Raya

Praise for the Book

'An exemplary biography that brings the whole world of Vijayanagara to life as no previous book has ever before succeeded in doing. Minutely researched, full of new material with apparently effortless command over primary sources in multiple languages, this finely written study of the great king Krishnadevaraya is full of good stories, revealing anecdotes and cleverly analysed myths. It makes an excellent introduction to the history of Vijayanagara and should be required reading for all visitors to Hampi.' **William Dalrymple**

'Though reigning for a mere twenty years at the start of the sixteenth century, Krishnadevaraya became synonymous with the aura of the Vijayanagara empire, with Tirupati (the world's richest temple today) and with the Telugu language. But as a man Raya has remained almost completely elusive until this riveting study.' **Rajmohan Gandhi**

'Srinivas Reddy's *Raya* offers a vivid and engaging account of the life and brilliance of the mighty Krishnadevaraya and chronicles with great clarity the charisma, force and vision with which he would establish the powerful Vijayanagara empire – a glorious period of our history whose rich legacy lives on to this day.' **Shashi Tharoor**

'In this unique biography of Krishnadevaraya, Srinivas Reddy captures the interests both of the general reader and of the specialist historian. He uses an impressive array of primary sources, liberally quoting from them to preserve their distinct textures and flavours. Periodically the narrative opens up to discuss broader issues of overarching importance, such as the nature of courtly culture and debates in the historiography

of Vijayanagara. His argument that Krishnadevaraya's real nemesis was not any of the Muslim sultans of the northern Deccan, but rather the Hindu Gajapati ruler Prataparudra is compelling and original. That Reddy manages to harmonize all this is a testament to the unifying quality of his engaging narrative. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in Indian history.' **Phillip B. Wagoner**

'Impeccably researched . . . a thoroughly enjoyable, intelligent, altogether edifying biography that combines academic sophistication with good writing.' ***Mint***

'A book that lovers of history could consider pouncing upon.' ***Scroll***

'A compelling, disciplined and compact biography . . . [Reddy's] use of primary sources ... is extremely valuable.' ***Frontline***

'Well-written, absorbing ... It gives us a clear picture of a personality who had a huge impact on the shape of India.' ***Deccan Herald***

Raya

Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara

Srinivas Reddy

juggernaut

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for

Professor Padmanabh S. Jaini

quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas
gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli est.

Whatever things occupy people – their desires and fears,
their angers and pleasures, their joys and runnings about –
they become the medley of our little book.

Juvenal, *Satires I.I.85–6*

vijayanagara-vṛttāntamu
sujanalache vinnayaṭṭi sūnṛta-vākyul
prajalaku teṭapaḍaṅgā
sṛjiyiñciti kṛṣṇrāya śekharu-carital

So that the people may clearly know
the history of Vijayanagara,
I have put together the deeds of King Krishnaraya,
in true and pleasing words
that one might hear from virtuous men.

Rāyavācakamu I.1

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Part III

Prologue

In the winter of 1515, a mighty army pitched camp along the banks of the Krishna river, deep in the heart of Telugu country. Meanwhile, their trusted leader quietly made his way to a nearby temple where locals worshipped a regional form of Lord Vishnu. It was the sacred Vaishnava day of Ekadashi, and King Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara fasted with devotion before laying his head to rest in the temple's sacred cloisters. It was the eve of the young Tulu king's greatest battle, and that night he had a dream that would forever change his life, and the fate of his people.

The benevolent god Andhra Mahavishnu appeared before the king – his lustrous black body was cloaked in golden silk, his wide open eyes were bright as lotus flowers, and the Kaustubha gem on his chest was a deeper red than the rising sun. The king was awestruck and humbled as god himself spoke to him in a gentle but serious tone:

'You've already written works in Sanskrit, but now you must compose an epic poem in Telugu, the language of the people! Tell the story of Andal and my wedding in Srirangam, for though I am a Telugu king and you are the king of Kannada, Vishnu is one and the same for everyone. Do this for my glory and your future will grow brighter and brighter with each passing day!' And with these prophetic words, Andhra Mahavishnu disappeared into the darkness.

