

Fall

2017



Sandesh

“The Message”

A Newsletter from IndUS of Fox Valley

From Editors' Desk

Royal families are an integral part of the history of India. For several millennia many empires have risen, expanded and gone into decline, always leaving remarkable imprints on Indian art, literature, architecture and on the lives of common people. It is impossible to list them all. Over 500 sovereign princely states existed outside the British Raj. At the time of independence in 1947, many were persuaded to merge with the Indian union. Some were integrated later under pressure, by diplomacy and with hefty payments of privy purses. They lost all their ruling power. Uniting India into one nation was a stupendous achievement. Later, the privy purses were abolished by a constitutional amendment in 1971. India became a true parliamentary democracy. It not only survived but thrived under new democratic rule.

Rule of the royals is still remembered with fondness, for this was a reality for many millennia. The nostalgia lives on, in folklore, in national monuments, and even in personal stories of “my brush with royalty.” This Sandesh brings you a variety of articles, from first-hand witness of royals, travels on “Palace on Wheels”, to informative and even downright funny anecdotes. Enjoy reading. - Sandhya Sridhar

Sandesh

**An IndUS of Fox Valley
Publication**

Editors

Dr. Sandhya Sridhar
Chief Editor

Dr. Gaurav Bansal
Ms. Sonia Beherawala
Ms. Janice Dugal
Mr. Rakesh Kaushika
Ms. Sandhya Maheshwari
Ms. Sonu Pareek

*The views expressed in the
articles are not
necessarily those of the
Editors or IndUS of
Fox Valley*

The Drama and Color of Rajasthan

By Michelle & James Rider

In 2013 in the season of Diwali, we teeming crowds, colors, smells, and embarked on an adventure around sounds, so stupendously glorious and Rajasthan on the luxurious Palace on full of life. After a lunch at Karim's, Wheels, a 5 Star Luxury Hotel in the we entered the rusty sandstone Red form of 14 vintage rail coaches Fort to see the fabulous apartments of belonging to the railways of the the emperors of the 1600s. The Royal maharajas and viceroys of India. I Baths, with inlaid marble and three love travel by rail - to slowly absorb chambers for different bathing the changes of the countryside and see experiences for the ladies of the court small glimpses of daily life from the were impressive. The first chamber window, and travelling on a restored was a steam room, the second a bath luxury train through this part of India with scented rosewater which poured sounded like an incredible from carved statues, and the third a opportunity! cold bath – in use before much of the world had any running water, and they still work!

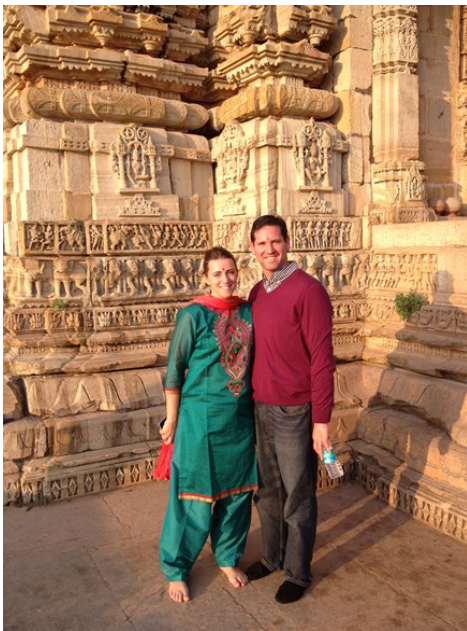
We arrived in Delhi and found the air warm and humid, the light golden, and my first impressions of this marvelous world were of color, beauty, and happy, generous people everywhere.

First, we visited Old Delhi's Chandni Chowk with its narrow streets,

The atmosphere at the train station for our departure on the Palace on Wheels was festive! Music was playing by the regal train, and each guest was personally welcomed and shown to

their teak-paneled coach by cabin attendants, resplendent in achkans, churidars, and turban. The train also had a spa, an ornate bar and lounge car, and gorgeously lavish dining cars.

At sunrise, we were served tea in our berths, and we watched the day beginning outside the windows. We arrived at the pink city of Jaipur to caparisoned elephants, music, and greetings with marigold garlands, then visited the Amber Fort and Palace— riding up as many have for centuries atop elephants. Here we walked up steps to a temple with silver doors, silver oil lamps, and huge pillars carved to look like banana trees, where a family deity was housed – an effigy of the goddess Kali.



The City Palace in Jaipur amazed us with its posh peacock décor and the Jantar Mantar Stone observatory, still accurate for study of the stars. The Hawa Mahal, or Palace of Winds, was a huge pink palace trimmed in lacy white where maharanis of yore could sit above the busy streets behind scrollwork screens and observe goings on while maintaining their seclusion.

We saw Jodhpur, the city whose buildings are washed in blue, and dominated by the towering Mehrangh Fort, so big that Rudyard Kipling thought it must have been built by giants. This city was founded in 1459 by Rao Jodha, who was reportedly cursed by a hermit

evicted from the hill where the fort was planned. Many say that the area is dry today.

My favorite Rajasthan experience was the golden fortress and desert sands of Jaisalmer. The oldest we visited, it was founded in 1156 AD, and retains medieval charm in cobble-stoned streets lined by ornate sandstone havelis with intricately carved balconies, cornices, and facades. The fortress is built of stone with no mortar and has stood perfectly in the desert for nearly 1000 years. The soft yellow sandstone of the area is perfect for the most ornate carvings which with time and exposure actually harden. It was the day of Diwali, and after a sunset camel ride in the desert, we enjoyed a fabulous dinner accompanied by music and folk dancers. We were treated to fireworks under a starry clear sky, and as our bus picked its way through the quiet old city late at night, the tiny oil lamps were burning everywhere in their special niches along the stone walls...it was truly magical. If dreams can become reality then this was where such things are possible.

