ROYAL *BILDUNGSROMAN* IN INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION

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by

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Certificate

This is to certify **that the thesis titled "Royal *Bildungsroman* in Indian English Fiction" is the bona fide record of the original research work carried out** by **Ms.R.Sumathi under** my **supervision and that** it has not **formed** the basis for **the** award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, **associateship** or any **other** title.

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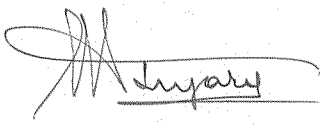

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Declaration

I, R.Sumathi, declare that the thesis titled "Royal *Bildungsroman* in Indian English Fiction" is the bona fide record of the original research work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted earlier elsewhere for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, associateship or any other title.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

India was for long known as the land of rajas and ranis and royalty played an important part in the history of India from the days of yore to the days of the Indian freedom straggle. So, quite naturally, many Indian writers have turned to royalty for fictional themes. Indian English literature now has a substantial body of fiction presenting historical personages who ruled various kingdoms, big and small. However, the corpus of Indian English historical fiction, when compared to other kinds, is lean.

The reason for this paucity can be traced to the Indian mindset. A.S.Panchapakesa Ayyar, acknowledged as the father of Indian English historical fiction, maintains that Indians have always lacked historical consciousness because of their temperament, cultural ethos and spiritual ideals:

> Firstly, the ancient Hindus never attached much importanc e to political events. Wars and conquests they considered to be far less important than philosophical discussions.... A new thought interested the ancient Hindus more than anew conquest.... Not that wars and conquests were in any way wanting in ancient Hindu history.,.» The

vast majority of the men, who really counted, the thinkers, worried little about these. . .. Secondly, the old Hindu Kings confined their wars to warriors, and never molested the priests, poets, philosophers, astronomers, physicians, grammarians and farmers. So the normal life of the country was not disturbed seriously by wars. ...

Thirdly, the political heroes left no permanent work behind. . . . The empires founded by Chandragupta Maurya and Samudragupta lasted but for a few decades, and what were decades in India's calculation of time by Yugas and Kalpas?

Fourthly, India had a very high ideal even from the dawn of her history. Measured by that ideal, her historical heroes were found to be wanting. Ancient India's great minds stuck to their ideal and scorned to record the achievements of these petty heroes or cherish their memories. The conquest of the three worlds was a famous ideal with them and sometimes it became even the conquest of the fourteen worlds. What were the conquests of Chandragupta Maurya and Samudragupta compared to these conquests? (*Baladityci: A Historical Romance of Ancient India*^ introduction viii-x)

Another reason for the paucity of historical novels in Indian English literature, as M.A.Jeyaraju states in his unpublished thesis "Indo-Anglian Historical Fiction: A Critical Assessment," is:

> **Historical accounts of Indian events by British writers were generally partial and, in the case of more recent events, deliberately distorted. To the British empire-builders and their historians any Indian who baulked their grand imperialist design was a villain and a monster and maligning them was their patriotic duty (4)**

As Indian nationalism struck root, developed and spread, Indian English writers sought to inculcate nationalistic fervour in the hearts of Indians. For this they needed to go back to India's past to draw lessons for the present. However, they could not write historical novels, because "the British-authored historical records of the usable past were incongruous distortions and the British caricatures of great Indian heroes had produced only schizophrenics" (Jeyaraju 5). So Indian English novelists went back to ancient ages, legends and folklore and wrote historical romances like T Ramakrishna's *Padmini: An Indian Romance* (1903), which permitted them enough licence to entertain as well as educate their readers without falling foul of British laws. It was only in

1930 that the first Indian English Historical novel proper, namely, Ayyar's ***Baladitya: A Historical Romance of Ancient India*** **appeared.** Several Indian English novels have appeared since then. The focus in these novels is generally on the protagonist, who is invariably a ruler and the preferred mode is biographical, so much so that the novels are generally named after the protagonists.

The **writing of such an historical novel, however, poses a problem for the historical novelist. History offers data on the public doings of** historical personages. Information on their private **doings** are **scarce and carry very little authentication. So, it is a challenge for the novelist to reconstruct the private life of an historical personage by using the** historical imagination.

The Indian English historical novels thus produced include Ayyar's *Baladitya* and *Chanakya and Chandragupta,* Vimala Raina's *Ambapali,* T.N.Murari's *Taj: A Story of Mughal India,* Jyoti Jafa's *Nurjahan: A Historical Novel,* Bhagwan S, Giudwani's *The Sword of Tipu Sultan,* Manohar Malgonkar's *The Devil's Wind: Nana Saheb's Story* and G.D.Khosla's *The Last Mughal,* covering the anci< nt the Muslim and the British periods of Indian history. There are also minor historical novels like Shehana Dasgupta's *Sultan Razia: The People's Queen*, Ayyar's *The Legions Thunder Past,* S.Gopalan's *Old Tanjore: An Historical Novel,*

Basavaraj Naikar's *The Sun behind the Cloud* and Thoidingham Suresh Singh's *The Prince and the Rose.*

One interesting aspect of these recreations of the past personages is the tracing of their upbringing or grooming for the historical role that they came to play in later life. This aspect is crucial, since it is widely acknowledged that the child is the father of man. The early background of the historical personages, the education and the training they underwent must have influenced their character and personality and thereby their future conduct. Hence the present researcher's interest in the bringing up of the royal protagonists of Indian English novels. Hence the present study of royal *bildungsroman* in Indian English fiction The study also considers the tutelage these protagonists received from their mentors, which also prepaed them for their roles in later life.

Avrom Fl< ishm in, in *The English Historical Novel*: *Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf,* says that the historical novelist, as "a recoverer of what actually happened," occupies the same ground as the historian (4). In *The Idea of History,* R.G.Collingwood explicates the resemblance between the historian and the novelist thus:.

> Each of them makes it his business to construct a picture which is partly a narrative of events, partly a description of situations, exhibition of motives, analysis of characters. Each

> **aims at making his picture a coherent whole, where every character and every situation is so bound up with the rest that this character in this situation cannot but act in this way, and we cannot imagine him acting otherwise. The novel and the history must both of them make sense; nothing is admissible in either except what is necessary, and the judge of this necessity is in both cases the imagination. Both the novel and the history are self-explanatory, self-justifying, the product of an autonomous or self-authorizing activity; and in both cases this activity is the *a priori* imagination. (245-46)**

Collingwood goes on to point out where the historian's work and the novelist's differ:

> **Where they do differ is that the historian's picture is meant to be true. The novelist has a single task only: to construct a coherent picture, one that makes sense. The historian has a double task: he has to do this, and to construct a picture of things as they really were and of events as they really happened.... (246)**

Fleishman explicates this difference from the historical novelist's artistic point of view:

> Both the novelist and the historian ... fill the gaps in the received data with imaginative 'threads[5].... The historian tries to add sufficient 'point' so that only one 'thread' or hypothesis can fill the space between. The better historical novels fill in the threads where there is room for alternative hypotheses.... The novelist goes a bit farther than inferentially necessary: some of the threads with which he fills the web of historical knowledge are inserted for the discrete data to be linked.... We might compare the historical novelist to the restorer of a damaged tapestry, who weaves in whole scenes or figures to fill the empty places which amore austere museum curator might leave bare.... (6-7)

William Henry Hudson, in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, suggests that the historical novelist has to do more than the historian, because he has "to bring creative imagination to bear upon the dry facts of the annalist and the antiquarian, and ... to evoke a picture having the fullness and unity of a work of art," since he has "to satisfy at once the claims of history and the claims or art" (159-61). To do this, the historical novelist requires a keen historical sense, which, as T.S.Eliot, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," says, "involves a perception, not

only **of the pastness of the past, but of its presence," and "is** a **sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together . . (4 9) .**

The historical sense is crucial to the composition of a *bildungsroman,* given the nature of the genre. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms,* M.H.Abrams defines the *bildungsroman* as a German term signifying a novel "of formation" or "of education" and says:

> **The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist's mind and character as he passes from childhood through varied experiences—and usually through a spiritual crisis—into maturity and the recognition of his identity and role in the world. . . .**

In *A Dictionary' of Literary Terms,* JA.Cuddon says that the *bildungsroman* "describes a novel which is an account of the youthful development of the hero or heroine ..

***The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropedia* defines the *bildungsroman* thus:**

> ***Bildungsroman* (German: "novel of educational formation"), class of novel developed in German literature that deals with the formative years of an individual upto his arrival at a man's estate and a responsible place in society. . . .**

> **The traditional tale of the folklore dunce who goes out into the world seeking adventure and learns wisdom the hard way' was raised to literary heights. . . . The *bildungsroman* ends on a positive note though it may be tempered by resignation and nostalgia. If the grandiose dreams of the hero's youth are over, so are many foolish mistakes and painful disappointments, and a life of usefulness lies ahead.**

Since the publication of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), English novelists have exhibited a partiality for the biographical, particularly the journey from childhood to adulthood. Such novels belong to the *bildungsroman* genre. The term was first used to refer to Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahare (c.* 1794). Several literatures have adopted the *bildungsroman* and produced excellent specimens of the genre. English literature is rich in *bildungsroman.* Some of the well-known examples are: James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones,* Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations,* D.H.Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers,* Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage.* Some well-known examples from. American literature are: Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* J.D.Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man.*

The specific themes dealt **with m** the ***bildungsroman*** are: coming **of** age **and apprenticeship, identity and the self, the journey (of life), love and Search for the meaning of life. Very** often **the protagonist (or hero) sets out on a physical or metaphorical journey, gamers wisdom from experiences *en route,* and returns to his original place. The American *bildungsroman* is usually a combination of the German *bildungsroman* and the Spanish picaresque, for example, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*** and **J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye.* In the** English ***bildungsroman* the** protagonist is a poor **(often** orphan) boy who **undergoes education and develops into a gentleman. Since Indians have a partiality for biographical narratives, the *bildungsroman* is quite common in** Indian English **literature. For instance, all** the later **novels of Kamala Markandaya are *bildungsroman* narratives. Most Indian English historical novels are also *bildungsroman* narratives.**

In Raina's *Ambapali,* Ajat Shatru, the son of *Samrat* Bimbasar of Magadh is carefully groomed to succeed his father as the ruler of the great empire covering the major part of Bharatavarsha, and, in the process, his counsellor Vasakar does not hesitate even to play the son against the father. Ambapali, the foundling, is brought up in the palace of raja Chetak of Vaishali almost like a **princess and becomes the** gandharva **wife of Ajat Shatru, but, as a Vaishalian, denounces him first and, after**

becoming a devotee of Lord Buddha, renounces Ajat Shatru categorically, while her young son by Ajat Shatru, already a Buddhist ***bhikku,*** innocently renounces the crown of Magadh, when Ajat Shatru offers it to him as alms, both renunciations resulting from the tutelage Buddha.

According to Ayyar's *Chanakya and Chandragupta*, Prince Chandragupta Maurya is a one-man Fourth World State living in disguise in Magadha. The only surviving member of the princely Moriya clan after the entire clan was treacherously killed by the usurping Navanandas, he is identified by the great scholar Chanakya and groomed to become a king and the deliverer of Magadha from the clutches of the Nandas. Chanakya tutors him in winning back Aryavarta from the Nandas and in beating back the mercenary hordes of the Macedonian adventurer Alexander. Ultimately, Chanakya guides him to the throne of Magadha in order to establish a ***Ramrajya*** governed by the principles enunciated in his ***Arthasastra.***

According to Dasgupta's *Razia*, Princess Razia is an important ruler, whose reign was a milestone in the evolution of Indian governance. Daughter of Sultan Iltutmish of Delhi, she is brought up specifically to succeed her father on the throne of Delhi. She becomes the ruler, but the period and the people are not ready for her and so she fails.

In Murari's *Taj,* Crown Prince Khurram of the Mughal dynasty is trained to succeed his father Jahangir. Given the context in which he lived, military power and leadership were more important than anything else. It is this training that enables him to capture the throne upon the death of his father, in an ambience governed by the stark choice, *Taktya*, *Takhta* (Throne or Coffin), in defiance of the machinations of his step-mother Nur Jahan.

In Gidwani's *The Sword of Tipu Sultan,* the bringing up of Tipu Sultan, the first son of Hyder Ali Khan of Mysore, is a classic exercise in the education of a royal offspring. Tipu's early upbringing influences him significantly and accounts for his unique governance and rule over the kingdom of Mysore against the backdrop of the imperialist designs of the British colonisers.

In Malgonkar's *The Devil's Wind,* Dhondu Pant Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Bajirao II, the last Peshwa, never gets to rule a kingdom, but earns historical notoriety as the arch-villain of the British Empire during the first Indian War of Independence of 1857, belittled by British imperialists as the Sepoy Mutiny. He is brought up as a prince and he is expected to succeed his adoptive father, but the infamous Doctrine of Lapse promulgated by Dalhousie deprives him of the throne. However,

his upbringing gives the lie to the British persistence in projecting him as the butcher of Kanpur and helps to rehabilitate a great nationalist hero.

All these historical personages are presented in historical novels based on the scanty data available in historical records and local legends. After the East India Company became a colonizing power in India, the rulers and their offspring became virtual prisoners in their palaces and the upbringing of the young princes of royal households became the prerogative of the colonisers. This is not highlighted in historical records for the simple reason that there were no great kings or princes in Royal India during the colonial period. However, the general pattern of their upbringing aimed at emasculating the royal princes of India and turning them into abject British puppets. In his unpublished thesis titled "A Postcolonial Reading of Plantation Novels in Indian English Literature," S.Thirunavukkarasu states:

> Manohar Malgonkar's novel *The Princes*, Kamala Markandaya's novel *The Golden Honeycomb* and Gita Mehta's novel *Raj*. . . . between them capture comprehensively the British imperialist strategy of subverting the princes of Royal India (and thereby its subjects): the son of a native ruler was taught by English

> tutors picked by the British Resident, sent to a school chosen by the British Resident, then sent to the Chiefs' College administered by an Englishman, taught to lose gracefully and generally brought up as a brown Englishman; the Viceroy's approval of the succession to the throne was used as a power lever; and, when the youngster ascended the throne as Maharajah, he was virtually "enslaved" and "imprisoned" in the palace, completely under the control of the British Resident residing in the nearby Residency and backed up by the British-officered Garrison Force maintained under a solemn treaty guaranteed to maintain him as a British puppet in a Catch 22 predicament. (4-5)

This pattern is used by Malgonkar, Kamala Markandaya and Mehta to spin three absorbing as well as educative tales of the offspring of Royal India and to illustrate the subverting strategy of the British Empire. Malgonkar's ***The*** *Princes*, Kamala Markandaya's *The Golden Honeycomb* and Mehta's ***Raj*** are period novels, in which the characters are "expository illustrations of the period rather than living people," as Royal A. Gettmann defines in "Types of Novel" (218). As such, the royal protagonists of these three novels illustrate the several strategies

employed by the colonizing British imperialists to subvert the princelings of India so as to sustain their imperial sway.

In *The Princes, Bal-raje* Abhayraj of Begwad goes through the regular British princely mill, but, given his background, the traumatic experiences in his early life and the military training he undergoes, he cannot be deceived by sophistry and knows that Indian royalty under the British is a golden honeycomb. Given his well-known partiality for the past, both historical and otherwise, Malgonkar keeps his narrative true to the facts of history in illustrating the British template lor the training of Indian princes. However, as a staunch nationalist, Malgonkar cannot desist from exposing the British imperialists to ridicule by implying that the British were only encouraging the latent lethargy and, in some cases, the venality of the princely tribe of India. In spite of it all, the protagonist of *The Princes* grows into a responsible Indian rather than a brown Englishman.

In *The Golden Honeycomb,* Maharajkumar Rabindranath is deliberately kept by his mother Mohini, the royal concubine, and his grandmother Manjula, the Dowager Maharani, out of the clutches of the British Resident and educated by a local Pandit with the result that he grows into a nationalist prince committed to his people and not to the

British suzerain. It is obvious that Kamala Markandaya deliberately fashioned *The Golden Honeycomb* as a *bildungsroman* to prove the efficacy of early upbringing in moulding the personality and character of individuals. The narrative and the text of the novel carry several hints that it is deliberately designed as a *bildungsroman.*

In *Raj, Bai-sa* Jay a does not even qualify for the special British treatment, but her father deliberately has her trained in *Rajniti* and all the skills **required by a prince and these stand her in good stead later in life.**

All the three novels prove that the royal households of India could have avoided the subversion of their princes if they had wanted to. It is Mehta's intention to show that the native royal tradition was adequately equipped to take good care of the upbringing of royal offspring and that what the British designed and implemented in India was just an expedient policy solely intended to sustain their imperial sway over a populous country by subverting the rulers by catching them young and de-nationalising them. Maharaja Jai Singh could not prevent this catastrophe in the case of his son Tikka, but, since his daughter, *Bai-sa* Jaya, is outside the pale of the British power, he implements his own native system of royal upbringing in her case and thereby proves the superiority of the native tradition.

The present study analyses the upbringing of the princely historical personages Ajat Shatru, Ambapali, Chandragupta, Razia, Khurram, Tipu, and Dhondu Pant to assess how their upbringing influenced the formation of their personality and character and prepared them to shoulder the burden of ruling in the future. It also analyses the fictitious royal protagonists Abhayraj, Rabindranath and Jaya to ascertain how they resisted the pull of conformity and remained steadfast in their detachment and nationalist dedication.

The upbringing of the historical princes prepared them to occupy the throne and, during their rule, they drew on the learning during their adolescent years to rale competently and wisely. The upbringing of the three fictitious princes, namely, Abhayraj, Rabindranath and laya helped them to escape being subverted by the British imperialists and, when India was about to become a sovereign country, to take on democratic roles for the welfare of the people.

This thesis is organised as hereunder. The first chapter introduces the subject, defines the *bildungsroman* and lists well-known examples. The second chapter analyses the bringing up of three princely personages of ancient India, namely, Prince Ajat Shatru, Ambapali and Prince Chandragupta. The third chapter analyses the upbringing of two princely

personages of Muslim India, namely, Razia and Khurram. The fourth chapter analyses the bringing up of two princely personages of British India, namely Tipu Sultan and Dhondu Pant Nana Saheb. The fifth chapter analyses the bringing up of ***Bal-raje*** Abhayraj of Begwad. The sixth chapter analyses the bringing up of Maharajkumar Rabindranath of Devapur State. The seventh chapter analyses the bringing up of *Bai-sa* Jaya of Balmer. The eighth chapter sums up the study. A list of works cited is appended to the thesis.

This thesis has been written and documented according to the guidelines provided by the *MLA Handbook for Writers ofResearch Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi, 6th edition (Chennai: Affiliated East-West, **2004).**

Chapter 2

Prince Ajat Shatru and Prince Chandragupta Maurya

Samrat Bimbasar of Magadh is the most powerful monarch of Bharatavarsha. He reigns over a vast territory for decades. But he can not control his son Ajat Shatru fully, because the young Prince is being moulded contrarily by his adviser Yasakar. Moreover, the magnetism of Ambapali, the famed dancer of Vaishali, is more powerful than all other forces in Ajat Shatru's life.

Samrat Bimbasar entrusts the training of his only son Ajat Shatru to his able minister Vasakar. *Maha Maty a* Vasakar, in order to make a fine monarch and a good scholar of Ajat Shatru, engages many learned men from Taxila to train him in music, painting and literature and yogis of high repute to look after his physical development. Bimbasar often sends Ajat Shatru with Vasakar to different States under the Magadh Raj with the pomp and glory befitting a Yuvaraj and the people pay homage to him. In this manner, Ajat Shatru is trained in the art of kingship. When Ajat Shatru is sixteen, Bimbasar has to wage a war against Champa to ensure the right of way on the Champa river. He decides to suppress the King of Champa and put his own son in charge of Champa. Ajat Shatru goes to the war with his father and commands his own army for the first

time. The weak King of Champa capitulates and Bimbasar, after appointing Ajat Shatra Viceroy of Champa, returns to Magadh, leaving Vasakar behind to guide and protect the prince. Thus *Samrat* Bimbasar provides his son Ajat Shatru practical training also in the art of kingship (Raina, ***Ambapali*** 112-13).

However, *Samrat* Bimbasar has not reckoned with the youthful energy and aspiration of his son or the wily intrigues of Vasakar. After four idle years as Viceroy of Champa, Ajat Shatru is rearing to prove his mettle, "tired of living under the shade of the glory which is his heritage," sick of being "the moon overshadowed by and dependent on the sun, his father the mighty *Samrat* of Magadh" (Raina, *Ambapali* 114; 116). He wants to prove his mettle all by himself. He wants a war of his own. Ajat Shatru finds a fitting *raison de guerre* in the revocation, by Prince Vidu Rath of Kosala, the son of King Presenjit of Kosala by a morganatic marriage, of the gift of the revenue of the village of Kashi, made by King Presenjit as dowry for the toilet expenses of his daughter when he gave her in marriage to *Samrat* Bimbasar. *Samrat* Bimbasar points out that it is quite just that the revenue should be stopped, since the Kosalan princess, for whose toilet expenses it was intended, is no more. But Ajat Shatru argues that it is not a question of money alone, but of prestige, since, by stopping the revenue, King Prasenjit has defied the suzerainty of Magadh.

Samrat Bimbasar advises Ajat Shatru that it is not becoming for a Kshatri and a Kshatri king to take money in the name of the dead and that such activities are best left to the brahmans (Raina, *Ambapali* 116-17).

Ajat Shatru returns disappointed to Champa and discusses the situation with his mentor Vasakar, who is against *Samrat* Bimbasar's new pacifist attitude. He is a shrewd and ambitious brahman and still cherishes the hope "to see the domain of Magadh Raj spread itself to the length and breadth of the peninsula" (Raina *Ambapali* 117). Vasakar rubs salt into Ajat Shatru's wound by pointing out that *Samrat* Bimbasar was only a lad of fifteen when his father crowned him and that Ajat Shatru may have to wait till the age of fifty before he is called the *Samrat* of Magadh. Vasakar's goading has the expected effect and Ajat Shatru impulsively decides to attack the Kosalan capital of Sravasti without seeking his father's help or advice. He wants Vasakar to ensure that his father hears only of his victory. Vasakar welcomes the prince's reaction and assures him that his victory will placate his father's wrath. He says that he will go to Magadh and be prepared to assist Ajat Shatru in case of any unexpected emergency. He also says that the prince's plan is the first step to his becoming the mighty emperor of Bharat. An elated Ajat Shatru goes with Vasakar to the council chamber, which holds all the maps and important papers (Raina, *Ambapali* 117-18).

Upon learning the news that Ajat Shatru is advancing on his capital with his army, King Presenjit curses his son Vidu Rath for bringing this war on his head and declares that the prince is not his son but his enemy (Raina, ***Ambapali*** 127).

Vasakar informs *Samrat* Bimbasar of Ajat Shatru's invasion of Kosala. Bimbasar is disturbed and enraged. However, he checks his rage and registers his disappointment with Vasakar, implying that he has not faithfully carried out his command to guide his son. But Vasakar indirectly tells Bimbasar that he has been transferred by Bimbasar himself to the command of Prince Ajat Shatru. Bimbasar senses the implications of Vasakar[5] s reply and, with astute diplomacy, concurs in his view and dismisses him (Raina, *Ambapali* 148-50).

Vasakar feels defeated. He planned to play the father against the son and be the real *Samrat* of Magadh. But he did not reckon with Bimbasar's pride and wisdom, his love for his son and the changes wrought in Bimbasar[5] s mind in the past four years due to close association with Lord Buddha. It is clear that he has lost Bimbasar's goodwill, his trust and his regard. So Vasakar decides to throw in his lot wholesale with Prince Ajat Shatru and groom him against his own father (Raina, *Ambapali* 150-51).

Bimbasar tells Kautilya and Sunidita that he has dispensed with the services of *Maha Maty a* **Vasakar and that, henceforth, only they two will be his counsellors, while Vasakar will be Ajat Shatru's counsellor. He bestows on Kautilya the title of** ***Maha Darshanik,*** **Great Philosopher and on Sunidita the title of** ***Maha*** *Mantri,* **Chief Minister. Bimbasar asks Kautilya and Sunidita to think over the recent developments and meet him the next day. Kautilya respectfully takes his leave. Sunidita warns Bimbasar against the machinations of Vasakar, whom he calls "a genius run amuck". Sunidita's own spies have been following Vasakar and they have reported to him the arrival of Abhaya Singh, Ajat Shatru's commander, in Raj Griha, the Magadhian capital So he deduces that Vasakar will not permit any direct contact between Ajat Shatru and Bimbasar in his absence. He reports what has happened in Sravasti. He warns that Ajat Shatru wishes to fortify Pataliputra against the Lichchavies. Bimbasar feels terribly tired because of the dilemma confronting him as a** ***Samrat*** **and as a father. He wishes to take counsel from Lord Buddha and asks Sunidita to arrange a meeting (Raina,** ***Ambapali*** 152-54).

Bimbasar is disconsolate at not receiving any message or gesture of reconciliation from his son because of Vasakar's machinations. The emperor in him prompts him to crush the rebellious reptile, but the father

in him offers excuses, blaming Vasakar's cunning. He sends Sunidita to meet the Prince. Ajat Shatru has been led to believe that his father plans to imprison him and appoint his younger brother the Crown Prince. So Ajat Shatru misconstrues Sunidita's visit and refuses to meet him, but, instead, signs a highly equivocal letter drafted by Vasakar. The letter only infuriates Bimbasar further and confirms his suspicion that Vasakar is using Ajat Shatru. Unable to bear the mental torture, Bimbasar wishes to ride to Lord Buddha, but Buddha himself comes to the palace just then (Raina, *Ambapali* 186-88).

The confrontation between Bimbasar and Ajat Shatru is now public knowledge and that is why Buddha has come to the palace. His arrival helps Bimbasar to relax and dispels the darkness suffocating his mind. Buddha counsels Bimbasar that it is his own ***aham,*** ego, and its five *senapaties*, namely the five senses, that are responsible for his dilemma and that, if he can conquer himself, he will know peace and contentment. He says that ***trishna,*** or desire for life and lust, has imprisoned Bimbasar in a gilded cage and he urges him to start fighting the enemy within him. Bimbasar begins to see the light vaguely. After the departure of Buddha, Bimbasar continues to sit in the same spot through the night. As dawn breaks, Bimbasar gets up with a new light in his eyes and with his mind clear (Raina, *Ambapali* 188-92).

In the morning, Bimbasar sends for Sunidita and orders Mm to have an *ashram* made for him beside the Welu Vana, the forest that he **has offered to Buddha for his meditation so that he can dwell beside the celestial abode of Buddha. It is clear that the counsel of Buddha has dispelled the darkness that clouded his mind** and **that he has seen the** light **(Raina, *Ambapali* 192).**

Following the light shown by Buddha, *Samrat* Bimbasar goes to his son in Pataliputra, **uncrowned and unguarded. Ajat Shatru sees** him approaching **and** his mind is **filled** with remorse for his **recent behaviour (Raina, *Ambapali* 203-05). But Vasakar justifies his own conduct on the ground that he has always been loyal to the Magadh State, irrespective of the** individual **occupying** the **throne (Raina, *Ambapali* 205).**

The Magadhians, under the leadership of Ajat Shatru, defeat the Licchvies in a battle in their long-drawn war. There is wild rejoicing in the Magadhian camp. Since no booty has been realized, Ajat Shatru, in a fit **of victorious emotion, announces to his soldiers that the treasury will be opened to reward them. However, *Maha Matya* Vasakar chides him for his rashness:**

> **"They have won you no victory Prince. You have spoken in** emotion **sire. The** camp **treasury is meant for battle and not for booty. But your word must be respected. Emotion, sire, is**

> wine in peace and poison in war. Its effect is never healthy. It dulls the spirit in the best of times and kills it in times of war. This is no victory won by you or them. It is a gift to you, sire, presented by the most beautiful woman of Vaishali." (Raina, *Ambapali* 231 -32)

Ajat Shatru is perplexed and asks his general Abhaya Singh what Vasakar's words mean, but Abhaya Singh attributes the riddles he mouths to the Minister's brahmanic heritage:

> "I do no know Prince. The mystery is his brahmanic heritage. He will never help us to be wiser than himself. While he gives us an inkling of danger he keeps the secret to himself. But he will tell you what he meant now, when he gets to know something more which he can hide from us," replied Abhaya with a smile (Raina, *Ambapali* 233)

Vasakar continues:

> "It is her smile which has raised laughter in your men. It is the sweep of her eyebrow that has helped your men to brow-beat the Lichchavies. It is the dark wine of her eyes that makes your men drunk with joy. In short it is her beauty that has unfurled your flag on her soil! . . . " (Raina, *Ambapali* 232)

Ajat Shatru thinks that Vasakar has become mad and that his mind has turned fanciful because of the strain of war. Vasakar, however, explains to Ajat Shatru the cause of the Magadhian victory, as he has found out from his spies, whom he sent to discover the cause of the uncertain progress of the Magadhians into the enemy lines:

> "The cause was the most beautiful girl of Vaishali, the *raj nartaki.* The princes who commanded their armies were rivals. So great was their infatuation for her and so intense was their hatred and suspicion of each other that they put not their mind to win the battle—but to win the girl! They left their armies in charge [sic] of their *senapaties* and left for Vaishali every eve intending to return before dawn. Those who did, were too exhausted in this heat after their long journey through the night; and those who overstayed beside her, neglected their duty. If they saw the army of one prince suffering a loss, they did not rash to help but stayed away so that he might be put to shame, or taken prisoner. An army without a general is a mob, not an army—and so—we broke through their lines. This and not our valour, Prince, won us our victory. Your flag unfurls there today in homage to her beauty!" (Raina, *Ambapali* 235)

Upon learning of Ambapali's beauty, Ajat Shatru impulsively decides to go to Vaishali and see her. Vasakar cautions against such rashness and the danger of capture. But Ajat Shatru brushes his advice aside. Seeing Ajat Shatru's stubborn determination, Vasakar gives in, but asserts that he must go with Ajat Shatru because he has much to do in Vaishali. He has learnt that the governing body of Vaishali is planning to reunite the princes and is to meet soon to arrive at a decision. He points out that Ajat Shatru has yet to fly the Magadhian banner atop Raja Chetak's palace. Ajat Shatru says that the he has not forgotten it. He asserts that he is immune to beauty, but must see Ambapali if she is all that Vasakar has described her to be. He points out that, since the rains have started, there must be a lull in the fighting. He proposes to go to Vaishali with Abhaya Singh and return in two days (Raina, *Ambapali* 235-36).

