Princely India Re-imagined

A historical anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the present

Aya Ikegame

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The princely states of India covered about 40 per cent of the Indian subcontinent at the time of Indian independence, and they collapsed after the departure of the British. This book provides a chronological analysis of the Princely State in colonial times and its post-colonial legacies. Focusing on one of the largest and most important of these states, the Princely State of Mysore, it offers a novel interpretation and thorough investigation of the relationship of king and subject in South Asia.

The book argues that the denial of political and economic power to the king, especially after 1831 when direct British control was imposed over the state administration in Mysore, was paralleled by a counter-balancing multiplication of kingly ritual, rites, and social duties. The book looks at how, at the very time when kingly authority was lacking income and powers of patronage, its local sources of power and social roots were being reinforced and rebuilt in a variety of ways.

Using a combination of historical and anthropological methodologies, and based upon substantial archival and field research, the book argues that the idea of kingship lived on in South India and continues to play a vital and important role in contemporary South Indian social and political life.

Aya Ikegame is a research associate for the ERC-funded OECUMENE project ‘Citizenship after Orientalism’ at the Open University, UK. She has co-edited *The Guru in South Asia: new interdisciplinary perspectives* (Routledge, 2012) with Jacob Copeman.

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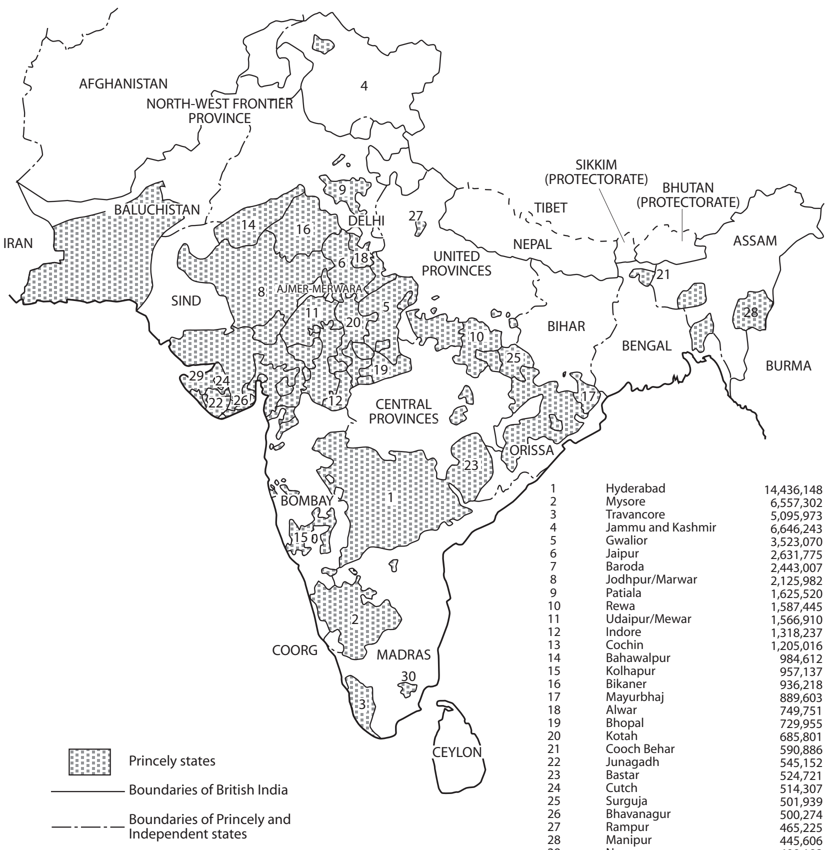
Abbreviations

B	brother
b.	born
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
Cham	Palace Chamundhi Thotti Files
D	daughter
d.	died
e	elder
F	father
GOI	Government of India
JD (S)	Janata Dal (Secular)
KSA	Karnataka State Archives, Bangalore
KSA/MPD	Karnataka State Archives, Mysore Palace Division, Mysore
L/P&S/13	Political & Secret International Files, Collection 25
M	mother
Muz.	Muzrai Files
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
OBC	Other Backward Class
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collection, the British Library, London
PAR	Palace Administration Report
PCO	Palace Controller Office Files
PM	Palace Maramat Files
r.	ruled
R/1	Crown Representative Record
R/2	Crown Representative Records (Mysore)
Rs	rupees
SC/ST	Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
Skt	Sanskrit
Tam.	Tamil
UBS	Urs Boarding School Files
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
y	younger
Z	sister
MyBe/eZDy	marriage between mother’s younger brother (who is elder than the bride) and elder sister’s daughter (who is younger than the gloom)

List of the Mysore maharajas in this book

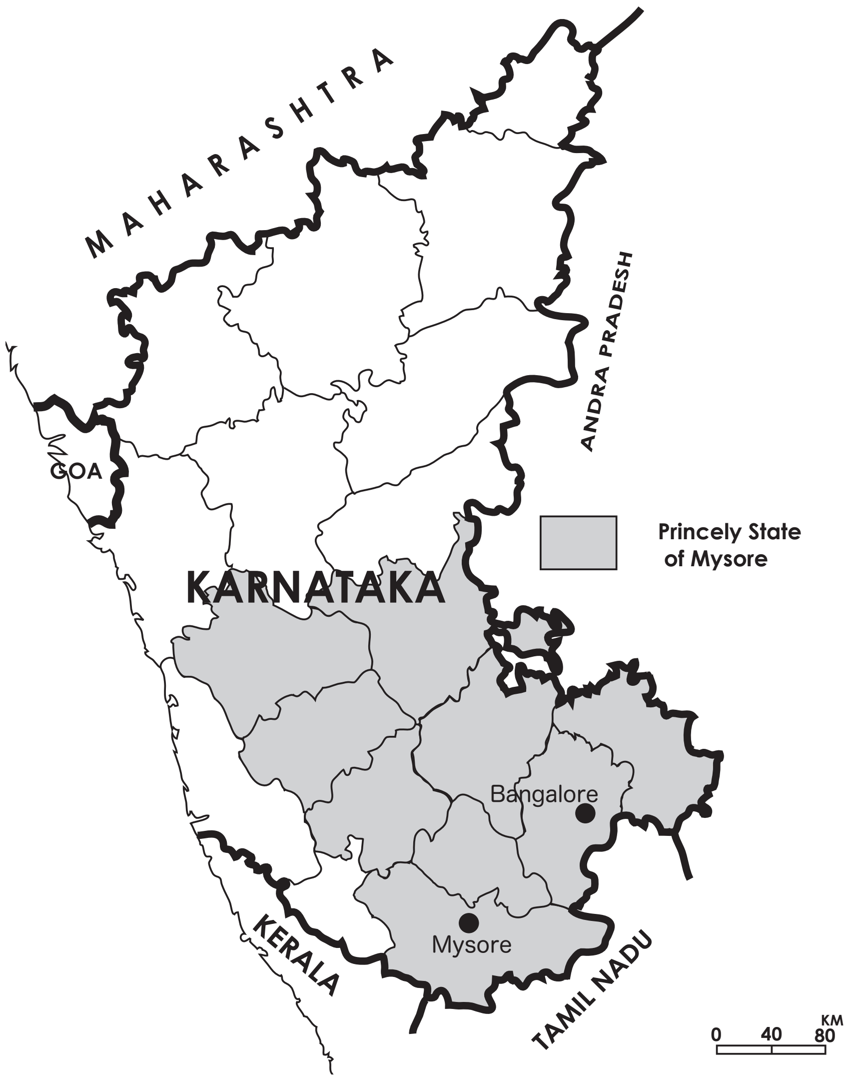
Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (1810–1831 with full administrative power)	1799–1868
Chamarajendra Wodeyar X	(b. 1863–d. 1894) 1881–1894
Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV	(b. 1884–d. 1940) 1902–1940
Jayachamaraja Wodeyar	(b. 1919–d. 1974) 1940–1947

General maps



1	Hyderabad	14,436,148
2	Mysore	6,557,302
3	Travancore	5,095,973
4	Jammu and Kashmir	6,646,243
5	Gwalior	3,523,070
6	Jaipur	2,631,775
7	Baroda	2,443,007
8	Jodhpur/Marwar	2,125,982
9	Patiala	1,625,520
10	Rewa	1,587,445
11	Udaipur/Mewar	1,566,910
12	Indore	1,318,237
13	Cochin	1,205,016
14	Bahawalpur	984,612
15	Kolhapur	957,137
16	Bikaner	936,218
17	Mayurbhaj	889,603
18	Alwar	749,751
19	Bhopal	729,955
20	Kotah	685,801
21	Cooch Behar	590,886
22	Junagadh	545,152
23	Bastar	524,721
24	Cutch	514,307
25	Surguja	501,939
26	Bhavanagur	500,274
27	Rampur	465,225
28	Manipur	445,606
29	Nawanagar	409,192
30	Pudukkottai	400,694
Other States		22,616,944
Total Population all Princely States, Agencies and Tribal Areas		81,310,845

Map 1 British India and princely states (1947)



Map 2 The princely state of Mysore and the modern state of Karnataka (1981)

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To begin with, I should acknowledge my alma mater, Waseda University in Tokyo, since sections of this book have clearly been influenced by my initial undergraduate training in architecture (and a first introduction to Sanskrit). My subsequent study (in French and English) on architectural conservation at Leuven University in Belgium also proved to be surprisingly useful when it came to understanding and interpreting the material and spatial reconfiguration of Mysore city during colonial times. The Kyoto University Foundation (1999), the Toyota Foundation (2000–01), the Japan Foundation for the Promotion of Sciences (JSPS) fellowships (a Junior Fellowship in 1999–2001 and a Senior Fellowship in 2001–04), and the Matsushita-Panasonic International Foundation (2006–07), collectively made possible three years of fieldwork in Mysore, as well as library and archival work in London and Paris, supplemental research trips, and the commencement of the writing-up of my research. With the help of an ESRC post-doctoral fellowship (2007–08), I was able to conduct additional archival research and fieldwork in Karnataka. Writing-up and revision then continued whilst I held a subsequent ESRC research award for work on mathas and education in Karnataka, undertaken in 2009–10 with inspirational guidance from Professor Patricia Jeffery. I then continued to work on the book while I was briefly a Research Fellow in the MINDAS centre at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan (2010–11), where my research was supported by the always energetic and helpful Minoru Mio sensei.

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In Mysore city, I owe so many things to so many people. Professor Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat and Dr Vasundhara Filliozat supported my life in many ways and introduced me to old Mysorean culture. Former director Dr J. V. Gayatri and the staff in the Karnataka State Archives, Mysore Palace Division not only helped my work in the archives but were also always supportive and friendly. They even shared their lunch boxes with me while I was working in their rented space in the Gayatri temple.

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Aya Ikegame,
Edinburgh, January 2012

1 Introduction

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The Indian princely state

In an era of subaltern historiography and rising low-caste political consciousness, it seems that every previously silent minority and majority in India is acquiring a voice. The singular exception to this is the Indian princely state.[1] Unmourned, yet unforgotten, they dominated nearly half of the landscape in colonial times, yet for the most part were treated as mere pawns by the colonial power and entirely disregarded by the Indian national movement. The politically acceptable parts of India's princely past have been salvaged in histories of reforming diwans, or prime ministers, and studies concerning the power struggles amongst high or dominant caste elites. The rajas, or kings, themselves and their families, however, have been entirely neglected. Even in studies of the colonial period, rajas are often depicted, in a spirit not unfamiliar to James Mill,[2] as ghosts of the past: powerless, self-indulgent, occasionally amusingly eccentric, yet of little political significance or social consequence. They are truly the people without history, whose role historians are little inclined to address. Since the abolition of the princely states soon after independence, and later (in 1971) the abolition of their stipends or 'privy purses' (sometimes described as mere 'pensions'), their descendants have become even more of an embarrassment: a curiosity to amuse tourists and a subject that Indians are disinclined to discuss in public. Nonetheless, the former royal families still exist. Many have moved into business or politics and, through kin networks, exercise an influence disproportionate to their status as ordinary (albeit high-caste) citizens. In private, ordinary Indians still discuss and remember them, a great many ceremonial and ritual occasions still require their presence, and, in many parts of India, a link to royalty, no matter how ephemeral, is still often used and valued. Politicians and leaders in various walks of life seek to imitate them and employ kingly symbols, discourses, and instruments of patronage.

The discrediting of Indian kingship is obviously not unrelated to the relationship, lasting over a century, between Indian kings and the colonial power that dominated the subcontinent prior to their collective abolition. Just as the Americans propped up the Japanese monarchy for their own purposes post 1945, so in colonial Africa and India, the British sustained as an instrument of their power 'traditional' rulers who had apparently long out-lived their usefulness, or in some cases had never even previously existed. In most cases, it has been argued, the resulting locus of kingship became entirely meaningless and hollow. At its worst, their relationship with the British has been regarded as treasonous, a source of profound inequality, and severely injurious to the growth of democratic, civil society. But how true is this, and do such critical perspectives make any sense from contemporary and indigenous points of view?

We can bring these questions closer to the subject of this volume by describing the dusty streets of Mysore city. Every Sunday night in Mysore, the palace is brilliantly lit with multi-coloured lights that bathe the streets and delight the gaze of the tourists who flock to the city centre to see them. The scion of the former Maharaja of Mysore still has the right to occupy a part (but not all) of this palace, and it is the association with his family name that affords the palace such distinction. Yet the lights are paid for by the Karnataka state government and they are illuminated, not in reverence or commemoration of the maharaja's dynasty, but simply to promote the image of the 'royal city', wherein the palace is the most symbolic monument.

There were more than five hundred princely states in India (including present-day Pakistan and Bangladesh) that had native Indian 'rulers'[3] as their sovereigns under British rule. They occupied nearly forty-five per cent of the area and governed thirty-five per cent of the population of India before the Partition in 1947. Even in the area under direct British control, many *zamindars* and village landlords, who did not have any title, nor recognition as native rulers, sometimes called themselves *rājā*, or behaved as if they were. India was indeed a kingdom of kings. Even in present times, we can see many former native rulers or their descendants playing important roles in public life. Some of them also still fantasise about their royal lifestyle, which they seek to regenerate and sustain through a new involvement in the contemporary consumer culture of India (Ramusack 1995). They are no longer rulers or sovereigns, but they are still functioning as 'royals'.

Beyond their official capacities, kingship continues to shape political behaviour in some parts of India and to invest it with a meaning that is recognisable to ordinary people. This is particularly the case in the South. To understand the role of kingship in political life, it is important to realise that it is not just one thing, but has several forms and faces. It does not merely occupy the limited space created for it by colonialism, nor does it entirely reproduce the symbolic and political order of pre-colonial times, since that world has ceased to exist. Instead, kingship has adapted and changed and has learned to work at several levels. Most crucially, however, it still serves a significant function in connecting people at a local level to wider political spheres in contemporary India.[4] To make sense of this, we must investigate the roles that kingship performs, and how it came to assume its present forms in South India, through the experience of the recent and colonial past.

Caste, king, and dominance

Indian kingship occupies an ambiguous and uncertain position in theories of Indian society. This is because, in the theory of *varna* hierarchy, although kings and landlords have been economically and politically powerful throughout the history of Indian subcontinent, the Kshatriya varna, to which Indian kings claim to belong, has only the second highest position next to the Brahmins. The secondary position of Kshatriyas in the caste hierarchy was analysed theoretically in Louis Dumont's influential and controversial work on caste, *Homo Hierarchicus* (1980). Dumont argued that the hierarchical structure of the caste system is based on a single principle: the opposition of the pure and the impure (ibid.: 43). By this definition, the Kshatriyas who engage themselves with 'impure' activities, such as meat eating, animal sacrifices, and war, have to reconcile themselves to their inferior position in relation to the Brahmins, whose main concern is to maintain their 'purity'. Dumont further claimed that hierarchy can be defined as the principle by which the elements (each caste) within a whole are ranked in relation to the whole (hierarchy or the system of caste), and that since, in the majority of societies, it is the religious ideology which provides the view of the whole, this ranking will be religious in nature (ibid.: 66). Although Dumont acknowledged the fact that the caste system gave a certain precedence to the domain of political and economical power, which the Kshatriya embodies (this is the reason why vegetarian merchants had to accept a position subordinate to Kshatriyas), he nonetheless concluded that 'in theory, power is ultimately subordinate to priesthood... Status and power, and consequently spiritual authority and temporal authority, are absolutely distinguished' (ibid.: 71–2).

Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* has inspired many debates and polemics amongst scholars of Indian society and has encouraged the emergence of numerous alternative views on caste (Das 1982; Dirks 1987; Fuller 1992; Gupta 2000; Parry 1980, 1985, 1986, 1994; Raheja 1988a; Quigley 1993, 1995 etc.). In thinking about Indian kingship under colonialism within these debates, a particularly important point for us to note is the Orientalist element in his theorisation. Thus, some scholars have argued that Dumont's view of caste was not exactly novel, but was the ultimate synthesis of the Orientalist and colonial views of Indian society, which contrast the spiritual and holistic Orient to the rational and individualist West (cf. Marriott 1969; Appadurai 1986; Inden 1986a, 1986b; Dirks 1989; Raheja 1988b). In several respects, therefore, his views on caste still require historicisation.

The Dumontian view of caste has met with diverse criticism from anthropologists, who were able to offer alternative views of caste and hierarchy using ethnological evidence. Most of them are what Dipankar Gupta describes as 'Hocart-inspired' scholars, who emphasise the centrality of Indian kings and dominant castes both in the ritual and cultural life of Indian society, rather than ascribing to the Brahminical perspective which Dumont's work clearly supported (Gupta 2000: 116–47). Thus, Jonathan Parry and Gloria G. Raheja separately found that, in the gift-exchange between clients and funeral priests in Benares, or between dominant castes and Brahmins in a village in UP (Uttar Pradesh), Brahmins are reluctant to take certain gifts (*dān*) from their patron, since the gift contains the inauspiciousness of the donor, yet they are nonetheless still obliged to receive them (Parry 1985; Raheja 1988a). This ethnographical evidence shows that Brahmins are, like other service castes, recipients of the sin (or inauspiciousness) of the dominant caste and they cannot refuse this role. Quigley also contested Dumont's idea that only the Brahmins occupy the highest ritual position by emphasising the ritual reciprocity and equivalence between castes, based upon his research in Nepal (Quigley 1993, 1995). The contribution of various anthropologists has been to not only present alternative perspectives, but also to question the separation of the domains of religion and politics, which was a fundamental shared theoretical assumption of the Orientalist and colonial scholars, as well as of Dumont's work. They have thus argued that kings and dominant castes occupy the central position, not only in the narrowly defined politico-economic domain, but also in the cultural and religious domains, which Dumont insisted was dominated by the Brahmin.

Although anthropologists have to a large extent successfully contested Dumont's Brahmin-centred views on caste, they have not necessarily taken the historical dimension into account. Their model, whether Kshatriya-centred or not, still remains ahistorical and, therefore, presupposes a relatively unchanging India. Nicolas Dirks, on the other hand, has presented an alternative caste theory that is historically specific (Dirks 1987). He has argued, through an examination of the ethnohistory of Pudukkkottai, a 'little kingdom' in Tamil Nadu, that the ritual and political centrality of Indian kings was undermined by British rule and that the image of traditional India or caste society, with the Brahmins at its apex, was nothing but an invention of colonialism (see also Dirks 2001: 3–6). Dirks' detailed historical sources described the significant political and religious role of kings in pre-colonial Indian polities (which he calls 'the old regime') and its subsequent decline. Interestingly, Dirks argues, this 'decline' of the old regime did not happen through their being weakened or marginalised, but was effected through their being re-invented by colonialism as a splendid 'theatre state', which was in actuality a mere charade of the old regime.

The work of Nicholas has been significant in enriching our understanding of the role of colonialism in the modern formation of Indian 'tradition' and has offered a very effective critique of Orientalist tendencies within modern social sciences. His thesis was provocative and convincing. Yet, it is based upon a small Indian state, which could have been a Zamindari estate, considering its territorial size and population. Dirk's study could, therefore, be criticised as unrepresentative and requires at least to be tested by comparison with neighbouring Indian princely states. The actual effects of colonialism in Dirk's study are also glossed over somewhat hurriedly, the focus being primarily on the pristine order of the pre-colonial kingdom, before it was sullied by European contact. This volume, by contrast, sets out to question specifically the relationship between Indian kingship and colonialism. It argues that the transformation of Indian kingship during the colonial period did indeed mediate the transition from the pre-colonial polity to post-colonial democracy. However, this does not mean that elements of the old regime simply survived through colonial times. The ideas and practices of old polity were re-examined and re-interpreted in order to fit with the radically changing nature of colonial societies and to meet with new demands from the people. From this perspective we encounter a key point of criticism in that the political practices of contemporary India still rely heavily on the language and ideas of kingship, even after the demise of the king. Dirks' argument fails to give any insight into this contemporary cultural aspect of political behaviour, which might arguably be seen as evidence of the survival of the political repertoire of 'the old regime'.[5]

In emphasising the enduring cultural and social roles of kingship, there is a danger that we may overlook the social changes and transformations inevitably brought about by colonial modernity. This poses the danger of taking us back to the Orientalists' construction of an 'unchanging' India. This is not a specific problem that studies of Indian kingship have encountered, but it is a more general dilemma faced by the historiography of colonial and post-colonial India. How historians have addressed this issue offers some important insights that need to be considered by anthropologists and others working within the same field.

The post-colonial predicament in historical writing on India

The debate over continuity and change has recently become a heated topic, with heavy political tones, amongst historians and anthropologists on South Asia alike (cf. Bates 2006; Washbrook 2004).[6] Although this contrast itself has merely been a reflection of the differences between history and the social sciences in general, interestingly it seems that more historians support a 'continuity' thesis of sorts, whilst anthropologists prefer to emphasise revolutionary 'change'. In his work on caste, Nicholas Dirks (2001) has highlighted the peculiar difficulties confronting contemporary exercises in historical writing on India. According to him, even relatively recent historical writing has profoundly inherited the views of British colonial historiography of the nineteenth century. These views represented British rule as tolerant, discreet, and even accidental – thereby justifying colonial rule as unoppressive and a mere reproduction of traditional styles of government, albeit in a more efficient, fair, and modern form. Dirks cites C.A. Bayly's work on eighteenth-century India as an example of this. By emphasising the continuity of Indian social norms and Indian 'agency' during the period of the expansion of the East India Company's domination, Bayly intended to challenge the old Marxist view that regarded this century as a period of decline. Dirks sees this as affirming the view that 'the British only succeeded in their project of expansion, and the consolidation of colonial rule, through the desires, actions, and agency of Indians' (Dirks 2001: 307). Dirks also criticises the approach of contemporary neo-Marxist historians. Thus he argues that David Washbrook's approach to issues of class and capital – which suggests that there was indigenous capitalist development in Indian society – leads us to conclude that British colonialism was 'incidental' (ibid.: 309). Dirks seems to suggest that these historians, who tried to regard Indian agency as an important force of history, undermine the hegemonic penetration of colonial rule and are, in fact, nothing but apologists of British imperialism.

Dirks' critique was preceded by Gyan Prakash's paper on Indian historiography, in which he condemned social and Marxist historians as being 'foundationalists' and therefore incapable of escaping from the traditional Orientalist's view of India, which essentialised India as a monolithic entity which was merely a mirror image, or antithesis, of the society and culture of the West (Prakash 1990). Prakash admits that social historians and Marxist historians have shifted the idea of an 'undivided and essential India' developed by the Orientalists into more diverse areas, but he criticises both for their way of writing history. He argues that, 'writing history implies recapturing the operation of classes and structures' (ibid.: 397). From this 'foundational' point of view he maintains 'we can do no better than document these founding subjects of history, unless we prefer the impossibility of coherent writing amidst the chaos of heterogeneity' – which he himself seems to desire (ibid.: 397).[7]

As Rosalind O'Hanlon and David Washbrook have pointed out, Prakash's refusal of particular themes and categories does not necessarily lead him to achieve what he intends – for example, the recognition of differences and forms of resistance and an engagement with the emancipatory politics of the dispossessed (O'Hanlon and Washbrook 1992). Moreover, feminism and criticism deriving from India's ethnic minorities, with whom Prakash intends to form an alliance, do not necessarily themselves hesitate to use foundational categories and notions of identity or agency (ibid.: 154). His approach to the heterogeneity of society is even more self-restricted by the refusal of any sort of categorisation or structural analysis. This ironical problem is well described by O'Hanlon and Washbrook, as follows:

> The difficulty here is that it is hard to see how this approach can have room for any theory about experience as the medium through which resistances emerge and are crystallized or about the conditions under which the subordinate can become active agents of their own emancipation on the basis of this experience. Some conception of experience and agency are absolutely required by the dispossessed's call for a politics of contest, for it is not clear how the dispersed effect of power relations can at the same time be an agent whose experience and reflection form the basis of a striving for change. (ibid.: 152–3)

It seems that the critiques of this tendency in postmodern and postcolonial studies have highlighted a fundamental theoretical and practical weakness deriving from an excess of idealism. However, Dirks rejects this criticism, suggesting that 'colonialism [has] become so bad a thing "to think", for many different voices in the academy today' that 'Cambridge historians' and other 'steadily growing groups of historians, anthropologists, and cultural critics' have come to view the critical colonial history inspired by postmodernist and poststructuralist perspectives merely as 'a new form of academic terrorism' (Dirks 2001: 312; see also Prakash 1992). There are, of course, unreasonable attacks on postcolonial studies in general, and these attacks often arise from anxieties of their own. But in turn, it does not seem reasonable for Dirks simply to label all historians or anthropologists with whom he disagrees as 'apologists' for colonial rule.

If we limit our attention to the creation and continuity of cultural and political values at a local level, and instead accept colonial power as inescapably dominant and penetrative, it can be argued that there is a risk that we will exclude from analysis the many small stories of creation by which people adapted to colonial hegemony and at times have succeeded in its subversion. If so, this discourse of exclusion becomes itself nothing but a violent and oppressive mode of interpretation, of the sort which post modern and postcolonial studies wish to critique. Narratives that tell only of the destructive power of colonialism may actually eliminate the voices that they seek to represent.

On the other hand, it might be too early to conclude that the perspectives of postcolonial critiques are incompatible with historiographies that endeavour to interpret differences and change by employing categories and structure. O'Hanlon and Washbrook have concluded that it is impossible 'to ride on two horses at once', especially when 'one of these may not be a horse that brooks inconstant riders' (1992: 167). But is this really so? Are these two historiographical narratives as incompatible as O'Hanlon and Washbrook have suggested? Are the narratives of destruction and of creation really impossible to narrate at the same time? It may seem utopian, but it should still be possible to describe, within the violence of hegemonic structures, the seeds of their negation, or at least elements of a counter-hegemonic discourse, whether it succeeds or not. As James Clifford has suggested, 'modern ethnographic histories are perhaps condemned to oscillate between two meta-narratives: one of homogenization, the other of emergence; one of loss, the other of invention' (Clifford 1988: 17). Perhaps the ethnohistory of colonial Indian kingship ought also to be a story of 'being destroyed and created' (1988: 17). This is particularly so in the case of colonial rule in India, which Guha has asserted was dominant but in practice never truly hegemonic (Guha 1998). It is necessary to see how Indian kings maintained a certain degree of their hegemony to unite and mobilise people at a time when the cultural and social bases for their legitimacy were being dramatically transformed.

Arguments concerning Indian kingship cannot escape from the problems of historical writing. In attempting to address them though, we cannot choose a better example than the case of Mysore, in which the princely state was a pure creation of colonialism, the former royal family having been restored to power within an entirely British-controlled regime in 1799.

The historical formation of Indian polity

It was precolonial Indian kingship which many postcolonial studies in the 1990s tended to emphasise as a driving force that united segmented elements into a harmonious entity through gifts of land, honour, and other resources. The advent of colonialism was thus regarded as marking the final end of pre-colonial political values and practices. This view, as we have discussed, was effective in exposing not only the destructive effects of colonialism, but also the process by which the British fabricated Indian traditions that were suitable for their own political purposes. It is worth asking, however, if pre-colonial polities and pre-colonial political imagination were so easily killed off. If the colonial, as Guha argues, was dominant but not hegemonic, it is not unreasonable to assume that there must be a space where the pre-colonial state imaginary itself was re-invented and sustained.

There have been many models presented for the historical development of state formation in pre-colonial India (cf. Sharma 1965, 2001; Mukhia 1993; Habib 1963, 1985; Pouchepadass and Stern 1991, Karashima 1999; Kulke 1982, 1995; Kimura and Tanabe 2006). Amongst them, Burton Stein's contribution was clearly one of the most important and influential. In the 1960s, Stein began applying the model of the segmentary state, developed by Aidan Southall in his anthropological study of Alur Society in Eastern Africa (Southall 1956), to a new interpretation of the ninth to thirteenth century Chola state in medieval southern India. Stein summarised the characteristics of the segmentary state as follows (Stein 1998: 20):

- There are numerous centres or political domains
- Political power (in Indian classical reference, *kshatra*) and sovereignty (or *rajadharma*) are differentiated in such a way as to permit appropriate power to be wielded by many, but full royal sovereignty only by an anointed king
- All of the numerous centres, or domains, have autonomous administrative capabilities and coercive means
- There is a state in the recognition by lesser political centres, often through ritual forms, of a single ritual centre and anointed king.

His interpretation was powerfully different from existing conventional understandings of pre-colonial Indian statehood. For instance, his argument that the transfer of revenue or surplus resources from these autonomous nuclear areas to the royal centre was of minor importance (Stein 1969: 186) obviously contradicted those Indian scholars who upheld the view that there was an Indian form of feudalism in pre-modern times. Inevitably, there have been many criticisms of the application of segmentary state theory in the interpretation of Indian state formations. Amongst these, Hermann Kulke has proposed the notion of the 'integrative polity', which attaches more importance to the incorporative ritual force of the single royal centre rather than to the fragmenting force of semi-autonomous peripheral centres (Kulke 1982). Stein himself later on proposed the idea of 'military-fiscalism' as an alternative to feudalism in explaining the character of certain pre-colonial regimes, such as that of Tipu Sultan (Stein 1985).[8]

Whatever the differences may be amongst the historians of pre-modern India, it is interesting to note that both Stein and Kulke accepted the idea of a distinction between the single ritual centre and one in which there are many political centres within a state. This distinction seems to have acquired a new significance when Indian kingship had to accept the super-imposition of colonial power and lost political and economical power (in the narrow sense of these terms).

Another important aspect of the pre-colonial segmentary state was that the single ritual centre did not necessarily have coercive power (*kshātra*) but monopolised sovereignty (*rājadharma*). However, the concept of *rājadharma* was, as many

Indologists have argued, a fuzzy one (Heesterman 1985: Lingat 1973). What was considered to be a *dharmic* (moral) action was always a matter for interpretation and contestation. In this sense, even the British 'civilising missions' could have been considered a dharmic force. Nonetheless, the British policy of indirect rule did not force them to become an active participant in the moral domain: they remained only a superficial administrative force, backed by military supremacy.[9] Many local power centres (segments) were far removed from the power centres of the new colonial regime. The impact of colonialism upon the local society was thus slow and gradual, if not ineffective. The colonial state apparatus that penetrated into agrarian society, furthermore, did not always immediately seek to undermine local power centres. The laissez-faire policy of indirect rule often worked to preserve many of their functions.

Despite the limited impact of the new structures of colonial administration, it cannot be argued that the segmentary nature of pre-colonial state formation survived intact alongside the powerful military supremacy of the colonial regime. Instead, it interacted with the new regime, interpreted new values and practices brought by colonial modernity, and re-invented itself. The relevance of the segmentary state model lies not in the 'unchanging' character of India but in the fact that it continued to change. New approaches to the study of princely India are needed, therefore, in order to understand how these changes took place and how the pre-colonial state imaginary created a space for the new democratic regimes of the twentieth century. The re-imagination of princely India should not remain outside of nationalist history any longer, but should emerge instead as a new site for the interrogation of India's social and political future.

Mysore: a model state or a puppet regime?

In the re-imagining of princely India, the princely state of Mysore (the southern half of the present-day state of Karnataka) is a challenging and inspiring subject for consideration, not only because it was one of the largest princely states, but also because of its ambiguous and uneasy position within the nationalist historiography of India. Mysore was quite unlike other princely states, whose rulers were allowed to continue in power thanks to their friendly, but often fragile, diplomatic relationship with the British. The Mysore royal house was, by contrast, 'restored' by the British following the defeat and death of the usurper Tipu Sultan at the battle of Srirangapatna in 1799. After the East India Company and its allies – Hyderabad and the Maratha confederacy – defeated Tipu, they divided his vast territories among themselves. However, the Company, afraid of the further expansion of the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad, handed over the southern portion of Tipu's territories to the heir of the old Mysore house, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, who was then only five years old. This meant that the British could effectively keep four-fifths of Tipu's territory under their direct and indirect control, and ensured that the Mysore royal house remained dependent and loyal to the British.

The restored Mysore royal house, the Wodeyar, was formerly the family of a local chief who, since the late fourteenth century, had ruled the area around Mysore city. The Wodeyar became a dominant power first by establishing alliances with other local chiefs. In 1610, Raja Wodeyar then took Srirangapatna – situated on a sandbank in the Kaveri river – from Jagadeva Raya, to whom the Vijayanagara kingdom had entrusted the Mysore region. At this time, by carrying out the state festival of Dasara, previously performed by the Vijayanagara kingdom, the Wodeyar family asserted itself as the legitimate successor to the Vijayanagara dynasty within this region. Successive Wodeyar rulers further expanded their influence. In particular, Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (r. 1672–1704) established an administrative body of eighteen departments and thereby consolidated the centralisation of power within the realm, as well as advancing as far as Madurai in the expansion of his domains. This was a time when Mysore, under the rule of the Wodeyar family, was at the peak of its prosperity. Their power then gradually declined in the early eighteenth century, until their army commander, Haider Ali – the father of Tipu – took over Srirangapatna and imprisoned the Wodeyar family, a fate they continued to endure until Tipu's death in 1799. The modern royal house of Mysore cannot therefore, in any way, escape the label of being a 'child of imperialism' (Hettne 1978: 43) or a 'puppet sovereignty' (Ray 1981: 99). The treaty concluded between Mysore and the East India Company was, moreover, highly disadvantageous to Mysore and imposed a heavy tributary payment upon the state.[10] The absolute superiority of the British further enabled them to remove administrative power from the Mysore maharaja in 1831. Although the country was administered in the name of the maharaja, the British officer conducting the administration was designated 'the Commissioner for the territories of the Maharaja of Mysore', and the maharaja was kept entirely away from any aspect of state administration. He then struggled thereafter to restore his power, whilst being constantly in fear of the possible annexation of his territory (Ray 1981: 95–120).

The uprising of 1857 changed the relationship between British paramount power and the Indian princely states. Through fear of another revolt, the British became more cautious about further territorial acquisitions, while the Indian princes who did not participate in the uprising became a necessary backbone of British rule. Mysore largely benefited from this sudden geopolitical change. The adopted son of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was recognised as a legitimate heir to the throne, and it was promised that the state administration would be given to him when he attained his majority. The state power was finally 'rendered' into the hands of the Wodeyar again in 1881. However, although the Mysore maharajas had a twenty-one gun salute bestowed upon them by the British – the highest such honour amongst Indian princes – their submissive relationship with the paramount power remained unchanged.

Despite the rather humiliating history of its maharajas, the princely state of Mysore acquired the reputation of being a model state within colonial India. This was the result of successful industrialisation and the modernisation of Mysore's infrastructure under a succession of progressive rulers and competent diwans (prime ministers).[11] Mysore was one of the first states to introduce quasi-representative bodies for the people within the state administration in 1881.[12] Mysore city itself became a symbol of the 'model state', as did the Kaveri power scheme (1899–1902), the main purpose of which was to transmit electric power to the Kolar Gold Mines, but which also made the city of Mysore the first city in India to be lit by electricity.[13] The modern history of Mysore might therefore be presented as a story of administrative innovation, successful modernisation and progressiveness. This volume, however, does not intend to present a hagiography of these achievements, or to focus on formal political developments or the conflicts over the state administration that have already been skilfully described elsewhere (Shama Rao 1936: Hettne 1978: Manor 1975, 1977, 1978a, 1978c: Chandrasekhar 1985; Chancellor 1997). Instead, its purpose is to ascertain to what extent and in what manner the pre-colonial segmentary state re-asserted itself, by examining the various strategies employed by the Mysore royals, and, the palace as an administrative body, in order to re-assume their authority within the unstable confines of the colonial polity.

The image of Mysore has always been Janus-faced, as both a puppet and, at the same time, a model state. Unlike other 'nationalist' heroes the rulers of Mysore never fought against British expansion, but they were not autocratic or oppressive either. Postcolonial critics have thus found the position of Mysore rather puzzling. It is difficult to assume that the Mysore rulers were simply representatives of an old regime, since that was practically destroyed by colonialism. At the same time, their own inventiveness was too obvious to ignore. The key to overcoming the seemingly contradictory images of the princely state of Mysore can be found in their Muslim predecessor, Tipu Sultan. Despite their rivalry and religious differences, it can be argued that the efforts of both the Wodeyars and of Tipu were directed towards the realisation of themselves as an ideal king, as defined by the constantly changing cultural values and social expectations of the region. Thus Kate Brittlebank has argued that Tipu's fascination with modern technology, military expansion, and administrative reforms should not simply be regarded as a result of his caprice, nor the actions of a modern rational thinker. Neither should his patronage of religious institutions, including Hindu temples and *maṭhas*, be regarded merely as evidence of his religious tolerance. Instead, she has claimed that these various, and sometimes contradictory, actions were taken as 'part of the expected role of the king' and that 'for one whose legitimate position might not have been fully established, they would have formed an integral and important part of that role' (Brittlebank 1995: 125). The very same argument can be made for the maharajas of Mysore following their restoration to power by the British. The administrative reforms that Tipu undertook, and those of the later princely state government, were nonetheless different in several ways. Tipu had an ambition to create a truly centralised regime, but the Wodeyar's Mysore left local power centres relatively free of intervention from the state government. The fragility of the rule of the Mysore Wodeyars was, however, no less than that of Tipu. Unlike the Maratha princes and Rajput rulers elsewhere in India, both the Wodeyars and Tipu lacked any kin network that could form a tie between them and the land-owning dominant castes who had effective political influence at the local level. Worse still for the Wodeyars, who ruled under the Pax Britannica, they were not allowed to strengthen their military power. The only way they could consolidate their position was therefore by playing the ideal role of the king, as expected by local traditions. The Wodeyar's challenge was to translate this local imaginary into the language of modernity and vice versa. The variety of actions taken by the Wodeyars was therefore different from those Tipu chose or intended in the late eighteenth century. Yet both continued to articulate what the ideal king should be and were aware of how it might be perceived by the people they ruled.

The seemingly contradictory images of Mysore in colonial times would make more sense if we considered the varieties of actions that the Mysore royal family undertook during this era as part of their own 'search for legitimacy'. Neither nationalist historiography nor colonial criticism made sense of this cultural and political imaginary, which was in fact crucial to the building of bonds between the 'restored' royal house and local power centres. To examine the strategies that the Mysore royal family adopted during colonial times will also help us to understand more broadly the changing nature of state formation from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

A postcolonial historical anthropology

As stated earlier, a key purpose of this volume is to counter the idea that Indian traditions were simply fixed and essentialised by the Orientalist discourses and practices of colonialism (Inden 1986a, 1986b, 1990; Dirks 1989, 2001; King 1999). Of course we cannot ignore the immense contribution of postcolonial thinkers, who have shown us that colonialism not only exploited the natural and human resources of India, but also constructed interpretations of Indian culture and society that suited contemporary prejudices and the instrumental purposes of colonial rule (Inden 1986a). It has been clearly demonstrated that what we tend to see as the main characteristics of Indian society were strongly articulated and enforced by colonial sociology, Indology, and colonial administration. Nicholas Dirks has argued in a similar vein that Indian kingship was rewritten by colonial ideology and practices, being preserved in its superficial aspects whilst losing its fundamental integrating function within society. Indian kingship, he argued, became a mere charade of the old regime (Dirks 1987). Nonetheless, although this perspective has strongly reminded us of the constructive power of colonial discourse and practices, as we discussed earlier, it ironically tends to deny the agency of Indian kings and their subjects, rendering them no more than puppet actors within a hollow 'theatre state'.

The effort to criticise the themes developed by some postcolonial thinkers, and to present an alternative theory of colonial kingship, was first initiated in Pamela Price's work on the Zamindari estate of Ramnad in Tamil Nadu (Price 1979, 1983, 1989, 1996). Price argued that the analysis of political change in these areas shows 'powerful processes for the continuing evolution of royal symbols and values under colonial rule' and that '(e)xamining these processes helps us to explain the nature of the charisma of major Tamil politicians of the twentieth century' (Price 1996: 6). The issues and concerns that she raised in her work will be pertinent in this study too. However, this volume will concentrate more on the cultural and social strategies adopted by the royal family and the palace in the domain secluded from the state administration – and in a sense from society itself – during the colonial period, while Price's study covers much longer periods of time (three centuries) and discusses more broadly the penetration of kingship into society. This difference in approach is partly owing to the size of the territories: the Zamindari of Ramnad being merely an estate (albeit a powerful one), whilst Mysore was one of the largest princely states and the second most important after Hyderabad. The Mysore king, being a restored king, was also by the early nineteenth century shorn of many of his economic and political powers. Mysore royal strategies of assertion and empowerment were, therefore, inevitably more cultural and social rather than political and economical. The nature, role, and influence of this cultural and social power will therefore be examined and unpicked and will be the main focus of attention.

Serious efforts to revaluate the agency of Indian royal elites during the colonial era have gained more currency in scholarship in recent years (see Ikegame and Major 2009). Manu Bhagavan (2003), for example, has argued that some princely states such as Mysore and Baroda had the ability to envision their own modern reality by initiating internal improvement and, thereby, to contest colonialism. His study on universities in the above two states has shown that their strategies to establish their own system of higher education within their territories could be regarded as a form of passive resistance against colonial domination. In following similar lines of argument to those of Price and Bhagavan, this volume has similarly had to be written in a manner quite different from other, more established, histories of Mysore. The few studies on the modern history of Mysore have concentrated on the political and economic history of the state administration and ignored the palace as a locus of power (Shama Rao 1936; Hettne 1978; Manor 1975, 1978a). While this type of history was inevitably limited to narratives of the personages of 'high-politics', this volume will concentrate on the social and cultural life of the Mysore royal family and the royal caste. These people were not often principal actors in state-level politics, where high ranking officials of the Brahmin, and later of the landed dominant castes, competed for hegemonic positions within the state. Because of their small number and their relatively limited geographical influence, the royal caste, the Urs, have never been politically dominant, but they have established a distinctive class culture. This volume will concentrate therefore more on the palace as a centre of the cultural politics of the Urs, rather than on the state, where administrative power was in the hands of state officials.

Focusing on the history of the royal family and their strategies to embody the ideals of sovereignty (*rājadharma*) enables us to understand better the relationship between colonialism and Indian kingship from a local perspective. Their colonial experience cannot be reduced to either one of heroic nationalism or one in which they are victims of colonial oppression. Rather, it exhibits more subtle forms of agency. Focusing on how the ideals of sovereignty have been re-interpreted and re-casted by Mysore kings in the context of colonial modernity also encourages us to go beyond some of the dilemmas of contemporary history writing. The history of their efforts thus cannot be reduced to either a narrative of continuity, or to the depiction of the Mysore kings as puppets within a colonial theatre. In order to achieve a new understanding of the history of colonial India, a bolder theoretical and methodological combination of disciplinary perspectives is required. To understand local and grassroots cultural values and practices, an anthropological method will be employed. Historical materials will also be used, not because colonial situations require 'historicisation' in order to unveil the destructive power of colonialism, but in order to examine how people lived through their colonial experiences within their own terms. In this endeavour, the use of anthropological and historical methodologies will be complementary to each other. Anthropological insights will contextualise in local terms the reports of British officers, upon which the history writing of colonial India is still largely reliant. This will reveal both British misapprehension of the situation in which they found themselves and the subtle, and sometimes cunning, manipulation of circumstances by Indians in the locality. It will also highlight what ideals the Mysore royal family sought to embody and how this effort was stimulated by both colonial modernity and the constantly changing and contesting cultural norms of local society.

This volume will begin with a history of the palace, not as a splendid architectural symbol of princely past, but as an active political centre. In the early nineteenth century the palace ceased to be the administrative centre and was forced to become merely a retreat for the king and his courtiers. In Chapter 2, it is argued that the palace nonetheless maintained its vital role in the society as a centre of cultural politics. Chapter 3 discusses how the segmentary nature of pre-colonial state formation continued to be central to the politics of colonial Mysore by examining the politics of honour amongst gurus and the royal caste, the Urs. The institutional bases of gurus, called *maṭhas* (or monasteries) were highly active in terms of the cultural and religious representation of local caste communities, as well as their economic and political struggles in the early twentieth century. The maharaja and his government were crucial in continuing to provide recognition to those local power centres.

The British believed education to be the most efficient mechanism by which to create loyal and docile princes (and to avoid a recurrence of the horrors of the uprising of 1857). Chapter 4 traces how western and modern education was introduced into the life of two maharajas of Mysore in the late nineteenth, and early twentieth, centuries. Despite their initial detestation of the new style of education and more mobile lifestyle demanded of the maharaja by the British, the Mysore royal family quickly embraced and embodied this novelty. Discovering the private life of the Mysore royal family reveals the ways in which they lived through, and re-interpreted, traditional ideas within the context of colonial modernity. The transformation of the royal caste of the Urs in this period was equally dramatic. In Chapter 5, it is explained how the alliances of heterogeneous local chiefs were formed and how this developed into a power base in the absence of a kin network that tied the ruling elite to locally dominant landed castes. The Urs, originally merely clansmen, quickly moved to adopt a more sophisticated elite lifestyle by adopting new values and practices. They were conspicuous in their adaptability and inventiveness, seeking to acquire modern education (based upon the English public school model) in order to became not just a politically powerful class, but also a culturally superior class of gentlemen.

Chapter 6 will describe how the Mysore royal family exploited the network of British officers in their attempts to form new matrimonial alliances with north Indian royal families, particularly with true 'blue blood' Rajputs. Kinship analysis, which was once the central methodology in structuralist anthropology in the 1970s and 80s, will be employed to explicate the historical process of matrimonial alliances in pre-colonial and colonial Mysore. Here it is not some unchanging nature of the structure that we seek to uncover, but rather the manner in which changes could take place. Chapter 7 shows how Mysore city was transformed in order to serve as a modern city, suited to British ideas of 'improvement', whilst at the same time embodying the local ideals of *rājadharma*. Tracing a social history of urban space reveals the radical transformation of the fort and city and the re-positioning of the social order.

Dasara, the festival of kingship and state, remained the most important political ritual in Mysore throughout the colonial period, and for several decades after independence. It will be demonstrated in Chapter 8 how Dasara was also the site wherein the various participants – the king, the British Residents, and the people of Mysore – could contest and exercise their agency by manipulating and adopting different sets of ritual symbols and codes. Chapter 9 finally concludes by arguing from the above aspects and examples that certain 'kingly' behaviour, and the use of kingly ritual symbols, are still conspicuously present and play an important role within the politics and society of contemporary Karnataka. As such, it is argued that a complete understanding of the contemporary political anthropology of southern India cannot be achieved without reference to the historical anthropology of the recent past.

For too long, India's recent history has been dominated by stories of the Mutiny, Raj, Swaraj, and Partition: largely stories of northern India, and of the interactions between British and Indian officials and politicians who were directly governing barely two-thirds of the subcontinent. In the final analysis, it is hoped that the re-imagining of the colonial history of princely India in the manner attempted by this volume will help open up a new terrain, apart from the dichotomies of colonialist and nationalist historiography, and the mythographies of imperialism and the Indian freedom struggle. It is further hoped that it may propose a more helpful methodology for anthropologists who wish to thoroughly historicise their understanding of contemporary social practices in the subcontinent and to escape the colonial origins of their discipline, first brilliantly critiqued by Talal Asad (1973), and with which they have been consciously or unconsciously struggling ever since. It may be concluded that a critical and historicised anthropological perspective that goes beyond polemics and dichotomous colonial epistemological practices can yet be achieved. Above all, it is hoped that the volume may contribute towards the envisioning of the many possible futures of India through a recollection of the originality and inventiveness so clearly seen in the country's recent past, and which are certainly so very much a part of life in the India of the twenty-first century.

2 The palace

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Today the royal palaces of India are being consumed as examples of India's glorious aristocratic heritage. The architectural beauty and the remains of the lavish lifestyles that the Indian maharajas once enjoyed divert our attention from the fact that the palaces were once influential political institutions in their own right. Indeed, the palace as a political body often competed with, and sometimes rebelled against, both its own princely state government and British paramountcy. To control this political body was therefore a major task for the British, who regarded it as a source of intrigue and corruption, and a regressive force against their civilising mission. The palace was, however, not simply a space where the traditions of the pre-colonial regime somehow managed to survive. Rather, the palace as a separate political body from the princely state government was a colonial innovation by which older traditions were re-articulated and, at the same time, colonial modernity was re-interpreted within a local context. In this particular political domain, many issues were contested that were not necessarily points of conflict between old princely traditions and the modernity brought by the British. Indeed, Victorian conservatism often underlined the conservatism of royal traditions, and this hybrid morality was used by both parties in order to subvert their rivals.

Despite the considerable influence of the palace as a political body in the princely states, scholarly attention has been directed mainly towards the understanding of structures and changes of princely state administration, and their relationship with the British. The palace as a political domain has not yet received much attention. This is largely because there are not many sources available to investigate the palace administration and its politics, while the separation between the palace and the state administration did not take place so distinctively in the case of smaller princely states. Conversely, in the major states, such as Mysore, the palace enjoyed a large portion of state revenues and exercised influence, especially over religious and cultural matters.

Throughout the pre-colonial times, the palace (*aramane*) was a synonym of the state and its government (*sarakāra*). Separation of the palace from the state administration was purely a result of British intervention, which happened in the early nineteenth century. In the case of Mysore, the palace was still the centre of state administration until the British took over the state administration in 1831.

The separation of the palace and its government, however, was never a clear-cut or irreversible process. We seek here to elucidate this complex process, especially to disentangle the relationship between the state and the palace, and to argue that despite its decorative façade, the palace played a significant role in re-interpreting and re-articulating traditional kingly cultural and social activities within colonial modernity.

The raja's share

In August 1830, 200 armed followers of Budi Basappa (or Buda Basvappa) attacked a fortress in Shimoga, Nagar district, the northernmost part of Mysore princely state (Stein 1993; Lind 2004; Shama Rao 1936, vol. 1: 416–41). Although they failed to seize the fortress at that time, their leader, Budi Basappa, utilised the influence of several Veerashaiva (Lingayat) gurus in the country and succeeded in mobilising a large number of peasants in the Nagar area. Budi Basappa proclaimed himself the legitimate heir to the throne of the Nagar kingdom, and therefore claimed the right to rule this forested area of Mysore. Historian Shama Rao, however, dismisses his claim and calls him simply 'a thug' (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 41). Peasants in other parts of the state soon joined this uprising by leaving their land, refusing to pay taxes and instituting armed revolts. As it became clear that the maharaja's government was unable to suppress this insurrection, East India Company troops were deployed, and by June 1831 Nagar was taken back from the rebels. The causes of the Nagar rebellion were complex: class/caste antagonism between Maratha Brahmin officials and majority Veerashaiva (Lingayat) peasants in Nagar; the notorious tax-farming *shirti* contract that stimulated the contractors, who were often outsiders, to force peasants to pay more tax; and the inability of the maharaja's government to control corrupt amildars in charge of local administration. However, the heavy burden of subsidiary tribute imposed by the British left the Mysore maharaja with little opportunity to dispense effective, and truly, lucrative patronage towards the peasants (Joseph 1979: 154; Stein 1980: 670–81, 1993: 188–9). Stephan Joseph has thrown light on the fact that, although the total tribute from the 198 princely states to the British administration was only Rs 72 lakhs per annum, Mysore was overburdened with the payment of Rs 35 lakhs, or nearly 50 per cent of the total[1] (Joseph 1979: 154). Indeed, the exploitative *shirti* contract system was introduced precisely because the maharaja's government needed to maintain high revenue income in order to meet the heavy tribute payment to the Company government. The fact that the only political language employed by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was that of the old regime did not help either. After taking over the state administration in 1811, he spent the surpluses of the state treasury – previously accumulated by Diwan Purnaiya – in acts of royal largesse, for instance giving gifts (in the form of both land and money) to Brahmins, temples and *maṭhas* (Hindu monasteries), rather than making the administration of the country more effective (Stein 1993: 189).

The Nagar rebellion gave the British good grounds to take over the administration of Mysore. In September 1831, after failing to make subsidiary payments for several months, Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III received a formal and final notice from the Governor–General for the transfer of his territory to the management of the East India Company. Article 4 of the subsidiary treaty concluded between the Maharaja of Mysore and the East India Company in 1799 contained a provision that the Governor–General could bring the territories of Mysore under the direct management of the Company if there was any failure of payment. The maharaja, who was then celebrating the national festival of Dasara, handed over the administration to the British Commission without any complaint (Shama Rao, 1936 vol.1: 448). Mysore was then placed under British direct rule until 1881, albeit continuing to be known as the territories of the Maharaja of Mysore.

The administration of Mysore was placed in the hands of a British Commissioner appointed by the supreme government. The social and economic conditions of the Mysore people did not, however, change drastically during the period of the Commissioner's rule. Mark Cubbon, the longest serving Commissioner from 1834 until 1861, was, according to a nineteenth century British journalist, 'not in any respect a man of broad and liberal mind, was of the stiffest school with regard to distinctions of race and social rank, and was no friend to educated natives' (Bell 1865: 25). While his efficient administration raised the total income of the state from Rs 68 lakhs in 1834–35 to Rs 84 lakhs in 1855–56, and succeeded in the liquidation of the maharaja's debts by 1857, he was totally uninterested in introducing liberal policies, such as the promotion of education. He also made it almost impossible for local elites, especially the old incumbents of the Urs and the maharaja's favourite Brahmins, to enter the state administration and instead brought in educated Brahmins from the Madras Presidency.

The subsidiary treaty of 1799, which granted the East India Company the right to take over the administration, also provided for the maharaja to receive one lakh (100,000) star pagodas (the equivalent value of 3.5 lakhs rupees), plus the amount of one-fifth of the net revenues of the state during the period of direct Company rule (Article 5 of the subsidiary treaty). This was called the 'raja's share'. In order to maximise state revenue, or, to be precise, the British share, the British officers argued over matters such as to what extent they could regard the debt as the maharaja's private debt, at what point the debt became a public debt of the state, and how to define the 'raja's share'. The problem was, as Junior Commissioner J. M. Macleod stated, that no specific portion of the revenues was set apart for the personal use of the maharaja when he was in office.[2] The king as a private individual did not exist before the British took over the state in 1831. Debates over the distinction between the maharaja's private expenses and the necessary payment for the purpose of meeting public demands therefore became highly complicated, since this would modify the way of calculating the raja's share and, as a consequence, affect the amount of revenue that the British supreme government could obtain. The Resident, J. A. Casamaijor, was of the opinion that the debt of the former government was a private debt of the maharaja. The junior commissioner insisted, on the other hand, that all the debts, whatever may have been the purposes for which they were incurred, ought to be regarded as chargeable to the revenues of the state. However, property, such as palace buildings and gardens, which the Resident regarded as the maharaja's private possessions should be the property of the state, since the maharaja did not have any private property at the time when the large portion of Tipu's territory was given over to him in 1799, and much of his current property was purchased thereafter with public money.[3] Another issue was how to define the 'net revenues', one-fifth of which would go to the maharaja as a part of his share. If the British officers deducted some expenses from the gross revenues before arriving at the net total, such as administrative expenditure and the cost of maintaining the military force provided by the Company government, they could estimate the raja's share as much smaller. In their argument, the expenses that the British were entitled to deduct from the gross revenues should be for the public purposes, and as a consequence, they could increase their share as well.[4] Finally they came to the conclusion that the raja's share should be 13 lakhs (1,300,000) rupees, which was the sum of one lakh star pagodas (equivalent to 350,000 rupees) and one-fifth of the net revenues (9.5 lakhs rupees).

After the Company government took over the state administration of Mysore in 1831, Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III lost all control over state affairs and became a pensioner who received the raja's share of 13 lakhs rupees from the state treasury. This sum was enough for him to indulge in acts of royal largesse as before. The British turned him from a public body, representing the state itself, into a private individual. Nevertheless, the maharaja continued to act in a kingly manner in a gift-giving economy within the diminished areas around the royal capital of Mysore. The introduction of the British Commissioner's rule in 1831 also defined the distinctive nature of political culture in Mysore. The British transferred all the administrative functions from Mysore city to Bangalore, where they had previously established the cantonment of the British troops. This division of functions between two cities, the one as a royal capital and the other as an administrative capital, remained even after the Maharaja of Mysore regained full power in 1881.

Gift-giving economy and the palace

Gift giving has been one of the themes intensively studied and enthusiastically debated by anthropologists and sociologists of India, especially in the late 1970s and 1980s (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1976; Appadurai 1981; Dirks 1986, 1987; Fuller 1977, 1989; Good 1982; Parry 1986, 1989, 1994; Parry and Bloch 1989; Raheja 1988a, 1988b). While this discussion has been largely focused on the theoretical legitimacy of the '*jajmāni* system', the central position of the king or dominant caste in the gift exchange (or grain sharing) relations was something on which most scholars agreed, both empirically and theoretically. Royal gift giving in medieval southern India is another theme to which historians have paid considerable attention (especially see Shulman 1985; Stein 1980). Medieval kings gave land to temples, *maṭhas* (monasteries), Brahmins, military retainers, and vassals, who were given rights to take some or all of the revenue from the land given to them. By this means they consolidated their rule and bound their subjects in gratitude and loyalty to them.

The nature and forms of the land holdings given by the Indian rulers were diverse and complicated, but the British brought them all together under one single category of *inām*. Although the British regarded these *ināms* as an ancient and corrupt practice, nonetheless, when they introduced new land tenure systems, such as *ryotwari*, they did not touch this particular land privilege. They carried out the so-called Inam Settlement in the mid-nineteenth century (in Mysore, the land survey started in 1863 and the central government sanctioned a set of rules for the settlement of *inām* lands), but this was a settlement, or non-settlement, which kept *inām* 'largely silent and secret' (Frykenberg 1977b). As Dirks has rightly argued, although a large part of *inām* remained intact, the system of royal giving, in which the *inām* had a distinctive position, was drastically changed, especially because the tie between kings and lesser power holders was completely cut off. According to Dirks, *inām* was a part of 'a system of exchange and redistribution' (1979: 176) in which 'honor, land, and service had previously been integrally linked' (1987: 338).

> In the old regime, inams, as gifts, became associated with the person who gave the gift and took on meaning from the fact that they were given by that person (and in the case of dynastic lines this personal relationship was passed on). As such, inams were to be given, only taken away when they were to be given again. The permanent resumption of inams entailed the creation of a new political system. (1987: 330)

Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III's allocation of *inām* certainly belonged to this political behaviour of the old regime that created new political alliances through the distribution of gifts and sharing of kingly symbols. When the ruler did not have any kinship tie with the politically dominant landed castes, the gesture of largesse, such as lavish patronage of temples and *maṭhas*, and allowing the landed castes relative freedom from any state intervention, were among the few options that he could employ.[5] It was obviously a self-destructive political choice under such colonial situations, in which he had a heavy burden of tributary payment, but he lacked other means through which he could wield influence.

The British kept *inām* intact and secured the raja's share, amounting to Rs 13 lakhs, although the maharaja was no longer in a position to allocate land away in order to create new political relations. Dirks further argued that those remaining vestiges of the old political system, for example *inām*, 'the raja's share', and royal titles, were simply the appearance of an old regime only slightly altered by the British in order to maintain peace and order. At the same time, the rajas and powerful landlords who were still fighting over honour, order and rank, were merely playing out a charade of the old regime, which had already lost the political dynamism that used to hold rulers and subjects together (1987: 355–7; see also Frykenberg 1977a, Washbrook 1981).

Although the argument made by Dirks does point out a significant change in the political culture of south India, his strong emphasis on the power of colonialism, which froze Indian traditions, tends to undermine the agency of indigenous political players. In his theory, the maharajas, rajas, zamindaris, and gurus of powerful *maṭhas* were nothing but puppets of colonialism left to act out the old play of pre-colonial politics. Dirks did not allow much room for considering the possibility of creativity by Indians who engaged with colonial politics by re-interpreting the political language and repertoires of the old regime. By re-examining the significance of gift giving, especially the distribution of royal honours in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the nature of colonial kingship would appear to be a subject for consideration not merely as a residual of pre-colonial India, but on its own terms, and possibly as a bridge to a new more modern form of politics.

The alienation – which was the term the British used – of land as *inām*[6] by Diwan Purnaiya and Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III between 1799 and 1831 was an important issue that the British had to settle when they took over the state administration (see Table 2.1). Purnaiya was originally Tipu Sultan's finance minister and controlled the state administration as a *diwān* (prime minister) during the maharaja's minority – between 1799 and 1811. The British officers claimed that the maharaja 'misalienated' a large sum of the state's land as *ināms*, and that the *ināms* he had lavishly given away should affect the amount of the 'raja's share'.[7]

Tax-free or tax-privileged tenure in the form of *inām* was much more extensive in western and southern India than elsewhere in India (Stokes 1978: 46–62). The nature and forms of land tenure in those areas, however, appears to have varied greatly. There were *ināms* given to religious and charitable institutions (temples, *maṭhas*, *chatrams*), village service *ināms*, such as one given towards the cost of maintaining tanks, and *ināms* given to individuals, which were classified as personal *ināms*. These personal *ināms* were given in order to encourage people to clear wasteland (ibid.: 49) or given by the raja as a gift or reward.

