Chapter 4

Tipu Sultan and Dhondu Pant Nana Saheb

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

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

Most of her life passed by, waiting for them [Hyder and Tipu]. When they came back with their trophies and treasures, with news of battles won and armies routed, she heard the hasty cheers of the multitude but she also counted the many who had not returned with them. Silently she would render thanks for their homecoming but would pray also for those lost on the battlefield and for the widows and...
orphans left behind.... (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 44).

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

Hyder Ali Khan and Fakhr-un-Nissa go to the tomb of Saint Tipu Mastan Oulia to seek his blessings. Hyder bows perfunctorily and leaves soon after depositing a large offering. Fakhr-un-Nissa remains behind and prays fervently for seven days. The atmosphere of the shrine gives her a feeling of peace and contentment, but she does not like the rocky and barren surroundings. After speaking to the trustees and the caretakers of the shrine, she employs a labour force to plant a garden. As the work starts, the wild-looking putative son of Saint Tipu rashes out of the shrine and asks them why the peace of the shrine is being disturbed. Fakhr-un-Nissa tells him that she plans to plant flowering trees, which, she says, will please Saint Tipu. The young man races back to the shrine and
returns after a few moments. He says that Saint Tipu will not be pleased because he does not want anything to be done for him by a woman. He asks her to send her son if she wants flowers to be planted. Fakhr-un-Nissa pleads that she has no son and wonders if her husband can be sent instead (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 48-[49]).

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

Hyder is confused by Fakhr-un-Nissa's account of these
happenings. But he says that their son will be called Tipu Sultan. Fakhr-un-Nissa reminds him that the son is to be brought up in the service of God. Hyder agrees to this, but he is impatient to have the son: Hyder says that if his son is to be named a Sultan, he himself cannot remain a junior commander, but must try to become a king. Fakhr-un-Nissa explains to him that the destiny of her son is to be a Sultan not in the earthly sense but in matters of spirit and in the service of the Lord. Nine months after her visit to the shrine, a son is born to Fakhr-un-Nissa at Devanahalli on Friday, 20 November, 1750. He is named Tipu Sultan (Gidwani, The Sword of Tipu Sultan 50-[52]). Hyder frequently jokes about his son Tipu having been promised to God’s service, but Fakhr-un-Nissa takes her vow seriously, as is evident in the reserve with which she treats Tipu:

When Tipu was asleep, Fakhr-un-Nissa would Mss him from head to foot fervently and ardently. She would wait for Mm to go to sleep before hugging him passionately to her breast or kissing Mm on the lips but when he was awake, her kisses would be light and gentle—a mere caress of the cheek or the forehead—so timid and tender as if she was seeking his permission for the familiarity. Fixed in her mind was the thought that her little one was destined to serve the Lord.
She had learned to honour seers and saints, and in her mind’s eye her son was already the chosen one of the Lord. She did not therefore consider it strange that he should inspire in her feelings of respect and humility. But when he slept, she surrendered to her hunger to smother him with loving kisses and wrap him in her arms. (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [66])

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

Three years after the birth of Tipu, when they still have no other child, Hyder affectionately warns Fakhr-un-Nissa that unless she gives him another son, she cannot keep her word to God to give Tipu to God’s service. Fakhr-un-Nissa asks Hyder to be patient, to have faith and not to blaspheme (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [69]).
At the age of four, Tipu starts training in calligraphy and his tutor appreciates his skill. Fakhr-un-Nissa says that they must now get him a religious teacher like Maulvi Obedullah. Hyder says that, since there will always be more Hindus than Muslims in his land, to be in the Lord's service will mean serving both of them and perhaps people of all religions. Fakhr-un-Nissa fears that there can be a conflict if Tipu is given training in many religions. Hyder categorically denies the possibility, asserting that, though religious men sometimes quarrel, religions never do so. At this, Fakhr-un-Nissa concedes that Tipu should serve all God's religions and all His people. Hyder wants Tipu to be trained in horse riding, so that he can move fast and in comfort and reach many people. Fakhr-un-Nissa agrees. Hyder also wants Tipu to learn archery, musketry, combat, marksmanship and military arts. Fakhr-un-Nissa protests that Hyder is making a fool of her. Hyder points out that, for all their readiness to give Tipu to God's service, Tipu may be rejected for His service and that even if God does not fail them, she may fail to deliver another son, in which case, they will not surrender Tipu to God's service (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [70]-72).