Doctors Michelle and James Rider live in Denmark, Wisconsin with their three children on a hobby farm. Michelle is a veterinarian and owns a practice in Mishicot. James is a cardiologist at Bellin Hospital. They enjoy travel, caring for their family and animals, beekeeping, and cooking. They are also strong advocates for social justice.

Many Rajas, Maharajas and Nawabs have made a very significant contribution to art, music and literature. - Maharaja Swati Tirunal of Travancore (1813-1847) wrote 67 padams in Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam and he introduced them in Bharata Natyam performance by artists. His padams have a rare literary flavour and the padams of this composer are becoming increasingly popular in the Bharat Natyam field.

Wajid Ali Shah, Nawab of Awadh was a gifted composer and Kathak dancer. His pen-name was 'Qaisar' and he wrote over forty works of poems, prose. He used the pseudonym 'Akhtarpiya' for his numerous compositions. He composed many new ragas *Jogi*, *Juhi*, *Shah-Pasand*, etc. under the artistic guidance and patronage of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, that Kathak achieved greater dimensions. He gave a definite form, made it more artistic, and gave to it an aesthetic touch, he enriched it with *rasa* and *bhava*, and he added literature to it, lent it sensuality, and furnished it with grandeur and splendor to its presentation

Maharajas of Mysuru

By B. S. Sridhar

This is a personal essay about the royal family of Mysuru (not for me, the anglicized Mysore). For those who want the details of a dynasty that dates back to 1336AD, and saw a succession of 26 monarchs – there are tomes written, and of course, there is Wikipedia! This is mostly an account of a curious young boy who soaked up the experiences of royal watching, from very close quarters.

Writing about the royal family of Mysuru is both difficult and delightful. Difficult, because many members of my family were firm supporters of the Indian independence movement and several of them went to jail. We are a family that despised imperialism, and loved democracy. Nonetheless, writing about the royals of Mysuru is delightful. I treasure the memories of grandeur and charm. No amount of reading and listening to others can come close to what I experienced first-hand.

The first royal I saw was the Nizam of Hyderabad. The Nizam was once considered the world's richest man. His wealth was legendary. His palaces opulent. And his miserliness was the talk of the town. Despite his fabulous wealth, and his rumored harem of hundreds of wives, Telangana, the area under his reign, remained one of the most impoverished and under-developed.

As a little boy of 5-6, on my way to school, I passed the King Koti palace. The high walls, the stern looking guards, and seclusion made the royals distant. On a couple of occasions, on our way to the public library, we heard sirens. All traffic stopped. People stood watching a

diminutive figure dressed in simple clothes driven to the mosque for prayers. The image did not compare well with the books, the movies and stories that depicted royalty.

The Nizam, whose ancestors were from Turkey, was essentially an outsider. Much against the wishes of his citizens, the Nizam had resisted joining the new republic of India. The Indian Army had to march in and quell the royal rebellion. That was the Nizam!

But, Mysuru was very different.

The Last Maharaja of Mysuru

The last of the Mysuru kings was Sri Jayachamrajendra Odeyar (1940-1947). An imposing man who stood over six feet and weighed some 300



pounds. As a respected scholar, he taught philosophy in several universities in Germany and the US. A serious student of classical Indian

music, he grew up to be a composer of considerable repute. A keen aficionado of Western classical music, he served as the first president of the Philharmonic Society of London. In addition, he financed artists such as Nikolai Medtner, Richard Strauss and Herbert von Karajan. As a keen sports enthusiast he actively promoted tennis, cricket, and horse racing.

The Royals of Mysuru entered the

20th century with Sri Krishnarajendra Odeyar IV (1884-1940) at the helm. A self-effacing, spiritually inclined visionary, this ruler was called a *Raja Rishi* (a saintly royal). Mahatma Gandhiji described his rule as *Rama Rajya*, an approbation reserved for the idealized rule of Rama as depicted in the epic Ramayana.

Mysuru was in the forefront establishing a semi-democratic legislature called Mysore Representative Assembly (1881). My maternal grandfather was a proud member this body during the 1930s. Odeyars also established a railroad network (1881), Asia's first hydro-electric power generation plant in Shivasamudram (1902), a string of hospitals and instituted major administrative reforms.

Sri Jayachamrajendra Odeyar was a progressive who embraced the new democratic order when India gained independence. He was promptly appointed to the constitutional position of governor of Mysuru, and later of Tamil Nadu. The last Odeyar followed in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor.

What I saw and learned, from close quarters, was that the members of the royal family were quite progressive, unassuming and willing to change with times. They forever tried to keep in touch with the common people. In my book, that was a big plus.

When we moved to Mysuru in 1958, the royal splendor, though in decline, was still evident everywhere. During our first year, we lived within a mile of the palace. The palace campus was lined with temples. Quite often, my brother and

I would collect flowers from our tiny garden and take them to offer in those temples.

By custom, Fridays were designated to the worship of Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity. It was quite common to see one of the palace elephants making rounds in our neighborhood. My mother offered a coconut and a banana to the magnificent creature, which too was considered an embodiment of Lakshmi. Despite its size, the elephant crushed the coconut with appropriate pressure, cracked it open and deftly consumed its flesh, leaving the shell behind. Our glee knew no bounds as the elephant departed after raising its trunk into a salute.

Mysuru, as recently as last year, was rated the cleanest city in India. It was even cleaner in those days. Wide roads, beautiful statuary, well-tended parks, decorative clock towers, fountains abounded across the city. Nishad Bagh, Curzon Park, Thandi Sadak and lakes called Karanji Kere and Kukkanahalli Kere attracted children and adults alike. There were two palace bands that performed around the city. At Nishad Bagh, a ten-minute walk from our home, the band played classical Carnatic music on Saturdays, and Western music on Sundays. Citizens from all walks of life gathered around to listen while children played on the lawns.

