

Appendix - 3  
**Pandurang Rao's**  
**(Rao Saheb) deposition**

**in the Court of the Magistrate, Kanpur, Dated July 4, 1862<sup>1</sup>**

My father's name is Sada Sewak, Deccani Brahan by caste. My age is 35 years. My profession is Riyasat (Ruling class) and my residence is Bithoor.

**Question : You have been charged with the crime of being a leader of the rebels of 1857 and for having fought against the government as the leader of the rebel troops. What have you to say to this?**

*Answer :* I was neither a rebel nor a leader of the rebels and never fought against the Government. The real state of affairs is this:- During the Mutiny of 1857, I was working at Bithoor. Nana left me at Bithoor with the instructions, "If a critical moment overtakes, you will shift away with ladies and children to any place you choose, at the time I send a message to you". My name, at first, was Sita Ram but Baji Rao adopted me as his son and changed my name as Pandurang Rao. The servants and other people called me 'Rao Saheb'. When he adopted me, I received at first no allowance but I was being brought up like real sons. At Baji Rao's death Nana became the head of the family and he treated me as before. He let my boarding and lodging arrangements remain as before, but allowed Rs. 200/- p.m. extra for my monthly expenses.

Still he granted me no allowance (salary). During the Mutiny, I continued to receive these Rs. 200/- p.m. When Nana Rao and Bala Rao had fled from Kanpur to Bithoor, Bala Rao had a bullet wound. Nana, accompanied by all the ladies and myself, went to Patkapur and there we crossed the river by small boats. We stayed on the other side of the river in a court-yard built by the Nana. The next day, Jess Singh and Bhopal Singh heard about us and reached there, took us to Fatehpur Chaurasi and kept us in Bhopal Singh's house. Some days after, elephants and vehicles were sent by the Begam from Lucknow, and they took all of us there. (Then the deponent amended his statement and said that): Nana sent only the ladies to Lucknow and Tatyia Tope, Nana, Bala Rao and myself remained at Fatehpur Chaurasi. After this Bala Rao went to Delhi, Nana to Lucknow and Tatyia to Morar. But I stayed at Fatehpur Chaurasi. Then Bala Rao fled from Delhi and reached Fatehpur and *nana also sent the ladies back from Lucknow to Fatehpur. Nana stayed at Lucknow and afterwards himself came back to Fatehpur after some days.* Tatyia Tope brought the army from Morar and came upon Kalpi. Bala Rao left Fatehpur and reached Tatyia Tope at Kalpi.

Sheorajpur and Bilhore are in the Dewar territory. At the same time Jwala Prasad, the *Karinda* of Nana Saheb came to realise the dues. He made his entrenchments somewhere in the *Ilaqa* of Sheorajpur or Bilhore. When Tatyia Tope and Bala Rao crossed at Kalpi and came chose to Akbarpur, they called Jwala Prasad to themselves and Nana sent me for realisation of dues to Sheorajpur and Bilhore, in *Pargana* Dewar. He also sent (a) Company of troops (Johnstone's) with me for my protection.

**Question :** If you were appointed to realise dues from Parganas Sheorajpur and Bilhore, Dewar, why were these men posted for your protection?

*Answer :* Nana feared that I, the deponent, might slip away to some place in *Rajwarah* and therefore he posted the Company of troops.

**Question : Were these men under you or not?**

*Answer :* They were under me but they did not leave me and did not go to distant places even if I ordered. I was close to Garhi which is near Sheorajpur, when at dawn I received a *Parwanah* of call from Bala Rao. I left the place and saw Bala Rao the same evening at bridge on the Bhawanti. Then I remained with him till he fled from Kanpur. Both of us crossed the Ganges at Birwa *Ghat*. The same day Bala Rao joined Nana, and I stayed at Naubat Ganj and Jwala Prasad and Tanya Tope were with me. Tanya Tope crossed on this side and went to Kalpi and Jwala Prasad took me to Nana at Aura Maoo.

