CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

THE KING

The Mahratha rulers who conquered Thanjavur region did not subvert the prevailing administrative units but introduced their own and strove to preserve the old ones as far as possible supplementing them with some of their institutions and rules. It is evident that the Mahratha rulers obtained political wisdom under the Sultan of the Deccan and the rulers of Karnatak. Ekoji the founder of the Mahratha Kingdom at Thanjavur built up an administration on the basis of the prevailing practices which he inherited from the Nayak rulers. The Mahratha kingdom was governed by a hereditary monarch, the king who was the head of the administration and occupied a supreme position in the state. In fact he was the pivot of the machinery of administration. The state consisted of seven elements in which the king commanded a supreme position. Though the king was the most important element in theory, he could not be an autocrat. His powers were generally limited by certain codes and institutions. The administration was based more on settled conventions than on rigid constitutional laws. There were checks on the powers of the king but there were no constitutional checks limiting the absolutism of the king. The organised community made regulations for themselves. The king's duty was only to enforce them.

Custom and public opinion also exercised their control on the royal highhandedness. It was difficult for the king to make any regulation contrary to the accepted customary usages and practices of the people as they varied from place to place. The state could not interfere in such matters. Another important check on
royal authority was public opinion. Any policy undertaken or promulgated should get the moral support of the people. For example, king Pratapsingh was selected by the popular support even though he was not willing as he was an illegitimate son of a sword wife. At times, the choice of the candidate for the throne had to be approved by the people.

The Royal Council which advised the king was another very important check on the king's authority. The king consulted it on state matters and policy. It was this council that performed the coronation of the king and conducted the administration. The power and the position of the ruler depended on his personality and character. Under weak kings, the council exercised great influence and power. The minister Shiva Rao's influence in Amarsingh's court is seen from the records. The king had to depend on his minister and so, he lost direct control of his people.

At times, the influence which the Brahmanas exercised over the king confined him to the palace, with the result corruption and misery became the order of the day. Except a few kings like Ekoji, Shahji, Pratapsingh and Serfoji-II, the other rulers possessed very little knowledge of administration and were men of mediocre ability. As there was no constitutional checks laid down between the king and the subjects, nothing prevented these kings from behaving like an autocrat.

The king as the head of the state had certain duties and responsibilities. The primary duty of the king was to afford protection to his subjects and redress their grievances. The lofty conception of the king was based on Dharma, Smrithi, and Sastras. The other duty was to maintain an efficient police and military organisation to
ensure the preservation of law and order in the country. The more important duty was the maintenance of Dharma in the country and preservation of the social solidarity of the people. The Mahratha kings enforced Svadharma in the country. They supported and encouraged maths and were anxious to maintain social solidarity. Their policy towards secular and religious institutions was well balanced. Dharma was considered as the essential basis and a crowned king should always rule with an eye towards it. The Mahratha kings worked for the economic progress of the people. They understood that public welfare depended on agricultural prosperity and a flourishing trade. New villages were formed and fresh lands were brought under cultivation. The yield from land was increased. Irrigation facilities were given. Trade was encouraged and some industries also received encouragement at the hands of the government.

Though the guiding policy of the monarch was the welfare of his subjects, most of the Mahratha kings did not adhere to it. A Jesuit letter of 1676 praises the justice and wisdom of king Ekoji’s (Venkoji) government and his beneficial agricultural policy9. Though he started his rule with a good intention, within a short span of five years, he began to harass the people for money. The Jesuit letters of 1682 and 1683 describe his tyranny and oppressive taxation10. His financial difficulties must be attributed to his costly peace with his step brother, Shivaji the great as he had to pay a large indemnity11.

The beginning of his rule was marked with peace and prosperity. But the later part of his reign was marked with his thirst for money and tyrannical administration. This sudden change according to the Jesuit letters perhaps was due to the sudden demise
of an able statesman named Jaganath Pandit who had administered
the kingdom well.

The reign of Shahji the son of Ekoji I was remarkably
noteworthy for literary activities. He is said to have built chattrams,
choultries and hospitals and established civil and criminal courts of
justice\(^\text{12}\). But Manucci charges him with religious persecution and
states that he levied a heavy poll tax on the Christians\(^\text{13}\).

