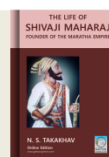




# THE LIFE OF SHIVAJI MAHARAJ FOUNDER OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

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## Chapter 23

# The Crowning of Shivaji, 1674

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The victory of Hambirrao over Abdul Karim had cost many lives to the Bijapur army which remained appreciably crippled for some time. Neither was it possible to muster a new army against Shivaji, nor did a capable general offer himself for a renewal of the contest. For a long time to come, Khawas Khan thought it was imperative to let Shivaji alone. Nor was there any likelihood of trouble brewing from Aurangabad. The subhedar there had, as we have seen, an amicable understanding with Shivaji and was not over-anxious to risk his troops beyond his frontiers. He considered it a great matter for congratulation that the periodic incursions of the Marathas were stopped and was anxious to keep good relations with Shivaji. Aurangzeb was involved in complications in the north. He no longer considered Shivaji the insignificant enemy he once had been inclined to believe him to be. A personal defeat at the hands of one whom he had affected to despise would be not merely a disgrace but a danger to the empire. He remembered too the treachery he had often practised upon Shivaji and feared the Maratha chief might seek to avenge himself upon him. He had also heard of the valour and bravery of the generals under Shivaji and could not help contrasting with them the knights of the sorrowful countenance whom he was able to send upon the Deccan campaigns. Could he count on the co-operation of Golconda and Bijapur against this incipient power? He who had done his best to subvert them from their foundations? Verily, the Southern Mahomedan feared the

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GATHA COGNITION<sup>®</sup>

Mogul more than the Maratha. Nay, the emperor was rather glad at the rise of the new power, so far as it had weakened the powers of Islam in the Deccan. For he was biding his time to sweep down upon the Deccan with the avalanche of a Mogul army and overwhelm the Deccan sultanates, and after them the Maratha Power – so he proposed to himself. No need then to quicken the movements of his tardy generals or send them the re-enforcements they kept crying for. There was indeed Shivaji's application for a treaty as mentioned in the last chapter. The shrewd monarch was not to be over-reached in this manner and saw plainly enough that it was only a make-shift alliance that Shivaji wanted. Such being the attitude of Aurangzeb, Shivaji saw that for the present there was no fear from this quarter. The only other power to consider was the state of Golconda. The prospect of any storm blowing from this state had not yet arisen. As things went for the present there were good relations indeed. The annual tribute came with clock-work regularity, and the chief minister Madanna was most favourably disposed towards Shivaji.

Having thus no need to dread the Islamic powers, Shivaji thought it a favourable opportunity to assume the insignia of royalty and be duly crowned king of his people. From the death of Shahaji, Shivaji had already borne the title of Raja and had struck his own coins. But it was felt desirable to consecrate his authority by the solemn sanction of the Hindu religion, by going through the elaborate ritual prescribed by Hindu usage for a consecrated monarchy. Unless he was invested with the visible symbols of regal pomp and power, the throne, the canopy and the umbrella of state, there would always be an appreciable deficiency or inferiority in the homage of his people and the respect of his enemies, in the opinion of princes and states, and the few agents and factors of foreign powers then established in India. Without such a religious confirmation of his power, both Indian princes and foreigners might continue to reckon him as an exalted polygar and confound his systematic war programme with the random depredations of a free-booting chief. These thoughts were now passing through his mind. It was necessary to rally the Maratha nobles still serving the Mahomedan monarchies in the south or carrying on independent wars and marauding excursions on their own account. It was necessary to teach them that the new power that had sprung up in their midst was based on broader and deeper foundations and was not an isolated effort for dynastic aggrandisement. It was necessary to unfurl the standard of Maratha unity, freedom and self-government, rally their wavering spirits, and unite their wayward forces under the aegis of a Maharashtra monarchy. To this end he had laboured for thirty years. The standard, to which all Marathas were to rally as an undoubted national cause, was by the nature of things required to be the standard of an independent sovereignty.

It is rather a matter for astonishment that this step should have been postponed to so late a period of his triumphant career. But in the first place as long as Shahaji lived – and he died only in 1664 – Shivaji would not have cared to have his name emblazoned with royal pomp, while his father was content to shine by the reflected glory of Bijapur. Had Shahaji elected to remain in Maharashtra when he paid his last visit to the land of his fathers, it is possible that Shivaji, as was to be expected of his filial devotion and his strict adherence to religious ideals and precedents, might have invested him with the sovereign power and conducted the administration in his name. The ten years that had elapsed since the death of Shahaji had been a period of stress and excitement, chequered with Mogul and Mahomedan wars, when the best of his time and resources were taken up with the fortification and entrenchment of his strongholds, the maintenance of his fleet and armies and the consolidation of his possessions. The bustle and excitement of war allowed no time for thoughts of coronation, pageantry and ceremonial. Now that peace reigned undisturbed over his varied realms, the thought of the assumption of the ensigns of sovereignty again recurred to his mind.

