

THE MASSACRE OF MANDAYAMS 1783



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INTRODUCTION

The following article on "The Massacre of Madayams: 1783" is a condensed content from a well-known booklet 'Mysore Pradhans'. It brings out the patriotic deeds and sacrifices of the famous Pradhans - Sri M.A. Tirumala Row & Sri M.A.Narayana Row - Mandayam Iyengars, in the cause of the country of the famous Pradhans, being the successors of the Ananadampillais of Bharadwaja Gothram.

The authors of the booklet, published in 1902 by Brahmavadin press in Madras, are 2 two Mandayam Iyengars: Sri M A. Srinivasacharya, an Advocate of Hassan, a descendent of above-mentioned Pradhan Narayana Row, and Sri M.A.Narayana Iyengar (also known as Srivasananda of Ramakrishna order). This booklet is based on the manuscript records, history of the times, also private documents and letters that were in possession of the authors, which was collectively published earlier in the year 1887 in the Gazetteer of Govt of Mysore by the British authority Mr B.L. Rice. Though the title "Massacre of Mandayams" is only a 3-line incident in the 40-page Booklet, it gives a brief sketch of history of the Mysore Kingdom, with an emphasis on the great contributions emanating from the intellect of the Mandayam Pradhans of Mysore during the six decades from 1760 to 1820. I chose the above title as Massacre since it left a deep sorrow in the inner chords of Mandayams of Bharadwaja gotra, though the Massacre included many other non Mandayams amounting to a total of 700 families.

SRIRANGAPATNAM FORT THE HISTORY

The massacre of 700 families took place at Srirangapatna on Narakachaturdashi day in the year 1783. This included Mandayams belonging to Bharadwaja Gothra. The perpetrator of this crime was Tippu

Sultan. It was the most violent and cruel act that resulted in the tragic end of 700 innocent families.

The Mysore Kingdom for centuries was ruled by Kings. In 1762, a low ranked cavalry man in the king's army rose in power due to his innate abilities in warfare, to such an extent that he usurped his master's kingdom. The kingdom was ruled by 'Rani Lakshammanni'. The usurper was none other than 'Hyder Ali'. Mysore kings were well-known all over India not only for their excellent governance of the kingdom, but also for compassionate welfare of the subjects. Their encouragement and support for arts and artists in music, dance, drama, literature and culture was exemplary. This display of excellence can be attributed to the sound and matured advice given to the ruling Kings by a few people of brilliant mind, titled as 'Pradhans' meaning counsellors. They were men of utmost integrity and loyalty to the rulers. They were also deft diplomats. In short, they were the right hand to the king in all affairs of the kingdom.

In the year 1608, just about 400 years ago, Raja Wodeyar, the ruler of the Mysore Kingdom rewarded one Tirumala Iyengar by appointing him as 'Pradhan', due to his untiring effort and diplomacy for getting sanction from the then Vijayanagar Maharaja, to extend the occupation of the Srirangapatnam fort by the Mysore Raja. Pradhan Tirumala Iyengar, a Mandayam Sri Vaishnava belonging to Bharadwaja gotra, was a descendent of the founder patriarch of Mandayam Srivaishnava community, by name 'Anantharya' of Kirangur near Srirangapatnam. He lived during the period of Bhagwad Ramanuja (1017 to 1137). Anantharya was a great devotee of Ramanuja who bestowed upon him the name 'Anandampillai'. All the descendants of Anantharya till today belong to Anandampillai family of Bharadwaja gotra. They are called Mandayam Anandampillai(MA) or Ramanujapuram Anandampillai (RA). Presently as an example, this can be identified with U. Ve. Dr MA Lakshmithathachar of Melkote - a Mandayam Anandampillai.

From Pradhan Tirumala Iyengar onwards, for 2 centuries until 1800, the legacy of Mandayams serving as Pradhans to the Rajas of Mysore continued due to their prowess, intelligence, ability and diplomatic skills. One Pradhan Govindarajayya, a Mandayam, during year 1759, was instrumental in arranging marriage of the then king Immadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar with

Lakshammanni, who became the most important queen or Maharani. She was the ruler of the Mysore Kingdom in the ensuing 50 years of Mysore History, which witnessed Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan's alien rule.

