



THE LIFE OF SHIVAJI MAHARAJ

FOUNDER OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

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Chapter 6

The Beginnings of Swarajya

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In the last chapter a brief sketch was attempted of the early preparations of Shivaji for the realization of his ambition: the exploration of mountain fastness and hill-forts, mountain paths and defiles, and the mustering together of a band of devoted friends and supporters. In this chapter we propose to trace his earliest activities as parts of a premeditated aggressive programme.

At the outset we meet with a heresy to which certain historians, the principal of whom is Mr. Rajwade (Vol. IV, page 73 of his “Materials for the History of the Marathas”), have given currency. These historians maintain that the beginnings of independence were made not by Shivaji but by Dadaji Kondadev and his officers at the instance of Shahaji himself, and that at a time when Shivaji was barely eleven or twelve years of age. In support of this contention, Mr. Rajwade quotes the chronicler, Sabhasad, to the following effect: “Immediately on the return from Bangalore to Poona, Dadaji captured the twelve Mavali glens and slew the Mavali deshmukhs who were raiding the country.”

It does not however follow from this statement that the idea of an independent Hindu state had been already conceived and its execution entrusted to Dadaji Kondadev by Shahaji. The context of Sabhasad’s statement makes it clear that the districts of the twelve Mavals, with Baramati and Indapur, were added to Shahaji’s jaghir for his eminent services in the Karnatic, and that in 1638 on his return from Bangalore, Dadaji Kondadev in

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pursuance of the orders he had received from Shahaji proceeded to take possession of the recently ceded districts by a war of conquest and the defeat of the local deshmukhs. Shahaji was just feeling his way to a permanent position at the Bijapur court, and he was not likely to contemplate any act of rebellion against Bijapur at the imminent risk of wrecking his new-built fortune. As a motive for this imaginary plan of forming an independent monarchy in the Maval districts, in concert with Dadaji Kondadev Mr. Rajwade points to the private enemies of Shahaji in the Karnatic, such as Afzul Khan, Maloji Ghorpade and other nobles of Bijapur who looked askance upon his rising power in the Karnatic. Such private enmities had probably no existence in point of fact so early as 1638. The animosities between Shahaji and Afzul Khan and other nobles of Bijapur began eight or ten years later. The history of Bijapur at this earlier period of Shahaji's career in the Karnatic makes scarcely any allusion to Afzul Khan and the other enemies of Shahaji of a later time. And if Dadaji had ever concerted with Shahaji a plan for establishing an independent power in the Maval districts, it is difficult to conceive why seven or eight years later the same individual should have entered such emphatic protests against Shivaji's designs. Such a position would have been quite ridiculous for a prudent man of affairs like Dadaji to take up in dealing with the enterprising programme conceived by Shivaji and is entirely at variance with the received tradition that the pertinacity of Shivaji brought Dadaji to an early grave, or, as is sometimes asserted, made him commit suicide by resorting to poison. Nor was an experienced statesman like Shahaji likely to entrust such a serious charge to Dadaji's insignificant force of a thousand men or thereabout when he had whole regiments at his command in the Karnatic. Nor is there any shred of evidence that a large army was ever sent under Dadaji from Bangalore to Maharashtra. Lastly there is this consideration: why should Shahaji have ever confided an enterprise of such gravity and consequence to another, when he was himself the greatest military leader of his time in all the Deccan? In short, the best that can be said for this theory is that it is an inconsiderate attempt to cast a shadow upon Shivaji's greatness by transferring the originality of his design to a lesser personage. Our line of argument is quite consistent with the view that Shahaji himself had his own designs of independence, a subject which we have sufficiently adverted to in a foregoing chapter. The crux of the question is whether upon Shahaji's advice a plan for a campaign of independence in Maharashtra had ever been conceived. If such an attempt had really been made, what circumstances conspired to put an end to it? And why should Dadaji have shown seven years later such a total change of front on the subject?