In Mysore, under native rule between 1799 and 1831, lands worth 3.3 lakhs canteroi pagodas (equivalent to about 10 lakhs rupees), and which represented around 15 to 20 per cent of the total land revenue assets[8] were allocated as *ināms* (see Table 2.1). The proportion of total *ināms*, which includes those allocated in pre-colonial times, to the total revenue assets would be much higher. The British regarded the alienation of land by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III as unacceptable, since these *ināms* had been granted not only for services rendered to the state or some other reasonable cause, but also to his own kin (the Urs) and to many 'unworthy persons'.[9] The senior chief commissioner started by quoting Vattel: 'when a sovereign gives away any of the property of the state, he has no right to make such grant except with a view to the public welfare', that, if even an independent sovereign has such an obligation, then the obligation

Table 2.1 Inām given from 1799 to 1831[11] in canteroi pagodas

	By Purnaiya	*By KRIII**	*Total*
Whole villages	33,801	83,121	1,16,922
Other lands	1,22,140	12,531	1,34,671
Total in land	1,55,941	95,652	2,51,593
In money	35,683	50,083	85,766
Total in land and money	1,91,624	1,45,733	3,37,359

(* = Krishnaraja Wodeyar III)

holds much more so in the case of 'a vassal prince, altogether dependent on the British government'.[10]

While Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was struggling to restore his power in the state administration after 1831, his own retreat, the palace (*aramane*), remained relatively free from any British intervention and was thoroughly secured by the ample income designated as the 'raja's share'. The palace then became a space where he could act as a king and a device that enabled him to perform kingly behaviour in the classic Hindu sense. Of course, such kingly acts were much more restricted than before: as we have seen, he was no longer in a position to give *ināms* to his loyal vassals. Yet he could continue to donate money and patronage to temples, *maṭhas* and learned Brahmins. For example, around 1819 Krishnaraja Wodeyar III brought Brahmin priests to the Chamundeshvari temple near Mysore city in order to perform Sanskritic rituals; and he endowed grants to the temple and renovated it with a massive *gōpura* (tower-gate). His patronage and Sanskritisation of his tutelary deity continued even after he lost control of the state administration in 1831. The Chamundeshvari temple, and other temples in the surrounding area of the Chamundi Hills, were placed under the direct control of the palace office in around 1851 (Goswami and Morab 1991: 9). The influence of the palace was then still significant, especially in Mysore city. There were more than six thousand people working for the palace in 1836, and by 1868, when Krishnaraja Wodeyar III died, the number was nearly ten thousand (see Table 2.3).[12] Considering that the population of Mysore city was 60,312 according to the Census in 1871, that means nearly one in six people in the city was working for the palace. The palace was the very centre of their everyday life.

The death of the maharaja and the palace settlement

When Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III accepted the decision of the Court of Directors in England to suspend him from power in 1831, the arrangement was considered temporary; once 'good government' was established in the state, the British would withdraw from the administration (Ray 1981: 95; Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 548). The maharaja waited patiently for eight years, and then began to question the validity of the continuation of the British Commission. While keeping the relationship with the British as harmonious as possible, he requested the supreme government to initiate the restoration of the country to him; this was ignored (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 548–51). During Governor–General Lord Dalhousie's term, many native Indian royal houses ceased to exist, and their territories were annexed into British dominions. The anxiety of the aged Maharaja of Mysore, who did not have any legitimate heir of his own, was naturally intensified as he feared that, if he died without a son, his territories might fall into the hands of the British, like any other princely state. He therefore appealed to Lord Canning, the first viceroy of India, and his successor, Lord Elgin, to restore his power and to recognise his right to adopt a son.[13] Since the viceroys, and most of the members of the Indian Council, were in favour of the absorption of Mysore, the maharaja began campaigning by sending his court surgeon, Dr Campbell, to England in order to put forward his claim in parliament and to impress Queen Victoria as to the justice of his case. Once he came to know that his case would not be discussed in the next session of parliament, he decided to go ahead without seeking permission. He adopted a boy as his successor who was then only two and a half years old (Ray 1981: 102, 104).

Things suddenly changed favourably, not because the British modified their policy to be more sympathetic towards native rule, but because the nizam of Hyderabad started claiming his share of Mysore territories in case Mysore was to be annexed to British dominion.[14] In order to dismiss the nizam's claim, Lord Cranborne, then the Secretary of State for India, announced in parliament in February 1867 that Mysore would not be annexed after the maharaja died. He even suggested that it might be possible to give a share in the government of the country to the adopted son when he attained the age of 18 (Ray 1981: 106–7; Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 571–609). Cranborne's announcement, though it did not amount to a pledge of any sort, finally led S. H. Northcote, Cranborne's successor, reluctantly to recognise the maharaja's adopted son as the future ruler of Mysore. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III then had only one year to live, but he at last succeeded in securing the territory of Mysore under the name of his adopted son, Chamarajendra Wodeyar X.

In early May 1868, following the death of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in March, the commissioner of Mysore, L. Bowring, ordered Major Elliot, who was in charge of palace duties, to carry out a settlement of several outstanding matters of palace administration.[15] Although the palace was separated from the state administration when the East India Company took over in 1831, it remained relatively intact. Therefore, the death of the maharaja was a great opportunity for the British officers to intervene in the maharaja's 'private' sphere and to bring it under British control. This intervention, called the Settlement of 1868; had three distinct purposes. The first was to assess the late maharaja's debts, the second was to examine his property, both immovable and movable; and the third was the reduction and remodelling of the palace establishment.[16]

There was a clear intention behind the settlement of 1868, which was to diminish the institution of royalty in order to prevent it from becoming a rival centre of power. While the intervention in palace administration was underway, other actions were undertaken, such as the destruction of all of the guns in the Mysore fort and other places where the late maharaja had strong political influence. This marked the complete takeover of military power by the British, a process that had begun in 1831. By 1868 the military assets beyond the purview of the British were effectively zero. All they found was an accumulation of musketry and other outdated weapons that were easily broken or rendered unserviceable.[17] Simultaneously, Commissioner Bowring was scheming for the transfer of young Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar from Mysore to Bangalore in order to weaken the influence of the palace over him. This effort of separating the maharaja from the palace continued throughout the days of the British Commission in Mysore (see Chapter 4).[18] Bowring even discussed the possibility of assigning fixed monthly allowances to each of the surviving ranis (two of the five legitimate wives of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III) and to the young maharaja, instead of keeping the palace as one single establishment.[19] Whatever his hidden agenda, the first step was to reduce the size of the palace establishments into what 'would be requisite for the comfort and dignity of the maharaja and the rest of his family',[20] but never more than that.

At the time of the settlement of 1868, there were twenty-five administrative departments, which Major Elliot subsequently reduced to twelve. These twenty-five departments each comprised an entire administration on a small scale, such as the treasury, pay office, military department, fort department, public works, and so on. These were partly remnants of the state administrative establishment that had functioned until 1831, during the time when the maharaja governed the country. The condition of the palace establishments in 1868 was described by Bowring in the following way:

> At the time of His Highness [Krishnaraja Wodeyar III]' death, the various departments were in a most unsatisfactory condition, and many abuses had crept in which it was impossible to remedy, as he persistently refused to admit any interference in the affairs of the palace, clinging with tenacity to the small amount of authority thus left to him.[21]

The state of these twenty-five departments was indeed chaotic, as some departmental functions overlapped, while others were simply unnecessary. However, this is only true if we look at the palace functions purely in terms of efficiency. As many have suggested, the kingly action (or kingly duty) was not to run his office efficiently, but to give, to redistribute, and to offer patronage. Elliot discovered that a grant of Rs 12,000 per annum was given to the Sringeri matha (one of the most important Shaivait *maṭhas* in India), and small grants were given to many religious and charitable organisations, including the Civil Orphan Asylum at Madras and the Roman Catholic Church at Mysore. The palace also distributed daily 300 seers (about 617 pounds) of rice to the poor in the city. The amount of rice was then reduced to 200 seers by Elliot.[22] Needless to say, the maharaja spent his money lavishly on clothes and jewels as other rajas did. Elliot estimated the value of gold articles and jewellery at the palace, and in the possession of the late maharaja's surviving ranis, at about Rs 33 lakhs, and suggested that a lot of jewellery that the maharaja had purchased had been given away. Considerable quantities of it were given away to his 'illegitimate' son-in-law (husband of his 'illegitimate' daughter), of whom it was said that even his cows were bedecked with chains of gold.[23]

The maharaja, as a consequence of his generosity and obvious partiality, created huge debts amounting to Rs 12 lakhs during the period of May 1864 up to the time when he died in March 1868. Elliot then investigated 311 cases and listed all the names of creditors and articles purchased under the maharaja's name. The nature of these claims varied from the subscription fees of English newspapers, to luxury goods such as expensive clothes and jewels. Contrary to expectations, the creditor to whom the maharaja owed most was not a jeweller or draper, but a grain food supplier in Mysore city, called Naga Setty, whose claim was about Rs 2.4 lakhs.[24] The maharaja not only gave food to the poor but also had to feed his own servants in the palace, which amounted to 700 seers (about 1,440 pounds) of rice a day.[25] The income of the maharaja comprised one-fifth of the net annual revenue and the fixed annual stipend of Rs 350,000, which amounted to 13 lakhs per annum. This was almost entirely

Table 2.2 Monthly and annual disbursement from Mysore palace treasury prior to the settlement of 1868.[28]

	Cost	*Rs*
Establishment	66,909	
Modikana (food grain) supplier	5,818	72,727
Doctor's pay, etc.		1,600
Miscellaneous suppliers paid in taluk receipts		25,000
		100,000
	Per annum	1,200,000
	Birthday expenses	30,000
	Total	1,230,000

Table 2.3 The number of establishments in the palace in 1836, 1868, and retained numbers after the settlement of 1868.[29]

Descriptions of duties	*In 1836*	*In 1868*	*Retained no.*
Religious servants	118	231	96
Pundits	105	464	125
Musicians	20	24	4
Physicians	29	86	14
Samūkada Ūligais	223	513	290
Religious Lingayats (Lingayat priests)	17	93	9
Itty Ūligais	122	107	61
Gollurs	157	168	74
Outdoor servants, Kattigaiwallas, Chobalars, Bearers, Musicians, Actors Mashaljies, Washermen, etc.	566	922	398
Aswasala, Gujasala and Cart establishment	429	595	129
Kurehutty	992	481	144
Sepoys (security guards)	1,208	1,494	547
Racharwars (body guards and escorts)	214	202	111
Ballays	590	556	264
Kundaechars (accountants)	45	43	10
English band	26	51	30
Other kinds	26	27	26
Workmen	98	416	96
Kamaties and Chengoolies	402	300	95
Garden establishment	134	392	152
Ashams	190	170	20
Jettirs (wrestlers)	0	112	32
Supply department	57	77	29
Office department	155	545	163
Amanath and Non-Parvarish	62	891	0
Avairs	0	606	277
Miscellaneous	239	121	0
Total	6,224	9,687	3,196

Table 2.4 The palace establishments after the settlement of 1868[30]

	Name of department	No. of personnel	Cost per month (Rs)
1	Aramane Duffer	16	263
2	Kille Cutcherry	586	4,335
3	Zillo Cutcherry	424	2,326
4	Chamoondy Totty	251	2,268
5	Avasarada Hobly	404	2,244
6	Samookada Ooligai, Khas	251	1,620
7	Samookada Ooligai, Zenana	426	1,475
8	Aswasala, Gajasala	132	799
9	Karohatty	152	501
10	Maramat (public work)	206	1,280
11	Garden	213	1,025
12	General Office	80	1,130
	Total	3,196	19,268

appropriated for maintaining palace establishments (see Table 2.2).[26] The huge 'raja's share' was literally eaten up by the people in the palace and the city.

In order to lessen palace expenditure, Elliot not only reduced the number and the size of the palace departments (see Tables 2.3 and 2.4), but also limited to only three the number of occasions on which the mass feeding of Brahmins and the poor, and the distribution of money and gifts, were carried out each year: the birthday of the young maharaja, the annual *sradhum* (anniversary of death) of the late maharaja, and the Dasara festival. Previously all visitors to the palace used to receive gifts throughout the year.[27] At the same time, Elliot provided Rs 9,600, to be left at the disposal of the two ranis, for philanthropic causes. A total of Rs 2 lakh was left available for charitable distribution of food, gifts, and money.

Gift giving was certainly something with which Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was most preoccupied. He gave away until his treasury became almost bankrupt. When he was in power, he gave away *ināms* as well as money and goods. Even when he lived on the 'raja's share' and was no longer able to allocate lands, he did not stop these acts of largesse, and gave away whatever he had to hand. This inevitably leads us to wonder why he had to give so much and so obsessively. If we premise that royal gifts were given in the expectation of loyalty from his subjects, what sort of significance could the loyalty of people have when the maharaja occupied only a nominal position within the state? Although there is no evidence to tell us how the maharaja and his subjects regarded his acts of largesse, it is significant to note that there is a general discourse in India that denies any kind of reciprocity in such gift giving or public service, such as charitable work for the public good. Adrian Mayer's study (1981) on people's perceptions of public service by politicians in the central Indian town of Dewas shows that the people have the idea that service (*sēvā*) must not be self-interested and should be done secretly. In this, even acquiring a reputation (*nām*) as a result of meritorious activities is considered to be non-pure. In this respect, is it appropriate to regard the exceptional scale of charitable activities and gift giving by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III as purely selfless service for the public good?

Anthropological studies conducted by Gloria G. Raheja (1988a) and Jonathan Parry (1986, 1989) provide a very different picture of gift giving in India. The type of gifts they found – the gifts of the pilgrims and mourners to the Brahmin priests in Benares (Parry), and the gifts given by the dominant castes to Brahmin priest, barber, sweeper and other service castes in daily transactions in a north Indian village (Raheja) – had to be one-way gifts, since this category of gifts contains the sins of donors. David Shulman's study on medieval south Indian myths also supports the idea that the king has to shower gifts on the Brahmins and other groups in order to rid himself of evil and sin, since 'his identification with the kingdom requires him to absorb all his subjects' violence, including the ineluctable sacrificial onus that accompanies the maintenance of ordered life' (1985: 84–86). It is also said in the classical texts that the king receives a part of the *punya* (virtue) and also the sin of the people' (Kane 1968–75 vol. 2: 37). It is a king's duty (*rājadharma*) to protect the kingdom by absorbing the sins and evil of people. If the huge scale of royal gift giving in the colonial era was intended to be a part of such classical kingly behaviour, he was not in a position to accept something in return, but was compelled only to give.

Resistance, conspiracy, and the three mothers

The radical reforms brought by Major Elliot and his able native officer, Rangacharlu, to the palace administration caused huge anxiety and agitation amongst the late maharaja's favourite palace officials and priests, who used to enjoy considerable influence and financial privilege. While the British officers were determined to eliminate such elements from the palace administration by replacing them with trustworthy officers, such as Rangacharlu, the former power holders in the palace soon began framing various plots against the new palace regime and the British commissioner in Mysore. Colonel G. B. Malleson, who was appointed as guardian to the maharaja, strongly believed that the former bakshi (minister), Narasappa, and his son, Krishnappa, were playing a leading part in various disobedient activities against British interference, although no evidence of this became apparent. These men had enjoyed unrestricted power under the patronage of the late maharaja, but their positions were largely undermined after his death. There were several major conspiracies against Chief Commissioner L. B. Bowring and especially against his native officer, Rangacharlu, who took charge of palace affairs after Major Elliot's palace settlement.

One of the plots against British interference in the palace occurred in the following manner. On the morning of the 8 January 1870, a placard written in Kannada was found affixed to the wall of the fort.[31] The placard, though unsigned, was drawn up in the name of the two ranis and claimed that Chief Commissioner Bowring had been summoned to Calcutta (then the headquarters of the British administration in India) to account for a defalcation of 90 lakhs of rupees. It read that the Governor-General had decided that, unless he could procure proof from the people of Mysore that the money had been legally spent, he would have to pay the same amount from his own pocket. The placard also accused Rangacharlu, some Urs (the maharaja's relatives), and a few Brahmin officers in the palace who were intent on forcing the ranis to give such a quittance.[32] It is not clear how the writers of the placard arrived at the particular figure of 90 lakhs rupees of defalcation, but it was true that Bowring introduced a large number of administrative officers, engineers, medical staff, and a police force, who were mostly Europeans on liberal salaries, in order to improve the administrative structure of the state (Shama Rao, 1936, vol. 1: 514–5). The number of the superior grade officers was expanded from about 30, in his predecessor Cubbon's days, to 135.[33] This resulted in increased state expenditure.[34]

Instead of the former bakshi, Narasappa, and his son, Krishnappa, whom the British assumed were the real people behind the subversive placard, it was zenana women who now came to the forefront of the political stage. Especially three mothers of the young maharaja – Devajammanni, his biological mother, and two surviving ranis of the late Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, Ramavilasa and Sitavilasa – who began acting as representatives of the palace and the people of Mysore as a whole. The British officers found them 'ignorant and evil in their nature', and believed that they were completely under the influence of Narasappa.[35] It is of course difficult to judge to what extent the three women were simply manipulated by these powerful men, but it is true that the women did exercise their agency, limited though it was, insisted on what they believed, and quite often modified what they believed if political circumstances required them to do so.

On the 4 January 1870, the two ranis, Ramavilasa and Sitavilasa, sent two petitions to the viceroy.[36] In the first petition, the ladies expressed their strong objection to the idea of removing their adopted son, Chamarajendra Wodeyar, from Mysore palace to Bangalore. The removal of the young maharaja from the palace was always a part of the British agenda to educate him in an environment away from the allegedly immoral influence of the old incumbency. The second petition underlined the demand that the two ranis had been making since June 1868, three months after their husband's death. They requested of the viceroy that all daily transactions in the palace management should first be communicated to the ranis, and carried into effect with their sanction. In other words, the ranis wished to assume the entire management of the palace, and with it that of the revenues enjoyed by the late maharaja. In the petition they also criticised Rangacharlu as being a Madrasee and 'not only stranger to this place', but 'unmindful of their welfare and totally unacquainted with the manners, customs, and the language of the country'. They insisted that because of Rangacharlu they were 'suffering all troubles and mental woe, being deprived of all honours and comforts'.[37] The two ranis had depicted themselves as helpless women of zenana, but at the same time ended their petition with the strong assertion that they were the representatives of the palace establishment.

> On behalf of this Sumsthanum [*samsthe*, kingdom of Mysore in this context], which owes its existence to British Government alone, and on behalf of ourselves and our son Chamarajender Oodier [Wodeyar], who all are ever

> grateful to the most adorable Maharanee [the Queen], we, whose endeavour always is to secure your better opinion of us, have with profound respect submitted this representation in the hope that no trouble may occur, and that the progress may be contained.
>
> Should, from the effects of our evil stars, this our request not meet with your approval, we beg that this our ‘Vignapana Putrekah‘ [petition] coming as it is from helpless females in seclusion, may be submitted to ‘Sreeman Maharanee‘ for his [sic] most gracious consideration.
>
> We, moreover, beg for pardon for any deviation from the rules of etiquette due to your Excellency on this ‘Putrekah‘ which we females may have committed (the translation of the petition of two ranis sent to the viceroy on the 4 January 1870).[38]

In the British view, after the maharaja’s death in 1868 the two ranis were influenced by self-interested advisers who encouraged them to assume some of the powers of the late maharaja.[39] The Second Rani, Sitavilasa, the youngest of five legitimate wives of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, according to the description of Malleson, possessed considerable intelligence and was particularly unwilling to forego the chance that her novel position gave her to control the affairs of the palace.[40] The biological mother of the young maharaja also very actively involved herself in those conspiracies. In early January 1870, at the height of the palace conspiracy, some Urs and leading Muslim elites in Mysore planned to have a meeting in honour of the departing chief commissioner, L. B. Bowring. The two ranis initially gave their approval for the meeting, but then changed their minds and declared that they would regard all those present at the meeting as the enemies of themselves and their house.[41] After interrogating several witnesses, the British came to know that the biological mother tried to induce an influential merchant, Deenanath Lallah, to set up a counter-meeting against Bowring by promising Lallah that he could recover his financial claims against the palace. To the horror of British officers, she even committed the ‘unbecoming act’ of leaving her own zenana during the night and going into another house in order to concoct this plot.[42]

Perhaps the three mothers of the young maharaja had been, as the British believed, under the influence of Narasappa, who had unquestionable power in the palace before the settlement. Yet, between the lines of the British reports emerges a counter saga revelatory of the extraordinary behaviour and conviction of these royal women. They may have been secluded within their zenana, but they were fully capable of exercising their political agency if the situation allowed them to do so. They quickly realised that having an antagonistic relationship with the British did not do any good, either for their own interests or for the welfare of their son. Later, they even demanded that British officers intervene in order to improve the educational environment of their son (see Chapter 4).

The three mothers remained influential and never stopped acting as representatives of their kingdom and people although the biological mother died early in 1872. The ranis demanded changes if they thought the country was not being well administrated. For example, the First Rani, Ramavilasa, sent a letter requesting the viceroy to replace the magistrate of Mysore municipality, who happened to be a Muslim gentleman, with a European officer. She said that the present town magistrate was hated by the Muslim population of Mysore for his Wahabi principles and disliked by the Hindus owing to his overbearing conduct towards them. She added that 'so long as European gentlemen fill this responsible post, the people have full confidence that the duties appertaining to the said officers will be discharged to the satisfaction of all'.[43]

The three mothers, none of whom had had a western education, exercised their influence at the very centre of palace politics. The most extraordinary fact was that they did not stick to their original reactionary stance, but quickly changed their attitude and accommodated the new political situation and the reforms that the British had introduced. As a result of their cunning, although some individuals – who had enjoyed political and financial influence under the patronage of the late maharaja – did lose power, the Mysorean Brahmins (many of them belonging to the Sri Vaishnava sect) and the maharaja's kin, the Urs, continued to occupy important positions in the palace administration.

The rapprochement

The strength of the palace as a political body was certainly undermined by the British intervention in 1868. Even after administrative power was returned to Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar X in 1881, the state administration was still dominated by British-trained Brahmin officers from the Madras Presidency. These Brahmin officers, called the Madrassis, were regarded as an obstacle to the recovery of full political influence by the Mysoreans. It is true that between 1881 and 1910 the British supported the Madrassis as a collaborative elite, and used them as 'a means to check the ambitions of the indigenous Brahmins' (Hettne 1978: 72). The selection of diwans (prime ministers) was always a great source of controversy amongst Brahmins, therefore the choice of Rangacharlu as the diwan in 1881 – he was a Tamil Brahmin and former chief assistant at the time of the Palace settlement of 1868 – created huge discontent among the Hebbar Iyengars[44] (Sri Vaishnava Brahmin) who dominated the palace administration. It is said that Rangacharlu was even attacked in the palace and pelted with sandals.[45]

After the Palace settlement in 1868, most of the leading members of the maharaja's relations, the Urs (*arasu*), continued to exercise power as bakshis (an honorary title given to some heads of palace departments, with equivalent status to that of assistant commissioners in the state government) and the local Brahmins controlled most of palace administration; the office of Palace Controller was created to enable the state to supervise and control palace affairs. It seems, however, that supervision by the state through the palace controller was seldom achieved without confusion and resistance. One conflict over the sharing of power between the bakshis and the palace controller concerned the appointment of palace employees. Most appointments in the palace were made according to the traditional *hakkudāra* system. Under this system, the eldest son or other senior heir of a retired or deceased palace employee would be given first consideration in the filling of his vacancy.[46] The palace officers sought to limit the power of the palace controller in the matter of appointments or the removal of permanent staff and insisted that this old tradition of palace employment should continue in order to maintain good relationships and the loyalty of officers serving the maharaja.

Although the confrontational relationship between the state and the palace continued, the clear distinction between the two, and the original efforts introduced by the British to restrict the power of the palace, were more or less forgotten. By 1910, their relationship had gradually improved to become more collaborative and cooperative. This was partly because of the power shift at state-level politics from the Madrassis to the local Mysoreans. By this time, the old Madrassis–Mysorean conflict had become a minor issue and the power struggle shifted to the rivalry between Brahmins and non-Brahmins (mostly landed dominant castes

Table 2.5 The palace establishments in January 1919[49]

	Name of department	*Number of personnel*	*Cost per month (Rs)*
1	(a) Palace Office	71	2,203
	(b) Dafer	13	114
2	Palace Treasury	61	874
3	Modhikhana	58	726
4	Zillo Kacheri	431	3,500
5	Chamundi Thotti	276	2,591
6	Awasarada Hobli	442	4,485
7	Khas Samukha	314	2,674
8	Zenana Samukha	98	1,008
9	Palace Stable	236 (15)	2,699 (309)
10	Gajasala	108	932
11	Palace Estates and Gardens	401	2,704
12	Chamundi Gymkhana	36	310
	Lokaranjan Mahal	37	365
13	Jagamohan Palace Chitrasala	18	132
14	Karohatti	79	555
15	Maramath	120	2,092
16	Kille Kacheri	565	6,132
17	Palace Band	91	2,141
18	Body Guard	191	3,271
19	Ursu Boarding School	18	391
20	Vani Vilas Ursu Girls School	22	359
21	Palace Dispensary	22	415
22	Zoo Gardens	30	462
23	Electrical Department	99	1,778
24	Palace Garage	136	2,668
25	Bangalore Palace	146	1,804
26	Fern Hill Palace	45	1,150
	Total	4,179	48,848

of Okkaligas and Lingayat) (Manor 1978a: 58–94).[47] This change was reflected in the fact that the palace recovered its size and power. The number of palace departments was increased to twenty-four in 1919 and to thirty in 1936, while the number of palace employees rose to more than 4,000 by 1936 (See Table 2.5).[48]

From 1890, Rs 88,302 was paid from the state government towards the cost of the maharaja's body guard and other regular troops and some endowments to a few religious institutions. Religious endowments of major institutions in the state had, at one time, all been under the direct control of the state government, but those situated in and around Mysore city were placed under the management of the palace in 1908, and more were added in 1917. During the civic improvement of Mysore city, the palace helped residents to move from the fort by offering loans and buying up old building materials (see Chapter 6). The palace and the state began to share their administrative functions and to cooperate with each other in the early twentieth century. The division between the state and the palace, or the public and the private, which the British had imposed, became even more blurred. As we will see in the following chapters, the palace and the capital city of Mysore transformed themselves into a cultural symbol of royal heritage through urban planning, marriage strategies amongst royal family members, and the expansion of royal patronage towards religious institutions and festivals (Nair 2011). In this attempt, the palace and the state were cooperative and together re-articulated the meanings of Indian kingship within the context of colonial modernity.

While the palace and the state were building a more cooperative relationship, the palace began to take initiatives to become more financially independent. For example, they began to exploit more effectively their landed properties, which mostly consisted of *kavals* (grazing ground for cattle). This, with a few other miscellaneous items, brought in an income of about Rs 1 lakh per year to the palace.[50] Although it was not until after 1971, when the privy purse for former Indian rulers was abolished by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, that the measures towards self-sufficiency became a real survival issue for the palace. The palace became then, for the first time, totally independent from the state and a purely private body. Many former princes had to sell their palaces, or turn them into luxury hotels (Ramusack 1995). Mysore was no exception. The Lalitha Mahal palace, built by Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV in the 1920s for the exclusive use of his most important guests, was bought by the central government-funded Ashok group and turned into a five-star hotel. The palace still owns several stately residences but has not been successful in running profitable 'heritage businesses'.

Currently, the scion of the Wodeyar family, Mr Srikantadatta Wodeyar (b. 1953–), the only son of the last maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (b. 1919–d. 1974), occupies half of the Mysore palace buildings, ownership of which is contested by the state government, with lengthy legal proceedings still ongoing. The maharaja's residential museum and the Jaganmohan art gallery are still owned by the palace. There is a rumour that Mr Srikantadatta can make several lakhs of rupees by selling mango fruits grown in his Bangalore palace grounds, which of course amounts to a popular fantasy rather than a reflection of reality. According to a newspaper report, Mr Srikantadatta Wodeyar, a former member of parliament, owns significant assets. Thus, apart from the Mysore and Bangalore palaces (the current market value of both palaces is Rs 1,500 crores) he owns assets such as the Lokranjan Mahal and stables, located in an area of thirty acres and worth some Rs 3 crore. The partnership share of other properties he held in Mysore and Ooty was alleged to amount to Rs 6 crore. He was also said to own 150 acres of non-agricultural land, worth Rs 12 crore (*The Deccan Herald*, 7 April 2004). However, it is not within the purview of this study to judge whether Mr Wodeyar is a rich man or not. The important issue is that the abolition of the privy purse in 1971 rendered the palace a purely private body that did not have any 'public' role. The maharaja became, for the first time, a private individual. Until 1971 however, the palace and the maharaja did not cease to act as a public institution, despite British efforts to confine them within the private domain.

Conclusion

The palace changed its role and character from a quasi-state government (before 1831) to a semi-governmental political body (1831–1971), and finally became a self-financing private body (1971–). The history of the palace as a political body reveals a complicated and dialogical relationship between British colonialism and Indian kingship. On the one hand, the palace as a separate semi-independent political body, shorn of secular administrative responsibilities, was born for the first time as a result of British intervention. In this sense, the palace was indeed invented by colonialism. In Mysore, the clear divide between the palace and the state government was also materialised in the form of two 'capital' cities: Mysore as a royal capital and Bangalore as an administrative one. On the other hand, the modern separation of the palace (*aramane*) and the state (*sarakāra*) did not represent a clear distinction between the private domain of the maharaja and the public domain of the state, as the British originally envisaged.

Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III continued to act as a generous patron of cultures and religions in the state through traditional forms of gift giving. The palace was the very centre of this gift-giving economy, which was largely discouraged by the British but remained an important feature of local communities. The actors, including women, in this ritualised economy sometimes resisted British intervention by taking 'traditionalist' stances. However, the very same people also quickly learned how to use the language of modern politics and to employ it actively in order to sustain their power within the limited, but still influential, political and economic domain of the palace.

The palace also remained a public institution and, indeed, increased its public presence by eagerly participating in a national project of the 'museuminisation of Mysore' (Nair 2011). As we see in the following chapters, the palace was thus instrumental in the transformation of Mysore city into a modern sacred capital (Chapter 7). The palace was the space where modern maharajas were educated and trained (Chapter 4). The palace was the centre of the mechanism that controlled the politics of honour by distributing and restricting the symbols of honour (Chapter 3). The palace was the space where Brahmin elites, the Urs, aristocratic women, powerful merchants and other stakeholders fought for power and influence. Kingship was therefore by no means ‘the ceremonial residues of the old regime’ (Dirks 1989: 8), but reconstituted itself in meaningful ways that extended its power into new spheres of influence. The medieval kingdom was dead, but kingship adapted to the colonial environment, and the challenge of modernity, and lived on in a new form that made it central to the emerging social economy of Mysore in the twentieth century.

3 The politics of honour

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Honour

In late August 1908, the Brahmin residents of Honnavalli village in Tumkur district sent several petition letters to the government. In those petitions, they complained that the guru of Murugha matha, one of the most influential Lingayat mathas in the state, was using 'unauthorised insignias' and ignoring the established *māmūlus* (Ka: custom or convention, often spelled as *mamool* in colonial documents), which was observed when the guru entered the village with a procession. Their points of objection were many. First, a type of drum called *ghante batlu* was carried through the Brahmin streets, which, according to them, should not have happened. This type of drum was also considered to be an insignia of honour, and they believed that the Murugha guru did not have the right to use it and should not be permitted to use it by the authorities. Second, the recitation of Vedas was problematic because, as specified by the Dharmashastra, Brahmins should not hear the Vedas being recited by non-Brahmins (Murugha matha was a non-Brahmin matha). Third, the use of titles of 'maharaja' and 'jagadguru' for the designation of the Murugha guru was highly objectionable. Fourth, the resident Brahmins insisted that the passing of processions with music through Brahmin streets and in front of temples had to be stopped. Finally, they believed that the erection of *pandals* (Ka: temporary canopy of leaves or cloth) in Brahmin streets should be discouraged.[1] Other caste communities also joined in. Vishwakarmas (goldsmiths) sent petitions insisting that the Murugha swami should confine himself to the routes established by *mamools* and respect the past *karāru* (Ka: contract or agreement) exchanged between Lingayats and Vishwakarmas. Devangas (weavers) also insisted that the Murugha guru should descend from the palanquin and walk to the temples. They then claimed that if any *mamool* was transgressed, they would take 'the law into their own hands'.[2]

It is not clear from the official correspondence whether the Murugha guru and his procession did indeed intend to ignore all of the sensitive issues that other communities regarded as transgressions of *mamools*, or whether the rival communities exaggerated the facts in order to undermine the reputation of the Lingayat community. But the deputy commissioner of Tumkur district, although he himself found it rather difficult to assess the situation, sent orders to the police superintendent to halt the tour of the Murugha guru at Honnavalli. The authority was afraid that if the Murugha guru continued his tour to Tiptur, where several thousand devotees of Murugha matha were gathering from nearby villages and had already set up elaborate pandals for the reception of their guru, the crush between the Lingayat community and other caste communities might lead to severe violence. The timing of his tour was also problematic because people were about to celebrate Ganesha and Gauri: festivals that were important annual events amongst Hindus, irrespective of caste. The police managed to persuade the Murugha matha to delay their tour for a few days in order to avoid the dates of these major festivals, and to leave Honnavalli by night, as their procession could thus be dispersed without 'wounding susceptibilities' of other castes.[3] It would also have been humiliating to Lingayats if their guru, having entered a place with a procession, should have to leave it without one. This time, the authorities succeeded in controlling the situation, but it was clear that the use of insignia by gurus had become one of the major concerns of both the state and palace administrators.

From the 1900s until the 1930s, there were many similar incidents of caste conflict concerning the use of insignia – symbols of honour – by the heads (gurus) of mathas, religious institutions where the gurus reside.[4] This incident is, no doubt, clear evidence of the fact that the self-assertiveness of rising landed castes (especially Lingayats and Okkaligas) was threatening the sensitivity of high-caste Brahmins by their 'transgressive' behaviour. Other caste communities, Vishwakarmas (their chosen name for several artisan castes including goldsmiths, silversmiths, ironsmiths and stonemasons), who were claiming at the time high-caste status equal to that of Brahmins, if not higher, and weaver castes, some of whom were also asserting their Brahmin status, were both keen on participating in this politics of honour. The stake here was the respectability of their own caste, and the recognition of such respectability from the centre of authority; i.e. the government, or the maharaja. The confrontations amongst high castes and aspirant castes were often tense, as we have seen in the above case of the tour of the Murugha guru. The tension and possible social unrest that resulted from it were serious enough to make the princely state authority feel a strong need to interfere in, and control, the situation. But what does this conflict over symbols of honour tell us about the nature of politics in early twentieth-century Mysore?

Both historians and anthropologists have not paid enough attention to caste politics over non-material resources, such as insignias – symbols of honour. Of course, lower castes adopting supposed high-caste habits (typically vegetarianism and teetotalism) were well recognised as acts of 'Sanskritisation', by which lower castes claimed a higher caste status than others thought they should (Srinivas 1966: 16). M. N. Srinivas, indisputably the father of modern Indian sociology, popularised the concept of Sanskritisation in the 1950s and 60s. This concept has been criticised by some scholars, but remains one of the most commonly employed terms both in sociological and journalistic writings in contemporary

India (Ikegame 2012a). M. N. Srinivas used the term 'Sanskritisation' for the first time in his book on Coorg in 1952:

> The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by Sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the Brahminic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. (Srinivas 1952: 30)

The actions of the Murugha guru and his disciples, especially their use of insignia, can be considered just another 'Sanskritising' act, as he tried to adopt symbols that were associated with Brahmins. But when we investigate the claims of both sides, it becomes evident that the situation was not that simple. Those who had supposedly transgressed the traditional norms (*mamools*) always insisted that they had been allowed to use certain insignias under the former maharaja, and very often they managed to submit the proof in the form of a *sannad* (deed, order). For them, their actions were perfectly in accordance with the *mamools*. The government and Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV (r. 1901–40) tried several times in the early twentieth century to fix the hierarchy of gurus in order to avoid further conflicts, but their efforts were constantly challenged by numerous caste groups. Moreover, the most significant omission of M. N. Srinivas in the making of the concept of Sanskritisation is that he described it as if there was no objection from higher castes to the Sanskritising behaviour of lower castes. In his definition of this action, lower castes seem to move smoothly upwards without any difficulty. The actual situation was quite the opposite, as we have seen. Brahmins and other high castes fiercely opposed the actions taken by non-Brahmin castes, which they regarded as offensive and insulting. The upwardly mobile non-Brahmin castes were equally, if not more, intolerant of the behaviour of others. For Brahmins, the imitative actions by lower castes were not just imitation, but posed a clear challenge to their cultural and social dominance. Mimicry here was not simply an act of trying to be like another, but an act of undermining the other by grabbing the privileges of the status to which they aspired. It was similar to the colonial mimicry that Homi Bhabha has described (1994: 85–92): the mimicry of non-Brahmin gurus 'emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal' (ibid.: 86). Their mimicry contained elements of mockery and offence, and could be regarded as dangerous from the point view of the powerful. The actions of lower castes certainly disrupted the supposed harmoniously interdependent caste hierarchy. But unlike the colonial authority, local Brahmins had to try much harder to keep this mimicry at the level of 'almost the same but not quite' (ibid.: 89). At the time when these castes were fighting over the seemingly insubstantial symbols of honour, Brahmins were losing their exclusive bourgeois positions, given by and secured by the colonial state apparatus, to the newly emerging non-Brahmin castes; especially in southern India. So-called non-Brahmin movements in the south began to appear as a real political threat even in some princely states such as Mysore.

Nicolas Dirks, although he emphasised the importance of honour in Indian political culture, nonetheless dismissed the politics of honour in the early twentieth century as meaningless 'fetishized things' (1987: 366). For Dirks, honours played a significant role for the integration of pre-colonial society:

> Honors had previously been integrally linked to a whole set of interrelated processes. Honor had to do with one's servants and retainers, endowments, rights (kaniyatci) within villages, temple honors, caste standing, relations to and grants of privilege from the Raja, heroism and maintenance of royal codes for conduct, office and responsibilities, and also the services one performed and the proximity one was permitted to kings, deities, and superior beings in general. Like the goods exchanged by the Maoris, which according to Mauss were thought to contain and confer the life force (hau) of their producers, honors took on part of the person of the king (donor) and then became part of the person of the subject (donee), thereby establishing a substantial bond. These honors were also vitally connected to rights to land and political privileges which made up the political 'system' of the old regime (Dirks 1987: 355–6).

This inter-linkage of honour, rights, status, resources, and pride had all served for the forging of social bonds between the king and retainers, the master and servants, local chiefs and people. Dirks argued that at the advent of colonial rule in south India, honours were taken out of their social and political context so that colonial administrators could regulate them in order to save the appearances of the old regime and 'to commoditize both kings and subjects under colonial prerogatives' (ibid.: 356). He argued that 'honors were suddenly cut off' from the integrating social system and became 'fetishized things'. He strongly asserted that this was all done by the colonial regime in order to 'keep everything as it was, without its former dynamism and reciprocity' (ibid.: 356).

As we will discuss later in this chapter, it is true that the Mysore princely government tried to control the politics of honour by fixing the uniform order of honours. In the uniform order, only the guru of Sringeri matha, one of the prestigious seats of the Shankaracharyas of Shaiva Sumartha Brahmins, could enjoy the highest honours. The rest of gurus were classified according to their importance in the state. The uniform order of honours was, however, constantly challenged not only by up-coming non-Brahmin castes, but also by Brahmins. It seems that the Mysore king and his subjects were not simply playing the meaningless shadow game of the old regime as Dirks suggested. Meanwhile, the old politics did not simply survive uninterrupted. There was clearly something new in this politics: the old language of honour was re-examined, re-interpreted by the players themselves and given a new role. In this chapter, we will re-evaluate the politics of honour as a vital politics of the early twentieth century in princely Mysore.

Subaltern honour and elite honour

The word *maryāde* means 'the bounds of morality or propriety, moral law, established rule or custom, rule of decorum or decency, propriety of conduct, reverential demeanour, respect, civility'.[5] *Maryāde* thus roughly corresponds to honour and respect. This is a widely used word in people's everyday life in contemporary Karnataka, and its meaning is highly equivocal. People, and especially women according to my observation, use this word to describe someone's qualities, or a manner of treating other people, that cannot be converted into any purely material subsistence, such as money or goods, or even social prestige in a conventional sense. For example, a woman who occasionally worked for me as a cleaning lady was a very hardworking and enterprising person. She was not only raising four children on her own (since her auto-rickshaw driver husband ran away with a young woman and never returned), but cared for other maidservants (*kelasadavaru*, literally persons of work) in the locality as well by introducing them to new clients and supporting them in the case of sexual or other forms of harassment by their employers. I have heard that her fellow maidservants appreciated her generosity and assistance, and said '*avarige maryāde ide* (she has *maryāde*)'. Another occasion on which I heard an expression of *maryāde* was from a young maidservant who came to Mysore city to follow her long-term lover and started working in a house where he worked as a driver. A few months later, she became pregnant and asked her lover to marry her. He was reluctant, and his family was strongly opposed to the idea because she belonged to a lower caste than theirs. They tried to persuade her to give up the baby and to return to her parents' home by giving her money. She did not like their proposal at all and consulted her fellow maidservants and myself (she possibly hoped that having a foreign 'madam' on her side might help to change her lover's mind). While she was talking to us, she started crying and shouted loudly '*nanage haṇa bēḍa, maryāde bēku* (I don't want money, I want *maryāde*)'. Her wish was to be treated with *maryāde*, which she ought to receive for her devotion and loyalty to her lover.

A poor and powerless man or woman can become a man/woman of *maryāde* if he/she has acquired a high moral standard, and people should treat him/her with *maryāde*. This notion of *maryāde* tends to be non-materialistic, or even anti-materialistic, and often contains a strong sense of empowerment. They may not be powerful or wealthy, but they can claim a high moral standard by accumulating *maryāde* and can be entitled to receive other people's respect (*maryāde*). By contrast with this subaltern usage of the word, *maryāde* given by the palace was a more crude materialistic representation. It symbolised a recognition of one's status by the superior authority, and did not necessarily require any moral quality or conduct of a person (although the accusation of immoral behaviour can lead to the loss of status). At the same time, these two notions of *maryāde* – one highly dependent on personal quality and conduct, and another a more decorative addition to a person's already established status – both share the idea that high moral standard and high social status must be recognised in public and ideally by high authority; respect thus has to come from above. The young maidservant longed for *maryāde* from her lover and his family precisely because her caste and her status as a woman was considered to be lower and weaker than theirs.

Another important aspect of the idea of *maryāde*/honour is that receiving *maryāde*/honour does not remain an individual matter but can be extended to the recognition of a family or even an entire community. If a guru was honoured by a superior authority, it would mean that all of his devotees were equally recognised as a respectable group. If the palace sent an elephant to the funeral ceremony of the head of one Urs clan, people would consider that all the members of this particular clan had been honoured by the maharaja. In her paper on the various aspects of political integration in south India during the last quarter of the twentieth century, Pamela Price examined the comments made by politicians in the English-language press in Karnataka and argued that issues of respect, maintaining self-respect, and being treated with respect by others is a still major concern in Karnataka politics (Price 2005: 43). She has also observed that it is an issue of caste honour when their representatives are appointed to major ministerial positions, and a caste is considered to be humiliated as a group if their representative is given a less important position, or none at all (ibid.: 42, 45). Politicians and their supporters are preoccupied with honour and respect, and eager to display it in a materialistic form in public space. This symbolic display of honour can take a ridiculous dimension. People of Karnataka, as well as elsewhere in India, compete with each other to make a bigger 'cut-out' (a board with a giant-size picture of a politician or film star) of their political leader than their rival group since 'the bigger the cut-out, the higher the honour of the politician' (quote from a interview with a journalist by Price, ibid.: 47). As Price has demonstrated, the political language of honour remains very much alive in contemporary politics and it is 'a language which resonates with a wide range of important values in both ordinary and extraordinary experiences' (ibid.: 62). There is a clear continuation between the people's obsession with the symbols of honour given to their leader or guru by the maharaja in the early twentieth century, and modern politicians' concerns over the public image of what they have received (wealth, political position, garlands etc.). It would be therefore be a mistake if we were simply to dismiss their obsession as a superficial and silly display of personal power. Rather, we should see the reason behind their preoccupation with symbols. These material symbols are understood amongst people not only as individual accolades but also as a mark of the community's respect, and the lack or insufficiency of these symbols means that the community is publicly humiliated. Giving honour and respect (*maryāde*) under the name of the maharaja through the palace was therefore not a decorative, superficial, or meaningless exercise, but constituted a very crucial part of active politics in Mysore.

Managing the politics of honour

The princely state government and the palace administration both tried to create unitary single rankings of honour amongst gurus and the royal caste members, the Urs. Despite the fact that the palace lost its political and economic power to the state government in 1831 and never fully recovered its influence, the palace played a significant role in the distribution of ‘kingliness’ by lending out symbols and facilities to display kingly authority. These symbols of honour were not simply regarded as a privilege which people would patiently wait to receive deferentially from the king/palace. Instead, they demanded such special honours or insignia as their own right, and if they could not receive any satisfactory honours, they accused the authorities of not treating them appropriately.

In the case of the noble Urs, they were entitled to receive palace honours (*aramane maryāde*) from the palace on occasions of festivities, including those of mourning. According to the palace office documents, discussing the necessity of the systematisation of palace honour and the issuing of palace honours was regarded as ‘one of the most important and delicate duties of the palace office’.[6] Since there were no general rules and the honours were of different gradations depending on the status of the family, and varied in minute particulars for every family – and even for the same family during different functions – the palace officers had to deal with each case by going through its precedents; these sometimes went back several decades.

The matter became even more complicated and troublesome as the Urs aristocrats frequently made applications for grants of honours to which, from the point of view of the palace authority at least, they were not entitled under the *mamool*. Then, in the late 1910s, the palace created a single general system of rules, applicable to any case, by dividing the Urs noblemen into three or four categories based on the amount of palace pension they received. Although the palace authority strongly claimed that the difference in the honours to different families was so insignificant that this new systematisation of honours was not as revolutionary as it sounded, this inversely reveals how even a minute difference could provoke dissatisfaction and grievances amongst the Urs. This delicate matter was, then, somehow standardised and simplified, and honours given to some families were even abolished. There are few sources that tell us of the reaction of the Urs to this new system, but it seems reasonable to imagine that the simplification of honours not only gave them a shock, but that it probably did not necessarily make the palace officers’ work as easy as they had anticipated. When the Urs noblemen felt discontented about their treatment by the palace, some Urs elders told me that they sometimes refused to attend the Dasara durbar, even though the palace had issued them official invitations. Although the pension they received from the palace was life-long and very substantial, the Urs have never been completely deferential towards the palace authority. They often complained, demanded appropriate treatment, and resisted.

The complicated and delicate system of honours was simplified, but nevertheless it did not change the importance of honours. Honour was always a vital part of the social life of the Urs and possibly became even more so since the politics of exchange of other gifts, such as land, money, goods, and women, was much more restricted in the modern colonial period (see Chapter 6). The nature and type of honours given to the Urs shows us that receiving palace honours was essentially a means of sharing in and demonstrating the spirit of kingliness. Issuing palace honours was, therefore, equivalent to giving a portion of the ritual functions of the palace, which served normally to decorate and demonstrate the status of the maharaja. For example, the Urs who were categorised as ‘Town Urs Class A’,[7] which was the highest amongst them, could receive at the time of their funeral forty *bhale* (bodyguards) of three different categories, a *singu* (a horn player), a pair of *chavari* (a fan made of yak tail) and its carriers, players of *gasti baajaa*, *banset baajaa* (musical instruments), a Karnatic band, and a palace band from Zillo Katcheri (a semi-military department), one Zillo Company (a company of soldiers) and one *sawar bīradāri* (disguised as Vīrabhadra, the most trusted guard of Shiva) from Kille Katcheri (another semi-military department), one umbrella of laced silk cloth with one *kalaśa* (water-vessel shaped ornament), a set of *oolaga* (pipe-shaped musical instruments), two *kattiges* (doorkeepers who hold a staff), two ulgis (servants) and besters from Avasarada Hobli, ten watermen, five others (called Gumpina people) and a Chowri Pair from Khas Samukha, a carpenter, fifteen *coolies*, illumination and tents for a temple service if necessary, a Nagari elephant from Gajasala, eight Kiston lights if necessary, and mango leaves, *garigandu* (feather like leaves) and *hombāḷe* (flower sheath of the coconut or betel nut tree) from the palace gardens. The lower the rank of the Urs, the fewer people and things would be sent from the palace. For the funeral of a member of the lowest rank amongst the Urs – non-stipendiaries – only six men would be sent to carry the corpse.

It is clear that these palace honours were not only conspicuously decorative ones, such as bodyguards, several kinds of insignias (fans, umbrellas, etc.), and an elephant, but also very practical ones: carpenters, lights, and leaves that were necessary for the rituals. For the palace, issuing these palace honours meant that most of the palace departments had to contribute in some way or another by sending their staff or resources, which they kept or produced. In this sense, the palace was indeed the ritual executor, without whose help the ritual might become difficult to carry out and would certainly look less respectable. On the other hand, receiving these honours, for the Urs noblemen, was not simply considered as a gift or grant, but something that they had to demand and contest. Moreover, receiving honour was not an individual matter, but a matter for the entire clan (*manetana*) to which the person belonged. Therefore, it was not simply that they sought honour, but that contestation and conflict among themselves often took the form of an honour dispute.

Royal honours and colonial modernity

The state, which became more and more involved in kingly activities, such as endowment of religious and charitable institutions, could not distance itself from the heated politics of honour either. By the early twentieth century, rivalry among mathas became so prominent that the state government could no longer ignore it. Long-standing sectarian conflicts among Brahmin mathas, and the conspicuous behaviour of self-assertive non-Brahmin mathas – especially amongst Lingayats (Veera Shiva) – intensified this rivalry. These conflicts were again manifested in the form of honour disputes, especially over the use of royal insignias (*rāja birudugaḷu*).

The state had a great deal of respect for the heads of maṭhas in the country. It is also said that the maharajas of Mysore always presented themselves as humble disciples before the great gurus; they did not hesitate to prostrate themselves on the ground to show their complete obeisance towards 'the teachers of the world' (*jagadgurus*).[8] The head of Sringeri matha, also known as Shankaracharya, enjoyed the highest position amongst such gurus. Candrashekhara Bharati (1892–1954), the guru of Sringeri matha, travelled widely in and outside the state and gave public talks in which he delivered not only the teaching of sacred knowledge of the Vedas, but also messages for contemporary society, such as objections to western education and the importance of preserving caste duties (Cenkner 1983: 104). Wherever he travelled in the country, the state government directed local officers to facilitate his journey. This is a typical official document circulated among local administrators and the police:

> His Holiness Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Swamigalavaru, Jagadguru of the Sringeri Matt, is proceeding on a tour through parts of the state, starting from Sringeri on or about the 18th January 1924. It is hereby directed that if the Swami comes into your respective taluks [sub-division of district], you should observe the respect of going *Istakapal* [following appropriate honours] and provide him with a place of safety for lodging and supply him with straw, gram, rice, shall, firewood, etc., on his paying for the same. If the Swami requires coolies, palanquin bearers, carts, and bullocks, you should likewise supply them and cause the proper hire to be paid. Measures should be taken for the protection of himself and followers at night. Three elephants, 20 horses and ponies, 3 palanquins, 25 swords, 25 muskets, 35 carts, 20 spears, 8 umbrellas, 2 chamaras [fans made of yak tail], 4 chowris [another type of fan], 200 Brahmins, 200 non-Brahmins, 20 silladars [soldiers] of the Mysore Horse and 8 sepoys of the Mysore Infantry will follow him. He may be allowed to pass unmolested through your taluk.[9]

The tour of the Shankaracharya of Sringeri was not what we might imagine for the austere journey of a renouncer, but rather similar to the splendid processions of the king. The palace and the state both contributed to this pomp and ceremony. The political position of the guru of Sringeri was clearly not sympathetic towards either the modern and progressive policy of the state, or the westernised lifestyle of the maharaja, but nonetheless neither ever showed any objection to his mission.

The marks of honour or insignia (*birudu*) that the Sringeri Shankaracharya carried with his tour were classified into three categories: royal, special, and ordinary, among which the first two were especially problematic and often caused controversy. The state therefore made it obligatory for every matha to ask the government to issue the permission to use such marks of honour in a tour or procession. Despite such state intervention, the use of marks of honour never ceased to be the focus of conflict. In 1932, the Muzrai department, which controlled religious and charitable endowments in the state, compiled, with the sanction of the princely state government, a manual concerning insignias and other honours enjoyed by the heads of maṭhas. This manual was, according to the Muzrai commissioner at that time, 'a long felt want' and thought to 'obviate the necessity of voluminous routine correspondence'.[10] The manual was basically composed of extracts from government orders issued in the past concerning insignias, which were re-arranged into themes such as *rahadāri* (which normally implies passport or police escort, but here means the permission to pass through certain areas with the list of permissible insignias) and 'First Day's Biksha', the reception ceremony of a guru by a state officer when the guru enters his jurisdiction, etc.

The ritual of the so-called 'First Day's Biksha' was an especially sensitive and contested issue. As many gurus of important maṭhas, in and outside of Mysore princely state, began touring in order to see their devotees who had migrated to larger cities such as Bangalore, Mysore, and Bombay, and to raise funds especially for educating their youths, the state officials felt a need to draw up an exhaustive list of important maṭhas that were entitled to receive 'First Day's Biksha'. It is not known when this particular ritual started and became an official duty, but whenever the guru of an important maṭha entered the administrative capital of Bangalore, some important officials – such as the mayor, Muzrai superintendent, and police superintendent – received him at the gate of the city and presented *bhikṣa* (alms, donation). The state officials tried to establish a fixed hierarchy by establishing a grading of the amount of *bhikṣa*. In the list created in 1909, the guru of Sringeri was entitled to receive the largest amount of Rs 300 for his First Day's Biksha, and other gurus were accorded an amount of *bhikṣa* ranging from Rs 50 to Rs 150.[11] Of course, Murugha matha contested this new hierarchy, and in 1919 the Muzrai department had to sanction the guru of Murugha to receive Rs 75, which placed him in the third highest status alongside six other gurus.

Amongst many 'royal insignias', the *aḍḍa pālaki* (cross-palanquin) was the most conspicuous and controversial. The *aḍḍa pālaki* is a type of palanquin, the axle of which goes horizontally facing the direction of travel, while the axle of an ordinary palanquin goes parallel to the street. Since the length of a palanquin on which the guru sits is usually about three meters or more, the *aḍḍa pālaki* can easily occupy the whole width of an ordinary village street. Therefore, riding on the *aḍḍa pālaki*, along with many other symbols of honour, was the most blatant public statement that a guru could possibly make. There were several mathas that insisted on the use of the *aḍḍa pālaki* for their processions, but the most persistent of all were the Kundli Sringeri matha and the Murugha matha. Kundli Sringeri matha is a matha of Smarta Brahmin with its headquarters at Kundli in Shimoga taluk. Kundli Sringeri matha challenged the official view that the Kundli Sringeri matha was a mere branch matha of Sringeri matha. The Kundli matha insisted that they had a long history of their own and held not a subordinate but equal status to the Sringeri. The Murugha was a dominant Lingayat matha whose devotees were mostly from the Banajiga (merchant) sub-division of Lingayats. Both mathas were able to produce convincing evidence – in the form of *sannads* (deeds) from Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, issued in the early nineteenth century, as well as oral accounts confirming that when the gurus went to the Mysore palace to pay respect to the maharaja, they rode on the *aḍḍa pālaki*. These two mathas continued to use the *aḍḍa pālaki* throughout the nineteenth century, despite occasional protests from other high-caste communities.

The maharaja and the state began to consolidate their policy towards these quarrelsome mathas in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1863, the maharaja declared that the guru of the Sringeri matha was the only personage entitled to hold the highest honour. Then in 1868, British Chief Commissioner L. M. Bowring, who was very close to the maharaja's family, sent a letter to the government of India in which he stated that only the Sringeri guru was permitted to use the *aḍḍa pālaki*.[12] This policy of introducing a single hierarchy of royal honours was adhered to by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV and his state officials in the early twentieth century. They believed that the best policy was to preserve and follow *mamool* (tradition) as much as possible, although they were never able to articulate what the exact content of *mamool* should be. They interviewed old high-caste (often Brahmin) residents to gather information about what constituted *mamool* in a particular area. They recognised that what was *mamool* in one locality could not be the same in another, and what was *mamool* to one person could not be the same to another.[13] Nonetheless, they strongly believed that the safest way was to follow *mamool* in the settling of disputes amongst mathas.[14] Their conviction of mamool, however, was often accompanied with the fear that they might have already gone beyond the safe limit and overridden *mamool* in 'the exercise of one of the prerogatives of royalty'.[15] Instead of acknowledging the fluidity and flexibility of royal honour, the state officials began to attempt to create a fixed single hierarchy of gurus. They began collecting information regarding mathas in different districts, enumerating thousands of them. They tried to classify mathas belonging to different denominations and different caste groupings purely by their importance in terms of history and revenue. As the palace authority did with Urs noblemen, so the state also attempted to systematise the distribution of royal honours so that they could control them more efficiently, without any confusion within the state apparatus, from the very top down to the local officials.

The strategies of systematising the symbols of honour were very much in tune with the spirit of colonial modernity in which things and people were, for the first time, enumerated and classified in order to serve the purposes of colonial policy (see Kaviraj 1994; Appadurai 1996: 114–35). As Appadurai has noted (1996: 129), the colonial state imaginary, unlike that of the Mughals, was not concerned with the acknowledgement of group identity, but with the enumeration of group identity. The Mysore princely state imaginary of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was something of a hybrid. They tried to acknowledge group identity through the distribution of honours in the name of the maharaja, while enumerating them for the purposes of modernity and efficiency. This hybrid policy was not always successful and probably provoked the mathas into more areas of contestation. The hybridity of princely policy under colonial rule was constantly challenged, and at the same time it opened a new terrain, within which different groups could articulate their political will in the language of traditional politics.

Honour as realpolitik

Gurus and their devotees in early twentieth-century Mysore seem to have been obsessed with symbols of honour, more so than in previous times. The authorities, both the state government and the maharaja, believed that they could control these quarrelsome gurus by establishing a standardised hierarchy of honours and imposing it upon them. The guru of a matha was not only the spiritual leader for a group of believers, but, more importantly, he was the centre of a community tied through kinship, caste, and occupational affiliations, as well as devotion. The Murugha guru was, for example, a leader who had a clear vision for the future of the Banajiga Lingayat community (merchant class of Lingayats), who were becoming increasingly economically and politically powerful at that time. Their obsession with symbols of honour should not be dismissed as meaningless behaviour as Dirks has suggested (1987), rather it should be regarded as a political act. The excitement and risk of accompanying the procession of a guru with royal insignias that might offend other high castes and cause a violent caste clash was not so different from going into the streets and participating in political demonstrations. Indeed, when the Murugha guru visited Bangalore on the 19 May 1919, his devotees organised a procession, which was, according to a state official, 'conducted with great éclat'.[16] There were over 60,000 people taking part in this procession, which went through the major commercial streets of the city from very early morning until mid-day.[17] While he was passing the Doddapete (a centre of the commercial district of Bangalore), several leading Muslim merchants of the city paid respect to the Murugha guru.

The Bangalore procession of the Murugha guru was an expression of devotion by his disciples, but it was also a clear reflection of the burgeoning non-Brahmin movement in Mysore state. By the late 1910s, non-Brahmin elites (merchants, lawyers, and government servants) were very aware of the already fully grown non-Brahmin movement in Madras Presidency (Hettne 1978: 143). In Mysore, although two leading non-Brahmin castes, Lingayats and Okkaligas, had already established caste associations – the Mysore Lingayats Education Fund Association and the Vokkaliga Sangha, established respectively in 1905 and 1906 in Bangalore – these were mostly initiated by urban elites who claimed to represent these two communities, and still lacked rural backing. The mathas, especially Lingayat mathas, played a role in linking the rural masses and urban elites. The non-Brahmin movement in Mysore was much less militant in nature than its counterpart in Madras, and did not extend its influence towards more disadvantaged Dalits and other lower castes, unlike the self-respect movement led by Periyar in Madras. They achieved, however, a complete transformation of the caste composition amongst the political elites in the state. In the 1920s, 70 per cent of superior posts in government service were held by Brahmins, despite the fact that they were only 3.5 per cent of the total population (Hettne 1978: 144 Manor 1978a: 28–9). From C. V. Rangacharlu (b. 1831–d. 1883), the fist diwan after the rendition of power to Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar in 1881, until the visionary diwan, M. Visvesvaraya (b. 1860–d. 1962), the diwanship was occupied exclusively by Brahmins. After the 1950s, all the chief ministers of Karnataka, save a few exceptions, have been from either the Lingayats or Okkaligas. The tour of the Murugha guru in Bangalore in May 1919 was a symbolic culmination of the rapidly changing political environment in Mysore. Indeed, in the very same year, as the non-Brahmin agitation in the state became uncontrollable, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV had to replace the charismatic diwan, Visvesvaraya, who introduced many large-scale modern development projects, with the non-Brahmin M. Kantaraj Urs, his own uncle. It would not be surprising if many Brahmin residents saw the Murugha guru and his thousands of devotees marching through the city as unquestionable evidence of the rise of non-Brahmin castes and the decline of Brahmin dominance.