The Jesuits compared Shahji with Nero for his anti-
people policies. His taste for women is clearly pointed out by the
Jesuit fathers. Fr. Bourges also records the same character of the
king in his letter\(^\text{14}\).

Pratapsingh who became king by popular support played
an important role. He lightened the land revenue assessment,
showed tolerance towards all religions and gave many endowments\(^\text{15}\).
Inspite of his weak character, king Tulaja was very tolerant in his
religious views\(^\text{16}\). King Serfoji-II was a benevolent king.

Another duty of the king was administration of justice.
The king was the highest court of appeal. When the lower court failed
to offer justice, the sufferer had the right to appeal to the king who
in turn, disposed off the case with criminal jurisdiction vested with
him.

King Amarsingh who usurped the throne in 1798 was
highly corruptive. The report of the commission of 1798 (which was
formed to probe Serfoji-II's succession and adoption) speaks of the
misery of the people. Justice was totally neglected. Shiva Rao, the
Sirkhel of Amarsingh, decided the cases according to his fancy and
bribed the people. The agents of the king demanded high rates from the people.....

SUCCESSION

The principle of heredity came to be largely followed with regard to succession to the throne during the Mahratha rule. The eldest son, as a rule, succeeded to the throne and his accession was sought to be secured by his nomination as the 'Yuvaraja', or the crown prince, even during the life-time of the ruling king. At times the sons of the ruling king ruled over some parts of the principality under the father's control. Ekoji, the first Mahratha ruler, appointed his eldest son Shahji the Yuvaraja. According to the Marathi inscription, "the three sons of Ekoji ruled jointly". Probably, they were viceroys of the two Subhas. The king who had no son was succeeded by his younger brother or some other member of the royal family worthy of the distinction, or by an adopted prince from the collateral branch of the royal family to succeed him. King Shahji died heirless and his younger brothers Sarabhoji I and Tukkoji I continued the rule bequeathed to them by their brother.

Though the Mahratha kings were guided by customs and conventions, yet the absence of natural heirs altered the law of primogeniture. When the king had no legal heir, he was allowed to adopt a son, guided by the principal sastras from their own Kshatriya caste. King Serfoji II was adopted in this manner. He was adopted from the collateral family of Tulaja. According to Hindu Sastra, the adopted son had a right to inherit the father's throne. At the time of trouble or delay in succession, the chief minister, the dalavoy or commander-in-chief, the sirkhel and the diwan formed an interim
government, but the same had to be dissolved after the selection of a new ruler21.

When the king was a minor, until he came of age and took up the administration of government into his own hands, a regent was nominated and entrusted with the government in the name of the young ruler. But some regents misused their regency for self-aggrandisement and for strengthening themselves against the legitimate ruler usurping the royal power and even dethroning the rightful king. There was an instance of such misuse of regency by king Amarshing. King Tulaja entrusted the administration of his kingdom to Amarsingh, his brother (the son of the concubine of Pratapsingh) as protector and regent until the adopted son Serfoji-II should come of age. Amarsingh acted as the regent for some time. But later he usurped the throne for himself22.

Speaking about his usurpation, the Tanjore district manual says, Amarsingh put forward claims to the throne and questioned the validity of the adoption and took the matter to the Governor of Madras. The Council invested Amarsingh with regal authority by concluding a treaty23.

When there was no male heir, the wife of the deceased king or the chief queen was permitted to govern the kingdom when the exigency arose. For example, queen Sujan Bai, the chief queen of Ekoji II (son of Tukkoji I) ascended the throne, after his death and ruled for 2 years from 1736 to 1738. But she was killed later. It seems that the leading people in the country had a voice in the selection of the heir24. King Pratapsingh, the illegitimate son of Tukkoji, was unanimously chosen to be the ruler by the people in this manner.
There were cases of abdication as well. Ekoji the first Mahratha ruler abdicated his throne in favour of his son Shahji\textsuperscript{25} and retired from active politics to spend the rest of the life in pious meditation. Under the Mahratha rule, there was no age limit for succession. Usually, the king ascended the throne at any age if the throne was vacant. There was no war of succession, but there was a coup-de-etat in the palace between 1736 - 1739 after Tukkoji I\textsuperscript{26}.

