

Chapter XII

SOCIETY AND CULTURE



The second half of the eighteenth century is remarkable in our history for several reasons. It sowed the seeds of modern age in India. It witnessed the rise of colonial powers in the land. The era of Mughal rule which had played such a vital role on society and culture was coming to a close, but it had left behind a permanent mark of its varied facets on different aspects of life. The core of Indian life was Hindu society which had absorbed essential elements from all shades of thought and had evolved a composite culture of unity in diversity and identity in multiplicity. Into this base of Hindu society, whose origin went back to thousands of years, whose culture exhibited the finest elements of human mind, whose social order displayed an unique pattern of its own, and whose reforming zeal witnessed a new movement of *bhakti* and devotion, was injected for a brief period of 40 years, a new blood for testing the Indian ethos of reconciling the irreconcilable.

The period of Haidar and Tipu was indeed a period of great experiment in testing the secular character of Indian society. Haidar and Tipu had no problem in winning the loyalty of their people. In fact their regime became momentous for its vigour and vitality, and for its novelty and prosperity. If in polity it resisted the colonial expansion and in economy it promoted progress and prosperity, in society and culture it integrated all people into one homogenous whole, gave them a sense of social solidarity and linguistic affinity, and lifted them up to a level of civilized society. More than Haidar it was Tipu who took keen interest in improving the quality of their life, in promoting art and architecture and in fostering language and literature, in exciting respect and manners of the people, and in making his kingdom an enlightened State.

Society was peaceful and integrated at that time. The type of communal tensions which we witness today was totally absent then. It is only a phenomenon of the 20th century, the gift of the colonial rule. With the advent of Muslims, there were of course political rivalries, but those rivalries had not percolated to the level of the people. They were power struggles only among the elite. The entire medieval period was an era of *Bhakti* movement, of humanism and liberalism, and of reconciliation and compromise. That was the pattern all over India, and more so in Karnataka. Therefore, the rise of Haidar and Tipu did not cause any tension at the level of the masses. Society and polity have always been in India two different streams, which never interfered in the functioning of each other. Rulers may come and go, and States may rise and fall, but the people led the same way of life. They were not perturbed by the happenings around. There was hardly any change in the structure of family life, in the established customs and practices, in the morals and manners, in the feasts and festivals, and in the pastimes and avocations. Village continued to be the hub of all social, economic and cultural life.

With the rise of Haidar and Tipu there was some change in this placid state of affairs. Intense military, political and economic activity, together with their dynamic leadership, had a significant impact on the life of the people. Haidar's constant wars required large military force. He was careful in his recruitment. He would select the best from any region. Very soon strong and robust men from different parts of the Deccan and South India found their way into the army. Mysore under Haidar comprised regions which spoke all the different languages of South India, Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. Their recruitment into the army injected their different traits as well, different languages, attitudes, outlook and behaviour. All that had to be fabricated into a common pattern. Hence, change was inevitable. When

the troops brought their families to the areas of their residence, their meeting and minglings with the local population caused a more multi-lingual, more composite and more cosmopolitan cultural life to emerge. Isolation was broken, angularities were rubbed off, and life-style was changed at least to some extent.

Political activity had the same effect. The State was enormously enlarged. New conquests brought new problems. Administration had to be efficient if consolidation of the conquests was the aim. Merit alone was the criterion for recruitment. Haidar was very pragmatic in his approach while running the State machinery. He would not go by caste, creed and class. The Marathas had gained proficiency in finance and revenue affairs. They were recruited in large numbers. The multi-lingual character of his State required recruitment into the administration people knowing different languages from different areas. Unlike the English, he did not force a language of his own into the administration. Consequently, many doors and many vistas were opened to people from all the five different zones - Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada - to work together, to live together, and share with one another the best they possessed. The State initiated a movement where social change was inevitable.

Tipu continued the policy. During his times both political and military activities were further intensified and modernized. More hostile intentions of the English called for more garrisons in the forts, more stationing of troops on the borders, and more enlarged and disciplined regiments for the main army. The presence of sizeable number of troops in different parts of the country influenced the civil life as well. The military occupation of Japan by the Americans after the Second World War had a powerful impact on the life of the people. Likewise, the Mysore army recruited from all over the Deccan and South India, reputed to be strong and disciplined, would have its impact on social and cultural life. There was a stir and a vibration in the outlook and attitude of the people, who heard the martial songs, who saw the military parade, and who observed the smartness and agility of the soldiers. It was all shaking them up from their deep slumber, which they were used to, from time immemorial.

Likewise, Tipu's administrative machinery, which was enormously enlarged influenced the civil life. Bureaucracy led a different life from that of the peasantry. When Tipu was drilling down the throats of the officials limitless instructions for a total change to make his state progressive and prosperous, the effect of those instructions meant to be transmitted to the grass roots level was sure to show some results. His was a centralized, unified, strong and well-knit administration, which was

persistently kept alert by his never-ending instructions, which was all innovative and far-reaching in their potential. When the Sultan was thus restless to bring about a drastic socio-economic change, the effect was inevitable. Eye-witness accounts of the contemporaries do inform us that there was a perceptible change.

