

art history from the Courtauld Institute of Art whereas his wife Naina Dalal studied graphics at the Regent Street Polytechnic. This young painter couple after completing their respective courses came back to India from London in 1963.

After teaching art history to the students for another three years Ratan Parimoo was made a Reader and Head of the Department of Art History and Aesthetics of the M.S. University Baroda in 1966. In the same year he won the first prize in painting in the annual exhibition organised by the Cultural Academy of the Jammu and Kashmir government.

In 1974 Ratan Parimoo got the Rockefeller IIIrd Grant to study and travel in U.S.A. After his return from an extensive study tour of America Ratan Parimoo became the Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the M.S. University Baroda in 1975. He served on this post for about six years upto 1981. Meanwhile in 1978 he was made the Professor of Art - History and Aesthetics from which post he retired in 1996 after attaining the age of superannuation. In 1991 Jawahar Lal Nehru fellowship was granted to him to carry out his art works.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo's childhood memories of his native place Kashmir often find an expression in his artistic works although Gujrat has now become his real *Karma Bhoomi* and he fluently speaks the Gujrati language. During his long stay in an alien land far away from his native place he came face to face with the reality of being a pan-Indian in a post independence era which naturally gave him many rude shocks like searching his own identity in a completely new environment around him with intense nostalgia at the same time. This inherent contradiction in the values of life over the years ultimately shaped the personality of this renowned painter and art historian.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo's quest for acquiring knowledge and his voracious reading habit enabled him to study in great depth the fundamentals of the subjects like literature, psychology, art, music, dance, painting, theatre, cinema and art history. The world of art actually opened up great vistas of knowledge, experience and

ambition which have sparked a thirst in Prof. Ratan Parimoo to achieve something extraordinary in life and strangely enough this driving force is still continuing in him even after attaining a position of excellence. Because he still believes that there is always a room for further improvement as no body can claim to be perfect in life.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo was initiated into the world of art history by Prof. V.R. Amberkar and Prof. Markand Bhatt when he was still a student in 1950s. He even took a keen interest in theatre during his student days and also acted in some plays. He studied theatre and literary criticism to properly understand the whole process of creativity. He used to have long discussions on art and allied subjects with his teachers like Prof. H.S. Bendre, Prof. Sanhho Chowdhary and Prof. K.G. Subramanyan which left a deep imprint on his mind. His fertile multidisciplinary impressions were further exposed to international levels during his three year stay in London and then by extensively travelling in America and Europe which further enriched the vast canvas of his creative thinking.

Although the artist in Prof. Ratan Parimoo became an art historian for few years due to mere destiny during his service period but soon after his retirement he picked up the brush again to paint his ideas on the vast canvas of his creative thinking. His versatility in handling and critically analysing many artistic media is an asset to his creative thinking. Sparked by an urge to create a language of his own through his paint and brush his mind translates his ideas into musical compositions, cinematic vistas and painterly nuances which he always tried to unfold through his art as well as teaching very successfully.

The ability to transcend from one medium to another with perfection is a rare feature for any artist which Prof. Ratan Parimoo demonstrates in his creations thus making him an artist and a *Rasik* simultaneously. His analysis of the "style" of Paintings as interpreted by the German and French art historians Heinrich Wofflin and Henzi Foeillon and his interpretation of "style" in Pahari and Rajasthani paintings are examples of Prof. Parimoo's breadth of vision and his depth of perception.

His application of intuitive knowledge and applied knowledge with versatility to analyse any artistic creation is a combination which is rarely found in an artist today. At every stage in his artistic endeavours he has boldly tried out new styles, new expressions and varied content revealing truthfully his inner soul without compromising with his basic principles of life and never dwelt on popular themes to make his art a commercial commodity. He always explored new avenues for his artistic expressions as an art historian than becoming a commercial artist.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo has also established himself as an excellent teacher during his tenure in the M.S. University Baroda. He has practically dedicated his whole lifetime in building up the reputation of the department of Fine Arts and Aesthetics to international standards with full commitment as a fatherly figure. His lectures used to be quite informative, full of ideas and methodology packaged very creatively for the budding artists. He always tried to bring new theories, methods and findings to the classrooms and never believed in repeating outdated techniques. He always laid emphasis on establishing the inter relationship of art with other mediums like a research scholar to gain perfection than taking the subject in a casual manner for its treatment.

