CHAPTER V

Sringeri and the Muslim Rulers

Introduction

We have seen in the earlier chapters the relation between Sringeri and the Hindu rulers. That the Hindu rulers throughout India respected the Jagadgurus of Sringeri was no wonder. But it is worthwhile to note that even Muslim rulers looked upon the Jagadgurus with veneration and on many occasions, sought their blessings. Some of them considered the Sringeri Gurus as their spiritual guides.

Sources

The kadatas, the firmans and the sanads of the Nizams of Hyderabad and Hyder and Tipu of Mysore, Keladi-nripavijayam and Guruvamsakavya, are some of the important sources to know the relation between Sringeri and the Muslim rulers. Selections from the Records of the Sringeri Mutṭi and the records in the personal possession of the present His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidyā Tirtha, are of immense value. There are over sixty documents spread over about fifteen kadatas, shedding light on the relation
between Sringeri and the Sultans of Mysore.

Sringeri and the Adil-Shahis of Bijapur

The following few instances prove the Sringeri Matha's relations with the Adil-Shahi rulers of Bijapur. The Shahi rulers of Bijapur and Golkonda made war against the Hindu chiefs of the South, who had become prominent after the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire.

Taking advantage of this situation, the Śvāmi of the Kūḍilī Matha^4 tried to influence the Bijapur authorities to put him in possession of the villages of Harakere and Maṇḍali which belonged to the Sringeri Matha. Virabhadra Nayaka (A.D. 1629 - A.D. 1645) of Keladi, wrote to the Bijapur officers^5 not to disturb the possessions of Śrī Satchidānanda Bhāratī I (A.D. 1622-63) of Sringeri.6 Accordingly, the request was heeded.

In A.D. 1637, Ranadulla Khan, the general of the Bijapur army and Shāji Bhōnsle, second in command, sent by Mohammad Adil Shāh of Bijapur, sacked Ikkeri. Virabhadra Nayaka was forced to surrender half of his territory to Ranadulla Khan and returned to his Bidnur palace from Bhuvanagiri Durga.7 Shāji captured Bangalore in A.D.1638 and a year later Ranadulla Khan occupied Tumkur and Basavapatna.
When the Śringerī Matha was facing difficulties both from external and internal foes, Śrī Satchidananda Bharatī I sent a Śrimukha to Ranadulla Khan, seeking protection for the Matha's villages and temples. In response to the Śrimukha, the Khan granted a sanad conveying "his salam to the illustrious Paramahamsa Parivrājakāchārya Satchidānandaśāhārati". Further, he issued tākīt (orders) to his officers stating that the Matha's villages in Shimoga that had been usurped, should be restored and that they should enforce on all people obedience to the Jagadguru's orders. He requested the Guru to be blessing him from time to time and promised him all possible help whenever needed.

Śringerī and Mughals

Even the Mughal officers respected the Jagadgurus. For instance, when Śrī Satchidānanda Bhāratī II (A.D. 1705-41) was camping at Tarikere, the Mughal Commander-in-chief in charge of the administration of Sira called on the Guru and gave him costly presents.

Śringerī and the Nizams

There were cordial relations between Śringerī and the
Nizams of Hyderabad. \textsuperscript{11} Nizam-ul-Mulk, the founder of the Asaf Jahi dynasty of Hyderabad, ruled from A.D. 1724 to A.D. 1748. He issued many firmans granting special privileges to the Sringeri Matha.

Nizam Ali Khan (A.D. 1761 - A.D. 1803) the son and successor of Nizam-ul-Mulk, continued his family tradition by confirming the privileges already granted by his father, with additions of his own to the Matha. These sanads are dated 24 Rabiulsani and 1. Jamadiulavval A.H. 1196 (8th and 16th April, 1782). The then Jagadguru of Sringeri was Sri Satchidananda Bharati III (A.D. 1770 - A.D. 1814). The Nizam ordered that the property of the disciples dying without heirs should go to the Matha. The Jagadguru was given authority over some temples in the dominion, and his agents were authorised to collect, from both Hindu and Muslim religious and charitable endowments, contributions at one anna in every rupee of their revenues. Besides, the annual payments of nasar and nasarana (presents) were continued, and Hindus of all classes were enjoined to offer puja (worship) and kañike (dues) to the Guru through his representatives. \textsuperscript{12}

Sri Narasimha Bharati VIII (A.D. 1817 - A.D. 1879) 32nd in the line, visited Hyderabad, where he was given a
warm reception. The first proclamation issued by the Nizam's Prime Minister referred to the 'auspicious tour' (sawāri mubārak) "of the most holy personage who could dispense blessings from where he stayed, but in the fulness of his grace had condescended to tour the kingdom of Hyderabad."