This change was a transformation of the feudal society into a quasi-modern society with new attitudes and values. Tipu was an enlightened ruler who was aware how much the world had changed, and how much the Indian society had remained static. His knowledge of the French revolutionary ideas - through his French corps which he had retained all through his regime - his own study of everything fine in Indian and Islamic heritage, and his own zeal to translate all these ideas into reality stirred his imagination. He set out like a crusader to bring about a metamorphic change in the society. Some of his social reforms give us an idea of his system of values and attitudes. The ban on the use of liquor and all intoxicants, the ban on prostitution and the employment of female slaves in domestic service, the abolition of the Nayar practice of polyandry in Malabar, the decree that Malabar women must cover themselves above the waists, the repeal of the custom of human sacrifice in the temple of Kali near Mysore town, and restrictions on the lavish extravaganza on marriages, festivals and charities, were all measures indicative of his enlightened outlook, which had their impact on the social life of the people.

But the impact of his economic measures to transform the feudal society was far deeper. The abolition of the zamindari system in one stroke was a revolutionary step. The people were liberated from the clutches of the intermediaries. The extortions of the pategars had made the life of the people miserable. Our peasantry was almost in the same plight as that of France before the French Revolution. The abolition of numerous taxes and bringing the peasantry into direct relations with the Government was not only an economic change but also a great social change. All citizens were now equal in the eyes of the government. The elevation of the status of the peasantry was a great achievement. He was now the feeder of the entire community. The "grain heap" indicated how much he dolled out and to whom. Each social category had a fixed share in the produce. All were at the mercy of the peasant. He was the "**Annadatha**". It was a great transformation. Unfortunately the colonials reversed this process again. The *inam* lands, the *jagirs* and the *agraharas* revised the feudal structure, undoing what Tipu had done. Mysore after 1799 was back again to feudal society.

If his agrarian reforms were radical, his commercial and industrial changes were revolutionary. The entire traditional business community was affected by the State

entry into commerce and trade. It was not only an economic change but also social. The merchant class was always a wealthy class in India. Some of them were money lenders, and many of them did not hesitate to make profits at the expense of human distress. Hoarding was not unknown. Advancing loans in lean season to get the corn at low prices during harvest season was a general practice. Famine and floods were good occasions for merchants to exploit the needy. In such a situation state trading in wholesale business ensured stable prices, steady supply of commodities, and regular check on manipulation. The social effect of structural changes in trade and commerce was the loss of money lender's influence. He was no longer able to dominate the rural scene. His wealth had to be diverted into some other more useful channels, and his life style of an indolent, pleasure-loving and blood-sucking banker underwent a great change. If he invested his money either on land or on business he had to be more careful, more hard-working and more resourceful. Correspondingly, the life-style of those who escaped from his clutches underwent a change when they were no longer at the mercy of the money-lender.

The entry of the State in trade and commerce created a class of bureaucrat merchants. From the sheer business point of view, they were inefficient. We have to imagine the situation of the ration depots of our own days to picture ourselves that the life-style of the people must have been quite different from what it was from ages. Government service became a lucrative profession. Despite Tipu's vigilance, corruption and nepotism might have been prevalent. Delay in delivery of goods and scarcity of essential commodities might also have added to the problems. The emergence of officials as trading agents and their lack of business proficiency must have caused some confusion affecting the traditional pattern of life. Society might not have remained unaffected by these changes, although where the system worked with diligence and care, good deal of benefits must have accrued to the people. With increasing purchasing power in their hands, they would have raised the standard of their life.

Similarly, Tipu's industrial policy affected the people greatly. Artisans were greatly encouraged. Technicians and skilled workers were invited from all over the world. The numerous projects he undertook and the interest he took to make them work well suggest that he was eager to raise a large labour force. Their emoluments were higher. They would come from different parts of the country and even from abroad they would be proficient in different arts and crafts. They had to be integrated with the local people. This would surely have put Mysore into a melting pot of great social change. The food-habits, mode of living and thinking, language

and culture, income disparity, work-schedule were all different. Tipu might have made his State a great experimental yard of transition from medieval times to modern age.

Tipu's industrial policy led to one more important change, viz increase in number of towns. Indian society had been so long mostly rural in character; it became urban. All his measures encouraged the growth of towns. The barracks for the troops were mostly in towns. To meet their needs labour and goods had to come from the villages. Their demands were of a varied type which could be met only by skilled workers in the towns. Iron-smelting, musket-making and cannon casting could all be done only in towns. Likewise the numerous other projects of both key-industries and consumer goods which Tipu initiated required skilled labour forces, which was available only in towns. There was a spurt in the growth of towns during his regime. Naturally, the urban life was different from rural life. More amenities of towns, better opportunities of trade, and greater scope for employment in industries attracted larger number of people from rural to urban areas. Attitudes and values of urban dwellers and different from those of rural folks, were hence a great social change.