Vasakar proposes to send Ajat Shatru to Vaishali in disguise and shadowed by his spies there. Ajat Shatru decides to go to Ambapali disguised as a Lichchavi merchant who has travelled for long over the high seas and returned with precious stones to sell her and to be accompanied by Abhaya Singh disguised as his slave. Ajat Shatru is greatly excited about the coming adventure, though he repeatedly asserts that a **woman's beauty cannot affect him (Raina, *Ambapali* 236-37).**

Ambapali takes quite some time to recover from the tragedy of her foster-father Giribal's death. Finally, she decides to drive out in her chariot one evening. Ajat Shatru, disguised as a merchant named Ajit Singh, and Abhaya Singh, disguised as his slave Bhilu, see her flashing past in her chariot and are charmed by her beauty. They go to Ambapali's palace. Abhaya Singh meets Anurag, the chief of her guards, who tells them to wait in the *vishram mandir,* the rest house. Ambapali returns to her palace. Ajat Shatru is impatient to meet her as he awaits her call (Raina, *Ambapali* 238-43).

At last, Ambapali favours Ajat Shatru with a meeting. For some time, Ajat Shatru remains spellbound and tongue-tied When he does find his tongue again, he mouths high-flown poetic praises of Ambapali rather than the virtues of his pearls and gems. Then he spins a convincing as well as pathetic yam of his richness and his treasures and Ms homelessness in Ms own native Vaishali. Ambapali is moved to recommend that he be accommodated for the night in the guest house. Ajat Shatru and Abhaya Singh take leave of Ambapali for the night (Raina, *Ambapali* 244-49).

Ajat Shatru originally plans to spend only two days in Vaishali. However, even after a week, he refuses to leave, despite Vasakar's arguments, threats and pleas. Vasakar finally capitulates and arranges for

Ajat Shatru to stay in the house of his spy Chitra Sena. Ajat Shatru is inextricably in love with Ambapali (Raina, *Ambapali* 249-53).

After a week, Ajat Shatru can no longer restrain his longing for Ambapali and begs her to take him in for the night. He proposes to wait for the evening *samaj* to depart and then climb to her balcony by the creeper that hangs by her window. Ambapali agrees to wait for him. Ajat Shatru excitedly tells Abhaya Singh of the coming tryst with Ambapali. Abhaya Singh warns him of the latent dangers, but Ajat Shatru brashes them all aside (Raina, *Ambapali* 252-57).

That evening, Ajat Shatru and Abhaya Singh go to Ambapali's palace. They hide in the dark shade of the trees while the assembly of the *samaj* leave. Ambapali stands on the balcony alone. Bidding good-bye to Abhaya Singh, Ajat Shatru rashes towards Ambapali, who, seeing him, comes towards him. Soon Ambapali is enveloped in Ajat Shatru's arms (Raina, *Ambapali* 258-59).

Day after day, Ajat Shatru and Ambapali bask in each other's love. The secret of their meetings is shared by her chosen maids and Anurag, the chief of her guards, who are happy that their mistress has at last found love and happiness. Ajat Shatru has won them over with his generosity and kindness. Surabhi, her principal maid, has introduced Ajat Shatru to Vijaya Veera, the Vaishalian *senapati.* Ajat Shatru now comes to

Ambapali's circle as an accepted member. But he still does not join the *samaj.* This is explained by Ambapali's fear of princely jealously. Ajat Shatru is expected to settle down in Vaishali, win recognition for himself and then marry Ambapali publicly (Raina, *Ambapali* 259-64). Ajat Shatru is overjoyed when Ambapali tells him that she is pregnant and he wants to marry her immediately (Raina, *Ambapali 266).*

The governing body of the Lichchavi Confederacy institutes an inquiry into the conduct of the deserters who were responsible for losing the battle. It is found that, while many princes deserted their command, many more failed to help neighbouring armies deserted by their commanders. It is also found that rivalry for the favours of Ambapali was the cause of all this. It is imperative that the Lichchavies unite and counterattack the Magadhians. An old minister opposes Raja Chetak's suggestion to eliminate the defaulting princes, and, instead, suggests uniting the princes by eliminating Ambapali, who is the cause of their disunity. One old councillor suggests killing Ambapali to safeguard the liberty and peace of the land. Raja Chetak is shaken, but, as President, he calls for comments on the proposal. Vijaya Veera rises and says that Ambapali is the daughter of their soil, the most beautiful woman of their lands and killing the defenceless girl will be cold-blooded murder which will stain the honour of Vaishali. He warns that a verdict to kill Ambapali

will go against their principles of *dharma* and lose them the faith of the people who adore Ambapali and the loyalty of some princes who love her with pure motives. He pleads that some course other than death be resorted to. As commander-in-chief, he warns that his men cannot fight with bold vigour if they have the blood of Ambapali on their hands. Raja Chetak is not ready to compromise on the welfare of Vaishali. At the same time, he will not sign the death warrant of his foster daughter Ambapali. So he puts the proposal to vote after vacating his seat as President. But the proposal to kill Ambapali is defeated by one hundred two votes to nine (Raina, *Ambapali* 267-71).

A shrewd and subtle councillor proposes that Ambapali be made *nagar vadhu,* the city's bride, allowed to marry none, as she will be married to the State and required to entertain all the princes of the Federation. No one will have a right to insult her privacy on pain of death. This will kill all the rivalry and unite the princes. This has been done before and the ceremony to do so is prescribed. The proposal is unanimously accepted. A decree is drawn and all the members sign the judgement unanimously. Vijaya Veera is not happy, because he knows of Ambapali's love for the merchant, but he perceives that sacrifices have to be made in times of war. Raja Chetak is unhappy because the decree will paralyse Ambapali[5]s will. He gives the proclamation to Vijaya Veera and

asks him to break the dreadful news gently to Ambapali. Vijaya Veera goes to Ambapali's palace with a heavy heart (Raina, *Ambapali* 272-74).

Ambapali is stunned to read the *parishad*'s proclamation. But Vijaya Veera appeals to her love of her motherland. She is persuaded and convinced. She signs her consent. As Vijaya Veera turns to leave, Raja Chetak comes there crestfallen. Ambapali will not have him grieve on her account and says so. Raja Chetak and Vijaya Veera leave, proud of Ambapali's sacrifice of her love. As she waits impatiently for her lover, she hears the drum beaters announcing the proclamation and the invitation to the ceremony to instal Ambapali as *nagar vadhu.* At last, seeing Ajat Shatru riding towards her palace, she asks her maid Paragani to bring the *vijaya tilak* and the garland with which to send him off to the battle front (Raina, *Ambapali* 275-82).

Ajat Shatru hurries in and asks Ambapali to leave with him at once. She protests that she cannot go with him now. Ajat Shatru says that he has heard the proclamation, but will not lose his love to a pack of fools, cowards and despicable worms. He says that they can both escape. She protests that the*parishad* is all powerful. Then Ajat Shatru reveals his true identity and asks Ambapali to be his queen. At this, Ambapali spurns him as the Magadh Monster. She puts the garland round his neck, applies the *kesar* paste to his forehead and strews the rice and the flowers on him,

saying that the ceremony constitutes their marriage, and calls upon Paragani to bear witness to their marriage. Ambapali then faints. Ajat Shatru kisses her on the lips and whispers his love. As Paragani comes with some maids, he asks her to tell Ambapali when she comes to that he will ever keep her love with him till he wins her or dies on the battle-field. He removes his diamond ring and places it on Ambapal's finger, but the ring falls off Giving Paragani a string of pearls, he tells her to take good care of Ambapali and, mounting his horse, rides away (Raina, *Ambapali* 282-85).

Prince Ajat Shatru of Magadh gains a name in history largely because he is initially vanquished by a woman of Vaishali, Ambapali. He marries the famed dancer of Vaishali in the *gandharva* fashion, concealing his real identity. However, when she discovers subsequently that he is actually the Magadh Monster, the mortal enemy of Vaishali, she denounces Mm, though she is already pregnant by him. He vows to destroy Vaishali and claim her as his prize. He destroys Vaishali all right, but Ambapali virtually vanquishes him, largely due to her upbringing in Vaishali as a girl and her subsequent schooling at the feet of Buddha.

Ambapali's upbringing is crucial to the *bildungsroman.* Ambapali is a foundling. Giribal, the *raj mali* or royal gardener of Raja Chetak of Vaishali, finds her abandoned in the *amra van*, or mango grove, in his

charge. The widower Giribal has never had a child of his own and the foundling fills the void in his heart with warmth. Thanking God for this gift of the ***van*** *devi,* or forest goddess, he takes the baby to his abode. He makes his goat suckle the baby and she goes to sleep. He decides to present the baby to Raja Chetak when he visits the royal temple near the garden and obtain his blessings and his permission to keep the child. Raja Chetak, upon hearing Giribal's tale, blesses the child and permits the ***mail*** to keep the baby. He presents a necklace of pearls as a token of his blessing to the child. Upon learning that the baby has no name, Raja Chetak names her *Ambapali*, the gift of the mango grove (Raina, *Ambapali* 5-14).

Raja Chetak often asks Giribal about Ambapali. He prefers to receive flowers from Ambapali to offer to the gods in the temple. One day, burdened with state problems, he sends his courtiers off to the palace and goes into the garden. Seeing Ambapali jumping in vain to reach a champa flower, he plucks it and gives it to her. He tells her to be with him for a while because he is weary. She comes forward and, taking his first finger in her little grip, leads him on. Later she returns to show Giribal a string of pearls given by Raja Chetak and to tell him that she took him to their hut and gave him honey and also showed him *baki ma,* the goat that suckled her as an infant. Soon Giribal gets a newly built house near the

palace lake, Ambapali's favourite haunt. His needs are all attended to. He is paid in gold and he becomes a rich man (Raina, *Ambapali* 59-62).

When Ambapali is eight years old, Raja Chetak requests the *raj guru*, or supreme priest, Aeharya Deva Kashyap, who has come with him to the palace temple, to teach Ambapali and asks Ambapali to receive the *raj guru's* blessings. Ambapali kneels and bends her head at the ***raj guru's*** feet. Aeharya Kashyap directs that Ambapali be sent to his *ashram.* He says that she will learn more than any books or letters can teach her (Raina, *Ambapali* 62).

Ambapali learns fast at the *ashram.* She has innumerable friends among the inmates of the palace, who shower presents on her. She has many friends of her own age on the way to the *ashram* and she takes food and toys to them. She tells them fairy stories. They too tell her stories. One day, going to the bazaar to buy same clothes and ornaments for Ambapali for ***Deepawali,*** the festival of lights, Giribal meets Surya Mani, a Sakyan prince and one of Raja Chetak's nephews, who has been fond of him as a boy. Surya Mani, who has been away in Taxila studying, now visits Giribal often and becomes fond of Ambapali (Raina, *Ambapali* 63-80; 94).

When Ambapali is fifteen years old, the Chinese traveller Than Swan Shaang and his friend Chou Yan come to Vaishali hearing of the

splendour and magnificence of the spring festival. Vijaya Veera, who is *Maha Senani,* or Chief Military Adviser, has been deputed to take the visitors round. They chance upon Ambapali playing with two swans in the lake and mistake her for a nymph. When she climbs out of the water and goes home carrying two vessels of water on her head, they follow her, talking in whispers. Vijaya Veera laughs at their whispering and says that she is not a fairy but little Ambapali. They ask if she is a princess. Vijaya Veera explains to them who she is (Raina, *Ambapali* 155-58).

Princess Ratnawali, one of Raja Chetak's daughters, who is on a visit to her father, has asked Ambapali to accompany her to the spring festival Since she is to sit in the royal gallery, Giribal decides that she must go dressed like a princess. He buys gorgeous garments and a beautiful piece of jewellery for her head decor. He also wants her to wear the pieces of jewellery that Raja Chetak has given her over the years. They leave for the palace, an unknown vague feeling of fear dominating Giribal's mind (Raina, ***Ambapali*** 162-66).

The spring festival has not been celebrated by the State and the customary dance competition has not been held for some years because the ongoing war with Magadh at the frontier has kept the Lichchavi nobility busy and away from Vaishali. Now that Vijaya Veera, with his brilliant leadership, has turned the war in Vaishali's favour, the spring

festival is being celebrated with buoyancy and cheer. In the auditorium, Kura **Sundari, a competitor from Kurushetra, angers Surabhi and Ambapali by her insulting response to Princess Ratnawali's curiosity to know her name and by her condescending reference to the great dancer of Vaishali, the late Chandra Sena. Kura Sundari proceeds in her haughty manner to question the judges' competence to judge the dance of her land. At this, a ripple of laughter comes from the ladies' gallery and one of the senior judges cuts Kura Sundari to size by permitting her to choose any classical technique. Kuru Sundari dances** well **and the audience applauds her. The applause goes to her head and she recklessly attempts a highly intricate *tom* and falters. Ambapali, who has been watching the dance with genuine fascination, detects the fault and impulsively calls out aloud. Like a flash of lightning, her single word silences the auditorium. Kura Sundari challenges her critic to come up to the stage and do the *tom* or apologise to her publicly. The judges and the President, Raja Chetak, will not flout the rales of the competition and so Ambapali is exposed as the impulsive critic. Princess Ratnawali pleads that Ambapali meant no challenge and that, being a child, she was not aware of the rales of the competition. Ambapali herself is contrite for the slip and is prepared to apologise. But her father Giribal shouts from deep in the audience against** an **apology. Kuru Sundari maliciously taunts Ambapali. Enraged at** this,

Raja Chetak rules out an apology and commands Ambapali to meet the challenge. The audience also clamours so (Raina, *Ambapali* 166; 170-78).

Blessed by Princess Ratnawali and encouraged by Surabhi, Ambapali goes up to the stage. The loud-mouthed Kura Sundari taunts Ambapali still, but Surabhi silences her. The judges smile because they know Ambapali's mastery of all the forms of classical dance thanks to the tutelage of the chief *guru maha sangeetagya* from Taxila. The *maha sangeetagya* withdraws from the judging committee because he has taught Ambapali the dance of the Kurus, but he blesses his pupil before walking away. Ambapali opts to use Kuru Sundari's musicians rather than her own. Taking her cue from Kuru Sundari, Ambapali dances the *tora* to perfection. As she ceases, the audience applauds her and the *guru maha sangeetagaya* proudly smiles at her and gestures to her to proceed with her dance. As Kura Sundari grinds her teeth in vicious jealousy, Ambapali beckons to her own musicians and begins to dance the classical dance of Vaishali (Raina, *Ambapali* 179-81).

When Ambapali gracefully ends her dance, the entire assembly applauds her ecstatically and demands that she be crowned *raj nartaki.* Ambapali is stunned and bewildered. Princess Ratnawali and Surabhi try to comfort her. As they lead her away, the judges tell the President, Raja Chetak, that, according to the custom of the dance competition, Ambapali

deserves to be crowned ***raj nartaki.*** Raja Chetak agrees that Ambapali is the best dancer, but hesitates to make her the ***raj nartaki.*** However, he will not flout custom or the verdict of the judges and the people and so he announces that Ambapali is the winner of the title of ***raj nartaki*** of Vaishali. He garlands her and then she is carried by princes and gallants in a litter to the palace of the ***raj nartaki*** (Raina, ***Ambapali*** 181-82).

Ambapali feels bewildered and restless. She misses and longs for the comforting presence of Prince Surya Mani. In the morning, when her maids apologise to her for having overslept, she feels embarrassed. However, she gradually gets used to the servility of her maids as well as to the attention and the compliments paid by the princes and the ***shresties*** of Vaishali (Raina, ***Ambapali*** 194-98).

Vaishali gradually wins battles, but many Lichchavi princes and soldiers are wounded. Ambapali converts a part of her palace into a nursing home for the wounded. Prince Chandrahas, who has become a Buddhist ***bhikku,*** comes as usual, with other ***bhikkus,*** begging for alms. Ambapali denounces the ***bhikkus*** as selfish and slothful cowards who roam the streets as beggars to avoid fighting for their freedom and working for their meal. Ambapali challenges Prince Chandrahas to come near her and fight the temptation of her beauty. Prince Chandrahas, however, dare not presume to assume that he has conquered desire or that

he is competent to teach her. He says that he is still trying to leam Buddha's teachings by living like a ***bhikku*** and has yet to take the *deeksha,* the confirmation ceremony. Ambapali criticises Buddha's teachings and his influence on the people of Vaishali. Prince Chandrahas is only tentative in his defence of Buddha's teachings and of his disciples, but he asserts that Ambapali should refrain from judging Buddha until she has met him. He informs her that Buddha will soon visit Vaishali at the invitation of the richest *shreshti* of the city. As Prince Chandrahas takes his leave, it is clear that he has instilled doubts in Ambapali's mind (Raina, *Ambapali* 306-19).

Vimal Kund, Ambapali's son by Ajat Shatru, grows up a lonely child. He plies his teachers, the *dasies* and his mother with questions that leave them perplexed. Only Prince Chandrahas answers Vimal Kund's questions with patience and honesty. Vimal Kund is gradually drawn towards Prince Chandrahas. One day Vimal Kund tearfully begs Prince Chandrahas to take him with him, away from the golden cage into which he has been put. Ambapali is mortified to perceive that she has somehow failed her son. She takes it out on Prince Chandrahas, but he silences her by pointing out that Vimal Kund needs a father. Ambapali turns imploringly to Vimal Kund, who assures her that he will not leave her unless she bids him go. Ambapali agrees with Prince Chandrahas that

Vimal Kund needs a father and so asks him to keep coming to her palace (Raina, *Ambapali* 357-64).

Considering the predicament of Vaishali, Ambapali wishes to challenge Buddha, who, in her perception, brings disaster to her land, as Raina records:

> **Lord Buddha was coming to Vaishali. Ambapali wondered what Buddha was like. She wondered what he had in him that so captured the hearts of the people. She had heard a lot about his teachings but she did not believe in them. She wondered if she could fight him in Vaishali. She felt she must save the men of her state from becoming unpatriotic, slothful monks. She must rouse in them enthusiasm and love for their country's honour. She thought she will challenge Buddha and show her people what he preached was shameful cowardice in the garb of *nirvana. (Ambapali* 375-**76)

On the day of Buddha's arrival in Vaishali, Ambapali rides out in her chariot with her maid Paragani to still the restlessness in her heart. Paragani cautions her about the procession of *bhikkus* moving towards them, but Ambapali refuses to change her course for them. One of the *bhikkus* stops her chariot by seizing the reins of the horses. An altercation

ensues wherein Ambapali spews contempt on Buddha and his preaching and his followers. Suddenly Prince Chandrahas arrives on the scene with Buddha's direction to his followers to let Ambapali proceed undisturbed on her way, Ambapali contemptuously and angrily resumes her ride (Raina, *Ambapali* 381-85).

However, as Raina describes, an epiphany awaits her:

> **Ambapali had started off in her wrath. But as she passed the centre of the long procession, her eyes were caught by the fluorescent halo of gentle light which emanated from the serenity of some being who stood there in the midst of the crowd and yet aloof from it. He seemed to smile on her. So taken up was she by the gentle smiling radiance of a face she had never seen before that she kept looking back straining her neck to see what she had seen as she had flashed past h i m . . . . she saw again the same face looking at her as if through the mists, still smiling.**
>
> **She had passed the procession. Paragani had taken up the reins. She [Ambapali] turned and looked before her on the empty road, but the face she had just seen through the dust, was still before her eyes. Still smiling, still glowing with the gentle glow of kind love and something utterly wordless**

which she had never felt or known before. His look seemed to have touched her as she passed him. The glow of his smile had melted her. She knelt on the curved railing of her chariot and bent her head on her hands.

"He has defeated us, Paragani', she whispered. 'He has defeated me in my victory. Did you see him Paragani? Did you see his smile?" she asked as if beaten. *(Ambapali* 385-86)

Paragani urges Ambapali to return home and rest in order to regain her composure, but Ampapali says:

"No Paragani, I will not go back defeated. But—neither can I now go forward. I must return. He was bigger than me. He smiled at me—at me, who shouted and scowled at him and his men. He smiled through the dust I flung at him. Oh! I am like that dust. I have lost, I feel so little—so petty, so dusty before him…. I must rise up. I must beg his pardon and make amends. I will not lose to him. I must not lose to him. Turn the horses Paragani," she said sitting down. (Raina, *Ambapali* 386)

As they near the procession, Ambapali gets down from her chariot and, walking past the crowd, tells the chief *bhikku* meekly to tell Tathagat

that she wishes to invite him to her palace. When the chief *bhikku* agrees to do so, she requests him to tell Buddha also that she begs his pardon and she also begs the *bhikku'*s pardon (Raina, *Ambapali* 386-87).

Returning home by a circuitous route in order not to disturb Buddha's procession, Ambapali seeks solitude in her garden. Prince Chandrahas, who hurries to her side fearing what will happen if Buddha declines her invitation, sits by her side silently. Some time later a *bhikku* brings the news that Buddha will visit her palace the next morning. Ambapali is happy (Raina, *Ambapali* 387-89).

Ambapali spends the whole night with Prince Chandrahas and artisans to prepare her palace for Buddha's visit. Buddha comes to her palace and preaches to the people of Vaishali (Raina, *Ambapali* 389-93). He says:

> "Wanting [,] ambition, wealth, fame, domination, love of conquest, love of lust, pride, power and passion. Our life is a continuous hankering of *trishna* [unquenchable thirst] after *tripti,* satiation. But the heart of our *trishna* is like the sieve. It can retain not the wine of pleasure, only the heavy pain remains; and *trishna* is for ever *atrapt,* unsatisfied. Thus ye see, how the endless strife prevails.

"We must then detach our soul form this self which is the body of *trishna.* In detaching our *atma,* soul, we unload all desires, and so all pain. We wake up new bom with a selfless self, free from *trishna* and so full of *triptil* Then do we tread the earth more godly than the gods~the gods that still want to be prayed to and sung to and bowed to with offerings. The aching urge to live ends, and so life glides smooth into a quiet, nameless joy—a joy that matures into complete happiness, a serenity of mind, an absolution, which I call *nirvana*" (Raina, Ambapali 393-94).

Buddha blesses Ambapali and eats the food served by her. After the meal, he retires for his siesta in the *parnakuti,* a hut made of leaves, specially prepared for him since he never lives in homes. In the evening he grants a special audience to Ambapali and invites her to open her heart to him. She does so and he clarifies many of her doubts. Finally Buddha blesses her and retires for meditation. As Buddha is leaving, Vimal Kund kneels and, clinging to Ambapali's feet, begs her to let him go with Buddha. With tears coursing down her cheeks, Ambapali consents to this. The next day, at dawn, as Buddha prepares to leave, Ambapali offers her *amra van* to Buddha's *sangh* and to Buddha himself her own son Vimal

Kund. Buddha blesses Ambapali and leaves, holding Vimal Kund by the hand (Raina, *Ambapali* 395-403).

Vaishali is in peril. The Magadhians burst through one defensive wall after another. Raja Chetak is wounded and dies, after asking his people to set fire to the city of Vaishali and flee to the jungles. Guru Deva Acharya Kashyap goes into the jungles. Paragani brings the news that Ajat Shatru has entered Vaishali and is marching into the city, wherein all resistance has ceased. Ambapali asks everyone to flee to the jungles. Paragani asks Ambapali to go with them, but she refuses to do so. A guard announces that Ajat Shatru is coming towards Ambapali's palace. As Ambapali moves out, an armed Prince Chandrahas waits with some followers to convey her to safety. Ambapali says that she is dead. She commands everyone except Paragani to leave so that no man will pay homage to Samrat Ajat Shatru. All leave the scene except Paragani. Asking Paragani to put out all the lights and to tell Ajat Shatru that she is at her toilet, preparing to receive him, Ambapali retires (Raina, *Ambapali* 413-24).

Ajat Shatru enters Ambapali's light-less palace. Paragani tells him that her mistress is getting ready to receive him. She fearlessly taunts him as a killer and refuses to light the palace. As Ajat Shatru tries to frighten Paragani, Ambapali appears on the stairs, clothed in saffron robes and

carrying in one hand her long silken hair, which she has shorn (Raina, *Ambapali* 425-26). As Ajat Shatru stands aghast, Ambapali tells him:

> **"I welcome you to darkness and despair, *Samrat* of Magadh ... I bring to you the offering of the defeated and the humbled. I have nothing to offer, yet I wished not to meet you empty handed. So I bring you t h i s .... 'A kingdom for the soft caressing fragrance of your silky hair,' someone had [sic] once said to Ambapali. He was a merchant who loved her. Her hair I bring to you, and this ring which the merchant had [sic] put on her finger ere he fled away from her to die into a monarch." (Raina, *Ambapali* 426)**

Ajat Shatru is smitten with pain and helpless confusion. He stands still and silent, feeling defeated and lost, tired and humiliated. He is unable to speak, even when Ambapali asks him to. She asks him to go with her so that she can see her motherland in the company of her conqueror and observe how the realm of his victory smiles on him and adds to his glory and power. They ride through the devastated city, Ajat Shatru sitting silent, as if hypnotised. Hearing a Buddhist disciple preaching to a crowd of people, Ambapali has the chariot stopped. She and Ajat Shatru alight and they see a tall boy preaching the message of Buddha. As the boy moves towards them, Ambapali tells Ajat Shatru that

he is their son Vimal. Ajat Shatru stands petrified, while Ambapali collapses. Vimal Kund recogniees his mother, but still asks for alms. She sys that she now has only her self to give him. Vimal says that he will take her the next day to Saranath, where Buddha awaits her to deliver her from sin, sorrow and strife. Vimal Kund turns to Ajat Shatru and asks for alms for the people who are now his. Ajat Shatru takes off his crown and offers it to Vimal Kund. Vimal Kund declines it and asks for something not so heavy and awesome. So, Ajat Shatru gives him a string of pearls. At his prompting, Ambapali gives Vimal Kund the ring which the departing Ajat Shatru once left on her finger. Vimal Kund turns to the people and asks them to join him in reciting Buddha's mantras of happiness. Vasakar and Abhaya Singh arrive on the scene and take Ajat Shatru away. Vimal Kund asks Ambapali to go home and get ready to go with him to Saranath the next day (Raina, *Ambapali* 426-33).

About fifteen years later, her tutelage at the feet of Buddha completed successfully, Ambapali sets out in a ship from Seth Bund Rameswaram for Lanka (Ceylon) as Buddha's messenger and disciple after having crossed the peninsula on foot, moving from village to village, spreading the light (Raina, *Ambapali* 434-35). She has emerged cleansed of her past, as Raina states: "The *nagar vadhu* of Vaishali, the

city's bride, was now the bride celestial of all humanity... (Raina, *Ambapali* 435).

Prince Ajat Shatru is groomed by his father's Minister, the able Vasakar, who, observing the spirited nature of Ajat Shatru and the increasingly pacifist tendencies of Bimbasar, decides to nurture Ajat Shatru in defiance of the ageing *Samrat.* So he encourages Ajat Shatru to commence a punitive war against Kosala. Later, when Ajat Shatru wins a battle in the sixteen-year-war with the Confederation of Lichchavi Republics and orders the opening of the treasury to his victorious soldiers, Vasakar chides him for his impetuosity and points out that his victory is due to the charms of the most beautiful woman of Vaishali and not due to his soldiers' valour. This tickles the curiosity of Ajat Shatru, who impulsively goes to see the woman and surrenders his heart to Ambapali. He contracts a *gandharva* marriage with her. But, when she discovers his identity, she denounces him and sends him away. He leaves in rage, vowing to destroy Vaishali and claim her as his prize. He does come back and destroy Vaishali, but Ambapali confronts him in saffron robes and with a shaven head as a follower of Lord Buddha. What is more, she presents to him their son Vimal Kund, who appears in the saffron robes of a Buddhist *bhikku* and declines, even as alms, Ajat Shatra's crown, which his father offers him. Ajat Shatru comes as the

scourge **of Vaishali** but **a patriotic woman of V aishali, who has** renounced **everything, discomfits him, both the characters acting in accordance with their early upbringing and grooming.**

The great Mauryan Emperor Chandragupta is completely a creature of Chanakya's making. Chankya discovers him disguised as the keeper of the State Guest house in the Magadhan capital, perceives the royal scion in him, tutors him, guides his campaigns and installs him on the throne of Magadha. Through his wise counsel, he helps Chandragupta to establish a *Ramrajya.* He tutors and moulds Chandragupta's son Bindusara and, alter Bindusara is firmly set on his throne, moves to the Himalayas.

In Ayyar's *Chanakya and Chandragupta,* Chanakya goes to Pataliputra to publish his book *Arthasastra* because the Magadhan kings honour scholars and patronize the publication of books. However, the Navanandas of Magadha insult him there and he vows to dethrone them. Chanakya discovers a potential emperor in Chandragupta, a descendant of the Moriyas, and initiating him into the royal role, grooms him to ascend the throne of Magadha in the place of the Nandas. Chandragupta, for his part, has already vowed to extirpate the Nandas who usurped the throne of Magadha **from his forefathers and also destroyed his entire**

Moriya clan, he alone surviving, thanks to the self-sacrifice of the entire clan.

Chanakya sends his disciple Indusarman to the court of the Nandas. Posing as a Jain occultist named Jeevasiddhi, Indusarman wins the confidence of the Nandas and their Prime Minister Rakshasa. However, he is secretly engaged in undermining the Nanda reign. Chandragupta, learning of a plot to do away with him, escapes from Pataliputra. Using mercenaries and hill tribes, Chanakya and Chandragupta attack Gaya in Magadha. The attack fails and Chanakya and Chandragupta flee.

Chanakya and Chandragupta seek the aid of the Macedonian adventurer Alexander to dethrone the Nandas. Alexander offers aid on condition of vassalage, but Chandragupta, as advised by Chanakya, spurns the offer. The offended Alexander imprisons Chandragupta in a dungeon in the palace of King Poros, his friend. But Poros's niece, Princess Santavati of Simhapura, who has fallen in love with Chandragupta, enters the dungeon through a secret passage, contracts a *gandharva* marriage with Chandragupta, and escapes with him. Later Chandragupta and Santavati are married in her father's kingdom of Simhapura.

