

CHAPTER VI

ELPHINSTONE AND MURDER OF GANGADHAR SHASTRI

Section 1 - Peshwa - Gaikwad Dispute and Elphinstone

Anarchy was^a dangerous pastime, and every year saw its crimson stain spread a little further across the fabric of the Maratha Empire. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, when there was hardly any Indian State free from chaos, the dispute among the Maratha states presented a scene of the worst confusion, which gradually set the path clear for the speedy dismemberment of the Maratha Empire. It has been stated in the 14th Article of the Treaty of Bassein, that the Peshwa gave his assent that the British Government should 'examine into, and finally adjust his demands on the Gaikwad.'¹ Baji Rao was extremely keen to get his claims investigated and adjusted against the Gaikwad, and could bear no delay. He pressed the Resident at Poona 'ever since 1807 for effecting a settlement.'²

The Peshwa's claim on the Gaikwad were of long standing. But a correct evaluation of various claims and

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1. Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements & Sanads*, Vol. VI, pp. 56-57.
 2. Elphinstone to Secretary Adam, 21.9.1813, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 276; Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p. 455.

counter claims as advanced by the parties in dispute, can be ascertained only after tracing the origin of those claims. Often historians differ from one another in estimating the exact value of the Peshwa's demands. Grant Duff believes that the debts of the Gaikwad to the Peshwa amounted to nearly a crore of rupees.³ According to Prinsep, the Peshwa's total claims amounted to a sum considerably exceeding three crores of rupees.⁴ On the contrary the anonymous author of 'The Rulers of Baroda,' correctly estimates the Peshwa's claims at more than four crores and a half inclusive of the various miscellaneous demands and are corroborated by the Bombay records.⁵ In 1751, Damaji Gaikwad was taken a prisoner by Balaji Baji Rao and was compelled to cede half of his territories in Gujarat to the Peshwa and hold the other half as the Peshwa's vassal. Damaji Gaikwad further promised to help the Peshwa to conquer Ahmadabad from the Mughals.⁶ In 1762, Raghoba summoned Damaji to assist him against Peshwa Madhav Rao I. He, however, could not go personally as he

3. Grant Duff, History of the Marathas, Vol. II. p. 507.

4. Prinsep, History of Political and Military Transactions in India, Vol. I, p. 70; P.C.Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 118.

5. P.C.Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, pp. 118-119.

6. Ibid., p. 119.

was indisposed, but sent his son Govind Rao with his contingent. Madav Rao inflicted a defeat on Rabhoba and punished the Gaikwad for his adherence to his enemy by 'imposing on him an annual tribute of 5,25,000 rupees and an annual service with 3,000 horse during peace and 4,000 during war.'⁷

Damaji Gaikwad died in 1762 A.D., leaving his entire possession disputed between Syajee Rao his eldest son, but by his second wife, and Govind Rao his second son by the first married of his wives.⁸ The Peshwa was determined to make full harvest of this dispute, and declined conferring investiture on either of the competitors till their rights should be fully investigated.⁹ Ultimately, Fateh Singh, Damaji's youngest son, emerged as the successful claimant, who bought recognition of the Peshwa to act as Regent on behalf of Syajee, who was 'unfitted for governing from natural imbecility',¹⁰ by 'agreeing to pay him annually the sum of 17,79,900 rupees and also by promising to pay a compensation of 6,75,000 rupees for the future discontinuance of the contingent.'¹¹ In fact, the

7. Alphinstone to Warden, dated 24.3.1816, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIII, pp. 30-31.

8. Ibid., p. 31.

9. Ibid., p. 31.

10. Ibid., p. 31.

11. P.C.Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 119.

amount promised in all these transactions were pretty heavy. Owing to poor financial condition of the Baroda Government often the dues could not be made regularly. Thus, the Peshwa's first claim was to the balance of 'an old account amounting to 39,82,789 rupees.'¹² The Peshwa also demanded a sum of rupees 50,19,887 for several engagements.¹³ The next claim was for 2,03,56,000 rupees on account of tribute and commutation for military service for 14 years at 14,54,000 per annum of which 7,79,000 rupees is for tribute and 6,75,000 rupees for military service.¹⁴ The Peshwa's third claim was to a share of any revenue that might be collected 'from the Baubee Mahauls conquered by Damaji and called Puttun Lunch Mahaul,'¹⁵ according to an agreement with the Gaikwad in 1765. But the Gaikwad argued that the Peshwa had renounced all claims to a share in the Baubee Mahauls. Although he did afterwards extort a lakh in one year and 25,000 rupees in another on this account, yet he afterwards desisted. In five or six settlements which took place after that period no further demand was made on that account. Moreover, the Baubee Mahauls produce no surplus revenue for the Peshwa to share.¹⁶ The silence of the Peshwa at so many settlements affords a strong

