

## History of ancient Meena states and their struggle with Kacchhawa rulers

As narrated by Tulsiram Jaga (village Nimoda, district Sawai Madhopur)

During *Samnvat* 1023 (at present *Vikram Samnvat* 2062), Alansingh Chanda ruled Gangkhoh (at a distance 4 *kos* from Jaipur). Sode Rai (Sora Singh) prince of Narwar (near Gwalior) died in fight with the Rathore Rajputs, though he won the battle. His younger brother Tejsing usurped the power and deprived family of Sode Rai of their inheritance. Taking notice of the devious character of Tejsing and due to his fear, wife of Sode Rai, Pushpadeh (daughter of Panwar of Ujjain) took the infant child Dhole Rai (who was then 8 months old) and left Narwar.

She was passing through a jungle. Being tired and hungry, she laid Dhole Rai on ground and start plucking berries to eat. A serpent came and hooded the child to shade him. The young Brahmin passing by noticed this miracle and searched for the mother of the child who was hiding behind the bushes due to fear of stranger. To the mother of Dhole Rai the Brahmin predicted bright future of the child, to which she laughed. The Brahmin questioned her identity, to which she replied '*aasman ke patki, dharti ke jheli*', i.e. thrown from the sky and embraced by the earth. Looking to the destitute lady he took her along promising some job for livelihood. When he entered Gangkhoh along with the lady he asked the women at *panghat* to take her to the queen and grant her a job. They took her to the Sodhe Rani (she belonged to Bhepdawat gotra) who was elder queen of Alansingh Chanda. Here, Pushpadeh was granted a job of maid servant with an exception pronounced by herself that she will not make bed for a man and wash his clothes.

Slowly as time passed, due to her sincerity she became trustworthy of the Sodhe Rani. It was mandatory for the queen to prepare food for Alansingh because he didn't like his food to be cooked by servants. But one day, being happy with Pushpadeh, just for a change the queen asked her to prepare the food. It was then served to the king. As the king took one or two morsels of it he at once recognized the change in taste of the food; it was delicious then ever before. He called on the queen to report urgently and explains the reason. Feared of the king, Sodhe Rani uttered the truth to which the maid servant Pushpadeh was also summoned to the king. Finally Alansingh got to know the truth and identity of Pushpadeh and thus adopted her as his sister; and her son Dhole Rai his

nephew. He ordered his queens that from today Pushpadeh will be rule the premises of Gangkhoh and he himself will rule rest of the country.

As the time passed Dhole Rai attained the age of five years old and became a very destructive child for every one. Daily their used to be complains from people about his activities. He did not obey to his mother Pushpadeh also. When the matter was taken to Alansingh, who disagreed to say anything to the child and instead ordered to compensate the people for their losses. When Dhole Rai became 13 years old he asked horse from his maternal uncle Alansingh and got it in gift.

*During this period their was reign of Anangpal all over India with its capital at Delhi. Every ruler had to pay royalty and taxes in his court to be in peace with him. Anangpal had only two daughters and no son. The elder daughter was Kamla and Reppo the younger one. Kamla had a son Jaisand Rathore, while Rikko son was Prathviraj Chauhan. Since Anangpal had no male issue therefore he adopted his grandson Prathviraj Chauhan and made his successor noticing his qualities.*

It was the duty of Alansingh Chanda to send eight persons to fill *tanka* in the court of Anangpal at Delhi. On one occasion, Dhole Rai who was now fourteen year old requested the king to permit him to go Delhi to pay for the royalties. Taking the money of *chauth* he went alone to Delhi. On appearing in the court of Anangpal to deposit the *chauth* and introduced himself as nephew of Alansingh to which the king disagreed as he knew that there was no sister of Alansingh. Finally Dhole Rai disclosed the truth. Being influenced with his personality he was recruited into the army and retained at Delhi. By the age of sixteen he was made officer of the army. The young Kacchhawa remained there for five years.

In the court of Alansingh Chanda was Bhima Rana (bard). He went to Delhi to meet Dhole Rai and seduced him to acquire the throne from his uncle Alansing by conspiracy in which Bhima Rana promised to help. Dhole Rai was misled that being a Suryavanshi Rajput and belonging to Kacchhawa clan he was born to rule the country. Further he asserted that it has been a tradition that throne and power are always acquired by betrayal. Dhole Rai finally conceived the idea of usurping his benefactor's authority.

He consulted the bard who advised him to take best chance of executing his plan on the night of Diwali, when it is customary to perform the ritual of offering water (*tarpan*) to the ancestors in the pond in mass gathering. During this time all the Meenas had to put down their arms, so the bard suggested to take best advantage of it. At the same time the bard has the duty to lead the Meenas to the pond beating (*danka*) his drum (*dhol*). So he conspired with the young Kacchhawa to attack the Meenas when he stops beating both side of the drum and remain beating only one side – this will suggest that the Meenas has entered the pond. The signal was sent to the Rajput army, Dhole Rai along with his five supporters accomplished his objective, filling the Jamwa-Ramgarh reservoirs with their dead bodies. It is said that there were around 4500 Meena army men of Alansingh who were massacred, none of them escaped alive, everyone was severed by their swords.

