

Bharatas and the Battle of Ten Kings

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ABSTRACT

The relics of prehistoric period discovered at MohenjoDaro and Harappa leave no room for doubt that chalcolithic civilisation of Indus Valley was something quite different from Vedic civilization, so likely in warfare too. Tribal conflicts remained common, but very particular, The Battle of Ten Kings, placed good in research, still have many questions unanswered. Some scholars consider it as a historical event and others just a legend or a story. The Battle of Ten Kings or Dasarjana war was the first significant battle fought on this land and a very known outcome that Bharatas under Sudas won the battle although his army was much smaller and gained supreme control over the North India. It presented an idea of big state/kingdoms well from sources, as territory would eventually become the first South-Asian state under Kuru tribe in post Rigvedic span and serve as a heartland of Brahmanical culture. The major cause of the Battle of Ten Kings, is seen in 'intense relations grew between Vashishtha and Vishwamitra' along with that, there are some mini causes or key causes also, put forward by historians, writers and bloggers, that is one of the aims of this research paper to bring them collectively here. Second, I tried well to brought from historical sources more, the tribes and their alliances, are key players of entire paper and put them in an order, hopefully, will help good to researchers. The paper will highlight a brief review of Bharatas and Sudas as well. Hence, the aim is to make reader interested and to contribute the historical research.

Keywords: Bharata, Sudas, Ten kings, Battle, Dasarjana, Vedic period, Clan, Tribe, Vashishtha, Vishwamitra, Puru, River Ravi, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The dawn of history in the upper Indus Valley make proclamation by the hymns of Rigveda Samhita. Modern historians of Ancient India usually seem to proceed with the assumption that very similar must have been the condition of the upper Indus Valley in the early Rig Vedic period when the Arya (Aryan) immigrants were engaged in a ceaseless war with the non-Aryan aborigines (Dasa/Dasyus) for the possession of land. Here the story began of fights and fight-back. The Battle of the ten kings, DasharajnaYuddha was fought, Bharatas were succeeded, and Sudas, remained the main hero. Rigveda documented a battle between the Puru Vedic Aryan Kingdoms of the Bharatas allied with the other peoples of Northwest India guided by a royal sage Vishwamitra/Viswamitra. It becomes more meaningful and sensible while presenting that Battle of Ten Kings was fought between King Sudas'sBharata tribe, after he had dismissed his legendary priest Vishwamitraand had appointed Vashistha/Vasistha in his place. Disappointed Vishwamitra gathered army of ten tribes but was defeated. Though seemingly an unequal battle, Sudas won by strategic breaching of a dyke (breaking embankment) in the river. Sudas celebrated his victory with the Ashvamedha/Asvamedha ritual to commemorate the establishment of realm, free of enemies from North, east and West. Hence, India is named Bharat-Varsha after the Aryan tribe Bharata and a vision of state building is also seen in the scenario.

BHARATA AND BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF SUDAS

The name Bharata is of Indo Aryan and Indo Iranian origin. Bharata tribe was first mentioned in Rigveda. It was a tribe of Trtsu dynasty. Along the Bharatas' trail of conquest- originally apparently just a subtribe of Purus. The Barata Tribe was descended from the BharataChakravartin, was son of Dushyanta and mother Shakuntala. It is mentioned that two Bharatas, DevasravasBharata and DevavataBharata, were lived near Sarasvati and Drsadvati (The Sarasvati has four branches flowing in different directions and Drsadvati or Drishadvati was a branch flowing North) rivers. In the epic, Mahabharata ancestor of Kurus became Emperor Bharata and his rule and kingdom was also called Bharata. The Bharata clan mentioned in Mahabharata is a Kuru clan which is the sub-clan of Puru clan, who were the cousins of the Yadavas and finally 'Bharata' today is an official name of the Republic of India.