**Question : Jwala Prasad was simply a sowar or horseman in the army who used to move about among the clerks of the Thana and Hahsildari. How was it that he got the honour of bringing a person like to you to Nana?**

*Answer :* In the days of my grand-father, Jwala Prasad was simply a soldier drawing Rs. 6/-. Nana made Jwala Prasad a *Risaldar* after Peshwa's death. During the rebellion Tanya Tope and Bala Rao were masters of the entire army and so was Jwala Prasad. His influence was over-weening and even if I had objected, nobody was prepared to pay and heed. Jwala Prasad and myself came to Nana at Aura Maoo. The same day Bala Rao, after the finalization of all things accompanied the ladies from Aura Maoo to *Mauza* Birwa thora. He took all the property with himself. Nana took me to Bhagwat Nagar with the intention of going to Kalpi. There we stayed in the country-side bordering the Ganges with the intention of crossing the river. During this period Nana received a letter from Tanya Tope asking him (Nana) to reach at once, and another from the ladies complaining that they had been put to much trouble by Bala Rao. Nana instantly sent Gauri Shankar, a high Military Officer, who had taken flight from Delhi, with 400 Horsemen and Foot-soldiers with me to Tanya Tope.

**Question : Why did Nana send you to Taty Tope?**

*Answer :* I do not know. He simply ordered me to report myself to Taty Tope at Kalpi. I reached Kalpi and stayed there for about 3 months.

**Question : What announcement was made at Kalpi when you reached there?**

*Answer :* When I reached Kalpi nothing about my arrival was announced.

**Question : Was a mendicant hanged at Kalpi?**

*Answer :* I do not know.

**Question : What was the strength of the army when you reached Kalpi and what strength was retained there for 3 months?**

*Answer :* There was a large army of about 2,000 or 3,000 but I do not know the exact strength.

**Question : To which Paltan did this belong?**

*Answer :* It belonged to *Paltan Morar* and *Paltan Gayatri* and to one more Paltan the name of which is not known to me. When Nawab Banda fled and stayed at Kalpi, he had one *Risala* and two or three hundred *Tilangas*.

**Question : Was someone, suspected of spying, killed at Kalpi?**

*Answer :* At Kalpi all those, who were killed, were put to death at the hands of one Chatta Singh, an officer of Morar army, and by the order of Taty Tope. When the fighting at Jhansi took place, Taty Tope went there to help the Rani. He went via Charkhari while I stayed at Kalpi. *Taty tope was defeated by the English army at Jhansi and there from came back to Kalpi.* The mother of the Nawab of Banda wrote a letter inviting me to Banda. With Taty Tope's permission I left for Banda and had gone a *kos* from Kalpi when I met Nawab Banda and his mother who, I learnt, had fled from Banda.

**Question :** You have just said that you were entrusted with no duties at Kalpi. Why did the mother of the Nawab of Banda call you in case you held no office?

*Answer :* Nawab Banda was my kinsman and his mother for many years had cherished the desire of meeting all the members of my family; because I was near at Kalpi, she called me. Then the Nawab of Banda stayed at this place for 3 or 4 days and, after this, sent all the members of his family to Kalpi. I stayed there with the Nawab and after eight days I reached Kalpi with the Nawab. After this Tatyatope marched again and faced the English army. He was defeated at Koonch and came flying to us. Seven or eight days after the English army came to Kalpi, and from there Tatyatope, Nawab of Banda and myself went to Gwalior side and stayed 3 kos on this side of Gwalior. He encamped at a distance of 3 kos on this side of Gwalior. The same day a Deccani person was sent by the Raja of Gwalior to Tatyatope with the message that he would arrange supplied for him but that he should not come to Gwalior. The next morning, the Raja's army reached this place and fought Tatyatope's troops. A large part of his army fled but the Nawab's *risala* attacked the Raja's army on the flank and put it to flight. *The whole soldiery of the Raja joined Tatyatope.* The Raja of Gwalior fled from Gwalior to Agra. Tatyatope, Rani Jhansi, Nawab Banda and myself now entered Gwalior. After a fort-night, the English army attacked Gwalior from two sides. The Rani was killed with the sword a day before our flight and Tatyatope, Nawab Banda and myself accompanied by some army fled and halted at a place 13 or 14 kos from Gwalior. Two or three days after the English army together with some of the Raja's troops got to this place as well. We fought and again fled to a place 10 miles off. All our field-pieces were captured by the English. Then we reached the territory of Jeypur through the forest, then went to Bondi and after this reached Rampur in the Holkar territory. Then we went to Jala Patan. Then Mussulmans of Patan, may be *Wilayat*is (foreigners) or of any descent, came

