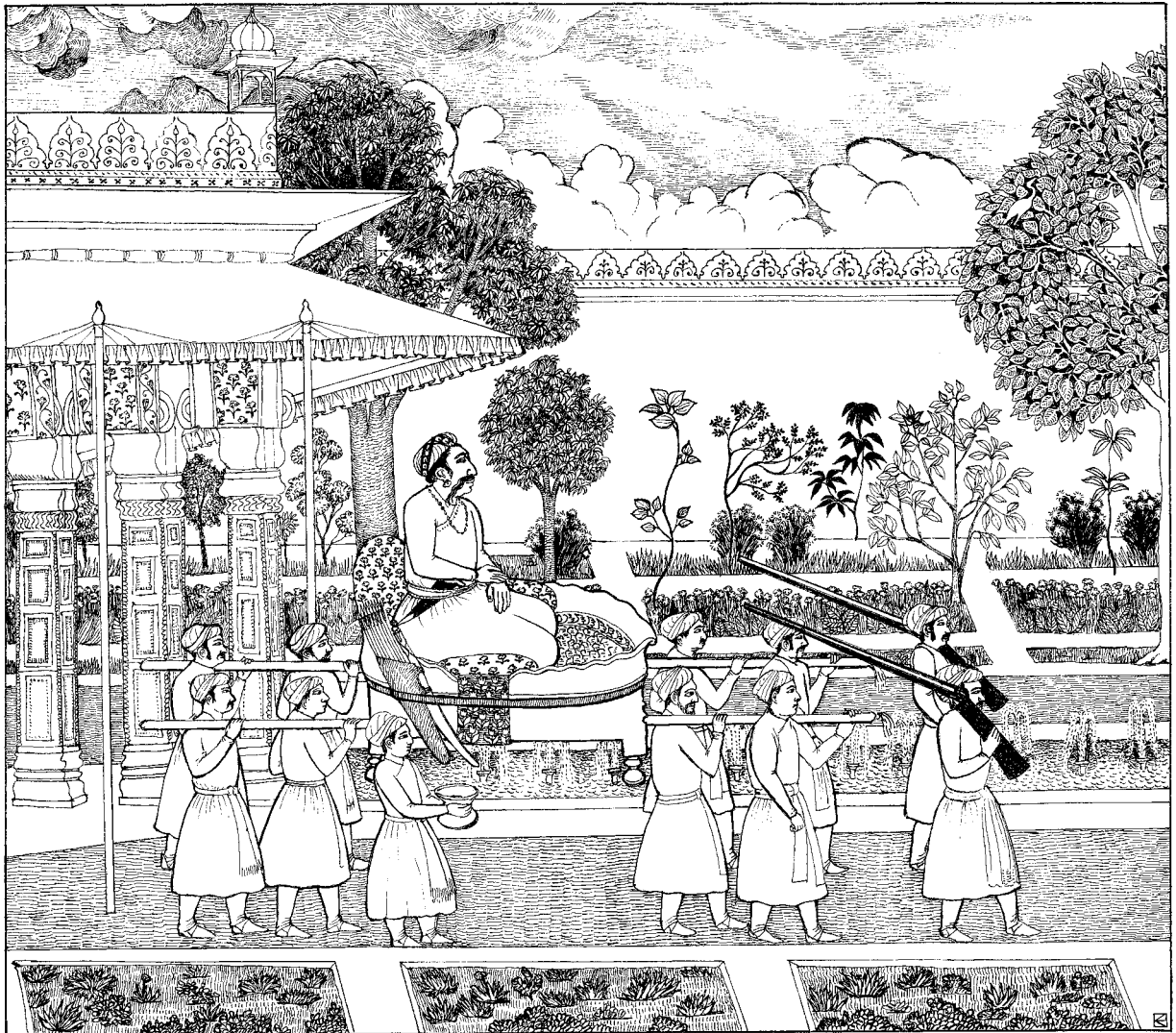




The Amirs of the Mughal Empire



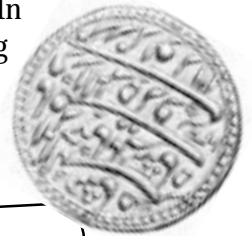
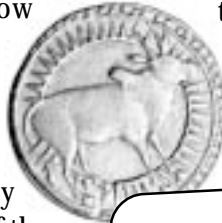
Here is an amir of the Mughal empire. This is how an amir sometimes travelled from place to place.

Mansabdars and Amirs

Administering a kingdom or a state requires officials and their staff. During the Mughal period the officials who looked after the administration of the empire were known as *mansabdars* (mansabdar). *Mansabdar* means holder of a rank – the emperor assigned a rank to each of his officials. The Mughal empire had thousands of high and low *mansabdars*. They executed the orders of the emperor. They maintained accounts of tax collected. If anyone rebelled against the authority of the emperor, it was the *mansabdars* who suppressed the revolt. They protected the empire and extended the rule of the Mughals to new areas. Of the thousands of mansabdars, around 500 or so were high officials or nobles called amirs.