An incident occurred at his court which led Shivaji to hasten this event. There was a dinner at his palace to which invitations were issued to the leading Maratha nobility. Due arrangements were made in the banquet-hall where the guests were to be entertained. A cushioned seat or *chaurang* was in the centre, higher than the rest. This seat was intended for Shivaji, and to the left and right the guests were to seat themselves at dinner. Among the assembled guests were included the ancient Maratha nobility, the Mohites, the Mahadiks, the Shirkes, the Nimbalkars, the Ghatges, the Jadhavs and scions of other families. On noticing the elevated seat unoccupied, evidently reserved for Shivaji, they were chagrined in the highest degree and their vexation was so great that they began without respect for place or person to criticise the arrangement: “And is Shivaji now become such a great personage in the land, and have we become mere cyphers? We the representatives of illustrious ancient families, entitled to the princely honour of the *morchel*?<sup>1</sup> The honours and dignities we have enjoyed Shivaji’s father never earned for himself. It is an insult to us to be seated on a lower level than Shivaji. Far better for us to leave the hall than submit to such an indignity.” Muttering such complaints they were about to leave the banquet-hall, when the officers of the household tried to pacify them, entreating them not to irritate Shivaji on the auspicious occasion but to represent their grievance to him personally at a more suitable

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1. The *morchel* was a tuft of pea-cock feathers used as a fan, and waved over the heads of princely personages as an attribute of royalty.

time. However the commotion in the hall reached Shivaji's ears and he was considerably embarrassed at the ill humour of his guests. The representatives of some of the second grade noble families, however, on being privately interviewed by Shivaji said they had no objection to the banquet arrangements. Shivaji then spoke privately to the great sardars like the Ghorpades, Nimbalkars and others and asked what their grounds of complaint were, upon which they made answer that they were the hereditary officers of the Mahomedan sultans for four or five centuries past, they could not brook Shivaji's taking precedence over them at such a social function, and that it was for Shivaji to consider the matter. Shivaji replied that if they made so much of their family prestige they ought not to attend his court. If need arose for their presence, they might be invited. Those who did not like the banquet arrangements had leave to depart. And with these words he presented "pan" to his obstinate guests, the usual ceremony according to Indian etiquette for bidding farewell to a departing visitor. This incident more than anything else impressed upon Shivaji the necessity of proclaiming himself a crowned king in these parts of India, since for lack of such a ceremony even the Maratha nobles showed a certain hesitation in recognizing his sovereign authority.

While these thoughts were revolving in his mind it is said that his tutelary deity appeared to him in a vision and assured him that his desire to be duly crowned and invested with the insignia of sovereignty would by her grace be fulfilled, and that one who had fought so nobly and strenuously in the cause of his country's gods and religion deserved more than anyone else the divine attributes of sovereignty. Encouraged by the thought of a divine sanction to his proposal, he broached the subject to his mother and on obtaining her support submitted it to others. Shivaji sent a confidential officer to communicate his intention to Ramdas, his spiritual adviser, who cordially approved of the proposal. Other persons of sage and saintly character in his kingdom were similarly consulted and concurred in the proposal. The acute scholars and learned expounders of Hindu law, the pillars of the Brahman community, were next invited to a council, with all the honour due to their learning, palanquins and other conveyances being sent to bring them to court from their residences. To this council the great nobles, commanders and ministers of state were also summoned. The question of a solemn coronation was submitted to the meeting. They all expressed themselves in favour of the idea and it was unanimously decided that Shivaji should go through the coronation ceremony according to the Hindu Shastras and be invested with all the insignia of royalty.

The next question to investigate was what things were essential according to Shastric requirements for a complete coronation ceremonial on orthodox Hindu lines. And here an initial difficulty presented itself which

rendered the traditional ceremony of a Hindu coronation well-nigh impossible. For according to the prescription of the shastras only the twice-born who had duly gone through the ceremony of the investiture of the sacred thread were capable of going through the forms of a shastric coronation. To all others this ceremony was denied. The circumstance that Shivaji had not been invested with the sacred thread placed him in the eyes of the pandits and the preceptors of the Hindu law in the category of Shudras or serfs. The pandits, therefore, declared that in his case a shastric coronation was impossible. Shivaji was then already far past the age for such an investiture, being now forty-six years of age, and had been married more than once and had children by his wives. A man of such an advanced age, a husband and a father, could by no means be capable of such investiture.

