Chapter 8

Summing Up

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

Prince Ajat Shatru is groomed by his father’s Minister, the able Vasakar, who is detached from the service of Samrat Bimbasar and entrusted solely with the guidance of Ajat Shatru who is stationed in Champa as the Governor. Ajat Shatru and Vasakar are answerable to Bimbasar at Raj Griha. But Vasakar, observing the spirited nature of Ajat Shatru and the increasingly pacifist tendencies of Bimbasar, decides to nurture Ajat Shatru in defiance of the ageing Samrat. So he encourages Ajat Shatru to commence a punitive war against Kosala on the pretext that King Prcsenjit has insulted Magadh by stopping the payment of the revenue of the village of Kashi, given originally for the toilet expenses of
the Kosalan princess given in marriage to Bimbasar. Later, when he wins a battle in the sixteen-year-war with the confederation of Lichchavi Republics and orders the opening of the treasury to his victorious soldiers, Vasakar chides him for his impetuosity and points out that his victory was due to the charms of the most beautiful woman of Vaishali and not due to his soldiers’ valour. This tickles the curiosity of Ajat Shatru, who impulsively goes to see the woman and surrenders his heart to Ambapali. He contracts a gandharva marriage with her. But, when she discovers his identity, she denounces him and sends him away. He leaves in rage, vowing to destroy Vaishali and claim her as his prize. He does come back and destroy Vaishali, but Ambapali confronts him in saffron robes and with a shaven head as a follower of Lord Buddha. What is more, she presents to him their son Vimal Kund, who appears in the saffron robes of a Buddhist bhikku and declines, even as alms, Ajat Shatru’s crown, which his father offers him. Ajat Shatru comes as the scourge of Vaishali but a patriotic woman of Vaishali, who has renounced everything, discomfits him.

Prince Chandragupta is a scion of the regal Moriya clan of Magadh. The usurping Navanandas murdered his entire clan and Chandragupta alone escaped, thanks to their collective self-sacrifice. Chandragupta lives in disguise, constituting a one-man Fourth World
State. Fortune brings him in contact with Chanakya, who, because the Nandas insulted him, has vowed to end their usurpation through a dharmayuddha. He identifies the royal scion in Chandragupta, moulds him, guides him and enthrones him. Through Chandragupta he launches his scheme to establish a Ramrajya in Aryavarta.

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

Prince Khurram is one of the sons of Emperor Jahangir. His elder brother Khusrav forfeited his claim to the throne when he foolishly revolted against his own father and tried to capture the throne and only the Law of their ancestor Timur against taking a brother’s life saved Khusrav’s life from Jahangir’s wrath. Khusrav’s upbringing was responsible for his grave error: his grandfather Akbar, who had been especially fond of him, had patronized him inordinately, particularly because of his dislike for his Crown Prince Salim’s (later Jahangir)
recalcitrant behaviour, and had nurtured in his tender heart intoxicating dreams of succession, since under the Timurid law, the succession was the sole prerogative of the reigning monarch.

After it is ensured that Khusrav will no longer aspire for the throne (both his eyes are put out and he is always chained to a soldier), Prince Khurram has been treated as the *de facto* Crown Prince: he is allowed to wear the red turban and he receives the province of Hissan-Firoz, the customary marks of the Crown Prince. He is also trained systematically in warfare and in commanding the Mughal army. Differences arise between him and his father over his insistence on marrying the commoner Arjumand, while his father contemplates a politically useful alliance with the Shah of Persia. When Aijumand’s aunt, the widowed Mehrunnisa, becomes Empress Nur Jahan and the virtual ruler of Hindustan, she places as many impediments as possible between Khurram and the father and creates as many misunderstandings as possible between the father and the son so as to secure the succession for her good-for-nothing son-in-law Shahriyar. However, Khurram’s upbringing gives him an advantage and, following it carefully, he manages to beat back all fraternal competition and ascends the Mughal throne, sparing Nur Jahan’s life only at the intercession of his wife Arjumand, when Nur Jahan herself is fully resigned to the Mughal choice of *Taktya Takhta.*
The circumstances of the birth of Tipu Sultan render him a marked prince. His mother Faqr-un-Nissa, after anxious years of childlessness, got him as a gift from the shrine of Saint Tipu Mastan Oulia and therefore she is quite serious in her resolve to surrender him to God’s service as she promised at the shrine. However, Tipu’s father, Hyder Ali Khan, just does not wish to take chances with the succession to the kingdom of Mysore. So along with religious training, Tipu is also groomed to become a monarch. What is more, Hyder ensures that Tipu will be able to rule justly his subjects who consist of Moslems as well as Hindus, while Faqr-un-Nissa wishes him to be moulded as the spiritual leader of both the communities. When circumstances ordain that Tipu should succeed his father to the throne of Mysore, his carefully charted and comprehensive training at the feet of Maulvi Obedullah and Goverdhan Pandit and at the hands of Ghazi Khan stands him in good stead and he also becomes the first nationalist monarch of India, a thorn in the flesh of the imperialist men of the East India Company. However, the same upbringing renders him incompetent to deal with traitors and quislings, who ultimately betray him and pave the way for his death on the field of battle and for snuffing out the nationalist flame lit by him.

