FORMATIVE YEARS (1817 A.D.-1863 A.D.)

Past history reveals that the girls were killed as soon after the birth. Even the people of lower caste, big *jagirdars*, highly designated people and kings were not behind in the killing of girls. During the war unmarried girls were kidnapped by the soldiers. The fear in the mind of people was only threat if they lost the war, their sisters and daughters could be abused physically and mentally and their whole family would be stigmatized.

Sikh history does not reveal any example of killing of girls but Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s mother Mata Raj Kaur was buried in the earthen pot. At that time when Baba Guddarh Singh ji came to know about this cruelty he rescued the girl child and blessed her to be the mother of a great warrior. Similarly Jassa Singh Ramgharia was accused of killing a newly born child due to which he was expelled from Sikh community.¹

The daughters of Sikh army personal were raised like their boys with good diet and pride. The girls were given the sacred teachings of Gurbani. On the other hand the girls being raised in an open environment were strongly built and healthy. Guru Nanak Dev Ji too revealed the importance of women in Gurbani:

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“Bhand jammee-ai bhand nimmee-ai bhand mangan veeaahu ||
Bhandahu hoveai dostee bhandahu chalai raahu||
Bhand mu-aa bhand bhaalee-ai bhand hovai bandhaan||
So ki-o mandaa aakhee-ai jit jameh raajaan||”²
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They were expert in horse riding, battle field and politics. People under the leadership of Sikhs were hard working and happy. Due to liberal nature of Government there was no fear of revolt from the people. Maharaja Ranjit Singh being careless leader was fond of hunting. One day he went to Siyalkot (now in Pakistan) with his friends for hunting. They were unable to find even a single prey after lot of struggle. Finally in the evening

² Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 473.
they placed tents for spending the night and set up the kitchen for preparation of food. That was the village Chagari of a rich wealthy Saradar Maana Singh which was in the tehsil Zaffarwal district Siyalkot. Co-incidently the girls of Chagari went out of their houses during the dusk. The beauty of Jind Kaur was noticed by the observing eye of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was found that kennel officer Maana Singh 's daughter , Jind Kaur had exceptionally attractive looks and was vivacious enough to attract the lion of the Punjab. Though at the age of 57 years, the Maharaja retained his passion to discern and posses beauty . Since she was the daughter of his friend –officer who hailed from nearby village (Chichrianwali) of his own birth place Gujjranwala, Jind Kaur could be inducted into the royal palace (harem) only after the nuptial ceremonies had been through. Her captivating eyes and ever ready wit so on chanted the one eyed lion that she became her JIND (life and strength) in the lateral sense. But she attracted the public eye only after she gave birth to a son (Dalip Singh) on the 6th September, 1838 A.D.

Jind Kaur was the daughter of Sardar Manna Singh, an Aulakh jat who hailed from a small village Chacher district Gujranwala, now in West Pakistan. Aulakh jat or Aurak, jat tribe, whose headquarters were mainly situated in Amritsar district. There they owned twelve villages, they were also found in the Northern Malwa; territory in the South of Satluj. They were said to be of the Solar descent, and their ancestor Aulakh lived somewhere in the Majha territory viz. territory between the Beas and Ravi. Along with the northern Malwa the Aulakhs were also found in Majha. But another story made their ancestor one Raja Lui Lak, a Luner Rajput. They were related to the Sekhu and Deo tribes with whom they didn’t inter-marry. In Amritsar district Aulakhs give their following pedigree:

