

SUBJECT 8 : KIRATAS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH IN MAHABHARATA

M - 50%, GEO - 30%, GN - 10%, H - 10%

The reference material describes the ancient dwellers of Arunachal Pradesh as Kiratas and highlights the participation of Kiratas and their kinsmen (Chins) in Mahabharata War who fought alongside Kauravas under king Bhagdatta, king of Pragjyotisha (Assam). These documents also reflect on valor and bravery of Kiratas during the ibid war. Subsequently the reference material through tribal tracing gives out the geographical locations of Kiratas.

Reference:-

1. Thakur, Amrendra Kumar (2003); Slavery in Arunachal Pradesh: A Mittal Pub, pn - 8
2. Singh, G.P (2008); Researches into the History and Civilization of Kiratas; pn -163
3. Osik, N.N (1996); A Brief History of Arunachal Pradesh (From Earliest Times to 1823), pn - 23
4. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>.

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- M - Mythology
- GEO - Geography
- GN - Genealogy
- H - History

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Refer Attachment 1

(Thakur, Amrendra

Kumar (2003); Slavery in Arunachal Pradesh; A Mittal Pub, pn - 8)

Mahabharata War

The great war of Mahabharata according to the famous historian Alexander Cuninghame, took place in 1424 B.C. Most of the historians accept this year as the probable one.

According to the epic, the Kauravas and Pandavas quarreled for the empire of India and they met in the field of Kurukshetra (near Delhi) for their final struggle. Bhagadatta, the king of Pragjyotisha (Assam) assisted the Kaurava princes in the war along with his Kirata and Chin soldiers. The Mahabharata, specially in the chapter *Maha Parva* is full of praises for the heroic and daring deeds of Bhagadatta and his Kirata and Chin soldiers. It says that "The Kiratas, with hair done in pointed top-knot, pleasant to look upon, shining like gold, able to move underwater, terrible, veritable tigermen so are they found."

The Kirata is the generic term applied to the dwellers of trans-Himalayas (north east India), Chin is the allies or kinsmen of Kiratas who were of Mongoloid extraction. The Adis of East Siang display the nearest resemblance to the Chins. The Kiratas mentioned in the Mahabharata

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(Singh, G.P (2008); Researches into the History and Civilization of Kiratas; pn - 163)

Origins, Antiquity, Identification...

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On the basis of all the available evidences, which we have discussed we find that during the time of Bhagadatta the Kiratas had diffused in different parts of north and south east Bengal, which formed the integral part of Prāgyotisa during the epic age. The Cinas were not the Chinese but the Tibetans, who were living on the border of Prāgyotisa.

N.N. Vasu is also of the view that "there was a time when the Lohita-sagara of the *Rāmāyana* and the Purvasagāra of the *Manu Samhitā* and *Kālikāpurāna* spread over a large part of eastern Bengal washing the feet of even the Garo, Khāsia, Jaintia and Kachar hills ... the Kirātas inhabited the eastern shore of the eastern sea".⁴⁰⁸ J.W. McCrindle's statement that "The country of the Kirāta, however, is placed in the great Indian epic, further, north in the neighbourhood of the Brahmaputra"⁴⁰⁹ is absolutely correct.

The tribes living in Antargiri, Vahirgiri and Upagiri, conquered by Arjuna in course of his northern expedition⁴¹⁰ may possibly be the Kirātas of the mountainous regions to the north of Prāgyotisa (the hilly regions of present Arunachal Pradesh). The exact location of these areas are not yet well-ascertained. However, on the strength of *Mahābhārata* it can be established that they must be lying within the boundary of Prāgyotisa. This can be supported by the Purāṇic evidence too.⁴¹¹ The location of the Kiratas there may not be surprising, because they were found in the inner, outer and upper mountain regions. Hence, they cannot be identified with the "lower slopes of the Himalayas and the Nepalese Tarai".⁴¹² But V.S. Agrawala has suggested that the Vahirgiri Pradesh (called Cullahimvanta in Pāli)

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(Osik, N.N (1996); A Brief History of Arunachal Pradesh (From Earliest Times to 1823); pn - 23)

Arunachal Pradesh

The people of Arunachal Pradesh are termed by the anthropologists as Indo-Mongoloids, and Kirata is the generic name given to them by the Indologists. Though we find the stray references to the natives of this state in the Sabhaparva (Book II) of the *Mahabharata*, the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, the *Geography* of Ptolemy, the *Kalika Purana* etc. but these do not provide sufficient clues to study the social formation of the tribes. However, it is certain that by the thirteenth century the tribes living in the first range of hills from the side of Assam had attained some degree of acculturation, and at least rudimentary beginning of stratification among the Hrussos (Akas) and the Banferas (Noctes) were already made.

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(<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>)

Kiratas of diverse regions in ancient India



Numerous chiefs of the Kiratas, armed with hunting weapons and ever engaged in hunting activities, eating of fruits and roots and attired in skins (animal-skins or tree-barks), were mentioned to dwell on the northern slopes of the Himavat and on the mountain from behind which the sun rises (Arunachal Pradesh) and in the region of Karusha on the sea-coast (could be the mouths of Ganges in Bangladesh or the mouths of Sindhu in Pakistan) and on both sides of the Lohitya mountains (in eastern Assam and western Arunachal Pradesh). They were mentioned as bringing tribute to Yudhishtira during his Rajasuya sacrifice. They brought with them, loads upon loads of sandal and aloe as also black aloe, and heaps upon heaps of valuable skins and gold and perfumes, and ten thousand serving-girls of their own race, and many beautiful animals and birds of remote countries, and much gold of great splendour procured from mountains (2,51). *The Kairatas (Kiratas), the Daradas, the Darvas, the Suras, the Valamakas, the Audumvaras, the Durvibhagas, the Kumaras, the Paradas along with the Vahlikas, the Kashmiras, the Ghorakas also were mentioned, here as bringin tributes*