As against our line of argument an objection may be raised somewhat to this effect. If Shahaji harboured no designs for independence in Maharashtra, it may be argued, why should he not have taken steps to punish Shivaji, - nay even expel him from his jahgir, — when complaints were made by Dadaji Kondadev, and when the Bijapur government itself took him to task for it? It is easy to reply to this objection. By the time Shivaji began his aggressions against Bijapur, Shahaji's authority was well rooted in the Karnatic, his jahgir possessions had been expanded on all sides, and his will was supreme law in the south. The Bijapur government was rent by party factions, and he had profited by the confusion to place his authority on a sort of autocratic basis. It was at such a time that the complaints against Shivaji came to him; a time which Shahaji felt was eminently favourable for such an attempt. With a secret approval of his son's designs and a belief in their practicability, and yet wishing to have no interruption in his chosen paths to independence, he disavowed responsibility for Shivaji's actions and professed a sort of time-serving neutrality upon this subject. His conduct clearly shows that the thoughts of liberty were in his heart, nor was he so debased or perverted as to prefer a gilded servitude to true independence. But there is nothing in his conduct to lend countenance to the view that he had begun to defy the Bijapur government so early as 1638. It is true that in the latter part of his career he was practically independent in the Karnatic. But never did Shahaji like his son openly defy the Bijapur government.

Shivaji saw the Mogul and Mahomedan power spread over the Western ghats, but he was shrewd enough to see, as others were not, that the foundations of the Mahomedan power over the ghats were not rooted deep enough to defy either the assault of a foreign power without or of rebellion within. It was apparent that the Mahomedan powers had always made little of these mountain fastness and had never troubled themselves about strengthening their outposts on the frontiers or garrisoning the hill-forts with sufficient forces for defence.¹ He therefore resolved to direct his first

1. From papers published by Mr. Rajwade (Vol. XV of his "Materials for a History of the Marathas") some evidence of Shivaji's pioneer attempts for independence, dating already as early as 1645, is now forth-coming. From a letter of Shivaji in reply to the Prabhu Deshpande, kulkarni of the vale of Rohida, in which the name of Dadaji Kondadev is mentioned as being privy to certain intrigues between this deshpande and Shivaji himself, an attempt is made to represent Dadaji Kondadev as not merely the promoter but the inspirer of Shivaji's plans. Dadaji's work in the conquest of the Mavals was however a part of his administrative duty as the procurator of Shahaji's jahgir, and was probably made in pursuance of his general orders for the settlement of the district. Whatever the original compact with this Prabhu family might have been, it is clear from Rajwade (Vol. XV pp. 272-73) that they undertook to devote themselves to the prosecution of Shivaji's designs for the achievement of Swarajya and espoused his cause, though the enemies of their family

operations against the ghat country, subjugate the hill-forts and carry the adjoining tracts of mountain land along with them. He knew that, do what the Mahomedan powers could, they would never get permanent control over his highlands, unless and until the Hindu population itself chose to put themselves entirely in their hands. The first part of Shivaji's programme therefore was to make his own what the Mahomedans had so long failed to dominate, and use the hill-forts both for purposes of defence and offence, as strategical positions commanding the entire ghat country and compelling the adherence and allegiance of the deshmukhs in the neighbourhood. On nearly all the hill-forts there were nominal garrisons maintained by the Bijapur government, who were practically like mounted sentinels keeping watch. It was not to Shivaji's interest, nor was it then in his power, to declare open enmity with them. He resolved to carry his point by stratagem. About twenty miles, to the south-west of Poona, lay the fort of Torna. Shivaji despatched Yesaji Kunk, Tanaji Malusare and Baji Fasalkar to open negotiations with the governor of the fort, asking him to make over the fortress for the present to Shivaji, who, it was represented to them, was in communication with the sultan for the purpose. By these insinuations, reinforced by persuasive gold, the fort of Torna fell into Shivaji's hands in 1646².

