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## Rajmala as the Record of Royal History of Tripura

Sourav Das

Guest Faculty, Department of School of Education, Tripura University

### Abstract

This paper explores Rajmala as a record of Tripura's dynastic history. The writings of E.F. Sandys are highlighted in this paper. According to E.F. Sandys' book 'History of Tripura,' Tripura has had contact with other parts of India since the Mahabharata period. This paper also highlights Rev. James Long's report 'Analysis of Rajmala.' Rev. Long sheds light on Tripura's dynastic past, claiming that its original name was KIRAT, and that it was ruled by rulers of the Lunar or Indo-Scythian race. This paper also discussed the king and his qualities or character, as described in the Rajmala chronicle.

Keywords: Tripura, Rajalma, Kirat, Rev. James Long, E.F. Sandys

### 1.1 Introduction

Tripura has its own royal chronicle known as the 'Rajmala' which is about the history of kings who ruled over this lovely state for a long time. Tripura has historically had ties with other North-Eastern states as well as Bengal. Because of their relationship with Bengal, the kings of Tripura were able to contact priests and scribes, and as a result, they arrived to this land. In his book 'Kirata-Gana-Kriti,' Suniti Kumar Chatterji states, "This led to the close approximation of both the royal family and rank and file of the Indo-Mongoloid people of Tripura to the Bengalis in religious and culture." There have been numerous ups and downs throughout the history of kinship in Tripura, as well as within cultural heritage. According to Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru, "no people, no races remain unchanged. Continually they are mixing with others and slowly changing; they may appear to die almost and then rise again as a new people or just a variation of old (Discovery of India, p-55)."

### 1.2 Rajmala

In the context of history of Tripura, the first and foremost importance is given to Rajmala. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Bengali language emerged as an important official language for reading writing under the guidance and supervisor of the ruler of that time. From then onwards, Bengali became a court language of the kings of Tripura.

### 1.3 Tripura and its Past

E.F. Sandys in his book 'History of Tripura', discussed that the name of Tripura can be seen in the Mahabharata period also. 'Turning to the Mahabharat we find that Yudhisthira sent forth to conquer and bring to tribute the lesser kings. In the Sabha Parva, Chapter XXXI, the sixteenth verse, we read that Saha deva, the younger brother of Yudhisthira among others, conquered the "immeasurable effulgent Tripura."

E.F. Sandys goes on saying 'after the departure of the Pandu brothers into forest exile (Vanavas) Duriyadhana became king and determined to have himself declared Samrat or Emperor. So he sent forth armies under various commanders, one of whom, Karana, as related in verse 9-11 of chapter CCIII of Vana Parva of the Mahabharat, after conquering various kingdom, came to the Batdabhumi or grazing country and subjugated Keroli, Mrittikavati, Mohana and Pattana, Tripura and Kosala, and made them all pay tribute.'

All of these things as discussed by E.F. Sandys events prove that, Tripura had a long political and cultural relation with various parts of North, North-East and North-West India.

#### 1.4 Rev. James Long's account on history of Tripura

Rev. James Long in his account 'Analysis of Rajmala' writes 'The first part of the Rajmala treats of "The Traditional Period of the Tripura Kings" which is mixed up with various mythological accounts. It informs us that the ancient name of Tripura was KIRAT from a person of that name of the Lunar or Indo-Scythian race, the brother of PURU who was banished to the Eastern provinces by his father Yajati. He built a city named Tribeg on the banks of the Kupil (Brahaputra) river. His son Tripura succeeded him. Tripura was a profligate tyrant and oppressed the worshippers of Shiva. By the grace of Lord Shiva, a son named Trilochan was born to the widow of Tripura. Shiva desired that Trilochan would be a successful king provided he adhered to the worship of Sun and Moon and the fourteen gods i.e. the Sun, Moon, Himalaya, Kamadeva, Fire, Ganges, Water, Prabha, Ganesha, Kartika, Brahma, Sarasvati, Siva and Vishnu. Since then these fourteen gods have become the family deities of the royal family of Tripura and even today, the Chaturda Devata is worshipped at old Agartala, the former capital of Tripura. The Raja of Hirambu (Kachar) offered him his daughter in marriage. Trilochan after conquering various countries visited Yudhistira of Mahabharata.'