Yet another social change was perceptible during Haidar and Tipu's times, namely the increase of Muslims in the military and civil services. This was a natural phenomenon; more Muslims found entry into the army because they made better soldiers. Even Nanjaraj preferred Haidar for the command, because he was bold and dashing. The Muslims had built up a tradition that they were more suited for the militia. Even the colonials recruited them later in larger numbers in their army. As they were not in large number in Karnataka, those from the neighbouring States and outside applied for recruitment and got selected. Haidar had an eye for talent and bravery, and he would not miss them if available. As the regime of both these was full of wars, large number was required. Their entry into the army meant their addition to the Karnataka culture. As they professed a different faith and had developed distinct language, literature and culture of their own, their impact on Karnataka culture and society was quite profound. Even today they form a sizeable minority, over 10 to 12 per cent of the population, and this increase took place mostly because of the patronage they received at the hands of Haidar and Tipu.

What is true of the militia was also true of the civil services. Although the Muslims were not in large numbers in the lower cadres of civil services, they were in quite a large number in higher grades. The State was not sectarian, and there were quite a few non-Muslims also in higher grades, and yet it made a difference from the position with none at all during the times of Wodeyars to quite a sizeable number

under the new regimes. The presence of their large number had an impact on the social life of the people, for they brought their own customs and manners, way of living and thinking, and language and literature. Meeting and mingling together with the locals, an interaction of give and take took place helping a composite culture to grow. The Bahmani and Bijapur States had already built up such a tradition, which was further carried to its logical conclusion.

Religious Policy

It should be remembered that neither Haidar nor Tipu was communal in character. They were aware of the fact that they were at the head of a State with large non-Muslim population and that they could survive only by adopting a just, fair and secular policy, where they were good to all. Haidar was very eclectic in religious affairs. Father Swartz, the Danish missionary who visited Srirangapatna in 1779 says that Haidar had no religion of his own, and left everyone to his own choice. Haidar continued the system of *inam* lands to Brahmins, and Tipu did not disturb them. Haidar was much inclined to satisfy the Hindu propensities of his soldiers such as performing *puja* in a temple before embarking on an expedition. When a portion of Ranganatha temple was damaged in the fire of 1774, Haidar rebuilt it within a



Sabhamantapa, Ranganatha Temple - Srirangapatna

month. When a Muslim saint complained that Hindus had committed excesses on his followers, and wanted redress from Haidar as head of a Muslim government, Haidar asked him, "who told you that this was a Mussalman government?" Tipu also maintained more or less the same spirit although he was personally more orthodox than Haidar.

When Swartz visited Srirangapatna, he performed a religious service to a band of Christians without asking anybody's leave. He preached Christianity in Haidar's own capital without attracting a word of objection. It has been said of Haidar that only merit and talent mattered most in the recruitment to services to the entire exclusion of religious preference. For civil administration he relied mostly on Hindus. Swartz recorded in 1779 that the ministers of Haidar's court were mostly Brahmins. At the time of his death in 1782 the most important five ministers were Purnaiah, Krishna Rao, Shamia, Mir Sadiq and Abu Muhammad Mirza. His revenue officers and diplomats were mostly Hindus, the doyen of diplomats being the celebrated Appaji Ram. In short, Haidar has been acknowledge even by such a die-hard colonial historian as Wilks as "a model of toleration by the professor of any religion."

It is the religious policy of Tipu that has excited great controversy. Wilks started the attack and others followed suit to depict him as an "intolerant bigot and a furious fanatic". He has suffered more at the hands of historians than at the hands of his enemies. It was all a colonial game which prompted the British historians to condemn him in order to justify their own rule. Whether it was Beatson or Bowring or Kirkpatrick or Wilks or Buchanan, all have indulged in the same trend of villifying Tipu. The British were prejudiced against him as he was the most inveterate foe who stood in the way of their expansion in India. Their own historian, John William Kaye, observes, "It is a custom among us *odisse quem laeseris* - to take a native ruler's Kingdom and then to revile the deposed ruler".¹

When Tipu and Haidar had shattered the British image of invincibility, there was consternation in their camp. The most sensitive issue in social and national life is religion, and they used this card both to justify their own aggressive exploits and to wipe off his memory from the mind of the people, so that they could remain loyal to the old dynasty of Wodeyars, who had come to power with British assistance, and who had remained faithful dependants of the British. Moreover, many of the sources which are quoted in favour of his harsh religious policy have originated from those who had been detained in his jails as prisoners of war.

1. John William Kaye, History of the Sepoy War in India, Vol. III, pp. 361-62.

The religious policy of Tipu is seen mainly with reference to his attitude towards the Nairs of Malabar, the Rajas of Coorg and the Christians of Canara. It is conveniently forgotten that he was harsh on them because they were guilty of treasonable acts in attempting to subvert his power by joining hands with the colonials, the enemies of the nation. Tipu's policy towards the British or the French or the Nizam or the Marathas was logical which was according to the exigencies of the times, but he did not have anything as such a "religious policy" towards his own subjects. He had only two policies, the foreign policy and the domestic policy. The former related to the removal of the colonials, and the latter, to make his State a progressive and a modern one. All his reforms and innovative measures were intended to make all his people, irrespective of caste, creed and class, happy and prosperous. No where do we find that the benefits of his reforms should reach only the Muslims to the exclusion of all others. We have seen how his instructions to protect the ryots, to help them and promote their interests, who were all non-Muslims, enjoined on the District and village officials to follow strictly to the letter. Such thoughts that he should help Muslims alone never crossed his mind. He had the highest ideals of kingship in mind that he should not incur the displeasure of God by making distinctions between man and man. Therefore, he did not have any particular "religious policy" or "norms" or "standard" to treat his own people. They were all his subjects, whether Hindus or Muslims or Christians, whose sentiments he respected, and whose interests he protected. In fact he was generous and liberal towards all. We may quote a few instances to prove his liberal and tolerant policy.