It was not easy to cut this knot, but one of Shivaji's most trusty and sagacious officers, Balaji Avji Chitnis, suggested a remedy. He advised Shivaji not to rest satisfied with the decision of the local pandits but to appeal to other shastris in India. He said that hitherto with God's grace he had triumphed over every difficulty and achieved his highest ideals and there was no reason why he should be baffled in this one object. He then spoke of a learned scholar of Benares, Gaga Bhatt by name, who was versed in all branches of Sanskrit learning – the four Vedas, the six shastras or sciences and the commentaries on the law, – and had attained an unrivalled reputation in India for his learning. His decisions on knotty questions of Hindu law were accepted by other pandits. His pronouncements carried almost a pontifical authority with them. The officer advised Shivaji to make a reference to this learned pandit on the question of his coronation, especially as he then happened to be at Paithan. He proposed that Gaga Bhatt should be invited along with the other renowned pandits of Paithan.<sup>2</sup> He would not refuse the invitation, as he could not but have heard of Shivaji's fame. Shivaji was gratified at this suggestion and Balaji Avji was deputed to invite Gaga Bhatt from Paithan and bring him under a safe escort. A sum of ten thousand rupees and the necessary paraphernalia of horses and palanquins were placed at Balaji Avji's disposal for this mission.<sup>3</sup>

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2. The family of Gaga Bhatt belonged to Paithan, which was famous as a repository of Hindu learning. Many of his ancestors and descendants have written authoritative works on Hindu religious usages. The family attained a celebrity for its learning and scholarship at Benares, and the descendants of the family still enjoy their high prestige among the Hindu princes of North India.
  3. According to the chronicles of Sabhasad and Chitragupta Gaga Bhatt came uninvited, hearing the renown of Shivaji, to pay a visit to his court. He was treated with proper hospitality and pleased with what he saw of Shivaji's court spoke as follows :-

On his arrival at Paithan Balaji had an interview with Gaga Bhatt and communicated to him Shivaji's proposal. At Gaga Bhatt's instance a meeting of the pandits was held at Paithan for the discussion of this question. After a long debate it was unanimously decided that there was no objection to Shivaji's going through the ceremonial of a shastric coronation after the manner of the Rajput princes of Jaipur, Udepur and other places. Gaga Bhatt was then brought by Balaji to Raigad, where he the received with all the honour and respect due to his learning. Shivaji himself going forward to welcome him to the fort. A procession was formed and the pandit conducted to the mansion selected for his residence, amid pomp and music.

Shivaji then convoked another assembly of the pandits, ministers of state, and citizens of note, at which Gaga Bhatt and the learned men of Paithan were introduced. The question of the coronation was again taken up for discussion, and the pros and cons having been fully considered by the meeting, the learned Gaga Bhatt delivered his decision as follows:— "That it appears to this meeting that Shivaji, a scion of the princely stock of the Sesodia family, is of Kshatriya descent, and that though his forefathers, having crossed the Naibada, came to be known as Marathas and gave up the investiture and other ceremonies of the Kshatriya class, the Kshatriya character of their descendants is not thereby impaired or extinguished. That, as in the case of the princely dynasties of Jaipur, Udepur and others, the investiture of the sacred thread precedes the coronation ceremonial proper, the same proceeding may be followed in the case of Shivaji, and that such proceeding would by no means be contrary to the precepts of the shastric law or to usage and precedent. That the fact that the original stock of the Sesodias at Udepur have always been distinguished by the insignia of royalty is a special circumstance to be considered in the case of Shivaji. As to the objection that the investiture ceremony was time barred by Shivaji's age and

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"The forms of Kshatriya duty have been utterly extinguished during the Kali Yuga. The earth is overrun with Yavanas (Mahomedans) who have usurped the thrones of kings. No spark of valour is left in the warriors of the Solar or the Lunar race. Sacrifices are stopped; forms of duty forgotten; the Brahman Dharma eclipsed; the great shrines have lost their expiatory virtue. It is only you who have put forth great valour, defeated the Mahomedan sultans, quieted Aurangzeb, vanquished his pro-consuls, won a great kingdom, and maintained in your power a hundred thousand cavalry, three hundred and sixty forts, and great wealth and possessions. This being so, you are yet without a consecrated throne. It is, therefore, my wish and the wish of many other Hindus to crown you king and have you saluted as a king of the royal umbrella by other rulers. Without a formal crowning a ruling king has no honour. By getting yourself formally crowned, you will complete the humiliation of Aurangzeb and the other sultans. Do you, therefore, indulge us in this our desire?" These words of Gaga Bhatt induced Shivaji to take up the idea of a formal coronation.

the circumstance that he was already a husband and a father, it was to be understood that in this case the rite of investiture would be wholly exceptional, curing a defect occasioned by unavoidable adverse circumstances and to be viewed only as a preliminary part of the coronation rites, the whole constituting together one grand, integral, religious function.” This learned decision was accepted by the pandits of Paithan and the Swarajya dominions and it was unanimously resolved that Shivaji should celebrate the investiture and coronation rites.