And then there was the famed Mysuru Zoo. The Maharaja's birthday was celebrated with a school holiday and free admission to the zoo. Hundreds of us went around the zoo, in joyous festive mood. The visit ended with the palace staff handing over sweets to the children.

My brother and I, we were fearless. We soon discovered many places of interest that were, strictly speaking,

private and out of bounds for visitors. We ingratiated ourselves with tourists who tipped the caretakers, and managed to enter several royal premises. The palace garage was a veritable collection of Rolls Royce, Bentleys, Cadillacs and such. Then there was *kudure tabeli* that housed splendid horses, gem studded royal coaches, some with gold and silver plating that were used not only for the royal family but also transporting the visiting dignitaries such as Queen Elizabeth and the British Viceroys. A large hall with high ceilings housed nothing but the best of the saddles, riding boots, reigns, spurs, whips, many rendered precious and beautiful with ivory, silver, gold and gems. For a nine-year old, it was as close to fairytales as one can get.

Soon we had become experts in gate-crashing into palaces by camouflaging ourselves with tourists who had the money to bribe the caretakers. Lalit Mahal palace sat at the foot of the Chamundi hills. With its dome that looked like St. Peter's



basilica, this palace was set in sprawling colorful gardens with manicured lawns. Spacious rooms named after colors with matching furniture and drapery created much awe. But, not as much as the magnificent ballroom that one had seen only in the movies. Atop the hill sat another palace, Rajendra Vilasa. That is where I first saw an electrically operated gate. What remains etched in my mind are a set

of mirrors on the landing by the decorative stairs. I could see Sridhars on my either side lined up to infinity!

A few weeks into our stay, my brother and I became members of Mysuru Makkala Koota, a children's club. A new building was about to be constructed and the foundation laying ceremony was a grand affair. Gayathri, the princess, accompanied by her mother, the queen, laid the foundation. She was a simple looking, average teenager but her simplicity and proximity made us admire her even more.

The royals tried to balance their aloofness with their need to be close to the public. An annual feature was Muharram, a Muslim observance of assassination of Ali, grandson of Prophet Muhammad. Hindus and Muslims came together in parades. Dancers, painted with stripes to look like tigers, some in costumes of warrior chiefs entertained the crowds. Our favorite spot was the Mysuru Bank Circle. Among the audience would be the five children of the Maharaja, watching the parade from the comfort of Rolls Royce and Bentleys!

Yet another attempt by the royals to mix with the proletariat was reflected in the Palace School. One of my cousins had studied there with the previous generation of princesses. Our own second-hand experience came from Rani, a 7-year old daughter of our physical education teacher. Rani was a very bright student and she had been selected for the privilege of studying with the royals. Rani's brothers and we walked to our school, a two-mile trudge, while Rani was picked up by a horse driven-coach for her commute to Palace School. From her account, her school atmosphere was quite unnatural. The select

students had to address the royals with great honor (all of them under 10 years old!) as “Milady” or “Milord “! Classes would be canceled quite frequently to accommodate the royals as they traveled to Bengaluru or some other place to discharge their royal duties. The brush with royalty proved too much for our teacher, a World War II veteran. Rani was back in her regular school for the next year !

Mysuru Dasara

As a kid the most festive time in Mysuru was Dasara, a ten-day fall festival. Modern celebration has it changed into a folk festival. Largely missing are the pomp and circumstance of the royal era.



My very first Dasara in Mysuru landed me in a fairy world. I was a member of Seva Dal, a children’s corps akin to Boy Scouts that had been founded during the independence movement. We met a couple of days each week and learned some gymnastics, drill and occasionally engaged in volunteer work. We were delighted when one day our leader informed us that we would be participating in a demonstration of calisthenics before the Maharaja.

The Mysuru palace was lit up with thousands of lights. The celebration has it changed into a folk festival. Largely missing are the pomp and circumstance of the royal era.

My very first Dasara in Mysuru landed me in a fairy world. I was a member of Seva Dal, a children’s corps akin to Boy Scouts that had

been founded during the independence movement. We met a couple of days each week and learned some gymnastics, drill and occasionally engaged in volunteer work. We were delighted when one day our leader informed us that we would be participating in a demonstration of calisthenics before the Maharaja.

The Mysuru palace was lit up with thousands of lights. The entire city was decorated for the celebrations. The Maharaja held his *darbar* or the royal court each evening. He would arrive around 6 pm and ascend the golden throne, facing a vast courtyard. The evening proceedings would start with a parade led by the cavalry, dozens of caparisoned elephants, courtiers, courtesans, followed by the royal horse, the royal cow and finally the royal elephant carrying the idol of Chamundeswari, the reigning deity of the royal family and the city of Mysuru. The pageantry was as close to a fairytale as I had ever read.

Once the Maharaja offered his prayers, the procession disappeared into the palace. A stage rose from the ground level carrying the court musicians. They performed for a few minutes making way for the spectacular performances by the cavalry, the Indian Army, and of course school kids like us! What an honor to be in literal and figurative spotlight! To the day I treasure that memory of performing before the royal court.

As the performance unfolded, the invitees to the *darbar* lined up and approached the Maharaja. They offered their tribute, often with a bouquet of flowers or a gold coin. They were dressed all in prescribed *darbar* outfits.

As a kid, it always bothered me that my father turned down these invitations. The idea militated against his ideals of democracy. So did many others in my extended family along with my neighbor, who was leading politician and a Gandhian. Though I must admit, albeit proudly, that my maternal grandfather had been honored at the same forum with public service gold medal.

For me, the loss was something quite personal and very selfish. These invitations came with passes to the children’s gallery from where the lucky kids had the commanding view of the day’s performances. Before

long, I had sneaked in or sweet talked my way into the children gallery, but only twice.

