

# THREE GREAT RULERS

K. A. NILAKANTA SASTRI

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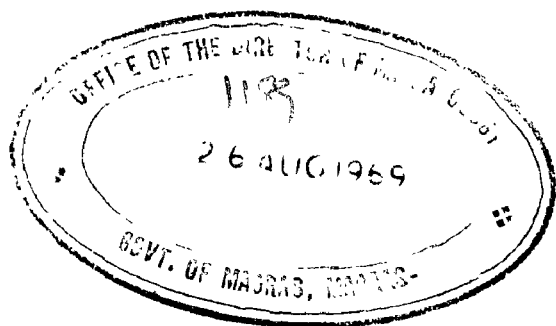
# THREE GREAT RULERS

BY

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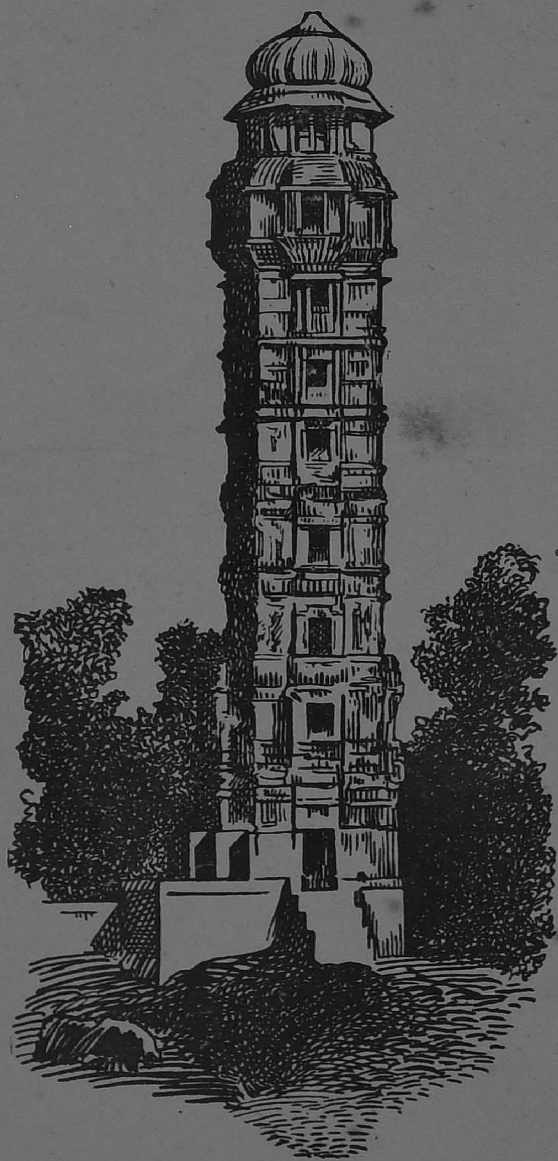
## FOREWORD

Here is the story of the life and work of three great Rulers of India in the past. They lived active lives and did great deeds which are still remembered. Nothing can be of greater interest to young readers than such lives marked by lasting glory. Lives of historical rulers are full of dignity and renown. In our young Republic of to-day, youthful minds will be drawn to the noble deeds of the men of action whose life story is bound to stir their sense of patriotism. The past history of India has undoubtedly left behind a charm which is tried to be communicated to our boys and girls in the three short sketches contained in this little book.

THE AUTHOR

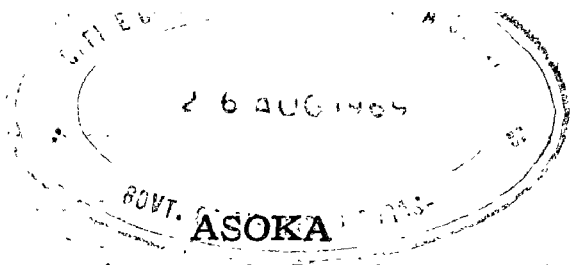
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Peerless Tower of Chitorgarh

**ASOKA**



Many centuries ago, in North-east India, there was a kingdom named Magadha. In the beginning it was but a small state. As the centuries rolled by, it conquered and absorbed its neighbouring states of Anga, Kosala, Avanti and Kausambi, and became powerful and famous. The glory of its name has reached us through myth and legend, epic and history. In the Mahabharata it is described as a fertile country protected by a ring of mountains, abounding in woods and forests, flowing with perennial streams, and rich in herds of cattle. It was then said to be ruled by the mighty Jarasandha, a merciless and tyrannical king, whom Bhima challenged and slew in a tremendous wrestling encounter. During the Buddha's lifetime, Bimbisara, and after him, his son Ajatasatru ruled over Magadha. Both of them showed the utmost honour to the Buddha, offering him rich presents, lands, gardens, and houses. Later on, under the kings of the Nanda dynasty, Magadha became more powerful still. Though the first Nanda king, Mahapadma, was not a bad ruler, the later Nanda kings were mostly bad, greedy and tyrannical. The last of them was known as Dhana Nanda, because he was incalculably rich. He was a man of worthless character, who used his power and his wealth to oppress the people. His subjects hated him; and they longed for a deliverer who would put an end to his tyranny.



At that time there was a young man named Chandragupta who was serving as a military commander under the Nanda king. He incurred the monarch's displeasure, and fearing his wrath fled from Magadha. The famous Chanakya befriended him, and became his adviser. Aided by his wise and clever counsel, Chandragupta raised an army, and invaded Magadha. He defeated and killed the tyrant, and occupied his throne.

Chandragupta was a great soldier. He maintained a permanent army of six hundred thousand foot soldiers, eighty thousand horses, nine thousand elephants, and large number of chariots. With the help of his army he conquered practically the whole of India, and liberating North-west India from its foreign rule, brought it under his sway. At that time there was in Syria a powerful king who was really ruler of all Western Asia. He was a Greek, and was known as Seleucus Nicator, which means Seleucus the Conqueror. He invaded India intending to reconquer Alexander's possessions. But Chandragupta defeated him, and forced him to sue for peace. Seleucus agreed to give Chandragupta much valuable territory to the west of the Indus in return for just five hundred war elephants. Thereafter, the Greek and the Indian monarchs became friends; and Seleucus sent Megasthenes as an ambassador to Chandragupta's court at Pataliputra. During his stay there, Megasthenes observed the manners and customs of the people, noted all the happenings in the kingdom, and compiled an excellent account of the empire of that time.

The dynasty which Chandragupta founded was known as the Mauryan dynasty, since Chandragupta was also called Mauryaputra. Chandragupta reigned for twenty-four years; and after him his son Bindusara succeeded to the throne. Though Bindusara's reign lasted for twenty-five years, we know very little of him. There is, however, a little story narrated about him. It is this. He once made a request to Antiochus of Syria, the son and successor of Seleucus, to send him some dried figs, sweet wine, and a Greek philosopher. Antiochus replied that he had great pleasure in sending the figs and the wine, but that he felt unable to send a Greek philosopher, as it was not lawful among the Greeks to sell a professor.

During Bindusara's reign his son Asoka (the sorrowless) was employed as Viceroy at Takshasila and Ujjayini.

The Kingdom of Takshasila lay at the north-west corner of India. It was a prosperous country, which had to submit to Alexander the Great, when he invaded India. Its capital, also called Takshasila, is mentioned by the Greek writers of the time as Taxila. It was a big centre of trade, and a famous city of learning. Crowds of pupils, princes and commoners, resorted to it. It was there that the great Samskrit grammarian Panini wrote his great Samskrit grammar perhaps two generations or three before Alexander's time. The city fell into ruins long before. Over the site of its ruins stands the modern town of Shahdheri. There is a story that Prince Asoka went there once to quell a rebellion of its people.

When he reached the city the prince was surprised to see that the citizens welcomed him. They told him that their rebellion was neither against him nor against his father, the king, but that they rebelled only against the bad officers of the city who ill-treated and harassed them every day.

The other viceroyalty of Asoka's was the kingdom of Malwa, once known as Avanti. It lay in the valley of Charmanvati (Chambal), a tributary of the Jumna. Its capital was Ujjayini, regarded as one of the seven sacred cities of India. Ujjayini was to Hindu geography what Greenwich is to British, that is, it marked the first meridian of longitude. On one of Asoka's journeys to Ujjayini, he made a halt in the town of Vidisa (Bilsa). There he chanced to meet a lovely maiden named Devi, the daughter of a merchant. He fell in love with her, and married her, and lived happily with her at Ujjayini. A beautiful boy Mahinda, and a lovely daughter, Sanghamitta, were born to them. They were to become famous later, as the peaceful missionaries of Asoka to Ceylon; and they were instrumental in converting the people of that island to Buddhism.

Bindusara died about 272 B.C. He not only preserved the large empire which his father Chandragupta left him, but perhaps also enlarged it a little. The great empire was Asoka's inheritance.

The Buddhist books relate that when Asoka became king on the death of his father, he did away with ninety-nine of his brothers. But this

story seems unreliable. Asoka has caused a number of stone inscriptions to be made, which are the earliest of their kind in India. Since they were carved and set up during his lifetime, they convey the most reliable information regarding the events which happened then. Some inscriptions of Asoka mention his brothers as living with their families at Pataliputra and other important cities in the empire. We have, therefore, to disbelieve the story of the wholesale murder by Asoka of ninety-nine of his brothers, and regard it as a piece of fiction. It might have been invented, perhaps to point out that Asoka, who was wild and ferocious in his early youth, was entirely changed after his conversion to Buddhism, and became a thoroughly virtuous man.

Asoka was born a Hindu, like his father and grandfather; and in his early life followed that religion. He had a pious and charitable bent of mind. He worshipped Siva with special devotion, and gave food every day to large numbers of holy men. His daily routine must have been very much the same as that of his predecessors, Bindusara and Chandragupta. Both Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador, and Chanakya, the author of the famous Arthasastra, have given a good account of their times, and of the administration of the country. The picture they have drawn is very interesting.

The capital city, called Pataliputra, stood on the northern bank of the Son at its junction with the Ganga. The ancient city has perished now, and it lies buried below modern Patna and

Bankipore. It was about nine miles long, and one and a half miles broad. It was surrounded by a massive timber palisade with sixty-four gates; and it was guarded by five-hundred and seventy towers. It was surrounded by a broad and deep moat filled with the waters of the Son.

The royal palace was a splendid structure, built mostly of timber, which was the chief building material of those days. Around it was a large royal park, which had fish ponds, and a rich variety of beautiful trees and shrubs. The royal court was maintained in great pomp and luxury.

The king's comforts were looked after by numerous women attendants. The king and his queens went about in palanquins of gold, accompanied by a large retinue of richly attired women. There were women archers in the king's body-guard. Often the king went a-hunting, and when he did so, the royal route was marked out by ropes. It was the duty of the women archers to guard it, and to keep the public away from it. The king also amused himself by watching fights between elephants, rhinoceroses, bulls, and the like.

Neither the gaiety of the court, nor the various sports and games distracted the king from the duties he owed to the state and the people. The system of administration which had been established by usage, prescribed the king's daily routine.

For example, he had to grant audience to his people at least once a day, to enable them to present their petitions before him and to submit their disputes to him for settlement.

The defence of the country was secured by maintaining a permanent army divided in the traditional way into infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. The footsoldiers carried bows and arrows, the bow being as high as the archer who used it. He also carried a shield of rough ox-hide. Some of the soldiers had spears instead of bows, and all carried a broadsword of the length of three cubits. In the cavalry each horseman carried two lances, and was protected by a buckler. Each elephant usually carried three archers besides the driver. Elephants were deemed invaluable in war. Chanakya says that the destruction of an enemy's army depended mainly on elephants. Seleucus valued them so much that in exchange for elephants, he offered large tracts of territory. A modern writer has compared them to the tanks of modern warfare. The chariots were drawn by two or four horses abreast; and on each chariot rode two or four fighting men, besides the driver. The whole army was under a War Office, governed by thirty members. They functioned as six boards of five members, each board being in charge of one of the departments, namely, infantry, cavalry, elephants, chariots, admiralty and transport.

The empire was divided into a number of provinces each ruled by a Viceroy. The Government of the capital city was entrusted to a body consisting of thirty commissioners. They were divided into six boards of five members each. The duties of each board were clearly defined, and regularly discharged. It was the duty of one

of these boards to take care of foreigners, to attend to them in their illness, to help them to dispose of their dead, and to administer their estates. From this it is fairly clear that many foreigners were present in the Mauryan capital. The government was systematically organized and had a number of well-staffed departments, very much like modern governments. As agriculture was the main occupation of the people, much attention was given to irrigation. For instance, in the reign of Chandragupta a large irrigation tank was constructed at Girnar in Saurashtra; and it was enlarged and beautified in the reign of Asoka. Good roads were laid to help trade and the movements of the army; and waterways formed a supplementary means of communication. Articles for sale were marked with an official stamp, and a sales tax was an important source of revenue besides the land-tax.

Asoka's coronation took place in 269/268 B.C. four years after his accession. All his inscriptions are dated from the year of his coronation. In the year 261 B.C. occurred the most momentous event in his career. Asoka considered the conquest of Kalinga necessary to complete the sovereignty of his empire in India. Kalinga is the land lying on the east coast of India between the Mahanadi in the north and the Godavari in the south. But the conquest was achieved only after very hard fighting. Asoka records that a hundred and fifty-thousand soldiers were carried away as captives, and that many times that number perished. He was stung by remorse at the

immense destruction in war. He turned for solace to the monks of the Buddhist *Sangha*.

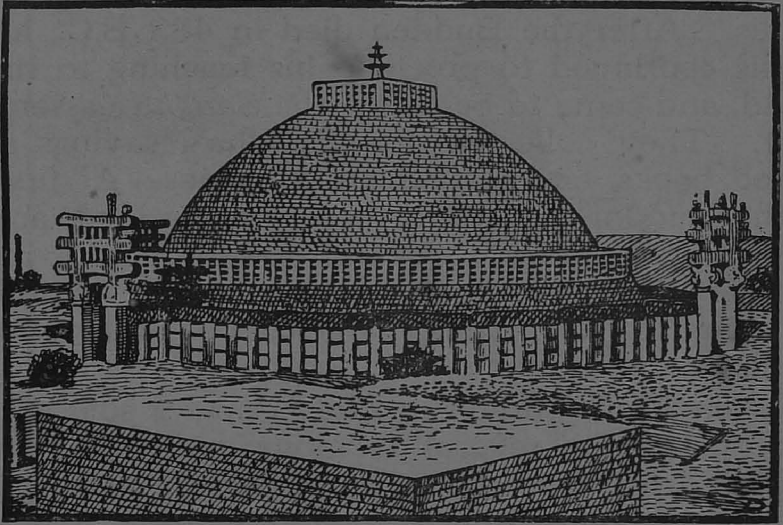
Buddhism is the name given to the faith newly founded about 520 B.C. by Gautama, the Buddha. He was a Kshatriya prince of the clan of the Sakyas, which had settled in the Nepal Tarai, at the foot of the Himalayas. His father was Sudodana, the king of Kapilavastu, and his mother Mayadevi. He was born in the near-by village of Lumbini, now called Rummindai. He was happily married to his cousin Yasodhara, a princess from the neighbouring tribe of the Koils. They had a son, Rahula. However, in his twenty-ninth year, a great and sudden change came over him. It is said to have been due to the vision which he saw of an old man, of a sick man, of a corpse and of a hermit of dignified bearing. Thereupon, Gautama resolved to give up his happy domestic life, and to go in quest of the means of putting an end to the sorrows of life. He visited many teachers, and tried various methods of fasting and penance, but without success. At last, he gave up all these severe methods, and began to take regular food and live a life of moderation and moral restraint. One day, as he wandered about the banks of the Niranjara river, near Bodhi Gaya, he received his morning meal from the hands of a village maiden Suiata by name. Then he went and sat under a pipal tree in contemplation. Suddenly, light dawned upon him and he became the Buddha, the Awakened. In his mind's eye, he saw the outline of a new doctrine of salvation to be achieved by self-control and love, and



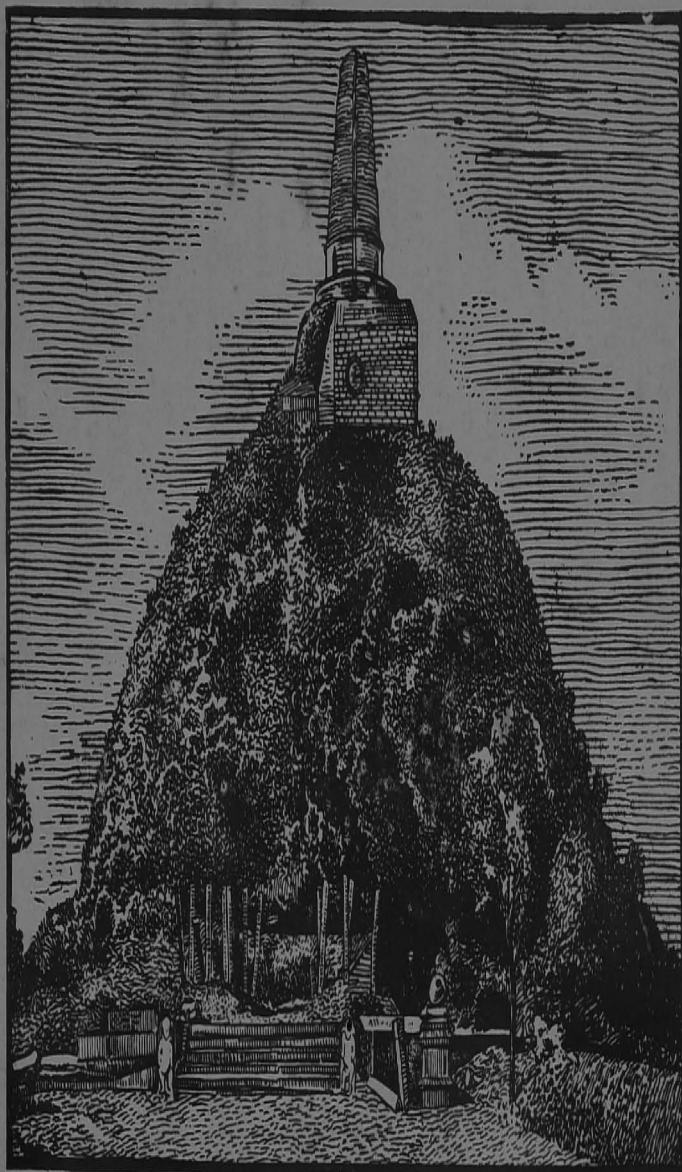
by pursuing a middle path, avoiding the extremes of luxury and asceticism. He began to preach the new doctrine. His first sermon was delivered in the deer park at Saranath, near Banaras. He led the life of a mendicant preacher, going from place to place, and proclaiming his doctrines. He gathered around himself a number of loyal pupils. After the Buddha died in 483 B.C., his pupils continued to proclaim his teaching to the world, and came to be called the *Sangha* (assembly). They collected the Buddha's sayings in sacred books, and settled his doctrines. At first, in the Buddhist doctrine there was no God, and therefore no worship. But in course of time, his disciples began to worship the relics of the Buddha, in the *stupa*, which is a memorial mound raised over his bodily remains.

