

**MYTH, RITUAL AND POLITICS : THE NATURE  
OF VIJAYANAGARA KINGSHIP**

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DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled "Myth, Ritual and Politics: The Nature of Vijayanagara Kingship" submitted by Sanjay Kumar Gautam is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of this university. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university and is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Anurag', with a horizontal line at the end.

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## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation has its origin in two statements made by two different persons in two different contexts, separated by more than a millennium. The contexts are that of the Mauryan and the Vijayanagara empires. The persons are Kautilya and Fernao Nuniz and the statements are (1) "all the officers should assemble with sealed accounts and with balances to be paid in the treasury "on the occasion of what has been identified by Heesterman as the Varunapraghasa festival,<sup>1</sup> and (2) "some say that they do this (Mahanavami) in honour of the nine months during which our lady bore her son in the womb; others say that it is only done because at this time the captains come to pay their rents to the king".<sup>2</sup>

These two apparently simple and matter of fact observations (in the case of Kautilya it was more of an injunction) if given their due attention, which they actually always deserved, turn into a serious question awaiting an answer from the historians. What the two above mentioned statements, one an observation and the other an injunction, second to say is that the yearly payment of dues to the king were to be made on the occasion of a festival,

the Varunapraghasa in the case of Kautilya and the Mahanavami in the case of Nuniz.

The questions that these two observations seem to throw up are: why in a text (Arthasastra) where in fact it would seem that Kautilya would prefer his king to break out from the sacrality or divinity of the kingship as a basis of the state, the occasion for the collection of taxes, which in a sense is the successful culmination of a period of politics, is organised around a royal ritual, which apparently is religious in nature? Why this culmination of politics in and through a ritual event? Why this 'fall' (of politics), as it goes against the professed intents of the Arthasastra, in the lap of religion? It would seem that deep in the Arthasastra, there is a dharmastra which, while dealing with rituals, rationalises it as politics -- i.e. where rituals and politics meet. Was this meeting together of ritual and politics a mere accident or a coincidence or did they have an 'elective affinity' between them with a deeper logic behind it? Were the rituals and politics opposed or antithetical to each other? Or was it that the difference between ritual and politics was only that of form and not of essence? How do we place the king in this context who was also the chief celebrant, together with his being a political head to whom the taxes were paid? Was he a ritual king or political king? The whole dissertation would be in

a way the pursuit of these questions and their possible answers.

From the above observation it would appear that there is a common ground where ritual and politics meet. And, as we know, in the process of performing these rituals many myths were recited, which provided these rituals a meaningful background, which in turn, make the rituals intelligible. Therefore it appears that in the process of performing a particular ritual all three, namely ritual, politics and myths join together, thereby, forming a whole, and, hence, could be studied as such.

But what we see in the writings on myths, rituals and politics is just the opposite. Rarely, if at all, do we find any study which has attempted to explain and interpret them as a single whole. They tend to split them into three different and independent fields of study and thereby not only distort the meaning but their (myths, rituals and politics) actual unity.

The early indologists like Max Mueller, Hillebrandt, Keith and others not only split them but, as it appears, never tried to make any connection whatsoever in all three of them.

The later writers, among whom Dumont and

Heesterman figure prominently, operate on the dualism of ritual and politics.<sup>4</sup> Instead of unity between ritual and politics, they see only opposition. In their writings it would appear, that ritual or politics can exist only at the cost of each other. Whereas politics divides the people, ritual brings them together. Whereas politics only generates conflicts, ritual generates solidarity. Here we can see the impact of Durkheim,<sup>5</sup> according to whom rituals perform the function of bringing about solidarity among the people. The fact that both these elements of ritual and politic united in the king during a royal ritual does not seem to bother them.

Hocart,<sup>6</sup> on the other hand, finds a continuity between ritual and politics, but in such a way that politics is swallowed by ritual. Politics becomes the continuation of ritual and both of them work for the general good of the society. Herein Hocart betrays his liberal humanist notion of state where power as constitutive of politics is missing. The same notion of politics and ritual seems to be at work in Stein's formulation and characterization of medieval south Indian state as a ritual sovereignty,<sup>7</sup> where even the relationship between the king and his subordinates is reduced to a ritual relationship.



David Shulman whose writings on South India myths are a landmark in a way, tends to treat the myths independently and out of the context of politics and ritual and thereby presents an image of the king which, as it appears, is more aesthetic than political in character. Although he brings out the paradoxical character of the kingship, his tendency to see myths in isolation prevents him from seeing the ritual as a mechanism, in and through which this paradox is maintained and resolved simultaneously.

Shulman shares his neglect of rituals with structuralism. What structuralism basically does in its analysis is that it brings out the structure of a myth which organises it in terms of various pairs of binary oppositions, like Deva-Asura, Grama-Aranya, Male-female, sky-earth etc. and stops at that. These binary oppositions are taken as a matter of fact, as if they were natural or god given and were not produced and reproduced in society and sustained by ideological needs.

Moreover, according to Levi-strauss, whereas scientific concepts can and do generate events, the myths cannot. According to him myths are the conceptualization of events. Therefore, myths are reduced to a position where they are vast passive receptions of events. But as we will

see that myths also can generate events in the form of rituals and Levi-Strauss can ignore this only by refusing to accept rituals as events.

This problem of structuralism came to the surface when J.B. Long<sup>10</sup> while trying to use Levi-Straussian structuralist method to analyse and explain the churning of the ocean myths came to the conclusion that this myth was not a myth in a Levi-Straussian sense; that it was actually the enactment of ritual in and through a myth, and finally that Indian myths can not be understood outside the context of rituals.

In the process of his analysis of the above myth, however, Long comes to one more very significant conclusion that in Indian myths, seemingly binary oppositions are not opposed to each other but rather, in the process of ritual, either of these is and can be transformed into the other. Therefore, binary oppositions like, Deva-Asura are often a case of transformation rather than opposition as one can see in the myths relating to Visnu as narrated in the Devi Mahatmya.<sup>11</sup>

The question which, however, we will pose in the process of our analysis of myths and rituals is that how did the transformation, for example, from Asura to Deva take place and through what mechanism. While looking for an

answer to this question we will have in mind Adorno's very significant remark that what myths and epics have in common is domination and exploitation, which in other words is their <sup>12</sup>raison d'etre.

The relationship between myth and ritual can, therefore, be stated thus: Myths seem to form a straight line. They have a beginning and an end which seems to be absolute. Things do not come back to where they start they happen once and for all and seem not to repeat themselves. Rituals on the contrary form a circle. Things come back to where they start.<sup>15</sup> The beginning and end are only halting points and do not represent an absolute break. Things are always in movement on this circular path. Moreover, ritual may be seen as the event itself, whereas myths seem to be a description of events. However rituals as events can not make sense without myths. They are, infact the enactment of the myths which form the plot of the ritual. And therefore, everytime a ritual is performed, a myths is also enacted, and thereby repeated once more as may be perceived in the recitation or narration of the myths of Varuna-Indra and Harischandra - Rohita<sup>16</sup> during the Rajsuya. This repeatability or recurrence of myths for thousands of years make it difficult to nail them down to some calendrical time. Thus rituals may be expected to reveal what myths

seem to conceal, viz., their repeatability, although the characters may vary according to the context.

In the case of royal rituals, with which we are concerned here, the myths underlying the rituals are based on stories of how subjection is made possible, as seen in the Vijayanagar foundation myth and its enactment in the Mahanavami festival ending up with the payment of dues, taxes by the subordinates to the king. Kautilya's injunction i.e. about the payment of 'balances' to the treasury at the end of what is identified as Varunapraghasa festival, which was a part of the Rajsuya, and Nuniz's observation on the Mahanavami festival and its purpose may thus be seen as pointing to the real meaning of the rituals i.e., domination and subordination.

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## CHAPTER I

### Myth, Ritual and Kingship

First of all, in this chapter, we shall try to bring out the salient features of the Mahanavami festival as it was celebrated during the Vijayanagar period, from its description given by Nuniz and Paes, the two Portuguese travellers. Within this festival there were other, independent rituals also being performed simultaneously. These rituals, as we have been able to identify them, are the Rajasuya and the Asvamedha together with the ritual connected with Durga.

After identifying the rituals, we shall try to take up all the three rituals, separately one after the other, and try and analyse them.

For explaining these rituals, we shall use the myths that form the background to these rituals and analyse them in the light of and on the basis of the discussion that we had in the general introduction to this dissertation. But for the Asvamedha ritual we shall use the ritual text itself, namely, the Satapatha Brahmana, because, we think that this ritual text brings out the nature and character of the Asvamedha more clearly and exhaustively than any particular myth related to this ritual, like the Asvamedha

celebrated after the war in Mahabharata by Yudhisthira, which has been described at great length in Asvamedha Paravan of Mahabharata.

After analysing and explaining all these rituals we shall take up the Vijayanagara foundation myth and try to show that the general pattern of this myth is the same as we have seen in other rituals, and we shall conclude this chapter with that.

The sequence of the myth to be discussed would be like this, 1. the Rajasuya, 2. the Asvamedha, 3. the Devi-Mahatmya and lastly, 4. the Vijayanagar foundation myth. This order is based on the chronological order of these texts.

A detailed narration of these myths following the texts have been given in the appendix.

### The Mahanavami Festival

Here we shall single out the essentials of the festival as reported by Nuniz and <sup>1</sup>paes. As Nuniz reports that some of the natives held the view that the nine days of the festival represented the nine months that our Lady bore her son, while, On the other hand, some of them thought that this festival was organized only because captains came to



pay their rents to the kings during this period.

The question is whether the two above mentioned observations, make sense or have any inter-related meaning. How do we account for this symbolism of birth of the king at the end of this festival? Why is this occasion chosen for the transaction of revenue or rent and royal insignia, as actually did happen at the end of the festival? Is it something external or accidental to the logic of the ritual, or do they fit into it? These are the questions which will remain unanswered right now and will be taken up later when we discuss the myth in the second section of this chapter.

When the king enters the shrine it is said to be covered with the curtains. According to Dharmasastra, Durga goes to sleep for a certain period every year and it is during this festival that she is woken up. It seems that shrines being covered on all sides symbolizes Durga's sleep and king when he enters the shrine does then worship, the Durga wakes up which is symbolised by the lifting of the curtains. With the lifting of the curtains, animal sacrifices to the idol begin. One can interpret it that the waking up or darsan of the idol is achieved not only through worship but also <sup>through</sup> animal sacrifices. If we follow the substitution logic of ritual, then it would mean that idol's darsan is achieved by king's own sacrifices who is

here substituted by various kinds of animals. King once does sastangadandavat to the idol. King seems to be only worshipping the idol and the idol seems to be that of Durga.

Brahmans were present generally around the idol when in the morning king goes inside the shrine to worship the idol, and the king does the worship in their presence. They are the ones who carry the idol from the shrine in the house of victory to the platform and bring it back when the celebrations are over. They are also said to fan the idol kept in the throne with the horsetail plumes. However, they are never seen worshipping the idol. It's only their physical presence around the idol that seems to be prominent here. However, they are shown worshipping, if we accept it thus, the king. After the king witnesses the sacrifices of animals and goes up to the platform brahmans already standing there then throw roses on the king. There at another moment in the festival brahmans are said to be fanning the king together with the idol with a horse plume. However the most prominent example in this respect is worship of the horse who is identified with the king with cooked rice, flowers etc. Here brahman's image as a servant of the king and not his superior seems to be prominent.

It seems that in the ritual space, what the idol

is to the king, the king is to his subordinates. The king worships the idol, the subordinates make salaam to the king. After finishing the fire-ritual king comes to the pagoda and there some of his favourites make salaam to him and then enter Captains and chief people and make their salaam to the king and some present gifts to him, and with it, the morning session gets over. In the afternoon session of the ritual also, Captains and chiefs enter and make their salaam while the king is sitting in front of the idol. We can easily see the parallel between the king making sastangadandavat to the idol and his subordinate chief making salaam to him. The king worships the idol, the subordinates worship the idol in the king. Here as we can see two stories are being enacted together - in one of these the characters are the idol and the king, in the other they are the king and his subordinates. Do the gods and kings have the same tale to tell? Do they share their biography? Doesn't God say "I will appear among men as king'. But what is he among the gods?

As Nuniz remarks, "during these nine days they are compelled to search for all things which will give pleasure to the king". Hundreds of women dancers dance all through the three phases of ritual everyday, clad in colourful clothes and dazzling garments that Paes describes so skillfully. Each captain erects a toranadvara (Paes calls it scaffolding and Nuniz castles) to welcome the king.

Every chief and captain, even the ones who are on the war front, send a triumphal car, well decorated which moves around the place where the king sits and goes back. Every officer of the city is bound to be present there at the time of the festival. It is during this ritual that exchange of royal emblems and rents take place. "The greatest mark of honour that the king of Bisanaga confers on a noble consists of two fans ornamented with gold and precious stones, made of the white tails of certain cows; he gives them bracelets also. Everything which the noble receives is placed on the ground. The king confers a very high honour too, if he permits a certain one to kiss his feet, for he never gives his hands to be kissed by any one. When he wishes to please his Captains, or persons from whom he has received or wishes to receive good services, he gives them scarves of honour for their personal use. This is a great honour and this he does each year to the Captains at the time that they pay him their land rents.

In every action that takes place rank (of king and his subordinates) is visibly present. While the king sits on the upper platform, with very few of his favourites besides and behind him, the rest sit on the ground or verandah. In one instance, Paes himself gets a chance to sit near the king on the upper platform. During the

wrestling while the king sits on the dias and bids to sit wish him three of four others, who according to Paes are kings themselves, and who are also the fathers of his wives. The principal among them is the king of Shrirangapattana and who therefore sits parallel to the king on the other side of the dias, and the rest sit behind the king. Here the highest rank after the king is also the closest to him especially during this ritual. During the wrestling no one, not even the great lords, except the wrestlers and dancing women, are allowed to sit and chew betel. Lastly on the tenth day, when the king goes out for a symbolic war, all the Captains and chiefs range themselves rank wise from the palace to the ritual spot. The higher the rank nearer to the king, the longer the distance (from the king) lower the rank. Rank was almost spatially measurable with the king as its centre. Rank was not only visible but measurable also with the king as one end of the scale.

