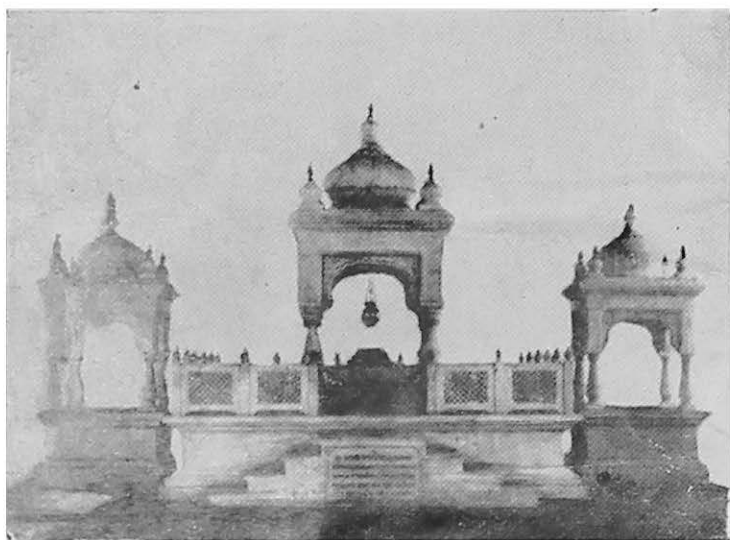


Here Came Swarajya.



**The Samadhi (Cenotaph) at Ambavde of Shri Shankaraj Narayan  
(died 1712 A.D.), the Founder of the Bhor State :  
remodelled in marble, by Shrimant Raja Saheb, in 1934.**

# HERE CAME SWARAJ

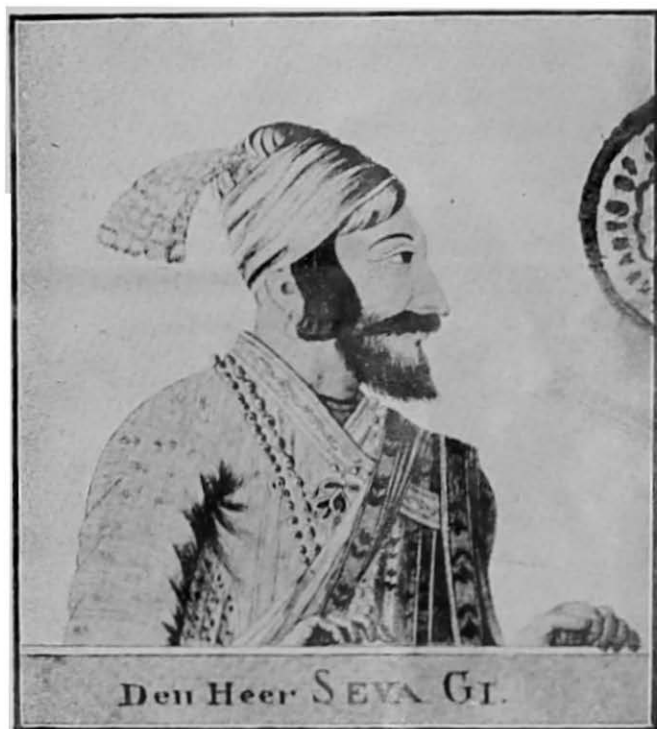
(A guide to places of historical interest  
in the Bhor State)



D. V. KALE, M. A.

**Printed and Published by the Bhor State Press, Bhor.**

**DEDICATED TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF**



**Chhatrapati Shri Shivaji Maharaj,  
The founder of 'Swarajya' in Maharashtra.**

[ By courtesy of Mr. V. S. Bendre ]

**Raja Shrimant Sir Raghunathrao Shankarrao  
Pandit Pant S2chiv, K. C. I. E.**



Who has splendidly shown the way to what should be done  
by enlightened Indian rulers conscious of their historic past.

## P R E F A C E

In every country there are spots held sacred owing to their association with great personalities revered by the nation and every effort is made to preserve and cherish the memories of the great national heroes, poets and great men. In a country like India, with a continuous stream of history and culture running for thousands of years, there should indeed be hundreds of places connected with its historical past. Unfortunately, however, the exact location of places connected with the great empire-builders and makers of India from century to century is not always available, owing to the great distance of time that separates an Ashoka or a Vikramaditya from the modern world. The position as regards the Maratha country and Shivaji the founder of the Maratha State is, however, quite unique in the whole of Indian history. Here are a people, who still proudly keep alive the vivid memory of their successful attempts in founding their own state and have been able to piece together every important contemporary detail of the story. They have reconstructed their history by the most modern methods. The Maratha people's pride in their past achievements, and particularly in the illustrious founder of their state and his wonderful performance, is unbounded. It is thus natural that the three-hundredth Anniversary of the glorious occasion, when first steps were taken by the youthful Shivaji, should have been the occasion of special celebrations, in course of which brochures should have been brought out, describing the historic region, which was the scene of Shivaji's early exploits. Almost the entire area is by a fortunate coincidence included within the modern state of Bhor, founded by one of his cabinet ministers. It is,

consequently, inevitable that the topography of the historical beginnings of the Maratha State should take the form of a gazetteer of the Bhor State.

To the visitor from abroad, who makes his way upcountry from Bombay through the beautiful and well-wooded Western Ghats, the country around Poona, with its bare hills and arid landscape, will strike as tame and hardly make any special appeal. But if he is able to visualise the past, with the aid of guides such as the present one, he will no doubt be fascinated beyond measure at the sight of a region where every hill and dale, fort and pass, is eloquent with the stirring happenings of a glorious past.

Mr. Kale has been a really faithful guide to the place described in the following pages, bringing out the historical role and geographical position of the forts that played such a vital part in Maratha history, very clearly before the mind's eye. He has done more and has explained the why and the wherefore of the historic happenings and the geographical surroundings. He has also given a glimpse of the more ancient past, when under the inspiration of the teachings of the Master of Peace, the hills and dales of the Deccan bristled with cultural activities, and the rich merchants endowed stupas and monasteries for the sojourn of Buddhist monks. The entire picture is completed by a few snaps of the beauty-spots and amenities around the capital of the Bhor State, which are sure to appeal to the modern visitor. Taken on the whole, Mr Kale's pocket guide-book is bound to add immensely to the pleasures of a visit to the unusually interesting area, which may be regarded as the very heart of the Maratha country, having supplied the lifeblood to the illustrious founder of the Maratha State and his associates.

This guide owes its appearance to the generous donations to the 'Hindavi Swarajya Smarak Mandal' by the present



Rajasaheb of Bhor, Raja Shrimant Sir Raghunathrao Shankarrao Pandit Pant Sachiv, K.C.I.E. The entire expenditure of the tercentenary celebrations, the inspiring memorial erected on the Cheladi site and the two guide-books prepared for the occasion, has been defrayed out of the Bhor grant. The Rajasaheb has also been pleased to order that all the principal memorials and historic spots described in this guide be preserved in proper order, and means of access to them be provided and kept in good condition. The Rajasaheb has indeed shown the way to what should be done by enlightened Indian rulers conscious of their historic past and proud of their cultural achievements, which shall ever remain among the most cherished possessions of a people struggling to resume their place among the comity of nations.

K. N. DIKSHIT,

Chairman,

1st January 1946.

Hindavi Swarajya Smarak Mandal.

## CONTENTS

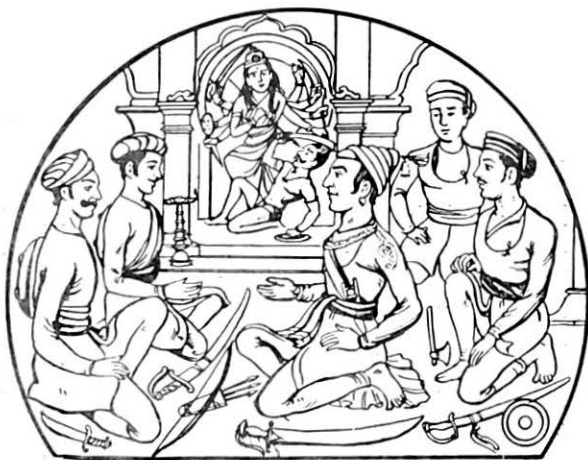
	Page
Preface	... 7
Panels of the Swarajya Stambha	... 12
Inscriptions on the Swarajya Stambha	... 14
See It For Yourself	... 17
1. Your Way Here	... 20
2. Standing Witness	... 24
3. The Royal Fort	... 27
4. The Formidable Stronghold	... 35
5. Rohida, The Beautiful	... 41
6. Rayareshwar Of The Oath	... 45
7. The First Victory	... 51
8. The Why And The Wherefore	... 54
9. The Glory That Was Bhor	... 58
10. And This Is The Capital	... 63
11. A Programme for Sightseers	... 67

## MAP

A Map of the Bhor State and adjoining country showing important places referred to in the book.

( Inside Cover Page No. 3 )

PANELS OF THE SWARAJYA STAMBHA.

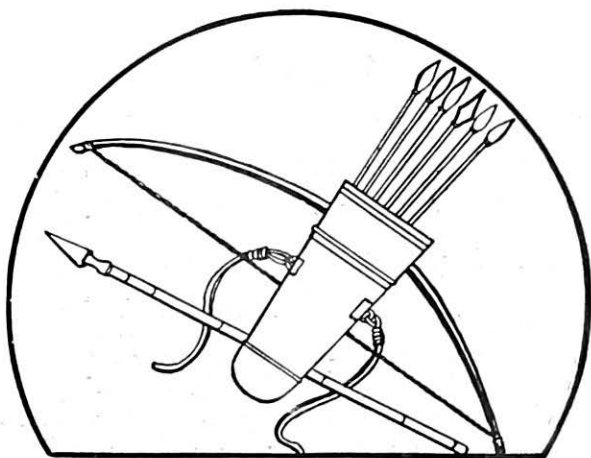


They express their cherished thoughts in the divine presence of Goddess Bhavani—an emblem of the Conception of the Grand Idea.

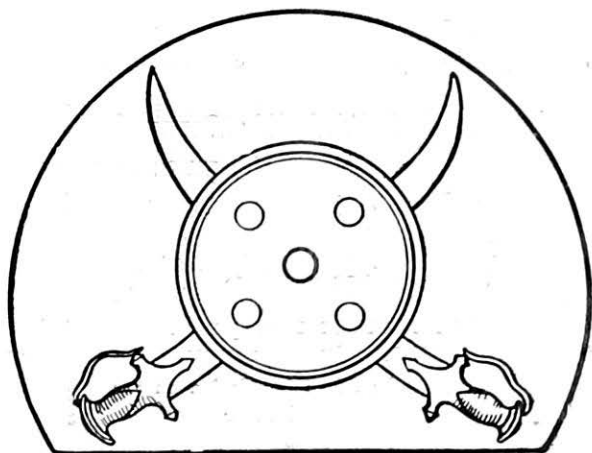


The prophetic seal of Shivaji, confidently asserting the progressive glory of Swarajya—an emblem of Ambition.

PANELS OF THE SWARAJYA STAMBHA.



The Quiver and the Bow—an emblem of Strength and Chivalry.



Cross-swords and Shield—an emblem of Power-Realisation.

## INSCRIPTIONS ON THE SWARAJYA STAMBHA.

महाराष्ट्रांत छत्रपति श्रीशिवाजीमहाराजांनी  
या प्रदेशांत स्वराज्याचा पाया घातला.  
या घटनेच्या त्रिशतसांवत्सरिक उत्सवाचे  
प्रसंगी हा स्मारकस्तंभ भोरचे अधिपति  
श्रीमंत राजे सर रघुनाथराव पंतसचिव  
यांनी शके १८६७ या वर्षी उभारिला.