carried tales to the local Rijapur authorities at Shirval. The Jedhes, who were the deshmukhs of Rohida, very early espoused Shivaji's cause. They had originally been in the Bijapur service, but about the time when Randulla Khan and Shahaji marched against the Moguls (1635 A. D.), they joined Shahaji (Jedhe Chronology, p. 178) probably with a view to enlist his support against the Khopde family who disputed the deshmukh rights over that particular district. The result of this intervention was that at a later date we find the Khopdes on the side of Afzul Khan, while the Jedhes and most other Maval deshmukhs or at least their followers remained on the side of Shivaji, whom they also assisted in the war with the Mores of Javli (Jedhe Chronology, pp. 180 and 181). Another enemy of the Jedhe family was Bandal of Hirdas Maval who had usurped their lands. Dadaji Kondadev marched against Bandal, but was defeated (Rajwade's Vol. XV, 316, 393) and had to retreat to his head-quarters at Shivapur. In the end with the help of Kanhoji Jedhe, Dadaji Kondadev made his peace with Bandal and brought about a good understanding with the leaders of the twelve Mavals, excepting the Khopdes, and after the death of Dadaji we find them co-operating with Shivaji in all his operations. In 1648 we find Jedhe Naik was with Shahaji in the South and was arrested along with him by Mustapha Khan. After his liberation Shahaji thanked him and exhorted him thenceforth to anchor his fortunes with those of Shivaji at Poona and support him with all his power. Thus it was that the Jedhes, the Silimkars and even the Bandals co-operated with Shivaji enthusiastically in the wars with Chandrarao More and Afzul Khan (Vide Jedhe Chronology pp. 179-180). This is clear proof that Shahaji not only secretly sympathised with the plans of Shivaji but did his best to promote them by furnishing his son with the services of a most loyal body of auxiliaries. It will be seen that in his petty wars Dadaji Kondadev only followed out the policy of Shahaji, the eventual complications of which that able administrator did not probably foresee.

2. Khafi Khan says that the first fort captured by Shivaji was Chandanwandan.

This was the first overt act of spoliation against Bijapur, and to lend it an ostensible colouring and retain possession of his prize, Shivaji promptly despatched his deputies to Bijapur, representing to that government that the taking over by Shivaji of the fort of Torna was entirely in the interest of the government, that a loyal servant like him had better be in charge of a sequestered fortress like Torna, in preference to adventurous officers, and that in virtue of his new position as governor of the fort, he would be able to compel the *deshmukhs* to render true accounts of revenue to the state, thus saving immense sums of money annually to the government. As a practical proof of his good intentions, he undertook to pay over to the government a far larger revenue than the average of the last ten years. The government took a long time to draft a reply to these representations, which was just what Shivaji wanted, for in the meanwhile his agents were lavish with presents and bribes among the officers of the court and secured a favourable reply to the petition. Meanwhile the fortifications of Torna were being radically overhauled and renovated, and when completely restored the name of Prachandgad was given to it. In course of these operations Shivaji had the good luck to unearth a quantity of buried treasure among the debris of the fort. Shivaji ascribed the find to the favour of the goddess Bhavani and caused a rumour to be spread that this was a proof of her favourable interest in his enterprise. This made his cause a popular cause, and the enthusiasm of the multitude knew no bounds. Shivaji devoted the treasure to the purchase of arms and ammunition and the erection of a new fort of his own.

To the south-east of Torna fort, at a distance of about three miles there was a barren mountain called Murbad,³ of considerable strategical value. This Shivaji resolved to transform into a fortress-town with impregnable defences. The mountain spurs projected on three sides. They were also strongly fortified with ramparts. The central fort was christened Rajgad and it was adorned with a spacious palace. The projecting redoubts were named Suvela, Sanjivani, and Padmavati respectively. The Shivadigvijay states that only the projecting forts were the creation of Shivaji. The central fort existed before and was won by a stroke of diplomacy. Dadaji Kondadev had reclaimed the dense jungle around the village of Khedber between Poona and Shirval and by the careful culture of mango groves in this wilderness converted it into a thriving centre, under the name of Shivapur, after the name of his master Shivaji. This new town was peopled by inhabitants from the Maval and Konkan regions, who gladly acknowledged the authority of Shivaji. At Shivapur he gave laws and heard cases, civil and criminal.