The tour of Murugha guru in Bangalore may have marked the beginning of a takeover of political domination by non-Brahmin landed castes, but on this occasion he did not use the controversial symbol of honour, the *aḍḍa pālaki*. This was a result of previous negotiations between the state officials and the Murugha matha in which they carefully planned the route of the procession and the types of royal insignias that the guru could carry. It is not clear how they reached a seemingly amicable agreement, but most likely the matha gave up the *aḍḍa pālaki* in exchange for the re-consideration of the terms of First Day's Biksha. The Muzrai department began reconsidering the list of First Day's Biksha in 1918, after receiving consistent requests from the Murugha matha, and the government passed an order granting him a First Day's Biksha of Rs 75,[18] which put him on the highest position amongst non-Brahmin gurus and higher than many other Brahmin gurus. This might have satisfied the pride of Lingayat elites to some extent, although they did not stop claiming the right in principle to the *aḍḍa pālaki*.

Whenever the gurus and mathas insisted that the government should allow them to use certain royal insignias, they unfailingly claimed that these insignias were previously authorised by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (r. 1799–1868). Indeed, the mathas were often able to prove this by presenting a *sannad* (Ka: *sannadu*, or *sanadu*: deed, order, charter) from the maharaja and sometimes even obtained a court order supporting their claims. The Murugha matha had two *sannads* issued by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III.[19] It was stated in one *sannad*, dated 13 January 1816, that the Murugha matha was entitled by *mamool* to exercise all the privileges enjoyed by the Sringeri matha. The other one, dated 29 September 1816, directed that the Murugha guru should be permitted to proceed with an *aḍḍa pālaki* and other honours. A number of *rahadāris* (permissions), issued for particular journeys of the guru had also been produced, in all of which the *aḍḍa pālaki* and other honours were expressly mentioned. The Brahmins had been constantly opposed to the use of these insignias by the Murugha matha, and this led to an order being passed in 1863 by Captain Cole, deputy superintendent, in prohibiting the use of an *aḍḍa pālaki*, and so eleven other insignias by the matha. The state government received complaints that the Murugha guru went through the streets of Devangere on an *aḍḍa pālaki*, and so the government subsequently ordered a stop to the cash allowance endowed to the matha from the state Muzrai department. The guru had afterwards tendered an apology and the government restored the cash grant to the matha.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III seemed to have given many *sannads* granting the use of certain royal honours, as well as tax-exempted lands (*ināms*), to gurus and other important local leaders. As we have seen in Chapter 2, during the period between 1799 and 1831, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III and his predecessor Diwan Prunaiya, gave away about 15 to 20 per cent of the total revenue asset as *ināms*. In the same manner, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III seems to have issued a large number of *sannads* generously granting the use of royal insignias. State officials of the twentieth century thus spoke of 'the Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, who appears to have been very liberal with the grant of these honours'.[20] His seemingly liberal behaviour was surely not entirely baseless. It is difficult to have an exact picture of how many such *sannads* were issued and which particular gurus were recipients, but it is fair to assume that the maharaja had a political strategy in his generous distribution of these honours.

Mathas in south India have had tremendous influence in local society. Murugha matha of Chitraduruga, for example, claims to have a list of more than two thousand so-called branch mathas (*śākhe maṭhas*) under their guidance. A sociologist who conducted research on the two important Lingayat mathas (Murugha in Chitraduruga and Siddaganga in Tumkur) in the 1960s assessed that there were more than two hundred mathas actively corresponding with Murugha matha (Sadasivaiah 1967: 132–3). These mathas took instructions from Murugha guru and sought his approval for appointing the head of their matha. Murugha guru could also dismiss the head of the matha. There was another type of matha, which showed its subordination to Murugha guru when the guru went to tours. Their number was more than a hundred. These 'branch mathas' were spread not only throughout Mysore princely state, but were also found in the Hyderabad, Coorg, Madras, and Bombay presidencies. According to Sadasivaiah, the income of these mathas from their landed properties may have been about one crore rupees. In the late 1950s, the Murugha matha alone could enjoy an income of over one lakh rupees per year from landed property, property given by devotees, donations offered by devotees, periodical tours, Dasara durbar, and earnings from investments (Sadasivaiah 1967: 137).

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, at the time when the Murugha guru was touring and arousing controversy in 1908, the tour was beginning to become a regular task amongst the many religious and administrative duties that the guru performed. The purposes of the tour were manifold. Devotees often requested him to visit and give his blessing to their village or town. The draft of the programme would then be sent to the local revenue officers, and the matha would wait until the programme was authorised (ibid.: 145). The guru would be taken in procession with authorised insignias. He camped in a local matha, or in a temple, or a choultry. In the evening, he would then give a religious or moral discourse to the gathered audience. During his visit, local leaders and wealthy families would conduct a ritual called '*pāda pūja*', for which they would donate a large sum of money to the Murugha matha. The tour of the guru was therefore partly a way to raise funds for the matha. For the devotees, the purpose of inviting their guru was not only religious, but also to satisfy purely worldly demands. For instance, when in 1959, on the request of villagers, Murugha guru visited a village called Ramagiri to give them his blessings (ibid.: 146), they organised a grand procession and reception to which thousands of villagers from nearby villages came. They then requested the guru to do two things: first to appoint a suitable guru for their local matha, and second to start a new hostel in the village for the middle school students coming from the neighbouring villages. The Murugha guru stated that he would send a guru to the local matha as early as possible, and for the hostel he would consider the request only when some money had been collected by the villagers. However, the guru was prepared to offer a building and also a few acres of land for the benefit of the student hostel. The villagers then formed a hostel committee and planned to collect five thousand rupees at the time of the harvest (ibid.: 147).

The tour made by Murugha guru in 1959 was probably not so different from that of 1908. The guru who had trouble with using certain symbols of honour in 1908, and the one who helped the villagers in building a student hostel in 1959, were the very same man: the twenty-fourth head of Murugha matha, Sri Jagadeva Murugha Rajendra Swamiji (r. 1903–56). He was from a Jangama (priestly class of Lingayats) family and very well versed in Sanskrit (he studied Sanskrit in Benares). His knowledge of Sanskrit was a crucial factor in persuading the mostly merchant class (Banajigas) devotees of Murugha matha to choose him as the new head of their matha in 1903. They wanted to have a guru who could match other Brahmin gurus (Sadasivaiah 1967: 130). Like other Lingayat gurus in the early twentieth century, Murugha Rajendra guru actively spread Veerashaiva philosophy, especially one of the most important modern Lingayat mottos of ‘work is worship (*kāyakavē kailāsa*)’, and the significance of education for both boys and girls. When he visited small towns and villages, he would deliver such moral work ethics, and at the same time he encouraged villagers to send their children to school. Murugha guru helped villagers to build schools and hostels in rural areas, and raised funds to build free hostels in urban areas so that bright students from the Lingayat community could continue their higher education without it becoming a financial burden. Many prominent Lingayat figures benefitted from the help provided by innovative Lingayat gurus. For example, B. D. Jatti, who was acting President of India in 1977, managed to pursue education for a law degree by staying at one of the hostels run by the Murugha matha in Kolhapur. While he was a student, he also organised a *sangha* (association) of Lingayat students in Bombay Presidency and conducted weekly meetings in a branch matha of the Murugha matha (Jatti 1993: 6, 123). For many devotees, the mathas offered real support in their otherwise difficult lives. This highly material dimension to the activities of mathas should not be forgotten when we try to understand their seemingly meaningless obsession with symbols of honour, since honours were still a very real means through which people could express their political demands, challenge authority, and compete against rival groups.

Honour and the exemplary centre

The language of honour seems to have acquired even more importance during colonial times. This was because other sources of power, especially the military and the control of land, had all fallen under the remit of the British central government and state bureaucracy. Allocation of the tax-exempted *inām* lands ceased to be a vital part of the political formation, which had bonded the king and his subjects together until the early nineteenth century (see Chapter 2). On the other hand honour, although it was cut off from the integrated system of exchange and redistribution of material resources, remained a vital political device for the people to reassert their status and rank, or to acquire political recognition. People enthusiastically sought after symbols of honour – insignias, emblems, and titles – and fought over them. It was not that these conflicts were actuated by honour per se, but that they emerged, as Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge have argued, by taking the form of honour disputes (1976: 205). Contrary to Dirks' argument that honour was simply fetishised and had lost the political dynamism of the old regime (1987: 357), the language of honour was recast in the modern setting and served as 'a new symbolic framework' in which people could 'formulate, think about and react to political problems' (Geertz 1973: 221).

It is useful here to remind ourselves that some scholars have argued that the pre-colonial imaginary of state formation extended its strength well into the nineteenth century, and it would not be obviously mistaken to consider that it was still employed in the twentieth century (Stein 1998: 20–1; Price 1996: 1–19). Amongst several models presented for the pre-colonial imaginary of state formation, the model of a segmentary state was the most successful and persistent. This model was originally developed by Aidan Southall, anthropologist of the Alur society in Africa in the 1950s (Southall 1956), and then applied to the medieval south Indian state of Chola by Burton Stein in the 1970s (Stein 1977, 1980, for information about the fascinating life of this model which travelled across many regions, see Southall 1988). The characteristics of the segmentary state developed by Stein can be summarised as following. There are many political centres with autonomous administrative capabilities and coercive means; political power and sovereignty are differentiated in such a way as to permit appropriate power to be wielded by many small segments, but full, royal sovereignty, only by an anointed king. There is a tendency for these segments to replicate the structure of authority of a single ritual centre, and the relationships between many segments is dynamic, constantly shifting and fluctuating, as it is easier for the more peripheral segments to switch their allegiances (Stein 1998: 20, Shulman 1985: 18). Sudipta Kaviraj employs a similar model for describing the structure of traditional society in India. While he cautiously reminds us that we cannot assume that something similar to sovereignty in modern Europe exists in non-European society, nonetheless he uses this term in order to approach an understanding of this unfamiliar political structure. He argues that the 'sovereignty' of the pre-modern Indian state had two layers, where there 'existed a distant, formally-all-encompassing, empire, but actual political suffering was caused on an everyday basis by neighbourhood tyrants' (Kaviraj 2010: 12). He further states that 'there were also considerable powers of self-regulation by these communities'. Their social arrangement was like 'a circle of circles, each circle formed by a community of a neighbourhood mix of caste, religious denomination, and occupation' (ibid.). The single ritual centre of authority, which enjoyed great ceremonial eminence, had very limited powers to interfere with local segments (ibid.: 12). The political exercise of the central authority, therefore, tended to be more theatrical and spectacular and acted as an 'exemplary centre' to be copied by the segments (Price 1996: 14).

The segmentary nature of the society and its organisation as a circle of circles was evident even in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Mysore under British indirect rule. The mathas, as we have seen, were clearly segments or neighbourhood communities. They existed in the domain where kin, caste, religious denomination, and occupation loosely overlapped. The mathas have been providing considerable support to their devotees in the areas of education, healthcare, and the resolution of disputes, which we could safely call social welfare activities that the state failed to provide. The mathas have their own ways of maintaining themselves, through incomes from land, donations, and other more modern forms of financial investment. The mathas could regulate themselves by selecting appropriate gurus, by rejecting certain gurus, or by forming alliances with other mathas. We can also observe the loose alliance between the main matha and the hundreds of supposedly subordinate mathas assuming the form of 'a circle of circles'. In a similar manner, in the use of royal insignias, the pyramid-like structure of mathas forms a part of the pyramid-like structure of the honour system with the maharaja at its apex.

When the Murugha matha received the highest royal honours from Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in the early nineteenth century, the political significance of this act was to accept the new Mysore maharaja as the central authority. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was not just 'liberal' in this gift giving, as later state officials thought, rather this act was vital for the maharaja to maintain his rather fragile new authority. The fact that the Wodeyars never had any kin or caste bases in rural areas outside of Mysore district made the segmentary nature of political structure even more salient in the Mysore state. Introducing more oppressive methods of giving outsiders tax-farming *shirti* contracts had already proved to be disastrous in the early 1830s, as many Lingayat gurus joined the Nagar rebellion against the princely government, which led the British to take over the entire administration of Mysore (see Chapter 2). In the mid-nineteenth century, it was politically significant to honour the Murugha guru who had influence over many mathas in Nagar region. This act of honouring was equal to giving recognition to the self-rule of small power centres in the region. To accept such honour was to acknowledge the Wodeyar as a central authority that may not necessarily have a strong coercive power. The problem of this political structure was that the central authority did not have an effective control over the mutually competitive segments. As we have seen earlier, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was gradually inclined towards the idea that the best way to control them was to introduce a fixed hierarchy of peripheral segments based on hierarchical varna ideology, which gives exclusive precedence to Brahmins. This policy was in accordance with the British policy of enumerating groups and creating a single social order, but it did not necessarily serve its purpose. The assertive landed non-Brahmin castes did not remain silent but had taken over the political dominance of the state by mid-twentieth century. To counter this, the Mysore maharajas had to find a way to control the various competing segments of society by means of the ceremonial elaboration of their authority. By increasing the visibility of the politics of honour in the early twentieth century, and by elaborating the use of the symbols of honour, such as *aḍḍa pālaki*, the maharajas opened and maintained a space within which peripheral power centres could share in 'kingliness' and join in fierce competition for legitimacy and status: a competition that was harmonised through the constant intervention and patronage of the titular royal head of state.

Conclusion

Regardless of social classes, honour (*maryāde*) remains an important symbolic language in the lives of most people in south India. People assert their moral and ethical being through this language. Honour also links people with their imagined community and its leader. If their leader is treated in a honourable way, they feel that they are honoured as a collective being. In colonial times, honour assumed its role as a device through which different caste and sectarian segments expressed their political aspirations. Contrary to the views of some scholars, the politics of honour were very important and very real. Many peripheral power centres, such as mathas, enjoyed a self-regulating quasi-autonomous status in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As we will discuss in following chapters, the Mysore maharajas and their family made tremendous efforts to remain the exemplary centre within a still-segmented society. This was not simply because coercive power was in the hands of the British, but because the central authority of the old regime never successfully held such power in the pre-colonial imaginary of the state.

The conundrum of princely government was to undertake two rather conflicting tasks in tandem. On the one hand, the princely government acted as a representative of the king, who would recognise the quasi-autonomy of each peripheral power centre. At the same time, the government was attempting to control these peripheral powers by enumerating and then classifying them into a single social hierarchy. While the government struggled to juggle both policies, the maharajas attempted to create a new modern exemplary centre, as we will see in following chapters, with each having the aim of exploiting this situation and enhancing his own authority. This required them to recast traditional ideas and values by appropriating imperial and modern bodily practices. If the distribution of royal honour were to remain politically meaningful, this exemplary centre had to demonstrate theatrically its values, which it did through conspicuous patronage, architectural renovation, and the elaboration of public rituals. By such means, the segmentary state successfully embodied colonial modernity, rather than being oppressed by it, and became something much more than a hollow representation of the old regime.

4 Educating the maharajas

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English-speaking Indians, with a love of gentlemanly manners, hunting, and cricket, were never created spontaneously. The particular class of society, sharing the language of command, manners, tastes, and westernised knowledge, that emerged in the late nineteenth century was a creation of colonial modernity. Indian princes and princesses were a decorative feature of this class. The British aristocracy and high officials who visited the palaces of Indian princely states, or encountered them at parties held in India or Europe, were impressed and entertained by their lavish lifestyle and conspicuous consumption of exotic goods. The European curiosity about oriental despotism was thereby gratified. This cultural exchange was facilitated because both Europeans and Indian aristocrats shared a considerable amount of cultural and social capital; this allowed both parties to converse with each other, to play sports such as hunting together, and even to fall in love. Education was one of the ways in which Indian aristocrats enabled themselves to acquire this crucial cultural and social capital, which would secure their friendly relationships with the British and other Europeans. For Indian aristocrats, transforming themselves, at least partially, by learning a new language, new etiquette, and new sports, was not necessarily a bad thing, provided this did not conflict with indigenous ideas of what were considered to be the core values of a proper ruler.

Education was certainly one of the crucial ways in which the British sought to control Indian princes. British policy towards the Indian princes drastically changed after the Indian uprising of 1857, from a more brutal policy of suppressing them by imposing heavy tributes, to a more moderate one of transforming them into loyal and docile subjects by means of education. Previously, the British had rarely sought to interfere with the traditional education of Indian princes which occurred within their own zenana, by their own pundits or ulemas. Princely education was not then so clearly separated from religion. Religion was, however, not so clearly separated from politics. When the British began to educate young Indian princes in their own institutions, in a modern and secular fashion, this was regarded by many as nothing less than a terrible violation of the king's sacred body. In traditional Hindu thought, the king is linked to a fire that burns. If one approaches carelessly, not only the person who transgresses, but also his whole family, could be destroyed, along with his properties (Heesterman 1985: 110). The body of king had, therefore, been nurtured within a politico-religious environment and had been carefully controlled within the palace as if it were the idol of a god kept within a temple. The modern English education brought by the British exposed this sacred, and possibly dangerous, body to the uncontrolled environment of the outer world.

By the late nineteenth century, the western style of education brought by the British was widely accepted amongst middle-class Indians. Yet this British education became problematic for Indian nationalists who felt the need to create a truly 'Indian' nation. Recent historical and anthropological studies have revealed the process by which the modern Indian education based upon – Hindu religious, or secular nationalist, ideals – emerged or re-strengthened themselves as forms of anti-British education. For example, Sanjay Srivastava explains that the Doon school, one of the influential Indian public schools, tried to construct a modern Indian citizenship, distinguished from the colonial version of modernity (Srivastava 1998). John Rosselli's study on physical education in nineteenth-century Bengal shows that the self-conscious Bengali elites partly blamed the system of English education for their effeteness, and that their sense of degradation led to a revival of traditional physical culture (Rosselli 1980). In this process, the Anglicised babus were often subjected to ridicule. Bengali magazines in the late nineteenth century described the babu,

> He wore an extraordinary mixture of European and Indian clothes; he drank; he had "three stomachs", Hindu, Muslim and European, and the last he took to the Great Eastern Hotel to feed it on beefsteak and mutton chops; he frequented prostitutes; he had a great deal of half-digested western learning and his intellect was hair-splitting and lightweight; he was over-sensitive and conceited, … (ibid.: 126).

According to the ideology of the Hindu nationalist agenda, English education made Indian youth effete and tore them between two worlds: new, modern and western practices, and old, traditional and Hindu norms, which were not always compatible. Therefore, they had to recover their 'real' identity through traditional education.

The image of a split identity is also found within studies concerning the English education of Indian princes. Satadru Sen argues that the British, as well as Indians, were affirmative about English education, but at the same time feared its consequences (Sen 2003). The British found it useful to create new loyal Indian princes but did not expect them to become equal in case they should cross the racial boundary (see also Bhabha 1994: 85–92). Indians hoped that their western educated princes might bring home more progressive and liberal policies, but were often disappointed. The local Indian press then accused English education of making their princes mere puppets of colonial power and of alienating them from their true nation (Sen 2003: 35). The discourse of 'deracination' was therefore a useful tool not only for the British, who wanted to create a class of Indians who were to 'be loyal but not equal', but also for Indians themselves, since it created the necessity and a justification for the national revitalisation of Indian cultures. Indian princes, however, failed to identify themselves with any group within imperial politics. Sen describes them as figures racially and socially alienated from both European and Indian society. Tragic stories of the experiences of Indian princes can be found almost everywhere in colonial India. Pamela Price provides the example of a wealthy Tamil *zamindar*, who kept his diaries in English (Price 1983). He tried his best to respond to both the colonial administration, which demanded that he punctually recover revenue from his tenants and return a portion to the Madras Board of Revenue, and to traditional Hindu ideas of royal action, such as supporting temples and Brahmins as generously as possible. As a consequence, his contradictory position within the Anglo-Indian system of *zamindari* rule led him into bankruptcy and he had to give up control of the zamindari in the sixth year of his reign (we can see a similar fate unfolding in the life of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III as described in Chapter 2).

Aside from the criticisms arising within various Indian nationalist discourses, questions remain as to how English education influenced local societies in India. As anticipated by Macaulay's notorious Minute on Indian Education (1835), English education was not only desirable for the British, but was also welcomed and adopted by Indian elites themselves.[1] The acquisition of a command of English certainly helped many Indian elites – especially among traditionally literate Brahmins – to join the British administration and to enhance their status in society. It was also true up to a certain point in the case of the Indian princes, who needed the continued support of the British and, at the same time, wished to enter the newly expanded imperial space (see also Chapter 6). However, we do not know what being educated in English (in the case of the princes, by the British) meant to local society. Deracinated princes became aloof from their own culture and people, but does that mean that local society could not accept English educated princes? 'Being aloof' was a crucial aspect of Indian kingship (as argued by Heesterman, 1985). Thus being aloof and deracinated could, theoretically, become a cultural strategy of Indian rulers and royals who tried to maintain their authority in the colonial situation, although for an individual, this strategy may have been tough to live with.

Making modern princes

In the early nineteenth century, British officers in South India were divided into two opposing camps with regard to their policy on education in India (Frykenberg 1986). One group supported Thomas Munro and Mountstuart Elphinstone, who were in favour of an indigenous and vernacular school system, and considered that the East India Company should not interfere in this matter. The other group was 'anti-idolatry' and supported the new school system introduced by Christian missionaries in the 1830s, in which instruction was conducted exclusively in English (ibid.: 55). This fundamental opposition on educational policy, however, became gradually less prominent as the Company government involved itself in local matters, such as the management and protection of religious institutions. The government became more responsible for the education of 'native people'. This did not mean that they had a clear educational policy, but they did recognise education as a crucial means to integrate a diversified society and produce more loyal and trustworthy Indian servants to stabilise their rule (ibid.: 54–65). This tendency of the British powers to involve themselves in educational issues became even more conspicuous when, after the Indian uprising of 1857, they began to consider Indian princes as the backbone of their dominion. Since British supremacy needed to have loyal and tame princes who supported British rule as a representative class of Indians, they strove to create loyal and docile princes. This was in addition to their old strategies of restricting the political power of Indian rulers by binding them with treaties and *sannads*, and imposing upon them demands for heavy military and financial contributions. To educate the princes was a subtle method of rule, but probably the most efficient.

The successive creation of boarding schools for sons and relatives of Indian ruling princes started in northern India in the 1870s. These schools had their origin in Lord Mayo's educational scheme and were all modelled upon English public schools. Lord Mayo believed, like most people in Victorian times, that the upper classes required a distinctive education, focused on the inculcation of self-reliance, a sense of moral duty, and team spirit – all tested on the playing field – which made young men fit for leadership in the service of the Empire (Metcalf 1989: 68; Ramusack 2004: 134). The fact that many Indian princes were minors, and therefore under the supervision of British Political Agents and Residents, also facilitated British control over their education.[2] Mysore was not an exception in this British attempt to create new indigenous leaders through education. The death of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in 1868 was a great opportunity for the British to make his six-year-old adopted son, Chamarajendra Wodeyar X (b. 1863–d. 1894), a westernised and modern Indian prince.

Although he himself had not received an English education, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III began funding a free English School at Mysore in 1833, at the suggestion of Colonel Fraser, the then British Resident. The whole cost of the school was borne by the maharaja himself throughout his life.[3] The desire for English education spread and, by 1852, there were five English schools in the cities of Bangalore and Tumkur (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 500–1). But, despite the early efforts to establish English education in Mysore, there were not enough schools to create the elites that were required. Most of the government officials continued to be Tamil or Telugu Brahmins recruited from the Madras presidency. It was not until the early twentieth century that Mysoreans themselves began to occupy high-ranking government posts (Hettne 1978: 72–4).

Although he showed some interest in supporting English education, it is not known what kind of education Krishnaraja Wodeyar III himself received. He was only four years old when the British sat him on the throne following the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799. The British did not interfere in the internal administration of Mysore until they assumed control in 1831 on account of mal-governance of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. It may be assumed that he was probably unsystematically educated, like his forebears, by the Brahmin pundits patronised by the palace. As discussed in Chapter 2, after 1831, the palace functioned as a minimised kingly power centre that was relatively free from British intervention. Within this restricted domain, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III continued to patronise and encourage traditional arts, such as painting, music, and dance, as well as Sanskrit scholarly traditions. The bulk of the Sanskrit literature that he himself wrote shows the high level of his knowledge of Sanskrit and religious literature.[4]

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the death of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in 1868 brought drastic changes to the lives of courtiers and aristocrats. The palace was no longer a place segregated from British control where they could still enjoy their authority and status; it was subjected to several interventions that tried to convert it into a more modern and open space. The education of the young maharaja was one of these interventions. It was only one year after the death of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III when Colonel G. B. Malleson was sent to Mysore to become the guardian of the young Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar, who was then six years of age. When Malleson arrived in Mysore at the end of June 1869, he found that the young maharaja had only once been outside the fort, and that his education could hardly be said to have begun, for he had only learned his letters (we do not know whether these were in Kannada or English), and these in an imperfect manner.[6] Within two months of his arrival, Malleson started the royal school for the young maharaja and sons of the nobles (the upper Urs) and state officers in Mysore city. His task, however, was not simply to arrange and organise suitable educational measures for the maharaja and young royals, but also – through inspection and, where necessary, interference – to ensure the smooth running of palace affairs. This had been threatened after drastic reorganisation, led in 1868 by Major Elliot, following the death of the former maharaja.

The newly established royal school was mainly run by two well educated Brahmins, both of whom were in their twenties. According to Malleson's report, one of them, Jayaram, the headmaster of the royal school, was well versed in European literature, and could even read Kant and Geothe in German.[7] Under their guidance, Chamarajendra Wodeyar progressed rapidly, and within a few months had begun to understand questions put to him in English.[8] Apart from classes in history,[9] geography, dictation, and arithmetic taught by Brahmin schoolmasters, field sports, such as cricket and riding ponies, were regarded as an important part of the young maharaja's education. Traditionally, mathematical knowledge was considered to be unnecessary for Kshatriya classes,[10] in fact seven-year-old Chamarajendra Wodeyar was rather struggling to learn arithmetic, which was clearly his weakest subject.[11] He did not seem to be academically distinguished, but he was very enthusiastic and industrious and showed great strength in sport.

When Malleson arrived at Mysore Palace, there was a certain feeling of scepticism about the young maharaja's education and even a strong hatred of Malleson and his Indian officers. A faction within palace politics, consisting of ex-ministers of the former maharaja and influential Brahmin priests, was trying to maintain its influence over the one-fifth of the state revenue that the maharaja was entitled to receive (see Chapter 2). They attempted to remove Rangacharlu[12] from palace administration, as he had assisted Major Elliot at the time of the palace settlement in 1868 and had remained as a palace controller since then. Malleson thought that two ranis of the former maharaja were entirely under the influence of these ‘dark agents’.[13] In his mind, there was a clear distinction between good or efficient Brahmins, such as Rangacharlu and the maharaja’s schoolmasters, and bad or corrupt ones, such as the ex-ministers and Brahmin priests in the palace. He strongly believed that he should remove the young maharaja from Mysore otherwise these bad Brahmins would undermine his moral character:

> I feel convinced that nothing short of it will effectually remove His Highness from the mischievous associations of the palace, which are certain to weaken the effect of whatever education he may receive at school. I write this with the more earnestness, as the Brahminism which rules in the palace is of the most reactionary and bigoted characters.[14]

He was at the same time aware of the fact that the maharaja should remain in his territory (i.e. Mysore city) and not be estranged from his people – although in his letters to the central government he constantly insisted on the importance of removing the maharaja from Mysore city. He thought that the Hindu people, over whom he would have to rule when he came of age, were ‘peculiarly jealous of, and attached to, the faith of their ancestors’, therefore he should not be alienated from their sympathies.[15] The proposed place was naturally Bangalore, which was the headquarters of the British chief commissioner and contained a large European garrison. He also specified the time when the maharaja should be removed from the palace:

> The dangerous period of the youth of a native of India, more precocious than our own countrymen, begins at that age. And while I am strongly of the opinion that no necessity exists to remove him earlier, I am equally satisfied that the removal should not be delayed to a later period. His Highness will attain the age of twelve years in February 1875. I would suggest, then, that the removal from Mysore be authorised to have effect before the January 1875.[16]

As many scholars have argued, the British regarded the *zenana* (women’s quarter) as especially dangerous and obstructive. Ramusack suggests that British officials severely criticised the underage ruler’s female relatives, since they did not have direct access to the *zenana*. They regarded Indian women as ‘superstitious and of doubtful morality’ (Ramusack 2004: 108). Malleson’s idea of Indian women was no different. In his report, he urged the chief commissioner of Mysore to appoint a European schoolmistress for the education of the women of the palace. The reason was that ‘the influence of an uneducated woman upon the educated man is sufficient to encourage prejudices which in theory he detests, and it must always work a retrograde effect upon the offspring’.[17] Indian women were thus considered as representatives of prejudiced, superstitious, and old India, and only European men as possessing the ability to distinguish new from old, and good from bad. Indian men, on the other hand, stood somewhere between Indian women and European men. They could become like Europeans but were still weak enough to be easily influenced by evil Indian women. The logic behind the proposal of the removal of the maharaja to Bangalore was that these Indian men, especially young men, should be separated by the Europeans from the influential Indian women's quarter. Indian women, although regarded as dangerous and destructive, were never considered as independent beings. They were thought to be even more vulnerable than Indian men with regard to superstition and old religious prejudices. Therefore, Malleson strongly insisted that the education for the royal ladies should be 'purely secular' and 'religion should never be mentioned'.[18]

Maharaja Chamarajendra's education and the three mothers

Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar's three mothers, two surviving ranis of the last maharaja, Ramavilasa and Sitavilasa, and Chamarajendra's biological mother, Devajammanniavaru, were, at the beginning, strongly opposed to the British plan for educating the maharaja in a school with other boys. The thought of the young maharaja leaving the Mysore palace every day and going to the royal school set up in the Summer Palace, about half a kilometre away from Mysore fort, was distasteful enough for these mothers to react very aggressively against any attempts by the British to introduce this scheme. This was not only because the maharaja's sacred and dangerous body had to be kept within the palace like a god's idol in a temple, but also because the three mothers were well aware that those who controlled the body of the maharaja had control over the politics of the palace. The three mothers therefore did their very best to prevent Chamarajendra from attending the royal school.

In late January 1870, Chamarajendra missed classes for a whole week.[19] It was reported that he had a slight cold and could not attend school on Thursday, whilst Sunday and Monday were holidays due to a Hindu festival. So, why a whole week's absence? The mothers subsequently insisted that after a child had been sick he should be anointed with oil prior to going out in the open air. The maharaja was reported to be well by Friday, but they could not perform this particular ritual either on Saturday or on Sunday. On Monday, they still could not perform it, because the mothers had to go to Srirangapatna to take a bath in Kaveri river. Tuesday was then pronounced to be unlucky to perform the ritual.[20] As Chamarajendra did not come to school on Wednesday, an alarmed Malleson sent the Comptroller of the Palace to inform the three mothers that excuses such as 'unlucky days' could not be permitted to interfere with the maharaja's education. Devajammanni, his biological mother, insisted that she could not send him to school without the agreement of the other mothers (the two ranis), and they had forbidden her to send the maharaja to school. The maharanis also sent a message to Malleson, but he replied that he would receive no message from them on the subject of the maharaja's education.[21] Furthermore, he delivered to the eldest brother of Chamarajendra a message for his mother, Devajammanni, that her reply to Malleson that she would not send the maharaja to school without the order of the maharanis would be reported to the chief commissioner.[22] These women were, of course, living within an extremely closed society, *zenana*, strictly regulated by orthodox customs and rituals. Yet it would be mistaken to understand the behaviour of the three mothers as a sign of their being simply ignorant or superstitious. They rather tactically used traditional religious restrictions whenever it suited them to justify what they wished to achieve. Religious excuses were not necessarily blindly followed by them but were carefully employed to manipulate a situation in which they had little other power to exercise.

That the three ranis were making instrumental use of religion as a political language was evident from the fact that they quickly mastered other forms of political discourse as the need arose. In 1877, First Maharani Ramavilasa and Second Maharani Sitavilasa met Viceroy Lord Lytton who visited Mysore. After their meeting, Ramavilasa sent a letter to the viceroy, which began:

> The present system of education [for] our son is apparently defective. He has made little or no progress in his studies, and this will be obvious to Your Lordship after a little conversation with him. We are extremely anxious that he should receive such an education as will hereafter fit him to govern this province with advantage both to his subjects and to himself, on the same enlightened principles of justice which is so characteristic a feature of British rule in India; and for this purpose, we with much difference, respectfully suggest that an English gentleman of ability from one of the Universities at Home be selected and appointed tutor to His Highness.[23]

She listed other issues, such as the recent famine and its management, the lack of employment in Mysore region, house taxes, and an unpopular town magistrate of Mysore; but her anxiety over the education of her son, who was then 14 years old, was clearly highlighted as the main concern of the aging mothers (the youngest of the three, Devajammanni, biological mother of Chamarajendra, died in 1872). By then, the mothers had learned that education could be beneficial for their son, and that it might be wise to rely on the British to provide it. It was reported that Chamarajendra had managed to read and write Kannada freely only after a vernacular language class was added to the royal school in 1876 (Urdu was later added in 1877) and his ability to employ English was not great either.[24] The old mothers' concerns were therefore well founded, but it is amazing to see how swiftly they apparently began appreciating the effects of new English schooling, which they had detested so much at the beginning. It is likely that these anxious mothers in fact formed part of a larger strategic game. The office of Guardian was abolished in 1876, and their favoured British officer J. D. Gordon had been transferred and appointed as Judicial Commissioner of Mysore. The aging maharanis had clearly realised by then the advantages of having a sympathetic British officer within their reach. In another letter to the viceroy, the First Maharani described Gordon as follows:

> He not only conducted all our affairs with great consideration and justice, and paid every attention to our wants and wishes, but even after giving over charge of his guardianship, and when employed on other duty, he has all along evinced great interest in the Maharaja's education and advancement, and in our own welfare.[25]

Such an Englishman could clearly be an asset, and they succeeded in their attempt to have Gordon returned to the palace. The British re-instituted the post of Guardian and brought Gordon back to his former position. The maharanis thus successfully came to present themselves as modern mothers whose largest concerns were about their son's education: a role they learned to play exceedingly well.

The tour: going out of Mysore

Another change that British Guardian G. B. Malleson brought into the young maharaja's life was the tour.[26] A Mysore maharaja had never shown himself in public, except on two occasions: his birthday celebrations and the Dasara festival. It was not only the maharaja himself: the Urs in general rarely left Mysore district or even the city of Mysore itself. Malleson, however, considered a tour a very crucial part of the education for boys from the ruling caste. He explained the necessity of a tour to the chief commissioner stating that 'nothing (would be) more beneficial to the young Urs than that they should see something more of the world than that presented to their view in Mysore, and especially an opportunity of noticing the action of railways, of steamers, and a sight of the sea'.[27] He intended to take several young Urs nobles to Madras, but failed to do so after meeting with an accident. However, he received an invitation from the Countess of Mayo to visit Calcutta, and suggested to the chief commissioner that the visit might be a great opportunity. Naturally, this proposal of taking Urs boys to Calcutta caused the 'wildest excitement' in the palace. The second rani contented herself with a sarcastic remark to one of the young nobles, on his wishing her farewell, that 'none of the Urs, his ancestors, had ever dreamed of even crossing the Kaveri' (a river only 13 kilometre distant from Mysore).[28] The first rani, however, sent the whole party her best wishes for the journey.

In December 1870, Malleson selected three promising boys from among the students of the royal school, namely Subramanyaraj Urs (Bettadakote clan), the second brother of the maharaja, Dalvoy Devaraj Urs (Kalale Dalvoy clan), and Munjundraj Urs (Mugur Clan), a cousin of the maharaja on his mother's side. Malleson's description of the journey was as follows:

> They had never seen a railway before, and they were struck by surprise and pleasure. What seemed at first to attract them most was the extreme comfort of the carriage. I had engaged for the three boys and myself a first class carriage, and in this I took care that they should want for nothing. The sound of the whistle pleased without alarming them. But when the engine started their pleasure was at its height. I never saw boys more animated. At last they went comfortably to sleep. When they awoke in the morning, we were nearing Madras. I asked Dalvoy [Devaraj Urs] whether he had travelled as pleasantly as in a carriage drawn by horses. He was emphatic; 'A million times more so', he said, 'there can be no carriage like a railway'. As we approached Madras the boys stretched their heads to catch a view of the sea. When they saw it, their wonder could not be restrained, so much larger, so vaster, was

> it than they had imagined. The same evening and every subsequent evening, they asked to be driven by the sea, and nothing pleased them more than gazing on its expanse.[29]

Five years later, the young maharaja himself experienced the outside world. In October 1875, the government of India desired that the Maharaja of Mysore and his suite with a suitable number of attendants should proceed to Bombay (the present city of Mumbai), to greet the Prince of Wales on his first visit to India. Malleson had kept this order secret for fear that it might upset the Mysore royals, since they had never allowed the young maharaja to visit even Bangalore. He then had an interview with the first rani on this subject. To his surprise, she did not object to the journey itself, but insisted that the maharaja should be accompanied by all the nobility of Mysore, and a retinue not less than that of the Nizam. He had difficulty in selecting the staff of young noblemen who were to accompany the maharaja, since the first rani demanded the inclusion of several young Urs whom he found less than desirable in manner, education, and appearance. He chose, without any hesitation, Dalvoy Devaraja Urs, then an eighteen-year-old who had already made two journeys to Calcutta and one to the Himalayas, and Desa Urs, a boy of thirteen, a classmate and playmate of the maharaja, and included, unwillingly, Gopalaraj Urs, a (biological) brother of the maharaja, and Basappaji Urs, who had married his sister. The rani's insistence was that these young Urs should be selected as a representative of each upper Urs clan regardless of the nature of the individual boys. However, Malleson's concern was that the maharaja's company should be well educated, able to converse in English, and have good manners and a good appearance. In other words, to what degree they were Anglicised was what mattered.

According to Malleson, the young Maharaja Chamarajendra had not felt at all confident about the journey until his departure, but his progress along the road towards Bangalore made a big impression upon him. As he drove from village to village, he was met with extreme enthusiasm. The villages had been ornamented with no mean skill, which alone was enough to attract the attention of a young boy; and the teeming numbers of the crowds gathering to pay homage to their future sovereign impressed him considerably. The scene that appeared in front of him as he approached the heavily populated town of Bangalore was even greater. The atmosphere there was 'in expression of deep feeling, of enthusiasm, almost of worship, it was scarcely to be rivalled anywhere'.[30] A Hungarian nobleman, who happened to be in Bangalore, told Malleson that 'he had, never in the world, seen anything to approach the deep reality of feeling expressed there. He had seen his own Emperor hailed with acclamations at Budapest, on the great occasion when he had won the love of the Hungarians by conceding to them a national parliament. The enthusiasm had seemed great then, but this appeared more intense, more deep-seated still'.[31] The British officers who received the maharaja at Bangalore were equally impressed by the scene. It appeared that they did not expect the degree of enthusiasm and excitement shown by the people of Bangalore, nor did they understand the significance of the visit of the maharaja. It was not simply a matter 'almost of worship', but was indeed worship. Huge crowds gathered, grateful only to have a *darshan* (view) of the maharaja and some of them were possessed with extreme joy at the sight of him. The scene was probably similar to when people gather to see great gurus or saints in the present day. In the mind of many, if not most, of their subjects at this time the sight of a maharaja was extremely powerful, as powerful as the sight of holy men, if not even more so.

On the evening of 27 October, the maharaja started out by special train for Bombay, accompanied by the chief commissioner, his guardian, his entourage, and his followers. It was the first time he had seen a railway, which delighted him a great deal. In Bombay, he exchanged visits with the governor of Bombay, the viceroy, and the Gaekwad of Baroda. On 8 November, the maharaja was in attendance with the other principal native princes to greet the Prince of Wales upon his landing, and subsequently drove in his carriage in the procession. He exchanged visits with the Prince of Wales on 9 November and the 11 November. The maharaja also had an interview with one of the correspondents of the London daily newspapers. The interviewer met with the maharaja, Delvoy Devaraja Urs and Desa Urs and was very much impressed, especially by Delvoy Devaraja writing that with his 'excellent accent and admirable good taste he spoke English perfectly'.

> He knew all about the Franco-German war, … understood even the principal of summer-drills in England, and expressed a desire to see the troops of all these nations himself (traditionally his clan occupies the post of hereditary Commander-in-Chief of the Mysore army). You Europeans, he said, are so well disciplined that I could learn much by travel, and I shall go to England on the very first opportunity.[32]

The response from the thirteen-year-old maharaja also made a favourable impression on the British news correspondent, in spite of the fact that the young prince was shy, especially with strangers.

> … [the Maharaja] chatted pleasantly about the sights of Bombay and its relative beauty when compared with his own capital. He was just going to the caves of Elephanta, and he intended to learn all he could while in the Presidency. He dwelt upon the pleasure of cricket, of which game he is very fond, and the advantages of underhand twist bowling, which he finds bothers the Mysorean cricketers exceedingly, and then upon the pleasures of sport. Thus fifteen minutes are so passed pleasantly, and concluded with a kind invitation to visit him at his capital and see his people. A more intelligent young gentleman I have never seen.[33]

The language of sport worked. It was certainly one of the devices that could create a link between people in the colonies and in the metropolis: a shared interest amongst otherwise distant and remote cultures.

The journey to Bombay clearly had a great impact on the young maharaja. He later expressed himself in his letter to Richard J. Mead, the chief commissioner in Mysore, on the occasion of Mead's transfer to Hyderabad in 1875: 'At all events, you have given me the example of sacrificing inclination to duty, though I must admit that since my journey to Bombay my previous prejudices against change have been removed'.[34] Probably Malleson was right to say that 'it has swept away an army of latent prejudices, and has inspired him with a distrust of those who had previously endeavoured to make him believe that Mysore was the centre of the universe'.[35] It is certain that the young maharaja realised during his journey to Bombay the expanse of the imperial space where he was merely one of the elements. At the same time, it reinforced the significance of his being a hereditary ruler in Mysore society. To establish a certain cultural and social position in the imperial space, while continuing to act as a traditional king in local society, was a new conundrum that he had now to face.

As Malleson wished, the government finally arranged to purchase a house with large surrounding grounds in Bangalore, and over 1874–75 converted it into a palace for the maharaja's residence.[36] Although the maharaja was not completely removed from Mysore, he started enjoying a much more mobile life than before. After the maharaja recovered his full power over the administration of the country in 1881, Chamarajendra Wodeyar and his family were constantly moving among three palaces: Mysore, Bangalore, and Ooty, in addition to occasional provincial and foreign tours. The idea of the tour was thus firmly established within the routine and practice of Mysore kingship.

It is interesting to see the contrast in the rulers' education between larger princely states like Mysore and smaller states or estates. In the case of the zamindar of Ettaiyapuram – the largest zamindari estate in Tirunelveli district in the Madras presidency – the British officers tried to introduce a similar sort of princely education for their minor zamindar. The British officers similarly expected that a tour to visit Madras would stimulate the minor zamindar's intellectual curiosity. However, it did not work and only aroused conflict within the court who were wary of the minor zamindar travelling. It seemed the zamindar and his younger brother did learn how to read and write in English, Telugu, and Tamil, but they did not progress beyond the ability to write rudimentary and simple letters (Good 2001: 833). This contrast was because not only had the British a much larger involvement in Mysore, but also the history of the relationship between the British paramountcy and the Mysore royal house inclined the Mysore rajas to accept more often whatever the British desired them to do. Yet, it is also true that the Mysore royal family themselves found a way to recover their authority by using the imperial network of British officers and the cultural and social capital of western education to their own advantage.

Princely education at the turn of the century

The difference between the education of Chamarajendra Wodeyar and that of his son, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, was that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the royals in the palace were far more willing to accept the idea of an English education for the young maharaja. After the sudden death of Chamarajendra Wodeyar in Calcutta in 1894, the royal family – with the Resident's approval – appointed S. M. Fraser, an officer of the Bombay civil service, as the tutor and guardian of the ten-year-old Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV. Fraser took charge of the maharaja in 1896 and re-modelled the royal school so as to suit the requirements of his education.

By the 1870s, the British had decided that Indian princes might be better educated in the Indian equivalent of a British public school (Ramusack 2004: 111). Princely colleges were then subsequently established: Rajkumar College (1870) at Rajikot, for the education of young princes from Kathiawar; Mayo College (1872) at Ajimer, for Rajputana princes and gentry; Aitchison College (1886) at Lahore, for princes from Punjab; and Daly College (1898) at Indore, for those from central India (ibid.). The prince of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, was, conversely, taught by a rather old-fashioned method of princely education: the setting up of a small-scale royal school within his own country, where the prince was instructed along with eight to ten other selected pupils. The newly adopted non-literate, Sayaji Rao of Baroda, was educated in a similar manner (ibid.: 110). It seems that Indian princes of the south were not considered suited to study at royal collages, probably because of differences in their language, customs, and food habits. The yuvaraja of Mysore was sent to the Mayo College in 1903 at the age of fifteen. However, a few months later he returned home, apparently on account of severe illness (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 2: 250). The nature of his illness was not clear, but it was very likely as a result of his inability to adjust to the northern Indian lifestyle: a problem many students from the south experienced whilst studying in the north at that time. We can thus find several petition letters in the Mysore palace archives from Mysore students asking for permission for them to change from one hostel to another where exclusively vegetarian food was served.

A major difficulty the royal tutor, Fraser, faced in starting a royal school was to select the companions necessary to provide competition in work and sports for Maharaja Krishnaraja and his young brother, Yuvaraja (crown prince) Narashimharaja. In 1897, the maharaja's class contained eight pupils, and the yuvaraja's class contained six. In the maharaja's class, there were three Urs boys. Fraser wrote of difficulties experienced on account of the absence in Mysore state of any young boys of wealth and position sufficient to share in the maharaja's training, and of the problems encountered in recruiting more boys to fill the places of those who would, at some time or other, have to leave the class in order to join schools to prepare them for regular public examinations.[37] The companions of the maharaja were three Urs, three Brahmins, and two Muslims. One of the latter was Mirza Ismail, who was to become diwan of Mysore from 1926 to 1940 and who contributed much to the development of the state. Ismail remained a very close friend of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV throughout his life.

The daily routine of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV was almost the same throughout the term of Fraser's appointment as guardian and tutor. According to Fraser's report of 1901, the maharaja spent one hour and a half on various kinds of sport, followed by music lessons (piano and violin) at 9:30 am for one hour. Class work was then conducted from 11 am to 2 pm and from 2:45 to 4:45 pm, followed by games and exercise. Evening preparation with an assistant tutor took place from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm, after which the maharaja went to the maharani's quarters for dinner (he had married a north Indian princess in the previous year, as described in Chapter 6). On his return, half an hour was then spent before bedtime reading an English daily paper, accompanied by the same or another assistant tutor.[38]

There was a considerable time set aside for sport in the education of the maharaja. Every day, from Monday to Sunday, one and a half hours in the morning and one and a half hours in the evening were made available for several kinds of sports: polo, tennis, horse riding, cricket, etc.[39] The importance of sport, especially cricket, amongst the Indian princes has been examined by Satadru Sen (2003). Sen suggests that learning how to play English sports was not only undertaken so as to immerse Indian princes in a culture of English nostalgia, but also to impart abstract Victorian values such as 'character'. Character can be described as a comprehensive ethic of physical and emotional self-control, and the public school code: the willingness to accept even bad umpiring decisions (or the decisions of authority) without complaint (ibid.). Building a manly character was absolutely crucial for the British officers in charge of the Indian princes' education. Malleson, the tutor and guardian of Chamarajendra Wodeyar, was pleased to see, after the young prince completed the journey to Bombay, that 'a timid nervous child of six years old finally became a manly boy of thirteen, developed his thought, and acquired mental power'.[40] The British idea of manliness was more to do with mental control and self-discipline over the body and its emotions than a mere display of physical attributes. Polo was one of the more typical sports that Indian princes practised. Brian Stoddart has argued that the Indian princes were the main 'client group' encouraged to take up polo, first because it helped them to establish a symbolic military equality (many Indian princes recruited polo players and coaches for their princely armies), and second because it allowed them to continue to perform 'conspicuous consumption', since it was always an extremely expensive sport (Stoddart 1988: 659). Above all, the skills acquired in certain sports, such as tennis and horse riding, were important tools necessary to enable the young princes to take part in the 'court society in Imperial space' (Rudolph *et al*. 2001).

The subjects taught in the maharaja's class in the year of 1900 to 1901, when he was 16 years old, were history (Indian history, English history and Ancient history) and political economy, for eight hours; English, for three hours; science, for seven hours; mathematics, for six hours; Kannada, for six hours; Urdu, for three hours; and drawing for one hour per week. The history taught to the young maharaja, with the exception of R. C. Dutt's *Ancient India* (1893), was all derived from books written in English by British authors.[41] Indian princes at that time were thus obliged to learn their own history through colonial writings. In this respect, the princes shared a great deal in common with other Indian elites. Inevitably they had to establish their own identity or self-consciousness within the image created for them by the imperial gaze.

The language education offered to the young prince is of considerable interest. Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV used to make his public speeches in three languages: English, Urdu (Hindustani), and Kannada. However, from his handwriting and private letters sent to his uncle, M. Kantharaj Urs, it seems likely that he was more familiar with English than Kannada, the local language. In the results of the final examination in 1897, he was ranked second in English but last in Kannada. This weakness in his maternal language was shared by some of his fellow students. Fraser reports that only a few boys could speak Kannada to an educated standard, although it was their own language. Fraser decided to discontinue Sanskrit after July 1897, considering that 'they would not have sufficient time to undertake the proper study of this most difficult language'. He shows his regret at this decision 'on account of the sentimental value, which no doubt attaches to the cultivation of Sanskrit by the Ruler of an ancient Hindu State'.[42] Compared with the time of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, who was known as a well-versed Sanskritist, and who completed several works on Sanskrit literature, the knowledge required for rulers had certainly changed. Sanskrit now held only 'sentimental' value.[43] The significance of Sanskrit changed in the course of time. The last Maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (r. 1940–47), nephew of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, was a well known Sanskritist and a composer of traditional Carnatic music. This should not be considered as a mere question of personal preference and ability. Rather it should be regarded as the revival of traditional knowledge in the early twentieth century. The fact that Jayachamaraja Wodeyar became the founder-president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a Hindu fundamentalist organisation, may also be considered as part of a reaction to western education and the westernised life style of his predecessors.

In addition to subjects of general education, the young Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV had two hours a day set aside for the study of so-called 'special subjects'.[44] These were subjects which could be called 'the art of modern kingcraft', and included the study of the basic elements of state administration, legislation, the system of taxation, and so forth. Fraser explained that the main purpose of these special subjects was to correct and corroborate the abstract work of study with examples from the machinery of the state in practice. For example, when the maharaja was learning about land revenue matters, an assistant commissioner in the Mysore division came with his records and explained them. When he was studying the survey system, the district surveyor was summoned to measure an area of land nearby with chain and cross-staff, with the maharaja and his companions working out the results. Afterwards, the surveyor showed how a field was classed by digging pits to discover the depth and quality of the soil. It is said that these special subjects greatly attracted the maharaja's interest.

Beside general education, the tour remained an important component in the training of a young prince, even more so than during the time of Chamarajendra. In the year 1900 to 1901, Krishnaraja was on tour for twenty-six days to provincial places and for forty-four days on a foreign tour to Burma. After he attained his majority and became a ruling maharaja in 1902, he spent even more of his time on tour; for instance, 141 days in the year 1929 to 1930. Taking the young maharaja out of his small palace and letting him know all about the outside world continued to be a crucial part of British policy on princely education. In the case of Chamarajendra Wodeyar, his tours had a tremendous impact, as they did on the aristocratic Urs accompanying him. However Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV was already born under circumstances that had accustomed princes and Indian aristocrats to a more mobile style of life. During the tours, or when staying in Ooty hill station during the hot season, S. M. Fraser continued to provide his daily classes.

Fraser acted as an adviser in the maharaja's social life, especially when at Ooty, a hill station situated in the Nilgiri mountains. This was where high-ranking officers from Madras and Bombay presidencies and Indian princes from different states[45] came together; typically they invited one another to parties in their respective estates and shared in ostensibly 'royal' pursuits, such as hunting.[46] The Mysore royal family members began frequenting Ooty after Malleson, the guardian and tutor of Chamarajendra Wodeyar, persuaded the palace to purchase an estate known as Fern Hill in 1873, which made Mysore the first princely state to buy an estate there. Ooty was the premier hill station of the Madras presidency, and had officially become the seat of summer government for the governor of Madras in 1870. British high-ranking officers preferred to move to hill stations like Ooty in order to escape from 'the heat, the dust, and the "natives"' (Kenny 1995: 694). Ooty provided the perfect landscape for 'a little piece of England' where the British could live in comfort and form a segregated European society. Indians were often excluded from European society, but Indian princes occupied a peculiar position. They never became full members of European society, but they were welcomed. Indeed, it was up to them to entertain European guests with exciting and exotic oriental pursuits, like tiger shooting or elephant hunting.

The young Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV often paid a private visit to the governor or members of the council in the Madras presidency while they were in Ooty and invited his guests to his 'At Home' party in the Fern Hill Palace. Fraser thought that one of the advantages of staying at Ooty was the opportunity it afforded the maharaja of meeting 'friends' outside of his usual Mysore and Bangalore circle. A further attraction of life at Ooty for the maharaja was 'the freedom from ceremonial which was impossible at Mysore and Bangalore'.[47] The maharaja and his party used to go to Ooty in late March, after *ugadi* (Hindu New Year's day) finished, come back to Mysore in April, and to go again to Ooty in June, since there were several religious ceremonies in May, including his birthday celebrations. In the year of 1900 to 1901, the maharaja spent barely four months in Mysore.

It seemed that Fraser did not experience as many conflicts as the previous tutor, Malleson. However, he occasionally complained about the way in which the courtiers treated the young maharaja. This is a letter sent to M. Kantharaj Urs, a maternal uncle and the husband of the elder sister of the maharaja, concerning *A Nation Dramas*, one of the theatrical performances in the palace that the maharaja regularly attended:

> Speaking generally, I think that the less a young boy sees of the stage the better – as theatrical performances have an exciting effect on the mind which

> often lasts for a long time, and is not favourable to an undivided attention to work. This is the case even when the performance is intended for children and the play is of the most harmless character. The effect produced is not merely exciting, but of a distinctly undesirable kind when young boys witness dramas written for adults. What is harmless to the latter is poison to growing boys. A moment's reflection will recall to you scenes both in Saturday's play and in others recently acted before His Highness, the moral of which is not good for a boy just turned fourteen. I may mention that no English boy would be allowed to go to the theatre at all during term time and I do not think it is good for His Highness to be kept till 2 A.M. and in holidays, the only play a boy should be taken to see, would be a pantomime or some drama, specially adapted for the young. Her Highness, I feel sure, will appreciate the point of view from which I regard this matter. I hope to be favoured with an interview before long.[48]

According to an Urs elder (born in the 1920s), the upper-class Urs used to enjoy this kind of play, and later films, held by the palace almost every week. When the maharaja came to see these amusements, he sat behind the curtain (*paradā*) made of bamboo. Urs women of high status also sat behind the *paradā* and enjoyed watching theatrical plays, musical concerts, and films. Fraser considered this custom equally undesirable and even immoral. The difficulty was that Fraser considered the issue entirely from his point of view as a teacher and failed to understand the ritual significance of the maharaja's presence on such occasions. Sharing space and time with the maharaja was important for other members of the court and aristocracy, and receiving his blessing in an audience at the end of the play was also important for the performers themselves. Participating in such functions was considered a normal part of kingly practice in traditional Mysorean society. The concerts and plays themselves, furthermore, were not exhibitions in the style of modern British performance arts, but rather were social events in which as much attention was paid to, for example, the seating arrangements as to what was happening on the stage. The maharaja was always seated in a slightly elevated, but concealed, position, and the proximity of others to him was in accordance to their rank. The importance lay simply in his presence. For the maharaja's subjects it mattered little whether he was a boy or not; and the event was not regarded as having anything to do at all with his education, or even entertainment.

By the end of the nineteenth century, when Fraser had educated the young maharaja, Mysore royals had already realised the importance of English education. It certainly bestowed on Mysore aristocrats the ability to speak English and play English sports, and particularly key qualifications for entering the imperial court society (see also Chapter 5). The new mobile lifestyle of the maharajas also helped to open their eyes to the outer world. However, the process of acquiring such abilities, morals, and 'character' was not a simple affair, as we have seen. It seems that the maharaja in colonial times had to learn how to adjust himself both to the imperial court society and to the local court society, which were sometimes contradictory.

Conclusion

English education, which was first introduced by the British in order to create loyal and docile Indian princes, was gradually accepted by the Mysore royal family and aristocratic Urs, though it caused constant confrontations between British tutors and the palace. The royal family soon discovered the benefits of English education and internalised the values and practices of new Anglo-Indian codes. This process of internalisation demanded of the princes a new style in which they had to move flexibly from the imperial court society, where they were expected to have Anglicised manners and language, to local society, which requested traditional kingly acts of them. The new demands made upon Indian princes could be powerfully acculturating, as has been shown, but at the same time they opened a new dimension within the classical conundrum of Indian kingship. In other words, Indian kings (‘princes’ in colonial times) have always had to live an alienated life, situated somewhere between being rooted in local society and being kingly and aloof. In colonial times this dilemma manifested itself anew as a tussle between the expression of traditional values and the expectations of modernity.

English education not only emphasised the alienated life of the king as an individual, but the king became a deracinated product of appropriation. Indian elites, especially princes and aristocrats, appropriated English education in order to form a new class, the Anglo-Indian version of the gentleman class. In doing so, they ensured that they were qualified to rule in the eyes of the British and equipped to uphold their interests in the political world of late colonial India. At the same time, knowledge and ideas also introduced them to a wider social and intellectual world, including hitherto unheard of opportunities for travel. The ruling elite became more mobile and more visible and were enabled to communicate with their subjects in ways that had not been seen before. They were sometimes able to play a double game: apparently collaborating with the paramount power, but privately supporting quite different interests. Whilst all the time professing his loyalty to the British, Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV thus covertly gave funds to local nationalist elites representing the Indian National Congress, even though it was officially banned within the boundaries of his state. English education, and the political tools that went with it, could therefore provide a starting point for resistance to the colonial regime. It could also provide the model for much wider change within society. In the following chapter, discussion will thus turn to the effects of English education upon the community of the Urs caste as a whole, from which the royal family of Mysore was drawn.

5 From clansmen to gentlemen

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The uniqueness of the Mysore royal caste, Urs, lies in the fact that despite their small population (several thousands in Karnataka, see Table 5.1), they managed to maintain social and politically influential positions for several hundreds of years. Their population is concentrated in the former Mysore princely state area, now called 'Old Mysore', which roughly corresponds to the southern half of the present state of Karnataka. Unlike other royal families in India, especially Rajputs and Marathas, the Urs do not have any kin ties with the landowning agricultural castes who dominate village-level politics. The political strategies of the Urs, therefore, had to be different from the usual patron–client relationships based on kin networks. Instead, the Urs had to utilise the politics of status and honour. In this area, the policies and practices of colonial rule played an important role in helping the Urs to maintain their superior position within the society. This chapter examines the ways in which the Urs endeavoured to change their identity from warriors to modern aristocrats through tactical use of the cultural capital provided by colonial modernity. The chapter also discusses the troublesome life of the Urs after many of their privileges were stripped from them by the policies of the government of independent India, such as the abolition of privy purses in 1971 and the radical land reforms introduced by the state government.

The legacy of colonialism in the life of the Urs in Mysore has two aspects. On the one hand, they have maintained many traditional customs and beliefs throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the present day, despite several colonial interventions which threatened their highly Sanskritised orthodox lifestyle. On the other hand, all the privileges that they could enjoy during the same period, in terms of social status and economic advantages, were possible because British rule restored them to power within Mysore state in order to create a docile Indian force to counter the influence of the nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas in South India. During colonial times, many royal Urs received generous stipends from the palace, and were also given *inām* land: a form of privileged land tenure. By the end of the nineteenth century, they began to receive modern, western style education that only became available much later for other castes. By acquiring economic and cultural capital, they transformed themselves from local chiefs into a westernised aristocracy. This process of transformation was, however, neither straightforward nor trouble free. To begin with, since the cultural strategies regarded as part of Westernisation are not always compatible with strategies for Sanskritisation and Islamisation, the royal Urs had to reconcile their new cultural strategy with these and other older forms of cultural assertion, which they had been using in order to enhance their status in pre-colonial society.

The abolition in 1971 of the privy purse (a grant given since 1947 to the rulers of Indian princely states) by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and the progressive abolition of *inām* tenure from the 1950s by successive state governments, drastically changed the life of the Urs. They were no longer a privileged aristocracy. The effort to re-assert their social status was thus made both in the form of tactics of individual survival, to secure their own financial situation, and in the form of yet another set of new cultural strategies by which they could attempt to distinguish themselves from others. This chapter traces the making of the modern identity of the Urs through modern education, and examines their strategies of 'cultural' survival in the changing economical and political situations of the post-colonial period.

The royal caste Urs

In Kannada, the word Urs (*arasu*) is a corrupted form of the word *rāja* (*rājā* in Sanskrit), which means a king, a sovereign, a prince, and a chief.[1] The name Urs was possibly a sort of title that indicated their status as a chief and much later became like a surname in Western usage in the nineteenth century. The local chiefs in Mysore kingdom named themselves with the term Urs. For example, Nanjunda Arasu (Urs), the chief of the Changalva (who were later incorporated into the Urs caste) was using the name Urs as early as the seventeenth century (Satyanarayana 1996: 52). In the eighteenth century, however, amongst the Urs who occupied many local administrative posts such as *amildars*, which was a chief administrative officer of a taluk (sub-division of district), some named themselves Urs whilst others used names like Raja. In the nineteenth century, the British began to designate them 'Ursoo' or 'Urs'. Since then the name Urs has gradually been accepted as their surname.

