

## Chapter II

### CONFLICTS AND DIFFERENCES OF THE GAEKWADS WITH THE PESHWAS

Pilajirao, the founder of the Gaekwad family in Gujarat, was appointed as a Mutalik or Deputy of Yeshwantrao Dabhade. He was given the title of Sena-Khas-Khel or the Commander of the special band or 'The Leader of the Sovereign band' the Senapati and the Mutalik had to manage the entire revenue of Gujarat. Raja Shahu had brought out this agreement between two powerful Chiefs and the end of the first struggle between the Peshwa on one side and the dabhades and the Gaekwads on the other. Pilajirao had all the authority of Senapati as Yeshwantrao Dabhade was found to be of a feeble mind. Within a short period of two years after this Pilajirao was assassinated in his tent at Dakor, by two Marwadis, who were employed by Abhesingh, the Governor of Gujarat. Due to the death of Pilajirao, Damajirao was required to respond all his responsibilities.

Damajirao was soon accepted as a Mutalik by Umabai, the mother of Yeshwantrao. Damajirao's plans were to be free from the domination of the Peshwa and the Dabhade, and to be defacto ruler of Gujarat. With this aim in view, outwardly he tried to maintain cordial relations with Peshwa Bajirao but he always tried to limit the power and influence of the

Peshwa in Gujarat. In order to be free from the controlling superior authority of the Peshwas and the Dabhade he tried to secure a mandate from Shahu Chhatrapati. Besides he maintained good relations with non-Maratha powers. In order to be free economically he tried to secure the rights of the collection of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from different parts of Gujarat which were at one time or the other, assigned to different Maratha Chiefs.

Damajirao was to pay, as decided by the agreement executed by the command of Shahu Raja after the battle of Bhilupur, one-half of the Chauth and revenue derived from Gujarat to Shahu Raja through the Peshwa. Damajirao generally resented this clause and his attempts were to be free, if not from the king atleast from the Peshwa. All the activities of Damajirao were directed for the complete execution of his cherished hopes.

#### Damajirao and Peshwa Bajirao :

Peshwa Bajirao was busy for all the nine years following the battle of Bhilupur (1731) in conquering the different parts of India and he did not much interfere in the affairs of Gujarat. Damajirao had his own field in Gujarat. Both Bajirao and Damajirao were the servants of Shahu Raja and they were driving at the common goal of expanding and strengthening the Maratha power. Both were thus oblige to

maintain good relations and they did outwardly. The assumption of a superior authority by Peshwa Bajirao was always disliked by Damajirao and the successes of one or the other increased their internal jealousy. This attitude ultimately led Damajirao to oppose Peshwa. Still however Damajirao tried to obey the Peshwa, Damajirao offered help to Chimnaji Appa, the brother of Peshwa Bajirao, against the Portuguese. He also promised to send men and ammunition as desired by the Peshwa for the further conquest.<sup>1</sup> In 1737 Damajirao at the request of Peshwa Bajirao joined Raghuji Bhosle against Sujayyat Khan, the nawab of Ellichpur.<sup>2</sup> But such instances where Damajirao and Bajirao worked together were rare.

Damajirao's attempts to minimise the influence of Peshwa Bajirao :

Damajirao and his father Pilajirao had taken active part in the battle of Bhilupur against Peshwa Bajirao and though they were defeated, tried to oppose the Peshwa. The Governor of Gujarat Abhaysingh had empowered the Peshwa to collect Chauth from Gujarat. Pilajirao had attacked Abhaysingh with considerable success. Abhaysingh got rid of Pilaji by a plot at Dakor and had appointed Sher Khan Babi at Baroda. Therefore Damajirao's first and foremost concern was to avenge the foul murder of his father and to regain Baroda.

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1 S.P.D. Book No.16, letter No.70, dated 10-9-1737.

2 S.P.D. Book No.30, letter No.207 of 30-12-1737.

In 1734 by the help of the Patels of Padra, Umabai Dabhade and other allies, Damajirao attacked Baroda and defeated Sher Khan Babi. Thus he regained Baroda from the Moghuls and it is to be noted that since that date Baroda has remained in the hands of Gaekwad.<sup>3</sup>

Momin Khan the rival of Abhaysingh sought the help of Damajirao against Abhaysingh. Damaji with a large army rushed towards Ahmedabad. Abhaysingh sued for peace and agree to pay Rs. 80,000/- from the revenues of Ahmedabad in addition to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi to Damajirao Gaekwad.

Damajirao turned towards Jodhpur. Abhaysingh in order to protect his own capital hastened towards Jodhpur, appointing Ratansing as his Deputy in Ahmedabad. Momin Khan and Damajirao captured Ahmedabad on May 28th 1737. Momin Khan ceded one-half the produce of Gujarat excepting Ahmedabad to Damajirao for his help. He also gave some land in the neighbourhood of Ahmedabad and the income of the Port of Cambay to Damajirao. Later in the same year he ceded half the city of Ahmedabad<sup>4</sup> and entire district of Viramgam. Momin Khan remained a firm ally of Damajirao till his death in 1743. Rangoji was put in charge of half the city of Ahmedabad and of several of its gates.

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3 Comm. Vol.II, p.227.

4 Historical selections from Baroda State Records (hereinafter abbreviated as His B.S.R.) Vol.I, letter No.23 of 20-5-1737.

Damajirao's assistants Rangoji and Devaji attacked Cambay and they secured large presents and the half the revenues of Cambay. Maratha Officers were placed at custom houses<sup>5</sup> of Cambay.

