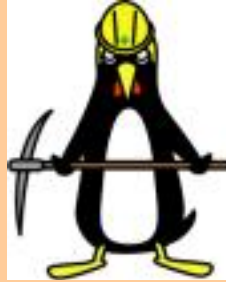**Ranthambhore: Nine Centuries, 944 AD – 1857 AD**
v.1.11 March 21, 2005

Work in progress: please do not depend on the sequence of events as related here; this article is by way of a collection of notes published to encourage scholars to join with us. If you do send notes, kindly be sure to source them, as this is a serious project!

Sources include:
- http://www.centraladventure.com/ranthambhorefort.html - we used this for the outline pending proper research.
- RC Majumdar volumes on the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughul Empire.

944 Built by a Rajput Chauhan king near today's town of Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan. The surrounding hills provide strong outer defenses for the fort, and its situation on a plateau that precipitously rises 700 feet above the plain make it for the next six centuries one of the strongest forts in India.

? Chauhan kingdom of Sapadalaksha and Nadol vanish.

In medieval India, Ranthambhore is an important Kingdom in the eyes of the Sultans of Delhi because it guards the passage to Central India.

Muslim invasions bring major political changes in North India.

RANTHAMBHORE

http://www.travellady.com/Issues/December03/Ranthambore.htm

Caveat

It is most important for readers to keep in mind that we are still sorting out the salient historical facts about the kings who ruled

Ranthambhore. As this is the first attempt to base history around the fort, it is not a trifling matter to keep track of who did what and when. Moreover, there is often disagreement between sources on major details. We are using R.C. Mazumdar's *History and Culture of the Indian People* as the preliminary basis for our compilation. If you send us material, you must source it or we will be unable to use your contribution.

His name in the history of the Chauhans is well known for defeating the successors of Mahmud Ghaznavi and occupying the whole of Delhi, Bundelkhand and a part of Punjab. He was murdered by his son Jagdeva. Jagdeva was murdered by his younger brother Vigraharaja IV. He is said to have ruled in the middle of the 12th century.

Vigraharaja IV is said to be a brave and powerful ruler, who had fought many battles against both the Muslims and the Hindus rulers. He brings the territories of Delhi and Jhansi, Punjab, Rajputana and Western UP under his rule. He resists the advance of the Muslims in India. He is a good administrator too, besides being a patron of art and literature and also promotes education.

Political instability befalls the dynasty after Vigraharaja IV. He is succeeded by his son Apara Gangeya who is killed by his own cousin Prithvi Raj II. He is followed by Vigharaja's uncle, Somadeva who in turn was succeeded by Rai Pithora most commonly known as Prithvi Raj Chauhan III. He was one of the most celebrated rulers of the Chauhans. He ruled from 1179-1192AD.

1190: Prithviraj Chauhan III rules Rajasthan and Punjab from two capitals, Pithoragadh (Delhi) and Ajmer. The Turk Muhammad of Ghur conquers Lahore and Sindh and reaches the border of Rajasthan. Prithviraj Chauhan defeats Ghuri in the first battle of Tarain (1191AD). Ghuri returns next year, defeats and captures Prithviraj.

1190s Prithviraj Chauhan III banishes from court Govindaraja, who belongs to the Chauhans of Ajmer. Govindaraja founds a new kingdom at Ranthambhore. When the Muslims overrun Ajmer after Prithviraj's death at Second Tarain, Govindaraja shelters Prithviraj's younger brother Hariraja.

On Govindaraja's death, his son Balhana takes over and rules Ranthambhore as a vassal of the Sultanate at Delhi.

1215 Balhana throws off the Sultanate's yoke around this time and rules independently.

1226 Sheoji, a grandson of the Jaichand Rathore of Kannauj who quarreled with Prithviraj III, establishes a new Rathore kingdom in Marwar after the fall of Kannauj to the Sultanate.

[We are still trying to work out what part Ranthambhore plays in this new dynasty. At this time Ranthambhore lies on the border of Malwa and Marwar; the new dynasty is established at Ajmer, some distance away. So it is not necessary that whoever rules at Ajmer controls Ranthambhore.]

1226 Iltutmish, the Delhi sultan, captures Ranthambhore. Treachery is involved: the sultan, unable to seize Ranthambhore, invites the ruler to Delhi where the latter is murdered, opening the way for the sultan to take control of the fort.

1236 On the death of Iltutmish, Ranthambhore is invested and **Raziya Sultan**, Iltutmish's heir, sends her general Qutabuddin Hasan Ghori to its rescue. The general manages to get the garrison out, but cannot hold the fort. He destroys as much as he can as he pulls back to Delhi.

1248 Balban makes his first unsuccessful attack against Ranthambhore.

1253 Balban unsuccessfully attacks Ranthambhore a second time.

1259 Jaitrasimha is the Chauhan king of Ranthambhore when he is defeated in this year by Sultan Nasiruddin.

1283 Hamirdeva [also called Hammir] **succeeds** Jaitrasingh in 1283 A.D. He rules over two districts in Rajasthan, but expands his kingdom by raids into Malwa and Gujarat. He recovers Ranthambhore and also defeats the ruler of Chittor.