The name Urs still has a special resonance in contemporary Mysore society. Urs is a name directly connected with the royal family, the Wodeyar, and everyone knows that they enjoyed a privileged status during the colonial era. However, people in general do not feel simple respect or envy towards the Urs. One often hears such disparaging comments as the Urs do not know the meaning of hard work, that they only busy themselves with functions and ceremonies, and that they are just bone-idle. A Brahmin involved in hereditary accounting work for some prominent Urs families told me, 'there are two types of Urs: one type idle away their life squandering their inheritance from the past. The other type do not cling to the status of the past, but apply themselves zealously to their studies and succeed on their own merit'. While one does find such cynical assessments of the Urs, it is also a fact that some people regard the royal family, and their relatives, as noble people and even semi-divine. To them, the king is almost like a god. The Urs, who are blood relatives of the king, are also special people. In the prayer room (*dēvara mane*) in their homes, decorated with posters and icons of the gods, they enshrine photographs or posters of the king and perform puja (*pūja*) towards him on a daily basis just as they do towards the Hindu gods.

The Urs themselves are fully aware of the diverse views held by the general populace. They adopt a discreet manner when they give their name. This may be seen as standing on their dignity, or it may be seen as them accurately predicting the change of attitude when their name is heard, and taking precautions in advance. In fact, when I went out with Urs friends we frequently encountered this kind of scene. The instant that people realised that they were Urs, and especially someone close to the royal family, they would be given preferential treatment, people would start to boast about how they were personally acquainted with the Mysore royal family, and would perform the role of a 'humble servant' in front of the Urs – whatever they felt in their heart of hearts. The Urs of my acquaintance were often clearly embarrassed and dismissive of the abject reactions of people. But no matter how they try to avoid it, it is not easy for the Urs to occupy a comfortable and normal position within society. People still treat the Urs, especially the upper Urs, as somehow aloof and apart from ordinary.

The Urs often refer to their own group as the Urs community (*arasu jānanga*). The word 'community', which lacks the inevitable hierarchical undertones of the word 'caste' (*jāti*), gives an impression of being placed on a level with other groups, while conveying a sense of cultural originality or identity. Although in the past they were a privileged class at the top of Mysore society, nowadays they have

Table 5.1 The population of the Urs caste by district in 1976[2]

City or Taluk	*Number of settlements*	*Number of families*	*Population (per cent)*
Mysore city	0	224	1211 (20.38)
Mysore	3	6	27 (0.45)
Heggdekote	4	44	247 (4.16)
Hunsur	4	39	213 (3.58)
Krishnanagar	9	121	618 (10.40)
Priyapatna	12	132	816 (13.73)
T.Narasipur	5	34	196 (3.30)
Nanjangud	3	6	41 (0.69)
Gundalpet	2	5	37 (0.62)
Chamarajnagar	7	34	178 (3.00)
Yelandur	2	6	36 (0.61)
Kollegar	6	57	317 (5.33)
Bangalore city	0	68	316 (5.32)
Ramanagar	2	13	78 (1.31)
Kanakapur	9	63	333 (5.60)
Chennapatna	1	6	30 (0.50)
Madikeri	1	1	5 (0.08)
Somavarapet	1	3	27 (0.45)
Malavalli (including Mandya city)	4	93	445 (7.49)
Total	91	1079	5942 (100)

lost many of their political and economic privileges. But even for the Urs who may be moving towards ruin, their original 'culture' is still valuable proof that they continue to form a part of the noble classes. And, although their politically strong position during the colonial time is now occupied by the numerically stronger landed castes (especially Lingayats and Okkaligas), they still maintain important places in high society. Many Urs have crucial roles running institutions such as gentlemen's clubs in Mysore and Bangalore. Some of them run successful businesses. In the electoral democracy, therefore, they cannot be a part of strongly caste-based political mobilisation, but their influence in businesses and high society cannot be ignored. They might be a minority, but they are not marginalised.

From local chiefs to the Indian aristocracy

Both in their self-image as an independent community and their popular image as relatives of the king, the Urs caste consider themselves to be a single homogenous group. However, if we take a look inside it, the image of the Urs as a single group instantly crumbles. This difficulty, however, is one that is concomitant with the very category of caste, rather than a problem peculiar to the Urs group. As Louis Dumont describes it, 'the caste, unified from the outside, is divided within. More generally, a particular caste is a complex group, a successive inclusion of groups of diverse orders or levels' (Dumont 1980: 34).[3] The case of the Urs group thus corresponds exactly to Dumont's description of caste in general.

The Urs caste is often divided internally into the following three groups (Nanjundayya and Ananthakrishna Iyer 1928–35, vol. 2: 47):

1. The Urs proper (*arasu*) which is divided into upper and lower groups
2. The Kumarapatta (*kumārapaṭṭa*) or Bahadur
3. The Bada Urs (*baḍa arasu*).

The Urs proper is the group that includes the royal family, the Wodeyar, and is further divided into an upper and a lower section. The second category, called the Kumarapatta or Bahadur, are said to be the descendants of the kings' illegitimate children. At present, two families are known to spring from the illegitimate children of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (r. 1799–1868). Mr B. N. Bahadur, a successful businessman in the USA who donated fifteen million rupees to an institute of management studies in the University of Mysore in 2003,[4] belongs to one of these Bahadur families. There is a great social and economic gap between the Urs proper and the third category, the Bada Urs, which rather crudely means 'poor Urs' in Kannada. Some of the group were once on the list of the OBCs (the Other Backward Classes)[5] in Karnataka.

Three categories of the Urs caste are again divided into sub-categories and individual clans. For example, the Urs proper, the highest ranked of the three groups, are further divided into an upper and a lower section, each of which forms a substantial endogamous group. There are some clans within the upper section of the Urs proper, however, that have long avoided intermarriage. Within the Urs, especially amongst older generations of the Urs proper, there is still a strong sense of clan consciousness which reminds them of the past antagonism between several clans, which we will discuss later. While some maintain a clan consciousness, many Bada Urs, the lowest of the groups, began to marry their women into the Urs proper men (or vice-versa). There are increasingly more Bada Urs who have become economically as wealthy as the Urs proper, if not more so, therefore what they need now is 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1984) – such as pedigree and lineage – which only the Urs proper have. Furthermore, amongst the very high-ranking Urs families who are close to the Wodeyar, marriages that transcend original endogamous restrictions are being actively arranged creating matrimonial ties with the royal lines of northern India or elsewhere (see Chapter 6). Accordingly, although an ideology exists to avoid intermarriage between these three sub-groups, we cannot consider each group to be a completely closed endogamous group. Perhaps the important thing is to recognise, as Dumont says, that when seen from a distance, castes appear to be a unified mass, but when seen close up they are split, but also at the same time we must recognise that even these fissures are not static.

The Urs proper, who make up the upper class of the Urs caste, are formed by a number of clans known as *manetana* (genealogical line) (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3). Each clan belongs to a different *gōtra*,[6] and as a result of a matrimonial rule that those within the same *gōtra* may not be linked in marriage, each clan becomes an exogamous group. It is said that there are a total of thirty-one clans in the Urs proper, among which thirteen belong to the upper section and eighteen to the lower one. The Mysore royal family, the Wodeyar, is at the top of the upper thirteen clans, and only those belonging to the upper section are permitted to form matrimonial ties with the royal family. The ranking of the clans are given in Table 5.3. The ranking of clans, however, has to be taken as an ideal ranking rather than one that reflects reality. Many clans were already defunct in the middle of nineteenth century, or even before, and different clan names have been added as well.

The name of a clan indicates the place where that clan ruled. This clearly shows that the Urs were a group of small chieftains who formed matrimonial alliances amongst themselves over several centuries. These places are found in the areas surrounding Mysore city: Mysore, Mandya, Chamarajanagara and Hassan districts, which almost correspond to the areas where the Urs currently live. Most clans, however, have lost their original link with the place where they used to rule. By the late eighteenth century, most Urs, especially upper Urs, had become administrative officers working under governments of both the Wodeyar and Tipu Sultan, and had been posted to places with which they did not have any previous connection.

Table 5.2 The clan composition of the three Urs groups

Groups within the Urs	*Number of clans*
The Urs proper	13 upper clans 18 lower clans
The Kumarapatta or Bahadur	2 clans
The Bada Urs	Clan number unknown

Table 5.3 The conceptual clan (*manetana*) composition of the Urs The upper thirteen clans[7]

The upper thirteen clans

	Name of clan (manetana)	*gootra*
1	Mysore (Wodeyar)	Atreya
2	Mugur	Vasistha
3	Yelandur	Agasthya
4	Kothegar	Visvamitra
5	Harikotara	Puruksha
6	Nilasoge, Hayianur	Mudgala
7	Belaguli, Naranahalli	Srivatsa
8	Kalale, Hunasanahalu	Bharadvaja
9	Halebidu, Belakere	Kanva
10	Hedathale, Nemmagala, Thoravalli	Sounika
11	Kote, Mudan Kote, Hura, Hullahalli	Kasyapa
12	Thagadur	Harithsa
13	Karagalli	Gautama

The lower eighteen clans

	Name of clan (manetana)	*gootra*
1	Tirugunda	Svathanthra
2	Begaly	Vainasa
3	Multur	Mandata
4	Kondy	Kasyapa
5	Mulagudu	Pururava
6	Sidhuvalli	Gruthsamara
7	Marsy	Venthsaya
8	Hebbalu	Daphika
9	Kikkeny	Not known
10	Hindanur	Madhata
11	Kulagana	Not known
12	Thala Kadu	Mardhula
13	Beltur	Not known
14	Hosakote	Not known
15	Malalavadi	Not known
16	Maddur	Not known
17	Hebbalaguppe	Not known
18	Theppuru	Sandilya

The ranking of clans, which the Urs maintained even in the late twentieth century, was formed in the latter half of the seventeenth century at the behest of the king of Mysore, Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (r. 1673–1704). He is known to have expanded the dominions of Mysore kingdom and to have constructed a centralised authoritarian political system. Prior to Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, the kingdom of Mysore was strongly characterised by political alliances of local power holders who possessed lands beyond the royal writ. Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar aimed to eliminate this decentralised power system, which was originally embraced by the monarchy, and tried to group these local power holders into a caste (*jāti*) called the Urs (Ota 2000: 130). The whole story of his creation of the thirty-one Urs clans is written down in Kannada literature,[8] which praises the achievements of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.

In 1690, Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar examined the conduct of the Urs kindred and relatives (*baṃdhugaḷu*). Those 'who have connections with the Gowda (or Okkaligas, peasant caste) or humble *jāti*' were incorporated into the *jāti* with which they were connected; 'those who have pure connections' were classified into the thirteen clans; and 'those whose conduct is slightly inferior' were classified into the eighteen clans (ibid.). It was decreed that both the thirteen and the eighteen clans should be endogamous, however it was permitted for a woman from the latter groups to become the concubine of a man from the former. Those who were assigned to the thirteen clans 'were born as noble Kshatriya' and relatives of the king. They expressed repentance if they 'forgot that honour' and 'foolishly abandoned the way of the *jāti*', or if they 'made light of the teachings of Veda as in the Sudras' 'according to the teachings of Shiva' and 'neglected the rites of Varnashrama (rule of varna)' (ibid.: 130). This literature explains the creation of the thirty-one clans by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar as a scheme to re-purify the Urs who, while being originally Kshatriya, had degraded themselves by relations with such 'humble *jāti*' as the Gowda. However, Ota holds that, to begin with, the lineage of the Urs who were classified into the thirteen and eighteen clans, including the royal family (the Mysore clan, Wodeyar), was intensely indigenous, and that there is an extremely high possibility that they included members from not only the peasant caste but also from other castes. Furthermore, Ota argues that, being of such diverse descent, they were not bound by the restrictions of bloodlines, and that their liberal marriage network was a driving force behind the formation and development of the original Mysore kingdom (ibid.: 130). Accordingly, the logic of this literature was a reversal of the actual situation; the Kshatriya local power holders were not degraded by mixing with other lower castes, but rather these people of mixed descent were for the first time given the caste of Urs and made the varna of Kshatriya (ibid.: 131). As described in the literature, the criterion for the division into the thirteen and eighteen clans was the behaviour of each clan. Ota believes, however, that, from the geographical distribution of the name of origin of each clan, the differences in clan status should be considered as largely regulated by purely political factors. These factors could include the extent of the area over which the clan held dominion and its historical depth, and from how early on it had had ties with the Mysore royal family, and the intensity of these ties, including matrimonial bonds.

The ideology of re-purifying the caste, used at the time for the unification of the Urs caste was not based on historical fact, but rather was a fiction inconsistent with reality, although it is not futile to consider the actual logic of this ideology. The ideology used here was rooted in the purity of blood. The clans were all separated and ranked according to how pure their blood was. This logic resembles the notion of purity and pollution formulated by Dumont to be the foundation of caste ideology (Dumont 1980). According to Dumont, the sole principle in which the caste system is rooted is the opposition between pure and impure. A hierarchy is created by the placing of the pure above the impure, and the separation of each caste and the division of labour is rooted in this opposition (ibid.: 92–108). However, as many critics of Dumont have pointed out, it must be considered that this pure/impure ideology, rather than being accepted by all members of the caste society, is a very convenient ideology for the Brahmin, who are positioned at the top of the hierarchy and held to be of extreme purity (cf. Raheja 1988a, 1988b; Parry 1994).

If we consider that the ideology of the opposition of the pure and the impure is a mere Brahminical ideology, the Urs ideology of consanguinity being discussed here, while invoking Brahminical concepts, clearly exists as a distinct ideology. In the Brahminical ideology of pure/impure, the Brahmins, whose extreme purity is the foundation of their position at the top of the hierarchy, are extremely vulnerable to pollution.[9] For this reason, they dislike to receive food or water from the lower castes or to eat in the same place as them.[10] This is on account of the belief that pollution will be transferred to their own bodies via food, water, and other substances. However, while the purity of blood by which the Urs are ranked may be reduced by mingling with impure blood, such a mingling with impure blood is not forbidden.[11] Rather, as will be mentioned later, the maintenance of illegitimate ties with impure blood becomes the basis of the links with the marginal sections of the Urs group. The intermingling of blood is not necessarily taboo for the Urs. It merely determines the framework of the hierarchy.

Another logic, which unifies the Urs while ranking them hierarchically, is the principle of endogamy. The upper thirteen clans and the lower eighteen clans of the Urs proper are regulated respectively as endogamous groups. At the same time, because of the basic rule that two people who share the same *gōtra* may not marry, each clan becomes an exogamous group. This negative rule of prohibition, however, may also appear as positive drive 'to marry women out' (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 43, 45). On account of this *gōtra* exogamy rule, all the clans should have established close marriage alliances with one another, and there should be greater unification within the endogamous groups. However, within the clans of the Urs, some tend to avoid marriage alliances with other clans. An Urs elder told me that until the 1970s and 80s there were absolutely no marriage alliances between certain clans, such as the Kote and the Mugur clans. As she put it, clans like the Mugur were 'that side' (*ā kaḍe*) of the Kaveri river and they would never send their daughters to 'this side' (*ī kaḍe*). According to her, 'that side' were people who had historically 'arrived later'. Both of these groups belong to the upper thirteen clans in the hierarchy of the thirty-one clans and should both be in the endogamous group, but in fact they had avoided marriages. While there are some relationships which reject matrimonial alliances, there are, on the other hand, clans which exchange women with one another. For example, there were frequent interchanges of women between the Kote clan and the Kalale clan. One can see other such relationships, which indicates that there are some clans among the Urs proper who carry out restricted exchange. One may say that this is a factor that prevents the Urs proper from forming one homogeneous endogamous group. Such restricted exchange is explained by the remark, ‘We were once brothers, but some time ago we became two separate clans’. The fact that, while there are clans who avoid exchanging women, there are in turn clans who prefer it, indicates that within the Urs there are discords as well as special ties. This is despite the wishes of the rulers, the Wodeyar, who, since the seventeenth century, have been trying to unify the Urs as a single caste group. This clan heterogeneity is striking even at the level of daily life. Its influence ranges from whose house one visits frequently, to who is invited to ceremonies such as weddings. It goes beyond a mere matter of conventions and at times attains the level of people’s emotions. For some people, the reason that they do not visit a certain person’s home is not simply because they are not accustomed to doing so, but because on an emotional level they are afraid to do so. Although this emotional clan consciousness is becoming less apparent, especially amongst younger generations of Urs, we could still say that elements of resistance within the Urs against the homogenisation of the community, which the Wodeyar family were unable to suppress, are still alive today in the daily lives of the community.

Within the Urs proper, not only is the exchange of women between the clans not ‘general exchange’ (Lévi-Strauss 1969), even the fundamental rule of the *gōtra* exogamous rule cannot be said to be entirely strictly followed. Within such a small population of the Urs proper, if a suitable marriage partner is not found among the preferred partner clans, rather than looking for one in an antagonistic clan, as a last resort steps are taken to somehow provide one from among their own clan. From what I understand, in the case of a marriage between the same *gōtra*, there have been marriages where the bride calls herself by the *gōtra* of her mother’s family during the ceremony and is seen as the adopted child of maternal relatives – concealing for the time being the matter of the same *gōtra*. In addition, some among the lower eighteen clans alter their original *gōtra* name to one with a higher social status. In comparison with the Brahmins, the Urs have a very flexible attitude towards their *gōtra*. The homogenisation of the community through *gōtra* exogamy has also been prevented by these ad hoc ritual arrangements.

In the seventeenth century, Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar tried to rank all the Urs clans in a hierarchy with the royal family at its top and unify them as a single caste. However, the ranking he created cannot be said to have been permanently fixed. According to the ranking made by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, the Mugur clan, from whom his mother came, occupied the second highest position after the Wodeyar. However, in a ranking drawn up at the end of the nineteenth century by the British Residency in Mysore, during the negotiation of marriage alliances with the royal families of northern India (see Chapter 6), the young Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV’s mother’s clan, the Kalale clan, and the Kote clan, who had long maintained marriage alliances with the Kalale clan, occupied higher positions (see Table 5.4). It seems that this ranking, as with so many historically constructed social ideas, should be interpreted as a contestable and fluid one rather than as fixed and stable.

Table 5.4 Rankings of the upper clans of the Urs compiled at the end of the nineteenth century[12]

	Name of clan	*gootra*
1	Mysore (Wodeyar)	Atreya
2	Bettada Kote	Kasyapa
3	Kalale	Bharadwaja
4	Mugur	Vasishta
5	Yelandur	Agasthya
6	Kothagala	Visvamitra
7	Nilsoge	Mudgala
8	Bilaguli	Srivathsa
9	Halebidu	Kanya
10	Hedathale	Sownika
11	Thagadur	Harithsa
12	Karagahalli	Goutama

The creation of the origin myth

The Urs had maintained various practices to differentiate themselves from the other Kshatriya before the colonial authorities recognised their special status. One of these was Sanskritisation, such as the adoption of vegetarianism mentioned previously. Another was the creation of the origin myth. While we possess no clear historical records of the locality where the royal Wodeyar family originated, there are many versions of the royal annals, known as *Vamśāvali*, which were written by poets and historians attached to the court from the seventeenth century onwards. These annals recount the brilliant achievements of the successive kings of Mysore and note that the origins of these kings are connected with the gods or legendary heroes. In these narratives, myth and reality are depicted as equivalent in a completely seamless succession.

Satyanarayana believes that the writers of the history of the royal family were under the patronage of the Wodeyar family, and wrote the myths of the origins of the royal family in order to make the link between their sect and the royal family appear legitimate and primordial (Satyanarayana 1996: 3–10). For this reason, the origin myths differ according to the religion and sect of the author. Differences occur not only when the authors belong to different sects, but we can also see points of difference in the details when the authors belong to the same sect but are from a different period. We examine here as an example annals written by a Sri Vaishnava writer in the first half of the eighteenth century, and annals written by a Jain writer in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The origin myth according to Sri Vaishnavaism is currently the one most generally circulated and bears a very close resemblance to the myth preserved within the Urs group during the colonial era as the most authoritative statement. According to this origin myth,[13] the founders of the Wodeyar family were two brothers, Vijaya (sometimes also known as Yaduraya) and Krishnaraya, who came to the area from

Dvaraka in western India, the present-day state of Gujarat. They came to the Mysore region because they were entrusted with the control of the Kaveri river area by the king of the Vijayanagara dynasty.[14] They were Kshatriyas belonging to the Yaduvamsha of the lunar race, which designates descendants of Yadu, who appears in Indian myth. This Yaduvamsha line is known as the line to which Krishna, one of the Hindu gods and also an incarnation of the god Vishnu, belongs.

Accordingly, the two brothers, Vijaya and Krishnaraya, decided to spend the night at a place called Hadadana near Mysore. The brothers learned that the king who had ruled this area had despaired of human life and joined the priesthood, leaving his wife and daughter in distress. In this land without a sovereign, power was in the hands of Mara Nayaka, the army chief (*dalvoi*) of the king's army, who was trying to marry the king's daughter in order to strengthen his authority further. Vijaya offered to help the queen and, with the help of Jangama (a Veerashaiva guru) who was attached to the court, he summoned Mara Nayaka to the palace and killed him. Vijaya then married the queen's daughter and became the king of Mysore.

The other origin myth, which links the Wodeyar family with the Jain faith, tells us a different story. [15] According to this, an Urs who was a descendant of the Yadava clan came from Vijayanagara and settled in Mysore in Kumbara Koppal (which means 'the potters' colony', and still exists in the south–eastern part of Mysore city). There he married a woman of the Kumbara caste and died after the birth of a daughter. The wife and daughter he left behind were troubled by a member of the Toreya caste,[16] who tried forcibly to marry the daughter. Since the Toreya caste was seen as a lower caste than the Kumbara, the mother was reluctant to give her daughter to him. However, the situation was changed by the appearance of three brothers who were descendants of Hoysala Vishnuvardana of the Yadava Dynasty: Devaraja, Tinmaraja, and Shantiraja. The three brothers saved the daughter, and Devaraja married her and became the ruler of this kingdom. Devaraja was later murdered by Mara Nayaka, the head of the Toreya caste, who then single-handedly seized power. However, Mara Nayaka was overthrown by Devaraja's son, Raja Wodeyar. With the support of the Jains, Raja Wodeyar became the sovereign of Mysore (Satyanarayana 1996: 6).

There is a shared plot in these two origin myths. The Kshatriya brothers, who are direct descendants of the gods of myth, come to southern India from the north. They then save the queen and princess of the indigenous ruler from people of humble birth. One of the brothers later marries the local princess and becomes the ruler of Mysore. Discrepancies appear between the various origin myths, i.e. the reason why the brothers had to come to southern India and the characters who are to be saved by them, but the basic plot is the same. Both myths tell us that ancestors of the Wodeyar family were noble Kshatriya from northern India, and that they became rulers of Mysore through a brave act against an illegitimate chief and a marriage alliance with the local royals. In fact, it is not at all unusual for many castes to claim to have descended from a famous king or even a divine figure in order to insist upon a much higher ritual status than that to which other castes might think they are entitled. However, the Wodeyar family, as rulers of an area known as Mysore, not only had to link their origin with a great personality, which became the basis for their transcendental presence, but also had to legitimise their rule in this particular region. This was because of the inherent contradiction of their being outsiders and at the same time the rulers of the local society. J. C. Heesterman called this dilemma the ‘conundrum of the king’s authority’ (Heesterman 1985: 108–27). The plot involving marriage to the daughter of the indigenous ruler plays a vital role in cancelling out this contradiction. The fact that the blood of the indigenous ruler ran in the Wodeyar family, as well as making the foreign kings acceptable in this region, also meant that they could be recognised as being indigenous men of power through the truth of their maternal history. Moreover, this legend of the marriage of a foreign noble father and an indigenous mother was convenient in explaining the form of the Wodeyar family’s faith. The tale thus resolves the inconsistency of their being devotees of the more Brahminical Sri Vaishnavaism, while worshipping as their clan god (*kula dēvata*) Chamundeshvari, originally an indigenous local village goddess.[17]

By identifying the rival armed forces members as lower-caste Toreyas (the Toreyas are generally regarded as Sudras), the Wodeyar origin myth further stresses the gap between the Mysore royal family and other contesting groups. The daughter of the indigenous ruler may not form a marriage alliance with one such lower caste, but she is willing to marry a foreign Kshatriya of purer blood. As a result of this pure-blooded marriage, the foreign king’s rule of this area would be accepted. Emphasising the foreign origin of the king is not unique to the Mysore royal house, on the contrary it is found ubiquitously all over India in order to legitimise the superiority of royal houses by giving them an added transcendent quality.

The king’s foreign provenance appeared again in the early twentieth century as the very commencement of the royal history of Mysore. This was printed in Kannada as *Annals of the Mysore Royal Family*[18] and used as a history textbook in schools. This reassertion of the Mysore royal family’s foreign origin coincided with their effort to establish matrimonial alliances with the northern Indian royals. As we will see in Chapter 6, their foreign origin was very much needed in order to convince their aristocratic counterparts that they belonged to the same blood as the Rajput and, therefore, that the matrimonial alliance they were seeking was both natural and legitimate.

The heterogeneity as a source of power

The lifestyle of the Urs is highly Sanskritised. Most upper Urs, especially the older generations, are strict vegetarians and do not consume alcohol. They observe the concept of ‘*maḍi*’ (ritual purity) carefully and never perform animal sacrifice (*baḷi*). They explained this rather Brahmin-like lifestyle as a result of their being not just Kshatriya but Brahma-Kshatriya.[19] It is not clear when they started using the term ‘Brahma-Kshatriya’ to designate themselves within the varna hierarchy, which normally divides ‘caste Hindus’ into four categories: Brahmin (the priestly class), Kshatriya (rulers and warriors), Vaishya (the merchant class), and Sudra (the class which provides services to the three upper varna). The Sanskritisation of their lifestyle probably happened at the time when the Wodeyar converted into Sri Vaishnavaism in the seventeenth century. We can also see strong influences of Veerashaivism in their lifestyle. At least as far as the food habits of the Urs are concerned, they are closer to Lingayats (Veerashaiva followers) than to Brahmins. For example, like Lingayats they consume a lot of garlic in their cooking which is seldom seen in Brahmin households in Mysore. Their Sanskritised lifestyle is not, though, as rigid as Brahmins and Lingayats. Many Urs, especially many men and some women of younger generations, do consume non-vegetarian food outside of the house, and many men do consume alcohol at home and especially in gentlemen's clubs. The flexibility of their lifestyle helped them to adjust to changing cultural circumstances and to balance the different, and sometimes contradictory, values brought by colonial modernity.

The Urs belong to a variety of religions and sects. They claim different religious and sectarian affiliations such as Shaivas, Sri Vaishnavas, Veera Shaivas and Jains according to their clan and lineage. It is exceedingly rare for people who belong to a caste other than the Brahmins to express in this fashion the sect to which they belong. As far as castes other than the Brahmins are concerned, they generally only possess an identity as a Hindu believer, and the differences between the sects within Hinduism are almost meaningless to them. The non-Brahmins merely attend their preferred temple or monastery and worship their favourite gods (*iśta dēvata*) or gurus. However, since the details of which sect and which temple they have historically supported are known to each of the Urs clan, religious sect is not at all a personal choice, rather it depends on the clan into which you are born. There are many temples within Mysore city, of which the main patrons are houses from the upper Urs.[20] In general, when a ceremony is carried out within an Urs household their domestic priests are invited. Their domestic priests are sometimes different from the priests serving in the temple that that Urs family has patronised. A domestic priest will commonly visit prosperous Urs families every day for the daily *pūjā* (usually in the morning and the evening).

The relationship between a clan and a religious sect does seem to be similar to that amongst Brahmins, but the major contrast between the two communities is that differences in religion or sect are not at all a hindrance to marriage amongst the Urs, while it would be considered a sin to undertake an inter-caste marriage amongst Brahmins. Amongst the Urs, a woman from a Jain family may marry into a Shaiva family, and this does not pose any problems. In addition, there are many Veerashaivas among the Bada Urs, the lower strata of the Urs. Although the Lingayats are generally recognised by themselves and others as a single independent caste, Lingayats among the Urs do not share this Lingayat identity. Compared to the Lingayats in north Karnataka, Lingayat customs and rituals in the area of Old Mysore (the former princely state of Mysore) are much more varied and less rigid. For example, only Jangamas (the priestly class amongst Lingayats) are allowed to become the heads of *maṭhas* (monasteries) in north Karnataka but the selection of heads is more relaxed in the south. In the north, religious importance was attached to *maṭhas* (monasteries) and their heads (*gurus*) and going to temples was somehow disregarded, but in the south many temple priests serving for small goddess shrines are Lingayats (called *tammadis*).

There are two lineages within the Urs proper that are endowed with Veera Shaiva *gurus*. The surname of each family is the name of their respective *maṭhas* called Boppegaudanapura Matha and Malavalli Matha. These two *maṭhas* are both in Mandya district. In these families, the eldest son becomes the next head of their monastery (*maṭhaḍikāri*), and he is permitted to marry, unlike most of the Lingayat *maṭhaḍikāris*. Two *maṭhas* are the centres of the Manteswami cult in southern Karnataka and still attract tens of thousands of devotees from lower castes, Dalits, and Muslims whenever they hold religious fairs or gatherings, called *jātres*. Manteswami was a saint who lived probably in the early sixteenth century.[21] He is believed to have come from a lower caste or Adivasi (tribal) background. His guru, Kodekalla Basava, and Manteswami rebelled against Jangama dominance within the Veerashaiva sect, which was originally propagated by the saint-politician Basavanna (1134–96) as an anti-Brahminical and more egalitarian religion. Manteswami was believed to have a supernatural power which cured the sick and sometimes revived the dead. Many lower castes, especially Panchalas (backsmiths), Kurubas (shephereds), and Dalits became his followers.

The link between the Urs and the Manteswami cult is extremely interesting, although it requires further detailed studies. The link does, though, provide us with clues towards understanding the nature of the political role the Urs played in medieval south India. Thus, it must have been hugely advantageous for the Urs to keep lower castes as allies through the activities of the Boppegaudanapura Matha and Malavalli Matha. In the times of war, lower castes with special skills such as blacksmithing were extremely useful. Disciples (*śaraṇas*) and devotees of Manteswami were said to be heavily armed and fought against whoever tried to oppress their beliefs (Ankanahalli 2008). It is also believed that when they helped Mysore Wodeyar in a war, a Mysore ruler gave two boys from his community, as a sign of gratitude, to look after the tombs (*gaddiges*) of the Manteswami and his disciples (ibid.: 96). The two lineages of Boppegaudanapura Matha and Malavalli Matha are derived from these two Urs boys. At precisely the same time, the Urs were trying to Sanskritise their lifestyle and to adapt aristocratic Muslim cultural practices such as purdah, they were therefore still keen to build strong ties with the lower strata of society. These extremely different politico–cultural strategies of the Urs were never considered to be conflictive or shameful. Rather this very heterogeneous mixture of high cultures and magico-religious practices amongst lower castes was the source of their dominance. The Urs compensated for the fact that they did not have any kin relationship with landed castes (Okkaligas and Lingayats), unlike other ruling castes of India such as Rajputs and Marathas, by maintaining ritual ties with both the top of the caste hierarchy (Brahmins and temples), through generous gift-giving, and the lower strata in the hierarchy by participating in and patronising their religious practices.

The two lineages of the Boppegaudanapura and Malavalli mathas are not at all marginalised nor disrespected amongst the Urs, despite the fact that the two mathas have strong associations with lower castes and Dalits, with whom many upper castes would have avoided any physical contact in the past (some may have problems even today). The two lineages have even established close kin connections with the royal family Wodeyar and the distinguished clans of the upper Urs. There have been many cases of women from the two lineages marrying into the royal family and also, conversely, of women from the royal family marrying into them. The mother of the present Malavalli Matha guru is, for example, one of the daughters of the former Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wodeyar.

Each year during the months of February and March the Boppegaudanapura and Malavalli hold successive *jātres* in their *maṭhas* and other important sacred sites related to Manteswami and his disciples. The devotees move from one place to another, mostly on foot, as a religious pilgrimage. The tombs (*gaddige*) of Manteswami and his disciples are located within these *maṭhas* and sacred sites on the *jātre* route. Devotees believe that *gaddiges* still possess supernatural power and many different forms of rituals are held around them. The height of the series of *jātres* during the months of February and March is the one held in a place called Kappadi for which the two *maṭhas* take responsibility in turn. The Kappadi jatre attracts thousands, if not tens of thousands, of devotees, every day mostly from the southern districts of Karnataka. The majority are lower castes, Dalits, and Muslims. During this *jātre*, the head of the *maṭha* that is in charge in that year sits on a throne each day. The throne, covered with a tiger skin given by the previous maharaja, is also called *gaddige*. Gongs and drums are sounded the instant he sits down on the *gaddige*, and there are some among the female devotees who collapse in a state of possession. This ritual clearly reminds us of the royal ritual, especially the durbar during the Dasara festival in which the maharaja incorporates himself with the goddess and the state (see Chapter 8). During the Kappadi jatre, the head of the *maṭha* becomes a physical manifestation of Manteswami himself. The current head of Boppegaudanapura Matha, Mr Channaraje Urs, told me that he is a mere caretaker of the *gaddiges* and not a guru, but becomes one only during the *jātres*.[22] The political implication of the Urs possessing the quality of a lower-caste guru is once again an important source of power that compensates for their lack of a kin network amongst the landed agriculturist castes. The ritual language of religio–politics thus connects the Urs with the lower strata of society. The capacity to maintain various, and often conflicting, religious and cultural values within the community has been the main source of their power. Their ability to connect themselves with lower and non-landed castes has appeared, curiously, to be effective in democratic politics after Indian independence as well, proving once again the durability of pre-colonial relationships into the present.

The heterogeneity within: the creation of a class of gentleman

In the 1910s, the Urs began to expand English education, which had previously been available only for the royal family and the upper Urs, to all of their caste members, including the Bada Urs living in rural areas. The expansion of English education was a part of their strategy to 'up-lift'– as they called it – their caste community. Other castes, especially the dominant castes in Mysore, the Lingayats[23] and

Okkaligas,[24] had already started forming caste associations and establishing schools and hostels for their young caste members (Manor 1977). The Mysore Lingayat Education Fund Association (1905) and the Vokkaligara (Okkaliga) Sangha (1906) were formed in Bangalore. These organisations worked for the advancement of their communities, particularly in the field of education. The intention of these organisations was to challenge the dominance of Brahmins in the country. They even succeeded in forcing the Mysore government to enhance job opportunities in government services and educational institutions for non-Brahmins, which led to the resignation of the charismatic Diwan M. Visvesvaraya who was a Telugu Brahmin, in 1919 (Manor 1978a: 60). The Urs were equally affected by the political atmosphere of the times, but their cultural strategies had to be different from those of other dominant castes. Looking back on the education among their community in the early twentieth century, one of the royal Urs wrote in the early 1950s that 'we cannot simply boast that our ancestors were fighters, warriors and a martial race. We should, in addition, cultivate the nobler instincts of the human race' (Urs 1953: 27). English education was considered to be a more effective tool to transform themselves from a mere martial race to modern aristocrats. Education had to be more than something which would secure them better jobs or more income. It had to cultivate nobility amongst them that would distinguish them from other numerically and politically dominant castes, particularly the Lingayats and Okkaligas.

In 1918, Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV ordered a survey to be conducted of the Urs caste members living in villages. A party of three Urs royals was sent to a number of villages in the Mysore princely state, as well as villages in the Coimbatore and Salem districts in the Madras Presidency. They made enquiries, collected statistics, and submitted a report to the maharaja about the economical and social condition of Urs caste members (ibid.: 23). This survey showed that there were a total of 112 villages in which members of the Urs caste were to be found living, inside and outside of the state, and that most of the Urs living in villages were economically poor agriculturists, struggling to survive. In order to elevate their community, the maharaja and upper Urs decided to admit the sons and daughters of these rural Urs to two boarding schools in Mysore city and sanctioned scholarships to village pre-primary school children who could not yet be admitted.

In the late 1910s, the palace stipend was also extended to the Urs living in villages; then called the 'Village Urs'. Most of the 'Village Urs' were newly found caste members after the 1918 survey and were Bada Urs, a lower sub-caste of Urs. The palace stipend was now divided into two categories, one was the stipend for 'Town Urs', who had been receiving the palace stipend since the nineteenth century and consisted of the Urs proper residing mostly in Mysore city, and the other category was the stipend for 'Village Urs'. There were only a few Urs who could claim a direct blood relationship with the maharaja's family, and were entitled to receive substantial stipends equivalent to a higher officer's salary. The bulk of stipends were made up of small allotments as low as Rs 10 per month in the case of Town Urs, going down to Rs 2 or even less in the case of Village Urs. Although the stipends for the Village Urs were very small compared to what the

Urs proper could enjoy, this financial aid from the palace must have helped them to change their lives and to move from being impoverished farmers into at least the lower ranks of the educated middle class.

The following description of the principles of Urs education, as outlined in a speech given by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV at the Chamarajendra Urs Boarding School in 1911, clearly shows what they tried to achieve through the expansion of modern education:

> …Do not forget in your zeal for your school the great importance of cultivating games and athletics, if you wish to become healthy, active and strong-minded men… I would ask you boys, to remember that true religion and morality do not consist in merely listening to religious and moral instructions. Try to carry out the lessons which are taught you here, by being honourable, truthful, modest and high-minded and by doing some good to your fellow men; and always remember that the race from which you have sprung demands a high standard of life and conduct. Our community is a small one, but it can nevertheless make its influence largely felt on public life, if only its members will be true to the highest ideals.[25]

The continuity between the education given to the maharaja by British tutors and the education for Urs youth is clear (see the previous chapter). Only a healthy body, trained through various sports and games, can maintain the high moral standards that men of noble birth should have. One objective of the Urs' educational policy was to make the whole Urs caste significant and influential in the public sphere in Mysore, not by their numbers, but by their cultural capital. Being noble and morally superior became the core of their caste identity; therefore, the extension of royal education was the only way to reshape themselves as politically significant and at the same time culturally different from other castes.

The predecessor of the Chamarajendra Urs Boarding School was the royal school established within the palace compound by the former maharaja, Chamarajendra (also called as Chamaraja) Wodeyar, and renamed in commemoration following his death. The original purpose of the royal school was to provide a lower primary education to young maharajas and royal family members, Urs boys from distinguished families, and Brahmin and Muslim boys from respectable families in the city. When the royal school was replaced with the scheme for the maharaja's private education in 1892, the Chamarajendra Urs Students' Home was opened in Nazarbad, outside of the Mysore fort, and dedicated exclusively to the education of the Urs. The students engaged in higher education could also stay in this student home and go to other high schools or colleges in Mysore city. The Urs Students' Home was renamed the Chamarajendra Urs Boarding School sometime in the late nineteenth century. After the Government Lower Secondary Examination was started in 1895, the Chamarajendra Urs Boarding School established five forms leading up to this examination.

For Urs girls, the Vani Vilas Girls' School, named after the able Maharani Vani Vilasa (wife of Chamarajendra Wodeyar) was established in 1913 by the order of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV (Vani Vilasa's son) and given a dormitory building in 1915. The maharaja was very keen on educating Urs girls despite the fact that most of the girls living in Mysore city were still practising *purdah* (seclusion of women). He gave a speech on the occasion of the prize distribution at the Vani Vilas Girls' School in 1917, in which he appreciated the education of girls in the school, saying that 'we are very pleased to note that cooking is not neglected, nor is gardening. Games too, I hope, are receiving adequate attention. A healthy mind in a healthy body is doubly necessary in the case of our girls who have to observe the Purdah system'.[26] It is interesting to see here that giving education to girls and keeping girls behind *purdah* were not apparently opposing ideas; conversely they thought that the very *purdah* system itself imposed a need to educate these girls. Of course, the purpose of girls' education was still mainly to create healthy housewives who were capable of looking after the household. Many Urs women, though, benefited largely, and in unexpected ways, from their education. In the case of day students, who were mostly upper Urs girls, they were able to go to the school by car and to receive education in a secluded space which did not violate the rules of *purdah*. They told me how much they enjoyed the science classes, table tennis, and Girl Guide activities at the Vani Vilas Girls' School. Many of them gained a lot from their education. Some went on to higher education and even became professionals, such as college teachers. After they gradually came out of the *purdah* in the 1950s, many more Urs women began pursuing modern professions outside of the household.

The Chamarajendra Urs Boys Boarding School was founded much earlier than the Vani Vilas Girls School, but had only thirty students in three forms in 1892. However, by the 1930s there were more than 130 boarders in eight forms (see Table 5.5 and Table 5.6). The number of boarders increased because it became possible for the Village Urs to send their children to this boarding school, having received scholarships from the palace.

Table 5.5 Number of students in the Chamarajendra Urs Boarding School[27]

Year	*Forms*	*Boarders*	*Day scholars*	*Total*
1892	3	–	–	30
1910	5	26	20	46
1927–28	5	–	–	144
1928–29	5	–	–	141
1929–30	5	–	–	145
1930–31	?	–	–	138
1931–32	?	–	–	138
1932–33	?	134	6	130
1933–34	?	128	6	134
1934–35	?	133–126	7	140–133
1935–36	8	125	9	134
1937–38	8	92	20	112
1939–40	8	–	–	116
1940–41	8	–	–	110
1941–42	8	114	13	127

Table 5.6 Number of students in the Vani Vilasa Girls' School[28]

Year	*Forms*	*Boarders*	*Day scholars*	*Total*
1913	4	0	20	20
1918	5	49	22	71
1928–29	5	80	–	–
1929–30	?	85	–	–
1930–31	?	85	–	–
1931–32	?	87	–	–
1932–33	8	85	31	116
1933–34	8	78	41	119
1934–35	8	68	48	116
1935–36	8	71	48	119
1937–38	9	84	38	122
1939–40	9	88	74	162
1940–41	9	89	73(25)	162

(Number of non-Urs students)

Table 5.7 Higher education of students from the Chamarajendra Urs Boarding School[29]

	1922–23	*1923–24*	*1924–25*	*1925–26*	*1926–27*	*1927–28*	*1928–29*	*1929–30*	*1930–31*	*1931–32*
Post-graduate Study	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	4
College Course	–	–	5	7	9	14	18	22	24	17
High School	19	28	35	33	48	35	35	40	42	43
Professional	2	2	4	14	19	18	19	14	7	15
Total	21	30	44	54	76	67	72	77	76	79

After the privilege of English education had been extended to the Bada Urs living in villages, they rushed to send their sons and daughters to the royal boarding schools in Mysore city, aware that this gave them a unique advantage over other castes whose educational initiatives did not have the benefit of state funding. It was certainly a great opportunity, especially for the Urs from rural areas. Yet, life in the school was not always easy for the young Urs from the village. Reproduced below are two cases illustrative of the difficulties they sometimes encountered.

Case 1

In February 1919, the school authority decided to introduce *mudde* – balls of *ragi* (a kind of millet) – at breakfast time every Saturday in order to introduce variety into the school meals. Certain students were discontented with this decision, and misbehaved by doing such things as throwing mudde at the walls of the dining hall. The authority took this incident seriously, and made a decision to dismiss nine students from the school and demote two students from Boarders to Day scholars (who were not provided with accommodation).

Ragi is a kind of dark-coloured millet, which even now is widely consumed in rural areas in southern Karnataka. It is grown on land that is too poor or dry for the cultivation of rice. The way of cooking ragi is generally to knead it with hot water, steam it, and make it into balls called mudde. The mudde is highly glutinous so one has to swallow it without chewing. People say that this is the proper way to eat mudde (ragi-ball). In urban areas, people occasionally use ragi as a weaning food for babies, or as a breakfast snack, especially amongst the middle classes, who have recently been adopting more health-conscious diets. However, they are unlikely to eat ragi for lunch or dinner. By contrast, amongst the agriculturists and working classes in urban areas, ragi is the staple food and they will eat mudde all day. The area around Mysore and Mandiya districts, where most of the Urs caste lives, is the richest area for rice production because of its modern irrigation systems and the abundant water resources arising from dams constructed in the early twentieth century on the Kaveri river. However, even in the rural areas where people cultivate rice, it is ragi that is mainly consumed rather than the more expensive rice, which is sold as a cash crop and exported to the cities. Therefore, white *akki* (rice) and black ragi are defining metaphors for city and village life, and the division between rich and poor. For example, the famous seventeenth-century bhakti saint–poet Kanakadasa composed *Rama Dhanya Charite* in which conflicts between wealthy Brahmins and poor Shudras were represented as a conflict between akki and ragi (Tarikere 2010). In the poem, a paddy grain abuses a ragi grain, 'you are the food of the shudras. No one uses you in sacred rites'. Considering the cultural and social significance of 'eating ragi', the reason for the misbehaviour of the boarders of Urs Boarding School, most of whom were from rural areas, seems to be more complex than the conclusion of the school authorities that this was simply a symptom of the loose morality of academically inferior students. The school authority probably introduced ragi to reduce costs, but the boarders may have misinterpreted the decision and felt disregarded or discriminated against by the fact that they had to eat ragi even after they came to the city: the denizen of rice eaters. It might be not unreasonable to assume from their behaviour that they had a sense of inferiority about their origins and resented the fact that there was a still a strong social and cultural barrier between the boarders from rural areas and the day students from wealthy urban families.

Case 2

In September 1926, twenty-seven students were dismissed from the school for having misbehaved in defiance of the school authorities [the precise offence is unclear] and having encouraged others to do the same. The students made statements about this incident at the request of the authorities. Because some of them never apologised, the school authorities concluded that they were encouraged by outsiders. After they were dismissed from the hostel, some of the students stayed in the electrical appliance store and rice shop in Chamaraja Road, both of which were run by Urs. While the authority continued to investigate this incident by listening to students' opinions, in January 1927 the school decided that four students were the main instigators and rejected their request for readmission. The remaining students, who apologised, were readmitted and allowed to have their scholarships restored.[30] During the dispute, twenty-seven students sent a letter of petition to the maharaja immediately following the incident, as follows:

> … We were surprised to see the notice stating that the Hostel would be closed on the 6th September 1926. … As our request was not complied with, we implicitly obeyed the order in leaving the Hostel at nine O'clock in the night having no meal that night. We starved and perambulated in the street finding no shelter that night. Nothing about our scholarship was mentioned either in the notice or in the communications we received from the secretary as well as from the president. We have enclosed all the copies of the communication for your gracious Highness's personal perusal. On the 9th September 1926, to our greatest surprise, we were served with memos stating we are deprived of our scholarships…As our ill-luck would have it, we lost the protection from the beloved institution for the simple reason of bringing our grievances to the notice of the authorities. Being unable to support ourselves and having none to give us a helping hand in the city, we all the 27 students are destined to put an end to our educational career once for all. We most humbly and loyally pray your highness' sympathy to lift us from the deepest distress we are put into.[31]

It is difficult to know what was really happening from the minutes of the school committee and the petitions of the students. The exclusion of nearly one-quarter of the student body, and the subsequent appeal to the maharaja's authority, nevertheless marks this as an extraordinary upheaval, yet not one atypical in the troubled history of the school. At least it is clear that there was an obvious difference between 'the haves' and 'the have-nots' in the Urs Boarding School. Day scholars were Town Urs who came to the school in their own chauffeured cars and whose families had sufficient wealth to afford private tutors for their children after school. On the other hand, the boarders from the villages were almost exclusively Bada Urs, and they had to leave the school if the authorities increased the hostel fees or stopped their scholarship from the palace. Among the Urs Boarding School committee members, British officer Denhain, who had been president of the committee, regarded this economic inequality as an important matter. He was often offended by the fact that even the students from well-to-do families would receive palace scholarships, and that no effort of any sort was made to allow for or correct the difference between them and the poorer students. Other members of the committee were not so interested in the matter. It seems that they were most concerned about the 'up-lift' of their community as a whole, but little concerned to correct the inequalities within it. For the Urs, this difference between the Proper Urs (or Town Urs) and the Bada Urs (or Village Urs) was fundamentally a social and cultural difference, rather than simply an economic one (although it was both). This perception of social and cultural difference is clearly demonstrated by the very great efforts made more recently by wealthier Bada Urs to raise their status by establishing marriage relationships with Proper Urs.

Despite the existing social, economic, and cultural deference between the Proper Urs and Bada Urs, the idea of the community of 'Urs Gentlemen' was established in the 1920s, which made the existence of the Bada Urs a crucial rather than merely a peripheral issue. The Bada Urs, who occupied important positions, such as village heads, were closer to the conception of the gentry class in its original connotation in Britain. As James Manor has suggested, unlike other Indian princes, such as Marathas and Rajputs, the Wodeyars of Mysore did not have any kin or caste ties with the powerful landowning caste groups, Okkaligas and Lingayats, at the local level. This limited their power in local arenas and kept the local elite happy by limiting the penetration of the state administration into local centres of power. Manor has also indicated that the rulers of Mysore recognised that it was pointless to seek to convert the Urs into a powerful landed aristocracy (Manor 1975: 34–5). However, it seems that their purpose in educating the poor sections of their own caste members was to expand their political power in the local village-level political arena beyond the palace administration. Unfortunately the strategy was doomed to fail, since the tendency of Bada Urs youth was invariably to aim for better paid appointments as officers or clerks in the city following their graduation, rather than return to the village. Yuvaraja Kanteerava Narasimharaja (b. 1888–d. 1940), who was said to be more politically active than his music-loving brother, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, attempted to encourage the Bada Urs boys by talking about the importance of Scouting activities in the village area carried out by students from Urs Boarding School, who instructed villagers in hygiene, cleanliness, sanitation, cooperation, and thrift.

> There is great scope for very useful work which will incidentally show how the problem of unemployment could be tackled. Social work will also check the tendency of Urs young men with landed interests leaving their lands to seek petty clerkships in government offices. 'Back to the land' is a slogan well worth repeating, as being more in keeping with the tradition of the Urs community and the dignity of their young men unable to obtain an opening for their energy in the services or professions.[32]

What was expected of the Bada Urs youth who studied in the school was to bring to the villages and rural areas a new moral way of life, which they learned through their activities in the school, such as playing western sports or participating in the Scouts. The contradictory desire of the young Bada Urs to become professionals and to continue residing in the city, along with the inability of the schools to erode class distinctions amongst the Urs, amounted to a failure of the boarding school, and the scholarships project as it was conceived after 1920. Rather than enhancing leadership in rural society, it better equipped its graduates to live in an upper-class, urban milieu, and, whilst undoubtedly enhancing educational standards generally, the schools did not succeed in creating a united landed class. The strategies, which were originally a product of British rule, to Anglicise royals and deracinate them from local society, did not serve the intended purpose of transforming their caste community into a monolithic class of gentry. The cultural capital that the Bada Urs youth acquired through modern education provided by the palace nonetheless transformed many lives. Subsequent generations of the Bada Urs have secured better-paid professional positions and by the mid-twentieth century several had formed marriage alliances with the upper section of the Urs, which would never have otherwise happened. The project of creating a gentry class that had strong influence in the local political arena, comparable to that of the dominant castes, was a failure. However, the Urs caste community as a whole gradually managed over the course of time to reduce the internal inequalities that had seemed so impossible to overcome in the 1920s.

Urs in post-independent Karnataka politics

Prior to India's independence, Urs of aristocratic families could occupy high office in the palace or state administration, which were both largely dominated by Brahmins. For example, M. Kantharaj Urs (b. 1870–d. 1922) of the Kalale family, younger brother of Vani Vilasa, became the diwan (the equivalent of chief minister) of Mysore in 1918. The fact that he married his niece, the eldest daughter of Chamarajendra Wodeyar and Vani Vilasa, made him even closer to the royal family (see Chapter 6). He was an able administrator in his own right, but this tight kin relation to the royal family helped him to achieve high office faster than any other official.[33] Many other Urs maintained their high, but often honorary, positions in the palace as well (see Chapter 2). By the 1920s, most government posts were dominated by Brahmins, but the Urs shared a small part of influential positions with other high castes, Hindus, and Muslims. Since Independence in 1947, many important political positions have been moved to the hands of the two landed agriculturist castes of the Lingayats and Okkaligas. They are both of middle rank in the traditional caste hierarchy and are classified as Sudra, but their number and political influence in local society make them 'dominant castes' (Srinivas 1987). They have been the main promoters of the non-Brahmin movements in Mysore princely states since the 1910s. While they began to educate their own caste youth through the help of the newly established caste associations and *maṭhas* (monasteries) (see Chapter 3), they managed at the same time to force the government to pass laws in 1921 to increase the representation of the backward classes (in those days which simply meant non-Brahmin castes in general) within the public service of the state. This made Mysore one of the first states to introduce a reservation system (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 2: 305–6). The dominant castes from Mysore princely state and northern Karnataka under the Bombay presidency also controlled Congress activities in these areas. This made them feel that they had an unquestionable right to occupy high ministerial positions in the new state government after independence. The political advantage of these two dominant castes was not only derived from their numbers. They are numerous, but their combined numbers still only amount to 26 per cent of the state population (Raghavan and

Manor 2009: 7). It arose from the fact that their caste members have a strong influence in local society, as most of them are landlords and village heads.

The political dominance of Lingayats and Okkaligas was unchallenged until D. Devaraj Urs (1915–82) became the chief minister of Karnataka in 1972. Indeed, until then, all the chief ministers were from these two castes. D. Devaraj Urs belonged to a prestigious Kalale Delvoy family, but because of his association with the Congress – which campaigned against princely rule in pre-independent Mysore – he was treated as *persona non grata* in the palace for many years (Raghavan and Manor 2009: 23). As Raghavan and Manor have suggested, the political strategies of Devaraj Urs were curiously similar to those that the Mysore rulers employed for centuries. The rise of Devaraj Urs as one of the most powerful politicians in the state was partly on account of luck. When the Congress party was split between the faction led by Indira Gandhi and that of the old Congress guard, associated with the Syndicate, he moved from a marginalised position within the Congress to centre stage. The president of the Syndicate was Nijalingappa, a former chief minister of the state and a powerful Lingayat leader, and many Congress politicians from dominant castes followed him. Devaraj Urs, who could not previously enjoy any high-power ministerial position under Lingayat–Okkaliga-ruled Karnataka, remained loyal to Mrs Gandhi along with other much less powerful Lingayat and Okkaliga politicians. After Mrs Gandhi's faction of the Congress, the Congress (R) won the parliamentary election of 1971, and in the subsequent state election of 1972, Devaraj Urs, the state president of the Congress (R), became a chief minister of the state, which was still called Mysore. During his chief ministership (1971–80), he achieved more than Indira Gandhi herself expected, and far more than any other chief minister at the same time. He actively recruited talented politicians from lower-caste groups and Dalits; introduced land reforms more effectively than most other states that distributed lands from dominant castes to lower castes; and encouraged lower castes to form caste associations by giving them generous funds (Raghavan and Manor 2009: 15–86). A 'rainbow coalition', a political alliance of many different caste groups, was realised for the first time during the Urs' regime. Even after the decline of his political power, the name of Devaraj Urs continues to be a symbol of backward caste political awakening and empowerment. Thus, the alliance between a small aristocratic community and backward castes within the modern state of Karnataka once again proved its effectiveness, just as the Urs patronage of lower-caste cults, such as Manteswami, had been effective in the past.

The strategy, revived by Devaraj Urs, of having political alliances with backward communities was continued by his two daughters, Chandraprabha and Bharati. Bharati Urs formed a new party called Urs Samyuktha Paksha (Urs United Party) in 2004 with a liquor baron, Hari L. Khoday, who belongs to the Idiga (traditional toddy tapper caste), one of the largest OBC castes in the state. They failed to win a single seat in the Lokh Sabha election of 2004, and during the electoral campaign, Bharati was arrested on a charge of murdering her own cousin, from whom she allegedly borrowed Rs 70 lakhs. Bharati was acquitted in 2010 for the lack of evidence.[34]

While the old political alliance between the Urs and backward castes was pursued successfully under Devaraj Urs, other forms of politics based upon class cultures were maintained by the Urs community. The politics in which many upper Urs enjoyed participating was exercised through personal contacts within exclusive closed spaces, such as gentlemen's clubs. The gentleman's club has not yet been paid much scholarly attention as an important feature of modern Indian society.[35] This institution, obviously introduced by the British, has become a common place for socialising amongst Indian elites. In Mysore, there are several clubs that serve this purpose. According to the Indian National Congress website, Mr. Srikantadatta Wodeyar, the scion of the Wodeyar family and former member of Lokh Sabha (the lower house of the Parliament) apparently belongs to no less than five of these clubs: the Mysore Sport Club, the Bangalore Golf Club, the Mysore Race Club, the Bangalore Race Club, and the Delhi Race Club.[36] Of these five, two have traditionally strong connections to the Mysore royal family: the Mysore Race Club and the Mysore Sport Club. The close relationship between elite clubs and the Urs is demonstrated by the example of the Mysore Race Club. It is said that it was Chamarajendra Wodeyar (r. 1881–94) who started horse racing in Mysore city, near the place called Kebbe Katte Bungalow. The patrons were the Maharaja himself and the British Resident, Oliver St. John. Racing continued until 1920 in the Kebbe Katte Bungalow, then moved to a new racecourse built by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV (r. 1902–40) who was a great lover of racehorses and owned many himself, as did his brother, Yuvaraja Kanteerava Narasimharaja Wodeyar.[37] The most important Mysore race used to be held during the one-week public holiday on the occasion of the maharaja's birthday celebrations. In 1976, Karnataka state insisted upon their rights over the land of the racecourse. Since then, the Race Club has signed a lease contract with the state and continues to run horse races.

In clubs such as the Mysore Race Club, members have to pay several lakhs a year in membership fees, and the number of members is often fixed: a newcomer therefore has to wait until a vacancy becomes available. In most of the clubs in Mysore, they select each new member individually by means of the votes of existing members. The traditional 'black ball' method of selection is still very much alive.[38] A newcomer is normally expected to start informal negotiations for admission several months before the voting is held. They try to meet as many existing members as possible and to introduce themselves through supporting members and acquaintances.

The exclusive space of gentlemen's clubs was extremely important for the Urs, and the Urs were the main players in the clubland of Mysore since the values and languages appreciated in this space were encouraged and nurtured through activities such as hunting, horse racing, golf etc., which Brahmin government officers did not always enjoy. The Urs' quasi-Brahminical lifestyle observance of purity (*maḍi*), vegetarianism, and abstinence from drink did not seem to stop the upper Urs men from entering clubland. Their purity was preserved at home, but they could otherwise enjoy drinking and consuming meat in the clubs.

Although the Urs, as an aristocratic class of Mysore princely state, has dominated the space of gentlemen's clubs, democratic forces have gradually been entering the clubland of Mysore. In March 2002, the Mysore Race Club introduced a general competitive electoral system to select new members, which meant that the voting was done in public for the first time. In this election, forty-one people fought for eight new memberships that had recently become available. There were three Urs amongst forty-one contestants, but none of the Urs was elected.[39] The Urs are still leading figures in these clubs, but being Urs no longer automatically ensures a privileged position. They now have to cultivate monetary strength, political influence, and personal contacts as well. To achieve this, some Urs – especially Mr Srikantadatta Wodeyar and his wife – have become a part of the new celebrity culture in the state, alongside film stars, sport personalities, and business barons.

Conclusion

The Urs community has adapted many different values and customs over the centuries. Their ability to adapt, and their courage to live contradictive values, has enabled them to stay in power, despite their fundamental political weakness of being a small community lacking kin ties with the dominant landed castes. Their political strategies were to actively accept elite cultural values (Brahminical, Islamic, and British) and simultaneously maintain magico-religious ties with lower castes. In post-independence Karnataka, the cultural and economical differentiation within the Urs community was largely diminished thanks to the expansion of royal education, but the economic privileges the upper Urs enjoyed during colonial times were completely taken away by successive land reforms and, particularly, Indira Gandhi's abolition of the privy purses in 1971.[40] It was extremely ironic that Devaraj Urs, being Indira's man, was the one who supported the very policy of taking some of their financial privileges away at the same time as he revived their political ethos of being the patron of backward communities.[41] Most controversially, Devaraj Urs even re-classified the Urs caste community into the category of OBC, which enabled them to claim reserved posts in education and government employment at the same time as they still claimed leadership within the elite social circles of Bangalore and Mysore. Did the Urs as a whole fail to become a class of gentleman? The answer will be yes and no. The Urs are still re-interpreting and re-articulating the values and languages of high-status cultures, and at the same time searching for opportunities to establish effective political alliances with backward communities; an exercise in which they have shown a constant ability to re-invent themselves as demanded by the times in which they live.

6 Marriage alliances in imperial space

The ‘cosmopolitan’ aristocracy

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In March 2004, a friend of mine showed me a classy looking magazine called *Society*[1], which he had borrowed from a mobile library in Mysore city. There was an interview, titled ‘People’s Princess’, which caught my eye. It was an interview with the former chief minister of the state of Rajasthan, Vasundhara Raje Scindia, in which she described her aristocratic background as ‘cosmopolitan’:

> I am as cosmopolitan as anybody can be. My mother was a Rajput from Gangni in UP. My father was a Maratha descendant. I am married into a Jat family of Dholpur. My paternal grandmother was from Goa, she was an aunt of Pratap Sinh Rane of Goa. My son Dushyant is married to Naharika, daughter of the only royal Gujjar family of UP. So, I have no agenda for any caste, community or religion (*Society*, February 2004: 32)

Vasundhara’s statement indicates that although she belongs to a royal family (she is indeed the Maharani of Dholpur)[2] and is a politician of the Hindu nationalist party BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), she nevertheless would not give any special favour to a particular caste, religion, or sect since she herself has a very mixed family background. What is equally interesting is the revelation of a highly elaborate form of marriage alliance established beyond the boundaries of regions and castes. This form of marriage is obviously very different from that practised amongst educated urban middle-class Indians, who demand a secure job, high income, and good educational background from a potential partner for their son or daughter and possibly even accept a ‘love marriage’. The marriage pattern described by Vasundhara, on the other hand, is a highly strategic one that is contracted only after careful examination of the social status, lineage, ranking, reputation, and bloodline of the families concerned.