**CORONATION**

The coronation was an important ceremony which provided the legal sanction for the selection of a ruler and conferred on him the title to govern. The Mahratha rulers like the ancient Hindu kings had their coronation duly performed. A special court was held for this formal function which was attended by the ministers, officials like diwan, purohit and others. The details of this ceremony were interesting. The chief priest or king's Rajaguru used to bless the king and advise him of his duties. The Purohit placed the crown on the fore-head of the king after chanting the mantras and poured the holy water on the king. Then he used to sit on the throne to receive the royal insignia - the royal crown, royal dress, elephant and a horse. Then he was given a sword to show that he was the leader of the army. Then the court and the army used to give a royal salute. Atlast the king used to make presents like shawls, garments, ornaments and gifts to the Brahmans and gave darshan to the people assembled there\textsuperscript{27}. Thus the coronation had an important significance, which implied recognition by the king of his responsibility.
Generally, the *Pattabhisekam* was performed when the crown prince had gained all theoretical knowledge of administration. The coronation was also known as *Rajyabheshekam* or *Makutabisekam* (crown). The prince was anointed *Yuvaraja* at times when he was too young. Perhaps, this was due to the fact that the reigning king feared that succession to the throne would be disputed after his death. It was so, when king Tulaja II for instance appointed his adopted son king Serfoji II *Yuvaraja* when he was nine years old. During the period of his training the prince was placed under the tutelage of able teachers who taught him all knowledge which was necessary for a king.

**ROYAL FAMILY**

The king, his queen, the prince and his consort constituted the royal family. Those who stood apart from the royal family were called *Johar yantra* (Royal household). The Mahratha kings married several queens from *Shanavakuli*, the Mahratha families of Satara, Kolhapur and Mahastra to maintain their royal status. The kings practised polygamy as it was the prevalent marriage system of that day which accorded the highest social sanction in the society. Though there were many queens in the royal palace the eldest son of the senior queen or *Rani* had the right to ascend the throne. Occasionally the queen acted as an advisor to the king. The ladies of the royal household also were initiated to perform Siva pooja. The Royal household believed in astrology and observed religious rites and ceremonies with austerity.

The royal documents or the king's written commands did not bear the royal signature of the kings. The royal seal was
Sri Pratapa Virakaravasiri and the royal signature was Sri Ram Pratap. Among the king's paraphernalia the sword was an important one. On the eve of battle, the sword was worshipped and taken out in an auspicious hour to prove their valour as they were of kshatriya clan. The Royal flag was treated with the greatest respect. The Royal palace was called Raj Mahal. The darbar hall of the Mahratha kings was called Shiva Sowdha which was constructed by king Shaji.

The Royal court comprised the king's courtiers and personal attendants of the king. Much of the daily official business of the king was transacted in the royal court where the king used to issue orders to various departments.

The daily routine of the king was carried on according to customs though none could compel him to stick to that programme. He issued orders and used to transact the state business during the evenings and night after the routine entertainments.

The Modi records throw light on various hobbies of the Mahratha kings like shikar hunting, wrestling, horticulture, painting and horse riding.

**HAREM**

The Mahratha kings maintained a harem with all oriental splendour. It was occupied by a number of legitimate wives and innumerable concubines. Among them some were highly cultured and at times they interfered in palace intrigues. Polygamy led to disputed succession. The period from 1736-39 was a dark one of disputed successions, pretenders and anarchy in the annals of the
Thanjavur Mahrathas. Sarabhoji I had no issue by his first wife and his second queen pretended pregnancy and she was delivered of a male child and the bogus son was named Savai Shahji; but the baby was in fact born to a washer-woman of the fort. The queen did so, in order to prevent Tukkoji from becoming the next heir to the throne. This bogus son was sent to the forest and called Kattu raja, who later claimed the throne from Pratapsingh.

THE IMPERIAL COUNCIL

The king was obliged to consult a distinct council of ministers each in charge of a separate department of administration. This council which was called ashtapradhan generally consisted of the mantri or the chief minister (chief advisor of the ruler in all matters) the dalavoy (commander in Chief) the ‘diwan’ (pradhan) the ‘samprati’ (Accountant or Finance Minister) the ‘dharmadhikari’ (Minister for charities) the sirkhel the rayasam (Chief Secretary) and the purohit.

