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## PREFACE

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The rise of Maratha power under the leadership of Chhatrapati Shivaji constitutes a very significant feature in the history of India. Many prominent historians, such as Sir Jadunath Sarkar, G.S.Sardesai and V.K. Rajawade, have worked quite extensively on Chhatrapati Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Kingdom, and its subsequent rapid expansion towards north under the leadership of Peshwa.

However, in the field of Maratha studies, the study of Maratha rules of Tanjore (1676-1855) remains sadly neglected by the historians, in general. The Maratha rulers were alien to the region of Tanjore, yet they ruled over it for about hundred and eighty years successfully and produced a number of great rulers, such as Shahaji (1684-1710<sup>11</sup>), Pratapsingh (1739-63), Serfoji (1798-1833) who brought glory to Tanjore. In fact, the reign of Shahaji (1684-1710<sup>11</sup>), the subject matter of this Dissertation, was known as the 'Golden Period' of Telugu literature.

One of the earliest works on the Marathas of Tanjore is 'Tanjavarche Rajgharane' by D.B. Parasnis in Marathi, published in 1912. Another recognised work entitled 'The Maratha Rajas of Tanjore' by Dr. K.R. Subramanyam was published in 1920. This book was translated into Marathi in 1933 by V.S. Vakaskar, under the title "Tanjavarche Marathe Raje". These works more or less cover the entire history of Marathas of Tanjore, but in very brief.

In this connection a mention must be made of S. Raju of Tamil University, who has done a considerable work on this subject. He has published some very important original sources such as 'Tanjore Maratha Copper Sheets' in 1983 and 'Tanjore Marattiar Kalvetugal' in 1987. More important, he has worked on the social and administrative aspects in detail and has published a book entitled 'Administration and Social Life under the Maratha Rulers of Tanjavur'.

There are other publications also such as 'Marathi Rangabhumicha Itihas' by S.N. Banhatti, published in 1957, 'Marathi Rangabhumicha Ushshakal' by Prof. Maya Sardesai, published in 1972, 'Roopdyanchi Roopkatha' by J.S. Sukhtankar, published in 1983, etc. but all these works refer to only some aspects of cultural life of Tanjore, under Marathas, such as music, drama, etc., indirectly as a part of their respective themes.

This Dissertation is just confined to Shahaji (1684-1710-11) the second ruler of Tanjore, and it is divided into five Chapters, viz., 'Political Life Sketch of Shahaji', 'Shahaji as a Patron', 'Shahaji as a Dramatist', 'Shahaji as a Poet' and 'Epilogue'.

The FIRST CHAPTER covers the historical background of Tanjore, political career of Shahaji, with the help of literary and epigraphic sources. A brief reference to his administration is also made. For pre-Shahaji Tanjore, sources of Vijaynagar History by S.K. Iyengar

are found extremely useful. Similarly, Shahendravilas of Sridhar Venkatesh, a court poet of Shahaji is extensively used in reconstructing the childhood of Shahaji.

The SECOND CHAPTER covers Shahaji's encouragement and his rich patronage to the men of letters, his court scholars and a survey of their literary works, with the help of epigraphic and contemporary literary sources.

In the THIRD and FOURTH CHAPTERS, stress is laid on Shahaji's literary career into two parts: 'as a dramatist' and 'as a poet' respectively. In these Chapters, the themes of his plays and poetry are described and analysed with the help of his original plays, such as 'Ganga-Kaveri Samvad', 'Mrityunjay Chiranjiv', 'Shankar Pallaki Seva Prabandha', 'Panchabhashavilas Natak', 'Chandrashekhar Natak' and also his 'Thyagesh Padas' and an attempt is made to assess him as a scholar against the literary background of the age he lived in.

This researcher faced paucity of sources while working on this theme, particularly in tracing his political career. However, the existing original sources such as 'Dharmavijay Champu', 'Rajkanya Parinay Natak', 'Shaddarshani Siddhanta Sangraha', 'Shahvilas Gitam', etc., have been extensively used in throwing light on the various aspects of multifaceted personality of Shahaji. The same sources

have also enabled this researcher to present certain positive traits of Ekoji, who is often found at the receiving end at the hands of historians.

The particular theme of the Dissertation - "SHAHAJI OF TANJORE - A GREAT PATRON, DRAMATIST AND POET" is chosen by me for my M.Phil Dissertation not only out of my interest in Maratha history, but also out of the feeling that the history of <sup>the</sup> Marathas of Tanjore remains somewhat neglected particularly by the scholars, researchers and historians in Maharashtra, inspite of its rich and substantial contribution to literature, dramas, poetry and fine-arts, of South etc. I was rather happy to find a similar feeling echoed by J.S. Sukhtankar, in other context and he subsequently wrote 'Roopdyanchi Roopkatha', highlighting the development of dramas under the Marathas of Tanjore.