In those days, no official in any kingdom in the world received as high a salary as the Mughal amirs or senior mansabdars. How else could they have lived in such luxury and grandeur? The Mughal empire had nobles whose salaries ranged from Rs 8,000

per month to Rs 45,000 per month. In those days you could buy 40 kg of wheat for a rupee. So just imagine how rich those nobles were!



Some coins from those times

Remember:
All Mughal officials who received a salary from the emperor were called **mansabdars**. A few very senior mansabdars were called **amirs** and they were the nobles of the Mughal empire.

How did a person become an official during Mughal rule? Let's try and find out. We will also compare Mughal officials with officers in the administrative service today, to see what similarities and differences there are between them.

Look carefully at the picture on the previous page. As you look at it, what thoughts come to your mind regarding the amirs of the Mughal empire? Write these thoughts down in your own words.

The Life of Amir Baqar Khan

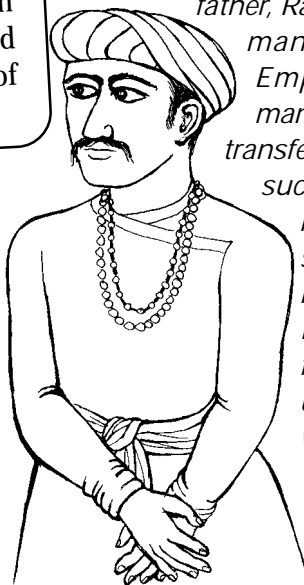
Let's read about the life of an amir of the Mughal empire. His name was Baqar Khan (baakar Khan). He was a noble during the reign of Emperor Jahangir (jahangir), who had become the emperor after the death of Akbar in 1605.

Do you know how a person gets a government job today? Discuss in your class.

How do you think Baqar Khan got a government job?

The Appointment of a Mansabdar

Baqar Khan's ancestors were Irani nobles. His father, Rahmat Khan (rahmat Khan), became a mansabdar during the reign of Emperor Akbar. Like other mansabdars, Rahmat Khan was also transferred from place to place. After one such transfer, Rahmat Khan found himself posted at Handia. His two sons, Baqar Khan and Asaf Khan, had grown up by then. Rahmat Khan was worried about their future. "Will my sons find jobs under the emperor?" he wondered.



Rahmat Khan's father had also been in the service of the Mughal emperor. But this did not mean that his sons would automatically become mansabdars. It depended on the wish of the emperor. It was the emperor who decided who should be appointed a mansabdar.

One day, Rahmat Khan was busy preparing for a trip to Ujjain. He was supervising the packing of some jewels, gold coins and expensive clothes with zari work in a box when his son Baqar Khan entered the room.

"Abbajaan, why are you taking all these things to Ujjain?" asked Baqar Khan.

Rahmat Khan replied, "Son, I'm going to meet Abdullah Khan, the subedar of Malwa, at Ujjain. I want him to recommend you and your brother to Emperor Jahangir for a job in the administration. Of course, he won't make the

recommendation on his own. I will have to give him something - a present. That's why I'm taking these valuable gifts with me."

In those days, the Mughal empire was divided into 12 subas or provinces. Malwa was one of the subas and Ujjain was its capital. The highest official in the suba was known as the subedar.