The Ministers who formed the king’s council were generally learned men chosen from the higher classes. Sometimes, the king’s brother, son or other relations were called to the council. The principal minister was the most important member of the astapradhan. In the later period he was called the peshwa. Sometimes the office of the dalavoy was coupled with that of the pradhani (diwan). The office of mantri was sometimes combined with that of dalavoy. The authority of the dalavoy varied according to the personality and character of the ruler. His function was to guarantee internal peace and uphold the country’s prestige in foreign relations through diplomatic dealings and military campaigns. Of the many
generals who led the Thanjavur army against the enemy, mention must be made of Manoji whose valour won for him the unstinted praise of the English.

The diwan or pradhani was not in impotence, to the dalavoy who was mainly concerned with revenue collection. The well known diwan Dabir Pandi was an expert in revenue matters and introduced a new system of revenue administration. Bavapandit another expert introduced pathak system of farming, Ragopandit the diwan of Serfoji II was another expert. The other members of the council were the samprathi or the accountant and the dharmadhikari. Ananda Rao Peshwa served both as dharmadhikari and dalavoy. The office of sirkhel came into existence during the time of Sarabhoji I. subedar Ayyavayyan became dharmadikari, sirkhel and diwan successively during the reign of this king. Shiva Rao the evil minister served as the sirkhel of king Amarsingh. Rayasam or secretary corresponding to the chola tirumanthiraolai was also an important officer. There was also the purohit, the chief judge and an amildar in the capital. The khiledar controlled the fort. There were a number of arikars (spies) to supply the information to the kings. Thus the administration was well organised and divided under a number of ministers for efficiency and to preserve peace and prosperity.

In the prosperous days of Mahratha rule, the administration was in tact. Some of the ministers were men of exceptional ability. Many ministers fell an easy prey to corruption. They fomented palace intrigues and assisted pretenders to the throne, bribed and oppressed the people to enrich themselves. For example, Sayyid the Killedar assumed the role of the 'king-maker' from 1736-39. Manoji the dalavoy, squandered away large sums of money and Sakhoji the mantri was bribed by Dupleix. Thus under weak
kings, their influence and power were great and they had complete control over the policy of the state.

**THE SECRETARIAT**

The details of administration must have been attended to by an efficient secretariat staff who must have been divided into various departments each in-charge of a branch of administration. These secretaries who always remained with the king and noted all that he said or did resembled the *tiruwaykelvis* of the Chola rulers who had similar duties to discharge. The king had a large number of officers in his establishment each of whom was assigned some work in the palace. The important officers mentioned in Modi records were *subhedar, pattackdar, amaldar, sharisthadar, taksildar, havildar, kotwal, karbar, karkoon, dimmati, kavalgar, harkara, vakil, kamavisidar, kasnis, imarathi* and so on. The *rayasam* was the chief secretary who acted as the personal assistant to the king who took the instructions from the king and passed it to the secretaries concerned. The *kotwal* was employed to protect the tower and to keep the city neat and tidy and to prevent theft. There were peskars or revenue collectors. The *karnams* were village accountants who maintained village accounts. The *kamavisidar* supervised the chattram administration and the *kavalkar* was the city guard.

The Mahratha kings of Thanjavur combined the Moghul and Konkan system, to maintain the civil administration of the state. They created and introduced 12 administrative departments called *mahals* for the palace establishments and 18 state departments called the *khanas* or *karkanas* for the state administration. Each department was assigned certain special duties. This arrangement of
12 mahals and 18 khanas were in existence since the time of Venkoji till the extinction of this kingdom. The following mahals concentrated on the respective works mentioned below:

- **Pote mahal**: Maintained the treasury.
- **Palki mahal**: Took care of the palanquins.
- **Kothi mahal**: Served as a warehouse for granaries.
- **Paga mahal**: Looked after and maintained the cows of the palace.
- **Thankasal mahal**: Royal mint.
- **Bahiil mahal**: Coaches and chariots were repaired and maintained.
- **Dharaji mahal or Jaju mahal**: Made the dresses for the royal household.
- **Modupoke mahal**: Prepared the food for the royal people.
- **Emarathi mahal or Maramat mahal**: Agricultural operations and repairs were effected.
- **Adhe mahal**: Looked after the drinking water supply in the palace.
- **Dhasthan mahal or Amanath**: Granary.
- **Jasude mahal**: Ambassadors and spy.