12. Alphinstone to Warden; 24.3.1816, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 37.

13. P.C.Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 120.

14. Alphinstone to Warden; 24.3.1816, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIII, p. 37.

15. Ibid., p. 38.

16. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

presumption in the Gaikwad's favour. Bajji Rao II's fourth claim was for 56,38,000 rupees on account of tribute for investiture, but the Gaikwad urged that in consideration of his financial stringency 'the investiture ought to be granted without pay Nazrana.¹⁷ The fifth claim relates to the practice in Ahmedabad which was not connected with the general arrangement.¹⁸ In the sixth claim, the Peshwa called upon the Gaikwad to restore him three elephants and five horses in accordance with his promise in 1792.¹⁹ The seventh claim deals with the repayment of a debt of one lakh of rupees with full interest, borrowed from a banker by the Gaikwad in 1792 for which the Poona Government had stood surety.²⁰ Malhar Rao's claims mentioned in the Peshwa's eighth demand were forfeited by his rebellion.²¹ The next claim pertaining to the fees of the Fadnavis were admitted by the Gaikwad.²² The last demand relating to the sum of 26,000 rupees for the enjoyment of the revenue of the village of Ramia by the Gaikwad for thirteen years, without any authority, was admitted by the Gaikwad.²³

In 1806, the Peshwa's Government prepared a statement of its claims on the Gaikwad which shows the account as

17. Alphinstone to Warden. 24.3.1816, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIII, p. 37.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

follows :-²⁴

Balance of an account settled in 1798.	Rs 39,82,789
For the tribute & commutation for ten years at the rate of Rs 14,54,000 per year.	Rs 1,45,40,000
The Peshwa's claims over the Babis Mahals according to an agreement with the Gaikwad in 1765, at the rate of one lakh of rupees per year, for thirty seven years.	Rs 37,00,000
On account of the bestowal of the dignity of Sena-Khas Khel on Anand Rao Gaikwad, in accordance with ancient tradition.	Rs 56,38,001
Total	Rs <u>2,78,60,790</u>

In 1811, the Peshwa's claims were again estimated. By lapse of time, they had then risen to 3,40,76,790 rupees, apart from the demands under the head 'miscellaneous claims' which remained practically the same as in 1806.²⁵ A list of the Peshwa's claim prepared in 1816 appeared in the 'Bombay Gazetteer', in which the account was stated as follows:-²⁶

The balance in 1795	Rs 39,82,789
Tributes and commutations from 1798 to 1816 at the rate of 14,54,000 rupees per annum.	2,61,72,000
By the Peshwa's partition-treaty the Peshwa demanded one lakh per annum from the Gaikwad (1760-1816)	56,00,000
Nazars due from the Gaikwad for the Peshwa's recognition of him as Sena-Khas Khel	56,38,001
Total	Rs <u>4,13,92,790</u>

24. P.C.Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 120.

25. P.C.Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, pp.120-121.

26. Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. VII, p. 385.

There were other various miscellaneous demands which included the Gaikwad's promise to pay three of his best elephants and five of his best horses to the Peshwa;²⁷ his debt of one lakh of rupees borrowed from a banker on the Peshwa's security; another debt to a banker named Balaji Naik Vira; a promise to give the Peshwa jewels to the value of one lakh of rupees; a demand for the sum of 50,19,887 rupees for various engagements; and lastly, another demand from the Gaikwad at the rate of 2,000 rupees for holding the village of Ramia without authority for seventeen years.²⁸

On the other hand, the Gaikwad brought forward his counter claims on the Poona Government in 1806 and those were repeated again in 1813. In 1813, his counter claims were calculated at 3,36,50,000 rupees.²⁹ The first claim relates to the transfer of the city of Broach to the English by the Poona Government in 1777. It was considered illegal by the Government of Baroda as it belonged to the Gaikwad. Consequently the Gaikwad claimed that he should be paid an indemnity of 2,16,00,000 rupees.³⁰ The Gaikwad's second counter claim was for 80,00,000 rupees³¹ on account of the

27. Alphinstone to Secretary Adam, 21.9.1813, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 281.

28. Ibid., pp. 281-282.

29. Bombay Political Proceedings, 13.10.1813, p. 3935.

30. Alphinstone to Warden, 24.3.1816; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIII, p. 40; Grant Duff, History of the Mahrattas, Vol. II, pp. 507-508.