The works of Prof. Ratan Parimoo as a painter should be assessed in the context of his own early life in the Kashmir Valley which he describes as the Lotus Valley during which period he concentrated himself in painting the various landscapes. Subsequently they gave way to a view of reality, of nature as of human nature which is quite otherwise. So his art journey can be classified into three significant phases of artistic expression. One stemming from the very traditional (Western Indian or Jaina style) which is linear and colourful; second boldly abstract with intuitive expression and cerebrated compositions; and third macabre metaphorically haunted by evil thoughts but playfully rendered. According to renowned art critics and art historians Prof. Parimoo's involvement with contemporary Indian art is not a matter of chance or casual flirtation as a dry academic but an artist suffused with creativity who is deliberate in his endeavours.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo has organised and participated in a number of art exhibitions all over the country and in U.K. as well where his creations were displayed prominently and were widely appreciated by the connoisseurs of art such as Nainital exhibition of Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi in 1955, Baroda Group of Artists' Exhibition in Bombay from 1956 to 1959. First one man show in Srinagar, Kashmir in 1958, South Asian Artists' Exhibition in Durham in U.K. in 1962, Joint show of Paintings with Naina Dalal at Bombay, Delhi and I.P.C.H., Baroda in 1964, 1965, and 1975, Retrospective Exhibition in Ravindra Bhawan, Delhi in 1972, one man show in Bombay in 1973 and 1977, organised and exhibited his paintings with eight Baroda artists in CMC Ltd., New Delhi in 1990, Artists against communalism in Delhi in 1991-1992, in Birla Academy of Art Calcutta in 1992, Bharat Bhawan Bhopal in 1995, A tribute to M.F. Hussain on his 80th Birthday Aurodhan Gallery Hayat Regency Hotel, New Delhi in 1995, Contemporary Indian Painting Bombay Art Society, Bombay in 1996, Major trends in Indian Art Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi in 1979, Retrospective Exhibition Mumbai in 1999 and Retrospective Exhibition in Baroda and Ahmadabad in 2000. He had the proud privilege at a very young age of displaying his creations in the famous Jahangir Art Gallery which was setup by Sir Cowasji Jehangir a noted Banker and industrialist on 21st January, 1952 to provide a platform to the young artists to exhibit their works at a cost of 2.50 lac rupees. The then governor of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency Sir John Colville and his successor, Raja Sir Maharaj Singh took keen interest in this project which ultimately took shape during the tenure of B.G. Kher the then Chief Minister of the Bombay state.

The artistic creations of Prof. Ratan Parimoo are the proud possessions of Hermitage, Leningrad; National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, Punjab University Chandigarh; Air India Bombay, Shyamal Builders Baroda; Lalit Kala Academy Delhi; Sahitya Kala Parishad Delhi; Madhavan Nair Foundation Cochin; Cymroza Art Gallery Mumbai and Welcome Group Hotel.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo is also a prolific writer. He has extensively written many articles and books on classical Indian and modern Indian art as well as films aiming at evolving a new direction in art historical studies including the 1974 paintings of the three Tagores Abanindranath, Gangendranath and Rabindranath. The books authored by him are Studies in Modern Indian Art (1975), Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture (1982), Sculptures of Sesasayi Vishnu (1983), Paintings of Rabindra Nath Tagore (1988), The Pictorial World of Gagdendra Nath Tagore (1995) Studies in Indian Sculpture, Essays in New Art History (2000) and the Legacy of Raja Ravi Verma the Painter (2000). He has also edited several papers including on Allora Caves, Art of Ajanta, and Creative Arts in Modern India.

Under Indo-Soviet Cultural Programme Prof. Ratan Parimoo travelled extensively in U.S.S.R. in 1968 for about a month. Then he went to Australia in 1978 on the invitation of the International Society for Education through Art to participate in the World Congress at Adelaide and in 1993 he toured London, Paris and Berlin extensively to give lectures on different aspects of art history.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo delivered the Radha Kamal Mukherjee Memorial Lecture in State Lalit Kala Academy Lucknow in 1981, U.G.C. National lectures in 1983, lecture in Hindi Sahitya Parishad, Ahmadabad in 1989, Soma Shekhar Memorial Lecture in the department of Archeology of the government of Andhra Pradesh in Hyderabad in 1990 and Rabindra Nath Tagore Memorial Lecture in Kolkata in 1999.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo is the member of the Executive Board of Lalit Kala Academy Delhi from 1981. He was member of the U.G.C. Panel on Art history and Museology in 1982, executive secretary of Indian Association of Art Historians from 1982 to 1988, member U.G.C. pay scale revision committee in 1985, member Central Advisory Board for Museums in 1987, member Indian Science Academy, New Delhi from 1993 to 1995, member U.G.C. panel for art history from 1994 to 1997 and member Art Purchase Committee of National Gallery of Modern Art New Delhi from 1998 to 2000.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo has two talented daughters Gauri and Gayatri. The elder one Gauri like her parents is a creative painter and a classical dancer. She did her Ph.D. in art history from the M.S. University Baroda under the able guidance of her father. She learnt Bharat Natyam under the supervision of her Guru Chandra Shekhar. She has been married with Krishnan Jagannathan a computer engineer. Now she lives in Singapore along with her husband.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo's second daughter Gayatri did her M.A. in Medical and Psychiatric Social Works from the Tata Institute, Mumbai. She helps mentally retarded children. She has been married with Mehul Patel a factory owner in Gujrat.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo writes literature in prose and poetry both in English as well as in Hindi language with equal ease. He has a very long list of publications to his credit in reputed magazines and journals of literature. He is popularly known as "Pandit" among his friends and colleagues and as "Sabaji" among his relations.