3. Variouslly called Mudrodev and Durgadevi Mount by other chroniclers. The Shedgavkar bakhar calls it Musaldev (p. 19).

While the entrenchments of fort Rajgad were in progress, a report of these doings of Shivaji reached the Bijapur government. The sultan immediately issued orders to Shivaji to put a stop to the fortifications and demanded explanation of these acts from Shahaji in the Karnatic. That warrior replied that neither had Shivaji consulted him in these things, nor was he doing anything upon his father's advice; but he and his family were loyal vassals of the Adilshahi state, and that being so, whatever Shivaji was doing in the way of fortification must be for the improvement or safety of his jahgir. The Bijapur state possessed no reliable fortress in the neighbourhood of his jahgir, and Shivaji might have thought of curing this defect. In this Shivaji could not be said to be doing any disservice to the Bijapur state. Such was the purport of Shahaji's reply. At the same time he wrote to Dadaji and Shivaji protesting against these acts of his son and exhorting him to reform his ways. Dadaji had already notified Shahaji of the latest doings of his son and exhausted his eloquence in vain to bring back Shivaji to the paths of worldly wisdom and easy security, — with what effect, has already been described.

Soon after followed the death of Dadaji Kondadev, and Shivaji took up personal charge of the jahgir, administering it in the name of his father. Shortly after, Shahaji's agents came to demand the arrears of the jahgir revenue. Shivaji dismissed them with the curt reply that the produces of the sterile fields scarcely sufficed for the cost of administration, and as the Karnatic estates of his father were both extensive and fertile, he had better maintain himself on that source of revenue. Shahaji does not seem to have resented this answer. It would seem that he was gratified with the early promise of a great career in the resourceful conduct of his son. Sometime later he voluntarily made over to Shivaji the entire charge and usufruct of the Maharashtra jahgir, with an expression of delight at the skill and statesmanship of which his son had already given unmistakable evidence. And wisely indeed was this step taken by Shahaji. There were civil dissensions at Bijapur and anarchy reigned in all departments of government. The wiser plan for Shahaji was to watch events calmly, with a firm grasp upon his Karnatic possessions. Shivaji's progress in Maharashtra was also fraught with grave danger to his personal security. By keeping a distance between himself and Shivaji and putting him in full authority over his Maharashtra interests, Shahaji might be free at any moment to renounce any responsibility for his daring acts. With this prudent counsel, Shahaji now settled for good in the Karnatic.

Now it happened that among these jahgir estates was the district of Supa, which hitherto had been administered by Baji Mohite, the brother-in-law of Shahaji, being in fact the brother of his second wife. He was also in charge of a squadron of 300 horses. On the death of Dadaji, Shivaji wrote to

him to bring the squadron and the jahgir accounts personally to Poona. Mohite did not obey this order and, instead of replying to the message, expressed his astonishment to the bearer of the despatch that Shivaji should play the landlord in the life-time of his father, whose great position alone had hitherto screened him from condign punishment for his acts of lawlessness and rapacity within the Bijapur territory. He wound up this solemn denunciation with an expression of alarm for the safety of Shahaji, should his son persist in his harebrained enterprise, not forgetting to give the gratuitous counsel: *ne sutor ultra crepidam*. The messengers made a faithful report of these utterances to Shivaji, and one can well understand how his blood must have boiled in his veins at this representation of his acts. His revenge was swift and sudden. The Shimga festival coming on, Shivaji called on this refractory step-uncle with a small guard of Mavalis, under pretence of asking and receiving the customary Shimga presents. The trick succeeded. Mohite was taken prisoner, his territory and horse captured and the jewels and treasury seized.⁴ Mohite was treated as became his rank and relation with Shahaji. Shivaji tried his best to persuade him to side with him. But persuasion had no force with Mohite, who with his followers was at last sent to Shahaji in the Karnatic, with a proper escort.

