

CHAPTER - VII

EPILOGUE

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E P I L O G U E

In 1710 A. D. a separate Maratha State was founded at Panhala by Tarabai, the daughter-in-law of Chhatrapati Shivaji, the founder of Maratha Swarajya, and wife of Rajaram, the second son of Shivaji. Thus, in the first decade of the eighteenth century the Kingdom of Kolhapur came into being. It represented the Maratha power founded by the first Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji. During the British Raj, it remained as a semi-independent Princely State. With the coming of independence, it merged into Bombay Presidency, one of India's major territorial divisions.

This Maratha State had a special significance and unique position in the history of the Marathas as the rulers bore the honorific title of Chhatrapati and as they were the direct descendents of Shivaji, the Great. This was one of the major Maratha State which played important role in the history of India in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The first capital of this second Maratha State was at Panhala and later on was shifted to Kolhapur so the rulers of this State were called the Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur. The Kolhapur State lies in the Western Maharashtra

and its territory included the area of present Kolhapur District as well as Raibag, Katkol, Jahagir. In the West, the Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur came into the contact with the East India Company.

In the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to trace the development of political relationship between the Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur and the East India Company from 1710 to 1857 when the Great Rebellion took place. (This is an interesting and fascinating study of a Maratha State which became the Princely State under British tutelege.) British power and prestige took deep roots and rapidly increased in India in the 18th century. The Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur had to confront a superior enemy like Britishers.

Great Britain established its contacts with East India through East India Company which was granted a charter by Queen Elizabeth in 1600. After the death of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in February, 1707, the English and the French East India Companies fought between themselves for the Indian trade. In course of time, the English East India Company was able to establish its commercial hegemony. It became the largest single promoter of this country's foreign trade. The desire for a fuller

and unimpeded economic exploitation whetted the appetite for political domination and the trading centres known as "factories" were converted into forts and the English Merchants into warriors. As a result of the three Deccan Wars fought in the years 1746-1748, 1748-1754, and 1756-1763 the English drove the French out of South India and became the dominant force there. The holdings of the Portuguese were confined to Goa, Daman and Diu. The battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) made the English masters of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Later on English power was expanding in all directions. During the regime of Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) Imperialism gained a new fillip and through the policy of "Subsidiary Alliance" he brought Hyderabad under the British control and Gwalior, Baroda, Indore, Nagpur and Poona under direct influence. The vigorous policy of Lord Hastings (1813-1823) subdued the Marathas, the central states on Rajputana and the Gurkhas of Nepal. Further a number of smaller Principalities were taken over through Lord Dalhousie's "Doctrine of Lapse". Thus between 1856 and 1857 the hold of the British over India was almost complete. By the proclamation of November, 1858, the Government was transferred to the British Crown and on 1st January, 1877 Queen Victoria was proclaimed as the Empress of India.

The Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur had to fight against the this formidable and superior enemy. The English power in India was superior in every way. The Chhatrapatis had to sign many treaties with the East India Company by which Company obtained many trading and political concessions in the Kolhapur State. Kolhapur State lost its independence and lived at the mercy of East India Company.

The first Chhatrapati of Kolhapur was the son of Tarabai and Rajaram - who reigned from 1700 to 1714. The year 1714 was of turning point in the history of Kolhapur because there took place a bloodless palace revolution at Panhala by which Tarabai and her unlucky son Shivaji were put into prison by Sambhaji, the second son of Rajaram and Rajasbai. Sambhaji the second Chhatrapati of Kolhapur who ruled from 1714 to 1761 was the last direct descendent of Shivaji.

During the reign of this Sambhaji, the first treaty with the English was signed. On 25th November, 1739, this first treaty was signed by one Shivaji Shankarpant, Raja Sambhaji's Naval Commandar of Malwan with the British President and Governor of Bombay. This was a treaty of "Firm Peace and Friendship" between the two contracting parties and it chiefly aimed at securing passage for the

English. "War and Merchandise Vessels" in their movements up and down the Western Coast . It only had five clauses.

Sambhaji died on December 20th, 1760 and ruled for about 46 years. Sambhaji maintained good relations with the foreigners in India. He entered into the treaties with the English, the Portuguese and the Dutch. By the treaties he allowed them to carry on trade and gave them places in the coastal strip of the Konkan.

The next Chhatrapati of Kolhapur was Shivaji II, who was a minor and as such the administration of the State was carried out by Jijabai, fourth Queen of late Sambhaji. Jijabai was very shrewd and cunning lady. She was head of the State till her death in 1773. During the period of her regency the first important treaty was concluded between the East India Company and the Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur on 12th January, 1766.