to us 10 *kos* from Patan and took us together with our army to Patan. The Raja of Patan did not give us supplies. We fought him and his army came over to our side. Tatya Tope made the Raja captive and brought him to me. Then he suggested to me, "I shall use harsh words and you should use gentle language to the Raja so that he may yield money". The Raja promised to give a few *lacs* and Tatya Tope sent him home under the escort of the army. In two or three days the Raja first gave us some money but then he fled away by winning over the people of the army. His family still remained there. His *Karindas* arranged with the money-lenders and supplied us the money. Now we marched out of Patan accompanied by horses, elephants and baggage. Then two battles, one at Bilwara (Bhilwara) and another at Kotwara were fought against the English by Tatya Tope. I do not remember if these two battles were fought before the fight at Patan or after it. From Patan we came to Rajgarh and thence to Biawara (or Bilwara). On the way there was a battle with the English army and they captured all the field-pieces Tatya Tope had. Thence we fled to Sironj where we stayed for eight days and then went to Isagarh. Tatya Tope fought the army of the Raja of Gwalior at this place. His army broke open the door of the boundary wall of the town, made entry in and plundered. The next day Tatya Tope left Isagarh and marched out to Chanderi where he fought the army of the Raja of Gwalior. He ordered me to go to Bundelkhand with the ladies and to stay there. We reached Lalitpur from Saugor and a battle took place at Khajauri. Tatya Tope fled with his army once again, Nawab Banda, Tatya Tope and myself again came to the side of Sironj and 10 *kos* away from Sironj there was another battle. Tatya Tope and myself again took to flight. Nawab Banda, Tatya Tope and myself then crossed the Nerbadda and reached Fatehpur. Then we reached the bridge of the Pali river through the forest. *Now the Nawab of Banda wanted to present himself before the English, but the officers of the army intervened. Then he deserted us and presented himself before the English.* Now Tatya Tope and myself came from Khargon to Indore. There 200

horsemen came over to Tatya Tope's side and while yet on the way, we fought the English army. The next day, we crossed the Nerbadda and marched towards Baroda. Tatya Tope fled from this place to Banswara and plundered some chattels there. Then another engagement with the English army took place at Partabgarh and Tatya Tope fled. Fourth day, after, there was again a battle against the English army and Tatya Tope fled. Four or five days after we crossed the Chanbel (Chambal), and reached near a fort in the Jeypur territory. Now we met Firoz Shah and Tatya Tope, Firoz Shah and myself came to Jeypur territory where we again faced the English army. Then we came flying to Dhousa. There was again a battle with the English. One night Tatya Tope left us, un-informed, with half of the army and since then we have not met. I said to Firoz Shah that we might present ourselves before the English if he so wished; and he consented. Then we both came towards Sironj. Firoz Shah said that he had sent his *Vakil* for establishing good relations with the English. Then I sent my servant Mohd. Ishaq as a *Vakil* to the General at Sironj, with a verbal request of presenting myself. The General sent a *Parwanah* to me asking me to go to him and that would not be detrimental to me. Several times I made up my mind to do so but the people of my army did not let me do it. The *Parwanah* is no more with me; it has been lost. The people of the army did not allow me to draft the reply in (the) manner I wished, rather they sent one against my intentions. The next day Mohd. Ishaq who was sent to deliver the reply came back and told me that my request was not conceded to by the *Sarkar* and that the General had ordered that I should present (before him) within a period of 10 hours. But the people of the army did not allow me to present myself there. The next half of the army left me but about 200 or 300 men were still present. Next day I took 10 or 12 of my chief men with me and left the army. After this, they also dropped on the way and only three persons remained (with me) namely Umrao Mussulman, Ganesh Brahman and Pokar Ahir, my personal servant. I wandered about, disguised as a mendicant, in the