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

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

To these teachers was due the breadth of intellectual vision and curiosity which Tipu displayed in later life and on which even him worst enemies have grudgingly complimented him; to them also he owed in some measure his sense of justice and fairplay, his belief in the one Supreme, his desire for truth and virtue, his mandate for action, and above all, his willingness to sacrifice for his principles and national honour, everything he possessed, including his own life—
and indeed, he did make that supreme sacrifice and courted certain death when the enemy, with treachery and superior numbers, had surrounded him and most of his adherents had deserted him. (*The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 81-82)

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

In 1761, just before Hyder assumes supreme command of the Kingdom of Mysore, a palace conspiracy erupts unexpectedly. Hyder is forced to flee to save his life. Fakhr-un-Nissa is temporarily safe because she is away visiting her father. Tipu and Abdul Karim are seized by the conspirators and imprisoned in Seringapatam. Tipu gives proof of the efficacy of his training in the dangerous situation. He manages to shoot
an arrow through the window, carrying a message, at the feet of Maulvi Obedullah. Maulvi Obedullah hastens to inform Ghazi Khan. After sending a messenger to Fakhr-un-Nissa, Ghazi Khan rescues Tipu and Abdul Karim. Hyder returns victorious and the family is reunited (Gidwani, The Sword of Tipu Sultan 95-96).

What happens after the rescue from Seringapatam fort is of great relevance and significance to Tipu Sultan’s future. The day after the rescue from the Fort of Seringapatam during the palace intrigue of 1790, Ghazi Khan hides Tipu and Karim in the dilapidated boat used for river-burial of children, which is docked at Simi, near his house. The horsemen who are to meet him there and take the two boys to safety do not turn up. So, the next day, he leaves the boys in the boat and goes to his house. Reaching his house, he finds the police conducting a house-to-house search for the princes, whose escape has been discovered. Writing out a hurried note, Ghazi Khan opens his window and knocks at the window of the adjacent house of Lala Mian with a stick. Lala Mian’s seven-year-old daughter Ruqayya Banu opens the window. Since Lala Mian has gone out, Ghazi Khan gives the note to Ruqayya, after making her promise to faithfully give it to her father when he returns. By then the police, who have been knocking at his door for some time, force it open. They arrest Ghazi Khan. Ruqayya Banu sees Ghazi Khan being led away by the
police (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* [116]-18).

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

Ruqayya gives the basket to Tipu and asks the boys to eat. Tipu gives his handkerchief and the sobbing Ruqayya wipes her face with it. After the boys eat the meal, the three of them eat the sweets Ruqayya has brought with her. Since she is afraid of returning in the dark, Tipu offers
to take her home. But, since his danger is greater, she decides to pass the night in the boat. That is where Lala Mian finds her in the morning, sleeping in Tipu's arms, when, finding her missing from the house and the basket also missing from the kitchen, he guesses that Ruqayya must have taken food to the boys, and hurries to the river (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 119-20).

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

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

Seven years after this escapade, in 1767, when Tipu is seventeen years old, he wins a resounding victory over the English army of Joseph Smith at Vaniyambadi. He follows it up by routing the English at Mangalore. In the course of the next two years, he inflicts such defeats on the English that in 1769, Hyder is able to dictate peace terms to the English before the very gates of Madras. Now Hyder asks Tipu to choose a battle flag and banner of his own. Tipu wants a tiger as his emblem on his battle flag. Hyder agrees and, from that day, the tiger becomes the
symbol and emblem of Tipu, embellishing his flags, banners, guns, clothes and coins. Ruqayya's words are the inspiration for Tipu's choice of the tiger as his emblem (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 126-28).