In addition to these 12 mahals, there were mahals like **Sarasvathi mahal or Sarasvathi bhandara** (storehouse or Treasury) to preserve paintings and portraits. This mahal was attached to **Sarasvathi mahal**. **Durani mahal** was the royal harem (zenana). The other mahals mentioned are **Sayidan mahal**, **Ramasami mahal**, **Nettimahal**, **Lanchan mahal**, **Danvantri mahal**, **Kalyan mahal**, **Sivapooja mahal**, **Sangeetha mahal** (musical concerts were held) **Karda mahal** and **kailasa mahal**.

In order to look after the state duties, the Mahrathas maintained 18 state departments otherwise called the khanas, or **Attava khanas** some of the famous khanas and their respective duties are as follows.
21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mahal or Khan</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jhamthar Khana</td>
<td>Where clothes were kept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhargar Khana</td>
<td>Safeguarded the jewellery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharbeth Khana</td>
<td>Preserved and supplied the cool drinks for royal family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiratha Khana</td>
<td>Armoury or the arsenal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philkhana or Hatti Khana</td>
<td>Maintained the elephant stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dastha Khana</td>
<td>Stitched and concentrated on the military and ordinary clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shikar Khana</td>
<td>Preserved the king's forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langar Khana</td>
<td>Supervised and repaired the boats and naval activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apthar Khana</td>
<td>Water irrigation projects etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thalim Khana or Kavath Khana</td>
<td>Maintained the state military department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daftar Khana</td>
<td>Record office - received and maintained confidential records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tharu Khana</td>
<td>Maintained the store house for guns and gun powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topu Khana</td>
<td>Maintained the state gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhava Khana</td>
<td>Supervised the sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambar Khana</td>
<td>Central granary the store house of paddy and grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dastha Khana</td>
<td>Levied and collected the taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhrash- Khana or Faras-Khana</td>
<td>Took care of arrangements required for the various state officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarab Khana</td>
<td>Where intoxicated drinks were supplied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above mentioned mahals and khanas were under the control of the sirkel, who was the head of the civil services of the state. Each mahal was under the control of a superintendent also called dimati. The daftari was head of the Daptar Khana, who kept a detailed account of the state revenue. He was the record keeper who used to send the reports to the king. This set up shows the influence of the Mughals and the Mahrathas of Maharashtra over the Mahrathas of Thanjavur. The kings of Thanjavur dropped certain mahals and created some new as and when necessity arose. As for the khanas they were purely guided by Muslim practice. The changes in the kingdom, palace intrigues and frequent wars disrupted the smooth functioning of the mahals and the khanas. The creation of new
departments also led to financial crisis. Further, the functions and powers of the state servants, were not clearly demarcated.

In addition to ministry, mahals and khanas, the administration of the Mahrathas of Thanjavur must have been attended to by an efficient menial staff. The records of this period do not, however, enlighten us very much on this point though we get occasional references to such workers. We are not able to know exactly the number of such workers or their relations with one another. The personal attendants and the staff members of the kings were many. Among them, a few are important namely dealath pavlok (personal body guard of the king) mahaldar (incharge of mahals) roshannaiki (lamplighter) mali (warden of gardens) shikari (hunter) doclath lashkar (personal infantry) and harikar (messenger).

In addition, the following staff were also working in the personal offices of the king, bommanaik (chief of the guards), foadhar (army officer) kiledhar (custodian of the fort), huzurnavis king’s personal secretary), sarnavis (assistant secretary) saluvanaikmadyasth (executive officer, in-charge of king’s ship building centre at Saluva Naickan Pattinam, kabar (superintendent of the palace) deshitaharicar (Brhaman messenger), chittari (incharge of Chitra Mahal) kan boon (clerk) madbahi (cook) vaidya (Native physician) and pawewala (watchman).

The Mahratha kings in general were autocrats, whose powers and authority depended mostly on their personality and individual character. Hence, sometimes good government was followed by misrule. Very often the Mahratha rulers were content to leave the administration of the kingdom in the hands of their ministers devoting their personel attention to the pursuit of learning,
promotion of literature or in domestic engagements and recreation indulging themselves in women, wine and vices, which gave them little time for affairs of state. Even in the reign of the most active king Serfoji II much of the government work actually devolved on the ministers and other administrators. Memoirs of Fr. Schwartz testify to this fact that the Brahmans excised control over the king greatly circumscribed his activities and confined him in the palace amidst the members of huge harem.