31. Alphinstone to Secretary Adam, 21.9.1813, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 284.

expenses incurred by him at the instance of Poona Government for subduing the rebellious Governor, Aba Shalukar of Ahmedabad.³² Thirdly, the Gaikwad's Government claimed a deduction of 40,50,000 rupees in consequence of the political unrest of the state.³³ It was for the amount of the expense he incurred in procuring a British force to secure the existence of his state which had fallen into great peril from the Peshwa's inability to afford the assistance he was bound by the treaty to furnish.³⁴ Therefore, his contingent should be considered as serving with him on the Peshwa's part, and that no compensation should be required for the years during which those internal troubles existed.

32. Alphinstone to Warden, 24.3.1816, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIII, p. 41.

In the year 1200 A.D. Abaji Krishna Shelukar in an unwarrantable prosecution of hostilities against the Gaikwad, raised troops and excited insurrections. The Gaikwad, having communicated this event to the Peshwa, restored order. Eight months were consumed in these arrangements, in the execution of which some of the principal Sirdars of the 'Kingdom' lost their lives. The establishment of suitable provision for their families, together with the expenses of the military preparations amounted to about 80,00,000 rupees.

Translation of the Gaikwad's report, written on the 17th of Rujub, in the Arabic year 1212; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 284.

33. Translation of the Gaikwad's report, written on the 17th Rujub, in the Arabic year 1212; Poona Residency correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 284.

34. P.C.Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 121.

Alphinstone, after a thorough study of various claims and counter claims as advanced by the Peshwa and the Gaikwad respectively, gave the following statement of accounts in his long letter to the Secretary, Warden, dated 24th March, 1816. 'All claims', he states, 'which were considered' are here put down in favour of the Gaikwad'.³⁵

<u>Peshwa's claims</u>		<u>Gaikwad's counter claims</u>	
Old Balance	Rs 39,82,789	Deduction for the years (Arabic) 1200, 1202, 1203.	Rs 20,25,000
Tributes & compensation for 17 years.	Rs 2,61,72,000	Indemnity for breach.	Rs 1,20,00,000
Nazar	Rs 5,00,000	Expenses of reducing Sailookur	Rs 20,00,000
Total	Rs 3,06,54,789	Total	Rs 1,60,25,000
Less	Rs 1,60,25,000		
Balance	Rs 1,46,29,789		

"From this it appears", Alphinstone concludes, "that the Gykwaur owes the Paishwa after all deductions upwards of a crore and forty six lacs of rupees on the most favourable view of his affairs and even if the Peshwa could be persuaded to give up the odd 46 lacs, as a remission, the balance against the Gykwaur would still be a crore of rupees."³⁶

35. Alphinstone to Warden, 24.3.1816, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIII, p. 43.

36. Ibid., p. 44.

Section 2 - Gangadhar Shastri's Mission

In 1812, Fatch Singh Gaikwad proposed that Gangadhar Shastri be sent to Poona³⁷ to adjust the account between the two states, and he offered to bear the entire expenses of the mission. On the 5th October, 1812, the Bombay Government expressed its consent.³⁸ Besides the adjustment of the Peshwa's claims on the Gaikwad, another important object of Gangadhar Shastri's mission was the intense anxiety of the Gaikwad for the renewal of the lease of Ahmedabad farm in his favour, which was to terminate in 1814.³⁹ The Peshwa had first leased out his half share in the management of Ahmedabad to Govindrao Gaikwad's son Bhagvant Rao in 1800, and the same was again renewed on October 2, 1804, for a period of ten years, at the annual rate of 4,50,000 rupees.⁴⁰ The Resident at Baroda and the court of Directors considered it desirable that the management of the farm of Ahmedabad should continue in the hands of the Gaikwad. But the Peshwa was not prepared to renew the lease.⁴¹ On 23rd October, 1814, he appointed Trimbakji Dangi to take the charge of the Farm. Trimbakji,

37. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p. 455; J. Talboys Wheeler, *Summary of Affairs of the Mahratta States*, p. 206.