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

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

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

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

Now assured that Ruqayya loves him, Tipu asks Burhan-ud-din if he would object if their friendship became closer, into a near-relationship. Burhan-ud-din welcomes the idea, though he does not understand Tipu's words. Tipu goes to his mother's chamber and finds Hyder there. Hyder sternly tells Tipu that he will marry now. Tipu agrees, but wants to say something. Tipu tells his parents of his wish to marry Ruqayya and Fakhr-un-Nissa nods approvingly. Hyder has nothing against Ruqayya, but he has given his word to Raushana Begum's father and Hyder never breaks his word. Finally Hyder finds a compromise—Tipu is to marry
both Ruqayya and Raushana Begum. So, in the spring of 1774, Tipu simultaneously marries Ruqayya Banu and Raushana Begum (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 133-35).

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

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

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

Tipu asks what he should do about his covenant with God, with his wife and with his children. Purnaiya tells Tipu of Shah Jahan, the great Mughal Emperor-Builder, of the bigotry and treachery of Aurangzeb, of his cruelty to his own father Shah Jahan, of Aurangzeb's cruelty to his elder brother Dara Shukoh, of Dara's liberal religious views and tolerance in the manner of his great grandfather Akbar, of Dara's wife Nadira Begum, who faithfully followed her fugitive husband while he was on the run, pursued by Aurangzeb's army, but refused to cross into Persia with him, preferring to die alone and unattended on her native soil, and of the proud wife of Jaswant Singh Rathor, who shut the gates of the castle against her husband for retreating from the field of battle. Purnaiya drives home the point of these stories by pointing out that he heard all these stories from Tipu's wife Ruqayya Banu. Finally Tipu asks Purnaiya to give him a few days to find answers to some questions that keep tossing in his
mind. Pumaiya points out that there is no time, because, despite their stratagem to keep the news of Hyder's death from leaking out, the English will soon know it and try to sweep across Mysore like locusts aided by traitors like Sheik Ayaz. Tipu argues that the long list of traitors that Pumaiya has given him proves that his people have broken their convenant with Mm and released him from responsibility, free to go Mis own way (Gidwani, The Sword of Tipu Sultan 57-60).

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

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

Goverdhan Pandit lets Tipu talk and thereby relieve himself of Ms depression and restlessness. Tipu admits that one part of Ms heart tells
him to stand up and fight the rapacious alien enemy who is out to disrobe and dishonour the nation. He tells Goverdhan Pandit of the British atrocities (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 164).

Royal mentor and royal disciple talk for two more days, though it is mostly Tipu who speaks and Goverdhan Pandit merely asks an occasional question here and there to clarify a doubt or to pose a problem. The mentor thereby enables the disciple to unburden his heart and cast away Ms doubts. Tipu’s anguished soul is gradually pacified. Tipu reaches the conclusion that he must stand up to tyranny and face pain and death for the sake of an ideal, for justice and truth, for the freedom and happiness of his people. Now Tipu knows why he should fight: he must fight because this is his country, Ms native soil and this he is honour-bound, duty-bound to defend and protect. The last question to be resolved is if Tipu should fight against the formidable British army when defeat and death seems the inevitable result. Goverdhan Pandit rhetorically asks Tipu if anyone who dies with honour in the performance of his duty dies in vain. Tipu replies that such a death will not be in vain because, someone, somewhere, some time, will pick up the fallen torch, for, once lit, it can never be extinguished. Tipu is at peace now, his mind made up to fight, to defend the nation, to preserve its honour. As Tipu takes leave
of Ms mentor, Goverdhan Pandit exhorts him not to let his dreams die (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 165-66).