Damajirao claimed a share from the revenues of Surat. He collected nearly six to seven lakhs of rupees from the merchants and then signed a treaty with Mawab Teg Beght Khan in 1735. The terms of this treaty were observed for about fifty years. Damajirao Gaekwad by his actions had asserted by 1744 that he had a considerable share in the revenues of Broach.<sup>6</sup>

Thus he tried to be economically free from the control of the Peshwa. He had also to contend and refute the claims of other Marathas Sardars in Gujarat, some of whom were the allies of the Peshwa.

The refutation of the Claims of Other Maratha Sardars :

Maratha Sardars such as Kanthajai Kadam Bande, Raghuji Bande, Raghuji Bhosle, Udaji Pawar and others had attacked Gujarat at one time or other and they used to collect a share in the revenues of Gujarat. Pilajirao had defeated Raghuji Bande and Udaji Pawar near Patan in North Gujarat in 1732. Damajirao with the help of his able assistant

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5 Ganse & Banaji : The Gaekwads of Baroda (hereinafter abbreviated as G.B.), Vol.I, p.47.

6 Ibid, p.48. Letter of 16-12-1772 from Mostyns diary. The Third English Embassy at Poona, p.48.

Rangoji managed the collection of Chauth of Gujarat and Rangoji worked as his Deputy in Gujarat whenever Damajirao went out of Gujarat. Kanthaji Kadam Bande, who had gone over to the Peshwa invaded Gujarat in 1735 when Damajir was in the Deccan. Rangoji defeated him at Anand Mogri<sup>7</sup> Rangoji then obtained from Momin Khand the Chauth of the revenues North of the Mahi,<sup>8</sup> which was once claimed by Kanthaji Kadam Bande. Damaji and Rangoji captured Viramgam. Kathanji Kadam Bande in company of Malharrao Holkar again invaded North Gujarat and plundered Vadnagar and Palanpur. Even though they were successful for some time but they could not stay any longer due to oppositions of Damajirao's generals. Udaaji Pawar,<sup>9</sup> another favourite of Peshwa Bajirao, made an attempt to seize a part out of the spoils of Gujarat, but he was defeated in battle and was slain.

Damajirao encountered Raghoji Bhosle at Dehermal,<sup>10</sup> a fort on the high road from Surat to Baranpur. He also obtained Aurangabad which had an income by way of duty on goods of one lak of Rupees. These two forts were the key

7 Anand Mogri is a village in Kaira District, 25 miles South-East of Kaira.

8 G.H.Desai : Gazetteer of the Baroda State (hereinafter abbreviated as ) Vol.I, Chap.VII, p.446.

9 Elliot, 'The Rulers of Baroda.' 1934 edition, p.28.

10 S.P.D. Book.No.12, letter No.118 of 1736.

for the whole of Baglan district. Damajirao secured these two forts by force on the eastern boundary of Gujarat. Thus by driving out most of the Maratha Commanders, Damajirao established his undisputed rights in Gujarat.

Damajirao's attempts to secure the mandate from  
Chhatrapati Shahu :

Damajirao Gaekwad had frequent quarrels with the members of the Dabhade family, but with his judicious nature he was in a position to pacify them. Besides the members of the Dabhade family did not agree among themselves, consequently there was no definite policy. They had also been in subordinate and in 1734 Shahu Raja had ordered Peshwa to punish them.

Damajirao wanted to be free from his subordinate position of Mutalik to the Dabhade family. He seized this opportunity and claimed the title of Sena Khas Khel directly from Shahu, to whom he proposed an agreement with clear and definite conditions. The agreement contained unmistakable evidence of Damajirao's ambitions and plans.

In his letter Damajirao warned Raja Shahu not to allow the Peshwa to interfere in their proposed agreement. The Peshwa had no hand in this matter. Damajirao wanted to exclude completely the Dabhades and the Peshwa from the administration of Gujarat. Damajirao, by this agreement, assured that the treasury of Raja Shahu would not suffer.

The proposed agreement<sup>11</sup> of Damajirao dated 28-5-1734 :

Damajirao promised that (1) the administration of Surat and Gujarat would be conducted as usual and there would be no cause of dispute. (2) He further promised to pay Rupees ten lakhs to Raja Shahu, two lakhs to Virubai, and two lakhs to Fatehsingrao Bhosle and every year he would pay six lakhs to the Royal treasury. (3) Two thousand soldiers and one member of the Royal family would serve Shahu Raja in peace-time, and ten thousand soldiers would be there in time of war. (4) Raja Shahu was not to appoint any officer in Gujarat. (5) If the Peshwa interfered, Raja Shahu should help Damajirao.

In this way Damajirao directly corresponded with Raja Shahu but Raja Shahu did not agree to the proposals and Damajirao was not encouraged. Raja Shahu had learnt that, Damajirao's authority had increased considerably in Gujarat and Saurashtra and he was getting tributes from this territor.

Raja Shahu, in 1735-36 had recognised that Damaji Gaekwad had a share in the revenues of Surat. In one of his letters he wrote that the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi on the Sea Customs at Surat were assigned to the Jagirdari of Fort Raigadh and land customs were belonging to the Gaekwad.<sup>12</sup>

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11 S.P.D. Book No.12, letter No.67.

12 H.S.B.S.R. Vol.I, letter No.22 of 1735-36.



Damajirao secured the title of Sena Khas Khel<sup>13</sup> from Raja Shahu in 1736, after the death of Baburao Dabhade. Thus Raja Shahu appreciated the work of Damajirao. In order to be free from the thralldom of the Peshwa Damajirao tried to cultivate good relations with foreign powers.

