



THE LIFE OF SHIVAJI MAHARAJ FOUNDER OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

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Chapter 24

The Wheels of Government

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It is proper at this stage to review the institutions of Shivaji and the organization of his administrative machinery. The enthronement ceremony helped to deepen the foundations of his power; his constructive genius, to broaden and regulate it. In attempting this survey from such scanty material as is at our disposal, we may preface it with the observation that the administrative system hereinafter described was not introduced abruptly after the coronation but was slowly and tentatively evolved and practically received its final form at the inauguration of the coronation era. To a certain extent indeed it will, be no exaggeration to say that a certain faint outline of the future plans was already conceived and partially acted upon before the gathering of armies and territorial conquests.¹

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1. That is almost as early as 1746 if not earlier. At the earliest period, the days of Dadaji Kondadev, Shivaji had his Peshwa, Muzumdar, Dabir and Sabnis (*Vide* Sabhasad p. 7). The Sir-nobut was added in 1647 (Sabhasad p. 8). Other officers were added from time to time, the constitution was settled about 1667, and probably revised in 1674.

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To start with, Shivaji was fairly familiar with the contemporary administrative systems, both Hindu and Mahomedan. He had also a fair acquaintance with the ancient Hindu systems as gleaned from the Puranas. He had weighed well in his own mind the merits and demerits, of each system and from a study of their methods evolved for himself a system in harmony with the spirit of his age, the need of the country and the highest average good, as he conceived it, of the rayat. It will again be no exaggeration to say that it will be hard to find a parallel, either in ancient or in modern history, to the extraordinary far-sightedness and constructive skill with which he evolved his methods and principles of government. To the qualities of a successful general and conqueror he joined an administrative genius and statesmanship which have seldom proved so fruitful of active benevolence. Considering the needs of the time and the evils of pre-existing and contemporary Indian monarchies, Shivaji saw two extremes, viz: a monarch solely swayed by the counsels of a favourite minister or one self-willed and governed by his single caprice. In either case, it meant disorder, injustice, misrule – in one word, tyranny-tyranny with the best or the wickedest of intentions. No single individual, however capable or intellectual, could keep in touch with the varying events in all departments of life over the whole country. No single ruler, however just and even-minded, could decide with impartiality and unerring precision on all administrative questions. The interests of one department must often clash with those of another. One may often trespass on the domain of another. This friction and overlapping had often led to discontent, and discontent had always been the parent cause of the overthrow of great monarchies. Shivaji saw all this and proposed to steer clear of these dangers and misfortunes. He entrusted the direction of public affairs to a cabinet of eight officers who were to assist him in the conduct of the government. This institution of a cabinet was a feature of Shivaji's government for which there was no precedent in any contemporary system. It was also unique in this sense, that after Shivaji the institution more or less fell into desuetude. On the rise of the Peshwas when the king became a titular puppet, it came under a total eclipse. An approximation to that system may however be seen in the more advanced and developed government of our own times under the aegis and direction of the British power.

Each of these eight ministers had direct charge of a department of government. A few details of this system are given below. The names of the incumbents of the various offices at the time of the Coronation have already been mentioned in the last chapter.

- 1) The Prime Minister (Mukhya Pradhan) or Peshwa, was next in rank after the king and was the head of the entire administrative system, civil and military.
- (2) The Senapati or Sir-nobut was the head of the military department. There were two Senapatis - one over the cavalry and the other over the infantry. Of these the former seems to have had precedence and control over the Senapati of the infantry. The latter had no place in the cabinet.
- (3) The Pant Amatya or Muzumdar was the head of the finance department. He examined all civil and military accounts and the separate accounts of each fort. The local audits of all parts of the kingdom came under his scrutiny, and the strict control exercised through his office had a wholesome restraining influence upon the spending propensities of local commanders and reduced the evils of speculation and embezzlement of public money to a minimum. The sanction of any extraordinary expenditure or reduction beyond normal limits was granted by the king upon the recommendation and by the advice of this minister. In consequence the officer had a very extensive department of clerks and accountants under him and he maintained many supervisors of accounts for each separate district, fort, or regiment.
- (4) The Pant Sachiv or Surnis was keeper of the government records, superintendent of the department of correspondence and examiner of all letters and despatches from local officers, commanders and governors of the fortresses. Government despatches to local officers also passed under his scrutiny. He was likewise the registrar of all grants, inams, sanads and commissions conferred upon civil and military officers in the provinces. This minister had also a large establishment. Without his seal and attestation no public document was valid. Both the Pant Amatya and the Pant Sachiv sent their representatives from province to province to examine and report on the work of their respective departments, viz: the department of accounts and that of records. These inspecting officers were empowered to make severe awards of fines and penalties to offending local subordinates. The principal departmental ministers at times paid visits to the provincial centres to make a personal scrutiny.
- (5) The Mantri or Wanknis was keeper of the private records and correspondence. He was also superintendent of the household troops and establishment. In this were included the various private departments of stores and treasure, separated under the heads of the eighteen Karkhanas (warehouses, arsenal, commissariat etc.) and the twelve Mahals or Koshas (treasury, mint, stables, parks etc.).

- (6) The Sumant or Dabir was minister of foreign affairs. He superintended all business in connection with foreign states, such as the receiving and sending of letters and messengers.
- (7) The Nyaya Shastri or Panditrao advised on ecclesiastical matters and expounded the shastras. He superintended state ceremonies and religious charities from the public funds. It was also his duty to see that the penalties awarded in criminal trials were in keeping with the precepts of the shastras. He was also the censor of the public morals.
- (8) The Nyayadhis, or the Chief Justice superintended the administration of justice both civil and criminal. Appeals to the king from the decisions of the local panchayats or *prant* officers (i. e. subhedar) were heard by this minister, who on a revision of the evidence gave his decisions.

In this manner the different departments of government were entrusted to different ministers. It was a point of honour with each minister to put the best of his energy and ability into his work. In intricate cases the minister in charge of the department concerned would discuss the matter with the king. If it appeared to be a matter of much gravity, it might be then referred to the cabinet or council and be subjected to a full discussion. Questions of policy affecting the whole kingdom were generally subjected to a full council discussion, and a final adjustment arrived at with the concurrence of all. The confidence thus reposed in the ministers and the value thus placed upon their opinion was a further incentive to their devotion and industry and bound them to the interests of the king and the state as to their own.

Of these ministers of state, barring the Panditrao and the Nyayadhis all were required to serve in the army and were leaders of great experience. Shivaji and his state lived in the midst of constant alarms. The sword was rarely sheathed. At the slightest notice any one of these officers, though mainly in charge of civil establishments, had to gird sword and buckler and march to the scene of war. To meet such emergencies, each of the state ministers had a deputy or mutalik who exercised full authority during his principal's absence in the field. They had the authority to affix their principals' seals of office, but in matters of special importance they had to submit their decision to the approval of their principals. Under the deputy or mutalik, each department had a staff of officers as follows: (1) A Muzumdar holding charge of the departmental audit; (2) a Phadnis who was an assistant to the Muzumdar; (3) a Sabnis in charge of the departmental record; (4) a Chitnis, in charge of the departmental correspondence; (5) a Karkhannis, in charge of the departmental stores; (6) a Jamdar, or office curator; and (7) a Potnis or cashier. Besides these officers there was a full complement of clerks varying with the character of the department and the volume of work passing

through it. On the personal staff of Shivaji, there was a Chitnis or private secretary for correspondence, a Phadnis or accountant, a Parasnis or Persian translator, and a Potnis or treasurer. The Chitnis, as has often been mentioned in the foregoing chapters was Balaji Avji, a Prabhu. Shivaji's first personal Phadnis (or Muzumdar) was Balkrishnapant Nanu mante, a close relative of the Raja Shahaji's chief minister of that family. The name of the Parasnis or translator is not known. His duty was to interpret letters or documents couched in the Persian language or to translate them into that language when necessary for despatch. Shivaji's Potnis was a grandson of Seshava Naik Pande of Shrigonde, at whose house the Raja Maloji is said to have concealed the treasure he had discovered in an ant-hill and to whom according to tradition he had made promise that when he came to have that sovereign power of which there was an augury he would make him the Potnis or treasurer of his realm. The grandson of the promisor made good the promise by conferring the post on the grandson of the promise.

