

14. The Fort is captured but the Lion is dead.

Jijamata's Wish : The twenty-three forts which Shivaji handed over to Jaising were still in the hands of the Moghuls. Kondana was one of these twenty-three forts. One day Jijamata said to Shivaji, "Shivba, it is not safe to leave the strong Kondana fort in enemy hands. You must recapture it." Shivaji was thinking on the same lines. He was very unhappy that Kondana was in Moghul hands. Both Shivaji and Jijabaisaheb were very unhappy about it. It was like a thorn in their side. Shivaji started making his plans for the recapture of Kondana. Who

could be entrusted with this task? It was very difficult to capture Kondana.

Tanaji Malusare : Tanaji was Shivaji's comrade right from the beginning. He came from the village Umrathe near Mahad in the Konkan. He was ever ready to put his heart and soul into any work assigned to him by Shivaji. Tanaji was strong and well-built, and as clever as he was brave. He was passionately devoted to Shivaji.

Kondana's Marriage First : Tanaji was busy making preparations for his



Tanaji's Resolve

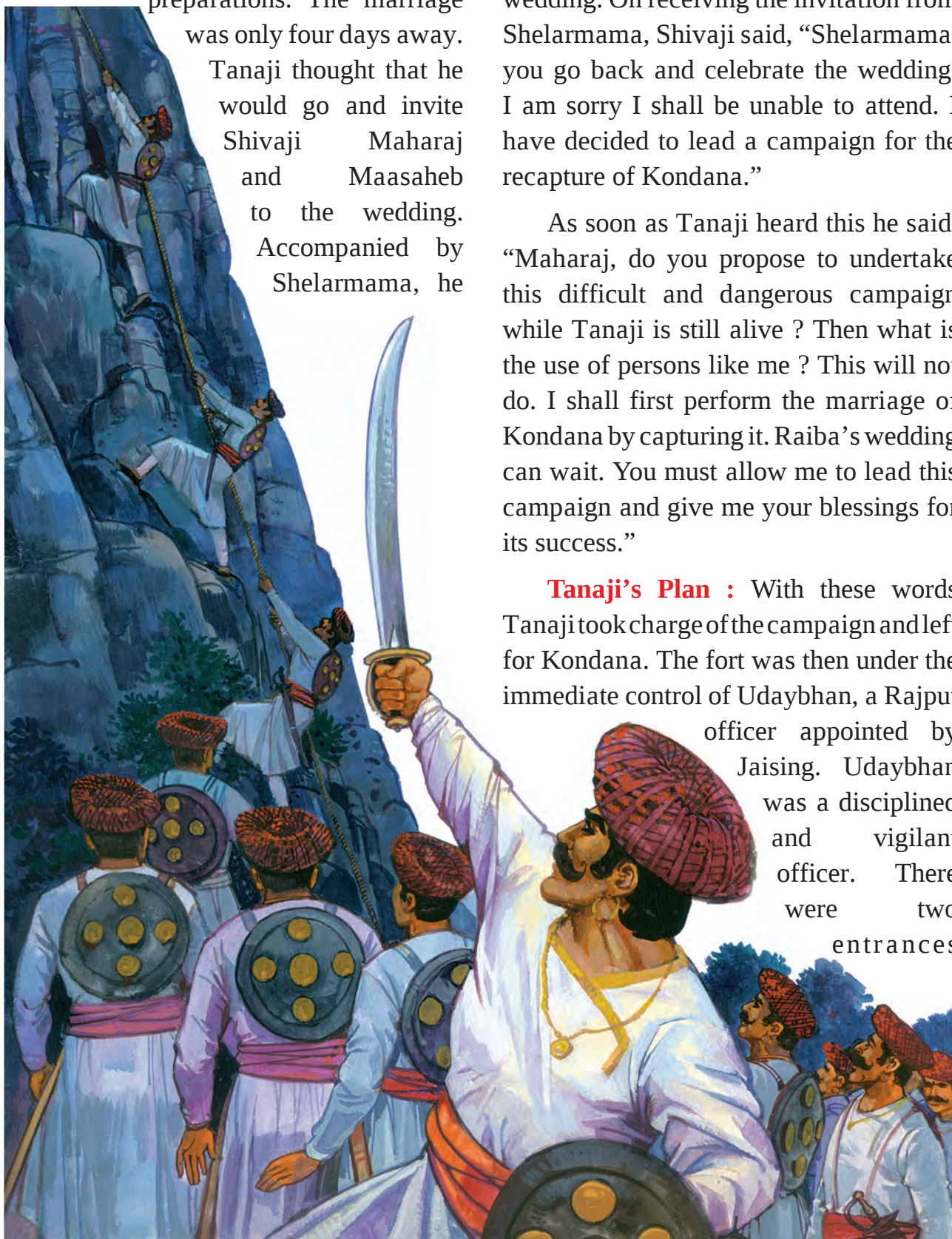
son Raiba's wedding. Everyone in the house was busy with the marriage preparations. The marriage was only four days away.