Alexander's **Greek soldiers mutiny and he is forced to** turn back. **Many of the territories conquered by him revolt. Alexander himself is wounded. The Gedrosian desert, through which Alexander's army retreats, takes a heavy toll of his soldiers. Guided by Chanakya's cunning, Chandragupta mounts a series of lightning attacks and clears the Sind of the Greeks. Later, When Alexander's powerful successor Seleucus Nikator invades India, Chandragupta, thanks largely to Chanakya's cunning, defeats him. Nikator cedes four of his provinces to Chandragupta, gives him his daughter Devabhranta in marriage and departs a friend and ally.**

Chanakya and Chandragupta invade Magadha again, but now depending largely on spies and policy and with the cooperation of neighbouring kings. The Nandas are killed and Magadha is conquered easily. Upon Chanakya's advice, Chandragupta marries Durhara, a Maury an princess, and **thereby secures his claim to the throne of Magadha.**

Using spies and wiles, Chanakya plays one rival of Chandragupta's against **another and systematically defeats all of them. The former Nanda king, Sarvarthasiddhi, King Poros and his brother Vairochaka are killed.** Poros's son **Malayakettu is frightened into flight. Finally, Chandragupta is crowned King of Magadha. The Nanda Prime Minister Rakshasa**

makes several attempts to assassinate Chandragupta, but Chanakya frustrates **all** the attempts. Malayakettu attempts to conquer **Mahgadha,** but **Chanakya foils the attempt. Chanakya tricks the able Rakshasa into switching allegiance to Chandragupta and instals him as Prime Minister in his own place. Chanakya also converts Malayakettu into a loyal vassal of Chandragupta's. Then Chanakya guides Chandragupta in conquering many kingdoms till the whole of North India comes under** Chandragupta's **rale.**

Chanakya is **the brain** behind **the** two **strands of the narrative in *Chanakya and Chandragupta,* one depicting the alien Greek invaders under Alexander being driven out ofBharatavarsha by Chandragupta under the guidance of Chanakya, replacing their hateful *Vairajya* by a *Swarajya,* and the other describing the liberation of Magadha from** the **tyranny of the Navanandas, who, under Mahapadma, "the exterminator of the entire Kshtriya race," as Radha Kumud Mookerji calls him in "Rise of Magadhan Imperialism" (18). have destroyed the ancient *dharma* of Bharatavarsha, and the founding, in its stead, of the Mauryan empire, which is a *Ramrajya* as enunciated in Chanakya's *Arthasastra.***

As part of his campaign against the alien Greek invaders under **Alexander, Chanakya** uses **the large assembly of Brahmins at the *swayamvara* of Princess Santavati in Simhapura to stir up nationalist**

spirit, particularly through his "Song of Freedom" (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta,* ch. 9). Chanakya explains that the goal of his several measures against Alexander is to "make him sick of the whole affair and to [sic] leave our country as quickly as he can" (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 113). He also explains the evils of *Varajya* and declares that anything is justified in an effort to establish a *Swarajya* (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 116). He wants all towns named Alexandria to be renamed and he orders that no Indian writer should mention anything about Alexander or his invasion of India (Ayyar, *Chanakya and. Chandragupta* 2.39).

In his campaign against the Nandas and in the measures he takes to found and secure the Mauryan empire, Chanakya resorts largely to wily stratagems and prudent policy. Chanakya advises Chandragupta to stomach the humiliation of seeking the aid of petty kings and tribal chieftains to dethrone the Nandas (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 71). Chanakya makes the most of the legend of a lion licking the sweat of the sleeping Chandragupta to build up his image (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 129). He tactfully agrees to Poros's rascally terms for cooperating in the invasion of Magadha (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 132). After the successful invasion of Magadha, when Chandragupta is disturbed by Chanakya's advice to murder his many

rivals and enemies, his mentor reassures him by quoting from the Ramayana and his own *Arthasastra* (Ayyar, *ChanaJcya and Chandragupta* 160-61). He says, '"We have got venomous snakes lurking all round us, ready to bite. We must have our bite in first'" (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 156). Perceiving the supreme competence of the Nanda Prime Minister Rakshasa, Chanakya tactfully wins him over to Chandragupta's side, instead of killing him, even simulating a quarrel with Chandragupta to outwit Rakshasa (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 186; 214).

Besides grooming Chandragupta for seven years for kingship, Chanakya plans his military campaigns, builds up his image and guides him in the administration of the empire, thereby making Chandragupta the Emperor almost wholly his own creation. Though Chandragupta shares Chanakya's ideals, his mentor's ruthlessness sometimes disturbs him (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 160-61). He admits that he is no good at diplomacy and so entrusts it entirely to Chanakya, confining himself to fighting wars (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 72).

Chanakya not only places Chandragupta securely on the throne of Magadha, but also moulds him into an ideal ruler of a *Ramrajya.* Largely using his own prescriptions in the *Arthasastra,* Chanakya recommends various social reforms, particularly to combat: the evil of the caste system

(Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 219). He says that the Magadhan imperial army has been moulded into the most efficient war-machine by the induction, contrary to traditional caste prejudice, of Yaisyas and Sudras as officers and men (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 235). He states that corruption cannot be abolished but only mitigated (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 265). He also preaches religious tolerance (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 346). He observes that drink is the father and the mother of all sins and explains that a drunkard passes through four stages: '"he is first jocose, then bellicose, then lachrymose and, finally, comatose'" (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 111). Right above Chandragupta's throne, Chanakya instals the inscription *Satyam Eva Jayate, nanritam*which translates as "Truth alone will triumph ultimately, never falsehood" (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 352).[1]

According to Chanakya, a king's *karma* is never-ceasing activity for the welfare of his subjects (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 242); he must consider himself the first servant of the people (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 256); the administrators of a country should regard themselves as servants of the servant of the people (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 256); the sale of liquor and narcotics must be regulated and their addicts registered (Ayyar, *Chanakya and*

Chandragupta 267); and, a king and kingdom have no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests (Ayyar, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* 187)

All this teaching helps to mould the ruler's mind of Chandragupta. It is the guiding star of Chandragupta[5] s historical role as the emperor of Magadha. Even Ms ultimate renunciation of the trappings of royalty and. his decision to seek peace and harmony is solitude is an outcome, of his early grooming by Chanakya.

Note

[1] It is pertinent to mention here that, till recently, the official motto of the State **of Tamilnadu,** India, was, *Satyam Eva Jeyate* Now it has been replaced by its Tamil rendering ***Vaimaye*** *Vellum,*

Chapter 3

Princess Razia and Crown Prince Khurram

One of the earliest Indian princes to be deliberately groomed to rule was Princes Razia of the Sultanate of Delhi. Her grooming and her ascending the throne of the Sultanate of Delhi were gl aringly contradictory to the general practice of the times. Yet her grooming was such that she was a successful and even admirable ruler during her brief reign.[1]

Razia is the daughter of Sultan lltutmish by his first wife, who was the daughter of Qutbuddin Aibak, the founder of the Slave Dynasty. Razia is bom to rule and Sultan lltutmish wants her to succeed him as the ruler of Delhi. However, his favourite wife, Shah Turkan, who is a bewitching beauty, wants one of her two worthless sons to succeed Sultan lltutmish, who, however, despises her two boys as lazy playboys. Shah Turkan tries in vain to persuade Sultan lltutmish to change his opinion of her sons (Dasgupta, *Razia* ***Sultan*** **6-10).**

Sultan lltutmish is convinced that his heir should primarily be willing and able to fight. He observes that his daughter Razia, more than any of his other children, possesses the qualities of a good soldier, being fearless, tough and intelligent. So he trains her to lead the Sultanate's army one day. Razia is trained to fight on horseback and on

foot, to manage her shield and heavy armour and at the same time be quick in her movements, so as to be able to ride away, if necessary. She is also taught how to direct her soldiers during a battle from the back of an elephant. She is trained to use various weapons, such as the spear, the sword and bow and arrows. Razia is also taught how to plan an attack on the enemy, studying the foe's weaknesses and the area of the battlefield. Sultan Iltutmish also teaches Razia that, in certain situations, diplomacy, and not war, should be resorted to. By the time Razia ascends the throne, she is prepared in every way to lead the most powerful institution in the Sultanate, namely, the army (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* [46J-48).

Razia is a princess with a difference. She does not dress like a girl or veil herself, but wears trousers and a coat, ties a turban round her head and carries a sword at her. hip. She participates regularly in martial games and constantly works on improving her skills as a warrior. She is good at sports and often goes hunting and riding. Bold and athletic, she is a skilful rider, both on horse and elephant. In short, Razia grows up more like a prince than a princess. She learns not merely to read and write, but also to argue and debate, so that she can hold her own among the nobles and counsellors in court. She also receives religious instruction and is familiar with the Koran. Thus Sultan Iltutmish trains Razia to become a ruler and a warrior (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* [17]-18).

However, there is one important drawback in Sultan Iltutmish's plan. Razia is, despite all her talents and qualities, a woman. When Sultan lltutmish dies in April 1236, and his decision that Razia will be his heir is made known to the Amirs, the powerful leaders and royal counsellors, most of them are not willing to take orders from, a woman. Shah Turkan senses this and decides to exploit it for her own benefit. She has no intention of giving up her power and position upon her husband's death. She has some powerful Amirs at court as her allies. She sets out to enlist their support for her sons, particularly Ruknuddin (Dasgupta, ***Razia Sultan*** 11; 18-19).

Razia, sensing the growing opposition to her becoming queen, diplomatically proposes that her step-brother Ruknuddin be declared Sultan. Shah Turkan and the Amirs are surprised. On 30 April 1236, Ruknuddin is crowned Sultan of Delhi. However, Razia is determined to strike back. She is confident that everyone will soon, see how weak Ruknuddin's character is (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 19-20).

Within, six months, the people begin to feel insecure because of the behaviour of Sultan Ruknuddin. His merrymaking and irresponsible behaviour empty the treasury soon. His mother, Shah Turkan, wields unlimited power and begins settling old scores ruthlessly. The mother and the son fear that the young Prince Qutbuddin, Sultan Iltutmish's son by

another wife, can be a dangerous rival when he grows up and so order his murder. They also try to silence Razia, who begins to fear for her very life. So she decides to go directly to the people by using a technique devised by her father to enable aggrieved citizens to draw the Sultan's attention and obtain justice—appearing in red clothes (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 26-27).

With the administration having broken down, and the Amirs defying the Sultan, Ruknuddin has to rush around to control several rebellions. While Sultan Ruknuddin is **thus** away **from Delhi,** in **November** 1236, **Razia, cleverly selecting** a bnday, **appears before the huge crowd going for prayers in the mosque in the red clothes of a victim. Bluntly telling the people that Ruknuddin has killed her brother** and **wants to kill her too and that her step-mother is evil and wants to see her die, Razia appeals to the people for help out of respect for her dead father. The people are moved. They capture Shah Turkan and imprison her. When Ruknuddin rushes back to Delhi, the Amirs, who have switched their loyalty to Razia, capture him and bring him before her. Razia orders that her step-mother and step-rother be tried according to the law. Both are found guilty and are killed (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 27-29),**

Sultan Razia is a kind ruler. She visits far-flung villages in the company of Court officials and personally acquaints herself with the way

her people live, particularly their privations. She devises many plans for her people-repairing roads, setting up a postal system, building forts to guard the roads against thieves and dacoits. Such measures, she envisages, will not only ensure good governance, but also prove useful to merchants, farmers and craftsmen and enhance the business potential of villagers. She invites scholars from all over to study and teach at Nasiri College in Delhi, which was founded by her father, and make it a prestigious centre of learning. She also encourages poets and painters. She sets up schools and libraries (Dasgupta, ***Razia*** *Sultan* [39]~41).

Dasgupta highlights the uniqueness of Razia thus:

> Razia Sultan did not become queen because she was the wife of a dead king. Nor did she become quttn because she was the mother of a young prince, on whose behalf she had to rule until he was old enough to be king himself. Instead she took the throne in her own right like a king would have done, and so she called herself Razia Sultan and not Sultana. She was her father's choice as heir and she was the people's choice as their ruler. In a way, she was a democratically elected queen and in this respect she was far ahead of her times. *{.Razia Sultan* 42)

As her projects for the welfare of her people begin to change the

atmosphere in the **Sultanate, Razia, with admirable political acumen, makes her boldest decision of removing the tax on non-Muslims, as Dasgupta narrates:**

> **The Sultan was very well aware of the fact that she and her noblemen—the Amirs—were foreigners in Delhi. Besides they were hugely outnumbered by the local population who were Hindus. She knew that if the Hindu kings stopped quairelhng amongst themselves and united, it would not take them long to get rid of the outsiders. Razia was a clever politician and understood that as a foreign ruler she could not survive long without the support of the Hindu population. If she was to keep her kingdom together, she needed their involvement and loyalty. She realized that she must somehow prove to the Hindus, that in her scheme of things they were her people as much as the Muslims were. And she thought the best way of doing so would be to treat Hindus and Muslims as equal. *(Razia Sultan* 42-43).**

The Amirs are shocked at Razia's proposal. To them the special tax on Hindus is not only an easy way of collecting money for the Sultanate but also a symbol of the power of the Muslim State and the Amirs. They point out that, in return for the tax, the Hindus are exempted from

fighting for the Sultan. To their surprise and horror, Razia asks why the Hindus should not fight for her (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 43). Razia wins the argument, as Dasgupta narrates:

> Razia explained to the nobles that she wanted the Hindus to identify themselves with the Sultanate and accept her as their ruler. She wished that Hindus and Muslims would participate in each other's lives and live harmoniously. This was only possible if her Hindu subjects were treated fairly, and Razia was convinced that the first step towards achieving that end was, to abolish the tax on Hindus. *(Razia Sultan* 43)

Despite the opposition of the Amirs, Razia abolishes the tax on the Hindus. Almost immediately the Hindus in the fortress town of Ranthambore rebel Razia sends a force to recapture the fort, but orders it to return to Delhi after recapturing the fort. Razia still holds that, if she lets the Rajputs handle their affairs by themselves and treats them fairly, with neither force nor arrogance, they will remain within the Sultanate and also respect and support her. The Amirs are worried that, very soon, with the help of the people, she will hold all the power in her hand and regard it unnecessary to consult the Amirs or even inform them of her plans. The Amirs perceive that power is gradually slipping away from

their hands (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan*44-45).

Within a year of Razia's ascent to the throne, a small Muslim sect decides to challenge the supremacy of the main sect, namely the Sunnis. A thousand armed men attack worshippers gathered for Friday prayers in the lama Masjid. Many people are.killed, but Razia quickly brings the situation under, control. Defiant Hindu kings sporadically rebel and, in some cases, Razia orders her soldiers to abandon some fortresses. The Amirs are confused. Several Amirs join together in a rebellion, march to Delhi, and lay siege to the city. Razia forms an alliance with loyal Amirs and crashes the rebellion, killing several of the rebel Amirs (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 49-50).

In 1240, when Razia has been ruling for three years, she is still without rest because of the constant trouble given by the Amirs, the most recent of these being a rebellion by Malik Izzuddin Ayaz, the Governor of Lahore. Since she cannot afford to lose Lahore, she marches into the Punjab, chases Ayaz into a comer and forces Mm to surrender. But, instead of killing or imprisoning him, she sets him free because he has been taught a lesson. Almost immediately upon her return to Delhi with her tired army, Razia leams that Amir Altunia, the Governor ofBhatinda, has revolted and declared his independence from the Sultanate (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan [57]-5S).*

Razia is stunned by the news. She recollects the situation at the time of her father's death: most of the senior Amirs and even some of the junior ones, despite Sultan Iltutmish's last wish, were opposed to Razia succeeding him; a few of the Amirs, however, supported her, because they did not care whether the ruler was a man or a woman; Altunia was one of these—a newcomer among the Amirs, a young Turkish nobleman, rather hotheaded and jealous by nature, but intelligent and ambitious, and expected to rise to great power one day; and, Altunia actually argued in her favour, hoping to persuade older Amirs to accept her as leader (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 58-59).

Razia reviews the past few years to detect what could have gone wrong: upon ascending the throne, she began rewarding the Amirs who had helped her by appointing them ministers in her Court or governors of provinces; Altunia was loyal and reliable and she trusted Mm totally, valuing his friendship and advice; she even thought of marrying him, but brushed aside the idea, since she did not wish to divert her attention from the Sultanate; and, for his loyal support during the siege of Delhi, Razia appointed him Governor of Bhatinda, thinking that such a far away province should be entrusted only to an absolutely reliable Amir (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 59-61).

Razia suspects that someone must have exploited the streak of

jealousy in Altunia's nature to turn Mm against her: after Altunia had left for Bhatinda, she turned to other people for advice; one of them was Jamal-ud-din Yakut, an Ethiopian slave in her Court, who caught her attention because of his calm and dependable nature and whom she appointed to the important post of 'Amir-i-Akhur', or head of the royal stables; many of the other Amirs were infuriated because the post was usually occupied by an Amir of Turkish blood; Yakut not only looked after her horses, but also advised her on other matters of state, while riding alongside her or fighting beside her; and, Yakut was constantly in Razia's company, much more than any other Amir (Dasgupta, *Razia ' Sultan* **61-62).**

Now, Amirs like Balban and Aeitigin have seized the opportunity provided by Razia's careless behaviour and Altuma's jealous nature to carry out their plan to get rid of her. They have incited Altunia's jealousy by reporting to him her scandalous behaviour with Yakut and they have promised to share power with Mm after Razia is toppled. Altunia has fallen into their trap. Working all this out cleverly, Razia decides to face Altunia's rebellion and the larger conspiracy. She sends for Yakut and tells him of her decision. Yakut has his own misgivings about the proposed campaign, but his loyalty is so great that he begins preparations for the war (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* **62-63).**

Razia's army sets out in April 1240. It meets Altunia's army near Bhatinda in Punjab. Altunia cleverly isolates Yakut. When Yakut dies in battle, his soldiers surrender to Altunia. Razia herself is captured and taken to Bhatinda fort. Altunia sends word of his victory to Delhi. The Amirs are oveijoyed and immediately appoint Razia's brother, Muiz-ud-din Bahram Shah, as her successor, since he is fit to be a puppet of the Amirs, the most powerful of whom is now Aeitigin, who becomes the Sultan's deputy. The Amirs just forget Altunia, Meanwhile, the indomitable Razia starts thinking of escaping, gathering her army and taking revenge on her enemies. Aeitigin's increased demands for power and recognition irk the other Amirs as well as the Sultan. One day he is violently stabbed to death by assassins. Now Altunia perceives that he has been used and fooled by Aeitigin and Balban, He is determined to take revenge on the Amirs who cheated him. Since Altunia and Razia have a common goal now, they agree to unite. They even fall in love again and decide to get married (Dasgupta, *Razia Sultan* 63 70).

After their marriage, Altunia and Razia turn their attention to reconquering Delhi. The Sultan and his advisers decide that, since Razia is still respected in Delhi, she should never be allowed to reach the city, but should be met outside the city. In October 1240, Razia's army and the

Sultan's meet at a place named Kaithal. The Sultan's army is larger and better equipped. Altunia dies fighting bravely. What happened to Razia after Altunia's death is a mystery because there are two versions of it. According to one, she was struck by an arrow and died a hero on the battlefield. According to the other, she fled from the battlefield into the countryside and, while she was sleeping in exhaustion, a peasant, coveting her jewels, killed her and buried her in the fields. All that can be ascertained is that she died on 13 October 1240 (Dasgupta, ***Razia*** *Sultan* 70-72).

In the eyes of Sultan Iltutumish of Delhi, only his daughter Razia is worthy of succeeding him on the throne of the Sultanate. So he arranges for her to be brought up as a prince, well-versed in war and statecraft. After his death, Razia, drawing upon her upbringing, succeeds, after a well-timed wait, to ascend the throne of the Sultanate. She rales competently and wisely for four years. But the male-chauvinist atmosphere prevailing then and her own youthful impetuosity cost her the throne and her life.

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well-timed wait, to ascend the throne of the Sultanate. She rules competently and wisely for four years. But the male-chauvinist atmosphere prevailing then and her own youthful impetuosity militate against her and she is doomed to fatal failure.

Murari's *Taj* proves the efficacy of prudent upbringing in childhood through the stories of Crown Prince Khurram, his elder brother Khusrav and Shah Jahan's (Khurram's) eldest son Dara Shukoh. Being a prince in the Mughal household was always dangerous because, according to the Timurid law, the succession was determined by the reigning monarch in an autocratic and absolute manner and the Mughal princes had only the proverbial choice of *Taktya Takhta* (Throne.or Coffin). Emperor Akbar, sorely disappointed with his eldest son Jahangir, sowed the seeds of succession in the mind of his grandson Khusrav to such an extent that, when, on his deathbed, he passed the reign on to Jahangir, Khusrav was sorely disappointed and he attempted an uprising against Ms own father. But he was betrayed. Jahangir could not kill Mm because of the Timurid prohibition against spilling one s own blood. So Jahangir had Khusrav blinded and chained for all his life to a soldier. So Khusrav[5]s younger brother Prince Khurram became Crown Prince. In the evening of his life, Shah Jahan is a helpless witness to the inhuman torture meted out to his darling firstborn Dara by his youngest son

Aurangzeb merely because Shah **Jahan** and Mumtaz (Aijumand) had doted on Dara and ignored Aurangzeb when.they were children.

Prince Khurram is reprimanded by his military tutor General Mahabat Khan for dreaming during his lesson in swordsmanship. Mahabat Khan points out that he could have killed the prince three times. He counsels that a prince cannot dream on the battlefield, because, in war, the king is the heart and, if he is killed, defeat is inevitable. He asks Khurram to remember his grandfather **Akbar's** advice that a monarch should ever be intent on conquest, as, otherwise, his neighbours will rise in. arms against him. Mahabat.Khan has been Khurram's personal tutor, teaching Mm. the princely arts of swordplay, horsemanship, wrestling, and the tactics of the battlefield since an early age. Now Mahabat Khan advises Khurram also to forget Arjumand. When Khurram asserts that he cannot erase her picture from his mind, Mahabat Khan sarcastically tells him to become a *sanyasi* and wander the land in sackcloth and ashes with her image about Ms neck. He seriously counsels Khurram: '"Love is not for princes. You are not a soldier or a villager. You are Shah Jahan. You will marry whom you must. Not for love, for politics[5]". When Khurram points out that his great grandfather **Humayun** married for love, Mahabat Khan points **out that** it **brought** great **disaster** on his head. Khurram thinks that **Humayun's** disaster was caused by his brothers and not his beloved

Hamida. When Khurram mentions Jahangir's obsession with Mehrunissa, Mahabat Khan warns Mm about the waiting women present, who might carry tales, because the wrong inflection on Mehrunissa could cost them their lives (Murari, *Taj* [51]-53).

Prince Khurram complains that he has been unable to obtain an audience with Emperor Jahangir. Mahabat Khan says that the Emperor hopes- that he will regain his senses. He warns that the Padishah will see him only then. Khurram says that the Emperor has granted him an audience for the next day and that he is going to make a demand on his father. Mahabat Khan cautions him that none but the Emperor can demand or command. He advises Khurram to speak gently to his father. He thrusts a Kashmiri girl at Khurram and asks him to douse the fire of his lust. But Khurram declines, saying that what bums in him is love. Mahabat Khan repeats Ms advice to speak carefully to Jahangir, remembering that he is Crown Prince Khurram (Murari, *Taj* 54).

Khurram enters the diwan-i-khas and approaches the Emperor with trepidation. After disposing of State affairs and dismissing his ministers, Jahangir leads Khurram to his chamber. The prince is formal and decorous and Jahangir chides him out of such an attitude and encourages him to speak fearlessly. Khurram broaches the subject of his marriage to Aijumand (Murari, *Taj* 56-60). Emperor Jahangir's reply is a long piece

of counsel to the Crown Prince:

> ‘Akbar .... often lectured me on the duties of a prince. It is our destiny to rule. God chose us alone for that purpose. We are not dacoits or brigands who have captured the empire. We are the descendants of Ghengis Khan and Timur-i-leng, and the empire we have carved from Hindustan sprang from our quality as rulers. A prince must consider only what will benefit his kingdom. If he thinks of himself first, and then his kingdom, it will be lost. You should read the Arthasastra of Kautilya. That Hindu wrote wisely on the duties of a prince. Everything I do, I consider first how it benefits the empire, or how it affects the empire. When you mount the throne, you will learn to think in this way. Now, on the question of this girl, Arjumand, I consider it not as the father of a beloved son, but from the seat of the emperor looking at his crown prince. Our lives, my son, are not our own. They are the kingdom’s. How will this marriage to Aqumand strengthen the empire? Consider it thus.’ (Murari, *Taj* 61)

Prince Khurram knows that he has lost and desperately says that the marriage will make him happy, and Emperor Jahangir replies:

> ‘Ah, badmash, you have not listened to me. Make you

> happy? I told you, our lives are not our own. A peasant can say, "1 will do this" and do it. Who does it affect? Only himself, perhaps his immediate family. But if Shah Jahan says, "I will do this because it makes me happy," it affects the whole kingdom. What does Aijunand bring with her? Wealth? Power? A kingdom? A political alliance? Will marrying her make a friend of an enemy, as Akbar always advised? Will it extend the empire?' (Murari, *Taj* 61)

Emperor Jahangir concedes that Prince Khurram may, after his marriage for the kingdom, take Aijumand for his second wife if he still feels the same love for her. Khurram asserts that he wants Aijumand as his first and only wife. At this Jahangir tells his son to do as he commands and advises him to expend his lust on other women and stop thinking of Aijumand. Seeing the anger mounting in his father's face, Prince Shah Jahan withdraws from the royal presence. As he reaches the threshold, Emperor Jahangir says that he has already chosen his wife for Mm (Murari, *Taj* 62).

The marital alliance decided upon by Emperor Jahangir for his Crown Prince Khurram is effected. The bride is Gulbadan, the niece of the Shahinsha of Persia. In conformity with his advice to his son and with the guiding wisdom of Akbar, Jahangir has arranged the marriage for

political reasons-to establish peace and friendship between the constant rivals, namely, the Emperor of Hindustan and the Shahinsha of Persia (Murari, *Taj* 104).

Prince Khurram is one of the sons of Emperor Jahangir. His elder brother Khusrav forfeited his claim to the throne when he foolishly revolted against his own father and tried to capture the throne. Since then Prince Khurram has been, treated as the *de facto* Crown Prince. He is also trained systematically in warfare and in commanding the Mughal army. Differences arise between him and his father over his insistence on marrying the commoner Aijumand, while his father contemplates a politically useful alliance with the Shah of Persia. When Aqumand'a aunt, the widowed Mehrunnisa, becomes Empress Nur Jahan and the virtual ruler of Hindustan, she places as many impediments as possible between Khurram and his father and creates as many mi sunderstandings as possible between the father and the son so as to secure the succession for her good-for-nothing son-in-law Shahriyar. However, Khurram's upbringing gives him an advantage and, following it carefully, he manages to beat back all fraternal competition and ascends the Mughal throne, sparing Nur Jahan's life only at the intercession of his wife Arjumand.

Note

[1] **Dasgupta's** novel, *Razia: The People's Queen*, is based on Jamila **Brijbushan's** biography *Sultan Razia: Her Life and Times*.

Chapter 4

Tipu Sultan and Dhondu Pant Nana Saheb

The formation of the character and personality of Tipu Sultan is of great interest because of the circumstances of his birth. His doting mother and his wise teachers mould his character and personality In such a manner as to ensure the emergence of a rare and admirable ruler. His Prime, Minister ensures that his rale is just and wise. But alien historians have deliberately maligned Tipu to an unrecognizable level. So Tipu is one of these Indian monarchs maligned by British imperialists who need to be rehabilitated. Fakhr-un-Nissa, Tipu's mother, plays a very important part in the formation of Ms character.

Fakhr-un-Nissa, wife of Hyder Ali Khan of Mysore, is concerned not only for her husband and her son, but also for their subjects:

> Most of her life passed by, waiting for them [Hyder and Tipu]. When they came back with their trophies and treasures, with news of battles won and armies routed, she heard the hasty cheers of the multitude.but she also counted the many who had not returned with them. Silently she would render thanks for their homecoming but would pray also for those lost on the battlefield and for the widows and

orphans left behind.... (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* **44).**

Fakhr-un-Nissa is Hyder's second wife. His first wife, Shahbaz Begum, has persuaded him to remarry because she was a chronic patient and had produced only a daughter. When Fakhr-un-Nissa remains childless for two years after marriage, on her deathbed, Shahbaz Begum takes a promise from both Hyder and Fakhr-un-Nissa that they will go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of the late Saint Tipu Mastan Oulia in Arcot to seek the blessings of that holy man (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 46).

Hyder Ali Khan and Fakhr-un-Nissa go to the tomb of Saint Tipu Mastan Oulia to seek his blessings. Hyder bows perfunctorily and leaves soon after depositing a large offering. Fakhr-un-Nissa remains behind and prays fervently for seven days. The atmosphere of the shrine gives her a feeling of peace and contentment, but she does not like the rocky and barren surroundings. After speaking to the trustees and the caretakers of the shrine, she employs a labour force to plant a garden As the work starts, the wild-looking putative son of Saint Tipu rashes out of the shrine and asks them why the peace of the shrine is being disturbed. Fakhr-un-Nissa tells him that she plans to plant flowering trees, which, she says, will please Saint Tipu. The young man races back to the shrine and

returns after a few moments. He says that Saint Tipu will not be pleased because he does not want anything to be done for him by a woman. He asks her to send her son if she wants flowers to be planted. Fakhr-un-Nissa pleads that she has no son and wonders if her husband can be sent instead (Gidwani, ***The*** *Sword of Tipu Sultan* **48-[49]).**

The young man replies: **'"1** know, but you **will.** You will have more than one son. That is why you came here. Your prayers have been heard. Go now.... But what is the use of having sons, only to have them mown down in battle!"' (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [49]). It sounds like a curse and Fakhr-un-Nissa begs that they may live. He asks if she promises to deliver her first bom to God's service. Fakhr-un-Nissa fervently says that she will. He tells Fakhr-un-Nissa: '"Go then in peace. Your first one will be a prince, a Sultan, a king amongst men. Let him know the ways of the Lord, so that he may carry his banner. Let him serve God and none else. Go.'" As he says this, all the wildness leaves Mm and Ms tone is soft but commanding so that Fakhr-un-Nissa feels the presence of someone else. She thanks him and kisses the hem of his robe. As she enters her palanquin to leave the shrine, the young man regains Ms wildness and shouts, '"Your son is a Sultan, do you hear? Tipu says so.'" (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* **[49]-50).**

Hyder is confused by Fakhr-un-Nissa's account of these

happenings. But he says that their son will be called Tipu Sultan. Fakhr-un-Nissa reminds him that the son is to be brought up in the service of God. Hyder agrees to this, but he is impatient to have the son: Hyder says that if his son is to be named a Sultan, he himself cannot remain a junior commander, but must try to become a king. Fakhr-un-Nissa explains to him that the destiny of her son is to be a Sultan not in the earthly sense but in matters of spirit and in the service of the Lord. Nine months after her visit to the shrine, a son is bom to Fakhr-un-Nissa at Devanhalli on Friday, 20 November, 1750. He is named Tipu Sultan (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 50-[52]).