Besides this organization of the public departments, for the proper administration of the various crown possessions different stores establishments were created. These were private or quasi-private departments, of the crown and at the head of them all stood the Waknis or Mantri. These establishments came under two groups, which were further elaborately divided into twelve Mahals and eighteen Karkhanas or Shalas. Among the Mahals were comprehended the zenana, specie, grain stores, horse stables, cows' parks, the mint, palanquins, private palaces, the wardrobe, the private body-guard, and general purvey department. In the latter class, the Karkhanas, came elephant parks, gymnasium, public granaries, music, artillery and arsenals, medical stores, drinking water, camels, tents and carpets, hunting, jewellery, kitchens, armoury, betel-nut etc., carriages, stationery, singing and dancing, and miscellaneous stores. Over all these thirty departments, there were *darogas* or superintending officers, clerks, guards etc.

There was a separate establishment for Jijabai. To her household were attached capable servants, male and female. There were peons and foot-soldiers, maid-servants, pujaris or private chaplains, puraniks or readers of the puranas and other Brahmans to officiate at religious functions. A sum was set apart for Jijabai's expenses and religious charities. Her affairs were administered by a household staff consisting of a diwan or general manager, chitnis (secretary), a phadnis (accountant), and a potnis (treasurer) with a number of subordinates. Shivaji was very anxious to provide for the comfort and happiness of his mother.

Shivaji's army was recruited chiefly from two sources, the Mavalis on the ghats and the Hetkaris in the Konkan beneath the ghats. The Mavalis were

crack swordsmen and the Hetkaris marksmen of repute. Each was armed with sword, shield and musket. They were to provide themselves with their own arms, the ammunition being supplied by the state. Their dress consisted of a pair of breeches coming half-way down the thigh, a long band, about a span in breadth girt tightly about the loins, a long scarf worn over it round their waist, a turban and sometimes a frock of quilted cotton. The Mavalis and Hetkaris were born and bred among the mountains and in consequence found themselves quite at home whether they had to thread their mazy way over an intricate defile or scale the frowning heights of an inaccessible precipice; and it will be no exaggeration to say that few races in other parts of the world could equal them in agility and swiftness of movement.

In each decury of ten foot-soldiers there was a Naik, that is to say, each decury consisted of nine infantry men under a Naik or corporal. Over five such decuries a Havaladar was in command. Over two Havaldars a Jumledar² and over ten Jumledars a Hazari or commander of one thousand.³ There were also Panch Hazaris or commanders of five thousand and they were immediately under the orders of the Sir-nobut or chief commander.⁴ Some of the foot-soldiers used bows and arrows, double-edged swords, spears, and javelins, and some merely carried the arms of their masters. The rule was that each soldier should wield the arms in the use of which he had acquired dexterity. Each soldier and naik drew a salary per month ranging from one to three pagodas. A jumiedar received a hundred pagodas per annum, and a hazari five hundred.

The cavalry were of two kinds: the Bargirs and the Shiledars. A body of horse of the first class was called the Paga or state cavalry, for their horses belonged to the state and were the property of the royal household and were looked after by state officers. The shiledar furnished his own horse and looked after it himself, for which an extra allowance was granted by the government. The shiledar horse had been a feature of the Mahomedan monarchies in the Deccan. Shivaji did not place so much reliance on cavalry of this description as on the Bargir class. The shiledars did not always care to keep their horses in proper condition for war and when tired of service might gallop away from the field. Hence Shivaji's policy was to reduce the number of these private

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2. Chitnis says that in the Mavali infantry there was a Jumledar over five Havaldars and a Hazari over five Jumledars. This would make an infantry battalion of 1250 foot-soldiers.
 3. A corps of one thousand under a hazari constituted an infantry battalion.
 4. Mr. Ranade (page 122) says seven hazaris made a sir-nobut's charge for the Mavali infantry. Mr. Kincaid (page 275) follows Mr. Ranade. Mr. Sardesai (*Marathi Riyasat*, 1915 edition, Pages 475-76) say five hazari battalions served under a sir-nobut.

cavalry-men, but he had to enlist them as at the time many a Maratha would only serve on this condition. When a shiledar offered to sell his horse to government, the horse was added on to the paga and the soldier served in that department of cavalry. The paga horses were each branded with the state stamp on the rump. The cavalry soldier was dressed in a pair of tight breeches and a frock of quilted cotton. He wore a scarf round the waist and a turban, one fold of which was passed under the chin so as to fasten and prevent it from falling down when he was in full career.⁵ The sword was girt with the scarf round the waist, the shield buckled at the back. The spear was the national weapon of the Maratha cavalry-soldier, but some also carried a match-lock. They were, as a general rule, to furnish their own arms, the shiledars had to bring their own ammunition, the bargirs received their supply from the state.

Over every troop of twenty-five horse-soldiers of either description there was a havaladar. Over five havalgars there was a jumledar and over five jumledars there was a subhedar.⁶ Over ten such subhedars there was a panch-hazari and over them all stood the sir-nobut.⁷ The cavalry sir-nobut was distinct from the similar officer in chief command of the infantry. For every corps of twenty-five horses there was a water-carrier and a farrier. The havaladar had to look after the feeding and grooming of the horses under him and the proper care of their trappings and equipments. The bargir drew a salary according to his grade from two to five pagodas per mensem, a shiledar from six to twelve, a jumledar twenty.⁸ A subhedar's salary was a thousand pagodas per annum and he had besides a palanquin allowance. A panch-hazari of horse had a salary of two thousand pagodas and a palanquin and an umbrella-bearer's allowance. A subhedar of a shiledar contingent held command immediately under the sir-nobut. Each subhedar, panch hazari and sir-nobut had an establishment of couriers, scouts and spies.

5. The practice of the Maratha bargir or shiledar cavalryman to pass a fold of the turban under his chin is a good commentary on Virgil's description of the dress of Aeneas, (Aeneid IV, 216, *Maeonia mentummitra crinemque subnexus*) viz. "His chin and hair bound with a Maeonian turban."

6. According to some authorities, a hazari held command over ten jumledars and a panch hazari over five hazaris. This arrangement is followed by Mr. Ranade and Prof. Sarkar. Under this plan a cavalry regiment would consist of 1250 horses and a panch hazari brigade of 6250 troopers.

7. Mr. Sardesai gives the same sub-divisions of the cavalry brigade as described here in the text. We follow Chitnis.

8. According to Sabhasad a jumledar received five hundred pagodas (annual pay) and a palanquin allowance.

Besides this cavalry and infantry Shivaji maintained a brigade of five thousand horses for his personal body-guard, and this was composed of the flower of his army. Shivaji's hostilities with the Mahomedan powers endangered his life at all times and his body-guard had to be on the *qui vive* day and night. Shivaji had chosen his body-guard from the pick of the Mavali youth. These were divided into companies of thirty, forty, sixty or one hundred men and placed under the bravest and most loyal of his commanders. The body-guard of foot had a rich uniform provided by the state, to be worn on state occasions, consisting of a gold-embroidered turban, a woollen mantle and a scarf of checkered silk or a Paithan shawl. For ornaments they wore sometimes gold armlets, sometimes necklaces of silver, sometimes of gold. For their swords they had scabbards with gold-mounted ends and gold-fasteners to secure their muskets. There was also a body-guard of horse, consisting of the cream of the bargir cavalry. They numbered five thousand and were distinguished from the rest by their gold and silver trappings. For the personal use of Shivaji, there was a private stable comprising about a hundred noble steeds, with housings and trappings of the most superb order. When Shivaji set forth on an excursion, the body-guard, both horse and foot, attended him as an escort, marching in front and in the rear, or to his left or right, always observing the prescribed order and keeping fixed intervals between them.

At the recruiting season, Shivaji personally inspected every man who offered himself for service, whether in the cavalry or the infantry and took security from some persons already in the service for the fidelity and good conduct of those who were to be enlisted for the first time. The sureties executed bonds for the good conduct of their proteges. None was appointed or promoted to the rank of jumledar or subhedar, hazari, or panch hazari, who had not given proofs of his bravery and chivalry, and of proficiency in arms as well as of his family connections. These officers were Marathas. Every subhedar and hazari had under him either a Brahman subordinate as sabnis or muster-keeper and a Prabhu officer as karkhannis or store-keeper, or a Brahman muzumdar or accountant and a Prabhu sabnis or despatch clerk. In the same way, under a panch-hazari there was a diwan, a sabnis and a karkhannis. Under these officers there were inferior subordinates, and beyond the prescribed number, the commander could appoint clerks and other subordinates at his own charge. Commanding officers, subhedars and hazaris were under strict regulations to observe punctuality in the due payment of salaries and allowances to their subordinates.