Text of the Marathi Inscription on the  
Memorial Pillar

महाराष्ट्रके अिसी प्रदेशमें श्रीशिवछत्रपति-  
महाराजने स्वराज्यकी नींव डाली। अिस  
घटनाके त्रिशतसांवत्सरिक महोत्सवके अव-  
सरपर यह स्मारकस्तंभ श्रीराजा सर रघु-  
नाथराव पंतसचिव भोरनरेशने बनवाया है।

Text of the Hindi Inscription on the  
Memorial Pillar

## INSCRIPTIONS ON THE SWARAJYA STAMBHA.

शाकेष्वन्धिरसाष्टचन्द्रगणितेष्वस्मिन्प्रदेशे  
शुभे । यातं वर्षशतत्रयं शिवनृपस्येप्सोः  
स्वराज्यं परात् ॥ इत्थं श्रीरघुनाथराज-  
सचिवेनामन्त्र्य भोरेशिना । स्तम्भः श्री-  
शिवभूपकीर्तिमतुलां प्रख्यापयन्नुच्छ्रितः ॥

Text of the Sanskrit Inscription on the  
Memorial Pillar

This Pillar in commemoration  
of the Tercentenary of the initia-  
tion of Swarajya ( Sovereign  
Maratha State ) by Chhatrapati  
Shivaji the Great, was erected  
by Raja Sir Raghunathrao Pant  
Sachiv of Bhor, in 1946 A. D.

Text of the English Inscription on the  
Memorial Pillar

## ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Correction</i>
p. 12	2	from bottom—	delete 'prophetic' and read 'prophesying' for 'asserting'.
p. 47	2, 3	from top	—read the year 1645 after the date.
p. 66	7, 8	from top	—read 'Jhenda' for 'Zenda'.
p. 68	2	from bottom—	read 'cenotaph' for 'tomb'.
p. 69	3	from bottom—	before 'from' add 'or Daru-mandap = wooden pavilion';
p. 69	9	from top	—read 'Lord of the forest' for 'Jungle god'.
p. 70	7	from top	—read 'A busy' for 'An active'.
p. 71	2	from bottom—	before 'not' add 'legend has it that this was the place in Dandakaranya, where Jatayu met his death in the struggle with Ravana';
p. 76	11	from bottom—	read 'Pavana-maval' for 'Pounmaval'.

*Note* :—Panels on the Swarājya-stambha printed on pp. 12-13 are only symbolic drawings; the pictures on pp. 45, 51 and 53 are imaginary compositions, drawn in conformity with certain details gleaned from contemporary references and the *Shivabharata*.

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## SEE IT FOR YOURSELF

Dear Visitor,

You see before you the tercentenary memorial erected to commemorate the initiation or rather the birth of the idea of 'Swaraj' in the blessed land you see around you. It was Shivaji the Great who first thought of it. It was he who cherished it through thick and thin. And it was he who realised it in his own coronation as the first Chhātrapati (Sovereign) in Maharashtra after a considerable lapse of time.

It is not possible to assign an exact date to the birth of the idea of Swaraj, or to the birth of any idea, for the matter of that; nor is it possible to point to any particular incident or incidents which set the limits either way. But one can breathe it in the air, as the contemporaries must have done at the time, and almost feel the subtle influences at work. Students bear testimony to them and scholars have dealt with them at some length. It is neither practicable nor necessary here to cover the ground over again.

The idea of suitably celebrating the tercentenary of the Maratha Swaraj was mooted in August, 1944. A representative committee of distinguished personages like Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, retired Director-General of Archaeology, and Mr. N. C. Kelkar requested Shrimant Rajasaheb of Bhōr to help the Committee in this noble cause and I am glad to say that the Raja Saheb readily responded. A donation to the tune of Rs. 15,000 was sanctioned with a



view to enable the Committee to carry out the programme. It was two-fold, one item being holding a meeting and providing meals, mainly to the descendants of Shivaji's Mavlas, that would assemble on that day and the other, raising a permanent memorial to commemorate the occasion and to publish, in Marathi and in English, Guides to Shivaji's forts and other connected places.

The first item is already carried out as those celebrations were successfully held at the end of May 1945, at Nasarapur. The Foundation Stone of the memorial was then laid at the hands of Shrimant Raja Saheb of Bhore, in whose territory lie the memorable forts like Torna and Rajgad, and places like Rayareshwar, mentioned in the guide. The function was largely attended and enjoyed by the descendants of Shivaji's Mavla compatriots, who live under the benign rule of the enlightened Chief.

The site selected for this memorial is admirably suited inasmuch as it lies at the crossroads. The road leading to Rajgad and Torna branches off at this point, which comes so close to the projected national highway. This memorial will soon be opened and will be the cherished possession of the Bhore State, the Founder of which, Shri Shankaraji Narayan, dedicated his whole life to the cause of the Maratha Empire in its critical period during the regime of Rajaram Maharaj, the second son of Shivaji the Great.

The invading Mughal armies had captured important forts commanding the Deccan territory after the demise of Shivaji; but Shankaraji Narayan after a strenuous fight recaptured the lost forts and territory. Territory thus retaken was given in jahagir to him by Rajaram Maharaj, who also conferred on him the distinguished office of Pant Sachiv, one of the important ministerial portfolios in the then Maratha Cabinet.

This is only a modest attempt. War conditions necessarily impose great restrictions. And these severely limit both the extent and the scope of what, in ordinary times, would have been a detailed guide and a concise history of the 'Birth-place of Swaraj'. As matters stand to-day, I have to be content with merely interesting you in only some of the places connected with the early career of Shivaji—the period of inception *par excellence*. If you find your interest roused and if you feel like undertaking a pilgrimage to the various places, my purpose is served.

You have to make up your mind before you think of such a venture. It is not going to be a pleasure trip. Most of the distance, at least the major part of it, you have to go on foot. Sight-seeing in this hallowed land is not quick mileage or first class hotels. 'It is not a material thing, but a spiritual and idealistic experience.'

Perhaps you decide to undertake this pilgrimage. Then I know that you belong to that fraternity which prefers internal to external enjoyment. People select places for their scenic beauty; you will be visiting them mainly for their historical associations.

Ever yours,

D. V. KALE.

## I. YOUR WAY HERE

Bombay is the Gateway of India. Poona is the centre of Maharashtra. So is Bhor the hub of Swaraj, the sovereign Maratha state, founded by Shivaji.

In Poona you get a glimpse of the hero's boy-hood. Poona formed part of his father's jahagir. Since his twelfth year he was commissioned by his father, who was then in the Karnatak, to stay in Maharashtra, evidently as his representative. He lived in Poona (1649-1655) in a palace, 'Lal-Mahal,' not far from the centre of Poona. From Poona you can have a distant view of the famous Sinhagad.

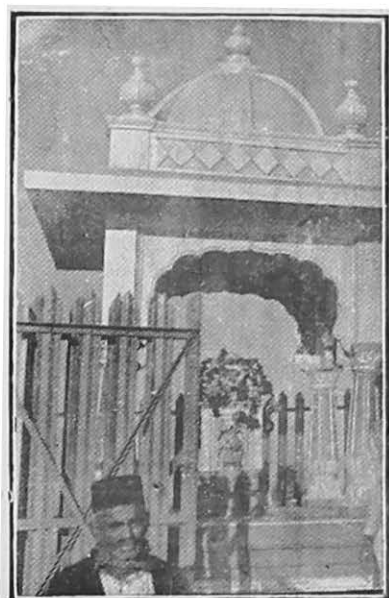


Sinhagad, Kalyan Darawaja.

And from Poona you can have a glimpse of Prachandgad.

Just pause for a moment as you cross the Lakdi bridge. Look to the south-west and your eyes rest upon the flat-topped Sinha-gad or the lion-fort (18 miles), well known for

its memorial to the immortal Tanaji Malusare. Close by you



Sinhgad, Tanaji Memorial.

see another eminence in the background. That is Torna or Prachandgad. Rajgad, the companion fort, which is only 3 miles from Torna and in the same range, is obscured by Sinhgad and cannot be seen from Poona. Hikers can even now find their way directly from Poona to these forts 'over hill and dale. But the commonest way is to take the Satara Road and follow a rather circuitous way.

Motoring for about twelve miles from Poona, you make a petty halt at Khed-Shivapur. You see on both the sides rows of mango trees, the celebrated mango grove planted by Dadoji, Shivaji's tutor. The Shivapur mango bears a good name in Poona market.

Shivapur was named after Shivaji. The old name was Khede Bare. Da'oji Kondadev caused a suitable *wada* or house to be built for his young ward and his mother Jijabai, who stayed there off and on between 1636 and 1641. Sinhagad is very close, almost an hour's walk or a few minutes' ride; Khede Bare was an ideal place for the instruction of a political aspirant.

Eight miles more and you come to Cheladi, an unpretentious village, from which branches the road that takes you towards Rajgad and Torna.

Cheladi need no longer remain only the humble pointer



Cheladi, Original Site.

to the heart of Shivaji's early exploits. It is the proud site of the *Swarajya-Stambha* (Swarajya-Pillar), erected in

honour of the initial steps taken by the founder of *Hindavi Swarajya*. The site is well-chosen. The memorial has a commanding position on an arterial road, which is regarded as a national highway. At the foot of a low hillock, it stands on the grassy slopes, and can be descried from a long distance on the Poona Bangalore Road. The hill top affords a view of the surrounding forts and region reminiscent of the then budding spirit of independence and valour.

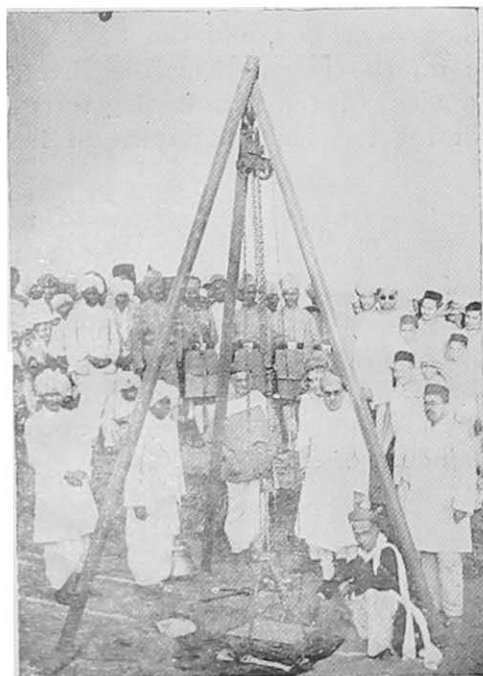
The memorial is situated in a stretch of territory belonging to the Bhore State, which is one of the strong links with the past of Maharashtra. It is a standing witness to the judicious munificence of the present enlightened ruler, Raja Shrimant Sir Raghunathrao Shankarrao Pandit Pant Sachiva, K. C. I. E. What can be more befitting than the erection of such a memorial by the occupant of the *gadi* of an important minister of the great Shivaji?



Facsimile of Shivaji's seal, enlarged 2.25 times the actual size.

## II. STANDING WITNESS

Hats off to the very first memorial of its kind in the



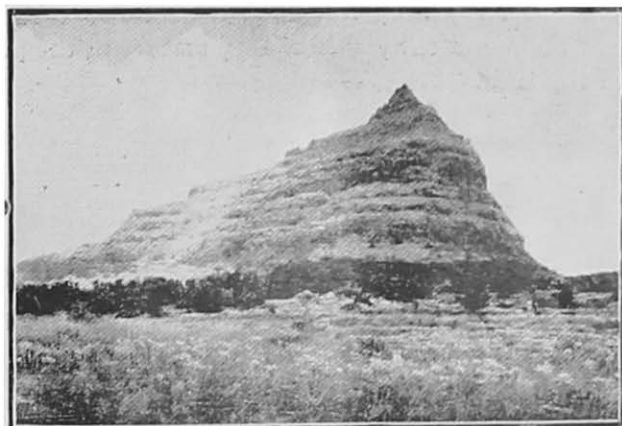
Shrimant Rajasaheb of Bhor, laying the Foundation Stone of the Memorial, 27th May 1945.

whole of India ! Stand reverently before it. Admire its unassuming yet dignified simplicity and say if it is not in keeping with the rugged severity of the rocky mountains that has imparted its tone to the spirit of the Maratha people. Study the inscriptions and the panels on the four faces of the eighteen-feet pillar, get to the top of the adjoining hill and breathe in the invigorating breeze wafted from the immortal scenes of the juvenile exploits of Shivaji. They are all within ten to fifteen miles from where you stand.