38. *Bombay Political Proceedings*, 7.10.1812, p. 2803.

39. Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II, p. 506.

40. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p. 456.

41. Elphinstone to Warden, 5.1.1814, *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. XII, p. 309.

however, did not go there personally, but sent his nominee Vithal Narasingh to manage the affairs on his behalf.⁴²

Gangadhar Shastri Patwardhan 'was born about the year 1775'.⁴³ He was a clever clerk in the Peshwa's office.⁴⁴ He left Poona as a result of his differences with Nana Fadnavis and Dada Gadre. He went away to Baroda when the British Residency was established there in 1802. He was appointed by Walker, the Resident at Baroda, as the Native Assistant on a pay of a hundred rupees per month.⁴⁵ Soon he became the main informant of the Resident at Baroda by keeping him well supplied with details of anti-British intrigues in the court of Baroda. Thereby, he became thoroughly obnoxious to large sections in Baroda and outside.⁴⁶ But his services to the Company were found to be of the greatest value. In November 1803, for his zeal, diligence and fidelity to the Company he was granted as an inam the village of Dindoli in the Chaurasi Pargana.⁴⁷

42. G. S. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 456.

43. Riyasat, p. 466.

44. G. S. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 454. According to Grant Duff, Shastri was originally in the service of Fadke family at Poona Grant Duff, History of the Marathas, Vol. II, p. 505.

45. Riyasat, p. 467.

46. G. S. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 455.

47. B. C. Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 114.

In 1807, the Bombay Government honoured him by the grant of a 'Palankeen with a monthly allowance of one hundred rupees for its upkeep'.⁴⁸ He also received from the Gaikwad a suitable commission for effecting a considerable saving in the military expenses of the state.⁴⁹ In May 1813, the Shastri entered the Gaikwad's service with the title of Mutaliq and a salary of six thousand rupees a year.⁵⁰ In 1814, the Bombay Government found it necessary to explain to Alphinstone that 'Gangadhar Shastri had been nominated to a confidential situation under Fateh Singh Gaikwad and not to the Office of Diwan to the Baroda State'.⁵¹ Grant Duff has rightly observed that the Shastri was the 'Prime Minister in all but the name'.⁵²

Alphinstone has given a clear and interesting portrayal of the Shastri's character; 'this man is a person of great shrewdness and talents who keeps the whole state of Baroda in the highest order and here lavishes his money and marshals his Swari in such a style as to draw the attention of the whole place. Though a very learned Shastri, he affects to be quite an English man, walks fast, talks fast, interrupts and contradicts and calls

48. P.C.Gupta, *Baji Rao II and the East India Company*, p.114.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

51. *Bombay Political Proceedings*, 20.1.1814, p. 317.

52. Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. II, p. 506.

the Peshwa and his ministers old fools and damned rascals or rather dam rascals. He mixes English words with every thing he says and will say of some one (Holkar for instance) 'Bahot triokwala tha, lekin bada akalmand kukhye (ookeye) tha'. - A very tricky person but very intelligent and of oblique sight.⁵³

Gangadhar Shastri had an interview with the Governor of Bombay and Colonel Carnac on his way to Poona. (53A)

The Shastri arrived at Poona in January 1814 under a British safe-conduct.⁵⁴ He was presented to the Peshwa on February 9, 1814, but the 'reception was very cold.'⁵⁵

The Peshwa referred the Shastri to his favourite minister Trimbakji Danglia who enjoyed his master's full confidence.⁵⁶ Trimbakji was a man of a violent character and very hostile

53. Colebrooke, Life of M. Alphinstone, Vol. I, p. 276.

(53A). पेशवे वसुदेव निवडलेले काण्ड, Vol. 41, p. 63.