Gratified at this decision, Shivaji hastened to make all the necessary preparations for the ceremony. The waters of the sacred rivers and the several seas, horses and elephants with the auspicious marks, the skins of tigers and beasts of chase, the lion-supported chair of state or throne, vases of gold and silver and other sacred vessels – all these were provided for. The state astrologers were ordered to investigate and determine the most auspicious time for the assumption of the title. They reported that the thirteenth day of the first half of Jesht (the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1674 A. D.) of the current year of the cyclic name of Anand was the most propitious time for the installation ceremony.

Invitations were sent to all the notable gentry and nobility of Maharashtra, to ministers and commanders, to subject princes as well as independent kings. To start with, it was determined that Raigad should be the capital town of the newly inaugurated monarchy. It seemed the best of all the places in Shivaji's possession; it satisfied approximately the shastric conditions for the capital of a great kingdom, some of which were that the site should be sacred ground in the neighbourhood of holy places and the waters of a noble stream, that there should be an abundant supply of water and facilities for the construction of tanks and reservoirs, that the territory around should be fertile, and above all it should be impregnable to the assaults of an enemy. It was resolved that the coronation celebrations should be held at Raigad.

Shivaji had already erected a spacious mansion at Raigad for his own residence, with buildings for his various departments of stores, classified under eighteen heads. Here were the offices and residences of the great ministers of state and the secretariat staff.<sup>4</sup> The durbar-hall where the throne

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4. The Shivdigvijay describes many other halls which were erected such as the *Vivek sabha* for the debates of learned pandits, the *Pragat sabha* for giving audience to the poor and hearing their disputes, the *Nyaya sabha* the audience of Justice, the *Prabodh sabha* the hall of Kirtana and Paranas, the *Ratnagar sabha* for connoisseurs of gems and jewels, the *Niti sabha* lot giving audience to distinguished foreigners etc., likewise also halls to serve as seraglios, chapels, baths, etc.

was installed was spacious enough to accommodate thousands of spectators without any discomfort. From all these arrangements, it appears clear that Shivaji had from the beginning intended to make Raigad the seat of his government. When the pandits sanctioned this decision, the palace-walls were painted and decorated in the best style of the country. The throne-room was adorned with a rich canopy and with tapestries of rare designs and texture. The throne itself was adorned with a richly embroidered canopy supported upon four columns plated with gold and fringed with strings and tassels of pearls. The other public places and edifices on the fort were similarly painted and decorated in expectation of the event. Due arrangements were made for the residence and for the comfort of the distinguished guests invited to witness the ceremony, among whom were distinguished Brahmans and subject princes. Spacious pavilions were erected for the celebration of coronation banquets and other functions. Persons showing any kind of skill were liberally patronized on the occasion. Indian musicians, both vocalist and instrumental, professional dancing girls, and entertainers of all kinds were called in large numbers for the amusement of the guests. As the feasting of Brahmans is always a special feature of such auspicious ceremonies, large pavilions were erected at more than five places, each pavilion accommodating at one and the same time more than four thousand guests. At each banquet-hall, a separate staff of cooks, waiters, attendants and overseers was appointed, and these men had orders to alter their menus and principal dishes from day to day. Separate pavilions were set up for the banqueting of friends, relations, officers and ministers of state.

The fort and its lower slope were thus crowded with tents and pavilions. A staff of supervising officers maintained a general control over the stores, with clerks in charge of each camp, who were under instructions to supply the needs of each guest, small or great, and for that purpose heaps of grain and other provisions were brought together. These officers were carefully trained in their duties, which they discharged under fixed regulations. The result was that the vast assemblages of guests were entertained in a style of hospitality which evoked universal admiration.

On the fourth day of the opening half of the month of Jesht the ceremony of the investiture of the sacred thread was commenced. It lasted for two days, and during this period a hundred thousand Brahmans were feasted and received a *dakshina* of a rupee each, Brahmans versed in the Vedas and the shastras receiving the honorarium befitting their position and learning. Upon the celebration of the investiture rites, the proper preliminaries of the coronation ceremony were taken in hand, commencing with the sixth day of Jesht. With propitiatory rites in honour of the God Ganpati, with which every religious rite must commence according to Hindu usage, and of the stars and

the planets, the coronation sacrifice was duly begun. During these days, till the final consummation of the sacrifice, both Shivaji and the officiating priests observed a rigid fast subsisting only on milk and fruit. But throughout the week while the host observed a fast there was a continual round of feasts to the Brahmans, fifty thousand of them being daily entertained, with frequent changes in the dishes. The other guests received the same hospitality, and were entertained with musical concerts and other social amusements. Song, dance, and revelry reigned supreme in all parts of the fort.