Dasara ended on the tenth day with *Jambu Savari* (the elephant ride). The king, all 300 pounds of his royal heaviness, would ride in the parade of magnificent splendor. He was heralded by endless columns of uniformed soldiers, scouts, cavalry, beautifully decorated horses, elephants and school children. I was one of the hapless children who had to report at 7 am in the morning for a parade that would start at 2 pm! The parade snaked through the city taking 3 to 4 hours to cover few miles to reach the outskirts of the city. Thousands of people, drawn from different parts of the country and the world would line up on both sides of the road to witness the magnificent show.

Banni Mantapa was a spacious estate with the symbolic *banni tree*. Tradition dictated that, rulers cross the city limits, offer prayers, and seek blessings for yet another successful year of reign. Upon reaching the destination, we could cool our heels and have some refreshments while the Maharaja prayed. At dark, we marched past the Maharaja who was now astride a beautiful white horse. The brilliant spotlights captured the resplendent royal attire woven in zari, metallic yarn made of gold. The Maharaj returned our salutes with his eyes hidden behind his dark glasses. That added to the mystery! That was the first time I had a glimpse of the man. My sympathies lay clearly with the hapless horse that carried its heavy burden in good humor.

The return march to the palace was somewhat quicker though the bright lights and the night added to the aura. I returned home very happy and tired.

During our second year in Mysuru, my father assumed the position of

principal of School for the Deaf and the Blind. The school was located right on the parade route, affording us a ring-side view of the Jambu Savari! Maharaj was a patron of the school. It was obligatory for the school principal to offer a tribute in form of flower garland to the king. No escape for the anti-royalist! The school trained blind children in classical music. The students sang a composition by the Maharaja. The entire parade came to a halt. The elephant stopped to allow the Maharaja to receive the musical tribute. We not only saw the Maharaja from close quarters but we had his attention for a full 3-4 minutes! No wonder, our home became a preferred destination for many of our friends and relatives!

Moving On

There is still a Gowri family in Mysuru. In 1961, my sister Mythili married into the Gowri family. By royal appointment, the Gowri family installed and consecrated the goddess Gowri in the palace for Gowri festival. That year, as a new bride, Mythili did the honors.

We moved out of Mysuru in 1962. We had witnessed the diminishing last days of royalty. By mid 1960s the automobiles and the coaches and many precious accumulations had seen their way to the rich collectors in the West and Australia.

By the end of 1960s, the royal stable had become Air Force Selection Board. I had very mixed feelings when I reported there to undergo selection testing to become a pilot. While I was proud to have been one of 19 (out of 6500 applicants) selected to be a Naval Aviation Cadet Officer, I was sad to see the once grand collection of horses, coaches and paraphernalia had been liquidated.

Today, I am quite used to staying in

Five Star hotels around the world. Both the palaces, Lalit Mahal and Rajendra Vilas are converted into hotels, open to public. Even though I can afford to stay there, something deep inside me militates against the idea.

By 1950, some 565 princely states had acceded to the new republic of India. The new constitution compensated the princes with generous pensions (the privy purse) and certain royal privileges. In 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi initiated a constitutional amendment to terminate these undemocratic royal privileges.

A Concorde of princes was formed to fight the amendment in the Supreme Court of India. The largest privy purse was owed to Sri Jayachamrajendra Odeyar of Mysuru. He was the logical choice to lead the Concorde. The ex-maharajas approached Odeyar. Displaying exemplary courage of his convictions, the Maharaja of Mysuru refused to be a part of the Concorde. He advised the princes to see the writing on the wall and move forward! Such was his progressive attitude toward change.

In 1974, when I was working as a senior executive at a battery plant in Bengaluru. Sri Jayachamrajendra Odeyar, the last Maharaja of Mysuru died, a broken man, both financially and spiritually. When the union representatives approached me with a request to close the plant as a mark of respect, I immediately consented.

Dr. B. S. Sridhar is a retired Emeritus Professor from UW Oshkosh. He is the founding member of IndUS of Fox Valley. He is also a founding editor of Sandesh. In his retirement, he keeps busy with his professional consulting and community service. He is District Governor of Rotary Club and was recently recognized as Rotarian of the Year.

Interesting Rare Facts about Royals of India

By Janice Dugal

King Ashoka was known for his brutality before he had a change of heart. He killed 99 of his 100 step brothers and cousins for the throne and left just one brother alive and made him his deputy king.

The Wadiyar (aka Odeyar) dynasty took over the Mysore Empire by dethroning Tirumalaraja of Vijayanagara Empire. Queen Alamelu committed suicide after giving them a curse of an heir-less future. Since 17th century every alternate king was childless and had to adopt a child (mostly a nephew) for continuation of the dynasty. Last king Srikantdatta died childless earlier this year.

Jaipur craftsmen created a huge sterling silver vessel for Maharaja

Sawai Madho Singh II for his trip to England. The motive was to carry *gangajal* (water from sacred river Ganges) for his use during travel.

The Nizam of Hyderabad was afraid about his wealth being taken away by the government so he hid it in trucks and it eventually got infested by termites and moths.

He owned "Jacob Diamond" the fifth largest in the world, about the size of an Ostrich's egg, and used it as a paperweight.

Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil of Rajpipla in Gujarat is the only Royal to have declared in public that he is gay. Unfortunately, he was later disowned by his family. He is the editor of a gay male-centric

magazine named 'Fun'.

The Nawab of Junagarh owned 800 dogs, each cared for by a personal human attendant. When two of his favorite dogs mated he spent a fortune on their wedding celebration.

Maharaja Bhupinder of Patiala had eighty eight known children and a large *harem* of wives. Once a year he paraded naked before them to assure them that he was very much alive and well!

Janice Dugal grew up in northwest Illinois. She has been in the Fox Valley for the past 14 years. Her educational background is in accounting/finance. She currently works part time and likes to volunteer her time at her kid's school, IndUS, and is currently the secretary of IANEW. Her husband Raj and she are busy raising their three children.