Prof. Ratan Parimoo now spends most of his time in reading books and in giving shape to his creative ideas through his brush on the canvas. He still has a great creative urge in him to paint some thing unique and extraordinary representing his inner soul which can be considered as his masterpiece creation by one and all. It is hoped that this creative genius will establish many mile stones in the field of art history in times to come. In the words of noted Hindi poet Niraj.

*"Shabd to shor hai tamasha hai
Bhav ke sindhu mein batasha hai
Marm ki baat hoath se na kaho
Marm ki bhawna hi bhasha hai."*

◆◆◆

A symbol of love and compassion

Sri Karunamayee Ma Ammaji

The natural beauty of Kashmir has always attracted men and women towards spiritualism from times immemorial. That is why it is being generally regarded as the land of saints, sages, mystics and *rishis*. Its *Sharda Peeth* was once regarded as the epicentre of world's knowledge where learned scholars from all over the world used to come for intellectual debates and high academic pursuits.



The Kashmir Valley has produced a number of scholars of merit and repute who have contributed a lot in the field of spiritualism and whose names are generally been taken by their disciples and devotees with great reverence and devotion. These noble souls of a very high spiritual order have always spread the message of love and universal brotherhood in the society all through their lives and inspired the people to become an ideal for others. One such outstanding *sanyasin* was Karunamayee Ma who not only enlightened a very large number of her disciples and devotees all over the world by her spiritual discourses but also brought succour to them through her spiritual prowess.

Karunamayee Ma's original name was Vimla Kitchlu. Her ancestors came out from the Kashmir Valley during the rule of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Her ancestor Pt. Atma Ram Kitchlu was employed in the army of the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II (1759-1806), who subsequently came down to Lucknow during the rule of Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula (1775-1797) around 1780 and settled down in Kashmiri Mohalla with his family members. Her father Pt. Kishan Prasad Kitchlu was in the education department in

U.P. Pt. Kishan Prasad Kitchlu married twice. From his first wife Kamla who was from the Aga family he had two sons Mohan and Moti besides a daughter Vimla and from his second wife Kripa who was from a Muttoo family he had two sons, Ravi Kitchlu and Vijay Kitchlu who were the famous musicians in their time. Vijay Kitchlu was married with Kanti Mushran who was the daughter of Pt. Kamta Prasad Mushran of "Pandit Brothers" Delhi.

Vimla Kitchlu was born in 1913. She did her matriculation from Vasanta Ashram Banaras (Varanasi). She then did her graduation around 1940 from Crosssthaite College Allahabad. During her college days she was an excellent sportswoman. She was a very good player of Table Tennis, Basket Ball and Badminton. She was quite robust in health with good physique. She was having a fair complexion and was quite attractive. She was a very good singer as well.

After leaving the college she was married with Pandit Uttam Narain Channa around 1942. She had three sons. The eldest being Harsh Channa who now lives with his family in Hong Kong. Her second son was Anil Channa who was in the ITC and died quite young. His wife Mrs. Veena Channa now lives in Defence Colony, New Delhi. Mrs. Vimla Channa's youngest son is Kapil Channa who is married with Neena the daughter of Pandit Ajit and Madhuri Haksar. He also now lives in Delhi.

Mrs. Vimla Channa had an inclination towards spiritualism right from her childhood days. She actually had no desire to get married but was instead interested to become a *sanyasin* renouncing all worldly pleasures, but her *guru* advised her not to do that and on the contrary suggested her that she could, carry out her meditation easily even while spending a married life without creating much fuss as it only requires concentration of the mind which makes a person to be one with the Supreme Being a mental state where one feels the real pleasure of the eternal bliss.

