Rebellion in the Raj

The Women Who Fought for Freedom



Chapter 6:

Rani Gaidinliu

Swipe

The Daughter of the Hills

In the 1920s, high in the hills of present-day Manipur lived a young girl who would one day challenge the mighty British Empire.

Her name was Gaidinliu.

Surrounded by forests, traditions, and the rich culture of the Naga people, she grew up deeply connected to her homeland and her community.

Soon, both of them came under threat.



A Fight to Protect Her People

The British imposed heavy taxes and began interfering with the traditions of the Naga tribes.

Gaidinliu could not stay silent.

She joined her cousin and mentor, Haipou Jadonang and became part of the Heraka Movement to protect Naga culture and religion. As British rule tightened its hold, the movement too grew into a powerful struggle against colonial rule.

Then, in 1931, it took a tragic turn.



A Teenager Leads a Revolution

The British executed Haipou Jadonang, but the struggle was far from over. At just 16 years old, Gaidinliu stepped forward to lead.

She organised a guerrilla resistance, urged her people to stop paying taxes, reject British authority, and continued the fight from the forests and hills of Northeast India.

A teenager was now standing up to an empire.



Captured, But not Silenced

Gaidinliu's bravery and determination inspired thousands, and the British became determined to capture her. A massive search was launched.

Eventually, in 1932, Gaidinliu was arrested and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Yet, even behind prison walls, she held on to her dream of a free India.



When Gaidinliu became “Rani”

Her extraordinary courage caught the attention of Jawaharlal Nehru, who met her at the Shillong jail in 1937 and was deeply moved by her determination.

He gave her the title “Rani.”

Gaidinliu was released from prison in 1947, after India gained independence. The teenage girl who had once fought from the hills would now be remembered as Rani Gaidinliu.



The Young Warrior's Legacy

Rani Gaidinliu's story leaves us with a powerful question. Can one teenager stand against a mighty empire? She answered that question with her actions.

She fought to protect her people, their culture, and their freedom, proving that courage does not depend on age.

Remembered as the "Daughter of the Hills", her story reminds us that no one is too young to lead or too small to make a difference.