A small event this, but it had great influence upon the minds both of supporters and strangers. They saw the sort of man they had to deal with. A man who had acted so sternly towards the brother-in-law of his father, and withal a faithful and zealous officer of Shahaji, was certainly not a person to be trifled with. The circumstance aroused a sense of responsibility and fear among his followers.

The fort of Chakan lies to the east of Poona. It commanded the line of communication between Poona and the Deccan plateau. The possession of this fortress went a great way towards securing the sovereignty of the country. The fortress had recently been the scene of important events in the career of Shahaji. That redoubted warrior had first obtained it in jahgir from the Nizamshahi sultan. When Shahaji had to fly the country from the vindictive pursuit of Jadhav, the possession of this important fortress passed into the hands of two turbulent polygar chiefs, Martand Dev and Honappa Deshpande. These chiefs were reduced and taken prisoners by Shahaji's friend, Murar Rao Jagdev of Bijapur, who made over the fortress again to its legitimate owner, Shahaji. Dadaji Kondadev, in his administrative capacity as Shahaji's minister of affairs, had appointed Firangoji Narsala as havaladar, or garrison

4. Other bakhars speak of a midnight raid upon resulting in the capture and imprisonment of Mohite and his followers. The Jedhe chronology gives a very late date to this event, viz. 1656. Sabhasad calls him Sambhaji Mohite.

commander of this fort. On the death of Dadaji, Firangoji made himself independent at Chakan. Shivaji opened negotiations in a conciliatory spirit and induced him to surrender the fort. Firangoji submitted quietly and was rewarded with a continuation of the garrison command of the fort in Shivaji's service. The old officers under Shahaji threw in their lot with Shivaji, excepting an old cavalry officer, Bilal Pagya, who was permitted to revert to his old allegiance at Shahaji's head-quarters.

In course of time, Firangoji Narsala captured the fort of Shivneri and planted Shivaji's flag upon his birth-place. Firangoji was entrusted with the command of this fort, in addition to his former command, and it was left to him to introduce Dadaji Kondadev's improved revenue system in the neighbouring villages.

Shivaji now turned his attention to the fort of Kondana, in the immediate vicinity of Poona. With his innate military instincts, he at once saw how indispensable the possession of this fort was for the permanent security of Poona. The seizure of this fort would strengthen Shivaji's jaghir possessions around Poona. But it was no light task to capture this fort. The Bijapur government maintained a strong garrison upon the fort under a Mahomedan officer. Shivaji was not yet powerful enough to advance openly to an encounter with such a force, an event which would have been the prelude to a larger movement on the part of the Bijapur government. An open war with Bijapur at this stage of his career would have been a suicidal act. Shivaji therefore made up his mind to win over the fort by bribing the commander, and in this he had immediate success. The fort was no sooner won than Shivaji proceeded to overhaul its fortifications. With its new entrenchments and munitions of war, the fort entered upon a new career of vigorous activity under the name of Sinhagad, or the Lion's Fort.

The fort of Purandar and the neighbouring territory was in the charge of a capable Brahman officer, Nilkant Haibatrao, who held the fort and lands in *inam* from the defunct Nizamshahi dynasty. When the Nizamshahi territory came in course of time to be annexed to the widening Mogul Empire, Nilkant succeeded in carving out an independent fortune for himself within the secluded fastness of fort Purandar. He maintained a friendly attitude towards Shivaji and Dadaji till his death, which occurred within a short time after that of Dadaji. He left behind him three sons, of whom the eldest Nilopant succeeded in swallowing up the entire patrimony, regardless of the interest and birth-right of his younger brothers, Pilaji and Sankraji, who not unnaturally maintained that they should all have equal rights to the succession and command of the fort. The family bickering had been in progress for some time, when Nilopant observing what strides Shivaji was making in the

expansion of his power cultivated his friendship. Shivaji was much perplexed over this fort, the acquisition of which seemed essential for the success of his enterprise. Open hostilities were impossible on account of the ties of alliance which had descended from sire to son. Public opinion was sure to be outraged by a declaration of hostilities. But for the efficient military control of his jaghir districts of Baramati, Indapur and Supa the acquisition of Purandar became an act of imperative necessity. Shivaji saw the accession of military strength the fortress was bound to bring to his possessions, and the insecurity to his own interests that the passing of the fort into hostile hands was sure to bring in its train. This, at any rate, he was resolved to prevent.