Maulvi Ali Amin of Muscat calls on Tipu, with letters of commendation highlighting his worth, consequence and learning. Tipu gives Mm a large donation for the mosque he is to construct in Muscat, and also a purse containing 1000 pagodas as a personal gift. The Maulvi moves around in Mysore and other parts of India and, on his way back to Muscat, calls on Tipu again. He has observed that Tipu is the only ruler in India who supports two religions—Hinduism and Islam. The Maulvi objects to this. Tipu quotes verses from the Koran to prove that he is not wrong. The Maulvi argues that if Tipu supports only Ms own people, they will support him with fury and fervour. Tipu replies that all his subjects—those that ring the temple bells and those that pray in the mosque—are his people and that this land is theirs and his. He does not wish to achieve power through the questionable method of creating disunity. He asserts that he is born of a soil which has given birth to and nurtured many religions, which teach Mm that all men are brothers. He points out that his Prime Minister is a Hindu and that he and his father before him have appointed many Hindus to high posts, not to seek a balance of power, but because of their merit. He says that he supports the temples because he is convinced that both as King and an Indian he is duty-bound and
honour-bound to do so. He believes that the Hindu scriptures as well as the Koran enjoin an attitude of reverence towards all religions. The Maulvi parts from Tipu, but tarries in Seringapatam for a week more. On the day of his departure, the Maulvi goes to the Sri Ranganatha Temple and hands a passing devotee the purse of 1000 pagodas gifted him by Tipu, begs the devotee to place if before the idol and walks away (Gidwani, The Sword of Tipu Sultan [211]-14).

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

Tipu's several progressive and liberal decrees, based on his commitment to the rights of citizens, irks his nobles, officers and governors, because such laws take away their traditional privileges and
perquisites. Mir Sadik remonstrates with Tipu and urges him not to interfere with the privileges of the ruling classes, since they are of great use to the kingdom. But Tipu, in reply, tells the Council of Ministers to learn from the past that power resides in the people, that the ruling classes are only trustees of that power, and that a nation which ignores the rights of its citizens will die (Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* 219-25).

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

Anand Kumar Raju, in “Fiction and the Uses of History: A Thematic Study of Bhagwan S.Gidwani’s *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* says that Tipu’s tendency to forgive those who erred was a carry-over from his early training in an amalgam of Islamic and Hindu theology. His commanders and courtiers sensing that Tipu’s kindness is costing him his power as a ruler, gradually begin to turn against him, eventually deserting him. (138)

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

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

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

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

My fencing master, Tantya Bhat, was the sort of person around whom legends naturally grow. Indoors or outdoors, he never went about without a sword strapped to his waist. Tall, slim, handsome, elegantly—almost foppishly—dressed, he was respected by men and sought after by women, and yet he was a shy and simple man who took life’s fare seriously. It was said that he had once killed a tiger with a spear, strangled a robber with a silk handkerchief, and rescued a princess abducted by bandits; that he could bring
down a **running** buck with a single bullet and a running man
with a single stone; that he could cut in two with his sword a
feather fluttering in the air (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind*
[21]-22).

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

Tantya Bhat had joined the Company’s cavalry for six
months to see for himself what it was that made the British
invincible in war, and had come back with the conviction
that the British were not invincible. There was something
else he brought back from his days with the company’s
army, a pith helmet. He discarded the turban and began to
wear the helmet, or topi, whenever he was on horseback.

That was how he acquired the nickname that stuck to him for
life: Tantya Topi (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 22)

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

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

(Malgounker, *The Devil’s Wind* 23)

Bajirao brings up his goddaughter Mani as a future wife for his adopted son Nana Saheb. She is a pupil with him at the paga. She fences, rides and swims with him and the children of the royal retainers. None of the other children think of her as a girl (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 22). But the ghost of Narayan, the fifth Peshwa, whom Bajirao’s parents caused to be murdered, often appears to Bajirao at night and curses that
Ms house will be burned down by his protectors and that his line will end with his successor. Bajirao screams that Nana Saheb will have numerous sons and that he has already chosen the girl Nana will marry. But the ghost laughs and says, “He can marry more women even than you have. But if ever a marriage is consummated, the wife shall die—not a single woman can live to bear his child! (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 24-25).