At length came the auspicious day, the 13<sup>th</sup> of Jesht. There was a large assemblage present to witness the *Abhishek* or solemn religious bath, the principal feature of the coronation ceremony. As partners in the labours of the state, the chief ministers likewise had to undergo similar solemn ablutions. In the first place, therefore, the eight ministers of state were duly appointed or confirmed in their several high offices. Next after them the nominations of the king's two principal secretaries, or personal amanuenses, were made. The functionaries in charge of the various departments and stores, as also the commanders in charge of towns and provinces were each either appointed or confirmed. All these functionaries went through the preliminary consecrated bath along with Shivaji. More varied and elaborate ablutions prescribed by religious sanction were then performed by Shivaji; such as the bath with various kinds of earth, the bath with a compound of milk, ghee, etc. called the *panch-gavya* dissolved in water, the bath in the water of the sacred rivers like the Ganges, and on the top of them all, the bath with the *panchamrit* or the nectareous bath, in which milk, curds, ghee, honey and sugar were blended together. These solemn ablutions over, the bathers were arrayed in robes of silver white, with flowers and wreaths, gold and jewelled ornaments, and the sacred sandal-wood or *gandha* mark impressed upon their foreheads. Shivaji then took his seat upon a gold-plated little stool made of a particular kind of wood, the wood of a pulpy tree like that of the genus *Ficus* being specially recommended by the shastras. When Shivaji was seated upon this quaint little stool, which was just a cubit and a quarter high and the same in width, the senior queen and the heir-apparent were asked to sit by his side.<sup>5</sup> The principal ministers of state then stood in the prescribed order around their king. First of all the Peshwa or chief minister with a gold vase filled with ghee stood due east of Shivaji; Hambirrao Mohite, the commander-in- chief, with a silver vase filled with milk stood due south Ramchandra Nilkanth,<sup>6</sup> the Amatya (or Muzumdar i. e. finance minister), with a copper vase full of curds

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5. The senior queen who took part in the Abhishek bath was Soyarabai, the mother of Prince Rajaram and the heir-apparent was of course Prince Sambhaji.

6. He was the son of Nilo Sondev. Sabhasad gives the name as Naro Nilkanth.

stood due west and Raghunathrao, the ecclesiastical minister, with a gold vase filled with honey stood due north. Next to these were large earthen jars filled with the waters of various rivers and seas.<sup>7</sup> The four cardinal points thus adjusted, the remaining four ministers of state stood mid-way between them, north-east, north-west etc., one of them holding the royal umbrella, another the fan imperial and the other two waving each a *chamar* or fly-whisk, ensigns of Indian royalty.<sup>8</sup> Facing Shivaji stood before him two personal amanuenses, Balaji Avji and his brother Chimnaji, to the right and left respectively, displaying writing materials in their hands. Next to these ministers to right and left stood the other functionaries of state and next the subject princes, the nobility and the gentry. The real ablution or Abhishek proper was then begun. A capacious urn of gold, with a hundred holes drilled at the bottom, was filled with scented water and the streaming urn held above Shivaji's head, and at the same time the contents of the various vases held by the ministers in their hands were poured out upon him, to the accompaniment of the sacred chants recited by the assembled priests. This was the final ceremony of the Abhishek, which was followed up by a wild outburst of flutes, trumpets and drums and the singing and dancing of the singers and nautch-girls present. After this Shivaji was bathed again and the auspicious *arti* – a quaint platter with lighted wicks – was waved over him by the matrons, and he was made to view himself as reflected in a bronze ewer filled with ghee and as also in mirrors before he was permitted to put on his dress – which was pure white – for the final installation ceremony.

The throne was a piece of splendid workmanship, constructed according to the precepts of the shastras. First of all, the basal platform was made of planks of banyan and fig-trees, wood considered sacred in the shastras, and especially prescribed for coronation purposes. This dais was decorated with gold plate, engraved with devices of silvan beasts on its four sides, the lion, the tiger, the hyena, the cat and the ox. On the golden dais stood eight columns each supporting a lion in gold, upon which the cushioned seat was placed. The columns bore in embossed relief devices of flowers, leaves, trees and creepers or birds and fishes, or figures representing nymphs

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7. The great rivers, the water of which was thus used, were the Ganges, the Jumna, the Krishna, the Godaveri and the Cauveri.