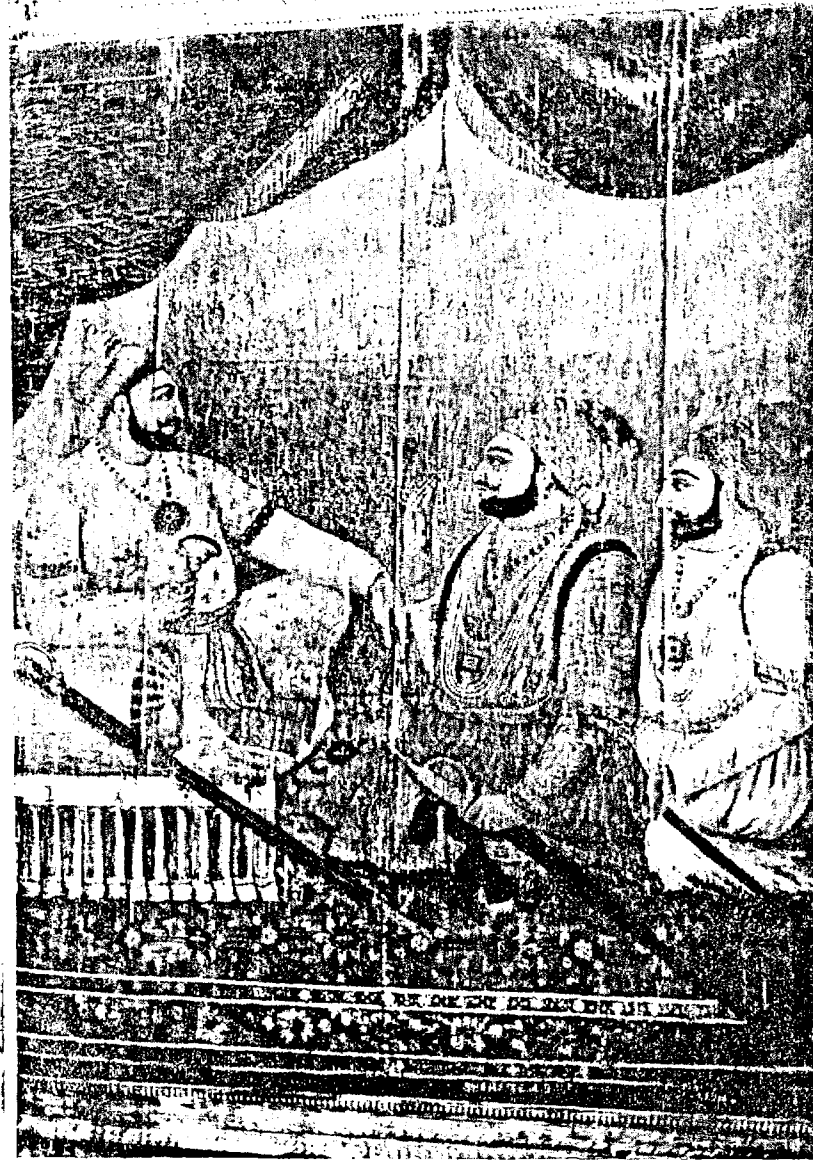
During the preparation of this Dissertation, I received valuable assistance from many persons and I would like to place on record my humble thanks to all the them. First I would like to thank my Guide, Dr. M.P. Patil, Department of History, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, for guiding me at various stages of this Dissertation work. I thank the Librarian of Saraswati Mahal, Tanjore, for extending every facility to me. As many of the original sources on which this dissertation is based, are in Telugu, and the English translations of many of these sources are not available, I would have been

seriously handicapped, but for the valuable co-operation extended to me by Telugu Pandit Shri N. Vishwanathan and Marathi Pandit Shri T.R. Bhima Rao. It would not be out of place if I mention it here that both these Pandits have been honoured by the Government of Maharashtra for their important contribution to Marathi literature, poetry and dramas.

I also thank the Librarians of Madras Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras; Barr. Balasaheb Khardekar Library of Shivaji University, Kolhapur; and Rajaram College, Kolhapur. I would also like to thank my colleagues Sarvashri S.A. Kumbhar, S.S. Patil, S.S. Khade and Dr. Ashok Wali, for assisting me in my Dissertation work.

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(Sadanand G. Wali)



Ekaji  
1676—1683.

Sahaji, 1684—1710  
Hero of the Poem.

Serfoji  
1711—1728.

From 'Shahendra Vilas'.