Wrestling constituted the most important part of the afternoon phase. Wrestlers used to get badly injured. Nuniz and Paes give contradictory information as to who used to get the award, the most injured, the defeated or the winner. It seems to have some ritual function but exactly what, it is not clear. What must be noted is that it is only at this time that king's guards are present in battle outfits. Does this wrestling indicates some ritual war?

All these nine days the king does not sit on the throne and does not wear his crown and anklet. As Paes informs us, in the middle of the house of victory, a dais with a 'throne' of state' on it is placed, and in his chair is kept a goddess. On one side of this throne, on the dais below, is kept a head-dress whose description clearly reveals that it was actually the crown, and on the other side is an anklet, another state jewel worn by the great warriors or the great literary figures and is called 'Virapande'. And the king sits in front of all this, at the edge of the dais. Nuniz gives a very queer reason for king's not sitting in the throne, "... this king does not sit on it, for they say, that whoever sits on it must be a very truthful man, speaks the whole truth, and the king never does so." It seems that for these nine days of the ritual, king symbolically surrenders the throne and the crown to the idol, probably the goddess durga who however is never identified. It was a symbolic loss of sovereignty of the king.

In one of the ritual events there appear nine horses, clad in clothes of the king's colours with many roses and flowers on their heads. One of the horses, which leads the group and on whom the kings are sworn, goes with two state umbrellas of the king, and better decorations than

others. This horse is clearly identified with the king. Then come the priests from inside the palace and they bring rice and other cooked edibles, water, fire, many kinds of scents, and they offer prayers and throw the water over the horse and then withdraw back into the palace. Here the horse's identification with the king and its subsequent worship by the priests with different things specially cooked rice,<sup>2</sup> is enough indications that it was actually a modified version of the Asvamedha Yajna. It's identity as the Asvamedha is further confirmed by the fact of the culmination of the Mahanavami on the tenth day which is similar to the ten days cycle of the Asvamedha.

However the most important is the womens' role in the particular ritual event. Many of them (according to Nuniz there were thirty six queens) come carrying vessels of gold. made of pearls fastened with wax, and a lighted lamp inside it. They proceed three times around the horses and in the end retire into the palace. These women are 'maids of honour' to the queens and on each day one of the queens sends her ladies. The days are already divided between them. As soon as these women retire, the horses also do the same. As far as the presence of the queen's maids of honour,' instead of the queens themselves is concerned, we know that rituals operate on the logic of substitution and

equivalences and, in our case, the maids are sent as the representatives of their queen.

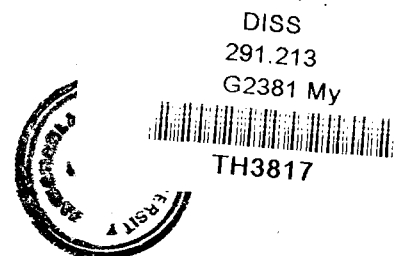
The consummation of the festival takes place on the tenth day of the festival. On this day the idol is carried out of the city and kept in a tent pitched at an uninhabited place. From this tent to the king's palace the Captains range themselves with their troops and array, each one in his place according to his rank. Then the king rides out of the palace and the city and goes to the place where the idol is kept. Here he gets down from the horse and shoots three arrows in three directions. Nuniz thinks that these three arrows were directed at the three hostile forces of Yadil Shah, Kutub Shah and the Portuguese. Nuniz also notes that it was the custom of the kings to make war on the kingdom lying in the direction where the arrow reached furthest. After making this ritual or symbolic war king puts the idol in a Cage made of gold and comes back with the idol to the palace.

Is all this a mere review of the troops, as Nuniz and Paes would have us or does it have any deeper significance. What do the idol's being carried out of the city and then it's being brought back to the city and in the process king's own crossing of the city boundary and his making ritual war signify?



Infact this act of boundary crossing and making ritual war brings it nearer to the Rajasuya ritual than any other, with only one difference, whereas in the Rajasuya proper a chariot is used<sup>3</sup>, in this case it is a horse. But this should not make much of a difference because rituals are rituals precisely because they operate on the logic of substitution and possibly anything could be substituted for anything else. As we have seen in Paes' description that if kings did not like to be sworn on a horse they used elephant for this purpose. A few centuries later the kings of Mysore would use elephant for this act of crossing the boundary and making a ritual war. As we have noted in the beginning also the character in itself is not important, what is important is its placing in 'time - space frame'.

One interpretation could be that during the Muslim invasion, many temples were demolished and idols for their safety had to be taken away to the jungles by bhaktas and after the Muslim threat died out they were carried back and placed in the temple again; that the whole show was a re-enactment of the same event of the past. And as we know Vijayanagara kings enthusiastically donated and participated in the rehabilitation of dilapidated and demolished temples. Then is the king shown as the leader, establisher and protector of Hindu dharma.



It might as well be that because this image of king puts him in the line of the goddess Durga who had defeated the demons, Rama who defeated Ravana and similarly other avataras of Vishnu who defeated the evil forces and saved the Hindu dharma from its immanent destruction. And fully in line with this image, Krshnadeva Raya is said to be the avata<sup>4</sup>ra of Krisna. In the coming sections of the same chapter we will see what it means to be a god.

### Myths Associated With The Rajasuya

The myth of Sunaksepa which is relevant for the Rajasuya has been taken from the Satapath Brahmana translated and introduced by Egging. As Egging himself says this myth used to be recited during the Rajasuya ritual and the choice of this myth rather than the ritual text has been preferred because, firstly, this ritual text has been discussed at great length by Heesterman, and secondly, because this myth reveals, as we shall see, the character and nature of the ritual in a much better way.

In this myth two stories are interwoven into one. Here, a pair of divine beings, Varuna-Indra appear with a pair of human beings, Harischchandra-Rohita. The thing that unites them both is their being kings. In what follows we

will see that both pairs of characters fit into one another; that one of them is more of a shadow of the other than having a separate existence of their own ; that they are basically one.

This myth as we have noted earlier is recited during the Rajasuya which also goes by the name of Varunasava, or consecration of Varuna with whom the sacrifice is identified. What happens in this ritual is as follows :<sup>5</sup> in the first phase of the ritual Varuna is sacrificed which coincides with his unction and there-fore dies as Varuna and takes birth as Indra and goes out on war. In the second phase of the ritual he comes back from war and is sacrificed as Indra and takes birth again as Varuna which coincides with his consecration. In the first phase of the ritual he leaves the throne and therefore leaves the sovereignty which he regains in the second phase of the ritual i.e. with the coming back of Indra and his subsequent sacrifice, Varuna is consecrated or enthroned. He loses his sovereignty as Indra but regains it as Varuna.

This varuna-Indra pair is no discovery of the Rajasuya. They had already been established in the Rig-veda itself. Vasistha himself articulates the relationship between these two sovereign gods thus, - "one of the two gods vanquishes the enemies in battles, while the other ever

sustains the socio-ethical laws"<sup>6</sup>. In other words Indra conquers and Varuna rules. Varuna maintains what Indra acquires by unlawful means; Indra subjugates people, Varuna maintains this subjugation as law or by means of law and therefore Indra is Svaraj and Varuna is Samraj<sup>7</sup>. These two gods represent the two aspects of sovereign functions, (1). Yoga, which means creation or acquisition of things one does not command or possess, and is represented by Indra and (2) Ksema, that is preservation and sustenance of what one has acquired which is done by Varuna. One can see the complementary nature of violence and law. Violence internalised in subjection to Varuna is law. One can understand the nature of peace under Varuna and we know Varuna was often invoked<sup>9</sup> for the promotion of the peaceful activities of the people. The ethic law i.e. Rita or Dharma that Varuna presided over was that of subjection or in other words it represents the internalisation of domination and violence.

There is, however, a difference in the nature of violence indicated by Indra as a warrior and Varuna as one who looked after rta or law. Indra's violence was naked, brutal and where it appeared death was sure to follow; his violence had death-as-fact i.e. he would kill his rival even by breaking the contract of peace with him, as he did with Vrtra. Varuna, on the contrary, waits for the subjects to

break the law; he withholds his violence, restraints it, and whence the law is violated, it appears as punishment. Varuna withholds and restrains his violence to the extent that it is internalized, and when the internalisation fails this violence appears, not as violence but as punishment. It is from fear of punishment (violence, death) that subjects do not violate laws. Varuna manipulates this fear of him; he gives people a chance to internalize violence, while Indra does not give them time to fear him, to internalize violence because his violence is death. In Indra violence is a fact, in Varuna it becomes a threat. The gap that separates violences or death-as-fact from violence and death as-threat is the gap that separates Indra as Svaraj from Varuna as Samraj. And this gap that separates them from each other is filled by politics, or to be more precise, politics as intrigue, or what may be also seen as manipulation. It is therefore essential to understand the nature of law and violence from the vantage point of politics and not from the vantage point of the Dharmasastra which has only internalized the same violence. This insight into the nature of violence will help us understand the politics of the Vijayanagar kings which I shall deal with in the second chapter in detail.

The other pair in the myth is the human pair

Hariscandra and Rohita. The details of this part of the myth are given in the appendix-1. Here it may be pointed out that Hariscandra stands for Varuna and Rohita for Indra. It would also seem that just as Rohita was the son of Hariscandra, Indra could also be taken to be son of Varuna. However, in the Rajsuya ritual this relationship is expressed symbolically, but the myth being a story takes it literally and genetically. Even in the case of Hariscandra and Rohita what appears to be symbolic relationship is taken to be literal and genetic in the myth.

In the rituals the act of violence is expressed through symbolic killing which is actually nothing but using death as a threat whereas the real killing would be death as a fact. In this sense there is a continuity between ritual and general political practice in the period under study viz., Vijayanagara empire. It is through death as a threat that the king could acquire subjects.

The myth of Harischandra and Rohita also talks of Harischandra being seized with dropsy (a disease of the & to reach) when Rohita is still away in the Jungle and does not return. Once he returns with the substitute as a brahman boy, Harischandra is cured. A somewhat similar occurrence may be recognized in the case of Varuna also, as mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana in relation to a Gumbaka<sup>10</sup> who is

equated with Varuna. Here Varuna seems to be afflicted with skin disease.

Varuna's affliction with skin disease may also be understood in terms of Vishnu's affliction with baldness<sup>11</sup> (Sipivistha also means afflicted with skin disease). Here Vishnu's own sacrifice represents the first phase of the ritual and hence the baldness. But with the second sacrifice his baldness disappears<sup>12</sup>.

In the light of what has been seen, by extending this equation Harischandra = Varuna = Visnu, we may interpret this myth as indicating the loss of sovereignty of Varuna when Indra his other self or son leaves him in the first phase of the ritual. In other words Indra-Virya is lost. But when Indra Comes back and is sacrificed symbolically, Varuna's sovereignty (together with health) is restored to him.

The theme of brahmanicide occurs directly or indirectly in many of these myths. In the case of Harischandra it occurs with Rohita's wandering in the Jungle, meeting with brahman and buying back with him the son of that brahman. Indra's warrior phase emphasises apart from other enemies, the killing of Vrtra who is a brahman.

As Heesterman notes there is a difference between

brahman and purohita or priest . He tries to establish this through what he calls pre-classical ritual system in which brahmans and Ksatriyas did not exist as two distinct functional groups but as rivals in the ritual arena, where real violence and not symbolic violence used to dominate. Later, however, after what Heesterman calls an axial - breakthrough, the idea of rivals was eliminated from the ritual arena by means of symbolic equivalences. In other words, the rivals in the preclassical system become the brahmans as officiating priests in the classical system. The rivals in the pre-classical system (bearers of brahman or power) become the officiating priests in the classical system in which the distinction between the brahman - priest and Ksatriyas is established.

The possibility of the rivals being made into subject is illustrated also by another myth which narrates Prajapati's victory over death as a rival.<sup>14</sup> Here also it is achieved by means of symbolic equivalences by which the rival's power can be made subservient. In the same way as death, the rival (here the brahmana) can be dealt with virtually without his active participation. Thus the brahmans who were the rivals in the preclassical rituals have as priests become subjugated.

If one tries to locate the Varuna - Indra myth in



a ritual context a parallelism may be established between Varuna - Indra and Purohita brahman, which would help to explain the warrior - Indra phase, in which brahmanicide is indicated. In the first phase of the ritual sacrifice of Varuna, his birth as Indra coincides with the existence of brahman as a rival in the warrior - Indra phase. But in the second phase of the ritual the brahmana is transformed into purohita coincides with Indra's own transformation back into Varuna as a king. Here the priests become subjects through rituals while earlier as brahmans they were rivals. The details of the story of Indra and Rohita would imply that brahmans in the Jungle are defeated in the warrior phase and brought back to ritual arena as purohitas. They also show that the brahman boy who was brought for sacrifice but whose sacrifice was averted by the divine intervention preferred to stay back with the priests as purohita, rather than return to the Jungle as brahman and being killed. Here one can see the politics of symbolic death or death as threat which creates subjects for the king.

Even as in the case of the Asvamedha, the royal rituals represent expiation rituals for brahman slaughter. The first phase of Varuna - Indra myth coincides with warrior or Indra phase of the ritual in which the slaughter of brahman or brahmanicide is introduced in the myth but averted through divine intervention only to emphasise the

symbolic nature of sacrifice which is to be expiated through ritual as indicated by the end of the warrior phase. It would therefore, appear that myths, which take the help of divine intervention to resolve the crises, do in fact betray their ritual origins.

