


The Grand Rebel: An Impression Of Shivaji, Founder Of Maratha Empire

Dennis Kincaid

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From Reader Review The Grand Rebel: An Impression Of Shivaji, Founder Of Maratha Empire for online ebook

Jordan Gabriel says

A very well written book.

Through village lore's, family stories, books and poetry not only did the writer uncover the story of Shivaji but also gives us knowledge as to the origins of many of the forts, maratha military tactics, weapons, slangs and family names.

Being written much after the empires rise he was able to get many perspectives from the marathas, british, moguls, ottomans and others involved.

Sajith Pradeep says

Sivaji's life and victories

Gives you a good account on the life of the greatest warrior prince of India. Though in some places the narrative drifts off into writings and musings, that are more familiar with the Englishmen. Overall the book is a good read.

Dharmit Shah says

Shivaji is highly celebrated in the state of Maharashtra and having lived there for a few years, I was always interested in knowing more about him. This book gave a lot of insight on the famous hero of India!

The pace of the book is just enough to keep one interested and wanting for more. There are minor typos throughout the book. Overall, an amazing book to know about Shivaji. Specially if you're an European because the author's laid numerous parallels with historical events from Europe.

Atul Sabnis says

A luxuriously written book.

Dennis Kincaid, the son of CA Kincaid, of the famous "History of the Maratha People", co-authored by Parasnis, wrote this book after he came to India around 1928, but the this book was published posthumously, in 1937.

As has been mentioned in the preface by TN Chaturvedi, "... Charles (Allen Kincaid), the historian, is remembered today more for his non-historical writings; while Dennis, the novelist, is known more for his two works on non-fiction."

As an Indian, the word rebel, in the subtitle is a bit disconcerting before the book is read, for it perhaps betrays the impending tone of the treatment of Shivaji's life and work, in the book. Yet, Dennis Kincaid keeps himself away from the intrigues of analysis, the slopes of bias, and the traps of -isms.

That Dennis Kincaid was a novelist at heart is obvious from the first word to the last. If someone, who had never heard of Shivaji would read the book, the reader would be delighted in the language and the judicious and unequivocal use of devices of fiction-writing, in what is actually strictly a work of non-fiction; a biography (with proper endnotes and such).

It is a delicious read, and recommended.

The very few factual inaccuracies are to be forgiven. Much more information has come to the fore since the 1930s, when he wrote this book. If this is a way of writing non-fiction, more power to you.

PS: I really wish good publishers like Rupa would invest more effort in copy-editing. The typos in Indian publishing are way too jarring and way too common.

Nishant Bhagat says

A book written around 90 years ago and still reads like it was written for the modern reader. I came across this one quite by accident and so had no expectations of this. I must say it surpassed them by the time I was on page 10!

Though every kid growing up in India, especially Maharashtra does know Shivaji's story but then those are just caricatures. It is books like these which add the colour and flesh to these historical legends.

The author surely looks at Shivaji as a hero. Even though this book is supposed to be historical non fiction it reads like a novel. Such is the writing that one forgets that it is non fiction book. It helps the cause when the writer is so in awe of the protagonist.

What makes this book special is also the little juicy life details the author talks about. He has covered every other nationality which operated in India in those days. This is the aspect which makes the book a very enjoyable read.

Sachin says

The book is written by a British Civil servant about 80 years ago.

The author has done a beautiful job at writing this length of biography of one of the greatest personality of Indian history.

The fact that the author, being British is able to understand & portray the small details of Indian culture & society, their influence on historical events and not being judgmental in it is a commendable skill of the author. Presentation is serene.

The book describes neatly the sanctity of Mother-son relation throughout and the fact that Jijabai was the most important character in life of Shivaji is aptly portrayed.

The contemporary politics of the states such as Mughals, Rajputs (Jaipur & Jodhpur) Bijapur and Marathas is

described along-with the story and give the reader a comprehensive idea about the situations.

The features which make the book outstanding read are:

- 1- The personality of Shivaji is described without any bias.
- 2- God connection of the biography with contemporary politics.
- 3- Narration and built up to the historical events is lively.
- 4- The mother- son relation is described with a touch of emotion, which renders the entire narration with a soothing sense.

