



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

The People of India, Volume Eight

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H.H. THE LATE MAHARAJAH OF MYSORE.

(406-7)

The late Maharajah was the descendant of a very ancient and illustrious family which for several centuries existed in Mysore, and established a kingdom, which through many vicissitudes still exists; and, though in a somewhat reduced form, maintains its position as one of the ruling principalities of India. The traditions of the family trace its rise from one of the Yadava princes of Guzerat. According to the legend, this person was wandering in Mysore, when he rescued the daughter of a local Wadyar, or petty chieftain, from a marriage which was about to be forcibly solemnized, and married her himself, thus becoming lord of two small townships, Hadana and Caroogully, near Mysore. From this couple, in lineal descent, Cham Raj reigned in or about A.D. 1500. By this time the family had increased their little territory very considerably, and a subsequent Rajah, Betad Cham Raj, at his death, divided his possessions among his three sons; to one of whom, Cham Raj, devolved the town and territory of Mysore. Here he built a fort, and his prosperity increased, and the fall of the state of Beejanugger, of which Mysore had been a dependancy, gave opportunity to all who were strong enough to assert their independence, and maintain it. By a local arrangement with the Viceroy of Beejanugger, the Mysore family had become managers of three Wadyars, or divisions of thirty-three villages each, and in A.D. 1610, the ruling head obtained possession of the town of Seringapatam and its dependancies, in addition to his former territory. Seringapatam was then a considerable town, and the temple of Runga, or Vishnu, was a shrine of great holiness in popular estimation, and frequented by numbers of pilgrims. Its possession, therefore, gave new dignity to its chief; he assumed the title of Rajah, instead of the former designation of wadyar, fortified Seringapatam, naturally a very strong position, and the possessions of the family became increased by other means, till they assumed the dimensions and importance of a local principality.

In 1654 the Mussulman Kings of Beejapoor sent a force into the Mysore

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