



**Rani Padmini** was the Rajput queen of Chittor Rajput and was married to the King Ratan Singh.

Ala-ud-din Khilji, Sultan of Delhi, who had heard of her unparalleled beauty, began to fantasize and expressed the desire to contemplate her.

He sent a message to King Ratan Singh, saying he was willing to offer his friendship if he was allowed to see the face of Rani Padmini just once, saying he considered her as his sister.

To avoid a war, Ratan Singh asked Rani Padmini to meet his "brother" with the face uncovered, but Padmini who was strong and smart, could smell an ambush. She refused to meet him, however, offered her husband that the Sultan could watch her reflection in a mirror, to preserve her honor.

Ratan Singh agreed and sent for Ala-ud-din. Instantly the Sultan came to meet Rani Padmini, accompanied by his most trusted generals and soldiers. While Ala-ud-din was waiting anxiously to meet her, his generals examined the fort's defenses, as they planned an attack on Chittor.

Rani Padmini was standing beside the lotus pool and when Ala-ud-din, saw her reflection in the mirror, he was stunned, impressed by her bright beauty. Dissatisfied for not being able to meet her in person, ordered his soldiers to pounce on Ratan Singh when he accompanied him outside the fort and took him prisoner to his camp.

Then Ala-ud-din sent a letter to Rani Padmini telling her that if she wanted her husband was released unharmed, she had to become his lover.

The queen, who was as smart as beautiful, agreed to go to Ala-ud-din's camp accompanied of 150 palanquins to her servants, led by disguised soldiers and others hiding inside them.

Thanks to this trick she could free her husband.

Ala-ud-din responded with the blockade of Chittor's fort. After a long time, the supplies inside the fort gradually decreased and Ratan Singh gave orders for opening the doors, planning a fight to the death, because they could not take it anymore.

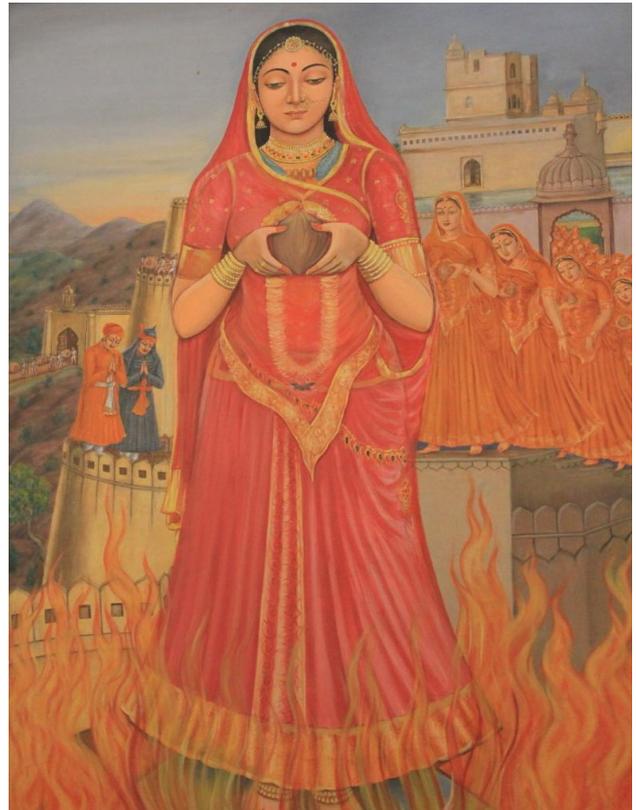
Rani Padmini was aware that her husband's troops were far fewer in number and would be easily defeated and disgraced once they entered the battlefield.

So, children were taken outside the fort during the night with trusted bodyguards to save them from the invaders.

At dawn on August 26, 1303, a large bonfire was lit in a room with just one door. Rani Padmini and women belonging to her court dressed up again in their best clothes as young brides, went to the fire room, closed the door behind them and jumped into the flames by mass.

Men, with a big weight on their hearts, dressed up in the supreme sacrifice's saffron robe, opened the gates of the fort and resisted to the end. Almost all Rajputs died in the battle that day.

When the Sultan and his troops entered the fortress, ready to sack Chittor and dishonor to all women, only found evidence of the mass suicide.



*The Jauhar is an ancient Rajput tradition that started with the story of Rani Padmini and her suicide. It refers to the voluntary and honorary death of the queen and other royal women. When the Rajput kingdom was defeated by the Muslim rulers, women preferred to commit suicide rather than be captured by Muslim invaders, who used them in their harems.*

*Rani Padmini, the wife of King Rawal Ratan Singh, was the queen of Chittor. She is often personified as a mythical figure for her exceptional beauty and personality; her courage and sacrifice. Rani Padmini's story has been beautifully commemorated in Padmavat, an epic poem written by Malik Muhammad Jayasi in Awadhi language in 1540.*