The commission appointed to enquire into the affairs of Thanjavur in 1799 pointed out how bribery and corruption had become rife under Thulaja and had grown worse under Amarsing, and how the king left everything to be managed by his sirkhel.

King Serfoji II became a mere figurehead more to be pitied. He bowed down before the British (due to the pressure exerted by the British) and ceded his country excepting the fort of Thanjavur in return for an annual payment of one lakh of pagodas. He found solace in arts and sciences. He was like a fallen oak which had lost all its grandeur. Shivaji II the last Mahratha ruler governed his Fort area so badly surrounded by a host of favourites and evil counsellors that within three years of his accession, he squandered away the immense treasure accumulated by Serfoji II and remained obstinate and callous. The Jesuit letters are of the opinion that the Mahratha rulers were generally arrogant, greedy and indifferent to the welfare of the people and exploited them mercilessly.

When the Mahratha Kings started their rule, they continued the same type of administration which was followed by the Nayaks. Ekoji the founder of the Thanjavur Mahratha Kingdom attempted no major change. This was partly because of his pre-
occupation with the task of consolidation and partly because of his reluctance to break the indigenous system, for it would have alienated the local inhabitants. But after the consolidation of their power, the Mahratha kings attempted to re-organise the administration on their own pattern. The establishment of the astapradhan in the place of the council of pradhanis and the creation of the khana and mahal were their own set up. Shaji and Pratapsingh created parallel offices (Mahratha and Tamil) as they found them essential to maintain their own identity without isolating themselves from the conquered people. The Mahratha administrative system in Thanjavur was not exclusively Mahratha in character. It combined in itself many of the elements borrowed from Chola, Nayak, Konkan and Moghul systems. The Mahratha rulers followed monarchical form of government but there was no separation of powers. The Offices like dalavoy, rayasam, samprithi of the Nayak period continued, but with Marathi words.

The Mahratha rulers being Hindus were expected to uphold the Hindu concept of ‘dharma’ but it may be doubted if they strove to obtain for their people’s happiness and good government. The kings perhaps did not develop any sentimental attachment with the people. The palace intrigues, disputes, frequent ravages affected the central administration. The process of degeneration was accelerated by the unscrupulous activities of several of the ministers which brought about the ruin of the kingdom ruled by weak kings and controlled by selfish ministers. It was always subjected to foreign invasions which brought along plunder and massacre of the inhabitants. It was no wonder that the people groaned under the weight of economic distress.
Footnotes

1. The seven elements of State - king, minister, territory, port, treasury, army and ally.


2. The king usually performed his duties on the basis of dharmasastras and traditional moral code as quoted in Hindu text books like ‘Rajanithi’ and ‘Dhandanithi’.

3. The public disapproval was expressed by the people not by obstructing the work of government, but by peaceful migration to outside places.

4. In case of tyranny, the subjects had no legal means of getting their grievances redressed and the idea of rising up in open rebellion was never thought of by the people........ During 1781 when Haider's troops ravaged the Thanjavur Kingdom and destroyed all embarkments and channels, the people escaped and emigrated and took shelter in the woods of coleroon (during the weak rule of king Tulaja).


7. “The king of Tanjore is ignorant, a prince who governs according to his despotic will, but he is in fact more a slave than a king”.


9. The Jesuit letter states, “King Ekoji has carefully studied the internal economy of his state”.

Andrew Freyre, Jesuit letter of 1676.


Annual letter of Andrew Freyre to Fr. Oliva dt Jan. 25.1682,


13. But in defence, it is said that in his reign, the Portuguese missionaries who called themselves ‘Roman Brahmans’ dramatised plays before temples revealing Hindu Gods.


*Report of Tanjore commissioners, 1799.*

18. Shahji lived in Thanjavur, Sarabhoji I lived at Sakkottai near Kumbakonam and Tukkoji I lived at Mahadevipatnam in Mannargudi subha. After Shahji died heirless in 1712, Sarabhoji I ruled jointly with Tukkoji I till his death. Tukkoji I succeeded his brother as ruler in 1728.


19. After the death of Tukkoji I, Thanjavur, fell a prey to the factions and intrigues of pretenders to the throne. The period of anarchy (1735 - 1739) followed. The state required a king of vision and valour. So the principal men of the kingdom persuaded Pratapsingh, the son of Tukkoji I by a sword wife to be the king in the interst of the kingdom.