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

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

As children, Nana Saheb and Mani grow up together, though she is only the daughter of a retainer named Moporant Tambe. She does everything with a gusto and style so that she seems to excel everyone else, particularly Nana Saheb. Bajirao adores her and so she is brought up like a princess. Quite naturally, Nana Saheb grows up hating her, though he is careful not to show his jealousy openly, as far as possible. Once, when Mani wishes to ride on an elephant with him, Nana Saheb insults her by saying that only princes and not retainers’ children are to ride on elephants. Mani scowls and declares that one day she will have ten elephants for each one of his. Later, Mani becomes the Rani of Jhansi and
certainly has more elephants than Nana Saheb (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 27-28).

Bajirao’s decision regarding Mani disappoints Nana terribly:

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

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

She [Mani] whose life he [Bajirao] sought to lengthen did
not live long, but, burned up quickly, like a roaring flame.
The husband Bajirao found for her was old and feeble, for all
that he was a ruling prince and fabulously wealthy. Bajirao
did not know that he also suffered from a queer perversity
which made him masquerade as a woman and even pretend
that he suffered from the pangs of menstruation. Mani, hobbled by the bonds of marriage to this obnoxious creature, made him a devoted and dutiful wife and—by what sexual artistry or magic it is difficult to say—even induced in him the spark of maleness necessary to have marital relations with her so that she bore him a son. This son died in infancy and the enfeebled father died soon afterwards, but not before adopting another’s child as his successor. Again Mani fell into her new role with gusto, the role of the diligent foster mother and protector and regent of her husband’s principality. Then the Devil’s Wind stirred and she reached out to embrace it and became the greatest rebel of us all

(Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 28-29)

With the exit of Mani from his life, Nana Saheb is left with the concubine Champa. Though named after a delicately scented, velvety flower, she is “as much a creature of the earth as a rock lizard, with a skin the colour of ancient copper and the texture of grained silk”. She is “a mature, folly developed woman, with a body toughened by the demands of professional dancing and professional sex”. When Champa first enters his room, Nana Saheb yells at her to get out and never come again. She goes away, but returns as soon as he is in bed. He hurls abuse at her, slaps
her and shoves her out. But the moment he puts out the light she crawls back. Then, as though to work off his rage, he rips off her clothes and tears into her body. She absorbs his clumsy assaults and awakens his passion against his will (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 29). Nana Saheb’s first experience of sex with her is obscenely passionate:

> Legs coiling like snakes held me fast; nipples slippery as sucked betel nuts brushed tantalizingly against my skin.

> Resentful in the knowledge that I was being prepared as a victim for her lust and yet once again in the grip of desire, I was conscious of the sense of revulsion brought on by the smell of her skin that was like sour wine, by the mouth which had been so shockingly depraved in its search breaking out into a repetitive half-breath, half-word, English obscenity just seconds before the final shudders.

(Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 29-30)

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

> With Champa I discovered sex as though I were the first man on earth and she the last woman. Soon I began to shiver with desire for the very things that had made my flesh shrink, the controlled pressure of her fingers, the heady, warm smells of
her body, the feline purring breaking into its incantation of
obscenity as though to mark the attainment of some goal,
and the convulsive shudders as though something within her
had burst. (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 30)

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

Whether Nana Saheb unwittingly wants to punish his bride for not
being Mani or he expects her to be another sexual athlete like Champa,
the fact is that the bridal night is a nightmare. The frightened, cowering
girl stares at him as though he is a wild animal come to devour her. While
he anticipates sheer ecstasy, the consummation of the marriage turns out
to be a trial of perseverance. The bride is a terrified child, ignorant and
unaroused. Her skin is cold and covered with goose pimples and her
shrinking away from him insults his manhood. As he lies exhausted but unfulfilled, she sobs into the pillow. The flow of blood from the rupture does not cease for a long time. By the morning she has a burning fever. Within two days she dies. For days after that, Nana does not want to touch another woman. Then he goes back to Champa (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 30-31).