“अलीकडील वातनी आहे की राजश्री गंगाधरपंत शास्त्री
हल्ली जायेंतवाड याची दिवासात्रिरी करितात, ते
प्रजेच्या हून मुलाईत यावयासी निघाले आहेत. येथील
मुख्यांनी मेट करून घेणें पारगार आशिल्लें मेशारोवट्टे
जायेंतवाड संमेलनें खरवारातीं विनंती करून लोखंडी
कारनां येणार असो लेत आहे गंगधरपंत वातनी”

54. G. S. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, pp. 455-456.

55. Ibid., Political Proceedings (Foreign), Cons. 25.

56. Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 11, p. 7.

to the English.⁵⁷ Soon after the Shastri's arrival at Poona, the anti-British faction headed by Ex-Diwan Sitaram at the court of Baroda became vigorously active. They looked upon the Shastri as a 'hated interloper and his ascendancy a deplorable incident.'⁵⁸ The Shastri's entire annihilation was indispensable to Sitaram's faction.⁵⁹ In June 1814, Elphinstone informed the Bombay Government that Govind Rao Bandhuji had held secret meetings with the Peshwa's Chief Minister Sadashiv Manakeshwar and had presented a letter from Fateh Singh Gaikwad who had complained against the Shastri's ascendancy in the state and also disavowed the mission.⁶⁰ Early in 1815, a person named Bhagwant Rao Gaikwad, an illegitimate brother of Anand Rao, appeared at Poona and started intrigues against the Baroda Government. He was cordially received by Baji Rao in full Darbar on the Vasant Panchami day⁶¹ (Feb. 14, 1815).

57. Charles Macfarlane, *History of British India from the Earliest English Intercourse*, p. 388; H. Bevan, *Thirty years in India*, Vol. I, p. 225.

58. P. C. Gupta, *Baji Rao II and the East India Company*, p. 117.

59. Wallace, *the Guicowar and his Relations with the British Government*, p. 199. It has been said that one of the objects of Kanhoji's conspiracy of 1812 was the destruction of the British Power by the murder of the English Resident and Gangadhar Shastri (*Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. VII, p. 217).

60. Elphinstone to the Chief Secretary to the Government, 25.6.1814; *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. XII, p. 332.

61. Elphinstone to Warden, 19.2.1815; *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. XII, p. 350.

In the meantime, Baji Rao was informed by his spies in Baroda that Anand Rao and Fateh Singh were virtually prisoners under the British guards, and were extremely anxious that the Peshwa should obtain for them freedom of action.⁶² Baji Rao claimed the suzerainty over the Gaikwad and insisted on sending his own agent to Baroda for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of the Gaikwad's hardship. But it was strongly repudiated by Alphonstone who stated that the Gaikwad was no longer the Peshwa's vassal.⁶³ Alphonstone was soon aware that the outstanding demands on the Gaikwad afforded a wonderful opportunity to the Peshwa for correspondence and interchange of missions with all the principal states of India.⁶⁴ But Alphonstone deliberately maintained a soft tone towards Baji Rao as the English were then engaged in a deadly war with Nepal and their repeated reverses had created a strong country wide popular discontent against the British Government.⁶⁵ In February 1815, Alphonstone asked the Peshwa to give up his claim of exercising control over the Baroda State and to surrender Govind Rao Bandhuji and Bhagvantrao to him as they were actively conducting intrigues against the English.⁶⁶ Alphonstone also

62. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p. 457.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 458.

64. Colebrooke, *Life of K. Alphonstone*, Vol. I, p. 294.

65. *Ibid.*

66. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p. 458.

advised the Shastri to quit Poona as his mission had proved a failure. The Shastri did not accept Elphinstone's suggestion because he felt that if he returned without achieving any useful result, his competitor Sitaram and the rest of the Baroda official circle would get the ascendancy and strengthen their opposition. On the other hand, the Peshwa and Trimbakji thought that if the Shastri, whose mission had been sponsored by the British Government went back in discomfiture, the British would take it as a personal affront and avenge themselves upon the Peshwa by making him lose both his overlordship and his debt. Therefore, Baji Rao and Trimbakji introduced a sudden change in their behaviour towards the Shastri and tried to create an atmosphere of complete cordiality. They persuaded the Shastri to stay on for sometime more and explore all possible means for settling their dispute.