Early the next morning Krishnadevaraya awoke astonished. He performed all the rituals with deep devotion and offered his salutations to the central temple spire. Next he called together all his priests and soothsayers and related his most wondrous dream. The assembly was amazed to hear of the god's visitation and assured the king that the auspicious vision meant certain victory. Lord Vishnu himself was commanding a king of Karnataka to write about a Tamil saint in classical Telugu! Krishnadevaraya thus felt perfectly capable of uniting the whole of south India under his inclusive banner. And so, with this divine mandate in his heart, the young king rallied his men together and set out to face his most hated enemy.

His arch-rival was not one of the five Bahmani sultans who continued to harass the empire's northern border, but rather the Gajapati king Prataparudradeva of Kalinga.

This proud king now controlled many key strongholds south of the river Krishna, and Krishnadevaraya was determined to reclaim them for Vijayanagara. The deep animosity between the two Hindu kings had been boiling for years – Prataparudradeva was a blue-blooded kshatriya, born into a long line of Solar dynasty kings, and Krishnadevaraya was but a low-caste upstart from humble origins. Prataparudradeva lorded it over Krishnadevaraya; he insulted him whenever he could by calling him a *dasi-putra*, the son of a servant girl, and never once saw him as an equal. The piercing taunts had worked, and Krishnadevaraya now marched with unrelenting resolve to humble his haughty rival. He knew in his heart that he was a great king, Lord Vishnu believed it too, and Krishnadevaraya was determined to prove his mettle to the world.

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Today, Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara is remembered as the iconic king of south India. Most histories portray him as a Hindu warrior who crushed Muslim invaders, some paint him as a peasant who rose to become an emperor, and yet others remember him as a shrewd statesman, a brilliant poet or a benevolent ruler. Each of these identities contributed to the king's remarkable persona, but he was

much more than any one of these readings. What makes Krishnadevaraya so exciting is that his life embodies all the vibrant dynamism of his era, a time that witnessed radical transformations in the social, cultural and political life of South Asia, and the world at large. His two-decade reign from 1509 to 1529 falls in what scholars call the early modern period, a precipice of world history when new global networks were being forged – cultures merged and cultures clashed, but the vast lands of the earth were not yet claimed by European colonialism. Krishnadevaraya thus represents a critical transformation from ancient king to modern politician. And in that sense, he was India's first global leader. He had to confront very modern problems such as building international alliances and negotiating overseas trade deals while grappling with the challenges of globalism and multiculturalism. The Deccan of his time was a place where Hindus and Muslims, north Indians and south Indians, Persians and Portuguese, all intermingled as they made their lives and fortunes.

In the eyes of the world, Vijayanagara was the epitome of oriental opulence. It was a cosmopolitan metropolis, the best provided city of the world, more magnificent than Rome, and so exceedingly rich that diamonds were traded in the streets by the basket load! And at the height of the empire's glory there ruled a magnificent monarch, the most feared and perfect king that could

ever be! The myths surrounding Krishnadevaraya began in his own lifetime, nurtured by sycophantic court poets, horse-trading Portuguese chroniclers and travelling storytellers. But myths are not antithetical to the discipline of history; indeed, they are critical components of how history is made and why it is propagated. Disentangling fact from fiction is but one part of historical research, contextualizing and interpreting that material is another part, for good history is not the pursuit of an absolute truth, but rather a search for meaning.

The legends of Krishnadevaraya's exploits spread widely after his death, but he consciously set them in motion, particularly through his *Amuktamalyada*, a glorious epic poem that the king did in fact compose in honour of Andhra Mahavishnu. That fateful dream of 1515 was no mere fiction – it was divine inspiration for an unforgettable empire.

This book is just one telling of Krishnadevaraya's life. It is based on the available historical archives, but it listens with sympathy to the legends, songs and memories of people. I was first enchanted by Krishnadevaraya when I read the remarkable poetry of his *Amuktamalyada*. Although literary texts like these are often viewed as works of pure imagination, rarely if ever mined as historical sources, I believe a sensitive reading of such material gives us a unique window into a poet's mind, and in this case,

the spirit of a great king. With this array of materials, I have tried, in the most genuine way I can, to present Krishnadevaraya as he might have seen himself, at the very heart of a magnificent world.