Tanaji thought that he would go and invite Shivaji Maharaj and Maasaheb to the wedding. Accompanied by Shelarmama, he

went to Shivaji Maharaj to give him and Maasaheb his personal invitation to the wedding. On receiving the invitation from Shelarmama, Shivaji said, "Shelarmama, you go back and celebrate the wedding. I am sorry I shall be unable to attend. I have decided to lead a campaign for the recapture of Kondana."

As soon as Tanaji heard this he said, "Maharaj, do you propose to undertake this difficult and dangerous campaign while Tanaji is still alive ? Then what is the use of persons like me ? This will not do. I shall first perform the marriage of Kondana by capturing it. Raiba's wedding can wait. You must allow me to lead this campaign and give me your blessings for its success."

Tanaji's Plan : With these words Tanaji took charge of the campaign and left for Kondana. The fort was then under the immediate control of Udaybhan, a Rajput officer appointed by Jaising. Udaybhan was a disciplined and vigilant officer. There were two entrances



Tanaji's Assault on Kondana

to the fort. Both were heavily guarded by Udaybhan's men. How then to mount an assault ? Tanaji quietly made a detailed inspection of the fort. On the western side there was a steep precipice where there were no guards. Tanaji decided to attack from that side. He explained his plan to his younger brother. He said, "You take a detachment of five hundred troops and try and reach the 'Kalyan' gate. With another three hundred I shall scale this precipice and get inside the fort. As soon as we are there, we shall throw open the doors of the 'Kalyan' gate. Then you step in and join us. Together we shall destroy the Moghul troops defending the fort." With the plan thus finalised, Suryaji and Tanaji went their different ways.

Over the Precipice and into the Fort : It was a dark night. Tanaji and his men were gathered at the foot of the precipice. The sound of crickets could be heard all round. Five or six members of Tanaji's party started to scale the precipice. It was indeed very high and steep. But somehow they managed to get a foothold in the rock, pulled themselves up by pushing their fingers into rock crevices and began the difficult and dangerous climb. Slowly but surely they reached the top. As soon as they were on safe ground, they tied a thick rope to a strong tree and let it down the precipice. The others took hold of the rope and climbed up to the top like monkeys.

Tanaji's Valour : By now Suryaji had reached the Kalyan gate. He waited there for the doors to open. The battle on

the fort started. Udaybhan heard of the attack. The battle drum was sounded. Udaybhan's garrison attacked Tanaji's men. A grim battle started between the two forces in the light of dancing torches. The Mavlas opened the doors of the Kalyan gate. Tanaji was fighting like a brave lion. Udaybhan attacked him. Both were very brave and the battle between them was fierce. Tanaji's shield was broken. So he tied his upper garment round his defending hand to parry Udaybhan's blows and continued the fight. In the end both were mortally wounded and fell fighting.

The Fort is captured but the Lion is dead : With the death of Tanaji the Mavlas found themselves without a leader and began to retreat. By then Suryaji and his men had arrived on the scene of battle. Suryaji was deeply grieved to know that his brother was dead. But he had no time for grief. He had to continue the fight. He cut off the rope by which the Mavlas had climbed the fort. Then he stood in the path of the retreating Mavlas and said, "Don't you see that your father is lying dead here on the battlefield ? Are you not ashamed to run away like a bunch of cowards ? Turn back and fight, for I have blocked your retreat by cutting off the rope by which you climbed up. The only choice before you is either to jump to your death over the precipice or to turn back and fight to destroy the enemy."

So the Mavlas returned to the fight and attacked the enemy. A fierce battle raged. The Mavlas ultimately conquered

the fort but in the process had lost their brave and lion-hearted leader, Tanaji. Jijamata and Shivaji Maharaj heard the news. They were struck with grief. Shivaji Maharaj expressed his sorrow in a single sentence : “The fort is won but the lion is dead.”

So Kondana became Sinhagad, in memory of the great warrior who gave his life to recapture it. This event took place in 1670. Later on, Shivaji Raje personally went to Umrathe and performed the wedding of Raiba.

EXERCISES

1. Colour the circle of the correct option.

- (a) Tanaji was the resident of this place.
 (i) Mahad ☐ (ii) Chiplun ☐
 (iii) Umrathe ☐ (iv) Ratnagiri ☐
- (b) Udaybhan, appointed by Jaising, was the chief of the fort.
 (i) Purandar ☐ (ii) Kondana ☐
 (iii) Raigad ☐ (iv) Pratapgad ☐
- (c) The name of Tanaji's brother was :
 (i) Raiba ☐ (ii) Suryaji ☐
 (iii) Murarbaji ☐ (iv) Firangoji ☐

- (b) What did Jijamata say to Shivaji about Kondana ?
 (c) Who took charge of the campaign of Kondana ?

3. Write the answers in two or three sentences.

- (a) What did Shivaji say on receiving the invitation from Shelarmama ?
 (b) What did Suryaji say to the retreating Mavlas ?

2. Write the answer in one sentence.

- (a) In whose hands was the Kondana fort ?

Activity

Make a list of historical monuments in your area.

