

Classic Poetry Series

Chand Bardai

- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Chand Bardai(30 September 1149 - 1200)

Chand Bardai (????????) was a Hindu charan and the court poet of the Indian king Prithviraj III Chauhan, who ruled Ajmer and Delhi from 1165 to 1192. A native of Lahore, Chand Bardai composed the Prithviraj Raso, an epic poem in Hindi about the life of Prithviraj. A charan of Jagati gotra, he was a worshiper of the goddess Saraswati, who gifted him with the boon of Bardai.

The Prithviraj Raso was embellished with time and quite a few authors added to it. Only parts of the original manuscript are still intact. There are many versions of Raso but scholars agree that a 1400 stanza poem is the real "Prithivraj Raso". In its longest form the poem comprises upwards of 10,000 stanzas.

The Prithviraj Raso is a source of information on the social and clan structure of the Kshatriya communities of northern India. The historicity of Prithviraj Raso was proved unreliable by historical writers like Buhler, Morrison, GH Ojha and Munshi Devi Prasad.

Family

Chand Bardai was married twice. His wives Kamla and Gauran gave birth to 10 sons, namely Sur, Sunder, Sujan, Jalhan, Vallah, Balbhadra, Kehari, Vir Chand, Avdut and Gunraj, and one daughter, Rajabai.

Career and Work

The royal poet had mastery of grammar, literature, astrology, prosody and the Puranas. He was conversant with the Abhiri, Autkali, Chandali, Dravirhini, Shkari, Swali and Vijaitia dialects. One of his most famous work was Prithviraj Raso. He compiled it in the archaic form of Brajbhasa. It is a long poem consisting of nearly 100,000 stanzas elucidating a chronicle of his master's achievements and the historical accounts. According to Colonel Tod, the poems of Chand Bardai have frequent indistinct references to fire arms, especially the malgola. Impressed by the classic elegance of the work, Colonel Tod translated about 30,000 stanzas into English. French scholar Garsa-de-Tasse certified and testified the authority of this compilation.

Chand Bardai was not only a court poet but was a member of the inner circle of the king. The poet accompanied the king during wars. In the second battle of Tarain (now Taraori, near Karnal in Haryana state — then Punjab) in 1192, Prithviraj lost and captured by Mohammad Ghori and Chand Bardai accompanied

the king was blinded at Ghori's court it was only with the help of Chand Bardai that Prithviraj could kill Mohammad Ghori. This event is described by Chand Bardai in the couplet, "Chaar baas, chaubees gaj, angul ashta pramaan, yete pe sultaan hai, mat chukoe chauhan". Although there are many other forms of this recital, this is the one mentioned in Prithviraj Raso. These events, as written by Bardai and later completed by his son are described in the article on Prithviraj Raso.

Padmavati

Chand Bardai

Prithviraj Raso

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