Rev. Long also commented in Analysis of Rajmala, 'It gives us a picture of the state, Hindu society and customs little known to Europeans, - Tripura, the Highlands of Bengal, the last country that yielded to the tide of Moslem invasion, and which its mountain fastnesses, retained for so long the Hindu traditions unmixed with the views that stream in from other countries.'

He also analysed the importance of Rajmala as follows; "The Rajmala on History of Tripura comes in opportunely at the present times, when such an anxiety is shown by Savants to throw light on the manners, religion and history of India previous to the Mohammedan invasion, also from the country described in the poem presenting various points of interest, whether we look at its position, having the Buddhist Kingdoms to the South, the Chinese Empire in the East, the ancient kingdom of Kamrup in Assam to the North, or the aboriginal tribes of its frontiers. Its mountain fastnesses and lonely jungles, enabled its chieftains, like the Welsh of former times, or the Huguenotes of the Cevennes, to maintain a spirit of resistance to intruders, and to preserve down to the last century Hindu manners and customs uninfluenced by the control of Moslem propagandism."

#### 1.5 Importance of King and Qualities of a King as discussed in Rajmala

In Mahabharata, there are discussions between Yudhishtira and Brihaspati, where Brihaspati advised Yudhishtira about welfare of the state, there must be a well-educated and powerful king. Bhisma also advised in Mahabharata to Dharmaraja Yudhishtira that, it is impossible to sustain dharma in a state or country where there is no king or ruler. Rajmala also gives an idea of what can be condition of a state or a country and its citizens without a strong ruler or king, which is discussed below –

মহাবৃক্ষ পড়িলে যে ফল ছায়া যায়।  
 বৃক্ষমূল নিবাসীয়ে বহু দুঃখ পায়ে॥  
 সরোবর শুকাইলে যেন মরে মীন।  
 অনাথিনী নারী যেন স্বামীর বিহীন□  
 বলহীন মৃগ যেন কুক্কুরে যে ধরে।  
 যুদ্ধে ভয় করে যেন অল্পবল ধরে॥  
 পিতা মাতা মৈলে স্হল ঘটে যে বিস্তর।  
 রাজাহীন রাজ্যে বাস বরাহি দুষ্কর॥

Matsya Purana, while focusing on the qualities and characters of a king or ruler says a king or ruler should not be mild or so quiet in character. Because for a mild person or king, there is a utmost possibility of certain defeat. And the king also should not be angry or hard in character, as it is harmful for a king as well as for the country. Rajmala also discusses about the character of a king or ruler –

অতি শিষ্ট না হইব নাহি ক্রোধ মতি।  
 এই মতে বুঝাইছে শুক্র বৃহস্পতি॥  
 রাজসিক ভাব যদি রাজার না হয়।  
 অতি শিষ্ট হৈলে রাজা জীবন সংশয়॥

Envoys had been sent for centuries and employed in various parts of during the time of kingship in Tripura. Various other states also sent envoys to Tripura as well.

পশ্চাতে হেড়ম্ব পতি ভ্রাতৃকে লিখিল।  
 এইসব তত্ত্ব পত্রে দূত পাঠাইল॥

## 1.6 Historical Account of the Kings of Tripura

The Rajmala has a list of 149 Twipra rulers as of 1431. The first king of the chronicle is Chandra, the Moon himself; the seventh is Druhyu, one of the sons of Yayati, a mythical Lunar dynasty. The 46th monarch is known as Tripur (Tripura) as a mythical ancestor of the kingdom's Sanskrit name. Ratna Fa, the 145th king, is the first in the list of historical rulers (fl. 1280). He was the first to bear the title Manikya and, as such, is regarded as the founder of the Manikya Dynasty.