The genealogical chart of the Mysore royal house, from the reign of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (r. 1799–1868) until the present day, indicates marriage alliances between the Wodeyars and the Urs or non-Urs royals, who are mainly from northern India (see Figure 6.1). The Wodeyars, the Mysore royal family, have not yet experienced the introduction of ‘foreign blood’, since none of the ‘foreign’ marriages so far have produced any offspring. However, it seems to be only a matter of time before the Mysore royal house acquires ‘cosmopolitan’ blood. It

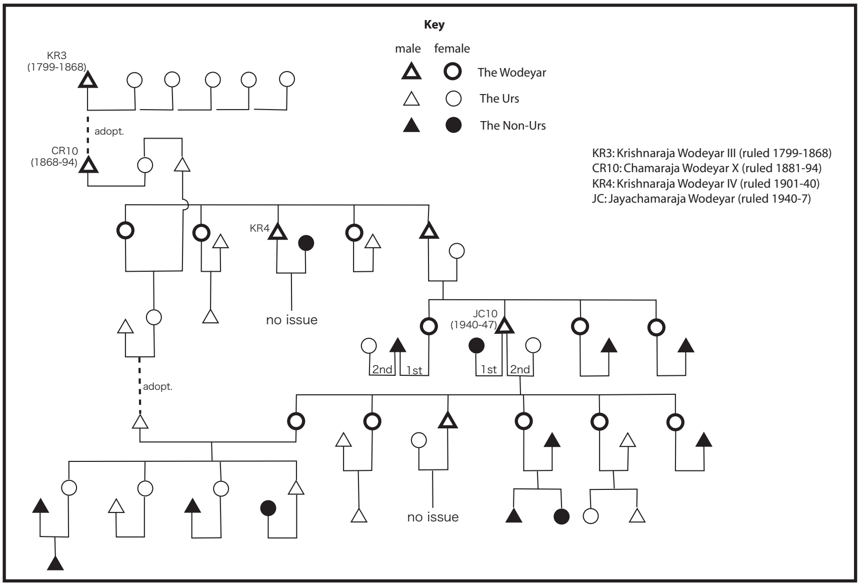

Figure 6.1 Marriage alliance with non-Urs Kshatriya

is also significant that cross-border marriage is becoming predominant, not only amongst the royal family but also amongst the upper Urs who have obtained and produced ‘foreign’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ blood.

The tradition of endogamous marriage between the Wodeyars and the Urs was broken for the first time by the marriage of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV (b. 1884–d. 1940) with a princess from a minute princely state in Kathiawar, in northern India, in 1900. His marriage is crucial to understanding the nature of the new marriage alliances established beyond the territory of Mysore, not simply because it was the first attempt, but also because it determined the fate of future marriage alliances amongst Mysore royals. His marriage was considered to be a ‘foreign’ one and created a huge controversy in local society.

Exploring the history of the matrimonial network among Indian royals gives us a different vision of the British Empire. The empire has often been regarded from the rulers’ point of view, or from the point of view of the ruled. In other words, empire has been described by two modes of narratives: one is the narrative of enlightenment and invention (or destruction) of Indian society by foreign rulers; another is the narrative of resistance and sustainability of the ruled Indians. The creation of a matrimonial network was initiated by Indians themselves, but it would have never been realised without the existing network of empire. The Indian royals’ desire for a matrimonial network was certainly an aspect of their loyal responses to British paramountcy, as this chapter will argue, but it simultaneously revealed the cleavages within empire. The narrative of their matrimonial network is, therefore, inevitably polyphonic.

In this chapter, we will examine the first attempt at a matrimonial alliance between Mysore and the princely states of northern India and interpret the nature of this alliance, and of its partial failure, by questioning their discourse and practice of kinship. In doing so, we will employ a structural analysis of kinship. Whilst structural analysis in general has fallen out of favour in anthropology, because of anxieties concerning the inherent dangers of essentialism and ahistoricity (a case of losing the baby with the bath water, some might say), we will apply it here to a very specific set of problems, wherein it can still reveal certain relationships in a more fruitful manner than any alternative methodology. As we shall see, customary marital practices are absolutely central to understanding the relationship between the Wodeyar and different clans amongst the Urs. They also determined the success, or otherwise, of the Wodeyar's attempt to cement matrimonial alliances with other Indian princes.

The imperial space

The Government of India Act of 1858 declared the final transfer of power from the East India Company to Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Government. By this Act, British territories under direct rule and Indian states under indirect rule were all equally incorporated into one single body, under the protection and control of Queen Victoria's government. Indian states, whose political relationship with the British had previously been determined individually by various treaties concluded between the Company and the Indian princes, were for the first time united under a single term. This Act marked not only the end of Company rule and the establishment of the monarch of England as the monarch of India, but also the final 'desacralisation' of the Mughal Empire as the centre of authority (Cohn 1983). Queen Victoria's proclamation assured the Indian princes that 'their rights, dignity and honour', as well as their control over their territorial possessions, would be respected, and the Indian princes and chiefs could still be regarded, at least in theory, as the British crown's allies, rather than its subjects (Ray 1981: 193). However, the social and ritual order was fixed with the British crown as the centre of authority, under which all the Indian princes were ranked as a single hierarchy. This meant that a new feudal system was established between the British paramount power and the Indian states as its loyal feudatories. In this chapter, I shall label this imagined space an 'imperial space', where geographically separated and culturally diverse territories were connected to each other in one dimension. It was in this space that the new feudal hierarchy was established, and Indian royal families began to form new matrimonial alliances.

David Cannadine has argued on the role of the aristocracy in the making of the British Empire that the expansion of imperial space was underpinned by 'the construction of affinities' (Cannadine 2001: xix). In so doing, he contests the view presented by Edward Said and others, who regard empire as a confrontation between two poles – metropolis and peripheries – and see a hegemonic relationship between the two. Cannadine suggests that 'the British Empire was not exclusively concerned with the creation of "otherness"' which postcolonial theorists have formulated as a crucial symptom of the hegemonic imperial project (ibid.: xix). The vision of British Empire he employs is still very hierarchical, but it is based on class, rank, and individualities rather than colour, race, and collectivities (ibid.: 9). He asserts that 'the British Empire was first and foremost a class act, where individual social ordering often took precedence over collective racial othering' (ibid.: 10).

Cannadine's assumption is partly correct when he says that the British regarded other societies as analogous to their own. In Mysore, the British contributed not only towards the restoration and maintenance of the royal house after the defeat of Tipu Sultan, but also towards the purification of the Wodeyar's 'blue blood' by restructuring the palace pension system, and cutting off from it people who had various 'illegitimate' relationships (in British thinking) with the former maharaja. The British helped the Urs proper to keep their status and authority in society, rather than the more influential illegitimate line of succession, since it was natural for them to imagine that society had an elite class based on rank, status, and blood which should not be undermined by personal connections and favours.

The imperial hierarchy was not based on dichotomous oppositions such as the West versus the Orient, us versus them, civilisation versus savagery; rather it was based on individual status, and all sorts of different people, including both rulers and ruled, were equally incorporated into the one system. Indeed, it 'homogenised the heterogeneity of empire' (ibid.: 85). The Indian princes were the most important decorative apparatus to represent this all-encompassing whole, because no place could show more effectively than India how empire could integrate great diversity into a single order. The Imperial Assemblage, or the Delhi durbars in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, sought to display the hierarchy of Indian princes and the imagined imperial space through pomp and spectacle. (see Cohn 1983). The native rulers, in various exotic costumes and with hundreds of retainers, contributed visually towards the realisation of the all-encompassing whole.

The hierarchy of the Indian princes, as clarified by titles (Nizam, Maharaja, Raja, Nawab, etc.), the number of gun salutes, and the new orders of chivalry (GCSI, GCIE, KCSI etc),[3] were carefully considered according to the size of the state, the amount of tribute paid to the British government, and the historical relation with the Company government. At the age of fourteen, Chamarajendra Wodeyar participated in the Imperial Assemblage held at Delhi in 1877. The Imperial Assemblage was held to celebrate the assumption of the additional title of 'Empress of India' by Queen Victoria, an act that marked the final transition of central authority from the Mughal Emperor to the British Crown, a process that had begun with the Government of India Act of 1858 (Cohn 1983 and Trevithick 1990). The young Maharaja of Mysore was treated with every mark of consideration as one belonging to the first rank of princes, along with the Nizam of Hyderabad and Gaekwad of Baroda, during an event of unprecedented pomp and ceremony. As the Maharaja of Mysore, he enjoyed a twenty-one gun salute, which was the maximum number among the Indian princes, and he was conferred the highest order; GCSI (Knight Grand Commander of the Order of Star of India).

The hierarchy in imperial space, which was 'based on class rather than race' (Cannadine 2001), might have stimulated the pride and vanity of the Indian princes. The expanse of this space was related to 'the construction of affinities' (ibid.: xix) that connected the metropolis and peripheries spreading from Africa to Asia, and linked the aristocrats of Europe to rulers and chiefs of colonies through common, or similar, orders of chivalry. This might have given Indian princes a feeling of engagement in this magnificent project of the empire. However, their enthusiasm for the joint project of 'the construction of affinities' was betrayed by their own efforts, which ironically revealed that the imperial hierarchy did not function as the hegemonic ruling power had imagined. The marriage alliance between Mysore and North Indian royal families shows not only the heterogeneity of the 'homogenising hierarchy', but also an unexpected divergence from the expected result of this homogenising project.

Marriage alliances crossing the border

Although there is no clear evidence, it was widely believed amongst his contemporaries – both his courtiers and British officers in Mysore – that it was the Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar X (r. 1881–94) himself who desired and initiated the establishment of a new marriage alliance between Mysore and north Indian royal houses. Indeed, at the time of his early and unfortunate death from diphtheria, in Calcutta in December 1894 at the age of thirty-one, Chamarajendra was said to be touring northern India with his wife and four children partly because he planned to meet with north Indian noblemen to discuss possible marriage alliances.[4] Not only was he the first Mysore ruler who received a modern and European-style education under the supervision of the British guardian appointed by the viceroy; he was also one of the first Urs royals who travelled beyond the boundary of his territory at a time when there was argument amongst some people that those belonging to high castes should not travel outside their country, or even cross the river Kaveri (see Chapter 4).

After Chamarajendra's death, his wife, Maharani Kempananjammanni (also known as Vani Vilasa), became the Regent on behalf of her young son, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV. She asked the British Resident for assistance to fulfil her late husband's wishes. British Resident W. Macworth Young agreed and sent several letters to the other British Residents and agents in Rajputana, central India, and the Bombay Presidency in December 1895.[5] The first purpose of this correspondence was to find out whether there were suitable families that had eligible princesses for the young maharaja of Mysore, and to ask the British officers to give him a list of such families in the territory where they had their offices. It seems that it was not clear what motivated the late Chamarajendra Wodeyar to establish marriage alliances with the north, even to his British and Indian contemporaries. British Resident Young understood the purpose of this new marriage alliance in purely biological terms. Young explained in his letters to the British officers in the north that the Mysore royal house had intermarried only within a limited number of local families, of which the greater number were extinct, and efforts to maintain the line of succession were mainly via adoption.[6] He emphasised the necessity of bringing 'new blood' into the Mysore royal house, and although he was aware that the high-ranking Rajputs in the north might be reluctant to give their daughters to Mysore, he thought that the wealth and position of Mysore would merit consideration.[7]

The replies to Mysore from the British agents in the north were disappointing. They all said that the Rajput chiefs did not recognise the Mysore family as belonging to their caste, and that there would be difficulties in effecting a matrimonial alliance with Mysore unless a beginning could be made by marrying a Mysore princess to a Rajput chief.[8] In fact, there was a proposal from the maharao of princely Kotah, Mahendra Umaid Singh II, who had recently lost his Udaipur wife, offering to marry a princess of Mysore. However, the maharao of Kotah wanted a dowry of Rs 500,000, a huge amount of money considering that the civil list of the Mysore maharaja, which was one of the largest amongst Indian princes, was then Rs 1,400,000. It was also said that the late Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar had met the Raja of Morvi, Thakur Waghji II Ravaji, and been impressed with the idea that he could offer one of his daughters to the son of the Morvi raja.[9] However, this idea of a marriage alliance was soon abandoned, since they discovered that both the Mysore and Morvi families belonged to the same *gōtra*.[10] It became obvious to the British Residents and Political Agents that Mysore should begin by first giving their daughters to the Rajputs if they wished to establish a matrimonial relation with the north:

> I gather from his letter that the Rajputs or Rajputana do not recognise the Mysore family as belonging to their caste, and that there would be difficulties about a matrimonial alliance with Mysore, unless possibly a beginning could be made by marrying a Mysore princess to a Rajput chief. […] [Crothwaite] suggests that you might ask Barr, if the young chief of Rutlam could marry a Mysore lady. […] I think the Viceroy would be glad if you would let me know how your negotiations progress.[11]

In the meantime, the Mysore court, and especially the maharani's natal family – the Kalale clan of the Urs – strongly opposed the idea of giving Mysore princesses away. The Urs, and the local population in general, regarded the new matrimonial alliance with the north as 'foreign', although it was not a relationship between an Indian and non-Indian that was proposed (unlike many of the affairs of westernised Indian princes with European, American, or Australian ladies). The maharani herself, although she was in favour of a 'foreign marriage' for her son, felt uneasy about sending her young daughter away among 'people of strange language and habits'.[12] The Kalale clan insisted that they had a right to receive a daughter from the Wodeyar, since they previously had given one – the maharani herself. The maharani then had to promise her own clan that she would give one daughter to her own brother and another daughter to a man of another clan. After all these preliminaries, the proposal of an alliance between Mysore and Kotah was ended by the following letter from Maharani Vani Vilasa to Resident Young:

> I am very sorry to write and tell you that the eldest girl has changed her mind again. This time, she is very strong about it, she wholly refuses to go out at all. It is very unfortunate she is like that. It makes me very sad and unhappy to go against her wish. So I have decided to drop this marriage question of hers altogether at least for the present. Thanks for all the trouble you took for me.[13]

By failing to give Mysore princesses to the Rajput chiefs, Mysore made it even more difficult to find a bride for the young maharaja. There seemed to be some chance of an alliance with Baroda, the third most important princely state in the imperial hierarchy, and the maharani favoured the idea;[14] however, the tender age of the princess of Baroda, who was only five years old, made this alliance look rather difficult. They then tried Kutch, one of the high-ranking Rajput royal houses in western India, but again found that Mysore and Kutch both belonged to the same *gōtra*.[15]

The maharani decided to send a deputation to Gujarat in July 1898. The deputation consisted of high profile officers of the Mysore government and royal Urs, namely: P. N. Krishna Murti, tashirdar of Yelandur and member of the State Council (later the diwan of Mysore) as its head; M. Kantharaj Urs, sirdar and brother of the maharani (later the diwan of Mysore); H. Lingaraj Urs, the durbar bakshi; and D. A. Chokshi, civil surgeon of Bangalore. This demonstrates that the marriage of the young maharaja was not simply a private and family concern, but also a public and state issue. Shesadri Iyer, the then diwan of Mysore, gave the following instructions to the members of the deputation:

> Her Highness, having resolved upon a foreign marriage alliance for His Highness the Maharaja, is anxious to secure for him the most eligible bride who can be found among Kshatriya families of the North. The Mysore family emigrated from Dwaraka many generations ago and though it belongs to the same common stock as the ruling Rajput House of Rajaputana and Kattiyawar, appears to have had no marriage alliances with them owing to distance, difficulty of communication etc. Modern convenience of communication by railway and telegraphs has brought about a more intimate intercourse between the Ruling Houses of the North and South, has added to their information of each other and has made their unification by marriage alliances once more possible. Her Highness' desire to effect such a unification is fully reciprocated by some of the leading Durbars of the North, e.g., Jadhpur, Rhtham in Rajaputana, and Kutch, Morvi, Pathanarin Kattyawar.[16]

The investigation was to include the following matters: purity of Kshatriya blood, personal health, appearance, respectability of the family in every way, preferable high status, conditions of marriage, horoscope, and character. They also made clear several conditions on the side of Mysore. First, any money or property which the bride's father might wish to give would be her own *stridhāna* (women's own property); second, the Mysore maharaja would not take any *varadakshine* (a sort of dowry) or other payments from the bride's family; and third, monogamy on the part of the Mysore maharaja during the lifetime of his wife and during her childbearing years would be promised, if asked for.[17]

The interesting, but entirely speculative, story about the Wodeyar's origins, which suggested that their ancestors were princes from Dwaraka in Gujarat, western India, was treated as a concrete historical fact in the instructions given to the Mysore marriage delegation. The attempt to establish a marriage alliance was thus presented not as new, but as an attempt to restore an ancient bond that had been interrupted because of geographical distance. The origin myth was, as we have seen in Chapter 5, created in order to assert the Wodeyar's relatively new conversion towards Vaishnavaism in the seventeenth century (Dewaraka is the birth place of God Krishna, who is an important incarnation of Lord Vishnu) (Satyanarayana, 1996: 3–6). The same story was here being used again in a very different modern setting.

The decision not to ask for any dowry should not be considered simply as a humble act, or a compromise in order to make negotiations easier. It was rather an honourable attitude, at least on the side of Mysore. Refusal of any sort of dowry is still very strictly followed among the upper Urs in the present day and is indeed a great source of pride, as something which distinguishes them from the lower classes or other 'greedy' high castes.[18] It is not clear, though, whether this proud message got through to the north Indian royal houses. It probably simply made it easier for the lesser princely states to give their daughters to Mysore. For them, giving a daughter to Mysore would go against their preferred form of marriage alliance – hypergamy – by which a woman marries a man of higher caste status, i.e. marrying up. Yet, obvious economic and political gains would have compensated for the fact that their daughter was marrying down.

After more than three years, through the means of deputations and confidential enquiries by British Residents and Political Agents, Mysore finally found a bride: Pratapa Kumari, the elder daughter of the rana of Vana, a Jhala Rajput in Kathiawar. She was then eleven years old, four years younger than the maharaja. The maharani of Mysore, Vani Vilasa, the mother of the young maharaja, did not give her approval until she had made the young girl's acquaintance and had satisfied herself that the marriage was a suitable one with reference to the appearance, physical condition, and disposition of the bride elect. Donald Robertson, the then British Resident of Mysore, also expressed his satisfaction with this alliance:

> I have had two interviews with the father and have also been privileged to see the young lady whose appearance seems to clearly demonstrate the wisdom of Her Highness' selection. I may mention that the Maharani made her final approval dependant upon the acquiescence of her son – who being probably influenced upon by interested advisers at first held out for the maintenance of the custom under which marriages have from many generations been contracted locally, influenced however by the advice of his mother, and possibly also by the attractiveness of the Rana's daughter…[19]

The emphasis on the appearance and nature of the young bride may have been an attempt to mask the fact that certain unsatisfactory elements existed in this matrimonial alliance. Vana was a minute state in Kathiawar, of sixty-two square kilometres, with a population of just 2,749 and an annual revenue of Rs 38,899.[20] The rana of Vana was not invested with any gun salutes, nor any title or order. The huge gap in political status between them in the imperial order certainly made the British Resident feel uneasy, and he was aware of natural opposition in this respect, although he nevertheless gave his approval for the new alliance. In his report, he stated that '(The) objection appears to me of comparatively minor importance whilst on the other hand the advantages to be found in this alliance are weighty and obvious'.[21]

The marriage of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV took place in Mysore in 1900. A metropolitan newspaper, *Madras Mail*, reported the extravagant marriage ceremonies which lasted for a fortnight and cost the state and royal treasuries Rs 20 lakhs. Alongside the detailed descriptions of festivities and events which took place during the marriage celebration, the newspaper report did not omit to mention the fact that Vana did not occupy a high rank in the hierarchy of Indian princes. The report did say, however, that the rulers of Vana were 'Rajputs of the bluest blood'.[22] The young couple seem never to have got on particularly well, nor did they produce any children.[23] Yet Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV did not deny the significance of such matrimonial alliances with the north, and personally arranged a marriage with another north Indian royal house for his nephew, who later became the last maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar.

Compared with other royal families in the south, Mysore's decision to have a matrimonial alliance with northern Kshatriyas (especially Rajputs) was very unusual. For example, Travancore did not change their rather unique matrilineal kinship relations with local aristocratic families during the colonial era, and the nizams of Hyderabad maintained their zenana throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The last nizam, Osman Ali Khan Asaf Jah VII (b. 1886–d. 1967) had seven wives and numerous concubines. By contrast, as we discuss later, the Mysore rulers had become monogamous by the middle of the nineteenth century. Mysore maharajas did not trouble the British by marrying white women either, unlike many other Europeanised Indian princes. The Raja of Pudukottai, Marthanda Bhairava Tondaiman (b. 1875–d. 1928) married an Australian woman despite the strong discouragement of the British Political Agent. The raja even expressed a desire to abdicate his throne for the sake of his marriage (Dirks 1987: 391–3). Mysore's choice of marriage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seems to have been much more flexible and cautious at the same time. They had accepted most European values (monogamy, alienation of illegitimate lines from power, western education, etc.), but never crossed the line of the colonial difference between the colonisers and the colonised (Chatterjee 1993: 26–7).[24] The Mysore royal family contained themselves within the realm of being 'almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 1994: 86) in terms of race.[25] Yet their matrimonial efforts and partial failure (not having received any high-ranking Rajput princess) reveals the existence of an internal hierarchy, which was clearly different from that created by the British, and of a cultural heterogeneity within the Indian princely world that was not understood by the colonial rulers.

The British Residents' involvement

The Mysore royal house could not have established any matrimonial alliance without the network of British officers who resided in the various princely states of India. British Residents and Political Agents were the colonial officers posted to Indian states who were supposed to control Indian princes and chiefs by giving them 'advice' and inform the British government in detail about the internal affairs of the states. Michael H. Fisher has demonstrated that the system of Resident and Political Agents was at the very core of making the ideology of indirect rule functional, and has explained the development and political significance of the Residency system in British India, and of its later adaptation in other British territories in Africa and South East Asia (Fisher 1984: 393–4; see also Fisher 1991: 1–42). According to his study, the time when the Mysore royal household sought a new matrimonial alliance with the north corresponds to the period after the British had finished elaborating the system of indirect rule. By then, the role of the Resident and Political Agent had been transformed from a diplomatic representative of the Company in the early nineteenth century, into a 'paternalistic guide' of Indian princes after the British suppressed the 1857 Mutiny, and the British crown was made sovereign over all of the Indian princes in 1858, in place of the Mughal Emperor. The number of states to which a Company Resident or Political Agent was posted was less than ten until 1800; it reached a peak of forty-five in 1840, and more or less stabilised after 1858 (Fisher 1984: 400). Ian Copland gives us a detailed description of life as a Resident or Political Agent in the princely states. Their life was somewhat boring, and they seemed to spend most of their time establishing friendly relations with the Indian princes and royals.

> If legend is to be believed, political work in the states consisted mostly of an incessant round of *shikar* expeditions [ceremonial hunting] and petty ceremonials. The typical political officer, Philip Mason tells us, was one who, exiled in the 'steamy idleness of a small State', had little else to do but wait for the raja to commit enough indiscretions to justify his removal (Copland 1978: 278).

The life of the British Resident and Political Agent might seem idle, but it was not always free from trouble. They were sometimes refused permission to visit certain princely states by the Indian rajas themselves, and by the early twentieth century the native durbars became clever enough to keep the Political Agents clueless about anything that might reflect negatively on their relationship with the paramount power (Copland 1978: 281). They were expected to acquire certain political influence over rajas and their durbars, but on the other hand, the British government had a fear that if the officers were exposed too long to one state or one region, an 'unhealthy spirit of partisanship' might develop between Indian rajas and British officers (ibid.: 280). As a consequence, they were frequently transferred to other states and this tendency became even more accelerated as time went by.[26]

When Mysore first sought a matrimonial alliance with northern Indian royal families, the British Residents and Political Agents seemed to be fairly cooperative and were willing to use their own network to find suitable spouses for Mysore, even though there was no apparent official order that they should do so. The cooperative effort on the side of the Residents and Political Agents began purely voluntarily, but they kept the office of Viceroy informed:

> About the marriage, I do not think the assent of the Government of India is ever required to such an arrangement as the Maharao of Kotah marrying a Maharaja Kumari of another state, but if it were asked for I cannot think there would be any hesitation in giving approval. [...] The Palace romance is interesting and I think you managed a difficult situation very cleverly.[27]

From the beginning of the negotiations, the Residents and Political Agents were aware that Mysore royals were not recognised as high-ranking Kshatriyas and that there was strong opposition amongst the royal Urs, but they were still very optimistic about the successful contracting of an alliance:

> The Mysore family does not, as you are aware, take rank among the highest in the matter of birth but it aspires to something not less than the highest and in view of current ideas which perhaps attach more importance to its wealth and position of a State than to its pre-eminence in the matter of descent. I do not see why its aspirations should not be fulfilled.[28]

> [...] Her Highness professes to fully appreciate the wisdom of importing a new strain of blood into Mysore, and if she will only remain firm on our side, the opposition, which would be of an undeniably interested nature, must soon die out.[29]

The British officers seemed to believe that they could handle the situation well and that their involvement would help to establish a more friendly relationship with the Indian princes. However, later on they began to realise that the situation was more complicated and difficult than they had anticipated. They were constantly surprised and disappointed by unexpected changes and the stubbornness of local princes and their courts. When British Resident Young in Mysore tried to persuade the maharani of the advantage in sending her eldest daughter to Kotah, he reported:

> I said [to the Maharani], 'If Kantharaj [her younger brother] gives up his claim and asked you to agree to Kotah, will you do it?' To this she agreed. I then sent for Kantharaj there and put before him the alternative viz. Of insisting upon marrying a fine woman and of renouncing his claim in the interests of the State [...] He chose the self sacrifice.[30]

But a few days later, Young found that 'the eldest Princess herself is quite happy over it [her marriage to Kantharaj, her maternal uncle] and so is Kantharaj'[31]

The British were also sidelined by the Kotah. Without the Political Agent's knowledge, the Kotah decided to marry a daughter of the Kutch house.[32] The Political Agent sent a letter to Mysore saying, 'Personally I am sorry that the old state officials here preferred the Kutch marriage. Sorry to have kept you waiting but the matter was only conducted this week'[33]

The enthusiasm of the British Residents and Political Agents for matrimonial alliances beyond traditional boundaries ultimately led them nowhere. Indian princes, on the other hand, although ostensibly reliant on the networks of British officers and on the viceroy for approval of their marriages, did not submissively follow the British Residents' advice. Rather, they used the British Residents' network whenever it was necessary, taking from the imperial structure only what suited their requirements.

The local opposition

Alongside members of the royal caste Urs, local citizens in Mysore state also expressed strong opposition and antagonistic feeling towards the young maharaja marrying a 'foreign' woman. The editor of the *Evening Mail*, an English newspaper published in Bangalore city, sent a letter to the viceroy, in which strong disapproval of this newly formed matrimonial arrangement was stated.[34]

> Is this step [the Maharaja selecting his consort from the Rajput families] –this innovation- needed and advisable? It is absolutely without a precedent in the long annals of this royal house, and is, moreover, a wide departure from its ancient family custom. There can be no denial of this. Then there must be some special reason for his departure. What this is people are anxious to know.[35]

First of all, the editor objected to the British government's interference in the matter, on the grounds that it was a purely domestic issue that should be decided only among the maharani and her other relatives.[36] He then enumerated possible difficulties caused by this 'foreign' alliance in five areas: domestic, social, religious, political, and moral. The following is a part of his objection concerning the 'moral aspect':

> The blending of these two royal families and the free association of their attendants would affect the manners of both the communities either for good or bad. The tendency of the present age is that such free admixture and enlargement of the community tends towards evil. Especially will this be so in a royal household where amidst so many servants and attendants, strict supervision cannot always be expected. As already said, the Rajputs have no objection to eating flesh and drinking wine. It may fairly be feared that the introduction of such people amidst purely vegetarians would surely affect the latter. The royal household now is very compact and easily manageable. Its enlargement by the introduction of a foreign element is sure to bring undesirable changes in every way.[37]

The points the editor made here were quite different from the anxieties of the maharani and the British Resident, which were largely concerned with status and rank. The editor's objections were surprisingly orthodox and Brahminical. Eating meat and drinking alcohol are strictly prohibited among Brahmins in general, but not necessarily among other castes, even in the south. The Urs had adopted vegetarianism and other Sanskritised practices in pre-colonial times, but remained much more relaxed than orthodox Brahmins about bodily contact with other meat-eating castes. The editor uses the same arguments about purity and pollution even when addressing problems relating to other aspects of the match. For example, with regard to social practices, he says that 'what is tolerated there (Kathiawar) may not be tolerated here (Mysore). Eating and drinking prohibited articles, and even mixing with those who eat and drink such articles brings down His Highness in the social scale and he becomes a polluted man'.[38] He then goes on to say that, once the maharaja has become polluted, he will not be able to enter a temple to offer his prayers.[39] In this respect, high-caste fears about purity intersected with popular conceptions of the ritual function of sovereignty, as the idea that a polluted maharaja would not be able to enter the temple to perform a state ritual, such as Dasara, concerned the majority of the population who were neither high caste nor Brahminically minded.

Discourse and practice of colonial Indian kinship

By summarising the historical incidence (or failure) of cross-border marriage between the Mysore royal house and northern Rajputs using the analytical terms of kinship, as developed amongst anthropologists in the 1970s and 80s, we can elicit both the historical contingency and the nature of imperial kinship emerging at that time. Several of the problems that the Mysore royal house had in forming new matrimonial relationships with the northern Kshatriyas suggest a conflict between two different logics of kinship. Kshatriyas in the north did not regard the Mysore royal family as their equals, although Mysore occupied a higher position in the imperial hierarchy. North Indian royal houses insisted that, according to the logic of hypergamy, Mysore should give a woman first. This meant that Mysore had to reconcile itself to becoming a wife-giver in order to be allowed to enter the hierarchy of north Indian Kshatriyas from the lower echelons.[40] Moreover, Mysore also had to pay a huge dowry, as evidenced by the extortionate demands made by Kotah. On the other hand, the local royal caste, the Urs, and especially the maharani's parental clan, the Kalale, demanded the taking back of at least one princess. Indeed, the Kalale clan insisted that the younger brother of the maharani had the right to receive a princess. The Mysore royal house, therefore, had to respond to incompatible demands from both sides. In the end, they could not give away a woman and, probably as a consequence of this decision, could not receive a woman from any high-ranking Rajput family in the north. Is this a collision between the general tendency of hypergamy in the north and the traditional preference of cross-cousin or uncle–niece marriage in the south, which is conventionally regarded as characteristic of the Dravidian kinship system? If so, should we regard this historical incident as a product of cultural confrontation?

Dravidian kinship is conventionally characterised as follows:

> Dravidians are expected to marry their cross-cousins – a class of kin which includes the mother's brother's child and the father's sister's child – and, at the same time, are forbidden to marry parallel kin, including a brother or sister, the father's brother's child, and the mother's sister's child. To view it from another perspective, the children of a brother and sister should marry, while those of two brothers or of two sisters are considered to be related to one another in the same way as siblings and must not marry. This rule also applies to more remote cousins, who are classified into cross and parallel categories. In most Dravidian systems, with important exceptions, marriage partners must be of the same generation, and the groom must be older than the bride (Trautmann 1993: 79).

The characteristics of Dravidian kinship were not only statistically notable but have been logically proved by analysing the terminological system (Dumont 1983: 1–35). The fact that in Dravidian languages there is a common word for father and father's brother, but another word for mother's brother, as well as a common word for mother's brother and father-in-law, demonstrates that the rule of cross-cousin marriage is the primary formula in the southern Indian kinship system (ibid.). The Indo–Aryan kinship system, on the other hand, is not as clearly defined as the Dravidian kinship system. Rather it is defined only negatively in relation to the Dravidian kinship rules; for example, cross-cousin marriage is forbidden in the north, and they 'marry at a greater distance, spatially as well as structurally, than in the South' (Dumont 1966: 90).

Uncle–niece marriage (the most favoured marriage being that between a man and his eldest sister's daughter, when he is older than the sister, MyBe/eZDy) was also widely observed, especially in present-day Karnataka state, the southern half of which was previously the princely state of Mysore. This marriage pattern is now rarely practised in urban areas, since it was officially prohibited by the Hindu Marriage Act in 1955,[41] but it is generally said that uncle–niece marriage is still carried out in rural areas of Karnataka. The marriage of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV's elder sister was precisely this form of uncle–niece marriage: she married her mother's younger brother, Kantharaj Urs, who later became the diwan of Mysore. Although uncle–niece marriage has been considered to be one of the ideal marriage patterns among Indians in southern India, uncle–niece marriage has not been given the same importance as cross-cousin marriage, in Dravidian kinship studies. Scholars in general have treated uncle–niece marriage as a mere deviation of cross-cousin marriage, or dismissed it as not worth considering among Dravidian kinship patterns. Trautmann, for example, comments, 'The custom of elder sister's daughter marriage is a secondary derivation of the basic cross-cousin rule' (Trautmann 1981: 206), while Dumont states that 'uncle-niece marriage falls outside of our purview' (Dumont 1983: 145).

Anthony Good, however, has shown that uncle–niece marriages (MyBe/eZDy) are as common as first cross-cousin marriages in south India and among Tamils in Sri Lanka, and he has pointed out that ‘their relationship terminologies often subordinate considerations of generation to those of relative age’ (Good 1996). After a careful analysis of kinship forms on the basic behavioural, jural, and categorical levels, he concludes that common forms of kinship among Dravidian-speaking people differ and therefore ‘most Dravidians do not have a “Dravidian kinship system”’ (ibid.). His denial of the existence of ‘Dravidian kinship’ serves as a warning of the danger of oversimplifying a particular historical incident as a product of cultural conflict, and indicates the possibility of considering it from different perspectives.

Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, which is one of the preferred forms of marriage in southern India, is considered a ‘generalised exchange’, in view of the ‘exchange of women’. Matrilateral uncle–niece marriage is, on the other hand, a ‘restricted exchange’ (see Figure 6.2). Lévi-Strauss has demonstrated the fundamental difference of these two forms of marriage in terms of ‘reciprocity’:

> Matrilateral marriage represents the most lucid and fruitful of the simple forms of reciprocity, whereas patrilateral marriage, in its twofold aspect as an avuncular privilege and as marriage with the father’s sister’s daughter, furnishes its *poorest and most elementary application* (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 451, emphasis is original).

The definite opposition Lévi-Strauss makes between ‘generalised exchange’ and ‘restricted exchange’ is, however, questionable. As Good has shown, if the number of families who join in matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is limited to two, it becomes identical to uncle–niece marriage (Good 1980: 490, see also Leach 1961: 76–80), which is clearly the ‘poorest and most elementary application’. However, this logical criticism does not, I think, change the relatively short-sighted perspective of uncle–niece marriage (MyBe/eZDy) in terms of reciprocity. This difference in reciprocity is crucial to our understanding of the Kalale’s claim to receive a woman back from the Wodeyar clan.

The fact that matrilineal uncle–niece marriage is one of the fundamental marriage patterns in southern Karnataka is also evident when we look at the role of the mother’s younger brother during marriage ceremonies. In the ritual called *dhāre herdu*, which symbolises the handing over of the daughter, it is the mother’s brother who gives the bride to the groom, not the bride’s father. The bride’s maternal uncle is not playing the role of a father or a guardian who gives a woman away, but is symbolically giving away his right of taking her as his own bride.

At the time when the palace was negotiating with northern Indian royal houses about a possible matrimonial alliance, the Kalale clan, the maternal clan of the mother of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV fiercely opposed the idea of sending a Mysore princess to the north. They also insisted that they had a right to receive at least one woman from the Wodeyar clan (Mysore royal house). Clearly their claim was the ‘poorest one’ as they tried to retrieve a woman as soon as possible, but they

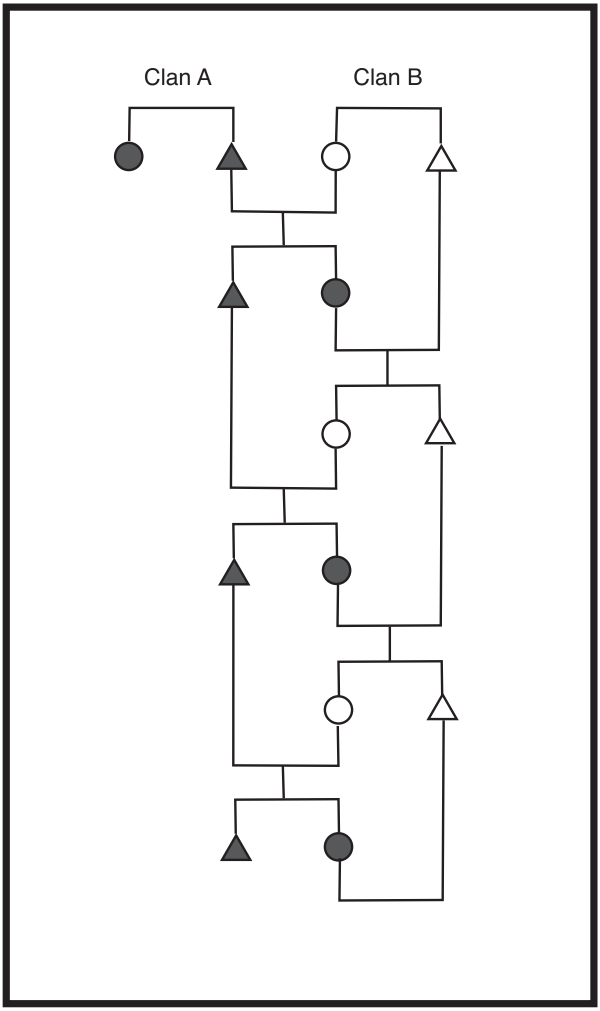

Figure 6.2 Repeated matrilateral uncle–niece marriage

succeeded in doing so by insisting that this was their 'traditional right'. The Kalale clan is one of the strongest clans among the Urs and the closest conjugal kin to the Wodeyars. Originally, the Kalale clan were independent local chiefs who were as powerful as the Mysore royal house. The Kalale contributed militarily towards the expansion of the Mysore kingdom in the seventeenth century and began to fill the office of military commander, called dalvoy (*daḷavāyi*). They established a strong bond with the Wodeyar by strategic matrimonial ties and military contributions, and seized real power in the country, although it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that the Kalale monopolised the office of dalvoy. Nobuhiro Ota suggests that the clan-head of Kalale and the military commander were often separated, probably because they wanted to keep the head of clan higher than a mere military post for the Wodeyar (Ota 2000: 251). This historical account might explain why they have separate lineages (or sub-clans) – the Kalale proper and the Kalale dalvoy – in the present day. So, why did such a powerful clan have to insist on taking a woman back from the Wodeyar during the period under consideration? As they claimed that the reciprocity of women between these two clans was a convention in Mysore, it may be worthwhile examining the validity of their 'traditional right' by looking at the history of the exchange of women between the Wodeyar and the Kalale, before going on to consider the politico-economical aspect of marriage alliances in colonial Mysore.

The flow of women between the Wodeyar and the Kalale since the end of the thirteenth century shows that the Wodeyar had become heavily indebted to the Kalale as far as women were concerned, and the Kalale seem to have intensively given women away (Nanjammani 1986: 66–78) (see Figure 6.3). In fact, the Kalale, including both the Kalale proper and the Kalale dalvoy, have given twenty-one women to the rajas of Mysore, but have taken only four women from them in return. If they were strictly following the logic of reciprocity, the Wodeyar had long been heavily indebted to the Kalale for women. Of course, the insufficiency of historical evidence prevents us tracing all the marriages formed between the Wodeyar and the Kalale, and it is possible that the historical descriptions we do have might have omitted to mention some of the women received from the Wodeyar. But if so, the fact that they were not obliged to mention the women from the Wodeyar's side will support our assumption that the reciprocity of women between two clans was less important in the pre-colonial period, especially between the Urs clan and the centre of power and authority, the Wodeyar.

The claim that a reciprocal relationship existed concerning women between the Kalale and the Wodeyar seems rather unreliable, yet there are certain combinations or pairs of clans among the Urs who did exchange women between them. The Kalale, in fact, used to be a partner of another clan. This reciprocal form of exchange is often explained in this manner: 'these two clans (*manetana*) used to be brothers, but for some reason or another they became separate clans'.[42] I assume that this is probably a vestige of a political alliance formed prior to the centralisation of power by the Wodeyar in the seventeenth century.

The practice of polygamy (polygyny to be precise) is another issue that we should take into account if we are to understand fully the nature of matrimonial alliances in pre-colonial Mysore. Traditionally, the raja would have several – often four or five – legitimate wives, as well as many illegitimate ones.[43] Legitimate wives came from the upper thirteen clans of the Urs, and the illegitimate ones were from the lower strata of the Urs (called the Sivachar, or the Bada Urs). Only children from a legitimate marriage could become legitimate heirs to the throne. This polygamous marriage system was practised until the time of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (r. 1799–1868), who had five legitimate wives and several illegitimate ones. Claude Lévi-Strauss has explained the logic of polygamy as an exchange of two different sorts of security: 'by recognising the privilege (of the chief's polygamy), the group had exchanged the *elements of individual security* which accompany the rule of monogamy for

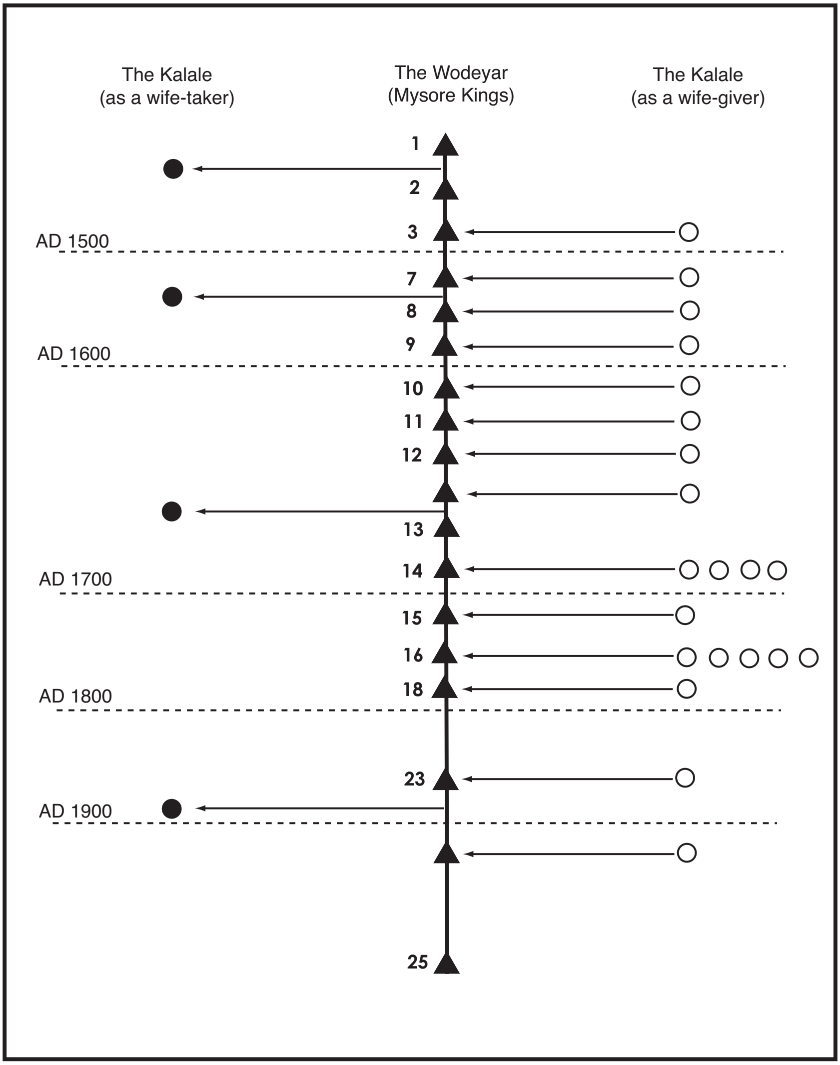

Figure 6.3 The flow of women exchanged between the Wodeyar and the Kalale clans

a collective security arising out of political organisation' (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 44, emphasis is original). If we follow this highly sophisticated analysis, the Kalale had to maintain reciprocal relations with another clan in order to maintain their own security in terms of women; at the same time, they had to recognise the Wodeyar's polygamy in order to secure political stability among the Urs clans, hence political matrimonial strategies were open for all the upper Urs clans.

The fact that the Wodeyar have always had difficulty in producing male issue also made the reciprocity of women between the Wodeyar and the other Urs clans less important in the politics of kinship in Mysore. The Mysore rajas in the direct male line have never had any male issue, with the sole exception of Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar (r. 1673–1704), whose son, a deaf-mute, later became Kantheerava Narasaraja Wodeyar II (r. 1704–14). It is widely believed that the infertility of the Wodeyar is on account of a curse laid upon them by a woman who threw herself into the Kaveri river after the Wodeyar's conquest of Srirangapatna in 1610.[44] Whatever the cause of their reproductive woes, the lack of male progeny created a situation in which the Wodeyars had to rely on adoption from the other Urs clans. Since 1732, none of the natural heirs born to be king could have children, whereas those who became a king by adoption were blessed with offspring. The line of succession therefore became a repetitive pattern of adoption by every other king. The practice of adoption became, in fact, very common not only within the royal household, but amongst the Urs in general, probably because the number of marriageable Urs is very limited in the first place. Inevitably, the practice of adoption amongst the Urs makes our analysis on the nature of Urs kinship much more complex, especially as it is not easy to see how adoption takes place between two clans. In the case of Chamarajendra Wodeyar (r. 1881–94), he was adopted from the Bettadakote clan, which was the natal clan of one of the five legal wives of the former maharaja (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 572–3). Two of his biological brothers then gained much higher positions in the list of the palace pensions and played important roles in the royal court. Therefore, we can assume that this practice of adoption gave another option to the Urs to form or strengthen their alliance with the Wodeyar, besides their conjugal association.

Although the Kalale claimed that they had a traditional right to receive at least one woman (princess) from the Wodeyar, it is now clear that, historically, they were more keen on giving women to the Wodeyar than receiving them. The question is why it suddenly became so important for the Kalale to receive a woman at the turn of the century. The reasons for this were a consequence of the economic and political changes that occurred in the life of the Urs during the nineteenth century. First, the speculative investment of women practised in pre-colonial times was brought to an end once the Wodeyar became monogamous, probably on the advice of British Residents. The Urs then had to protect their security in other ways; for example, by making their daughter the maharaja's only legitimate wife, or by taking a woman from the maharaja. Moreover, since pure kinship distance became the only standard by which to determine their rank and their income in the palace pension hierarchy, taking a woman back had a value almost as great as making their daughter into a queen.

By the late seventeenth century, the Urs had changed their nature from semi-autonomous local chiefs to subordinates dependant on the centralised government and royal authority – the Wodeyar (Ota 2000). The advent of colonialism accelerated this tendency and made them mere pensioners who depended on incomes from the palace and from *inām* land. Under such circumstances, to take a woman back became of crucial economical importance. The internal logic of the Kalale's insistence on reciprocity was neither an enduring tradition nor a characteristic kinship pattern of the south, but the logic created and enforced by contingent colonial situations.

The making of an imperial/national aristocracy in contemporary India

The imperial aristocracy that emerged during colonial times in the princely states expanded their concerns within the wider area incorporated under the British crown. Mysore contributed towards this expansion by trying to embody the imperial hierarchy through marriage. In Baroda, another 'model state' in colonial times, the reformist Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III (b. 1863–d. 1939) similarly married some of his children to Rajput royal families, although his own two marriages were both within the Maratha matrimonial circle. This new aristocracy produced colourful socialites, such as Gayatri Devi, the third maharani of Jaipur. Gayatri Devi's mother was Sayajirao's daughter, and her father was the maharaja of Cooch Behar. The resulting network of Indian aristocratic matrimony gradually began to cover wider geographical areas and cultural multiplicities. However, the new aristocratic class that resulted is not, in the present day, merely a nostalgic echo of India's imperial past. The class of former aristocrats still occupies an important place in contemporary India; they are seen not only as traditional heirs of indigenous rulers, but have also acquired new roles. For instance, many of them are actively participating in Indian politics as 'nationalists', others have been setting up new businesses (luxury hotels, tourism, the apparel industry, etc.) in order to secure their assets (Ramusack 1995). They have also been establishing a new upper-class culture by making use of their 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1984), especially their blood and status, which the newly emerging, powerful middle classes clearly lack. They are even expected to behave as the 'people's princess', or the 'people's king', and sometimes do so.

Innovative changes, especially those that have occurred since the 1990s, such as the development of domestic aviation, satellite TV networks, mobile phones, etc., are making the life of the Indian aristocracy largely more standardised compared with the aristocratic life of the nineteenth century. The peculiar habits and customs that used to create cultural friction amongst Indian royal families are becoming less predominant in their everyday life. Even the difference in language is no longer an issue in the contracting of matrimonial alliances. Most young Indian aristocrats speak English well, and sometimes better than their supposed mother tongue. They can continue living in a cosmopolitan city, like Delhi, Mumbai, or Bangalore and do not need to move to some obscure place. The anxiety which the maharani of Mysore experienced when she was asked to send her daughter away among 'people of strange language and habits' does not concern Indian royal mothers any more. Young Indian aristocrats nowadays even have a choice, although a restricted one, in the selection of their spouse. However, these changes do not necessarily make 'generalised exchange' easier for Mysore.

The last maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (r. 1940–47), the nephew of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, first married a princess of Charkhari (11 gun salutes, Bundela Rajput). This marriage did not last, and he married again to a woman from the Urs caste, with whom he had several children. Three of Jayachamaraja's sisters were married to north Indian royal houses. Yet all the north Indian princely families into which Mysore princes married were not as high status as Mysore in the imperial hierarchy, nor were they high-status Rajput clans. The Wodeyar and members of the Mysore royal caste are still following the same practice of establishing matrimonial alliances mainly through 'speculation of women',[45] which necessitates tremendous efforts and cautious strategies on the part of Mysore.

In 2003, the marriage of a high-ranking Urs woman was arranged. She was married into the royal family of a small former princely state in Madhya Pradesh. The princely state was, and still is, considered to be a rather 'tribal' one, and its size and wealth were, of course, much less than that of Mysore. Since she had an unmarried younger brother, I asked one of her relatives about his marriage and

Figure 6.4 An Urs woman marring into a Jat royal family in the early 1960s (courtesy of S. H. Urs)

I was told that as a result of his elder sister marrying into a north Indian royal family 'the line will be made so that he will receive a good offer of marriage'. Indeed, within several months, his marriage was arranged. This time, he received a bride from a former princely state in Gujarat, into which one of his relatives had previously married. After more than one hundred years of speculatively investing women, finally Mysore took a woman back from the north. However, they are still only half way to their objective. They still have to create the line carefully, since the line created thus far determines the line ahead.

Conclusion

The participation of the Mysore royal caste in pan-Indian matrimonial networks can be regarded as a response to the gaze of empire. Their effort to establish a matrimonial alliance with the north was, in some ways, an effort to embody the hierarchy of empire by exchanging women. Two different logics of exchange, however, operated as strong impediments to its accomplishment. Marriage in the imperial space was indeed 'generalised exchange' (Lévi-Strauss 1969). However, as Lévi-Strauss almost prophetically stated, 'generalised exchange presupposes equality, and is a source of inequality' (ibid.: 26). Their expectation of equality was met with inequality amongst the imperial aristocracy. What they wished to have was recognition from their fellow aristocrats, but the exchange of women between them, which should have secured their equality, actually degraded Mysore, from the position of the second highest in the imperial hierarchy, to that of a mere 'wife-giver'. Resistance from local royal caste members towards this new form of matrimonial alliance was also a product of the colonial situation. They claimed 'traditional rights' concerning the reciprocal exchange of women and succeeded in taking a woman back from the Wodeyar. However, as we have seen, it was not a part of an 'enduring tradition', but the best possible choice under the new politico-economical circumstances.

Members of the Mysore royal caste have progressively begun to integrate themselves into pan-Indian aristocratic matrimonial networks, after the initial successive and rather humiliating 'speculations' involving women. Ironically, the creation of a new aristocratic class, which spread over the whole of India, was partly a realisation of the 'homogenising project' of empire. At the same time, intentionally or accidentally, it helped the first 'national' class to emerge. The creativity of Indian princes in this instance, though, appears to have arisen not as a result of their resistance against colonial rule, but as a consequence of their very loyalty to the idea of empire.

7 The capital of Raajadharma

Modern space and religion[1]

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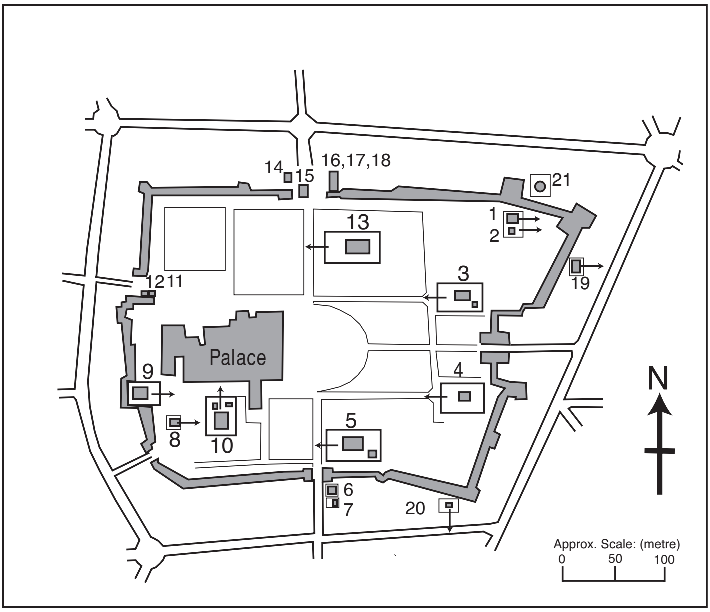
Mysore fort

Thomas Metcalf once said that the British believed the new architectural style called Indo-Saracenic was well suited for princely buildings, as well as their own public buildings such as railway stations, colleges, and law courts. The blending of traditional and modern elements exactly fitted their conception of the princes' role within India under the British Raj. The princes were simultaneously meant to embody India past and a vision of its future (Metcalf 1989: 106, see also Metcalf 1984). Mysore palace, which is certainly a good example of the Indo-Saracenic-style of architecture – a blending of traditional and modern – is both a heritage monument of India's princely past, and a memento of the maharajas' lavish taste and spending. The palace attracts thousands of tourists every day from all over India, as well as from abroad, but visitors probably find it rather confusing that they are asked to pay two entry fees. This is because the palace is currently maintained by the state of Karnataka, while the scion of the Mysore royal family, Mr Srikantadatta Wodeyar, still occupies a portion of the palace and runs a museum of his own. The visitors therefore have to pay both the state and the surviving prince.

The state of Karnataka passed the Mysore Palace Act in 1998, which provided for the acquisition and transfer of the Mysore palace and the open space around it.[2] The Act was created in order to undermine the demand from the royal family to return the Mysore palace property and to allow them to take care of its maintenance. The Act defines the Mysore palace as 'a unique historical, architectural and cultural heritage of Karnataka in particular and of the nation in general', and declares that the palace, with its immediate surroundings, including the open space, park, garden, and the royal treasure (including royal throne, royal crowns, the Howdah, royal apparel, ornaments, and paintings) are all required for maintaining its *public character* (the Mysore Palace Act, emphasis is mine). Although Mr Srikantadatta Wodeyar and his wife are allowed to live in a portion of the palace for the duration of their lifetime, their legal claim to the palace property has been completely denied. The palace still represents India's past, but this vision of its future does not require a prince anymore.

The palace and open space around it are surrounded by walls and still give a sense that it was once a fort. In the fort, we find several Hindu temples, each of which belongs to a different sect. For those who know a little about Indian temple art, these temples may seem strange because most of them face towards the palace, in contrast to the conventional arrangement in which the main temple shrine faces towards the east (see Figure 7.1).[3] This unusual composition of the temples within the Mysore fort compound gives the impression of a spatial configuration in which the king is at the centre of a religious domain as the protector of his people and *dharma* (the moral order) within his kingdom. However, the history of Mysore city offers us a



		Direction
1	Sri Kodi Somesvarasvami Temple	East
2	Sri Kodi Kala Bairawasvami Temple	East
3	Sri Trinesvarasvami Temple	West
4	Sri Gayatriammanavara Temple	West
5	Sri Svetavarahasvami Temple	West
6	Sri Dodda Anhaneyasvami Temple (South Gate)	West
7	Sri Vara Prasadi Ganapati Temple (South Gate)	West
8	Sri Khille Venkataramanasvami Temple	East
9	Sri Laksmiramanasvami Temple	East
10	Sri Prasanna Krisnasvami Temple	North
11	Sri Vinayakasvami Temple (West Gate)	North
12	Sri Sanjivanjaneya Temple (West Gate)	North
13	Sri Bhuvanesvariammanawara Temple	West
14	Sri Vinayakasvami Temple (North Gate)	East
15	Sri Anjaneyasvami Temple (North Gate)	North
16	Sri Ramadeva Temple	West
17	Sri Navagraha Temple	West
18	Sri Chandramauleshvara Temple	West
19	Sri Someshvara Temple	East
20	Sri Kote Maramma Temple (Bisilu Maramma)	South
21	Baba Syed Mansoor Shahkhadrira	

Figure 7.1 Present-day Mysore fort

very different picture. In pre-modern times, the fort was once effectively the city itself, where most of the city-dwellers resided, in cramped conditions. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, the fort changed its form from a residential town into a modern garden or empty space, where only the palace and several temples remained. This spatial transformation of the fort was a crucial part of a city improvement project in Mysore, which tried to beautify the capital at the same time as endeavouring to meet modern demands for sanitation and hygiene. Most of the temples in the fort were at the same time restored, enlarged, or newly constructed by the Mysore maharajas while the city was radically changing its form. In this process, the modern Western idea of improvement and the traditional kingly role as a protector of *dharma* were somehow reconciled and mutually strengthened.

Dharma and improvement

Ranajit Guha has argued that the coalescence and divergence of two distinct paradigms of politics characterised the general configuration of power in colonial India. One of these paradigms derived from the metropolitan political culture of the British, and the other from the pre-colonial tradition of the 'old regime' (Guha 1998). According to his formula, the general configuration of power is an interactive opposition between dominance and subordination. These two terms are determined and constituted by a pair of interacting elements: dominance by coercion and persuasion, and subordination by collaboration and resistance. The two paradigms of politics, one of the British and the other of the Indians, have their own idioms which correspond to each of these four elements (ibid.: 20–4). For example, coercion functions as the idiom of 'order' in British political tradition and is also interpreted as *daṇḍa* (force or punishment) in Indian notions of dominance. Within the element of persuasion too, there are two idioms at work. One of these is the British idiom of improvement, which informed all efforts made by the colonial rulers to relate non-antagonistically to the ruled. The introduction of Western style education, their patronage of Indian arts, and the efforts made by Christian missionaries to ameliorate the living conditions of the lower section of society are all considered as 'improvement'. The idiom in Indian political tradition, which consists of an organic element of persuasion, is *dharma*. It was *dharma* to which the Indian elite turned in order to justify and explain the initiatives by which they hoped to make their subordinates relate to them in a submissive and co-operative fashion (ibid.: 30–9).

It is rather unfortunate that Guha does not include in his argument any further explanation about the peculiar nature of power in colonial India as the coalescence of two distinct paradigms of politics. His efforts turn instead to emphasising how the organic composition of dominance undermined the effectiveness of persuasion in relation to that of coercion, rather than qualifying the nature of the coalescence of these two paradigms. He argues that, because of this failure, the dominance of the British and Indian elites in colonial India became nothing but 'dominance without hegemony' (ibid.: 65). It is not the objective of this chapter to assess or to judge the nature of dominance in colonial India, but to analyse how and to what extent these two distinct paradigms of politics coalesced. Hence, we concentrate on one aspect of this coalescence: improvement and *dharma*.

The concept of *dharma* is one of the Indian notions which has most attracted the attention of Western scholars.[4] Yet, the variety of English translations for this word – duty, rightfulness, the moral order, and so on – shows how difficult it is to define and to understand this concept (cf. Biardeau 1981: 50–4; Frykenberg 1989: 44). The East Asian translation in Buddhist texts, 法 (*hou* in Japanese), does not escape this difficulty either. *Hou*, the law or the order, does not explain what conforms to *hou* and what does not. Heesterman's insightful approach helps us to understand the complexity and dynamism of the concept of *dharma* (Heesterman 1985). He sees the difficulty of defining the concept of *dharma* in the fact that this concept itself diverges in two different directions. On the one hand, *dharma* should be a transcendent order that provides one with the fixed orientation needed to face the insoluble spiritual problems of life and death in an uncertain society. On the other hand, *dharma* has to be relevant for someone who sometimes has to act contrary to the tenets of *dharma* in order to lead his daily life in society. Thus, *dharma* has to make allowances for customs that are rooted deeply in society, and what is the right custom needs to be determined by the assembly, the *pariśad* (ibid.: 11).

In spite of the problematic nature of Indian kingship, especially the ritual inferiority of the ruling class Kshatriyas to the priestly Brahmins,[5] the role of the king in regard to the concept of *dharma* is clear. The king is a necessary institution for the protection of the people through the maintenance of *dharma*, the universal order (ibid.: 108; see also Derrett 1976). The duty of the king, or *rājadharma*, anticipated by his subjects in the old regime was to maintain *dharma* (the moral order): he was thus both the subject and the formulator of moral order. He was to retain a military force, to take responsibility for settling disputes, to support worship in temples or other institutions, and above all to secure the lifestyle of Brahmins who should not, in theory, engage themselves in any worldly activities (Price 1989: 563–4). Therefore, the contribution of the king or local chief towards the maintenance of *dharma*, and hence the general welfare of society, was not limited to his patronage of religious activities, but tended to be measured by how much he spent on temples and other religious institutions. Religious institutions then often acted as a part of the mechanism for the redistribution of resources within society (Appadurai 1981: 71–4).