The news reached Gangkhoh that the king was killed by Dhole Rai. Hearing to which, Sodhe Rani (she was of Bhepdawat *gotra*) laughed and ordered the servants to find out the body of Alansingh and bring home for the funeral. She dressed up herself most beautifully wearing all costumes & jewelry and walked with the dead body of Raja Alansingh to the pyre to become *sati*. While she walked on her way to the pyre (*videhi*) of her husband, people noticed a miracle – whenever she accidentally hit cow dung, it immediately got changed to coconuts (*naariyal*).

After the mass annihilation it was time when Dhole Rai was entering Gangkhoh. He faced the Rani on his way to the palace. He could not raise his sword in front of her who was going to become *sati*. Therefore he placed his sword under his armpit, tied turban on his head, and put grass in his mouth to show his respect and condolence to the Rani. He joined his hands before the Rani, to the reaction of which Rani exclaimed that now ‘everything is fine for you as now onwards you will hold authority over the Gangkhoh’. She asked Dhole Rai to give her way to the pyre. But Dhole Rai asked for her benevolence and blessings without which he was not ready to let her way. The Rani questioned the legitimacy of the act for being made widow on one hand and asking for blessing on the other hand. But Dhole Rai got adamant to get blessings of the Rani. Finally looking to his stubbornness she resolved to bless him that his power will remain forever on this

earth until a Chanda Meena man will mark the forehead of the successors with blood from left thumb of his foot. Another condition that she put was to adopt her as mother goddess of his clan (*kuldevi*). Finally Sodhe Rani became *sati* in Amber. It is claimed by the Jaga of Meenas that Shila Devi of Amber is actually Bhepadawat Meeni (Sodhe Rani). Jamwa & Shila are two mother goddesses of Kacchhawa Rajputs among which Shila Devi is of Meena clan. But in actual more research work is required to establish this fact practically.

According to the records of Jagas, in Bundi some eleven thousand Meenas were killed by foul play to acquire the throne of Bundi by the Chauhan (Hada) Rajputs. In similar manner some thirty-two sovereign states of Meenas were destroyed one by one by the Rajputs to subjugate them. Losing their power, Meenas resolved to guerilla attacks to take revenge from the Rajputs. Then to settle peace with the Meenas, the Rajput rulers called for a common joint meeting in Ajmer. In the meeting it was mutually decided that Meenas will hold treasury of the state while their ruler will be amongst the Rajputs. The Meenas provided their army in service of twelve Rajput states among which were the Panwar of Ujjain, Solanki of Rudarwa, etc. Meenas obeyed (*palana*) to the authority of these twelve states therefore the word '*barah-pal*' (twelve *pal*) originated.

Aalmallar Tatwara was established by Gehlot Meena. The word 'Gehlot' *pal* originated because he obeyed to the Gehlot Rajputs. In original these Gehlot Meenas migrated from Meengarh to Chittor and comply with the Gehlot Rajputs. The original *gotra* of Gehlot Meenas is different. It is said that Meengarh was situated somewhere on the bank of river Indus (*Sindh*). Here, there were some 152 states of Meenas. This is assumed to be contemporary to the period of Indus Valley Civilization (2600 to 1800 bc). The *Jaga-ke-pothi* mentions that from these 152 states, originated 152 original *gotra* of Meenas.

### **Later history according to *Annals & Antiquities of Rajasthan* written by Col. James Tod\***

On one occasion Dhole Rai was returning from Ajmer with his wife, the force of Meenas of that region accumulated to oppose his passage through their country. The fight took place in which he was killed. Her wife escaped who gave birth to

posthumous child, who was named Kankil, who later conquered the country of Dhundar. His son, Medul Rao made a conquest of Amber from the Soosawat Meenas, later he also subdued the Nadla Meenas and added the Getoor Ghati to his territory. Hoondeo succeeded, like his predecessors, and continued the warfare against the Meenas. He was succeeded by Kuntal. On one occasion Kuntal was to proceed to Bhutwar to marry a daughter of Chauhan Prince there. Remembering the former fatality, Meenas collected from all quarters and demanded to leave the standards and *nakarras* of sovereignty in their custody. Kuntal refused and had a fight with Meenas in which Meenas were defeated with great slaughter. This further secured his rule throughout Dhundar. Kuntal was succeeded by Pujoon who is well recognized as a chivalrous Rajpoot, and immortalized by Chund, in the poetic history (Rasa) of the emperor Pirthi Raj. Later many successors of the Kacchhawa clan came who kept extending their territory, with the support of Mughal Empire.

Another important hold of Meenas was on Naen which was destroyed by Bharmall Kacchhawa with aid from the Mughal connections and leveled its half a hundred gates. On its ruins he erected the town of Lowain.

- \*Col. James Tod, *Annals & Antiquities of Rajasthan*, vol.-II, Rupa & Co. New Delhi, 2002, Pg. 281-283.