CHAPTER VI

Sriingeri and Mysore

Introduction

Sriingeri's relation with Mysore in the past was more cordial than with any other kingdom. In the previous chapter, we have seen the relation between Sriingeri and Hyder and his son Tipu of Mysore. In fact, Hyder and Tipu continued the relation between Sriingeri and Mysore which was already established by Krisnaraja Wodeyar II (A.D. 1734 - A.D. 1766). The British Commissioners (A.D. 1831 - A.D. 1881) also continued to have cordial relations with the Sriingeri Matha and took a very helpful and sympathetic interest in its affairs. They affirmed all the privileges enjoyed by the Matha, consolidated its land grants and upheld its supremacy. The Government helped the Matha's Dharmadhikaris in collecting dues and in making enquires into the achara-vichara of their sāgīyas. The Matha's privileges in owning, cutting and selling sandal-wood were also continued. A brief survey of the sources will enable the readers to know the relationship between Sriingeri and Mysore better.
The records belonging to the reign of Krisnara ja Wodeyar II and Krisnaraja Wodeyar III, establishing the relationship between Sringeri and Mysore are published in Selections from the Records of the Sringeri Mutt and Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department.

The kadatas are also of great importance especially to know the relation between Sringeri and Krisnaraja Wodeyar III. There are over 160 documents spread over about 43 kadatas. The earliest dated document is Saka 1684 (A.D. 1762), belonging to the reign of Krisnaraja Wodeyar II, and the latest A.D. 1832, belonging to the reign of Krisnaraja Wodeyar III. Similarly, for the Commissioners' period, the documents published in Selections from the Records of the Sringeri Mutt and about 50 documents spread over about 22 kadatas are of immense value. Besides these sources, a careful scrutiny of the documents in the State Archives, the Mysore palace, the Madras Oriental Library and the records in the personal possession of the Sringe ri Jagadguru, is sure to bring rich rewards to the patient efforts of scholars in this regard.

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The relation between Sringeri and Mysore began during the reign of Krishnaraja Wodeyar II, when Sri Satchidānanda Bhārati II (A.D. 1705 - A.D. 1741) was the Jagadguru. In the sure belief that the Guru's presence in his State would bring in the much needed rains for the country, the Maharaja invited him to Mysore and granted to him Belavadi and its hamlets, worth twelve hundred pagodas.

After the fall of Tipu, the Hindu dynasty of the Wodeyars was restored, and as a result, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (A.D. 1796 - A.D. 1868), was enthroned in A.D. 1799. As he was an infant, Purnaiya who served under Hyder and Tipu, carried on the administration as a Regent (A.D. 1799 - A.D. 1811). An interesting story says that Purnaiya being a Madhva Brahmin (Advaitin), it seems, developed a prejudice against the Sringeri Guru (the champion of the advaitins). He was under the wrong impression that the Guru was leading a luxurious life. With the intention of insulting the Guru, he proposed a polemical contest between the Guru and the ablest of the pandits in Mysore. Sri Satchidānanda Bhārati accepted the challenge and won.
Purnaiya prostrated before the Guru and begged his pardon. Since then, so long as he remained in power as the Regent, he served the Sringeri Matha with devotion.

The Regent, in a letter, dated A.D. 1806-7, ordered Madhavaraya, the Subedar of Bangalore to reserve agratambula (first present of betel-leaf made at an assembly as a mark of the highest respect) for the Sringeri Matha and the second for the Sivaganga Matha on auspicious occasions like marriages and upanayanams. Thus the supremacy of the Sringeri Matha was acknowledged.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III and Sringeri

The regency of Diwan Purnaiya came to an end in A.D. 1811 and Krishnaraja Wodeyar III took over the administration of the kingdom directly under his control. With the coming of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, a new and a memorable era began in the history of the relation between Sringeri and Mysore. Sri Satchidananda Bhаратi III (A.D. 1770 - A.D. 1814), Sri Abhinava Satchidananda Bhаратi II (A.D. 1814 - A.D. 1817) and Sri Narasimha Bhаратi VIII (A.D. 1817 - A.D. 1879), were his contemporaries who ruled in order of succession.

No sooner had the Maharaja taken over the administration in A.D. 1811, than he invited Sri Satchidananda
Bharati III to his capital. He acknowledged the nationwide fame of the Sringeri Matha and took precautions to prevent the smaller mathas from assuming its insignia.

From a nirupa (A.D. 1815) to Sarvottamarya, the Faujdar of Nagar, it is understood that His Highness presented a silver pitha and pādukas to Sri Abhinava Satchidānanda Bharati II. In order to prepare these valuable articles, ten manas and one dhade of silver and two seers of gold were used. The Maharaja also sent 1,000 varahas for the coronation ceremony of Sri Abhinava Satchidānanda Bharati II.