While the fraternal dissensions were at their height, Shivaji, with a chosen band of his Mavalis, entered the Purandar territory, with the ostensible purpose of a tour in the Supa district. No sooner were the two younger brothers apprised of Shivaji's approach than they sent to invite him to fort Purandar to arbitrate upon the dispute.⁵ Upon this Shivaji made a halt and quartered his men at the temple of Narayan under the fort. A sudden march upon the fort might rouse Nilopant's suspicion, and this Shivaji wanted to avoid as much as possible. On the other hand the younger brothers had no courage to descend and openly join Shivaji. In this uncertainty, the soldiers and officers of the garrison began to reflect upon the growing evils of the fraternal strife. Things were drifting they could not see how and might end in the seizure of the fort by an outsider. Far better they thought if the fort were to pass under Shivaji, their neighbour, than under an utter stranger. Shivaji owned the surrounding country and was fast becoming the lord of the hill-forts round about. Under his iron hand anarchy was impossible. What leader more valiant and chivalrous could they ever hope to serve? Such thoughts were passing through their minds. They concerted their plans and determined to invite Shivaji to the fort. They represented to the dissentient brothers the wisdom of cultivating friendly feelings between their family and that of Shivaji, and that the valiant leader being under the walls of the fort and the time being that of the Divali festival, the most festive time of the year in the Deccan, it would be but an exercise of common courtesy to welcome him to partake of the hospitality of the fort. They further advised the brothers to lay their mutual complaints before Shivaji and abide by his decision. Thus persuaded, the three brothers descended from the fort with the object of according a warm welcome to Shivaji and invited him in the most cordial terms to accept their hospitality in the auspicious season of Divali. Shivaji protested that he was not alone and could not indeed leave his followers in the

5. The author of the Rairi bakhar says that Shivaji asked for and obtained from Nilopant permission to spend the autumn at the foot of fort Purandar, and upon this Shivaji came into the country under the fort in company with Jijabai.

season of festivity. Upon this the welcome was extended to the whole party, and for three days they enjoyed the hospitality of the fort. During this time, it is but due to Shivaji to say that he used all persuasive arts to pour oil upon the troubled waters, but nothing that he could think of could heal the feuds in the family. The arts of reconciliation were tried in vain. The two younger brothers pleaded that they had no hopes of justice at the hands of their brother and offered to put themselves under Sliivaji's protection. On the night of the third day, while the company were conversing, Nilopant feeling drowsy retired to sleep. Shivaji suggested to the younger brothers that they should seize this opportunity and imprison a brother who turned a deaf ear to all conciliatory proposals. The brothers eagerly fell in with this proposal. Shivaji called his Mavalis and enlisted the sympathy of the garrison forces for a concerted *coup de main* with the mutual help of his own soldiers and the garrison. Nilopant was surprised while asleep and put under arrest. The three brothers were marched out of the fortress, which itself was taken possession of by Shivaji's men. Their *inam* lands were equally divided among them, and they were ordered to reside on the lower heights under the fort. In course of time they were given offices in Shivaji's government and prospered in his service. Thus was the fort of Purandar captured without a drop of blood, with the result of a great accession of military strength to Shivaji's districts of Supa and Indapur.

Soon after this event, Mankoji Dahatonde captured the fort of Visapur under Shivaji's orders. An Abyssinian officer of Shahaji, Sidi Bilal the Abyssinian, was in authority at this fort, and Shivaji intended at first to continue him in command. But when the proposal was made to him, the Abyssinian replied that Shivaji was a lawless adventurer, his career one of unrestrained violence, his course ultimately bound to end in ruin: he would not take service under Shivaji's flag. Shivaji showed no resentment at this scathing criticism on the part of a veteran officer of his father. Without the least insult or indignity to his person, but rather with many marks of esteem and laden with a profusion of favours, the veteran was allowed to return to Shahaji.