Note on Sources

Most histories of the Vijayanagara empire and its famous kings have been told through the eyes of foreigners. The hard facts and figures of much of the Indian past were recorded in the words of hundreds of travellers, explorers and merchants who visited India from all around the world. Many wrote about south India, including Moroccan scholar Ibn Battuta (d.1377), Italian merchant Niccolo de Conti (d.1469), Russian merchant Athanasius Nikitin (d.1472), Persian court chronicler Abdul Razzaq (d.1482), Italian traveller Ludovico di Varthema (d.1517) and Portuguese officer Duarte Barbosa (d.1521). In regard to Vijayanagara's history, our most extensive written sources remain the chronicles of Domingo Paes and Fernão Nunes, two Portuguese horse merchants who both spent time in the Vijayanagara capital during its heyday. Each of these travellers wrote accounts of their wondrous experiences in India, and though they contain much detail,

they must be read, like all historical sources, keeping in mind a text's context and pretext.

Although it has been argued that India did not have a tradition of historical writing, for millennia Indians have recorded their past in creative ways, through sculpture, inscription, myth, poetry and song. These sources may be deemed soft in the hard discipline of history, but if read in the right light, they offer fascinating historical insights found nowhere else. In addition to Persian histories like the *Tarikh-i-Ferishta* written by Bijapuri historian Ferishta and the *Burhan-i-Ma'asir* by Sayyid Ali Tabataba, I refer to Telugu literary sources such as the *Rayavacakamu*, a unique seventeenth-century historical text, along with various Telugu court epics like the *Manu Caritramu* of Peddana, the *Parijata Apaharanamu* of Timmana and, most importantly, Krishnadevaraya's own literary masterpiece, *Amuktamalyada*. Sensitively reading each source with respect to its context, its production, its author and its intended audience offers us vivid perspectives into the medieval south Indian past.

We thus have before us a remarkable array of materials: archaeological remains, multilingual inscriptions in stone and copper, European travel literature, Persian *tarikhas*, Portuguese court chronicles, epic poetry, genealogies, local *kaifiyats*, folk songs, oral verses and popular legends. These sources are generally laid out on a linear spectrum with

some deemed more scientific, objective and factual while others more artistic, subjective and fanciful. I have tried to avoid this polarization by reading each source in context and putting disparate sources in conversation with each other. This, I believe, gives us a rich and holistic picture of the king and his time.

One demand of stitching together various source materials is the need to reconcile the staggering variety of names, dates and events. Multiple chronologies have been made uniform so the reader can smoothly follow the events of the king's life. In addition, certain quotations have been slightly modified for grammar and flow. In some instances I have left certain terms as they appear in the original text or translation in order to retain some of the historical texture of each given source. For example, Portuguese sources call Muslims Moors, while Hindu sources use Turks or Yavanas. In other sources Hindus are referred to as heathens, infidels and gentiles. The interested reader can refer to the notes for more details.

Lastly, Krishnadevaraya is referred to by many names and epithets throughout these sources. In his own time he was known as Krishnaraya, but today most people simply call him Raya, the king. They do so out of affection and pride as they carry a living memory of the king and his glorious exploits. I grew up listening to those stories, and I draw upon them now as yet another source of history.


SOUTH INDIA AND THE DECCAN
EARLY 16TH CENTURY
AHMEDNAGAR
Godavari
CUTTAK
BAHMANIS
GAJAPATIS
Simhachalam
BIDAR
Warangal
GOLCONDA
Gulbarga
Kondapalli
BIJAPUR
GOA
Raichur
Krishna
Kondavidu
Andhra Mahavishnu
Mudgal
Ahobilam
VIJAYANAGARA
Udayagiri
Tungabhadra
Tirupati
Penukonda
VIJAYANAGARA
Chandragiri
Indian
Ocean
Srirangapatnam
Shivasamudram
Chidambaram
Kaveri
Sri Villiputtur
SRI
LANKA
CAPITAL
Temple
Fort
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Part I