Now set-your compass and spread your pocket map. Within a few degrees of the north-west lies Sinhagad, towering above the hill range, you have just crossed in the *Katraj ghat*. Almost due west you can see two wings of Torna and the hump of Rajgad, if you walk but a few yards to the north. Sinhagad is obstructed from view by hills; but Torna and Rajgad can be seen through chance gaps. East-north-east, you can easily recognise the dominating height of Purandar, now easily motorable upto the fort wall.

Were it possible to overcome the limit to our eyerange and see through the surrounding cordon of hillranges, we could see fort Rohida to the south, and the extensive plateau of *Murha* Rayareshwar about south-south-west. Almost to the south-east on the bank of the river Neera and on the junction of the Bangalore road with the Mahad-Pandharpur road, lies the ancient town of Shirawal.

Mahableshtar and Pratapgad lie still further behind Rohida and Rayareshwar. Tunga (the lofty) and Tikona



Fort Tunga, From a Distance.





Fort Tikona.

(the triangular), two other mountain fastnesses famed in Maratha History would come behind Sinhagad. Raygad, Shivaji's latter-day capital, would be due west of Rajgad.

These are important names. Do they mean nothing to you ?

They are names to conjure with. They have played an important and an unforgettable part. Let me take you to some of them and tell you how they feature in the proud annals of the land.

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### III. THE ROYAL FORT



Rajgad, The Pali or Western Gate.

You are already about 22 miles from Poona. About 13 miles more by the Nasrapur-Velhe metalled road, and you come to a point where you can no more use any vehicle. Trekking for about 5 miles via Vajeghar and Pimpri you enter Rajgad by the Pali or western gate. There are two more gates—the Gunjan gate and Alu gate. The Pali gate takes you to Padmavati or the northern *machi*,\* the Gunjan gate takes you via the village as also the rivulet Gunjavani, to the Suvela or south-eastern *machi*, and the Alu gate to the Sanjivani or the south-western *machi*.

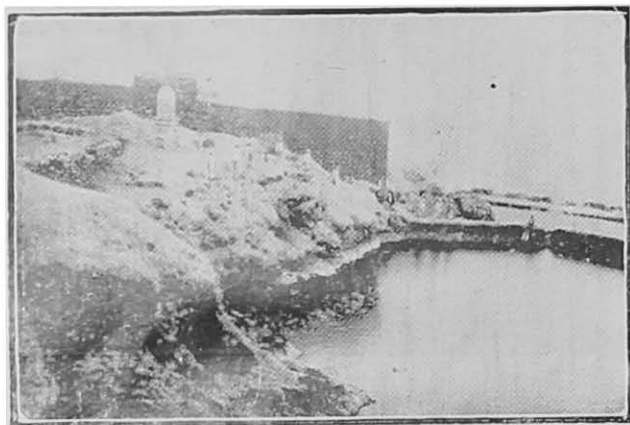
The fort has a striking shape, being almost like a three-bladed propeller or fan. The *bale-killa*‡ occupies the boss

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\* *मार्च* (from Sanskrit *मंच* = a bedstead) means a plateau or level ground occurring at the foot or between the foot and summit of a mountain. (Molesworth).

‡ *बालेकिला* (Persian) is the highest portion of the works of a hillfort; the upper fort. (Molesworth).

and rises 4574 feet above sea level. And the three *machis* are the three hill arms extending from the centre for about 4, 7 and 7 furlongs respectively. The stronghold seems to have existed long before Shivaji. But most probably it was a bare



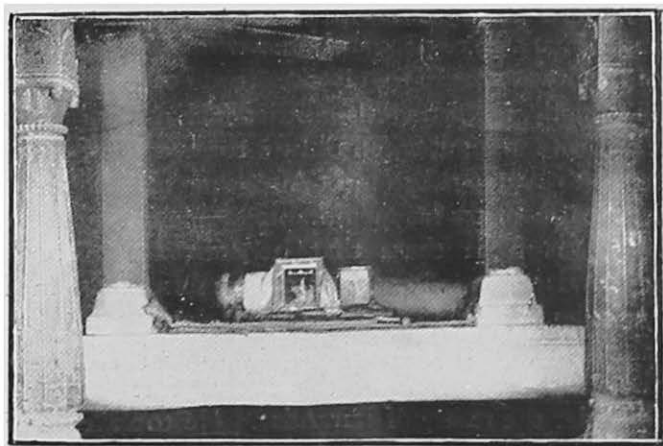
Rajgad, Padmavati Tank on the Padmavati Machi.

peak and could hardly have afforded accommodation for a score of huts. The three hill arms, moreover, provided an easy approach and its position could not be considered impregnable. It was Shivaji who fortified these *machis* and rendered Rajgad invincible. With the peculiar formation of the hills and the isolated position of the new fortifications, the resulting structure came to be regarded as four independent forts and are so referred to in the available lists of forts, and what is more, were entrusted to four different officials.

The construction of the fort extended naturally over a long period and went on probably intermittently between the years 1656 and 1663. This gives us some measure of the time and expenditure that could be bestowed upon individual fortifications in Shivaji's days. When we remember

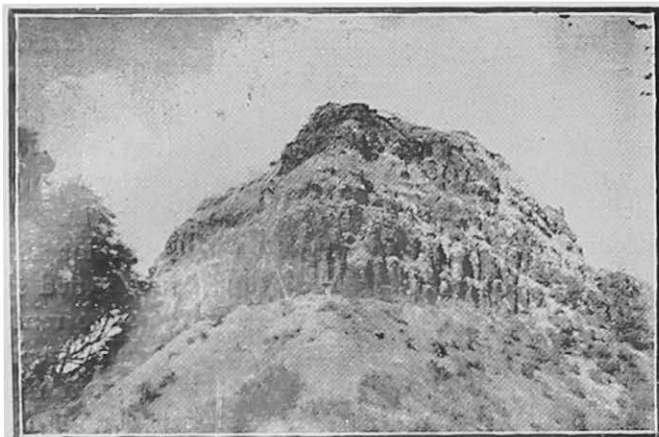
that during his active career of over 30 years, Shivaji must have built or strengthened no less than 60 such hillforts, we can at once form an idea of the extent to which the resources of the budding Maratha State were spent on this vital factor, the factor on which it depended for its very existence.

Rajgad could very well be regarded a typical instance of a hillfort. Being guarded on every side by hillranges, and with an ample living space on its plateaux and a copious water-supply, it was a stronghold after Shivaji's heart. He strongly fortified it, named it Rajgad i.e the Royal Fort, and made it his exclusive capital for a dozen years (1658-1670), until security reasons drove him to adopt the inaccessible Rayagad as his capital, where he got himself crowned in all formality. Even when the expansion of the state rendered it necessary to undertake new strongholds in all directions, and it was imperative on him to move about from fort to fort, Rajgad, the scene of his earlier exploits continued to have a hold on his mind, and he seems to have found time to spend a few days occasionally on this first hill capital.



Fajgad, Location of Shivaji's seat in the Sadar.

Rajgad is naturally associated with a number of happenings in Shivaji's eventful life. Afzalkhan's head is said to have been deposited in a frame-work in a niche in the entrance to the *bale-kill*. It is significant of Maratha



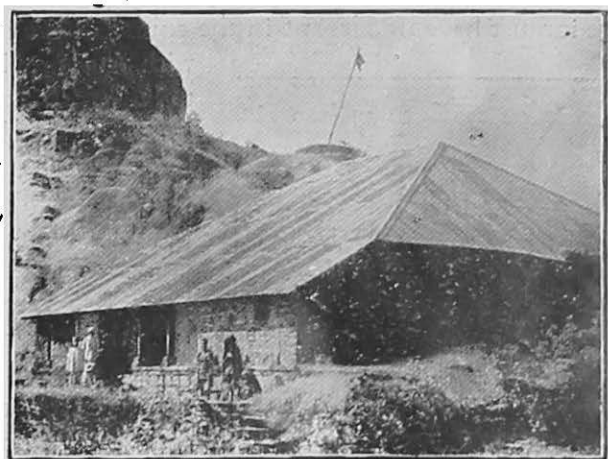
Rajgad, Bale-Killa.

chivalry that the head of the Bijapur general was treated with every mark of respect and even worshipped ; and offerings of food were made to it in the Hindu orthodox manner. Shivaji's family, including his mother Jijabai were at Rajgad at the critical moment, when Shivaji took leave of them and proceeded to Pratapgad to meet Afzalkhan. It was to Rajgad that he repaired after his memorable escape from Panhala in 1660. It was from there that he started for Poona, to execute his daring night assault on Shahistakhan in 1663. Two years later he had devised from Rajgad, plans how to meet and win over the Imperial commander Jaysing. Rajgad was the most important of the twelve forts retained by Shivaji under the treaty of Purandar. He took leave of his mother at Rajgad for going to Agra with his son Sambhaji, and evidently it was to Rajgad, that he returned from this

thrilling adventure, which almost cost him his life. His son Rajaram, who was to play such an important part in the critical days of the all-out invasion by Aurangzeb, after the gruesome slaughter of Sambhaji, was born at Rajgad in 1670. It was no wonder, therefore, that Rajgad was ever uppermost in Shivaji's thoughts.

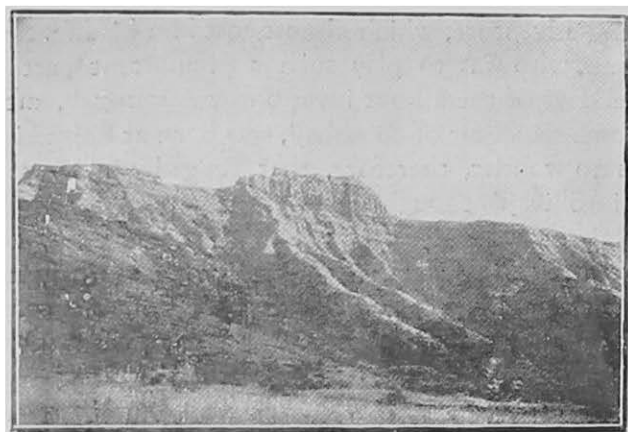
Rajgad owes its importance to Shivaji and may be said to be entirely his own creation. It is rich in early associations with the Maratha hero and affords ample scope for imagining the bustle and pomp in the days, when it was the hub of activity of the youthful Maratha Kingdom.

Very little now remains of its old buildings. A few remnants—such as the old *sadar* or Shivaji's secretariate,



Rajgad. The Sadar. A portion of the Bale-Killa is seen to the left. a couple of houses of the old dignitaries of the fort-capital, now providing shelter for the few servants of the Bhor State, and two or three simple temples courageously brave the inclemencies of the rather severe monsoon.

Much of the *enceinte* or girdle wall of the multiple fort is intact and capable of being studied, in spite of the



Rajgad, Full view from the West.

damage it must have undergone in the course of the struggle with Aurangzeb (1689 to 1704), during which time it exchanged hands at least four times. The Bhagirathi temple on the *Suvela machi* seems to have been desecrated during these troublous times.