8. These ministers were Annaji Datto (the Pant-sachiv), Janardan Pandit Hanmante (the Sumant), Dattaji Pandit (the Mantri), and Balaji Pandit (the Nyayadhish or lord chief justice). But some of names are differently given in the different versions. For instance, Chitnis gives the name of Trimbak Sondev instead of that of Janardan Hanmante and Sabhasad gives the name of Ramchandra, the son of Trimbak instead of that of Hanmante. Sabhasad gives the name of Niraji instead of Dattaji Pandit (Mantri), and Chitnis gives the name of Niraji Ravji instead of that of Balaji Pandit (Nyayadhish).

dancing to the accompaniment of string instruments.<sup>9</sup> The cushion consisted first of deer-skin and tiger-skin, with a layer of gold coins between them. Upon this was piled up a soft cushion of cotton-down encased in velvet, with the back and side cushions embroidered in gold. From the basal pedestal upwards there rose an ornamental silver plate called the *prabhaval* forming the back of the cushioned throne and surmounting it with a metal canopy of gold, studded with brilliants and fringed with pearls. Above all rose a canopy of cloth of gold raised upon outer pillars and glittering with pearl tassels. At the entrance of the durbar-hall a horse and an elephant chosen for the auspicious marks upon their bodies were standing in readiness, decked with gold trappings and embroidered housings. As the auspicious hour drew near, Shivaji performed a solemn *puja* or worship of the God Vishnu, a golden image being used for the purpose, and when the *puja* was over he held the image in his right hand. At last when the inauguration time came, Shivaji saluted the Brahmans and received their benedictions amid Vedic hymns. He made his reverent salutation to his mother, who acknowledged it with a stream of affectionate blessings. And now holding the image of Vishnu still in his right hand Shivaji advanced to the throne. Approaching the right hand side of the throne, Shivaji made a slight genuflexion with the right knee, saluted the consecrated throne, and with his face to the east, ascended it without touching it with his feet. The eight ministers of state took their stations at the eight columns of the lion-throne, standing with their hands clasped in reverence. First in order the ecclesiastical minister Panditrao took his post on the right and the chief minister or Peshwa on the left. Next behind them, the commander-in-chief (sir-nobut) on the right and the Amatya (finance-minister) on the left. Behind them stood the other four ministers, the Sumant (or Dabir i.e. foreign secretary) and the Sachiv (or Surnis i.e. record-keeper) to the right and the left, and the Mantri (or Wakis i.e. home secretary and lord privy seal) and the Nyayadhish (chief justice) also to the right and the left respectively. The moment the installation was completed, the air was rent with the mingled din of drums and trumpets. The musicians and nautch-girls struck up their rhythmic melodies. The roar of cannon resounded from Raigad which was taken up by the guns of the surrounding hill-forts, as previously arranged, one after another. Thus every fort in Shivaji's dominions joined in the jubilant boom of guns.

After ascending the auspicious throne, Shivaji changed his white robes for scarlet, decked himself with the usual ornaments of Indian royalty, the

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9. Some chronicle writers affirm that the gold columns and sculptures upon the throne required gold of the weight of three candies, thirty-two seers, and thirty-two masas i. e. nearly four candies weight of gold.

necklace, the plume, the pearl-crest, the pearl pendants etc., and consecrating his sword and bow and arrows with solemn chants and *pūja* took the weapons in his hands. Thus attired he came out to have flowers of silver and gold showered upon him and the auspicious *arti* waved around him by a group of sixteen Brahman matrons, who received rich presents of female costumes and ornaments. The concluding ceremonies after the enthronement were now taken in hand and the benedictions of the officiating priests were received. Munificent presents were made to them. Gaga Bhatt received an honorarium of one lakh, besides valuable presents of wearing apparel and jewellery. The priests presiding over the coronation sacrifice received five thousand each, the officiating chaplain rupees twenty-four thousand. Brahmans of learning and eminence received honorariums ranging from two hundred to one thousand rupees each; Brahmans of the rank and file rupees twenty-five per head. Ample largesses were also bestowed upon gosavis, hermits and mendicants of all kinds ranging from two to five rupees each. Persons of saintly character and Brahmans of pre-eminent piety received grants of inam land. Finally, after the manner of great Indian sovereigns, Shivaji was weighed against gold and the precious treasure equivalent to his weight, amounting to sixteen thousand<sup>10</sup> pagodas, was distributed among the Brahmans.

The ministers of state, subhedars and the various departmental officers, both public and private, received their titles and robes of office with various personal decorations. All moreover received the sanads or patents of their various offices. The presents made to the eight ministers of state included gold-embroidered state robes, pearl crests and pendants, sword and shield, horse and elephant, the chief minister receiving besides the special insignia of his high position, viz. a jari – patka (a cloth of gold banner, an honour also conferred upon the chief commander), a nobut or state drum, and a pair of gold handled chowries (ornamental hair tassels) to be waved about him on state processions. When the state ministers came forward to greet him with their salutation, presented their nazars (loyalty offerings) and received their patents of offices, Shivaji bestowed upon each of them a lakh of pagodas. Balaji Avji was then invested with the robes of Chitnis or personal secretary, with similar presents, and next after him Chimnaji Avji, Balaji's brother and colleague. For each of the eight ministers a *mutaliq* (deputy) was appointed. They also came forward to receive their special robes. The lesser officers on the civil and military establishments received their respective honours.

