The Story of Rathor Jaswant Dungarsiyo (d. 1565 or 1566)

Rathor Jaswant had gone to Banswara for military service while landless and in a state of destitution. At that time Rawal Pratap (1549-80) was on the Banswara throne. Jaswant enjoyed the revenues from a land grant of six villages. Then Rao Malde of Jodhpur (1532-62) had sent for elephants from the direction of the Narbada River. Rana Udai Singh of Mewar (ca. 1537-74) had received the news. So the Rana wrote to Rawal Pratap, saying “The Rao’s men have gone for the elephants, when they return they will come on such-and-such a road. You should take their elephants.” The Raoji’s men came to Banswara. The Rawal received word. Then the Rawal positioned his retainers around the elephants they were bringing. Then the Rao’s men made enquiries. They said, “Is there any Rathor Rajput here among the Rawal’s men?” Then someone said, “Jaswant Dungarsiyo is here.” Then the Rao’s men said to Jaswant, “This is our situation.” Then Jaswant said, “I have come here just now while landless. Even my land grant is not yet ready to produce revenue. But, what should I do? If you say so, then bring the elephants here to me. God will make things okay.” Then the Rao’s men, using the pretext of having to provide water for the elephants, released them. Then the Rawal’s men, mentioned above, said, “Where are you going with the elephants?” Then they said, “In fact they fled, to the land beyond. We are watering them and bringing them back.” And so they watered the elephants, but then they took them to Jaswant’s camp and tied them there. The Rawal received the news. The Rawal summoned Jaswantji to his presence. Jaswant went there. The Rawal began the conversation. He said, “Rao Malde did a bad thing. He took Jaitaran Town (in Marwar) from your father while he had a son like you to give it to.” Then Jaswant said, “In that there was no fault on the Rao’s part. The fault was on the part of my brother, Tejsi. Why did Tejsi, then the lord of Jaitaran, stop the Rao’s agent, Abho, because he was owed money? Why did he steal Rao Malde’s dinner plate?” Jaswant told the Rawal the whole story.

Then Jaswant said, “In that business there was no fault of the Rao’s.” Then Rawal Pratap realized there was nothing to be gained through this conversation. Then he said straightforwardly to Jaswantji, “The Rana asked for these elephants. I am the Rana’s servant, so hand over the elephants to me.” Then Jaswantji said, “Did I send for these elephants? They came of their own accord while I was camped here. And why would someone send me a gift?” Now, anyone who takes these elephants will take them only after killing me first.” Then the Rawal said, “You go to your camp then and make preparations to die.” We’ll kill you and take the elephants.” Jaswant came back to his camp. He bathed. He performed seva-puja. He put on his armor and was ready to die. Meanwhile the Rawal provided his commanders with retainers and sent them ahead. Jaswantji had the elephants watered and grazed. He had their feet buried in the ground, then had four Rajputs ascend each, and kept them to his rear. He told his men, “When the action begins, you outfit each elephant with four lances.” He set up that sort of military formation, put on his armor, and confronted the Rawal’s retainers. The hair on Jaswantji’s head was standing up. It pushed his helmet up. This sort of great heroic passion arose within Jaswantji. The Rawal’s commanders observed him and sent word to the Rawal. They said, “We are going to kill Jaswant, but today the son of Dungarsi is a man to behold.” Then the Rawal came. He came and observed the demeanor of Jaswantji. The Rawal got down from
his horse, came forward, and embraced Jaswant. He said, “The Rano may do whatever he wishes with me, but I shall not kill you.” Afterward Jaswant sent the elephants to Campabai in Sirohi. The Rawal gave Jaswantji a land grant double the value of his previous one and highly honored him.