Pradhan Govindarajayya accumulated wealth and became a rich person. Three years later, as mentioned in the beginning, in the year 1762, Hyder Ali usurped the Mysore Kingdom. The wealth of Pradhan Govindarajayya attracted the attention of Hyder Ali. He wanted to plunder and loot. Pradhan who had it all secretly buried, refused to give it. So, Hyder Ali strangled the Pradhan to death in 1765. Pradhan Govindarajayya left behind 2 sons, Tirumala Iyengar and Narayana Iyengar. But for all practical purposes they named them as Tirumala Row and Narayana Row. Many ask - why Row while they are Iyengars? The answer is: Row is a title symbolic of higher status in Society, perhaps derived from the title 'Rao Bahadur', given by Rulers or Rajas. Actually, the names are Mandayam Anandampillai Tirunarayana Iyengar and Mandayam Anandampillai Narayana Iyengar.

These two brothers Pradhan Tirumala Row and Pradhan Narayana Row are the main actors in the coming history of the Mysore Kingdom, for a period of nearly 45 years from 1770 to 1815. The villains are the father and son duo - Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, during this period of about 36 years from 1762 to 1799, wherein they were the de facto rulers of the Mysore Kingdom. The heroine is Rani Lakshammanni, the rightful heir to the Mysore Kingdom, who was kept in a sort of exile during this period. The others who participated in this historical period as extras, were fence sitters - the British Colonisers of East India Company, the Peshwa ruler of Marathas, Nizam of Hyderabad, the French army and Danes to a small part.

Rani Lakshammanni, the queen of Mysore Kingdom, was a highly patriotic lady. She was very dynamic with extraordinary diplomatic skills. Her firmness and determination, ability and intelligence, could be seen in her incessant pursuance of getting back the kingdom from the clutches of Hyder and Tippu. She tried three times secretly to get rid of the Mahommaden usurpers, collaborating with her Pradhans and friends. But she did not succeed due to better intelligence in Hyder and Tippu's camp. Ultimately after the death of Tippu in 1799, the Mysore Kingdom came back to Raja

Wodeyars, but with certain conditions worked out with British who were responsible for ending Tippu Sultan's rule through a war.

Her mission to retrieve the lost kingdom, started around 1765. At that time, it should be known that British, who came to trade in India under the garb of 'East India Company', had taken over many parts of India as their colony, ruled by British resident governors, collectors and other staff etc.

In her first attempt, as early as 1765, Maharani sent one Rayadurga Srinivasa Rao as an emissary to meet the then Governor of Madras Lord Pigot - a British, to seek his assistance in getting rid of Hyder Ali. The Governor promised his assistance. But the Nawab of Karnatic — a Muslim, applied counter political pressure not to cede the usurped Mysore Kingdom back to Rani, and continue with Hyder Ali. The British with their genetic 'divide and rule' policy, did not adhere to Lord Pigot's promise, and did nothing regarding this matter. Thus, the first attempt failed.

But the Maharani did not lose her grit and tenacity. In her second attempt, 5 years later in 1770, Rani Lakshammanni sent a secret emissary to Peshwa Madhavarao the Maratha ruler, for this purpose. Hyder Ali, through his intelligence services, suspected Pradhan Tirumala Row as a privy to this scheme. He arrested him and put him in confinement. Later when Hyder invaded Bellary and Gooty, he released Tirumala Row and took him along with him lest the Row should do any mischief to his cause, if left alone at Srirangapatnam. Hyder was scared of Tirumala Row's superior intelligence. Hyder did not want Row to be in his capital city of Srirangapatnam. So, Tirumala Row was sent away to Kadapa as a resident representative of Hyder in the court of another Muslim Nawab. With this Rani's second attempt also failed. But the Maharani did not lose heart. She was not the one to lose the pride for Mysore Kingdom.