Hyder frequently jokes about his son Tipu having been promised to God's service, but Fakhr-un-Nissa takes her vow seriously, as is evident in the reserve with which she treats Tipu:

> When Tipu was asleep, Fakhr-un-Nissa would Mss him from head to foot fervently and ardently. She would wait for Mm to go to sleep before hugging him passionately to her breast or kissing Mm on the lips but when he was awake, her kisses would be light and gentle—a mere caress of the cheek or the forehead—so timid and tender as if she was seeking his permission for the familiarity. Fixed in her mind was the thought that her little one was destined to serve the Lord.

> She had learned to honour seers and saints, and in her mind's eye her son was already the chosen one of the Lord. She did not therefore consider it strange that he should inspire in her feelings of respect and humility. But when he slept, she surrendered to her hunger to smother him with loving kisses and wrap him in her arms. (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [66])

Even **in** the midsummer heat, when most children are left naked or semi-naked, **Fakhr-un-Nissa** keeps Tipu fully clothed. Hyder remonstrates that people may suspect that Tipu has a physical deficiency if he is so meticulously covered from neck to foot all the while. However, Hyder guesses that **Fakhr-un-Nissa,** who has seen many fakirs and holy men walking around wrapped in nothing more than a loin cloth, perhaps does not wish Tipu to get **used to that** kind of life-style when he attains holiness or wants him to make up now for all the privations of the future (Gidwani, ***The*** *Sword of Tipu Sultan* 67).

Three years after the birth of Tipu, when they still have no other child, Hyder affectionately warns Fakhr-un-Nissa that unless she gives him another son, she cannot keep her word to God to give Tipu to God's service. Fakhr-un-Nissa asks Hyder to be patient, to have faith and not to blaspheme (Gidwani, ***The*** *Sword of Tipu Sultan* [69]).

At the age of four, Tipu starts training in calligraphy and his tutor appreciates his skill. Fakhr-un-Nissa says that they must now get him a religious teacher like Maulvi Obedullah. Hyder says that, since there will always be more Hindus than Muslims in his land, to be in the Lord's service will mean serving.both of them and perhaps people of all religions. Fakhr-un-Nissa fears that there can be a conflict if Tipu is given training in many religions. Hyder categorically denies the possibility, asserting that, though religious men sometimes quarrel, religions never do so. At this, Fakhr-un-Nissa concedes that Tipu should serve all God's religions and all His people. Hyder wants Tipu to be trained in horse riding, so that he can move fast and in comfort and reach many people. Fakhr-un-Nissa agrees. Hyder also wants Tipu to learn archery, musketry, combat, marksmanship and military arts. Fakhr-un-Nissa protests that Hyder is making a fool of her. Hyder points out that, for all their readiness to give Tipu to God's, service, Tipu may be rejected for His service and that even if God does not fail them, she may fail to deliver another son, in which case, they will not surrender Tipu to God's service (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [70]-72).

Maulvi Obedullah and Goverdhan Pandit take over as Tipu's mentors to shape him according to Fakhr-un-Nissa's vision. The message that Goverdhan Pandit seeks to implant in young Tipu's mind is that God

is not confined to any form of religion or excluded from any. Maulvi Obedullah is less outspoken and dogmatic. He also thinks that there are many pathways to reaching God—and religion is one of them. Tolerance, prayer and devotion are what the venerable Maulvi seeks to instil in young Tipu's mind. The Pandit and the Maulvi, therefore, complement each other's teaching (Gidwani, ***The Sword of Tipu*** *Sultan* 80-81).

These early mentors of Tipu's young and receptive mind impart the training gently, through stories, tales and anecdotes and often through song and verse. While they persistently seek to implant their ideas, much more so they wish to invest him with a thirst for knowledge, a philosophical outlook, a heart with compassion and a mind that enquires and questions (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 81). Of what Tipu owes to these mentors, Gidwani says:

> To these teachers was due the breadth of intellectual vision and curiosity which Tipu displayed in later life and on which even him worst enemies have grudgingly complimented him; to them also he owed in some measure his sense of justice and fairplay, his belief in the one Supreme, his desire for truth and virtue, his mandate for action, and above **all,** his willingness to sacrifice for his principles and national honour, everything he possessed, including his own life—

> and indeed, he did make that supreme sacrifice and courted certain death when the enemy, with treachery and superior numbers, had surrounded him and most of his adherents had deserted him. *(The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 81-82)

Hyder often steals into the nursery and eavesdrops on the religious training being imparted to Tipu through stories interwoven with poetry and imagery. Tipu's mentors pay attention to his physical training also. It is the duty of Ghazi Khan, Hyder's military commander, to teach Tipu what is beyond the jurisdiction of his more learned teachers, the Maulvi and the Pandit (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [91]). Pointing to Maulvi Obedullah and Goverdhan Pandit, Ghazi Khan complains to Hyder '"They addle his brains. They keep him so occupied with their holy trash that one would think that you wanted your son to be a Fakir. What time do I have to teach him to be a man and prince"' (Gidwani, *Tipu* [91]).

In 1761, just before Hyder assumes supreme command of the Kingdom of Mysore, a palace conspiracy erupts unexpectedly. Hyder is forced to flee to save his life. Fakhr-un-Nissa is temporarily safe because she is away visiting her father. Tipu and Abdul Karim are seized by the conspirators and imprisoned in Seringapatam. Tipu gives proof of the efficacy of his training in the dangerous situation. He manages to shoot

an arrow through the window, carrying a message, at Ihe feet of Maulvi Obedullah. Maulvi Obedullah hastens to inform Ghazi Khan. After sending a messenger to Fakhr-un-Nissa, Ghazi Khan rescues Tipu and Abdul Karim. Hyder returns victorious and the family is reunited (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 95-96).

What happens after the rescue from Seringapatam fort is of great relevance and significance to Tipu Sultan's future. The day after the rescue from the Fort of Seringapatam during the palace intrigue of 1790, Ghazi Khan hides Tipu and Karim in the dilapidated boat used for river-buria! of children, which is docked at Simi, near his house. The horsemen who are to meet him there and take the two boys to safety do not turn up. So, the next day, he leaves the boys in the boat and goes to his house. Reaching his house, he finds the police conducting a house-to-house search for the princes, whose escape has been discovered. Writing out a hurried note, Ghazi Khan opens his window and knocks at the window of the adjacent house of Lala Mian with a stick. Lala Mian's seven-year-old daughter Ruqayya Banu opens the window. Since Lala Mian has gone out, Ghazi Khan gives the note to Ruqayya, after making her promise to faithfully give it to her father when he returns. By then the police, who have been knocking at his door for some time, force it open. They arrest Ghazi Khan. Ruqayya Banu sees Ghazi Khan being led away by the

police (Gidwani, *The **Sword of Tipu** Sultan* [116]-18).

When her parents return, Ruqayya gives her father Ghazi Khan's note. He reads it and his face falls. Ghazi Khan has asked him to take food to the two boys in the boat at Simi and to look after them. Lala Mian does not want to do so because, if caught, he will be hanged and he has children of his, own to worry about. His wife protests that he has served Hyder and that Ghazi Khan is a friend of his. She is concerned about the two boys and the consequences of not helping them. Lala Mian says that they can plead that Ruqayya Banu forgot to deliver the note to him. In fact, he returns the note to Ruqayya and instructs her to say, in ease she is questioned, that she forgot to give it to him. Ruqayya.obeys him, but keeps worrying about the boys the whole day. In the night, after her parents have gone to sleep, Ruqayya goes into the kitchen, stuffs bread, biscuits, pickles, jam and honey into a basket and. creeps out of the house. Walking, five miles barefoot and terrified in the dark, crying and praying all the time, Ruqayya reaches the boat (Gidwani, ***The** Sword of Tipu Sultan* 118-19).

Ruqayya gives the basket to Tipu and asks the boys to eat. Tipu gives his handkerchief and the sobbing Ruqayya wipes her face with it. After the boys eat the meal, the three of them eat the sweets Ruqayya has brought with her. Since she is afraid of returning in the dark, Tipu offers

to take her home. But, since his danger is greater, she decides to pass the night in the boat. That is where Lala Mian finds her in the morning, sleeping in Tipu's arms, when, finding her missing from the house and the basket also missing from the kitchen, he guesses that Ruqayya must have taken food to the boys, and hurries to the river (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 119-20).

Lala Mian is relieved to find his daughter safe. He asks her to come with him. Ruqayya asks the boys to come with them. They do so. Fortunately, it is the day of the Holi festival. Lala Mian goes to a shop selling Holi articles and buys coloured powders and face masks. They all play Holi. Soon their clothes and hair are multicoloured so that no one can recognise them. Lala Mian takes the three children to his house. Ruqayya's mother takes over. She bathes Karim and Ruqayya. Tipu cleans himself. Ruqayya's mother goes to a lady doing tailoring work and buys a suit of clothes to fit Tipu. Ruqayya claps her hands upon seeing Tipu in **his new clothes, but says that he looked very handsome and very gallant in his tiger mask. Only then Tipu looks at the mask. He asks Lala Mian if he can keep the mask. Lala Mian offers to get him a new one not spoilt by the Holi colours. But Tipu insists on taking only the coloured mask (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 120-23).**

Throughout that day Ruqayya makes Tipu wear the tiger **mask**

again and again and the three children invent a game to play together. In the evening, after Karim goes to sleep, Tipu and Ruqayya sit together, holding hands. They are both very happy. Late in the evening, Ghazi Khan, who has been released after questioning by the police, returns home. He is happy to find the boys safe and sleeping in Lala Mian's house. Lala Mian suggests dressing the boys as girls and placing them in a litter joining the marriage procession of Seth Devi Dayal's son the next afternoon. Accordingly, the next afternoon, Ghazi Khan goes out of the city ahead of the marriage procession and arranges horses. Lala Mian puts the two boys in a litter along with himself and they join the marriage procession. Some hours later, they are out of the city. Ghazi Khan meets them there and takes over the boys (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 123-26).

Seven years after this escapade, in 1767, when Tipu is seventeen years old, he wins a resounding victory over the English army of Joseph Smith at Vaniyambadi. He follows it up by routing the English at Mangalore. In the course ol the next two years, he inflicts such defeats on the English that in 1769, Hyder is able to dictate peace terms to the English before the very gates of Madras. Now Hyder asks Tipu to choose a battle flag and banner of his own. Tipu wants a tiger as his emblem on his battle flag. Hyder agrees and, from that day, the tiger becomes the

symbol and emblem **of Tipu,** embellishing his flags, banners, guns, clothes and coins. Ruqayya's words are the inspiration for Tipu's choice of the tiger as his emblem (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 126-28).

When Hider comes out victorious in the palace intrigue and takes over undisputed command of the Kingdom of Mysore, he goes to the dilapidated boat on the river at Simi. The basket brought by Ruqayya is still in the boat. Tipu wants to keep the basket. Hyder has a replica of the basket made in gold and goes to Lala Mian's house with Fakhr-un-Nissa and the two boys. He kissed Ruqayya and gives the golden basket to her in exchange for her basket, which Tipu wants to keep, Lala Mian's family is showered with gifts. Tipu gives Ruqayya a miniature painting on ivory of a tiger. There is a silent communication between Ruqayya and Tipu. Lala Mian, who is a junior commander, now rises by leaps and bounds under Hyder's patronage until he becomes a general. Hyder sends a gift to Lala Mian's household ever year at the time of Holi, Lala Mian dies fighting for Hyder at Melukote in 1771. Hyder settles large estates on the family and gives Lala Mian's command to his son **Burhan-ud-din,** Ruqayya's brother. Tipu calls on **Ruqayya's** mother to condole the loss of Lala Mian, but he does not see Ruqayya as custom forbids it (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [129]-30).

When Tipu is seventeen years old, Hyder thinks of a marriage

between Tipu and the beautiful daughter of the Nizam of Hyderabad's brother, with the ulterior motive of drawing the Nizam away from the English, whose ally the Nizam is. Hyder sends Tipu on a diplomatic mission to the Nizam. Tipu's mission succeeds in breaking up the Anglo-Hyderabad alliance at least temporarily. But Tipu expresses reservations about marrying a girl from such a treacherous family. Upon this, Hyder too has second thoughts. Whenever Hyder identifies a suitable bride, Tipu expresses some objection or reservation about her. His mother is of help to him in this, because she can brook no defect whatsoever in the bride. At first, Hyder looks for power and wealth in any prospective bride, but, as Ms own power and wealth grow, he looks for only a virtuous and beautiful bride who will give him a number of grandsons (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 130-31). Baulked repeatedly in his matchmaking by Tipu and Fakhr-un-Nissa, Hyder vows that his next choice will be binding on Tipu. He chooses Raushana Begum, daughter of Imam Saheb Bakshi of Arcot (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 130).

That very morning, however, six-year-old Salim, son of Burhan-ud-din and nephew of Ruqayya, prattles to Uncle Tipu Sultan that his aunt Ruqayya will not marry a man but only a tiger (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan ipu* 132-33). Salim tells Tipu:

> 'You know, Uncle, she herself told me, after grandma and

> my father had scolded her sternly for not agreeing to get married, that once—many many years ago-a prince met her. So charming was the prince, so handsome, so brave and so strong that a magician became jealous and cast a spell on him. Thereupon the prince turned into a tiger,and went to the forests to roam. She is now waiting for him to come back. Every now and then, the wicked magician comes in different disguises and sends her a proposal of marriage. Grandmother and father try to persuade her in vain and then leave her in anger. But she is only waiting for her tiger. She will marry none else.[5] (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 133)

Now assured that Ruqayya loves him, Tipu asks Burhan-ud-din if he would object if their friendship became closer, into a near-relationship. Burhan-ud-din welcomes the idea, though he does not understand Tipu's words. Tipu goes to his mother's chamber and finds Hyder there. Hyder sternly tells Tipu that he will marry now. Tipu agrees, but wants to say something. Tipu tells his parents of his wish to marry Ruqayya and Fakhr-un-Nissa nods approvingly. Hyder has nothing against Ruqayya, but he has given his word to Raushana Begum's father and Hyder never breaks his word. Finally Hyder finds a compromise—Tipu is to marry

both Ruqayya and Raushana Begum. So, in the spring of 1774, Tipu simultaneously marries Ruqayya Banu and Raushana Begum (Gidwani, ***The Sword of Tipu Sultan*** 133-35).

When i ipu is **twelve,** it **becomes clear that his younger brother Karim cannot become a ruler because of a strange malady. So Hyder decides to break the promise to God and take back Tipu in his own service. So Tipu's religious training ends. He is now to be brought up as a man of war-as an heir to Hyder's throne. Maulvi Obedullah and Goverdhan** Pandit **take leave of** Tipu **on his twelth** birthday, **after** having **trained him for seven years. Both of them say that Tipu will always be a man of God (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [101]).**

When Maulvi Obedullah and Goverdhan Pandit have left, Ghazi Khan becomes the sole tutor of Tipu. Hyder tells Ghazi Khan that he is short of sons and asks him to see that Tipu lacks neither valour nor will. If Ghazi Khan makes a mighty man of Tipu, Hyder will make him a mighty king. Ghazi Khan places his hand on his heart and says that he will do so, God willing. Hyder glares at Ghazi Khan (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 102).

A grieving Pumaiya meets Tipu ahead of the camp where Hyder lies dead. Tipu tells Pumaiya **of his decision to renounce the** kingdom **and**

devote himself to piety. Purnaiya counters by arguing that a commander does not desert in the midst of a battle and that a king does not forsake his duty in the pursuit of his dreams. When Tipu pleads that he must listen to the voice of his conscience, Purnaiya says that it is Tipu's duty to live up to the covenant he has made with his father and his country. Tipu protests that his father imposed his paternal will on him and that he never made a covenant with his country (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 57).

Tipu asks what he should do about his covenant with God, with his wife and with his children. Purnaiya tells Tipu of Shah Jahan, the great Mughal Emperor-Builder, of the bigotry and treachery of Aurangzeb, of his cruelty to his own father Shah Jahan, of Aurangzeb's cruelty to his elder brother Dara Shukoh, of Dara's liberal religious views and tolerance in the manner of his great grandfather Akbar, of Dara's wife Nadira Begum, who faithfully followed her fugitive husband while he was on. the run, pursued by Aurangzeb's army, but refused to cross into Persia with him, preferring to die alone and unattended on her native soil, and of the proud wife of Jaswant Singh Rathor, who shut the gates of the castle against her husband for retreating from the field of battle. Purnaiya drives home the point of these stories by pointing out that he heard all these stories from Tipu's wife Ruqayya Banu. Finally Tipu aks Purnaiya to give him a few days to find answers to some questions that keep tossing in his

mind. Pumaiya points out that there is no time, because, despite their stratagem to keep the news of Hyder's death from leaking out, the English will soon know it and try to sweep across Mysore like locusts aided by traitors like Sheik Ayaz. Tipu argues that the long list of traitors that Pumaiya has given him proves that his people have broken their convenant with Mm and released him from responsibility, free to go Mis own way (Gidwani, ***The*** *Sword of Tipu Sultan* 57-60).

Tipu pleads that, despite all the urgency that Pumaiya urges, he does need time to still his mind which is in turmoil. Above all, he wishes to go to Kolar, where his father's body lies. Purnaiya sees the futility of farther argument. He turns to Tipu's immediate plans. He says that he will possibly find Goverdhan Pandit at Kolar. Tipu promises to meet Pumaiya on the 28th of December with his decision. They embrace each other tearfully and go their separate ways (Gidwani, ***The*** *Sword of Tipu Sultan* 161-62).

At Kolar, Tipu sees Goverdhan Pandit kneeling by the side of his father's grave, Ms eyes closed in prayer. Tipu touches the grave with Ms forehead, kisses it and then sits next to Goverdhan Pandit (Gidwani, ***The*** *Sword of Tipu Sultan* [163]). The vigil is epiphanic for Tipu.

Goverdhan Pandit lets Tipu talk and thereby relieve himself of Ms depression and restlessness. Tipu admits that one part of Ms heart tells

him to stand up and fight the rapacious alien enemy who is out to disrobe and dishonour the nation. He tells Goverdhan Pandit of the British atrocities (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 164).

Royal mentor and royal disciple talk for two more days, though it is mostly Tipu who speaks and Goverdhan Pandit merely asks an occasional question here and there to clarify a doubt or to pose a problem. The mentor thereby enables the disciple to unburden his heart and cast away Ms doubts. Tipu's anguished soul is gradually pacified. Tipu reaches the conclusion that he must stand up to tyranny and face pain and death for the sake of an ideal, for justice and truth, for the freedom and happiness of his people. Now Tipu knows why he should fight: he must fight because this is his country, Ms native soil and this he is honour-bound, duty-bound to defend and protect. The last question to be resolved is if Tipu should fight against the formidable British army when defeat and death seems the inevitable result. Goverdhan Pandit rhetorically asks Tipu if anyone who dies with honour in the performance of his duty dies in vain. Tipu replies that such a death will not be in vain because, someone, somewhere, some time, will pick up the fallen torch, for, once lit, it can never be extinguished. Tipu is at peace now, his mind made up to fight, to defend the nation, to preserve its honour. As Tipu takes leave

of Ms mentor, Goverdhan Pandit exhorts him not to let his dreams die (Gidwani, ***The*** *Sword of Tipu Sultan* 165-66).

Maulvi A1 Amin of Muscat calls on Tipu, with letters of commendation highlighting his worth, consequence and learning. Tipu gives Mm a large donation for the mosque he is to construct in Muscat, and also a purse containing 1000 pagodas as a personal gift. The Maulvi moves around in Mysore and other parts of India and, on his way back to Muscat, calls on Tipu again. He has observed that Tipu is the only ruler in India who supports two religions—Hindusim and Islam. The Maulvi objects to this. Tipu quotes verses from the Koran to prove that he is not wrong. The Maulvi argues that if Tipu supports only Ms own people, they will support him with fury and fervour. Tipu replies that all his subjects—those that ring the temple bells and those that pray in the mosque—are his people and that this land is theirs and his. He does not wish to achieve power through the questionable method of creating disunity. He asserts that he is bom of a soil which has given birth to and nurtured many religions, which teach Mm that all men are brothers. He points out that his Prime Minister is a.Hindu and that he and his father before him have appointed many Hindus to high posts, not to seek a balance of power, but because of their merit. He says that he supports the temples because he is convinced that both as King and an Indian he is duty-bound and

honour-bound to do so. He believes that the Hindu scriptures as well as the Koran enjoin an attitude of reverence towards **all** religions. The **Maulvi parts from Tipu, but tarries in Seringapatam for a week more. On the day of his departure, the Maulvi goes to the Sri Ranganatha Temple and hands a passing devotee the purse of 1000 pagodas gifted him by Tipu, begs the devotee to place if before the idol and walks away (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [211]-14).**

Mir Sadik complains bitterly about Tipu's practice of pardoning those who **have been guilty** of **treason** or **conspiracy against the** Kingdom **of Mysore. Mir Sadik counsels that, when Tipu gives unmerited pardon, he endangers the very essence of his power and he urges that, however generous Tipu chooses to be, his justice must be severe. Mir Sadik insists that friendship is a word that should mean nothing to a king, that the king must be as hard as iron, and that, otherwise, the very criminals he spares will bite his hand. He adds that the king reigns only through the fear he inspires. He counsels Tipu to trust no one, not even Mir Sadik himself. Tipu says that he hopes he will cease to exist if the day comes when he has to distrust Mir Sadik (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [218]).**

Tipu 's several progressive and liberal decrees, based on his commitment **to the rights of citizens, irks his nobles, officers and governors, because such laws take away their traditional privileges and**

perquisites. Mir Sadik remonstrates with Tipu and urges him not to interfere with the privileges of the ruling classes, since they are of great use to the kingdom. But Tipu, in reply, tells the Council of Ministers to leam from the past that power resides in the people, that the ruling classes are only trustees of that power, and that a nation which ignores the rights of its citizens will die (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 219-25).

The circumstances of the birth of Tipu Sultan render him a marked prince. His mother Faqr-un-Nissa, after anxious years of childlessness, got him as a gift from the shrine of Saint Tipu Mastan Oulia and therefore she is quite serious in her resolve to surrender him to God's service as she promised at the shrine. However, Tipu's father, Hyder Ali Khan, just does not wish to take chances with the succession to the kingdom of Mysore. So along with religious training, Tipu is also groomed to become a monarch. What is more, Hyder ensures that Tipu will be able to rule justly his subjects who consist of Moslems as well as Hindus, while Faqr-un-Nissa is wishes him to be moulded as the spiritual leader of both the communities. When circumstances ordain that Tipu should succeed his father to the throne of Mysore, his carefully charted and. comprehensive training at the feet of Maulvi Obedullah and Goverdhan Pandit and at the hands of Ghazi Khan stands him in good stead and he also becomes the first nationalist monarch of India, a thorn in the flesh of the imperialist

men of the East India Company. However, the same upbringing renders him incompetent to deal with traitors and quislings, who ultimately betray him and pave the way for his death on the field of battle and for snuffing out the nationalist flame lit by him.

Anand Kumar Raju, in "Fiction and the Uses of History: A Thematic Study of Bhagwan S.Gidwani's *The Sword of Tipu Sltan*says that Tipu's tendency to forgive those who erred was

> a carry-over from his early training in an amalgam of Islamic and Hindu theology. His commanders and courtiers sensing that Tipu's kindness is costing him his power as a ruler, gradually begin to turn against him, eventually deserting him. (138)

Raju points out that the first to thus desert Tipu is his trusted chief commander Mir Sadik (138).

Murari[5] s novel *The Devil's Wind* proves the importance of early upbringing in determining the character and the future conduct of a person. Dondu Pant Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the last Peshwa, Bajirao II, is a much maligned Indian prince. An investigation of his growing up shows that he could never have become the horrible creature that the British projected him as.

Bajirao, the last Peshwa, deposed by the British and exiled to

Bithoor, is anxious that his adopted son Nana **Saheb** should leam **Sanskrit** so that he can read the scriptures in the original. So he engages a Benares priest as his tutor. Bajirao also makes Nana Saheb leam fencing and riding at an early age. A paga, or riding school, is built by the river near the Palace in Bithoor, with a ring and a series of graduated jumps. Nana Saheb has to practice in the paga on three days a week. On the other three days of the week he has to go to the fencing-school at the back of the house, where he is put through the moves and **countermoves of** traditional **Maratha** swordsmanship, first with a satinwood stick and then with **a** blunted practice sword (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* [21]),

Nana Saheb describes his fencing master Tantya Topi and the legend that grew around him:

> My fencing master, Tantya Bhat, was the sort of person around whom legends naturally grow. Indoors or outdoors, he never went about without a sword strapped to his waist. Tall, slim, handsome, elegantly—almost foppishly—dressed, he was respected by men and sought after by women, and yet he was a shy and simple man who took life's fare seriously. It was said that he had once killed a tiger with a spear, strangled a **robber** with a silk handkerchief, **and** rescued a princess abducted by bandits; that he could bring

> down a **running** buck with a single bullet and a running man with a single stone; that he could cut in two with his sword a feather fluttering in the air (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* **[**21**]-**22**).**

Nana **Saheb** explains now **Tantya** Topi got his name:

> **Tantya** Bhat had joined the Company's cavalry for six months to see for himself what it was that made the British invincible in war, and had come back with the conviction that the British were not invincible. There was something else he brought back from his days with the company's army, a pith helmet. He discarded the turban and began to wear the helmet, or topi, whenever he was on horseback. That was how he acquired the nickname that stuck to him for life: Tantya Topi (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 22)

While the children are practicing swordsmanship in the fencing school under the supervision of Tantya Topi, Bajirao sometimes leans out of Ms balcony and orders them to stop and tells them: '"This is only for self-defence, not for killing. Being Brahmins, you may not take a life. You can kill only in battle—an enemy. But, of course, there are no enemies any longer. Now carry on: Smile and don't curse!'" (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 22-23).

Nana Saheb describes his **schoolwork:**

> I was alone with Pandit **Umashankar,** whom 1 called **Guraji,** both of us squatting on a reed mat placed under a framed painting of Saraswati, the goddess of learning. To begin with, Guraji and I did not share a language: I spoke only **Marathi and he, even though he was a master of five languages, did not know Marathi: All the same he promised Bajirao that he would, in time, make me a Pandit, or a learned** man. **He haughtily dismissed** arithmetic **and algebra as subjects fit only for the children of tradesman and concentrated on teaching me languages, Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu, all through the medium of Hindi, which I** was **supposed to pick up as I want along. The method worked admirably, especially with Hindi, which I learnt well.... (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 23)**

Bajirao brings up his goddaughter Mani as a future wife for his adopted son Nana Saheb. She is a pupil with him at the paga. She **fences, rides and swims with him and the children of the royal retainers. None of the other children think of her as a girl (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind*** 22). **But** the ghost **ofNarayan,** the fifth **Peshwa,** whom **Bajirao's parents caused to** be **murdered, often appears to Bajirao at night and curses that**

Ms house will be burned down by his protectors and that his line will end with his successor. Bajirao screams that Nana Saheb will have numerous sons and that he has already chosen the girl Nana will marry. But the ghost laughs and says, "'He can marry more women even than you have. But if ever a marriage is consummated, the wife shall die—not a single woman can live to bear his child! (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 24-25).

Nana's entire life is warped because of the curse of the ghost: the first two women Nana marries do not long survive the marriage and the third survives only because he has never been a husband to her, since he will only be killing her. Bajirao's trusted priests offer a pat solution to nullify the effect of the curse, on the lines of the story of Patali-putra, who was first married to a patali, or vine, and then to a girl, who bore him children, and who founded a great dynasty. So the priests suggest marrying Nana to a patali sapling and then sacrificing the sapling in place of the wife. Bajirao swallows the idea, not realizing that the ban is not so much against marriage itself as upon marital relations and that it applies to as many wives as Nana Saheb marries (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 25-26).

A few days before his seventeenth birthday, Nana is duly married to a patali plant in a tub with the fullest Vedic ritual. That night, Nana's

seminal fluid is sprinkled on the plant ritualistically. Nana tends the plant with all care. For a month the plant flourishes and the buds on it blossom. But, forty-nine days from the wedding day, the plant dies. The priests declare joyfully that their plan has succeeded and that the plant has been accepted in sacrifice in place of the wife. Bajirao, however, thinks otherwise. Abandoning his long-cherished plan of marrying Mani to Nana Saheb, Bajirao selects a healthy young woman named Champa from one of the courtesan establishments of Lucknow and presents her to him as his concubine. Nana has always believed that Champa was the best thing that could have happened to him (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 26-27).

As children, Nana Saheb and Mani grow up together, though she is only the daughter of a retainer named Moporant Tambe. She does everything with a gusto and style so that she seems to excel everyone else, particularly Nana Saheb. Bajirao adores her and so she is brought up like a princess. Quite naturally, Nana Saheb grows up hating her, though he is careful not to show his jealousy openly, as far as possible. Once, when Mani wishes to ride on an elephant with him, Nana Saheb insults her by saying that only princes and not retainers' children are to ride on elephants. Mani scowls and declares that one day she will have ten elephants for each one of his. Later, Mani becomes the Rani of Jhansi and

certainly has more elephants than Nana Saheb (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 27-28).