20. Before his death, king Tulaja, chose Serfoji II from a collateral branch and adopted as his heir to succeed him.


23. It was in this manner, that the English interfered in the Tanjore succession - in 1792.
24. ‘Katturaja’ (forest king) was deposed and Pratapsingh was made the king by the people, though an illegitimate son had no right to inheritance.

25. Ekoji abdicated in favour of his son Shahji, perhaps due to a sort of unworldliness under the influence of the Maratha saints as mentioned in Bhosala Vamsavali - a Sanskrit MSS of Shahji’s reign. This fact of abdication is corroborated in AYYA - AVAL, Sahendravilasam Kavya. (V. Raghavan (Ed) T.M.S.S.M. lib publication series, Thanjavur, p.54 and Indian Antiquary, Vol 33, p.187.

26. After the death of Tukkoji and his son, Queen Sujan Bai was killed. It was followed by confusion, Sayyid the Kiledar of the fort was the king maker. This period was a dark one of the disputed succession between ‘Katturaja’ the pretender and Sayyid,


28. King Serfoji II installed his son Shivaji II as his successor, even during his life time and entrusted his son to the special care and protection of the British resident.


29. Fr. Schwartz was the guardian of Serfoji II, who taught him European languages, literature and science.....


30. The Mahratha royal families were purely of Rajput origin.


32. Queen Deepambal advised king Ekoji I, while dealing with Shivaji the great - (The step brother of Ekoji I).


“We do upadesam even to the queens of the Rajas as a Rajaguru....” *Deposition of Ramaswami*, (7th witness O.S. 26 of 1912) p 1 and 5.


35. It was derived from their family deity Bhavani of Kolhapur

36. The ‘Parvanikai’ (royal command) does not bear signature. ‘Parvanikai huzur’ means personal order.

   Extracts from the Exhibits and judgements in O.S. No. 26 of 1912, Thanjavur palace suit and Extracts (Thanjavur papers).

   Deposition of M.S. Ghantigai (O.S. No. 26 of 1912), p.9


   **Modi records**, (Bundle No.126, Vol.42, 1830).


40. ‘Ashtapradhan’- The Mahratha king followed the model traditionally followed by Shivaji the great in Maharashtra.

41. Bavaji served both as mantri and dalavoy who was the senapathi. Anandaraya Makhi was a famous dalavoy who had a hereditary claim to the office. He served under three kings continuously- Shahji, Sarabhoji I and Tukkoji I as dalavoy and mantri after Tryambakamakhi.

Sometimes the office of the delavay was coupled with pradhani.


subedar-head of a subha.

sherishadhar - custodian of records.

martara-In-charge of attendance register of a court.

dimmati-Officer who signed the courts' decree.

Imarathi - In-charge of repairs.

Chitnis - secretary to the king, who communicated the official matter to officials in Tamil.


52. King Serfoji II maintained 3 kitchens - Marathi non-vegetarian, Brahman, (Vegetarian) and western, the heads of each kitchen was called ‘Kansama’ or Achari. The headcook was called ‘Varist’. The food taster who taste the food of the king was called ‘Aphar ruchirao’.

*Modi records*, Bundle No124/C (T.M.S.S.M. Library, Thanjavur).

53. **Lanchan mahal** - where royal seals were kept.

54. **Danwantri mahal** - A research centre for medicine.

55. **Karda mahal** - Where old documents were preserved.

56. **Kailasa mahal** - Royal cremation ground near river Vadavaru. Its is also called ‘Rajaghori’.


*Modi records*, Bundle 923/C, (T.M.S.S.M. Lib. Thanjavur)


King Tulaja spent his time mostly in drink and the company of evil counsellors, caring little for the welfare of his subjects.


63. He was permitted to exercise sovereign authority inside the fort. The British were to carry on revenue and judicial administration of the whole country......


   In 1841 as a result of misgovernment, the British took away from him all authority in the fort area,


67. The parallel officers were 'Amildar' (Revenue Collector) 'Killedar' (commander of fort) and 'Arikars' (spies).

68. The ravages of Haider Ali (1769 and 1781) and the occupation of Thanjavur by the Nawab's agents in 1773-76 greatly impaired the economic strength of the people.