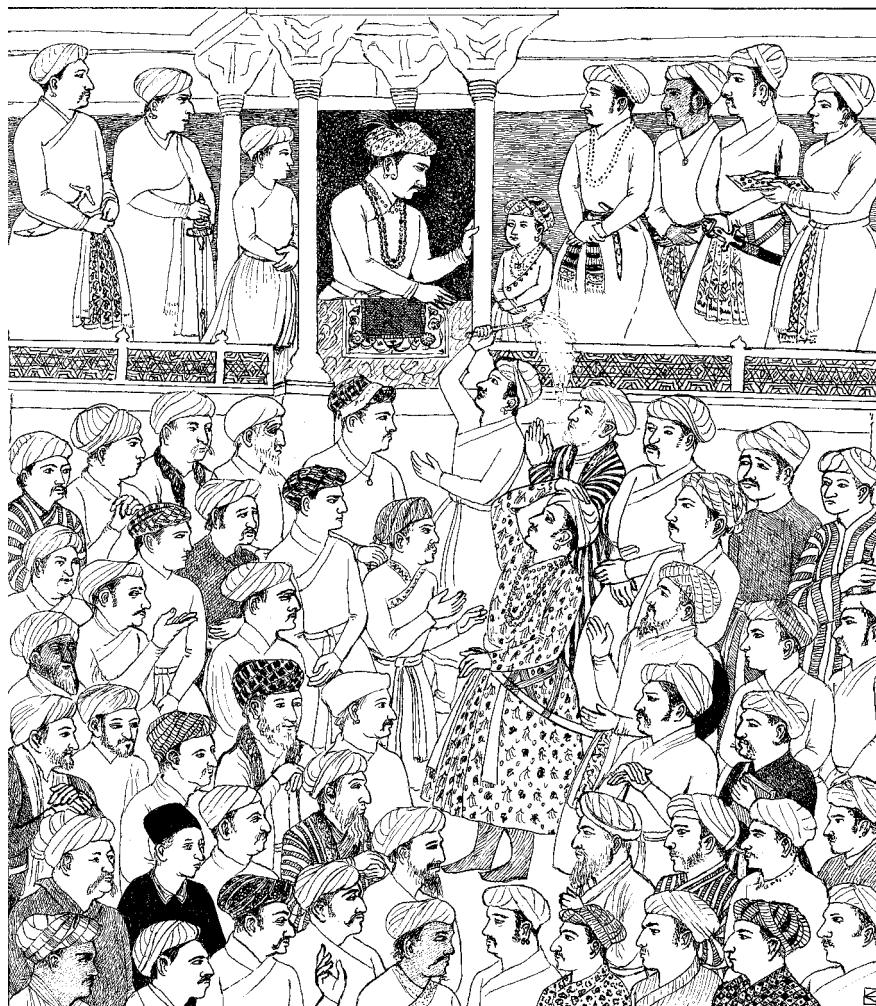
The emperor appointed new mansabdars on the recommendations of his senior officials. That was why Baqar Khan's father set out to meet subedar Abdullah Khan.

The subedar agreed to recommend the case of Baqar Khan, the elder son. He wrote a letter to the emperor in which he praised Baqar Khan, saying he was a good swordsman. He also wrote that Baqar Khan's father, Rahmat Khan, was a loyal mansabdar. He concluded the letter by saying it would be fitting to make Baqar Khan a junior mansabdar.

The subedar sent the letter to Agra through a *qasida* (runners who conveyed letters). Agra was the capital of the Mughal empire and the emperor lived there.

The letter reached the *mir bakshi* in Agra. The *mir bakshi* (*mir ba#Sal*) was the official who looked after the appointments of mansabdars. The following day, when Emperor Jahangir presided over his court, the *mir bakshi* read out the letter from the Malwa subedar.

Emperor Jahangir gave his orders to the *mir bakshi*. "Prepare a *farman* to make Baqar Khan a mansabdar. Give Baqar Khan the responsibility of



The darbar of Emperor Jahangir. No one could sit down in front of the emperor. Can you see a Portuguese padre standing amongst the others?

raising a contingent of 100 cavalymen and 200 horses. Decide what his first job should be and let me know."

After being briefed by the mir bakshi, the emperor decided to make Baqar Khan the kotwal (*Katvaala*) of Raisen.

A few days later, a royal farman (*Farman* - which today we call a government order) was issued in which the details of Baqar Khan's appointment were spelt out. Baqar Khan's salary was fixed at Rs 5,000 per month. In addition, he was to be paid a sum of Rs 1,500 per month to maintain a contingent of 100 cavalymen and 200 horses.

Baqar Khan was overjoyed when he received the farman in Handia. At last he too would become a mansabdar!

It was Baqar Khan's good fortune that he was appointed a mansabdar. Now let's find out what happened after his appointment.

The Mansabdar's Guarantor

A few days after receiving the farman, Baqar Khan went to meet the subedar of Malwa. He had been appointed as the kotwal of Raisen, which came under the Malwa suba.

Subedar Abdullah Khan told him, "You are now a junior mansabdar. If you work hard you can become a senior mansabdar like your father."

The subedar asked Baqar Khan, "Who is your guarantor (*Jawantdar*)?" Baqar Khan replied, "Seth Hukumchand is my father's guarantor. He knows me well. I'm sure he'll stand guarantee for me too."

Comparing Then and Now

This was how officials were appointed during the time of the Mughals. How different it is from the way officials are appointed today! These days, when the government wishes to appoint people to various posts, it first places an advertisement in the papers. The advertisement gives the details of the posts vacant in various departments. It shows how many posts are available, the qualifications needed for each post, etc. Any person can submit an application for the posts if he or she meets the minimum requirements. All the candidates then appear for an examination and face interviews. Those who pass the examination and interview are appointed to the job. These are the procedures of appointment in the government. If they are not followed, people can file a case in a court.

In those days, a mansabdar had to get a prominent person to stand guarantee for him before he could get a salary. If the mansabdar mishandled or misappropriated money, or did not do his work properly, the emperor could ask the guarantor to pay up, thus compensating the state for any loss.

Baqar Khan got Ujjain's Seth Hukumchand to stand guarantee for him.

Maintaining a Cavalry Contingent

In this way Baqar Khan fulfilled one condition for receiving his salary. A second condition still remained - he had to organise a force of 100 cavalymen (horse riders) for the emperor.