Bajirao's decision regarding Mani disappoints Nana terribly:

> the moment Bajirao revealed that she [Mani] was not to be my wife I experienced a sudden sense of loss as though something to which I had been grafted was being severed, leaving a raw wound that would remain with me all my life. I had never doubted that if Mani had become my wife, my life would have been altogether different-richer, rewarding, exciting. She might not have made me a quiet, properly subservient Hindu wife, but she and I would have made a matched, formidable team, cancelling out the plusses and minuses in our personalities and rounding them off (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 28)

Nana says that Bajirao should not.have done it to him or to Mani:

> She [Mani] whose life he [Bajirao] sought to lengthen did not live long, but, burned up quickly, like a roaring flame. The husband Bajirao found for her was old and feeble, for all that he was a ruling prince and fabulously wealthy. Bajirao did not know that he also suffered from a queer perversity which made him masquerade as a woman and even pretend

> that he suffered from the pangs of menstruation. Mani, hobbled by the bonds of marriage to this obnoxious creature, made him a devoted and dutiful wife and—by what sexual artistry or magic it is difficult to say—even induced in him the spark of maleness necessary to have marital relations with her so that she bore him a son. This son died in infancy and the enfeebled father died soon afterwards, but not before adopting another's child as his successor. Again Mani fell into her new role with gusto, the role of the diligent foster mother and protector and regent of her husband's principality. Then the Devil's Wind stirred and she reached out to embrace it and became the greatest rebel of us all (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 28-29)

With the exit of Mani from his life, Nana Saheb is left with the concubine Champa. Though named after a delicately scented, velvety flower, she is "as much a creature of the earth as a rock lizard, with a skin the colour of ancient copper and the texture of grained silk". She is "a mature, folly developed woman, with a body toughened by the demands of professional dancing and professional sex". When Champa first enters his room, Nana Saheb yells at her to get out and never come again. She goes away, but returns as soon as he is in bed. He hurls abuse at her, slaps

her and **shoves** her out. But the moment he puts out the light she crawls back. Then, as though to work off his rage, he rips off her clothes and **tears into her body. She absorbs his clumsy assaults and awakens his passion against his will (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 29). Nana Saheb's** first **experience of sex with her is obscenely passionate:**

> **Legs coiling like snakes held me fast; nipples slippery as sucked betel nuts brushed tantalizingly against my skin. Resentful in the knowledge that I was being prepared as a victim for her lust and yet** once again in **the grip** of **desire, I was conscious of the sense of revulsion brought on by** the **smell of her skin that was like sour wine, by the mouth which had been so shockingly depraved in its search breaking out into a repetitive half-breath, half-word, English obscenity just seconds before the final shudders.**
>
> **(Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 29-30)**

Within a few days, Nana Saheb realises that he cannot match Champa's range of passion and surrenders to her and is rewarded:

> **With Champa I discovered sex as though I were the first man on earth and she the last woman. Soon I began to shiver with desire for the very things that had made** my **flesh shrink, the controlled pressure of her fingers, the heady, warm** smells **of**

> **her body, the feline purring breaking into its incantation of obscenity as though to mark the attainment of some goal, and the convulsive shudders as though something within her had burst. (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 30)**

Soon Nana Saheb comes to regard Ghampa as not merely a woman who has sold her life for a backward place in his. If there is no love in their; life, there is no deceit in it either. She perfectly understands what it is **to be a mistress. She works at her role with zest and makes a complete** success **of it. She is "devoted but not demanding, tender but not mawkish." She never presumes or takes things for granted. She is there whenever he needs her and yet she never intrudes in his life away from the bed chamber. When Nana Saheb tells her that Bajirao has found a wife for him, she is more excited than Nana Saheb himself (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 30).**

Whether Nana Saheb unwittingly wants to punish his bride for not being Mani or he expects her to be another sexual athlete like Champa, the fact is that the bridal night is a nightmare. The frightened, cowering girl stares at him as though he is a wild animal come to devour her. While he anticipates sheer ecstasy, the consummation of the marriage turns out to be a trial of perseverance. The bride is a terrified child, ignorant and unaroused. **Her skin is cold and covered with goose pimples and her**

shrinking away from him insults his manhood. As he lies exhausted but **unfulfilled, she sobs into the pillow. The flow of blood from the rupture does not cease for a long time. By the morning she has a burning fever. Within two days she dies. For days after that, Nana does not want to touch another woman. Then he goes back to Champa (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 30-31).**

Within a few weeks, Bajirao sends out emissaries to find **another wife for Nana Saheb, holding out an offer of** a **lakh of rupees to the father of the bride. Champa comments that the Peshwa should have** waited **for people** to **forget the curse. Since the curse** is so **widely known no father offers his daughter, though the Gangetic plain is 'the stamping ground of indigent brahmins' (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 31). But the Peshwa does not have to wait for long, as Nana Saheb narrates:**

> **The greed of brahmins is as proverbial as their poverty, and the smell of the hundred thousand, lying unclaimed and rotting, must have made their nostrils twitch till they hurt. Barely two months had passed before the emissaries returned, complete with a family carried in three separate palanquins: father, mother, and marriageable** daughter—or, **indeed,** a **daughter long past the marriageable age, for she was already seventeen and could never have found a**

husband because her father **was so** destitute. Bajirao approved and the marriage was quickly got over and the **parents stayed on only long enough to collect the reward and then disappeared without a trace as though anxious to shake off pursuit. (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind 3*1)**

At the time of Nana Saheb's marriage to Giija, **the** priests decreed **that** she **must.perform a** pilgrimage to **Ujjain on the full moon of the month of Magh before the marriage is consummated. So, for four months,** they **share a** bed **without consummating the marriage. Nana Saheb can see that** Girja **is** consumed **by physical desire. On the eve of her departure for Ujjain, Nana Saheb tells Giija about the curse. She laughs at the** superstitious **belief. That night she topples Nana Saheb's resolution and they consummate their marriage. The next morning,** Giija **sets out on her** pilgrimage. **On her** way back from Ujjain, **she dies of** cholera. Nana **Saheb's only consolation is that she has not died from injuries inflicted by him (Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind* 32-33).**

Nana Saheb does not want to get married ever again. Bajirao is worried about the succession. Nana Saheb says that he can adopt a son. Bajirao fears that the East India Company will make difficulties. Nana Saheb refuses to marry because his wives all die. Bajirao hopes that one of them will give him a son before dying. Nana says that he has become

impotent and cannot **have sex with a wife, though Champa is different,** because **she** is a **mistress. Bajirao suggests a Chinese concubine, since the Chinese are best equipped for arousing jaded appetites. Nana Saheb** protests **that he** is **quite happy with Champa. Bajirao advises Nana Saheb** to get rid **of Champa** and **get someone younger (Malgonkar,** *The Devil's Wind* 33-35).

In 1846, when Nana Saheb is twenty-two years old, Champa gives birth to a girl. Bajirao is overjoyed and names her Gangamala, "the Garland of the Ganges." He orders an elaborate celebration and invites all the Kanpur officials and their wives. He gives away gold snuffboxes to the men and gold attar **cases to the women with the occasion of the** naming **ceremony of Nana Saheb's daughter inscribed on them. The ulterior motive of the gifts is to negate any report of Nana Saheb's impotence by the numerous spies of the East India Company (Malgonkar,** ***The Devil's Wind*** **37).**

Nana Saheb is grateful to the gods for the gift of Champa:

> **She was indeed indispensable, and no one could have held a place of greater respect in my tightly circumscribed world. Not my wife, she yet was the partner of my joys and** sorrows, a nurse **during my illnesses,** a **jester during my ill humors;** she **ordered** the **meals** and **supervised** the washing

> of the windows and the swabbing of the floors and saw to It that my guests were well looked after.... she remained the **mistress of my household, the woman who held the keys of the safes and storehouses and worried about wastage. My brothers addressed her as** *Tai,* **or elder sister, and brought their problems to her, and neither Tantya nor my secretary, Azim, ever sat down in her presence or could bring himself to tell the latest camp joke. (Malgonkar,** ***The Devil's Wind*** **45-46)**

As soon Bajirao discovers that Champa is pregnant, he knows that Nana's impotence is pretended and he sends agents to find **another bride for him. Unable to find any bride in north India, the agents move south and** find **a bride in the Deccan, in a village called Sangli, at least a thousand miles from Bithoor.** Her **name** is **Kashi and she is reported to be ten years old. Nana first sees her at the wedding ceremony, "a sickly, black-haired creature with large, petrified eyes and skin mottled as though feathers had been plucked from it." She reminds him of "a crow brought to a snake house for a python's meal." Bajirao declares that Kashi will** be **brought up as a princess and proceeds to engage tutors and** companions for her proper upbringing (Malgonkar, ***The Devil's*** *Wind* **46-47). But Nana Saheb never consummates their marriage:**

> **Kashi and I never slept in the same bed. She lived in a distant wing of the wada, which 1 seldom visited, so I saw her but occasionally. All the same, during ceremonies and festivals, we had to sit side by as man and wife and offer prayers together, for, in families such as mine, conventions are inviolable. A wife is a wife, a husband a husband, and the two are tied together in one bundle that only death could untie. It was almost a master-and-saive relationship. God knows I did little enough to live up to my obligations as the master; all the same, Kashi made a perfect slave, industrious, diligent, and, above all, loyal. Her unswerving loyalty makes me squirm with guilt, —unless that was her way of punishing me, some intuitive, feminine form of revenge (Malgonkar, *The Devil 's Wind* 47)**

The early upbringing of Nana Saheb and his experiences during his adolescence mould his character and personality. When, in later life, he has to face crises and solve problems, that personality asserts itself and explains why he acts in the way he does. When the first Indian War of Independence commences, Nana Saheb is first fully trusted by the British, who look up to him to guarantee their safety. He is quite happy to oblige his friends. However, when they unilaterally decide to trust their own

human resources, Nana Saheb is freed of all responsibility for their safety. At his juncture, the rebels seek his leadership, since, despite the British refusal to recognize his claim to succeed to the throne of the Peshwa, he is the heir to the throne of the Peshwa in the popular perception. He cannot reject the popular call to lead his own people. However, it is very clear from Malgonkar[5] s narrative that he is led rather than leading, that he is less a man doing than a man suffering. That is quite in character, because that is how he has been brought up.

Chapter 5

Bal-raje Abhayraj of Begwad

Manohar Malgonkar's *The Princes* is a period novel. It presents a representative picture of the predicament of Indian monarchs and their households in the decades leading up to Indian Independence and the merger of loyal India with British India to form Independent India.

One of the concerns of the novel is the upbringing of the children of royal households in the context of the changing times. *The Princes* does not seek to represent all the ways in which royal children were brought up, because there is only one prince in the story. However, it does attempt to present the general influence of the times on the psyche of royal children in determining their response to the cataclysmic changes overtaking the Indian subcontinent politic and the Indian people.

A day or two after his eleventh or twelfth birthday, *Bal-raje* (Maharajkumar / Yuvaraj / Crown Prince) Abhayraj of Begwad sees a beautiful ram being carried by a servant to the royal kitchen and makes it his pet. Naming it Cannonball, he trains it as a butting ram. A year later, he innocently enters it in the ram fight for the Dassara festival. When his Cannonball begins to take a beating, Abhay wants to withdraw it from the contest, but, his father, Bcdar (Maharaja) Hiroji of Begwad, forbids it.

The fight continues until Cannonball collapses and dies, watched tearfully by Abhay (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 24-28).

In the evening, while worshipping the family deity Ambica as part of the Dassara festival, the Maharaja goes into a trance. Later he tells Abhay that he has been praying to Ambica to give Abhay strength to reconquer all their possessions and re-establish the raj of the Bedars of Begwad between the Kali and the Nashi rivers, and beyond, upto Delhi itself. Then he lectures Abhay on manliness: men who weep cannot call themselves men and should wear baneles and hide their faces: the Bedars are fearless, since *Beciar* means without fear; they are like lions and do not weep for dead lambs; they never break down in public; they have to take a whipping now and then and must learn to take it without flinching, without showing that they are hurt; they should behave like well-bred dogs, which do not set up a howl when kicked, like a pie dog; it is most important not to squeal; and, tears are the refuge of the weak (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 30-31).

The Maharaja proceeds to extract a solemn promise form Abhay that he will never break down in public. Abhay promises. Then the Maharaja forces Abhay to drink a glass of whisky, Abhay obliges. Only when he nears the dining table does Abhay realise that the main dish of the evening is a whole roast sheep—his own Cannonball. Invoking Arab

hospitality **for** the evening, **the Maharaja** names **himself the host** and **the Yuvaraj** the **chief guest** and, **carving out the** eyes **of** Cannonball, **offers them on a plate to Abhay. Observing Abhay's difficulty in swallowing the eye, the Maharaja helps him with another shot of neat brandy and gladly watches the eye go down Abhay's throat. Then, Abhay, throwing away his fork, grabs the other eye with his** fingers **and thrusts it into his mouth, declining the Maharaja's offer of another glass of whisky. The Maharaja congratulates him. Abhay relishes his triumph. But he also hates his father sufficiently to be ready to kill him then (Malgonkar,** *The Princes* **31-33).**

Abhay's childhood was circumscribed by the boundary walls of the Hirabagh palace; he was brought up by a bunch of fat and clammy ayahs and an angular and icy nanny; and, at eight years, he was glad when they were replaced by male **attendants and tutors (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 34-**35).

Since the age of eight, he seems to be always doing some kind of lesson or other: riding lessons, cricket lessons, boxing lessons, music lessons and sword fighting lessons, according to a rigid time-table **laid down by his father (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 35).**

Abhay sees **very little of his parents. Usually he sees his mother at breakfast, always looking peaked and tired. He sees her again just before**

going to bed; looking radiant and beautiful, and gorgeously dressed (Malgonkar, ***The*** *Princes* 35).

Abhay also sees his father in the evenings. Bathed and dressed in pyjamas, he is taken by the nanny to the billiards room. Generally his father appears happy to see him. Occasionally, however, his mind seems far away and his greeting is functionary (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 35-36).

Abhay hardly ever sees his parents together. Lessons occupy most of his days and he relishes the achievements he posts. His favourite sport is riding, under the coaching of Hamidulla. He can still recall the figure of Hamidulla and his orders: "'Fikra-fight! Fikra-fight!", his way of saying "Figure of eight" (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 36-37).

One of Abhay's boyhood friends is Charudutt, his father's son by a concubine known as Bibi-bai. A loud mouthed bully older than Abhay by one year, Charudutt is feared by all the boys at school. Charudutt and Abhay are always involved in scraps. When his father sees braises on Abhay's body, he arranges boxing lessons for him. Within two months, Abhay puts an end to Charadhult's attacks. It is only years later that Abhay understands that Charudutt[5]s hatred for him is due to the fact that he can never be the Yuvaraj, since he is the son of a concubine. Charudutl's mother has an extraordinary hold over the Maharaja, though she is not his only concubine (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 37-38).

Abhay learns **Hindi,** Sanskrit and the scriptures from Pandit Sharma and spends the evenings with his English tutor Frederick **Moreton. In addition to English, history and geography, Moreton teaches him English customs** and **manners. Most evenings, they go for a ride in one of the palace cars and often sit and listen to western music. Moreton even attempts to teach Abhay to play the piano, but fails (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 38).**

Of Moreton \s influence on the formation of his personality and character. **Abhay says:**

> **1 now feel he may have been the greatest single influence of my early days. He was perhaps the only man in the palace who treated me as an equal, not as a child, but as an adult, and, for much of the time, not as a prince either, but an ordinary man. He was always interested in what I had to say, and above all he never betrayed my confidence. Even though he represented authority, I found myself regarding him more and more as a guide and mentor, even** as **a companion. . . . (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 38-39).**

Abhay makes friends with a cobbler's son named Kanakchand in his class in the Ashokraj High School. Since he is an untouchable, he is made to sit on the floor, at the back of the class, away from the others.

One day, while they are **playing mango-seed** football **during** the morning break, the children who sit at the back of **the** class are watching their play from a respectful **distance. In their enthusiasm, some** of **these** boys **join** the game and one of them tackles **Charudutt** to the ground. An enraged **Charudutt** abuses them as cow-eaters and shoos them away. The others **join in baiting the untouchables. The untouchables flee, one of them leaving behind his satchel leaning against a pillar. Charudutt grabs it and proposes to throw it into the pond. The other boys agree that it will teach the** cow-eaiers **a** lesson **not to come and muck up their game. The** owner of **the** satchel **begs that his books be returned and he be forgiven. But Charudutt dumps his satchel into the pond. The untouchable boy begins to pommel Charudutt. But Charudutt, who is bigger, gets the better** of **him. Then he proposes dumping the boy also in the pond. Some** of **the boys do so and Charudutt abuses him repeatedly. The untouchable boy retorts by calling Charudutt a bastard, a whore's son. As Charudutt flares, the bell rings and they all run into the classrooms.** After **school, as they are going home, Abhay notices that the untouchable boy is standing near the pond shivering, with his books spread out to dry. Later he learns that the boy's name is Kanakchand (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 39-40).**

That evening, Abhay asks Pandit Sharma the meaning of the word "bastard". The Pandit is shocked and, warning Abhay not to utter the

word, **changes the subject, Abhay says that he will ask Moreton. Pandit Sharma** says **that the English tutor will be shocked. Later Abhay puts the same question to Moreton. The English tutor is taken aback, but, after** stating **that** it is not a **word used by respectable people, he goes** on to explain it as mildly as he **can. He also protests against the** dumping **of the** books in **the** pond, **because the boy's father** may **not be able** to **buy** him another **set.** When **Abhay bluntly asks** if **Charudutt** is **not** a **bastard, a whore's son, Moreton skilfully advises him on how a gentleman should speak. Abhay, however, cannot forget the fact that there are so many uparajas in the family who are given pensions and treated as noblemen (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 40-43).**

The next morning Kanakchand is sent out of the class for not having his books with him. He hangs around the school the whole day with a vacant book. The next morning, Kanakchand sits outside the class. Charudutt is absent, feigning a stomach-ache in order to listen to the commentary on a cricket match in Bombay. During the break, Abhay speaks to Kanakchand. He learns that the boy's father will beat him if he finds out that the books are gone and that they cannot afford to buy even second-hand books. Abhay offers to give the boy money the next day. But since he has no money, the next day he give Kanakshand his own

books and is happy to see the boy in class again (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 43-44**),**

That evening Moreton discovers that Abhay's books are missing, along with his copy of *Highroads Treasury,* a book of English poems given to Abhay by him for his previous birthday. Abhay has to explain what happened to his books and he adds that he gave his books to Kanakchand because he had no money to give. Moreton seems quite pleased with what Abhay did. He even appreciates the act. He adds that he will speak to the Maharaja about giving him a pocket allowance. The next morning Abhay finds a set ol new books on his table. At school, Kanakchand returns to him the *Highroads Treasury* (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 44-46).

Abhay and Kanakchand become friends, helping each other with their lessons. Kanakchand is good at all subjects except English, while Abhay is far ahead of the class in English. One day Kanakchand brings Abhay a gift, some large polished bean-seeds. Abhay gives Kanakchand two marbles. Abhay keeps giving Kanakchand small gifts (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 47).

Kanakchand is Abhay's first contact with the poveity of India, as Abhay explains:

One day when he showed me what he had brought with him for his mid-day meal—a single black roti smeared with a mess of oil and chillis and a whole raw onion—for no reason at all I felt close to tears.

It seemed that even the onion was something of a treat, and that bajra or millet bread and chilli powder mixed with ground-nut oil formed his main meal of the day. I watched with fascination as he ate, hungrily and with relish, and felt a little ashamed of the extra-large chocolate which I had just bitten into and which seemed to taste slightly bitter in my mouth. He wolfed the very last crumb, biting alternatively on the charred bajra roti and the onion. And when he finished the very last mouthful, he liked his fingers clean before going to the tap to wash his hands (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 47-48).

Abhay has another chocolate in his pocket. He had found them on his table as he was leaving for school. He takes it out and gives it to Kanakchand to eat, Kanakchand thanks him and stuffs the chocolate into his mouth, wrapper and all. As Abhay tells him that he should not eat the wrapping, Kanakchand realizes his mistake and spits it out. He apologises

and says that he has never seen anything like it in his life (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 48).

That evening, Abhay falls ill and is bed-ridden for days. Whenever he wakes up he sees his mother beside his bed. Often he thinks he is aware of the presence of a broad, unrefined face with a thin moustache and smelling of cigar smoke and cheap liquor. He has dreams too. In one of them he sees his mother naked in bed with a hairy man and he can smell the **scent of tobacco smoke and rum (Malgonkar, *Princes* 48-50).**

When Abkay recovers, his Father introduces to him to Abdulla Jan, the new Palace Officer, who has replaced old Kabraji. Abhay is shocked because it is Abdulla's face that has haunted him all these days during his illness. Abhay takes an instant dislike to the man. His father has brought Abdulla from police service in British India as a bodyguard for Abhay. He has also replaced all the servants, including Dhaniram, Abhay's personal servant of years (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 50-51).

A week later, Abhay learns that a school boy has been coming to see him every day. It is Kanakchand. Abhay and Kanakchand become closer than before. Abhay invites Kanakchand to his annual party for the children of the palace staff, much against the objections of Charudutt, In **fact he even fells his half-brother that he need not come to the party if he does not like to. When Charudutt threatens to tell his mother and through**

her the Maharaja, Abhay bluntly points out that the Maharaja no longer visits his mother (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 51-52).

Two years later, Abhay learns that Charudutt's mother came to be suspected of having tried to poison the Yuvaraj:

> **It seems that the doctors had told my father that my illness had been due to some kind of food poisoning, and when he had found out about the two chocolates which had been so temptingly put beside my school books, he had jumped to the conclusion that someone had tried to poison me.**
>
> **No one had been able to discover how the chocolates had come to be where they were. It was believed that one of the palace servants had been bribed to put them there. That was why my father had dismissed all the servants in my wing and brought in Abdulla Jan, who was experienced in security duties, as the Palace Officer.**
>
> **The coincidence between my illness and my father's sudden abandonment of Bibi-bai was so marked, that everyone seemed to take it for granted that my father was convinced that Bibi-bai had tried to murder me in an effort to secure the succession for her own son; it was not unknown for a prince to adopt a son bom of a concubine if**

there was no direct heir to the gadi. Personally I never paid much heed to that kind of talk. At the same time, it was quite true that hardly any Indian state was free of such rumours, for poisonings were almost the recognized weapons of succession disputes, a sort of occupational hazard for growing princes.

The fact remains that within a month of my illness, my father had Bibi-bai's residence shifted from the old palace to a tumble-down house near the elephant gate. (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 52)

The Gandhian movement seeps into Begwad, but the Maharaja stamps it out firmly, as Abhay narrates:

My father had banned all the nationalist papers such as the *Chronicle* of Bombay and the *Hindustan Times* of Delhi, and had promulgated ordinances in the state to keep in step with the Viceroy's ordinances legalizing preventive detention, and indeed had kept well ahead of the British parts of India in the race for repressive legislation. He bustled about energetically, trying to make "examples" of people associated with the agitation. He dismissed a clerk in his octroi department because he had seen the man's son

wearing the white **khaddar** cap. And once he was so enraged by a group of people shouting **"Inquilab-zindabad",** which meant "long live the revolution", after his car had passed, that he had all of them rounded up and sent to prison for three weeks____

He went on tightening his "security measures" as **he** called them., matching his wits against the enemy. He passed orders that any boy found wearing the white cap was to be instantly removed from school. He stopped the sale of photographs of Tilak and Gandhi in the state. He also reintroduced horse-whipping as a punishment for these and similar crimes, and the next time someone **shouted a nationalist** slogan in his hearing, he had the offender flogged in the market square.

And right enough, the political movement seemed to disappear from our state. At least people did not go about shouting slogans any longer, or wearing the white cap in defiance of the ordinances, and Father took that as evidence of a complete victory. He was convinced that it was his stringent measures for security, his "exemplary" punishments, **that had** eradicated **Mr.Gandhi's** movement from his state. (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 61-62)

At the **same time, Abhay cannot forget the close attachment** between **his** father **and his people and he recalls what the subjects** of **Begwad say about the Maharaja:**

> **"He would come to us on horseback, like a king should", they say of my father, "Riding through our fields, talking our own language".**
>
> **"And whenever he was amongst us, he would always share our food—whatever we were eating. Because a king should** know **what his people eat, how they live". ...**
>
> **"In the days of Hiroji Maharaj", they will tell you in recalling the days of my father's rule, "we used to get wheat at sixteen seers to the rupee".**
>
> **"He was a real food-giver, the anna-data, was our Dada-Maharaj".**
>
> **"Yes, and jowar was twenty** seers **to the rupee. A man could live on** five **rupees a month and still have money for tabacco...."**
>
> **"Tobacco! It has become like gold and silver... and they sell you wood husk".**
>
> **"And whenever anyone wanted to see the Maharaj, all they**

had to do was to go to the evening audience ... or in an emergency, hold up the car when he was driving past. Now you cannot even see a Tahsildar for three days . . . and then you have to pay a rupee to his chaprasi",

"At my daughter's wedding, I had the state military band given free ... just as at the wedding of the prince himself',

"The band as well as the utensils were always given free—the taats and the waties for the wedding feast. You could feed a hundred. ..."

"Nowadays it costs at least a hundred rupees to hire the cooking and serving utensils",

"But who can think of feeding a hundred people these days!" (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 62-64)

Kanakchand tells Abhay quite a lot about the Gandhian anti-salt-tax campaign. He wishes that he were old enough to join the nationalists and wear the white cap, the people's cap. He reveals that he does wear one in his bustee, because otherwise he will be stoned by the boys (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 65-66).

The Maharaja awards five annual scholarships to boys selected from the Ashok Raj High School (which has only five classes) to study three years at the High School at: Jubblepore. The scholarships are given

for proficiency in English, decided on the merits of an essay written by the candidates. Kanakchand asks Abhay to help him with his essay. Quite convinced of the righteousness of his action, Abhay writes the essay for Kanakchand and Kanakchand wins the scholarship (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 67-68).

At the award ceremony, the Maharaja accuses Kanakchand of cheating and mentions that his essay was written by another; he accuses him of disloyalty and pulls a white cap out of his pocket. Then he whips Kanakchand and orders the cringing and crying boy to be taken away (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 70-71).

That night Abhay cries in bed. His mother is unable to console him. She promises to do something about it. He declares that he hates his father. He fears that Kanakchand will accuse him of telling his father (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 71-72). Abhay's mother keeps her word:

> **About a week later, my mother told me that it had all been sorted out. She had arranged it through Abdulla Jan. She had sent word to Roopchand, Kanakchand's father, that she would not only bear all the expenses of his son's high school education, but would pay for his going to college as well. From that day my mother paid the money demanded by Roopchand every month for the next nine years, until**

Kanakchand passed out of the law college (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 72)

Abhay goes to the Chelmsford Princes' College at Agra. Before his departure, his teachers give him advice. His father gives him a Holland shotgun. His mother gives him an expensive pocket watch. Abhay likes the gun best. But, since he is not allowed to take a gun to the Princes' College, he leaves it behind in his room in the palace. It is just a finishing school for the sons of the princes, where the emphasis is not on examinations, but on sports (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 74-75).

Returning home for the holidays, Abhay rushes to his Holland shotgun. To his horror, he discovers that it has been used. Establishing that Abdulla Jan has used it, Abhay gives him a terrible tongue-lashing, asserting his authority as Yuvaraj (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 79-81).

In the evening, he goes to meet his mother. She has heard of the clash and advises him to control his temper and his language. She asks him to apologise to Abdulla, keep the incident from his father and not think of punishing Abdulla. Abhay is disturbed at her attitude to the incident and to Abdulla. She is particular that Abdulla should not go away (Malgonkar, *The Princes* 81-83).

Abhay finds himself alone. Charudutt has been prohibited from entering the palace. When he sends word to Kanakchand., he is told that

his friend has not come home for the holidays. However, riding:out later, he sees Charudutt and Kanakchand chatting happily. They move away at Ms approach. Pressed, Kanakchand bluntly says that he docs not wish to talk to Abhay and that he hates him. It is clear that Kanakchand has succumbed to revolutionary ideas (Malgonkar, *Princes* 86-88).

Abhay observes that Ms mother is very unhappy:

> And I also became aware of the unhappiness that haunted my mother. I played rummy with her in the afternoons, and accompanied her for her evening drives. It was sad to see what joy these small attentions gave her. My loneliness was nothing to hers;, mine was. wholly transitory, hers was permanent. Her life was a great emptiness and there was nothing anyone could do about it. One could not do more than feel sorry for her, and play an occasional game of rummy with her, this woman who, although she was a Maharani, was also branded as having the white foot [ill-luck]. Cast away by her husband in the first bloom of youth, now grown to maturity with all the fires of her being unslaked, she was if anything looking lovelier than ever, and, almost perversely, more radiant and lively than ever

too, **full of laughter and happiness. (Malgonkar, *Princes* 97-98)**

After his education at the Princes' College, Abhay conies home to find Abdulla gone and he is happy. Abhay goes to a regular college and earns a degree. Next he has to undergo administrative training in some royal establishment. Travancore and Sir C.P. Ramanswami Aiyer are being mentioned. Yuvaraj Abhayraj is on the threshold of adulthood (Malgonkar, *Princes* 102-118).

Given the kind of upbringing that Abhay has received and his childhood experiences, his future conduct may be foretold more or less accurately. Abhay's estrangement from his father, his enlisting in the British Indian Army, his brave experiences during the Burma campaign follow logically from his upbringing. Again it is his upbringing that accounts for the manner in which he deals with the revolutionary Kanakchand who dares to beard him on his own home turf merely because he is a big nationalist figure in a new country. But Abhay's innate class and his upbringing assert themselves and he prefers honour to a compromise with opportunists. He publicly horsewhips Kanakchand and, rather than face an inquiry, abdicates his royal privileges.

Chapter 6

Maharajkumar Rabindranath of Devapur State

Kamala Markandaya's novel *The Golden Honeycomb* is conceived and written as a *bildungsroman* intended to communicate the message that more patriotism in the hearts Indian royal personages and greater devotion on the part of Indian royal parents to the proper upbringing of their offspring as Indians could very well have prevented the absolute enslavement of India by the British traders turned rulers.

Rabindranath, the protagonist of Kamala Markandaya's novel *The Golden Honeycomb*, is the son of Maharajah Bawajiraj III of Devapur State by a **concubine. He is nurtured and groomed by his grandmother, Manjula,** the **Dowager Maharani, and his mother, Mohini, the concubine, with a purpose and a plan. Manjula, a commoner, was shifted unexpectedly and involuntarily** from **her rural valley to the palace at the age of thirteen when her husband was nominated Maharajah in the** place **of Maharajah Bawajiraj I, whom the British dethroned and incarcerated because he had dared to "raise levies to eject them from the kingdom'[5] (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 8). She submitted to several British fetters and impositions in the name of sacrifice for the "'Ruling House" and for the sake of her husband, Maharajah Bawajiraj II.**

But neither he nor she proposed "to sell short" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 15),

When her husband dies after a riding accident which paralyses him, Manjula, as widow and dowager, is completely free of all British fetters. A distant relation of hers, **named Mohini, is sent from** the . valley **to the palace as** retainer **and** companion in **her** widowhood.. **Mohini** shares.some **of Manjula's native fire and the bold airs of the remote valley she carries with her "will not be swamped by the rarefied, royal atmosphere" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 31). Mohini soon has Maharajah Bawajiraj entangled in the coils of her wild love. When Mohini** becomes.pregnant, Manjula **sees her** opportunity to challenge **the hegemony of the British rulers who have systematically moulded her only son into a despicable puppet.**

Protected by Manjula, **Mohini** refuses, **to,** many. B.awajiraj. and **opts to remain a concubine so as to** be free.of British fetters. **When her son is bom, she resists** Bawajiraj's.plan.to **stash her away in** the.. Summer Palace, **ten miles away, and continues to live in the wing of the palace known as the Pearl Suite and reserved for Manjula. She also names the boy Rabindranath, according to Manjula's wish, after the Indian poet. Now, Manjula and Mohini, who, together, "have routed the Maharajah,'" take**

the education of Rabi into their hands (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden* *Honeycomb* 9-44).