When the Guru of the Kūḍī Matha contested the right of the Śrīnīvāsi Guru to special insignia, the Government of the Nizam answered by issuing a series of proclamations containing takits to all Ḍāvānd, Ḍeshmukhs, Ḍeshpāndes, Patels, etc., in the Subhas of the Deccan to prohibit all other mathādhipatis from displaying mahābirudavālas (insignia of high honour) and touring the dominion to collect kanike. These documents which were written in Persian with Marāṭhi and Kannāḍa translations in the daftars of the Subhas, are dated 2 Ramzan 1259 (16th October 1843), 2 Rabiulawal 1261 (11th March 1845) and 7 and 16 Zilkath 1261 (8 and 16 December 1845).

The Śrīnīvāsi Matha was represented by two Prāṅth Dharmādhikāris or agents whose duty was to collect nazarāna during wedding ceremonies, dipārādhana-kanike, prāyaschitta payments (payments made on the occasion of purificatory ceremony) etc. The decision of the Matha Dharmādhikāri in
casts disputes and cases of lapses from the spiritual and moral codes (smritis) were enforced by the Sircar officers.  

These days, the quasi-judicial authority exercised by the Sringeri Matha has fallen into disuse. But that is the case with almost all the other mathas as well in the country.

Sringeri's relation with Hyder and Tipu

Correspondence between Sringeri and Srirangapatna reveals the existence of close contacts between the Jagadgurus and Hyder Ali and his son Tipu. Letters of Hyder and Tipu are couched in respectful language and breathe a spirit of veneration for the Jagadgurus.

Hyder Ali (A.D. 1722 - A.D. 1782), an adventurer of exceptional ability shot into prominence as a military leader and in A.D. 1761 safely established himself in supreme authority in Mysore. The expansionist policy of Hyder irritated his adversaries, the Peshwa, the Nizam and the English East India Company. It is surprising that all these powers while they fought among themselves, held the Jagadguru in equally high esteem.
According to the wish of Raghunātharao, the uncle of Peshwa Mādhavrao, Śrī Abhinava Satchidānanda Bhārati I (A.D. 1741-67) visited Poona in 1760-61. On that occasion Hyder Ali wrote to the Jagadguru: "You are a great and holy personage. It is but meet that all should desire to pay respects to you, and I am happy you are responding to Raghunāthrao's invitation." In order to make the Jagadguru's journey comfortable, Hyder sent the Guru an escort of one elephant, five horses, one palanquin and five camels, besides making him costly presents. He paid the Guru Rs.10,500 for his expenses.

Hyder received Srimukha, prasāda and clothes from Śrī Abhinava Satchidānanda Bhārati and in reply to this, besides paying his homage, he sent clothes to Śrī Sāradāmbā and to His Holiness. He assured His Holiness that he would preserve all the privileges that the Matha was entitled to and requested him for his blessings.

In spite of his own difficulties (Peshwa Mādhavrao and Nizam Ali were against Hyder), Hyder continued the policy of patronising the Matha. He evinced his esteem for the new Guru Śrī Satchidānanda Bhārati III (A.D. 1770 - A.D. 1814), by issuing nirūpas (A.D. 1780) to all officers directing them to render every assistance to the Matha.
Sri Satchidananda Bharati III in a Letter of Blessing to Hyder Ali conveyed his greetings. The Guru requested him to maintain Dharma in all the conquered territories. The Guru further wrote, "we pray Sri Saradamba and Sri Chandramaulisvara to give you all success."

In response to Hyder Ali's mirupa, Sheik Liyaji, the officer of Nagar, issued orders to killedara and paruatyagara to execute the Master's orders. Liyaji also wrote a letter to the Guru, acknowledging the receipt of prasada and mantraksate of Sri Saradamba's Rathotsava (car festival), and informing him of the various measures he had taken.