1

Coronation

In the modern-day village of Hampi, across from a pillared assembly hall in an ancient Shiva temple built on the southern bank of the meandering Tungabhadra river, rests a stone tablet inscribed with poetic lines in Sanskrit and medieval Kannada. The slab was installed to commemorate the coronation of a young and hopeful new king. It relates that in the Shalivahana-Shaka year 1430, on the fourteenth day of the bright half of the month of Magha, a festival was held in celebration of Krishnadevaraya's coronation, when he granted the village of Singinayakanahalli to the Shiva temple so that it might provide sweet fruits and cakes to Lord Virupaksha. The new king of kings also donated a golden lotus set with the nine precious gems, a golden vessel, two ceremonial drums and twenty-four silver lamps to

be used for the evening arati. And lastly, he had a new mandapa built inside the temple, the very assembly hall that still stands today. The inscription dates to 24 January 1510 and was installed months after the coronation. And although precise dating remains a challenge for Indian history, general chronologies are indeed possible. The evidence makes clear that Krishnadevaraya, a young man in his early twenties, ascended to the Lion Throne of Vijayanagara in late 1509 and celebrated his official coronation in early 1510.

To put things in a global perspective, this was around the time of Henry VIII's enthronement as the king of England, Shah Ismail's conquest of greater Persia, Michelangelo's painting of the Sistine Chapel, Montezuma's dominion over the Aztec empire and Afonso de Albuquerque's capture of Goa. To be sure, it was a dynamic and often turbulent time in human history when unprecedented global connections (and conflicts) heralded the dawn of a new world order. At the same time, remarkable advances in technology, art, science and literature reinvigorated ancient traditions with a modern, cosmopolitan vitality. For example, ancient political wisdom from Kautilya's Sanskrit text *Arthashastra* was reformulated by medieval poets (like the king himself) in vernacular languages to accommodate new and localized political realities. And so, for a young king like Krishnadevaraya, the inescapable

past was not to be forgotten, but rather remade as the foundation for a bright and promising future.

The Hampi inscription begins with some thirty Sanskrit verses that describe the mythical genealogy of Krishnadevaraya's legendary predecessors. By claiming descent from the moon, the Vijayanagara kings imagined themselves as part of the fabled Lunar Lineage, putting them in league with celebrated kings like Pururavas, mighty warriors like Arjuna and wise sages like Vishwamitra. This kind of genealogical grafting was a common practice among medieval Indian dynasties, particularly new royal families who sought to legitimize their ancestral right to rule. Krishnadevaraya's poet laureate Allasani Peddana later put it this way: 'In the beginning, rising from the depths of the Milky Ocean, came the Moon, that King of Stars and Light of Heaven. And to the Moon was born a son, versed in the Vedas, whose name was Budha. And to him was born the mythological king Pururavas who had the courage of a lion. And his son was Ayus whose son was Yayati.' And with his first wife Devayani, Yayati had two legendary sons: Yadu and Turvasu. Krishnadevaraya was part of the Tuluva dynasty and claimed descent from Turvasu. Interestingly, the earlier Sangama dynasty kings of Vijayanagara traced their ancestry back to Yadu. Peddana craftily adds that Turvasu was the better of the two brothers, having a wealth of good qualities and

much fame. This slight change was a clever strategy that allowed for continuity with the Lunar Lineage while accommodating a distinct dynasty with an alternative pedigree. Indeed, these well-crafted mythical genealogies validated newly minted royals by connecting them to a revered, albeit mythic, historical lineage.

Krishnadevaraya's Tuluva dynasty was the third dynasty to rule over Vijayanagara. Earlier in the mid-fourteenth century, the brothers Harihara and Bukka founded the empire and established the Sangama dynasty that held sway for a solid century and a half. By the late fifteenth century, however, Vijayanagara, which had by that point grown into a powerful empire commanding large swathes of southern India, was in turmoil. Repeated incursions from neighbouring kingdoms, internal rebellions and a string of weak kings had left the empire precariously unstable. The last two decades of the fifteenth century witnessed two usurpations of the throne and multiple short-lived reigns by rulers from three separate dynastic families. During this volatile period in the history of Vijayanagara, the founding Sangama dynasty collapsed, the transitory Saluva dynasty came and went and the powerful new Tuluva dynasty rose to prominence.