When the distribution of honours and presentation of nazars was at an end and the levee was dissolved, Shivaji went in a royal procession for a

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10. These 16,000 pagodas amounted to about one hundred and forty pounds in weight.

solemn thanks-giving at the temples of the gods. He mounted a horse with gold and jewelled trappings and rode into the outer court, where dismounting from the horse he got into a golden howdah borne by a magnificent elephant gaily decked with gold and rich embroidered housings, fringed with pearls. At the head of the elephant the chief commander of the forces took his seat, holding the trident in one hand and with the other waving the morchel (a brush of peacock feathers waved at royal processions before the king). In the rear part of the howdah, the prime minister took his seat, waving the morchel from behind. The other ministers and their deputies joined the procession, each riding his own elephant as also the select nobility and commanders, on elephants or horse-back. In the van of the whole procession were the elephants bearing the two principal standards of the state, first the Jari-patka or the grand ensign of cloth of gold and secondly the Bhagva-zenda or the orange-ochre ensign. Behind them marched the ensigns of the Peshwa (prime-minister) and the Senapati (chief commander) also supported on elephants. Immediately after rode the commanders of the royal horse and officers of the horse guard musketeers with their steeds accoutred with gold and silver trappings, marching gallantly muskets in hand and forming the vanguard. After this cavalcade followed gun-carriages with artillery, horse-carriages and distinguished generals on elephants or horse-back. After them came on foot slingers, swordsmen, archers, lancers and miscellaneous classes of foot-soldiers and behind them the squires and body-guards of commanders and a division of musketeers. Then followed military drums, tabors, tambourines and other war-like musical instruments; next after them fifty led elephants; then a corps of one hundred cavalry and skyrockets mounted on camel transports: then again another troop of fifty led elephants, and behind them the softer and more melodious music of clarions, hautboys, drum mounted on horse-back, horns and trumpets. Behind them marched bards, minstrels, and Indian troubadours; next after them, flag-staff-bearers, ensigns, spearmen, macebearers and ushers with staves; and after them came gymnasts, athletes and champion wrestlers of the Maharashtra palaestra, mounted upon elephants. Behind them all came Shivaji in his gold howdah, a company of brave Mavalis, gaily accoutred and glittering with ornaments, serving as an immediate body-guard and surrounding his elephant at a respectable distance. Behind the king marched the elephants of the ministers and departmental chiefs and an infantry force brought up the rear.

It is needless to say that in expectation of the coronation procession, the streets were cleansed and decorated, and in many places were washed and beautifully laid out with picturesque designs in coloured powders or *rangoli*, an accomplishment of high class women in India. The houses were painted in gay colours and beautifully draped with tapestry. Flags, buntings, arches were

seen everywhere. The procession went from temple to temple, making offerings to the gods and liberal largesses to the Brahmans. On the return journey, married women stepped forth from their threshold and waved the arti at different places on the road or scattered flowers and *durva* grass from the windows and balconies. At the palace gate Shivaji changed into a chariot and on arriving at the court-yard into a palanquin and so came on to the durbar-hall, where at his entrance he went through a quaint little Indian ceremony for appeasing or counter-acting the influence of the evil eye after all this triumph.<sup>11</sup>

Entering the inner apartments he first paid his worship at the chapel of his tutelary deity, and then proceeded to salute his mother. He then visited the ladies apartments where he was welcomed and honoured with auspicious arti by his queens, who received from him royal tokens of his regard and affection. Returning to the hall Shivaji again mounted the throne and held durbar. The courtiers offered nazars and made their salutes with humility. The durbar was dispersed with the distribution of *pan*, flowers and attar of rose. The Brahmans were sumptuously banqueted, and Shivaji dined in company with his friends and guests. The solemn rites were now over. Every detail of that extraordinary and well-nigh obsolete ceremonial and pageant had been worked out with marvellous precision. The subject princes and other visitors took their leave, having received from Shivaji many a token of his esteem and affection. The different *artistes* and musicians who had enlivened the entertainments with their various talents received ample rewards for their labours. The spectators went home singing the praises of Shivaji and his greatness. The whole celebration is said to have cost a crore and forty-two lakhs of pagodas.

From the date of the coronation a new era was inaugurated,<sup>12</sup> which was to be observed in all public business and by all people throughout Shivaji's dominions. The date of the coronation and the inauguration of the new era was the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the first half of the Hindu month of Jesht in the year 1596 of Shalivahan and correspond to the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1674. Shivaji now adopted the name and style of "Kshatriya Kulavatansa Shri Raja Shiv Chhatrapati," the meaning of which title is, "the Ornament of the Kshatriya

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11. A jar of water and a handful of salt, lemon, pepper etc. are waved up and down the person of him from whom the evil eye is to be taken off and poured out on the ground.