Lastly, being written by an Englishman, the author has tried to do a comparative analysis of historical events & personalities with that of European counterparts which make the book accessible & understandable for the ones having knowledge of European history.

Piku says

Rating: 3.5

As a Maratha, I've grown up reading the Maratha history and revering Shivaji Maharaj. Growing up in a house full of books was a huge advantage. Even in school, our entire fourth grade history was on the exploits of this brave warrior king. So when I chanced upon this book while browsing a local bookstore, I was interested in reading what a foreign author thought about Shivaji.

Shivaji's life story is a colourful one, full of adventure and excitement and Kincaid has captured that perfectly. It may not be an in depth analysis of one of the greatest Hindu Kings that ever lived but it is one of a kind book in the English language, enough to get readers interested in this rich historical period. One thing that I loved about Kincaid is how he has referenced a lot of world events of the 17th century while telling Shivaji's story. It is something, you won't find in the Indian books, a glimpse of what was happening in the world when Shivaji was busy taking on the Mughals in western India. Kincaid has compared Shivaji to Garibaldi and Frederik the Great and placed him among the world leaders of that time.

The book might have been written 90 years ago but it still holds it own in today's times. The writing is good enough to be engaging and if you are a history buff, this will definitely be a fantastic read for you.

The only thing I didn't like and why I refrained from giving this one 4 stars is that there are lot of typos in the book. Lot of names have been spelled incorrectly. While, I understand, in some cases, it is understandable since a foreign author might not be too familiar with Indian names but in many cases a name is spelled differently on different occasions and that seems more like a shoddy copy-editing job.

Arun Divakar says

There is a cult of hero worship that follows the character of Chatrapati Shivaji. The bearded, pleasant yet stern visage looks at you from posters, statues and images across a lot of places in Maharashtra and if you happen to take a plane to Mumbai then the airport is named after him too. Before I read this book, my only knowledge of Shivaji was that he was a warrior king and a superbly successful one. A biography or a historic fiction variant was something I had been on the lookout for but strangely enough nothing turned up. In the introduction to this book, the author mentions that most of the legends around Shivaji were passed down orally as ballads and as yet a consolidated story of his life does not exist. This to me was grossly unfair

considering how much good material lies in the life of Shivaji. There was mention by Ashok Banker that he plans to write a series of historic novels about the Marathas but this is yet to materialize. All considered it is rather ironic that the most readable story of the Great Maratha was written by an Englishman !

India has had kings by the dozen and there has been no shortage of colorful characters among them and yet Shivaji stands out for a few reasons which I find to be rather unique. Firstly, he was a leader with vision and someone who organized administration and the military in a way that could withstand the ravages of time. Curiously enough, he also anticipated the need for a Navy when most other Indian rulers including the Mughals had not advanced much on this idea. Secondly, he was one of the very few Indian rulers who employed guerrilla warfare successfully against enemies. Considering that Shivaji consistently was at war with the numerically superior Mughal army or the well-stocked Bijapur empire, a direct war was out of the question. And yet with shrewd use of his mountain fortresses along the coast of Maharashtra, he did manage to bring his enemies to heel with guerrilla warfare and lightning fast raids. Thirdly, he was a ruler who was extremely adaptable to his environment. Shivaji used valor, bravery, negotiation, shrewdness, guile and diplomacy all in equal measures while dealing with opponents and potential allies. All of these are quite interesting hallmarks that speak of someone who is a survivor in a murky world of shifting alliances and with new enemies pouring in from the western hemisphere. The world around the Marathas were changing and for their good. In Delhi, following the rule of Shahjahan, the Mughal empire was slowly starting to fray at the edges. The wild and paranoid ideas of Aurangzeb were not enough to hold it all together and the golden age of the Mughals were drawing to a close. Into the vacuum left by them stepped in the English East India Company with whom Shivaji maintained a neutral relationship. He also was in contact with the French and did not alienate them or their business interests. I found in Shivaji all the traits of a man determined to carry his image of being a ruler heralded as a Hindu monarch to the hilt and he employed every last method to ensure that he succeeded in it.