territories of Gwalior and Tonk. Then in that jungle, Umrao Mussulman and a few days after Ganesh Brahman also left me. Umrao Mussulman brought my wife and her old mother to me in the jungle. Now, considering my stay in the forest improper, I came to Pushkar near Ajmer. After this we reached Thaneshwar via Ajmer, Jaipur and Delhi. I had adopted the name of Lachhman Das Pandit. For 15 days we stayed at Thaneshwar then we went to Jwalaji, from there to Kangra, and then to Pur Mandal, Soodh and Mahadeo in the Jammu territory and then to Tirkata. I had a mind to go to Kashmir and therefore went to Chandenee. I sent the old lady along with a man to Kashmir and I with my pregnant wife still remained at Chandenee in the Jammu territory. Madho Rao Brahman accompanied me from Pushkar but he fell ill at Pur Mandal. I came from Chandenee to Pur Mandal to take him. Then I and Madho Rao reached Jammu to buy a buffalo. Thence we reached Sialkot, bought a buffalo and returned to Chandenee. The new temple is one and half kos from Chandenee where I used to go for worship frequently. Here Bhim Rao who was with Tatyia Tope met me in the guise of a mendicant. He recognised me although I did not. When I came out of the temple and was going to ride my horse, he accosted me thus, "I am your old slave who had tasted your salt. Now I have come to you after much wandering about". He stayed with me for one and half months at Chandenee and then said, "I am a rebel, but a rebellion has subsided, rebels are no more being brought to account. I shall, therefore, now go to my home." Two or two and a half months after this Bhim Rao came with the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot and took me captive.

**Question:** You have mentioned about the General's Parwana. Clearly say what were your terms and what terms were offered by the Government?

**Answer :** He had said that my life would be spared and I would not be fettered and thus my honour would be safeguarded.

**Question : Did he not write, in which chases?**

*Answer* : No.

**Question : What were your terms?**

*Answer* : The first condition was that the property of my followers including my own should not be forfeited and that somewhere between Benares and Hardwar I should get an open place on the bank of Ganges for my residence. Other things I do not remember. Although, I do not fully recollect other details, still I think the *Parwana* said that in case I did not present myself I would be considered guilty. This frightened me and so I did not surrender.

**Question : Did you ever go to Hyderabad Deccan?**

*Answer* : Never.

**Question : A certain person in Hyderabad wanted to create trouble in the army in order to put it to flight. Do you know who he was?**

*Answer* : I do not know who he was.

**Question : Is the deposition, just read out to you, and made by you before the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot, correct?**

*Answer* : Yes, it is so. I gave this deposition.

**Question : You said you had no power, but you also said that you kept the (English) gentleman and his wife in your protection. If you had no power over the army, how did you take them from the army?**

*Answer* : I did not take them by force but entreated Abha Dhanuk Dhari to hand them over to me.

**Question : You have got it written in your deposition, acknowledged by you just now, that the spy, Bhim Rao was taken captive at your suggestion. If you had no authority how was Bhim Rao imprisoned?**

*Answer* : I had no authority, but everyone agrees to a good thing said by a person of note. I had said a right thing independently and so Bhimrao was taken captive.

**Question : Do you have a witness for anything?**

*Answer* : None.

**Question : Your deposition has been read before you word by word and you have acknowledged it. Now, what answer do you have for being a rebel leader.**

*Answer* : I am neither a rebel nor a rebel leader.

**Question : If you were not a leader how did you recruit the army?**

*Answer* : I did not recruit any army.

**Question : If you were not a rebel why did you accompany the army for an attack on Kanpur and fought (sic) the English?**

*Answer* : Just as Bala Rao had kept me at Fatehpur Chaurasi so Nana Rao also kept me with himself. I had no power independently.

**Question : If you were not a rebel leader, why was an announcement made in your name at Kalpi?**

*Answer* : All announcements used to be made by Nana's name. Bala Rao was not at Kalpi and I was alone. Tatya tope was there with me. The announcement was not made in my name. Tatya Tope was the commander of the army, stationed both outside and inside the fort. I was staying in the open outside the fort. I know nothing about the mendicant's being hanged nor do I know who did it and when. I also do not know about the fine imposed on the people at Kalpi.

