Rajasthan A LAND OF BEAUTY AND BRAVERY





Dedicated to the gallant warriors and enterprising trailblazers and architects of Rajasthan, who have elevated the desert state to a pre-eminent position in the country.





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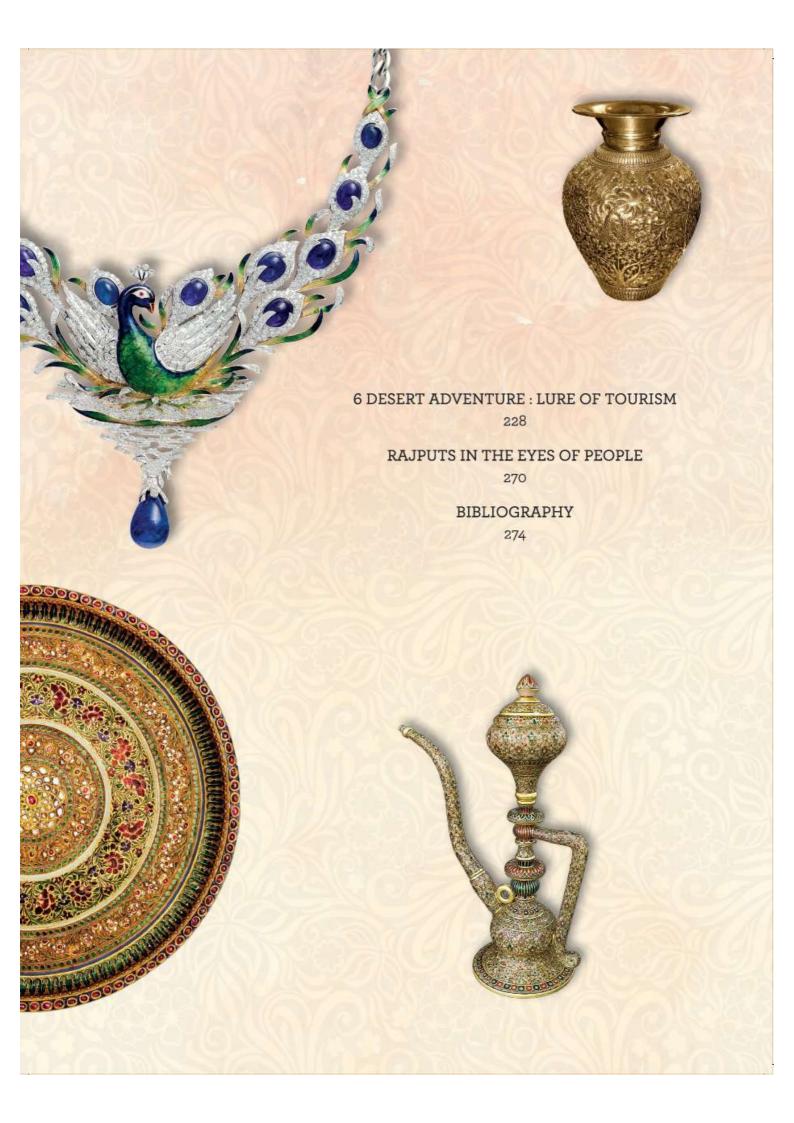
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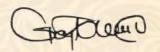






ajasthan is one of the largest and most fascinating states of India and perhaps the riches in terms of cultural heritage. This magical land of colours is known for its valour, chivalry and romance. It is immensely rich in history, hospitality and natural beauty. The state has unusual diversity in all forms: inhabitants, costumes, traditions, customs, music, dialects, cuisine and environment. Rajasthan always teems with joy and bonhomie unique to this part of the country. The natural terrain simply mesmerising, with the lofty Aravalii hills-one of the oldest ranges in the world-spreading out, and the golden sand dunes of the great Thar desert undulating gently.

The state is a haven for diverse wildlife and rich variety of flora and fauna. There is a certain magic about travelling through Rajasthan, which is unequalled by any other place in the world. Its past, people, their inherent drive to explore and great potential in the present time fascinates economists, sociologists, anthropologists and historians around the globe. Besides being a visual feast, Rajasthan: A Land of Beauty and Bravery is a valuable contribution. Generally, coffee table books are rich in visuals but light on content. However, this pictorial book is as serious about bringing out the history of the subjects in depth as it is about tracking rare photographs about them. Undoubtedly, Dr. D. K. Taknet's meticulous research deserves congratulations as well as the gratitude of the reader. The rare images, both of the past and the present, offer visual pleasure while the accompanying descriptions make for absorbing reading. And, indeed, it is this ability to cherish the old and blend with the modern that sums up the story of Rajasthan. I facilitate Dr. Taknet and IIME, a Research Institute for producing this well-written, lucid and informative book about India's most exotic state.







am delighted to learn that International Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (IIME), Jaipur is publishing a coffee table book titled "Rajasthan: A Land of Beauty and Bravery".

Rajasthan, with its deep-rooted history and vibrant cultural heritage, is a land that enchants all who experience it. From the golden sands of the Thar Desert to the magnificent forts, palaces, and temples that adorn our landscape, the state is a living testament to centuries of valour, beauty, and tradition. It is a place where the spirit of courage, gallantry, and resilience thrives, and where people from diverse backgrounds live in harmony, celebrating life through festivals, music, and dance.

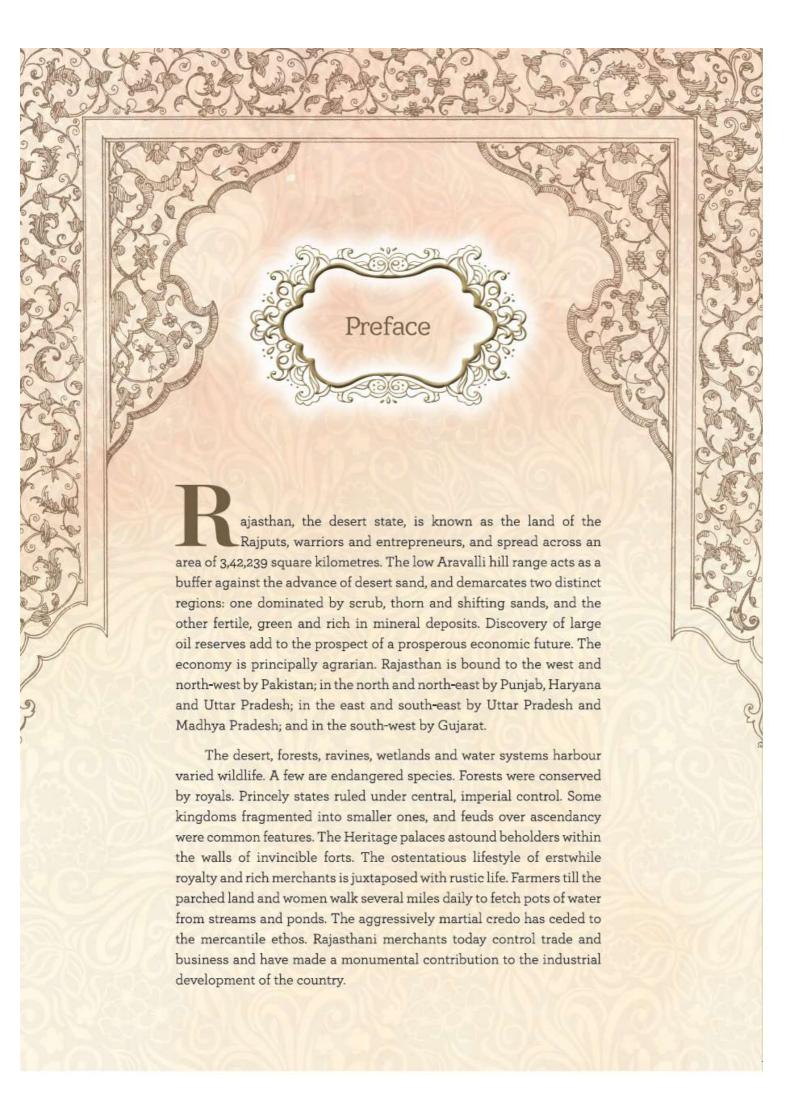
Now Rajasthan has embarked on its journey towards sustainable long-term growth and inclusive development by way of reaching out to stakeholders and partners in this journey. The proximity of the state to the Northern and Western markets of India, vast mineral resources and investor-friendly policies of the state government, makes the region a prime choice for limitless business opportunities and investment to the state.