This chapter takes the operation of space in Mysore city in general, and Mysore fort in particular, as a concrete example of the confederate relationship between Western ideas of improvement and the Indian concept of *dharma*. The objectives are first to assess how, and to what extent, these two notions worked together in the operation of space, and second to indicate the limits of this collaboration by demonstrating the nature of the problems faced by this special relationship during the transformation of the city.

Historical transformation of the capital

Mysore city was the original power centre of the Wodeyars. They established their capital here in the early fifteenth century. It is said that the name Mysore (*Maisūru* in Kannada) was derived from *mahishāsuradaūru* (the place of Mahishasura, a mythical buffalo–demon slain by the goddess Chāmundēśvari). In medieval India, it was an important part of the political and military strategies for the establishment of a kingdom to build and maintain forts (*kōṭes*).[6] The Mysore fort, therefore, most probably had military functions, as well as administrative and political roles as the royal capital. Mysore remained the capital of the kingdom until 1610, when Raja Wodeyar moved his capital to Srirangapattana, an island town on the river Kaveri, formerly the seat of the viceroy of the Vijayanagara dynasty. This transfer symbolically indicated that Raja Wodeyar was assuming the role of legitimate successor to the Vijayanagara empire. At the same time, he inaugurated a Dasara festival at Srirangapattana, which had previously been performed as a state festival in Hampi, the capital of the Vijayanagara dynasty (Stein 1983: 77–84, 1993: 37–8).

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Mysore kingdom was taken over by Haider Ali, who had originally served the Wodeyars as the head of their army. Haider and his son, Tipu Sultan, expanded the territory, and the latter became the last major Indian force to stand against British domination in southern India. Tipu continued to occupy Srirangapatna as his capital until he was finally defeated by the British in 1799. It was only after the defeat of Tipu that Mysore once again became the capital city. The East India Company restored the Wodeyar house and installed five-year-old Krishnaraja Wodeyar III as the ruler of Mysore state. They then shifted the Mysore royal house from the former capital city of Srirangapattana to Mysore.

When the young maharaja and royal entourage arrived in Mysore, they found not a single house in a good state of repair inside the fort. However, in the new fort, called Nazarbad, built by Tipu Sultan, there were a number of houses. They were in very poor condition, and it was difficult to obtain water there. A special pavilion for the *paṭṭābhiśēka* (enthronement ceremony) of the new maharaja also had to be constructed (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 266). This episode suggests that, after the transfer of the capital to Srirangapattana in 1610, Mysore had fallen into disrepair. However, another historical account indicates that Mysore had nonetheless remained a reasonably populated city. *The Annals of the Mysore Royal Family* (hereafter, *the Annals*)[7] describe the state of the city of Mysore before the restoration of the Hindu kingdom in 1799.

> There are one inner fort (*voḷa kōṭ*e), one outer fort *(hora kōṭe*s), one impure fort (*anṭana kōṭe*s) in the Sringara garden, one Khasti street in the inner fort, one Tigara street behind the palace, one street behind the storehouse, and one storehouse street. In the outer fort, there are one Sejjemudanaraja market, one *daḷavāyi* (army chief) street, one *tammaḍi* (Lingayat priest) street, *kandācāra* (tax collector) office street, one small Brahmin street, one big Brahmin street, one gram street, one Flowersellers' street, one street near Srinayana temple, one street behind the stables, one cattle street, one Washermen's street, one Barbers' street, one Potters' street, one Conch players street, one street in the Sringara gardens, one Prostitutes' street, one school, two tiger stalls, four streets in the impure fort, the same number of markets, 462 houses in twenty-nine *vaṭāra* (a group of small houses built contiguously within a single

enclosure), 1,238 shops, fourteen wells, 120 *manṭapa* (pandal), thirty *hacāra* (halls), four *biḍucāvaḍi* (rest houses) and two official buildings (*the Annals*, vol.2: 90, translated from Kannada by the author).

From the above description, it is clear that the fort had all the necessary amenities of an early modern city. It had residential areas, shops, artisans' workshops, public offices, temples, and even brothels. Each caste apparently had its own street in which to live. Several maps of the city show the locations of these streets (See Figure 7.2 and Figure 7.3). It is not clear whether the city had two separate forts or two separate spaces inside the fort, but certainly people in the city lived in

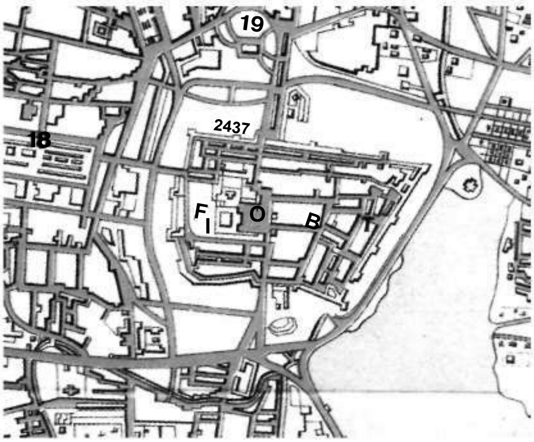


Figure 7.2 Mysore fort around the 1890s (From B. Lewis Rice, Mysore: A Gazetteer, vol. 2 revised edition published in 1897)

Figure 7.3 Mysore fort in 1902 (KSA, Bangalore)

two separate residential areas which probably demarcated one area for the caste Hindus and another for untouchables.[8]

After the move from Srirangapattana to Mysore in 1799, one of the first changes the Mysore maharaja made in the city was the construction of several *agrahāras* (*Epigraphia Carnatica*, My 1, My 2, My 3). An *agrahāras* is a Brahmin settlement granted by the king or powerful local chiefs. The Brahmins were not only given a place to live, but they were offered appointments, cattle, and *inām* lands or villages (of which the land revenue goes to the *inām* holder, rather than to the government). According to the *Annals*, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III constructed twelve *agrahāras* in the country, six of which were located in Mysore city. Half of these *agrahāras* in Mysore are now found to the west, and the other half to the south, of the fort.

Following the transfer of the capital, the population of Mysore city increased significantly. The maharaja invited a large number of Brahmins, both priestly and lay, and soldiers from outside Mysore, especially from the neighbouring Tamil and Maratha countries. The number of people working for the palace was said to be over 10,000 (*Elliot Report*). The number of people indirectly involved in the palace economy must have been even greater, although there were few soldiers, since by this time the Mysore fort had lost its military function. The only soldiers permitted were the maharaja's personal bodyguard and the palace guard, since the British had made it clear that the fortresses and strong places in Mysore state were to be garrisoned and commanded by British troops. The British insisted that they alone had the right to judge which forts should be dismantled and which should be repaired, and that the Mysore fort was to become a residential town of political and economic importance, but was no longer to be the strategically important centre of the kingdom (Articles 8 and 9 of the Subsidiary Treaty of Mysore, 1799).

The state, the palace, and the temples

What kind of changes did the traditional role of the king as protector of *dharma* undergo during the colonial period? How was the modern establishment of a 'state' and the position of the king contested or shared with the administration of the religious domain? In 1831, the British took over the Mysore administration on the grounds that the maharaja could not suppress the peasant uprising of 1830–31 in the Nagar region, in the northernmost part of the kingdom (see Chapter 2). They then shifted all the state administrative functions from Mysore city to Bangalore city, where they had previously built their cantonment. The palace, which used to govern the state administration, was forced by the British to become an 'entirely private body' whose purpose was solely to serve the maharaja's household.[9] The intention behind this was to remove the influence of the maharaja and his ministers in the palace from state-level politics, but the British did not interfere in palace administration itself, probably because they did not find it wise to do so, at least while Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was alive. While the maharaja and his own ministers remained in the palace, the state administration, under the British commissioner, was filled with British-appointed Brahmin officials, mainly from the Madras presidency.

The complex relationship between the state government and the palace reveals the nature of Indian kingship under indirect rule. As we have seen in Chapter 2, when the British took over the administration in 1831, the main purpose of their intervention was the separation of the private and public domains in state administration.[10] The British believed that they could separate the public and the private, and that doing so would be better for the state administration. The ideal maharaja's role as a protector of *dharma* (the moral order) consequently became ambiguous, especially in relation to religious endowments. The protection of *dharma* by the king is, in theory, for the welfare of his kingdom as whole, and not for himself. He sometimes even has to sacrifice himself or his personal interests for the benefit of his people. But when the king is considered to be a private individual and gives his money to religious institutions, is this a personal donation or a kingly act to protect the moral order of his country?

At the time of the settlement of 1868, religious endowments by the late maharaja seemed to C. Elliot, who was in charge of the palace settlement, to be very chaotic. Elliot found that there were eighty-nine religious and charitable institutions receiving a monthly allowance totalling 2,513 rupees from the maharaja's private treasury. Among the largest were a grant of 1,000 rupees per month for the Sringeri Matha, one of the most important monasteries in south India, followed by grants to the civil orphan asylum at Madras (an annual contribution of 1,000 rupees), and to the Roman Catholic church at Mysore (a monthly grant of thirty rupees). Other institutions received smaller amounts, mainly between ten and twenty rupees per month from the palace treasury.[11]

> I must however observe that all grants made from His Highness' private Treasury must be considered to have virtually ceased at His Highness' demise, and their continuance must entirely depend upon considerations of public utility and respect due to His Highness's memory.[12]

The basic policy here was once more to divide these institutions into two categories: the first, institutions founded by the late maharaja and his family members; the second, institutions founded by private individuals that had received a contribution from the late maharaja.[13] According to the 1868 settlement, all of the grants for institutions in the first category were to be provided by the State Muzrai Department, which administered Hindu temples and charitable endowments, whilst Elliot proposed that those in the second category would be awarded gratuities to enable the managers of these institutions to invest in land for their support. However, in 1870–71 a new arrangement was introduced. The management of five temples (Prasanna Krisna Temple, Lakshmiiramaṇa Temple, Varaha Temple, Trineeshvara Temple within the fort, and Chamundeshwari Temple in Chamundi Hills) was entirely transferred from the state to the palace management, on the grounds that the temples were religious institutions of the maharaja rather than of general public interest, and that in some of them the royal family's religious services were frequently rendered.[14] Of the remaining institutions, some were maintained partly from palace funds and partly from state funds until 1891, when their charge was transferred to state funds. Their management, nonetheless, remained with the palace. Other temples, too, continued to be supported from state funds but managed by the palace.[15] Ineluctably therefore, whilst the funding still came from the state, control over religious institutions in Mysore fell increasingly into the hands of officials whose loyalty was to the palace.

While the Mysoreans gradually regained power in state-level bureaucracy in the early twentieth century, the management of the palace was also gradually reformed. Officially and formally, the palace remained under the control of the state, but palace officers thereafter began to exercise increasing autonomy and authority. A parallel system of supervision was thus introduced for the management of the fort temples, Chamundeshwari Temple and others, and in the early 1910s a new post, the *Muzrai Bakshi* (or Minister for Religious Endowments), was created. The officer appointed was also given the role of Head of Chamundi Thotti, a palace department which was responsible for all of the palace rituals – a position that could be considered equivalent to the state-appointed muzrai officer. Having oversight of the finances of religious institutions that were critical to the Mysore maharaja's influence was, of course, a very important position. The post was invariably held by a Mysorean of the Urs caste.

In the day-to-day management of the temples under state control, a crucial role was played by local trustees, called *dharmadarshis*, who were appointed by the state upon the recommendation of the deputy commissioner. They were in a position to advise and co-operate with the state-appointed muzrai officers in matters relating to the internal management of the institutions and were obliged to have regular meetings, check accounts, and supervise the daily affairs of the institutions. The muzrai bakshi was obliged to supervise these dharmadarshis and report to the state-appointed palace controller.

It seems that the dharmadarshis were not very keen to perform their duties. H. Lingaraj Urs, the first muzrai bakshi, complained that they did not have any interest in the management of the institutions and were reluctant to hold the obligatory monthly meetings. In 1915 he found that there had not been any meeting worth the name held during the previous five years. Under such conditions, he felt he could well manage without their extraneous help, since the institutions were near to each other and could easily be visited, and the palace controller was available to audit and check his accounts.[16] In practice, the amount of supervision Lingaraj Urs had to handle was probably much more than he had anticipated, but a similar enthusiasm and sense of responsibility was to be found amongst other palace officials. For them, the management of muzrai institutions was not simply a matter of controlling these institutions, but was also a matter of serving the public interest.

> The Muzrai is a matter of momentous significance. It seems to me that for success in the administration of this Department, it would be well to take into account as far as possible man's spirit of disinterestedness and sentiment of devotion, especially so where reverence to concrete forms as a means to stimulate sacred abstract notions of spirituality plays a prominent part. To enlist

popular sympathy, secure public co-operation and offer suitable inducements to voluntary services in regard to the various religious and charitable institutions would go far to avoid complications, and promote harmony and healthy action, ensuring efficiency along economic lines.[17]

Religious institutions under state control in Mysore indeed occupied a position of tremendous significance in the state administration. There were 18,938 institutions in 1915, thirty-three of these being outside and the rest within the state, enjoying an estimated income from inām land, and other sources, of Rs 880,000 and a cash grant from the state budget of Rs 322,000, giving a total income of Rs 1,202,000.[18] The State Muzrai Department classified these institutions according to their annual income and put them under different forms of control (see Table 7.1). The first class of institutions, termed major institutions, were under the direct charge of the muzrai superintendent; the second class of institutions, named minor institutions, were left to the care of the deputy commissioner; and the third class of institutions, called village institutions, were looked after by village bodies such as the village panchayats.[19]

Those religious institutions managed by the palace were deemed a part of the maharaja's private religious domain. However, those thought to be of public interest remained under the direct control of the state administration. Despite this, officials continually deferred to the religious authority of the maharaja, and the palace steadily gained more power over religious institutions in Mysore city, both numerically and financially. Thus, by the 1920s, the tasdik grants[20] for institutions managed by the palace's muzrai bakshi accounted for more than one-fifth of the total state tasdik grants (see Tables 7.2 and 7.3). Moreover, most of the palace muzrai institutions had acquired considerable importance by this time, in terms of the scale of their income, and were classified as major institutions, of which there was a total of only 133 in the country (see Table 7.1). This meant that whilst the palace and the state enjoyed a generally co-operative relationship in the management of the religious institutions, the palace inexorably came to dominate religious affairs within Mysore and, in this domain at least, began to act like a state within a state.

Table 7.1 Religious institutions in Mysore state in 1914–15[21]

Classification		*Number*	*Percentage*
	Institutions outside the state	33	0.17
1st class	Institutions within the state with income over Rs 1,000/a year	133	0.70
2nd class	Institutions with income between Rs. 100 and Rs 1,000/a year	1,372	7.25
3rd class	Institutions with income less than Rs 100/a year	17,400	91.88
	Total	18,938	100

Table 7.2 Annual tasdik grants of the institutions of the state in the 1920s[22]

Classification	*Annual Tasdik grants*	*Percentage*
Chattrams (charitable institutions)	61,162	24.1
Temples	125,364	49.3
Mahomedan Institutions	12,405	4.9
Palace Institutions	55,182	21.7
Total	254,113	100

Table 7.3 Annual receipts of religious institutions under palace management, 1928–29[23]

	Classification	*Cash tasdik*	*Remittances*	*Special grant*	*Total (Rs)*
1	Maharaja's Chattram (charitable institution)	Rs 19,450	Rs 86.4	Rs 1,300	Rs 20,836.4
2	Pancagavi Matha	626	158.9	–	784.9
3	Jagapadakatte Matha	350	–	–	350
4	Prasanna KriSNa Temple (Fort)	13,732.25	460.2	–	14,192.45
5	Varaaha Temple (Fort)	4,359	392.7		4,751.7
6	LakSmiiramaNa Temple (Fort)	2,049	58.8	–	2,107.8
7	Trineeshvara Temple (Fort)	2,041	1,090.1	–	3,131.1
8	CamunDeeshvari Temple (Chamundi Hills)	9,149	3,890	1,440	14,479
9	Mahaabaleeshvara Temple (Chamundi Hills)	1,139	–	244	1,383
10	Narayana Temple	354	–	132	486
11	Gaddige Ammanavara Temple (Chamundi Hills)	210	–	–	210
12	Uttanahalli Jwalamukhi Temple	896	–	184	1,080
13	Camanpatti Deeveshvara Temple	178.75	–	–	178.75
14	Sanjeevaraaj Urs' Temple	120	–	–	120
15	Pattada Gudi	60	–	–	60
16	Kille Venkataramma Temple	287.9	–	–	287.9
17	Someeshvara Temple (Fort)	8.75	–	–	8.75
18	Bhairava Temple (Fort)	8.75	–	–	8.75
19	Anjaneya Temple (Fort)	104.75		70	174.75
20	Vinaayaka Temple (Fort)	58.2	–	–	58.2
21	Tulmasa Santharpane	–	770.3	2,650.8	3,421.1
22	Grant for annual repairs	–		2,000	2,000
	Total	55,182.3	6,907.4	8,020.8	70,110.5

Improvement and the emergence of modern space

The rate of population increase in Mysore city was probably slowed by the transfer of the state administrative functions to Bangalore in 1831, yet the city remained prosperous and attractive enough for new immigrants. Although the palace had lost its role as the sole central administrative power, it still employed several thousand people, working in state institutions of several kinds: administrative, judicial, and educational. Patronage in the religious and cultural domains of the palace, in the name of the maharaja, also created a large number of posts for religious scholars, artists, musicians, and artisans.

The fort, with its many old narrow and winding streets, was crowded with buildings of all sorts, and the palace itself was thickly surrounded by a number of private dwelling houses. Improvements in the sanitation of the fort commenced around 1872, when some house properties east of the palace were acquired and demolished, and a new residential area called the Nagarkhana block was erected on the site. Subsequently, some very insecure portions of the palace were pulled down and rebuilt, habitations crowding the space between the palace and the western side of the fort wall in its neighbourhood were all cleared, and a system of underground pipes for drainage was gradually introduced.[24] This stage of the improvements was actuated by the need to create additional space for the palace buildings.

Practical measures to improve sanitary conditions in India were first enacted in the army camps and major cities in the 1860s (cf. Guha S. 1993: 389, and Dossal 1991: 137–40). The several sanitary measures taken in the second half of the nineteenth century were mainly concerned with the improvement of ventilation and the creation of a sewage disposal system. These measures were based on the theory of miasmas – toxic air arising from a swamp – which was believed to be the cause of serious disease. Sewage disposal and ventilation were therefore considered necessary measures to remove the causes of miasma and to eradicate disease. When the central government of India published proceedings on practical measures for sanitation in towns and villages in 1888, which were circulated as government proceedings in Mysore, the systems they defined as necessary in promoting sanitary reform were water supply, drainage, and water conservancy.[25] These measures seem to be reasonable according to current ideas on sanitation, but at the time there was still a strong belief that ‘the chief disease causes in all Indian towns are to be found within the walls which enclose the compounds and houses’.[26] They further criticised the traditional planning of Indian houses, ‘from being enclosed within walls, [they] have no proper ventilation, and the rooms are so dark as sometimes to require a lamp day and night’, worse still, ‘in some parts of India, it is the practice to cover in the entire courtyard, so that foul exhalations are prevented from escaping into the air’.[27] They also pointed out the danger of houses that had privies in the soil close to the water-well. They then concluded that ‘the simplest way of avoiding these dangers would be by rebuilding the houses on new ground and adopting precautions to prevent the subsoil being polluted with filth’.[28] These traditional Indian houses – especially the traditional *toṭṭi mane* bungalows of Mysore – must, needless to say, have had several advantages in the Indian climate as well as for their customs and lifestyle, according to which several generations of a family would live within a single compound. However, British sanitary specialists did not have any interest in combining traditional Indian lifestyles with modern requirements. For them, the main obstacles preventing sanitary improvement was ‘the ignorance of the people’ and ‘the passive resistance offered by them to all departures from the practice of ages’.[29]

The first major attempt at modern town planning and adopting sanitary precautions, took place in Bombay in 1898. This was a response to the plague epidemic of 1896, from which six thousand people died within three months. The Bombay City Improvement Trust (CIT) was created by an Act of the Parliament in order to improve living conditions in Bombay. The Municipal Corporation and the government of the Bombay Presidency entrusted all vacant land to this body. The CIT widened roads in the central crowded parts of the town. A new east–west road, Princess Street, was constructed to bring sea air into the centre of crowded residential areas. A suburban development was also started in 1899 for the purpose of relieving congestion to the south. Well laid out plots, with mixed land-use patterns, marked these sections.[30] These methods of improving living conditions were designed to introduce air to the congested parts of the city by creating wide streets, and simultaneously to develop new suburban areas to accommodate people from central parts of the city, as well as new immigrants. A very similar policy was soon introduced in Mysore. The Mysore City Improvement Trust Board (MCITB), set up in 1903, was meant to provide quick measures to counter the plague epidemic, which had reduced the population of the city dramatically in 1900 (see Table 7.4). At the same time, this immediate introduction of a similar institution to that in place in British India was intended as a counter-measure to British paramountcy, and was intended to show the capabilities and adaptability of Mysore as a 'model state'.

The MCITB employed the same methods as those applied in Bombay. The Trust Board built several new suburbs in order to decongest the city (Shama Rao 1936 vol.2: 754). The main area ravaged by plague in 1900 was the residential area towards the west of the fort. The buildings in this area were demolished, and several hundred families were uprooted as a consequence. The new suburbs called 'extensions' were laid primarily to provide housing for these people as well as for the growing population of the city. New broad roads were also constructed. The Sayaji Rao Road (named after the Gaekwad of Baroda) was created by filling in a canal, known as Purnaiya's Nullah, originally excavated with the object of bringing water from the Kaveri river into the city. Ashoka Road was an extension of an existing road, called Dodda Peetha (meaning 'big commercial street'), which used to cross the centre of the fort from the south to the north.

While the MCITB developed several extensions and allotted plots to people for building houses,[31] the palace played an equally important role in the transformation of the city. The palace often acted as a mediator between the Trust Board and people living in the fort, especially the maharaja's kin, the Urs. The primary idea was that the Trust Board would take their houses and lands in the fort and give them enough compensation to buy a new plot in the new suburb reserved for the Urs. But the Urs, who used to have large houses in the fort, were often reluctant to sell their houses and move to the new suburb.[32] The acquisition of land in the fort was therefore never easy. The Trust Board asked the palace to intervene in the matter of the acquisition of land, and the Urs tried to negotiate through the palace to maximise the amount of compensation, or to obtain better plots. Their houses were often built by the palace maramath (the public work department) using materials taken from old, demolished houses within the fort. The palace also gave them generous loans to buy a plot and build new houses. Thankfully, many of these houses were built in a modern version of the elegant *toṭṭi mane* style, with a central courtyard open to the sky, providing cool breezes and a communal living space for the several generations of Urs families that occupied them. This was especially convivial and convenient for respectable Urs women living in *purdah*.

Dismantling the old city and developing new suburbs was intended not only to solve the problems caused by congestion and to assure the increasing population a modern and hygienic living space, but also to create the opportunity to visualise, and to fix once again, the social stratification articulated by class, caste, and religion. It is important to note, therefore, that the city was not simply a spatial representation of existing social stratification, but a device to make concrete and enforce social stratification itself.

The division of habitation based on community was transformed from the street-wise division in the fort to the more spacious and more distinct area-wise division in the new suburbs (Mahadev 1975: 11). The suburb in the north was mainly for the Muslim and Christian population; the *agrahāras* in the west and the south, and the new quarters in the west, were meant for the Brahmins, both priestly and lay; Lakshmipuram in the west extension, and Itigas in the east for the Urs royals; extensions in the south for the other caste Hindus; and the several separated areas, of which the largest was Jalapuri (now called Gandhi Nagar) in the north–east part of the city, for the Dalits or untouchables.

The division of habitation was changed not only in terms of scale and dimension, but also in terms of social distance. Until the early nineteenth century, the distance of the residence from the palace building showed the proximity of a person to the king. The inner circle surrounding the palace consisted of the royals, high-ranking courtiers, and Brahmins, whereas the outer circle was mostly populated by the more lowly courtiers and other poor people. Sivarampet and Santhepet, just outside of the fort, were occupied by the merchants, and in the north of these commercial areas was the residence of the artisans and the Muslims (ibid.: 10.). However, during this drastic transformation of the city, people of wealth and status moved to suburbs far from the fort, and the poorer sections of society remained in the congested centre. Physical proximity to the palace ceased to represent social proximity to the king, or even reversed its original significance. Yet the incentive to create residential areas separated by caste and religions seemed to be somehow stronger than before. This incentive was particularly strong among the high 'clean' castes, who tried to avoid any kind of physical contact with lower castes, as far as possible, in order to maintain their ritual purity. They were especially afraid of receiving food or water from lower castes, and living next to them increased such risks. Some of the new suburbs in the west, such as Sarasvathipuram – inhabited mostly by people working for colleges or other educational institutions – were practically meant for vegetarian high castes, and non-vegetarian castes still hesitate to live there.[33] The improvement of the city was certainly one of the occasions on which people could differentiate themselves from others by using caste ideology in the same way as they would use a census to claim a higher status (cf. Srinivas 1966: 1–48).

Table 7.4 Population change in Mysore city, 1870–1990 (The Census of India, 1991)

Year	*Population*	*Area (km2)*	*Population density (person/km2)*
1871	60,312	–	–
1881	63,363	–	–
1891	74,048	–	–
1901	68,111	19.43	3,505.5
1911	71,306	24.61	2,897.4
1921	83,951	24.61	3,411.3
1931	107,142	25.90	4,136.8
1941	150,540	33.67	4,471.0
1951	244,323	36.26	6,738.1
1961	253,865	37.30	6,806.0
1971	355,685	37.30	9,535.8
1981	441,754	40.05	11,030.1
1991	480,692	36.69	13,101.4

The beautification of the capital city and the restoration of temples

During the programme of beautification, marshy areas, such as old canals or tanks and the moat that used to surround Mysore fort, were filled up; old houses in congested residential areas, typically in the fort, were demolished; and villages or forests surrounding the city were transformed into new residential plots. New modern spaces finally appeared after these operations were completed. It was within these new spaces that European-style boulevards, parks, and modern architecture were then constructed. The western area of the then city, developed by the Trust Board, was one such modern space where they built several public buildings in an elaborate colonial style. The Gordon Park, named after the then chief commissioner, who was later the resident of Mysore in the 1870s, was a huge empty space containing prominent buildings such as the Victoria Jubilee Institute (presently the Oriental Institute), the Maharaja College, and the Law Courts. Such disproportionate investment of state money in the beautification of capital cities was a common phenomenon in the princely states.[34]

While the Trust Board was constructing modern buildings and extending roads in new developed areas, the fort was gradually changing its form and function. The western extension, especially Gordon Park, was a more Europeanised modern area, whereas the fort was meant to represent the Hindu capital. The clearance of the entire fort except temples and palace buildings was decided upon in the late nineteenth century, but was probably not completed until the 1930s.[35] However, the newly cleared spaces in the fort were large enough to construct a new palace and to enlarge several temple compounds.

Mysore palace, which is undoubtedly one of the most splendid palaces in India, was designed by the Irish architect Henry Irwin. The construction of the new palace was started after the old one was destroyed by a fire in 1897. The maharani, the then Regent Vani Vilasa Sannidhana, decided to build a new palace on the model and foundations of the old one. Irwin, who was also known for the Viceregal Lodge in Simla and the Victoria Hall in Madras, had at that time recently retired as consulting architect of the government of Madras and was therefore free to undertake private work. He received the contract for the new Mysore palace, his plan was approved, and the construction was inaugurated in October 1897, only eight months after the fire.[36] The new palace was to represent the second-largest princely state in India, therefore the scale and cost of the construction were inevitably extravagant. When it was completed in 1912, the total cost was Rs 4,417,913, nearly double the original estimate of Rs 2,500,000.[37] The actual cost of construction was equal to nearly one-quarter of the annual revenue of Mysore state.

In spite of its exotic appearance as a mixture of European and Oriental styles, the plan of the new palace was based upon similar principles to the old one, as Maharani Vani Vilasa, mother of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, had wished. The main structure of the palace consists of two parts. The front half of the palace, called *sajje*, opens towards the public square, and was the place where the royal durbar took place during the state festival of Dasara and the maharaja's birthday celebrations. The maharaja, royals, high-ranking officers, and representatives of different communities in the country all used to be seated here according to their rank and status. The other part of the palace behind the *sajje* is a combination of many rooms, called *toṭṭi*, which have a courtyard in the centre. A *toṭṭi* would sometimes be a departmental office, and sometimes a residential section. This structure was kept throughout the evolution of the palace.

Additional work was carried out in the 1930s in order to enlarge the *sajje*. This added a much wider stage to the palace building, which unfortunately covered Irwin's elaborate façade (see Figures 7.4, 7.5, and 7.6). The expansion of the *sajje* clearly suggests that the palace needed a wider space in order to accommodate more participants in the durbar and to allow a larger number of spectators to

Figure 7.4 A postcard of the old Mysore Palace before the fire of 1897 (personal collection)

Figure 7.5 The Mysore Palace in the 1930s before the extension of *sajje* (KAS/MPD, Mysore)

Figure 7.6 The Mysore Palace, 2005 (Photographed by the author)

witness it. The fort thus gradually transformed its function into that of a stand for viewing the rituals and ceremonies of a 'theatre state'.[38]

In the course of the construction of the new palace, temples within the fort became the subject of restoration and beautification. The restoration of old temples, and the construction of new ones in the fort, had already started in the early nineteenth century. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III constructed a Sri Vaishnava temple, Prasanna Krishnaswami temple in 1825 on the grounds that there was no temple for Krishna, which was also his own name.[39] Another Sri Vaishnava temple, Varaha Swami temple, in the Hoysala style, was said to have fallen into disrepair at Srirangapattana and so was moved into the fort and reconstructed by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in 1809.[40] The maharaja also restored and glorified several temples in the city, often by adding splendid *gōpuras* (towers) to the original structure. However, the restoration of temples in this period was a part of the traditional religious endowments by the king. Although the idea of *dharma* continued, these restorations were undertaken in an entirely different context during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

The cost of repairing the temples, which previously had been regarded as simply a part of the religious endowment to enable the temples to continue daily worship and occasional festivals, was for the first time regarded as necessary from an aesthetic point of view. In 1928, the state government directed an annual provision of Rs 20,000 and an additional Rs 10,000 for a period of five years for the construction and repair of muzrai institutions and buildings 'of architectural interest'.[41] Out of Rs 30,000 allotted annually, Rs 2,000 was earmarked for disposal by the palace authorities for the execution of repairs required for muzrai temples under their management. Prior to this government order, the palace authorities complained that the amount of the annual tasdik grant for the palace muzrai temples was fixed in 1899 and comprised charges only for the establishment and expenses of daily worship and special worship, and did not include the sum required for repairing and keeping the structure in good condition. The palace therefore had to advance a large sum of Rs 37,000 to finish the work,[42] a decision that the palace authorities vigorously defended whilst requesting reimbursement from the state.

> The Palace Institutions are primarily important ones being situated in the Capital city and it is incumbent on the part of the Government to bear the repair charges of these Institutions even though the entire management of these Institutions have been handed over to palace with their Tasdik grant.[43]

The restoration and repair of temples in the fort was therefore a part of the beautification of the capital city. Temples of diverse styles, scales, and sects were now surrounded by the newly-designed compound wall. Five large fort gates were constructed in a style harmonised with these walls. For each one of the gates, a temple for Vinayaka (otherwise called Ganesha, remover of obstructions) and a temple for Anjaneya (Hanuman, guardian of Vishnu) was either constructed or restored.

The curious composition of the temples noted earlier, was gradually completed during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The temples, which do not face towards the east (as is customary) but towards the palace, were constructed or reconstituted during this period, except for one called the Trineshvara temple that was built in the Vijayanagara style. It is said to be especially auspicious for Shiva temples, of which Trineshvara temple is one, to face towards the west,[44] which is probably the reason for this temple doing so. Also, two goddess temples, the Gayatri Temple and the Bhuvanesvari Temple, which face towards the palace instead of towards the east, were constructed in the 1940s and 50s. The transformation of the fort into the ideal representation of a Hindu capital was thereby finalised at last, shortly after Indian Independence in 1947.

The concept of dharma and its dilemma in modern space

The fort of Mysore was transformed into a largely empty space in accordance with modern ideas of hygiene and sanitation, and the palace and temples all emerged in a renovated form. This new space in the fort was created, as we have seen, by a combination of modern ideas of improvement, and traditional ideas of *dharma,* working together. However, the co-operation of the two ideas was not always trouble free.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, it was the duty of the king to protect *dharma*. But the question remains unanswered: what is *dharma*? It is difficult to define *dharma* as anything more than that 'which wise twice-born men praise' (Heesterman 1985: 115). The wise twice-born, the Brahmins, were represented in Mysore by the following three sects: the Smarta (*smārta*, followers of Advaita philosophy, Shaiva), the Madhva (*mādhva*, followers of Dwaita philosophy, Vaishnava), and the Sri Vaishnava (*śrī vaiśnava* followers of Visistadvaita, Vaishnava). The Brahmins who belonged to these three sects were not only given several privileges – such as *agrahāras*, *inām* lands or villages, and cows which secured a source of their livelihood – but were also to be entertained by the king during certain rituals in which the Brahmin population of the city were given *santarpaṇe*, ritual mass feeding. For example, on the occasion of the annual *eḍekaṭle*, ancestor worship ritual, for the late Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar (r.1881–94), thousands of Brahmins were fed in three different places in the city.[45] The religious offices in the palace, and the Sanskrit colleges supported by the palace and later by the state, all limited their appointments and admissions to Brahmins who belonged to one of these three sects. This monopolisation of religious posts and knowledge by the Brahmins was later fiercely contested by other religious sects, especially the Jains and Lingayats, who claimed to be equal to the Brahmins. In the early twentieth century, the Jains appealed to the palace for a post of dharmadhikari, and the Lingayats demanded the admission of Lingayat students to the Sanskrit colleges which previously welcomed only Brahmin students.[46]

It is worth mentioning that the Mysore maharajas were generous towards religions other than Hinduism, although most religious endowments were given to Hindu institutions. They acted, at least in public, according to the idea of *rājadharma*, which defines the role of the king as a protector of all of his subjects and his country at large. The following speech made by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV gives us some idea about how he tried to manifest himself as an ideal king who supports not only his own religion, but all the religions his subjects uphold. The speech was delivered in Urdu, which is a quite different language from his mother tongue, Kannada, on the occasion of the opening of a mosque for the Muslim section of His Highness's Body Guard Troop in 1922.

> It will give me great pleasure if the Musalman community makes full use of the mosque and if they constantly resort to it for prayer and meditation. This mosque is situated on one side of the lines; the Hindu temple is on the other side. Each ministers to the spiritual needs of its followers. Each is symbolic of that unity in diversity, which will, I hope, become in an increasing measure a pleasing characteristic of the motherland, with all its diverse castes and creeds. To a devout Hindu they represent but one of the paths leading to the same goal. If by providing them [you] with a mosque and by coming and taking part in the function, a Hindu like myself encourages them [you] to become truer Muslims practicing the high principles and following the noble traditions of their [your] religion, I feel happy and amply rewarded. […] I hope that you will bear mind the fact that you are Mysoreans first and all the rest next, owing a duty to the state, and that you will always work together for the common benefit and for the prosperity and advancement of the state in all possible ways.[47]

His tolerance and prudence in religious matters would certainly deserve the praiseworthy title 'Rama Rajya' (the Golden Age ruled by Rama), an epithet that was used by Mahatma Gandhi to describe the rule of the Mysore king.[48] His belief that being more religious does not necessarily lead to communal hostility, but guides people to the same goal and enables them to work together for the prosperity and advancement of the state, can be a strong aphorism for present-day society. The Indian ideology that the king transcends all the differences of religions and sects, and unites them from above, was clearly alive and persuasive in the modern discourse of nationalism in Mysore. However the transformative effects of religious revival on modern space were limited by the fact that modern ideology and traditional Indian idioms of politics and religion did not always work together so well. A history of a small goddess shrine standing just outside the fort helps us to understand this dilemma and the paradoxical nature of *rājadharma*.

The Kōṭemāramma temple, formally known as the Bisilumāramma temple, is a shrine of a local goddess of hotness (*bisilu*), who is believed to have strong powers to cure diseases such as smallpox and chicken pox.[49] The local goddess, such as Bisilumāramma, is widely worshipped as a village goddess (*grama dēvate*) in different names and forms by all Hindus and especially by the lower castes, Dalits (untouchables), and women. They are often independent and single, unlike other Hindu goddesses who are usually presented as consorts of great Hindu gods. The devotees bring to such a village goddess special offerings called *tampu* (cooling food) to cool her down, and sometimes perform animal sacrifice (*bali*) to please her (Fuller 1992: 46, 85). It has always been a problematic issue how to treat these indigenous forms of religious beliefs and practices within a modern space, especially a blood-thirsty goddess such as Bisilumāramma.

Village goddess worship, although regarded by the Brahmins as an indigenous and non-Brahminical tradition,[50] lies at the very core of the ritual of kingship in Mysore. The Wodeyar *kula dēvate* (family god) Cāmunḍēśvari was a local mother goddess who became the protector of the country under the patronage of the Wodeyars. During the state festival of Dasara, in which goddess Cāmunḍēśvari kills a buffalo-demon Mahshaasura and restores peace to the world, the maharaja invokes her in the role of chief sacrificer.[51] Throughout the nine days of celebration, he daily sits on the throne into which the goddess is incorporated. As we discuss in the following chapter, the maharaja's sitting on the throne in public is not a simple display of his power and authority but signifies a sacred communion of kingship, goddess, and the king himself (Hayavadana Rao, 1936:147–8, also see Stein 1983). The Dasara festival, therefore, clearly shows that the worship of goddesses is an indispensable factor for kingship and for the king himself, whose duty is to perform rituals to protect his country from evil and to call upon the power of the goddess to destroy evil and to restore peace. However, when the king needs external authorities to establish his transcendent position within the day-to-day running of society – Brahminical ideology, the mystical theory of king's alien origin, or perhaps recognition by the British paramountcy – the local and indigenous forms of belief are not always found to be compatible. The Brahminical gods secure their omnipresence through the fact that they are transcendent and lie above local society. The raison d'être of local goddesses, however, is rooted in particular, discrete localities. Moreover, the Brahminical notion of *dharma* severely rejects animal sacrifice as being against the dharmatic rule of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence), which prohibits the taking of any life. (This however is a paradoxical part of *dharma* since the Veda, on which the notion of *dharma* is said to depend, is believed to focus to a large extent on the idea of sacrifice) (Heesterman 1985: 81–2).

Brahminical ideology often deals with these local gods and goddesses in two ways. It sometimes incorporates them into the Brahminical pantheon by metamorphosing them into *avatārs* (manifestations) of Great Gods; otherwise it denies them as trivial and savage beliefs. The goddess Cāmunḍēśvari is a case of the former. After Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III returned to Mysore in 1799, he made a large bequest to her, both in money and land. He not only magnified the scale of the temple by adding a massive *gōpura* (temple tower), but also invited Diksit Brahmins (Shaiva) from Madras presidency and encouraged them to introduce more Sanskritised rituals (Goswami and Morab 1991: 2). They Sanskritised her original name, Cāmunḍi into Cāmunḍēśvari, and incorporated her into the Great Gods' pantheon as an avatar of Pārvati, wife of Shiva.

Bisilumāramma is a rather more peculiar example. Unlike Cāmunḍi she was not Sanskritised, but was not completely excluded by the palace authority either. *The Annals* say that her temple was situated in the fort even before the transfer of the capital in 1799 (*The Annals*, vol. 2: 90). However, during the dismantling of the congested parts in the fort, this temple was shifted from inside the fort to outside the southern wall of the fort. According to palace records, Rs 1,768 was spent on the construction of a new temple for this goddess in 1924.[52] The reason why they had to move the temple outside the fort was not clear. Yet one can speculate that the palace authorities or the City Trust Board intended to make the fort ‘clean’ both in terms of hygiene and Brahminical ideology. Bisilumāramma temple, where people perform *bali* (animal sacrifice) for the goddess, and non-Brahmin priests (occasionally even women) officiate during temple rituals, could not be considered to be a ‘clean’ temple from either the point of view of modern hygiene or Brahminical ideology.

The palace’s attitude towards the goddess’s temple was a matter of some complexity. They decided to exclude her shrine from the fort, but at the same time included her as one of the palace muzrai temples. This ambiguous and rather uncertain decision reveals not only something about the nature of the palace’s management of religious institutions, but also the people’s expectations of the king’s role in society, especially his administrative intervention. A series of petitions sent to the palace from the people in charge of the Bisilumāramma temple in the late 1920s sought the king’s intervention in their dispute. The people who were in charge of temple affairs were of the Raja Parivara caste[53] and most of them were working in the zillo katcheri, a semi-military department in the palace which regulated and undertook all arrangements connected with escorts and processions. The petitions were sent by a woman named Manchamma. She was the widow of Hirode Sidda Nayaka, Raja Parivara caste, who had served a long time in the palace zillo katcheri. She sought help from the maharaja to settle recent disturbances among them concerning the management of the temple. There were three groups – called Hirode Sidda Naik, Tope Mancha Naik, and Jodi Sidda Naik – who in turn took responsibility for the worship and service of the goddess as *pūjāri* (priest). However, after her husband’s death, two men took over all the management of the temple and misused the temple income, including the income from *koḍuge* land (a type of *inām* land) granted by the maharaja. She claimed that these two men ignored all the residents of the village, who used to share the responsibility of the temple, and asked the maharaja to solve this problem.

> Your Highness – The temple belongs to the palace – The land belongs to the palace. I request your Gracious Highness to kindly arrange for the disbursement of *mirāsu* [right] and honours granted by the palace through the *yajamana* [chief] of the Village and not through these people and thus protect us poor and humble servants of Your Highness from the trouble and annoyance caused by these self-interested people.[54]

However, despite what Manchamma thought, it was no longer the case that the temple and its land belonged to the palace. All the land in the fort and the surrounding area, where the temple was, was now owned by the city municipality. The temple was now one of the state muzrai institutions whose management was indeed the responsibility of the palace, but the palace did not own it as she believed. Nevertheless, the palace did intervene in this dispute. They looked into the practice of the division of responsibility over the previous ten years and made sure that this would continue as before.[55] Manchamma's claim shows that there was a popular notion of *dharma* in which the role of the king was to solve people's disputes and to bring peace to their daily lives. In this notion, the king was not someone who kept himself aloof from society and took responsibility only for the maintenance of ideal *dharma*, but someone who could intervene to resolve material conflicts and disagreements and to literally restore peace and order to society. This is certainly another aspect of *rājadharma* which led the king to intervene in the everyday disputes of the population on an *ad hoc* basis, rather than imposing upon them a transcendent order or something 'which wise twice-born men praise' (Heesterman 1985: 115).

Although the palace took responsibility for the management of the Bisilumāramma temple, her temple was removed from the fort not only physically as we have seen, but also symbolically. One of the religious practices, one which has continued to the present day, is the removal of the state sword from the palace whenever a festival (*utsava*) is performed and an icon of a god or goddess is brought out from a temple in the fort. The idea behind this practice is to avoid any confrontation of two gods (the goddess in the state sword and the god in the temple) and to keep the sacred space of the fort harmonious and peaceful.[56] This practice was applied to the Bisilumāramma temple as well when it was inside the fort. But since her shrine was moved out of the fort, this practice ceased to involve Bisilumāramma.[57] Paradoxically, at the same time that she was excluded from the sacred space of the fort, she was renamed Kōṭemāramma, or goddess of the fort, thus still clearly retaining importance in relation to this otherwise Brahminised, modernised, and purified space.

Conclusion

As Ranajit Guha pointed out, the two distinct paradigms – the modern idea of improvement and the Indian notion of *dharma* – did indeed strengthen each other and create a modern space. A history of Mysore city, especially the spatial changes to the fort in the centre of the city, provides us with a concrete example of how these two paradigms worked together to serve the new regime. Spatial improvement realised the aesthetic of modern rule in the form of a hygienic empty space that the authorities could easily control, and the notion of *dharma* created the ideal representation of *rājadharma* (the king's duty) within this modern space. However, indigenous forms of belief limited this collaboration of the two paradigms. Brahminical values could redefine and enforce themselves within modern administrative codes under indirect rule. Yet they failed to incorporate or to tame local and indigenous religions and customs, simply because the modern ideology of rule and traditional idioms of *dharma* worked so well together. The fate of the Kōṭemāramma temple (previously known as Bisilumāramma) within the fort reveals not only this limitation in co-operation between the two paradigms, but also another notion of *dharma* that the people expected the king to exercise. In this alternative, popular notion of *dharma*, the king was expected to intervene to resolve disputes within the wider society – an active and temporal engagement incompatible with both Brahminical ideas and the British desire to restrict his authority to purely private matters. The case of the Kōṭemāramma temple shows that, at least at a symbolic level, the maharaja's public duties and involvement persisted. He thus functioned within the spheres of two entirely different and apparently conflicting notions of *dharma*: subaltern and Brahminical. Although inevitably ambiguous in its nature, the notion and functions of *rājadharma* survived not only with a doubly strengthened force to transform the urban space of modern Mysore but also as a necessary institution of everyday administration.

8 Dasara, durbar, and dolls

The multidimensionality of public ritual

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Dasara: the changing nature of sacred kingship

Dasara (*dasarā* in Kannada) is a festival celebrated on the first ten lunar days of the bright fortnight of the lunar month of *āshvayuja* (the seventh month of the lunar calendar which corresponds to the period from September to October in the solar calendar).[1] Dasara is celebrated all over India under different names and forms. In southern India, this festival, commonly known as Navaratri (nine nights), is a celebration of the mystical battle between a goddess and the buffalo–demon Mahiṣāsra (Fuller and Logan 1985). In Bengal, people celebrate it as Durga puja, in which the goddess Durga kills the demon. In Central India, the festival is generally called Dusshara. Though the main theme of Dasara is to ritually reproduce the mystical battle between the goddess and the demon and to celebrate her victory over the demon, it seems that there are two forms of the celebration of Dasara. One form focuses mainly on rituals of the goddess. The Navaratri festival celebrated in the Minakshi temple in Madurai clearly belongs to this type. The study carried out by Fuller and Logan on this festival in Madurai has depicted the management of symbolic elements and language of temple rituals as a bloody battle within the pure and clean space of the Brahminical temple, with the purpose of renewing the sacred power of the goddess and restoring a harmonious world (ibid.). Dasara in Mysore constitutes another form in which the emphasis is placed, not only on the worship of the goddess, but also on kingship. These two forms of Dasara are, however, never in opposition to one another and nor are they self-sufficient, but rather are strongly interrelated and interdependent. In the case of Mysore, in particular, the role of the goddess is obvious. It is the goddess Chamundeshvari, not the king, who kills the demon, Mahiṣāsra. Even in the festival at the Minakshi (*mīnākśī*) temple, the statement of Fuller and Logan that there is no reference to kingship is debatable, since the arrangement of dolls and images of the goddess in domestic and temple rituals in Madurai is called *kolu*, which literally means 'royal presence'. This practice suggests a trace of the king's presence in the festival, and it would not be surprising to find that the Madurai Nayaka kings, originally Vijayanagara regents, celebrated Navaratri just as the Mysore Wodeyars are known to have done.[2]

Other interesting examples of Dasara come from the 'jungle kingdoms' of Central India (Gell 1997; Schnepel 1995, 1996).[3] Alfred Gell (1997) has demonstrated an interesting politico-religious relationship between the Hindu king and his 'tribal' subjects in the celebration of Dusserah in Bastar. In Bastar, unlike other parts of India, the tribal people 'abduct' the king and carry him to their camp immediately after the usual ten-day celebration ends. The king has to remain there overnight, and is offered a meal of wild meats by his tribal subjects (ibid.: 439). Gell argues that the people of Bastar ritually exalt the king by praising him or treating him as a living god, paradoxically in order to assert their own existence. This ritual language has also been used politically as a means to undermine the power of the state.

In southern India, the tradition of the Dasara or Mahanavani festival as a public ritual of kingship can be traced back to the time of the Vijayanagara kingdom in the fifteenth century. Burton Stein has argued that most scholars of Indian kingship have failed to understand the transition from sacred kings to sacred kingship that occurred during the post-Gupta era (before the fourth century), and have therefore overlooked the fact that it is the sacred nature of kingship as an office, not the king himself, which is maintained by performing public rituals (Stein 1983). The desacralisation of kings by the time of the medieval period is widely supported by many Indologists, historians, and anthropologists of Indian kingship. However, it is often understood simply as the religious domain (*dharma*), which Brahmin priests represent, and as being separated from the political and economic domain (*artha*) as the king and dominant castes take the reins of power, with the latter still being subordinated to the former in terms of ritual hierarchy (Dumont 1980; Derrett 1976). Burton Stein challenged this theoretical separation of the political and religious domains by pointing out the significance and continuity of sacred kingship in medieval India. Thus in the pre-Gupta and Gupta period (320–550 CE), royal sacrifices (e.g. the horse sacrifice, the royal consecration, the 'drink of strength' sacrifice) were performed to regenerate the sacred power of kings that enabled them to take on the responsibilities (*rājadharma*) of the protection and nourishment of the people and country (Stein 1983: 69).

The earliest account of the Mahanavami festival is that of an Italian traveller, Nicolo Conti, who visited Vijayanagara (present-day Hampi) in 1420 AD. A Persian ambassador, Abdur Razzak, also left an account of the festival in 1442.[4] The most detailed description was given by two Portuguese travellers, Domingos Paes and Fernao Nuniz, in the sixteenth century.[5] These accounts give us an idea of the Mahanavami festival celebrated at Vijayanagara, the capital of the great kingdom. Although Stein has emphasised the similarities between the Mahanavami at Vijayanagara and later royal rituals, such as Dasara in Mysore, it seems equally important to point out differences and to consider the nature of the transformation of the kingly ritual that occurred in precolonial southern India.

According to the description by Domingos Paes and Fernao Nuniz, the nine day ritual was performed on several huge platform-like constructions inside the palace compound at the capital city of Vijayanagara. Some of them functioned as galleries for the audience from which they enjoyed watching dancing-women, the bloody fight of royal wrestlers, and, most of all, a large-scale animal sacrifice.[6] The king himself offered a prayer to the idol on one of the edifices, called the 'House of Victory' or 'Throne Platform' by foreign travellers and archaeologists, or 'the Mahanavami Dibba' by the residents of Hampi, the present-day name of the former capital, Vijayanagara. Neither Paes nor Nuniz clearly gave the name or nature of this idol, but it is believed that it was of Pampa, the tutelary goddess of the capital city, and consort of Siva (Stein 1989: 38). It is interesting that, while the rulers of Vijayanagara were personally devotees of Vaishnavaism, they continued worshipping a local goddess, probably of an indigenous nature, which could be traced back much further than the rule of the Vijayanagara dynasty. The transition from the sacred king to the sacred kingship is clearly seen here; what the people who gathered in the palace compound observed was not the sacred power or attributes of the king himself, but the sacredness of the *paṭṭa* (kingship or 'the state' in the broad sense), which was regenerated though the king's invocation of the goddess, the protector of the country. According to Paes' description, they built a shrine of the idol (or goddess) covered with a cloth on top of the edifice. The king went inside the shrine and performed a ritual for the goddess, and occasionally the cloth was taken away in order that the audience could see the ritual being performed by the king.

Another important aspect of the Navaratri festival in Vijayanagara was the royal assemblage, durbar, which subordinate chiefs had to attend and where they had to exchange homage and gifts with the king of Vijayanagara. They entered the palace one after another according to their status and rank, and gave *salām* (greetings) to the king. The description by Paes and Nuniz clearly shows that the durbar was a powerful tool of control in the Vijayanagara kingdom. Subordinate chiefs had to visit the capital with their soldiers, horses, and elephants, and attend the durbar in the court during this festival. They were obliged to maintain a certain number of soldiers according to their obligation towards the king.[7] The Mahanavami festival was the occasion where these subordinate chiefs had to show that they were carrying out their duties in front of the king.

These features of Mahanavami in sixteenth-century Vijayanagara are found in the successor states of Vijayanagara, such as the Wodeyar dynasty of Mysore and the Nayaka kingdom of Madurai, and in minor states like Ramnad in the nineteenth century. Stein calls attention to this remarkable continuity of kingly ritual in the less-studied medieval, and early modern, southern states. One may question, however, if sacred kingship was established in medieval India, whether it went through another transition during the colonial period. Thus we still find diverse and conflicting elements in the celebration of Mahanavami in the Vijayanagara period: the worship of a bloodthirsty local goddess and at the same time the Sanskritised epic hero Rama;[8] the Hindu religious tradition and the use of Mughal court language (durbar, exchange of gift and honour); and the display of the righteous conduct of the king in parallel with the expression of the expectation of his subjects.

The historical descriptions available enable us to discuss the nature of Dasara in Mysore from a comparative perspective. First of all, the animal sacrifice, which was a predominant feature in the Vijayanagara era, was completely replaced by Sanskritised or vegetarianised practices. The pumpkin gourd (*būdigumbaḷa*) covered with vermillion powder (*kumkuma*), which the maharaja cuts with the royal sword on the tenth day after the worship of arms, can be regarded as a surrogate (called *kuṣmāṇḍa*) for the sacrificial animal. It is not clear when the vegetarian substitute was introduced in place of the animal sacrifice. According to a description by Rao (1921), no animal sacrifice was performed in the royal rituals in the palace in the early twentieth century. Considering the highly Sanskritised lifestyle of the Urs (see Chapter 5), it is quite possible that animal sacrifice was abandoned sometime in the pre-colonial period, possibly in the seventeenth century when the Wodeyar rajas converted to Sri Vaishnavaism. In other parts of India, on the other hand, the sacrifice of buffalo or goats was quite common until very recently. For example, in the princely state of Mewar (in the present-day state of Rajasthan), a buffalo was sacrificed in Dasara until the early twentieth century, although it has since been replaced by goats or a vegetable surrogate (Fuller 1992: 112–14). Wrestling (*jaṭṭikāḷaga*) in the palace court can be regarded as a surrogate for an ancient bloody ritual, but it would be overstated if we called it a surrogate of human sacrifice as some scholars have (cf. Fuller 1992). It is true that the heavy sound of the metal knuckle-dusters of the Jetti wrestlers and the sight of blood over their backs and heads are enough to frighten us, even though the fight itself does not last more than five minutes. It is probably a smaller scale replica of war, which is one of the predominant themes in Dasara, rather than of humans being sacrificed to the goddess. The aspect of war is thus seen throughout the Dasara rituals; a mythic battle between the goddess and the buffalo–demon Mahiṣāsra, the worship of the royal arms, the worship of the shami tree, and the military parade after the Vijayadashami procession (see also Biardeau 1984). All of these elements together, especially implication of the battle, clearly indicates the function of Dasara as a state ritual and not one simply for the celebration of godly power of the person of the king himself.

The lack of animal sacrifice in Dasara is apparent outside, as well as, the palace. People in Mysore in general do not perform any animal sacrifices during Dasara. For *āyudapūjā*, the most popular and widely performed ritual during Dasara, people perform *pūjā* to vehicles, such as cars, bicycles, and motorbikes, and tools, such as scissors, knives, and nowadays even computers or photocopy machines. They treat these vehicles and tools as their own army, and review them after performing *pūjā* by moving or using them for a while. In the process of this review, people use vegetable surrogates, often limes, and crush them with their vehicles or tools (see Figure 8.1). Animal sacrifice is mostly performed during the festival of the various village goddesses (*grama dēvata*) in the hot season, especially in February and March, but not in the time of Dasara, which comes in September or October.

Figure 8.1 āyudapūjā, 2002 photographed by the author

It is interesting to note the similarity between the temple ritual of Navaratri in Minakshi temple in Madurai and the Dasara celebration in Mysore. In Minakshi temple, Navaratri is the only festival in which a single priest takes charge of the whole ritual (Fuller and Logan 1985: 86–7). On the first day, special cords called *rakṣābandhana* (Skt) or *kāppu* (Tam.), made of yellow cotton thread, are tied to the right wrist of the festival priest and to the left wrist of the image of Minakshi (ibid.: 82). In Mysore, on the other hand, a special cord, 'kankana', is tied to the right wrists of both the maharaja and the maharani. In the Minakshi temple, these special cords have two purposes: the first is to give protection against evil forces, and the second is to signify a vow. The second purpose was the explanation I was given in Mysore. In order to carry out the state ritual, the maharaja and the maharani keep a vow during the nine days, and when the whole ritual is completed the cords are removed. As Fuller and Logan point out, the tying of the cords on the first day and their removal on the tenth day also signify the beginning and end of the ritual (ibid.: 87), and while the cords are tied on their wrist, they possess a special status which is clearly distinguished from their normal, profane status.

In Mysore, the fact that the maharaja cannot leave the palace during the first nine days of Dasara adds another significance. According to the terminology of sacrifice established by Mauss and Hubert, the maharaja is obviously the sacrifier (*sacrifiant*, the patron of the rite) of the whole ritual as the head of the country, but the same time he is also the sacrificer (*sacrificateur*, the mediator between the patron and the supreme being) of the ritual, just like the priest of the Minakshi temple, and has to conduct the whole ritual himself (Mauss and Hubert 1964: 9–49; Fuller and Logan 1985: 86). The maharaja has to go through a series of ritual purifications and to wear a ritually pure costume: two pieces of unstitched white silk cloth. He has to be separated from the profane world, to stay in a secluded space in the palace, and to follow a restricted diet. In this sense, he is a prisoner captured in the ritual or, if we are allowed to go further, what he experiences is a temporal death in order to maintain his pure status.[9] He has to abandon any worldly desire during the nine days' celebration and remain pure until he completes the ritual. It is often said that undertaking the Dasara rituals is quite different from undertaking the other rituals performed in the palace. Dasara is not a personal ceremony, but a ritual for the country, therefore the maharaja has to conduct Dasara rituals and cannot refuse or cancel for personal reasons.[10] He has to sacrifice himself, both practically and ritually.

Another important public ritual is the durbar, or court assembly, which originated in the court of the Mughal emperors. In the Mughal court, the hierarchical relation between the king and his subjects was confirmed in the durbar through ritual presentations. A subordinate person offered *nazar*, gold coins, and/or *peshkash*, valuables such as elephants, horses, jewels and other precious objects.[11] The Mughal then presented a *khelat*, which consisted of sets of cloths, jewels, arms and shields, according to the nature and amount of *peshkash* presented (Cohn 1983: 168–70).[12] As Bernard Cohn suggested, this was not simply an exchange of goods and valuables but rather an 'act of incorporation' by which a subject became 'a part of the king' (ibid.: 169). The durbar was also an occasion for the public display of the hierarchical structure of the kingdom. Subordinate chiefs, noblemen, officials, and prominent citizens had a seat at the durbar according to their status (Fuller 1992: 126). Cohn described it thus: 'the spatial order of a durbar fixed, aerated and represented the relationship with the ruler. The closer to the person of the ruler or his representative one stood, the higher one's status' (Cohn 1983: 169).

In modern durbars, adopted by Hindu dynasties from the Mughal ceremony by the eighteenth century (Fuller 1992: 126), the system of presentation seemed to become less predominant while the public display of social hierarchy was firmly maintained.[13] Instead of the elaborate system of presentation, the Hindu kingdoms added another dimension, in which the relationship between deities and the king was symbolically displayed (ibid.: 126). It is often the case that the deity is identified with the throne at the court assembly (ibid: 126). In Mysore, the golden lion fixed to the throne signifies that the goddess Chamundeshvari resides in it, since the lion is her vehicle. Therefore, the act of the maharaja sitting on the throne represents the incorporation of *paṭṭa* (state/kingdom), the goddess (the protector of the kingdom), and the king. Fuller also asserts that 'the ritual act of incorporation always linked subjects to the king and the deities conjointly, rather than to the king alone' (ibid.: 127). Fuller further argues that this incorporation displays 'the king's double relationship with the state deity, whereby he is both a form of the deity and the latter's human representative on earth' (ibid.: 127). This analysis seems, however, to oversimplify the relationship between the deity and the king and elides the importance of the structural transition from the divine king to sacred kingship which occurred sometime in the pre-Gupta era. It seems that we should still sustain the theory of sacrifice in the analysis of the Hindu durbar, rather than returning to the theory of the divine king. We should regard this incorporation not simply as one between the deity and the king, but rather as the king representing the unity of kingship and the deity. In this regard, the king plays the same role as the state elephant and horse, which physically represent the existence of *paṭṭa*, kingship/state. The ritual process in which the king – wearing a splendid costume and jewels just like the decorated state elephant and horse – acts like an objectified thing in this public display of sacred union, and creates a space where the people, his subjects, can exercise their own agency in order to reassert their relationship with him, which we discuss later.

British Residents in the European durbar

During the colonial period, an important public ceremony was added to the Mysore Dasara, which was called 'the European Durbar'. While the usual durbar was held twice a day continuously for nine days, European guests, including the British Resident, and other officers in the residency, were invited to attend the first durbar on the evening of the ninth day. They observed the public worship of the royal arms, royal emblems, and the state horse and elephant. It is said that the European durbar was started during the reign of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in the early nineteenth century.[14] A picture engraved in 1848–49 depicted the splendid assemblage of Indian nobles and British officers on the *sajje* (the durbar hall) in the former wooden palace (see Figure 8.2).[15] Probably at the beginning, the European guests

Figure 8.2 'The Dusserah Durbar of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore' engraved by C. F. C. Lewis Senior in 1848–49 (OIOC, British Library)

accepted the invitation to the durbar out of pure curiosity. Colourful rituals, the maharaja's splendid costumes and jewellery, decorated animals, and the wrestling of half-naked Indians were more than sufficient to satisfy their desire for the exotic and bizarre. Few would have realised the significance of Dasara, or the meaning of the durbar they were attending, but simply enjoyed watching the spectacle, just like the Portuguese travellers in sixteenth-century Vijayanagara.