By this treaty the English vacated Sindhudurg and the neighbouring forts and handed them over to Jijabai's agents and Jijabai in turn set about paying the extortionate claim for war expenses that the British had incorporated in the treaty. By its very nature, neither side could have regarded the treaty as much more than a makeshift arrangement, to be set aside whenever an opportunity presented itself.

The prevalence of piracy compelled the British Government to send an expedition against Kolhapur in 1765 which resulted into the conclusion of the above mentioned commercial treaty. The conditions of this treaty, however, were never observed. The payments which Kolhapur had agreed to for the expenses of the expedition were not made, piracy was not suppressed and in 1792 another expedition was prepared. Jijabai at this time was not alive and ~~Shivaji~~ Shivaji himself was carrying on the administration. Consequently this second treaty was signed during the reign Shivaji II. It was signed on November 25th, 1792. By this treaty the Raja agreed to give compensation for the losses which the merchants had sustained from the year 1785, and to permit the establishment of factories at Malwan and Kolhapur.

Later on Shivaji was engaged for a long time in war with other Maratha powers, more particularly the Patwardhan family, the Sawants of Wadi and Nipaniwar Appa Desai and his Government was weakened by internal factions. On several occasions during these struggles, the British Government declined to interfere and the Raja of Kolhapur concluded a treaty with the British Government on 1st October, 1812 by which, in return for the cession of certain forts, he was guaranteed against aggression of

all foreign powers. He also engaged to ~~also~~ abstain from hostilities with other States, and to refer all his disputes with other States to the arbitration of the British Government. This was the last treaty during the reign of Shivaji II, by which Sindhudurg and the area round about was given to the English. Chikodi and Manoli was given to the Peshwa.

Shivaji II promised not to maintain a Navy and not to have belligerent relations with any power without consent of the English. This was an humiliating treaty imposed on Shivaji. This treaty virtually marks the end of independent existence of Kolhapur. By the last clause the Chhatrapati had to accept a subordinate position to the English. Thus during his reign (1762 - 1813). Kolhapur was changed from Kingdom to a Princely State. This unfortunate King Shivaji II did not live long to suffer the indignity. He died on 24th April, 1813.

Shivaji II ruled Kolhapur for about 50 years. It was the longest rule in the Chhatrapati family. Because of the political exigency he had to make alliance on different occasions with Hyder, Tipu and the English. Unfortunately the times were against him. He was born a century too late. Before the rising tide of the English he had to surrender first in 1792 and again 20 years



after in 1812. By the treaty of 1812 he had to virtually surrender his independence. He was a victim of the times.

Shivaji II left behind two sons Sambhaji alias Abasaheb and Shahaji alias Buwasaheb. Both were minor.

Sambhaji who was born on 8th March, 1801 succeeded to his father as the next Chhatrapati of Kolhapur. In the war with the Peshwa in 1817 Abasaheb cordially sided with the British Government and in reward for his services the Districts of Chikodi and Manoli which had been previously wrested from Kolhapur by the Nipani, were restored. In 1821 this Chhatrapati Abasaheb was murdered by one of his men, Sayaji Mohite. Abasaheb had five years old son but Buwasaheb his brother who was then 16 years old was very ambitious and eager to ascend the throne of Kolhapur. Buwasaheb completely succeeded in his mission. British also took the side of Buwasaheb and placed him on the Gadi of Kolhapur as the next Chhatrapati (1822 to 1838). But later on he did not maintain good relations with the English.

Buwasaheb proved himself an oppressive and profligate ruler. Between 1822 and 1829, three times the British Government was obliged to move a force against him in consequence of his aggressions on other chiefs in

which he did not respect even British territory, and of the spoliation of his Jagirdhars which drove them to rebellion. He had to conclude another, treaty with the English in 1826 by which he agreed to reduce his army to its peace establishment and to attend to the advice of the British Government in all matters affecting the public peace, to respect the rights of certain Jagirdhars and never to grant an asylum to rebels.

On the last occasion on which British force was moved against him in 1827, in consequence of his infraction of the Second Article of the treaty of 1826, he signed a preliminary treaty which was subsequently modified in 1829.

By this treaty of 1829 his army was limited to 400 horses and 800 infantry, he was stripped of the district of Chikodi and Manoli and of Akiwat, he was compelled to admit British troops into his forts, to pay Rs. 1,47,948/- compensation to certain Jagirdhars, to cede lands as security for the payment and accept a Minister appointed by the British Government.