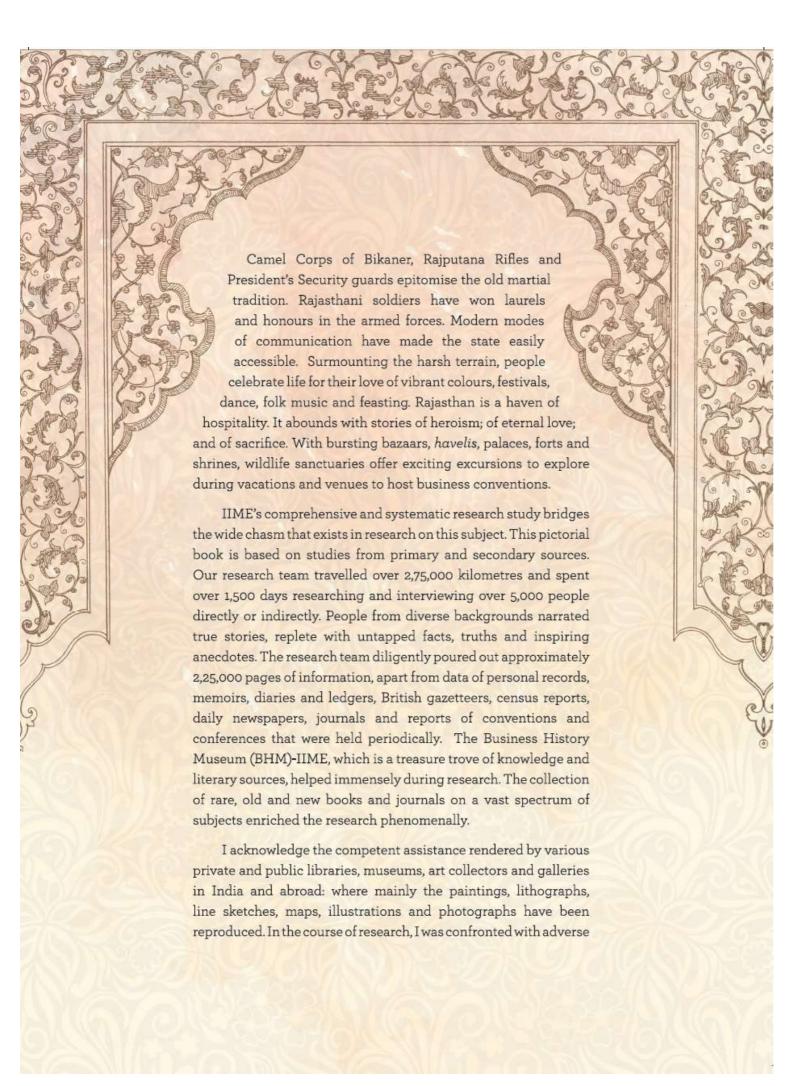
This coffee table book beautifully captures the essence of Rajasthan-its glorious past, its stunning landscapes and the indomitable spirit of its people. The images complemented by insightful narratives, offer both visual pleasure and an enriching understanding of our state's heritage. It is an important contribution, blending the old with the new, and showcasing Rajasthan's journey towards inclusive growth.

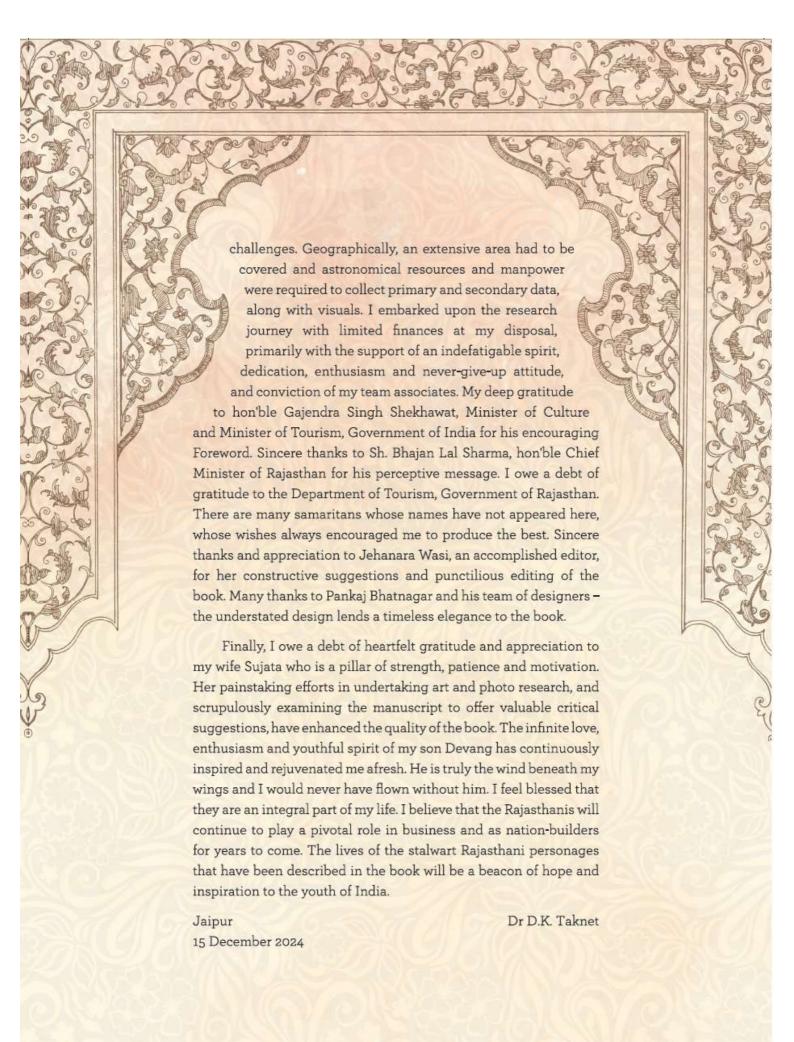
I am sure this coffee table book will inspire readers to appreciate the unique bbeauty and enduring bravery of Rajasthan, and contribute to the continued growth of our state.