When Asoka turned to Buddhism for solace, it was one of the several religions competing for eminence on the banks of the Ganga. He was drawn to that religion by its high moral outlook. He became proficient in its doctrines and began to preach them, and was looked upon by his subjects as a great teacher of morality (*dhamma* or *dharma*). He often visited the *Sangha* of the monks for instruction; and on such occasions he wore a monk's robes as a compliment to the *Sangha*. I-tsing, the Chinese pilgrim, who visited India in the seventh century A.D., records that he saw an image of Asoka clad in such robes.

Soon after his conversion, Asoka went on a pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya, where he lived a secluded life for about nine months. In an



Sanchi Stupa



ANURADHAPURA  
(Ceylon)

inscription known as the 'Minor Rock Edict', Asoka exhorts others to follow his example. After a careful study of Buddhist scriptures, he chose some important texts, and recommended all monks and nuns to meditate on them. He went on a religious tour, visiting the sacred spots of Buddhism and leaving memorials of his visits in several places. In one of those visits, he planted an inscribed pillar at Lumbini where the Buddha was born. He also visited the *stupa* of Kanakamuni, a former Buddha, and enlarged it. According to tradition, he visited also Kapilavastu, Saranath near Banaras (where Buddha first preached his doctrine), Kusinagara and Sravasti, where the Buddha long resided, and the *stupas* of some of the Buddha's disciples.

Asoka's conversion to Buddhism brought about a crisis in the affairs of the *Sangha* in a few years. Though Asoka patronized all religions, he did not favour them equally. For example, he presented two rock-cut caves in the Barabar hills in the south Bihar to the monks of the Ajivaka sect, and a third cave either to them or to some other sect. But his gifts to the Buddhists were much larger. Many joined the *Sangha* merely for the sake of the wealth and comfort which the monks enjoyed as a result of royal gifts. These insincere members put forward their own doctrines as those of the Buddha, and created disorder and strife in the *Sangha*. Because of their behaviour, the truly pious monks found life difficult in the monastery at Pataliputra; and the best among them withdrew to

other centres. This disorder lasted for seven long years. A 'Third Buddhist Council' had to be assembled by Asoka at Pataliputra with the aid of the eminent monk Moggaliputta Tissa. At the Council the false monks were all expelled; and the purity of the Buddha's doctrine was restored; and life in the monastery at Pataliputra resumed its normal course. Asoka thus undid the harm caused by his generosity. Further, Asoka ordered his governors to see that in future unworthy persons did not enter the *Sangha* or create any disturbance there. If they did, his orders were that they should be unfrocked and expelled from the monasteries forthwith.

Asoka arranged to send missionaries to different parts of India, and also to countries outside it to preach and establish the *dhamma*. It was thus that Mahinda and Sanghamitta, the son and daughter of Asoka, who took to a monastic life, went to Ceylon to procure the conversion of the island. They reached Ceylon during the reign of Tissa (258-230 B.C.) who, like Asoka, was called Devanampriya (beloved of the Gods). The mission was a complete success. Tissa, the king, was enthusiastic in spreading the Buddhist religion, and he erected many splendid buildings in its service. Though the chronicles of Ceylon narrate that the conversion of the island was effected suddenly bringing in its train a number of miracles, it is certain that it must have been gradual. Mahinda settled down in Ceylon, and died there about 204 B.C. His memory is associated with many monuments in the island.

Sanghamitta (friend of the Assembly) was as successful among women as her brother was among men. It is stated that Sanghamitta took from Gaya a branch of the sacred tree under which the Buddha gained knowledge, and that she planted it at Anuradhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon. A relief on the great Buddhist *stupa* at Sanchi in Central India represents the carrying of the Bo-tree from Buddha Gaya to Ceylon. The Bo-tree stands today among the ruins of Anuradhapura, the oldest historic tree in the world; and is now about two thousand four hundred years old. It has been preserved by the zealous care of the monks, who put up terraces of earth or pillars of iron and masonry to support its spreading branches, and watered it with reverent care in times of drought. The parent tree at Buddha Gaya was totally destroyed about A.D. 630 by a king of Bengal. It was, however, brought back to life by the piety of Purnavarman, a descendant of Asoka, and a ruler of Magadha.

Buddhism, which thus took firm root in Ceylon during Tissa's reign, has exerted ever since a very good influence on the life and customs of the Sinhalese. The great sacred city of Anuradhapura, whose hill-like *stupas* rise high above the trees of a royal park containing royal baths and palaces, may serve as the measure and symbol of Asoka's influence on the world.

In his inscriptions Asoka says that he sent his messengers to the Greek kingdoms of the West, lying beyond western Asia and ruled by Antio-

chus, son of Seleucus, and to the kingdoms in the South of India (Chola, Pandya and Keralaputra) as far as Tamraparani (Ceylon). In these distant countries, by the king's command, the *dhamma* was taught; wells were dug and trees were planted on the roadside; hospitals were established for men and animals; and medicinal herbs were planted and grown everywhere, to provide drugs for the hospitals.

The tradition is that Kashmir formed part of Asoka's dominion and that he created the town of Srinagar and built a large number of stupas and temples devoted to the worship of Siva. His son Jalauka reigned there after him, and expelled the foreigners who had overrun the land. Similarly, Nepal also was part of his empire. Even during his father's lifetime Asoka reduced a rising of the Nepalese and Kasyas, mountain tribes of the Himalayas. In one of his pilgrimages Asoka visited the birthplace of the Buddha and then travelled to Nepal where he founded the city of Patan, two miles south-east of Khatmandu. He built there five *chaityas*, one at the centre and the others at its four cardinal points. The latter remain to this day, and resemble similar structures in Sanchi and Gandhara. His daughter Charumati who accompanied him was married to Devapala, who belonged to a Kshatriya clan of Nepal. They settled in Nepal, and the city of Deopatan, one of the oldest cities of Nepal, was founded by Asoka then. The famous shrine of Svayambhunath in western Nepal is also connected by tradition with Asoka.

Khotan in Central Asia, beyond the Himalayas, is connected by legend indirectly with Asoka. Asoka had a son Kunala, who was so named because his beautiful eyes resembled those of the Kunala bird of the Himalayan region. The story is that Kunala, when he was viceroy at Taxila, had his eyes blinded by the intrigues of his step-mother Tishyarakshita. Asoka, discovering this, exiled the officers of Taxila who had taken part in the crime. Khotan was founded by these exiled officers and their followers. Khotan was for many centuries an Indian state, employing a language and writing derived from India. The early sculpture and painting of Khotan have many features common with early India. The Khotanese and the Kashmiris have marked resemblances to each other even today.

Asoka caused many inscriptions to be carved and set up. They are thirty-three or thirty-four in number, of which twenty-one may be said to be important. The latter fall into two groups, viz. rock-edicts and pillar edicts. The rock edicts are so called because they are engraved on rock faces. They are fourteen in number, and were issued in 257 and 256 B.C. The pillar edicts are so called because they are engraved on stone pillars. They are seven in number, and were issued about 242 B.C. The rock edicts are found along the boundaries of the empire and as near them as possible. They are mostly in the language prevalent in Magadha during Asoka's time; except in some places where they are translated, not very correctly, into the language of the



region. The writing employed is generally the *Brahmi* script, from which the Devanagari and many other modern Indian alphabets have grown. In his inscriptions Asoka explains the principles of his government, and also instructs his officers to carry them out faithfully. He set out in two inscriptions special rules for the government of the newly conquered country, Kalinga. He also appointed special officers to look after the welfare and to promote the happiness of the backward tribes living within the borders of his extensive empire.

There were various grades of officers under the emperor, who were in charge of the administration. At the top there were the princes of the royal family who were employed as Viceroys in the provinces. Under them were the *Rajukas* and *Mahamatras*. The *Rajukas* ruled over hundreds of thousands of people. Asoka told them that they should look after the people as a nurse looks after the child in her care. They had the power of life and death and could reward or punish as they pleased. All capital sentences, however, were not carried out for three days, firstly, to enable the prisoner to prepare himself for death, and secondly, for the officer to revise his order, if he found that the order was wrong. To guide them and to act as a check on them there were certain agents called *purushas*, who knew the king's mind. They were always travelling about, seeing that the officers carried out the king's instructions. They also took part in the propagation of *dhamma* among the people. The *Mahamatras* were more nume-

rous. They administered justice in each city, as the Rajukas did in the rural areas. They often met in councils to take common decisions on administrative matters. They had control over the accounts department. They went on tours of inspection. A special class called *Anta Mahamatras* (officers of the borders) were engaged in civilizing and preaching *dhamma* among wild tribes. A new class created by Asoka was called the *Dhamma Mahamatras*. It was their duty to help all classes of people, particularly the destitute and the aged, to review sentences awarded by courts of law, and to lighten or remit them altogether for sufficient reasons. Their activity did good not merely to the Buddhist Sanghas, but also to the ascetics and householders of all sects.

Asoka was a very hard working ruler. He spared neither himself nor his officers in the continuous promotion of the welfare of the people. He valued glory and fame only as means to promote morality, goodwill, and happiness among men. He looked upon good government as a debt he owed to the people; and he was keen that that debt should be promptly and fully discharged by him and by everyone of his officers. It was such an obsession with him that he issued an order to his officers to report to him the affairs of the people at any time, "while I am eating, in the harem, in the inner apartments, even in the palanquin and in the parks". He believed that persuasion was better than force as the means of moral reform; but if necessary, he was prepared to use force. He never allowed the army or the defences of

the empire to weaken. Asoka regularly ordered the annual release of prisoners, following the traditional practice of Indian monarchs, which agreed with his own desire to be merciful and considerate to all.

His religious policy favoured Buddhism; as a result, Buddhism which at the beginning of his reign was struggling for influence, gained an impetus and was well set on its way to becoming a world religion. But he was not intolerant of other sects, nor did he disregard them. In his inscriptions, he always mentions the Brahmanas before mentioning the Sramanas. He assures the people that all sects may reside together everywhere. Some *Mahamatras*, he says "were ordered by me to busy themselves with the affairs of the *Sangha*. Likewise, others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with the Nirgranthas (Jains). Others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with the various other sects". Asoka declares in his seventh Rock Edict "All sects desire both self-control and purity of mind." Asoka required that all should cultivate mutual respect, should live in peace and friendliness, and should cultivate habits of good social conduct. The ideal which Asoka preached to his people through his officers was more ethical and social, than religious. It was the common ground on which all Indian creeds met. He used the entire machinery of the state to make the people of the world—within his empire—and even beyond it—live a good life.

His inscriptions proclaim his code again and again. One inscription states "Obedience must be rendered to mother and father; likewise to elders. Compassion should be shown towards men. Truth must be spoken. Thus moral virtues must be practised. Pupils should respect their teachers in accordance with the ancient rule". Another inscription reads "Meritorious is obedience to mother and father. Liberality to friends, acquaintances and relatives, to Brahmanas and Sramanas is meritorious. Abstention from killing animals is meritorious. Moderation in expenditure and moderation in possession are meritorious." He emphasises that serfs and servants should be properly treated. He says in yet another inscription "One who practises great liberality, but does not possess self-control, purity of mind, gratitude, and firm devotion is very mean". The second Pillar Edict contains the striking passage: "To practise morality is meritorious; but what does morality include? It includes few sins, many virtuous deeds, compassion, morality, truthfulness, and purity".

Asoka believed in *Ahimsa*. He forbade the slaughter and sacrifice of animals and the holding of *samajas* or festival gatherings where many animals were slaughtered for the feasts. In the royal kitchen, while formerly hundreds of animals and birds were killed every day for curry, only three namely, two peacocks and one deer, were slaughtered at the time the first Rock Edict was issued. Later, even these were not killed. Asoka stopped the time honoured institution of the royal

hunt; and he issued a code of regulations and restrictions relating to the slaughter and mutilation of birds and beasts. Though based on ancient tradition, the code yet bears on it the impress of Asoka's mind; and it was enforced throughout his empire.

Asoka was a great reformer; and the *dhamma* he sought to lay down was a practical code of social ethics. He laid stress on conduct and pointed out how easy it was to fall into evil ways and how difficult, particularly for the highly placed, to be always well behaved. He condemned evil passions like fierceness, cruelty, anger, pride, and envy, and warned all against the evil deeds resulting from them.

Asoka was a great builder. The rise of a vigorous dynasty ruling over large parts of the country generally brings about a great development in art and literature. This development is fostered by the rule of a good and strong monarch, by the growth of industry and commerce, by the rise of a rich merchant class; and by intercourse with foreign countries. Asoka's personal interest in religion and art was the most important contributory cause. We have very little knowledge of the state of art before Asoka's time, for very few buildings have survived from that period. The building materials of that time were mainly timber and brick which do not last very long. Chandragupta's magnificent palace, described with such admiration by Greek writers, has disappeared without leaving a trace. The only examples of pre-Mauryan architecture now surviving are the

enclosure wall of a shrine at Nagari in Rajputana, and a structure known as Jarasandaki Bhaitak, (the seat of Jarasandha) at Rajghir in Bihar. Both of them were built of stone.

In the ancient world, art was generally the hand-maid of religion. The vedic religion of sacrifice, which needed only a simple hall of fire did not offer much scope for architecture or decoration. The popular forms of religion like the worship of sacred trees and animals, representing particular Gods, seem to have influenced the growth of art. It is probable that shortly before Asoka's time the lion of Durga, the bull of Siva, and the *garuda* of Vishnu were carved on stone pillars; and these were set up at some places in the Ganga valley. Asoka directs that his inscriptions were to be engraved on stone pillars already in existence. But they were few. It was he who made large and systematic use of durable stone in creating magnificent works of art, which can be seen even today. As in the history of Buddhism so in that of Indian art, Asoka's reign marked a great epoch.

Within his palace enclosure, Asoka constructed an immense pillared hall. It was three stories high, and covered an area two hundred and fifty feet square. This structure has suffered from flood and fire at different times. The remains of this hall were discovered near Patna at a depth of seventeen feet. Its roof was supported by fifteen rows of columns, each row containing fifteen pillars, fifteen feet from each other. They are of fine sandstone and stand on wooden bases. This

arrangement of pillars all over the floor of the hall, and the manner in which they were polished, seemed to have been borrowed from Persia. Since the glory of the great Persian empire had spread all over Asia before Asoka's time, Asoka might have wished to surpass it in glory by building an audience hall larger than that of the Persian emperor's. One of the sand pillars of Asoka's hall which has survived, bears a mason's sign clearly Persian in character. It tapers like a pine trunk with no sign of base or capital. The practice of having royal proclamations engraved on rock-cut faces and on stone pillars was also borrowed from Persia.

Asoka presented the Ajivakas with some caves cut out of rock. The walls of these caves are finely polished, like the pillars of the audience hall. These rock-cut caves, which are the earliest known examples of their kind, are faithful copies in stone of wooden or thatched buildings.

The most striking monuments of Asokan art are the celebrated *dharma-stambhas*, free standing pillars with sculptured capitals. They impress both by their size and their finish. The original number of such Asokan columns was about thirty. Of those which have survived in more or less perfect state, ten bear the inscriptions of Asoka. Each of these columns consists of a plain shaft of single stone thirty to forty feet in height, rising straight from the ground without a base, and tapering like the trunk of a palm or pine tree. The most graceful column is the one at Laurya Nandangarh in the Nepalesé Terai, which is crowned by a lion.

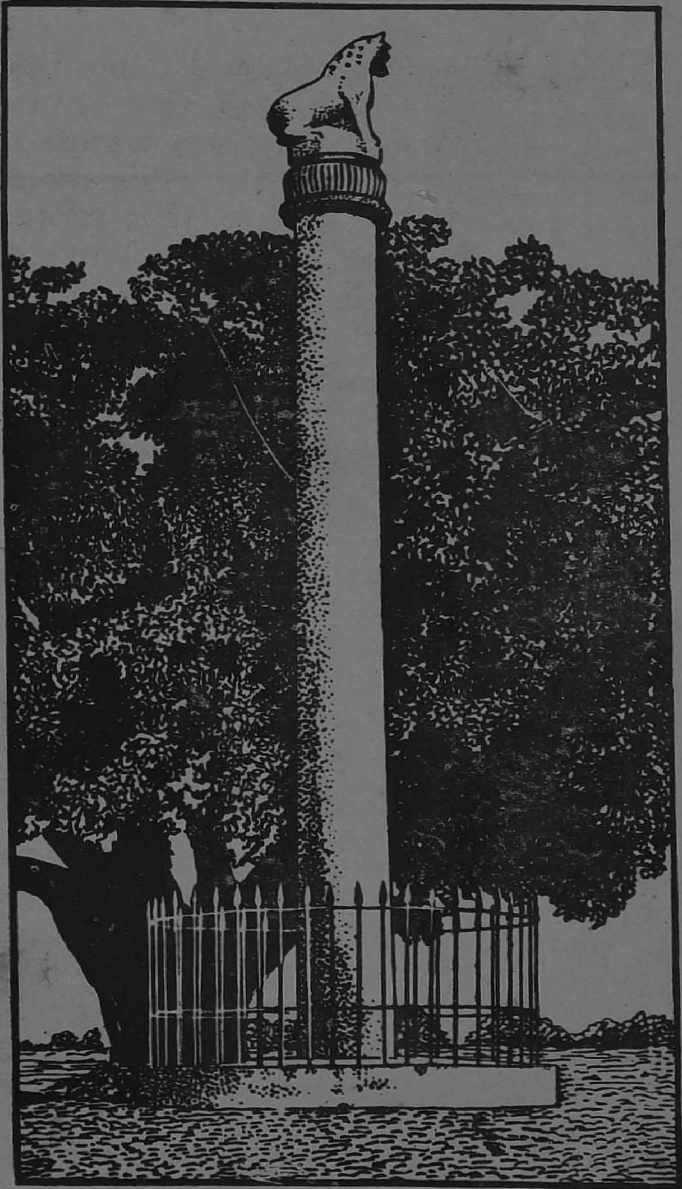
Above the column is a bell-shaped capital, also of single stone. The capital consists of an ornamental slab serving as a support for a large sculpture of an animal or a group of animals supporting a Buddhist symbol, such as the wheel. Shaft and capital together sometimes reach a height of fifty feet. They were joined together by a big copper bolt. The best known of these capitals and most impressive is that from Saranath near Banaras, which the Government of the Indian Union has now adopted as their symbol. The capital is a very good example of the way in which designs borrowed from abroad were modified by the artists to suit Indian conditions. As V. A. Smith observes, "Much of the design was suggested by Persia. But even the lions in the round are wholly different from and far superior to their Persian prototypes in pose and style, while the bas-reliefs of the guardian animals of the four quarters on the sides of the abacus are purely Indian. It is improbable that they could have been executed by any sculptor who had not been soaked in ancient Indian tradition". The perfect execution of the best examples of Asokan sculpture is astonishing. The extraordinary precision and accuracy which characterizes Maurya work has never been surpassed even by the finest workmanship of Greek artists.