Manjula feeds Rabi's infant fancy with tales of his ancestors, intended to inculcate nationalist and patriotic fervour. She tells him how one of his ancestors routed the British by hiding war elephants up in the palace and making them charge down the ramps when the enemy surrounded the palace, planning to gain possession of the palace, which housed the treasury, and the zenana, which would yield a clutch of desirable hostages. She says that the British, learning from their defeat, returned with terrible cannons and defeated Rabi's ancestor. She explains that the British triumphed, not because they were better soldiers, but because their training and discipline were better and also because the Indians **foolishly allowed them to divide the natives through bribery and plotting. Rabi, who, at the age of three, "is avid for tales," listens with absorption, hour upon hour, to anyone who can tell him such tales, so that "his education is eclectic." These stories leave such an indelible impression upon Rabi's plastic mind that Bawajiraj protests to Manjula** that **they are half-baked legends. But she asserts that "'legends are the blood history of a country'" and, she bluntly tells Bawajiraj that his British-appointed tutors taught him only '"slanted history'" (Kamala Markandaya, *'The Golden Honeycomb* 45-48).**

Manjula and Mohini are the two women who are “sculpting” Rabi's life. Maharani Shanta Devi also contributes, by her kindness and by her **impartiality between her own three daughters and Rabi. Mohini sedulously trains Rabi to be native and natural. For instance, she instructs him to eat peaches “properly,” that is, the whole fruit, skin and all, and not like his father, who eats peeled slices, according to his British training. When Rabi is four years old, Bawajiraj, at the suggestion of the British Resident and the Dewan, speaks of putting Rabi to school.** Mohini **sees** this **as a** British **attempt “to catch him early" and to make him “their creature”. She prefers that a local Pandit be appointed to teach Rabi (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 52-56).**

Rabi’s formation is also influenced by his two friends Das and Janaki, both nine-year-old servants in the palace. He plays with them regularly, though both Das and Janaki resent his class (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 54-59).

Mohini maintains that “the world of reality” begins outside the “crested, gilded, guarded, ornamental gates of the Palace.” She appoints a local Pandit from this world of reality to teach Rabi. The Pandit’s teaching is different from **what a British-appointed tutor would have taught. For** instance, he **teaches Rabi that Queen Victoria** is **not the Queen of India, but the Queen-Empress, which means that she became what she**

is **through conquest, not by the will of the people. The Pandit also tells Rabi of the nascent nationalism sprouting in the Indian mind. He says that Rabi's father is not one of the people. The Pandit's teaching is so effective** that one **day, running into the Resident, Sir Arthur Copeland, and ignorant** of **his identity , Rabi innocently but emphatically tells him that** the **Indian** people never **wanted Victoria to be their Empress, which she** became **through conquest, which, in British eyes, is a quasi-seditious opinion (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 58-70).**

A shocked Sir Arthur suggests to Bawajiraj that Rabi be sent to some boarding establishment. Bawajiraj conveys to Mohini Sir Arthur's concern that Rabi is running wild. He says, '"the Resident feels, and I entirely agree, that Rabi should broaden his horizons.'" Mohini says that she and the Dowager Maharani have always held the same opinion and that she will immediately arrange to take Rabi on a tour to see the world. She says that the Pandit, who has travelled widely in the country, can make the arrangements. When Bawajiraj speaks of sending Rabi to a boarding establishment, Mohini threatens to leave the palace once and for all, taking her son with her. A rattled Bawajiraj literally goes down on his knees, kisses her delicate toes and promises never to talk about it again. Exploiting Bawajiraj's state of contrilion, Mohini secures his consent to take Rabi on a tour of the kingdom (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden*

Honeycomb 70-74). Ironically, the Resident, observing Bawajiraj, Mohini and Rabi just then, is pleased with the impression that he has secured Rabi's future:

> **He [Resident] hopes he has secured the boy's future. He believes he has intervened in the nick of time to rescue him from the pernicious influences which are permeating the country, in which he sees the seeds of ruin for the child. He is glad that he has. . . . (Kamala Markandaya,** *The Golden Honeycomb* **74-75)**

Mohini plans to show Rabi everything-.."rivers, valleys, mountains, hamlets, all the great cities and the little villages, and the people who live in these places." She wants him to meet the people. She declares that he can learn little "cooped up" in the palace. Manjula suggests a pilgrimage to the family shrine. They take the Pandit along with them. Mohini insists on travelling as a commoner. She agrees to take along only a Brahmin cook-cum-guardian named Parasuram, offered by the Dewan (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 76-79).

The expedition is extensive. They visit the family shrine. Rabi sees a paddy field at close quarters for the first time in his life. The Pandit tells hirn of the poverty of the peasants and that there is no one who can tell Bawajiraj that he is wrong in his opinion that everyone in his State is

well-fed. They stop by a mangrove swamp to watch birds. The birds are suddenly disturbed when two Europeans with guns approach their nesting ground. A swarm of villagers converge on the Europeans. One of the Europeans raises his gun but the other one restrains him. The villagers surround the Europeans. There is shouting and shaking of fists. Rabi is puzzled by the palpable anger of the people. The Pandit urges the coach driver to drive on at once. As the coach speeds away, Rabi sees the Europeans assaulted by the villagers and their guns flung into the swamp (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* **77-82).**

The touring party camps in a meadow by a stream. Elsewhere the land is parched. Manjula gathers lantana berries and offers them to Rabi, who eats them with relish. He has been receiving secret supplies of them from Janaki in return for plums and apricots from Kulu orchards stocked in the palace. Mohini shows Rabi a mimosa plant and he is wholly absorbed in testing its touch-me-not phenomenon. When the cook calls them to eat, Rabi, using a favourite expression of his father's, says that he could eat a horse. Mohini objects to the idea. She says that he does not have to copy everything that his father says. After a filling meal, Rabi lies in the sun, recalling each delight. Suddenly he recalls the starfish-like hands of the Europeans surrounded by the hostile villagers and is worried that the Europeans probably came to harm. The Pandit rationalises that, if

they **had** not come **with guns, nothing would have happened (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 83-87).**

They go through the countryside. The land is arid, with scarcely a **rivulet to refresh the landscape. Drought has prevailed for several years in succession and** people **have starved and died in hundreds of thousands. Those living look like walking skeletons, their ribs showing. The nakedness exposed is a revelation to Rabi. All these experiences make Rabi feel that he is being expanded (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 102-04).**

Upon their return to the palace after six months, Rabi excitedly recites his experiences to his doting father. He describes their visit to the Fort where their ancestor was incarcerated because the British were afraid **of him. Bawajiraj is embarrassed. Rabi also tells of the visit to the shrine where the sacred eagles come to be fed and repeats the legend that once the British leave India, the sacred eagles will vanish for ever. Bawajiraj is disturbed. Mohini tells him that the Dowager Maharani told Rabi the legend (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 106-07).**

When plans are afoot for attending the Delhi Durbar, Mohini tells Bawajiraj **that she does not want Rabi exposed to subversive influences. So he concedes her demand that the Pandit should accompany Rabi, despite the fact that Sir Arthur has suggested Rabi's attendance at the**

Durbar "as an **antidote to the indoctrination that the boy has undoubtedly suffered ... at the hands of his Pandit" and has expressly stated that the Pandit should be excluded from the royal party, because his presence at a function of this nature will have "a disastrous influence on Rabi" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 109-10). The battle for Rabi's mind is joined, as the Resident muses:**

> **The boy's [Rabi's] mind is plastic. It is highly desirable that he should carry away from the Durbar impressions and interpretations of the most correct kind, whereas the tutor is known for the disloyal slant of thought, word and deed. (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 110)**

The tour has made Rabi bone-conscious. He captures Janaki and opens her bodice urgently to look at her ribs. He shows her his own ribs. He explains that, as the Pandit told him, such inspection provided a standard of comparison. He adds that the people are not doing all right, because he saw hundreds of them looking terrible. Rabi says that Janaki too is not doing all right. Janaki assures him that she is. Moved by his concern, Janaki draws his head on to her breast and plants generous kisses on it (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 111-12).

At the Coronation Durbar, Rabi is a confused boy. The splendour displayed awes him. His father's bearing and importance impress him.

However, the lack **of freedom sometimes irks him. Yet** a new understanding **of duty** gives **him** a **degree of tolerance. The** Pandit tells **him that all the money spent is a waste and could be** put **to better purpose. When the veterans who displayed extraordinary loyalty to their British officers during the first uprising of 1857 appear, Rabi is about to join the general applause but the Pandit restrains him. He explains that these men were traitors who** put **down an uprising of the people. Rabi is excited when his father goes up to be received by the Viceroy. But, as Bawajiraj retires from the presence, Rabi's belief in his father's greatness is shattered because he sees him "backing away like a lackey." With that, "the rub of reality" begins for Rabi (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 137-61).**

The Durbar and Delhi have turned sour for Rabi. He is not interested in any place or event. Bawajiraj blames the Pandit. Rabi refuses to reveal his reasons. The Pandit can only find out that Rabi is not ready to go anywhere with his father (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 161-65).A change comes over Rabi's mind:

> **It was in effect a confounding of intention, at least as far as Rabi was concerned. The reverent growth the Resident had hoped the Durbar might nurture was largely stultified, and the** earthy **aspirations of the Dowager and Mohini were at**

least partly realised. Not only was the **Maharajah** divested, but **the sun-king before whom he had dwindled was himself reduced to common proportions. For Rabi, the divine ascendancy of the British, which had transfixed his elite elders, ceased to be tenable.. . . Gods and men, in a way, resumed their proper stature. It was a** child's-eye **view, of course, but the eye remained singu 1 arly suspicious, permanently on guard against illusions and sophistries.**

(Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 166)

Rabi returns home and finds Janaki gone. No one dares tell him that she has been beaten up and turned out of the palace grounds for her intimacy with Rabi and their trysts in the shrubbery. Frustrated, Rabi throws the marble she presented him into the Lily-Pond. He has brought a white sari with purple border as desired by Janaki from Delhi. He shoves the parcel out of sight in a woodshed. He makes a straw doll, wraps it in a white rag and bums it to ashes, signifying that, for him, Janaki is dead. He **moves about with a forlorn air, walking like a ghost. At last he leams that Janaki has been sent away for good and he cries. Rabi becomes thoughtful, struggling** to **perceive his own** self **and his position. His grandmother gives him food for further thought by saying that Indians sold out their souls and their birthright a long time ago. It** is **only much**

later that he learns from Das that Janaki was sent away because of him (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 175-213).

Rabi begins to go to the Dewan's house regularly to be acquainted with the workings of Devapur State. The Dewan and the prince take to each other. Once the Dewan says tents are to be bought to house people living in low-lying areas during floods. Rabi says that the State should cure the disease, not tinker about with the symptoms. The Dewan perceives a potential ally in Rabi for carrying out his long-cherished dream of "controlling the seasons." For his part, Rabi feels that something has shifted so that he and the Dewan are "in the same boat" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 219-21).

The Viceroy recognises Rabi as the successor of Bawajiraj (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 236). Though Rabi is happy for "his father, who has all along had his heart set on the recognition, he himself has mixed feelings about the development:

> **He experimented cautiously, to see. Hair-Apparent. Heir to the throne of Devapur. The reverberations came all right, but oddly muffled by what had been amassed by secret unremitting processes at conscious and unconscious levels; those doubts, inflections, obliquities, what speech expressed and slurred over, the dry notes that entered the voices of**

> **Dowager and Dewan, his own observations of the bizarre, recorded mechanically and teased out later in the stillness of the mind: an accumulated charge that riddled the whole concept, making it a fragile golden honeycomb. (Kamala Markandaya,** *The Golden Honeycomb* **237)**

Visiting Bombay with his father, Rabi tackles a crowd of angry, demonstrating mill-workers, who injure his father, by simply talking to them m their own language, "in the accents ot lanaki and Das, in the coarse and strident language that belongs to, and is bred by, the harsh world in which livings are scraped." Stunned, the mob leaves the royal party alone-and goes its way. Rabi conveys his injured father to their exclusive hotel, the Imperial. He has not been comfortable in the Imperial. He has sensed the unreality of his existence. The affluence of the lodging has been grating upon him. He longs to find out the reality. But he does not know "where he could go to find out, or how, or from whom." AT last, he slips out of the Imperial and goes out into the streets of Bombay to find the reality (Kamala Markandaya, ***The Golden Honeycomb*** **245-63).**

Rabi joins the striking mill-workers, recalling his grandmother's advice to him never to allow anyone to force him to wear blinkers but to see the people. Reaching Chaupati Beach, the mob faces a police picket,

including **mounted policemen. When some stones are thrown breaking** window **panes, the police charge the crowd. Rabi is outraged at the police lathi-charging the crowd and breaking skulls. To Rabi, "it is a revelation to observe the limbs of government so deployed" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 264-70).**

Rabi is dazed:

> **He [Rabi] has never seen policemen like this before. There is no connection between the benign and courteous paladins of his experience and this punitive horde pouring on to the beach. These men are *mad,* they are *rampaging.* They have unstrapped their *lathis* and are using these berserk clubs to strike down unarmed people. Flailing at them. The scene has manic overtones. (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 270)**

A mounted policeman orders his horse to trample down Rabi. As the horse raises its hooves, Rabi darts forward, seizes the bridle and reverses the motion. As Rabi slips past the animal, the policeman opens his **scalp with a lathe. Rabi keeps moving blindly, feeling giddy (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 271-72).**

A girl helps Rabi **off the street. Feeling her protruding bones, Rabi thinks that she is Janaki. The girl says that she is Jaya, a mil 1-worker. But**

Rabi persists in calling her Janaki. When he comes to, he finds himself in a hovel. He learns that she has saved him and ministered to him. She advises him to go back to his parents, leaving her empty-belly race. He declares that he will never abide by such blinkered conventions. He partakes of her poor meal. He leaves the hovel after obtaining her consent to his return, because he wants "to see" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 272-77).

After receiving medical treatment from a doctor, Rabi returns to Jaya' s hovel. He **has his first experience of sexual intercourse with her. He learns that her husband is in jail for agitating and that she sells her body whenever she is short of money. Rabi goes out and buys an** expensive **sari for Jaya. She is grateful. But he begins to notice that she is dirty. He goes out and buys all sorts of things for her. She protests that he will spoil her with all those gifts. When she tries to make love to him again, he shrinks because her body is stinking. She explains that she has to walk very far for water and then stand very long for her turn. About three weeks** later, **the strike ends. Jaya goes back to work. Rabi leaves the hovel with a determination: "He would see the Dewan about certain glaring holes in his own state. He was, after all, the heir" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 278-90).**

Back in Devapur State, Rabi writes to the Dewan, who has

retreated to Ms ancestral village. He **has plans** to remedy the holes in the **fabric of Devapur. The Dewan is happy at this opportunity. However, the two of them di ffer in their approach. The experienced Dewan believes that one must "think in the round," whereas the impatient prince declares, '"Cross bridges when I come to them,"' since '"life's too short'" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 297).**

With the political situation hotting up all over the country, a clamour for freedom rising allover British India, **the Great War** commencing **and the price of essential** commodities rising, **restlessness spreads** to **Devapur State too. Bawajiraj hardens. Mohini senses it. The Dewan too observes it. Bawajiraj wants strikes outlawed. The Dewan side-tracks the issue. He is determined to safeguard the interests of Devapur and its people. He decides that it is time to usher the heir to the throne boldly into his camp (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 303-07).**

Rabi's nationalist upbringing has been so effective that he refuses to join **the Expeditionary Force that Bawajiraj mobilises to** fight **the Hun on behalf of his imperial suzerain. He bluntly says that he does not want to. Manjula, who has moulded Rabi's mind to this quality, declares that** Indians **have given** Britain **enough and need** not **offer** their **sons** as **well, "dismembering them, body and soul." Mohini, who has had an equal**

share in moulding Rabi's mind in the nationalist mode, says that he is sensible in not wanting to become cannon fodder for the British, being an Indian. Rabi's motives, however, are different and simpler. He finds the cause proclaimed by Bawajiraj "of distant and exaggerated application." Moreover, Rabi believes that there is more to do at home: immense problems that he and the Dewan plan to tackle across the kingdom (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 313-16).

While the Dewan goes for compulsory education, Rabi is for water, whose **importance was brought home to him in a Bombay slum. He points out that Jaya had to wait half an hour for a thimbleful of drinking water and to walk a quarter of a mile for water to wash herself. The Dewan proposes a dam to harness water in times of plenty, to be released when the monsoon fails. Rabi recalls how Janaki used to be flooded out regularly and live in a musty tent. Perceiving the "enduring scar" that Rabi carries from these acquaintances, the Dewan pounces on the opportunity "to push ahead with schemes with or without the** Maharajah's **blessings in company with Rabi and these obscure females" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 516-17).**

The Dewan and Rabi pore over maps. They go on extended tours, Rabi mostly, accompanied by experts. Rabi travels by car, on horseback, on elephant and on foot, particularly to one spot deep in the jungle, where

the dam is planned. Rabi begins to **feel that** he **is** close, "or if not close, within range of taking up his heritage." The Court observes that Rabi has **no** desire, **or little, to indulge in palace dalliance. His mother wonders at his abstinence and yearns to find out what goes on in his mind, but cannot do so. However, she has faith in her son and in his upbringing (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 317-20).**

For Rabi, fulfilment lies in the passion he is beginning to feel for what **is building in the jungle. The Dewan comes to see for himself. Rabi, "in some kind of faded khaki, such as lesser chaprassis might wear, sleeves rolled up over arms ... to a dark cork," and with hands calloused "like a ganger's," greets** his **mentor. The Dewan says that what Rabi has achieved is a case of"'word made flesh,'" by which he means that their plans are coming to fruition. The Dewan compliments the workers. Rabi says that they are "fired." The Dewan is overwhelmed by the physical details that Rabi provides, which bespeak his total commitment (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 320-24).**

Rabi's commitment to the building of the dam is so complete that he prohibits any celebration ofhis attaining majority. He also declines to participate in a ceremony which the new and unpopular Resident, A1 fred Buckridge, proposes, to effect the transfer of the Regency from the Dewan to the Maharajkumar, in compliance with the wish expressed by

the Maharajah on the eve of his departure to the Western Front with his **Expeditionary Force. That year, during summer, the people of Devapur State are surprised and pleased to see water flowing in the canals criss-crossing their fields. The following year, the people marvel when water flows in controlled cascades and boils in the water courses and they regard it as a divine answer to their prayers, though they acknowledge the human factor. Rabi is happy and feels that he can now face tormentors like Das, Janaki and Jaya. At last, he permits the celebration of his majority and of his taking over the Regency, which, however, the people turn into a celebration for the dam (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 364-74).**

Rabi identifies himself so closely with the people and so distantly with his father, now returned from the wars, and the bond between the prince and his mentor is so close that the Dewan makes bold to tell Bawajiraj that the common mind identifies the Maharajah with salt and the Maharajkumar with water. Bawajiraj, who has consented to the doubling of the Salt Tax, flinches. Mohini tells him that the people of Devapur are now Rabi's people and not his. However, she pleads with Rabi to be kind to his father. Rabi relents and goes to meet his father. He also calls at the Residency, as his father suggests. There he meets his childhood friend Sophie Copeland, who has returned from England and

he offers her his company (Kamala Markandaya, ***The Golden Honeycomb*** 392-410).

As the popular **movement gathers momentum, Bawajiraj is** mortified **to** see Rabi on the **fringes** of **the mob "observing if** not superintending proceedings." **Summoned** to the royal presence, Rabi defends the popular demand for **rescinding** the insupportable **levies** and treaties imposed by the British. The Dewan tells Rabi that he is glad to **note that his** years **as hi s pupil have not been profitless and advises that, in all activities, '"the watchword is discipline."' When the agitators** surround **the palace and the Residency and offer satyagraha, Rabi is out there, squatting "like a stone Buddha" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb 4*15-56).**

The formation and development of the mind and character of Rabi in *The Golden Honeycomb* is set off by an equally well-planned and neatly executed exercise in character formation, but with a diametrically opposite motive, namely the moulding of the mind and character of an Indian prince by the British to suit their imperial designs. The British, over the years, honed this process to such perfection that the native princes of the princely states of India were certain to remain facile puppets of the British under the system of subsidiaiy treaties and engagement s between the British and "the ostensibly independent

princes **of India", guaranteed by a curious phenomenon, as Kamala Markandaya records in the prologue to *The Golden Honeycomb*:**

> **Under this system a British-controlled force was planted within the Princely States to safeguard them against attack, the Ruler of the state paying a subsidy for the upkeep of the garrison within his borders and usually in his capital.**
>
> **In effect it was a Catch 22 arrangement. Refusal to pay the subsidy risked annexation of the Prince's dominions in lieu, while payment ensured the support of a force that virtually guaranteed his subjection . . . (n.p.)**

The foil to Rabi's upbringing is the moulding of the mind and character of his father. The British catch Bawajiraj young and mould him in their classic fashion into a British puppet, much to the chagrin of his mother, Manjula, who, a generation later, challenges the Residency from the zenana by refusing to yield Rabi into British hands and, instead, fashioning him into an enlightened nationalist prince of the people.

The formation and the development of the mind and the character of Bawajiraj is taken over by the British at a very early age. He is put to school at the age of five and learns from a Pandit a little of all subjects, all of them, except Sanskrit, being first "vetted" by the British Political Agent (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 16).

At the age of eight Bawajiraj receives a pony of his own and an English tutor. Kamala Markandaya highlights the element of puppetry motivating the appointment of an English tutor:

> **The education of a young Indian prince and future Maharajah is adjudged too important to be left any longer in the hands of an Indian, however learned. The information that the Pandit can impart is suspect—not from any intrinsic shortcomings which have been detected in the man, but because a particular representation of facts is required to produce those attitudes of esteem and admiration which in time will result in loyal and acquiescent Rulers. (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 17).**

Manjula protests that her son should learn about his own country first, echoing "sentiments adrift in the atmosphere, which are sawing at the nation's consciousness" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 17). But the British Political Agent overrules her. Bawajiraj learns what his British overlords want him to:

> **The boy who will one day be Bawajiraj III leams about England, its geography and history, its constitution, its manners, laws and customs, and about its explorers, generals, and statesmen who, from the highest motives, have**

annexed **a** third **of** the world.

The **chronicles** of **his own country are, inevitably, curtailed, beginning summarily with the European connection; and of his own ancestral history he is given the barest bones. The plight of his deposed kinsman [Bawajiraj I], the manner of his deposition, are disposed of in a few sentences; but the story of the great Queen, the human circumstance of her accession in girlhood and early bereavement are** so **vividly portrayed, the wisdom and benevolence of her rule and that of her Ministers** so **enthusiastically communicated, that it becomes a matter of pride to consider himself her subject. (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 17-18).**

The tutor, Mr. Barrington, counts it an honour to be entrusted with the shaping of the mind of the "malleable young prince." He accompanies the prince on his daily morning ride. He teaches him tent-pegging, and coaches him in tennis and cricket. In all this coaching, the tutor "instils in his pupil standards of conduct by which he himself abides," particularly teaching him "not just how to win, but how to lose gracefully," which is "excellent practice for the prince, who will have to give ground, later on, on a grand scale." Manjula feels that her son "is being moved away from

her, .from her **self--which** encompasses her country and her people. The British moulding of the mind and character of Bawajiraj is rounded off at the Chiefs' College with its British principal and the British-officered Military Academy and with training in civil administration at the hands of a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service. And, when Bawajiraj marries the daughter of a neighbouring independent Rajah, the British Political Agent believes "the prince's tutelage is sufficient to neutralise any undesirable influences from that quarter" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 18-33).

Bawajiraj ascends the throne unexpectedly at the age of twenty-one, when Ms father dies after a riding accident (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 24-25). As Maharajah Bawajiraj III, he is a facile British puppet. His concubine Mohini bluntly tells him that he is not free, that the British have tied him up hand and foot, that he does not even know it, and, that she will never become his wife and be shackled like him. Mohini even tells him that he is '"only a ***nam-ke-vaste*** king."' The British have advised Bawajiraj that, in case his concubine bears a son, the name chosen "must not reflect any connection" with the throne. Therefore, Bawajiraj is relieved that she proposes to name her forthcoming son Rabindranath (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 32-36).

The British have devised a system wherein though Bawajiraj believes "that he enjoys a great deal of latitude," he can make no move which "infringes British interests." The Resident keeps close watch "to ensure that there is no breach." There is also, in the capital, a British-officered Garrison Force, which can be used to enforce the Resident's decision. Bawajiraj cannot raise levies or make treaties. In such straitened circumstances, Bawajiraj cannot but conform to his British grooming (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 36-37). Kamala Markandaya describes Bawajiraj's conformity to his British moulding thus:

> **Bawajiraj does not greatly care to recall the failings, or the perfidy, of the British. To do so (the ferrety knowledge barely scratches a comer for itself in the hinterland of his consciousness) would be to chip away at convictions on which his life is based. For Bawajiraj is a British creation. He is too robust, or implicated, to assist in a process that some lingering shreds of instinct warn him would end in his dissolution (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb***
>
> ‘ 106)

Bawajiraj has become so completely a British creation that conjugal felicity seems sacrilegious to him in the tent city whrein all the

royal personages of India attending the Delhi Durbar are housed:

She **[Mohini] is leaning over him, unfastening the froggings of his sleeping shirt one by one from collar to hem. At each release she kisses the new exposure of flesh. Flaying him, he feels, shuddering; and stops her there.**

'Not now, Mohini.'

'Why not now?'

He cannot actually say, except that he feels there is a time and place, and it is not here, in the very shadow of Imperial scarlet in the very dawn of Durbar. It would be, he feels devoutly, wrong.

'I don't feel it IS the proper thing,' he says, primly.

'It is.'

'No.'

'Yes.'

'Is this a proper time?'

'Certainly.'

She kisses him again, her lips touch the fork of his body,

'I don't feel like it,' he cries weakly, against all the evidence.

'You do. My love, you do.'

She straddles him. Her voice is husky and triumphant, and banishes tents and illustrious shadows. But all the time, in the very vortex of his love-making, Bawajiraj is afflicted with a sense of the sacrilegious. (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 147)

The very subject matter of *The Golden Honeycomb* makes it a *bildungsroman.* The novel tells the story of the formation and development of the mind and character of Rabi. The early pages of the novel present mainly the result, and not the process, of British conditioning of the mind of Bawajiraj, specifically to serve as a foil to the Rabi story. There is also plenty of internal evidence in the novel of the author's intention of writing a *bildungsroman.*

Bawajiraj asks the pregnant concubine Mohini to marry him and she, refusing to do so, asks him if he wants their child to become a British puppet like him *{Honeycomb* 32). The author-narrator comments:

Frankly, Bawajiraj sees no objection. He is not an immodest man, but he believes, certainly in all truth, that he has served an onerous apprenticeship to fulfil his role as ruler...,

This modest claim is also true of his father. The difference is that Bawajiraj 11 has felt the strings the British attach to their protected Maharajahs and has at least glimpsed the

extent to which they have kept him from realising his full potential. For he, unlike his son, has come of age as a free man. His translation to the gaddi. . . has been at the age of eighteen, long after the basic pattern has set. Subsequent changes, therefore, are in the nature of fringe alterations to an edifice **whose inner structure has remained untouched, (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 32-33)**

Sir Arthur, the Resident, convinced that the local Pandit has communicated subversive opinions to Rabi, presses Bawajiraj to send the boy to a boarding establishment. Bawajiraj protests that Rabi is much too young, not seven yet. The Resident's heart sinks, and he thinks, "like **a Jesuit, that the boy's thought processes are already set firm, that he is quite lost" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 71-72).**

Planning for a commoner's tour of the kingdom for the native edification of Rabi, Mohini spurns the supernumerary flunkeys offered by Bawajiraj for their protection. The Dewan, instead, offers a man of his, named Parasuram, a cook-cum-guardian, because he is concerned for the safety of the only heir to the throne, particularly in view of his intelligence that "there is an insurgency abroad." The De wart's rationale is to invoke the invisible but powerful umbrella of the nation-wide Brahmin network over the royal party. But Bawajiraj excitedly welcomes the

Dewan's suggestion saying, "'the standard of cooking outside the Palace kitchens is execrable."' At this, the Dewan wonders how Bawajiraj could **be so dense (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 78-79). The author-narrator comments:**

> **He [Dewan] takes time off.. .to wonder if Bawajiraj can be as dense as he appears. The podgy hands, the dark, sensuous face, all but convince the Brahmin, but the children he has fathered, the three charming girls and the little boy Rabi, qualify the estimate.**
>
> **Tirumal Rao [Dewan] experiences a rare, acute pity for the Maharajah. *The clay is right enough,* he feels, *but the alien potter has mangled the material* [emphasis added]. (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 79)**

Kamala Markandaya deliberately inserts words, phrases and sentences into the text of the novel to point to the intended *bildungsroman* motif of the novel. When the Dewan visits the dam-site, he sees Rabi coming to greet his "mentor" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 321). When Rabi formally addresses him as "'Dewan Sahib,"[5] the older man is pleased and accepts the deference as his due as Rabi's "preceptor" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 322). When Rabi ribs the Dewan for wondering at the prodigious progress

which he seems not to have expected, the older man regards it as a small matter of "pupil twitting his master" (Kamala Markandaya, ***The*** *Golden Honeycomb* 323). Rabi tells Sophie that he recognizes that he is '"a product of two schools'" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 431). During the burgeoning but disciplined popular movement, the Dewan tells Rabi, '"I'm glad to note that your years as my pupil have not been profitless'" (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 431).

Rabi's is the typical growth and development of the protagonist of a *bildungsroman.* **His sojourn with Jaya in the Bombay slum is his spiritual crisis. Her want of the basic amenity of water crystallises for him all the deprivation that he witnessed but did not comprehend in his childhood playmates Das and Janaki and the poverty that he observed during the tour of the kingdom. He realises that, as heir to the throne of Devapur, his role in the world is to mend the holes in the fabric of Devapur (Kamala Markandaya, *The Golden Honeycomb* 290). It is with this recognition of his responsibility that Rabi leaves Jaya's hovel. After he has carried out his resolution, the novel ends on the positive note of the peaceful popuiar movement defeating the combined forces of the paiace and the Residency on the one hand, and, on the other, Rabi and Usha, the leaders of the popular movement, deciding to get married without any British "levers" on her or on her children (Kamala**

Markandaya, ***The Golden Honeycomb*** 464; 460). It seems **as** if Rabi rejects his princely role and will willingly be a popular leader. **Bawajiraj**'s **growing up is a foil to Rabi's: he is never conscious of his growth and development and he passes through no crisis of any sort.**

Several critics have referred to certain *bildungsroman* features of the novel like the growth and development of the protagonist, awakening, learning and change, tutelage and training. In "Continuity and Change in the Novels **of Kamala Markandaya," A.V. Krishna Rao states that *The Golden Honeycomb* is "the story of the growing up of Rabi, the royal scion" (25). in *"Golden Honeycomb* [sic]: A Brief Study," Rao says that Rabi's "individual consciousness" is integrated into the design of the novel (80). Premila Paul, in "Kamala Markandaya," refers to "the growing consciousness of Rabi" (189). Arthur Pollard, in "Kamala** Markandaya[5]s ***The Golden Honeycomb,"* says:**

> **Rabi's history is a progress to understanding and then to action in a movement that takes him from admiration of his father with unquestioning acceptance of the *status quo,* through the influence of his mother and Pandit, to a rejection of his princely role and the assumption of the leadership of popular protest.... (24)**

In "*The Golden Honeycomb:* A **Critical Appraisal," A.N. Dwivedi**

points out that Manjula "enlightens" her grandson and fuses anti-British feelings into him and that the Pandit "injects" nationalistic feelings into him (213). Shanta Krishnaswamy, in *The Woman in Indian Fiction in English 1950-80***, says that the women in Rabi[5] s life "serve as instruments of awakening his conscience," and that, through them, "he emerges as an enlightened heir apparent, vastly different from the 'brown Englishmen' [,] the conforming rulers that his predecessors, had turned out to be" (223-**24).

