

Twitter Thread by Vibhu Vashisth

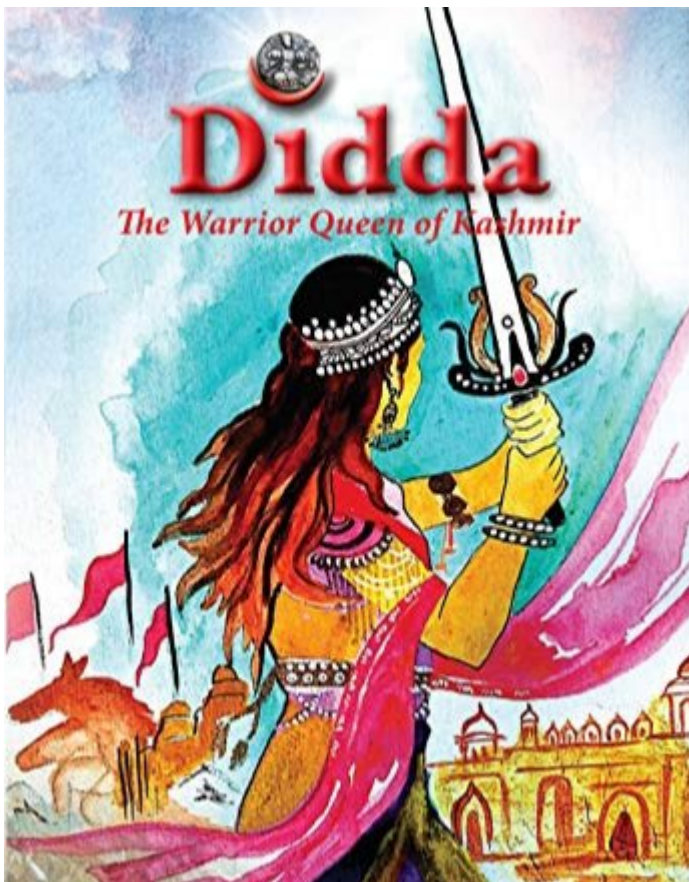


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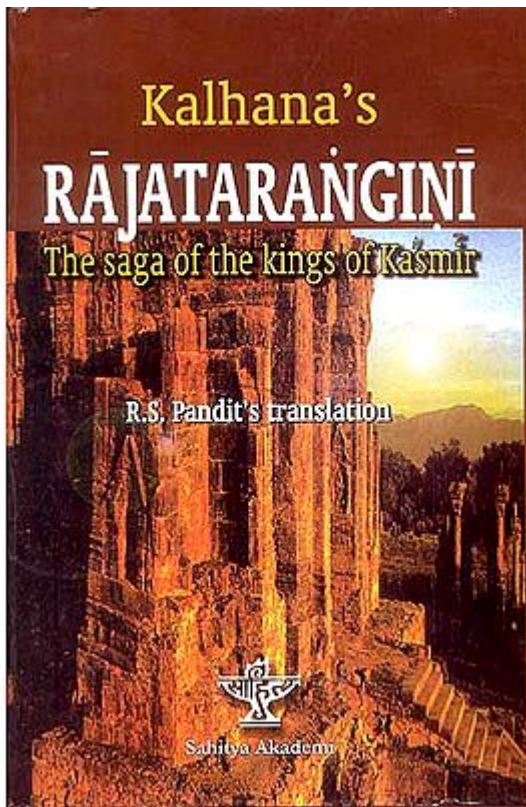
THE LEGEND OF THE QUEEN DIDDA OF KASHMIR

Born in 924CE to King Simharaja of Lohara which lies in Pir Panjal range of NorthWest frontier in Kashmir,Didda was physically disabled by birth having a deformed leg.Being a limp,she wasn't loved by the King&was brought up by the maids.



Still she learned sword fighting and horse riding to the best of her ability. Political and Military strategies came to her naturally.

Most knowledge pertaining to her is obtained from the 'Rajatarangini',a literary and historical piece of work written by Kalhana in 12th century.



She is often referred to as Charanhina (footless) in Rajatrangini. Although she could walk but there was a woman named Valga who used to carry her almost everywhere. It is for this woman she later built Valgamath. She was still unmarried at the age of 26.