I extend my best wishes for the success of this publication.

(Bhajan Lal Sharma) Chief Minister, Rajasthan









Valour, Wars and Heroes



istas of sun-drenched desert...one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world, the Aravallis, running from north-east to south-west for over 600 kilometres in precipitous, parallel ridges; and the fertile plains to the east and south-east of the Chambal river, the annadata (sustenance-giver)... Rajasthan's destiny bears the stamp of the indelible influence of its topography. Romanticised by bards, artists and historians, the never-say-die ethos of its proud inhabitants has managed, century after century, to transform plaintive cries of suffering, resulting from natural disasters or battles, into songs of glory and legends of valour and patriotism.

Rajputana, now called Rajasthan, is home to one of the oldest civilisations in the world, and is a symbol of Indian culture. Celebrated globally for its ethos of chivalry, courage and romance, its ballads have inspired heroism through centuries. Legends of daredevil sons who sacrificed their lives for their land's honour continue to enthral people of India. Lt Col James Tod, the author of the monumental work, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, observed: 'There is not a petty state in Rajputana that has not had its Thermopylae, and scarcely a city that has not produced its Leonidas.'

Indeed, Rajasthan conjures up images of a land coloured in crimson by the glint of steel...of men whose footprints on the sands of time have left a legacy that no storm can ever erase...a history





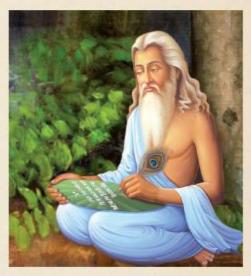
of those whose dedication and undying commitment to a word once given made their challengers tremble and quake. A land of stark beauty, its challenging terrain meant for those who can play for dauntingly high stakes. No wonder then that it takes centre stage in the annals of Indian history. In his book Discovery of India, Jawaharlal Nehru observed: 'Among the people of India today none are more typically Indian or prouder of Indian culture and tradition than the Rajputs. Their heroic deeds in the past have become a living part of that very tradition...'

The name Rajasthan evokes enchanting images of golden sand dunes across the Thar desert; splendid forts, palaces and temples; hoary Aravalli hills; Sambhar, the country's largest saline lake; amazing varieties of flora, fauna, brave, sturdy and cheerful people.

Land of Valiant Warriors

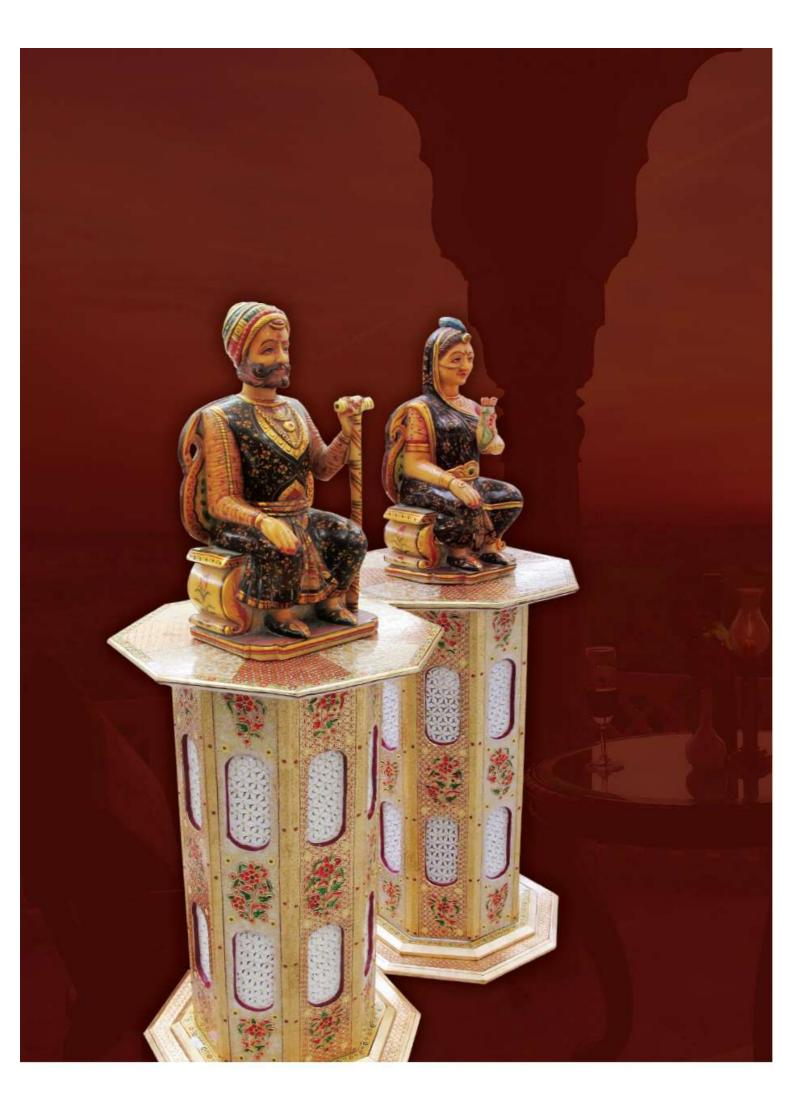
It will be apt here to describe briefly the realm of the Kurus, over which Parikshit ruled. The kingdom, according to the epic Mahabharat, stretched from the Saraswati to the Ganga. In the 'Digvijaya-parva' it is said to extend from the border of the land of the Kulindas (near the sources of the Sutlej, Yamuna and Ganga) to that of the Surasenas and Matsya (in the Mathura and Bairat regions); and from the frontier of Rohitaka (Rohtak in present-day Haryana) to the domain of the Panchajas of Rohilkhand. It was divided into three parts: Kurujanganla-Thekuru proper and Kurukshetra. Kurujanjangla, as its name implies, was probably the wild region of the Kuru realm that stretched from the Kamyayaka forest on the banks of the Saraswati to Jhandwa near [samipatah] the Yamuna. The Kuru realm proper was probably located in the region of Hastinapur (beside the Ganga), being identified with a place near Meerut. The boundaries of Kurukshetra are mentioned in Taittiriya Aranyaka as being Kandava in the south, Turghna in the north, and Prinnh in the west. The Mahabharat gives the following description of Kurukshetra: 'South of Saraswati and north of the Drishadwati, he who lives in Kurukshetra really dwells in heaven. The region that lies between Tarantuka and Marantuka or Arantuka, the lakes of drama and Machakruka, this is Kurukshetra, which is also called Samanta Panchal and the northern sacrificial altar of the grandsire {Brahma}.'