1290 Jalaluddin Firuz Khilji besieges Ranthambhore, but when he recognizes how much blood would have to be shed for the fort, this overly kind-hearted king lifts the siege in the early spring of 1291. [R.C. Majumdar.]

1298 Hamirdeva, the Rajput king of Ranthambhore, stops paying tribute to Delhi and gives refuge to Muhammad Shah, a rebel against Alauddin Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi. Allauddin's general Ulugh Khan [Balban] sends an envoy to the fort demanding the death of Muhammed Shah but Hamirdeva declines saying he cannot harm anyone who has sought shelter with him. [R.C. Majumdar.]

1301 Allaudin Khilji attacks Ranthambore both orders the fort to be besieged from all sides. Aside from the need to capture the rebel Muhammed Shah, Allaudin also has strategic objectives in mind: the fort is one of the strongest in India, and a gateway to the west, south and east.

When he sees no progress at the siege, Allauddin Khilji himself

marches to Ranthambhore. In spite of all the strategies adopted by him the fort withstands. However soon the fort starts feeling the pinch of the siege. Famine in the fort is acute. Hamirdeva sends his minister Ranmal as an envoy to Alauddin to negotiate terms.

At this stage treachery raises its heads in the form of Hamirdeva's generals – Ratipal and Ranmal. Alauddin Khilji entices Ratipal by promising him the Kingdom of Ranthambhore if he helps him in capturing the fort. We do not know at this time what promises are mde to Ranmal. Facing certain defeat, Hamirdeva for the fight to death. Thousand of ladies in the fort performed "Jauhar" by jumping into fire and the men rush out of the fort to fight unto death. The Delhi Sultan finally occupies Ranthambhore in July.

For helping him to gain Ranthambhore, Alauddin executes the treasonous Rajputs on the sound principle that a traitor once can be traitor twice.

Khilji makes one of his generals in charge of the area and returns to Delhi. A Chauhan feudatory of Alauudin Khilji rules Ranthambhore.

1326 or thereabouts: [R.C. Majumdar.] **Rana Hammir** of Mewar [1314-1378] begins expanding his kingdom, taking advantage of the instability that has fallen on the Khilji empire after Alauddin's death in 1316. He titles himself Maharana of Mewar.

He captures the fort, sending the Chauhan feudatory fleeing for help to Muhammad Bin Tuglaq, who is now the ruler of the Delhi Sultanate.

[We are still researching what happens next; meanwhile see below.]

1340 Around this time, Rana Hammir regains the kingdom of Mewar, implying that somewhere after 1326 he lost it. Presumably the loss and regaining of his kingdom involves Ranthambhore.

1450? **Rana Khumba** [1433-1468, also called Khumbakarna] captures the fort in the mid 15th century and later hands it to his son. After his son's death, the Hada Rajputs of Bundi take over Ranthambhore once again.

1496 or thereabouts: Ranthambhore has again fallen at some point earlier to the Delhi Sultanate. Sikander Lodhi's governor at Ranthambhore, around this time, is **Daulat Khan.**

Tuglaq attacks Ranthambhore but is defeated and captured by

Maharana Hammir. Tuglaq gains his release by paying an enormous ransom, which includes ceding Ranthambhore to its new occupier.

1528 The fort passes to the child Prince **Vikramjeet** on the death of his father, the legendary **Maharana Sangha of Mewar**. The Maharana had promised the fort to the son of his junior wife Karmavati. She has two sons by Ratna Singh, Vikramjeet and Uday Singh. As they have yet to reach the age of majority, her brother Surya Mal of the Hada clan becomes guardian.

But when **Ratna Singh**, Maharana Sangha's son and heir [ruled 1528-31] tries to assert his authority over his half-brothers and step mother, Karmavati pledges her loyalty to Babur and her stepson is stymied.

In 1531, Vikramjeet assumes the throne of Mewar on the death of his half-brother Ratna Singh.

1532 Around this time, **Bahadur Shah** of Gujarat captures Ranthambhore as part of his expansion north into Rajasthan. He can expand because in the early years of Mughul rule in India, after the fall of the Lodhis, most of India is in disarray. Bahadur Shah goes on to invest and sack Chittor in 1535.

1535 **Humanyun** captures Ranthambhore as part of his counter-offensive against Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. The offensive also sees the great fort of Chittor back under a Delhi king, and Humanyun continues into Gujarat, reclaiming this territory for Delhi.

1558 **Akbar** invests Ranthambhore, but has to raise the siege because of trouble with Bairam Khan.

1569

February 8. **Akbar** returns to the siege, pitching his tent nearby, no intention of leaving till he has possession. The defender is **Rai Surjan**, the Hada clan chief of Bundi. He holds the fort as a vassal of Chittor. Rai Surjan is much influenced by Akbar's recent and ruthless sack of Chittor, during which the Mughul emperor ordered all civilian males to be executed.

So on March 21 he surrenders the fort keys to the Emperor, and **Mihtar Khan** becomes Akbar's commander at fabled Ranthambhore.

TO BE CONTINUED