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Ram Chander                  Majang
  Kasab                     Markhanb
  Dhaul                     Geo
  Raghu                      Mandal
  Uderun                     Danich
  Pura                       Aulakh
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Among the Emperor courtier was Raja Aulakh, Punwar Rajput, who at once embraced Islam. The emperor also pleased and conferred it in the Jagir, though the Aulakh continued to administrate it until about 175 years when their power declined. Similarly some of the Aulakhs came under the influence of Sikhism during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Aulakh jat of Amritsar district played a prominent part during Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s time. The father of Maharani Jind Kaur was a Aulakh jat. At an early age, Manna singh entered the service of Ranjit Singh as a dog-keeper. He was a Kumedan in the darbar of Shere-E-Punjab on the establishment maintained for looking after the department of hunting the dogs. Thus because of his job he was in direct contact with Maharaja. Jind Kaur was born in 1817 A.D at Sardar Manna Singh Aulakh’s home. Jind Kaur was the sister of two brothers namely Sardar Jawahar Singh and Sardar Hira Singh. The name of all these could be read easily in the history but history did not revealed any clue or evidence about the elder daughter of Manna Singh. Jind kaur was the younger daughter of Sardar Manna Singh, an Aulakh jat who hailed from a small village Chachar, district Gujranwala now in Pakistan. Her elder sister was married to Sardar Jwala Singh Bhadania. Jind kaur, the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the queen mother of the last Sikh sovereign Maharaja Dalip Singh is called as Rani/Ranee/Mai or Queen mother, by the various European as well as native contemporary writers. However she was known as Rani Jindan or Jind kaur. She was renowned for her beauty, energy and strength of purpose but her fame was derived chiefly from the fear she engendered in the British in India, Who described her as "the Messalina of the Punjab", a seductress too rebellious to be controlled. It is said that she developed intimacy with both Suchet Singh and Rai Kesri Singh. She was endowed with great beauty-the fatal gift of God. It was once her strength and weakness. The pair of bewitchingly lovely and lyrical eyes added charm to her winsome oval face. She combined great personal charm with the characteristic strength of man. She hailed from the stuff she was heir to. From many contemporary evidences, it was clear that Rani Jind Kaur was not only the principle wives of Maharaja and her own existence as well as that of her son Dalip Singh was unknown till 1843 A.D. when the Khalsa army panchayats proclaimed the latter as Sovereign of the Sikh Kingdom.

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8 Noteable Rajput of Jammu and principle advisor of Raja Suchet Singh.
crinoline over her traditional clothes, and emeralds and pearls under her bonnet was Maharani Jind Kaur.

In the early age of life Jind Kaur used to play the game of king and queen along with other girls and Jinda usually become the queen of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. And all the other girls who used to play with her and even her elder sister would laugh on Jinda and taunted her that she would be the queen of one-eyed king. All these things were not understood by Jinda in the early age. She danced in the joy and her mother made her promise to make her the queen of Maharaja. All this was made a taunt to Jinda by other girls and they called her Rani Jinda. 

Parents raised Jinda with full love and care. What she demanded she got it. She was more active and intelligent than her age. She was easily recognized in the group of 1000 girls. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was attracted while seeing Jinda. He had her dreams all night. At last one day, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent his soldier to Sardar Manna Singh’s house and told him to make his presence in the darbar. Soldier along with Manna Singh immediately arrived in the darbar. On arriving Manna Singh with full respect wished Guru fateh to all people sitting in the darbar and bowed his head and awaited for the order to be given by the Maharaja. He was told to sit beside Maharaja and was asked to give the hand of Jinda for him without any hesitation. Listening to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s order Manna Singh was totally confused and was unable to give any reply to Maharaja as being their servant. He could lost his job in case if he refused to the Maharaja. Manna Singh was unable to give any answer to the question asked by Maharaja as Maharaja was thrice time old as the age of Jinda and how could he marry Jinda with Maharaja. He started thinking about it as it was so difficult for him but after thinking a lot he accepted the proposal of Maharaja and agreed to give the hand of Jinda to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Manna Singh arrived back home and shared all the conversation which took place between him and Maharaja Ranjit Singh to his wife. He told each and every thing to her without in return listening any of the answer of her. All that left a deep impact on Jind Kaur. She was doubted on the proposal laid down by the Maharaja as she was going to become Maharani but on the other hand there was fear in her mind that their was short family life due to the age gap between her and Maharaja.

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11 Ibid p. no. 39.
Leading the life as a ruler was not so good as spending the happy and loving life with the aged one. Jind Kaur’s personal life was not clear. Each and everyone around them came to know about the engagement as Jind kaur was going to become Maharani. All the friends of Jind Kaur taunted her for being the Maharani of one-eyed Ranjit Singh and Jind Kaur felt sad of it.

In the young age, Jind Kaur listened about Shere-E-Punjab of having large number of wives. One day she asked her sister that why the males do the marriage? Then the sister answered that they were making decisions of marrying her to the Maharaja. He has many queens and you will come to know all about this after getting married to him. Jinda put forward her views and told that the first marriage was done in the childhood age by his father and he also did some marriages to keep up his relations which were all totally a political stunt. By doing the marriage he joined the hands with the other misls and Maharajas. All these marriages were done only for the personal benefit, but in Punjab after setting up the empire those marriages were continued. By thinking all this Jind Kaur felt into deep thoughts. According to Dr. Bhagat Singh there were 20 marriages of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and 20th marriage was with Jind Kaur. According to Dr. Bhagat Singh in his book Maharaja Ranjit Singh, following were the Rani’s with whom Shere-E-Punjab was married:

Maharani Mehtab Kaur who was daughter of Sardar Gurbaksh Singh Ghanayia and Rani Sada Kaur with whom Maharaja Ranjit Singh married in 1796 A.D. She was mother of Isher Singh, Sher Singh and Tara Singh. She died in 1813 A.D. Rani Raj Kaur who was also called Dataar Kaur and was famous by the name of Mai Nakain Kaur. She was daughter of Ran Singh and sister of Giyan Singh Nakai. She was married in 1798 A.D. and was the mother of Maharaja Kharak Singh. Rani Roop Kaur, District Amritsar village Kot Sayiad Mehmoood’s numberdar Jai Singh’s daughter and was married to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1815 A.D. Rani Laxmi’s marriage was in 1820 A.D. and she was Dega Singh Vada Dhaga’s daughter who was Sandhu jat resident of village Jogki of Gujjrawala. Rani Mehtab Kaur or Rani Katochan or Gadan was daughter of Raja Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra. She was married to Maharaja in 1829 A.D. and died in 1839 A.D. after the death of Maharaja became sati. Rani Raj Kaur Banso sister of Mehtab

Devi and second daughter of Raja Sansar Chand. Her marriage was in 1829 A.D. and she died in 1835 A.D. Rani Raj Devi daughter of Mian Padam Singh became sati after the death of Maharaja in 1839 A.D. Rani Devno Devi daughter of Chib khatri Sanad Bhari of Batala’s daughter also became sati after the death of Maharaja. Rani Hardevi daughter of Chaudary Ram Saleria Rajput of Atalgarh district Gurdaspur also became sati after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s death. Rani Ram Devi daughter of Kour Singh of village Shashriwala district Gurdaspur died before the death of Maharaja. Rani Devi from district Hoshiarpur’s village Jaswan daughter of Wazir Nakuda. Rani Moran before marriage was a muslim dancer in Lahore. In 1802 A.D. she was married to Maharaja and she also went along with Maharaja to Hardwar on a tour. Rani Gul Bahar Begum of Amritsar was married to Maharaja in 1833 A.D. and died in 1863 A.D. Rani Ratan Kaur was the widow of Gujrat’s Sahib Singh Bhangi. After his death Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1811 A.D. brought her to his palace and she was the mother of Kanwar Multan Singh. Rani Daya Kaur was also the widow of Gujrat’s Sahib Singh. She gave birth to two sons Kashmir Singh and Pishora Singh and died in 1843 A.D. Rani Chand Kaur was the daughter of Jai Singh Jat of village Chainpur district Amritsar. She was married to Maharaja in 1815 A.D. She died in 1840 A.D. Rani Mehtab Kaur was the daughter of jat Sujan Singh of village Malla district Gurdaspur married to Maharaja in 1822 A.D. Rani Shaman Kaur, the daughter of Suba Singh of the Malwa region was married to Maharaja in 1832 A.D. Maharaja Ranjit Singh married to Rani Gulab Kaur of Jagdeva village of Amritsar. Rani Jind Kaur also known as Rani Jindan was the daughter of Sardar Manna Singh Aulakh and she was married to Maharaja in 1835 A.D. She died in 1863 A.D. and was the mother of Maharaja Dalip Singh.  

Fixing the date of marriage arrangements were started. Maharaja Ranjit Singh came to marry Jinda on the elephant. Lot of mohars were thrown on the ground in the way. Sardar Manna Singh spent huge amount of money on the marriage of Jinda. Jinda’s marriage was done with full enjoyment. Sitting in palanquin Jinda watched her very costly marriage dress and jewelry. Parent’s beloved Jinda became Rani and went to Lahore. Separate palace was made for her in the fort which was near the old Summan (pillars). Palace was simple from outside but interior decoration was done in a well mannered way.

15 Ibid p. no. 40.
Shere-E-Punjab listened about the beauty of Jinda but he was not knowing of being her much glorious. He was astonished while he looked at the face of Jind Kaur. The world seemed dull against the beauty of Jind Kaur. At the first sight Jinda got a present of title “Mehmooba” from Maharaja. Due to her beauty she was actually looking as Maharani in reality. All the wives of Maharaja were feeling jealous of each other and it was their nature to fill the ears of Maharaja about each other. Maharaja was annoyed of listening all these things again and again. But Maharani Jind Kaur’s nature was totally different from all the other wives. She adopted the new way of living the life than the other wives. Due to non tolerable nature of the wives Maharaja respected all of them and was not happy from any of the wives. Jind Kaur adopted the way of love and peace instead of jealousy nature. She treated all the other wives with full respect, love and care. Even with the servants she behaved with well respect. After becoming Maharani Jind Kaur made her appropriate place in Maharaja’s heart which was all due to her polite nature and intelligent mind. Name of love is always placed at the utmost position in the world.