The letters he wrote to the Swamiji of Sringeri discovered in 1916 by R. Narasimhachar express deep sentiments of respect towards Hinduism. In one of those letters he quotes a Sanskrit verse, meaning "people do evil deeds smilingly but will suffer the consequences weepingly"². In another letter he requests the Swamiji to pray for the prosperity of all. More interestingly, when the Sringeri temple was damaged in the Maratha plundering raid of Parsharam Bhao, Tipu furnished the Swamiji with funds for reinstalling the displaced image of Sharada temple. The letters Tipu wrote at that time to Swamiji express such sentiments of respect for Hinduism as to disprove the charges of religious intolerance leveled against him. After the idol was installed Tipu received the *Prasada* and the *shawls* with due reverence, and in return sent gold-laced cloth and a bodice for the goddess and a pair of shawls for the Swamiji. In another record it is mentioned that Tipu sent two palanquins, one for the goddess and another for the Swamiji.

2. M.A.R. (Mysore Archaeological Report), 1916, pp. 10-11, & 73-76; "Hasadhbih Kriyate Karma Rududbhir anubhuryate".

Nor was such treatment confined to the period when Tipu was at war with the Marathas. It extended all through his regime. At another time when there was no war, Tipu addressed the Swamiji as Jagadguru and asked him to pray for the welfare and happiness of all the people. Tipu wrote, "Please pray to God for the increase of our prosperity. In whatever country holy personages like yourself may reside that country will flourish with good showers and crops". A fanatic Muslim would never have addressed a Hindu priest with such language of devotion; nor would he have ever believed in, and encouraged, forms of worship not permissible in his own religion.

Sringeri was not the only place Tipu patronized. He gave four silver cups, a silver plate and a silver spittoon to Lakshmikanta temple at Kalale in Nanjangud; a gold and silver vessels besides elephants and jewels to Narayanaswamy temple at Melkote; a jeweled cup and some precious stones to Srikanteswara temple at Nanjangud, besides a greenish *linga*. Sri Ranganatha temple was hardly a stone's throw from Tipu's palace from where he listened with equal respect to the call of the Muezzin and also the ringing of the temple bells. There were two other temples, the Narasimha and Gangadhareswara, near his palace. His appointment of numerous Hindus to high officers and his grants and gifts to Hindu temples falsify the wrong accusation that he was intolerant.

When a dispute arose between two sects of Srivaishnavism over which of the rites, whether of the *Vadagalais* (northerners) or *Tenkalais* (Southerners), should prevail in the Melkote temple, the matter was referred to Tipu, whose decision was so fair that all accepted it ungrudgingly. Thus Tipu's policy in respect of both Sringeri and Melkote was such that it indicated the secular character of his State, unhindered by any prejudice. A Hindu Chief, Parasharam Bhao, damages a Hindu temple and even desecrates its goddess, but a Muslim ruler rushes to its rescue and restores the holy establishment. Two different Hindu sects could not resolve their own dispute, and they turn to a Muslim king, and he solves the problem. This shows Tipu's deep interest in integrating all diverse forces in the society for the common purpose of the prosperity of all.

As if all this is not enough, it is on record that Tipu consulted Hindu astrologers, feasted Brahmins, bore the expenses of the religious ceremonies, and supported Hindu religious establishments. He treated all his subjects with equity and justice. If he was harsh on Nairs, Christians and Coorgis, who were in league with the English, he did not spare his co-religionists, if they were guilty of similar offence. The Mopillas, the Mahdavis, the Nawabs of Kurnool, Sunda and Savanur were all

punished in a similar manner. He was more hostile towards the Nizam and the Nawab of Carnatic than towards the Marathas.

In short Tipu's policy towards the non-Muslims should be viewed in the correct perspective that no State would tolerate betrayal of national interests. Recent researches have brought to light his enlightened character which made no distinctions among his subjects on the basis of race, religion, caste or sect. He endowed liberally many temples with grants to support the base of many Hindu religious institutions, which were as many as 156 in number. He was quite conscious of the fact that without the support of his people overwhelming majority of whom were Hindus, his regime would be shaky. His law code declared, "... to quarrel with our subjects is to war with ourselves. They are our shields and our buckles and it is they who furnish us with all things. Reserve the hostile strength for our enemies".