Mrs. Vimla Channa was initiated into spiritualism quite early in life by her *Guru* Pandit Srikant Joshi who used to live in Beej Bihar in Srinagar district of the Kashmir Valley. Pandit Srikant Joshi

himself was a spiritual saint and a disciple of Ma Ragyan Devi of Tulamula. He gave the proper guidance to Mrs. Vimla Channa about performing the various *Yogic Asanas* and other exercises required for deep meditation.

Mrs. Vimla Channa even after her marriage used to spend her considerable time in meditation and in worshipping various gods and goddesses. While living in Delhi she used to organise religious congregations and discourses almost regularly due to which she started gathering popularity among certain sections of the society. Gradually she formed a big group of her followers who started calling her Karunamayee Ma or Ammaji out of their love and affection for her. So this way Mrs. Vimla Channa became Karunamayee Ma to her large number of followers and disciples. She continued giving her inspiring spiritual sermons highlighting different aspects of Hindu Philosophy in religious congregations and gatherings at different places in Delhi for almost thirty years which made her naturally quite popular among the masses who started regarding her as a great *sanyasin* with spiritual prowess.

Prior to 1989 Karunamayee Ma used to go to the Kashmir Valley every year to pay her obeisance to Ma Ragyan Devi at Tulamula and to perform certain religious ceremonies there. But due to terrorism raising its ugly head in the valley she had to abandon this annual ritual. She then felt the need to have some another secluded place far away from the hub of the city life in a beautiful and serene environment where she could perform her meditation without any disturbance or distraction of mind and which can be developed later on as an ideal centre for spiritual studies.

Karunamayee Ma then purchased a big plot of land near Delhi on Delhi-Alwar highway in Gurgaon district of the Haryana state in village Sanp ki Nagli in Sohna Tehsil for her *Ashram* which was an ideal site for such a venture fulfilling all her basic requirements. She laid the foundation of this spiritual centre on a 10 acres plot of land amidst chanting of vedic mantras which she named as "Sri Karunamayee Ma Ashram". She later on with the help of her disciples built an imposing temple of goddess Durga inside the

precincts of this *Ashram*. A big hall with a seating capacity of 500 people was also built for regular religious functions in the *Ashram*.

Karunamayee Ma also got constructed a living accommodation for herself and quarters for her disciples in the campus of the *Ashram*. To provide proper medical care to the inmates of the *Ashram* a dispensary was built in the *Ashram* complex with well qualified doctors for treating the patients. A library was also built where religious books and other rare manuscripts on Hindu religion could be properly kept and preserved.

A beautiful garden with flower beds and shrubs was then developed around this temple complex just to give an aesthetic look to this spiritual centre. Fruit bearing trees of various varieties were also planted to provide fresh fruits to the inmates of the *Ashram*. To provide the pollution free atmosphere for the devotees in the *Ashram* premises *Neem* trees were planted all along the boundary wall to purify the atmospheric air.

Keeping in mind the daily needs of the inmates of the *Ashram* arrangements were made to grow vegetables of daily use and other cereals in the *Ashram* for which a tube well was installed to provide round the clock water supply. For getting pure milk and other milk products a dairy was established in the *Ashram* so that the devotees may not have to go to other places for such items and may be able to devote more of their time for meditation and other religious duties without any mental tension or physical strain.

Karunamayee Ma right from her childhood days had a fancy for secluded places where no body could disturb her meditation and other spiritual pursuits like performing her *Jap, Tap* and *Vrat* with single minded devotion fully lost in her ownself. It was because of this reason that she never allowed telephone services in the *Ashram* as the unnecessary telephone calls at times become quite irritating and disturb the concentration of the mind especially during meditation. As she was initiated into spiritualism at an early age so she used to devote much of her time in deep meditation and her face used to glow with the spiritual aura which was a symbol of vibrant energy in her.

During both the *Navratras* thousands of her devotees and disciples used to throng to her *Ashram* from all over the world to pay their obeisance to her. Special arrangements used to be made outside the *Ashram* premises for the parking of their vehicles so that the main Delhi - Alwar highway may not be blocked for traffic. Special arrangements were also made during this period for the proper boarding and lodging of her large number of devotees in the *Ashram* complex, so that the devotees may not have any problem during their stay there.

Karunamayee Ma's main message to her disciples and devotees always been was to perform meditation with the purity of mind and body unlike other Kashmiri saints who used to live under most dirty conditions. She always believed in observing perfect hygiene and cleanliness. She used to take bath daily and used to wear clean clothes as her philosophy of life was that cleanliness is next to godliness. So for meditation it is essential that both mind and body should be pure and free from any form of pollution. If your body is not clean and pure and there are dirty ideas in your mind then there is no use in performing any form of meditation or worshipping the goddess Durga Bhagwati. It was because of this philosophy that she used to change the clothes of all the deities installed in the temple daily after giving them a bath to observe perfect hygiene.