There are some very interesting constructional features in evidence. Portions of the outer wall of a bastion are protected by subsidiary walls or barbicans erected at a short distance from the base and only

The Bhagirathi Image, *Suvela Machi*, Rajgad.

about 5 feet high. They afford additional protection and cover for the defender, besides acting as a retaining wall to the principal bastion. It is appropriately named as *chilkhat*



Rajgad, Suvela Machi Deep *chilkhat* in the Foreground.

or armour. A very interesting form of *chilkhat* or protective walling is to be seen on the inner side. Inside the outer wall there is another, leaving a deep recess between the two, for a considerable distance, affording moving and standing room for the defenders. Safe in this underground passage, they could charge from the lower rows of loopholes or could walk through tunnels in the bastions to the outer *chilkhats*. In the last resort it

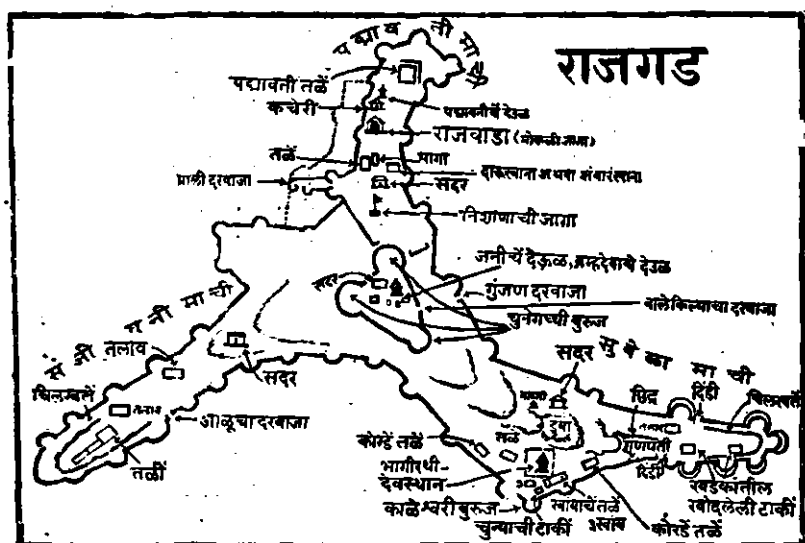
could afford a hiding place for springing up a surprise on an unwary intruder.

Rajgad was included in the territory of the Pant Sachiv ever since 1704, when it was reconquered for the last time, by Shankaraji Narayan, the founder of the Bhor State.

It is but natural that forts constituted the centre of administration in Maratha times. This interesting feature is still maintained in the Bhor State, four out of its five divisions being named after hill-forts. The fort was the capital. All principal offices were at first located within or



near the fort. In peaceful days the protection of the fort was no longer required, and the offices were removed to more accessible places, only petty garrisons being maintained on the forts. Their names are still retained for the respective subdivisions, as a relic of the old administrative system and the importance of the forts in the old order of things. The Raja spends a considerable amount annually on the celebration of festivals in honour of deities, thus helping to keep up public interest in these lofty memorials of a bygone age, and an occasional visit to some of the forts by the enlightened Raja is by no means a rare occurrence.

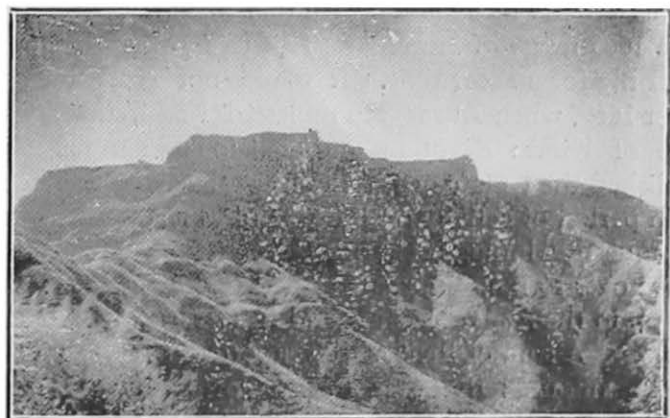


Rajgad, A Sketch Map.

It is interesting to observe the position of Rajgad in relation to some of the prominent forts and landmarks. The great Sinhagad can be seen roughly to the north; historic Purandar is almost due east; beautiful Rohida is to the south-east and the *Murha* Rayareshwar to the south. Lake Whiting caused by the Bhatghar or Lloyd Dam across the Velvandi river, can be seen to the south and south-east of the fort. A footpath and waterway across the lake is used as a shortcut to Rajgad by visitors from Bhor. Torna or Prachandgad is almost north-west. It is to Torna, therefore, that we shall now turn.

#### IV. THE FORMIDABLE STRONGHOLD

A silhouette of a motor-lorry with a bush on top is how Torna strikes anyone looking at it from the east or



Prachandgad, Full view from the West.

the Poona-Bhor side. There seems nothing extraordinary about it, and this impression persists until one comes to Velhe, at its very foot. As soon, however, as you get a nearer view and begin to approach the fort, you realise how precipitous is the way leading to the main gate. The fort is inaccessible and was rightly christened Prachandgad (formidable fort) by Shivaji about 1656, when he is said to have renamed some of his forts.

The fort could not fall except by negotiations and Grant Duff mentions that Shivaji "held communication with the killadar of Torna (who was then under Bijapur) and by means, the particulars of which are not known, induced him to give over the place" (Vol. I, p. 110). This according to some, is the very first exploit of Shivaji, and the tangible result of the spirit of rebellion, he had instilled

among the youth of the country. Hence the great importance attached to this hillfort.

Torna is mentioned in old documents. It is mentioned as undergoing repairs when Rajgad was being constructed, and was left to Shivaji along with that fort and ten others, by the 1665 treaty of Purandar. This treaty with Aurangzeb lasted only for a short time. It could not continue after August 1669, when Aurangzeb molested Kashi, the age-old centre of Hindu devotion and religious pilgrimage and demolished the temple of Kashi Vishweshwar. Then begins a fresh period of activity on the part of Shivaji and a series of conquests, winning back, one by one, from the 23 forts handed over to the Mughals in 1665. A treasure fund is built up in the *mahals*. All round repairs are ordered at all the forts. A sum of Rs. 5,000 is allotted to Prachandgad and like amounts to other forts. Torna did feature to some extent in the bitter struggle that followed Sambhaji's tragic end. The then Pant Sachiv is said to be administering the territory from this fort in 1703. Since then it forms part of his jahagir, charge and possession. It gives its name to a Taluka, though the offices are stationed at Velhe.

Visitors to Torna now approach it by the Poona-Nasrapur-Velhe road. Velhe is about 42 miles from Poona. It is only five-six miles from Rajgad by a footpath. Before the days of the cart road to Velhe, people from Poona followed the Sinhagad road upto a point about 2 miles from Khadakvasla, crossed a hill, descended into the valley of the Kanand river and thus reached Velhe, which about 1880 A.D. was called Peth. "It took three hours," says James Douglas, "walking, climbing and scrambling" up the hill.\* "The long flight of almost perpendicular steps for about three hundred feet was worn and much displaced," he

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\* "Book of Bombay", p. 374.

complaints. The conditions are very much better now. The steps are provided with iron railing. The pathway is repaired and cleared; so much so that one can reach the fort within less than an hour and a half.

Let James Douglas describe the fort for you. "Owing



Prachandgad, Binidarwaja, A Veritable  
'Strength of Stone'.

to the angle of ascent, the gateway—as it is the case in many forts—is quite invisible to the eye, until we are within a few feet of it and in one instance the rock juts out sheer over our heads... The folding spiked doors are enclosed by a fine piece of arched masonry, a veritable "strength of stone or munition of rocks."

"It is a curious recess, formed by nature between two scarped rocks. At some geologic period, the crest of Torna had been rent asunder, leaving

this cleft, 'the door of Torna' in the rock."

This is poetical exaggeration. The cleft is man-made. It is the result of a wonderful cooperation between man's ingenuity and nature's difficulty.

Curiously enough Torna, which is so much made of by Grant Duff and those who depend on him, is not given

so much importance either by Marathi or Persian records.



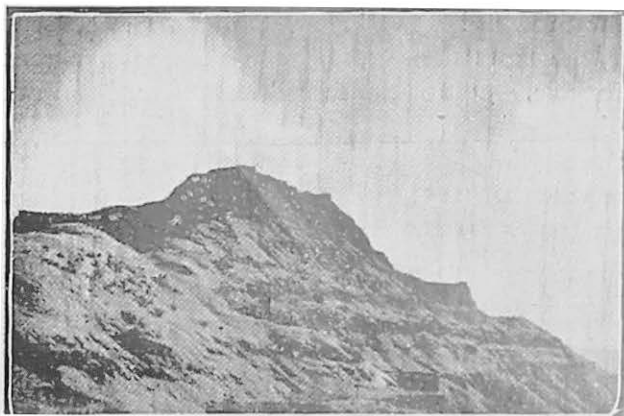
Prachandgad, Flight of Steps in the  
Rampart on Rising Ground.

Persian MSS. do mention Rajgad, Lohagad and even the petty fortalices like Tunga and Tikona. Nowhere, however, do they seem to mention Torna. The trite pun, therefore, that Shivaji adored the temple of Swaraj by the auspicious festive garland (तोरण) of Torna appears quite unfounded. Shivaji himself does not seem to have attached any significance to that name; or he would not have changed it to the matter-of-fact 'Prachandgad'.

Torna is by all means well worth a visit. It is a fine specimen of a fortified hillock standing guard over the unruly elements in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Many complaints were lodged with the Subhedars and Havalgars as to how turbulent neighbours found refuge in the fort and escaped condign punishment.

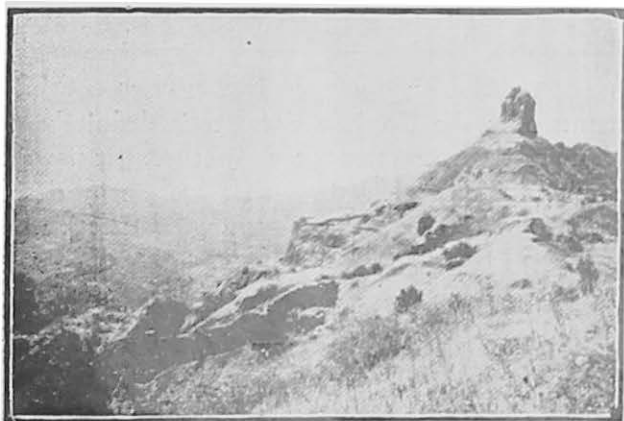
Though Prachandgad gives its name to a Taluka, there is no one to be found who can correctly name the bastions, gates and watches. It is thus difficult to identify the few names that occur in certain available documents, and only a general idea can be given here.

The central fort which you enter by the much famed



Prachandgad, Bale-Killa.

gate is of course the Bale Killa. Extending from the south-west to the south-east, it provides a walk of nearly a mile and a half from end to end. The north-east extension is the Zunjarmalla māchi and the south-western one is the Budhla māchi. There are in all 6 shrines, 7 *metas* (watches



Prachandgad, Budhla Machi.



## V. ROHIDA, THE BEAUTIFUL

Rohida is very near Bhor. Five and a half miles' pleasant walk in the morning or a ride in the bullock-cart



Fort Rohida, The Triple Entrance.

brings you to Bajar-wadi, via Bhambawdi and Hatnoshi. Bajarwadi is just near the foot of the hill. An ascent of a mile and a half finds you negotiating the only gateway to the fort. It is a fine specimen of the usual triple variety. Judging distances by the eye, the main entrance lies somewhere about the middle of the eastern face of the rampart, that side of the hill being comparatively more accessible than the rest.

The fort is shaped somewhat like an egg, or more like a glaxo milk-feeding bottle. It is about two furlongs from north to south and less than a furlong from west to east and can be traversed in a very short time. It seems to be all bastions with scarcely any considerable length of curtain wall joining their flanks. The bastions, consequently, are



almost round, as they require to be held together by themselves, and at places seem to give way.

No one knows what the name Rohida means; nor can it be said definitely when the fort came into being. Rohida might have been derived from the Sanskrit-word *rohita* (red), signifying the red colour of the earth round about.



Fort Rohida : A General View.

Shivaji later changed it to Vichitragad. Why he should have called it *vichitra* (strange) is more than one can imagine and I am inclined to take *vichitra* to mean spotted, painted, beautiful, lovely, wonderful, as found in the lexicon. The lovely wee fort might well have struck the imagination of even a serious statesman.