Whims, Fancies, and Anecdotes of Indian Royals

By Sridevi Buddi

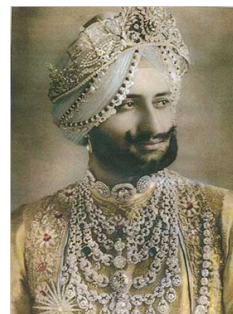
Many are the fantasies of common people and multifold are the whims of Maharajahs! When it comes to living life to the fullest, hardly anyone can surpass the ingenuity of Indian royalty. The Cartiers, Louis Vuittons and Christophles of this world have bowed down in front of their whims and fancies. Treasures were crafted by outstanding European luxury goods manufacturers, fashion houses and decorators of the late 19th and early 20th centuries like this Salvatore Ferragamo wedge sandal crafted for

Maharani Indira Devi in 1938.

Many Maharajas and Maharanis were known for their love for beauty and style which showed through their orders to jewelry houses like Cartier and Van Cleef and Arpels. They entrusted the jewelers of Rue de la Paix and Bond Street with their family treasures so that they could be re-set to the fashions of the day. Nothing was too beautiful for them, nothing too spectacular. Indian royals were flamboyant spenders.

In 1926, Cartier received a trunk full of precious stones and jewelry belonging to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, who wanted his stones remounted in Parisian style. The creation that emerged is famous the world over: the Patiala necklace. The necklace comprising five

magnificent platinum chains, a cascade of seven large diamonds, the celebrated yellow De Beers diamond of 234.69 carat, a tobacco-colored diamond and two rubies. The necklace remains one of the grandest pieces ever made by Cartier, perhaps even by any other jeweler.

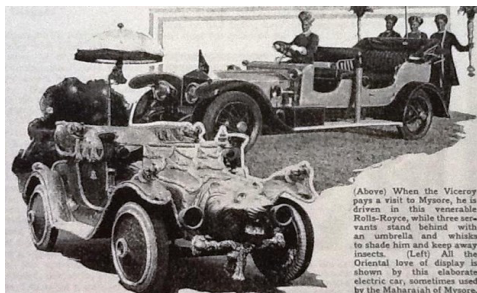


Many Maharajas actively patronized prestigious jewelers and auto manufacturers. Luxury cars were given as gifts in trousseaus and

many were custom-designed! The Maharaja of Mysore had no less than 24 Bentleys and Rolls-Royces.

The Maharaja of Mysore, being the



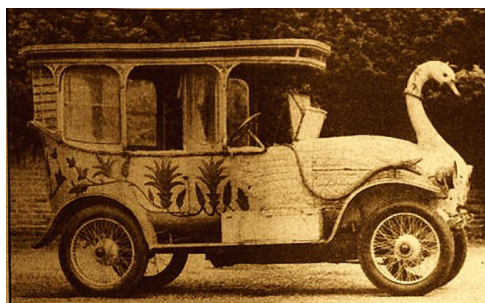


(Above) When the Viceroy pays a visit to Mysore, he is driven in this venerable Rolls-Royce, while three servants stand behind with an umbrella and whisks to shade him and keep away insects. (Left) All the Oriental love of display is shown by this elaborate electric car, sometimes used by the Maharajah of Mysore.

2nd richest man in the world never hesitated even a bit and regularly purchased them in multiples of 7 (i.e. buying 7 at a time or 14 at a time and even 28 at a time). It was popularly referred to as “Doing a Mysore”.

Maharaja of Nabha had customized his car to look like a swan and every evening, he would drive it slowly on the streets amidst eager crowds who would be mesmerized by the car which looked like a swan taking to water.

In some of the cars, exterior



accessories were attached to turn them into terrain vehicles which could be used for hunting expeditions. H.H. Aga Khan II had installed extra footboards so that servants could stand on them holding a fluorescent lamp that works like a camera flash so as to dazzle the Tiger's eyes thereby making it an easy victim. Maharaja of Kotah also attached an Elephant rifle and a hand-cranked machine gun for hunting purposes.

The Indian king Jai Singh on his visit in London, was walking in the streets in a casual dress. He saw a Rolls Royce showroom and went to ask about the price and features of their

cars. Thinking that he was another poor Indian citizen, the showroom salesman insulted him and asked him to leave. After the insult, King Jai Singh went back to his hotel room and asked his servants to call the showroom that the King of Alwar city is interested in purchasing a few of their cars.

The King returned to the Rolls Royce showroom again after a few hours. He was now dressed in his astonishing royal costume and walked in with a royal demeanor. By the time the King reached the showroom, there was a red carpet laid out for him and all the salesmen curtsied and paid their respects. The king purchased all the six cars they had at the showroom and paid the full amount including the delivery charges. After reaching India, he ordered municipal department to use all those six Rolls Royce cars for cleaning and transporting Alwar city's waste.

Rolls Royce, the symbol of luxury cars all over the world was now reduced to being a symbol of ridicule. Whenever someone used to boast in Europe or America that he owned a Rolls Royce, people would laugh and say, "Which car? Is that the same one used in India for carrying municipal waste?" Sales and income of Rolls Royce suffered because of such dishonor. At one point the King received a telegram stating, "Regret and request to stop using the Rolls Royce for transporting municipal waste". The company also offered six new Rolls Royce cars to King Jai Singh free of cost with no delivery charges. When he was convinced that the Rolls Royce Company had learnt their lesson, he stopped using the cars for carrying waste.

Indian royalty created palaces designed by the best architects. Among them was Charles Mint who



built the luxurious Laxmi Vilas Palace in Vadodara built for Maharaja Sasarara Gaekwad III in Year 1890. The palace is reputed to be the largest private dwelling built till date and four times the size of Buckingham Palace.

In 1902, Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala gave his civil engineer photographs of the Versailles palace and asked him to replicate it, right down to the gargoyles. The palace, which is spread over a total area of 200 acres was designed by a French architect M. Marcel and built by a local builder Allah Ditta. The maharaja also had exquisite taste in Sevres porcelain, Gobelins tapestries, and the finest crystal.