In those days, Kashmir was ruled by a king named Kshema Gupta. Known for his addictions of women and gambling, he was looking for political legitimacy of his rule and therefore in 950CE, he offered to marry a not so young and disabled queen, who was the granddaughter of the Shahis.

Princess Didda was the granddaughter of the Hindu Shahi of Kabul named Bhimadev Shahi. Since the princess was very beautiful, Kshema Gupta soon got bewitched by her beauty. He was so mesmerised that he even engraved her name in front of his name on the coins as 'Di-Kshem'.



People started calling him 'Didda-Kshema Gupta'. Although it sounds romantic today but in those days it was considered humiliating. A husband adding his wife's name to his own was unacceptable to the Patriarchal society. The marriage of Didda and Kshema Gupta resulted in the...



...unification of the Kingdom of Lohara with that of Kashmir. The alliance that was forged consolidated power in the precarious region. Queen Didda gained considerable influence in the political and state affairs of the Kingdom very soon after her marriage.

Her fight with patriarchy started very early in her life, being a disabled child. But the real battle began in 958CE when King Kshema Gupta died of a fever. She was forced to commit 'Sati' which she fiercely denied and opted to rule as a Queen Regent for her minor son Abhimanyu.



She had to face unbearable opposition from local warlords and her own ministers. Soon many revolts broke out and the Queen crumbled them with great ruthlessness. She killed many rebels including her husband's nephews and quashed many rebellions.

The toughest of the revolt she faced was perhaps started by her General Yashodhara who revolted immediately after he came winning a battle against King Thakkana of the neighbouring kingdom of Shahi descent. Having a victory to his credit, when Yashodhara returned back, he expected...

...a hero's welcome but the Queen instead conspired to arrest him, which she was unsuccessful at. Pissed off General then revolted & immediately all Nobles sided with him. Toughest revolt as it was, but Queen managed to suppress it with the help of her ministers Naravahana & Rakka.

In 972 when her son died, she became Regent again for her Grandson Bhimagupta this time. By now, Didda built a reputation and carved a niche for herself in the Patriarchal society and Kingdom. She had broken the backs of all the rebellions and evolved to quash the numerous...

...conspiracies of nobles using the four classical tools of conduct and arbitration as:

-Saama : meaning deliberation & truce.

-Daama : meaning bribe, remuneration & compensation.

-Danda : meaning exercising force, prosecution, combat, vengeance, punishment or torment.

-Bheda : meaning manipulation, scheming and Divide & Rule tactics.

Ultimately, after over two decades of rule, she outmanoeuvred all of them and settled the rebels for good. Her rest of the reign was very peaceful and quite.

She resented patriarchy b'coz of which she turned out to be such a ruthless Queen. From all the accounts available, Queen Didda has been accredited of being a good ruler&administrator. People called her 'Langdi Chudail' for her ruthlessness back then but she ruled Kashmir for 44yrs.



She was a beauty with brains, she was clever and fierce and did every that thing which a man couldn't imagine a woman can do. It's not new that when men see women rising above their abilities, the first thing they do is try to character assassinate the women.

Similar was the case with Didda, whom the ministers and nobles of her Kingdom accused of debauchery, adultery and witchcraft. Didda was opportunistic but she never indulged in appeasement politics. She worked to make her kingdom prosperous and was successfully able to do it.

As per 'Rajatrangini', she deposed off her three grandsons when they posed a threat and challenged her regime. She appointed her lover Tunga as her Chief Minister in 980CE who provided her the courage to fight patriarchy and emotional companionship.

This relationship of her worked wonderfully and boosted her morale. Last two decades of her uncontested reign were most prosperous and peaceful.

No other Queen of the Subcontinent could match the duration of her reign. She remains the most powerful woman in the History of Kashmir.

She was the most administratively skillful Queen half of whose reign passed with unquestionable peace and prosperity. The fierce Queen Didda never yielded to the Patriarchal system of society and lived a complete fulfilling life as an independent woman and a Monarch.

Any talk about feminism&women empowerment would be incomplete if we don't talk about Queens like Didda.She turned out the way she was to fight Patriarchy but she undoubtedly was a great administrator&a great Queen who worked for prosperity of her people.Her story needs to be told.

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