The present myth of Varuna-Indra and Harischandra - Rohita achieves its dramatic effect precisely by manipulating the gap between the real and the symbolic sacrifice or in other words myth and ritual. Therefore, the moral of the myth is that human sacrifice has to be condemned. This is nothing new in the context of the rituals because the function of the ritual is precisely to replace the real sacrifice with a symbolic one. It is in this context that we can understand the plight of Rohita and his subsequent running away to Jungle and the shock of brahman boy when they found out that they were really going to be sacrificed.

In royal rituals brahmanicide per se figures but only symbolically, the significance being that the brahman being converted into a purohita or priest is subjugated through ritual killing. Otherwise brahmanicide has little meaning for the sovereignty of the king. The Brahmans as priests are the ideal examples of how violence can be internalized. The brahmans as priests were the ideal and

paradigmatic subjects. The politics of Prajapati's discovery of symbolic equivalences to capture death and therefore incorporate it was nothing less than the discovery of rivals as subjects. And as Heesterman says Prajapati's this discovery marks the axial - break through and we can understand why.

In this context one may also point out that vasistha who explained in the Rigveda the exact nature of relationship between Varuna and Indra was also the first devotee of one of the first kings Varuna as Dandekar<sup>15</sup> observes. It would also be interesting to know that<sup>16</sup> Vasistha had two births, first as a brahman and the second as Purohita, when he is said to have been appointed with the kings Tristu - Bharata on the recommendation of Agastya. Vasistha in his first birth is a brahman and lives beyond this world. In his second birth as a purohita he descends on the earth with the project to save the world from perpetual strife, from the chaos of perpetual war, when there was not occupational distinction between brahman and a Ksatriya who were rivals of each other. And the only way Vasistha could realize his project was his own subjection to the king, as purohita. Peace, harmony and solidarity were all brought about with the loss of freedom that they had as each other's rivals, with a king over them. The discovery

of symbolic equivalences by Prajapati enabled him to bring about solidarity or unity but only with the subjection as its centerpart.

It is in this ritual context that not only two births of Vasistha as a brahman and as a priest can be explained but also the relationship between the king and the brahman also.

Here we can see that brahmans were no mere spectators in the ritual arena, they were in fact part of it, undergoing same kind of ritual process of death and rebirth as the king with only difference that at the end of the ritual while sovereignty is restored to the king, subjection is imparted on the brahmans. Thus ritual was a process of subjection dramatized, replete with politics.

### The Asvamedha

Now we shall discuss the Asvamedha and see that the pattern is the same as in the case of Rajasuya

The Asvamedha is the most important royal ritual. Although it has been dealt with in many religious texts the Satapatha Brahman's account is exhaustive and most extensive. An exhaustive analysis of this ritual is not attempted here, however, a schematic analysis of this ritual

is in order which will try to bring out its essentially political nature.

To put it simply or even better simplistically, the Asvamedha consists of a rite where a horse is let loose to roam and which ends with the horse coming back to from where it had started. The Satapatha Brahmana explains it thus, "Prajapati's eyes swelled; it fell out: thence the horse was produced; and in as much as it swelled (asvayat), that is the origin and the nature of the horse (asva). By means of the Asvamedha, the Gods restore it to its place; and verily he who performs the Asvamedha makes Prajapati complete; and this indeed is the atonement for everything, the remedy for everything. Thereby the gods redeem all sin, yea, even the slaying of a brahmin<sup>17</sup>. And, "But indeed, distinction, royal sway, departs from him who performs the horse sacrifice..."<sup>18</sup> "Asvamedha means royal sway: it is after the royal sway that there strive who guard the horse. Those of them who reach the end bcome (sharers in) the royal sway but those who do not reach the end are cut off from royal sway"<sup>19</sup>. "Prajapati poured forth the life sap of the horse (or Prajapati produced, created the Asvamedha), when poured forth, it went straight away from him and spread<sup>20</sup> itself over the regions. The gods went in quest of it" .

As the text says, Asva was produced when

Prajapati's eye 'swelled' and the text further explains that 'to swell' is the horse's nature. Therefore, it swells, expands and 'spreads itself over all the regions: What could it mean, 'to swell'?

Here a quote from Shulman's Temple Myths might help us understand the nature of this horse which is 'to swell', "... thus the Suksma - linga at Tancavur went on growing in the palm of the founding king; the stone image of the bull Nandin at this shrine continued to grow until a nail was driven into its back; Nellaiautar (Siva at Tirunelveli) in the form of a linga outgrew twenty-one pedestals until a king fearing that worship would soon become impossible, threatened suicide unless the god stopped... The image that grows forever until a nail was driven into its back or some way could be found to stunt its growth is a common motif"<sup>21</sup>. God grows until a nail is driven into its back or somebody threatens to commit suicide. The image of the god grows out of the shrine and threatens to encompass the whole world with a flood of stone but if a nail is driven into its back or somebody threatens to commit suicide the god withdraws back into the shrine and that is how the world was saved. As we can see the god is confined in the shrine; he is imprisoned. God's presence is a threatening presence and he has to be cut to size for the

humanity to survive. But does not he come prowling out of the shrine? A nail has to be driven into his back, the text says, which is nothing other than what we have seen in the previous cases as in that of Varuna, the God's sacrifice. And is God alone sacrificed? No, the devotee also threatens to commit suicide, a way of saying symbolic sacrifice. The God withdraws into his shrine as God whereas the devotee comes out as a devotee. But what were they to each other before this compromise was achieved? They were enemies. They confront each other as death confronts life. And after the symbolic sacrifice on both the sides, life is restored to both of them, death is overcome, but with a difference: one of the erstwhile enemies becomes God and the other devotee. As enemies or bitter rivals they were equal, now the devotee worships the God. Is there any other way one can explain this? God is a 'dangerous divinity'.

And if the king is called God it is in so far as he becomes king through the same process. As we have quoted earlier, the Satapatha Brahma says, to repeat, "Prajapati's eye swelled; it falls out; thence the horse was produced; and in as much as it swelled (asvayat), that is the origin of the horse (asva). By means of the Aswamedha the gods restored it to its place...." Prajapati's eye swells, falls out and 'spreads over all the regions' as horse. And as to why it spreads over all the regions, it is because

"Aswamedha means royal sway: it is after this royal sway that these strive who guard the horse. And we know that the horse is nothing but Prajapati after his first sacrifice. The text says, "By means of Aswamedha the Gods restored it to its place" which is to say that the horse is restored to Prajapati as his eyes and with it, as it would logically follow, the 'royal sway' is established, Prajapati becomes the king. Prajapati's becoming king coincides with his second sacrifice as horse and its being restored to him as his eyes.

But what happens before the horse is turned back into the eye and royal sway is established? What does the horse do? "... and this (Aswamedha), indeed, is atonement for everything. Thereby the gods redeem all sin, yea even the slaying of a brahmin". But when are these sins, including the slaying of a brahmin, committed and who commits them? Of course, not by the horse as the eye of the Prajapati because this is precisely the task of turning the horse back into prajapati's eye whereby gods redeem their sins. Then the sins must have been committed by the eye as horse of after the first sacrifice of Prajapati after which he spreads himself over all the regions. It is during this period that he does the brahmin slaughter and with his second sacrifice which is simultaneous with his turning back



from the horse to the eye, he redeems all his sins or expiates them. Prajapati's first sacrifice and his subsequent transformation into a horse is simultaneous with his brahmin slaughter and second with his expiation. The sin that Prajapati commits after his first sacrifice he redeems or expiates with and after his second sacrifice.

But why does brahmin slaughter take place at all that it should be expiated? "Prajapati produced the sacrifice (that is, the Aswamedha sacrifice, and thus the immolation or emptying out of his own self). His greatness departed from him and entered the great sacrificial priests. Together with the great priests he went in search of it, and together with the great priests he found it..."<sup>22</sup> Prajapati's greatness enters into the four officiating priests and this is simultaneous with his loss of royalty or sovereignty,"... indeed distinction, royal sway, departs from him, who performs the horse sacrifice."<sup>23</sup> Prajapati's 'greatness' and 'royal sway' departs from him and enters into the four officiating priests which is nothing but the transformation of priests into brahmins and thereby his transformation into the rival of the erstwhile king Prajapati who now becomes one of the rivals. The uncrowned king becomes the rival of the priest-turned-brahmin. And when Prajapati"...Together with the great priests went in search of it (his 'greatness', 'royal sway' or crown) and

together with the great priests found it", he actually went to battle with these priests turned brahmin who were now his rivals and after he had vanquished them (which is brahmin slaughter in the ritual) which would be brahmins coming back to the position of priests.

The Satapatha Brahmana proudly says that "Indrota Daivapa Saunaka once performs this sacrifice for Genamageya Parikshita, and by performing it he extinguished all evil doing, all brahmin-slaughter; and, verily, he who performs the Aswamedha extinguishes all evil doing all brahman-slaughter. <sup>24</sup> Then, boasting, it tells us that, "Mundibha Audinya it was he who discovered this atonement for slaying the brahmins; and when offers the oblation to Brahmahatya he prepares a remedy for the slayer by satisfying Death himself with an oblation and making a protection for him (the slayer)" and then adds" At whosoever's Aswamedha, therefore, this oblation is offered, even if in after; times any one in his family kills a brahmin, he thereby prepares a <sup>25</sup> remedy (expiation) for him. But we know what is the politics of atonement and expiation. This atonement and expiation is nothing but a way of saying that the horse gives up its predatory nature and transforms itself into the eye of the Prajapati and thereby becomes a king and a protector. Here, protection would means restraining the use

of violence. This restraining of violence is achieved by the Brahman's readiness to accept the subjection to the king as a priest. The king who 'swells' out of the palace after his first sacrifice coils back into it after the guarantee of the subjection of the brahmin has been made which corresponds with his and the brahman's second sacrifice. Now we can see the parallel between god's growing out of a shrine and king's swelling out of the throne or palace and their subsequent come-back or withdrawal into their respective palaces takes place with exactly the same process which is that of subjection.

It seems that for the time being not only the priests but other sections of the populace are separated from the king when he is uncrowned, subjects together with the priests become free for sometime in the absence of the king. But this absence of the king is no happy absence because his absence as a king coincides with his transformation into a terrible horse who 'swells over all the regions', looking for victims which includes even brahmins. From the passage that I am going to quote, it also appears that four brahmins as four priests represent in the ritual arena four different sections of the subject and their momentary freedom and subsequent subjection represents this process for the whole of the population. "For the priesthood he seizes a brahman, for the brahmin is the

priesthood; he thus joins priesthood to priesthood; for the nobility he seizes a Rajanya for Rajanya is the nobility; he thus joins nobility to nobility; for the Maruts (he seizes) a vaisya, for the Maruts are the clans (peasants): he thus joins the peasantry; for toil (he seizes) a Sudra, for the <sup>26</sup> Sudra is toil; he thus joins toil to toil;...." As we can see the text uses the word 'seizes' and 'joins'. Brahmins are seized and then joined to the priesthood and the same happens with the Rajanya, Vaisya and Sudra. It suggests as if at some point of time in the ritual, priests, rajanya, vaisya and sudra are let free and disjoined. But disjoined from what? Must be from the king, when in the beginning of the ritual it is first sacrificed, he loses his sovereignty with his transformation into a horse. But this freedom is very shortlived and they are again seized back into subjection and thus joined to the king.

### Myth of Durga and Visnu

We shall now discuss the myth related to Durga and Visnu which has been given in the Devi-Mahatmya, which itself constitutes a section in Markandeya Purana, translated by Pargiter.

The myth has been taken up after the Rajasuya and the Aswamedha, because this myth seems to have appeared very

late. Pargiter himself think, on the basis of one of whose copies found in nepal dated 998 A.D., that it can not be later than the ninth century.

Actually in the Devi-Mahatmya there are four myths given but we have taken up for our analysis only one due to relevance for this discussion.

Before we start the proper analysis of this myth, we will bring out its certain important moments:

- i. Visnu woos the sleep of contemplation which is identified as Durga.
- ii. Visnu woos the sleep at the end of the Kalpa when the universe is converted into absolute ocean.
- iii. Two terrible Asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha spring from the root of Visnu's ear.
- iv. Brahma stands on the lotus that grew from Visnu's navel.
- v. The Asuras Madhu-Kaitabha seek to slay Brahma.
- vi. Brahma to wake up Visnu extolls the sleep of contemplation, the goddess.
- vii. The goddess thus extolled by Brahma, withdraws from Visnu.
- viii. Visnu wakes up and kills the Asuras.

As we can see, Visnu goes to sleep at the end of the Kalpa, when the whole universe has been engulfed by the great flood i.e. the universe has turned into an ocean is nothing but the cosmic flood, known in Indian mythology as Pralaya. The ocean which is confined to one part of the universe 'swells' and 'spreads' itself over the whole universe and turns it into an absolute ocean. This turning of the whole universe in an 'absolute ocean'. We should remember that the ocean is the abode of lord Vishnu where he lies on Sesanaga. Our text says that Visnu went to sleep 'stretching Sesa out'. It is actually stretching of Visnu himself as ocean out on the whole universe whereby the existence of the whole world is threatened. Here we must keep in mind the symbolism of 'swelling', 'spreading', 'growing', etc. which we have discussed in our previous myths, to understand the nature of this 'stretching out of Visnu'.

But the creation is beset not only with the danger of an absolute flood but also by its (flood's) personal manifestation in Madhu-Kaitabha where the creation itself is represented by Brahma who is being sought to be slayed by the two Asuras. Now as is given in the text and we have also noted in the beginning, these two Asuras spring from the root of Vishnu's ear, and thereby are his own manifestations. But, then, a problem crops up immediately:

How do we account for Visnu's waking up and slaying these Asuras who are his own manifestations? Is it not by overcoming the Asuras, Visnu is overcoming himself? But how do we make sense out of it, Visnu overcoming himself! What could it mean?