Shivaji possessed at this time about two hundred and eighty hill-forts. These forts played a very important part in Shivaji's military system and he attached a special value to their defence and equipment. Whatever war or

invasion menaced the country Shivaji had been able to defy the enemy in campaign after campaign by the help of these forts. From a skirmish or a raid upon the enemy in the camp or the plains below he could swiftly lead his hosts to the battlemented heights of his forts and laugh to scorn the impotent rage of his pursuers spending itself in vain against their rock foundations. Rarely could a hostile army dominate for long the country within range of such a fortress. A hostile occupation would in its nature be temporary being subject to the fire and descents of the garrison of the neighbouring fort. In short the fort was the most salient point of Shivaji's military system, both as regards offence and defence. No outlay was too great whether to repair or restore old fortifications or to build new ones in positions of natural advantage or strategical value. The organization and discipline of the forts were the most efficient and strict to be found anywhere under his dominions.

The governor or commander in supreme charge of a fort had the title of havaladar. He was usually a Maratha officer of distinguished bravery, loyalty and position. Under him was a sir-nobut, or commander of garrison troops and a tat-sir-nobut or commander of the ramparts. There was besides a staff of the usual officers, a subhedar, a sabnis, a phadnis, and a karkhannis. Of these latter the first three were generally Brahmans, the karkhannis or commissary of stores was commonly a Prabhu. These officers were selected with care for their talents, loyalty and devotion. The ministers of state or distinguished nobles stood security for their good conduct. The final responsibility for the safety of the fort being vested in the havaladar, the other officers had strictly to obey his orders. He held the keys of the fort. He passed orders for commissariat supplies, ammunition and food provisions. He held the seals of the fort and papers were received or sent in his name. He had finally the supreme charge of the garrison army. The subhedar administered the revenue in the outlying villages and acted in consultation with the havaladar. The sabnis kept the records and correspondence of the fort and the muster of the garrison forces. The karkhannis kept accounts of stores and commissariat. He was also the pay-master and supervisor of the public buildings in the fort. The division of work among men of different castes, as also the system of checks and counter-checks, was a successful provision against fraud and treachery. The forces maintained at each fort were in proportion to its size and importance.

The hills beneath the fort and the sloping declivities from the foot to the summit were guarded by sentinels whose duty it was to watch the movements of a possible invader and guard the hilly woods. At the foot of the fortress, there were outposts at the cross-ways and commanding positions where bodies of Ramosis, Parwaris, Mangs or Mahars were stationed on guard. They also acted as scouts and brought to the governor of the fort secret intelligence of any stir or excitement or anything unusual taking place in the neighbourhood,

put the enemy's spies or scouts inquiring about the conditions within on a wrong scent, and made sudden attacks on straggling parties from a hostile army loitering in their neighbourhood.

Under the strict regulations of Shivaji it was the duty of the havaldar to see that the portals of the fort were closed at nightfall. He had to assure himself in person that they were properly locked up, and he could under no circumstances part with the keys, but have them under his pillow when he went to sleep. The commanders in the fort try turns went their appointed rounds all over the fort during the night. The sir-nobut had general control over the patrols, but the watches at important positions over the defences were under the supervision of the tat-sir-nobut, or commander of the rampart. The havaldar was expected to be on guard at head-quarters, with a posse of armed men. The officers of each department were furnished with distinct regulations for their conduct, from which they were under no circumstances to deviate. Nor were they permitted to interfere with the duties of any brother-officer, being strictly limited to their own. Unnecessary tampering with the duties of another and indifferent attention to one's own was visited not merely with a stern animadversion and censure, but a punishment which was alike rigorous and exemplary.

The fort regulations provided for punctual payment of their salaries, whether in cash or kind, to the officers and men in the garrison. Provisions of food supplies and fodder, fuel, arms and ammunition, brick and mortar, were made on a liberal scale, in quantities to last for two years or more at a time. Each fort had its own scale for these supplies, based upon its particular needs and circumstances. Easy slopes and passages up the forts were rendered steep and inaccessible by cutting down the rooks, or by mining and artificial defence works. It is unfortunately not easy to ascertain the scale of salaries of the havaldar, subhedar, tat-sir-nobut and other garrison officers. The havaldar was at any rate entitled to the privilege and allowance of a palanquin and torch-bearer. The garrison troops drew their salaries on the same scale as other soldiers. Besides the regular garrison army, there were the skirmishers, sentinel guards and the irregular and nondescript soldeiry stationed at the outposts beneath the fort. These were recruited from various castes and hill-tribes, such as Ramosis, Parwaris, Mahars, Mangs and Berads. They did not receive fixed pay but had lands settled upon them in the neighbourhood of the fort, where they were to have their allotted dwellings, subsisting on the produce of the fields they tilled and held as their own. All these men came under the general appellation of gadkaris or garrison men. The object of this plan was to make the gadkaris, especially these nondescript members of the garrison, feel a personal interest in the safety of the fort committed to their care, which was alike the source of ho honour and of livelihood to them. In

consequence of this arrangement, as the years elapsed, a breed of brave and loyal warriors was reared up at each fort. The veteran soldier looked for no higher honour or reward at the hands of Shivaji than to be placed in command over one of these forts or promoted to the higher garrison appointments. The fort was under the general administrative sphere of the taluka next adjacent to it and the talukdar or mamlatdar, as the case might be, was under orders to supply the necessary provisions with the advice of the prant-subhedar. The dismissal or restoration to office of any of the garrison officers depended on direct orders to that effect from the sovereign.

The organization of the artillery was in the hands of separate officers, about whose names or grades the authorities are silent. Cannon were stationed at suitable points in the different fortresses. The field artillery was moved from place to place by means of waggons, arms and ammunition were conveyed in carts, both being drawn by teams of oxen, of which a special breed was reared. When the army was on march, each cart or waggon had a double team of oxen, one relieving the other when necessary. A party of mechanics accompanied the army – smiths, carpenters, tanners, gunners and the like. The artillery officers were to keep their ammunition and equipments ready for any emergency. The mounting and dismounting of guns being an operation of great skill and labour, the best experts only had these duties assigned to them. Besides the fort artillery planted in stationary batteries, there were about two hundred field guns mounted on carriages. The artillery was purchased from the Portuguese, French and English merchants or obtained from them under the special articles of the treaties concluded with their representatives.

For the purpose of administration the entire territory under Swarajya, or Shivaji's direct control, was divided into a number of circles or districts called mahals and prants. A mahal comprised territory or villages yielding an annual revenue of from seventy-five to a hundred and twenty-five thousand rupees. Two or three such mahals went to form a prant or subha. The officer in charge of a mahal was the mahalkari. He was also called a turufdar or talukdar. This officer was generally a Brahman or Prabhu by caste. Over each mahal likewise there was a havaldar, Maratha by caste. The officer presiding over a subha was the subhedar. He was also called mamlatdar. The subhedar's jurisdiction often extended over one or two forts. The officer in charge of two or three villages was called a kamavisdar. He supervised the collection of revenue in his own little circle under direction of the mahalkari, or talukdar, his immediate superior, and submitted his accounts at the head-quarters of the subhedar concerned. The head-quarter's staff of the subhedar consisted of a muzumdar, a chitnis, phadnis and a daftardar or record-keeper, together with the necessary establishment of clerks and assistants. The mahalkari superintended the work

of the kamavisdar, the subhedar that of the mahalkari. The subhedar heard cases. In criminal matters he gave decision himself. In civil matters he got the cases submitted to a village panchayat and enforced their decision: The frontier districts were subject to many disturbances, and the subhedars in charge of such districts were assisted by a contingent of infantry and cavalry. The revenue levied, whether in cash or in kind, was conveyed for safe custody to the strongest fort within the district limits. The subhedar's salary was four hundred pagodas per annum and he had also an allowance for a palanquin and umbrella-bearers. The muzumdar in charge of a subha or prant drew a salary of one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five pagodas, and the other officers at the district head-quarters in due proportion. As to the salaries and allowances of the sub-divisional officers, the mahalkari and the kamavisdar, there is no information available.