There are several stories of Asoka narrated in the Buddhist books. Some of these have been represented in sculpture. For instance, there is a story that Asoka's favourite queen Tishyarakshita, grew jealous of Asoka's devotion to Buddhism. So



she cast a spell on the Bodhi tree which began to wither. Asoka was broken-hearted; but went with his queen and had the tree watered with pitchers of perfumed waters; he thus restored it to its former splendour. This visit is represented in sculpture on the *stupa* at Bharhut and on the eastern and southern gateways of the great *stupa* at Sanchi. Both these places are in Central India.

Asoka was a great monarch and the foremost of India's statesmen and heroes. His long reign ensured good rule and happiness to all his people. Early in life, he realised the value of goodness and morality to society. He strove throughout his life to rouse India to listen to the call she received through him. He did much for Buddhism. His missionaries went to Syria, Egypt, Africa, Macedonia, Epirus, and Ceylon to spread the gospel of the Buddha. He might not have built the eighty-four thousand *chaityas* which legend says he did. But he did build quite a number, which were shown to the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang who travelled throughout India about A. D. 640. After the conquest of Kalinga, Asoka gave up war as a political weapon. He resolved to become a conqueror in another and nobler sense. Conquest was to be won not by wars, but by *Dhamma*. Asoka saw that such a conquest was full of joy. He desired security, self-control, peace of mind and joyousness for all.



Asokan Pillar



Akbar

**AKBAR**



## AKBAR

It was early morning, late in November. Humayun, the Mughal emperor, who was driven into exile by Sher Shah, the Afghan, was encamped on the shores of a small lake in Sind. With him were some two thousand horsemen, the sorry remnant of a big army. He saw the dust raised by a group of riders approaching at speed over the desert. Was it friend, or foe? The homeless emperor had wandered much in the sandy wastes of Sind, and had found that he could trust no one. This time, happily, it was good news. The horsemen came from Umarkot, a small town twenty miles away. There stayed his young wife, who was expecting soon to be a mother. She was Hamida, the daughter of his brother's preceptor.

The messenger brought the joyful news that Hamida had given birth to a boy. She had not been very eager to marry Humayun, who was without a kingdom or a crown. But Humayun loved her so intensely that she consented. She now gave him 'an heir and hope'. It was the custom to distribute many presents on such occasions. But Humayun was not in a position to do so. He took a pod of musk, broke it over a porcelain dish, and offered it to his followers, saying 'This is all the present I can afford to give you on the birth of my son. His fame will one day, I trust, pervade all the world, as the perfume of this musk now fills our tent'. The child was named Akbar. He

was born on the night of a full moon, on the 23rd of November 1542.

On his father's side, Akbar was the seventh in descent from Timur. Through the mother of his grandfather, Babur, he was descended from Chingiz Khan. He thus 'had in his veins the blood of the two most pitiless conquerors the world has known'. It is all the more surprising how kind and humane Akbar was as a ruler.

Hamida and her baby joined Humayun in the town of Jun, which Humayun had taken and converted into a camp. The birth of a son revived Humayun's hopes, and strengthened his resolve to regain his kingdom. He was not a great soldier like his father Babur; but he had perseverance even when circumstances were most desperate. He expected to get help from the Shah of Persia, and he wanted to reach there. But his brothers Kamran, who ruled at Kabul, and Askari who held Kandahar under Kamran were in his way: and they were not his friends. Humayun crossed the Indus and reached the border of the province of Kandahar. He heard there that Askari was marching against him; but he was not in a position to give him battle. So he fled, leaving the child Akbar, barely one year old, in the care of his faithful slave Jauhar. Hardly had Humayun and Hamida ridden away on a single horse, for they were short of horses, when Askari fell on their camp and captured the child Akbar. Askari carried the child and Jauhar off to Kandahar. There Askari's wife, Sultana Begum, treated Akbar kindly and looked after him well.

In Persia, Humayun was cordially received by Shah Tahmasp, and was treated well as a guest. He spent about a year there in luxury, very welcome to him after the hardships he had undergone in the desert plains and the rugged mountains he had traversed. At Kazvin in north-west Persia, at the Shah's court, Humayun saw gatherings of many pious scholars and artists. He was impressed greatly, and he began to dream that he would one day make Delhi a rival of Kazvin. A year later, he left Persia after getting a promise of help from the Shah to regain his kingdom.

Soon, he took Kandahar with Persian help, and pardoned his brother Askari. He then advanced on Kabul, and established himself there, his other brother Kamran having abandoned the city. His child Akbar was living at Kabul; and so the family was united once more. Humayun stayed there for nine years; but his position was still insecure and uncertain, owing to the intrigues of his brother Kamran.

During these years, Humayun tried to educate Akbar under a succession of able teachers. But all the teachers failed, since Akbar refused to learn. Humayun who was a scholar, was annoyed at the boy's slackness, and gave him much advice. But Akbar, whose life was cast in the midst of danger and adventure from the day of his birth, showed no willingness to learn to read or write. A single signature of Akbar exists on the fly-leaf of a precious manuscript of the life of Timur. It is written with great effort in a childish hand and attested by his son Jahangir. This unique signature proves



that Akbar never mastered the art of writing. Though not ready to read books himself, Akbar was fond of hearing them read. He had a strong memory; and he got by heart entire poems of the Persian poets, particularly the Sufi-mystics. Art interested him. He was fond of painting, and took lessons from two young Persian artists, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad. They subsequently became court painters at Delhi. But he heartily threw himself into outdoor games and sports. Riding, polo, and sword play were his favourite pastimes; and he became an excellent shot. He loved the company of animals horses, camels, and dogs—and liked to fly pigeons.

In the meantime, in India, Sher Shah, who had defeated and driven away Humayun, ruled well and justly. He died of an injury received in a siege. His rule was followed by that of his second son Islam Shah. When he died, Adil Shah, a nephew of Sher Shah, became ruler of Delhi. He was weak and indolent, and left most of the affairs to Himu. Himu was a Hindu salt seller, who had risen to high office under Islam Shah; and was a good soldier and administrator. But he was disliked by the Afghan nobles. He had ambitions of becoming the emperor himself. The other nephew of Sher Shah, Sikander, was also claiming the throne. Much confusion prevailed in the country.

Humayun made good his opportunity. Leaving Kabul, he reached Peshawar and crossed the Indus. He was then joined by his faithful comrade Bairam Khan, and other officers from Kandahar. Bairam Khan was an able soldier of

straight character, who had shared his exile. Humayun defeated Islam Shah's army in more than one battle and regained his throne.

Young Akbar, who was then twelve years of age, was placed in charge of the Punjab with Bairam Khan as his tutor and guide. Humayun remained at Delhi trying to consolidate his position.

On a Friday in January 1556, Humayun heard the sun-set call to prayers as he was descending the steep stairs of his library. He at once knelt in reverence there. While getting up after prayers, he slipped and fell down the stairs, and broke his skull. Three days later, he was dead. Humayun was then only forty-nine years old.

The news of his father's death reached Akbar in the Punjab. He was enthroned there by Bairam Khan on a brick throne in a garden. The throne on which he sat can be seen even now. When Akbar was crowned he was still a boy not quite fourteen years old. But he was emperor only in name; and he had to fight hard and long to become emperor in fact.

The early years of Akbar's military career were spent in recovering a great part of the territories, which his father Humayun had lost. With Bairam Khan's help, Akbar reduced, one by one, all his enemies, who were threatening him on every side. First he defeated Sikander Sur, the nephew of Sher Shah. Then he turned on Adil Shah, and his general Himu. But Himu defeated the Moghul army and occupied Delhi. Puffed up by

victory, he proclaimed himself sovereign, assuming the famous title 'Raja Vikramaditya'. It was a critical time. Akbar was advised to retreat to Kabul; but the intrepid Bairam Khan would not hear of such a step. Bairam Khan restored discipline in the relatively small army by executing Tardi Beg, the commander of Delhi, for negligently allowing the city to fall into Himu's hands. By his bravery he infused courage and confidence among the men. Bairam Khan then advanced to the historic plain of Panipat, where Akbar's grandfather had won the kingdom of Delhi. In Himu's army were one thousand and five hundred war elephants. But in a preliminary battle, Himu's guns fell into Bairam Khan's hands. In the decisive battle on 5 November 1556, Himu and his army fought bravely and victory seemed theirs. But just then Himu was hit in the eye by an arrow, and fell down unconscious. He was captured and taken before young Akbar in a dying condition. Bairam Khan urged Akbar to earn the title of Ghazi by slaying the Hindu leader. Akbar shrank from hurting a dying man. But Himu was killed by some of those who stood by. The next day, the victors entered Delhi and very soon seized Agra. The vast treasures of Himu fell into their hands. Not long after, Sikander Sur also yielded. Himu's master, Adil Shah, the other aspirant to the throne, remained in the east, and made no attempt at all to dispute Akbar's right. So Akbar's throne was fairly free from the rival claimants to the throne, and Akbar felt himself secure.

At Mankot, Akbar married his first wife, the daughter of his uncle Hindal. He was then not even fifteen years old.

During the first few years of Akbar's reign, Bairam Khan engaged a Persian scholar, Mir Abdul Latif, as Akbar's tutor. He too failed to induce Akbar to read and write. But Akbar learned from him the principle of *Sulh-i-kul* or universal toleration, based on the view that the end of all religions is one.

Akbar was healthy, strong and, as stated already, passionately fond of games and hunting. In a portrait of the time, 'with smooth cheeks and lips and long curling hair, an animated expression in his eyes, and wearing a purple coat, he stands smelling a flower which he holds to his nostrils. Before him a blue sky and empty plain'. It is a happy 'portrait of eager youth with all the world before it.'

With youth and health, and happily married, and the monarch of a kingdom, Akbar should have been completely happy. Yet he felt some strange dissatisfaction. One day he mounted an Iraqi horse of high mettle and vicious temper and rode off into the desert quite alone. There he dismounted, and 'communed with God.' The horse galloped away when he dismounted. But when Akbar recovered from his trance he saw the horse coming back to him of its own accord. Akbar took this as a divine sign that he must return to his fellow men and carry on his work in the world; and so he rode back to Agra. It was his first

mystic experience. He had several such experiences in later years.

A couple of years passed. Bairam Khan continued in charge of the government. He was a Turkoman and a Shia and had been once a Persian subject. Moghul nobles who occupied prominent positions in the court of Akbar belonged to the Sunni sect. They did not like Bairam Khan, and they were exceedingly angry with him for having executed Tardi Beg, the commander of Delhi. Akbar was then in his eighteenth year. Though he was well aware of Bairam Khan's ability and faithfulness, he was chafing at the restraints imposed on him. The ladies of the court, and all those whom Bairam Khan had offended by his haughty manner worked up his feelings further. These intriguers continually poured into Akbar's ears secret accusations against Bairam Khan. Akbar yielded to all these influences. His chief nurse, Maham Anaga, persuaded him to write a letter to Bairam Khan saying that he had decided to take the conduct of affairs into his own hands. It was suggested in that letter that Bairam should go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, an idea which he had long been cherishing. Further Akbar directed Pir Muhammad, a disloyal servant of Bairam Khan, to pack him off to Mecca.

Stung to the quick, Bairam Khan rebelled. But he was defeated and taken prisoner. Akbar, however, was generous, and forgave him; and gave him leave to proceed to Mecca in a manner suited to his rank. But Bairam Khan was murdered on the way at Patan in Gujarat, by an Afghan,

whose father had been killed in a battle against Bairam Khan's army. Akbar then married Bairam Khan's widow, Salima Begum, the daughter of Humayun's sister. He took charge also of Bairam Khan's four-year old son, Abdul Rahim, and looked after him and showered honours on him, thus atoning somewhat for his bad treatment of Bairam Khan.

A little later, he sent an army under Adham Khan, the son of his nurse Maham Anaga, against Malwa. Its ruler was Baz Bahadur, husband of Rupmati. Their names are celebrated in song and legend. They were so passionately fond of music, and of each other, that the affairs of state were neglected. So Adham Khan won an easy victory. But he behaved so very cruelly and badly that Rupmati was driven to commit suicide. Akbar hearing the news hastened there, and reproved Adham Khan severely.

Soon after, Akbar appointed Shams-ud-din Khan Prime Minister of the empire. He also recalled Adham Khan from the Government of Malwa. Adham Khan who thus lost power and influence was enraged. But he bided his time, and one day attacked the new Prime Minister in the palace hall, and murdered him. Perhaps he meant to murder Akbar too. But Akbar came into the hall by another door, and felled Adham Khan with a mighty blow of his fist. The senseless miscreant was bound and thrown down from the terrace. His neck was broken, and his brains were shattered to pieces. Akbar reported the story to his nurse, Maham Anaga, the mother of

Adham Khan. She was ill in bed, and only said 'Your Majesty has done well'; but died within forty days. Akbar was now completely free from all corrupting influences, and he really emerged from 'behind the veil' as Abul Fazl puts it.

It was about this time that Tansen, a famous musician of Gwalior, was summoned to the court and was received with great honour. The reception of Tansen at the court became the subject of a well known painting. The picture is one of the earliest productions of the Mughal court painters where we find Persian and Hindu styles fused into one.

It was Akbar's ambition to extend his sway over all India. In such an attempt he was following the tradition set up by the Hindu and Muslim kings of the past. He also used to justify himself saying 'A monarch should ever be intent on conquest, otherwise his enemies rise in arms against him'. So after freeing himself from the evil influence around him, he set about his conquests in earnest. He directed his attention in turn against Gondwana, Rajputana, Gujarat, Bengal, Kashmir and Kandahar, and finally against the Deccan. He conquered them all, and added them to his empire. He had also to suppress a number of rebellions from time to time.

Akbar realised early that the good will of the people alone would make the government stable, and so he sought by all the means in his power to make them contented. He stopped the enslavement of prisoners-of-war, removed the pilgrim tax, and abolished the *jizya*, a tax imposed

only on the Hindus. Akbar married a Rajput princess, a daughter of Raja Bhar Mall of Amber or Jaipur. Akbar thus made it clear that he was not just a foreign invader, but was one who had adopted India as his home, and who treated all Indians, Hindus and Muslims, alike.

The kingdom of Gondwana, country of the Gonds, formed the northern part of the modern Madhya Pradesh. It was governed by Rani Durgavati, as regent of her minor son. She was an excellent princess; and the people were happy under her administration. She and her son, Prince Vir Narayan, resisted the Mughals bravely, but were wounded. Durgavati stabbed herself to escape falling into the enemies' hands. Her son, Vir Narayan, was killed in another battle, and the kingdom was overrun, and a vast amount of spoil was seized.

Soon after this, Akbar came to know of a plot to set up a son of Kamran as a rival to the throne. He acted promptly by having that prince privately executed. But the act provoked the rebellion of some nobles and officers, whose leader was Khan Zaman Ali Kuli Khan, governor of Jaunpur. He was a distinguished soldier, who had fought in the battle of Panipet, and whose services were second only to those of Bairam Khan. The nobles did not like Akbar's Persian ways. They disliked also his strong personal rule, which left them little freedom to do as they liked. The rebellion lasted with breaks for two years, and was finally crushed in the battle of Manikpur near Allahabad, in which Ali Kuli Khan himself fell.



Strong fortresses in the hands of the enemies are a constant source of danger. So Akbar started attacking them quite early in his reign. He conquered Gwalior, Chunar and Merta. He felt that the Rajput stronghold of Chitor was like a thorn on his side. Akbar never wanted any reason to attack it, but chance provided him with a reason. Rana Uday Sing had sheltered Baz Bahadur, the fugitive king of Malwa. Akbar was stirred to anger and marched against Chitor. But Uday Sing was a coward, unworthy of his great ancestry. He left the defence of the fortress to Jaimal Rathor, and slunk away to the Aravalli Hills.

Akbar knew the great strength of the fortress of Chitor and so he laid siege to it methodically. While the siege was in progress, Akbar by a lucky shot killed a prominent figure who was giving orders for the defence of a breach. The man whom he killed happened to be Jaimal, the defender of the city. When Jaimal was killed, the Rajputs lost all their hopes.

Soon afterwards, Akbar and his army saw great flames going up to the sky within the fortress. It was the terrible *jauhar*, the last sacrifice. "Every Rajput warrior puts on the saffron robe, vowing to fight to the death. Underground in the city is a vast palace, where a great fire is lighted. The Rajput women dressed in the finest robes, will walk into that fire to the sound of muffled music, singing as they walk. By fire, as their lords by the sword, the women within the city will pass over from this world, to await in the world beyond the coming of their warriors."

Akbar entered the fortress the next morning on an elephant. The resistance was desperate; and thirty thousand men perished: but the fort was taken. Akbar was amazed at the heroic defence. He set up at Agra two statues, those of Jaimal and of the young prince Patta, barely sixteen years old, who fought most valiantly till death overtook him.

Next, Akbar besieged the fortress of Ranthambhor, held by Raj Surjan Hara, a vassal of the Rana. While the siege was in progress, Raja Man Singh, the nephew and adopted son of Bhagavan Das, obtained a safe conduct and entered the fortress to persuade Surjan Hara to surrender. Akbar went along with him disguised as his mace bearer. But the uncle of Surjan recognized Akbar, and gently taking the mace from him, conducted him to the Gadi in the castle. Thereupon, Akbar granted liberal terms and privileges, most flattering to Surjan's pride and race; and the fortress surrendered. Akbar became virtually master of Rajputana.

