

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 4: TANSEN



TANSEN

~Summary~

-by Khushwant Singh

The story 'Tansen' is about the greatest **musician** of **India**. He was the only child of his parents. His father was a singer named **Mukandan Misra**. As a child, he spent a lot of time in the forest playing and **imitating** the **voice** of **birds** and **animals**. **Swami Haridas** recognised his talent and **assured** his father that he could make Tansen into a great **singer**. Tansen's father agreed to it. Thus, Tansen **left** his parents and stayed along with Swami Haridas for **eleven years** and became a good singer. Unfortunately, Tansen's **parents died** around this time. Tansen decided to live along with a holy man named **Mohammad Ghaus** to fulfil his father's **dying wish**. After some time, Tansen married Hussaini and had five children. Tansen's **family members** had a good **musical background**.

When **Akbar** noticed Tansen's talent, he **appointed** him to his court. Although this paved the way for a strong **musical bond** between Tansen and Akbar, Tansen's fellow **courtiers** were envious on him. They **plotted** to kill him by making him **sing Raga Deepam**.

Tansen had a thought after some time. He gave practice to his daughter and her friend to sing Raga Megh in order to balance the warm effect of Raga Deepam. The **nature** of these two Ragas are, **Raga Deepak** will create a **warm** atmosphere and **burn** the singer into **ashes**; whereas, Raga Megh produces rain. On the appointed day while singing Raga Deepak, Tansen was **saved** but was fell ill. He got **recovered** after some time. Also, Akbar **punished** the **enemies** of Tansen. He served Akbar's court till 1585 until his death. His **tomb** in **Gwalior** is still a **pilgrimage** centre for **musicians**.

~Conclusion~

Tansen went on to become even more popular for his music. He had given an excellent display of talent as well as wisdom. The Emperor punished the courtiers who had devised the plan and he honoured Tansen by keeping him in his court until the day the great musician died in 1585. Tansen's tomb in Gwalior remains a place of importance even today.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 19)

Question 1. Why did Swami Haridas say Tansen was 'talented'?

Answer: Tansen, as a child, learnt to imitate the calls of birds and animals. One day he roared like a tiger in the forest. He intended to frighten the travellers. Swami Haridas was impressed by the skill of the boy. So, he called Tansen 'talented'.

Question 2. Why did Akbar ask Tansen to join his court?

Answer: Tansen learnt music from Swami Haridas for eleven years. He himself became a famous singer. Sometimes he sang before Emperor Akbar. Akbar was so impressed that he asked Tansen to join his court in 1556.

Question 3. How do we know that Akbar was fond of Tansen? Give two reasons.

Answer: Tansen became the favourite of the Emperor. Akbar used to visit Tansen's house to hear him practise music. He asked Tansen to sing whenever he had the mood. He also gave Tansen many presents.

Question 4. What did the other courtiers feel about Tansen?

Answer: Tansen's popularity made other courtiers jealous of him. They made up their mind to ruin Tansen somehow.

Question 5.

- What happens if Raga Deepak is sung properly?
- Why did Tansen's enemies want him to sing the Raga?

Answer:

- If Raga Deepak was sung properly, the air became so hot that the singer was burnt to ashes.



- b. The courtiers who were Tansen's enemies, wanted the singer to sing Raga Deepak and die of heat.

Question 6. Why did Tansen agree to sing Raga Deepak?

Answer: Tansen agreed to sing Raga Deepak because he dared not disobey the Em-peror. Secondly, he wanted to prove his ability.

Question 7.

- a. What steps did he take to save himself?
- b. Did his plan work? How?

Answer:

- a. Tansen was a little worried as well as afraid. He took two steps for his safety. He requested the king to give him some time. Next, he taught his daughter and her friend to sing Raga Megh.
- b. Yes, Tansen's plan worked. His singing made the environment hot. Flames shot up and lighted the lamps. Just then, the two girls started singing Raga Megh. The rains came down suddenly and saved Tansen's life.

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