Now we shall turn to one moment of this myth which might give us a clue to this puzzle; our text says that when the fierce fight between Visnu and Asuras was going on, the Asuras, exceedingly frenzied with their power, deluded by the great illusion, exclaimed to Kesava, 'to choose a boon from us'. The God spoke, 'be ye both content with me now; ye must be slain by me; What end is there of any other boon here? Thus much indeed is my choice here", and then Visnu "cutting them with his discus clove them both asunder, heads and buttocks". The text says that the battle went on for five thousands of years and Visnu could not kill them and when he finally managed to kill them it is only after getting as a boon from the Asuras their won death. What in effect our text is saying is that the Asuras who could not be killed by Visnu were killed by their own boon to Visnu as their own death. It is more a cause of suicide or self sacrifice than anything else. Things become a bit clearer when we see the Bombay edition of the Devi Mahatmya quoting Asuras as saying to Visnu. "We are pleased at the battle

with thee; thou are worthy of praise as death to us". Therefore, the Asuras who could not be killed by Visnu died of their own will, it was their self sacrifice. But as we have seen Asuras as flood are Visnu's own manifestations, they have "sprung from the root of Visnu's ears". And therefore it is nothing but Visnu's own self-sacrifice.

But what about Brahma? How do we account for his position in the myth? As the text says, Brahma here represents creation. In the text he is said to be the creator. As we have seen the whole creation as universe or world is threatened by the Great flood which is a manifestation or 'stretching out' of Visnu himself. Visnu confronts the creation, universe or the world as death confronts life. The creation is also represented in a human or anthropomorphic form as Brahma who is threatened by another of Visnu's manifestations as Asuras. Again, Visnu confronts Brahma as Death confronts Life. And Visnu commits self-sacrifice only when Durga who is, as we shall see, his own essence, Shakti, is extolled by Brahma, a way of saying that Brahma worshipped Visnu, which as we have seen earlier is a form of accepting subjection. While discussing all this we must bear in mind that Brahma is here representing the creation which itself, not unlike Brahma, is threatened by the Great Flood or the 'stretching out of Visnu' himself in the form of the ocean.



But one fact remains unaccounted for and that is, how is Brahma shown to be born out of Visnu? If we remember, what we discussed in the case of Vasistha, as to how he was born from Varuna and Urvashi, we can easily see the parallel between him and Brahma. In the meantime we must also be reminded of the fact that Visnu is a paradigmatic king and then we can easily see how this myth has been woven around a royal ritual.

But before we put it in the framework of a royal ritual it would be better to have a clear idea of Durga's position in this myth. Our text Devi Mahatmya makes it clear that she is the essence, energy and strength of Visnu with all the paradoxes generally connected with him. She is said to have appeared in man-lion form (narsimha),<sup>27</sup> generally attached to Visnu. At the end of the Devi Mahatmya<sup>28</sup> she herself says that she would appear again as the offspring of Yasoda's womb in the cowherd Nanda's home, and dwelling on the Vindhya range mountains, she would destroy the Asuras, which again shows clearly her identification with Krisna. All this make it clear enough that she is simultaneous with the avatars of Visnu himself. Gonda also notes "... this lack of clear and definitive distinction made between power of an impersonal character and personal beings with power is by no means an exclusive

characteristic of the Indian culture... this distinction  
remains vague and fluid for primitive thought...<sup>29</sup> and  
"parallel to Indian examples of power's conceived as  
attributes of a deity, but also to assume a personal form  
and to appear as his female partner to found in the religion  
of ancient Romans".<sup>30</sup>

Now if we put the whole myth in the framework of  
royal ritual, it would be thus: In the first phase of the  
ritual, there takes place the first sacrifice of Visnu,  
which in our text has been symbolically expressed as Visnu's  
going to sleep. After his first sacrifice Visnu dies as  
Visnu the King, takes birth as Asuras and threatens the life  
of Brahma, and also stretches himself out on the whole  
universe as ocean and threatens to submerge it. Here there  
is a homology between Asuras and the flood on the one hand  
and Brahma and the world as a creation on the other hand.  
Brahma's condition is expressive of the condition of the  
universe and the same is true for the Asuras and the flood.

But with the first sacrifice Brahma is also  
discharged or released from Visnu which coincides with, what  
we have seen in previous myths, priests turning into brahman  
and therefore rivals of Visnu turned Asura. The Brahman  
finds himself face to face with death and feels himself  
unequal to the task of a rival.

Brahma out of fear refuses to take up this task of a rival in confronting death as Asuras and surrenders to it which is expressed symbolically in his exhaltation of Visnu, or Durga which amounts to the same. His surrender to Visnu to be more exact to Asuras could be expressed in ritual terminology as his sacrifice which would coincide, in the context of other known royal ritual, with brahmanicide and the subsequent self sacrifice or sacrifice of Asuras and redemption of Visnu with its expiation and with it the second phase of the ritual gets over. Visnu is redeemed as a king and Brahma is assimilated into him as a subject. The first phase of the ritual is sovereignty lost and the second phase of it is sovereignty regained.

Here as we can see, Brahma by his surrender to death-as-fact reduces it to death-as-a threat but by the same token alleviates it to the position of a king. Subjects are subjects precisely because they feel more comfortable to live under death-as-a threat than to face the death-as-a fact and thereby die as a hero, as for the king, he is more interested in ruling than killing people. Protection of the people by the king amounts to nothing more than ruling over them, maintaining it and protecting his own kingship from being taken away by other rival kings. Symbolic death on the part of the people is nothing but

their life as subjection. As we shall see in the last section of this chapter and the second chapter of this dissertation that politics in the period under study, more or less, amounted to management of violence. And it seems, if we have to understand medieval South Indian kingship it would be better to see it also from the perspective of violence and its management through intrigue together with an economic perspective. Atleast it will provide us a different vantage point in understanding the nature of medieval South-Indian kingship.

### Foundation Myth

Finally, we will discuss the Vijaynagara<sup>31</sup> foundation myth as given by Nuniz . In the course of our interpretation we will be making some observations by way of comparison of the hero of this myth with Karna as they seem to share some qualities.

In what is going to follow we see a drama being enacted with Anegundy fortress as the stage, the hero is unnamed and is known as 'king of Bisanga' or 'King of Vijaynagar' and the time is of the Muslim invasion from Delhi. "Then the king of Bisanga, seeing the determination of the soldiers of the king of Delhi that they would never leave the place without making an end of those whom he had

with him in the fortress, made a speech to them all, laying before them the destruction that the troops of the king of Delhi had caused in his own kingdoms... that now there was nothing for them to look to but death... that of the fifty thousand men who had been in the city of Anegundy, he had chosen them alone as his companions and true friends and he begged of them that they would hold fast in death to the loyalty which they had borne him in their lives; for he hoped that day to give battle to the king of Delhi....". Here we have a hero (King of Vijayanagara) face to face with death in the form of a king of Delhi. Being a hero not versed in the technique of symbolic or ritual death, preparing to take on it as death-as fact, never flinching an inch from it as we have seen in our previous cases Brahma or brahmans doing. He is taking on death-as fact and says "there is nothing for them to look to but death". Being a hero unknown to the art of subjection he is completely blind to compromise as an option. And in this great spectacle of death which is going to follow, he does not have soldiers for whom doing battle is a job and they are paid for it - but "Companions and true friends" who "would hold fast unto death". And when they heard the decision and determination of their leader to die than to surrender the enemy, "All of them were very content and glad at this" and "in a short space were all armed".

For these heroes death was not something opposed to their life but was the consummation of it all. Death was the completion of life itself. With death it would vanish, leaving no trace behind for "the king made them another speech, saying, 'Before we join battle we have to wage another war with our sons and daughters and wives, for it will not be good that we should allow them to be taken for the use of our enemies (and) I will be the first to deal with my wife and sons'. 'At this time they were all standing in a large open space which was before the citadel and thereby by the hand of the King were slain over fifty of his wives and some sons and little daughters; and same was done with their own hands by all who had wives and sons who could not fight". They left no successor no heir to avenge their parents' death. Not unlike Karna who also left no heir, very unlike Pandavas, and if he was not married it was not just an accident of history.

How contrary to the death of a hero was the death of a king who, when captured on the battlefield by one of his erstwhile allies and now enemy, addresses him "it is not proper that you who had been styling yourself my son, should behave in this manner... you do not recoil from treachery against your father and teacher... All my army is destroyed; it is lying dead on the battlefield. I trusted you

considering you to be my son, and believed that you would not deceive me.. well, it has taken place somehow. As you are my son don't let me fall into the hands of the enemy and be beheaded, but shoot my head off with my own cannon".<sup>32</sup>

And thus it was done. Here is a king, knowing well that his erstwhile muslim ally and son, as he would call him, has already betrayed him and is his enemy now, wants to die with an illusion that the king who is going to succeed him will be his own son, that reality was just the contrary was not enough to open his eyes. He, while dying still wanted to live as a king in his own son. On the one hand we have a hero who knowing well that nothing is going to survive him, that the death was an end of it all or better he himself made it sure that nothing survives him, accepted death joyfully; on the other hand we have a king who reluctantly accepted death with the illusion that after all death is only an interval, that he is again going to live in and through his son as king. Such is the force of the illusion that even the real death is turned into a symbolic death, just an interval, immortality is restored to the king as a king. The Hero accepted death knowing that it was his end, the king reluctantly accepted it because he thought it was only a momentary break. It is in this perspective that we can understand Surath who when asked by Durga to choose a boon he "chose a kingdom that should not perish in another

life. And the gods are no different, they keep descending on the earth in different avatars as a king. It is this contrast in their attitude towards death that separates king from a hero. The hero knows only one death and that is death-as fact and not death-as threat which would mean constant living under its shadow as a subject.

But history had something else in store, "where these nuptial feasts, (slaying of wives, sons and daughters), so abhorred of all, were fulfilled they opened the gate of the fortress, and the enemies forthwith entered and slew all of them except six old men who withdrew to a house". And therefore 'king of Bisanga' was deceived if he thought that all of them were companions of his death. Six of these had betrayed him and 'were made captive and were taken before the king (and) one of them was a minister of the kingdom, another the treasurer, and the others were leading officers in it'. But the six who betrayed their leader when he was alive begged his deadbody from the king of Delhi. "(king of Delhi) ... gave orders that bodies should be burnt; and the body of the king (of Bisanga), at the request of those six men, was conveyed very honourably to the city of Nagundy. From that time onward that place became a burial place of the kings. Amongst themselves they still worship the king as a saint". And so the alive king was let die and the dead king was being resurrected contrary



to the life and death of a hero. And this process of resurrection would soon be complete. When the unrest was becoming uncontrollable in the newly conquered region "the councillors decided that the king should command the presence of the six men whom he held captive and that he should learn from them who was at that time nearest to the king, or in anyway related to the king of Bisanga, and, ... no one found to whom by right the kingdoms could come, save to one of the six.. who at the time of destruction of Bisanga had been minister of the kingdom. He was not related by blood to the king.. but (it seemed) good that his highness should give the kingdom to that one. At once the six captives were released and set at liberty, and many kindness and honours were done to them and the governor; and he took them oaths and pledges of their treaty as vassals..". While the hero left none as his heir, none was his blood relation to the king, but heirs had resurrected him as their predecessor. Its not always predecessors who choose their successor, many a times it's successor who chooses his heir and anybody can see it in the genealogies of themselves fabricated by the kings. While the hero defied death by accepting it, those who had runaway from it became kings. A tragedy was resurrected as its own parody. The experts of symbolic death had been put at the helm of everything who knew how to wield death as a threat over

their subjects and they were the ones who had succumbed to it when they were made captives and vassals of the king of delhi and had run away from death as a fact. As we can see symbolic death is not just confined to rituals it is part and parcel of general political practice. The heroes who were victorious in their death, had lost with their ressurection. Their attitude towards life and death was antithetical to the existence of state. No wonder Karna was abandoned and dispensed with at his very birth. In our case the ressurection of the hero as an ancestor of the newly crowned king was an indication that heroic age in South India was coming to an end.

But the thing which is to be noted here is that with the ressurection of the dead hero, his real death was turned into a symbolic death, which is also reflected in would be king's conversion to Islam, again a form of symbolic death. If we see the whole story from the point of view of the would be king, who finally became king, it was a mere temporary loss of sovereignty. But as is true for any symbolic death, and as we have seen in our analysis of rituals and myths also, it coincides or is simultaneous with a new birth which in this case would be his conversion to Islam and his acceptance of vassalship to the King of Delhi. This acceptance of vassalship completes his identification with the king of delhi and thereby also with his atrocities.

And we know that Muslim kings were projected as predators. because of the destruction they had caused and their reign of adharna. "Earth is no longer the producer of wealth. Nor does Indra give timely rain. The god of death takes his undue toll"<sup>34</sup>. "Nature itself has forgotten its unusual course. "The river Kaveri uncursed by proper bunds or dams have become deflected very much from her time honoured course and flows in all sorts of wrong directions<sup>35</sup> as if it is imitating the Turuskas in their action".