In 1882, Saddiq Muhammed Khan Abassi IV, the Nawab of Bahawalpur (current day Pakistan), ordered a silver-encrusted bed. The design was sent to Christofle in Paris calling for a bed of "dark wood decorated with applied sterling with gilded parts, monograms and arms, ornamented with four life-size bronze figures (of naked females) painted in flesh color with natural hair, movable eyes and arms, holding fans and horse tails.

Massive amount of silver, nearly 640



pounds was needed to make the bed. The four naked figures were European, representing women of France, Spain, Italy and Greece, each with a different skin-tone and hair color. Through ingenious mechanics linked to the mattress, these figurines could be set in motion, so that they fanned the Nawab, while winking at him. All this was set to a 30-minute cycle of music from Gounod's Faust made possible by a music box built into the bed.

When these luxury brands were born in Europe and America, the Indian royalty increasingly became their

ladder to financial and creative success – not only by buying their designs, but also by enriching their knowledge of a highly cultured land such as India. These fabulous creators gleaned many aesthetic references from the country.

Today, when half the world is reeling under economic difficulties, luxury brands have approached Indian shores again. The difference, this time, is that the 'New Maharajas' in India are the wealthy and whimsical scions of booming businesses and industrial houses, the Bollywood princes and princesses

and the nouveau riche.

Sridevi Buddi is the President of IndUS of Fox Valley, and is also on the board of SHAMA, Inc. After qualifying with an MBA in finance and human resources from Osmania University, she taught human resource management, organizational behavior, and financial management at College of Commerce and Business Management, Osmania University in India. She managed payroll and payroll taxes for few California based companies from 1998-2008. She lives with her husband, three children and a dog in North East Wisconsin. She enjoys playing tennis and is a member of the Rotary club of Appleton.

Five Most Stylish Royal Women

By Sonu Pareek

India has a long and extensive history of being ruled by various dynasties. The royals were much celebrated for their regal style and expensive collections of jewels and artifacts. The Indian royalty, especially the Maharanis, had their own charm and created a niche for themselves around European Fashion Circuit.

We look back at five royal queens, whose incredible beauty, effortless style and penchant for luxury is still remembered. They left an indelible mark not only influencing the Indian fashion but style and design around the globe!

Gayatri Devi of Jaipur



Grandeur and elegance is what comes to mind when describing this erstwhile beauty! I remember seeing her at polo matches and various events around my

hometown. The Maharani of Jaipur was given the title of the most beautiful woman in the world in the 60s. Her choice of pure French chiffon saris with delicate floral prints and dainty leheriyas coupling them with slightly puff-sleeved blouses and a dot of bindi became the signature style of royal households across the state of Rajasthan. Over the years the pale pastels were replaced by mature teals, and greens; and the pearls were replaced by bolder solitaires; but the sassy downward Pallu remained on the left shoulder! This was her dignified protest of the traditional demure head cover that the princesses of that era were supposed to abide by. Her wedding trousseau in 1940s boasted to sheets from Czechoslovakia, shoes from Florence, and night gowns in mousseline de soie from Paris. This gives us an insight into her discerning taste for luxury!

Indira Raje of Baroda

Indira Raje was the Maharani of Cooch Bihar, who passed her sense

of style and taste for fine fashion to her daughter, Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur. The mother-daughter



duo were the epitome of grace and charm! It is well known that once when visiting Paris, she spotted the buttery fabric: chiffon. As a fashion visionary, she inquired if the fabric's width could be extended from 34 inches to 42 inches, so that she could drape it as a sari. Hence, the tradition shifted towards chiffon as a fabric of choice for royal women.

Sita Devi of Baroda

Known as Wallis Simpson of India, Maharani Sita Devi of Baroda was always a fashion icon. She was known for her meticulous detail to fashion and was said to travel with a thousand saris with matching handbags and shoes!

It said that in 1953 the Maharani



sold a pair of bejeweled anklets to Harry Winston, a famous jeweler. The anklets had



for her sartorial choices which bespoke of royalty. Rani Sita Devi had spectacular jewelry

The New York fashion Institute showed a 1940s sari of the Princess. The traditional sari was given her own style and flair, giving it a more western touch by adding sequins, beads and metallic embroidery on chiffon, crepe and net. Her saris were designed by a Frenchman and embroidered in India.

large emeralds and diamonds. The jeweler set these stones into a necklace and that spectacular piece was bought by the Duchess of Windsor. The Duchess wore it to a ball in New York in 1957, which was also attended by Sita Devi. When the other guests were heard admiring the necklace the Maharani exclaimed that those jewels looked nicer on her feet embarrassing the Duchess to no end. It is a commonly shared anecdote that defies the norm of social grace observed by members of royal families.

collections from Cartier, and Van Cleef and Arpels. She was always seen wearing beautiful jewels from the famous jewelry houses around Europe.



Princess Niloufer of Hyderabad

She was known for style with substance.

Kohinoor of Hyderabad, as she was popularly called. Princess Niloufer was considered one of the most beautiful women in the world. Her looks and clothes were the topic of discussion for the fashionable nobility around India and Europe.

The list of the glamorous royals is endless. The royal legacy is still an inspiration to a lot of film actresses and style divas. These five women just didn't make a tremendous impact on fashion and lifestyle but they were quite significant in bringing change into the lives of women and children in India. Their contributions in the fields of women's education and healthcare are monumental.

Check out a video on these beautiful women at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCCXVSsiAKA>.
Sonu Pareek has been a long time resident of Fox Valley. She is an avid reader and traveler. In her free time, she loves to socialize and entertain. She lives in Appleton with her husband and two sons.