Sourced from *Political History of Ancient India* by Hemchandra Raychaudhuri, Rajasthan is bound in the west and north-west by Pakistan; in the north and north-east by Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh; in the east and south-east by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh; and in the south-west by Gujarat. Historically, Rajasthan was always ruled by princely states, under central, imperial control. Its history has been dominated by valiant warriors and stories of their brave deeds, resulting from a desire to remain independent. The official histories of different ruling families are a litany of leadership qualities and exemplary patterns of gallantry, which percolated to society.



Top and facing page: Rajasthan is among the few tropical deserts of the world, possessing the highest population density. The earliest inhabitants of Rajasthan belonged to the Great Harappan Civilisation. Archaeological findings in Luni Basin, Buddha Pushkar, Ahar Valley, Kalibanga, Pilibanga and Sanchore revealed that early man inhabited this area about 6,000-8,000 years ago. The colourful and exotic state of Rajasthan, spellbinding 'Land of the Kings', epitomised the soul of India. It was the abode of the mighty Rajputs, clans of intrepid warriors who claim descent from the sun, moon and flames of a sacrificial fire, ignited to revive the wandering souls of the ancient 'Kshatriyas'. They claim to be descended from the thirty-six royal Kshatriya clans mentioned in the Puranas and the two Indian epics, the Mahabharat and Ramayan.





Poetry : In Stone, Clay and On Paper



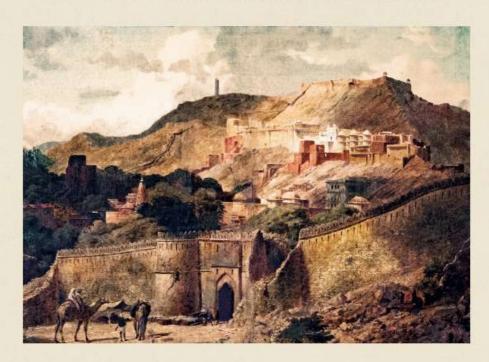


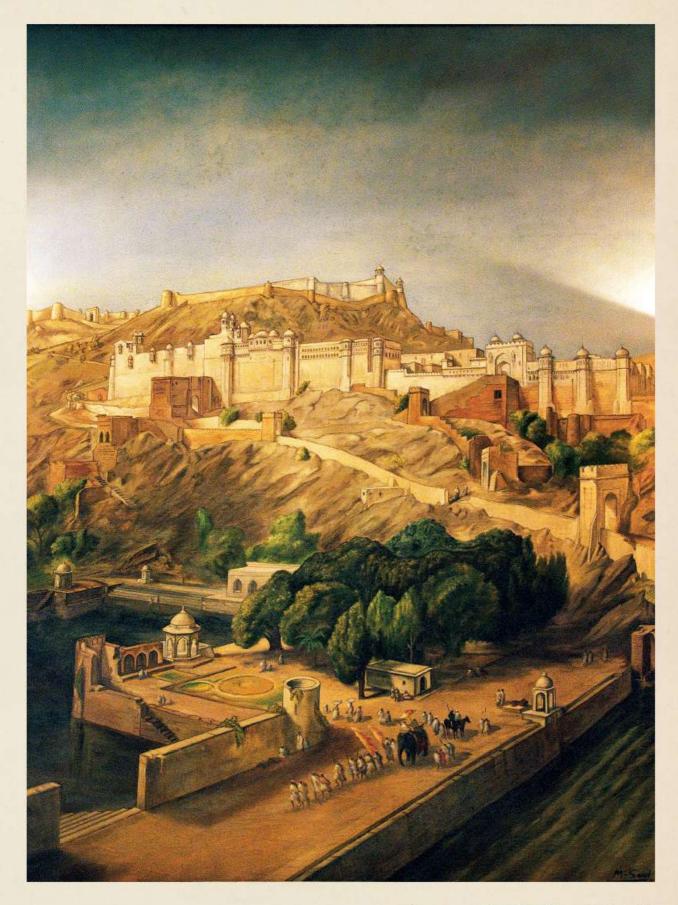
Right and facing page:
Rajasthan is famous for its majestic forts and palaces that have stood the tests of time in this princely state.
These monuments are perfect examples of the architectural heritage of Rajasthan. The two rare paintings at Amber Fort are well known for their artistic Hindu style elements. With huge ramparts and series of gates and cobbled paths, this fort stands tall, adjacent to the Maota Lake.

he brilliance and exquisite beauty of Rajasthan's architecture attracts travellers all over the globe. Citadels and fortresses, palaces and ramparts spring up like a conjurer's magic tricks from amidst the sands of the great Thar. The uniqueness of the carved temples, havelis, step wells and cenotaphs makes Rajasthan an architectural marvel. If you happen to be on a soaring rampart or feel the fine filigree stone work, you will be transported back to the royal courts, to the love and intrigues that transpired within those walls.

Some of the most magnificent art flourished here under the patronage of the rulers who loved art, nobles and wealthy merchants. It was the generous endowments from the patrons that allowed artists to live long and well enough to produce such stupendous works of sculpture, painting and literature. As part of the continuing tradition of patronage, the ruling classes invited gifted artists from various parts of the country to their newly-found cities. The importance of art in a Rajasthani's life can be gauged from the Rajput saying that defines a man as one who must 'in times of need wield a sword and in other times, write and design with a pen and a brush.'

Rajput royals lived up to this ideal. Emulating the Mughals, they too set up *karkhanas* or workshops where artists could hone their creative skills. The buildings that sprang to life belong to two categories: secular and sacred. Towns and villages, houses, forts, palaces, cenotaphs and step wells represented the secular side while temples, mosques, tombs and shrines had the sacred stamp.