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They were like demon whom Krisna had killed; those "Turuskas with those swinging tufts, those blood-shot<sup>37</sup> eyes, those ferocious beards and furious-browed foreheads" Dharma was in great distress, "The kali age deserves now deepest congratulations for being at the zenith of its power, hushed is the voice of dharma.. and discounted is nobility of birth"<sup>38</sup>. The water of Tamraparni which was once white with sandal paste rubbed away from the breasts of charming girls is now flowing red with the blood of cows<sup>39</sup> slaughtered by the miscreants". The death was all around, "the cocoanut trees have all been cut and in their place are to be seen rows of iron spikes with human skulls dangling at the points"<sup>40</sup>. But the worst affected were the brahmans, "In the highways which were once charming with the sounds of anklets of beautiful women are now heard ear-piercing noises

of brahmins being dragged bound in iron fetters".<sup>41</sup> One  
could see "the tears of brahmans taken as prisoners".<sup>42</sup>

Temples were in a bad condition. "Those temples which were once resonant with the sounds of Mridanga drums are no echoing in fearful howls of jackals".<sup>43</sup> "The foldings of their doors are eaten up by woodworms. The arches over their inner sancturaries are rent with wild growth of vegetation".<sup>44</sup> In Srirangam the lord of serpents is seen warding off the tumbling debris of brick with his hood lest their fall disturb the sleep of yoga in which Hari is wrapped up there".<sup>45</sup>

As we can see Hari is again wrapped up in the sleep of Yoga. Brahma with his creation was again in danger of total destruction. But demon, as we have seen, was Hari himself. In our case it was the king himself who with his identification with the invaders had turned against the people whom he had ruled over. The king himself had turned into a predator. He himself had become the horse of Prajapati who swelled and spread itself over all the regions, or as the image of Nandin which had refused to be confined in a temple or he was like becoming Indra of Varuna himself or becoming Rohita of Harischandra. As we have seen in the case of the Aswamedha and Rajsuya, here also the theme of brahminicide is prominent and the total picture

that has been painted is that of chaos and disorder and destruction which coincides in our study with the first phase of the ritual of the first sacrifice, which is also the loss of sovereignty. It is during this period that subjects are let free for the time being, which is also reflected in Purohitas becoming brahmans. But as we have noted earlier also, the absence of sovereign and therefore subjection is no happy experience because this absence of the sovereign as protector is his presence as a predator. Letting free would here mean free to be the rival of the king which is no easy task. Here the king as predator faces his erstwhile or would be subjects as death faces life. People find themselves face to face with death itself in their king as predator. The king as predator is death to the people. Here people are face to face with death-as-a-fact and therefore with real death.

Here one can raise the question that after all whatever happened was real and does not come under the framework of ritual. Here real would mean real violence. But as we have seen in the analysis of Rajsuya myth that this is actually the crisis of ritual itself and is an inbuilt one, where it tends to spill over its rigid boundary of symbols and become real which is reflected in Rohita's refusal to his sacrifice, and the same effect could also be produced if the horse in Aswamedha were to refuse to turn

back.

But as we saw in the case of Rajsuya also the crisis was managed finally and this took place with the second sacrifice of the king where he is converted back to Hinduism. As we have in other rituals and myths, this second sacrifice which takes place in the second phase of the ritual also coincides with the redemption of sovereignty. In our case also king's meeting with the saint Vidyaranya and his conversion back to Hinduism is celebrated as part of the king's yearly enthronment or crowning. "And ever since in his (vidyaranya) memory the king of Bisanga on the day when they are to be raised to be kings, have in honour of the hermit, to enter their house (of Vidyaranya) before they enter their own; and they offer many prayers in it and celebrate many feasts there every year". His conversion back to Hinduism was also simultaneous with his recrowning. The predator had again put on the mask of the protector, and with it Varuna was restored back, Rohita had come back and the horse had been restored to Prajapati as his eye. The people were no more faced with the death-as-a fact but only death as a threat which would harm them only when they break the law presided over by the king, and would appear now as punishment.

Now, it is in this perspective that we will place the Mahanavami. Here the king's symbolic loss of

sovereignty, which is reflected in his surrender of crown to the goddess symbolises the first phase of the ritual which starts with the first sacrifice of the king.

This symbolic loss of the crown coincides with king's symbolic birth as a predator, Indra, Rohita, horse or 'muslim' kings (in so far as they were taken as predators), with all the sins generally connected with them; here the king appears as a sinner. His symbolic character is nearer to a bandit.

And the king's going for a ritual or symbolic war is the repetition of the predator's war against the people, in symbols. It is this phase of the ritual which coincides with chaos, disorder, arta, death, adharna etc. But the fact that this is a symbolic war, that he comes back (and does not refuse like Rohita) after this symbolic war is indicative of the fact that ritual boundary is not crossed, that his crossing of the city boundary was only a symbolic one, quite in line with his symbolic loss of sovereignty as against the real loss of sovereignty in which case he would become the real predator.

One can say we have also been making this dualism of real and ritual. What I have tried to show is that 'real' is violence and that ritual is overcoming of violence

via king. If we remember what we have discussed in the Rajsuya myth, Prajapati was able to eliminate the rival in the form of brahman from ritual arena precisely by means of symbolic equivalences. The state itself functioned on this dualism of ritual and real and this is precisely what we have exposed. We have shown that king becomes king only by using real, which is real violence, as a threat; that if violence were to be a violence-as-a fact then it would have created only dead bodies and no subjects. We have also shown that the subjects confront the king as life confronts death and that they are able to defer this death or postpone it for the time being only by their subjection. This subjection which we have also called symbolic death or the postponement or diference of real death is achieved only through investment which might be in the form of taxes.

It is therefore quite in line with the internal logic of the ritual where the subordinates pay their yearly dues to the king. It was their paying dues to the king, which was the guarantee that king would remain confined to the symbolic boundary that is to say that he would become predator for us in a ritual only, and that too for a shortwhile. No wonder, as we have noted in the first section that every subordinate of the king was asked to be present at the time of the festival and even the ones who were on the war front used to send their representatives. As Nuniz



reports, and we have quoted in the first section, that some of the natives held the view that nine days of the festival were for the nine months that their lady bore her son, on the other hand some of them thought that the festival was organised only because captains came to pay their rents to the king during this period.

Now in the light of whatever we have discussed, we can say that both the observations are true. It was during this period that king used to undergo the process of ritual death and rebirth at the end of which the king is born fresh as the protector. This fresh birth of the king as a protector is made possible by their captains' payment of their yearly dues to the king. It is this yearly payment of the dues that is reflected in the ritual as the symbolic death of the one who would pay it, which would result in the symbolic death of the one to whom he pays it.

Therefore as we can see there is a continuity between politics and ritual, that the ritual was the dramatisation of the simple everyday experience of politics. And politics during this period was more of a management of violence through intrigue where death was also used as a threat to bring people and rivals in subordination. This prominence of intrigue is there because actual confrontation or violence had to be avoided to the last.

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## CHAPTER II

### Politics of Manipulation:

#### The 'Rajaniti' of Krishnadevaraya

The nature of medieval Indian state and therefore politics has been a bone of contention among the historians for long and remains so even now. Whereas, the colonial or imperialist historiography saw only chaos and despotism in the name of politics, where the king was divine and therefore absolute and arbitrary in his decisions the nationalist historiography tried to challenge the former by proving that in India also the state or the king ruled or operated through a well organized bureaucracy. This attempt of the nationalist historians got a fillip with the discovery of the Arthashastra, where the divinity of the king was not at all prominent, moreover, it seemed to give an incontestable proof of their wish for bureaucracy.

However, this nationalist historiography came under heavy attack from some historians and sociologists like Heesterman<sup>1</sup>, Burton Stein<sup>2</sup> and Dumont<sup>3</sup>. What is common among all these three is that, as far as politics is concerned it generated only Conflicts and divisions and that the unity was brought about by extra political means of kingship, religion or caste. All three of these seem to

operate on the basis of the dualism of politics and religion or ritual, which were, by definition, incompatible with each other, and therefore politics could never become an important theme in their study. Even Burton Stein, who otherwise has done such exhaustive study of early and late medieval south Indian history, stops with his deconstruction of the notion of bureaucracy, and therefore no wonder that Prof. Chattopadhyaya<sup>4</sup> has called Stein's characterization of state as 'State Sans Politics'.

However, recently some historians have tried to make politics their theme of study, among whom Ronald Inden<sup>5</sup> and Andre Wink<sup>6</sup> are the prominent ones. In Inden, his concept of Imperial formation holds a crucial position, which indicates that the empire was not something static and fixed but something which was always in movement; it was a process. According to him, India, as an imperial formation, consisted of an empire and a number of other kingdoms. It was a state of politics, of rulership that overlapped one another. It was, however, not a static hierarchy. These states constituted and sustained by their ongoing and dialectical and existential reconstituted their relations with one another.

The other historian, Andre Wink, has developed the concept of fitna to explain the logic of state formation in

India. According to him Fitna was the normal political mechanism of state formation or annexation and that fitna implies no more than the forging of alliances where the state organized itself around conflict and remained essentially open-ended instead of being territorially circumscribed.

As one can see, Inden and Wink have been able to provide the Indian polity with a dynamism that is lacking in earlier studies, by freeing themselves from their European context where territoriality of the state was fixed. Whereas early historians, specially Europeans, tried to see it from the western perspective and therefore found only conflicts and divisions, these two historians made an attempt to see Indian polity on its own terms and managed to incorporate its apparently shifting and conflicting character in their concept.

In the case of the of Vijayanagar politics, Nilkanta Sastri<sup>7</sup> and Mahalingam<sup>8</sup> saw only depoliticised bureaucracy, whereas Stein with his dualism of politics and ritual completely bypassed the issue of politics by saying that the relationship between the king and his subordinates was only that of ritual and therefore not political in character.

In what is going to follow an attempt will be made to bring out the nature of state and therefore politics under vijayanagar empire by analysing, interpreting and explaining a contemporary text<sup>9</sup>, a section of the Amuktamalyada, whose authorship although generally attributed to the most famous king during Vijayanagar period Krisnadevaraya himself, remains controversial. The section of Amuktamalyada, which we are going to deal with, has, as given by Nilkantasastri, its title called Rajniti. Its analysis and interpretation would be important, firstly, because it will give us a clue as to how the natives themselves, or to be more exact, the kings, because it is addressed to them, thought of, what they called politics, and, secondly, how they perceived their own relation with their subordinates or hostile kings. This would be primarily a kind of textual analysis, much neglected by historians.

The Vijayanagar kings seem to have been aware of the distinction between a simple warrior or a hero and a politician and chose to identify themselves with the later. Once, the king Krisnadevaraya himself is said to have addressed one of his ministers saying, "so you have explained to me the political ethics in a very lucid manner. As the bees know the scent of flowers from the breeze, I have learnt the politics from you. Infact I have been



transformed into a politician....."<sup>10</sup> . As to from what was the king transformed into a politician, a passage from the Amuktamalyada seems to give us a clue. It says, "A king should not take a vow to make war upon an enemy. By marching with his army upon the enemy he may attain his object or he may fail, or his desire may be fulfilled on some other occasion, though not at that time. Is the king a politician or a lover of war?" As we can see here the king is making a distinction and a contrast between a 'lover of war' and what he calls a 'politician'. what exactly the text seems to convey is that a king should not launch a war without taking into account its pros and cons and if he did not find the situation fit, then he might as well defer or postpone it for some future date. it is king's being a politician that prevents him from indulging in any adventure in the matter of war. In fact what the text is alluding to is that in adverse conditions it is better to avoid war through a compromise than engaging into it only to get ruined. For a king, unlike a hero, there is no absolute chasm that separates victory from defeat, there is always a middle path of compromises where victory and defeat are inseparable. Nothing can provide a better illustration of this attitude of a king as politician towards war than the story handed over to us through Nuniz and discussed in the last section of the first chapter, where a hero in the form

of king of 'Bisanga' when encircled by the enemy's army saw no other way out of the impasse but death, the would-be king chose the way of compromise by keeping himself away from the war and then surrendering himself to the enemy king.

A king should not only be always ready to conclude treaty or compromise with his enemy, but also create conducive atmosphere where his enemy has an easy access to compromise and must not force him to a situation where the confrontation becomes an issue of life and death. According to the Amuktamalyada, "If a king attacks an enemy in places from where he can not escape, he is obliged to turn round and offer battle, when he may either win a victory or die the death of heroes". The king therefore should not only not let himself lapse into heroism but should also make sure from his enemy that he does the same. The battle was a way to reach a compromise and not the complete elimination of his enemy. In this context, with this kind of political ethics, the complete elimination of his enemy would have rendered his politics irrelevant. And therefore, we can say that war was a way to forge new alliances, as is true of the concept of fitna also, which meant forging alliances.

A passage from the amuktamalyada will show how fragile was the balance on which rested the relationship between the two kings. "Like the water that stagnates until

it is set in motion by the arrival of a flood, an invader's forces should march by short stages, for a few days, so that they may get impetus gradually by their conjunction with his other troops. If the enemy's troops are numerous, he should return to the capital, having honoured the enemy with presents". Here, honouring the enemy would mean nothing else than the acceptance of subordination of the king to his enemy. Once, as Firishtah reports, when Ahmed Shah marched with his army to Vijayanagar the king "Dewul Roy sent ambassadors to the sultan entreating peace, to which he consented, on condition that he would send the tribute of as many years as he had neglected to pay, laden on his best elephants and conducted by his son, with his drums, trumpets and all the other insignia of state, to his camp. Dewul Roy unable to refuse compliance, agreed to the demands, and sent his son with thirty favourite elephants, loaded with treasure and valuable effects".<sup>11</sup>

The Amuktamalyada further adds, "But if, on the contrary,, he learns from the spies that the enemy is weak, he should surround him, without allowing him to escape". In this case, as we can see, the king would force his enemy to honour him. If we use Inden's concept of 'scale of forms', and 'scale of politics' then we can see how one polity replaces the other in the hierarchy with which the scale is graduated.

In one passage the Amuktamalyada prescribes, "it is proper that a king should, without coercion, induce a strong neighbour who keeps himself aloof from fear to join him voluntarily like an angler who having allowed a big fish to struggle with the line and pulls it up when it swallows the bait". Here a king is suggested not to use violence or military force directly but use the fear of his enemy of him in such a way that he surrenders voluntarily. It is, as one can see, this skill in manipulating a given situation by which, not only the actual war could be avoided but also the enemy would be brought under subordination, which distinguished the king from a simple warrior.