Most Tuluva genealogies conveniently skip over this tumultuous chapter of dynastic succession and narrate how Turvasu's descendants established a lineage in which

many famous kings were born. One of them was the semi-historical Timma, a powerful king whose strong arms bore the weight of the world and brought stability to it. To him was born Ishvara, a handsome and noble-minded lord who protected the righteous. And to him and his virtuous wife Bukkamamba was born Narasa, the first real-life king of the Tuluva dynasty who ruled the world and made it sinless. And so, in a smooth and seamless manner, the genealogy of Krishnadevaraya's ancestors moved from mythical to historical.

By all accounts, Narasa Nayaka was a fiercely effective general who served during the Saluva interregnum. The Hampi inscription proclaims that he conquered many enemies: the southern empires of the Chola, Chera and Pandya lords, along with many brave Turks and the kings of Kalinga. But Narasa Nayaka was unlike his predecessors from the other two dynasties; he is believed to have hailed from the Tulu country, a coastal region of southern Karnataka with a distinct language, history and culture all its own. It was perhaps the similarity between 'Tuluva' and 'Turvasu' that prompted these kings to attach themselves to this mythic ancestor, but regardless, two things become clear: one, Narasa Nayaka was an upstart from outside the inner circle of ruling Vijayanagara elites, and two, he was not a kshatriya by birth. He was most probably from a shudra background, but his bravery in battle and strong

leadership enabled him to seize the Lion Throne and save the empire from collapse.

The inscription continues: 'Just as Rama and Lakshmana were born to King Dasaratha by his queens Kausalya and Sumitra, two brave but modest sons, prince Viranarasimha and Krishnaraya were born to King Narasa by his queens Tippamba and Nagalamba.' By most accounts, Krishnadevaraya's elder brother Viranarasimha ascended the throne after their father for a short but praiseworthy reign. Peddana declares that Viranarasimha killed all his mighty enemies with the worn blade of his terrifying sword, while the Hampi inscription praises his generous ritual donations to all the great shrines and temples of the south. It was after his five-year reign that the young Krishnadevaraya finally became king of Vijayanagara in late 1509.

Royal successions were often fraught with intrigue and complication, and there are many versions of how Krishnadevaraya ascended the throne. While most histories attest to the reign of Viranarasimha, folk legends suggest that Narasa Nayaka passed the mantle of kingship directly to his younger son. One legend claims that Viranarasimha's mother Tippamba hatched an assassination plot against her stepson. Luckily the ever-watchful minister Timmarasu spirited the young Krishnadevaraya away and kept him safe from such court

intrigues. Upon Krishnadevaraya's return, when Narasa Nayaka was finally on his deathbed, the ailing king called his two sons to his side and said, 'Whichever one of you can pry this signet ring from my hand shall inherit the throne.' And being the elder of the two, Viranarasimha tried first, but to no avail; no matter how hard he tried, the ring would not slip from the old king's swollen finger. It was then that Krishnadevaraya, seeing that there was no way to pry the ring off, unsheathed his dagger and sliced off his father's finger. The dying king was unfazed; in fact he was pleased, knowing well that his successor would be a man of fearless action.

This somewhat gruesome tale resembles the apocryphal story of Alexander the Great and the Gordian knot. As the legend goes, there was a huge tangled knot, made of hundreds of smaller knots, in the town of Gordium where a prophecy proclaimed that whoever could unravel the great knot would become king of Asia. And so when young Alexander arrived in Gordium en route to India, he didn't try to untangle each knot one by one like all the others; he simply sliced through them all with one swift sword stroke! These tales conjure up images of brash young kings who could achieve what others deemed impossible. Krishnadevaraya and Alexander were men of resolve, and they knew their destinies would have to be forged with bold actions. Another less bloody story is told of Narasa

Nayaka's test for his two sons: in a spacious hall the king had a large carpet laid out, and in the middle of it he placed a dagger. Then he challenged his sons to retrieve the dagger without stepping on the carpet. Viranarasimha tried and failed, but Krishnadevaraya simply fell to his knees, rolled up the carpet, and grasped the dagger. Although we cannot take these tales to be factual, they encode specific qualities of Krishnadevaraya's personality – he was bold, decisive and clever.