Poetry: In Stone, Clay and on Paper 1 67



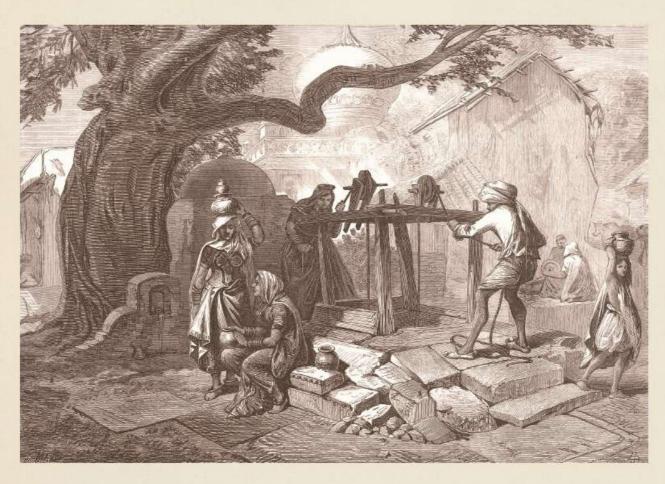
Creators of Destiny





ajasthan is spread over an area of 3,42,239 square kilometres, divided by the low Aravalli hills. Geographically, Rajasthan is the largest state in the country with a population of 6.86 crore (68.6 million), as per the census of 2011. The state is divided into 33 districts, 30 zila parishads and 241 tehsils. It has a high percentage of rural population (75.13 per cent), indicating that it is still principally rural and dependent on agriculture for a basic livelihood. Ensconced in its sweeping embrace are lofty mountains and rolling sand dunes; fertile, green plains as well as parched lands; scorching hot summers and freezing climes.

As noted earlier, Rajasthan's economy is mainly agriculture-based. The western region grows predominantly *kharif* or monsoon crops, while the eastern belt, which has better rains and soil, grows both *kharif* and *rabi*, winter crops. Cereals such as *bajra*, *jowar* or sorghum, wheat and barley cover the largest cultivated area. About 30 per cent of the total cultivated area is irrigated. The western region of Rajasthan was covered with forests during the Jurassic era about 180 million years ago. Now much of the region is desert. The western sandy plains with contrasting topography are shaped by the Thar desert.



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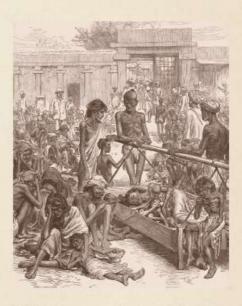
During summer, the mean maximum temperature averages around 45° C/113° F, yet the mercury can drop below freezing point in winter. Churu, for instance, registers sub-zero temperatures in winter. Annual rainfall is less than 254 mm. Mount Abu with 163.8 centimetres receives the highest rainfall in the state. The total annual rainfall in the western part of Rajasthan is highly variable geographically as well as unpredictable climatically, with frequent spells of drought punctuated by a heavy downpour in some years, associated with passing low pressure systems over the area. At most places, the highest normal monthly rainfall is during the months of July and August.

Famine is the 'grand natural disease' of Rajasthan. The period from 1255 to 1258 witnessed terrible starvation and death. However, the worst famine—dreaded as the *chappaniya akal*—broke out in 1899 when people had to survive on grass, roots and bark of the *khejri* tree. The dreadful memories of that famine are recalled in a Marwari folk song, in which the people implore the demon of famine not to visit their beloved land: 'Chappaniya aurun mat aai mahare desh.'

The Luni river and its seasonal tributaries form the major river system of the Godwar and Marwar regions, draining the western slopes of the Aravallis and emptying south-west into the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. The Shekhawati belt that includes Sikar and Jhunjhunu districts receives slightly higher rainfall and is home to great salt lakes such as the Sambhar. In fact, the Sambhar is one of India's largest inland saline depressions, and the wetland constitutes the most important wintering area for flamingoes, apart from the Rann of Kutch. Over 500,000 flamingoes visit the wetlands, in addition to many pelicans. Salt extraction is one of the main activities of the wetlands. This zone has a few streams, and even those disappear into the sandy plains after flowing over short distances.

The Ghaggar plain spreads over most of Ganganagar district. The Ghaggar is believed to be the modern manifestation of the legendary Saraswati river. Important canal systems, including the Ganga, Bhakra and Indira Gandhi canals water the valley. The Indira Gandhi Canal with 7,000 kilometres of distribution channels, is the biggest irrigation project in the world. Yet, the sandy hillocks and low sand dunes in the region are quite noticeable.

The Aravalli range stretches into the districts of Udaipur, Sirohi, Dungarpur and Banswara. Guru Shikhar in Mount Abu is the highest point at 1,727 metres. The Aravallis have not only checked the desertification of Rajasthan but influenced the climate of the state. The eastern plains stretch from the east of the Aravallis to the plains of the rivers Ganga and Yamuna. The eastern edge of the Aravallis up to the north of Udaipur forms their western boundary, while their southeastern limit is marked by the Vindhyan plateau: Bharatpur, Alwar, Jaipur, Dholpur and Sawai Madhopur, Tonk and Bhilwara. This fertile belt has made a mark in both agriculture and industry.

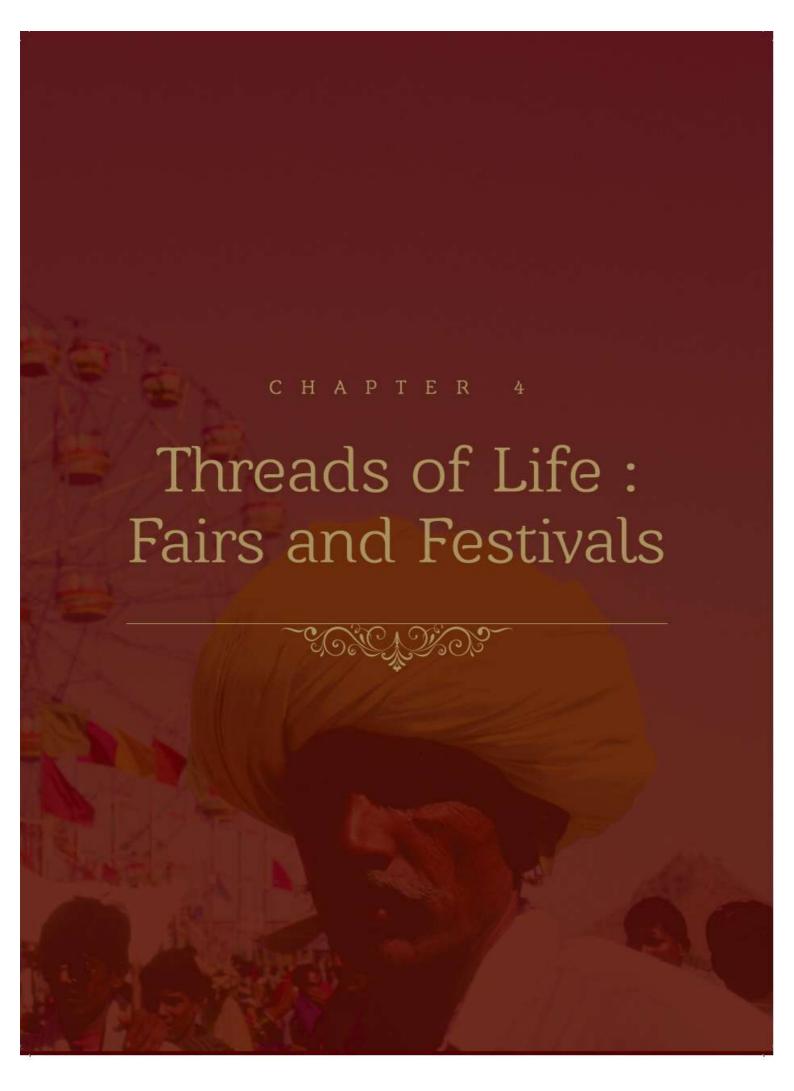


Top: Victims waiting for famine relief. Earlier, famine was a recurrent feature in the lives of the Rajasthanis. Specially, the famine of 1896-97 that prevailed over several princely states in Rajputana. According to Lord Curzon, it was 'the most widely extended and most terrible famine known in Indian history'.