Damajirao in league with foreign powers :

Damajirao acted firmly on his own account with the Nizam, the Siddis, and the local chiefs of Gujarat. The members of the Gaekwad family were in close contact with the Nizam and often looked to him as the sympathiser of their cause. He was considered as a good supporter of the Gaekwad's right against the Peshwa. During the days of Pilajirao, after the battle of Bhilupur the Gaekwad family had acted so much in collaboration with the Nizam-Ul-Mulk, Bhavansingrao Thoke, Udaji Pawar and others that the Peshwa's agent Keso Vishwanath warned Bajirao Peshwa to be on his guard.<sup>14</sup>

Damajirao Gaekwad often sent his agents to Nizam-Ul-Mulk on one of occasion he sent a present of forty gold mohras and seven bundles of superior jari (silk cloth) to Nizam.<sup>15</sup> Damajirao invaded Broach in 1741, which was held by the Nizam's agent, and the request of the Nizam he raised the Seize but he managed to get a portion of the revenues of Broach.<sup>16</sup>

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13 Wad : Sel. Kitta No.90,95.

14 S.P.D. Book No.30, letter No.13 of June 2nd 1732.

15 Ibid, letter No.156 of January 22nd 1736.

16 Elliot The Rulers of Baroda, p.29.

Damajirao also exercised control at the trading centres such as Surat, Broach, and Cambay. The European merchant companies and their agents sent lavish presents to Damajirao and he used to issue Parwanah (Permits) for their merchandise.

Damajirao on his own account had settled the tribute question with the Rajas (Chiefs) of Mandavi, Rajpipla, Idar and Thakors of Mahi-Kantha and Rewa-Kantha. Damajirao was accepted by these tributary rulers as their overlord. In order to stabilise and strengthen his position in Gujarat, he won over many Maratha leaders to make Gujarat as their permanent residence.

#### Damajirao's rivalry with Peshwa Bajirao :

The repeated attempts of Maratha Sardars to conquer a part of Gujarat and their defeats left a lasting impression on Damajirao that Peshwa Bajirao disliked his increasing power and hold over Gujarat. On the other hand the power and influence of Peshwa Bajirao had lately increased very much. Peshwa Bajirao and his followers like Sindhia and Holkar had overrun Central India. This rising power of the Peshwa was looked with an eye of suspicion by Damajirao and Ranghoji Bhosle of Nagpur. Both Damajirao and Ranghoji Bhosle refused to assist the Peshwa in his attempt to unite the great Maratha Princes against the Nizam, the great foe<sup>17</sup> of

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17 G.H. Desai : The Gazetteer of the Baroda State, Vol. I, Chap, 7, p.448.

Marathas in those days. Even without their help, Bajirao won a great victory over the Nizam at Palkhed in 1738. Both Peshwa Bajirao and Damajirao were jealous of each other. Damajirao having entrusted all his work to his Deputy Rangoji looked for an opportunity to measure swords with the Peshwa and his party. This inherent hatred of each other was the root cause of the subsequent conflicts between the Peshwa and the Gaekwads. The death of Bajirao Peshwa in April 1740<sup>18</sup> gave an opportunity to Damajirao to do what he had desired for a long time.

#### Damajirao against the selection of

#### Balaji Bajirao as the Peshwa :

Shahu Chhatrapati was the authority for appointing the Peshwa and he had number of proposals and suggestions from interested party for the appointment. Damajirao and Raghoji Bhosle pressed the claims of one Bapuji Naik of Baramati, a rich Banker, to the post of the Peshwa. He was a relative and a creditor of Bajirao Peshwa, but had become his enemy owing to his persistent demand for the repayment of the loan which Bajirao had taken from him but he could not repay. Bapuji Naik offered a huge sum if he was appointed to the vacant post of the Peshwa.

In spite of all opposition Shahu Chhatrapati conferred the Peshwaship on Balaji, the eldest son of Bajirao.

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18 Elliot. The Rullers of Baroda, p.30.

Damajirao was angry and at the instigation of Raghoji Bhosle, invaded Malwa, region assigned to Peshwa. This step of Damajirao strengthened the relations of the Peshwa and the Pawar family. The Peshwa authorised Anandrao Pawar to establish himself at Dhar<sup>19</sup> as the sentiently of Malwa against the Gaekwads.

Next year the Peshwa won over Raghoji Bhosle, the more formidable of the two allies by allowing him to collect the revenues of Lower Bengal<sup>20</sup> Bapuji Naik then came to terms with the Peshwa and invaded Gujarat, attacked and burnt Songadh. However he retired on the approach of Rangoji.<sup>21</sup>

#### Damaji against Peshwa Balaji Bajirao :

In 1749, a second opportunity occurred for Damaji, to side any party opposed to the Peshwa. Shahu Chhatrapati died childless on December 15th 1749 and there were very many plots intrigues for the succession. There were many supporters including Rani Sakvarbaj, the senior most wife of Shahu for the assertion of a claim of Sambhaji, Raja of Kolhapur, nearest relative of Shahu.

Shahu Chhatrapati had put a note in his own handwriting by which he had debarred Sambhaji from coming to the throne

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19 Grant Duff. Vol.II, p.9.

20 Ibid, p.16.

21 G.H.Desai. The Gazetteer of the Baroda State, Chap.VII, p.448.

or Satara. Shahu Chhatrapati had also authorised Peshwa Balaji Bajirao as the supreme authority for deciding the succession to the Cadi. At the insistence of the aged queen Tarabai ( wife of Rajaram ). One Ramraja was adopted and crowned as Chhatrapati. Tarabai tried to dominate the Peshwa by keeping Ramraja under her thumb and within no time mutual hostility had arisen between Tarabai and Peshwa Balaji. Tarabai's party was later on supported by Umabai Dabhade and Damajirao Gaekwad for their personal reasons.