The text is divided into six sections and was composed over several centuries under the patronage of several Tripura rulers. It was first commissioned in 1458 by Dharma Manikya I, who assigned the work to the royal priest Durlabhendra and two Brahman pandits, Sukheshwar and Baneshwar. Their work was the initial section of the book, and it included the traditional time of Tripura's history, as well as many mythical narratives. Subsequent sections were written in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries by Amar Manikya, Govinda Manikya, Krishna Manikya, and Kashi Chandra Manikya, in that order. Durgamoni Uzir ultimately compiled the full updated text under the reign of Krishna Kishore Manikya in the mid-nineteenth century.

A list of legendary Tripuri kings is given in the Rajmala chronicle, a 15th-century chronicle in Bengali verse written by the court pandits of Dharma Manikya I (r. 1431). The king's ancestors are traced back to the mythical Lunar Dynasty, according to the chronicle. Druhyu, Yayati's son, became king of Kirata country and built Trivega on the banks of the Kapila river. His realm was limited on the north by the Tairang River, on

the south by Acaranga, on the east by Mekhali, and on the west by Koch and Vanga. The King of Hedamba's daughter married King Trilochona of Trivega. Because the King of Hedamba had no successor, he appointed Trilochona's eldest son as King of Hedamba. After Trilochona died, his second son Daksina ascended to the throne of Tripura. Daksina divided the kingdom's wealth among the eleven brothers. The King of Hedamba, as Trilochona's eldest son, claims his kingdom from his brothers. In defiance, the furious King of Hedamba attacked and destroyed Tripura's capital. The eleven brothers leave Trivega and settle at Khalangma on the banks of the Varavakra River, where they found the capital of Khalangma. In the eighth century, the kingdom relocated its capital to Sylhet, near present-day Kailasahar in North Tripura, along the Surma river.

The Tipra religion had 14 deities known as Chaturdasa Devata, which are now kept at the Chaturdasa Temple in Agartala, which is maintained by Tipra priests known as Chantais, who manage the Kharchi and Ker festivals according to tradition.

The first historical documents of the Twipra kingdom occur in the 15th century, when it was initially threatened by Islamic invaders. This is also the period when Chhengthung Fa took the title Manikya, becoming Maha Manikya, with the cognomen being kept by all Tripura Kings until the death of Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya in 1947. Under Ratna Manikya I, the capital was relocated to Rangamati on the banks of the Gumti River, which is presently located in South Tripura.

Tripura was one of the states that repelled several waves of invasions by Turks, Afghans, and Mughals. Tripuris (Tiplasa) also successfully repelled Burmese and Arakanese invasions from the east on several times. At its peak, it included what is now Tripura, Bangladesh's Sylhet division, Assam's Cachar area, and Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts, and it even managed to remain free and independent before to the British occupation.

The plains of Tripura, on the other hand, fell victim to Mughal invasions. The plains territories include what is now South-East Dhaka and Comilla. While the lowland areas were thus Islamized, the Tripura Hills acted as a constant barrier against Eastward incursion. The Tripura Hill Kings were great supporters of Hindu rituals and traditions. They are known today as one of the longest and most stable dynasties from the Indian East.

Twipra's geographical jurisdiction was extended further into Eastern Bengal by Dhanya Manikya (reigned 1463-1515). After Udai Manikya, Rangamati was called Udaipur. The kingdom prospered in the 16th and 17th centuries, with monarchs like Govinda Manikya mounting a robust defence against the pressures of Muslim nations to the west. The plains territories, however, broke away from Tripura state as a result of the efforts of a renegade Tripuri monarch who was supported by Mughal administrators of the Eastern Bengal plains. Plains Twipra afterwards became a distinct Mughal client country, with Mughal emperors exerting influence over the selection of its kings. The Mughals, on the other hand, were never able to reach the Hills areas to the east.

## 1.7 Conclusion

Finally, we can state that Rajmala provides a detailed account of Tripura's dynastic history, emphasising on the social, religious, and political elements of this lovely region. Various British officials, including E.F. Sandys and Rev. James Long, devoted precious time researching the true history of Tripura with the assistance of Rajmala and writing down Tripura's historical chronicles.

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