Facing page: Rajasthan being a desert area is a dry place, so the importance and care of a water source is one of top priority. In medieval times, there were wells and tanks that served people's needs. Wells are still the main source of drinking water for the local communities in Rajasthan.









ajasthan's fabled mystique has captured the imagination of people the world over. Life is difficult in this harsh, inhospitable and arid region. Yet, defying the challenges posed by uncongenial terrain and extreme climate, Rajasthanis have filled their lives with colour and joy. They have painstakingly evolved a medley of fairs and festivals; corpus of dance and music; and a rich tradition of arts and crafts that helps them to celebrate life. Moments of pleasure in the dry, rain-starved environs infuse vigour into the people, weary from the grind of survival.

Interestingly, Rajasthani tribes, particularly from the western part of the state, such as the Nats, Bhats, Mirasis, Sargadas, Dholis and Bhands, have developed into professional folk entertainers. Besides the patronage extended by the rulers, the Rajasthani ideal to nurture a 'cultured personality' has helped in the development of the various art forms. This ideal is expressed through the popular proverb: 'Raag baag poshaak madh kavita aur tasvir, jo yaanki parakh kare beene kahe amir — those who appreciate music, clothes, wine, poetry and painting deserve to be called aristocrats.' The state is characterised by artistic creativity and mass participation in festivities. The spirit of celebration, so common among the Rajasthanis, finds expression through rituals, feasting, sports, music, pageantry or simply, the profusion of colours. People love to celebrate, their fondness for vibrant hues, music and dance, enlivening the desert that comes alive.



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The calendar is crammed with festivals and celebrations. It is almost as if every day of the year is a special occasion. The fairs provide an opportunity to the diligent village folk to relax in the company of their family and friends. Fairs and festivals traditionally revolved around religious observances. Nowadays popular and even commercial events have been transformed into celebrations. In fact, fairs are organised specially for the benefit of tourists by showcasing the art, culture and cuisine of a region.

Rajasthanis have deep-rooted religious beliefs. Religion and spiritual sentiments have always been inextricably linked with social festivals and fairs. Music and dance are integral to these festivals. Hence, there is a fascinating interplay of religion, fairs, festivals, music and dance in celebrations and on community occasions that entails rejoicing. Rajasthan's folk music, dances and other performing arts mirror the archetypal Indian way of life. The philosophical, spiritual and physical planes fuse into one another, and find outlets through various cultural media that have over the centuries remained alive and pulsating.

Sound of the Desert

The lifeblood of village life is music, song and dance. The royalty also patronised music and dance, and various court artistes enriched the different art forms. Jaipur notably nurtured the Khayal and Dhrupad styles of classical singing, and the Kathak dance form. The unforgettable melodies of Rajasthan are invoked from various delightfully primitive-looking instruments. The stringed variety includes the sarangi, kamayacha, morchang, rawanhattha and ektara.

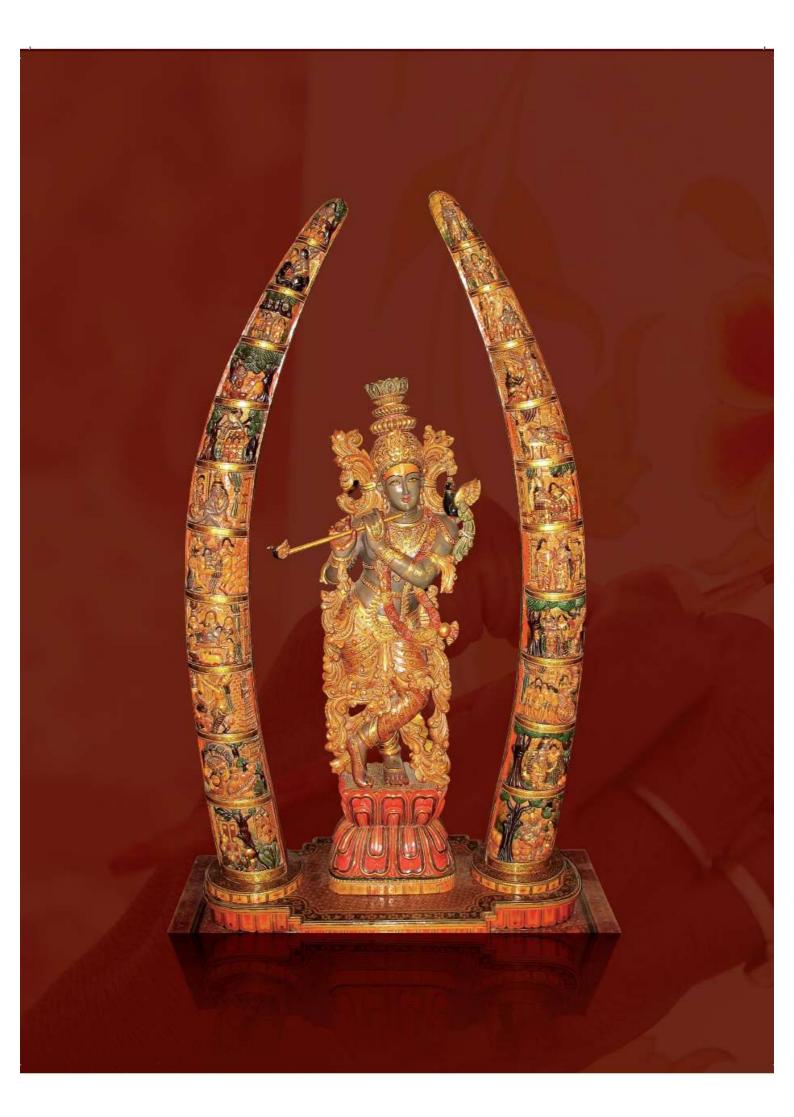
From the huge nagadas and dhols to the tiny damrus, the percussion instruments come in all shapes and sizes. The large nagadas or battle drums are mostly played at the head of processions. The daf and chang are a favourite with Holi revellers. Bagpipes and

Top left: A cacophony of turahi (curved wind instrument) and nadaswara, as they let out their victory peals. These were used to exhort the warriors to move forward in battle.

Top right: A flute specialist who plays the double flute through his nostrils. Such performances are enjoyed by onlookers during festivals, religious and wedding processions.