In this manner did Shivaji proceed to reduce the numerous hill-forts bordering upon his jahgir and render his position as secure and impregnable as possible. Up to this period he had had no occasion to court open hostilities with Bijapur. True indeed, two or three forts, such as those of Torna and Kondana, were seized directly from the military authorities of the Bijapur government; but they had been taken without shedding a drop of blood, and there was this excuse in their case, that they lay immediately upon his jahgir estates. While their maintenance in the highest state of efficiency was naturally more possible from the fact of their being vested in Shivaji's hands, and on the retention of them to a great extent depended the permanent security

and tranquillity of his jahgir, the turbulent deshmukhs, or revenue lords, of the neighbourhood would now be under greater control, and what was of far greater moment, they would no longer be able to avoid paying their contribution of the government dues. The forts of Chakan, Purandar and several others had passed under usurping chiefs who defied the government. In reducing these restive chiefs, Shivaji could make it appear that he was in reality doing a service to Bijapur. It was therefore quite natural that the Bijapur government made little of this apparently insignificant movement of Shivaji. How could they be induced to believe that young and inexperienced as he was, the son of a loyal veteran like Shahaji could ever lend himself to the prosecution of any seditious designs against the state? His schemes must of necessity, so they thought, be in the interest of the government. Another circumstance contributing to the same result was the fact that the reigning Adilshahi sultan (Mahomed Adil Shaha 1626-56) was absorbed in the erection of monumental edifices, the architectural beauties of which still redeem the ruins of the Bijapur capital. His political programme comprehended the subjugation of the whole of the Karnatic country, in the prosecution of which enterprise Shahaji had already rendered such splendid service. The sultan must have thought that to confiscate Shahaji's jahgir and take stringent measures against young Shivaji's present career would lead to unnecessary irritation and unpleasantness in his relations with a gallant officer who had already rendered such meritorious service to the state. It is needless to expatiate at large upon Shivaji's objects and purposes at this stage of his career. Suffice it to say that he was laying deep the firm foundations of that imperial edifice under whose arch the people of Maharashtra were able to breathe freely the spirit of liberty and independence. The mountain forts were the keys that opened up before him the dominion of the surrounding territory. Under the shadow of their rocky walls, his own realm could thrive in prosperous security, in spite of all the alarms of war.

In this manner Shivaji brought under his rule the whole territory from Chakan fort to the Nira. Each fort was re-entrenched as it was captured and kept in a state of high efficiency under a garrison of his faithful Mavalis. The deshmukhs of the districts around paid in their dues of land revenue without a murmur. The revenue system, of Dadaji Kondadev was introduced everywhere. Favourable settlements were made with the riots, with the result of great regularity in the payment of revenues; and a desire to improve the land was bred in their minds by reason of the sense of security they began to feel about their estates. Shivaji actively promoted this instinct for improvement, and his efforts made him the idol of the people. The Hindu cultivators in all directions hailed him as an ideal sovereign. His officers admired his wisdom and sagacity. Admiration and gratitude ripened into a

feeling of reverence. Among the Mavalis this sense of reverence was most intense. They looked upon him not only as their king, but almost as their father. They were ready to sacrifice their lives for his glory. They were resolved to carry out his behests, regardless of consequences.

Not less important than the efficient management of his territorial possessions was another part of his policy, which was the retention in his service and favour of as large a number of followers as possible, and of men of ability both military and civilian. There was an emulous zeal to join his service. Shivaji was an extremely good judge of character and ability. He was deft in assigning the right duty to the right man, and wherever possible this was done by Shivaji in person. He never let slip an opportunity of extending his patronage to a brave soldier or a capable civil officer, Men of honour and ability swarmed round him from all parts, and Shivaji left no stone unturned to infuse his own spirit of enthusiasm in them, and convert them into efficient instruments of the great cause looming before him in the future.