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

The greed of brahmins is as proverbial as their poverty, and the smell of the hundred thousand, lying unclaimed and rotting, must have made their nostrils twitch till they hurt. Barely two months had passed before the emissaries returned, complete with a family carried in three separate palanquins: father, mother, and marriageable daughter—or, indeed, a daughter long past the marriageable age, for she was already seventeen and could never have found a
husband because her father was so destitute. Bajirao approved and the marriage was quickly got over and the parents stayed on only long enough to collect the reward and then disappeared without a trace as though anxious to shake off pursuit. (Malgonkar, The Devil’s Wind 31)

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

Nana Saheb does not want to get married ever again. Bajirao is worried about the succession. Nana Saheb says that he can adopt a son. Bajirao fears that the East India Company will make difficulties. Nana Saheb refuses to marry because his wives all die. Bajirao hopes that one of them will give him a son before dying. Nana says that he has become
impotent and cannot have sex with a wife, though Champa is different, because she is a mistress. Bajirao suggests a Chinese concubine, since the Chinese are best equipped for arousing jaded appetites. Nana Saheb protests that he is quite happy with Champa. Bajirao advises Nana Saheb to get rid of Champa and get someone younger (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 33-35).

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

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

She was indeed indispensable, and no one could have held a place of greater respect in my tightly circumscribed world.

Not my wife, she yet was the partner of my joys and sorrows, a nurse during my illnesses, a jester during my ill humors; she ordered the meals and supervised the washing.
of the windows and the swabbing of the floors and saw to It
that my guests were well looked after.... she remained the
mistress of my household, the woman who held the keys of
the safes and storehouses and worried about wastage. My
brothers addressed her as Tai, or elder sister, and brought
their problems to her, and neither Tantya nor my secretary,
Azim, ever sat down in her presence or could bring himself
to tell the latest camp joke. (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind*
45-46)

As soon Bajirao discovers that Champa is pregnant, he knows that
Nana's impotence is pretended and he sends agents to find another bride
for him. Unable to find any bride in north India, the agents move south
and find a bride in the Deccan, in a village called Sangli, at least a
thousand miles from Bithoor. Her name is Kashi and she is reported to be
ten years old. Nana first sees her at the wedding ceremony, “a sickly,
black-haired creature with large, petrified eyes and skin mottled as
though feathers had been plucked from it.” She reminds him of “a crow
brought to a snake house for a python's meal.” Bajirao declares that Kashi
will be brought up as a princess and proceeds to engage tutors and
companions for her proper upbringing (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 46-
47). But Nana Saheb never consummates their marriage:
Kashi and I never slept in the same bed. She lived in a distant wing of the wada, which I seldom visited, so I saw her but occasionally. All the same, during ceremonies and festivals, we had to sit side by as man and wife and offer prayers together, for, in families such as mine, conventions are inviolable. A wife is a wife, a husband a husband, and the two are tied together in one bundle that only death could untie. It was almost a master-and-saive relationship. God knows I did little enough to live up to my obligations as the master; all the same, Kashi made a perfect slave, industrious, diligent, and, above all, loyal. Her unswerving loyalty makes me squirm with guilt, —unless that was her way of punishing me, some intuitive, feminine form of revenge (Malgonkar, *The Devil’s Wind* 47)

The early upbringing of Nana Saheb and his experiences during his adolescence mould his character and personality. When, in later life, he has to face crises and solve problems, that personality asserts itself and explains why he acts in the way he does. When the first Indian War of Independence commences, Nana Saheb is first fully trusted by the British, who look up to him to guarantee their safety. He is quite happy to oblige his friends. However, when they unilaterally decide to trust their own
human resources, Nana Saheb is freed of all responsibility for their safety. At his juncture, the rebels seek his leadership, since, despite the British refusal to recognize his claim to succeed to the throne of the Peshwa, he is the heir to the throne of the Peshwa in the popular perception. He cannot reject the popular call to lead his own people. However, it is very clear from Malgonkar's narrative that he is led rather than leading, that he is less a man doing than a man suffering. That is quite in character, because that is how he has been brought up.