

FRIGATE 'FOUDROYANT' A PRODUCT OF INDIA

BY

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Foudroyant traces her origin of birth to a well-known maritime city i.e. Bombay (now Mumbai) way back in 1817. It is here that the famous Wadia builders built this ship in the yard out of teak which is found in abundance along the Malabar coast. The ship was commissioned as HMS *Trincomalee*, a LEDA class frigate by the Royal Navy.

The ship was sold out from the Royal Navy in 1847 after being in commission for nearly 30 years. She was renamed as *Foudroyant* by the new owner Mr G.W. COBB of Chepston, England to commemorate the name of one of LORD NELSON's flagship. It has been in use since then as a harbour accommodation ship. Besides, it is also being used to provide seamanship training for voluntary youth organizations of Great Britain. The ship is still afloat off the coast of England which serves as a living testimony to the artistic skills of the Indian craftsman and more importantly, proving the superiority of teak over oak. It is understood that the British Parliament debated at length for months together when the question of shipbuilding in India was discussed as they felt that the Crown would lose valuable revenue and employment. But it is to the credit of the then British government to concede that teak was positively superior to oak, which enabled the progress of the wooden shipbuilding industry in India till the onset of the Industrial Revolution.

A piece of the teak that was used to lay the keel of *Foudroyant* was formally presented by CAPTAIN D.C.R. WALTERS, Royal Navy, the then Naval Advisor to the British High Commissioner to India in 1972 to the Chairman, Mazgaon Dock Ltd. Mumbai where *Foudroyant* was originally built. Realizing that this historical memento would be better served if placed in a maritime museum, the undersigned took up the onerous task of persuading the Mazgaon Dock Ltd. Mumbai to consider handing over the memento to the Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai and finally met with success on 10 October 2001. The memento presently lies in state in the Prince of Wales museum (Maritime Section) to remind visitors of the golden era of shipbuilding (wooden) in India and in Mumbai particular.

May we earnestly hope that the shipbuilding activity (steel) reverberates with glory one again.