The British Resident and his officers, unlike the European non-officials present in Mysore, felt a sense of obligation to participate in the durbar. In his analyses of the role of the British Resident in Indian court ritual between 1764 and 1858, Michael H. Fisher has shown that a British Resident needed to be a part of Indian court rituals in order to carry out his duties. First, he had to represent the interests of the East India Company and to convince Indian rulers of the legitimacy of those British interests. Second, he had to report to his superiors in the Company the details of events and their underlying meaning (Fisher 1990; also see Fisher 1991: 250–4). Not only were British Residents involved in court rituals, but the residency itself became an invaluable symbol of status and dignity for Indian rulers (Fisher 1990: 453–4). When the Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, was told his Resident was to be withdrawn, he apparently confided in tears that as long as he had a Resident, he was still considered to be a prince, but by the removal of his Resident he would be lowered to the level of a poligar (ibid.: 454).[16]

After the uprising of 1858, the nature of the relationship between Indian rulers and British paramountcy altered drastically. The British sought to create their own new imperial rituals by adopting Indian court ritual, language, and symbols (Cohn 1983). All the Indian rulers were ranked in the imperial hierarchy, with Queen Victoria in the supreme position. Imperial rituals asserted the harmonious relationship between Indian rulers and British paramountcy and visualised the complete subordination of Indian aristocracy. In Mysore, on the other hand, the Resident and his officers did not interfere so much in court ritual procedures, although they continued to participate in them. They did not recognise the significance of their own presence in Dasara rituals until the early twentieth century. This was the time when Dasara itself attracted a larger number of people, and durbars were performed in a much wider open space because of the expansion of the durbar hall and the drastic clearance of the fort (see Chapter 7).

In the early twentieth century, the palace and the British residency standardised the entire procedure of this ceremonial by going through a process of formal negotiation that reflected misunderstandings and self-interest on both sides. The following programme gives us an idea of the whole procedure of the ceremony that took barely one hour from the Resident's departure from Government House until his return from the palace.

Programme of the European durbar in 1919.[17]

1. An escort of Cavalry and a Palace carriage will wait at the Government House at 6.45 p.m. to escort the Resident thence to the Fort Palace, where he is expected to arrive at 7 p.m. He will be met by the Palace honours.

2. On the arrival of the Resident, a salute of thirteen guns will be fired from the Fort Battery.
3. A Guard-of-Honour will be assembled in front of the Palace and will salute the Resident on arrival.
4. A Sirdar and the Chief Secretary to Government will receive the Resident at the carriage and conduct him to the entrance of the Durbar Hall.
5. At the top of the Stairs, the Dewan will receive him and conduct him to the Drawing Room, where His Highness the Maharaja will meet him.
6. After the exchange of the usual salutations with the Resident, His Highness the Maharaja will enter the Durbar Hall and, after the observance of the usual ceremonies, take his seat on the Throne, the Resident taking his seat to the right of His Highness the Maharaja.
7. After a few minutes, the other European guests, ladies and gentlemen will arrive and, passing in front of the Throne and exchanging salutations with the Maharaja, take their seats to the right of the Resident.
8. After an interval, the Resident will be presented with garlands, attar and pan by the Dewan, and the others by one or two principal officers present.
9. When leaving the Resident and after him, the other European guests present will pass in front of the Throne, exchanging the usual salutations with the Maharaja.
10. The ceremonial attending the arrival of the Resident will be observed on his departure.
11. Dress – For Civil Officers entitled to wear Uniform – Durbar Dress.
12. For Military Officers – Full Dress Uniform.
13. For others [Europeans] – Evening Dress.

Before they reached this compromise on the procedure, there had been a series of complaints from the British Residents. Their objections against the European durbar were certainly a reflection of their ignorance about what was going on, but they also reveal that they tried to make sense of it in their own terms and even to convince themselves that the durbar was a good opportunity to demonstrate their authority within an Indian princely state.

It was Resident Oliver St John who declined the maharaja's invitation to the ceremony for the first time in 1889. Although the participation of the British Resident in Dasara had become customary in the residency after 'the rendition of power' in 1881,[18] he objected to the British participation in it and questioned the nature of the ceremony. He regarded the Dasara durbar as religious and public rather than secular and private in its character, and therefore considered that any British officer wearing official uniform should not attend such a ceremony. The religious character of the durbar was problematic for them not simply because the British officers were supposed to keep their distance from any sort of native religious custom (although they often failed to do so), but also because St John understood the Mysore durbar as a rite which incorporates the maharaja with a god.

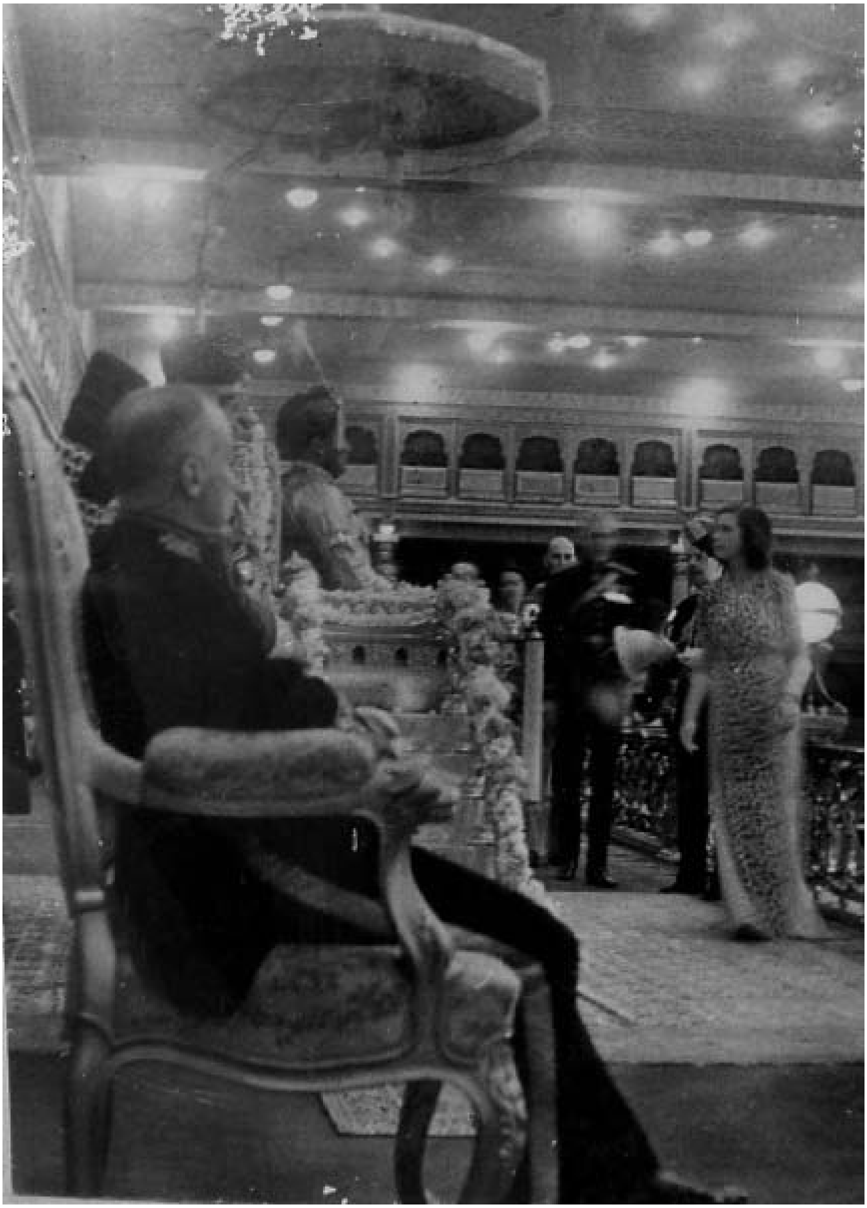

Figure 8.3 European durbar during the Dasara festival (KSA/MPD)

> It is popularly said that the Maharaja sits as a God to be worshipped by the people. Without going so far as this, it is notorious that he assumes a sacred character, and if not God himself, is held to represent for the time a kingly divinity. In this capacity he sits not on a throne in our sense of the word but on a raised platform, in the cross legged attitude adopted by sculptors in representing the God of the Hindu pantheon, and presents himself to the homage, if not the adoration of the people. The obeisance made to him by the procession of Europeans and their wives would appear to be held as the public recognition by the paramount power of this divine right.[19]

It is interesting to see the clear contrast between their understanding of Mughal and Mysore durbars. They regarded the Mughal practice of presentation in purely economic terms,[20] on the other hand, they sensed the religious character of the durbar in Mysore. Probably, Resident St John was genuinely disturbed by the spectacle in which the maharaja acted like a god and was treated like a god. Nevertheless he did not inquire further into the nature of the durbar and did not try to understand the significance of the ritual and the role of the king in local tradition, which might have contradicted this first impression. What he did instead was to enumerate objectionable aspects of the Dasara durbar according to a ritual code; I shall call it the 'Anglo-Indian public ritual code', which the British developed during the nineteenth century as a normative guide for their officers whenever they had to participate in local ceremonials.[21] St John saw that the essence of this ritual was the public homage paid to the maharaja in the durbar, and called it 'the worst part of the function'. But his objection against this ritual was centralised mainly upon the fact that homage was paid to the maharaja *seated* while the Resident was *standing*, which was nothing but a public display of the subordination of the Resident to a native ruler.[22]

The various forms of the Anglo-Indian public ritual code were mostly built around the exchange of courtesy between the Indian princes and high ranking British officers, which were meant to directly reflect their status in the imperial space, and to enforce and visualise this hierarchy itself. The British developed this public ritual code to such an extent that they ceremonialised most interactions between British officers and the Indian princes, and codified every minute of the acts and procedures of these ceremonies.[23] The practice of etiquette on the ground was, however, not always simple, especially when the native ruler occupied a supposedly higher status than the British Resident or the Political Agent in the imperial hierarchy. In the case of Mysore, the maharaja enjoyed a twenty-one gun salute while the Resident was granted a thirteen gun salute. Therefore, the status of the Resident was lower than the maharaja. On the other hand, however, the Resident in the princely state was a representative of the British Crown, which was, needless to say, the supreme authority in India.

The British were, therefore, discontented with the fact that the 'exchange of visits', which was a central practice in this ritual code, was not properly performed. According to etiquette, the maharaja was supposed to pay his return visit to the Resident soon after the Resident had arrived back at Mysore from his visit to the maharaja. Since the maharaja could not leave the palace during the nine days' celebration, these formalities were not accomplished. Diwan Sheshadri Iyar wrote to St John begging his understanding in this matter:

> Dasara as you are aware is the greatest festival in Mysore. As is usual with all such Hindu festivals there are many ceremonial observances to be gone through in keeping it – these have during long centuries hardened into rigid rules, a departure from which is not possible without causing shock to the sentiments associated with the festival in the mind of public. When once duly installed with consecratory ceremonies on the first day of the Dasara, His Highness cannot leave the palace precincts for nine whole days [and] during these days [he cannot] take any part in other than the recognised routine of ceremonials – and he is obliged to refrain from showing himself in public to any extent except from the balcony of the palace seated on the ancient throne of Mysore.[24]

The Resident accepted this explanation and exempted the maharaja from paying the return visit to him. The Mysore royal representatives, on the other hand, began to use the religious character and historical continuity of the ritual as a pretext to accept as few further modifications as possible. After this incident, the formalities of imperial ritual and the traditionalist discourse of local practice came into conflict over the site of the public ritual – the European durbar.

The declining of the invitation to the Dasara durbar by Resident Oliver St John reveals that the British officers realised that their role in this ritual was not as simple spectators but as actual participants; they were not only seeing but also being seen. It is interesting to note that this realisation on the part of the British did not lead them to completely withdraw from the Dasara durbar, rather they insisted on the superiority of the Anglo-Indian public ritual code and tried to insert their own logic of etiquette into the local ritual practice. Just as the long tradition of Dasara placed emphasis on public display, the concern of British officers was also centred around what to show to the people and how. St John, although he refused to attend the durbar, showed some sympathy towards James Gordon, the commissioner at the time when power was handed to the Maharaja of Mysore in 1881. He imagined that '(Gordon) was anxious to show the people of Mysore that the rendition was a real fact, and therefore consented to go through the act of homage to the Maharaja'.[25] However, he thought that several years after the rendition, this consideration was no longer necessary.

In the arrangement in 1891, the palace finally accepted some modifications to the durbar ceremony, especially on the issue of seating, whereby the Resident took his seat simultaneously with the maharaja.[26] Subsequently, the printed pamphlet of the Mysore Dasara was made to reflect the agreed procedure and was sent to the government of India for its approval in 1892.[27] After that, the Resident continued to attend the Dasara durbar.

After St John, there were no further complaints from the British Residents until 1916. This was possibly because of the individual character of each Resident, but may also have been because some of the later Residents were personally close to the maharaja and did not want to disturb their relatively harmonious relationship. In the case of Resident S. M. Fraser, who was previously the maharaja's private tutor and guardian, he attended several durbars as the Resident during his term from 1905 to 1910 without any complaint. However, in 1916, when H. V. Cobb, the newly appointed Resident, attended the Dasara durbar, the old controversy revived. Cobb noticed several problematic features in the European durbar, which were not properly mentioned in the printed procedure. Most of the things which he found unacceptable were on account of the fact that the durbar was held in the newly completed palace for the first time in 1910.[28] The change of venue caused several modifications in the course of the whole ceremonials. For example there was a new arrangement in which a sirdar (a title given to a few high ranking Urs royal), holding a handkerchief on the palm of his hand upon which the maharaja placed his own hand, walked on the maharaja's *right* while the Resident walked on the maharaja's *left* when they moved from a private drawing room to the durbar hall.[29] As we have seen, this is the sacred thread, called *kankana*, which was tied around the maharaja's right wrist as a sign of a sacred vow, and the sirdar was supporting it without touching it. At the same time, the Resident's 'proper' position in a durbar should be on the maharaja's *right* according to the Anglo-Indian court ritual code. It seems that the irregularity of this arrangement did not become an issue when the durbar had taken place in the temporary durbar hall in the Jagamohan Palace after the destruction of the old palace,[30] because the Resident met the maharaja in the durbar hall itself and the procession in which the sirdar held the maharaja's wrist had already been completed by the time they entered the durbar hall.

Resident H. V. Cobb was further annoyed by the fact that, instead of the maharaja and the Resident taking their seats simultaneously, which was agreed at the time of Resident St John, the maharaja claimed that the practice had been for him to sit down first, and then after he had taken his seat, to make a half turn towards the Resident and by a nod or sign to indicate to him that the purification ceremonies being over, the Resident and his staff might take their seats.[31] Another issue was that the maharaja claimed that the Resident, his staff, and the European guests, on leaving the durbar hall after making their bows to him, should also bow to his younger brother, the yuvaraja, who had attended the durbar officially and sat on the maharaja's left in the previous three or four years. To the Resident's surprise, when he gave an informal salutation, with reluctance, to the yuvaraja, differing from the formal bow to the maharaja, the yuvaraja, like his brother, remained *seated*.[32]

The fact that Cobb went on to consult with the government of India about the modification of durbar procedures was enough to make the young maharaja nervous. R. H. Campbell, the then Maharaja's Private Secretary, had to act as a go-between. Of the three objections (the Resident's standing on the maharaja's left, the maharaja taking his seat first, and the bow to the yuvaraja), the first issue was settled fairly smoothly since the Mysore side explained to the Resident about the religious significance of the practice of the maharaja resting his right wrist on the sirdar's hand[33] (apparently Resident Cobb had previously believed that the maharaja was lame).[34] On the part of the government of India, the question regarding the Resident bowing to the yuvaraja, who remained *seated*, was the most objectionable feature, since the status of the yuvaraja was clearly lower than that of the Resident.[35] On this point, the maharaja immediately agreed that the yuvaraja would rise from his seat to receive and return the Resident's salutation.[36] Of all the issues that Resident Cobb raised, the question of taking his seat simultaneously when the maharaja sat on the throne was the least acceptable for the maharaja. The maharaja insisted that the ceremonial of the durbar was of a religious, rather than of an official, character, and any modification on this issue might hurt the feelings of his subjects. The government of India, on the other hand, insinuated that the official attendance of the Resident at the durbar might be henceforth discontinued.[37]

The go-between, Campbell, the private secretary of the maharaja, then had to find some middle ground where both sides could reach some sort of agreement. He endeavoured to clarify the interpretation that 'the religious part of the ceremonies was not completed until the Maharaja was actually seated'.[38] Therefore, until the maharaja was seated on the throne, he could not give a sign to indicate to the Resident to take his seat. However the Resident could take his seat immediately after the whole religious ritual had been completed. This was eventually accepted. These British interpretations of the durbar procedure reveal not only that they did not really have any clue about the durbar, but also how important it was for them to make a distinction between religious and non-religious matters when they tried to interfere in Indian local customs. As we have seen, the nature of the durbar is not divisible between religious and non-religious parts; rather, the whole process of the maharaja ascending, standing, and sitting on the throne signifies the incorporation of state/kingship, the goddess and the king. While he is sitting on the throne, he is integrated into this sacred union, therefore his gift is not a simple gesture of a return gift but a sacred blessing from it. Thus, the religious nature of the ceremonials continued contrary to the British officers' interpretation. The separation of 'religious' and 'non-religious', however, gave the British a feeling of confidence in a double sense: if a thing was religious they did not have to understand it and could legitimately allow the Indians to do what they wanted to do. On the other hand, if a thing was not religious, then they could fully assert themselves and could force their ideas and practices on the Indians.

No specific official agreement was reached on whether or not the Resident and the maharaja would take their seats simultaneously, although Resident Cobb agreed to attend the durbar in the following year. He reported that he sat down simultaneously with the maharaja after the religious ceremonies at the *gaddi* (throne) were concluded, but there was not any interchange of salutations. The yuvaraja stood up and Cobb saluted him unceremoniously when he left the durbar hall.[39] Nevertheless, he continued to complain by pointing out trifling matters, such as the height of his chair:

> I was not supplied with a footstool as requested by me, and as Mr. Campbell [the private secretary of the maharaja] had promised. I had asked for his as

> the chair provided is uncomfortable and does not permit of my feet touching the ground when I lean back. What apparently was done was to cut an inch or two off the legs of the chair. This however, was insufficient to enable me to rest my feet on the ground. In earlier days the Resident's chair was on a dais but this mark of distinction was surrendered presumably in Sir H. Daily's time [Cobb's predecessor], and I suppose the Durbar [Mysore court] considered that to provide the Resident with a footstool would be to increase his dignity – the last thing they would wish to see done.[40]

The problematic features of the Dasara durbar were caused not only by the scheming manoeuvring of the Mysore court as the British nervously imagined, but also by the undisciplined attitude of their own officers and European guests. Cobb noticed in the durbar of 1917 that about one quarter of the Europeans (officers and non-officers) did not bow to him when they passed his chair on their way to their seats.[41] In 1919, though they were told to do so, about six people did not acknowledge the presence of the Resident, two of them were American Residents in Ootacamund who were believed to have ignored the British Resident intentionally.[42] The British, then, tried to make sure that at least their own military officers would acknowledge the presence of the Resident as 'the King's representative' and certainly give two bows, one to the Maharaja and another to the Resident, when they passed in front of the throne.[43] Since the number of the European guests, both officers and non-officers, constantly increased and numbered a few hundred by the 1920s, it became more and more difficult to discipline the conduct of the European guests at the durbar in the manner desired by the Resident. Instruction was given to European guests in Government House, where most of them stayed, and an official order was circulated among the military officers serving in the Bangalore Brigade Area.[44] It was a serious matter, since the Resident clearly did not have enough ritual devices to maintain the same status as the maharaja, if not a higher one, in spite of the fact that he had the power to force the maharaja to accept the Anglo-Indian ritual code. Although the British Residents successfully maintained their political influence over the Mysore maharajas, they did not conquer the durbar ritual. Instead, the ritual of kingship, durbar, grew to become even more grand and powerful by appropriating the Anglo-Indian ritual code imposed by the British, and the presence of the British officers, as one of the decorative features of the sacred union of the state, the goddess, and the king.

The king and the people

Mysore rulers, as well as the rulers of Vijayanagara, appeared in front of the people during the Dasara celebration not as a simple display of the king's power and authority, but rather as a display of the legitimacy by which the king was entitled to sit on the throne. The British added a new dimension to Dasara by trying to insert the idioms of the Anglo-Indian court ritual, but they never took complete control over the durbar procedure and were rather swallowed up in the gigantic scale of the public ritual in Mysore. How, then, were these aspects of Dasara perceived by the people of Mysore? Were they simply impressed by the conspicuous consumption of ritual symbols by both their Indian rulers and the British? Or is there any agency of the people which might add another dimension to Dasara?

The Dasara festival at Mysore city has important economic and political dimensions, apart from the religious and cultural ones. The official year used to start when the Dasara festival was completed. The Representative Assembly, the quasi-democratic institution introduced in the late nineteenth century, was held immediately after the ten days' celebration was completed. The number of people who came to Mysore to witness the Dasara festival and the maharaja's procession dramatically increased in the early twentieth century. The improvement and beautification of the city also heightened its attraction and that of the Dasara festival. Mirza M. Ismail, who was Diwan of Mysore between 1926 and 1941, fought back against a harsh criticism of the beautification of the city made by a visitor to Mysore by boasting of the economic significance of the Dasara festival:

> [The visitor] did not like its [Mysore's] beauty or its cleanness, its parks or its lights. They seem to have offended his eye. He was not pleased with the sight of the vast crowds either. They appeared to him hungry. The Government could only feed them on "beauty"! How can one argue with such people? They do not seem to realise what a tremendous economic gain – leave alone the political and religious and festive aspects of it – the Dasara festival is to the State and particularly to this City. It attracts annually a large influx of visitors – at least 100,000 to 150,000 come from the State and outside. Assuming – during the five or six days he stays in the City, it gets Rs 10 or 15 lakhs every year. And what is the expenditure that the Government incurs? Would you believe it? Hardly Rs 10,000.[45]

The explanation of Mirza Ismail may not be sufficient to explain the sums that the government spent on the beautification of the capital city (see Chapter 7), but it is astonishing to see the number of people Dasara attracted and the amount of money they brought into the city. The population of Mysore city was about 107,000 in 1931 but had increased to 150,000 in 1941. If Ismail's estimation was right, this means the population was doubled or more during the celebration of Dasara. There must have been a great number of people who were leading merchants, landlords, and others coming from every part of the country to attend the Representative Assembly, and state officials and military officers who also had a duty to attend the Assembly or the Dasara procession, but this number shows that there were many people who came to Mysore just to see Dasara and for *darśan* (viewing) of the maharaja.

There were two occasions on which people could see the maharaja: his birthday procession and Dasara. On these occasions, people were given sugar or sweets, and sometimes a one rupee coin.[46] People, especially children, were excited by this distribution. The excitement of *darshan* of the maharaja, which people were waiting for, was a mixture of praise and fear. People were, and still are, eager to see the maharaja, just as they try to see the idol of a god in the temple. At the same time, people had a fear of him. A retired railway worker, born in the 1920s, told me that the maharaja has magical powers and that if the maharaja looks at someone directly with his bare eyes, that person might be killed or seriously hurt; this is the reason why the former maharaja (Jayachamaraja Wodeyar) always wore dark glasses. ‘It is very very dangerous’, he added. Being a Brahmin who had had a primary education in Mysore city, though he failed to get a secondary education degree, he was certainly not an uneducated villager, but he still strongly believed that the eyes of the maharaja have a deadly magical power. This belief was apparently shared by other Mysoreans in those days. This intriguing story was, however, easily refuted when I went to see a Brahmin priest who serves the palace. ‘Why did he always wear dark glasses?’, I asked. ‘He simply liked them’, was the answer he gave me. The fact that the maharaja maybe did not wear dark glasses in order to conceal his magical power does not undermine the significance of the emotions people had for the maharaja. That ‘he might not be a god, but is someone very special’, was certainly a feeling shared by most people in Mysore.

There is an important domestic festival that people perform during Dasara, which is called *bombe* or *gombe habba* (doll festival). People, especially the women in each household, arrange dolls of gods, humans, and animals on a podium with several successive levels leading up to the top. They normally do not put this podium in the worshipping room (*dēvara mane*), but in the living room, which they clean and purify before putting it up. Nowadays, people do not make a podium as big as they used to, and most households only have a single or two level podium on which girls arrange their own collection of dolls (see Figure 8.4).

Figure 8.4 A Dasara podium, 2002 photographed by the author

The doll festival has become more of an entertainment for girls and is certainly losing the religious character which it originally had, but Nanjammanni has an account of the doll festival in the Urs household, and it gives us some idea about the practice and meaning of this festival. Women in the Urs household used to make a podium with eight or nine steps (*sālus*) on which they arranged the dolls of the raja and rani on the bottom step, idols of Rama, Sita, Lakshmanna, Anjaneya, five Pandavas (main characters from the Mahabarata) on the second step, elephants, horses, camels, and other animals on the third step, things made of glass on the fourth and fifth steps, a shopping street, garden, and hospital on the sixth and seventh steps, and they placed a wooden board on the last step upon which they spread mud, in which they sowed seeds and let them grow (Nanjammanni 1986: 149–50). It is also said that every Urs woman was given dolls of the raja and rani (king and queen) when they married and that they performed *pūjā* for the dolls by offering flowers and yellow rice to them in the worshipping room (*dēvara mane*) during Dasara. Placing dolls of the raja and rani in the worshipping room and offering *pūjā* for them is unusual among other castes but still very common among the Urs (see Figure 8.5).

The most elaborate decoration of the doll festival I have seen in Mysore was that of a Brahmin family living in one of the *agrahāras* (Brahmin quarters) in the city. Their podium was more than six feet high with five steps on which they lined up idols of gods and goddesses which they used to keep in the cupboard (see Figures 8.6 and 8.7). In this house, not only for Dasara but also for other major

Figure 8.5 Raja and rani dolls placed in the worshipping room in an Urs household, 2002, photographed by the author

festivals like Krishna jayanthi, they set up a similar podium in their living room. Their arrangement of the dolls was very similar to the manner Nanjammanni has described: the raja and rani dolls on the lowest step and the dolls of the gods on the higher steps. They perform *pūjā* for raja and rani dolls on the podium itself, not in the worshipping room. They told me that they used to perform *pūjā* on the raja and rani dolls at precisely the same moment as the maharaja ascended to the throne during the durbar in the palace.[47] They knew exactly when they had to do so because a salute of twenty-one guns, which the people in the city could hear, was fired at the moment when the maharaja climbed onto the throne. The salute of guns, which was introduced by the British in order to create and fix the imperial hierarchy, became an important device for people by which they could know what was going on in the palace.[48] The domestic worship of the raja and rani dolls, and the royal ritual in the palace, were thus linked by this Anglo-Indian ritual device.

Figure 8.6 A Dasara podium in a Brahmin household, 2002, photographed by the author

Figure 8.7 Raja and Rani dolls just after the *pūjā* was performed, 2002, photographed by the author

I asked several people why they perform *pūjā* for the raja and rani dolls in the *bombe habba* (doll festival) during Dasara. All of them firmly denied that they do *pūjā* simply because they regard the maharaja as a god. They also denied that the arrangement of a podium was a representation of the pantheon of the gods in which the maharaja occupies the bottom of the hierarchy. They said to me that this is a simple matter of convenience; they put the dolls of the raja and rani here so that they can perform *pūjā* easily. What people repeated to me was that '*rājā dēvaru alla, ādare dēvara tara irabāku* (the king is not a god, but he should be like a god)'. It may be argued that the image of the doll festival in which people offer praise for the royal presence possibly reveals another dimension, in which people exercise their agency and demand for the king's rightful rule (*rājadharma*) through a ritual act. When the maharaja appears in public as a representation of kingship, people praise him and put him on the throne themselves. If people can put him on the throne, however, they can possibly do the reverse.

The fact that a huge crowd of people gathered in the city to see the durbars and the maharaja's procession was a reflection of the important nature of Dasara. Burkhard Schnepel has suggested in his study of Dasara in Jeypore that Dasara had a 'morally unifying and socially leveling function' by which 'during *dasarā* all subjects of the kingdom, no matter what their social backgrounds were, came together and melted into one big mass, in which they were equal among themselves and even at one with the king' (Schnepel 1996: 139). He has also pointed out that the uninhibited mood among the crowd had the potential to reveal its character of a 'rite of inversion' or a 'ritual of rebellion' (ibid.: 140).

Being afraid of the king's magical power, placing the doll of the king on the throne praying that he should be like a god, and rushing to the street and feeling a socially levelling effect, were all part of the active participation of the general populace in this public ritual which regenerates the relationship between the people and the king. Even the most passive act of being fearful of the king's magical eyes does not mean that people felt weak and powerless against the king. The sense of awe did not keep them away from the king; instead it pushed them out onto the street and boosted their desire for *darśan* (viewing) of the king. The participation of the people of Mysore in Dasara reveals a complex dimension in their relationship with the king and kingship. The ritual devices that people use, both formal and emotional, in order to relate to the king and kingship are highly ambiguous and rhetorical. Their praise, fear, and excitement for the king embodies at the same time its obverse, and can turn into critical evaluation, demands, and even the questioning of royal legitimacy and authority.

Can the state take over Dasara?

In 1970, when Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister of India, began to attempt the abolition of the privy purse,[49] Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, the last Maharaja of Mysore, decided not to ride on the golden howdah in the Dasara procession any more. The state of Mysore, later the state of Karnataka, then took over this festival. Dasara now, for the majority of the people, means performing *āyuda pūjaa* at home or at their work place, and watching the Dasara procession on TV. Especially among middle-class Indians living in the suburban areas of Mysore, it is becoming more common to stay at home rather than to go to the city centre to be jostled by the crowd. Dasara today is certainly losing its character as a public ritual, instead becoming increasingly an individual and domestic ritual. Its nature as a public ritual is gradually being taken over by the Ganesha habba (Ganēśa chatrti) in September and the Deepavali in November, which are both very popular in northern and western India. Especially during the Ganesha habba, people, particularly young people and children, organise themselves in the locality to create a huge Ganesha statue and celebrate the festival collectively, which was not common several decades ago. Deepavali has not acquired the nature of a collective or public festivity in a narrow sense, but the overflowing sound and light all over the city (most notably from private firework displays) create a certain sense of collectiveness. While Dasara is losing one of its main features as a public ritual, the state of Karnataka is keen on making Dasara a state festival. But now Dasara is divided between the 'traditional' rituals, still performed by Mr Srikanthadatta Wodeyar ('the Maharaja') inside the palace, and the public festivities organised by the state.

Most Mysore residents are not particularly interested in attending the private durbar. This is partly because it is very difficult to obtain a pass, unless they have a relative working for the palace, but it is also the case that they cannot find any reason to do so any longer. Although the present Wodeyar family still makes tremendous financial and physical efforts to maintain all the traditional rituals in the palace during Dasara, the future of these kingly rituals is uncertain.

Conclusion

A salute of twenty-one guns, which was bestowed by the British Crown on the Maharaja of Mysore as holding the highest status among Indian princes in the imperial hierarchy, served to create a temporal ritual space, which went beyond the palace compound and reached into the domestic space of every resident in the city. The sound of the gun salute facilitated and enforced the ritual participation of the general population in a more effective way, in that they could place the king on the throne themselves at exactly the same time as the king himself ascended to it. This active exercise of the people's agency also elicits the complex role of the king in relation to kingship, the goddess, and society at large. The Dasara festival in Mysore is not simply a public ritual to legitimise the king's authority over the people, but the display of a ritual process in which the king is depersonalised and thrown into the ritual in order to represent the incorporation of kingship/'state' (*paṭṭa*), and the goddess, the protector. In other words, the king acts as a sacrificer in the whole ritual, while at the same time he is objectified during the course of Dasara for the sake of the 'sacred kingship'. It is also significant that the maharaja's subjects do not play a merely passive role in the festival, by being impressed by and prostrating themselves before the splendid display of the king's wealth and military strength. Indeed, they have an active agency in putting the king on the throne and gazing as a mass (potentially judgmental and menacing) at the incorporation of kingship and the goddess. For the people, Dasara is a ritual occasion to confirm whether the king is suitable for the sacred kingship or not.

Colonialism did not alter the multidimensionality of the public Dasara ritual, but rather facilitated its continuation in the modern urban setting of the capital city. The British won their political and economical exercise of power and even succeeded in the cultural appropriation of Indian rituals and the creation of imperial rituals such as the Imperial Assemblage and Delhi Durbar. However, they seem to have been swallowed up in the politics and language of ritual practice in Mysore. The drastic change in the interaction of the king and people occurred, not during colonial times, but in 1970, when Indira Gandhi decided to abolish the privy purse and the former Maharaja of Mysore stopped riding on the state elephant in the Dasara procession. Colonialism did not alter the nature of sacred kingship but the modern state did. Indira Gandhi, then the prime minister, in order to re-gain popularity, wished to present herself as a sole protector of the people. She held up the former princes, who had already lost much of their power, as living symbols of the feudal inequality within society that she was vowed to eradicate. By stripping the former princes of all their privileges, she claimed to have advanced her campaign to abolish poverty. From playing the sacrificial animal or 'scapegoat', sacrificed in order to remove the sins of the country in pre-colonial times, the kings came to be used once again in the modern era for the purification of the socialist nation-state.

9 The king is dead, long live the king!

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Back to the realpolitik, but who is the king?

On 29 February 2004, a huge tent set up in the Urs Boarding School ground was filled with thousands of people, both rich and poor, women and men, old and young. Among those people, there was the whole spectrum of contemporary Karnataka society, from humble farmers in *dhōti*, wearing cotton scarves over one shoulder in order to make their modest outfits look respectable, to overweight middle age women wearing expensive silk Kanchiwaram saris and thick gold chain necklaces. All of them, obviously from diverse economic and social backgrounds, actually belonged to the same caste, the Okkaligas, one of the dominant castes in Karnataka. They were assembled there to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of their guru, Balagangadharanatha swami, the seer of Adichunchanagiri Matha (monastery). His birthday celebration was started with a colourful procession that marched from the Kote Anjaneya temple, in the north of the Mysore fort, to the Urs Boarding School ground. The guru was seated in a huge palanquin placed on a flower-bedecked open vehicle: a contemporary, upgraded version of the *aḍḍa pālaki* (cross-palanquin), the highest mark of honour among the royal insignias (see Chapter 3). After the *pūja* was performed in the temple, Mr. Srikantadatta Narashimharaja Wodeyar, the scion of the Mysore royal family and former member of Lok Sabha (the lower house in the Indian Parliament), honoured the guru by putting on his head a golden crown weighing 1.5 kg, valued at Rs 10 lakhs.[1] The same act of honouring was repeated on the same day, by S. M. Krishna, then the chief minister of the state of Karnataka for the Congress (I), and by the chairman of the Mysore Urban Development Authority, the modern incarnation of the Mysore City Improvement Trust Board. Other disciples also presented the guru with a golden *rudrākśi māle* (Shaivite rosary which is normally made of dried berries) and silver *pāduke* (sandals).[2]

The mass gathering of the Okkaliga caste on the occasion of its guru's birthday was set very conveniently at the beginning of the campaign for simultaneous Lok Sabha and state assembly elections in April 2004. S. M. Krishna, an Okkaliga himself, gave a speech at the celebration, in which he reminded people that the backward classes and the exploited had been given support and reservations since the dissolution of the Mysore maharajas, and that this was the new *rājadharma* of the elected government. To advance this would now be the *prajādharma* (people's dharma). He also pointed out the important role that the *maṭhas* played in society, and questioned the validity of criticisms made against the religious gurus of the state.[3]

As the scenes described above suggest, the social impact of wealthy religious *maṭhas*, such as Adichunchanagiri, is hugely significant in Karnataka. Several educational trusts under the guidance of Adichunchanagiri guru run hundreds of educational institutions in the state where, according to their official website, thirty thousand students were receiving education in 2006. About six thousand are given free boarding and lodging, and the *maṭha* recently set up a thousand-bed hospital in a rural area where the majority of the population are poor and belong to the so-called backward classes. Here, they are given free treatment and medicine.[4] Politicians of Karnataka cannot, therefore, overlook the influence of religious leaders over the election result, especially someone considered to be a spiritual leader of a dominant caste. So great is this influence, that the open support of the guru Balagangadharanatha Swami for the Janata Dal in the 1994 Assembly elections led the Janata Dal to secure the Okkaliga votes and to win the election.[5] Ten years later, although the guru did not say anything about the election during his birthday celebration, his silent message was clear enough to suggest that his fellow Okkaligas were expected to vote for the Congress (I). This discourse and the use of religious symbols during the gathering was surprisingly similar to what we have seen in the politics of honour that tied the royal centre and religious gurus in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although this time it is not clear from where the honour was coming. Is it Chief Minister S. M. Krishna, or the heir to the now defunct Mysore royal title? Who is the 'king' in this political ritual?[6]

During the run up to the election, there were numerous caste gatherings, disguised as religious functions, as well as straightforward political rallies demanding a certain number of seats in the state assembly for members of their caste. Together these greatly intensified the excitement and tension. The smaller, elite, 'royal' caste of the Urs did not arrange or organise any mass rallies, unlike the Okkaliga. Instead, they were thrown into turmoil by the sensational news that one highly prominent Urs politician had killed her own cousin, who allegedly had lent Rs 65 lakhs at 30 per cent annual interest and had demanded that the politician repay it at the crucial time of the election.[7] The name of this politician is Bharati Urs, daughter of the former Chief Minister D. Devaraja Urs, a paternalist politician of the 1970s, who was considered to be a champion of progressive social reforms, one of which was the redistribution of lands from the dominant landed castes, the Lingayats and Okkaligas, to landless tillers (Manor 1980). This altruistic policy made D. Devaraj Urs an iconic figure of the backward class movement in Karnataka, even after his death in 1982. It left the Urs with a somewhat difficult reputation, as elite benefactors of the poor at a time when they were declining in both economic and political influence. This could still be electorally advantageous, however, and in an attempt to capitalise on the Devaraj legacy, his daughter, Bharati Urs, had set up a new political party called Urs Samyuktha Paksha (Urs United Party), aided by a businessman Hari L. Khoday, popularly known as a 'liquor baron'.

Her ambition was thoroughly spoiled by the murder allegation, although even before this scandal it seemed that the Urs in Mysore city were not at all united in their support for the party. Many had apparently already determined to vote for the Congress in the State Assembly election, and for the conventional candidate in the Lok Sabha election: the son of the last maharaja, Srikantadatta Wodeyar, who was also a Congress candidate in Mysore constituency.

The final result of the 2004 general election in Karnataka surprised many and stood in marked contrast to the general picture of all-India level politics. Whilst nationally the 'India shining' campaign of the Hindu nationalist BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) led government did not attract the general voter and cleared the way for the Congress (I) Party to return to power, in Karnataka, the BJP gained more seats than any other party in both the Lok Sabha and in the assembly, whereas the Congress lost a considerable number.[8] The Congress then had to form a coalition government with the Janata Dal (S) in order to stay in power in the state, but their electoral defeat was very evident. The scion of the Wodeyar family, Srikantadatta Wodeyar, who was seeking his fifth term, apparently failed to appeal to anyone beyond a handful of Okkaliga and the Mysore Urs elite. He was pushed down to third position and lost the Mysore Lok Sabha seat to the BJP candidate, C. H. Vijaya Shankar, who was a leader of the Kuruba community, categorised as one of the Other Backward Castes (OBCs).[9] The press reported this as an anticipated defeat, since voters were allegedly disenchanted by the Wodeyar prince's inaccessibility to the masses.[10] The Congress party was then compelled to ally with the Janata Dal (Secular) with the aim of keeping communal forces out of government. S. M. Krishna, the Congress (I) Chief Minister, was removed from Karnataka state politics on account of this electoral failure, and was later appointed as the governor of the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh. None of the candidates of the new pro-OBC party, the Urs Samyuktha Paksha, won any seats. It is difficult to judge to what extent the murder scandal of Bharati Urs affected this result, but it certainly did not help.

The electoral success of the BJP in Karnataka should not be read simply as evidence of the growing Hindu nationalist feeling in the south, but as a combination of many local factors. One of the major developments was that the numerically and politically powerful Lingayats had become tired of power sharing with the Okkaligas, another dominant caste, within the Congress party. Therefore, they had moved to support the BJP as a new platform from which they could potentially enjoy more unrestricted access to power. But the Lingayats alone could not gain enough votes for the BJP. It is significant that several leaders of OBC castes, who were traditionally regarded as loyal Congress supporters, joined the BJP immediately before the election, in order to contest against the State Congress, which (they claimed) had not adequately responded to the demands of the OBCs. Their shift was backed by the growth of political awareness among lower sections of society (such as the OBCs and Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCs/STs)) who began to regard the Congress as a pro-elite, and pro-dominant caste party.[11] The election might therefore be seen as marking the beginning of a gradual political power shift towards the OBCs and out of the hands of the dominant castes (the Okkaligas and Lingayats), which, after all, constitute only about 35 per cent of the total population of Karnataka. We might pause to ask if it demonstrated a further shift in the centre of political power, which was first removed from Kshatriya kings to Brahmin officers during the colonial period, then in turn removed from Brahmin domination by the advent of democracy and the rise of the dominant castes in the early twentieth century. It is, however, important to point out that the visible political assertion of backward castes was first initiated in the 1970s by D. Devaraj Urs, who belonged to the Mysore royal caste. This could thus be regarded as an interesting revival of a political alliance between the royal caste and backward classes that had existed in pre-colonial times. Although the Urs Samyuktha Paksha failed to create a new political force in Karnataka, perhaps there might yet be opportunities for a royal-backward alliance. At least it has become clear that having royal blood and a royal name are not enough on their own to win an election.

Karnataka politics faced another sudden turn in early 2006. A faction of the Janata Dal (S) left the coalition with the Congress and formed a new alliance with the BJP. This move gave the BJP a majority in the assembly and made Karnataka the first southern state to be ruled by the Hindu nationalist party. Immediately after the coup, H. D. Deve Gowda, the former prime minister and the Janata Dal (S) national president, expressed his open opposition to the new alliance, which his own son, H. D. Kumaraswamy, who was then the chief minister, had engineered. However, Deve Gowda later organised a huge rally of the Okkaligas in order to consolidate caste support for the party. This rally was named 'Guruvandana (gratitude for gurus)' and coincided with the birthday of Deve Gowda himself. Balagangadharanatha Swami of Adichunchanagiri Matha and others were invited. It was clear that the religious leaders were still very much the key actors in mobilising the people. The politics of honour, in which the king/political leader of the community pays obeisance to religious gurus (or prostrates in front of them, which the word *vadana* literally means) still apparently had appeal and could offer a strong ritual message to the mass of the population.

One of the conspicuous aspects of the chaotic environment of Karnataka politics is that, although the locus may have shifted, the politics of honour and political ritual still remain a vital mechanism that connects people in the locality with larger political spheres. Pamela Price has argued that the political language of honour is 'one which ordinary men and women can understand' and that this is 'a language which resonates with a wide range of important values in both ordinary and extraordinary experience' (2005: 62). This was clearly evident in the nature of political campaigning in 2004, despite its apparent lack of success for the Congress. The king as a single symbolic centre of society seems absent in this contemporary political ritual, but the sharing of kingly symbols and language amongst small political centres – politicians, caste leaders, gurus – is still highly active. This sharing of kingliness or claiming *rājadharma* has become even more fluid and competitive (for a more detailed politics of honour in Karnataka politics in the 1990s, see Price 2008). In this competitive political environment, the elite 'kingly' caste of the Urs was clearly marginal (even disreputable).

In the 2004 election, the performance of Mr. Wodeyar, the only person who truly inherited blue blood, was inadequate. However, the absence of a king as a single centre does not undermine the significance of kingship in Karnataka politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The widespread use of the ideals and values of kingship by political leaders and caste elites suggests instead that a greater variety of groups now participate in the competitive sharing of kingliness. The constant contest over the loci of power has become more intense and has penetrated into all sections of society. Arguably, the discourse and practice of kingship is thus more omnipresent and effective now than it was before, even though there is no longer a king.

Colonial kingship and the politics of representation

If the language and symbols of kingship remain a powerful political mechanism in contemporary Karnataka, what role was played by colonialism in the transformation of the nature of Indian kingship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? If, as Nicholas Dirks has suggested (Dirks 1987), colonialism made Indian kingship a hollow institution, how can we explain the seemingly continuing practices and discourse of kingship in present-day politics? Alternatively, if kingship simply continued as a vital political framework, unchanged from pre-colonial times, can it possibly be argued that the Mysore kings did nothing at all during nearly one hundred and fifty years of colonial subordination? In answering these questions, it seems useful to reconsider the notion of political representation. Gayatri Spivak recalled the importance of distinguishing between two different meanings of representation when she criticised the naïve self-assertion of 'undivided subjectivity' (or the unquestioning belief in the joint struggle of male intellectuals in the first world and working-class women in the third world), which she found in a published conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. She argued that 'two senses of representation are being run together: representation as "speaking for", as in politics and representation as "re-presentation", as in art or philosophy' (Spivak 1999: 256). She also considers the play of *vertreten* (represent in the first sense) and *darstellen* (re-present in the second sense) in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in which Marx talks about 'class' as a descriptive and transformative concept (ibid.: 257). The important suggestion here is that these two senses of representation are 'related but irreducibly discontinuous' and the complicity of these two can conceal the differential nature of a class (ibid.: 257).

The distinction between two senses of representation seems useful in understanding the historical development of Indian kingship. What J. C. Heesterman called the 'conundrum of the king's authority' or the 'dilemma of kingship' (Heesterman 1985: 108–27) seems to be understood as a difficulty in realising two different kinds of 'representation' at the same time. Heesterman has demonstrated in his reading of classical texts that the role of the king is to embody transcendent values (*dharma*). Therefore, he has to be impartial and external to local problems in the society (ibid. 118), whereas he, as an embodiment of his kingdom, is obliged to absorb both the merit and sin of the society. He can be the incarnation of world order (*dharma*) itself, or at least equal to ten wise men, learned in the Veda; on the other hand, he can be as evil as ten brothels (ibid.: 109). Heesterman has argued that Indian kingship 'remains suspended between sacrality and secularity, divinity and moral humanity, legitimate authority and arbitrary power, dharma and adharma' (ibid.: 111). In other words, the king has to 're-present' or *darstellen* the ideal values of society and thus has to stay aloof from that society. But the king also sometimes has to 'speak for' (*vertreten*) the society or community. Since the royal function in classical law is not legislative but rather administrative (Lingat 1973: 207–56), he is expected to intervene and settle disputes in society. He therefore has to remain within the society. V. N. Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have also demonstrated the ambiguous nature of kingship in the Nayaka period in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Tamil Nadu (Rao, Shulman and Subrahmanyam 1992). The Nayaka king, although he acted and was imagined as a living god, was also the object of the court poet's periodic insult and parody (ibid.: 217). They have argued that '(b)oth divinity (he is a god) and dis-illusion (he is a mere human avatar) are woven into the public role of the Nayaka king' (ibid.: 217). This contradictory nature of the king seems to resonate with the distinction between two different kinds of representation.

The Dumontian view of caste would suggest that the ultimate solution to this dilemma of kingship is for the king to ask Brahmins to lend him their transcendent authority, and to exercise kingly activities only in the politico-economic domain from which the Brahmins need to absent themselves as far as possible (Heesterman 1985: 127; Dumont 1980: 66–72).[12] However, it is possible to argue that kingship itself developed a solution to this dilemma.[13] The notion of a segmentary state, which Burton Stein introduced in his study of the Chola kingdom, could be regarded as one of the solutions that kingship itself used to resolve the dilemma within the realm of state formation (Stein 1977, 1980, 1991, 1998). As discussed earlier, one of the characteristics of the segmentary state is the distinction between a single royal centre and many autonomous segments. Stein explains this relationship as follows: 'the political power (*kśatra*) and sovereignty (*rājadharma*) are differentiated in such a way as to permit some power to be exercised by many power holders (from nobles or little kings to landed village heads), but with full, royal sovereignty to be held by an anointed king' (Stein 1998: 20).[14] The incorporation of many political segments into a single royal centre was realised through the distribution of honours, titles, and land, as well as the ritual replication of the single centre by peripheral little kingdoms (Dirks 1987). This incorporative state formation was, however, as Norbert Peabody has argued, not harmonious, nor was it a single logic of pre-colonial Indian polity. Although Peabody's work is on a northern Indian state, his suggestion seems a reasonable one to consider in relation to equivalent southern states. He has shown that there were rival centres with overlapping domains, and that therefore the political hierarchy of centres (patrons) and segments (clients) always remained open to contestation and negotiation (Peabody 2003: 7). This revised notion of pre-colonial state formation does not necessarily deny the logic of incorporation through gift-giving. Instead, it explains how the ideal pattern of incorporation was used as a tool of negotiation and further contestation by rival centres. The pre-colonial Indian state formation is one in which a centre (sometimes plural) is given the status of royal sovereignty, which re-presents *rājadharma* and therefore becomes a source of the legitimacy and authority from which autonomous segments receive the honours, titles, and land by which they consolidate their own *raison-d'être*. The segments, whether they are little kings or village heads, need legitimacy from above in order to consolidate their claim to 'speak for' the local community.

What the Mysore kings tried to achieve during the colonial period was not to speak for the local communities but to become a re-presentation of the state that transcended all communities. This re-presentation was inevitably less substantial in terms of coercive power and it was clearly not a novel strategy, but a continuation of an old one. In pre-colonial times, the Mysore kings cut the kinship tie with other local power holders, after having established a narrowly kin-based political alliance by creating the Urs caste. At the same time, they created the myth of their foreign origin and adopted several cultural practices (including vegetarianism and the practice of *purdah*) in order to distinguish themselves from other local communities (see Chapter 5). The advent of colonialism did not alter the course of their action, but what was considered to be *rājadharma*, ideal kingship, was drastically transformed. The modern values and practices brought by colonialism, and the changing expectations of the local populace, influenced the manner in which Indian princes embodied the idea of *rājadharma*. Many Indian princes certainly reflected the imposition of colonial ideas. As Satadru Sen has suggested, through such embodiment of foreign values many Indian princes become deracinated and alienated from their own society (Sen 2003). From another point of view, however, acquiring foreign languages and manners, and becoming deracinated, could be advantageous, not only enabling entry into imperial court society but also creating an aura of transcendence, that of the 'stranger-king' within their own society.

Mysore royals succeeded in re-casting the ideal 're-presentation' of the modern model state by being passively educated by the British. They also tried to create a new gentry class of their own in rural areas that could 'speak for' local communities, by extending educational facilities to the lower strata of their caste. This attempt was successful in raising the living standards of their poor caste members but failed to give rise to a locally rooted, politically influential class (see Chapters 4 and 5). The formation of new matrimonial alliances with Rajputs in the north was also both a passive embodiment of imposed values and an active re-assertion of their 'foreign' origins (see Chapter 6). The creation of a pan-Indian matrimonial network amongst the Indian princes was not intended by the British. Yet, their invention of an imperial hierarchy, with the British crown at its apex, stimulated the calling of becoming true Kshatriya and promoted the expansion of existing matrimonial networks amongst the Rajput aristocracy towards much larger geographic, and more ethnically diverse, horizons. Geographically and ethnically remote self-professed Kshatriyas, such as the Mysore Urs, took advantage of the network of British Residents and Political Agents in order to realise their long awaited desire. Their desire to become true Kshatriya was not easily achieved, but probably unknowingly played a part (albeit briefly) in the creation of a truly 'national' class for the first time in the history of the peninsula.

Gift-giving and the elaboration of royal powers

Following the British takeover of the state administration in 1831, the Mysore maharajas could not hold full administrative power over their territories, even after the 'Rendition of Power' in 1881. Although the state was run in the name of the maharaja during the rule of British commissioners (1831–81), and he remained head of the state during the subsequent period of indirect rule (1881–1947), the real administrative decision making was concentrated in the hands of the diwan.[15] The maharajas were made 'pensioners' with a share of state revenue and practically removed from the state administration. However, as I argued in Chapter 3, they continued to play a central role in the politics of honour. Nicholas Dirks' argument concerning Indian kingship in the colonial period is that the gift exchange between the king and lesser power holders – in which the king gave land, titles, and honour, whilst subordinates averred their loyalty towards the king – was ended by the advent of colonialism, thereby entirely undermining the political dynamism of the old regime (Dirks 1987). However, the continuation of gift-giving in the colonial period suggests that sharing sovereignty (the spirit of kingliness) was still crucial for newly emerging political segments who tried to speak for their communities. The politics of honour served as a crucial medium between centre and segments.

The transformation of the capital city was an allegory for colonial kingship in Mysore. The capital city was remodelled to become a re-presentation of *rājadharma* (royal order) (see Chapter 7). The king's aloofness or embodiment of new transcendent values did not mean that these ideas and practices were imposed one-sidedly on people. Rather, the separation of the king from local politics created a space wherein people could exercise their agency and engage themselves with a wider political arena. Dasara was one ritual through which a dynamic relationship between the king and people was periodically evoked, regulated and reassessed. A refusal to participate in this state ritual did not mean disobedience to the ruler or a possible attempt of subversion, as in the times of the Vijayanagara dynasty, but participation did not imply their acceptance of the current political situation either. People participated in the Dasara celebration and performed *pūja* for the doll of the maharaja in order to assert their own agency. They did not exercise their agency in any real political sense until the very end of princely rule. Interestingly, they then continued to support the maharaja's sovereignty, whilst demanding the replacement of the Mysore state government with their own elected representatives who would truly speak for them.

The role of the king in the era of democracy

Soon after Independence was celebrated with joyful excitement all over India in August 1947, the Mysore State Congress called for the launch of a 'satyagraha' (civil disobedience movement) in order to establish 'responsible government' in the state.[16] Although the Mysore maharaja had decided to accede to the Indian Union,[17] the population was eager to see the end of authoritarian rule and the immediate establishment of a truly democratic form of governance. The Congress leader, K. C. Reddy, appealed to people to march into Mysore city in order to show the maharaja the strength of the people's desire for democratic government. This mobilisation of people by the State Congress, called the 'Palace satyagraha' or 'Mysore *chalo*' (go to Mysore), started on 1 September 1947, and thousands of people began heading for Mysore city from every part of the state, as well as from elsewhere in former British India and other princely states. On 4 September, the Congress leaders in Bangalore, who were about to start the 'jatha' to Mysore, were all arrested.[18] The armed police force sought to prevent the satyagrahis from reaching Mysore by collecting them just before they reached the city and transporting them to the distant jungle or outside of the state borders.[19]

From the mid-1930s, the confrontation between the Mysore Congress and the state government had become especially strained since Mirza Ismail – diwan and childhood friend of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV – began to employ somewhat autocratic measures in order to suppress Congress agitation within the state.[20] Ismail, while he maintained a friendly relationship with the All-India Congress leaders, especially Gandhi,[21] did not hesitate to issue several imperious orders to prohibit public meetings and processions, and to ban the hoisting of the national flag. He also introduced strict censorship on the press, as a result of which several local newspapers were suppressed and the circulation of certain newspapers from other parts of India was banned.[22] Congress leaders, workers, and students were jailed in many parts of the state, and the violent action of the police against them was extreme.[23] The people of Mysore were no longer prepared to tolerate the slow development of democratisation in the state and the harsh suppression of their civil liberties by the government, especially after 1945, when it became clear that India's Independence was simply a matter of time. The young Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, who was said to be more democratically minded,[24] dismissed Mirza Ismail from the diwanship in 1941. Several diwans were appointed, but none of them could announce any concrete constitutional reforms that would satisfy the demands from the Congress.

Although political agitation against the state government became intense and more violent, there was no single voice that denied the status of the maharaja, nor any action to overthrow the monarchy.[25] The Congress and other political parties (influential ones amongst them were the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League) demanded the establishment of responsible government 'under the aegis of the Maharaja'. It is also important to mention that the State Congress' call for satyagraha was not supported by other influential political bodies. The Mysore Chamber of Commerce and the Hindu Mahasabha appealed to the Congress to postpone the satyagraha, and the Muslim League decided that Mysore Muslims should keep aloof from the movement, although all of them supported the Congress' demand for responsible democratic government.[26]

On the first day of the palace satyagraha, the capital saw a procession, more than a mile long, organised by the Mysore City Congress. Men and women, students, and others marched through the main streets in the city and reached the town hall maidan in the north of the Mysore fort. The City Congress Committee had arranged for the hoisting of the national tri-colour flag in the Subbarayankele maidan. The City Congress leader declared that in future, whenever there was flag-hosting at any of their functions, they would hoist only the national flag until they heard their president's call for the end of the satyagraha. But he also insisted that this did not mean any disrespect to the Mysore flag, since it was also theirs. Interestingly enough, earlier in the same day, Dalits (the former Untouchables) in the city met in the town hall compound near the palace and hoisted the Mysore flag in order to express their sense of loyalty to the maharaja.[27]

The state government's method of transporting satyagrahas away from Mysore was effective enough to prevent them from reaching the palace, but other forms of civil disobedience, such as picketing law courts, barricading roads, and hoisting the national flag, became increasingly vigorous and uncontrollable. Curfews were frequently imposed upon major cities, and schools and factories were closed throughout September. On 24 October 1947, after talks between the diwan and Congress leaders in jail, the new ministry was finally announced. K. C. Reddy, the Mysore State Congress leader, became the first non-official prime minister in Mysore. The Congress's victory day fell on the last day of Dasara, *Vijayadashami* (the day of victory), and the leaders held a victory march from their Congress office to the government office in Bangalore (Muthanna 1980: 79).

During the Mysore satyagraha of 1947, students, villagers, and workers marched into their capital city to see their maharaja and to show him their will. Although this time most of them did not succeed in reaching Mysore, the act of marching to Mysore itself was not novel for them at all. The Mysore Dasara attracted people in similar numbers from equally as far: the city population was easily doubled. Even during the Independence Day celebrations, one newspaper reporter could not help writing that 'the town hall (…) attracted the largest crowd ever known for public occasions with the possible exception of the Maharaja's processions held twice a year'[28] After all, the purpose of Dasara was not simply to celebrate the divine-king but to subtly insist upon his obligation to be an ideal divine-like king (see Chapter 8).

The 'loyal' anti-government agitation in Mysore, in which we find an echo of the ritual pattern of the annual celebration of Dasara, shows many similarities with ritual rebellion within the princely state of Bastar in central India. Alfred Gell has argued that there was a fundamental resonance between tribal rebellions and the Dasara celebration in Bastar, in both of which the tribal people ritually and politically exalted the Rajput king in order to secure their own demands (Gell 1997). During three rebellions, occurring in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they rebelled against the state government by supporting the king.

Although Gell has claimed that this is a characteristic of a 'tribal' mode of society in which social hierarchy was relatively flat and two-dimensional (the tribal mass and the king), we find a similar mode of people's mobilisation in so called 'traditional' kingdoms such as Mysore, where social hierarchy was more developed as a material patron–client relationship between the very high and the very low, with nuanced graduations in the middle (ibid.: 434). The difference might be that the tribal people exalted the raja of Bastar in order to secure their own resources and way of life, and keep themselves free from state intervention and exploitation; the maharajas of Mysore, on the other hand, exalted themselves by using any resource and opportunity available to them, resources willingly afforded to them by the wider society. Self-exaltation, both in terms of moral values and material wealth, was the only strategy to enable the maharaja to remain in a position of ideal sovereignty, which the people desired him to possess and wanted to manipulate at their convenience whenever necessary. The Mysore kings were probably aware of this ritual and political condition of their status in relation to their subjects. Diwan Mirza Ismail thus described his childhood friend, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, as follows:

> His personal wants were extremely few; his life was very simple, even austere. On State occasions there was pomp and splendour, such as was, perhaps, to be seen nowhere else in India. It would be hard to find anywhere in the world a spectacle more brilliant than his Dasara Durbar. But the magnificent display was intended for the enjoyment and benefit of his people. They met no desire of his own (Ismail 1954: 59)

He was right to suggest that all the pomp and lavish ceremony were for the people, not for the king himself, whilst being austere in his private life was also not for himself but for the people and his state/kingship (*paṭṭa*). The maharaja was aware that he had to be both a renouncer and a splendid re-presentation of his successful and progressive 'Model State'.

The Mysore royals accepted and embodied diverse strategies and techniques (such as the objectification of caste, colonial networks, modern education, and Anglo-Indian ritual codes), yet at the same time, their very act of acceptance of imposed colonial values enabled them to reinterpret, recast, and diversify 'traditional' cultural and political practices and to establish a new form of sovereignty within a modern setting. Their efforts were made in order to become both a re-presentation of a state in colonial modernity and a political representation of local communities, but they succeeded only in the former. Their failure to re-establish themselves as powerful political leaders was, ironically, conspicuous at the time of Independence, when many different communities emerged as autonomous units and insisted upon participating in political decision making. People re-discovered the Indian monarchy or sovereignty as an effective form of political institution to which they could appeal to express their discontent with the government. If sovereignty was the re-presentation of the ideal state (*rājadharma*), the king had to listen to his people. The fact that the Mysore king was both practically separated from the state administration and aloof from local communities (which was the predestined condition of being a small caste group, as well as the result of the strategies that he had willingly taken), enabled people to enter the new polity of democracy. Not only was this process relatively smoothly achieved in terms of the limited numbers of violent incidents, but it was also accomplished within the development of indigenous political discourse and practices.