An elaborate survey of the entire Swarajya territory was taken in hand and the land record in the *daftar* of the mahalkari gave the names of the owner of each agricultural holding. The unit of field measurement in Shivaji's system was the pole or *kathi* which measured nearly six cubits in length.⁹ A cubit was fixed at fourteen *tasus* or inches in Shivaji's system and eighty such *tasus* went to make a *kathi*. Twenty *kathis* made a *bigha* and one hundred and twenty *bighas* made a *chavar*. The produce of the holding was determined by a survey of the standing crop. Of the assessed produce three-fifths were left to the cultivator of the field and two-fifths formed the amount of the land tax, which was payable either in cash or in kind. Annual *kabulayats* or agreements were entered into with the rayat with reference to the payment of the government dues. In times of scarcity *tagavi* advances were made on a liberal scale which were repayable by instalments during the four or five years following after the period of agricultural distress. When allotments of uncultivated land were made to new tenants for the first time, with a view to their being brought under the plough, grants of agricultural cattle and seed were made at government expense and advances of corn and cash to the holder of the virgin soil, till the first harvest was gathered. The amount thus advanced was to be reimbursed to the state in the course of a few years. Thus the lands were settled upon the rayat with full proprietary rights, and all soil that could boast of any degree of fecundity was brought under the plough. The revenue officers were under strict regulations to apportion the tax to the produce and render the burden of government dues as light as possible.

9. The strict measure of the *kaths* was five cubits and five *muthis*. A *muth* is equal to the breadth of the closed palm.

One important modification introduced by Shivaji in the revenue usages of the Mahomedan states calls for special notice. Under the Mahomedan regime each mahal and village had its revenue lord, deshमुख or deshपन्ढ्या, desai or patil, kulkarni or khot, mirasdar or zamindar, as the case might be. The government officers had no direct dealings with the cultivator or rayat, but only with the revenue lords, who collected the revenue dues from the individual cultivator. The grievous result of this system was that the cultivators were always at the mercy of these rapacious chiefs, who fleeced the unresisting multitude at their sweet will. Was the government's share over the village produce two or three hundred rupees? Off went the rack-renting mirasdar to levy two or three thousand! *Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes!* The drones carried away all the honey, the industrious multitude groaned, and the officers of government looked on helpless, the state coffers being as low as ever for all the exaction. The revenue lords were surrounded by their own satellites, swordsmen and musketeers. They lived in fortified residences and secured their villages with mud-forts and ramparts. When the government took notice of their exactions and raised the assessment, they did not scruple to defy the sovereign power or even appeal to arms. The consequence was that the whole country was seething with sedition on account of these rebellious polygars.

This was entirely changed. The taxes were to be collected from the rayat under the direct supervision of the paid officials of the central power. The usurping mirasdars and zamindars were divested of the tyrannous powers under which the peasantry had groaned for centuries. They were now entitled to fixed grants based on an average estimate of their just claims in the old regime, and these were to be levied no longer from the cultivators but from the district officers representing the central government. True indeed, the revenue lords subsided into an idle rentier class, digesting their incomes and bearing no burden in the economy of the state. But the harpies of extortion had been at worst turned into harmless grasshoppers. Their pensions were subject to yearly confirmation, a procedure which guaranteed their good behavior towards the state. The peasantry, freed from their grinding greed, breathed more freely. The thrall in practice became a free agent towards the state, the lowly serf began to hold up his head. Desai and deshमुख became simple subjects. Their forts and walls, their strongholds and donjons were everywhere rased to the ground, their feudal bands dispersed, their private wars and depredations put down with a strong hand. The district and taluka officers watched all their movements. It is easy to understand how these insolent nobles smarted with discontent under the new discipline. But that should smouldering discontent was never allowed to blaze into a fire. Wherever practicable, the old nobility found congenial employment in Shivaji's army

and in the civil service; and as they waxed in dignities and emoluments they got reconciled to the new regime. As servants of the state though they drew their stipends, their hereditary rights and their annual claims over the village revenues were at the same time assured to them. The dragon of anarchy was slain, the cultivator went happily about his smiling meadows and the arts of peace and thrift no longer languished in the land.

A word may be said about Shivaji's field regulations. The continuance of Shivaji's independence and of the sovereign domains he had wrested from the reluctant Mahomedan powers depended entirely upon the army and necessitated the maintenance of large bands of warriors ready to take the field at the shortest notice. Never did any prince, whose power rested so vitally as Shivaji's did upon the upkeep of his army, practise a more rigid system of economy and discipline. Rigid however though the system was, the military organization he had to maintain in order to meet the constant alarms of war was too great to be entirely supported upon the slender resources of the Swarajya revenue. A certain portion of the army was stationed at the various forts, and maintained upon the revenues of the neighbouring villages. The remainder of the necessary armaments required, therefore, to be supported at least in part on other resources than state revenues. Added to these was the constant drain of wealth involved in the interminable struggle with the Mogul and the Adilshahi sultan. These circumstances conspired to give rise to the Maratha practice of sending out, year after year, a definite portion of the army upon a campaign of invasion on the enemy's territory.¹⁰ This was called *Mulukhigiri* or active service on hostile soil. While the soldier was serving out his campaign he supported himself at the cost of the enemy and at the end of his campaign brought home his spoils to replenish the state treasury. Another consequence of these ceaseless campaigns, which no doubt was aimed at by Shivaji, was that the Mahomedan powers subjected to the distracting war grew more and more feeble and inert, and gradually relaxed their control of the country, surrendering one district after another. This, as we have seen, was the ruling idea of Shivaji's life.

The sir-nobut of the horse went forth on these campaigns for eight months in the year. He levied the chaauth and sirdeshmukhi dues in the Bijapur and Mogul dominions and sacked the wealthy towns in the hostile territories. When setting forth on the campaign, inventories were duly made of the goods and chattels belonging to each soldier required by him on his march, and valuations of these were made and entered in the regimental books, the object being to compare on the return of the campaigners the valuables belonging to

10. Sabhasad, page 29.

each soldier with those he had taken at the commencement of the march, to make him accountable for anything found in excess and confiscate it to the public coffers as part of the general booty or, as an alternative, deduct its value from his stipend. On the other hand, if a soldier was found to have come by losses or impairment of his property the same was made good at the charge of the state. If a trooper of the shiledar class lost or disabled his horse while on active service in the campaign, he immediately received compensation at the rate described in the original inventory. No females, servant-maids or prostitutes were permitted to accompany any soldier on a campaign.¹¹ Distillers or vendors of spirituous liquors were also prohibited from joining the regiment on march. An infringement of these rules was punished with death. The reason was plain. A strict disciplinarian like Shivaji knew by intuition the value of temperance and sobriety on field service.

No sacrilege or interference with Brahmins was permitted on a campaign. No kine were ever to be carried away in plunder nor oxen except as draught cattle according to requirement. Females and peasants were not to be interfered with. Wealthy Mahomedans or Hindus in a position of dependence on the Mahomedan chiefs and able to pay the war contributions might be arrested and taxed proportionately to their fortunes, but immediately on their payment of the stipulated sums they were to be set at liberty. The rest of the poor population suffered nothing by the invasion. Women and children had perfect immunity under all circumstances. Pending the payment of contributions, hostages might be taken, never a Brahman, a Mahomedan by preference.

The campaign had to be concluded before the rains, when the squadrons were to rejoin their cantonments. On arrival at the frontier of their own state, a search was made into the goods or chattels carried by each trooper, in comparison with the previous inventories, leading to restorations or confiscations, where it might be thought necessary. Elaborate inventories were also made of the spoils taken from the enemy. Embezzlement of the public spoils was summarily dealt with. The returned cavalry resumed their ordinary places in the cantonment, of which there were two or three centrally situated, with long lines of stables and residences for the troopers. The brigadier had to provide the fodder and veterinary aid to the beasts, examine the musters of his regiment, and make up the salary bills for the men under his command.