Karunamayee Ma always preferred *Jap* in place of *Jap Mala* to obtain spiritual salvation. Whenever she used to talk with her disciples she always used to have a *Jap Mala* hidden in a small case in her right hand. She used to ask her devotees to perform prayers in high melodious tone so that a proper atmosphere could be created for deep meditation. She has selected prayers written in the Kashmiri language for the recitation in her *Ashram*. Though her disciples were from different sections of the society but all of them used to sing Kashmiri hymns with great devotion. These prayers used to be sung daily in the *Ashram*.

Every year on the auspicious occasion of *Navratra* special religious prayers used to be organised in the *Ashram* premises. On

the day of *Durga Asthami* a *Haven* used to be performed the whole day in which according to *Bhawani Sahestranam Ahuti* used to be given to goddess Durga to protect us from all worldly evils and to give us strength to follow the path of truth for the happiness of all human beings. After this *Haven Navveed* used to be distributed among the devotees on a long concrete platform which was built especially for this purpose in the *Ashram* complex.

Karunamayee Ma was actually a symbol of love and compassion. Even after attaining a ripe age and failing health she never disappointed her disciples or devotees and always gave them moral strength through her teachings to overcome the difficulties in life. Whosoever used to come to her with any problem she always used to give them a patient hearing and then used to suggest them the way to solve that problem so that they may not have any sort of mental blockade thus causing them further harm and anxiety. She used to apply *tilak* on the forehead and used to tie a red sacred thread on the right hand of the concerned person. She also used to give quite often some *Mantras* for *Jap* to overcome the bad period in life and for providing mental peace. She also used to enquire about the progress in such matters to change her prescription accordingly. She had such a sharp memory that she used to call her disciples by their first name.

Karunamayee Ma used to go to Hardwar once in a year with her disciples and devotees to take a holy dip in the Ganges. There she used to perform prayers the whole day and used to give sermons to her disciples. She also used to pray for the well being and welfare of the Kashmiri Pandits.

Apart from her spiritual discourses Karunamayee Ma also gave due emphasis to social work for the betterment of the society. To provide proper medical treatment to the poor people of the village she opened a Homoeopathic hospital and an Ayurvedic clinic in the *Ashram*. She also made arrangements for the free distribution of the medicines to the needy patients. Free medical camps were also organised under her instructions from time to time in the *Ashram* to perform cataract operations. She started a knitting cum weaving

centre for poor women to make them economically secure and self-reliant. She also launched a literacy drive for the children of the village to make them literate by starting a primary school. She used to love the children immensely and so she made all the proper facilities for their games and sports. To encourage the children in sports every year a sports meet used to be organised in which various prizes used to be given to the winning children in different events.

During *Navratra* a recitation competition of *Mantras* used to be organised for children in which children were rewarded according to their performance. On the day of *Naumi* nine young girls were decorated like nine goddesses and then were taken out in a procession. They were then duly worshipped by Karunamayee Ma herself and then ceremonially were sent off from the *Ashram* after giving them sweets and other articles. On this occasion new clothes were distributed to the poor people of the village.

Every year on some particular day Karunamayee Ma used to invite the whole village population on a feast in her *Ashram* just to maintain a personal contact with each and every villager. This annual ritual was carried out after prayers for their all round prosperity and health.

Karunamayee Ma has composed a number of devotional poems in Hindi which have been published by the *Ashram* as *Ma-Ka-Prasad*. In one of her compositions she says.

Gyan Bhakti ke bina kahan mile nirvan

Guru charan seva bina nahi mile Bhagwan.

Similarly she warns her devotees by saying

"Bhool per bhool kare apne ko duboye

Neki kar tere kam aye kyon use bachaye

Karunamayee Ma had a melodious voice with mesmerising effect. When she used to sing her own devotional songs then she used to make the entire audience spell bound and motionless fully absorbed in the magical effect of the spiritual aura. She always loved the singers with good sonorous voice.

Karunamayee Ma had a great fascination for travelling. She was a widely travelled person. She had been to America, Canada,

Europe and Hong Kong a number of times, and had religious discourses with her devotees in these countries. On 1st September 2000 she went on an extensive tour of France and Germany for two months.

Karunamayee Ma before taking her *Samadhi* selected one of his young disciples and after performing certain religious rituals made him her heir to look after the activities of the *Ashram* as Nand Baba. On 28th October 2000 at the age of 87 years Karunamayee Ma took *Nirvan* to become one with God. It is hoped that Nand Baba will develop this *Ashram* as the greatest spiritual centre of the country which will be a real tribute to that noble soul fulfilling the ideals which she cherished all through her life. We should not forget the golden words of Harriet Woods that you can stand tall without standing on some one. You can be a victor without having victims.