Hyder Ali's orders to his subordinate officers clearly indicate his deep interest in the Sringari Matha and also his reverence to the Jagadguru. His letters to the Guru invariably contained his salame (greetings). In the kadatas, Hyder is generally styled, 'Navab Hyder Ali Khan Bahadar'. Similarly, the letter of Blessing from Sri Satchidananda Bharati to Hyder, contains the various titles of the Jagadguru. A few more kadatas point out the intimate nature of the relation between Hyder and the Jagadguru.
Hyder suffered from cancer and died on December 7, 1782. The Second Anglo-Mysore war which was in full swing when he died, was concluded by his able and ambitious son, Tipu.

In some respects, Tipu (A.D. 1753 - 99) followed his father's policy and one such example is the regard he showed to the Jagadguru. The correspondence between Sri Satchidananda Bharati III and Tipu, stands in testimony to this view. There are about 21 letters and several kadatas which shed light on the relation between the two.

The Marathas, the Nizam and the English were planning to crush Tipu. Tipu like his father, having realised the importance of divine help, sought the blessings of the Sringeri Jagadguru to overcome his difficulties and to secure peace and prosperity in his kingdom. On several occasions, the Sultan made a request to the Guru to send prasada and mantrakshate of Sri Saradambha and he too made presents like shawls etc. to the Guru.

When Tipu Sultan came to know about the loot of the Sringeri Matha by Parasuram Bhau's contingents, the Sultan wrote to the Guru: "People who sin against such a
holy place will at no distant date suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. People do evil smiling, but will suffer the penalty in torments of agony; this adage will be fulfilled. Treachery to gurus will lead to allround ruin, destruction of all wealth and the ruin of the family." The Sultan made a grant of 400 Rahatis for the restoration of the temple and the re-installation of the idol of Sri Saradamba. Subsequently he made a present of a palanquin, elephants, clothes and some money to the Guru, requesting him at the same time to be so kind as to offer prayers to God for the complete destruction of the enemy, the success of his own army, and for his own prosperity as well as that of the State.

From various nirūpas and binnavattales as recorded in the kadatas, it can be known that whenever the Guru, as per the wish of the devotees, went on a tour, the Sultan issued orders to his various officers like killedārs and pārupatyagārs to issue rahadāris, make all the necessary arrangements and to give protection to the Svāmi from thieves and brigands. He ordered his officers to allow and assist the Matha's agents to collect their usual Charana and Dipārādhana kanike and also to enquire into the Varnasrama (conduct) of their Sisyas or disciples. The
officers of the Sultan were ordered to keep watch over, and also punish, those who unlawfully collected the Matha's dues (kānike) by impersonating as the agents of the Matha.36

A copy of the nirupa,37 dated Visvāvasu sam Nījā Chaśitra Su. 8 (Sunday, 17th April, 1785), from Tipu Sultan to a person named Kōte Narasayya, states that according to the court's judgement, the Sringeri Śīma, of the revenue value of 3,003 varahas, should be handed over to Sri Satchidananda Bharati of the Sringeri Matha, and in future the Matha's claims over that area should not be questioned.38

Tipu assisted the Guru in the work of renovating the temples at Kānchi, which had been partly destroyed during Hyder Ali's campaigns.39

In one of his letters Tipu conveyed his salām to Sri Satchidananda Bhāratī III and wrote that he depended upon three sources of strength, - God's grace, the Jagadguru's blessings and the strength of his arms.40 Tipu, though an iconoclast, sent a crystalline Siva Linga to Sri Satchidananda Bhāratī, with a special request to worship it.41

Tipu was facing attacks from the Marāthas, the Nizam
and the English, whose destruction the Guru had been requested to effect by performing Satachandi and Sahasrachandi japa and homa and in this regard he told the Guru, 'I have written to the asaf of Nagar to supply you all the materials required for the great yāga; Triambaka Rao of Nagar and the amildar of Koppa will camp at Sringeri to see to the necessary supplies of vessels, cloth, images (pratimas) etc. Kindly see that rituals are performed according to the prescribed rules, give liberal cash presents to Brahmans, and feed them in thousands every day.' In another instance, he requested the Guru to perform Varuna Japa and Rudrabhisēkha for half a mandala (24 days) to ward off certain calamities. In a subsequent letter Tipu acknowledged the miraculous effects of the yāga - how he was successful in his enterprise and how rains came and the land yielded rich harvests.