When the inventories were fully made up and tallied, the sir-nobut waited on the king presenting the spoils of the war for his gracious acceptance. The accounts were then audited and the balances credited to the royal treasury

11. *Vide* his *Shedgavkar bakhar*, page 89.

or warehouses. Jewels, precious apparel etc. were cleaned or polished as required and arranged in the proper cabinets with the estimated prices put upon them. It was open to officers and soldiers to make a bid for any of these articles at the assessed prices, which could be deducted from their salaries. Individual soldiers and officers recommended for special gallantry were now introduced to the king by the sir-nobut upon the advice of the respective subhedars for promotion or rewards of merit. The widows and orphans of those that had fallen received their fixed grants from government. Soldiers disabled by grievous wounds had their life pensions settled by the state. Medical grants were liberally made to those invalided in the service by wounds or disease. The condition and grievousness of the wounds received determined the amount of compensation and entitled them to promotion or other marks of honour. Officers in the army found unfit for the duties to which they were appointed were not summarily dismissed but transferred to another sphere or relegated to the civil service. Breach of discipline or disobedience on a campaign led to a court martial and punishment and a repetition of the offence, to dismissal from service. Misappropriation of the spoils or plunder obtained in a campaign was visited with condign punishment. In all these disciplinary matters, the sir-nobut was to act under the order of the sovereign, not on his own responsibility.

About the end of the monsoons, on the auspicious day of Dasara (a great Hindu holiday in the early part of October), the squadrons of horse were to start again on a new campaign. The celebration of Dasara was one of the most festive periods in Shivaji's calendar and of great significance in his military system. Hindu traditions of hoary antiquity and from the epic period downwards recognized it as the most auspicious day for the opening of a campaign. On the day of Dasara, shiledar and bargir and whoever else had a desire to join Shivaji's cavalry or infantry appeared before the sovereign and gave a display of their agility and physique and skill in arms. Shivaji supervised the tests in person, and those who were found fit for service were immediately enrolled and appointed to duties for which they showed special aptitudes. The forces to be launched out on the new campaign were personally reviewed by the sovereign. Shivaji examined every horse taken out on the expedition. The lists of accoutrements and appurtenances of each soldier were made out once again. The sir-nobut and the leading commanders came to have their farewell audience of the monarch. The final orders were given and taken and the generals led forth their eager hosts into those hostile territories which were decreed to be the scene of their activity for the year.

Under Shivaji's system the generals and superior officers drew their salaries in advance at the time of the mobilization of their squadrons. The rank and file of the regular army and the irregular camp-followers received their

accumulated wages at the end of the campaign. From the salaries thus received in a lump sum they were to provide for their families for the whole year. The stipends due for the period of inactivity while the forces were cantoned during the monsoons appear under this system to have been payable in a lump sum at the time of Dasara. While on campaign the soldier had scarcely any payment to make for his subsistence. Shivaji spared no expense to keep the army happy and contented at all times. Never was there a mutiny, sedition, or conspiracy in his camp. The passion that dominated every breast, every regiment, every camp flying Shivaji's standard was to put forth the very best of their valour and daring, and to earn the applause and admiration of their master. This was the occupation of their thoughts, this noble emulation that inspired them.

In the other departments there was great punctuality in the payment of all salaries to public officers. At the end of each year the salary bills were made up and paid and the standing instructions were to leave no balances for the next year. The punctuality thus observed kept the men in the public service in sympathy with the government, their families well supported even in the absence of their chiefs, and the entire civilian class free from fear of indebtedness. Shivaji knew from the condition of other governments of the time that irregularity in payment was the root cause of sedition among public officers, of indifference to duty, of dullness, of ineptitude. Hence the great care with which he endeavoured to extirpate the least signs of indebtedness from the public service. The spectre of debt took the edge from all ambition and enterprise, robbed life of all its savour and drove the distracted victim to every kind of vice and iniquity. All this Shivaji saw and he wisely made provision for his officers to enable them to avoid these fears. But he saw that there were occasions, like marriages and other festive functions, when not only the poor but even the most affluent were forced to borrow. Such being the case a rule was made that public officers on such occasions might apply for aid from the state funds, and such aid was granted on a scale determined by the applicant's position and services. At the same time when an officer was found improvident or extravagant and in consequence overwhelmed with debt, he was discharged from the service.

The superior officers received their salaries in cash or by orders for payment on the revenue officers. The latter paid in cash or in kind according to the order received, which they had to follow to the letter. Punctuality of payment was the outstanding feature of the system. These orders on the treasury were duly audited from year to year. When a paid servant of the state happened to be a holder of an agricultural estate, the land-revenue chargeable on his holding was deducted from his stipend and the balance made up by an order on the treasury, which was duly paid off in cash or in kind. No military or civil officers received assignments of village lands, as the whole or part of

their salaries. Such assignments of the revenues of entire villages or a portion of them went under the name of *mokasa*. The grant of *mokasa* lands had become a regular feature of Mahomedan rule, and a prolific source of every form of oppression. What with the zamindar and the mokasadar, the subjects of these unhappy governments were, as it were, ground down between two mill-stones. Under pretence of government service they impressed any amount of forced labour. To avoid these evil practices, therefore, Shivaji took care, that, where orders on the revenue were made in payment, they should be addressed to and made payable by the revenue officers concerned, and debited to the revenue account, and that the recipients should under no circumstances exercise any kind of proprietary rights or claims on those villages to the revenue of which their salaries were debited.

In the same manner were jahgirs suppressed. Jahgirs were fiefs conferred on great nobles of the state in recognition of services performed. The holders of the jahgirs collected the revenues of these fiefs by their own agents, and were responsible to the state for paying a small percentage of their receipts as tribute or in lieu thereof had to serve in the field with a prescribed number of followers. With a tenure that presented such a wide latitude for freedom of action and independence and placed such multitudes under their autonomous sway, these jahgir feudatories appeared more in the character of ruling princes than obedient vassals in allegiance to a common sovereign. The cultivators looked upon them as their sovereign masters. They had their own militia of jahgir forces. They lived in fortified strongholds and secured their fiefs with many a fortress, tower and parapet. The fiefs descended from father to son in right of succession. The zeal and loyalty of the founder of the family in the service of the central power could not in the nature of things be transmitted unimpaired along with the family fortunes to the generations that followed. The strain of virtue and valour that had distinguished the first fief-holder was rarely to be discovered among scions of the same blood. Contempt of the central power and insolent disobedience to its commands were the natural consequences. The spirit of defiance had become the element in which they lived and moved. The signal of a foreign invasion might be expected to gather their forces for the defence of the central power; but it more often proved a trumpet-call for mutiny and rebellion.

Shivaji was so conscious of the festering evils to which the jahgir system gave rise in the commonwealth, that he set his face sternly against the practice. Where it happened that in territories newly brought under his flag the old practice was found to exist and the jahgirdar aristocracy of the ancient regime had in some form to be recognized, the lands held in jahgir from times of yore by these families were no longer considered as held in proprietary right, and a percentage of the revenue was all that was conceded to them for

the continuance and glory of their ancient pedigrees. And this, with the additional precaution that they should not interfere with the rayats, who were responsible only to the government officers of the villages concerned. Divested of all shadow of authority and power to work their will upon the suffering multitude, the more capable and talented of these nobles found a free arena for the exercise of their virtues and genius in Shivaji's army and civil establishments. Their ancient forts were levelled to the ground. No castellated residences were any longer assigned or permitted to them. Down went *buruz* and parapet. They were required to occupy ordinary unfortified residences. The stronger fortifications over all the jahgir dominions of course passed bodily under Shivaji's military officers as parts of the ordinary defences of the country.