◆◆◆

The myth about Kashmir and Kashmiri

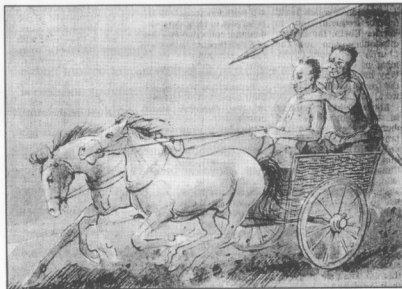
The book written by Pt. Prithvi Nath Kaul Bamzai with a foreword by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru is being regarded as the most authentic work ever done by any body on the history of Kashmir and its people. But unfortunately this monumental work of its own kind is based on the notion that Aryans were alien people who came to India from Central Asia on fast driven horse chariots a myth propagated by the European scholars and historians all these years.

This theory was evolved from an ancient Persian text known as *Zend Avesta*. The Muslim historians and scholars believe that the word Aryavrat used for describing the land of Aryans actually originated from the Avestan words *Aryenem* and *Vaego* which means the seed of the Aryans or the land of Aryans.

Then there is also a theory that many Indo-European tribes who left Central Asia in the 18th century B.C. were more powerful because they had learnt the art of training their swift horses to demolish the ox and donkey mounted armies of many great civilizations. Since their horses were too small in size to take up the weight of a mounted warrior for a long time so they invented chariots in which the charioteer used to hold the reins of the horses attached to it and the warrior with a spear or a bow standing behind him. But the latest scientific researches by eminent Indian scholars and historians have conclusively proved that Aryans were in fact indigenous people and as such they came from no where. They were actually much advanced in every field than the people of other regions of the world.

In November, 2003 the British archaeologists discovered a 2500 year old rare iron age chariot which lay buried during the digging operation for building a new motorway at Ferry Bridge, West Yorkshire, England. The find was an intact complete chariot which

clearly gives a hint that some of the tribes of Central Asia of the then known world migrated to Europe in the pre historic times around 500 B.C. The British author Thomas R. Trautmann in his book *Aryans and British India* has written that after the British became the rulers in Bengal they learnt the Sanskrit language and eventually came to believe that Indians and British were initially Aryan kins i.e. from the same stock.



An artist's impression of a 2,500 year-old rare Iron-Age chariot discovered by the archaeologists in December 2003 in West Yorkshire, England while digging to construct a bridge. The find is a complete chariot with the skeleton of the charioteer according to The Times of India of 4th December, 2003.

This indicates that the Aryans probably migrated to England in 500 B.C. from Central Asia.

According to Prof. Shivaji Singh the former head of the Ancient Indian History department of the Gorakhpur University who did an exhaustive research work on the origin of Aryan civilization, the DNA testing on the people of Central Asia and European countries have proved to be similar. But they have no similarity with the DNAs of the people belonging to this sub continent.

The mitochondria in the blood passes from one generation to the another generation and if the Aryans would have come from

Central Asia or ancient Persia then there should have been some similarity between the two blood groups. But their non existence proves beyond any shadow of doubt that the Aryans did not come from outside but were Indians according to the latest theory propounded by Prof. Singh.

Then we also know full well that the *Vedic* civilization is the oldest in the world. The *Vedas* are not merely books, but they are the accumulated treasure of divine laws discovered by different persons in different times. Though the European scholars and historians opine that *Vedas* were written between 3050 B.C. and 3000 B.C. but this is again a myth as they cannot be confined to a particular time frame because they have no beginning and no end.

Among the four *Vedas*, the *Rig Veda* is oldest which in its hymn 10.190.1.3 clearly states "that universal order and truth were born of blazing spiritual fire, and thence night was born, and thence the billowy ocean of space. From the billowy ocean of space was born time, the year ordaining days and nights, the ruler of every moment in the beginning before us the creator made the sun, the moon, the heaven and the realm of light."

It is very interesting to note here that a theory has also been propounded by the Muslim historians that the ancient Persian text *Zend Avesta* may have been older than the *Rig Veda* and the *Rig Veda* was originally written not in the Sanskrit language but in the Kharoshti script which like Persian and Arabic is written from right to left. The ancient Brahmi script came after the Kharoshti script. The Brahmi script is somewhat similar to the 'pinman' Akkadian script of ancient Babylon. The Pali and Gupta scripts came much later. The ancient Sharda script was evolved from the north western Brahmi around 9th century A.D. It remained in popular use for several centuries mainly in North Western Frontier Province, Dardistan, Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh and parts of Himachal Pradesh. This Sharda script in ancient times was widely used from Afghanistan to Delhi during the rule of Hindu Shahi dynasty of Kabul and Ohind and Shahi dynasty of Gilgit.