Gangadhar Shastri prepared a draft agreement to which the Peshwa gave his assent. By it the Gaikwad was to cede a territory yielding a revenue of seven lakhs of rupees and acknowledge the sovereignty of the Peshwa by receiving an investiture from him, provided it were always conferred on the nearest heir and without a

Nazrana.⁶⁷ But Fateh Singh Gaikwad was averse to any settlement on the basis of territorial cession and expressed his disapproval of the scheme. The Shastri still hoped that Fateh Singh might be brought to open his eyes to his own interest. Alphinstone considered that a postponement of the negotiation might be helpful to secure a favourable answer from Baroda. So he encouraged the Peshwa's intention of going on a pilgrimage to Wai.⁶⁸ After his return from Wai, the Peshwa projected his annual pilgrimage to Masik. Alphinstone decided to accompany the Peshwa and Gangadhar Shastri.⁶⁹

All this time, Baji Rao and Trimbakji maintained a show of profuse affability and sweetness towards the Shastri and completely won him over by skilfully playing on his vanity. Some alluring offers were made out to Gangadhar Shastri. Trimbakji went so far as to propose resigning his own place to the Shastri so that the Peshwa

67. Resolution of the Bombay Government, 10.5.1815, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 369. The Shastri felt that these terms would prove beneficial to the Gaikwad. He pointed out that by paying seven lakhs of rupees a year, the Gaikwad would escape the whole of the Peshwa's demands, which, even if all the Gaikwad's claims were admitted would amount to a larger annual sum.

68. Bombay Political Proceedings, 10.5.1815, p. 2019.

69. P.C. Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 126.

might avail himself of the services of so able a minister.⁷⁰ A matrimonial alliance was projected between Baji Rao's sister-in-law and the Shastri's son.⁷¹ The Shastri's mind was so thoroughly captivated that he began to respond to these professions with equal cordiality, and soon became an intimate friend of Trimbakji. The thread ceremony of the Shastri's son was performed in Poona with lavish pomp and grandeur, in the presence of the Peshwa.⁷²

In the meantime, news was received from Baroda that Fateh Singh did not accept the proposal of ceding in perpetuity territory worth seven lakhs annually to the Peshwa in discharge of his debt. This decision shattered the Shastri's plans and now he seriously began to think of an honourable escape from his bonds with the Peshwa. He suddenly declined to celebrate the marriage of his son with the Peshwa's sister-in-law, for he feared that in gaining the favours of the Peshwa, he might forfeit that of his own master.⁷³ Furthermore, he gave a more deadly

70. H. Bevan, *Thirty years in India*, Vol. I, p. 227, According Dr. P. C. Gupta, he was proposed to accept the office of 'Prime Minister' of Poona Government (P. C. Gupta, *Baji Rao II and the East India Company*, p. 126).

71. Grant Duff, *History of the Maharattas*, Vol. II, p. 510. Cotton holds that 'the Peshwa attempted to win over the envoy's allegiance, by promising one of his own daughters in marriage to his son'. (J. S. Cotton, *Mountstuart Elphinstone*, p. 90); J. Talboys Wheeler, *Summary of Affairs of the Mahratta States*, p. 207.

72. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p. 459.

73. Colebrooke, *Life of M. Elphinstone*, Vol. I, p. 295.

cause of offence in forbidding his wife from visiting the Peshwa's palace.⁷⁴ Indeed, no one who respected the honour of a female relative could allow her to witness the scenes of gross debauchery and licentious profligacy which formed part of every day life at the court of Poona. Revenge was now the dominant passion in Baji Rao's mind and Trimbakji was at hand ready to second the impulse. But they assumed a perfect calm exterior and gave out no inkling of their sinister design.

In fact, the Shastri's negotiations with the Peshwa had caused much alarm to the Bombay Government. On the 8th May 1815, the Bombay Government passed a resolution disapproving the Shastri's conduct. The Bombay Government considered that by entering into a discussion on the question of the rights of sovereignty the Shastri had acted beyond his jurisdiction. Gangadhar's proposed arrangement with the Peshwa's Government embraced a direct acknowledgement of the right of the Peshwa to interfere in the domestic concerns of the Gaikwad.⁷⁵ The Bombay Government, therefore, thought it desirable that the Shastri's mission should be terminated immediately as it failed to effect an adjustment upon any satisfactory principle. But the Shastri accompanied by the Peshwa and

74. H. Bevan, *Thirty years in India*, Vol. I, p. 228.

75. P.C. Gupta, *Baji Rao II and the East India Company*, p. 127.

Elphinstone had already left for Nasik before the resolution of the Government had reached Poona.⁷⁶