In her third attempt in 1776, Maharani Lakshammanni approached Lord Pigot again, who had come back to Madras as Governor, after restoring Tanjore to its native ruler. She deputed her Pradhans Tirumala Row and Narayana Row as emissaries to revisit the friendly Lord Pigot seeking British help in ousting Hyder. The shrewd Maharani promised lots of incentives in the form of money if Pradhans come back with success.

Encouraged by this promise, Pradhans embarked on this dangerous and difficult mission to Madras. On the way they learnt that Lord Pigot was behind bars on some false charge. Even then the Pradhans managed to communicate with Lord Pigot, who advised them to go and stay at Tanjore, where he would meet them after one year, as by that time he would be restored back to his Governorship. Hence Pradhans went to Tanjore, where they stayed under the protection & hospitality of Raja of Tanjore under request from Lord Pigot for a special care. Meanwhile, after a few months Pradhans came to know to their utter disappointment, about the death of Lord Pigot at St Thomas Mount in Madras. They communicated to Maharani Lakshammanni the tragedy and their failure to affecting any change. But, determined to achieve the goal by waiting for a proper opportunity to negotiate with British, they continued to reside in Tanjore enlisting the sympathies of Tanjore Raja. Thus, the third attempt also failed. Maharani became more determined and her tenacity increased.

In 1782, 6 years after the third attempt, the fourth attempt was made to drive away Tippu Sultan from Srirangapatnam and restore the kingdom to Rani Lakshammanni. It is necessary to remember that both the Pradhans continued to stay in Tanjore, under the protection of Tanjore Raja, after the third attempt. They were waiting for the right time to reattempt. During this sojourn of 6 years stay they were in constant touch with Rani Lakshammanni. Schemes were hatched with Lord Macartney, the Governor of British administration at Madras through the good offices of John Sullivan the resident officer to the court of Tanjore, and one Rev. Schwartz, a celebrated Danish missionary, by Pradhans at Tanjore. The extraordinary ability, intelligence and acumen coupled with skilled diplomacy of Mandayam Pradhans came to the fore as a success, resulting in a 'Treaty' with British embodying certain terms and conditions. The main part of the treaty was that British Army would invade and liberate Srirangapatnam from the clutches of Tippu Sultan and restore the Mysore Kingdom to rightful owner Rani Lakshammanni. To execute this treaty, the British Army under one Col Lang asked the Pradhans to guide them the way to Srirangapatnam, and provide the various services like food etc., which was agreed on. So, Pradhans with their own 300 horses guided Col Lang's army, starting on 2nd April 1783,

marched through Karur, Vijayamangalam, Dindigul, Palghat, Dharapuram and Coimbatore.

While guiding and trying to get the British army on the march to Srirangapatnam, the Pradhans had secretly organised a conspiracy with their friends, with an aim to overthrow Tippu's government. This conspiracy is detailed below separately as it ultimately led to the 'The Mandayam Massacre'.

THE CONSPIRACY

Two men, one Subbaraj Urs assisted by one Narasinga Row, directed the Conspiracy in Srirangapatnam. It was arranged, with the help of 3000 jetties, Mahrattas and others who were for the cause of Rani Lakshammanni. Their plan was to occupy the Srirangapatnam Fort and seize the treasury, capture and imprison every Mahomedan. One Anche Shamaiah was supposed to destroy Tippu's men in Mangalore. A certain night in the early part of August 1783 was fixed as the day of the start of revolt. That night, just while the conspirators were getting ready for the attack, Syed Mahomed Khan the 'killedar' (fort in-charge), got the scent of the attack on the fort and the conspiracy. He arrested Subbaraj Urs and many others and put them to death. The killedar at once reported everything to Tippu.

Meanwhile Tippu had come to know of the open alliance and active service of Tirumala Row with the British army. So, Tippu ordered the arrest and imprisonment of the relatives of all involved in the conspiracy including men, women and children, to the extent of nearly 700 families. These included families of relatives of Pradhans Tirumala Row and Narayana Row - Mandayams of Bharadwaja gotra. They were chained with heavy irons and thrust into the dungeons of Srirangapatnam. Pradhan Narayana Row was also captured and imprisoned. But he soon managed to escape. Tippu, on his return from Mangalore to the capital Srirangapatnam, ordered a wholesale

massacre of all the 700 families, mercilessly putting them to death. This was the day of 'Naraka Chaturdashi' (Deepavali). Tippu Sultan also confiscated the Jahgirs huge estates/villages awarded to the Pradhans and their relatives, by Rajas to subjects loyal for their superior service to the kingdom.