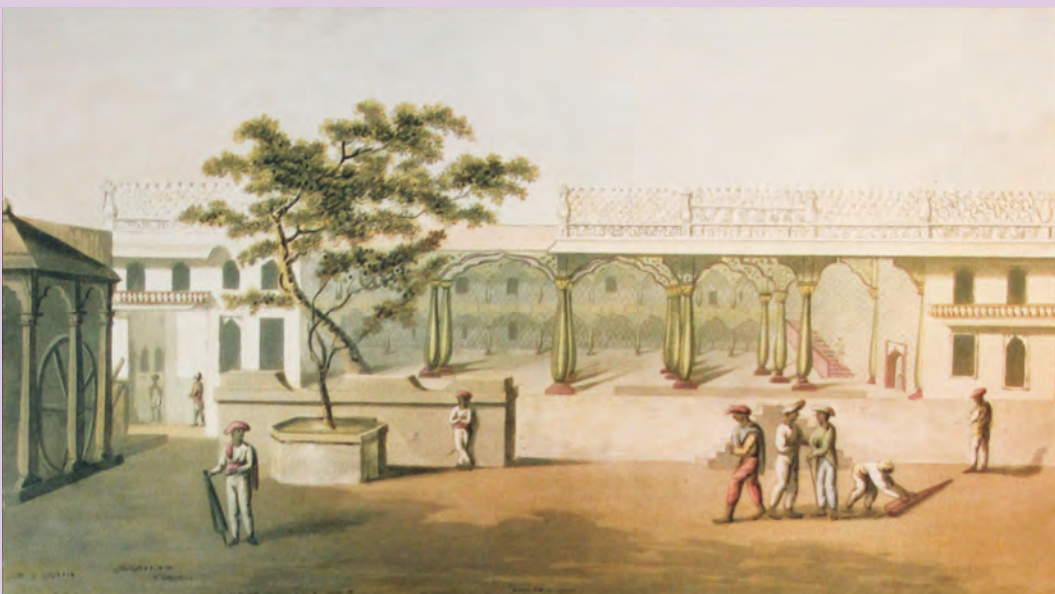
The degree of his popularity can be gauged from the resistance his subjects offered to the British after his fall. The Waugh insurrection, the Vellore Mutiny and the rebellion of 1831, which ultimately supplanted the Raja's authority by the British Commissioners, indicate the popular will against the English, as also his enlightened policy which was just and fair to all. Haidar had laid the foundation of a temple at Conjeevaram, but before its completion he died. Tipu ordered not only its completion but also participated in its opening ceremony. He elevated many Hindus to high offices. Purnaiya was the Diwan in charge of Revenue and Finance. Krishna Rao was the Treasurer. Shama Iyengar was the Minister of Post and Police. Narasinga Rao and Ranga Iyengar held key position in Srirangapatna. Srinivasa Rao and Appaji Rao were the diplomats. Mool Chand and Sajjan Rao were his agents at the Mughal Court. Nagappa was the *Faujdar* of Coorg. His civil list is full of many Hindu names. They held important posts in the army as well. Hari Singh commanded a wing of cavalry. Sripat Rao was sent to reduce the Nairs. Shiraji, a Maratha, held the command of 3,000 horse and defended Bangalore fort against Cornwallis. Gandhiji went to the extent of calling Tipu in *Young India* an embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity.

That Tipu's harshness towards his foes was based on political ground and not religious could be known by the condition he stipulated in a proposed treaty of alliance with the French. This article which exhibits a remarkable degree of his humanity declared, "I demand that male and female prisoners as well English as Portuguese, who shall be taken by the republican troops or by mine, shall be treated with humanity, and with regard to their persons that they shall be transported at our joint expense out of India to some place far distant from the territories of the allies."

Despite the knowledge of all this information, Wilks did not hesitate to say, "Tipu, in an age when persecution only survived in history, renewed its worst terror"³. There is no limit to the poison that Wilks has poured on Tipu. A dispassionate study of all sources would reveal that all sections of his people were justly treated, and that no single caste, community or sect had any monopoly of power in his government.

Art and Architecture

Art is the exuberance of the finer elements of human spirit. It is the sublimation of the aesthetic sense in man. It is the objectification of that creative impulse which is the urge of the soul. Art is not merely a medium to impart delight and pleasure, but a source of creative faculty. It is the first or the dawn form of man's knowledge and skill. Even before man becomes conscious of the world around him, he exhibits art talents. A child scribbles something and says that he has hidden a bird in a bush. We have to appreciate here the child's imagination as well as his creative impulse. The cave-men of the pre-historic days have exhibited their art on rocks and boulders. The richest heritage of mankind is art whether it is sculpture or architecture or painting or poetry, or music. It is our only legacy where history assumes concrete shape ever present with us to remind the glory of the past.



North side view of Tipu Palace, Bangalore - James Hunter, 1804

³ Wilks, History of Mysore (Madras, 1989), Vol. II, p. 766.



