

Rajmata Jijau



Jijabai was born on 12 January 1598 and a daughter of Lakhoji Jadhav in present-day Buldhana district of Maharashtra State. she was wed at an early age to Shahaji Bhosale, a nobleman and military commander under the Adil Shahi sultans of Bijapur in present-day Karnataka.

She wholeheartedly supported her husband's cause. Shahaji had tried to establish a Maratha state on the ruins of the erstwhile Nizamshahi sultanate. However he was defeated by the combined forces of the Mughals and Adilshahi. Shahaji became a sardar in Adilshaha's army. He settled in Karnataka and got married again. As per the treaty he was forced to move south. In order to continue the struggle, he deputed her as queen regent.

The elder son Sambhaji remained with their father. Shivaji left Bangalore along with his mother, a council of ministers and chosen military commanders. When they arrived in Pune it was full of jungles and wild beasts. She encouraged cultivators to settle. She renovated the kasaba ganapati temple. A Red sandstone palace of moderate size known as Lal mahal was also built. She has given a number of decisions in legal and administrative matter known as majhars.

Jijabai was a very pious and intelligent person with great vision for independent Hindu kingdom. She inspired Shivaji by telling stories from Ramayan , Mahabharat. Inspired by her, Shivaji took Oath of Independence (SWARAJYA) in fort temple of lord Raireswar in 1645 when he was 17. In Shivaji,s impeccable , spotless character and courage Jijabai,s contribution is enormous.

Jijabai's elder son Sambhaji was killed while on a military expedition in Karnataka by Afzal Khan. When Shahaji died, Jijabai tried to commit sati - committing suicide by burning oneself in the husband's pyre, but Shivaji stopped her from doing so by his request. Jijabai is widely credited with raising Shivaji in a manner that led to his future greatness. She died soon after coronation of Shivaji.

Sant Gadge Baba



Debuji Zhingraji Janorkar (February 23, 1876 - December 20, 1956), popularly known as Sant Gadge Maharaj or Gadge Baba, was a saintly social reformer, a wandering mendicant who held weekly festivals with the help of his disciples across Maharashtra. His reforms and visions for villages in India is still a source of inspiration for various political parties and non-government organizations.

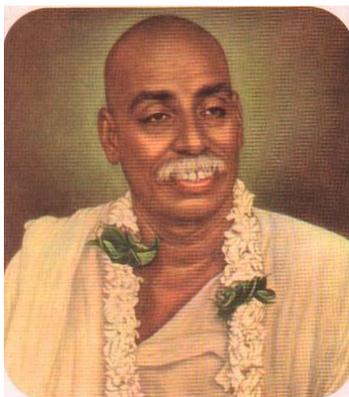
Maharaj was born in Shedgaon village in Amravati District of Maharashtra in a washerman's family. A public teacher, he traveled from one place to another wearing his food pan upturned on his head and carrying his trademark broom. When he entered a village, he would instantly start cleaning the gutters and roads of the village. He also told the citizens of the village that their congratulations would have to wait until his work was done. In return the villagers gave him money. From this money Maharaj built educational institutions, dharmasalas, hospitals and animal shelters. He conducted his discourses in the form of "Kirtans" in which he would emphasize values like service to humanity and compassion. During his kirtans he would educate people against blind faiths and rituals. He would use Dohas by Saint Kabir in his discourses.

He exhorted people to stop animal sacrifice as part of religious rituals and campaigned against vices such as alcohol abuse. He tried to embody the values that he preached: hard work, simple living and selfless service to the poor. He abandoned his family (wife and 3 children) to pursue this path. Maharaj met the spiritual teacher Mehar Baba several times. Mehar Baba indicated that Maharaj was one of his favorite saints and that Maharaj was on the sixth plane of consciousness. Maharaj invited Mehar Baba to Pandharpur, India, and on 6 November 1954 thousands of people had Maharaj and Mehar Baba's darshan.

Maharaj died on December 20, 1956 on his way to Amravati, on the banks of river Pedhi near Valgaon. The Government of India has started a 'Sant Gadge Baba Swachta Abhiyan' in 2000-01 in his honour. This programme awards prizes to villagers, who maintain clean villages.

Currently almost all organizations built by him are functioning well. On December 20th, 1956 the Great Saint left this mortal world. Even so many years have passed since his departure there is a lot of following for him. Government of Maharashtra state also runs a village cleanliness programme named after him. University of Amravati was renamed as Sant Gadge Baba University.

Saint Tukdoji Maharaj



Tukdoji Maharaj was a noble self realised saint. His early life was full of Sadhana both spiritual and yogic exercises. He spent much of his early life in the deep jungles of Ramtek, Salburdi, Ramdhighi and Gondoda. Even though he was formally not much educated, his metaphysical spirit and potentiality was of very high order. His devotional songs permeate full spirit of devotion and moral values. His Khanjedi, traditional musical instruments was unique and his style of playing it was unparalleled. He was bachelor; however, his life was dedicated for the services of the masses irrespective of caste, class, creed or religion.

