



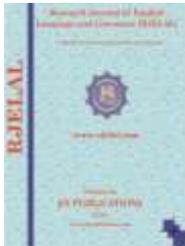
MYTHOLOGICAL FACTS IN AMISH TRIPATHI'S 'THE IMMORTALS OF MELUHA'

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on Amish Tripathi's first novel *The Immortals of Meluha*. The novel begins with introducing the protagonist Shiva, an immigrant Tibetan barbarian who hails from the tribe known as Gunas. The novel is set in an imaginary land Meluha. The inhabitants of Meluhans are Suryavanshis believes in a legend that Neelkanth (blue throat) will appear and save them from the terrorist attack by the evil Chandravanshis who has allied with the Nagas, people with physical deformities with exceptional martial skilled warriors. Shiva becomes their saviour and indulges in war with Chandravanshis. After capturing them, he comes to find that even the people of Chandravanshis believe in the legend of Neelkanth. The novel ends with Shiva considered Nagas as evils and want to avenge a Naga who is considers as the murderer of his best friend, Brahaspathi.

Keywords: *myth, facts, reconstruction,*

Abbreviations

IOM- *The Immortals of Meluha*

INTRODUCTION

The word myth comes from Ancient Greek 'mythos' meaning speech, narrative, fiction, myth, plot. The main characters in myths are usually gods, goddesses, demigods or supernatural humans. Myths are sacred narrative that explains how the world and humanity evolved into their present form. Mythology refers to the collected myths of a group of people but may also mean the study of such myths. Mythological fiction is literature draws from the tropes, themes and symbolism of myth, legend, folklore and fairy tales. It is set in the modern or historical world. It portrays a world infused with mythic archetypes, mystery and magic.

Around the world there are many myths passing from generations to generations either in oral form or written form to teach people about virtues and vices. Puranas are categorised under

Hindu Mythology. In Hindu Mythology: Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; Shiva, the destroyer are trinity of gods. Shiva destroys and creates a new life to balance the universe. He is Mahadev (god of gods), passionate lover, fierce warrior, consummate dancer.

Amish Tripathi re-narrates Shiva in his Shiva trilogy as '*The Immortals of Meluha*', '*The Secret of the Nagas*' and '*The Oath of the Vayuputhras*'. This narration makes the author to carry out his role perfectly to spread the knowledge of virtues and vices to younger generation. It also teaches people to do good karma for a better life. It also includes science-fiction. Author uses some Sanskrit and Hindi words. This paper deals with the mythological facts in '*The Immortals of Meluha*'.

DISCUSSION

The novel is an interpretation of the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical facts. "What if Lord Shiva was not a figment of a rich imagination, but a person of flesh and blood? Like you and me."

Meluha was an imaginary land. But the places in the series are considered as Indus Valley Civilization. The figures which we are worshiping as gods and goddesses are the characters in these series. This is the basic mythological fact in this novel. The series begins in 1900 B.C with Shiva, the destroyer of the evil staring at the sky. He is near the Mansarovar Lake at the foot of Mount Kailash. This is considered as the sacred place for the Hindu people.

Shiva is shown as a human, who due to his karma and good deeds becomes a god. He is taken to Meluha, a near perfect empire by Nandi. He wants to escape from the regular attacks of another tribe Pakratish. He remembers his uncle's words that his destiny lies beyond the mountains. His tribe starts to move towards the empire and arrives at Srinagar, the respected city. Meluhans' cities are described with three-storeyed buildings, underground drains, polished copper plates, iron gates similar to represent Indus Valley Civilization. The author has even mentioned the places like Harappa and Mohanjodaro. "The city, on the mighty Indus, was dedicated to a great philosopher-priest called Lord Mohan, who had lived in this region many thousands of years ago". (IOM 207)

Shiva's name differs from place to place, people to people. Most famous is Nataraj, the lord of dance. In the novel, author indulges Shiva's dance by teaching to Sati. He just dances as in his tribe. He does not consider him as a Neelkanth but a normal human being. So he withdraws when Guru calls him the Nataraj. It shows his withdrawal to accept his fate as a saviour. "I am just a medium for the boundless Nataraj energy. Anyone can be the medium" (IOM 81).

During those days, there are four types of people. They are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Brahmins are highly respected people.

They are doctors, teachers, lawyers, priests, basically any intellectual profession. Kshatriyas are warriors and rulers. Women are also allowed as warriors. Vaishyas are craftsmen, traders and business people. Shudras are farmers and workers. In the novel, Brahaspati, Kanakhala and Ayurvati are Brahmins. Daksha, Sati, Parvateshwar and Nandi are Kshatriyas. Lord Ram is mentioned as the Meluhans follow the rules made by him. He is the seventh Vishnu. "They referred to him as Vishnu, an ancient title for the greatest of the gods meaning protector of the world and propagator of good". (IOM 65)

The Devas and Asuras are living a long life. The reason behind it is Somras, the drink of the gods. It prevents the ageing process. This novel speaks about Somras as a very important factor. Everything in the novel circulates around Somras. It is the base foundation for the novel. Somras is the reason all the people in Meluha are young. It is the main reason for Shiva's throat to become blue. It is a clue to find Neelkanth who is going to save Meluhans from the evil. On fighting back from terrorist attack Sati saved Shiva from agnibaan, the fire arrow by allowing it to pierce her body. The fever due to agnibaan is untreatable. Sati has given Somras and it saves her life.