Thus was crushed the many-headed hydra that had turned the fairest parts of the country into a morass and poisoned its substance. For whatever name it assumed – khot, deshmukh, deshpande, desai, zamindar, mokasdar, mirasdar, jahgirdar – the evil was the same, irresponsible rapine. It was an attribute of the highest statesmanship on the part of Shivaji that though he deprived them of their voracious propensities, this brood of hawks could yet be successfully tamed for the public service. The discontinuance of the jahgir practice by Shivaji has had one unfortunate result: the names of the illustrious leaders and statesmen, who are nobly seconded their sovereign's efforts for the redemption of the liberty of their country, have fallen into an unseemly and unmerited oblivion. In any age, in any country, the names of Moropant Pingle, Abaji Sondev, Tanaji Malusare, Yesaji Kank, Baji Fasalkar, Baji Prabhu, Netaji Palkar, Prataprao Guzar, Hambirrao Mohite and a host of others would have shone in the national galaxy like stars of the first magnitude. Today they are under an unnatural eclipse. True to his principles Shivaji conferred no jahgirs upon these illustrious partners of his labours in field and in council, though nobody else in all the land could be said to have had a better claim for any mark of recognition than these tried veterans. But not even in these cases was the "no jahgir" rule to be broken. Had the gallant services of these men received any such recognition, who knows but perhaps these great names might still have survived the ravages of time, not indeed quite unscathed but still with the family honours and the family estates ?

Another important rule of Shivaji's discipline was that no public office, civil or military, was to become hereditary. However capable or brilliant the career of the father had proved to be, this was no reason in itself for the succession of his son to the same office. If the great services of the father were at all to be acknowledged by a compensatory preferment of the son, it was strictly conditioned by the capacity and character the latter had revealed in his career. Without such ability, the gates of royal favour or preferment were

closed, not only as regards succession to the paternal dignities, but to any official appointment. This put an end to all manner of nepotism in the public service. The public offices never became the close preserves of a small ring of families. The duties of the state were discharged with efficiency and with unfaltering regard for the right. This is the more remarkable when we consider the sterling character, the selfless devotion, the unwavering rectitude of Shivaji's gallant companions in arms and in council, the pillars of the empire, its builders, its defenders. Remarkable again because no one, – no, not even the worst caviller, – traces the rigour of the new system to a lack of appreciation or to insolence or ingratitude. Not indifference but a just appreciation governed all these actions, no phlegmatic disregard but a keen instinct to discern merit. So lively was this sense of fair dealing as between officer and officer, so strict the measure of justice, whether distributive or retributive, that Shivaji did not hesitate, where duty required it, to rebuke the greatest of his generals, to discharge or supersede them, when the least act of insubordination or dereliction of duty was brought home to them in the exercise of their trust. The fact that these great ministers and commanders held no jaghirs and were backed by no feudal militia made their removal or supersession from office comparatively easy. Such was the new regime, the discipline of the renaissance of the Maratha power. No prototype of it can be found in the contemporary Mahomedan governments of Shivaji's time or in the fossilized systems of Hindu medievalism that had preceded it. Unhappily for the Maratha Renaissance all vestiges of the new system disappeared after the advent of the Raja Shahu and the usurping domination of his Peshwa ministers, – with what dire results is too well known to the student of history.

While the conduct of the great officers and commanders was subject to the constant scrutiny of the sovereign and his principal ministers, there was a secret intelligence corps or service of scouts which maintained a constant watch on the actions and the movements of the local officers at each fort, mahal, or subha, each cantonment and campaigning regiment. The head of this corps of scouts was Bahirji Naik, a man in the complete confidence of Shivaji. Secret officers kept an eye on the movements of commanders despatched on a campaign, watched the booty taken and the contributions levied and reported any attempts at misappropriation or under-assessment of the spoils of war. The detectives maintained their silent watch upon the manner in which the garrison officers discharged their trust, gave warnings of any attempted collusion with the enemy, reported on the revenues levied and actually submitted to the treasury, and generally took notice of cases of oppression or misrule. But the intelligence service had not only this sphere of activity. More important was the detective work they rendered the state by reporting on the movements of the enemy, the camp news in the Adilshahi, Kutubshahi or Mogul territories,

the latest ministerial and other changes of office, the latest developments in policy or plans. They were ubiquitous; they went in all manner of disguises; they saw and detected everything. The secret despatches thus received from these officers were read out in the privacy of the royal palace by Shivaji's personal secretary, Balaji Avji Chitnis. A reported case of insubordination or breach of discipline on the part of an officer was subjected to a close investigation, and, if at the end of the enquiry he was found guilty, he was immediately punished with the penalties attached to the offence. This exercised a wholesome restraint upon the other officers and made them more amenable to duty.

Shivaji did not consider there was a necessity for a separate judicial service throughout his dominions. In land disputes or contractual disagreements about transfer of property, the cases were referred to panchayats by the mahal and district officers. The village panchayat system flourished in all its vigour and vitality, and, being the cheapest and most immediate, it was, at the same time, the most convenient system to the inhabitants. Shivaji, therefore, retained the system with a right of appeal to the sovereign. The advantage of the system was that the parties concerned had not to go a long way from their homes to reach the court, the trials took place where the causes of action arose, and decisions were given by persons who could make a personal investigation of the facts and indeed bring their ocular knowledge and local experience to bear upon the question at issue; and, over and above this, there was the undeniable advantage that being of the people they decided for the people without charging any fees or salaries. It was for the mahalkari and the subha officer to see that the decisions of the panchayat were duly respected though the party dissatisfied with the judgment of the panchayat court could appeal to the king. Such appeals were heard by the Nyayadhis or the chief justice, one of the ministers of the Ashta-Pradhan cabinet. Criminal jurisdiction was vested in the subha officer, against whose decision a reference could be made to the sovereign for revision, when the case was called before the court of the Panditrao or the ecclesiastical officer, who revised the case in the light of the shastric law. Cases of insubordination in the army or breach of military discipline came for investigation before the military subhedar or other higher officer, which could be appealed from to the sovereign, when decision was given by the sir-nobut or commander-in-chief.

In the territories now reduced under Shivaji's dominions, there had once prevailed much disturbance from thieves and dacoits. This pest of thieves was considerably mitigated and in parts utterly suppressed by Shivaji. Thieves and criminal tribes such as Berads and the like, were hunted down and executed when arrested. Some were given lands within gunshot of some strong fortress or other and the commander of the fort kept them under a strict surveillance.

Some were indeed enrolled among the irregular infantry of the fort garrisons and the temptation to crime cured by the prospect of a fixed salary. Where a village had earned a notoriety for frequent dacoities, it was placed under the sentinel watch of a person of the Berad class, who was made responsible for the safe-guarding of the village properties and was bound to trace the theft or pay damages. If he committed a theft himself he was straightway led to execution.

Charitable grants to shrines and temples coming down from long antiquity were continued in the new regime, and where the grants formerly made were found inadequate, additional grants were sanctioned. Fresh grants were made by cession of agricultural lands to many religious institutions which had thus far struggled on without any state aid. These places of religious sanctity were placed under proper procurators and managers, and an audit was to be made of the expenditure incurred from the state grants by priests and pujaris. These audits were subject to annual inspection by state officers. Persons of high reputation for sanctity or righteousness residing at the holy pilgrim places received annuities. For the celebration of recurring solemnities and religious festivals, assignments of village lands were made to shrines and holy places.

It was not Hindu shrines only which came in for a share of the royal bounty, but the Mahomedan mosques and shrines and the tombs of the pirs and saints of Islam throughout the Swarajya dominions continued to draw the revenues assigned to them by the Mahomedan powers. Shivaji was so far from confiscating these mortmain properties of the church of Islam, that, on the contrary, he even transferred fresh lands to Mahomedan shrines and made new assignments of revenue. Shivaji's enthusiasm for the faith of his fathers does not seem to have led him into a bigoted hatred of anything and everything that belonged to the Mahomedan religion. Among the numberless campaigns he led in person or under the generalship of his great commanders, there is no instance mentioned of any act of sacrilege or violation of any Mahomedan shrines. And this is the more to be admired since the perpetuation of any such sacrilegious crime would, among the scenes of religious frenzy into which the followers of Islam were being constantly betrayed in his times, have appeared comparatively excusable. But Shivaji's was an enlightened policy of religious tolerance, which made any form of persecution impossible.¹²

The settled sway of Islam over the plains of Maharashtra had crushed out all life and vigour from the indigenous studies of the Vedas and other

12. Even Khafi Khan had to acknowledge Shivaji's tolerant policy towards the Church of Islam. *Vide* his remarks on the character of Shivaji (Elliot, VII p. 305 et. passim).

branches of Hindu philosophy. With a view to encourage and revive these fallen studies, Shivaji instituted a new system of patronage for the exponents of Hindu learning and philosophy. Under this system the month of Shravan, which coincided with the season of the autumnal cessation from warlike activities, was devoted to giving audiences to learned Brahmans from all parts of the country, who were invited to make a display of their learning and submit themselves to prescribed tests conducted by the ecclesiastical minister, the Pandit Rao. The candidates coming out successful from the tests received rewards in corn, from one to ten maunds, according to the quality and standard of their attainments. Great scholars and exponents of the Vedas and of the Indian school of astronomy, were accorded the welcome due to their position. Honorariums were given them on a royal scale. Scholarly Brahmans from across the frontiers of the Swarajya kingdom were honoured with presents in cash, those domiciled within the Swarajya limits received drafts for so many maunds in corn on the local treasury of the district in which they were domiciled. Along with the patronage of Sanskrit learning, state aid was granted to the performance of religious sacrifices and other celebrations when undertaken by learned Brahmans on their private initiative on a scale of magnificence requiring such support. In short, it was a principle of Shivaji's government to make much of the existing virtue, piety and learning in his kingdom and not to cast it adrift in search of an alien patronage. Free alms-houses were opened for maintenance of the deserving poor and arrangements made for the banqueting of the Brahmans at the important temples on auspicious occasions.