Tipu Palace - Bangalore



Lal Mahal - Srirangapatna



Dariya Daulat Bagh - Srirangapatna



Darya Daulat Bagh, Srirangapatna in 1860



Dariya Daulat Bagh - Srirangapatna



Inner view of Dariya Daulat Bagh

Haidar and Tipu have also left behind their legacy of art. Despite the hectic time of constant strifes they had, they did not forget to evince interest in art and architecture. They were good builders, and were greatly influenced by the Mughal style of architecture, particularly the structures of Sira, which Dilawar Khan, one of its governors, had erected. Both Haidar and Tipu adopted that as the model for their palaces at Bangalore and Srirangapatna. As the material used for them was perishable, they did not stand the ravages of time. The Bangalore palace was used as an administrative office until 1868, which being no longer safe was demolished. Haidar commenced its construction in 1781 but it was completed by Tipu in 1791. The building was in the style of Darya Daulat, and was very magnificent. Mackenzie compared it to the palaces of Agra and Delhi. An inscription installed there claimed that "it cast the beauty of China into oblivion". The description is hyperbolic, but it must have been magnificent to some extent, as the attempted restoration of the painting on a portion of the wall would indicate. Its balconies were richly carved. Its halls and rooms were extremely airy, and its walls were decorated with painting and gilding.



Tipu sultan's Palace - Nandi



Mausoleum of Haidar's father - Kolar

Haidar and Tipu had built several palaces in different places, such as Chitradurga, Bidnur, Mysore, Nandidurg, and Srirangapatna. All of them have perished except Darya Daulat at Srirangapatana, which was his summer palace. But of the main palace within the fort which was his residence, nothing remains except an impression of Buchanan, who says, "... though built of mud, it possesses a considerable degree of elegance and is the handsomest native building I have ever seen". It was a large building surrounded by massive and lofty walls of stone and mud. It had several handsome apartments. The private chambers of Tipu formed a square, on one side of which were the rooms that he himself used. The other three sides of the square were occupied with ware-houses in which he used to deposit vast varieties of goods. The apartment most commonly used by Tipu was a large lofty hall, open in the front and closed on the three other sides. The front portion served as a revenue office, where Tipu would give audience to people. The chief entry into the private square was through a strong passage wherein were chained four tigers. Within these was a room which was his study. His bed room was attached quite close to it.

The only buildings that are still maintained in good order are the Darya Daulat Bagh, the Gumbuz of Haidar and Tipu and the Mausoleum of Haidar's father at Kolar. Darya Daulat Bagh or "the Garden of the Wealth of the Sea" still attracts lovers of beauty from four corners of the world. It was the summer palace of the Sultan. It appears to have been built in the Mughal style of architecture resembling Akbar's famous durbar hall at Agra which is a fine specimen of Indo-Saracnic art. This palace is located in the surroundings of enchanting beauty on the bank of the river Cauvery. The palace is an oblong building with flat roof supported by very high fluted pillars, eight in number on each of the four sides. It appears to be a simple structure from a distance, but all its beauty lies in those refined and delicate carving in wood and lacquer work, which makes this palace one of the finest pieces of art in our country.

The whole structure of Darya Daulat rests on a rectangular platform about five feet high on which stand those pillars which support the roof. Around it runs a wide verandah borne on a tapering lotus formed wooden pillars with tri-foil arches. The inner building which is also square, faces the Naqqar Khana in the south and the river Cauvery in the north, both the faces being exactly alike.

There are small rooms and steep stairs on each of the four corners. The upper storey forms an inner floor with canopied balconies in the middle of the four sides. The staircases are hidden in the dark rooms concealed in the walls. The Durbar Hall has a projecting balcony in the centre from where Tipu received ambassadors and guests. On the east and west sides there are three rooms each used perhaps for living purposes.

An interesting feature of this palace is that its walls, pillars and arches are profusely painted with varied colours including free use of gold. The durbar hall is so magnificent that it recalls the grandeur of *Diwan-e-Khas* of Delhi, although the material used here is much inferior. Rees observes, "The lavish decorations which cover every inch of wall from first to last, from top to bottom recalls the palaces of Isfahan and resemble nothing, that I know in India"⁴. The base of the fluted pillars that support the Durbar Hall is in the form of a lotus suggesting that Tipu must have had very imaginative artists. The carvings on these pillars which taper as they soar high is in the form of tiger-stripes. The lintels that support the capital, the different arches that emerge from the capital, and the floral designs on either side of the arches are exquisite. The ceiling gives us an idea that it is a Persian carpet as if woven at the top. The balcony has the elegance and the beauty of the Mughal art. The lacquer work is ornate and nicely executed.

⁴ Rees, *The Duke of Clarence in Southern India*, p. 81.

The paintings on the eastern and western walls are noteworthy features of this palace. On the western wall are depicted Haidar and Tipu with their vazirs. We have here a graphic descriptions of the battle of Polilore where colonel Baillia was captured prisoner. The battle scene of the times is well brought to our notice. On the eastern side are sketched several ruling chiefs such as the Rajas of Tanjore and



Jamia Masjid - Srirangapatna



Inner View of Jamia Masjid, Srirangapatna

Coorg, the Nawabs of Arcot, Cuddapah, Kurnool, the queen of Chittor and Krishnaraja Wodeyar III.

The Gumbaz in Lal Bagh at Srirangapatna was built by Tipu for his father where both he and his mother are buried. It is a very fine specimen of the architecture of the period which is full of delicate beauty with tiger-stripes which Tipu loved most. It carries no other designs, either floral or geometric or calligraphic except the colour scheme of the tiger-stripes, which is quite awe-inspiring indicative of Tipu's fondness for heroic deeds. The most note-worthy features of the structure are the polished pillars of black marble, the exquisite dome, the slender minarets, four in number, and the rich decoration in plaster indicating the impact of Hindu style. This structure is an ample proof of Tipu's refined taste and sound knowledge of building art.