In those days, all mansabdars, whether big or small, had to maintain a troop of cavalry.

However, such a system did not exist in the time of the Mughals. There were no such application procedures laid out. Everything depended on the goodwill of the emperor. And if Baqar Khan did not get the job, he could not appeal to anyone.

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An example of a modern advertisement

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT BOARD
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Subject: Filling up the post of Scientist "E"/"F" on deputation/contract basis
Government of India has constituted Technology Development Board (TDB), a Statutory body under the Department of Science and Technology in the year 1996 to administer the Fund for Technology Development and Application.
TDB invites applications for the following posts of Scientists.
1. Scientist "F" in the pay scale of Rs. 16,400-450-20,000
2. Scientist "E" in the pay scale of Rs. 14,300-400-18,300
The job involves appraisal and processing of technology commercialisation project proposals, monitoring, steering till fruition of the projects. The above posts are to be filled on deputation/contract basis for a period of 3 years.
Essential qualifications: Post Graduates in Science or Graduate in Engineering or Technology related subject.
Experience: Three years in responsible position on technology financing/technology commercialisation.
Eligibility: Scientists working in immediate lower grade shall be considered for the next higher grade.
For the post of Scientist "F": 5 years regular service in the grade of Scientist "E" (Rs. 14,300-400-18,300)
For the post of Scientist "E": 5 years regular service in the grade of Scientist "D" (Rs. 12,000-375-16,500)
Scientists and Technologists holding analogous posts in Central Govt./State Govt./Autonomous bodies/industry are also eligible.
Age: Not exceeding 56 years as on 19th November, 2002.
The above posts carry usual allowances as applicable to the Central Government employees and also other benefits like Leave Travel Concession, Medical facilities, etc. The employees of the Board are not covered under the general pool of government accommodation.
FORMAT OF THE APPLICATION
(1) Name in full (in Capital Letters), (2) Father's/Huband's Name, (3) Address for Communication, (4) Permanent Address, (5) Date of Birth (in Christian Era), (6) Academic Qualifications, (7) Employment details in chronological order including pay drawn, (8) "experience(s)", (9) Names and Addresses of two Referees (10) Self Appraisal and (11) Signature of the Applicant with date.
Interested candidates may send their applications through proper channel to:
The Secretary,
Technology Development Board,
Department of Science and Technology,
Technology Bhawan,
New Mehrauli Road, New Delhi-110016.
Last date for receipt of applications: 19th November, 2002
davp 1347/2/2002
Technology Development Board.

Some kept 10 soldiers, some 100 and some even 5,000 soldiers. Whenever the emperor needed soldiers, he would send an order to his mansabdars.

The emperor also kept a separate army. But he made each mansabdar maintain some troops for him. The mansabdars paid the salaries of these soldiers and the expenses for the upkeep of horses from the money the emperor gave them.

In this way, the responsibility of maintaining a huge army was divided among all the mansabdars. The mansabdars could also use their soldiers for other administrative responsibilities.

Baqar Khan's father maintained a contingent of 1000 men and 2000 horses in Handia. Baqar Khan purchased 200 horses with the help of his father's horse trader. He then told his father's cavalymen that he needed soldiers. They recruited men from their villages. Thus, Baqar Khan recruited a contingent of 100 young men. Since he had not yet begun to receive a salary, he took a loan from Seth Hukumchand to meet all the expenses.

Complete the following sentences:

During the Mughal period, all officials were appointed by _____.

The emperor appointed new officials based on the _____ of his senior amirs.

The mansabdar received money for his salary besides money for _____

Baqar Khan Takes Charge of his Kotwali

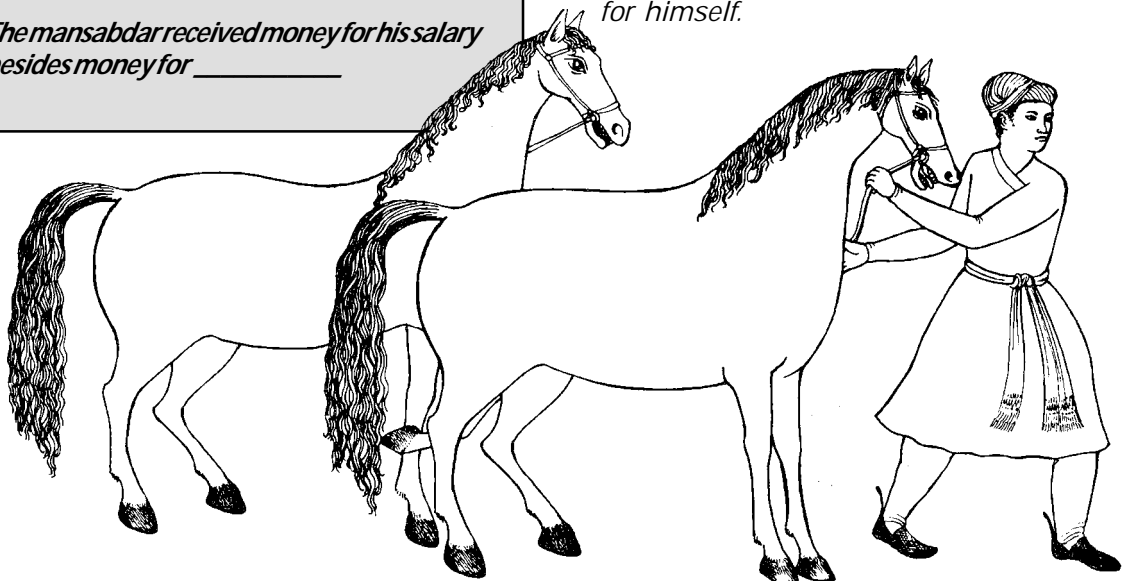
Once his cavalry contingent was ready, Baqar Khan left Handia for Raisen. He carried the royal farman of his appointment with him. On reaching Raisen he went to the kotwali and took up his duties. His work included catching thieves and dacoits, maintaining peace and order and keeping an eye on the happenings in town.