Most historical accounts, however, maintain that Krishnadevaraya took the throne after his elder brother's reign. Fernão Nunes, who was in Vijayanagara from 1535 to 1537 collecting stories from locals, relates the following: When Viranarasimha was sick on his deathbed, he called his minister Timmarasu to his side, along with his eight-year-old son, the heir apparent. He then gave two commands to Timmarasu: first, to raise the young boy to the throne upon his death, and second, to put out the eyes of his younger brother Krishnadevaraya and bring them to him as evidence. Timmarasu reluctantly consented and departed. He called for Krishnadevaraya and took him aside to a stable and revealed to him his brother's plan. Krishnadevaraya said, 'I do not wish to be king, nor anything else in the kingdom, even though it should come to me by right. I only desire to pass through this world as a yogi.' Hearing these noble words, and

seeing that Krishnadevaraya was an able man of over twenty years and therefore more fit to be king than his boy nephew, Timmarasu commanded a she-goat to be brought before him so that he could have its eyes put out. Then he presented the goat's eyes to Viranarasimha so the king might die thinking his will was done. And as soon as Viranarasimha had passed, Timmarasu raised Krishnadevaraya to the Lion Throne of Vijayanagara.

This dramatic tale might contain a kernel of truth, and like the other stories, it tells us about Krishnadevaraya's spiritual inclinations, as well as Timmarasu's importance throughout his life. A final account of the king's ascension comes from the *Rayavacakamu*, a seventeenth-century semi-historical text that presents us with a detailed, albeit imagined, account of the proceedings of the fateful day when Viranarasimha freely abdicated the Lion Throne of Vijayanagara. While seated in the great hall, Viranarasimha turned to his military commanders and said, 'Indeed, the time has come to pass this diadem on to Krishnaraya. Besides, I am growing old, so it is only fitting that officers be appointed to perform his coronation so that he may begin to rule the kingdom.' And finding an auspicious moment, Viranarasimha named his younger brother Krishnadevaraya successor to the Lion Throne of Vijayanagara and presented him with the signet ring of the kingdom.

The text goes on to describe all the court officials and military commanders who came together for the occasion, notably Timmarasu, the venerable minister who was lovingly addressed as Appaji, along with his son and his grandson. Also present were the official clerk, the state treasurer, several local chiefs and feudatories, scholars, priests, poets, astrologers and many other people both young and old. At the auspicious hour all of them helped give Krishnadevaraya a ritual bath, exactly as prescribed in the sacred texts. Then they seated him in a golden seat on a ceremonial dais, where he performed the sixteen great donations and other meritorious acts. He donated mountains of gold, silver, jewels and pearls, gifted millions of cows and granted support to a thousand families. Water was brought in golden vases from the four oceans and from all the great rivers: the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri and Tamraparni. Then, at the precisely ordained moment, the air resounding with the sound of horns, tabors, conches, kettledrums and gongs, a group of brahmans anointed the king with those sacred waters as they chanted Vedic mantras. They showered him with gold and heaps of the nine precious gems: rubies, pearls, red corals, emeralds, yellow sapphires, diamonds, blue sapphires, garnets and beryls. Then they dressed him in fresh clothes, perfumed him with the finest sandalwood scents and draped him in a yellow shawl as

if he were Lord Vishnu himself! And after that a grand feast was enjoyed by all of Krishnadevaraya's family, closest friends and personal attendants. When the meal was over, Krishnadevaraya washed his hands and rinsed his mouth with scented water.