Vikarma are people who are treated as carriers of bad fate. They are not allowed in any pujas and to marry again. As Sati is a vikarma, she cannot attend the ceremony even though she is a princess. The law is strongly followed even to the royal families. If anyone touches the vikarma people, they have to do shudhikaran, the purification ceremony. "vikarma are people who have been punished in this birth for the sins of their previous birth" (IOM 95).

Yagna, a ceremonial fire sacrifice is must to do all pujas to make Lord Agni as witness. In the ancient times fire is the essential and most sacred thing. Author also mentions this yagna in the novel. Yagna is conducted to honour the Neelkanth under the auspices of Lord Varun, god of water and the Ashwini Kumar twins, who were considered to be the ancient seafarers from Meluha to Mesopotamia. There was a custom before such yagna, the pandit stood and asked formally that if anybody has any

objection to yagna. Tarak, citizen of Karachapa opposed it. He pointed Sati who was on the guesthouse in the same platform and opposed her as she was a vikarma. Sati was about to leave. Tarak insulted her who she withholds but he continued to insult Shiva. This made her fury and called him for an Agnipariksha, a trial by fire. The combat would be conducted within a ring of fire. The duel is the symbol of bravery. The duelists had to fight till one person either surrendered or died. Kshatriyas always give importance to bravery. Fierce Sati fought well and won in the battle. She started to accept the feelings for Shiva as he supported her for the duel which indicates the respect which she expects from others throughout her life.

Nagas were considered as evil and cursed people. They were living in a hidden place beyond to the south of the Narmada. Nagas were people with deformities like vulture head with human body, elephant face in human body, some with extra hands and legs, and some with two heads in a body. They hurt only Brahmins and the temples. But if they want to protect themselves, they would fight against kshatriyas. A naga who was lord of the people wore a band in his hand. It was an Aum. Most slogans in Hindu religion start with Aum. It is considered as sacred. It is the basic sound. "Aum is the holiest word in our religion. It is considered the primeval sound of nature. The hymn of the universe." (IOM 58)

Pandyas are people from the Sangamtamil, a land way beyond the Narmada River. Lord Manu, descendent of the Pandyas mentions in this novel. Sangamtamil is believed to be under the water due to natural calamity. "Sangamtamil was the richest and most powerful country in the world at the time. Lord Manu's family, the Pandyas, had ruled that land for many generations." (IOM 184)

Meluhans imagine Shiva as Lord Ram. Their thoughts are Shiva will protect them from evil. He is their saviour. Shiva often hears others calling him as Lord and compares him with Lord Ram. He even thinks this awkward. During his childhood, he was unable to save a woman in the forest. This torments Shiva with guilty conscience. So he offers to save the people from evil which is

Chandravanshis, though he not considers him as Neelkanth or saviour or Lord or Lord Ram. If anyone calls him as Lord, he rejects it politely and encourages his friends to call by his name.

"A new system is required, and I obviously don't know what this new system should be. But I do understand one thing. More than a thousand years back, we faced a similar situation and Lord Ram came and taught us a better way. I am sure that, similarly, you will lead us to a superior path." (IOM 179)

Lord Ram's birthplace is Ayodhya, the impregnable city. It is considered as sacred place by Hindu mythology. In the novel, Ayodhya is capital of Chandravanshis. They are descendants of moon. They give importance to passion, beauty and freedom. The trinity gods leaves a tribe with some tasks. Lord Brahma's tribe are seven in number and is known as Saptrishi. Over the ages the Saptrishis and their followers are known as Tribe of Brahma or simply, the Brahmins. Lord Ram's tribe are known as Tribe of Vasudevs. The name Vasudevs is due to Lord Ram entrusted task to his trusted lieutenant, Lord Vasudev. Lord Rudra's tribe are known as Vayuputras. Vasudevs task is to guide Mahadev when he appears. Throughout this novel whenever Shiva is in trouble with his thoughts, he meet Vasudevs. Their help made Shiva to clarify his doubts.

CONCLUSION

Showing Shiva as a humanly form, Sati as Daksha's daughter, Brahaspathi as Shiva's friend, Ayurvati, Nandi, Veerbhadra and mentioning of Lord Ram, Lord Rudra, Lord Varun, Lord Agni are mythological characters mentions in the novel to frame the plot. Indus Valley Civilization is mentioned as Meluha. Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis are major empires in the novel. Suryavanshis are descendants of sun. They follow solar calendar. They give importance to truth, duty, honour. Chandravanshis are descendants of moon. They give to passion, beauty, freedom. Thus the novel uses many mythological facts to frame its plot.

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