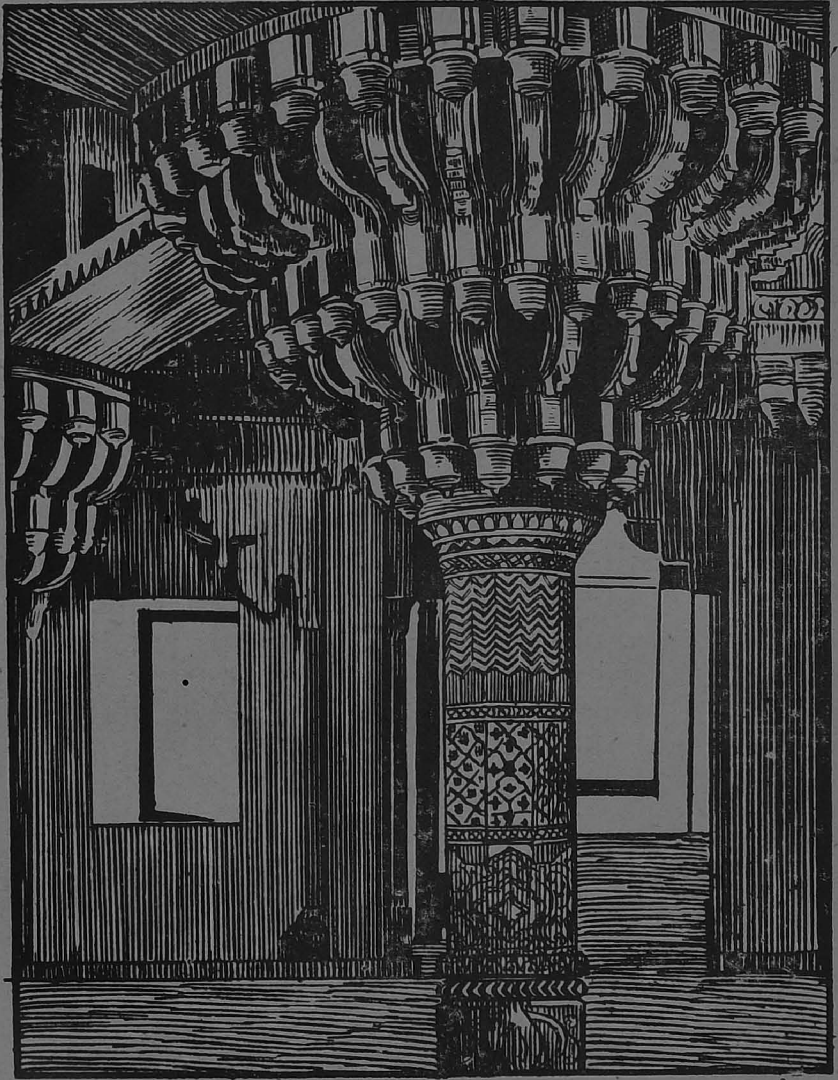
But Mewar (Chitor) never submitted to him. Rana Pratap Singh, the son of Uday Singh, reconquered some of the fortresses which the Rajputs had lost. He had several narrow escapes on the battle-field, and his life was one of constant peril and suffering. Yet he never thought of surrender, and carried on the fight against Akbar.

During the campaigns against the Rajputs, which lasted about six years, Akbar's many-sided activity found another scope. In 1565 he

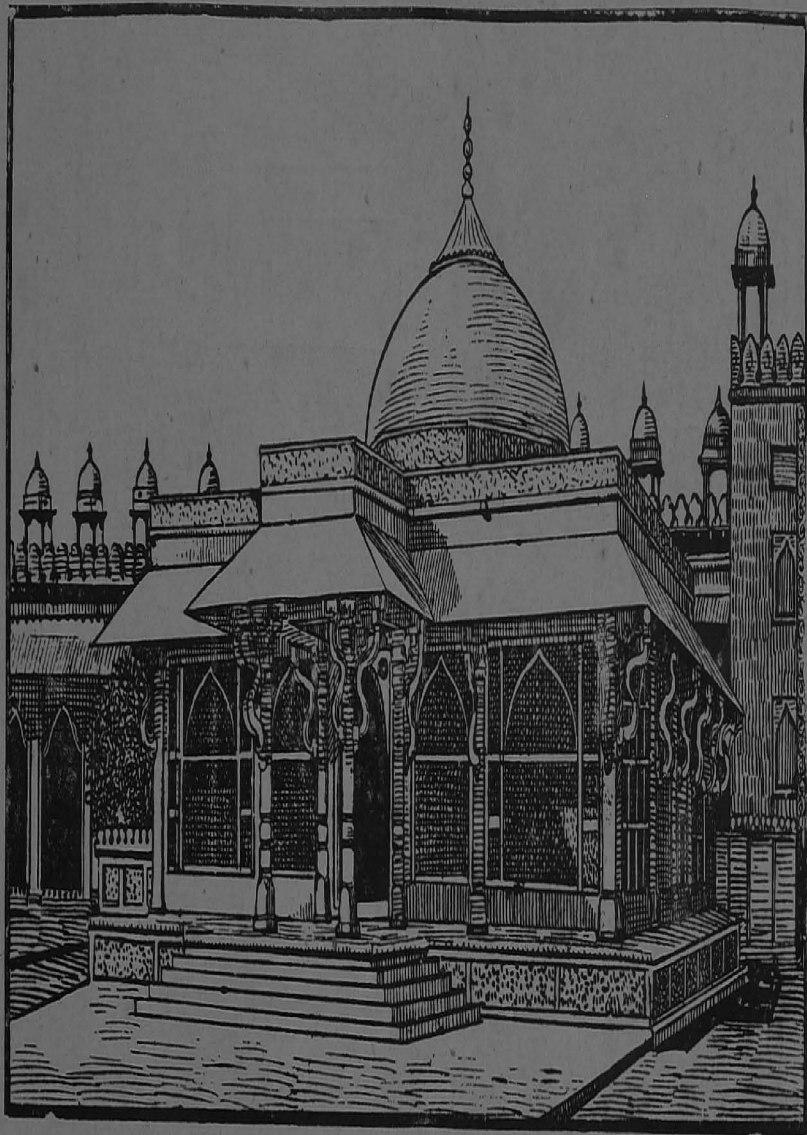
began building the great fort of Agra, which took about fifteen years to complete.

For a long time Akbar had no son, though he had married many wives. He made pilgrimages, offered prayers, and visited holy men. About twenty miles from Agra, among the rocks of Sikri, there lived an ascetic, Shaikh Salim Chishti. When Akbar visited him, he prophesied that his prayers would be answered, and that three sons would be born to him. Soon after, Akbar heard that his Rajput queen, daughter of the Raja of Jaipur, was about to give birth to a child; and he sent her to Sikri so that the child may be born near the holy man's abode. A boy was born, and Akbar named him Salim in honour of the saint. He was the future Jahangir. Next year, a second son was born; and he was named Murad. Akbar's joy knew no bounds. In this context it would be interesting to add that the prophecy of the saint was completely fulfilled by the birth of a third son to Akbar two years later. He was named Daniyal.

As a mark of gratitude to the saint, Akbar erected a splendid city at Sikri and named it Fathpur Sikri (the City of Victory). It took many years to complete. It has been described by an early English traveller as "much greater than London." Akbar used it as his capital for some years, but abandoned it later. There are many famous buildings there, some of great beauty. A notable structure was the Lofty Portal of the Mosque. It was probably an arch of victory celebrating the conquest of Gujarat. On that



Strange pillar of Fatehpur Sikri



Marble Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti, Fatehpur Sikri

great portal was an inscription which read: "So said Jesus, upon whom be peace! The world is a bridge; pass over it, but build no house upon it".

The wealth of the rich coastal province of Gujarat which had once been part of the sultanate of Delhi attracted Akbar. He marched against it with ten thousand men. Muzaffar Shah, the nominal king of Gujarat, fled. He was discovered hiding in a corn-field, and was caught and forced to submit. The conquest of Gujarat not only increased the territory and income of Akbar's empire, but it also gave it an access to the sea in the west and brought increased trade and contact with foreigners.

From there Akbar hurried back to suppress another revolt. He had to fight a battle at Sarnal on the river Mahi in which he had a narrow escape. He was attacked by three enemy soldiers all at once. He drove off two, and Bhagvan Das, his companion, pierced the third with the spear.

Soon after returning, while he was at Agra, Akbar heard that a rebellion had broken out in Gujarat. Without a moment's hesitation, Akbar took the field again. With a small force of three thousand horse he covered the distance of six hundred miles from Agra to Ahmadabad in eleven days, and gained a decisive victory against twenty thousand of the enemy. He was back again within a month and a half at Fathpur Sikri. The amazingly brief campaign was a marvel of swiftness and surprise.

After the campaign in Gujarat, Akbar began some important reforms. Akbar preferred giving

cash payments instead of jagirs to his officers, as they increased his power and diminished that of the officials, making it difficult for them to rebel. He created regularly graded classes of officers, called *mansabdars*, who were half-military in character. They had to supplement the regular army with their own men when required by the emperor.

It was about this time that two new persons joined Akbar's court. One was Abul Fazl, son of Shaik Mubarak, a writer, who claimed descent from an Arabian dervish. Abul Fazl became the closest and most trusted friend of the emperor, and the historian of his achievements. He was 'a man of most profound learning, untiring industry, and commanding intellect' and 'resembled Francis Bacon . . . in combining the parts of a scholar, author, courtier, and man of affairs'. He 'was for many years Akbar's confidential secretary and adviser'. Very different was the other, Mullah Abdul Qadar. He was also known as Badauni from the place of his birth. He was a Muslim of the narrowest orthodoxy. He disliked much that he saw and heard in Akbar's court, and wrote a prejudiced record of the events of the reign. The record was not published till after the emperor's death.

Akbar's next war was with Bengal. The province declared its independence when Sher Shah's family declined in power. But when Akbar became emperor, the ruler of Bengal at that time accepted Akbar's authority, and sent him tribute though occasionally. After he died, his son Daud

was not so prudent. As he had a large army and a vast treasure, he imagined that he was strong enough to defy Akbar. He even dared to seize a frontier fort of Akbar's when he was in Gujarat. Akbar sent an aged general to deal with him; but the general found the campaign difficult and asked the emperor to come down himself. Akbar sent part of his forces by land, and voyaged down the rivers with the rest of his army in a fleet of large boats at the height of the rainy season. Akbar seized Hajipur, on the north bank of the river. It was the depot from which Patna drew its supplies, and the Bengal ruler Daud was frightened, and fled from Patna by night. The city with its enormous booty fell into Akbar's hands. Daud was finally defeated and slain in a battle fought near Rajmahal, and Bengal was annexed to Akbar's empire.

Orissa was next subdued. Akbar took care to classify the areas of Puri and Jagannath as crown land to satisfy Hindu feeling.

After returning from Bengal, Akbar built in the gardens of the palace at Fathpur Sikri a "House of Worship." He desired that learned men of all schools of Islam should meet there and discuss problems of religion and philosophy. On the southern side the learned doctors sat; on the north the ascetics and mystics; on the west the descendants of the Prophet, and on the east such nobles as desired to be present. Akbar presided over them all, not seated in solitary dignity, but moving freely among them, and talking now with one and



now with another. But Akbar was soon tired of the endless discussions they indulged in.

About that time, he heard that the Christian missionaries in Bengal had frowned on some of their converts who cheated the government of the revenues due to it. Akbar was eager to know more of this religion, which set its face 'against dishonesty even to a foreign government.' So he sent for the Vicar-General of Bengal, Father Pereira. He was a pious priest; but not quite learned enough to satisfy Akbar's curiosity about religious matters. He suggested to Akbar that the aid of a more learned priest may be sought. So Akbar wrote to Goa asking that two priests capable of instructing him in Christianity may be sent down to him. They were accordingly sent. One was Father Ridolfo Aquaviva, a young man from Naples, whose life of asceticism won everybody's respect. The other was Father Antonio Monserrate, a Spanish scholar who wrote a history of the Mission. The history, written in Latin, is a valuable record of the time; but it is also as prejudiced as the record of Badauni. Along with the priests came an interpreter, Francesco Enriques, a convert from Islam. Akbar received them with great honour. He deputed Monserrate to teach the Portuguese language and Christian morals to his ten year old son, prince Murad. Akbar's desire to know all about Christianity was real. It is certain that by his association with the Jesuits Akbar risked his throne, and even his life.

About this time, Akbar had a mystic experience. A hunt had been arranged in the

Punjab with thousands of beaters. They first formed a ring, about fifty miles in circumference, and then narrowed down the circle driving the game towards the centre. There the emperor and his nobles were waiting to hunt the animals as they came near. For ten days, the preparations went on. Suddenly, Akbar called the beaters off, and allowed the animals to escape. This was the result of Akbar's mystic experiences. He must have then felt more or less as Asoka did after the conquest of Kalinga. Akbar's feelings of humanity were only temporary.

Some time after, Akbar asked Shaik Mubarak, father of Abul Fazl, to prepare a document declaring that the emperor was also the religious leader of his subjects, and had power to decide on all disputed questions relating to Muslim religion. The document declared that the emperor's decision was binding on all in accordance with the Koran. All the Muhammadan priests (*ulamas*) of the court were required to sign the document. Further, Akbar occasionally took the place of the regular preacher, and led the prayer in the mosque. A verse composed by Faizi, the brother of Abul Fazl, which ended with the words 'Allahu Akbar', which could mean both 'Great is God' and 'Akbar is God' was recited in mosques. These words were stamped on coins issued at the time. Some later coins bore the statement: 'Allahu Akbar Jalla Jalalahu', meaning 'God is most great; eminent is his glory'. But the words could also mean, 'Akbar is God, let his brightness shine forth'. All these acts of Akbar were resented by orthodox Muslims.

But Akbar claimed that he was the king not only of the Muslims, but of all Indians.

Since Akbar had made himself the final authority on questions of Islamic religion, discussions of religious matters in the 'House of Worship' ceased to have much value. The building itself was pulled down, perhaps by Akbar's orders. For some time longer, Akbar kept up his annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Kwaja Muin-ud-din at Ajmer, and offered the five daily prayers, and followed other orthodox Muslim practices.

He began to hold the religious debates in the private apartments of the palace. Leaders of other religions namely, Christians, Parsis, Hindus and Jains were also invited. Akbar showed so much interest in their doctrines and practices, that each religious leader believed that Akbar was going to embrace his own creed. Badauni and the Christian fathers accused Akbar of deliberate fraud. Akbar's interest was not hypocrisy, but only what we should now call scientific curiosity. He saw good men belonging to all creeds, and universal toleration appeared to him the only proper way of bringing them together. Each religion contained some features that pleased him and so he adopted them. But he stopped short of conversion to that faith.

He was attracted by Christianity; but he found it difficult to understand some of its doctrines. Further, Christianity, did not tolerate other religions. Lastly, the Fathers wanted Akbar to have only one wife and to send the others away. Such an act would have meant to Akbar the loss of his

throne. He depended very much on the support of the Hindus from whom he had married his queens, and to whom he had given posts of trust and authority. Akbar told the Christian priests that he desired them to come and build churches and live freely in his empire, just as the Hindus were doing. But the suggestion instead of satisfying the Jesuits, irritated them, because they did not like to be put on an equality with the Hindus.

He was attracted by the doctrines of the Jains, as explained by Hira Vijayasuri. He forbade the killing of animals on certain days. The ancient faith of the Persian prophet Zoroaster, as set forth by Dastur Meher-ji Rana, appealed to him greatly. He worshipped the Sun, and kindled a sacred fire in the palace. He directed Abul Fazl to see that it was never allowed to be put out.

To the Hindus, he was friendly and gave full freedom of worship. Under the influence of his Rajput wives, he adopted some Hindu customs. He also tried to reform Hinduism. He legalised the remarriage of widows, and prohibited the burning of unwilling wives on the funeral pyres of their husbands. He forbade child marriage, trial by ordeal, and animal sacrifices.

But the whole of his policy was gall and worm-wood to the Muslims of India. For four centuries they had looked upon themselves as the privileged ruling class in India. The whole trend of Akbar's political and religious policy was to destroy this position.

The Kazi of Jaunpur proclaimed that rebelling against the sovereign who had abandoned his

religion was a religious duty. The leading courtiers joined in a plot against the emperor. Among them was Shah Mansur, an able financier, whom Akbar had promoted from the rank of a common clerk to that of Finance Minister of the empire. They seriously thought of Akbar's younger half-brother Muhammad Hakim, governor of Kabul, as fit to occupy the throne. The prince was a drunkard and had no ability. But they did not mind his defects.

The rebellion broke out in the east. Hakim sought to support it by an invasion of the Punjab in the west. Akbar deputed Todar Mall and his officers to deal with the rebels in the east. He himself resolved to go to meet the danger from Kabul. He had found so much disloyalty at court that he felt his throne, and even his life were in serious danger. As failure at such a juncture would mean total disaster, he made the most careful preparations. He took with him almost all the Muslim leaders who were opposed to him, so that he could watch them carefully. He knew that if they were left behind, they would have opportunities of creating trouble. Monserrate went along with him as Murad's tutor.

Akbar cowed the traitorous courtiers and nobles by executing Shah Mansur at Thanesar. When Muhammad Hakim, who had advanced to Lahore, heard that Akbar was advancing against him with a big army, his courage failed him. He fled back to Kabul over the mountains helter-skelter, losing thousands of horsemen in crossing the great rivers.

But Akbar pressed on. From the banks of the Indus, he wrote to his brother commanding him to receive him at Kabul as his sovereign. But no reply came. Since crossing the Indus with his big army would take time, Akbar sent Murad and Man Singh in advance. He ordered them to move slowly, so that Muhammad Hakim might have an opportunity to come and make his submission. Akbar joined the advance army and entered Kabul. But his half-brother had already fled from there. Akbar spent a week at Kabul. Then, appointing his sister Bakht-un-Nissa Begum to govern it, he returned in triumph to Fathpur Sikri. The rebellion had signally failed; and Akbar felt a new sense of security.

Akbar felt convinced, more than ever, that religious differences were acting as a great obstacle to unity. He endeavoured to found a new creed which all people could adopt, and which would unite them together. He called it *Din Ilahi* (Divine Religion). A special council called by the emperor accepted the proposal almost unanimously.

Akbar's scheme has sometimes been compared to the plan put forward by Ala-ud-din Khalji early in the fourteenth century. But the analogy is wrong. Ala-ud-din wanted to spread his religion by the sword, and did not seek a common bond. A closer parallel to Akbar's attempt is Asoka's ideal of *Dharmavijaya*. Asoka had more success than Akbar, because the religions of India in his day had a common origin, and the intolerance of Islam was unknown to any of them.

The Divine Faith was a failure. 'The religion which was to have united all, pleased none'. It never got beyond a narrow circle of courtiers, who accepted it out of personal regard for the emperor. But, all the same, Akbar's dream was a noble one.