In a short time, he was at the head of ten thousand Mavalis and three thousand horses, including the scattered cavalry left behind by Shahaji, which was now mustered together. There were civilian officers deputed by Shahaji and others nominated by Dadaji Kondadev, who still continued under Shivaji and rendered him every assistance. They were nerved to action and fired with enthusiasm by the exalted spirit with which they saw their master dash forward for the glorious stake of national independence. They recognized that talent for enterprise and genius for invention which swayed Shivaji's comparatively youthful form. They obeyed his least wishes. Shivaji on his part was not slow to honour and appreciate, where honour and appreciation were due. Acknowledgments of merit and promotion followed in quick succession. For the present, Shivaji was resolved that the idea of Swarajya or independence should be commensurate with the boundaries of his jahgir, and with a view to instil this idea, and as a foretaste of the future, he appointed Shamraj Nilkant Rajekar (Ranzekar)⁶ to the rank and office of *Peshwa* or prime minister, Balkrishna Dikshit to that of *Muzumdar*, (accountant general), Sonopant to that of *Dabir* (foreign secretary) and Raghunath Ballal Bokil to that of *Sabnis* (paymaster). Besides these, Yesaji Kunk, Tanaji Malusare and Baji Fasalkar were appointed to the command of the Mavali troops, Shivaji himself being the commander-in-chief of his army. The honour of *Sirnobut* (marshal of the royal drum) had not yet been conferred upon any individual,

6. The Shivdigvijay gives 1643 as the date of the appointment, and this seems to have been accepted by Mr. Rajwade; but such an early date does not seem probable. In the bakhar of Chitragupta the name of the Peshwa is given as Saiikraji. Raghunath Ballal Sabnis was probably Raghunath Ballal Korde.

though some chronicles describe the appointment as having been made as early as this period.⁷ In short, though Shivaji's power had not yet extended beyond the natural boundaries of his jahgir, the foundations were laid and the machinery of self-government was already in motion, to work with an added impetus, when the outline was more fully filled in and the entire superstructure was complete in all its parts.

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7. According to Sabhasad and Chitragupta, the Maratha commander of the Supa district, Tukoji Chor, had the honour of the Simobut conferred on him. But the same authorities record a little later that the honour was conferred upon Mankoji Dahatonde (*alias* Dutonde, *alias* Datavda).

Foot note to page 68: The passage from Sabhasad referred to by Mr. Rajwade occurs at page 7 of that bakhar. It literally seems to mean that "the Maval desh mukhs were bound and subdued and the lawless raiders amongst them were killed." But the passage has been differently interpreted, the word "*bound*" being interpreted as "bound to the cause," or "united." The twelve Mavals referred to in the passage are in the neighbourhood of Poona. They are little valleys generally named after the rivulet irrigating the mountain declivity in each case. They are (1) Rohidkhore, (2) Velvand, (3) Muse, (4) Muthe, (5) Jor, (6) Kanad, (7) Shivthar (8) Murrum, (9) Powd, (10) Gunjan, (11) Bhor and (12) Pavan. There were similarly other Mavals in the neighbourhood of Junnar, such as Shivner, Bhimner, Ghodner, Parner, Jamner etc. (Vide Sardesai's *Marathi Riyasat*, 1907, p.166). These Mavals have the characteristic suffix *Khore* or *ner*. As to the fact of Shivaji's seal being found impressed on a document published by Mr. Rajwade in his volume XV and dated as early as the year 1639 A. D., and the inferences drawn from the date and the language of the motto of the seal ("This is the seal of Shivaji, the son of Shahaji, whose glory waxes over the world like the crescent glory of the moon") by historians like Messrs. Kincaid and Sardesai, it seems to us that the use of such a seal even at so early a date cannot be taken *per se* as an evidence of a set purpose to inaugurate an independent kingdom, since it was customary for every jahgirdar to have his own seal; and the language of the motto might be taken as a piece of conventional extravagance. However it is important in the light of other circumstances as furnishing an index to the hidden motives in the mind of Shivaji, and possibly also of Shahaji, viz: the irrepressible desire for founding an independent monarchy. Beyond this there is no warrant to infer that the empire-building actually began as early as 1639.