Several months passed. Baqar Khan was running out of money. This was the money he had borrowed from Seth Hukumchand. The Seth was demanding his money back. But Baqar Khan had still not received his salary.

Baqar Khan sent one of his men to Agra. The man made the rounds of the imperial **diwan's** office. The imperial diwan was the mansabdar who arranged payments of salaries. The imperial diwan kept the accounts of the income and expenditure of the entire Mughal empire.

Baqar Khan Gets a Jagir

During the time of the Mughals, there were two ways in which officials were paid. Some mansabdars were paid in cash. But the majority were given jagirs. A jagir meant the mansabdar had the right to collect the emperor's taxes from the people of a certain area and keep the money for himself.



For instance Baqar Khan's salary was Rs 5,000 per month. He was paid an additional Rs 1,500 for his cavalry.

Can you calculate the monthly amount provided to Baqar Khan for keeping one soldier and two horses?

In a year, Baqar Khan should have received a total of Rs 78,000 for himself and his cavalry. To arrange for this Rs 78,000, the imperial diwan picked out 40 villages in the Malwa suba from which a total land tax of Rs 78,000 was due. These 40 villages were near Dewas. The diwan selected these 40 villages as Baqar Khan's jagir.

On the imperial diwan's recommendation, Emperor Jahangir issued a farman in which he ordered that Baqar Khan may collect the land tax from these 40 villages and retain it in lieu of his salary.

Those mansabdars who received salaries in the form of jagirs were known as jagirdars. In this way, Baqar Khan became a jagirdar and his salary was taken care of.

But consider one point. Did the emperor give all the villages and towns in his empire as jagirs? If he did, how could he pay for his own expenses? Actually, the emperor kept about 25 percent of the land tax for himself. He did not give villages and towns in some areas of the empire as jagir. The land tax of these areas was collected by his officers and turned over to him.

Did the jagirdars turn over a part of the land tax from their jagirs to the emperor? Explain.

Collecting Land Tax from the Jagir

Baqar Khan was posted in Raisen but the jagir allotted to him was in Dewas. He would have to go to Dewas to collect his salary.

Find how far Dewas is from Raisen using the map on page 16.

Baqar Khan got ready to go to Dewas once he got the farman for his jagir.

The Amil

First Baqar Khan had to solve one problem. How was he to collect land tax from the villages of Dewas? He could not go personally to every village to collect land tax. Baqar Khan looked for a reliable man who could be entrusted with the task of collecting land tax on his behalf.

In a few days he found the right man. His name was Banarsi Das and he was the son of a trader in Raisen. Baqar Khan appointed Banarsi Das as his amil (Amla) or agent.

He made an arrangement with Banarsi Das - in return for collecting the land tax on his behalf, Baqar Khan would pay him a certain amount of money. Baqar Khan also took Rs 2,000 from Banarsi Das as guarantee. This was to ensure that Banarsi Das did not fudge the accounts or make off with the land tax. If he did, Baqar Khan stood to lose a great deal of money. So he took this guarantee beforehand, which he would return only if Banarsi Das brought him the taxes.

After making all these arrangements, Baqar Khan and his amil Banarsi Das left for Dewas where the villages of his jagir were. They first met the diwan of Dewas. The diwan kept the accounts of land tax of all the villages of the area.



You remember that the imperial diwan maintained the accounts of the entire empire? Each smaller area also had its own diwan.

The diwan of Dewas provided Baqar Khan with the details of the 40 villages of his jagir. He also showed him the land tax accounts. He then advised Baqar Khan, "Collect only as much land tax as has been fixed by the emperor. I don't want to receive any complaint from the peasants. If complaints are received, I shall inform the emperor. He will then demote you and reduce your salary. Of course, if the peasants or zamindars of any village refuse to pay land tax, inform the fauzdar (Faujadar). He will send his soldiers to assist you."