The Peshwa ~~was~~ <sup>✓</sup> entitled for ~~the~~ <sup>✓</sup> half ~~the~~ <sup>✓</sup> share of the revenue of Gujarat by the agreement made after the battle of Bhilupur. This agreement was not observed by the Dabhade and Damajirao Gaekwad. The payment to the Peshwa was not only neglected but it was avoided. In 1750 Damajirao ~~was~~ summoned to Poona as the representative of Senapati Yeshwantrao Dabhade. This invitation was refused by Damajirao. In 1751 the Peshwa demanded from Yeshwantrao Dabhade one-half of his possessions of Gujarat but the demands were refused by Damajirao Gaekwad. Later on Balaji demanded from Umabai Dabhade the arrears and the dues from Gujarat. Umabai was unable to pay and she considered it as an insult to her.

Under other instructions of Chhatrapati Shahu, a meeting was held at Sangola of all important leaders of the Maratha Kingdom by this meeting Yeshwantrao Dabhade was

deprived of his estate and Subah of Gujarat was divided equally between the Gaekwad and the Peshwa.<sup>22</sup>

Thus Dabhade's were reduced to insignificance. Umabai in her distress looked to Tarabai for help and the two ladies made a common cause. They raised a cry that Chhatrapati's Raj had been usurped by the Brahmins and they called all Maratha leaders to their help. The ladies wanted to rescue the Raja of Satara and all Maharashtra from the power of Brahmins. They induced Damajirao to take the lead and head their cause. Damajirao was not allowed to accept the invitation of Tarabai and Umabai and he advanced rapidly towards Poona with an army of 15,000 men.

#### The Army of Damajirao :

Antaji Vishvambhar, a news-writer of the Peshwa has described the Army of Damajirao. It according to him it consisted of five big guns at the top of twenty two camels. Fifteen to twenty carriages for gun powder, twelve thousand foot soldiers and two thousand horse riders.<sup>23</sup> Jagjivan Dhonde, and another writer wrote that Damajirao's army<sup>24</sup> was led by five distinguished generals named Khase Damaji,

22 Sardesai, Vol.II, Chap. XIII, p.292.

23 G.H.Desai : The Gazetteer of the Baroda State, Vol.I, Chap. VII, p.438.

24 Ibid, p.459.

Khanderao Gaekwad, Jaysing Gaekwad, Gangaji Gaekwad and Jagjivan Pawar.

Peshwa Balajirao's attempts to check Damajirao :

Peshwa Balajirao had asked his men Mahipatra o Kawde to seize Jagjivan Pawar before he effected junction with Damaji Gaekwad but Jagjivan Pawar<sup>25</sup> had already joined him.

Pilaji Jadhao, wrote to Damaji Dissuading him from going to Satara, but Damaji persisted in going on account of the written promises that he had received from Tarabai and he acted in response to her call.<sup>26</sup>

Yadopant, agent of Dabhade, for the Peshwa had pleaded for the Subedari of Gujarat being continued to his master. The Peshwa in October 1750 declined to accept the proposal and appointed his own Kamavisdar in Yadopant's presence. Later on in December 1750 Sadashivrao Bhau, the newpew of the Peshwa and the Peshwa agreed, with Umabai Dabhade to handover half the province of Gujarat to Peshwa. Then Umabai was allowed to go to Telegaon. Thus the Peshwa and Umabai wanted to ruin Damajirao completely. Umabai confirmed these proposals<sup>27</sup> on January 4th 1751.

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25 P.M.Joshi : S.P.D. New Series. Letter of the Peshwa, 23-1-1751.

26 S.P.D. Book No.VI.Letter No.164 of 12-3-1751.

27 Historical Sel.from Baroda State Record, pp.37-39.

The Poona Government supported the Peshwa and the military officers Bapuji Bajirao<sup>28</sup> and Bapuji Bhimrao were ordered to oppose Damaji. Raghuji Bhosle<sup>29</sup> was also instructed by Peshwa to start with a large army towards Poona to oppose Damajirao Gaekwad.

Damajirao's early skirmishes and successes :

Damajirao was confident of his successes and he began to collect cess and revenues with dues from the Moghul Thanas Khandesh,<sup>30</sup> Khandoji Gaekwad captured Pawagadh on July 20. 1750 and the Havildar of Jayaji Sindhe<sup>31</sup> in charge of the Fort on behalf the Peshwa was killed. Damajirao had encounters with the forces of Bapuji Bajirao<sup>32</sup> at Bahadurpura in Khandesh. The skirmish were spread over an area of four miles and savaji Bhapakar and his brother were killed. Vithal Shivdev<sup>33</sup> tried to oppose Damaji near Satara but Vithal Shivdev's elder brother Abaji Pant died in the action.

Damaji had created a stir in the army of the Nizam by his bold action and it was expected that the Nizam<sup>34</sup> might invade the Peshwa's territory in response to the call of Damaji.

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28 S.P.D.Book VI, Letter No.173, 12-3-1751.

29 Ibid, Letter No.170 of 19-3-1751.

30 S.P.D.Book 26, Tarabai and Sambhaji Letter No.151 of 14-1-1951.

31 His.Sel.from Baroda State Record,p.39.

32 S.P.D.Book XXVI, Letter 161, dt. 24-2-1751.

33 S.P.D. Book XXVI, Letter 164,dt. 16-3-1751.

34 Ibid, letter 173 of March 1751.



Bapuji Bajirao, the officer at Poona had described his difficulties in opposing the Gaekwad. He had described the condition of Poona. "The inhabitants of Poona took fright and fled at the approach of Damaji's forces. The Peshwa's mother<sup>35</sup> and wife moved to Sinhgad." The fighting force in Poona was so much frightened that Bapuji Bajirao could not collect even a small force. He failed to oppose Damajirao and he could not stop him from proceeding to Satara.<sup>36</sup> Damaji with his army marched 25 miles per day and reached Sangamner. There he collected a tribute of ten thousand rupees on the spot and marching through the Ghat of Chandanpur reached Davadi and Niabgaon. Senapati Dabhade with his army made a junction with Damajirao at Nimbgaon. Tarabai and Sakwarbai were prepared for Damaji's grand reception at Satara. On the way to Satara Damajirao was opposed by a much stronger force under the command of Nana Purandhare and Govindrao Chitis but they were unsuccessful.