A folk story is told about the momentous occasion when Timmarasu raised the young Krishnadevaraya to the throne. Right before the ceremony, Timmarasu called Krishnadevaraya aside and instead of imparting some secret advice or personal praise, he slapped the would-be king across the face. Krishnadevaraya was shocked and taken aback, but then he reflected on Appaji's strange behaviour, for he knew there was a lesson to be learned here. Timmarasu explained how important it was going to be for the young king to remember the hardships of life and the pain of being punished. As a final teaching, he advised that punishments ought to be meted out judiciously, for after this day Timmarasu would be unable to discipline his new king, only obey his command, whatever it may be.

When the official ceremonies were finally completed, Krishnadevaraya seated himself on a multicoloured carpet and summoned Appaji and his other ministers and commanders. He explained that since he was a young king, he needed to be instructed in the protocols of court and the proper conduct of a king. To this the ministers

replied, 'First of all you should know that the king of the Lion Throne is none other than an emanation of Vishnu.' And then they recited a verse on royal conduct:

> When a man is youthful, and adorned with the nine gems,
> fragrant flowers and perfume, and served by leaders of men,
> he is rightfully called a king, the Lord of the Great Hall.
>
> And for a man loved by the goddess of wealth, a generous hero,
> radiant as a treasury of virtues, look to the Lion Throne
> in the Great Hall, and the victorious king who rises to fill it!'

They continued their advice with a long list of precisely itemized directives: 'The one who sits on the Lion Throne should understand the seven constituents of the state: king, minister, ally, treasury, country, fort and army. He should know the seven gifts of honor: palanquin, fine clothes, ornaments, vehicles, royal favors, camphor and pan. He should know the seven techniques for dealing with an enemy: conciliation, sowing dissension, bribery, attack, deceit, overlooking transgressions, and trickery in war. And the seven royal vices: women, dice, drink, the hunt, arrogance in words, harshness in war and wasteful spending.' And in this way, Krishnadevaraya's learned ministers went on to enumerate an extensive list of political maxims that a wise king ought to know,

understand and put into practice. In short, they advised the king to 'punish the wicked and protect the good', for a 'king's success depends entirely on his ability to live according to dharma'. These often dry catalogues of political injunctions were more than mere abstractions to Krishnadevaraya; he listened to them carefully, filling his mind and heart with this traditional wisdom. Indeed, these theories of governance would find practical expression throughout his reign.

Upon receiving these important teachings on governance, the new king inquired about how to acquire wealth for the empire. The assembled advisers explained, 'If the king acts in accordance with dharma, the rains will fall at least three times every month and make the earth most fertile. If the palace then takes taxes that are its due without being unjust, the palace will prosper, and great quantities of money will flow into the treasury.' And then they offered a verse from the famous Telugu political theorist Baddena:

> Justice is the way to make the people prosper
> and the people's prosperity is the way to wealth,
> that's why they say: justice is the true treasury of kings!

Krishnadevaraya listened carefully to all the sage counsel offered by his advisers and said, 'Until now,

my brother and father have ruled the kingdom. Now I must go and see all the kingdoms, forts, lands, citadels, temples and sacred places that have been under their power.' Appaji and the others agreed. 'Yes, the king should personally inspect the realms ruled by his predecessors. If you just stay where you are, then you'll never learn anything about the business of the kingdom. You should go and let your subjects behold you. To impress your enemies and feudatories, you should go with your terrifying army to inspect the eight directions and make your fame shine!'

Krishnadevaraya was pleased with these words and resolved to go and see all the lands of his realm. But first he decided to send out spies so he could find out about the different regions of the realm, the strengths and weaknesses of the local lords and chiefs, the various villages and towns and what the people, both learned and simple, were saying about him. The new king was keen to understand the greater world around him, and his returning spies only confirmed what he had already expected: support from his southern base was weak, the Gajapati lord of Orissa was quickly eating up the empire's eastern realms and the prickly sultans to the north, particularly the Adil Shah of Bijapur, was ever hostile. But this situation was also the perfect opportunity for a young new sovereign to exercise

his will and establish his might. And so, at the end of the day, the young king Krishnadevaraya took his seat on the Lion Throne of Vijayanagara and looked out to his vast empire with both hope and determination.