This book is not one that can be easily categorized for it is neither fiction nor non-fiction. It digs its feet into terrain where both these genres overlap but with a slight leaning towards non-fiction. The tone that Kincaid adapts is that of an amused observer and not of a detailed chronicler. Time and again he quotes the correspondence of the East India Company about the exploits of 'Sevaje' – as someone who is of strategic importance to them but whom they did not want to appear too lenient to. Also, the author relies heavily on world history whereby he compares and contrasts the turmoil in India with examples from a large number of civilizations and occurrences.

I cannot with all my heart recommend this book but considering a serious lack of other reading material about a fascinating period of Indian history, this is worth a read.

Neeraj Mishra says

As the great quote: " The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away. " Shivaji always wanted to lead an ascetic life spent in nature and mountains ! At different stage in life he felt a strong pull to let go.. Reaching it's peak at his first audience with Sant Tukaram & Ramdas. Also book elucidates what it really meant to be a Hindu nationalist. Shivaji was a benevolent ruler and respected and cared for all faiths. Hindu Nationalism or Hindutva only meant getting the nation rid of external rulers from Arab and Persia etc who definitely held bigoted views and viewed every non muslim as kafir to be condemned. Shivaji also was a master tactician who used tacyfully managed enemy with diplomacy and trickery to compensate for his weak Army. He was also extremely generous and extended pardon easily.. While he had all the riches

he rarely indulged and mostly led with little luxury all his life. A must read book for everyone who want to learn about the Ascent of the great Marathas and Shivaji as a human in general

Vaijyanthi says

A short and a lovely bio of the Grand Maratha. I chanced upon an old copy at the Asiatic Society Library a few years ago. One of the liveliest books I had read in a long time. Unfortunately this book has been out of print for a long time. Wonder, why no one is getting it back into print.

Naliniprasad says

This is the first Biography of Shivaji's that I read. This book opens a window to social, cultural, economic and religious life of Indian kingdoms 300 years ago. It also gives a vivid picture of Shivaji's character and the situations that helped make him the Great Hindu King he was. At times we may feel that Dennis Kincaid was partial to his countrymen when he describes the English Merchants spurning Shivaji's offers in his raids on Surat. But he managed to give an impartial picture of Shivaji and his times. If anyone is interested in learning how the Maratha empire was founded, this book is the best place to start.

Rohan Sankpal says

This was my first book on Shivaji's life. I believe it qualifies to be called as a biography of Shivaji. The title very precisely captures the subject matter of the book. The author has aptly described the era and the main events that transpired in Shivaji's lifetime. Although at certain places it appears that the author has been boasting about the bravery of English officers, it gives a brief insight on relationships between the English (or any other kingdom of that era) with those of the Marathas. The book has a fast pace and keeps the avid reader engrossed till the end. It's a worthy book for people who want to know or want to start knowing on the advent of the Maratha kingdom.

Christopher says

Written by a Raj administrator in the 1930s, this biography is a remarkably fair portrait of what was then an often overlooked historical leader for much of the world. Many of the problems you might associate with the time of its writing are not in evidence, though there is a strong tendency to give a bit too much credence to romance and hearsay.

Premanand Velu says

Absolutely unputtable, especially in the first two thirds of the book elaborating the successful campaigns and rise of young Maratha kingdom by the legendary personality of Shivaji who rose from the ranks of hillmen to a monarch all by his daring stratagems and cunningness. Shivaji is a multifaceted personality with high

level of personal integrity which lacked in the later descendants, it appears.

Besides portraying Shivaji and early Marathas, this book also gives snapshot of Mughal and Deccan politics and power centers, the theater in which Shivaji operated. The opulences of Deccan Sultanates, the religious disagreements between Sunni North and Shia Deccan, their views on Hindu majority subjects all provide hues to the narrative. The narration itself supported by references and documents grounding on facts loosely besides being short and not too deep.

A must read for beginner in understanding the Marathas history.

Kamlesh Gandhi says

Absorbing , reasonably unbiased writing by an Englishman , one knew little about this warrior called rebel by the British... but then they , the British have always been like this came as merchants and became colonisers ...