After his discussions with the diwan and fauzdar, Baqar Khan and his amil went to the villages. They called the zamindars, patels and patwaris of the villages and showed them the royal farman.

Baqar Khan told them, "Banarsi Das is my amil. He will collect land tax from you on my behalf. Please give him all your assistance."

Having made the arrangements, Baqar Khan returned to Raisen. Banarsi Das collected his salary from the villages and brought it to him.

In the next chapter you will read how the *amil* collected land tax from the villages and how it was often not possible to collect the entire land tax. If the land tax could not be collected properly, the jagirdars would not be able to recover their full salaries for the year.

Inspection of the Cavalry

One day an order came from the mir bakshi in Agra. Baqar Khan was told to report at Agra within two months with his troops. The emperor was to inspect his contingent.

You have read that every mansabdar had to keep a specified number of mounted soldiers for the emperor. Baqar Khan had to maintain 100 cavalymen. The emperor wanted to make sure that his mansabdars were actually maintaining their cavalry. That's why he inspected their contingents once every one or two years.

The mansabdar's horses would be branded (permanently marked) during these inspections. In addition, a report carrying a description of each of his soldiers would be registered at Agra. Any mansabdar who failed to take his troops for inspection was punished. The punishment was usually a demotion.

Baqar Khan reached Agra with his army. The emperor himself inspected the army along with the mir bakshi. The horses were branded and descriptions of the cavalymen were recorded.



Transfers

All *mansabdars* in the Mughal empire were transferred every one or two years. Their jagirs, also kept changing. There was a very important reason for doing this. The Mughal emperors did not want any of their senior officials to get too strong or too well established in one place.

What would happen if a *mansabdar* remained in one place for many years? He would establish relations with powerful and prominent families of the area. With their help he could even rebel against the emperor. To prevent this from happening the *mansabdars* were constantly transferred and their jagirs were changed.

Baqar Khan was transferred many times. He went to Multan, Agra, Awadh and Bengal. He was also promoted, rising in rank. By 1627 he became the subedar of Orissa. He was, thus, a senior mansabdar or amir. His salary was Rs 30,000 per month. He had to maintain 5,000 cavalymen, for which he was paid another Rs 80,000 per month.

b) How did the Mughal emperors ensure the following duties of their officers

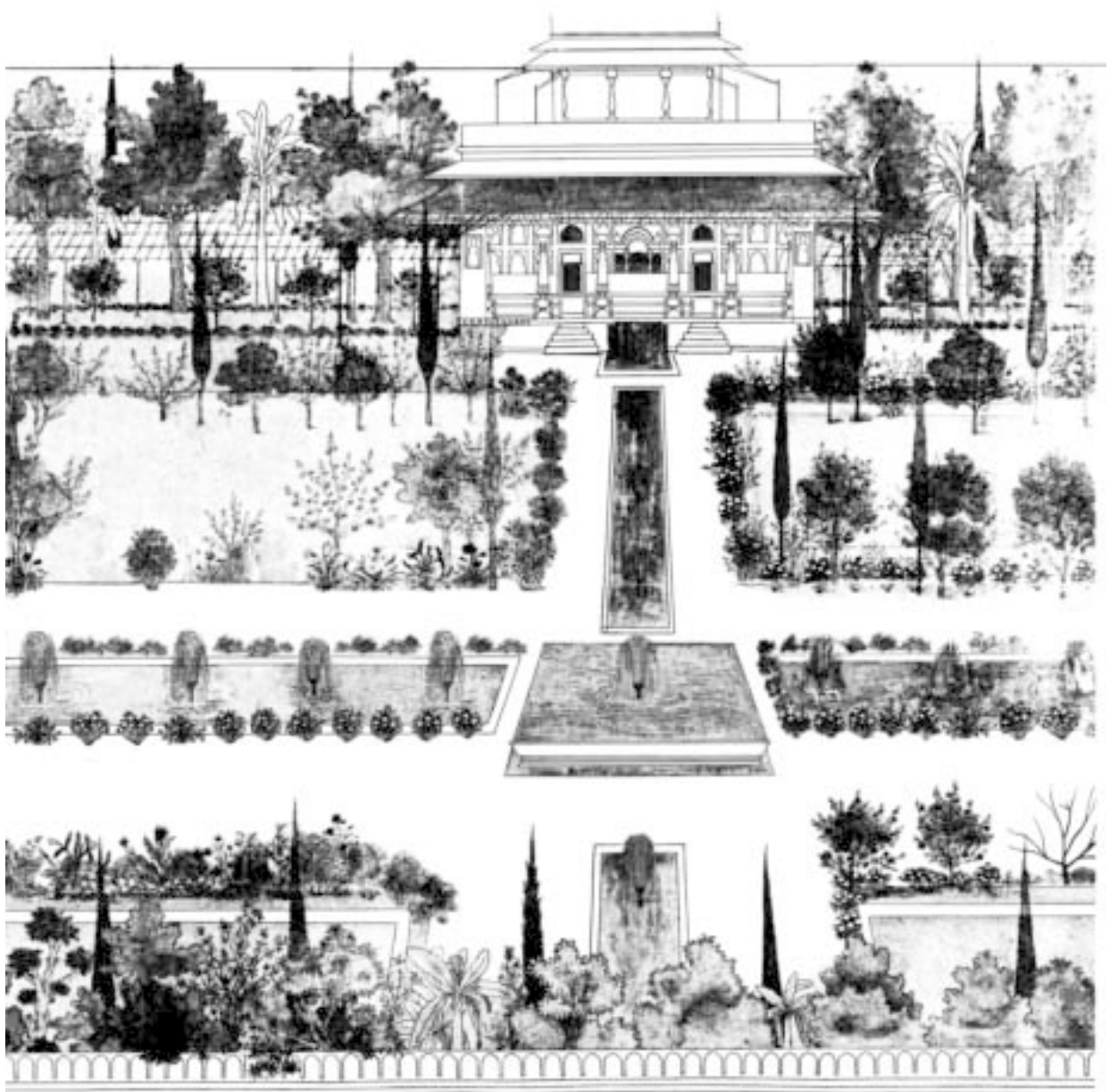
- **Responsibility for maintaining an army**