Then some people with jaundiced vision write quite often in various newspapers and journals that Kashmir was never a part of India and was always a disputed territory to serve their vested interests, when Ashoka the great had its empire from Kashmir to Kalinga and founded the Srinagar city. Then Kashmir had a king Lalitaditya (699-738) whose marching armies conquered the kingdoms of Punjab, Kannauj, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in the east and the territories upto Gujrat in the south. He conquered Tibet in the north and had parts of Afghanistan like Badakshan and Gandhar in the west in his empire. He met the tragic end in his campaign in Aryana (Iran) where his armies perished due to a heavy snow fall.

It is also a fact that in ancient times Kashmir was being regarded as the highest seat of learning where even the household ladies used to speak fluently in Sanskrit and in Prakriti according to Bilhan. The learned scholars from all over the world used to come to Kashmir for academic discussions and debates to quench their thirst for knowledge. But all these discussions used to take place in the *Vedic* Sanskrit; which was the main language of the valley at that time. All along the Hindu rule in the Kashmir Valley Sanskrit occupied a pride of place as it was the main language for both a medium of instruction and for keeping official records.

When Zainul Abideen became the ruler of Kashmir in 1420 A.D., he through a royal decree made Persian as the official language of Kashmir in place of Sanskrit. But here it should be kept in mind that in the later period though both Sanskrit and Persian were the medium of political literature in the Kashmir Valley the domain of the learned few whereas the general masses on the other hand used to communicate in Prakriti which was the admixture of words and phrases borrowed from many languages spoken on the borders of the Kashmir Valley. This gradually with the passage of time assumed the form of a new vernacular which we now call as Kashmiri or Koshur. So the Kashmiri language in the strict sense of the word is a cocktail of many languages as it has adopted the dialects of many neighbouring regions.

The Kashmiri language in its early phase was preponderantly composed of *Vedic* Sanskrit words and idioms. So it was regarded as an offshoot of the Sanskrit language. But with the advent of the Muslim rule in the valley its basic character changed considerably when Persian and Arabic words and expressions entered into its ever expanding vocabulary. Even its script has gone through a complete metamorphosis i.e. from the original Sharda script to Arabic script.

The Kashmiri language as such attained a distinct status of its own during the early *Sultanate* period. Its earliest known existence is being considered as the 15th century.

Then there are various theories about the origin of the Kashmiri language which were put forward from time to time incidentally by the western scholars and historians. According to Jules Block, George Morgenshtierne and Ralph L. Turner the Kashmiri language is the offshoot of the Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit language. On the other hand the researches conducted by Dr. Grierson elucidate that there is an addition of the Dardic as well. According to Dr. Grierson many tribes from different regions of Central Asia migrated to Kashmir in different times and naturally they used to speak different dialects which had their influence over the local Kashmiri language. The main languages of the region were Kafir, Chitrali, Shinas and Kohistani.

The Kashmiri language which is spoken now a days in Kashmir is actually influenced by the languages of the Tibetan stock. It is still a million dollar question as to how the Kashmiri language was actually evolved. But this can be said definitely that it always remained under the tutelage of the Sanskrit language.

Kalhan in his epoch making work the *Nilmat Puran*, which is supposed to be written between the 6th and 7th century quotes extensively the vernacular words spoken by him. In this exhaustive work the grammatical elements can be traced to Prakriti or *Vedic* Sanskrit. The earliest known work in the Kashmiri language could be traced 100 years after Kalhan. The oldest book written in the old Kashmiri language is Siti Kantha's *Mohancy Prakash*. The main theme of this book is Tantric worship that is to find the highest truth through Tantric rituals.