Herds of kine were maintained at the state expense in select pasturages in the valley of the Bhima, in Mandesh and other places, and an army of state dairymen and cattle attendants looked after their up-keep. A high class breed of commissariat oxen was reared in these cattle farms. Farm cattle were likewise supplied to agriculturists from public stalls. There were likewise parks of state buffaloes. These were in charge of shepherds and dairymen who were to reside in meadows teeming with herbage among the valleys and the mountains. The herds were surveyed from year to year and the annual contributions in butter or ghee were settled on each individual shepherd as also the quantity of milk each of them had to supply at the public feasts of the Brahmans on state occasions. A similar arrangement was made for state flocks of sheep and goats which were allotted in groups of twenty or twenty-five to the charge of individual shepherds subject to the same method of surveying and registering and the same scale of contributions on state occasions.

It may be of interest in this place to glance at the daily routine of Shivaji's life in times of peace. He rose with the dawn which was ushered in by beating the palace drum and with songs of divine praise sung by the palace

minstrels to the accompaniment of instrumental music. Awakened amid these strains the pious king offered to Heaven his morning prayers. Then followed the ablutions of the face and hands, the worship of the sacred kine, the morning bath with water mingled with sacred sprinklings from the Ganges and other purificatory streams, the rosary, the prayers and other acts of worship. After this some time was devoted to readings from the sacred puranas. Those acts of religious merit were generally ended by 7.30 A. M., after which the Maharajah usually put on his full dress. He gave himself for a brief interval to his daily exercise of target-practice, and came to the audience hall. The secretaries and officers were by this time ready in their places to receive orders and confirmations. Strangers admitted to the levee made their salutes. A smile to this minister, a word to that, a charge to a third drew all hearts towards the king as by a subtle magic. There was none present there but thought that he alone was basking in the sunshine of the royal favor. Men of talents obtained ready admission and left with many an acknowledgment of their sovereign's esteem and patronage. The session in the audience hall lasted till 10 A. M.; then an adjournment was made to the office chambers for confidential consultation with one or other ministers of state. At 11 A. M. the usual number of Brahman guests was entertained to dinner, and the king himself sat down to his morning meal, with a select company of guests. After the dinner and *pan-supari* the king came again to the secretariat and had the correspondence of the day read out by his private secretary and replies dictated and drafts presented for approval and confirmation. Urgent proposals were then taken up and a provisional audit made of that previous day's receipts and disbursements, as also the estimates for the morrow. Then the king retired to his private chambers for the afternoon siesta, after which he came back again to the audience-hall, reviewed the recent doings of the various quasi-public establishments of the mahals and the *kàrkhanàs*, considered appeals or references from the judicial officers, and passed final orders thereon. About an hour before sunset, the king used to leave the palace, to pay a visit of inspection to this or the other private establishment, visits to the temples or the private parks, or for equestrian or other forms of exercise, after which he returned again to the audience-hall for the evening levee. About 7 P. M. came the time for night devotions, prayers and readings from the puranas to be followed in due course by the evening meal, and deliberation with a minister. After all this audience was given to secret spies and scouts, and the nicer details of foreign diplomacy and private correspondence were attended to. Such was the ordinary routine of a life subject to an extraordinary stress of public events and surprises, the punctuality and regularity of which amid the manifold disturbing events that beset his career on all sides, cannot fail to excite our admiration. The punctilious precision of the king in all things

could not but impress the same virtues upon the minds of his ministers. Sloth and procrastination found no place at his court.

While Shivaji thus diffused all round among his courtiers this keen regard for precision and punctuality, he also encouraged among them a love of noble enterprise and an ambition to rise in their own departments by dint of perseverance, enthusiasm and self-help. For these were the qualifications to win distinction and promotion in his service, not the arts of the flatterer or the parasite, or the encomiums of interested friends and partisans. Thus the court became the training-ground for virtue and talent; mediocrity and inefficiency had no place within its hallowed precincts.

During the hours of business at Shivaji's durbar, indulgence in any form of raillery or banter was forbidden. Professional jesters, entertainers and sycophants were denied admission at the durbar sessions. Vulgar or obscene conversation was impossible at his court, and the rake and the voluptuary avoided his presence. His serious thoughts were occupied at all hours with discussion of arms and horses, war and conquest. In leisure hours he was capable of witty and humorous discourse in the company of his chosen confidants, nor was he a stranger to the intellectual delights of poesy, but revelled in the impromptu effusions of the court poet, Bhushan Kavi, and other bards. Shivaji was always prepared to give an audience to musicians and preachers of distinction, who never failed to receive at his hands the reward due to their talents, learning and eloquence. Nor was the art of dancing altogether discouraged. There was no puritanical embargo on all forms of song and dance. But there was a studied restraint and discrimination in these forms of amusements. They never became a master passion with him to the exclusion of graver pursuits. The same measure of restraint was observed in the amusement of the chase. As an ordinary accomplishment and a recognized obligation of the Kshatriya or warrior caste, Shivaji indulged in this sport at intervals of one or two months, hunting big game as a rule and sparing bucks and deer, except when venison was occasionally needed for the anniversary oblations to the *manes* of his ancestors and other quasi-sacrificial occasions.

A noteworthy feature of Shivaji's discipline was the spirit of friendliness and social intercourse that subsisted among the ranks of his officers. There rarely was any envy or friction among the different members of the state-service. They were required to abstain from intervention in departments not falling under their immediate care and avoid sowing discontent among their brother officers out of spite or jealousy on failing to attain their wishes. When owing to any cause, the social relations between any of the great ministers of state were found to be strained, Shivaji promptly interfered and effected a restoration of the friendly accord and good feelings

that previously existed between them. To make the reconciliation complete, where the parties belonged to the same caste, Shivaji got them to seal the restoration of harmony by a matrimonial alliance. Juniors in the service were required to behave deferentially with the senior officers. No royal valet or personal attendant, however high he might stand in the king's favour or confidence, dared abuse his position to whisper slander in the ruler's ear and prejudice his opinion against any minister or officer in the public service. The acts of administration were a forbidden subject to the menial staff, nor were they allowed to turn the conversation to the subject of their own or their friends' advancement in the king's service. No petitions or complaints of this nature were directly to be placed before the king, but to be submitted in due course through the heads of their departments. This injunction was strict and universal, and even the great nobles of the court and the personal relations of the king did not escape from it. No claims for preferment found an avenue to the king's foot-stool except through the natural gate-way of the department concerned. When in spite of this rule some great officer or other did plead for preferment in the royal presence, he was invariably told that the reply to his petition would be sent through the minister concerned. Complaints against public officers were not encouraged and unless an investigation clearly proved a serious lapse on the part of a state officer, he incurred no blame or distrust in the mind of his sovereign. This mistrustfulness on the part of the king against his own ministers and officers was a common weakness of Indian potentates, and many a slanderer was to be found in every principality to impose upon the credulity of the prince and turn him against the truest and most steadfast of his servants. Shivaji knew well the seamy side of human nature and the knavery of officious back-biters and informers. The knowledge that their king was above that meanness which scents suspicion on every side and gathers around him a corps of officious, eaves-dropping and meddling informers inspired Shivaji's officers to give of their best both as regards service and advice, in the serene confidence that there was no possibility of a misapprehension as to the purity of their motives and the integrity of their work, no alienation, in short, unless there was a grave dereliction in the discharge of their duties.

