

JAUNSARI TRIBE- HISTORY HIDDEN IN GREAT HIMALAYAS

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Abstract: In this Paper, we focus on the glorious history of this beautiful country called India. In the northern part of the country, in the foot hills of "Great Himalayas" lies a Region called Chakrata Where resides a tribe called "Jaunsari tribe". Since, this place was not under lime light, so very few research works has been done over here therefore there is a possibility that some historical evidences are hidden over here even today. This region has its own historical importance from pre-historic era to colonial times that increases the possibility of finding some historical links or evidences that need to be explored in order to have a better understanding of our history. This range is separated from Trans Himalaya mountain range by the Main Central Thrust Fault, and lies north of it. Entities the range is within include Pakistan, China, India, Nepal, and Tibet.

Keywords: Jaunsar region, tribe, pre-historic era, culture, tradition, polyandry, polygamy, colonial rule, rock edict.

Introduction:

There are so many historical places in India but very few places could be said to be associated with pre-historic India, ancient India, medieval India and modern India. Chakrata-Kalsi region of Dehradun district is one of the rare places which are associated to all these historical parts. This region is also called „Jaunsar bawar region“ because a tribe (Jaunsari tribe) dwells here. Jaunsari people are called “descendents of Draupadi”. Draupadi is a popular character in the story of Mahabharata. The culture, customs, language, rituals, architecture, musical instruments, beliefs etc of this particular region has not changed (that much) with time. This tribe is centuries old but history is preserved here even today. One can easily find traces and strong links between this region and history.

Jaunsari culture or jaunsari people are still connected to their roots even today. If someone wants to see the traces of this culture in history, s/he will find its roots in the epic Mahabharata. People of this tribe are called “descendent of Draupadi”. There is a strong reason behind this. Most important reason behind that is the custom of polyandry, which is quite prevalent in this tribe even today. Jaunsari culture is one of those rare cultures that follow the custom of polyandry (a woman having more than one husband).

Along with the association with Draupadi, this tribal area seems to be closely connected with Mahabharata (especially at the time of Pandavas’ exile/ *agyatvaas*). Some of the other links between this tribe and Mahabharata are given below:

I. Various places:

□ Lakhmandala:

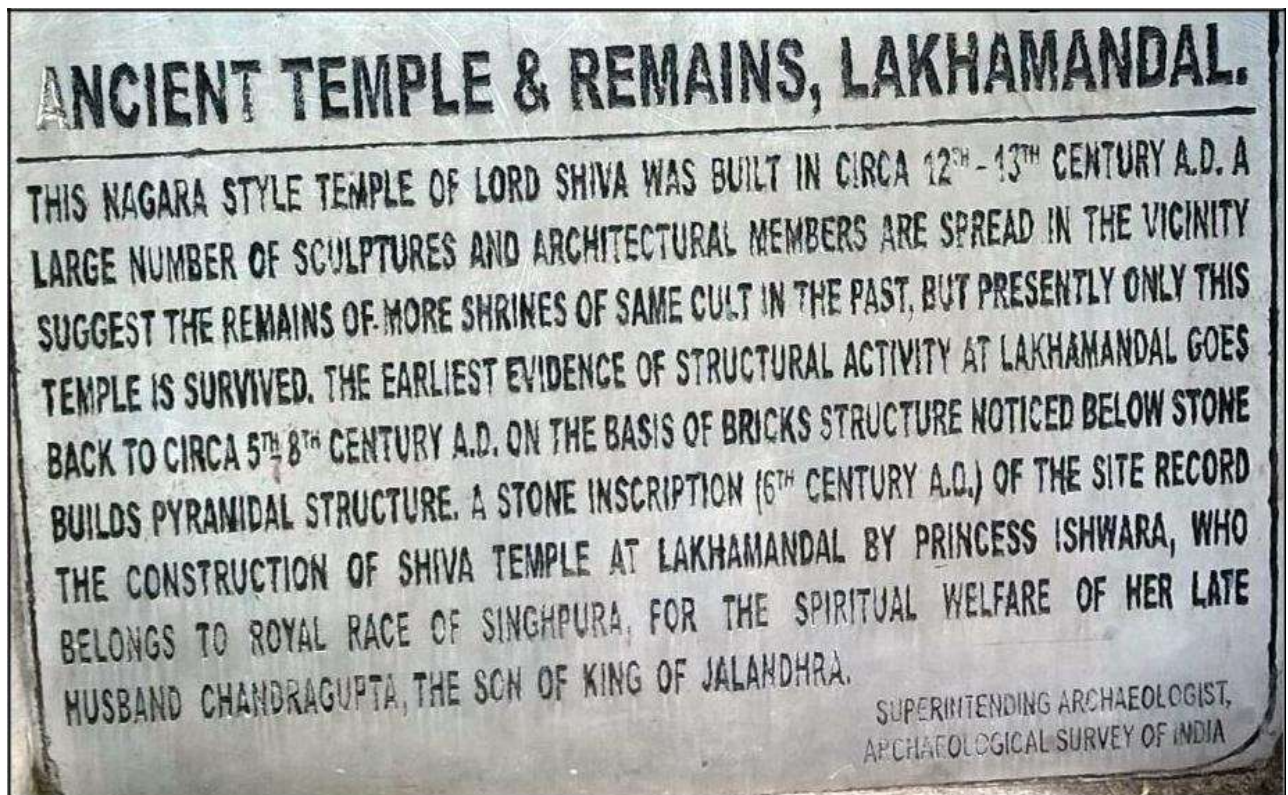
Location- Chakrata, District-Dehradun

Geographic Coordinates- 30.731224 degree North 78.067423 degree East.

This place is said to be the one where the “*Lakshagriha*” was built by Duryodhana to kill

along with Kunti and Draupadi. Unfortunately the pre-historic remains of the incident are now unavailable (said by the local people) but a Nagara style temple of lord Shiva is here which was built in c. 12th-13th century AD.

“The earliest evidence of structural activity at Lakhmandala goes back to c. 5th-8th century AD on the base of bricks structure noticed below stone build the pyramidal structure. Since, during the time of Mahabharata, “Lakshagriha” was constructed here, this place got its name Lakhmandala from “Lakshagriha”.



A rock statue at Lakhamadala temple premises

□ **Bairaat Khaai:**

First legend: Bairaat Khaai is another place in the region. This place is said to be the part of the kingdom of King Virat. King Virat was Arjuna's father-in-law; Subhadra's father.

Second legend: This place is named after a giant Garh Bairaat, killed by Pandavas and buried here in a trench. "Bairaat" word comes from his name and "Khaai" means a trench.

□ **Hanol:****Location-** Dehradun district, Chakrata**Geographic coordinates:**30.971004 degree North 77.927953 degree East

During Mahabharata era, king Duryodhana came here and liked this place so much that he decided to reside here. On his pray Lord Mahasu made him the king of this place. Duryodhana made Jakholi his capital village and constructed a temple for Lord Mahasu.

“ In medieval time the great mughal emperor Akbar Made frequent visits to the temple”

II. Architecture:

According to Archaeological Survey of India and other reports, temple in this area were built in c. 12th-13th century AD. Architecture of houses and temples is not different.



Beautiful wooden carving on walls. Buildings are made up of wood and stones. For building purpose deodar wood is widely used. Wooden flooring can easily be seen and stones are used for making walls. Some other features of this architecture are: sloped roofs, small doors/windows, beautiful carvings and paintings on wood (used to enhance the beauty of roof and walls) and maximum use of locally available building material.

III. Customs :

Tribal people of this area followed the custom of polygamy and polyandry till recent times. After the amendments in Hindu marriage act 1955 under section 494 and 495 polygamy is made void, now this custom is not prevalent today.

Just as we see in Mahabharata Draupadi had five husbands: Yudhishtira, Bheem, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahdev. An example of polyandry.

Yudhishtira's wives were Draupadi and Devika, Bheema had Draupadi, Hidimba and Valandhara, Arjuna had four wives Draupadi, Subhadra, Naagkanya Ulupi and Chitrangada while fifth refused to marry him, Sahdeva had Draupadi, Vijaya, Radha, Mala etc. hence the custom of polygamy was also prevalent. Just as that time people followed this custom in the name of Pandavas.

The custom of polyandry could be seen as a solution of "division of property among children". Here one cannot differentiate between real brother-sisters and cousins because in the case of polyandry where children had same mother but different fathers, are biologically cousins but socially they are real brothers-sisters. So, the inherited property will not be divided in fractions like one-third, one-fourth etc. Every son has equal right equal share.

There might be some other reasons behind following these customs but truth lies in the fact that people in this area are still connected to their roots and history.

Conclusion:

Once this culture was flourished in this region but now facing the danger of extinction. Like other cultures this culture has its own pros and cons. Some of them are discussed here.

Pros:

- Dowry system does not exist here. Girl child is not considered to be a burden here. Resultantly, the problem of female infanticide also does not exist.
- Society is matriarchal. Women are given more values than men. Here, this culture reminds you about the early Vedic period. People here still follow those rules and regulations.
- Girls are given a highly reputed place. Eve-teasing is considered to be a heinous crime. While the rest of the country is badly suffering from these problems, one cannot see the cases of domestic violence, flesh trade, rape etc. over here.

Cons:

- This culture could not match its pace with outside world. Its own native people once go out to urban areas or cities, now hesitate to follow their customs, rituals etc.
- Very less development is also a major reason for the fall of the culture. People are running towards the cities in search of education, jobs, health facilities etc leaving the culture to extinct.

References

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- [2] Hussain, majid, geography of india