The Bharatas and the Trtsu were ruling Aryan clans and they were supported by priest Vashistha. VashisthaMaithravarni, composed Rigveda, Book 7. And VishwamitraGathinah, once also the royal priest of Sudas, composer of Rigveda, Book 3. Bharata existed during vedic age and is considered asRigvedic tribe dated

latter half of the second millennium BC, located in North Indian subcontinent. Vedic Sanskrit was their language and practices historical Vedic religion.

Sudas, a Bharata king, descendant of King BharataChakravartin, son of Pijavana and grandson of Divodasa/Devadatta, was the 14th/16th generation descendant. He was the very first hero, defeated the confederacy of ten kings and established the pre-eminence of his tribe. He was a great warrior. He inherited the kingship and ruled till the Battle of Ten Kings. King Sudas's wisdom and use of effective strategies made him a winner against his enemies. One of the strategies, was building a wall across river Ravi, forming a dam where he would decisively drown his enemies. Sudas used tactical means to acquire victory over the alliance of multiple tribes. It is clear, that next to the king Bharata, Sudas held the head of the poet clan. Upaas was a royal physician in court of Sudas. Parthava was an itinerant soldier and friend of Upaas. And Devasravas was brother-in-law of Sudas.

VEDIC TRIBES AND TRIBAL ALLIANCES

The entire territory of Vedic Aryans was divided into a number of tribal principalities ruled normally by the rulers. The Bharatas were one of the most important Vedic tribes and below is the list of different tribes based on Aryan and Non-Aryan ethnicity, recorded from sources.

1. Alina: Alina is said to belong from Nuristan (east Afghanistan). We have also reference that they actually do exist at Gandhar, and known as Gandharis
2. Anus/Anu: This tribe led by king Anava, and they lived in West Punjab. They were also said to be a dynasty of Kashmir. KaviCayamana, grandson of AbhiyavartinCayamana was descendant of Anu, son of Yayati.
3. Bhalana: One of tribes that fought against Sudas in Dasarjana battle. Some scholars argued that the Bhalanas lived in East Kabuistan and that the Bolan Pass derives its name from Bhalanas. One more indication that Bolan region is related to Baluchistan.
4. Bheda/Bhida: About this tribe, I didn't found more than that Shimyu was a Bheda king.
5. Bhrgu/Bhrigu/Bhrigus: Sources told that Phryge has origin of Turkey. One more reference that it was a priestly family descended from sage Bhrgu. They were related to the composition of Rigveda.
6. Dasa/Dasyu: We have controversial meaning about. The term labelled to all Iranian tribes that were in opposition to Kings Sudas. And we found also that Sudas belong to such community as well.
7. Druhyus: They were defeated enemies of Aryas. Their king Gandhara founded a state named after him, Gandhara or modern Kandhar.
8. Matsya: They belonged to Rajasthan and Haryana and that people living in Alwar-Bharatpur region.
9. Pakhta: They were having origin in Modern Pakhtoons.
10. Panis/Parni: A tribe in present Pakistan and Afghanistan, lasted till SikandarLodhi. Panis were cattle thieves. It is also mentioned that it was a Scythian tribe which later founded the Parthian dynasty of the Persian Empire.
11. Parsu: It is connected with the Persian people though this view is disputed by some.
12. Prithu/Prithus: They were Parthians of (NE Iran) and referenced also that they were a clan of the Puru tribe.
13. Puru/Purus: The Purus were the most prominent tribes of all and thus led the collaboration against the Bharatas. They were considered master tribe of Bharatas. They were closely connected with Trtsu and the Bharata, lived on either side of Sarasvati. They are also considered as the mother tribe of king Sudas. The Bharata (Trtsu) was a clan among the Puru tribe. Purukutsa was a king who led the alliances. He was son of king Mandhata. Now Purukutsa was called the leader of Purus. Trasadasyu was son of Purukutsa and led alongside with his father.
14. Sivas/Shiva: Sources related to Sivas told that they might be belong to Khiva in Uzbekistan.
15. Shimyu: The only reference about is that they were Sarmatians. (You can match this tribe with 'Tribe number 4'. Might be, there is a relationship between king Shiyumu and tribe Shiyumu.
16. Trtsu: This was a tribe of king Sudas.
17. Turvasa/Turvasha: The tribe was war friend of Purus during Battle of Ten Kings.
18. Vishanin: It was a tribe that don't identified.
19. Yadu: It was one of the five early Rigvedic tribes. As Yadu had tribal union with Turvasa tribe, were frequently described together.
20. Yaksu: It was relatively unimportant or a fun for Yadu.