It further says, "Like an archer, who, holding the arrow steadily in the bow discharges it when he feels sure of his mark, a king should control his wrath against an enemy until the circumstances are favourable for his destruction". The skill of the king as a politician lied in his perception of his enemy's weaknesses and a patient wait for it to surface than a military commander who would fight well.

"If a king feels confident that he can effect the destruction of his neighbour on the frontier, it is only proper that he should do so. Otherwise he should befriend

him. If he becomes hostile, his neighbour on the other side is the proper person to subdue him. Then the king's frontiers become secure without effort". Here we can see the technique through which king wins a war without effort or without ever fighting it, through his skill in politics whereby he uses his neighbour to subdue his enemy. Moreover subjection of his enemy was not the only option, the king could befriend him also. But this friendly coexistence of two kings was only a temporary retreat which would disappear as soon as one of them feels confident enough to subdue the other.

Again the text says,

"Burn the Kingdom of your enemy and seize his forts. If his women fall into your hands, treat them as you would treat your sisters and daughters. In the presence of his enjoys do not utter harsh words about him, for you may be obliged to conclude peace with him".

As we can see every war no matter how much destructive it was, was fought with an eye on compromise and alliance. Here, the king is asked to do whatever he likes with the kingdom of his enemy, except the relatives, specially women, who were not to be eliminated but used as hostages to force out subordination as ransom from his enemy. Once the king Krisnadevaraya himself <sup>12</sup> while on his

campaign against the king of Orissa happened to get hold of the latter's aunt, wife and son whom he treated well and finally managed to have an alliance with the King of Orissa by forcing him, using his relatives as hostages, to offer him his daughter in marriage, which in turn brought peace together with the subordination of the erstwhile enemy, the King of Orissa.

As we can see where politics is a skillful management of violence than anything else. How was this politics realized in actual terms? "On discovering that his enemy extorts money from his subjects, employs despicable persons, makes peace with other kings by surrendering territory and treats with suspicion the people that have done him good, a king should create differences between him and his subordinate chiefs by secret offers to the latter of protection and of jewels set with gems". Here the king's politics lies in taking advantage of the enemy's tyranny over his subjects and ill treatment of his subordinates by creating differences among them and by offering one of the factions protection and wealth. The violence was managed by this manipulation whose main concern was to play one faction of the opponent against the other. It is this capacity for manipulation which separates the king as a politician from a simple warrior or a bandit.

But the border of the kingdom was infested with the bandit tribes whose violence was of a completely different nature. They were more interested in plunder and looting than ruling over the people. They were what Clastres would call antistate. They had only friends and enemies and no subjects or subordinates who as we have seen would be more of an enemy with the mask of a friend than a real friend. Moreover among the tribals the duality of character was the biggest crime. For Krisnadevaraya himself in Amuktamalyada while explaining the nature of tribals says that "Once a hunter armed with bow and arrows paid a visit to another hunter who entertained him by feeding him with milk and rice. The visitor noticed a pot on the hearth in which fibre was boiling and believed that it contained meat. Considering that his host had insulted him, he, forgetting the hospitality, resolved to kill him at a suitable place when the host came out to see him off. On the way, however, when the host sought his permission to go home soon, lest the fibre which was boiling in the pot should be spoilt, he let him go, having realised his own mistake". Then in the same breath the text adds "These forest dwellers who are pleased with even that repast of milk and rice, never act treacherously towards him who hosted them. If these unsophisticated men discover even a very small fault, they become hostile without considering the nature of fault".

These 'unsophisticated' men know no other relationship than that of total friendship or animosity. Subjection as a political experience was absent among them. No wonder the king was hard put to check their violence.

"The attempt to enumerate the crimes of savage tribes inhabiting the hilly tracts is to endeavour to wash the dirt off a wall built of mud. Punishment can not eradicate their crime completely". "The banditchiefs satisfy their sensual desires by raping captive women and with the wealth obtained by the looting of caravans of merchants". "Moreover the affliction of the people cannot be reduced, until the power of these mountaineers (sic) is brought under the control of the crown". These people untamed, unacquainted with the art of politics, i.e. tribesmen, would not be easily brought under the control of the crown.

But whereas the tribesmen were unaware of the art of politics the king knew well enough the logic of their behaviour and knew how to manipulate it to his own interests, for, "if they are brought under the control by an agreement and gifts, they are helpful in invading an enemy's country, and plundering the frontiers. A king who exercises his authority over all can not contemplate the punishment of a thousand".



The text further adds that "The king should somehow dispel their fear, and draw them towards him. Distrust or faith, anger or love, hostility or intimate friendship with them arises out of small causes, as these people are of limited intelligence". As we can see finally the untamed tribals who till yesterday were a constant threat to the functioning of the state were shrewdly manipulated into the contemporary political culture of medieval South India and became part of and active bearers of the king's expansionist policy by waging wars against his enemies and plundering the frontiers.

In the perspective of the king's politics, there were two kinds of enemies, external and internal. So far, from this point of view we have studied only the relationship of the king with his external enemies and the politics through which they were brought into subordination. After the external enemies were subordinated they would now form part of the internal politics of the king. (The erstwhile enemies would now be so many subordinates to the king). But as we have seen the politics of intrigue and compromises through which the enemies were brought into subordination, would not be complete and permanent by its very nature, firstly, because the same kind of politics would still be operative from outside and secondly, because

the subordinates would always like to go back to their former position. The compromises were only strategic and therefore temporary retreats for further maneuvering as the king himself could be seen doing so many times. And therefore it is not surprising that king's internal problems are no less, if not more, than the external problems.

"What is the use of needless discussion if a king does not destroy the hidden enemies of his kingdom, having discovered them by thorough investigation, and move about fearlessly like a man amongst the women, what is the fruit of his sovereignty after all? Does kingship beget only miseries?" The king's cherished ambition was to move amongst his subordinates as one moves amongst the women.

But to achieve this ambition of total subjection of his subordinates, it was essential to neutralise the forces operating from outside, in other words it was essential to cut off any link that his subordinates might have with the outside forces or king's external enemies. "Like a farmer who, having at first taken possession of a field, plants a hedge of thorns around it, and then begins to season the soil by digging it with a spade and tearing up the roots, stamps. The king should make himself the master of his territory, either by befriending the enemy (external)

and having thus freed his mind from anxiety he should proceed to destroy the enemies within the kingdom".

To effect this separation of internal enemies from external ones a king is expected to concede even a part of his territory to his enemy. " A king should acquire the lasting friendship of his enemy by surrendering, if necessary, even one half of his kingdom, and then free himself from the internal enemies. The fear of the internal enemy is, indeed, greater than the fear of the external enemy". But as we have seen above this lasting friendship through which the separation of internal and external in other words, the indifference of the external enemy towards the internal affairs of the king is gained, is not so lasting or to be more exact is not supposed to be lasting according to the king's own political ethics where it is only a temporary strategic retreat, which could be breached any time one deemed fit.

Now let us see how does, what has been a bit loosely called bureaucracy, figure in the politics of the king. "Viewed from the standpoint of the king, his servants always fall into three classes, viz, friends (hitalu), friends and enemies by turn (hitahitalu), constant enemies (sadahitalu)". This language of friends and enemies is not the language in which one expects the bureaucracy to be

articulated and the fact that its there only goes to prove that to call it a bureaucracy would be a case of anachronism. Infact, the above formulation is indicative of the existence of some other kind of system, with a different logic than that of a bureaucracy.

"No work can be transacted on the expenditure of money alone, without the willing co-operation of several nobles. Liberality, gentleness, and truthfulness help in obtaining such co-operation." "The nobleman who would otherwise be called to be the part of the larger bureaucracy were not be taken for granted and were to be persuaded to help by the extra-bureaucratic means of liberality, gentleness and truthfulness. The need for this 'Willing' co-operation' of theirs shows that they had not lost their will to the king as would be expected from a bureaucrat who would get the salary to implement the will of that king, where availability of money would have been enough to get any work done.

"The dependents who serve a king wish him evil, if, even a morsel is decreased in their food. Has a king really any friend? Is it wise to loosen your hold on the shoulder of the man who walks by your side without relinquishing your hold. You must not trust him, though you have to deal with him kindly". Here as we can see, the

question is not that whether a king has really a friend or not but that the king has to take every body under him as an enemy and that he was not to trust anybody as a matter of policy, irrespective of the person involved. It was part of the political ethics of the king to take anybody and everybody as his rival who with a slight loosening of the hold from over their shoulders would become independent.

The ministers are also treated in the same way or even more so because they occupy the highest rank after the king. "Kings generally summon for consultation a person who was given congenial advice on one or two occasions.; Taking advantage of the influence acquired by frequent consultations, he is likely to induce the king, having received bribes, to do improper deeds. Therefore, a king should, by means of his spies, examine his conduct outside the council". "If such (trust worthy as a brahman) a minister can not be had, a king should transact the business of the state himself, keeping in view the principles of political science. If on the contrary, being not disposed to remain content with the power derived firm his wealth and army, he employs a wicked person as a minister, that minister not only causes annoyance but becomes in the courses of time, the master of his master", as saluva Narasimha did <sup>13</sup>. Here the relationship between the minister and the king, his master, is strategic in nature;

and that the sides could be reversed, depending on the political skill of the parties involved; that the minister could become king and the kings themselves ministers. Here there is no absolute and permanent line that separates kings from his ministers who are more of a rival of the king with the mask of a servant. These positions, of king and the minister, are strategic ones and do not form two offices in the permanently fixed system of a bureaucracy. Whether it was the question of external or internal enemies the king was always face to face with a rival whose activities were always to be watched over with the help of the spies, to keep them in check.

The most important way to keep his rivals under check was intrigue and manipulation which as we have seen is true in the case of both external and internal enemies. "Kings should foster rivalry among his nobles and warriors so that their activities, loyal or otherwise, might not be hidden. Moreover, by competing with one another to obtain the royal favour by performance of loyal services, they abstain from disloyal activities". The king was supposed to maintain his position by fostering rivalry among his subordinates, the nobles and the warriors, whereby he could check the possibility of any kind of alliance that his subordinates might form against him. Here again the

subordinates are treated more as rivals than the servants constituting beareaucracy. By definition the subordinates were disloyal to the king and their loyalty was won over to the side of the king only through the mechanism of manipulation whereby one faction of his subordinates could be played against the other. Here the loyalty is not the selfless loyalty which a hero has of his followers which continues till his death but is of a variety where betrayal in the times of crisis, or even the conscious use of it is only normal. This loyalty should be understood in the context of the politics of intrigue and manipulation where it was used only as a mask or a strategic device. As we can see, it is only natural in this kind of political context that intrigue and manipulation was the best mechanism for the king to maintain his position.

There were other ways in which the king's sovereignty could be compromised by the disloyal acts of his ministers. "The bad ministers persuade the king to offer rewards to their own dependents and dissuade him from rewarding others. Moreover, they induce him to promise reward to the people, but prevent the fulfilment, so that the people, believing him to be undependable, might not approach him". As we can see the ministers maintained their own group of dependants or in other words subordinates, for whom he would scheme out the reward from the king and

thereby strengthen his own position against - and at the cost of - the king, which would in effect mean that the king would be made to pay for his own destruction. His own sword was turned against him. Moreover, by dissuading the king from giving rewards to the right person, and secondly, by getting the promises of reward to some and then subsequent and deliberate obstruction in its fulfilment, a minister could sever the vital link between him and his real or possible allies who then would always be ready to jump into the lap of an internal or external enemy of the king on the slightest pretext. The king was schemed or intrigued into ill treating his own group of loyal subordinates which would actually mean that king was intrigued into digging his own grave; and that the king would maintain his position only by being the most skilled intriguer or manipulator.

"The bad ministers take advantage of the neighbouring states and encourage the free booters in the country. When the king is caught in difficulties they do not discharge their duties properly; but having spread their influence every where, conduct themselves in such a manner as to make it appear that they alone are the protectors of the king. " Even the slight surfacing of the king's weakness in the face of a neighbouring state's threat would be used by the ministers to break free from the hold of the



king and act free. The king would be reduced to a mere hostage in the hands of his own subordinates. The protector of all would now have his own subordinates as his protectors. In the logic of this kind of politics every subordinate sees himself as a future or potential king and the existent king as the potential subordinate. The line that separates the king from his subordinate is only a strategic one and therefore temporary. The king and the subordinates seem to be on the same 'scale' with the difference only of degree.

It is in this situation that the dividing line between what we call administration and politics get blurred. If the subordination of the subordinates was to be maintained by the same kind of politics through which they were brought under subordination than the politics itself becomes simultaneous with administration. Here the politics through which the king deals with his external enemies or in other words, which we might provisionally call independent kings is coextensive with the politics through which he deals with his what has loosely been called bureaucracy, or the officers, who as we have seen are designated as the internal enemies, then, there is really no essential dividing line between external and internal, where, these designations become strategic and provisional ones, and therefore politics and administration becomes one; that they

are different only in form and not in essence. It is under the force of contemporary experiences where the zone of politics and administration are clearly defined and separated, that some historians have tried to force their modern concepts on the medieval South Indian society. In this kind of system even the boundaries of the different kingdoms are only provisional and strategic, and therefore no wonder that we find the notion of a fixed boundary missing in this kind of kingdom.