Margaret Joseph, in her monograph *Kamala Makandaya***, says that various incidents in the course of the story bring about changes in Rabi and that those who come into contact with him "influence" him in some way (149). In "Images and Archetypes in Kamala Markandaya's Novels," P. Geetha says that Rabi "reaches self-awareness through a 'trial and initiation[5] process" with Janaki, Jaya and Sophie (174). Prem Kumar, in "Conflict and Resolution in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya,[55] points out** that **Rabi learns about "the India that lies outside the guarded** palace: **impoverished, exploited and degraded" (26). David Rubin, in** ***After the*** *Raj: British Novels of India since 1947,* **speaks of Rabi's "evolution" and says that his experiences in Bombay constitute "a kind of awakening"** (166).

Fawzia Afzal-Khan, in *Cultural Imperialism and the In do English*

Novel: Genre and Ideology in ***R.K.Narayan,*** *Anita* ***Desai,*** *Kamala* ***Markandaya and Salman Rushdie,*** **observes:**

> **the old grandmother hopes to inculcate in Rabi something she was unable to in the father: a sense of pride and belonging to his own people and past, rather than a past concocted by the British. She hopes that Rabi... will be able to address the very real problems of poverty and hunger faced by the people of his land. . . . (136)**

In "A Master jeweller al Work," D.S. Maini says that Manjula, Mohini arid the Pandit studiously groom Rabi for the difficult and dangerous role of a "royal 'rebel"' (19). K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, in *Indian Writing in English*, points out that Rabi "rejects his princely destiny" (743).

Chapter 7

***Bai-sa* Jaya** of Balmer

Raj nit i* is the very breath of life of *Bai-Sa* (Princess) Jaya of Balmer. She learns the ancient Indian art of governance as a child and it stands her in good stead throughout her tempestuous life. She is deliberately brought up to face the reality of royal life in the changing times. Mehta's Raj may well be said to have designed the perfect antidote to British imperialism in India in the native philosophy** of ***Rajniti.

When Princess **Jaya** of Balmer is **five years old, her father, the Maharajah of Balmer, insists that she accompany him into the jungle. The Maharani objects, but the Maharajah overrules her saying that she coddles their children too much. Two hours before dawn the Maharajah rides out with his hunting party, with Jaya before him on his saddle. As they are passing through a village, two shikaris bring news of the sighting of a big panther and suggest that the princess better be not taken along. The Maharajah entrusts Jaya to a group of villagers and mounts his elephant (Mehta, *Raj* 1-2).**

A village boy of about ten tempts Jaya to drink cow's milk in the villagers' manner: he makes Jaya squat under a cow, her head pushing **against its soft belly while he squeezes the full udder,** directing a **stream of warm milk into her hair and eyes. Drawn by the delighted hooting of**

the watching children, the village women come there and, seeing Jay a covered in mud and milk, hold their earlobes in mortification, beat the children and exclaim in fear of what the Maharajah will say. The children cry and so does Jaya. Nine-year-old Tikka, the Crown Prince of Balmer, arrives on the scene, winks at the guilty boy and, regarding the crying Jaya with disgust, takes her into the jungle, where the panther has been caught and tethered (Mehta, *Raj* 3).

Riding in a howdah atop an elephant, Jaya is at first excited, but, as the jungle noises increase, she is frightened and crouches on the floor of the howdah, gripping her brother's ankles. When they reach the Maharajah's position, Jaya sees a large black panther, chained to a sal tree, blood dripping from its neck, filling the jungle with its roars of rage and leaping against the steel links of the chain. She doses her eyes in fright. When she opens her eyes she finds herself standing very near the agitated panther. As the animal lunges, its blood and. spittle fall on her skirt. She tries to hide behind her father's legs but the Maharajah forces her to face the panther. Gradually Jaya’s terror subsides (Mehta, *Raj* 3-4). Mehta comments:

> *Jaya was too young to understand that Maharajah Jai Singh was teaching his children Rajniti, the philosophy of monarchy, as it had been taught to prince after prince of the*

House ofBalmer. Not until she became a ruler herself did she comprehend that the Maharajah taught his children the traditions of courage when he was himself a frightened man. (Raj, **prologue 5)**

In 1897, caravans of bards converge on Balmer across the drought-ridden desert to bless the birth of the firstborn **of the Maharajah. Outside the capital they are accommodated in a tent city installed by the Maharajah. Entering the inner fort, they sing the glory of the Rajput race and are rewarded. The thirty-ninth heir to the throne of Balmer is born. Many Indian monarchs are scheduled to go to London for the Diamond Jubilee of Empress Victoria. Many nobles from the several Rajput kingdoms that dot the desert urge Maharajah Jai Singh to go to London** and **to impress upon the British monarch the sufferings of Indians under British rule (Mehta,** *Raj* **16). The Maharani's words finally persuade the Maharajah to go: '"Go to London, Durbar. You are the voice of the people's assembly. Victoria must listen to you. India's Empress cannot ignore India's suffering'" (Mehta,** *Raj* **16). But, in England, Maharajah Jai Singh discovers that no English ear is interested in tales of famine or death in India (Mehta,** *Raj* **19; 26).**

By the third year of the drought the Maharani sees that the balance of Baimer's government is being disturbed. The Maharajah's absences are

longer and **he complains that the nobles are conniving against him** because he **is taxing them more to combat the famine. The wives of the nobles call on the Maharani and complain of dwindling dowries and impossible budgets. Growing afraid for her husband, the Maharani, at night, kneads the knots of tension in his body (Mehta, *Raj* 28-29).**

Unable to cope with the influx of refugees into Balmer, Maharajah Jai Singh reluctantly closes the borders of Balmer to refugees. However, he adamantly persists **in his resistance to a British presence within his country, which, many of his nobles believe, will enrich the country (Mehta, *Raj* 30). The wives of the nobles become openly rebellious and come in a delegation to the Maharani, whom the Prime Minister's wife addresses thus:**

> **'The Maharajah is unreasonable, hukam. He has not allowed us to take a paisa from the fanners in the last four years, but we have had to pay our taxes just the same. We have not been allowed to charge for irrigation and seeds. We have been forced to open our granaries to feed starving refugees.. . . How does the Maharajah expect us to live, hukam? Even the best cow runs out of milk when it is not fed.' (Mehta, *Raj* 30)**

The Maharani realises that the pyramid of Balmer's government is

crumbling (Mehta, *Raj* 31).

The **Maharani is certain that she is again pregnant. She waits** for **the return of her husband, thinking of how the ordered world which gave purpose to her existence has turned upside down and of the depth of her husband's despair as his country has become a wasteland ready to be exploited by the machines of a new age without customs or humanity. The Maharajah arrives and asks her to break purdah. After remaining** paralysed **for some time by the order to destroy a thousand years of tradition, the Maharani begs him to ask anything from her but that (Mehta, *Raj* 31).**

> **Tearing the veil from her hands, the Maharajah tells her: 'Savage times require savage measures! Your sacrifice will not be unique. The Tiger Queen of Baroda has come out of purdah and is travelling in her country to assist in famine relief. The Regent of Jodhpur's wife has moved out of Jodhpur's Fort. Now she lives in a mud hut and cooks food for the drought kitchens with her own hands. I require your presence in the camps. Ask yourself this, woman. What is more important, your veil or your people's despair?' (Mehta, *Raj* 31-32)**

Regaining control, the Maharani sends for the Baran, the senior

maid who **performs** all her puja when she is menstruating **or** otherwise indisposed. She instructs her surrogate in the zenana to ensure that during her absence the refugee women are not neglected. The Baran protests that **if she breaks purdah the zenana will lose** the **reason for its existence. But the Maharani silences** her **by saying that the Maharajah wishes it (Mehta,** *Raj* 32).

The Maharani, for the first time in her life, goes to the King's View, a tower designed to give the ruler a clear view of the surrounding countryside and deny an enemy army the advantage of surprise. She is to dine with the Maharajah there. Arriving, she tells him of the expected **child. He says that he may not be present for the birth because he is going to England for the Coronation. It is only an excuse to meet the Tsar and sell him the** Balmer **Navratan secretly to raise funds since the treasury is nearly empty (Mehta *Raj* 36-37). In fear, the Maharani says:**

> Tf **the British ever discover you have broken the terms of your treaty with the Empire and dealt independently with a foreign power, especially Russia.... The British will exile you from Balmer! They will take your throne! They will refuse to recognize Tikka** as **your heir, or invest him with his** rightful **ruling powers! You know they can invoke their terrible Doctrine of Lapse.'... (Mehta, *Raj* 37)**

The Maharajah explains the political realities which have cornered **him:**

> **'If the rains fail again, I shall have to construct a railway and allow foreign factories to be built in Balmer. I must arrange loans so the fanners don't have to sell their land to the Angrez companies at unreasonable prices. All this costs money. When the Tsar stayed with me as Tsarevitch, he admired the Balmer Navratan. . . . (Mehta *Raj* 37)**

The Maharani, in great secrecy, helps Jai Singh make his preparations for London, as Mehta describes:

> **Although the treasury was under the Maharajah's jurisdiction, all contents were described in detail in the treasury files in minute detail. The file that recorded the presence of the Balmer Navratan had to be removed and altered. Night after night the Maharani sat with her husband in the King's View and rewrote the file in her own hand, eliminating any mention of the Balmer Navratan. *(Raj* 38)**

Towards the end of the fifth year of drought the Maharani gives birth to a daughter. This time there are no bards at the gate and no feasts of celebration as at the time of the birth of Tikka. Returning in better spirits from England, Jai Singh hears the voice of his daughter and,

commenting that it is not the sound of a crying baby, but a battle cry, decides to name her Jaya, meaning Victory (Mehta, ***Raj*** 38-39).

After seven years of famine the rains come. A music performance is held in **Balmer Fort to celebrate the occasion. The Maharani re-enters purdah (Mehta, *Raj* 40-42).**

From the moment Jaya is bom the Maharani is determined to bring her up in the ways of her predecessors, which alone can protect the child froth the harsh, changing world beyond the zenana walls. Even as a child, Jaya is made to accompany her mother to the Temple of the Balmer Maharanis and recite the names of the sati queens of Balmer (Mehta, *Raj* 42-43). Mehta describes the child's discomfiture on these occasions:

> **Jaya squirmed and wondered why there were so many satis and so many vows: no fish to be eaten by the women of the royal house until their desert lands had an abundance of water; no meat to be eaten during the breeding season of animals; no songbirds to be kept in cages until the foreign usurper had left India. *(Raj* 43)**

However, she enjoys scattering grain to the birds once the ritual **worship is over. She also enjoys the daily ride on horseback outside the walls of the Fort, identifying plants and** medicinal **herbs and listening** to **tales of adventure told by the accompanying officers (Mehta, *Raj* 43).**

The Maharajah has decreed that Jaya is not to be raised in purdah. **In every other particular the Maharani insists that Jaya be educated in the traditional manner of the princesses of Balmer. Jaya does not like the music lessons of the old Ustad. She is trained in rangoli by the Baran. Once** a **week she accompanies the Maharani to the chambers below the** zenana **to dispense the Fort stores. During this long exercise the tvlaharani converses with the palace servants about crops or prices so that Jaya will, without knowing it, absorb information about her country (Mehta, *Raj* 44-45).**

Jaya loves the afternoons in Kuki-bai's chambers, listening to her stories, while a maidservant massages her body with wheat mixture. After a bath she goes to the rifle range to compete with Tikka under the supervision of Major Vir Singh, her father's ADC. The is not so confident about the riding session, particularly since Major Vir Singh asks her to jump fences without letting the coins between her knees and the horse's hide drop. However, she does not cry when she falls off her horse because her mother has constantly urged that a Rajput princess has to learn endurance. Then she listens to Major Vir Singh's stories of his military exploits (Mehta, *Raj* 45-49).

Kuki-bai dances on the tusks of Moti, a ninety-year-old elephant with four-foot-long tusks and recalls the day on which she and her two

brothers arrived on Moti at the Fortress of **Chittore,** performed before five Rajput kings and was taken as concubine by the Lion **of Balmer,** Maharajah Jai Singh's grandfather (Mehta, ***Raj*** 49-52).

Jaya is ignorant of the changes occurring in her father's kingdom, like the laying of railway lines or the fitting of organ pipes in the church her father has built for the **Angrez.** When the Balmer State Train steams into the new railway station on the outskirts of the capital, it is a strange sight for her. So are the first motor cars that arrive in Balmer Fort. At first she refuses to enter one of the cars (Mehta, ***Raj*** 53-54).

Jaya hates her cousin's father, Raja Man Singh. He is an Anglophile who has already engaged English rotors for his daughter and his small son John, who is next in line after Tikka to the Balmer throne. His children are known by English names, they eat with knives and forks and they call their parents Mummy and Daddy. One day she overhears her father telling her mother that he must engage an English tutor for Tikka in order to convince the British that he is training his son to be loyal to them since the British and the Russians have overcome their differences and there is a danger of the British discovering his secret dealings with the Russians, which is a crime in their eyes (Mehta, *Raj* 54-55).

That afternoon the Maharani drives to Chand Mahal, Kuki-bai's **old** home, now being altered to accommodate the Englishman hired to

teach **Tikka. Jaya** is curious to sec how the **Angrez** live. In the bathroom **she mistakes the toilet commodes for bath tubs for the feet. On their way back Jaya tells a maid that she doubted if Tikka can be taught anything by people who** bathe **in dirty water and have stiff legs and so need chairs to** relieve **themselves (Mehta *Raj* 55-56).**

Tikka is fascinated by his tutor, Captain Osborne. In his anxiety to impress his tutor, Tikka applies himself to his lessons with an ardour that surprises his sister. She fears that he is becoming an Angrez. His room fills **up with English books and catalogues. Tikka spends all his spare time practising crickct at the nets in the pavilion built at Captain Osborne's suggestion. Jaya is sick of Tikka's cricket talk. He is no longer interested in kite-flying but only in England cricket and Ranji, the great Indian cricketer. She fears that Tikka is becoming a half-caste like their cousin John when she** finds **out that he** wants **Indians to excel the British. But when Tikka criticises the Maharajah for refusing to send him to England for his education she says that he hates India because of his tutor. One day she hears Major Vir Singh warning Tikka not to believe everything that his tutor says because that is only his version (Mehta, *Raj* 57-62).**

Jaya is **not aware** of **the changes overtaking India,** as **Mehta** describes:

> **Indian newspapers, freed at last of Viceroy Curzon's censorship, were filled with passionate editorials demanding Home Rule for British India. Indians were boycotting British goods to show their resentment of the Empire's exploitation of India's resources. Nationalist leaders were being sent into exile. From America, Europe, Africa, Japan the exiled leaders continued to demand representation in the government that ruled their country. Realizing that the momentum of nationalist feeling had become irreversible, the new Viceroy had invited Indians to sit on the Imperial Council which governed British India, and called the first conference ever held between the Icings of India and the representative of the British Crown. *(Raj* 62)**

Before departing for the Viceroy's conference, Jai Singh introduces Jaya to Mrs. Roy, who is to make her fluent in the English language. Jaya has never met an Indian woman like Mrs. Roy. She wears austere homespun saris. She is fiercely anticlerical and refuses to attend the Maharani's religious functions if priests are present. She holds virulent views on the British Raj. She captivates Jaya with bloodcurdling accounts of the injustices of the Empire. She even mentions a cousin shot: dead by the British police. From the cloth satchel hanging from her shoulder, Mrs.

Roy produces an endless supply of nationalist Indian newspapers. Soon Jaya **begins to** understand Major **Vir Singh's warning to** Tikka. For every incident interpreted by Captain Osborne **in** the imperialist way Mrs. Roy has a contradictory nationalist interpretation. Going to Mrs. Roy's house, Jaya sees many photographs of her husband's cousin Aran Roy, the brother of the killed nationalist, and leams about his fanatical nationalism. Mrs. Roy tells Jaya that even the maharajahs of India have begun to assert **their Indianness** to some **extent** (Mehta, *Raj* **64-68).**

James Osborne, the sixteen-year-old son of Captain Osborne, joins his parents in Balmer. He has been invited to the zenana because Tikka is **likely to go to England with him. Jaya leams from Kuki-bai that the new** Viceroy has **insisted** on **Tikka being schooled** in **England if** he is to be recognised **as Jai Singh's successor, since the British** Raj does not trust **the Maharajah** after **learning of his secret dealings with the Russians during the famine. When James arrives with his mother, the zenana ladies whisper that he will make a good tamer of their little panther Jaya. Kuki-bai rebukes them for their impertinence. Jaya speaks** frankly **and** innocently to **James about the house he lives in and its original occupant,** the concubine **Kuki-bai. James is embarrassed. When she** tells **him** of the original amorous paintings on the walls of the house, James turns red. When she speaks of them to **Mrs.Osbome,** the English **lady** evades the

subject (Mehta, *Raj* 71-74).

Jaya goes to the Osbornes' accompanied by a maidservant who cautions her that the Angrez do not talk publicly about love and that is why Tikka is angry with her. At the Osbornes' a cricket match is being played. After the game and refreshments, a film depicting the story of God Krishna is screened. Earlier, when it was screened at the palace, the Maharani and the ladies were excited to sing hymns, but, here, Tikka and his friends mock the film. Jaya is sitting between James and Tikka. James tells Java not to mind Tikka and his friends, since they do not understand what they are seeing. He assures her that he knows about Lord Krishna since he was bom in India (Mehta, *Raj* 74-75).

Jaya and James are together a lot. One afternoon Kuki-bai asks her what she now thinks of James and adds that since, at ten, she is half-woman already, it is time she were married. That evening, when she meets James, Jaya is tongue-tied. When James asks if he has offended her, she is overcome with shame and runs into the zenana. The Maharani gives her a parcel—a gift of the portrait of the man she may marry one day. It is a miniature of Prince Pratap, the younger brother of the Maharajah of Sirpur, Maharajah Victor. Jaya feels nauseated and as if her childhood is slipping away. Her mother reassures her that Prince Pratap is quite handsome and the alliance highly desirable. To Jaya Prince Pratap

looks **like an animal stalking its prey. Jai Singh arrives and objects to** Jaya being **shown the picture. He opposes an alliance with Sirpur since the Sirpurs are the lapdogs of ihe British Empire. He declares that, having been forced to send his son to England, he will not lose his daughter to an Angrez lackey also. Sensing that her childhood is ended, Jaya no longer finds James threatening (Mehta, *Raj* 76-77).**

At the Dasara puja, Maharajah Jai Singh, according to the centuries old custom, sacrifices a white blemishless goat to the family goddess. However, he does not cut off the head of the ram in a single stroke. So the Maharani says that the sacrifice is **unholy and predicts that there will be bad luck on the house. The Maharajah too looks worried, perhaps because he knows that the sacrifice was unholy. When the procession returns to the Fort, Jaya races to Tikka and tells him about the Maharani's prediction. But Tikka dismisses the entire ritual as superstitious nonsense irrelevant to the twentieth century (Mehta, *Raj* 78-80).**

Jaya is all excited about the Coronation Durbar in Delhi, which her father and brother are going to attend and she is even jealous of her brother, until Mrs. Roy angrily condemns the whole ceremony as a colossal waste of Indian money in a time of famine. During the absence of the Maharajah and the Heir Apparent, Jaya practises hard with her rifle so that she **can bag a tiger when they return and go out on a shikar.**

Tikka's description of **the Durbar upon his** return **excites Jaya** until he praises the revelry of **the Sirpur princes and wishes that Jaya were** older **and married to Prince Pratap. The Maharani complains that the** Maharajah has been forced to agree to send Tikka to England for his education. Tikka, however, seems quite happy about it (Mehta, ***Raj 80-83).***

Jaya goes on a shikar carrying the new rifle that her father brought for her from Delhi. A tiger is **sighted. Tikka fires his gun so as to make the tiger move** within **range** of **Jaya's rifle. Jaya** fires **and wounds the tiger but does not kill it. The wounded tiger prepares to spring on the elephant, which bolts in panic. As the tiger pursues the fleeing elephant, Jaya, filled with shame, drops her gun and seizes James Osborne's waist to steady him, so that he can shoot the tiger. As the tiger, with a mighty roar, makes its death charge, James fires and kills the tiger. As Jaya's body shakes with fear,** James **puts his arms around her and holds her until the shivering stops. When** she **looks up into his blue-green eyes, James congratulates her on bagging her first tiger (Mehta, *Raj* 85-86).**

During the shikar, Jaya hears her father rave to Captain Osborne about British injustice, their absorbing Indian armies, their castrating Indian nobles, their confusing Indian scholars, their diminishing Indian **priests, their deposing the guardians of Indian laws, leaving only Oriental**

despots **by smiling on all the vices of Indian rulers except independence. Afterwards she hears her father protesting to Captain Osborne against Tikka being kept out of the cricket team of his British school merely because he is a native of the subject country. Captain Osborne lamely hopes that this experience will teach Tikka to stand on his own feet. The Maharajah says that if England teaches Tikka, as it taught him, to hate injustice in those who are all powerful, he will be content (Mehta, *Raj* 84-**85; **87-88).**

For some reason that she cannot fathom, Maharajah Jai Singh orders Jaya to learn the texts of *Rajniti,* the classical art of government, which Tikka would have studied if he had not gone to England. Her music and English lessons are curtailed and now she spends most of her time in the Fort Library, looking at portraits of the great astronomer Maharajah Jai Singh of Jaipur, the famous scholar Maharajah Verma of Cochin, Manu the Law Giver, Brighu the Prophet or Shankaracharya the Philosopher. She reads several volumes from the bookshelves. At times the Raj Guru of Balmer questions her on the four arms of kingship, namely, *Saam* (serve), *Daan* (provide), *Dand* (punish) and *Bhed* (intrigue), the duties of a king, his rewards if he fulfils them and on what happens **if he does not. He teaches her that the Angrez concept of the divine right of kings does not apply in India where merit and not birth is**

the attribute of kingship. He also teaches her the texts on government and *Rajniti* in the *Arthasastra* which provide knowledge of merit (Mehta, *Raj* 88-89).

From the Raj Guru Jaya learns that monarchy is inviolable. But Mrs. Roy lists a number of violations of monarchy so that the position of kings seems precarious. Jaya is confused. She is impressed when Mrs. Roy speaks of the freedom movements in Ireland and India and declares that the British Empire will be finished off by the Home Rule movements in Ireland and India. Jaya's training in shooting continues under the tutelage of Maj or Vir Singh. The Maharajah plays war games with her, using toy armies on the billiards table (Mehta, *Raj* 89-91). When their talk turns to *Rajniti,* Jai Singh complains:

> ***'Saam,*** **1 tended my people, putting their survival above the vanities of an empire, and I was called seditious. *Daan,* I provided for the state, and my only son was taken hostage by the Angrez. *Dand,* how can I be just when 1 cannot give sanctuary to those who fight injustice in the British Raj or try a man who has the ear of the Angrez? What then remains of monarchy but *bhed?* Intrigue, flattery, imitation—the weakest arm of monarchy. This is what it means to be an Indian king in the British Empire. ' (Mehta, *Raj* 91)**

Maharajah Jai **Singh laments to his daughter over the havoc** wrought by the Angrez on **Indian monarchs: the Maharana** of Udaipur's **days are numbered, since the British have already taken his mint and are trying to gain possession of his mines, despite their treaty with him; the ruler of Manipur has been hanged; the ruler of Rewa has gone; the ruler of Indore lives under a threat; half of Hyderabad's kingdom has been removed on a Viceroy's whim; the Maharajah of Baroda has been threatened, because he turned his back on the Angrez Emperor's coronation and reads books** by **the Italian republican writer Mazzini; in the south, thrones tremble because their kings dare to be more progressive than the Angrez themselves; and, all over India, rulers are exiled or forced to abdicate while Britain replaces their ancient lines with lackeys. After listing** all **these depredations of the British, Maharajah Jai Singh asks if the Indian people would ever forgive the Indian monarchs for those ignoble treaties (Mehta, *Raj* 91-92).**

Tikka's letters indicate that he has become an admirer of the Sirpur princes. He reports that Prince Pratap likes French ladies, that he regards Indian women as overfed buffaloes and that he is crazy about the latest craze in dancing, namely the tango. Once Tikka sends a photograph of his **birthday party held in the Savoy. It shows James Osborne grown into a handsome young man. Jaya's heart lurches at** the **sight of him. James** has

always **written to her twice a year—a card on her birthday and a letter at Christmas. Jaya is ashamed of her secret passion for him (Mehta, *Raj 92-93*). The Maharani complains about the Maharajah's educational** programme **for** Jaya:

> **'Who will marry such an overeducated girl? Her in-laws will resent her. Her husband will be insulted when she flaunts her learning in front of him. She is twelve years old. At that age I was already engaged to be married. At the very time she should become a woman, her father is trying to make her into a son.' (Mehta, *Raj* 94)**

To repair the damage done by the Raj Guru and the Maharajah, the Maharani decides to undertake Jaya's training herself: She cancels jaya's pleasant afternoons in Kuki-bai's chamber, listening to the old concubine's tales. Instead, Jaya is surrounded by eager purdah ladies teaching her the *sola shringar,* the sixteen arts of being a woman, like maintaining her body's complexion, removing skin down, restoring life to dull hair after childbirth with oils, heightening the body's natural odours with scents to act as an aphrodisiac on the senses of a lover, matching ornaments to clothes, choosing the right auspicious gemstone for each occasion, and, walking gracefully. Jaya feels oppressed by these lessons and eagerly escapes to the cavalry grounds. There, however, Major Vir

Singh makes it quite clear that he is indifferent to the fact that she is a girl, which seems to corroborate the Maharani's observation that the Maharajah is trying to make her into another son (Mehta, *Raj* 94-95).

Jaya has only contempt for the old prunes who are teaching her the arts of the female. Her maidservant Chandni, married for six months, says that she can teach Jaya better. She adds that the concubines in the zenana know more about the art of being a woman than the purdah ladies. She offers to take Jaya secretly to meet the concubines. Chandni takes Jaya to the dark chamber below the zenana where the concubines live. The concubines persuade Jaya to shed her clothes and teach her several womanly tricks. Gradually Jaya's self-consciousness vanishes (Mehta, *Raj* 95-98).

As war clouds gather over Europe, the Maharajah is worried about Tikka's presence in England and complains that the Viceroy wilt not allow him to return to India. Captain Osborne assures Jai Singh that Tikka will be quite safe in England. During the English lesson, Mrs. Roy shows Jaya a newspaper which predicts defeat and disillusionment for Britain, because the Muslim sepoys, who in 1857, refused to bite bullets soaked in pig's fat, will now refuse to fight against the Sultan of Turkey. Mrs. Roy points out that the British are assiduously promoting the image of the Aga Khan to subvert the Indian Muslim sepoys. Mrs. Roy decries

the **superstitions that Jaya has picked up from the purdah ladies and the concubines (Mehta, *Raj* 99-100).**

When Jaya is thirteen years old, the Maharajah agrees that she must be betrothed. The **Maharani shows her a number** of **photographs of** princes who have been suggested for **her. Kuki-bai** is adversely critical of **every one of them, much to the joy of Jaya and to the chagrin of the Maharani. Finally the Maharani challenges Kuki-bai to suggest a bridegroom for Jaya. Kuki-bai says that the Angrez boy James, if he were an Indian, will** be **her first choice. Jaya blushes at this, much to the concern of the purdah ladies. However, since James is not an Indian, Kuki-bai suggests Prince Pratap of Sirpur as the most eligible bridegroom. Jaya is horrified, but the Maharani hastens to approve** of **the suggestion. She points out that, considering the Maharajah's poor standing with the British, Sirpur will be the safest family for Jaya to be married into. Jaya goes to the billiards room to plead with her father. Jai Singh tells her that Tikka is returning home. Jaya leaps in joy and wants fireworks and phonograph and records. The Maharaj ah, however, says that they cannot celebrate Tikka's return home when five hundred other princes are going to war. When he says that James has already joined his father's regiment and is staying back in England, Jaya is shocked (Mehta, *Raj* 101-03).**

The zenana **prepares for the *manwar* ceremony** celebrating **the** warrior **caste.** For **the first time** in **her life** Jaya, now **thirteen,** is allowed **to participate in it. The eunuchs select good pellets of opium to be mixed in *asha,* the spirit drunk by Rajput warriors, and given to the ladies on this day to make them shed their inhibitions and utter the name of the father of their children. Jaya is so self-conscious about her dress and appearance that she is almost late. The eunuchs serve the *asha*** and **the ladies** are **stoned, while the concubines and the eunuchs sing lewd and erotic songs. As the afternoon fades into dusk,** Jaya **feels herself in the enfolding embrace of James Osborne (Mehta, *Raj* 104-09).**

While the palace is excited about the anticipated arrival of Tikka, Jaya is worried about James going to war. Upon Tikka's arrival, the war is forgotten for some time in celebration and joy. When Jaya tells Tikka of her mother's decision to marry her to Prince Pratap, he tells her that she need not worry about it because Prince Pratap is not thinking of marriage but of taking the Sirpur Lancers to Europe. At last the telegraph brings news of the declaration of war by England and Japan and the King-Emperor's Mobilization Proclamation. The Maharajah asks Roy and his wife to teach his soldiers the rudiments of the English language so that they can survive in Europe. He asks Major Vir Singh to inform the Senapathy to put. all troops on alert and commence full combat training

(Mehta, *Raj* 110-12).