Hence, the players (tribes) we found were allies and tied with bands (alliances). We did found as well that the fighting armies were more in relationships. The most important fighting groups belong to Trtsu and Puru, both were in relation with Bharatas. According to ancient records, Battle of Ten Kings involved all Rig Vedic Indians. In essence, it was a fight that involved the Bharata, allied with other Western Indian tribes against the vedic tribes.

Puru, Yadu, Turvasa, Anu, Druhyu were Aryan tribes and Alina, Pakhta, Bhalanas, Sivas and Vishanin were non-Aryans. Anus, Druhyus, Yadus and Turvasa were allies of Purus against Bharata. These five were the five people

(Panchjanah) of Rigveda. Devodasa's allies were Prastoka, Asvatha and Srnjaya's son in the one hand, and on the other hand, Bharatas were enemies of the Yadu-Turvasa.

Two of the ten kings only, Bheda and Khavasa/Khavasha are mentioned by names; two others are mentioned by their patronymic as Vaikarnas (sons of Vaikarna); and six other were Simyu/Shimyu, Yakshu, Turvasa, Druhyu, Anuand Puru. The tribes and clans who were associated with these ten kings, Matsya, Bhrigus, Druhyus, Pakhtas, Bhalanas, Alinas, Sivas, and twenty one clans who obeyed the two sons of Vaikarna. Other tribes mentioned were the Ajas, Sigrus who dwelt on Yamuna. Only one important Vedic tribe, the Yadus, was not included among the opponents of Sudas. And among the less important omissions were the Chedis, the Krivis and the Rusamas. Early Aryan immigrants such as Turvasa, Yadu and Druhyu/Druhyus has allied themselves.

King Sudas had 10000 warriors against, whereas the alliance had a quantity of 66666/66600. Hence, it was an unequal battle between the two armies, where at one side, a huge force challenged the Bharatas but the game that meant for win or loss, a small army remain succeeded.

BATTLE OF TEN KINGS

According to ancient India's history, there were no organised battles back then as remained Battle of Ten Kings. The historians and other writers have detailed the Battle of Ten Kings and that remained important in Indian context. One of the source reference about the Battle of Ten Kings, I came with, that, one soldier under captivity of Sudas, revealed the words 'DasaRajna' before dying. It meant that ten Kings were plotting to kill Sudas. And for that, the preparations were already in a countdown.

Before place the Battle of Ten Kings in an explanation through causes and consequences, it is body historic, that presented some battles before that historic battle. Devavata's son, SrnjayaDaivavata/Devavata defeated Turvasa tribe in a battle took place in Eastern Afghanistan. Under the chieftain DivodasaAithigva, Bharatas moved through Hindukush mountain range in the Northwest Indian subcontinent where he defeated the aboriginal mountain chief Sambara, is a rakshasa (demon) as mentioned in the BhagavataPurana. Of these conflicts between men and men, perhaps many were waged by the Aryas against Dasas, as were waged by the Aryas against other Aryas allied to the Dasas. The greatest feat of war known to the Rishis of the Rig Veda is the theDasarajna or King Sudas's "Battle with Ten Kings".