The saintly poetess Lalleshuri who appeared on the scene in the 14th century developed the Kashmiri language into poetic form. She propagated her doctrine through the language of the masses. Her poetic compositions in simple common Kashmiri language are called as *Vakhs* which have been derived from the word *Vakyas* meaning episodes. That is narration of a particular incident in the poetic form in fourlines. Then elective school of Islamic *Rishis* like Nund Rishi or Nooruddin who was born around 1377 A.D. developed their own form of the Kashmiri language. Nund Rishi's *Nur Nama* contains his preachings in the form of *Shrukhs* i.e. *Sutras*. Habba Khatoon and Arimal Kachroo further enriched this poetic form of the Kashmiri language. So by all these references we can very easily conclude that the Kashmiri language as such had a very long oral tradition due to which it remained a spoken language for a very long period and therefore could not develop its own script. Because of this shortcoming it could not become a medium of instruction any where in the land of its birth. In the Hindu period of the valley the court language was Sanskrit which was then replaced by Persian in the Muslim period and then during the Dogra rule Urdu became the state language, which is still enjoying the same status even after 56 years of our independence. It is the greatest paradox that the Kashmiri language still does not enjoy the same status which the other regional languages of the country enjoy in their respective regions mainly because this language does not have any specific script of its own. The main problem is that it is a phonetic language where the meaning of each word depends on its proper pronunciation. Any deviation in producing a particular sound altogether changes the meaning of the given word. So how to assign different phonetic notes to its alphabets to formulate its script for the writing purpose is the greatest difficulty which is actually hampering its fast progress and development. A British scholar Dr. T. Graham Bailey in the beginning of the 20th century did some work to evolve a phonetically correct script to write this language after doing an exhaustive research work which was duly published by the Royal Asiatic Society, London in 1937 under the heading *The correct*

pronunciation of Kashmiri words and their sounds. But after that no sincere effort was made by anybody in this direction. It is most unfortunate that uptill now no proper software has been developed to print this language correctly although some very renowned scholars of this language are working very hard on this project for the last several years. It is hoped that they would succeed in evolving a proper software for this language to make its printing easy and uniform so that no more confusion could be created at least on this front in future. Mark Twain has very rightly said *It is better to deserve honours and not have them than to have them and not deserve them.*



The mystery of "Dars" & "Dhars"

It has been observed time and again that the present generation of K.P. writers who have no idea about the history of Kashmir generally write "Dhar" in place of original "Dar" in their articles, features and stories which is a wrong practice. It only reflects their ignorance about the historical importance of these two surnames and their basic difference.

All along the Hindu period of Kashmir, which came to an abrupt end in 1339 A.D. due to wrong policies being pursued by the Hindu kings over the years, the Dar Pandits were taken in very high esteem and were generally regarded as the king makers.

When Sikander *Butshikan* (1389-1413) became the Sultan of Kashmir maximum conversion of these "Dar" Pandits took place at the point of sword, so much so that many of them fled away to far flung places to save their souls and to preserve their religion. Some of these "Dar" Pandits went up to Bengal in the far east. They were so much frightened with the *Sultan* that to keep their identity a closely guarded secret they adopted the Bengali surname "Dhar" to mix up with the local population or else by writing their surname as "Dar" they would be spotted and get killed by the *Sultan*.

When Zainul Abideen became the *Sultan* of Kashmir in 1420 A.D., he extended an invitation to the Kashmiri Pandits, to return back to their motherland who had fled earlier to different places out of fear and promised them to give good jobs in the administration with no interference in their religious beliefs from the state. Many Kashmiri Pandits then again went back to Kashmir during this period including those "Dar" Pandits whose descendants had changed their surname to "Dhar" while living in Bengal to hide their identity under fear psychosis.

Though the descendants of these Bengali stock of "Dhar" Pandits went back to Kashmir on the invitation of *Sultan* Zainul Abideen but somehow they continued writing their surname as "Dhar"

even in the valley just to maintain their separate distinct identity and to signify that they had come back to Kashmir from Bengal. So if the old surname "Dar" is written as "Dhar" it defeats the very purpose for which the surname "Dhar" was coined to maintain a separate identity of its own.

So "Dar" Pandits are those whose ancestors did not return back to Kashmir during the rule of Zainul Abideen; whereas "Dhar" Pandits are those whose ancestors returned back to Kashmir during this period from Bengal. This is the basic historical difference between the two.

Actually "Dhar" is a Bengali surname. Professor Neel Ratna Dhar was a well known scientist of the Allahabad University, who was a Bengali fellow. There are many Bengalis who write their surname as "Dhar". Frankly speaking this "Dhar" surname does not have Kashmiri origin. It was borrowed from Bengal for a particular and specific purpose under certain abnormal conditions of that time to preserve and protect the Hindu religion from the onslaught of most barbaric and fundamentalist forces as per old saying that if one lie saves the life of a person then it is not a sin. I hope that the learned writers will understand the basic historical difference between "Dar" and "Dhar" and would not get confused between the two. "Dhars" are basically "Dars" with a Bengali *Mukhauta* and not vice-versa. I personally know some "Dar" Pandits who migrated to Calcutta from Uttar Pradesh after the partition of the country in 1947. Now their descendants write "Dhar" as their surname under local influence, which confirms the above contention. John. F. Kennedy has very rightly said *"Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."*