Sita Devi of Kapurthala

The Vogue magazine described the 19 year old princess as a secular goddess. She was named amongst the five best dressed women by a top fashion magazine. She was known

Prominent Royals of India

By Sandhya Sridhar

Mauryan Empire (322 BCE-187 BCE)

Founded by Chandragupta Maurya, this empire was extensively widespread. It was one of the largest empires of its time, covering a vast region along the natural boundaries of the Himalayas to the north, Assam to the east, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran to the west. It expanded into central and southern regions under emperors Bindusara and Ashoka.

Chandragupta Maurya and his successors created a single efficient system for administration, finance,

and security. This led to thriving trade - importing as well as exporting. A teacher-scholar named Chanakya, also known as Kautilya, played an important role as his political advisor. Chanakya wrote a political and economics treatise titled Arthashastra.

Chanakya's "Chanakya Nitee" is known for shrewd, pragmatic advice to ruling monarchs. Chanakya advised both Chandragupta and his son Bindusara. He helped Bindusara destroy nobles and kings of sixteen kingdoms and become absolute master of the territory between the eastern and

western oceans. Chanakya's son Ashoka, a brilliant commander of the army successfully crushed revolts and conquered larger territories, however, conquest of the Kalinga empire turned to be a pivotal event for him. He felt a deep sense of remorse when he witnessed 100,000 soldiers and civilians dead, his own 10,000 men among them, and thousands more devastated by the war. He renounced violence and embraced Buddhism. He sent missionaries to help spread the non-violent religion. The next 40 years of his rein was a period of peace,

and prosperity. His edicts are etched on stone pillars are found as far west as in Afghanistan and far south in India. They are mostly in Prakrit and some in Greek and Aramaic. His legacy continues in Ashoka Chakra (Ashoka wheel), prominently displayed on the Indian flag, and an image of lion-heads on currency bills and coins. Both are from Ashoka pillars.

Gupta Empire (320 CE- 550 CE).

An ancient empire, founded by Sri Gupta, flourished covering most of the subcontinent. This is considered the golden age of India. Chandragupta I, Samudragupta and Chandragupta II were the most notable rulers of the Gupta dynasty. Like Renaissance, but many centuries earlier, much of the classic literature was created during this period. Many scientific advances were made under the tutelage of Gupta emperors.

Two major epics Ramayana and Mahabharata were canonized during this time. Aryabhata, a genius mathematician, gave us the concepts of zero, place-values, basis for trigonometry and algebra (e.g. indeterminate equations, series of squares and cubes). As an astronomer, his theories were based on heliocentrism (which is the sun at the center and planets orbiting), accurately calculating eclipses and sidereal periods. Varahamihira, another astronomer, mathematician and a physicist contributed to our understanding of algebraic properties of zero and negative numbers, and what later came to be known as Pascal's Triangle. Vishnu Sharmā wrote Panchatantra. Vatsyana, a great scholar, wrote his world-famous treatise on attaining spiritual salvation through sexual behavior, Kam Sutra. Kalidasa, the greatest

Sanskrit poet and dramatist wrote *Raghuvansha*, *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, *Vikramorvarshiyam*.

The great advancements made by the Gupta empire are still visible in India as well as nearby kingdoms of Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia and other countries in southeast Asia.

Southern Dynasties

Pandyan kings ruled the southern region from the 4th to 16th century, reaching their golden age in a later period (1216-1345), expanding into Odisha to northeast and Sri Lanka to south. They were experts in agriculture, fisheries and water management. They had diplomatic and trading relationships with Roman and Greek empires. The Meenakshi Temple at Madurai is a great example of their architectural prowess.

Cholas ruled a large area South India from 3rd century BCE to 13th century CE. They became a naval power of ancient India invading cities in Malaysia, Indonesia as well as annexing Sri Lanka and Maldives to their southern territory. Their lasting legacy is evident in Tamil literature, and art and architecture spread throughout southeast Asia.

Cheras were a ruling dynasty in present day Kerala and in parts of Tamilnadu from 4th to 12th CE. They traded with Greece, Rome, North Africa, Middle East, Sri Lanka and China. Most of their history is recreated from Sangam Literature in old Tamil, dating back to 3rd century CE. Pandya, Chola and Chera all contributed to this body of literature, a collection of 2381 Tamil poems composed by hundreds of poets.

Rashtrakutas ruled large parts southern to central India, including

present day Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and parts of Gujarat were ruled from 6th to 12th CE. Early kings followed Hinduism and later ones, Jainism. Kailasnath Temple, a sculpture cut out of one massive rock at Ellora is an example of their architectural accomplishment. Elephanta caves (Gharapuri) near Mumbai exhibit Rashtrakuta royal insignia, of trimurti, Bramha, Vishnu and Mahesh.

Hoysalas were a prominent dynasty in Karnataka from 10th to 14th CE. Descendants of Yadavas, their era was known for development of art, architecture and religion. Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebidu and Somnathpura show amazing level of detail and sophistication in temple architecture.

Mughal (Mogul) Empire: 1526-1857 CE

Founded in 1526, this was a Muslim empire with roots in central Asia. It lasted until 1857 when the British government overtook East India Company and established the British Raj. Successive emperors assimilated by forming marriage alliances with Hindu Rajputs and Muslim Persians, giving rise to Indo-Persian culture. It became the second largest empire, after the Mauryan empire sixteen centuries prior. Akbar expanded it through warfare and diplomacy. He allowed free expression of religion and tried to resolve cultural and political differences by establishing a new religion. The empire reached its peak under Shah Jahan exemplified by building of the Taj Mahal. The decline started under his Shah Jahan's son Aurangzeb whose rule was marked by religious extremism

And intolerance. Mughal contribution to arts, languages, cuisine, architecture and culture enriched India.