Love can win even very hard heart. Due to that true love Maharaja awarded her the honour of ‘Mehmooba’. Due to her good nature she was respected with honour in the darbar. Maharaja spend maximum of his time with Maharani Jind Kaur. After getting the award of Mehmooba she became the chief queen of the Maharaja. Maharaja once asked Jind kaur “Mehmooba jaan! Doojian Rania bare tuhade ki kihaal hun.”

“Maharaj! Oh sab meria vadia bhena hun”.

Maharani politely with bowed head said “Tuci jaande oh raj mahal vich ki koot-nitti chaldi a.”

“Sarkar!” Jind kaur did not spoke any word which showed her pointed thinking.

“Oh, pyari Jinda! Oh meri Mehmooba! Tera dil kina vada a? tuci kise nu v gheerna karna nahi jande”.

“Sarkar! jis dil vich maharaj da pyar vas giya a us vich gheerna ja eerkha vaste gunjaish hi kithe reh gayi a? Main ta…….” Jind kaur bowed her head in the feet of Maharaja.

\[17\] Ibid p. no. 14.
\[18\] Ibid p. no. 14.
\[19\] Ibid p. no. 15.
“Tusa sarkar da man moh liha hai. Sarkar tuhanu pure dil nal pyaar karda a.” Maharaja hugged her. That was very happy day in the life of Maharani Jind Kaur.  

This all revealed the beautiful and charming faced women Jind kaur and her polite nature with which she was able to win over her husband. She made high ordered place in the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The queen of beauty, daughter of kingdom and intelligent lady made a great important place in the life of Maharaja. Maharani Jinda adopted the new way to led a life other than all other Rani’s. Due to this nature she became beloved one of all in the Raj Mahal. Maharani Jind Kaur’s emerald and seed-pearl necklace was one of the famous necklace from the jewelry she hold down. This necklace was named as Maharani Jindan Kaur Emerald and Seed-Pearl Necklace. The name refers to a historic emerald and seed-pearl necklace that once belonged to Maharani Jindan Kaur. The necklace was actually a gift by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to his young and pretty 18 year old wife Jindan Kaur between 1835 A.D. and 1839 A.D., the year of her marriage to Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the year of the Maharaja’s death respectively. The necklace was designed by the jewelers of the Maharaja’s court in Lahore in the early 19th century. In keeping with the prosperity of the Maharaja’s Darbar, a jewelry designing and manufacturing industry was also developed, to supply the court with the best of jewels, designed by experienced artisans who worked for the court. Thus, even at Lahore, the seat of the Punjab empire, there was flourishing jewelry designing and manufacturing industry where the Maharani Jind Kaur emerald and pearl necklace was designed and manufactured. The necklace had distinct features of Indian design, such as the emerald and pearl drop tassels. Emerald and Seed Pearl Necklace had gone down in the history, As a piece of jewelry that had adorned the neck of a brave queen who had dared challenge the might of British Empire and fought consistently to safeguard the cultural, religious and other interests of her people throughout her life.

Raja Dhyan Singh tried all this to Maharaj also. Some of the queens of Maharaja’s were the results of all this work of Raja Dhyan Singh. Due to the popularity of Jinda, Raja Dian Singh started praising the dogra girl and Maharaja Ranjit Singh stopped him and

20 Ibid p. no. 16.
21 An important emerald and seed-pearl necklace from the Lahore treasury, worn by- Maharani Jind Kaur(1817-1863) wife of Ranjeet Singh, the lion of Punjab (1780-1839) - www.bonhams.com, p.no.1.
22 Ibid, p. no. 2.
told him “Raja Sahib” when a man reaches at the top then he should stop there, otherwise
the next step by him walk be his downfall.

On September 4th, 1838 A.D. Rani Jinda gave birth to a son. Everyone was happy and
thanked the Almighty. Shri Akand Path Sahib was done and after that Kirtan and Ardas
was done in the Palace. The alphabet “D” was the first alphabet which came from the
order (Hukamnama) by Guru Granth Sahib. The name of her was kept “Dalip Singh”.  

So in the history of Punjab the most dispute period was of Maharani Jind Kaur’s who
was reagent of Maharaja Dalip Singh from the time period of 1843A.D. to 1848A.D.
After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, she and Dalip Singh commanded Sikh rule and
governed it for some time. She was known to be the first lady who fought in the war of
independence of India. Maharani was the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She
was the 18th wife of Shere-E-Punjab. The name of Jinda was all due to him only and was
remembered in the history of Punjab. She was named as the Iron lady due to which there
was always fear of her among the British. Maharani Jind Kaur’s life was full of sacrifices
which correlates with the rise and downfall of Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s rule.

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no. 44.