Akbar issued laws directed against some Muslim practices. He forbade the use of the name of Muhammad and prohibited the building of new mosques or the repair of old ones. He encouraged Hindu, Jain and Zoroastrian practices. Akbar appeared in public with Hindu sectarian marks on his forehead, and observed Hindu festivals. He invited two more Jesuit missions. Jerome Xavier and Immanuel Pinheiro were the leading members of the last mission. Though Akbar gave them permission to make converts they did not succeed in converting the sovereign or the nobles.

As years went on, Akbar's dislike of Islam seems to have grown more and more. Pinheiro says, several years later, that he found in Lahore not a mosque nor a Koran. 'The king has made a sect of his own and makes himself out to be a prophet. He adores God and the Sun, and is a Hindu. He follows a sect of the Jains.' So, many years after the foundation of the Divine Faith, Akbar's desire to combine features from all religions had not left him. But he was not cut out for religious leadership. He tried to be a religious leader but failed to make himself one.

Then Akbar turned to the conquest of Kashmir. He no longer commanded the armies himself. But his choice of a commander in the campaign was a very unfortunate one. He was Raja Birbal,

by birth a poor brahmin belonging to the class of Bhats (singers of praise). His name was Mahesdas. When he came to Akbar's court, his brilliant and witty conversation made him a general favourite. He composed popular Hindi verses. Akbar gave him the title *Kaviraj* (king of poets), and conferred on him a *jagir*, with the title of Raja, and built for him a fine house at Fathpur Sikri. He was the one Hindu who had embraced the Divine Faith. Akbar often employed him on delicate missions, but kept him mostly at court as companion, musician, and jester. He had no qualifications whatever to lead an army, particularly against the fierce mountain tribes on the North West frontier. Birbal was cut down with nearly 8000 men in a surprise attack in a mountain pass. It was the severest defeat which Akbar's army ever suffered.

Akbar's grief at the death of his friend was intense. But he was now reaching a stage of life, when the friends of one's youth begin to die, and one has to bear the blows of Time. A little later he heard of the deaths of two other beloved companions of his. One was Bhagavan Das, the first of the Rajput princes to join him, a brave general who had fought by his side in many a campaign. The other was Raja Todar Mall, who had risen from a clerk's place to the position of Prime Minister, and who was one of Akbar's most trusted generals. He was also a capable statesman who had introduced reforms in the land revenue system. Those reforms were so good that they have stood in their essentials till to-day.



He cleverly compelled Hindus to learn Persian, by a simple order that the revenue accounts should be maintained in that language. Feeling that his end was near, Todar Mall took Akbar's permission to go and live at Hardwar on the banks of the Ganga. But Akbar needed the services of the loyal servant again; and so he recalled him saying that looking after one's duties was more virtuous than sitting on the banks of the Ganga. Todar Mall obediently returned, but died soon after. Abul Fazl thus praises him: 'Careful to keep himself from selfish ambition, he devoted himself to the services of the State and earned an everlasting fame.'

Akbar added Sind, Baluchistan and Kandahar to his empire. Thus at the end of forty years of rule, Akbar was master of all India north of the Narmada, and of Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar with their dependencies, and of Orissa as well.

Then he turned his attention to Southern India. He sent missions to the sultans of the Deccan inviting them to recognize his overlordship, and to agree to pay tribute. Khandesh, whose capital was Burhanpur, promised obedience. Ahmadnagar did not follow. Akbar decided on war, and Abdul Rahim, son of Bairam Khan, was chosen for the command. But the young Murad, already a slave to drink, was also made a joint commander. The commanders quarrelled. Ahmadnagar was defended by Chand Bibi, one of the heroic women of Indian history. 'She was very beautiful. Her frame was slight, but full of dignity. Her features were regular. Her eyes were

large, soft and brown, and shaded by dark thick lashes, below delicately arched brows. Her broad forehead revealed unusual power. She always wore a veil across her face. She was a perfect rider; and an expert in following the swift falcon's flight as it dashed after its prey.' Indian painters have loved to paint her with her falcons in the plains. Chand Bibi fought bravely but the odds were against her. So she concluded a peace by ceding Berar to Akbar. But after the death of Chand Bibi Ahmadnagar was captured.

Another war in the South became necessary, and, since Murad had died of drink, Abul Fazi was placed in command. But it was not going well enough. So Akbar entrusted his projected conquest of Mewar to Salim, and went to the Deccan. He captured Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh. But the great fortress of Asirgarh, the most formidable in all India, held out. It was a huge mass of rock rising nine hundred feet above the plains and was enclosed by a triple line of fortifications. It had a plentiful supply of water from wells and reservoirs, and was stocked with provisions enough to last a siege for ten years. Six months of strenuous siege elapsed, but there were no signs of the fort yielding. Akbar had no time to lose, for Salim had revolted at Allahabad. So Akbar started negotiations with the ruler of Khandesh who offered to submit to Akbar's sovereignty if his country and the fortress of Asirgarh were restored to him, and the prisoners released. These terms Akbar granted. But when Bahadur came into his presence, he did

not allow him to go back. However, the fort was well defended by an old Abyssinian Governor, who refused to yield. With him in the fort were seven princes of the blood royal, who were ready to assume the kingship and continue the fight. Akbar then resorted to lavish bribery and bought over the most important of the defenders. The bribed men gave up the keys of the fortress, after Bahadur had written to them under compulsion, asking them to surrender the fort. The Abyssinian Governor took poison, and his son stabbed himself to death in the Mughal camp before Abul Fazl and the Mughal chiefs. A little time later, the whole kingdom was conquered.

Akbar's last years were rendered sad and lonely by the misconduct of his sons, and the loss of his friends. Murad, his second son, had drunk himself to death. Daniyal, the youngest, was taking after his brother, and would not listen to advice. He too died of drink, a little later.

Salim, his first born child of many prayers, was not without ability. He was capable of feeling and inspiring strong affections. But he thought that his father had lived too long, and that it was time to get the throne for himself. So, while Akbar was in the South, he attempted to seize Agra with its vast treasure. The loyal commandant Kulich Khan would not admit him within the fort, and Salim's nerve failed him. Akbar's mother tried to meet the wrong-headed prince and advise him; but he evaded her and went off to Allahabad, where he assumed and exercised royal powers.

From Asirgarh, Akbar sent one of Salim's companions to him as a messenger of peace with a friendly and affectionate letter. But Salim won the messenger over to his side by making him his chief minister. He then began to raise a large army. When Akbar came from the Deccan, he heard that his son was marching on Agra with thirty thousand horesmen. Akbar wanted to appease him, if possible. So he appointed him Governor of Bengal and Orissa. Salim merely retired to Allahabad, and behaved towards his father as one king would to another. He impudently sent Akbar specimens of the coins he had issued in his own name.

Akbar sent word of the rebellion of Salim to Abul Fazl who was in the Deccan and summoned him to come to his side. Salim feared that Abul Fazl's presence would stiffen Akbar's attitude to himself. So he plotted to do away with Abul Fazl on his way to Agra, and engaged a Bundela chieftain, Bir Singh, to do it. Though the plot leaked out and Abul Fazl received repeated warnings, he did not mind them, refusing even a bodyguard. While he was travelling with a small party, they were set upon, on a morning, by five hundred horsemen of Bir Singh. Abul Fazl was killed, and Bir Singh sent his head to Salim. Salim gloated over the sight, and insulted the head of his father's dearest friend.

The news of this brutal murder upset Akbar. He had sorrowed over the death of his friends Birbal, Todar Mall, Bhagvan Das, Shaik Mubarak, and Faizi, the poet. But the violent

death in the wilds of Central India of Abul Fazl, his dearest friend, brought about by his own son, was the most sorrowful of all. His anger and grief knew no bounds. Akbar retired from the public gaze for three whole days. He issued orders that Bir Singh should be caught and killed on the spot; but Bir Singh managed to escape.

In spite of all this, Akbar shrank from open war with his own son. Finally, in the rooms of Akbar's mother a reconciliation between them was brought about by Salim's step-mother, Sultan Salima Begum, a learned and wise lady. Salim presented to his father as a peace offering one thousand *mohars* and three hundred and fifty-four elephants, animals of which Akbar was always very fond. Akbar gave him rich dresses, a jewelled sword, a rare elephant, and a turban just taken off from his own head, a very great honour. Salim was publicly proclaimed heir-apparant once more. But the reconciliation was hollow, for the blood of Abul Fazl lay between them.

Salim did not resume the war in Mewar as Akbar directed, but asked again and again for more men and money. Once more he set up an independent court. All the time, Akbar's anger was rising, and it looked as if it might flare up at any moment. There was another danger which threatened Salim. Raja Man Singh and a few others, who did not want Salim, set up and supported his son Khusru, a youth of very lovely presence. And Khusru also worked against Salim.

not heeding the advice of his mother. She felt this unfilial conduct so much that she committed suicide by swallowing a large dose of opium. Salim's grief at her death was very great, and Akbar sent him an affectionate letter of condolence and sympathy. But Salim did not mend his evil ways, and hurt Akbar more and more by his conduct. Akbar thought that he could be brought to his senses only by force. Akbar's mother tried to make peace between them recalling that Salim was now their only surviving son, but she failed. Overcome with grief, she fell ill, and died a few days later.

Salim was afraid of Akbar's anger. He left his large army far away from Agra, and entering the city fell humbly at the feet of his father. Akbar who had not the heart to pursue the fight with his son, received him with many signs of affection, and gracefully accepted his presents of gold and elephants. Suddenly, however, his pent up anger flared up, and he lost control over himself. He drew Salim into an inner room, and slapped him soundly on the face. He reproached him for his unfilial conduct; and ridiculed him for coming to him as a humble petitioner when he had a large army at his command. He then put Salim under arrest, and forbade his officers to give him neither wine or opium. But Salim's sisters and Akbar's wives softened the blow by their sympathy. Soon, Akbar, generous as ever, set Salim free, and made him Viceroy of the Deccan provinces, and acknowledged him as heir-apparent.

The loss of his friends, the ignoble and untimely death of two of his sons, the rebellion of Salim, and the death of his mother, had all cast a gloom on Akbar's life. He felt that all his glory had turned to ashes. Then he himself fell ill. Salim wanted to visit his father in his sick bed, but was warned that Khusru's partisans had plotted to arrest him when he came. Salim kept himself away and gradually won the support of the nobles by promising to maintain the faith of Islam, and to forgive the partisans of Khusru.

He visited Akbar only when Akbar had become too weak to speak, though he was still conscious. Akbar then made a sign to Salim to put on the imperial turban, and to gird the sword of Humayun which hung at the foot of the bed. At another sign from Akbar, Salim went out assured of his throne, and heard the acclamations of the crowd.

Akbar breathed his last a month before completing his sixty-third year. He was buried at Sikandra, near Agra, in a tomb partly planned by himself. The funeral was simple according to orthodox Muslim customs.

'Hardly any one so eminent in history', says Lawrence Binyon, 'has so actual a presence in our imagination . . . . We have him before our eyes in his prime of life. He is compact of frame, muscular rather burly, of moderate stature, but broad-shouldered, neither lean nor stout; of healthy complexion, the colour of ripe wheat. His eyes, rather small, but with long lashes, sparkle like the points of light on little waves, when they catch the sun. He wears moustaches, but no beard.

His voice is loud and full. When he laughs, it is with his whole face. His movements are quick, though from much riding in his youth he is slightly bow-legged. He carries his head a little on one side over the right shoulder. His nose is no commanding beak; it is straight and small, the nostrils wide and mobile. Below the left nostril is a wart, thought to be very agreeable in appearance. In whatever assemblage of men, he is recognisably the king. He radiates energy. His temper is naturally violent; and he is aware of it, so much so that his orders are that no death warrant is to be carried out till it is twice confirmed. His anger is terrible, but easily appeased. He has an insatiable curiosity, and loves new things. His mind is as incessantly employed as his body.'

He was very brave, and occasionally took grave risks to his person. Once on his way back from Malwa, Akbar encountered a tigress with her cubs, and killed the tigress with a single blow of his sword. On another occasion he mounted the fiercest and wickedest of elephants, made him fight with another till his own mount chased the other victoriously across the Jumna, half sinking the bridge of boats in the wild rush. Such occasions filled his courtiers with dread. But Akbar had a deeper motive. Was it God's will that he should live or die? He would put it to the proof. Here was another phase of his mystic nature.

His mode of life was regular and moderate. He carefully filled his time, slept little, and ate only one moderate meal a day. He disliked making his body a 'tomb for beasts'. He took some meat



twice a week. He was a man of great energy, a fine and enthusiastic polo player, who played the game even by night using fire-balls. He delighted in the chase. He had a mechanical turn of mind, and he devised a new method of making gun barrels which would not burst. Like some other rulers, Akbar used to disguise himself and mix with the common people to hear their opinions at first hand. Once when he was in the midst of a group of pilgrims he was recognised by a vagabond. But he quickly effected such a change in his eyes and features, that no one else recognised him and he quietly stole away.

He was indeed a born statesman. When he was quite young, he discovered a broad basis for the empire he was raising by abolishing the pilgrim tax and the *jizya*, and by marrying a Rajput princess, steps which effectively changed the opposition which Hindus, particularly Rajputs, had kept up against the Muslim kingdom of Delhi, into the active and free co-operation with the government of the day. Akbar's reign witnessed the change of the Mughals from a band of military invaders into the founders of a stable Indian Dynasty.

Akbar's reign formed an age of great poetry, noble buildings, and fine paintings. Tulasi Das was the greatest man of the age—'the tallest tree in the magic garden of Hindi poetry.' Neither Akbar nor Abul Fazl seems to have known him personally. But Man Singh and Abdur Rahim, the son of Bairam Khan, were his friends and admirers.

His story is interesting. Son of ordinary Brahmin parents, Tulasi Das is said to have

been left by the wayside, as he was born in an unlucky hour. He was picked up by a wandering mendicant, who brought him up and taught him the story of Rama. Tulasi Das spent most of his later life in Banaras, where he wrote his great poem. *The Ram Charit Manas* (The Lake of the Deeds of Rama) written in the old Hindi of Ayodhya is a veritable Bible to the Hindus of Northern India. From beginning to end, there is not one impure word or idea in the whole poem. Tulasi Das appealed to the millions of his countrymen, the people whom he knew. He died full of years and glory.

Sur Das, the blind bard of Agra, was among the thirty-six singers and musicians of Akbar's court. He was a follower of Vallabhacharya, and wrote in western Hindi known as Braj Bhasha, of which his language is considered the purest specimen. His *Sur Sagar* of about sixty thousand lines is in the form of songs. It narrates the stories of Krishna, and contains thousands of fine passages.

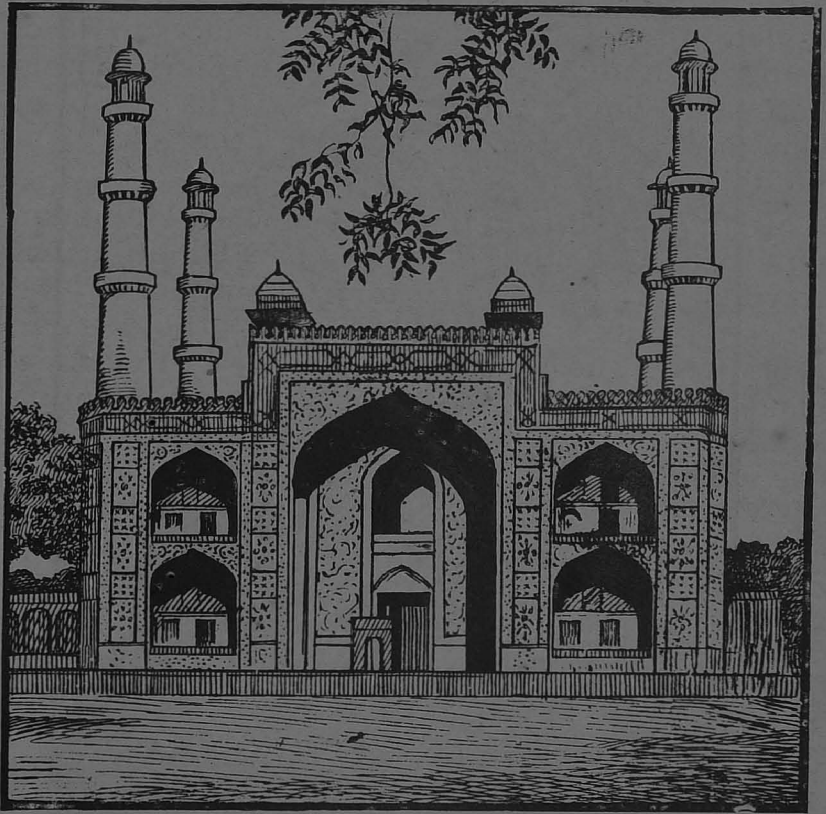
Faizi the poet, Abul Fazl the author, Badauni the historian, and Abdur Rahim are notable Persian writers of India belonging to Akbar's court.

The buildings of Akbar's reign are known for their splendour. Abul Fazl says of them 'His Majesty plans splendid edifices, and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay'. Akbar deliberately introduced Hindu motives in many of his buildings, without giving up the Persian ideas dominating Muslim architecture. The Jehangiri

Mahal in Agra Fort for instance might well pass for a palace of a Hindu Raja. Many buildings in Fathpur Sikri show the same features. Akbar resided in several cities and built palaces in all of them. Lahore, Agra, and Fathpur Sikri contain the most important buildings. His tomb at Sikandra is a design recalling the glory of Buddhist structures.

Mughal painting in India began when Humayun came back to Delhi. Under Akbar, Hindu artists crowded his court, and came to outnumber the Persian painters. The Indian and the Persian styles were mingled, and there grew up a new school which produced great works in painting portraits, court scenes, and animal and bird life. The whole school reflected Akbar's political aims. With Persians as their model, the Mughal school of Akbar's day turned to adornments of manuscripts. Writing was even more valued than painting.

A Jesuit writer describes Akbar thus: 'Indeed he was a great king; for he knew that the good ruler is he who can command, simultaneously, the obedience, the respect, the love, and the fear of his subjects. He was a prince beloved of all, firm with the great, kind to those of low estate, and just to all men, high and low, neighbour or stranger, Christian, Saracen or Gentile; so that every man believed that the king was on his side. He lived in fear of God to whom he never failed to pray four times a day'.



Akbar's Tomb



Sivaji

**SIVAJI**



## SIVAJI

The land of Maharashtra falls into three divisions, a coastal strip, a mountain region, and wide plains. The coastal strip lies below the Western Ghats (Sahyadri) and is called Konkan. The climate of this area is moist and humid; its soil rich and fertile. The mountain region is known as Maval. There is much rainfall here attended by furious storms. Wide rolling plains lie to the east of the Western Ghats. This region is known as the Desh. It is really an inland plateau. Its climate is hot and dry, and its soil barren and stony. But it becomes richer in its eastern section, where even with a small rainfall the deep black soil produces crops in abundance. Though the Desh is hotter than Maval, it is still pleasant and healthy.