Dhondu Pant Nana Saheb never succeeds to the throne of his adoptive father, Bajirao II, the last Peshwa. But, having been brought up
as a potential successor, he subsequently puts the grooming to effective
use, at least for some time, during the first Indian War of Independence of
1857. However, his forte is not doing, but suffering. He is not born to be
a hero, and he fades away into history. However, Malgonkar’s re-reading
of history redeems Nana Saheb from the execration poured on him as the
butcher of Kanpur and rehabilitates him as a pioneering nationalist.

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

Maharajkumar Rabindranath of Devapur is carefully governed
from childhood by his mother Mohini and his grandmother Manjula to
defy the subverting strategies of the British colonizers. While she was the
Maharani of Devapur State, Manjula was powerless against the British
Resident. Now, as Dowager maharani, she is outside the pale of his
power and she prepares her retainer Mohini to be impervious to the glitter
of royalty and remain true to the salt of her native heritage with the result that Mohini perversely remains a concubine, well outside the area of influence of the British resident. Together, the two women chart a nationalist course for the upbringing of the only male offspring of Maharajah Bawajiraj III. The result is an unconventional maharajkumar of the colonial days who has not been taught by an English tutor, has not gone to a boarding establishment or to the Chiefs’ College, but a very native prince who has had his schooling with a local Pandit ragged urchins roaming about the palace grounds a part-time prostitute in a hovel in the slums of the empty-beliy race in Bombay and the parched subjects of his father’s kingdom with their ribs showing, a prince who prefers the challenges of the wilderness of the kingdom to the comforts of the zenana in the palace. In short, Rabindranath turns out to be a Maharajkumar who can not be bridled by either the Maharajah or the British Resident because he has no great love for the golden honeycomb that is royalty in colonial India.

Bai-sa Jaya of Balmer is purposely trained in Rajniti because her father has no illusions about his poor standing with the colonial power. He also ensures that she is brought up as a prince rather than as a princess. When her brother is killed in World War 1 and her father dies of a broken heart, it is her training in Rajniti that comes to her succor,
particularly in view of the attitude of her father’s successor, her uncle Raja Man Singh’s Anglophile son. When she is hurriedly married off to Prince Pratap of Sirpur and sent away, she has to undergo intolerable privation and humiliation through all of which her training in Rajniti is her only defence and protection. Finally, when the wheels of history turn inexorably, and Royal India is swamped by British India and disappears into the Indian Union, the Raj Guru of Balmer re-interprets Rajniti for her to counsel that, though the monarch is now replaced by the democrat, her dharma remains unchanged: the protection of the people. So Jaya files her nomination to contest the elections.

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

On the contrary, where the princes were purposely brought up as native princes, they remained true to their salt, as illustrated in the stories of Rabindranath and Jaya. Abhayraj, by undergoing the British colonial training, but overcoming its evil effects through the sensitivity nurtured in him by his early environment and later training, proves that the stories of Maharajkumar Rabindranath and Bai-sa Jaya are quite within the bounds of credibility and plausibility.