Shivaji (Valentyn portrait)
Shiva
(drawn by Mir Muhammad
before 1686)

Modern Statue
PORTraits of ShivaJi

We have reliable information about ShivaJi's personal appearance in 1664, when he was seen by some Englishmen at Surat. The chaplain Escaliot writes, "His person is described by them who have seen him to be of mean [=medium] stature, lower somewhat than I am erect, and of an excellent proportion. Actual [=active] in exercise, [he] seems to smile, a quick and piercing eye, and whiter than any of his people." The cultured Frenchman Thevenot, who travelled in the Deccan from November 1665 to February 1667, says of him, "The Rajah is small [in size] and tawny [in complexion], with quick eyes which indicate abundance of spirit." It is a pity that neither the English factor of Rajapur whose wig ShivaJi examined with his fingers in curiosity (March, 1675), nor Henry Oxinden, the English envoy present at ShivaJi's coronation (1674), has left any description of his personal appearance. The latter only says that he weighed about 16,000 pagodas, (according to Le Feber, 17,000 pagodas or about 160 pounds). The best old portraits of ShivaJi are described below.

1. An engraving in F. Valentyn's Oud-en Nieuw Oost-Indien (1724-26), the pictures in which were most probably acquired by the Dutch E. I. Co.'s mission to the Mughal Court in 1712. My frontispiece. The fine steel engraving given in Orme's Fragments (1782) is this portrait as retouched by a European etcher.

2. The Italian traveller Manucci in 1706 presented to the Venetian Senate a volume of 56 portraits drawn for him by Mir Muhammad, an artist in the household of Shah Alam, before 1698. This volume (now in Paris) contains a portrait of ShivaJi (No. 59 in Blochet's list) which Mr. Irvine has reproduced by photography in his edition of the Storia do Mogor, Vol. III., picture No. XXXV. Second portrait in my book.

3. There is a contemporary and authentic portrait of ShivaJi preserved in the British Museum, viz., MS. Add. 22,282 (Picture No. 12). It bears a Dutch inscription, 'ShivaJi the late Maratha prince.' This volume of Indian portraits evidently belonged to some Dutch owner who had written the name of each person in Dutch on the portrait before 1707, as Aurangzib's portrait is inscribed, 'the present Great Mughal.' Mr. Irvine holds that the portraits were true to life so far as the artist could make them. They are well executed, in the usual style. The following description of this ShivaJi portrait is supplied by Mr. Irvine:

"Three-quarter length, looking to right.—same face as in Orme's Fragments. Black beard and moustache—long hair at sides—gold pagri—jewelled aigrette—black plume—white jigha (pearls)—flowered coat with white ground—purple silk scarf thrown across shoulder—worked sash—peshqabs (dagger) sticking out from waist on left side—right hand hidden it hilt of a pattah or rapier—left hand holding a dhup or straight sword."

4. A miniature of ShivaJi on horseback, hunting a lion with the sword, now preserved in the P. W. Museum, Bombay. (My conjecture of date, about 1725.)