He was all the while absorbed in spiritual pursuits. He critically observed the nature of the people and channelised them for the cause of their upliftment. He had self realised vision and throughout his life, taught the lessons for the purity of hearts and malice for none. In early life, he used to sing the devotional songs, however, with the passage of time, he impressed the masses that God is not only in Temples, Churches or Masjids, and he is everywhere. His powers have no limits. He advised his followers to follow the path of self realisation. He firmly opposed the priesthood and propagated the eternal values and universal truth. In 1935 Tukdoji organised a Maharudra Yojna on the hills of salburdi where more than three lakhs of people came to participate. After this Yojna, his fame spread far and wide came to be respected throughout Madhya Pradesh. In 1936 he was invited by Mahatma Gandhi to his Sewagram Ashram where stayed a month. Thereafter Tukdoji started mass awakening through cultural and spiritual programmes and plunged ahead long into the national freedom struggle in 1942. Ashti-Chimur freedom-struggle was the result of the clarion call of Rashtrasant Tukdoji. He was arrested at Chandrapur and imprisoned in Nagpur and Raipur jails for 100 days i.e. from 28th August to 2nd December 1942.

His Literary contribution is also immense and of high order. He has composed both in Hindi and Marathi three thousand Bhajans, two thousand Abhangas, five thousand ovis and contributed more than six hundred articles on religious, social and national aspects and on formal and informal education. Rashtrasant a self illuminating star and a dynamic leader of divert actions. He was well known for many arts and skills. In the spiritual field, he was a great yogi, and in cultural field, he was a treat orator and musician. His personality was unparalleled and unique. His personality had many facets and. His teachings are everlasting and useful for the generations to come.

In his last days, he was suffering from cancer. All possible efforts were made to cure the fatal disease, but Rashtrasant left his mortal body on 11th October 1968 at 4.58 p.m. in the Gurukunj Ashram, to rest in eternal peace. His Maha Samadhi is built just in front of his Gurukunj Ashram, which inspires us to follow his path of action and selfless devotion. Let us build our careers and characters on the line of the teachings of His Holiness Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj for our all round development of welfare.

Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh



Panjabrao Shamrao Deshmukh (December 27, 1898 – April 10, 1965) famously known as Bhausaheb Deshmukh was a social activist and a farmer's leader in India. He was the Minister of Agriculture in the first cabinet of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952. He was born at Papal in Amrawati district of Vidarbha, Maharashtra on December 27, 1898. His childhood had gone happily at Papal. His original surname was "Kadam". After completing his primary education at home, he was sent to Songaon at first and then to Karanja Lad. He got his high school education at Karanja Lad up to ninth standard. Then he took admission in Hind High school, Amrawati. After that he went to Fergusson College at Pune.

In those times there were no facilities of higher education in India. Many Students used to go to England for further education. So he also wanted to be a Barrister from Cambridge University. Despite too much poverty at home, he managed to make money to go to England. He took barrister degree in 1921. He also took M.A. honors in Sanskrit and done Ph.D. with the subject Origin and development of religion in Vedic literature.

He was attached with Satya Shodhak Samaj of Mahatma Phule. He did Satyagraha for entry to untouchables in Amba Temple, Amrawati, which was a very strongly condemned by the upper castes. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was pro to him in this movement. Deshmukh knew that prosperity would come only when the weapon of knowledge became available to all. For this purpose he established Shivaji Education Society. There is an Agricultural university by his name at Akola, i.e. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth. He was a well known educationalist who well cemented the foundation of education in not only in Vidarbha but throughout the Maharashtra region.

He was elected thrice for the Lok Sabha. Dr. Deshmukh was selected by Nehru as the first agriculture minister of India. He played an important role in the making of the Indian Constitution. He was a staunch supporter of the mission by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He was the secretary for Vidarbha region of the Indian Labour Party, established by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He dedicated all his talents and energy for formulation and implementation of the policies that would bring prosperity to agriculture and the agriculturist. He established the Bharat Krishak Samaj and launched a campaign called Food for Millions in 1955. He brought in the Japanese method of rice cultivation in 1958 and organized the World Agriculture Fair in 1959, which was inaugurated by Dwight Eisenhower, the then President of the US. The fair was visited by dignitaries across the world some of them being Nikita Khrushchev, the then president of USSR, Lord and Lady Mountbatten and many others.

He started the process of establishment of Agricultural Universities all across the country and gave fillip to agricultural education and research. He appeared many cases in the district court of Amrawati from the side of poor peasants. But the main case was British govt vs. Azad Hind Sena, in which he assisted to Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr. Deshmukh died on April 10, 1965 at Delhi.