Rajgad, Torna, Sinhagad, Kenjala, Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani can all be spotted from Rohida. Purandar, of course the hero of the group, dominates the whole of the Rohid-khora (valley) and the Shirawala-desh (region). Wherever you move the twin-top fort looms large with all its majesty and commanding height and the more you

study the topography of the region, you understand how it controls the old Poona-Pandharpur i.e. the new Poona-Bangalore road.

Rohida is but an outpost when compared with Sinhagad and Purandar, and so was it treated by the invaders of the nascent Swarajya of Shivaji. Shahistakhan in 1660, Jaysing in 1665, Aurangzeb in 1690 all passed by the same road and resorted to the same tactics of reducing minor forts like Rohida on their way.

Rohida, however, features a good deal in the annals of the brave Sachiv family. Shankaraji Narayan the founder



Fort Rohida. The Gate with the Inscriptions, dated 1656 A.D., on either side (one in Marathi and the other in Persian).

recovered this and the other forts nearby from the clutches of Aurangzeb about 1692. Everyone of these was won

after great struggle, and bestowed upon the hero of the epic fight. Rohida was a favourite resort of the earlier Sachivs. They lived in Nere and Varodi near Rohida, before the capital was removed to Bhor. The well-known Ram-Navami festival, now celebrated with great pomp and eclat at Bhor, used to be performed on Rohida, as early as 1720 A. D. Ambawda, the hallowed site of the shrine of the founder is very near Rohida, and it is believed that he took the last leave of his beloved kingdom from that stronghold.

Rohida recently attained celebrity owing to a misconception. As popular fancy had invested Torna with the halo of being the very first military conquest of Shivaji so had it sanctified this fort as the place where Shivaji and his friends took the oath of 'Hindavi Swarajya'. The ignorant scribe copied 'Rohideshwar' in the place of 'Rayareshwar'; and what wonder that the God Rohideshwar was associated with the fort Rohida! But now that the truth is known, we must visit Rayareshwar, on that count.

Rohida (Vichitragad) gives its name to a Taluka in the Bhor State, whose capital now is Shirawal, an important ancient place standing at the junction of the Poona-Wai and Poona-Bangalore roads. The capital, Bhor, is also in the same Taluka. To Bhor, then, we must return as there is no other convenient way to Rayareshwar.

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## VI. RAYARESHWAR OF THE OATH



The Sacred Oath before Rayareshwar.

The whole of the Bhor State, especially the part above the Ghats, is rich in associations with Shivaji's early life and activities. It is *par excellence* the region of the *mavals* and still boasts of the old nomenclature of the *murhas* and the *rhoras* (summits and valleys). Scions of old reputed families, like the Kanks, Malusares and Pasalkars, the descendants of the Jedhes, Bandals, Khopdes, the friendly Deshmukhs and the helpful Prabhu Deshpandes, who stood by Shivaji through thick and thin, are to be found everywhere among the peaceful subjects of the State. There is no place that has not played a part in the early career of Shivaji. The

whole of the Bhor State proper, as also the adjoining region, is thus historically interesting. There would be nothing to choose between place and place. Cheladi, in this sense, is as deserving a place as any other, of the honour of a memorial to the initiation of the Maratha Swarajya.\* And yet for a conscientious historical investigator Rayareshwar holds special attraction as the birthplace of the Maratha Swarajya.

Shivaji was, of course, the undoubted originator of the brilliant idea. He and a few of his trusted companions met in the august presence of the divine inmate of the lonely sanctuary which is shrouded in mist for a considerable part of the year, and gravely, though in the full faith of the child that is the father of the able and the ambitious pioneer, pledged their word to each other. It is not known when exactly they met, how many of them or who definitely came together, how on earth they brought about the meeting or in what exact words they gave expression to their most cherished thoughts. As matters stand, the evidence of such an occurrence is very meagre or almost nothing as the fastidious researcher would say. What little we have is only circumstantial and inferential, if we may say so.

The late Mr. V. K. Rajwade published in 1912 what seems to be the purport, put down from memory, of a document, which, the writer says, he had in his possession. The document was a communication from an Adilshahi officer chastising one Dadaji Naras Prabhu for complicity in Shivaji's rebellion. About a thousand or twelve hundred youths are reported to have flocked to Shivaji's standard, Dadaji's complicity was reported by his compatriots to the Thanadar of Shirawal, on hearing of which, Dadaji is said to have fled, evidently to escape punishment. The officer,

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\* It has, however, a special claim to that distinction, inasmuch as it formed part of the small subdivision of Shahaji's Jahagir, called Khedebare, parcelled out by him about 1646 and committed to Shivaji's charge, to afford him training in practical administration.

therefore, exhorts Dadaji to return to his charge. This letter is dated 1645 May 31.

Another letter of an earlier date, 1645 April 17, is a copy of Shivaji's own letter to Dadaji, assuring him of his support and asking him to give courage to his father, who was naturally anxious about the consequences. It is in this document that the most important words from Shivaji occur. Shivaji says, "You are not faithless to the Shaha, nor are we. Shri Rayareshwar in your *khora*, your family deity, self-existent on the plateau near Sahyadri, has granted success to us. And it is certain that he is going to crown all our ambitions with success by developing *Hindavi Swarajya* in the near future. We have pledged our faith to each other—*Rajashri Dadajipant* (Dadoji Kondadeva) was there to mediate. That pledge is as firm as adamant. It will be observed by us and our successors, and will be binding upon us as regards the continuation of your *watan* and all such matters. **It is the will of God that this State should come into being. Do inspire this faith into the heart of your father.**"\*

These are significant words, and if the document be true and genuine, there is every reason to believe that it represents the real state of Shivaji's and his compatriots' minds.

But there is another evidence, which though rather indirect is more reliable. Letters of Mahomad Adilshah dated August 1644, speak of Shahaji and his attorney Dadoji as virtual rebels. The farmans call for heavy punishment on all the relatives and associates of that renegade Shahaji.† This sheds light on how exasperating the relations between Shahaji and the Bijapur ruler had become about that time.

Another piece of evidence is equally or perhaps even more conclusive. That Shivaji or somebody in the name of Shivaji had begun independent rule in the Khedebare and

\* Rajwade, Vol. XV, letters 269, 263.

† Sir J. Sarkar, Ind. Hist. Quarterly VII, p. 362-4.

had assumed powers of dispensing justice, is borne out by a genuine *khurdakhat* of 28th June 1646.\* The *khurdakhat* is issued from the office of Raja Shivaji and bears the extraordinarily eloquent, significant, poetical and ambitious seal, which has become so famous ever since its discovery. "This here shines," announces the immaculate Sanskrit couplet on the hexagonal seal, "for the good of the world, the universally honoured sealmark of Shivaji, the son of Shahaji. It waxes apace just like the digit of the moon, of the first day of the bright half of the month, develops from day to day." This is the very first document of its kind *so far discovered*. And even though there is no document discovered *so far* of any earlier date, there is absolutely no reason to prevent our taking this to be only one of a series that might have begun earlier. There is evidence that things happened to estrange relations between Shivaji and the Adilshah; and the range of time covers, from the evidence before us, nearly two years from 1644 to 1646. The real beginning may well be somewhere about the middle of 1645. The evidence is not quite 'conclusive' as the term goes. But to us it seems very nearly conclusive, so far as at least the initiation of the idea of Swarajya (i.e. independence) is concerned.

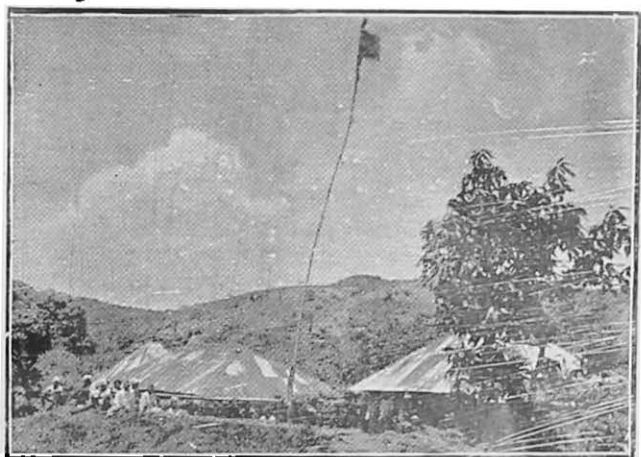
The association of Rayareshwar with the oath of Swaraj is only based upon that one letter given by Rajwade. But it has also that unique syllable 'Ray', signifying royalty, which occurs also in the equally important names of Rajgad and Rayagad. 'Rajgad', we know, is of Shivaji's own coining. Might he not have, from design, transferred the name of Rayareshwar to Rayagad?

Murha Rayareshwar forms the boundary line between the western half of the Vichitragad Taluka in the Bhor State and the Wai Taluka in the Satara District for about 15 miles.

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\* Patrasara Sangraba, No. 510.

It extends from Ambade in the east to the very edge of the Western Ghats. There is an extensive plateau at the top



Murha Rayareshwar. The Temple where the Famous Oath was taken, varying from about a mile to a furlong in width. It is well known for its beautiful crop of wheat which is the property of the Jangams. They are now almost the sole inhabitants of the plateau and the devotees of God Shiva to whom the temple of Rayareshwar is dedicated.

To reach Rayareshwar one has to get down at Dapkeghar, about 15 miles from Bhor on the Bhor-Mahad road and walk for about 4 miles to Dhanivli just on the fringe of the plateau. Two miles more and you are welcomed by the Jangams with the sounds of old-fashioned trumpets or brass-horns, which, by the by, was the oldish way of communicating news-signals both joyful and serious.

The murha is very like a vast hillfort and may well rival Rayagad in extent and inaccessibility, at certain points at least. But the range is too long to be developed as an independent and completely unapproachable or easily defensible fort unit. It might have served, however, as a



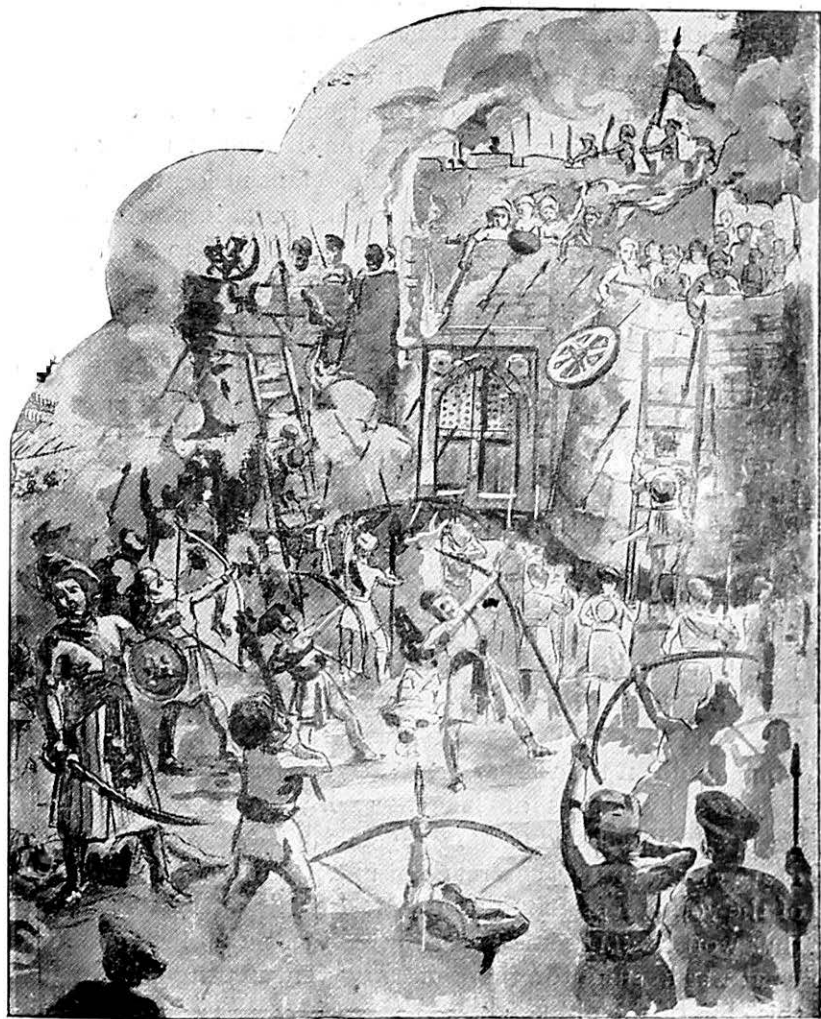


Murha Rayareshwar, The Pillared Cave.

training ground for Shivaji's early armies, and one sees an attempt at excavating a rock tank in the right hillfort fashion in the pillared cave, now called the 'matha' or monastery of a monk, or for want of any realistic history the 'cave of the Pandawas' !

