

The name Shah Jahan comes from Persian meaning "King of the World." He was the fifth Mughal ruler after Baburr.

He succeeded to the throne upon his father's death in 1627. He is considered to be one of the greatest Mughals and his reign has been called the Golden Age of Mughals.

In 1634, the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, extended his hospitality to the English traders to the region of Bengal (and in 1717 completely waived customs duties for the trade).

The chief events of his reign were the destruction of the kingdom of Ahmadnagar (1636), the loss of Kandahar to the Persians (1653), and a second war against the Deccan princes (1655).

In 1658 he fell ill, and was confined by his son Aurangzeb in the citadel of Agra until his death in 1666. On the eve of his death in 1666, the Mughal Empire spanned almost about 9/10 the size of modern India.

The period of his reign was the golden age of Mughal architecture. Shah Jahan erected many splendid monuments, the most famous of which is the Taj Mahal at Agra built as a tomb for his wife Mumtaz Mahal (birth name Arjumand Banu Begum). The Pearl Mosque at Agra and the palace and great mosque at Delhi also commemorate him. The celebrated Peacock Throne, said to be worth millions of dollars by modern estimates, also dates from his reign. He was the founder of Shahjahanabad, now known as 'Old Delhi'. The important buildings of Shah Jahan were the Diwan-i-Am and Diwan-i-Khas in the fort of Delhi, the Jama Masjid, the Moti Masjid and the Taj. It is pointed out that the Palace of Delhi is the most magnificent in the East.

Birth And Early Years

Shah Jahan was born as Prince Khurram Shihab-ud-din Muhammad, in 1592 in Lahore as the third and favorite son of the emperor Jahangir his mother being a Rathore Rajput Princess, known as Princess Jagat Gosain who was Jahangir's second wife. The name Khurram - Persian for 'joyful' - was given by his grandfather Akbar. His early years saw him receive a cultured, broad education and he distinguished himself in the martial arts and as a military commander while leading his father's armies in numerous campaigns, impressing his father at the age of 16 when he built his quarters within Babur's Kabul fort and redesigned buildings within Agra fort.

Marriage

In 1607 he was to marry Arjumand Banu Begum, the grand daughter of a Persian noble, who was just 14 years old at the time. She would become the unquestioned love of his life. They would, however, have to wait five years before they were married in 1612. After their wedding celebrations, he, "finding her in appearance and character elect among all the women of the time," gave her the title Mumtaz Mahal (Jewel of the Palace).

According to the official court chronicler Qazwini, the relationship with his other two wives "had nothing more than the status of marriage. The intimacy, deep affection, attention and favor which His Majesty had for the Cradle of Excellence [Mumtaz] exceeded by a thousand times what he felt for any other."

Accession

Inheritance of power and wealth in the Mughal empire was not determined through primogeniture, but by princely sons competing to achieve military successes and consolidating their power at court. This often led to rebellions and wars of succession. As a result, a complex political climate surrounded the Mughal court. In 1611 his father married Nur Jahan, the widowed daughter of a Persian immigrant. She rapidly became an important member of Jahangir's court and, together with her brother Asaf Khan, wielded considerable influence.

Khurram's intense military successes of 1617 against the Lodi in the Deccan effectively

secured the southern border of the empire and his grateful father rewarded him with the prestigious title 'Shah Jahan Bahadur' (Brave King of the World) which implicitly sealed his inheritance.

Upon the death of Jahangir in 1627, Khurram succeeded to the Mughal throne as Shah Jahan, King of the World, the latter title alluding to his pride in his Timurid roots.

Despite her frequent pregnancies, Mumtaz Mahal travelled with Shah Jahan's entourage throughout his earlier military campaigns and the subsequent rebellion against his father. Mumtaz Mahal was utterly devoted — she was his constant companion and trusted confidante and their relationship was intense.

Rule at Shah Jahan's court

Although his father's rule was generally peaceful, the empire was experiencing challenges by the end of his reign. Shah Jahan reversed this trend by putting down a Islamic rebellion in Ahmednagar, repulsing the Portuguese in Bengal, capturing the Rajput kingdoms of Baglana and Bundelkhand to the west and the northwest beyond the Khyber Pass. Shah Jahan's military campaigns drained the imperial treasury.[citation needed] Under his rule, the state became a huge military machine and the nobles and their contingents multiplied almost fourfold, as did the demands for more revenue from the peasantry. It was however a period of general stability — the administration was centralised and court affairs systematized. Historiography and the arts increasingly became instruments of propaganda, where beautiful artworks or poetry expressed specific state ideologies which held that central power and hierarchical order would create balance and harmony. The empire continued to expand moderately during his reign but the first signs of an imperial decline were seen in the later years.

Under Shah Jahan the Mughal Empire attained its highest union of strength with magnificence. The land revenue of the Mughal Empire under Shah Jahan was 20¾ millions. The magnificence of Shah Jahan's court was the wonder of European travelers. His Peacock Throne, with its trail blazing in the shifting natural colors of rubies, sapphires, and emeralds.

His political efforts encouraged the emergence of large centres of commerce and crafts — such as Lahore, Delhi, Agra, and Ahmedabad — linked by roads and waterways to distant places and ports. He moved the capital from Agra to Delhi.

Under Shah Jahan's rule, Mughal artistic and architectural achievements reached their zenith. Shah Jahan was a prolific builder with a highly refined aesthetic. He built the legendary Taj Mahal in Agra as a tomb for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Among his other surviving buildings are the Red Fort and Jama Masjid in Delhi, the Shalimar Gardens of Lahore, sections of the Lahore Fort (such as Sheesh Mahal, and Naulakha pavilion), and his father's mausoleum.

Fate

His son Aurangzeb led a rebellion when Shah Jahan became ill in 1657 and publicly executed his brother and the heir apparent Dara Shikoh. Dara was the eldest of the sons and was the favorite of both the Emperor and the people. With this Dara assumed the role of Regent in his

father's stead which brought animosity towards him swiftly by his brothers. Upon receiving this information, his younger brothers, Shuja, Viceroy of Bengal, and Marad, Viceroy of Gujarat, declared their independence, and marched upon Agra in order to claim their riches. Aurangzeb, the third son, the ablest and most virile of the brothers join them and being placed in chief command, attacked Dara's army close to Agra and completely defeated him.[16] Although Shah Jahan fully recovered from his illness, Aurangzeb declared him incompetent to rule and put him under house arrest in Agra Fort.

Jahanara Begum Sahib voluntarily shared his 8-year confinement and nursed him in his dotage. In January of 1666, Shah Jahan fell ill. Confined to bed, he became progressively weaker until, on January 22, he commanded the ladies of the imperial court, particularly his consort of later years Akbarabadi Mahal, to the care of Jahanara. After reciting the Kalima and verses from the Qu'ran, he died. Jahanara planned a state funeral which was refused by Aurangzeb as he was against ostentation and the body was washed in accordance with Islamic rites, taken by river in a sandalwood coffin to the Taj Mahal and was interred there next to the body of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Information redacted from Wikipedia. For further research, read it.