The month of June wore away at Nasik in the usual routine. On the auspicious occasion of the Ekadashi in the month of July, a visit to Pandharpur was considered necessary, and to economise the expenses only a short hurried journey with a small party was proposed. In order to put the Shastri off his guard, Baji Rao invited him to accompany to Pandharpur. Accordingly, Bapu Mairal, the Shastri's assistant and the major portion of the party returned to Poona and Elphinstone was dissuaded from accompanying the Peshwa on his pilgrimage.⁷⁷

Section 3 - Murder of Gangadhar Shastri

On his way to Pandharpur, Baji Rao increased his personal guards and warned them to be vigilant in their watch.⁷⁸ Shortly after their arrival at Pandharpur, the Shastri came across a letter written by Govindrao Bandhuji, in which he was warned that he would not see Baroda again.⁷⁹

76. The Peshwa and his party reached Nasik on the 26th May, 1815.-(Foot Note) Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 374.

77. Grant Duff, History of the Mahrattas, Vol. II, p. 512; Forrest, Elphinstone's Writings, p. 138.

78. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.460.

79. Govindrao Bandhuji came to Pandharpur with great secrecy, but his arrival was discovered by the Shastri immediately before his death. Elphinstone to the Governor General, 16.8.1815, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 394.

The warning kept the Shastri mostly in his home with a few personal servants attending on him. The Ekadashi was over, and the return journey was to commence on the 21st July 1815. On the 20th July,⁸⁰ the Shastri returned from an entertainment given by Ram Chandra Gossain and complained of indisposition. In the evening of the same day, Trimbakji arrived at the temple and sent his clerk Laksman Pant to invite the Shastri there for offering the last prayer. The Shastri, politely rejected the invitation. But Trimbakji repeated the request thrice and pressed the Shastri to come.⁸¹ At last, the Shastri found it discourteous to decline such pressing friendly calls. Accompanied by seven unarmed followers he went to the temple where he was received by Trimbakji.⁸² Later on an old priest of the temple spoke to the Shastri and gave him Prasad to eat. Thereafter, the Shastri started on his return preceded by Trimbakji's guides through the same path by which he had come.

80. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 460. According to Pottinger's report, Gangadhar Shastri was murdered on the night of the 19th July 1815.- Pottinger to Warden, 23.7.1815, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 375. Forrest states that the Shastri received a message from Trimbakji on the night of the 14th July entreating him to come to the temple and perform his devotions - Forrest, Alphinstone's writings, p. 122. The same date (14 July) has also been mentioned in Parliamentary Papers, Vol. 11, paper No. 369, p.8.

81. Alphinstone, to the Governor General, 16.8.1815, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, pp. 394-395. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.460.

82. Ibid.

As the party proceeded a few paces, a band of armed men came rushing after them calling out 'make way, make way'. They hacked the Shastri to pieces. His four followers ran away after receiving some wounds. A cry arose, as the old priest and the Shastri's three servants came with lighted torches and were taken aback by the sight of this ghastly crime.⁸³ Practically, the same story has been given by the Shastri's help-mate Bapu Mairal who received a letter from Moro Trimbak, written just two hours after the Shastri's assassination. Moro Trimbak was with the Shastri at Pandharpur when the crime was perpetrated.⁸⁴

The next day the Shastri's men requested Trimbakji to make an enquiry. But Trimbakji told them that it was not possible to trace the culprits as he had no idea on whom to fix the guilt.⁸⁵ Baji Rao and Trimbakji did not reach the Capital for several days. They led a life of seclusion with

83. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.461; H. Bevan Thirty years in India, Vol. I, p. 229. B.S. Jones remarks that when prayers were ended, some assassins rushed out of the temple and murdered the Shastri. (Jones, British Power in India and the subsidiary system of Alliance, p. 15); Wheeler, Summary of the Affairs of the Mahratta States, pp. 207-208; देशी क प्रसंग निवृत्त लेख, vol. 41, pp. 84-85.