a) Compare the officers of today with those of Mughal times. Explain the similarities and differences between them with regard to:

- **Manner of appointment**
- **Definite salary**
- **Manner of obtaining salary**
- **Transfer**
- **Responsibility of maintaining troops**

• Collection of tax

Baqar Khan earned Rs 30,000 a month at a time when you could get 40 kg of wheat for a rupee. What did Baqar Khan do with so much money? Let's



take a peep into his home to see how he lived.

The Lifestyle of a Mughal Amir

Baqar Khan lived in a huge palace. It could not be seen from the road because it was surrounded by high walls. The outer wall had a door which was guarded by 20 to 30 sentries. Inside, there was a large formal garden at the centre of which stood his palace. Running through the middle of the garden was a marble channel in which cool water flowed. Beautiful fountains dotted the garden. There were paths on both sides of the channel and square lawns bordered by flower beds and rows of tall trees.

Baqar Khan's palace was made mostly of stone. It had many large rooms. The floors of the rooms were covered with expensive carpets. The walls had niches containing porcelain cups and jars from Iran and China. The walls were made of polished stone. Baqar Khan's own special room was made of marble. It's walls had a floral inlay of coloured precious stones. The ceiling was plated with silver and gold. Some of the rooms were built below ground level to keep them cool during the hot summer months.



Baqar Khan built separate houses for each of his four wives. Each wife had a household of 40 to 50 slaves to serve her.

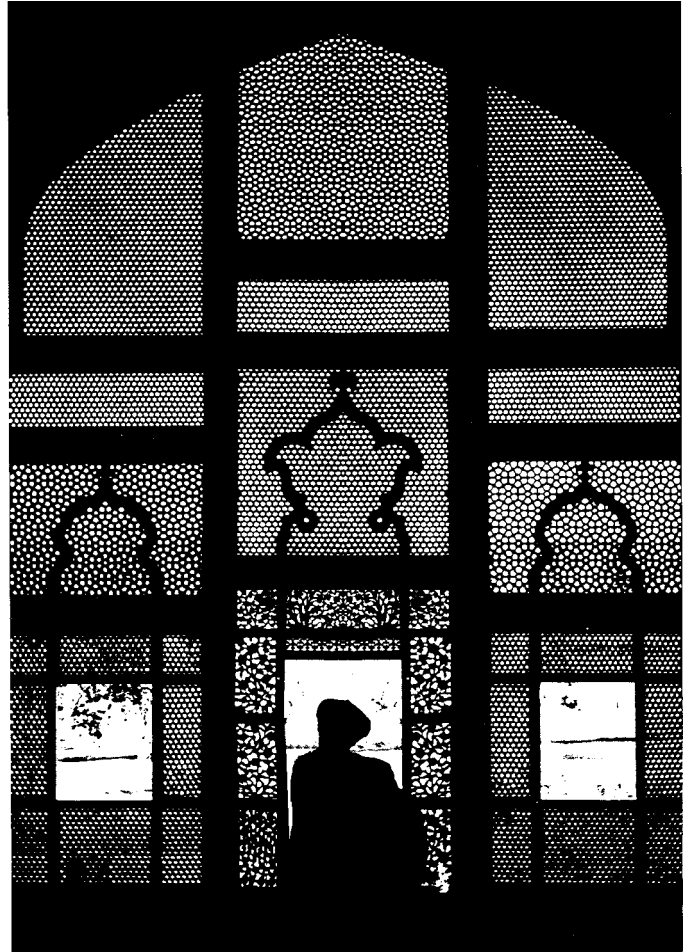
Baqar Khan and his wives were particularly fond of jewels like diamonds and pearls. Traders from far and wide would come to sell them jewels. They also liked beautiful and expensive clothes. Anything already worn