An open court-yard runs all round the Gumbuz, and on the western side lies the beautiful mosque known as *Masjid-e-Aqsa*. The highly-polished black pillars eight on each side are unique in their own right rarely seen anywhere in India, and their black colour is quite suggestive of the mausoleum. There is a rich decorative masonry work over the veranda roof. The central part which supports the most graceful dome have a base built in granite with massive slabs. The dome is a plain hemisphere until at

the very tip there is a little masonry work which creates the impression that a floral lid is placed on a spherical vessel. The dome itself is a simple structure characteristic of Bijapur architecture. The simplicity of style is visible on the four walls. There is profuse plaster work in this structure. The base of the dome is decorated. The doors are inlaid with ivory and are very beautiful. There are two inscriptions at the Gumbuz one of which carries a chronogram of Haidar's death in 1782. Another inscription is an elegy on Tipu's fall containing seven verses in Persian and two in Arabic. As we enter the precincts of the mausoleum surrounded on three of its sides by a mosque, and rest houses for visitors built in the style of Saracenic buildings of northern India with its Cyprus trees and finely laid out beautiful gardens, a solemnity unconsciously steals on us and makes us feel that it is a sacred resting place of the Sultan who gave his blood to write the history of free India.

The third important surviving monument of Tipu at Srirangapatna is *Jamia Masjid* or as it is called *Masjid-e-Ala*. It has two lofty minars. The main prayer hall is at the first floor reached by a flight of stairs from north and south. The outer portion of the mosque has a big verandah supported by a colonnade of huge pillars in Deccani style with their high ornate capital to support the roof. The outer side of the mosque carries three big arches. There is small dome in the centre of the western wall just above where the Imam leads the prayer. The dome is a plain hemisphere until at the very tip there is a little masonry work which creates the impression that a floral lid is placed on a spherical sphere. Inside the prayer hall there are numerous foil arches that have been formed over massive pillars. The decorative plaster work is very lavish in floral design. The prayer hall has a *Mehrab* in the form of a small room. The two tall minarets are the main points of interest, which combine majesty with grace. Their shafts are decorated with cornices and floral bands. There is a winding flight of 200 steps to reach the top of the minaret where narrow terraces provide a visitor a panoramic view of the entire surroundings. At the crown of the minars are large masonry *kalasas* of the Hindu style. These minars together with the Darya Daulat Bagh and the Gumbuz are not only the main source of attraction to the visitors but also the symbols of the by-gone glory of Tipu. The mosque in Mangalore known as "*Zeenat-al-Masjid*" built by Tipu is unique in one sense that its entire roof is a sheet of copper.

Thus Tipu was able to erect a few noble structures some of which exist to this day to speak of their grandeur. He was able to incorporate the features of the Mughal art as well as of Bijapur. Tipu's structures show remarkable skill and technical



Mosque and Gumbaz



Inner view of Gumbaz



Tomb of Tipu Sultan and his Father, Mother



Model of Srirangapatna fort, Courtesy: Dept. of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage

knowledge. For example, the circular structure of the Gumbuz dome has been built by converting the square spaces into eight-sided openings by laying triangular pieces as angles which bear the weight of the material used to hold the spherical dome together. His monuments exhibit the finer tastes of the Persian traditions as well as the skills of the local masons, who were experts in the art of carving. Wood was largely used, although stone was not neglected. Wood had a larger share for the pillars, doors, lintels, freezes and ceilings at Darya Daulat Bagh. The decorative



Water gate, Srirangapatna



Elephant gate, Srirangapatna



Bangalore gate, Srirangapatna

designs of the floral type on the walls, on the pillars and on the ceilings are covered with the delicacy and elegance of a goldsmith's work.

Forts of Haidar and Tipu

Forts, fortresses and fortifications were the watchwords of defence until the colonials subjugated the whole of India. Haidar and Tipu constructed forts and fortifications all over their dominions. Most of them existed before their advent but they repaired, strengthened and reinforced them besides adding many new strategic forts. Most of them were mud forts and they changed them to stone forts raised high walls, constructed ramparts, ditches, trenches, battlements, covered ways and Watergates. Some of the important forts which impress us even today are at Srirangapatna, Chitradurga, Nandidurga, Devanahalli, Dindigal, Ambur, Bidnur (Nagar), Kundapur, Mercara, Mangalore, Madhugiri, Bangalore, Manzarabad and Chintamani.

The forts these two rulers built extended from Dindigal and Palghat in the south to Koppal and Raichur in the north, and from Ambur in the east to Mangalore in the



Nandi Durga

west. They erected forts on hillstops as well as on level plains. They were careful in the choice of spots for the forts which should serve the strategic purpose, and help as a line of communication. The highest fort of the Sultanate was at Jamalabad near Belthangadi, and yet it had plenty of cool and clean water.