Politics as a game of bringing the external enemies into subordination and then maintaining it was not much different from the political economy of the kingdom or to be more exact they coincided with each other. Once a minister when asked by Krsnadevaraya<sup>14</sup> "how to increase the income of the state", replied thus, "If your majesty and your government collect tax without injustice you will prosper, and a good deal of money will surely flow into your treasury, "O krsnaraya justice is the means of increasing the prosperity of the people and the prosperity of the people is the source of wealth. Justice, therefore, is the treasure house of the kings"<sup>15</sup>. Here, first of all the negative nature of the justice becomes apparent, because, it effectively meant not committing injustice in the collection of taxes and, secondly, that the collection of taxes was the

only way to income and therefore, it logically follows that if the king had to increase the income of the state the only way he had was the expansion of the kingdom. Here the negative nature of the state becomes apparent where, it only collected taxes and its justice consisted of withholding its own violence against the people. The text says "The king having an officer who acts like a jackal, does not persuade the impoverished cultivators migrating from his district to return, and wants to sell their cattle and gain and utilise the timber of their houses as fuel, that king can not enrich himself, though he may conquer the seven islands (the whole world)". As we can see, the people are migrating because of the excess of violence committed on them by the king's own system which could keep his subjects in their place only by withholding violence or coercion and let it remain there as a threat because, if the violence would become real the people would either be killed or they will migrate to other places in which case the king would lose his subjects. As we can see the proper use of violence was fundamental to the existence and logic of the state. But this system always tended to degenerate into sheer banditry. The logic of subjection is the same in the case of subjects as in that of subordinates, namely use of violence as threat, with the only difference that whereas subordinates being the rivals of the king could not afford

migration as an option, the subjects not being rivals of the king would migrate in the case of excess of violence or coercion. The violence and its proper use was central for the king to maintain his sovereignty. Whereas as the source of violence the kings were not much different from a bandit, it was the use of violence as threat that differentiated the king from a bandit. The force behind the politics of manipulation which made it effective was the violence or coercion. Here the case is more of domination and subjection than that of exploitation, because the state was confined, as it appears, to the zone of mobilization and distribution and not of production. And it is therefore that violence becomes so important.

And, if the kings showed some interest in production, that was only by way of a strategic manouver. "The extent of the kingdom is the means for the acquisition of the wealth. Therefore, even if the land is limited in extent, excavate tanks and canals and increase the prosperity of the poor cultivator by leasing him the land for low ari and koru, so that you may obtain wealth". Here as we can see, 'the extent of the kingdom' is said to be the means of wealth, which as we have seen could be expanded (which was essential to increase the incomes of the state) only by way of war and politics of manipulation or intrigue. Here the king is interested in increasing the productivity

of the land if his kingdom is small. Therefore it seems that the extent and the expansion of the kingdom was the most important source of income and the means to increase it and investment for increasing the productivity was only a second option.

It was the part of the daily routine of the king to listen to the recital of verses on political ethics. One day one verse from the Nitisastra of Bhartrhari strikes the king, "O king Badde only those kings deserve to be called strong who maintain an army larger than the armies of all the feudatory chiefs. The other kings are, indeed, far removed from the power to command"<sup>16</sup> On hearing this Raya asked for the accounts which he was not satisfied with. He then, one night escaped from his palace and hid himself in a temple, and when discovered by his minister, Raya said to him, "Where is our sovereignty? Who is inclined to submit to us? What can we do with the people who do not obey us? We are not capable of punishing them. How can a person who has no power to command govern the earth? So we will enter the city only after forming a plan by means of which we can<sup>17</sup> enforce our authority. Otherwise we ought not to return". As we can see the armies that the feudatories had were by nature hostile to the king and that the king could keep them under control only by having the military strength double to

all his subordinates put together. So that, even if all of them got together he could defeat them. In the last instance it was the military strength that was decisive for the king to maintain his control over his subordinates and subjects. And all that intrigue or manipulation was concerned about was the deference of real war to the maximum possible extent. The Vijayanagara militarisation may well have been for purposes of defense against the new and superior war technology of the Islamic powers, but also a mechanism of keeping other native rulers under the threat of war.

"One should tour the country ruled over by one's ancestors. Nothing can be known if one remains stationary in one place. Such being the case, it is necessary that people should know your majesty. You should establish your glory by touring the country in all directions, accompanied by the four fold army so as to create terror in the mind of the enemies and subordinate chiefs".<sup>18</sup> Here again we see that the king is advised to tour around the country so that the terror and fear could be created in the ranks of the subordinates which would prevent them from engaging into any kind of manipulation against the king. This practice of touring around the country was meant to defer any kind of possibility of real confrontation which might have been planned out by his subordinates. King maintained his superiority by creating-and playing on-the fear.

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### CHAPTER III

#### The City of Vijayanagara: Its Structure and Symbolism

After the painstaking effort of a team of excavators led by Dr. Nagaraja Rao, Dr. Michell and Dr. Fritz,<sup>1</sup> for almost a decade now, a definite structure of the city Vijayanagar has started emerging out of the ruins, throwing new problems to the historians. These questions have been clearly and in detail formulated by Prof. Burton Stein.<sup>2</sup>

One of the questions is, whether there was a single guiding spirit behind the construction of the city and whether there was a definite plan behind it or whether the builders had any definite model in their mind and, if there was any, what was that, and how does it help us understand the nature of kingship during the period under study. In what is going to follow, we will try to respond to these issues. However as Prof. Stein himself points out that these issues are intertwined with other and more serious issues of epistemology and methodology.<sup>3</sup> Our study, however, can at best only be hypothetical and therefore tentative at this stage.

So far only one attempt has been made to respond to these issues in the works of John Fritz. According to

him, "the material record of the city must be considered a set of documents of the greatest importance for understanding the nature and development of Vijayanagara kingship".<sup>4</sup> The guiding question of his study is whether Vijayanagar was a cosmic city, and he answers it in affirmative, which in turn proves the divinity of the king himself and his identification with god.

According to Fritz, though the city plan does not conform to the geometry of a particular Sastric model, it has some Sastric properties as given in the Krityakalpataru and discussed by Inden. According to the Krityakalpataru, the temple housing the royal deity should be in the centre of the royal palace in the west, and, the audience hall containing the throne of the king on the east. The west of the centre where the royal palace is situated, is called the zone of royal residence, and the east where the audience hall and the throne are situated, Fritz calls the zone of performance. The centre as Ramachandra temple thus divides the royal structure in the zone of royal residence and the zone of royal performance.

He divides the city as a whole into three urban zones: 1. the sacred centre beside the Tungabhadra river; 2. the urban core containing the royal centre; and, 3. the sub-urban centre in the plains beyond.

According to him, though the Ramachandra temple is not in the geographic centre of the city. However if we see the system of the roads which many times seem to converge on this temple (Ramachandra) and thereby give this temple some kind of centrality, as far as the city as a whole is concerned.

Finally, through the movement of god Rama in myth in which the god is shown to have come to the Rayasukha hill to the north, then, to malyavanta hill to the northeast, and finally departed towards Lanka to the south and thereby completed a half circle of clockwise movement around the seat of the god and the temple, which Fritz compares with pradaksina in a temple and then, hastily concludes with the remark that, "the model for the city is not an abstract city, but the temple".

This kind of interpretation of the city provokes many questions which need to be answered or atleast recognised as problems. One of the questions is raised by Prof. Stein according to whom the cosmic interpretation of the city which might have been derived from Sastras can be questioned on the ground that there is no historical evidence to the effect that these texts were ever considered  
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by the Vijayanagar designers. But this question seems to

be unfair, because, then we would not be able to interpret the spatial organization of the societies which do not possess any script at all. And after all the city structure and the other architecture are also a kind of writing in space with a definite logic behind them and therefore should be interpreted on their own and if the sastric texts help us in doing that then we should take all the help from them. As we know the Vijayanagar kings styled themselves as the defenders of the Hindu dharma, and so some kind of attinity between the city structure and the Sastric model might not be an improbable proposition.

However, there are other far more serious questions. One of them is that before one calls a city cosmic one has to problematise the question of cosmos itself as it has been represented in dharmic literature. As Dandekar points out <sup>6</sup> the notion of creation has a different meaning in the Indian context; that here something is not created out of nothing as is the case with the religions of the west, but, something is created out of something other, as a chair is created out of a wood; that in Indian dharmic texts the creation is the transformation of something into something other. And it is in this context that he interprets the creation of cosmos itself, which, according to him is created out of chaos. Therefore cosmos is created out of, what apparently seems to be its opposite,

chaos. And it is declared that in Indian rituals the opposites are only apparently so; that one keeps itself transforming into the other; and finally, that life is won out of death, a conclusion which Heesterman had already arrived at.<sup>8</sup>

But as has been observed by all the above mentioned authors this making or creation of cosmos takes place in and through rituals and therefore it is essential that we understand the cosmos in the context of rituals.<sup>9</sup> Here, as we can see, the cosmos is a relational phenomenon; that it is created or produced out of chaos; that this production or creation takes place in ritual arena. Here, simple stating of this binary opposition would not be enough and it is essential that we understand and analyse the ritual itself. It is more important to know the creation of the cosmos than the cosmos itself.

But our task, here, is greatly reduced, when we know that creation rituals are also royal rituals, that the creation of the cosmos and the creation of the king are simultaneous. The Rajsuya and Asvamedha which we have analysed in the first chapter are also creation rituals,<sup>10</sup> and the myth of Durga and Visnu which is also a well known Creation myth,<sup>11</sup> as we saw could be understood only in the context of a royal ritual. Heesterman, after a volume long

analysis of Rajsuya came to the conclusion that it was a creation ritual also where the whole cosmos is created, together with the royal ritual, where the abhisekam of the king takes place.<sup>12</sup>

French scholar Jean-Pierre Vernant while analyzing the genesis themes in eastern theogonies observed:<sup>13</sup>

the genesis themes remain integrated with a vast royal epic that depicts the clash of successive generations of gods and various sacred powers for the dominion over the world. The institution of sovereign power and the establishment of the order appear as two inseparable aspects of the same divine drama, the stakes in a single struggle, the fruit of a single victory. This general feature marks the subordination of the mythic tale to the royal ritual.

Further:

(these myths) reveal a particular conception of the relation between sovereignty and order. The king not only governed the social hierarchy, but also intervened in the workings of the natural phenomena. The ordering of the space, the creation of time, and the regulation of seasonal cycle appears to have been part of the royal activity; these were aspects of sovereign's function, no distinction was made between nature and society.

And the Vijayanagar kings themselves are said to be born in the lineage of moon who in its turn is said to have born out of the churning of the ocean.<sup>14</sup> This churning of the ocean myth has been analysed in detail by J. Bruce Long at the end of which he came to the conclusion that this

myth "is no myth at all, in Levi-Straussian terms, but a ritual in mythical form or rather a mythic ritual played out as a game. To be more specific this tale is the Soma ritual celebrated by means of narrative performance, with the various structural components of the story taking the place of the sacrificial paraphernalia of the rite".<sup>15</sup> And soma ritual is the part of royal ritual the Rajsuya, and the Asvamedha and in earlier times it seems it was the most important royal ritual.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, we can see that we will be able to understand the genealogy better if we keep the ritual origin of the ancestors of the king in mind. And any time the royal ritual takes place this same cosmic drama is re-enacted and the king is born afresh once again, and this is exactly what we have seen in the case of the Mahanavami festival.

As we know the rituals relating to yjña take place on and around the altar i.e., the Vedi. If we look at the Mahanavami festival from this perspective then we can see that the Mahanavami Dibba where the festival used to take place, was nothing else than the Vedi or the altar itself. But we have also seen that the king on the tenth day of the festival used to ride out of the city, make a symbolic war and then come back and thereby he symbolically assimilated the whole city in the ritual arena and therefore the whole city was turned into a vedi or altar. But the question that

remains to be answered is that is there anything in the structure of the city itself which will prove this.

The answer seems to be in affirmative if we  
17  
consider one adhyaya from the Satapatha Brahmana:

When they had sacrificed they beheld (discovered) the eastern quarter, and made it the eastern front quarter; as it now is that eastern (front) quarter: therefore creatures here move in a forward direction, for they (the gods) made that the front quarter. 'Let us improve it from here' they said, and made it to be strength 'may we see this strength', they said; and it became yonder sky.

They then beheld the southern quarter and made it the southern quarter; and it now is that southern (right, dakshina) quarter.; when the dakshina (cows) stand to the south 'let us improve it from here', they said, and it to be space. 'May we see this space and it became this air for that air is space;.....

They then beheld the western quarter, and made it (to represent) hope, - wherefore it is only when going, after going forwards (to the east), one obtains (his object) that he goes back to that (western) quarter; for they (the gods) made that (quarter to represent) hope. 'Let us improve it from here', they said and made it to be prosperity (or distinction). 'May we see this prosperity'; they said'; and it became this earth, for this (earth) is indeed (the source of) prosperity; whence he who obtain most therefrom becomes the most prosperous.

They then beheld the northern quarter and made it the waters. 'Let us improve it from here', they said, and made it (to represent) the law: hence whenever the waters come (down) to this (terrestrial) world everything here comes to in accordance with the law: but whenever there is drought, then the stronger seizes upon the weaker,



for the waters are law.

First of all, what this myth tells us is that, east is the front of the vedi or altar, west is the back, south the right, and north is the left of the altar.

In our case also, as John Fritz has pointed out the Vijayanagar city faces the east, which therefore would be the front of the city and this characteristic it would have in common with the altar which had its front to the east.

Then as the Satapatha Brahmana tells us that the gods made the northern quarter water. The Vijayanagara city also has water to its north in the form of the Tungabhadra river itself, and therefore this characteristic also, the city has in common with the altar.

But there are some other problems still to be answered. How do we account for the fact that in the west hope and therefore, desire is conceived, and in the east these desires are fulfilled and the north which represents not only the water but law also?

There seems to be a logic behind the pattern of the sequence in which the different directions have been explained one after the other. In this sequence the east comes first, the south second, the west third and the north,

fourth, and the last. There seems to be a movement which starts from the west to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then finally to the north which will eventually culminate and stop at the point from which it had started, here west. This a we can see is in clock-wise direction and seems to form a rectangle or a square at the end of this movement. This is almost like making a Pradaksina around a temple.