The murha is between 4500 and 4700 feet in height. The top is reached by at least 6 different pathways and curiously enough, four of them are named after different animals, according to the ease or difficulty of ascent. Thus one is named after *sambar* or an antelope, another after a dog, the third one after a tiger and the fourth after cows. The word *dara* (descent in a valley) is affixed to the name of the animal. The word may as well mean a doorway. Two remaining names follow the usual practice adopted in forts : one is the Ganesh Darwaja and the other Loha or Iron Darwaja. One is tempted to read much in this seemingly minor detail. Rayareshwar is a typical case and must have had enough to do with the early activities of Shivaji. Only one must have a tinge of the imaginative to make the whole scene stand before the mind's eye as it must have been enacted about three hundred years ago.

## VII. THE FIRST VICTORY



The Victory won after a very hard s'ruggle.

Shirawal is the head-quarters of Vichitragad Taluka. It is also the place, where Shivaji won his first victory over the Adilshahi forces. To Shirawal, therefore, we must repair now, about 30 miles along the Satara road.

The story is briefly told. It refers to 1648-49 A.D., when Shivaji was only eighteen or nineteen years old. Shahaji, his father, was then serving in the Karnatak under the Bijapur Sultans and somehow (the details need not be told here) incurred the displeasure of the party in power. He was suddenly arrested and orders were issued to confiscate his jahagirs both in the Karnatak and the Maharashtra.

His elder son, Sambhaji, looked after his possessions in the Karnatak and the younger, Shivaji, administered those in the Maharashtra, including the forts of Sinhagad and Purandar. The latter fort was Shivaji's headquarters and one Fatehkan was sent against him, in that direction. Balaji Haibatrao, Fatehkan's lieutenant, came as far as Shirawal and took possession of the fort. Shivaji despatched a small force from Purandar, which started late at night and reached Shirawal at dawn only to find that Haibatrao was already strongly entrenched in the fort. Nothing daunted, Kawji, the commander of Shivaji's contingent, crossed the moat and began to undermine the earthen rampart wall. The invading archers took heavy toll of the defenders, rammed down the wall and entered the enclosure through breaches by means of ladders and soon overcame the occupants in a hand-to-hand fight, which resulted in the death of the enemy commander and the complete victory of the young representative of the 'rebel' Shahaji. Shivaji thus won his spurs and the Adilshahi got the foretaste of what was in store for them if they ventured to challenge this chip of the old block.

The army sent against Sambhaji met with no better fate and the indomitable courage of both his sons, who at

this time showed the rare wisdom of pursuing a common policy, went a long way towards securing Shahaji's release and rehabilitation in royal favour within a few days of his arrest. But that is another affair and we can only pay a visit to the ancient fortalice of Shirawal (now only a mass of *debris*, mostly the result of the action just described), as the proud scene of the earliest victory of Shivaji.



The Maratha Standard was held high.

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## VIII. THE WHY AND THE WHEREFORE

It is impossible to deal with each and every activity of Shivaji in his early days ; but we have seen enough to convince us that the country around Bhor is, in some special way, related to Shivaji and his early doings. Why is it so ?

For one thing, the Bhor State is contiguous to, and at least a portion of it formed part of, the jahagir of Shahaji, described by a number of authorities as lying between the Bhima and the Neera. This jahagir, students of History well know, formed what may be called the marches or boundary between the rival Sultanates of Ahmednagar and Bijapur. It often changed sovereignty, but most probably not the jahagirdar, and Shahaji continued to enjoy undisputed mastery over this troublesome borderland, which was admirably suited to be the seedbed of Maratha independence, through the instrumentality of the jahagirdar's own son.

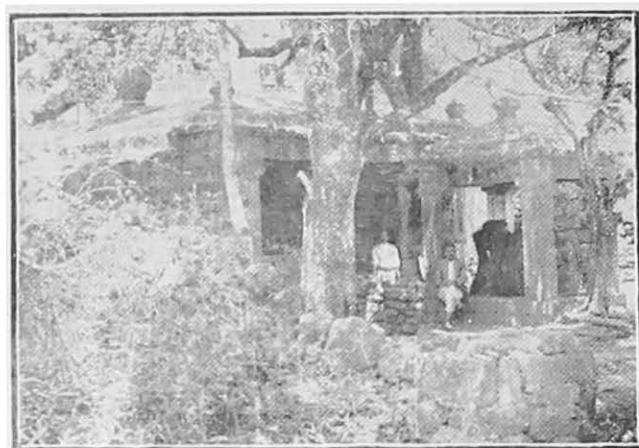
The geographical layout of this territory is another contributing factor. Lying contiguous to the Western Ghats with their towering heights and deep ravines clad with thick jungle, this region is practically inaccessible both to the prying eye and to the task forces of the ruling authority, which could be held at bay with impunity. It is under such natural protection that the budding power of Shivaji's nascent Swarajya could grow.

A glance at the general map of India would bring out one more strong point that weighed in favour of this part of the country. It commands one of the principal highways between the north and the south, as also between the Konkan ports of Chaul, Revdanda in the west and Poona-Nagar-Paithan region in the Desh uplands in the east, just an ideal position for one whose only hope to prosperity lay in taking advantage of the difficulties of the different reigning powers of the day, playing them one against the

other. Occupying this key-position Shivaji could obstruct his opponents' lines of communication at will, while securing his own life-line intact, in whatever direction he chose to move and strike. This was evidently a very important favourable factor from a military and diplomatic point of view.

The genius of Shivaji and his associates is by far the most important contributory factor of all ; and though the natural mountain fastnesses existed for ages, those who possessed them never dreamt of their potentialities, before the rise of the mighty genius in whose scheme of things they played their part so well. Feudal principalities in the middle ages thrived under the protective power of a few forts or strongholds. Larger kingdoms had fortified outposts in outlying districts and on the borderland between two independent sovereignties. These were thus either administrative centres for the surrounding tracts dominated by them or defensive outposts in times of warfare and were established at suitable places such as fortified hill tops or walled towns, according to the needs of the situation. Shivaji, however, built up his administrative system for purposes of offence and of defence, by the construction and organization of forts into a regular instrument of resistance. And having established himself in the heart of a territory, abounding in hills and dales, every peak and plateau of which could be converted into a veritable hillfort, he began defying the rule of the Bijapur Sultanate, which was alien in spirit and dominated by foreigners. This part of the territory already had a few forts, of which Shivaji repaired some, extended and added to the fortifications of others and caused several new ones to be built. He made use of these as none else had done before him and enriched by his own experience, he caused a series of forts to be constructed, and used them as stepping stones for penetrating deeper into the Adilshahi Kingdom and the Mughal Empire.

The Bhore State naturally served as the springboard and though very little now remains of the former sylvan glory



Someshwar Temple in Ambarkhind, in sylvan surrounding, and the strength of mountain fastnesses on either side of the great Sahyadri hills, which proved the grave of many an enemy expedition, a chance glance at such a place like the Umbarkhind, on the Khopoli-Pali road, still gives



Umbarkhind.

some idea of the holding power and defensive and offensive possibilities of the *mavals* and the *murhas*.

Inaccessible to physical aggression, this part remained comparatively free from the morally emasculating influences visible in vast north-Indian plains. This was perhaps the greatest recommendation, the region could have, in its favour. Though inaccessible and keeping up its independent life and tradition to some extent, it was fully sensitive to the manifold stimuli, given by the foreign Arab and Portuguese traders and conquerors to Maharashtra and the western coast generally. It is due to such influences that western India remained both alive and self-conscious, while avoiding that deadweight of orthodoxy, which still persists both in the northern and southern parts of India. This part was consequently admirably suited for the regeneration of the Hindu sovereignty. This was the studied opinion of political philosophers and idealist saints like Ramdas, who frankly stated it in so many words. It was out of deliberate choice that he preferred to stay about here, after having visited and explored the possibilities of almost all the other parts of the vast Indian continent.

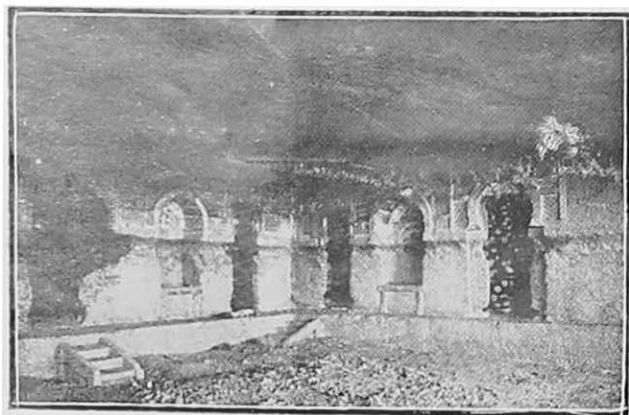
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## IX. THE GLORY THAT WAS BHOR

The Deccan has been inhabited by man from the stone-age period and was a flourishing tract when the curtain of history is lifted off the scene. The antiquity of the Bhore territory goes back at least as far as the 1st or 2nd century B. C. The evidence consists of a number of Buddhist caves reminiscent of the great hold that religion had over a great part of India. The Buddha Bhikshu was a peripatetic missionary whom the inclemencies of weather compelled to rest during the monsoon months. Rich lay worshippers, generally merchant princes, caused spacious caves to be excavated at suitable places along what must have been in those days the much frequented highways. Two such highways pass through the Bhore territory and both of them are marked by the existence of caves.

One of these, that between the Deccan and the Konkan sea-board, particularly the ancient port of Chowli (Symulla or Timulla of Ptolemy, A.D. 150), passes through the Sudhagad Taluka, via the springs of the Kundalini river and the



Thanala Caves.

passes variously named the Waghjai, the Lendi etc. Here are found at least two series of these Buddhist excavations, besides also a rectangular cell at some distance. The Nadsur or Thanala group of caves consists of about eighteen to twenty caves, the Nenawli or Khadsambla group of about five or six. Both these are within the precincts, or what is called the *ghera* of the Sudhagad fort and are named after the adjoining



Sudhagad : A Doorway.

villages. The single rectangular cell at Gomashi, much later in date, is about six miles to the south-west of Nenawli and has a Buddha image in the *bhumisparshamudra* (भूमिस्पर्शमुद्रा), placed on a platform at its farther end. The people in their ignorance worship it as the sage Bhrigu or Amba-rish. But the identity of the image is absolutely unmistakable and the age of the cave can be established as about the sixth-seventh century A.D.,

when under the influence of the later Mahayana sect, the older Hinayana places of worship were reconditioned for use. All the caves in Bhore, other than that at Gomashi, belong to the Hinayana Buddhists and consequently are of an older date. Those at Thanala are more ornamental and bear an inscription or two, testifying to the donations made towards the construction of some of those caves.

The most important and the largest of the Nadsur group (No. 7) has the whole of the wall decorated with the Buddhist rail, arch and other mouldings with figures of men, women and animals. The representation of Gajalakshmi, a huge five-headed serpent, and male and female figures standing on a fish (Cave No. 15) easily attract the attention of even a lay visitor.