At this time the Peshwa Balaji was in the South and learning the ~~the~~ News of Damajirao's advance, he hurried from Aurangabad to Satara in great alarm. In the mean time Trimbak Pant had attacked the Gaekwad's army a second time. Damajirao was expecting some help from Tarabai but she could help him but a little.

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35 His. Sel. from Baroda State Record, p.39.

36 S.P.D. Book VI, Letter 167 of 15-3-1751

37 Grant Duff, p.274.

On the banks of the river Venya Damajirao had skirmishes with Nana Purandhre for about a fortnight and Damajirao was driven in the blind valley of the river Venya on March 15th 1751. He was surrounded on both sides by the army of the Peshwa. Damajirao was forced to ask for peace. Damajirao and Senapati had taken refuge near Satara, the Gaekwad's camp was looted and Damajirao was taken as captive. The news of the victory was received in Poona on March 16th 1751 and guns<sup>38</sup> were fired in Poona in honour of the victory against the Gaekwad.

Peshwa Balajirao arrived at Satara with his forces on April 24th 1751. He demanded for the cession of half of Gujarat and for the payment of twenty five lakhs as an indemnity on April 25th 1751. Damaji represented that he was only the Mutalik of Dabhade, the Senapati, and had no authority for complying with what was asked.<sup>39</sup> Early the next day Damaji saw Umabai, explained her the situation and resigned his patition as a mutalik of Dabhade. On April 30th 1751, the Peshwa suddenly invaded Damaji's camp, when he was quiet unaware, looted his camp and captured two sons of Damaji, with Umabai and Yashwantrao Dabhade as prisoners.

With this step on the Dabhade, and Damajirao gave a blow to all hopes of Tarabai and Umabai and their cause was

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38 S.P.D. Book No.26, letter No.164 of 16-3-51.

39 Elliot : The Rulers of Baroda, p.34.

taken as lost by their followers. Damajirao and his minister Ramchandra Baswant were confined in Poona, his son Sayaji was sent to Mangalvedha, but Govindrao and Fatehsingh, the younger member of the family remained safe with Tarabai at Satara.<sup>40</sup> Though important member of the Gaekwad family were imprisoned, yet Balaji Yamaji, a cousin of the minister assembled all pages, patkas and kamavisdars at Songadh and there placed Kadarji Gaekwad at their head.<sup>41</sup>

#### Damajirao's absence in Gujarat :

During the absence of Damajirao, the Peshwa made great efforts to wrest Gujarat from the Moghulas and the Gaekwad party. Khanderao Gaekwad also tried to make the best use for himself of the absence of Damaji. Moreover Javan Mard Khan took advantage of the occasion to increase his power in Kathiawad. On the other hand Damaji's men maintained and collected the Maratha share from the revenue of Broach, and they also collected a third of the Surat dues. Shankerji Keshav Phadke, Peshwa's Suba of Bassein, invaded the districts South of Surat and besieged Parner, but the Gaekwad Commander sent a large force from Songadh and Phadke was defeated. The Peshwa had entrusted the work of conquering Gujarat to his younger brother Raghunathrao, but he was unable to march beyond Surat. The conquests of Jvan Mard Khan in North Gujarat alarmed the Peshwa. Balaji Bajirao

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41 Elliot : The Rulers of Baroda, p.34.

Peshwa asked Raja Durjansingh,<sup>42</sup> Raja of Mandvi to rise against Damajirao, when the later was in Poona. And Durjansingh is pleased to learn the defeat and imprisonment of Damaji by the Peshwa. The two villages of Induri and Davadi war posted under guards and the removal of treasury was prevented.<sup>43</sup>

Damajirao was transferred from Poona to the fort of Lohagad as a prisoner and severe restrictions were imposed upon him as Senapati escaped from the captivity on November 17, 1751. Damajirao longed for release from his imprisonment, which had become very strict, as he was laden with irons after the escape of his minister Ramchandra from the prison.

The Peshwa was prepared to recognise the Senapati Yeshwantrao and was going to give the Sanads for half of Gujarat to him. Damajirao, at once understood his position under this move of the Peshwa, and as he earnestly desired to come to terms with the Peshwa. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao very well knew how difficult it was to win Gujarat from the Moghuls without the help of the Gaekwad so the two chiefs made an agreement. Damajirao was mortified at the conduct of the Peshwa, whom after his treachery he refused, so the story goes, to salute except with his left hand. He was also vexed at the necessity of paying, during the years of his imprisonment besides his annual tribute of  $5\frac{1}{4}$  lakhs fines and

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42 S.P.D. Book No.24. Letters Nos. 60-62-63, dated 22-12-1951.

43 S.P.D. Book No.26, Letter No.204.

tributes which amounted to 10 lakhs of rupees.<sup>44</sup> Damaji was required to agree to pay to the Peshwa 15 lakhs of rupees as arrears of tribute from Gujarat, and to share equally all his possessions and future conquests. Financial points were kept in view and the territory of Gujarat was partitioned between the Gaekwad and the Peshwa (See Appendix III on p.235 and p.242 respectively).