Sri Narasimha Bharati VIII who succeeded Sri Abhinava Satchidānanda Bharati II, in A.D. 1818, communicated the news of the demise of his predecessor to Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar III, and after invoking Sri Vidyāsaṅkara, Sri Sāradāmbā and Sri Chandramaulīsvara, sent prasāda and mantrākṣate to him.

On the occasion of the Guru's visit to Mysore (A.D. 1828) the Maharaja made a grant of three sarvamāṇya (rent free) villages (Belavādi, Andavalli and Sirakaraḍi) to the Matha for the regular worship, illumination and various services of Sri Chandramaulīsvara and Sri Sāradāmbā.
The State rendered help to the Sringeri Samsthana in enforcing the rules of Dharmasastra on its disciples in matters of achara-vichara. His Highness confirmed the right of the Matha to the property of those disciples who died without heirs, subject to the limit of the value of a thousand rupees, and if the value exceeded the limit, the permission of the Government had to be obtained.

**Sringeri and the British Commissioners**

During the first half of 19th century, the political atmosphere in the country was unfavourable to the Indian princes. The Governor-General Lord William Bentinck (A.D. 1828 - A.D. 1835) departed from the policy of non-intervention and took over the administration of Mysore (A.D. 1831) on the plea of misgovernment and placed it under the administration of British Commissioners. The Commissioners had a veneration for the Sringeri Jagadgurus. The following few examples will illustrate the relationship between the two.

Though regular relationship between Sringeri and the Commissioners began in A.D. 1831, contacts between Sringeri and the British existed even earlier. For instance, the magistrate of the Kanara District, on 23rd December, 1815, issued an order to police, Darogas, Subedars, Jamadars and Dafedars etc., asking them to receive the Sringeri
Svāmi (Śrī Abhinava Satchidananda Bhāratī II), at their respective places and provide proper facilities to him. It is learnt from this copy of the Company's rahadāri (passport or permit), that the Svāmi was on his way back after a pilgrimage to Gōkarna and such other holy places.

The Matha was privileged to transport its articles free of duty in sarvamānya villages. For example, an order dated 15th September, 1832, issued by the Commissioner’s Office to the Nāmeldārs of Ikkerī and Sāgar, states that they were not to collect any dues on the Matha’s articles that were carried in the sarvamānya village of Bādadabailu (in Chandragutti taluk).

The Commissioners settled many social matters relating to orphan women and bahiskāra in the Śrīnērī Samsthāna. These aspects are separately dealt with in the chapter on social conditions.

Stokes, the Superintendent of Nagar, wrote a letter (19th December, 1834) to Śrī Narasimha Bhāratī VIII, thus, “I am all-right owing to your blessings. Bṛṣṭhaya Sāstri, the Sarvādhikāri of the Matha has informed me of the dues from the Andavalli village not being remitted to the Matha. The matter was communicated by me to the Commissioner and I have received a reply. The matter will be set right.”
This shows the extent to which the British officers took interest in the affairs of the Matha.

The correspondence between Sringeri and the British was not one sided. On several occasions the Gurus also wrote Letters of Blessings (Adhyāvat paramaṃcāram) to the Government. For example, Śrī Narasimha Bhāratī VIII wrote to Colonel Cubbon, the Commissioner, that 'they' pray god for the perpetual prosperity of the Government. The Guru also informed him of the regular religious activities conducted in the Samsthana.25

The British administrators showed their regard for the Śringeri Jagadguru by providing him with supplies and escort on pilgrimage to holy places. Śrī Narasimha Bhāratī went on a pilgrimage to the north. Alexander Nisbet, (Collector of the Dharwar District), welcomed the Guru at Dharwar and provided him with escort during his pilgrimage to Nasik, Dwāraka, Kurukṣetra, Kāśī, Badrikāśrama, Jagannātha etc. (A.D. 1842).26

The Government of Madras also recognised the supreme position of the Śringeri Jagadguru, and issued orders for the proper reception of His Holiness at places visited by him in South India.27
According to L. Bowring, Chief Commissioner of Mysore, "The Śrīṅgēri Guru is the direct representative of the sectarian Shaṅkar Āchārya and is the acknowledged Spiritual Director not only of the greater proportion of the Hindus of Southern India, but also of those of the leading Mahārāṣṭra Houses, such as Hölkar and the former Peishwas. It may be said that his influence is far greater than that of any Hindu spiritual guide in India and I presume it is for this reason that he is regarded with such unlimited respect. He is the only Guru in the Province who is permitted to carry the Adda Pallkee or cross palankeen, and he has in his possession Sunnuds of great antiquity from the Nizām, the Peishwas, the Mysore Rājāh, Hölkar and others, all enjoining the utmost respect to him." The above statement shows that the British Commissioner correctly judged the position of the Jagadguru among the Hindus.