Nadsur Caves, A Couple Standing on a Fish.

Here is an expert's opinion: Henry Cousens remarks that "from the general style, coupled with the character of the letters in the inscriptions, the absence of all images of Buddha, the presence of the dagoba as an object of worship, the want of pillars, the use of wood-work, the rail and the very early ornament, I think we cannot be far wrong in ascribing to these caves as early a date as Bhaja or Kondane i. e. about B. C. 200" (Archæology of Western India, No. 12 Page 10). The Khadsambala or Nenawli

caves are remarkable for the total absence of sculpture, or ornament or inscriptions. But anybody can see that they bear a great likeness to those at Nadsur, giving rise to a suspicion that they have been excavated by the same people and at the same time. The lack of ornamentation may be due either to the unsuitability of the rock or to the want of time or perhaps money at their disposal.

The other highway from Poona to the Southern Maratha Country and Karnatak passes via Shirawal and is marked by a series of fifteen caves about two miles to the west of Shirawal. It is called Pandavadara after the mythical Pandava heroes. It is an old Buddhist Vihara of nearly the same or even earlier age than that of the Thanala or Nenawli caves. The stupa is mistaken for a Shiva-linga and local Hindus hold a fair in its honour! To quote from a note by Dr. A. S. Altekar written in 1936, "Since there are no traces



Nadsur Caves, A Doorway.

of influence of Mahayana religion, it is permissible to conjecture that the Buddhists were not occupying the caves after about 400 A.D. Then they must have passed in possession of Hindu monks or sadhus. The presence of Ganpati, Shivalinga and other minor deities show that they were used as cave-temples by the Hindus. The Pandavas have, of course, nothing to do with the caves."

The caves at Shirawal are rather at a lower level and subject to the action of rain and mud, and were until recently, when they were cleared by an enthusiastic servant of the State, practically inaccessible to visitors, though they seem to have been examined as early as 1854 A.D. by Mr. West and others and later by Major H. Lee and probably by Burgess. The caves are referred to as 'Layanagiri' in a copper-plate (A.D. 780) of Rashtrakuta king Dhruva, discovered in

the village Ving nearby, in which Shirawal is mentioned as 'Shrimal'.

Now this Ving is referred to in another copper-plate of 1079 A.D. and is spoken of as a Mahasthan or great seat of religion i.e. a sacred place. One Khambhadeva Chalukya who ruled over Shirawal (this time mentioned as 'Sirivalaya') has given the Mahasthan as a religious gift. The old glory of Ving has passed away and we only see the ruins of the temples of Rama and Seeta almost in the riverbed of the sacred Neera. Judging from the extant ruins, the old temple must have been rather grand. The somewhat extensive ghat on the bank of the river Neera is another indication of the importance of the place. Close to this there is a temple of Shiva named Rameshwara presumably after its original donor Rama. *Kundas* shown in the river bed, named after Rama and Seeta are other curiosities worth a visit.

These are ancient relics and point to an almost unbroken record of civilization from the good old times. The copper-plates afford evidence of Rashtrakuta and Chalukyan rule. And though clear evidence is not forthcoming, we may as well take the same line of indigenous rule continuing under the Yadavas. Then came the Muslim conquest in the early fourteenth century and though it lasted over 300 years, it was more formal than real in the outlying parts, owing to the impenetrable nature of the mountain fastnesses. Finally came the reestablishment of Swaraj by Shivaji the Great. What is most interesting is that the present ruling family are the lineal descendants of that brave hero, who was the first to reconquer in 1694 this part of the country from the Imperial Mughal forces in temporary occupation of the land after the unfortunate murder of the ill-fated Sambhaji.

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## X. AND THIS IS THE CAPITAL

Bhor is the capital of the Bhor State. I can find no better words to introduce Bhor to you than the remarks of H. E. Sir Leslie Wilson, the then Governor of Bombay, in the course of his visit in 1924. "The geographical position of Bhor", said His Excellency, "though it may be, in some ways, inconvenient owing to its distance from the railway, strikes me as being an exceptionally favoured one in other respects, situated as it is in a rich and beautiful valley, with an unfailing supply of good water and a healthy climate. The town of Bhor itself, so far as I have been able to see it, reflects great credit on the Chief Saheb and all those responsible under him for its maintenance, and I am particularly struck with the careful planning, as a result of which all the state institutions and offices are grouped round the neat little square in front of the palace, thus contributing to the convenience of the administration and the public alike."

The Rajasaheb of Bhor is a man of excellent parts and liberal views. He came to the Gadi in August 1922, and the Diamond Jubilee of his age was celebrated in 1938 by the state people with due pomp and eclat. He has had fortunately the experience of extensive European tours to his credit and has a great faith in popular institutions. The government is run with the help of an Executive Council and the Rajasaheb has in 1942 given consent to a Legislative Council being instituted in his State with an elected non-official majority. The elected council is functioning satisfactorily, and the practice, of appointing a minister from among the elected members to carry on the work of the transferred departments, is regarded as a good beginning towards popularising the administration and modernising the educational and other facilities in the State.

Along with such entirely modern institutions, Bhor, like most other seats of Indian rulers, preserves and improves upon certain best religious-cum-social and cultural traditions from the past. Thus the annual state-financed Ramanavami (March-April) :Celebration of Bhor, the religious week held sacred in honour of the birth anniversary of Shriram, is really a grand occasion for people from far and near. It has a continuous history of its own for almost two centuries and a half. The reigning person then gives grants, year after year, to the learned and the skilful, and entertains all and sundry to a sumptuous meal by way of the *mahaprasad*, in the right patriarchal fashion of the older generations. It is a time of great bustle and activity in the people's life, when the pick of the singers, musicians, artists, religious expounders and even hardy wrestlers and other experts, all play their part and have the only chance of proving their worth. It is thus a sort of an omnific academy, suited to the semirural life of the olden times.

The anniversary day (Kartik : October-November) of Shri Shankaraji Narayan, the illustrious founder of the State has been, since 1930, organised into another popular festival. More recently it has been brought in line with modern requirements, by the institution of a substantial prize in the name of Shri Shankaraji Narayan, for the best book of the year (in a prescribed department of literature), which is granted in an open darbar on that day. It is also the occasion when studied speeches from the recipients of the prize and other learned invitees, are arranged for the benefit of the people.

All roads in the State, in this way, start from and lead to Bhor, the State capital from 1740 A. D. This is physically true of three out of the five Talukas, which combine to form the State, comprising over five hundred villages and nine hundred square miles of extremely hilly country, only

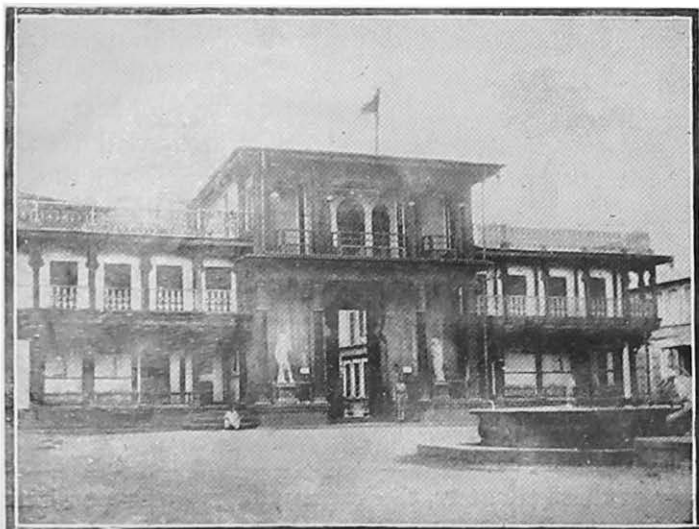
about one-fifth of which is somewhat of a plane tract. It is in this latter part, the rich and fertile valley of the river Neera, that this modern capital is situated within sight of the now worldfamous Bhatghar dam and the extensive Lake Whiting. Bhor, though comparatively small in extent, is yet, with an individuality of its own, being progressively developed into the educational and industrial metropolis of a rural population of over seven lakhs of hardy people. Not far from Poona, the historical and cultural centre of Maharashtra, it comes under the irresistible civilizing influence of modern city life and is closely connected with that city by an efficient bus service, plying many times a day. Bhor can thus boast of a number of good middle class families and merchants, a Municipality, a Library, and an excellent High School, scouting and other activities and a wellkept Museum, all prospering under the fostering care and patronage of the enlightened ruler.

The State Museum has entries of all departments such as coins, paintings, illustrated manuscripts, copperplates and other art curiosities. Lying within the very area with the almost unique historical background forming the subject-matter of these chapters, the museum has great possibilities of developing a good historical collection of local mementoes of the glorious past. The hills and jungles of Bhor, which naturally abound in wild animals, thus provide not only an excellent hunting ground for Nature's game, but for substantial historical research as well.

Of all the buildings that reflect the discriminating tastes of the present ruler, the palace, which was considerably rebuilt in 1870 and has been repaired from time to time, is by far the object of general attraction, housing as it does, the central shrine of Shriram, the family deity of the ruling line, the residence of the Raja Saheb, the darbar hall, the museum and a number of important government



offices. The grand entrance is remarkable and even a casual visitor gets an indelible impression of the association of the State with the historical past, from two glass cases, each exhibiting a well arranged collection of old assorted weapons and missiles. From the open courtyard you see the flagpost on the palace, flying the traditional Bhagwa Zenda, the old national standard of the Marathas, which



The Bhagwa Zenda on the Bhor Palace.

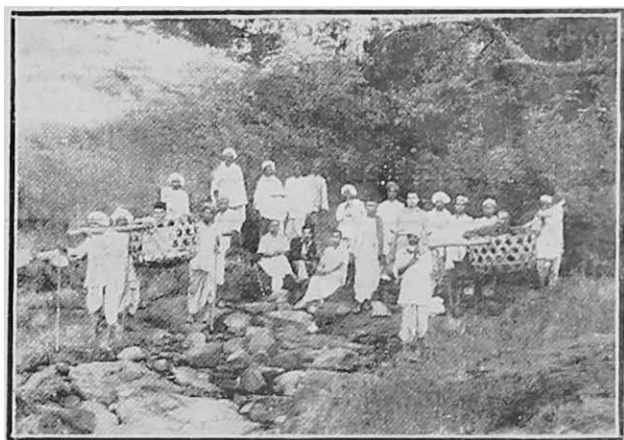
transports you at once to the good old days, which this book helps you to visualise.

Now you are practically at the journey's end. You started from Poona and are now in Bhor in the august presence of the standard of Shivaji the Great. From here you can as well take your leave and go home with a heart full of that tercentenary inspiration which will always remain with you, namely that three hundred years ago,

“HERE CAME SWARAJ”.

## XI. A PROGRAMME FOR SIGHTSEERS

Life is not mere history and to the varied elements in the teeming population of Poona and elsewhere, looking for some temporary escape from their life of routine and drudgery, Bhor State affords good opportunities for holiday-making. It is not possible to give any minute details, as these can easily be gathered from other sources. Here is subjoined only a tentative list arranged alphabetically and with a few indicative cursory notes, to enable the inclinable reader to make his choice.



Party equipped for a historical trip to hill forts. The *dal* or the wickerwork conveyance used in going up the hill is conspicuous in the photograph.

This, it should be remembered, does not claim to exhaust all the trip possibilities in the State and one should be glad to learn of more and better discoveries by discerning connoisseurs. This is again, not by any means, an inventory of beauty-spots only. It includes a number of historical places, which could not be referred to in previous chapters for obvious reasons, and also places of interest

from even other points of view. Bhor State has not, so far, got any Gazetteer whatever, on the lines of the learned district Gazetteers for the British territory. The information put together in this chapter has had, therefore, to be culled from various oral and other sources and is bound to be rather incomplete. The directions and distances are unavoidably approximate and the lines of approach may perhaps vary.