Maratha Empire (1674-1813 CE)

Marathas were responsible to a large extent for ending Mughal rule in India. Marathas were Hindu warriors from Deccan Plateau, in Maharashtra. Marathas came into power under the leadership of Shivaji, who revolted against Mughals and carved out an empire called Hindvi Swarajya to protect Hindus from Muslim atrocities. At its peak, it dominated much of the subcontinent stretching from Tamilnadu in the south to Peshawar in the northeast, bordering Afghanistan, and Bengal in the east. The vast area was managed by giving semi-autonomous powers to victorious Sardars (knights). It became a confederation of states ruled by Gaekwads in Baroda, Holkars in Indore, Malwa and Scindias in Gwalior and Ujjain, Bhonsales in Nagpur, and the Puars in Dhar and Dewas and a few others. It became a naval power keeping British and Portuguese ships at bay. Early in the empire, revenues were raised by the raid and plunder of the ships and other territories. As the empire grew, they developed a system of tax collection. A series of Anglo-Maratha ensued, the first was won by Marathas, and after a defeat in the third war, the empire went into decline under Bajirao Peshwa II.

Gaekwads of Baroda

The city of Baroda was granted as a fief by Peshwa Bajirao I, a de facto ruler of the Maratha Empire, to Pilajirao Gaikwad when he

conquered it from the Mughals in 1721. Gaikwads ruled this western state from their capital city of Baroda (Vadodara). Most notable among them was the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad III. He introduced many progressive reforms such as ban on child marriage, legalizing divorce, and removing untouchability.

His economic development initiatives include promoting Baroda's textile industry, establishing railroads, and founding the Bank of Baroda. His major contributions are in the field of education. He was the first Indian ruler to introduce, in 1906, compulsory and free primary education. This was far in advance of contemporary British India. He established Baroda College, a public university, which was renamed after him in 1949, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (MSU). His rich library became the nucleus of today's Central Library of Baroda with a network of libraries in all the towns and villages in his state.

See the Maharaja in a rare film clip at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3OdZpX7mOA>

Nizams of Hyderabad

Nizam, short for Nizam-e-Mulk, was an administrative head of the Hyderabad state in south-central India. After the decline of the Mughal Empire, its viceroy, Mir Qamar-ud-Din Siddiqi, founded the Asaf Jah dynasty in 1713 and declared themselves independent in 1724. Nizams ruled for the next two centuries making it the largest and the most prosperous state, covering parts of present day Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Nizams developed railways, introduced electricity, built roads, airways, irrigation, massive

water reservoirs and founded Osmania University. The last emperor was the richest man in the world in his time. A legend has it that he owned Jacob Diamond, the largest in the world, worth \$200 million and used it as a paperweight.

Dr. Sandhya Sridhar, has been a founding member of IndUS and current Chief Editor of Sandesh. She is semi-retired and continues to teach in College of Business at UW Oshkosh in adjunct capacity.

Upcoming IndUS 2017 Banquet Event

Theme *Royals of India*

Saturday, November 18, 2017

5:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

**Venue: Radisson Paper Valley
Hotel Appleton**

Highlights:

Exhibition
Social Hour
Authentic Indian Cuisine
Cultural Program

Ms. Ritu Tannan
(Chair, IndUS-2017)
Dr. Sujatha Kailash
(Co-chair, IndUS-2017)

Contact: IndUS of Fox Valley

3000 E Apple Hill Blvd.
Appleton WI 54913
indusfoxvalley@yahoo.com
www.indusfoxvalley.org

IndUS of Fox Valley is a 501 (c)(3)
nonprofit organization

The Board of Directors

Ms. Nancy Heykes (Chair)
 Ms. Sridevi Buddi
 Mr. Shaleen Devgun
 Mr. Raj Dugal
 Ms. Sandhya Maheshwari
 Ms. Ruth Mansukhani
 Ms. Richa Mehrotra
 Ms. Sonu Pareek
 Ms. Sonali Sharma
 (India Association NEW ex-officio)
 The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of IndUS Exe. Committee are ex-officio members of the board.

The Executive Team

Ms. Sridevi Buddi
President
 Ms. Sonu Pareek
Vice President
 Ms. Pooja Arora
Secretary
 Ms. Susan Kulkarni
Treasurer

Team Leaders

Ms. Sonu Pareek
 (Cultural & Art Programs)
 Dr. Sandhya Sridhar
 (Chief Editor, Sandesh)
 Ms. Shobha Chetty
 (Education and Outreach)
 Ms. Sridevi Buddi
 (Fund Raising)
 Ms. Nancy Heykes
 (Publicity & Communication)
 Dr. Gaurav Bansal
 (Webmaster)

News ...

Octoberfest

IndUS volunteers in collaboration with IANEW were up before the crack of dawn to set up for Octoberfest 2017. It was on September 30th, on a bristling cold morning with temperature in 40s. The day warmed up later and sunny weather brought over 200, 000



people to the fest in downtown Appleton. About 1000 customers visited IndUS-IANEW stall.

We served juicy chicken tikka, crispy samosas, and delectable masala dosas, made on the spot and served with potatoes or chicken filling and chutneys. The henna station attracted many and there were people waiting patiently for the henna and the piping hot dosas.



About 40 volunteers, including teenagers and adults served in shifts throughout the day to cater to the tremendous demand and crowd at the stall.

The net proceeds from the event is donated to hurricane disaster relief. Goodwill NCW is matching our donation of \$3500, without charging any administrative costs.

Celebrate Diversity Picnic

IndUS Fox Valley co-sponsored the 25th annual **Celebrate Diversity**

Community Cookout with Celebrate Diversity Fox Cities on the August 19th, 2017 at Jefferson Park in Menasha.

Several hundred people enjoyed a perfect afternoon of music, food and camaraderie. The event was graced by the Honorable Mayor Tim Hanna and by Karen Nelson, Appleton's Coordinator of Diversity & Inclusion.



Ashna Bansal entertained the audience with a Bharatnatyam-Bollywood fusion dance and Eeshani Buddi performed a Bharatnatyam dance dedicated to lord Ganesha. IndUS henna station was busy as always. Madhuli Bhide's songs were melodious and complemented the ambience. The afternoon program featured an 80-minute concert by