One feature dominates the country. All over it, there have been carved out by the action of the sun, the wind and the rain, a number of abrupt flat top peaks which could easily be converted into strong forts with very little additional building. These natural strongholds have played a great part in the country's history from old times. They gave easily defended shelters to groups of hillmen, who rode out on their strong little ponies and harassed any invader; but quickly withdrew into them when their safety was threatened. The people of this wild country were hardy and frugal. They could live for days together on ears of corn



plucked from the fields and rubbed between their hands. Thus it was that the Maratha horsemen often throve where others would have starved.

Maharashtra is an ancient land. It formed part of Asoka's empire. His inscriptions mention a people called Rashtrikas who may well be the ancestors of the Marathas. Buddhism spread in Maharashtra early, and there are to be found in it many beautiful Buddhist caves adorned with sculptures and paintings. Those at Karli and Ajanta are among the best known. Buddhism died out, however, by the sixth century A. D. and the people became devoted to God Vithoba or Vitthala, at Pandarpur. Vithoba and Vithala are popular forms of the name of Vishnu.

Soon after Asoka's time, Maharashtra became the seat of the independent empire of the Satavahanas, or Andhras as they are sometimes called. Under the Andhras Deccan became a strong and prosperous kingdom. The ports on the west coast from Broach to Goa were often visited by early Greek and Arab traders who brought wine, glass, gold and at times pretty girls for sale in the Indian markets. They took back precious stones, fine muslins, spices and other articles of luxury which were much in demand among the ladies of the Roman Empire. The Andhras patronized literature. The *Sapta Sati* is a collection of 700 love lyrics in the ancient language of Maharashtra. It was collected by an Andhra king and contains many pleasing pictures of village life in ancient Maharashtra. The *Brihatkatha* or 'Great Story' was composed under Andhra patronage. The

original poem is now lost, but it survives in translations or in other modified forms in many languages.

The Chalukyas of Badami, the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta (Malkhed), and the later Chalukyas of Kalyani, and the Yadavas of Devagiri upheld the independence and civilization of Maharashtra for many centuries. It was during the reign of the Chalukya king Pulikesin II that Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim visited Maharashtra. Of the people the pilgrim has recorded, 'Their manners are simple and honest. They are tall of stature, haughty and revengeful. To their benefactors, they are grateful: to their enemies, relentless. If they are insulted, they will risk their lives to wipe out the insult. If one seeks their help in distress, they rush to his aid, not caring what happens to themselves. When they have an injury to avenge, they first give warning to the enemy, then each being armed they attack each other with lances. In battle those who flee are pursued. But those who give themselves up are not slain. If a general loses a battle they do not punish him, but present him with women's clothes, and he is driven to seek death for himself.' It was in the days of the Yadava rule, that the great Marathi saint Jnana Dev, the author of *Jnanesvari*, the Marathi exposition of the Bhagavad Gita, lived.

Maharashtra passed under Muslim yoke early in the fourteenth century. It had little share in the freedom movement which ended in the establishment of the Empire of Vijayanagar. However, a great religious movement arose then at

Pandarpur. It was the Bhakti movement and it spread over the whole land. Based on the worship of Krishna, it made all his devotees equal. Many interesting stories proclaim the sense of equality. Jnana Dev, feeling his approaching end, sat in the temple of Krishna at Pandarpur with his brothers and sisters, and expressed to the God his desire to be buried at the feet of his image there. God Krishna answered him saying that if he were buried there, his fame would be lost in that of Krishna. So he advised that Jnana Dev may be buried at Alandi, another holy place. So a grave was dug for him there, and a deer-skin was spread inside it for him to sit upon. A fire was lit, and flowers were strewn upon it. Jnana Dev sat on the deer-skin, and inhaling the fragrant smoke from the fire slowly became unconscious. His disciples closed the mouth of the grave. Jnana Dev was an outcaste brahmin. By his devotion to God, he won his way back into that caste and became a saint. The Muslim Kabir, was attracted from the north by the fame of Pandarpur, and he sang songs in praise of Krishna. When devotees met in the love and worship of Krishna, differences of caste did not count, and so Pandarpur came to attract pious men of all castes. There were potters, leather-workers and goldsmiths among the devotees. Some of them become saints, and the saint Namdev, who wrote of the end of Jnana Dev, was a tailor.

They were all men of holy and austere lives. Their worship of Krishna was pure and devoted. Their poems and preachings, consoled

men and gave them refuge from the sorrows of a hard life and of political subjection. This was called the Bhakti movement. Pilgrimages to holy shrines, the singing of devotional songs in Marathi, and a common belief in the doctrines of the saints became fresh bonds of unity bringing the people of Maharashtra together.

Muslim power in the Deccan first grew and developed into a large kingdom known as the Bhamini kingdom. It ultimately broke up into five states among which were Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. Their Muslim rulers lived in ease and luxury, employing large numbers of Marathas as clerks, soldiers and financiers. The opportunity provided the Maratha with political experience. The Bhakti movement helped to weld the Marathas into a political power.

The leading Maratha families were fond of claiming descent from ancient Rajput families. The Bhonsles traced their ancestry to the royal house of Chitor, members of which had come over to the Deccan in the troubled days of Alaud-din-Khalji. But actually the earliest Bhonsle we know of was just a *Patil* or village officer. The story of his Rajput origin was invented later. In his line came Maloji, who entered the service of Lukaji Jadhav Rao, a general in the service of the Nizam Shahi government of Ahmadnagar.

Maloji and his son Shahaji, a fine little boy of five, once went to the house of Lukaji to celebrate the Holi festival. There Jija Bai, the little daughter of Lukaji, one year younger than Shaha-

ji, was also present. Holi is a time of great festivities and amusement. Lukaji, seated both the little children on his knee, and said in jest 'Well, my girl, will you have this boy for your husband?' Molaji sprang up from his seat immediately and claimed that Lukaji had betrothed his daughter to Shahaji, and asked all the guests present to note it. Lukaji was thoroughly taken by surprise, but under the circumstances he persuaded himself to accept the arrangement. But his wife was opposed to it, and would not agree at all.

Maloji then went on a pilgrimage to Tuljapur to implore Goddess Bhavani's aid to the matrimonial alliance. The Goddess appeared to him that night in a dream, and assured him of the fulfilment of his heart's desire. Returning to Ahmadnagar, he challenged Lukaji to a duel. When the king of Ahmadnagar came to know of this challenge, he summoned both Maloji and his master Lukaji to his presence. On hearing the details of the story, the king promoted Maloji and gave him military rank and territory. He made him a commander of fortress and conferred on him the title of Raja. Maloji was now the equal of Lukaji and none could object any longer to the alliance on the ground of social inequality. The marriage of Shahaji and Jija Bai was celebrated with great pomp, and the king himself graced it with his presence.

When Maloji died, Shahaji who had grown up into a gallant young soldier, succeeded to his estate. The next year, there was a war between Ahmadnagar led by Malik Ambar, and the

Mughals. When the Mughals won, some Maratha nobles deserted to their side, but Shahaji remained faithful. Malik Ambar was by birth a slave, but a fine man. In warfare, in command, in sound judgment and in administration, he had no equal. He trained Shahaji in a kind of irregular warfare which avoids pitched battles, but effectively harasses the enemy. Under Sivaji, the Marathas learned to use the art of guerilla warfare to such great effect.

Shahaji continued to serve Ahmadnagar for some years after Malik Ambar's death. But when Ahmadnagar sustained a severe defeat, Shahaji had to submit to Shah Jahan, who confirmed him in his possessions. Soon, however, he gave up his allegiance to the Mughal Emperor and made another attempt to recover Ahmadnagar. In the name of its ruler he conquered the western half of the old dominion up to the sea. But the victory brought Shah Jahan against him and once more he had to yield.

Soon after, he became one of the leading Hindu generals of the government of Bijapur. At that time Bijapur was at war with the Mughals. Shahaji avoided open battle, but inflicted small defeats on the Imperial troops. When peace was made between Bijapur and Shah Jahan, the Sultan of Bijapur was asked to deliver Shahaji to him. Shahaji, however, escaped with his followers to the Deccan hills, and from there kept up a little war until Shah Jahan gave him a free pardon.

For the first few years after their marriage Shahaji and Jija Bai lived happily together. Sivaji was their second son, born on April 10, 1627. There is a story related about his birth. In the midst of war on behalf of Malik Ambar, Shahaji had a dream one night. He saw a Gosayi, clad in rags and smeared with ashes, standing by his bed-side. The Gosayi put a mango into his hand and said: "Share this fruit with your wife and you will have a son who will be an incarnation of Siva. You must never compel him to salute a Musalman, and after his twelfth year, you must give him freedom to act as he pleases." It was because of this dream that Shahaji gave his child the name Sivaji.

At the time of Sivaji's birth, Jija bai was living in a house in the fort of Shivner near Junnar. Even the early years of Sivaji's life were full of peril and adventure. During the years when Shahaji was at war with the Mughals, Jija Bai had to use all her wits to keep Sivaji hidden, often in woods and caves, to prevent his falling into the hands of Shahaji's enemies. After Shahaji made peace with the Mughals, he married Tuka Bai, a girl of inferior rank. Thereafter Jija Bai mostly lived by herself with her son Sivaji.

When Sivaji was ten years old, his mother took him to Bijapur, where he stayed for three years. According to the custom of the times, he was wedded at this early age to Sai Bai, the little daughter of Vithoji Mohite Newaskar. Even at this age, it is said that Sivaji showed signs of his attachment to Hinduism. He protested

against cattle being driven to the slaughter house along the streets of Bijapur, and refused to bow to the King of Bijapur according to the practice of the court. Shahaji must have been glad to send back Jija Bai and her unruly son to reside in his private estates of Poona and Supa. He appointed a trusted Brahmin officer named Dada-ji Khonda Dev to assist her in managing the estates and bringing up Sivaji.

Today, Poona is a big city, and the country round it is a smiling plain. It got its name of 'the holy town' since according to Hindu tradition all junctions of rivers are holy. But in those days the country round about Poona was barren, as it had been laid waste by the wars of the Deccan Sultans among themselves and with the Mughals. The population was low, many having either fled or perished. It would have been no easy task to obtain a good living from Shahaji's estates, but both Jija Bai and Khonda Dev were very capable persons. They now set about reviving the ruined estate of Shahaji. They offered lands rent free for a time and the proposal attracted cultivators from the hilly tracts and the neighbouring districts. They rewarded hunters who cleared the country of wild beasts. They armed bands of hillmen to watch the newly raised crops and harvests and to protect the villagers from being attacked and enslaved by robbers and marauders.

There is no picture of Sivaji in his boyhood. The picture of his manhood shows his brow 'wrinkled as if with grave and constant thought.



The cheeks are burnt with long exposure to sun and rain, and deeply furrowed as if with anxiety and care. But the nose is curved like a falcon's beak. The eyes are large. The thin lips are compressed with inflexible resolution. The whole face speaks eloquently of trouble bravely borne and dangers triumphantly surmounted.' Sivaji's body was short, but broad and strongly built, and a legend survives that the tips of the fingers reached below his knees as Arjuna's did.

As a boy, Sivaji was very shrewd and intelligent, and was wont to ask questions on public affairs. There were three influences shaping his growth. The most powerful among them was that of his mother, a proud woman. She disliked her husband's service under Muslim kings. She bade Sivaji never to forget his descent from the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Rana of Udaipur. The second influence was that of the city of Poona, which was an ancient centre of Samskrit learning, and which had an orthodox religious atmosphere about it. Last but not least, was the influence of his Brahmin mentor, the honest and efficient Dadaji Konda Dev.

Sivaji developed early an intense love for his country and his religion and was devoted to his family Goddess Bhavani. Long into the night he would sit listening to the recitations of *kathas*, and *puranas*. He would listen with rapture to old tales of war, heroism and devotion, to the tales of Rama and Sita, and the adventures of the Pandavas. It is said that once at the risk of his

life, he went into the heart of his enemies' camp at Poona in order to listen to a *katha*.

The Mavalis, hillmen of the valleys round about Poona, are a relatively backward race. Though they had a rough appearance they had many sterling qualities. They were hardy, brave and very faithful. They had profited by the wise and just rule of Khonda Dev. Young Sivaji captured their hearts completely. They taught him to ride, to shoot, and to use the sword in a deft manner. They took him with them when they went a-hunting. By associating with them Sivaji came to know every inch of the Deccan hills, and all the paths and byways in the jungles and ravines leading from the ghats to the Konkan. Three men in particular became his close friends, Yaji Kanaka, Baji Phasalkar, and Tanaji Malusre. To them, he confided his plans, and together they slowly collected a number of followers.

In the Poona jagir, there were four fortresses. They were Kondana, afterwards famous as Simhagadh, overlooking Poona, Torna near-by, and Chakan and Purandar. All of them were carelessly guarded. The Sultan of Bijapur did not care for the area as much as he did for the richer lands of the south. His garrisons were also weak, because his best troops had been sent to fight in the Karnatak wars.

Sivaji and his Mavalis seized Torna during a rainy season, when its garrison had gone away to live in the valley. He began repairing its defences and while doing so came by a large treasure

trove. It was considered a good sign of Goddess Bhavani's favour. With the money thus got Sivaji built another fortress on the peak of Rajgadh, three miles from Torna. Only then did the sleepy government of Bijapur wake up, and it wrote to Shahaji asking him to stop his son's aggression. Shahaji thereupon wrote to Khonda Dev to restrain Sivaji. But Khonda Dev was now too old to interfere. Perhaps, like Jija Bai, he too did not dislike Sivaji's moves against the Muslim power. Sivaji told his father that he would take over the Poona estate as his own. He gained Kondana by bribery, and Purandar by surprise. In a year he had made himself master of the Poona district and was preparing for fresh adventures. Dadaji Khonda Dev died soon after. On his death-bed he handed over the keys of the treasury to Sivaji and blessed him, and advised him to secure freedom for 'the temples, the Brahmins, and the sacred kine.'

Sambaji Mohite, the brother of Shahaji's second wife Tuka Bai, was at Supa, and he refused to recognize Sivaji as master. With three hundred picked men Sivaji marched suddenly against him, and made him prisoner. He then sent him and his followers to Bangalore, the headquarters of Shahaji's government. Sivaji thus secured complete control of his father's Poona estates.

Sivaji next turned his eyes on the rich province of the Konkan. He learnt from his spies that a quantity of treasure was about to be sent from Kalyan by its Muhammadan governor; Mulana

Ahmed, to Bijapur by way of the Par Pass. He surprised the party carrying the money and captured the treasure after a fight in which many men were killed on both sides. This was the first occasion when Sivaji gained a success after spilling blood. He made generous provision for the families of his fallen soldiers. His generosity and his success increased the admiration of the Mavalis for Sivaji. Under his leadership they had fought and beaten the dreaded Muhammadans.

Soon after, Kalyan was captured by one of Sivaji's officers, Abaji Son Dev. Mulana Ahmad and his family were made prisoners. Abaji sent to Sivaji the daughter-in-law of Mulana Ahmed, a young woman of great charm. Sivaji observed 'so fair is she that were it in my power, I should wish to be born as her son.' He then gave the lady such presents as her father or brother might have given her, and sent her back with an escort to her husband. Mulana Ahmed was also set free. The conduct of Sivaji raised his prestige and popularity.

It was now more or less open war with Bijapur. Tired of Muslim rule, the people of Maharashtra, were willing to accept Sivaji as their ruler. Several forts opened their gates to him, and the Konkan, as far as the borders of Savantwadi, became his. He occupied the hill of Rajgad, which he made his capital later. He acquired from a Konkan Hindu for a sum of 300 pagodas his famous 'Bhavani' sword. He always kept it with him and offered worship to it at the time of Dasara.

Even after losing Kalyan and the revenues of Konkan, the Bijapur government did not realise Sivaji's power. It suspected that Shahaji, who had conquered much territory, had put up his son Sivaji to rebel in the north, seeking at the same time to create an independent state for himself in the south. Shahaji protested that Sivaji was no longer under his control. But the Bijapur Sultan did not believe him. He seized Shahaji with the aid of a corrupt Maratha chief, Baji Ghorpade of Mudhol. The act of treachery was neither forgotten nor forgiven. Shahaji wrote to Sivaji: 'If, you be a true son of mine, punish Baji Ghorpade.' The punishment could not come at once, but some-time later Sivaji captured Mudhol, plundered it thoroughly and burnt it to be ground. The sack of Mudhol is almost the only instance of such destruction by Sivaji.

The Sultan of Bijapur had Shahaji confined in a tiny cell and threatened to build it up altogether unless Sivaji surrendered. Sivaji wished to save his father, but did not want to submit to Bijapur. So he hit upon a clever plan. He wrote to Shah Jahan, offering him his services. The Emperor at once accepted his offer and made him a *mansabdar* of 5,000 horse. The Sultan was alarmed at the proof of Mughal favour. He thought it best to release Shahaji, since disorder and rebellion prevailed in the Karnatak, and Shahaji had friends even in his own court.

Sivaji then captured Javli, which belonged to Chandra Rao More. Javli lay on the road from Kalyan and the sea to the towns inland, and was

therefore a key city. Sivaji knew that there was no prospect of success in open war with the Raja. So two of Sivaji's officers resorted to a trick. They secretly posted their troops in the jungles around Javli, and entered the city with a pretended offer of a marriage alliance between the Raja's daughter and Sivaji. In the open darbar they stabbed the Raja and his brother to death. The hidden soldiers rushed in at a given signal and captured the city. Thus the whole of that territory passed into Sivaji's hands.

Sivaji's power was rising while the authority of Bijapur in Maharashtra was waning. The Savants of Wadi also submitted to him, paid revenue, garrisoned his forts and provided soldiers for his army. Only the Abyssinian Sidis of Janjira, who had a large fleet, retained their independence foiling all Sivaji's attempts to conquer them.

Bijapur had so long left Sivaji alone, because it had its own troubles. Firstly, there were rival factions in the court of Ali Adil Shah, the Sultan of Bijapur, who was barely nineteen. Secondly, Aurangzeb, who was then the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan was bent upon annexing Bijapur to the Mughal empire. And so Aurangzeb invaded Bijapur.