Joint operation of Damajirao and the Peshwa  
from 1753 to 1760 :

Though Damajirao had promised the partition of Gujarat he was not immediately released. Raghunathrao and Damajirao, after his release, started fresh activities in 1753. They marched towards Ahmedabad and defeated Jawan Mard Khan Babi, and took the possession of Ahmedabad. While Damajirao was settling his affairs of Ahmedabad Raghoba and taken possession of the Rewa and Mahikantha districts. The Raja of Idar raising, surrendered to Raghoba, Prantij, Vijapur, half of Modasa, half of Bayar, and half of Harsol.<sup>45</sup> The Babi Sultans had their territories in different parts of Gujarat and Kathiawad e.g., Manabat Khan held Junagadh; Khan Dauran Khan held Kaira and Sardar Mahammad Khan held Balasinor. Jawan Mard Khan was the most powerful of all the Babies and he had his jagirs in Panchmahals, besides Patan, Visnagar, Vadnagar, Vijapur, Sami and Radhanpur. He had also Majpur,

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44 Aitchisons : Treaties. Sanads and the Engagements.  
Vol.VIII, Appendix 1.

45 Hist.selections from Baroda State Records, Vol.I, pp.37-39.

Tharad, Kheralu and Tharvara in north of Ahmedabad. But Damajirao within a short time deprived Jawan Mard Khan of all his territories except Sami and Radhanpur.

Damajirao's efforts practically put the Moghul authority in Gujarat to an end and the country was divided between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad according to the terms settled in 1751-52 and subsequently conformed in 1753. From this date the Gaekwad's Mulukgiri force began intermittently to collect Ghasdana tribute from the Mehivasi Thakurs, regulating its demands, not by the ability of each chief to pay but by his capacity to resist impositions.<sup>46</sup>

The revenue of Ahmedabad was equally divided between Damajirao and the Peshwa, but with the exception of one gateway the city was held by the troops of the Peshwa. Raghunathrao left at Ahmedabad an officer named Shripatrao as his representative while Damajirao was represented by his son Sayajirao.

During all this period Damajirao had identified himself with the Peshwa's policy of territorial expansion, Ahmedabad, Surat and Cambay were the chief places of their attack. Though Damaji had played an important part in this warfare he was not its main beneficiary.<sup>47</sup> The English merchants and other foudatory prices tried to please both Raghunathrao

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46 S.P.D. Book No. 26 letter No. 161 dated 24-2-1751.

47 47a. S.P.D. Book No. 26 letters Nos. 164 and 173 of March 1751.

and Damajirao and they gave regular presents to them. Really the Peshwa was to a greater pecuniary advantage because he alone used to issue the Parawanas to the English merchants.<sup>47a</sup>

Damaji Gaekwad in harmony with the Peshwa :

Damajirao changed his attitude towards the Peshwa, and he helped the men of the Peshwa in Gujarat against the Muslim chiefs; and Damaji was received cordially by the Peshwa Sadashivrao Bhau and Raghoba when he went to Poona from Gujarat in June 1752. Moreover he was treated as a guest.<sup>48</sup> In one of his letters dated January 16, 1753 Damaji writing to Bhausaheb (Balajirao Peshwa) gave ample assurances of his loyalty<sup>49</sup> to the Peshwa. In this letter Damajirao wrote as a follower of the Peshwa. Balajirao also showed his favour by handing over the charge of two city gates of Ahmedabad to Damajirao<sup>50</sup> on March 21, 1753. Moreover Peshwa gave a sanad dated April 14, 1754 to Damaji Gaekwad appointing four officers<sup>51</sup> under him for responsible posts. Damajirao was given a Poshak<sup>52</sup> ( dress ) at Poona on

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74a S.P.D.Book No.26, letters Nos. 164 and 173 of March 1751.

48 S.P.D.Book No.6 letter No.167 of 15-3-1751

49 S.P.D.Book No.40 letter No.23 of 16-1-1753

50 His.selection from Baroda State Records, Vol.I letter No.58 of 21-3-1753.

51 Ibid, letter No.60.

52 Ibid, letter No.68 of 28-10-1756.

January 28, 1756 at the total expense of Rs.3204-12. The Peshwa often asked Damajirao for the information about matters in Gujarat. He was also asked to warn<sup>53</sup> the chiefs of Jafarabad and the pirates of Cutch not to help the Siddi of Janjira.

Damajirao - war associate of the Peshwa :

Damajirao Gaekwad was an associated of the Peshwa not only in Gujarat but in other parts of India also. Peshwa's son Sadashivrao Bhau and Raghunathrao expected the speedy arrival of Damajirao on January 17, 1760, on the eve of the battle of Udgir.<sup>54</sup> Raghunathrao and Damajirao were working together and Damajirao's forces were requisitioned by Raghunathrao. Damajirao had reinforced Raghoba and he was directed often to go to the key points.<sup>55</sup> Damajirao was wounded on the battle field of Udgir<sup>56</sup> and the Peshwa Balajirao appreciated his services.

Damajirao joined Sadashivrao Bau's army when it marched towards Delhi to fight Ahmedshah Abadali in 1761. The fate and the detail account of the battle of Panipat may not be

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53 Ibid, letter No.73 of 10-10-1759.

54 S.P.D. Book No.letter No.37 dated 17-1-1760

55 Ibid, letter No.66.

56 Ibid, letter No.119.



told here. But in this last great struggle of Panipat Damajirao was in the immediate rear of Ibrahim Khan Gardi's cavalry.