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A marble screen

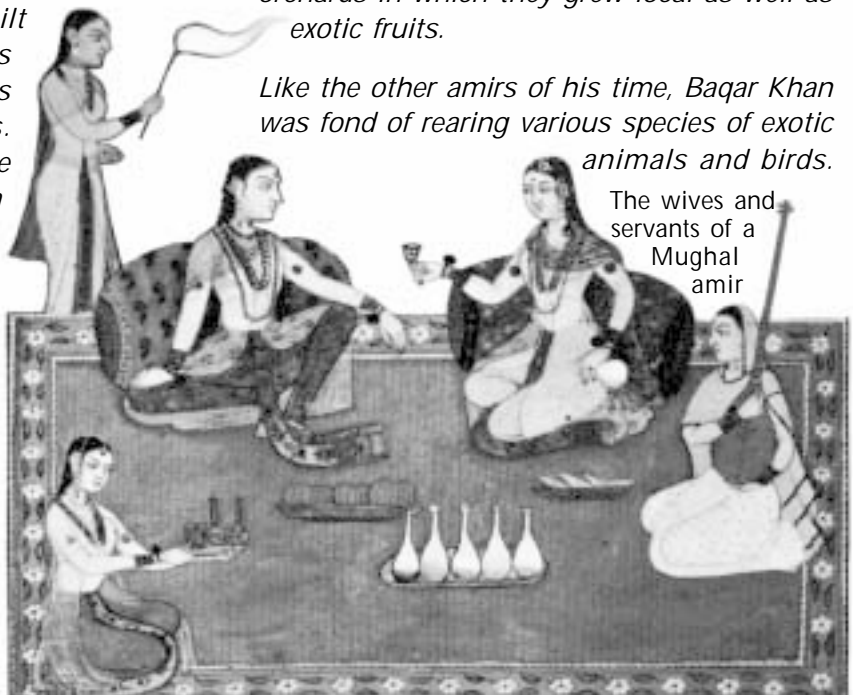
for a day was never worn again.

Their normal everyday clothes were made of the finest muslin and coloured silk, with zari work in gold and silver.

Their food contained the most expensive items of the times. Wine was brought from Iran and ice from Kashmir. They maintained their own orchards in which they grew local as well as exotic fruits.

Like the other amirs of his time, Baqar Khan was fond of rearing various species of exotic animals and birds.

The wives and servants of a Mughal amir



Apart from camels, elephants and horses, he also kept tigers, cheetahs, deer, hawks, colourful parrots, parakeets and peacocks on his grounds. One form of entertainment was to watch fights that were arranged between these animals.

Baqar Khan also had a *karkhana* (Karkana), a kind of workshop, not too far from his palace. It was used to make all the items used in the Baqar Khan household - clothes, carpets, silver and gold jewellery, objects of wood, etc. These items were not sold but used in Baqar Khan's home. Often, famous craftsmen of the area would be brought to the workshop and made to work there.

Baqar Khan needed to collect several lakh rupees from his jagir. He appointed many amils

to do this work. He also employed many clerks and servants in his palace to keep an eye on the amils and maintain an account of the money collected.

Such a huge household with so many servants and underlings meant a great deal of expense. From time to time, expensive gifts had also to be given to the emperor, princes and other high officials.

Apart from spending money on themselves, amirs like Baqar Khan also spent it on buildings for public use by the common people.

Baqar Khan built two mosques with madaras attached to them. He also built a sarai to provide shelter to travelers. If he had been a Rajput amir he would have constructed temples and a pathshala for Hindus. Like the Irani-Turani amirs, the Rajput and Sheikhzada

amirs also lived in opulent luxury. They had grand palaces, hundreds of servants and employees, male and female slaves and many wives. The magnificent palaces of the Rajput amirs can be seen even today in Rajasthan.

Exercises

- 1 How did Baqar Khan get into government service? Can a person get a government job in the same way today?
- 2 Who stood guarantee for the *mansabdars*? Why was the guarantee taken? Does this sort of thing happen these days as well?
- 3 For what work did Baqar Khan appoint an amil? Why did he take guarantee money from the amil ?
- 4 How was the inspection of Baqar Khan's cavalry contingent carried out and why?
- 5 Write six sentences on what you might have seen in Baqar Khan's household if you had gotten a chance to visit him in those days.
- 6 Last year you read about the *bhogpatis*. In those days, instead of salaries the king gave his officers villages for their pleasure and enjoyment. The officers were permitted to extract any kind of tax and carry on the administration in whatever way they chose to.

These 'bhog' villages remained with the same officer and his descendants.



An amir in a state of undress