Here as we are talking in terms and perspective of the royal rituals Asvamedhika parvam of the Mahabharata<sup>18</sup> can give us some clue to the understanding of this particular pattern of movement. On the completion of the great war between the Pandava and the Kaurava, Yudhisthira, having reascended the throne of his fathers, resolved to perform the Asvamedha. Arjuna, the king's second brother is appointed to guard the horse that moves around for a year in the process of which Arjuna secures the subjection of many kings whom he invites to attend the festival at the culmination of Asvamedha and finally comes back. Arjuna started his expedition from the west to the east, then turned to the south, then to the west and finally to the north and comes back to from where he had started. If we see this myth in the perspective of ritual then the movement and the subsequent turns in the war expedition of Arjuna

fits into the sequence in which the different directions follow one another and therefore we can say that in the movement around the altar a successful war expedition has been symbolically expressed.

Now we can understand why and how the hope is conceived in the west and realised in the east and also why and how the west represents the earth, and the north, law. if we recapitulate the whole story once again, the story would be something like this: the king who is in the west conceives the desire to conquer his enemy to the east and goes on a war expedition which results into a temporary loss of law which after his eventual victory is reestablished again. But with the eventual victory and return of Arjuna the kingdom is also gained and therefore no wonder the west represents earth also together with hope.

Now we can see the logic behind the king's palace being on the west of the Vijayanagar city, the Tungabhadra on the north and the gate or the entrance on the east of the city. Now at this stage of our analysis we can say that the Vijayanagara city was modelled upon the structure and the idea of an altar.

But the few passages that we have quoted from the Satapatha Brahmana seems to have something more to tell us. As we have seen whereas the west represented the earth, the

east sky and the south represented the space or air, the north represented the water. Here again the sequence is important: earth (west), the sky (east), the space (south),<sup>19</sup> and the water (north). And as R.N. Dandekar and others have pointed out in ancient Indian theogonies the earth and the sky were one and undifferentiated and that they came to be separated with the creation of the cosmos itself and Varuna is the one who is said to have separated them. Here also with the movement towards the east from the west would also be a movement from the earth to the sky which again is the re-enactment of the same cosmic drama through which the sky was separated from the earth, after which the space filled with air is created. Therefore, we can say that movement around the altar is also symbolically expressive of the creation of the cosmos itself. As we can see the very construction of the altar with its fixed orientation to the cardinal directions and the identification of the different directions with the different elements of the cosmos had behind it the idea of creation and royal ritual in which the abhisekam of the king takes place. The creation of the cosmos and the consecration of the king are simultaneous with each other.

It is in this perspective of royal ritual and the creation ritual that the exact nature of city's relation

with the cosmos becomes clear. The city is not in any ordinary sense the miniature of the cosmos, a mere representation of it but is an altar which creates and recreates the cosmos or if we put it in different terms produces and reproduces the cosmos. It (altar) represents the cosmos in so far as it creates it (the cosmos). This perspective helps us in bringing out the functional aspect of the city to the fore. And if we keep in mind the consecration of the king also around the altar then we can similarly say that the city as an altar consecrates and re-consecrates, therefore creates and recreates the king. And if we see in pragmatic terms also the city was the place from where the whole kingdom is maintained. It is because of that the fortified city was one of the important elements of the state.

But this city is like the temple also. As we know the Srirangam temple has seven <sup>20</sup> prakaras or enclosures within which it is situated, just like the Vijayanagar city where as Paes reports there were seven enclosures in the form of seven concentric circles. <sup>21</sup> Within which the king's palace is located. Seven successive enclosures for a temple is supposed to be the best or uttamottaama. <sup>22</sup> Here as we can see there is a parallel between the city and the temple, but, above we saw that the city was modelled upon an altar. how can a city be modelled upon both the altar and the

temple simultaneously? Is there something common in an altar and a temple?

And Stella Kramrisch proves in her book The Hindu Temple,<sup>23</sup> the temples themselves were modelled on the essential structure of the Vedi or altar. And therefore, we can say that the city was like an altar.

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## APPENDIX

### 1. Rajsuya

"King Harishchandra, being childless, prays to Varuna to grant him a son, vowing to sacrifice him to the god. A son is born to him and is called Rohita; but in spite of the god's repeated demands, the fulfilment of the vow is instantly deferred; till at last the youth, having been invested in armour, is told of the fate awaiting him. He, however, refuses to be sacrificed, and escapes to the forest. The king thereupon is seized with dropsy; and the son, hearing of this, hastens homeward to save his father. On the way he is met by Indra who urges him to wander, and accordingly does so for a year. The same is repeated five different times. In the sixth year, the prince, while wandering in the forest, comes across a starving Brahman, Agigrata, who lives with his wife and three sons, and who consents to sell him one of his sons for a hundred cows to serve him as a ransom to Varuna. The Brahman wishing to keep his eldest son, whilst the mother refuses to part with the youngest, the choice falls upon the second boy, called Sunahsepa. Rohita now returns to his father who, having been told of the transaction, then proposes to Varuna to offer the Brahman youth in lieu of his son; and the god, deeming a Brahman better than a Ksatriya, consents to the

exchange, and orders the king to perform the sacrifice, and to make the youth chief victim on the Abhisekaniya, or day of consecration. Four renowned Risis officiate as offering priests; but when the human sacrifice is to be consummated, no one will undertake to the victim, the boy's own father, Agigrata, then volunteers to do so for another hundred cows; and subsequently he even undertakes to slay his son for a similar reward. But when the poor lad sees his own father coming towards him, whetting his knife, and becomes aware that he is really to be slain "as if he were not a man", he bethinks himself of calling upon the gods for help; and by then he is successively referred from one to another, till by uttering three verses in praise of Usha, the Dawn, he is released from his father, whilst the king is freed from his malady.

Subsequently one of the four priests, the royal sage of Viswamitra, receives Sunahsepa as his son, conferring upon him the name of Devarate, and refuses to give him upto Agigrata; and when the latter calls on his son to return to him, and not to desert his ancestral race, he replies, 'What has never been found even amongst Sudras thou has been seen with a knife in thy hand, and has taken three hundred cows for me. O Angiras! 'And on his father avowing his guilt and promising to make over the cattle to him, he again replies, 'He who has once done wrong will commit

another sin; thou has not abandoned the ways of a Sudra: what thou hast done is irremediable, 'and 'is irremediable,' echoes Viswamitra, who then formally adopts him as his son.

[From The Satapatha - Brahmana - Part V, translated by Julius Eggeling (Oxford, Clearredon Press, 1900), pp. XXXIV -V].

## 2. Devi Mahatmya

While the adorable lord Visnu, stretching Sesa out, wooed the sleep of contemplation at the end of the Kalpa, where the universe was converted into absolute ocean, then two terrible Asuras named Madhu and Kaitaha, springing from the root of Vishnu's ear, sought to slay Brahma. Brahma the Prajapati stood on the lotus that grew from Vishnu's navel; and seeing these two fierce Asuras and sleeping Janardana, and standing with heart solely thereon Brahma, in order to awaken Hari, extolled that sleep contemplation which had made its dwelling in Hari's eyes -- the lord of splendor extolled Visnu's sleep which is queen of the universe, the supporter of the world, the cause of permanence and dissolution,.... Then the goddess of darkness, extolled thus by the creator there in order to awaken Vishnu to slay Madhu and Kaitaha, issued forth from his eyes, mouth, arms and heart and breast and stood in the sight of Brahma where birth is inscrutable; and Janardhana, master of the world, being greeted by her, rose up from his couch in the universe; and he saw these two there, Madhu and Kaitabha, evil of soul, excelling in heroism and prowess, red-eyed through anger, fully prepared to slay Brahma. Thereupon the adorable lord Hari rose up and fought with those two ... And they, exceedingly frenzied with their

power, deluded by the Great Illusion, exclaimed to Kesava, 'choose a boon from us'. The god spoke 'Be ye both now content with me; Ye must both be slain by me! what need is there of any other boon here? Thus much indeed is my choice'. Gazing then at the entire world which was nothing but water, these two, who had been thus tricked, spoke to the adorable lotus-eyed god--'Slay us where the earth is not overwhelmed with water'. 'Be it so' said the adorable wielder of the conch, discus and club, and cutting them with his discus clove them both asunder, heads and buttocks.

Thus was she born when praised by Brahma himself.

[From The Markandeya Purana, translated by F. Eden Pargiter (Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1904), pp. 469-72].

### 3. Vijayanagara Foundation Myth

Story runs like this: After being attacked by the king of 'Delhi' king of 'Bisanga' took refuge in a fortress.

And being sheltered in the fortress, after he had taken order about his provisions, he was beset on all sides by the king of the people of Delhi, who had already upto this time been at war with him for twelve years; over which edge little time was spent, because the people that were inside the fortress were numerous, and in a little space had consumed their provisions.

Then the king of Bisanga, seeing the determination of the soldiers of the king of Delhi that they would never leave the place without making an end of those whom he had with him in the fortress, made a speech to them all, laying before them the destruction that the king of the troops of Delhi had caused in his own kingdoms; and how, not content with that, he had besieged this fortress, so that now there was nothing for them to look to but death, since already there was no water in the fortress nor anything left to eat. And (he said) that of the fifty thousand men who had been in the city of Nagundyhe he had chosen them alone as his companions and true friends, and he begged of them that they would hold fast in death to the loyalty which they had borne

him in their lives; for he hoped that day to give battle to the king of Delhi. Then he said that already there remained to him of his kingdom and lordship nothing but that fortress and the people that were in it, and so he asked them to arm themselves and die with him in battle, giving their lives to the enemy who had deprived them of all their lands.

All of them were very content and glad at this, and in a short space were all armed; and after they were so the king made them another speech, saying, 'Before we join battle we have to wage another war with our sons and daughters and wives, for it will not be good that we should allow them to be taken for the use of our enemies.' And the king said, 'I will be the first to deal with my wife and sons'. At this time they were all standing in a large open space which was before the citadel, and there by the hand of the king were slain over fifty of his wives and some sons and little daughters; and same was done with their own hands by all who had wives and sons that could not fight.

When these nuptial feasts, so abhorred of all, were fulfilled they opened the gate of the fortress, and the enemies forthwith entered and slew all of them except six old men who withdrew to a house. These were made captive and were taken before the king (of Delhi), and the king asked them who they were and how they had escaped, and they

told him, who they were and how they escaped; at which they greatly rejoiced, because one of them was a minister of the kingdom and another the treasurer, and the others were leading officers in it. They were questioned by the king of Bisanga and such riches as were buried in the walls of the fortress were delivered upto him; they also gave him account of the revenues of the kingdom of Bisanga at that time. When all was known to the king he delivered to one of his captains, and command to take over the bodies of the dead to another captain, and gave orders that bodies should be burned; and the body of the king, at the request of those six men, was conveyed very honorably to the city of Nagundi. From that time forward that place became a burying place of the king's. Amongst themselves they still worship this king as a saint.

After the victory, the king of Delhi left the kingdom of Bisanga to someone called 'Meligu niby' to look after. It is during this period that they are converted to Islam.

But "when it was known now he (the king) was out of it, those who had escaped to the mountains, with others who, against their will and through fear had taken oaths of allegiance for their towns and villages rose against their captain Meligu niby, and came to besiege him in the



fortress, allowing no provisions into him, nor paying him the taxes that had been forced on them... And Meliguy niby... sent quickly to him (king) to tell him how all the land was risen against him and how everyone was lord of what he pleased, and no one was on his side... (the king told his men) how badly the lords of the land obeyed him; so that each one was king and lord over whomsoever he pleased,... there will be no justice among them... All the councillors decided that the king should command the presence of the six men whom he held captive and that he should learn from them who was at that time the nearest of king, or in anyway related to the king of Bisanga; and, this questioning done, no one was found to whom by right the kingdom could come, save to one of the six whom he held captive and this one he who at the time destruction of Bisanga had been minister of the kingdom. He was not related by blood to the kings... but (it seemed) good that His Highness should give the kingdom to that one...

At once the six captives were released and set at liberty, and many kindnesses and honours were done to them and the governor was raised to be the king and the treasurer to be the governor; and he took from them oaths and pledges of their fealty as vassals; and they were at once dispatched and sent to their lands with a large following to defend them from anyone who should desire to do them any injury.

And when these six men had thus finished their journey to the city of Nagundi they found only the ruined basements of the houses and places peopled by a few poor folk.

The men who took over the charge was Deorao, so are we informed by Nuniz. Here one more story is added to the above. This is:

"The king going one day on hunting... to a mountain on the other side of the river Nagundym, where now is the city of Bisanga, -- which at that time was desert place'.... ;being in it with his dogs and a hare rose up before him, which instead of fleeing from the dogs, ran towards them and bit them all, and none of them dared go near it for the harm that it did them. And seeing this, the king astonished at such a thing biting dogs which had already caught for him a tiger and a lion, judged it to be not really a hare but (more likely) some prodigy; and he at once turned back to the city of Nagundim.

And arriving at the river, he met a hermit who was walking along the bank, a man holy among them, to whom he told what had happened concerning the hare..... the hermit said that the king ought in that place erect in which could dwell, and build a city for the prodigy meant that this would be the strongest city in the world, and that it would

never be captured by his enemies, and would be the chief city in the kingdom. And so the king did and that on that very day began work on his houses, and he enclosed the city roundabout: and that along he left Nagundim and soon filled the new city with people. And he gave him the name Vydiajuna, for so the hermit called himself... but in course of time this name has become corrupted, and it is now called Bisanga. And after the hermit was dead the king raised a very grand temple in honour of him and gave much revenue to it. And ever since in his memory the king of Bisanga on the day when they are to be raised to be kings have in honour of the hermit, to enter this house before they enter their own; and they offer many prayers in it, and celebrate many feasts there every year." With this meeting of Vidyaranya that he is said to have been converted backs to Hinduism.

From Vasundhara Filliozat (ed.) , The Vijayanagar Empire as seen by Doming Paes and Fernao Nuniz, (New Delhi, NBT, 1977), p.73-80.

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