During the invasion Sivaji played a cautious game. He acknowledged Aurangzeb's supremacy in the Deccan. But he asked Aurangzeb to recognise his possession of the territory which he had taken from Bijapur since it was misgoverned. However, when Aurangzeb's army went further

south Sivaji fell upon Junnar and captured much treasure. He also attacked Ahmadnagar and carried off one thousand good horses which he sorely needed. Meanwhile Aurangzeb received the news that Shah Jahan was seriously ill, and that Dara had become regent. He hastened northwards to try and get the throne for himself. When Sivaji heard of Aurangzeb's return, he sent messengers to Aurangzeb regretting what had occurred. He also suggested that he might be allowed to hold the Konkan under Delhi, rather than let it go back to Bijapur. Aurangzeb gave his tacit consent to the proposal. Sivaji then erected a fortress at Pratapgadh, about four miles from Javli and commanding the highway to Konkan. The fortress has been called the Gibraltar of the East.

When Aurangzeb returned to northern India, Bijapur felt free to punish Sivaji. It collected a large army of all arms, and placed Afzal Khan in command. He was an experienced Pathan soldier, and was very strong and brave. He boasted that he would quickly bring the 'mountain rat' bound in chains before the Sultan of Bijapur. Sivaji had gathered all his troops at Pratapgadh. On his way there, Afzal Khan defiled the temple of Vithoba at Pandarpur, and the temple of Goddess Bhavani at Tuljapur and broke the idols. Sivaji's anger was roused when he heard of Afzal Khan's doings.

It was still the rainy season, and Afzal Khan found the march very difficult. When he reached Wai he had a cage prepared, and boasted that he

would entrap Sivaji, and drag him as a prisoner to Bijapur. Viswas Rao, a secret agent of Sivaji, entered Afzal Khan's camp in a fakir's garb, and heard the boast, and reported it to Sivaji. Then Afzal Khan sent an envoy, Krishnaji Bhasker, to Sivaji at Pratapgadh inviting him to meet him at Wai. But in an intimate talk, Sivaji made Krishnaji tell him the truth, and learnt that the Pathan general intended treachery. The same night, Goddess Bhavani appeared before Sivaji in a dream and called upon him to avenge the outrage to her temple at Tuljapur.

Sivaji laid his counter plans carefully. He sent a polite invitation to Afzal Khan to meet him a fortnight later at Pratapgadh. He then prepared a wide road through the forest for Afzal Khan's advance, and placed welcome stores of food all along the route for him and his army.

Afzal Khan accepted Sivaji's invitation in a confident mood, and marched to Pratapgadh over the Mahabaleswar plateau. On the route the elephant which carried the Bijapur royal standard made a dead stop and refused to move. But Afzal Khan did not mind the omen, and had the standard placed on the back of another elephant and continued his march.

The spot chosen for the interview was about a quarter of a mile from the fort wall. Sivaji had posted troops around the flanks and rear of the Bijapur army and had given them directions to attack when they heard his signal, a blast on a horn.



He held a Council, and named his young son Sambaji as his heir and Netaji Palkar as regent, in the event of his death. He then took leave of his mother. He put on a coat of chain-armor, and over it a gold embroidered coat. He put a steel cap upon his head and tied over it a cloth turban. Within his left hand he concealed 'the tiger claws' (vyagh-nakh) and had a small dagger up his right sleeve. With very few attendants, he descended the hill to meet Afzal Khan, who travelled in a palanquin. Afzal Khan took with him the same number of attendants as Sivaji, but one of them was a famous swordsman Syed Banda. On Sivaji's sending word that he feared Syed Banda, Afzal Khan left him behind. But Afzal Khan carried a sword, while Sivaji came apparently unarmed.

As soon as they met, Afzal Khan insulted Sivaji by asking him how a common peasant like him came to have so much riches, which were displayed in the *shamiana* put up for the interview. Hot words passed between them. Sivaji reminded Afzal Khan that he was but the son of a cook. The Khan was thoroughly enraged.

He seized Sivaji by the neck with his left arm, forcing his head under his armpit. He tried to twist his neck, and to stab him in the stomach with his sword. The coat of mail which Sivaji wore saved him. He was still in great peril, and was on the point of fainting. Then, thoughts of his divine mission flashed on his mind. Hope and courage revived. He pressed the steel claws deep into the Khan's stomach, and drove the

dagger into his back, and then wrenched himself free. Afzal Khan struck a mighty blow at Sivaji's head. It cut through the turban and steel cap, and slightly wounded the scalp. Sivaji snatched a sword from one of his companions and struck the Khan through his left shoulder. The Khan fell down calling loudly for help. At the call, Muslim soldiers came running up. Sivaji's men blew the horn. The Maratha soldiers rushed from all sides and fell on the Bijapur horsemen. They cut off the dying Afzal Khan's head, and brought it to Sivaji. Many fell in the fight. At Sivaji's order all who surrendered were spared. The camp of the Khan, his treasury, stores, horses, elephants and cannon fell into Sivaji's hands. He distributed most of the booty as rewards to his troops. He gave a large amount of gold to Viswas Rao, the spy, who gave him timely warning of Afzal Khan's treachery.

Sivaji's mother had anxiously watched the scene from the top of Pratapgadh. She blessed him when he came back to her with the dead man's head in his hand. Sivaji buried the head on the top of the hill, as an offering to Bhavani, and built a tower over it and called it Afzalburj.

Sivaji now decided to carry the war into the enemy's country without giving him time to recover from the disaster which had overtaken the expedition. He divided his army into three sections. He left one section to guard the Poona district, and posted another to prevent any hostile movement by the Sidis of Janjira or the Savants of Wadi. With the third section he

marched southwards and captured the great fortress of Panala and several smaller forts. He advanced up to the gates of Bijapur, plundering as he went, and avoiding fight with the Bijapur cavalry. When the Abyssinian general, Sidi Johar, took the field with a large army, Sivaji retreated to Panala, deputing Netaji Palkar with his cavalry to harass the enemy in the open country.

Afzal Khan's son was eager to avenge his father's fate. So the Bijapur army laid siege to Panala. Netaji Palkar's small cavalry could not relieve the siege. The Maratha troops in the Konkan were too far away to come to his aid. Famine threatened him and his army. He met Sidi Johar to discuss with him the terms for the surrender of Panala, and went back saying that he would return the next day to complete the arrangements. The Bijapur troops believing that they had won, relaxed their watchfulness. That night, under cover of rain and darkness, Sivaji escaped with a handful of followers. He was pursued. But he posted a thousand Mavali troops under Baji Prabhu, once a foe but now a faithful officer, at a narrow defile called Rangana Ghat. They were to hold the pass until a gun was fired signalling that Sivaji had reached in safety Rangana fort. Baji Prabhu carried out the orders most faithfully and well. He repelled the Bijapur cavalry twice with loss. Men were falling fast and he himself was badly wounded. Yet a third and stronger assault he met with equal courage. Half of his little force perished. At

last the gun was heard and the dying commander ordered a retreat. The little force went back in good order taking the body of their gallant leader with them. Rangana Ghat was the Thermopylae of Maratha history.

Sivaji then retired to Pratapgadh. There he built a temple for Bhavani, as he was unable to proceed as usual to Tuljapur for the Dasara. Sivaji gained various successes in the Konkan, and made an alliance with the Portuguese of Goa. He formed a fleet to patrol the coast, and to capture trading vessels visiting the Bijapur ports. Meantime, the Bijapur commander, Sidi Johar was suspected by his king, and rebelled against him. But he was killed. Bijapur then made terms with Sivaji recognizing him as the ruler of the Deccan as far as Kolhapur in the south and of the Konkan up to Goa. The treaty was perhaps due to the influence of Shahaji who visited his famous son after many years. Sivaji received his father with great reverence, and sent him loaded with presents for the king of Bijapur. Father and son never met again, Shahaji being killed in the hunting field three years later.

About this time, Sivaji decided to make the fort of Rajgadh his capital. It was the centre of the Konkan, and conveniently close to the places which Sivaji raided often. There is an interesting story relating to the Fort. When the engineers announced to Sivaji that the defences of the fort were complete, Sivaji offered a purse of gold and a bracelet to any one who would climb the rock without the aid of rope or ladder and plant

a flag at its top. A hillman found a pathway and won the reward. Sivaji had the path closed with a new bastion.

Sivaji soon completed the task of liberating the part of Maharashtra subject to Bijapur. It was his intention to form an alliance with Bijapur and Golkonda both for defending the Deccan against the Mughals, and for liberating that part of Maharashtra which was still under the emperor of Delhi.

At this point it would be better to deal with two other people who profoundly influenced Sivaji.

There lived at that time two famous saints in Maharashtra, Ramdas and Tukaram. Sivaji knew both of them and showed them the greatest respect and honour.

Tukaram was a native of the little village of Dehu and was by birth a grocer. When he was eighteen, he lost his father. He was soft by nature, and neglected the collection of debts due to him and became bankrupt. His wife and little son died of privation. Tukaram sought solace from these sorrows by becoming a wholehearted devotee of Vithoba of Pandarpur. He has composed many *abhangs* in praise of Vithoba, and others narrating incidents in his own life. They are somewhat crude but forceful, and embody the teachings of the school of Pandarpur.

Sivaji went and lived with Tukaram for several days leading the life of a religious devotee, a thing which Jija Bai disliked intensely. Tukaram advised Sivaji to return to his duties as a warrior and prince, and to go to Ramdas for guidance on

spiritual matters. On one occasion, when Sivaji sat listening to Tukaram's recitation of *katha* in a temple at Poona, the troops of Bijapur surrounded the place. The saint and Sivaji continued unperturbed. A man resembling Sivaji in every way rose from the audience, and ran out slipping through the guards. The Afghans pursued him on horseback, but he ran swiftly towards Simhagad, and escaped. When Tukaram's *katha* was finished, the real Sivaji went quietly away unmolested. It was said to be a miracle wrought by Krishna to save Sivaji. Tukaram died not long after. His followers believed that he went to heaven in the chariot of Ramachandra.

Ramdas was younger than Tukaram. His real name was Narayan. He ran away from a marriage arranged for him by his parents. He wandered about from shrine to shrine. He is said to have performed many miracles. He finally settled at Chaphal in the Satara district, where he built a temple to Ramachandra. He believed that he was an incarnation of Hanuman, and so changed his name to Ramdas.

His fame reached the ears of Sivaji. Bhavani also revealed to him that Ramdas was his destined *guru*. Two attempts of Sivaji to meet him proved fruitless. On the third visit he found the saint seated under a tree and composing verses for his famous *Das bodh*. Sivaji gave Ramdas a large sum of money. The saint promptly distributed it among his cowherds. Ramdas in turn gave a few gifts to Sivaji. They were a coconut, some water, some earth, a few pebbles and a little horse-

dung. Sivaji took them reverently and showed them to his mother Jija Bai who asked him with scorn what they meant. Sivaji explained that the water and the earth meant that Sivaji would conquer Maharashtra; that the pebbles implied that he would hold the country by means of rock fortresses; and that the horse-dung showed that the cavalry would be his strongest arm.

Sivaji repeatedly invited Ramdas to come and live with him, but the saint declined the request. Sivaji loved to visit the saint whenever he could, and heard not only his recitation of sacred verses, but received much sound practical advice from him.

Several stories are told of them. On one occasion, Ramdas was in great pain on account of a serious illness which threatened his life. He told Sivaji that only the milk of a tigress could save him. Sivaji fulfilled his wish. On another occasion, the saint asked Sivaji for alms. Sivaji gave him his whole kingdom. Ramdas accepted the gift, and Sivaji became his servant. At the end of the day, Ramdas returned the gift, saying, 'Take back your kingdom. It is for kings to rule and for Brahmins to do worship.' But Sivaji requested that Ramdas should give him his sandals (as Rama gave his to Bharata) so that the world might know that Ramdas and not he was the true king. Sivaji also chose for his flag the orange coloured banner *Bhagavachanda*, which pilgrims carry when they go to Pandarpur.

To resume the narrative of Sivaji's career.

Soon after, Sivaji's cavalry plundered the Mughal territory and brought back vast quantities of booty. Aurangzeb sent his uncle Shayista Khan, the governor of the Deccan, to punish Sivaji. On their march, the imperial troops were harassed by the Maratha horsemen. They lost a thousand men, killed or disabled, in taking the little fort of Chakan. Their idea was to rest at Poona during the rains and then attack Sivaji. Shayista Khan strictly regulated entry into Poona by a system of permits to prevent being surprised. He taunted Sivaji saying that instead of coming down to the plains and fighting like a man, he was hiding in the hills like a monkey. 'Yes,' Sivaji replied, 'but remember that it was a monkey which destroyed Ravana and his host.'

Shayista Khan took up his residence at the Lal Mahal or Red Palace, where Sivaji had spent his boyhood. Sivaji knew every inch of the place. One dark and wintry night, he disguised his men as members of a wedding procession and as Mughal troops in charge of Maratha prisoners and contrived to enter Poona. They entered the garden of the Lal Mahal and silently went into the kitchen. They stabbed the cooks and other servants. They were all over the place, cutting down everyone they met. The Khan's son resisted bravely and slew three men before he fell. Making a hole through the wall they entered the bedroom where the Khan was sleeping. The Khan himself shot down a man. He then got through the window and clutched its edge hesitating to jump into the street below. Then a Maratha



slashed at his hand and cut off three of his fingers and the Khan dropped into the street and escaped. The Marathas vanished from the palace as quickly as they came.

A cavalry party was sent out to capture the attackers. It strayed too near Simhagad and suffered great losses from the fire of a hidden battery. Shayista Khan was crest-fallen and asked to be recalled. The command was then given to Aurangzeb's son Prince Muazzam. The Rajput chief, Raja Jai Singh, was sent along with him to help him.

Sivaji's successes continued. His navy plundered the rich pilgrims to Mecca. He raided Ahmadnagar and attacked the port of Surat and gathered an enormous booty in a leisurely loot. On his return from the Surat expedition, Sivaji heard the sorrowful news of his father's death. He then assumed the hereditary title of Raja granted by the king of Ahmadnagar to Maloji, and struck coins in his own name.

Meantime, the Mughals were on the march. Their leader Raja Jai Singh was an able commander. He captured Purandar, and shut up Sivaji's family at Rajgadh. Sivaji thought it best to come to terms with Jai Singh. He agreed to surrender a number of forts in the Deccan, and to become a *jagirdar* of the Mughal emperor. He even assisted Jai Singh in the expedition against Bijapur. Finally, on the advice of Jai Singh, who gave his pledge for Sivaji's personal safety, he agreed to go to Agra and meet the emperor.

But the visit was a failure. Aurangzeb received him coldly. Sivaji refused to make the salutation in the form the court custom required. Aurangzeb placed him among the commanders of 5,000 horse. Sivaji considered the post as an indignity and expressed his resentment openly.

He was thereupon forbidden to attend the durbar, and was practically held as a prisoner, strictly guarded in his house. When he sought permission to go back to his country, it was refused. The only concession showed to Sivaji was that he was allowed to send large baskets of sweetmeats to nobles in the city, and for distribution among the poor people at the mosques.

Ram Singh, the son of Jai Singh who had guaranteed Sivaji's safety, felt that Sivaji's life was no longer safe. He therefore aided Sivaji to effect his escape. One day, Sivaji complained that he was ill, and that he wished to be treated by the best doctors in Agra. He recovered his health under the medical treatment. To celebrate his recovery, he asked that large quantities of sweetmeats should be prepared to be sent to his friends. He bought three horses and sent them out with some of his attendants along the Mathura road, saying they were gifts to the Brahmins, whose prayers to Krishna had brought about his recovery. That evening, Sivaji got into a sweetmeat basket and his son Sambaji into another and their followers disguised as porters carried them out. One was left behind, Hiraji Pharzand, who personated Sivaji in his bed. They reached Mathura on the horses they had already sent out. Disguised as a pilgrim

and travelling by night Sivaji reached Allahabad. Sambaji had then to be left behind in charge of a friendly Brahmin. By a roundabout route Sivaji reached the Deccan, and appeared before his anxious mother, Jija Bai, at Rajgadh in the garb of a *bairagi*.

Maharashtra rejoiced greatly at the return of its beloved leader. As a result of the Mughal war, his possessions had become much reduced. But his lieutenant Moro Pingle, who acted as his regent, had reoccupied a few of the torts surrendered to the Mughals. Sivaji lay quiet for the next three years, devoting his time to civil and political reforms. But Jija Bai felt the presence of Muslims at Simhagadh as a disgrace, and she repeatedly urged Sivaji to recapture it. It was no easy task. Simhagadh was a strong fortress, with but a single gate reached through a narrow mountain path. It was defended by Uday Bhan, celebrated for his daring and bodily strength. Tanaji Malusre, his brother Suryaji, and a thousand picked men were chosen for this dangerous adventure. Leaving Rajgadh they went in small parties and met at the foot of the fort on a clear moonless night. They crept silently up the cliff, up one of the steepest points, which on that account was not very well guarded. The garrison was within. The sentries pacing the walls could be seen dimly against the sky. A Mavali climbed up, let down a rope ladder and pulled up Tanaji with three hundred of his followers. A sentry looked up, and though a speeded arrow slew him, he raised an alarm before he died. The garrison

turned out and Tanaji attacked and killed several commanders, including a dozen sons of Uday Bhan. At last Uday Bhan himself came out and with his Pathans cut down Tanaji, though he was killed instantly in his turn. There was some confusion among the Marathas when Tanaji was killed, but Suryaji soon restored order, and led the attack raising the cry 'Har, Har, Mahadev.' The Rajputs were forced back bit by bit, and at last the fort was won. A thatched hut was set on fire and this was the signal for which anxious watchers were waiting on the walls of Rajgad. Sivaji heard both of the success and its cost. 'I have won the fort, but lost my lion,' he said. The name Simhagadh, given to the fort formerly called Kondana, is a memento of the death of the gallant Tanaji. Very soon Sivaji took many other forts held by the Mughals.

Sivaji again plundered Surat, pillaging it for three days. The troops returned to Rajgad loaded with jewels, clothes, and money to the value of millions of rupees. They drove back with great slaughter a large body of Mughal cavalry which sought to intercept them. Sometime later a body of Maratha horsemen led by More Pingle cut to pieces an entire Mughal division in an open fight. The victorious campaign raised the prestige of the Maratha soldiers. They fell upon Khandesh and demanded *chauth*, a fourth of the land revenue of the province, to be paid to the Marathas to be free from their raids. They raided various places, pouring the plunder into Rajgad.

They also raided the coast with their fleet, and occupied large tracts of the country behind.