The British even provided him with personal military guard of the soldiers. This last treaty of 1829 signed by Buwasaheb marked the final eclipse of the

Kolhapur State and the expert rider and noted hunter died on November 29th, 1938 with frustration.

Thus, the career of Buwasaheb gives a fine data for a psychological study. He mentally lived in the past, looked upon himself as a master which he unfortunately was not.

Buwasaheb was succeeded by his minor son Shivaji III, alias Babasaheb who was born on December 26, 1830. A Council of Regency consisting of Shivaji's mother, his aunt and four karbharis (officials) was formed. Soon after the members of the Regency quarelled against each other and the young chief's aunt Diwan Sahiba assumed the entire control of the State. This misrule was so great that the British Government under the provisions of the treaty of 1829, interfered and appointed a Minister of its own, Daji Krishna Pandit.

The State was in debt to the tune of six and half lakhs of which only one lakh was paid.

The British set up machinery for introducing economy and clear administration. So they appointed Daji Krishna Pandit as their Agent at Kolhapur in 1844. Generally the Chief Minister of Kolhapur belonged to a

respectable family of Kolhapur. So the appointment of Daji Krishna Pandit as Chief Minister made by the British was not appreciated by the Kolhapur subject. This appointment gave a rude shock to the people of Kolhapur who had looked upon their State as an independent unit. In his attempt to clean administration he removed a number of old officers. With a sense of damaged self respect and loss of power almost the whole of Kolhapur rose against the British. The rebellion engulfed the city of Kolhapur and spread to the Bhudargad and Samangad, Vishalgad and Rangna also joined them. All of them, however, had to yield to the superior power of the English.

In the Kolhapur city Dinkarrao Gaikwad and Rawaji Vakanis led the rebels. They were supported by Saibai. The rebels appointed Dinkarrao as the Chief Minister and took charge of the administration. An English army together with a Kagal detachment suppressed the rebellion within short time. The British imposed a fine of 15 lakh rupees on the State. Dinkarrao Gaikwad and a large number of others were arrested, tried and punished. Their Vatanis were confiscated. Saibai was sent to Poona where she died in 1862. There was also a suggestion for the abolition of Kolhapur Gadi, but as Babasaheb was only 14 years old at this time he could not be held responsible for the rebellion.

However, a Political Superintendent was appointed to administer Kolhapur during the minority of the Chhatrapati. Major Graham was the first Superintendent, Daji Krishna Pandit was again given the charge of Civil Administration. Major Graham became the first political Superintendent in 1845 and remained in Kolhapur upto 1854 and prepared his Statistical Report of Kolhapur Principality in which he described the Social, Political and Economic conditions as well as old inscriptions and ancient history of Kolhapur. Modernisation of Kolhapur State was inaugurated in his tenure.

The next important event in which Kolhapur State was engaged was the revolt of 1857. This was an all India revolt. The uprising of 1857 in the North had its echo in the Deccan. Bombay, Nargund, Satara and Kolhapur showed the signs of discontent. In Kolhapur the 27th Native Infantry raised the standard of rebellion. It looted the treasury and marched towards the area where the English Officers were living. The English fled away and took shelter in the Residency. But on way, quite a few of them were killed. Before they could enter the city Colonel Mahan, the Political Superintendent closed the doors of the city.

On December 4th the soldiers of the city rose against the British. They closed the gates of the city.

Jacob was outside the city in the camp with about 200 English soldiers. He also had with him a number of native soldiers of the 27th Infantry which had remained loyal to the British. He forced open a gate by artillery fire.

The English soldiers entered the city. The rebels were scattered and could not give effective resistance. In order to terrorise the people, Snyder shot dead 36 soldiers in the Palace square itself. He forced the citizens to give up arms and put his soldiers on guard.

Ultimately the revolt of 1857 in Kolhapur was suppressed with cruel hand by the Britishers and the immediate effect of this uprising was an end of Company's rule in India. Like other States in India, Kolhapur also came under the control of British Crown. During the mutiny of 1857 the Raja Babasaheb remained faithful in his allegiance to the British Government but his younger brother Chimasahab joined the rebels and later on he was imprisoned and deported to Karachi where he died in confinement. Thus, this was a story which reveals the relationship of Kolhapur with a trading Company and explains how a trading company established her superiority over a State which was directly connected with the founder of Maratha power and lived at the mercy of foreigners as the rest of Indian States.

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