84. See appendix. Bapu Mairal's statement may be considered as first hand information of the Shastri's murder.

85. P.C. Gupta, Baji Rao II and the East India Company, p.129.

strict guards watching over their persons. They took no steps to investigate the circumstances.⁸⁶ On the contrary, the Peshwa commanded to circulate a stern warning that no one should talk of the subject and spies were posted in the city for preventing such talk.⁸⁷ The news of the murder of Gangadhar Shastri caused great consternation all over the land. The news was hurriedly communicated to Alphinstone, who was then at Allora,⁸⁸ by Henry Pottinger, the Officer-in-charge of Poona. On the 25th July, 1815, Alphinstone addressed a letter to the Peshwa from Allora, calling upon him to discover and punish 'the author and instigators of this atrocity.'⁸⁹

86. J.S.Cotton, Mountstuart Alphinstone, p. 90.

87. Sardesai, New history of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 461.

88. Forrest, Alphinstone's writings, p. 43.

89. Alphinstone to the Peshwa, 25.7.1815, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p. 377. According to Wheeler, on the 7th of May, 1815, Alphinstone sent his ultimatum that the Peshwa was to surrender Trimbakji within a month from that day and to give up three forts as pledges for the fulfilment of his engagement (Summary of Affairs of the Mahratta States, p. 216).

A P P E N D I X

The following account of occurrences on the day of the Shastri's assassination is extracted from a narrative drawn up by Bapu Miral and translated into English by Captain Pottinger -

"On the 14th (of ashad sudh) the Shastry went to an entertainment given by Ram Chunder Goossayne Patunker to the Paishwa and on his return home complained of fever and desired that if any person came to request him to go to the temple, they might be told that was indisposed. In the course of half an hour one Luxman Punt came on Trimbukjee Dinglia's behalf to invite him to join in the devotions, and he said: "I am unwell and will not go to-day". Shortly after Trimbukjee sent a second messenger to acquaint the Shastry that the Paishwa was to go to the temple next morning, that the crowd was therefore cleared away and that he (the Shastry) ought to take advantage of this circumstance and attend prayers, but not to bring many attendants. He returned the former answer. Baupoo Chiplunker a friend of the Shastry and Rowjee Mahratta, a relation then left the Shastry and walked to the great temple where they met Trimbukjee Dinglia who observed: 'I have sent twice to the Shastry to

come to prayers. He declines doing so, but wish you would try him again." Rowjee Mahratta came back to the house occupied by the Shastry and told him what Dinglia had said. He at first observed, "I am unwell"; but on reflection he became apprehensive of offending Dinglia by not complying with his three different messages and therefore he agreed to go. He accordingly set off with two Mussalchees, two personal servants, three Murroarras and a caroon of Trimbuckjee's. As he passed along with shops, one of his attendants overheard a man in the crowd ask : "which is the Shastry"? He did not think of observing these people. The Shastry entered the temple, performed his devotions, chatted for a few minutes with Trimbuckjee Dinglia and then proceeded towards his house. He desired three of his people to stay behind with one Chytondoss Baba, a kind of preceptor of the Shastry and a very old man, and he advanced himself accompanied by Trimbuckjee Dinglia's sepoy's who were in front of him ten or twelve paces. Next came two of the Shastry's own Murroarras, then two Mussalchees with lighted flambeaus and about four paces behind them was the Shastry. One Ramchunder Burway an inhabitant of Funderpore and a priest of the temple had hold of the Shastry's left hand, and Bapoo Chiplunkar the Shastry's friend was on the opposite side but a step or two in the rear. These three

were followed by the Shastry's two personal servants and when the party had walked some little distance from the temple three men came running up behind them as if they were clearing the road for some person by calling out 'Pice', 'Pice' (make way, make way) their hands were folded up in a cloth probably as a shield and in each of their right hands there seemed to be a twisted cloth which is usual for striking people in a crowd to make them stand aside. One of the assassins struck the Shastry a violent blow apparently with his cloth, when it was discovered that he had a sword also in his hand. Another seized him by the lock of hair of the crown of his head to throw him down and when he was falling the third assassin cut him over the head. Two more men at this juncture rushed from the front of the party and three of the attendants who attempted to stay by the Shastry were wounded, on which his friends, Mussalchees and followers ran away and left him in the hands of the murderers who mangled him in the most shocking manner and one of them exclaimed: "we have now finished him." This was over heard by one of the wounded. The assassins then threw down two sword scabbards and made their escape; and the Shastry's people who were following with the old man already alluded to, saw five men with swords run away towards the temple. They also

observed the flambeaus lying extinguished and smoking on the ground and became much alarmed, but not knowing what had taken place two or three of them ran home to the Shastry's house and learning he was not there they returned to search for him and found his corpse in the road almost cut to bits. They took the pieces up and carried them home. This was about half past eight-0' Clock at night."

Alphinstone to the Governor-General, 16.8.1815, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, pp. 394-396.