Aloof, foreign, and deracinated, the existence of Mysore colonial kingship was nonetheless not a colonial contradiction, created by colonialism as an apparatus of the 'tradition' of unchanging India, but was a result of the continuous evolution of indigenous kingship under dynamically changing political circumstances. The kings and royals in Mysore positively participated in the process of the creation of a new modern kingship that ironically put an end to the king's rule, but which remained active as an important political framework within the newly independent state. Within the present state of Karnataka, we see the final stage of the process first begun in the colonial period. Kingly authority has progressively moved away from pre-colonial kingly incorporation, through military expansionism and the redistribution of material resources and honour, towards a non-material based re-presentation of the ideal kingly order, reconstructed as the focus of the politics of honour within the state. Only now, all the puppet strings have been cut and the puppets have taken over the show. The ritual remains and has indeed proliferated, but since the heroic efforts of D. Devaraj Urs, politics has been divided with no clear and effective leadership emerging to act as the central source of beneficence and object of loyalty within the state. The resulting political practices are arguably a symptom of the further democratisation of politics within the state and are mimicked elsewhere in southern India (most notably in Tamil Nadu). Elections are no longer so predictable, and the use of kingly rituals obviously present hazards. However, these rituals may still afford great opportunities to those willing and able to exploit them.

Anthropologists are always trying to distinguish politics from culture, and too often study one in isolation from the other (Spencer 1997, 2007: ch.1). However, from our exposition of present-day political practices in Karnataka, it should be obvious that political anthropologists are doomed to a merely superficial understanding of the organisation and unfolding of events if they ignore phenomena such as kinship, kingly ritual, and the concepts of honour and *rājadharma* that are to be seen so forcefully in the history of the recent, and not so recent, past. It is thus clear that the pre-modern and colonial experiences of the people within this state have thus had profound influences on their lives; influences that endure up to the present day. That same historical record cannot be fully explicated without a thorough-going understanding of the social practices, ergo the anthropology, and the customs and patterns of belief within the former kingdom, that have adapted and endured despite the vicissitudes of war, conquest, and dramatic political, social, and economic change. However, this does not amount to a plea for straightforward interdisciplinarity in approaching the study of southern India. What it is hoped that this study may have underlined, to begin with, is the need for a shift away from the nationalist, colonialist, and exclusively north Indian interpretative paradigms that have long dominated academic study of the subcontinent. This is all the more apparent as the balance of economic power in India has shifted dramatically from north to south in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Exploring Princely India, it may be suggested, encourages an insight into long-established indigenous social and political practices that are not absent elsewhere, but that are too often overlooked and obscured within the colonialist, nationalist, and (it may be added) neo-nationalist conservative frameworks of historical analysis that overlay the academic study of much of the subcontinent. A critical re-appraisal of these modes of analysis is vital in the attempt to establish a truly subalternist approach to the study of Indian history and politics, an approach that endeavours to elude the baleful influence of modernist, Western points of reference such as class, faction, ideology, secularity, and the unfolding of European legal rights and institutional norms and expectations that dominates a great deal of contemporary intellectual debate. In the search for evidence of the agency of the Mysore kings and the kingly caste, we have presented only fragments from the history of the past two hundred years of this region in south India; eschewing any attempt to provide an 'authoritative' or comprehensive overview. It is hoped that this study may, nonetheless, have sufficiently highlighted the perils that lie in wait for anthropologists who rely upon over-simplified Manichaean narratives of the past that hinge upon dichotomous, modernist interpretations contrasting continuity and change, revolution and order, or dominance and resistance. In order to understand the dynamics that endure into the present day, at least equal attention must be paid to processes of adaptation and innovation, and the re-presentation of political and social ideals, as they are worked out at a local level. In this way, it is hoped that at least some of the grand meta-narratives of both anthropology and history may be laid to rest, and an academic discourse might emerge that is more relevant to the lives of ordinary people, whether poor or rich, struggling or newly prosperous, within the globalising economy that is providing fresh impetus to the transformation and re-imagining of society that has always been a part of Indian tradition.

Notes

1 Introduction

1 Historical and anthropological studies on princely states have begun to increase in number, but more needs to be done. Amongst the general overviews, Ramusack (2004) is a tremendous effort to synthesise a variety of studies on individual states, while Allen and Dwivedi (1986) have revealed the changing lifestyles of Indian princes in several states. McLeod's study (1999) on the triangular relationships of the Indian princes, the Nationalist politicians, and British paramount power in the first half of the twentieth century in princely states in western India offers more pro-princes views of the political process towards independence, which had often been ignored in nationalist historiography.

2 James Mill, *The History of British India* (10 vols.), London 1819.

3 Native rulers were not called 'kings', but 'princes', maharajas or rajas according to their status within the imperial hierarchy, since the sovereign of the British Empire was only the British 'king' or 'queen'.

4 Tanabe (2011) argues that one of the functions of kingship, which connected the people and local political structures with much wider regional politics, was indeed enhanced during the transition from the medieval to early modern periods.

5 Price (1989, 1996) and Balzani (2003) offer good examples of the continuing evolution of Indian kingship in modern India.

6 There have been notable efforts amongst historians to go beyond the dichotomous views of change versus continuity by providing more nuanced histories which acknowledge the major social transformations brought about during the colonial era while giving voice to local players who re-interpreted, modified, and re-asserted their local political, social, and cultural ideas and practices (see Barrow and Haynes 2004).

7 Prakash believes that it is impossible to write a history in terms of the development of capitalism and to contest at the same time the homogenisation of the contemporary world by these same forces (ibid.: 398). However it is probably possible to distinguish between using these 'foundational' notions as tools of academic analysis or of political struggle and defining these notions as an accomplished fact.

8 Stein (1991) later modified his theorisation of segmentary state by placing less emphasis on the ritualistic authority of the centre. In his response to various criticisms, Stein admitted that there could be more substantial (especially military and administrative) cohesive centralising forces at the centre. Karashima (2002) claims that this modification undermines the distinctiveness of the segmentary state model and makes it no different from the feudal state system. It can still be argued, however, that local political segments in South Asia had relatively more significant autonomy and self-regulatory powers than any other 'feudal' system in Europe or Japan.

9 Regarding the British involvement in religious and communal issues, see Robb 1986.

10 The maharaja's government had to make a huge subsidiary payment to the British government, which amounted to 57 per cent of the presumed revenue in 1799. The tribute from Mysore represented 50 per cent of the total imperial tribute paid by the 198 princely states in British India (Stein 1993: 188), see also Chapter 2.
11 One of the most prominent diwans, M. Visvesvaraya, introduced the state-capitalist model of development, which he had observed during his stay in Japan in 1898.
12 One of the quasi-democratic bodies was the Representative Assembly, established in 1881. It was created to distribute information on all state matters and was confined only to the local elites, consisting of landowners and merchants. This form of mobilisation of people 'from above' was gradually challenged by a deeper process of mobilisation from below (Hettne 1978: 87).
13 The Kaveri scheme was commenced, at British instigation, during the Maharani's regency. At the time, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV was still only a teenager (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 2: 180–2).

2 The palace

1 Other major princely states, for example Hyderabad, did not contribute any tribute as such but the revenue from the Berar (about 28 lakhs rupees) was paid for by maintaining a contingent force, Baroda paid nothing, and Kashmir gave one horse, twelve goats and three pairs of shawls as tribute (Joseph, 1979: 163).
2 Minute by the Junior Commissioner J. M. Macleod, 2 November 1832 (OIOC R/2 temp. 1/10).
3 Ibid.
4 Minute by the Senior Commissioner, dated 30 November 1833, contains different calculations of the raja's share of the net revenues by which the British officers tried to make sure that their company would receive more than the tributary previously paid by the maharaja's government (OIOC R/2 temp. 1/10).
5 Dominant castes (the Okkaliga, and the Lingayat) emerged as a political lobby in the 1910s and have remained politically powerful groups since then. See Manor 1978a: 58–72; also Hettne 1978: 78–82.
6 The word *inām*, which originally means a reward or a prize in Arabic (Ona 2002: 53–4), was used under Mughal rule to designate a particular type of *jagiir* which did not involve any obligation of service, being independent of rank (Ali 2001: 75). While a *jagiir* was in general given as a substitute for a cash salary, the assignment of *inām* seems to have been a special and honourable treat from the ruler. In Deccan, especially in Maratha country, *inām* was known as tax-exempted land, which was often hereditary (Ona 2002).
7 Minute by the senior commissioner, 30 November 1833 (OIOC R/2 temp. 1/10). But in the end, the *ināms* regarded as 'misalienated' did not affect the maharaja's income.
8 The British assumed that the total amount of revenue for the year 1831 to 1832 was 2,088,978 canteroi pagodas or 62.5 lakhs rupees, of which 1,618,831 canteroi pagodas was land revenue, 401,107 canteroi pagodas was Sayer (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 459).
9 The Minute by Senior Commissioner W. Morrison, 30 November 1833 (OIOC R/2 temp. 1/10).
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Letter from L. Bowring, the commissioner of Mysore, to the Secretary to the Government of India [hereafter GOI], 5 September 1868, *Correspondence relative to the Maharaja's Palace Affairs*, hereafter called *Elliot Report* (KSA B 014323).
13 On the British policy concerning Mysore after 1858, see Ray 1981: 95–120.
14 Salar Jang, the diwan of Hyderabad, argued that the nizam had a rightful claim on a part of the Mysore territory under the partition treaty of 1799, and therefore if the British absorbed Mysore, the nizam should be given an equal share in the revenue of the state.

Salar Jung's actual intention was to get back Berar, control of which had been given to the British in 1853 (it was not entirely ceded until 1904), by using the claim on Mysore (Bawa 2004: 143).

15 *Elliot Report*, (KSA B 014323).

16 From L. Bowring, commissioner of Mysore, to the Secretary of the GOI, 5 September, 1868, *Elliot Report*.

17 Letter from L. Bowring, the commissioner of Mysore to Major C. Elliot, 7 May 1868, *Elliot Report*.

18 Bowring was very cautious about the idea of transferring the maharaja to Bangalore and reminded Elliot that he did not have to take any further steps during the settlement of the palace. Bowring, however, expressed his desire that the prospect of this transfer of the maharaja would become familiar to the relatives of the maharaja. Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Letter from L. Bowring to the secretary to the GOI, 5 September 1868, *Elliot Report*.

21 Ibid.

22 Letter from C. Elliot to L. Bowring, 31 October 1868, *Elliot Report*.

23 Letter from C. Elliot to L. Bowring, 13 November 1868, *Elliot Report.*

24 Letter from C. Elliot to L. Bowring, 10 October 1868, *Elliot Report*.

25 Letter from C. Elliot to L. Bowring, 31 October 1869, *Elliot Report*.

26 In fact there was a monthly deficit of Rs 4,000 in the pay of the establishments which used to be met by loans, and a much larger amount owed to the grain food supplier, the monthly charge ranging from Rs 17,000 to 18,000, of which only Rs 10,218 per month were actually paid. Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Letter from C. Elliot to L. Bowring, 10 October 1868, *Elliot Report*.

29 Derived from the official letter from Major C. Elliot, superintendent, Ashtagram division, in charge of palace duties, to L. B. Bowring, the commissioner of Mysore, dated 31 August 1868, *Elliot Report*.

30 KSA/MPD PAR year 1868–1918: 3.

31 Letter from Guardian G. B. Malleson to L. B. Bowring, the chief commissioner of Mysore, 11 January 1870 (NAI Foreign Dept. Proceedings, April 1870 nos. 61/71).

32 Ibid.

33 Out of 135 superior grade officers, less than 30 subordinate appointments were held by natives, while the remainder were held by Europeans (Shama Rao, 1936, vol. 1: 514–5).

34 It is unclear how much state expenditure increased because of the sudden expansion of the administrative structure. Bowring was reluctant to follow the annual budget system of receipts and expenditure that the GOI wished to introduce in Mysore. Bowring could not see, at first, any use for the budget system as his sole concern was to ensure a surplus at the end of the year (Shama Rao 1936 vol. 1: 516). If he followed his conviction and used most of the state revenue, the expenditure would be around Rs 100 lakhs, which was certainly much larger than the previous state expenditure of 85 lakhs when Cubbon was in charge.

35 Memorandum by G. B. Malleson, guardian to the maharaja of Mysore, 18 January 1870 (NAI Foreign Dept. Proceedings, April 1870 no. 67).

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Memorandum by G. B. Malleson, 18 January 1870 (NAI Foreign Dept. Proceedings, April 1870 no. 64).

40 Ibid.

41 Letter from G. B. Malleson to L. B. Bowring, 11 January 1870 (NAI Foreign Dept. Proceedings, April 1870 no. 65).

42 Letter from G. B. Malleson to L. B. Bowring, 2 February 1870 (NAI Foreign Dept. Proceedings, April 1870 no. 62).
43 Translation of the letter sent from the first rani, Ramavilasa, to the viceroy dated 18 September 1877 (NAI Foreign Department Proceedings, Political A July 1879 no. 240).
44 They are a sub-sect of Sri Vaishnava Brahmins, whose mother tongue is Tamil.
45 D. R. Gustafson, *Mysore: 1881–1902: the Making of a Model State* (unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1969: 59 ff.) quoted in Hettne 1978: 72.
46 Memorandum by P. Raghavendra Rao, Assistant Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Mysore, dated 25 April 1905 (KSA/MPD PCO file no. 1900).
47 Non-Brahmins, especially two dominant castes of Vokkaligas and Lingayats, emerged as a powerful lobby against Brahmin domination in the state administration in the 1910s and 1920s. See Manor 1978a: 58–72.
48 The Bangalore palace and the Fern Hill palace at Ooty were not included. The number of people working for the Bangalore palace was 157, and for the Fern Hill palace was 36 in 1936 (KSA/MPD PAR year 1935–36: 36).
49 KSA/MPD PAR year 1868–1918: 18–19.
50 KSA/MPD PAR year 1868–1918: 37.

3 The politics of honour

1 Letter from deputy commissioner of Tumkur District to the secretary of Muzrai department, 5 September 1908 (KSA Muz. file no. 65 of 1908).
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 There were many inter-caste, inter-religious confrontations concerning the rights to use certain areas or streets for religious procession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in many parts of India. One of the best documented incidents was the Kalugumalai riot in 1895 in Madras Presidency. This was a dispute over the right of Nadars, who had newly converted to Roman Catholicism, to take processions through the main streets. The antagonism between the Nadars and other Hindu castes led to severe rioting and ten people died (Good 1999a, Bayly, S. 1989: 445–7).
5 Kittle, *A Kannada English Dictionary*, 1996 (1894): 1220.
6 ‘Systematisation of Palace Honours’, 23 June 1919 (KSA/MPD PCO 1898–1915 [Royal Family]).
7 Families classified as Class A were D. Nanjaraj Urs (the Kalale Dalvoy family), Sirdar Goparaj Urs’ family, Mrs Gopalakshine Urs’ family, Mrs Chamappaji Urs’ family, and Rana Laxman Shinji’s (father-in-law of Maharaja Krishranara Wodeyar IV) family. For other members of these families (which probably means members other than direct relations), honours as per Class B (families whose stipends range between Rs 75 and Rs 200 a month) were issued. From the official document titled, ‘Funeral Honours, Presents and Khillats to Rajabandhus’, dated 22 August 1933 (KSA/MPD PCO 1898–1915 [Royal Family]).
8 The scion of the Mysore maharaja family still receives several high-status gurus by prostrating himself in front of the guru even in public spaces such as a railway station.
9 Government Order, No. 860-Muz. 165-23-23, dated 10 December 1923 issued by the diwan of Mysore to all amildars, deputy amildars, police inspectors or others in the taluks of the Mysore state.
10 ‘Introduction’ in *Manual of Birudus and other honours enjoyed by Mathadhipathis in and outside the State, complied up to 31 October 1932*, Bangalore 1933 (KSA (B) 2463).
11 Ibid.: 76–8.
12 DO document to the diwan regarding the Murugha matha’s claim dated 11 August 1913 (KSA Muz. no. 30 of 1913, serial nos. 1–5).

13 Letter from deputy commissioner of Tumkur district to the secretary to the Muzrai department, dated 5 September 1908 (KSA Muz., file no. 65 of 1908, serial no. 9).
14 Note submitted by Diwan V. P. Madhava Rao to Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV on 3 April 1908 quoted in Notes on Murugha matha claim dated 11 August 1913 (KSA Muz., file no. 30 of 1913, serial nos. 1–5).
15 Ibid.
16 Letter from the deputy commissioner, Bangalore, to the maharaja, dated 19 May 1919 (KSA Muz., file no. 645 of 1918, serial no. 11).
17 Ibid.
18 DO from the secretary of Muzrai department to the Muzrai superintendent, dated 1 July 1919 (KSA Muz., file no 646 of 1918, serial nos. 12&13).
19 *Manual of Birudus and other honours enjoyed by Mathadhipathis in and outside the State*: 98 (KAS/MPD Muz.).
20 Ibid.: 96.

4 Educating the maharajas

1 Macaulay's opinion on English education in India was meant to criticise the government grant 'for the revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India', by which Macaulay meant only Arabic and Sanskrit literature. He insisted that English was a more useful language to learn than Sanskrit or Arabic. Needless to say, his idea was based on his deep prejudice against oriental learning, e.g. 'I have never found one among them (Orientalists) who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'. However, he might be right to point out that the British government had to pay for the training of Arabic and Sanskrit students, 'while those who learn English are willing to pay us' (from 'Minute on Indian Education' in 1835).
2 In western India during the year of 1876–77, almost half of the total princely area was under minority administration (Copland 1982: 138, 300, 316).
3 (KSA/MPD PAR years 1868 to 1918: 3) When Krishnaraja Wodeyar III died in 1868, the school was taken over by the state government.
4 The publication project of Sanskrit works by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III has just begun in Mysore.
5 George Bruce Malleson (b. 1825–d. 1898) later co-authored a six-volume *History of the Indian Mutiny* which became a standard history of the Indian uprising of 1857.
6 Malleson's report to Chief Commissioner R. J. Meade, 1 February 1871 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/404).
7 Ibid.
8 Report from the second master A. Narashmha Iyenger to Malleson, 12 December 1870 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/404).
9 The book used for the maharaja's history class in 1871 was *A Small History of India*.
10 It was said that a *zamindari* did not need a facility in mathematics (Price 1989: 569). According to the definition of Tamil kingship, a raja (as well as a *zamindari* in nineteenth century Anglo-Indian politics) should be generous and a man of largess, not calculating or thrifty.
11 Report from second master to Malleson, 12 December 1870 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/404).
12 Rangacharlu was a Brahmin officer trained in the Madras presidency and became the first Diwan of Mysore in 1881.
13 Memorandum by Malleson, 27 July 1873 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/402).
14 Report from Malleson to the chief commissioner in Mysore, 1 February 1871 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/404).
15 Ibid.

16 Memorandum by Malleson, 27 July 1873 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/402).
17 Report from Malleson to the chief commissioner in Mysore, 1 February 1871 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/404).
18 Ibid.
19 Letter from Malleson to L. B. Bowring, chief commissioner of Mysore, 2 February 1870, (NAI Foreign Department, Political A, April 1870, No. 62).
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Letter from the first maharani of Mysore to the viceroy and governor–general of India, 18 September 1877 (NAI Foreign Department, Political A, July 1879 No. 240).
24 Report from Rangacharlu to T. G. Clarke, Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore, 8 December 1876 (NAI Foreign Department, Political A. July 1879, No. 271).
25 Ibid.
26 Dirks suggests that the importance of the tour lay in 'exposing the young Maharaja to wider vistas and perspectives so he would not become engulfed in the narrow and Byzantine preoccupations of court life' (Dirks 1987: 390).
27 Report from the Guardian to His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore to Chief Commissioner in Mysore, 1 February 1871 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/404).
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Letter from Malleson to R. A. Dalyell, officiating chief commissioner of Mysore, 1 January 1876 (KSA/MPD PCO Box no. 1916–17, File: Palace Office 1917).
33 Ibid.
34 Letter from Chamarajendra Wodeyar X to Richard J. Mead, the Chief Commissioner in Mysore, 23 December 1875, quoted in Shama Rao 1936 vol. 2: 31.
35 Letter from Malleson to R. A. Dalyell, officiating chief commissioner in Mysore, 1 January 1876 (KSA/MPD PCO Box no. 1916–17, File: Palace Office 1917).
36 PAR year 1868 to 1918: 3.
37 Report from S. M. Fraser to J. A Crawford, Resident in Mysore, 16 November 1901 (OIOC R/2 temp. 8/64).
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Letter from Malleson to R. A. Dalyell, officiating chief commissioner in Mysore, 1 January 1876 (KSA/MPD PCO Box no. 1916–17, File: Palace Office 1917).
41 The following books were used in the maharaja's class in the year 1900 to 1901: *General Sketch of European History* by E. A. Freeman, *History of England* by Arnold Forster, *Rulers of India series* (Clive, Warren Hastings, Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, and Marquis of Wellesley), and *Ancient India* by R. C. Dutt (Epochs of Indian History series) (OIOC R/2 temp. 8/64).
42 Report from S. M. Fraser to J. A Crawford, Resident in Mysore, 16 November 1901 (OIOC R/2 temp. 8/64).
43 Ibid.
44 List of special subjects for the maharaja in 1901:
   1 Principles of Jurisprudence.
   2 International Law and Indian Political Law.
   3 Principles of Legislation.
   4 History of Land Revenue in Mysore, with notes on the Survey System.
   5 The Mysore Land Revenue Code.
   6 Notes on Whitworth's Rajkumar Law Lectures.

7 History of Criminal and Civil Justice in Mysore.
8 Inam Settlement in Mysore.
9 Forests.
10 Famine Relief.
11 Excise.
12 Sayar.
13 Mohotarfa or Assessed Taxes.
14 Stamps – Registration – Salt.
15 *Letters to an Indian Raja* by Narayam Mahadev Parmanand (1–99).

From the report on the Education of the Maharaja of Mysore, from S. M. Fraser to J. A. Crawford, the Resident in Mysore, 16 November 1901 (OIOC R/2 temp. 8/64).

45 According to Kenny, there were five to ten Indian princes who bought an estate in Ooty by the 1890s, including the nizam of Hyderabad, and the Gaekwad of Baroda (Kenny 1995: 709).

46 Frederick Price's account of Ooty in the late nineteenth century gives us the idea of the life in the hill station in those days (Price 2002).

47 Report from S. M. Fraser to Donald Robertson, Resident in Mysore, 31 October 1897 (OIOC R/2 temp. 8/64).

48 Letter from Fraser to M. Kantharaj Urs, 6 June 1898 (Urs 1953: 335–6).

5 From clansmen to gentlemen

1 Kittel, *A Kannada Dictionary*, 1996 (1894).

2 The survey carried out by the Urs Committee in 1976 (Nanjammanni 1986: 12).

3 Dumont also says '(i)n practice, to enumerate the castes one must be content to see them from the outside: in a given linguistic area there is a large but not indefinite number of names of castes. They could be added up, but in doing so one would overlook an important aspect of the phenomenon: seen from the inside, the category corresponding to one of these names is subdivided at least once and often several times, and marriage, for example, takes place only within one of the subdivisions. In fact there is no end to this subdivision: what from afar seemed unified appears as partitioned at close quarters' (Dumont 1980: 34).

4 *The Deccan Herald*, 17 August 2003.

5 OBCs are socially backward classes other than scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs). In the constitution, OBCs are described as 'socially and educationally backward classes', and government is enjoined to ensure their social and educational development by giving them special quotas in employment and education.

6 *Gōtra* are agnatic exogamous clans which stretch back to a legendary founder. According to classical Indian literature, only the Brahmin may be endowed with a genuine *gōtra* (Trautmann 1981: 240). However, in fact, this *gōtra* exogamous system is also widely seen among the Kshatriya and the Vaishya. Trautmann considers this as an imitation of the *gōtra* system on the part of the non-Brahmin *varna* (ibid: 244). Certainly the *gōtra* exogamous system of the Urs, as described in this chapter, is not strictly adhered to, and there are even some people who change their actual *gōtra*. This may also indicate the imitative nature of the Urs *gōtra* system. Fujii interprets such imitation of the *gōtra* system as a means of proving that one belongs to the Brahminical varna and as one link in a kind of sanskritisation (Fujii 2003: 209). One may perhaps be able to see it thus in the main. However, Trautmann argues that, in the case of those who celebrate rituals, for the Kshatriya and the Vaishya, just as for the Brahmin, the norm is that they must possess a *gōtra*, and there were two solutions to this. The first is that the authorities of the time approved specific *gōtra*, for both the Kshatriya and the Vaishya; the second is that they simply loaned the *gōtra* of their household priest (ibid: 244). The existence of unique *gōtras* for non-Brahmins may perhaps substantiate Trautmann's theory.

7 H. V. Nanjundayya and L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, 1928, *The Mysore Tribes and castes*, vol. 2: 47–51.
8 Kannada title is *Śrī manmahārājaravara vamśāvaḷi*.
9 Gloria G. Raheja (1988a) and Jonathan Parry (1994) have demonstrated that most Brahmins are reluctant to receive certain gifts, because they believe that these gifts transfer sin or inauspiciousness of the donor to the receiver.
10 The food transaction among different castes has been one of the main concerns amongst anthropologists, especially in the 1960s. See Marriott 1968b, Mayer 1960.
11 As C. J. Fuller has pointed out, 'explanations of inferior rank in terms of putative low-caste origin, mixed ancestry, descent from illegitimate unions, etc. are ubiquitous in India' (Fuller 1984: 53). However, it seems possible to consider this 'explanation' not simply as a 'cultural construct' to redefine their status in the society but also as a possible strategy to associate themselves with a more powerful section of the society.
12 A list of the Urs families made by the British Residency in Mysore during the negotiation of marriage alliances with the northern Indian royals (OIOC R/2 temp. 29/272).
13 The story given here is from the *Maiūuru nagarada purovotta* (1740). This is held to be the most important manuscript among the origin myths of Sri Vaishnavaism (Satyanarayana 1996: 4).
14 Another version of Sri Vaishnava origin myth tells that some princes of the line of Yadu came from Dvaraka to Melkote near Mysore in order to worship their family god, Narayana (ibid.: 4).
15 The *Rajavalikatha* written by the Jaini court poet Devachandra in around 1858.
16 The Toreyas (*toreya*) are also called Bestas, and they are said to have been originally fishermen, and palanquin bearers (Nanjundayya and Ananthakrishna Iyer, 1931, vol. 4: 637–9).
17 For instance, Vijayanagara kings, although they were Vaishnava followers, worshipped and patronised the local Shaiva goddess.
18 *Maisūru samsthānada prabhugaḷu śrī munmahārājaravara vamśāvaḷi*, was published in 1916 (Row ed. 1916). This was originally published in a Kannada monthly journal called *Hithabodhini* in the late nineteenth century, which was allowed to use historical material kept in the Mysore palace.
19 It is generally understood that the ideals of the Brahmins and the Kshartiyas are in many ways opposed to each other. McKim Marriott writes that '(the) Brahmin ideal stresses intellectual refinement, ascetic standard of consumption, and nonviolence, while Kshatriya ideal stresses, on the other hand, strength, readiness for violence, luxurious consumption, including meat-eating' (Marriott 1968a: 110).
20 Relations with the temple they support are not always harmonious. During the 1950s, there was a dispute between an Urs family and the priest of the temple of which they were the patrons, and this dispute finally went to litigation. There are some Urs who complain that the temple priests frequently adopt an extremely arrogant attitude towards them, even though the Urs are their patrons.
21 It was widely believed that Manteswami lived sometime during the fifteenth century, but recent, more detailed, studies suggest a much later period. Kumar Ankanahalli (2008: 7), for example, assumes that he lived during the period between 1515 and 1575.
22 Interview with Mr Channaraje Urs on the 4 June 2008.
23 They are followers of Veerashaivism. They are called Lingayat by the other castes because they always wear a linga – a symbol of Shiva – on their person. Their origins lie in a religious movement in the twelfth century opposed to Brahminical values and authority, and which aimed to realise an equal society that was not based on one's birth. However they soon developed a hierarchical caste-like structure within the sect. Their priestly class, known as Jangama, claim a social status similar to, or possibly even higher than, the Brahmin (cf. Ishwaram 1992, McCormack, 1958, 1963: Manor 1977: 175–8).

24 Okkaligas are also called Gowda (*gauḍa*) which means 'village head'. Okkaliga simply means people who cultivate. They are landed caste and have strong political influence in the state. Manor has shown the process in which the category of Okkaliga has been created first by the census reports, which included diverse social groups under a single heading of occupation (Manor 1977: 169–75).
25 Speech by Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV on the occasion of the School Day in 1911 (reproduced in Urs 1953: 27).
26 Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV's speech on the occasion of the prize distribution at the Vani Vilas Urs Girls' School, 24 June 1917, *Speeches by His Highness Maharaja Sri Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur, G.C.S.I., G.B.E., Maharaja of Mysore, 1902–1933*, Mysore 1934: 147.
27 KSA/MPD UBS files no. 1906–18.
28 KSA/MPD UBS files no. 1906–18.
29 KSA/MPD PAR year 1931–32: 15.
30 KSA/MPD UBS files no. 1906–18.
31 Petition from twenty-seven students to the Maharaja of Mysore, dated 13 September 1926 (KSA/MPD UBS files no. 1906–18).
32 KSA/MPD UBS files no. 1920.
33 M. Kantharaj Urs started his career as a probationary assistant commissioner in 1894. But because of the sudden death of his brother-in-law, Chanrajendra Wodeyar, he was promoted to assistant secretary to the Maharani Regent, his elder sister, Vani Vilasa, in 1895.
34 *The Hindu*, 28 May 2010.
35 Mrinalini Sinha's study on European social clubs in India is one of exceptions (Sinha 2001). The club culture adopted by Indians still needs to be studied.
36 http://www.congresssandesh.com accessed in December 2006.
37 http://www.mysoresports.com/pages/horserace/Html/MysoreRaceClub.htm (accessed in December 2005).
38 In Mysore Sport Club, for example, if one receives one black ball (a negative vote), he/she must have three white ball (positive votes) in order to compensate one black ball.
39 *The Star of Mysore*, 28 March 2002.
40 For the political performances of other former Indian princes in 1971, see Khare (1973).
41 It is widely believed amongst residents of Mysore city that the last maharaja, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, did not resist against the abolition of the privy purse since he trusted Devaraj Urs to ensure the welfare of the royal family.

6 Marriage alliances in imperial space: the 'cosmopolitan' aristocracy

1 According to a BBC report, *Society* is the market leader in celebrity magazines in India with a circulation of 100,000 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4116237.stm) *Society* features the splendid lifestyles of Indian celebrities (film stars, models, cricket players, politicians, 'item girls' and famous royals), and devotes a lot of space to covering their extravagant parties in Mumbai and other Indian cities.
2 Vasundhara Raje Scindia belongs to a powerful political family. Her mother, Vijayaraje Scindia, the Maharani of Gwalior, was a member of Lok Sabha from the Congress. She later joined the BJP and was elected its vice-president. Vasundhara Raje followed her mother and joined the BJP, but her brother, the late Madhavrao Scindia, remained a leading member of the Congress and was even considered a possible candidate for prime minister of India. He died in a plane crash in 2001 at the age of fifty-six (Ramusack 2004: 277; see also Basu 1993 on female political leaders of Hindu nationalism).

3 After the uprising of 1857, three orders were created specifically for the Indian Empire. The Most Exalted Order of the Star of India was established in 1861; the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire and the Imperial Order of the Crown of India were inaugurated in 1878 (Knight 1968).
4 The raja of Dholpur told Young about the conversation he had with the late Chamarajendra before his death; from a confidential letter from W. M. Young to M. Cunningham, the Bombay Presidency, 29 March 1896 (OIOC R/2 temp.29/273).
5 Letters sent from Young to the British Political Agents in Rajputana, central India, and the Bombay Presidency in December 1895 (OIOC R/2 temp. 29/272).
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Confidential letter from the Political Agents in Rajputana to Young, 2 April 1896 (OIOC R/2 temp. 30/274).
9 Confidential letter from Young to M. Cunningham, the Bombay Presidency, 29 March 1896 (OIOC R/2 temp.29/273).
10 *Gōtra* is an exogamous clan. Each *gōtra* is derived from an ancestral saint, *rishi*. It is widely believed that only Brahmins have *gōtra*. Claims of having *gōtra* among Kshatriyas can be considered to be a form of Sanskritisation, (see Trautmann 1981: 240–4).
11 Confidential letter from Foreign Department to W. M. Young, Resident of Mysore, dated 30 April in 1896 (OIOC R/2 temp. 30/274).
12 Confidential letter from Young to M. Cunningham, the Bombay Presidency, 29 March 1896 (OIOC R/2 temp.29/273).
13 A letter from Maharani Kempananjammanni to the Resident W. M. Young, dated 2 April, which does not mention the year when it was written, but according to the circumstances, it was probably in 1896 (OIOC R/2 temp. 29/273). The maharao of Kotah, on the other hand, had already decided to marry a daughter of Kutch before Mysore finally made up their minds.
14 Confidential letter from Robertson, Resident at Mysore, to the Viceroy of India, 22 October 1897 (OIOC R1/1/1/195).
15 Ibid.
16 Confidential Memo of Instruction, 26 July 1898 (OIOC R/2 temp. 30/278).
17 Ibid.
18 Dowry in the south is considered to be a new phenomenon. Traditionally, wedding expenses and the exchanging of gifts were shared much less asymmetrically between the bride's kin and the groom's kin, since the southern Indian kinship system was more isogamous compared to that of the hypergamous north (Srinivas 1984: 10). Therefore, the Mysore house's refusal of dowry was not at all strange in the local context.
19 Confidential letter from Donald Robertson, Resident in Mysore, to the Secretary to the GOI, 26 June 1899 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/413).
20 *List of Ruling and Mediatised Chiefs*, GOI, 1903: 34.
21 Confidential letter from Donald Robertson, Resident in Mysore, to the Secretary to the GOI, 26 June 1899 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/413).
22 *The Madras Mail*, 20, June 1900.
23 Although no Urs would openly admit it, I have often heard people say that Maharani Pratapa Kumari always stayed in the sumptuous Lalitha Mahal palace, situated 11 kilometres from Mysore city, and rarely visited Mysore's main palace.
24 Indian nationalism also relied upon colonial difference. Partha Chatterjee has argued that the inner domain of culture, such as language, religion and family life, had to be essentially Indian and was premised upon a difference between the coloniser and the colonised, so that the nationalists could claim sovereignty over this inner domain (Chatterjee 1993: 26–7).
25 Homi Bhabha has famously discussed the double binding nature of colonial discourse according to which Europeans aspire to reform natives into civilised subjects at the same time as desperately seeking to maintain colonial difference (see Bhabha 1994).

26 In 1877, political appointments in Bombay averaged more than four years' duration; by 1901, the average had fallen by half (Copland 1978: 280).
27 Confidential letter from M Cunningham, then the Political Agent of Rajputana to W. M. Young, the Resident of Mysore, 3 April 1896 (OIOC R/2 temp. 30/274).
28 Confidential letter from Young, Resident of Mysore, to D. W. K. Barr, Agent to Central India, 6 December 1895 (OIOC R/2 temp. 29/272).
29 Confidential letter from D. Robertson, Resident in Mysore, to the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Viceroy of India, 22 October 1897 (OIOC R/1/1/195).
30 Confidential letter from Young, British Resident in Mysore, to M Cunningham, Political Agent of Rajputana, 29 March 1896 (OIOC R/2 29/273).
31 Ibid.
32 It seems that the marriage between Kotah and Kutch did not materialise. The maharao of Kotah married a princess of Isarda in 1908.
33 Confidential letter from A. B. Mayur, Political Agent in Rajputana, to Young, Resident in Mysore, 8 May 1896 (OIOC R/2 30/274).
34 The letter from the editor of the *Evening Mail* to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India, 14 October 1899 (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/413).
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Jonathan Parry's intensive work on kinship amongst the Rajputs in a hilly district of northern Punjab not only gives us a detailed description of their marriage alliances but also shows internal contradictions within their hypergamous system. Problems arise at the top and bottom of the hypergamous chain. While the highest *biradari* (collection of patrilineal clans) has difficulty in finding grooms of higher rank for their daughters, the lower biradari, on the other hand, also experience difficulties finding marriage partners, since those above them do not give them brides. Parry argues that the contradictions in the hypergamous chain periodically elicit reform movements which try to equally distribute brides amongst the community by rejecting hypergamous marriages and encouraging reciprocal marriages (Parry 1979: 195–237). According to this logic, they will only welcome a new clan if the newcomer joins in the hypergamous chain from the bottom, which enables the lower clan to receive a bride. When the status of the new clan is unquestionably higher than any of the existing clan, they will certainly accept the newcomer, but in this case, is there any benefit for the newcomer from joining in?
41 The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 forbids marriage where 'the two are brother and sister, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, or children of brother and sister or of two brothers or of two sisters' (Article 3, Clause (g): iv). At the same time, it allows traditional 'custom': 'the expression "custom" and "usage" signify any rule which, having been continuously and unformally observed for a long time, has obtained the force of law among Hindus in any local area, tribe, community, group or family' (Article 3 Clause (a)). Uncle–niece marriage in the south is, therefore, theoretically still possible, but most middle-class city dwellers think the custom of uncle–niece marriage is backward and outdated.
42 Interview with an Urs woman from the Kalale clan, who actually married a man from the pair clan of this reciprocal combination.
43 Several elder Urs told me that the women, often from the Sivachar section (lower section of the Urs), with whom the maharaja had a relationship, were given a special necklace to signify it.
44 The legendary curse on the Wodeyars preventing them from having sons was laid in 1610, when Raja Wodeyar conquered the fort of Srirangapatna from Srirangaraya, then the viceroy of Vijayanagara kingdom. Raja Wodeyar was informed that one of Srirangaraya's

wives, Alamelamma, took temple jewels and kept them with her. He then sent his army to Talakad; where she had fled. She managed to escape from this attack and utter the famous curse before she jumped into the river Kaveri. 'May Malangi turn into an unfathomed whirlpool. May Talakad turn into a barren expanse of sand. May the Rajas of Mysore not have children for all time to eternity'. Raja Wodeyar, whose intention was simply to return the jewels to the temple, was deeply contrite and had an idol of Alamelamma made in gold which is still worshipped in Mysore palace to the present day.

45 One of the problems intrinsic to structuralist kinship analysis is the difficulty of treating a woman as an agent of her own fate. This chapter does not completely avoid this problem. However, the women who were thrown into the matrimonial speculation described did not leave their voices behind. The Urs who are willing to discuss marriage arrangements with Rajput families tend not to talk about the women who were married into the land of 'strange language and habits' in the past. Through rumour and hearsay, I have come to know that several women were sent back after a brief period of marriage, or after having produced a male child (presumably leaving her son behind). These women remained silent and often lived separately from their natal families.

7 The capital of Raajadharma: modern space and religion

1 An earlier version of this chapter has appeared as Ikegame 2007.

2 Karnataka Act No. 32 of 1998, first published in the Karnataka Gazette Extraordinary on the 13th November, 1998.

3 It is often said that most temples face towards the east, so that deities in the temple can see the sun rise though there are many irregularities in this matter (cf. Fuller 1984: 3).

4 A special volume of the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (32 (5–6), 2004) deals with many significant historical manifestations of the term *dharma*. But the editor, Patrick Olivelle remarks that there are still many areas to be studied (Olivelle 2004: 421).

5 Many scholars have questioned the validity of the ritual inferiority of Kshatriya and presented alternative views (Hocart 1927, 1950, 1970 (1938); Appadurai 1988; Raheja 1988a, 1988b; Parry 1994; Quigley 1993, 1995).

6 Stewart Gordon's research on forts in Maratha country gives us some idea about the political and military importance of forts in pre-colonial India (Gordon 1979).

7 The annals of the Mysore royal family, *śrīmanmahārājaravara vamśāvaḷi*, was published in Kannada, by the order of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV (r. 1902–40) in the early twentieth century and was used as a history textbook in most schools in modern Mysore.

8 There are many cases where different castes and religious communities have been located in specific areas of a town. In some cases, not only the area of residence, but also the right of access to a certain area became a very serious issue. For example, in the South Indian town of Kalugumalai, the location of a church, which was situated next to the Hindu festival route, caused a huge dispute over the ownership of sacred space (Good 1999b: 74–6, see also Good 2004, ch. 9).

9 This policy was strongly imposed, especially when Krishnaraja Wodeyar III died in 1868, *Elliot Report*.

10 Minute by J. M. Maclead, 2 November 1832 (OIOC R/2 temp. 1/10).

11 Official Letter from C. Elliot, Superintendent, Ashtagram Division, in charge of Palace Duties, to L. Bowring, Commissioner of Mysore, *Elliot Report*.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 *A Guide to the Records in the Divisional Archives*, Mysore, part 1, 1991: 41.

15 Fifteen religious institutions in Mysore city were placed under palace management in 1908. The number of institutions was increased to twenty in the 1920s and to twenty-five in the 1950s (ibid.: 41–2).

16 DO No. 93/1, from Palace Muzrai Bakshi, H. Lingaraj Urs to Huzur Secretary, Mirza Ismail, 31 August 1915 (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1913–14).
17 Memorandum on re-organization of the Muzrai Department, no date but probably around 1915 (KSA/MPD Muz. File no. 1913–14).
18 *The Administration Report* for 1914–15 under Muzrai Department.
19 The system of the management, control, and supervision of muzrai institutions was revised in 1917. Government Order, 2 April 1917, in *Supplement to the Mysore Muzurai Manual*: 7.
20 Tasdik grants are fixed grants given by the government to a temple, mosque, etc. Professor Anthony Good has suggested that they might have been cash grants replacing earlier land grants and therefore payment as compensation. This is quite possible in the case of Mysore as well, although I did not check this issue in situ (cf. Good 2004: 214).
21 *The Administration Report* for the year 1914–15 under Muzrai Department.
22 The Official letter from Palace Huzur Secretary to the Financial Secretary to the Government, 23 March 1928 (KSA/MPD Muz. File no. 1928).
23 KSA/MPD PAR 1928–29: 31.
24 KSA/MPD PAR 1868–1918: 5.
25 *The Proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department (Sanitary)*, 27 July 1888, and *the Proceedings of the Dewan to His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore (General)*, 18 December 1888.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 This information was taken from the website of the Department of Theoretical Physics, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (http://theory.tifr.res.in/bombay/amenities/orgs/cit.html accessed in Dec. 2004) On the planning of Bombay city in the nineteenth century in general, see Dossal 1991: 95–148.
31 In the first instance the Board did not undertake to build houses, but laid out extensions (or suburbs) and divided them into plots with all the amenities to attract people from the congested areas. This effort was highly successful and the new extensions sprang up with open spaces surrounding them (Mahadev 1975: 89).
32 In the palace archives, there are many documents concerning the loans given by the palace to the Urs and considerable correspondence between the palace and the Urs who were reluctant to move from the fort (KSA/MPD PCO and UBS files).
33 From oral communication with non-vegetarian, middle-class, but low-caste residents in Mysore city in 2002.
34 For example, the transformation of Jamnagar city, which Howard Spodek has demonstrated, is a similar case to that of Mysore (Spodek 1973: 253–75).
35 I interviewed a retired railway employee, who had resided inside the fort till around 1925. He told me that the fort was still congested with market streets and houses in the 1920s.
36 *The Mysore Palace, A Visitor's Guide*, Directorate of Archaeology & Museums, Mysore, 1989, Reprint 1996.
37 Ibid.
38 The transformation of the palace as a theatre in Mysore city shows how keen the Indian princes were to impress their people, as well as the British, with the extravagant display of rituals. However, this might be overstated, given that once the British undermined the central power of Indian kingship, Indian princes were arguably obliged to adapt and assert themselves more in the ritual domain (Dirks 1987: 384–97). The display of state rituals, such as Dasara, cannot therefore be simply considered as an assertion of kingly authority. See Gell 1997.

39 *Mysore Archaeological Report*, 1919: 18, cited in Persons (1930: 84).
40 *Mysore Archaeological Report*, 1918, cited in Persons (1930: 83).
41 Government Order, 10 February 1928, *Proceedings of the Government of Mysore*, 1928.
42 The official letter from the Palace Huzur Secretary to the Finance Secretary to the Government, 4 August 1927 (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1928).
43 Document submitted on repair charges of the Muzrai Institutions under Palace management (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1928).
44 From interviews with priests of the temples in Mysore fort in 2002.
45 In January 1916, on the occasion of the *eḍekaṭle*, 8,180 Brahmins (4,550 Smarthas, 2,350 Madhvas, and 1,280 Sri Vaishnavas) in three places, the Government Anna Chattram, the Tulasi Thotam, and the Sankara Matha respectively (KSA/MPD PCO file no. 1898–1915).
46 Many petitions sent by the caste associations to the palace authority were found in Muzrai Department files in Mysore Palace Archives.
47 This speech was originally given in Urdu, and translated into English (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1918).
48 *The Hindu*, 1 June 1936, quoted from Manor (1975: 37).
49 Maaramma is also known as Mari and Māriyamman in Tamil Nadu, and Mariiāii in Maharashtra, all terms derived from the Sanskrit *mārī*, meaning 'plague, pestilence, epidemic pestilence personified' (Masilamani-Meyer 2003: 381).
50 The Brahmins in Mysore never enter village goddess shrines, although some Brahmins told me that they might give some donations to the shrines.
51 In popular Hinduism, the homology of war and sacrifice is very common (Fuller and Logan 1985: 80).
52 Letter from the Assistant Engineer in the Palace Maramath Office to Huzur Secretary, 17 October, 1924 (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1924). According to the letter, they first finished constructing the new temple, installed the image, and then demolished the existing temple in the fort.
53 The Raja Parivara caste were called Rachewar or Rajawar (*rācevāru, rājavāru*) in *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*. They formerly called themselves Bada Urs Makkalu, meaning children of Bada Urs (the lower category of the royal caste, Urs). They insisted that they were of Kshatriya descent and the progeny of the Bada Urs, but this was not entirely recognised by the other castes (Nanjundayya and Iyer 1931 vol. 4: 482–8).
54 A petition from Manchamma to Maharaja Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, 2 March 1929 (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1923–24).
55 List of rotation of groups in Bisilumāramma temple, no date, but probably around 1930 (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1923–24).
56 From oral communication with the priests in temples in the fort in 2002.
57 Palace administration memo, 7 February 1925 (KSA/MPD Muz. file no. 1923–24).

8 Dasara, durbar, and dolls: the multi-dimensionality of public ritual

1 The word dasara is derived from Sanskrit, *dasa*, ten and *shan*, a day, and means tenth day (Hayavadana Rao 1936: 1).
2 Fuller and Logan deny both possibilities. They assert that the parallel between deities and kings is a ubiquitous feature in the temple ritual, therefore, the display of dolls as monarchs does not mean the presence of the king. Moreover there are very few historical sources on the Madurai Nayaka's Navaratri; (Fuller and Logan 1985: 99–101).
3 Burkhard Schnepel calls little kingdoms in Central India 'jungle kingdoms' as a subtype of 'little kingdom' (Schnepel 1995: 147). The term 'little kingdom' was used by Bernard Cohn in his study on the political system of the eighteenth century Benares region and adapted by Burton Stein to describe the characteristics of medieval south

Indian states (Cohn 1959, 1962; Stein 1977, 1980, 1989). Schnepel's idea of the jungle kingdom has two characteristics: the first is its relatively remote and inaccessible setting, and the second is its high percentage of a so-called tribal or *adivasi* population.

4 The accounts by Conti and Razzak are found in R. H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century: A Collection of Narrative Voyages to India*, London, 1857.

5 The accounts of Paes and Nuniz can be found in Robert Sewell, *(A Forgotten Empire Vijayanagara): A Contribution to the History of India*, London, 1900.

6 Paes reported that 250 buffalos and 4,500 sheep were slaughtered on the last day of the nine day celebration (Sewell 1900: 274–5). Nuniz also gave an account of the animal sacrifice, according to which they killed nine male buffalos, nine sheep and nine goats on the first day, and thenceforward they killed more each day, always doubling the number (ibid: 377). Platform constructions for the staging of ritual performances are still visible amidst the ruin at Hampi in the present day.

7 From Nuniz's account (ibid: 374).

8 For the divine status of Rama, see Pollock 1984.

9 Similar arguments relating to temporary death can be found in studies on kingship in general, especially in the issue of regicide. Evans-Pritchard 1962: 75–6; de Heusch 1997: 217–18; Hocart 1954: 27; Quigley 2000: 239.

10 Oral communication with the Urs elders in Mysore.

11 The edited volume, Robes of Honour, contains detailed analysis of the exchange of ceremonial garments (*khilat*), found in South Asia in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. The volume shows how widely this custom is spread, and how deeply it is rooted in South Asian society (Gordon ed. 2003).

12 For a more detailed description about the Mughal system of presentation, see Ali 2001: 143–44.

13 For other types of public rituals in princely India, see Haynes E. 1990; and Haynes D. 1990.

14 It seems that Krishnaraja Wodeyar III first allowed his European guests to witness the durbar in 1805. A special durbar for European guests was finally established around 1814 (Hayavadana Rao 1936: 146).

15 The engraving by C. F. C. Lewis Senior in 1848–9 was entitled 'The Dusserah Durbar of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore' and dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Victoria and His Royal Highness Prince Albert (The British Library, Orient and India Office Collection).

16 Krishnaraja Wodeyar III further said that 'I have more money than I spend but if I had not, I would gladly take a meal less and have the comfort and dignity of having a Resident and the Residency… I will most gladly pay all the cost of the Residency Establishment including the Resident's and Doctor's salary' (quoted in Fisher 1990: 454).

17 Reproduced from the official document circulated among the British officers in Mysore for the durbar in October 1919 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).

18 The post of the British Resident was re-introduced in 1881. The participation of the highest British officer in the Dasara festival seems to have already become customary in the early nineteenth century. However, Resident St John did not hold any historical record of their participation in Dasara prior to 1881. He asserted that Dasara was not attended by the Resident or by European visitors during Krishnaraja Wodeyar III's reign from 1799 to 1868, which is clearly not the case; 'Note on the Dusserah Durbar at Mysore 1889' by Resident Oliver St John (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).

19 'Note on the Dusserah Durbar at Mysore 1889' by Resident Oliver St John (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).

20 The British saw the offering of *nazar* and *peshakash* as paying for favours (Cohn 1983: 170).

21 For accounts of durbars organised by the British, see Cohn 1983; Nuckolls 1990.

22 Note by Resident Oliver St John, dated 9 February 1890 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
23 In Mysore, the residency codified these public ritual practices sometime in the 1930s. This ritual code included the maharaja's birthday celebration, Dasara, honours and salutes, exchanges of visits between the Resident and the maharaja (formal and informal), exchange of courtesies between the Resident and other Indian princes visiting Bangalore, and so on; *Mysore Residency Political Note Book* (OIOC R/2 temp. 44/414).
24 Letter from Diwan Sheshadri Iyer to Oliver St John, dated 4 October 1889, quoted in a Confidential Note on the 'Dusserah Durbar' at Mysore by H. V. Cobb, dated 5 September 1917 (OIOC R/2 34/343).
25 'Note on the Dusserah Durbar at Mysore 1889' by O. St John (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
26 Confidential letter from the Foreign and Political Department to H.V. Cobb, the Resident in Mysore, 5 September 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
27 Confidential Note on the 'Dusserah Durbar' at Mysore, by H. V. Cobb, the Resident in Mysore dated 31 July 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
28 KSA/MPD PAR year 1868–1918: 7. However the British official record says that the new palace was used for the first time in 1915; from 'Note on the Dusserah Durbar at Mysore' (Confidential) by Resident H. V. Cobb, 31 July 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
29 'Note on the Dusserah Durbar at Mysore' (Confidential) by Resident H. V. Cobb, 31 July 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
30 The Dasara durbar was held in the Jagamohan Palace in 1897, 1898, and 1899 and a special pavilion was built in front of the Jagamohan Palace and was used for Dasara and the marriage ceremonies of the maharaja and his sister till 1909, PAR year 1868–1918: 17.
31 'Note on the Dusserah Durbar at Mysore' (Confidential) by the Resident H. V. Cobb, 31 July 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
32 Ibid.
33 'Confidential letter' from Maharaja's Private Secretary R. H. Campbell to Resident H. V. Cobb, 26 September 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
34 Cobb himself insisted that he was given the explanation of the maharaja being lame by Campbell but accepted the new explanation since 'it had an air of vraisemblance'; Confidential letter from H. V. Cobb to the Political Secretary to the GOI, J. B. Wood, 3 October 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
35 Confidential letter from J. B. Wood, Political Secretary to the GOI, Foreign and Political Department, 22 August 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
36 Confidential letter from J. B. Wood to H. V. Cobb, 5 September 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
37 Confidential letter from J. B. Wood, Political Secretary to the GOI, Foreign and Political Department, to H. V. Cobb, the Resident in Mysore, 5 September 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
38 Confidential letter from R. H. Campbell to H. V. Cobb, 26 September 1917 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
39 'Note as to the Dusserah Durbar of 1917' (Confidential) by the Resident H.V. Cobb, 28 October 1918 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
40 Ibid. A new seat was specially supplied for him in the following year's durbar. No footstool was provided, but the chair was lower so that the Resident was able to sit in comfort. (Note regarding the Dusserah Durbar of 1918, OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343). However it is not certain whether or not he was satisfied by this new chair.
41 'Note as to the Dusserah Durbar of 1917' (Confidential) by Resident H. V. Cobb, 28 October 1918 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).
42 'Note regarding the Dusserah Durbar of 1919' (confidential), 4 October 1919 (OIOC R/2 temp. 34/343).

43 Official Document from the Secretary to the Resident in Mysore to C. B. Ruthven, Colonial Commandant, Bangalore Brigade Area, 24 August 1921 (OIOC R/2 temp. 38/357).
44 Confidential letter from the Secretary to the Resident in Mysore to Lord Ruthven, Colonel Commandant, Bangalore Brigade Area, 3 September 1921 (OIOC R/2 temp. 38/357).
45 Concluding speech at the Dasara session of the Representative Assembly on 22 October 1937, by Diwan Mirza M. Ismail, in *Address of the Diwans of Mysore to the Mysore Representative Assembly from 1913 to 1938*, vol. 3: 333.
46 From oral communication with elderly residents in Mysore.
47 Nanjammanni reports the practice of raja rani puja at the time when the maharaja ascended the throne (Nanjammanni 1986: 149). Fuller and Logan have pointed out the interrelationship between the temple ritual of Navaratri and the domestic ritual, *kolus*, in Madurai, which is very similar to the doll festival in Mysore. They suggested that the arrangement of the dolls is the replication of a temple which signifies the pure and peaceful state of the world. Therefore, the sacred space is transferred from the temple to the home (Fuller and Logan 1985: 97). In the case of Mysore, though the most significant feature of the doll festival is the worship of the raja and rani dolls, the podium at home is certainly a representation of the harmonious world, which the goddess restores by killing the demon.
48 For example, the gun salute was fired when a prince or princess was born in the palace. People still remember the days when the palace was very closely connected to their daily life.
49 Mrs Indira Gandhi, who had split the India National Congress after the 1967 election, began to attack the former Indian princes as a privileged class. This became a part of her new campaign, '*garibi hatao* (abolish poverty)'. The former Indian princes were indeed convenient means by which to divert attention away from her own inability to implant effective measurements against India's poverty. The first legislative attempt to abolish the privy purse occurred on 18 May 1970, when the Home Minister introduced the Constitution Twenty-fourth Amendment Bill. The Lokh Sabha debated it on 1 and 2 September and adopted it by a vote of 336 to 155, eight votes more than the two-thirds majority required to amend the Constitution. The Bill then went to the Rajya Sabha, where the vote was 149 in favour and 75 against, a vote short of the two-thirds majority required to amend it. Then, on 6 September, President V. V. Giri issued an order which directed former princes to cease to be recognised as rulers. However, the Supreme Court declared on 15 December 1970 that the Presidential Order of 6 September 1970 was ultra vires and therefore inoperative. The Supreme Court decision was again turned over in December 1971. When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi introduced the Constitution Bill (Twenty-sixth Amendment) into the Lokh Sabha, it was passed by a vote of 381 to 6 after a debate lasting just four and a half hours. One week later it was sent to the Rajya Sabha, where it was passed by 167 to 7 (Seyer 1985: 739–48). Despite the damage the Mysore royal family had from this Bill, Indira Gandhi's Congress remained strong in Karnataka throughout the 1970s (Manor 1978b).

9 The king is dead, long live the king!

1 *The Star of Mysore*, 27 February 2004. Rs 10 lakhs is equivalent approximately to 12,000 GBP. Honouring politicians or gurus by giving a gold crown or by donating an amount of silver or gold equivalent to their actual weight (in the belief that this was a traditional practice in the past) has become a common public ritual in India. Some suggest that this is also a way to black money into white launder (Price 2005: 61).
2 *The Star of Mysore*, 1 March 2004.
3 *The Vijaya KarnaaTaka*, 1 March 2004.

4 http://www.adichunchanagiri.org
5 *The Hindu*, 26 April 2006.
6 For the complex relationships between the gurus and politicians in India, see Copeman and Ikegame 2012.
7 *The New Indian Express*, 10 March 2004. James Manor has analysed the 1999 election result and argued that the future of the BJP in Karnataka is uncertain even though BJP candidates received 28.8 per cent of the vote in 1999, which placed the BJP second only to the Congress which gained 41.9 per cent (Manor 2001).
8 BJP won 18 seats in the Lok Sabha and 79 in the assembly; the Congress won 8 and 64 seats respectively, and the Janata Dal (Secular) won 2 and 59 seats respectively.
9 Wodeyar won the 1999 election against Vijaya Shankar by a margin of 13,000 votes.
10 Mysore Lok Sabha and Assembly Election results 2004, in *Mysore Samachar* (http://www.mysoresamachar.com)
11 Muzaffar Assadi's analysis of the 2004 election is helpful in understanding the changing political scene in Karnataka (Assadi 2004). Although he argues that the success of the BJP was largely because of their expansion of Hindutva bases by communalising local political awareness, the fact that the Janata Dal (Secular) also won many seats in the state assembly seems to be more significant and to suggest that the voters' shift was not necessarily from the Congress to the BJP but also from the urban-middle-class-based politics, of which S. M. Krishna was regarded as symbolic, to more rural- and lower-class-oriented politics, which the JD (S) and BJP emphasised to a greater degree.
12 This varna-oriented or Brahmin-centred view of Indian society has been challenged by many anthropologists, who have advocated a Kshatriya or dominant caste-centred view (Hocart 1927, 1950, 1954, 1970 (1938); Parry 1994; Quigley 1993, 1995; Raheja 1988a, see also Introduction).
13 V. N. Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam argue that, under the old dualistic model of Sanskrit kingship, the authority of Kshatriyas derived from the Brahmin's recognition and acceptance of royal gifts. This was swept away, and instead a unitary kingship was embodied in the individual and centred ruler during the Nayaka period (Rao, Shulman and Subrahmanyam 1992: 217–18).
14 Burton Stein adapted his ideas from the anthropologist Aidan Southall's work on East Africa. But he later rejected one of Southall's propositions that 'spheres of ritual suzerainty and political sovereignty do not coincide'. This might be a sensible turn in the history of medieval India (Stein 1991: 233), but the distinction seems to be still useful for the understanding of colonial kingship that we discuss here.
15 S. Chandrasekhar argues that the 'one man rule' of the diwan was established by the first two diwans, Rangacharlu (1881–1883) and Seshadri Iyer (1883–1901) (Chandrasekhar 1985: 7, 19–24). The transfer of powers to the diwan was also a general British policy in other princely states (cf. Dirks 1987: 331).
16 The Mysore State Congress Working Committee finalised the launch of satyagraha on 21 August, 1947. (*The Hindu*, 22 August 1947).
17 The transition of Mysore to become an integral part of the Indian Union was regarded by negotiators from the centre as 'smooth and easy' (Menon 1956: 295). In August 1947, the maharaja accepted both the Instrument of Accession and the Stand-still Agreement. In June 1949, he enforced a revised Instrument of Accession giving the central legislature power to legislate on all matters in the federal and concurrent legislative lists, except those relating to duties and taxation. Mysore also accepted the scheme of Federal Financial Integration in 1950 (ibid.: 295).
18 *The Hindu*, 5 September 1947. The original plan of Congress leaders was to start at Bangalore on 4 September, visit several towns and villages on the way, reach Mysore on 14 September and offer satyagraha before the palace (*The Hindu*, 3 September 1947).
19 The method used by the Mysore police received not only complaints from neighbouring states, but also tricky resistance from satyagrahas. Sometimes policemen, who tried

to dump satyagrahas outside the state borders, were themselves surrounded by other satyagrahas, made to wear civilian clothes including the Gandhi cap and to shout the Congress' slogans. They were then 'arrested' by satyagrahas and 'kept in remand' till the local police intervened (*The Hindu*, 20 September, 1947).

20 For the satyagraha movements in other princely states see Wood 1978.

21 Hettne 1978: 187.

22 See All India States' People's Conference's report on the political situation in Mysore (1938: 9–11 in NMML) and S. Chandrasekhar 1985: 121–32.

23 When the Congress leaders were planning to launch the 'September Satyagraha' in 1939, twenty-one Congress leaders and 2,500 satyagrahas were arrested between September and November (Hettne 1978: 200).

24 Ibid: 201.

25 According to Dick Kooiman's comparative study on three princely states – Travancore, Baroda, and Hyderabad – the political movements in these states never declared themselves against their own princes (Kooiman 2001: 219). For more general politics of Indian princes before independence, see Copland 1997.

26 *The Hindu*, 28 August, and 2 September 1947.

27 *The Hindu*, 3 September 1947.

28 *The Hindu*, 19August 1947.

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