Even today Anandampillais of Bharadwaja gotra staying in Melkote and other places, do not celebrate Deepavali, as a mark of homage to their ancestors who were killed in this Massacre.

The British were compelled to make peace with Tippu. The Treaty of Mangalore was concluded in March 1784. Thus, the fourth attempt failed with cruel crime of the Massacre of Mandayams. My article ends here, as the theme of the title has been dealt.

The surgical strike ends as a tragedy to Mandayams but leaves one with a yearning to know what happened later to the Pradhans MA Tirumala Row and MA Narayana Row , what happened to the quest for return of Mysore Kingdom to Rani Lakshammanni, and the role of British and Tippu Sultan. The answer to the above is encompassed in the Mysore History, starting from the end of the year of the massacre in 1783 to the death of the Pradhans in 1815 covering a period of 32 years, during which Tippu Sultan was also killed in February 1799 in a war. So, I have tried to give a brief in this regard.

POST MASSACRE PERIOD - 1783 TO 1815

Disappointed with the termination of the war against Tippu Sultan, resulting in the Mangalore Treaty, the British promised Maharani and the Pradhans of full support when a convenient opportunity arose. Pradhans Tirumala Row and Narayana Row returned to Tanjore.

Tippu was after Tirumala Row. He tried to capture Tirumala Row clandestinely in Tanjore. Getting scent of this, Tirumala Row fled to Travancore, under the protection of the king there. Like Nizam of Hyderabad and Peshwa of Mahratta, the Travancore King was also an ally of British. Tippu, disrespecting

the Mangalore Treaty, invaded Travancore not only to win it, but also to capture Tirumala Row. British waged a war against Tippu. Pradhans smelled an opportunity. They promised support to British in the war on the condition that British make a treaty with Maharani to obtain the return of the kingdom usurped by Tippu. The Treaty was made. Wars between British and Tippu took place extending from Coimbatore to Srirangam . When Tirumala Row was helping British in Coimbatore, Tippu who came to know that Tirumala Row is stationed there, went personally hounding for capture of Tirumala Row. There were spies and traitors that is common during wars. When Tirumala Row was going back to Tanjore from Coimbatore to escape from Tippu, a few traitors tried to ambush him & kill him. Tirumala Row of intelligence & capability maneuvered an escape through a different route and saved himself once again from death.

Tippu could not win these invasions. He retreated. British were marching towards Srirangapatnam for a siege of the fort, led by the Governor General of India - Lord Cornwallis. Tippu knew that he could not sustain. So, he cleverly got another Peace Treaty made with British who found it suitable to their 'Divide and Rule' policy of governance. This 5th attempt called as Third Mysore war ended to the utter disappointment of Pradhans who strived for 16 years to get the kingdom back to the Maharani. After some time, the Maharani came to know that Tippu Sultan is conspiring with French Government to bring French army to oust British from India. Once the British came to know about this from the Maharani, they could not bear the audacity and the cunning conspiracy of Tippu Sultan. This caused such a rage & anger to the Imperial Lion (The British) that they marched into Srirangapatnam and captured the fort by furious assault on 11th February 1799. Ultimately Tippu Sultan was killed by an ordinary soldier, and his heroic deeds came to an end.