12. The new era was known as the Coronation Shaka, not called personally after his name as Shivaji Shaka. According to Mr. Sardesai (Marathi Riyasat, 1915 edition, page 362) this era was used in public papers and proclamations in the Maratha state for about 104 years. Mr. Sardesai's statement is based upon certain papers published in the Report of the Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal of Poona for the Shaka 1835.

Race, His Majesty the Raja Shiv, Lord of the Royal Umbrella.” The noble resolve of his youthful years, the labours of a life-time, were crowned with rich fruition, – a free kingdom, a crowning, and the inauguration of a new era.

It is not needful to describe with what sad thoughts the Mahomedan monarchies must have received the news of this solemn enthronement. Up to this date they had endeavoured to persuade themselves that whatever Shivaji’s triumphs and laurels, he was after all a polygar chief, not an anointed sovereign like themselves and that in consequence his name could not stir the depths of national loyalty in the people’s heart. When his rebellion was crushed his name would sink into oblivion and no land-marks of his memory would be left behind. From this pet theory of theirs they were rudely awakened. Not conquest, but union, was the real key-note of his success or the end of his ambition. That Shivaji should conquer the fairest provinces and the strongest fortresses in the country and sit down with folded hands without endeavouring to unite the affections of the people towards himself and sealing the enduring compact of relationship between sovereign and his subjects, for the attainment of which a solemn consecration and coronation seemed to be the only road, was quite unthinkable. When the Brahmans of Maharashtra seemed to waver in their opinion and make mountains of shastric difficulties, he attained the crowning glory of his noble ambition with the help of the learned exponents of the law at Paithan and Benares. Sooth to say, no Brahman or pandit of the time had a doubt about his Kshatriya origin, except that a few purists vainly attempted to rank him as a Shudra as being what in the language of the law amounted to a non-user of Kshatriya rights and privileges. To clear the mist from their eyes the clear logic of Ganga Bhatt and other scholars was necessary. But to the great people reposing beneath the shade of the Sahyadri, with that strong common sense and gratitude which have at all times been the back-bone of their national character, it could scarcely have been matter of doubt, despite the croaking of a few idlers, that he, who had delivered Maharashtra from the yoke of Islam and given his country-men the first taste of freedom and independence, deserved the name of Kshatriya more than those who masqueraded under it. It was an evidence of great foresight on his part that Shivaji established beyond the shadow of doubt the foundations and ensured for all purposes the stability and permanence of a puissant Hindu monarchy, by the solemn pomp and magnificence of his enthronement. He immediately acquired greater prestige in the eyes of the Rajput princes of the north and of the European settlers domiciled in the country, whether French, or British or Portuguese. Even Mahomedan powers – Bijapur, Golconda, and Delhi – had now to show greater deference towards him. Heretofore his name had been a terror, now it became a terror not unmingled with respect.

While the coronation festivities were still running their course, a tragic event took place which put an end to the revelry. This was the death of the aged Jijabai. She did not long survive the coronation. Her work was done. The seed she had sown had borne abundant fruit. The early stimulus she had applied to her son had awakened into life a whole people. Her sage advice had accomplished more constructive work than councils and cabinets. She had seen step by step the realization of her dreams; she had seen her son's career of victory; she had seen the crowning triumph of a united people enthroning her son in their affections more firmly than an earthly throne and the final inauguration of a new era. She had seen all this and now closed her eyes in peace. She succumbed to a sudden illness within ten or twelve days after Shivaji's coronation. Coming so suddenly upon the crest of the coronation triumphs, her death overwhelmed Shivaji with grief. That his mother should rejoice with his joys and triumph in his triumphs was the highest of his personal ambitions. Without her, these joys and triumphs seemed to have no savour, his kingdom seemed a wilderness, his wealth as dross. And so he mourned. How intense his love and affection was towards his mother was now seen by all his people. The solemn obsequies were performed and lakhs of rupees were spent on the funeral ceremonies. The four months of autumn that followed her death, Shivaji spent at Raigad, where she had died. These four months were spent in mourning. During this long period, Shivaji never once sat on the throne. It was on the fifth day of the first half of Ashvin (October) that he sat in durbar, mounting the throne again after an auspicious ceremony. After this, in company with the eight ministers and army he left Raigad to offer his worship at the temple of the Devi (goddess) at Pratapgad, whence he proceeded to visit his spiritual preceptor Ramdas Swami, and make pilgrimages to the temple of Mahadev at Shikhar, and to that of Khandoba at Jejuri, and again returned to Raigad.

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