Facing page: Festivals like Diwali, Holi, Dussehra, etc., are common throughout the country. But a few others like Gangaur, Teej, etc., are exclusive only to Rajasthan. In the Gangaur festival, goddess Parvati is worshipped as the prime deity. Band troupes, gun carriages and elephants lead the entourage accompanied by singers and dancers.





Magical Hands





or many reasons, Rajasthan has attracted the attention of the world. Cradle of one of the oldest civilisations, the state has a rich crafts heritage that is closely intermeshed with its social tapestry and vibrant traditions. The varied landscape and seclusion of one part from another account for the independent flowering of crafts in different regions of the state: from wood carvings to embroidery on camel leather, and from silver filigree to ground-glass meenakari jewellery. The cultural and ethnic diversity has facilitated honing marvellous techniques and crafts that are hard to replicate elsewhere.

Traces of copper beads, bangles, tools and terracotta pottery at the pre-Harappan site of Kalibangan confirm the antiquity of handicrafts in Rajasthan. The once fertile land turned into dry desert owing to deforestation, but the creative spirit of the people remained intact. Rajasthanis are exceptional craftsmen, with an intrinsic sense of design that is apparent in the simplest objects of daily use. The difficult feat of constructing daunting forts and palaces in this harsh terrain, and the continual demands of an imperial lifestyle comprise the factors that gave rise to such highly skilled artisans. Craftsmanship shaped and perfected over many centuries generated the unique designs and motifs which continue to fascinate connoisseurs globally.



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Timeless Traditions

The cities and towns of Rajasthan still retain their medieval ambience, owing to their traditional architecture, arts and crafts, oriental bazaars and exotic jewellery and clothes, worn by most people. This priceless heritage fashioned over ages, and through assimilation of diverse cultural influences has made Rajasthan, spread over 3,42,239 square kilometres of land, showcase the plurality, in terms of people and ethos, that defines its identity.

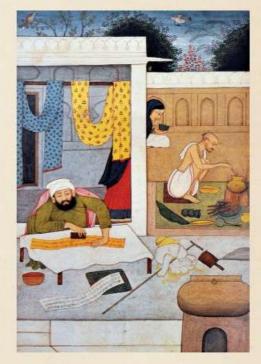
Arts and crafts undoubtedly flourished under generous royal patronage to set up small-scale manufacturing units with financial assistance of kingdoms. This led to the production of fine works of high merit: architectural components, paintings, jewellery, woodwork, metal work, artefacts and even distinctive textiles. Rajput rulers encouraged the artisans to set up schools for the propagation of their crafts.

Each Rajput principality had its exclusive craft, and to this day every small town and village has a frieze of lanes, where artisans practise a craft, handed down by their forefathers. Exposure and friendly ties with the Mughal court spurred local rulers to aspire for grandeur. The Mughals brought with them the refined designs and technical competence of the Persians. The result in Rajput kingdoms was the fusion of two cultures, which culminated in a period of efflorescence that inspired awe among beholders. While the state of Mewar guarded the purity of Indic arts and crafts, the monarchs of Jaipur promoted cross-cultural influences in blue pottery, gold and silver jewellery, brass items, stone carvings and architecture.

The seeds of creativity inherent in folk culture, blossomed into a stirring folk tradition, transmitted from father to son with a sense of reverence. Today, Rajasthan is the Mecca of miniature paintings, hand-block and vegetable-dyed fabrics, rugs, gems and jewellery, leather items, woodwork, metal work, stonework, terracotta artefacts and blue pottery. Like a magnet, it draws travellers, buyers and connoisseurs from different parts of India and the world. In this land of unusual contrasts, beauty, art and aesthetics suffuse the very ethos. The dull, dreary terrain, with its scorching heat, endured by the resilient inhabitants, is thereby transformed. The unique attraction is Rajasthan's splendid old forts, towns, shrines and palaces, imbued with a mystical quality.

Saga of Paintings

The world of Rajasthani miniature paintings is most fascinating. The painters engaged in the art today are descendants of the original craftsmen who perfected the technique to create incredible Rajput miniatures. Even though numerous innovations mark these paintings,



Top: A painter involved in cloth printing. Bandhani or Bandhej is an elegant tie-and-dye form that depicts Rajasthan's rich culture.

Rajasthan is one of the richest states in the field of arts and crafts in the country. The creativity and artistic skills have inspired generations of Rajasthani craftsmen to create opulent and rich treasures. Stone, clay, leather, wood, ivory, lac, glass, brass, silver, gold and textiles are all modelled into brilliant forms. The history of Rajasthan is a witness that kings and their nobles were patrons of arts and crafts and encouraged craftsmen in activities ranging from wood and marble carving to weaving, pottery and painting.

Facing page: There are many craftsmen in Rajasthan who create earthen utensils of excellent quality. Rajasthan has earned immense popularity due to its exquisite handicrafts, which are a striking part of the Rajasthani culture.





Desert Adventure: Allure of Tourism





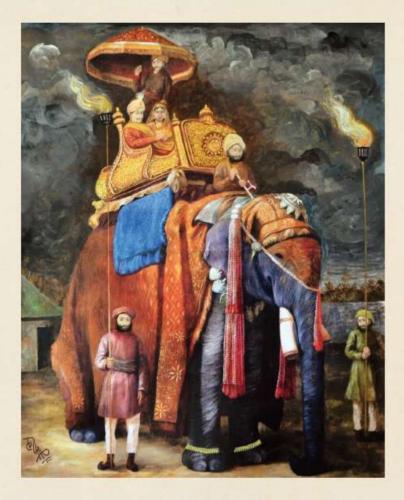
ajasthan is a vacationers' paradise and haven of hospitality. Its people consider it an honour to welcome a guest in the house. They uphold the tradition of Atithi Devo Bhav (the guest is God) and request the outsider to visit their land (Padharo mhare desh).

The state has numerous attractions for tourists that are exclusively its own. Every region is hallowed by the sacrifices of martyrs. Every nook and corner hides a tale of love; and every lane has a story to narrate. Bazaars evoke eastern exotica, abundance and gaiety; havelis showcase art, crafts and architecture; palaces epitomise regal grandeur, and forts legendary heroism. The myriad temples, mosques and dargahs symbolise the spiritual quest that transcends narrow sectarian beliefs and social boundaries.

Rajasthan's unique character derives from its inhabitants. There have been great saints, mystics and faqirs whose compassion was showered on all beings, the spillover still attracting supplicants for grace. Extraordinary masters, warriors, poets, annalists, musicians, dancers, sculptors, painters, craftsmen, traders, businessmen and philanthropists signify that the human spectrum is infinite. Their openness to the world and forces of change make the people harbingers of peace and goodwill.