Thus, ended the usurpation founded in treachery, supported by violence and cruelty and destroyed by the force of justice and power of the British. The British restored the kingdom to Royal family of Mysore. British promised Pradhan Tirumal Row the Prime Minister-ship of Mysore Kingdom. Maharani Lakshammanni and the Pradhans were overwhelmed with joy. 36 years of

rule in exile had ended. However, British (cunning fox) changed their mind by bringing one by name Purniah as the Prime Minister (well-known later as Dewan Purniah), instead of giving it to Pradhan Tirumala Row. The reason given by British was that Pradhan Tirumala Row was away from Srirangapatnam in the last 16 years. Thus, he had lost touch of local

governance. Whereas the Minister Purniah staying in Srirangapatnam has the right experience of governance. He should be the Prime Minister. Also, they were of the opinion, that Mahomedan influence in the country stood in the way of restoration of Hindu Raj. As such, not only Principal officers working for the late Sultan should be retained, and reinstatement of one of the sons of Tippu to Govt of Mysore, as an appeasement to muslims!

This was a bolt from the blue. The Rani & Tirumala Row felt a miserable jolt of grief and sorrow. They could not insist as the treaty with British did not allow many independent decisions by Rani. The British (roaring lion & cunning fox) adopting the Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde posture, got their pound of flesh. Tirumala Row had to agree to British proposal of him returning to Madras. His request to meet Rani Lakshammanni, once before going to Madras was denied by British. This denial exposed ruthless attitude of British.

Tirumala Row settled down in Madras, with generous compensation and protection. The Maharani being aged, installed Krishnaraja Wodeyar as Mysore Maharaja. People of Mysore were immensely delighted. In the year 1811, Pradhan Narayana Row (Mandayam Anandampillai Narayana Iyengar) died. His son Tirumala Row Jr, who was given the post of Head Shirastedar (Dewan) in collectorate of Trichinopoly, resigned and joined his uncle Tirumala Row Sr at Madras to serve the Mysore Raja, remotely. Due to his superior abilities, His Highness of Mysore appointed him as Dewan of Mysore in 1815. Even before he could occupy the post, he was poisoned to death. Pradhan Tirumala Row also died in 1815. Thus, for the Mandayam Community it was a loss of two eminent Pradhans.

CONCLUSION

It is said that the world is a stage on which all of us are actors in a continuous drama with the time never ending. If this is true, then the above history is minuscule part of this eternal drama. But, this drama is real. Whereas the dramas we stage for entertainment is not, wherein actors play a role.

I see a value of unflinching patriotism, determination, tenacity and grit in Rani Lakshammanni, a value of unflinching loyalty, integrity, capability, dedication and superb diplomacy, all flowing from the brilliant intelligence of Mandayam Pradhans Tirumal Iyengar and Narayana Iyengar, the evil character of hatred, rage , anger, coverdice , violence, cruelty and murder, in the father and son duo - Hyder Ali & Tippu Sultan, exploitation, cunningness and avarice in the British.

MY ANALYSIS

Many mistakenly attribute Tippu Sultan seeking the help of the French to oust the British from colonizing India, as his patriotism for India. But it was purely for a selfish reason to keep the Mysore Kingdom to himself and preventing British from taking over. It was to continue the treacherous usurpation. This was also a conspiracy!

Similarly, the British defeated and killed Tippu Sultan, primarily to avoid the French from waging a war against them so that they can continue the slow usurpation of India under the garb of trading by East India Company. This made British restore the Mysore Kingdom to Rani Lakshammanni, as a corollary. Otherwise , more peace treaties would have emerged.

Though the Pradhan's conspiracy was the cause and provocation for Tippu's anger and rage resulting in the massacre, it was meant to take back the rightful kingdom usurped by Hyder and Tippu. Bhagwad Geeta says — "Telling a lie to save the truth is the right Dharma." Thus, it was a right conspiracy meant to destroy evil.

Trust the article enables some understanding of the history surrounding 'The Massacre of Mandayams' and the pride of the two great Mandayam

Pradhans of our community.

Descendants of Pradhans (at present):

- Pradhan M.A.Tirumala Row.: Late Sri M.A.Krishnamachari of 'Cash Keeper' family of Madras. His daughter Smt Vedavalli & her son Sri M.A. Srinivasan presently staying on 5th Main Road, Malleswaram, Bangalore.
- Pradhan Narayana Row.: Late Dr M.A.Narasimhachar of Basavanagudi, & his 3 sons - Dr Tirumalachar in USA, Sri Dasarathi in Bangalore, & Sri Ramesh in New Zealand.

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