**Question : If you were not a rebel why were you there with Firoz Shah?**

*Answer* : When Tatya Tope left me I thought it was in my power to join the English but I had no friend or acquaintance to introduce me. If I along would join I would be killed. Therefore, first I sent my *Vakil*, Mohd. Ishaq to the General. I could not present myself before the English because I was in Tatya Tope's captivity.

**Question :** Once you alone took an army to Jalaun and then once to Lalitpur and fought the English. Why did you do so if you were not a rebel and only a captive in Taty Tope's hands?

*Answer :* I did not fight in Jalaun nor (*sic*, or) in Lalitpur.

**Question :** You have said above in your deposition that the Nawab of Banda segregated himself and joined the English. Could you not act the same way, if you were not a rebel?

*Answer :* I could not avail of an opportunity; the Nawab of Banda had a large number of females with him and on this pretext he stayed behind and thus availed of an opportunity to join the English. I was all alone and could find no pretext.

**Question :** Who has a better opportunity of segregating himself, one who has females with him or one who is all alone like you?

*Answer :* The Nawab of Banda had reason for staying behind while I had none. The army had already marched forward and the Nawab being left behind, he went over to the English.

**Question :** You have said above in your deposition that Taty Tope brought the Raja of Pain (*sic*, 'patan') captive before you and asked you, in order to squeeze money from him, to use gentle words for him and himself to address him in harsh tone. This shows that Taty Tope and yourself were one in all matters and you and Taty Tope exacted fine from the Raja.

*Answer :* I did not take any fine from the Raja, only Taty Tope did so. I had to do what Taty Tope asked me to do. It was Taty Tope who asked me to do this, and not I who had asked Taty Tope.

**Question :** The Commissioner of Jhansi has stated in the Narrative of Events of that district that in October 58 (1858), 1,000 men came down upon the Jhansi territory, under Rao Saheb, plundered some villages, killed a large number of those who had been in the service of the English, amputated and cut

**off the noses of many and deformed them and then crossed the Bindha (or Bindua) river at Sirsa Ghat.**

*Answer* : I had seen a bungalow on fire at a distance of about 10 *kos* from Jhansi. It was government bungalow but I do not know what it was built for. The people of the army had set fire to it. I do not know what else they had done. The Nawab of Banda and myself were there with the army but Tatya Tope was not there although other officers of the army were there.

**Question : Who was the chief of the army that accompanied you?**

*Answer* : Gauri Shankar and Imam Ali were the officers of the army. I had not (*sic*, no) authority and simply accompanied the army whenever it moved.

**Question : (Deputy Saheb)- If you were not rebel why did you cross the river Bindua, go to Lalitpur with the army and join Tatya Tope who had brought an army from the side of the South- Deccan, and then stayed together at Lalitpur?**

*Answer* : As I was under the authority of Tatya Tope and of the army, I had to go wherever the army went.

**Question : From the Commissioner's deposition it is learnt that you fought a battle with General Mitchel at Sidhwaya where you were defeated and from where you went to Bhopal via Saugor (Sagar). What have you to say about this?**

*Answer* : The army was staying at a place between Saugor and Sironj. The news of the coming of the English troops from the Saugor side was received in the night and therefore our army marched out at midnight. Half of the army had proceeded on, and the remaining half was still left. This faced the English troops with the result that it took to flight. I was with the first half which had already left and this also took to flight.

**Question : From the depositions of the witnesses, attested to-day in your presence, it has been learnt that you were an**

accomplice of the rebels and of their leaders and it was known to all the people of Jhansi and Lalitpur (where this army marched and where this gentleman was the Commissioner) that you were the chief of the army. Why was Tatya Tope or Nana Rao not known as the leaders of this army?

*Answer* : Bala Rao and Tatya Tope were the masters of the army and not I. As there are many of my kinsmen in the Deccan side, this may be a reason why I became known as a leader.

**Question** : Bhim Rao, the man who got you captured, also says you were a leader?

*Answer* : He tells a lie; I can't say why.

**Question** : Do you have any witnesses in support of this?

*Answer* : There were many in the army. But now I have none.

Signatures (illegible in Hindi)

Signatures (illegible in English)

**Reference :**

1. "Trial Proceedings in the Case *Govt. vs. Rao Saheb*". Kanpur Collectorate Mutiny Records. F.S.U.P., Vol. III, pp. 683-694.