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Diverse dialects have engendered a rich corpus of regional literature, songs, ballads and folklore. Every region has its own ethos, cuisine, customs and traditions. The landscape also varies accordingly, from the stark desert and hills to verdant pockets of breathtaking beauty. Together, these make for a composite travel package of exciting excursions, Ayurveda and yoga sessions, jungle safaris, adventure sports and other thrilling experiences. And for those inclined to the esoteric, the stimulating interaction with traditional healers and custodians of arcane knowledge could well be another reason to visit Rajasthan. Hence, the number of foreign and domestic visitors to the state has swelled to an unprecedented degree, with many tourists opting for holiday packages, ranging from health tourism to heritage tourism. Owing to its great ecological diversity, the state provides infinite opportunities for nature tourism too. Pilgrimages also draw innumerable people. Several shrines, of different faiths, are spread across the length and breadth of Rajasthan. Its bazaars and markets offer an exciting array of crafts: paintings, jewellery, textiles, soft-as-gossamer quilts, pottery, durries, carpets and a range of wood, metal, stone sculpture, and leatherware.

Two features that make Rajasthan ideal for vacations: the incredible variety of its environs; and the sheer romance of its history.

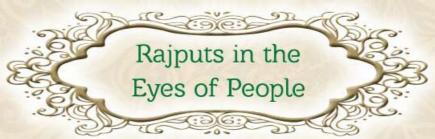




Top left and facing page: Rajasthan is one of the most popular tourist destinations in India, for both domestic and international tourists. It is rich in culture and heritage. Rajasthanis are very hospitable and for them a guest is akin to god, 'Atithi Devo Bhava'. It subscribes to a dynamic relationship between host and guest in which the host receives the guests with goodwill, treats them with utmost respect and ensures their entertainment. This concept creates an awareness about the preservation of culture, heritage and hospitality.

Top right and bottom: Many tourists visit Rajasthan for Ayurveda and yoga sessions.





REPRESENTATION OF THE PROPERTY SERVERY

Whenever I tread the soil of Rajasthan - the mother of valiant warriors - I shiver with fear lest I should trample upon the mortal remains of a male or a female warrior.

Ramdhari Singh Dinkar

There is not a petty state in Rajputana that has not had its Thermopylae, and scarcely a city that has not produced its Leonidas ... M.L.Rousselet confesses that it was 'very rare to meet with incivility of any sort among the Rajputs provided you are yourself very polite' ... While describing the royal family of Jodhpur, Murray writes that the whole family are as one would expect of a family of traditions.

"The spirit of chivalry is continually fed, for everything around him speaks of arms and strife." His amusements were 'warlike' and the dance and the songs served 'as fresh incitements to his courage."

Let us take the Rajput character from the royal historians themselves, from Akbar, Jahangir, Aurangzeb. The most brilliant conquests of these monarchs were by the Rajputs only.

The Rajput welcomes his guest with the munawwar piyala, or 'cup of request,' in which they drown ancient enmities.

The devotion of the Rajput is still paid to his arms, as to his horse. He swears by the steel,

and prostrates himself before his defensive buckler, his lance, his sword, or his dagger.

If we compare the antiquity and illustrious descent of the dynasties which have ruled, and some which continue to rule, the small sovereignties of Rajasthan, with many celebrities in Europe, superiority will often attach to the Rajput.

The poorest Rapput of this day retains all the pride of ancestry, often his sole inheritance; he scorns to hold the plough, or to use his lance but on horseback.

The Rajput of character is a being of the most acute sensibility; where honour is concerned, the most trivial omission is often ignorantly construed into an affront.

The noble Rajput, with a spirit of constancy and enduring courage, seized every opportunity to turn upon his oppressor. By his perseverance and valour, he wore out entire dynasties of foes, alternately yielding 'to his fate,' or restricting the circle of conquest.

If devotion to the fair sex be admitted as a criterion of civilisation, the Rajput must rank high. His susceptibility is extreme, and fires at the slightest offence to female delicacy, which he never forgives.

Lt Col James Tod



Among the people of India today none are more typically Indian or prouder of Indian culture and tradition than the Rajputs. Their heroic deeds in the past have become a living part of that very tradition.

Jawaharlal Nehru

The Rajputs were the vanguard of Hindu India in the face of the Islamic onslaught.

Historian Stanley Wolpert

The mothers of this land infuse bravery and patriotism into the hearts of their children right from the time they are in the cradle. No wonder the whole of Rajasthan is replete with examples of unparalleled heroism. But what amazes one is the fact that besides battlefields, the people of Rajasthan have unfurled the banner of triumphant success also in the field of trade and commerce.

D.K. Taknet

He called Rajputana the land of romance and chivalry, the region where nature, art and a high-bred race of warriors have combined to render every aspect of the province attractive.

Edwin Arnold

He wrote the stirring lines, about the royalty for whom, four things greater than all things are women and horses and power and war'.

Rudyard Kipling

Hinduism is 'a religion of marvellous vitality which has withstood the impact of more than one great faith'.

Hallam Murray on Hinduism

The Indian puts up with anything rather than quarrel with his mother, and her memory remains fresh and green long after other departed relations and friends have been lost in oblivion.

Edward Elwin

Through his veins, love, passion, carriage and the stern justice revenge throbbed and burnt.

G.W. Forrest on the Proud Rajput

Arnold refers to the great jauhar of Chittor which was committed by 15,000 women. Praising their bravery and valour, Arnold writes: 'So eager were those dauntless Rajputs or King's children to sustain the name or to conquer or to die for Suryavansha'.

When Jaisalmer was seized, Arnold writes: '24,000
Rajput women were put to death forcibly. They were
thrown in the fire by their husbands, fathers and
brothers before going to fight to die
for their faith. When these women were dead, they put
tulsi leaves in their turbans, yellow powder
on their faces and garments and marched
forward to die. This was a grand example of the
Rajput valour which left Arnold with
great admiration for this race'.

Though jeuhar was a medieval custom, it reminded the travellers of the great sacrifices of the Rajput women and as a part of Rajput military strategies. This custom did not prevail in the nineteenth century and this nature of sacrifices ended with the establishment of the British paramountcy in Rajputana.

Arnold on Jauhar

Trevelyan found something stupendous in the hospitality of India. According to him, after five minutes of introduction it was very ordinary for Indians to ask a stranger to come and spend a month with them.

Hermann Keyserling wrote very highly of Rajputs while travelling in India. He confesses that "there are no more noble types than these Rajputs". He compares the nobles of his own country and Rajputs: 'How paltry do the bearers of our oldest names, the oldest of which only date from yesterday, compared with those of India appear by the side of any Rajputs." He makes a notable remark in his diary when he writes: 'How little my subconscious

is still free from European prejudices. It disturbs me, I cannot describe it otherwise that there are men in India like the Rajputs.

He adds: 'How splendid these Rajputs look'. All the different and characteristic arts of knighthood were practised in Jaipur as 'only knightly virtues matter, knights alone count'.

Arnold refers to the Rajputs in high-flown eloquence and says that a whole *Iliad* could be written about their daring deeds and boundless loyalty.