The most important fort, of course, was of Srirangapatna, which was the capital. Being an island surrounded by the river Kaveri it had great strategic importance, the nerve centre of the whole dominions. The history of this fort goes back to 1454 A.D. when Thimmanna, a palegar of Nagamangala, said to have built a mud fort with the permission of the Vijayanagar rulers. In 1610 Raja Wodeyar took possession of this fort. Tipu strengthened this fort with long, huge and massive straight walls, square bastions, deep ditches and lofty cavaliers. It has three gates, the Delhi gate, the Ganjam gate and the elephant gate. The elephant gate towards the east was built by Tipu in 1791. The fort has three lofty walls, double ramparts and double ditches on all sides. Within the fort were located the Sultan's palace and all the government offices and residential quarters of ministers, commanders and high officers. The Ranganathaswamy temple was also located quite close to the palace, and also the main mosque, known as *Masjid-e-Ala*. The town had, an underground water supply system from the river and channels which ran to every quarter.



Devanahalli Fort

Haidar captured Chitradurga fort in 1779 from Madakari Nayak. Haidar replaced the mud fortifications around the town with strong stone walls and erected a fort on the hillock, which Tipu further strengthened it. Even today it stands in the same condition. A small palace too was built within the fort, but it is not there to-day. Nandidurg fort was on the top of the famous fortified hill in Chikballapur taluk near Bangalore. It is about 4851 feet *above* sea level at the termination of the range of mountains running from Penukonda to Bellary. Haidar captured this fort from the Marathas in 1770. It is strong, formidable and impregnable fort. The source of water supply to the fort was from a tank called *Amrita Saravara* or "Lake of Nectar" which



Sultan Battery, Mangalore



Bangalore Fort



Manjarabad Fort

was fed by the perennial springs. There is so called Haidar's drop in the north and Tipu's drop in the south. Haidar had built a beautiful small palace at the top of the hill.

Devanahalli where Tipu was born had a fort, and it was that place which first witnessed Haidar's valour in the engagement of 1749. The town had a mud fort which Haidar demolished it and replaced it by a strong stone fort which is standing even today. A memorial arch with an inscription stands on the site where Tipu was born. Haidar emerged into political lime light with his governorship of Dindigal, where he reshaped an old fort which stands still in good condition. In 1757 he captured the Palghat fort also and remodeled it. The Ambur fort was captured by Tipu in 1780. Its reconstruction took nearly two years, and the ground fort is still standing with a Persian inscription carrying the Chronograh of construction dated 1196 A.H (1782 A.D).

Haidar conquered Bidnur with great difficulty and gave it the name of Haidar Nagar, where he built a palace and established a mint besides making it his principal arsenal for the manufacture of arms and ammunition. He rebuilt the fort and made it very strong. Haidar built another strategic fort on the top of a hill near Hosangadighat, near Kundapur, and called it Haidargarh. In 1773 Haidar captured

Mercara and erected the stone fort there. He repaired the fort of Kabbardurga and called it Jafarabad. It is quite a strong fort, almost impregnable.

Haidar took Mangalore in 1763 and built a dockyard and an arsenal there. In 1783 Tipu demolished the English fort and built the Sultan's Battery and a new fortification. This Battery acted as a watch tower to prevent the entry of foreign warships. Haidar built a strong redoubt at Coondapur. Both Haidar and Tipu paid attention to Bangalore fort which was strategic in importance. Kempegowda, founder of Bangalore had erected a mud fort there in 1537. In 1761 Haidar under the supervision of his maternal uncle, Ibrahim Ali Khan, the *Khilledar*, constructed a strong stone fort, which was oval with round towers at proper intervals. It had fine cavaliers, a *fausse bray*, a good ditch and a covered way without palisade. It had two gate ways, the Delhi gate in the north and the Mysore gate in the south. The palace stood inside the fort. After 1792 Tipu renovated and re-strengthened the fort.

The Madhugiri fort in Tumkur District is very beautiful. A palegar had erected a mud fort which Haidar replaced it by a stone structure. The highest peak of the hill is 3933 feet above the sea level. In the Malanad area Tipu selected the spot of Manzarabad for the construction of a fort. This strategic fort stands on a hill on the Mangalore-Hassan Road. It is quite a strong fort still standing in its original shape. It is planned like a star with a grand gate and masonry walls. It commands an excellent view of the western ghats. Tipu constructed a new fort at Mysore and called it Nazarabad fort. The Chintamani fort built by Tipu on a hill, 4227 feet above sea level is quite formidable and difficult to ascend. Nizamgarh fort, not very far from Raichur, was the northern most fort of the Sultanate. It is situated about two miles from Koppal.

Thus both Haidar and Tipu paid great attention to forts and fortifications which in those days decided the destiny of a State. These forts had other political, economic and social implications. They involved the people also in defence of their safety, security and liberty, for at times of attack they had to support the garrison with the required supplies and also act as a source of intelligence. In peace times, the forts offered a compact and integrated growth of economic life promoting arts and craft and business and commerce. Socially too, the forts helped to bring together people from all walks of life, soldiers, civilians, merchants, traders, artisans, and labourers, all learning to live together and work together. In short, fort life was really an experiment in great social change.



A view of Dariya Daulat Bagh