It was a battle that took place between various warning tribes of Northwest India. Ten Kings is a wonderful narration of the historical battle of Dasarjana mentioned in Rigveda. It depict and represent all the foreign invasions which were tried on the Bharatabhoomibhoomi but that time, King Sudas represent as the valor of India. This great battle is described briefly in two hymns (33 and 83). A detailed account of Sudas' great battle is given in the Rigveda vii (18), in which Vashishtha (in singular) is named as the author. The battle took place near Parsuni (Ravi) river, Punjab in 1400 BC. Witzel dated the battle between approximately 1450 BC and 1300 BC.

The first phase of battle placed on river Ravi near Manasa, west of Kurukshetra and thereafter, in second phase, battleground shifted to the banks of river Yamuna, wherein the local chieftain Bhida was defeated along with three other tribes- Ajas, Sighras and Yaksus.

Sudas's war was with 21 kings (more or less), it may be that they belong to 10 tribes. It is also mentioned that there was no Matsya tribe involved in this battle and Aja, Sigrus and Yakshu were not enemies of Sudas. Enemies of Sudas were called 'animdra' means Indra-less, who rejected Indra. A change was brought against all the ten kings and their allies who were called non-worshipping or non-sacrificing.

In it's war process, all it happen when Bharatas have crossed Beas and Satluj and their progress towards Kurukshetra, came across a nascent inter-tribal alliance led to battle. Along with that, during Sudas had crossed the river Ravi from West to East. Shortly after the crossing Ravi, he was encircled by an enemy alliance of Aryan and non-Aryan tribes.

CAUSES OF THE BATTLE OF TEN KINGS

Coming over through passages of history regarding Battle of Ten Kings, historic sources put forth the main cause and that was controversy surrounding the priesthood between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. Along with that, I came up with some causes, more or less, thanks to different historians, writers and blogging. Many Rig Vedic tribes are mentioned in the inter tribal conflict, that is why, some argue, it was due to intertribal environment. The ten kings were cattle raiders, a constant cause of war in ancient times. So, it might be one of the causes of enmity.

Sudas rode to meet his guru, Vashishtha along with his son Indrath and daughter Indrani. They witnessed a heated argument between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. Vashishtha later told that Vishvamitra sending warning to Sudas about not to construct new city. It becomes clear that Vashishtha worked as fueling the fire resulted the first big battle on Indian land.

Indeed, King Sudas in a certain moment had two highly developed and trained Gurus embodied as sages, Vashishta and Vishwamitra. Vashishta was a priest who helped Sudas, he battled through illusions in war against Vishwamitra, who has long been one of his main opponents. And Vishwamitra helped the alliance with the contributions of his own, he also called the gods through hymns. Vishwamitras, now spiritual head of invading Purus, from the earliest times were related to kings of Purus and Panchalas, who were called Bharatas in general. Entry of Vashishtha and getting closer to Sudas, hence jealousy existed between the two priests, is accepted cause of war, but between Sudhas and Vishwamitra and their opposition grew all at certain. Vishwamitra consolidated a group of ten kings, pitching and teaching them against Sudas. Hence, the war is known as Battle of ten Kings.

As time went, King Sudas fired over guru Vishwamitra due to some unknown disagreements and replaced him with guru Vashishta. Guru Vishwamitra felt so embarrassed and offended that he decided to take revenge. This proved a direct challenge to Vishwamitra, who now stranded against the Sudas in particular and Bharatas in general.

This is where the story becomes even more interesting. The thing is that there was a clash between them, and one was supposed to leave. It happened that was Sage Vishwamitra. It was right at that moment that he was thinking on how to take revenge, and it was due to him that coalition of ten kings was established. That would have led towards the long war with many battles. Nevertheless, as it seems, King Sudas came as the winner after all. Vashishta's poetics secured blessings for the Bharatas, the main reason that why King Sudas choose him over Vishwamitra.