**Ambadkhind** : Or Vishramghat, about 8 miles to the south (-east) of Bhor; a khind or hillgap on the Bhor-Wai footpath, discovered and developed into a summer residence for the rulers of Bhor since 1864; fine scenery, copious watersupply. There is an *annachhatra* and *dharmashala* for casual visitors. Veruleshwar or Someshwar, a Shiva temple in jungle surroundings, and the famous Mandhardevi or Kalubai temple are both within 2 miles from the bungalow, on opposite sides. ( British Territory ).



Mandhardevi Temple.

**Ambavda** : The *Samadhi* (tomb) of Shree Shankaraji Narayan, the founder of the Bhor State, who died in

1712 A. D. ; about 9 miles to the south (-west) of Bhor ; motorable road.

The old temple of Shree Nagnath is the family deity of the Jedhes of Kari, the intimate associates of Shahaji and Shivaji ; a typical specimen of water-engineering.

**Asare :** An important temple of Vireshwar ; only about 2 miles to the north of Nadsur, which is about 8 miles to the north-east of Pali ( Sudhagad T. )

**Baneshwar :** Jungle god in jungle surroundings ; about a mile of motorable road from Nasrapur (Vichitragad T.) ; pleasant and copious water-supply, with the ingenious water-engineering, usual in these parts ; said to be built by Jadhavivrao Bhau, the hero of Panipat. There is a big Portuguese bell in the temple (cast in 1683). There are ruins of an old building nearby, which are said to be of those of an old *wada* of Shrimant Peshwas, an indication that Baneshwar was a favourite resort of the Peshwas.

**Bhatghar Dam :** Enclosing Lake Whiting, only 2 miles from Bhor.

**Cheladi :** Memorial Pillar, commemorating the tercentenary of the initiation of Swarajya or Maratha sovereignty, in 1645 A. D. ; at the crossroads to Nasrapur ; about 22 miles from Poona on the Poona-Bangalore road ; a mile and a half to the east of Nasrapur ( Vichitragad T. )

**Dapsar :** A small village given credit by tradition for the excellent water that was taken to Rayagad (about 12 miles to the south) for Shivaji's own use ; about 15 miles to the northwest of Velhe (Prachandgad T.)

**Daramandap :** The topmost gap through which the Mahad road descends into the Varandhghat ; sounds like *dwar-mandap* or the porch in the gateway, from which a visitor can have a commanding view of both the Konkan and the Desh.

**Dhondase:** At the foot of fort Sudhagad; the Thanala caves can be approached via this village, about 7 miles to the north-east of Pali (Sudhagad T.).

**Gomashi:** A rectangular cell with the image of Buddha in the *bhumisparshamudra*; about 12 miles to the south-east of Pali (Sudhagad T.).

**Hirdoshi:** An active village about 15 miles to the west of Bhor on the Mahad road; there is a plinth for a contemplated memorial to Shivaji the Great.

**Kedareshwar:** A very old Shiva temple, in Shirawal (Vichitragad T.).

**Kelada:** A place of old *annachhatra*, on the ghat road; in Gunjanmaival, about 12 miles to the southwest of Velhe (Pranchandgad T.).

**Khadsambla:** Buddhistic caves, also approachable from Nenawli (see Nenawli).

**Khamgaon:** A place of *annacchatra* on the old pathway to Poona; about 9 miles to the northeast of Velhe (Prachandgad T.).

**Murha Rayareshwar:** An extensive plateau, famed for the Shiva temple where the oath of Hindavi Swarajya is said to have been taken by Shivaji and his young friends (see Chapter VI). The Marathi inscription in the temple seems to refer to repairs done in 1805 A. D. (?)

**Nadsur:** Buddhistic caves, also approachable from Thanala (see Thanala).

**Neerabav:** The well from which the river Neera is supposed to take its rise; near Shirgaon just before the Varandh ghat on the Bhor-Mahad road begins. The inscription on the well mentions Shaka year corresponding to 1788-89 A. D.

**Nenawli:** Buddhistic caves of the 1st or 2nd century B. C., also approachable from Khadsambla; about 12 miles to the southeast of Pali (Sudhagad T.).

**Pali :** Well-known for Sarasgad, a hillfort, and the Ganpati temple of Ballaleshwar, one of the *Ashtavinayaks* or the eight important templeseats of God Ganesh, traditionally invested with special sanctity. The temple of Pali was built by Morobadada Fadnis, evidently sometime between 1775 to 1800 A. D. Pali is the administrative headquarters of the Sudhagad Taluka.

**Pandavdara :** Buddhistic group of caves of the Hinayana period ( 1st or 2nd century B. C. ), about 2 miles to the west of Shirawal ( Vichitragad T. ).

**Pargaon :** Petty rock-excavations, about 7 miles to the south of Shirawal (Vichitragad T.), on the Satara road.

**Prachandgad or Torna :** Hillfort ( see Chapter IV ).



Prachandgad. A peculiar provision in one part of the parapet wall - supporting stone slabs jutting out of the rampart as rests for the archers or gunners.

**Rajgad :** Hillfort ( see Chapter III ).

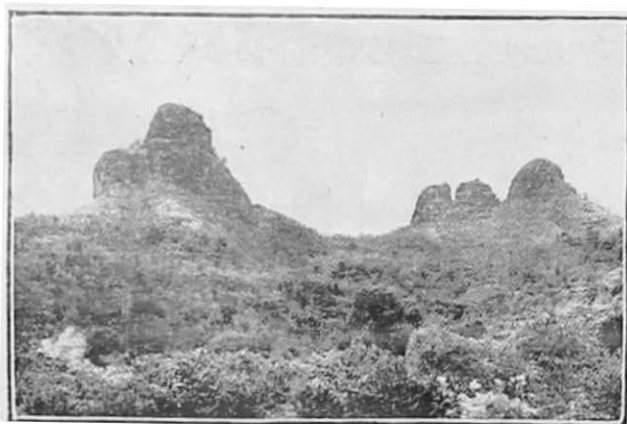
**Rameshwar :** Hilltop temple with jungle scenery, 6 miles from Pali (Sudhagad Taluka); not to be confounded with Uddar Rameshwar, which is in Uddhar below.

**Ranze :** A temple with water engineering like that at Baneshwar, caused to be constructed by one Mairal, a Diwan of the Holkars ; 7 miles to the north of Nasrapur (Rajgad T.) and very near Kondhanpur ; the village is referred to in one of the earliest order letters bearing the seal of Shivaji, dated 28 Jan. 1646 A.D.

**Rayareshwar :** The same as *Murha* Rayareshwar ( see Chapter VI ).

**Rohida or Vichitragad :** Hillfort ( see Chapter V ).

**Sarasgad :** Hillfort ; a very small specimen of a hill fortification or rather outpost, without the usual Balekilla. Often mentioned along with Sudhagad ; very near Pali (Sudhagad T.).



Sarasgad, Pali.

**Shirgaon :** The source of the river Neera ; see Neerbav ( Vichitragad T. )

**Shirwal :** The capital of Vichitragad Taluka ; the seat of an important *thana* in the Bijapur Kingdom, with a landfort named *Subhanmangal* now in ruins ; there are

two *maths* or monasteries said to belong to the Ramdas tradition ; the place of the first victory of Shivaji described in Chapter III. It is referred to in old copperplates as 'Shrimal' in 780 A. D. and 'Sirivalaya' in 1079 A. D.



Sarasgad, Pali A Postern Gate.

**Shivthar :** A natural cavern to the north of Majheri, in the British territory (Mahad Taluka, Kolaba District), on the Bhor-Mahad road, just on the border of the State and the Mahad Taluka. The *ghalai*, as the cavern is called, is a natural cave carved out by the action of water, in which the great saint Ramdas wrote out the immortal 'Dasabodha' or the precepts of the devotee.

**Siddheshwar :** A spacious Shiva temple about 2 miles from Pali (Sudhagad T.), said to have been built by the Peshwas.

**Sudhagad Fort :** Hillfort, about 8 miles to the east of Pali (Sudhagad T.). Has a very extensive surrounding jungle, containing the Buddhist caves at Thanala and Nenawali. It is said that Naro Mukund, Shankaraji Narayan's father,



was rewarded with the *sabnishi* of this fort by Shivaji in 1648, for his bravery. Shri Bhorai is the principal temple.



Shivthar, The Cavern of Ramdas.

**Thanala** : Buddhistic caves, of 1st or 2nd century B. C., also approachable from Nadsur ; about 8 miles to the east of Pali (Sudhagad T.).

**Tikona** : Hillfort, otherwise named Vitandgad ; with temples of Shri Tryambakeshwar and Shri Tuljai ; about 7 miles to the north-west of Kolvan (Pounmaval T.) and only 3 miles from fort Tunga.

**Torna or Prachandgad** : Hillfort (see Chapter IV).

**Tunga** : Hillfort, otherwise named Kathingad, with a temple of Shri Tungai ; about 10 miles to the northwest of Kolvan (Pounmaval T.).

**Uddhar** : Natural lukewarm water springs, about 5 miles from Pali (Sudhagad T.).

**Umbarkhind** : The site of a decisive victory for Shivaji over Kartalabkhan and Raibagin, two of Shahista-khan's trusted lieutenants, on 2nd February 1661 A.D.



Shivthar : The Maruti image recently put in to commemorate the habitation of Saint Ramdas.



Fort Tunga : The Doorway, showing the precipitous flight of stonesteps.

The Mughal army was crushingly defeated and was glad to purchase safety for a heavy ransom.

Umbarkhind is the name of a precipitous mountain-pass descending down from the heights of the Maival Taluka (Poona Dist.) into the lowlands of the Pen Taluka (Kolaba Dist.). Though the pass is actually outside the limits of the Bhor State, it is only within a few hundred yards of the boundary line and the battlefield must have evidently extended to within the limits of the Sudhagad Taluka for a considerable distance and thus covered extensive ground, now included in the Pen and the Sudhagad Talukas. Visitors can branch off to the east, about the 15th milestone, from the Pali-Khopoli road, and within 5 minutes can have a good view of the Umbarkhind before them.

**Unhera :** Natural hot water (112°F.) springs in the adjoining British territory (Pen Taluka, Kolaba District), only a mile from Pali (Sudhagad T.).

**Usar :** Hilltop temple of Shri Varadayini, the Goddess of the Sachivs. With the usual jungle surroundings; flowing water even in hot summer; 3 miles from Pali (Sudhagad Taluka).

**Vagheshwar :** Old Shiva temple about 5 miles from Kolvan in the Pounmaival Taluka. With a big Portuguese bell; a pond nearby produces blue lotuses, a rarity in this part of the country.

**Vichitragad or Rohida :** Hillfort (see Chapter V).

**Ving :** A village on the Neera, about two miles to the west of Shirawal, referred to as Mahasthana in copper-plates of 9th and 11th centuries. It has a Shiva temple and ruins of temples and ghats indicating the existence of a sacred place in old times and a number of *virgals*. (Br. T.)

**Vir Dam :** A subsidiary dam on the Neera river; about 9 miles to the east of Shirawal (Vichitragad T.). (Br. T.)

BOMBAY

PANVEL

KARJAT

KHED

MAVAL

# MAP OF THE BHOR STATE AND ADJOINING COUNTRY

PEN.

PEN.

KHANDALA

LONAVLA

LOHAGAD

VISAPUR

PANANAR

DEHU

INORATANI R.

ALIBAG

SUDHAGAD

PAUN MAVAL

CHINCHVAD

HAVELI

O CHAUL

REVADANDA

RAMESHWAR

UDHAR

ASRE

THANALA

NADSUR

SARASGAD

DHONOSE

SUDHAGAR FORT

PALI

USAR

WAGAI

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PRACHANDGAD

TRAJGAD

VICHITRAGAD

ROHA

MURUD

MANGAON

MHASLA

MAHAD

ARABIAN SEA

- 1 HATNOSHI
- 2 BAJAR WADI
- 3 GUNJAVANE



SCALE

0 2 4 6 8 10 12

MILES.