this history of war reveals the importance of women and their lives in state formation and governance. Mothers and wives, such as SaktiMa and Rajasree, dominate in shaping the lives and careers of their husbands and sons, and

arguably, the fate of the state, itself, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the dynastic marriage of Satyabhaji to Chandrasinh established a kinship relationship between the Jhallesvars and the supreme political dynasty, Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Through these marital connections, successive generations of Jhallesvars protected the stability of Jhalavad and checked the advance of rival Rajput clans, such as the Jadejas. In the eighteenth century, Rani JijiBa emerged as a dynamic wife and mother, soldier and statesman, who negotiated with a wide range of forces from above and below, including the mercenary Kasbatis, her Rajput clansmen the *Chavdas*, the Muslim Nawab of Radhapur, the Maratha general, Sadashiva Ramachandra, her brother-in-law Seshoji and her co-wives, sisters through marriage. In this way, military histories can reclaim the voices of women who are often absent from dynastic chronicles, and illuminate their vital role in the public sphere.

Lastly, this essay emphasizes vibrant description of ethnographic detail over dry and distant analysis. It vividly brings to life the people and places of Jhalavad itself, by emphasizing the energy and vitality of local society, which shaped the agency of the Jhalavadi residents over nine successive centuries, and continues to this day.

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