Tribes seeking to steal cows from the Bharatas, also mentioned in hymns. Vishwamitra was advisor to cattle stealing Puru tribes. A story that Vishwamitra stealing the cow of Vashishtha probably originated this enmity between two Purohites. 66660/66666 warriors, who had come to carry off cattle, perished, thanks to Indra (rain/rain God) who made the waters of Parshuni fordable and recovered the cattle from plunders.

Michael Witzel argues that it might have been a resentment of an ousted family priest, while Ranabir Chakravarti, "fought for controlling rivers, which were a lifeline for irrigation. Hence, Sudas was forced to fight against far superior force led by ten Kings comprised his neighbours and allies, led by his friend Anu, instigated by Anu's Guru Vishwamitra, in a bid to wipe out Sudas and his Sudra/Shudra tribe and take control of the rich fertile lands, they guarded in behalf of the Bharata nation. This is solid reference and has a proof found almost in all battles and wars in history, that Kings wish to be strong economically.

Upstream, they cut the dykes, as to inundate Sudas and his army, probably located at an oxbow extension of the river or inside one of its old branches. Instead it was them who for the most part, ended up in spreading flood. The enemies of Sudas tried to change the course of the river Ravi by damming it but Indira made river follow again. The dam they were building broke, drown the entire army. Therefore, the battle took place, at least in part, in the inundated area. The ten tribes wanted to punish the Bharatas, however, their struggle to achieve this failed. The surprising turn of the battle, that is the piercing of the dykes of the river Ravi, where themen with hoisted banners encounter each other in the battle. Individual Puru warriors were drowned to the river by Indira, who then demolishes their forts and their seven cities and gives the dwellings of 'sons of Anu' to Trtsu-Bharata. As the ten kings battle took place after crossing the river Ravi from West to East and was apparently also that led to the conquest of the seven old cities, the conclusion presented itself that the 'Seven Old Cities' are indicating Harappa with its partly very old settlement hills as well as settlements farther in the hinterland.

CONSEQUENCES AND A BRIEF AFTERMATH

In the end, Sudas was victorious. Many enemies were killed, fled in panic, were slain in the ensuing pursuit and were partly swept away by the flood. After winning the battle, Bharatas form the Kuru Kingdom, which is considered as first attested state in Indian history. Rigvedic tribes conquered by Sudas, Bharatas settled in Kurukshetra and emergence of Kuru kingdom existed as territorial changes after the battle.

Bharatas replaced most of their opponents immediately after winning the Battle of Ten Kings. Many tribes fled westwards into Iran. The Bharatas replaced Purus and settled on their land. Vishwamitra fled also and never return to Bharata. Vashishtha/Vasistha was richly honored by Sudas for his spiritual aid during the battle.

As a further consequence of the battle, we can observe, on the one hand that Sudas and the Bharata under new Royal priest and in the other hand, in the seventh Mandala, both the Puru, Vashishtha and the Trtsu were found at the Sarasvati river and later on Yamuna. Vashishta, the royal advisor to the king Sudas, tried to reconcile the defeated tribes to restore peace. This resulted the formation of big tribe Kuru.

The Battle of Ten Kings led Bharata to occupy the entire Puru territory (West Punjab) centered around Sarasvati river and complete their eastward migration. A political realignment between Bharatas and Purus followed soon and might have included other factions of the tribal union as well. Sudas drove away North-Western tribes from river Ravi, which have attacked India over millenia.

CONCLUSION

The Battle of Ten Kings, between Bharata king and a tribal Confederation, resulted in the victory of Bharatas. The exact cause of the Battle of Ten Kings is yet to be revealed. Next to the great importance of the Rigvedic battle itself, that was supported by the number of participating kings and tribes. The ten kings battle thus makes the culmination of the Rigveda history, in so far as- on the one hand- it concluded the conquest of the Punjab by the Puru and the Bharata latecomers- and on the other hand, as it has opened up the further path eastwards. There we have, King Bharata, who United the Indian subcontinent.

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