Tipu had an ardent desire for visiting Sringeri, which, however, could not be fulfilled owing to his death in A.D. 1799. In the 4th Anglo-Mysore War (A.D. 1799), he died as a great soldier-hero.
Notes and References

1. Nos. 42-45 belong to Hyder Ali's period and Nos. 46-66 belong to Tipu's period.

2. There are a good number of records in Persian, Sanskrit and Kannada shedding light on the relationship between the Sultans and the Jagadgurus. These records need a careful study at the hands of the specialists. A catalogue of the Kannada records is prepared by the author of the present thesis and submitted to the Karnataka State Archives.


4. About 9 miles from Shimoga, where the confluence of Tungā and Bhadrā takes place.


7. KNV., p.98.

8. ARMAD., 1934, No.33.

9. In Tumkur District (It was the headquarters of the Mughals in Karnataka), see Hayavadanarao, MG., Vol.V, Tumkur Dist., under Sirā, pp. 536-540.

10. GVK., XIV, Vv. 54-56.

11. The information furnished in this chapter, with regard to Hyderabad's relation with Śrīnagēri, the author is much indebted to the article "Śrīnagēri Gurus and Muslim Rulers" by K.R. Venkataraman, published in SS., 1963, pp.69-71 and also TTW., by the same author, pp. 62, 71 and 72.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p.70. Śrī Satchidānanda Bhārati I (A.D. 1741-61)
15. TTW., p.59.
17. ARMAD., 1916, p.73.
20. During the Keladi period it was Bidnur and during Hyder Ali's period it was called Hyder Nagar. In due course, it simply became Nagar.
22. Ibid., No.57.
24. Ibid.; Kā. 70, No.99, etc.
Note: The titles of the Jagadgurus are in Chapter VII (Administration).
27. Sg.R., Nos. 46-70.
29. Kā. 65, No.10; Kā. 66, Nos. 93 and 128.
30. For details, see Chapter, Srinivasi and the Marātha Rulers, in this thesis.
31. The Marāṭhas were annihilated in the 'Third Anglo-Marāṭha War' (A.D. 1817-18).

32. SG.64, 47 dated A.D. 1791-92.
   English translation from the TTW., p.60.

33. KD. 129, No.34; SG.64, 47-50 and 59;

34. KD.65, Nos. 10 and 18; KD. 66, Nos. 93 and 128.

35. According to the Hindu concept Brahmana, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra are the four Varnas and Brahmacharya, Grihaśṭha, Vānaprastha and Sanyāsa are the four Aśramas. It was the duty of the Dharmādhikāris of the Matha to see that the Matha's disciples strictly observe the rules of Varnāśrama.

36. KD. 66, No.129.

37. Ibid., No.137.

38. It appears that the Śrīnāgāri Śīme yielding a revenue of 3,003 varahas was under disputation. That was why the Sultan after hearing the court's judgement had to re-confirm the Śrīnāgāri Matha's claims over Śrīnāgāri Śīme.

39. TTW., p.61. Śrī Satchidananda Bhārati III was then camping at Kāñchī.

40. KD. 120, No.5; SG.64, 65.

41. Ibid.

42. "Sata-one hundred, Chandi - Goddess Kāli. Satachandi Japa is a repetition of certain Mantras invoking the help of Chandi probably with one hundred hands the Goddess of Kāli for the destruction of the enemy."
43. **Sahasra** - one thousand, **Chandi** - Goddess Kālī.

44. **Sg.R.,** 51-53; English translation - **TTW.,** p.61.

45. **Varuna Japa** is performed to invoke the help of the Varuna, the God of rain.

46. "**Rudrabhisēkha** is performed to God Rudra to propitiate him in various forms, eleven in number and the abhisēkha or bath is made especially of Pañchakavya - the five different forms of cow's milk, etc., and other things for bath. Rudra is the God of destruction in his lower aspect and is the protector from all evils and he is called Śiva or Śahkara in his high aspect of conferring all sorts of boons and comforts." P.V.Jagadisā Ayyar, **South Indian Shrines,** 1920, p. 263, Foote note No.4.

47. **Sg.R.,** 66.