After the great disaster of Panipat when the Peshwa was marching to Miraz, Damajirao with all his forces joined the Peshwa. Damajirao also accompanied Raghunathrao in the battle of Rakshashhuwan in 1763. The credit of the success is to some extent to Damajirao as one of his men killed Raja Pratapwan and Damajirao got a Knilafat and title of Khas-Khel from the Raja of Satara. Raghunathrao invited Damajirao to join the campaign of the Peshwa against Haider Ali,<sup>57</sup> in the Karnatic.

#### The domestic dissensions in the Peshwa Family :

After the great disaster of Panipat Peshwa Balajirao expired while his sons Madhavrao and Narasirao were of 16 and 10 years respectively. Raghunathrao started disputes for Peshwaship. This dispute gradually brought the uncle and the nephew to open blows.<sup>58</sup>

Madhavrao and Raghunathrao worked in co-operation for sometime in 1763 but the latter always counted upon his friends like Malharrao Holkar, Naro Shankar and Damaji Gaekwad. After the year 1765 the relations of Raghunathrao and Madhavrao were entirely estranged. An open war broke out

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57 S.P.D. Book No. 20 letter No.147 dated 27-1-1765.

58 S.P.D. Book No. 10, letter No.5.

between them in the summer of 1768. Damajirao Gaekwad was a close associate of Raghunathrao and he generally shifted his alligance to Raghunathrao. Naturally Madhavrao had no good will for Damajirao, still however Damajirao in official matters always obeyed Madhavrao.

The relations of Damajirao and Madhavrao :

Madhavrao Peshwa appointed Ramchandra Baswant<sup>59</sup> as Diwan to Damaji Gaekwad. Madhavrao Peshwa by his circular of September 24, 1763 had confiscated the Vatan and Inam of Dabhade and gave it to Damaji.<sup>60</sup> Damajirao often took little care to pay his dues to Peshwa and the Peshwa was often required to warn Damajirao on one occasion Peshwa Balaji Bajirao instructed his Fadnis<sup>61</sup> that Damaji Gaekwad should be warned, that if he failed to pay off the arrears due from him, the Jagir in his charge would be confiscated. Damajirao was instructed by Madhavrao against his undue exaction from the people.<sup>62</sup> In a letter dated April 16, 1764 Balaji Janardan (Nana Fadnis) explained to the Peshwa the account and the dues to be exacted from Damaji Gaekwad. The

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59 H.S.B.S.R. Vol.II, letter No. 88 of 7-1-1763.

60 Ibid, letter No.100 of 24-9-1763.

61 S.P.D. Book No.39 letter No.23 of 13-3-1764.

62 S.P.D. Book No.39 letter No.27 of 16-4-1764.

letter has shown that Gaekwad had paid all dues but two lacs eleven thousand were still due.<sup>63</sup> There was scarcity of rainfall in Gujarat so Damajirao was unable to remit Peshwa's dues in time and he requested the Peshwa to condone the delay.<sup>64</sup> In that very year the Gaekwad family was siding Raghunathrao but failed to send troops for service at the court of Madhavrao. A letter dated June 13, 1768 from Madhavrao Peshwa demanded for the offences the payment of a Nazar of Rs.52,215/-.<sup>65</sup> Later in the year 1768 Gaekwad was advised by his friend Antaji Pershuram Godbole to express his loyalty to Peshwa and if Damajir failed to pay the sum of Rs. 5,25,000 due to the Peshwa, the Peshwa would be displeased.<sup>66</sup>

Damajirao troubles Peshwa Madhavrao :

Damajirao generally accompanied Raghunathrao in all important battles but his alliance was with the discontented member of the Peshwa family. This alliance got him the title of Sena-Khas-Khel and a Sanad for his share of Gujarat. The Peshwa had bestowed upon Raghunathrao Teladi and five other districts in Gujarat and the Gaekwad was in charge of it on behalf of Raghunathrao. Young Peshwa Madhavrao was irritated with Damajirao as he was siding

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63 His. Sil. from Baroda State Records letter No.128 of 5-12-1767.

64 Ibid, letter No.133.

65 H.S.B.S.R.Vol.II, letter No.135.

66 S.P.D. Book No.19, letter No.5.

Raghunathrao. He asserted that the original partition of Gujarat had not been a fair one. In order to make it a fair one Peshwa Madhavrao demanded an outright cession of these districts to the Peshwa. These districts made over to Raghunathrao and they were computed to be worth Rs.2,54,000. After the third great defeat of Gaekwad these districts were restored to the latter, on condition of his paying that sum as additional tribute.

Damajirao as a supporter of Raghunathrao :

There were disturbances in Gujarat created by the chiefs<sup>67</sup> of Mandvi, Jawar, Ramnagar, Bansada, Rajpipla, Surgaon etc. The members of the Babi family also rose against the Marathas. Gopalrao Barve<sup>68</sup> a Maratha Officer had collided with Babi chiefs. He was running the Peshwa's interest in Gujarat, when he was engaged against the Jats in the North and Haiderali in the South. Damaji tried to subdue the Babis in North Gujarat round about Visnagar and Sidhpur. He tried his best and spent large amount of money, still he was not quite successful. So a request was made to Raghunathrao<sup>69</sup> to pay a visit to Gujarat to settle affairs. Raghunathrao came to Gujarat to help Damajirao and by his order dated July 4, 1767 asked Damajirao to send forces to quell disturbances of Gopalrao Barve in Gujarat.

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67 S.P.D. Book No.29 letter No.125 of 21-3-1766.