Tikka is impatient to join up. Many Indians have already volunteered. Mrs. Roy sneers at them. Tikka and Jaya watch the Balmer Lancers practising manoeuvres every day. They help to teach English to the troops. They listen to the Senapathy 's reports on the progress of the war in Europe. Maharajah Jai Singh notes that the Indian monarchs have mobilised more forces than what is required .under their treaty obligations. These forces, collectively known as the Imperial State Forces, are to be commanded by the seventy-year-old Sir Pratap Singh, the Regent King of Jodhpur. He is leaving shortly for Europe with the first contingent. The Balmer Lancers are to leave with the.second contingent. Tikka and Jai Singh exchange hot words because Tikka wants to lead the Balmer Lancers (Mehta, *Raj* 112-13). But Jai Singh makes Ms stand clear: "'What honour is there in strengthening those who have made us a subject people, forced to plead for what is ours? I am accepting an intolerable blackmail [i.e. sending the Balmer Lancers] to consolidate your rightful position as heir to the Balmer gaddi'" (Mehta, *Raj* 113).

Frustrated, Tikka takes Jaya to an almost abandoned temple at the far end of the Fort and, in the presence of the Goddess, swears to take the Balmer Lancers to Europe, with or without the Maharajah's blessings, even joining hands with Raja Man Singh if necessary. However, one

week before the departure of the Balmer Lancers, at a full-dress rehearsal, Maharajah Jai Singh announces that his son will lead the Balmer Lancers into battle (Mehta, *Raj* 114-17).

On **the** eve **of Tikka's departure to the battlefield, Jaya, as his sister,** is **to perform a puja. She is heavily decorated with jewels. Dressed** in **the colour of** the **Goddess and veiled, Jaya** is **to receive charge of the sanctity** of **the** Fort when she **puts the tilak of blood on Tikka's forehead.** It is **very difficult for Jaya and the Maharani to desist from weeping as the preparations are made. Harly next morning Jaya takes her place between the Raj Guru and the Maharajah in the Fort Temple. Taking Tikka's sword from the Raj Guru, Jaya slices the soft cushion of her thumb and smears a long streak of her blood onto Tikka's forehead. Tikka takes his sword from Jaya and, invoking the Goddess, severs the head of a ram. The priests anoint the foreheads of the Lancers, their weapons and the heads of the horses with the blood of the sacrifice. The Balmer Lancers, led by Tikka, march out to the accompaniment of the Balmer nagara drums and cannon fire (Mehta, *Raj* 118-21).**

As Tikka writes letter after letter from Europe, the Maharani spends entire days in the Temple of the Balmer Maharanis doing pujas for the welfare of the Balmer Lancers. Jaya is commissioned to read out to the ladies in the zenana a brief report of the day-to-day developments in

the war. **When Tikka goes to the front and his letters cease, the Maharani begins to spend her nights also in the temple in solitary worship. As news of the Maharani's obsession with the supernatural spreads, mendicants and holy men begin appearing outside the walls of the zenana and the Maharani consults naked, ash-covered ascetics through the stone lattices of the harem walls (Mehta, *Raj* 123-24).**

One day the Maharani leaves the Palace with Jaya to consult a woman who lives in a cave at the edge of the desert. She has refused to come to the Palace. She is called Sati Mata. It is said that she is of royal blood and became an ascetic when she was prevented from performing sati at her husband's death. She lived in Benares for twenty years, next **to the burning ghats and corpses. It is said that she has eaten the flesh of dead children. The Maharani enters a broken sati cenotaph in the hills, carrying a basket of fruits and flowers. Jaya sees bats hanging from the broken dome of the tomb and monkeys scurrying. Sensing something slithering over her feet, Jaya screams and, running into a courtyard, practically falls into the lap of a woman sitting on a tiger skin at the base of a mango tree (Mehta, *Raj* 124-25).**

Seeing a cobra slithering on to the tiger *skin,* Jaya suppresses another scream. The Sati Mata says that terror of a harmless snake is not the sum of the fear Jaya will know. Taking Jaya's hand, she places it near the

snake. The cobra slithers up **Jaya's forearm** to coil itself around her wrist. **Its forked tongue darts out, striking at the glass bangles sliding down her arm (Mehta, *Raj* 126). The Sati Mata tells Jaya: '"Go towards your fear, child. Only then can you find the courage to endure the life that stretches before you, exiled from your sex'" (Mehta, *Raj* 126). Upon hearing this, the Maharani bitterly says that she warned the Maharajah that he was educating his daughter to be a man (Mehta, *Raj* 126).**

Ignoring the Maharani's outburst, the Sati Mata tells Jaya: "'Few will understand the high cost of your valour, child, the impoverishment of your spirit. But you must find the courage to live with your own barrenness'" (Mehta, *Raj* 126). At this prediction the Maharani is alarmed, but the Sati Mata reassures her that Jaya will many and bear a son. She also prophesies that Jaya will marry a great and ancient sword. The Maharani interprets this to mean that Jaya will be third or fourth wife to an ageing Mahatajah and says that Maharajah Jai Singh will never permit such a union (Mehta, *Raj* 126). The Sati Mata tells the Maharani: '"Your ambitions are so young, woman. Marriage, youth, power-all these are dreams that drift away like dust before the inevitability of death .. (Mehta, *Raj* 126).

The Sati Mata continues:

'The **title sati should not be given to a woman who burns**

herself but to a woman of virtue. And the greatest virtue is endurance. I am called the Sati Mata because my gurus are the five Satis, those five virtuous women who refused to bum themselves on their husbands' pyres. The true sati has the will to continue when the familiar world fragments around her.... You will also be known as a Sati Mata, Maharani-sahib. When the nagaras of Balmer Fort are smashed before your eyes' (Mehta, *Raj* 127)

The Maharani is frightened because the Balmer nagaras can be broken only when Balmer Fort is conquered. Casting aside all her regal dignity, the Maharani prostrates herself on the tiger skin, ignoring the cobra turning towards her, begs the Sati Mata to show her a way to make reparation for any foolish actions that might have released evil influences and to give her a mantra to placate the anger of the Goddess. The Sati Mata chides the Maharani for believing in goddesses and mantras like a child (Mehta, Raj 127). The Maharani sheds tears and says:

'Only one who has achieved detachment could speak such words without profanity. But I am an ordinary mortal. My son fights another nation's wars. My husband is under siege from his governing council in his own citadel. You say the nagaras will be smashed before our eyes. Your words are

> Ml of death.... We have need of help, Sati Mata. I beg of you give me a mantra to protect our house against the threat of destruction.' (Mehta, *Raj* 127-28)

The Sati Mata raises her hand in benediction and Jaya sees a red glow enveloping the ascetic's palm (Mehta *Raj* 128). The Sati Mata says: ""You have insisted on a mantra and 1 must give you one. This will be your mantra against fear, Maharani-sahib. Ram Nam Sat Hai. The Name of God is Truth'" (Mehta .*Raj* 128). The Maharani stands up and shoots **back: .**

> 'The mantra of death! ... If the foundations of our house tremble, so be it. But I will not speak a mantra that should fall only from the lips of a widow following her husband's funeral pyre! I am the wife of Jai Singh-ji. I shall, never live on as Jai Singh's widow!... I am a Maharani of Balmer. Like my great predecessors, I shall bum myself, before I speak your mantra. (Mehta *Raj* 128)

The Sati Mata tells the Maharani to repeat the mantra until she has understood its meaning and then, closing her eyes, the Sati Maw appears to enter a trance and a voice seems to swell up from the earth and resonate in the stillness: "'Ram Nam Sat Hai. The Name of God is Truth. Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!"' (Mehta, *Raj* 128).

In the summer of 1917, Tikka is wounded at Cambrai. He writes that Prince Pratap crawled under enemy wire to rescue him and carry him back to their lines, unaided by the Sirpur retainers who were lying drunk in their villages and that, therefore, the Balmer Lancers now treat Prince Pratap like a god. Upon reading Tikka's letter, the Maharani says that Balmer owes the Sirpurs a debt which can never be repaid and adds that the marriage of Jaya and Prince Pratap can no longer be delayed. Jai Singh, who does not favour Prince Pratap for Jaya, argues against the match but, ultimately tells the Maharani to do as she thinks best. Jaya is horrified to hear this (Mehta, *Raj* 132-33).

The Maharani exchanges horoscopes with the Dowager Maharani of Sirpur. From the convalescing Tikka's letters, Jaya learns that Prince Pratap is a heavy burden on the Sirpur treasury because he spends lavishly on dinners in hotels and courtesans in brothels. From the Dowager's letters Jaya learns that Sirpur is banking on Jaya's dowry to take the pressure of Prince Pratap's extravagance off the state. On the day that Jaya's nuptial arrangements are concluded, the Sati Mata sends a garland of marigolds in blessing and repeats her prediction that Jaya will marry a great sword. As the engagement presents start arriving from Sirpur, the zenana is excited but Jaya is dispirited (Mehta, *Raj* 134-35).

The Maharajah returns from a secret meeting of Indian kings and

Indian nationalist leaders in Patiala to announce that **he** proposes, with **the** guidance of Maharajah Dungra and **Mrs.Roy's** cousin, **the** lawyer Arm **Roy,** to **devise a constitution for Balmer which the British Empire cannot alter to its advantage. The following month Jaya is finally and formally engaged to Prince Pratap. Jaya feels only revulsion at the sight of the portrait of Prince Pratap with his heavy-lidded eyes and bored smile. Kept in her room, the portrait seems to chill the chamber, but she has to garland it every day and recite prayers for the well-being of her future husband** (Mehta ***Raj*** **135-37).**

In **January, the lawyer Arun Roy arrives from Bengal. Jaya and the other ladies of the zenana find him very handsome. Maharajah Dungra, a huge** man, **arrives with his equally huge son,** who is **paradoxically called Tiny. Jai Singh takes his visitors on a tour of his kingdom. Whenever someone trusted leaves the Fort to join the Maharajah, the Maharani sends her husband reports of the Council meetings and Raja Man Singh's movements. Jaya carries the heavily sealed envelopes to the messenger and sometimes adds a note of her own. Once Jai Singh summons Jaya herself. The Senapathy drives Jaya into the jungle and stops near an abandoned fort. Horses are waiting for them. The Senapathy hands Jaya a spear saying that the Maharajah wishes her to gain some experience of riding with a spear, though there is no question** of her **trying to stick** a

pig. He also hands her a pistol so that, in case she gets thrown, she can use it to frighten away any animals. **They** join **the** other spears who are **waiting at a rocky nullah. Suddenly a boar is sighted. The Maharajah races after it, holding a dagger and not a spear. The boar is almost cornered by the Maharajah, Tiny and Aran Roy. The lawyer from Calcutta strikes with his lance but the lance snaps from the momentum of the animal's leap. The wounded boar races towards the lake, the broken** lance **sticking** out **from one shoulder. The boar moves in a straight line** towards jaya's **horse, its small** eyes **fixed on her. Remembering Major Vir Singh's instructions,** Jaya spurs **her horse to gain momentum so that speed will add strength to her blow. Jaya strikes correctly. Her wooden lance snaps, but the boar is** also **killed. Arun Roy congratulates her. Later** in the **evening** a **villager tells them that the boar killed by Jaya was old enough to have in its head a pig-pearl which is unparallelled, shines like moonlight and has magical properties. Throughout the day Jaya feels close to Arun Roy (Mehta, Raj 140-47).**

After **their return to the Fort, one day, Jaya is summoned by her father and Maharajah Dungra to her father's** office. **The table in** front **of them is covered with green files. They are the stock certificates which** Maharajah **Dungra gave Jai Singh in London in 1898** as **gift on the occasion** of the- **birth of his heir** Tikka. Jai **Singh has now made** them over

to **Jaya. He warns that Jaya should tell no one about the stock certificates,** not even **her mother or** even **her husband. Maharajah Dungra explains to her that it is like the secret cache of money for hard times kept by every good housewife, to be used when she needs something for herself. Dungra adds that until such an emergency occurs, his son Tiny and he will keep the wealth safe for her in Dungra. Jaya innocently asks if the papers are wealth. Dungra says that they are a new kind of wealth and that, in the twenty** years **since he bought them, their value has multiplied** many times over. **Jaya is saddened by the reminder of her impending wedding. However, she is pleased when A run Roy, coming to say goodbye, hands her the pig-pearl from the boar she killed. As Arun Roy walks away, Jaya feels that she is his conspirator in a plot he has not yet revealed (Mehta, Raj 148-49).**

Balmer celebrates Divali gaily. Two days later Maharajah Jai Singh congratulates the Maharani on having mothered a lion because he has received commendatory despatches from his son's Commander-in-Chief, General Allenby, and from **the Viceroy about the feat of arms and courage displayed by the Balmer troops in the Middle East. There is also a letter from Tikka hinting that he may soon come home. The Maharani cries upon hearing this. However, hard upon these arrives a telegram announcing the glorious death in battle of the heir to the throne of**

Balmer. Maharajah Jai Singh goes berserk, but the Maharani, sans tears, issues appropriate instructions to Jaya. Lights are extinguished and cooking pots are smashed in Balmer Fort and the whole of Balmer is immersed in gloomy mourning. On the fifth day of the mourning, the Maharajah announces in the Durbar Hall that the war in the Middle East has ended (Mehta, *Raj* 150-55).

The Maharajah can hardly stand up as the homecoming Balmer Lancers bring home the ashes of Tikka. The Maharani goes berserk on seeing her son's ashes and, beating Jaya's shoulders with her fists, she screams that the Maharajah has killed her son by his senseless, hopeless rebellions against the Angrez. Kuki-bai asks Jaya to send for the Sati Mata because the Maharani has lost control of her senses. Then Kuki-bai sequesters the Maharani in her own chambers and asks the Baran to announce that the Maharani is performing a special puja for her son. Jaya goes to inform her father of her mother's condition but the Senapathy and the Raj Guru bar her way saying that the doctors are with him. When Kuki-bai leams of this, she despatches Jaya in haste to tell Maharajah Jai Singh that he should not eat anything from Raja Man Singh’s house. Jaya races through the corridors to do so, but the Household Guards bar her way, saying that the Maharajah is in Council. Jaya waits outside. When the doors are opened, Raja Man Singh comes out with fury writ large on

his face. Upon seeing Jaya, be puts **on** a show of sorrow and sympathy. Rushing into her father's darkened bedroom, Jaya sees that his left **foot** is **not encircled with the heavy gold anklet of sovereignty, which he is holding in his hands. Upon seeing Jaya, Jai Singh tells her that he has informed the Council that she is to become ruler of Balmer, with Raja Man Singh ruling as Regent until she comes of age, but he is not certain about what will happen after that. He urges Jaya to guard the honour of the people and complete the reforms he has begun.** Jaya tells **him not to** cat **lood from** Raja Man **Singh's house, but he does not hear her. When she repeats her warning, the** Raj **Guru embraces her and tells her not to look for conspiracy where there is none, adding that the Maharajah** is **dying because his time has come. He asks Jaya to call her mother.** As **though the Sati Mata has instilled her own strength into her, the Maharani serenely sits by the Maharajah's deathbed until he** is **pronounced dead (Mehta, *Raj* 156-58).**

As the priests prepare the Maharajah's body for cremation, the Maharani sits by the bed, denuded of all signs of matrimony. She calls for scissors and cuts of her hair. Once the body is carried away, the Maharani is shunned and reviled by the women of the zenana as an unfortunate and unclean widow. The Maharani, following custom, breaks her bangles on a slab of stone. The old women grind the broken bangles into dust. Jaya

hits out blindly at the old women. But she cannot silence the obscene litany. The Maharani passes regally under a shower of broken bangles thrown on her by the women of the zenana. At the zenana temple the Maharani tells Jaya that she wishes to be alone till the cannons announce the **performance of the Maharajah's last rites. She enters the Temple of** the **Balmer Maharanis, barring the wooden doors behind her. As Jaya stands forlornly on the pathway, she hears the cannons announcing that her cousin John is breaking her father's skull to release his soul and she curses herself aloud for being born a girl and so barred from the last rites. Kuki-bai and the Sati Mata come running and ask after the Maharani. The doors of the temple are broken open and the Maharani is discovered, trying to commit sati. The Sati Mata lifts her burning body and flings it unceremoniously into a nearby canal. Kuki-bai chides the Maharani because Jai Singh's grandfather, the Lion of Balmer, banned the practice of sati forever. The Sati Mata asks for some balm and ciothes for the Maharani because the Raj Guru will soon send for her. As if on cue a purdah lady delivers the message that the Raj Guru has urgently summoned the Maharani (Mehta *Raj* 158-61).**

At the final ceremony, the Raj Guru says:

> **'Our greatest blessing has been the continuity of our kings. For thirty-nine generations the anointed son has taken the**

throne of the anointed father, and we have never endured the cruel wars of disputed succession. But any priest unfortunate enough to be Raj Guru of Balmer when the line of direct succession is broken is enjoined to mark the solemnity of the event by breaking the nagara drums of Balmer Fort[5] (Mehta, *Raj* 161)

As Moti carries the nagara drums through the **crowds, Raja Man Singh angrily protests: '"The nagaras can be broken only when we lose our citadel. I am Regent of Balmer. 1 will not permit this madness"' (Mehta, *Raj* 161).** As, **ignoring the angry protest, the Raj Guru breaks** the **nagara drams with the sword of Balmer, the Maharani turns towards the zenana chanting: "'Ram Nam Sat Hai. The Name of God is Truth. Ram Nam Sat Hai.** Let **there be peace and peace and peace'" (Mehta, *Raj* 162).**

During the days of mourning, Jaya hears from the Baran that the Maharajah is rumoured to have been poisoned by Raja Man Singh and that Raja Man Singh has gone to Delhi to petition the Viceroy to overturn the Maharajah's decree and let his son John succeed to the Balmer gaddi (Mehta, *Raj* 162). Upon his return from Delhi, Raja Man Singh triumphantly summons the Maharani to the public courtyard and shouts at the assembled people:

'This woman's association with the House of Balmer has

ended.... She has neither husband nor son to keep her in her old age....

'What shall we give widow? . . . It is written in our ancient scriptures that we owe the widow nothing—not the food from our cooking vessels nor the water from our wells. What shall we give the widow? ... (Mehta, *Raj* 162)

As Jaya clenches her teeth in revulsion at customs which can so strip her mother of regal dignity that pity and disgust mark the features of everyone in the courtyard, the Raj Guru advances on the crowds, his spare frame shaking with rage, his hands holding aloft gold bangles, and says:

'Cruel and heartless race, you have called this woman Mother. It is your duty to succor her. . . . Fortunately, the Maharani of Balmer does not need the charity of those she has treated as her sons. The Maharajah of Dungra sends these as the sign of the brother.' (Mehta, *Raj* 163)

Then the Raj Gum delivers a veritable thunderbolt:

'A stranger opens his house to your maharani. A stranger places at her feet a brother's wealth. Tomorrow I anoint Raja Man Singh's son Maharajah of Balmer, In the ancient texts which chart the destiny of our country it was written that this

be so. But I will break the silence of the Raj Guru to tell you this. It is also written that the man who so eagerly mounts the Balmer throne after the nagara drums are broken will be your last king' (Mehta, *Raj* 163)

With the exit of her widowed mother from Balmer, Princess Jaya is virtually a prisoner of Raj a Man Singh. He marries her off in a hurry and by proxy to Prince Pratap of Sirpur. The entire ceremony is a painful experience for Prince Jaya. In the past one year, amidst rumours about the sinister suddenness of Maharajah Jai Singh's death, Raja Maan Singh's son John has been crowned Maharajah of Balmer with the support of the British Empire. Consolidating its position, the new ruling family has so humiliated the widowed Maharani as to make her flee Balmer and seek sanctuary with the Maharajah of Dungra. The Roys have been dismissed from Balmer and their sentiments publicly denounced as seditious. Kuki-bai has been silenced and confined to the concubines' quarters. Raja Maan Singh has hastened Jaya's marriage lest she threaten his son's throne. Since Prince Pratap is busy in Palestine, Raja Maan Singh, with huge sums of money, has persuaded the Sirpur Council to permit Jaya to be married by proxy. Rani Man Singh has systematically isolated Jaya so that the only person she speaks to is her maid Chandni (Mehta, *Raj* 165-68).

Going to Sirpur, Jaya commencs a new set of battles. Her husband Prince Pratap and his eider brother Maharajah Victor are moral wrecks. The priests of Sirpur are a powerful lo, with their own ambitions and schemes. The national scenario is becoming more and more complicated everyday. Maharajah Victor commits suicide. Pratap becomes Maharajah, but cannot change his philandering ways. Jaya has to bail him out when he becomes the victim of a monumental case of blackmail. Then he gets himself killed in a flying accident and she takes over as Regent of Sirpur for her four-year-old son Arjun. When he grows up, he is killed by a communally charged mob in Calcutta while trying to save his Prime Minister Sir Akbar. Weathering all these challenges, Jaya signs the Instrument of Accession to the Indian Union and files her nomination to contest the elections in democratic India. She is able to manage all this because she studied *Rajniti* as an adolescent girl.

Chapter 8

Summing Up

This thesis set out to analyse the portrayal seven historical royal princes and three fictitious royal princes in Indian English fiction so as to assess how their upbringing influenced their character and personality when they came to the public arena. The conduct of the historical royal princes has been constructed by the novelists concerned from scanty historical data available from history and legends. The fictitious royal princes are entirely the products of the imagination of the novelists concerncd, though they conform to the well known pattern of the upbringing of royal princes in colonial India.

Prince Ajat Shatru is groomed by his father's Minister, the able Vasakar, who is detached from the service of *Samrat* Bimbasar and entrusted solely with the guidance of Ajat Shatru who is stationed in Champa as the Governor. Ajat Shatru and Vasakar are answerable to Bimbasar at Raj Griha. But Vasakar, observing the spirited nature of Ajat Shatru and the increasingly pacifist tendencies of Bimbasar, decides to nurture Ajat Shatru in defiance of the ageing *Samrat.* So he encourages Ajat Shatru to commence a punitive war against Kosala on the pretext that King Prcsenjit has insulted Magadh by stopping the payment of the revenue of the village of Kashi, given originally for the toilet expenses of

the **Kosalan princess given in marriage to Bimbasar. Later, when he wins a battle in the sixteen-year-war with the confederation of Lichchavi Republics and orders the opening of the treasury to his victorious soldiers, Vasakar chides him for his impetuosity and points out that his victory was due to the charms of the most beautiful woman of Vaishali and not due to his soldiers' valour. This tickles the curiosity of Ajat Shatru, who impulsively goes to see the woman and surrenders his heart to Ambapali. He contracts a *gandharva* marriage with her. But, when she discovers his identity, she denounces him and sends him away. He leaves in rage, vowing to destroy Vaishali and claim her as his prize. He does come back and destroy Vaishali, but Ambapali confronts him in saffron robes and with a shaven head as a follower of Lord Buddha. What is** more, **she presents to him their son Vimal Kund, who appears in the saffron robes of a Buddhist *bhikku* and declines, even as alms, Ajat Shatru's crown, which his father offers him. Ajat Shatru comes as the scourge of Vaishali but a patriotic woman of Vaishali, who has renounced everything, discomfits him.**

Prince Chandragupta is a scion of the regal Moriya clan of Magadh. The usurping Navanandas murdered his entire clan and Chandragupta alone escaped, thanks to their collective self-sacrifice. Chandragupta lives in disguise, constituting a one-man Fourth World

State. **Fortune brings him in contact with Chanakya, who, because** the **Nandas insulted him, has vowed to end their usurpation through a *dharmayuddha.* He identifies the royal scion in Chandragupta, moulds** him, **guides him and enthrones him. Through Chandragupta** he **launches** his scheme to **establish a *Ramrajya* in Aryavarta.**

In the eyes of Sultan Iltutumish of Delhi, only his daughter Razia is worthy of succeeding him on the throne of the Sultanate. So he arranges for her to be brought up as a prince, well-versed in war and statecraft. After his death, Razia, drawing upon her upbringing, succeeds, after a well-timed wait, to ascend the throne of the Sultanate. She rules competently and wisely for four years. But the male-chauvinist atmosphere prevailing then and her own youthful impetuosity cost her the throne and her life.

Prince Khurram is one of the sons of Emperor Jahangir. His elder brother Khusrav forfeited his claim to the throne when he foolishly revolted against his own father and tried to capture the throne and only the Law of their ancestor Timur against taking a brother's life saved Khusrav[5]s life from Jahangir's wrath. Khusrav[5]s upbringing was responsible for his grave error: his grandfather Akbar, who had been especially fond of him, had patronized him inordinately, particularly because of his dislike for his Crown Prince Salim's (later Jahangir)

recalcitrant behaviour, and had nurtured in his tender heart intoxicating dreams of succession, since under the Timurid law, the succession was the sole prerogative of the reigning monarch.

After it is ensured that Khusrav will no longer aspire for the throne (both his eyes are put out and he is always chained to a soldier), Prince Khurram has been treated as the *de facto* Crown Prince: he is allowed to wear the red turban and he receives the province of Hissan-Firoz, the customary marks of the Crown Prince. He is also trained systematically in warfare and in commanding the Mughal army. Differences arise between him and his father over his insistence on marrying the commoner Arjumand, while his father contemplates a politically useful alliance with the Shah of Persia. When Aijumand'a aunt, the widowed Mehrunnisa, becomes Empress Nur Jahan and the virtual ruler of Hindustan, she places as many impediments as possible between Khurram and the father and creates as many misunderstandings as possible between the father and the son so as to secure the succession for her good-for-nothing son-in-law Shahriyar. However, Khurram's upbringing gives him as advantage and, following it carefully, he manages to beat back all fraternal competition and ascends the Mughal throne, sparing Nur Jahan[5]s life only at the intercession of his wife Arjumand, when Nur Jahan herself is fully resigned to the Mughal choice of *Taktya Takhta.*

The circumstances of the birth of Tipu Sultan render him a marked prince. His mother Faqr-un-Nissa, after anxious years of childlessness, got him as a gift from the shrine of Saint Tipu Mastan Oulia and therefore she is quite serious in her resolve to surrender him to God's service as she promised at the shrine. However, Tipu's father, Hyder Ali Khan, just does not wish to take chances with the succession to the kingdom of Mysore. So along with religious training, Tipu is also groomed to become a monarch. What is more, Hyder ensures that Tipu will be able to rule justly his subjects who consist of Moslems as well as Hindus, while Faqr-un-Nissa wishes him to be moulded as the spiritual leader of both the communities. When circumstances ordain that Tipu should succeed his father to the throne of Mysore, his carefully charted and comprehensive training at the feet of Maulvi Obedullah and Goverdhan Pandit and at the hands of Ghazi Khan stands him in good stead and he also becomes the first nationalist monarch of India, a thorn in the flesh of the imperialist men of the East India Company. However, the same upbringing renders him incompetent to deal with traitors and quislings, who ultimately betray him and pave the way for his death on the field of battle and for snuffing out the nationalist flame lit by him.

Dhondu Pant Nana Saheb never succeeds to the throne of his adoptive father, Bajirao II, the last Peshwa. But, having been brought up

as a potential successor, he **subsequently puts** the grooming to effective **use, at least for some time, during the first Indian War of Independence of 1857. However, his forte is not doing, but suffering. He is not born to be a hero, and he fades away into history. However, Malgonkar's re-reading of history redeems Nana Saheb from the execration poured on him as the butcher of Kanpur and rehabilitates him as a pioneering nationalist.**

Yuvaraj Abhayraj of Begwad has no illusions. His upbringing has taught him that the position of the rulers of Royal India is untenable. So, when the British Empire breaks up in India, he is prepared for it and rides the resultant storm as best as he can. He is also ready for constitutional governance in democratic India. However, he will never compromise on the honour of his royal family. That is why, when the nationalists are at the height of their power and influence, he has no hesitation in horse-whipping his dearest friend in boyhood, Kanakchand, who is now at the top of the political ladder of the nationalists.

Maharajkumar Rabindranath of Devapur is carefully governed from childhood by his mother Mohini and his grandmother Manjula to defy the subverting strategies of the British colonizers. While she was the Maharani **of Devapur State, Manjula was powerless against the British** Resident. **Now, as Dowager maharani, she is outside the pale** of **his** power **and she prepares her retainer Mohini to be impervious to the glitter**

of royalty and remain **t\rue** to the **salt of** her native heritage with the **result** that Mohini perversely remains a concubine, well outside the area of **influence of the British resident. Together, the two women chart a nationalist course for the upbringing of the only male offspring of Maharajah Bawajiraj III. The result is an unconventional maharajkumar of the colonial days who has not been taught by an English tutor, has not gone to** a **boarding establishment or to the Chiefs' College, but a very native prince who has had his schooling with a local Pandit ragged urchins roaming about the palace grounds a part-time prostitute in a hovel in the slums** of the **empty-beliy race in Bombay and the parched** subjects **of his father's kingdom with their ribs showing, a prince who prefers the challenges of the wilderness of the kingdom to the comforts of the zenana in the** palace. **In short, Rabindranath turns out to be a Maharajkumar who can not be bridled by either the Maharajah or the British Resident because he has no great love for the golden honeycomb that is royalty in colonial India.**

***Bai-sa* Jaya of Balmer is purposely trained in *Rajniti* because her father has no illusions about his poor standing with the colonial power. He also ensures that she** is **brought up as a prince rather than as a princess. When her brother is killed in World War 1 and her father dies of a broken heart, it is her training in *Rajniti* that comes to her succor,**

particularly in view of **the attitude of her father's successor, her** uncle **Raja Man Singh's Anglophile son. When she is hurriedly married off to Prince Pratap of Sirpur and sent away, she has to undergo intolerable privation and humiliation through all of which her training in *Rajniti* is her only defence and protection. Finally, when the wheels of history turn inexorably, and Royal India is swamped by British India and disappears into the Indian Union, the Raj Guru of Balmer re-interprets *Rajniti* for her to counsel that, though the monarch is now replaced by the democrat, her *dharma* remains unchanged: the protection of the people. So Jaya files her nomination to contest the elections.**

The analysis above shows that the upbringing of the historical princes was largely responsible for their success or failure in later life. Where their early mentors moulded their character and personality properly, the results were happy, as in the case of Ambapali, Chandragupta, Razia and Khurram. The kind of training and motivation provided to Ajat Shatru by his counselor Vasakar could produce only a battering ram, a warrior brute who can devastate a great cultured nation but cannot handle his own son who, when he offers his crown to him. declines it even as alms. The efficacy of proper and wise upbringing is also borne out by the stories of Tipu Sultan and Nana Saheb. The consequences of inappropriate upbringing were quite obvious during the

British colonial period, when the children of Indian rulers were deliberately alienated from their native heritage by the British colonisers, **who fashioned a very effective mechanism to subvert their royal minds. On the contrary, where the princes were purposely brought up as native princes, they remained true to their salt, as illustrated in the stories of Rabindranath and Jaya. Abhayraj, by undergoing the British colonial training, but overcoming its evil effects through the sensitivity nurtured in him by his early environment and later training, proves that the stories of** Maharajkumar Rabindranath **and *Bai-sa* Jaya are quite** within **the bounds of credibility and plausibility.**

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