The Commissioners' Rule ended in A.D. 1881, during the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon (A.D. 1880-84). Subsequently, Chāmarājendrā Woḍeyar, the adopted son of Kiṣṇarājā Woḍeyar III, was installed as the ruler of Mysore. Even during the Commissioners' period, cordial relation between Kiṣṇarājā Woḍeyar III and Śrīṅgēri had continued.
The successor of Chamaraja Wodeyar was Krisnaraja Wodeyar IV (A.D. 1894 – A.D. 1940), who followed in the footsteps of his predecessors. Sri Satchidananda Siva Abhinava Narasimha Bhаратि (A.D. 1879 – 1912) consecrated the shrines of Sri Sankara and Sri Sarada at Kalady, on February 21, 1910. The Maharaja of Mysore went to Kalady and paid his respects personally to His Holiness.

The successor of Sri Satchidananda Siva Abhinava Narasimha Bhаратि was Sri Chandrasekhara Bhаратि III (A.D. 1912 – A.D. 1954). By 1916, the erection of a shrine over the Samadhi (tomb) of the late Guru and also the renovation of the Sri Sarada temple in Sringeri were completed. In 1916, the Kumbhabhiseka (consecration) of both the shrines was performed by the Guru; and on that occasion His Highness Krisnaraja Wodeyar IV was present in Sringeri. In 1924, the Guru visited Mysore. With the permission of the Maharaja a shrine for the late Jagadguru was built in Mysore, with a pathasala attached to it.

In 1931, the present senior Guru was ordained into Sanyasa with the name of Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha. To a
considerable extent, he relieved his senior Guru from attending to the many cumbersome affairs of the Matha, religious as well secular. Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (1940-74) himself a highly erudite scholar was an ardent disciple of the present pontiff throughout his life.
Notes and References

1. Nos. 33-40 - Krishnaraja Wodeyar II.
   No. 41 - Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar.
   Nos. 92-108 - Regency of Diwan Purnaia.
   Nos. 109-170 - Krishnaraja Wodeyar III.

2. ARMAD., 1916, 1923 and 1933.

3. Kda. 3, 8, 10, 12, 20, 21, 28, 32, 36, 37, 45, 50, 53, 57, 61, 64, 72, 81, 91, 102, 107, 108, 112, 116, 120, 126, 130, 132, 137, 141, 145, 147, 159, 166, 172, 175, 177, 191, 194 and 195.


7. Kda. 8, 9, 10, 12, 34, 36, 50, 53, 56, 57, 62, 73, 75, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 104, 130, 149 and 173.

8. ARMAD., 1923, No. 6.

9. TTW., p. 63.

10. Sg.R., 97.

11. According to TTW., p. 66, Narasimha Bharati VII and according to SS., p. 157, Narasimha Bharati VIII.

12. Kd. 71, Nos. 1 and 2. These two documents belong to Prajñāpatti Samvatsara (A.D. 1811).

13. Ibid., No. 1.

14. Kd. 12, No. 57; Kd. 28, No. 21; Kd. 37, No. 8.

15. Kd. 12, No. 142. Note: All the titles of the Sringeri Guru are mentioned in this record.

17. Kad. 8, No. 8; Kad. 10, No. 63; Kad. 21, No. 18; Kad. 120, No. 1; ARMAD., 1916, p. 79.

18. Kad. 10, Nos. 28, 29 and 30.

19. Sg.R., 128.

20. Kad. 37, No. 27.

21. Ibid.

22. This centre of pilgrimage, in the North Kanara District bordering the Arabian Sea, is famous for the temple of God Mahabalêsvara.

23. Kad. 36, No. 3.

24. Kad. 73, No. 34.

25. Kad. 92, No. 140. The document belongs to Plava Samvatsara. A binnavattale (p. 247) in the same Kadata is dated Saka 1762, Svarari sam. Hence the document bearing Plava sam., most probably belongs to Saka 1763 (A.D. 1841).

26. Sg.R., 79. Note: The document is in Marathi.

27. Sg.R., 184, 185 and 186. The documents are in English.


29. Jayachamaraja Wodeyar continued to show his respect to the Sringeri Matha till he breathed his last on September 23, 1974. Just a week prior to his death, he had visited Sringeri and obtained darusana and blessings of Sri Saradamba and Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Svami.