68 S.P.D. Book No.19 letter No.35 of 6-4-1766.

69 S.P.D. Book No.29 letter No.73 dated 4-7-1767.

There were financial relations also between Raghunathrao and Damajirao. Raghunathrao in his letter dated December 18, 1764 noted that he had received money from Damajir Gaekwad for his army expenses and asked Nana Fadnis to write it off the account. He had written that Gaekwad has sent Rs.5,25,000 and 2,25,000 on two different account.<sup>70</sup>

Damajirao was not only an able supporter of Raghunathrao but he was also his friend, and he had disobeyed the orders of the Peshwa Madhavrao. Madhavrao reprimanded Damaji Gaekwad for not accompanying him with his forces in an expedition in the North though he was asked often to that effect. Later on Madhavrao by his order dated December 13, 1766.<sup>71</sup> directed Damaji and Janoji Bhosle to proceed towards North to join Raghunathrao and Damajirao joined that expedition.

#### Towards the Battle of Dhodap :

Damajirao Gaekwad like other adherents of Raghunathrao, such as Janoji Bhosle, Naro Krishna etc. attempted to evade Peshwa's demands.<sup>72</sup> Damaji Gaekwad was granted a Sanad bestowing on him as Saranjam, the nine districts of Kamaal-ud-din Babi. Peshwa Madhavrao often tried to obtain tribute for this territory from the Gaekwad, or a portion of the districts for himself. But though on one occasion the

70 S.P.D. book No.29 letter No.76 of 18-12-1764.

71 S.P.D. book No.20 letter No.175 of 13-12-1766.

72 S.P.D. Book No.19 letter No.49 of 21-6-1767.

Gaekwad paid one lakh and another Rs. 21,000 for the Babi Mahals, he successfully resisted all further attempts in this direction.<sup>73</sup> He generally based his resistance on this Sanad, which he connected with the arrangement having been made between Damajirao and Raghunathrao. Madhavrao drew the attention of his uncle towards the attitude of his followers and urged that all owed loyal service to the State. He strongly represented to Raghunathrao that his followers flagrantly disobeyed his orders and sought refuge with his uncle and obtained protection. Madhavrao was not prepared to tolerate this undermining of the Peshwa's authority. In spite of heavy odds, somewhere in September 1767 an attempt was made to conciliate the two beligrant persons.<sup>74</sup> and Raghunathrao tried to secure the interest of Damajirao Gaekwad and Bhosle. Their pardon was secured by the ratification of this agreement of October 3, 1767 (Dassera day).

Raghunathrao was losing his high position and influence as Peshwa Madhavrao was proving himself more efficient. Raghunathrao was carrying his secret intrigues with Nizam-ul-mulk, Haider Ali, Damaji Gaekwad, Janoji Bhosle and others. He was also trying with Britishers for help and had secured a promise to that effect.<sup>75</sup>

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73 The Gazetteer of the Baroda State, Vol.I, Chap.VII,p.465.

74 S.P.D.Book No.19, letter No. dated 28-9-1767.

75 Sardesai, Chap. XXVI, p.525.

Raghunathrao had no male issue, so he adopted one on April 18, 1768 a boy and named him Amritrao, Raghunathrao then demanded a half-share in the Peshwa's dominion. Damaji Gaekwad and Janoji Bhosle openly espoused Raghunathrao's cause and Holkar chose to remain neutral, while Mahadji Sindhia joined Madhavrao. The question was to be decided by the point of the sword.

Madhavrao was not slow in putting into execution his decision and an open war broke out between them in the summer of 1768. Madhavrao, with his consummate skill and foresight, easily inflicted a crushing defeat on his uncle in an action near the fort of Dhodap on June 10, 1768. He captured him with Damajirao's son Govindrao and many others. He imposed stringent restrictions on Raghunathrao and in addition severely punished his adherents, who had been responsible for all the trouble. This domestic contest had many destructive characteristics and terrible punishment was meted out to the members of the Gaekwad family alongwith other supporters to Raghunathrao. Govindrao was conveyed to Poona as a prisoner of the Peshwa and hard terms were exacted on the Gaekwad.

The Articles of Agreement Between the Peshwa Madhavrao and Damajirao Gaekwad:

After this reverse Damajirao was required to sign an agreement but before the agreement was executed Damajirao died on August 16, 1766, at Patan. So this agreement was

executed by Govindrao and Fateshsinghrao after Damaji's death. Damajirao was to give Rs.25,000 as a Nazar for one year and for non-attendance of troops for the previous year. He had to pay Rs.15,75,000 as the arrears of last three years. Thus a total of Rs. 41,00,000 was to be paid by installments of  $5\frac{1}{4}$  lacs a month. The tribute was raised from  $5\frac{1}{4}$  lacs to Rs. 7,79,000 for a year. He had also to satisfy the claims of Dabhade family and Khanderao Gaekwad. The six Mahals which were restored to Gaekwad were now taken away from him by Poona Government for Darbar Kharch (court expenses). The agreement concerning the sharing of the customs of Surat and Ahmedabad was to be strictly observed. It was agreed that Gaekwad should serve every year at the presence of the Peshwa with 3000 horse and in time of war 4000 hourse. One person of the Gaekwad family was to remain with the troops and the attendance was regularly enforced. Mr. Elphistone when reviewing in 1816 the relation of the two states, was doubtful if Damajirao ever paid tribute before the battle of Dhodap or ever served the Peshwa with a fixed number of troops. But after this disaster of 1768 either ~~Punctual~~ payments were made or the arrears were carefully remembered. With this agreement the prosperity of the Gaekwad family declined.



Estimation of Damajirao's work :

Damajirao rose to power steadily from 1732 to 1768. He proved himself fit in every way to win and to hold a kingdom in the midst of a number of bold adventurers from Gujarat and outside Gujarat. In spite of great reverses from Peshwa's party, Damajirao was in a position to better the fortunes of Gaekwad family. His death was a severe blow to the Gaekwad family and it was followed by the dispute for succession which ultimately weakened the Gaekwad family and strengthened the power of the Peshwa.