The bakhars give a picturesque account of the style of Shivaji's durbar when he sat in audience for the discharge of solemn business and to decide on public affairs, as also of the pomp and circumstance of the state processions which were held from time to time. The forms observed at these public functions were nearly the same as have been described in the last chapter in connection with the coronation festivities. In the centre of the audience-hall was the royal throne and the canopy; behind, the bearers of the *morchel* and other attendants; in front standing in two rows were the blood-relations and officers of the body-guard. Next sat in due order of precedence on either side,

the great ministers of state, commanders, members of the revenue and diplomatic services, representatives of foreign powers and select nobles.¹³ The deputies and secretaries to the great ministers of state sat behind their chiefs. Then came the heads of various stores and treasury establishments. Two mace-bearers or sergeants guarded the entrance, saw to the proper salutes being made by those presenting themselves at the durbar, gave them their seats according to the degree of their precedence and ushered and announced strangers coming to the durbar. The sentinel posts in front of the audience-hall were in charge of these sergeants, and when anybody's presence was specially wanted at the durbar they sent one of the peons or troopers under their command to deliver the summons for attendance to the person concerned.

At the solemn processions, on the auspicious occasions in the Hindu calendar, the order was very much as described in the last chapter. Right in the vanguard of the entire procession came the elephants bearing the dual standards of the empire, the Jaripatka or the cloth-of-gold flag and the Bhagwa-zenda or orange-coloured banner. Behind these came the two cloth-of-gold pennants of the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-chief also mounted on elephants, followed by the standards of each separate regiment of cavalry and infantry, with officers of the king's guard and the shiledar corps riding immediately behind as the general custodians of their regimental flags. Then followed trains of artillery and ammunition, squadrons of horse and elephant-corps, the skirmishers in the infantry, light armed slingers, javelin-throwers, archers and musketeers. Behind came the war-bands, drums, horns and trumpets with their shrill war music. Behind them again came the *paga* or household horse and mounted police, followed by the softer music of flutes and pipes, and minstrels and troubadours. Then followed other bands of spearmen, mace-bearers, peons and attendants, wrestlers and gymnasts following on foot, and lastly the elephant bearing the royal *howda*, surrounded by a ring of chosen attendants and Mavalis. Immediately behind followed the ladies of the royal family, then the ministers of state according to their usual rights of precedence, the secretariate officers and their deputies, and nobles and commanders. The royal drum escorted by the chief commander and other officers brought up the rear of the procession.

The bakhars give a very interesting story illustrating Shivaji's fame among his contemporaries as a patron and admirer of genius, and of his anxiety to retain such men to adorn his court by their presence. At Delhi, at

13. The Peshwa, the Amatya, the Sachiv, the Mantri and the Chitnis stood to the right of the throne; the Panditrao, the Senapati, the Sumant, the Nyayadhish etc. to the left.

the imperial court, there was a poet of the name of Chintamani,¹⁴ whose business it was to entertain the emperor by singing or reciting his odes. This bard had a brother, who was also a gifted poet, but who unfortunately unlike his more fortunate brother did not enjoy the imperial patronage. He depended on his brother until somebody insulted him as an idle, stay-at-home fellow, when he¹⁵ determined to leave Delhi, and resolved never to live any more on the bounty of a Mahomedan. In the course of his wanderings he came to the court of a raja among the mountains of Kamaun and had the good fortune to obtain his patronage. Having spent a few years in that principality, he asked for permission to leave, upon which the prince as a sign of his appreciation presented him with a sum of one lakh of rupees, accompanying his farewell present with the observation that the poet would not find on earth a donor so bountiful and appreciative as himself. This expression of conceit irritated the poet who replied then and there to the Raja: “There may be thousands on earth to equal, nay surpass, you in munificence, but scarcely a beggar, I think, who would thus spurn a present, though a lakh of rupees, accompanied by such an arrogant boast.”

With these words, the imperious bard put down the gold and left the country without any recompense for his poetic labours. In the course of his peregrinations the rising fame of Shivaji reached his ears and induced him to come down to the Deccan. Seeking an interview with Shivaji he declared to him his intention of living under the auspices of one who had no love for Mahomedans. Upon this, Shivaji retained him in his patronage and settled a maintenance grant upon him. His forte was to make poems on diverse subjects in the *Braja-bhàshà* a dialect of the valley of the Jumna, with which he used to entertain Shivaji. His principal poem is a sort of epic celebrating the exploits of Shivaji, the *Shiv-Raj-Bhushan Kavya* or the poem on the glories of Shivaji.¹⁶ Shivaji was quite charmed with this poem. After a long sojourn in Shivaji’s territories, he announced his intention to return home, upon which he

14. Chintamani is said to have previously lived under the Bhonsle Raja Makarandshah of Nagpur for several years.

15. This poet is said to have at first lived under the patronage of the Raja Chhatrasal of Pannah for about six months and left him in 1664 to join Shivaji’s court (*Kavyetihas Sangraha*).

16. This poem was published in the Marathi Magazine *Kavyetihas Sangraha* many years ago. It is said the poem was completed the year before Shivaji’s coronation. It proposes to discuss the figures of speech etc. in Indian works on rhetoric and in the illustrative verses chosen on the subject, the poet describes the glories of Shivaji’s achievements. Prof. Sarkar thinks that Bhushan’s *Granthavali* (Hindi, edited by Shyam Bihari Mishra and Shukdev Bihari Mishra – Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Benares, 1907) is full of “fulsome flattery of Shivaji, by a variety of similes and parallels from the Hindu scriptures and epics”, but at the same time useful “as showing the atmosphere and the Hindu mind of the time.”

was rewarded with ample presents and pressed to return again, which he willingly promised to do.

When the news of the bard's return to Delhi,¹⁷ laden with wealth and tokens of Shivaji's favour, reached the envious ears of Aurangzeb, he bade Chintamani introduce his brother to the imperial court. Bhushan is said to have attempted some sort of protest declaring that the emperor was a declared enemy of his patron, and as a loyal vassal what would he have to do with such a one, since nothing could escape his lips but the praises of Shivaji, which would only irritate the emperor? However on the insistence of Chintamani, our bard undertook to attend the durbar, on a condition proposed and accepted, that should he be required to recite a poem, the theme would be the glories of Shivaji. Sometime after the first introduction, Aurangzeb bade Bhushan recite some verses. The poet said, "Your Majesty had better wash your hands first, for after the erotics of my brother, which excite a voluptuous languor in your heart, I am going to raise my song to a heroic pitch, which, I am afraid, must needs raise Your Majesty's hands again and again to your august mustache. Hence wash your hands. I say!" "All right," said the emperor, "and if thou failest, thou shalt answer with thy head!" With this threat, he bade him commence his verses. Bhushan began to recite the glories of Shivaji's achievements. The emperor bade him sing his own greatness, celebrating his suzerainty over all princes and the enormous streams of tribute flowing to the imperial treasury from subject vassals. Upon this Bhushan began with a simile comparing the vassal princes to trees and the emperor to a butterfly rifling the sweets of every tree. In presenting this similitude, Bhushan likened Shivaji to the champak tree, and as the butterfly abstains from the champak tree alone, as it is believed, the poet expressed in recondite terms his meaning that whatever success the emperor might have achieved against other princes and whatever tribute he might levy from them, his attempts had all failed before Shivaji. Then the emperor reminded him of the preliminary condition and told him he had got him to wash his hands in vain. The poet continued five or six stanzas, in which some martial scenes were rendered in such lively strains that at the end of the sixth stanza the emperor spontaneously raised his hand to his mustache. Upon this the poet concluded his recitation and the emperor, gratified with his exquisite skill and poetic faculty, bestowed upon him many marks of honour and patronage. Shivaji's agent at the imperial court sent full particulars of the incident to his royal master, which was indeed very gratifying to Shivaji. He wrote in reply to his agent to send the bard Bhushan again to the south and it is said that at sight of his letter, Bhushan returned once more to live at Shivaji's court.

17. Probably Agra, but Delhi is used loosely of the Mogul durbar.