Sivaji was now at the height of his power. He had not only recovered the ground lost to the Mughals, but had defeated all his rivals in open fight. He made up his mind to crown himself as the lawful monarch of all the lands he had conquered by the strength of his arm. Sivaji prayed for some days in the shrine of Bhavani at Pratapgadh as a preparation for the coronation which was to be the great event of his career. His coronation "was a scene of great splendour. Gaga Bhat, a *sastri* of renown from Banaras, was present and performed the ceremony according to the strictest ritual. First the Raja was invested with the sacred thread, and declared to be an anointed Kshattriya, lord of the Maratha race. Then he weighed himself in gold, and distributed it to the Brahmins. Lastly, clad in gorgeous robes the Raja mounted the throne, amidst cries of 'Sivaji Maharaj ki Jai!' from the vast crowd assembled, in the precincts. The guns at Rajgadh thundered volley after volley; the sound was caught up, and repeated from fort to fort, till from end to end of the Sahyadris, the roar of artillery for hundreds of miles proclaimed to the world the birth of the Maratha nation. That night, merry making and rejoicing, music and dancing, gladdened the hearts of high and low in every hamlet of the Deccan. In Rajgadh, the spoils of plundered cities, stored for years were poured out with a lavish hand. Fifty thousand Brahmins were fed for a week, and innumerable costly presents were distributed. Gaga

Bhat alone received over a lac of rupees. Meanwhile, Sivaji seated on the throne with a golden image of Vishnu in his right hand, his queen and his son at his side, his eight ministers holding their symbolic emblems around him, went through the stately ritual of an Indian coronation. Finally mounting his horse, he rode in state round the town at the head of his troops.”\*

Sivaji's last expedition was directed to the South. He set out to claim his share of his father's rich and tempting lands in the Karnatak then completely in the possession of his brother Venkaji. They were under the nominal suzerainty of Bijapur. The new southern dominion lay stretched right across South India from Tanjore to Bednur.

Sivaji left the home country in charge of More Pingle, the Peshwa. Sivaji directed him to defend it against enemies, and to keep up the endless war with the Sidis of Janjira. First he went to Golkonda, and formed an alliance with its Sultan. He promised to help Golkonda against Bijapur and also against Delhi in case of need, and got in return a sum of money and a number of guns for use in the south. Then he visited the holy shrine of Mallikarjuna on the banks of the Krishna. For a moment, in his religious frenzy, he thought of giving up his life as a sacrificial offering to Mallikarjuna; but Goddess Bhavani appeared in a vision and commanded him to do the work which still remained to be done and

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\*Rawlinson: *Sivaji, The Maratha*, pp. 84-85.

which he alone could complete. So he refrained; and on the advice of his minister Raghunath Pant Hanumante he showed his devotion to the God by providing accommodation for the pilgrims coming to the place.

The invasion was a complete success. When the strong fortresses of Jingi, Vellore, Kolar and Bangalore were quickly captured one after another, Venkaji consented to surrender half his possession to Sivaji. Within eighteen months Sivaji conquered a territory as large as his original kingdom, and seven hundred miles away from it. When he returned to Rajgadh by way of Bellary, his new conquests were firmly held by a line of fortresses from sea to sea and manned by garrisons devoted to his cause. The wide region was of immense use to the Marathas in their later conflicts with the Mughal Empire.

A little later, Sivaji helped Bijapur to resist the invasion of the Mughal commander Diler Khan. An able Mughal officer Rahmast Khan attacked Sivaji's troops and inflicted heavy losses on them. His son Sambaji deserted to the enemy for a while, but came back disappointed and was put in prison. Sivaji did not long survive these reverses. A small trouble in the knee brought a high fever, and he died on 14 April 1680 at the relatively early age of fifty-three.

By his own effort, he created a large kingdom with an annual revenue of nine crores of rupees. He did this at a time when the Mughal empire was still strong, and was ruled by one of its most energetic and able monarchs.

Sivaji's government was carried on in accordance with the ancient Samskrit books on politics. The Council of State included eight ministers and eighteen departments of public services. There were three provinces each under a Viceroy. The ancient *panchayat* settled almost all civil disputes. Land was carefully measured, and two-fifths of the produce came to be the share of the State. Cultivation was encouraged by advances for the purchase of seed and cattle to new ryots settled on uncultivated lands. The revenue was collected by officers of government and not by contractors. The fighting Marathas, Sivaji himself not excepted, refused to learn the three 'R's, which they held to be unworthy of a soldier.

Discipline was strict in Sivaji's army. No one could take with him his wife or mistress. In case of breach of the rule the penalty was death. The foot-soldiers and the cavalry were carefully organized under different grades of officers. They were paid in cash. Sivaji disliked the *jagir* system. Forts played an important part in the defence system and were maintained in good repair and carefully garrisoned, each fort being put under three officers of equal rank to serve as a check upon one another. Sivaji maintained a good fleet stationed at Kolaba to check the Abyssinian pirates, and to plunder the rich Mughal ships of merchants and pilgrims.

"He made it a rule that whenever his followers went on a raid, they should do no harm to the mosques, the book of God, or the women. Whenever a copy of the sacred Koran came into his

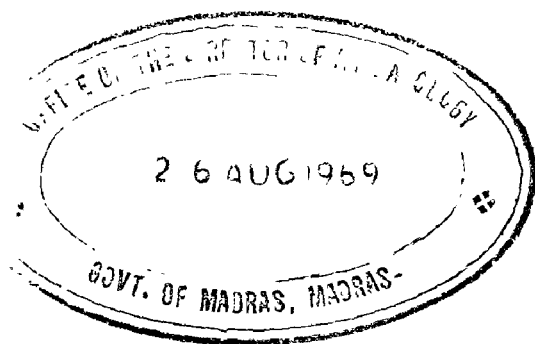


hands he treated it with respect and gave it to some of his Muslim followers. He was careful to maintain the honour of the women and children of the Muhammadans when they fell into his hands. His orders upon this point were strict and any one who disobeyed them was punished."

He was deeply religious. He accepted Tukaram and Ramdas as his guides. He firmly believed that he was the favourite of Goddess Bhavani.

He welded the Marathas into a mighty nation for the defence of Hindu religion and culture.

## NOTES



# ASOKA

## NOTES

- Page 5. Chanakya's Arthasastra is a Samskrit work on  
Politics and Economics.
6. *Bankipore*—close to Patna.  
„ *Distracted*—drew away.
7. *Tanks*—Steel boxes travelling by motor power and  
containing crew and guns.  
„ *Admiralty*—Branch of the government that superin-  
tends the navy.
8. *Girnar in Saurashtra*—Saurashtra is the name given  
to the new State recently formed by combining  
Guzerat with the neighbouring country.  
„ *Was stung by remorse*—repented.
9. *Sangha*—Society of monks.  
„ *Lumbini*—in Gorakhpur Dt., Nepal Terrai (p. 22).  
„ *Bodh Gaya*—E. of Banaras.
10. *Stupa*—Plain hemispherical dome set on a terrace.  
„ *I-tsing*—A Chinese pilgrim who visited the centres  
of Buddhist learning in India and the East Indies  
at the close of the 7th century A.D.
11. Kapilavastu is at present known as Bhulia village  
some distance north of Gorakhpur.  
„ *Kusinagara*—about 32 m. east of Gorakhpur in U.P.  
„ Sravasti was an important ancient city. It is in the  
Gonda Dt., U.P.

- Page 12. *Tissa*—known as ‘Devanampriya Tissa’ the first historical ruler (247-207 B.C.) of Ceylon and contemporary of Asoka.
13. *Relief*—Piece of sculpture  
,, *Sinhalese*—natives of Ceylon.
14. Tamraparani or Tambapanni in Pali; Name of ‘Ceylon’ in Pali language. Equivalent of Taprobane, the Greek name of Ceylon.  
,, *Khatmandu*—Capital of Nepal.  
,, *Chaityas*—Prayer halls or places of worship.
16. *Brahmi script*—Ancient script in the old inscriptions.
17. *An obsession with him*—Anything that fills his mind.
19. *Ahimsa*—kindness to men and animals.
21. *Jarсандха*—See p. 1.  
,, *Garuda*—the divine Eagle on which Vishnu rides.
22. *Terai*—jungle land at the foot of the Himalayas.
23. *Capital*—head of pillar.  
,, V. A. Smith, author of a History of India.  
,, *Bas-reliefs*—shallow carving or sculptures.
24. Bharhut and Sanchi contain stupas on which the story of the Buddha’s life is carved.  
,, *Hsien Tsang*—(or Yuan Chwang), the Master of the Law (of the Buddha) was a Chinese scholar and traveller who was in India about 644 A.D.

### QUESTIONS

1. Describe the extent of Asoka’s empire.
2. How did Asoka spread Buddhism in India and beyond it?
3. Write an account of Asoka’s work as a great builder.

4. What do you know of the Asokan columns and the inscriptions on them?
5. How does Asoka hold his place as the foremost of India's statesmen and heroes?
6. Summarize Asoka's services to Religion and Art?
7. How did Asoka come to be called the beloved of the gods 'Devanampriya'?
8. Can Asoka be called the greatest among the Rulers of India?
9. 'The glory that was Ind.' How did Asoka make it?

# AKBAR

## NOTES

- Page 27. *An heir and hope*—a son to succeed him.
28. *Timur*—a Turkish conqueror who invaded India in 1399. He rivalled Chingiz Khan in cruelty and ferocity.
- „ *Chingiz Khan*—The Great Khan or ruler of the Mongols who invaded India about 1225 A.D.
29. *Tahmasp*—Ruler of Persia.
30. *Sufi-mystics*—Muslim philosophers who thought Islam and Hinduism did not differ so much after all.
32. *Panipat*—where the first battle was fought by Babar in 1526.
- „ *Ghazi*—An Arabic word meaning ‘slayer of infidels.’
35. *Bided his time*—waited.
- „ *Felled*—struck down.
- „ *Miscreant*—vile wretch.
36. *Corrupting influences*—wicked influences.
37. *Overrun*—conquered, spoiled.
38. *The Aravalli Hills*—in Rajasthan.
39. *Mace bearer*—official carrying the staff of authority.
- „ *Gadi*—throne (Hindi).
40. *Fathpur Sikri*—about 25 m. south-west of Agra.
42. *Mansabdars*—From Persian ‘Mansab’ meaning pension.
44. *Vicar-General*—official assisting the Bishop or Archbishop.

- Page 44. *Goa*—Seat of the Portuguese power on the West Coast of India, full of Catholic Churches and Priests.
- „ *Jesuits*—Members of the Society of Jesus, a Roman Catholic Order founded by Loyola in 1533.
46. *Kwaja Muin-ud-din*—a great Muslim saint who lies buried at Ajmere in Rajasthan. The shrine is still a famous place of pilgrimage to pious Muslims. Kwaja Muin-ud-din was the brother of Shaik Salim Chishti who lies buried at Fathpur-Sikri.
- „ *Badauni*, the Muslim historian who lived in Akbar's time. He was a native of Badaun, a town in U.P.
47. *Gall and wormwood*—Bitter, greatly displeasing.
- „ *Kazi*—Civil judge in Muslim countries.
- „ *Jaunpur*—The city of Jaunpur on the Gumti (now in Bihar) was founded by Firuz Shah Tughlak in A.D. 1360.
50. *Zoroastrian practices*—belonging to the religion of the Parsis who are the followers of Zoroaster.
51. *The blows of Time*—the misfortunes that time brings.
52. *Chand Bibi*—the dowager queen of Bijapur who came to Ahmednagar and defended the city against the attacks of Murad, Akbar's son. She was murdered in 1600.
57. *Unfilial conduct*—conduct unworthy of a son or daughter.
58. *Turned to ashes*—came to nothing.
- „ *Sikandara*—about 6 miles from Agra. See p. 60.
- „ *Lawrence Binyon*, author of a fine book on *Akbar*.
59. *Wart*—a small excrescence on the skin.



Page 59. *Radiates*—spreads all around.

„ *Insatiable curiosity*—curiosity that cannot be satisfied.

60. *Tallest tree*—(Figurative) greatest poet.

62. *Manuscripts*—Handwriting was practised as an art in those times.

„ *Saracen*—General name for Arab or Moslem.

„ *Gentile*—Pagan; generally meaning 'Hindu'.

### QUESTIONS

1. Compare Akbar and Asoka as great Indian rulers.

2. Write an account of the progress of Art and Literature in Akbar's time.

3. How did Akbar make himself the friend of all religions?

4. Write what you know of Chand Bibi, Birbal, Abul Fazl, and Todar Mall.

5. Give an account of Akbar's conquests.

6. How did Akbar work for Hindu-Muslim unity?

7. Describe the glory of Akbar's court.

8. What events cast a gloom on Akbar's life?

9. Describe Akbar's person and mode of life.

10. Say how Salim annoyed his father.

# SIVAJI

## NOTES

Page 65. *Strongholds*—forts.

66. *Karli and Ajanta*—Karli near Bombay has the greatest of the rock-cut Chaityas (temples) with its grand hall. Ajanta in North West Hyderabad State has about 27 rock-hewn temples with beautiful sculptures and painting in them.
- „ *Pandarpur*—A famous place of pilgrimage in Bombay State.
- „ *Satavahanas*—About 200 B.C. the early Satavahanas established an empire including the Godavari valley up to Nasik and the Konkan country. Their capital was Paithan on the river Godavari (in modern Aurangabad District, the Nizam's state).
67. *Chalukyas of Badami*—The Chalukyan Kings ruled at Badami in one of the southern districts of the present day Bombay State. The last of the Chalukyans ruled from 746-753 A.D. at Badami. His power was put an end to by Dantidurga, a King of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. The carvings in the temple at Badami are very beautiful and date back to the time of the Chalukyas.
- „ *Kalyani*—Capital of the later Chalukyan kings situated in the Nizam's State or Hyderabad. It was a great and prosperous city about 1100 A.D.

- Page 67. *Yadavas of Devagiri*—The Yadava kings seized the Kingdom of the Chalukyas of Kalyani as far as the river Krishna and founded Devagiri, their capital (modern Daulatabad in the Nizam's State not far from Aurangabad) in 1187 A.D.
- „ Pulikesin II—the most powerful ruler of South India from 608 to 642 A.D. by virtue of his great conquests.
- „ *Jnana Dev*—The great saint known also as Jnaneswara completed his commentary on Bhagavad-gita in Mahrathi on the banks of the Godavari (A.D. 1290).
- „ The Empire of Vijayanagar was established by the brothers Harihara and Bukka with the powerful support of Sage Vidyaranya with its capital Vijayanagar on the south bank of the Tungabhadra in 1336.
68. Alandi near Poona has become a place of pilgrimage after Gnaneswar was buried there.
- „ *Kabir*—a great religious leader born in 1469 in the Lahore District held in veneration by both Hindus and Muslims. He claimed to be 'at once the child of Allāh and of Rām' and wrote beautiful verses in Hindi.
- „ *Namdev*, a well-known Mahratta saint born of a low family.
69. *Alaud-din-Khalji*—Able ruler at Delhi about 1308. It was in his reign that a Muslim invasion of South India was made by Malik Kafur.
70. *Tuljapur*—famous for its temple in honour of goddess Bhavani.

- Page 70. *Malik Amber*—A great soldier who opposed the Mughal Emperor. He died in 1626.
72. *Gosayi*—a religious mendicant.
74. *Falcon*—a bird of prey like a hawk.
- „ *Mentor*—Trusted adviser.
- „ *Kathas*—religious stories.
77. *Savantwadi*—a district in Bombay State now.
79. *Key city*—important city from the military point of view.
- „ *Waning*—going down.
- „ *Abyssinian Siddis*—Dark big looking men from Abyssinia who had become soldiers under the Sultan of Janjira (on the coast of Bombay State).
80. *Gibraltar*—a strong fortress guarding the Mediterranean Sea and belonging to England.
- „ *Mountain rat*—Nickname of Sivaji given to him by the Mughals.
- „ *Wai*—a town on the river Krishna in Bombay State.
81. *Fakir*—a Muslim wandering mendicant.
- „ *Blast*—sound.
82. *Shamiana*—tent or a temporary structure. (Similar to the Tamil word ‘Pandal’)
85. *Thermopylae*—A narrow pass between northern and southern Greece where 300 Spartans under their King Leonidas fought a Persian army ten thousand strong in 490 B.C.
86. *Bastion*—Part of a fortification.
- „ *Privation*—Want of the comforts of life.
- „ *Abhangs*—Popular devotional songs in Marathi.

- Page 87. *Das bodh*—name of a poem written by Ramdas (1608-1681), more philosophical than religious.
88. *Strongest arm*—best defence.
- „ *Bhagavachanda*—The flag of God.
89. *Permits*—written orders.
90. *Crest-fallen*—humbled, dejected.
91. *Resentment*—anger.
92. *Bairagi*—a Hindu religious mendicant.
93. *Turned out*—was brought to view, assembled for duty.
- „ *Har, Har, Mahadev*—The war-cry of the Marathas who believed in Siva or Mahadeva.
- „ *Lion*—ablest fighter Tanaji Malusre.
- „ *Memento*—Object serving as reminder.
- „ *Intercept*—Catch on the way from place to place.
- „ *Chauth*—meaning one-fourth in Marāṭhi.
94. *Sastri*—a learned Brahmin priest.
- „ *Volley after volley*—discharge of gun fire at the same time.
95. *Bednur*—On the Arabian sea coast near Mangalore.
- „ *Holy Shrine of Mallikarjuna*—A great temple of Siva in the Kurnool District of to-day along the Nallamala Hills on the banks of the Krishna and known by the name of Srisailam. The temple has one of the 'Dwadasalingams' and is sacred to Hindus.
96. *Jinji and Vellore*—The fine big forts of both Jinji and Vellore in South India are there even to-day and are visited by many people.

- Page 96. *Kolar and Bangalore*—well known for their forts in the 17th century.
- „ *Bellary*—a fine fort on the big rock was built in later times by Haidar Ali.
97. *The Three R's*—Reading, writing and arithmetic.
- „ *Kolaba*—Southern part of Bombay city.
- „ *The Abyssinian pirates*—the Siddis (see p. 79).
98. *Welded*—united.

### QUESTIONS

1. What account does the author give of the Maratha country?
2. Write what you know of Gnanadev, the Marathi saint.
3. Narrate the story of the life of Shahaji, the father of Sivaji.
4. Under what influences did Sivaji come in his boyhood?
5. Describe the steps by which Sivaji rose to power.
6. How did Sivaji behave towards Aurangzeb?
7. Write in your own words the story of Sivaji's meeting with Afzal Khan.
8. Who were Ramdas and Tukaram? How was Sivaji attached to them?
9. How did Sivaji escape from Agra?
10. How did Sivaji rule his kingdom?
11. Why is Sivaji dear to the hearts of Hindus?
12. Give an account of Sivaji's heroic acts.

